

# Catholic Ancestor

Journal of the Catholic Family History Society

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**CATHOLIC ANCESTOR**  
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**FROM THE EDITOR**

Madeleine Barrows

Welcome to the summer issue of your journal. I begin with a plea: you will notice that it is rather slimmer than usual and this is because I need some more material to include, so please get writing and sending. My details are inside the front cover and, as Elizabeth Prior's article in this issue shows, publishing your researches here often leads to more information coming to light!

As space is available, it struck me that it might be useful for readers to have a little 'potted version' of what post-Reformation Catholics could do and when, so I invited Dr Val Fontana, the previous editor, to put one together and I have appended it to Shirley Monkhouse's article on "An Eighteenth Century Catholic Family in Brindle". I hope it proves a useful reference when considering how our forebears lived. Dr Fontana also kindly supplied a note about the purchasing of commissions in the British Army by Catholics for Note 7 in Mary Casteleyn's article. She has produced a most interesting article about Irish tradespeople in London in the eighteenth century and Selwyn Hodson Pressinger has produced more information to follow up his earlier article on Torphichen Preceptory and the Knights of St John.

This issue also contains three inserts. The Gift Aid form is repeated; if you are a tax payer please sign this and return it (if you have not already done so) so that, as a registered charity, the Society can reclaim the tax you have paid on your subscription. This is at no extra cost to you and makes a substantial difference to

the Society's income. If you are unsure about how the scheme works, please see Pam Fontana's article in the last issue.

The second insert is for the Annual Day Conference and AGM to be held on 23 October 2010 at the Westminster Archives Centre in London. Details of the talks are included with the yellow booking form. Please return the form if you intend to attend.

The third, lilac, insert is an order form for the registers of St Joseph's Mission, Southampton 1792-1849. Do read Pam Fontana's article on page 60 about this transcription as you will find the CD-ROM contains much more than simple registers and will be of interest to any member wanting to know more about the establishment and growth of parishes at this time.

Finally, the Committee has reconsidered the wording of the 'disclaimer notice' that we always publish concerning the copyright of articles and how they may be reprinted elsewhere, as it was apparent that the wording we have used for some time was causing some anxiety to potential authors. The Society is now happy that authors should keep the copyright but request that any republication of articles elsewhere includes a note stating that the piece was first published in *Catholic Ancestor*.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I must acknowledge the team work that produces this journal. Thank you to all contributors for sending me such useful and interesting material, and also to the Committee for their continued and prompt support. In particular, I would like to thank Margaret Butler for her careful and knowledgeable help with proofreading and checking.

## **FUTURE PUBLICATIONS OF *CATHOLIC ANCESTOR***

Please note the following target dates:

<b>Volume 13 2010/2011</b>	<b>Last date for copy to be received by the Editor</b>	<b>Target dates for publication</b>
No 3	23 October 2010	4 December 2010
No 4	21 February 2011	2 April 2011
No 5	25 June 2011	6 August 2011

### **Disclaimer**

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# FROM THE COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE REPORT

Peter Barlow

The regular quarterly committee meeting took place in April. On the train home I thought back to the first committee meeting that I attended in 2004. At that point the Society was just coming out of a period where it looked as though winding up was the only option. A new committee was appointed and in July 2005 Pam reported that we had a bright future. She was right. Today I can look at my bookshelf and see the nine CD-ROMs that we have published since then. The journal has continued to flourish and is now a substantial item landing on your doormat three times a year. I'd like to offer my thanks to all the members, the committee, and our editors who have worked hard to make the Society what it is today.

### **Publications**

We have offered a CD-ROM again with this issue of the journal and details are given in a separate article and an order form is in the centre of the journal as usual. We have more works in the pipeline but as was noted in the last journal we will run out of material if members do not come forward to propose new projects or assist with existing ones.

Hard copies of the Sardinian Embassy register transcripts have been produced and given to Barbara Murray and St Anselm's. Seeing these in print (printed double sided they form a stack of paper over 5 inches tall) is a graphic demonstration of the efforts of the transcribers.

A copy of all our CD-ROM publications has been given to the National Library of Ireland.

## **Marketing**

Our GENfair micro-site continues to be updated as we publish new data discs. Visitors to our main website are directed to the GENfair site to purchase items. At the time of writing we have received orders for twenty-three CD-ROMs, one printed publication, and one membership by this means.

Our friends in the Manchester and Lancashire FHS are continuing to offer all our discs through their own website. The East of London FHS offers the London discs.

## **Finance, Membership, Editor, and Branches**

Routine matters continue satisfactorily. We have already received a number of completed Gift Aid forms. The form is being reprinted in this issue in case any members missed it last time.

## **Gift Aid**

Thanks to those members who returned their forms promptly; this has enabled us to make a claim for the tax refundable for the year to 31 July 2006, amounting to £138. The final date for rendering this claim was 31 July 2010. The claims for 2007, 2008, 2009 (and of course 2010) are still in date, and have been held back in the hope that those members in a position to sign a Gift Aid form will get it into an envelope (if you are ordering a CD-ROM, it can go to Kath; otherwise it can go to Pam), so that we can make the most advantage of the possible refunds, for which it is essential for us to hold a signed form.

## **Publicity**

We have decided to discontinue our advertisement in *Family Tree Magazine*. This advertisement appeared every two months but produced practically no new members and was costing us over £200 a year. The committee will continue to investigate alternative and more effective forms of advertising. If any members would like additional copies of the single sheet advert that was included in the last journal then please let me know.

## **Library**

In the last journal we were looking to find a good home for the books that Barbara Murray holds for the Society. Since then Fr Michael Dolan, librarian at the Talbot Library, has seen the list of books which Barbara has in the Society's library and has requested thirty titles. Fr David Lannon, the Salford Diocesan Archivist, will look at the remainder.

## **Day Conference and AGM**

We have booked the lecture theatre at the City of Westminster Archives Centre for Saturday 23 October 2010. You will find full details and a booking form in the centre of this Journal.

# **REPORTS FROM THE BRANCHES**

## **FROM THE DERWENTSIDE BRANCH**

Margaret Bowery

Derwentside Catholic Family History Society continues to meet on the second and third Tuesday of each month at Our Lady of the Rosary Church Hall at 7.15 pm. Members use resources to research their ancestors and have provided local photographic exhibitions throughout the year.

## **FROM THE NORTH-WEST BRANCH**

Maureen Fitzgibbon

The meeting held on May 15 was very well attended and heard an excellent talk by Shirley Monkhouse on "Memoirs of a Manchester recusant" based on the articles she had written for the *Catholic Ancestor*.

The summer outing to the Shrewsbury Diocesan Archives was not as well attended as usual, as a few members had to pull out at short notice. Nevertheless Fr Phillips and his team provided a very interesting visit showing the records that they hold in their new home at Woodchurch and talking about their plans for the future.

Members of the Group are continuing to transcribe and index parish records and would welcome further volunteers. [Ed: anyone interested should contact Mrs Jean Smith, whose details are inside the front cover]

## THE ARTICLES

### **INTRODUCTION TO CATHOLIC SOUTHAMPTON by R E Scantlebury Registers of St Joseph's Mission, Southampton 1792-1849 Pam Fontana**

This CD-ROM, which is offered free to members with this issue (see the pullout order form in the centre of this issue), is full of treasures which will interest many members who have no connection whatever with the Southampton area. There are so many ways in which the very detailed history of this specific parish echoes the experiences of many other parishes in other parts of the country, and thus will illuminate for us the church life of so many of our forebears.

Canon Robert Scantlebury was a very thorough historian and had been strongly encouraged in his work by his bishop, Bishop (later Archbishop) John Henry King of Portsmouth (1941-1965). This late, and much loved, bishop came from a recusant family and, when he had had the time, did himself pursue serious historical researches. Robert Scantlebury started by continuing the Hampshire registers, some small section of which had been included in Catholic Record Society (CRS) Volume 1 covering the period 1721-1826. His work covered the period 1826-55, and was published by the CRS as Volume 42. Many more Hampshire records were transcribed by him and were subsequently published by the CRS as Volumes 43, 44 and 49. Volume 56 also includes some of his work: the registers of Marnhull, Dorset 1772-1826. Volume 59 contains the Isle of Wight registers. His work on Southampton would also have formed part of this series and was

almost ready to send to the CRS for printing, when his death cut this project short.

Carole Olding explains how she was asked by the Diocesan Archivist to see what could be done with the material at this point, and she has carried out additional researches, for example on the conditions of housing of the poor, which would include the average parishioner, as late as 1890.

When the Southampton church was enlarged in May 1850 a full list of the contributions and expenditure was kept; this echoes the experience of many parishes, responding to the large internal migration of the Irish poor for work in England.

The archives contained a printed report on the Catholic Boys School of Southampton covering the details of actual income and expenditure for the year to 19 March 1856, and this is included on the CD-ROM. A very similar one exists for Portsea: again, this record echoes the situation in many other parts of the country.

A celebrated Belgian poet, the Rev Henry C E Van Doorne, served at Southampton for a period and there is a most interesting outline of his life, including his service in Camberwell and Brixton, which will be of interest to members with London connections.

Southampton and Winchester were both areas that received many of the French émigré clergy and laity at the start of the French Revolution. Some were later able to return to France, but many among the laity had settled into some sort of employment and had married into the local families, so members may find some unexpected forebears from these registers. The French émigrés also spread more widely; many of them were married in French Chapels in London and their children were baptised there. Again, they were marrying into the local families as the years went on.

The list of contents on the CD-ROM sets this out as:

- Introduction to Catholic Southampton by Canon RE Scantlebury

- The Registers of St Joseph's Church, Southampton:
- Baptisms 1792 - 1848
- Marriages 1803 - 1849
- Introduction to St Joseph's Registers with Transcriptions of the Latin & French entries
- Bibliography
- Researches into the precursors of St Joseph's Church
- Documents relating to the enlargement of St Joseph's Church, its School and Anti-Catholic Hostility in Southampton
- Biography of Fr H C E Van Doorne, the Belgian Poet & Curate and Historian of St Joseph's
- A full transcription of the Pylewell House and Elm Cottage Marriage Register (1843 and 1855)

## **AUGUSTINE MEADE: A LONDON-BASED IRISH CATHOLIC MERCHANT**

Mary Casteleyn

The firm of Augustine Meade and Company operated in London for approximately twenty years or more from the mid 1750s onwards. London was an attractive venue for Irish Catholic transatlantic merchants, dealing as it did with the Irish linen and provisioning trade mainly across the North Atlantic to America and the West Indies. London then, as now, was a centre for the all important finances, banking and insurance.<sup>(1)</sup> Augustine Meade of New Buildings, Coleman Street, London, traded on his own account with the West Indies and America and also appears to have had a hand in marine insurance and clearing bills of exchange from other Irish Catholic merchants. The Meade family were from Limerick but may also be found in counties Cork and Clare. Although I have an extensive family tree for the Limerick Meade

family, all Catholic merchants with connections in France and America, as well as in the West Indies, I have not yet been able to slot Augustine into a particular branch of the family. These Limerick Meades were connected with, and married into, the Roche family of Limerick. The Roches were Irish Catholic merchants who carried out, amongst other things, an extensive provisioning trade with the West Indies, collecting all the cattle and hide produce, as well as salted butter, from the pastoral hinterland behind Limerick for transport on to the Caribbean. This family also provisioned the English Army and Fleet for over thirty years and the trade was immense. Augustine Meade appears to have acted as the London agent for members of this Roche family and it seems highly likely that he is indeed part of the extended Limerick Meade family. These Irish merchant families tended to marry into one another and set up partnerships with one another, always desirous of keeping the money and the business in the family, so to speak. One of the Roche family stood sponsor at the Baptism of Augustine's daughter Phillis in December 1776.

The Treasury Archives have a record of Mr Meade, who presented himself at the Treasury in May 1775 with a letter for William Eden Esq from Lord Clare in Ireland concerning the case of Mr Roche of Limerick, whose ship, the *Helena and Mary*, loaded with 1,000 sacks of rape seed was en route for the Port of London. Mr Eden's "kind interference" was sought to enable the cargo to be unloaded free of duty. Failing this kind interference the cargo, though badly needed in London, would of necessity be sent on to Holland at great expense and cost to Mr Roche.<sup>(2)</sup> Sadly there is no other paperwork in the archives to establish whether the cargo was unloaded in London or not. In June 1782, after Augustine had died, another petition on behalf of Philip Roche of Limerick was presented by William Burke on behalf of the firm trading as "Mrs, the widow, Augustine Meade of No 6, Coleman Street Buildings". Mr Roche had fitted out two ships from Limerick, and had sailed under the Dutch flag, with provisions for the Dutch islands of St Eustatius and St Martin some months

before hostilities with Holland had broken out. These two islands had now been captured by the English and Mr Roche's ships and cargoes had been seized; the £15,000 raised by the sale of Mr Roche's property was distributed amongst His Majesty's Fleet and Army. Mr Roche's grievances were very great indeed: Would His Majesty please redress the said grievances and order the Lords of the Treasury to pay him the value of his property?<sup>(3)</sup> Whether this petition on behalf of an apparently loyal subject was successful is not recorded. But what is very interesting is that the firm of "Mrs, the widow, Augustine Meade" was dealing with it. This does not quite fit the usual picture of abject eighteenth century Irish Catholic womanhood, to have an Irish woman, operating an extensive business and to have an agent call on the Lords of the Treasury with a message for the King concerning the return of a £15,000 bounty.

Augustine Meade's will is dated 12 August 1778 and was proved at London on 6 March 1779 by Elizabeth Meade, his widow. He mentions seven children "now living" in his will but does not name them. Elizabeth is his sole executrix, indicating that all the children are probably minors. The position of a Catholic woman is interesting as she has sole management of his affairs and as we have seen from above, his business. He asks her to supervise the balancing of his books, pay all his debts and keep the remaining monies for her own upkeep and that of the children "she has always been a good mother to them and will continue to do so as long as God shall spare her life". She is directed to his cash and bankers books "to be found in my bureau by which it would appear that there is now at my Bankers in Bills about £4000". Touchingly he adds "Mrs Meade will find in my bureau a canvas bag containing 23 guineas which I left there for her present use least [*sic*] she wanted money".<sup>(4)</sup>

The registers of St James, Spanish Place, London show the following baptisms for some of Augustine's children: [note these come from the CD-ROM *Miscellaneous London transcriptions*]

14/6/1769 Elizabeth Mead (sic), dau of Augustus and Elizabeth. Sponsor: Rev. Matthew O'Casey  
6/8/1770 Michael Mead (sic), son of Augustus and Elizabeth. Sponsor: Rev Thomas Hussey  
27/1/1773 Alice Mede (sic), dau of Augustus and Elizabeth. Sponsor: Rev Richard Robinson  
15/8/1774 Helene Meade, dau of Augustus and Elizabeth. Sponsor: Elizabeth Meade  
15/12/1775 Helen Meade, dau of Augustus and Elizabeth. No Sponsor recorded  
23/12/1776 Phillis Meade, dau of Sir Augustus and Elizabeth. Sponsor: John Roche

There is one other entry which must surely be for this family but which appears to have been incorrectly transcribed by a careless or forgetful priest and this is for 1772, (no date but between 9 February and 5 March) and which reads "Andrew Mead, son of Sir Michael and Lady Elizabeth. Sponsor: Sir Andrew Mead (by Rev Thomas Hussey)". Augustine and Elizabeth did have a son called Andrew as he appears in his mother's will. Two of the above children, Michael baptised in 1770 and the first Helene, baptised in 1774, must have died young<sup>(5)</sup>

Poor Elizabeth Meade did not have an easy time of it in her widowhood, although as we have seen, she continued to operate her husband's business. She does not appear to have had the same business acumen as her husband. The *London Gazette* shows evidence that she was declared a bankrupt in 1784 and again in 1792, this last must have been a claim against her estate as she was dead at that date.

Elizabeth Meade, widow, names her seven living children in her will, which was dated 9 June 1788 and proved in London on 7 November 1789. Her sons are named as Augustine, Christopher and Andrew Meade and each were to receive their portraits – in all probability miniatures which were popular at the time. The daughters are named as "my eldest daughter Elizabeth" and Alicia,

Helena and Phillippia Phillis. The will is interesting as she names four executors, namely Margaret Quin, widow, now residing at Great Saint Helens, London, and Peter Prendergast, John Greenham and Joseph Dungan, all of White Street, Little Moorfield, Middlesex. The remaining family portraits were to be divided amongst the three youngest daughters as well as “my body cloathes, linens and laces”. All the rest of her possessions are to be put into public auction or sold by private sale and the monies raised were to be invested for her four daughters. However the eldest, Elizabeth, was not to get her share unless she returned to live in England before the month of August 1794 (when she would have been twenty-five years old). If she did not return, or if she died beforehand, her share was to be added to her sisters’ shares. It is not made clear where Elizabeth was, but I suspect she was probably in a convent on the continent.<sup>(6)</sup>

The only child I have traced so far is Augustine Meade junior, who entered the Army as ensign in the 13<sup>th</sup> Regiment in 1794. There must have been enough money available for a commission to be bought for him, although he is not serving in any of the top and therefore expensive regiments.<sup>(7)</sup> By 1795 he was a Lieutenant in the 48<sup>th</sup> Regiment and was at the surrender of Malta by the French in 1800. In 1803 he obtained a promotion to Captain in the 39<sup>th</sup> Regiment and by 1804 was promoted to Major in the Royal Regiment of Malta and he served in Malta and Sicily. According to a document dated from Malta, 13 December 1809, and sent to His Majesty’s Board for Claims in Sicily, all of Augustine’s effects and personal baggage had fallen into the hands of the enemy whilst on route to Sicily. There is a somewhat plaintive note in his appeal “for which losses I have hitherto received no compensation although the propriety of my claim to His Majesty’s Grant for Loss of Baggage was upon earlier investigation fully admitted and established”. I hope they paid up. In this document he lists his knowledge of foreign languages as French and Italian and states he has fifteen years total service.<sup>(8)</sup> There is a marriage for an Augustine Meade to a Frances

O'Shanley in the registers of St Martin's in the Field on 27 October 1785.<sup>(9)</sup> This is possibly the same Augustine, but no Catholic marriage has so far been found, although there probably was one.<sup>(10)</sup>

The other two sons remain untraced as do the four daughters. They, presumably, had no money for dowries and thus had no hope of any reasonable marriages. It is possible that, if they survived, they entered the religious life, but this is a simple guess on my part.

This is a short vignette of an Irish Catholic family operating in London in the eighteenth century which was reasonably affluent, educated and socially aware and who later fell on hard times. This Meade family does not present the usual picture of the impoverished immigrant Irish, nor indeed did they represent that class. Instead these Meades are symbolic, and indeed part of, the disposed old Irish Catholic gentry. Debarred from owning land and property and excluded until later in the eighteenth century from the professions, these old Catholic families took to the only thing available to them – trade. Consequently being ‘in trade’ amongst the Irish had none of the social stigma associated with being ‘in trade’ in England. Many Irish Catholic merchants operated on a global scale, were commercially astute and highly successful. So much so, that one Protestant gentleman sitting in his Irish estate bemoaned the fact that, whilst the Protestants had all the land, the Catholics (of this class) had acquired all the money. And it was just this sort of commercial money that was used to assist and support the re-establishment of Catholic Church in Ireland after Catholic emancipation in the early nineteenth century.

#### References and notes

(Ed: thanks to Dr Val Fontana PhD for the notes on Catholics in the British army and Catholic marriage registers.)

1. Thomas Truxes, *London's Merchant Community and North Atlantic Commerce in the Mid-Eighteenth Century in Irish and Scottish Mercantile Networks in Europe and Overseas during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*. David Dickson, and Ian Parmentier and Jane Ohlmeyer, editors [Academic Press, 2007].
2. The National Archives (T1/515) Case of Mr Roche of Limerick.
3. The National Archives (CO 246/1) A State of Mr Philip Roche John's Case.
4. The National Archives. The Will of Augustine Meade. 1779.
5. Catholic Family History Society. *Miscellaneous London District Transcriptions. Vol 2: Registers of St. James, Spanish Place. Baptisms 1732-1848*. CD-ROM.
6. The National Archives. The Will of Elizabeth Meade. 1789.
7. Augustine Meade junior was legally barred from holding any commission in the British Army in 1794, but there were ways around this. The Indemnity laws allowed one to hold a commission for twelve months before having to comply with the Test Act requirements to declare against transubstantiation and receive the Church of England sacrament; at the end of the twelve months Parliament passed another Indemnity Act, which gave another twelve months' grace and so on. Some questions were asked about the legality of this procedure, but Parliament passed an Act, sponsored by the then 'Protestant' Duke of Norfolk, in 1817 to clarify matters. However, it was not unknown for Catholic young gentlemen to join the British Army as Officers for as long as the war lasted with no questions asked. In units formed during the war commissions could be granted without purchase.

If he had purchased a commission in a Foot Regiment a Lieutenantcy would have cost him £800 and a Captaincy £1,500. This did not usually vary much by regiment or battalion, although one had to pay a lot more in the Guards and Household Regiments: £1,000 and £3,100. Normally there was only one battalion per regiment. Extra battalions were added during a war. The number of men in a battalion was fairly constant if they could be recruited; there was no conscription. The idea of buying a commission was a way to ensure that officers came from the

gentry class and, by owning property, had a stake in the stability of the country.

8. The National Archives (WO 25/747/M pt 2) Statement of Service of Major Augustine Meade, Royal Regiment of Malta. 1809.
9. The IGI: Register of St Martin in the Fields.
10. The C of E service was necessary if you wanted the marriage to be legal and, because of their business interests, the Meades would have required this. Not finding a Catholic marriage does not indicate that there was not one, because many old registers were in little notebooks that priests carried around with them.

## THE “MATTHEW/JAMES” CONUNDRUM

Elizabeth Prior

My interest was piqued by Agnes Ainsworth’s article “All the Newsham Priests”, (*Catholic Ancestor* Vol 13 No 1, pp 32-41) as, until I read it, I had no idea that John Newsham had been married twice. My Newsham connection is through his daughter Jennet by his first wife Margaret Webster. I should mention that some time ago I had obtained a copy of John’s will<sup>(1)</sup> but, as it contained no apparent reference to his children by Margaret, I thought it must be another John, possibly his son born in 1764, and so put it to one side.

I made contact with Agnes and discovered the reason for her statement that “there is a possible fifth Newsham priest in that family”. The problem is a baptismal entry for a James Newsham in the registers of Westby which states:

Sept. 25. James son of John & Betty Newsham, Westby.  
Richard Gillot & Mary etc.<sup>(2)</sup>

By his will dated 20 October 1801 and proved on 15 August 1808 John appointed his son James as one of his executors

and also gave James the property known as Moss Edge in Lytham. He also left other property to his executors to provide for the maintenance of his infant children, who are listed in birth order: William, Joseph, Robert, Henry, Edward, Matthew, Charles and Ann. The will was witnessed, *inter alia*, by James Newsham senior. Agnes assumed, not unreasonably in light of the above entry, first, that the witness James was John's son by his first wife as it is not unknown for there to be living siblings with the same Christian name and, second, that the James appointed executor and also as beneficiary was the James born in 1789.

At the date of his will the ages of John's infant children based on their baptismal dates<sup>(3)</sup> were: William 20; Joseph 20; Robert 18; Henry 16; Edward 14; Matthew/James 12; Charles 10; and Ann 8. There was also a son, Thomas, aged twenty-five. I had serious doubts that John would have been legally able either to devise property to or appoint as an executor a minor. Even if it were legally possible, it made no sense for John to ignore his older children by his second marriage in favour of James. I realise that this begs the question of why, apart from James, John did not refer to the children of his first marriage. My argument would be that the gift of Moss Edge to James was on an unwritten understanding that James would share the income with his full-blood siblings.

A comparison of the signatures on John's will and on the will of James Newsham senior<sup>(4)</sup> shows a striking similarity. The signature of James junior (son of John and Margaret) on an indenture dated 18 January 1792<sup>(5)</sup>, wherein James is quite clearly identified as the son and heir at law of Margaret née Webster, is plainly different. James Newsham senior was John's younger brother. Therefore the James named in his father's will is the son of the first marriage.

My view is that the priest made a mistake when entering the child's name in the baptismal register and that the name James should have been Matthew. Fr Matthew Newsham died on 20 May 1848 and his death certificate gives his age as 58. If my assumption is correct then the age is right as Fr Matthew would

have been 59 on his next birthday. As further corroboration Fitzgerald Lombard's *The English & Welsh Priests 1801–1914* lists Fr Matthew's birth year as 1789.

1. LRO ref. W/A/R125a/4
2. CRS vol.15 p.30
3. CRS vol.16 pp 449 & 451 & vol.15 pp 25,27,29,30,32,33,
4. LRO ref. W/RW/A/R166/83
5. LRO ref. DDL181

## **A CATHOLIC FAMILY IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BRINDLE**

Shirley Monkhouse

*“~ unique among the Benedictine parishes of England~” Cardinal  
Hume*

“My father was put apprentice to a Catholic in Brindle”: Thomas Eadsforth (1787-1868). This was the statement which, many years ago, led me to connect my Manchester family with their Lancashire forebears. The sentence was to open another chapter in the history of the family and I was to discover the importance of the two words Catholic and Brindle.

To begin with, I knew nothing of Brindle apart from its place on the map, so we dutifully incorporated it into our Lancashire pilgrimages to visit places associated with the Eadsforth ‘name-bearers’. After our visit in February 1995, we came away with a jumble of information and impressions, words and photos, which I filed along with my uncle’s notes from the Lancashire Record Office. I made a tentative attempt to create some kind of family tree from the long lists of names and wrote a short chapter for the booklet I produced for a family reunion in 1997. Then life pointed me into another direction and intensive research was put on the back burner.

When I opened the files again, I discovered the possibilities of Google and email: these were and are a lifeline for me as I now live in Warwickshire, rather distant from the land of the ancestors. And so I have been able to put together a more complete picture of the time my forefathers spent in Brindle.

Before appearing in Brindle, the family had lived for many generations in the Garstang area, probably from about 1451 until 1697. Several Eadsforths of varying spellings appear in the Garstang records, so I was able to build up a picture of their lives, including the farmhouses they lived in and some incidents from daily life. The large family of William Edsforth of Barnacre stands out. They were all confirmed by Bishop Leyburn in Nateby near Garstang in 1687, and William's will, written in 1696, records that they were tenants of the Gerard family.

The reason why the family split up so shortly after William's death in 1697 may never be known. Son Thomas went to Aldcliffe by Lancaster, Robert went to Myerscough and Alexander (the first bearer of the name which was to be repeated for many generations) apparently went to Brindle. These were at the time all areas with Catholic connections, so perhaps they were logical destinations. My great-great-great-grandfather Thomas relates in his memoirs that an Alexander, presumably the son of William, had to leave his Protestant wife and their two sons, taking only one of his horses. This is the Alexander "who left home to preserve his faith" who so fascinated me when, as a child, I first read the old family papers!

It is in the Brindle registers that the name Alexander next appears and the family seems to have become well established in the parish during the 18th century.

To understand something of their lives, it is helpful to know a little of the history of the area. Brindle is one of the oldest Catholic parishes, having been in the care of Benedictine monks, who first began to serve in the area about 1677. However the adventures of the Catholics of Brindle began earlier than that!

Brindle's major claim to fame is the connection with Saint

Edmund Arrowsmith, who was born in Haydock, Lancashire in 1585. He was baptised Bryan, but took the name Edmund at his confirmation. His parents Robert and Margery (née Gerard) Arrowsmith had both suffered for their faith: his maternal grandfather Nicholas Gerard was a recusant and his paternal grandfather died in prison. Both Edmund's parents and their household had been driven, tied two by two, to Lancaster jail, leaving their four little children uncared for, until some neighbours took pity on them, an experience that must have deeply affected the small Edmund. In 1605 he entered the English College at Douai, was ordained in 1611 in Arras in France, and returned to England in June 1613 to work as a priest in southern Lancashire. In 1624 he became a Jesuit, which in a way sealed his fate.

According to the Penal Laws in force at that time, no priest could say Mass, so the Benedictines and Jesuits had to move around the parish, saying Mass in several Mass houses, to avoid persecution.<sup>(1)</sup> Mass was said at Newhouse Farm, Top o' th' Lane, Higher Shutting Field Farm and many other sites, which have been lost since. As there was no fixed pattern of Masses, Brindle Catholics devised their own secret means of advertising the location of the next Mass: clean washing was hung on hedges! I wonder what the code was: maybe a shirt or skirt for the place, and the number of garments might have indicated the time.

In the summer of 1628, Edmund was ministering in the Brindle area. He was betrayed by the son of the landlord of the Blue Anchor Inn, but was given an advance warning that soldiers were being sent to capture him. He escaped on horseback along the lanes of Brindle, crossing the fields to Arrowsmith House to say his last Mass, then along Grigson Lane. His route has been mapped out and can be followed by visitors to the area. He stopped on Hillhouse Lane to hide his vestments, chalice and altar stones, which were eventually found in 1774, when their cottage hiding place blew down in a gale. Finally, his horse refused to jump a ditch on Brindle Moss and the tiny statue of Our Lady, which he always carried with him, fell into the ditch and he was captured.

He was taken to the Boar's Head, where his captors spent nine shillings of his money on drink, (nowadays something in the region of £40!), before being delivered the next day to Lancaster Castle. He was tried for High Treason and, on 28 August 1628, he was taken from the Castle and dragged on a hurdle through the streets to the gallows on the moor. Here he was hanged, drawn and quartered. Later, a Catholic managed to cut off one off his hands, and this relic is now preserved in a silver casket in St Oswald's Church, Ashton-in-Makerfield.

In that year, too, the Recusant Roll for Leyland Hundred shows Brindle as having 38 recusants, who paid a total of £2 10s 8d in fines. In 2010 this would have the spending power of £225; at about £6 each: this does not seem to be a vast sum.

Brindle had a long association with the Gerard family, who were widespread in Lancashire. As we have seen, Saint Edmund Arrowsmith's grandfather was a Gerard and, about 1677-8, Alice Gerard of the Well gave a site to build a chapel and house on Gregson Lane in Brindle. This was confiscated in 1718 as a result of the 1715 Rebellion. In 1696 William Edsforth of Barnacre and his family had been tenants of Lady Anne Gerard so, maybe, Alexander moved to Brindle for that reason: knowing that he would be in a solidly Catholic parish. Throughout the eighteenth century the fortunes of the family must have been inextricably entwined with the history, religious and social, of Brindle.

In 1726 Dom William Placid Naylor obtained the large Stansfield House and its grounds, establishing a chapel in the cottage, which still stands, and built up the Brindle Mission. Stansfield House was, in fact, bought by non-Catholics and held in trust until it could be handed over to Father Naylor. This was a tremendous risk on the part of the buyers, as The Test Act made it impossible for Catholics to inherit or acquire property.

Almost certainly it was Father Naylor who officiated at the marriage of Alexander Eidsforth (II) and Mary his first wife on 10 November 1729 at St Joseph's, and christened their six children. All of the children were given the traditional family names seen in

the previous generations. Babies were baptised very shortly after birth, often on the same day, so we can take the baptism dates as an indication of their birthdays. All the names appear in the family documents, so I was delighted to find them confirmed by the baptism records of St Joseph's, courtesy of the IGI.

Ann was baptised in January 1731, and her brother Robert on 8 December 1732. Sadly Robert was to live only a few years and he was buried at St James Parish Church in Brindle on 1 March 1740. His brother John was baptised on 10 September 1735 and he was followed by William who was christened on 3 March 1739. Then came Mary baptised on 4 September 1742 and Jane on 24 September 1744. This last baby died in May 1745 and was buried on the 8 May, also in St James churchyard. As St Joseph's chapel did not at that time have its own graveyard, Catholics were permitted to be buried in the graveyard of the Parish Church.

The children apparently lost their mother soon after the death of Jane, as a Mary, wife of Alexander Eidsford, was buried at St James Church on 6 May 1746. As a widower with a young family, ranging in age between 15 and 1, Alexander would have found it difficult to care for the children. The solution for most widowers was to marry again, and this Alexander did, appearing very shortly afterwards with a new wife Alice Waring, who was to bear him nine children.

Helen was baptised at St Joseph's on 14 March 1748, Robert on 29 January 1751, and Elizabeth on 10 February 1753. Alexander, the third of the name and my great-great-great-great-grandfather, was baptised on 9 November 1754. (Looking into the future, he married Elizabeth Foster at St James Church on 16 October 1777 and soon afterwards moved to Manchester to start his own dynasty.) His birth was followed by Thomas, who was baptised on 29 October 1756, Alice, baptised on 27 August 1758 and James, baptised on 3 May 1761. Then followed the two baby Henrys, possibly named after Alice's father. The first Henry was baptised on 2 September 1762, but died only a few weeks later, being buried at St James on 9 December of the same year. Maybe

Alice sensed that the next baby might be her last and also named him Henry. He was baptised on 4 September 1764. Family records mention two other children of Alexander and Alice: William and Mary, but they do not appear in the registers for this period, so perhaps they were the already-mentioned children of Alexander's first wife. I find it interesting, but infuriating and sometimes confusing, that the family had used the same pool of names throughout the centuries, since about 1450! It does however mean that a Peter or Philip is unlikely to be one of the close family!

Alice herself was one of a large Waring family in Brindle. One of the three members of the little congregation who were sent to the Continent to be educated as priests was Ambrose Waring, who was professed at Dieulouard in 1761. Maybe he was the brother of Alice?

By 1767 there were about 600 in the congregation when Father Naylor was succeeded by Reverend Joseph Lawrence Hadley. Interestingly, in the 1767 Papist returns there is no mention of the Eadsforth family, but they were certainly still in the area and it was probably the Reverend Hadley who said the burial service for Alice's husband Alexander (II) on 25 June 1772, before he too was buried in the graveyard at St James.

Shortly after this, in 1774, the family would have experienced the excitement of the local Catholics when the vestments belonging to Edmund Arrowsmith were discovered. We were lucky enough to see them at our visit in 1995 and it is not too difficult to imagine the effect this discovery might have had on the Catholic families of the neighbourhood - a connection with their somewhat insecure past, a reminder of the dangers and adventures endured by the priests who kept their faith alive and a confirmation of their pride, that was to lead the grandson of Alice and Alexander, Thomas in Manchester, to boast that his Brindle-born father was an "old English Catholic".

The Brindle Mission became the parent of several others in the neighbourhood and, in 1784, Eidsforth family members might have been among the 168 persons confirmed in Brindle. I wonder

if anybody remembered that a little band of the Barnacre family had set off on 3 September 1687, nearly 100 years previously, to be confirmed at Nateby Hall. This Confirmation and the commitment of local Catholics might have encouraged the developing plans to build a church to serve the faithful of Brindle and, indeed, Reverend Hadley was to build the present church of St Joseph in 1786. It was constructed in a very plain style to avoid drawing attention to its existence as Catholics were still forbidden to build places of worship.

By this time, however, Alexander III and his family were probably settled in Manchester, as his son Thomas was born there early in 1787. However, the rural relatives who stayed in Brindle would surely have enjoyed the relative security of the new barn-like structure in a deep dell, well-hidden by the trees around Stansfield House, which then became the Presbytery for the new church. 'Eatsforth's still appear in the records of St Joseph's until around 1803; one branch of the name having mutated from Eidsforth around the middle of the eighteenth century. There remain no clues as to the lives and deaths of those families, as the Burial Ground dates only from 1815. However, another line did emerge from Brindle, moving to the north-east of England, which gave rise to a large number of descendants, who are still there today.

The dates give us the framework of their time in Brindle, but why did they choose this place and how did they earn a living? Alexander (III)'s son Thomas mentions that his father "was put apprentice to a Catholic in Brindle". I am confident that this refers to the textile industry, especially as we do know that this Alexander at his marriage in 1777 was a "weaver of Brindle", as was his brother Robert who married Ann Yeat, a widow of Brindle, at St James in 1774. There had been Eadsforth weavers in the Barnacre family, too. In 1595 a 'Book of Recusants' recorded Robert and Cecily E?dsforth of Garstang, "poor householders, he a webster" (Catholic Record Society). So maybe this was a skill passed down from one generation to the next. Perhaps there is

some kind of ancestral memory, as I myself am fascinated by the appearance and feel of textiles.

Weaving was certainly a major feature of Brindle life in pre-Industrial Revolution times, the village itself having expanded as a result of the industry. The hamlet “Top o’ th’ Lane” on the hillside beyond the Parish Church is well-known for its rows of weavers’ cottages with their typical loomshop windows. The houses date from the early eighteenth century, so I wonder if Alexander and his family might have lived in one of these houses. I have found references to the ‘independent weavers of Brindle’, which means they were in the fortunate position to buy raw materials from dealers and sell on the woven goods to whomever they pleased: a considerable advantage, cutting out the middlemen. Linen was mainly produced on hand looms and good weavers could earn good wages. They were not exclusively men, so maybe our ancestor-mothers, too, could help boost the family income. In some cases weaving was so remunerative that they could work for four days, and earn about £4 each. In about 1780, this would have the 2010 equivalent spending power of £250. In some areas they considered themselves quite a superior set and would not drink with farmers!

We can only guess what factors led Alexander III to leave pastoral Brindle for the rapidly growing town of Manchester. Of course, the exodus to the cities was beginning, but one intriguing possibility has come to light. While reviewing my material for this article, just after the 2010 volcanic eruption in Iceland left us and three daughters stranded in Salzburg and Romania, I was interested to discover a volcanic eruption in Iceland in 1783 - the Laki Fissure eruption - which, as well as being catastrophic for the Icelanders (25% of the population died in the ensuing famine), had serious consequences in Britain.

The amount of volcanic ash in the atmosphere over the UK gave rise to the “sand-summer” as the 1783 summer became known. The amount of sulphur dioxide released by the eruption was colossal: 120 million tons. The resulting smog - the Laki Haze

- was deadly, killing as it spread over Western Europe. It reached Great Britain by late June 1783, and thousands died from sulphur dioxide poisoning, outdoor workers being particularly vulnerable. The effect on the weather was no less dramatic. As the haze heated up, a series of heavy thunderstorms were unleashed, with hailstones causing livestock losses.

Possibly, then, conditions in the Lancashire countryside contributed to the reasons which led Alexander and his extended family, including his sisters, to move to Manchester. Whatever the reasons, he must have been confident of earning a better living in the developing cotton industry. So, attracted by the possibilities in Manchester, he followed the growing stream of migrants, entering the town by the main thoroughfare from the north, Long Millgate. Not far from the northern edge of the town, he settled “bottom of Shude hill in Garden St.” It seems that they were not the only migrants from Brindle: when Alexander's daughter Helen was baptised in Manchester in 1792, her godfather was Silvester Waring, himself born in Brindle and doubtless a relative of Alexander's mother Alice.

Manchester's earliest mills dated from the beginning of the 1780's and in 1786, around the time that our family arrived, “a stranger approaching the town only saw one high chimney, which was Mr Arkwright's Mill.” Two centuries later that site was marked by another landmark: the CIS building!

Somehow I like to think of Alexander and his family keeping that mill chimney in their sights as they too approached the town. Was it for them a symbol of hoped-for prosperity? Living so near that mill, did Alexander himself work there? And where did his son Thomas start work at the age of nine? I shall never know. One thing is certain: without those little groups of eighteenth century migrants, which included my own family, Manchester would not have developed at such a phenomenal rate.

#### Sources and acknowledgements

- Eadsforth Family Archive

- St Joseph's Church Brindle Website and Mick Gardner
- *Old Catholic Lancashire*, Dom FO Blundell, [London, Burns & Oates, 1925-1941].
- [www.brindlehistoricalsociety.org.uk](http://www.brindlehistoricalsociety.org.uk)
- St James Parish registers from Lancashire Online Parish Clerk Project.

Summary note of regulations concerning Catholic behaviour in England & Wales (from Dr Val Fontana PhD)

Up until the 1778 First Catholic Relief Act it was true that no priest could say Mass in England and Wales, and anyone informing on a Catholic priest presiding at a celebration of the Mass was awarded £100 and the priest imprisoned for life. However, like one imprisoned in Hurst Castle in Hampshire in the eighteenth century, he could be allowed out to say Mass for locals as required at the discretion of the governor of the prison.

The First Catholic Relief Act repealed the laws restricting the activities of Priests and allowed Catholics to inherit and own land in England and Wales. At the same time the military authorities issued two forms of attestation to all recruits giving them the choice of saying they were Protestants or missing that bit out. Catholics could still not build chapels within five miles of any borough, like Portsmouth.

The Second Catholic Relief Act, passed in 1791, allowed Catholics to build chapels anywhere they wanted, provided they were publicly registered and did not have a tower, spire or bells: they said nothing about a chiming clock! Hence, there was a surge of chapel building after 1791, including Newport in the Isle of Wight, Portsea and West Cowes and others all over the country.

In 1828 the Test and Corporation Act was repealed and, in 1829, the Emancipation Act was granted allowing

Catholics to become equal citizens with their Protestant neighbours.

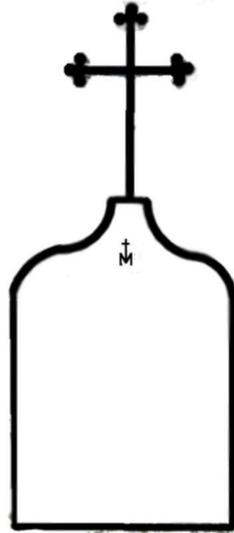
Thus, over fifty-one years Catholics were granted Emancipation from the Penal Laws passed as a result of the English Reformation. I will not here go into the differences in Scotland and Ireland.

## ***IN SION FIRMATA SUM – I AM FIRMLY ROOTED IN SION (SIRACH 24:15)***

Pete Barlow

Broadwater Cemetery is very close to where I live in Worthing. The cemetery was opened in 1863 and is the last resting place of over 24,000 Worthing residents. For many years it was uncared for and subject to frequent vandalism. Thanks to the efforts of the Friends of Broadwater Cemetery it is being restored to its former glory. The cemetery contains the grave of Mary Hughes, allegedly the inspiration behind the “Mary had a Little Lamb” nursery rhyme. Also buried in the cemetery are the Victorian naturalists Richard Jeffries and William Henry Hudson.

In one part of the cemetery there are a group of eleven unusual tombstones which I have tried to illustrate in the accompanying sketch. Each stone is surmounted by an iron cross and carved at the top of each stone is a letter M with a cross imposed. These are the graves of the Sisters of Our Lady of Sion. The first sisters arrived in England



from Paris in 1860, they started a foundation in Worthing in 1861; a school was built in 1862 and is still in existence today, it is no longer run by the nuns, although they are represented on the board of governors.

Mostly there are two nuns interred in each grave, one from a death in the nineteenth century and the other from a death in the twentieth century. Most of the nineteenth century inscriptions give the religious name (always of the form Marie X de Sion), the lay name, the words “Religieuse Proffesse”, the date and place of birth and the date and place of death (always Worthing). The twentieth century inscriptions give just the religious name and date of death.

The earliest death was in 1870 and the last ones were in 1941. I have captured the details from the gravestones onto the spreadsheet used for input into the Index of Nuns. I have also enquired of the Friends of Broadwater Cemetery if the plot in which these graves stand is Roman Catholic, so far they have no definite evidence but have promised to look into it. If it turns out to be Catholic then it would be useful to publish the details of all the burials. I would expect that quite a few would be of people who had retired to Worthing from other parts of the country and whose deaths might otherwise be difficult to trace.

## **TORPHICHEN: FAMILY, PRECEPTORY AND THE ORDER OF MALTA, SCOTLAND (PART B.)**

Selwyn Hodson-Pressinger FSA (Scot)

In a previous edition of *Catholic Ancestor* (Volume 11, Number 5) I wrote about Torphichen and the Catholic family links to Torphichen Preceptory and the Hospitaller Order of St John (Order of Malta). In particular, references were made to the history of the Order in Scotland and its ancient connection with the family of my late stepfather, James Bruce Sandilands. He was particularly

aware of the history and his unusual position in being the sole Catholic hereditary peer in the family since the Reformation.

The only other Catholic convert had been his aunt Alison Sandilands. After her death in 1971 James received a letter from his (Protestant) father, Lord Torphichen, which ended with the following words: "Father Healey officiated - I think he must be the first Catholic priest that has crossed the doorstep of Calder House since before the Reformation". Calder, built in the 1300s and formerly known as Caldour Castle, was the ancient seat of the Sandilands/Torphichen family. Four years later, following the death of Lord Torphichen, the local Catholic priest was invited again to Calder House to say a memorial Mass in the former Great Hall (now drawing-room). It was a significant milestone. Not since the Reformer John Knox performed his first Protestant service (in this very room) during the Reformation had any Masses been said there. This event, and Lord Torphichen's earlier gesture of inviting Father Healey to Calder, were clearly reflections of positive change and improved relations between different Christian denominations after many centuries of division.

More recently, in November 2009, another significant event occurred of a similar nature. For the first time since 1560 a Catholic Mass, attended by members of the Order of Malta, was celebrated in Torphichen Preceptory. It was a *Missa Cantata* on the Feast of St Josaphat. Said in the Traditional Rite (or Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite) the Mass was organised by Una Voce Scotland, the Scottish branch of the International Latin Mass Federation. The Old Rite was deemed particularly appropriate as this would have been used by the Order's predecessors at Torphichen: the religious orders used the Roman Rite rather than the Sarum Missal that was favoured by many Scottish dioceses. Una Voce Scotland had invited their members and those of the Order of Malta to take part at Torphichen, and as a result a party of six knights attended, led by the Order's 'Grand Prior of England'.

Fortunately I was first alerted by a member of Una Voce Scotland, who kindly rang me after reading the obituary in *The Times* of my mother Pamela, the Dowager Lady Torphichen, which contained many references to my stepfather, the history of Torphichen, and the Order of Malta. Later I was contacted by the chosen celebrant Father Hugh Boyle who, like me, is a Scottish Companion of the Order of Malta and a Fellow of Society of Antiquaries (Scotland). He also sent me a DVD produced by Una Voce Scotland that recorded the special Mass which he had presided over. Apparently another event (a Solemn High Mass) is being planned at Torphichen Preceptory later in 2010, this being the last of such events organised by Una Voce in Pre-Reformation sites in Scotland.

Torphichen, on account of its unique history, is of particular interest to Scottish Catholics and to members of the Order. Seven centuries after St Ninian brought Christianity to West Lothian and built his chapel in the village of Torphichen, the Hospitaller Order of St. John (later known as the Order of Malta) incorporated it into their newly constructed Norman church in 1168. A hospital was then created on the upper floor of the transept. Little remains now of the original Preceptory, save for the transept, chancel and tower. The present church was built in 1756 and occupies the site of the old nave, the foundations of which are currently preserved by Historic Scotland [*Ed: a photograph can be viewed at <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk>*].

It was around 1124 that King David I granted the Order of St John the preceptory at Torphichen, which thereafter became their Scottish headquarters. His successor, King Malcolm IV, later granted the Order a house in every burgh in the kingdom. These houses all remained dependencies of Torphichen, as no other preceptory ever developed in Scotland. By contrast many preceptories evolved in England.

Sadly, the advent of Protestantism and the Reformation saw the demise of the Order of St John (Order of Malta) in the British Isles. The suppression of the Priory of England (excluding

Scotland) began in England with King Henry VIII in 1540 and, by 1559, was completed by Queen Elizabeth I. The Priory of Ireland was surrendered in 1540, although it was briefly held by the titular prior Oswald Massingberg from 1554-57, before being surrendered again to Queen Elizabeth I.

After 1540 there was a period when the Order retained only one preceptory in the whole of the British Isles, namely Torphichen. In 1547 Sir James Sandilands (second son of James Sandilands, 7th feudal baron of Calder) was the Preceptor of Torphichen and Prior of the Order of St John in Scotland. As the Reformation in Scotland had taken its hold by 1560 Sir James (in view of his increasingly isolated position as last remaining Preceptor of the Order in Britain) eventually considered handing over the preceptory and its lands to the Scottish crown (see below). It should be noted, since the death of his Catholic uncle (the Rev Peter Sandilands, of Calder Church), Sir James had been isolated within his own family too. Both his father James, 7th feudal baron of Calder, and his elder brother John, had already succumbed to the religious views of John Knox and were close friends of the preacher. Even the family's Calder Church was now Protestant.

It cannot have been easy for Sir James finding himself the legal representative of an isolated Catholic religious establishment marooned in the sea of fervent reformers. As well as his own religious dilemma, he was concerned about the hundreds of tenants (and others) who depended on the Order in Scotland for their livelihoods. He thus needed to decide how best to secure their future and protect them from the horrors of piecemeal land confiscation by the state. The example of England's recent monarch (Henry VIII) and the treatment of the English monasteries was an unpleasant lesson that could not be ignored. So, Sir James took the only legal steps open to him and resigned all the Order's lands to the Crown.

Out of gratitude for Sir James' surrendering of the Torphichen preceptory and lands to the Scottish Crown in 1564, Queen Mary Stuart (to whom he was related) instructed that he

receive it back, so as to continue with its administration, as a regrant in his own name for the princely sum of 10,000 crowns and an annual rent of 500 marks, along with the secular Scottish title of Lord Torphichen (Lord St John of Torphichen). It is worth noting that the Preceptors of Torphichen had sat in Parliament as peers, so that, by being made an hereditary peer, Sir James was in fact retaining his parliamentary rank. As a result of Sir James's action the Order of Malta nominally transferred the Torphichen preceptory and lands to his Catholic Sandilands cousin, who was also a member of the Order in Malta. In reality, however, Sir James retained possession of the Order's property in Scotland. [To avoid any confusion over namesakes, and correct any misconceptions, it should be noted that Sir James Sandilands had two contemporaries within the Order of Malta (during the 1550s) who shared his family surname.]

Finally, in an earlier article I mentioned another significant Scottish connection (besides Torphichen) with the Order of Malta. Namely, Fra Andrew Bertie (a Scottish Catholic and old friend of my late stepfather James Bruce Sandilands) who, in 1988, was elected Grand-Master of the Order, based at the headquarters in Rome. Fra Andrew Bertie, the grandson of the 7th Earl of Abingdon, was the very first British Grand-Master in the Order's entire nine hundred year history: truly an historic event. Sadly, since then Fra Andrew has died, but is nonetheless followed in his exalted post by Fra Matthew Festing, another Briton. Fra Matthew (previously Grand Prior of England) was elected Grand-Master of the Order - "Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes, and of Malta" - in 2008. This double British triumph is a veritable achievement, and something in which English and Scottish Catholics can be proud.

As a footnote, it should be mentioned that the new Grand Prior of England, Fra Fredrik Crichton-Stuart, is actually a Scot. In his previous role as Delegate of the Order's Delegation of Scotland he had been invited in the past by the Venerable Order of St John (a Protestant organisation established in the nineteenth century) to

attend their services in Torphichen Preceptory. More recently, however, he had the good fortune of attending the abovementioned historic Catholic event at Torphichen organised by Una Voce Scotland.

## **THE NATURE OF EARLY CATHOLIC REGISTERS**

Michael Gandy

*[Ed: this short article is reprinted from the 1994 Newsletter of the Society]*

Did you know that the chapel of St Mary, Moorfield (the 1763-1837 registers of which were transcribed by Barbara Murray and Peggy Wells) was, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, dedicated to St *Paul*? If you are used to working with Anglican registers it is easy to imagine that the Catholic system worked the same way, i.e. with ‘proper’ churches properly set up; but early Catholic buildings were often ‘hole-in-corner’ and were quite likely to be a rented room or even warehouse space.

In the penal period they had to be inconspicuous even in the places where they were tolerated and, in the mid-nineteenth century, urban expansion, two different scenarios both produced the same effect. In some areas the new influx of Irish in the 1840s swamped the previous congregation and both priests and premises had to be found as quickly as possible, with no money to pay for either. In the 1860s it became policy to build schools rather than churches and many missions did not get a separate church building until twenty or thirty years after the mission was established. In other areas there were almost no Catholics and a keen priest or local family would provide occasional Mass to test the water, as it were, or in the hope of producing a congregation from converts. Sometimes this worked and sometimes it didn’t, and a priest who came once a month for a little while to celebrate Mass in

someone's front room found that numbers never got into double figures and there were just more urgent needs for the moment.

When you focus on the fact that there wasn't an actual church you realise that another image we have may well be wrong. We picture our ancestors bringing the baby to the font to be baptised but, in many cases, the priest came to the house and the entry was written into the register which he kept at his lodgings. Many family histories contain phrases like " John was born 12 Sept 1810 and baptised 15 Sep at the church of..." and in Anglican terms that's probably right but in Catholic terms it depends very much what sort of community we are dealing with.

Another error is the use of Anglican place-names to describe Catholic chapels. This is particularly common with those who have ancestors in the old registers of Northumberland, Durham and Yorkshire which were deposited at the Public Record Office [*now The National Archives*]. Since the administrators thought in terms of Anglican parishes, every Catholic chapel is indexed under its (Anglican) geographical location. Now that these registers have now largely been indexed onto the Mormon IGI the misnomers are being repeated.

This problem is compounded by the fact that many registers which are *now* known as one thing were known as something quite different when your ancestors' names were written into them. Missions moved and early registers were often the pocket book of the priest who took them with him. The registers of Worcester are always said to begin in 1685, and so they do, but they didn't come to Worcester until 1720 and the entries for 1685-1720 are the personal register of Fr Ignatius Thorpe SJ with entries in Monmouth, Gloucestershire, Kent, Northamptonshire, Essex, Flint, Lincolnshire, Staffordshire, Sussex and Dorset so that any statement that you had ancestors 'baptised at St George's, Worcester in 1705' would be wrong on three counts - despite a perfectly accurate printed transcript of the original!

## **ITEMS DRAWN TO OUR ATTENTION & RESPONSE TO PAST ARTICLES**

1. From Father Stewart Foster

### **A History of the Diocese of Brentwood (1917-1992)**

This book, by Fr Foster, (over 200 pages plus maps and illustrations) was published in 1994 to mark the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Diocese of Brentwood. After setting the scene in terms of the growth of Catholicism in Essex and East London in the nineteenth century, the book tells the story of the foundation of the diocese towards the end of the First World War, its development in the inter-war period and the difficulties endured during the Second World War. The rapid expansion of the diocese in the post-war period is then examined, followed by an assessment of the impact of the Second Vatican Council. The final chapter covers the first twelve years of the episcopate of Bishop Thomas McMahon.

Originally priced at £8, the book is now available for £5 post free (please make cheques payable to BRC DT). Orders should be sent to: Brentwood Diocesan Archives, Cathedral House, Ingrave Road, Brentwood, Essex CM15 8AT.

2. From Pam Fontana

### **Census Dates and Easter**

Having access to a publication of the Royal Historical Society guides and Handbooks, No. 4, *Handbook of Dates for Students of English History*, edited by CR Cheney, this edition published 1978, I thought others might find it useful to have this note of the date of Easter in relationship to Easter in that census year. This assists in interpretation as to possible reasons why a certain individual might be in a certain location at the census date;

this is particularly so where the Easter date and the census date are close, as they may simply be visiting family at that time.

## CENSUS DATES & CORRESPONDING EASTER DATES

YEAR	DATE OF CENSUS	DATE OF EASTER
1841	6 June	11 April
1851	30 March	20 April
1861	7 April	31 March
1871	2 April	9 April
1881	3 April	17 April
1891	5 April	29 March
1901	31 March	7 April
1911	2 April	16 April
1921	19 June	27 March
1931 ( <i>destroyed by enemy action</i> )	26 April	5 April
1941	<i>No census due to war</i>	

### 3. From Pete Turnbull **'Pre-natal Baptisms'**

No, not a new Mormon doctrine! A friend recently asked me about a baptism record he had found in a Manchester register. All the names fitted with it being that of his great-grandfather, but the date was 'wrong'. The record said: born 15 May 1845, baptised 25 May 1845. The birth certificate, already obtained from GRO said born 3 July 1845. Was it possible to reconcile the difference?

The answer lay in the date of registration. This was 14 August 1845, forty-two days after 3 July. Forty-two days was precisely the legal limit for legitimate registration of a birth. Mark Herber, in his *Ancestral Trails* (pp 49-50), recalls his great-grandmother celebrating her birthday in July, although her birth certificate said she was born in October 1881. He speculates that

her parents had not registered her birth by the necessary date, and when they did register it, they calculated a date that fell within the required forty-two days before the registration date. They would have done this to avoid the penalty applied for late registration.

He does not say whether such a penalty for late registration was also applied before registration was made compulsory, in 1875. If it was, then my friend's great-great-grandparents, living as they did in poverty-stricken Ancoats, would have had good reason to give a falsified date of birth to the GRO, but they would also have tried to get as close as possible to the true date.

The moral of the story seems to be not to limit your search for a baptism to the period after the official GRO date of birth.

#### 4. From Maureen Fitzgibbon

#### **Update: Closure of Manchester and Liverpool Libraries**

In a previous issue (Vol 12 No 6, December 2009) I reported on the proposed closure of Manchester Central Library to allow major upgrading. The closure took place on 28 June and will be for about two years. The interim service, now known as "City Library", has been transferred to: Elliott House, 151 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3WD. Telephone: 0161 234 1983. E-mail: [libraries@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:libraries@manchester.gov.uk). The Local Studies Unit is sited on the second floor; telephone 0161 234 1979.

Most of the microfilmed Family History material previously available at the Central Library has been transferred including Parish registers, Manchester newspapers, electoral registers and Workhouse registers. However because the Unit is much smaller it is now necessary to make appointments to use the readers. Any other archival material has been re-located at the Manchester Record Office, Marshall St, Manchester M4 5FU. Telephone: 0161 832 5284. Access is by appointment only.

Having noted in the previous issue of *Catholic Ancestor* that the proposed closure of the Library could be bad news for NW

family historians, worse was to come. News was received of a similar closure of Liverpool Central Library in William Brown Street but positive information has been kept well-hidden.

The information available at the time of this report (30 July) is that the closure took place on 23 July and will be for at least two years. From 9 August the Local Studies microfilm and microfiche facilities will be available at the: The World Museum, William Brown St, Liverpool L3 8EN. Telephone:0151 478 4393. Please note that this may not be the phone number required to access the Library services, but I have been unable to find a dedicated number. Records available include Census returns, Parish registers, Cemetery registers, local newspapers, street directories and National BMD Indexes.

All other archives have been transferred to a satellite service at: Wellington Employment Park, Dunes Way, Sandhill Lane, Liverpool L5 9ZS. They will be accessible sometime in August, although no date has been given. Access will be by appointment only, with twenty-four hours' notice required.

## **PROBLEM FORUM**

Hazel LeMay is wondering if anyone can give her information about St Vincent's Boys Home, Hull, where her father and his brothers were transferred in 1911 from York Workhouse School. Also, she believes that a book about his life in this Home was written by Ernest Cleveland, but has so far been unable to trace a copy.

If any reader can help with Hazel's query, please send your information via the Editor, whose contact details are inside the front cover, and it will be passed on.

# THE MEMBERSHIP

## THE MEMBERSHIP LIST

Kath Black, Membership Secretary

### New Members:

- 4073 Mrs A Eley, 28 Green Street , Consett, Co Durham DH8 5LP
- 4074 Mrs Agnes Nelson & Mrs Rosemary Wright, 232 Medomsley Road ,Consett, Co Durham DH8 5JW
- 4075 Mr Richard Whittle, 22 Mount Pleasant Close, Lightwater, Surrey GU18 5TP
- 4076 Miss Sally Anne Watson, Bishop's Brook Cottage, Pincots Lane, Wickwar, WOTTON-UNDER-EDGE GL12 8NY
- 4077 Mary & Anthony Welsh
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- 4079 Dr Caroline Bowden, 5 Merthyr Terrace, London SW13 8DL
- 4080 Freda, London
- 4081 Mr George Mitten, PO Box 695, Redvers SK S0C 2H0 Canada
- 4082 Barbara J Starmans, 85 Chelton Drive, Richmond Hill, ON L4E 4A8 Canada
- 4083 Wilfred Holden, 26 Leyburn Road, Livesey, Blackburn, Lancashire BB2 4NQ

## NEW MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Sylvia Dibbs

1. Ann Eley, 28 Green Street, Consett, Co Durham, DH8 5LP, is researching: O'HANLON (James) of Armagh, Ireland (1825) and Blackhill, Consett, Co Durham (1850-1895); O'HANLON (Patrick) born Armagh, Ireland (1845) and Gateshead, Tyne and Wear (1874+).
2. Mrs Agnes Nelson, 232 Medomsley Road, Consett, Co Durham DH8 5JW is researching: MURPHY of Ireland and Consett (1841+); WATCHORN of Ireland and Consett (1883+); CONWAY of Ireland and Consett (1850+); BRADY of Ireland and CONSETT (1838+); CLARKE of Ireland and Consett (1851+).
3. Mrs Anne Neil, 11 Chequers Road, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester M21 9DX is researching: CAVANAGH of St Saviour Southwark (1880+) and Wandsworth (1900+); FENNESSEY and FINNESSEY of Rotherhithe (1841) and of Brockley, London (1900+); FLYNN of Plymouth and Exeter (1800+) and of London and Croydon, Surrey (1900+).
4. Ms F Ramsden, London E15, is researching: RAMSDEN of St Marylebone (1810+); CARRIER of London (1820-1870); SHAW of London (1870-1900). It is not known if they are Catholics. (If you can help, please contact the Membership Secretary who can arrange for you to be put in contact with Ms Ramsden)

## **SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS PRINTED ITEMS**

Items may be obtained from the Past Publications Secretary:  
Mrs M Skelton (address on inside front cover, please send cheque  
in payment) or online using a credit card from:  
<http://www.genfair.co.uk/supplier.php?sid=227>

1. The Registers of the Venetian Chapel in London, Baptisms 1744-1796 & Marriages 1744-1754, 1772-1788. 84 pp, £3.
2. The Registers of the Neapolitan Chapel, London, 1765-1855; also Registers of the Imperial Chapel, London, 1764-1820. 92 pp, £3.
3. The Bishops' Register of Confirmations in the Midland District of the Catholic Church in England. 1768-1811 and 1816. 256 pp, £5.
4. The Bishops' Register of Confirmations in the London District of the Catholic Church in England. 192 pp, £5.
5. The Burial Register of St Mary Moorfields, London 1819-1853. 227 pp, £5.
6. The Register of the Benedictine Schools for Girls at Ghent, Preston, Caverswall and Oulton, 1624-1969. 120 pp, £4.

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*Postage & packing must be paid for these items:*

*UK: £0.65; Europe: £1.40; Rest of World: £1.80*

1. The Baptism Registers of St Mary's, Mulberry Street, Manchester 1820-1831 (Images with index). Manchester's hidden gem. CD-ROM (Adobe Acrobat file) £7.50.
2. The Baptism Registers of St Patrick's, Livesey Street, Manchester, 1832-1860 (Images with index). CD-ROM (Adobe Acrobat file) £7.50.
3. The Burial Registers of St Patrick's, Livesey Street, Manchester, 1832-1858. Transcribed data with introduction. CD-ROM (Adobe Acrobat file) £7.50.
4. The Registers of the Chapel of the Royal Sardinian Embassy, London. CD-ROM (Adobe Acrobat file) £7.50.
5. Miscellaneous London District Transcriptions Vol 1, CD-ROM £7.50.
6. The Baptism Registers of St Anne's, Ancoats, Manchester 1848 – 1875. Transcribed register and scanned copies. CD-ROM £7.50.
7. An Index of People Mentioned in Lancashire Wills of Reputed Roman Catholics: wills registered in York and Chester 1429-1894. Transcribed data. CD-ROM £7.50

# SERVICES FOR MEMBERS

## **Index of Nuns**

Search of Index: Free to members; £5 donation requested from non-members. Held by Margaret Butler (address on inside front cover). This is an index of approximately 14,000 nuns who were in the English Province of their Order. It is arranged alphabetically by the surname of each nun and usually gives date of birth, names of parents, religious name, dates of profession, date and place of death and name of Order.

## **1881 Census**

Search of Index on microfiches (often held by libraries on CD-Rom): Free to members, £5 donation requested from non-members. Held by Margaret Butler (address on inside front cover). Searches can be made for ANY ancestor in England and Wales, Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands, Catholic or not.

## **PAST PUBLICATIONS**

These are held by the Past Publications Secretary (address inside front cover) and by GENfair (<http://www.genfair.co.uk>) and comprise almost all the back journals of the Society. The website shows the list of contents of *Catholic Ancestor*. Please send £2 per copy of each back Journal requested (includes postage and packing) and include a contact telephone number in case of queries. Non-UK, please send a suitable sum in your own currency if more convenient. You may pay by credit card if you order via GENfair. She also holds back copies of Occasional Publications; see the list on pp 95-96 of this issue.

## **SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Individuals in UK: £15 p.a. due 1 January by cheque or by standing order. Second member at the same address: a further £2 – only one copy of the journal to each address. Non-UK members: £20 p.a. in sterling, which may be paid for 2 years, to save on bank charges. ALL CHEQUES TO BE MADE PAYABLE TO: Catholic Family History Society. Subscriptions can also be taken out or renewed via <http://www.genfair.co.uk>.

## **MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS**

Journals published three times a year. Occasional Publications. Day Conference with AGM around October each year. Some local meetings.

**Web Site: [www.catholic-history.org.uk/cfhs](http://www.catholic-history.org.uk/cfhs)**

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