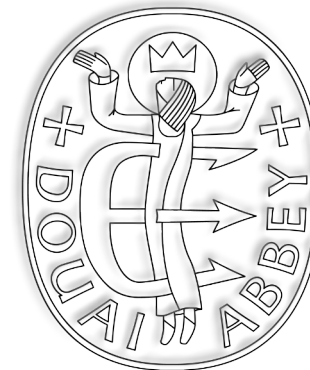




The
Douai
Magazine

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The Douai Magazine



Quidquid agunt homines Duacenses

Number 181-2019

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Cover: Carved stone head of Henry I from Reading Abbey, now in Douai Abbey library

From the Abbot

I HAVE JUST FINISHED READING *The Catholics* by Roy Hattersley, the former Labour MP, who has written in the past on other Christian churches in the United Kingdom, notably the Methodists. Hattersley had been surprised to discover that his father was an ex-Catholic priest. However, what impressed him about the Catholics in Britain and Ireland was their dedicated certainty. Through thick and thin, through persecution and prejudice, they never compromised. This, he believed, was a distinctive mark of Catholicism in the British Isles. It stubbornly held out for its beliefs, even if this meant refusing to compromise with the current political regime, even if it meant martyrdom. Perhaps Catholics themselves might not be so sure about Hattersley's opinion, but it is true that Catholicism has persisted with a gritty determination until the present, becoming, in the view of another author, Britain's "largest minority." Hattersley's book reminded me of being present when Pope Benedict XVI addressed members of parliament in Westminster Hall during his visit to England. The central thrust of his message was that politicians should be very wary of side-lining religious faith in their governing of a nation.

The beginning of 2020 saw the international furore over the drone attack which killed a warlord in Iraq and which led to violent protests from Muslim activists. In England in 2020 we shall be celebrating the 850th anniversary of the martyrdom of St Thomas Becket in 1170, in his own cathedral in Canterbury. He was murdered for standing up for the Church against King Henry II by four knights who travelled from France, the mediæval equivalent of drones perhaps. Becket had wanted to protect the Church which he believed to be the living transmitter of Christian revelation. The king had once been Becket's friend and had rewarded him with high office, in the same way that at a later date King Henry VIII rewarded his friend, Thomas More, until More stood up for his religious principles. This angered the king and subsequently led to More's execution.

While many Muslim countries have continued to respect the advice provided by their religious leaders, this tradition seems to have slowly disappeared in the West, hence the plea of Pope Benedict XVI. There was a time when kings and politicians in Europe would listen to the views of church leaders and have them stand alongside them. As the West has become more secular so this role has well nigh disappeared, and moral and

ethical decisions, notably when these might lead to a country deciding to go to war, are taken without recourse to such advice. A resort to early dialogue and diplomacy as a means of preventing armed conflict is one area in which the religious voice might still be heard. Somehow, then, religious faith stubbornly survives, even if it does so as a voice in the background. There has been, rather surprisingly, a recent admission of the role religious faith continues to play in the welfare and progress of the nations when the newly-elected government of the United Kingdom agreed to support the cause of Christians in countries in which they are subject to persecution or suffer from discrimination. That action is to be commended.

GEOFFREY SCOTT OSB

Reading Abbey: Recent Research on the Abbey Ruins and the Abbey Quarter

JOHN AND LINDSAY MULLANEY, and those of us at Douai who knew Professor Brian Kemp (1940-2019), wished the following article on developments at the site of Reading Abbey to be published in The Douai Magazine in his memory and in recognition of his deep interest in the abbey over many years. On some recent occasions Brian came to work in the Douai Abbey library. He was a founder member in 1986 of the Friends of Reading Abbey and later its president, Abbot Geoffrey being a patron of that society. Brian was pleased to see the re-opening of the abbey ruins after a long period spent on their conservation and only some months after his Reading Abbey Records had been published by the Berkshire Record Society in 2018. Since the restoration of the abbey ruins, the area of Reading surrounding them has become known officially as the Abbey Quarter.

Brian had moved to Reading in 1951 where his father worked for Sutton Seeds and graduated in history from the University of Reading in 1961. and was already a member of the university's staff when he completed his doctorate in 1966. He became a professor in 1990 and retired partially in 2001. He published many books on the abbey, particularly his edition of the Reading Abbey Cartularies, published by the Royal Historical Society in 1986-87 and which deal with the administration of the abbey's estates. The earliest and most important cartulary dates from the 13th century and has a Woolhampton connection. It was discovered around 1792 hidden in a priest's hole in the Earl of Fingall's house in Shinfield, near Reading by a bricklayer repairing a chimney in the house. Fingall had married the heiress of the Catholic lord of the manor of Woolhampton, and both husband and wife had gone to Ireland by 1792, leaving their chaplain in a house where the old school tower now stands. The cartulary was brought to "Woolhampton great house" and was eventually sold by the earl to the British Museum. Today it is in the British Library (Egerton MS 3031).



PART 1

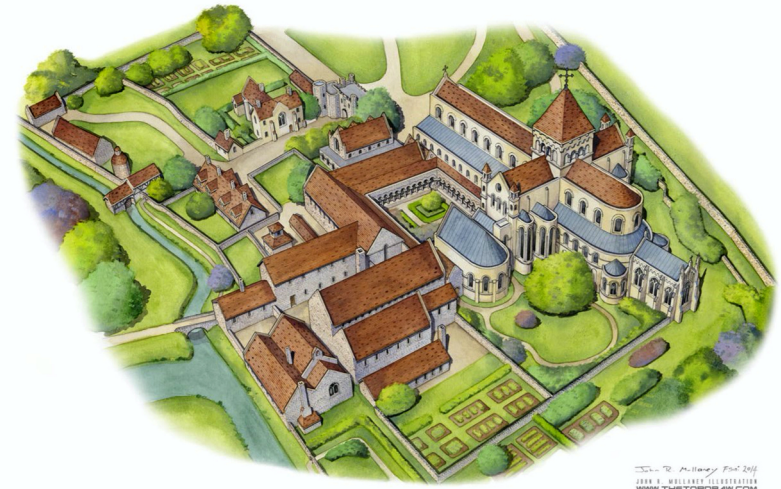
THE FOUNDATION CHARTERS OF READING AND SOME OF ITS PREDECESSORS

THE *APOSTOLATUS BENEDICTINORUM IN ANGLIA* (The Apostolate of the Benedictines in England) is an early 17th century history of the Benedictine order, published at Douai in 1626 and partly written by the English Benedictine, Fr Augustine Baker. Its main focus is to prove the independence of the English Benedictines from Cluniac control, or what Baker calls the “Cluniac yoke.” It is also a protest against the proposed integration of the English and Spanish congregations into a single entity. A number of English Benedictines at the beginning of the 17th century had joined Spanish monasteries. The debate centred on whether there had been an English Benedictine Congregation in the mediæval period to which the 17th century English Benedictines were heirs or whether the only Benedictine congregation represented in mediæval England was the Benedictine congregation of Cluny which had French origins. At the time of the writing of the *Apostolatus* there were clearly hopes that, under Charles I, Catholicism might be de-criminalised and the exiled religious orders allowed to return, so I think Baker’s treatise may have been an attempt to persuade the Crown that there was nothing to fear from foreign interference if the Catholic monastic orders were to be re-established in England. Clearly Charles’ intransigence towards Parliament, and the subsequent Civil War, would finally put an end to such hopes for the foreseeable future.

As historians of Reading Abbey, we were asked to find and record all references to that monastery in the text of the *Apostolatus*. It is essentially a polemical tract, written in 17th-century legal Latin, and is not an easy read. However, while working our way through the text, which we were relieved to find was available online as well as in a number of copies in Douai Abbey library, we found plenty of interesting material, in particular reproductions of mediæval documents which Baker had discovered in the Cottonian library in London and elsewhere. Among these were the foundation charters of several abbeys. What follows is a study of four of these, including Henry I’s foundation charter for Reading Abbey.

The surviving ruins of the abbey have recently been reopened after extensive restoration. They give little idea of the magnificence of the original monastic complex, which was one of the richest and most

extensive monasteries in England. Our imagined reconstruction of the abbey is based on archaeology and the typical design of a mediæval Cluniac abbey.



William of Malmesbury, in his *Chronicle of the Kings of England*, famously wrote the following about Reading Abbey around the year 1135, before the death of its founder, King Henry I, and he suggests that Henry placed Cluniac monks in Reading:

He built this monastery between the river Kennet and the Thames, in a place calculated for the reception of almost all who might have occasion to travel to the most populous cities of England, where he placed monks of the Cluniac order, who are to this day a noble pattern of holiness, and an example of unwearied and delightful hospitality.

We can reasonably ask these three questions about the abbey: Why build the monastery? Why the Cluniac order? And why here in Reading?

We can start by looking at the four mediæval monasteries listed below, and posing the relevant questions, which can be answered by looking briefly at each of the foundation charters in turn. In a useful alliteration I am going to examine their patrons, purpose, position and privileges. I should point out that all the foundation documents I shall be examining

have had their authenticity challenged, and are probably later versions, but they arguably reflect the original sentiments of the founders. The four monasteries and their founders are as follows:

Cluny	910 AD	<i>William the Pious</i>
Battle	c. 1071 AD	<i>William the Conqueror</i>
Lewes	c. 1078 AD	<i>William de Warenne</i>
Reading	c. 1125 AD	<i>Henry I</i>

The monastery of Cluny was founded over 200 years before Reading Abbey, in 910, by William, Duke of Aquitaine and Count of Poitou, known as “the Pious.” The foundation charter begins as follows:

To all right thinkers it is clear that the providence of God has so provided for certain rich men that, by means of their transitory possessions, if they use them well, they may be able to merit everlasting rewards. As to which thing, indeed, the divine word, showing it to be possible and altogether advising it, says: “The riches of a man are the redemption of his soul.” (Prov. xiii.)

William states that he proposes to “support at my own expense a congregation of monks,” and hopes that, “although I myself am unable to despise all things, nevertheless, by receiving despisers of this world, whom I believe to be righteous, I may receive the reward of the righteous.”

The document goes on to state that William is handing over to the community of monks the town of Cluny in Burgundy, bequeathed to him by his sister Ava...

with the court and demesne manor, and the church in honour of St Mary the Mother of God and of St Peter the prince of the apostles, together with all the things pertaining to the vill, indeed, the chapels, the serfs of both sexes, the vines, the fields, the meadows, the woods, the waters and their outlets, the mills, the incomes and revenues, what is cultivated and what is not, all in their entirety.

The purpose of the donation is made clear in the following passage:

I, William, and my wife Ingelberga, give, moreover, all these things to the aforesaid apostle—first for the love of God; then for the souls of my lord king Odo, of my father and mother; for myself and my wife—for the salvation, namely, of our souls and bodies; and not least for that of Ava, who left me these things in her will; for the souls of our brothers and sisters and nephews, and of all our relatives of both sexes; for our faithful ones who adhere to our service; for the advancement, also, and integrity of the Catholic religion.

William states clearly that the monks are to live “according to the Rule of St Benedict,” and it is made crystal clear that the primary purpose of the monastery is as a powerhouse of prayer for all those named. However, there is another important function of the new community:

We will, further, that in our times and in those of our successors, according as the opportunities and possibilities of that place shall allow, there shall daily, with the greatest zeal be performed there, works of mercy towards the poor, the needy, strangers and pilgrims.

In his founding document William states clearly that the abbey is to be independent of any secular power:

It has pleased us also to insert in this document that, from this day, those same monks there congregated shall be subject neither to our yoke, nor to that of our relatives, nor to the sway of the royal might, nor to that of any earthly power.

Abbots are to be appointed by the community, not by any king or even “the pontiff of the Roman see.” What made Cluny unique, however, was that it fell under the direct authority of the pope.

We can see here three characteristics of the Cluniac monasteries which would spread across Europe in the following three centuries: independence from secular and hierarchical power; the care of pilgrims; and an intense concentration on the *Officium Mortuorum* (Office of the Dead), including the founding of the feast of All Souls in the 11th century.

The document reflects the mediæval division of society into three orders: the *oratores*, those who pray; the *bellatores*, those who fight; and the *laboratores*, the labourers, who supported the other two.

With Battle Abbey, founded around 1071, we come to a very different reason for founding an abbey. The foundation charter quoted in the *Apostolatus* leaves us in no doubt that it was intended as a victory monument. The high altar was placed on the exact spot where Harold was believed to have been killed. The charter begins with the uncompromising statement of its founder, William the Conqueror:

I have built a church in honour of St Martin, which I have desired to be named Battle because it was in this place that God gave me such a great victory, so that I might triumph over my enemies who were unjustly opposing me and so that I might acquire perpetual possession of the kingdom which was owed to me and my successors by the law of heredity, in perpetuity.

The original Latin, *quam de Bello appellare volui*—“which I have desired to be named Battle”—makes its title even more shocking; a modern

Benedictine might feel uncomfortable were his abbey to be called “War.” This is the Conqueror speaking, fresh from his brutal Harrowing of the North. According to David Knowles, all the workmen, the stone and the monks were brought in from Normandy, emphasising conquest over the Saxons. Later entries in the Battle chronicles do, however, state that the purpose of the abbey was prayer for all those killed at Senlac, striking a more inclusive, less triumphalist note.

The late 12th-century *Chronicle of Battel Abbey* (sic) tells how the monks came from Marmoutier, a Benedictine abbey founded by St Martin of Tours, a military saint, who was, along with St Mary, to become the patron of the new abbey. We might feel that his name is suspiciously close to that of Mars, the Roman god of war.

The charter refers to the monks being *ex ordine et religione Maioris* (“from the order and faith of Marmoutier”) and states that the monastery is to follow the Rule of St Benedict. As Baker insists forcibly in the *Apostolatus*, it was never a Cluniac abbey. As with Cluny, however, the charter stresses its independence from external control, including from Marmoutier, which had initially attempted to “subject Battel to their governance.”

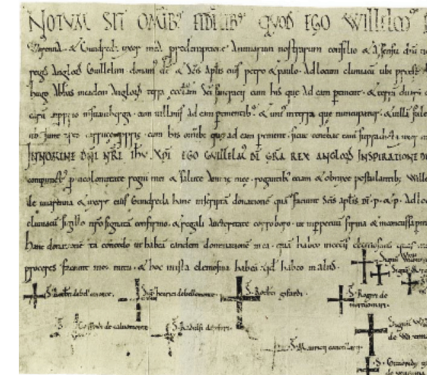
The first abbot was Gausbert, originally from Marmoutier. Note how the charter stresses that the abbot does not own any property:

We therefore set down, both ecclesiastically and by my power as king, that when the abbot of Battle dies, all the property of the monastery, wherever it may be, is to remain in the hands and at the disposition of the prior and the monks of the monastic chapter of Battle. This we also set down and confirm as a perpetual decree, that the abbot of Battle has no private property rights of his own; they belong to the community and brothers.

On the abbot’s death everything is to revert to the community and his successor is to be chosen by the monks, through an election in chapter.

William the Conqueror did attempt to use the Cluniacs for his own ends, requesting that twelve Cluniac monks be sent to England to help him reform the clergy, but the abbot of Cluny, the great St Hugh of Semur, refused, no doubt wisely, to help in this programme. However, the abbot did agree to a request from William de Warenne, the first earl of Surrey and a veteran of Hastings, to found a Cluniac priory at Lewes in Sussex. An account in the prior’s book tells how William and his wife Gundrada had intended to make a pilgrimage to Rome, sometime between 1078 and 1082, but were unable to reach it owing to warfare between pope and emperor. Instead, they stayed for a while at Cluny and were hugely impressed by its

holiness and concentration on prayer for the dead. Hugh agreed to send several monks to Lewes, including Lanzo, the first prior.



The original charter of Lewes (left), which was sent to the mother house at Cluny, somehow survived the depredations both of Huguenots and revolutionaries. William de Warenne and his wife, for the redemption of their souls and with the consent of King William, give the site of the priory to Cluny and dedicated the church to St Pancras, who had been venerated there for centuries. The earl would certainly have hoped for fervent

prayers after his death as he had led a violent military career. The charter is confirmed by King William “for the safety of my kingdom and the salvation of my soul.” As with other Cluniac priories, Lewes owed obedience to Cluny, but was in fact allowed considerable autonomy.

Like other English monasteries, Lewes was demolished during the Dissolution under Henry VIII, with the help of specially hired Italian explosive experts. When the railway came to Lewes in the 1840s, a deep cutting was dug across the body of the church. During this work the remains of both William and Gundrada, who had been buried in the chapter house, were discovered. They are now in the Gundrada chapel of Southover church in Lewes, under her grave slab, made of beautifully worked Tournai marble (right). This was discovered in the 18th century in Isfield church, where it had been re-used for a monument to Henry VIII’s cofferer.



In studies of Reading Abbey it is now a commonplace that Henry

founded the abbey as a result of the death of his only legitimate son, William Adelin, in the White Ship disaster of November 1120. However, none of the major contemporary chronicles states this. Orderic Vitalis provides a graphic account of the tragedy, in which around 300 people, including the flower of England's young nobility, lost their lives, and describes Henry's devastation on receiving the news. But the account continues with Henry's remarriage to Adeliza of Louvain in the hope of begetting a new male heir to the throne. Both William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon also continue in the same vein. It is entirely possible that before the White Ship disaster Henry was already planning a monastic foundation, as was normal for kings and nobles at the time, as he is known to have sent to Constantinople for relics in 1118, the year of his wife's death. As we shall see, the foundation charter does not cite William Adelin's death as the major reason for founding Reading.

Malmesbury's famous quote about the foundation of the abbey, within a description of the king which praises his piety, comes before the account of the shipwreck. It stresses the fact that Henry brought monks from Cluny to found his abbey. The question arises: why bring Burgundian Cluniacs rather than Benedictine monks from Normandy?

Henry's family had close ties with the Cluniac order. His favourite sister, Adela, had sent her youngest son, Henry of Blois, to Cluny at the age of ten, and he was later professed as a monk. A year after Reading received its charter, while still in his twenties, he became abbot of Glastonbury, an example of the practice of Cluniac monks being sent to other Benedictine congregations. Adela was a patron of the nuns at Marcigny, the prestigious women's house in Burgundy, and she retired there in 1120.

At the beginning of Henry's reign, Cluny was in the process of being rebuilt in its final and most impressive form, Cluny III. Its major sponsor was Alfonso VI of León and Castile. The Camino de Santiago passed through his territories. His father, Ferdinand I, had granted a huge annual payment of gold to Cluny, and Alfonso doubled it in 1077 to 1,000 gold dinars. When Alfonso died in 1109 Henry probably took over as Cluny's main sponsor. Though his donations never matched those of Alfonso, Henry was described by Robert de Torigny as being responsible for the "major part" of financing the new basilica, and Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny from 1122 to 1156, wrote that Henry had "a more than ordinary share of love and attachment to Cluny."

By 1121, following the deaths of both his wife and his son, Henry would have been painfully aware of the need for prayers for the dead, and the

Cluniac specialisation in the *Officium Mortuorum* was no doubt a powerful reason for asking Cluny's help in founding his new abbey.

When we look at the charter itself, as quoted in the *Apostolatus* (below), it is notable that the primary impetus for founding the abbey at Reading appears to have been to replace three ancient houses, those of Reading, Chelsey and Leominster, which had been destroyed *peccatis suis exigentibus* ("on account of their sins") and acquired by laymen. The meaning of this phrase has been interpreted in various ways. Some versions of the charter omit the word *suis*. However, it certainly suggests the presence of an earlier abbey at Reading, which may have been on the same site, as suggested by archaeology in the 1970s, undertaken by Dr Cecil Slade of the University of Reading.

„representabimus. Henricus Dei gratia Rex Angliæ, Dux Normannorum, Archiepiscopus,
 „ Episcopus, Abbatibus, Comitibus Baronibusque suis, & omnibus Christianis tam presentibus,
 „ quam futuris salutem perpetuam. Scitis quia tres Abbatibus in regno Angliæ, peccatis
 „ suis exigentibus olim destruxerunt, Readingia scilicet, Chelleya, & Leominsteria: quas ma-
 „ nus laica diu possedit, earumque terras & possessiones alienando distraxit. Ego autem consilio,
 „ Potius & aliorum fidelium pro salute animarum mearum, & Willelmi Regis patris mei, & Willelmi Regis
 „ fratris mei, & Willelmi filij mei, & Matildis reginæ matris meæ, & Matildis reginæ uxoris
 „ meæ, & omnium antecessorum & successorum meorum, edificavi novum apud Readingas monasterium
 „ in honore & nomine Dei genitricis semperque Virginis Mariæ, & B. Iohannis Evangelistæ;
 „ & donavi eidem monasterio ipsam Readingiam, Chelleyam quoque & Leominsteriam, cum ap-

The charter begins:

Know ye that three abbeys in the Kingdom of England, namely Reading, Chelsey and Leominster, have been destroyed on account of their sins, and that for a long time they have been in the hands of laymen, and their lands and possessions have been alienated. I, therefore, by the advice of my bishops and other faithful subjects have, for the salvation of my soul and that of King William my father, King William my brother, William my son, Queen Matilda my mother, Queen Matilda my wife and all my ancestors and successors, have built at Reading a new monastery in honour of the ever Virgin Mary, Mother of God, and Blessed John the Evangelist.

We may notice the complete lack of any donation of the site to Cluny, such as we saw in the Lewes document. Part of the site was already in royal hands. Domesday states that it had belonged to Edward the Confessor. Another section had belonged to Henry de Ferrers, who had donated it to Tutbury Priory in Staffordshire. That community, like Battle Abbey, received other land in exchange for their holdings in Reading.

In the second paragraph we are on familiar ground: the first role of the abbey is to be intercessory prayer for the salvation of Henry's own soul and for those of his family, including, but not accentuating, his son William

Adelin, whose body had never been recovered from the sea. Note the dedication to St Mary, the supreme intercessor, and to St John, who had stood with her at the foot of the cross. In later years, with the acquisition of the Hand of St James, the abbey came to be associated with that saint and his emblem, the scallop shell, was the major element in the coat-of-arms of the monastery.

The charter goes into considerable detail about the privileges of the abbey, which were to cause resentment from the townspeople in later years, especially the freedom from tolls, whereas the monastery exacted its own tolls on goods entering the town. Note the prohibition of any demand for payment from any external body or person:

No other person, great or small, is to demand anything, either as a debt or a custom, or by force, from the men, lands and possessions of the monastery of Reading. He may not demand military service or help with any campaign or involvement in building bridges or castles, or the provision of horses or pack horses or boats, workmen, tribute or gifts. The monks of Reading and their staff and property are to be free of all gelds and tolls and any other customs tariffs on land and water at bridge and sea ports throughout England.

When an abbot of Reading dies, all the property of the monastery, wherever it may be, is to remain intact and free, with all its rights and customs, at the disposal of the prior and monks of the Reading chapter. We lay down this precept to be observed forever, that the abbot of Reading is not to have his own rental holdings, but they are to be held in common by all the brothers.

Whoever may be chosen, through God's will, in canonical election, as abbot, must not misuse monastic alms by granting them to on his own family but must use them in the service of the poor, of pilgrims and of guests of the monastery.

There is a striking similarity between this charter and those of Cluny and Battle in the insistence that the abbey's lands do not belong to the abbot but to the community. On the abbot's death his successor is to be chosen in canonical election and there is to be no nepotism. The charter of Cluny states, "there shall daily, with the greatest zeal, be performed there works of mercy towards the poor, the needy, strangers and pilgrims." Battle's insists that the abbot "is not to misuse the charity of the monastery in gifts to his secular family or anyone else but must use it for the good of the poor, of pilgrims and guests, and for the care of the brothers."

Finally, Reading's charter states that "whoever may be chosen, through God's will, in canonical election as abbot must not misuse alms by granting

them to his own family or other persons but must use them in the service of the poor, of pilgrims and of guests of the abbey."

Augustine Baker, in the *Apostolatus*, argues strongly that Reading was not a Cluniac abbey, and we may tend to agree with him. There is certainly no mention of Cluny in the 1125 charter. It was not unusual for Cluniacs to set up new Benedictine houses and to supply priors, such as Hugh de Boves, the first abbot of Reading, who had been a monk of Cluny and then prior of Lewes. In the Cluniac order, there was only one abbot, that of Cluny itself; the other Cluniac monasteries had priors. Monks and abbots from Reading could be sent to Cluny, as happened with Abbot Hugh II of Reading, who was elected as abbot of Cluny in 1199, the year of King Richard I's death.

Whereas Lewes made an annual payment to Cluny of 50 shillings, plus 100 shillings when a new prior was appointed by Cluny, Reading's charter, as we have seen, specifically rules out payment to external institutions. Abbots of Reading were to be chosen by their community, not imposed.

There is no doubt that Reading's constitution was closely modelled on the Gregorian reforms (that is, those promoted by Pope Gregory VII, 1073-85) which were so typical of Cluniac monasteries but, as Knowles puts it, "Houses such as Reading were founded by a body of Cluniacs and with Cluniac uses, but existed from the first as autonomous abbeys."

Augustine Baker constantly insists on the independence of the English Benedictine Congregation, which was the main reason for him helping to compile the *Apostolatus* in the first place, and he states that abbeys such as Reading were *extra corpus et ditione (sic) ordinis Cluniaci, nihil illi debebant subiectiones nihil obedientiae* ("outside the body and the dictates of the Cluniac order: they owed it neither subjection nor obedience"). As he often puts it, Reading was not under the Cluniac yoke, and he points out that Reading is not listed as a Cluniac abbey, either in Cluny's own library or in the catalogue of monasteries in the Tower of London.

I would argue that it is fair to describe Reading as "Cluniac" in its customs. But the monastery was very much Henry's personal foundation. At Candlemas in 1113 Henry had stayed at Orderic Vitalis' Benedictine abbey of St Evroult in Normandy and had asked to be admitted as a member of the society, after commending the monks' way of life. It was Henry who granted Reading Abbey its privileges, including the right to deal with criminal cases, under the proviso, as the charter states, that if the abbot and monks should fail to administer justice the King may compel them to do so.

Most historians agree that Henry I intended Reading Abbey to be not only his personal mausoleum but the burial place of his successors for centuries to come. Following his acquisition, through his daughter the Empress Matilda, of the relic believed to be the Hand of St James, the king clearly intended that Reading should also become the national shrine and the focus of devotion to St James in England. This at least was achieved for the next four centuries, but in the event no further kings of England were buried in the abbey. It remains the institution most closely associated with Henry I, and the modern town of Reading can take pride in such a legacy.

JOHN & LINDSAY MULLANEY

PART 2

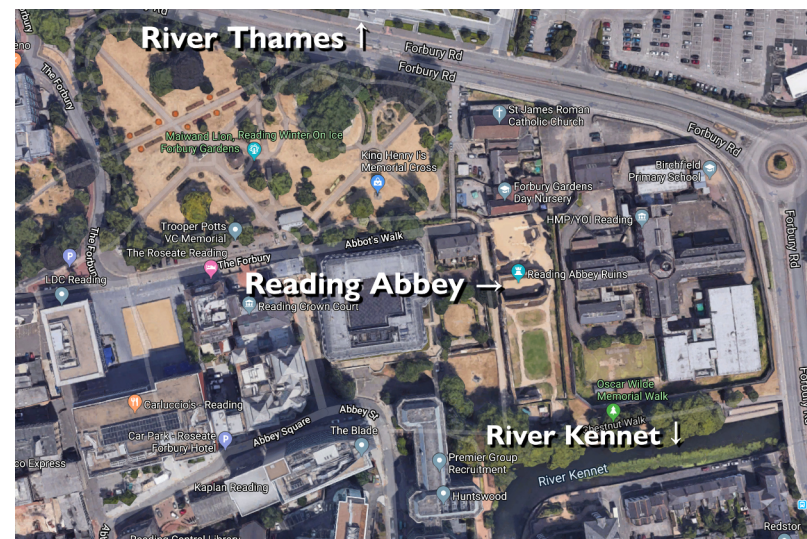
WHAT MORE IS THERE TO FIND OUT ABOUT READING ABBEY? THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL, ARCHITECTURAL AND DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE.

It may be helpful to place the monastery in its setting within Reading. It stood at the town's most easterly point which was not subject to flooding, between the rivers Kennet and Thames. At the other end of the town, to its west, there is another rise in the terrain. The minster church of St Mary stands on this site today and many believe this was the main centre of the town of Reading until Henry founded his monastery in 1121. At the time of the Reformation, Reading was one of the richest abbeys in England. In the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535, it was within the top ten richest monasteries in England. Indeed, using one measure of calculation, with an annual income of around £2,000, it ranked sixth.

Over the last decade there has been increased interest in Reading's vanished abbey. This has been due, to a large extent, to the conservation of the standing ruins. These had reached such a state of decay that falling flint and stone presented a serious danger to visitors, so much so that the area had to be closed to the public. Another factor, which raised Reading Abbey's profile, was the media interest in the search for the burial place of the founder of the monastery, King Henry I, which followed the discovery of Richard III's body in Leicester.

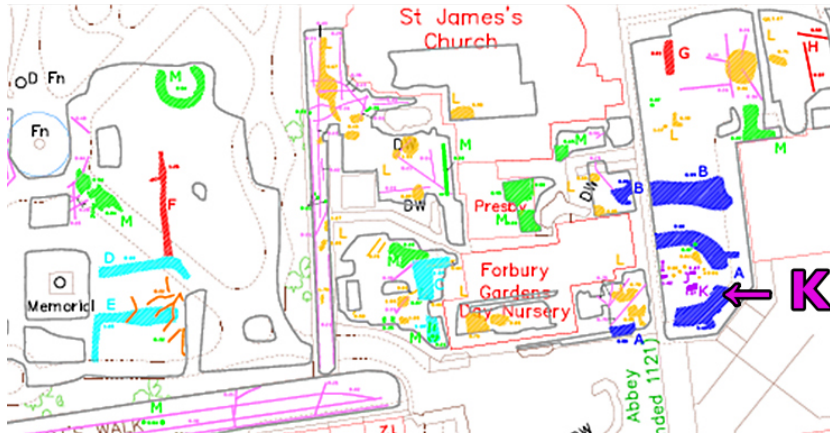
Now we know much more, compared with ten years ago, thanks to archaeology, architectural analysis, newly discovered documents, and a better understanding of Benedictine, and specifically Cluniac, history. All these help us re-evaluate our knowledge of Reading Abbey. Initially, in

2016, archaeologists began a survey by means of a ground penetrating radar (GPR) in 2016. The aim of the survey was to determine the extent of the abbey church and some of its features, such as whether there were towers at the west end.



The scan produced some exciting discoveries in that at the east end, in the apse, it revealed some previously unknown features. I will look at these shortly. If these discoveries were new and potentially important, the scan was, however, also disappointing and rather frustrating. It added little to our knowledge of the west end of the church, how far it extended or its architectural style. For instance, one debate is whether the church had western towers or a narthex of some sort. The scan did not show footings for any such building. There were also some anomalous features and signs of possible foundations. However, without excavation there is no way of knowing if these are abbey related. In the 19th century several buildings, such as greenhouses and even railway sheds, were built on this part of the site within Forbury Gardens. Could these soundings merely refer to such buildings?

However, the eastern end told a different story. It confirmed the findings of a 1970s dig, such as the existence of the ambulatory and the exact position of its wall. There were also indications of burials in the chancel, specifically in the sanctuary, in and around the location of the high altar. These are marked on the scan on the next page with the letter K in purple.



It was the east end, or chancel, that proved the most informative following the archaeological excavation. When I first saw the results of the scan I was probably most excited by the traces of what I speculated might be the footings of a *pulpitum*. For some time, I had suggested its existence at the entrance to the choir. Indeed, as we shall see, there is a reference to a “screen” in the translation of a 12th-century document known as *The Miracles of the Hand of St James*. The *pulpitum* was the barrier that separated the nave of the church from the choir and chancel. Here would have been the choir, presbytery and sanctuary—the space, that is, reserved for the monastic community and those invited in.

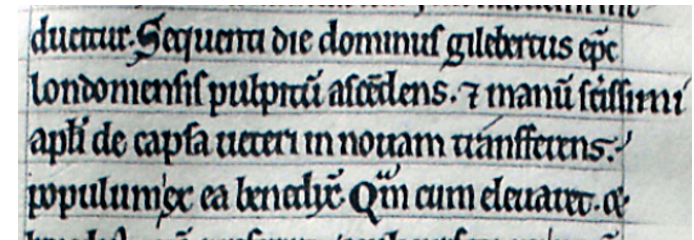
The scan showed foundations with a break in the middle, which would indicate that some such screen stood on this spot. Of course, once again, without excavations, we cannot know whether these are mediæval or later remains. It is possible that what appear to be mediæval footings in the scan may date to post-Reformation works. The school, for instance, which now stands on the site was built in the 1870s.

I was, therefore, delighted when, in 2018, Professor Brian Kemp published a book which contained his original translation of *The Miracles of the Hand of St James*, but alongside the Latin text. The original manuscript is now in Gloucester cathedral library. Kemp first worked on this many years ago and he dated the document to circa 1200.

The hand of St James was considered to be the abbey’s most important relic. For instance, its image appears on the seal of the abbey. The mummified hand, in a magnificent reliquary, had been brought to England in 1125 by the Empress Matilda, Henry I’s daughter, after the death of her

husband, the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V. The supposed hand of St James the Greater was part of the imperial crown jewels. In fact, some contemporary reports considered it the most important item in this collection.

Miracle number 18 in the Gloucester manuscript can be dated to between 1163 and 1187, when the bishop mentioned, Gilbert Foliot, held the see of London. In this miracle story we read how Bishop Gilbert placed the hand in a new reliquary on the *pulpitum* for the people to see.



The extract illustrated above shows the original manuscript with specific mention of a screen, which in the text is *pulpitū*. It is of course possible that the word was used more generically and that it was not specifying what today we would call a pulpit. Nevertheless, along with what appears to be evidence from the GPR survey, I think it reasonable to consider the possibility that we are indeed looking at the foundations of this type of screen. Architecturally it is what one might expect to find in this area of a 12th-century church. What is certain is that by 1187 the chancel was in use, that townspeople and pilgrims were coming to the abbey, and that a screen, probably a *pulpitum*, gave entry to the choir, and on it was placed at least one relic of enormous prestige.

At this point I will look in more detail at what must be one of the most important pieces of research concerning Reading Abbey to be published in recent times, Professor Kemp’s book, *Reading Abbey Records: A New Miscellany*, which was reviewed in *The Douai Magazine* of 2017.

The account of the annual ceremonial in the abbey church to commemorate Henry’s death on 1 December 1135, together with our knowledge of Romanesque architecture, considered with the result of the GPR, combine to give us an insight into the abbey in its first century or so. Kemp discovered this manuscript in the British Library (Additional Ms 8167, fo. 200r-v) in a bundle originally from Westminster Abbey. The annual ceremonial covers both the vigil and the day itself, namely 31

November and 1 December. How this Reading document came to be included with those of Westminster is a mystery.

The annual commemoration was a solemn event liturgically speaking. This is demonstrated by the fact that the Office of the Dead was sung with full ceremony. It was, however, also a time of celebration with special feasting for both the monks and for “thirteen poor people” who were to be fed in the *aula* (hall) of the abbey. We thus learn something of the care the community felt for the poor and a very practical implementation of the Rule of St Benedict.

The same commemoration, but with less ceremonial, took place on the first day of every month, with the same instruction that “thirteen poor people are to be fed for him [ie Henry I] in the hall.” As seen above in the examination of the charters, charitable works for the poor were at the core of the foundation documents of Cluny, Battle and Reading.

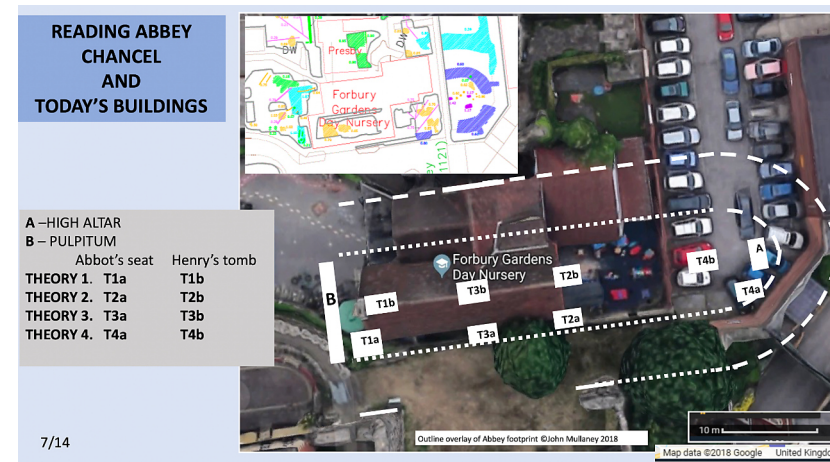
This document also helps us in addressing the vexed question of the location of the grave of Henry I. From the moment our archaeological investigations began this has been the question the media, and indeed most people, have been interested in.

It should be understood that the Westminster manuscript examined by Kemp is not a detailed liturgical account of every part of the Masses and the Divine Office celebrated to commemorate Henry’s death. It is rather a list of instructions, most probably to clarify where there was room for alternatives or doubt, and how to proceed during the two days of the king’s commemoration. However, it does contain several clues as to the location of Henry’s tomb within the chancel.

We learn, for instance, that the abbot’s seat was alongside the tomb of the king: *Ingradiatur abbas ad sedile suum iuxta tumbam super pavimentum ex parte australi* (“The abbot is to proceed to his seat next to the tomb upon the pavement on the south side”). But interpreting this statement is not quite as straightforward as it may first seem. An abbot’s normal place, as confirmed here, was on the south side of the choir, usually immediately on coming through the *pulpitum*. This would place the abbot’s seat, and the tomb, to the west of the chancel as marked by T1 on the map shown on the page opposite.

However, there are other possibilities. If we look at the burial places of King William II at Winchester or King John at Worcester, their tombs are at the east end of the choir stalls. It is also possible that this part of the text is referring to the abbot’s place at Mass, which could place this seat or throne, or *sedile*, near the altar. Even if we admit to some doubt as to the

tomb’s exact location, the combination of the evidence gives us a much clearer understanding of the structure and dynamics of the chancel area.



Turning to the architectural style of Reading Abbey and some details about its construction, we were able to combine evidence from various sources to add to our knowledge of the abbey. The illustration at the beginning of this paper gives us some idea of what Reading Abbey may have looked like after 1315. It was essentially a Romanesque building, with its sturdy rounded arches, but we know that in 1315 a Lady Chapel was added in the lighter, Decorated style.

As we have seen, the first monks came from Cluny itself, under the leadership of Peter, prior of Cluny. They were joined by monks from Lewes, the main Cluniac monastery in England. Building began in 1121. We can tell much about its design from the standing ruins. However, we must recall that Abbot Suger’s abbey church of St Denis in Paris, in the new, so-called Gothic style, with the architectural advantages of pointed arches, was consecrated in 1144, around 20 years after building at Reading had started.

To try and see what archaeological evidence exists for the style of architecture at Reading, we launched a project to examine the stones of the abbey. For this Dr Kevin Hayward from the University of Reading, a petrologist specialising in ancient monuments, joined our team. We not only examined many of the stones *in situ* scattered around the abbey site, but we also made an appeal to the public. We were not overwhelmed with responses but those we did get revealed a pattern. One type of stone

predominates: Taynton limestone. Virtually all the stones on the abbey site, or collected from it, are of this type.

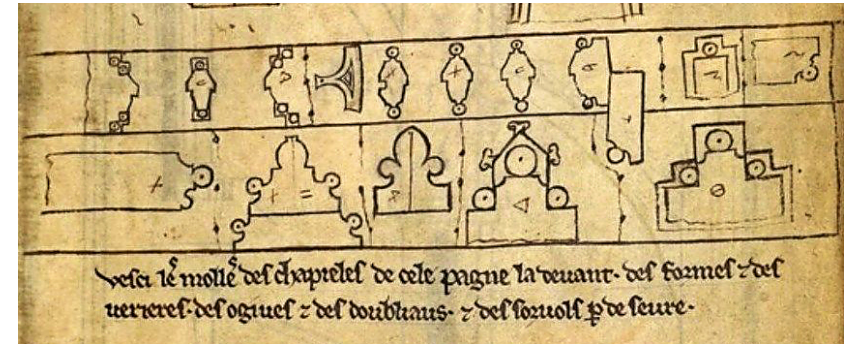


Taynton is a quarry west of Oxford and was in use probably from Roman times. Taynton stone consists of banded shelly oolitic limestone. The surface has alternating bands of hard, grey shelly oyster and ooids, or small round calcite grains, that often weather out, giving the rock its distinctive pitted surface.

What have we discovered? Lying in the grounds of St James' Catholic church in Reading, and so in the area of the north transept of the former abbey church, buried beneath piles of flint rubble, we found a voussoir (a wedge-shaped stone used in building an arch). The pattern is simple rolled billet and we came across several examples of this design in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, such as at the church in Bockleton (*below*).



One item that was discovered, and almost certainly comes from a post-Romanesque period, is a window mullion. The style of the Reading example probably belongs to the Decorated period, most likely from the Lady Chapel built in 1315. It was designed to take the leading for stained glass, as can be seen from the runnels in the stonework and as illustrated by Villard de Honnecourt, writing in the 13th century (*below*).



Other stones include several examples of rib vaulting and even a waterspout. The question is: did these come from Reading Abbey, or from some other building? In the case of the rib vaulting, the existence of the same pattern in the 19th century archway leading from Forbury Gardens into the ruins, would suggest that they did come from the abbey as this archway is made up of stones found on the abbey site.

However, we must acknowledge the possibility that the same masons, working with the same materials and to the same designs, may have been employed elsewhere. This is almost certainly the case in the similarities between some of the stones thought to come from Reading Abbey and now at Windsor and Reading itself.

Possibly the most impressive pieces of carved stonework are now to be found at Douai Abbey. These were given to this abbey at the beginning of the 20th century by Dr Jamieson Hurry, the pre-eminent amateur historian who did so much to promote knowledge of, and interest in, Reading Abbey. In the reading room of the library at Douai there are two carved grotesques which have been mounted either side of a carved head of a king (*right*). Could this king be Henry I?



There are similarities between this head and those of the kings of Judah, dating to the 13th century, in the Musée de Cluny, Paris. These once stood above the west door of Notre Dame and, mistakenly, were thought by the revolutionary mob to be those of the kings of France. So, having decapitated the living king, the mob turned its attention to these statues, dressed as they were in the clothes of Capetian monarchs. They were lost for nearly 200 years, but fortunately were rediscovered in 1977 and are now on display at the French National Museum of the Middle Ages (*below*). Notice the similarities in carving, and especially between the crown of the Douai head and those in Paris.



Arguably, in terms of theology and history, one of the most important pieces of sculpture associated with Reading Abbey was found among some stones discovered in the first half of the 20th century at Sonning and Borough Marsh, a few miles downriver from Reading. These are now in Reading Museum and are mainly capitals which probably originally came from the abbey. The sculpture I am referring to is part of a capital which depicts what is most probably the Coronation of the Virgin (*above right*).



Another, fuller, version of this scene, almost identical in its iconography, is to be found at St Swithin's church in Quenington, near Fairford in Gloucestershire. These two sculptures, dating from the first half of the 12th

century, are the earliest representations of the doctrine of the Coronation of Mary which became popular in subsequent centuries. The capital, though found at Borough Marsh, was most probably from Reading. The abbey at Reading, as we have seen in the foundation charter, was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and St John.

It has been suggested that the capital may have come from the cloister area and that a tympanum (the semi-circular sculpture above a doorway), similar to that at Quenington, may have been over the doorway leading from the cloister to the chapter house. Could there have been another, grander, representation over the west door into the abbey church itself?

I said I would look at the architectural evidence in our attempt to discover more about Reading Abbey. First of all, we have confirmed that the style of the worked stone shows, as to be expected, that it conforms to the initial building being Romanesque. There is, however, little to suggest a strong Cluniac or Burgundian influence. There is no hint of the historiated biblical scenes that we find at Cluny, or those at Autun by the famous master sculptor Gislebertus. There is no reference to the morality tales of the *psychomachia* or *physiologus*. Possibly written as early as the 5th century, the *psychomachia* portrays the struggle between the virtues and the vices, whilst the *physiologus* looks at "nature," at real and fantastical creatures whose qualities represent good and evil. I would also argue that although there are Norman elements, we also see Saxon influence in the patterns and chasings of the capitals.

The existence of the depiction of the Coronation of the Virgin most certainly demonstrates a certain independence, and indeed an innovative devotional element, but one that fits well into the ethos of the monastery and its very *raison d'être* as stipulated in the founding charter.

Another element which demonstrates how the abbey developed can be seen in the floor tiles (*right*). There may have been a tiler at Tilehurst, west of Reading, in the 12th century. Also, recent excavations in Silver Street, just south of the abbey, have confirmed the existence of at least one late 12th-century tiler in



this area. These, and others like them, may have provided the abbey with its first tiles. However, according to Dr. Cecil Slade, the abbey tiles date to the 13th century and later.

There are two types of tile found at Reading. The earlier used an inlay technique. This involved pressing a wooden stamp embossed with the design into the hardened dark clay, filling this with lighter white clay and scraping away the excess before firing and glazing. A later technique was to cover the whole of the dark hardened clay with the light soft clay then, using a stamp, to press the light clay into the dark clay. As this is nearer to the concept of printing they are often referred to as printed tiles.

If archaeology and architecture can tell us much about the appearance of the abbey, and how it changed over the years, then music, the chanting of the Office, was what was at the core of the life of the monastery. Prayer, the *Opus Dei*—as praise, thanksgiving and petition—was the very reason for all the art, architecture and sculpture of the abbey.

There was some disagreement among those following the Rule of St Benedict about how much time should be given to chanting of the Office. The Cistercians in the 12th century, for instance, considered that the Rule's injunction to work should include a significant portion of manual labour. The Cluniac tradition focused on formal prayer, specifically the liturgical rituals of the Mass and the Office, and most especially the Office of the Dead. This was held in such importance that its Hours—Vespers, Matins and Lauds—were added to those of the daily Office.

I would like to conclude this article with a psalm which we know was sung at Reading Abbey. Thanks to Professor Kemp's recent book, we can read details of the solemn liturgy, held every year, and each month of the year, on the occasion of the commemoration of Henry I's death. The rubrics state:

Dompnus abbas, incepta Antiphona ad Magnificat, incensabit maius altare tantum et tumbam Regis cum duobus in cappis ad hoc assignatus, qui circa finem tercii psalmi intrabunt chorum cum turribilis, qui post incensationem altaris et tumbae pergunt incensaturi dominum abbatem.

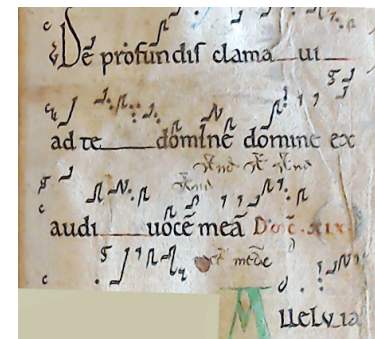
“The lord Abbot, after the antiphon at Magnificat has begun, will cense the high altar and the king's tomb with two in copes assigned for this, who at the end of the third psalm will enter the choir with the censers, and after the censuring of the altar shall proceed to cense the lord abbot.”

(Translation by Professor Brian Kemp)

From this we learn that the thurifers were to enter the church after the third psalm. This would have been Psalm 120, *Levavi oculos meos in montes*

(“I have raised my eyes to the hills”), and so just before the fourth psalm, which would have been Psalm 129, *De profundis* (“Out of the depths”).

In the archives at Douai Abbey there is a 12th-century *Cantatorium*, and one of its surviving pages (*right*) is of the *De profundis*. Through sheer chance, as I was browsing the web listening to various pieces of chant, I came across this version being sung.



In conclusion, I hope that I have demonstrated that by combining evidence of the foundation charter, with that of Reading Abbey's architecture, sculpture and liturgy, and other documents as they come to light, we have learnt something that is new. There is undoubtedly much more to be discovered about the Benedictine apostolate in Reading from the middle ages up to the time of the abbey's dissolution and the martyrdom of its last abbot, Hugh Cook Faringdon, in 1539.

JOHN MULLANEY

Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsay and the English Benedictines

DR FELICITY LOUGHLIN, Research Fellow at the University of St Andrews, delivered a lecture on the Chevalier Ramsay at the English Benedictine History Symposium, held at Douai Abbey on 25 April 2019.

A stray surviving letter in the Archives Nationales in Paris (A.N. M865/24) provides vital evidence of a visit in the 1720s to St Edmund's Priory in Paris (the first home of Douai Abbey) by the Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsay, a Scottish Jacobite, man of letters, friend of the famous French writer Fénelon and a key figure in the development of freemasonry in England and Scotland.



SEVERAL MONASTIC HOUSES had been established on the continent in the aftermath of the Henrician Reformation. During the 16th century, the English Benedictine monasteries were exiled in Europe. By the 18th century, English Benedictine monks were to be found at Douai in French Flanders (now Downside Abbey), in Lorraine (now Ampleforth Abbey), St Malo (transferred to French Benedictine monks in 1669), Paris (now Douai Abbey) and Lamspringe (near Hildesheim in Germany, suppressed in 1803). There were also two monasteries of English Benedictine nuns, at Cambrai in France (now Stanbrook Abbey), and in Paris (now Colwich Abbey). Before the deposition of James II during the Revolution of 1688, the English Benedictines had enjoyed a short-lived revival in England, particularly in London's court circles. Yet the political and religious turmoil of the Revolution had led to a dramatic reversal in the fortunes of all English Catholics. By 1689 the Protestant Dutch *Stadtholder*, William of Orange, had been crowned king as William III, and the Catholic King James II and VII had been forced into exile in France. The ensuing destruction of monastic chapels and persecution of monks inaugurated a century in which the English Benedictine Congregation (EBC) and its mission would be directed from continental Europe, only to return to English soil with the outbreak of the French Revolution.

During the 18th century, the apostolic work of the English monks helped to keep Catholicism alive in England, and they played a vital role in shaping the English Catholic community of that time. In particular, they

did much to deepen its engagement with wider European ideas and networks. Discussed here is a particular facet of this cross-cultural exchange which focuses on the exiled Benedictines' relationship with a particularly intriguing figure, the Chevalier Andrew Michael Ramsay (1686–1743). A Scottish Jacobite who spent the majority of his adult life in France having converted from deism to Catholicism under the influence of the charismatic Archbishop Fénelon, Ramsay was one of the most popular writers of 18th-century Europe. His readers included such luminaries of the Age of Enlightenment as David Hume, Voltaire, and Montesquieu. Yet it is only in recent years that historians have begun to pay greater attention to Ramsay and his writings.

In their response to Ramsay's Jacobitism, mysticism and "Christian Freethinking," recent historians have drawn upon his political, philosophical and religious works, as well as his private correspondence. A key figure in Ramsay's story is Abbot Thomas Southcott (1671–1748), President-General of the EBC for 20 years, from 1721–41. Southcott's presidency squares almost exactly with Ramsay's life in France. The conclusion of this article will illustrate how this English Benedictine's interest in Ramsay's work sheds light on the concerns and interests of the English Catholic community during the Age of Enlightenment.

RAMSAY'S LIFE AND WRITINGS

Born in 1686, Andrew Ramsay had modest beginnings. He grew up in Ayr on the west coast of Scotland, and was the son of a baker and burgess, also named Andrew Ramsay, and his wife Susanna. His family had experienced religious persecution first-hand during his youth; the family had been forced to flee to Ireland for a brief period in 1684 due to his father's involvement with radical Presbyterian groups, who had by then fallen out of favour with the established Episcopal Church of Scotland. When Presbyterianism was re-established as Scotland's national church in 1690, the Ramsay family returned to Ayr.

As Ramsay tells us in his memoirs, he was exposed to differing religious opinions during his childhood, his father being a Presbyterian, and his mother an Episcopalian. During his teenage years, Ramsay came to share his mother's aversion to the strict Presbyterian-Calvinist doctrine of double predestination, which dictated that while the elect are pre-ordained to eternal salvation, the reprobate have been predestined for perpetual damnation. Ramsay's distaste for Calvinism did not destroy his

devotion to God; he later recalled how he used to retreat to the ruins of an old Catholic church, praying to God for hours, late into the night.

Ramsay was educated at Ayr Grammar school, which would have provided him with thorough training in Latin and some Greek. He matriculated at the University of Edinburgh in 1702, and began studying Divinity at Glasgow in 1704, intending to have a career in the kirk, before returning to complete his studies at Edinburgh. By 1705, however, he was plunged into a period of extreme spiritual turmoil and abandoned his studies. He began to view all forms of Christianity as fanatical and erroneous. As he recalled in his memoirs, he was impelled to “take refuge in a sober Deism, which confines itself to a Reverence for the Deity, and to the immutable ideas of pure Virtue, without any concern about Mysteries, Priests, or outward Worship.” For two or three years Ramsay remained torn between Christianity and deism. As his memoirs stated: “I could not shake off my Respect for the Christian Religion, the Morality of which is so sublime...I wandered up and down in the unsettled Principles of an extravagant Toleration, without being able to find a fix’d Point.” During this period of spiritual unrest, the young Ramsay composed several poems, many of which reflected on the turbulence of his soul. As he pleaded in *The Tow’ring Wish*:

My God, my God, O let thy Pow’r divine
Conquer this vain, this Rebel Heart of mine.
The World, the Flesh, and Satan rage in me,
O break their Force, and then triumphant be.

In his quest for spiritual enlightenment, Ramsay became acquainted in 1708 with a group of Episcopalians known as the Garden Circle, led by Aberdeen minister George Garden (1649–1733). The Garden Circle was attracted to Catholic mysticism and introduced Ramsay to the writings of the French mystic Madame Jeanne-Marie Guyon (1648–1717), who had been condemned as a heretic by the papacy despite the efforts of the charismatic and highly popular Archbishop Fénelon to defend her. Fénelon’s notorious condemnation of Louis XIV’s persecution of the Huguenots had made him a symbol across Europe of “pious rage against religious persecution,” an image which had clear resonance for English Catholics in exile. Indeed, James Edward Stuart, the Jacobite heir to the British throne, would meet with Fénelon in 1709. Guyon and Fénelon preached a mystical theology of “Pure Love.” They taught that salvation was rooted in charity—the disinterested love of God and neighbour—which could be achieved through self-denial and contemplative prayer, in which the individual casts off any prior conceptions of God and

surrenders himself entirely to the divine will. Pure love, they believed, was all God desired and its practice would bring the soul into a more perfect union with the divine.

Inspired by mystical theology but still struggling with spiritual unrest, Ramsay travelled to the continent. In 1710, he reached Holland and met Pierre Poiret, a renowned mystic. The same year he travelled to France where, after half a year of conversations with Fénelon at Cambrai, he converted to Catholicism. Ramsay later published an account of his conversion which described how Fénelon had persuaded him that there was “no reasonable Medium betwixt Deism and the Catholick Religion.” According to Ramsay, one must either confine oneself to natural religion, founded on the ideas of God that can be derived from human reason alone, or, if one accepts the bible as a revelation from God, one must submit to the Church as the supreme authority for its interpretation. Allaying Ramsay’s fears about the corruption of the Church and its priests, Fénelon assured him that God’s Providence would ensure that his will for the Church would be fulfilled, even by such inadequate means. As he told Ramsay: “It is not the Holiness of our Superiors, nor their personal Talents which make our Obedience a divine Virtue, but the inward Submission of the Mind to the Order of God.” In response to Ramsay’s doubts about why the bible should contain “such a shocking Contrast of luminous Truths and obscure Doctrines,” Fénelon argued that the bible’s mysteries encouraged humanity to sacrifice their understanding to God. The purpose of true religion was to “elevate and abase Man, to show him at once both the Grandeur and Weakness of his Nature.” As Fénelon concluded, “Christianity adds nothing to your pure Deism, but the Sacrifice of the Understanding, and the Catholick Faith does but compleat this Sacrifice. Pure Love and humble Faith are the whole of the Catholick Religion.” In 1711, Fénelon received Ramsay into the Catholic Church in Cambrai.

After several years in Fénelon’s household, Ramsay travelled to Blois in 1714 to meet Madame Guyon, and he served as her secretary until her death in 1717. He subsequently moved to Paris where he worked as a tutor from 1718, becoming acquainted with the English Benedictines and the Jacobite court at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. During this period he made a name for himself through his writings on political theology, particularly the Jacobite sentiments expressed in his *Essay de Politique* (1719), later republished in 1721 as the *Essay on Civil Government*. Greater recognition was to come from his work editing the late Fénelon’s works, who had died in 1715. In 1723, he published an extremely influential *Life of Fénelon*. It was at this point in his career that Ramsay came to the attention of the English Benedictines.

In January 1722 Thomas Southcott, the President-General of the EBC, wrote to James III and VIII at the exiled Stuart court at the Palazzo Muti in Rome, singing Ramsay's praises: "I take this occasion to assure you that tho' I have all the opinion in the world of the late archbishop of Cambray [Fénelon], I look upon Ramsay himself as yet a greater man than he." During the 1720s Ramsay joined Southcott for some time as a lodger at St Edmund's Priory in Paris where he spoke of his "solitude" there. Southcott introduced Ramsay to exiled English and Scottish clergy in Paris and at Saint-Germain-en-Laye, the home of the Jacobite court, and by 1723 he had drawn him into the campaign to assist English Catholics following the exposure of a failed Jacobite plot in 1722 (the Atterbury Plot) in which Ramsay successfully facilitated a meeting between Southcott, Bishop Fleury of Fréjus, and the Regent Orléans. Through his connections with prominent Jacobites, including Baron Charles Francois, the Comte de Sassenage (1704-62), Ramsay gained the title Chevalier and he was granted a small royal pension. Soon afterwards, in 1724, Southcott helped to secure Ramsay a position at the heart of the exiled Stuart court as tutor to the three-year-old Bonnie Prince Charlie. Tensions within the court meant that Ramsay's time at the Palazzo Muti proved fraught, and he remained in the post for under a year. He nevertheless remained a salaried agent of the Stuarts and retained his connections with leading Jacobites.

After Ramsay's return to Paris, he published his best-selling work, *Les Voyages de Cyrus* ("The Travels of Cyrus") in 1727, a historical novel which swiftly became a European bestseller. It was translated into English the same year and saw 22 editions by the end of the 18th century, being translated into German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, Russian, and Greek. The story relates the political, religious and moral education of the young prince Cyrus II of Persia, as he travels through Egypt, Crete, the ancient city of Tyre, and Babylon. It ends by foreshadowing Cyrus' glorious reign (559-530 BC), which would witness the great expansion of the Persian Empire.

Ramsay's success increased his popularity among English Catholics, and in May, 1728 Southcott informed James III that the Catholic community was eager for Ramsay to come to England to appeal to the government for an improvement in their conditions. Though nothing came of this appeal, Ramsay nevertheless visited London in 1730, where he was elected a member of the Royal Society and the Spalding Society, and was awarded an honorary doctorate in civil law from the University of Oxford by 85 votes to 17, the first of its kind to be awarded to a Catholic since the Reformation. The ceremonial speech praised Ramsay as "a man well versed in all departments of learning, who had devoted himself to the

instruction and delight of his fellows, who...had contributed to turn men's minds to the study of Scripture, but whose outstanding distinction was that he was a disciple of Fénelon." Ramsay returned to France in 1732, and in 1735 he married Marie Nairne, the daughter of a prominent Jacobite Sir David Nairne.

During the 1730s, Ramsay continued to write and to publish. His works included an influential speech delivered to the freemasons of Paris in 1737, with whom he had been involved for at least a decade. In the final years of his life, Ramsay devoted himself to his self-styled "Great Work," *The Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion*, which aimed to defend Christianity from the attacks of deists and sceptics. By 1742 Ramsay was suffering from ill-health and had settled in Saint-Germain-en-Laye where he continued to work on his *magnum opus*. He died on 6 May 1743 aged 57, before he could prepare his masterpiece for publication, and was survived by his widow and their young daughter. His body was buried in the parish church at Saint-Germain-en-Laye. His heart was placed in the convent of the French Benedictine Sisters of the Holy Sacrament in the rue Cassette in Paris, a fitting resting place for one who had spent much time among the Benedictines.

RAMSAY'S THOUGHT & THE ENGLISH BENEDICTINES

Ramsay's thought intersected with the concerns and interests of the English Benedictine community in several respects.

1. JACOBITISM

His Jacobite political thought had played a crucial role in his friendship with the English Benedictine Thomas Southcott, himself a committed Jacobite. In 1717 a schism had threatened to break up the Benedictine congregation, dividing those who saw little hope of a Jacobite restoration and therefore felt the best means of securing Catholic emancipation was through negotiation with the Hanoverian monarchy. The schismatic party was led by Laurence Fenwick, President-General of the EBC in 1717, and this group opposed Southcott, the future President-General, who was thoroughly committed to the Jacobite cause. With Southcott's dominance over the congregation for over 20 years, the Benedictines were to remain firmly wedded to the Jacobite cause during Ramsay's lifetime. Ramsay's *Essay on Civil Government*, which opposed rebellion against the established rule and defended virtuous monarchy as the best form of

government, had considerable appeal for Southcott. These were themes that Ramsay would later take up in his *Travels of Cyrus*, which put forward a model of Jacobite kingship that would be guided by self-sacrifice and a desire to uphold the public good. The novel also argued that a virtuous king would promote religious toleration, recognising that outward differences in religious ceremonies are less important than worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

Ramsay developed these ideas further in his *Plan of Education for a Young Prince* (1732), a work targeted at Bonnie Prince Charlie, which sought to prevent monarchical corruption through education. He recommended that the prince be instructed in history, including the Wars of Religion, which would demonstrate the evils of sectarianism, prejudice and religious intolerance. The Stuart prince was also encouraged to contemplate the perfections of God as an incentive to imitating them. Ramsay argued that the prince's education should also consist of the study of nature to enhance his understanding of God, the self and his fellow creatures. Ramsay's defence of an enlightened and virtuous Jacobite monarchy that would ensure religious liberty and tolerance appealed to many reform-minded English Catholics, including Benedictines such as Thomas Southcott.

2. MYSTICISM & THEOLOGY

Ramsay's religious thought, above all his defence of the contemplative methods of Catholic mysticism, also had considerable appeal for the English Benedictines. English Benedictines of the 17th century, particularly Augustine Baker (1573–1641), had promoted a revival of late mediæval English mystical writers. Mysticism of this kind had proved especially popular among the Benedictine nuns at Cambrai. Interest in mysticism survived in its Fénelonian and Guyonian forms among 18th-century English Benedictines. Ramsay's role in editing and disseminating Fénelon's mystical thought thus gave him considerable appeal. Ramsay's mysticism was not only attractive as a method of devotion, it was also thought to have considerable influence in gaining Anglican converts to Catholicism. As we have seen, many Scottish Episcopalians were attracted to Quietist mysticism. Indicative of the Ramsay's appeal as a disseminator of mysticism is Southcott's report to Cardinal Gualterio in 1722 that the Anglican ladies of Paris were particularly captivated by Ramsay's teachings on Fénelonian "Pure Love." Ramsay's story of his own conversion in the *Life of Fénelon* appeared to offer further proof of the importance of mysticism in leading individuals to the true faith.

Ramsay also defended mysticism in his best-selling *Travels of Cyrus*. The novel offered a positive portrayal of wise pagans who adopted a form of internal worship and personal devotion that was strongly reminiscent of Guyonian and Fénelonian mysticism, based on silent contemplation and the subduing of the passions rather than the strict observance of external religious ceremonies. The novel thus served as a defence of mystical devotion against critics who deemed it to be unnatural or antisocial. In Book II, Cyrus encounters the Persian *magi* who live apart from the rest of society, and use "harmonious musick" to calm the passions and induce silent contemplation and prayer. Struck by the practices of the semi-monastic Persians, Cyrus is "supriz'd to see, instead of austere, melancholy, and thoughtful Men, an agreeable and polite People." Ramsay's novel had also linked the importance of an internal, heartfelt devotion to the subordination of the role of rational understanding in Christianity. The prophet Daniel thus informed Cyrus that "Religion is not a System of Philosophical Opinions, nor yet a History of Miracles, or supernatural Events; but an experimental Science which God reveals only to Souls who love Truth for its own sake. We may admire its Doctrines, and be struck with its Prodigies but be Strangers to its Spirit. To know its secrets, and feel its Energy, a superior Power must descend and take Possession of your Heart." It is not difficult to see how Ramsay's praise in the *Travels of Cyrus* of a secluded community devoted to a life of contemplative prayer would appeal to an English Benedictine community.

Ramsay would also devote a considerable portion of his final work, *The Philosophical Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion*, to a detailed demonstration of the wise pagans' knowledge of the three essential means of reuniting the soul with God—prayer, self-denial, and mortification. In doing so, Ramsay attempted to reveal the presence of mystical devotion in all religious traditions and hoped to prove the antiquity and legitimacy of Catholic mystical practices.

3. "TRUE, NOBLE, CHRISTIAN FREETHINKING": CATHOLICISM, UNBELIEF & SECULAR LEARNING

Ramsay's Jacobitism and mysticism were the most evident attractions of his thought for the English Benedictines. Also influential was Ramsay's vision of a Catholicism that would be bolstered against unbelief by an open engagement with secular learning and scholarship. The late 17th and early 18th centuries had witnessed the rise of deism, scepticism and atheism. Notorious thinkers of this stripe included the sceptic Pierre Bayle, the pantheist and presumed atheist Benedict Spinoza, the French deist

Voltaire, and a host of English deists including Charles Blount, John Toland and Matthew Tindal. While atheism was generally dismissed as absurd due to the popularity of Newtonian science, which had appeared to demonstrate that divine wisdom was apparent in designing the general, immutable laws that governed the universe, deism and scepticism were thought to pose a considerable threat. While deists did not subscribe to a single, unitary creed, they tended to reject the authority of the scriptures, to dismiss the necessity of supernatural revelation, and to assert that true religion consisted only of those principles which could be discovered by the natural light of human reason. For the deists, often referred to by their contemporaries as “freethinkers,” these beliefs rested on two central principles: the existence of a remote, almighty deity who created the world but does not intervene in it directly; and the immortality of the soul. The deists argued that these beliefs could be found among the wise of all times, places and nations. Some Christian thinkers, both Catholic and Protestant, responded to the deists by advocating rigid doctrinal dogmatism and a stricter adherence to biblical accounts of the natural world.

Ramsay took a very different approach to the Christian struggle against unbelief. Far from advocating a return to rigid doctrinal instruction, Ramsay sought to reclaim freethinking from the grip of the deists, advocating “true, noble, Christian freethinking” in its place. Throughout his life he engaged in the heated philosophical and theological debates of the age, sharing his views on a wide range of topics, including Newtonian science—Ramsay had studied mathematics with Newton’s disciple, Fatio de Duillers (1664-1753) while he was in London in 1709—, biblical chronology, the nature of the soul, and the meaning of the pagan gods. In Ramsay’s view, it was only by tackling hotly-contested subjects and engaging with the latest antiquarian, cosmological and philosophical discoveries that Catholicism could be truly defended against the sophistic reasoning of the deists and sceptics. While he stressed that reason ought to be subjugated in divine matters, and while he argued that the divine mysteries should be accepted with humble faith, he nevertheless accorded reason and secular learning an important place in an enlightened Catholic life. As we shall see, this approach to “Christian freethinking” was to prove popular with the English Benedictines.

Ramsay’s involvement with the freemasons was also connected with his conviction that learning and religion went hand in hand. Freemasonry was not condemned by the papacy until 1738 and it was highly popular in Jacobite circles. In his speech to the freemasons of Paris in 1737, Ramsay had asserted that a central part of freemasonry’s mission was to “reunite all

men of enlightened minds, gentle manners, and agreeable wit, not only by a love for the fine arts, but much more by the grand principles of virtue, science and religion.” To that end, he supported the creation of a “Universal Dictionary of the liberal arts and useful sciences,” which would promote the improvement of human society, having been much impressed by the steps taken towards this by Ephraim Chambers’ *Cyclopaedia or Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, published in 1728.

Ramsay was especially attracted to the value of historical scholarship in combating deism and irreligion. He devoted much of his life to the study of pagan religions, which constitute a central part of his best-selling *Travels of Cyrus* and his final work, *The Philosophical Principles*. According to Ramsay, the fundamental principles of Christianity could be found in all pagan traditions throughout history. As the *Travels of Cyrus* proclaimed, “the great men of all Times, and of all Places, had the same Ideas of the Divinity and of Morality.” In a clear statement against contemporary Unitarians and deists, who denied the doctrine of the Trinity, the 1730 edition of *Cyrus* added that belief in three principal deities had also been common to all pagan religions. The *Travels of Cyrus* concludes with the young prince’s encounter with the prophet Daniel, who reveals to him the fullest version of the divine mysteries. Daniel’s revelation causes Cyrus to cry out “Zoroaster, Hermes, Orpheus, Pythagoras, all your Discoveries are but imperfect Traces and chance Rays of the Religion of the Hebrews.”

Ramsay’s *Philosophical Principles* continued his investigation of pagan religions. It identified six fundamental tenets of Christianity, which he argued could be found in all pagan traditions. In addition to the belief in the existence of a supreme God and the Trinity, Ramsay added the belief in three manifestations of the Messiah—pre-existent, suffering, and triumphant; belief in three states of angelic nature; and in the three essential means of reuniting the soul to God—prayer, self-denial and mortification. For Ramsay, the existence of these six fundamental principles in all religious traditions provided powerful testimony against contemporary deists and atheists, because it could “answer the...objection of the incredulous, who maintain that the sacred mysteries of our holy faith are new fictions unheard of by the philosophers of all nations; and to shew, on the contrary, that Christianity is as old as the Creation.” Indeed, Ramsay regarded the traces of a universal religion among the pagans as powerful proof of the biblical account of early human history against “Atheists, Deists, Free-thinkers and Minute-philosophers of all kinds.” In Ramsay’s view, the biblical account of Noah and his descendants

repopulating the earth after the Flood offered the most plausible explanation of the traces of religious truth to be found among the pagans:

...if it can be proven from the records of the ancients, that the vestiges of the most sacred truths are to be found in all nations, ages, and religions, then I maintain, that the Mosaic history of the origin and propagation of mankind, can alone give a reasonable solution of this great phenomenon in the history of the human mind...All depends then upon proving this uniformity and universality of religious sentiments in all places and times.

Ramsay's conviction that all pagan religions contained some vestiges of the essential principles of Christianity allowed him to put forward some rather eccentric theological ideas. First, he sought to defend God from the charge of injustice or partiality by putting forward a unique interpretation of the biblical account of the Fall. Ramsay suggested, in agreement with Isaac Newton, that the extant version of Genesis represented only an abridged version of an originally much longer account. In Ramsay's view, Adam and Eve would not have hesitated to fulfil God's command to "be fruitful and multiply" and they would have immediately set out to procreate the entire human race, "from a holy desire of producing numberless living images of the Deity, capable to know and love him." This being the case, it was likely that all human beings had pre-existed in paradise and had willingly participated in disobeying God's command to refrain from the forbidden fruit. For Ramsay, this interpretation of Genesis provided the only explanation of original sin that preserved God's justice, since "this sin was really committed in a pre-existent state by all the individuals of the human race, that are now condemned to the sufferings and miseries [sic] of a mortal life." He supported his interpretation with passages from the scriptures, which he backed up by testifying to similar beliefs in the pre-existence of the soul among the pagans.

Secondly, breaking the bounds of orthodoxy, Ramsay also asserted that all created beings, angelic and human, would one day be restored to their former paradisiacal state, and that no one would suffer eternal damnation. All souls would ultimately be reconciled to God of their own free will:

For in what sense could the Gospel be called "glad tidings to all nations," if it announced that salvation belonged only to the smallest and most inconsiderable part of mankind and that all the rest were to be for ever and ever miserable?

Though he conceded that several biblical passages refer to "eternal" torments, he argued that these terms needed to be interpreted in a figurative rather than literal sense. In Ramsay's view, scripture had to be

interpreted metaphorically, not literally, whenever it jarred with our understanding of God's wisdom and goodness:

The universal rule of interpreting Scripture, is, that we must depart from the rigorous, literal, grammatical sense of the words, when that sense contradicts manifestly the divine attributes.

Ramsay's assertion that all pagans had possessed some knowledge of the means by which the soul is reunited to God—through prayer, self-denial and mortification—formed an important part of his defence of universal salvation. He emphasised that God did not require "the theoretical knowledge of the sublime truths of the Christian religion," but "demands only the heart." In Ramsay's view, God's providence had preserved ancient pagan writings to prove the universality of salvation:

To prove this doctrine by authentic facts, almighty Providence has preserved such vestiges of divine light and virtue among the Pagans, and in the writings that have been saved from the shipwreck of antiquity, that no doubt can be made of the boundless extent of universal grace.

The *Principles* even went so far as to claim that those who participated in abominable pagan rites, including human sacrifice, could evade divine disapproval so long as they carried out these acts with pure motives:

...who dares say, that it is impossible, that there might have been, among the Pagans, some pious souls, that by invincible ignorance, and prejudice of education, acted from a full persuasion, that the supream [sic] God demanded of them such sacrifices. We are far from justifying these lamentable abuses...but we maintain, that omnipotent grace, all watchful Providence, and the universal love God has for all simple, honest, and upright minds, may preserve them spotless and innocent, amidst all the...abuses introduced into their respective religions.

Ramsay controversially argued that the failure to recognise allegorical passages of scripture constituted one of the greatest errors of the Jews, who had "explain'd all the metaphorical descriptions of the divine nature and attributes in a literal sense, and form'd to themselves the idea of a partial, fantastic, furious, wrathful God who loved one nation only and hated all the rest." Nor were Christians exempt from corrupting the true meaning of the scriptures. Many had misinterpreted the symbolic language used in the bible and had explained "all the metaphorical descriptions of the divine nature and attributes in a literal sense." In Ramsay's view, this represented a failure to recognise that it was "common to all the ancients both sacred and profane to represent intellectual ideas and perfections by sensible images and operations."

Though Ramsay's Christian freethinking pushed the bounds of Catholic orthodoxy much further than any of his contemporaries, his attempt to unite faith with an openness to secular learning was one approach that greatly appealed to English Benedictines such as Thomas Southcott, who worked hard to promote secular learning in the English Benedictine Congregation. Writing in 1731, Southcott criticised what he viewed as an old-fashioned scholastic pedantry that "mingles in the schools of piety and divinity," and he encouraged ordinands to adopt a cosmopolitan outlook. Perhaps the greatest indication of the affinities between Ramsay's approach to learning and that of the Benedictines is the establishment of an English Benedictine Academy, the Society of St Edmund, at St Edmund's Priory in Paris in 1749, membership of which was open to the laity as well as the monastic community. Reflecting Ramsay's approach to religion, learning and unbelief, the St Edmund's Society defined its role as "urging us on to study (for) we are all destined for the Mission, where we are to preach the gospel, and to engage in polemical combats with perhaps the most learned and formidable Adversaries in the whole world." Echoing Ramsay's defence of enlightened religiosity and Catholic apologetics, the Society also recommended the study of "sacred and profane History," mathematics and natural philosophy as important tools with which to combat unbelief in England.

Until the Society of St Edmund ceased to meet in 1756, its papers, which are today in the Douai Abbey library, discussed numerous scientific, philosophical, historical and religious topics. These included essays by Charles Walmesley—who later became English Benedictine procurator in Rome and bishop of the Western District in England—on Newtonian theories of the propagation of light and the rise of vapours and on astronomy; John Barnes's essay on natural theology, which included discussions on the possibility of life on other planets; and a poem by Augustine Walker, which praised enlightened monks engaging with contemporary intellectual culture.

While the ethos of the St Edmund's Society shares Ramsay's spirit of intellectual enquiry, papers by Thomas Welch and Bernard Catteral bear the greatest similarity to the studies to which the Chevalier devoted much of his life. Welch shared Ramsay's fascination with pagan religious history, penning an essay on the Druids. Welch rejected deistic claims that the Druids had practised a rational religion which proved the irrelevancy of the Christian scriptures. Like Ramsay, Welch argued that the origins of the Druids' religious beliefs could in fact be traced back to the revealed truths granted to Noah after the Flood. Although aspects of this original tradition had been forgotten over time, the Druids had nonetheless preserved

certain important features of the religion of the ancient Hebrews, whose teachings had been transmitted to them by ancient Phoenician merchants. At the same time, he asserted the relative superiority of Christianity, comparing the religious errors into which the Druids had fallen with the erroneous deists of his own day.

Bernard Catteral's essay, meanwhile, took as its subject the meaning and nature of scriptural revelation. Catteral subscribed to the traditional Catholic view that the Bible contained historical/literal teachings as well as an allegorical/mystical sense. Yet, like Ramsay, Catteral stressed the importance of acknowledging the linguistic and idiomatic customs of the ancient Hebrews and Greeks, and stressed that a greater sense of scripture would come from combining allegorical with literal readings.

An essay by Charles Walmesley also dealt with a subject dear to Ramsay's heart: the souls of animals. Ramsay had written an essay on this subject, which rejected Descartes' mechanistic interpretation of the souls of animals, and argued that the souls of animals in fact represented the souls of the fallen angels, who had rebelled against God with Satan. In Ramsay's view, the fallen angels had originally been punished by being imprisoned in the souls of animals and placed in the Garden of Eden. The talking serpent represented one such fallen angel. After the temptation of Eve, Ramsay argued, the fallen angels were punished for their further disobedience against God by being deprived of the power of speech. The souls of the animals thus represented the souls of fallen angels which were undergoing a period of purgation and transmigration before they would ultimately be reunited with God. Walmesley adopted a less eccentric approach. While he shared Ramsay's rejection of Descartes' vision of animals as mere machines, he argued that their soul related to the material senses of this world only, and did not possess the same traits as the human soul. As such, the souls of animals were not immortal. For Walmesley, "to allow immortality to Brutes as well as man, would not be consonant with religion."

CONCLUSION

While Andrew Ramsay's political and religious thought was not adopted wholesale by the EBC of the 18th century, the monks in Paris seem to have been receptive to his ideas in several important respects. Ramsay's Jacobite affiliations and his ardent commitment to Guyonian and Fénelonian mysticism made him an attractive figure for Thomas Southcott and like-minded Benedictines, who recognised the value of the Chevalier's

works in attracting Anglican converts to Catholicism and bolstering the image of enlightened Catholicism in Britain. While Ramsay's more eccentric theological ideas did not garner widespread support, he nevertheless set an example of a cosmopolitan Catholicism, which valued secular learning while acknowledging the supremacy of faith and the limits of human reason. At a time when Europe was coming to terms with the legacy of inter-Christian violence and persecution, Ramsay's emphasis on the supreme virtues of charity and faith offered a means by which the English Benedictines, and the British Catholic community more broadly, could promote a more tolerant religious culture. The Benedictines' interest in Ramsay's Christian freethinking sheds light on the ideas to which they were responding during their period of exile in continental Europe.

DR FELICITY LOUGHLIN



Ramsay's Life of Fénelon

The Anglican Church in Ethiopia

ANDREW PROUD was a regular visitor to Douai during his time as Anglican bishop of Reading, from which position he retired in 2019. Prior to his time in Reading he was area bishop for the Horn of Africa, based in Addis Ababa.



THE ANGLICAN PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA is small. For eight decades it was very small, but in the early 2000s that began to change, and it is in that story I am privileged to have been a part. It is a story which cannot be told without an appreciation of its context.

Ethiopia is a predominantly Christian country. According to the 2010 census, 45% are Ethiopian Orthodox, 35% are Muslim, and the remainder are mostly Protestant Christians. By some quirk of bureaucracy, the Catholic Church, now under the care of its first Ethiopian cardinal (a friend of mine), is counted among the latter.

Ethiopians are proud to have been a biblical country for a very long time. For them, the Queen of Sheba and the Ethiopian eunuch both witness to the fact that the road between the Ethiopian highlands and Jerusalem was familiar and well trodden. When Salahadin took Jerusalem, and it was no longer safe for Ethiopians to make that pilgrim journey, King Lalibella built the rock-hewn churches in the town that shares his name. Lalibella, now a UNESCO world heritage site, is still a place of pilgrimage and prayer.

Ethiopian Orthodoxy, which belongs to the same family of churches as the Coptic Church in Egypt, arrived in Ethiopia in the third century, when two missionaries converted the emperor. Apart from relatively brief encounters with Portuguese Jesuits and Mohammad le Gragn in the 16th century, Ethiopia and her faith have remained untouched by the outside world. Part of the Oriental Orthodox family of churches, their liturgy and practice is, and feels, very Judaic—the Jewish holiness codes, and Arabic and ancient Egyptian practice are noticeable in their worship.

Within that tradition, and from very early on, Anglicans promised to honour this ancient heritage by restricting their activity to the Anglican Chaplaincy in Addis Ababa, established in the 1920s. The much-loved but very eccentric first chaplain of St Matthew's, the Rev Ethelstan Cheese,

gathered a weekly congregation in the British Legation for several years, before going native and disappearing for months, then years, at a time. From time to time, he would be found sitting under a tree in the Ogaden, teaching the Bible to a handful of Somalis. In the 1950s, land was given to St Matthew's by His Imperial Majesty, Haile Selassie I, to build the present church. Close to both the university and the national parliament it was, and is still, surrounded by crushing urban poverty.

When we arrived 50 years later, St Matthew's was thriving, a spiritual home to diplomats, African Union officials, aid workers, doctors, teachers and missionaries from 26 countries. There were also eight congregations of refugees from the long standing civil war in South Sudan, in and around a little town called Gambella, right on the border with the Sudan, a town with no Orthodox presence at the time.

With the encouragement of my bishop in Cairo, I began to visit from Addis Ababa, to offer support and to resolve problems and tensions as they arose, which was fairly frequently. Of the handful of clergy who were there, all but one had been ordained by the famous Bishop Hilary Garang, the only bishop to stay in South Sudan during the decades-long war, and after only a month of orientation. These clergy were desperate for theological education, for clear synodical structures, for church buildings, and for resources. And so, the next four or five years were mapped out for me. We established a three-year Theological Education by Extension programme, which graduated 26 clergy and laity. We built churches as they evangelised, both inside and outside the refugee camps. We raised funds to gather people regularly, to pay clergy stipends, and to provide school support. In Addis, we had established a community library in the St Matthew's compound providing textbooks and reference books for children in our neighbourhood. Over 1,000 children and young people were registered and regular users.

In 2007, after a lengthy consultation process with Canterbury and our province, I was consecrated the first ever Area Bishop of the Diocese of Egypt, North Africa and the Horn of Africa, to serve the five countries of the Horn: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somaliland and Somalia. Because of the political situation in Somalia and Eritrea, I never managed to visit there. I did get to Djibouti and Somaliland, several times—a modern-day successor to Ethelstan Cheese.

With encouragement from my dear friend, Bishop Angelo Moreschi, a Salesian, and with money from Irish Aid, we built a library and training centre on two hectares of land in Gambella, given by the then Regional President. That centre is now a thriving theological college.

When we left in 2011, after nine years, the congregations in Gambella had grown from eight to 73, served by 26 paid clergy and 14 lay readers. Today, that number has grown to 150, and Gambella is on the verge of being recognised as a diocese in its own right. An Indian priest has just been consecrated as their first bishop. One day soon, we pray, Gambella will be served by an indigenous bishop.

Meanwhile, St Matthew's still flourishes, although they are looking for a priest again. And as Gambellans move deeper and further into Ethiopia, to attend one of the new universities which are springing up all over the country, small groups of Anglican Christians meet to worship every week. It is the seed-bed for more growth, perhaps.

Ethiopia changed me, and I owe her a great deal, both as a Christian, and personally, and as I take pilgrim groups to Lalibella, I suspect she will continue to do so.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the community at Douai Abbey. During the eight years that I was Bishop of Reading, its welcome, hospitality and encouragement has meant much to me.

ANDREW PROUD



Tangents on an Uncollected Letter of Archbishop Bede Polding OSB

IN 2017 RICHARD BARTON OF CHELTENHAM—in which town St Gregory’s Catholic Church was for a long time a Douai mission—donated to the community a scrapbook. “Scrapbook” is an inadequate term, for the volume was filled with a wide range of ecclesiastical memorabilia dating from the 19th to the mid-20th centuries: bishops’ postcards; priestly and episcopal ordination, jubilee, memorial and calling cards; photos of monks, clerics and prelates; and a letter or two. This unsystematic collection had a reach beyond the United Kingdom, with items from the USA, the Continent and beyond.

Richard had acquired the collection from John Bevan, the Catholic bookseller, who had himself bought it from a nursing home in Bridell in Pembrokeshire. The collection was gathered by George Ellis, a resident of the nursing home, who had begun as a customer of John Bevan and ended up an unconventional friend. Writing to Richard Barton, John Bevan described George Ellis as “a bit of a misanthrope who lived alone amongst his books and delighted in writing letters and compiling scrap-books,” and “the Bristol convert/recluse who spent his life as a religious groupie, writing to abbots and collecting photos and newspaper cuttings.”

Elaborating further, John Bevan offers greater depth and warmth to what might initially appear an ungenerous assessment of Ellis. Born in 1910, George Ellis’ father perished in the Great War leaving George to be raised “by his mother and two maiden aunts in a very strict High-Anglican household.” At the Anglican church in Cotham (Bristol) “he fell in love with ritual and ceremonial.” Consummating his Catholic leanings, he converted in his late teens, “and used to bicycle over to Downside to witness all the grand liturgies for the great feasts when Abbot Cuthbert Butler pontificated.”

Ellis did not attend university and “instead started a round of novitiates in a variety of religious houses and orders including Caldey—all short-lived as he was too much of a loner to mix with others.” He ended up as a houseman of sorts in various convents which gave him the time and space to pursue liturgical interests, and to amass a library of more than a thousand books. In later years he returned to Bristol and regressed to his Anglican roots since he “couldn’t cope with the liturgical ravages of Vatican II.” When Ellis finally met and was befriended by John Bevan they

discovered that Ellis had known Bevan’s parents in the late 1940s through a mutual connection with Fr Roscoe Beddoes, a “flamboyant Oxford convert” priest serving in Wales. Reliant in his final years on a state pension, Ellis died in the nursing home—rather fittingly a former convent—at Bridell near Cardigan, and was buried from the Anglican church in Westbury-on-Trym.

John Bevan concludes his reminiscence on Ellis’ “lonely and nomadic life” with warmth, recalling that Ellis “loved to talk and was a fount of knowledge on all matters liturgical so that I always came away from my visits enriched.”

Thanks to Richard and John we have learned the provenance of the collection donated to the Douai community. Included without any context among the many curios of this collection was a hand-written letter, dated 30 June 1846, from the pen of Archbishop Bede Polding OSB, (*right*) a monk of Downside and the first archbishop of Sydney, Australia. While Richard and John helpfully explain how the Polding letter came into their hands, they have no word on how the letter came into the hands of Ellis. That, at least for now, remains one of the mysteries of the reclusive life of George Ellis. It is more than likely that he chanced upon the letter in a marketplace then awash with undervalued historical items.



This letter from Polding, with no context given for it, raised questions of its own. With some other items from the Ellis collection I posted scans of the letter on my blog. Months later the seed there planted bore fruit. Two correspondents emerged who were able to offer information that allowed us to determine the context of the letter and so add an extra stroke of shape and colour to the historical portrait of Archbishop Polding.

Fr Colin Fowler OP, a Sydney-based Dominican and scholar, noted that the letter did not appear in the three-volume set of Polding’s correspondence published between 1994 and 1998. So it is highly probable that this letter is unknown to Polding scholars. Fr Fowler kindly undertook a transcription of the letter which, slightly amended, appears at the end of

this article. Fr Fowler also noted that the letter's date, 30 June 1846, was the day after Polding's arrival in London and the 12th anniversary of his episcopal consecration.

The letter is addressed to George John Durrant, Since there was no Benedictine by that name we concluded that the addressee was not a confrère. Given the letter came to Douai via Cheltenham, a possible West Country connection was at first considered. However, a second correspondent, Peter Agius, an alumnus of Worth and Downside schools, confirmed that George John Durrant was an Old Gregorian solicitor, which facts explains his connection with Polding. Durrant was the donor of the statue of St Gregory in the quadrangle of Downside school. Durrant was born in Norfolk in 1821 and so was 25 when Polding wrote him this letter. In 1854 Durrant co-founded the Law Union Fire and Life Insurance Company, the offices of which were first in Pall Mall, and later in Chancery Lane. He died in 1869 of throat cancer aged only 47, having fathered three girls and four boys, two of the latter educated at Downside.

The context of the letter was now emerging into the light: Polding was replying to Durrant's apparent concern that Polding, a distinguished Old Gregorian, might himself wish to chair a gathering in London, most likely of Old Gregorians. Polding lightly excuses himself from such an office. Given that he advises Durrant to "proceed according to the published announcement" it seemed likely that some other had been announced as chair, and that Polding's presence had not initially been envisaged. Polding's eminence must have moved Durrant, urged perhaps by others, to offer the chairmanship of the gathering to him, as a matter of good form. Polding was happy to be present merely "as one of the invited."

Further investigation by Peter Agius uncovered two entries in *The Tablet*, in the 4 and 11 July 1846 editions, that confirmed the emerging picture. In the 4 July edition (*below*) was an announcement by George Durrant that Archbishop Polding would be present at the meeting and

ST. GREGORY'S CLUB, DOWNSIDE COLLEGE.
 The Secretary has the gratification of announcing to members that the Most Rev. Dr. Polding, Archbishop of Sidney, having within a few days arrived in England, has signified to him his intention to be present at the Club Meeting and Dinner on the 7th Instant.
 It is hoped that every member of the Club who can by any possibility make it compatible with his engagements, will on this particularly interesting occasion rally round the Primate of the Australian Continent, and most illustrious member of St. Gregory's Club.
 GEORGE JOHN DURRANT, Hon. Sec.
 Chelmsford, July 1, 1846.
 P. S.—Meeting at Half-past Four—Dinner at Five precisely.

dinner of the St Gregory's Club of Downside College on 7 July.

In the next edition on 11 July is a report (*right*) of the "fourth annual meeting and dinner" of the club's members, held at the Albion Hotel. A further search by this writer revealed that, as noted above, the meeting had indeed been earlier advertised in *The Tablet*, in the 20 June edition (*below*), and indeed another had been announced as taking the chair, namely Prior Wilson of Downside.

With Polding graciously declining to allow his own relative eminence to upset arrangements, Prior Wilson of Downside took the chair as first advertised, with Polding seated at his right. Polding regaled his fellow Old Gregorians with nostalgic reminiscences of life at Downside as well as an overview of the situation of his fledgling flock in far-flung Australia. One imagines that there would have been no little pride in the pioneer missionary work of this distinguished Old Gregorian prelate.

ST. GREGORY'S CLUB, DOWNSIDE COLLEGE.
 The fourth annual meeting and dinner of the members of the club took place on Tuesday, the 7th inst., at the Albion Hotel, Aldersgate-street. The Rev. Joseph Wilson, Prior of Downside, occupied the chair on the occasion, supported on the right by the Most Rev. Archbishop Polding, and on the left by the Rev. Mr. Spain.
 The vice-chair was taken by the Right Rev. Dr. Morris, Bishop of Troy, President of the club, supported by J. Hasting, Esq., and G. J. Durrant, Esq., the Hon. Secretary. There was a numerous attendance of both clerical and lay members, from all parts of the country. Letters, regretting their inability to attend, were read from the Right Rev. Dr. Ullathorne, Bishop of the Western District; the Right Rev. Dr. Brown, Bishop of the Welsh District; Sir Edward Smythe, Bart., of Acton Burnell; and the Very Rev. Luke Barber, Superior of the Benedictine Order in England. The health of "Her Majesty and the Royal Family" having been given by the Rev. Chairman, "Success to Alma Mater," and the "Health of Archbishop Polding," were successively proposed and received with enthusiasm.
 Dr. POLDING returned thanks in a very eloquent and moving manner, and characterised the present as one of the most pleasurable days of his life. His Grace narrated the progress of religion in Australia, and concluded a most interesting address by the happiest allusions to his early years at the college, from which his duties had separated him for the rest of his life by the wide ocean. He trusted the time would come when an institution similar to St. Gregory's Club, of the principle of which he highly approved, might be established in Australia.
 "The President of the Club" was next proposed by Mr. Lambert, of Salisbury, and acknowledged by Dr. Morris with his usual eloquence.
 Mr. Durrant returned thanks for the toast of "The Committee of Management and Secretary."
 In the course of the evening the club was invited by the Rev. Prior of Downside to hold their next meeting at the College, an announcement which was received with great applause.

ST. GREGORY'S CLUB, DOWNSIDE COLLEGE.
 Members are informed that the ANNUAL MEETING and DINNER of the Club is appointed to take place on TUESDAY, the 7th of July next, at the ALBION HOTEL, Aldersgate-street, London, the Rev. JOSEPH WILSON, Prior of St. Gregory's, in the Chair.
 Meeting for transaction of business at Half-past Four o'clock, and Dinner on Table at Five o'clock precisely.
 Members are particularly requested, as early as possible, to communicate to the Honorary Secretary their intention to be present, that arrangements suitable to the number attending may be made.
 By order of the Committee,
 GEORGE JOHN DURRANT, Hon. Sec.
 Chelmsford, June 15, 1846.

Polding is reported as hoping that “an institution similar to St Gregory’s Club, of the principle of which he highly approved, might be established in Australia.” It is not entirely clear whether he means an Australian branch of the Downside old boys, or—perhaps more likely—an equivalent institution for the projected Benedictine school in Sydney, an antipodean incarnation of the English Benedictine educational tradition. In 1852 Polding opened just such a school at Lyndhurst, in Sydney’s inner-western suburb of Glebe. For 25 years its largely monastic staff taught a classical curriculum, preparing its pupils for entry into the recently-established University of Sydney, and so helping nurture future leaders for the marginalised Catholic community of colonial Australia.

Sadly the school, like Polding’s missionary-Benedictine vision for the Church in Australia, foundered on the antipathy of the newly-ascendant Irish secular clergy, as well as the emergence of rural Catholic boarding schools, largely Irish run and charging significantly lower fees. The school struggled on till Polding’s death in 1877, after which his successor, another Downside monk, Roger Bede Vaughan, wound it up, in part due to his more realistic appraisal of Benedictine prospects in Sydney. He soon invited the Irish Jesuits to Sydney to take on the mission of educating boys for future Catholic leadership, and in 1879 they opened what is now St Aloysius’ College in Kirribilli, the successor to Polding’s Lyndhurst.

HOTELS.

FORD’S HOTEL,

14, Manchester Street, Manchester Square.

Mr. and Mrs. Ford beg to inform the Catholic Nobility and Gentry, and others, that they have taken and fitted up the above Hotel, where those who are kind enough to favour them with their custom, will find every accommodation. From its Proximity to two Catholic Chapels, this Hotel cannot fail to be a great conveniency to those Catholics who may come to Town for a short time.

Mr. and Mrs. Ford beg to return their sincere thanks to those who have already favoured them with their custom, and they hope, by attention to their Friends, and by moderate Charges, to merit a continuance of the same kindness.

(Above) *The Catholic Directory and Annual Register, 1840*

and 15. They advertised their eponymous hotel in the Catholic Directory as welcoming the “Catholic Nobility and Gentry, and others,” the latter category evidently flexible enough to include colonial bishops. The two Catholic chapels mentioned in the advertisement are the former Spanish Embassy chapel, now St James’ Spanish Place, and the French chapel of Our Lady of the Annunciation in Little George Street (now vanished),

Lastly, the letter shows that Polding wrote to Durrant from “Fords Hotel.” Ford’s Hotel was at 14 Manchester Square in Marylebone. In 1815 that address housed the Manchester Arms Hotel and Coffee House, but by 1840 the property had been purchased by a Catholic couple, Mr and Mrs Ford, who later expanded the hotel to include numbers 13

which was declared a Chapel Royal by Louis XVIII in 1815. Later, number 14 became the home of the statesman Alfred, Viscount Milner, a member of Lloyd George’s war cabinet, a fact now commemorated by a blue plaque.

In 1851 George Durrant would be married in the old Spanish embassy chapel in Manchester Square, a stone’s throw from Fords. After his death his widow, Mary, moved to Ormskirk to be near one of her sons and other family. She attended St Anne’s church, living with her sister in Halsall Lane. The Douai monks Fr Bede Rigby and Abbot Oswald O’Neill earned her particular affection there. Fr Bede gave her the last rites on her deathbed, and held her to have been “a living saint.” Speaking of saints, the cause for Polding’s canonisation is now being actively promoted in Australia (for more information see <https://inthosedayes.blogspot.com>).

HUGH SOMERVILLE KNAPMAN OSB

TRANSCRIPTION (by Fr Colin Fowler OP)

Tuesday
Ford’s Hotel

Dear Durrant,

I received your congratulations on my arrival with gratification not less than you have experienced in communicating them. With respect to the taking of the Chair, it is an Office I avoid whenever I can, and on this occasion there is not the least difficulty in my way—the Prior of Downside, in my opinion, or one of the lay students, is the proper person ~~in my opinion~~. I beg, therefore, you to proceed according to the published

[bottom of page 1:] George Peter Durrant Esq

announcement, and as one of the invited let me be present—I have written to Downside with the same purport. Thus happy still, the once more bound friends, whom distance and absence have not removed from my remembrance. It is and always will be young [?] in their regard, though wrinkles and grey hairs denote changes in other matters. Adieu dear George and believe me

Affectionately Yrs

+J B Polding Sydneien.

[on the reverse, in a different hand]

June 30th 1846
Dr J.B.Polding
attends

ORIGINAL LETTER

Tuesday -
 First Hotel -

 Dear Samuel
 I receive your congratulatory
 on my arrival with gratification and hope
 that you have expressed in communica-
 cating them. With respect to the station
 of the Chair it is an office I avoid when I
 can and on this occasion the vision of the
 had difficulty in my way -
 The Pain of Downside in my opinion is
 one of the lay the duty is the proper
~~person~~ ~~to~~ ~~exercise~~ I say the duty
 you will proceed according to the published
 Guy John Samuel Esq.

announcement, and as one of the invited
 to me be present. I have written to
 Downside to this same purpose
 How happy shall I be one more to meet
 friends whom distance and absence
 have not removed from my remembrance
 and always will be young in their
 eyes - though wrinkles and grey hairs
 denote changes in other matters -
 dear father and believe me
 Affectionately
 (B. Polding Esq. Esq.)

June 30th 1846.
 Dr. J. B. Polding
 attend.

Fr Fowler recently published a fascinating insight into Archbishop Polding, which is now available on Amazon UK:
 Colin Fowler (ed), *At Sea with Bishop John Bede Polding. The Journals of Lewis Harding: 1835 (Liverpool to Sydney) & 1846 (Sydney to London)*, transcribed, edited and with an introduction by C F Fowler (ATF Publications, Adelaide, 2019).

Promoting Safeguarding in the English Benedictine Congregation

OVER 20 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE VARIOUS English Benedictine monasteries based in England gathered at Buckfast from 8 to 10 May 2019 for a training workshop on safeguarding. This was organised and run by Praesidium, a non-religious, independent body, founded over 25 years ago in the United States to help organisations protect those in their care from abuse, be they children or vulnerable adults, and to help them preserve trust in their organisation. Representing Douai at the three-day workshop were Abbot Geoffrey and myself.

At present Praesidium has over 4,000 diverse client institutions. Most of the English Benedictine Congregation (EBC) monasteries, including Douai, presently come under the safeguarding commission of their local dioceses. However, it was felt that there needed to be oversight of the whole process by a body more independent from the Church. Hence the EBC engaged Praesidium, whose purpose is not to supplant the role of the dioceses, which will continue their work with the monasteries much as before, but to ensure, by means of regular visits, that the standard of safeguarding practice in each monastery is of the highest order.

Thus, prior to, or shortly after, the Buckfast workshop visits were made by Praesidium to the various monasteries. Praesidium then issued a preliminary report on each monastery, highlighting good practice but also indicating areas where improvements in standards were needed. Only when these improvements have been made will Praesidium issue a final report and grant accreditation.

The workshop at Buckfast focused on improving safeguarding in terms of prevention, responding to failures in safeguarding, and improving supervision practices in the monasteries.

Prevention includes such aspects as the proper screening and formation of candidates for the monastic life, making sure there are clear boundaries of which everyone is aware, and establishing systems of support and accountability.

As regards the proper response to concerns and allegations, it was recommended that best practices should be incorporated. Furthermore, there needs to be clear, written guidelines which are known to everyone in the monastery. These include the obligation of reporting to statutory

authorities all known or suspected abuse. Given the needs of victims of abuse, the Buckfast training workshop advocated the importance of a speedy response to allegations, a response that is both pastoral and compassionate.

The third area covered by Praesidium at the Buckfast workshop was supervision. Such supervision pertains to members against whom allegations of abuse have been established.

The leaders of the workshop emphasised the importance of having written policies and guidelines for various safeguarding situations, of documenting the community's safeguarding processes, and of having written accounts of all steps taken in response to an allegation.

All those attending the workshop were impressed by the professionalism and up-to-date grasp of the topics on the part of the three Praesidium members leading the workshop. There was nothing passive about the sessions but plenty of lively discussion and opportunities for questions.

It is now up to each monastery to study the reports they have received from Praesidium and ensure that any improvements suggested are made so that they might obtain the final accreditation. This will require a lot of dedicated hard work but will hopefully ensure that the monasteries of the EBC continue as safe havens for everybody, especially children and vulnerable adults.

FINBAR KEALY OSB

Leaks, Rattles, Flies, Fallen Bars & the Clerestory Window Blowout

DR GREG PRIMAVESI is a long-standing friend of the monastic community. After the death of Father Wilfrid in 2003, Greg generously stepped in to supply the technical and practical know-how we had lost with Father Wilfrid's death, and has served us faithfully in that capacity ever since. Greg acted as clerk of works for the construction of the library and the refurbishment of the monastic accommodation earlier in the century, and has been involved in many other projects for the community. This article, a mixture of narrative and technical detail, will serve as a comprehensive and accessible record of the remedial works to the abbey church completed in 2019. The community is very grateful to those who so generously donated to the costs of the work, not least the Donnington Hospital Trust.



IT WAS WITH SOME TREPIDATION that we followed the bearer of the news that a high-level abbey church window had just blown in, following the last dying throes of Storm Diana on the morning of 29 November 2018. Sure enough, one of the west windows had a gaping hole some six feet high by three feet across—twelve panes had blown in. Glass had gone everywhere, the tidal wave being stopped by the altar steps. Poor Fr Hugh in his first weeks as bursar had a baptism of fire, but rose to the occasion very well. He decided that disaster should be turned into opportunity, and that the chronic problems of leakage and fly-infestation in the 1993 build should be addressed once and for all alongside the repairs to be made to the clerestory windows.

Fortunately, earlier in 2018 we had received quotes for access equipment to allow inspection of the clerestory windows to look for causes of the leaks, rattles and flies that have plagued the abbey church for years. So we were immediately able to hire a “spider” to inspect the whole clerestory from the inside and thought, somewhat naively, perhaps to effect a repair! The machine just fitted through the church doors and once inside it folded out onto its four support legs, underneath a large hydraulic arm with platform from which we could survey most of the clerestory at a height of 12m to 16m: hence the name spider. Wobbly and scary though it

was at first, we soon were acclimatised and able to trust Brent O'Hagan at the controls (when he could hear us!).

Inspection by the project team—myself, Douai's maintenance engineer Martin O'Hagan, his brother and the spider controller Brent, our quinquennial architect John Radice, and Peter Campbell, the glazier from Chapel Studios—revealed a complete tale of woe, quite apart from the astonishing numbers of the pesky insect *Pollenia rudis* (the common cluster fly). The main cause of the leaks and the rattles became clear. The 4'-wide windows comprise leaded glass, nine panes high by four across, stiffened at each vertical joint by phosphor bronze bars approximately 5/8" square, with the bars let into the mullion glazing channel and held there crudely with mortar. Our architect was suitably horrified, and as surprised as we were that the bars were so flexible. This meant that over the last 25 years any strong wind resulted in the window and its lead *comes* (the lead sections holding the stained glass together) flexing with every gust, such that the lead was weakened, the lead to glass bond compromised, the fixing of the bars generally loosened, and even worse—the copper tie wires attaching the glass to the comes in many cases had fractured. Storm Diana had simply dealt the death blow to that western section where these tie-wires had broken altogether, thus ripping out the twelve panes and their lead comes.



While John Radice and I were up in the spider, there was fortunately a heavy rain storm and we were able to see water coming in the windows—basically through the failed lead cement and then dripping off the bronze bars onto the bottom window sills. Located here is a condensation drainage channel (half round, about 10mm) which in places was damaged and unable to prevent water spilling over into the church itself. We also identified that many of the drainage holes to the outside from the channels were blocked.

Martin and Brent effected a temporary repair to block the hole using a piece of OSB roofing board clamped to internal battens across the mullions. Meanwhile we used the spider to look at the rest of the clerestory. Imagine our horror when we found the westernmost south-facing 4' window was missing one of its stiffening bars, while another bar was holding on by less than 1/8" of failing mortar, and the top five sections all had broken copper tie wires. Indeed as we watched, the panes flexed in and out with the merest breeze. This window became known as the Damocletian, after the sword of Damocles. Hence the need to close the abbey church, and thanks be to God for the fact that the missing fallen bar had not previously injured anyone. Martin and I had a dim memory of having seen such a bar, and indeed it was found in the wax sacristy leaning against the wall, clearly having been found by a church cleaner or flower arranger and put aside. Weighing 4kg and 14m up, its fall would have dealt anyone underneath a serious injury or even killed them outright. Over the four months until outside scaffolding was up, in any strong wind we could see the Damocletian window blowing in and out with every gust. Fortunately it held out.

One other major contributory factor was that nearly all of the wire ties were not tightly attached to the bronze bars. Many bars were not precisely positioned and thus the wires tended to be offset and not aligned to the square surface. Thus wind flexing allowed the wires to bend slightly allowing continued flexing until the windows rattled against the bars and the bars in turn were pushed loose, leading to catastrophic failure on the western window.

Over the week of the spider hire we were able to check the general state of the clerestory and also carry out some tests on the stiffening bars. Using a 30kg luggage balance, we found that a 15kg load (equivalent to a 65mph gust) produced a deflection of over 7mm (1/4"), which seemed to us far from satisfactory.

Fr Hugh carried out much searching of archives and from them we discovered that the new nave had leaked from the beginning for many

reasons, some of which had been addressed, and too often down to poor execution of roofing details and lack of supervision of the various subcontractors. It is unfortunate that the weakness of the bronze bars and their fixing was not identified, nor was maintenance suggested on the drainage holes. The archives also revealed some useful drawings and comments on the mullions.

In the final weeks before Christmas of 2018, we did some fairly intense engineering on methods to stiffen the existing bars, using theoretical wind loading, and on possible methods for re-fixing the bars properly. Tests in my workshop showed that two bars bolted together improved stiffness by a factor of four, and that it was only necessary to use two bolts at 1' from each end of the 4' bars. We experimented with methods of replacing missing or loose tie-wires, and came up with drilling through the lead comes and using a farthing coin as an exterior bronze washer that was electrochemically similar to the lead, the tinned copper wire and the phosphor bronze. We also carried out a practical test using my Renault Scenic car to confirm what pressure the wind would exert on a typical window at 70mph. Martin took pressure readings, while Brent held the boom with pressure sensor and wind-speed sensor through the sunroof giving speed readings to me, the driver, to coordinate with satnav. Fortunately no police observed us doing 50-70mph down Chapel Row to Upper Bucklebury with a pole stuck through the roof, and then minutes later going back in the opposite direction. I suppose we could have claimed to be Google updating our maps. The windscreen slope mimicked the roof angle and indeed confirmed the theoretical calculations. Experiment is always more fun.

Much thought was given to the practical details over Christmas 2018, generally ideas spawned at 2am needed continual refinement allowing sleep to return! That way, by the end of the holiday in early January 2019, we had a fairly well mapped-out idea for solving most problems. After some jostling with the prima-donna attitudes of myself and the architect we managed to agree on a single hymn sheet and then worked very well together. In particular my original blunderbuss approach to fixing the new bronze bars into the mullions was refined by the simple machining of an offset taper to the new bars which would then fit into a 12mm diameter hole in the mullions filled with grout via a separate injection hole giving a very elegant result.

Fr Hugh had managed meanwhile to get the insurance claim underway and started the pursuit of obtaining funding for the whole project.

Fr Oliver returned to the fray as bursar in the new year and remembered that Mike Cook at the firm Buro Happold had been the original structural engineer when the new nave had been built in the early 1990s. Some emails resulted in Mike, now very senior in the firm, giving us full cooperation. A very useful meeting with him, the architect and myself confirmed all our proposed actions. Mike's comments on the structure were both interesting and very reassuring. He also made a suggestion on where to place the two holes for bar stiffening, which gave us a further 7% increase in stiffness.

John Radice decided quite rightly that we should carry out the project properly and meet the CDM (Construction, Design and Management) regulations, so there was a hiccup while the project was more fully planned. This involved obtaining quotes from several scaffolding contractors and a proper engineering design being drawn up. There was also the need to identify the project team and assess their qualifications for insurance purposes. A health and safety file had to be prepared which included full documentation of the proposed works. This was quite a handful for one who likes to just get stuck in, but as John convinced me, it was essential for this type of project. We also had to get permission from the Historic Churches Commission for the proposed works which took a statutory six weeks. The upshot of all this was that the original hope of Fr Hugh and myself to complete the works by Easter was a hopeless target. In the end the final date was set at 29 May, but that shifted to 8 June after problems with the glazier matching the original glass and our losing the original slot in his planning schedule.



A very good photograph of the state of the clerestory before the damage occurred was taken by a local photography group who had been allowed access to the abbey church one afternoon earlier in 2019. This enabled the glazier to quote for an almost exact match and acquire the correct glass for the repair.

The project started in earnest when the internal scaffolding went up and was handed over to us on 22 March 2019. The external scaffold was handed over on 8 April. I have to say that S.A. Scaffolding was remarkably good and over the whole project only broke two slates in anger, so to speak, although they identified a further six slates which were already cracked, an astonishing result. We asked them to use carpet (from the lounge room of my cousin) under the boards laid directly on the slates which must have helped. At £50,000 the scaffolding might seem expensive, and indeed was approximately half the project cost, but it was indispensable as we had access to everything and the firm proved extremely helpful adapting things as required.

Cleaning: Our project team included James Bridge who had worked at Douai over university vacations for some time and who was thus approved by our insurers to work on the project. Apart from helping with everything when needed, James took on the cleaning of the entire clerestory, inside and out, a task that took almost the whole project time to do thoroughly and always just ahead of the repairs to the stiffening bars and the glass pane sealing. James could use only plain water and elbow grease. He also tackled most of the pestilential fly corpses and spider webs. He was very useful when we older members of the team dropped things from 14m up!



Drainage: Martin and James tackled the channel drainage holes and were able to clean out all but one, which required Brent's help as well. Of the 38 drainage holes, about half were blocked, mostly due to 25 years of spider and fly activity; but some were never aligned in the first place! We also needed new larger drainage channels which Brent built by using proprietary aluminium extrusions screwed into the sills and grouted to form a flat channel with an inner raised section giving a fourfold improvement in channel volume, with an inner edge able to catch drips from the new double bar assembly. Altogether, 36 new drainage channels were thus made.



Bronze Bar Stiffening: It was decided that both the 3' and 4' windows needed the eight bars on each to be stiffened using a new bar bolted to the original. There are six of each width, making 48 of each type. One of James' first jobs was to cut the random bar lengths we got into the blanks for machining. He started with a hacksaw but it was a lengthy labour so we changed to angle grinding. In total, 96 bars were then sent to an engineering firm in Aylesbury to machine the 10mm offset spigot on each end to be fitted into the mullions. Here I made an error which resulted in the machined lengths being 25mm too long. I intended that James would do a double check but got side-tracked, a mistake that cost us about £1.5k and two weeks, but fortunately it was not (quite) on the critical path.

Meanwhile, we started on drilling the 192 holes in the mullions to take the spigot. One end needed to be 50mm deep and the other 25mm, so the spigot could be slid in to the 50mm hole and then slid back 25mm into the other end. A generous person will appreciate why I got the length wrong! Drilling these holes was difficult and required a special jig to allow offsetting of the 5mm pilot drill to the power drill axis lest one damage the existing window and its lead comes. An inexpensive 300mm hexagonal extender and further short extender allowed a suitable offset due to the loose fit. The pilot holes were enlarged eventually to 12mm using diamond drill bits. For each main window it took about a day to drill the 16 holes, so with 12 windows this was a major time factor. In some cases the position of the stainless steel mullion reinforcing bars limited the depth we could achieve, which in turn meant that each machined bar had to be fitted to its holes. A small injection hole was also drilled to allow grout to be injected when the bars were finally in place.



Each machined bar was fitted temporarily in place and the inner original bar marked for the position of the 5mm M6 tapping hole. The additional bar was removed and the original bar was then ready for drilling and tapping. As this bar is directly attached by (sometimes loose) tie-wires and also feebly attached at its ends, this drilling operation was critical to prevent damage to the leaded glass. A special drill jig was made using an old Black & Decker pillar drill system modified to allow it to be clamped to the bronze bar. Even so, two people were needed to drill these holes to two-thirds of the bar thickness. These holes were then tapped to allow six threads of engagement. Accuracy was essential in order to then refit the new bar without too much difficulty. The two bars were fixed using a

stainless steel M6 bolt screwed into the tapped hole and fixed with Loctite, a special bronze washer then fitted to separate the two bars by 1/8" to make room for the existing tie-wires, and then were added a shake-proof washer, nut and half locknut with more Loctite, followed by removal of the bolthead. This fixing ought to last for a thousand years!

Once the bars were joined, the bar assembly was grouted in place using the injection holes. Our expert grouter was Brent, which was why we used this grout for the new drainage channels as well as fixing in the new windows. The grout was left to cure, any excess snapped off and the final finish was smeared expertly by Brent with Stonebond Vertical resin, which had been coloured to suit the mullions. James was tasked with getting the colour mix correct, which involved a lot of mess. The same Stonebond Vertical system was used to colour the drainage channels and fill in cracks in the mullions and general stonework where required.



Broken Tie-Wire Repairs: For this the key was to drill a 2mm hole in the lead came between the panes of the glass to allow a 16SWG tinned copper wire to be pushed through from outside. Experiment showed that this was possible and it led to the requirement of an external washer drilled on its edges to allow the two wire ends to be spaced to suit the bronze bar on the inside and support the often damaged lead over a sufficient area on the outside. I originally envisaged using a penny, but modern pennies are steel with a surface plating of copper bronze, which means they are magnetic,

and thus over a short time would corrode. Hence the choice of 1943 bronze farthings, which are £1 each on the internet, so we bought 20 to replace all those ties which had broken. The new replacement window would have new lead and ties fixed by Chapel Studio. The farthings were drilled with two holes at the 5/8" spacing required and then these holes were used as the drilling jig for making the wire holes from the outside.

In general, where the wire had failed the lead was also cracked and an attempt was made to solder the worst cracks using a gas soldering iron, but most reliance was on the farthing washer and modern silicone lead mastic under the farthing when tightened up.



Rattle prevention & Individual Glass Pane Sealing: The flexing of all the glass over 25 years meant that we could be certain the special glazing cement had been weakened on all 3' and 4' windows. The decision was made to seal *all* glass panes and at the same time ensure the wire ties were held firmly to the tie bars. A high modulus clear neutral cure silicone adhesive/sealant was used to surround each tie wire and also to glue the lead comes to the bars. The same sealant was used around the inner edges of all the 3' and 4' window panes and on the inner verticals and bottom of all the 2' windows. All the outside verticals and bottoms were sealed on the 3' and 4' windows using silicone lead mastic.

Fly Screening: With the outside scaffold up, it was immediately obvious why the abbey church has had a problem with the cluster fly: the zinc mesh ventilation gap all around the eaves of the clerestory had failed. The zinc had become powdery over the 25 years since the new nave was built, leading to myriad holes, some big enough to fit small birds! On a sunny

April day the air at that level was simply buzzing with flies and in the evening they would simply go into the rafter/tile space. The problem with *Pollenia rudis* is that it lives for around two years, unlike most of its blowfly relatives, and emerges from roof spaces when conditions are right, and then plagues us. So new stainless steel mesh was fitted all round and, together with the filling of other lead-work gaps, this will effectively prevent clerestory ingress. We have also just completed renewal of similar failed mesh at the lower-level eaves all around the church.



The New Repaired Window: Chapel Studios arrived with the new window in the last week of the project as planned and it was fitted in two days. It went in beautifully and is a perfect match.

Other Internal Repair Work: Internally, we were able to clean debris, including flies and spiders and dust off all the glulam beams, repaint flaking walls on the old high level walls, and effect repairs to cracks at the joints of the mullions and ring beam. We also found that the western sloping light had a slipped upper glass section, which allowed leaking in heavy rain. The glass was wedged to prevent further slippage and the leak hole sealed.

External Slate Leakage: There was historic indication of leakage around the southern clerestory down pipe. In the event we removed 18 rows of slates to see if the felt had failed but were unable to find any serious holing

of the felt. A layer of breathable membrane was fixed over the existing felt to ensure this leak would not recur. There was a large leak which Martin found on the southern roof slope change and this was due to a lack of felt under the large capping slates at this point. The clerestory down-pipe spout discharge in any wind allowed water to be blown up and into the unfelted gap, a significant leak source now completely cured. The few damaged slates after scaffolding removal were also fixed.



Conclusions: With hindsight, it is clear that the damage inflicted by Storm Diana was a godsend. It forced us to close the abbey church before a second window blew in, with the very real chance of killing someone. The interior and exterior scaffolding allowed us to examine in detail all the defects leading to leakage, rattles and flies, quite apart from the necessary storm repairs. To date it seems that all but a minor leak between the old and new halves of the abbey church has been fixed. There are now very few cluster flies in the church, and in high winds almost no rattles. We have also purchased a 13m-high temporary scaffold tower for ongoing routine maintenance. This has already been used to great effect on the tall windows in the older section of the abbey church.

Finally, a great thank-you must go to all involved in the project: architect, structural engineer, bursars, Chapel Studio and above all to our internal team of Martin, Brent, and James—not forgetting Doreen, our

first-aid emergency contact. We finished the job on time and to budget. Congratulations also to Frs Oliver and Terence for making it right up to the top scaffolding level and to Br Christopher for trying! Thanks finally to Sarah, the catering manager, for the celebratory cake!

DR GREG PRIMAVESI



The Douai Society, 1868-2017

A DISCUSSION TO FOUND AN OLD BOYS' association took place at St Peter's in Liverpool, a Benedictine parish, and the Douai Society came into being on 15 July 1868, when there were lots of old pupils present at Douai in France to celebrate the jubilee of St Edmund's College, founded in Douai in 1818. Its colours were to be red, blue, and gold superimposed on black or white. Part of the celebrations in 1868 was the first performance of Fr Austin O'Neill OSB's *Jubilee Ode*: "For fifty years, In joy and tears, Thou hast bravely stood, dear Alma Mater." Given the fact that St Edmund's was at this date a minor seminary from which students went on to diocesan seminaries in England and in Europe, it is unsurprising that the first members of the Society were clergy. At the silver jubilee in 1893 at Douai in France there was a banquet, a performance of the Mikado, and a cricket match between "The Past" and "The Present" at the country estate at Planques. From its earliest days, the Douai Society awarded academic and sports prizes to the students. In June 1894, 40 of the Society attended the meeting at the Royal Hotel at Matlock Bath in Derbyshire, where they entertained each other with communal singing. Such was the popularity of the Society that a Junior Douai Society was formed the next year and met in Southport. Older Dowegians initially felt threatened by this infant society.

Meanwhile, Douai's major benefactor, Squire Edmund Granville Ward, responsible for the new Ward Cloister and Guest Wing in 1897, had begun to entertain members of the Society to dinner at the Savoy Hotel in London, where among the usual toasts was one to the papal zouaves, an army of volunteers who had vowed to defend the pope against Italian nationalists. The Exchange Hotel in Liverpool was the venue for the 1897 meeting. The meeting in July 1902 was at Douai itself, a year before the closure of the abbey and college in France: "The weather was charming, the sea calm as a millpond, and the passage exhilarating and pleasant ...Entering the town all seemed as of old. The Grande Place, the pavé on the narrow streets, the white houses with closed shutters, the sluggish river...Flags hung from the windows of the College, calling to mind faint visions of Mafeking day."

Like other loyal friends of Douai, the Douai Society lodged a formal protest in July 1903 against the closure of the abbey and college in Douai. The Society attempted unsuccessfully to prove that it owned the country estate at Planques which the liquidator had seized. Newly settled in

Woolhampton from the summer of 1903, the abbey and school continued to have the generous support of the Douai Society which slowly turned from being a mostly clerical institution into a predominantly lay society.

In 1918, Rugby Union replaced Association Football as the winter game in Douai School, and the Douai Society willingly accepted this change in relation to its own fixtures. The Douai Society played a prominent part in collecting funds for the erection of a new, and much enlarged, cricket pavilion in the park during 1922. This was survived until the present pavilion which was opened in 2016. Gradually, the school developed into an English public school.

It was only by 1929 that the numbers of lay members in the Douai Society superseded those of the clergy. Soon the Society's A.G.M. was fixed to meet annually at Woolhampton. Partly because of the lack of space at Woolhampton, the monastic community welcomed the Douai Society into its calefactory, which also served as the monastery library, for the formal meeting and the social gathering after it while, from 1917, the Society's dinner took place in the new school refectory. At the 1917 meeting in the monks' calefactory/library, which later became the monks' refectory, Abbot David Hurley ran the meeting as the Society's president. At this meeting it was agreed to elect provincial secretaries who might arrange annual local meetings. Four were appointed and a northern provincial meeting was successfully held in 1918. By 1920, there were meetings of the Society in the south, the midlands, and Wales, besides the annual general meeting at Douai itself.

The usual toasts at the annual dinners of the Society were to the pope and the king, to the Douai Society, and to *Alma Mater* after which came the school song, *Ad Multos Annos*. The dinner was followed by an informal concert. At these meetings, Mass was always celebrated for living and dead members of the Society, and a cricket match against the school organised. In 1918 there was no golden jubilee celebration of the Society's foundation since the event was "shrouded and unnoticed in the smoke and gloom of war." The 50th or Jubilee meeting was held at Woolhampton in April 1921, when an annual school prize in honour of the Society was instituted, and proposals made to provide sports cups and open a fund for a new cricket pavilion. During the 1920s, many sports trophies, shields and medals were donated by the Society. The President of the Douai Society for 1921 was the famous Old Dowegian Fr John O'Connor (not yet a monsignor), on whom G. K. Chesterton based his "Father Brown" novels.

The industrial crisis of 1926 brought about a reduction of numbers at the meeting of that year. In 1927 the Old Dowegians Rugby Club was

founded in the hope it would give Old Dowegians a new interest in their school. The first Douai Society ball and cabaret took place at the Piccadilly Hotel in London in February 1928. In his speech to the Douai Society in 1929, having just witnessed a gymnastic display by the school in a marquee in front of the cricket pavilion, Fr Ignatius Rice looked forward to seeing a plan for a combined gymnasium and theatre brought to fruition. With the building of the abbey church in 1933, the Society pledged itself to raise funds for the new choir stalls.

Between 1935 and 1936, whilst the new senior wing and Bede Library were under construction, the Douai Society developed a revised constitution, "thought by some older members to be too revolutionary and met with a good deal of criticism." The architect of this change was Denis Robson, president in 1937-38. By the new regulations, the Council was made a permanent body and given executive power, and the Society made responsible for coordinating all Old Dowegian activities. At this point, membership stood at 600. In 1939, the Society celebrated the small college, founded in 1839, which became St Mary's College at Woolhampton. A number of Woolhamptonians attended the celebrations. On account of the war, the Society held no general meetings between 1940 and 1945, but provided much of the funding to allow *The Douai Magazine* to continue publication during the war. No officials were elected, so essential business was carried on by Fr Dunstan Cammack OSB and Dr James Walsh. At the 1946 meeting, Bishop John Henry King of Portsmouth was elected president, and a war memorial, in the form of a Roll of Honour and bursaries for the sons of Old Dowegians, was discussed.

The second half of the 20th century saw a continuation of the Society's traditions but also some new initiatives, such as the first Douai Society retreat held in Holy Week of 1952 and preached by Fr Dunstan, with Old Dowegians serving at the services during the Triduum under Fr Matthew Hulley OSB as the MC. The golden jubilee of the abbey and school at Woolhampton in 1953, the coronation year, was well attended. This year saw the Society commission a portrait for the first time, that of the headmaster, Fr Ignatius Rice OSB, who had been president of the Society in 1950, and who had been headmaster for 40 years, but whose health was beginning to fail. The artist was Henry Carr.

From 1953, monthly meetings of the Society were held in London, at the recently opened Challoner Club. In 1954, the Douai Society presented Abbot Sylvester Mooney with a gold pectoral cross to commemorate his silver jubilee as abbot (1929-1954). It bore the 1929 arms of the abbey and school granted by the College of Heraldry, and was presented by Bishop

John Henry King. At Abbot Mooney's golden jubilee of ordination, in 1961, the Society presented him with a set of liturgical books, finely printed and leather bound, for use at services when the abbot pontificated.

In July 1962, Fr Wilfrid Sollom OSB spoke at the Annual General Meeting of the Society on the proposal to build a new monastery, and showed the architect's plans. He then gave a similar presentation in November to the first Douai Society meeting in Dublin. Fr Wilfrid accompanied his presentation with films he had made of life at Douai. The Society volunteered to help as far as it was able. At the next meeting, in July 1963, Mr Frederick Gibberd, the architect, outlined his plans for the new monastery. Many Old Dowegians attended the laying of the foundation stone of the new monastery on 13 June 1964, and saw Abbot Mooney wearing the new set of pontifical white vestments which had been commissioned by the Society and were made at Downside Abbey.

In 1968, the Society kept its centenary and there was a very large attendance of 170 at the Centenary Meeting and Dinner, at which all signed a commemorative album. The Hon Mr Justice Daniel Brabin was the first speaker at the dinner and reminded his listeners that the abbey and school were both old when the Douai Society was born. He felt the future was going to be problematical, with great changes taking place in education and in the religious orders. Abbot Mooney responded by stating his belief that the abbey and school could face the future with faith and confidence. By this date, the Society had organised an annual ball at Douai in April which was followed by the AGM and Dinner in July.

Fr Dunstan Cammack had been a key figure in the Douai Society for many years until his sudden death in 1972, and the Society launched an appeal to begin a collection of books for the Bede Library related to the dramatic arts, in which Fr Dunstan had taken an abiding interest. A book plate designed by David John was commissioned for the collection. To commemorate the closure of the junior school at Ditcham Park, Denis Hopkin organised a "pilgrimage" picnic to Ditcham in August 1975, at which the Society was toasted.

The new school-orientated A4 format of *The Douai Magazine* in 1980 removed the traditional "Douai Society" entry which until it reappeared in 1986, when it was included under a new heading, "Old Boys." The news items, however, remained the same, comprising the annual ball and AGM and Dinner. The after-dinner speeches now gave much more attention to current events and developments in the school. 1980 was the 15th centenary of the birth of St Benedict, and the Society commissioned the sculptor, David John, to carve a mahogany panel of the saint. By 1987 the Society was

made aware of another appeal, this time for the completion of the abbey church, and it was hoped that members would be generous in their donations. Cardinal Basil Hume was the guest of honour at the Society's 1988 Dinner. He had long associations with Douai monks and recorded the advice given to him by Abbot Mooney on his election as abbot: "Always have a cup of tea before matins."

The 1990s saw some competition to the status the Douai Society had enjoyed for so long, as Old Dowegians organised independent and informal year groups. A lapse in the publication of *The Douai Magazine* forced the Society to publish its own magazine in 1994, and this was followed in 1997 by its own page on the internet. The need to do something about the cricket pavilion, outdated and decayed, was prophetically mentioned by Kevin Murphy-O'Connor, the president of the Society in 1995, as the project closest to the Society's heart.

As the millennium approached, the Douai Society was affected by significant change. The tradition of annual balls came to an end, though the AGMs survived. The failure to publish annually *The Douai Magazine* meant news of the Society became sparser until it took its destiny under its own control and began issuing a newsletter, *The Old Dowegian*, from 2000, thus cutting its links with *The Douai Magazine* once it began to be published again. Most serious of all, Douai School closed in 1999 which left the Society bereft of its roots. But somehow, it refused to go under and many of its members attended the 2003 celebration marking the centenary of the abbey and school's resettlement at Woolhampton in 1903. It ensured it would be noticed by commissioning Philip Whitehead, an Old Dowegian, to carve a stone commemorating the centenary, with its heading, *Pax Ineuntibus*, "Peace to all who enter here." At the 400th centenary in 2015 of the founding of the monastic community in Paris in 1615, a number of the Douai Society travelled with the community to Paris for an impressive series of events in the French capital.

In 2017 the Douai Society found a new home. It had contributed generously to the new cricket pavilion in Douai Park and was provided with the "Douai Room" on its first floor in which future meetings could be held and Society memorabilia put on show. Here it remains looking across the cricket square to the old school, and beyond to the abbey church.

GEOFFREY SCOTT OSB

The Douai Foundation

SINCE THE CLOSURE OF DOUAI SCHOOL in 1999, the Douai Society has been in terminal decline. While it still serves its purpose, and will continue to do so for some years, inevitably the Old Boys and Girls who comprise its membership will not be replaced with new blood.

The 150th anniversary of the Society in 2018 prompted some sober reflection about the lasting legacy of the school. To some degree it has been immortalised in the Douai Room, the clubhouse-museum housed on the upper floor of the pavilion in Douai Park opened in 2017. However, it was felt that some enterprise of a charitable nature should be created which would not only perpetuate the name and the memory of the school, but would perform some useful social function, ideally one which also appealed to those outside the Douai family. So, the Douai Foundation was created with the stated aim of “promoting and supporting Benedictine education at home and abroad” focusing on those in greatest need.

There are now only four English Benedictine schools remaining in England: Ampleforth, Downside, Worth and Ealing (plus Ampleforth’s preparatory school of St Martin’s). However, there are a further 205 Benedictine and Cistercian schools scattered across the globe (63 in Europe; 28 in North America; 37 in Latin America; 32 in Africa; 34 in Asia; and 11 in Oceania). These are a mix of boarding and day; secondary and primary; single sex and coeducational; fee-paying and free; those attached to monasteries and those which nowadays operate under a largely secular management. They are all Roman Catholic, although some of the Anglican Benedictine houses undertake informal educational work.

Their one uniting feature is that they instil the same familiar Benedictine values that Dowegians were taught for nearly 400 years: love of Christ; prayer; stability; stewardship; hospitality; community; justice; *conversatio* (which might loosely be defined as selflessness); obedience; discipline; and humility.

The Douai Foundation’s projects to date have provided basic provision to schools, whose pupils would otherwise have gone without. The first is a £2,000 grant which will build much-needed laundry facilities at the Inkamana High School in South Africa. The second is a grant of £1,500 which will allow the purchase of three computers by the monks of Ndanda Abbey in Tanzania for their nursing school.

At home, there will be an annual “Douai Prize” to the value of £250 at each of the English Benedictine schools, awarded to the senior pupil who

best demonstrates the Benedictine values with a spirit of good humour. The Trustees are also in talks with the Headmaster of St Benedict’s, Ealing regarding an exchange between its pupils and schools overseas.

Currently, the Douai Foundation’s only income derives from its initial modest endowment, producing around £3,500 per year. However, the aim over the next two decades is to grow this to a substantial pot of money, with a significant income and the power to change lives.

The Douai Foundation is holding a gala dinner with musical entertainment at the Savoy Hotel on Friday, 2 October 2020 in the presence of the Foundation’s Patron, Her Grace the Duchess of Somerset; His Eminence the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster; and other notable guests. Please visit the website www.douaifoundation.org later in 2020 for tickets and further information.

RICHARD SIMS
TRUSTEE & HON. SECRETARY
THE DOUAI FOUNDATION

Some Memories of Douai

IN 1960 MY FATHER STARTED WORK in Rome and we moved there as a family. I started at Douai in September 1961, aged nearly 14. Unlike many of the boys in the school I had not been to a boarding prep school. I had been to John Fisher School in Purley, a boys' school with the senior years also functioning as the Catholic grammar school for the area. I passed the 11+. This school was fine but rather drab. In Rome I went to St George's English School for a year and a half. It was "English" in the context of three American schools in Rome also teaching English speakers. It offered the General Certificate of Education. Many of the pupils were English but it was an international school. We came mainly from all-English speaking countries—British Commonwealth countries and the USA—but I also remember there were Danish, Swedish and French children. Many of the children had one anglophone parent. There were many religions represented: Catholics, Anglicans, Jews, Muslims and others. And there were also girls! There was no fixed uniform. It was great fun and very interesting.

I enjoyed living in Rome. It was a city with an interesting culture. I learnt Italian reasonably well. We went out a lot in the city and to other parts of Italy. We ate good Italian food, although at home my mother was an excellent cook. I remember Christmas carols at the English College, followed by mince pies and frascati. The college was, like Douai in France, one of a number of English seminaries in Europe after the Reformation period.

When I started at Douai I felt I was stepping back two or three years, into the 1950s, and what I am about to relate was typical of many boys' boarding schools of that time. We slept in the Open Dorm. There were something like 60 beds in this dorm, arranged in long lines. There was no private space; every boy had a black metal bedstead with a sunken mattress, and next to it was a chair with a coat-hanger. We ate in the huge school refectory, on long tables, supervised by one of the housemasters who walked up and down. The food was indifferent. The pupils were all boys, and the uniform was a choice of three grey suits which included one of herring-bone design. Blazers, with the school badge, were allowed in the summer term. Except on the occasional holiday, when informal dress was allowed, there was no thought of being able to change into non-uniform clothes outside school hours. We had 15-minute baths once a week, supervised by a prefect who rationed the amount of hot water allowed. A change of clothes, including one pair of socks and new underpants, took

place again once a week. Miss Crook, the linen room matron, knew boys by their linen numbers rather than by name. Above all else, I disliked the lack of privacy and not having my own space. I also felt there was a lack of free time, because the days were very full.

The school put on a performance of a Gilbert and Sullivan operetta every two years which was produced by Fr Dunstan Cammack. *Iolanthe* was produced in my first term. Fourth formers like me, whose voices had not broken, took the female parts and rehearsals were held each evening towards the end of term. I resented these eating into my free time. Fortunately, I managed to fail my singing audition (which was not difficult!) so that gave me more free time. Later, for similar reasons, I avoided the optional weekly film, and usually celebrated by having a second bath! That may have been a mistake since I now have some regrets about possibly missing good films.

Corporal punishment was quite frequent, and was administered by the housemasters or, in more serious cases, by the headmaster. Fr Hilary Palmer was my housemaster and I felt he resorted too frequently to administering the stick. I did not get on very well with Fr Hilary. I think he should have been more neutral and detached.

Compulsory haircuts were frequent and disliked, since in the 1960s long hair was becoming fashionable. Those with long hair were selected by the housemaster at lunch to go the barber after lunch for the required short back and sides.

I know many boys enjoyed sport, which was a very important part of life at Douai School, but I was not any good at rugby or cricket. Since I resented having to play, I did not even try. I thought of myself as being a bit of a conscientious objector against compulsory sport! I now admit that I probably missed out through this behaviour as all my family, parents and offspring included, enjoyed or enjoy sport, and are good at it. Later in life I did in fact enjoy sport. I walked a lot, including leading walking holidays in Europe, and I dived and sailed.

Alcohol was not allowed on the premises, although on feast days—"hogs" as they were called—the prefects had cider, though the rest of the school was given orange juice. I remember an Etonian, visiting Douai for a match, asking where the bar was. Sometimes I went out for walks, mainly across the fields to Beenham, where the post office and village store could be found. I also had a lot of fun hitchhiking along the the A4-Bath Road to different places including hitching once to Bristol, from where I managed to get back to school in time for tea.

Teaching was patchy despite small classes of only 15 to 20 boys. The quality of teachers varied; some were excellent, some were not. When I was 15 we were given the option of studying a language instead of choosing another science subject. I chose to do Spanish, which I found a doddle as I already spoke reasonable Italian. Choosing languages meant that I took no science O-Levels. This remains a gap in my education. My wife Janet, who was a chemistry teacher, is not impressed by my lack of scientific knowledge.

For A-Levels I studied English, geography and history. The first two had many students who were not that bright and saw these subjects as easy options. Mr William Bell—"Billy Bell" to his pupils—could not keep discipline and was taken advantage of, so little academic progress was made. However, a few of us keener ones encouraged Mr Bell, who was exceedingly knowledgeable, to give us seminars. Arts A-Levels, of course, needed a lot of reading revision. I found my best plan was to get up before breakfast and go out to the upstairs room in the old cricket pavilion in the park. I am very pleased that the old pavilion has been replaced by a new building, with a first floor devoted to the "Douai Room," containing lots of memorabilia of Douai School.

I did manage to get into the White Dorm in my second year in the Sixth Form. It was a place of untold luxury at that time. This dormitory had cubicles, so I had a privacy that I had never had until that point, and I could decadently lie undisturbed on my bed when reading. Quite a few boys did a third year in the Sixth Form, mostly as Oxbridge applicants, but I was desperate to avoid that and to escape, so I worked hard to achieve good A-Level results. I achieved these so I was able to leave the school in July 1965. I went off to Newcastle University and into the Swinging Sixties. No more grey suits or compulsory haircuts.

After university I became a town planner and worked in Essex, North Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, for local authorities and then in consultancy. Now my family lives in Hutton-le-Hole, a beautiful village of stone houses in the North York Moors National Park. We have two grown-up children and three grandchildren.

Visits to Douai are few as I am so far away, but I keep in touch with the abbot, who was a contemporary of mine in the school. I did have a few Douai-related aftermaths following my departure from the school. First, when studying town planning in Oxford, I went to see *If* at the local cinema. This was Lindsay Anderson's film set in a public school where rebels, the leader played by Malcolm McDowell, ended up machine-gunning the headmaster and chaplain. There I met by chance another Old

Dowegian. We both thought the story credible. Our companions, who had been at day schools, thought it far-fetched and unfeasible.

For many years I led walking holidays in Europe for Waymark. The Spanish and French O-Levels I had gained at Douai proved very useful. For these I am grateful to Mr John Campbell, who is still alive and visits Douai occasionally. Once, on the Amalfi Coast, I found a client of mine was the Mr Moran who had taught us Latin in the Fourth Form. Some fieldworkers in a vineyard said "Salve!" to us as we walked by, which I remember is a Latin word, and is still in current Italian use, so it was rather appropriate. I skin-dived for many years. A frequent site was the wreck of the *Rohilla* near Whitby, which I later learnt was where Fr Basil Gwydir OSB had died. He was the Douai monk who was the first military chaplain to die in the First World War.

As we are in North Yorkshire, I keep in some touch with Benedictine affairs since Ampleforth is quite close to us.

To conclude, on balance I did not enjoy Douai greatly. Not being sporty did not help. I think I was sometimes bored and missed privacy. With hindsight I think that educationally I would have done as well if I had stayed at St George's, and would have enjoyed myself more. On the other hand, my time at Douai made me independent and I do have some good memories, and made some good friends there.

PATRICK SUTOR
OD, 1961-65

Golden Anniversary of St Luke's, Theale

THE YEAR 2019 WAS A MEMORABLE ONE for the Theale area of the monastery parish of Douai because 22 June saw the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the opening of St. Luke's church.



Catholic worship in the Theale area goes back considerably further than 1969 when St Luke's opened its doors for the first time. The Woolhampton parish dates from 1786, originally covering the area from Reading to the Wiltshire border in the west and extending south into Hampshire. As the Catholic population grew, parishes were established in Newbury, Basingstoke, Thatcham and Tadley, but Theale always remained part of the Woolhampton parish. Records suggest that Mass was celebrated in the Theale area for a while during 1896 and 1897. From 1903, when the Douai community relocated to Woolhampton, the monastery took responsibility for the parish. In the early days Woolhampton parish consisted of four areas: Woolhampton, Pangbourne, Theale and Burghfield Common. St Mary's at Woolhampton was the only church in the parish. It appears that a Mass centre was established at Theale around the end of the Second World War. Mrs Ethel Wakeford, a parishioner now long deceased, recorded her memories of 1946 saying, "Mass was served from Douai one

Sunday per month. The priests cycled, but could not come if the weather was too bad." From about 1950 until 1962, Mass was celebrated in the Lamb Hall—part of *The Lamb* public house. This building survives in Church Street, although it is no longer a public house, operating recently as a guest house. From 1962 until St Luke's was built, the Mass centre was the King George V Railway Staff Association Hut, known affectionately as "The Railway Hut." No longer surviving, it was located so close to the railway line that trains rattling past during Mass prompted parishioners to look at their watches to check if the trains were on time.

In the 1960s the building of new Catholic churches in England and Wales reached its peak with 600 new churches being built in that decade, St Luke's being one of them. With up to 70 people attending Mass there was a demand for building a Catholic church in Theale. In addition, the proposed route of the M4 was expected to be a trigger for a large expansion of housing in the area. In 1967 the parish priest, Fr Oswald Dorman, purchased Chestnut Cottage, in Englefield Road, and the land attached to it, at a cost of £8,000 for a church to serve the growing community. The cost of building the church was £22,000. A total of £30,000 might sound very modest today, but was a substantial amount at that time. Chestnut Cottage was not demolished for the development and today it is administered by the diocese of Portsmouth. Unfortunately, the route of the M4 motorway was altered and when it was finally opened in 1971, on the northern edge of the village, it split the area that was to be served by the new church, and plans for house building changed. Since then building growth in the Theale area has been more modest than expected.

The architect for the church was George A. J. Mathers ARIBA (1919-2015). He has an interesting history. The son of a postal worker, he left school at 14 to study bricklaying, joinery and plumbing. In the mid-1930s he started training as an architect. At this time he became a committed pacifist and a convert to Roman Catholicism. His pacifism led to two periods of incarceration in Wormwood Scrubs. There he met Paul Mauger, a Quaker architect and prison visitor, who offered George a job on his release from prison. Mathers designed a wide range of buildings during his career, but is best known for designing churches. His most prestigious achievement is Marychurch, Old Hatfield (1971) which received a Grade II listing in 2013 whilst Mathers was still alive, an unusual event in the architectural world. The conclusion of the Second Vatican Council in 1965 was the cue for the design of St Luke's with a forward facing altar. The spirelet on the roof of the building was a feature that Mathers had used in other churches that he designed in this period. The church was opened on

22 June 1969 by Bishop Derek Worlock, who had suggested the dedication to St Luke the Evangelist.

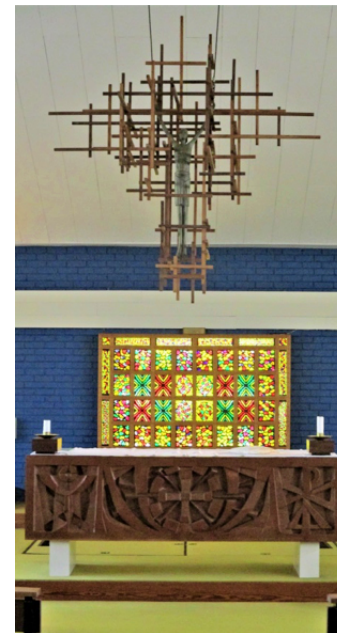
St Luke's community has enjoyed the leadership of a large number of priests from Douai Abbey and many of them are remembered with affection. Before the building of St Luke's priests from Douai included Frs Leonard Wynne, Aloysius Bloor, Paulinus Cunningham, Oswald Dorman and Aelred Eckersley. In his years as parish priest Fr Oswald was responsible for establishing the structure of the parish, being the driving force in building St Bernadette's in Pangbourne in 1958, St Luke's in 1969, and purchasing land in Burghfield Common where he built St Joseph's Hall as forerunner to St Oswald's church, which was opened in 1976. Since 1969, St Luke's has been thankful for the care of Frs Brian Murphy, Godric Timney, Leonard Vickers, Alphonsus Tierney, Nicholas Broadbridge, Richard Jones, Francis Hughes, James Donovan, Terence Fitzpatrick, Romuald Simpson, Benedict Thompson and Dermot Tredget. At present we are fortunate to have Fr Peter Bowe as parish priest and Fr Benjamin Standish as his assistant.

In the past 50 years Catholic churches in England have seen reductions in the numbers attending Mass, and the number of ordinations to the priesthood has steadily declined. St Luke's is no different in this respect. The number of baptisms at St Luke's illustrates this. In the 1970s there were 58 baptisms at St Luke's. In the 1980s it was down to 38, but up to 44 in the 1990s. In the new century with rising house prices and no major building in the village, the number of young families dropped away and baptisms fell to 24 in the 2000s. In the current decade only 8 baptisms have been celebrated at St Luke's. The same applies to weddings, which were a regular feature of St Luke's early years, but today a wedding is a very rare event indeed. Until the turn of the 21st century First Communion celebrations were an important feature of St Luke's year but, in common with our sister churches in the parish, numbers have declined to the point where the decision needed to be made to celebrate First Communions on a whole-parish basis. At the same time Confirmation, which had been celebrated at St Luke's in 1971, 1995 and 2001, has moved to celebration in the cathedral in pastoral area groups.

Being realistic about these changes brought new challenges to St Luke's. In 2001 the Sunday morning Mass was moved to Saturday evening. There was a fall in numbers at Mass, and of particular sadness was the reduction in the number of children attending. It required considerable energy and drive from those remaining to rebuild a sense of community. Looking on the positive side, being the venue for the parish Saturday evening vigil

Mass has drawn a good number of parishioners from other parts of the parish and this has enriched the whole community. The most recent challenge was faced in 2015 when a restructuring of the parish, resulting from a smaller number of priests being available from the abbey, seemed to point to St Luke's being permanently closed. After a review by Bishop Philip Egan, it was decided to redraw the parish boundary to align it with the A4. This meant that the parish, as a whole, lost St Oswald's in Burghfield Common to Tadley parish, while St Luke's remained open.

The features of the church are little changed in the past 50 years. The architect, George Mathers, commissioned the carved altar frontal, hanging cross and tabernacle from the young sculptor Angela Godfrey MRBS. Shortly after graduating from King's College, Newcastle upon Tyne, in 1961, she was asked by Mathers to carve an altar for his new church in St Albans. This was the first of many commissions from him and her work graces many churches today. The Lady Altar's statue of the Madonna and Child was carved by the artist David John. His canon of work includes statues in Liverpool and Cardiff cathedrals as well as the altar, tabernacle and lectern in the English College, Rome. Around the time St Luke's was built he had a local connection to the parish as he was living at Bucklebury. At Douai Abbey his work can be seen in the Blessed Sacrament chapel, in the windows, lamp screen and tabernacle, and his hanging cross in the monks' choir. At St Mary's, Woolhampton he was responsible for the window in the Lady Chapel together with the candle base for the statue. At St Oswald's in Burghfield Common, his beautiful Madonna and Child graces the Lady altar. In addition, an almost identical statue to St Luke's can be found in the chapel at Basingstoke Hospital.



At St Mary's, Woolhampton he was responsible for the window in the Lady Chapel together with the candle base for the statue. At St Oswald's in Burghfield Common, his beautiful Madonna and Child graces the Lady altar. In addition, an almost identical statue to St Luke's can be found in the chapel at Basingstoke Hospital.

The illuminated reredos panel that can be seen in the photograph was the work of Fr Alphonsus Tierney. Francis Tierney attended Douai school from the age of 12. In 1928 he entered the novitiate, taking the name Alphonsus, and was ordained on 7 April 1935. He taught at Douai School until 1948 and then became the first headmaster at Douai's junior school in Petersfield. From 1952 until 1973 he was headmaster at Douai school. From 1973 to

1978 he was prior at the abbey and finally from 1977 to 1986 he was parish priest of Woolhampton parish with special reference to the churches of Theale and Pangbourne. He is remembered with affection by several members of St Luke's congregation. His enthusiasm undimmed, in 1979 he decided that the installation of the illuminated panel would "highlight the church." This endeavour did not meet with universal approval, but Fr Alphonsus produced new panes at regular intervals which were inserted into the frame fashioned by Greg Primavesi and the panel remains to this day. Over time, the blue colour has faded leaving the bright yellow tones predominating. "Alfie" continued to serve as parish priest until 1986 when he retired to St Gregory's, Cheltenham where he died in February 1992.



Some of the artefacts in the church are closely associated with past parishioners. The font, for example, commemorates Mrs Esther Bird who was a tireless worker in the parish from 1951. In the days before St Luke's church was built she would set up the altar on card tables at the Lamb Hall, bringing her pewter candlesticks from home. In the Marian months of May and October she also brought a large statue of Our Lady of Lourdes. The Stations of the Cross, painted on silk in oak frames, are clearly not contemporary with the building. In the 1980s a church on the Caledonian Road in London was replacing its set of Stations and placed an advertisement in *The Universe* offering them to another church. Tom and Charles Bateman were dispatched to investigate and brought them back to Theale. They were deemed suitable for St Luke's and

the Bateman family secured them with a generous donation to the church on the Caledonian Road. There is an amusing postscript to this story. A few months later Newbury Police station intercepted a package addressed to the abbey because it rattled suspiciously when shaken. A monk was dispatched from the abbey to the police station where the parcel was carefully opened only to reveal the small wooden crosses from the top of the Stations.

When the church was built the possibility of adding a meeting room was envisaged. To bring this about took 25 years and the dedication of the meeting room took place on 22 June 1994 as part of the 25th anniversary celebrations. The room was named after William Kirby, a parishioner who

took great pleasure from giving rather than receiving and who was very generous with both his financial support and his time in many ways. He was instrumental in getting the room built. There was some opposition to the extension on the grounds of traffic congestion, but this was overcome and the Kirby Room has become an asset, not just to the parish, but also many groups in the local community.

St Luke's has been closely involved with the local community for the past 50 years. When fundraising for the building of the Kirby Room, magnificent summer fêtes and firework displays on 5 November were held. These events were enthusiastically supported by the whole village. In addition there were close ecumenical links forged between St Luke's and the other churches in the village. For many years these links included the United Reformed Church and Holy Trinity Anglican Church. After the United Reformed Church closed the links with Holy Trinity remained. At one time Holy Trinity had a church hall that they loaned to St Luke's for social events. Sadly this hall was destroyed by fire and not rebuilt, so when the Kirby Room was opened St Luke's were able to reciprocate and Holy Trinity continues to use the Kirby Room from time to time. One winter, after Mass had been moved to



Saturday evenings, the heating system in Holy Trinity failed and they "borrowed" St Luke's for their Sunday services. Cordial relations continue to this day.

Today St Luke's is home to a core community that is relatively small in number, but the commitment of this



small group is working wonders. The anniversary celebration was the culmination of a year's hard work by this small group. The church looked its best having been cleaned and many small but telling repairs completed. The gardens were



manicured, and the floral decorations in the church added to the beauty of the occasion. Extensive research uncovered the names of members of the worshipping community since before the church was built up to the present day and this honour roll was displayed in the church. All this hard work was rewarded with a beautiful summer's day for the celebrations. Abbot Geoffrey celebrated the Mass, with Frs Peter Bowe and Benjamin Standish concelebrating. The congregation comprised around 100 people with visitors from the other two churches of the monastery parish—St Bernadette's, Pangbourne and St Mary's, Woolhampton—as well as some of our Anglican neighbours at Holy Trinity. Mass was followed by an excellent and well-attended barbecue supper in the church grounds in glorious evening sunshine, a happy conclusion to a very special day.

Throughout the past 50 years St Luke's congregation has been a faithful and enthusiastic community. As Abbot Geoffrey pointed out in his homily during the celebration Mass, St Luke's, in common with the other churches in Woolhampton parish, has never had a resident priest. As a result the members of the congregation have had to step forward to organise much of the day-to-day operation of the church. This has encouraged commitment from the St Luke's community from the early days of the Mass centres, through the building of St Luke's and the Kirby Room, up to the challenges of the 21st century. It could be said that St Luke's, along with St Bernadette's, Pangbourne and St Mary's Woolhampton, are more prepared for the challenges facing us this century than are many other Catholic parishes.

MARGARET CHURCH

Diamond Anniversary of St Michael's, Tadley

TODAY IS THE FEAST OF ST MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS but because it falls on a Sunday this year, it is replaced by the Mass of the 26th Sunday of the year, and I offer a few reflections on its readings later. I was present, with some of you, at the 50th anniversary of this church in 2009, when Bishop Crispian Hollis was principal celebrant and preacher.

As you know, St Michael's was founded by Douai Abbey a year after the foundation stone had been laid at its sister church, St Bernadette's, Pangbourne. Tadley is still awaiting its church. This morning we are in what was designed as a parish hall. I can only suggest that as the parish began to expand greatly at this time on account of the atomic works, it was felt that Tadley required its own priest, so a presbytery was built to house him, and the parish became independent of Douai. Church and presbytery were built on what in those days was called Tadley Common, a flat area, with poor soil. The hall-cum-church was paid for by taking out a loan and by events such as garden fetes and bazaars. Tadley and Pangbourne churches were designed by Lewis Trevers, who lived just outside the latter. They thus have similarities, especially the shape and the brickwork. Mr Trevers was good at designing staircases fit for ballrooms and there was one erected in 1976 outside the chemistry lab at Douai. Presumably lack of funds and the level plain on which the church is built, prevented him erecting one here.

Whilst Tadley was still in Douai's care, it was looked after by Fr Michael Young, who travelled from the monastery to Tadley, and later to Kingsclere, on a motorbike. As he was the priest in charge, Tadley's church was dedicated to his patron. In the same way, the new church at Burghfield, which was built much later, was given St Oswald as its patron, since Fr Oswald Dorman had been for many years parish priest of the whole Woolhampton parish. Once Douai had handed Tadley over to the diocese in order that a resident priest might be appointed, Fr Michael continued to travel on his motorbike to Kingsclere, to what I think had been a hall of the freemasons, and seems to have just been recently sold. Fr Michael went blind in his old age, which prevented him mowing the abbey lawns daily, since bumping into trees became a hazard. However, he kept busy, learning braille and teaching philosophy to the young nuns at nearby Cold Ash. As a young member of the Douai community, I didn't have much contact with Tadley which went off independently once the Douai link

had been severed. However, I knew two of the diocesan priests who served here: Fr Desmond O’Ryan, who was a true gentleman, and dear Fr Roger Hendry who lived here with his parents before moving to Cosham. He left his substantial library to Douai, which, as librarian, I received.

I’ve always felt that the dedication of the church in Tadley to St Michael was appropriate, leaving aside its association with Fr Michael Young. Tadley sheltered under its neighbour Aldermaston, which became notorious for the Aldermaston anti-nuclear marches of the 1950s and 1960s, which I associate with Canon Collins and Lord Soper. In Rome, the greatest church dedicated to St Michael is the Castel Sant’Angelo (*Angelo* the Italian denoting St Michael the archangel). It was built as a brick drum-shaped mausoleum to be the tomb of Emperor Hadrian who died in 138 AD. It’s just down from St Peter’s Square. Later, when St Gregory the Great was leading public prayers to repel the plague ravaging Rome at the end of the 6th century, he had a vision of the Archangel Michael at the top of the building, sheathing his sword to indicate that the pestilence had ceased. His bronze statue is still on the top of the building. The Castel Sant’Angelo later became a fortress to defend the city from attack, which it did for a thousand years. So Tadley today, protected by the Archangel Michael, nestles under the shadow of the Aldermaston atomic establishment whose principal aim is to defend England from military attack and ultimately to aim at peace, not war.

But I must end with a short reflection on today’s gospel, the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus. It’s a morality tale, originally from Egypt, but common to many cultures. It teaches that selfishness in this life will be punished hereafter and those who now suffer will be rewarded in the future. More importantly, it teaches us that we Christians have a duty of charity, that there are no social distinctions in God’s sight. Our Lord gives this folk tale an unusual ending by describing his own resurrection from the dead, a reminder to us that all human sin has been conquered by his rising from the dead. Lazarus means “God has helped,” and so this poor creature covered in sores is a reminder of Our Lord’s own humility in taking on our human condition.

homily by ABBOT GEOFFREY SCOTT

Alongside the English Carmelites of Antwerp

RE-ENGAGEMENT AND RENEWAL

ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES facing religious communities over the past 50 years has been to re-engage with their original charisms and at the same time to respond positively to the needs of contemporary society. It seems to me that the Alongsider Programme is a concrete way in which Douai Abbey is seeking to respond to this vital task of renewal. The programme both reinvigorates the foundational Benedictine principle of hospitality as well as offering the 21st-century individual a new and dynamic way of interacting with a monastic community. From May to July 2019 I had the great privilege to participate in this programme. For just over two months I was able to live, eat, pray and work alongside the monks at Douai, thereby gaining a profound experience of a lived Benedictine spirituality as well as deepening my own life of discipleship.

An integral part of being an Alongsider is to participate in the various works undertaken by the community. This included working in the garden, cleaning rooms, clearing up after meals, serving in church and working in the library. This latter role has involved the preparation of an exhibition to celebrate the fourth centenary of the English Carmelites in Antwerp, displaying a number of exhibits housed in Douai Abbey’s library and archive. So while I have been living alongside the Benedictine community here at Douai, I have also been living alongside a 400-year old English Carmelite community of nuns in Antwerp. As I hope to show, both communities have provided me with wisdom and insights as I seek to deepen my own life of faith in the 21st century.

THE ENGLISH CARMELITES OF ANTWERP

During the 16th century, St Teresa of Avila carried out a reform of the Carmelite order which, over the following years, spread throughout Europe. Her disciple, the Venerable Anne of Jesus, in whose arms St Teresa died in 1582, played a pivotal role in introducing the Discalced Carmelites (so called because they did not wear shoes) into France and the Low Countries. In 1607 Anne of Jesus founded the Brussels Carmel, and it was there that a 17-year old English woman called Anne Worsley arrived,

seeking entry. It was as Sr Anne of the Ascension that this English woman (whose life-size portrait is in the reading room of Douai Abbey library) became the first prioress of the English Carmel at Antwerp and directly inherited, through the Venerable Anne of Jesus, the Teresian tradition.

A community of English Carmelite nuns was eventually founded in Antwerp in 1619, and remained there until 1794. A principal figure in the foundation of this English Carmel was Lady Mary Lovell. She was born Mary Roper, the daughter of Baron Teynham, and grand-niece of William Roper, the son-in-law of St Thomas More. Lady Mary had lived in exile at Brussels since the beginning of the 17th century, and, having been widowed in 1616, her principal interest was to help create several religious houses on the continent for exiled English Catholic women. She had tried her own vocation with the English Benedictine nuns in Brussels in 1609 and later with the English Augustinian Canonesses in Leuven. She chose not to persevere in the religious life, and instead pursued the foundation of her own convent.

It was with the encouragement of her confessor, the Carmelite provincial Fr Thomas of Jesus, that this aspiration to found a convent took shape. She therefore chose the Reformed Order of the Carmelites and eventually settled on Antwerp as the location. Mother Anne of the Ascension Worsley was elected first prioress, and was prioress for 26 years, dying on 23 December 1644, after serving nine terms of office.

THE BEST OF TIMES AND THE WORST

Over the next 150 years or so the Antwerp Carmel of English nuns experienced both growth and continued struggles. As the community grew, it became too large for the buildings in Antwerp and as a result daughter houses were founded in such places as Lierre (1648) and Hoogstraten (1678). They experienced many financial difficulties although these were, to a large extent, eased by generous gifts from English exiles.

In the 18th century, the tumultuous events of the French Revolution were to have a devastating impact on the Antwerp Carmel. At the suppression of the community in 1794 there were 20 sisters, 14 of them English, while two were Flemish. On 29 June 1794, the Antwerp nuns left their convent and reached London on 12 July, where they lodged in a congested house with few comforts but plenty of rats.

Eventually, on 13 September 1794, the nuns found a home at Lanherne in Cornwall, in a mediæval manor house belonging to the Catholic Arundel family of Wardour. Enclosure was established in 1797 and a

novice, Sr Anastasia of the Immaculate Conception Lost, was clothed in 1799. This was the first clothing of a religious in England since the Reformation. The nuns remained at Lanherne until they dispersed in 2001, a number of them joining St Helens Carmel in Lancashire. This joint community itself dispersed in 2015 and the remaining ex-Lanherne nuns were taken in by other carmels.

A CELEBRATORY EXHIBITION

Which brings us to Douai Abbey library and archives in 2019, and to my own small role as an Alongsider. Having received the archives of the English Carmelites of Antwerp, Lanherne and Lierre, over the past few years, Douai prepared an exhibition to celebrate the history of these remarkable women over the last 400 years. A number of rare and beautiful exhibits have been placed on display. These include the Foundation Vestments donated by Lady Lovell, a silver gilt chalice, a ciborium, and two monstrances, one from Antwerp and one from the daughter house at Lierre. Several fascinating and very rare books have been assembled for the exhibition, including one which is of particular interest for scholars of the English Benedictine mystic, Fr Augustine Baker.

LESSONS FOR AN ALONGSIDER

I want to finish by explaining why I entitled this article “Alongside the English Carmelites of Antwerp.” The more time I spent with these nuns and their history, the more I realised that I have been alongside them just as I have been living alongside the community at Douai. That is to say, their story is not simply a matter of historical interest but has important relevance for me and perhaps for all of us, in at least two ways. First, their endurance and perseverance through times of great difficulty is surely as significant now as it was then. While there were undoubtedly periods of great hope and growth, the experience of struggle and conflict was never far away. Through financial worries, eviction, expulsion and pest control, the community showed incredible resilience and perseverance. I cannot claim to suffer in anything like as dramatic a manner as this, but my period as an Alongsider has thrown up its fair share of anxieties and moments of darkness. The book of Sirach, in chapter 2, tells us that, if we seek to serve the Lord, then we will surely face times of testing, but that we should hang on, cling to God, be steadfast, not lose our nerve. Nevertheless, with all due respect to Sirach, it seems to me that the answer to such moments of

struggle is not simply to adopt the spiritual equivalent of a stiff upper lip. Rather, it is to walk in the truth, to be honest, and to reach out for help.

And this leads me to my second point of connection with the Antwerp Carmelites. It can be so easy in times of distress to run away, to become isolated and separated from others. The reason such isolation is so painful is that it cuts us off from a vital source of healing: other people. For it is in communion, be it our family, group of friends, or religious community, that we can seek help, support, and life. While I have no doubt that the Carmelite community at Antwerp-Lierre-Lanherne, was full of the usual human tensions and disagreements, it could also offer mutual encouragement and hope. Perhaps that sounds a bit idealistic, a romanticised view of community which only an outsider/Alongsider could entertain. Nevertheless, I know from my own experience that however challenging communal life may be, an isolated existence is even worse. The French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre once said *Lenfer, c'est les autres*—hell is other people. I disagree. Hell is being cut off from other people, being cut off from help, support and love.

HOPE AND HEALING

During my two months at Douai Jean Vanier died, a truly inspirational and holy man. In 1964, at the same time that religious communities were being encouraged to engage actively with modern society, Jean Vanier founded L'Arche, an international group of communities where people with learning disabilities live, pray and celebrate with their assistants. As I reflect on my time with the inspiring sisters of Antwerp together with this wonderfully warm and welcoming community at Douai I am struck by the truth of his words: "Community life is there to help us, not to flee from our deep wound, but to remain with the reality of love...We are in community for each other, so that all of us can grow and uncover our wound before the infinite, so that Jesus can manifest himself through it." (*Community and Growth*, p330).

STEPHEN ROACH

Fog & Myth: Celtic Monasticism—the Irish Tradition

EARLY ON A COLD, WINDY AND WET December morning, whilst still dark, I left Douai for my journey to the monastery of Glenstal, County Limerick, in the Republic of Ireland, to take a short course on Celtic monasticism. A few hours later I arrived to bright, warm sunshine and a welcome which matched the weather. Unfortunately, the soft days so typical of the West coast returned as anything but soft; torrential rain, fog and hail were to accompany my time in Ireland.

The stated purpose of the course, led by Br Colmán Ó Clabbaigh OSB, was to dispel some of the myths surrounding Celtic monasticism and find a more authentic understanding of the formation and influence of the Irish monastic tradition.

Irish or Celtic monasticism has often been hijacked to add credence to particular agenda of history, ecology, theology or culture. To strip away these rather constricting limitations leads to an understanding of a character rooted in, but distinctive from, the wider monastic movement developing between the fifth and tenth centuries. Seen in the light of modern research, the influence of earlier belief systems and sacred landscapes become a formative force for the emerging Christian movement in Ireland. With the uniting personalities of both Patrick and Colmcille, the unique seafaring influence on early Irish history, concepts of exile and pilgrimage already evident in early manuscripts, Irish Christianity did not emerge from a vacuum.

With the expert input of Br Colmán, assisted by Abbot Brendan and Dr Cathy Swift from Mary Immaculate College in Limerick, the three participants were invited to challenge many preconceived ideas about the whole of the "Celtic" tradition. There is nothing guaranteed to focus the mind more than standing, ankle deep, in freezing mud with the wind and rain lashing across the field, hunkered down under an upside-down umbrella while one learns how to read the carvings on a high cross. To visit the early monastic sites and to experience just what was endured by those who gave birth to such a great tradition was immensely powerful. Standing by neolithic structures which had been drawn into ancient Irish folklore only to be redirected by the emergence of Christianity gave a vivid sense of continuity and conviction.



There is evidence of artistic influences from the Middle East becoming incorporated into early Irish manuscripts which can be seen in some of the carpet pages of various liturgical texts. These designs then became incorporated into the figurative metal work and enamel of liturgical vessels and artefacts. They were further adapted into the designs which adorn many of the High Crosses. These crosses were used both to demarcate ecclesiastical boundaries and to act as catechetical aids. Silver from early coinage, often also from the Middle East, was often used in payment by traders and was melted down to make even more delicate and beautiful items for liturgical use.

Abbot Brendan led an insightful session concerning the Stowe Missal from the late eighth century, presently the only surviving indicator of early Irish liturgical practice, which shows both Roman influence along with local adaptations and inclusions. It is not possible to judge if this was a standard text and so it can only provide limited insight into the liturgical celebration of the time. However, it added to the emerging sense that what might be termed “Celtic” did not necessarily grow in a vacuum.

Dr Cathy Swift tried to convince us that our schoolboy perception of Vikings as marauding warriors bent on pillage and destruction was somewhat wide of the mark. While understanding that there was certainly a trading element to their incursions, and that substantial Irish Christian traditions went back with them to Scandinavia, she failed to convince us that they were merely cuddly, misunderstood day-trippers. Her expositions of recent archaeological evidence and research, however, did

throw a different and helpful light on the development of the Irish landscape and the cross-fertilisation of both societies which happened as a result of their encounters.

On my final morning, as we left for Shannon airport, the sun was shining on a clear, bright landscape, somehow matching the changed view I now had of the birth of Celtic monasticism and its substantial contribution to world Christianity. The myth had indeed been lifted.

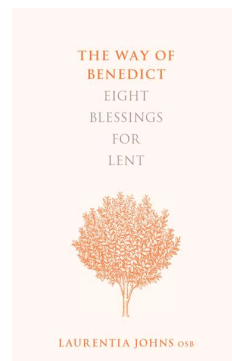
GREGORY MADDISON OSB

Book Reviews

Laurentia Johns OSB, *The Way of Benedict: Eight Blessings for Lent*, London, SPCK, 2019, ISBN 978-0-281-07581-2, pp. 123

AS PART OF THE RESEARCH for this book was undertaken in the Douai Library, and as the author is both a nun of our congregation and a friend of our community, it is both appropriate and a pleasure to review it in the pages of this magazine.

Although described as bearing eight blessings for Lent, this book actually offers a gift and a blessing for us all throughout the year. Dame Laurentia has poured into her work the fruits of her wide experience as a Benedictine nun, formator, spiritual guide, poet and writer, and has succeeded in producing a beautifully written book, full of insights that may benefit not only those vowed to live by the Rule, but also those who have not but who follow its teaching in the context of their ordinary, everyday lives outside monasteries.



“Benedictine spirituality” is a term often mentioned and yet rarely defined, so I found Dame Laurentia’s suggestion on page 37 helpful, that “Benedictine spirituality can help us to pray today in three ways: by giving a clear focus to our spiritual life, by providing the sort of environment where prayer can take root, and by enabling us, especially through the lens of attentiveness in chapters 5-7 of the Rule, to detect something of the inner dynamic of prayer.”

Each chapter, focusing on the eight blessings of “beginning, gospel living, attentiveness, the Word, worship, reverence, welcoming, and beyond,” concludes with practical suggestions for reflection and action, ensuring this book may be profitably read by both individuals and groups.

One of the book’s most attractive features is the skilful way in which the author weaves into her text rich insights not only from the Bible and the Rule but also from both ancient and modern writers.

Dame Laurentia is to be congratulated on producing a book full of insights not only to be read and studied, but also prayed and lived.

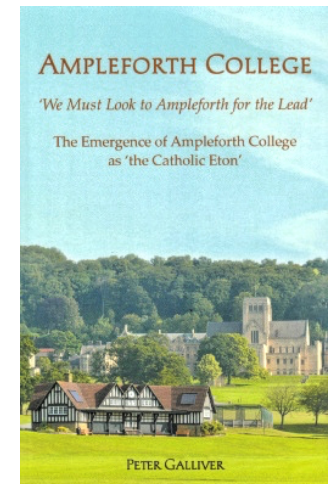
ALBAN HOOD OSB

Peter Galliver, *Ampleforth College: The Emergence of Ampleforth College as “the Catholic Eton,”* Leominster, Gracewing, 2019, ISBN 978-0-852-44939-4, pp. viii + 140

PETER GALLIVER KNOWS AMPLEFORTH WELL, having taught history in the school for twelve years. But his book is not a straightforward history of Ampleforth College. An indication is in the subtitle: this book is an attempt to examine how Ampleforth became part of the Establishment.

The Ampleforth monastic community, like the communities of Douai and Downside, has its origins in a monastic foundation in the 17th century across the English Channel, destroyed at the French Revolution and subsequently finding refuge in England. The school established by the monks was quite small and poorly endowed. It inherited many of the features of the typical continental schools such as those run by the Jesuits and the schools attached to the seminaries. The classes were named Grammar, Syntax, Poetry and Rhetoric; the administration was divided between the Prefect of Studies and the Prefect of Discipline, both under the Prior. The clientele was largely northern, especially Lancastrian, and most boys left at 16 to go into the family business, running farms and cotton mills. A significant proportion of those who stayed on beyond 16 were intending to join the monastery. Admission of Catholics to Oxford and Cambridge was not allowed.

In an interesting chapter, Galliver summarises the developments in Catholic education through the 19th century. In the first few decades of the 19th century, the Catholic population of the country was small and accustomed to keeping its head down. The most eminent Catholic schools were those associated with the seminaries, particularly Oscott, and later the Jesuit schools such as Stonyhurst and Beaumont. But at the end of that century significant change was under way. The bishops had decided that the seminaries should concentrate on forming priests. The Jesuit schools were still operating on the continental model. The universities were now open to non-Anglicans and there was greater confidence and ambition amongst Catholics.



Galliver relates how Ampleforth took the bold step of opening a private hall, now St Benet's Hall, at Oxford in 1897. The first student there was Fr Edmund Matthews, who became the first Benedictine monk since the Reformation to receive an Oxford degree. In 1903, only two years after graduating, he was appointed headmaster. He was elected abbot in 1924 and chose Fr Paul Nevill to succeed him as headmaster. Between them, these two monks reorganised the school into houses, recruited the most able lay teachers and started an ambitious building programme. In 50 years they transformed the school. Boys were to be trusted, given responsibility and encouraged to show leadership. The school as it exists today is the legacy of Met and Posh Paul.

Ampleforth is actually very different to Eton. Ampleforth is not in the home counties; it has been co-educational for nearly 20 years; the students do not wear a distinguishing uniform; there is no tradition of fagging, of Dames, or of rowing; and though it has produced many eminent military leaders, lawyers, industrialists, artists, actors, doctors, academics, journalists, diplomats, sportsmen, clergy and charity workers, it has formed almost no politicians. And yet, Galliver's book does demonstrate convincingly that Ampleforth should now be considered part of the Establishment with Eton, Harrow, Winchester and the rest. Nevertheless, the monks would warn us that being part of the Establishment is not a requirement for entry into the Kingdom of God. Fr Paul Nevill's answer when questioned about the aims of Ampleforth was: "we are preparing our boys for death."

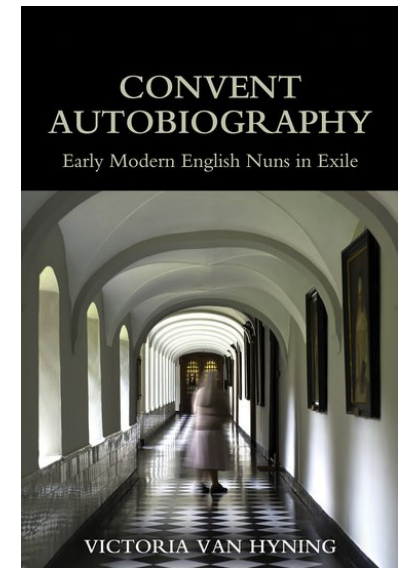
TERENCE RICHARDSON OSB



Two recent books, published by the Oxford University Press, are clear examples of how valuable are the archival collections deposited in the Douai library since it opened in 2010. The authors of both of these works acknowledge in their respective introductions the debt they owe to the Douai library where they spent much time in preparatory research for their publications. Both deal with the large number of convents founded in Europe for English Catholic women following the dissolution of the monasteries in England under King Henry VIII.

Victoria van Hying, *Convent Autobiography: Early Modern English Nuns in Exile*, Oxford, OUP, 2019, ISBN 978-0-197-26657-1, pp. 416

DR VAN HYNING'S BOOK BEGAN AS research following a Master's degree in Mediæval Literature from Oxford University and a doctorate at the University of Sheffield. She was then awarded several postdoctoral fellowships at Oxford, one of which was funded by a British Academy Fellowship attached to Pembroke College. Her interest has been in women's writing and especially in autobiographical writing found in the convents abroad. Today she works as a specialist at the Library of Congress in Washington DC. Douai Abbey library allowed her to research the archives of some of the 4,000 British Catholic women who established convents in Europe after the practice of



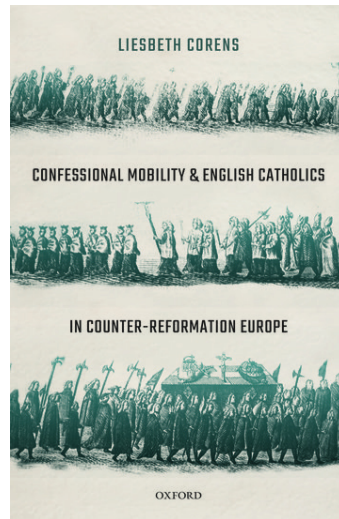
Catholicism had been declared illegal in the Tudor period. Unusual for this period, many of these nuns were literate and their archives reflect literary interests within the convents themselves as well as Catholic networks existing in the British Isles. She explores the tension inherent in the nuns' enclosed religious life with their need to solicit patronage outside the convent walls. The author has a particular interest in the nuns' "self-writing" which is found in their anonymous autobiographical chronicles, and her research led her to discover a new autobiographical genre to which she gave the title "subsumed autobiography."

In the Douai library van Hying was particularly interested in the archives of the English Canonesses of St Monica in Louvain and their daughter house, the English Convent in Bruges. These nuns enjoyed literary links with the early humanist circle of St Thomas More. As Victoria told me when I attended the launch of her book: "This book could not have been written without the help of Douai Abbey's library and archive."

Liesbeth Corens, *Confessional Mobility & English Catholics in Counter-Reformation Europe*, Oxford, OUP, 2018, ISBN 978-0-198-81243-2, pp. 256

THIS BOOK BY LIESBETH CORENS also deals with the English convents in Europe. Like van Hying, she has held a British Academy Fellowship, and was awarded a doctorate at Cambridge University in advance of her book. Corens has concentrated on the experience of exile by a minority group in early modern Europe and its place in the wider Counter-Reformation. This has involved a study of the effect of mobility and how it changed these female communities. As a result of her research, she too has created a new model genre, “confessional mobility,” for which the study of surviving archives at Douai Abbey and elsewhere has been essential. While at Douai, her interests expanded into other collections held in the library here which indicates the value of having such a large number of different collections of archives of the historic English religious orders deposited alongside each other. It was gratifying to see that she had noted in her preface the help given her in preparation for this book by an Old Dowegian, Dr Paul Arblaster.

GEOFFREY SCOTT OSB



Obituaries

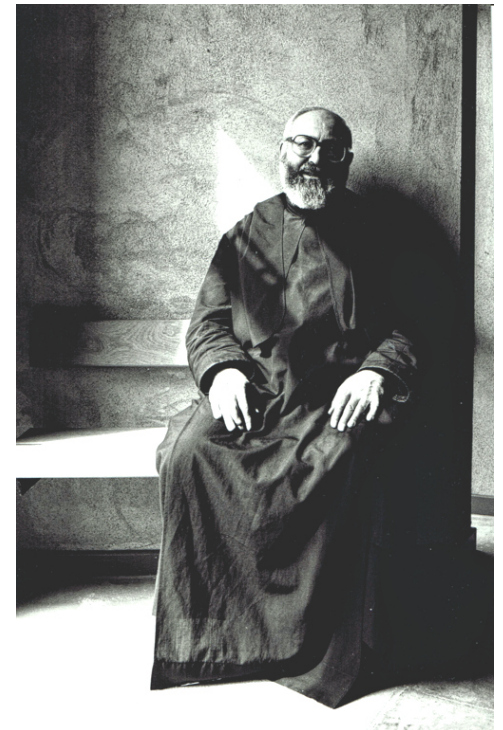
FR NICHOLAS BROADBRIDGE OSB, 1930-2019

Thomas Broadbridge was born in Liverpool on 8 March 1930 and educated at St Edward's Grammar School in Liverpool. After national service and work in London he was clothed as Br Nicholas on 19 September 1954. He was professed on 11 October 1955 and ordained priest on 11 May 1961. He took further courses in Belgium, France and Spain. For some years he taught in the school, but from 1985 he served on the mission until a serious car accident in 1995 which forced his return to the monastery. There he pursued woodwork, and developed the ministry of spiritual direction and healing he pursued up to his death on 22 October 2019.

WHEN I MET FR NICHOLAS IN 1998 after a parish talk that he gave on healing, I soon warmed to his friendly persona and engaging smile.

It is hard to describe the essence of a person in a few short paragraphs and nor do I wish to put Fr Nicholas on a pedestal, but he was indeed a very good man, gentle and kind, always generous and giving. He loved people to the full with the heart of Jesus and was much liked and loved, especially by his family and friends.

He was blessed with the gifts for a healing ministry and speaking in tongues following a deep spiritual renewal in the 1970s, which he embarked on with great care and diplomacy, constantly seeking greater intimacy with Christ and an increased desire to serve and help others.



He never personally considered himself a “healer” but always taught that our Lord Jesus Christ was and is the Healer of us all. If there is one image of him I shall always remember that is of Fr Nicholas preaching with the forefinger of his right hand pointing upwards towards Christ, reminding us constantly to ask Jesus for the gifts of forgiveness, faith, and compassion whatever our need, and to offer up all that we find difficult.

His talks and his ministry led him to give various workshops on the subject and many people were brought to him for prayerful guidance and help. He would turn no one away and was always ready with a listening ear.

He was a jolly person. He loved life: travelling, studying, reading, researching, watching sport (when he could no longer play), languages and making crafts. He had a good sense of humour and was very approachable.

He suffered for many years with various ailments and illnesses, patiently accepting their debilitating effects, and the resulting reduced mobility, fatigue and sense of isolation. He never complained. He suffered with great humility but always maintained a sunny disposition as best he could and turned his stubborn streak into sheer determination which enabled him to keep going and serve the Lord to the end!

As time moved on, he became frailer and unable to do as much as before. All that he was started to slip away but one thing was left, the most important thing of all: love. Above all things, he continued to give us his love and that love now resides in our hearts as he takes his love for us with him to the Lord. The words of St Paul (1 Cor 13:13) come readily to mind: “So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love..”

ZINA NEAGLE



ANNE ELIZABETH HOLT, 1926-2019

ANNE HOLT DIED SHORTLY BEFORE CHRISTMAS at the age of 93 after a long and busy life, spent almost entirely in and around Aylesbury, though her interests and activities ranged far beyond.

Music was central to her life but I need not say much about how she used this talent in the service of the Church, important as this was to her. To her fellow parishioners she will have been a familiar figure at the organ for almost 40 years, and Fr Kevin has alluded to her wider work with the Society of St Gregory in promoting music in the liturgy.

Anne was born in 1926 in Prestwood, near Great Missenden, the only child of Gwladys Jones and Jack Walters, a solicitor who had come to Bucks three years earlier to join the local firm of Parrott & Coales, where he was senior partner for many years until his sudden early death in 1954 and where Anne’s cousin Owen, and husband John, were later to become partners.

Both Anne’s parents were from North Wales, her father from Conway and her mother from Amlwch on the far corner of Anglesey, where her large family had strong local roots. Though not brought up to speak Welsh like her cousins, Anne spent many long and happy holidays in the company of her Amlwch relations and cherished the memory of its rocky, wind-blown coastline throughout her life.

The family moved to Aylesbury in 1928 and a few years later Anne was one of the first pupils at Prebendal House, next to the Anglican church of St Mary, where she formed a special friendship that would last throughout her life. Later she was sent to board at St Swithun’s in Winchester, where her love of music and Christian faith were further nurtured.

Anne was 13 when war broke out and 19 when it ended. Her teenage years would have been tinged with anxiety for relations and friends facing danger and captivity and she was devastated when her adored elder cousin, Edwin, was killed fighting with the commandos on D-Day.

After leaving St Swithun’s she trained for three years as a nursery and infant-school teacher at the Froebel Institute, returning to Aylesbury in 1946, when still only 20, to become headmistress of the recently-opened Fairmile Nursery off Turnfurlong. The record of her struggles to keep the pipes and children from freezing during the severe winter of 1947 can still be read in her distinctive, fluent hand in the school log preserved now in the county archives.

Soon after returning to Aylesbury she met her future husband John, then already in his 30s and who, after demobilisation, had moved to Aylesbury from Oxford to take up a post as a county council solicitor. She invited him to her 21st birthday party at Quaglino’s Ballroom, off Piccadilly, receiving a copy of *The Diary of a Nobody* in exchange. Two years later, in April 1949, they became engaged and on 8 September that year were married at St Teresa’s, Princes Risborough, when she was 23. A year later Thomas, now Fr Oliver, was born, followed by me two years later.

1949 was also the year in which Anne, who had been brought up as an Anglican, became a Catholic. John was from a Catholic family with an elder brother in the Jesuits, and there were those in the town who offered

her sympathy for having to “turn” in this way to facilitate her marriage. In truth, the seeds had been sown much earlier and even at school, when attending services in the mediæval surrounds of Winchester Cathedral she had begun to question whether she was, as she put it, “in the right department” or whether for her the Holy Catholic Church in the creed meant something different. Thereafter, her new faith was the main inspiration in her life and she was hugely proud when Thomas entered the Benedictines at Douai.

Following her conversion, Anne immersed herself in parish life, first at St Joseph’s in the High Street, later at St Clare’s in Elmhurst and finally, on John’s retirement in 1974, at St Anne’s, Wendover. She was a founder member of the Aylesbury section of the Catholic Women’s League in the 1950s and held office at both local and diocesan levels. Coming from an Anglican family and with a mother raised in Welsh Methodism, she was an early and enthusiastic supporter of ecumenism.

Through the CWL she became involved in the National Council of Women, at one point combing regularly through Hansard as its Parliamentary Reporter. One wonders how she managed to fit it all in.

Anne’s teaching career had ended in 1949, the year of her marriage, but she remained active in local education, serving as a governor of Aylesbury High School and several local primary schools. Child welfare was later central to her role as a magistrate on the Aylesbury Bench, to which she was appointed in 1969, very much to her surprise. She served there for 20 years, only standing down in 1989 as she approached the age when, as she put it, she would be “disqualified by antiquity” from sitting in the juvenile court.



Anne was an accomplished pianist, winning a first-class certificate of merit at the Aylesbury Festival of the Arts in 1955. Her prize was a 78rpm recording of her performance together with its adjudication in the distinctive tones of the conductor, music publisher, and later close friend and Wendover resident, Kenneth Robertson—an experience she was able to relive in her last years following its transfer to CD. As children, we would listen to her playing after she had put us to bed and the sound of Bach’s

Mortify Us by Thy Goodness, so beautifully performed by today’s organist, Ben Frost, is a particular memory. Anne retained a deep love of classical music and following the refurbishment of St Mary’s in Aylesbury in the 1970s was a driving force in the establishment and organization of its weekly “Music at Lunchtime” concerts.

Today, at their first concert of the New Year, her successors are including a special tribute to her in the programme in recognition of her role over the almost four decades that the concerts have continued.

In 1979 Anne was awarded the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* medal by the Vatican for her services to the Church and in 2017 was presented by the Mayor of Aylesbury with a Certificate of Appreciation for her years of service to the Friends of St Mary’s and the local community. She never sought praise and was genuinely surprised when it came. She was, however, indefatigable in defending and promoting what she saw as important and never shrank from confrontation where required, as some here may recall.

More privately, her warm and fun-loving nature, supplemented by her Froebel training, made her a wonderful mother, attentive and encouraging to us when young, discreetly supportive as we grew older and, above all, open-hearted, her house in Butler’s Cross always a haven of hospitality. She was also a loyal and caring friend and a source of support to anyone needing her help. Typically, even in her late 80s she would go by taxi every week to a retirement home in Risborough to visit an older acquaintance with little, if any, family of her own.

She was never one to take herself too seriously. She also scorned pomposity in others—“not one of the qualities (I) admired,” as she once told a CWL conference, on a similar occasion naming Winnie the Pooh as an early role model when pondering tricky decisions.

In private, she was also a fine mimic and would regularly entertain the family with re-enactments of the day’s encounters. All was done with a wry and gentle wit that came, I suspect, from her mother and her Anglesey roots, memories of which would bring a smile to her face to the last.

From the eulogy delivered by JAMES HOLT

Community Chronicle 2019

January

The year's beginning was dominated by the **STORM DAMAGE** to the abbey church late in November. The abbey church was closed to public use for the duration and even the community could use only the choir, which meant larger liturgies had to be held in St Mary's. With access to the bookshop now impossible, Fr Gervase set up a stall in conference room corridor which served remarkably well. The abbey church concert programme inevitably suffered as well. We were blessed with some generous donations towards the repair, not least from the local Donnington Hospital Trust; for all of these the community is most grateful.

In the middle of the month the tidying of the **RECEPTION AREA** was completed with a cushion for the wooden bench installed outside the bursar's office. The cushion was made by our seamstress Sally Fish, and we can now offer visitors something more comfortable than concrete slabs on which so sit and wait.

On 14 January **FR BONIFACE** was able to return to Ormskirk after some weeks' recuperation from a nasty fall in the abbey church. The silver lining to this cloud was the he was able to spend Christmas with the community.

In Cheltenham, on 27 January, Fr Abbot attended the **BOOKLAUNCH** of *The Indomitable Mr Cotham: Missioner, Convict Chaplain and Monk*, by Joanna Vials (right). A biography of Fr Ambrose Cotham, one of our monks who served in Australia and Cheltenham, the book's foreword was written by the abbot.



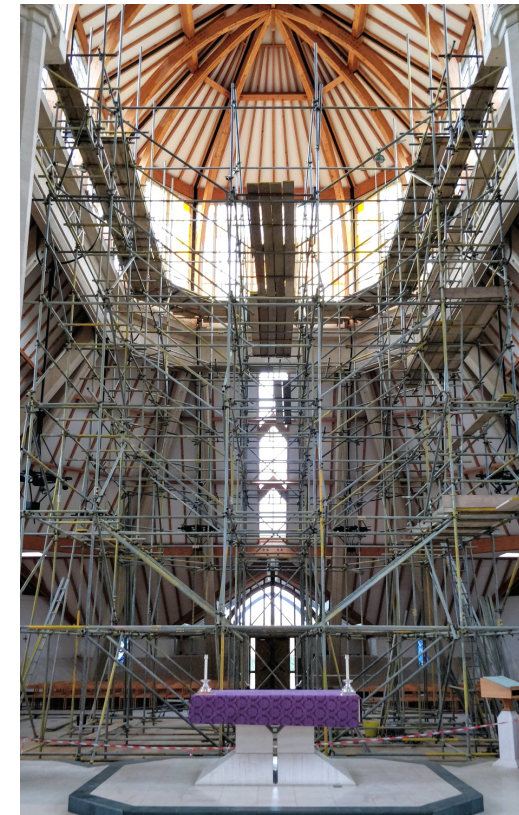
February

Though it would be a quiet month, February began with ice and snow. Nevertheless, 60 confirmandi from Eton College braved the elements for a day of recollection here on 1 February.

The dominating event of the month was the community's **ANNUAL CONVENTUAL CHAPTER** held late in the month. Apart from the chapter itself there was a presentation to the assembled community by Praesidium, the American non-religious body which now monitors and assesses the safeguarding practices of the various monasteries of the EBC. The brethren also met individually with the Praesidium representatives.

March

On 7 March Fr Hugh moved to our parish in **SCARISBRICK**, where he will assist Frs Godric and Boniface both there and in Ormskirk, while preparing for further studies.



By the end of the month scaffolding had been erected in the abbey church to allow for the repairs to be done safely and effectively. Such was the scale of the repairs and remedial works needed, as well as the relative inaccessibility of the nave clerestory, the scaffolding needed was very extensive indeed.

It must have been a bracing sight for the clergy of Nottingham diocese who came to stay from 11 March for a retreat.

A week earlier, the various **SUPERIORS OF THE EBC** met at Douai with the Abbot President. The main topic for discussion was monastic formation

in all its various stages, from the initial training of novices to the continuing formation of professed monks and nuns.

On 21 March we celebrated a liturgically-rescaled solemnity of St Benedict in St Mary's. Present for Mass and the festal lunch was Andrew Proud, the retiring Anglican Bishop of Reading. It was a farewell visit, and after lunch he presented the community with a wonderful Ethiopian icon of the Last Supper. As you will learn from his article on page 45 he spent some time there as an Anglican bishop prior to his coming to Reading.

At the end of the month BISHOP PHILIP EGAN of Portsmouth and his selection team were at Douai to interview potential candidates for the diocesan priesthood.



By now Fr Gabriel was well into restoring Fr Bernard's model of READING ABBEY (*opposite*) constructed in 1970 for an exhibition. His work should be ready for its golden jubilee in 2020. As well as restoring it, Fr Gabriel is enhancing some of its landscaping features. The model gives a much needed overall perspective on how Reading Abbey would have looked in its prime as one of the great monasteries of England. The model will be displayed in the library cloister along with models of the 1993 abbey church extension and the 1966 Frederick Gibberd design for the new monastery.



April

Early in the month Bishop Philip returned to Douai with 30 OF HIS CLERGY to spend a Lenten Day of Recollection before Holy Week.

On 12 April Frs Peter and Benjamin attended the funeral of the mother of one of our longest serving kitchen staff members, Graham Giles. May she rest in peace.



HOLY WEEK was constrained by the repairs to the abbey church, but nevertheless the community's liturgies for the Triduum continued, celebrated in the more intimate locale of St Mary's. Good Friday Stations of the Cross were held in the meadow, with the young silver birch trees to mark each station leading to the imposing Calvary crucifix in its grotto adjacent to the monks' garden. This year Easter Sunday Mass was celebrated by the Abbot President, Christopher Jamison. Fr Gregory prepared a richly flowered paschal candle stand. Early in Holy Week Fr Gregory made his second perseverance as a novice.

In Easter week Douai hosted the 20 or so participants gathered for the annual EBC HISTORY SYMPOSIUM. Among the topics for the

papers presented were Dom Gregory Ould, a musician monk of the now-closed Fort Augustus Abbey, and Dom Joseph Kennedy, a monk of our own community in the late 17th century and a convinced Jacobite.

Just prior to the Symposium we heard the sad news that JACK EYSTON, of Mapledurham House on the Thames, had died. He was a long time friend of the community. May he rest in peace.

May

It was a busy early May for the abbot. On 1 May he concelebrated with Bishop Philip Egan as the latter conferred the sacrament of Confirmation to pupils at St Mary's, Ascot. Right after this Fr Abbot went to Reading Minster to attend the official farewell of the Anglican bishop of Reading, Andrew Proud. On 5 May Fr Abbot himself conferred Confirmation on 15 pupils of Winchester College in St Mary's, Woolhampton. He would confirm more young people next month in our parish at Alcester.

Also early in the month a man arrived to take part in our ALONGSIDER PROGRAMME, which allows men to live and work with the monastic community over a number of weeks.

About this time FR LOUIS began to experience a decline in his health and a need for enhanced treatment over the next few weeks.

Frs Abbot and Finbar were three days at Buckfast for a workshop on SAFEGUARDING run by Praesidium; Fr Finbar's report is on page 56.

In mid-May FR GERVASE gave the third and final talk in his series on the development of the *Antiphonale Monasticum*, which we use at vespers. He had given these talks as part of our regular Monday community meetings.

At the May meeting of the abbot's council PETER BRYAN was thanked for his years of service as one of the financial advisors to the community, a service offered free of charge. We wish him well for the future.

At the end of May FR ALBAN was in the Irish county of Meath to lead a clergy retreat. While there he was able to visit Silverstream Priory, a young Benedictine community which is attracting a goodly number of vocations.

Towards the close of the month a number of students for the PERMANENT DIACONATE from several dioceses came to Douai on retreat.

June

On Sunday, 2 June, a number of the community were at MAGDALENE COLLEGE in Cambridge for the biennial singing of vespers in the college chapel. After vespers the Fellows offered the brethren a fine supper in the college refectory and accommodation to several of the monks for the night. Magdalene was originally a Benedictine house. With Frs Abbot, Oliver, Godric and Hugh, were Fr Oswald of Ampleforth and Br Jarek of Glenstal, both of whom joined us from Oxford. Beefing up the numbers of the monastic choir were the university chaplain, Fr Mark Langham, and Brs John and Daniel of the Dominicans at Blackfriars in Cambridge. Br Daniel is a former parishioner of the monastery parish at Woolhampton.

In the second week of June the scaffolding in the abbey church began to be dismantled. The same week seminarians from ALLEN HALL came on retreat to Douai.

On 15 June Fr Abbot presided over the ABBATIAL ELECTION at St Anselm's Abbey in the American capital, Washington DC. Abbot James Wiseman was re-elected to serve a third term. *Ad multos annos!*

During the month the exhibition on the ENGLISH CARMELITE NUNS of Antwerp opened in our library. Much of their archive and rare book collection is in safekeeping at Douai.

On 21 June a group of students from the Anglican training college at ST STEPHEN'S HOUSE in Oxford visited Douai for a day of recollection, and were able to see the exhibition in the library.

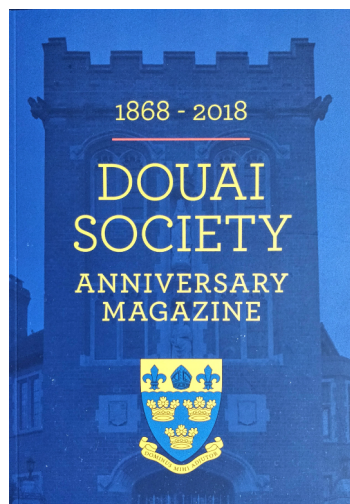
The next day Fr Abbot celebrated Mass at ST LUKE'S IN THEALE for the 50th anniversary of the church there. With him were Frs Peter and Benjamin. More on the anniversary can be found on page 82.

Meanwhile, on the same day, FR GODRIC was in Liverpool Cathedral to be inducted by Cardinal Edwin O'Brien as a chaplain to the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre.

On 25 June Fr Abbot was confirming again, this time the 21 confirmandi prepared by Fr Benedict at our parish in STUDLEY.

Two days later Fr Abbot was at STANBROOK ABBEY to fulfil the happy duty of receiving the solemn vows of Sr Marian Sweeting-Hempsall. *Ad multos annos!*

On 29 June the first CONCERT was held in the abbey church since the storm damage closed the church last November. There was still some scaffolding up so it was not quite mission accomplished yet for the church repairs.



Australia, summoning up enough verve to hold the youngsters to an honourable draw.

July

On 1 July 20 visitors from the NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY in London came to view our extensive collection of ecclesiastical portraits, which are hung throughout the monastery and the library. Most date from our days in France and came over with the Douai community when it was exiled in 1903, through we have a number of portraits of English Carmelite nuns and Canonesses of St Augustine, given over to our care by their communities.

One such portrait, of the Carmelite Mother Anne of the Ascension Worsley, graces the cover of the CATALOGUE (right) accompanying the Antwerp Carmelite exhibition in the monastery library and released this month. With detailed historical notes written by the abbot and Stephen Roach, the limited-edition catalogue was produced by Fr Hugh for the Weldon Press and is available from the Librarian at £5, which includes UK postage (cheques to be made payable to "Douai Abbey"). This unique exhibition runs until Easter 2020. Stephen's article arising from the exhibition can be found above on page 91.



The abbot was busy this month with EBC ABBATIAL ELECTIONS. On 9 July he was at Ealing Abbey in London to preside over the chapter which elected Fr Dominic Taylor as its new abbot. The next week he was at Stanbrook Abbey in North Yorkshire to perform the same duty; the sisters elected Dame Anna Brennan as their new abbess. *Ad multos annos!*

On the eve of St Benedict's day the community CLEANED THE ABBEY CHURCH. With the scaffolding erected for repairs by then removed completely, this church cleans marked the completion of the remedial works and the return of the abbey church to full use. It is now a better church than prior to the storm damage, as you will have learned from Dr Greg Primavesi's report on page 58.

August

As usual, most of August was given over to the resident community's SUMMER HOLIDAY. The middle of the month brought the sad news of the murder while on duty of PC Andrew Harper on the A4 and within the borders of the monastery parish. May he rest in peace.

On the feast of the Assumption of Our Lady FR LOUIS was able to visit from his care home and join the community for its festal lunch. His exhaustive library of works relating to the philosopher Martin Heidegger is now being moved into the monastery library for preservation.

The morning of 16 August broke to scenes of slaughter in the monastery garden after a fox had managed to get in and KILL 30 OF THE POULTRY housed there. While the guinea fowl and special breeds were spared, the majority of the laying hens were killed, leaving Fr Gabriel with the sombre duty that day to dispose of them.

Our staff took the opportunity of the holiday period to use the newly-acquired mobile tower to maintain the higher windows in the choir and sanctuary of the abbey church. Such ongoing maintenance had been impossible before the acquisition of the tower, a happy fruit of the storm damage to the church. The purchase of the tower has been made possible by the donations of generous benefactors, to whom our thanks are due.

In the last week of the month the COMMUNITY'S ANNUAL RETREAT was engagingly led by Abbot Martin of Prinknash Abbey. With us for the retreat, as has become customary, were the Anglican brethren from Salisbury. Sadly this year they were without Dom Kenneth Newing, who died in May in his 96th year. May he rest in peace.

FR RICHARD, serving the parishes of Fishguard and St Davids in Wales, was unable to be with us for the retreat due to his father's fast-failing health. Indeed, during the retreat Horatio Jones passed away. May he rest in peace.

September

On the first of the month Fr Oliver took over as GUESTMASTER for the monastery. He replaces Fr Finbar, who will begin new work after a short break.

On the third of the month three of the sisters from DARLINGTON CARMEL visited Douai and were able to view the Antwerp Carmelite exhibition in the library. While at Douai they reached an agreement with the abbot for their archives to be housed and cared for at Douai.

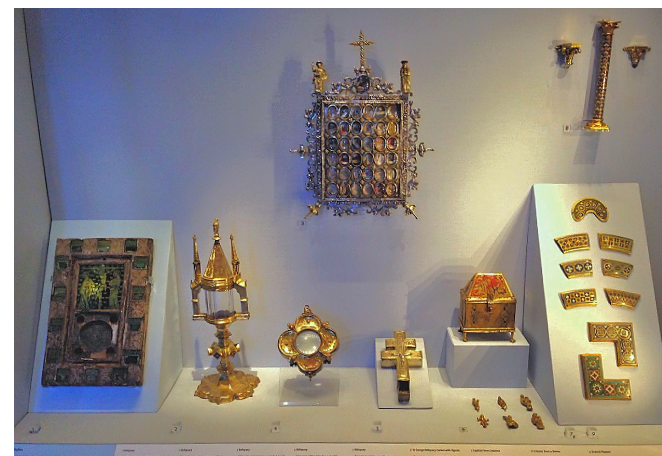
A couple of days later the Abbot President's Regimen, or council, met at Douai, and for the first time used Skype to allow Abbot James of St Anselm's, Washington DC, and Prior Francis Straw at Buckfast to take part without having to travel to Douai.

On the last day of the month THOMAS MESSENGER arrived at Douai to begin his monastic postulancy. If both he and the community discern clear prospects of a vocation he will be clothed as a novice in the new year.

The same day 34 clergy of the DIOCESE OF PORTSMOUTH, in company with Bishop Philip Egan, arrived at Douai for a retreat ably led by Abbot Xavier Perrin of Quarr Abbey.

October

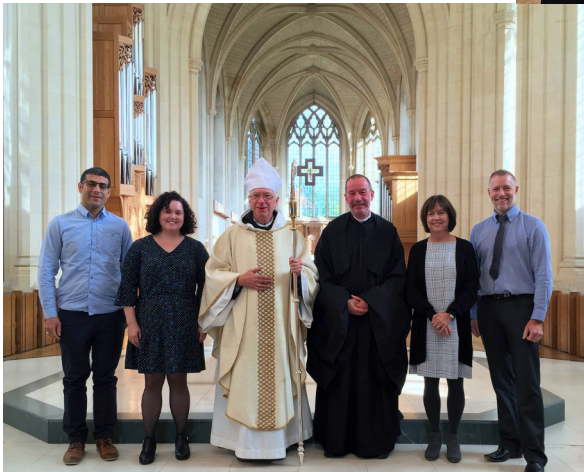
After conservation work, a 14th-century RELIQUARY in the possession of the monastic community and described in the previous issue of *The Douai Magazine*, was put on display in Room 84—the Sacred Silver Gallery—at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Made between 1300 and 1325, it was likely commissioned by the monastery at Bury St Edmunds. It is a rare survival from the wholesale destruction of monastic sacred treasures during the Dissolution under Henry VIII. It is on the left in the photo below.



On 5 October the community at Douai welcomed BR JOHN GEORGE of Downside and BR ANDREW PRICKETT of Buckfast, who will be staying at Douai in term time while pursuing their ecclesiastical studies in Oxford.

In the second week of the month the SUPERIORS of the various EBC monasteries of monks and nuns were at Douai for one of their regular conferences with the Abbot President. Also present were the abbess of Kylemore in Ireland and the prioress of Mariavall in Sweden, both of which monasteries are in the process of petitioning to join the EBC.

In the abbey church, before the abbot and community Fr Gregory made his FIRST PROFESSION OF VOWS on 15 October. Joining him for this blessed day were some of his family and close friends. *Ad multos annos!*



*From top left—
reading the vows;
the kiss of peace;
family & friends*

On his way back from a Douai Abbey Parishes' Trust meeting in Ormskirk on 17 October, the abbot collected the first consignment of manuscripts and rare books belonging to COLWICH ABBEY, a convent of EBC nuns founded in 1651 in Paris. The nuns have asked Douai to conserve their significant collection in our archive.

From 21 to 25 October Bishop Peter Doyle and a contingent of his clergy from the DIOCESE OF NORTHAMPTON were at Douai on retreat.

FR NICHOLAS, after a short illness, died in hospital on 22 October, fortified by the rites of the Church. Despite the permanent infirmity he endured after a serious car accident in 1995, he remained to the end an indefatigable spiritual counsellor to the many laity who came to see him. A remembrance of him can be found on page 103 above. *Requiescat in pace.*

Two groups from the FRIENDS OF READING ABBEY were given tours of the monastery library on 29 and 31 October.

On 30 October 20 monks and nuns of the EBC gathered at Douai to participate in a WORKSHOP ON LEADERSHIP run by Carol Vanstone. Joining them for the workshop were Archabbot Jeremias Schroder of St Ottilien Abbey in Bavaria and six of his monks.

November

In the early afternoon of 6 November the community celebrated the FUNERAL MASS of Fr Nicholas in the abbey church, his body having been solemnly received into the church the night before. The church was almost full as his friends, family, parishioners and Old Dowegians gathered to pay their last respects and commend him to God's mercy. Among the family present was his sister Rina, who did not let her 102 years prevent her from travelling down from Liverpool. He was laid to rest in the monastic graveyard to the north of the abbey church.

The second annual BASIL GWYDIR LECTURE was delivered on 9 November in the new pavilion in Douai Park. It was given by Charles Antelme, an Old Dowegian, who spoke on his career in the British army. The lecture is named in honour of Dom Basil Gwydir, a monk of Douai, who lost his life in 1914 while serving as a military chaplain aboard the hospital ship *HMHS Rohilla* when it sank off Whitby. It was reported by survivors that as the ship sank he remained below decks to be with the immobile patients, and so drowned with them, a true if unacknowledged martyr of charity.

20 November, ST EDMUND'S DAY, saw the community celebrating our patronal feast day, this year in company with the Abbot President, Fr Wulstan Peterburs of Ampleforth and Bishop Alan Hopes of East Anglia. For lunch we were joined also by our local bishop, Philip Egan of Portsmouth, who was with a group of theologian friends.

December

BISHOP PHILIP returned on 3 December with a group of his clergy for a day of recollection led by Abbot Cuthbert Brogan of Farnborough Abbey.

The same day Fr Finbar represented the community at the funeral at Cold Ash of SR PADDY BRADY FMM, who had died just short of her century. Since Douai has served the sisters there for many years she was known to most of the community for her indomitable spirit and strong singing voice. May she rest in peace.

After having been unable to use the abbey church last year due to the storm damage, the LOCAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS were able to return this year for their annual carols' concert on 4 December.

On 12 December two car loads of monks went down to vote in the general election. Returned as our new local member was LAURA FARRIS, a one-time parishioner at Douai.

Fr Nick King SJ and 12 JESUIT SCHOLASTICS arrived the next day to make a retreat and to renew their vows.

During the night FR BERNARD suffered a bad fall and had to be taken to hospital for ongoing treatment and assessment. Please keep him in your prayers.

On 19 December FR ARMAND DE MALLERAY FSSP began a weekend retreat at Douai for 34 retreatants. Fr Armand served for some years in Reading and is well known to the community.

Frs Austin and Oliver celebrated their GOLDEN JUBILEE of monastic profession on 20 December. *Ad multos annos!*

Sadly, the next day Fr Oliver's mother passed away. Her obituary is on page 104. May she rest in peace.

HUGH SOMERVILLE KNAPMAN OSB

Monastic Community 2020

Rt Rev Geoffrey Scott, abbot since 1998, is also librarian and archivist. He teaches church history at Blackfriars Hall, Oxford and is President of the Catholic Archives Society, annalist of the EBC, and member of *The Douai Magazine* committee.

Very Rev Alban Hood is prior, novicemaster, choirmaster, member of *The Douai Magazine* committee, and a censor of books for the EBC.

Rt Rev Finbar Kealy is abbot emeritus and Cathedral Prior of Canterbury.

Rt Rev Edmund Power is abbot emeritus of St Paul's-outside-the-Walls in Rome. He teaches at Collegio Sant'Anselmo in Rome, where he also serves as Roman procurator for both the EBC and the St Ottilien Congregation.

Fr Gervase Holdaway is subprior, director of oblates, baker, and manager of our bookshop.

Very Rev Godric Timney is Cathedral Prior of Worcester, and parish priest of Ormskirk and Scarisbrick (Lancs). He is also Episcopal Vicar for Religious in the Liverpool archdiocese.

Fr Bernard Swinhoe is retired and prays for Church and society.

Fr Louis O'Dwyer is retired and prays for Church and society.

Fr Peter Bowe is the parish priest of Woolhampton, and sits on the abbot's council.

Fr Boniface Moran is assistant priest at Ormskirk and Scarisbrick and chaplain to the Douai Society.

Fr Austin Gurr serves as parish priest of Andover (Hants).

Fr Oliver Holt is the bursar and guestmaster, sits on the abbot's council, organises concerts in the abbey church, and is the community's liaison with the Douai Society.

Fr Alexander Austin is the parish priest of Stratford-upon-Avon (Warks).

Fr Francis Hughes is the parish priest of Kemerton (Glos) and serves on the Marriage Tribunal for Clifton diocese.

Fr Richard Jones is the parish priest of Fishguard and St Davids (Pemb), and edits the annual *Ordo* for the EBC.

Fr Paul Gunter is parish priest of Alcester (Warks), and sits on the abbot's council. He is also Secretary to the Department of Christian Life and Worship of the Conference of Bishops of England and Wales.

Fr Benedict Thompson serves as the parish priest of Studley (Warks).

Fr Benjamin Standish is assistant priest in Woolhampton parish and assistant guestmaster.

Br Christopher Greener is infirmarian and assists in the pastoral programme.

Br Simon Hill serves as properties' manager, and assistant to both the bursar and the infirmarian.

Fr Hugh Somerville Knapman serves in the parishes of Scarisbrick and Ormskirk, sits on the abbot's council, and is publisher and webmaster.

Fr Gabriel Wilson is pastoral programme director, vocation director, and keeps our bees and poultry.

Fr Gregory Maddison is in his second year of novitiate.

Br Aidan Messenger is in the first year of his novitiate.

This list does not necessarily include all of the work undertaken by members of the community.



Ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus

