

English
Catholic



History
Association

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NEWSLETTER

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NEWSLETTER ARTICLES AND FEEDBACK

always welcome

Please send contributions to the editor Mrs Sheila Mawhood, the ECHA Publicity Officer at the address on page 3. [By email please and if possible saved with file extension of .doc in Word, photos in .jpg format.

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West Midlands, North West England, Wessex and Wales: VACANT

NEWS & NOTES

- The Universe recently mentioned the following London shrines:
 - The Carmelite Convent, St Charles Square W10 (in 1915 Our Lady appeared to a nun and told her to draw a picture of the apparition – ‘Our Lady of Notting Hill’ – see right.)
 - Our Lady of Assumption & St Gregory Church, Warwick St, Piccadilly Circus W1
 - The Carmelite Church, Kensington Church St, W8, Our Lady of Muswell Church, 1 Colney Hatch Lane, N10 1PN
 - Our Lady of Willesden Shrine, 1 Nicoll Rd, NW10 9AX.



The ECHA visited Willesden in 2002. Perhaps we are due for another visit. What do members think?

- English Martyrs ceiling finished...the ceiling in the Chapel of St George and the English Martyrs in Westminster Cathedral has been completed. The names of the 40 martyrs are emblazoned in mozaic across a dark sky in the chapel vault, and there is a depiction of the Tyburn gallows in marble on the west wall. As you face the gallows, you are pointing directly towards the site of Tyburn 2 miles away.



- The Pope will be travelling to Fatima on 13th May for the 100th anniversary day of the first apparition of Our Lady of Fatima in 1917. The World Apostolate of Fatima in England and Wales commemorated this special event on 18th February, when, in Westminster Cathedral, H E Cardinal Vincent Nichols received, blessed and crowned the National Pilgrim Statue of Our lady of Fatima and celebrated Mass.
- The Catholic Family History Society are launching a new electronic database in October 2017, an index to the names and details of over 250,000 Catholics and their Friends in England 1680 – 1840. To express your interest and reserve a place contact: cfsrecords@gmail.com.
- Our sympathies go to Father Andrew Goodman and the parishioners of Holy Cross Church in Bedminster, Bristol which closed permanently at the end of February 2017.

Holy Cross Church (right and below) was built in 1922, erected as a successor to a building in Victoria Street in Bristol City, which in turn replaced an earlier building in East Street, Bedminster, built in 1854.



Bedminster was the home of a famous shrine, dedicated to St Katherine of Alexandria. The remnants of the shrine were demolished in 1887. The 1854 church in East Street was a short distance from the site of the shrine.

- Still on the subject of church closures, Chris Magner has produced an interesting study of St Mary Magdalene Church of Much Wenlock, in Shropshire, which sadly closed in 2008. Chris has carried out this research as a tribute to those in Much Wenlock who are doing their best to keep the Catholic tradition alive in the town, after the loss of their church. For details of Chris' publication, see Book Reviews.

- Much Wenlock is the resting place of St Milburga. Chris Magner would be grateful for any information on this lovely little church [right] in Church Stretton, Shropshire, dedicated to St Milburga. In this church there is a small plaque to Gertude Octavia Benson - a remarkable lady, daughter of a Church of



England Vicar. She was one of thirteen children who became a convert and paid off the debts of the church around 1930. It must have taken courage to convert to Catholicism in the 1920's, especially when your father was a vicar!

- Martin Blake has written a review in our Books section of Donal Anthony Foley's book, "The Secret of Glaston Tor". Donal Foley has now published a second book in the series, "The Dark Tower" and is working on a third volume called, "The Glaston Chronicles". Martin suggests that these books are the Christian response to the magical "Harry Potter" series.
- Our cheery Editor, ..Sheila Mawhood, is hors de combat at present so I have stepped inadequately into her shoes for the March Newsletter. Hopefully you will have your Editor back in time for the June edition.

DR KEVIN MCGARRY

Members will have noted the death of Dr Kevin McGarry recorded in the December newsletter. Many newish members will not have known him but his invaluable contribution to ECHA must be recorded and his articles and booklet brought to your attention. Kevin joined the English Catholic History Group (which became the English Catholic History Association when it obtained Charity status in 1998) following his move to live in Warminster, after his retirement as a lecturer in education, in 1993. He was a Committee Member and trustee of ECHA from 1995 to 2003 and our Research Consultant for many years.

Kevin made an extremely valuable contribution to ECHA with the many articles that he wrote for the newsletter from December 1993 to 2006, also "A Reader's Guide to English Catholic History" which was published by ECHA in 2001. Although it sold well through ECHA and the CTS it was decided, rather than reprint, to produce a new updated edition with improved presentation. Kevin worked on this for some time, producing many additions but regrettably felt he could no longer continue the work when he became ill with leukaemia. It is still hoped that someone else will take on the task.

The first run of Articles by Kevin were "Notes for researchers", 12 contributions published from March 1996 to December 1998 (the first 5 are just one page of references). These follow his initial article in December 1993, "Catholic Education in the nineteenth century: some preliminaries for research". His more extensive work "Education and English Catholicism" was published in 15 newsletter articles from Dec. 2001 to Dec. 1995. The booklet was produced from these articles.

Other articles by Kevin include :

"What about the children: problems for recusant parents", March 1996.

"Communications in Penal Times: spreading the word", June 1995.

"Catholic Women in Penal Times: some directions for research", December 1995.

"The first Millenium: some characters and reflections" December 1999.

I still have copies of newsletters containing the articles and will try to make them available to members at some of our future meetings. Please note my request for a volunteer to re-edit Kevin's booklet to enable ECHA to have it reprinted.

Toni Eccles

ARMY CHAPLAINS

Gordon Amand, one of our members, has shown me a privately-produced book about 25 army chaplains, mainly Catholic, who were killed or died during or shortly after WWI and about 2 army chaplains who were killed in WWII, shortly after the D-Day landings. The book is obviously the result of much research. It does not give full biographical details of these brave men but gives great details of the actions in which they lost their lives and, where known, the locations of their graves.

Gordon has reminded me that Dr. James Hagerty, who spoke to us about chaplains at our Day Conference at Downside Abbey in October 2014, has published a book, **The Cross and the Sword**, on this subject.

Gordon has a special interest in chaplains who served in the Boer War or WWI and would be pleased to hear from any member or other person who has a similar interest.

Bernard Polack

MARTYRS ON YOUR DOORSTEP

I was contacted recently by a fellow parishioner of the parish of the English Martyrs in Chard, asking whether I would help with research for a pageant which they hope to put on to commemorate the centenary of the church in Chard. I thought first of all I should find out about the martyrs connected with Chard, and discovered that the Venerable John Hambley was arrested in Chard in 1585. He promised conformity, was reprieved from the gallows and sent to prison, whereupon he escaped but was apprehended again in 1586. Again he wavered but at the last minute said he was ashamed of his weakness and refused to conform, being executed in 1587. I rather warmed to this very human sounding martyr. Casting around on the internet for any more local martyrs, I was surprised to find one on my doorstep. The Blessed James Fenn lived about two miles down the road from me, in Montacute. The following is the account of his life from the website of the Church of the Holy Ghost, Yeovil:

The Life and Death of Blessed James Venn

“James Fenn (born circa 1540) appears to have come from a respectable Catholic family, with his brothers John and Robert becoming priests in their lifetimes. Born in Montacute, James won admittance to study at New College, Oxford, through his impressive singing performance as a chorister. He was noted for his gentleness and good humour. Later he was made scholar and fellow of Corpus Christi College. At his graduation to receive his BA, removing his hood he retorted that he would never be guilty of obtaining any temporal honour at the price of his eternal salvation. During this turbulent period, the Privy Council had allowed Catholic candidates of Oxford University to receive their degrees without taking the Oath of Supremacy, but this local suspension of the Act of Succession was short lived. Refusing to take the oath, Fenn was removed from office at Oxford University.

Continuing to privately tutor pupils after his dismissal at Gloucester Hall, James Fenn married, his wife given birth to two children (a boy and a girl). Spending some time in his village of birth, he was forced into hiding when the local vicar challenged him regarding his absence at the Anglican services. His wife died suddenly during this time, and after a couple of months he returned to Montacute, living in concealment through the help of a friend. He was later employed by an "eminent Catholic Gentleman" (Sir Nicholas Poyntz) in Gloucester. It appears that Fenn was influential on the youths he tutored, and there is record of a least one coming to the Catholic Faith upon witnessing his martyrdom. Sir Nicholas recalled that the manner in which Fenn carried out his daily duties made his whole life a perpetual sermon exhorting virtue and piety to all.

In 1579, following the earlier death of his wife, and because of James' "excellent qualifications and rare virtues" he was encouraged to consider the priestly ministry. Trained at Rheims, he was ordained relatively quickly as a priest in April 1580 and returned to his home county of Somerset to minister secretly here. However, this stay was short. He was found a Catholic, and was arrested close to the Manor House of Brympton d'Evercy. Despite this, it is noted that he reconciled several persons of distinction to the Catholic Faith before his imprisonment.



Left: The mediaeval church of St Andrews, situated in the grounds of Brympton D'Evercy, which has been described as the most beautiful house in England. In the 1580's, Brympton D'Evercy belonged to the Sydenham family.

He was taken to Ilchester Prison. Held in the stocks on the market day, his "invincible patience, modest countenance and tranquil soul" caused many to reflect more deeply into their own faith (rather than shaming Fenn as intended). The onlookers saw something worthy of admiration in James Fenn, and this reaction angered the authorities. By September 1581 he was in Marshalsea Prison in Southwark. It appears that Fenn's priestly identity was unknown to his prosecutors, and as such he was enabled to minister to his fellow prisoners for about 3 years. He utilised his time in prison well - spending it in prayer and other spiritual exercises as well as in leading pirates and other serious criminals back to God. Upon his priesthood being exposed, a demonstrably false charge of a plot against the Queen was generated against Fenn and four other priests, which led to his being taken to the Tower of London.

Much ought to be said of the martyrdom itself. On the morning of the 12th February 1584, when he was already laid on the hurdle at Tower Gate, he looked up, and recognized his little daughter, Frances, standing in the crowd. She was weeping bitterly, but he kept his habitual calm and peaceful expression, as, lifting his pinioned hands so far as possible, he gave her both his parental and priestly blessing, and then was drawn away. Fenn prayed at the gallows itself, though refused the consolation of a Protestant minister ("I am not to be taught my duty by you."). Questioned on the accused charge of treason, he reiterated that he had never wished to harm the Queen by so much as a pin-prick and willingly gave all due obedience to her in worldly matters (but not in spiritual matters). Immediately before being hanged, he commended himself and the Queen to God's mercy."



Church of the Holy Ghost, Yeovil

I wonder whether James Fenn just happened to be passing Brympton D'Evercy when he was arrested, or was he saying Mass for the Sydenham family and then, being warned of the danger of arrest, tried to get away from the house in order not to implicate them? With historical research, one interesting thing leads to another. A friend of mine is writing a history of Montacute and had not heard about James Fenn and is now going to include in his book a little piece on him. I wonder how many of our members have martyrs on their doorstep waiting to be discovered.

Angela Hodges

Origins of the modern pilgrimage from Bristol to Aust and the historic celebration in 1997

I came upon a sacred place
And stayed awhile and prayed
Since then it preyed upon my mind
A signpost to my way. *(Pat Tayler)*



When imprisoned by the high fencing around the Forum in Rome, the only feasible escape led me opposite the entrance to San Gregoriano, where the incessant bells beckoned all to prayer, and I found myself close to the place where Augustine was educated. There in this place I felt beholden.

At home, in the Aust parsonage, the problems of a rural village beset us. Given the closure of the village shop and possibly the Church, with horror we prayed for help, yet worse was to come. Vital repairs were needed on the fabric of the Church, and the Archdeacon was about to make his visitation! Suddenly the telephone rang and someone called Paul Denyer, a voice from the blue, asked my husband, who was Church Warden, if the Church could be opened after a walk from Bristol around the Feast of Saint Augustine near the end of May.

The idea of a pilgrimage to Aust (medieval Austin after Augustine) originated in the late 1970s when the reverend Paul Denyer, now a Canon, walked via a long established footpath from Bristol to Aust. It is a fact universally acknowledged that the warden's wife is as much involved in the Church as the warden and I was thrilled, but only if it was ecumenical for I was a Catholic. Key people involved, as well as Paul and the Taylers, were the late Rt Rev Monsignor William Mitchell, then Vicar General of the Clifton Diocese, as well as Clergy and Ecumenical

Officers of both the Anglican and Catholic Churches and local acoustics wizard Dr Peter Dobbins. It was thus established as an ecumenical pilgrimage in 1994.

As early as 1990, the then secretary for ecumenical affairs to the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Very Reverend Stephen Platten, suggested *The Pilgrims Way*, an ecumenical journey by various means from Rome to England – where in 1997 it would be 1400 years since Augustine and forty monks were sent by Pope Gregory to renew the Roman Faith – and thence on to Iona, to celebrate Columba's death there on June 9th, fourteen centuries ago.

The invitation to visit Aust *en route* was accepted and work to accelerate the restoration of the Church, in preparation, was greatly supported by English Heritage, Gloucestershire Historic Churches and various charities from the Charities Digest. Michael Tayler was the main master of the funds.

As the Aust Co-ordinator of the Pilgrim's Way I had elation, and sometimes amusement, in organising the invitations, very adequately helped by friends and some neighbours and by the vision of historic blessing, 1400 years ago.

We were well blessed too, on that special day, details of which can be found elsewhere. The annual pilgrimage has continued (bar 2001 due to foot and mouth disease); the 2014 walk was therefore the twenty fifth since the start in 1989.

Pat Tayler

A walking pilgrimage to Aust takes place every year from Bristol Cathedral, organised by the Anglicans. This year's pilgrimage will be on Saturday 20th May. It begins with a short service in Bristol Cathedral at 8am, and then follows a route to Aust with several breaks for refreshments and picnic lunch. The day ends with a service in St John's Church, Aust, at 5pm. More information can be found on www.austpilgrimage.wordpress.com The following paragraph is taken from this website:

The Annual Aust Pilgrimage takes place on a Saturday in May (usually one near St Augustine's Day – 26 May) to mark the occasion that St Augustine of Canterbury met the British bishops at "St Augustine's Oak". Many locations have been suggested for this meeting but one, the village of Aust on the banks of the River Severn (very near the old Severn Bridge), is regarded by many as the most likely place for it to have happened.

Although pilgrims can walk from anywhere they choose, the main group meet at Bristol Cathedral at 8am for a short service before setting out on the 15 mile walk to the Chapelry of St John at Aust where, after tea, there is a Pilgrimage Service. Pilgrims are also invited to make their own arrangements to walk from other starting points. For a number of years some have walked over the Old Severn Bridge to Aust, whilst others who have been unable to walk have come by car or bicycle to take part in the Pilgrimage Service at 5.00pm

It is hoped this year that some ECHA members will join the pilgrimage, either from the Bristol or from the Wales direction. In addition, we hope to organise an historical talk to take place later in the year, perhaps at Downside. More information on this will follow in subsequent newsletters.

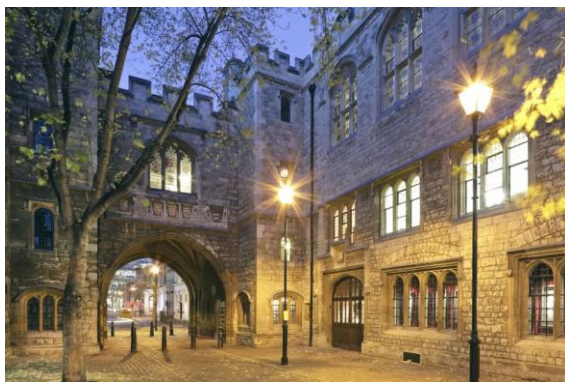
Pat Tayler

FORTHCOMING EVENTS GUIDE

In the December newsletter, our Editor mentioned Reformation 500 and the many events lined up throughout England and on the Continent. On Sunday 26th March at 3 p.m., for example, there will be a Catholic-Lutheran service at St George's Cathedral, Westminster, where Catholics and Lutherans will jointly look back on the event of the Reformation. The **ECHA** will be having its own **Reformation 500 Conference** in Bath on **1st April**. For further information, contact Steve Parsons at Downside (details on back cover).

The annual **York Catholic History Day** takes place on **3rd June** at the Bar Convent. No need to book. You can just turn up and pay on the door. This year's conference is being organised in conjunction with the Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University and its title – *Exile and return: The Bar Convent and the English Catholic Story* – is inspired by the Living Heritage Exhibition at the Bar Convent. The speakers will be Dr James Kelly, Dr Hannah Thomas, Dr Cormac Begadon and Dr Caroline Bowden, and talks will describe the life and experience of English Catholics during penal times, the experiences of those who went abroad and the impact of the eventual return of religious communities when political upheaval on the continent forced them to come back to England, with particular reference to those communities who passed through the Bar Convent on their return.

On **Saturday 8th July** - A visit to two of the surviving remnants of pre-Reformation Catholic London. First, the Museum of the Order of St John at St John's Gate, Clerkenwell. This recently opened museum tells the fascinating story of the Knights of the Order of St John of Jerusalem (Knights Hospitallers) and the Priory in Clerkenwell which was the English headquarters of the Order until its dissolution by Henry VIII. Entrance to the Museum is free but we have arranged a private guided morning tour for which the suggested donation is £5 (£4 concessions). More details about the Museum are available at [The Museum of the Order of St John - Museum of the Order of St John](#).



Museum of the Order of St John

After lunch we move on to the nearby London Charterhouse and former Carthusian monastery which in January 2017 opened its doors to the public for the first time since its foundation in 1348! There is a new museum to explore and we have arranged a private "Brother's Tour" to be given by one of the resident community. This will provide an in-depth look at the long history of the site and the lifestyle of the Brothers through the centuries. More details are available on the Charterhouse website at [Homepage - The Charterhouse](#).

Members and their guests are welcome to join us for either or both parts of the day. Full details are on the booking form and please indicate whether you wish to attend one or both parts of the day. Advance payment is required for those wishing to take part in the Brother's Tour of the Charterhouse.

If anyone fancies a **cream tea** on the day, the nearby Malmaison hotel offer a cream tea at the discounted rate of £10 for visitors to the Charterhouse.

There will be a joint visit with Midland Catholic History Society on **Thursday 14th September** to Blackfriars and Campion Hall, Oxford. For information on Campion Hall – see <http://www.campion.ox.ac.uk/?q=node/60>



Campion Hall, Oxford, designed by Lutyens and built in local Cotswold stone, was opened in 1936.

In 1581, Edmund Campion, a Fellow of St John's College, Oxford, Catholic convert and underground Jesuit priest, was executed at Tyburn for treason. In the same year, it was decreed that all Oxford undergraduates must subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England. This requirement was removed in 1871 but Catholic bishops of England still prohibited their subjects from attending Oxford in case they were contaminated with protestantism and heresy. This prohibition was relaxed in 1895 and the Ampleforth Benedictines and the Jesuits lost no time in opening houses of study in Oxford so that their members could gain Oxford degrees and teach in their schools. The Dominicans, having no schools, established Blackfriars later in 1929.

Blackfriars, Oxford (right)



BOOKS

Parish of St Mary Magdalene, Much Wenlock, Shropshire.

1849-2016 Fully Illustrated. 76 pp. £10.

Chris Magner

This publication has been produced as a tribute to the local Catholics who steadfastly persevered through many difficult situations in order to ensure the survival of the Catholic Faith and Tradition in Much Wenlock and also to all those who have lived, loved, served and worshipped to the 'Glory of God' within the boundaries of the Parish

This is not a complete history of the parish but Chris hopes that the descriptions recorded will give a snapshot of its unique story.

Chris does not write commercially or for gain but to cover costs of printing. This is reflected in the price of this publication.

Please contact Chris direct: Chris Magner, 21 Dunval Road, Bridgnorth, Shropshire WV16 4NA. Email: chrismagner45@yahoo.co.uk

François Longuet and the Reading Mission

by **Lindsay Mullaney**

ISBN 978-09935512-3-9

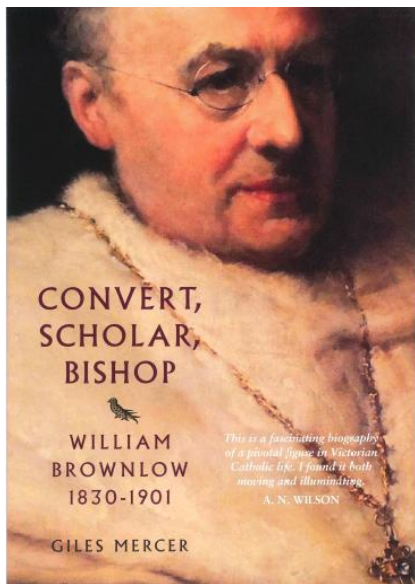
Paperback, black and white and colour illustrations. 112 pages

Publisher Scallop Shell Press **£8.00** (£9.50 inc p&p)

It is well known that thousands of French priests came to England in the wake of the French Revolution. Though most of them returned in 1802 after the Peace of Amiens, a few stayed to work in the English Mission. Among them was a young priest called François Longuet. Based in Reading, he became determined to found a new chapel, the Chapel of the Resurrection, with the support of the Vicar Apostolic of the London District, William Poynter. Lindsay Mullaney has used a series of letters between Longuet and Poynter, plus other documents involving Longuet, which are held in the Westminster archives, to build up a picture of this fascinating personality. Longuet was ahead of his time in many ways, not least in encouraging women and girls to serve at Mass, to the disapproval of some parishioners and other priests, and in collaborating with Protestant ministers his 'good friends'. Lindsay has also used archives from Portsmouth Diocese and the

Reading Mission Registers, as well as newspaper articles from the *Reading Mercury*, which was edited at the time by the women of the Catholic Smart/Cowslade family. Sadly the newspaper articles refer to his murder, by an unknown assailant, on February 13th 1817, exactly 200 years ago. Despite strenuous efforts by the police, who interviewed a number of unlikely suspects, his murderer was never caught, though the local Catholic community seem to have had their suspicions. Following Longuet's death his French family attempted to get possession not only of Longuet's personal belongings, but of the chapel and its furnishings. Documents relating to the case include fascinating inventories of the priest's furniture and household goods, as well as his library.

Longuet's story gives interesting insights into the relationship between the French priests and the Vicars Apostolic, as well as with the wider English community.



Convert, Scholar, Bishop

This long-needed biography takes us on a fascinating journey through Victorian Anglicanism, Catholicism in England and Wales, Italy, Ireland, and missions in West Africa and Australia. William Brownlow's sensitive exploration of religious conversion (his own and others') remains stimulating. He was a scholarly, courteous, effective Catholic apologist. His many friends included Newman. His ministry in the Plymouth and Clifton Dioceses illuminate the Catholic Church in the south-west, especially in regard to education. His episcopacy, though short, helped shape the future. His historical and spiritual writings are given their deserved re-evaluation. Brownlow was

best known in his day for publicising and interpreting the momentous discoveries of the catacombs in Rome. His zealous and practical interest in social teaching, the labour question, slavery and child poverty are also engagingly assessed.

£30

To Order: Buy Online: <http://bit.ly/2kcPCUi>

Contact: Steve on 01761 235 323 or email sparsons@downside.co.uk

The Secret of Glaston Tor by Donal Anthony Foley

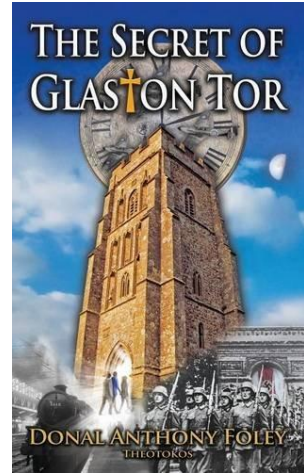
ISBN-10: 0957496915 ISBN-13: 978-0957496910

Paperback. Publisher: Theotakos Books

We are all aware that a whole generation of those who grew up in the sixties and seventies, often educated at Catholic schools, have abandoned The Faith. They no longer 'do God'. Their culture is atheistic (though still influenced by Christianity). But it would seem that their children's generation show more interest in orthodox religion, and admiration for Tolkien's masterpieces and the Narnia Chronicles of C S Lewis is still strong. It is to them that the "New Evangelisation" will appeal.

A new series of stories directed chiefly at teenagers was launched in October 2015 by Donal Anthony Foley of **Theotakos Books**. The first of the

Chronicles of Glastonbury was published in 2015 and should prove a useful tool in the New Evangelisation. **The Secret of Glaston Tor** is well written and gives an exciting account of the adventures of three young cousins, one American and two English, who are taken back in time from 2015 to 1940 in France under the German occupation, where for five days they accompany an ever growing party of refugees attempting to leave France for Britain. These include allied airmen shot down over France, a Jewish Catholic lady married to a German and their sick five year old son, a former communist youth who plays the part of baddie and one or two others. To find out how they achieve escaping to England, you must read the book. Without overdoing the religious element, Foley makes this a deeply Christian story and it should complement the Harry Potter series that are so secular. The dialogue is well handled and is particularly compelling in the scenes where the cousins are arrested in Paris by Gestapo agents from whom they manage to escape. As Joseph Pearce Writes in his recommendation on the back cover, "**The Secret of Glaston Tor** is a gripping yarn that has all the ingredients any adventurous reader could desire. Time travel, war adventure, interrogation by the secret police, a desperate attempt to escape from France against all odds. And it's all woven together with a golden thread of religious truth. Who could ask for more?"



Martin Blake

2017 PROGRAMME

APRIL: Saturday 1st April 2017 – Reformation 500 Conference at St John the Evangelist Church, Bath. For further information and bookings, contact Steve Parsons on 01761 235 323 or email sparsons@downside.co.uk.

JUNE:: Saturday 3rd June 2017- Catholic History Day at the Bar Convent in York. The title of this year's conference: *Exile and Return: The Bar Convent and the English Catholic Story*.

JULY: Joint visit with the Midland Catholic History Society to Little Malvern and Blackmore Park. Details to be confirmed in June newsletter.

JULY: – Saturday 8th July 2017 -St John Museum and Charterhouse Museum, London. 8th July. Booking form enclosed.

SEPTEMBER - Thursday 14th September - Joint visit with Midland Catholic History Society to Blackfriars and Campion Hall, Oxford.

OCTOBER - Annual General Meeting and Day Conference. Date to be arranged.