NORTHERN CATHOLIC HISTORY

No. 6

Autumn, 1977

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 twice yearly.

PATRON: His Lordship the Bishop

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NORTH EAST CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY

During the past year the Society has welcomed several new members but our continuing existence depends on those who have supported us over the last three years. We remember the late Canon Thomas Murray with gratitude for his encouragement from our very first meeting. Several of the excellent talks were fairly well attended but regrettably the Durham meetings attracted few members and consequently all but one of our talks this year will be given at Newcastle. Our two Summer outings, however, to an old and a new Cistercian abbey, proved very popular. In May we visited the ruins of Fountains Abbey. Fr. White of Ripon joined us in the morning and, as well as talking about the Catholic history of the area, showed us his church and exquisite collection of church needlework. After lunch we enjoyed a conducted tour of Ripley Castle.

Miss Davison gave us yet another of her warm sunny days for our June visit to the living Cistercian community at Nunraw in Berwickshire, where one of the monks described the history of the Abbey and said our Society's annual Mass in the original chapel, and later on members attended Vespers in the new chapel. Our return journey through the Lammermuirs and Northumberland took in a short visit to James IV's thanksgiving church at Ladykirk on the Tweed.

Outings proposed for the coming year include a September visit to Blanchland and Minsteracres, and another to Mount Grace and the Egton Bridge area associated with Bl. Nicholas Postgate. Details of the five talks are given on the end cover. Please note the dates and attend if you can. Finally, our Treasurer reminds us that the 1977/8 subscriptions are now due.

E.M. Swallow, Secretary

The object of the periodical is the publication of articles on the history of the Church in North East England from the earliest times. In these first issues we aim to provide an outline history of the Church, accounts of Catholic missions, parishes, diocesan societies and families, notes on sources, and transcripts of original documents. Articles and offers to do research are welcomed.

In this issue Miss Forster describes the Catholic associations of ruined Cartington Castle, Leo Edgar recalls Catholic life in Newcastle 70 years ago, Peter McGuiness concludes his account of St. Mary's Cathedral, and Michael Joyce reveals more evidence about the education of Catholic children in the 17th century.

R.M. Gard, M.B. Joyce, Editors

THE STORY OF CARTINGTON

Ann M.C. Forster

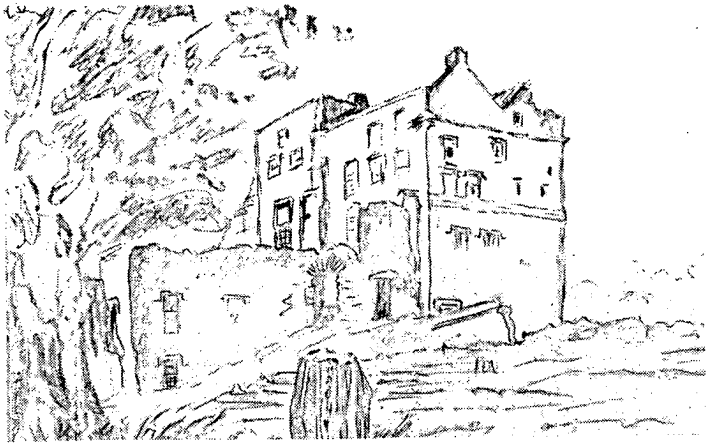
The ruins of Cartington Castle stand on an eminence, nearly 1,000 feet above sea-level, about a mile and a half north of the village of Thropton in Rothbury parish, Northumberland.

In the 12th century half of the manor of Cartington was held by the overlord, the other half was leased to tenants. In 1168 one tenant was William Fresbern or Frebern. References to this family living in Cartington may be found down to 1342.(1)

The chief person of interest among them is a certain Ralph de Frebern, described as a Northumbrian gentleman, and probably but not certainly of Cartington. While on a Crusade against the Saracens he found on Mount Carmel a community of hermits, and was greatly attracted to their way of living. When he returned to England he brought some of them back with him, and settled them at Hulne, near Alnwick. He joined the community, and became the first prior, in 1240. He was later provincial of the order of Carmelites, dying in 1254.(2)

There is no reference to the Freberns of Cartington after the middle of the 14th century, and instead we find a family of the name of Chesman. A William Chesman first

Cartington Castle, c.1780 : from west (above), from south west (below)



appears in 1370, when he was concerned as adjudicator in a suit over the manor and town of Kenton; the case was decided in favour of Alice Ravensworth.(3) Over the next 40 years William Chesman, or another of the same name appears to have been a person of some importance. In 1387 he was guardian of Robert Rutchester of Ovingham;(4) in 1400 "steward" to the governor of Morpeth;(5) in 1403 a burgess of Newcastle, leasing land in Stamfordham of Balliol College, Oxford;(6) and witnessing the receipt of a payment by Merton College.(7) In 1408 we get the first mention of William Chesman in connection with Cartington, when he was granted a licence to have divine service in the chapel in his dwelling-house of Cartington (*ut in capella infra mansum suam de Cartington licite valeat habere divina officia*).(8) This would surely indicate that he was occupying the principal residence there, described in 1415 as the *turris* (tower) of Cartington.(9)

In 1416 a William Chesman was a monk of the Cistercian abbey of Newminster, when he was present at the blessing of an abbot.(10) In 1427 "William Chesman laicus" was a member of a commission investigating the grant of a vacancy to the vicarage of Alwinton,(11) and in 1436 "William Chesman capellanus" was similarly engaged regarding the patronage of Ingram, when Robert Chesman was instituted vicar there.(12)

A family of the name of Cartington, which had been in the neighbourhood since the beginning of the 13th century, began to rise in importance, and in 1359 John Cartington had a lease of a moiety of the manor of Cartington, and during the following century the family acquired the other moiety.(13) Steps were taken to enlarge the castle and make it more secure against attack. A John Cartington had licence in 1441 to enclose and crenellate the building.(14) John Cartington was knight of the shire for Northumberland in the Parliaments of 1427, 1433, 1437 and 1447.(15) His son, another John, married Jane daughter of Sir Robert Claxton of Dilston; and their daughter and sole heiress Ann Carting-

ton, by her marriage with Sir Edward Radcliffe of Derwentwater, carried both Cartington and Dilston into the Radcliffe family. After this the Cartingtons disappear from Cartington and are found as dependents of the Radcliffes at Dilston.

The latter were possibly living at Cartington in 1515, when Margaret, sister of Henry VIII and Queen Dowager of Scotland, now remarried to the Earl of Angus, took flight into England. At Harbottle castle she gave birth to a daughter, destined to be mother of the Lord Darnley who became the husband of Mary, Queen of Scots. She was very ill at Harbottle, and from there was carried in a litter to Cartington, where she stayed for four days before moving on to Brinkburn priory.(16)

The Radcliffes played an important part in the defence of the Border. Sir Edward, his son Sir Cuthbert and grandson Sir George all served as Wardens of the Marches, but they appear to have made Dilston their residence. Cartington formed part of the property assigned as jointure to Catherine Mallory on her marriage to Sir George Radcliffe *circa* 1551. She was convicted of recusancy many times between 1592 and 1607,(17) but her husband appears to have conformed. Not so their son, Sir Francis, born in 1563. Described as 'late of Cartington', he was convicted and committed to prison in 1592.(18) Cartington was listed as one of the places to be searched for a priest, but none was found.(19)

The following year the Radcliffe estates were seized to the Crown and two thirds of their annual value charged to the holder. Among them was the reversion of Cartington.(20) At a later inquisition (9 August 1605) Cartington was valued as worth £40 *per annum*, of which £26.6.8 *p.a.* was charged to Sir Francis.(21) He and his wife Isabel Grey (sister of the Sheriff, Sir Ralph Grey, to whom was issued the warrant for her arrest) had a large family, all

staunchly recusant. Four of the daughters became Poor Clares at Gravelines. A fifth married Roger Widdrington and Cartington was included in their marriage settlement. It was still under sequestration for the recusancy of Francis Radcliffe.

The story of Roger Widdrington has been told elsewhere. (22) Suffice it to say that he and his father-in-law made a pair that was a thorn in the side of the government. For their recusancy they suffered privation, imprisonment and on occasions needed to disappear and lie low. But when times grew easier, additions and extensions were made to the castle at Cartington, till from a bleak fortress it was transformed into a large and attractive mansion, including two wings, with a tower, a court-yard and an orchard, all within a large enclosure.

About the year 1637 Roger Widdrington, now Warden of the Middle March, purchased Harbottle castle and moved in there, dying in 1641. Cartington was given over to his son Edward, recently married to a Scottish lady, Christina Stewart. When civil war broke out in England he espoused the cause of the King, and with his kinsman Lord Widdrington raised at their own expense a force of 2,000 footmen and 200 horse. After the defeat of Marston Moor he was banished. In 1648 a group of Royalists, temporarily occupying Cartington, were surprised and attacked by a party of Roundheads, The garrison under Sir Richard Tempest held out for a couple of hours and then surrendered without loss of life, but with very considerable damage to the castle. After the Restoration in 1660 Sir Edward (he had been made a baronet of England in 1642) appealed for compensation, placing the cost at £8,000.(23)

Some repair to the castle was undoubtedly made, but Sir Edward did not settle there. He made up his mind to go abroad and embrace a religious life. Accordingly he went to

Bruges and lived in great privation and poverty. He died there in 1671 and was interred in the Capuchin church.(24) His son and heir, then a student at the Scots college, Douia, met his death by drowning the following year.(25)

Lady Christian had intended to enter the religious life, but on her husband's death she returned to Cartington. Her daughter Mary was married to Sir Edward Charlton of Hesleyside, and after his death at Cartington in 1674, she remained there with her mother. Both ladies are named in a list of recusants of Cartington in 1677.(26) Lady Charlton was a woman of charity and zeal, noted for her quality in making converts. She founded at Cartington an alms-house for four poor widows of Rothbury parish. The house, nicknamed "the nunnery" is now in private ownership and occupied.

When she died, in 1703, her heirs were William Hardwick, son of her daughter Mary, John and Gilbert Talbot, sons of her daughter Christian, and her daughter Catherine, wife of Sir Nicholas Sherburn. Eventually the greater part of the estate devolved upon Gilbert Talbot, who was a priest. He died in London about 1747, and by will left his real estate in trust for the benefit of the Thropton mission. The castle was sold, and is now the property of Lord Armstrong.

From the foregoing it will be gathered that Cartington had a long Catholic history, and that from the 15th down to the 18th centuries the holy Mass was offered there, though possibly not continuously. Yet with regard to the mission itself and to the priests who served it we have practically no information. In the latter half of the 17th century one member of the family was showing concern as to how it was to continue. This was Mrs. Clara Orde, a daughter

of Roger Widdrington and Mary Radcliffe. In 1675 we find her discussing the matter with Fr. Roger Mitford, chaplain at Dilston, and it was suggested that the Mass-centre be transferred to the village of Thropton. On her death in 1696 she left a sum of money and some altar vessels to be used for that purpose.(27)

Meanwhile, in 1687, during the reign of James II, when the laws against Catholics were in abeyance, Bishop Leyburn made a visitation of the North, and at Cartington, on 15 August, he administered the sacrament of confirmation to 146 people. Among them were Talbots (John, Gilbert and Catherine), Sherburns, Widdringtons, Selbys, Claverings, Charltons, and others whose names are still among us, such as Robsons, Davisons, Greys, Wilsons, Hunters, Browns.(28)

Another scrap of information comes from the "Disbursement book of Sir Thomas Haggerston".(29) Three of his sons were priests, and to each of them he allowed an annuity of £20. In 1694 and 1695 the £20 was sent to Lady Charlton to be passed on to Fr. Francis Haggerston O.F.M., and in 1701 the payment was made similarly for Fr. John Haggerston S.J.

Fr. Gilbert Talbot does not seem to have resided at Cartington, which in his time must have been becoming uninhabitable. In his will he left £300 to the Franciscan order, and from this some people have deduced that at some time Franciscans had served there; but there is nothing to support this supposition, or to show any connection with that order, except the short service of Fr. Francis Haggerston.

A few fragments found among the ruins of Cartington castle bear witness to the former existence of a chapel there: a wooden crucifix with metal figure, the stone bust of a female saint, and two other carved stones, one a *Pieta* and the other a Trinity group.(30)

NOTES

1. A History of Northumberland, vol. 15, pp. 370-1.
2. Tate, History of Alnwick, vol. 2, pp. 46. 51.
3. Archaeologia Aeliana, 3rd series, vol. 5, p. 103.
4. A History of Northumberland, vol. 12, p.202.
5. Hodgson, Northumberland, vol. II, 2, p.497.
6. op. cit. vol.12, p.310n.
7. Northumberland & Durham Deeds, (Newcastle upon Tyne Records Committee), ser.7.) ser. 7, p.162.
8. Surtees Society, 164, no.100.
9. List of Border Holds of 1415.
10. Surtees Society, 177, no.1354.
11. ibid. 182, no.1553.
12. ibid.,170, no.1224.
13. A History of Northumberland,vol. 15, p.371.
14. ibid., p.172.
15. ibid.
16. ibid., p.473.
17. E.377/1 Northumbr. (C.R.S.18); E.377/10, 14,16.
18. S.P. 12. 245/131.
19. A History.., op. cit., vol. 7, p.135.
20. E.377/1.
21. E.377/14.
22. Recusant History, vol. 11, p.196.

23. Cal.S.P.Dom., 1660-1, p.339.

24. Skeet, Collectanea, vol.2, p.19.

25. Records Scots College,(H.M.Register House, Edinburgh).

26. D.D.Dixon, Upper Coquetdale,p.354 f.n., S.S.40

27. W.V.Smith, Thropton 250 years old, Ushaw Magazine, Dec. 1952.

28. Westminster Archives.

29. S.S., 180, pp.24,28,57,58.

30. Dixon, loc.cit. p.359.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION IN SEVENTEENTH CENTURY NORTHUMBERLAND

M.B. Joyce

On James I's accession the fortunes of Catholic recusants entered an unusual and varied phase. If at the dawn of the seventeenth century penalties were stepped up, this was by no means a consistent policy throughout the reign. Indeed their fortunes fluctuated considerably, partly on account of the events surrounding the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, partly on account of the King's hopes for a Spanish marriage for his son and partly because James was, by nature, more disposed to a policy of toleration than his predecessors.

For the King's part he bore his Catholic subjects no malice at the beginning of the reign and it is generally accepted that the passing of the recusancy laws could be laid at the door of the Commons. By the Act for the due Execution of the Statutes against Jesuits, Seminary Priests, Recusants etc(1) a fine of £100 was imposed on anyone found guilty of sending a child abroad for his education, the person or child concerned was to forfeit all his estates and no woman or child was to depart the realm without licence of the King or six Privy Councillors. It was further enacted that, after Michaelmas next, the penalty for being or keeping an unlicensed schoolmaster was to be increased to 42s. a day, with half the fine going to the Crown and half to the informer.

The actions of a small group of hot-headed and irresponsible Catholics in 1605 significantly altered the status and position of their co-religionists in this country. Grave repercussions followed, not least legislation requiring that the fortunes of those over 18 who were beyond the seas and who did not return within six months were to be enjoyed by a non-recusant next-of-kin.(2) What the Commons was especially concerned about was the fact that their policy, which was aimed at enforcing an Anglican upbringing on children, was being thwarted. As late as 1624 they sought to introduce a bill placing all children of Popish recusants over nine years of age in Protestant schools or as apprentices or servants to known Protestants.

If we are to go by local reports, however, and these should perhaps be treated cautiously lest they serve to magnify the strength of Catholicism, there occurred something of a Catholic revival. About 1615 Bishop James of Durham was writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury of 'the flocking of priests within the diocese'. Two years later John March, vicar of Newcastle, wrote to the Secretary of State that 'Popery flourished' and in the county Roger Widdrington was charged with 'spreading very dangerous seducing books' and with having 'poisoned with Popery all Hexamshire, as since he has in a manner all Northumberland.'(3)

Direct reference to schools and schoolmasters are sparse. In 1601 it was remarked of Robert Errington of the Linnels, Hexham, that he 'keepeth a schoolmaster in his house whose name is unknown'.(4)

Action was next taken against Thomas Key for teaching children in Launcelot Fenwick's house at Stamfordham in 1614. He had no licence and had been there the past year or more.(5) It is placed after a Lesbury presentment, but as the names do not occur in any sort of order, it does not follow automatically that he was in that location.(6) He may well have been the 'Thomas Scholemaster' who was con-

victed of recusancy at Bywell St. Peter's as early as July, 1607. (7)

Another of the same name was 'Richard Key, als. Rowley', schoolmaster at Halton, the home of the Carnaby family, between August, 1615 and May, 1617. (8) A possible connection between the two may be through Thomas Key, rector of Wolsingham, who resigned in 1533 and who later appeared as servant (possibly tutor) to Bertram Anderson of Newcastle in 1570 and to his son Henry in 1584.

About 1615 Catholic children in Hexham were able to attend school (though what type one cannot say) at considerable personal risk. One pupil was Dorothy Musgrave who later became an Augustinian canoness of Louvain and who recalled how she had seen her father apprehended as she made her way to school. The less fortunate who had no access to a Catholic schoolmaster may well have compromised and sent their sons to a local grammar school, while ensuring that they received their training in religion at home. Thomas Percy, Constable of Alnwick, who was a kinsman of the Earl of Northumberland, sent his son Robert to the town grammar school. Others would have to rely on travelling schoolmasters like John Whitfield who was active in the North and was for a time at Stella and almost certainly worked in Northumberland. Teaching music, too, would have been a suitable front for a Catholic engaged in the hazardous profession of schoolmastering. An ex-schoolmaster in the area at this time was Mrs Haggerston's relative, Dom Bede Banister, O.S.B. He had formerly been active in Lancashire before going overseas to become a Benedictine. Finally there were those, possibly the vast majority, who received their education at home and who depended on their parents for the rudiments of knowledge. In penal times, therefore, female recusants were expected to take an even greater interest than usual in their children's education.

The greatest individual contribution to Catholic life within the city of Newcastle was made by Mrs Dorothy Lawson

of St Antony's, near Heaton. Though married to a Protestant who died c1614, Mrs Lawson ensured that her twelve children were given the benefit of a Catholic upbringing. 'On festivall days ... there was usually a Catechisme in the afternoon, to which the neighbours' children were called together with her own household, and herself never absent, delighting much to hear them examined, and contributing medalls and Agnus Deis to those who answered best.'(9) Her children, moreover, 'till they came to maturity, had a schoolmaster for humanity and a priest for Christian doctrine'; later they repaired to the colleges and convents abroad. Rarely could one hope to come across so striking an example of a flourishing Catholic household in penal times.

From the middle of the reign of James I to the outbreak of the Civil War has been described as the most contented and peaceful period Catholics were to enjoy until the relaxation of the penal laws in 1778 and 1791. That the Catholic body was afforded a greater degree of toleration was in no small measure due to the political and religious sentiments of the Stuart rulers and was only achieved in the face of bitter opposition from Parliament. What was true of James I was even more so of his son Charles.

Information regarding Catholic educational activity in Northumberland at this time is negligible and further detailed evidence of its survival does not occur until the Interregnum. Yet from here, as from elsewhere, the steady stream of recusants' children to the colleges and convents abroad was on the increase. (10) Amongst those who acted as escorts were Brother William Singleton, O.S.B. and Fr.Henry Morse, a Jesuit novice. Both were apprehended in the area, hence our knowledge of them: the former was supposedly en route to Berwick, the latter on board the 'Sea Horse' as she was leaving the Tyne early in April, 1626.

It was under the Commonwealth that a most important venture was begun. In 1649 Fr. Christopher Simpson, S.J.

established 'a select academy for youths of the higher class'. While sources do not confirm that it was in Northumberland, everything seems to point in that direction since he was superior of the Jesuit mission in Northumberland for more than twenty years. The project won him much renown, and, on his death in 1674, the Provincial wrote that 'his known probity and candour drew many of the leading men among the heretics to him, in so much as they did not hesitate to entrust their own sons to be educated by him.'(11) This at a time when there were some 40 schools in Northumberland was no mean achievement and speaks highly of the individual and his order. The school was still in existence at the time of his death.

Jesuit sources also provide an interesting anecdote about a nine year old Catholic boy from the village of Abberwick in Northumberland.(12) He went to a school in which he was the only Catholic. One day 'some itinerant Protestant ministers had sent word to the master of the school that they intended to come and catechize the children, and requested him to keep the boys in school till they came. The Catholic boy, hearing this, asked leave to go home. The master refused it, being determined that he should await the intended instruction. The boy took the first opportunity to slip out of the school and though the master and the other boys called out to him, he ran home. The next day he fearlessly returned to the school where he was severely flogged. The master then asked him tauntingly whether it would not have been better for him to have stayed and heard the preachers of the day before. The little confessor answered 'No, for if he had willingly listened to the false doctrines of these teachers, he would have been liable to eternal punishment in hell.' One wonders how many other children found themselves in similar situations.

How Catholics fared in the North at the time of the Restoration is not always easy to discern and doubtless much depended on the locality and much on the prevailing

political climate of the region. While Newcastle Corporation financed the publication of anti-Catholic pamphlets and sermons, it was, nevertheless, possible for Catholics to enjoy comparative peace on the estates of the Catholic gentry. At Callaly, Whittingham, the stronghold of the Claverings and the Collingwoods of Eslington in the same parish, for instance, there were about 100 papists in 1663. Here there was a resident priest and a petty school too. Whether the schoolmaster was a Catholic or not we do not know, but in view of the fact that there was a large recusant community (it must be admitted that it was a Presbyterian centre of some importance as well) with Catholic lords of the manor, it seems likely that Catholic children would at least attend the local school. After all, compromises must often have been reached in situations where the parson and the schoolmaster depended a great deal on the good will of the lord of the manor. Consequently, when considering the facilities for at least elementary education in those areas of Northumberland where the families of Radcliffe, Widdrington, Selby, Thornton, Charlton, Swinburne, Haggerston and others wielded influence, the opportunities for the education of Catholic children may well have been greater than is usually thought.

There was certainly a Catholic schoolmaster in 1680 at Netherwitton where the Thorntons, a staunch Catholic family, were lords of the manor.(13) Ralph Mackey, a yeoman, was reported as 'a Papist teaching without licence.' For some reason his name is partly erased in the preamble to the presentment and, when his name does occur, he is only mentioned for not going to church. The following year he was excommunicated for the same offence. Thereafter there is no trace, though his family were living in Hexham in 1705.(14) The fact, too, that he was styled 'yeoman' in the lists raises an interesting point. Research into Catholic members of the medical profession shows that they were frequently so described in the returns where no indication was given of their real calling. Could not the same safe-

guard have been applied to Catholic schoolmasters, who would thereby escape additional attention, in districts where local sympathies proved stronger than Church and State requirements?

The only possible endowment by a Catholic benefactor of a free school at the time was that of Thomas Errington of Bingfield Hall. In his will, dated 20 November, 1677, he bequeathed £10 a year to this purpose and a further £5 to the poor of St John's parish.(15) While there is no mention of a Thomas Errington of Bingfield in the Recusant Rolls, his family were traditionally Catholics and it may have been that he kept his religious sympathies quiet lest they attracted attention.

In 1685 James, Duke of York, a Catholic, succeeded to the throne of England. New schools were set up throughout the country, two being opened in the Bishopric of Durham. The master of the one at Newcastle-upon-Tyne was Fr. Philip Leigh S.J., alias Layton, alias Metcalfe, who directed a well-frequented school with a reputation for classical studies.(16) That at Durham, which was open by 1685, was a boarding school. Very probably the Catholics of Northumberland availed themselves of both these schools, the fact that one existed outside the County being immaterial. Ralph Clavering, for instance, was doubtlessly referring to Fr Thomas Thweng's school at Quosqu (Quousque) in Yorkshire when he wrote in his Responsa at the English College, Rome, in 1683 that he had studied humanities at Carlton. Besides, Sir Thomas Haggerston and Thomas Riddell had lent their support to the Mary Ward nuns who sought to establish a convent at Dolebank, near Ripley. In the 18th century there are instances of boys travelling as far as Hampshire, not to mention the constant procession who travelled overseas to make their secondary studies. There is no reason to suppose therefore, that the Catholic gentry did not make use of the foundations at Durham, or Osmotherley, or York for that matter.

The Catholic Church has long attached great importance to providing an educational system for its younger members. Her chief reason for doing so has been that she saw the Christian ideal as the centre of education. During the period under discussion it was rarely possible to build churches, schools or school-chapels. Though there was a considerable network of colleges and convents abroad, these were principally for secondary studies and, besides, the expense involved put them out of the reach of many. For the vast majority schooling was restricted to schools in this country where savage penal laws were in force. Here, imprisonment, fines and forfeiture of goods, together with restrictions on religious and civil liberties, rendered the whole business a precarious one. When Catholic schools existed they were invariably of short duration, in fact it would be more accurate to speak of Catholic schoolmasters rather than Catholic schools prior to 1688. Even then any educational activity was usually restricted where landed families of sufficient importance were able to offer a degree of protection to their co-religionists.

To speak of a system of Catholic education in the seventeenth century would be presumptuous, for there was no organization then. On the other hand there were Catholic schoolmasters, sometimes itinerant, there were priests, at first Marian, later regular and secular, there were tutors, and there were recusant women bound by circumstance to play a greater role than usual in the upbringing of their children. Together they combined to provide educational opportunity for English Catholics and, by their common effort, helped forestall those attempts to eradicate Catholic influences from the realm.

Finally, the Church authorities were very conscious of the gravity of the situation, and every effort was made to combat the effect of 'heretical teaching'. As early as 1638 the Franciscan hierarchy issued a regulation that all missionaries were bound to catechize children, either at

home or at the priest's residence. Even so, there were some they were not able to reach: Thomas Clavering, who entered the English College, Rome, in 1649, maintained that he had only been converted to recusancy two years earlier.(17) Yet his mother, a daughter of Sir Thomas Riddell of Fenham, was convicted of recusancy as early as 1630. His two elder brothers, Robert and Ralph, both matriculated at Queen's College, Oxford, but there is no mention of them graduating which would have involved their taking the oath of supremacy and abjuration, though it was by no means uncommon for the sons of gentry to spend a year or two at university without going on to take their degree. Instead they moved on to Lincoln's Inn which seems to have often been the course for recusants. Robert died young, while Ralph's record of recusancy dates from 1655 when he refused to take the oath. This double anomaly raises the question of what access Catholic families had to priests and to what extent they may have outwardly conformed, at least until their studies were completed.

SOURCES

1. *I Jac. I c.4.*
2. *3 Jac. I c.5.*
3. *Cal. S.P. Dom. Jas.I lx. No.15.*
4. *Visitation Returns of the Archdeacon of Northumberland, II, 5.1601.*
5. *The Act Book of the Court of High Commission, 1614-17.*
6. *Recusant Roll E.377/28.*
7. *Ibid. E.377/16.*
8. *The Act Book of the Court of High Commission, ff 33,39,42,44,46 and 133.*
9. *W. Palmes, S.J., A Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson of St Antony's near Newcastle-upon-Tyne (1860), p.43.*
10. *Vide A.C.F. Beales, Education under Penalty (1964), p.128.*
11. *Stonyhurst MSS. Anglia, vol.V. No.77.*
12. *H. Foley, Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus, vol.III, p.124.*
13. *Archdeacon Turner's Presentments, 1680. Robert White MSS.*
14. *Return of Papists to the House of Lords, 1705.*
15. *A History of Northumberland, vol.IV (1897), p.134.*
16. *J. Gillow, The Church in Gateshead (1889), p.45.*
17. *C.R.S. 55, p.517.*

SAINT MARY'S CATHEDRAL – THE EARLY YEARS. PART 2

P. McGuinness

Most of the stained glass windows in the church are memorials to benefactors, the Dunn family being the most prominent. The window at the west end of the south aisle is to Thomas Dunn and that at the end of the north aisle is to Elizabeth Dunn. It was Elizabeth Dunn who in 1872 bequeathed money which enabled the church's spire to be extended to the height of 222 feet, making it the highest in the city. Provision was also made for a peal of bells and a clock but these were not acquired, probably because of the lack of funds. The top section of the spire was designed by the local architects, Dunn and Hansom. Dunn built many Catholic churches in the North East and Hansom was an architect of national reputation, although better remembered as the designer of the once familiar horsedrawn 'hansom' cab.

On the south side of the church there is a crypt, the site of which is marked by the altar tomb of Bishop Riddell. He caused the crypt to be made with shelves for twenty coffins but only the Bishop himself and Fr. Fletcher are interred in it. They died whilst working among sick parishioners during a cholera outbreak in 1847 and it may have been on this account that the crypt was permanently sealed. No one today is quite sure how access could be gained to the crypt. Bishop Riddell is also commemorated by a brass set in the floor at the entrance to the choir. The brass is at present covered by the free standing altar.

The sacristy, designed in the Gothic style by the younger Pugin, was added in 1858. It was enlarged by Dunn

and Hansom in 1872, at which date a small lodge for the sacristan was built at the gate to Clayton Street. In the 1930's the Chapter Room was redecorated and it is recorded that the panels then installed were made from oak which had lain in the church tower for many years. It seems that they were given by Sir John Fitzgerald when premises in the White Hart Yard in the Cloth Market were dismantled, and are a relic of the Catholic chapel which once existed there. An oak fireplace surround is also said to have an interesting history, in that it came from a local builder who had purchased it at Brinkburn Priory where it had been taken when Anderson Place, a large house which stood near the junction of the present Market Street and the upper portion of Grey Street, was demolished in the 19th century.

The parish life of St. Mary's began when the church was opened on 21 August 1844, and the first, most pressing, need must have been to pay off the building debt. On the first anniversary of the opening a meeting was held to make a serious effort to do this and, led by the Dunn family, the sum of £1,701.2s.4d. was collected in three months, and in 1849 a further £468.10s.2½d. was paid off. The remainder of the debt was in the hands of the executors of Cuthbert Dunn and this was cancelled when his heir came of age. According to the Northern Catholic Calendar, the church was consecrated on 21 August, 1860, by which time it was free of any debt.

The Dunn family, already generous benefactors, added to their endowment by building schools for boys and girls in Oyster Shell Lane. These were then handed over to the church authorities who made regular exhortations to parents to send their children to the schools, even though small payments were required for the education. The fee ranged from 1d. to 4d. a week, depending on the class in which the child was taught. It is not known whether the church paid these school fees if the parents were unable to do so. The church exhortations to parents had a hidden motive in that State grants were based partly on attendance figures and the inspectors

made regular visits to schools in receipt of grants.

The more rigid application of Church law, characteristic of the nineteenth century Church, is very evident in the frequent notices regarding behaviour at holiday times, in the calls to carry out the various fast and abstinence obligations, Easter duties, and regular weekly attendance at Mass, and in frequent reminders to parents about the religious upbringing of their children. One holiday reminder concerned the annual Race Week: "This is a carnival week in Newcastle - drunkenness and every crime will run riot." The church arranged for exposition of the Blessed Sacrament to make "reparation to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament for all the outrages committed against Him, especially by drunkenness, impurity and blasphemy."

Marriages were not allowed in Advent and Lent. Services were occasionally held at very early hours on certain feast days - one Christmas the first Mass, with music by a band, was at 6 a.m., and one New Year's Day the first Mass was at 5 a.m. The high Masses in the early years of St. Mary's were certainly grand occasions, with the music of Mozart and Beethoven often being played. Without doubt, the organist/choirmaster had to be a man of great musical ability. An agreement of 1885 shows that he had to play, or to supply a deputy, at four services each Sunday, once each Thursday, and on the first Friday of every month. He received the grand salary of £100 a year and from this sum he had to pay "such members of the choir as he, at his discretion, may think proper."

The surviving notice books contain some interesting information. A notice for November 1864 reveals that the heating system had been installed that month, so that those attending early Masses on winter monrings before then must have been uncomfortably cold. Although there is no direct evidence, the lighting of the church was originally by gas. The change to electric lighting was made in the 1890's, and

one commentator noted that this would "preserve the beautiful decorations much longer."

The poverty of many of the parishioners is reflected in a call for a minimum subscription to the Bishop's Fund of ½d. a week. There were a number of collections for the benefit of those out of work, despite the parish's own need to keep out of debt. There were many calls for money for the cleaning and lighting of the church, of course, and funds were sometimes raised by an evening entertainment at one of the halls in the town - the Music Hall in Nelson Street, the Town Hall, the Tyne Theatre, and Bath Lane Hall, for instance. A musical evening in the church itself, with the performance of Rossini's Stabat Mater, and other popular pieces, was another way of raising money.

Denunciations from the pulpit naming offending persons was not uncommon. The actions which prompted such condemnations were marriage in a Protestant church, membership of secret societies, and persons receiving their training as teachers at a non-approved college - these offenders were barred from teaching in any Catholic school in the diocese, All was not doom and gloom, however, for very soon after the opening in 1844 a library was established which parishioners were allowed to visit on Sundays. There was also a savings bank and a clothing club. The parishioners were certainly not allowed to become parochially minded or complacent for they were urged to support new diocesan projects such as the setting up of new missions and Benton Grange, and when the Little Sisters of the Poor arrived in the parish and moved into 36 Clayton Street West in August 1865, the parishioners did much to promote their work.

The notice books and papers, held in the Cathedral, and which the late Canon Murray very kindly allowed me to consult contain ample evidence for the compilation of a detailed chronicle of the history of the Cathedral church and parish, and of the changing character of Catholic life and traditions

during the 133 years of St. Mary's. I hope that this brief outline will encourage others to study its history in greater depth.

SOURCES

Eyre, Charles. A Description of St. Mary's Catholic Church, Newcastle upon Tyne (1848).

Cooke-Nicholson, T. The Catholic Churches and Chapels of Newcastle upon Tyne (1871).

Contemporary Newcastle newspapers in the Newcastle Central Library.

Notice books and original papers at the Cathedral.

CATHOLIC LIFE IN NEWCASTLE SEVENTY YEARS AGO

Leo Edgar

Leo Edgar was born in Newcastle in 1893. He attended St. Dominic's School, leaving at the age of 10 to enter Hawkesyard College (Staffs), the Dominican Seminary, with the intention of joining the Order. He left Hawkesyard at the age of 14 when his father's death left his mother with five children (Leo was the eldest) to bring up - there was no widow's pension, children's allowances or other Welfare State benefits in those days. He secured employment as an office boy. He met Katie McEvoy when she was 14 and he 17 and they were married in 1920. They lived mostly in Sandyford and Walker and since 1939 in Gosforth.

During the First World War Leo Edgar served in the infantry, "going over the top" on the Somme in July 1916. Towards the end of that War he was seconded first to the Portuguese and then to the American army, and was with the Americans in France when the Armistice was declared in 1918.

He joined the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at the age of 17 and is now the National Life President for England and Wales. Pope Pius XII created him a Papal Knight of the Order of St. Gregory in 1957. He served on the City Council for 12 years, followed by 21 years as chairman of the Northumberland and Durham Rent Tribunal. He was appointed a J.P. in 1942.

What follows is an edited transcript of a tape recorded interview in which Leo Edgar responded to four general questions. The text was subsequently checked and amended to include a few further details given by him. The sentiments expressed are all Mr. Edgar's own.

Antony Archer O.P. and editors

Leo V. Edgar, 1977

1. *What do you remember about Newcastle before the First World War?*

Before 1914 Newcastle was residentially more compact than now. I can remember when Byker and Walker were separate townships to the east of the City as was Newburn to the west. Streets such as Gibson Street and Dean Street were flint cobbled and the ascents were so steep that horses shoes had to be flanged at the front to secure a grip. To get up Gibson Street from the Quayside they had to hitch four extra horses in front of the two in the shafts. The streets further up into the town were paved with wooden blocks bound together with tar which on a hot summer day would melt causing the blocks to buckle and cyclists to spend many hours scraping gritty tar from tyres.

Horse trams were then the main form of public transport but were soon followed by electric trams powered from overhead wires. The present outlying housing estates did not exist then so that workers did not have to travel far to their jobs and the majority walked from home to shop, office or factory. It was a much more homely city to live in than now because the pedestrian could get about without risk.

Before the War halted house building, accommodation was easy to obtain. Newcastle builders specialised in the terrace flat system, with four rooms up and three down, no bathrooms, and outside loos. Sandyford, Shieldfield, Byker and Walker were all built on the same patters and that went for the majority of Newcastle till you got up to Jesmond. Builders competed keenly to secure tenants, offering a week's rent free plus money for wallpaper if you moved in. Most folk tended to reside in the area where they had been born, with the result that different working and social classes lived in different areas. The artisans lived in Walker and Scotswood where the shipyards were, labourers lived in Byker and Shieldfield, shop assistants and clerks in Heaton and Sandy-

ford, executives in Jesmond. There were exceptions of course to these general definitions, but the divisions brought in their train a degree of class distinction. The people who lived in Sandyford and Heaton thought themselves a bit better than those who lived in Byker and Shieldfield, for example, and Jesmond was over all. However, no matter in which area you lived there was a spirit of good neighbourliness.

I would say that to a degree you had Catholic streets: Melbourne Street, Gibson Street, City Road - these were ghettoes of poor Catholics, and very crowded. The Irish poor Catholics were herded in Buxton Street, Gibson Street and Victoria Square, which had an archway in Melbourne Street, an archway in Gibson Street, an archway in Buxton Street, and in the middle there was a pant which spouted water and had railings all around it. There were people who lived downstairs - really only two rooms - and upstairs there was a gallery along, and other two-roomed tenements. In these streets three out of every four people were Irish, and poor, and depended on labouring work.

Poverty, under-nourishment and bad housing were the causes of much disease. T.B. ('consumption' was the term used) claimed teenagers. The poor could secure medical treatment only by weekly payments into a doctor's fund, and the destitute only by obtaining a Dispensary letter from such organisations as the S.V.P. which bought these letters in bulk and distributed them to their sick 'clients'. Many children in the Quayside and Byker areas went barefooted, and the City Police, many of whom were Irish, had a boot and shoe fund from which children were fitted out with clogs on a recommendation from the S.V.P. or the schoolmaster. The Dominican nuns from St. Catherine's Convent on Shieldfield Green collected surplus clothing from the better-off to provide for needy men and women.

Unemployment was rare: machines and mass production had not as yet replaced manual and mental skills. But it was hard for Catholics to get a job in a big store. Most of these were run by Methodists and employed only Methodists. Very few women worked behind the counter then: they stayed at home and girls on leaving school remained at home helping mother, the eldest daughter in families, which by present standards were large, becoming virtually a second mother until she wed. A few girls became assistants in women's outfitters shops, and girls from poorer families went into service.

People provided their own recreation at home - owning a piano was a mark of distinction - and occasionally there were magic lantern slide shows, and, later on, the silent cinema. With only the occasional horse and cart plodding leisurely along the road, children were allowed to play with their wooden and metal hoops in the road itself, and playing with marbles in the gutter to and from school made many lads late for school or meals. Football was just as much a mania then as now, but more youths played than watched, the Town Moor being filled with games every Saturday afternoon - we had to carry the goal posts and cross bar to and from the Moor to wherever they were kept during the week. Newcastle United was a team to be reckoned with. There is a legend that it was the black and white colours of the Dominican habit of Father Houtman, a United fanatic, that inspired the famous magpie stripes of the Club.

2. *What was it like being a Catholic then?*

People were more conscious of class differences in those days and 'kept their place', but most people adhered to some church or chapel so that there was also an awareness that a person was a Methodist, a Jew, Church of England (with the emphasis on England), a Quaker, or a Roman Catholic (the Roman was emphasised). The Methodists were numerically

strong and powerful in Newcastle commercial and political life, while Catholics were prominent in Trade Unions. In those non-ecumenical days religious divisions were acute to the point of mutual dislike and, in the case of Catholics, distrust.

We Catholics were ultra parochial. The parish was the centre of your religious and social life. There was the school and, when you left school, there were the youth club, the boys' brigade, the Boys' Scouts, and afterwards the men's club, as well as the parish guilds - Rosary for the women and Blessed Sacrament for the men - you had no need to go outside the parish which had a family spirit. Dances used to be held in the school and the whole parish would turn up at the Christmas parties. There wasn't much mixing between parishes - the boys' brigade started this for me. It was only when the non-parochial lay societies, such as the C.W.L., the K.S.C., the Catenians, the C.Y.M.S., the Legion of Mary, the S.V.P., the Evidence Guild, got going that people from different parishes met, apart from in their jobs, at district or diocesan meetings.

Each parish was a distinct unit. Walker was our next parish - there was no St. Lawrence's, no Holy Name, no St. Teresa's at that time. There was the same parish cohesion at school and children from different areas generally didn't mix outside school. The Quayside, for instance, was out of bounds to Sandyford kids. In those days the children from the present Holy Name area used to come to St. Dominic's school. We looked on them as a class above us - their fathers were professional men - but there was one thing in their favour as they mixed well in school. In due time, when their parents could afford it, they went to boarding school or to St. Cuthbert's Grammar School. For the rest, the teachers would pick out one or two they thought worth putting in for the scholarship at eleven. If you stayed at St. Dominic's or any Board School till you were 14 you left with a very

limited education - just the three Rs, plus the fourth R for Catholics, religion.

I have a feeling that at the adult stage there was an awareness of social differences between Catholics. St. Dominic's drew its congregation from Heaton, Sandyford, Shieldfield, Jesmond, and parts of Byker, but whatever the social differences all classes came together at Mass. You knew who the people from Jesmond were for they were better dressed and would pull up in carriages drawn by horses - the motor car was a rarity then. Social differences were also reflected in clothing worn, and to water down comparisons the clergy opened a chapel of ease in Lime Street, where the poorly clad could attend Mass without embarrassment.

Lime Street, Gibson Street and City Road housed many Irish families, the descendants of the immigrants who had come over after the Famine. Irish immigration had really reached saturation when I was a boy but some came to join people already here. A rendezvous for these sons and daughters of Erin was the Irish Club in Clayton Street, where they would collect together and get news of home.

There was the Ancient Order of Hibernians (a friendly society running mutual insurance) which always held a church parade on St. Patrick's Day, and from it developed the Anti-Partition League. The Irish Club was always a bit of a Fenian club but after the War the Anti-Partition movement came out into the open. But the Irish integrated well with the people of Newcastle, as the raising of the Tyneside Irish Battalion when War was declared in August 1914 showed. The Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle has ever depended, and been well served by, the young Irish priests who came over to this 'foreign mission'. When the Irish Free State was created the Irish Club gradually petered out, and a branch of the Anti-Partition Leage was formed.

Mr. De Valera came over to Newcastle in 1948, addressed

a mass meeting in the City Hall (*Mr. Edgar was chairman of this meeting - ed.*), spoke in a debate at the University Union, and met the heads of the Durham University Faculties. Adversity can stimulate action and Irishmen on Tyneside have been prominent in many aspects of public life: John Scanlan, Tom Larkin, Austin McNamara in Local Government, Martin Connelly in Parliament, Ted Colgan, Joe Cummins in Trade Unions, to name but a few.

3. *What changed after the First World War?*

During the War men of all classes were thrown together and shared a common danger when on active service. In the trenches the pre-War social veneers were stripped off and men from different classes realised that they were all alike and got down to a bed-rock sense of human values. I think it affected those from the higher classes more than those from the lower, but those from the lower discovered that those who'd been so superior were willing to take the same risks as themselves. Not the colonels and the brigadiers, but the lieutenants. I survived long enough to become a serjeant-major (if you lived long enough you were bound to) and I was responsible for indoctrinating the lieutenants into the life of the trenches as and when they were replaced. They didn't live long - they always had to go over the top in front of their men. They realised the calibre of the Tommy in the trenches and the qualities he had by virtue of having to rough it in normal civvy life.

There was a difference at home. Women were released from the fetters of household chores and went to work in munitions factories or joined auxiliary forces. The women worked alongside men exempted from military service and earned big money (the private in the trenches had a shilling a day), and it was taken for granted that any woman on munitions would have a fur coat. Unlike the Second World War when bombs fell on folk at home, people at home didn't know there

was a war on, unless they had someone killed or maimed. Soldiers coming home from the trenches on leave would return disgruntled at the affluence of those at home.

The result of all this was that men coming home on demobilisation were determined never to return to the pre-War servile conditions, and women were determined to retain the financial advantage of working. Before the War fear had been a driving force - fear of unemployment, sickness, bereavement. You worked or you starved, for the bosses had the power to dismiss you and there were not the welfare benefits we enjoy today. We returned from the War with a sense of rebellion against the old order. Men who had daily faced sudden death realised their human dignity and rights and were determined that things would never be the same again. These factors, plus the growth in numbers and strength of Trade Unions and the promise of the politicians that England would be a 'land fit for heroes', stimulated a social revolution. The General Strike was a by-product of this intent for reform.

4. *What about the Church after the War?*

Many of us who returned with a changed sense of values applied the test to our religion - not so much about the Faith as about the Church. I am sure that the priests who served as army chaplains with the troops at the Front had similar reactions. These Catholic chaplains did a great job. I had a feeling that the laity had not been so much 'priest ridden', as the enemies of the Church declared, but were not sufficiently recognised by the clergy as being capable and intelligent people. Even if our education had been less academic, it had been gained in the hard school of life.

On matters not affecting faith and morals we could rebel. After the War I was the secretary to a parochial men's club which had a chaplain who, in my opinion, was

irregular in seeking to veto a matter of the club's administration. I contested his action and the club committee supported me. The result was an ultimatum that either I be dismissed from the club membership or the club be closed. A general meeting of the members supported my opinion and the club was closed down. I mention this, not as an example of anti-clericalism by the laity but rather as an example of how men felt that there were areas where the influence of the Church should be reassessed. We accepted its influence in matters like attendance at Sunday Mass and on Holydays of Obligation, and the teaching on sin, confession, the sacraments, and so on, but there was a feeling to the point of resentment that, even allowing for prudent rather than hasty action, the Church was failing to give a lead in implementing the papal encyclicals on the social order. The attitude of Cardinal Bourne during the 1926 Strike when he took a very strong hand for Churchill and backed the Government against the strikers seemed to socially-minded Catholic men to conflict with that of Cardinal Manning in earlier industrial and social conflicts.

Parish priests were looked upon as being part of the establishment. In parishes served by the religious orders, the superiors and members of the community, being subject to transfer from one place to another, seemed to have wider horizons. The rapid growth of lay societies, especially the then Catholic Social Guild which, with the Catholic Workers College, produced Trade Union leaders, members of Parliament, and members of local Councils, gave the laity the opportunity to fill the void. Looking back, I acknowledge that this can leave the clergy freer to fulfil their pastoral work and to broaden the opportunity for lay folk to apply Christian principles to the new social order.

PROGRAMME 1977/8

21 September 1977	A.G.M. St. Dominic's Priory Hall, Newcastle, 7.30 p.m.
	Talk by the Chairman, the Rev. W.J.Nicholson.
19 October 1977	St.Dominic's Priory Hall, Newcastle, 7.30 p.m.
	The Reverend Bede Bailey, O.P. From Hexham to Newcastle - the Dominicans in the 1860s.
23 November 1977	St.Dominic's Priory Hall, Newcastle, 7.30 p.m.
	W. Gibson, Esq.: The 1715 Rebellion.
15 February 1978	St.Dominic's Priory Hall, Newcastle, 7.30 p.m.
	G.Milburn,Esq: Patterns of North East Religion in the 1850s.
15 March 1978	Durham University Library, Palace Green, Durham, 8.00 p.m.
	Dr.I.Doyle: Talk and display of manuscripts and printed books connected with the history of Catholicism in Great Britain since the Reformation.
Summer 1978	Two outings to be arranged for May & June.

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