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Association

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NEWSLETTER

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NEWSLETTER ARTICLES AND FEEDBACK AND COMMENTS

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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NEWS & NOTES

- Greetings and salutations to you all. I hope that you are enjoying the summery weather. I am grateful to Angela (Angie) Hodges for composing the March newsletter at short notice when I was indisposed. Thanks Angie.
- I have news of several events that you might be interested in, events that we at ECHA are not organising ourselves. So I have listed them along with our own events, all in date order in the upcoming events guide. And on the back cover. I hope that you find this convenient and easy to refer to. You have the opportunity to attend Mass at Canterbury Cathedral in July and Westminster Abbey in October.
- **The ECHA website.** I think that I have told you before that we seem to be fielding more and more enquiries from the general public on our website. I thought that you might find this one interesting, I have removed the name of the enquirer...: ***I have a 1778 printed form recording the swearing of an oath in Liverpool, before a magistrate, by my ancestor William Hayes [Heys], probably of Walton, Lancashire. The form refers to him consequently being relieved of penalties enacted by a law of William III.***
Liverpool archivists inform me that they had not seen one before. I wonder if one of your members could enlighten me as to the significance of the oath. I should be most grateful. Our Chairman, Dr Simon Johnson was able to shed light on the matter... ***The oath you refer to concerns the 'Papists Act' of 1778 (18 Geo. III c.60). It was the first act of relief for the Roman Catholic communities of England and Wales. It was later extended to Ireland. It required the oath taker to: a) declare their loyalty to the reigning sovereign; b) renounce the so-called Pretender (the rightful king!) c) acknowledge that the Pope had neither temporal nor spiritual jurisdiction in Great Britain. Those who took the oath were relieved of the provisions of the Popery Act of 1698 (William III) with certain liberties restored. Priests were no longer prosecuted for saying Mass, the laws against Catholic schools were also relaxed. Catholics could purchase land and inherit land. The act led to the so-called Gordon Riots of 1780 (we had one in Bath) ... largely in London. I hope this helps; do let me know if you require any further information. With best wishes.*** There have been plenty of others. The one that did raise our eyebrows once was a request from the Russian TV news channel RT for one of us to take part in an TV debate on religion. We politely declined that one.

Sometimes we do draw a blank, so maybe we will pass them on to you via this newsletter in the future..

I think I have told you before that our website is maintained by our Regional Co-ordinator for the South West of England – Mrs Lynne Hunter Johnson. Don't forget that Lynne uploads onto the website, a podcast of the various presentations which are given at our meetings. Such as at the AGM. So you can listen any time.

- In our March newsletter you will have read the obituary of Dr Kevin McGarry. There was some information missing from that article, so we have an amended version on page 15..
- **St Edmund Campion Pilgrimage June/July 2017.** For the past few years, the Knights of St Columba have organised this Pilgrimage, where Mass is offered at various Catholic churches and chapels, mainly in the Home Counties and in London. A relic of St Edmund Campion is taken to each of the Masses. I have been sent the full schedule but it is too extensive to reproduce here, so here is a summary week by week. If you want further details of the particular church and the Mass time, I suggest you contact the local KSC for details. The Pilgrimage began on 3 June, so here are the venues week by week from Sunday 18th June.

Sunday 18 June. The Chapel at **Stonor Park** 10:30am then during the week ~ Abingdon, Wallingford and Didcot.

Sunday 25 June. Sacred Heart at Henley at 10:30am, then during the week - Kiln Green, Wokingham, Twyford, Staines and Windsor.

Sunday 2 July. The Grange, Lyford 4pm. Then during the week – Hanwell, Hayes, Ruislip, Whitton, Yeading,

Sunday 9 July. Harrow & District Stanmore, St William of York 8am and 10:30am then during the week - North Harrow, Bro Jack Prayer Group W13, Hoxton Square, Homerton.

Sunday 16 July. Kingsland Ball, Pond Road, Our Lady and St Joseph 12:15pm. Then during the week – Northfields West Ealing, Acton, Kilburn. Stamford Hill.

Sunday 23 July. London Marble Arch – Tyburn Convent 4pm

UPCOMING EVENTS GUIDE

Sunday 25th June at 1.30pm

Annual Martyrs Walk

Devotional walk from the Churchyard of St Sepulchre-without-Newgate, in Holborn, London following the route of Catholic Martyrs to Tyburn. Concludes at 5pm with Benediction and Tea at Tyburn Convent. There is no charge for the walk but donations welcome.

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Friday 30 June 2017

Visitor Centre, Upper Room **Downside Abbey**

THE DOWNSIDE LECTURES

'In the Footsteps of the Apostles: The Bishop in the Historical Narrative.'

Brownlow - Clifford - Russell

In 2008 Abbot Aidan Bellenger launched *The Abbot's Forum*, a series of popular lectures on a variety of Downside related themes. It is with great pleasure that the recently established Heritage Department has relaunched this important outreach mission, now known as *The Downside Lectures*. The first in this series *In the Footsteps of the Apostles* concentrates on three bishops who have recently been the subject of the recently re-founded Downside Abbey Press.

Dr Giles Mercer, former Head Master of Stonyhurst College and Prior Park, will present a paper on his critically acclaimed account of Bishop William Brownlow, fourth Bishop of Clifton (1830-1901).

Rev Dr Canon Tony Harding, Clifton Diocesan Archivist, is a noted historian and parish priest. Harding will present a paper on Bishop William Clifford, third Bishop of Clifton (1823-893).

Dr Simon Johnson, Director of Heritage at Downside Abbey, presents a paper on Bishop Richard Russell, a subject of his recently published account of *The English College at Lisbon*.

£25 to include buffet lunch, refreshments and tour. Here is the timetable:

8.30am	Mass (Optional)
9.30	Tea/Coffee
9.50	Introduction and Welcome
10.00	Canon Harding – Bishop Clifford
11.00	Break
11.15	Giles Mercer – Bishop Brownlow
12.25	Midday Office (Optional)
12.45	Lunch
1.30	Simon Johnson – Bishop Russell
2.30	Tour of Monastery Library
4.00	Finish

Further details and bookings please contact:

Steven Parsons 01761 235323 sparsons@downside.co.uk Details of future Lectures will follow in the newsletters and will be posted on the ECHA website.

Thursday 6 July 2017

ECHA and Midlands Catholic History Society Joint Visit to Little Malvern Court and Blackmore Park (Church of St Alphonsus. (booking form enclosed)

Little Malvern Court

A historic house created from the former Prior's Hall of medieval Little Malvern Priory. The priory was formed in 1171 and was disbanded by Henry VIII in 1537. After the Dissolution the property came into the possession of the Russell family of nearby Strensham, and later passed to the Beringtons, who still own the Court today. The new owners converted the hall and associated monastic buildings into a private dwelling. The house stands in 10 acres of attractive gardens formed from the grounds of the Benedictine monastery.

The hall was built around 1480, and in addition to the prior's residence, includes monks cells and other monastic rooms from the old monastery. The former priory church stands beside the current Hall. The interior rooms are notable for the marvellous double-collared timber roof of the hall, and the historic furnishings, including collections of 18th and 19th century embroidery, art, and church vestments.

The gardens are created in a series of attractive garden rooms and terraces, with wonderful views over the surrounding area. There are collections of spring bulbs

and old fashioned roses, and walks beside a water garden which feeds into a series of small lakes.

Blackmore Park, Our Blessed Lady and St Alphonsus

During the eighteenth century the recusant Hornyolds owned the now demolished Blackmore Park at Hanley Swan where they maintained a chapel. John Hornyold was vicar apostolic of the Midland District from 1756 to 1778 and once escaped arrest by 'substituting a female cap for his flowing periwig and throwing a woman's cloak over the vestments'. In 1846 John Vincent Gandolphi Hornyold built the present attractive church designed by Charles Hanson and furnished largely by E.W. Pugin. It was consecrated by Bishop Ullathorne on 19 August 1846. A monastery for Redemptorist priests was built adjoining the church but they left in 1851 and the parish has since been served by diocesan priests.

Here is the day's programme:-

10.30 Visit to Little Malvern Court. We shall be taken on a guided tour of the house in groups of ten at half hourly intervals. While waiting, or once the tour is finished, members can have coffee, visit the gardens and the Priory Church

12.45 Buffet lunch at 'The Swan' in Hanley

2.15 Visit to the church of Our Lady and St Alphonsus, Blackmore Park, with talk by Anthony Hornyold

3.00 Mass at St Alphonsus

Safety considerations at Little Malvern Court mean that the number of places available for this visit is limited to 30

Bookings with fee of **£25** per person no later than 28 June **2017**

(fee includes cost of admission to Little Malvern Court, coffee and lunch)

To: Vincent Burke

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Thursday 6 July St. Dunstan's Anglican Church in Canterbury (corner of London Road and Whitstable Road). You can hopefully get more details from their website of a service they are holding. This church is the location of a relic of St Thomas More - his head.

Thomas More's daughter, Margaret, secured the release of More's head from a spike on London Bridge and brought it back to Canterbury. This relic was placed into the family tomb of her husband, William Roper. The Roper family vault is located beneath the Nicholas Chapel, in St Dunstan's Church.

A large stone slab marks its location to the immediate left of the chapel's altar. Three impressive stained glass windows adorn the chapel. The one behind the altar depicts in great detail, the major events in the life of St. Dunstan.

Another commemorates the visit, on 29 May 1982, of Pope John Paul II to Canterbury to pray with the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury at the site of the martyrdom of St. Thomas Becket in Canterbury Cathedral. The window displays the arms of the Archbishop's diocese and the Pope. Plaques mounted on the walls explain the veracity of the relic of the Saint's head, the sealing of the vault which contains it, and the life of the Saint, including a prayer he wrote.

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And staying in Canterbury, on **Friday 7 July at Canterbury Cathedral** there will be at Mass offered for the Translation of St Thomas of Canterbury. The Mass is at 8pm.

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Nigel Parker tells me that there is still availability for the ECHA London event on **Saturday 8 July**. This is your chance to see the surviving remnants of pre-Reformation Catholic London - the Museum of the Order of St John at St John's Gate in Clerkenwell in the morning and after lunch, the nearby London charterhouse and former Carthusian monastery. I am sending you the booking form again, so that's where you'll find all of the details. I am hopeful that there will be a café or restaurant nearby so that we can have a social get together at lunchtime. Do, by all means bring a packed lunch if you prefer that. I imagine that there are park benches nearby and hopefully it will be a sunny day. Cream tea at the Malmaison (£10) sounds like a very nice way to round the day off.

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We now have the programme and booking form for the ECHA joint visit with Midland Catholic History Society on **Thursday 14th September** to Blackfriars and Campion Hall, Oxford.

- 10.30 Visit to Blackfriars and talk on history of the Dominicans by
Fr Richard Finn O.P
- 12.00 Mass at Blackfriars
- 12.45 Lunch (members to make own arrangements)
- 2.30 Visit to Campion Hall led by Professor Peter Davidson
- 3.30 Departure

***Safety considerations at Campion Hall mean that the number of places available for this visit is limited to **30** – evenly divided between MCHS and ECHA members.*

*If one of the groups does not take up all of its allocation then the places will be given to members of the other society/association***

Bookings with fee of **£10** per person no later than 1 September 2017. The booking form is enclosed

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Saturday 7 October Westminster Abbey. The Guild of Our Lady of Ransom Mass in the chapel of St Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey at 10:45am. Tickets are free but there is a suggested donation of £15 per person and tickets can be obtained from:

Derek Williams, Guild Administrator, The Guild of Our Lady of Ransom
Pilgrim Bureau
Friday Market Place
Walsingham
Norfolk
NR22 6EG
Tel: 01328 820658

I went to this Mass last year and it was very moving. It was later in the day after the Abbey had closed and all the visitors had gone. So we seemed to have this vast historic beautiful building to ourselves, Yet in the small Chapel we felt we were in a small intimate space.

There will be a limited number of tickets. If you would like to go, please ring first to check availability.

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Saturday 21 October Day Conference and AGM St John the Evangelist Church in Bath.

This is still work in progress but one of the speakers of the day will be Dr Giles Mercer, the author of the recently published biography of Bishop Brownlow. He will be presenting this time on St Alphege.

Here are a few notes which Dr Mercer has sent us regarding St Alphege.

St Alphege: Saint of Bath and Saint for our Times

Alphege, born in Bath in 954, became a monk at Deerhurst in Gloucestershire and then at Bath, where he was a (much-visited) hermit on Lansdown and later abbot of the community in Bath.

His

inclinations were towards the contemplative life but his abilities and leadership qualities meant he was needed for wider responsibility in the Church.

Made bishop of Winchester in 984 he led that diocese with determination, compassion, and courage for twenty years, after which he was translated to Canterbury at a time when England was being ravaged by Danish invasions. Alphege was captured by the Danes and a ransom was demanded for him. He would not allow this to be paid, because he did not want the people to suffer further. For this he was killed brutally by Danes at Greenwich in 1012.

His life sheds light on reformed monasticism, on diocesan life, and on perennial issues of justice, faith, witness, and evangelisation. The cult of St Alphege, endorsed especially by St Anselm, was one of the greatest of the pre-Reformation period. Today his life and example provide inspiration across the Christian spectrum and beyond, but he deserves to be much better known.

We are expecting to have our second speaker presenting on *Reformation 500*. More details will follow in the September newsletter and before that on our website, but please mark the date in your diary.

ARTICLES AND FEEDBACK

A Tour of Catholic Colchester

On 25 May, on a blazingly sunny Thursday afternoon, the Colchester Catholic Heritage Group invited a representative of the ECHA and other distinguished guests (including Lord Petre of Ingatestone Hall and Mgr John Armitage, Rector of the Shrine at Walsingham) to take part in an inaugural tour of Catholic Colchester. The tour was organized by local Catholic Jennie Guthrie-Stevens and the Museum Service in Colchester Castle and began at the Gatehouse of St John's Abbey. Queen Katherine of Aragon came to the Abbey for the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1515 and then continued on her journey to the Shrine in Walsingham. Once considered to be the fourth largest abbey in England, it closed in 1539 after the brutal execution of the Abbot.

We then visited Holy Trinity church which was built during the Saxon period. Among the Catholic connections is Countess Rivers who lived opposite the church and who died a bankrupt because of the fines imposed on her for attending Mass. We moved on to St Helena's chapel which is one of the oldest buildings in Colchester and which has been claimed to have been built by St Helena herself,

the mother of the Emperor Constantine and Patron Saint of Colchester. The chapel was until the year 2000 used as a storeroom for the Colchester Castle Museum but happily is now a Greek Orthodox Parish Church in the Patriarchate of Antioch.

We finished the tour at Colchester Castle where amongst other speakers, Mgr Armitage spoke about the link to Walsingham and recited the Pynson Ballad which tells the story of the Walsingham Shrine.

I also took the opportunity to visit Colchester's Catholic church of St James the Less and St Helen which was completed in 1837 by architect Joseph John Scoles who went on to design the Jesuit Church of the Immaculate Conception at Farm Street in London.

These are just some of the places with a Catholic connection in Colchester which is well worth a visit. Anyone wishing to arrange a tour should contact Jennie Guthrie-Stevens at jemgs12@gmail.com.

Nigel Parker

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A Catholic university at 50: an oral history of Leeds Trinity University

Helen Kingstone

(Postdoctoral Researcher in the Humanities department at Leeds Trinity University)

Catholic institutions have played an important role for centuries in bringing social justice to deprived communities and individuals. The Sisters of the Cross and the Passion, for example, have been involved in education of girls across the north of England since their foundation in the 1850s. In the 1960s, they became instrumental in founding the joint colleges of Trinity and All Saints at Leeds, a pair of teacher training colleges which have now grown and developed into Leeds Trinity University.

In April 2015, the ECHA awarded £200 research funding (matching £200 from Leeds Trinity University itself) to a project to build an archive of oral history interviews with founders, former staff and alumni of the university as it reaches its 50th anniversary. The project's aims have been to trace the significance and effect of the Catholic foundation over fifty years, and to offer insights to guide the institution in its next half-century.

What was originally Trinity and All Saints Colleges (one for women and one for men, but innovative in having both sets of students sharing classes and teaching

space) was established by the Catholic Education Council and the Sisters of the Cross and Passion in 1966 as a teacher training college affiliated to the University of Leeds. Under the inspirational leadership of Andrew Kean and Sister Augusta Maria, it grew and flourished, and in the past fifty years it has experienced upheaval, merging, uncertainty under the Thatcher government, expansion and most recently, the status of independent university.

What has the project involved? Our grant from the ECHA has enabled me to travel to record interviews. Oral history methodology recommends interviewing people in their own homes where possible, where they feel most comfortable and able to speak freely. Since this is a project asking people about their memories of an institution, run from within that institution, we were keen to emphasise to interviewees that we wanted a full historical perspective, not merely celebratory endorsements. We were more likely to get that 'warts and all' account in people's own homes, and so the travel funding has been very valuable.

I carried out interviews with 14 former members of staff. We set out to go as far back chronologically as possible and then work forward. Unfortunately both founding Principals have passed away, but I was able to interview Andrew Kean's widow Winefred, who still lives locally. From her, I moved on to interviewing longstanding staff members. The project would be enriched further by including the voices of former students, but unfortunately our funding has not stretched that far. Perhaps a future project!

I travelled to people's homes to meet with them and make audio recordings of an interview with each one, normally one to two hours long. In oral history interviewing, interviewees are given the time and space to relate their experiences and memories in a relatively free narrative with as little interruption as possible. This takes it far from the methods of questionnaires or journalistic interrogation, and aims to produce a more authentic recollection.

I learnt a huge amount about my own workplace and institution through this project. One element that came through strongly was just how daunting an undertaking the founding of these colleges was. As the first Principal's widow Winefred Kean related, the colleges began over conversation 'in our sitting room'. After the Second World War and the baby boom, more teachers were needed for Catholic schools, and so the Catholic Education Council liaised with George Dwyer Bishop of Leeds, and the Sisters of the Cross and Passion, to set up a new college to train them. As many of the interviewees described, the site of the eventual campus was a set of fields that soon became a 'sea of mud' as it turned into a building site, and was still a work-in-progress when many of the pioneering first students arrived in September 1966. Sister Marie de Carmel, an original member of staff, related how 'about a week before the college was due to open,

the builders went bust!' The accommodation blocks were not yet finished, and so a group of 92 women students, with her as warden, were housed in a former Baptist seminary down in the woods a few miles away. As she said, this was a temporary solution, but it worked well and she was there for the next 13 years!

The pioneering spirit of the early colleges stretched far beyond their ability to live in a building site. Andrew Kean's innovative vision for the colleges involved seeing them from the start as a nascent Catholic university. Whereas many teacher training colleges at the time were relatively intellectually unambitious, focusing on training rather than academic subjects, he reversed the balance, prioritising broad academic studies and a grounding in the fundamentals of philosophy, ethics and liberality of thought. With that in mind, a 'Foundation Course' was developed by Damian McHugh, one of my other interviewees, to give all students this kind of grounding. Kean's zeal for unconventionality and all things new also included his staff and the job titles they were given. As sports lecturer Dan Baldasera recalled, he nearly lost out in the interview process to a parachutist whose unusual skills caught Kean's eye, and the department he joined was one for 'Human Movement', since Kean wanted their work not to be confined to Physical Education, but to be as broad as possible.

Many of my interviewees also stressed the family spirit of the early colleges, when the student body was small, and many staff were new to Leeds and thus found a community through the institution. As Joyce Simpson (English lecturer from 1973, and later Head of Humanities) recalled, 'it was very homely! It was people of drive and passion who were prepared to turn their hands to whatever needed to be done. ... You quickly got to know people – I remember Mr Kean saying to me, "we're all one big family." The family really was the model. It was patriarchal, if you like, but there was a family feel to it.' And this sense of a united community persisted. When the first co-Principals retired in 1980, Mary Hallaway applied for the job of first joint Principal, and as she related to me, she didn't expect to get it! When I asked her why she was appointed, she remembered how the panel had been amused and surprised (and perhaps impressed) at her answer to a question on which aspect of the college was most important in building its Catholic atmosphere. She had responded: 'The domestic staff.' These were the people who the resident students met every day, and who they might go to first in time of need.

One topic I asked all my interviewees about was the significance of the college's Catholic foundation. Several recalled that they were encouraged to recruit as many Catholic students as possible, but even from the beginning, neither staff nor students were required to be Catholic. Regardless of their faith background, everyone was encouraged to attend mass in the new 1960s college chapel, and

as one interviewee described it, on All Saints Day ‘there was a three line whip!’ During this period in the wake of Vatican II, the Church was keen to find unity rather than division. The general consensus was that the Catholic foundation was pervasive but relatively unobtrusive. Sister Marie de Carmel emphasised that there was no indoctrination and no religious divisions – she described it rather as a ‘Christian’ foundation.

The remainder of the matched funding was used to produce a set of exhibition boards which showcased the key ideas and memories from the project, and brought together text, photographs, and ‘talking tile’ audio devices so that visitors could listen to selected clips from the interviews. Most of those clips are now available to listen to on the 50th anniversary website, as part of a timeline of the university’s history. Just go to www.leadstrinity50.co.uk/our-history. This website is constantly being added to through an open call for memories from former staff and students. We hope this will broaden the project’s reach, and enable it to include people we haven’t had the chance to meet or interview in person. The interviewing project may have paused for now, but the 50th anniversary celebrations – and Leeds Trinity’s history – continues.

Dr Helen Kingstone

h.kingstone@leadstrinity.ac.uk

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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, Kevin 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 June 1996 to March 1999 (several 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 December 2001 to March 2006. The booklet was produced from these articles.

Other articles by Kevin include :

"Communications in Penal Times: Spreading the Word", June 1995.

"Communications and Penal Times: The Role of the Teacher", September 1995.

"Catholic Women in Penal Times: Some Directions for Research", December 1995.

"What about the Children?: Problems for Recusant Parents", March 1996.

"The First Millennium: Some Characters and Reflections", December 1999.

"Wales and the Age of Saints: June 2001.

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

note from the Editor: I am very pleased to inform you that we have had a volunteer from the ECHA membership step forward in response to Toni's call.

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Church closures

Following our mentioning the closing of Holy Cross Church, Bedminster in our last newsletter, Chris Magner has written to say...

" I am against church closures. I wish our Bishops were not seemingly Beeching Bishops. Being very interested in railways it seems to me the church is following Dr Beeching who came to run the railways and closed many. Just like the railways, closures are not the answer to the challenges the church faces. Today more people are using the railways than before Dr Beeching and we as a country have spent untold millions in putting back some of lines and stations he closed.

This is what will happen to the church in future. If a diocese wishes to close a church it should ask the parishioners could they pay all the upkeep costs and if so

let them keep it as a house of prayer in the hope that one day it will once again be needed. Many Catholic churches were built by the sacrifices of our fore-fathers (and fore-mothers). Whilst a church cannot be kept open because of this every effort should be made to keep it before closure as once gone it is gone for ever.

I believe that as soon as a church is mooted for closure in the Diocesan offices the Bishop should come and listen to the fears of the parishioners as to how they will cope without their church. When a church closes those hit the hardest are the young, disabled and senior parishioners who do not have their own transport. In many rural areas there are no Sunday buses as here in Shropshire. A joint committee should be set up between the parish and diocese within say a years timescale to see if the church could be saved rather than face demolition or disposal. Once closed it is gone for ever. As long as the parishioners can pay all the running costs they should run their churches as houses of prayer in the hope that one day services will resume.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Catholics – The Church and its People in Britain and Ireland from the Reformation to the Present Day.

By **Roy Hattersley** 2 Mar 2017

Hardcover 572 pages £25 (Amazon £19.99)

One might suspect (falsely) that an atheist, the son of an apostate Catholic priest, would pour malice and misunderstanding into such an account. The opposite is true. It shows great sympathy for the near 500 year struggle of the Church against forces attempting to exterminate it, and then discredit it. Indeed, I often found it difficult to realise that I was not reading the work of a Catholic “insider,” but he rightly does not shirk facing objectively unsavoury episodes in our history.

He concentrates on the main stream of Catholic history and its interaction with political issues, for which he is particularly well qualified. This is probably familiar in outline to members of the ECHA, but he also provides a wealth of detail, much new to me, spiced with a dry wit, which makes it an easy read. Items, possibly not central, are omitted. There is no specific mention of St Margaret Clitherow, of Mrs Fitzherbert, the true wife of the bigamous George IV, or of the “Black and Tans”. The enigmatic writer R H Benson, the convert son of the Anglican “Archbishop of

Canterbury”, is excluded from the account of Catholic literature, though his complex output would probably require a book in itself!

My approval of the book is enhanced by his apparent regard for Fisher above More and for Manning above Newman. True, he gently tweaks the tail of the intransigent John Milner. Surprisingly as non compromising is a virtue that the author seems to cherish highly.

In a long book, I only detected one, minor, error. In a reference to “Brideshead Revisited” he states that Lady Marchmain, “a bogus saint”, was among those assembled at Brideshead during the last moments of Lord Marchmain’s life. Her corpse may have been buried in the house or grounds, but a contributory reason for his return from Venice was her death.

I strongly recommend the book and hope that any future readers will enjoy it as much as I just have.

Alan Whaits

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Conscience is my Crown. A Heroic Witness in an Age of Intolerance

By **Patricia W Claus** £12.00 - 2017

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Blog for Thursday 1st June 2017 – Catholic Herald by Francis Phillips

Having written about the early Christian martyrs and some of their modern counterparts in my last blog, I have been reading about the Elizabethan Jesuit martyr, St Robert Southwell in *Conscience is My Crown* by Patricia W. Claus (Gracewing £12.99). Actually the book is a study of four interrelated men of the period, the Rev Robert Lenthall, his cousin William Lenthall and John Hampden as well as Robert Southwell, but the saint’s life is naturally the most moving part. Christian martyrs are made not born. Southwell, who secretly arrived back in England in 1587 after studying for the priesthood in Rome, was realistic about his chances of evading capture under the punitive anti-clerical laws of Elizabeth I, writing soberly, “I know very well that sea and land are gaping wide for me; and lions, as well as wolves, go prowling in search of whom they may devour.” Yet he still added bravely, “But I welcome, more than fear, their fangs.”

After almost six years secretly ministering to Catholics, writing devotional poetry as well as works defending the Faith for his co-religionists, Southwell was captured in 1592 and tortured to reveal the network of his friends and fellow priests. He gave

nothing away. Even Sir Robert Cecil, son of Elizabeth's chief minister, Lord Burghley, admitted that "There is at present confined one Southwell, a Jesuit who, thirteen [sic] times most cruelly tortured, cannot be induced to confess anything, not even the colour of the horse whereon a certain day he rode..."

On 19 February 1595 Southwell was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn, proclaiming that he died "because I am a Catholic priest, elected into the Society of Jesus in my youth..." It is an inspiring life.

Southwell and Shakespeare both belonged to a "loosely-knit network of intermarried recusant families" which gives Claus the opportunity to raise the question of Shakespeare's religion. It is known that Shakespeare's father, as well as his older daughter, were fine-paying recusant Catholics. Claus quotes *The Quest for Shakespeare* by Joseph Pearce, which suggests that the poet "was not so much a "secret Catholic" whose faith was unknown to all but a chosen (Catholic) few, but that he was considered a "safe" or "tame" Catholic, whose faith was known but was not considered a threat to the Queen or the state."

This seems a much more likely conclusion than that offered e.g. by biographer Peter Ackroyd, also quoted in the book, who concludes that because Shakespeare was able to imaginatively take on the many different attitudes of his characters it meant he himself had to be "a man without opinions...a man without beliefs." Joseph Pearce ripostes, "No-one on earth who has attained the age of sentience can be without opinions or beliefs", pointing out that that "Agnosticism is a belief, atheism is a belief, nihilism is a belief"; quite so. The last word should go to Robert Southwell, from whose poem "Content and Rich", Claus takes her title: "My conscience is my crown/Contented thoughts my rest/My heart is happy in itself/My bliss is in my breast."

Francis Phillips

2017 PROGRAMME

- **JUNE Sunday 25 London, Holborn** at 1.30pm
Annual Martyrs Walk to Tyburn
Devotional walk from the Churchyard of St Sepulchre-without-Newgate.
- **JUNE Friday 30 Stratton-on the Fosse** Downside Abbey **THE DOWNSIDE LECTURES** 'In the Footsteps of the Apostles: The Bishop in the historical narrative.' Brownlow - Clifford - Russell *bookings from Downside Abbey*
- **JULY Thursday 6 Worcestershire.** ECHA and Midlands Catholic History Society Joint Visit to Little Malvern Court and Blackmore Park (Church of St Alphonsus *booking form enclosed.*
- **JULY Thursday 6 Canterbury** St. Dunstan's Anglican Church Please obtain details of service from St Dunstan's website
- **JULY Friday 7 Canterbury.** Mass in Canterbury Cathedral
- **JULY Saturday 8 London, Clerkenwell.** St John Museum and Charterhouse Museum, London. 8th July. *booking form enclosed*
- **SEPTEMBER Thursday 14 Oxford** Joint visit with Midland Catholic History Society to Blackfriars and Campion Hall, Oxford *booking form enclosed*
- **OCTOBER Saturday 7 London Westminster Abbey.** Mass in the chapel of St Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey. *Bookings from The Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, Walsingham.*
- **OCTOBER Saturday 21 Bath** Day Conference and AGM St John the Evangelist Church. Dr Giles Mercer - St Alphege. Second speaker Reformation 500 *Details and booking form to follow in September newsletter.*

