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No. 44 2003

North East Catholic History Society

NORTH EAST CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY

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

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

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

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NORTH EAST CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY

Some twenty-five members attended the annual Mass for deceased members at St Andrew's on 4 September, beginning the 2002-2003 year. This was followed by the AGM, at which Fr Milburn, Chairman, reviewed the activities of the preceding season, thanked the officers for their loyal work and the members for their support, and conducted the elections for the year.

The outings to Lastingham, Byland and Rievaulx abbeys on 18 May and to Swinburne on 14 September are described in this issue. At its first indoor meeting on 2 October the Society was honoured with a talk by Bishop Hugh Lindsay, who recalled the progress of the Church and Diocese during his lifetime. Next, on 6 November, George Thornton discussed some Celtic and Roman influences on St Cuthbert. Attendance at the meeting on 6 January was reduced by the weather, but Robert Murphy used cartoons from Punch to prompt a lively debate about the anti-Catholic agitation on the restoration of the hierarchy. Both Bishop Lindsay's and Mr Murphy's papers are printed in this edition. The talks by Mary Woodman and Fr Milburn on 5 February and 5 March will have been given when this booklet is being printed.

It is hoped to publish in Northern Catholic History, *if not in a single issue at least over the years, articles covering the whole history of the Church in North East England, from the earliest Celtic and Roman times, during the 'Golden Age' of Northumbria, through the Catholic medieval centuries, then during the dark penal years, followed by the revival and extraordinary growth in the 19th century, and, lastly, its life and changes before and after Vatican II. In this issue the medieval period is featured in Fr Milburn's account of the abbeys of Lastingham, Byland and Rievaulx, while the sufferings of penal times are recalled in the reprinting of the late Dr Forster's article on the financial effects of the recusancy laws on the Forcer family of Harbour House, the reprint incorporating corrections made by Dr Forster after its original publication in 1956. Margaret Oates then completes her account of the Paris convent founded by Miles Pinkney, the first part of which was published last year. This is followed by Robert Murphy's paper on the anti-Catholic agitation of 1850 and by Douglas Smith's description of an unusual musical bazaar in aid of St Benet's in Sunderland in 1912. The edition is completed by Bishop Lindsay's valuable review of changes in the Church during his lifetime.*

All the speakers and authors of articles are warmly thanked, as are also are printers at Darlington Carmel. Neither the Society nor this publication could continue without the Good Lord's loving providence, for which all will say a heartfelt Deo Gratias.

Robin Gard, Editor
January 2003

THE RECUSANCY OF THOMAS FORCER

Ann M. C. Forster

Reprinted from *The Ushaw Magazine*, December 1956 (See notes at end)

In presenting the conditions under which the Catholics had to exist in the days of Elizabeth I and James I, it is perhaps possible to depict a Reign of Terror which is unsupported by evidence; it is also possible to tone down the picture unduly, by assuming that the penal code could never have been fully operative. No doubt conditions varied from time to time, and from place to place. It is therefore necessary, in any particular case, to study carefully such evidence as may exist. In the pages which follow, an attempt has been made to set out, in detail, the working of the penal system as it affected a single individual – a Durham gentleman, by name Thomas Forcer. The *data,* in his case, are considerable. They are derived primarily, from the documents relating to his recusancy which were drawn up after his death; these have been preserved, and are now at Ushaw.[1] They have been supplemented from the Recusant (Pipe) Rolls and the Exchequer Receipts, and from contemporary documents and local records. Where these evidences seem to conflict, or are difficult of interpretation, the fact has been stated.

Thomas Forcer succeeded to his inheritance on the death of his father, John Forcer, in 1591. Both father and son were returned, in a list of Recusants of County Durham, dated 13th January, 1592/3, among those "fledd or keepe secretlie."[2] Actually John Forcer was then dead, for his inquisition *post mortem* is dated 1591,[3] when Thomas had livery of his estates. These consisted of the manor of Harberhouse, in the chapelry of St Margaret's, Durham, lying along the bank of the Wear about four miles to the north of Durham City, of land in Newton and Northwaists in the same parish, and of the manor of Kelloe in Kelloe parish to the south-east of the city. Two-thirds of all these came to Thomas Forcer; his mother Margaret Forcer (née Carr) had a life interest in the remaining third, as her widow's portion. Thomas had been married twelve years or more to Margaret, daughter of John Trollopp of Thornley. John, their eldest son, was born about 1581, and during his childhood, Harberhouse was the family residence.[4]

Thomas Forcer's first dated conviction for recusancy was on the 2nd August, 1590.[5] He was then convicted on an absence from church of

thirteen months, fine at £20 a month, £260;[6] which, with £40 more for the two months between the date of his conviction and the Michaelmas term day ("because he had not made submission") brought the total to £300. There is recorded however, in the Recusant Roll of 42 Elizabeth (1600),[7] an item of £100 referring to a period of recusancy of five months following the 2nd July, 1583, no date of conviction being given. Seeing that this offence preceded the passing of the Statute[1] of 1585, which fixed the fine for non-attendance at church at £20 a month, such a penalty could only have been irregular; but since it is unlikely in the extreme that any such fine was paid, the point remains a theoretical one only.

In default of the payment of the fine, the Statute provided an alternative. All the recusant's "goods and chattels" and two-thirds of his landed property, were to be " seized into the hands of the Queen." Henceforth he would rank – so long as he paid his rent – as "tenant" of the Crown. A Commission would enquire into the nature, extent and worth of his property, and the rent to be paid would be calculated at two-thirds of its annual value.

The Commission which investigated Thomas Forcer's property, the 16th June, 1593,[8] was presided over by William Hodgson; almost, certainly the William Hodgson of Mannorhouse in the parish of Lanchester, who appears subsequently as his friend and trustee. He was a crypto-Catholic; later on his son John was reported to be a "special recusant" (1598).[9] His Commission took their duties very lightly. They assessed the estates *en bloc,* and valued them at the lump sum of 67s. *per annum,* an absurdly low figure in comparison with later valuations. The rent, reckoned at two-thirds of this, was 44s. 8d. Of this Mr Forcer was responsible for 29s. $9^{1}/_{3}$d., and his mother for 14s. $10^{2}/_{3}$d.

Possibly it was decided, for safety's sake, that the nominal holder of the lease should be, someone who was conformable, when, at the Michaelmas, term (17th September, 1593), Francis Trollopp,[10] a relative of Mrs Thomas Forcer, became the Crown tenant at the rent agreed upon. Or this course may have been adopted as the first step in a scheme for the recovery of the property; for the following year, the 24th November, 1594 Francis Trollopp conveyed the lease to four gentlemen obviously in trust for the owner. These four were John Trollopp of Thornley,[11] William Hodgson of Mannorhouse, Anthony Welbery of Castle Eden, in Co. Durham, and Francis Metham, of Wigginthorpe in Yorkshire, all relatives or connections

of the Forcers.[12] Possibly the scheme might have worked, had the rent been paid, but it was not.[2] The name of Francis Trollopp remained on the Rolls as debtor to the Crown in 29s. 9⅓d. *per annum* for the lands of Thomas Forcer. The debt accumulated year by year, up to 1605.

Meanwhile, Thomas Forcer had been convicted again, the 22nd July, 1594, on seven months' recusancy from 10th July, 1593 to 31st January, 1593/4; this, together with the two months from conviction to the end of the Michaelmas term made nine months in all, penalty £180. A similar fine for his wife doubled the penalty.[13] Other convictions followed: the 26th July, 1596, Thomas Forcer, his wife, mother, and two sisters, were fined £100 each, on recusancy of three months following a date unspecified, *plus* two months to the term day;[14] the 4th July, 1597, Thomas Forcer alone, on one month from the 5th June previous *plus* three months to term day, £80 in all.[15] None of these fines were paid.

Accordingly, the 26th April, 1598, a fresh Commission, under Sir John Savile,[3] seized the lands again and made a revaluation. The manors of Great Kelloe and Harberhouse, with six messuages, cottages, 110 acres of land, 100 acres of meadow and 150 acres of pasture, were found to be worth in all £50 *per annum*: rent chargeable to the "tenants" (Thomas Forcer and Margaret Forcer, widow) £33 6s. 8d.[16]

Now comes a puzzling feature of the case: another Commission, acting simultaneously, but with entirely different findings. The 29th April, Thomas Calverley and others[4] also "seized" the lands. Their valuation (for Thomas Forcer's portion only) was as follows:

		£	s.	d.
Harberhouse	annual value	7	6	8
Kelloe	" "	8	17	9
Newton in Northwaists	" "	4	0	0
	Total	£ 20	4	5

Rent reckoned at two-thirds of this, £13 9s. 7⅓d.

This rent also was charged against the "tenants" (Thomas Forcer and his own tenants).[17]

Both these rents were entered up on the Recusant Roll. As no payment was made, the following Michaelmas both Commissions acted

again, Savile's on the 4th October,[18] and Calverley's on the 7th.[19] Whether these Commissions were one or two, i.e. whether partners or rivals, is a point yet unsolved; but the facts suggest the latter, and this view is supported by the following passage taken from a contemporary letter.[20] "When the statute was made," the writer says, "that those who did not pay the £20 a month, should forfeit all their goods and two-thirds of their lands ... (those in office about the Court) procured the Lord Treasurer's warrant that any who indicted and convicted such a Papist should have a Commission to find his land, and have a lease of two-thirds of it, at the rent found for Her Majesty, this obtained, they would offer composition to the tenant, and when this was agreed on and paid, would find it under the rate, and pass the lease to some friend ... "[21 5]

In this case Calverley prevailed, and in October, 1598, the lease of Thomas Forcer's lands, together with those of other recusants, was granted to Thomas Wright,[22] who henceforth appears on the Rolls as liable for the rent of £13 9s. 7$^1/_3$d. *per annum*. The other rent of £33 6s 8d., charged against the "tenants," also appears, accumulating year by year, until 1609 when it was cancelled. No such rent was ever paid. Calverley also seized goods and chattels to the value of £37 10s., and a further lot of £26. These were subsequently rescued from the Sheriff by a Mrs Jane Hilliard, widow, and their value debited against Thomas Forcer on the Rolls. The latter debt was later remitted; the former remained on the Rolls and apparently was never paid.[23 6] Thomas Wright paid two instalments of rent, in May and November respectively of 1599.[24] Then payment[7] ceased.[8] In consequence of this, and of a fresh conviction against Thomas Forcer (6th August 1600, £180 on seven months from 1st January previous *plus* two months to term day: his wife, mother and sister similarly fined),[25] at Michaelmas, 1600, again rival Commissions were at work.

The 20th September, Ralph Bowes and other Commissioners seized Mr Forcer's lands and valued them:

		£	s.	d.
Harberhouse	annual value	7	6	8
Northwaists	" "	0	6	8
Kelloe	" "	10	13	4
	Total	£18	6	8
Rent at $^2/_3$ of this		£12	4s.	5$^1/_3$d.[26]

This rent was never paid, though recorded on the Rolls till 1609, another bogus transaction. Bowes was a notorious grabber of recusants' lands.[27 9]

A month later (25th October), Henry Tankerd and others made an independent seizure and valuation:

		£	s.	d.
Harberhouse	annual value	13	6	8
Northwaists	" "	0	13	4
	" "	3	0	0
	" "	3	0	0
Kelloe	" "	16	0	0
	Total	£36	0	0

Rent charged, £24:[28] another bogus rent, charged on the "tenants" and never paid, remaining on the Roll till 1609.[10]

The lease of two-thirds of Thomas Forcer's lands was granted, together with those of other recusants the following Easter, 1601, at Calverley's rent, £13 9s. 7⅓d., to Ralph Downes,[29] servant to Henry Sanderson.[11] This Sanderson, the searcher at Newcastle upon Tyne, sometime gaoler of Brancepeth Castle, captor of the martyrs George Errington, Thomas Palliser, John Talbot and John Norton, was a notorious farmer of recusants' lands.[30] He had just lost the lease of those of Sir William Blakiston, the rent having been raised and the lease granted over his head to a relative of the owner. Possibly therefore; in the present instance, he was acting through Downes. The rent was paid, in Downes' name, regularly for eight half-years, the last instalment being at Easter, 1605.[31] Even so, during his tenancy, another Commission was held, the 6th November, 1601, under William Hilliard.[32] The purpose of this Commission is not clear. If, as seems likely, he was a connection of the Mrs Hilliard who had previously befriended Mr Forcer, he was probably trying to do him a service. It may have been an attempt to get a redistribution of the property, so as to secure for Mr Forcer the undisputed possession of one of his residences, instead of a third part of all of them, for Kelloe alone, which the Forcers were occupying, was valued on this occasion,[12] and both annual value and rent were set at the same figure, £16 *per annum*. It is also

possible that Forcer had already, by some private arrangement, with Downes, recovered Kelloe, and was now being called to account, as owning the whole manor. Neither of these explanations is entirely satisfactory, and neither solves the question of why the annual value and the rent were set at the same figure. But again, no such rent was ever paid in to the Exchequer, though the transaction appears on the Rolls till 1605. We have little, or no information with regard to the actual cleavage, of recusants' lands, and how it was determined which portions should constitute the forfeited two-thirds, and which the recusant's own third. One would expect to find courts of arbitration to decide on boundaries, etc., but there is no evidence that any such thing ever existed. On the contrary, the evidence, such as it is, indicates that it was left to the Crown tenant to pick for himself, as witness another statement in the letter already quoted: "Felton and his companions choose their fairest house and domains and assign them what they list for their third." One can imagine the vexations, in addition to all the pecuniary loss, which could not fail to result to the recusant from such an arrangement: the having to share his house with whatever disreputable tenant the Crown tenant chose to put in; losing the crop he had sown; seeing his growing timber cut down and carted away. "Some recusants," the letter goes on, "whose whole living is hardly worth £260 a year, had rather pay the whole (i.e., the £20 *per mensem)* and possess their own livings, than be subject to the barbarous usage ..."[33]

Thomas Forcer was not worth anything like £260 a year, even if his lands, after seven years of alienation, had been in fit condition, but when next the lease fell vacant, his friends seem to have seized the opportunity to enable him to gain control. About 1605 Margaret Forcer, the widow, died, and the portion which she had held for life came into the general estate. The 11th April, 1605, Sir George Freville's Commission revalued the estate and raised the rent considerably. Here are his figures:[34]

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Harberhouse						
Thomas Forcer's portion annual value	10	0	0			
two-thirds due to the King				6	13	4
Margaret Forcer decd. annual value	5	0	0			
two-thirds due to the King				3	6	8
Northwaists						
Thomas Forcer's annual value	4	0	0			

	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
two-thirds due to the King				2	13	4
Margaret Forcer's annual value	2	0	0			
two-thirds due to the King				1	6	8
Kelloe						
Thomas Forcer's annual value	20	0	0			
two-thirds due to the King				13	6	8
Margaret Forcer's annual value	10	0	0			
two-thirds due to the King				6	13	4
Total annual value	£51	0	0			
Total due to the King				£34	0	0

This rent of £34 was charged against the "tenants,"[35] but it looks as though there was competition for the lease, for John Welbery, a relative of the Welbery who had previously acted as Mr Forcer's trustee, came forward with a bid of £40, secured the lease. The 9th July, 1605, he paid the fine for its acquisition; 10s.,[36] and the 30th September he entered into possession.[37] [13] At this cost, £40 *per annum,* Thomas Forcer enjoyed undisputed possession for the rest of his days. Henceforth each year, at Easter and Michaelmas, £20 was paid into the Exchequer in the name of John Welbery. The last payment was on the 3rd May, 1622,[38] Thomas Forcer having died the previous March.

At the time this lease was granted, 1605, previous leases, i.e., those of Francis Trollopp and Thomas Wright, and also the "tenants" liability from Hilliard's valuation, were reviewed and cancelled in favour of John Welbery. In these cases a token rent of one year was charged and cancelled. The bogus leases of Savile, Bowes and Tankerd were cancelled four years later, in 1609. The rent according to Savile, and that according to Bowes, were then recorded as being four years in arrear, that according to Tankerd nine years in arrear.[39] This may mean that from time to time, these bogus rents were reviewed and acquitted, but that the transaction might continue to appear on the Rolls until someone authorised its removal. It certainly does *not* mean that rent was *only* four years in arrear, i.e., that it had been paid up to 1605. No payment of any such rent ever appears in the Exchequer receipts.

There were further convictions, the 5th August, 1605,[40] and the 7th January, 1606/7,[41] but in spite of these, the lease of John Welbery ran

steadily on. One might be tempted to conclude that Thomas Forcer, in the words of the old story-tellers "lived happily ever after." Such however; was not the case, as we learn from the following letter, written by Mr Secretary Calvert to the Bishop of Durham (Richard Neile), and dated the 10th October, 1620.

> My verie good Lord. The occasion of this letter is to lett y^{r} LoP understand, that his Ma^{tie} has been moved on the behalf of Mr Forcer, now a prisoner at Durham, concerning whom yo^{r} LoPP hathe beene pleased to write once or twice unto mee; and I am comaunded by his M^{atie} to signifie his pleasure unto y^{w} that the said Forcer, in respect of his great age and infirmities, bee delivered out of prison upon good bayle, to appeare when hee shall be called upon, and that yo^{r} LoPP do give order for it presently, and to advertise his Ma^{tie} by mee of the performance thereof ...[42]

What was his offence? Recusancy? His last conviction had been on the 19th April, 1615;[43] for Contempt of Court, failure to respond to one of those frequent summonses to appear and give an account of himself? He died a poor man, as his will[44] reveals. Some rough furniture,[14] some utensils for brewing and malting – these were the "heirlooms" he left to his son, together with debts amounting to over £57.

His two eldest sons were Jesuits, the third died young, and Peter, his fourth, was his heir. It was Peter's son, John Forcer, who, in the year 1637, at the Michaelmas term, made suit to the Barons of the Exchequer for a cancellation of the debts recorded against his grandfather for recusancy. They dug out the records of convictions, seizures, leases real and counterfeit, and put *Quietus* to them all; "the hand of the King was lifted" from the estates of Thomas Forcer. One debt was still running on, fifteen and a half years in arrear, in the name of John Welbery, the £40 *per annum,* unpaid since the death of Thomas Forcer, fifteen and a half years previously.[45]

At the end of the typed text of the article Dr Forster added the following note:

> *The Memoranda Rolls show that, with the possible exception of the half year intervening between Downes and Welbery (Annunciation to Michalemas 1605) Thomas Forcer paid continuously through various agents from the time of the first seizure (1593) to the day of his death, a total of £761 16. 2. The various persons concerned in the redemption of his goods, Thomas Forcer, Thomas Calverley, Henry Sanderson, Jane Hilliard and John Trollop, were discharged of all obligations, nothing being said with regard to the particular part played by each.*

NOTES

This article was originally published by Dr Forster in *The Ushaw Magazine,* December 1956, pp.123-134. Dr Forster subsequently amended the text to assimilate details she had found later in the Memoranda Roll, reference E.368/645, No 195 (Midsummer, Charles I, 1637) in the Public Record Office. The amendments were written by Dr Forster on a typed copy of the article among her Papers deposited in the Northumberland Record Office, reference NRO.1954/68. The amendments are given in the second series of Notes below, the numbers of which are marked in the text in italics. The first series of Notes below, Nos.1-45, are those included in the published article.

NOTES (1956)

1. I am indebted to the Rev. W. V. Smith for permission to use his transcripts of these.
2. S.P.12. 244/8 i. (Public Record Office).
3. Inq. p.m. John Forcer, 33 Eliz. (cf. Surtees, *Durham,* vol. IV, p.148 f.n.). There is a reference to the recent death of "old Mr Forcer of Harberhouse" in a letter dated 9th May, 1591 (cf. S.P.12 238/147).
4. Foley, *Records of the English Province S.J.* III, p.106.
5. Or 1591; the text is obviously corrupt. Cf. Exchequer Records, Pipe Series, E.377/1, in *Adhuc Res Ebor*, printed in Cath. Record Soc. vol.18, p.76; Ushaw MSS.
6. These sums should be multiplied by something like fifteen or twenty for their equivalent worth to-day.
7. E.377/9 in *Item Adhuc Item Item Ebor.*
8. E.377/3 Ush. MSS.
9. "A perilous fellow, conformable to Her Majesty's proceedings ... whose sonne, called John is a speciall recusant ... " (Letter from Tobie Mathew, Bishop of Durham, to Lord Burghley dated 27th May, 1598, printed in Surtees *Durham* II, p.322, from Sadler's Papers, II, p.204, and Supplement to Stype's Annals, p. 344; also, in part, in Foley, *op. cit.* III, p. 130.
10. E.377 3; Ush MSS.
11. Old Mr. Trollop had conformed after imprisonment. He appears as a recusant again in 1606.
12. *Archeologia Aeliana*, 4th ser. vol. 111, Greenwell Deeds, no.340.
13. E.377/1; C.R.S. 18, p.79; Ush. MSS.
14. E.377/9 in *It. Adh. It. It. Ebor.*
15. ibid.
16. E.377/11 in *It. Ebor.*
17. Ush. MSS.
18. E.377/7 in *Res. Ebor.,* Ush. MSS.
19. E.377/7 in *It. Adh. It. Res. Ebor.;* Ush. MSS.
20. Francis Cordale to Marco Tusinga, London, 22nd, July, 1599, (Cal. S.P. Dom. Eliz. 1598-1601, p.253).

21. Cf. Morris, *Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers, III, p.23;* The livings of recusants are sometimes begged of three or four several men; and grants made to all of them. If he/the recusant/or any their friends for them, think good to deal for the lease, they must compound with them all, notwithstanding that only the first grant be good as against the Queen, but all allowed current against Catholics."
22. E.377/7 In *It. Adh. It. Res. Ebor.;* Ush. MSS.
23. E.377/9 (40 Eliz.) in *It. Adh. Item(3) Ebor.;* Ush. MSS., and E.377/14 (3 Jas. I) in *Adh. It. Ebor.;* in the latter the date, 25th October, 42 Eliz. has been partially erased. This date, copied in Ush. MSS. cannot be correct.
24. According to the statement of Thomas Forcer's son (cf. Foley III, p. 107) his parents were " twice despoiled of all their goods and possessions, except only a third part which was left for their sustenance, and they could only redeem them again for a heavy sum of money."
25. Arch. Ael., *op. cit.* no.342. Exchequer Receipts (Pells), E.401/1864.
26. E.377/9 in *It. Adh. It.(3) Ebor.*
27. E.377/17 in *Adh. Res. Ebor.;* Ush. MSS.
28. *Progress of King James*, vol. II, p.760, cited in Surtees *Durham,* IV, i, p.116.
29. E.377/9 In *It. Adh. It.*(4) *Ebor.;* Ush. MSS. There is an entry in 377/10 and in subsequent Rolls, which makes it appear that in 1600 a portion of Harberhouse was owned by Robert Mayer, but this is merely due to a clerical error, two contiguous entries; those of Robert Mayer of Hardwick and Thos. Forcer of Harberhouse having got confused. The original entries are in E.377/9 as quoted above; in E.377/17 the error has been corrected.
30. E.377/10 in *Adh. Res. Ebor.*
31. Cf. "A Note of Henry Sanderson's Employments," (Tobie Mathew to Sir Robt. Cecil, 27th June, 1600, Hist. MSS. Commission, Salisbury MSS. cal. vol. X, 202-205)/Sanderson/ "hath raised to Her Majesty's use the rents of certain recusants' lands in this country/ Durham/from £18 to £200 *per ann.* which no man was willing to enter into before, such is their alliances and clans."
32. Arch. Ael. *op. cit.* no. 342; Pells Receipts E.401/1869-1876.
33. E.377/10 in *It. Adh. Res. Ebor.* Ush. MSS.
34. Cf. Morris, *op. cit.* p.22: "All gentlemen of worth pay the whole penalty. Others in the seizure of the two parts miserably used, as by having their lands unequally divided, and on these two parts all manner of wastes to be committed, especially in cutting down their woods at unseasonable times, whereby they cannot grow again, and suffering their ancient houses and fair building to go to ruin and decay."
35. E.377/14 in *Adh. It. Ebor.*; Ush. MSS.
36. E.377/17 in *Res. Ebor.*
37. E.401/1876.
38. E.377/14 in *Adh. It. Ebor.*
39. E.401/1908; E.377/30.
40. Ush. MSS.
41. E.377/13 in *It. Adh. Res. Ebor.;* Ush. MSS.

42. E.377/16 in *It. Adh. It. Res. Ebor.;* Ush. MSS.
43. Mickleton MSS. quoted in Surtees, *Durham,* IV, ii, p.158.
44. E.377/22; E.377/32; Sir C. Sharp's Printed List of 1615 Recusants; Ush. MSS.
45. Surtees Soc. vol. 142, p.151. (16th November, 1621).

NOTES

These notes are Dr Forster's amendments to the typed copy of her 1956 article. The amendments are those in italics and correspond to the italic references in this reprinted article.

At the head of her typed text, Dr Forster added: *With corrections from the Memoranda Roll, E.68/645, No.195, Mids. Chas.I (1637).* In one corrected note *(2),* the reference is given as E.368/645, No.195, which would appear to be the correct reference. Several of the notes refer to a transcript of the entries in the Roll, presumably made by Dr Forster, but no such transcript appears to be among her Papers in the Record Office.

1. *No: the estates were separately valued. See Memoranda Roll, p.4 of Transcript.*
2. *5 years rent, Annun.1593 - Annun.1598, was collected by the undersheriff, Robert Robson. See Memoranda Roll, E.368/645, No.195, p. of Transcript.*
3. *A 'Central' Commission sitting at Wakefield (Mem. Roll), probably a check on the local Commissioners mentioned in the Mem. Roll and thereafter ignored.*
4. *This was the local Commission whose findings endured until the re-assessment of 1605.*
5. *Rent at the new rate for the half year, Annun.1598 - Mich.1598, was collected by the undersheriff from the tenants, £6 14. 9²/3.* (An interlinear note by Dr Forster).
6. This sentence was re-worded by Dr Forster, omitting *The latter debt was later remitted,* and replaced by *Both remained on the Rolls and apparently were never paid.*
7. *probably* inserted.
8. *but rent for 1¹/2 yrs up to Annun.1601 was collected by the undersheriff* inserted. *For all these payments of R. Robson into the Exchequer, see his payments in --lump sums, 23 Nov.1605 and 26 May 1606 -Pells receipts. See also E.377/14/10.*
9. Note added after this sentence: *(A Durham Commission, which included R. Robson, the undersheriff, possibly a genuine attempt to grab.*
10. Note added here: *This was another 'Central' Commission sitting at York. Tankerd took Calverley's valuation of goods, but a different estimation of lands. (Mem. Roll, p.11).*
11. *Hen. Sanderson was a member of Calverley's Commission, so was Robson.*
12. *Not correct. The whole estate was valued. See Mem. Roll, pp12,13* of Transcript.
13. *For the half year, Annun. - Mich.1605, no rent appears.* It is not clear where Dr Forster intended to place this note in her typed text.
14. *Not quite correct. Much of the furniture inventoried by Calverley in 1596 figures in the will: the rest may have been comprised in the remainder left to his wife and daughter.*

AN ENGLISH CONVENT IN PARIS THROUGH 250 YEARS

Margaret Oates

Convents have traditionally provided good schools for girls. Through centuries of practice, the skills of teaching nuns have achieved a quality of education prized, not only by Catholic families but often by parents from other backgrounds. It still is, as much for the learning as for the morals and manners imparted with it. Times are changing however, and the change is coming about because the nuns themselves are disappearing. Fewer women wish to give their lives to prayer and good works.

One of the earliest examples of such a teaching convent was founded in Paris in 1634 and one of its founders was Miles Pinkney,[1] a native of Durham. It was inspired by the example of Douai, a seminary for priests which also taught the sons of English Catholic gentry. Miles and his co-founder, Lady Mary Letice-Tredway (whose idea it was), wanted to train English girls who would become nuns and pray for the reconversion of England, or, if not, might return to England to marry and raise families in the faith, well enabled to stand up for their beliefs. Later, after the French Revolution, it became a fashionable school for French girls too and achieved wide renown. Georges Sand[2] was a pupil there. Some of the names in its annals are from our part of the kingdom - notably Barbara Charlton,[3] whose *Memoirs of a Northcountry Lady* is famous. She was a pupil there as were her mother and sisters. Among the lists of pupils for just the years 1817 to 1829, were Barbara, Charlotte Stapleton, Catherine and Fanny Tempest; while nuns over the years included Dorothy Clifton, Catherine Lawson, Dorothy, Mary and Mary Alippia Witham, Mary Widrington, Elizabeth Pulcheria Stapleton, Mary and Thomasin Fenwick. Names from other parts of England included Arabella Fermor (whose experience inspired Alexander Pope to write his famous *The Rape of the Lock)* and several Ropers.

The Abbé F.-M.-Th.-Cédoz,[4] chaplain to the convent, chronicled its first 250 years in a book published in 1891, from which the substance of this short account is taken. Its existence in Paris continued until 1903, when some anti-clerical bias in France caused its removal to its present home in Ealing, London. Its 300th anniversary was celebrated in 1934 (with a pageant of its history) and its 350th milestone was passed in 1984. Now it is no longer a convent but the school still flourishes as St Augustine's Priory School.

The convent began in 1634. Its location was to have been Douai, but George Leyburne, later President of Douai College, fired the imagination of Lady Tredwell with the idea of Paris as a better choice. Miles Pinkney (or Thomas Carre as he was better known on the Continent) was doubtful but asked his friend and colleague, Bishop Richard Smith[5] of Arras College, who lived in Paris at the home of Cardinal Richelieu, for advice. Richard viewed the proposal with both trepidation and admiration and promised help; this he was in a good position to furnish, having the ear of the most powerful Cardinal Minister in France who had great influence with the king, Louis XIII. The king gave permission to open the convent in Paris with the proviso that it be approved by the Archbishop of Paris. The institution was to be for English nuns and pupils only, to be served by secular priests and to cause no expense to the public purse. These terms being agreed, Louis XIII signed letters patent in March 1633, authorising Lady Tredway to establish a monastery. The Archbishop's permission was signed 24 May 1633.

Raising capital was difficult. At last, however, a house was purchased with aid from Richard Smith and a Dr Holden, among others. It was in the Faubourg St. Michel in the Rue d'Enfer. On 20 February 1634, a small band of nuns and postulants travelled to Paris from Douai to take possession. On 26 March, Lady Tredway was inducted as Abbess; at first she had to fill all the usual posts in a convent as well as that of Abbess. She was Prioress, 'Dépositaire' (i.e. administrative manager) and novice mistress. Thomas Carre was chaplain. Financial resources were meagre, mostly based on the dowries of novices. These did multiply, but as yet there was no school to bring in fees. By strict economy all debts were paid off and after two years a larger house was acquired. It was in a marshy area of Paris - known as 'l'eau qui dort' - and brought fevers and the death of three out of the little community. The contract for a new and more permanent home was signed 20 December 1638. This was in the Rue Fossés-Saint-Victor and consisted of four contiguous houses. Notre-Dame-de-Sion was its new name. Its chapel was consecrated 30 July 1640 by Bishop Richard Smith; a bell was added and named 'Marie Augustine'; it was never silenced until the Revolution. Georges Sand, who was a pupil at the school in 1817 said, in 1855, that it had a pretty silvery chime. The school was in operation by 1640.

The convent raised some revenue by taking in lodgers, or 'locataires', as M. Cédoz calls them. They had no part in the religious or educational life of the community and were mostly high-class people who brought their own

furniture and lived quietly.

Dowry money was invested in England, but the Civil War and the aftermath of Charles I's execution blocked arrangements for drawing upon these resources. In France too, from 1648-1652, conditions were severe. The nuns had to find another source of income. They made money by fine needlework which they sold. Things improved with the Restoration. They regained access to their funds in England and the convent was able to celebrate the jubilee of the Abbess in 1664. In 1666, however, a fraudulent bankrupt threw their finances into disarray once more, while wars between England and Holland had the effect of raising both English and French taxes. By the close of the 1660s, Thomas Carre's health was failing. He took steps to ensure the convent a chaplain to replace himself and found Edward Lutton[6] who gradually took over the administration. No choice could have been better. Edward guided the convent successfully through difficult times after Thomas's death in 1674. Lady Tredway died too, on 12 October 1677, aged 84. She had resigned as Abbess in 1674.

From 1672 an important development took place. When the little group arrived in Paris in 1634, they brought with them the Rules and Constitution of the Convent of Notre-Dame-de-Beaulieu at Douai, where Lady Tredway had begun her conventual life and these they had followed. That rule was formed for a Flemish convent and now the community was in Paris and must conform to French laws. According to the old rule, the Abbess was chosen for life but in France this was not allowed. Only two systems were possible: a Superior chosen by the community for a limited period or an appointee chosen by the King and from where he pleased - an 'Abbess Commendataire'. Neither system was ideal but the latter could be inconvenient - even children had been so appointed. So the community opted for the elective system: a Superior chosen by a 'Chapter' for a period and indefinitely re-eligible. Edward Lutton was charged with the rewriting of the Statutes. Infinite care was taken in conference with Thomas Carre, Lady Tredway and the opinions of all in the community. In 1674, Lutton was charged with the presentation of the document to the Archbishop of Paris. It was formally approved on 19 January 1675. The convent was officially recognised as *Les Dames Chanoinesses Anglaises* and took its place among French religious communities. The Superior was to be elected for four years after which there must be a new election. M. Cédoz gives much information on rules, procedures, ceremonies and habits for which

space here does not allow inclusion.

To Edward Lutton fell the onerous task of saving the fabric of the convent buildings which were threatened by moves to improve the road works of Paris. Known as the 'Fossés', the convent was situated by the ramparts and ditches of old Paris, between the Rue de Charonne and Rue de la Roquette - the former was below the level of the latter. Municipal officials in 1676 decided that levelling should be done and at the expense of the property holders. By 1685, after some legal wrangling, the work was ordered to begin. The alterations could leave the convent buildings hanging in the air. Pleas to powerful sources to avert the menace were to no avail so it was necessary to make supports to hold the building and to make new foundations. It was dangerous work. At the outset a workman was killed. Edward took charge himself and oversaw the work by day and night, undermining his own health at the same time as shoring up the convent walls. He lived in continual anxiety, watching for unforeseen cracks and crevasses, worrying about precipitating falls of stone by the lightest blow of a pickaxe. The money question haunted him too but by 1688 the work was finished. The convent had to return to a régime of the strictest economy.

Edward continued to be a tower of strength until his death in 1713. Disaster troubled the convent in 1709 when a year of unusually low temperatures froze the rivers, even the seas. Stones cracked; the hardiest of trees, beasts in their stables and the poor in their hovels - all perished. Many died of starvation among whom were 15 at the convent, eleven of them nuns. Chaplains who followed Edward were Mr Lawson Green[7] followed by Mr Wilkinson[8] who died in 1771. Mr Hurst[9] was chaplain when the French Revolution broke out and through much of the Terror. He died in 1793 and the convent was left without a chaplain for many years.

In 1734 (the centenary of the convent), William Howard, Viscount Stafford,[10] a greatly revered friend, visited the convent to see his sister - a 'locataire' there. Scarcely arrived, he collapsed and died. He had wished that his heart should be placed in the keeping of the Benedictine convent in Paris where his sister was Superior, but this was later deposited at the 'Fossés' in 1807 when the Benedictines were returning to England. The heart of James Radcliffe,[11] the ill-fated Earl of Derwentwater, executed in 1716 for his part in the Jacobite Rising, was also (by testament) confided to the keeping of the nuns. Another heart to be kept there was that of Lord Teynham,[12] who wished it to rest near to his children Mary and Philadel-

phia-Mary-Magdalen Roper.

The Superiors among the nuns included Mme Mary-Alippia Witham (1728-1736) and (1748-1752), the daughter of Sir John Witham of Cliffe Hall, Mme Throckmorton and Mme Bishop (1760-1765). The latter was followed by Mme Frances Lancaster (1765-1808) who led her flock with great wisdom and courage through the revolutionary years.

Events following May 1789, culminating in the taking of the Bastille were the beginning of years of tribulation for the community. By October, all goods held by the clergy were considered national property and soon all religious establishments had to declare their possessions and revenues. In 1790, the suppression of religious vows in France was decreed to be followed by a ban on the wearing of religious habits. All were invited to leave their Orders and lists were made of inmates of convents. The official list of those in the community at that time is included in M. Cédoz's book, with the status of each.

Mme Lancaster was quick to plead a special case for the Dames Anglaises. They cost France nothing, for their income came from dowries invested in England. All the personnel were English; their purpose was to educate English girls. This succeeded insofar as they could remain in their premises in possession of their goods, for the time being. They were, however, deprived of their income from the 'locataires'. But France's economy was foundering, so the threat of confiscation loomed larger. They suffered a 'surprise' raid; luckily they had forewarning from a sans-culotte[13] to whom they had given a kindness, but the search was frightening, taking place in the small hours of the night with maximum violence from 16 or so revolutionaries with sabres in their fists. The schoolchildren in their dormitories must have been terrified.

All grew worse after July 1793 when rage against the English meant that the nuns became hostages, prisoners in their convent. Priests were arrested (including Mr Hurst), and some of the locataires. Under Robespierre, wholesale arrests on the slimmest of pretexts were made; premises were needed to house these 'suspects' so the convent was turned into a 'maison d'arrêt'. Soon the Fossés was filled with women of all degrees. Georges Sand's grandmother was a detainee there as was her mother-to-be. The nuns did their best to comfort these women, many of whom went to the guillotine, though some escaped with the downfall of Robespierre. M. Cédoz tells many of their stories. Some communities of nuns were billeted

upon the convent - all hostages because they were English.

After July 1794 the worst of the Terror diminished with the fall of Robespierre. Conditions eased. There was no chaplain, for Mr. Hurst had died in November 1793. There was no Mass, the chapel was vandalised; its valuables were gone and the sepulchral flagstones had been raised, the coffins broken and bones strewn about. In 1795 General Buonaparte took charge and there were four years of respite, but in 1799, the Jacobins were re-elected and confiscations began again. The Fossés was auctioned and the community prepared to set off for England. Buonaparte once more saved the day, however. He was First Consul by January 1800.

It is said that, while Buonaparte was not himself religious, he thought that religion and education promoted order in society. Perhaps that was why he helped the community. It found a friend too in Counsellor Lebrun who sent his daughter to the school. The First Consul showed a particular interest. Barbara Charlton's memoirs talk of his liking to walk in the convent gardens. The house was retrieved and they were allowed to continue their work - again only provisionally. The church was repaired, the relics saved were re-installed and in 1806 they were allowed to resume the wearing of their habit. The school had become celebrated in England after its tribulations became known.

In 1808 Mme Lancaster died and was replaced by Mme Canning, her deputy, under whose rule (1808-1820), the school became fashionable and it was during this period that Georges Sand (whose real name was Aurore Dupin) became a pupil. After Waterloo, the Duke of Wellington rode in triumph into Paris and honoured the convent in the Fossés with a visit, during which the young ladies sang *God save the King* and *Rule Britannia.*

The uprising against the Bourbon king in 1830 saw the children sent home. Fewer returned. Financial troubles plagued the community. Again, 1847-8 brought more civil unrest which descended into bloody anarchy. The Archbishop of Paris himself was killed while bravely trying to broker an armistice. A band of insurgents broke into the convent garden but left peaceably.

These events all took place in the premises of the Rue Fossés-Saint-Victor. Later during the rule of Mme Mary Louisa Howell (1852-1867), these old well-loved buildings were to be lost to them. Under Napoleon III, starting in 1858, the streets of Paris underwent a famous re-organization associated with the name of its architect, Haussmann.[15] The nuns would

have to find a new home. The good news was that compensation would be paid and many in the community would be glad to be rid of their inconvenient maze of poky little houses, full of cracks and crannies, in disrepair and ruinous in places. It was a matter of consternation to the older nuns, however, for the place was full of memories. In 1855, Georges Sand described the old place as it was when she was a pupil in 1817.~

> It was an assemblage of buildings, of walls and gardens which made a sort of village, rather than a particular house. There was nothing monumental, nothing interesting for the antiquarian. Since its construction, which did not go back more than 200 years, there had been many changes, additions or successive re-distributions, so that one could trace its ancient character in very few places. But this heterogeneous ensemble had its own character, something mysterious and embracing like a labyrinth - a certain poetic charm like recluses know how to instil into the most common things. It was at least a month before I knew how to find my way by myself, and still, after a thousand furtive explorations, I did not know all the byways and corners.

The "furtive explorations" had included forays into the huge underground cellars (rumoured to stretch far out under Paris), where lay sister Françoise Thérèse Hailes distilled her mint. The 'potager', or kitchen garden is also described - rich in magnificent flowers, variegated pinks, gilded grapes, majestic melons and other vegetables and fruit.

M. l'Abbé Langénieux, later to become a Cardinal Archbishop, was ecclesiastical Superior to the convent in 1860. He found a new site for the community situated at the entrance to the park at Neuilly. It included a fine house, but other buildings were needed for which the first stone was laid 30 May 1860. The old houses had to be evacuated and the lady locataires given notice to quit (for they were not to be housed at the new premises). After a last Mass in the chapel the exodus began. Some of the older nuns had literally to be prised from the cloister or their cells, so affected were they. The removal of the tombs below the chapel floor was postponed until 1863, but the special caskets were taken to Neuilly. Among these were the hearts of the Earl of Derwentwater, Lord William Howard, Sir George Throckmorton and Lord Jerningham.[16]

All being established, Reverend Mother decided to provide a school for the poor children of Neuilly. This opened in 1862. Mme Howell became ill with cancer and died in 1867. Her rule had seen other notable events. Through all the revolutionary years their property had been confiscated more than once and returned to them, but only 'provisionally'. This lack of

status caused many inconveniences. During the reign of Napoleon III, the community at last managed to obtain a decree in 1853 approving the Dames Anglaises, "dites de la Concepcion",[17] giving them legal status. The year 1852 saw the replacement of the convent bell, 'Marie Augustine', which had become cracked with age.

The most interesting event of her time as Superior for northern readers, concerns the pastoral ring of St Cuthbert. This had been in the possession of Bishop Richard Smith who had spent his last years at the convent, dying in 1655. He was buried in the church. He bequeathed the ring to the community and they had guarded it with great veneration. In 1850, Cardinal Wiseman visited the convent on his way to Rome to receive the Cardinal's hat and expressed a desire to possess this ring. The convent Chapter considered but rejected this request. His Eminence later changed their minds by sending a letter explaining that he did not want the relic for himself but for the College of Saint Cuthbert at Ushaw in County Durham. Reverend Mother Howell, therefore, presented the jewel case to the Cardinal when he came to say Mass at the convent some time later. It is still at Ushaw today.

Mother Mary Gonzaga-Martha Howell was elected Superior in 1867.

The last adventure recorded by Abbé Cédoz came with the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1. Pupils had been sent home after war was declared in July. Defeat after defeat and the Prussian advance on Paris meant that the community was advised to leave the capital. They were offered sanctuary at Suce, north of Nantes. The convent building was left in the charge of its concierge and his wife who were to have some hair-raising adventures at the hands of the communards before being able to escape to Versailles - the base of the new French government after insurgents had taken over Paris and set up communes. The convent buildings were requisitioned by the communards as a barracks and a relentless bombardment by government forces ensued. Neuilly, the prettiest suburb in Paris, was torn apart. The convent roof was badly damaged, its interior vandalised and desecrated. Clerical personnel in Paris were taken hostage or went into hiding. Fortunately, M. de Langénieux was well hidden by friends. The nuns were safe at Suce, but it was many months, even after the rebels were routed, before they could return home. Damage had to be repaired, interiors cleansed and disinfected. Permanent losses included the caskets containing relics confided to their care, such as the Earl of

Derwentwater's heart. It was thought that the rebels, finding them, hoped they contained treasure of a more temporal kind, and being disappointed, disposed of them.

Settled once more, the community enjoyed a happier period up to 1884 when their 250th anniversary was celebrated. The Abbé Cédoz was now chaplain. The school and community prospered. Twice each year, the scholars entertained their counterparts from the school for the poor children of Neuilly, instituted by Reverend Mother Louisa Howell. In the summer months, on Mme Howell's feast day, a grand open-air feast was held, served by the convent girls in the convent gardens, preceded by games in which the children from both schools took part. In winter, for the feast of St. Catherine, another feast was made, but held indoors. The convent schoolgirls had been busy all year with their needles making small gifts for their guests and when the feast was over, there was a 'tombola'- a grand distribution of these gifts; there were dressed dolls, capes, knitted mittens, stockings, crosses, chaplets, medals and coffrets full of sweets. The most coveted gift was a 'sac à surprises'.

The convent and school had become well-known throughout Catholic Christendom; it enjoyed renown in some other circles too, so that when the celebrations for the anniversary drew near, the attention of the secular world was engaged. There were reports in several prestigious newspapers[18] describing the three days of events, the eminent ecclesiastical personages who attended and the display of sacerdotal needlework embroidered by the nuns for the use of poor parishes in England and France.

The Abbé closes his account at this date. His book was published in 1891. Never, he thought, had the nuns been more numerous or had more pupils than during this last period. He pays tribute to the simplicity, obedience, poverty and faith that had underpinned their courage during the long life of the community.

NOTES

1. Miles Pinkney was the son of Martin Pinkney of Brandon and his wife Ann Batmanson of Broom Hall in Durham. See "Miles Pinkney (1599-1674): a Durham priest in counter-Reformation Paris", by Dominic Bellenger. *Northern Catholic History*, No.19, Spring 1984, pp.13-17.

2. "Georges Sand" *pseud.* (i.e. Amandine Lucie Aurore Dupin, afterwards Baronne Dudevant,

1804-1876). Authoress who was a pupil at the convent in 1817 and was later famed for her liaison with Chopin. Her description of the convent is included in *Histoire de ma Vie*, Paris, 1855).

3. Barbara Charlton. *The Recollections of a Northumbrian lady 1815-1866,* being the *Memoir of Barbara Charlton of Hesleyside, Northumberland;* ed. by her grandson L.E.O. Charlton (1949).

4. Cédoz, Abbé F.-M.-Th. *Un couvent de réligieuses à Paris de 1634 à 1884.* (London and Paris, 1891). The Abbé died in 1895.

5. Richard Smith, Bishop of Chalcedon, was born 1568. He was ordained in 1592, at the English College, Rome. He had a permit to establish Arras College, a community of controversialists within the University of Paris. He was consecrated Bishop in 1625. He was in England until controversy drove him to return to France in 1631, where he was warmly received and offered a home in his palace by Cardinal Richelieu, with the sinecure of the Abbey of Charroux. After Richelieu's death in 1642, he was deprived of his abbey by Cardinal Mazarin and obliged to seek refuge in the English Augustinian convent of Les Dames Anglaises where he remained until his death in 1655. He was buried in the chapel there.

6. Edward Lutton (c.1637-1713) was the son of a wealthy distiller of Essex. He was ordained at Douai in 1661 under his mother's name of 'Lutton', his real name being Elrington. He was working on the English Mission when, in 1662, he first met and helped to care for Miles Pinkney who was thought to be dying. He was later Procurator and Confessor at Douai before joining Miles in Paris in 1668 where he entered the new seminary of St Gregory. Later he succeeded to the chaplaincy of the convent.

7. 'Mr Lawson Green' (1677-1741) was similarly a priest from Douai where he too was sometime Procurator. Nothing of his background is known, according to Cédoz, but his real name was Lawrence Ward. A short account of him by M. Plumerden describes him as "of a peaceful and gentle character". He was chaplain for 30 years in the last of which he was painfully ill with dropsy. He died in 1741 in his 66th year and the 37th of his priesthood.

8. John Paul Wilkinson was also from Douai and is not listed in Gillow. He took the office of chaplain one month after Mr Green's death and died in 1771.

9. William Hurst (c.1734-1793) was the brother of John Hurst (priest and schoolmaster), from Broughton-in-the-Fylde, Lancashire. Both received their early education at Dame Alice's celebrated school at Fernyhalgh, Broughton. William took the oath at Douai in 1756 and was ordained there. When St. Omer was made over to the secular clergy he was sent there to teach humanities but in 1771 he came to Paris to be Confessor to the Augustinian nuns in the Rue Fossés. He is described as "a plainspoken upright man, held in great esteem who might have lived for many years but for the horrors he experienced during the Revolution. Oppressed at the sight of so many enormous crimes already committed and others that seemed to impend, he sank under a stroke of apoplexy in November 1793". He may have been a descendant of Richard Hurst, martyr. The nuns at the convent were obliged to bury their chaplain with their own hands.

10. Sir William Stafford (d.1734). Was he a descendant or relation of Viscount William Howard Stafford, martyr, who was tried, along with other lords in 1680, accused of conspiracy in the bogus Titus Oates 'popish plot', instigated by the Earl of Shaftesbury?

Stafford was the first to be tried and was condemned to be hung, drawn and quartered. James II, who did not believe in his guilt, could do no more to help him than commute his sentence to beheading. (Gillow). His attainder was not reversed until 1824.

11. James Radcliffe, Earl of Derwentwater, was the owner of vast estates in Northumberland and elsewhere and was a blood relation of the Stuarts. He spent his early years at the Stuart court in exile and through this connection he knew the convent well. He bequeathed his heart by testament into their keeping in 1716 before he was executed for his part in the Jacobite Rising of 1715.
12. Teynham is the title of the Roper family. Its lineage is from William Roper (son-in-law) and Meg Roper, his wife, daughter of Sir Thomas More; the latter was buried at St Dunstan's in Canterbury, with her father's head (which she had retrieved after his execution) in her arms, in 1564.
13. 'Sans-culottes'. (Fr., 'without knee-breeches'). This was a name given during the Revolution to the extremists of the working classes, or 'red republicans'.
14. A community of Benedictine nuns whose house was in Rue de Champs de l'Alouette; Nuns of the Immaculate Conception, from the Rue de Charenton, known as 'The Blue Nuns' from the colour of their habits; Seven French Carmelites also joined them.
15. Baron Georges Haussmann (1809-1891) was the designer of the reorganisation of the streets of Paris which began in 1858. He was a financier and town-planner under Napoleon III. He began his task by widening streets, laying out boulevards and parks, building bridges, etc. He was made Baron and Senator but the heavy tax burden laid upon the citizens led to his dismissal in 1870.
16. Lord Jerningham was related by marriage to the Teynhams and to the Staffords, while Sir George Throckmorton came of an old family whose members were much involved in events of English history during the 16th and 17th centuries.
17. The description of the community of the Dames Anglaises given in this official document arises from a confusion with the 'Blue Nuns' (i.e. nuns of the Immaculate Conception) who were billeted at the convent during the Revolution.
18. Newspapers which noted the 250th anniversary of the foundation of the convent were: *La Semaine Réligieuse, Le Matin, Le Figaro, The Morning News* (printed at Paris), *The Daily Chronicle, The Times, The Standard, Catholic Times* and *The Globe.*

Stop Press! St. Augustine's Priory School, Ealing, the descendant of the Paris convent, was among the top twenty in the league tables of independent schools in *The Times,* 23 January 2003.

A CATHOLIC 'CLANGER' AND A PROTESTANT EXPLOSION: THE ANTI-CATHOLIC AGITATION AT THE TIME OF THE 1850 RESTORATION OF THE ENGLISH ROMAN CATHOLIC HIERARCHY

Robert A. Murphy

In early November, 1850, Henry Hopwood, the Rector of Bothal with Sheepwash and Hebron, near Morpeth in Northumberland, and upward of sixty of the householder parishioners signed their names to an address to the Lord Bishop of Durham, Edward Maltby,[1] in which they protested against the Papal Bull[2] whereby the Pope reorganized the ecclesiastical administration of the Catholic community in England and Wales. 'We regard this Bull,' they wrote, 'as an act of aggression upon the rights of the reformed Church of England; we reject it as null and void; and we are prepared to resist it to the utmost of our power.'[3]

A veritable deluge of similar addresses – many of them much more heated and abusive in tone – were drafted by Anglican vestries and sent to the local Church of England archbishops and bishops throughout the country. The Anglican establishment had clearly been thoroughly rattled by the Holy See's Brief, seeing it as an assault upon the English Church's prerogatives.

In Hexham, a meeting of clergy and laity was convened to deplore the use by the local Roman Catholic bishop of the town's name for the new unwanted diocese. The title of Bishop of Hexham had not been used since 821 A.D. but the local Anglicans saw the Catholic move as an invasion of their sacred space.[4]

Amid the general, public condemnation of the restoration of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, some Protestant communities were clearly slow to express their enthusiasm for the 'No Popery' campaign. Thus, the *Newcastle Journal* for Saturday, 16 November, 1850, printed a letter from a disgruntled reader who deplored the passivity of the city's Protestant clergy and laity in drafting an address on the issue:

> What are the clergy and people of our town doing in the matter of Papal encroachments? Why are there no addresses being got up, both to the Queen and our worthy Diocesan [bishop]? Let us follow the example of so many parts of the country, and especially of London, where clergy (with some important exceptions[5]) and laity, have arisen to a man and nobly raised their voices

against the arrogant assumption of the man of sin [i.e. the Pope] ... let us, of Newcastle ... lend our voices to that general demonstration of feeling which shows that we are determined to preserve intact our glorious constitution from the attacks of Popery without and the treachery of pseudo-sons within, which is, under God, the safeguard, glory and honour of our land – Our National Protestant Church.

What had caused this nation-wide outcry over the restoration of a hierarchy which was solely of concern to the Roman Catholic clergy and laity of England and Wales?

The blame was laid squarely at the door of Lord John Russell (the then Prime Minister) whose letter to the Bishop of Durham printed in *The Times* of 4 November, 1850, had erroneously and mischievously ascribed to the Papal Brief a political claim to temporal power which it did not have. In the letter, which Lord John Russell wrote to Dr Edward Maltby, he expressed his feeling of indignation that he who had vigorously and consistently supported Roman Catholic claims to civil rights had been kept in the dark about the Holy See's intentions. (This was not in fact true!). He continues:

> There is an assumption of power in all the documents which have come from Rome; a pretension of supremacy over the realm of England, and a claim to sole and undivided sway which is inconsistent with the Queen's supremacy, with the rights of our bishop and clergy, and with the spiritual independence of the nation, as asserted even in Roman Catholic times ...
>
> ... No foreign prince or potentate will be at liberty to fasten his fetters upon a nation which has so long and so nobly vindicated its right to freedom of opinion, civil, political and religious.

He then attacked Tractarian[6] clergy for breaking their oath of acceptance of the 39 Articles and for introducing Papal practices ('mummeries of superstition'[7]) into the Reformed liturgy. They were doing Rome's work and were 'unworthy sons of the Church of England'. The views expressed in Lord John's letter (which his Cabinet colleagues had not seen[8]) caused an outburst of 'No Popery' among the vast majority of Protestants but gave great offence to the Catholics in England and Ireland who saw their beliefs treated as superstition. How, in fact, are we to explain the Prime Minister's wildly aberrant reading of the 1850 Apostolic Brief?

The Brief announcing the Holy See's intention to endow England and Wales with a Roman Catholic hierarchy was issued by Pope Pius IX on 29 September 1850. Its purpose was to reorganize and up-date the ecclesiastical administration of the Catholic community in England and Wales

whose structures were proving inadequate to the demands made upon it by the rapid changes in the Catholic community and in society in general taking place in England in the early 19th century. The Brief's focus was principally upon the spiritual well-being of the small, though rapidly growing, flock of Roman Catholics. These included the traditional old Catholics and their dependants whose ancestors had clung to the faith throughout penal times, the clergy who were toiling heroically to provide for the pastoral needs of their flocks, recent converts predominantly from the Anglican Oxford Movement, and a majority of Irish immigrants driven by poverty to seek work in England.

The new ecclesiastical arrangements worked out between a Vatican commission and a small group headed by Dr Ullathorne, the spokesmen of the English & Welsh Vicars-Apostolic, represented an historic change of status for the body of English and Welsh Roman Catholics. No longer was the Church to be treated as a body with missionary status whose initiatives, activities and deliberations were tightly regulated by *Propaganda Fide* in Rome. Though still under the latter's supervision, it was to be awarded the same status as most other hierarchies throughout the world. This implied a new freedom of action to minister to the spiritual needs of Roman Catholics and represent them in official dealings at local level with the British Government.

The changes introduced concerned only Roman Catholics. It involved the replacement of the eight Apostolic Vicariates by an archdiocese of Westminster[9] and twelve dioceses. There would thus be an archbishop and twelve bishops to administer the entire area of England and Wales. Ireland was not affected since it had retained its historic episcopate throughout penal times and the traditional diocesan titles were acknowledged by the British Government when the Act of Union was signed in 1800.

The missionary status which involved quite a complex set of ecclesiastical arrangements had been in operation since 1753, as a result of the Constitution *Apostolicum Ministerium* of Benedict XIV (1675-1758), Pope from 1740-1758. It had been devised for a Church under persecution and implied the existence on the statute books of England of penal laws whereby Catholics were denied access to public life, to membership of the House of Commons and the House of Lords, to the liberal professions, to education whether at school abroad or at the universities at home, and the right to their own forms of worship in churches built and served by priests

from their own community. The Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 and previous Relief Acts of 1778 and 1791 by granting all the above, though with certain safeguards, had rendered the 1753 Constitution obsolete.

To the astonishment and horror of the Roman Catholic parties to the negotiations leading up to the restoration, who had understood that the British government was in tacit agreement with the measures proposed by the Holy See, the new ecclesiastical arrangements were met with outrage by *The Times* and much of the English press which chose to see the move as an act of papal aggression against the Crown and the Church of England.

During an unofficial visit to Rome in 1847 as an unaccredited envoy of the British Government, Lord Minto, who was father-in-law to Lord John Russell, the British Prime Minister, had been granted an audience with Pius IX and been informed of the negotiations taking place and even issued with a provisional memorandum on the matter. Three years later, when the storm over the restoration of the hierarchy burst upon the British public, Lord Minto denied any knowledge of the memorandum[10] though he had not raised any objection to the measures adumbrated by the Holy See.

The agitation against Catholics was skilfully orchestrated by almost the whole bench of Anglican bishops and clergy who initiated a 'No Popery' campaign which swept the country and called for addresses from Anglican vestries to protest against the subversion of the rights of the Queen and the Church of England. By 31 December, 1850, the Crown had received 6,700 addresses protesting against Rome's interference in the affairs of the realm. This implies almost as many anti-Catholic meetings, which clearly required an enormous, concerted effort on the part of the organizers.

The ultra-Tory *Quarterly Review* was quick to remind its readers of the implacable hostility it had shown to the 1829 Catholic Emancipation campaign and to drive home the lesson that Rome, as ever, was not to be trusted and that the Papal leopard could not and would not change its spots. Staunch Evangelical Anglicans and Protestant dissenters of all hues –Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists along with Unitarians–whipped themselves into a frenzy of anti-Catholic agitation and there were even calls by the more virulent Protestants for the withdrawal of all the civil rights granted to Roman Catholics over the previous 70 years.

Dispassionate political observers of the period such as the Anglican, Charles Greville,[11] were in no doubt that the frenzied reactions of the mass

of Protestants to the Pope's Apostolic Brief were totally disproportionate and unjustified by any issues arising from it. He recognized that the Pope and the new Archbishop had been misguided in adopting the triumphalist tone in which they had signalled the restoration of the English Catholic hierarchy. However, he understood that the changes to be implemented did not actually infringe any existing law in the statute book. He saw that the high-flown rhetoric of the Papal Brief and of Dr Wiseman's pastoral letter was substantially no different from any other pronouncements which emanated from the Holy See in its dealings with other governments.

The new Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster loved the pompous cadences of the Holy See's official declarations and in his Pastoral Letter of 7 October, 1850: *From Without the Flaminian Gate,*[12] the expression of his feelings of pride and exultation was to many English Catholic, as to Protestant, ears arrogant, unctuous and provocative:

> Catholic England has been restored to its orbit in the ecclesiastical firmament from which its light had long vanished and begins anew its course of regularly adjusted action round the centre of unity, the source of jurisdiction, of light, of vigour...

The Elizabethan Reformation settlement was described as the 'departure of England's glory'. Referring to his appointment as Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and the duties pertaining thereto, he wrote:

> Till such time as the Holy See shall think fit otherwise to provide, we govern and shall continue to govern the counties of Middlesex, Hertford and Essex as ordinary thereof, and those of Surrey, Kent, Berkshire and Hampshire with the islands annexed, as administrator with ordinary jurisdiction.

On hearing of the Cardinal's claim, the Queen is said to have asked: 'Am I the Queen of England or not?' She was far from being amused. At this stage, to the Queen and Prince Albert, Lord John Russell played down the seriousness of the Pope's Brief.

It is easy to see how *The Times* was able to exploit the false notion that temporal not spiritual control was behind the Pope's move. The reviewer went on:

> If the appointment be not intended as a clumsy joke, we confess that we can only regard it as one of the grossest acts of folly and impertinence which the Court of Rome ventured to commit since the Crown and people of England threw off its yoke... The Pope and his advisors have mistaken our complete tolerance for indifference to their designs; they have mistaken the renovated

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zeal of the church in this country for a return towards Roman bondage.

Before *The Times*' incendiary article appeared, other English journals had commented on the restoration of the Catholic hierarchy in a purely factual way as merely an interesting piece of foreign news. They failed to see any intended insult or extravagant claim. Nevertheless, when the anti-Catholic campaign began in earnest, in the main they joined in the anti-Catholic hullabaloo. Such agitation had its inevitable results. In various parts of the country, Catholic churches were attacked, windows broken and clergy abused and spat upon, though there was not the widespread looting which was a feature of the Gordon riots of 1780. Large-scale meetings of Protestant bodies were called to express indignation at the so-called papal aggression and solidarity with the insulted monarch.

At Birkenhead, a crowd of irate Irish labourers some 3000 strong, disrupted an anti-Catholic meeting called by a Protestant Association. Catholic clergy were seen among the Irish protesters collecting shillelaghs, cudgels and clubs from the more bellicose demonstrators before ushering them into the hall where the meeting was to take place. When the meeting broke up, the 250 policemen who had been brought in to deal with the ensuing affray had to call for assistance from 700 special constables and

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Opposite:

LORD JACK THE GIANT KILLER

Punch's 1851 satirical representation of the conflict between the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell, and the newly appointed Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, Dr Nicholas Wiseman, over the Restoration of the English Roman Catholic hierarchy which was announced by Pius IX in an Apostolic Brief of 29 September, 1850.

The P.M. is in knight's armour; he is holding the shield of Protestantism and the sword of his Parliamentary Act (The Ecclesiastical Titles Act). The Cardinal is here depicted as a Roman gladiator wearing his Cardinal's hat and ready to use his crozier as a weapon. The gross features of the Archbishop and the scantiness of his gladiatorial apparel contrast unfavourably with the swaggering posture and the splendid knightly accoutrements of the diminutive Lord John Russell who is supported by John Bull and applauded by Punch.

two companies of the 52nd Regiment.

In Newcastle, various meetings were held but the proceedings were heated yet orderly and Catholics were allowed to state their minority views without any serious recriminations.

On Bonfire Night and on subsequent days, anti-Catholic parades in London and other cities featured floats with gigantic and crude effigies of Guy Fawkes, Pius IX, Cardinal Wiseman, cunning Jesuits and lascivious monks and friars. Insults were heaped upon the Catholic Church and on Pope Pius IX who, just 3 years before, had been hailed by *The Times* as an enlightened and reforming statesman.

Cardinal Wiseman who, in his negotiations with politicians and his popular lectures to the British intelligentsia, had sought to avoid polemics and had won respect by his moderate, scholarly and respectful presentation of the Catholic case and his attention to Protestant views, was suddenly transformed into a conniving, Jesuitical schemer. He was accused of seeking to undermine the Anglican Church by his support for the Puseyite or Tractarian wing now represented as disloyal to the Protestant cause and colluding with the Papists in an attempt to undermine the authority of the Church of England 'as by law established'.

Lord John Russell, the Prime Minister, persuaded a reluctant cabinet that the agitation would only be calmed by the introduction of a Bill: *The Ecclesiastical Titles Act* which would deny Roman Catholic bishops the right to use the names of any Anglican dioceses and to receive any bequests left under the usurped titles under pain of a £100 fine for each act of non-compliance. He claimed that the Parliamentary process was the best means of releasing the pressure that had built up against the Roman Catholic community and that the measure would act as a kind of release valve thereby avoiding the likelihood of a repeat of the mob violence such as had marked the six-day long Gordon Riots of 1780.

It was a limp argument which did not convince his colleagues who blamed him for creating the commotion in the first place by his letter to the Bishop of Durham which had accused the Pope of seeking to subvert the authority of the Queen, the British Parliament and the Church of England. The letter won the approval of the majority of the population and tapped an anti-Catholic vein which united Protestant opinion. This was an egregious blunder on the Prime Minister's part which was to lead to the demise of his ministry in that it lost him the support of the Irish MPs whose

religious beliefs he had ridiculed and on whose votes his government depended.

In point of fact, the Roman Catholic hierarchy ignored the Act and no prosecutions were ever brought. The Act turned out to be a dead letter and was repealed by Gladstone in 1871 during Lord John Russell's life-time. The latter had the good grace to admit it was a 'blunder'. It has been described by the eminent Anglican historian, Owen Chadwick, as 'the most foolish act of his political career'. It was, in fact, totally out of character, quite inexplicable in an MP such as Lord John whose record of support of civil rights for Catholics was unimpeachable and who, at an early date in his political career, had recognized the deplorable past behaviour of English governments towards Irish Catholics. He was a fervent Protestant who saw the Church of England as the subservient, moral arm of the government. Catholic beliefs he could not bear, he had a horror of dogmatic religion of any kind, but that did not prevent him from seeking justice for subjects who in his view had been wronged.

The thesis which I wish to put forward in the present paper is that the 1850–51 anti-Catholic agitation was due as much to problems besetting the Church of England as to those the Roman Catholic community was called upon to face. The internal stresses the former had to endure were a consequence of the ambiguous nature of the Elizabethan Church settlement. The Prayer Book and the 39 Articles had tried to take in as wide a range of religious views as was compatible with the reformed character of the new creed. It included certain views which could be interpreted in a Catholic sense though the Protestant colouring of the texts was undeniable. The Anglican claim was that their purpose was comprehensiveness.

The dominant position of the Church of England in the life of the nation was the source of hostility between Anglicans and Dissenters, the latter consisting of the descendants of Protestant sects which, since Puritan times, had refused to acknowledge the spiritual authority of the National Church. The questions which the Dissenters and Roman Catholics levelled at the English government and Church were as follows:

1. How could there be equality before the law in view of the alliance between Church and State when the Anglican Church alone was taken to be the latter's religious mouthpiece?
2. What sort of justice was it when non-Anglican Christians were unable to marry, christen their children or bury their dead from their

own places of worship?

3. Why should they pay tithes to maintain a state church some of whose key doctrines and liturgy they repudiated? Why should their young men be asked to take unacceptable oaths if they wished to go to university?

An increasingly militant, wealthy and influential body of middle-class industrialists and merchants who were Dissenters and were active in local government challenged the aristocratic insistence on the Church of England's right to be the sole voice of the British religious conscience. The period between 1830 and 1833 was marked not just by political agitation over the scope of electoral reform but also by radical challenges to the position of the Anglican Church in the light of the attempts by the bench of Bishops of the House of Lords to block the passage of the Reform Bill. It was a low water-mark in the history of the Church of England and there were many loyal Anglicans like Thomas Arnold, the headmaster of Rugby, who were dubious about its survival. There were denunciations at public meetings of the wealth of the Anglican bishops and comparisons were made with the simplicity of the Apostles in the early church. Their right to interfere in political issues was denied and they were accused of owing their incomes to an in-built corruption which had to be eradicated.

John Wade in his *Extraordinary Black Book* fulminated not only against the Churches of England and Ireland but against the Tory Party as a whole. They were seen as 'fountains of corruption and graft'. Extremist voices called for the abolition of the Church of England's established status by act of Parliament and the confiscation of its property. Particular abuses requiring reform were those relating to church endowments, pluralities, non-residence of clergy, political parsons and bishops' stipends. The system of appointing bishops was seen as an aristocratic 'jobs for the boys' arrangement. Always in the background lurked the fear, during the 1832 electoral campaign, that a government might be elected which would bring down the monarchy, the aristocratic order and the established Church, as had occurred in France in the 1789 revolution.

To complicate matters even further, the period of 1830 to 1845 saw the emergence of a new, dynamic body of Anglican clerics, known as the Oxford Movement, grouped around Newman, Pusey, Keble, Manning and Hook. They sought to recover for the Church of England Catholic practices and devotions which had fallen out of use. Their scholarly forays into early

church history and theology revealed 'higher patterns of evangelical sanctity' than could be discerned in the Churches that had emerged from the 16th century Reformation. Their earnest piety and attention to their parishioners set standards which most broad churchmen had signally failed to meet.

The *Tracts for The Times*[13] was the official organ of the group of scholars intent on retaining or reviving the Catholic elements in the Prayer Book and the 39 Articles. In Tract XC, which caused a storm of protest among liberal Anglicans, Newman argued that the Articles were susceptible of a Catholic interpretation but this claim was repudiated by the Hebdomadal Board of Oxford University and bishops were advised to suppress the Tracts. The supporters of the Tracts (Tractarians or Puseyites, later Anglo-Catholics) were vilified by liberal Anglican divines who upheld the comprehensive nature of the Articles so as to include a wide range of Protestant scriptural interpretations.

An acrimonious dispute erupted in February 1836 when the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, offered Dr Hampden, a fellow Whig, a vacant professorship at Oxford. A group of High-Church and Evangelical clergymen which included Newman, Keble, Pusey, Golightly and others were convinced that Hampden held heretical views and was therefore unfit to teach Oxford undergraduates. His defenders maintained his orthodoxy and accused the High-Church leaders of a witch-hunt and of being secret Papists. Accusations of popery and bigotry were levelled against Newman and Pusey for the 'romanizing tendencies' of their writings. *The Times* in its characteristic, outrageous manner, alleged that Jesuits were being harboured in Oxford by Anglican clerics.

In 1840 Melbourne refused Hampden a bishopric, yet in 1846 Lord John Russell, ever ready to trail his coat, appointed Hampden to the see of Hereford. A storm of indignation and protest ensued from High-Churchmen. The constant trading of accusations and insults between the high- and low-church parties created bad blood and resulted in the polarization of religious opinions. A renewed interest by the Puseyites in ritual and liturgical practices and vestments, which had been a feature of the early mediaeval Church and which the Roman Catholic Church had retained, upset many traditionalist Anglicans who resented any changes to the sober Anglican rubrics of the time. Surplices and candle-sticks, for example, were unknown in most Anglican churches of the time; they frequently became

the subject of dispute between members of the same congregation.

The Church of England's relationship with the Crown and State was put under the microscope while its internal squabbles, its abuses and scandals were avidly seized upon by a press ever on the lookout for sensational revelations. It had to resist constant calls for root and branch reform of its structures at a time when its broad and High-Church wings were locked in a dispute over the soul of Anglicanism, over what dose of Anglo-Catholicism, if any, was palatable in a Church which gloried in its Protestant and reformed character.

A further incident which set the liberal and High-Church wings of the Church of England on a collision course occurred in 1847 when the Rev. G.C. Gorham was presented by the Lord Chancellor to the vicarage of Brampford Speke in the diocese of Exeter. The diocesan bishop, Henry Phillpotts, had grave doubts about the orthodoxy of the clergyman's beliefs. He examined him on them and found that his view on baptismal regeneration were unsound. He therefore refused to institute him to the living.

A complicated lawsuit followed and Gorham appealed to the Judicial Committee of Privy Council which declared his views were not contrary to the doctrine of the Church of England. The decision led to a storm of protest from High-Churchmen who argued that the State could not determine what constituted true Christian belief. Baptism was such a key doctrine that it was realized that the Erastian nature of the Anglican church had been clearly demonstrated. Many High-Church clergy and laity seceded to Rome including H.E. Manning and R.I. Wilberforce. As a result of the legal wrangling involved in this case, Lord John Russell found reinforcement for his view that Tractarian clergy were traitors to the Protestant cause and agents of the Church of Rome. He echoed Thomas Arnold's dictum: 'I'd rather have a Roman Catholic foe than a Tractarian spy.'

On the other hand, the Roman Catholic community, at the time of the *Catholic Emancipation Act*, was just emerging, as it were, from the catacombs, yet was increasing perceptibly and steadily especially in the new industrial cities and towns. It lacked the human and material resources that were needed to cope fully with its spiritual mission. Its bishops and lay notables were disunited in their views of how best to fulfil that mission in a society that was racing 'hell for leather' towards industrialization.

New structures for the ordering of its religious life were obviously

called for but what were they to be? A furious, public and often acrimonious dispute was pursued in the few Catholic reviews that existed and a vociferous lay lobby was not slow in letting Rome know of the inadequacy of bishops and clergy. The Roman body *Propaganda Fide* whose task it was to oversee the work of the English Mission (or Apostolic Vicariates) was at times in despair at the conflicting views and delations it regularly received from English sources, both clerical and lay, and thought the English Catholics an exceptionally disputatious bunch.

The Catholic population in England of about 80,000 in the year 1800 had become by the time of the 1851 religious census 700,000 souls, most of whom were Irish immigrants, for the most part poverty-stricken and uneducated. Nevertheless, they were to be the seed-bed of a flourishing religious community that would in the 20th century enrich the English religious and social scene with its own special earnest and devout character.

In order to understand how Catholics became in 1850–1851 the target of the hatred, resentment and suspicion of the majority of the British population, one needs to bear in mind that the country was in the throes of an on-going revolution in the political, economic, religious and social fields and the array of problems that early 19th century governments had to face was daunting even to the many Victorian men of good will working on behalf of their fellow-countrymen.

The Victorian age has been described by the historian G. Kitson-Clark as one in which religion 'pervaded all society, challenged men and women of every level of society or of education and became fused with the objectives of most political parties and the hopes of every class.'[14] On Sundays (the Sabbath), church-going was high, worshippers poured into churches and chapels, all forms of entertainment were banned even though it was the only day in the week when the downtrodden working classes were not at work. How profound and widespread the religious instruction imparted by the various Christian bodies was is difficult to say but the Dissenters brought to their Bible-based search for truth a commitment, conviction and passion which won it many adherents in the course of the 19th century.

Anyone wishing to ascertain the status of Roman Catholics in Victorian Britain has to realize that they were execrated as a corrupt and benighted body by the majority of the Protestant population whose knowledge of their beliefs and practices was based upon prejudiced and distorted

hearsay. In her study, *Victorian People,* Gillian Avery writes of the horror which Catholicism inspired in Victorian Evangelicals. They saw in it all that was evil, blasphemous and corrupt, they accused it of attempts to ensnare innocent Protestants by the foulest of means. Mrs Sherwood in *The Nun* (1833) recounted fearful practices that went on in a convent where nuns were entombed in dungeons for years on end for holding wrongful opinions. The writer Edmund Gosse speaks of the unreasoning horror instilled into Protestant children of Rome and of Roman Catholics:

> As a child, whatever I might question, I never doubted the turpitude of Rome. I do not think that I had formed any idea whatever of the character or pretensions or practices of the Catholic Church or indeed of what it consisted, or its nature but I regarded it with a vague terror as a wild beast, the only good point about it being that it was very old and was soon to die.

In 1833, after a visit to Rome where he called on Mgr Nicholas Wiseman, the young rector of the English College, John Henry Newman's comment on the Roman Catholic system was: 'Dead flies cause the precious ointment to stink.' Twelve years later he was to realize that he had made too much of the 'dead flies' and had seriously underestimated the abundance of 'precious ointment' to be found in Catholicism. In his *Apologia pro Vita Sua,* he spoke movingly of the deep waves of spiritual consolation he experienced on his conversion to Rome. Even great writers such as Wordsworth[15] and Charlotte Bronte[16] whose views one might have expected to be more liberal, were convinced anti-Catholics unreasoning in their determination to keep Catholics out of public life.

In 1847, Wiseman who, along with Bishop Sharples[17], was sent to Rome by the English Vicars-general to begin negotiations for the restoration of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, was sent back to England on a mission from the newly-elected Pope, Pius IX, who was anxious to call on the aid and experience of British Ministers to help bring about a liberal policy that would calm the agitation in the Papal States and support his struggle against Austria.

The Pope had raised the hopes of Italian liberals when he had granted an amnesty to political prisoners gaoled during the reign of his predecessor, Gregory XVI. The Austrian foreign minister, Metternich, was determined that liberal ideas should not be encouraged and that thoughts of Italian unity were not to be entertained.[18] Pressure was being exerted upon the Pope by the Austrian government to clamp down on civil unrest in the

Papal domains and it was hoped that British counter measures might have the effect of restraining Austria's tight grip on the northern Italian states.

Relations between the Holy See and the British Government improved dramatically and Lord Minto was sent out to Italy ostensibly on a tour of the various Italian courts but his main mission was to act as a temporary, unofficial envoy to the Holy See.[19] On his return to England, a Bill for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the British Government and the Papal States was drafted and, despite the deep misgivings of the ultra-Tory elements in Parliament, it was passed though with an amendment deeply offensive to the Holy See whereby Roman Catholic clerics would be ineligible as ambassadors. However, the Bill was not implemented because the signatures of the Papal representatives could not be had, as a Republican rising in Rome in 1848 led to the seizure of the city and the flight of the Pope to Gaeta in the Kingdom of Naples. (Incidentally, the British Government offered Pius IX safe passage on a British ship to Malta, which would suggest that at this stage relations were still on an even course.)

However, 1848 had witnessed other revolutions in Europe, in France, Germany and some of the Italian states. The British Government was alarmed at developments in France (which always needed to be watched) where the interim Republican government under Lamartine[20] was struggling to maintain order. News that an Irish rebel delegation had approached the new French government with a request for arms to undertake an uprising unnerved the British government though the French sensibly refused to accede to the request.

When the Pope was restored to power in April 1850 it was French bayonets which enabled Pius IX to pick up once more the reins of government. The British Government was deeply suspicious of French motives and saw the Pope's actions as duplicitous, even though British forces were unable to intervene militarily on his behalf.

In August, 1850, Dr Wiseman was summoned to Rome to be made a cardinal and the intention of the Holy See was to keep him in Rome to oversee the workings of the future diocesan bishops. In taking his leave of the British ministers with whom he had been in negotiations over the restoration and diverse foreign affairs affecting the two parties, Wiseman informed them that he was not likely to return to England as he had heard he was to be permanently resident in Rome. In point of fact, Dr Wiseman

was sent back to England upon the advice of Mgr George Talbot and at the request of a majority of the Vicars-Apostolic.

Lord John Russell must have been extremely suspicious over Rome's sudden change in policy over Dr Wiseman's role and his Protestant suspicion of the Catholic Church's and the Pope's motives must have overcome his political instincts. The Durham letter was the result of frustration over the failure of his genuine attempts to better the condition of Catholics in both England and Ireland. He felt that all his efforts had been met with base ingratitude. The result was disastrous for relations between Roman Catholics and the general public of this country and Ireland.

Curiously, the anti-papist campaign had the unexpected and ultimately salutary effect of reducing animosity between the opposing Catholic groups and of closing the gap between their various standpoints even if it involved a sustained period of backs-to-the-wall resistance and a restricted role for Roman Catholics in the life of the nation. For decades ahead, Catholics were to feel under siege, being considered – in Gladstone's view – as citizens owning a dual allegiance but their sense of unity was thereby intensified.

However, the 1850-51 experience taught the Catholic leaders that their best-laid plans, however well-intentioned, were not necessarily consonant with the workings of Providence which has its own agenda and its own seasons. After all the turmoil the English Roman Catholic Church experienced in 1850-51, one would have thought that it would have emerged from the crisis somewhat crestfallen and chastened by the sustained and bitter 'No Popery' campaign it had had to endure yet the 1852 inaugural meeting of the English and Welsh hierarchy was an undoubted triumph, bringing about a sense of unity of purpose and a girding of the loins for the task ahead. It proved to be a decisive moment in the history of the Church in this country when the Catholic community got a brief glimpse of the spiritual power it was later to become in the life of the nation.

NOTES

1 Edward Maltby (1770-1859) was a Whig party supporter and advocate of Catholic Emancipation who was appointed Bishop of Chichester in 1831 and translated to Durham in 1836 just after the Palatinate jurisdiction was separated from the episcopal and vested in the Crown. He owed his elevation to the bench of bishops to his support for the Reform Bill at a time when most bishops were Tory. He was throughout his life a friend of Lord John Russell.

2 The document issued by Pope Pius IX was not in fact a Bull as the English press wrongly stated but a Brief, the former term being reserved for papal edicts of a more solemn nature.

3 *Newcastle Journal*, Saturday, 16 November, 1850, p.8.

4 *Newcastle Courant*, 22 November, 1850, p.3.

5 A reference to certain Tractarian parishes in the capital such as those at Pimlico, Mile End and Clapham whose Romanizing liturgical innovations caused a split in the congregations, resulting in violence and the regular intervention of the police.

6 Also referred to as 'Puseyites' after Dr Pusey, one of the original leaders of the Oxford Movement, who remained in the Church of England.

7 Lord John Russell, *Letter to the Bishop of Durham* dated November 4, 1850. This phrase which was intended to summarize Roman Catholic beliefs caused outrage among both English and Irish Catholics and was deplored by his cabinet colleagues.

8 His colleagues recalled that *The Edinburgh Letter* of 22 November, 1845, in which he announced his acceptance of the necessity of repeal of the Corn Laws was also sprung upon them without any prior discussion.

9 The choice of this title for the Archdiocese raised Protestant hackles in view of the historic associations with the Abbey. Dr Lingard among others warned against its use and foresaw that it would needlessly inflame Protestant passions.

10 The Memorandum in question was not the final draft of the Apostolic Brief as issued in September, 1850 but an interim version intended to provide the noble Lord with the main outlines of the Holy See's thinking. It seems incredible that a trained diplomat such as he, did not grasp the significance of the meeting and the political implications involved.

11 *The Greville Memoirs,* Vol. V, p. 257.

12 It was known as the *Porta del Popolo* but, in using this sonorous title, Dr Wiseman wished to stress the link which was being recreated with the Rome of the early Papacy. The reason why the pastoral was issued *From without the Flaminian Gate* was because only the Pope is allowed to issue solemn documents within the City.

13 Initially, these were short articles by members of the Oxford Movement which dealt with doctrinal and liturgical issues which distinguished Anglican beliefs from those of Roman Catholicism and the Dissenters. They developed into more substantial works which examined fundamental principles of Anglican belief. They were halted after Newman's *Tract XC* was condemned.

14 *The Making of Victorian England,* Methuen, 1962, p.147.

15 See: Kathleen Jones, *A Passionate Sisterhood*, Constable, London, 1997. Wordsworth objected to the idea of his daughter Dora marrying the Roman Catholic Quillinan. 'The Roman Church was at its root idolatrous and persecuting ... It could never be a temple of the true God.'

16 When George Henry Lewes, the editor of *The Leader* urged tolerance towards R.C.s on the occasion of the restoration of the R.C. hierarchy, Charlotte berated him and 'congratulated him on his likely conversion' wishing him '...much facility of speech in your first experiment in auricular confession'.

17 The Coadjutor of the Lancaster district. He was asked by the Roman authorities to pen a rebuttal of the objections which had been put forward by Cardinal Acton who had vigorously opposed any change in the ecclesiastical arrangements. When Dr Wiseman was sent to England on a mission to the Court of Saint James, the negotiations were halted and Bishop Sharples fell ill shortly afterwards and returned to England.

18 Metternich would have no truck with the concept of Italian unification. He considered Italy 'a mere geographical expression'.

19 English legislation forbade any official diplomatic relations with the Court of Rome and various subterfuges had been used over the years whenever there was a need for discussions between the governments. It is interesting to note that at the time of the Congress of Vienna negotiations, 1815, the Pope's official delegate, Consalvi, was considered as *persona grata* when he came to London. He was held in high esteem by most of the delegates and – incredibly for the times – a portrait of him hangs in Windsor Castle.

20 Alphonse-Marie-Louis de Prat de Lamartine, (1790-1869), a fine French Romantic poet and political orator. He was for a short period head of the Provisional Government during the 1848 Revolution but was replaced by the future Napoleon III.

ARE THERE ANY MORE AT HOME LIKE YOU?

Douglas W Smith

MONKS AT MONKWEARMOUTH - This was the headline that appeared in the *Sunderland Echo* in September 1912, about the opening of St Benet's Church.

'Whatever else may be said about the establishment of a Redemptorist monastery, it declared, 'there can be no doubt of the fitness of its location.' Indeed it was true, the north banks of the Wear have been linked with the name of Benedict Biscop and his community of monks for some thirteen centuries. The Protestation Returns of 1641 reveal the names of only four papists living in Monkwearmouth. By the onset of the 19th Century this area, with its shipyards, mining, glassworks and all trades connected with the river, had brought in a huge population. Inevitably, there were numbers of Catholics and previous to the erection of a bridge in 1796, they had perforce to take a ferryboat across the river to the south side in order to attend one of the small chapels that existed until St Mary's, Bridge Street, was established in 1835. St Benet's was to be the third post-Emancipation parish to be established in the town in this area where the fast growing population called out for a church in their midst.

A site behind Roker Avenue had been purchased from Sir Hedworth Williamson for £300; a school had been opened in 1865, serving also as a chapel, but by the 1880s plans were submitted by architects for a building capable of seating some 900. Messrs Dunn & Hansom of Newcastle were chosen but there can be little doubt that the Belgian priest, Fr Jules du Floer - priest there for twenty-four years - had great influence both on the design and decoration of the church, as well as establishing various church organisations. By the time of his retirement in 1897 he was said to have known every person in his parish - no mean feat with such numbers - and would stand at the shipyard gates to collect funds from Catholics and non-Catholics alike towards the building of the church.

He was to have the satisfaction of seeing his project through. On July 4th, 1889, the *Echo* described the opening ceremony in detail. A year later the mission invited the Redemptorist Order to take charge: the church, church house, school, being all in readiness for them due to the ten years of efforts by priests and people.

With interest the newspaper followed this with an insistent refrain

about religious freedom. Bishop Preston's sermon was reported at length in which he gave a history of the Order founded by St Alphonsus Liguori who designated what his followers should do in the church - not to undertake any prominent work, nor for instance, should they become university professors or teach the children of the upper classes in college - but like the parable of the Good Shepherd, go in search of lost sheep, reclaiming sinners, instruct and give Missions to the poorer classes whilst observing their common rule of life. This vocation, the *Echo* implied, could be of no threat to the Establishment. Indeed they singled out as the 'most pleasant part of His Lordship's address was that which he spoke of the freedom of religion that prevailed in England - a country where religious persecution was unknown, at any rate on the part of the Government.' Pointing out the references made by the bishop to countries in the past where religious orders had been expelled, the newspaper queried why this had happened in Catholic countries and could the reason be chiefly political? 'But England being overwhelmingly Protestant,' they assured their readers, the 'State does not fear monks and friars - the Redemptorist Fathers now settled in our midst will have the sympathy of all good Christians and of all good citizens of every class.'

Of course, the newspaper continued, the broadening of thought in this land is continuous; disregard of human reasoning about the letter of religion is rapidly giving way among the masses to free regard for the spirit thereof, and that the Bishop's reference to religious freedom is due to the 'Briton's instinctive love of fair play.'

'Whereas 'No Popery' is a cry the Briton revolts from in regard to Catholics,' pursued our erstwhile reporter, drawing a fine line of distinction between the current Victorian religious positions, 'As regards the Romanising priest of the Establishment' he regards as a treacherous servant of the state whose money he receives. No such public feeling is to be expected against the Redemptorist Order, he again assures his readers with the rather partisan position that 'for the simple reason they are powerless to harm the state.'

So Protestant Victorian England was safe. Chiefly because of this there was religious liberty, the refuge of all who failed to find freedom abroad.

Freedom to worship was one thing; freedom from financial debt quite another. St Benet's was £14,000 in the red and to counter this, an entirely novel twist was given to that well-tried Victorian method of raising church

funds - the parish bazaar.

It would be interesting to learn if Fr du Floer had any personal contact with the composer Leslie Stuart. Certainly the priest was an accomplished musician - he produced an annual concert during his twenty-four years - and left behind a solid musical tradition in the parish. As such, he could hardly have been ignorant of the enormous success of the latest musical *Florodora* which was sweeping the country and U.S.A. after its opening in London, November 1899. Its catchy tunes ensured that it was whistled and sung throughout the land, for Leslie Stuart (real name Thomas Barrett, born Southport) had produced what today would be called a 'top of the pops.'

The good Fathers persuaded the composer to visit Sunderland and under the title of his musical, to inaugurate a 'Grand Florodora Bazaar'.

It was to last four days, with 'season tickets' at two shillings and sixpence admittance to full entry or one shilling per day, and was held at the Drill Hall near Vine Place and the Green.

In November, 1903, it opened with a full orchestra of the Amalgamated Musicians Union and the regimental band of the Durham R.G.A. Volunteers from South Shields rendering extracts from 'Soldiers of the Queen', 'Little Dolly Day Dream', and, of course, 'Florodora'.

The patrons of this bazaar were the Bishop, President Roosevelt (how did they manage that?), Sir Hedworth Williamson and other figures. Prominent folk opened the bazaar each day: Sir Hubert Jerningham, ex-Governor of Mauritius and Trinidad, J.S.G. Pemberton, M.P., and, on the Thursday morning, Leslie Stuart himself.

Several columns were given over to this event by the *Sunderland Echo*. Particularly worthy of note it found were the decorations - 'more attractive than ever previously adorned a bazaar ... a large floral display only to be found in reality where flowers are grown in abundance for the making of perfume.'

Archways, bowers, masses of blossom, an entire woodland glade with 'an old windmill' in the distance, are some of the features noted. Apart from flower stalls (including a Passion Flower stall manned by the Sisters of Charity), there were others dedicated to live-stock, stereoscopic and photographic, refreshment, ice-cream, a rifle range, a quoit gallery, wheel of fortune, variety shows, child acrobats and even a post office.

Leslie Stuart arrived from London with his 17 year-old daughter

May, for the second day of opening. He explained that the idea of calling it Florodora had come from a Mr. John Lafferty and that, though he had opened many bazaars in his time, the idea of having one for religious purposes named after a theatrical work had been commented on with appreciation by the London theatre press. He evidently felt strongly about the Victorian disapproval of the stage and declared that 'any religious body that should throw off the fetters of bigotry which existed in many denominations and recognise the stage, was gratifying.' Amongst his friends, he explained, he counted many priests and amongst the theatrical profession many Catholics like himself, 'ready and willing to respond to the call in aid of charity.'

To laughter and applause, he suggested that the Fathers should organise the ladies of the parish and send them round the country to play Florodora. 'That would clear the debt!' he added. He went on to express the hope that other denominations might follow their example and recognise the theatre as had been done here ... 'a fitting recognition of a profession which has done more in aid of charity than any other'.

Before he left for London that night, Leslie Stuart was asked what two things had impressed him most. He replied - the erratic climate and the cobble-stones!

WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY, AND SATURDAY, Nov. 18th, 19th, 20th, and 21st.

FLORODORA BAZAAR.

To reduce the heavy debt on St. Benet's, Monkwearmouth, will be held in the DRILL HALL, SUNDERLAND (Entrance from View Place and The Green).

Bazaar will be opened on WEDNESDAY at 3 p.m. by Sir HUBERT E. JERNINGHAM K.C.M.G.

On THURSDAY at 2.30 p.m. by LESLIE STUART, Esq., Composer of the National Song "Soldiers of the Queen," of "Florodora," "Little Dolly Daydream," &c.

On FRIDAY at 2.30 p.m. by J. S. G. PEMBERTON, Esq., M.P.

On SATURDAY at 3 p.m. by Rev. J. O'BRIEN.

The FULL ORCHESTRA of the AMALGAMATED MUSICIANS' UNION will render selections of the greatest composers at intervals on WEDNESDAY from 3 p.m. till 5 p.m., and a small Orchestral Band chosen from the same will be in constant attendance throughout the Bazaar.

The REGIMENTAL BAND of the 3rd DURHAM R.G.A. VOLS. South Shields, will give a grand programme from 7.30 till 9.30 p.m. on WEDNESDAY.

Season Tickets, 7s 6d; Tickets, 1s (admit from opening every day); Tickets, 6d. from 6 p.m., and till, day on the Saturday.

Advert in the Sunderland Echo

An elaborate doll, dressed in Coronation robes and with several other outfits provided by the costumiers of the town, was held as a foretaste of the morrow's auction. A sad note was added by nine year-old John Callahan who was found lying unconscious near the staircase leading to the concert room. He had been sliding down the bannister and fractured his skull.

The success of the bazaar was proving to be enormous. By the end of the week it was being copied and adverts appeared in the newspaper for 'Corder's Christmas Bazaar & Paris Toy Fair'; 'Liverpool House -The Great Sale', etc.

By the final day, the tickets had been reduced to "Sixpence all day" and the crowds responded. At last, the final total was announced that after expenses, the sum of £1,032 had been reached. Both Catholics and non-Catholics alike were thanked for their material help and for spending money.

The elaborate doll was won by a Mrs. Atkinson of Chilton Street, Southwick. Does it still exist I wonder?

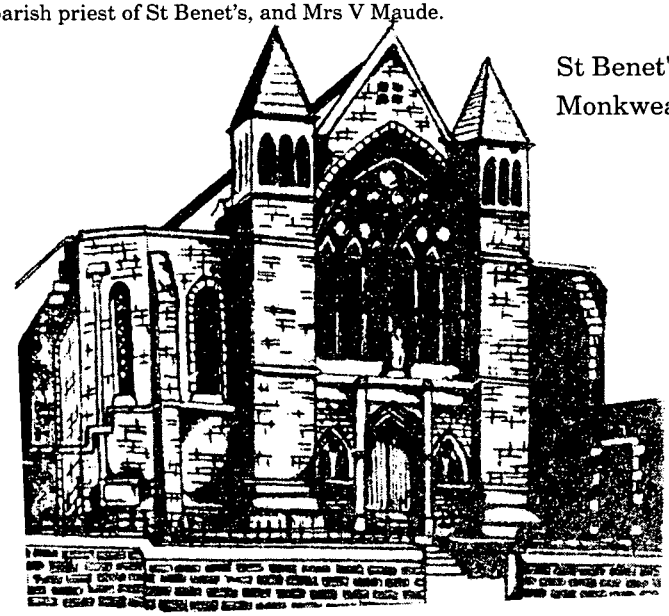
So ended this extraordinary extravaganza. Leslie Stuart never duplicated his success of *Florodora* despite attempting half-a-dozen more musicals. But both St Benet's as well as the 'pop' song from this - 'Tell me Pretty Maiden ...' this unlikely coupling - have endured to this day.

SOURCES

Sunderland Echo: 20 Sept 1902; 18 Nov, 1903; May 30,1980.

M. Morris & L. Gooch: *Down Your Aisles (Northern Cross, 2000).*

Information from parish archives by kind help of Fr Charles Corrigan, C.Ss.R., rector and parish priest of St Benet's, and Mrs V Maude.



St Benet's
Monkwearmouth

FROM ALTAR BOY TO BISHOP, 1927 - 2002

The Rt. Rev. Hugh Lindsay

Whenever asked where I was before coming to Newcastle as bishop, I delight in saying my mother was at Sunday Benediction in St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle, when I started to kick my way into life. My roots are in the Catholic Church and Newcastle. I can remember our parish move to the new Holy Name church before I was three. I had two parish primary schools St Charles's, Gosforth, a new school with pupils from varying backgrounds; then to St Andrew's, Manors, built in 1870, kept going by 120 Nazareth House girls, a few parishioners and outsiders like me.

The Rt. Rev. Hugh Lindsay

I always wanted to be a priest, never wavered, and became an altar server early on. Father Johnson, a wise parish priest, disappointed me in 1938 by insisting that I go to St Cuthbert's Grammar School rather than Ushaw. It resulted in two unusual formative experiences. I was evacuated to Cockermouth in 1939 with the school for two years in the country with a good non-Catholic and nonchurchgoing family who encouraged me to become a priest. Not being at Ushaw when war began meant that I was in the RAF from September 1945 until early 1948. After 'square-bashing' and a three-week crash course in basic RAF equipment accounting, I was posted to India - and sent by air - for the historical years 1946 and 1947.

Thence back to Ushaw for a sound, solid six-year course leading to priesthood, with no newspapers, radio or TV or outside interests to distract us. The only drawback was that pastoral experience began after ordination. I only wanted to be a priest working full-time in a parish. I was sent

to live and work in a parish, giving my prime time to Bishop's House, and in 1959 to work full-time at Bishop's House, with the chaplaincy to Sisters and boys at St Vincent's Home.

When I was with Bishop Cunningham, the diocese had no staff. When he was ill and, in 1962-1965, away at the II Vatican Council for months on end, I often found myself helping the Vicar General, also a parish priest, to look after the diocese, and doing most of the resulting work. Despite that, I was astounded and surprised in October 1969 to receive a Latin phone call to say that the Holy Father wished me to be auxiliary bishop. I could not claim to be unqualified then nor in 1974 when I was appointed diocesan bishop. I always worked as hard as health allowed until it compelled me to retire in 1992. There have been many developments and changes in my lifetime.

That is most evident in the simplification of the liturgy surrounding a Bishop. Many Catholics, including good, regular churchgoers, used to avoid Mass or any ceremonies involving the Bishop because they were complicated and took a long time. They were also a trial to parish clergy, unused to them, to the Bishop who battled to celebrate them in a prayerful and relaxed way, and to the priest MC who had to help bishop, priests and servers to avoid the many pitfalls. Nowdays, the concelebration of Mass by the Bishop with his priests is a strong sign of what being in communion really means. Confirmation, Ordinations and many other liturgies, like the consecration of a church, are now much clearer and understandable and much less wearing for all concerned. Most important of all, these newer rites leave us much more free to reflect on, and pray about, what Our Lord is doing with us and for us in the sacred Liturgy.

The life and work of the Bishop has changed immensely. When I worked for Bishop McCormack in 1953, I would quip that the Exchequer had just come out from under his bed! We had no office staff and the Bishop wrote most letters in his own hand, attended few meetings, had very little contact with other churches, and dealt almost exclusively with parish priests and religious superiors. Younger priests, ordinary religious and lay people rarely encountered him. The system was not geared to the post-war explosion of population, new developments and the long-delayed expansion of secondary schools and more new parishes. I still remember the astonishment when, realising that new estates were not being built to last, I suggested that we too should build new churches for semi-nomads.

Bishop Cunningham had been used to running a larger diocese as

full-time Vicar General in Salford. He had several priests in administration and brought that style to us, insisting they all used typewriters. (Hence the clergy quip CTS - Cunningham Typing Service!) The marriage tribunal became more effective. Work with local education authorities increased as the government re-organised secondary education. The announcement of the II Vatican Council and regular changes in Church law increased the pressure of work. A larger diocesan organisation was already a belated necessity; civil administration was growing and becoming more detailed. We could not afford it so, as Secretary and the only full-time priest in administration, I had to fill growing gaps in education and planning work. It was like being a barrister without researcher or typist.

When I resigned in 1992, I still used the same rooms and the same desk as Bishop McCormack but there the resemblance ended. A computer terminal for my personal word-processor replaced Bishop McCormack's fountain pen. We had had a lay office administrator and typist for several years. St Vincent's housed offices for diocesan finance, tribunal, education and catechetics. These were to meet real needs; even parish priests who would have to find the money asked for this help. I knew all our local Church leaders quite well and we had frequent meetings. Parish priests were no longer the only link with the Bishop.

The Bishop's relationship with the Holy See has become closer. When I started at Bishop's House, many necessary decisions had to be referred to Rome - every financial transaction over £2,000 - £3,000 for instance, so there were regular Latin letters to and fro. I was always struck by the Roman Curia's courtesy to and respect for the diocesan bishop. The II Vatican Council collegial relationship between Pope and Bishops means that very little has to be referred to Rome.

Our personal relations with successive Popes have become less formal and much more real. The half hour audience during the quinquennial visit is now a real discussion about the present state of the diocese and Pope John Paul's command of English made it easier still for me. His visit to this country and frequent contact with our bishops visiting Rome gives us a closer working relationship. The successive Nuncios have also helped Rome to understand us better and have helped us to understand Rome better.

The media can give an impression that the Roman Curia is constantly reproving bishops but that is not true. We now visit them fairly regularly so that we understand each other better. I have always been impressed by

the professional skill of the bishops, priests, religious and lay people who work in the Curia and also by their hard work and courtesy. There is an occasional problem because many of them have not generally been involved in regular pastoral work and this can occasionally make us approach a particular matter from a different angle.

Our present problems with liturgical translations are a good example; they are not so much with the present Congregation for Divine Worship, the International Committee for English in the Liturgy (ICEL) and Bishops' Conferences as with a complete change of policy in Rome about how best to translate Latin liturgical texts. The 1969 Instruction, with which many of us were not completely happy, emphasised the need to get at the true meaning rather than a literal meaning. ICEL's following it faithfully has produced translations with which Rome has become unhappy for about the last ten years, but the new Instruction was not available until little over a year ago. Without referring to the 1969 Instruction it makes clear that translations must be much more literal. For example, in 1969 we were forbidden to translate *hominibus bonae voluntatis* as 'men of good will' as this misses the richness of the original languages; if the 2001 Instruction means what it seems to require, we will have to translate it 'men of good will', forbidden until now. Apart from the delays unavoidable in submitting revised translations to meet the new requirements, I can see no future problems once the new system is up and running.

A Bishop's relationship with his fellow-Bishops is now closer. Bishop McCormack, and Bishop Cunningham in his earlier years, attended two Hierarchy meetings a year. The shortish agenda covered matters of common interest but even a common agreement still left each diocese free to do what the Bishop thought best.

The Holy See's establishment of Bishops Conferences still leaves a diocese with remarkable freedom but gives the Conference the responsibility of handling many matters formerly the Holy See's preserve, arriving at some common and binding decisions and finding ways of avoiding the unnecessary divergences of practice which baffled lay people before the Council and sometimes scandalised them. It has enabled individual dioceses to have much more influence than before and has given us strong support in facing difficult problems and making hard decisions. The Conference's joint policy on child abuse is an excellent example of that.

The Bishop's relationship with diocesan priests is closer. Bishop

McCormack's natural shyness, and the long tradition of dealing almost exclusively with the parish priests, made him seem even more distant than he was to young priests and students. Bishop Cunningham visited our students regularly and knew them reasonably well; he made it part of his parish visitation to have a private conversation with each young priest.

About 1966 he established our Council of Priests so that priests were free, and often encouraged, to ask for open discussion with no holds barred about anything that concerned them. It helped priests to know each other and the varying views better than before. It strengthened the deanery meeting, making the parish less isolated, and deepened priests' knowledge of, and trust in, their Bishop.

When I was appointed bishop, the priests already knew me and I knew them and the parishes and places of the diocese and inherited an excellent Council of Priests. The Clergy Review editor told me that our minutes were the best guide he could find to problems which were exercising the minds of priests in England and Wales. The National Conference of Priests found our priests' contributions very valuable and, not surprisingly, found at least two Chairmen from amongst them, Monsignor Philip Cronin and Canon Bob Spence. Father Owen Swindlehurst was an elected member of these priestly bodies despite his close connections with the Bishop and the diocesan administration; that, and his welcome as Auxiliary Bishop, underlines how close the relationship could be.

The Bishop's relationship with religious is closer. Bishop McCormack started, the day after his consecration in 1937, to pay a social visit to each religious house in the diocese. The first sister to open the door to him said, 'Of course we are not subject to your visitation'. Twenty years ago, I once left a visiting bishop and others at a Gateshead restaurant whilst I found a parking place; the only small place was near a convent and, after squeezing in with difficulty, I discovered the community lined up to greet their Bishop so I had to go in. It was a sign of an even more welcoming, friendly and co-operative relationship.

We owe an incalculable amount to the work of religious in the diocese. Before the Council they traditionally emphasised their independence. It could mean religious parishes being less close to the deanery and the diocese than was desirable. It also meant that an order's decisions need not fit our diocesan pattern. The Council asked us to co-operate even more and that happened, with great benefit to all. An example is the number of small

communities of religious living and working amongst the poor. It began when two orders discovered that I could guide them to places of great need. The appointment of a Coordinator for Religious and the representation of religious on the Diocesan Pastoral Council bear witness to their close involvement in the work of the diocese.

The Bishop's relationship with laypeople is closer. Bishop McCormack had open-house interviews at the Cathedral house on Friday and many Catholic lay leaders saw him regularly, but the average Catholic rarely saw him. Bishop Cunningham was able to get around much more but the apparent gap remained as it always will; you can't be a real person to over 200,000 Catholics. However, visits to parish organisations, the establishment of the Diocesan Pastoral Council and increasing lay involvement in the work of the diocese lessened the 'distance.

The Bishop's relationship with other churches and other faiths is closer. This is the most remarkable change. For instance, the Anglican Bishop phoned to ask my opinion of Abbot Hume's appointment to Westminster; when I said 'excellent' he objected that I did not know him sufficiently well. I explained my reason, 'He gave up everything to become a monk at 18; today he is being required to give up being a monk. With such self-abnegation, it's bound to be a success'. Work with other Christians and other faiths has involved many extra meetings but the benefits are undeniable; most important of all, unnecessary points of difference are disappearing and sharp differences honestly faced and tackled.

The Bishop's relationship with the missions and the Third World is closer. Modern communication and travel is a partial explanation but the urgings of the Council and of the Holy See have done far more. The most outstanding example is the establishment of CAFOD which has often led the way in helping Third World peoples to help themselves. The missions were remote and ill-understood but lay and priest volunteers have been working there for decades with our full support. We also welcome an increasing number of religious and priests who come to Europe for further training and experience.

The Bishop's relationship with the media is closer. It could hardly have been remoter than when I started at Bishops's House in 1953. Church administration was unnecessarily shrouded in confidentiality; many documents from the Holy See were 'under pontifical secret' even when they involved public decisions. Bishop McCormack laid great store on confiden-

tiality; he once gave me a pile of letters to post without telling me, as I discovered at breakfast next morning, that one of them was moving me from Byker to Ponteland. Bishop Cunningham was freer with confidential information and open to comment. When I went to Bishop's House in 1959 he asked me, still a young priest, to observe carefully whatever he said and did and always to tell him anything with which I disagreed, giving my reasons. I did and he always listened carefully, without always taking notice. But he so faithfully observed the confidentiality of the unfolding II Vatican Council, that he told me nothing about it until the documents had been promulgated.

Neither Bishop was comfortable with the media. We never issued information on every-day matters of interest like Church and school openings. Reporters would only phone when a difficult story cropped up; I had to try to give a reasonable reaction, often impeded by confidentiality or by the bishop's reluctance to go public. Brian Redhead's rise to fame on TV was helped by his covering opposition to our building a much-needed secondary school on the site of St Cuthbert's Grammar School cricket pitch, which had long been leased to the Benwell Cricket Club which had nowhere else to go.

We have had many advantages through being open to the media, as I learned when I was chairman of the Catholic Information Office. The Holy See allowed us to have access to the then Abbot Hume to arrange for press, radio and TV coverage of his appointment to Westminster; it helped him to become a national figure in a very short time. Similarly, we were allowed to use the excellent facilities in Lancaster House to enable hundreds of journalists to remain there with full radio and television coverage of the Pope's 1982 visit to Great Britain, giving them advance copies of all his texts. Every place the Pope was to visit had a full-time priest information officer six months beforehand. That was why Pope John Paul had wall-to-wall coverage on TV and radio and in the press. When the Meadowell and Elswick/Scotswood riots and fires underlined the hopelessness those people felt, our good relations with the media meant that Father Jim O'Keefe and I were allowed to show how much the Church was actually doing about it.

The media is free and we can never expect to be treated exactly as we would like; that is clear from much of the coverage of clerical paedophile cases. Everyone forgets that most people knew nothing about child abuse

fifty years ago and would not connect it with priests. Twenty years ago, it was thought to be curable and, even now, knowledge of its causes and extent is far from precise. Yet a picture emerges of a defensive Church which connived to hide known abusers and appoint them elsewhere. I would expect to know if that had happened within living memory in our diocese and I do not have such knowledge.

I have deliberately made no mention of schools and catechetics until now. They always came top of Bishop McCormack's agenda but he was reluctant to face the expense of secondary modern schools in view of the huge cost of new post-war primary schools. Bishop Cunningham was forced, probably by the Holy See but certainly by central government, to build secondary schools or lose our place there for good. They had all been approved, but few built, when comprehensive reorganisation came up; he was able to 'freeze' the plans and avoid the huge extra expense of quickly deserting separate secondary buildings for purpose-built comprehensive schools.

People forget that our great worry in the late 1940s and 1950s was the growing 'leakage' of children, people young and old from the Church. Sending priests and religious vocations promoters into school and huge Vocations Exhibitions was a sign that they were drying up. Priests were astounded by the numbers of apparently excellent Catholics who admitted that they would no longer go to church when they were rehoused elsewhere. The Catechism and associated methods of catechetics seemed partly to blame, so more modern successful Continental methods, soon replaced by our own style. But, despite the wonderful work of our Catholic teachers and the excellent facilities at their disposal, the 'leakage' continues to be worse than ever.

An increasing number of baptised Catholic children come to school with little sign of faith, rarely attend Mass and seem to have little or no contact with the Church afterwards. Vocations to the religious life are very few; vocations to the priesthood have dipped. We have to keep asking, 'why is this happening?' and 'what can we do about it?'. I wish I could give clear answers.

The improvements I have seen in the Church should have improved things. Why have they not done so? Read the introduction to the Council's Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, nn 4 - 11. Causes are listed and described as 'a real social and cultural transformation whose repercussions are felt too on the religious level'; but it gives us no principles or practical examples of what we need to do, nor does it help us to find out

how we are to 'read the signs of the times' and 'interpret them in the light of the Gospel'. Our attempts so far have been hindered by unforeseen problems and have not been very successful. I am sad that the society in which I live and for which I have given my life working as an ambassador of Christ either does not believe in God or at least takes little notice of what he says, and even sadder that this may be true of the world for which Our Lord suffered and died. But my firm hope in God includes whatever he will do, through the Son's Church, and through the faithful believers who hold on to him no matter how much everything changes.

EXCURSIONS DURING 2002: 1: LASTINGHAM, BYLAND AND RIEVAULX

The Rev. David Milburn

On Saturday, 18 May, we set out for the North Yorkshire Moors, hoping to visit Lastingham, Byland and Rievaulx in the course of the day, and expecting, as always in early summer, a reasonably sunny day. But it was not to be. As we gathered for the coach at Newcastle Central Station it was obvious that the weather intended to dampen our hopes. Mist accompanied us across the Tyne and when we reached Guisborough the visibility was so poor that we had to abandon our projected route to Lastingham via Rosedale Abbey, much to the relief of our coach driver, who did not relish the prospect of driving along that rather narrow minor road even in good weather. Instead, we kept to the main A171 road to Whitby, branching off towards Lastingham through the Vale of Pickering. During our descent, the mist had almost cleared away, only to be replaced by another hazard in the form of a slow moving fuel tanker, the driver of which laid on for us a terrifyingly erratic series of manoeuvres, blocking our way for some ten miles or so. About an hour behind schedule, we managed to keep to our programme by shortening the visit to Lastingham and our lunch break at Hemsley, as well as contenting ourselves with simply a coach-eye view of Byland, before moving off to Rievaulx.

LASTINGHAM

This pretty little moorland village has managed to keep its extraordinary history secret for a long time. I first discovered it when I supplied at Pickering in the early 1950s, but had never been back. None of the rest of the group, so far as I could gather, had ever been there, and most had heard of the place for the first time when they received the excursion programme. All that is known about its important early history is actually to be found in Bede's *History*, Books III, chapters 23 and 28, IV, chapter 3, and V, chapter 19, together with a source note in his preface saying that it was from the monastery at Lastingham that he learned about the two saintly brothers Chad and Cedd and their work in Mercia and Essex. Of a Northumbrian family, both saints were educated in the monastery of Lindisfarne in the time of St Aidan, whose benign pastoral care certainly shaped their own work as bishops.

It was Cedd who founded the monastery at Lastingham. Already in 653 he had volunteered for mission work in Mercia, and from there he was recalled by King Oswy and consecrated bishop at Lindisfarne in order to undertake the re-evangelisation of the kingdom of Essex after the collapse of the Roman mission there directed from Canterbury. Accompanied by a single priest and journeying always on foot, Cedd founded several churches, one of which, in stone, at Bradwell on Sea, dated c.653, pre-dates the work of Benet Biscop and Wilfrid in Northumbria by several years. One of the truly amazing features of Anglo-Saxon Christianity is the mileage which these missioners clocked up, and Cedd was no exception. From Essex he made several journeys back to Northumbria, and it was on one of these that he founded his monastery in a desolate part of the North Yorks Moors at Lastingham. Shortly after attending the Synod of Whitby in 664, he contracted the pestilence which carried off many leading churchmen of the day, including the archbishop of Canterbury, and he died soon afterwards at Lastingham, where he was buried.

As for Chad (Ceadda), after initial training at Lindisfarne he furthered his studies in Ireland, like so many other English churchmen of his time. Called to succeed his brother as abbot of Lastingham (in 654?), following the Synod of Whitby he became bishop of York , but Wilfrid disputed his appointment and in 669 he was deposed by Theodore, the new archbishop of Canterbury. With edifying humility, Chad returned to Lastingham, but before long he was invited by the king of Mercia to continue the conversion of his people. He established his see at Lichfield, and when he died after a short ministry of two and a half years (just like Cuthbert), he was buried in the church of St Mary there. Later his body was transferred to the new church of St Peter. At the Reformation his bones were hidden and, when rediscovered in the 19th century, they were enshrined in the new Catholic cathedral in Birmingham, dedicated to his name. According to the new National Proper of Saints, issued in 2000, these two saints are now commemorated throughout England and Wales on 26 October, the day of Cedd's death in 664. Rightly so!

Because of its close assocation with Saints Chad and Cedd, Lastingham church, abandoned during the Viking period, was re-built soon after the Norman Conquest, though abandoned again in 1088. It became a parish church in the 13th century. The present mixture of styles incorporates the 11th century aisled chancel and crossing, and particularly the 11th century

complex crypt where the Romanesque capitals display a unique interpretation of the old classical orders. Interesting as its architecture may be, what visitors take away with them above all else after visiting the crypt is an extraordinary feeling that they have been treading on sacred ground. This was universally our impression as we descended the steps into the low and cell-like building – the same feeling, a sort of holy *frisson,* that so many visitors to Iona and Holy Island experience. Or is the cause the person rather than the place? I have read recently of people being similarly affected when visiting the Oxford study of Archbishop Michael Ramsay, late of Durham and Canterbury. Undoubtedly, we arrived at Lastingham "as enquirers and left as pilgrims", a quotation which reflects Simon Jenkins' apt description in his *England's Thousand Best Churches* on p.778: "Some churches are a challenge to the faithful; Lastingham is a challenge to the faithless." Instinctively on departure, a number of us vowed to return, and if possible arrange the celebration of Mass in the crypt. I am sure that the present incumbent, a most charming and accommodating man, would be very anxious to help us to achieve this.

BYLAND

After an hour's lunch break at Helmsley we set off on the six mile journey south to Byland, but with time pressing so heavily upon us we simply parked the coach near the abbey entrance, to give George Thornton an opportunity to point out briefly the importance of the site. In my experience we have never been able to do justice to Byland: on our last visit, several years ago, we wandered about in a hail of rain, bedraggled and guideless. Yet it has an intriguing history and some quite outstanding architectural features. It began its existence as a community of the order of Savigny, one of several 11th century attempts to return to the simplicity of the original of the Benedictine Rule, eschewing the elaborately carved and painted buildings, costly vestments and church plate of existing Benedictine houses. The Savigniacs penetrated into England before the Cistercians, establishing in 1124 a colony at Tulketh near Preston on land given to them by the powerful Stephen, Count of Boulogne, who eventually succeeded to the English throne. As the site proved unsuitable, the monks moved to Furness four years later. From there the monks established a daughter house in West Cumberland, but after being atttacked by the Scots and being refused entry to Furness, the fledgling community set out

to cross the Pennines in pursuit of a patron. Temporary settlements at Hood, Byland and Stocking followed, during which time the Savigniac order merged with the Cistercian , giving up their grey habit for the white. Whilst at Stocking the monks acquired the present Byland site and settled there in 1177 when most of the domestic buildings were completed. The church itself, the most elaborate attempted up to that time by the English Cistercians, took another twenty or so years to finish. A splendid building, with galleried upper walls, spacious windows and bright decoration, it defied at every turn the original insistence on stylish simplicity. Such waywardness shows how we belong to a Church *semper reformanda.*

I am sure that many of us enjoyed Simon Jenkins' series on English Churches which livened up Saturday night TV last autumn. Though his rather subdued commentary did not match the poetry of his *England's Thousand Best Churches,* compensation was provided by the gripping photography. Jenkin's name came into my mind when I took to reading Lucy Beckett's booklet *Rievaulx, Fountains, Byland and Jervaulx,* in the series of Pilgrim Guides published by Canterbury Press. It is not, I think, a coincidence that in describing the beginnings of Anglo-Saxon Christianity neither Jenkins' first TV programme nor the Beckett's booklet thought it important to mention the names of Gregory the Great and Augustine of Canterbury, preferring instead to give exclusive credit to the Irish missionaries for the introduction of Christianity into Anglo-Saxon England. Despite the publicity given to the Roman Mission on the occasion of its 14th centenary in 1997, English non-Catholic writers apparently still prefer to forget the Roman contribution to the conversion of this country.

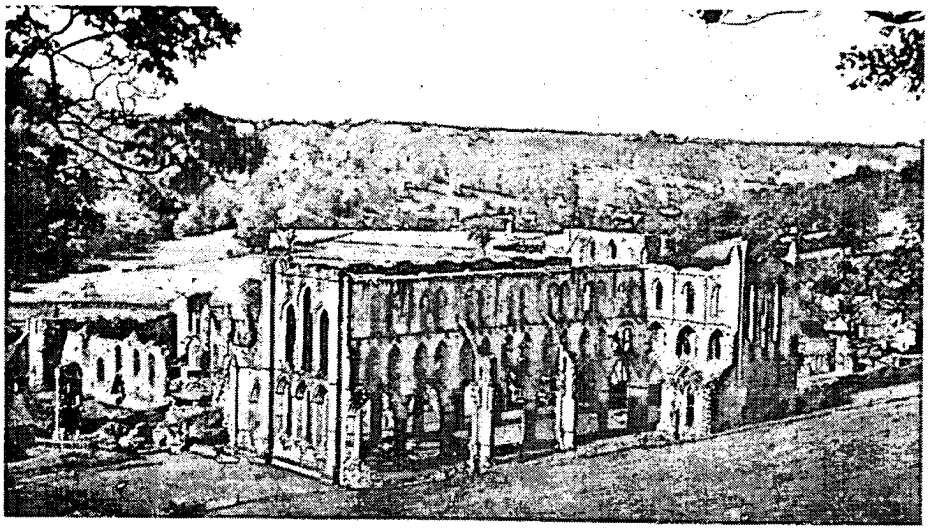
Be that as it may, Anglo-Saxon monasticism, having flourished for fifty years, then weakened by wealth and patronage during another half century, succumbed quickly to successive strikes by the Scandinavian invaders. Indeed, we can say that in northern parts it was eliminated, the 10th century liturgical and claustral revival being confined to the South and the Midlands. At the time of the Norman Conquest there was probably not a single monastery north of a line from the Trent to the Humber. Of the two that are sometimes quoted as having survived, Ripon and Durham, it has to be said that some scholars doubt whether Archbishop Oswald of York re-founded Ripon, and, even if he did, it is likely that it did not outlive him. About Durham, it is now generally agreed that by 1066 the community had lost its monastic identity.

The scorched earth policy employed by William the Conqueror to crush the rebellious North at first prevented any revival there of monasticism, but c.1073-4 three Anglo-Saxon monks from the Vale of Evesham, inspired by Bede's *History,* were able to re-establish monasteries at Jarrow, Wearmouth and Whitby. Three years later St Mary's, York, began to take shape within a short distance of the city's new Romanesque Minster, and later still came the introduction of Benedictines at Durham and the building of present prestigious Abbey Church which also served as a Cathedral.

Impressive as was this return to monasticism and the springs of Benedictine spirituality, there were those who disapproved of a life style which increasingly depended on the wealth and status which marked Norman Church and State. They knew of an alternative austere and out of town life-style already flourishing in Europe, following the example of Robert of Molesme (1026-1110) who initiated the radical move to wild, waste land in Burgundy and the foundation of the new Cistercian (from the Latin *cisterna*, marsh land) Order. In the first pages of his recently published study of Newminster, *The Story of an Abbey and its First Abbot,* George Thornton relates, with his customary insight and enthusiasm, these stirrings of one of the most powerful spiritual movements in the history of the Church.

The distinction of first introducing the white monks to England belongs to those from the French abbey of L'Aumone, who settled at the end of 1128 at Waverley near Farnham in Surrey, but it was to be the wide dales and wooded river valleys of the north, "virgin soil ... ready for the sowing" (Knowles), which would feel the greatest spiritual and social impact of the Cistercians, Yorkshire being the home of most of their foundations. (In fact only one was established within the boundaries of our diocese, that of Newminster, a daughter house of Fountains.) The first of them was Rievaulx, which dates from March 1132, beating Fountains by a mere four months. Its founder was Walter Espec, who invited monks from the great Abbey of Clairvaux in Burgundy to settle on his land just above Helmsley, in the valley of the Rye, hence the name Rievaulx. After visiting Archbishop Thurstan at York, they were led to their destination by their abbot William, an Englishman who had spent some time at Clairvaux, including a period as secretary to St Bernard himself. Their first task would have been to build a temporary church from the available wood. When the stone church

was begun, it had to be in the simple and austere style laid down by the Cistercian rule, devoid of any decoration. Its scale meant a great deal of back breaking work for years to come. Many men were attracted to Rievaulx's severe form of community life, not least by the reputation of St Aelred, who entered the abbey in 1134. Within thirty years it housed 140 choir monks as well as some 500 lay brothers, whose manual work dispensed with the hiring of outside help, thus avoiding the feudal system of tenants, serfs and servants. The oldest buildings at Rievaulx are their modest rooms. The Englishman Stephen Harding is credited with expanding the idea of lay brothers, creating for many uneducated men a sense of a genuine commitment to the religious life. Ironically, their skills in land management eventually generated the considerable wealth which in turn led to a falling away from earlier ideals.



Rievaulx Abbey

The first time I visited Rievaulx was on a beautiful summer's evening when its ruins, floodlit by the sinking sun, allowed one to imagine that it indeed was England's finest monastic site. The damp, dull weather of this visit did not bring the same delighted surprise. But we were glven a big bonus. Though we had been assured in advance that only audio tours were available to visitors, it was the custodian of the site himself who volun-

teered to conduct us round the abbey ruins. A fount of knowledge, he gave generously of his time and answered all our questions. Building work at Rievaulx had to face particular problems because of the narrowness of the site given by Walter Espec. Its boundary being the river Rye which then flowed down the centre of the flat glacial floor, much intensive labour in terracing was involved to try to keep to the general plan of a Cistercian house. Of course, as time went by more land was given to the community, and even more purchased, and with the considerable increase in profitable sheep farming, more elaborate additions in whiter stone were made possible. It is these which reflect the sun's rays so effectively. But on any day Rievaulx manages to keep a special aura, its ruins evoking past prayer as well as past glory. The newly equipped Visitor Centre is an invaluable tool in trying to reconstruct its past. Large scale excavation was carried out in the 1920s, mostly by soldiers wounded in the war of 1914-18. Their work was photographed, and the results are the subject of a special exhibition. For those who like myself are captivated by 3D computer reconstructions of old buildings, please note that Sheffield University has already launched a Cistercians in Yorkshire project, starting with Roche and Kirkstall, later adding Rievaulx, Fountains and Byland. Our in-depth study of Rievaulx, having been completed shortly before the site's closure at 6.00 p.m., it was time to return to Newcastle by the A19, our loyal members once again well satisfied.

SWINBURNE

Our outing to Swinburne for Mass, postponed in 2001 because of the foot and mouth epidemic, eventually took place on Saturday, 14 September 2002. It was preceded by an interesting tour of the Roman Army Museum near Greenhead, the preferred option, a short visit to the Vindolanda excavations, having been ruled out by the inability of some of our "oldies" to negotiate the difficult access to the site. At Swinburne the Riddell family made us very welcome, and from their ranks, Mr Matthew Festing, well known as a Sotheby's representative in our area, very kindly provided an entertaining and informative talk prior to a short visit to the remains of the old house and castle. Fittingly, the day ended with the celebration of Mass in the 1841 chapel, the interior of which consciously reflects the Riddell family's long-standing adherence to the Faith. What follows in this issue is, with our sincere thanks to Mr Festing, a copy of his address to us at Swinhurne.

EXCURSIONS IN 2002: 2: SWINBURNE

Matthew Festing

Welcome to Swinburne and to St Mary's. I thought I would begin by telling you a little about the church in which you are sitting. It was built by Thomas Riddell in 1841 and consecrated in the same year. I suppose that he decided that by the 1840s it was safe enough to have a public chapel here even if it was deliberately rather unostentatious. It replaced the older chapel in the castle which was certainly here from at least 1690. The Riddells also owned Felton where there is another chapel built in 1857 and again that church is dedicated to St Mary. It is more elaborate than this church probably because the family lived at Felton during the 19th century while Swinburne was let.

From an ecclesiastical point of view this little church's chief claim to fame is that it was while he was chaplain here that Father Athanasius Allanson wrote his biography of the English Benedictine congregation. The General Chapter of the English Benedictines in 1842 had directed that this biography should be begun and interestingly enough it was not finally published until 1999 although Allanson died here at Swinburne on the 13th January 1876. Peter Allanson was born in London in 1804 and went to Ampleforth when he was eight. He was Professed in Solemn Vows on the 2nd June 1821 before his 17th birthday and he was ordained in 1828. Very shortly afterwards he was sent to Swinburne and here he remained for 48 years. In 1868 he is recorded as having informed the Bishop that "the flock is small and not much happens here". Throughout his period here the documentation he used to produce this monumental work arrived by train in batches but it also appears that he occasionally travelled to Lille in Northern France to consult the sources there. In 1858 Father Athanasius became Provincial of York and he thus combined being chaplain here with looking after all the Benedictine missions in the northern half of England. He was appointed a Titular Abbot and may be counted as a considerable scholar.

He is not the only interesting priest to have served here. During my youth Father Slack was chaplain and provided us all with a great deal of entertainment and amusement. I think I am right in saying that he drove a Harrods delivery van before the First World War and being a conscientious objector drove an ambulance during that war. In my childhood he

possessed a motorbike and sidecar and made a weekly journey on Mondays into Hexham which took him all day – a journey of about 12 miles. He then stayed in the County Hotel on Monday night, did his shopping on Tuesday, spent another night in the hotel and trundled slowly back here again on Wednesday. He was gloriously forgetful and had to be reminded during Mass by my uncle (who generally served) about where he had got to:- "Now Father read the gospel and now Father say the offertory etc". He was notoriously independent and used to refer in public to the local ordinary as "that Bishop in Newcastle".

From the point of view of being the seat of an ancient Catholic family Swinburne is of considerable interest but it also lies more-or-less in the centre of an enormous Neolithic site. The park is full of Neolithic terraces and there are several barrows. Part of the layout includes a remarkable standing stone, 11' high – I think it is certainly the largest standing stone in Northumberland. In medieval times between here and the castle it is recorded that there was a chapel dedicated to Our Lady. There are foundations in the wood on the left of the drive which may well be of this little chapel. By the end of the 13th centurythe property certainly belonged to William de Swinburne who was Treasurer General to Queen Margaret of Scotland and he also owned Chollerton and Capheaton. These properties still belong to his descendants. By the middle of the 14th century this property had passed to Roger de Widdrington and he was granted a licence to crenellate in 1346. Widdringtons continued to live here until towards the end of the 17th century. Swinburne was involved in much of the border raiding and it is recorded that Sir Robert Kerr of Cesford broke into the castle on the 27th August 1596, climbed to the roof and blew a trumpet before departing. When we go down to the castle you will unfortunately not see the building where this incident took place. Indeed it is not certain whether its foundations now lie under the lawn, under the new house or under the west wing.

There were a series of marriages between Widdringtons and Riddells down the years. The Riddells owned both Fenham and Gateshead, both rather too close to Newcastle for Catholic comfort. As a child I was taught that at the Titus Oates plot the mob marched out to Fenham, found the Riddells not at home, but collected one of the servants and took him into Newcastle and hanged him from a lamp post. If the story is true this poor man should be counted among the martyrs. In any event Thomas Riddell

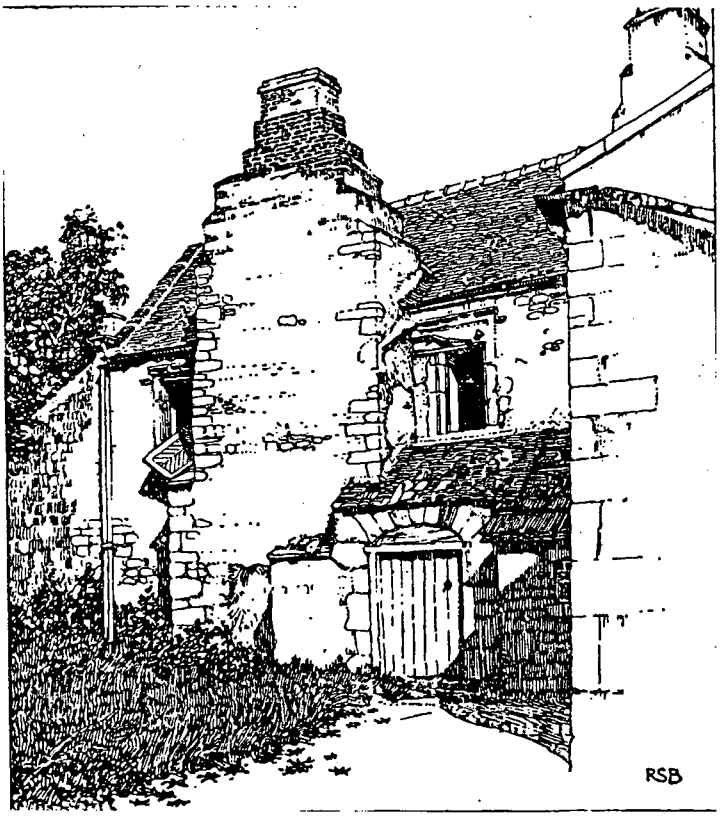
purchased Swinburne from his Widdrington cousins shortly after this incident and the family has remained here ever since.

The first recorded Riddell of this branch of this old Border family, Sir William, was Sheriff of Northumberland and Constable of Norham Castle in 1314 and a number of his descendants served as Sheriffs of Newcastle, Mayors and Members of Parliament. They married Brandlings, Claverings, Radcliffes, Greys, Daltons, more Widdringtons, Thornburghs, Salvins, Blounts, Throckmortons and Welds. Through those marriages the family descends from Stonors and Talbots and also Blessed Adrian Fortescue, uncle of Queen Anne Boleyn, who was beheaded for refusing to sign the Oath of Supremacy. Sir Thomas Riddell was Governor of Tynemouth Castle and defended it for the king in the Civil War. Thomas Riddell, his great grandson, rode out from here to take part in the 1715 Rising, was captured and escaped from Lancaster Castle.

In the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries the Riddells became very rich largely because of their extensive estates acquired by Widdrington marriages and a judicious marriage with the Dalton family which brought in an estate in Lancashire. They had a number of coal interests and became very keen on horse racing. Among their most famous racehorses were *XYZ*, *Gallopade* and of course *Dr Syntax*, the sire of *Beeswing*. A lot of local money was made by backing *Dr Syntax* which won 20 gold cup races and that is the reason for the various pubs in the North of England being named after this famous horse. Despite their wealth they were never idle about Catholicism and were members of the famous Catholic Committee of prominent peers and gentlemen which negotiated with the Government at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries. The ultimate result of these negotiations was of course Catholic Emancipation.

Within the Church the family has produced William Riddell, the second last Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District and Bishop of Logona. It was he who was responsible for the building of the Catholic cathedral in Newcastle and his tomb is to the right of the side entrance to the Cathedral. His brass is to the left of the high altar beneath the Riddell window. Another, Arthur, was Bishop of Northampton from 1880-1907. There have been a number of secular priests including a Canon of Redcar and also a Dominican Nun. Among the Benedictines, George Riddell became Father Gregory at Lamspringe in Germany and became Abbot of Cismar. Father Edward Riddell was also a monk at Lamspringe and was later the Prior of

that Abbey. Thomas likewise became a monk at Lamspringe and was Professed there in 1715. We know however that he later was excommunicated for having a fight with another monk, so they certainly were not all virtuous by any stretch of the imagination!



We will now leave the chapel and go down to the castle where you will see at the north end of the old west range where the chapel was until the erection of the present church. In the old part of the house which you will see were certainly a number of places of concealment for priests. Unfortunately much of the inside of that part of the castle collapsed during the last century and it is now impossible to tell exactly where the priests hiding holes were.

NOTE

The visit to Swinburne was made on 14 September 2002. The place name is spelt Swinburne or Swinburn, the former spelling being adopted here throughout the booklet for uniformity.

THE STORY OF AN ABBEY AND ITS FIRST ABBOT: THE ABBEY OF NEWMINSTER AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY AND ST ROBERT OF NEWMINSTER

G.B.Thornton. St Robert's R.C.Church, Cedar Road, Fenham, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 9PH, price £2.50, plus 5Op. postage (cheques to G.B.Thornton). The proceeds from sales are donated to the new Cistercian Abbey of Our Lady and the Angels in Nigeria.

Of all the sites of the great Cistercian abbeys of the North – one thinks of Rievaulx, described elsewhere in this booklet – Newminster is perhaps the least impressive, in fact little more than a field with a confused medley of mounds from which a few stones surface here and there. Likewise, Saint Robert, its founder, has been little known – if one thinks of St Aelred of Rievaulx – outside his Morpeth home. Furthermore, apart from a small cartulary and a few medieval deeds, little documentary evidence survives of its internal life and extensive estates. Yet this daughter house of Fountains Abbey, of which so much remains, ranked high among the monasteries founded by the White Monks in England and Wales by 115O.

Thus there has long been a great need to record the story of Northumberland's single major monastery. George Thornton has devoted many years to researching its history and this has now been published in this brief but comprehensive account, simply but attractively set out and printed. Mr Thornton first places the abbey in its setting in the valley of the River Wansbeck. He then gives an account of St Bernard of Clairvaux, the founder of the White Monks, the establishment of Fountains Abbey, the political influence of Normans, before introducing St Robert and the founding of Newminster. There follows a description of the typical Cistercian layout of the site and some of the identifiable features and artefacts, and of the land holdings donated by the abbey's patrons, from which it supported its life, largely from the wool of sheep. The chapter on the Dissolution in 1535 is short but poignant, but Mr Thornton concludes on a happier note describing the revival of the Cistercian ideal in the Scottish Border abbey of Nunraw.

Professor Jack Watt provides a valuable Foreword on medieval monasticism in the European and national context, complimenting Mr Thornton on 'this fascinating evocation of his beloved Newminster'.
Robin Gard

PROGRAMME 2002 - 2003

The meeting on the 4th September will be held at St Andrew's, Worswick Street, Newcastle upon Tyne (Mass at 7.00 p.m., A.G.M. at 7.30 p.m.). All other meetings will be held 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.)

4th Sept. 2002	Mass 7.00 p.m., followed by A.G.M 7.30 p.m.
2nd Oct. 2002	The Right Reverend Hugh Lindsay: *From altar-boy to Bishop: personal recollections of a developing Church: 1927-2002.*
6th Nov. 2002	Mr. George B. Thornton: *Cuthbert, Celtic or Roman?*
8th Jan. 2003	Mr Robert A. Murphy: *A Catholic Clanger and a Protestant Explosion: the 1850-51 anti-Catholic agitation*
5th Feb. 2003	Mrs. Mary Woodman: *The Medieval Churches of St John and St Andrew.*
5th Mar. 2003	Fr. David Milburn: *Caveat for a Cardinal? Assessing the life of Ushaw's Cardinal Merry del Val.*

COACH EXCURSIONS

14th Sept. 2002	Swinburne (1 p.m. departure)
17th May, 2003	Selby Abbey
14th June 2003	Abbotsford

(2003 dates are subject to change)

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