

The Catholic church in England: the politics of allegiance and identity 1791-1908

Olive R M Barnes (2011)

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The Catholic Church in England
The politics of allegiance and identity
1791 – 1908

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Abstract

This thesis argues that the increasing visibility of Catholics and Catholicism in nineteenth century England and Wales reduced the prejudice against them and their religion; that they developed an identity which was incontrovertibly English in spite of the absorption of a very large number of Irish migrants; and that by the end of the century their allegiance to the nation was no longer suspect.

Visibility was expressed in three forms. New churches were built throughout the country in every county in England and Wales. Many of these locations had no knowledge or experience of Catholicism since the Reformation. Myriad difficulties were faced, and overcome, chief amongst which was the institutional poverty of the Church. This thesis will show how this was done and the support given to this project by the Irish migrants.

A second form of visibility was the re-introduction of Catholic cultural practices such as processions. These often became significant events in towns as disparate as Preston, where Catholicism had survived, and Cardiff, where it was re-introduced in the nineteenth century. The local press reported fully and favourably on them.

Finally, Catholics became visible through participation in public life. Prejudiced press comment on such participation lessened as the century progressed.

1908 was a seminal year in English Catholic history. Confidence was such that a great celebration of the Eucharist was planned by the Church. This occasioned a confrontation with the Government due to the disabling laws still outstanding on the statute book. Now however, England witnessed, not a recurrence of outraged national prejudice, but universal approbation for Catholics. Many were unaware that such laws, originally designed to protect the Protestant Constitution against subversion by Catholics, were still extant. The Church, and Catholics, had taken their place in English national life, their allegiance was no longer suspect and their identity as English no longer questioned.

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1 Introduction

In 1829 the Third Catholic Relief Act in England and Wales was passed by Parliament. This is generally known as the Catholic Emancipation Act. By it, Catholics were granted the right to participate in English society and civic and political life on (almost) the same terms as other Englishmen¹. In terms of religious practice, the two earlier Relief Acts (1778, 1791) gave those who took the oaths specified in the Acts, the same rights of freedom of worship granted to Protestant Dissenters by the Act of Toleration of 1690. And yet, although now legal, Catholicism was seen as foreign, strange and not English by most of the population. Indeed there was considerable prejudice against it. Linda Colley, describing the creation of British identity in the eighteenth century following the Union between England and Scotland, argues that it was formed in opposition to Catholicism². It used many of the events of the two previous centuries (the defeat of the Spanish Armada; the Gunpowder Plot; the Glorious Revolution) to imply the privileged position of Britain and the British since Protestantism had been embraced³. Foxe's Book of Martyrs, the great polemic of the Reformation era in Britain, was republished in part format which made it accessible to all⁴. This reinforced the doctrine of Catholicism as a cruel religion. The continuing wars against the great Catholic powers of France and Spain, and the Jacobite Rebellions of 1715 and 1745 made the loyalty of the few remaining Catholics suspect and engendered fear of subordination to the Pope amongst the general populace. Until the Relief Acts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Catholics had been subject to punitive laws which treated them as potential traitors⁵.

Less than a century after Emancipation, in 1908 the head of the Catholic Church in England and Wales had a very public altercation with the Prime Minister of the day. When the telegrams and notes which had passed between them were made public, the press, almost universally, sided with the Catholic position. This thesis examines the path from prejudice through tolerance to acceptance. In particular it answers the question:

How, over the course of the nineteenth century, did this religious minority establish an identity which reconciled the essential characteristics of being at once English and Catholic, a position which, heretofore, had appeared to be an oxymoron?

¹ Certain high offices of state such as Lord Chancellor of England and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland were closed to them by the 1829 Act.

² Linda Colley, *Britons : Forging the Nation, 1707-1837*, 2nd edition (New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale Nota Bene, 2005), Ch 1, passim

³ Ibid., 22

⁴ Ibid., 25-28

⁵ Ibid., 19

There were many factors which contributed to the diminution of prejudice but it will be shown here that one of these was increased visibility. Prior to Relief, the few Catholics in England had generally good relationships with their neighbours. However, so few were they, that the vast majority of English people had no personal experience of Catholicism, its beliefs and rituals or its adherents. The greater visibility apparent in the nineteenth century led to non-Catholics becoming familiar with the Church so that many of the myths which had fuelled anti-Catholic prejudice previously were shown to be just that - myths. Visibility was achieved in two ways: firstly through a comprehensive and geographically-wide rebuilding of the Catholic infrastructure of churches and chapels; and secondly through the re-introduction of aspects of Catholic practice which may be better defined as cultural. These included processions on occasions of great feasts of the Church (Whitsun and Corpus Christi); pilgrimages to holy places; and the establishment of Catholic charities and practices which had been forbidden during the Reformation. Over the long century under discussion here, it will be shown how the legal position of Catholic cultural practices changed through legislation and decisions in the courts.

1.1 Context

There are two over-arching themes which form the background to this thesis: anti-Catholic prejudice and the Catholic Irish migrants in Britain. A short history of both these must be given to provide the historical context for this thesis.

There were three strands to anti-Catholic prejudice: its origins, its usefulness and its continuance. Anti-Catholicism had its origins in the confessional fault-lines of the Reformation. In an essay on what he called the “structure” of the prejudice of anti-popery, Peter Lake explains the ideology which underpinned it in the early seventeenth century⁶. Lake argues that according to Protestants, popery was Satan’s weapon and, under the veil of piety and reverence, its intent was to pervert and invert the true Scriptural religion of Protestantism; popery was intolerant, cruel and tyrannical; an anti-religion based on “ignorance, superstition and unthinking traditionalism”⁷. In other words, all the negatives of which Protestantism reflected the positives.

Looking back from the vantage point of the twenty-first century, we see that the political landscape of the seventeenth century in England looks like a long power struggle between Crown and Parliament. A new form of political order was being developed – Constitutional monarchy. In the early seventeenth century Parliament was understood by

⁶ Peter Lake, “Anti-Popery: The Structure of a Prejudice”, in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics 1603-1642*, eds Richard Cust and Ann Hughes. (Harlow: Longman, 1989) 72-106

⁷ Ibid., 77

contemporaries as having the “capacity to bring about unanimity and harmony”⁸ between the Ruler and the Ruled. It was obvious, even to contemporaries, that this harmony did not exist. Such a failure of the political system needed an explanation. Lake argues that “at this point the spectre of popery and popish conspiracy came to the rescue”⁹. Although under James I the war against Spain had ended, prior to that, every generation in England from Elizabeth’s reign had experienced a real Catholic threat to national security from within or without – Spanish Armada, Gunpowder Plot, invasion scares and Irish rebellions. There were real differences amongst the Protestants – Anglicans and Nonconformists – but they could unite in the face of a common enemy if that common enemy could be named and identified. Popery provided this unifying “other” and “all those not directly implicated in the problem (popery) became part of the solution (non-popery)”¹⁰. Lake distinguishes between the anti-popery of the small number of “committed” Protestants and the more popular variety of anti-popery. The former saw the activity of recusants and missionary priests as a threat to Protestant values whereas the latter tended to be “crisis-related”¹¹. Although there was suspicion of Puritans in the early part of the century as well, it was the “foreignness”, its allegiance to a foreign prince, which helped to maintain the English prejudice against popery.

Lake suggests that the political uncertainty of the time, left people unsettled and confused, especially as England had embraced the true religion of Protestantism and thus set itself on the path to godliness. The unsettled nature of seventeenth century English politics led to regicide, the republic, the protectorate, the restoration, the deposition of a lawful monarch and the exclusion from the succession of a lawful heir. But most importantly, people were confused by the lack of consensus between Crown and Parliament and it was this specific area of dissension which created the environment for Catholicism to become a convenient scapegoat. Events as disparate as the rise of Quakerism and the regicide were blamed on Jesuit plots. Papists’ responsibility for the Great Fire of London in 1666 was immortalised on the Monument erected to commemorate it. Titus Oates’s fabrications fell on fertile ground and led to the hysteria and injustices of the Popish Plot. The attempt to exclude Charles II’s heir from the throne came about because of what was by then, a visceral fear of Catholicism.

Following the Revolution of 1688, as England rose to become a major power, many believed that God had shown His hand. England was The Chosen Nation, the New Testament successor to the Old Testament Israel. England had stayed faithful to the Bible,

⁸ Ibid., 81

⁹ Ibid., 82

¹⁰ Ibid., 82

¹¹ Ibid., 83

it had remained a Godly nation and God had bestowed His bounty, hence England's political rise; the opportunities of the industrial revolution; and the development of stable governance which guaranteed liberty to all Englishmen. Englishmen could point to France, Spain and the Mediterranean nations, but particularly to Ireland, to "prove" the devastating effect Catholicism had on the development of any nation. Because of this, it was imperative to keep out popery, to guard against its superstitions, to prevent it gaining any foothold in England. This was English exceptionalism defined against the universalism of Catholicism.

The ecclesiastical calendar was a reminder of this special relationship which God had with England. Like the Old Testament Israelites, Englishmen could trace their history in terms of when they were in God's favour and when they had sinned. Thus January 30th (Commemoration of the execution of Charles I) was a day of general fast; May 29th (Restoration of the Monarchy) was a day of celebration and likewise August 1st (inauguration of the Hanoverian dynasty which secured the Protestant Succession). November 5th was doubly blessed – Deliverance from the Gunpowder Plot and the landing of William of Orange¹². In sermons in church, in these commemorations, in the almanacs which were published annually, all strata of society were exposed to an image of Catholicism which was greedy, rapacious, cruel, superstitious and threatening; Catholics were lazy, credulous and lacking moral fibre; and those who held power were authoritarian, tyrannical and capricious.

1745 was a watershed – the effective demise of the Jacobite cause¹³. By this time, anti-Catholicism was no longer a political need, but now existed as a popular prejudice. Englishmen (and women) were Protestants; England was a Protestant nation and Catholics were not quite English. They were somewhat foreign and owed allegiance to a foreign prince (the Pope); they worshipped God in a foreign tongue (Latin) and they believed their priests had strange, irrational, non-English powers. It was the combination of these beliefs and fears which, embedded in the national psyche, made it easy for Lord George Gordon to incite the crowds in 1780 into a fury against Catholics. That some of these beliefs were untrue; some were the result of misunderstandings; some were deliberate lies; and some were calumnies was irrelevant.

Any nineteenth-century history of Catholicism in England must acknowledge the presence of anti-Catholic prejudice which was an ever present reality for a considerable part of the century and it may be possible to draw parallels with the seventeenth century, especially as

¹² Colley, *Britons*, 19

¹³ James Francis Edward Stuart (the Old Pretender) died in 1766 and his son Charles Edward (Bonnie Prince Charlie) in 1788. The last of the direct line, Cardinal Henry Stuart, died in 1807.

it was manifested in both popular and more considered form. There is an extensive historiography dealing with this subject, but some representative volumes may be chosen which show specific aspects of this historiography. John Wolffe deals with the mid-century, from Emancipation in 1829 to 1860 which is beyond the last great popular uprising against Catholicism in England in 1850¹⁴; Denis Paz concentrates on this popular uprising which was caused by the restoration of the Catholic Hierarchy in England and Wales¹⁵; Walter Arnstein focuses on a particular MP who pursued a career-long campaign against Catholic convents¹⁶; and Michael Wheeler viewed the subject from a literary or cultural perspective¹⁷.

In the thirty year period covered by Wolffe, he examines the various Protestant Societies established with a view to wielding political power or influence. Wolffe begins his treatise with the aftermath of the granting of Catholic Emancipation and says that much of the support for this measure had “reflected not favour to Catholicism but a belief that religion and politics were separate”¹⁸. It was the sincerely held belief that the Protestant Constitution should be protected which stirred Protestants into action. He argues that anti-Catholicism in the nineteenth century was a revival rather than a continuation¹⁹. In illustrating and explaining the “Anti-Catholic Frame of Mind”²⁰, Wolffe uses many of the points which were in dispute in the Reformation period – justification by faith alone; transubstantiation; invocation of saints being idolatrous²¹. The condition of Ireland was compared unfavourably to that of Britain and the blame for this was laid squarely at the feet of popery which kept the Irish peasantry in “ignorance and idleness, in crime and wretchedness”²². This language is not dissimilar to that of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Wolffe draws out three particular strands to the anti-Catholic mindset of the Victorian era. Firstly that Catholicism was inimical to social and economic progress in which Ireland and Britain were compared²³; secondly, from the mid-1830s considerable emphasis was placed on the “alleged sexual corruption of Rome”²⁴; and thirdly was the criticism that Catholicism was antipathetic to liberty, “conceptualized in broadly Whiggish

¹⁴ John R. Wolffe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829-1860* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991)

¹⁵ D. G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Victorian England* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1992)

¹⁶ Walter L. Arnstein, *Protestant Versus Catholic in Mid-Victorian England : Mr. Newdegate and the Nuns* (Columbia ; London: University of Missouri Press, 1982)

¹⁷ Michael Wheeler, *The Old Enemies : Catholic and Protestant in Nineteenth-Century English Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

¹⁸ Wolffe, *Protestant Crusade*, 106

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 8

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 107-144

²¹ *Ibid.*, 110

²² *Ibid.*, 120

²³ *Ibid.*, 121

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 123

terms, as mediated by Burke, as a balance between arbitrary government and anarchy”²⁵.

Wolffe concludes his examination in 1860 when, he claims, Ireland was more stable; Irish immigration was less than previously and therefore not so great a threat; and the campaign against the government’s grants to the Catholic seminary in Maynooth had failed. On this final point Wolffe claims that this marked the “end of the rearguard action in defence of exclusively Protestant constitutional norms”²⁶.

The position of Irish migrants in British society figures frequently in Wolffe’s book because most of them were Catholic, so that it could be inferred that anti-Irish and anti-Catholic prejudices stemmed from the same source. Denis Paz has shown that there were two separate and distinct prejudices²⁷. In his monograph, Paz focussed on the last national outcry against the advance of Catholicism in England when the Catholic hierarchy was restored in 1850. This was a very popular outcry and he analysed the memorials and petitions sent to the Queen and to Parliament and the circumstances under which many of them gained signatures. From these he built up a portrait of popular anti-popery (as opposed to the political anti-popery described by Wolffe) as it existed in the towns and cities of England in and around 1850.

Walter Arnstein discussed the issue by focussing on the career of Charles Newdigate Newdegate²⁸. Newdegate was a Member of Parliament for North Warwickshire for over forty years from 1842. As a recently elected Tory MP he showed his independence by voting against the Maynooth grant in 1845. He fought to protect the Protestant Constitution and he expended a great deal of his energy and used a considerable amount of parliamentary time in an attempt to force Government inspection and control over Catholic convents. Eventually in 1870 a Parliamentary Select Committee on the issue was formed but the Report from the Select Committee²⁹ recommended no legislation on the matter. That Report, though, is a valuable resource for historians, offering them a portrait, not only of the legal position of Catholicism at that time, but also how Catholics themselves viewed it. Chapter seven of this thesis will refer to some of the testimony from that Parliamentary investigation.

The texts of anti-Catholicism were well understood by the nineteenth century. Popular novelists, such as Charles Dickens in *A Christmas Carol*, could include images of the onion

²⁵ Ibid., 127

²⁶ Ibid., 288

²⁷ Paz, *Anti-Catholicism*

²⁸ Arnstein, *Protestant Versus Catholic*

²⁹ Charles Pelham Villiers, *Report from the Select Committee on Conventual and Monastic Institutions, &C.; Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, and Appendix* (House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1870).

as a fat friar winking at young women passing by and readers would understand the metaphor of the Catholic friar as fat, greedy and lascivious³⁰. Edward Norman has argued that it was the forced withdrawal into discreet worship and practice which “attracted the Protestant charge of deliberate secrecy, and encouraged popular suspicions that dark and superstitious practices took place”³¹. People generally understood the unnaturalness of celibacy, the superstition of transubstantiation and feared the confessional. These “popular suspicions” form the basis for Michael Wheeler’s examination of how anti-Catholicism was manifested in the popular and serious literature of the nineteenth century³². Taking a literary perspective rather than a purely historical one is the main difference between Wheeler and the other authors mentioned above.

These four titles and Lake’s sixteenth century exposition give an overview of both popular and principled anti-Catholicism. In this thesis its usual manifestation was through objections to the building of new Catholic chapels in towns in various parts of the country. Wolffe has concentrated on the period after the 1829 Act and implies that there was not a great deal of legislative change after that. Chapter seven disputes that by showing that considerable changes in the law of England did take place after 1829.

The Irish migration had a considerable impact on the development of English Catholicism in the nineteenth century. The relative number of Catholics in the English population increased from 1% to 5% over the period under discussion and was due largely to the immigration of Irish men and women throughout the century. A steady stream in the late eighteenth century became a river by the turn of the nineteenth. The thirty years from about 1830 to 1860 showed the greatest flow of migrants. In the past the migrants have been characterised as homogeneously poor, unskilled and Catholic. The effect of the migration will be discussed in later chapters, but as with anti-Catholicism, there is an historical context which must be considered first. Irish and English Catholics were both subject to legislation which made it difficult for the practice of their religion and also excluded them from political life. The memory and mythology of those proscription years differ in the two countries even though the laws were almost identical.

The narrative of a nation’s history becomes embedded in the national psyche. For the English it is the Whig version of national advance: England as the New Israel; the English were the new Chosen People; and God was an Englishman. For the Irish it is the nationalist reading: Ireland conquered and enslaved by its greedy thoughtless neighbour.

³⁰ Paz, *Anti-Catholicism*, 1

³¹ Edward R. Norman, *Roman Catholicism in England : From the Elizabethan Settlement to the Second Vatican Council* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 3

³² Wheeler, *The Old Enemies*

This puts Ireland and the Irish competing with the Poles and Jews for the gold, silver and bronze medals in what Roy Foster has called “the Olympics of suffering”³³. For groups within nations there are their own histories and where this coincides with the national version then the national one will suffice. Where there has been a struggle for existence, assimilation or acceptance as part of the larger nation, smaller groups, bound by their sense of identity which differs from that of the nation, endeavour to remember their own history. It is in this history that myths are written, remembered and transmitted to future generations. In all such myths there is, perforce, an element of truth and however much the revisionists try to correct the view and demolish them, they can be tenacious.

Both George III and George IV were against Catholic Emancipation as they held that it was against the Coronation Oath in which they had vowed to protect the Protestant Religion. When the Duke of Wellington finally persuaded the Houses of Parliament to pass a Bill for Catholic Emancipation in 1829, it was only by threatening to resign that he eventually prevailed upon George IV to give the Royal Assent. It has been said that, having given his assent by signing the bill into law, George IV threw the pen on the floor and stamped on it, so that having been accursed by signing this bill, the offending instrument of signature could never again be used³⁴. That this is a myth is beyond doubt as the monarch did not give assent by “signing” a Bill³⁵. Assent was given in Council when the Head of the Bill was read and the monarch said “Le Roi le veult”, which is Norman French for “The King wishes it”. Thus the Royal Assent is verbal rather than written. This myth is not only extant in non-academic circles. Denis Gwynn, one-time Professor of Modern Irish History at University College Cork and author of a large body of work on English Catholic History, repeats the story in his account of Emancipation³⁶. Gwynn does not give his source, but its inclusion in the work of a respected academic shows the extent to which the story had spread and appears to have been accepted.

The Oxford English Dictionary³⁷ gives five definitions of the word “myth”; of these two are relevant to the memories of Irish and English Catholics; firstly that a myth is “a

³³ Prof Foster made this comment at one of his seminars at Hertford College, Oxford. I do not remember the date

³⁴ I have been told this story on, at least, two occasions by non-academic historians of English Catholic history.

³⁵ Lucinda Maer and Oonagh Gay, *The Royal Prerogative (SN/PC/03861)*. (London: House of Commons Library; UK Parliament, 2009)., 5

³⁶ Denis Gwynn, *The Struggle for Catholic Emancipation (1750-1829)* (London: Longmans, 1928), 274; Gwynn’s version is a little less theatrical than that above:

The Catholic Emancipation Bill was proceeding in its inexorable progress through Parliament, and on Monday, 13th April the King’s Ministers appeared stubbornly at the Castle to request the royal signature. The King was helpless and hysterical. He would not look at the document he was asked to sign. Finally, Wellington prevailed. He scribbled the necessary letters across the parchment, and then flung the pen furiously on to the ground.

³⁷ *The Oxford English Dictionary*. Accessed 02/11/2008. <<http://dictionary.oed.com>>

widespread but untrue or erroneous story or belief; a widely held misconception” or secondly that it is a “popular conception of a person or thing which exaggerates or idealizes the truth”. For a myth to be sustained it must be credible; have some basis in fact; and must speak a truth to its receivers. The story of George IV’s pen is mythical, but it persists and is repeated by Catholics because it tells the truth that Emancipation was won despite the objections from some in very high places. We cannot always tell how a myth might have started, but occasionally the genesis of a myth may be observed.

In August 2008, Faber and Faber published *God’s Executioner – Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland* by Dr Micheál O Siochrú of Trinity College, Dublin. O Siochrú is an academic whose work is steeped in seventeenth-century Irish history, particularly the middle period of that century. Apparently the publishers were interested not only in the academic market, but the general market in Ireland as well. A price of £20 is very low for an academic monograph in hardback and to publish the paperback edition simultaneously unusual indicating that the target market was not just academic. The book was reviewed extensively in the non-academic press: in Ireland by *The Irish Times* and *The Irish Independent*; in the North of Ireland by *The Belfast Telegraph* and *The Irish News*; and in Britain by *The Observer*, *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Daily Telegraph*.

The book opens with the following anecdote:

In 1997, shortly after the Labour party’s victory in the British general election, the newly appointed foreign secretary, Robin Cook, received a courtesy visit from Bertie Ahern, the Irish prime minister. Mr Ahern entered Cook’s office but immediately walked out again on seeing a painting of Oliver Cromwell in the room. He refused to return until the foreign secretary removed the picture “of that murdering bastard”. Anxious to avoid a diplomatic incident, Cook made the necessary arrangements.

Ó Siochrú continues by saying that the story was told by the comedian Stephen Fry at the launch of the Heritage Sector’s “History Matters” campaign in 2006. Fry “commented that ‘it was a bit like hanging a portrait of Eichmann before the visit of the Israeli prime minister’”³⁸.

Both Michael Mansergh in *The Irish Times*³⁹ and John Carey in *The Sunday Times*⁴⁰ repeat the anecdote to illustrate the pervasive and baneful memory of Cromwell held by Irish people. This indeed was O’Siochrú’s point in including the story.

A few weeks later, the book was launched at Trinity College Dublin. Amongst the invited

³⁸ Micheál Ó Siochrú, *God’s Executioner : Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland* (London: Faber, 2008), 1

³⁹ Michael Mansergh, Review of *God’s Executioner : Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland* by Micheál Ó Siochrú, *The Irish Times* 23 August 2008.

⁴⁰ John Carey, Review of *God’s Executioner : Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland* by Micheál Ó Siochrú, *The Sunday Times* 17 August 2008.

guests was Mr. Ahern. Ahern's speech at the launch was reported thus in *The Irish Times* of October 10th:

Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern last night denied storming out of former British foreign secretary Robin Cook's office in 1997 upon seeing a picture of Oliver Cromwell in the room.

Speaking at the launch of Dr Micheál Ó Siochrú's book, *God's Executioner: Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland*, Mr Ahern said: "I can honestly say there was no walkout."

Mr Ahern said: "After the delegation and I arrived at Mr Cook's office, there is no doubt Cook noticed our delegation's discomfort, particularly mine. Cook asked me how I felt and was a bit taken aback with my forthright reply."⁴¹

The original story has received widespread publicity, from Stephen Fry; in Ó Siochrú's book; and by being repeated in the reviews of the book. Perhaps the perception was growing that Ó Siochrú's version was becoming embedded in the Irish national psyche, because on the weekend following the launch, *The Irish Times* included Ahern's contradiction of the story in its *Quotes of the Week* column⁴². It remains for future historians to ensure that the correct story of the offensive portrait is included. Thus are myths created⁴³.

The mythology of English Catholicism centres on the first century of proscription – the recusant period. Many suffered the ultimate penalty of death accused of treason while others, such as Sir Thomas Tresham were left financially ruined by the fines imposed due to his refusal to attend the services of the Established Church. Sir Thomas had been knighted in 1575 at Kenilworth by Elizabeth I at the same ceremony as William Cecil. He remained Catholic and paid recusancy fines totalling £8000 between 1581 and 1605. This is about £1.4m in today's values⁴⁴. Although a wealthy and efficient farmer, with an annual income of £2000, he left debts of £11,000⁴⁵. He also spent many years in jail. His Catholicism was certainly in no doubt and he has left two memorials of his faith on the landscape in Northamptonshire⁴⁶. Sir Thomas was the father of Francis Tresham, a conspirator in the Gunpowder Plot. Not all recusants were fined – only those who could pay; but records of all those examined were kept. In 1904 the Catholic Record Society was

⁴¹ "Book Launch", *The Irish Times* 10 October 2008.

⁴² "Quotes of the Week", *The Irish Times*, 11 October 2008.

⁴³ Recently this author attended a function at Lincoln's Inn. Perusing the portraits of former members of the Inn, the proximity of those of St Thomas More and Oliver Cromwell drew a smile. Whilst standing there viewing these, a fellow guest stood beside me and told me the story of Bertie Ahern and the Cromwell portrait in Robin Cook's office. Unfortunately we were interrupted before I could share the correct version of the incident.

⁴⁴ Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, *Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1264 to 2010*, 2011, <<http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/>> (accessed 25/07/2012)

⁴⁵ *Sir Thomas Tresham*, <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-vh/w-visits/w-findaplace/w-lyvedennewbiold/w-lyvedennewbiold-history/w-lyvedennewbiold-history-thomas_tresham.htm> (accessed 20/02/2007)

⁴⁶ See p. 153 below

founded in England and “is devoted to the study of Roman Catholicism in the British Isles from the Reformation period to the present day”⁴⁷. In the century since, recusant rolls for various counties have been published. Although it is over two hundred years since the first Catholic Relief Act (1778), there is still cachet attached to “recusant” status. In an interview in 2009, Fr Timothy Radcliffe O.P., former Master of the Dominican Order worldwide, was introduced to readers of *The Times* as belonging “to a notable recusant dynasty”⁴⁸.

When Brendan Behan was in Borstal, on the first occasion he was to serve Mass, he was standing outside the chapel with a mate waiting for the priest. His fellow inmate told him that the Anscombes, an old Catholic family, would be bringing the priest. Brendan turned to him and said “They’re no older a Catholic family than my own”⁴⁹.

This incident encapsulates a fundamental difference between the Irish and English Catholic historical memories and sense of identity. To be “old Catholic” in England means to have had a familial entry on a recusant roll, or, even better, to be able to claim a martyr in your family. There are no “old Catholic” families in Ireland, not in the sense that there are in England, or at least such is the popular memory. In Ireland, the recusants were residents of the Pale – the Old English. The experience of this particular group in Ireland was very similar to that of their gentry and aristocratic co-religionists in England. They did suffer the penalties of recusancy. The secular authorities decided in 1621 that they would no longer enforce the recusancy fines⁵⁰. With this relatively short period of enforcement, and the small number of people affected, it is unsurprising that the first era of proscription had little impact on the general populace. Simply put, the religious Reformation which was pushed through as part of the Tudor re-conquest of Ireland, became conflated with the political struggles of Irish (Gaelic and Old English) magnates. For years P J Corish had ploughed a lonely furrow writing the religious history of that period in Ireland⁵¹ where the political upheaval formed a backdrop. Recently the baton has been picked up and much new work is being undertaken by scholars such as Henry Jefferies⁵² and Brendan Scott⁵³.

In England the martyrs are the most respected members of the recusant tradition. Elizabeth

⁴⁷ *Catholic Record Society*, <<http://www.catholic-history.org.uk/crs/index.htm>> (accessed 02/03/ 2009)

⁴⁸ Rupert Shortt, "Why Go to Mass? Because It Is the Greatest of Dramas.," *The Times* 21 February 2009.

⁴⁹ Brendan Behan, *Borstal Boy* (London: Arrow, 1990), 329

⁵⁰ Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation : Europe's House Divided, 1490-1700* (London: Penguin, 2004), 398

⁵¹ Patrick J. Corish, *The Catholic Community in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Dublin: Helicon, 1981); Patrick J. Corish and Benignus Millett OFM., eds, *The Irish Martyrs* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005)

⁵² Henry A. Jefferies, *Priests and Prelates of Armagh in the Age of Reformations, 1518-1558* (Dublin, Portland, OR: Four Courts Press, 1997); Henry A. Jefferies, *The Irish Church and the Tudor Reformations* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010)

⁵³ Brendan Scott, *Religion and Reformation in the Tudor Diocese of Meath* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006)

I professed not to want to create martyrs, but from a Catholic perspective, those who were under sentence of death for alleged treason and were offered their life in return for conforming could only have one status – that of martyr for the faith. Anne Dillon investigated the historical arguments surrounding those who died during Mary I's and Elizabeth's reigns⁵⁴. In this she shows how the argument moved back and forth between the two opposing camps in the late sixteenth century. The Protestants were executed for heresy and Catholics for treason. The toll of Catholic martyrdom rose and fell with politico-religious tensions in Europe. The cause for the canonisation of the English martyrs was first proposed in the seventeenth century. At the Bishops' annual meeting in 1887, a letter of thanks was sent to the Pope for his permission to allow the cause of 261 English martyrs to be introduced (this list included five Irishmen, one of whom was Oliver Plunkett). The Expenses of Cause were to be apportioned amongst the Dioceses⁵⁵. In 1970 forty English martyrs were canonised when the Vatican decided that the norms for canonisation – two attested miracles – could be laid aside in the case of martyrs.

The last execution in England of a Catholic for his faith was, ironically, an Irishman of an Old English family. Oliver Plunkett, Archbishop of Armagh, died in 1681. Plunkett was one of a number of Catholic priests who fell foul of the anti-Catholic hysteria whipped up by Titus Oates and his ludicrous claims of a plot to assassinate King Charles II.

Catholic (as opposed to political) martyrs are not so well remembered in Ireland. Vincent Twomey claims 260 Irish martyrs, including the only one to have been canonised (Oliver Plunkett, Archbishop of Armagh)⁵⁶. Of these, seventeen were beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1992. The main problem in their cause for canonisation is separating the political from the religious motivation for their refusal to comply with orders given by the authorities. The process which led to the beatification ceremony in 1992 had begun in the nineteenth century when Patrick Moran was Vice-Rector of the Irish College in Rome (1855-1866). Moran spent time in Rome researching the Irish martyrs in the archives. Encouraged by Moran, Archbishop Walsh of Dublin submitted material to Rome in 1904 and the Roman authorities gave permission for 257 cases to be introduced. Archbishop Dermot Ryan of Dublin appointed a commission of eminent historians in 1975 and asked them to prepare a detailed submission to Rome of a representative selection from these names⁵⁷. A series of articles was published in the *Irish Theological Quarterly* from 1999 to

⁵⁴ Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603*, St Andrew's Studies in Reformation History, eds Bruce Gordon, et al. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2002)

⁵⁵ Anon., *Minutes of Bishops' Meetings 1858-1909*, Westminster Diocesan Archives 202, April 27th 1887

⁵⁶ Vincent Twomey, *The End of Irish Catholicism?* (Dublin: Veritas Publications, 2003) 45

⁵⁷ Ambrose Macaulay, Review of *The Irish Martyrs*. Edited by Patrick J. Corish and Benignus Millett OFM. *Irish Theological Quarterly* 71.3-4 (2006), 266-267

2001 in which the lives and deaths of some of the *beati* were recalled.

The Society of Jesus is often seen as the pre-eminent congregation of the Catholic Reformation. They quickly gained a collective reputation for their education and their intellect. They were given control of the English College in Rome and also of Cardinal Allen's English College in Douai, so that even those priests who were not members of the society were trained by them. Besides the Jesuits, the Benedictines also had a significant presence in the English mission. There were Jesuits in Ireland, with some in Dublin from the early seventeenth century, but the most influential regular priests in Ireland were friars - the Franciscans and Dominicans. For both countries, the secular priests were educated at the various Colleges set up on the continent. One particular difference seems to have been the relative wealth of the men who went to the continent for their training. Englishmen tended to be from the better-off families, or were sponsored by a wealthy patron. Irishmen frequently were ordained before they went to seminary. In this way they could subsist on the offerings they received for saying masses for special intentions⁵⁸. The continental training of priests ended abruptly with the French Revolution. Many clergy and part-trained priests returned home. Despite seminaries opening in Carlow, Kilkenny, Waterford and Maynooth, the situation with partly educated priests created a serious problem in Ireland⁵⁹. In England the "returned" seminaries set up at Ushaw in Durham and Oscott near Birmingham and continued their work there.

Cromwell is the *bête noire* of Irish history but he is feted by the English, to the extent of having a statue erected outside Parliament. In 1973, Antonia Fraser entitled her biography of him *Cromwell, our Chief of Men*. The experience of Catholics in England was very different from that of their co-religionists in Ireland. According to Fraser the French Ambassador, Antoine de Bordeaux, was of the considered opinion that the English Catholics fared better under the Protectorate than under any previous Government⁶⁰. In the middle 1650s conversions to Catholicism, as reported by the Jesuits, rose from 78 in 1650-51 to 416 in 1655; as many as six Masses were said daily in the chapel of the Venetian Ambassador and up to ten were said on feast days⁶¹. Although later financial difficulties meant that the recusancy fines were again called upon to help the Government out, the memory of English Catholics of Cromwell is more favourable than not. Besides the brutality of his campaign, for Irish Catholics the long lasting effect of Cromwell in Ireland was the seizure of land and its distribution to his soldiers.

⁵⁸ Emmet J. Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1750-1850* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006), 31

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 41

⁶⁰ Antonia Fraser, *Cromwell, Our Chief of Men* (St Albans: Panther, 1975), 490

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 490

The major laws which affected the political position of Catholics in Ireland and England were those which were imposed after the restoration of the monarchy, in particular, the Corporation (1661) and Test Acts (1673) which required a candidate for public office to take communion in his parish church and to make the Declaration against Transubstantiation. No Catholic could, in good conscience, make this Declaration. These laws mark a dividing point between the recusant and penal periods. Although now excluded from political office, the main memories of the English Catholics are concentrated on the difficulties experienced in the first period of proscription. That of the Irish focuses on the second.

Following the Revolution of 1688 in England and the Williamite Wars in Ireland, the Protestant parties in both countries sought to consolidate the Protestant hold on the throne and Parliament through the enactment of further laws against “the growth of popery”. The motivation for, and the outcome of, the laws in both countries were different. The only substantial way in which the laws differed between Ireland and England was in the inheritance of property. In both countries Protestant kin had first claim on inheriting property. In England, in theory, Catholics could not inherit property at all, nor could they buy it, nor receive a gift of property. In Ireland, where land was devised to the next generation, the normal practice of primogeniture was discontinued and that of inheritance by gavelkind was imposed for Catholics. Under gavelkind, all sons received an equal share of the property. The effect of this would be to diminish the property holdings of individuals, and in an era where size of property determined one’s political influence, this led to a diminution of that influence. Edmund Burke said of the laws in Ireland that “the professed object was, to deprive the few men, who, in spite of those laws, might hold or obtain any property amongst them, of all sort of influence or authority over the rest”⁶².

During the recusancy period Catholics in England had learnt to maintain a low profile. By doing so they retained the trust and confidence of their near neighbours. Now, however, regardless of their political views, regardless of the loyalty they held towards England, regardless of the fact that many senior members of the Church of England were also uneasy about ignoring the Stuart claims to the throne, it was the Catholics who bore the brunt of the insecurities felt by those who had organised the succession to the throne. No longer would maintaining a low profile suffice as a means by which a Catholic could continue to participate in the life of his nation. Every avenue by which he might contribute to the nation was closed to him by virtue of his religious beliefs. As a result a number of prominent members of the laity who had remained Catholic through the recusant period

⁶² Edmund Burke, “A Letter to Sir Hercules Langrische, Bart., M.P.; January 3rd 1792”, in *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, vol. 4 (London: John C Nimmo, 1887), 170

began to conform. They included the Earl of Surrey (heir to the Duke of Norfolk), Lord Teynham, Sir Thomas Gascoigne, Lords Gage, Fauconberg, Montague, Nugent, Kingsland, Dunsany, the Duke of Gordon; and three other baronets: Tancred, Swinburne and Blake⁶³. Basil Hemphill adds that in those cases where the major supporter of a congregation conformed, the congregation was frequently lost. The reasons for these apostasies are clear when one considers the rank of those who were doing so. Burke wrote to Sir Hercules Langrische, a member of the Dublin Parliament, that “they who are excluded from votes (under proper qualifications inherent in the Constitution that gives them) are excluded, not from *the state*, but from *the British Constitution*” (original italics)⁶⁴.

Burke was writing of the laws in Ireland but this was also true of Catholics in England and whilst the Catholics in Ireland, both Irish and Old English, may have been a conquered people, such a status never applied to English Catholics. Excluded from their rightful participation in the political nation, conforming was an understandable path for them. Called to account in 1780, by the electors in Bristol for his actions in supporting early Catholic Relief, Burke described the two parties in Parliament who had enacted the penal laws in England as making “a sport of the fortunes and the liberties of their fellow-creatures”⁶⁵.

Burke wrote of those who had implemented the laws in Ireland that “they must but too frequently have motives of pride, passion, petulance, peevish jealousy, or tyrannic suspicion, to urge them to treat the excluded people with contempt and rigor.”⁶⁶

In concluding his letter to Langrische, Burke summarised his view on the penal laws in Ireland thus:

You abhorred it, as I did, for its vicious perfection. For I must do it justice: it was a complete system, full of coherence and consistency, well digested and well composed in all its parts. It was a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, and as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment, and degradation of a people, and the debasement, in them, of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man⁶⁷.

In Ireland, as Jonathan Swift wrote in 1708, Catholics had become “hewers of wood and drawers of water”⁶⁸. In the last quarter of the century relief from the laws began in both countries; whilst Ireland was about 80% Catholic⁶⁹, the numbers in England showed about

⁶³ Basil Hemphill, *The Early Vicars Apostolic of England, 1685-1750* (London: Burns & Oates, 1954), 84

⁶⁴ Burke, “Langrische”, 175

⁶⁵ Edmund Burke, *The Works of the Rt Hon Edmund Burke*, vol. 2, 12 vols. (London: John C Nimmo, 1887), 327

⁶⁶ Burke, “Langrische”, 175

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 210

⁶⁸ Quoted in Thomas Babington Macauley, *History of England from the Accession of James II*, vol. 4, 5 vols. (London: Folio, 1986), Fn 87

⁶⁹ Census returns in the nineteenth century consistently showed Ireland to be about 80% Catholic.

1%, but they were growing; the *Returns of the Papists* ordered by Parliament showed an increase from nearly 68,000 in 1767 to over 69,000 in 1780⁷⁰.

The Cromwellian campaign seriously affected what had become the normal running of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Before this, Mass was frequently said in the houses of the gentry or merchants, a situation broadly similar to England in the recusant period. In planted areas in Ireland, however, sheds, outhouses or even the open air were used⁷¹. The image of an outdoor mass (the priest standing, vested, at a rock as “altar” (the Mass Rock); surrounding the congregation are men on look-out for soldiers who would disturb the liturgy) has adorned many Irish school history text books. Corish says that it was in the decade following Cromwell’s visitation that the tradition of Mass Rocks imprinted itself on Irish memory⁷². Synods at Tuam (1658, 1660), Armagh (1660) and Cashel (1661) showed that the parish structure had collapsed and that the diocesan structure was also in disarray. Although two bishops attended the Armagh synod, none attended the others.

Following the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, matters began to improve. Thatched Mass-houses with mud walls were often built even where the landlord was Protestant. A report in 1731 into the State of Popery showed that the “altar in the fields” was far less common than a Mass-house although a congregation with a Mass-house probably had a sympathetic landlord⁷³. It was true that some continued to worship out of doors sufficiently far into the penal era for the memory to remain, but by the middle eighteenth century it was a rare occurrence. Whilst Mass out of doors may not have been a feature of the English Catholic penal-era experience, in the nineteenth century their collective experience went far beyond churches, chapels, Mass-houses and peoples’ front rooms as will be shown below. In England, as in Ireland, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, mass was said wherever accommodation (even if apparently unsuitable) could be found.

Archbishop Troy of Dublin in a letter, dated 27th August 1795, to Fr Michael Daly, Rector of the Irish College at Lisbon wrote that “the restriction laid on [education] by Law is the most barbarous and inhuman of all their penal laws”⁷⁴. The response of the Irish to the prohibition of popish schools and popish school-masters by an Act of 1695 was to construct a network of informal, unregulated schools which became known generically as “hedge-schools”. Sometimes shelter was indeed provided by a hedge but probably not as frequently as the popular memory would have us believe, as often these met in people’s

⁷⁰ J. A. Harding, *The Diocese of Clifton 1850-2000* (Bristol: Clifton Catholic Diocesan Trustees, 1999), 6

⁷¹ Corish, *Catholic Community*, 33

⁷² *Ibid.*, 49

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 99

⁷⁴ Patricia O’Connell, *The Irish College at Santiago De Compostela, 1605-1769* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 24

houses.

For Catholics in both Ireland and England the important point of education was that it should be Catholic rather than Protestant. Education, as it is understood today, was not considered a right by many in England for any other than the upper classes. In the late eighteenth century, Hannah More of Somerset was told by William Wilberforce that “something must be done about Cheddar”. Wilberforce had visited the village and found but two bibles (one of which was propping up a table); people living in the caves; and utter abject poverty. More set about establishing schools in North Somerset but received complaints from local farmers⁷⁵. She later wrote in one of her stories that farmer Hoskins complained that “of all the foolish inventions, and new-fangled devices to ruin the country, that of teaching the poor to read is the very worst”⁷⁶.

Daniel Corkery has somewhat romanticised the position of the hedge-school master in *Hidden Ireland*⁷⁷. In 1981 P J Corish wrote that a “legend that still needs much disentangling has gathered about them”⁷⁸. The legend has been disentangled by Antonia McManus’s study on the hedge-schools; their teachers; the text books used within them; and their ultimate demise in the early nineteenth century⁷⁹.

In England efforts were also made to establish Catholic schools. Brailes in Warwickshire had its own functioning, albeit hidden, school from the earliest days of the recusant period⁸⁰, but the memory in England is that priests, whether as chaplains to the gentry or appointed to missions, catechised the children in the doctrines and disciplines of their faith and provided such education as was possible. There may be more work that can be done in this area. It was illegal for Catholics to teach in non-Catholic schools, but in 1766 an Anglican clergyman employed Peter Newby as a teacher at his school. Newby was a Lancashire Catholic who had gone to Douai apparently to train for the priesthood. Having returned home without completing the course, he was a well-educated man in want of employment⁸¹. Rev Bartholomew Booth employed him to teach Greek, Latin and French at his new academy at Woolton near Liverpool⁸². Writing of Newby, Maurice Whitehead has

⁷⁵ Hannah More believed it was alright to teach the poor to read their bible, as long as they were not taught to write as writing involved thinking! (Conversation with Dr S Edney)

⁷⁶ Quoted in Antonia McManus, *The Irish Hedge School and Its Books, 1695-1831* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2004), 160

⁷⁷ Daniel Corkery, *The Hidden Ireland : A Study of Gaelic Munster in the Eighteenth Century* (Dublin: M.H. Gill and Son, Ltd, 1924)

⁷⁸ Corish, *Catholic Community*, 79

⁷⁹ McManus, *The Irish Hedge School and Its Books, 1695-1831*

⁸⁰ *SS Peter & Paul, Brailes*, <<http://www.catholicbrailes.org.uk/brailes/brailes.html>> (accessed 01/01/2009)

⁸¹ Maurice Whitehead, *Peter Newby: 18th Century Lancashire Recusant Poet*, ed. Oliver M Westall (Lancaster: Centre for North-West Regional Studies, University of Lancaster, 1980), Occasional Paper no 7, 14

⁸² *Ibid.*, 15

said that not only did the tolerant Booth employ a Catholic master, but he also took in Catholic boys into his school⁸³. Booth's school closed in 1772, and after a brief sojourn in Essex, Newby returned to Lancashire where, despite the illegality of it, he set up his own school⁸⁴. How many such illegal Catholic schools operated in the proscription era has not yet been researched. For those Catholics, male and female, Irish and English, whose families could afford it, or who were fortunate enough to be sponsored by the generosity of the wealthy, a more rounded education was available in the many schools abroad founded for this purpose. In the wake of the French Revolution, many of these returned "home" to England where they continued their work.

1.2 Structure of Thesis

Following the Second Catholic Relief Act in 1791, Catholics were permitted to build public churches again and there was a great need to do so, for two reasons. Firstly there was the spiritual need. The central belief of Catholicism, that which distinguishes it from Protestant denominations, is its doctrine of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. This alone would have justified undertaking the project to build appropriate sacred space. The second was a physical need. John Bossy has argued that, far from being in inexorable decline, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the Catholic population was growing⁸⁵. At this time also, in common with people from the other denominations, there was movement of Catholics from rural areas to the newly industrialising towns and cities. As a result, chapels were needed in new locations. In 1791 many temporary, secret, and some not so secret, locations were used for Catholic worship and these needed to be replaced with permanent structures. They had at this stage very few buildings which were recognisably chapels or churches. As yet no overarching history of this rebuilding project has been undertaken – how it was organised; what the priorities were; how it was financed; or what difficulties were in its way. Bryan Little has written a history of Catholic churches in England⁸⁶ and his book covers three centuries from 1623. His primary focus was that of architectural history and he does not address these questions. He dismisses most of the nineteenth century churches as being "generally undistinguished"⁸⁷. Recently, English Heritage has produced what may be described as a "coffee table" book⁸⁸ designed to show

⁸³ Ibid., 16

⁸⁴ Ibid., 16-18

⁸⁵ John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community, 1570-1850* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1975), Fig. 1 422

⁸⁶ Bryan D. G. Little, *Catholic Churches since 1623 : A Study of Roman Catholic Churches in England and Wales from Penal Times to the Present Decade* (London: Hale, 1966)

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Christopher Martin and Alex Ramsay, *A Glimpse of Heaven : The Catholic Churches of Britain* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2006)

how Catholic churches have contributed to the built heritage of England. This too focussed on architectural developments. Many amateur historians⁸⁹ have documented the history of their own parishes. At the beginning of the century all visible signs of Catholicism had been expunged from vast areas of England and Wales during and since the Reformation. The history of this project is important because a building which is recognisably a place of worship is a text in stone which declares the presence of a congregation of that denomination in that locality. From an historical perspective, analysis of the geographical spread of Catholic churches in the nineteenth century shows how the religion itself spread in the country⁹⁰.

The first part of this thesis fills this gap in the historiography by giving an account of this rebuilding project.

The Catholic Church in England and Wales in 1791 was institutionally very poor and to build the necessary sacred spaces for its worship and ritual was a daunting undertaking especially as, with rapidly increasing immigration from Ireland, the number of Catholics was growing faster than the general population. The primary aim of the bishops was to provide a church and a priest within reasonable distance of any group of Catholics which could become a congregation. There were many difficulties which had to be overcome: financial, social and legal. Chapter two specifies and examines these.

The major difficulty was how to fund the project and this is discussed in chapter three. Over the century, a variety of methods was used to fund churches and an outline structure dividing the project into three phases (1791-1840; 1840-1870; 1870-1908) is proposed. In the period covered by this thesis, the Catholic Church in England and Wales did not have parishes; geographical areas ministered to by priests were missions⁹¹. Although the bishops were generally reactive to the need for establishing new missions, not all were successful and some were closed. Chapter four compares two pairs of similar missions in an attempt to establish which, if any, factors might have led to a greater chance of success of new missions. One of the factors identified is the presence of Irish migrants in an area and this leads to a discussion on the contribution which those migrants made, not only to this rebuilding project, but also to the form of Catholicism which emerged by the end of the century.

⁸⁹ Describing such writers as “amateur” must not be taken as pejorative, rather that most were not in full-time employment as “professional” historians.

⁹⁰ Maps are included which illustrate the geographical expansion of Catholicism (see below p. 41 and 91ff.). The first map shows the position as it was in 1791, in so far as this can be ascertained from the sources used. The others show the position in 1840, 1870 and 1908 respectively.

⁹¹ The word “mission” is used throughout this thesis, as parishes were not established until 1918. Although this may imply a newly established Catholic community in a locality, that should not be inferred. There is further discussion on “missions” and “parishes” in chapter two in the section on the Church administrative structure.

There have been many books and papers written on the Irish in Britain⁹². In these, the writers look at aspects of being Irish in Britain, so that they focus mainly on the difficulties which the migrants might have had in assimilating; the social problems which their poverty caused; or their lack of skills which ensured their occupations were usually in labouring. The difficulties of the Church's rebuilding project enumerated in chapter two do not include any related to the Irish migrants – these difficulties would have existed even without the presence of the migrants. There has been work specifically on the Irish as Catholics in Britain, including essays in the various collections edited by Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley⁹³. Steven Fielding has argued that Irish Catholics retained their distinctive ethnic and religious identity within their working class milieu⁹⁴ and Raphael Samuel showed the Irish aspects of it⁹⁵. Samuel manages in a relatively few pages to expose the problems which the Catholic Church had to overcome in establishing a comprehensive pastoral structure to the migrant Irish. There is frequently a perception that in the nineteenth century these migrants assumed a nationalist identity which was inimical to the British state. Chapter five opens with a brief discussion on Irish nationalism and its relevance to this thesis. It then proceeds to address three arguments which are often used to show that the influence of the Irish migrants was minimal, beyond that of substantially increasing the numbers of Catholics in England and Wales. The first of these is that the Catholicism which the migrants brought with them to England was a folk religion rather than truly Tridentine Catholicism⁹⁶. Mary Heimann, in her monograph on Catholic Devotions in nineteenth century England, argued that the migrants tended not to attend weekly mass as required by the decrees of the Council of Trent⁹⁷. The second argument against Irish influence was that of leakage from the faith – the non-practice of their faith on migration. Leakage is usually accepted to be around 40%. It is often linked to the lack of regular practice undertaken before migration and there is evidence which shows that this was so in many parts of rural Ireland. Hugh McLeod discusses lack of attendance in terms of people who identified as Catholics as oppositional to Protestants⁹⁸ but even taking all

⁹² For example: Roger Swift, *Irish Migrants in Britain, 1815-1914 : A Documentary History* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002); G. Davis, *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1914* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1991); a very comprehensive introduction to the subject is given in (Donald MacRaild, "The Irish in Britain 1750-1922, a Bibliographic Essay," (1999), <<http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/diaspora/guides/brit.shtml>> Accessed 26/02/2009.). Although this now needs updating, it is still invaluable.

⁹³ For example Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, *The Irish in Britain, 1815-1939* (London: Pinter, 1989) and more recently Roger Swift and Sheridan Gilley, *Irish Identities in Victorian Britain* (London: Routledge, 2011)

⁹⁴ Steven Fielding, *Class and Ethnicity: Irish Catholics in England, 1880-1939* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993)

⁹⁵ Raphael Samuel, "An Irish Religion", in *Patriotism : The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity; Minorities and Outsiders*, ed. Raphael Samuel, vol. II (London: Routledge, 1989) 94-120

⁹⁶ S. Gilley, "The Roman Catholic Church in England, 1780-1940", in *A History of Religion in Britain*, eds S. Gilley and W.J. Shiels (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) 346-362, 351

⁹⁷ Mary Heimann, *Catholic Devotion in Victorian England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995)

⁹⁸ Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (London: Croom Helm, 1974), 34

these into account, research for this thesis shows that there may have been another, hitherto unconsidered, factor at play once the migrants arrived in England and this will be shown here.

The third part of chapter five will show that throughout the century, the Irish migration did not represent a drain on the (very limited) resources of the Church but did in fact make significant contributions, not only in numbers but financially and organisationally. The migrants are often portrayed as poor, unskilled and uneducated. This chapter adds to the growing body of scholarship which shows the presence amongst them of educated, middle-class and professional people. These are shown to have undertaken leadership roles at all times in the century. The sources used are discussed below and from those it has been possible to identify a portion of the missions where there was an Irish influence. Chapter five gives a map which shows those missions which had an Irish presence and show that Irish migrants played a role in the spread of Catholicism and building its churches throughout the country, not only in the large industrial conurbations with which they are usually associated.

The main argument of this thesis is that the developing visibility of Catholicism played a part in reducing the prejudice against the religion and its adherents. Chapters two to five stress the physical presence of churches and chapels in cities, towns and rural areas throughout England and Wales – a growing visibility which is clear from the maps in chapter three. Overcoming the problems discussed in chapter two and rebuilding the infrastructure of churches as seen in chapters three to five begs the question “Did all of this activity, visible in the towns and on the landscape of England and Wales, lead to an improvement of their neighbours’ attitudes to Catholics?” Chapter six answers by showing how Catholic confidence and assertiveness grew over the long century examined in this thesis. There were different ways in which this confidence was exhibited and these are discussed in chapter six. Here the fashions in dedications are examined and shown that these changed significantly over the century from forms which were very neutral to those which were more Catholic. Confidence was particularly shown when the Catholics were able to memorialise their Reformation martyrs which they did from about the mid-century. An aspect of the Church’s agenda in the nineteenth century was the claim that it was the original Christian foundation in England; as will be shown, this claim was supported in the dedications used and in the architecture of their churches. The change over time in the language used by the Bishops in pastoral letters; advertising the use of languages other than English in church services which showed its membership of the Universal Church are other facets of the English Church’s assertiveness which will be examined in this chapter.

Language also featured in the appeals made by missions for the Catholic body as a whole to assist them. Referencing some of Charles Booth's survey of London in the late nineteenth century⁹⁹, it will be shown that in this area, the language did not so much change as vanish altogether even though the need was no less urgent by the 1890s as it had been in the 1790s.

There were two other forms of visibility which showed how Catholicism and Catholics were becoming a normal part of English life – Catholic culture and engagement in public life. Engagement in public life is all about politics, and what is shown in this chapter is how Catholics took their part in the political life of the nation. Catholics and politics was the subject of Dermot Quinn's text¹⁰⁰ in which he focussed on the effectiveness of Catholics as a voting bloc and individual Catholics as members of Parliament. The discussion here is not limited to Parliamentary politics; which party was supported or whether the individuals concerned were particularly effective or otherwise, as this is not the issue addressed here. The question answered here is "to what extent did Catholics engage in public life?" It will be shown that over the century, all classes did so engage; that they were encouraged to do so by the Church leadership; and that, ultimately, those who stood for elective office were accepted by all sections of the community.

The final thread in chapter six is that of cultural Catholicism. Prior to the Reformation in England, many Church feast days were celebrated in the community. These celebrations would usually have religious and secular parts, a church service in the morning and some form of non-religious entertainment afterwards. Processions were a frequent constituent part of these celebrations. These had generally been excised from English life during the Reformation period. Returning Catholic celebrations in the form of processions to the streets of England was a new feature of nineteenth-century English life. Thus Catholicism in all its rich variations became visible to a greater number of non-Catholics. Generally, the re-introduction of processions to English life was welcomed by the denizens of the towns where they took place. This is shown by the reports in the local press at the time; examples from two towns are discussed, Preston in Lancashire which had a long recusant tradition and Cardiff where the return of a sizeable body of Catholics was a new phenomenon. There were instances of the Established Church following the lead of the Catholics so that some practices, hitherto exclusively Catholic, were adopted by the Established Church. Not everyone welcomed these and although there was much concern

⁹⁹ Charles Booth, *Inquiry into Life and Labour in London*, London School of Economics Archives; Charles Booth, et al., *Life and Labour of the People in London. Third Series: Religious Influences* (London: Macmillan, 1902)

¹⁰⁰ Dermot Quinn, *Patronage and Piety: The Politics of English Roman Catholicism, 1850-1900* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993)

about ritualism in the Church of England, the protests against the Catholic practices were based on the legal restrictions still in place on Catholics following the three main Relief Acts of Parliament (1778, 1791 and 1829). A major procession planned for the Eucharistic Congress in 1908 was, at the very last minute, cancelled in its intended form by the Government of the day due to its presumed illegality. This leads one to question the usual assumption that, following the third Relief Act in 1829, Catholics suffered from no further legal disabilities.

The 1792 edition of *The Laity's Directory* included an account of the 1791 Relief Act. From reading this, and cross-referring to the UK Parliamentary Archives, it was clear that the Relief Acts did not actually repeal any of the penal laws. Later editions of the *Directory* in the 1830s contained a form of words which purported to be a legal way for Catholics to bequeath money to a priest for masses to be said for their souls after their death. The protests against processions and the inclusion of such advice in the *Directories* led to research to establish the particular legal position of Catholics and the Church in the nineteenth century. This showed that the three Relief Acts did not remove all their disabilities and that Catholics were, at the time, aware of them. Thus in chapter two, in enumerating the difficulties faced by the Church, English law is included as one of these. There has been no substantive historical study neither of the development of this body of law nor of the issues still facing Catholics after 1829. Julian Rivers has published a monograph which discussed, from a jurisprudential perspective, the legal changes affecting all of the non-established religions in England¹⁰¹. Rivers included a brief historical account of the law as it changed, but this was purely narrative background to his thesis which focussed on the position of the non-established religions in the early twenty-first century. Some incidents particular to the legal position of Catholics after 1829 have been written of, such as the 1908 Eucharistic Procession¹⁰² while others have either been forgotten or, maybe because they involve some of the finer points of law, ignored. And yet, after 1829, Catholic charities were not permitted; Catholic trusts could not be set up; bequests for masses for the soul of the legatee could not be made; male religious communities could not own property. Some of these disabilities were removed by further Acts of Parliament (after 1829); others by the courts as judges, leading or following public opinion, saw fit to overturn decisions made in previous times. Chapter seven explains exactly what these disabilities were. Here, English law, both statute and court judgements, is examined and it

¹⁰¹ Julian Rivers, *The Law of Organized Religions : Between Establishment and Secularism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

¹⁰² Carol A. Devlin, "The Eucharistic Procession of 1908: The Dilemma of the Liberal Government" *Church History* 63.3 (1994); G. I. T. Machin, "The Liberal Government and the Eucharistic Procession of 1908" *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 34.04 (1983)

will be shown how these changed over the whole century so that, by the early twentieth century, Catholicism came closer to being on the same legal basis within England as the other non-established Christian denominations.

1908 was a momentous year for Catholics in England and Wales. The final chapter explains why this was so and thus shows that it was an appropriate year to end a thesis on Catholic history in England and Wales. It concludes the argument by showing that, on the occasion of the International Eucharist Congress, held in London that year, for the majority of English people, Catholicism was simply another religion on a landscape which was more tolerant of difference. It also summarises the argument that the increased visibility of Catholicism made it more familiar to many more people than it had been a century earlier. As a result, non-Catholics were less inclined to exhibit the prejudice which their forbears had held. One could summarise the conclusions by saying that by 1908 Catholics could, in almost all respects, behave as Englishmen and Englishmen could behave as Catholics.

1.3 Sources Used

To investigate how Catholics made themselves visible through church building, one must discover how, when, where and why the individual pieces of this project were put in place. As there are many hundreds of parishes in England and Wales today, it was decided to create a database which could be interrogated for the answers. It was found that in the period 1791-1908 over 2,000 locations were used by Catholics in England and Wales for Sunday morning worship. Having decided on this approach, the question then was where one might find the correct data. The data required was: address of mission; diocese (or district if founded before 1850); dates of foundation of the mission, dedication of the church, and construction of the church; if a mission were closed that date was included; and some form of coding which indicated common features of missions or the type of dedication. The database also noted when dedications were changed and when the mission moved from one location to another. Every location listed for Sunday morning worship was recorded. Not all these were, or developed into, missions. Convents, schools and private houses were listed in the *Directories* but were included in the database when they were the only place where mass may have been said in that locality. These did not all necessarily become missions, although frequently missions followed on from these less public institutions.

Sources for this information would include websites; printed parish and diocesan histories; and the *Catholic Directory*. Many parishes have researched their own history, projects which are usually undertaken to coincide with a parish jubilee. A previous librarian at

Downside Abbey, Dom Daniel Rees, endeavoured to acquire copies of these when they were published, but could not be certain that he had compiled a full set. All the Catholic dioceses have websites which include parish information and links to parish websites where these exist. Of the parishes which have websites not all include a page of its parish history. Following links from diocese to parish could not guarantee success in finding the information required. There have been sites which purported to give a list of all the Catholic parishes in the country but examination of these has shown them to be deficient¹⁰³. Rejecting the modern resource of the internet, focus switched to printed sources. Parish histories, whether online or printed, would provide supplementary information, but would not suffice for the purposes of this thesis.

The *Catholic Directory* gives full information on all the dioceses and parishes in England and Wales and is updated and published annually. The *Directories* have been used by many in their researches into the Catholic Church in the nineteenth century. Mary Heimann used them to find which devotions were available in churches across the country from 1850-1914¹⁰⁴. Heimann took a sample of every fifth year from the *Directories* to construct her thesis on Catholic devotions in the latter half of the century. Abbot Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard used the full collection in Downside Abbey to produce a “working list”, as he called it, of all the priests who had worked in England and Wales in the whole century¹⁰⁵.

In the current *Directory* after each parish name in its list there are up to three dates: the date of foundation of the parish; the year the church was opened; and the year the church was consecrated¹⁰⁶. Because Catholic Canon Law forbids consecration of a church until all the debt has been cleared and the site held freehold or on long lease (typically 999 years), many churches give only two dates. Comparing information from earlier editions with a more recent *Directory*, it became apparent that much important data could only be gleaned from the original nineteenth-century *Directories*. The main problems were threefold. Firstly, amalgamation of two missions was not recorded. Secondly, missions which closed, for whatever reason, would not be recorded in future editions; the only way of discovering such a closure was by noting its absence in the edition following closure. Thirdly, as will be seen in many examples below, the year of foundation of the mission and the year of opening and naming of its church were rarely the same. It is argued in chapter six that one way in which it was possible to discern growing Catholic confidence was by analysis of

¹⁰³ One was looked at closely at the start of this research and found to be deficient. This website has since been removed from the web and therefore no reference to it is possible

¹⁰⁴ Heimann, *Catholic Devotion*

¹⁰⁵ Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests 1801-1914 : A Working List* (Bath: Downside Abbey, 1993)

¹⁰⁶ CD 1997 38

the dedications used when naming churches. It was found that there were fashions in dedications and, as might be expected in any form of fashion, these changed over the course of the century. To support that argument, and to discern these changes in fashion, precise dates were needed for when the dedications were given. This information could only be obtained from the original *Directories*. There was also an issue of dedications being changed; although this was not allowed¹⁰⁷, it did happen and, again, full information on changes could only be discovered by a thorough reading of all nineteenth-century editions. As an example of this, from the 1997 *Directory* one might think that the earliest dedication in memory of one of the English Reformation martyrs was the mission at Barton-in-Humber, founded in 1848 and listed in the 1997 *Directory* as dedicated to St Augustine Webster. Reading through the nineteenth-century *Directories* show that although the mission was founded in 1843, no dedication was actually given until 1878 when the church was dedicated to St Augustine of England. Sometime between 1878 and 1997 the dedication was changed from Augustine of England to Augustine Webster. This may have happened after Webster was canonised as one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales in 1970.

In analysing the data on dedications, further information was sought to establish the extent to which the presence of Irish migrants in the English church was acknowledged. If one were to list the churches dedicated to Irish saints and calculate that as a proportion of all the churches built in the period, this should yield the answer. The immediate difficulty with this is that some Irish-born saints had cults in England. St Aidan, born in Ireland, founded the monastery at Lindisfarne, and there has been local devotion to him since. Does a church dedicated to Aidan count as an Irish dedication or one formed from a local cult? Most probably, in the North of England it is the latter; but were a church to be so dedicated in, say, Chiswick, where there was a settled Irish community, it might be inferred that this was an Irish-influenced dedication. The same difficulty arises with Columba who was very influential in the early development of Christianity in southern Scotland and northern England. Although he is one of Ireland's three Patrons, it is probable that the dedications of churches to him in this area were due to local devotion rather than the particular presence of Irish migrants. On the other hand, St Walburge was an old Saxon saint, yet the church named after her in Preston was built, mainly, by an Irish congregation in the 1850s.

These considerations led to an examination of the data collected in an endeavour to draw inferences from the dedications given to churches in England and Wales in the nineteenth

¹⁰⁷ *Churches*. 1998. *CODE OF CANON LAW*, Accessed 29/09/2011.
<http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P4H.HTM>

century. The data used, to construct an argument concerning dedications, the influences which led to the choice of dedications, or the conclusions to be drawn from fashions in them, had to be rigorous and credible.

To overcome these problems and create reliable data, a database was built using nineteenth-century sources. These were, mainly, *The Laity's Directory* (1795-1839) and *The Catholic Directory* (1840-1909). Substantial runs of the *Laity's* and *Catholic Directories* are available in the British Library, the Central Catholic Library and in various Diocesan archives, but one of the most complete collections is at Downside Abbey Library. It has copies of the *Directories* from 1795 to the present except for the editions of 1807, 1808, 1809, 1811, 1814, 1816 and 1823. All, bar those missing in Downside, were used to create the database¹⁰⁸. Earlier editions referenced in this thesis were not used for the database and were accessed through the *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* database¹⁰⁹ or the British Library. The arguments of chapter three and of parts of chapters five (language) and six (dedications and language) rely on the data extracted from the *Directories*. The Appendix shows which information was extracted to create the database and the number of occurrences of each type of data.

The other main resource used in creating the database, particularly in establishing if there had been an Irish influence, was *Historical Notes on English Catholic Missions* by Bernard Kelly. Kelly's work, published in 1907, provided a short pen portrait of each mission extant at that time. He does not give footnotes showing the source of individual pieces data but, in the accompanying bibliography¹¹⁰, he includes both the *Laity's* and *Catholic Directories* as one of his "chief sources" of information. Kelly provides much anecdotal evidence and, although there is an occasional mistake, his information generally agrees with other sources. These sources were supplemented by parish histories (printed or online); the *Victoria County Histories*; nineteenth-century directories such as Kelly's *Directories of Places*. These sources yielded more information about chapels, including, sometimes, the names of benefactors.

The main argument constructed from a comprehensive reading of the *Directories* and Kelly is supported by other contemporary primary sources particularly newspapers such as *The Times* which gave a national view and local papers, especially those from Preston, Cardiff and Liverpool which reported on features of growing Catholicism and the local response to

¹⁰⁸ As the *Catholic Directory* was a direct successor title to the *Laity's Directory*, this thesis will use "Directory" to refer to them both.

¹⁰⁹ "Eighteenth Century Collections Online", <<http://gale.cengage.co.uk/product-highlights/history/eighteenth-century-collections-online.aspx>>.

¹¹⁰ Bernard W. Kelly, *Historical Notes on English Catholic Missions* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1907), unnumbered page at beginning of book

these. In the mid-nineteenth century Henry Mayhew published an account on London's labour and the poor¹¹¹. As a contemporaneous eye-witness account this was valuable background reading, especially his accounts of the Irish costermongers and street traders. Half a century later, Charles Booth produced a survey of London including maps which categorised each street by its social class. He subsequently amassed evidence through interviews with clergymen of all denominations. Booth's work has been criticised for being qualitative rather than quantitative, an unusual criticism for a Victorian work as they were wont to use statistics to categorise almost everything. Rosemary O'Day, in her assessment of Booth's work, suggests that it is a source which could be more profitably used by historians. In contrast to those who have not used Booth when it would appear to have been apposite to their work, she particularly singles out Hugh McLeod for his "expert use" of the data¹¹². McLeod¹¹³ has used Booth's work and analysed his findings to give an account of religion and its practice across the social classes "in the Victorian City", but his title is broader than the actual content as he stays firmly focussed on London. The disadvantage, from the perspective of this thesis, of Booth and Mayhew is that their work is entirely based on London and this thesis covers all of England and Wales. However, notwithstanding that, as primary sources their works provided useful background reading and gave insight into the authors' opinions of those who were Catholic or Irish. Booth in particular was prepared to state his opinion on matters as, for example, when he said that "we ... rejoice to feel assured that the conversion of England to Roman Catholicism is a chimerical dream"¹¹⁴. Kenneth Inglis¹¹⁵ covers similar ground as McLeod but goes beyond the metropolitan boundaries.

The archives of various Catholic Dioceses were referred to¹¹⁶ and permission was sought, and granted, to read the otherwise confidential Minutes of the Bishops annual meetings from 1850-1908. The main primary source on the 1908 Eucharistic Congress was the official report published after the Congress¹¹⁷. Secondary sources¹¹⁸, particularly the timeline given in Machin's paper, proved very valuable as did Devlin's comments on the aftermath of the decision to restrict the intended purpose of the final Procession.

¹¹¹ Henry Mayhew. *Of the Religion of the Street-Irish* 1851. *London labour and the London poor*, Accessed 26/08/2011. <<http://etext.virginia.edu/toc/modeng/public/MayLond.html>>

¹¹² Rosemary O'Day and David Englander, *Mr. Charles Booth's Inquiry: Life and Labour of the People in London Reconsidered* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1993), Fn.2 161

¹¹³ McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City*

¹¹⁴ Booth, et al., *Life and Labour of the People in London. Third Series: Religious Influences*, 253

¹¹⁵ Kenneth Stanley Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963)

¹¹⁶ The archivists were invariably helpful but all these archives suffer from a severe lack of resources, especially financial.

¹¹⁷ *Report of the Nineteenth Eucharistic Congress, Held at Westminster from 9th to 13th September 1908* (London: Sands and Company, 1909)

¹¹⁸ Devlin, "Eucharistic Procession", 407; Machin, "Eucharistic Procession", 559-583

Sources for the chapter on English law were mainly primary. These included the Westlaw database¹¹⁹ of court reports which gives both modern and historical court judgements. The Houses of Parliament reports, debates and archives provided the information on the changes in Statute Law¹²⁰. The section on Catholic charities and trusts required the first edition of the standard text book¹²¹ because as the law changes current editions rarely include sufficient historical detail. The publication of Julian Rivers' monograph¹²² provided an authoritative verification of the research undertaken here.

1.4 The Laity's Directory – a brief history

One publication stands out against all others for contemporaneous information on the development and spread of Catholicism in England and Wales in the nineteenth century. It is *The Laity's Directory* and its successor *The Catholic Directory* which Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard claims is the longest in-print periodical in Britain, "if not the world"¹²³.

Catholic priests and members of religious congregations are obliged by Canon Law to recite the Divine Office daily. This varies annually and, to ensure the correct rubric is used, bishops and superiors of religious congregations publish the *Ordo recitandi officii divini* for their respective priests and members. This is usually known as the *Ordo* and specifies the Office for each day of the liturgical year. The *Ordo* also informs priests of the celebrations of feast days and days of fast and abstinence.

When, in England, Catholicism was proscribed but tolerated, Catholics had to maintain the practice of their faith without the regular guidance of priests. James Marmaduke, an eighteenth-century Catholic publisher, conceived the idea of publishing the *Ordo* in English for the laity (officially, as with all Vatican publications then, it was issued in Latin). This he entitled *The Laity's Directory*. By publishing an English *Ordo*, Marmaduke provided a reference for literate laity to assist them in their religious practice. The earliest edition of Marmaduke's publication in the British Library is that of 1768, although the year of first publication is unknown as, at that time, publication of Catholic material was illegal. Frans Blom et al state that it was known to have been published "since at least 1758"¹²⁴; Fr H Thurston agrees, claiming the first edition was issued for the year 1759¹²⁵. This is contradicted in a preface to the 1874 edition of the *Catholic*

¹¹⁹ Westlaw U.K., <<http://login.westlaw.co.uk/maf/wluk/api/tocectory?sttype=stdtemplate&stnew=true>>

¹²⁰ House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, Proquest, <<http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk>>

¹²¹ George W. Keeton, *The Modern Law of Charities*, 1st edition (London: Pitman, 1962)

¹²² Rivers, *Law of Religions*

¹²³ Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests*, viii

¹²⁴ Frans Blom, et al., eds, *The Correspondence of James Peter Coghlan (1731-1800)* (Woodbridge: Published for the Catholic Record Society by the Boydell Press, 2007), xxxi

¹²⁵ H Thurston, "An Old-Established Periodical" *The Month* February (1882), 154

Directory, when the then editor wrote:

The earliest copy that the Editor has seen of the *Ordo recitandi Officii Divini, &c.*, is one for 1722. In 1782 were added to the *Ordo* the conditions for gaining the eight Plenary Indulgences, in 1787 an Obituary of Clergy and Laity, and in 1791 a notice of Schools.¹²⁶

According to Thurston, J P Coghlan was the official publisher of the *Ordo* (in Latin) for the clergy¹²⁷. Coghlan decided to publish his own English version, using the same title as Marmaduke, possibly in 1764¹²⁸. The distinguishing feature of Coghlan's version was that he had gained the agreement of the Vicar Apostolic in London to publish the *Ordo* in English and persuaded the Vicar Apostolic to write a "Thought for the New Year" – a religious meditation – for his publication. On its title page, Coghlan's version had printed "*cum permissu superiorum*". It is probable that permission to publish was obtained by Coghlan as support for his venture; however it was required by Canon Law for episcopal permission to be given before publishing any ecclesiastical documents¹²⁹. This caused problems nearly a century later. Appearing as a witness before the Select Committee on Conventual and Monastic Institutions, 1870, the *Directory*'s publisher (Mr J Cull from Burns, Oates and Co.) and editor (Rev W A Johnson) were questioned at some length by members of the Committee as to the meaning of this phrase and the authority which its use bestowed upon the publication. Johnson explained, at some length to the Committee the differences between "*permissu superiorum*", "*Nihil Obstat*" and "*Imprimatur*"¹³⁰.

James Peter Coghlan was the son of a Shropshire stone-mason who had been apprenticed to a London printer and subsequently set up his own business. By the final quarter of the eighteenth century, he had become the foremost Catholic publisher in Britain. His correspondence, covering the period from 1771 to his death in 1800 has been edited and published¹³¹ and shows the extent to which Coghlan was embedded in the Catholic community: he passed on intelligence and reports of events on the Continent and arranged lodgings for Catholic students and clergy en route to schools and colleges abroad.

Marmaduke hit back in his 1774 edition with an impassioned plea for support:

The Public finding the great utility of such a Directory, the Publisher of this, being the original contriver of it, had great reason to expect their encouragement of his, as a gratitude due to every promoter of a common good; for if he had not thought of it, they perhaps would not have had one to this day.

And moreover it has been his chief view to supply the Public with correct editions

¹²⁶ CD 1874, unnumbered page

¹²⁷ Thurston, "Old Periodical", 155

¹²⁸ Blom, et al., eds, *Coghlan Letters*, xxxi

¹²⁹ Thurston, "Old Periodical", 155

¹³⁰ Villiers, *Select Committee on Convents and Monasteries.*, 146-157

¹³¹ Blom, et al., eds, *Coghlan Letters*

of the most useful Books; ... Therefore he reasonably thinks he ought to hope for some favour from them.

But on the contrary, having long lain under a great deal of mistreatment his property of this Directory, and his innocency of what is industriously laid to his charge, and finding no other means of rescuing himself from thence, consistent with christian liberty, he now proposes to sell off his stock in trade at a very low rate.¹³²

He renamed his version *The Original Laity's Directory*. In spite of the promise to “sell off his stock in trade” the holdings in the British Library indicate that Marmaduke was still publishing and in business until his final edition for 1789. Marmaduke died in 1788¹³³ leaving Coghlan as the sole publisher of the *Directory* and bringing to an end this unseemly quarrel. Coghlan died in February 1800 and his business was taken over by Keating, Brown & Keating. In the 1793 edition, the *Directory* included a list of the chapels in and around London. Over the following few decades this list gradually expanded until it became a comprehensive compilation of all the Catholic chapels in England and Wales.

In the late 1830s an Irish publisher issued an Irish version of the *Directory* with a very similar format, listing churches in Ireland and included churches in England, Wales and Scotland. This was clearly an attempt to compete in the English marketplace. The Irish edition soon removed most of the detail on the English and Scottish churches and concentrated solely on Ireland and has continued as the *Irish Catholic Directory* to the present time. Perhaps the Irish attempt to enter this market was influenced by the lack of development of the *Directory* by Keating. There was very little difference between the 1830s editions and those of the previous century other than the expanding list of Catholic missions. A new publication, *The Catholic Directory for the year 1838*, was issued by the publishers of *The Catholic Magazine*. This was intended as competition for Keating's *Laity's Directory*. In 1839 Keating placed a notice in his publication that he was being challenged by unfair competition. He was not prepared to make the *Directory* a “vehicle of contention” and so withdrew from the marketplace¹³⁴.

It may be that the Vicars Apostolic were embarrassed by the rivalry which had arisen between the two competing publications. This is unlikely ever to be confirmed as there is no archive extant of the *Laity's* or *Catholic Directories*. Following Keating's withdrawal from the marketplace (probably due to bankruptcy¹³⁵), the Bishops took control of the publication. A visual inspection of Keating's 1839 edition and that of the 1840 *Catholic*

¹³² Marmaduke, James. *The Laity's Directory; or, the Order of the Church-Service, for the Year of Our Lord, M DCC LXXIV*. London: James Marmaduke., 1773

¹³³ Thurston, “Old Periodical”, 156

¹³⁴ LD 1839, 88

¹³⁵ CD 1841, viii

Directory shows considerable continuity between the two *Directories*¹³⁶.

The Vicars Apostolic had no publishing facility of their own so the *Directories* were published, firstly by Simpkin Marshall and subsequently by other Catholic publishers including Charles Dolman and Burns and Oates. Currently it is published by Gabriel Communications. Despite the frequent changes in publisher, since 1840 editorial control was nominally in the hands of the bishops and it would appear that, usually, the editor was the secretary to the Vicar Apostolic of London and, after 1850, the Archbishop of Westminster. There were sometimes some changes in content¹³⁷ but these were not in the lists of missions or dioceses – the current position of the Church in England and Wales. Thus the *Directories* remain the only comprehensive source for tracking the development of Catholic missions; the opening of schools, convents and monasteries; and the expansion of Catholic ministry, such as confraternities, in the missions.

The nineteenth century was a time when many periodicals were founded but a great number closed for lack of readership. Following the Relief Acts, there were many entrants into the field on behalf of the Catholic interest, although strictly speaking they remained illegal until 1845 when the various Tudor and Stuart penal laws were repealed. Nicolas Wiseman and Daniel O’Connell founded *The Dublin Review* in 1836; this continued well into the twentieth century. Frederick Lucas, a convert to Catholicism from Quakerism, founded *The Tablet* in 1840. Priced at sixpence it was not for the lower classes. *The Rambler* too was priced at sixpence and, seeing a need for Catholic material for the poorer classes, Mr Bradley founded *The Lamp* priced at a penny. In 1864, *The Month* was founded by Miss Taylor. When she founded a congregation of nuns this passed into the hands of the Jesuits. All of these were review-type publications although some, such as *The Lamp*, would also have had some news content. From these few examples it will be seen that Catholics were as active in the publishing business as any other section of society. Some of those mentioned have survived (*The Tablet*, *The Month*). Others founded later in the century as weekly newspapers such as *The Universe* and *The Catholic Herald* continue publication in the twentieth first century¹³⁸. Of all the Catholic publications, the *Directory* was unique in that it was published annually, contained little reading matter but provided those Catholics who could afford to buy it with a sense of the advancement of their church from a few scattered congregations to a nationwide church.

¹³⁶ The format and layout of the 1839 and 1840 editions are remarkably similar so that the 1840 edition appears in all respects to be a direct successor to that of 1839, albeit with a change in title.

¹³⁷ At various times during the century the *Directories* included obituaries of lay people as well as clergy; for some years in the latter part of the century a list of Catholics in public office was included; for a period, information was given on the Church in the British Empire.

¹³⁸ Andrew Hilliard Atteridge. *Periodical Literature (England)*. ed. Kevin Knight. 1911. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Accessed 28/12/2012. <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11673a.htm>>

1.5 Contents of the Directories

Coghlan's edition of 1789 had the following pattern: Church Calendar (*Ordo*); A New Year's Gift; a Homily on the Gospel of the Fourth Sunday of Advent; The Festivals Explained; and a Catalogue of books available from him. The 1790 edition was broadly similar. In 1791 there was an appeal for money to relieve the debt on the church at St George's Fields in Southwark where "there are not less than 3000 mostly labouring industrious Persons". The debt was £1200. This is the first occasion in which the *Directory* was used to appeal for chapel funding. Over the next few decades many such appeals were made in the *Directory* and over the century the language and frequency of appeals for churches and missions changed significantly¹³⁹.

Following the Relief Act of 1791, the 1793 edition expanded to include the list of chapels in and around London and also the main provisions of the 1791 Relief Act. Coghlan also included a little curiosity that year – a copy of a notice from the Portuguese Embassy Chapel in London as to proper behaviour in church. For the next few years, the list of chapels remained London-centric, the furthest from London being that of St Peter's Winchester, "designed in the Gothic style of Henry VI"¹⁴⁰ and built by Rev John Milner, missionary at Winchester and future Vicar Apostolic in the Midland District.

Over the next three decades a few new missions were added each year. In 1796 there were two more missions from Hampshire: Portsea and Gosport; in 1797 two from the Isle of Wight: Cowes and Newport. Three French chapels, including one in Middlesex Hospital, were listed in 1799 and provided the first evidence of the presence of French émigré priests. The listing of Salisbury in 1802 was the first time a mission from outside the London District was included. With the inclusion of Lichfield in 1804 and Knaresboro' (sic) in 1812 the *Directory* then had at least one entry from each of the four districts.

The survival of the publication after the restrictions of the penal laws were generally lifted in 1791 attests to its continued usefulness and the Knaresboro' entry supports the view of the publisher as to who might use the *Directory*. It specifically mentions that seats were reserved "in the tribune for visitors to Harrogate"¹⁴¹. This implies that Catholics visiting Harrogate would seek this information in the *Directory*. Targeted at the more well-to-do members of the community, publishing information about places where Mass was available would have been useful for those who travelled to other parts of the country for business or leisure. This inference is supported by a note which appeared at the end of the 1815 edition:

¹³⁹ The language used in the appeals is discussed in p. 161 below.

¹⁴⁰ LD 1794

¹⁴¹ LD 1812

N.B. In case of discontinuance of any of the above Chapels, from the want of means of support, or other causes, it is respectfully requested that in future early notice may be given of the same to the editors of the Directory, for the information of the public, and to prevent disappointment to travellers, or persons in quest of a country residence.¹⁴²

The comment about “discontinuance” shows there was an expectation that missions at this time may not always have been secured permanently. This edition listed sixty one chapels: forty eight from the London District; three from Midland; two from Northern; and eight from Western including one in Wales. By now, ten missions which had previously been listed were no longer in the *Directory*. Although these included six of the French chapels which had been opened to minister to the French émigrés, it indicates that in endeavouring to trace the growth and spread of Catholicism, the closure of missions must be considered.

The early editions of the *Directory* were not at all comprehensive as is evident from the paucity of missions listed from Lancashire. In 1823 it seems that an effort was made to include all chapels as there were 282 new entries in the 1824 *Directory*, including, for the first time, entries from Lincolnshire and Northumberland and seventy seven new entries from Lancashire. Before that there had been only two Lancashire missions listed – St Anthony’s, Liverpool, first listed in 1815 and St John the Evangelist in Poulton-le-Fylde listed from 1819. This lack of information on the early chapels throughout the country did not, however, pose a serious limitation for the analysis on dedications as, at that stage, chapels were usually listed without them; only a location was given and this was often quite vague. At this early part of the century, most Catholic congregations worshipped in private houses or in public buildings rented for Sunday morning “prayers”¹⁴³ and therefore no formal dedications had been given to them. The early *Directories* did not make it clear whether services were held in permanent or temporary accommodation. The analysis of dedications hinges on public knowledge of these so that the date a dedication was included in the *Directory* is taken as the relevant date for analysis.

Although it is not known how Coghlan or Keating compiled their list of missions, a glimpse into a later editor’s *modus operandi* is gained from the evidence given to the House of Commons Committee of Inquiry into Convents in 1870 when Rev W A Johnson, editor of the *Directory* was called as a witness. Johnson explained the process he used to ensure that the list of missions was correct:

During the month of October and the early part of November I receive a large number of letters from all quarters, from the clergy and the laity, and other persons who have noticed any addition that is required, or any alterations that should be made, I then prepare the sheets, and I send the sheets of each diocese, either to the

¹⁴² LD 1815

¹⁴³ “prayers” was a euphemism for Mass; see p.161 below.

bishop, the vicar general, or the secretary of that diocese; and as the Directory, although private property, is an undertaking of great public utility, I invite them to have the kindness to furnish me with any additional corrections which they may think necessary.¹⁴⁴

In his evidence, Johnson stated that he and the publishers, Burns, Oates & Co., were the joint proprietors of the *Directory* in 1870¹⁴⁵. He determined the editorial content; the advertisements were the responsibility of Burns, Oates.

The format and content of the *Directories* changed substantially from the late eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. The list of missions initially filled about half a page. From 1824 this became a section on its own, organised by geographical county within ecclesiastical district. From 1850 the missions were sorted by diocese: Westminster first and then its twelve suffragans in alphabetical order; within each diocese, missions were listed by locality within county. The *Directory* expanded as Catholic Church activity, whether as missions, charities or schools, within Britain¹⁴⁶ expanded. From mid-century it included information on the Church in the Colonies (British), with lists of Vicars Apostolic and Bishops (but not parishes) in Africa, India and the Antipodes, including, sometimes, the numbers of Catholics in these colonies¹⁴⁷. The advancement of Catholics in public life in the United Kingdom was also noted, including Catholic members of both Houses of Parliament and the Privy Council. For a brief period in the last quarter of the century, one diocese included a list of local public offices held by Catholics.

In 1850, a list of sixteen places on the Continent where Confession could be heard in English or French was given. It was noted that this list was “imperfect” and contributions were invited to maintain it¹⁴⁸. The corollary to this (use of other languages in England) had been included from the earliest editions, specifically, the French missions established in England after the French Revolution advertised use of French and an early mission to “foreign” Catholics used German for sermons and discourses. Later in the century, many more languages were offered for confession. This illustrated the diversity of priests working on the English mission, but it was not only the foreign priests who were multi-lingual. Many English priests had trained or worked abroad and became fluent in the languages of those countries; on their return home they would offer confession in those languages¹⁴⁹.

Any shortcomings noted above are more than compensated for by the use of a periodical

¹⁴⁴ Villiers, *Select Committee on Convents and Monasteries.*, 149

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 147-152

¹⁴⁶ For most of the nineteenth century, information on the Church in Scotland was included in the *Directories*.

¹⁴⁷ For example, see CD 1858, 176-205

¹⁴⁸ CD 1850, 107

¹⁴⁹ See p.165 below.

which over two centuries has maintained a persistent ethos and house-style. Furthermore, by using the *Directory* from its first publication by James Marmaduke through to the editions of the early twentieth century, it is possible to discern not only the many changes in the life of Catholics in England and Wales but also where their concerns lay, and wherein lay their sources of developing pride and identity. These can be seen in the changes in language used; the number of (fee-paying) schools for young gentlemen and young ladies; the appeals for money to build or maintain churches; the presence of churches in holiday resorts which shows a developing Catholic middle-class; the reaction to developments in legislation which affected them; the expansion of Catholicism in the British Empire and the initiation of the process for the canonisation of the martyrs of the recusant period. In the absence of an archive, any conclusions drawn have to be by inference.

All of the *Directories* published from 1795 to 1909 were used as the source of the data in constructing the database on which the analysis for this thesis relies. A full account of the data in the database, with exemplars, is given in the Appendix. From this data, a chronology of the rebuilding of the Church's infrastructure can be created. Although mention has been made of the problems caused by prejudice, this was not the only difficulty in the way of the rebuilding project. Before establishing a mission, a bishop had to decide if there was a need in that place; he had to balance the needs of a small rural congregation of, say, 100 people against those of a large town with a few thousand nominal Catholics; there was the law, both English and Canon which had to be obeyed; and there was always the vexed question of money. Few of the bishops were rich men; the number of rich Catholics was not great, and as the century wore on these few became proportionately smaller in number. The next chapter will identify and discuss the problems facing the bishops as they started to rebuild their infrastructure.

2 Rebuilding the Catholic Church in England and Wales

There is no evidence that, following the passage of the 1791 Relief Act, the four Catholic bishops acted together to plan a strategy to provide sacred space for their congregations. Many Catholics were at this time worshipping in temporary, non-chapel buildings. The Church's response to the obvious need was, generally, reactive rather than pro-active. Yet, by 1908, Catholic chapels, churches and cathedrals were a familiar presence in most communities both urban and rural. The question is "How was this achieved?" This question will be answered in this chapter and the next by showing the problems which stood in the way of the Church achieving the greater national coverage it required to minister to all its adherents. This chapter will enumerate and discuss all but one of the problems, that of finance for the project, which will be addressed in chapter three. The response of the Church leaders – lay and clerical – and the resolution of the problems, or their diminution, will also be shown. Before discussing the problems, though, the position of the Catholic Church, its chapels and how Catholics accessed and financed the services of the Church in 1791 will be shown.

2.1 The Catholic position in 1791

Attempting to reconstruct the location of Catholic congregations in the immediate aftermath of the Relief Acts is difficult, primarily due to the hidden nature of Catholic religious practice at the time. In broad outline it is accepted that about one-third of Catholics lived in Lancashire, one-third in London, a further smaller concentration in the north east of England and the remainder scattered in smaller congregations throughout the country.

From 1849, the *Directory* sometimes gave a year of foundation for a mission. As its editor relied on the information received from the priests in the missions, foundation dates could be added only if the priest supplied it. Claims for early foundation (pre-1791) were indicative of a growing sense of pride in the survival of Catholicism in an area. There were instances of conflicting dates being given in different editions. St Mary's, Preston, was first included in 1824; in 1849 its foundation date was given as "1759 or 1760"; three years later, the opening date of the first chapel was given as 1761; subsequently, a foundation date of 1605 and an opening date for the chapel as 1758 were given¹. A similar story emerges for the mission at Brockhampton in Hampshire. For this mission the foundation date was given variously as "about 1756" (in the 1851 edition); "about 1730"

¹ CD 1890 171

(in 1862); 1790 (in 1886) and 1733 (in 1910). Thus it may be concluded that the *Directories* are not the most reliable source for precisely dating the foundation of pre-Relief missions. However, there is no single reliable source for this information.

Not all foundation dates can be found from the *Directories*. It seems from the appeals in the *Directory* that the mission at Hethe in Oxfordshire existed before 1791, but no foundation date earlier than this was given in the *Directory*, although other sources² confirm the existence of the Hethe mission. To maintain consistency in this thesis, Hethe has not been included in Table I or Map I below. The same rule is applied to missions which arose from the houses of the gentry and aristocracy. If a pre-1791 foundation date does not feature in the *Directory* they are excluded from the map and table. There was a great deal of Catholic activity around Harvington Hall in Worcestershire during the recusancy period and Kelly claims that the mission can be traced back to James II's reign³. A similar story may well pertain to Coughton Court, although Kelly does not make the same claims for this mission⁴. Neither is illustrated here. It is not intended that this map should be deemed to be a definitive representation of Catholic ministry in 1791; it is for illustrative purposes only.

On the basis of the foundation, chapel or opening dates given retrospectively in the *Directory*, the number of missions open in England and Wales in 1791, excluding the London area, were as shown in Table 1.

² *Parishes: Hethe. A History of the County of Oxford: Volume 6* ed. Mary D. Lobel. 1959. Accessed 29/06/2012. <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=63737>>

³ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 204

⁴ *Ibid.*, 143

County	Number of chapels / missions before 1791	Location
Berkshire	3	East Hendred; Reading; Farringdon
Brecknockshire	1	Brecon
Cheshire	1	Chester
Cumberland	2	Warwick Bridge; Whitehaven
Devon	2	Chudleigh; Exeter
Dorset	2	Lulworth; Marnhull
Durham	4	Blaydon on Tyne; Leadgate; Stockton-upon-Tees; Sunderland
Gloucestershire	1	Gloucester
Essex	1	Witham
Hampshire	2	Brockhampton; Gosport
Hertfordshire	1	Ware
Isle of Wight	1	Newport
Lancashire	36	Chorley; Garstang (4); Portico; Preston (8); Ormskirk (3); Euxton; Carnforth; Kirkham (2); Lancaster(2); Leigh; Appleton; Weld Bank; Wigan (5) Liverpool (4); Ulverston
Northumberland	10	Alnwick; Chathill; Minstreacres; Morpeth; Barrasford; Longhorsley; Rothbury (2); Hexham (2)
Oxfordshire	1	Stonor
Shropshire	2	Cleobury Mortimer; Middleton
Staffordshire	4	Cobridge; Sedgley; Stafford; Wolverhampton
Surrey	1	Weybridge
Sussex	2	Arundel; West Grinstead
Warwickshire	4	Solihull; Brailes; Birmingham; Evesham
Westmorland	2	Dodding Green; Kendal
Wiltshire	2	Bath; Wardour Castle
Worcestershire	2	Worcester
Yorkshire	29	Austwick; Tadcaster; Bedale (2); Bransby Hall; Brough Hall; Burghwallis; Darlington; Egton Bridge; Houghton Hall; Grosmont; Holme-on-Spalding; Richmond; Osmotherly; York(2); Scarborough; Leeds(2); Hull; Carlton Hall; Broughton Hall; Sheffield(2); Thirsk(2); Arden Hall; Walton Hall; Wycliffe
Total	115	

Table 1: Catholic Missions in 1791 as identified from The Laity's & Catholic Directories

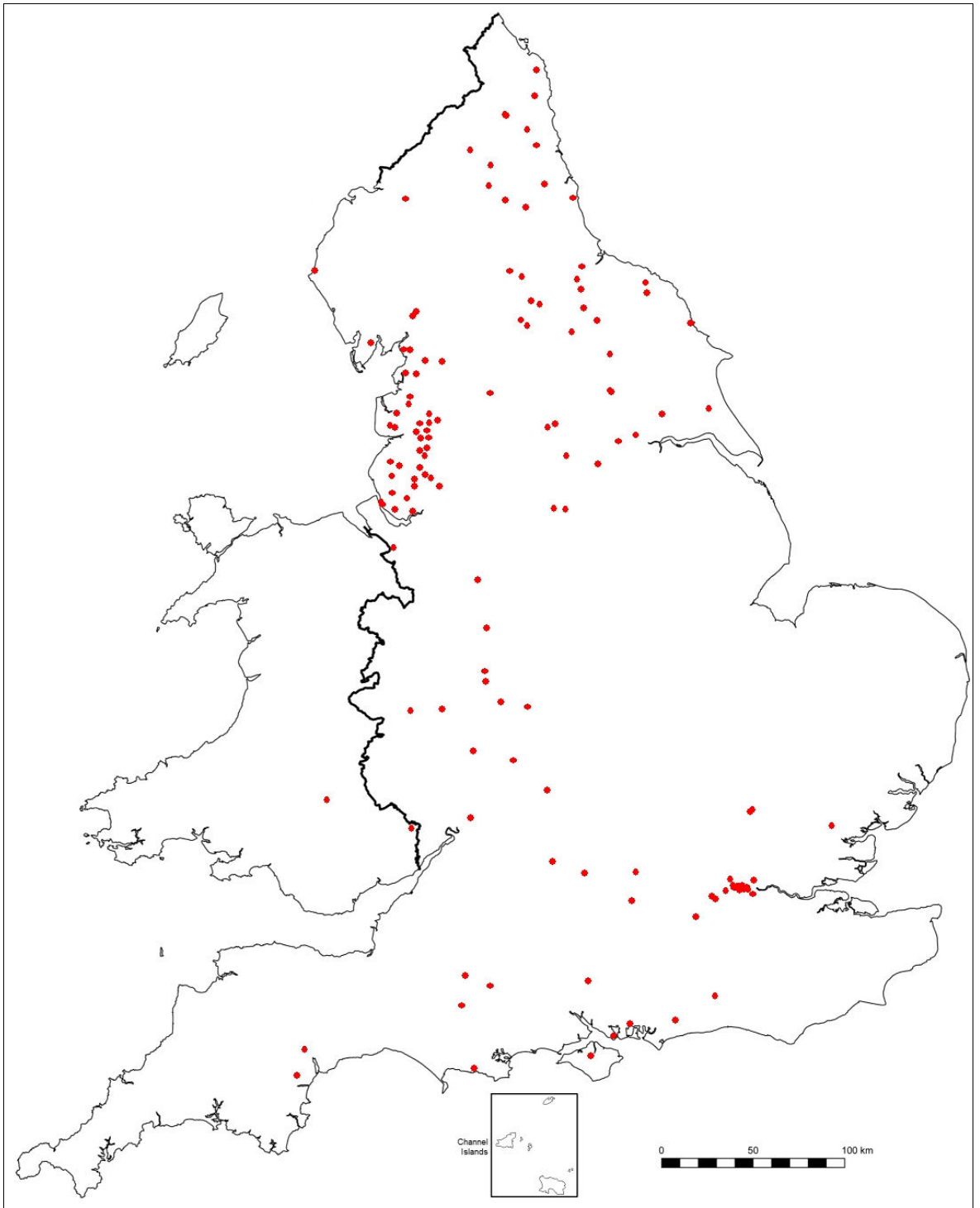
This agrees in broad terms with the general position of Catholicism in 1791. The concentrations are in Lancashire (36); the north east – Northumberland, Durham and Yorkshire (43). A further concentration of Catholics was in London and there were eight London missions in the first listing of chapels in the *Directory*⁵. Four of these were Embassy chapels – Bavarian, Neapolitan, Portuguese and Spanish. A further nine chapels were listed as being “near London” giving a total of seventeen. Only one of these, the Stratford mission in Essex, was subsequently given a foundation date earlier than 1791. At this time, most of the missions which were in existence were survivals from the penal days, although new missions were being founded. The traditional memory of Catholic practice in the penal period is of the private chapels provided by the gentry and aristocracy. Rowlands’s recent research⁶ has shown that not only the gentry and aristocracy provided Mass houses, but artisans, shopkeepers and yeomen farmers also gave space in their houses for priests to say mass and perform their pastoral duties. These may have been part of so-called “riding missions” in which the priest would ride to a location, minister to the people there and then ride on to the next community on his circuit. For the faithful on these circuits, attendance at mass would have been regular, but frequency would have depended on the length of the circuit.

Before Relief, there were five ways in which Catholic practice was possible. Firstly, there were the private chapels of the gentry, frequently supported solely by the owner and often with the priest employed directly by him (or her). Such chapels were usually in rural locations. Secondly, there were the riding missions. Thirdly there were the chapels attached to religious houses and schools (both of which were illegal); although uncommon, there were some Catholic schools such as the Bar Convent school for girls in York which was founded in 1686 and, near Birmingham, Sedgley Park for boys founded in 1763. When a priest was in residence, these would have admitted local Catholics to mass. Fourthly, the European Catholic countries maintained chapels at their embassies and the priests attached to these ministered to the local English Catholics. Finally, there were semi-permanent Catholic chapels tolerated in some towns. These may have been hired rooms, rather than single-use buildings. In Manchester in about 1760, rooms secured off Church Street were used as a chapel. The passage to the “chapel” became known locally as “Roman Entry”⁷. The Map on the next page shows this “starting position”.

⁵ LD 1793

⁶ Marie B Rowlands, ed., *English Catholics of Parish and Town, 1558-1778 : A Joint Research Project of the Catholic Record Society and Wolverhampton University* (London: Catholic Record Society, 1999)

⁷ *Townships: Manchester (Part 2 of 2)', a History of the County of Lancaster: Volume 4*. ed. William Farrer and J Brownbill. 1911. Accessed 29/05/2009. <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=41410>>



Map 1 Missions identified as existing in 1791

This was the position of the Church in the final quarter of the eighteenth century, in terms of accommodation for sacred rituals. As it was illegal to build Catholic churches, large capital projects were rarely undertaken and most of the costs involved were running costs. As the eighteenth century wore on toleration of Catholicism was growing *de facto*, even if not *de jure*. Thus in 1786 Thomas Weld could ask George III for advice on building a Catholic chapel at Lulworth Castle in Dorset. The king assented, but advised that it should be concealed⁸. The resulting building, the first free-standing Catholic chapel built in England since the Reformation.

From these descriptions it may be concluded, as Heimann has done⁹, that Catholics had little difficulty in practising their faith. As it transpired, there were many who were unable to attend church on Sundays due to their extreme poverty. Even before Relief, steps were being taken to provide for these and other new or growing congregations. In March 1777, Dom Bede Brewer, chaplain of the Benedictine mission in Bath appealed for funds to enable a larger chapel to be built. At that time the chapel was in Bell-tree House. This was a lodging house as well as a chapel and the account books show that many of the Catholic gentry stayed there when visiting Bath (Anne Fenwick of Lancashire¹⁰ stayed at Bell-tree House in 1765¹¹). Dom Bede's appeal was as follows:

As it is very well-known that many inconveniences attend the Bell-tree House, and that it is found much too small for its usual purposes, it is hoped that the proposal of a subscription for raising a more spacious and convenient building for the same end will meet with the approbation of the gentlemen, ladies and others residing in Bath, as well as the nobility and gentry in other parts of the Kingdom, most of whom have at one time or another occasion to visit this place.¹²

In this appeal, there is nothing to indicate that a new Catholic chapel was its objective. This appeal was launched before even the first Relief Act of 1778 and is indicative of the openness with which Catholics could, in some places, practise their faith and not only in the Catholic heartland of Lancashire; even in Bath considerable latitude was granted to Catholics and their chapel at Bell-tree House was publicised in the printed *Guide* for visitors from 1753¹³. The appeal was addressed to the Catholic population at large, in particular the upper classes who had the money and leisure time to visit Bath¹⁴. The larger chapel was necessary because Bath's Catholic population was increasing rapidly and had

⁸ *Lulworth Castle - the Chapel*, <http://www.lulworth.com/Castle_Park/chapel.htm> (accessed 02/09/2009)

⁹ Heimann, *Catholic Devotion*, 12

¹⁰ For a discussion on Anne Fenwick's significance to English Catholicism see p. 184 below

¹¹ John Anthony Williams, ed., *Post-Reformation Catholicism in Bath : Volume 1* (London: Catholic Record Society, 1975), 63

¹² *Ibid.*, 66-67

¹³ *Ibid.*, 61

¹⁴ Williams does not say what medium was used to promulgate the appeal.

“a substantial Irish element”¹⁵.

An appeal to relieve the debt on a new chapel built at Southwark and dated September 29th 1794 was published in the *Laity's Directory* of 1795¹⁶. Elsewhere in London a group of Irish merchants galvanised themselves into action and established the mission of St Patrick's in Soho Square. Forming themselves into the Confraternity of St Patrick, they wished “to consider the most effectual means of establishing a chapel to be called St. Patrick's, on a liberal and permanent foundation”¹⁷. The chapel opened in 1792, little over a year after the Relief Act was passed. The area which St Patrick's served was the infamous rookeries of St Giles. The foundation of St Patrick's illustrates some of the shortcomings of the models used for maintaining missions heretofore. Here was a very large, potential congregation without the social or financial means of its own to build a church for itself. Twenty years before St Patrick's was founded, in 1773, a new mission was started in Bermondsey. The congregation here, as in St Patrick's, was primarily Irish migrants.

These three examples, Bath, St Patrick's and Bermondsey, presaged the future: new or larger congregations often as a result of Irish migration. The appeal for the new Bath chapel showed the necessity to go beyond the immediate congregation to raise the capital required; the foundation of St Patrick's was not initiated by the intended congregation as they lacked the financial and social means to do so, but by gentlemen of a charitable disposition. Thus, as the eighteenth century came to a close, the model used by Catholics for two centuries (private chapels or hired rooms for small congregations) needed to change to meet the new circumstances of larger or new congregations. Yet, even before Relief the needs of these new congregations were being addressed. The continual inflow of Catholic migrants from Ireland over the whole century meant that the Church would have little respite in its attempts to create a viable infrastructure which would give relatively easy access to its ministry to all.

At the time, it may not have looked to be a particularly daunting task. There were a number of factors which were operating in the Church's favour: with Relief there was a reasonable expectation that further losses of gentry and aristocracy conforming to the Established Church would cease¹⁸; appeals could be public and specific (unlike the earlier appeal from Bath which spoke of the “usual purposes” in an attempt to conceal its real

¹⁵ Williams, ed., *Bath*, 67

¹⁶ LD 1795 unnumbered page

¹⁷ MPH, *St Patrick's Soho Square Two Centuries of 'Care and Prayer'*, <<http://www.stpatricksoho.org/parish/pastpresent.htm>> (accessed 21/05/2009)

¹⁸ Following the 1688 Revolution, many gentry and aristocracy whose families had remained Catholic in the recusant period conformed to the Established Church. Hemphill, *The Early Vicars Apostolic of England, 1685-1750*, 84

purpose); and the Church was reasonably well off for priests.

But there were difficulties, and attention must now focus on these.

2.2 Difficulties

Six main difficulties, besides the major problem of funding for capital and running costs, can be identified. These are the Church's administrative structure; prejudice; English law; Canon law; identifying need and building congregations; and the provision of clergy.

2.2.1 Church administrative structure

There were two aspects of the formal administrative structure of the Catholic Church in England which created difficulties. Firstly, Vicars Apostolic were constrained in ways in which Diocesan Bishops were not. Secondly, the lowest level of organisation was missions rather than parishes.

The role of the Vicar Apostolic was created by Rome in the early seventeenth century following the discovery of new lands in the Americas. It was a method of administering the developing Churches in the newly discovered lands. Subsequently it was extended to those countries in Europe which did not have a Catholic secular government. Vicars Apostolic were usually in Episcopal orders and their titles were taken from the ancient Sees which had been lost to Christendom. The Pope was *de jure* in charge of the district and the vicar apostolic administered it under the close direction of the Vatican and therefore did not have the same authority in the district as a bishop had in his diocese. As districts were autonomous regions independent of political boundaries no corporate structure, such as pertained when there was a Primatial See with suffragans, existed.

From 1688, in the reign of James II, the English Church was divided into four districts: London, Western, Midland and Northern. As each Vicar Apostolic was of equal status, none could become, *ex officio*, the main spokesman for the Church in England. This can be seen in their response to the Relief Acts. Two letters were addressed to the Catholic clergy following the 1778 Act, one from the bishops of the London, Midland and Northern Districts and a separate letter from the bishop of the Western District¹⁹. The main focus of these letters was an order to all clergy to pray for "our most gracious sovereign King George the Third, ... Queen Charlotte and all their Royal Family". They also enjoined the clergy to recommend to their respective congregations "(when you shall be able to meet, without danger to yourselves or your flocks, from the grievous penal laws which stand out

¹⁹ LD 1792

against the Catholics of this Kingdom)²⁰ that they too should pray for the royal family²¹. Charles Walmesley (Western District) went a little further by specifying that “a memorial of the King by name [should] be made every day in the Canon [of the mass]”²².

The more generous and comprehensive Relief Act of 1791 led to each individual bishop issuing a pastoral letter to their districts. The content of the four pastoral letters was essentially the same: that Catholics should give thanks for Relief and should prove themselves to be model and loyal subjects. On the face of it though, this was surely an opportunity for the bishops to lead their community and speak with one voice which would have been louder than the four separate voices. The bishops though, were not at this point familiar with the role of leadership of the English Catholics nor did the presence of four Vicars Apostolic in England, each of equal standing in the Church’s hierarchical structure, readily lend itself to corporate action with one assuming the lead.

Issuing separate letters in 1791 may have been a pastoral decision, and there is nothing to suggest otherwise, but some disagreements between the bishops were conducted publicly. There was a row in the early nineteenth century when it was proposed that in return for full emancipation the government would have a veto on episcopal appointments. John Milner²³ (Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District) argued strongly against it whilst the other bishops were prepared to accept it²⁴. Public disagreements continued right up to 1850 when, for example, following the division of the London District between the archdiocese of Westminster and the diocese of Southwark there was disagreement between Cardinal Wiseman and Bishop Grant on the division of finances between the two dioceses²⁵. Once the hierarchy was restored such disagreements could be contained within the formal, confidential forum of synods or bishops’ annual meetings. It would appear that the structure of Districts and Vicars Apostolic inherently lent itself to individual rather than corporate action. In England this militated against a cohesive plan of action in addressing the needs of the Church and its members following the permission granted by the 1791 Act to build churches.

Despite this there was an attempt in 1838 to act corporately. In December of that year the four Vicars Apostolic issued a joint pastoral letter²⁶. They invited the faithful to make

²⁰ Original parentheses

²¹ LD 1792

²² LD 1792

²³ Milner was mission priest at Winchester; he was appointed Vicar Apostolic for the Midland District in 1803; he was also the parliamentary agent for the Irish bishops and it was they who had persuaded him to oppose the veto.

²⁴ See p.191 below

²⁵ Edward R. Norman, *The English Catholic Church in the Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 80

²⁶ CD 1840, 106-111

contributions to a national fund for three particular causes: funding for seminaries, the support of poor missions, and the creation of foreign missions. At this point there was a seminary in each district, which, as the bishops pointed out, would have been funded from benefices before the “so-called Reformation”²⁷. The intention of the bishops was to make the seminaries self-supporting. There were many missions which were so poor that they could not maintain a priest and these often remained without a chaplain. A national fund, available to the bishops, would enable them to support missionaries until the congregation could do so itself. The question of foreign missions was, in reality, a pipe dream; unable to support its own missions, it may be asked if the bishops were being in any way realistic in looking to send priests abroad, but this part of the appeal was based on the tradition which they said they had inherited from their “Saxon Ancestors”.

The plan was that collectors would be authorized by the bishops to call on all Catholics “regardless of rank or station to solicit funds for all three causes”. If the collection did happen, it is highly likely that the money collected would have been deposited in Wright’s Bank. There is no mention of the outcome of this appeal, either in the *Directory* or in the Westminster Diocesan Archives. This lack of documentation may be related to the increase from four to eight districts and the failure of Wright’s Bank, both of which happened in 1840 and either of which would have forced a re-organisation of the financial affairs of the districts. Following the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850, a more collegiate form of Church governance in England and Wales was possible. Even so, no further attempt was made to create any kind of national church-building fund. Thereafter each diocese created its own funds for the support of poor missions (the collection for “poor missions” (sic) is still taken annually in Clifton Diocese).

The second aspect of organisation which was not helpful was that of missions rather than parishes as the lowest level of pastoral administration. A parish is canonically constituted, geographically bound and its priests, particularly the priest in charge (parish priest), have specified rights and duties. The boundaries of missions were far more fluid than those of parishes. They could be divided by the bishop in charge if they grew too large either geographically or in size of congregation, or if another priest became available. However it was not always a straightforward process.

A series of letters between the Rev Mr Southworth of Brockhampton and Bishop Douglass discussed the dispute between two priests of the district in 1792²⁸. Bishop Douglass was the Vicar Apostolic of the London District; Southworth appears to have had some oversight

²⁷ CD 1840, 108

²⁸ *Vol Xliv, 1792-1793 Bishop Douglass Letters*, Westminster Diocesan Archives

of the Hampshire area of the district (perhaps a form of rural deanship) although his formal role or title is not clear from the letters. There was a well-established mission in Portsea supported by members of the congregation who paid subscriptions. As the mission expanded a second priest was assigned to work on the other side of Portsmouth harbour in Gosport. Many of those who paid subscriptions to the Portsea mission lived in Gosport and were not inclined to pay for two churches and consequently made no contribution to either²⁹. The matter was settled with both priests receiving a division of the money available to support their missions. This dispute, illustrative of the difficulties caused by the fluid boundaries of missions, would have been less likely with a parish structure. The change of boundaries of a parish, should it for example become too large, is done in consultation with the priests and people of the existing parish.

These two difficulties were overcome at different times. Following the restoration of the hierarchy in 1850 the Bishops Conference was created and met annually in Low Week after Easter. Items for the agenda were requested in advance of the meeting. In the nineteenth century, minutes were taken by the newest bishop. No one other than bishops was permitted to attend, thus preserving confidentiality. Many priests probably assumed that as and when the hierarchy was restored, normal Church organisational structures would be put in place, that is, that canonical parishes would be created. This did not happen in 1850 and was delayed until 1918. At that point the English Church was in all respects in the same position as other national churches within the Catholic structure.

2.2.2 Prejudice

The question which needs to be asked is: Has it been possible to discover instances where the building project under discussion here was hampered by anti-Catholic prejudice? Samuel answers this question with examples taken mainly from Wales, but recognised that the “establishment of a new [Catholic] mission was liable to provoke in the local community an outburst of Protestant indignation”³⁰. Initially, in response to the prevailing prejudice, Catholics tended to build understated or disguised chapels. Fr Thurston, writing in the 1880s, commented that “old Catholics” could still remember the days when it was a “high compliment” to say of a Catholic chapel that it had “the appearance of a church at first entrance”³¹.

Thomas Burke has chronicled the history of Catholicism in Liverpool³² and mentioned a

²⁹ Rev Southworth, *Vol Xliv, 1792-1793 Bishop Douglass Letters*, Letter, Westminster Diocesan Archives, Item 27*

³⁰ Samuel, "Patriotism," 107

³¹ Thurston, "Old Periodical", 161

³² Thomas Burke, *Catholic History of Liverpool* (London: C. Tinling, 1910)

number of instances of anti-Catholicism. When the new church of St Patrick's was proposed there were objections from Protestants on the grounds that Catholics already had sufficient accommodation³³. The Jesuits and Benedictines had long been active in Liverpool and their churches, St Anthony's and St Mary's respectively, were unable to cope with an influx of Irish labourers after the Peninsular Wars. Burke suggests that these migrants probably worked on the new Prince's Dock in 1819³⁴. It was decided to build a church, dedicated to St Patrick, to provide for them. Many, including liberally-minded Protestants, contributed and, in spite of the objections, the foundation stone was laid on March 17th 1821.

Those attempting to establish a mission for the 600 or so Catholics in Huddersfield across the Pennines continued with their appeal for many years until in 1830 a chaplain was appointed and it was noted in the *Directory* that year that there had been a problem buying a site for the church due to the bigotry of the locals. Several times they had refused to sell a site to the chaplain and when, at last, he had found a possible seller, they had "sent a deputation, to the proprietor of the soil, to prevent him from letting [the chaplain] have any"³⁵. This occurred despite the support of the local landowner, the Hon Edward Petre.

There was a report of a similar inability to buy a plot of land in Melton Mowbray in 1839 when their appeal noted that they had hoped to start building the previous spring, but were "disappointed" in their attempt to buy a site, due they believed to religious prejudice³⁶. In 1844, with the church built, the appeal stated that there was an urgent need for a school as there was considerable religious bigotry in the area³⁷.

Without being very specific, the Melton Mowbray missionary mentioned "bigotry" against Catholicism. The appeal for the mission in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, also mentioned bigotry. In this case the writer was quite clear as to its cause. In 1852 the population of Aylesbury was about 7,000 inhabitants "who, like those of most of our agricultural districts, [were] chiefly remarkable for their bigotry, and hatred to our holy religion"³⁸. In 1844 the first priest in Aylesbury, Fr Duncan, had described the town as being "furiously anti-Catholic"³⁹.

In August 1851, the firm of solicitors, Messrs Knowles and King, on behalf of Henry Wilberforce, bid at auction in Maidstone, Kent, for the former assembly rooms which

³³ Ibid., Fn 38

³⁴ Ibid., 35

³⁵ LD 1830 25

³⁶ LD 1839 19

³⁷ CD 1844 42-43

³⁸ CD 1852 79

³⁹ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 61

Wilberforce wished to convert into a chapel. Wilberforce, the son of the philanthropist William Wilberforce, had converted to Catholicism in 1850. Although the solicitors were instructed to maintain his anonymity, two days after the auction it was common knowledge that Wilberforce was the purchaser. He had to pay the purchase money by November 1st. In the middle of October, the solicitor reported that he was under pressure from the vendor and others who were indignant at the proposed use intended for the property. Unfortunately the money was not found and Wilberforce had to give up the property⁴⁰.

The final point on prejudice concerns respectability. There are a few instances in the *Directories* where congregations were embarrassed by their church location and, consequently, were belittled by their non-Catholic neighbours. For many Catholics in England, their early experience of attending Sunday Mass was not in a great Gothic cathedral, or even a medieval “St Mary’s” in the centre of their town or village. Catholic services were held in many diverse buildings: public houses, the local Assembly Rooms, a granary above a slaughter-house. Often a mission would start in the front room of a local house, thus continuing the tradition of the penal days. This diversity did cause some specific problems.

In 1839 the pastor at Penrith, Cumberland (J Fielding Whitaker) appealed for help for his new and struggling mission. The mission, first listed in 1835, had a congregation which, with two or three exceptions, was “of the poorest class of Irish”. There were very few sacred vessels or vestments for the priest or acolyte. They used an “out-house” as a chapel. Unfortunately, the entrance to the out-house was through the Church of England churchyard “and the poor Catholics [were] taunted with the poverty of their place of worship by the Protestants, who [strutted] with pride into the beautiful edifice, which was once Catholic”. Henry Howard of Corby Castle had assisted in buying a plot of land and the Rev Mr Whitaker was now appealing to “lovers of their religion” to build a

temple to the God of Truth; and prove to the Protestants of Cumberland, that the Catholics of England are still animated by that same religious spirit which in former times caused their ancestors to elevate those magnificent edifices to religion, whose very ruins alas! are still an ornament to our land⁴¹.

A not dissimilar situation occurred in Tamworth. In 1829 a lengthy appeal for help for the mission appeared in the *Directory*. Originally the mission was supported by the Cumberford family, but this family had died out. A “chapel” had been erected in 1802 and, once a month, the Lichfield chaplain came and said “prayers” (i.e. mass). Due to a series of property lettings, the congregation now met in a “small room” in a garden which became surrounded by “cottages, pigsties and other nuisances”. They were scorned by

⁴⁰ *The First Attempt - 1851*, <<http://www.stfrancisparish.org.uk/history3.html>> (accessed 20/09/2011)

⁴¹ LD 1839 25

their “bigoted” neighbours who taunted the congregation with “shunning the light – with being ashamed to appear before the public – and with assembling where it was a disgrace to any respectable person to associate with them”. The writer of the appeal agreed that this was true, but claimed that the “nuisances” had come to them – they had not gone to the nuisances⁴².

This appeal bore fruit as by the following year the mission had a house and chapel which would open the following spring. They thanked “those friends of “the good old cause””⁴³ who had helped them. The appeal author wrote that a mission was particularly important in Tamworth as the local people knew nothing of Catholicism and its doctrines and practices except for that which they learnt from

the declamations of a certain set of preachers, and from the scandalous tracts that have been industriously circulated, abounding with notorious falsehoods, and the grossest misrepresentations⁴⁴.

A considerable amount of effort was exerted by Catholic congregations and priests to establish schools so that they could combat “notorious falsehoods”, and “grossest misrepresentations”. The preferred method was to open schools in which not only the children, but also adults, could receive religious instruction. Education became a major issue for the Church over the nineteenth century⁴⁵. As well as counteracting bigotry, schools also met the need to provide accommodation for Catholic children who were being educated in non-Catholic schools. The mission in Guernsey, where the congregation was mainly of “needy Irish labourers” and “still more indigent” natives of France, asked for help to expand its school in 1834. There were at the time approximately 100 children in the school, but others were going to non-Catholic schools. The problem, according to the appeal, was that the non-Catholics offered inducements, including payment, for the children to attend “sectarian” schools⁴⁶.

As early as 1812 it was noted that there were two schools (separate schools for boys and girls) in Bermondsey⁴⁷. In 1822 the pastor commented that “many [children] have been withdrawn from Anti-Catholic schools”⁴⁸. By 1826, although there were now 200 children in the mission schools, the pastor estimated that a further 800 were not, some of whom were in Protestant and other Dissenting schools “to the manifest danger of being perverted

⁴² LD 1829 71

⁴³ Original quotation marks

⁴⁴ LD 1830 pp.21-22

⁴⁵ A project examining Catholic education in nineteenth-century Britain has been undertaken by the University of Central Missouri, led by Prof Eric Tenbus; Eric Tenbus, *English Catholics and the Education of the Poor, 1847–1902* (Pickering and Chatto, 2010)

⁴⁶ LD 1834 28

⁴⁷ LD 1812

⁴⁸ LD 1822

in their religion”⁴⁹. The mission in Weymouth opened a school in 1838 and in 1840 appealed for help to support it so that Catholic children would not have to go to “anti-catholic” schools⁵⁰. The priest at Merthyr Tydfil, although in receipt of a very small income from his poor congregation (£48-11-6 in 1844⁵¹) spent “£10 per annum towards the education of poor children, who would otherwise be educated in Protestantism, and exposed to vice”⁵².

Prejudice manifested itself in a variety of ways and there was no telling where or how it might occur. Frequently, the motivation to found schools was to counteract it. Thus prejudice became a double-edged sword as it caused difficulties in establishing missions and created an extra burden by requiring Catholics to build schools as well.

2.2.3 English law

There were specific elements of the law which imposed constraints on the redevelopment of the Catholic Church following the Relief Act of 1791. These will be discussed briefly here. A fuller account of the legislative and case law changes relating to Catholicism, after 1791, is given in Chapter 7 below.

The law as it stood in 1800 prevented the Catholic Church owning property, because it was not recognised as a “corporate body”. It also precluded the creation of charities for the advancement of the Catholic religion. From the time of Elizabeth I, the law allowing charitable status to bodies founded “for the advancement of religion” assumed that by “religion” was meant that of the Established Church. Appeals for funds to build or support Catholic missions or schools could not be registered as charities. As a result, the Catholics were forced to circumvent the law; trusts established to endow a mission could not state this as their intended purpose; property and bank accounts were held in the names of individuals rather than the mission or diocese; male religious communities were specifically prohibited under the 1791 and 1829 Acts and in those cases, the community property was usually “owned” by a named individual. As Catholic charities were not permitted until 1832, one could not leave a bequest for a child to be educated in a Catholic school; nor could a school be established as a charitable foundation. This also meant that when missions appealed for funds, the money had to be lodged in an ordinary bank account rather than in some form of charitable account.

In December 1850 Rev Richard North of the Greenwich mission wrote to James O’Neal, Vicar General of Westminster Diocese, asking that he, O’Neal, should instruct the

⁴⁹ LD 1826 1

⁵⁰ CD 1840 31

⁵¹ CD 1846 pp.84-85

⁵² CD 1846 pp.84-85

Cardinal's lawyer to prepare a deed of gift "conveying our church with the freehold ground it stands on to the following Trustees – Cardinal Wiseman, Rev Ignatius Collingridge, Rev James O'Neal & Rev Joseph North". Joseph North was Richard's brother. The site, in Richard North's estimation, was worth £10,000⁵³. On the death of each trustee, the property would be assessed for death duties; thus death duties were payable four times. It would have been preferable if Richard North could have entrusted the Greenwich mission property to a corporate body such as the Archdiocese of Westminster, but as the law stood in 1850 this was not allowed.

The Church thus incurred legal expense in establishing secure property ownership which would survive the death of the nominal owner or the trustees. Later in the century as will be seen below in chapter seven, the Church took advice from counsel and began to establish diocesan trusts which could hold all Church property with any form of legal contrivance.

2.2.4 Canon Law

It may seem invidious to suggest that Canon Law, the law of the Universal Church, could hinder the reconstruction of Catholicism in England and Wales. The full codified Canon Law was first published in 1917 in *Codex Iuris Canonici*. Canon 1162, clauses 1-3 state:

§1 Nulla ecclesia ædificitur sine expreso Ordinarii loci consensu scriptis dato, quem tamen Vicarius Generalis præstare nequit sine mandato speciali.

§2 Ordinarius consensum ne præbeat, nisi prudentur præviderit necessaria non defutura ad novæ ecclesiæ ædificationem et conservationem, ad ministrorum sustentationem aliasque cultus impensas.

§3 Ne nova ecclesia ceteris iam existentibus detrimentum afferat, maiore fidelium spirituali utilitate non compensatum, Ordinarius, antequam consensum præbeat, audire debet vicinarum ecclesiarum rectores quorum intersit, firmo præscripto can.1676⁵⁴.

Canon Law was revised; updated and translated into English in 1983 (it was forbidden to translate the 1917 version from Latin). Canon 1215 (1983)⁵⁵ states:

§1 No church is to be built without the express and written consent of the diocesan Bishop.

§2 The diocesan Bishop is not to give his consent until he has consulted the council of priests and the rectors of neighbouring churches, and then decides that the new church can serve the good of souls and that the necessary means will be available to build the church and to provide for divine worship.⁵⁶

Whilst the *Codex Iuris Canonici (1917)* was a new publication within the Church, its

⁵³ Richard North, *Box W1/2; Item 944*, Westminster Diocesan Archives, Item 944

⁵⁴ With thanks to Prof Ken Pennington, Professor of Ecclesiastical and Legal History, The Catholic University of America, who forwarded me images of these texts.

⁵⁵ I have given the 1983 version as my competence in translating Latin is not quite up to the 1917 *Codex!*

⁵⁶ *Churches*.

contents were not; it was the outcome of a major project undertaken by canon lawyers in the nineteenth century to compile a comprehensive list of all the laws promulgated by the Church over its nineteen centuries of existence. Each canon included references to the original sources, ancient and modern, from which it was derived. For the Catholic Church in England and Wales, emerging from the restrictions of the penal days and faced with a severe shortage of sacred space, under Canon 1162 they had to accumulate the capital fund for a new church before they could start building. This was not an unreasonable restriction, especially in view of the near débâcle which had occurred in Newport, Wales in the early 1840s.

Usk and Newport were early listings of chapels in Wales in the *Directory*. At first they were listed alternately (Usk in 1824 and Newport in 1825). By 1829 they were listed separately, each with its own chaplain. In 1840, Newport announced that it was building a new church and asked for contributions⁵⁷. The church was designed by Mr J Scoles for the growing congregation which included many Irish workers and soldiers from the nearby barracks. The site was donated by John Jones of Llanarth. In 1840 the church was opened with a pontifical high mass celebrated by Bishop Brown, recently appointed Vicar Apostolic of Wales⁵⁸.

There is a note of (understandable) panic in the wording of the appeal of 1843. This explains that the church was built to replace “a small and inconvenient church which had served since 1812.” The congregation numbered about 2,000 “mostly necessitous Irish”. The total cost of the church with capacity for 1,000 persons was £4,500 and they had gone ahead with the building confident that “donations would be forthcoming”. The debt, £2,890, was very high. Formal notice had been sent to Dr Brown, informing him that the creditors would foreclose if the debt were not quickly paid. Donors were requested to send their contributions to Dr Brown.

This was an unusual appeal and the only incidence in the *Directories* where the threat of foreclosure was publicised. The Western District had been split in two in 1840 and Wales became a separate district. The funds of the old Western District would have been divided according to some appropriate and agreed formula, but in the 1830s, Bishop Baines had expended a great deal of money purchasing Prior Park as a college and seminary for the Western District. This had nearly bankrupted the district, so that in 1840 the amount of money in the Western District account to be divided would have been very small⁵⁹.

⁵⁷ CD 1840 32

⁵⁸ E. Curran, *St Mary's, Newport, History*, n.d., <<http://www.allsaintsrcnewport.co.uk/history.htm>> (accessed 01/102009)

⁵⁹ Harding, *Clifton*, 11

Unfortunately for the chaplain at Newport and Dr Brown, the 1843 appeal yielded less than £50. The debt, with interest, rose to “considerably” over £3,000⁶⁰. To safeguard the church, funds from an endowment which had been established to support the mission at Newport were applied to liquidate the interest on the debt⁶¹. In 1846 it was explained that, with regard to the debt, families of Llanarth and Clytha had contributed £750 and the debt had been restructured by borrowing elsewhere to pay off importunate creditors. The ignominy of selling the church was avoided. The mission was not yet financially solvent or stable. Interest on the debt absorbed all of a small fund of £40 per annum contributed by the families of Llanarth and Clytha⁶², and although there were now approximately 2,000 Catholics in the mission congregation, the annual income for the chaplain was only about £100⁶³.

The crisis at Newport was unusual. It had been forced to build due to its rapidly increasing congregation, an increase which far exceeded provision for Catholic worship in the town. This is a very good illustration of why Canon Law forbade church-building until the funds to complete the church had been secured. Debt was allowed, but when borrowing to build, the congregation had to be in a position to service the debt. It is clear from its appeals that the Newport congregation had not been organised to do so.

Much as no bishop or priest would wish to find himself in the position of the Newport clergy, there was an urgent need for sacred space. Ensuring that funding was in place before embarking on a building project was a sensible precaution, but the Catholic community in England and Wales was disproportionately concentrated in the lower-paid echelons of society. This legal restriction meant that missions appealed year after year until there was enough money to start building. Whilst this was happening, they were forced to use a wide variety of, sometimes unsatisfactory, accommodation for their sacred rituals. Also, missions which had leased property had to start appealing for funds many years before the old lease ran out. Bermondsey stated in their appeal of 1831 that their lease would end in 1840⁶⁴.

The bishops were aware of the restrictions imposed by Canon law. Bishop Goss, in his address, at the laying of the foundation stone of a new church in Liverpool in 1856, commented that they had not yet the means to build the chapel nor to support the mission.

⁶⁰ CD 1844, 68

⁶¹ CD 1844 pp.67-68

⁶² The leading “families of Llanarth and Clytha” were the Joneses and the Berkeleys respectively. There was a private chapel at Llanarth Court. John Jones endowed the mission with £500 for its maintenance (Curran). Clytha is an hamlet within the (Anglican) parish of Llanarth.

⁶³ CD 1844 pp.67-68

⁶⁴ LD 1831, 9

“Yet” he said “we go forth full of hope”⁶⁵. As the number of Catholics increased, creating more urgent need for chapel space away from the traditional centres of Catholicism, it could not be expected of the (relatively) small number of wealthy Catholics to meet this need. A new method of funding would have to be developed and the difficulties created by Canon Law would have to be ignored or circumvented in some fashion – and “hope” would not be an entirely satisfactory solution.

2.2.5 Identifying need and building congregations

The mission appeal for Aylesbury, in 1852, mentioned that until there was a church built the mission could not be said to be truly established⁶⁶. Building a church created a visible sign of a Catholic presence in a locality. Catholics were, however, quite used to worshipping in buildings which were not, formally, churches so that the absence of a church building did not imply an absence of a congregation.

The question could be asked as to which came first, the congregation or the church. Usually it was the former, but a mission would struggle if the congregation did not grow sufficiently to become self-supporting, and extreme poverty could hamper even the largest congregations. When the Confraternity of St Patrick set about creating the mission of St Patrick in Soho Square, the congregation was already in situ, although not recognised as such. They were the exemplars of the “nominal” Catholics who had ceased to attend. The Embassy chapels were within reasonable distance, but the poverty and social position of the denizens of the Rookeries of St Giles put the Embassy chapels beyond their reach. The name chosen for the mission and its church served as advertisement as to who should constitute its congregation.

During the penal days members of congregations knew each other quite well. Various systems were in place to ensure their safety including, particularly, knowing one’s fellow worshippers. Relief brought the freedom to worship without fear of prosecution, but for new missions being founded there was probably a lack of familiarity with each other amongst worshippers. Relief also meant that the Church authorities were in a position where they could actively seek out those who were nominally Catholic but had ceased to attend on a regular basis.

As Catholicism spread away from its heartlands, missions and congregations came into being in various ways. In the first few decades after relief, the most urgent need was to respond to those already in residence who did not have access to church services. In 1812

⁶⁵ "Laying the Foundation Stone of the New Roman Catholic Church of Saint Vincent De Paul," *Liverpool Mercury* April 9th 1856., 2

⁶⁶ CD 1852, 79

there were 500 “poor labouring Irish” in Workington. There was no chapel or priest, and the Rev Mr Johnson, based at Whitehaven, was unable to minister there as well, but his assistant priest undertook the ministry at Workington and hired the local Assembly Rooms as a chapel⁶⁷. Identified as Irish, those in St Giles and Workington were assumed to be Catholic.

The assumption, made frequently in the nineteenth century, that “Irish” and “Catholic” were synonymous, was probably instrumental in identifying many of the new Catholic congregations and establishing missions to serve them.

Huddersfield mission, with the support of the Hon E. Petre, appealed in 1825 for funds to build a chapel and school for the estimated 600 Catholics in the town. Readers were assured that this number would be greater if the church were in place⁶⁸. No chaplain had yet been appointed but this was not unusual when chaplains would often be shared between missions whilst the new one was being established; initially the Halifax chaplain served Huddersfield as well. Although the appeal for Huddersfield does not mention either the social class or nationality of the Catholics, by naming the chapel after St Patrick, it is probable that a large proportion of them were Irish.

Founding missions for small groups of Catholics in rural areas or smaller market towns was undertaken where possible. The situation in these areas was different from that in urban settings. If there were not a large concentration of Irish or there had not been a recusant tradition, the existence of a group of Catholics in an area may not have been known to the bishop. In 1822 an Irish prelate visited Leamington Spa, presumably to take the waters. Following his visit, he wrote to the Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District, John Milner, informing him of the presence of Catholics in Leamington. A small chapel was built and a pastor was appointed⁶⁹. By 1827 the chapel was too small and the fledgling mission appealed for assistance to build a bigger chapel. Entry to the original chapel was through the Royal Hotel whose proprietor, Mr Copps, was a Catholic⁷⁰. The new church at Leamington was being built for 500 persons. That they were appealing for this so shortly after their first chapel was established shows that the congregation in Leamington quickly became established.

In Swindon in the 1840s there was a group of six Catholic families. For some weeks on

⁶⁷ LD 1812

⁶⁸ LD 1825

⁶⁹ LD 1832 pp.24-25

⁷⁰ LD 1827 pp.28-29. Whilst most of the appeals in the *Directories* were anonymous, Mr Copps may have been involved in writing this appeal as it included an advertisement for his hotel: the owner being a Catholic “takes this opportunity of soliciting the patronage of the Catholic Nobility and Gentry visiting Leamington”.

Sundays the men-folk walked fourteen miles to Fairford for mass. They petitioned the Bishop of Clifton to start a mission so that their families could attend as well. The mission at Swindon opened in 1848 and was served on the first Sunday of the month from Fairford⁷¹. By 1851 mass was being said more regularly, initially in the Greyhound Inn⁷². In 1859 they appealed for funds to build a small chapel to serve the Catholics scattered over a large area⁷³. A small chapel was built on land provided by a parishioner, Mrs Arkell⁷⁴. In spite of this solid start, by 1870 the *Directory* noted that Swindon was “served occasionally”⁷⁵, yet it continued to expand and by 1881 there were 300 parishioners⁷⁶.

Use of an inn (in Swindon) or the Assembly Rooms (in Workington) could cause problems amongst non-Catholics. In 1827, the mission at Gloucester appealed for funds to build a “proper entrance” to their chapel. At the time the congregation had to go through a private house to their chapel. Although not problematic for the resident congregation or visiting Catholics, the appeal noted that “many of their separated brethren, who [were] becoming every day better disposed towards the Catholic Religion, [were], on that account, deterred from attending to an exposition of its tenets”⁷⁷. The unusual entrance hindered expansion of the congregation amongst the non-Catholics.

Congregations could be built through the dogged persistence of one person. Fr Patrick O’Moore arrived in Croydon in the late 1830s. The parish history⁷⁸ says that the first record of Mass in the post-relief era was at Christmas 1837⁷⁹. D O’Regan says that Fr O’Moore was a refugee from Spain and that he may have brought some other refugees with him⁸⁰ who formed the core of the new Catholic community in Croydon. They were joined by locals and a small chapel was built. According to Kelly⁸¹, Fr O’Moore could not speak English and catechetical instruction was given by a local Catholic physician, Dr Lashmar. Fr O’Moore retired about 1850 and for a number of years the mission was served from Norwood, but his activity over the previous thirteen years had created a mission with a viable congregation.

Although allowing a priest to serve in a private house may be viewed as a legacy of the

⁷¹ CD 1848, 72

⁷² Harding, *Clifton*, 187

⁷³ CD 1859, 98

⁷⁴ Harding, *Clifton*, 187

⁷⁵ CD 1870, 141

⁷⁶ Harding, *Clifton*, 187

⁷⁷ LD 1827, 62

⁷⁸ David O’Regan, *A Short History of St. Mary’s Croydon*, <<http://www.saint-mary.org.uk/html/history.html>> (accessed 29/01/2009)

⁷⁹ There had been a mission in Croydon before the Relief Acts. Fr J B Moloney was the priest; he was the last man in England to be convicted and sentenced for being a Catholic priest; the consequences of his conviction is detailed in chapter seven below.

⁸⁰ O’Regan, *A Short History of St. Mary’s Croydon*,

⁸¹ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 148

penal days, it was not necessarily so. There were instances of converts continuing this noble tradition by building chapels in their houses. Missions sometimes grew from these. At Weston-in-Arden, Warwickshire, when Richard Brome de Bary converted in 1842, he provided a chapel and school for local Catholics from which the mission grew⁸².

Building congregations was a major responsibility for pastors. For some, it may have been relatively easy as the congregation was *in situ* and all that was needed was to rally them into church on Sunday. The old congregations, those with a history of recusancy and of the penal days, needed to develop beyond their secret hiding places. Such problems as those congregations had were more easily managed than those of the new congregations. They had the advantage of familiarity amongst their (non-Catholic) neighbours, whereas often the new ones had to battle against ignorance and prejudice. Many of these new congregations came into being in working-class areas where traditions of church attendance hardly existed⁸³. Most of the working-class Catholics were Irish and they had to deal with the twin prejudices against their faith and their nationality and also the unconscious secularism of the working-classes⁸⁴ which saw church attendance as a middle class activity; going to church required “dressing up” and when members of the working class attended they became indistinguishable from others in the congregation. Inglis says that this could be seen as betrayal⁸⁵.

2.2.6 Provision of clergy

Calculating the ratio of priests to people over the whole country would give a misleading indication of the availability of priests in England. Three priests serving a mission with 2,000 would allow one priest per 700 persons – a reasonable work load. Unfortunately while there were very large congregations with estimated numbers of thousands, there were also rural congregations with a few hundred or even tens of people. The problem was to balance the scarce resource of priests across both rural and urban missions. In endeavouring to ensure that their scattered people gained access to services and instruction, bishops had to balance the needs of many against those of a few.

A considerable number of entries were at one point or another listed as “served from” a neighbouring mission. There were 744 such entries, not all of which were missions as some were private houses, convents or other institutions. Fledgling missions, formed from the split of a larger mission, were usually initially “served from” the original mission: St

⁸² J B Hickson, *Parish History, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart*, 2005, <<http://www.olshweston.org/>> (accessed 15/02/2010)

⁸³ Inglis, *Working Classes*, 323

⁸⁴ This phrase was coined by Horace Mann in his Report on the Religious Census of 1851 and quoted by Inglis *Ibid.*, 329

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 334

Vincent de Paul in Liverpool was a daughter church of, and served from, St Patrick's. Sharing priests occurred in rural areas too.

Sometimes the bishops had to be imaginative. The missions at King's Cliffe and Oundle were listed with the same priest from 1835-1838. Mass times differed in both missions on alternate Sundays – early one week, later the next. In this case the priest said early mass in one chapel, rode to the other and said a later mass there. He may then have remained in that mission for the week, instructing the faithful and carrying out his other duties, before saying early mass on Sunday morning and returning to the first for later mass and a week's ministry. According to the village history, this was a "riding mission" established in the late 1700s⁸⁶.

It was these small scattered rural communities which must have caused the biggest problems for the bishops in terms of supplying priests to them. The recently ordained Irish priest, Rev J B McNaughten, appointed to Gainsborough in Lincolnshire, succinctly sketched the problems facing priests and bishops in rural areas in 1851:

The new mission at Gainsborough was opened in Oct 1848. From that time to the present it has been kept open amidst many and great difficulties. ... With a population of approximately 10,000 inhabitants, of whom about 130 are Catholics, it is the centre of an immensely populous district, and surrounded by many large villages and towns. In its vicinity also lie Retford (Nottinghamshire), an old borough town with a pop of 8,000 inhabitants, and several Catholics, but no chapel or priest &c.; Kirton Lindsey (Lincolnshire) with a population of about 4000 inhabitants, and many Catholics, but no chapel; Bawtry, Epworth, and the populous district called the Isle of Axholme, bordering on Yorkshire. Gainsborough is 19 miles by road and 16½ by rail from Glandford Brigg, where there is the nearest chapel to it. In fact along the immense line of distance which lies between Great Grimsby on the German Ocean and Worksop in Nottinghamshire, the chapel at Glandford Brigg is the only one. Gainsborough has no chapel, school &c..⁸⁷

The "immense line of distance" gives a strong indication of the difficulties encountered in such an area. There are stories of Catholics undertaking lengthy journeys on a Sunday to attend mass, a nineteen-mile journey by foot would take nearly five hours at a reasonable walking pace, Yet to staff and maintain separate missions in Gainsborough (130 Catholics), Retford ("several" Catholics) and Kirton Lindsey ("many" Catholics) would have been very difficult.

A total of 630 missions⁸⁸ were at some stage listed as being served from another mission. Whilst this was acceptable for a year or two while a mission was being established, some missions seemed to share a priest for most of their existence in the nineteenth century.

⁸⁶ *Church and Chapel*, <http://www.kingscliffeheritage.org/aboutkingscliffe.html#Church_chapel> (accessed 2nd October 2011)

⁸⁷ CD 1851 pp.71-72

⁸⁸ This does not include the private houses or institutions.

Penllwyn in Monmouthshire was originally served from Newport when listed in 1852. A priest was appointed in 1855. In 1861 it had joined with Brynmawr. From 1870 it was served from Pontypool and in 1886 from Pontymister until at least 1908. This example shows that there were peculiar aspects to these problems in Wales. Whereas in England, many of the missions which shared priests were as a result of scattered groups in rural areas which had often survived from the pre-Relief days, in Wales there were far fewer such surviving congregations. The new congregations identified, by and large, came from the Irish migration to the coal mines in the Valleys or the heavy industry which had developed in South Wales as a result. The difficulty in establishing a mission became a question of where to site the centre of the mission. This can be seen from this example.

The mission at Milford Haven suffered as did many in Wales from a dearth of Catholics. It was founded in 1844 with stations at Pater and Haverfordwest. In 1846 a notice informed readers that the mission could not be maintained for the want of means to support the pastor⁸⁹. The following year it was relisted and a small Baptist chapel was rented. There were few Catholics in the town but there were frequent visits from Irish mariners for whose benefit it was desired to establish a permanent mission⁹⁰. For the following two years it was listed under Haverfordwest. There was no church, no mission-house, no school and no mission fund. There were about one hundred Catholics in all and the mission was supported by the Vicar Apostolic of Wales⁹¹. There was no pastor in 1856 and in 1857 the mission at Milford Haven was no longer listed. It remained unlisted until 1896. In 1900 Milford Haven was served from Pembroke Dock and in 1904 a priest was appointed.

The motivation for the establishment of this mission was to minister to visiting Irish mariners. The problem for the bishop was a lack of financial resources and a settled congregation. The centre of the mission had moved to Haverfordwest when that at Milford Haven had closed. There were more Catholics at Haverfordwest and it was deemed to provide a cheaper base. There were then stations at Pater, Milford Haven and Pembroke, and the intention was that once established the mission would be extended to include Tenby where “seventeen Catholics [had] promised £1-6s each annually for [the mission’s] support, and 4 or 5 others also [promised] funds until it [could] sustain itself”⁹².

Nearby, in Pater, they were building a church “in the pointed style” in 1847. Pater was two miles from Pembroke which was a military and a marine station and the site of HM

⁸⁹ CD 1846, 85

⁹⁰ CD 1847, 88

⁹¹ CD 1848, 89

⁹² CD 1846, 85

Dockyard which employed about 1400 men. It was expected that a “large Catholic congregation will in all likelihood be formed here, when the chapel shall be completed”⁹³. Pater was usually listed with Tenby “where Mass will occasionally be said for the nobility and gentry who come to this well-known watering place”⁹⁴. Oliver Murphy was appointed to the mission in 1850 and remained for forty four years⁹⁵.

The difficulties in this locality were manifest. Haverford West, Milford Haven and Tenby, being the outliers of this area, are all within twenty miles of each other, similar distances to those in the Lincolnshire example quoted above and not an unreasonable area for a priest to cover as a rural mission. There was a reasonable expectation that some of the 1400 men working at HM Dockyard would be Catholic; there were a few scattered Catholics around and there were regular visitors – sailors from Ireland and the leisured classes who took holidays in Tenby. The problem was identifying the optimum centre for the mission; hence the frequent changes in location. The extent of this problem in Wales can be seen from the data which shows that of the 125 missions in existence in 1908, no fewer than seventy two of them had at some point been served by a priest from another neighbouring mission.

It can be seen from the last two difficulties discussed, that identifying and building congregations and providing clergy for them were closely linked. During the centuries of proscription, providing clergy seems to have been somewhat easier as the congregations were more closely geographically linked, and yet Bossy identifies the distribution of clergy as a problem in this period⁹⁶. There was also an understanding that the Tridentine requirements for attending mass every Sunday and on holydays could not be fully enforced and that there was no fault on the part of Catholics who were unable to attend as a result of the legal restrictions. Although some inferences have been drawn from the data gathered on the question of provision of clergy, further research needs to be undertaken to understand the full extent of the juggling act which the bishops had to undertake to provide for the greatest number of people, and, as the century went on, also to provide for the growing number of scattered rural communities.

These six difficulties did not affect every mission. Some would have started with a congregation of a reasonable and manageable size; a priest would have been available to serve the new mission; some were supported generously by members of other denominations. But, all missions, old and new, had to find the capital to build their churches and ongoing funds to maintain church and mission. For a voluntary organisation

⁹³ CD 1847 pp.88-89

⁹⁴ CD 1861, 215

⁹⁵ Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests* , 132

⁹⁶ Bossy, *English Catholic*, 223

with ambitions to serve every community this was a formidable challenge, although it would not have been apparent at the dawn of Relief in 1791. As this was an issue which affected all missions, it must be looked at more closely. The next chapter will discuss the funding of building and maintaining churches throughout the century and will show how that changed as the century progressed and the demography of the Catholic community in England and Wales developed.

3 Financing the project

When we recall the state to which the long years of persecution had reduced the Catholic body at the dawn of the nineteenth century, we may well wonder at what has been accomplished since then. Who shall say how it has come about? Where out of our poverty, for example, have been found the sums of money for all our innumerable needs? Churches and colleges and schools, monastic buildings and convents, have all had to be built and supported; how, the Providence of God can alone explain.¹

Abbot Gasquet was writing in the early twentieth century by which time the major proportion of the rebuilding work had been completed albeit some in quite temporary form. Gasquet may have been content to let the “Providence of God” explain how the means were obtained, but since Gasquet wrote these words, no one has offered any other explanation. This chapter will give an alternative answer to Gasquet’s and, by looking at the century as a whole, will propose that there were three phases in financing this project. These will be characterised as the gentry-, labouring- and middle-class-phases. The events which caused the movement from one phase to the next will be shown, in the case of the ending of the gentry-phase, it was the collapse in 1840 of Wright’s Bank. This had been the bank of choice for Catholics in the first half of the century. Moving from the labouring to the middle-class phase was brought about primarily by the change in the demography of the Catholic community.

There were two distinct aspects to the problem of money: capital and running costs. Capital was required to build churches and, once built, funds were needed to support the priests and the general costs of the mission. The institutional Catholic Church in England was very poor unable to hold endowments, trusts or property which could generate capital or income. It was totally reliant on the purses of individual members. There were some priests and bishops who did have means of their own and used them to support the Church’s missions, Fr Shaw at Bermondsey and Bishop Thomas Walsh, Vicar Apostolic in the Midlands and, later, in London, are examples.

Gasquet, from the viewpoint afforded by the new century could look back and see the great strides which had been made. It is unlikely that once Royal Assent had been given to the Act of 1791 that the four Vicars Apostolic were aware of the task which lay ahead of them or their successor bishops. No mention was made in the pastoral letters which they issued to mark the occasion. As these were public documents this was not unexpected, but nor did a perusal through the letters of Bishop Douglass, Vicar Apostolic for the London

¹ Francis Aidan Gasquet, *A Short History of the Catholic Church in England* (London: Catholic Truth Society, 1903)

District in 1791, show that there was any real concern as to the task which lay ahead. Yet the early signs were present. As early as 1777, as discussed above, Bath recognised that it needed to build a larger chapel. A new chapel in Southwark, St George's, was in financial difficulty and appealing for assistance from 1794.

To give an overview and examine the methods used to acquire the capital required, this chapter will first show how chapels in the 1790s were financed and how in the immediate aftermath of Relief, the pastors and laity set about raising the funds to build new chapels as required. The collapse of Wright's Bank will then be examined to show how pivotal an event this was. This led into the second phase where the labouring classes were galvanised into collecting the capital required for their own churches, an instance without parallel in Victorian society. With the increasing number of middle-class Catholics, the balance in the demography of the community changed, so that these educated people could take a lead in financing and supporting churches. This final phase was assisted, as will be shown, by technological developments.

3.1 The 1791 Model

At the time of Relief there were five ways in which Catholics could hear Mass or receive the ministrations of a priest: the Embassy chapels; private houses of the gentry; schools or institutions; riding missions or semi-permanent chapels, usually in towns. These were financed through private funding, endowments, seat subscriptions or combinations of these. This can be seen more clearly from the list of chapels published in the *Directory* of 1793. The entry for each chapel showed its location, how it was supported, the number of chaplains attached and the services held. The chapel at Virginia Street was supported by subscription; had three chaplains; the first Mass on all Sundays and Feasts of Obligation was "at 8 o'clock, and a sermon at 11 o'clock on Sundays"; Vespers was "at 3 o'clock in the afternoon"². The other chapels, how they were supported and the number of their chaplains were as follows:

White Street; subscription; four chaplains;

St George's Chapel (Southwark); subscription; two chaplains;

Sardinian Chapel (Lincoln's Inn Fields); the King of Sardinia; [?]³ chaplains;

St Patrick's chapel (Soho Square), to be opened 30th September 1792; general subscription; four chaplains proposed;

Bavarian Chapel; partly by the Duke of Bavaria and partly by subscription; five chaplains;

Neapolitan Chapel; the King of Naples and Sicily; number of chaplains not

² LD 1793

³ LD 1793, Figure illegible

specified;

Portuguese Chapel; the Queen of Portugal; eight chaplains;

Spanish Chapel; the King of Spain; five chaplains⁴.

Following this is a brief list of nine chapels “near” London each of which had one chaplain and all of which were “mostly supported by subscription”⁵. Excluding the particular cases of the embassy chapels, chapels in London were usually supported by subscription. These were offered by members of a congregation to support their pastor and constituted a regular and, usually, well-defined income for him and for the expenses of the mission. These were not weekly offerings but rather a larger sum of money paid on a more infrequent basis, perhaps quarterly or even annually. As such they could only have been afforded by those who were relatively well off. The Irishmen who formed themselves into the Confraternity to establish the mission of St Patrick in Soho Square announced their intention that the support of the chapel should be by “general subscription”. The intended congregation of this mission, the area around St Giles, was notoriously poverty stricken and it was unlikely that its inhabitants could afford to enter into a subscription. The expectation was that the general Catholic body would, through the general subscription provide for the priests and mission expenses.

Differentiating therefore between private chapels, such as those of the embassies and gentry, and those open to the general public the norm for the support of a public chapel was to open a subscription list. There were also some chapels which had endowments but as these were legally suspect these were not much publicised⁶. Even at this early stage, difficulties were beginning to manifest themselves. The chaplain of St George’s, Southwark, stated in 1795 that the “subscriptions from seats is uncertain”⁷. The other immediate difficulty with this model was that subscriptions would not generate the necessary capital to build a permanent chapel permitted now under the 1791 Act. For this reason a congregation which sought to build a chapel without the aid of a generous benefactor had to appeal for assistance from the Catholic body as a whole. From the earliest years post-Relief, many of these appeals were made in the pages of the *Directory*. The majority of appeals requested “donations and subscriptions”. Use of the two words was not tautological: donations implied a once only offering, probably for building capital; subscriptions implied a continuing commitment. In 1812, Brighton mission appealed for assistance to liquidate its debt of over £300 asking for subscriptions and donations⁸. This

⁴ LD 1793

⁵ LD 1793

⁶ See p. 200 below on the change in the legal position of Catholic charities.

⁷ LD 1795

⁸ LD 1812

was repeated in the same form until 1819, when visitors to Brighton were invited to contribute to a project to enlarge the chapel for which a “subscription [had] been entered into”⁹. In this way the running and capital costs were specified separately in appeals.

It may have been that missions were first listed in order to launch an appeal. The Coventry mission included an appeal in its first listing in 1810; it had built a chapel, but the congregation was very poor and there was a “considerable debt”. Coventry appealed to the “Catholic nobility and gentry” for donations¹⁰. Subsequently they appealed for “benefactions however small”¹¹. In 1821 Coventry’s debt was over £200, but the mission was collecting seat subscriptions quarterly¹². The appeals continued sporadically until, in 1843, the need for a new church was urgent as the current one was in “a ruinous state”. By this time the congregation, which was “mainly converts” but “very poor”, had been collecting for nine years and had reached a total of only £200¹³.

The “poor” Catholics of Brecon had a chapel, but were unable to support a missionary and they appealed in 1818 for subscriptions from the general populace for this purpose¹⁴.

Nottingham mission, first appearing in 1821 in the *Directory*, launched an appeal in 1826. A larger church was needed as there had been a “great influx of Irish Catholics” due to the state of Nottingham trade¹⁵. This was built and in 1840 a further appeal was made for support for the mission and schools as there “was no endowment”¹⁶.

From these few examples it can be seen that the poor were not expected to support their own missions and pastors, and there was little hope that they could collect the capital required to build a church. Coventry used a mixture of all forms of funding: donations from richer Catholics, seat subscriptions, benefactions and congregational collections, yet still struggled to meet its needs. Brecon simply could not afford a much-needed missionary and Nottingham, having had its schools built by the sixteenth Earl of Shrewsbury¹⁷, could not afford to maintain them without an endowment. Of the 514 missions which were listed in or before 1840, about a quarter (128) appealed for assistance in one form or another.

Not all the poor congregations were totally helpless. Bermondsey, one of the most populous missions in London, although it had endowments, appealed nearly every year from its first listing in 1812 until 1861. Having been endowed by Fr Shaw in 1773 and,

⁹ LD 1819

¹⁰ LD 1810

¹¹ LD 1813

¹² LD 1821

¹³ CD 1843, 24

¹⁴ LD 1818

¹⁵ LD 1826, 31

¹⁶ CD 1840, 19

¹⁷ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 298

later, by a Miss Byrne¹⁸, it also received significant support from Baroness de Montesquieu¹⁹. She provided for the galleries which expanded the capacity of the chapel to 500²⁰, donated money for the schools²¹ and for a new church²². According to its appeal in 1826, the schools of the mission were “supported by monthly or weekly appeals to the congregation” who in spite of their own “great wants cheerfully gave their shilling”²³.

In 1831, the appeal from Bermondsey changed. It noted that the lease for the site on which the chapel stood would expire in 1840 and they were beginning to collect for a new site and church. They hoped that before “that time [arrived], God [would] inspire some generous individuals, with the will, and endow them with the means, of erecting a becoming Temple, for the exaltation of his name, and the salvation of his people”²⁴. The baroness bought the land and offerings on the foundation stone when it was laid amounted to £170. The people had “contributed much from the little they had” and the baroness gave another £1500²⁵. Unfortunately for the mission, she died “before she could endow the church for ever”²⁶ and Bermondsey was obliged to continue appealing to the wider Church for funds to complete the building and support the mission.

Newark in Nottinghamshire was one of the few to publicise receipt of an endowment. In 1830 they appealed for funds to build a church as they had “been favoured with a gift sufficient for the perpetual maintenance of a pastor”²⁷. James Provost Waterworth “erected the church” and settled an endowment on the mission “of about £80 per annum”²⁸.

Hartlepool, first listed in 1835, noted that the pastor was supported by the small sum which was paid for sittings²⁹. This was one of the last mentions of seat subscriptions.

Before the bishops tried to establish a fund for the support of poor missions in 1838, the clergy of Cheshire met together in 1826 and decided that a weekly subscription from all

¹⁸ Ibid., 74

¹⁹ Baroness de Montesquieu was daughter-in-law of Charles-Louis de Secondat, Baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, political philosopher and author of *l'Esprit des Lois* Ibid., 74. Having escaped the French Revolution, Baroness de Montesquieu became a generous benefactor of the Catholic Church in England. She also contributed to the missions at Poplar (LD 1828, 9), St Patrick's Kidderminster (LD 1836, 28) and West Bromwich (LD 1831, 22). It is one of history's ironies that her father-in-law's book had been placed on the Index of Forbidden Books by the Catholic Church in 1751 Hilary Bok, "Baron De Montesquieu, Charles-Louis De Secondat," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2008), <<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/montesquieu/>> Accessed 16/10/2009..

²⁰ LD 1826, 11

²¹ LD 1827, 10

²² Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 74

²³ LD 1826, 11

²⁴ LD 1831, 9

²⁵ LD 1835, 64

²⁶ LD 1836, 9-10; Baroness de Montesquieu died on July 13th 1835. Her total contribution to Bermondsey was about £4000.

²⁷ LD 1831, 60

²⁸ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 286

²⁹ LD 1835, 14

Catholics in the county should be collected “for the support and propagation of Catholicism”. They added that “[m]any Irish in great distress [had] been driven from their homes and [had] settled amongst [them]” and further commented that “there were also dissenters who were unhappy in their own faith”. It was signed by six priests – Revs Platt, Collingridge, Briggs, Blundell, Hall and Fisher³⁰. Yet again, a great need was created by the presence of poor Irish but one should not infer a negative association with “poor Irish” from this. Duckinfield, in Cheshire, requested support due to an influx of Irish and reminded readers that the Irish had “steadfastly adhered [to the faith] through centuries of persecution”³¹.

The Cheshire initiative seems to be the first time that a cooperative effort was made by Catholics to remedy the lack of sacred space beyond the boundaries of their own missions. The notice in the *Directory* was not an appeal *per se*, rather it was a statement of intent. The notice pointed out that if the 3,000 Catholics in Cheshire were each to give 1d per week that would yield £600 per annum. There was a large church being built at Duckinfield; a gallery was being added at Stockport and land had been purchased for a church and house in Congleton, all of which were evidence of need, and in establishing the Cheshire Fund, the priests involved showed an awareness of need and a willingness to meet these needs on a wider, in this case county, scale³².

The Cheshire Fund bore some fruit. Its appeal had coincided with one from Congleton where the congregation consisted mainly of poor Irish silk weavers³³. For sixteen years, there were no further appeals from Congleton, unusual for a “poor” mission, until in 1842 they appealed again. The income of the mission was now £54 per annum from a congregation estimated to be about 300. “Up to recently” they had been helped by the Cheshire Fund, but that was no longer available and with a debt of £300 at 5%, the mission was struggling³⁴. No further mention of the Cheshire Fund is made in the *Directory* after the 1842 appeal from Congleton.

The situation in missions which appealed year after year shows the shortcomings of the system, yet the fact that they continued to appeal implies that there was an expectation that the wealthier members of the Catholic body would provide for the poorer congregations. This method had served the Church well when it was a small scattered community and congregations were supported by the better off members and the need for change would have required considerable prescience on the part of the bishops. It is apparent from the

³⁰ LD 1826, 49

³¹ LD 1827 pp.11-12

³² LD 1826, 49

³³ LD 1826, 48

³⁴ CD 1842, 30

appeals in the first half of the nineteenth century that there was an expectation that this system would continue. But it did not take account of the changing demography of the Catholic community in England and Wales. This was now inexorably shifting so that as the century progressed, the proportion of wealthy Catholics relative to that of labouring Catholics became very small.

Despite the difficulties, the Church was expanding; missions were being founded; churches, chapels and schools were being built and, somehow, were being supported. It was becoming apparent though that matters were not moving quickly enough and that Catholics were being lost because the means (churches and schools) were not in place to minister to them.

3.2 1840 - Wright's Bank³⁵

It is with feelings of the deepest regret, that owing to my inability any longer to support some large mercantile undertakings, in which I had most incautiously and improperly engaged, I have unfortunately so compromised the credit of our banking house, as to compel it to suspend its payments.

I still hope these will, if not hastily hurried to a close, indemnify our creditors against ultimate loss; but should the result prove otherwise, I must, in justice to my partners, acquit them of all blame, and impute solely to myself the lamentable consequences which have now ensued, both in their regard and in that of those esteemed friends who have reposed such unbounded confidence in our establishment.

I must further add, that my partners have constantly remonstrated and expostulated against every irregularity and departure from the legitimate business of the house; and for these reasons I prefer making this announcement in my own name, however painful and humiliating it is to me to do so.

JOHN WRIGHT

Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, Nov. 23³⁶

This statement, published in *The Times*, signalled the demise of Wright's Bank whose importance according to *The Times* "was chiefly derived from its connexion with wealthy Catholic families, by whom the greater part of its deposits [had] been placed"³⁷. There were many bank failures in the 1840s as the British economy underwent a nineteenth-century version of the twenty-first century "credit crunch". Many banks had overextended themselves by investing in the expansion of the railways and these failures led to The Bank Charter Act of 1844.

Subsequent to its collapse, Wright's offices and business were taken over by the London Joint Stock Bank. Unfortunately, although banks' archives are generally retained in

³⁵ Much of this outline of banking and bankruptcy in the mid-nineteenth century was learned in a conversation with Oliver M Westall, economic historian, Lancaster University.

³⁶ "Money Markets and City Intelligence", *The Times* 24 November 1840., 3

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 3

mergers and takeovers, those of Wright's seem to have been lost³⁸. No history of Wright's Bank has yet been written³⁹, although Phil Cottrell gives some background⁴⁰ and T J Holt S.J. wrote an article on its collapse based on the archives of the English Province of the Society of Jesus and the Jesuit College at Stonyhurst in Lancashire⁴¹.

Many of the private banks in England, such as Coutts, Drummonds and Hoares, had started as goldsmiths⁴². These banks, mainly located in the West End of London, had as clients the gentry and aristocracy. Another group of banks, the investment banks, began in the City of London. Their clients were merchants, traders and other businesses. Wright's was founded in about 1699 by William Wright, goldsmith, of an old Catholic family. In the centuries during which Catholicism was proscribed, many religious communities of mainly English membership were established in towns and cities across Europe and there were often English Catholic merchant communities nearby. The history of these merchants and their networks has not yet been researched⁴³. Any trading relationship which they would have had with England would have had to have been discreet as, following the Revolution of 1688, Catholics were banned from the cities of London and Westminster. This need for discretion may explain the presence of Wright's in Covent Garden. The geographical location of a bank in the early nineteenth century was a good indicator of its client base; Wright's was in neither of the usual locations.

The Catholic community, laity for private banking, merchants for investment banking and religious institutions for their needs, all used Wright's Bank. This may have been so since the bank's foundation as the Wright family, through marriage, had connections within that community⁴⁴. Stonyhurst College and the English Province of the Society of Jesus banked with them⁴⁵. In correspondence with Clementina Lynch⁴⁶, Abbess of the Irish Benedictines

³⁸ The standard reference for tracing banking archives is by Orbell and Turton John Orbell and Alison Turton, *British Banking : A Guide to Historical Records*, Expanded new edition (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001). Wright's Bank is not listed in this. The trail of mergers / takeovers goes from Wright's to The London Joint Stock Bank to Midland Group to HSBC. HSBC's archives department does not hold the Wright's Bank archive. John Wright, senior partner of Wright's Bank, was a founding director of The Ionian Bank. These archives are held in The London School of Economics, but LSE does not hold the Wright's archives

³⁹ This statement is corroborated in Cottrell's history of The Ionian Bank, an institution which John Wright assisted in founding P. L. Cottrell, *The Ionian Bank : An Imperial Institution, 1839-1864* (Athens: Alpha Bank Historical Archives, 2007). My thanks to Dr Cottrell for forwarding me the relevant chapter from his book.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ T. J. Holt, "The Failure of Messrs Wright & Co. Bankers in 1840" *The Essex Recusant* (1969)

⁴² Orbell and Turton, *Banking Records*, 4

⁴³ Conversation with Abbot Geoffrey Scott OSB

⁴⁴ At the time of the collapse, the other partners were Anthony Wright Biddulph; Henry Robinson and William Jerningham "Court of Bankruptcy," *The Times* 16 December 1840., 6

⁴⁵ Holt, "Wright & Co", 74

⁴⁶ Blom, et al., eds, *Coghlan Letters*, 249

at Ypres; Archbishop Troy of Dublin⁴⁷ and Paul MacPherson⁴⁸, agent for the Scottish Church in Rome from 1793, J P Coghlan refers to Wright's Bank in terms which indicate familiarity.

Fifty eight of the missions which appealed in the first half century after Relief requested donations be lodged with Wright's. These were spread throughout the country from Devon to Cheshire and Lincolnshire to Brecknockshire Ten missions nominated banks other than Wright's, but only one of these did not use Wright's as well (Ulverston, in Lancashire, had used Worswick and Son).

In writing of the collapse of Wright's, Holt concluded that its collapse was due to what he termed "occupational disease"⁴⁹ which concurs with the information received from Oliver Westall. The accounts in *The Times* give a different picture as it reported that John Wright (the senior partner) had placed money in overseas investments which were of dubious quality. John Wright accepted total blame for the failure and absolved his junior partners of all culpability in the matter⁵⁰. Cottrell says that there were indications of flamboyancy in Wright's character⁵¹. He had been involved with partners, primarily Oliver Farrar who was a landowner and retired barrister, in establishing a number of financial institutions around the world including the Provincial Bank in Ireland (1825); Bank of Australasia (1834); Bank of South Africa (1835); Mediterranean Bank (1836); Cuba Banking Company (1836); Ionian Bank (1838)⁵².

Farrar and Wright were using the new method of joint-stock banking and were "pioneers" in this field. Although not all of their overseas banks enjoyed longevity, they were soundly established. However, as Cottrell says

there was a 'Janus' aspect to both men; one public face they shared was that of the gentleman banker, directing chartered financial institutions along with other gentlemen – courtiers, professionals and merchants - the other, utterly private in Farrar's case, was that of the rash speculator⁵³.

One can only speculate as to why Wright developed such a strong business partnership with a man who had connections with "evangelical sects"⁵⁴. He was born in about 1786 and was of the first generation of Catholics to grow up in the post-Relief era. He became head of a bank which had a limited client base and was set (geographically) away from the

⁴⁷ Ibid., 274

⁴⁸ Ibid., 331

⁴⁹ Holt, "Wright & Co", 66

⁵⁰ "Money Markets and City Intelligence", 3

⁵¹ Cottrell, *Ionian Bank*, 95

⁵² Ibid., 57 Cottrell gives a table showing all the banks of the Farrer-Wright group and their interlinking directorships Cottrell, *Ionian Bank*, 58-60

⁵³ Cottrell, *Ionian Bank*, 67

⁵⁴ Ibid., 66

rest of the banking world. The expanding British Empire, development of new forms of banking (joint stock) and his own ambition may have led him into partnership with Farrar. Both men, as Cottrell explains, also indulged in rash speculation – in Wright’s case with money held in trust by his bank⁵⁵. Many of the missions which were raising and saving money for their new chapels held accounts with Wright’s. It was the era, as Cottrell puts it, of gentlemen bankers. This firm had served the Catholic community for 150 years. Where else were the missions to place their money?

It is possible to gauge some of the effect this failure had on the Catholic community from letters written at the time. From his research, Holt concludes that “their customers suffered grievously”⁵⁶. There are three contemporary letters which refer to the event in the Jesuit archives: the first from a Dr W H Coombes who commiserated with Stonyhurst for their losses in “the late disaster”; the second, from Rev J G Morris of Wakefield reported that they had heard of “serious losses of ours by the late disastrous failure”; the third, written by the Jesuit Rector in London, Randall Lythgoe, apologised that he had been pressed for time owing to the necessity “of looking to the affairs which interest the Society from the failure of Wright & Co.”⁵⁷. Holt stated that Stonyhurst lost an estimated £5,000 and the Province £1,500⁵⁸.

Holt discussed the stocks which were held by the bank and which could therefore have been liquidated to recompense the creditors. The stocks which were not sold were held in the names of various persons whose surnames were those of partners in the bank either in 1840 or previously (Wright, Selby, Robinson and Biddulph). He adds that some were “given as held for groups – probably religious communities”⁵⁹. He also states that “large sums were held on behalf of ... a group of Reverend gentlemen (religious orders presumably) – over £26,000 Consols in one instance, over £10,000 Consols in a second, and over £8,000 in a third.”⁶⁰

The “Reverend gentlemen” of whom Holt writes may not have belonged to religious communities. On January 13th 1841, *The Times* printed a lengthy list of creditors which included nearly fifty accounts in the names of reverend gentlemen. The total in these accounts, most of which were small amounts (only four were over £1000), was over £20,000. Two accounts were associated with specific missions: £206 in a “trust account

⁵⁵ Ibid., 66

⁵⁶ Holt, “Wright & Co”, 66

⁵⁷ Ibid., 74

⁵⁸ Ibid., 74

⁵⁹ Ibid., 75

⁶⁰ Ibid., 75

for Jersey Chapel”⁶¹ and £330 4s 9d “for the repairs of St Patrick’s Chapel”⁶². One of the names on the Jersey chapel’s account was that of Right Rev Thomas Griffiths, Vicar Apostolic (London 1836-1847). Griffiths’ name was on eight other accounts as well. The total lost in these nine accounts was nearly £5000. These accounts were more likely to have been mission accounts than those of religious communities – perhaps even holding the proceeds of their appeals.

The loss of money for missions represented a serious setback in their efforts to acquire the capital to build a chapel (as required by Canon law), or to create an endowment fund for ongoing costs. One of the missions which suffered greatly was that at Greenwich. It was one of the missions listed in the earliest editions of the *Directory*. A plot of land for a chapel had been granted by an (unnamed) individual, who had also contracted for the building materials to be supplied until a subscription would “release [him] from the obligations which [his] charity [had] contracted”. This appeal was dated September 1794 and in it, the Rev Mr Jones, the mission priest, acknowledged the “liberal conduct” of the Governor and officers of the Royal Naval Hospital at Greenwich⁶³. The incumbent at the Greenwich mission ministered to the Catholic retired sailors at the Naval Hospital; this was not an official chaplaincy appointment as there were not yet Catholic chaplains in the Armed Services. In 1795 the Greenwich mission banked with Wright’s and with Messrs Robarts, Curtis, Were, Hornyold, Berwick & Co.

The rest of the Greenwich congregation came from Woolwich, Deptford and Lewisham⁶⁴; Woolwich became a separate mission in 1818 which allowed more room in the Greenwich chapel for people living nearby⁶⁵. The closure of the King’s Dock at Deptford led to unemployment amongst the congregation and the mission was now reliant on the “few pence” which could be contributed by the seamen of whom there were about 500⁶⁶. These seamen were now invoked as the *raison d’être* of its renewed appeal. In performing their duty to the King, readers were told, they had “often neglected that due to Almighty God”. Through their residence in the Hospital, the country had provided for their “corporal wants”, it was up to Catholics to provide for their spiritual needs; they called “upon their wealthy Catholic Brethren, to preserve them a house where they can assemble, and prepare for their last voyage, the important one of eternity.”⁶⁷

⁶¹ At that time (1840) there was one chapel in Jersey (St Mary and St Peter, first listed 1824) which had not appealed through the *Directory*.

⁶² “Court of Bankruptcy”, *The Times* 13 January 1841., 4

⁶³ LD 1795

⁶⁴ LD 1810

⁶⁵ LD 1818

⁶⁶ LD 1824

⁶⁷ LD 1824

By 1828 the number of “aged and infirm” seamen had diminished to “*four hundred*” (original italics). They contributed a halfpenny weekly. A similar contribution from the “poorest class of Irish labourers” represented the income for the mission⁶⁸. By this time Wright’s was the only bank used by the mission for receipt of donations. A decade later the church was too small for the congregation and in “a ruinous condition”. It was difficult to enlarge as the original plot was completely filled. Again the plea, dated September 1838, was on behalf of the retired sailors⁶⁹.

Greenwich did not appeal for the next few years. In 1846, readers were informed of the current state of the mission at Greenwich: there was now a separate mission at Deptford and, unfortunately for Greenwich, the charity schools were now part of this mission so that schools were also required “for the children of pensioners” and others. These had been opened but there were only two subscribers. The main appeal though was for a new chapel as the present one was a “miserable building” and was located in “a neighbourhood of horrors”. An attempt to improve matters a few years previously had failed through a “fatal bankruptcy”. It had found an “excellent piece of ground” and was now appealing to “Irish or British” sailors on behalf of the “worn-out sons of the sea at Greenwich Hospital”, some of whom, it was noted, had fought at The Nile and at Trafalgar⁷⁰. The “fatal bankruptcy” was that of Wright’s. The mission had lost all it had saved, about £900⁷¹. The new church was started the following year. Amongst the donors was Lord Newburgh, although the Rev Mr North (mission priest) was disappointed with the response from other “wealthy and noble” Catholics who had not helped. Bishop Griffiths, recently deceased Vicar Apostolic of London, had also given a very generous donation “from his deathbed”⁷². Greenwich was a struggling mission. The loss of accrued capital of £900 would have necessitated a complete restart of the mission’s efforts to build a new chapel. It is understandable that North was upset with the “wealthy and noble” Catholics who contributed nothing even if these men were trying to ascertain the extent of their own losses.

The wealthy Catholics were not always noted for their generosity towards the capital needs of the Church at this time. The prominent architect A W N Pugin who was renowned for his straight talking, wrote to John Rouse Bloxam on December 6th 1840 (punctuation, capitalisation and spelling as in original)

you will be happy to hear that the failure of wrights bank will not affect any of my work in Progress. ... the great sufferers by wrights bank will be the rich old

⁶⁸ LD 1828, 11

⁶⁹ LD 1839 pp.14-15

⁷⁰ CD 1846 pp.47-48

⁷¹ “Greenwich Church - Opening of New Chapel”, *Weekly Register* 18 August 1849., 42

⁷² CD 1848 pp.53-54

catholics who never gave anything to the church - & are now justly punished. the Duke of Norfolk had between 60 to £80000!!!⁷³

The Times reported that the Duke of Norfolk had lost up to £59,000⁷⁴ although Cottrell says it was £54,000⁷⁵. There were many other well-known “Catholic” names in the lists of creditors published in *The Times* including that of Daniel O’Connell who lost just over £6⁷⁶. Pugin’s comment was quite barbed, but whether or not the wealthy Catholics were parsimonious, the collapse of Wright’s represented a serious loss to the Catholic community as a whole. Compared to other denominations its demography did not reflect that of society as a whole – it had a (relatively) few wealthy members and a large mass of very poor people. A Catholic middle class was developing but was not yet numerous enough to have a significant impact. It was thus more reliant than the other denominations on the generosity of a few patrons to provide large donations.

At about the time Wright’s was failing, another Wright who was also a banker (and no relation of the Catholic Wrights) was donating £500 to a new Church of England church in Nottingham. The list of donors published in *The Times* named ten people who gave varying amounts from £50 to £2000⁷⁷. Many of these may well have been middle class who had through their own endeavours accumulated sufficient wealth to make their donation. A total of nearly £4000 was collected and as this was spread across ten individuals it lessened the burden on each one. By comparison, there were very few towns in England and Wales which had a sufficient number of middle-class Catholics to replicate the donations of the Anglicans in Nottingham. The necessity of building a church in any town became a burden on the whole Catholic community.

The early 1840s was a period of serious, public financial difficulties for the Catholic Church. The *Tablet* reported that the total liabilities of the bank were in excess of £800,000⁷⁸. It is not being claimed here that the entirety of this sum was lost from the Catholic “communal” purse. However, it was then the main Catholic bank. Wright’s collapse must have been a shock to them and a serious embarrassment (*The Times* chronicled the whole of the bankruptcy in some considerable detail at a time when it was particularly anti-Catholic in its editorial policy⁷⁹). *The Tablet* reported that the failure was “a great loss to the Catholic body” and that the influence on Catholic interests could not

⁷³ Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, *The Collected Letters of A.W.N. Pugin*, ed. Margaret Belcher, vol. 1: 1830-1842, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 169;

⁷⁴ “Money Market and City Intelligence”, *The Times* 26 November 1840., 5

⁷⁵ Cottrell, *Ionian Bank*, 94

⁷⁶ “Court of Bankruptcy”, 4

⁷⁷ “Nottingham - New Churches”, *The Times* 17 June 1841., 4

⁷⁸ “Failure of Wright's Bank”, *The Tablet*. Saturday November 28th Evening edition (1840), 459

⁷⁹ Gilbert A. Cahill, “Irish Catholicism and English Toryism”, *The Review of Politics* 19.1 (1957), 67

but “be extensive and severe”⁸⁰. Some mechanism had to be found which would overcome the shocking events of Wright’s; minimise the possibility of near-foreclosure on churches as had happened at Newport; and yet provide the means to meet the continuing pastoral requirements of churches in many towns around the country.

3.3 Penny contributions

In 1827 the congregation of St Mary’s in Duckinfield was about 4,000 “almost exclusively Irish and entirely of the labouring class”. The mission was very poor stating in its appeal that “vestments etc” would be gratefully received⁸¹. St Mary’s did not use any bank to receive its donations, instead it listed a number of local clergy. The appeal of 1827 was repeated in 1828⁸². There was nothing further until 1841, at which stage there was a heavy debt on the church and the congregation was described as “poor distressed exiles from our Sister Country, who [were] compelled to resort hither for a support which they [may have expected] in vain in their native land.”⁸³

The need was obviously very great, and, based on the experience of other missions, it would be expected for Duckinfield to seek assistance from wealthy Catholics. Instead the St Marie’s Society was founded to help liquidate the debt on the church. Membership of this society cost 1d per week, paid weekly or annually⁸⁴. This simple method allowed even the poorest members of the congregation to support their mission.

We cannot be sure if there were a conscious connection, but this motif of “penny contributions”, used at Duckinfield harks back to the Catholic Rent initiated by Daniel O’Connell during his campaign in Ireland to secure Emancipation in the 1820s. In this system, “church wardens” were chosen in Catholic parishes throughout Ireland and after Mass on Sunday they collected the monthly penny membership fee from members of the Association. There were branches of O’Connell’s Catholic Association in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Blackburn, Preston and Liverpool; thus the Catholic Rent methodology would have been familiar to Catholics in England as well as in Ireland. By setting up this system of payment by instalments, the labouring classes were effectively induced to enter into a subscription, which until then had been the preserve of the wealthier members of the Catholic community. This removed the problem of annual seat subscriptions which labourers could not afford.

By the 1840s a number of references to the poor making small contributions for the

⁸⁰ “Failure of Wright’s Bank”, 459

⁸¹ LD 1827 pp.11-12

⁸² LD 1828, 12

⁸³ CD 1841, 36

⁸⁴ CD 1842, 31

ministry of the Church (which included both spiritual and educational ministry) were already on record. The mission in Bermondsey had appealed many times for funding to build and support its schools. By 1822 many children had been withdrawn from “anti-Catholic” schools⁸⁵. The congregation contributed to the costs of the schools by cheerfully giving their shillings in spite of their own great wants⁸⁶. Edward Walford claimed that while contributions were made by the Kings of Sardinia and Bavaria to the new St George’s, Southwark other donors included “the Irish poor, including the waifs and strays of St. Patrick’s Schools in Soho, and other very poor districts, [who] sent their pence.”⁸⁷

The bishops were conscious of the difficulties of the poor. Writing to the Earl of Shrewsbury in January 1840, Bishop Walsh, of the Midland District, which at this time was in serious financial difficulties, admitted that with “great poverty occasioned by the want of trade ... the priests in many places cannot ... make up their minds to call on the poor for their pence.”⁸⁸

The phrase “pennies of the poor” in various guises appears in a number of histories of Catholicism in England in the nineteenth century, usually in a context which includes the descriptor “Irish”. John Denvir recalled that on the occasion of the opening of a new church in 1856, Cardinal Wiseman said that it “had been erected by the penny contributions of Irish labourers, bargemen, bricklayers, hodmen and other toilers”⁸⁹. *The Times* reporting on the opening of the church of St Mary and St Michael, Commercial Road, East stated that it had been “built almost entirely by the penny subscriptions of the poorest of the poor, the surrounding congregation consisting of bargemen, coalheavers, dock labourers, and bricklayers’ hodmen”⁹⁰. It made no reference to their national origin. Mgr Bernard Ward in his history of nineteenth-century Catholicism mentions that “after the great Irish immigration it became possible to build [churches] from the pennies of the poor”⁹¹; J A Harding says that the church of St Nicholas of Tolentino in Bristol was “built from the pennies of the poor” for an Irish congregation⁹². Heimann gives the impression that a large number of churches were paid for by this method⁹³.

⁸⁵ LD 1822

⁸⁶ LD 1826, 11

⁸⁷ Edward Walford. “*St George’s Fields*” *Old and New London: Volume 6*. 1878. Accessed 20/04/2009. <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45286>>

⁸⁸ Cited in Rosemary Hill, *God’s Architect : Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* (London: Allen Lane, 2007), 223

⁸⁹ John Denvir, *The Irish in Britain* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1894), 397-398

⁹⁰ “A New Roman Catholic Church”, *The Times* 09 December 1856., 7

⁹¹ Bernard Ward, *The Sequel to Catholic Emancipation : The Story of English Catholics Continued Down to the Re-Establishment of Their Hierarchy in 1850*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (London, New York [etc.]: Longmans, Green and Co., 1915), Vol II 139

⁹² Harding, *Clifton*, 257-258

⁹³ Heimann, *Catholic Devotion*, 139

How this method actually worked in practice is illustrated in the following example. The mission of St Vincent de Paul in Liverpool was created as an offshoot of the expanding mission of St Patrick's in the early 1850s. There were, by this time, twenty-four churches in or around Liverpool, but the rapidly expanding Catholic population in the poorer parts of the city meant that further accommodation was required. The congregation of the new mission was concentrated around the docks and was probably "large, poor, labouring" as many congregations were described in earlier editions of the *Laity's Directory*. This congregation, however, made but two appeals through the *Directory*.

The first priest of St Vincent's was Fr McCormac, a volunteer from Derry. He said Mass in a "penny theatre" rented by the priest of St Patrick's for the purpose⁹⁴. In 1852, St Vincent's became a mission in its own right. Stonyhurst-educated Edward Walmsley was appointed but unfortunately he died later that year and was succeeded by Fr Bernard O'Reilly, an Irish-born priest who had been curate at St Patrick's⁹⁵. O'Reilly put his efforts into building a new chapel and in 1853 submitted an appeal to accompany its first listing in the 1854 *Directory*. Readers were informed that this mission was in a temporary location until a church could be built. They were using "a dilapidated shed". The congregation was about 7,600 but the shed held only 1,200 to 1,500. Dr Goss, Co-Adjutor Bishop of Liverpool, and other clerics were named as receivers of donations⁹⁶. Meanwhile, in Liverpool "Fr O'Reilly organised a weekly Sunday collection, and every Sunday he was seen, after last Mass, proceeding from door to door, collecting the pennies of the poor."⁹⁷ O'Reilly called a meeting in May 1854 by which time he "had raised £2,000 by this means"⁹⁸.

Editorial matters for inclusion in a *Directory* had to be with the editor by late September. O'Reilly would have been collecting for some months when he launched his appeal. The cost of the site was £6,000 and collecting this in pennies must have seemed a thoroughly daunting task, even for a young man (O'Reilly was twenty eight when he was appointed⁹⁹). There were no published appeals in either 1855 or 1856. This non-repetition implies that O'Reilly was hoping to receive donations to create the capital fund to purchase the site and initiate building.

Bishop Goss succeeded Bishop Brown in Liverpool in 1856 and his first official duty was to lay and bless the foundation stone of St Vincent's church. Easter Sunday in 1856 was on

⁹⁴ Burke, *Liverpool*, 73

⁹⁵ Ibid., 123

⁹⁶ CD 1854, 60

⁹⁷ Burke, *Liverpool*, 123

⁹⁸ Ibid., 123

⁹⁹ Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests*, 58

March 23rd, so that St Patrick's Day was celebrated on the transferred date of April 6th. In his address to the crowd which had gathered to witness the event, Bishop Goss informed them of the Canon Law which stated that they could not begin to build unless they had the means to complete the church and to support the worship within it¹⁰⁰. The responsibility for the decision to go ahead with the project was his as diocesan bishop. Perhaps he was unaware of the near debacle in Newport, Wales just fifteen years previously¹⁰¹. Goss doubted if the site had yet been paid for. Speaking specifically to the Irish people in the crowd, he mentioned St Patrick's Day, transferred that year as they had been transferred from their home to Liverpool

We rely hopefully and confidently; we have no fears; because we are satisfied you carry with you the faith which you have inherited from your fathers. The foundation stone which is thus laid on the transferred feast of your patron saint, St. Patrick, will be to you a great and glorious remembrance.¹⁰²

Such faith in the generosity of working men and women was probably unusual at that time, but Goss went on to comment on the rise in the number of Catholic churches now in Liverpool; where a few years previously there had been two, now there were "numberless" and that these were provided more by the working men than "by the benefactions of your richer brethren"¹⁰³. Perhaps his faith was not misplaced, or perhaps he knew how determined Fr O'Reilly was.

He concluded his address by saying that the Catholic ship carpenters had, that day, each contributed a day's wage which in total amounted to £59 0s 6d to be laid upon the foundation stone. Others who were "not earning as great wages" had given in like manner the sum of £42 8s 6d¹⁰⁴. (The total was £101 9s). Goss was at pains to point out that these were not the whole of their contributions. "Assuredly" he concluded "if the church of God is built upon the apostles, truly may it be said that this church of St. Vincent de Paul will be built upon working men"¹⁰⁵.

The weekly collections continued. By the end of the year, the full cost of the site had been paid. Fr O'Reilly penned another appeal to be included in the 1857 *Directory*. He was appealing for a very poor congregation who "week after week" had "contributed their pence" to build a new church, often "stinting themselves of their scanty meals"; the plot had been bought and the foundation stone laid. The church would be dedicated to the

¹⁰⁰ "Laying the Foundation Stone of the New Roman Catholic Church of Saint Vincent De Paul.", 2

¹⁰¹ See p.53 above.

¹⁰² "Laying the Foundation Stone of the New Roman Catholic Church of Saint Vincent De Paul.", 2

¹⁰³ Ibid., 2

¹⁰⁴ Traditionally, offerings are physically laid on a church's foundation stone by the congregation as they file past it. On this occasion, however, the weather proved very inclement and the collection was taken under cover. Ibid., 2

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 2

“Father of the Poor” St Vincent of Paul; as building progressed, the debt which was “pressing hard upon them” was growing. O’Reilly concluded his appeal in rather emotional fashion - “For the love of Jesus and His Immaculate Mother, of Holy Joseph and Blessed Vincent, give something, even a trifle.”¹⁰⁶

O’Reilly further informed his readers that they hoped to open the church the following May or June (1857). They would have to use a table as they could not afford a proper altar and the vestments used would be “cast-offs” from other churches “unless the faithful come to our aid”. The appeal was followed in the *Directory* by a statement from Bishop Goss verifying O’Reilly’s words¹⁰⁷. The new church was opened in August of 1857. On this occasion Fr O’Reilly paid tribute to the generosity of his “poor Irish flock” which had by then contributed £6,500¹⁰⁸.

The dedication shown by this poor congregation in collecting the money to build their church is truly phenomenal. That they did so without major donations from their wealthier brethren is a tribute to their identification as Catholics. The amount collected on the day the foundation stone was laid (£101 9s) was equivalent to £63,600 in 2010; while the total amount collected over the years of the “penny” collections (£6,500) was equivalent to over £4 million in 2010¹⁰⁹.

Specific circumstances were needed for a campaign utilising “penny contributions” to be successful. Firstly, they were populous missions which presupposed an urban area; secondly these churches were located in the poorer parts of the towns; and thirdly they were not the first churches in those towns. Whilst the context in which the comments on penny contributions have been made by historians might give the impression that this was a common occurrence, it is likely that it was not so. Although “the waifs and strays of St. Patrick’s Schools” contributed their pennies to the building of St George’s cathedral in Southwark, the cathedral itself was not funded by this method. Churches which have been identified here as funded in this way include St Vincent de Paul Liverpool; St Nicholas of Tolentino Bristol; St Mary and St Michael London; St Walburge’s Preston. St Walburge’s deviates slightly from the model expounded above for St Vincent’s. Penny collections were indeed made; but many of those whose help was enlisted (and expected) were suffering from a lock-out at their mill. This lock-out had lasted two years. Unable to

¹⁰⁶ CD 1857, 70

¹⁰⁷ CD 1857, 70

¹⁰⁸ Burke, *Liverpool*, 127

¹⁰⁹ Officer and Williamson, *Measuring Worth*, . The Measuring Worth website gives five measures for calculating current values – retail price index; GDP deflator; average earnings; Per Capita GDP; (relative share of) GDP. As the sums collected here came from earnings, the average earnings measure has been chosen.

contribute financially, the mill-workers gave their labour instead¹¹⁰.

The first mission at Kingston-on-Thames was opened in 1853 and an attempt was made to utilise this method to finance the building of the church there. Until then “the Catholic residents, the poor of the workhouse, the soldiers of the neighbouring barracks [had been] dependent for their spiritual requirements on the pleasure of a private gentleman.”¹¹¹

It seems likely that this “private gentleman” was Alexander Raphael M.P. who had built a family chapel at his property in Kingston which opened in 1848. The Rev Mr Clarke, priest at SS Mary and Patrick’s mission, initiated a penny-contribution style collection for building a new church for the mission. Clarke’s method was to distribute a card with 240 squares marked on it. Each 1d contributed was marked on the card with a pin-prick. A full card thus represented £1 towards the building fund¹¹². Raphael died in 1850 and the property was inherited by his nephew who opened the church to the public¹¹³. The opening of the family chapel of St Raphael rendered unnecessary the building of another Catholic church in Kingston and the mission relocated to it in 1856.

It could be argued, as indeed it was at the time in Liverpool¹¹⁴, that the towns in question needed no further Catholic churches. Prior to St Vincent’s, Liverpool had twenty-four churches; before St Nicholas there were three other churches in Bristol. There were seventeen churches in and around Preston before St Walburge’s. The mission of St Mary and St Michael on Commercial Road in London was an old mission which had outgrown its original chapel and needed a new church to accommodate a greater proportion of its greatly enhanced congregation estimated to be about 21,000 in 1842¹¹⁵.

It was not only churches which were built or supported by penny contributions. As mentioned above, regular, very small, sums were paid to support the schools at Bermondsey. In giving evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee on Manchester and Salford Education (1852), Mr Adshead, a member of Manchester Town Council, handed various documents to the committee which showed the means by which the Manchester and Salford Catholic Association organised their collections. This Association had three objects: to provide funds for the education of priests for the diocese; to establish and support poor schools; and to defend the Catholic faith. Membership cost ½d per week; each collector was tasked with collecting twelve subscriptions; this, along

¹¹⁰ Martin and Ramsay, *Glimpse of Heaven*, 94

¹¹¹ CD 1856, 48

¹¹² CD 1854, 49

¹¹³ *St Raphael’s, Roman Catholic Church*, <http://www.straphael.org.uk/our_church.htm> (accessed 15/01/2010)

¹¹⁴ See, for example, Burke’s comment “Orange-Tory Liverpool did not view with equanimity the erection of new churches and schools” Burke, *Liverpool*, 76

¹¹⁵ CD 1842, 7

with their own subscription, was passed on to a section master who was responsible for twelve collectors. The rules of the Association specified the distribution of funds (three parts to clerical education, eight parts to poor schools, one part each to the Catholic Poor School Committee, the Catholic Defence Association of Ireland and to a contingency fund, a further two parts were to become a “surplus” fund the disposal of which was voted at the annual general meeting)¹¹⁶. Mr Adshead suggested that when the scheme was “fairly in operation ... from £7,000 to £8,000” would be collected annually¹¹⁷.

There may not have been many more churches than these few mentioned which were built in this way. The extraordinary thing is not how many or how few churches were built by collecting pennies, but that any were at all. Knowing that such undertakings were against the strict law of the Church, it was courageous of the bishops to allow them to proceed, especially so soon after the embarrassing situation in Newport.

Poor Catholics building their own churches was in contrast to proceedings in the Church of England at that time for which the Church Building Acts of 1818 and 1824 granted it £1.5 million in total to assist its building programme. Even so, there were many debates in Parliament over the next few decades on the necessity of building churches for populous parishes. In 1855 the Marquess of Blandford moved the Second Reading of the *Formation &c. of Parishes Bill* which was a further attempt to mitigate the lack of church space due to population movement. Two aspects of Blandford’s introduction are relevant here.

Speaking of earlier Acts the Marquess said:

One of the first conditions originally laid down for the building of a new church was, that the population of the district should not be less than 4,000, that there should not be accommodation for more than one-fourth of the inhabitants in the mother church, and that 1,000 of the inhabitants should reside at a distance of more than four miles from the church¹¹⁸.

Taking these conditions as that which were considered reasonable in 1855, it is clear from many of the appeals for new Catholic churches that they met these conditions (population, accommodation and distance) and were required even though there were already churches in the towns in question. When the main form of transport was walking, churches and schools needed to be close to the people they served.

Blandford went on to discuss endowments;

The ancient principle as to endowments was stated in Burn’s Ecclesiastical Law. Those who built or endowed churches were entitled to the *jus patronatus*—the right

¹¹⁶ Thomas Milner Gibson, *Report from the Select Committee on Manchester and Salford Education; Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index* (House of Commons Parliamentary Papers, 1852), 408-409

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 408

¹¹⁸ *Formation, &c. Of Parishes Bill*. House of Commons. vol 139 cc221-237. 27 June 1855: Pages., col.224
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of presentation.

...

one great principle of endowment was, that the patronage of churches should be placed, under proper restrictions, in the hands of the persons who built and endowed those churches, in order to stimulate private liberality¹¹⁹.

Under the Acts Blandford spoke of, nearly a quarter of a million pounds had been donated for new Anglican churches. In the Established Church, it was expected that individuals would provide the means for building churches and also endowments for their maintenance¹²⁰. Their “reward” was to be granted the right of presentation of a minister to the living. The number of wealthy Anglicans was far in excess of the number of wealthy Catholics. Prior to 1840 the methods used to fund capital and running costs of churches were broadly similar in both Churches. Two coincident factors effectively forced upon the Catholic community the necessity of developing a new method for funding. These were firstly, the collapse of Wright’s Bank and the attendant loss of a significant sum of money from the Catholic community and, secondly, this was the period of greatest immigration from Ireland imposing on the Church an urgent need to provide chapels well beyond the Catholic heartlands of yesteryear.

3.4 Middle-class funding

The latter part of the century saw the rise of middle-class patrons, those who had made money in the buoyant British economy of the nineteenth century. The Reynolds brothers, successful cotton traders, built the church of St Clare in Liverpool¹²¹; a considerable amount of the funding for the new church at Cambridge was provided by Mrs Lyne-Stephens, a former ballet dancer who had married a banker¹²²; Mr and Mrs Broderick of Hove provided for many chapels, including that of the seminary at Wonersh¹²³; Amy Elizabeth Imrie, heiress of the White Star Line, paid for the chapel of St Mary of the Angels in Liverpool¹²⁴.

The factors which forced the system of penny contributions on the Catholics in mid-century were ameliorated as the century progressed, so that after about 1870 or so, funding for building new Catholic churches did not differ in any significant way from that of the other denominations, whether Established or Dissenter. It is therefore at this stage – the third discernible stage of funding of Catholic infrastructure – that the pattern can be seen to fit the model outlined by the Marquess of Blandford in Parliament and is here named as the

¹¹⁹ Ibid.: Pages., cols. 228-229

¹²⁰ The example given above of the Anglican church built in Nottingham follows this pattern

¹²¹ Martin and Ramsay, *Glimpse of Heaven*, 169

¹²² Ibid., 139

¹²³ See p. 113 below

¹²⁴ Martin and Ramsay, *Glimpse of Heaven*, 10

middle-class funding model.

There were still individual aristocratic benefactors as generous as the Earl of Shrewsbury¹²⁵ had been; the fifteenth Duke of Norfolk provided for the building of many churches and gave generously to others, including the Westminster Cathedral Fund. Two very large and notable churches which he funded in his own particular areas of influence have since become cathedrals: that of the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton at Arundel was built to celebrate his 21st birthday; and in Norwich, the cathedral of the Diocese of East Anglia was built to celebrate his marriage.

There was a specific instance where the door-to-door method was used in a middle-class setting. The development of Saint Francis Xavier church in Liverpool followed a similar pattern to that of St Vincent's but was different in some important respects. In this case there was no "large poor" congregation to be catered for, simply a desire by some Liverpudlian gentlemen that the Jesuits should return to the city. The Jesuits had ministered to the few Catholics in Liverpool throughout the proscribed years, but following the suppression of their congregation by Rome in 1773, they handed their church over to the care of the Benedictines. In January 1840 a group of Liverpool gentlemen met in the Rose and Crown public house to form themselves "into a provisional committee for the formation of a society with a view to erecting a Catholic church in Liverpool to be presented to the president of Stonyhurst College"¹²⁶.

Membership of the committee cost one shilling and the committee divided the town into districts each of which had its nominated collectors. The committee, which included some well-known Liverpool names, were Messrs Rosson¹²⁷, Chaloner, Jump, Holme, Lightbound, Holland Moreton, Rockliff, Sharpies, Bullen, Brown, Hore, Yates, Knight, Folding, Gallon, O'Neill, O'Donnell, Cafferata, Towneley, Firmey, Whitty, Walton, Verdon, Aspinall, Bretherton, and Roskell¹²⁸. The collectors were a more socially mixed group and, perhaps unusually for this time, included a number of women. The list of collectors was published in the centenary history written by Fr Nicholas Ryan S.J. in 1948¹²⁹ of which 149 collectors' names are listed for the first year, 1840. The collections continued from 1840-1848 and the church was opened in December 1848. The women involved were out and about collecting on an equal basis with men and were not obviously

¹²⁵ John Talbot, sixteenth Earl of Shrewsbury, was the major financial patron of A W N Pugin and paid for many of Pugin's churches.

¹²⁶ Johnny Kennedy. *St Francis Xavier's, Liverpool: Parish History* Accessed 02/10/2011. <<http://www.sfxchurchliverpool.com/book/page1.php>>

¹²⁷ John Rosson had delivered the address at the laying of the foundation stone for the new St Mary's built to replace the old one which had been designed to look like a warehouse Burke, *Liverpool*, 75.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 61

¹²⁹ Nicholas Ryan, *Collectors and Members of St Francis Xavier Society 1840*, 1948, <<http://www.old-liverpool.co.uk/SFXCollectors.html>> (accessed 23/10/2008)

the wives or daughters of male collectors, for example, there was a Mrs Green but no Mr Green on the list; an Elizabeth Peters, but no man with the surname Peters collected¹³⁰.

St Vincent's and St Francis Xavier's were collected for and built but ten years apart. The major differences were that the collection for one was organised by laymen, for the other it was the mission priest who took the lead; that and the relative wealth of the two congregations.

There is some difficulty in identifying people as "middle class". Would Charles Butler who took a leading role in the Catholic Committee of the late eighteenth century have identified himself as middle class? Perhaps not, but for the sake of argument here, by middle class is meant not those who had inherited wealth in the form of land and property, but those whose money came from business or their profession. Using this definition there was, even in the eighteenth century, a Catholic middle class. Men such as Daniel Reardon, William Delahunt and Mr Keating who were nominated to receive donations for Bermondsey in 1812¹³¹; or the various gentlemen with "Esq" appended to their names in the appeal for St George's in 1842: W H Bosanquet; Richard Kieley; James Kiernan; and A De La Torre¹³². A history of the English Catholic merchants of the penal days would identify them and their associates in England. This should lead to an assessment of their contribution to the Church in those early days post-Relief.

A memorial to Bishop Thomas Walsh, Vicar Apostolic London, who died in 1849, said that he was the son of "Mr Thomas Walsh, [who] was an Irish gentleman, a respectable Catholic merchant, in the City of London"¹³³. It went on to say that his achievements included the opening of St Chad's cathedral in Birmingham and

almost at his own expense, five other large and handsome parish churches in the District. Under his government ... in many cases, with large pecuniary aid from himself, were raised another commanding Cathedral at Nottingham, and near upon fifty other parish churches and chapels.¹³⁴

Bishop Walsh, as a secular priest, was not bound by a vow of poverty and the wherewithal to offer "pecuniary aid" was likely to have been inherited from his father rather than anything he had earned as a priest or bishop in the English Church. It seems that his father was not only a "respectable" merchant but also a successful one.

If, as seems quite likely, Catholic merchants had used Wright's Bank especially during the days of proscription, this may explain why they did not come to the fore in assisting new

¹³⁰ Ibid.,

¹³¹ LD 1812

¹³² CD 1842 pp.12-13

¹³³ CD 1850, 108

¹³⁴ CD 1850, 112

church building immediately after the failure. This was redressed by them in the last decades of the century. More and more one reads of churches where the major donors were of this class. They did not always pay the full cost, but provided enough to secure a mission's foundation. Two other factors emerged which influenced this movement. One was a technological development: iron churches; the other was the concerted drive for schools.

Iron churches were pre-fabricated churches, delivered and erected on a prepared site. The cost was a few hundred pounds and they were regularly advertised in the *Directory*¹³⁵. They were not bought exclusively by Catholics but provided a cheap solution to the need to provide some space while a mission was being established¹³⁶.

Cardinal Manning, in his role as Archbishop of Westminster, undertook to make provision for all Catholic children to have a Catholic school to attend¹³⁷. In doing so, he made education a higher priority than building a cathedral for his own archdiocese¹³⁸. The Education Act of 1870 created Board Schools paid for through the rates. There followed a battle fought by the "voluntarists", who were against state support for faith schools, on one side and Anglican and Catholic leaders on the other. Manning's argument was that as state schools were to be funded from the rates, and as Catholics would be paying rates but could not attend these secularised schools, it was unjust that they should be expected to pay twice for their education. Manning argued for justice, but he also produced figures showing the number of children in Catholic schools¹³⁹. The argument was won, eventually, by the Established Church and Catholics.

In the face of the competition from the board schools, the Church embarked on an

¹³⁵ For example, on the inside back cover of the 1901 *Directory*: Church "to seat 400, with Vestry, Chancel, Organ Chamber, and Porch, delivered and fixed complete on purchaser's foundations." Total cost: £367 10s

¹³⁶ Enthusiasts have created a website documenting the remaining "tin tabernacles" : <http://www.tintabernacles.com/index.html>
Recently St Michael And All Angels' Church , Hythe, Kent has been listed *St Michael and All Angels' Church, Hythe*, 2011, <<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/en-508432-st-michael-and-all-angels-church-hythe>> (accessed 28/04/2011)

¹³⁷ Cardinal Manning was consecrated as Archbishop of Westminster in June 1865. In June 1866 the Westminster Diocesan Education Fund was established "to promote the religious and secular education of poor children" of the diocese. The funds were available for the erection and maintenance of certified reformatories, industrial and poor-law schools, orphanages, parochial day-schools and to give assistance in individual cases of orphans and destitute children. CD 1870, 347

¹³⁸ Manning did not entirely neglect the cathedral project. In 1869 he issued a pastoral letter appealing for funds for a site and for building (CD 1869 pp.298-313). A site was found and from 1871-1873 a regular account was given in the *Directory* of progress towards paying for the site. It was left to his episcopal successor, Herbert Vaughan, to bring the cathedral to fruition.

¹³⁹ From 1869 onwards the annual figures of the Westminster diocesan school inspectors were published in the *Directory*. These figures included the actual attendance on the day of inspection and the average attendance over the school year. For example, in 1868-1869, the actual attendance was 14,027 and the average attendance was 13,260 CD 1869, 117

extraordinary phase of establishing schools and new missions¹⁴⁰. Three buildings were necessary in a mission: church, school and presbytery. Following Relief at the beginning of the century, a church was the primary concern. The appeals then stressed this priority. Missions established schools but these came after the church. When necessary, the chapel was used as a school-room. Cardinal Manning's priority of chapels and a school place for every Catholic child was shared by his fellow bishops. Now as the battle for education funding progressed, the order of building changed – the school came first. Manning initiated a collection for building funds to be taken annually on Trinity Sunday. For that Sunday he issued a pastoral letter which gave a résumé of progress over the previous year and highlighted missions which were in particular need.

Schools had always been a significant part of the Church's mission. Before the national network of Catholic missions was established, schools allowed members of the public access to mass even though they were not associated with the school: Sedgley Park College (founded by Bishop Challoner in 1763) and St Edmund's College at Ware (transferred from Douai in 1793) were both listed in the *Directories* for many years with times for Sunday services. They were not established as missions; rather they were offering access to their services to Catholics who might otherwise be unable to attend mass. What was different in the last few decades of the nineteenth century was that while missions had retained the traditional Catholic dual focus of chapel *and* school, both were now urgently required. Dual-use buildings became a common feature. From 1860 the *Directory* noted a total of seventy-eight missions which initially operated from a "school-chapel". Before 1860, only twelve missions had established worship in a school-room first¹⁴¹.

Multi-purpose buildings and iron chapels made the mission "inherent in the soil" as was said by Fr Smith at Aylesbury some years previously¹⁴². The mission in Kensal founded in 1860 shows clearly this new order of building. A "school-chapel", opened in 1872, was followed by an iron chapel in 1873¹⁴³. In his pastoral letter of 1881, Manning mentioned that the foundation stone of the new church at Kensal had been laid. The mission had schools, but now needed a chapel and presbytery¹⁴⁴.

The story of St Patrick's in the East at Wapping was not dissimilar. It was founded in 1871; by 1874 it had a temporary chapel in the school-room¹⁴⁵. This was used until 1877

¹⁴⁰ Eric Tenbus, "'We Fight for the Cause of God': English Catholics, the Education of the Poor, and the Transformation of Catholic Identity in Victorian Britain" *The Journal of British Studies* 46.4 (2007), 868ff

¹⁴¹ It should be noted though that in 1847, A Pugin provided designs for a building which could be used as a school and a church Hill, *Pugin*, 510

¹⁴² CD 1852, 79

¹⁴³ CD 1878, 105

¹⁴⁴ H. E. Manning, *Pastoral Letters 1865-1883*, Westminster Diocesan Archives, 641

¹⁴⁵ CD 1874, 107

when a separate chapel, still temporary, was in place¹⁴⁶. By 1895 the chapel was no longer listed as “temporary” and the mission chapel was consecrated on May 22nd 1902¹⁴⁷. The gaps in the story of Wapping can be filled in from Manning’s pastoral letters. In 1877 he told the diocese that a freehold site had been secured for St Patrick’s in the East. At that time they had only £100 and therefore intended putting up a temporary iron chapel. The school-room was being used for Mass but it only held 200 and the population of Wapping was about 3000. Manning went on to ask for assistance specifically for “the thousands of poor in Wapping” as it would not be “beyond the power of many” to put up an iron church. Such a church with accommodation for 500 “could be put up for £500.”¹⁴⁸. Here Manning’s realism is to the fore. £500 is not a very large sum to raise. The following year in his “annual report”, Manning announced that “God [had] put it into the generous heart of one man to give four thousand pounds to build the Church as his offering to our Divine Redeemer”¹⁴⁹. The church was to be opened in August 1879¹⁵⁰. By 1880 the church was “free of debt due to the renewed devotion of its Founder” and Manning hoped it would soon be consecrated¹⁵¹.

The Wapping mission had a large and impoverished congregation and was thus not very different from that of St Vincent’s in Liverpool. Yet it would appear that no attempt was made to use the penny contributions method here, and surely, it would have had a reasonable chance of success had it been. Manning’s formative tradition was that of the Church of England, where Parliament and the wealthier members of the Church provided the wherewithal for church building projects. He may not have been overly familiar with the penny contributions method; or it may have been that he was uncomfortable with it as he was particularly conscious of the disabilities under which the poor laboured. Rather than lay the burden on them to provide their own churches, he used his annual Trinity Sunday letters to encourage the wealthier Catholics to make a greater contribution to church building. Thus after a brief flurry of projects between the 1840s and 1860s which were funded by door-to-door collections of small amounts of money, the Catholics returned to the normal and, under Canon Law, more law-abiding method of those who could afford it providing the means to build the churches required.

Merchants had been involved in supporting the early missions pre- and post-Relief as can be seen from some of the entries in the early *Directories*. A new generation of Catholics of substantial wealth had arisen during the century as a result of their new freedom to engage

¹⁴⁶ CD 1878, 111

¹⁴⁷ CD 1905, 117

¹⁴⁸ Manning, *Pastoral Letters*, , 561

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 587

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 604

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 617

legally in commerce and the professions. This is evident from the greater number of people who participated during the latter half of the century. With few exceptions (such as the Duke of Norfolk and the Brodericks), the providers of funds in the latter half of the century tended to support their local mission. The merchants' names tended to be associated with one mission only.

Fund-raising included such familiar events as bazaars. In the second half of the century these were becoming more common amongst the Catholics in towns and were reported in the local press as social events. Not only was it reported that they were happening, but which ladies were in charge of the stalls (and it was nearly always ladies) and also those of higher social standing who visited the bazaars. A bazaar held to relieve the debt on the Church of St Alban in Liverpool raised £80 in the first of three days¹⁵², whilst in Leicestershire one held to raise funds for the Church of St Bernard's Abbey¹⁵³ raised £540 in two days. Neither of these churches appealed for assistance through the *Directories*.

The role of women in the Church's educational and social mission is well known through the various histories of sisterhoods founded in the nineteenth century, but little has been written of the contribution of laywomen as benefactresses. As has been noted in this thesis women were financial benefactors of the church: Baroness de Montesquieu at Bermondsey; Mrs Lyne-Stephens at Cambridge; the Misses Jones of Clytha who supported the Newport mission; the church of St Elizabeth in Richmond, paid for mainly by Mrs Elizabeth Doughty, was also supported by Lady Mostyn¹⁵⁴. Earlier Mrs Anne Fenwick had set up and provided for the mission at Hornby in Lancashire in 1762. Knowing that her Protestant brother-in-law would inherit Hornby Hall on her death, she placed funds at the disposal of the chaplain whom she had employed. This enabled him to buy a property and continue the mission after her death in 1777¹⁵⁵.

Catholic education was not the prerogative of boys only. One of the consequences of the Reformation was a diminution of easily accessible education especially for girls due to the closure of convents. Catholic girls from the gentry families in England travelled abroad for their education just as their brothers did. These schools and colleges transferred back to England during the French Revolution – Stonyhurst, Downside, St Mary's Ascot, although the girls' school at the Bar in York had always remained in England. Their presence was signalled to the resident Catholics in England through their advertisements in the *Directory*. As the nineteenth century advanced and more and more mission schools

¹⁵² "Local Intelligence; Catholic Bazaar", *Liverpool Mercury* 27 August 1856., 2

¹⁵³ "Catholic Bazaar", *The Leicester Chronicle* 29 April 1843., 1

¹⁵⁴ CD 1849 pp.77-78

¹⁵⁵ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 218

were advertised, it was clear that education for the upper and lower ends of the social spectrum was being provided for. The “middling class”, as they were referred to, needed, and expected, education beyond that of mission-school level. Across many towns in England, religious congregations of sisters, brothers and priests founded schools for this class of student.

In Bath, the sisters of La Sainte Union, at the request of the Benedictines in the mission, opened a school in South Parade in the middle of the century¹⁵⁶. In 1889 there were about thirty middle-class girls in the school¹⁵⁷. This congregation also opened schools in London and, later, Ireland. Many communities of religious sisters, particularly from France, opened establishments throughout England: Notre Dame sisters in Northampton and Sheffield, La Retraite sisters in Bristol and Salisbury. Similar establishments were founded for boys. One interesting aspect of many of these schools was that they were not restricted to Catholics. This was not surprising as these were fee-paying schools and in many towns there were probably not enough Catholic girls and boys to make them financially viable. Whilst Catholics may have had preference in admissions, the Catholic intake could be as low as 25% in the nineteenth century¹⁵⁸. By the end of the nineteenth century, provision of education for all classes of Catholics was well advanced.

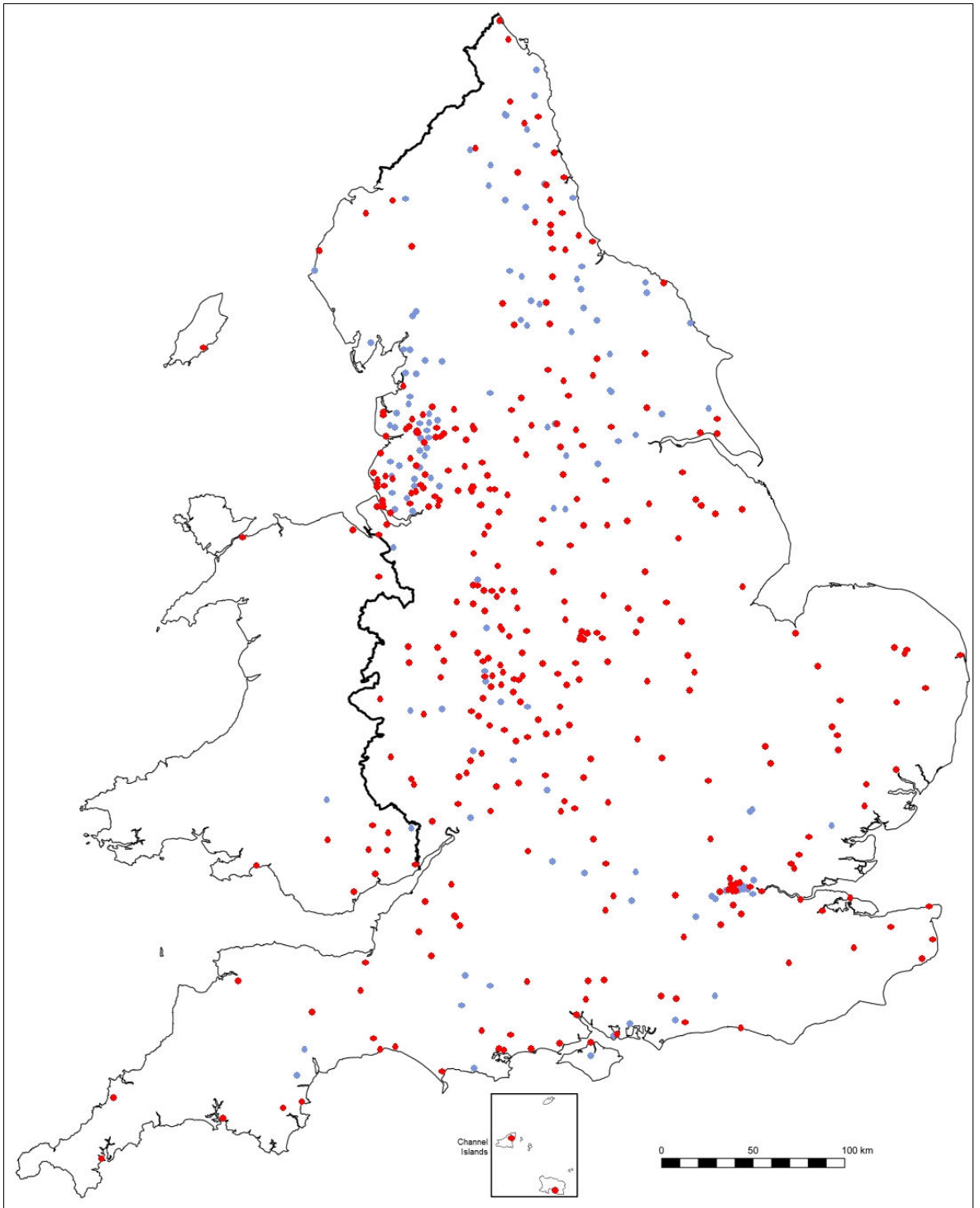
3.5 Maps

This chapter and the previous one show how the Church gradually overcame the problems and difficulties which faced it in building an infrastructure of chapels so that all Catholics could have easy access to the ministry of the Church. In the previous chapter a map showed the location of those chapels identified from the sources as existing in 1791. Using the dates taken as the divisors of the three funding phases argued here, it is possible to illustrate the advance of the Catholic Church in England and Wales by giving snapshot illustrations of the Church’s position in each of those three years – 1841, 1870 and 1908. The three maps which follow here do this. The scale of the undertaking can be seen from these illustrations. On each map the new missions, i.e. those created since the previous map, are shown in red, the established missions are shown in blue.

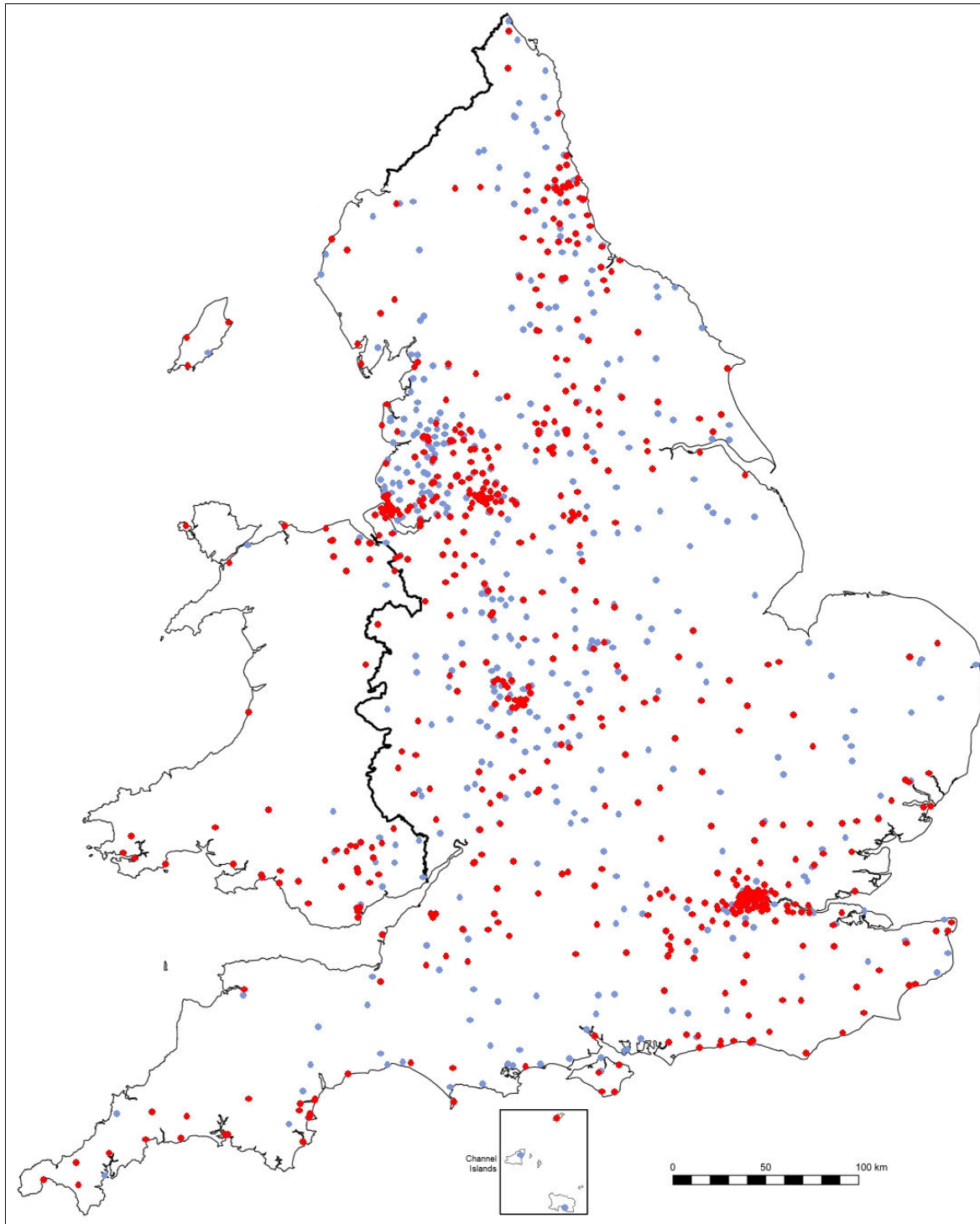
¹⁵⁶ CD 1861, 109

¹⁵⁷ “Other Schools”, in *Kelly's Directory of Somerset*, ed. Kelly (London: Kelly, 1889), 50

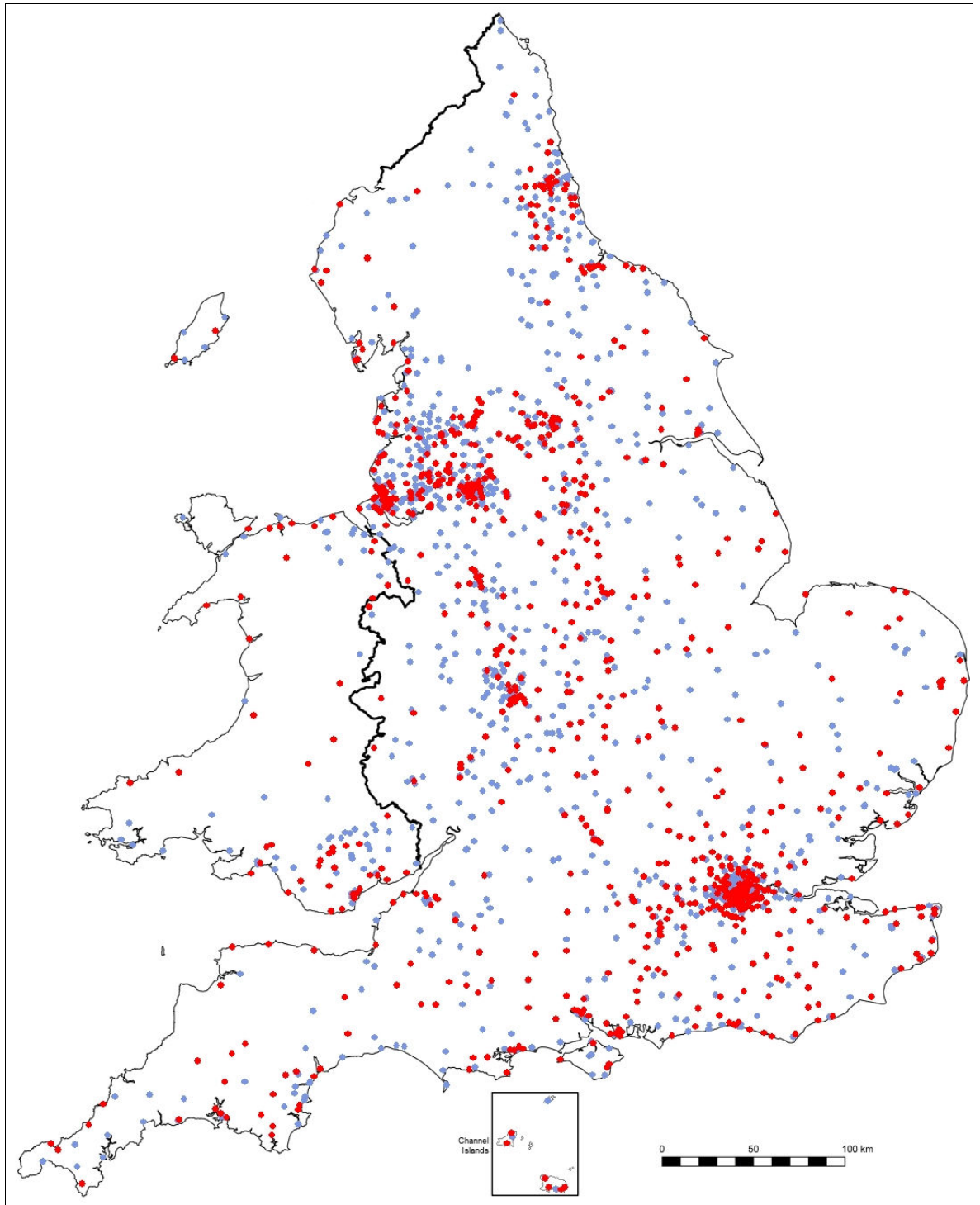
¹⁵⁸ The figure of 25% is the current proportion of Catholics in St Brendan’s Sixth Form College, Bristol. The college was founded in the 1880s by the Irish Christian Brothers for the education of middle-class Catholic boys in the city. A previous Principal of St Brendan’s, Derek Bodey, researched the early history of the college and was surprised at the low number of Catholics in those early years. (Conversation between author and Mr Bodey).



Map 2: Missions in 1841



Map 3: Missions in 1870



Map 4: Missions in 1908

However one views this, this was an impressive achievement. It does leave one with questions though. Was this project all unalloyed success? Were the difficulties mentioned overcome in all cases or did some of the missions stumble and, ultimately, close? If this did happen, is it possible to discern any factors which might have led to a greater chance of success? The next chapter discusses these questions by examining those missions which closed or struggled to become firmly established. In particular it examines two pairs of missions which had much in common yet had different outcomes.

4 Success and Failure

The previous two chapters outlined the difficulties which missions had to overcome in order to become established. That many did so, in spite of these problems, is a tribute to the zeal and commitment of both priests and people. Not all missions had to overcome all of these problems. Indeed there were many which were founded, established their churches, schools and congregations without experiencing any of these problems or needing to appeal to the wider community for support. Some of these were successors to the old penal missions; some were in new locations unused to a Catholic presence in their midst; some were actively supported by Protestants (of all denominations) who, in a liberal fashion, believed that some religious adherence was better than none; and some, supported by new converts, started from new domestic chapels.

In 1815, on the last page of the *Directory*, the editor requested that information on the discontinuance of any of the chapels he had listed should be sent to him. In this way he could keep the list as up to date as possible and would avoid misinforming the public who used the *Directory* as to where they might hear mass¹. This raises a number of questions:

How often had this happened?

Were those entries which were deleted “failed” missions?

Were there other reasons for the discontinuance?

This chapter will discuss success and failure in attempts to establish missions. Over 2,000 entries were listed as providing Catholic services during the long century under discussion. Of these, nearly 400 were removed permanently from the *Directory*. There were also just over 100 locations where, at some point in the century, services were suspended for a period.

Permanent removal of a listed mass centre from the *Directory* did not necessarily mean that a mission had failed. Over the century most of the private houses and many of the other institutions which had opened their doors to local Catholics were removed from the *Directory*. This will have happened for various reasons such as that the house may have been sold out of Catholic hands; the congregation had grown so that a mission was viable and was therefore established in the locality; or there may not have been a priest available for the private chapel. Lincolnshire, in particular, with its very scattered rural communities, had a number of private houses whose domestic chapels were open very late in the period: Nocton Hall (1876-1889), Hanthorpe Hall (1903) and Allextton Hall (1904-

¹ See p. 34 above

1908) are examples, but, even in Westminster archdiocese, some private domestic chapels were open to the public in the early twentieth century.

Convents, monasteries and other institutions, such as schools or orphanages, also opened their chapels to local Catholics. In 1831 an appeal made on behalf of Catholics in Atherstone, Warwickshire indicated that there were some Catholics in the area, but not sufficient to support the foundation and continuance of a mission. At the time, the chaplain from Hinckley travelled occasionally to Atherstone and officiated “in an upper room”². The congregation wanted to build a church but were without the means. Nothing further appeared until 1840 when a Dominican priory was listed in Atherstone. Rev B Caestryck, who had previously served for many years in Leicester, was named as the pastor. The priory listing continued until 1860 when the entry appeared as for a mission with no reference to the priory. The mission church was opened and consecrated in September 1861³.

The institutional and domestic chapels which were removed from the *Directory*, even where there was no successor mission, cannot be construed as failures, as they were never missions. The location may have been temporary for a religious community: many communities fled political upheavals in Europe, not only during the French Revolution, but later in the century during a further bout of anti-clericalism in France and the Kulturkampf in Germany. Of the 400 permanent closures, just over seventy two were such private chapels leaving about 300 apparently unsuccessful attempts to establish missions. As Kelly only included missions extant in 1906 he makes no mention of closures of missions. When a mission was removed the *Directory* never gave a reason for its removal. It is not possible to do other than conjecture why a mission may have closed but the reasons are more than likely to fall into one or other of the categories of difficulties mentioned above in chapter two. Although the question of permanent closure cannot be answered satisfactorily the question may be varied by looking at those missions which suffered temporary suspension. Is it possible to discern reasons why some missions struggled to establish whilst others in broadly similar circumstances succeeded, even in the face of extreme difficulties? This question may be addressed by comparing similar missions and thus endeavour to establish the common factors which led to a successful establishment.

In the database all the missions which were not continuously listed were recorded as such. In creating the database, where more than one attempt was made to establish a permanent mission in a locality, these have been kept as a single entry, but the temporary suspension

² LD 1831, 55

³ CD 1870, 127

of the mission has been recorded. Atherstone was one example. Although not constituted as a mission when first listed in 1831, there was clear intent to do so as the Vicar Apostolic (Midlands) had advanced the money to buy a plot of land for the chapel⁴ and it is counted amongst the 100 missions which were suspended and restarted. Another example was in Windsor which was listed in the *Directory* from 1797 to 1805. The location given was “near The Hope, Frogmore”. Windsor was omitted from 1806 to 1826; in 1827 a mission opened at Clewer, near Windsor. The early mission may have been a continuation of a pre-relief mission, or it may have been established to minister to soldiers during the Napoleonic Wars (Clewer advertised its 9 o’clock mass on Sunday as being for “soldiers stationed at Windsor”⁵). The Clewer mission is recorded in the database as a continuation of the original Windsor mission.

4.1 Comparison of Missions

Two pairs of missions which bear considerable similarities have been chosen. They are Northampton and Aylesbury and St Albans and Cambridge. Of these four towns only Cambridge had any significant history of Catholicism surviving since the Reformation. Sawston Hall, about 10 miles south of Cambridge, was owned by the Huddleston family throughout the penal period and nineteenth century. The Catholic claim to have been the original Christian foundation in England and events during the Reformation meant that there were historical imperatives for establishing missions in St Albans and Cambridge. St Albans was in Westminster diocese and Cambridge in Northampton diocese. Northampton and Aylesbury were market towns in the east Midlands which had not developed as major industrial centres and both were in the diocese of Northampton.

4.1.1 Northampton and Aylesbury

The East Midlands of England were particularly devoid of Catholic presence when Relief was granted. The story of the mission at Aylesbury is representative of those towns which had neither private patronage nor the presence of a religious community to assist in establishing a congregation. When Aylesbury was first listed in 1844 there was only one other mission in Buckinghamshire at Olney near Weston Underwood which was first listed in 1824.

The first priest in Aylesbury, Fr Duncan, described the town as being “furiously anti-Catholic”⁶. The mission closed in 1850 due to the death of Fr Duncan and the “precarious”

⁴ LD 1831, 55

⁵ LD 1828, 11

⁶ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 61

support afforded his successors⁷. In 1851 a new missionary was appointed. Rev M Henry Smith was an experienced priest who had previously worked in Poplar and Stratford in the London District⁸. The Bishop of Northampton, William Wareing, issued an appeal stating that Aylesbury was a town of about 7,000 inhabitants “who, like those of most of our agricultural districts, [were] chiefly remarkable for their bigotry and hatred to our holy religion.”⁹

Smith had set up a small chapel with the help of friends and had furnished it with all the requisites for “Divine Service”. The appeal was for funds to purchase a plot for a church and endow the mission. The church was the more important as “a mission cannot be said to be securely established, until we are inherent in the soil; - then, and only then, it becomes difficult, if not impossible to root us out.”¹⁰

Unfortunately for Bishop Wareing, his appeal and plan did not succeed. Smith left the diocese of Northampton in 1857¹¹ and the mission was removed from the *Directory* listings for twenty years. In 1879 it was re-inserted when mass was said in a private house on alternate Sundays. In 1880 this changed to alternate Tuesdays in a private house and in the prison on alternate Wednesdays. The priest travelled from Weston Underwood. The following year’s notice was more vague in that mass now was “on a weekday”¹². In 1882 there were six missions, besides Aylesbury, listed in Buckinghamshire and yet Aylesbury struggled until, in 1890, a temporary chapel was established and so was the mission¹³. It thus took nearly fifty years to establish the mission on a permanent basis.

Northampton was very similar in that it too was a rural town in which industry had developed from the agriculture of the surrounding countryside. Neither it, nor Aylesbury, had developed any major industry which might have attracted people to migrate to them. When an appeal was launched in 1822 to build a Catholic church in Northampton it was noted that there was none anywhere else in the town or county¹⁴.

Weedon, a village with a large army barracks, was nearby. The regiments stationed there were “frequently Irish and therefore mostly Catholic”¹⁵. A priest had been appointed and he was being financially supported by Dr Milner, Vicar Apostolic of the Midland District. The receivers of donations included a Rev Cornelius Magrath of Northampton. This is

⁷ CD 1852 pp.79-80

⁸ Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests* , 70

⁹ CD 1852, 79

¹⁰ CD 1852, 80

¹¹ Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests* , 70

¹² CD 1881, 177

¹³ CD 1890, 194

¹⁴ LD 1822

¹⁵ LD 1822

probably the priest mentioned as having been appointed¹⁶. Magrath did not stay long as the following year the *Directory* mentions that Rev William Foley had been appointed to the mission¹⁷. Getting this impoverished mission onto a sound basis was a struggle, indicated by the appeal in 1827 which requested vestments and church furnishings¹⁸, yet at no time was it closed. Funds were gathered and a site for a church was bought. This site “had originally been part of St Andrew’s Priory, from where Thomas Becket had escaped into exile”¹⁹. Twenty years after the initial appeal, the two missions of Weedon and Northampton were listed separately in the *Directory*. The new church in Northampton was designed by A W Pugin, and originally named after St Felix, the patron saint of soldiers. On being raised to the rank of a Cathedral in 1850 when the Diocese of Northampton was created, the church was enlarged and re-dedicated to Our Lady and St Thomas in 1865.

Separating Weedon from Northampton and setting it up as a mission in its own right was unfortunate for the soldiers and their families as they now had no church. Mass was said in a small room in a public house, hardly ideal for a congregation estimated at 500, including wives and children. An appeal for the “smallest donation of the charitable [was] most earnestly solicited”²⁰ in 1851. The mission at Weedon continued in spite of poverty; from 1882 onwards it was served from Daventry and was open to both military and civilians²¹. It was never omitted from the *Directory*.

Northampton and Aylesbury each suffered from one of the difficulties discussed above – poverty and prejudice respectively. Yet the mission in Northampton thrived, to the extent that its church became the centre of the new diocese as a cathedral within the space of a generation whilst at Aylesbury it took about twice as long to build even a temporary church. The main difference from the perspective of the Bishop endeavouring to establish a Catholic mission was that Northampton had the advantage of a nearby army barracks. Following the Relief Act of 1793 in Ireland, Catholics could join the Army which they did in significant numbers so that, wherever Irish regiments were based there was always a core of Catholics. Until Catholic military chaplains were appointed, soldiers were ministered to by the mission priests.

4.1.2 St Albans and Cambridge

St Albans was the historic site of the martyrdom of St Alban in 304 AD; thirty Reformation

¹⁶ LD 1822

¹⁷ LD 1823

¹⁸ LD 1827, 23

¹⁹ *Cathedral of Our Lady and St Thomas, History*, <<http://www.northamptoncathedral.org/cathedral5.htm>> (accessed 15/05/2009)

²⁰ CD 1851, 79

²¹ CD 1882, 185

martyrs had been in residence in the University of Cambridge. The motivation in both cases for establishing missions was historical.

Local dissenters in St Albans, as the *Directory* put it, were well-disposed to the mission²² and a priest began work there in 1840. In 1841, mass was said on the first Sunday of the month and attendance was between 70 and 100 persons²³. In 1845, the mission was in a “destitute” state, as was its neighbouring mission in Luton. There were about 60 Catholics in St Albans and about 30-40 in Luton²⁴. A new church, paid for by Alex Raphael MP, was due to open in 1851 and this comment was inserted in the *Directory*:

To all it must yield a peculiar joy to witness how true religion, after many years’ local obscurity and prostration, begins to renew her glory, and vindicate her influence in a place so full of Catholic associations, and so dear to every catholic heart, as St Alban’s venerable town.²⁵

The opening of the church should have rendered the mission secure but by 1852 there was no resident pastor, perhaps indicating that the mission could not afford, on its own, to support a priest. The mission at Luton had not been listed since 1848. For a few years St Albans’ mission struggled on without a resident chaplain and then it, too, was removed from the *Directory* of 1857. In 1864 it was re-listed, without a resident chaplain, but served from Waltham Cross and Hertford²⁶. By 1885 the church was too small for the congregation and Kelly mentions that at that time as many as “forty or fifty Irish labourers might have been seen kneeling outside”²⁷.

Although unable to take degrees until 1871, there were occasionally Catholic students resident in the University of Cambridge. One such was Thomas Redington from Galway who matriculated in 1832 and stayed for ten terms. Redington’s mother came to live in a rented house in Cambridge and brought her own chaplain with her. He said mass in her house for the Catholic undergraduates at the time²⁸.

Bishop Walsh appealed for help as, in 1828, there was no public Catholic chapel in Cambridgeshire. Rev Edward Huddleston added his voice in “support of a measure at once so auspicious to Religion, and so creditable to the Catholic Cause”²⁹. Initially the mission, such as it was, was served by the priest from Sawston Hall and by 1831 it was listed separately from the Hall. The appeal continued for a few years and the mission was served

²² CD 1841, 23

²³ CD 1841, 23

²⁴ CD 1846, 50

²⁵ CD 1850, 39

²⁶ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 341

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 341

²⁸ M. N. L. Couve de Murville and Philip Jenkins, *Catholic Cambridge* ([London]: Catholic Truth Society, 1983), 104

²⁹ LD 1828, 12

from Sawston Hall until, in 1843, a church was opened in Cambridge and a chaplain, Fr Shenley, appointed. He was Irish, educated in the Irish College in Paris, but seems to have left the Eastern District soon afterwards³⁰. The new chaplain was Thomas Quinlivan from Co Clare in Ireland. He was trained for the priesthood in the Eastern District seminary at Gifford's Hall in Suffolk and ordained in 1843³¹. Cambridge was the first position for this newly-ordained, inexperienced priest and it represented his life's work as he remained there for forty years.

It was not a wealthy mission. Quinlivan first asked for assistance for the mission schools in 1861³², but, even so, in 1866 the Council of Education threatened to withdraw its school grant unless the buildings were replaced³³. By 1868 a new school and a house for the teachers, which was "much admired" had been provided, but at the cost of a heavy debt³⁴. As well as giving notice of these improvements Quinlivan had now acquired a site for a new and larger church which was "urgently needed". The schools had cost £1000 and the debt was £500³⁵. Until the debt was substantially reduced there was little prospect of building the larger church for which Quinlivan so earnestly appealed.

In his appeals, Quinlivan was as aware of the importance of a Catholic presence in Cambridge as Edward Huddleston had been before him. Quinlivan is one of the many unsung heroes of the Catholic Church in England in the nineteenth century. Working in a mission which was constantly under financial pressure, albeit with a wealthy Catholic landowner nearby, Quinlivan persevered with his appeals to build a larger church "more worthy of the *old faith* in Cambridge"³⁶ (his italics). Although he had a site secured and had received a donation of £50 from a friend, he did not have the large congregation which priests in the industrial centres such as Liverpool had and therefore could not use the "penny collections" which were commonplace at the time. The 1851 Religious Census returned 260 Catholics in Cambridge³⁷. Unable as yet to finance the building of a church, by securing the site when he did, Quinlivan had a degree of good fortune as, in 1871 the University Test Act was passed in Parliament. This abolished the "communion tests" for taking degrees in the old universities. Following this Act, there was a flurry of activity by Nonconformists to establish themselves in Cambridge. Quinlivan continued to appeal year after year and in 1881 he placed a full page appeal in the *Directory*:

³⁰ Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests*, 149-151

³¹ *Ibid.*, 68-70

³² CD 1861, 215

³³ CD 1867, 260

³⁴ CD 1868, 329

³⁵ CD 1869, 373

³⁶ CD 1867, 260

³⁷ Couve de Murville and Jenkins, *Cambridge*, 105

An appeal to the Catholic body at Home and Abroad

The growth of the old faith here, since 1843, has been like that of the mustard-seed in the parable. Its influence has, in some measure, been felt in England and throughout the British Empire ...

The time for throwing fresh vigour into our Mission-work is come. A new and imposing church, fully served, is the pressing want of the hour. With a view to this end, the Lensfield Estate has, within the last twelve months, been purchased. Its position at Hyde Park Corner is known far and near as our great central thoroughfare. The extent of the Estate is 8220 yards, and its two frontages extend over 580 feet. In Cambridge, with its college rights, there is now no other such freehold to be had.

The mortgage, with its interest, is a heavy burden; and it must be paid off before, on principles of finance, we can safely begin the new church. The cost of the Lensfield House and Estate is about 6300l.

The Methodists and other bodies are sinking thousands in churches and colleges in Cambridge, in order to reap the benefit of the old and new foundations.

With the full sanction of my Bishop, I appeal to the Catholic body for cheques and post-office orders.

T Canon Quinlivan

M.R.

P.S. – I know well that many are the local claims upon those who can give to God and His Church; but as our cause is a national one, I feel that this appeal, in the great interests of religion, should meet with a prompt and practical response from all Catholic hearts. After more than thirty-seven years in Cambridge, working my parish (sic) quietly I now realise the sacred duty and dignity of becoming, for Christ's sake and His Church, a public beggar. As a veteran in the field, I beg all Catholics who can to rally round me in this the final crowning work of my priestly life

T.Q.³⁸

The church then in use in Cambridge had been designed by Pugin and was described by the Camden Society as “a hidden gem”³⁹. It was simply not large enough for the congregation. With the Methodists and “other bodies” sinking thousands into the colleges and churches, Quinlivan was concerned about the visible presence of Catholicism in a city which was no longer a Church of England preserve. In 1882, the debt had been reduced to approximately £3,000 (the fifteenth Duke of Norfolk paid half of the cost of the site⁴⁰). Lensfield House itself had been blessed and was now the Rectory of St Andrew's⁴¹. The appeal continued in 1883, but not in 1884. Canon Quinlivan retired in 1883 and died in 1885. It was to his successor Fr Scott that the responsibility of bringing Quinlivan's dream to fruition fell. The new church in Cambridge was opened in 1890. The major benefactress was Mrs Lyne-Stephens, a former ballet dancer and widow of a wealthy banker⁴².

³⁸ CD 1881, 395

³⁹ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 115

⁴⁰ Little, *Churches*, 146

⁴¹ CD 1882, 408

⁴² Martin and Ramsay, *Glimpse of Heaven*, 139

Establishing the mission in Cambridge had not been easy. Although the Huddlestons gave financial and moral support, there was anti-Catholicism in the town. Kelly commented that when it became known in about 1841 that a Catholic church was to be built “great indignation was manifested at this in the University” and “on November 5th a large body of students assembled to tear up the foundations”. They were deterred by “the prospect of an encounter with a body of burly Irishmen, and a force of special constables under the command of the mayor, Thomas Fisher Esq.”⁴³. Although Quinlivan had not lived to see the new church at Cambridge, to him must go a considerable amount of credit for steering the fledgling mission through its difficult early years. Not only was he responsible for the usual round of pastoral care but as the “Catholic presence” at Cambridge he was effectively the Catholic University chaplain before the formal establishment of a chaplaincy. A number of Cambridge men converted to Catholicism during his tenure. He was described by Thomas Field of St John’s College as “the clever, popular, excellent and very wide-awake Romish priest then resident in the town”⁴⁴.

Neither mission at Cambridge nor St Albans was easy to establish. Both built a small church in the early 1840s. In St Albans the local Dissenters were well disposed whereas Cambridge had to fight against prejudice; in St Albans a permanent church had opened shortly afterwards but Cambridge had to persevere with a small inadequate chapel for another forty years. Yet the Cambridge mission flourished whilst that at St Albans struggled even to support a pastor. One identifiable difference between the two was the presence of an Irish community in Cambridge.

4.2 Success Factors

In endeavouring to establish the factors which might lead to a successful mission where difficulties seemed to militate against such success, the examples above point to an Irish presence as being one of those factors. Nearly 25% of all the missions founded before 1909 either closed permanently or were omitted at some point, indicating difficulty in becoming established⁴⁵. The figure for missions with identified Irish connections was about 10%, less than half the rate as that for the others⁴⁶.

The permanently deleted missions with Irish connections were those at Abergele in North Wales (listed only in 1847); St Patrick, York (listed from 1859-1866); SS Mary and Patrick, Darlington (1860-1871); St Patrick, Newcastle-on-Tyne (1853-1874); Our Lady and St

⁴³ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 115

⁴⁴ Quoted in Couve de Murville and Jenkins, *Cambridge*, 107

⁴⁵ 485 missions were closed permanently or omitted at some stage; this represents just under 23% of the total of 2,141.

⁴⁶ There were 187 missions identified as having an Irish connection; 18 of which were closed or omitted representing just under 10%.

Patrick, Coxhoe, Durham (1867-1875); St Bridget, Leeds (1861-1892); SS Patrick and Joseph, Halifax (1872-1893); and unnamed missions at Owlerton, Yorkshire (1861-1905) and Eastbourne (1857-1858).

Only one mission in Wales with a congregation of Irish migrants closed and that was the one in Abergele which was established as a temporary mission whilst the railway line from London to Holyhead was being built⁴⁷. It was listed in the *Directory* in 1847 only and was closed when the Irish labourers were dismissed⁴⁸.

St Bridget's in Leeds was originally listed in 1862 and was served from St Patrick's. By 1874 it had its own incumbent. No address was given for the mission in the *Directory*, although Kelly's Trade Directory gives the address as Regent Street and mentions that the building was previously known as Ann Carr's Chapel⁴⁹. It was one of the many Catholic missions which took over disused Dissenter chapels. St Bridget's was last listed in 1892. Although new missions were founded in Leeds after that, it has not been possible to associate any of those with the original St Bridget's⁵⁰. In a history of the Leeds missions, Norman Waugh wrote in 1904 that a new church dedicated to St Patrick was opened in 1891 and that the clergy of the new church served "the missions of St Augustine, old St Patrick's, St Charles and formerly, St Bridget's"⁵¹. Both the old St Patrick's and St Bridget's were closed when this church was opened. The original St Patrick's was re-opened in 1902 as "Old St Patrick's" and indicates that the congregation had outgrown its new church. Leeds City Corporation re-developed the centre of the city at this time. There had been negotiations between the Corporation and the Diocese for a new site for the cathedral, as the original cathedral site had been compulsorily purchased. With the flexibility allowed to Bishops under the mission system, a re-alignment of mission boundaries may have taken place which led to the permanent closure of St Bridget's.

St Patrick's in Newcastle was a short lived mission, with very little commentary on it in the *Directory*. When it was opened the *Directory* noted that the priest in charge was residing some way away as there was "no possibility of his residing on the spot". The area in question was "in the poorest part of Newcastle, amidst a dense population of poor Irish"⁵². At the time of its closure there were five other missions extant in Newcastle. It may be concluded that it was simply poverty which caused the closure of this mission. Later (in

⁴⁷ CD 1847, 90

⁴⁸ CD 1848, 91

⁴⁹ "Leeds", in *Kelly's Directory of West Riding of Yorkshire, [Part 2: Places L-Y]*, ed. E. R. Kelly (London: Kelly, 1881), 618

⁵⁰ There is a St Brigid's parish currently in Leeds. It was founded in 1929 (CD 1997, 324). It is not possible to associate this with the earlier mission of the same name

⁵¹ Norman Waugh, *A Short History of St Anne's Cathedral and the Leeds Missions* (London: The Art and Book Company, 1904), 51-52

⁵² CD 1853, 51

1910) a new mission of St Patrick was opened.

No information is available on the closures at York, where there were three other missions at this time; Darlington, with five other missions; Halifax, which had one; and Coxhoe, which had two missions nearby.

Owlerton was not formally constituted as a mission. It was an army barracks chapel to which civilians were admitted for services. Throughout its lifetime it was served from the mission of St Vincent de Paul in Sheffield. This illustrates one of the difficulties in attempting an analysis of the opening and closure of missions as many of the places where mass was heard were not actually missions at all, but fulfilled the desire by the Church to make mass and other services available to as many Catholics as possible. Eastbourne mission, which closed, was also an army barracks and may have been a temporary station for troops as it was only listed in 1857 and 1858.

Missions with an Irish connection which were temporarily omitted and relisted were at Hythe; Deal; Dover; Purfleet; Stratford in Essex; Wolverhampton; Milford Haven; Gainsborough; Farnborough; and Manchester. Stratford in Essex and St Patrick's in Wolverhampton both seemed to be omitted for a few years while their churches were being built. The mission at Irlam in Manchester was omitted for one year only, it is not clear why this may have been so – it could have been a printer's error.

Dover, Hythe and Deal were part of a large mission which was usually centred at Dover and seemed to be one of those locations which had priests appointed when possible. In 1836 it was noted that the regimental depot was in Dover “at present” and that of the “180 men no less than 165 were Catholic”⁵³. At this time it was served from Margate which was twenty-five miles away. In 1853 the chaplaincy was vacant but a note said that it was supplied when there were Catholic soldiers in the garrison⁵⁴. The core of the congregation appears to have been the Catholic soldiers with few Catholics outside the barracks walls. Purfleet mission became established because of a nearby garrison. Originally listed in 1865, it was omitted from 1867-1880. In 1881 a garrison chapel was opened to which civilians were admitted⁵⁵.

Kelly indicates that the mission at Gainsborough started in 1866 and a church was opened on June 3rd 1868⁵⁶. The difficulties in rural Lincolnshire have already been discussed above⁵⁷. The foundation date of 1866 given by Kelly is not the whole story. There had

⁵³ LD 1836, 17

⁵⁴ CD 1853, 46

⁵⁵ CD 1881, 109

⁵⁶ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 183

⁵⁷ See p. 59 above

been previous attempts to establish a Catholic presence in the town, the first from 1824-1838. This appeared to be faltering when the position of missionary was vacant in 1836⁵⁸. The second attempt was in 1848 when a recently ordained Irish priest, Rev J B McNaughten, was appointed. McNaughten seems to have stayed until 1854, as in 1855 Gainsborough was served from Brigg⁵⁹. In 1862 it had a new incumbent and thereafter the mission was secure⁶⁰.

Farnborough, which is quite close to Aldershot, was originally constituted as at the centre of what was described as the Farnborough Missionary District⁶¹. There was a Soldiers' Boys Home here for the sons of deceased soldiers and the school was named St Patrick's. An attempt was made to hold regular religious services and mass was said in the school chapel. Farnborough was unlisted in the year 1896 only, but this may have been a printer's error as there was a monastery in Farnborough which should have ensured a priest in the mission. The mission was for a short time staffed by secular priests before the Salesians took over. Their community chapel became the mission chapel⁶².

4.3 Conclusions

It can be seen from these examples that missions which had a core of Irish Catholics, although they struggled at times due to poverty, rarely failed. The absence of a body of Irish migrants in St Albans and Aylesbury seemed to make it more difficult for those two missions to establish. The conclusion one reaches is that having a body of Irish Catholics within the locality increased the probability of a successful establishment of a mission. Yet the historiography, whilst allowing for their contribution to the increase in numbers of Catholics in England and Wales, is not always positive in its assessment of any other contribution made by Irish Catholic migrants to the development of the English Church; rather the impression is given that they represented a drain on the resources of that Church due to their poverty; that their faith was more "folk" than Tridentine Catholicism and thus more religious education was required which in turn increased the drain on the Church's resources; and that they remained separate from their English co-religionists. Recently, even the "numbers" contribution has been questioned as historians point to significant leakage of Irish Catholics from the practice of their faith. In view of the conclusion reached in this chapter that the migrants made a significant contribution, there are questions which must be answered. In particular, what was the nature of the faith of Irish

⁵⁸ LD 1836, 20

⁵⁹ CD 1855, 88

⁶⁰ CD 1862, 138

⁶¹ CD 1894, 232

⁶² *Our Lady Help of Christians, Farnborough - a Short History*,
<<http://www.olhcfarnborough.org.uk/history.htm>> (accessed 27/01/2010)

Catholics – folk or Tridentine? What about leakage from the practice of the faith? Does the research undertaken for this thesis offer any new insights on this issue? What other contribution did the Irish migrants make? In the next chapter the issue of Irish migration in the context of the developing English Catholic Church; the melding of the two bodies of Catholics into one worshipping community; and the support which the Irish gave to the English Church's agenda will be addressed.

5 The Irish Migration

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Catholics numbered approximately 1% of the population of England and Wales. By the end of the century that had increased to about 5%. This five-fold increase was due, mainly, to migration of Catholics from Ireland to England. In endeavouring to create an identity with which the English Catholics themselves were comfortable and simultaneously was acceptable to the population at large, this large influx of Irish had to be assimilated by the English Church. Neither the presence nor the Catholicity of the Irish could easily be denied. As the main argument of this thesis is that increased visibility of Catholicism reduced the prejudice against that faith and its adherents, it is unarguable that such large numbers made a contribution to that increased visibility. But visibility in the form of teeming masses of poor, uneducated, unskilled labourers living in squalor in the slums of England and Wales was probably not the visibility that English Catholics would have wished for. This is often how the historiography portrays the migrants.

Chapter three above has discussed the extreme poverty of the institutional Church. Such was this poverty that it might appear to have been beyond its capability to minister to a fivefold increase in numbers when so many of these migrants were themselves impoverished. Were the migrants a drain on this institution's resources or did they make a real contribution to the English Church other than that of increasing the visibility of Catholicism through sheer numbers? In considering the migrants and their contribution, one must also address the question of leakage, the fall off of practice in their faith. Why did this happen? Historians have speculated as to why this was and the conclusion usually reached is that it was because the people were not well educated in the tenets of their faith. Has the research for this thesis given any further clues on this subject? The lack of education, leading to leakage, is bound up with the concept that Irish Catholicism, as practised by the people, was not a fully Tridentine Catholicism such as was found in England, rather that it was a folk religion, based more on superstition than the doctrines of the Church.

It is often thought that some of the antipathy which existed between Irish and English Catholics was as a result of the desire by Irish political activists to dismantle the United Kingdom which had come into being at the beginning of the century and establish a separate parliament in Dublin, the doctrine of Irish Nationalism. Before addressing the questions pertaining to the migrants' Catholicism, the idea of their political allegiance must

be addressed. A concept which developed in Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was that of nationalism and in Ireland's case this developed into separatism, a nation separate from Britain. The first campaign under this philosophy of separatism was that of Daniel O'Connell who campaigned in the early 1840s for the repeal of the Act of Union. O'Connell's activities on this front, as indeed they had been during his campaign for Catholic Emancipation, were conducted mainly in Ireland. Irish *Nationalism* as a political issue arose with the advent of the Irish Party in Westminster through the leadership of Isaac Butt and Charles Stewart Parnell. Butt had formed the Home Government Association in 1870. This became the Home Rule League and Parnell took over the leadership of it in 1880. In the early days of the Home Rule movement, there was much suspicion of it by the press and the Catholic hierarchy in Ireland which saw it in terms of an Orange / Tory plot!

In 1872 Hugh Henrick undertook a survey of the Irish in England and reported on this in a series of articles for *The Nation* newspaper². Henrick's intent was to discover how much support for Home Rule there might be amongst the immigrants. Whilst he found Irish in towns and cities throughout England, it would be fair to say that Henrick was not convinced that herein lay the basis for a mass political movement in England. The organisation required to mobilise them into such would have been very significant. Attempts were made, but as has often been commented only one Member of Parliament was ever elected in an English constituency on the Irish Home Rule platform. This was T P O'Connor who held the Liverpool Scotland seat in from 1885 until his death in 1929. As O'Connor continued to stand on the "Home Rule" platform after Irish independence, it may be said that he had a considerable personal following which ensured he retained his seat in many elections regardless of his political platform. But does the election of only one MP indicate antipathy on the part of the migrants in Britain to a major political campaign in their native land? This question was answered in Alan O'Day's essay on Irish migrant identity³. O'Day was expounding an argument on "mutative identity" and comparing how Irish identities varied in America and Britain. In setting the scene he noted that Isaac Butt, whilst advising that associations should be set up in Britain to advance Home Rule, said that this should be done without antagonising the English or the Scots. Butt also advised his audience in Glasgow that they should "aim at the well-being of Glasgow which is the city of your adoption"⁴. Some years later, suffrage had been

¹ David George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland* (London: Routledge, Croom Helm, 1995), 194-195

² Hugh Henrick, *A Survey of the Irish in England (1872)*, ed. Alan O'Day (London: Hambledon, 1990)

³ Alan O'Day, "A Conundrum of Irish Diasporic Identity: Mutative Ethnicity" *Immigrants & Minorities* 27 (2009)

⁴ *Ibid.*, 319

extended greatly through the Reform Acts of 1867 and 1884 and as the majority of men now had the right to vote⁵ it might have been hoped by the leaders of the nationalist movement that the power of the ballot could be used if the voters could be organised. C S Parnell advocated those who were eligible should ensure that they attained the privilege of the vote, but if Parnell had hoped that they would use it to advance the cause of Home Rule, he was to be disappointed⁶ as the election of only one MP showed.

O'Day gives four defining features of mutative ethnicity. Of these, two are relevant to this thesis. Firstly, that there is an attachment to the country of origin which is passive rather than active and, secondly, that the politicisation of the cohort, when it exists, rises from local situations⁷. Bearing these in mind, one must also accept that it is difficult to identify the political leanings of the large mass of migrants as very little written material is available from them. The major campaign being fought by the Catholic Church at the same time (from about 1871 onwards) was for justice in funding for Catholic schools. This would surely, by O'Day's definition, have been of greater concern for the majority of Irish migrants who had the vote. Indeed, the Church exhorted voters to register and from 1875 the *Directory* included detailed instructions for registering voters for County, Borough and Municipal franchises⁸. These included checklists of the dates, forms and signatures required to ensure correct registration. There are many instances where Irishmen identified as Catholics, whether it was protecting their chapel from the Gordon Rioters in 1780⁹, digging the footings for their church's foundations¹⁰, or standing guard against a mob of Cambridge students intent on damaging their church in that town¹¹. All these instances support the localism aspect of their identity.

There was antipathy towards the Irish migrants. Some of this undoubtedly came about because so many identified as, or were assumed to be Catholic and was therefore due to the prevailing anti-Catholic prejudice, yet the two were not one and the same thing. Some may have been due to the nationalist campaign, but as this campaign was a feature of the end of the nineteenth century it coincided with a very short period of this thesis. Research for this thesis shows that the appeals lodged in the *Directories* by missions were generally promulgated in the first half-century after Relief. In these there was considerable sympathy shown for the poor Irish in their congregations. These appeals did not indicate

⁵ Chris Cook, *The Routledge Companion to Britain in the Nineteenth Century, 1815-1914*. Routledge, 2005. 68.

⁶ O'Day, "Mutative Ethnicity", 319

⁷ *Ibid.*, 323

⁸ CD 1875, 33-35

⁹ See p. 122 below

¹⁰ See p. 124 below

¹¹ See p. 103 above

antipathy towards the Irish as a consequence of any perceived nationalistic political affiliations on their part. Two examples will illustrate the point. The mission at Duckinfield appealing in 1827 mentioned that there were an estimated 4,000 in the congregation, “almost exclusively” Irish and of the labouring class.

The English Catholics then will not let these their poor fellow creatures be deprived of a comfortable place for exercising that religion, to which they have steadfastly adhered through centuries of persecution.¹²

These migrants had “flocked hither to seek that support which is denied them in their native land”¹³. The names of the priests to whom donations should be sent did not indicate any particular Irish connection. Their names were Crook, Sherwood, Gillow, Hall and Fisher¹⁴. The Rev Mr Fielding of Penrith appeared sympathetic of his poor Irish congregation as they endured the taunts of their Protestant neighbours¹⁵. As in the Duckinfield appeal there is no evidence here of antipathy towards the poor Irish. The same sympathy is evident in many of the other appeals made in the first half of the century.

Despite such apparent sympathy, Bryan Little says that separate churches were built “to ease tensions between the indigenous and the immigrant faithful”¹⁶. Very little evidence of this has been found here. There is the well-known case of the two congregations in Birmingham where the Irish worshipped in St Chad’s and the English at St Peter’s in the early part of the century. Other than that though, the research for this thesis has not confirmed Little’s judgement. Churches may have been built in response to an influx of migrants but not to separate them from the indigenous population, rather their greater number created a more visible need than a smaller number of English would have made apparent. In such a situation, both Irish and English shared the same church¹⁷. This is supported by Paz who refers to Neville Kirk’s research on the working classes in the Lancashire and Cheshire cotton districts. Kirk argued

that the cotton districts saw cooperation between English and Irish Chartists and labour unionists, that the Irish ghettos were not as large or as segregated as some scholars think, that the Irish community was experiencing “a limited process of assimilation,” and that “strong and widespread class feeling” transcended ethnic differences¹⁸.

¹² LD 1827, 11-12

¹³ LD 1828, 12

¹⁴ Although it is not possible to be certain without their Christian names or initials, from the entries in Fitzgerald-Lombard’s list, none of these would appear to have been of Irish origin. Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests*

¹⁵ See p.49 above

¹⁶ Little, *Churches*, 129

¹⁷ Chapter 6 analyses the dedications of churches and it will be shown that dedications for churches for Irish congregations were not always of Irish saints (p. 149 ff.).

¹⁸ Paz, *Anti-Catholicism*, 226

As most of the town churches were built for large, labouring congregations it does seem unlikely that there was ethnic segregation; it is more likely that missions were divided on class lines, if at all.

Ryan Dye suggests antipathy towards the Irish amongst the English Catholics by referring to Sir Robert Gerard's desire not to have an Irish priest appointed in a mission where he had influence¹⁹. It may be that Sir Robert was anti-Irish, but an alternative reading is that he was simply trying to maintain the privileges which the gentry had apportioned to themselves in the years before Relief. In those times the gentry, who often employed the priests, had a considerable say in who they would employ. As a result of the various Church Building Acts in the nineteenth century, where a member of the Church of England gave significant support to the building of a new church he would have the right of presentation of the incumbent. Was Sir Robert looking for a similar consideration in the Catholic Church, effectively a return to the *status quo ante*?

5.1 A drain on resources?

To return to the questions asked at the start of this chapter, can one quantify the contribution made by the Irish migrants? Were all classes of migrants involved or was it the few successful ones? If it were just the few, did the remainder, the large majority, represent a drain on Church resources?

In his pastoral letter for Advent 1894, Bishop Butt appealed for funds to build a worthy Chapel for his seminary. He estimated that the project would cost something in the region of £5000, and was rather at a loss to imagine how the money might be found. A week later, on 9th December, the Bishop was conducting a parish visitation at Lewes, when a shabbily-dressed man demanded to see him. The presbytery staff were reluctant to admit the visitor, but he was persistent and in the end they agreed. The man was Denis Broderick, whose wife Catherine, had dedicated her life to building churches. As a nearly illiterate child of Irish famine refugees, she had travelled the country on foot as a pedlar, praying 'Give me money, O God, and I will build you churches.' She married Denis Broderick from Galway, and then together they began a silk trading business which flourished and made them a fortune. They moved to Hove and together began to build churches—eventually nine of them. Since they had no children, all their money went into this purpose, for which the Church, and the Seminary, has cause to be very grateful.²⁰

This story was first published in 1965 and is consistent with the image of Irish migrants as poor and illiterate. Rosemary Hill claimed that the Irish poor were a drain on English

¹⁹ Ryan Dye, "Catholic Protectionism or Irish Nationalism? Religion and Politics in Liverpool, 1829-1845" *The Journal of British Studies* 40.3 (2001), 357

²⁰ Sean Finnegan, *In Hope of Harvest: The Story of St. John's Seminary, Womersley* (Guildford: Womersley Press, 2011); Fr Finnegan kindly emailed me this text from his book whilst it was with the publishers. His footnote in the text reads: "The visit to Lewes is recorded in the Diary of Bishop Butt, entry for 9th December 1894; the story of Denis and Catherine Broderick is from the Southwark Record November 1965, article: The Catholic Church in Portslade by Father Lewis. Sadly, the tradition that Broderick turned up with old notes wrapped in newspaper is unlikely to be true."

Church resources and that they were referred to by a Birmingham priest as “scum”²¹. Hill was writing a biography of Augustus Pugin and her judgment may be based on material which she had read in pursuit of her research on Pugin.

In the front hall of St Nathy’s College in Ballaghaderreen in Ireland there is a portrait of a Victorian couple. He is dressed in black frock-coat; she in a full-skirted fashionable gown. They have the appearance of being very well off. The portrait hangs in the hallway as they were major benefactors of St Nathy’s. The story is that in 1904 the Bishop Lyster of Achonry was in hospital in Hammersmith. The patient in the neighbouring bed was an Irishman living then in Hove. They got talking as patients do and the Bishop told his companion that he was in need of money to renovate a former army barracks into extra accommodation for the College. His fellow patient was Denis Broderick, originally from Co Sligo which is in the diocese of Achonry. Broderick gave the requisite sum to the Bishop. The portrait in St Nathy’s is of Denis and his wife, Catherine.

From census records and the *London Gazette* it is possible to piece together a little of Denis’s life. He was born in Co Sligo in 1833 and as a young man married Catherine Powers in London in 1856. She was the daughter of Irish immigrants but quite clearly they were not Famine migrants as Catherine was 28 in the 1861 census and was born in the City of London²². According to the decennial census records, in 1861 Denis and Catherine were living in Cripplegate with her widowed mother. His occupation was “Traveller”²³.

Catherine was recorded as “Wife” with no occupation given. By 1881 he was a Woollen Warehouseman employing two men. He had moved from Hanover Court to Fore Street, also in Cripplegate²⁴. Ten years later Denis and Catherine had retired to Hove and lived at Denmark Villas where they employed a maidservant Sarah O’brion (sic). Their neighbours in Hove included a Rector; an army officer; a clerk in holy orders; and people living on their own means. Dennis (sic) is described in the 1891 census as a retired Merchant²⁵.

There is no record in the census documents of children. The *London Gazette* listed Denis as one of the partners of the Union Bank of London²⁶, a joint stock bank founded in 1839²⁷. In the list of partners, Broderick is listed as a Gentleman in 1879²⁸ and as a Woollen Warehouseman in 1880²⁹.

²¹ Hill, *Pugin*, 206

²² Catherine’s year of birth is uncertain. According to the census records, in 1861 she was 28; 20 years later she was 45 (1881) and in 1891 she was 50! Dennis’s ages in those censuses were 28, 50 and 58.

²³ “Census 1861”, RG9/213 (London Ward of Cripplegate., 3

²⁴ “Census 1881”, RG11/372 (London Ward of Cripplegate., 22

²⁵ “Census 1891”, RG12/818 (County East Sussex; Civil Parish Hove., 39

²⁶ “Union Bank of London”, *The London Gazette* 26 February 1879., 284

²⁷ Orbell and Turton, *Banking Records*, 513

²⁸ “Union Bank of London”, 284

²⁹ “Union Bank of London”, *The London Gazette* 25 February 1880., 279

By the time he retired, Broderick was a wealthy man. He and his wife Catherine proceeded to spend their wealth on building Catholic churches in the south of England. In total they are reputed to have built nine³⁰. These were not spectacular churches in most cases and served small communities. Despite their significant contribution to financing church building projects, information on the Brodericks is difficult to obtain. They are not mentioned in Bryan Little's history of Catholic architecture³¹; nor in the more recent publication on the same subject published by English Heritage³². Their financial contribution is mentioned in respect of only two churches by Bernard Kelly³³. Of the churches they financed, so far it has been possible to identify five. The church of St Michael, Wareham, Dorset was built at a cost of £1,500 and opened in 1889. The foundation stone was laid by the Duke of Norfolk³⁴; St Mary in Brighton was built between 1910 and 1912³⁵ (this was after Kelly had published his work).

They also paid for the house and the chapel for the Passionists at Herne Bay in Kent³⁶. Following Denis's death in 1909, Catherine approached Fr Kerwin at Portslade and told him that Denis had long wanted to build a church at Portslade. According to the parish history, an early attempt to restore Catholicism to the area in 1885 had foundered. This must have been a short-lived effort as it was not listed in the *Directory*. A more successful attempt was launched when a convent was opened in 1904 and their chapel was opened to the public. From this the mission developed and a second Sunday mass was celebrated at a local laundry. The new church, which Catherine Broderick had paid for, was opened in July 1912³⁷.

In recording their gift for the seminary chapel at St John's Wonerish³⁸, Bishop Butt wrote in his diary on December 9th 1894

Said Mass at Lewes and gave (sic) confirmation and Benediction in the evening.

A very happy day which kept me indoors. Mr Broderick of Brighton called and undertook to build the Seminary Chapel at a cost of £5000.³⁹

In his final essay in *Paddy and Mr Punch*, Roy Foster commented on the concept of "ethnic fade"⁴⁰. This is the idea that the higher the social class of an immigrant, the less

³⁰ B. Lowden, *Parish History, St Teresa's Southwick*, <http://www.st-theresas-southwick.org.uk/html/parish_history.html> (accessed 16/03/2010)

³¹ Little, *Churches*

³² Martin and Ramsay, *Glimpse of Heaven*

³³ St Michael's Wareham and the chapel of St John's Seminary Wonerish.

³⁴ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 415

³⁵ *About St. Mary's*, <<http://www.stmarysbrighton.com/2.html>> (accessed 27/10/2008)

³⁶ Email from Zandra Kilduff.

³⁷ Lowden, *Parish History, St Teresa's Southwick*,

³⁸ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 443

³⁹ The diary entry was emailed to me by Julie Cheyney, Archivist, Archdiocese of Southwark.

⁴⁰ R. F. Foster, *Paddy and Mr Punch : Connections in Irish and English History* (London: Allen Lane, 1993), 289

their country of origin matters in terms of their assimilation and their advancement in their new country. Exactly what Denis Broderick's social status was in Ireland is not known, but it is highly unlikely given his rise to the status of "gentleman" that he was one of the illiterate, unskilled, labouring migrants from Ireland. The Brodericks' contribution to the rebuilding of the Catholic infrastructure was real and substantial. The Church was perhaps fortunate that they had not had any children and could therefore spend the considerable fortune they had amassed in defraying the expenses of new buildings. But they were not alone amongst Irish migrants in achieving success in Britain. The *Laity's Directories* feature many Irish names in the appeals in the early years of the nineteenth century. These names were included as receivers of subscriptions and donations to the missions which were appealing; as such they would have been men of substance.

In 1813 the mission at Stratford in Essex requested donors to send their donations to, amongst others, a " _ Macarty Esq" of Wellclose Square. No initial or christian name was given⁴¹. A revised appeal in 1817 included the name of Denis McCarthy Esq. of 44 Wellclose Square⁴². Mr McCarthy's name continued in the list for some years. The new chapel was named after St Patrick and St Vincent de Paul. The chaplain was a Rev M. Chevrollais, one of the émigré clergy from the French Revolution. The dual dedication of the church reflects Chevrollais' presence and that of the majority of the congregation who were "labourers of the sister Isle, of the Land of Erin; totally incompetent, on account of their poverty, to support even the chapel or schools for the education of their children"⁴³.

The appeal for Bermondsey in 1812 stated that it was supported "by voluntary contributions of Irish tradesmen and merchants". Daniel Reardon, receiver of donations for Bermondsey⁴⁴ was later secretary to the committee collecting for St Mary's, Moorfields in London⁴⁵. Other appeals which included laymen with Irish names were John O'Neil (sic) for St Patrick's church in Liverpool⁴⁶ and James Kiernan, who was on a very cosmopolitan committee formed to build the new St George's at Southwark⁴⁷.

The appeals usually named the bishop, the mission priest and one or two other priests of the district or diocese as receivers of donations and, in the early part of the century, laymen as well. Later in the century when appeals were less frequent, it was less likely that laymen were named as receivers of donations. Whilst the laity were still involved in raising the money required, it tended to be as members of formalised committees such as at

⁴¹ LD 1813

⁴² LD 1817

⁴³ LD 1822

⁴⁴ LD 1812

⁴⁵ LD 1818

⁴⁶ LD 1824

⁴⁷ CD 1842 pp.12-13

St George's Southwark⁴⁸, or street collectors for St Francis Xavier in Liverpool, rather than in the more informal way prior to 1840.

Catholicism struggled to secure itself in Wales, mainly because of the extremely straitened financial circumstances which existed from the very beginning of the separate Welsh District in 1840⁴⁹. Although most of the Irish Catholics in Wales were labourers there were exceptions. The history website of Barry in South Wales⁵⁰ includes the story of Dr P J O'Donnell who was born in Cashel, Co. Tipperary, and qualified as a doctor in 1882. He came to Barry via Cardiff in 1886 and was almost immediately elected to a committee by the Cadoxton Vestry. Dr O'Donnell was instrumental in setting up the Catholic mission in Barry. Barry was first listed in the *Directory* in 1893⁵¹. Some years before that Dr O'Donnell had persuaded a priest from Cardiff to travel to Barry. Mass was said in his house until larger premises could be secured. More Catholics arrived to work in the town and in "1887 a petition of some 450 Catholics was sent to Bishop Hedley [of Newport] resulting in the appointment of Fr. Hyland to the [mission]"⁵². Mass was then said in a room in The Wenvoe Arms and the mission was named St Mary's. A monstrance was presented to the fledgling mission by a group of Protestant businessmen from Llanelli. With a priest appointed and a growing congregation the next step was to build a church. A plot of land was bought in 1892 and work commenced on building a school-chapel which opened in May 1892⁵³. In 1929 for his services to the Catholic Faith, Dr O'Donnell was honoured by the Pope with the award of The Knighthood of St. Sylvester⁵⁴.

In Llandudno, North Wales, the driving force behind the mission was an Irish priest, rather than a layman. The first priest, Fr Jenkins, arrived in 1867. The mission was initially based in a building which had previously housed Turkish Baths. Mass was said in the home of Michael Costelloe until the necessary alterations were made. There was a very small congregation (average attendance at mass was twenty), most of whom were servants in the various lodging houses in the town – this recalls the situation in Bath in the late eighteenth and Leamington earlier in the nineteenth century. Fr Jenkins suffered ill-health and died in 1869. He was succeeded by Patrick Mulligan, who "was charged with closing down the Mission"⁵⁵. Mulligan was from Longford, had received his priestly training in

⁴⁸ CD 1842 pp.12-1

⁴⁹ CD 1842 pp.44-46

⁵⁰ Tom Clemett, *History of Barry*, 2004, <<http://www.barrywales.co.uk/tomclemett/default.asp>> (accessed 30/04/2011)

⁵¹ CD 1893, 202

⁵² Clemett, *Barry*,

⁵³ Tom Clemett, *All the Saints*, 2003, <<http://www.barrywales.co.uk/tomclemett/all Saints2k.asp>> (accessed 21/05/2009)

⁵⁴ Tom Clemett, *Town Builders and Developers*, 2002, <<http://www.barrywales.co.uk/tomclemett/townbuilders.asp>> (accessed 21/05/2009)

⁵⁵ Margaret Amiel and Madeline Dunphy, *A Short History of the Catholic Church in Llandudno*, 1993,

Carlow⁵⁶ and arrived with little intention of closing the mission, even with such a small congregation. Llandudno town was expanding as more and more visitors came to visit the resort. As the town population grew, so did the number of Catholics. In 1882 Mulligan needed to extend the chapel to hold an extra forty persons. In 1891 the local newspaper reported a Church and Chapel Census of the town on Sunday November 22nd 1891:

Total number of inhabitants in Llandudno 7333

Attendance at English Services 1092 (from 8 places of worship)

Attendance at Welsh speaking Service 879 (from 11 places of worship)

Attendance at Roman Catholic Chapel 79⁵⁷.

Before this census Mulligan had bought a half-acre site from Lord Mostyn for £1210. The small congregation, with considerable help from the townspeople, had raised £3000 and building began. The foundation stone was laid and blessed in September 1891. The new church was to have a capacity for 500 worshippers – a true act of faith from a man with a congregation of 79! The traditional donations laid on the foundation stone on that day in 1891 amounted to the “considerable sum of £200”. The total cost was estimated at £5000. Amidst great ceremony the church was opened in August 1893. The occasion was memorable, as amongst the invited guests were Sir Stuart Knill, Bart., Lord Mayor of London and Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster⁵⁸.

The visit of the Lord Mayor of London was a signal honour for this small Welsh resort and when it became known that he was visiting the town, the Board of Improvement Commissioners held a special meeting to arrange a public reception and voted a sum of money for this. This was augmented by private donations. The celebrations included fireworks on the seafront and a banquet⁵⁹. The day of the opening ceremony was declared a public holiday in Llandudno.

The new church was, initially, used only in the summer months. During the winter the reduced congregation repaired to their old chapel in the converted turkish baths. Fr Mulligan died in 1906, much respected not only by the Catholics but by all the people of Llandudno. His Requiem Mass was celebrated by Rt Rev Bishop Francis Mostyn. “The Church was full and a large crowd gathered outside the Church. Every shop and office in Llandudno was closed and every cab and horse-drawn vehicle hired.”⁶⁰

The contribution of these particular individuals may well be forgotten in all but their own

<<http://www.llandudno-catholic-church.org.uk/about/>> (accessed 26/04/2011)

⁵⁶ Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests*, 130

⁵⁷ Amiel and Dunphy, *Llandudno*,

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*,

⁵⁹ “The Lord Mayor at Llandudno”, *North Wales Chronicle* August 19 1893., 8

⁶⁰ Amiel and Dunphy, *Llandudno*,

locality, or in the histories of their parishes, but they show that not all Irish migrants were of the poorer and unskilled classes; nor were all the better class of Irish who made a contribution to the Church in England and Wales clerical. It was argued above that the funding model used by the Church was changed in the latter part of the century due to the increase in middle-class Catholics. The Irish middle classes were a feature of Catholic life from before Relief. Some of the Catholic trading networks established between Europe and England in the penal days probably included Irishmen. Thomas Walshe, Vicar Apostolic in Birmingham was the son of a successful Irish merchant based in London⁶¹. Daniel Reardon and Denis McCarthy may have been in this network, as probably also were the men who had been involved in the foundation of St Patrick's in Soho Square although their names have been forgotten⁶².

In migration studies, the success or otherwise of the second generation is often used as a measure of assimilation by the migrants into the host community. Very little is known of J P Coghlan's early life or of his ethnic origins, although his surname does point to an Irish antecedent. In their introduction to his letters, Blom et al mention that amongst his list of publications was a Gaelic version of Henry Turberville's *Abridgement of Christian Doctrine*⁶³. This would indicate that Coghlan had some clients in Ireland, but is not evidence of Irish ancestry. However, Coghlan also advertised some patent medicines in the back covers of the *Laity's Directory*. In order to safeguard against counterfeits "these medicines were sealed with a seal, a cypher carrying the signatures of their patentees and the Coghlan heraldic device with its motto in Gaelic"⁶⁴.

It may well be argued that illustrating the Irish contribution with some examples from throughout the century of the middle-class Irish does not, in reality, refute the argument that the Irish migrants were a drain on the English Church's resources. The labouring Irish represented by far the greatest portion of migrants; they were the poorest in all respects, having few financial or social resources to contribute to the rebuilding project – a project made all the more urgent by their very presence. In suggesting the three phases of building the second, labouring, phase was shown to rely specifically on large numbers making very small donations over a prolonged period of time – the penny contributions. Examples were given and also the particular case of St Walburge's, where unable even to give pennies, the men gave their labour instead.

Discussions on Irish migration have tended to focus on well-defined geographical areas

⁶¹ CD 1850, 108

⁶² Unfortunately a search in the Westminster diocesan archives did not yield the name of the gentlemen on this committee. The history of St Patrick's simply states that they were "Irish".

⁶³ Blom, et al., eds, *Coghlan Letters*, xxx

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, xxxii

such as the mills in Lancashire and Yorkshire; the industrial areas around Tyneside and in the Midlands around Wolverhampton and Birmingham; and in various employments in London. There was also a pre-dominance of Irish labourers in many ports as dockers and other labourers. One must include in this list the various military establishments. From the beginning of the century Catholics in the lower ranks of the Army and Navy were invariably Irish recruits. Before the mid-century, when Catholic chaplains were formally appointed to the Services, some missions were founded specifically to minister to Catholics in nearby barracks.

There is evidence that both the Admiralty and the Board of Ordnance (the administrative bodies of the Navy and Army respectively) were supportive of religious ministry even if, occasionally, the law or prejudice within a regiment created difficulties. In 1795 the mission at Greenwich, which had assumed responsibility for Catholic sailors in the Royal Hospital, acknowledged the “very liberal conduct of the Governor, and other officers of the hospital”⁶⁵; in 1842 St Patrick’s mission at Woolwich asked for help to build a church on freehold ground which was “*the Munificent Gift of Her Majesty’s late Board of Ordnance*” (original italics)⁶⁶.

Some priests who ministered to the soldiers mentioned their Irish origin as in this plea from Portsea: “May God in His mercy enlighten some pious individuals to assist the poor soldiers (stricken children of Ireland), who day and night keep watch for the protection of an earthly crown!”⁶⁷ Others, such as Abbé Voyaux de Franous when requesting funds to “relieve spiritual needs of poor soldiers” at the Royal Hospital in Chelsea, directed their appeal to Ireland⁶⁸. In 1830 42.2% of non-commissioned officers and men in the army were Irish. This fell to 30.4% in 1868 at which time the proportion of Catholics in the army was 28.4%, which suggests that most of the Catholic soldiers were Irish⁶⁹. Although Catholic chaplains were accredited to the armed services from 1836⁷⁰, this did not remove the necessity for the missionaries to continue their pastoral care of soldiers and sailors beyond that date. As the century advanced, military and naval chaplains were listed in the *Directory*. There remained throughout the period under discussion much integration of services for the military and civilians; as late as 1895, Shoeburyness included the comment “For military and civilians” after its list of services⁷¹. Again this “sharing” of priests

⁶⁵ LD 1795

⁶⁶ CD 1842 pp.13-15

⁶⁷ CD 1848 pp.55-56

⁶⁸ LD 1812

⁶⁹ Peter Karsten, “Irish Soldiers in the British Army, 1792-1922: Suborned or Subordinate?” *Journal of Social History* 17.1 (1983), 36

⁷⁰ *Army Chaplains History*, Crown Copyright, <<http://www.army.mod.uk/chaplains%5Chistory%5Cdefault.aspx>> (accessed 29/04/2011)

⁷¹ CD 1895, 120

indicates that the supply of clergy was never as secure as the bishops may have wished. In 1792, the Rev Mr Southworth in Hampshire wrote to the Bishop Douglass in London and concluded his letter thus:

After London and its environs, I am persuaded there is no place in the District, where the Catholics are so numerous, as at Portsmouth and Gosport. In such a field two labourers will find work enough, even in time of peace. Being mostly Irish, it seems reasonable that one at least of their Pastors should be of that nation.⁷²

Portsmouth and Gosport were major naval bases and it is of note that this statement was made before the (Irish) Relief Act of 1793 permitted Irishmen to join the services. This showed that the Church recognised from an early date that there were substantial numbers of Catholics in the armed services and these men, and their families, would need pastoral care. Thirty-seven missions were identified where priests ministered to the armed services.

Examples given above of Cambridge and Northampton showed that it was not just in places traditionally associated with Irish migration that there was influence. Some of the older, well-established missions expanded with an Irish presence. There had been a mission in Bath for most of the eighteenth century. In spite of the penal laws, there was a significant presence of gentry Catholics there. Bath was as popular location for visitors and an annual guide to the facilities and attractions was published under the title of *New Bath Guide*. When the Benedictines launched their appeal in 1777 to build a larger this *Guide* in 1780 mentioned that the new chapel was required on the grounds of “the rapidly rising Catholic population of Bath, with its substantial Irish element”⁷³. The Irish in Bath were two distinct groups, young emigrants, particularly women, who went into domestic service and gentry, often in search of a fortune through marriage.

The role of an Irish prelate in the opening of a mission in Leamington has been told above⁷⁴. Leamington was a spa town and entertained many visitors; as such many domestic servants would have been employed there. These were often young Irish single women employed in private houses or in the many hotels in the town. One can imagine a conversation taking place between the Irish prelate and an hotel servant once their common Irish origins had been established. Although there was a mission at Wappenbury which was occasionally elided into one entry with Leamington in the *Directory*, such were the working conditions of servants at this time, that there would have been no certainty that they could afford the time to attend Sunday worship in a nearby town (Wappenbury is about five miles from Leamington).

⁷² Southworth, *Bp Douglass Letters*, , Item 27*

⁷³ Williams, ed., *Bath*, 67

⁷⁴ See p. 56 above

The impoverishment mentioned regarding many of the very large congregations was not the sole preserve of the cities of industrial England. In 1850 the Rev Mr Guidez, attached to a mission in Hertford, appealed for support for a mission which he had previously founded in Alderney. He visited it occasionally “until a permanent priest [could be] appointed”. There were 400 Catholics in the mission and they were all very poor. Guidez wrote that “nothing short of a miracle can help this struggling mission”⁷⁵. The growth of this mission was noteworthy, from 400 in 1850 rising to 600 in 1853. The congregation was a mixture of Irish and French “and all working people and scarcely able to afford half support to their pastor”. Instruction and catechism were given in both English and French⁷⁶. Ten years after Guidez’s first appeal, a new church with accommodation for 500 had been built; there were about 1400 Catholics there by then. A small school had ninety children in it, but assistance was needed to supply the children with “books, slates etc”⁷⁷. There was no evidence in the resources used of Irish migrants on the island of Jersey⁷⁸ although with recorded Irish labourers on both Guernsey and Alderney, research may well show that they were.

It should not be assumed that because there were so many appeals for poor missions with substantial Irish populations that the Irish Catholics in those early post-relief days were victims in need of constant support. They were prepared to defend their faith and its buildings in the face of physical or theological attack. The original mission from which that of St Mary and St Michael in Commercial Road, London, arose was destroyed by Lord George Gordon’s rioters in 1780. The priest in the mission at the time was Fr Coen and upwards of 3,000 Irish labourers were intent on defending their mass house in the face of the mob. The magistrates “dreaded the results of such a conflict” and Fr Coen yielded to their wishes and stood down his “troops”. The mission received compensation from the Government and a new chapel was built at a cost of £1500⁷⁹.

Basil Hemphill quoted a description by Mrs Marlow of attending Mass said by Bishop Challoner in 1771. Very early in the morning she and her husband arrived at a public house in a back street. She was frightened and held on to his arm. They climbed to a garret where the room was being prepared.

Soon after we heard the door-key turned and several rough footsteps entered the garret, some gentle taps and words were exchanged between a powerful-looking Irishman who kept his post close to it, and those outside, which were passwords of

⁷⁵ CD 1850, 147

⁷⁶ CD 1853, 47

⁷⁷ CD 1861, 217

⁷⁸ Kelly does not include the Channel Islands in his *Historical Notes* even though they were in the Diocese of Portsmouth; nor does he include the Isle of Man which was in Liverpool diocese.

⁷⁹ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 140

admission. The key was turned again each time anyone entered.⁸⁰

These examples show the willingness of Irishmen to defend their Catholicism in its physical manifestation as chapels.

Although many Irish migrants were unskilled, leading to labouring jobs for men and domestic service positions for women, there were skilled migrants, particularly in mining. Hard-rock mining has long been associated with Cornishmen, but there was also a cadre of skilled Irish hard-rock miners. Famously, miners from Béara in West Cork migrated to and worked in the copper mines in Butte, Montana⁸¹. There had also been copper mines in Waterford. The men, and women, were able to utilise these skills when they migrated to Cornwall and Cleator in Cumberland. The missions at Camborne (first listed 1853) and St Agnes (1875) had a significant Irish presence. According to Kelly the Catholic population in Camborne was “scarcely fifty” in 1851 but had “increased to 253” in 1853 when the chapel was in a stable loft fitted up by a Mr Pike, “a convert Gentleman”. “In 1858 the Catholic population had risen to one thousand, owing principally to Irish immigration”⁸². For several years, before a chapel was built there, Fr MacKay of Camborne “used to say Mass occasionally on Sundays at St Agnes, ‘in the kitchen of an Irish labourer’s cottage’”. A chapel was opened in 1882, the cost of which had been “generously defrayed” by Mr Pike⁸³.

One unusual church building project for which the Irish migrants can claim a particular influence was that at Cleator Moor in Cumberland. In the middle of the nineteenth century there was a rapid increase in population there following the discovery of hæmatite ore and the development of iron ore mining. Many Irish came to Cleator Moor, nearby Cleator and Whitehaven to work in the mines. Led by the mission priest, Dom William Gregory Holden OSB, the means to build a large church at Cleator Moor were collected. It was designed by Edward W Pugin, cost £5,000, had a capacity for 1,000 worshippers⁸⁴ and opened in 1853. This was the first church of any denomination in Cleator Moor. The Anglican church of St John the Evangelist was consecrated in June 1872⁸⁵. Later there were also chapels built by the Wesleyans (opened 1872); Presbyterians; Primitive Methodists (erected 1892); Congregationalists and the United Methodist Free Church⁸⁶.

In 1857, Bishop Turner of Salford laid the foundation stone for the new church of The

⁸⁰ Hemphill, *The Early Vicars Apostolic of England, 1685-1750*, 82-83

⁸¹ David M. Emmons, *The Butte Irish : Class and Ethnicity in an American Mining Town, 1875-1925* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989)

⁸² Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 115

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 340

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 134-135

⁸⁵ “Cleator”, in *History, Topography and Directory of Cumberland*, ed. T Bulmer (Preston: T. Bulmer and Co., 1901), 532

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 533-534

Immaculate Conception in Aspull in Lancashire. The second stone was laid by Frederick Gerard, who was the brother of Sir Robert Gerard. Reporting on the event, *The Preston Guardian* told its readers that a few days before the ceremony “a party of men, chiefly Irish, from the “Lancashire Lakes”, after finishing their day’s regular employment, came and cut the ground for the foundation, as a free-will offering to the work”⁸⁷. The attendance at the laying of the foundation was large, about “eight or nine hundred persons” and included, not only the bishop “in full pontificals” and Mr. Gerard who was a local magistrate, but also “many of the colliers in their working dresses and with their black faces, having left work to attend to this sacred duty”⁸⁸.

These various examples show instances of poor Irish congregations which were reliant on the support of others, such as at Leamington Spa, Alderney and Guernsey, but also those where Irish labourers gave of their time and skills, such as they were, even where they were unable to contribution money to defray the cost of their churches. Perhaps it would be fairer to say that the migrants represented a drain on the Church’s resources, not in terms purely of financial capability, but rather in the ability of the Church to provide pastoral care to the very many new congregations which were springing up in parts of the country from which Catholicism had until now been excised.

Having examined the contribution of the lower and middle classes, it would seem appropriate to say something of the Irish Catholic gentry. The Old English aristocracy in Ireland had similar experiences of, and made similar responses to, the recusancy laws as their counterparts in England. In so far as there were recusancy rolls in Ireland it was their names that would have appeared on them. Recusancy was rarely prosecuted beyond the Pale and the secular authorities decided in 1621 that they would no longer enforce the recusancy fines⁸⁹. Irish and English (and Scottish) aristocrats maintained a high level of social engagement with each other. In his history of the Catholic families in England in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, Mark Bence-Jones frequently mentions English aristocrats visiting cousins in Ireland, or marrying the offspring of Irish aristocratic families⁹⁰. Not only in marriage were the families aligned; many of the Irish gentry families sent their children (boys and girls) to the same schools on the continent during the penal days as their English counterparts. The inter-connectedness between the families transcended national and putative ethnic boundaries. If the middle classes suffered ethnic fade, the upper classes inhabited a curious middle world. These Irish aristocrats would, probably, have had “mutative identity” imposed on them by their location – Irish when

⁸⁷ “Laying the Foundation Stone of a New Catholic Church”, *The Preston Guardian* 21 March 1857., 5

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 5

⁸⁹ MacCulloch, *Reformation*, 398

⁹⁰ Mark Bence-Jones, *The Catholic Families* (London: Constable, 1995), 229-230

they were in Britain and English when they were in Ireland

It is difficult to ascribe migration from Ireland to Britain to the upper classes as they moved freely between both countries. To what extent the Irish upper classes may have influenced British Catholics to support Catholicism's advance is unknown. Occasionally one will find reference to their contribution. Little states that Lord Kenmare was a major benefactor of the new chapel at Cheltenham in 1809⁹¹. Kenmare was one of the foremost Irish gentry involved in negotiations with the government on Catholic Relief in Ireland in the late eighteenth century. Many of the gentry held estates in both Ireland and England, and some held titles in the nobility of both countries. John Talbot, patron of A W N Pugin, usually referred to as the 16th Earl of Shrewsbury, was also Earl of Waterford and of Wexford and was patron of a number of charities. When he was listed in the *Directories* in connection with charities which had a distinctively Irish focus, his Irish titles were given. In the section on charities of the 1844 *Directory* the "Earl of Shrewsbury" was President of the Catholic Institute of Great Britain⁹², whereas the President of St Patrick's Charity Schools, and Asylum for Female Orphans was the Right Honourable the Earl of Shrewsbury and Waterford⁹³.

5.2 Irish Faith – Tridentine or not?

Many of the incidentals of pre-Reformation Christianity which were not strictly scriptural represented the faith of the people. These included aspects of traditional religion generally known as sacramentals: holy water or candles blessed on Candlemass Day. Eamon Duffy argued that these sacramentals should be seen, not as aspects of paganism and objects of superstition, but rather of "lay Christianity". From the liturgy for blessing these objects, people believed that they became imbued with the power of Christ and His Cross and in the hands of the laity could be used to ward off the Devil, for example, by lighting the blessed candle during thunderstorms or by placing it in the hands of the dying⁹⁴.

Sacramentals were abolished in England during the Reformation.

The old order of Catholicism survived in Ireland – to some extent. It did not survive in its entirety as it did in those parts of Europe which remained Catholic, such as Bavaria, Spain or Italy. In Ireland, the superposition of a Protestant authority over a mainly Catholic populace created a situation unprecedented in Europe. The political difficulties in Ireland meant that Tridentine reforms could not be implemented fully. Attempts to do so were

⁹¹ Little, *Churches*, 60

⁹² CD 1844, 128

⁹³ CD 1844, 135

⁹⁴ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars : Traditional Religion in England C.1400-C.1580* (New Haven ; London: Yale University Press, 1992), 281-283

doomed to failure or had only sporadic or transient success. The reforms were not unknown in Ireland, the hierarchy was represented at the Council of Trent by three bishops – Thomas O’Herlihy (Ross), Eugene O’Hart (Achonry) and Donal MacCongail (Raphoe)⁹⁵ and Irish priests would have learnt of the reforms whilst training in the seminaries on the continent.

The Irish Church had the advantage of retaining its hierarchy and parish structure through the centuries of proscription, although, due to the absence of bishops and other difficulties, this was often more theoretical than reality. Acts of the Dublin Parliament in 1697 which banished all regular priests, and 1703 which required secular priests to register with the authorities were an attempt to extirpate Catholicism by removing its priests. No further registrations of priests were permitted after 1703, the intention being to deprive Catholics in Ireland of priests within a generation. In spite of the law, the Church recovered somewhat so that by 1730, with new episcopal appointments, all but two of the twenty six dioceses had bishops. Ironically, it was then that Rome took a hand, and almost succeeded where the civil authorities had failed. The Vatican issued a rescript in 1742 forbidding Irish Bishops from ordaining more than twelve men during their episcopate. This was followed in 1750 by another which forbade Irish regular orders from accepting novices; candidates for the regulars had to undertake their novitiate and pre-ordination training in a continental house of their order⁹⁶. All of these circumstances would have led to a reduction in the number of priests available and, coupled with the penal laws which forbade any form of Catholic involvement in education, meant that much religious education in Ireland was undertaken by hedge-schoolmasters. As these were informal schools, the religious education given was reliant on the knowledge of the schoolmaster.

In the early nineteenth century rapid population growth caused the ratio of priests to people in Ireland to become rather problematic. Larkin quotes from the 1839 *Irish Catholic Directory* which gave priest to people ratios in France of one to 800; in Austria one to 750 and in Prussia one to 900. French ecclesiastical authorities thought that their ratio was too high and that one to 650 would have been ideal⁹⁷. Bossy estimated that in England there were approximately 380 priests in 1770, and about 80,000 Catholics which gives a figure of one priest to 210 Catholics in England and Wales at that time⁹⁸. Larkin comments that the continental figures were based on long-established Tridentine models of pastoral care, contrary to the situation which prevailed in Ireland. A more realistic ratio, according to Larkin, “for providing adequate pastoral care for the Catholic community in pre-famine

⁹⁵ O’Connell, *The Irish College at Santiago De Compostela, 1605-1769*, Fn1 15

⁹⁶ Larkin, *Pastoral Role*, 29

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9-10

⁹⁸ Bossy, *English Catholic*, 422

Ireland, especially given the more modest pastoral expectations of that community, would be about one priest to 1,700 people.⁹⁹

The ratios for the four ecclesiastical provinces in Ireland 1840 were

Armagh	one to 2,760
Cashel	one to 2,970
Dublin	one to 2,150
Tuam	one to 3,080
Nationally	one to 2,750 ¹⁰⁰ .

The “more modest pastoral expectations” of Irish Catholics compared to their continental co-religionists was probably the result of generations of experience; through the penal days, Irish Catholics had received, not a Tridentine model of pastoral care, but a model which was practicable under the existing legal restrictions. The Tridentine model assumed a Catholic civil power rather than one determinedly inimical to the Church and its adherents. The other factor was that the Catholic Church in Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century was institutionally poor, and such pastoral care as it could give was all that it could afford.

This is the context in which the Catholicism of Irish migrants to England must be considered. Sheridan Gilley, commenting that the Irish were still attached to customs such as “the wake for the dead”, wrote that “their religion was still permeated by an ancient pre-Christian folklore driven underground in much of Catholic Europe by the Counter-Reformation”¹⁰¹. Bossy was more trenchant stating that the religion of Irish migrants to England “was still a folk-religion, barely touched by the counter-Reformation, short on formal instruction, and unfamiliar with the obligations of regular religious observance and sacramental practice”¹⁰². Heimann states that even where they did practise, migrants’ expressions of their faith was often mixed with “superstitious” elements or “at any rate nationally specific customs such as the wake and pattern”¹⁰³

An interesting exposition of Irish migrant religion is given by E P Thomson. Thompson claims that the “most enduring cultural tradition which the Irish peasantry” brought with them to England was that of a

semi-feudal nationalist Church. In the most squalid of cellars there might be still be found some of the hocus-pocus of Romanism, the candlesticks, the crucifix, and the ‘showy-coloured prints of saints and martyrs’ alongside the print of O’Connell, the

⁹⁹ Larkin, *Pastoral Role*, 10

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 10

¹⁰¹ Gilley, “Catholic Church”, 351

¹⁰² Bossy, *English Catholic*, 316

¹⁰³ Heimann, *Catholic Devotion*, 13-14

‘Liberator’¹⁰⁴.

Thompson’s use of the pejorative terms “Romanism” and “hocus-pocus” calls into question his dismissal of the validity of their faith.

The term “folk religion” seems judgemental and somewhat dismissive. Renaming such practices “lay Christianity” changes their meaning. The Irish were much attached to waking their dead. The old Gaelic tradition of mourning included memorialising the dead before interment and hospitality was offered to those who came to do so. Thus obsequies in Christianised Ireland became a mixture of this traditional memorialising, keening¹⁰⁵ and the requiem liturgy.

When one of Máire Ní Dhuibh’s (O’Donoghue’s) sons had died, a relative’s wife – a Mrs Charles Philip O’Connell, newly settled amongst the Gaels, ignorant of their immemorial customs – came to the wake, and fell on her knees in silent prayer. Máire Ní Dhuibh herself looked on in astonishment; and at last, failing to contain herself, broke out upon her in violent abuse. Was this her way of making grief? Had she no word of praise or sorrow to cry above the dead? Then, as if to teach her, she clapped her hands and gave free utterance to her suddenly-raised emotion in a flood of words: “Where are the dark women of the glens, who would keen and clap their hands and would not say a prayer until the corpse was laid in the grave?”¹⁰⁶

Daniel Corkery told this tale by way of introducing the elegies of Aodhagán Ó Rathaille (1670-1728). Ó Rathaille lived through the transition from the old Gaelic high cultural order to the new Anglicised order. As much as Ó Rathaille embodied the transition of the old Gaelic cultural order this tale tells of the encounter between the Gaelic and Anglicised traditions of grieving.

Máire Ní Dhuibh and Mrs O’Connell represented two aspects of evolving Catholic culture in Ireland. Mrs O’Connell came to pray for the deceased; Máire Ní Dhuibh wanted him memorialised. The “wake” as it survived, particularly in rural Ireland blended the Gaelic and Catholic rituals. Wakes are still held today. The body is laid in the best room of the house and relatives and close friends of the family will keep vigil through the night. In Adrigole on the Béara peninsula in the early twentieth century the “wake took place over twenty-four hours before the body was removed to the church and mourners used the time to tell stories about the person and in this way their life was celebrated”. Mourners would join in saying the Rosary and “[a]s with weddings, beer and whiskey was served” as well as “tea, bracks and cakes”¹⁰⁷.

¹⁰⁴ E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Pelican Books, New edition (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 480

¹⁰⁵ Keening was the tradition of public wailing for the dead; it is an Anglicisation from the Gaelic word *caoin* meaning to cry or to wail. During the wake women who were “professional” keeners would attend to maintain the wailing deemed appropriate for the deceased.

¹⁰⁶ Corkery, *Hidden Ireland* 164

¹⁰⁷ Eileen O’Leary, ed., *Adrigole - the Jewel on the Ring* (Adrigole, Co Cork: The Caha Centre, 2007) 97

Although wakes became uniquely associated with Irish death rituals, they were a traditional part of Christianity, as J P Coghlan reminded his readers in 1791:

Wakes, or Country Feasts – are usually observed on Sunday next after the Saint's Day, to whom the Parish Church is dedicated; and took origin from a Letter written by St *Gregory* the Great to St *Melitus*, Abbot, who was sent into England with St *Augustine*, in these words: "It may therefore be permitted them (the *English*) that on the Dedication Days, or other solemn days of Martyrs, they make them Bowers about their Churches, and refreshing themselves, and feasting together after a good religious sort, kill their Oxen now to the Praise of God, and Increase of Charity; which before they were wont to sacrifice to the Devil

To this Coghlan appended the explanation that "they are called Wakes, because on the Vigils of those Feasts people were wont at Night to awake from Sleep, and go to Prayers."¹⁰⁸ Coghlan was quoting from *Bede's Ecclesiastical History. Chap. 30*. Bede was reporting the sanctioning by Pope Gregory the Great of the transmutation of pagan celebrations into Christian ones. The term "vigil" may be more associated with religious rituals which occurred on the evening before a feast-day. It is apparent from Coghlan's addendum that a "wake" was not an uncommon event.

The second aspect of popular Irish Catholicism to be considered is pilgrimages. In national terms, the most famous were those to Croagh Patrick in County Mayo and Lough Derg (St Patrick's Purgatory) in Co Donegal. Pilgrimages, particularly because of the favours sought through undertaking them – spiritual in the form of indulgences or physical in the form of a cure – were also abolished during the Reformation. Lough Derg pilgrimages were suppressed by order of the Privy Council of Ireland in 1632. The destruction of everything on the island was personally supervised by the Anglican bishop of Clogher, James Spottiswoode¹⁰⁹. In spite of this, pilgrimages seemed to have continued as 5,000 pilgrims were reported in 1700. By Act of Parliament in 1704, a fine of 10 shillings or a public whipping was imposed for going to such places of pilgrimage in Ireland¹¹⁰. Both the Croagh Patrick and Lough Derg pilgrimages continue to this day.

Thirdly there were the "pattern" celebrations. Patterns were local saints' feast-days, often celebrated around an ancient sacred site possibly of pagan origin. This was not unusual; Christianity often used the local cultures of peoples in its early days of expansion to assist in its efforts at proselytising, but it should not be assumed that all Christian festivals have evolved from pagan ones as Ronald Hutton has shown¹¹¹. Angela Robinson, an anthropologist, has studied the Mi'kmaq people of Nova Scotia and has commented on

¹⁰⁸ LD 1791

¹⁰⁹ *Lough Derg, Historical Chronology*, <<http://www.loughderg.ie/index.cfm/area/information/page/historical>> (accessed 19/04/2010)

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*,

¹¹¹ Ronald Hutton, *Stations of the Sun : A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), *passim*

their particular devotion to St Anne, Mother of the Virgin Mary and grandmother of Jesus. Grandmothers have traditionally held a special place in Mi'kmaw society and since their conversion to Catholicism, the celebration of grandmothers and St Anne have been joined into a communal celebration on July 26th each year (the feast of St Anne)¹¹². These celebrations have religious and secular portions.

Some patterns would have included prayers at the local holy well in their ritual. Once the religious ceremonies were complete, celebrations of a more secular character would take over. Local, and national, celebrations of this kind, the mixing of religious and secular, were familiar to Christians throughout pre-Reformation Europe. In many of the towns and cities of Europe which were untouched by the Reformation, these festivals continue today. In prohibiting such festivals, Protestantism severed the link between popular and formal religion.

The objections of the Irish hierarchy to traditional religious celebrations were not doctrinal – it was the misbehaviour of those who attended after the completion of the religious observances, particularly, sexual impropriety and the over-indulgence in alcohol. At its most basic, they were embarrassed in front of their Protestant neighbours! Licentiousness existed elsewhere. In Regensburg, the beginning of lent is marked by Carnival, at once a secular and religious festive occasion. Until recently there was a parallel tradition of holding a penitential service to atone for the sins committed during Carnival¹¹³. But Regensburg is in Catholic Bavaria.

The monolithic, dogmatic, rule-bound, pre-Vatican II Catholicism is often seen as the genuine “Tridentine Church”. That form of Catholicism owed more to the political upheavals which engulfed the Papacy in the late nineteenth century, in particular the loss of temporal power over the Papal States, than the strict implementation of the reforms of Trent. Although the Council of Trent confirmed many of the medieval teachings of the Church; clarified some such as the use of images as an aid to prayer; and refuted Protestant “heresies” such as the doctrine of justification by faith alone, its main decrees focussed on a restructuring of elements of Church organisation such as priestly education and restating the duties of all ranks of the clergy. Adopting the reforms of the Council of Trent took considerable time across all of Catholic Europe. Particular local circumstances will have contributed to some reforms being adopted quickly whilst others were reluctantly accepted or even rejected. Joseph Bergin’s *Church, Society and Religious Change in France, 1580-1730* covers the Reformation of Catholicism in France. In his review of this work, Eric

¹¹² Angela Robinson, “‘Ways of Believing’: Mi'kmaw Catholicism and Traditionalism in Nova Scotia,” *Catholicism and Public Culture Conference* (Dun Laoghaire, Ireland: June 2009).

¹¹³ Twomey, *The End of Irish Catholicism?*, Fn.13, 180

Nelson writes:

The ... chapters ‘Saints and Shrines’ and ‘Sacraments and Sinners’ consider how the Church sought to shape well-established religious ideas and practices, including the cult of the saints, pilgrimages, processions and the sacraments ... Local and regional variations make any generalization difficult, but it is clear that church leaders sought to defend late medieval beliefs and practices in part as a response to Protestant challenges even as they sought to rein in those features that they found most troubling¹¹⁴.

At what point, it might be said that the Catholic Church in England became a “fully” Tridentine Church is not known. Certain aspects of its organisation in England in the nineteenth century did not conform to the reforms of Trent; for example, when the Continental seminaries, exiled from France during the Revolution, returned to England and were established at Ushaw in Durham and Oscott near Birmingham, they took in lay students “and none conformed in discipline or formation to the rigid structures of a Tridentine diocesan seminary”¹¹⁵.

Assessing conformity to the Tridentine reforms must take account the local situation; it should not be assumed that the faith of Catholics who did not adhere to the full discipline of Trent was a folk religion. The lack of formal education in both religious and secular subjects meant that the faith transmitted in Ireland probably lacked theological rigour. In England, greater facility existed amongst Catholics for the better transmission of the faith. Although it was not possible for the English Catholics to attend their religious duties to the extent of weekly Mass, the smaller population and the regular, if infrequent, attendance of a priest, meant that they could receive the necessary instruction and, at least, fulfil their Easter Duty as laid down by Trent¹¹⁶.

Rowlands and Williams both refer to the lack of regular practice amongst Catholics in England. Williams was discussing the mid-nineteenth century where, of over 24,000 Catholics in the Western district in 1839-40, fewer than one third (8,000) were Easter communicants. In Bath itself of the 1,800 Catholics in 1839-40, 570 were Easter communicants¹¹⁷. Of the “less committed” Catholics as discovered from the Papists Returns of 1767, Rowlands writes

These may comprise a group of Catholics whose neighbours thought of them as Catholics, who perhaps thought of themselves as Catholics but who did not fulfil their Easter duties. Were all the Catholics listed in 1767 what we should call today

¹¹⁴ Eric Nelson, “Review Of “Church, Society and Religious Change in France, 1580-1730” By Joseph Bergin (Review No. 916)” (2010), <<http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/916>> Accessed 14/01/2011.

¹¹⁵ Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests*, xiv

¹¹⁶ The Council of Trent decreed that all Catholics should confess their sins and receive Holy Communion at Easter time – Easter Duty.

¹¹⁷ Williams, ed., *Bath*, 79

‘practising’ Catholics?¹¹⁸

The larger population and, relatively, considerably fewer priests made the task of catechesis and instilling regular practice more difficult in Ireland. For most lower-class Catholics in Ireland at that time, being Catholic was expressed through performing their “Easter Duty” and accessing the rites of the Church for baptism, marriage and the last rites. Larkin makes the point that this was the level of pastoral provision expected of a greatly overworked body of clergy, and that this was the minimum which most people received¹¹⁹.

Alexis de Tocqueville, recording his experiences in Ireland in the 1830s, met with many priests and although he commented on the attachment of the people to Catholicism, he never remarked on their lack of regular practice¹²⁰. De Tocqueville came from a Catholic country and would not have seen a conflict between identification as a Catholic and irregular practice. It is also likely that for some Irish people identification as Catholic was as much oppositional to the ruling Protestants as an expression of a deep-seated faith and knowledge of Catholic doctrine, and hence the minimal attendance. De Tocqueville noted a spirituality amongst the people which remained in spite of the problems which the Church was endeavouring to overcome at that time, and he appreciated the efforts of an impoverished community who successfully built a church for themselves. Plain it may have been, but de Tocqueville realised that ornamentation was not required for a building to achieve aesthetic qualities¹²¹.

When the Church began rebuilding in Ireland after Relief, the new sites chosen for chapels were often some way away from the ancient sacred sites. Many nineteenth-century churches were built in the towns, usually in the main street. Often they were particularly prominent buildings, and with a hint of triumphalism about them. This rebuilding in many ways marked a new beginning for Catholicism in Ireland, but it also fractured the association with the ancient holy places – by moving the churches into the centre of towns, the sacred sites of the old traditions were marginalised. Not only were the locations changed, but also the dedications. William Smyth tells of the new chapel built in the parish of Shanrahan in Co Tipperary. Shanrahan’s patron saint is St Cathaldus. On his way back from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land Cathaldus stopped at Taranto in Southern Italy. There his feast is celebrated with great festivities. In contrast, in his native village in Ireland, a new church was built in 1830. It was situated on the main street of the town between the

¹¹⁸ Marie B Rowlands, "The New People," in *English Catholics of Parish and Town, 1558-1778*, ed. Marie B Rowlands (London: Catholic Record Society, 1999) 286-352, 265

¹¹⁹ Larkin, *Pastoral Role*, 4

¹²⁰ J P Mayer, ed., *Alexis DeTocqueville Journeys to England and Ireland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), 118-193

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 169

barracks and the courthouse. It was dedicated to St Mary¹²².

Because the Reformation was not as effective in Ireland as in England, popular religion remained. In the circumstances described above, the grasp of the fundamentals of their faith exhibited by Irish labourers was quite reasonable.

Thomas Bridgett converted to Catholicism in 1850, just after leaving St John's College Cambridge. Thirty years later Bridgett wrote of the influences which brought him into the Church, one of which was a conversation which he had with an Irish labourer when he accompanied a university friend to visit the Catholic church in Cambridge; having found the chapel after some difficulty they got the keys from "a poor Catholic man". Bridgett's friend was inclined to tease the poor man and asked him "Why Paddy do you think you've got the truth all to yourselves down in this little back street, and all our learned doctors and divines in this University are in error?"

The answer that "Paddy" gave was this
"Well, sir, I suppose they're very learned, but they can't agree together, while we are all one"¹²³.

In his descriptions of the costermongers of London, Henry Mayhew gave examples of Irish street sellers who, claiming Catholicism, at least exhibited a rudimentary knowledge of the tenets of their faith. According to Mayhew "The religious fervour of the people ... was intense". Their theology may not have been profound but he was complimentary of their religious knowledge compared to that of the Protestant street traders who, he said "neither had nor knew any religion whatever"¹²⁴. Booth's impressions were similar to those of Mayhew. "Among Catholics", Booth says "they are early Christians. They remind one of the Primitive Methodists in their simplicity and their freedom alike from intellectual subtleties, emotional excitement, or the undercurrents of superstition in connection with their faith"¹²⁵.

In discussing the faith of Irish Catholic migrants, consideration has to be given as to when in the century they migrated. The campaign to remove patterns, wakes and local pilgrimages from the local Catholic practice because of licentiousness turned a vibrant living faith into a form of Catholicism which was quieter and more reserved than heretofore and probably would not have been recognised as such by those on the Continent where Catholicism had remained undisturbed. Building churches away from the traditional sacred spaces and changing the dedications from the old local saints removed from the people their sense of connection with the generations who had gone before them. This engendered a sense of rootlessness and may have been a factor in the high rate of leakage

¹²² William Smyth, "Explorations of Space", in *Ireland - Towards a Sense of Place*, ed. Joseph Lee (Cork: Cork University Press, 1985) 1-21, 5

¹²³ Couve de Murville and Jenkins, *Cambridge*, 109

¹²⁴ Mayhew. *Of the Religion of the Street-Irish*, 107-108

¹²⁵ Booth, et al., *Life and Labour of the People in London. Third Series: Religious Influences*, 247

which so concerned the English bishops in the later part of the nineteenth century.

Larkin described the renewal of Irish Catholicism after the Famine as a “devotional revolution”¹²⁶. Following his latest volume this view must be more nuanced, but there is no doubt that Irish Catholicism post-Famine was more recognisably Tridentine in practice than pre-Famine. One of the most influential figures in achieving this was Cardinal Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Armagh (1850-1852) and Dublin (1852-1878). Cullen drove the re-invention of Irish Catholicism into a form which was at once acceptable to the Roman Curia and the Protestant Government in the United Kingdom, but one must ask to what extent, if at all, Cullen endeavoured to “shape well-established religious ideas and practices” or to defend “late medieval beliefs and practices” so that the faith and religion of the people of Ireland retained its essence.

Politicians and bishops from O’Connell to Cullen managed to conflate “Irish” and “Catholic”. Colin Barr has argued that through his contacts in Rome, Cardinal Paul Cullen succeeded in imposing like-minded bishops of Irish origin throughout the British Empire and in the United States and thus created Catholic Churches which were essentially offshoots of the Irish church or, as Barr called it, *Imperium in Imperio*¹²⁷. This was not the traditional faith of the Irish people – that had been lost in the Great Famine and, together with the removal of churches to new locations away from the traditional sacred sites, led to a disconnection between the Irish people and their historical faith.

5.3 Leakage

The issue of leakage is often linked to the non-Tridentine practice associated with the Irish migrants. This is a reasonable argument on the grounds that as they were not accustomed to practising in their homeland one should not be surprised that they did not take up the practice when they were in a strange land where they would have to actively seek out a church to attend. This would become even more difficult if they were living and working in a town where at the time of their arrival there was as yet no local Catholic church and they would thus be obliged to find the nearest church in another town.

Hugh McLeod suggests a four-fold gradation of Catholicity – those whose lives were focussed on the Church and regular attendance; those who did not attend but sent their children to Catholic schools; those who could happily live their lives without a priest but would not consider dying without one; and those who were Catholic in the sense that they

¹²⁶ Emmet J. Larkin, *Historical Dimensions of Irish Catholicism* (Washington D.C., Dublin: Catholic University of America Press, Four Courts Press, 1997)

¹²⁷ Colin Barr, "Imperium in Imperio: Irish Episcopal Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century" *The English Historical Review* 123.502 (2008)

were not Protestant¹²⁸. Many of the latter two categories identified strongly as Catholics and many of the Irishmen mentioned in this thesis as defending the Church against physical attack may well have been of Catholics of the latter two types. Inglis discusses the question of leakage at some length referring to the discussions held amongst Catholics in the last decades of the nineteenth century¹²⁹. It is apparent from this that it was a concern at the time and various causes were suggested and solutions were proffered. Causes included living amongst people who cared nothing for religious practice so that there was not the social habit of attending church on Sunday morning in an area; mixed marriages¹³⁰; and also that the poor simply did not have the clothes to wear to church. This last was seen as an “English” problem¹³¹. Booth mentioned leakage, but used the more usually applied Catholic term of “lapsing”. He agreed that the “tendency to lapse [was] due to the spirit of the age, which it [was] impossible that Catholics should entirely escape, and which [became] an especial danger when Catholics [were] scattered among a non-Catholic population”¹³². Manning thought that the leakage was the major stumbling block against the conversion of England and that the cause was that there were not enough churches or priests¹³³. The solutions proffered included not building large churches for the wealthy but rather build for the working class; ending the charging for seats; and more activity by the wealthier members of the laity¹³⁴. The bishops and priests might complain that the laity were “lazy”¹³⁵ and were not doing anything like enough to help the clergy but on the other hand the laity could point to clerical reluctance to involve them¹³⁶.

The figures given above for the non-Communicants in the Western District in 1839-1840¹³⁷ would support an argument that the inaccessibility of churches and chapels was a contributory factor¹³⁸. The Western District comprised the counties of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon and Cornwall along with all of Wales. There were but fifty one missions in that whole area in 1839, thirteen of which were in Wales. People with no transport would have had great difficulty getting to Mass every Sunday. The problem of leakage should not be seen as one peculiarly pertaining to Irish migrants. Inglis refers to the “Law of Social Habit”¹³⁹ where it has been found that when

¹²⁸ McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City*, 34

¹²⁹ Inglis, *Working Classes*, 121-139

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 129

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 130

¹³² Booth, et al., *Life and Labour of the People in London. Third Series: Religious Influences*, 244

¹³³ Inglis, *Working Classes*, 122

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 129

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 131

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 136

¹³⁷ See p.131 above

¹³⁸ This argument would not be valid for the city of Bath where there were three missions in 1839.

¹³⁹ Inglis, *Working Classes*, 327

one generation stops practising, the following generations rarely take it up. The particular circumstances in both Ireland and Britain during the years of proscription meant that there were few Catholics who could attend mass every Sunday. The emphasis in Ireland had always been on doing their Easter Duty, hence the growth of Station masses.

There may be another factor, which has occasionally been alluded to, but the argument has not been developed further. Patrick Corish quoted Fr Thomas Mahon OFM who, in 1748, regularly heard the confessions of Irish migrant workers in the chapel in Lincoln's Inn Fields, and said that there were "ten Irish for one English confession ... I have met with numbers who have not been for years together for want of an Irish confessor"¹⁴⁰. Denis Gwynn mentions an Italian priest in South Wales¹⁴¹, Fr Signini¹⁴², who "had found it necessary to compile for his own use a small conversation book in Irish, so that he could hear confessions"¹⁴³. Confession is the one sacrament of the Church for which a common language between the priest and the person confessing is absolutely required. In other pastoral situations an interpreter may be used if a common language does not exist, but not in confession. Thus, as Fr Mahon found, for a person not proficient in English if there were not a priest available who spoke the appropriate language that person could not confess their sins. Without confession, they are *de facto* excommunicated as they may not receive Communion. In such a situation, many may have been forced to rely on the Church for the rites of passage only.

No evidence of any official concern in the nineteenth-century Church for those Irish migrants who were deficient in English has come to light¹⁴⁴. At the time when Fr Mahon was writing the lower-class Irish migrants were more likely to be monolingual Irish speakers on arrival in England. This situation probably continued until the middle of the nineteenth century. It is known from various sources¹⁴⁵ that Irish was frequently spoken amongst the migrants. The Minutes Book of the Bishops' Annual Meetings from 1850 onwards contains records of all the decisions made at those meetings, but not the discussions which led to the decisions. Before each meeting, bishops were asked to submit, to the Archbishop of Westminster, topics for discussion or questions; these were also recorded in the Minutes Book. There is no record of any question being asked; nor of

¹⁴⁰ Corish, *Catholic Community*, 93

¹⁴¹ There has been a long established Italian community in and around Cardiff in South Wales.

¹⁴² Fr Signini, a Rosminian, was ordained in 1841; died 1889 Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests*, 246

¹⁴³ Denis Gwynn, "The Irish Immigration", in *The English Catholics 1850-1950*, ed. G A Beck (London: Burns Oates, 1950) 264-290, 268;

¹⁴⁴ Nicholas Wolf says that the "definitive assessment remains that the hierarchy [in Ireland] in the words of Brian O Cuiv, "never planned collectively" to make certain that Irish-speaking priests were available for pastoral care". Nicholas M. Wolf, "The Irish-Speaking Clergy in the Nineteenth Century: Education, Trends, and Timing" *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua* 12.4 (2008), 63

¹⁴⁵ Gwynn, "Irish Immigration," 267-268; Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 480

any request for a discussion on the issue; nor of any decision being made concerning the lack of the English language amongst Irish migrants. Writing of the language issue in the Irish Catholic Church in the nineteenth century, Nicholas Wolf relies on “the definitive assessment” by Brian Ó Cuiv “that the hierarchy ... ‘never planned collectively’ to make certain that Irish-speaking priests were available for pastoral care” in Ireland¹⁴⁶. It should be said, that there is no mention in the English Bishops’ minutes of any problems which speakers of any other language might have had either.

Although the *Directories* were published *cum permissu superiorum*, it was not until 1840 that the Vicar Apostolic, London and later the Archbishop of Westminster took control of its publication. However, as it frequently published on matters of concern to the Church’s leaders before 1840, it can be used as a source to discern those concerns when no other source exists. A brief review of the mention of foreign languages, i.e. not English, in the *Directories* will show the extent of the use of foreign languages, including Irish, in the English Church.

In England the diverse ethnic origins of the Catholic community had long been evident by the entries in the *Directory* which indicated sermons or discourses in foreign languages. In 1800 the *Directory* listed a number of “French Chapels”. These were for the émigré priests and Catholics who had fled from the Revolution in France. The chapel in Dudley Court in London advertised catechisms and sermons in French¹⁴⁷; that of St Louis de France continued to advertise a discourse in French until 1886¹⁴⁸. In 1810 it was announced that a chapel had lately been established for the benefit “of some thousand German Roman Catholics ... After High Mass on Sunday either a sermon or discourse in the German language”¹⁴⁹ was given. This chapel made frequent appeals for support as it was ministering to “poor foreigners” who were “the poorest class of catholics in the Metropolis”. In doing so it provided a “spiritual home to friendless and destitute foreigners”¹⁵⁰. In 1840 it was listed as The German Chapel¹⁵¹ and three years later it was holding catechism classes for the children of “poor foreigners”¹⁵²; until 1895 the mission advertised a German sermon on Sundays¹⁵³. Later in the century there was a migration of Poles and Lithuanians to Britain¹⁵⁴ and a Polish mission was established at St Chad’s in

¹⁴⁶ Wolf, "The Irish-Speaking Clergy in the Nineteenth Century: Education, Trends, and Timing", 63

¹⁴⁷ LD 1800

¹⁴⁸ CD 1886, 102

¹⁴⁹ LD 1810

¹⁵⁰ LD 1837, 5

¹⁵¹ CD 1840, 617

¹⁵² CD 1843, 6

¹⁵³ CD 1895 pp.106-107

¹⁵⁴ Rogers says that the Lithuanians were “more commonly” called ‘Poles’ Murdoch Rogers, “The Lithuanians” *History Today* 35.July (1985), 16

Manchester. Confession was available in “English, Czech, French, German, Hungarian, Italian, Latin, Lithnish (sic), Polish, and Russian” and the pastors at the mission requested information be given to them on any Poles, Lithuanians or Ruthenians who were dangerously ill¹⁵⁵. This last type of request was often made by missions to foreigners in England. With the exception of the mission of St Patrick’s at Soho, no mission was advertised in the *Directories* as having been set up to minister primarily to Irish migrants although many, as has been seen in this thesis, did in fact do so. The corollary to this is that pastoral care in the Irish language was not advertised until much later in the century.

The Bermondsey mission in south London had a congregation which was primarily labouring Irish. An Irish priest, Fr Shaw, had founded the mission and he endowed it in 1773. Shaw’s endowment included a condition that there should always be an Irish-speaking priest in Bermondsey¹⁵⁶. At no time, from 1795 to 1908, did this mission advertise the availability of any ministry in Irish. St Patrick’s in Soho offered no Irish language services either, although confession was available in Spanish from 1872¹⁵⁷. A mission in Gateshead founded in 1852 had about 40% Irish in its congregation. The following year it offered a sermon in Italian¹⁵⁸. The second mission in Southwark, founded in 1852 and claiming a congregation “exclusively labouring Irish”, from 1856 offered confession in English and German¹⁵⁹.

One might argue that the Irish speakers were mainly of the poorer classes and therefore highly unlikely to buy the *Directory* and thus discover where there was pastoral care offered in Irish, except that the “poor foreigners” for whom the German mission was established were surely just as unlikely to discover its existence in the *Directory*. Evidence of the use of the Irish language is non-existent in the *Directories* until 1852, when St George’s in Southwark advertised a discourse in “the Irish language” at the 6.30 a.m. Mass on Sundays¹⁶⁰. This was last advertised in 1858.

There were a number of factors at work here. While the Poles, Germans and Lithuanians were definitely “foreign”, the Irish were part of the United Kingdom, and therefore, presumably, deemed not to be in need of special treatment or consideration. As against this, strenuous efforts were made by the Vicar Apostolic in Wales to provide Welsh speaking priests for Welsh speakers¹⁶¹. The Vicar Apostolic for the Western District (which included Wales) was Patron of the *Catholic Society for the distribution of Welsh Prayer*

¹⁵⁵ CD 1900, 257

¹⁵⁶ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 74

¹⁵⁷ CD 1872, 105

¹⁵⁸ CD 1853, 215

¹⁵⁹ CD 1856, 42

¹⁶⁰ CD 1852, 38

¹⁶¹ CD 1842, 45

Books, &c.. This was necessary “as the Welsh are in many places totally ignorant of the English language”¹⁶². The Welsh were obviously not foreign either; but the difference was that the Welsh-speaking priest was required, not to minister to Welsh-speaking Catholics, of whom there were very few, but rather to proselytise. There were parallels with the Protestant Evangelical organisations which brought Irish speakers to preach to the Irish in London and elsewhere in England.

Such provision as was available seemed to be left to the efforts of the individual mission priests such as Fr Signini mentioned above and there were priests who did strive to ameliorate the situation. A new missionary rector was appointed to Islington in 1882. Fr Leopold Pycke was Belgian born and trained¹⁶³; whilst at Islington he heard confessions in French, Flemish, Dutch and Irish. This was the earliest advertisement of Irish as a language for confessions. All the other entries were added in 1915; even Bermondsey, whose endowment required an Irish-speaking priest, did not offer Irish until 1915. St Patrick’s Soho founded for the poor Irish denizens of St Giles never offered confessions in Irish. As will be discussed in the next chapter, from early in the twentieth century a specific effort to list the languages in which confession could be heard was made. A search through the Directories shows that, except for Islington, it was not until 1915 that any other missions offered Irish language confessions. In that year five missions did so – Bermondsey, Bow, Camberwell, Islington and Tyne Dock

Finding Irish-speaking priests would have been a problem. Since its foundation Maynooth’s curriculum had been delivered in English and Latin, but yet as Nicholas Wolf has shown there were in Maynooth throughout the century a good proportion of Irish-speaking priests¹⁶⁴. The All Hallows seminary in Dublin was founded in 1842 to train priests for the “English speaking world”. Fitzgerald-Lombard aggregated the seminaries which trained priests for the English mission in the nineteenth century; Maynooth and All Hallows supplied the largest number from Ireland, 131 and 116 respectively, about one quarter of the total of Irish priests¹⁶⁵. It should not be assumed that the other Irish-born priests were trained in Ireland as candidates for the priesthood continued to go to the Irish Colleges on the continent even in the nineteenth century whilst others were trained in England. Fr James Lyons who ministered in Dublin in the mid-eighteenth century (and would therefore have been trained abroad) confessed to a “deficiency in my native language, which for the greater part I forgot when I was in the college”¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶² LD 1836, 43

¹⁶³ Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests*, 12

¹⁶⁴ Wolf, "The Irish-Speaking Clergy in the Nineteenth Century: Education, Trends, and Timing", 67

¹⁶⁵ Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests*, 361}

¹⁶⁶ Corish, *Catholic Community*, 93

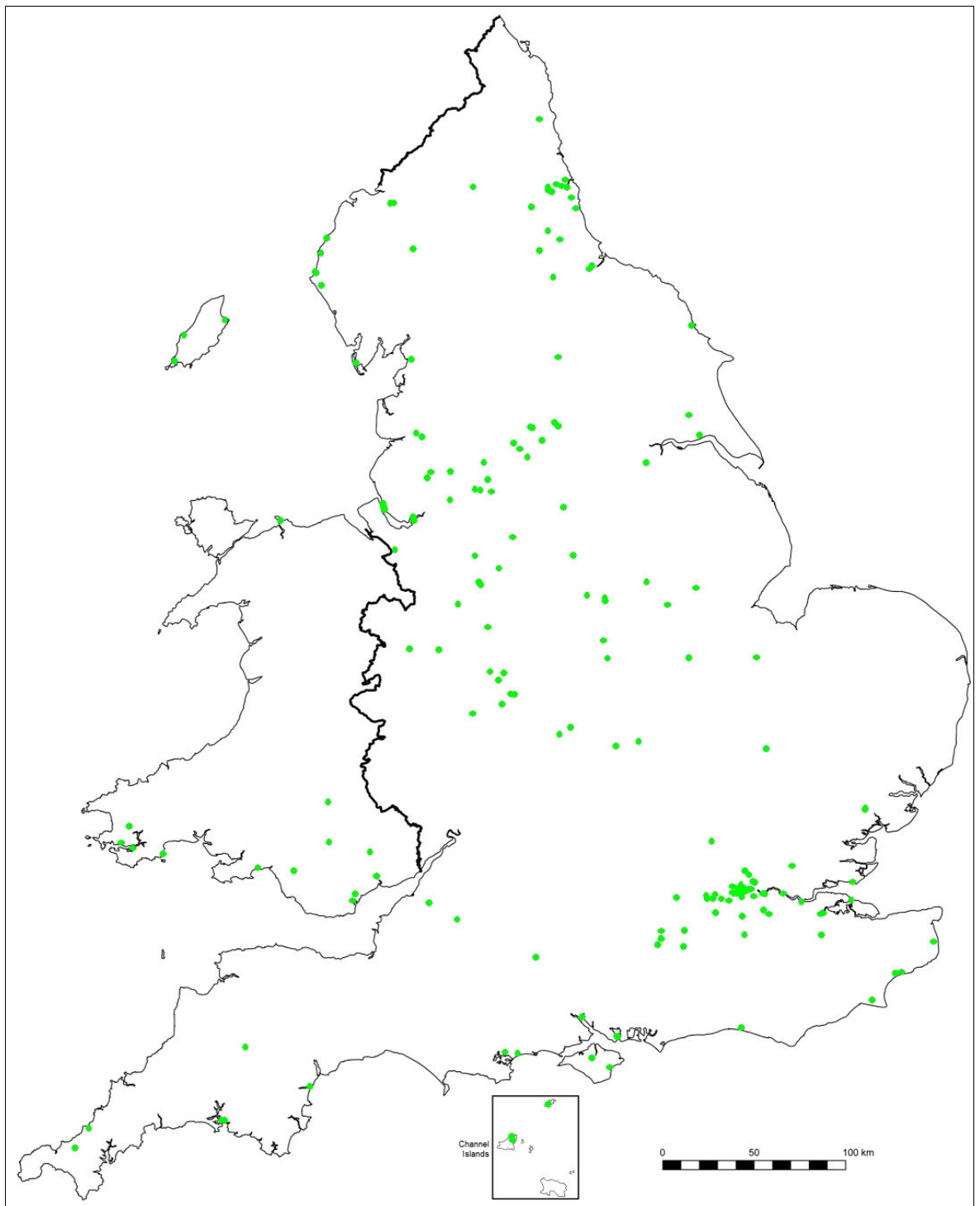
Further research needs to be undertaken to discover if the lack of language skills by the Irish migrants, particularly in the pre-Famine era contributed to the leakage of Irish Catholics from the regular practice of their faith. It has been shown here that there appeared to be a lack of concern by the Church authorities for language deficiencies on the part of the Irish migrants, a concern which was not mirrored in their care for migrants from other European countries or even for the indigenous Welsh speakers in England and Wales.

This chapter has shown that all classes of Irish migrants made real contributions to the rebuilding of the Catholic Church's infrastructure in England and Wales. It has been argued that their lack of religious education was due to the extreme shortage of priests and skilled teachers in Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century; that the faith which they took with them on migrating was a faith which was suffused with spirituality and many features of Catholicism not dissimilar to those which remained in the parts of Europe untouched by the Reformation and that it was this which made their faith essentially different to that of their English co-religionists. The factors in the Tridentine versus Folk argument are often used to explain the leakage for Irish Catholics from the regular practice of their faith. The argument advanced here is that it may have been a deficiency in English and the lack of provision of Irish-speaking priests which was a greater factor in the falling off of practice.

Using a very restricted set of resources, a large number of missions in all parts of the country have been identified which had an Irish presence. Given that it has been argued here they were not passive acceptors of support from the English Catholics, one may ask to what extent their "brand" of Catholicism was imported to England. If their numbers were so great, did the English Church become an offshoot of the Irish Church? If not, to what extent did they influence the form of Catholicism which emerged as the century progressed? Because, whatever about arguments concerning folk religion and Tridentine Catholicism, traditionally, Catholicism is a religion which extends beyond the four walls of their churches and on special occasions spills out into the streets in processions and such celebrations. This is the area which one should call "cultural Catholicism". It is another aspect of the visibility which this thesis has been discussing. If, as has been averred here, visibility would lessen the antipathy and prejudice against Catholics, is there evidence of this happening, at least amongst their neighbours? The question is, did these cultural events become a feature of English Catholic life and when did this happen? The next chapter will address these questions and will also argue that Catholic engagement in public life was another form of visibility.

On the next page is a map which shows all the missions which were found to have had

Irish migrants in their congregation. This has been created in the same way as the maps in chapter three. It can be seen from this that they were present in missions throughout the country.



Map 5: Missions with an Irish presence

6 Creating an Identity – English and Catholic

In 1852, Fr John Henry Newman was invited to preach the main sermon at the first Synod of Bishops of the newly restored English Hierarchy. In this sermon he described the Catholic Church and its adherents during the penal days thus:

No longer, the Catholic Church in the country; ... [but] a few adherents of the Old Religion, moving silently and sorrowfully about, as memorials of what had been. ... a mere handful of individuals ... Here a set of poor Irishmen, coming and going at harvest time, or a colony of them lodged in a miserable quarter of the vast metropolis. There, perhaps an elderly person, seen walking in the streets, grave and solitary, and strange, though noble in bearing, and said to be of good family, and a "Roman Catholic." An old-fashioned house of gloomy appearance, closed in with high walls, with an iron gate, and yews, and the report attaching to it that "Roman Catholics" lived there; ...

Such were Catholics in England, found in corners, and alleys, and cellars¹.

Whether or not English Catholics agreed with Newman's characterisation of them the image of Catholics in England being quiet and retiring is one which was familiar at the time. It was a consequence of their many years of exclusion from public involvement and influence. In his introduction to his *Historical Notes*, written in 1906, Bernard Kelly concurs with Newman's assessment:

The great famine of 1845-7 added its tens of thousands to the already considerable Irish population in England, and, whatever may be said to the contrary, the presence of the more boisterous Celt had a very salutary effect in correcting the air and habit of timid reserve so long noticeable in the bulk of native English Catholics.²

In creating their identity, the Catholics of England wished it to be both Catholic and English. Throughout the recusant and penal period they had maintained their Catholicity but many of their countrymen would have seen their attachment to Rome as diminishing their Englishness. Quoting the above extract from Newman's sermon, Edward Norman remarked that the social withdrawal of Catholics had the opposite effect intended as it allowed the charge of "deliberate secrecy" to go unchallenged "and encouraged popular suspicions that dark and superstitious practices took place"³. Norman states that it was these suspicions which formed the basis of much anti-Catholic prejudice⁴. These were suspicions which were held by those who knew nothing of Catholicism because it had vanished from their neighbourhood and were therefore based on ignorance. It was a different form of prejudice to the political variety which Wolffe discussed. In a series of

¹ John Henry Newman, *The Second Spring Sermon*, 1852, <<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/newman-secondspring.html>> (accessed 30/04/2008)

² Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 41

³ Norman, *Roman Catholicism*, 3

⁴ *Ibid.*, 4

lectures to the Brothers of the Oratory in Birmingham Newman exposed this form of ignorant prejudice. In particular he deconstructed the description of the ritual of Benediction as written by a Protestant Scripture Reader in the Journal of the British Reformation Society. Having held the description up to ridicule, Newman continues

I am not blaming this person for not knowing a Catholic rite, which he had no means of knowing, but for thinking he knows it, when he does not know it, for coming into the chapel, with this most coxcombical idea into his head, that Popery is a piece of mummery, which any intelligent Protestant can see through, and then being not surprised when he finds ... a whole congregation, worshipping a gold star glittering like diamonds with a lamp in it. This is what I mean by *prejudice*.⁵
(original italics)

The previous chapters have concentrated on the rebuilding project and shown how, over the course of the century, new Catholic churches and chapels were built in many towns and rural areas thus rendering them a familiar feature on the English landscape. It was the very ordinariness of Catholicism, the presence of Catholics going about their business as citizens the same as everyone else, which Newman, in his final lecture to the Oratory Brothers, recommended as the way to combat such a prejudicial view as that of the Scripture Reader. By doing so, regardless of what *The Times* or Exeter Hall or the Prime Minister or the Bishops of the Establishment say, their neighbours here in Birmingham would say that “an exception must be made of the Catholics in Birmingham”⁶.

The success of their rebuilding project encouraged growing self-confidence in the Catholic body. One of their claims was that Catholicism was the original Christian foundation in England and they re-enforced this claim through the use of the ancient Anglo-Saxon saints’ names in the dedications of their churches. This chapter opens with a discussion of those dedications, showing how over the century they changed and also how the growing confidence of the Catholic community in England was reflected in these changes. Although most of their churches were built in the nineteenth century, features of their architecture reinforced this claim of ancientness.

Language as an indicator of confidence will also be examined through the changes of tone in the pastoral letters from the early Relief period. Language was also used to re-iterate the membership of English Catholics in the Universal Christian Church.

In the opening chapter reference was made to three forms of visibility which helped to reduce the prejudice of others towards Catholics. Buildings were one; the other two were the engagement by Catholics in public life; and the re-introduction of forms of cultural

⁵ John Henry Newman, *Lectures on the Present Position of Catholics in England : Addressed to the Brothers of the Oratory in the Summer of 1851*, Gracewing 2001 edition (Leominster: Gracewing, 1851), 259

⁶ *Ibid.*, 387

Catholicism to English life. All of these factors helped to produce an identity which was at once English and Catholic.

6.1 Dedications of churches

In 1851 a new mission was opened in Baldwin's Gardens, Grays Inn Lane. The congregation consisted of, mostly, poor Irish and Italians. The mission was named after St Bridget. Appeals were made in 1854 and 1855 after which a normal listing for the mission was given until 1875. In that year it was noted that the mission was served from the nearby Italian church. The following year the mission announced that the "old church of St Etheldreda, Ely-Place" was to be re-opened "in the course of the year and substituted for St Bridget's". The 1876 *Directory* printed the following notice:

Restoration to Catholic Worship of the
Old Church of St Etheldreda
Ely Place

This gem of medieval art having been purchased by the Fathers of Charity with all their available funds, they appeal with confidence to the public to enable them to restore it in a manner worthy of its sacred and historic character. – W Lockhart, St Etheldreda's, Ely Place, London, E.C.⁸

Ely Place had been the London palace of the Bishops of Ely since 1286. Within the palace complex the church of St Etheldreda was the Bishop's private chapel⁹. Elizabeth I forced the then Bishop to surrender Ely Place to the Crown in the late sixteenth century. The old palace was demolished in 1772 and Ely Place, which incorporated St Etheldreda's, was built¹⁰. There was a certain satisfaction in the announcement of this reclamation of one of England's old pre-Reformation churches¹¹.

Whilst re-dedicating St Etheldreda's to Catholic worship was a bold statement, it was not realistic for the Church to purchase every pre-Reformation church which may have become

⁷ CD 1876, 99

⁸ CD 1876, 374

⁹ Alison Weir, *Katherine Swynford : The Story of John of Gaunt and His Scandalous Duchess* (London: Vintage, 2008), 345-346

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 211

¹¹ The purchase of and re-installation of Catholic worship in this particular church is not without its historic irony. John Wycliffe (1324-1384) has been called the 'morning star' of the English Reformation *Ibid.*, 22. He and his followers "anticipated many of the key doctrines of Protestantism" A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation*, 2nd edition (London: B. T. Batsford, 1989), 46. Dickens claimed that by 1530 the Lollards (followers of Wycliffe) had accomplished their two main services to the Reformation; firstly by hardening the Bishops' minds against all criticism and toward the English Scriptures; and secondly, and, in Dickens' opinion, their more important function in English history, they had "provided a springboard of critical dissent from which the Protestant Reformation could overleap the walls of orthodoxy" Dickens, *English Reformation*, 58-59. In his lifetime Wycliffe had been the receiver of support and patronage of John of Gaunt. Following the burning of his London home – the Savoy Palace – during the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, John of Gaunt was excluded from the centre of political power in England. When he returned to prominence ten years later he needed a new home in London. John leased Ely Place from the Bishop of Ely Weir, *Swynford*, 211. Living in Ely Place he would have worshipped in St Etheldreda's – the church now reclaimed by the Catholics.

redundant for use by the Established Church. But, they could reclaim the pre-Reformation saints, martyrs and confessors by using their names in church dedications. These names were already memorialised in towns and villages around the country: St Albans in Hertfordshire or Perranporth in Cornwall named after St Piran, patron of tin-miners. Although the church was barred under the Emancipation Act from using the names of pre-Reformation dioceses and deaneries, there were no restrictions on parish names.

Names are a fundamental part of the process of creating identity and also of commemoration. It was commemoration which inspired the practice of naming early Christian churches. All churches are dedicated to God, but as Christianity spread, a church was often built over the resting place of a martyr and would become known by his or her name. This practice evolved into one where saints were commemorated in a locality particularly associated with them, even if they were not martyrs, or this was not their burial place.

It may seem surprising that although Canon Law has evolved over two millennia, the Catholic Church does not have rules for deciding on a church dedication; there are guidelines, but not rules. The dedication is decided in consultation with the congregation for whom the church is intended. The suggested dedication is put forward to the local bishop who then, usually, approves it. The guidelines issued by Pope Urban VIII in 1638 are:

1. the possession of the body or some important relic of the saint;
2. his announcement of the Gospel to the nation;
3. his labours or death in the locality;
4. his adoption as the national patron;
5. the special devotion of the founder of the church;
6. the spirit of ecclesiastical devotion at a given time.¹²

Examples of each of these categories of dedications given to churches built in England in the nineteenth century are as follows:

1. St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham was built between 1839 and 1841. Relics of St Chad, which had been removed from Lichfield Cathedral during the Reformation, were re-discovered and enshrined in the new Cathedral.
2. St Augustine was the major apostle to England. In 1803 the chaplain at Margate built a church which he dedicated to St Augustine "whose first place of landing was

¹² H Parkinson. *Patron Saints* ed. Kevin Knight. 1911. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Accessed 26/05/2009. <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11562a.htm>>

the Isle of Thanet, when sent by St Gregory¹³.

3. In the north-east of the country three churches are named after St Aidan, the first such was opened in 1868 in Newcastle. Aidan is particularly associated with preaching the gospel in Northumbria.
4. St George, Patron of England, is commemorated, most famously, in Southwark Cathedral which was built at St George's Fields.
5. Many churches have had their dedications specified by the major benefactor, for example, in Liverpool the Reynolds brothers paid for the church of St Clare. Both their wives were named Clare¹⁴.
6. In 1854, Pope Pius IX declared the Immaculate Conception of Mary to be a dogma of the Church. The first churches with such a dedication were in Chesterfield, Bangor and Hartlepool in 1842. After the dogma had been declared forty six more churches used it.

It is the flexibility given to congregations by guidelines rather than rules which makes analysis of church dedications of historical interest. Analysis of the data would show if there were any trends in names used; whether history was memorialised; benefactors were remembered; or church doctrines proclaimed. The penal years had forced the separation of English Catholics from the rest of the nation and denied them their English identity. In analysing the dedications which they used in the nineteenth century, it became apparent that these were used to reclaim their English identity whilst simultaneously proclaiming their Catholicism.

The construction of the database for this thesis was discussed above in chapter 1 and details of its contents are given in Appendix 1 where the number of dedications in each of the defined categories is given. The particular dedications which will be highlighted here are (the number of these dedications is in brackets):

Roman Catholic Marian (312);

English Marian (222);

Irish Saints (66);

Pre-Reformation English (358)

Post-Reformation English saints (18);

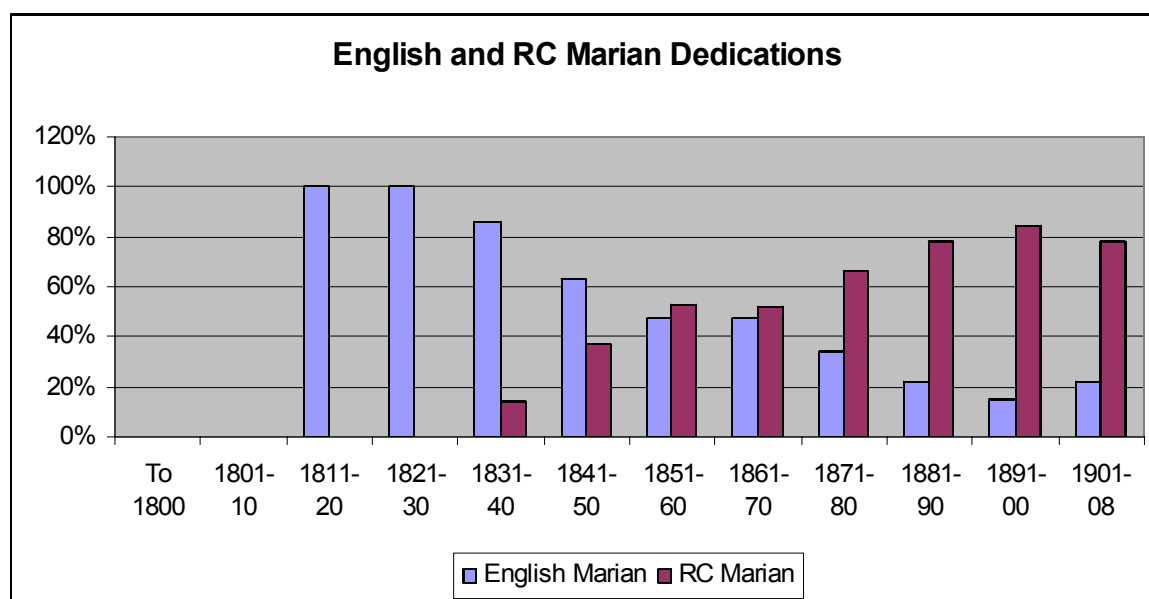
The date of a dedication was noted as this would provide the data to discover if there were

¹³ LD 1804

¹⁴ Martin and Ramsay, *Glimpse of Heaven*, 169

any trends in the use of names. Usually dedications were not given until a chapel was built, but in the latter part of the century, dedications were often given immediately on formation of a new mission. In contrast, the early missions which had survived the penal period and had a chapel in place might not receive or have recorded a dedication in the *Directory* for some years after it had been listed. In those early years, the usual practice in the *Directory* listings was to give a location of the chapel, but not the name.

Marian dedications were used throughout the nineteenth century. Whilst later in the century the names defined here as being Roman Catholic (rather than English)¹⁵ did achieve greater prominence, missions continued to use the older form. But there was a decided trend from the old style of names to the newer style as can be seen in this chart:



The earliest Roman-type name was given to the church of Our Blessed Lady in St John's Wood in London in 1837.

Church guidelines say that dedications should not be changed. This was not adhered to in England. Many of the churches which had Roman style names had had previous dedications. St Mary's in Croydon changed to Our Lady of Reparation in 1867; and St Nicholas in Prescott, Lancashire to Our Lady Help of Christians in 1870. Of the 293 churches with Roman style Marian dedications in 1908, nearly half (136) had had a previous name and a quarter of these (34) were of the older English type. Some dedications were changed through the addition of another name; at Blaydon-on-Tyne St Mary was added to give St Mary and St Thomas Aquinas in 1851. There were also eleven which changed from Roman to English style names, Chislehurst changed from Our Blessed Lady to St Mary in 1861.

¹⁵ In this thesis English-style Marian is, for example, St Mary; Roman-Style, such as The Immaculate Conception, differentiates Mary from the rest of the saints.

Overall though, the chart above shows a marked decline in the older style of dedications over the century. Their prevalence in the earlier period reflected the insecurities of Catholics at that time and the hidden and anonymous nature of English Catholicism. The increasing use of more obviously Catholic Marian dedications shows that English Catholics were growing in confidence and were prepared to use their particular style of dedications to establish their difference and identity.

In researching Irish influence in the English Church, one of the questions posed was whether this could be discerned from the dedications given to churches in the nineteenth century. On the basis of the numbers found, the answer is that this did not happen; sixty six out of a total of 2,141 mass centres were given an Irish dedication. This is just over 3%. This is quite contrary to that which happened in other centres of Irish migration. Australia and the USA both have many churches named after national Irish saints such as Patrick and Brigid, but also those with a more localised veneration in Ireland. These include Declan, Fiachra and Kevin in Australia; Brendan, Colman, Finbar and Attracta in the USA¹⁶. These dedications may reflect the places of origin of the early arrivals. Patrick is prominent in both countries, and there are churches named after him in many other parts of the former British Empire including India, South Africa, Canada and New Zealand.

There are three possible reasons for the absence of Irish dedications, but it must be mentioned that there are churches dedicated to St Patrick in every diocese in England and Wales. This is not so for St George, patron of England; St Augustine, Apostle to England; or any other English saint. It should also be noted that the St Patrick's churches in London, Liverpool, Huddersfield and elsewhere, were often amongst the earliest built in those towns after Relief. However, there is not the variety of Irish names in use in England and Wales as may be found in America and Australia. A brief look at the names used in church dedications in Ireland shows that some saint's names are restricted to their places of origin, such as Fachtna in Co. Cork or Mel in Co. Longford¹⁷. This reflects guideline three above (his labours or death in the locality). These saints' names of local Irish veneration were not used in Britain because Britain had its own local saints' cults, many of which were as ancient as the Irish saints and their names were used even where there were Irish congregations. Therefore, although Catholics were sparse in Cardiff before the Irish arrived, the first church there could have been named St Patrick but, not unreasonably, was dedicated to St David, the patron of Wales; similarly the church in Birmingham with an Irish congregation was named St Chad, a seventh-century Anglo-Saxon saint. In Australia and America there were not these indigenous ancient saints so that the immigrants, of

¹⁶ Parkinson. *Patron Saints*.

¹⁷ *Parishes in Ireland*, <<http://www.catholicireland.net/parishes/index.php>> (accessed 05/07/2009)

whatever nationality, could, and did, use their own saints' names.

A second reason is that one of the curious aspects of Irish Catholic habits is the tendency to use street names or localities to specify a church; Irish Catholics tend not to refer to a church by its name. On the website of Catholic parishes in Ireland many churches are listed by their location rather than their dedication¹⁸. Allied to this, the third reason for a lack of Irish dedications is that the usual practice for deciding the dedication of a church was to consult with the congregation for whom it was built or with the major benefactor. Whether or not such consultation took place is difficult to discover, but this research shows that, in the majority of cases, the names chosen were explicable rather than contentious. The two churches discussed above at St Albans and Cambridge, although both ultimately relied on a core of Irish members of their congregations were named St Alban & St Stephen and Our Lady & the English Martyrs, respectively. In the context of their locations, it is understandable why these particular dedications were given.

It should also be noted that many of the regular orders used saints of their congregation for the missions where they were working. One instance of an argument over a dedication has been discovered, that of the church of St Nicholas of Tolentino in Bristol. St Nicholas was an Augustinian friar as was the priest of the mission at the time the church was built. The congregation (mainly Irish) wished the dedication to be to St Patrick but the name given at the behest of the mission priest was that of Nicholas. As a result of the conflict over the name, the congregation was promised that when the mission was divided in the future, the daughter church would be named after St Patrick. This was indeed done¹⁹.

The evidence found in this research is that churches built for predominantly Irish congregations were not signified as such by dedicating them to Irish saints. Of the 187 missions identified with an Irish connection, 106 were never given an Irish name. One third (39) of them had old Catholic names such as Joseph, Peter and Paul and twenty eight used names of old pre-Reformation English saints, the saints with local cults, such as Walburge, Cuthbert and Begh. At the end of the period under discussion there was only one church in Jarrow, St Bede's. This congregation has been identified as mainly Irish by Green and Pollard²⁰. There was no church in Preston with an Irish saint's name, in spite of the presence of an Irish community there. In accepting non-Irish names, the Irish congregations would not have been perplexed. They would have been familiar with the continuance of local cults in this fashion. Examples of churches built by, or for, Irish

¹⁸ Ibid.,

¹⁹ Harding, *Clifton*, 78

²⁰ Adrian Green and A. J. Pollard, *Regional Identities in North-East England, 1300-2000* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 164

congregations include the chapel in Whitehaven named after St Begh, from which St Bee's Head gets its name and St Walburge's in Preston. Other names used for churches with Irish congregations included Thomas of Hereford and Cuthbert.

Of all the male saints' names used, Patrick was the second most common, with 65, after Joseph (197). George, Patron of England (21) and Augustine, Apostle to the English (34) were used far less frequently.

Yet, the English Catholics were aware of their history and the rich heritage of their Church which

had the honours of near a thousand years upon it; ... it was based in the will of a faithful people; ... and it was ennobled by a host of Saints and Martyrs. ... Canterbury alone numbered perhaps some sixteen, from St. Augustine to St. Dunstan and St. Elphege, from St. Anselm and St. Thomas down to St. Edmund. York had its St. Paulinus, St. John, St. Wilfrid, and St. William; London, its St. Erconwald; Durham, its St. Cuthbert; Winton, its St. Swithun. Then there were St. Aidan of Lindisfarne, and St. Hugh of Lincoln, and St. Chad of Lichfield, and St. Thomas of Hereford, and St. Oswald and St. Wulstan of Worcester, and St. Osmund of Salisbury, and St. Birinus of Dorchester, and St. Richard of Chichester.²¹

These words by Newman in 1852 encapsulate the point made above as to one of the reasons the Irish migrants did not seek to apply their own saints' names to churches in England and Wales as they had done in other countries to which they emigrated. In using these old names, the Catholic Church in England and Wales was reclaiming its history. These were *their* saints, the saints who had hallowed the ground in generations previously, the saints who were remembered, not only in church names, but in place names throughout the country: Boston from St Botolph's Town; Felixstowe from St Felix. Using these names could also give an impression of greater ancientness than was the reality of a newly built church.

These old English saints' names were used 358 times in dedications. The vast majority were local to where a cult had flourished before the Reformation. The only church named after St Modwen, seventh-century Abbess in Burton-on-Trent is in that town; there is but one example of a dedication to St Piran (in Truro) and to St Birinus (in Dorchester-on-Thames). Birinus preached to the people of Wessex and was bishop in Dorchester. John Milner chose to open his new church in Winchester in 1792 on the feast of St Birinus, December 5th²². The first church in Whitby was named after Hilda, famous for her role in the Synod of Whitby in the seventh century. The few who transcended their own locality and were used throughout the country were George; Thomas of Canterbury; Alban; Augustine; and Gregory.

²¹ Newman, *The Second Spring Sermon*,

²² John Milner, *Letter to Bishop Douglass Nov 15th 1792*, Letter, Westminster Diocesan Archives

No church in the nineteenth century was named after “Thomas Becket”. Thomas of Canterbury was preferred. As the primatial See of the Church of England it was a bold move to adorn Catholic churches with so English a name. Thomas’s cult had flourished in medieval England to the extent that his shrine at Canterbury sometimes rivalled that of St James at Compostela²³ but his shrine had been suppressed in England by proclamation in 1538²⁴.

During the Reformation, claims were made by Protestants that the Christian faith in Britain originated from missionaries in the early apostolic days of the Church, rather than as a result of the papal intervention of Gregory who sent Augustine to convert the English. This was done to show that attachment to Christianity was not reliant on attachment to the papacy and to give an historical basis for English religious independence. Although the veneration of pre-Reformation days of these saints may have ended, there was still a memory of them in place names or even superstitions such as that attached to St Swithin’s feastday. Much of the history of their cults may have been forgotten especially as people moved to the cities, but the Catholics still had a point to make.

The English Catholics were conscious of their more recent history too. They were very proud of the steadfastness of those from amongst them who had won the crown of martyrdom during the recusancy period, but the status of the martyrs was contested by the majority population – were they martyrs or traitors? Proclaiming their martyrs in the public space of England through church dedications could only be done when the community was confident of its position in English society. The church at Tower Hill, in 1865, was the first to memorialise them and was named *The English Martyrs*. It was a singularly appropriate church to use that name, as many of the martyrs began their last journey from the Tower. In 1864, a proposal to petition the Holy See to institute a feast to commemorate the English Martyrs of the Reformation period had been placed on the agenda for the Bishops Meeting²⁵. At their annual meeting in 1871 all the bishops signed a request to Rome asking for the Cause for Canonisation of the martyrs to be formally introduced²⁶. The Cause was initiated in 1887 and the Bishop of Clifton was asked to “draw up an address to the Holy Father in thanksgiving”²⁷. There were 261 martyrs included in the Cause. Following the initial use of the title in 1865, a further seventeen churches were named after the martyrs; of these seven changed their dedications to the

²³ Frank Barlow, "Becket, Thomas (1120?–1170)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27201>> Accessed 27/09/2011.

²⁴ Nicholas Orme, *English Church Dedications : With a Survey of Cornwall and Devon* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 10

²⁵ This appears in the index of the Minutes of the Bishops Meetings although there is no minute recorded.

²⁶ Anon., *Bishops’ Meetings*, , 45c

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 202

English Martyrs or added English Martyrs to their previous name. In 1914, the church at Ellingham in the diocese of Hexham and Newcastle added the names of *beati* Thomas More and Thomas Percy to its previous dedication of Our Lady of the Rosary. This was the first time a specific martyr of the Reformation period was so honoured²⁸.

The conclusions which one draws from this analysis of the dedications given over the century is that there was a shift from conservative English style to more Catholic style of Marian dedications; that the English Catholics used the names of their ancient saints as part of their claim to being the original Christian Church in England; that the absence of an Irish saint's name did not indicate the presence or absence of an Irish community, but that the presence of such a dedication probably did; that Irish Catholics were prepared to accept that the churches which they built should be dedicated to English saints with local cults. The most popular dedications were to the Virgin Mary; of the male saints Joseph was the most common, Patrick second, followed by George and Augustine. Finally, one can trace the growing confidence of the English Catholics, firstly through the change in style of Marian dedications and from when they started to dedicate churches to their own Reformation martyrs in 1865. Commemorating their memory in church dedications was placing them as equals with the first English martyr, St Alban, who gave his name to a city and a diocese.

6.2 Architectural considerations

Sir Thomas Tresham's Catholicism was certainly in no doubt and he has left two memorials of his faith on the landscape in Northamptonshire – Lyveden New Bield, near Oundle and Rushton Triangular Lodge. Both are filled with religious symbolism. The triangular design of the Rushton Lodge refers to the Trinity. Above the entrance is the motto "*Tres Testimonium Dant*" which is a quotation from St John's Gospel referring to the Trinity and means "There are three that give witness". The inscription is also a pun on Sir Thomas's name – his wife addressed him as "Good Tres"²⁹.

Between Tresham (1543-1605) and Augustus Welby Pugin (1812-1852), Catholic religious architecture was necessarily anonymous. During those years chapels were inconspicuous, yet even so, not always unknown to the neighbourhood. Many churches were completely disguised, for example when Thomas Weld complied with George III's advice and concealed his chapel by building a "mausoleum". Shortly before this, in 1769, the chapel

²⁸ Thomas More and John Fisher were canonised in 1935. In 1970 a further forty martyrs were canonised. The Cathedral at Arundel, built by the 15th Duke of Norfolk and opened in 1873, had been dedicated to St Philip Neri. One of Norfolk's ancestors, Philip Howard, was one of the canonised martyrs. The cathedral dedication was changed on the occasion of his canonisation to St Philip Howard.

²⁹ *Rushton Triangular Lodge*, <<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server.php?show=nav.11900>> (accessed 02/03/2009)

in the Bar convent in York was built within the existing convent structure so that its roof could not be seen from the street; it had a built-in priest-hole and eight doors to facilitate the rapid exit of the congregation in case of a raid by pursuivants³⁰. An attempt by Liverpoolian Catholics to rebuild their chapel which had been destroyed in 1746 by a mob was thwarted by the city council. Upset by their intransigence, they built a “warehouse” on the site and furnished it as a chapel³¹.

Yet in spite of the covert nature of Catholicism evident in these various ruses, elsewhere the presence of its adherents was apparently open. In Bath Abbey there are memorial tablets to members of the Catholic gentry, some dating from before the first Relief Act: Sir John Jernegan (sic) of Cossey, died 1737; and Lucy Julia Thomson, daughter of Edmund Plowden, died 1762. The Catholic memorial tablets at Bath are distinguishable by the presence of a cross or the letters R.I.P. on them. Lucy Thomson’s tablet was all in Latin which was unusual in Bath Abbey at that time, and surely left no doubt in the mind of the reader as to her, and her family’s, religious allegiance.

Following the Relief Act of 1791 the new Catholic chapels followed the unassuming plainness of Nonconformist chapels, partly in response to the memory of the Gordon Riots (the chapel in Warwick Street in London had been destroyed in the Gordon Riots; on rebuilding it, the stairway up to the church was “steep and purposely twisting”³²), but also because the law forbade Catholic chapels from having steeples. Gradually assertiveness overtook Catholic inhibitions. The revival of Gothicism which led to the distinctive Victorian style of architecture throughout England is credited to Augustus Welby Pugin.

Pugin was the son of a French immigrant and received his first commission at the age of 15. A man of considerable talent, he was fortunate to have found support from John Talbot, 16th Earl of Shrewsbury, a patron with a considerable purse; Bishop Thomas Walsh Vicar Apostolic of the Midlands, perhaps a supporter of Catholic triumphalism; George Myers of Birmingham a builder who could translate Pugin’s inexact architectural drawings into substantial buildings³³; and craftsmen John Hardman (of Birmingham), Herbert Minton of Staffordshire and J G Crace of London. These men were receptive to the idea of recreating the medieval crafts of stained glass, encaustic tiles and the use of medieval designs for interior fabrics and wallpapers, respectively³⁴. Building in the Gothic style was not a re-invention of Pugin’s. Before he was born, a Gothic church in “the style of Henry

³⁰ *The Bar Convent - Chapel*, <<http://www.bar-convent.org.uk/chapel.htm>> (accessed 02/09/2009)

³¹ Burke, *Liverpool*, 11-12

³² Martin and Ramsay, *Glimpse of Heaven*, 45

³³ Hill, *Pugin*, 194, 229

³⁴ Alexandra Wedgwood, “Pugin, Augustus Welby Northmore (1812–1852)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22869>> Accessed 30/07/2009.

VI” had been built in Winchester at the direction of John Milner³⁵, but Pugin was a considerable publicist for the Gothic style. Milner was well versed in Catholic history. In invoking the “gothic style of the reign of Henry VI” he was harking back to the last great king-builder of pre-Reformation days. Henry VI had endowed King’s College Cambridge and its magnificent chapel, perhaps one of the greatest examples of late Gothic known as English Perpendicular.

The passage of the Catholic Emancipation Bill in 1829 seemed to mark the end of the “Catholic question” in British politics. By this time Catholic church building was progressing at a good pace. Imbued with further confidence following Emancipation, Catholics embarked on a new phase of building in which their churches were more visible and more authentically Catholic. This coincided with the emerging talent of Pugin who had converted to Catholicism in 1835. Pugin believed that Gothic architecture was the purest form of architecture for sacred spaces. Its vaulted ceilings and pointed arches led the eyes heavenwards. It also provided an appropriate environment in which the drama of the mass could be enacted³⁶. In his churches he included Rood Screens and Doooms. Many of the ancient roods had been removed during the Reformation and the Doooms had been whitewashed over.

Pugin’s enthusiasm was infectious and persuasive and, more importantly, Shrewsbury was a generous patron. His masterpiece, perhaps a contentious notion, is St Giles Church in Cheadle. Funded by Shrewsbury, it exemplifies all of Pugin’s ideas of Gothic architecture, from the coloured encaustic floor tiles and the stained glass windows, to the Rood Screen above which was a picture of The Last Judgement. Following Pugin’s death in 1852, at the early age of 41, his legacy was continued by his sons and others such as J A Hansom. Pugin did not set out to recreate the particular Gothicism of old England; he toured England, certainly, for inspiration for his designs, but also France and Belgium and his architecture and other designs reflect this. He was not without his critics though. When first asked to produce designs for St George’s new church at Southwark, it was obvious that his new “cathedral” would be overly costly and would take many years to build. Upset by the committee’s response – they needed a new church more immediately than Pugin’s plans would allow – Pugin rolled up his drawings and walked out³⁷.

The Jesuits had been one of the foremost religious orders working in England during the

³⁵ LD 1795

³⁶ Pugin had worked in theatre design early in his career. Besides his church architecture he also designed a new form of chasuble for the celebrants to wear at mass; this style is still in use today and known as Gothic style, as opposed to Roman style. The Roman-style vestments were very stiff, but the Gothic style moved with the priest and in her biography of Pugin, Rosemary Hill suggests that it was Pugin’s theatrical design experience which led to these designs. (Hill, *Pugin*, 197).

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 207

penal days. They believed very strongly in classical style architecture with Greek porticoes and ionic pillars. They opened a new church in this style in Hereford in 1839. This was publicly criticised by Pugin. A notice was placed in the *Catholic Directory* the following year:

The Bishop takes this opportunity of publicly acknowledging the obligations which the Western District owes to the illustrious body who erected this noble monument, and of expressing his deep regret at the unauthorized and virulent attack made upon them by a Catholic periodical, in an article headed 'New Church at Hereford,' and signed A Welby Pugin.³⁸

Pugin believed that classical style architecture was not fit for churches where the Christian god was to be worshipped. He had called the church at Hereford “a pagan temple” and “a Catholic concert hall”³⁹. Pugin’s style eventually prevailed. In returning to Gothicism, the Catholics were able to build new churches in an old style giving the impression that their churches were older than they actually were; but more importantly they were reconstructing part of the religious history of the country. They were returning to England churches in which the focus was the altar rather than the pulpit which was the case in Protestant, particularly Dissenting, churches. Although most of the pre-Reformation churches still extant in England had by then lost their particularly Catholic features, the neo-Gothic churches of Pugin and his followers contrasted starkly with the plainness of Protestant churches.

Whatever the arguments which flowed between architects supporting different styles, for Catholics throughout England and Wales Sunday mass was not always experienced in a church which would be celebrated as an architectural glory by later generations. The mass is so central to Catholic practice that priests would celebrate it in any space they could, simply so that the people could attend; 145 missions used temporary accommodation when first started. These ranged from a room in the chapel-house at Tunbridge Wells⁴⁰ to the Assembly Rooms in Workington⁴¹. Occasionally the temporary accommodation was given by Protestants, such as at Bishop Auckland in the middle of the Durham coalfield⁴². The first mission in Pontypool held mass in a public house⁴³. When the tenant moved, they switched to a different public house. This congregation was mainly Irish labourers and soldiers from the local barracks⁴⁴. The Pontypool missionary might appear sanguine at advertising that he was using a public house, but the priest at Halifax seemed a little more

³⁸ CD 1840, 31

³⁹ Martin and Ramsay, *Glimpse of Heaven*, 59

⁴⁰ LD 1838, 14

⁴¹ LD 1812

⁴² CD 1842 pp.38-39

⁴³ CD 1840 pp.32-33

⁴⁴ CD 1844 pp.68-69

embarrassed at the situation in which he found himself. It seems likely that the mission in Halifax used a public house too, although it was described as being used for “every profane purpose” during the week⁴⁵. It was not only the priests who were aware of the “profane uses” of the buildings which accommodated chapels. Joseph Keating, raised in a Welsh mining town, wrote in his autobiography about his experience as a child attending mass in a public house turned chapel where the “sacred had utterly banished the profane.”⁴⁶

Cardinal Manning may have crusaded against intemperance, but his co-religionists owed much to the publicans of the country who opened their doors to mission priests throughout the century.

Some of the difficulties caused by the lack of chapel space were practical. In Cardiff, mass was said in a two-room cottage, the altar was in one room whilst such of the congregation as would fit gathered in the other⁴⁷. The position of the “chapel” at Coton near Tamworth was embarrassing⁴⁸, but surely nothing compared with the situation of the “very talented and zealous pastor” in Merthyr Tydfil who, on Sundays, said two masses. The first was in the granary above the slaughter-house; the second was in a wash-house. The priest himself lived in a workman’s cottage with “practically no furniture”⁴⁹.

It was from these kinds of unpromising starting points that many of the churches now in use were founded. Bryan Little’s text⁵⁰ focuses on the architectural aspects, yet he seems a little ungenerous in his assessment of the difficulties facing the community as a whole in its efforts to rebuild a national infrastructure on such limited means. Little is frequently dismissive of the aesthetics of the buildings from this period; he takes little account neither of the problems facing the Church as it embarked on this project, as discussed above in chapter two, nor of the urgent necessity to build as quickly as possible in many situations. More recently, covering much of the same ground, Martin⁵¹ pleads for many of these Catholic churches to be considered as part of the architectural heritage of England. He is more sympathetic to the conditions which prevailed for Catholics in Victorian England, a sympathy which is made plain in the title “*A Glimpse of Heaven*”. The title is from one of the rich heiresses who built a magnificent church in the slums of Liverpool and was determined to give the poor people of that area a “glimpse of heaven” when they attended mass on Sunday⁵². Whether in Greek or Gothic or simple churches of no particular

⁴⁵ LD 1833, 26

⁴⁶ Joseph Ignatius Keating, *My Struggle for Life* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2005), 10

⁴⁷ CD 1840 33-34

⁴⁸ See p.49 above

⁴⁹ CD 1840, 32

⁵⁰ Little, *Churches*

⁵¹ Martin and Ramsay, *Glimpse of Heaven*

⁵² *Ibid.*, 10

architectural merit, these chapels had the advantage that within them Catholics could hear mass without having to experience the taunts of their neighbours or other noisome distractions.

The Abbey Church of St Gregory of the Benedictine Monastery at Downside did not replace a temporary building. Although built in three distinct phases, and, as yet, unfinished, its overall effect is coherent with that of pre-Reformation churches. The first phase – the transept – was designed by Dunn and Hansom and built in 1882. This was followed by the choir, by Thomas Garner, opened in 1905. The final part was the great soaring Gothic nave, designed by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott and opened in 1925. The tower is modelled on the style of Somerset churches. There are, however, some features of the abbey church which are more reminiscent of an earlier era. To the left of the high altar is a side chapel with a richly decorated, ornate casket on four pillars. This is the shrine of St Oliver Plunket, Archbishop of Armagh, martyred for the Catholic faith at Tyburn in 1681 – the last Catholic to die for the faith in England. Plunket, ministered to by a monk of the community of Downside, asked the monk to take care of his remains after his death. This the monk did and Plunket’s reliquary now has a prominent place beside the high altar.

Behind the choir is an ambulatory, an unusual feature in a church of this age but common in pre-Reformation times. As one walks around the back of the ambulatory there are chapels, each with its own distinctive features. The central and most magnificent is the Lady Chapel. In niches around the ambulatory are tombs of previous abbots and bishops including Cardinal Aidan Gasquet and Bishop Baines of the Western District⁵³. Unlike the memorial tablets of the eighteenth century in Bath Abbey, these tombs include full length effigies, again reminiscent of earlier days. The overall effect is of a medieval Gothic church rather than a nineteenth- or twentieth-century reconstruction. As a text in stone, it supports the claim of Catholicism being the ancient faith of the English people.

Downside Abbey is the largest Neo-Gothic church built in England since the Reformation. Pevsner called it “the most splendid demonstration of the renaissance of Roman Catholicism in England”⁵⁴.

6.3 Language

The continuous publication of *The Catholic and Laity’s Directories*, with their constant house style, makes them good resources to examine any changes in language used by

⁵³ This was sadly ironic for Bishop Baines as it was he who had defended, in the *Catholic Directory* of 1840, the Jesuits’ classically designed church in Hereford against Pugin’s Gothicism.

⁵⁴ Nikolaus Pevsner, *North Somerset and Bristol*, Buildings of England (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958), 182-184

Catholics when referring to themselves or to the rest of the nation. Following Relief, it would have been reasonable for publication of the *Directory* to have ceased. Its continuance was appreciated by the hierarchy who, at their annual meeting in 1868, thanked the then editors (Rev W A Johnson and Fr Stanton) and were “of the opinion that ... as it is the only complete register of the statistics of the Catholic Church in England ... [it] is now and will be hereafter of great utility and value”⁵⁵. The bishops seemed to have had a sense of the history contained within this publication. With such episcopal approbation the *Directories* can be used to analyse Catholic self-perception.

In seizing the business opportunity when he ousted James Marmaduke from the marketplace which he, Marmaduke, had created, J P Coghlan offered space in his publication for items from the Vicars Apostolic. The *Directory* reproduced the pastoral letters following the first two Relief Acts and also the appeal in 1838 for the establishment of a national church-building fund. Social order and the danger of moral degeneration in the slums of industrial Britain became a major issue over the century. The early editions of the *Directory* show that concern for the poor was at the forefront of Catholic thinking and this was exhibited in the early appeals through the emphasis on education as a means of preventing the moral degeneration so feared by all. The battle for justice in educational funding may have been fought from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, but Catholics in England had focused on the social benefits of education well before then. This section of the thesis will discuss the language used to illustrate these points, from the official letters released by the bishops to that used in appeals by missions. The appeals changed over the century: what they were appealing for, the expectation of response, and the descriptors of the congregations. Finally in this section on language there will be a short discussion on the place of non-English languages. These showed that the Catholics in England and Wales were members of the Universal Christian Church.

In 1791 the Vicars Apostolic each issued a Pastoral Letter in thanksgiving for the passage of the Relief Act of that year. The sentiments felt by the bishops are clear from their texts⁵⁶. The legislature was described as “humane and generous” (London) and “indulgent, compassionate, enlightened, and wise” (Midland). The bishops assured their flocks that they may take the oath prescribed by Parliament “safely” (Western), “lawfully and conscientiously” (Northern) and “without Scruple or Difficulty” (Midland). (London did not mention the oath). They exhorted their fellow Catholics “[o]n every occasion shew that you are good subjects” (Midland); “continue to shew yourselves deserving of that

⁵⁵ Anon., *Bishops' Meetings*, , 32

⁵⁶ The texts were reproduced in full in LD 1792. In this passage the quotes from the four letters will be indicated in brackets after, thus (London) will indicate that this was from the pastoral letter of the Vicar Apostolic, London.

favour”; “implore the divine blessing on your KING and COUNTRY” (London); and “pray for the prosperity of your country” (Western).

The overall impression gained from reading the four pastorals was of the obsequiousness of the bishops, yet, they did not hesitate to draw attention to the “oppression under which we laboured” (London) and to remind readers that they had suffered under “the heavy Load of many very severe Laws, and cruel penal Statutes” although these had been eased (Midland). Attention was also drawn to the “rivetted and inveterate Prejudices” against Catholicism and it was hoped that these would in time be “quite laid aside” (Midland).

Forty years later another pastoral was issued by the Vicars Apostolic and published in the *Directory*. The intent was to establish a national fund⁵⁷. Now the bishops were more confident and explained that the fund was necessary because in the days before the “so-called Reformation”⁵⁸, seminaries would have been funded through benefices but the “civil power about three hundred years ago transferred them to the system of Christianity, which then, for the first time, made its appearance”⁵⁹. This was a direct attack on the claims made that the Church of England was the original Christian foundation in England and could claim foundation from apostolic times. The bishops were not alone in their denigration of the “so-called” Reformation. In 1833 there was an appeal from the newly appointed pastor in Houghton-le-Spring in the Durham coalfields. He wrote that he was “the *first* resident priest since the pretended Reformation” and that efforts to “revive and extend the ancient faith” were being successful⁶⁰. When the mission at Wellington celebrated the opening of their new chapel of St Patrick, a note in the *Directory* commented that Catholicism was now permanently established in an area where it had been “unknown since the period of what is called the Reformation”⁶¹.

In the 1840 edition of the *Directory*, there was an Annual Retrospect. The writer (it was anonymously written, but may have been the editor) discusses the advance of Catholicism in terms of a “slumbering giant awaking”, how at the accession of George III there were 60,000 Catholics and now there were two million (this latter figure is not very credible). The writer went on to chart the advance of Catholicism around the world, including in the British Empire, noting that he was writing in the context of “the abrogation, or rather relaxation (for we still suffer injustice) of the penal laws”⁶². This phrase from the Annual Retrospect of 1840, “for we still suffer injustice”, reflected the true situation of

⁵⁷ See p.45 above

⁵⁸ CD 1840, 108

⁵⁹ CD 1840, 110

⁶⁰ LD 1833, 15

⁶¹ LD 1838, 17

⁶² CD 1840 pp.112-114

Catholicism in England at that point⁶³ and contrasts with that of the bishops in 1791, where they asserted that that “state of things no longer [endured]” and where two of the four bishops (Western and Northern) claimed, incorrectly, that the laws had been repealed.

In 1771 Mrs Marlow attended “prayers, as it was generally called, for the word Mass was scarcely ever used in conversation”⁶⁴. In the early decades of the nineteenth century in Catholic chapels the times given for Sunday morning services usually specified “prayers” or sometimes “Divine Service”. By 1827, most of the chapels in London were advertising “Mass”, but “prayers” or “Divine Service” continued elsewhere; in Bloxwich, Staffordshire it was still “prayers” in 1829⁶⁵. Gradually this use reduced and by 1840 the Northern District was using “Mass”; in 1842, the last bulwark of “prayers” fell when the Welsh District used “Mass”. “Divine Service”, being somewhat less euphemistic than “prayers”, did continue for some time, the mission at Hammersmith announced that a “beautiful chapel” had opened in 1853 for “Divine Service”⁶⁶. Mass was the ritual in which the bread and wine were transubstantiated into the Body and Blood of Christ. It was this belief of Catholics which had led to the derogatory cry from anti-Catholics of “No wafer Gods here”. To advertise the times for “Mass” rather than “prayers”, which was innocuous or “Divine Service” which was commonly used in the Established Church showed the growing confidence of the English Catholics and their belief that their rituals were gaining acceptance amongst the populace as a whole.

Early appeals stressed the benefit of good social order which would result from the proper and secure establishment of missions to the poor; many also included reference to the pastoral work undertaken by the missions. The chapel of St Mary at Moorfields was for many years the principal Catholic chapel in London. It was a continuation of the original mission at White Street and was built on freehold land offered by and bought from the City of London⁶⁷. The appeal in 1818 specified that the congregation was large (about 15-16,000) and very poor. The appeal was addressed to “all benevolent Christians” as the church would “promote social order and practical morality among the poor, ... make them better men and better subjects, by founding their obedience to the laws and their observance of the social duties, on the strong basis of religion”⁶⁸. Promotion of “social order” may have in part motivated the City authorities to offer the site for the church.

Pastoral work in many of the early missions was practical charity. The priest at Stratford,

⁶³ The legal position of Catholics in England is discussed below in Chapter 7.

⁶⁴ Hemphill, *The Early Vicars Apostolic of England, 1685-1750*, 82

⁶⁵ LD 1829, 22

⁶⁶ CD 1861, 210

⁶⁷ LD 1818

⁶⁸ LD 1818

Essex, specifically mentioned that the children in his area went around “in tatters” and he asked for funds to allow him “to clothe the naked”⁶⁹. By 1843, the church and school at St John’s Wood had been built. The debt was cleared and the missionary gave thanks for the support he had received but he was still asking for money as he too needed to start “clothing the naked”⁷⁰. St Mary’s in Chelsea, built initially to minister to the “poor soldiers in [The Royal Hospital] Chelsea”, in 1825 announced that it had a school “for the Clothing and Education of poor Catholic Boys and Girls now numbering 80”⁷¹.

The schools thus had a dual purpose – education and distribution of charity. The education element in the early part of the century was often to combat the zeal of Evangelical Protestant Societies which were proselytising amongst Catholics – particularly through the provision of free schools. Other inducements were also offered such as payments to parents in Guernsey⁷²; and in Richmond the children were being “tempted away to other schools through inducements of clothes [and] food”⁷³. Having asked for money in 1825 for the school, the following year Chelsea repeated the request adding that the school and appeal were necessary “to prevent *Parents sending their Children to anti-catholic Places of Worship*” (original italics)⁷⁴. The problem of children attending non-Catholic schools continued throughout the century. St Joseph’s in Bunhill Row in 1853 had room in their school for 400, but that left about 800 more without. These had to

either remain ignorant of their religious and social obligations, or seek learning amongst the establishments of heresy, which, under the name of day-schools, night-schools, Sunday-schools, ragged-schools, are to be met at every corner.⁷⁵

The appeals encapsulate the *raison d’être* of Catholic education. There were three elements to this – firstly to educate their flocks in their faith; secondly, to save their souls by keeping them safe from heresy and thirdly to make them good, moral citizens free from taint of vice or, as the notice from Bermondsey succinctly put it in 1854, keeping its schools open would “baffle the malignant designs of the adversaries of truth and [rescue] the souls of these poor children from the danger of perversion, to which, alas! they are so fearfully exposed”⁷⁶. The Bermondsey schools had been open since 1799⁷⁷.

These objectives were not only sought through the schools. Charities were formed to publish tracts and pamphlets which were either very cheap or even free for those who

⁶⁹ LD 1828, 9

⁷⁰ CD 1843, 11

⁷¹ LD 1825

⁷² See p. 50 above

⁷³ CD 1849 pp.78-79

⁷⁴ LD 1825

⁷⁵ CD 1853 pp.31-32

⁷⁶ CD 1854, 44

⁷⁷ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 74

could not afford to buy them. The York Catholic Defence Society founded in 1828 to defend Catholicism “against calumnies and to bring to an end the absurd prejudices against the Catholic religion”⁷⁸ was followed a decade later by the Catholic Institute. Amongst the Institute’s particular objects were “to put the poorer classes of Catholics in possession of Books of Piety and Devotion at the lowest possible price; and in cases where persons are too poor to purchase, to supply them gratuitously.”⁷⁹

The Catholic Institute was founded by laymen but at a general meeting in 1845, at the request of the Vicars Apostolic added “charitable education” to its remit⁸⁰. In 1849 it was re-constituted as the Catholic Poor School Committee with three representatives (two lay and one clerical) from each District⁸¹. In this guise it played an important role in the development of Catholic education in the second half of the century. Each year the Chairman of the Committee reported to the Bishops’ annual conference⁸².

Promoting social order amongst the lower classes was a common concern amongst the upper classes of nineteenth-century England, especially as they became aware of the reality of the squalor and degradation in the newly industrialised cities. In this respect, Catholics were no different to any other group, religious or otherwise, who fostered good social order. Although Cardinal Manning is often seen as the archbishop who led the great battle for Government funding for Catholic education, it can be seen from these few examples that from the earliest days post-Relief, there was a drive in missions to educate the poor, not only in their religion but also in their duties as citizens. This was not an emphasis which emerged as a result of the influx of Irish migrants in the mid-century (1830s-1860s). The need to educate the poor was realised very early. These advertisements for support for schools do not specifically mention that the schooling is required to counteract deficiencies amongst Irish migrants in their religious or civic duties; such deficiencies seemed to have been universal amongst the poorer classes.

It must be said though, that by the end of the century, in many missions the situation was not much changed from that of Bermondsey and Chelsea at the beginning. Poverty, as shown by Charles Booth’s famous survey of London’s streets still stalked much of the capital⁸³. Booth mentions the Catholic school at Kensal New Town where the boys and girls aged between twelve and sixteen have their toes “shewing through their boots and their skirts [?] and dragging, hatless and unwashed”⁸⁴. Booth also noted here the presence

⁷⁸ LD 1829, 70

⁷⁹ CD 1842, xii

⁸⁰ CD 1846, 151

⁸¹ CD 1851, 31

⁸² Anon., *Bishops’ Meetings*, , passim

⁸³ Booth, *Inquiry into Life and Labour in London*,

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, B359, 79

of a Catholic soup kitchen where children were given soup and bread and many of them looked “underfed”⁸⁵. The Kensal mission had been founded in 1860 and a school chapel was opened in 1871. In 1881, Cardinal Manning included the needs of the Kensal mission in his Trinity Sunday pastoral letter when he asked the Westminster congregations for struggling missions. The first stone of a church at Kensal had been laid; the mission had schools but the means to build a church and presbytery were needed⁸⁶. The words were simply for a “needy” mission. There was in this case none of the urgency, or indeed the honesty, in the descriptions of the grinding poverty of some of the Catholic missions in the latter part of the century which had been seen in the decades after Relief. It was noted whilst reading the *Directories* that from 1840 onwards the number of appeals published in this periodical had diminished very significantly. Whether this was because of the assumption of ownership of the *Directory* by the bishops; whether the Catholic body as a whole was embarrassed by the circumstances of many who claimed to be Catholic or whether the reality was that too many missions would have been appealing and thus all were excluded in the interest of space is not known. Embarrassment seems a likely cause, yet there were many Catholics, both lay and religious, who involved themselves in charitable work; the Medical Benevolent Society was founded in 1843 to bring medical aid to those who could not afford it⁸⁷; the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul was founded in England in 1844 and quickly spread so that by 1857 there were thirty-nine branches active in most of the major cities⁸⁸; the St Elizabeth Institute in Liverpool was founded, and run “by ladies” in 1854 to train poor girls for domestic service⁸⁹. Despite all these efforts the need continued.

There is one final point on language and its uses which must be made. Norman wrote that

Amongst the more learned who retained or were converted to the old faith there seems to have been one particularly decisive consideration: the sense of belonging to a universal society whose truths were inseparable from the religious institution in which they were conveyed. Theirs was basically a rejection of the central claim of Anglicanism that a national Church was competent, without reference to the rest of Christendom, to determine doctrine.⁹⁰

The use of Latin for the main services of the Catholic Church may have seemed an anachronism to those outside it, but Catholics who were ignorant of that language would maintain that the advantage was that wherever in the world one was, one could attend mass and know what was happening at any point. But, as was discussed in the last chapter with

⁸⁵ Ibid., B359, 81

⁸⁶ Manning, *Pastoral Letters*, , 641

⁸⁷ CD1843, 225

⁸⁸ CD 1857, 240

⁸⁹ CD 1857, 241

⁹⁰ Norman, *Roman Catholicism*, 26

reference to the Irish migrants, language difficulties could come into play in other Church ministrations especially that of confession. In 1850, for the first time, the *Directory* gave a list, “as yet imperfect” of places on the continent where confessions could be heard in English. Readers were invited to tell the editor of any others of which they knew⁹¹. Each year thereafter the list gradually expanded.

At the beginning of the twentieth century it would appear that priests were asked in which languages confessions could be heard in their missions. These were either listed as part of the services in each mission or were included as a composite list at the end of the diocese’s listing. A total of eighteen languages was offered around the country. The most common was French (offered by 91 missions), followed by German (46) and Italian (41). At the opposite end of the scale Latin and Russian were each offered once; Czech and Hungarian twice. There were five missions which heard confessions in Portuguese and Polish.

The variety of languages available was because some English candidates for the priesthood travelled abroad for their training and used their language skills on their return for the benefit of non-English speakers. There were many foreign priests working in England in the nineteenth century. Fitzgerald-Lombard gives brief statistics on the national origins of the priests working in England and Wales in the period 1801-1914. Over 1000 were of European origin. These included nearly 500 French priests, many of whom would have been émigrés from the Revolution, but that still left over 500 who, like Fr Pycke from Belgium, could not be considered “exiles” from their homelands. There were also priests from Asia (41), The Americas including Canada (69), Australasia (23) and Africa (12)⁹². This variety of national origins of priests working in England was evidence of the universality of the Catholic faith.

6.4 Public Life

In his monograph, Dermot Quinn discusses the involvement of Catholics in English politics in the second half of the century. Quinn compares the effectiveness of two Catholic politicians – The Marquis of Ripon and the 15th Duke of Norfolk. Herein lay one of the problems for Catholics in any attempt which they might have made to be a political power or bloc within the state. Ripon was a Liberal, a member of Gladstone’s government until he resigned following his conversion to Catholicism; Norfolk, a large landowner and pre-eminent peer of the realm, was a natural Tory. These divisions went further than simply the more prominent members of Church. Following the extension of the franchise so that most men could vote, it might have been expected that those of Irish birth or

⁹¹ CD 1850, 107

⁹² Fitzgerald-Lombard, *English and Welsh Priests*, 362

extraction would vote Liberal. The Liberals towards the end of the century were more inclined to legislate for justice for Ireland (to settle the Land War and on the Home Rule question), whereas the Tories were allied to Unionism in the Home Rule debate. On the other hand, the question of funding for denominational education, also a “justice” issue, gained no sympathy from the Liberals but was an issue on which the Tories might deliver. Quinn has analysed the position of Catholics within parliamentary politics and their lack of influence therein and concluded that this was a considerable disappointment to them.

Quinn’s thesis was that the Catholics lacked influence due to political naivety or immaturity and that the paucity of MPs elected to Parliament was further evidence of this. Jeffrey Von Arx argued against Quinn by pointing out how Cardinal Manning encouraged Catholics to be involved in politics at all levels and not just parliamentary party politics⁹³. The question addressed here is to what extent Catholics engaged in politics and public life on the same terms as other groups in England and what evidence is there that their involvement was accepted.

It was the desire to return to Parliament which was a major motivation in the establishment of the Catholic Committee in the late eighteenth century. Many upper-class Catholics had conformed to the Church of England because of the exclusions imposed on them through the penal laws. Even as late as 1780, after Relief had begun, the Earl of Surrey (heir to the Duke of Norfolk) abjured and took a seat in the House of Commons⁹⁴. Although there were very few Catholics elected to the Commons from English constituencies in the nineteenth century, it was not uncommon for English Catholics to stand for election in Ireland⁹⁵.

Standing for Parliament was a costly business and not within the remit of most of the population. One of the ways in which the ordinary, as yet disenfranchised, people could make their case to Parliament was through petitions. Bishops in letters to their priests frequently requested petitions to be got up to influence Parliament in the desired direction. Tenbus shows how extensively this method was employed by the Catholics in the fight for equality in educational funding. From mass meetings through petitions to priests speaking from the pulpit, this was politicking on a national scale by Catholics⁹⁶. These were the standard methods employed by any pressure group in the years before universal franchise⁹⁷.

In the mid-1860s one issue was the spiritual needs of prisoners. The Prisoner Ministers Bill in 1863 was proposed by John Pope Hennessy (a Catholic) empowered local

⁹³ J von Arx, “Catholics and Politics”, in *From without the Flaminian Gate*, eds V A McClelland and M Hodgetts (London: Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd., 1999) 245-271

⁹⁴ Thomas Erskine May, *The Constitutional History of England since the Accession of George III*, vol. 2, 2 vols. (New York: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, 1863), Fn 1, 322

⁹⁵ For example, Lord Acton, Catholic intellectual, was elected for Carlow in 1859.

⁹⁶ Tenbus, “Education of the Poor”, 868-873

⁹⁷ Paz, *Anti-Catholicism*, 30

authorities to appoint Catholic chaplains to prisons and pay for them out of the rates⁹⁸, but obstructions were frequently put in their way. Cardinal Wiseman first requested such a petition to “force the Justices of Middlesex to allow Catholic prisoners access to priests and chaplains”⁹⁹. It was petitions such as this which forced Parliament’s hand in revisiting legislation. The legislation was often drafted with good intent, but permissive legislation could not overcome the prejudices of local officials who sought to obstruct the spirit of the law. The battle was for mandatory appointments in all these cases. On succeeding to Westminster, Cardinal Manning continued the work of petitioning Parliament for Catholics in public institutions. One of his first requests to his priests was for a petition to seek “redress for the spiritual grievances affecting Catholic paupers and Juvenile Offenders”¹⁰⁰. There was a separate petition in this case from Catholic wives and mothers.

Manning did not confine himself to issues specifically affecting Catholics. In March 1868, he sought signatures to a petition against the *Sale of Liquors on Sunday Bill*. His *Ad Clerum*¹⁰¹ letter on that occasion ended thus

I hereby give permission for Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament on the three days before the Feast of St. Patrick; and strongly recommend that there be a Triduum, with the intention of suppressing the sin of drunkenness, wheresoever the Clergy may find it possible.¹⁰²

The cause of temperance was close to Manning’s heart as was that of the poor; later that year he asked for signatures to petition the House of Lords where they were debating a Bill for the Improvement of the Habitations of the Poor. Manning asked his priests to send their returns to him in the forthcoming week “even if the signatures be not very numerous”¹⁰³.

Perhaps the most successful mobilisation of the Catholic faithful was when the hierarchy had been restored. Paz has dealt in considerable detail with the petitions and memorials which were got up throughout the country against the hierarchy resulting in about one and a quarter million signatures¹⁰⁴. The Catholics responded to this agitation and, led by Lords Lovat, Vaux and Dormer, presented a loyal address to Queen Victoria with over a quarter of a million signatures¹⁰⁵.

From these few examples it can be seen, that besides the great educational debate which was a major political issue for Catholics through the second half of the century, there was

⁹⁸ Quinn, *Patronage and Piety*, 60

⁹⁹ H E Manning, *Ad Clerum Letters*, Westminster Diocesan Archives, 21 Apr 1864

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 1 Feb 1866

¹⁰¹ *Ad Clerum* letters were sent to priests in all the missions of a diocese.

¹⁰² Manning, *Ad Clerum*, , 11 Mar 1868

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 4 Jun 1868

¹⁰⁴ Paz, *Anti-Catholicism*, 45

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 96

engagement led by the bishops and laity of the type which was common at that time.

There were Catholic MPs and they achieved office in the government. Richard More O’Ferrall MP was described in the lists of creditors of Wright’s Bank as “of the Admiralty” at which point he was Secretary to the Admiralty¹⁰⁶. Messrs Keogh, Sadler and Monsell¹⁰⁷, who held office in 1853 under Lord Aberdeen, were upset enough by a comment made by Lord John Russell in the House to tender their resignations. Russell had described the Catholic Church as being “hostile to free institutions and disloyal to civil Governments”. As no other Minister had dissented from Russell’s words, it was to be assumed that this was the Government’s view of the Church and, according to *The Times*, placed “Roman Catholic members of the Government in an awkward position”. Monsell’s letter of resignation was of “such temperate strength” that *The Times* thought it would have been a great pity for such a man to be lost to the administration. Aberdeen explained to the three men that the views of Lord John were his private views. In its report on the matter *The Times* went on at great length in support of Lord John’s utterances and suggested that they were the views of every right-thinking Englishman¹⁰⁸.

For much of the middle part of the century, *The Times* was virulently anti-Catholic. In spite of its frequent avowals that Catholicism and Englishness were fundamentally incompatible, many of those who might have been amongst its readership converted to Rome and for some years the *Directory* annually produced a list of the prominent people who had done so. The Church in England certainly benefited from these conversions. John Henry Newman was the most significant theologian in England of any denomination in the nineteenth century; Henry Manning had been expected to achieve high office in the Church of England and the Marquis of Ripon resigned from the cabinet when he converted, although it was not until a year later that the real reason for his resignation emerged. As might have been expected *The Times* fulminated over this declaring that it was right for Ripon to resign as

a statesman who becomes a convert to Roman Catholicism forfeits at once the confidence of the English people. Such a step involves a complete abandonment of any claim to political or even social influence in the nation at large ... To become a Roman Catholic and remain a thorough Englishman are – it cannot be disguised – are almost incompatible conditions. ... The principles of English life and of the Roman Catholic religion are very difficult to reconcile¹⁰⁹.

¹⁰⁶ W. J. FitzPatrick and Peter Gray, "O'Ferrall, Richard More (1797–1880)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20565>> Accessed 24/09/2011.

¹⁰⁷ William Monsell was a rare example of an Irish Catholic Unionist. He was MP for Limerick. Matthew Potter, *William Monsell of Tervoe 1812-1894 Catholic Unionist, Anglo-Irishman* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009)

¹⁰⁸ “Zealots of All Sides Will Be Concerned to Hear ...” *The Times* 06 June 1853., 4

¹⁰⁹ “News”, *The Times* 05 September 1874., 9

By converting to Rome, Ripon had ‘renounced his mental and moral freedom’¹¹⁰. There was correspondence between Gladstone and Ripon in which Gladstone conceded that Ripon himself would not be “personally short on civil loyalty and duty to his queen and country”¹¹¹. Manning advised Ripon to remain silent and patient for a while. This advice was well-founded as when Gladstone returned to power, Ripon was offered, and accepted, the post of Viceroy in India¹¹².

The row over Ripon’s conversion in 1874 illustrated that many held the opinion that Catholics were unsuitable for high office in any state. In less than ten years, England, not only legally but also culturally, had become far more tolerant of religious diversity as even atheists were allowed to take their seat in Parliament from 1886¹¹³. When the Catholic Henry Matthews entered the cabinet as Home Secretary in 1886, there was no adverse comment in *The Times*. His term in office was “dogged with controversy”, but these were political rather than religious controversies¹¹⁴.

The 1791 Act allowed Catholics to take most offices of the Crown which had previously been closed to them. Charles Butler, the leading lawyer on the Catholic Committee which had pressed for Relief, was called to the bar after he had taken the oath. Prior to this, Butler’s practice was limited to that of conveyancer which precluded him appearing as counsel. He had come to the attention of the first lord of the Admiralty, the fourth Earl of Sandwich, and appeared as his counsel in a parliamentary inquiry, before the Relief Acts.

When asked whether he had taken the oaths prescribed by the Test Act, he replied that it was ‘a question which this House will have the humanity not to ask of me, because it leads to an explanation rather inconvenient to myself’¹¹⁵.

Although the profession was technically closed to them, there had been a long history through the penal days of Catholics training and acting as lawyers, albeit as conveyancers, particularly because of the penal laws affecting property. Butler may have been the most prominent Catholic lawyer but he had not been alone. John Bergin has written of the careers of Irish lawyers in the London Inns of Court. Some of these lawyers were Catholic and some had practices with an exclusively Catholic client list¹¹⁶. In 1831, Butler became

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 9

¹¹¹ The argument which following the announcement of Ripon’s conversion is discussed in Quinn, *Patronage and Piety*, 87-96

¹¹² Anthony F. Denholm, "Robinson, George Frederick Samuel, First Marquess of Ripon (1827–1909)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/35792>> Accessed 18/01/2011.

¹¹³ Edward Royle, “Bradlaugh, Charles (1833–1891)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2011), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3183>> Accessed 18/01/2011.

¹¹⁴ A. Lentin, “Matthews, Henry, Viscount Llandaff (1826–1913)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2010), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34940>> Accessed 18/01/2011.

¹¹⁵ Dorothy M. Moore, “Butler, Charles (1750–1832)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4179>> Accessed 24/09/2011.

¹¹⁶ John Bergin, “The Irish Catholic Interest at the London Inns of Court, 1674–1800” *Eighteenth Century*

the first Catholic to be appointed as King's Counsel¹¹⁷; in 1863 William Shee became the first Catholic to be appointed a judge on the Queen's Bench since the Revolution of 1688¹¹⁸.

Civic offices such as Mayor or Lord Mayor were open to them, but under the 1829 Act, Catholics holding civic offices were not allowed to process to their own churches in their civic regalia. James Holdforth was the first Catholic Lord Mayor of Leeds. He held this office in 1838¹¹⁹. A silk and cotton spinner, he was the lone Catholic in the boardroom of Leeds and Yorkshire Assurance which was dominated by "a well-established Tory, largely Anglican, mercantile elite"¹²⁰. The first Catholic Lord Mayor of London was Polydore de Keyser, elected in 1887. De Keyser was born in Belgium and had come to London at a very young age¹²¹. (The first Jewish Lord Mayor was Alderman David Salomons (1855). He had persuaded the London City Corporation to remove the inscription on the Monument which blamed the Catholics from the great Fire of 1666¹²²).

Sir Stuart Knill was elected Lord Mayor of London in 1892. In a break with tradition the Prime Minister, W E Gladstone, and many senior Ministers did not attend the Lord Mayor's Banquet that year. The response to the toast of "Her Majesty's Ministers" was made by the Earl of Kimberley, Lord President of the Council and Secretary of State for India. He apologised for the non-attendance of Gladstone who had been advised by his doctors not to attend¹²³. It had been announced a week before the banquet that Gladstone would not be attending and the *New York Times* headline was

Slighted by Gladstone; he will not attend Lord Mayor-elect Knill's banquet. Four members of his cabinet also decline – the custom of many years broken – the action looked upon as truckling to the anti-catholic feeling¹²⁴.

In between there were many offices at a local level which were taken by Catholics. There was a period when the *Directory* rather strayed into triumphalism in listing Catholic holders of these. In 1861 it included a list of MPs and Peers¹²⁵; this list remained a fixture

Ireland / Iris an dá chultúr 24 (2009) My thanks to John Bergin for sending me a copy of his paper.

¹¹⁷ Moore, "Butler, Charles (1750–1832)."

¹¹⁸ G. F. R. Barker and Hugh Mooney, "Shee, Sir William (1804–1868)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25285>> Accessed 24/09/2011.

¹¹⁹ *Lord Mayors & Aldermen of Leeds since 1626*, 2011, Leeds City Council, <<http://www.leeds.gov.uk/files/Internet2007/2011/22/list%20of%20lord%20mayors%20and%20aldermen%20since%201626.pdf>> (accessed 29/09/2011)

¹²⁰ Robin Pearson and David Richardson, "Business Networking in the Industrial Revolution" *The Economic History Review* 54.4 (2001), 667

¹²¹ *Belgian Lord Mayor of London*, <<http://www.diplomatie.be/london/default.asp?id=38&ACT=5&content=114&mnu=38>> (accessed 04/05/2011)

¹²² Walter Thornbury. *"The Lord Mayors of London" Old and New London: Volume 1*. 1878. Accessed 24/09/2011. <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45053>>

¹²³ "Lord Mayor's Day the Banquet", *The Times* 10 November 1892., 6

¹²⁴ "Slighted by Gladstone", *The New York Times* 2 November 1892., 4

¹²⁵ CD 1868, 41

in the *Directory* thereafter, and confirmed the lack of Catholic MPs in England; in 1869 there were 58 Catholic MPs, all from Irish constituencies, except for Sir John Simeon, MP for the Isle of Wight¹²⁶. From 1872 the political lists included Catholic members of the Privy Council¹²⁷. In that year Herbert Vaughan, who was from an old recusant family, was appointed Bishop of Salford. Salford Diocese submitted its own list of Catholics in public office from 1874 when there were: County Magistrates (11); Borough Magistrates (12); Members of Municipal Corporations (5) of whom two were Aldermen; Local Government Boards (9); Poor-Law Boards (9); School Boards (11); and Religious Inspectors (2)¹²⁸. In 1879 the list included four County Deputy Lieutenants and by 1885 it took a full page in the *Directory*¹²⁹. Vaughan was alone in producing this list and it was no longer included after the 1885 edition.

6.5 Cultural Catholicism

Catholicism is different; not only in its doctrines, but also in its culture from Protestantism in that it becomes embedded in the social and cultural life of its communities. In removing the non-scriptural accretions to its faith during the Reformation, Protestantism severed many of the links between the socio-cultural life of communities and their Christian faith. Eamon Duffy has discussed at length how this happened in England in *The Stripping of the Altars*¹³⁰. Ronald Hutton has written the most comprehensive history of the communal festivities in Britain¹³¹ in which, for example, he traces the history of Christmas from the pre-Christian midwinter celebrations to the Christianization of these¹³² and then on through the “Re-invention of Christmas” following the birth of the Oxford Movement in the Church of England. This was supported by the publication of “*A Christmas Carol*” by Charles Dickens in 1843 and Prince Albert who, as Hutton puts it, were responding to the mood of the times¹³³.

In the Catholic countries of Europe the medieval tradition of marking a religious feastday with both church and secular celebrations had been retained. Processions through the streets which started and ended in the parish church could include aspects which were quasi-religious at best. This was a faith which was not restrained by the four walls of the church and had remained an essential part of local cultures. As discussed above this melding of religious and social celebrations had been retained to a greater extent in Ireland

¹²⁶ CD 1869, 44

¹²⁷ CD 1872, 44

¹²⁸ CD 1874, 198

¹²⁹ CD 1885, 231

¹³⁰ Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*

¹³¹ Hutton, *Stations of the Sun : A History of the Ritual Year in Britain*

¹³² *Ibid.*, 1-8

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 112-114

than was practical for so small a minority as the Catholic community in England. The 1829 Catholic Emancipation Act seemed to make such cultural practices illegal by forbidding any Catholic ecclesiastic

to exercise the rites or ceremonies of the Roman Catholic religion, or wear the habits of his order, save within the usual places of worship of the Roman Catholic religion, or in private houses¹³⁴.

This was a re-iteration of Clause 11 in the 1791 Relief Act.

Pilgrimages and processions are the most visible of external religious rites. Holywell in North Wales had been a centre of pilgrimage for over a millennium. It was listed in the *Directory* from 1824. The Jesuits took charge of it and built a new church in the 1840s which, as the numbers travelling there increased, was frequently enlarged¹³⁵. It was not until near the end of the century that pilgrims returned to Walsingham. Unlike Holywell, which had escaped the depredations of the Reformation, the shrine in Walsingham was destroyed¹³⁶. In 1895 Bishop Brownlow of Clifton initiated an annual Catholic pilgrimage to Glastonbury, site of the largest abbey in pre-Reformation England. Two years later, the Anglicans followed with a pilgrimage of their own in the grounds of the ruined abbey¹³⁷. With few pilgrimage sites remaining in Britain, the more visible expression of Catholicism external to church services was processions, particularly those at Whitsun and Corpus Christi.

It is not certain when the first identifiably Catholic procession was held in nineteenth-century England, but that of March 17th 1821 in Liverpool must be a strong contender for such an accolade. St Anthony's and St Mary's missions were unable to cope with an influx of Irish labourers after the Peninsular Wars. Burke suggests that these new arrivals probably found work digging Prince's Dock in 1819¹³⁸. It was therefore decided to build a church, to be named after St Patrick, to provide for this new congregation. Many, including leading Liberals, contributed to the new church although there were objections from others on the grounds that Liverpool already had enough Catholic accommodation¹³⁹. In spite of these objections, the foundation stone for the new church was laid on March 17th 1821. The event was reported fully in the following edition of the *Liverpool Mercury*¹⁴⁰.

¹³⁴ *10 Geo. Iv.--Sess. 1829. A Bill for the Relief of His Majesty's Roman Catholic Subjects*. House of Commons Parliamentary Papers 1829: Pages.

¹³⁵ Roy Fry and Tristan Gray Hulse, "Holywell – Clwyd", *Living Spring Journal* <<http://people.bath.ac.uk/liskmj/living-spring/sourcearchive/ns1/ns1tgh2.htm>> Accessed 03/01/2013.

¹³⁶ *The Roman Catholic National Shrine, Walsingham. A Brief History*, <<http://www.walsingham.org.uk/romancatholic/the-roman-catholic-national-shrine-walsingham/>> (accessed 03/01/2013)

¹³⁷ Harding, *Clifton*, 264

¹³⁸ Burke, *Liverpool*, 35

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 38

¹⁴⁰ This account is drawn mainly from the "Saint Patrick's Day," *Liverpool Mercury* 23 March 1821., 315. It has not been possible to quote from it as the digitisation of this particular page is poor.

Four of the Irish benevolent societies attended mass at St Mary's after which they processed to join with the remaining Irish societies which had attended early mass at St Anthony's. Led by a number of priests in carriages and followed by various Irish groups, not all of which were religiously based, bands and school-children processed to the site of the new church of St Patrick.

The procession included the Connaught Rangers who were stationed in Liverpool at the time. They had fought with distinction during the Peninsular War and had gained a considerable reputation for their bravery. At their own request, privates and non-commissioned officers took part in the procession. Their commanding officer had asked, and the War Office granted, permission for them to parade. Many of the Rangers bore "signs of their service to the King, [and] aroused the sympathies of the liberal minded non-Catholic population"¹⁴¹. They had given a day's pay to the building fund and promised further contributions. Although this did not dispel all the preconceptions concerning the loyalty of Catholics, it was a visible manifestation that loyalty to Rome and the Crown were not incompatible.

In terms of regular processions, Preston seems to have led the way as in 1892 a celebration was held marking the fiftieth anniversary of the Catholic Guilds procession at Whitsuntide¹⁴². Preston had the advantage of having retained a significant Catholic population throughout the penal period and could be reasonably certain that they would not be molested when they did process. The processions included the sodalities, guilds and other religious groups attached to the missions. The clergy also took part although it is not clear from the newspaper reports if they were vested¹⁴³. At the procession of 1885 the main address was given by Fr Walford who was newly appointed to the Preston mission. He asked if it were "really possible that a Catholic procession can really be walking through the streets ... of a proud Protestant town of the proudest Protestant nation in the world?"¹⁴⁴ The Preston processions were in two parts, first there was the religious part, the actual procession of guilds and sodalities held on Whit-Monday morning. This was followed, the local newspaper reported, by entertainments which happened in The Orchard¹⁴⁵. This was a truly Catholic occasion. There were Church of England processions at Whitsuntide as well. The tradition grew up that the Catholics processed in the morning and the Church of England Sunday School children processed in the afternoon.

The Catholic procession of 1887 was given an extensive report in *The Preston Guardian*

¹⁴¹ Burke, *Liverpool*, 39

¹⁴² "Stray Notes", *The Preston Guardian (also known as The Preston Chronicle)*, 11 June 1892., 2

¹⁴³ "Whitsuntide", *The Preston Guardian* 04 June 1887., 2

¹⁴⁴ "The Rev. Father Walford, S.J., on the Catholic Processions", *The Preston Chronicle* 30 May 1885., 6

¹⁴⁵ "Whitsuntide", 2

that year because the executive of the Church of England Sunday Scholars procession decided not to hold theirs at Whitsun. This was the year of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee and there were to be local celebrations later that month at which it was intended that the Sunday Scholars would process. There was a definite note of regret in the newspaper that they had not marked Whitsun as usual

There was no procession of the Church of England denomination; this has been postponed till the Queen's Jubilee is locally celebrated; still there were not a few observations to the effect that seeing the Catholic Guilds had followed the ancient Whitsun custom, and were prepared to display their loyalty by a similar procession within a month's time, the Church of England schools ought also to have done the same.¹⁴⁶

The absence of the Church of England schools allowed the newspaper to devote nearly two columns to the Catholic procession under the large headline "IMPOSING PROCESSION OF THE CATHOLIC GUILDS". As it happened the weather that day was very good and according to the report the glorious sunshine added to the festive air of the proceedings. Full details were given of the organisations which processed; names of their marshals; the design of their banners and who had made them (considerable detail was given in the case of new banners); the priests who accompanied them; and the numbers of men, women, boys and girls in each group. The paper reckoned that about 5,000 people in total formed the procession and that it took about an hour to pass by any point on the route. Bands preceded each group and these too were named. One interesting aspect of this was the number of military bands which were in the procession including those of the Preston Rifles; Blackburn Rifles; the 3rd and 4th battalions of the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment; and the Preston Artillery¹⁴⁷.

What seems to have started in Preston became a trend which was followed in other parts of the country. Preston, as noted, had a long tradition of Catholicism; Cardiff had not. In Cardiff an annual procession was held at Corpus Christi. This was centred on Cardiff Castle, property of the Catholic Marquis of Bute and the earliest report of the event was in 1879 when 2,500 people (mainly children) processed. The "spectators were numerous" and the contemporary newspaper reported the procession converging on the Castle as an event in the cultural life of the city¹⁴⁸. As in Preston, once the serious religious part of the occasion had been completed, the children had games and entertainment and the local newspaper reported on the enjoyment of all the citizens in Cardiff of the event¹⁴⁹.

Corpus Christi was a late addition to the Christian calendar of feasts having been instituted

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 2

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 2

¹⁴⁸ "Procession of Catholic Children at Cardiff", *Western Mail* 13 June 1879., 3

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 3

by the Pope in 1317. Ronald Hutton gives a detailed account of traditional celebrations in England, including that of Corpus Christi before it was excised from the calendar by the Reformation¹⁵⁰. By 1318 the feast day had spread throughout Europe and was recorded in St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester and at Wells Cathedral and in 1325 a Guild was founded in Ipswich to organise a procession of the host to complement the liturgy of the day.

Although its spread from there was slow, by the early Tudor period the processions held in various parts of the country were magnificent affairs and included dramatic productions in the afternoon or pageants with actors in the processions¹⁵¹. As might be expected, during the Reformation the processions were banned during the reign of Edward, re-instated by Mary and forbidden again by Elizabeth. All that remained were the dramas which were shorn of those parts offensive to Protestant sensibilities. As Hutton says, this feast is now more of interest to historians of the development of drama than for its religious significance¹⁵². The belief in the doctrine of the Real Presence by Catholics was a feature which distinguished their faith from Protestantism and by holding a procession for Corpus Christi they were asserting that belief in a very public and confident way.

In many other towns and cities, where there was a significant body of Catholics, processions took place, at Whitsuntide or on Corpus Christi, with the school-children, confraternities and sodalities joining in. These events, although very Catholic, were reported favourably by the local newspapers. The acceptance and enjoyment of these particular aspects of Catholic culture by the general populace may have been partly influential in the decision to hold the Eucharistic Congress in London in September 1908. This was the Nineteenth Eucharistic Congress and was the first to be held in the English-speaking world and, except for one occasion in 1893 (Jerusalem), it had always been held in a Catholic country. The Eucharistic Congress had been initiated in France in 1881 to increase Catholic devotion to the Eucharist. It consisted of talks, sermons and religious services, and ended with a procession of the Blessed Sacrament. The papacy had taken an interest in Congresses and usually a papal legate was sent to represent the Pope. Cardinal Vannutelli was the papal legate sent to London. This was the first such a legate had been sent to England since Cardinal Pole in the reign of Queen Mary I. Vannutelli arrived at Dover where he was met by the Bishop of Southwark and from thence went on to Charing Cross Station where he was greeted by Archbishop Bourne. The events of the Congress started with the formal opening on Wednesday September 9th followed by sectional meetings held in English or French on the following three days. At these, papers were read

¹⁵⁰ Hutton, *Stations of the Sun : A History of the Ritual Year in Britain*

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 304-305

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 305-306

concerning theology, liturgy or practice associated with the Eucharist.

Considerable coverage was given in the newspapers at the time; *The Times* published the events of the Congress in its Court Circular column for the forthcoming week¹⁵³ and reported on each day's activities. These reports were followed by letters to the editor from Protestant organisations complaining, in particular, about the proposed Procession which was planned for Sunday, the final day. This was to be the major event of the week, the culmination of all of the previous activity. It was also the event to which many Catholics, unable to attend weekday activities due to work commitments, would come. Special trains were laid on to bring them from every part of Britain. They travelled also from Ireland and across the Channel from France and Belgium. This was to be a demonstration of Catholic devotion and culture, a multinational gathering of Catholics united before the greatest mystery of their faith, the Blessed Sacrament.

Plans for the event had been prepared for months¹⁵⁴. The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Edward Henry, had been consulted on the route and the maintenance of order and, according to *The New York Times*, he “anticipated much more trouble in dealing with the suffragette meeting in Trafalgar Square on Sunday than with the Eucharistic procession planned to take place in Westminster”¹⁵⁵. The Home Secretary, Herbert Gladstone, also knew of the plans. Stewards were nominated from each parish which would be attending. The Protestant societies had appealed, unavailingly, to the King to stop the procession. They took their complaint to the Liberal Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith. In the final few days before the planned procession a flurry of letters and telegrams sent by the various people involved, was complicated by the distances between them as it was holiday time. Archbishop Bourne was in London; Asquith in Scotland; The King was in Nottinghamshire for the Doncaster Races; Lord Ripon was in Yorkshire (the only Catholic in the Cabinet, he was asked by Asquith to influence Bourne); Henry was fishing in Ireland; and Gladstone was in East Lothian. Only Edward Troup, Under-Secretary in the Home Office, was in London¹⁵⁶. Asquith asked Bourne not to process. Bourne refused unless Asquith specifically instructed him not to do so, in which case Bourne would publish the total correspondence which had passed between them. Asquith pointed to the illegality of carrying the Sacred Host and Bourne reluctantly agreed to process in strict compliance with the law; there would be no Host and the clergy would not wear vestments.

¹⁵³ “Court Circular”, *The Times* 29 August 1908., 9

¹⁵⁴ Carol Devlin and G I T Machin discuss the Procession, its alterations and the consequences in considerable detail. Devlin, “Eucharistic Procession”; Machin, “Eucharistic Procession”

¹⁵⁵ “English Not Hostile”, *The New York Times* 13 September 1908., C1

¹⁵⁶ Machin, “Eucharistic Procession”, 565

Bourne told the story of his recent communications with Asquith¹⁵⁷ at the Men's Meeting in the Albert Hall on Saturday evening. "A storm of angry cries and hisses greeted the announcement"¹⁵⁸. Bourne asked the "people to accept this arrangement with the loyalty and respect which [were] due both to their ecclesiastical superiors and to the civil authorities"¹⁵⁹.

On the Sunday a procession was held. They did not carry the Blessed Sacrament and all Catholic ceremonial was removed. Catholic prelates from around the world walked in formal Court Dress¹⁶⁰; members of the religious orders wore ordinary clerical suits and carried their habits over their arms in silent protest; Catholic aristocrats, Irish and English, formed a guard of honour for the Papal Legate; thousands of ordinary Catholics lined the streets. Together they were united in a public proclamation of their common Catholic identity.

Next day the storm broke around the Prime Minister and his government. Every newspaper commented upon the events with full knowledge of what had transpired as Bourne had published the complete correspondence between himself and Asquith.

The Daily Telegraph claimed that

[i]t [was] impossible to write in terms other than those of the strongest condemnation of the conduct of the Government with respect to yesterday's procession of the Blessed Sacrament. ... The result is that [the Government] will draw down on themselves a storm of obloquy and indignation, and excite animosities which need never have been stirred out of quiescence.¹⁶¹

The Times thought that the Government "had blundered conspicuously" and called for the disabilities of Catholics to be removed¹⁶². Other newspapers also called for the removal of Catholic disabilities.

The leading Anglican High Church publication was *The Church Times*. It was perhaps no surprise that they expressed their sympathy with the Catholics. In an article entitled "Toleration" the writer said that English Protestantism "was fundamentally the same as ever".

It is that which made a hero of Titus Oates, and drove a King into exile; it is that which the elder Pitt could skilfully use for the promotion of an alliance with the evangelical Frederick the Great; it is that which the crazy Lord George Gordon could stir up to fill London with riot and bloodshed on occasion of the first

¹⁵⁷ Machin has unravelled the sequence of letters and telegrams which passed between politicians and churchmen *Ibid.*, 566-572

¹⁵⁸ *Eucharistic Congress*, 541

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 543

¹⁶⁰ "The Eucharistic Congress", *The Times* 14th September 1908. 7

¹⁶¹ *Eucharistic Congress*, 619-620

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 617-619

relaxation of the penal laws; it is that which poured itself out in fury and lamentation when Peel and Wellington forced through the Emancipation Act of 1829. ... It is a violent prejudice, a compound of hatred and dread. ...

But what shall we say of men who, priding themselves on their own nonconformity and their fathers' resistance to laws in restraint of religion, raise the hue and cry against others who act in the very same way? ...

English Protestantism has not even begun to be tolerant. It has little power to interfere, because the laws in restraint of religion have been reduced to a mere shadow of their former selves; but when there is any weapon available, it will fight against toleration.¹⁶³

The legality of Catholic processions was doubtful. The 1829 Act banned Catholic priests from wearing their “habits” in public; however neither secular priests nor the feared Jesuits wore “habits”. This is, perhaps, a pedantic point, but statutes do try to be clear. The accepted meaning of the phrase was that Catholic clergy could not wear their vestments or other distinctively Catholic clothing in public. Half a century previously, as the furore over the “Papal Aggression” of 1850 was receding, in 1852 Queen Victoria had issued a proclamation reminding Catholics of the law¹⁶⁴. In response, J H Newman wrote to S Walpole, “one of Her Majesty’s Principal Secretaries of State” asking if it were permitted for Catholic priests to go about the streets in cassocks as had been habitual in Birmingham for the previous four years. The response was that all violations of the Act were covered by the proclamation and if there was any doubt he should seek legal opinion. The matter would be resolved in court if a prosecution were to be brought¹⁶⁵.

Nearly sixty years later, Lister Drummond wrote concerning the curtailed procession to *The Tablet* in September 1908¹⁶⁶. He opined that “Catholic processions [were] absolutely legal”. Although he gave no profession, his address at Temple, London implies that he was a barrister. He argued that cassocks, copes and cottas, being dress common to other than Catholic priests are legal, but mitres, stoles, chasubles are not. Even wearing these forbidden garments in a procession would not make the *procession* illegal. He went on, with regards to the Queen’s proclamation, that “a proclamation cannot make a law. It can only demand obedience to a law already in existence.” It was, he wrote, issued at a time of popular panic and “was not worth the paper it is written upon”.

From the newspaper reports, it is difficult to say if the Corpus Christi processions in Cardiff were held completely within the walls of the Castle. If they were, then they were legal, as they were held on the private property of the Marquis of Bute who was a significant figure in Cardiff (he had re-built the Castle and had founded the *Western Mail*

¹⁶³ Ibid., 632-634

¹⁶⁴ “Court Circular”, *The Times* 16 June 1852., 5

¹⁶⁵ “For Some Time Past the Streets of London”, *The Times* 16 June 1852., 5

¹⁶⁶ “Letters”, *The Tablet* 19 September 1908., 441

newspaper which reported on the processions there). *The Times* in 1852 was at the height of its anti-Catholic phase, fulminated as it was wont to do. It complained that for some time past the streets of London were “infested by a parcel of dirty people in the dress of Roman Catholic ecclesiastics”¹⁶⁷. Commenting on the Queen’s proclamation it went on to say that Protestant clergy did not do this sort of thing even though there was

no law on the subject – for none was needed. The tacit good sense of the Protestant clergy prevents them from dragging their sacred vestments through the mud – and even running the risk of exposing religion to contempt . . . Let the Roman Catholic clergy follow the wholesome example. So, again, with the practice of out-of-doors processions and ceremonials – the thing is simply impossible in England¹⁶⁸.

And yet, by the end of the century the “impossible” had come to England and Anglican clergymen were to be seen in procession.

The Times was in no doubt as to the law, but the Catholic community, by going beyond their church walls and private houses, was returning religion to English public space. There had always been public processions to church on civic or other occasions, such as the judges’ processions at the opening of the legal year, but Catholics were not limiting their processions to holders of public office; theirs were public demonstrations of faith by ordinary people, a point made by Fr Walford in Preston.

In 1908 most British people probably were unaware of the remaining disabilities of Catholics. Many may have believed, if they had thought about it at all, that the passage of the three Relief Acts in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had ended the legal discrimination against them and that such prejudice as remained was social and religious rather than legislative. That this was a false belief was shown in the furore that erupted over the 1908 procession and leads one to ask what other disabilities remained after the 1829 Act of Catholic Emancipation. The next chapter will examine the question of the changes in the law over the nineteenth century as it affected the Catholic Church, its adherents and its practice. These changes were in legislation and, just as importantly, in decisions made by the courts. The changes in the law are important as it allows one to assess whether the law represented an impediment to the progress of Catholicism in England; and whether they retarded or speeded up the achievement of the Church’s aspirations.

¹⁶⁷ “For Some Time Past the Streets of London”, 5

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 5

7 English Law

The debacle over the 1908 Procession brought to the fore again the question of the legal position of Catholics and their church in England and Wales¹. Colin Haydon suggests that the progress of Relief from 1778 and 1791 through to the triumph of 1829 has been read in a rather “whiggish” fashion by Catholic historians², a reading which sees 1829 as the end point of Relief. This is a well-founded observation, because as was pointed out in the previous chapter, Catholics were still constrained in the practice of their religion. Yes, they were permitted to build churches and to hold their services within them, but Catholicism traditionally has never been contained within the four walls of a church and lacking the legal right to take their faith into the public square represented a legal discrimination. It was this question which led to further research on the dismantling of the centuries of laws which had been passed against Catholicism. This necessity for this research was shown also by the frequent notices in the *Directories* of information concerning new legislation specifically related to Catholics and their position in the law. It was found that, despite the two papers written by Devlin and Machin on the 1908 procession, there was practically nothing in the literature which dealt with this question.

The discussion in this chapter will continue from where Haydon ended (1780) and will include Church ownership of property; the vexed issue of charitable trusts; bequests for masses for the dead; installation of Catholic chaplains in public institutions including the armed services, workhouses and prisons; the repeal of the penal legislation; and the question of oaths. This will show that 1829 was not the end; from a legal perspective it is probably better to consider it as the end of the beginning³. 1829 marked the point at which the erosion of the privileges of the Established Church really began by allowing the unreformed Catholic Church and its adherents to take their place in England’s public sphere. The 1778, 1791, 1829 chronology, given by many historians of the period, is unnecessarily and misleadingly short. It does not take account of the further acts of the nineteenth century (in 1813, 1832 and 1860), nor those of the twentieth century (1926 and 1974). All of these removed further disabilities attending upon Catholics and thus allowed them to participate more fully in British public life⁴. The three-Act chronology does not

¹ The law in Scotland and Ireland were different at this point in the history of the United Kingdom.

² Colin Haydon, "Parliament and Popery in England, 1700-1780" *Parliamentary History* 19.1 (2000), 56-57 (this paper is incorrectly titled “Parliament and Property 1700-1780” on the EBSCO database)

³ With apologies to W S Churchill

⁴ There are disabilities remaining, the Act of Succession (1701) is the one most people are aware of, but clauses 15-18 of the 1829 Act forbid Catholic involvement in any Church of England appointments. This would cause difficulty if the Prime Minister were Catholic. There are also offices closed to Catholics (clause 12). The 1974 Act which allowed Catholics to be Lord Chancellor (forbidden under the 1829 Act)

take account of case law, where the law is open to judicial interpretation. Decisions in court could, and did, have implications for Catholics. There are thus two aspects of “dismantling the anti-Catholic legislation” to be considered – statute and case law. Both will be discussed in this chapter.

Through most of the process, the relief from and repeal of the various laws was contested, sometimes by people who could only be described as bigoted or extremely prejudiced. It must be said though, that some of the objectors were principled, seeing the toleration of Catholicism as inimical to the Protestant Established Church and the British Constitution as it had developed over time. Lord George Gordon is a clear example of extreme prejudice, but George III who believed that relieving Catholics of their civil disabilities would require him to break his Coronation Oath, by which he had promised to defend the Protestant Constitution, could be considered as principled. Depending on one’s viewpoint, it can be argued convincingly that Charles Newdigate Newdegate MP was prejudiced or principled. In his attempts to introduce legislation to subject Catholic convents to government inspection, Catholics at the time thought he was prejudiced against them, but he argued that convents were un-English and detrimental to family life⁵. It is not intended here to expose those who were prejudiced or principled, simply to enunciate the chronology.

7.1 Dismantling anti-Catholic legislation

Julian Rivers has pointed out that after the Act of Toleration (1689), prosecution for religious offences “quickly died away” and effectively ended the recusancy legislation⁶, but its usefulness to magistrates was not ended. Moving the Religious Opinions Relief Bill, the Lord Chancellor, in 1846, “reminded their Lordships that not more than four or five years ago fourteen or fifteen convictions had taken place under these Statutes of Recusancy”. Lord Brougham in this debate had told their Lordships the following anecdote of a case in 1841

Three or four men had been prosecuted for poaching; but in consequence of a clumsy laying of the information the worthy magistrates who presided could not prosecute to a conviction. They, being guardians of the law and of the game, having failed to convict, the accused men would have departed. "Oh, but," said one of the magistrates, "were you at church last Sunday?" "No." "Or the Sunday before that?" "No." "Or the Sunday before that again?" "No." "Oh, you must pay Queen Elizabeth's shilling then." Thus, as the men could not be convicted of poaching, the magistrates contrived to convict them of recusancy, and they were each sentenced

makes special provision if the appointee were Catholic: the Monarch may remove those functions related to the Church of England from a Catholic Lord Chancellor. *Catholic Emancipation Bill*: Pages.

⁵ Arnstein, *Protestant Versus Catholic*

⁶ Rivers, *Law of Religions*, 18

to a penalty which, with costs, amounted to 28s. or 29s. They were poor men, common day labourers, and could not pay the money—they were sent to prison for three or four months, and the families of some of them came upon the parish.⁷

Previously in 1844, Lord Beaumont had endeavoured to bring in a Bill to repeal the various penal statutes against Catholics. The then Lord Chancellor had suggested that there were about 700 Acts which would have to be considered. The whole issue was passed to a Commission to research and prepare an appropriate bill⁸. It is therefore apparent that relieving Catholics of their legal disabilities was a very complex undertaking. That which had taken place prior to the Lords debate in 1845 had been somewhat piecemeal and driven by political considerations rather than pure religious tolerance. A perusal of the 1779 and 1791 Acts will show that these Acts repealed very little of the disabling laws; rather they relieved those Catholics who took the oath specified in the Acts of the penalties of the laws. In reality, Catholic Relief had begun before 1778 with, firstly, a judicial decision and, secondly, a private Act of Parliament. The first of these reflected the spirit of the age and the second the sense of natural justice of English legislators.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century intolerance towards those of other Christian denominations was diminishing – Holland, a Protestant state, was tolerant of its Catholic citizens; in the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), by which Gibraltar was ceded to Great Britain, Article X guaranteed “that the free exercise of their religion shall be indulged to the Roman Catholic inhabitants” of Gibraltar⁹. Britain won control of the French Canadian colony, Quebec, in 1760. The Treaty of Paris (1763) guaranteed religious freedom for the Quebecois. Most of these, being of French origin, were Catholic. The Quebec Act (1774) provided the legislative framework for Britain’s new subjects and enshrined this religious freedom. It granted Catholic priests the right to collect tithes and public officials were not required to take oaths which were objectionable to Catholics. Karen Stanbridge argues that as relations with the North American colonists were becoming more acrimonious and revenue from the colonies was falling, there would have been insufficient funds to support a defensive line in Quebec against the other thirteen colonies should war break out. The concessions to the Catholics in Quebec were a pragmatic way of guaranteeing their loyalty and diminishing the requirement for British troops to protect it¹⁰.

In spite of the Act of Toleration Dissenters were still subject to disabilities. In particular, the Corporation Act required holders of some offices to qualify by taking communion in

⁷ *Religious Opinions Relief Bill*. House of Lords. vol 85 cc1252-1288. 30 April 1846: Pages., cols. 1264-1265

⁸ *Statutes against Recusants*. House of Lords. 26 June 1845: Pages., cols 1193-1195

⁹ *Article X, Treaty of Utrecht, 13th July 1713*, <<http://www.gibnet.com/texts/utrecht.htm>> (accessed 18/03/2009)

¹⁰ Karen Stanbridge, “Quebec and the Irish Catholic Relief Act of 1778: An Institutional Approach” *Journal of Historical Sociology* 16.3 (2003), 389

the Church of England. According to Erskine May “the city of London had perverted the Corporation Act into an instrument of extortion, by electing dissenters to the office of sheriff, and exacting fines when they refused to qualify”¹¹. In 1759 a judgement of the House of Lords found against the City of London. Lord Mansfield, moving the judgement in the House, declared

It is now no crime for a man to say he is a dissenter; nor is it any crime for him not to take the sacrament according to the rites of the Church of England: nay, the crime is if he does it, contrary to the dictates of his conscience.¹²

In August 1767, William Payne, a London master carpenter, appeared before Surrey Assizes as prosecutor against John Baptist Maloney whom Payne accused of being a Catholic priest. Maloney was convicted¹³. Following this case, Lord Mansfield convened a meeting of judges¹⁴ and laid down strict rules which had to be met to secure convictions of a Catholic priest. The accuser had to prove that the man was a priest and, to convict a priest of saying mass, it had to be shown that every word of the mass had been said. With this very narrow and strict interpretation of the law when Payne accused James Webb of being a priest and saying mass, Mansfield instructed the jury according to this new interpretation and Webb was acquitted¹⁵. Three years later Maloney was pardoned but banished from England¹⁶. Edmund Burke, writing in 1780, said that the judges had superseded “the strict rule of their artificial duty by the higher obligation of their conscience”¹⁷.

In spite of the penal laws against Catholics buying and inheriting property, through entails on the property and intermarriage with other Catholics only, the main Catholic families had managed to retain their property almost intact through the eighteenth century¹⁸. However, sometimes property was lost to Protestant kin and could leave the Catholic side of the family in near destitution.

Anne Fenwick was the only child of the Catholic landowner Thomas Benison of Hornby Hall in Lancashire and stood to inherit his estate. She married a neighbouring squire, John

¹¹ May, *The Constitutional History of England since the Accession of George III*, 315

¹² *Ibid.*, 315

¹³ Joanna Innes, "The Judge and the Carpenter," *British Legal History Conference 2007* (Oxford: 2007.), 5 with thanks to Joanna Innes for permission to quote from this paper.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* (, 5

¹⁵ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 140

¹⁶ George Hay, Vicar Apostolic of the Lowlands in Scotland, attempted to have Maloney transferred to Scotland as the banishment was from England, rather than the United Kingdom Blom, et al., eds, *Coghlan Letters*, 18

¹⁷ Burke, *Works*, 328

¹⁸ That the Catholic land-owners of England managed to circumvent the law on inheritance to keep their property is accepted. Charles Chenevix Trench has told the story of how the remaining Irish Catholic landowners retained their property Charles Chenevix Trench, *Grace's Card : Irish Catholic Landlords, 1690-1800* (Cork ; Dublin: Mercier Press, 1997). Although many of the same methods as in Ireland were used in England, their story has not yet been told in the same comprehensive fashion.

Fenwick in 1752. He was a Protestant. To facilitate some dealings on his part she made over her estates to him and his heirs. When he tried to return the property into her name he could not do so as she was a Catholic¹⁹. Before the matter was resolved, John was killed in a hunting accident. As there was no issue of the marriage his brother, Thomas, inherited the whole estate including Hornby Hall. He took full advantage of Catholic disabilities to deprive Anne of her property. After some years it was decided by arbitration that she should have Hornby Hall for her use, her debts paid, and an annuity of £250.

Thomas withheld the payments awarded by the arbitrators so she took the matter to court and obtained a verdict for £18,000. Thomas procured a stay of execution, at which point Anne was at a deadlock, but not defeated. Through her connections, she obtained an introduction to the Lord Chancellor. He introduced a private bill in Parliament which reimbursed her to the extent of £6,873 cash and secured for her a £400 annuity²⁰. This was enacted in 1772.

Anne's plight was as a result of the law of unintended consequences as demonstrated by the Lord Chancellor's willingness to right the wrong in her case. In the preamble to the Bill it was clearly stated that Anne had been wronged by her brother-in-law

Thomas Fenwick [who] availing himself of the disability which your said subject is under on account of her religion, ... has already reduced your said subject to a state of the greatest distress and obliging her ... to contract debts which she is wholly unable to pay²¹.

She may have been reduced to a "state of the greatest distress" and near to being "totally ruined" but even so, in 1762, whilst fighting her case, she had installed a priest in Hornby Hall to minister to the seventy-eight Catholic families in the area²². Edmund Burke's observations on the case reflect the sympathy which many gentlemen would have had for her plight, particularly her difficulty in supporting herself as a widow

it was but the other day that a lady of condition, beyond the middle of life, was on the point of being stripped of her whole fortune by a near relation ... and she must have been totally ruined, without a power of redress or mitigation from the courts of law, had not the legislature itself rushed in, and by a special act of Parliament rescued her from the injustice of its own statutes.²³

Erskine May stated that in spite of all the "anomalies and inconsistencies" in the body of penal laws, it was possible to divide them into two parts, the first imposed "restraints on

¹⁹ It may have been that, naively, Anne had not sought advice from a Catholic conveyancer and thus protected her property.

²⁰ *Townships: Burrow with Burrow. A History of the County of Lancaster: Volume 8.* ed. William Farrer and J. Brownbill. 1914. Accessed 02/05/2011. < <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=53308>>

²¹ Ibid.

²² Anne Stott, "Women and Religion", in *Women's History : Britain, 1700-1850 : An Introduction*, eds Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London ; New York: Routledge, 2005) 100-124, 105

²³ Burke, *Works*, 328

religious worship: the other attached civil disabilities to faith and doctrine”²⁴. The “anomalies and inconsistencies” were mainly due to the laws being enacted in response to some political crisis or other and this created the complexities identified in the House of Lords in 1845.

First Relief Act 1778

18 Geo. III, c. 60 *An Act for relieving His Majesty's Subjects professing the Popish religion from certain Penalties and Disabilities imposed on them by an Act, made in the eleventh and twelfth Years of the Reign of King William the Third, intituled, An Act for the further preventing the Growth of Popery.*

Sir George Savile introduced the Bill in Parliament, his motivation being that Protestants were not persecutors²⁵. The Bill was very limited in its extent. It removed, under conditions, the penalty of imprisonment from Catholic priests, bishops and schoolteachers in England²⁶; it allowed Catholics to join the armed forces without taking the oath of supremacy²⁷ (but they could not take commissions) and removed the disabilities concerning property purchase and inheritance²⁸. To benefit from the relief offered, Catholics had to take the specified oath within six months of the Act, or within six months of inheriting land or property or of their twenty-first birthday as appropriate. This Act was not a repeal of the 1699 Act - those who did not take the oath were still subject to the disabilities of the 1699 Act. The final clause of the Act specified that in the case of any “Popish Bishop, Priest or Jesuit or schoolmaster” where proceedings had already been instituted against them, these would continue.

The Act was seen by Catholics as the first chink in the armour of intolerance, although in reality it just formalised that which had become practice through the decision made by the judges after John Maloney's case and extended to others the benefits of Anne Fenwick's Private Act. Removing the penalties for priesthood allowed Catholics to attend mass. This had to be in private as there was still legislation against Catholic chapels. The oath specified was the one which had previously been agreed with Catholics in Ireland and therefore, unusually, it was accepted by the Catholics in England without argument amongst themselves.

In spite of its limitations, Lord George Gordon and the Protestant Association did not agree with any relaxation of the law. The Gordon Riots in 1780 were very destructive. The chapels of the Sardinian and Bavarian Embassies were severely damaged; Sir George

²⁴ May, *The Constitutional History of England since the Accession of George III*, 314

²⁵ John Cannon, “Savile, Sir George, Eighth Baronet (1726–1784)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24736>> Accessed 26/09/2011.

²⁶ 11 & 12 Gul III, c4 (1699)

²⁷ As had been specified in the Test Act 1673

²⁸ 11 & 12 Gul III, c4 (1699)

Savile's house was broken into and the contents removed and set fire to outside; Lord Mansfield's property was also damaged by the mob. In Bath, the new Catholic chapel was burnt to the ground on the day before it was due to open, the Vicar Apostolic's house damaged and his library and the records of the Western District were burnt. Despite the riots, Parliament held firm and no attempt was made to repeal the act²⁹.

Edmund Burke had to explain his motivation for supporting this Act to the electors of Bristol in 1780. He outlined how religious freedom was now part of the political landscape of Europe, and that it would have been so in England after 1688, if the various factions in Parliament then had not vied with each other "as if they were playing with balls and counters, [and] made a sport of the fortunes and the liberties of their fellow-creatures"³⁰. This was despite the natural inclinations of their new monarch, William III, in whose native country of Holland one third of the population were contented Catholics. The 1699 Act was, according to Burke "a subversion of justice from wantonness and petulance", and repealing it was done by men who were "men of honour and virtue", "good Protestants" and "good citizens"³¹.

Second Catholic Relief Act 1791

31 Geo. III c. 32 An Act to relieve, upon Conditions, and under Restrictions, the Persons therein described, from certain Penalties and Disabilities to which Papists, or Persons professing the Popish Religion, are by Law subject.

This Act was altogether more generous and comprehensive. The preamble recognises that certain penalties and disabilities had been imposed on papists. It further says that "certain principles have been attributed to them which are dangerous to society and civil liberty and which they are willing to disclaim". The Act allowed Catholics who took the new Oath of Allegiance, Abjuration and Declaration to be relieved of the specified disabilities. As with the 1778 Act it was not a repeal act. The specifics of the Act were

- a new oath was specified (clause 1); those who took it were relieved of the penalties of recusancy imposed by the various Acts of Supremacy (clause 3) and could not be summonsed to take oaths specified under older Acts (clause 18);
- any Catholic who "scrupled" to take the oath specified for an office might appoint a deputy who would take the required oath (clause 7);
- Catholics could act as a "Counsellor at Law, Barrister, Attorney, Solicitor, Clerk

²⁹ This was not a foregone conclusion. There were protests after the 1752 Naturalization Of Jews Act, and Parliament repealed it in its next session Rivers, *Law of Religions*, 17-18

³⁰ Burke, *Works*, 327

³¹ *Ibid.*, 327

or Notary” (clause 22).

- Catholics could act as schoolmasters (clause 13); they had to register with the justices and specify the location of their school (clause 16); they could not hold the Mastership of “any school or college of Royal foundation or of any other endowed school or college”, and could not keep school in either of the ancient universities (clause 14); they could not take a Protestant child into their school (clause 15);
- priests could say mass (clause 4) but must register with the justices before doing so or performing any other ecclesiastical function (clause 5); they were exempted from jury service and from being appointed to parochial offices (clause 8); they could not wear the habit of their order except within a church or private house (clause 11);
- it remained unlawful to found, endow or establish any religious order bound by monastic or religious vows; or any school, college or academy by Catholics within “these Realms or the Dominions”; and any “uses, trusts or dispositions” considered to be for “superstitious” uses before this Act continued to be unlawful after it was enacted (clause 17).
- people may attend mass and other rituals of the Catholic Church (clause 4); attendance at mass would meet the requirements of the laws concerning the “frequenting of Divine service on Sunday” (clause 9);
- Catholic chapels must be registered (clause 5) but may not have a steeple or bell (clause 11);
- chapel doors may not be “locked, barred, or bolted” during a service (clause 6); it was forbidden for anyone to “disturb any act of worship allowed by this Act” (clause 10);
- Catholics could remain in the cities of London and Westminster (clause 19);
- Catholic peers could attend Court and on His Majesty wherever he was residing or visiting (clause 20);
- Catholics no longer had to register their names and estates (clause 21)³²;
- Catholics were not exempted from paying tithes (clause 12)
- Catholics were not exempt from “any part of 26 Geo. II c. 33” (clause 12)³³. ;

³² This clause was unusual in that it specifically repealed those acts which required them to register their estates (1 Geo. I 2 c. 55 and 3 Geo. I c. 18)

³³ 26 Geo. II c. 33 was an act to prevent clandestine marriages. It required of everyone to marry in a Church of England church. Catholics were allowed to do so by the Catholic Church as the law required it, but for Catholics the formal solemnisation of the marriage had to take place before a Catholic priest,

- any discussion on the “Oath of Allegiance, Abjuration or Declaration of this Act” was forbidden, or as the Act put it no one could “deny or gainsay” any part of it (clause 12);
- The Act did not apply to Scotland (clause 23).

Clause 17 on ““uses, trusts or dispositions” considered as being for “superstitious” uses” had ramifications for Catholics and the Church which were not resolved until the twentieth century.

A sketch of the Act was published in the *Laity's Directory* of 1793, with comments by the editor³⁴. In his observations and advice the editor made the following points:

- in registering a place where Catholic services would be held, care should be taken to get the limits of the location correct “for security of residents, officiants (sic), congregated persons, burials and other acts of religion”.
- a magistrate may oblige attendance at Catholic chapels where the law requires attendance at the parish church.
- Although a steeple and bell were not permitted, a “striking clock or tower is not mentioned”.
- On the point concerning religious orders the *Directory* advises that in “Catholic countries no religions can establish without the permission of the temporal government, prudently no one would attempt it here”.
- An assembly for religious services becomes a “congregation” when there are five persons more than the family attending. In such circumstances the place needs to be licensed.
- Catholic gentlemen returning to England were advised on the difficulties which might still be encountered at the Custom Houses at ports. Should they import items such as “Popish Agnus Deis, crosses, pictures, beads, or such vain and superstitious things” to be worn or used by any British subject, under an act of Elizabeth I³⁵ both importer and receiver incur a *praemunire*. Nor could one import “popish” books. The importer would incur a fine of 40s for each book and the books would be burnt³⁶. On the matter of books, the editor explains fully the powers of the Customs officials to search for such material. The only leniency of which he was aware had been where religious women had made

thus two marriage ceremonies were required

³⁴ LD 1793

³⁵ 13 Eliz c. 2 sect. 7

³⁶ 3 Jac 1 c.5 sect. 25; sections of this Act were repealed in 1844 and 1846 (CD 1845, 156; CD 1847, 142).

such things and sent them as presents to friends in England. The officials will sometimes allow them to be returned to the sender. Under another law, to protect trade and manufacture “embroidery, philligree (sic) or other foreign manufactured or wrought articles” may be confiscated. These items include priests’ vestments.

The clause which allowed Catholic peers to be present at Court, like many of the other discriminatory statutes, was one which relieved Catholics from a disability “more honoured in the breach than the observance”. In 1778, George III and his Queen stayed with Catholic Lord Petre at Thorndon Hall whilst in Essex for a military review³⁷.

What is apparent from Coghlan’s commentary is that there were inconsistencies in Relief. This Act allowed freedom of worship to Catholics, but the restraints on importing “popish” books meant that the missals which priests needed to carry out their ecclesiastical functions were still proscribed. Having pointed out the legal restraints, Coghlan continued with a plea for a relaxation of the powers of the Customs officials so that the necessary printed material could be imported³⁸. There is also seen here the willingness of Catholics to circumvent the law with Coghlan noting that a “striking clock or tower” could be used in place of a bell or steeple.

The major disabilities removed by these two acts were those relating to property. Political power, forty years before the great Electoral Reform Act of 1832, was in the hands of the major landowners. Property and its rights were a fundamental part of English identity. In the introduction to his book on the British Empire, Niall Ferguson gave a list of “distinctive features of their own society which they tended to disseminate” in the British colonies. Second on this list was “English forms of land tenure”³⁹. By denying Catholics participation in this “distinctive feature” of English society through the laws which circumscribed the “normal” rights of inheritance, the law had denied them a significant part of their English identity. By returning to Anne Fenwick some of her rights over her property through the private bill of 1772, Parliament began the process of reinstating Catholics within the firmament of English society.

On the other hand, Parliament was still endeavouring to protect the Established Church. This it did through the education clauses which prevented Catholics from being in any way involved in the education of Protestants, whether as schoolmasters or within the two universities. By not allowing their priests and religious beyond their places of worship or private homes in their religious dress, the law was ensuring that they would remain

³⁷ Bence-Jones, *Catholic Families*, 21

³⁸ LD 1793

³⁹ Niall Ferguson, *Empire : How Britain Made the Modern World* (London: Penguin, 2004), xxiii

invisible. This was probably not entirely a bad thing as in spite of the law which now protected their services on the same basis as those of other denominations, there was still a great deal of anti-popery sentiment in England. Well into the twentieth century this could take the form of disruption of services or taunting of priests.

Following the enactment of these two Bills it seemed but a matter of time before Catholics would return to the political life of the country, but as Erskine May so succinctly put it “Parliament continued to shrink from the broad assertion of religious liberty, as the right of British subjects, and the policy of the State”⁴⁰.

With the exception of one act, 1791 to 1829 were years of continuing frustration for Catholics on both sides of the Irish Sea. In 1808, Henry Parnell published a short book on the penal laws which still existed⁴¹. Parnell was an Irish lawyer and in his booklet he pointed out that as a result of the unevenness of Relief in the two kingdoms of Ireland and Britain before the Union in 1801, Irishmen who held offices legitimately in Ireland could be subject to the full rigour of the law when they crossed the Irish Sea to England. He particularly mentioned the case of soldiers. The Irish Relief Act of 1793 permitted Irishmen to join the Army and to take commissions up to the rank of colonel; commissions were not open to Catholics in Britain. Parnell claimed that Irish soldiers were being forced to attend Protestant Divine services when their regiments were in Britain⁴². This anomaly was resolved by the 1813 Catholic Relief Act which “extended the Irish relief of 1793 to those transferring to offices” in Britain⁴³.

Had Irish and English Catholics been able to work in harmony emancipation may have come earlier. However, not only could they not work together, but even within the small body of Catholics in England a power struggle was in play between the laity and the clergy. One of the major points of disagreement was the issue of a veto by the Government on Catholic episcopal appointments. Leading members of the English Catholic laity were prepared to accept this, but John Milner, Vicar Apostolic (Midland) objected as did Daniel O’Connell in Ireland. It might not have appeared as a stumbling point as at that time the vast majority of Catholic bishops, worldwide, were appointed by the state⁴⁴. The problem was that the veto in the United Kingdom would allow a Protestant Government to have a say in the appointment of Catholic bishops. There was no clause for the veto in the 1829

⁴⁰ May, *The Constitutional History of England since the Accession of George III* 314

⁴¹ Henry Parnell, *A History of the Penal Laws against the Irish Catholics from the Treaty of Limerick to the Union* (Dublin: H Fitzpatrick, 1808)

⁴² *Ibid.*, 174

⁴³ Rivers, *Law of Religions*, Fn 100, 21

⁴⁴ Eamon Duffy, *Saints & Sinners : A History of the Popes*, Yale Nota Bene, 3rd edition (New Haven, CT ; London: Yale Nota Bene/Yale University Press, 2006), 274

Act. The repeal of the Test⁴⁵ and Corporation Acts⁴⁶ in 1828 cleared a major legislative hurdle on the road to Emancipation. Their repeal allowed Dissenters to vote and enter Parliament and thus broke the monopoly of the Established Church on the legislative body.

It is not necessary to re-iterate the circumstances which led to Emancipation except to state that, in spite of the efforts of the English Catholic lobbyists, ultimately it was the mass movement of Irish Catholics which forced Prime Minister Wellington's hand in the matter. The contributions made by the vast numbers of O'Connell's followers were not only financial (membership was set at a penny a month). Their visible support; attendance at meetings; and votes for him in the 1828 by-election in Clare in defiance of the instructions of their landlords, unnerved the government sufficiently to force the legislation through in 1829. Wellington believed Ireland was on the brink of civil war. The path from 1791 to the enactment of Emancipation in 1829 has been widely chronicled. Bernard Ward's told it from the perspective of the "old Catholics" in England⁴⁷; Denis Gwynn gives the Irish version⁴⁸; and Owen Chadwick recounts it from the Church of England side⁴⁹.

Unfortunately many of those who had voted for O'Connell in 1828 were disenfranchised as in the 1829 Act the property requirement for voting was increased from forty shillings to £10. In 1829 further disabilities were added to those of 1791 including the exclusion of Catholics from the offices of Lord Chancellor; Lord Keeper of the Great Seal; High Commissioner to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland; and Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; monastic orders, or any male religious community bound by vows, were forbidden; priests were banned from performing Catholic rites or ceremonies or wearing their habits outside of churches or private houses; the Catholic Church could not assume any ecclesiastical titles held by the Established Church; Catholics could not hold teaching positions in Church of England educational establishments; and they were not allowed to present clergy to a Church of England living nor to advise the Crown on any Established Church appointments. This last meant that in the event of a Catholic becoming Prime Minister he would be excluded from participating in the nomination of Church of England bishops. Including the office of Prime Minister in the list of proscribed offices was discussed, but Chadwick says that "sensible men" thought the possibility of a Catholic becoming Prime Minister was "incredible"⁵⁰. These disabilities were included to soften the

⁴⁵ 25 Car. II, c.2; 30 Car. II, St. 2

⁴⁶ 13 Car. II, St. 2, c. 1

⁴⁷ Bernard Ward, *The Eve of Catholic Emancipation : Being the History of the English Catholics During the First Thirty Years of the Nineteenth Century*, 3 vols. (London ; New York [etc.]: Longmans, Green and Co., 1911)

⁴⁸ Gwynn, *Catholic Emancipation*

⁴⁹ Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church Part 1*, Ecclesiastical History of England ; No.5 (London: A. & C.Black, 1966), 7-24

⁵⁰ Ibid., 18

bitter pill presented by Wellington and Peel to Parliament.

The Jesuits were specifically mentioned in the clause on male religious communities although there were already a number of such communities in England, they having returned during the French Revolution. The Benedictines had established communities at Downside and Ampleforth; the Jesuits at Stonyhurst. Returns of members of male religious communities were published in Parliamentary papers, the last such in 1863 when there was a nil return. Archbishop Howley of Canterbury believed this provision was intended from the beginning to be a dead letter⁵¹.

Lord Clifford was invited, as a Catholic layman, to give evidence to the 1870 Select Committee on Conventual and Monastic Institutions. The first question asked of him concerned the effect of these laws on monastic institutions. Clifford replied that during the penal days people of his class sent their children to school in France. Since the French Revolution it had been possible for their children to be educated in England, but they were obliged to send their children

to be educated by men who are labouring under penal disabilities, and may be dismissed from the country ... This ... might tend very much to foster feelings of inattention and disregard to the law [amongst our children], inasmuch as they are educated by masters, whom they look up to, but who are habitually, ... infringing the law ... we consider that that is not a proper position towards the law of the land⁵².

Other than unsettling the sensibilities of some Catholics this particular law's other effects were in the ownership of property and receipt of charitable bequests by such communities. Both were problematic as the communities were illegal.

There were three different declarations and oaths which had to be taken for public office at various times in England: the Oath of Allegiance; the Declaration of Abjuration of the Stuart claims to the throne; and the Declaration against Transubstantiation. The oath contained in the 1829 Act for those elected to Parliament contained phrases which Catholics were unhappy about, but the Vicars Apostolic, having consulted with Rome, decided that it could be taken. Some, including the Duke of Norfolk who took his seat in the House of Lords on the first day possible, had not waited for the bishops' approval. But, as ever, the question of oaths to be taken by Catholics raised discontent amongst them. One reason was because they specified that the oath-taker should inform the authorities of any treason against the state known to them. This impugned their loyalty to the nation. It was a reference to various Reformation era plots including the Gunpowder Plot of 1605 when Jesuit priests had refused to tell the authorities of it because they believed they had

⁵¹ Ibid., 19

⁵² Villiers, *Select Committee on Convents and Monasteries.*, 117

heard of it under the seal of confession. Following Relief, the “Catholic” oaths included within them a Declaration of Abjuration of the Stuart claims. A common oath for all entering Parliament was established by the Oaths of Allegiance and Relief of the Jews Act (21 & 22 Vict, c 48)⁵³. In 1871 the separate Roman Catholic Oath for other offices was abolished by the Promissory Oaths Act (34, 35 Vict., c. 48)⁵⁴.

The Declaration against Transubstantiation⁵⁵ was a different matter. Transubstantiation, that the bread and wine are changed into the Real Presence of Jesus Christ at the consecration of the mass, is one of the defining doctrines of the Catholic faith and should the law require this Declaration to be made in order to assume an office, no Catholics could in conscience make it. In 1867 the requirement to make this declaration was removed for any public office still requiring it, including Lords Chancellor of Ireland and England and Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge Universities. It was not, however, removed for a monarch on ascending the throne.

The Marquess of Salisbury (Prime Minister) had abandoned an attempt to change the Declaration in 1902⁵⁶. When Queen Victoria died, Edward VII’s first duty was to take the Oath of Accession and make the Declaration against Transubstantiation before Parliament. Edward had always been on good terms with Catholics (he had sent a wreath to Cardinal Manning’s funeral⁵⁷) and he asked that the Declaration be removed but was persuaded that this was not possible at this time. He reluctantly took it, reportedly saying the words inaudibly as he was conscious of the fact that there were many Catholics in the assembled company of both Houses of Parliament present.

Complaints from around the Empire flooded into London as Catholics from Canada, Australia, and Ireland took offence at this slur on their religion. Parliament was asked to change the law; it considered the matter for all of Edward’s reign (1901-1910) and by the time he died it had still not been resolved. George V indicated that he was not prepared to make the Declaration and it was quickly removed by Parliament before he took the Oath of Accession⁵⁸.

Most of the offences defined in the 1829 Act were penalised by fines. The Roman Catholic

⁵³ Aileen Walker and Edward Wood, "The Parliamentary Oath," (2000), <<http://www.parliament.uk/documents/commons/lib/research/rp2000/rp00-017.pdf>> Accessed 02/04/2011.

⁵⁴ J.H. Pollen. *English Post-Reformation Oaths*. ed. Kevin Knight. 1911. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Accessed 02/05/2011. <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11177a.htm>>

⁵⁵ As well as denying the doctrine of transubstantiation, the declaration went on to say that the “invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other saint, and the sacrifice of the Mass are superstitious and idolatrous”

⁵⁶ *The Coronation Oath*. House of Lords. 12 May 1902: Pages., col. 1321

⁵⁷ “Funeral of Cardinal Manning”, *The Times* 22 January 1892., 6

⁵⁸ Norman Bonney, “The Evolution and Contemporary Relevance of the Accession and Coronation Oaths of the United Kingdom” *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 13.4 (2011), 604-606

Relief Act (1926) removed many of these penalties but not the offences; it did not change the restrictions on Catholics holding those offices mentioned; nor the ecclesiastical titles clauses; nor the clauses forbidding Catholics being in any way involved in Church of England appointments. The Lord Chancellor's Act (1974) permitted Catholics to hold that office. The Lord Chancellor held the patronage of many benefices in the Established Church which generally dated from the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the reign of Henry VIII. Under the 1974 Act, the monarch could remove those rights of presentation from a Catholic Lord Chancellor.

As was mentioned in the previous chapter in the discussion on processions, the legality of these processions was very tenuous and depended on their form and location. This did not stop the Catholics from holding them. The ban was revoked in the 1926 Act.

7.2 Ownership of Church Property

Mr Bagshawe, a Catholic barrister, gave evidence to the Villiers' Committee on the issue of monastic communities owning property. Under Catholic Church law, such men and women took vows of poverty which precluded them from owning personal property. The position of the male communities was particularly parlous. If a member of a community were to leave and claim his "share" of the community property, the community could not defend themselves in a court as, were they to do so, they would have to declare their illegal status⁵⁹. Bagshawe mentioned one case, which he knew of by hearsay, where "somebody had an interest, or claimed an interest in the property [of a monastic community]; [the monks] considered themselves defenceless by reason of the illegality of their position".

In a further response he said

as matters now stand, I take it that if any monk were to leave his convent, and were to make a demand ... to have the entire property of the institution sold, and to have his share paid over to him, there would be this difficulty in resisting that demand⁶⁰.

"This difficulty" was the legality of the monks' position. In 1904, Archbishop Bourne sought to address the situation concerning the ownership of property by the Catholic Church and sought counsel's opinion before discussing the matter at the annual bishops' meeting. The cumbersome law of property as it existed in England at that time⁶¹ left the Church and several of its organisations exposed to expensive legal actions. Also, where there were a number of trustees, when any one of them died there was a liability for death duties as trustees were regarded in law as private owners, and therefore the estate was

⁵⁹ Villiers, *Select Committee on Convents and Monasteries.*, 17

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 17

⁶¹ It was generally recognised by all at the time that the laws concerning property were very complicated. A series of Acts of Parliament in 1925 and 1926 endeavoured to clarify the situation in England.

liable for death duties on the death of each trustee. Bourne gave two examples of how these problems might be manifested to his brother bishops. In the first the Boleyn Castle Reformatory Estate was partly owned by Fr Seddon alone when he died. His brother was his heir and “circuitous steps”⁶² had to be taken to vest the property in the proper authorities. Secondly in the case of an orphanage which was to be sold, it was found that some of the trustees had died. Considerable legal costs were incurred and a mortgage of £5000 had to be taken out before the sale could proceed. Counsel offered three possible courses of action

1. Incorporate under The Companies Act – this way had been adopted by at least two Church of England dioceses.
2. Each diocese to create its own Omnibus Trust Deed; Wesleyans and other denominational bodies had done this.
3. A scheme, unspecified, to be approved by the Charity Commissioners.

Counsel advised the bishops to organise their diocesan property holdings under an omnibus trust deed for three reasons

1. There would be one body of trustees appointed by the Bishop; he could elect successors when necessary; the trust would therefore be an “undying entity”, and there would be no question of Death Duties.
2. The purposes for which property was held would be in a Trust Deed which would be approved by the Charity Commissioners; therefore the Trustees would know these purposes and would not need to employ solicitors to communicate with the Charity Commissioners.
3. Counsel believed that at present considerable freedom to buy and sell, for purposes widely stated, would be obtained from the Charity Commissioners and embodied in such a trust deed as proposed⁶³.

Bourne recommended to his fellow bishops that they took this advice. They did so, but not all immediately – the Diocese of Clifton’s Trust Deed and trustees were not established until 1926.

Even with a diocesan omnibus trust deed, the position of male communities bound by vows was still problematic as they were still illegal. One way this was overcome was for the diocese to purchase the property and lease it back as in the following example. In the early twentieth century The Society of the Divine Saviour (Salvatorians) set up a mission in Wealdstone and at first they rented the necessary property. When the opportunity arose

⁶² The minutes do not specify what these were.

⁶³ Anon., *Bishops’ Meetings*, , 346-347

to buy a plot of land for their church, school and house, the “diary” of the mission shows how this was done (the community was illegal)

July 12th 1905

The site for Church and School ($\frac{3}{4}$ acre) and for the Salvatorian House ($\frac{1}{2}$ acre) has been purchased at a cost of £1000. For the portion of the Mission £300 have been paid at once by the Church Building Fund whilst the remaining £300 have been borrowed through Archbishop’s House at the rate of 4 per cent. The half acre for the “Society of the Divine Saviour” has been bought by the Archb’s (sic) House and let on lease to the S.D.S. for 5 years at the rate of 4% of the purchase money of £400.⁶⁴

Thus the Salvatorians circumvented the law in establishing their mission in Wealdstone.

This is one form of evasion of the law of which Lord Clifford spoke when giving evidence to the Villiers Select Committee.

7.3 Judgements of the courts⁶⁵

The general thrust through the nineteenth century was to allow Catholics and the Catholic Church to be in the same position as Dissenters before the law⁶⁶. This was specifically stated in the Catholic Charities Act of 1832. However, this did not allow for the particularities of Catholicism where it differed from the dissenting denominations. There were parts of Catholic practice which were deemed “superstitious” by the sixteenth-century Reformers and this was enshrined in the preamble of an Act of Edward VI which forbade “superstitious uses” of bequests. The 1791 Act reiterated that bequests which were illegal prior to its enactment would remain illegal. Lord Clifford, in his evidence to the Villiers Select Committee in 1870, said that Catholics should be allowed to dispose of their money after death according to the custom of Catholic practice where they were wont to request that mass be said for their souls when they died. This was the kind of bequest which was considered to be superstitious. Although the law had been moving towards equality of all of the non-Established religions, these particular problems areas of Catholic practice meant that they found themselves in many instances of having to evade the law. Clifford said to the Committee that “we wish to be placed on the same footing”⁶⁷ as all other Englishmen.

In a letter to J R Bloxam, Pugin had mentioned “the Blundell legacy”⁶⁸. Margaret Belcher,

⁶⁴ *The Wealdstone Chronicle*, 1901-1911, <<http://www.gb.sds.org/Documents/Wealdstone-Chronicle.htm>> (accessed 22/09/2011)

⁶⁵ A search of the literature yielded a single paper on the subject of Catholic charitable trusts. Robert Ombres deals with the current situation rather than the historical one which is outlined here. Robert Ombres, “Charitable Trusts: The Catholic Church in English Law” *Law & Justice - Christian Law Review* 126/127 (1995)

⁶⁶ Rivers, *Law of Religions*, 21

⁶⁷ Villiers, *Select Committee on Convents and Monasteries.*, 117

⁶⁸ Pugin, *Letters*, 169

editor of Pugin's letters, gave the following explanation of Pugin's reference⁶⁹. Charles Blundell of Ince Hall, Lancashire, died in 1837 and left the residue of his estate to the Vicars Apostolic of the London and Midland Districts. In an effort to comply with the law and to ensure that his wishes were met, but unable to specify the offices of Vicars Apostolic, he named the two bishops. Bishop James Branston (London) had died before Blundell and the will had not been changed to reflect this. This meant that Dr Walsh (Midland) was entitled to the whole of the residue of the estate of about £200,000. This was challenged by Blundell's next of kin and eventually, in 1839, it was agreed that Walsh would receive £70,400 and the relatives the remainder. In November 1840 an agreement was reached between Walsh and Branston's successor, Dr Griffiths, whereby Griffiths would receive £20,000 of the legacy⁷⁰. The matter of Catholic legacies and trusts was a feature of the law affecting them through the nineteenth century.

The first case which tested the post-Relief position of Catholics was the will of George Cary heard in the Court of Chancery in 1802⁷¹. Cary wished to leave the residue of his estate

for the purpose of educating and bringing up poor children in the Roman Catholic Faith such as orphans or those whose parents or friends were not able or willing so to educate those children⁷².

The Master of the Rolls (Sir William Grant), in his judgement said

That the residue cannot be applied according to the will is certain. The Roman Catholic religion has received a considerable degree of toleration by the Statute of the present King (stat. 31 *Geo.* III. c. 32): yet there is a provision in that act, that all dispositions before considered unlawful shall continue to be and be deemed so. There is no doubt, a disposition for the purpose of bringing up and educating children in the Roman Catholic religion was unlawful before that time.

Here the use is clearly charitable in its nature: viz. for poor orphan children. What vitiates it is, that they are to be educated in the Roman Catholic religion.

I must declare the bequest of the residue void (*Attorney General v. Power*, 1 *Ball & Beat*. 145); but that it must go to such use as the King shall direct⁷³.

Thus were bequests for the charitable purposes of educating poor Catholic children declared void. The Roman Catholic Charities Act of 1832 remedied this anomaly and a Catholic charitable legacy could be made provided no part of it was deemed superstitious. The position on this was clarified a few years later. In the case of *West v Shuttleworth* (1835), Margaret Townsend's legacy was contested. Townsend had written in her will

⁶⁹ Ibid. Fn 2 171

⁷⁰ A clerk set out to deposit Dr Griffiths's £20,000 in Wright's Bank only to find the bank closed on his arrival. The closure was permanent as it happened.

⁷¹ Background reading for this section included *The Modern Law of Charities* (1st ed, 1962) by George Keeton, particularly Ch 3 *The Myth of Superstitious Uses*.

⁷² *Cary V Abbott* 7 Ves 490, 32 ER 198. Court of Chancery 1802, 490

⁷³ Ibid., 497

To the chapel of St. George's Fields, London Road, £10; St. Patrick's chapel, Sutton Street, £10; Lichfield chapel, £10; the Reverend Rowland Broomhead, Manchester, £5; the Reverend Mr. Gabb, Worksop, £1, 1s.; the Reverend Mr. Duchern, £1, 1s.; the Right Reverend Mr. Smith, Durham, £1, 1s.; the Reverend Joseph Tristram, £1, 1s.; the Reverend John Tristram, £1, 1s. Whatever I have left to priests or chapels, it is my wish and desire the sums may be paid as soon as possible, that I may have the benefit of their prayers and masses⁷⁴.

The critical comment here was the wish that she might "have the benefit of their prayers and masses". In deciding the case the Master of the Rolls (Sir C Pepys) said

the giving legacies to priests to pray for the soul of the donor has, in many cases collected in Duke (p. 466), been decided to be within the superstitious uses intended to be suppressed by that statute [1 Ed 6 c 14]. I am therefore of opinion that these legacies to priests and chapels are void.

...

in that case [*Cary v Abbott*] and the cases there cited, the object of the gift was clearly charity. In the present case, according to the construction I have put upon these legacies, there was nothing of charity in their object; the intention was not to benefit the priests, or to support the chapels, but to secure a supposed benefit to the testatrix herself⁷⁵.

The judge therefore decided that the bequests were superstitious and should be passed to the next-of-kin⁷⁶. Here there was a slight variation from the *Cary v Abbott* case. In 1802, before the Catholic Charities Act, the illegal portion of the estate was passed to the King (State); following the 1832 Act, the next of kin received it.

The *Directory* for many years afterwards published the following advice to its readers (one assumes in response to this judgement)

Bequests for Masses

Under the existing law such legacies are held as void, but the following form of a bequest is not liable to any legal objection.

*I bequeath to the Reverend _____, of _____, the sum of £ _____ (in words), and I earnestly hope that the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered for the repose of my soul; but I do declare that this expression of my hope shall not be construed as a condition or trust attached to the same legacy, and that the compliance with such my hope shall not be deemed necessary to give effect to the same legacy.*⁷⁷

The judgement in *West v Shuttleworth* was saying that a requiem mass or prayers for the soul of the deceased were superstitious. The Roman Catholic Charities Act (1860) was much broader in its definitions of Catholic charities than the 1832 Act had been. Following its enactment it was likely that had any part of a bequest been declared legally invalid

⁷⁴ West V Shuttleworth 39 E.R. 1106. Court of Chancery 1835 , 1106

⁷⁵ Ibid., 1111

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ CD 1848, unnumbered page; in Calendar section in the month of August

(superstitious) a judge could re-apply the invalid part to other Catholic charitable purposes⁷⁸.

Although the Villiers Committee had been formed to examine Catholic monastic and conventual communities, much of the evidence given to it concerned the position of Catholics in English law⁷⁹. The first witness was the Charity Commissioner, Peter Erle. After the Roman Catholic Charities Act of 1860, he said about 400 Catholic charities had been enrolled. The Act had allowed Catholic trusts to be enrolled as if this had happened when they were first set up. This was because Parliament had recognised that many such trusts and endowments had been set up clandestinely during the penal days. Even so, Erle claimed, very many of those enrolled were “imperfect” in that the objects of the trusts were not stated, nor was it possible to determine who the trustees were⁸⁰. Erle maintained that there were no reasons at that time (in 1870) why Catholic charities should not enrol as openly as those of other denominations. When asked about the *West v Shuttleworth* case, he conceded that many of the trusts in question may well have a portion related to “superstitious uses” as decided in that case. Asked if they were obliged to “evade the law”, he replied “Yes”. An attempt had been made in the 1860 Act to resolve this difficulty, but Mr Erle believed that applying the laws would “disturb many Roman Catholic trusts”⁸¹. Lord Clifford in his evidence spoke of a trustee where the trust was for purposes deemed superstitious. In these cases nothing was written down as written instructions could be challenged in court. It was very difficult, he said, for the trustees to know how to dispose of the money even though they “knew perfectly well” the purpose for which the money had been left⁸².

West v Shuttleworth remained the leading authority on the issue of “superstitious uses” until *Bourne v Keane* in 1919⁸³. Frank Russell K.C. had read a paper outlining the history and legal reasoning behind the illegality of such bequests to the Eucharistic Congress in 1908. He also suggested how this might be challenged, but he needed a case to take forward to the courts. He ended on that occasion by warning his audience that only statute or a judgement in the House of Lords could change the prevailing law and that such a statute was “outside the pale of practical politics” and that they should “put not [their] trust

⁷⁸ This follows the long established doctrine in English law of *cy-près* whereby the court can make an order applying invalid elements of a charitable bequest to the nearest possible purpose.

⁷⁹ Villiers, *Select Committee on Convents and Monasteries*.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 3

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 3-4

⁸² *Ibid.*, 117

⁸³ Cardinal Bourne of Westminster and the Jesuit Fathers of Farm Street, London were the appellants in this case before the House of Lords. James Keane was the executor of the will. The testator was Edward Egan.

in the House of Lords⁷⁸⁴. As counsel for the appellants in this case, Russell now had the opportunity to put his argument before the Law Lords and use the argument he had outlined before the Congress in 1908. The facts of the case were

An Irish Roman Catholic testator, domiciled in England, bequeathed £200 to Westminster Cathedral for masses, and £200 and his residuary personal estate to “the Jesuit Fathers, Farm Street”, for masses⁸⁵.

The original judge and the Court of Appeal held

on the authority of *West v. Shuttleworth*, that the gifts were void as gifts to superstitious uses. At the Bar of the House the next of kin contended that the bequests to the Jesuit Fathers were void under the Roman Catholic Relief Act, 1829 as gifts to a monastic order⁸⁶.

In giving judgement Lord Birkenhead said

My Lords, this is a difficult and an extremely important case. Your Lordships cannot in my view escape the duty, anxious as it undoubtedly is, of overruling decisions which have been treated as binding for generations⁸⁷.

The barristers involved had cited a number of cases which had been decided on the basis of *West v Shuttleworth*. If the House of Lords were to declare the original will valid and legal it would overturn generations of case law, hence Lord Birkenhead’s comment about this being an extremely important case. The argument that such bequests were superstitious was based on The Chantries Act 1547 (1 Ed 6 c 14) the preamble of which reads

A great part of superstition and errors in Christian Religion had been brought into the minds and estimations of men by reason of the ignorance of their very true and perfect salvation through the death of Jesus Christ, and by devising and fantasizing vain opinions of Purgatory and Masses satisfactory to be done for them which be departed; the which doctrine ... is maintained ... by the abuse of ... chantries ... made for the continuance of the said blindness and ignorance⁸⁸

Russell's argument was that the courts held that this preamble was declaratory of the law as it existed at that time, but he pointed out that it could not have been so as but a few years before this statute, Henry VIII had left a bequest for masses to be said for his departed soul!⁸⁹ Subsequently, the preamble had been interpreted by sixteenth-century legal commentators as having the effect of law because it was in accord with public opinion. It was this which gave rise to the concept of “superstitious uses” being part of the law of England.

In his judgement Birkenhead pointed out that although the preamble was clear, nothing in any clause of the Act rendered masses for the dead illegal. He also pointed out that the

⁸⁴ *Eucharistic Congress*, 68

⁸⁵ *Bourne V Keane* AC 815. House of Lords 1919 , 816

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 815

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 830

⁸⁸ *Eucharistic Congress*, 61

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 61

preamble of an Act was not in itself law. Further, the common law of Ireland permitted bequests for masses for the dead⁹⁰. The case was found for the appellants and the bequests allowed.

It has been contended in legal circles that the judgement in *Bourne v Keane* was legally flawed, but as George Keeton writes

For just as the lawyers had altered the law in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to accord with public opinion, and did so on very shaky legal grounds, so the lawyers of the twentieth century reversed the process, to accord with public opinion which had decisively altered in the intervening period.⁹¹

The judgement in *Bourne v Keane* allowed a particular practice common amongst Catholics to be re-instated into England.

7.4 Erosion of the establishment

The Quebec Act of 1774 granted Catholic priests the right to collect tithes and public officials there were not required to take oaths which were objectionable to Catholics. This latter provision opened the colonial civil service to individuals other than members of the Established Church⁹². This particular Act broke the monopoly of the Established Church in Britain's colonies and, as the Empire expanded, the Church of England was not established in any of the colonies. Yet, however tolerant Britain was with regards to religious adherence in its colonies, the same was not the case at home.

The establishment of the Church of England was underpinned by a philosophy that every person resident in England was a member of that Church. Ministers of the Church were required by law to have pastoral care for all in their parish, even if the individual considered themselves to be a member of another denomination. From this sprung the assumption that in closed communities, such as the armed forces, prisons, hospitals and workhouses, all chaplains appointed would be Church of England ministers; and persons within these closed communities were obliged to attend such services as were offered by those chaplains, that is Church of England services.

From the earliest days, priests in the missions assumed the care of the Catholic members of the armed forces. Many missions were founded specifically because regiments with a significant Catholic recruitment were frequently based in those locations. Northampton was an example of a mission founded on this basis. Although the number of Catholics in the army became very significant during the Napoleonic wars, particularly those regiments which recruited in Ireland, it was not until 1836 that Catholic priests formally became

⁹⁰ *Bourne V Keane.*, 831-861

⁹¹ Keeton, *Charities*, 55

⁹² Stanbridge, "Quebec and the Irish Catholic Relief Act of 1778: An Institutional Approach", 375

chaplains. The history of the Catholic Armed Services chaplains has been written by Johnstone and Hagerty⁹³.

In spite of the official status of Catholic chaplains and of the particular contribution made by regiments drawn from Ireland and therefore mainly Catholic, the Protestant Alliance still protested at displays of attachment to Rome by those in uniform. In 1875, it complained about participation by four uniformed Life Guards in a May procession outside the Catholic church in Ladbroke Grove⁹⁴. It was perhaps as well that the Alliance was not in existence in 1821⁹⁵ when the Connaught Rangers marched in Liverpool with the full knowledge and permission of the War Office⁹⁶. From 1862, the *Directory* listed Catholic chaplains serving in the armed forces.

In 1870, the *Directory* published a notice concerning inmates of work-houses.

Relatives, sponsors, and friends of Poor Catholic Children, and Catholics generally, are requested to take notice of the following instructions:

1. When a poor Catholic Child is under the necessity of going into the Workhouse, the Priest of the District should, if possible, be informed of it beforehand, in order that he may at once procure the Child's Baptismal Certificate, or obtain such other evidence of its religion, and that of its Parents, as may be required by the authorities to insure the Child's being classed in the Workhouse Register as a Catholic. In defect of such information, it will be entered as a Protestant, and may so remain through life.
2. The Child, when taken into the Workhouse, should be accompanied by some one who can declare to the Master or Superintendent that it is a Catholic, and can demand that it be entered as such in the Creed Register.
3. As the protection of the religion of the Poor is a great work of charity, it is urgently impressed on all persons who either accompany or know of the removal of any Child to the Workhouse, that they should immediately make the case known to the Clergy, in order that they may prevent the Proselytism of the Poor.
4. The Clergy will feel grateful for every assistance they receive to further this important object; and they will cheerfully procure the necessary Registers without expense to anyone⁹⁷.

The battle, and battle it was in many parishes, to allow Catholic paupers to practise their religion was fought through the middle of the century. Even for adults it was difficult.

When a priest in 1841 asked for the use of a room to minister to the inmates of a Liverpool

⁹³ Tom Johnstone and James Hagerty, *The Cross on the Sword : Catholic Chaplains in the Forces* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1996)

⁹⁴ Margaret Mulvihill, "'Peculiar Circumstances': Catholic Chaplains of the Victorian British Army in India", *The Electronic British Library Journal* (2008), <<http://www.bl.uk/eblj/2008articles/article3.html>> Accessed 19/04/2011., 2

⁹⁵ The Protestant Alliance was founded in 1845

⁹⁶ See p.173 above

⁹⁷ CD 1870 xiii

workhouse it was refused⁹⁸. The Certified Schools Act of 1862 allowed for children of each denomination to be educated in schools of their own faith. This was a “permissive” Act and did not confer an obligation on the Workhouse Guardians. In 1864 the Catholic Workhouse Committee circulated the guardians of London unions which were known to have significant numbers of Catholic children requesting that the children be released to Catholic schools. Rev W W Doyle signed the letters to twenty-one boards. In reply, ten refused outright, five did not reply, five more stalled and one agreed in principle but took no further action. Lord Petre signed letters to eleven boards; he failed to secure the release of even one child⁹⁹.

An amendment to a Poor Law Bill of 1866 was passed but the onus was placed on Catholics to identify each Catholic child in a workhouse and hence the notice in the *Directory*. With Cardinal Manning now at the helm of Westminster Diocese, a serious campaign was directed by him for the passage of a more comprehensive Act. A rearguard action was fought by C N Newdegate, the Protestant Alliance and others, but the Bill was passed in 1868¹⁰⁰.

The delays and obstructions experienced by the Catholic community in respect of workhouses were of a similar nature to that which occurred regarding prisons and ministrations to prisoners who were not of the Church of England. An Act (Geo IV c.64) allowed non-Established Church ministers to attend a prisoner only if the prisoner requested it. In the debate on a new Prison Ministers Bill (1863), the Duke of Somerset, moving the Bill in the Lords, suggested that it was this class of men (prisoners) who most needed instruction in religion and they were least likely to request it. In reply, Lord Berners, seeking to delay the Bill, outlined succinctly the objections to this and other such like Bills

1st. That he considered it wrong to pay for the propagation of error. 2nd. That it was unnecessary. 3rd. That the results would be mischievous and injurious to the interests of the Established Church. The Protestant religion was established by law, and the Protestant Church was connected with the State in this country, and therefore they were bound not only to maintain them, but to refrain from encouraging any other creed that was hostile to them; and he believed that to subsidize the ministers of other denominations was an act of hostility to the Church of England.¹⁰¹

This Bill became law, but again as a permissive Act the local authorities were not obliged to appoint Catholic chaplains. In 1871 the issue returned to Parliament with a further Bill

⁹⁸ Burke, *Liverpool*, 78

⁹⁹ J Matthew Fehenev, "Towards Religious Equality for Catholic Pauper Children, 1861-68" *British Journal of Educational Studies* 31.2 (1983), 144

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 150

¹⁰¹ *Prison Ministers Bill—(No. 109.) Second Reading*. House of Lords. 08 June 1863: Pages., col. 499

moved by the Earl of Morley.

The object of the present measure was to remedy the defects of the Act of 1863, by authorizing the Secretary of State, upon complaint being made to him that the number of prisoners confined in any prison, belonging to any religious persuasion other than the Church of England, was so great as to require the ministration of a minister of their own persuasion, and that the prison authorities had failed to appoint such a minister under the power given them by the Act of 1863, to require the prison authority to appoint such a minister.¹⁰²

The passage of this Bill, which made the appointment of chaplains of the appropriate denomination mandatory, brought the issue to an end.

To end the abuse of clandestine marriages, the Marriage Act of 1753 required all marriages to be solemnised before a minister of the Established Church. As this was the law of the land Catholic Canon Law recognised the marriage but insisted on Catholics holding a second ceremony before their own priest. An Act of 1836 created the General Register in which births, deaths and marriages were registered with the civil authorities. The Marriage Act of that year allowed non-Anglican churches and chapels to register for the solemnisation of marriage¹⁰³. These two acts represented a major erosion of the Established Church's position in the day-to-day lives of many people and removed from Catholics (and Dissenters) the necessity of two marriage ceremonies.

It can be seen from this description of the changes in the law over the century that there was evidence of four things happening. Firstly, despite the greater toleration of other religions, there existed in England a core of Protestant activists who were determined to restrict as far as possible any advance which the Catholics might make. Some of this was a reaction to the Ritualism which was spreading throughout the Church of England. This was an issue which had surfaced before in the Church of England during the episcopate of Archbishop Laud in the reign of Charles I. The *via media* devised by Elizabeth I was not quite Protestant enough for some and not quite Catholic enough for others within Anglicanism. When Anglican ministers introduced aspects of ritual including incense and reserving the consecrated host they caused great annoyance to many of their members and Catholics sometimes got caught in the middle of the subsequent argument. Secondly, Acts of Parliament such as those in the 1830s granting responsibility to a secular Registrar General for recording the rites of passage of people (births, marriages and deaths) may be seen as the beginning of the separation of Church and State in modern Britain. In such a political environment it was easier to pass laws which permitted ministers of an unreformed religion to care for their own flock within state institutions such as workhouses

¹⁰² *Prison Ministers Bill (No. 37.) Second Reading.* House of Lords. 17 March 1871 Pages., col. 164

¹⁰³ Rivers, *Law of Religions*, 20

and prisons. The third point is that judges can devise means to decide a case on the basis of justice rather than on the very narrow and strict application of the law. Separated by more than a century, Lords Mansfield and Birkenhead had responded to the calls for justice. Finally, despite all the bluster and protests of those who wished to preserve the Protestant Constitution, in a century and a half most of the disabling anti-Catholic legislation was repealed and legally, especially after the *Bourne v Keane* judgement and the 1926 Relief Act, Catholics were as close to being in the same position under the law of England as any of the other non-Established denominations.

By showing how the legal position of Catholics continued to change substantially after 1829, this chapter has offered an explanation of the presumed illegality of the Procession of 1908. The word “presumed” is used here as the matter was never tested in the courts and given that judges could not always be relied upon to agree with their more prejudiced fellow citizens one may not assume which way a judgement might be given. The argument used in the seminal case of *Bourne v Keane* was first proposed at the Eucharistic Congress of 1908. Although this review of English law has gone beyond 1908 for completeness sake, that year was of particular importance to the Catholics of England and Wales as a number of events occurred which showed that Catholics in England were no longer the outcasts which they had been in 1778, the year of the First Relief Act. Those events and the conclusions of this thesis are the subject of the next chapter.

1908 was a momentous year for Catholics in England and Wales; hence it is the end point of this thesis. On February 1st, King Carlos of Portugal was assassinated. Portugal was England's oldest ally and a Requiem Mass, attended by the King, was celebrated in the Spanish Embassy Chapel in London. This was the first time since James II that an English King had attended mass. The Requiem in London caused a great gathering of royalty, diplomats and politicians as well as prominent members of society from all sides of the religious divides. The entire "Ministry", except the Prime Minister who was indisposed but sent his private secretary as his representative, attended. The attendance of "many Protestants" in the congregation for a Requiem Mass said for the "devout sons of the Roman Catholic Church" was attributed to the memory of King Carlos having attended the funeral of Queen Victoria a few years previously¹. The Irish Guards² furnished a guard of honour, appropriately according to *The Times*, as many of the guardsmen were Catholic³. This was a major diplomatic event in London and was given lengthy coverage in *The Times*, partly, it was reported, because the Spanish Chapel was a beautiful building that was "not well known to Londoners". *The Times* gave a detailed description of the chapel and of the Catholic ritual even though the mass said was "a low Requiem Mass with music. It was the simplest kind of service of which the ritual of the Church of Rome admits, and it lasted barely half an hour"⁴. Edward VII had always been open-minded about Catholicism and as King of the British Dominions he was aware of the large number of Catholics within his realms, estimated at about twelve millions⁵.

On June 29th, Pope Pius X issued the Apostolic Constitution *Sapienti Consilio*. This reorganised part of the Roman Curia. Prior to this, countries where there was a non-Catholic government came under the aegis of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda). Now, however, only those without an established Catholic hierarchy remained under Propaganda. As all three national Churches in the United Kingdom (England and Wales; Scotland; and Ireland) had hierarchies they would no longer come under the jurisdiction of Propaganda⁶. This constitution came into effect on the First

¹ "The Lisbon Murders. The Memorial Services", *The Times* 10 February 1908., 12

² The Irish Guards were formed on 1st April 1900 by order of Queen Victoria in response to the many courageous actions performed by Irish regiments in the Second Boer War. *The Irish Guards, History*, <<http://www.army.mod.uk/infantry/regiments/9608.aspx>> (accessed 05/05/2011)

³ "The Lisbon Murders. Requiem Mass at Spanish-Place", *The Times* 10 February 1908., 12

⁴ *Ibid.*, 12

⁵ *Eucharistic Congress*, 54

⁶ Umberto Benigni. *Sacred Congregation of Propaganda*. ed. Kevin Knight. 1911. *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Accessed 03/05/2011. <<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12456a.htm>>

Sunday of Advent in 1908.

These two events, the one significant for the recognition by the King of the appropriateness of memorialising a Catholic King by a Catholic liturgy; the other of significance to the hierarchy and Church authorities in England and Wales as it placed their national Church on a par with those in Catholic countries, were interspersed by the greatest show of Catholic devotion and pomp seen in England for centuries – The Nineteenth Eucharistic Congress.

The day after the curtailed procession, it and the government's handling of it, were the major stories in the press. The universal approbation which they received was a new experience for Catholics in England and Wales. Over the previous century the prejudice towards them had softened and it seemed less and less likely that there would be another outburst such as they had experienced in 1850 on the occasion of the restoration of the hierarchy. For just over a week, Catholicism had been a major story in the newspapers of the day and it was a positive story. Catholics, laity, clerics and prelates, had conducted themselves in a dignified fashion as befitted any community of faith. Many newspapers called for the laws to be repealed and the general support received for their removal might have been expected to result in immediate legislation. Yet as has been shown above, even the obnoxious Declaration which a new monarch had to take remained on the statute book for a further three years. But the government suffered as a result of its interference. At the end of September in a by-election in Newcastle the Liberal candidate was defeated. A meeting of Irish voters had resolved to support the Unionist candidate in spite of their natural preference at that time for Liberals who supported the cause for Irish Home Rule⁷. The Marquis of Ripon resigned from the cabinet in October, officially due to age (he was 81) and ill health. Archbishop Bourne refused to attend a conference organised by the Board of Education which was attempting to resolve issues concerning secular education. He wrote to the President of the Board that the issues could not be resolved until Catholic resentment [over the Procession] had diminished⁸. It was nearly twenty years before the relevant law was changed but, in the meantime, Catholics continued to hold their processions up and down the country.

There are three key words in the title of this thesis – politics, identity and allegiance. The argument has been constructed by reference to the lowest tier in the Catholic Church's hierarchical system; it has not overly concerned itself with the machinations of bishops, the high politics of the Church or, except rarely, those of the State. It has endeavoured to find

⁷ "Election Intelligence. Newcastle, Unionist Victory; an Analysis of the Result", *The Times* 26 September 1908., 10

⁸ Devlin, "Eucharistic Procession", 425

the voice of the powerless and the silent through their activities, particularly through the sacrifices they made in building for themselves their sacred space. But the “state”, “allegiance” and “identity” are all closely linked. Before drawing the conclusion in this thesis, these must be briefly examined.

8.1 Identity – English? Irish? Roman?

We started from our lodgings about 5 in the morning, to be present for the first time at a Catholic religious service, or at prayers, as it was generally called, for the word Mass was scarcely ever used in conversation. We arrived at a public-house in some back street near the house in which Mr Horne (the priest) resided. I felt rather frightened seeing some very rough looking people as we passed through the entrance, tho all were very quiet ... We hurried past them, but I could not help clinging to Marlow, having an undefined fear of what was going to happen. We mounted higher and higher. At the top the door of a garret was unlocked and we saw at the far end what seemed a high table, or long chest of drawers with the back towards us. A piece of carpet was spread before it by a young man who pointed us to our seats. In a few minutes the door opened, and the Ven. Dr. Challoner, accompanied by Mr Horne and another priest, entered the garret, the door of which was secured by an assistant, who then unlocked some drawers behind what, I found was to be used as an altar, and take out the vestments and other things for the service.

Soon after we heard the door-key turned and several rough footsteps entered the garret, some gentle taps and words were exchanged between a powerful-looking Irishman who kept his post close to it, and those outside, which were passwords of admission. The key was turned again each time anyone entered, and just before the Bishop vested himself to say Mass bolts were drawn also, and no one else could pass into the garret. In the meantime the young man had prepared all that was needed for Mass, taken from behind what was used for an altar, which was covered with a white linen cloth. A crucifix and two lighted candles were placed on it and in the front was suspended a piece of satin damask, in the centre of which was a cross in gold lace...

When all was over I heard the door-key turn once more, and all the rough footsteps leaving the garret. The Bishop, having unvested, remained kneeling before us while the people departed. The two priests, assisted by the young man, replaced the vestments, candle-sticks, and all that was used at Mass, behind the altar, locking all up carefully, and leaving the garret an ordinary one in appearance as before.

Thus did Mrs Marlow describe attending mass in 1771 as quoted by Hemphill⁹. A little over one hundred years later, Joseph Keating wrote of his early experiences in the Welsh mining village of Mountain Ash.

We went to Mass every Sunday morning in the “long room” of a public house called the Scroby Arms. Drink and the devil had possession of the room until midnight, and the Holy Ghost descended upon it in the peace of the Sabbath morning. The long room was at the back of the inn, with a platform at the far end, holding the altar and a piano. Songs and hornpipes had been sung and danced there a few hours previously. Flowers of great beauty decorated the altar, and a tiny red lamp burned before it. When we entered the room we blessed ourselves with the

⁹ Hemphill, *The Early Vicars Apostolic of England, 1685-1750*, 82-83
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holy water which was placed in a tin can near the door, and genuflected profoundly to the altar and piano. Sunlight poured in from a side window. A few coarse benches, without backs, made seats for the first arrivals. Men and women, boys and girls, crowded in until the interior became warm and suffocating. While waiting for Mass to begin we took out our rosaries and prayed for the souls in purgatory.

From a door behind the people the priest appeared, robed in richly coloured vestments, and came slowly forward with great dignity, preceded by one small altar-boy in black and white. All the stifling congregation went silently upon its knees, as the priest passed up to the altar. The murmur of musical Latin words rolled through the silence. The wonderful ceremony of the Mass began; and, instantaneously, the drink-stained long room became, as if by a miracle, a cathedral of hushed reverence and worship, from which the sacred had utterly banished the profane.¹⁰

The contrasts between, and similarities of, the two scenarios are marked. In Mrs Marlow's account of 1771, entrance was by code word to the garret of a public house down a back street. Keating, born one hundred years later, also attended mass in a public house used as a "chapel", but there was no secrecy, no locked doors, no "powerful-looking Irishman" checking that each person seeking admittance might safely be allowed in. In Mountain Ash, the "sunlight poured in from a side window". Not only is the light allowed in to the Catholic service, but by now too, after years of hiding in back alleys and garrets, Catholicism had emerged into the light of public view in England.

This thesis has sought to discern the identity which the Catholics of England constructed for themselves now that their religion was once again legal. Some aspects of this identity they actively sought to foster; some emerged over time; some they sought to suppress; and some were ascribed to them by the prevailing culture of the day. Was it Irish, a *de facto* province of the Irish Church? Was it Roman, a foreign accretion on English society? Or was it, in fact, truly English? The answer is that it amalgamated parts of all of these.

Linda Colley has argued that Protestantism was a core part of English identity. This is based on the construction of Catholicism and Catholics as "other"¹¹ and the introduction to the national narrative of anti-Catholicism. Peter Lake argued that this prejudice developed in the seventeenth century when Catholics and Catholicism were scapegoats for all the ills which befell the godly country which England had become since it had embraced biblical Protestantism¹². Whatever the theological and doctrinal arguments of the Reformation in Europe, in England for the majority of the populace, the primary outcome of the Reformation was a sense that England was free of external political interference. It had thrown off the Roman yoke. This sense of freedom had continued long after the power

¹⁰ Keating, *Life*, 9-10

¹¹ Colley, *Britons*, 5

¹² Lake, "Anti-Popery"

struggles which had gripped Europe when the contenders were defined as Catholic or Protestant.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century Englishmen (and women) had a highly developed sense of their birthright which included fair treatment for all under the law, the right not to be subjected to capriciousness by those in authority and the right to challenge authority. E P Thomson summarised his discussion on the heritage of a “free-born Englishman” by asserting that they might “claim few rights except that of being left alone”¹³. How could Catholics reconcile this English sense of freedom from external pressure with their Catholic adherence to Rome? It is clear that in spite of the penal laws English Catholics considered themselves to have inherited this birthright too. Two examples taken from opposite ends of the social spectrum will illustrate this point.

The first is Anne Fenwick, discussed in detail in the previous chapter. As she applied to various courts and arbitrators, and eventually to the Lord Chancellor, it was clear as judgement after judgement found in her favour, that she was a victim of unintended consequences. No Englishman could, in justice, accept the fairness of a law which left a gentlewoman widow penniless and without any means of supporting herself. Although Anne knew that as a Catholic, the law was not in her favour, as an Englishwoman, she was prepared to fight this blatant injustice and regain her independence.

Matthew Wanklyn has shown how Catholics cooperated with their Protestant neighbours in Madeley in Shropshire¹⁴. Mr Fletcher, who later achieved national notoriety as a Methodist zealot, was the Vicar at Madeley (1760-1785). One of his prayer meetings was interrupted by a group of young men, amongst which was a Catholic. On endeavouring to take the Catholic to the Bishop’s Consistory Court, the churchwardens refused to support Fletcher. Fletcher, subsequently, preached a polemical sermon denouncing Catholicism when it was proposed to build a Catholic chapel in his parish. Thomas Slaughter, another Catholic and a member of the Madeley vestry, demonstrated against Fletcher in the churchyard after this sermon. As Fletcher was also against the recreational activity which the community indulged in on the Sabbath any protest was welcomed by the parishioners. Slaughter felt confident of his status as an Englishman to make the complaint. As a result of his protest, when Mr Fletcher had moved on, and the local Catholics felt strong enough to start building their own chapel, they were assisted by their Protestant neighbours¹⁵. This begs a further question. The parishioners of Madeley were not happy with a clergyman who went

¹³ Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, 88

¹⁴ Matthew Wanklyn, “Catholics in the Village Community: Madeley, Shropshire 1630-1770” in *English Catholics of Parish and Town, 1558-1778*, ed. Marie B Rowlands (London: Catholic Record Society, 1999) 210-236, 231-233

¹⁵ The church at Madeley, St Mary’s, was first listed in 1824. No earlier date of foundation was given.

on to become a “Methodist zealot”. Church-goers can be conservative, preferring to find the ritual of Sunday morning service unchanged from week to week. This in part may explain some of the objections later in the century to “ritualism” in the Established Church. Did local people accept, and support, the presence of a catholic church in their locality because the ritualism of which they were suspicious and uncomfortable, would be contained within its walls and would not therefore infect their Sunday worship?

There is no doubt that whatever schemes Paul Cullen devised to spread the Irish version of Catholicism throughout the British Empire, he did not attempt to do so in England. And yet, the Irish did have an influence on English Catholicism. This was more than just numbers as has been shown in chapter five above. The numbers which they brought though greatly increased the density of Catholics in towns and cities throughout the land. Their presence supported the re-introduction of Catholic public expressions of faith such as processions. These may have happened without Irish participation, but undoubtedly the greater numbers processing added to the vitality of the events. The other contribution which the Irish added was in spreading Catholicism to parts of the country which had not experienced Catholic neighbours for centuries.

What was mostly lacking in the English Church was the use of Irish saints names for churches built by or for Irish congregations. Rather than use Irish names which would have had no particular meaning in an English context the Church instead went back to the old Anglo-Saxon names and thus reinforced its claim as the original Christian foundation in England. In claiming these saints as their own they were identifying as English. There was a change though, as has been shown, in that over the century as their confidence increased they tended to use Marian dedications which were more noticeably Catholic than specifically English. In this they were identifying with the Universal Church. Ultimately though, their own saints again came to the fore when they publicly claimed as Martyrs for their faith the men and women who had been executed in England during the Reformation age.

In examining Catholic devotions in the second half of the century, Mary Heimann¹⁶ argued that the devotions which became common place in the English Church at that time such as Benediction and the Forty Hours were not in fact accretions from Rome foisted on an unwilling Church by Ultramontanists. She showed through careful analysis of earlier English Catholic texts from the penal era that these were part of the continuing tradition of English Catholicism. In doing so, Heimann contends that “whatever the place of origin or cultural allegiance of a Catholic living in England ... ‘English’ and ‘Irish’ Catholics

¹⁶ Heimann, *Catholic Devotion*, 79,80
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managed to find a common spiritual ground which was acceptable to the sensibility of both¹⁷.

The English Church did absorb and accept the universalism of Rome. This was an important point to many Catholics and encouraged at least some of the converts who moved over to Rome as argued by Norman. Another aspect of this universalism, and more pertinent at ground level, were the migrants from France, Poland, Lithuania and Germany who found their homes at some point in England. The English Church ministered to them in their common language of Latin for most of the Church's rituals and in their own languages for the more private ministry of confession.

8.2 Allegiance

The original anti-Catholic laws had been imposed during the political maelstrom which was the Reformation; re-enacted a number of times since¹⁸ and further impositions were created in the aftermath of the 1688 Revolution which brought to an end the reign of the last Catholic monarch in England and Ireland. Much of this legislation was due to real or perceived suspicion of the allegiance of those who retained their loyalty to Rome, but as the Catholics saw it, this was spiritual loyalty only. Catholics therefore had difficulty in proving their allegiance due to the laws. They were barred from Parliament and all political offices, thus denying them the opportunity to partake in either government or loyal opposition; they had been banned from entering the armed services and were thus unable to fight for King and Country. In spite of these disabilities, they did endeavour to demonstrate allegiance to the Crown on many occasions as exemplified by those Catholics who fought for Charles I. By the eighteenth century, with the full panoply of legislation in place, their options were more restricted. With a career in the British services closed to them, some joined the Elector of Hanover's army and tried, in this way, to show their allegiance to the Hanoverian succession¹⁹. Generally though, the eighteenth century was a time of frustration for many of the Catholic gentry and aristocracy resulting in many defections from the "old faith". Only the removal of the discriminatory legislation would give the Catholics of England a chance to show their allegiance in England, to its Crown and its Constitution. Full participation in the constitutional framework would also allow them to reclaim their identity as English men and women; but, and perhaps more importantly for them, removal of all the discriminatory legislation would allow them to proclaim in England their identity as Catholics.

¹⁷ Ibid., 141

¹⁸ The various recusancy laws enacted during Elizabeth I's reign were for the duration of her reign only and therefore had to be re-enacted at the start of James I's reign in England.

¹⁹ Bence-Jones, *Catholic Families*, 45

A consequence of the long battle fought over three centuries was a residing suspicion that Catholics were not loyal to the state or constitution. From the earliest Relief Act in both Britain and Ireland the Armed Services were open to them.

In the Battle of Bussaco, 27th September 1810 ... General Merle, cresting the ridge with his troops, had happened upon a weak spot in Wellington's line. To hold the line, Wellington ordered in two six-pounder cannons to hit the French flanks ... Meanwhile General Sir Thomas Picton rallied his light division and returned to support the men who were holding the gap. These included the 88th Connaught Rangers which was led by Colonel Alexander Wallace. The men of the 88th knew only enough English to get by on the parade ground. Their language was Gaelic. ... Wallace led his men obliquely into the French column consisting of eleven French battalions. Under the Rangers onslaught, the foremost French ranks toppled backwards on to those behind, until suddenly the whole mass broke and rushed headlong down the mountainside. "Upon my honour, Wallace," cried Wellington, riding up, "I never witnessed a more gallant charge than that just now made by your regiment."²⁰

By the end of the Peninsular War the Connaught Rangers had been awarded twelve battle honours and been nicknamed "The Devil's Own" by General Picton²¹. This was the regiment which, bearing evidence of their service to the King, marched to the laying of the foundation stone of St Patrick's church in Liverpool in 1821²². Whether they added to the procession in terms of military grandeur might be doubtful as Picton, commenting on their appearance, had called them his "brave ragged rascals". The 3rd Division, of which the Rangers were an integral part, returned from the Peninsula with a reputation that they had never been repulsed in an attack²³. There can have been no doubt as to their religious affiliation as the parade was led by Catholic priests in carriages. The sight of so famous a regiment marching in a Catholic parade was exactly the sort of visibility of which other Catholics would have approved.

When the regiment left Liverpool in August 1821 the *Liverpool Mercury* declared that "the conduct of the men was highly exemplary, and gained for them the general esteem of the public"²⁴. The rank and file of the army at that time were not, generally, "respectable" members of British society; many undoubtedly joined up to escape an appearance before the magistrate; the officers may have been of a different social caste, but the men were often considered to be vagabonds and undesirables. For any newspaper to acclaim the conduct of soldiers as "exemplary" was high praise.

The nationalist narrative of Irish history excuses the Irishmen who joined the "British"

²⁰ Elizabeth Longford, *Wellington : The Years of the Sword* (London: Panther, 1971), 282-283

²¹ Robert Money Barnes, *The British Army of 1914 : Its History, Uniforms & Contemporary Continental Armies* (London: Seeley, Service and Co., 1968), 261-262

²² "Saint Patrick's Day", 315

²³ "Memoirs of Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Picton, G.C.B.; Including His Correspondence by H. B. Robinson", *The Times* 07 November 1835., 5

²⁴ "Varieties", *Liverpool Mercury* 10 August 1821., 6

army, not as renegades or traitors to the cause, but rather as victims of economic circumstances. Peter Karsten has offered a more nuanced explanation, agreeing that there were economic prerogatives at work for many of those who enlisted, but lists as the two main reasons for enlisting “adventure and tradition”²⁵. In particular he suggests that the men joined the “Army” rather than the “British Army”. As a result of seven hundred years of *de facto* political unity, “most Irish people [accepted] the fact that they were part of the United Kingdom”²⁶. The figures given by Karsten indicate that most of the Catholics in the army were probably of Irish origin, and in the lower ranks²⁷. It was not only Irishmen from Ireland who joined up as in response to a French War scare in 1859, the Liverpool Irish Militia was founded. This was “started among the middle class and prosperous Irishmen who had come over to England long before”²⁸.

Allegiance can be shown by good citizenship or in serving the state in all levels public life. Reference has been made above to the numerous occasions when priests who appealed for funds to build schools did so on the grounds that a good education would encourage loyalty amongst the students of those schools. Catholics assuming such positions as Mayors, Privy Councillors, and Cabinet Ministers or as members of the various local boards became commonplace so that it became unnecessary to comment on their religious adherence in the press. In their service to the Crown in the armed services, many who were unlikely to aspire to any form of public office showed that they too were loyal to the Crown.

8.3 Conclusion

This thesis is about the history of visibility. As Bishop Lacy of Middlesbrough told the Middlesbrough diocesan synod “The old, stupid, fanatical, and ignorant prejudice is fast melting away before the visible presence of the Church.”²⁹ From a very poor starting point where their churches and chapels were hired rooms or buildings hidden away anonymously beyond the prying gaze of friend and foe, the Catholics of England and Wales embarked on a major building project. In doing so, over the long century discussed here they held their Sunday morning services in over 2,000 different buildings. It was these churches which created the visibility of Catholicism throughout the land as the maps in chapter three above show. The industrial revolution was half a century old, and the migration to the new factories and cities was already well in progress. Irish and English Catholics flocked to

²⁵ Karsten, “Irish Soldiers in the British Army, 1792-1922: Suborned or Subordinate?”, 38

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 41

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 36

²⁸ *Ibid.*, Fn 10 56

²⁹ Richard Lacy, *3rd Synod of Middlesbrough*, Synodi Diocesanæ Medioburgenses, Annis 1881 ad 1888, Middlesbrough Diocesan Archives

these new opportunities for better-paid employment. The myth of Irish migration being a Famine and post-Famine phenomenon has been well and truly disposed of by historians although Rowlands referred to Irish immigration as being of the 1840s³⁰. Some of the earliest missions listed in the *Laity's Directory* were based on the presence of large numbers of Irish Catholic migrants, many of whom were described as “poor labouring” workers – Bermondsey, Southwark and Soho Square all ministered to almost exclusively Irish communities.

All three, and the others which sprang up in the following years, expected the wealthier members of the Church to provide for them. This was not a peculiarly Irish or Catholic expectation – rather it was the expectation of the age. Parliament made substantial provision for the Established Church to build churches; the Catholics had to rely on their own means. The argument persists as to whether or not the wealthy Catholics in England gave according to their means. The research for this thesis seems to indicate that they were not as forthcoming as they might have been. Poor missions were obliged to appeal year after year when an endowment within the reach of many of the rich would have provided financial security at least for a priest. One of the earliest major benefactors was Baroness de Montesquieu, a French émigré and one with a particularly lasting influence was the 16th Earl of Shrewsbury who was patron of A W Pugin. Appeals castigated the meanness of the rich and extolled the generosity of the poor who gave from the little they had. Which ever way this argument is finally resolved, or if indeed it ever is, there seems little doubt that the collapse of Wright's bank in 1840 was a seismic shock to the state of finances, not only of individual Catholics, but also to many of the missions which had been saving donations towards their building fund.

The period from 1791-1840 has been characterised here as the “gentry phase” in building a new infrastructure for the Church. It may not have been a valid characterisation in absolute terms of provision of funds, but has been called so due to the general expectation in society at that time that the rich would provide accommodation for the poor who were without the means to do so themselves. With an estimated £800,000 removed from the institutional and personal accounts of the Catholic Church through the Wright's débâcle a method had to be established which would allow the Church to continue building.

The need was especially great at this time. The rate of migration from Ireland was at its peak in the period from the 1830s to the 1860s. Although the Famine years increased the visibility of migrants and the press accentuated their poverty and neediness, those years represented in reality but a small upward blip in what was by then a veritable flood.

³⁰ Rowlands, ed., *Catholics of Parish and Town*, 344
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During this time, a most singular contribution to the English Church was made by Irish migrants. It was then that they “stinted themselves of their scanty meals” to build churches and chapels for themselves. It is no myth that Catholic churches were built by penny contributions of poor Irish labourers. It is no myth that when they were out of work, unable to pay, they gave their labour instead. The edifices which they built may not have been as grand as Pugin’s magnificent confection at Cheadle, or as triumphalist as the Oratory in London, or as near-perfectly Gothic as Downside Abbey Church. Pevsner may have disliked the hammerbeam roof of St Walburghe’s in Preston; the priests of St Vincent’s in Liverpool may have had to use a plain table as an altar as they could afford no other; and many other missions may have appealed for cast-off vestments from their better-off colleagues. The opening ceremonies of many of these were reported in the local press, with much emphasis on the number of bishops, clergy and other dignitaries who attended. The opinions of the men and women who built them are not recorded but the labourers of Liverpool, Preston and east London would have been very proud of their edifices.

Architecture is often assessed from the perspectives of aestheticism or of technical innovation. The great public buildings of the past – temples or other religious buildings – inspire the generations who come after the builders, not just for their beauty but also because of what the builders achieved in spite of the lack of technology which is now taken for granted. Had Pevsner considered the social cost of building St Walburghe’s, would he have changed his mind? Does it actually make a difference if the church is financed by the wealthy from their “spare” money or by the poor who have to do without to give to the cost? Architectural critic Brian Little wrote that very few of the Catholic churches of the nineteenth century were of any great architectural merit. Pevsner and Little were of an earlier generation of critics. Since then a reassessment of Catholic churches of the nineteenth century has led to many of them being listed as part of English National Heritage (including St Walburghe’s). This reassessment led to a publication by English Heritage in which the social cost of building these churches was given prominence.

While this phase of building – called here the “working-class phase” – may have lasted for only a short while, it maintained a momentum in the geographical expansion of visible Catholicism. Alone amongst the Churches and Denominations of the mid-century, Catholicism had a foothold in the slums. Although not all the working-class Catholics were Irish, the larger proportion were and it was for them that the churches needed to be built. The numbers were such that small chapels rarely sufficed. The days when Catholics slipped into chapels down alleyways were now long gone. If the chapel were not yet in place, then profane space had to suffice; if the chapel were not large enough, the

congregation knelt outside in all weathers regardless of how inclement it may have been. As much as the presence of large churches may have increased its visibility, the sight of the faithful precluded from worshipping within the chapel due to lack of space made Catholicism a reality for many of their fellow subjects.

Throughout the century there was a parallel drive to educate the poor. Even before the Catholic Poor Schools Committee came into being, mission priests up and down the land had been endeavouring to provide some level of education for their people. Support for day schools for children and night schools for those working during the day was appealed for frequently. The passage of the Education Act of 1870 increased the momentum for Catholic schools, at considerable cost to the community. By now, also, as certainly as had happened in all other sections of society and industry, a Catholic middle class had emerged from Victorian trade and industry. These men (and women) engaged with the church-building project, much as their counterparts in other denominations had been doing for some time. The third and final phase discussed here – the middle-class era – now began. Conscious of the battle being fought over education, in this phase many missions built a multi-purpose building which was a school from Monday to Saturday and a Church on Sunday.

All three of these phases had to be undertaken in spite of serious difficulties which were discussed at some length in chapters two and three. Over the century these lessened to a considerable extent, but local outbreaks of prejudice and financial difficulties remained, mainly because the Church never really overcame its institutional poverty. Elsewhere, by the end of the century a whole town could be seen to celebrate the opening of a Catholic church as happened in Llandudno in 1893.

Barbara Charlton famously told some fellow dinner guests that there was a world of difference between English Catholics, of which she was one, and Irish Catholics³¹. A century later historians have said that the faith of the Irish migrants was a “folk” religion, not quite Catholic, not really post-Reformation Tridentine Catholicism. If by “Tridentine” is meant the monolithic, rigidly enforced, dogmatic Catholicism as taught, practised and promulgated in the years before the Second Vatican Council of the 1960s, then this would be a genuine assessment of the Catholicism of the majority of Irish migrants in the nineteenth century. However to suggest that they alone were in this state of unreformed, medieval faith would be a myth which must be corrected.

Many of the migrants self-identified as Catholics, as shown by Raphael Samuel’s

³¹ Barbara Charlton and L. E. O. Charlton, *The Recollections of a Northumbrian Lady 1815-1866 : The Memoirs of Barbara Charlton of Hesleyside, Northumberland* (Stocksfield: Spredden Press, 1989), 244}

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comments on census returns from Manchester in 1871 where many Irish gave “Catholic” as their occupation³². The migrants were not strong on theology, but reading Thomas Mayhew’s accounts of his conversations with Irish costermongers in London it is evident that many of them had some knowledge of the tenets of their faith. For them, Catholicism was a part of their culture and inheritance as much as their language and music. Emmet Larkin has dispelled another myth by analysing the provision of clergy in Ireland in the pre-Famine years. Ireland was not then a priest-ridden society. In fact, as Larkin has shown, it was woefully short of clergy and of sacred space. Much of the historical memory of Catholicism in pre-relief Ireland – mass-rocks, hedge-schools and constant harassment by the authorities – may be mythical. Research has shown, for example, that there were Protestant landowners who provided chapels for their Catholic tenants, that some of the hedge-schools were not as informal as the title suggests and were more effective than the government-sponsored Charter Schools. But the Church which emerged into the full glare of post-relief daylight in Ireland was very ill-resourced in all aspects – chapels, schools and clergy. In this environment, one must lower one’s expectations as to the regular practice of religion and educational attainment of the adherents. As has been argued above, that which survived in Ireland was a form of cultural Catholicism. This was fertile ground for re-education, rejuvenation and revival and could have been achieved in Ireland without losing that which made Irish society Catholic. Instead this was supplanted by a culture of Catholic clericalism – an extreme form of state- and socially-supported confessionalism.

Cultural Catholicism was that which the lower classes of Irish migrants brought with them to England. It was quite at variance with practice in the English Catholic community which, in the penal days, had been hidden behind “high walls” and “yew hedges” as Newman put it. English Catholicism was a private, quiet, family affair. It did not take itself out into the public sphere. Kelly maintained in his introduction that the “more boisterous Celt had a very salutary effect in correcting the air and habit of timid reserve so long noticeable in the bulk of native English Catholics.”³³

Here the question was asked as to whether or not the English Catholics did all that they could to extend the hand of welcome, charity and support to their impoverished Irish co-religionists. For every Barbara Charlton, it is very easy to find an example of utter heroism and dedication amongst the English, especially the priests. The danger here is that of judging the nineteenth century by modern standards (hence the question raised as to what exactly Tridentine Catholicism was). The theologians may debate the meaning of

³² Samuel, "Patriotism," 95

³³ Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 41

“Catholicism”, but before Vatican II agreed to the use of vernacular languages for the mass, the use of Latin for the Church’s rituals differentiated it from other Christian denominations. Wherever one went in the world, the rubric and language of the mass were the same. However, for a congregation to follow the teaching part of the mass – the sermon – required that it be addressed to them in a language they understood.

If, as has been stated in many histories, the Irish were ignorant of the tenets of their faith; if they were unaware of the obligation to attend mass every Sunday; if they had no knowledge of the requirements to fast and abstain on the days appointed; how were they expected to learn if they were told this in a foreign language? Many of the Irish migrants, especially in the first half of the century, were monolingual Irish speakers. There is ample evidence of Irish being spoken amongst themselves; Samuel has mentioned the frequent use of Irish in their neighbourhoods; there was the Italian priest, Fr Signini, in South Wales who made his own phrase book so that he could hear confession in Irish. But, there is no evidence of a systematic concern amongst the authorities of the English Church to address the language issue of the Irish Catholics. Provision was made in the earliest endowment of the Bermondsey mission for an Irish-speaking priest, although his presence was never advertised in the *Directory*. Later in the 1850s Southwark advertised a discourse in Irish during the 6.30 am mass. This was a rare incidence and lasted less than ten years. In the 1820s appeals were made to support a German language mission in London; in 1843 a priest in Southwark was identified as being “for the Poles”. In the 1890s when the Polish and Lithuanian migrants arrived, special native-language missions were established for them. In the century as a whole, eighteen languages were used in English and Welsh missions. Yet in only five missions was the use of Irish advertised and this was the migrant group which provided by far the greatest number of Catholics to the English Church. That this was never considered to have been an issue can be verified by the fact that never during the Bishops Annual Conferences was any question raised on this; no debate proposed; nor minute recorded.

The argument that as Ireland was part of the United Kingdom they were not “foreign” does not work as the Vicar Apostolic in Wales begged for money to support two Welsh-speaking priests, not for indigenous Welsh Catholics but for proselytising. Herein surely lies an explanation for some of the leakage of Irish from the Church. Could the Church have done more? On the evidence found for this thesis, they did very little, so the answer has to be yes. Undoubtedly, there were individual priests who were exemplary in their care for their flock. Resources were stretched. What priest had time to go and learn a new language? There were priests who could minister in German, French, Russian, Flemish, and

Portuguese. Why not Irish? Why is there no evidence that the bishops realised that there might be a problem? Was this the result of cultural prejudice? Or was it pure thoughtlessness?

One of the difficulties faced by the Church in rebuilding its infrastructure was the Canon law which forbade them from starting to build a chapel unless the means were there to complete it and to support the worship in it. The bishops were aware of this law and chose to ignore it. It was not just Church law which English Catholics were prepared to ignore. As Lord Clifford said in his evidence to the Parliamentary Select Committee, they were not above evading the law of the land as well.

The myth that the last vestiges of Catholic disability were removed by the 1829 Emancipation Act has been dispelled here; not just statute law, but the decisions by judges in the courts had a bearing on Catholic life and practice. This aspect of Catholic history has largely been ignored by historians. Case law tends to move slowly; sometimes a little ahead of popular opinion, sometimes it lags a little. Lord Mansfield moved it on when he and his fellow judges specified strict criteria for convictions of Catholic priests or for saying mass. It was not until Lord Birkenhead's judgement of 1919 that the myth of "superstitious uses" was finally laid to rest. Further relief, in the form of the Catholic Charities Acts (1832, 1860) came gradually. Yet bit, by bit, Catholics were gradually becoming equal with other of the non-Established Church. Permissive Acts which allowed Catholic priests into the prisons and workhouses did not cause much stir on a national level, but at local level, Catholics often had to fight for that which the law now allowed them.

Over the century, the Catholic Church in England had witnessed the gradual removal of most of the disabilities under which it had previously laboured. It had shown through its engagement in civic and political life that it was not a threat to the Crown or Constitution. Special oaths were no longer required for Catholics to take up any of these positions, a sign that the nation trusted their loyalty. They could petition Parliament, for and against the issue in question, on the same basis as other groups without the cloud of suspicion hanging over them. The Church could call on its members to vote on particular issues, such as education, without raising the spectre of "Rome rule". They were seen to be as loyal and committed to the nation as any other group within it.

The English Catholic Church had become a visible worshipping community in many parts of the country from which it had long been excised. It had created an identity far removed from the quiet, hidden religious life of its forbears. Yet England had not returned to the full religious culture of pre-Reformation days, nor could one expect that. Protestantism and its

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church-based religious practice had changed that. The English Church had absorbed a population of Irish migrants roughly four times its own size. Their religious inheritance was different, even while in some respects it was the same, but in Ireland 80% of the people had remained Catholic. In Ireland, the practice of cultural Catholicism had remained strong. Religious practice was not confined to the church building. Patterns, pilgrimages and other such manifestations bore witness to that. In 1821 when the Connaught Rangers received permission from the War Office to march to attend the laying of the foundation stone of St Patrick's Chapel in Liverpool, was this a Catholic procession? There is no doubt that the Rangers were proclaiming their faith in the public sphere and, whilst doing so, were marching along the King's Highway. In the absence of clergy in their vestments and the other usual accoutrements of Catholic processions, this would not have been documented as one. Less than twenty years later though, Catholic processions did start again.

The local press reported on these. The local non-participating people watched and presumably enjoyed the spectacle they presented. And what an unusual sight they must have been then in mid-century England – the bands, the school children, the confraternities and sodalities. In Preston, to celebrate Pentecost, it became traditional for the Catholics to parade in the morning and the Anglicans in the afternoon. Thus was an aspect of pre-Reformation Christianity revived in England – taking religious events into the public, non-sacred arena. If processions were a part of the revival of cultural Catholicism in England, the form they took in England was a particularly English form. Unlike their continental counterparts, those not actually processing remained but interested observers. There was little possibility that they would in any way participate. Three centuries earlier this form of religious expression had been excised in the Protestant reign of Edward VI.

Perhaps as a result of these local processions the hierarchy was so confident of the general acceptability of Catholicism that it invited the Eucharistic Congress to be held in England in 1908. Neither the Government nor the Church can have been totally expecting the reaction to the government banning the main procession. Almost universally the press castigated the Government, not for ban, but for the manner in which it was executed. Most of the press called for a change in the law even whilst not denying the culpability of the Church in organising such an illegal event. In the aftermath of the procession ban, the reports in the press were those which might have been expected if it had been commenting on any other prominent institution which had found itself in confrontation with the government. This response showed that the Church had gained general acceptance in England. The rights and the wrongs of both parties were discussed even-handedly. There

was little of the vitriolic prejudice which characterised the press but half a century previously. A Catholic Cabinet Minister could resign and his principled stand understood; a Catholic Archbishop could refuse to continue talks with the government and this was deemed reasonable. There was no questioning of the allegiance of the Church or its members.

Bossy ended his history of the English Catholic Community in 1850 by saying it had become a denomination³⁴, in 1908 that denomination became a church, *de facto* and *de jure*. This new Church in English life, whilst retaining spiritual allegiance to Rome, had, during the reign of Elizabeth's successor, Victoria, created an identity which had absorbed a multitude of immigrants and brought traditional Catholicism back onto the streets, but did so in a way which was consistent with the religious sentiments and expectations of the English people.

The measured responses given by Lord Clifford to the Parliamentary Select Committee in 1870 indicate that he, as a representative layman, was not looking for special treatment for himself and his fellow Catholics. He wanted Catholics to be able to operate as Catholics in England³⁵. In making itself respectable in a Victorian sense and acceptable in an English sense, the Catholic identity which emerged in the nineteenth century was one with which Catholics and their fellow non-Catholic subjects were content. They were an integral part of the United Kingdom nation. It had elements of the culture of Catholicism which remained in those countries unaffected by the Reformation; it was an integral part of the Universal Church; in spite of occasional lapses into triumphalism, Catholicism gained in respectability as the century advanced. Catholicism thus became, not a threat to the state and its constitution, but rather another minority within an increasingly diverse demography.

The celebrations in Llandudno in 1893, enjoyment of processions in towns from Cardiff to Preston, the lack of comment on the appointment of a Catholic as Home Secretary all showed acceptance by the population at large. Yes, there were still some who made a fuss at every advancement and perceived attempt to re-establish Catholicism as the nation's religion or to gain rights which made the Catholic Church more equal than others³⁶, but for the overwhelming majority, Catholicism was but one denomination in a religious landscape which was more diverse at the beginning of the twentieth century than a century before. In essence though, the Catholic Church in England retained an incontrovertibly English

³⁴ Bossy, *English Catholic*, 362

³⁵ Villiers, *Select Committee on Convents and Monasteries.*, 117-122

³⁶ *The Protestant Alliance - History*, 2010, <<http://www.protestant-alliance.org/page20.html>> (accessed 23/07/2011)

character.

Appendix – Contents of Database

The data was entered into a standard Microsoft Access™ database designed for this thesis. SQL (Structured Query Language) was used to analyse the data and extract the information required for the evidence to support the argument of the thesis. SQL is the standard tool used for data analysis in relational databases.

All of the *Directories* from 1795 to 1909 were read to collect the data and it was found that there was a total of 2141 different locations listed in which Mass was said. The data extracted was as follows:-

Name the name of the Church in 1908 and any previous names for this church / mission. A change in name was not unusual, with up to six names being recorded in one instance – the church in Stamford, Lincolnshire changed from *St Mary and St Augustine* in 1863 to *Our Ladye and St Augustine* (1864), *Our Lady Immaculate & St Augustine, Apostle of England* (1880), *St Mary (Immaculate Conception) & St Augustine* (1886), *The Immaculate Conception & St Augustine* (1890) and finally *Our Lady & St Augustine* in 1902. While these are all variations of the same dedication, not all name changes were. The church at Morpeth in Northumberland was named St Bede in 1843; this changed to St Robert (1851) and in 1873 this was clarified and became St Robert of Newminster.

Namecode In order to analyse the naming conventions a code which indicated the type of dedication used for a church or chapel was given; both current and, where they occurred, previous names were included.

Address addresses of missions often changed, especially in the early days of a mission. Until a church or school was built, the mission may not have had a permanent address. Until about 1840, it was not always possible to be 100% certain that a mission with a new address in the *Directory* was the same as one from the previous year. This would have been easier had the names of the priests always been published, but often they were not. Shortly after 1850, the position of Mission Rector was created. From then, as their names were usually included under the mission name, it was easier to decide if a new address was a continuation of a previous mission, albeit at a different address. During the nineteenth century postal services were developing and this led to greater precision in addresses. These were no longer as vague as “near the Turnpike”,

which was the address given for St Francis of Assisi, Stratford, Essex in 1817.

Town towns often had more than one church and various explanations have been given as to the character of the different congregations in towns. The original two congregations in Birmingham were split along ethnic lines: the Irish attended St Chad's (where there was an English priest) and the English attended St Peter's (which had an Irish priest). When St Chad's was rebuilt as a cathedral in the 1840s the two congregations swapped churches. In Brighton there were four churches by 1878 and each church ministered to the people from a specific district within the town: the western area by St Mary Magdalen; northern by St Joseph; North-west by Our Lady of Good Counsel. The fourth church, St John the Baptist, did not have a district assigned¹.

County the pre-1974 counties. London came into being as a separate county in 1889.

Postcode the postcode of the church, or where the chapel is no longer in use, the nearest possible postcode to its identified location. This is used to produce the northings and eastings to plot the missions on the maps in chapter three.

District ecclesiastical districts. From 1688 to 1839 there were four districts: London, Western, Midland and Northern. When in 1840 these were increased to eight (London, Western, Wales, Central, Eastern, Yorkshire, Lancashire and Northern) a new column of data (*District1*) was added.

Diocese the original dioceses in 1850 were the Archdiocese of Westminster with twelve suffragans (Beverley, Birmingham, Clifton, Hexham and Newcastle, Liverpool, Newport and Menevia, Nottingham, Northampton, Plymouth, Salford, Shrewsbury, Southwark). In 1878 Beverley was split into Leeds and Middlesbrough. In 1895 the Vicariate of Wales was created to include all of Wales (the Diocese of Newport and Menevia and those parts of Wales which had been in the Diocese of Shrewsbury). Glamorganshire remained within the Diocese of Newport. In 1898 the Vicariate of Wales became the new Diocese of Menevia. As with the Districts, extra columns were added to show the changes of Dioceses so that it was possible to ensure that a mission was located in the correct diocese.

Year First in Directory there were missions which had existed for some time before they were listed in the *Directory*. This was particularly obvious in the case of Lancashire where there were only two entries before 1824.

Year Last in Directory last recorded listing of an entry. Private houses' or convents' entries often ceased when a mission was formalised in the area. A convent (St

¹ CD 1878, 226
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Mary) was founded in Greenhill, Swansea in 1867; the listing continued as a convent until 1874; in 1875 it was listed as a mission with a different name (St Joseph). Besides the development of a private institution into a mission, other reasons for closure included the inability of the congregation to support a priest; the anticipated numbers did not materialise; severe local antagonism to Catholicism; or the priest may have had to leave, sometimes due to ill-health, and there was none to replace him. Sometimes failed missions were re-started. In such cases an attempt has been made to link the new mission with the previous one.

Year Named the year a dedication was given to a mission or chapel was rarely coincident with that of its foundation. St Mary and St Michael, Commercial Road London was listed in the 1795 *Directory*, but under its address only. It was not until 1843 that a name was included in its listing; 1843 is the year recorded in this field.

First Church Date

Year Mission Founded

Year Church Opened from 1849 the *Directory* often included these dates. There were sometimes inconsistencies in the dates given. Where these various dates were in conflict, analysis for this thesis used the *Year First in Directory* as the defining date for the foundation of a mission.

Licensed for Marriages following the legislation which allowed marriages to be performed elsewhere other than the churches of the Established Church, from 1838 chapels which were licensed for marriages were denoted by an * in the *Directory*. There was no consistency in whether a church was licensed from one year to the next. The confusion was such that recording this data was discontinued.

Sittings from the middle of the century onwards some chapels included a figure for the number of people who could be seated. Seating was not always an indicator of capacity as most of the congregation stood. As this information in the *Directories* was haphazard, collecting this data was discontinued.

Notes this links to a MS Word™ document where comments and information on this mission from the *Directory* and other sources has been stored.

Type in collecting the data, various common factors became apparent. Rather than introduce a separate column for each, these have all been coded in this column.

Namecodes

The codes used to analyse the dedications given to churches and chapels are as follows; the number of occurrences of each is in parentheses:

- 0 (18) *Post-Reformation English saints*: the martyrs of the recusant period.
- 1 (312) *Roman Catholic Marian* and
- 2 (222) *English Marian*: Many ancient churches in use in England bear dedications in the form St Mary or St Mary Immaculate. This is characterised here as “English Marian”; “Roman Catholic Marian” is defined as dedications in the form Our Lady Immaculate or The Immaculate Conception.
- 3 (358) *Pre-Reformation English*: in this category are the old English, Anglo-Saxon and Celtic saints (but not David, Patron of Wales or Andrew, Patron of Scotland). Most have local, rather than national, cults. Some of these were Irish but preached in Britain. St Piran was an Irish missionary to the Cornish. There is a church in Truro dedicated to him. He is coded as pre-Reformation English because he is venerated in Cornwall as Patron of Tin miners².
- 4 (66) *Irish Saints*: usually Patrick, but occasionally Brigid and Colmcille.
- 5 (561) *Pre-Reformation Catholic*: the early Christian saints: St Joseph; the apostles; the early martyrs (such as St Stephen); and the angels.
- 6 (43) *Post-Reformation Catholic*: for example, St Charles Borromeo, Archbishop of Milan, and St Vincent de Paul, who was known as “The Father of the poor”.
- 7 (220) *OLS: Our Lord and Saviour*: churches dedicated to Jesus Christ (*The Sacred Heart*), The Godhead (*The Holy Trinity*) or events in Jesus’s life (*The Nativity*).
- 8 (27) *Other Nationalities*: there was an influx of Polish and Lithuanian migrants at the end of the nineteenth century. Churches which they used were named after their national saints. This category also includes St Louis of France, St David and St Andrew.
- 9 (154) *Congregational*: religious congregations often dedicated churches to saints of their order. The Franciscans frequently changed the name, when they took over a mission, to *St Francis of Assisi*.

There were 129 churches / missions with no dedication listed in 1909.

Type

Following are the codes used for this entry; the figures in parentheses are the number of

² Kelly, *Historical Notes*, 397
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occurrences of each:

- A (37) shows a connection with the Armed Services. This may have been formally through chaplaincy; informally, where the mission ministered to soldiers and sailors nearby; or where a grant of land or money was given to the mission for a church (usually near a military or naval base).
- B (5) these were chapels which were designed to look like other buildings in order to disguise their true purpose; the chapel at Lulworth Castle in Dorset was designed to look like a mausoleum; St Peter's church in Birmingham designed to look like a factory. Thurston commented that "*old Catholics*" can still remember the days when it was a "high compliment" to say of a Catholic chapel that it had "the appearance of a church at first entrance"³.
- C (170) indicates a convent, monastery or other institution which was the first Catholic presence in a locality.
- D (182) chapels where Mass was not said on a weekly basis: holiday resorts which had Mass during the summer months only; missions where Mass was said on alternate Sundays with a neighbouring mission; missions where Mass was held for the eight indulgences.
- E (81) missions where an Irish connection was discovered. In the case of missions where the Irish connection was found in Kelly⁴ this was coded using a 4.
- F (29) missions which ministered to foreign migrants: the post-Revolution French émigré missions; a mission to the German seamen in London; missions for the Polish / Lithuanian migration at the end of the nineteenth century.
- G (58) these had an account with Wright's Bank which collapsed in November 1840.
- H (10) missions which bought a Dissenters' Chapel and converted it to Catholic use.
- I (22) means, other than appeals, used to raise funds: priests taking in lodgers; building a cemetery where fees were paid to the mission.
- J (118) missions which claimed a date earlier than its first entry in the *Directory*, or which, in its appeal, made an allusion to its history.
- K (197) miscellaneous: references to holiday resorts; or unusual aspects such as the mission in Gloucester where local Protestants were deterred from entering the chapel as to do so they would have to enter through a private house⁵.
- L (99) where languages, other than English, were used in services or confessions. A total of eighteen different languages was offered over the century.
- M (51) records the costs of building, maintaining the mission or the collections made.

³ Thurston, "Old Periodical", 161

⁴ Kelly, *Historical Notes*

⁵ LD 1827 62

- N (70) the names of benefactors were found from the *Directories* or Kelly.
- O (112) indicates where a mission's listing was removed and later re-instated.
- P (145) where buildings other than purpose-built churches were used; for example public houses or the local Assembly Rooms.
- Q (110) size of the congregation. This may have been given as emphasis in an appeal or to show a growing congregation.
- R (140) mission had a school.
- S (90) school chapel was built first. This was a multi-purpose building which served the local Catholic community as a school during the week; chapel for services or school-room for catechesis on Sunday; and, more usually at the beginning of the nineteenth century, as room for night-school for adults. Towards the end of the century, it was often built first; the presbytery followed and finally a purpose-built church would complete the building programme.
- T (10) temporary mission. Although not common, an example of this is the mission set up in 1847 to minister to the Irish labourers on the North Wales railway construction project. This mission in Abergele was listed for one year only⁶. In a statement in 1848, the Vicar Apostolic (Wales) noted that the mission had been closed as the Irish railway workers had been discharged⁷.
- U (744) at some stage, this mission was served by a priest from another mission.
- V (184) a private house, probably with its own chaplain even in the latter days of the century; also indicates missions which had developed from a privately funded chaplain.
- W (20) local anti-Catholic prejudice; or a mission which appealed for funds to build a school as non-Catholics were enticing the Catholic children to their schools;
- X (69) conflicting data given in different editions of the *Directory* as to the foundation dates of the mission or church.
- Y (234) a mission which published an appeal in the *Directories*.
- Z (35) an entry which was described as a station of a mission or supported stations nearby.
- 4 (33) an Irish connection noted by Kelly⁸.
- 5 (30) first appeal for this mission was after 1840.
- 6 (14) missions which used a bank other than Wright's.

⁶ CD 1847 90

⁷ CD 1848 91

⁸ Kelly, *Historical Notes*

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