

**English  
Catholic**



**History  
Association**

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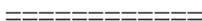
**NEWSLETTER**

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**MARCH 2020**

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### **Membership of the English Catholic History Association**

is open to all who are interested in furthering its aims.

Annual membership £11 with reductions for additional members at same address and students under 25

Membership forms and further details are available from:

The Secretary or Treasurer, addresses on page 3,

or on the website - <http://echa.org.uk/>

Feedback, comments and articles for publication are **always** welcome

Please send contributions to the Newsletter Editor: Mrs Sheila Mawhood, at the address on page 3. And send them by email please and, if possible saved with file extension of .doc in Word, and photos in .jpg format.

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                                  Mr Nigel Parker  
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                                  Dr Giles Mercer

**Address for Correspondence:** Mrs Angela Hodges  
45 High Street, Stoke-sub-Hamdon, Somerset. TA14 6PR  
☎ 01935 823928 **E-mail:** secretary@echa.org.uk

**Website:** [www.echa.org.uk](http://www.echa.org.uk)

**Website Administrator** Mrs Lynne HUNTER JOHNSTON **Email:**  
[website@echa.org.uk](mailto:website@echa.org.uk)

**Programme Co-ordinators:** Ursula and Bernard Polack (address below)

**Membership Secretary:** Mr Vincent Burke 16 Brandhall Court, Wolverhampton  
Road , Oldbury, West Midlands, B68 8DE ☎ 0121 422 1573

**Newsletter Editor and Publicity Officer:** Mrs Sheila Mawhood (address below)

**Regional Co-ordinators:**

**Leeds, Middlesborough, Hexham & Newcastle** Mrs Lalage ROBSON, Dunelm, Black  
Dyke Lane, Upper Poppleton, York, YO26 6PT ☎ 01904 794929

**South East (East Anglia, Brentwood, Arundel & Brighton & part of Southwark):**  
Bernard POLACK, 4 Woodstock Grove, Farncombe, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 2AX.  
☎ 01483 421412

**Diocese of Westminster:** Nigel PARKER, 17 Salcombe Gardens, Clapham Common  
North Side, London SW4 9RY  
☎ 020 7978 4329 **Email:** nigel.parker349@btinternet.com

**Kent:** Christopher BULL, 48 Reed Avenue, Canterbury, Kent, CT1 1ES  
☎ 01227 451139 **Email:** abtaurusreed@gmail.com

**Northampton and Nottingham Dioceses:** Mrs Sheila MAWHOOD, 21 The Retreat,  
Princes Risborough, Bucks HP27 0JG  
☎ 01844 343669 **Email:** sheilamawhood@aol.com

**Lancaster, Salford, Liverpool & Hallam:** Mr Anthony KLOSZEK: 189 Smedley Rd,  
Cheetham Hill, Manchester, M8 0RU ☎ 07765 525801

**West Midlands (Birmingham and Shrewsbury):** Vincent BURKE

**South West (Clifton and Plymouth):** Mrs Audrey ATTER, 7 South Terrace, Penzance.  
TR13 4DP **Email:** [audreyatter123@outlook.com](mailto:audreyatter123@outlook.com)

**Wales and Portsmouth:** both VACANT

## NEWS & NOTES

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Greetings from ECHA Central to all of our members and friends. We hope that this finds you all keeping well and coping with the current necessary restrictions on our comings and goings.

I have left in place on the back page, the events we had planned for the year, they are mostly postponed or on hold, but I wanted to give you something to look forward to once we can hop onto a train again and meet up with other people at one or other the events that we organise ourselves or publicise for other organisations.

I am sorry to have sad news for you. Within the space of a couple of months we have lost two former Chairmen of the ECHA.

Mr Gordon Faulkner and Father Brian Doolan.

Vincent Burke our Treasurer knew Father Doolan over a long period and he has written a few notes which you will find on page 8.

Gordon Faulkner was involved with the ECHA from its very early days. Actually, he was more than just *involved with*. He was in effect its first chairman but agreed to take it on only as *Deputy* Chairman because he was not a Catholic. I understand from one of our members who was around in those early days, that Mr Faulkner was very involved with family history in Bristol and he wanted to help in the best way he could. And he did just that. He and a few others were instrumental in setting up the ECHA.

May he rest in peace.

**The re-dedication of England as Mary's Dowry.** Last week, England was re-dedicated to Mary. It was planned that each English Bishop would hold a ceremony locally whilst a Mass was to be said at the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk. In the event, owing to the closure of churches in the wake of the Covid 19 outbreak, Christians were invited to re-dedicate themselves and their country to the prayers of the Virgin Mary from their own homes.

So many people (530,000 they say) tuned into livestreams at Walsingham and elsewhere that many websites crashed. But all was not lost, it was

possible to watch the proceedings on YouTube.  
But why *Dowry*? Please see 11 for a few explanatory notes

**New ECHA Co-ordinator.** I am very pleased to inform you that Audrey Atter who recently moved from Winchester to Penzance has taken up the role of ECHA Co-ordinator for the South-West (Clifton and Plymouth). Audrey had served on our ECHA committee and was responsible for putting us in touch with the Winchester Catholic History Group and we continue to publicise their monthly lectures. So Audrey is breaking new ground for us. Funnily enough on page 12 you will find details of a book about an extraordinary lady who left a colourful Bohemian life in London and ended up moving to Cornwall where in later years she established a Catholic chapel in Bude. Good luck Audrey, we look forward to hearing from you in Cornwall.

**ECHA Grants.** As you are aware, your annual subscription enables us to allocate funds to people conducting research in the field of English Catholic History. We have a very broad brief. The applicants are often scholars and academics but we also help people who say, are writing up the history of their local parish. We recently gave funds to a lady who wrote an updated History of the History of the **English Catholic Martyrs** Parish in Chard Somerset. Recently, the author emailed us a copy of the publication, if this is of interest to you, please contact Angie Hodges, our Secretary and it may be possible to email the booklet to you. Or maybe post it.

We have also awarded funds to an ECHA member, the author of a book on the subject of **St John the Evangelist Church**, New Ferry, Bebington, Wirral. We have also granted funding to a member who is working on **British and Irish Catholicism in numbers: Creating a dataset 1800-1850**. There are several other applications which are presently being assessed.

**Gresham College.** In our last newsletter I told you about a lecture which had been given at the University of London, Gresham College by Professor Alec Ryrie on 20 November 2018– ***How the English learned to Hate Catholics***. Here is a link to that lecture

[https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/content.gresham.ac.uk/data/binary/3167/2019-11-20\\_AlecRyrie\\_EnglishCatholics-T.pdf](https://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/content.gresham.ac.uk/data/binary/3167/2019-11-20_AlecRyrie_EnglishCatholics-T.pdf)

And here is a link to Gresham College <https://www.gresham.ac.uk/>  
Gresham College was founded in 1597 to offer free lectures to the public on various subjects including religion. The Gresham website also includes a video of the lecture and a copy of the illustrations used in the presentation.

**And finally, “attending” Mass** and other devotions whilst we are in lockdown. The other Sunday some of us on the ECHA committee had a round-robin of emails boasting about where we had “attended” Sunday Mass. Dublin, Cork, Walsingham, SS Anselm and Cecilia (successor to The Sardinian Chapel in London, St John’s in Bath. I attended the 10:30am Mass at St Mary’s Cathedral in my home town of Sydney.

One of my colleagues, who will remain nameless, confessed that *“old habits die hard. Even though I was attending Mass in my lounge room, I still managed to be late.”*

There are numerous livestreams now functioning. Catholic TV could be a good starting point if you want to see what is out there. Or your own local church may well be streaming Mass live. Your Diocesan website would have details as well. Look out for Downside Abbey. Simon told us that they will be streaming Mass and devotions from there in due course. Please as always keep an eye on our website for news. And please also support our new Facebook page. Nigel is adding events and news there all the time and Lynne is doing the same with the website. Keep well everyone and God bless you all.

## ARTICLES

### **Re-dedication of England as Mary's Dowry**

I found a useful article on Vatican News in which the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Vincent Nichols explained **the Re-dedication of England to Mary**.

Speaking to **Vatican News**, Cardinal Nichols explained that *“the rededication is a recapturing of an ancient part of our Catholic heritage.”* The Cardinal was referring to the original dedication, made by King Richard II in 1381, during a period of political crisis in England. Exploring the idea further, Cardinal Nichols told Vatican News that while the word *“‘dowry’ is a bit of an old fashioned word, it means we make of ourselves a gift to give to Mary, which has always been part of our tradition. And in return we ask for her protection.”*

Looking at the situation in Britain, with much of the country subject to social distancing and isolation, the Cardinal explained that the need to pray for protection actually fits the present state of affairs quite well. *“What is particularly interesting is that, in 1360 when Richard II was king, the country was recovering from the ravishing of the Black Death, which had slaughtered vast swathes of Europe. Now this virus is not of the same measure, but we still turn to Mary in our hour of need.”*

Elsewhere it was reported that Msgr John Armitage, Rector of the Catholic shrine at Walsingham, released a joint statement with the Rector of the Anglican shrine, Fr Kevin Smith. The statement says, *“Today, fear and uncertainty about the future is affecting millions of lives around the world and within our own communities and families. We see in Mary one who was not shielded from life’s pain and difficulties. This is why we can look to Mary with confidence and trust in times of sorrow and joy.”*

The original dedication of England took place in 1381, when King Richard II made a series of “Entrustment vows” during a ceremony at Westminster Abbey. The country was in the midst of political uncertainty with the Peasants’ Revolt against landlords. The 14-year-old king turned to the Virgin Mary for her protection.

English law at the time required that a husband should provide his wife with a portion of his land and money, to be able to support herself should the husband die before her. This was known as the widow’s dowry. Although other leaders, such as King Edward the Confessor, who reigned

from 1042-1066, had informally referred to England as “Mary’s Dowry,” the dedication made by King Richard was the first official use of the title. The King established the title in law. It was then solemnly proclaimed in 1399 by Thomas Arundel, who was Archbishop of Canterbury.

The proclamation read: *“The contemplation of the great mystery of the Incarnation has drawn all Christian nations to venerate her from whom came the first beginnings of our redemption. But we English, being the servants of her special inheritance and her own dowry, as we are commonly called, ought to surpass others in the fervour of our praises and devotions*

*As England seeks the protection of the Virgin Mary once again, these opening words of the prayer resounded throughout the British Isles and beyond:*

*“O Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our most gentle Queen and Mother, look down in mercy upon England thy “Dowry” and upon us all who greatly hope and trust in thee.”*

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### **Father Brian Doolan (25 August 1943 – 23 December 2019)**

Fr Brian will be sadly missed by many members of the Association who came to know him and appreciate the work he undertook as chairman of the ECHA for many years. He was foremost especially in the promotion and preservation of the history and heritage of the church in the Archdiocese of Birmingham – formally as a member of the Historical Commission and as secretary to the Historic Churches Committee. Less formally he was the long serving chairman of the Midland Catholic History Society and was instrumental in promoting collaborative ventures between that Society and the ECHA.

Efforts to raise awareness of the rich heritage of the church in the Birmingham Archdiocese were already under way before Fr Brian’s arrival in the 1990s, but the last twenty five years have witnessed a much stronger focus on preserving that heritage as well as attempting to rectify previous mistakes. During his time at St George’s, Worcester, at St Chad’s Cathedral, Birmingham and at Brailes, in South Warwickshire, he gave a

powerful and eloquent voice to that agenda for preservation and restoration, reinforced by his store of knowledge accumulated over decades of church ministry. It had also enabled him to establish close connections with a wide variety of scholars and experts in church history and architecture.

The lasting legacy of that effort is to be seen in St Chad's cathedral, partly restored to former splendour, and at Brailes which he worked tirelessly to restore and turn into a beautiful place of pilgrimage. That was not achieved without some personal cost – while he was Dean at the cathedral he often said that, having spent most of his life trying to get away from Birmingham, he now found himself 'living over the shop' in the heart of the city. But he loved the cathedral and nothing gave him more pleasure than to give guided tours – either to large groups or to individuals; he never turned down a request from anyone and the hour long tour was a rare treat to experience. Many television viewers will have seen the Pugin documentary fronted by Tony Robinson; the quality of the programme was considerably elevated by Fr Brian's contribution.

He has also left us with a valuable store of his writing and research, with a number of contributions to the journal *Midland Catholic History*, and as author of several Historical Commission publications. These include the beautifully illustrated and entertaining account of the Pugins and the Hardmans; his account of the life of Richard Challoner (which he also delivered as a talk a number of times) is a highly accessible introduction to a neglected subject; the history of St George's Worcester is also the most up to date and finely illustrated publication on a notable church of the diocese.

His chairmanship of the English Catholic History Association and the Midland Catholic History Society was remarkable in many ways – his leadership gave much valued focus and vitality to their activities. He could always be relied upon to come forward with ideas for places to visit or for speakers to invite – and, when all else failed, and showing his gift for improvisation, to lead guided tours himself or to fill a gap when no speaker could be found. The healthy consequence was to actively involve more and more people in visiting and becoming aware of their rich

heritage. His suggestions for day conferences proved highly successful and brought large audiences into the Grimshaw Room at the cathedral and other venues. One that stands out in the memory, coinciding with the advent of the revised version of the liturgy – ‘The history of the Mass, from Melchisedech to the Second Vatican Council’ as he memorably titled it. He never seemed to be discomfited by unexpected requests, such as the one from the producers of ‘Galileo’ at the Birmingham Repertory theatre some years ago; the author, perhaps unsurprisingly, had left little guidance on Roman liturgy in the seventeenth century; the producers were heavily indebted to Fr Brian who was brought in as consultant.

The many hundreds of people who benefited from his work as historian, educator and evangeliser will have very fond personal memories of Fr Brian but will also cherish and share with others the love of Catholic heritage that he inspired. Fittingly his funeral Mass, at which the principal celebrant was his Grace the Archbishop of Birmingham, took place in the splendour of St Chad’s Cathedral on 4 February 2020.

***Vincent Burke***

## **The Venerable English College (VEC) in Rome**

(<https://www.vecrome.org/about>) prepares men for the Catholic priesthood. The seminary was founded in 1579 as a place for preparing priests to serve on the "English Mission", but there has been an English presence on via di Monserrato since 1362, when the site was acquired by a confraternity of Englishmen living at Rome. The English Hospice, as it came to be known, offered a welcome to generations of pilgrims. As well as seminarians and formation staff, there are also priests doing further studies living at the College. There are currently about forty people who live and work there. Mgr Philip Whitmore, of the Archdiocese of Westminster, is the present Rector.

The Archives of the Venerable English College in Rome record more than 650 years of history, stretching back to the original foundation in 1362 of the English Hospice, a place for pilgrims from England and Wales, on the site of the present College. The documents in the Archives constitute the oldest British archival collection outside Britain.

The VEC Archives today are at a turning-point: conservation efforts are required to preserve many of the collection's fragile records, and presentation and cataloguing methods need to be brought into the twenty-first century to do justice to the Archives' significance. The VEC are launching an endowment fund to enable them to carry out their important work which includes archival restoration work. They are encouraging individuals to join the **Friends of the Venerable** or to make a donation via the link on their website.

We have been in contact with the Archivist there and we expect to have more details of their work and their archives in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, I thought you would find the information on their website particularly interesting. Watch this space.

## BOOKS

**The Webbs of Odstock** by Hugh Grant – Downside Abbey Trust 2019

ISBN: 9781 898 663 04 1

Hardcover pp 180 colour plates £14.95

*Four centuries of a West Country Catholic Family 1466 – 1876*

**Pamela Colman Smith Tarot Artist: *The Pious Pixie***

by Dawn G Robinson – Fonthill Media April 2020

ISBN: 9781 781 557 41 9

Paperback: pp 232: colour photographs 32: £19.00

*What makes a talented mystical artist convert from mysticism to Catholicism in 1911 after creating the world's most renowned Waite-Smith tarot deck?*

*Why did she remove herself from vibrant London to the Lizard Peninsula in Cornwall where she evangelised Catholicism in a heavily non-conformist area? And what of the chapel which she established in Bude?*

Includes previously unpublished material including interviews with her former errand boy in Bude.

## BOOK REVIEW

**Henry Matthews, Viscount Llandaff, the Unknown Home Secretary**, by Roger Ward, Fonthill, 2017, ISBN 978 1 78155 715 0

Henry Matthews has to be one of the best kept secrets of Birmingham's modern history; and even more so of recent Catholic history. The title of Professor Ward's book offers some immediate clues; 'unknown' certainly – and anonymity was a choice made by the man himself, leaving instructions to his executors to destroy unread all his papers after his death – an instruction which seems to have been carried out with meticulous care. The judgement of his contemporaries was overwhelmingly negative and 'undistinguished' is a label regularly accompanying references to his political career. Professor Ward's biography offers glimpses of a more complex story and of a more sympathetic character than contemporary opinion allowed.

Lack of distinction and anonymity perhaps, but in many ways Matthews' political career is worthy of more than just a passing glance. He was the first Catholic to serve in the Cabinet. He occupied one of the highest offices of state for six years (1886-92), a term only exceeded by Teresa May. Given the anti-Catholic prejudice of the time, heightened by Irish Nationalist/Unionist tensions, it seems remarkable that he made a career in the Conservative party at all. And, as a Conservative, that he secured election to a parliamentary seat in Birmingham, Joseph Chamberlain's back yard.

His political progress owed much to being in the right place at the right time and, even better, having the right political connection. Having made his mark as a highly successful barrister, noted for his forensic skills and eloquence in the court room, his lawyerly skills and former tenure of a parliamentary seat in Ireland caught the attention of Randolph Churchill, rising star of the party. It was Churchill's patronage that smoothed Matthews' progress into the hostile territory of Birmingham politics. Sadly for Matthews Churchill's fall from grace was even more meteoric than his rise, and the loss of such a formidable patron was a signal of worse problems to follow at the Home Office.

Professor Ward gives a lively account of the stormy seas the Home Secretary had to negotiate. Against a background of Irish Republican activity and industrial working class unrest Matthews' instincts as a 'liberal' Tory were to be reasonable and to be fair. Such instincts did not sit well with his party leader, Salisbury, the majority of Conservative MPs, recalcitrant and militaristic senior police officers and the newly emerging popular press. His survival in office and his ability to cope with the strains of running an unwieldy department of state with inadequate resources suggest a man of steelier qualities than he has been given credit for.

It is hard to see Matthews being a popular figure in the corridors of Westminster. Always something of an outsider – too Catholic, too single – he did himself few favours in the party by being too intelligent, too liberal and too fluent in several European languages. He remained politically active in the Lords until his death shortly before the outbreak of world war and was instrumental, working with other peers, in the promotion and protection of Catholic educational interests and religious communities.

Professor Ward deserves credit for rescuing Matthews from obscurity, piecing together a picture of his political life using the very limited resources available. Inevitably it is a fairly short account but it is a very readable and accessible survey of one of the more turbulent periods in modern British history. Matthews is very likely destined to remain a shadowy figure but Professor Ward's book may prompt some enterprising researchers to dig deeper and bring him a little further out of obscurity.

A short account of Matthews' life can also be read in Professor Ward's article for *Midland Catholic History*, Number 25.

***Vincent Burke***



## 2020 PROGRAMME

**ALL events up to and including July 2020 have been cancelled or postponed. More news in June newsletter**

**APRIL: Monday 6<sup>th</sup> WINCHESTER.** The Milner Hall, St Peter's Street, Winchester SO23 8BW at 7:30PM.

***Hans Holbein and The Reformation***

*Presented by* The Rt Rev'd Dr Christopher Herbert, Bishop of St Albans (1995-2009) In retirement an Honorary Assistant Bishop in the Dioceses of Salisbury & Winchester ***cancelled***

**MAY: Monday 18<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> High Leigh, HODDESDON, Herts.**  
**CAS (Catholic Archives Society) conference. *cancelled***

**MAY: Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> SALFORD, Greater Manchester.**  
**Visit to Wardley Hall, Medieval Manor House and Mass at a nearby church. This is our inaugural ECHA visit to the North-West. *cancelled***

**JUNE: Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> YORK, Bar Convent.**  
**York Catholic History Day. *cancelled***

**JULY: Monday 20<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> YORK, Bar Convent.**  
**CRS (Catholic Record Society) conference. *cancelled***

**OCTOBER: Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> LONDON.** Hinsley Room, Westminster Cathedral. ECHA AGM and afternoon conference.  
Dr Carmen Mangion - **Changing Dimensions of Women's Religious Life 1945-1990.**