

YEARS OF FAITH

CATHOLIC HISTORY IN AND AROUND

BURY ST EDMUNDS



ST EDMUND'S CHURCH HISTORY GROUP

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They acknowledge the valuable contributions made by past members John (Jack) Steggles and Claire Robinson who passed away respectively in 2016 and 2019.

Front cover: Interior of St Edmund's Church 2018

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FOREWORD

Having arrived in September 2019, I still regard myself as a comparative newcomer to the parish of St Edmund King and Martyr and am therefore delighted to write this foreword. There are obvious reasons for this pleasure – the History Group has produced an historic record seldom found in other parishes and their research stimulates us to consider the extent of change and why it occurs. Perhaps more importantly the work of the History Group is an example of how groups in the parish come together to support their clergy in uniting its diverse community.

The history of St Edmund goes back to the 9th century. A man of virtue, his life was ended violently because he refused to renounce his Christian faith. Others over the years have similarly laid down their lives or have suffered oppression whilst remaining true to their beliefs. *'Years of Faith'* provides the opportunity to learn more about the actions of Catholic families and the harsh choices they faced. It is to them that we owe a debt for maintaining the missions at Lawshall, Hengrave and Great Barton and the building of our Presbytery, Chapel and Church in Bury St Edmunds.

The life and death of Edmund were the inspiration for building St Edmund's Abbey in 1020 which was cared for by the Benedictine Order until the dissolution of the Monastery in 1539. Pilgrims from across Europe came to our town to venerate the Saint's shrine. It is fitting that 1,000 years later the interest in Edmund is maintained and that our Catholic Church is the only religious institution in town to commemorate in its title his name, sovereignty and cause of death. Our devotion will be manifest during 2020 but will continue long after.

Whilst *'Years of Faith'* is a tribute to those who have served us down the years we should also appreciate the work undertaken by John Saunders and his team in producing such a detailed and helpful piece of work. They have ensured that our history is open to everyone, as is our Church into which we are pleased to welcome you irrespective of whether or not you share our faith.

David Bagstaff

Canon David Bagstaff

2020

INTRODUCTION

St Edmund's Church History Group is a small body of volunteers from the parish who meet occasionally to ensure that the history and heritage of our Church is maintained. Our first main achievement was the publication of a booklet *'The Present From Our Past'* but time does not stand still and in 2018 it was necessary to update it. The variety of projects undertaken by our Group is itself testimony to the dedication of members, including commemorating wartime events; talks, tours and exhibitions; cataloguing materials for the Suffolk Records Office; compiling a record of the assets of the Church; contributing to Diocesan history.

Changes of clergy at St Edmund's and new events are reasons for updating *'Years of Faith'* but revision is timely in that 2020 celebrates 1000 years since the foundation of the Abbey of St Edmund. It is perhaps worth reminding ourselves that Catholicism itself has experienced many changes in a millennium, the most significant occurring during the reformation of King Henry VIII; it has been both victim and perpetrator of oppression, violence and immorality; it has provided and continues to provide support to those in times of need. Our town has matured to its present state of religious acceptance and tolerance; our ecumenical connections are sound and purposeful.

Online publication of *'Years of Faith'* is one of the benefits of modern times. It does not purport to be a conventional book that is tied to historic facts; it stretches to the present on the basis that today's events will be tomorrow's history. It enables the reader to explore in an unstructured fashion and it is environmentally friendly because you do not have to print the pieces you may not wish to retain. It depends on where and how you want to start your literary journey. Those wishing to absorb the history from Jesuit times may wish to commence at Chapter 1; visitors seeking to use the book as a guide will find Chapter 5 the logical starting point; newcomers might be reassured by the experiences of others who came to settle in the parish as described in Chapter 8; there are those who might be planning to visit other nearby locations and will beforehand appreciate the contents of Chapter 7. In whatever order you read, we hope that the entire content will prove enlightening.

Names of people who have a special place in the history of the Church of St Edmund King and Martyr are featured in this book but of course there are many others past and present who have made a huge contribution to Catholicism in the town – omissions are not because they are regarded as in any way less important. It is the combination of the contribution of individuals and the parish as a whole that has maintained our faith, something that in our present times of change and challenge we should recognise and be prepared to carry forward into the future.

Two expressions, 'history repeats itself' and 'we must learn from the mistakes of the past' entwine in our lives – we need to find out what happened in the past, what was good or bad before we can learn how to realise our future. Acquainting ourselves with the past is an important step and we hope that dipping in and out of *'Years of Faith'* will help your journey forward.

John Saunders

Chairman of St Edmunds History Group

2020

CHAPTER 1 – THE PRESENCE OF THE JESUITS

The establishment of the Church of England following King Henry VIII breaking from Rome was one of the most significant happenings in British religious history. It led to the destruction of St Edmund's Abbey in Bury St Edmunds in 1539 and centuries of religious rivalry.



Within the town of Bury St Edmunds reminders of past bloodshed exist – the memorial to 17 Protestants within the Great Churchyard show that this was not always a one-sided affair and there are many vivid accounts in other documents that illuminate the scale and abhorrence of such epochs. The purpose of *'Years of Faith'* is not to cover the realm of those historic events but to commence by considering the role of those from the Society of Jesus who served the town.

According to records within the Jesuits' archives at Farm Street, London, we know with a degree of certainty that the Jesuits' Mission existed prior to 1685 but it was in that year that they established a college for boys, house and a chapel within the ruins of St Edmund's Abbey, making use of the former Abbot's Palace. This Mission was especially supported by the Rookwood family (referred to in Chapter 7, especially Elizabeth Rookwood (who died in 1694) who purportedly donated 50 chalices to their cause. These chalices came to be known as the 'Rookwood chalices' and are mentioned later in this chapter.

In 1688 at the time of the Orange Revolution there were riots which led to the ousting of the Jesuits from the Abbey Grounds. The riots led to the deaths of three of the rioters and of Mr Prettyman, a lay person who was endeavouring to protect the College. After that, occasional visits by Benedictine Priests had to meet the spiritual needs of local Catholics, a situation that existed until 1756 when the last Benedictine Fr Howard left.

Fr John Gage SJ first came to Bury St Edmunds in 1755 where he celebrated Mass. This was conducted in secret in a house at 43 Southgate Street to avoid the risk of legal proceedings – the threat of punishment by death for the open celebration of Mass still lay in the statutes.

Seven years of Fr Gage's ministry led to the purchase in 1760 of a house and surrounding land in Westgate Street at a cost of £593. This was to become the Presbytery with a simple Chapel to the rear out of sight of the road. The first Mass in the Chapel was celebrated on 8 December 1762; at that time Catholics numbered around 160 of the town's approximate population of 6,000. Penal

times continued for over twenty five years, until 1788. Fr James Dennett SJ, Provincial, gave the original approval but resources came from Fr Gage's brother, Thomas, and his cousin Sir William Gage. The house was large enough to accommodate the family when they chose to stay. Fr John Gage's ministry continued until his death in 1790 when, as described in Chapter 7 he was buried in the family vault in Stanningfield.

His mother, Elizabeth Rookwood Gage, descended from a strong Catholic ancestry, had died in 1759. She was heiress to the Coldham Estates (situated in the parishes of Lawshall and Stanningfield) where she had spent a long widowhood before moving to Southgate Street. She bequeathed the mission-house with its adjoining meadow and a farm at Westley to her son Fr John who made all this over to the Mission. Thus Elizabeth Rookwood Gage was the founding Patroness of the Bury Mission. It was finally licensed in 1791 after the Catholic Relief Acts had been passed.

St Edmund's Church has always benefited from the generosity of its parishioners and within this publication and more specifically in Chapters 5 and 10 mention is made of some of the more prominent donations and those that no longer appear in the Church. However, without the financial support of the Jesuits and the contributions made by Mrs Elizabeth Rookwood Gage and her son Fr John Gage, Catholicism in the town would not have flourished.

The sum of £900, probably saved at the Suppression of the Society (by Pope Clement XIV in 1773), helped to support the Mission at Bury. It came on the death of the former Provincial, Fr James Dennett, in 1789. Later the bequest of Fr Edward Baptist Newton, former Professor at Liège, provided a collection of books and the interest from money to relieve poor Catholics in Bury.



Fr Thomas Angier - reproduced with kind permission of Jesuits in Britain Archives

Following Fr Gage was Fr Charles Thompson who arrived in 1790. At the time of the Restoration of the Society in England (1803) three priests lived in Bury St Edmunds. Fr Robert Cole was Missioner until his death in 1812. Fr Thomas Angier who had been at the Mission since 1795 went on to become Missioner until 1826 on his posting to New Hall, Chelmsford.

In 1826 Fr Henry Wright took charge of the Mission though he left due to sickness and died very young. He too came from a grand family – indeed his brother later became a Baronet. Fr John Laurenson took over in 1832 but, to everyone's great sadness, died after only two years. In 1794 Fr Laurenson had been one of 18 Jesuits (10 priests and 8 scholastics) who came from Liege to Stonyhurst; their number included Fr Joseph Tate. A most able man, Fr Laurenson had founded the Clitheroe

Mission in 1799.

The Bury and Norwich Post and Suffolk Herald of 4 February 1835 reported an early loss for the Chapel: *'The Sessions for the Borough were held on Monday last – James Betts for breaking into the Catholic Chapel in Westgate Street and stealing several articles of plate etc and was sentenced to be transported for 14 years'*.

Fr Joseph Tate started at the Yarmouth Mission in 1822 and moved to Bury St Edmunds in 1835. He found Fr Gage's Chapel to be too small and undertook the task of building our present Church. Unfortunately a dispute with the builder led to the threat of a lawsuit, the matter being eventually decided by counsel who awarded the sum of £347.18.0 to the builder, Mr Newnham. This, plus plaintiff's costs of £738.12.4 and defendant's costs of £700.15.9, placed a great burden on the parish over and above the building costs.

The Church was built in 1836 at an approximate cost of £9,400 (equating to £2.5 million in 2020) – of this the Province gave as a free gift £2,000 and advanced £7,400 at 3% interest. In and since the year 1842 the Province took the rent of the Westley Farm, known as Fressels, as security for the interest on the loan of £7,400.

The Bury and Norwich Post and Suffolk Herald dated 6 April 1836 referred to the external construction and funding of the Church. It also highlighted the disquiet around that time from opponents of the Faith:

'A number of immense blocks of Ketton stone (many of them weighing 3 – 4 tons each) have been put on barges at Wansford to be used in building a large Catholic Church at Bury St Edmunds. We believe that the expense of this edifice is defrayed from the general fund for the creation of Catholic Chapels upon which every town has a claim in its turn. This fact may serve to quiet the alarms of some of those persons who see in every announcement of a new Catholic place of worship the approach to the restoration of 'Popish' supremacy in this Country. The Duke of Norfolk stated the other night, on newspaper authority, that the number of Roman Catholic Chapels in England had increased from 30 to 510 within the last 60 years. But we suspect that the smallness of the number of Chapels supposed to have existed 60 years ago may be explained by the fact of the Romish form of worship having been proscribed up to that time; and many a Chapel, perhaps like the one in this town, may have been concealed behind an old outbuilding – a standing monument of by gone Protestant intolerance. Supposing that there be 510 R C Chapels, each having a congregation of 300 persons on the average, the total will not amount to a hundredth part of the population, notwithstanding the constant immigration of Irish poor. These fears of the spread of Popery, and the perpetual hankerings after the interposition of the secular arm, are wretched complements to the Protestant Church with its endowed Ministers posted in every parish'.

On November 16, 1837 the Church was opened and this was followed by an advertisement in the Bury and Norwich Post of 13 December 1837 which announced:

'The Catholic Church of St Edmund, Bury St Edmunds will be dedicated to divine worship on Thursday the 14th of December at eleven o'clock am. In the morning Mozart's Mass No 1. In

the afternoon at three o'clock, a selection of sacred music. Collections will be made. Mr Nunn will preside at the organ and several members of the Bury Musical Society have kindly promised their assistance in the choir. The words of the sacred music may be had at Mr Newby's, Angel Hill, price sixpence'.

The Church was dedicated on 14 December 1837 and its splendour was described six days later in the Bury and Norwich Post:

'The Altar is elevated on a platform approached by circular steps and is painted in ornamental panels with the name of 'Jesus' inscribed on the front, the tabernacles and crucifix with six superb candlesticks and an equal number of vases of flowers being placed upon it'.

In the Church accounts of 15 October 1838 it was recorded that £616 was paid to Mr Fairs for painting the Church although the colours and paint type were not specified. The sanctuary pillars were Scagliola, as were those at Ickworth Park, pilasters were marbled to resemble Sienna; the ceiling was 'true blue' with white/grey mouldings; white cornice with gilt capitals.



Fr James Brownbill - reproduced with kind permission of Jesuits in Britain Archives

In 1837 Fr Henry Brigham came to Bury and in 1842 he was named Superior of the College of the Holy Apostles (Society Records of the English Province show this to have been in existence in 1633). Fr Brigham returned to Stonyhurst in 1845 to be Prefect of Studies.

Fr Bernard Jarrett took over the Mission for nine years and was succeeded by Fr James Brownbill who had been Rector of Stonyhurst moving then to the new St Ignatius's College in north London. The now famous Farm Street Church was built in his time and Archdeacon Manning converted, later to become Cardinal. Fr Brownbill noted in 1866 that many families were leaving Bury in search of better paid employment and the Catholic population dropped to around 200. In 1867 Fr Edward Bird ran the Mission for two years followed by Fr Thomas Knight until 1873.

In 1874 Fr Joseph Lazenby was appointed Parochus. During his 11 years he wrote an account of the Society's College in Bury in 1687 (see *Foley's Records of the English Province*). His interest in St Edmund was evident in an article in the Bury and Norwich Post of 22 November in 1881:

'The feast of St Edmund, East Anglia's King and Martyr is now looked forward to with much interest, as an annual occurrence, and two very attractive services were held on Sunday morning and afternoon last, in the above place of worship. It will be remembered that during the past six years (through the exertions of the Rev J Lazenby and the liberality of kind

friends) a material change has been made in the interior of the sacred edifice, in the shape of permanent decorations in oil colours, statue of St Edmund, pictures and numerous other minor additions, all more or less symbolical of its patron Saint. This year notes the introduction of a relic of St Edmund. The pastor of the church, who is still working very hard to revive the name of, and devotion to, St Edmund, has collected a vast amount of information respecting the Martyr-King.... The Rev J Lazenby thought that a relic of the Saint was an all-important item for the Church (dedicated to him) in the town, where upwards of 1000 years ago the body lay and up to the present day bears his name. He at once made application, and eventually succeeded in getting the relic which the President Cardinal Archbishop Duprez had extracted for himself from the silver shrine of St Edmund in 1867 and which he has presented to this Church'.

It was during his tenure that the elementary school was opened by Fr Lazenby on 4 June 1882 at a cost of £600 which was paid by Fr Purbrick Provincial. The teaching staff of the new School was augmented by a trained mistress, an assistant mistress, and a pupil teacher, the last a protestant who was subsequently reconciled to the Church. This greatly raised the character of the School, as shown by the larger attendance and increased Government grant. The number of boys was 26, 32 on the books, average attendance 23; examined 24: passed in all subjects 11, passed in some 12. Girls 38, on the books 44, average attendance 29, examined 36; passed in all subjects 16, in some 15. Infants 27, on the books 39, average attendance 20, examined 27.

The Parish diaries indicated the situation at that time:

'1885 Catechism is now taught in the school room three times a week, and on Sunday afternoons a catechism is also given in the Church followed by benediction when all the children in the congregation attend'.

'Sixty are out of the Church, many from the time of the opening of the new Church in 1837, having quarrelled with the resident priest on the subject of bench rents. Others again took offence at the removal of that priest, who was deservedly popular in the pulpit, and whole families have remained unbaptized in consequence of these differences. Two or three years back, we discovered that one who always counted himself a catholic, had never been baptized, and he received that Sacrament along with his first-born son, his two brothers-in-law, soldiers, standing sponsors respectively. His marriage then had privately to be revalidated, his wife being a born catholic and then making her first confession. Yet, notwithstanding the full conviction of these people of the truth of our holy Religion, there seems to be no means of persuading them to come to mass. The brother of this good man, himself a baptized catholic, is organist at the Socinian chapel, and his children, with two exceptions, are unbaptized. The exceptions are the eldest daughter by adoption, who was received into the Church on her marriage some five or six years ago; and a son, baptized in danger of death, by Fr Thomas Knight SJ. Another brother of the father, though baptized, goes nowhere and allows all his children to be brought up in the Anglican heresy. These are a few specimens of the things which render this mission so sad'.

'In 1885 the Congregation undergoes many fluctuations; the departure of the Rushbrooke family after the death of the late Commander Rushbrooke R N has been a great loss to the mission. Another family of eight, connected with the Post Office, has removed on promotion

to Barnet near London. One year there were 100 catholic soldiers in the Barracks. Since the change in the recruiting grounds, there have not been more than 20 or 30. Many of them, especially the Sergeants, give great edification by their pious demeanour, giving attention to the sermons and assisting at the Sacraments'.

'A mission was lately given here by our Father Humphrey SJ, and although there were good attendances of the pious catholics and a fair number of non-catholics, not a single reclaimed was counted amongst the confessions. We gave up our confessional to the preacher, and erected one in the Tribune behind the organ, where we heard just five, for so great is the echo of this Roman Church that the least whisper was echoed back from the Apse behind the altar. Our Easters were fewer than usual, partly owing to the migration of practical catholics elsewhere. And yet it must be said the Mission was a success in a town like this which is little better than a Social Abomination, vying with what is related to the Pagans of old. And no wonder, since a great number of the inhabitants are unbaptized, registration in their case having taken the place of the Sacrament'.

'Two converts were the fruit of the mission, an Innkeeper who had been under instruction for some time (baptized by Fr de Betham) and a widow who had also frequently attended the services. After instruction Fr Lazenby received her into the Church. Our converts, therefore, if few, are worth having. It is easy to purchase any number of shady characters and lousers by a lavish distribution of poor-money; but such persons, for the most part, do small honour to the Church. Thus: "Few and Good," is the motto in the present state of the Church in England; for the day, however near at hand, has not yet come for the general reconversion of the nation, foretold by St Teresa of Jesus. Nor here must we omit the return to the Church of one received 18 years before in Ipswich, who had been led astray by his father and Freemasonry, and who renouncing the impious sect returned to the Church, and made his first communion after fruitful instruction'.

The departure of Fr Lazenby was deeply felt by the parishioners and townspeople as reported in the Bury and Norwich Post 19 January 1886:



Fr Joseph Lazenby - reproduced with kind permission of Jesuits in Britain Archives

'The Rev J Lazenby, who for many years successfully laboured in Bury St Edmunds in connection with the Roman Catholic mission in this town, owing to ill-health relinquished his duties here, and a movement was at once set on foot to present the reverend gentleman some mark of the appreciation of his services from those amongst whom he had laboured so long and so well. The movement met with a hearty response from all and consequence was that the interesting ceremony took place on Tuesday evening last, the gift taking the form of a Breviarium, handsomely bound in four volumes. On Tuesday evening service was held in the Chapel, when the Rev J Lazenby who is now stationed at Yarmouth assisted. There was a good attendance,

and after service the congregation proceeded to the library beneath the Chapel where the presentation took place. The proceedings were opened by the Rev J Strappini who briefly adverted to the object of their meeting. He then called upon Mr A J Floyd to make the presentation.

Mr Floyd, in doing so, read the following address: "Reverend and dear Father Lazenby, it is with mingled feelings of pleasure and regret that we, the undersigned, address you, regret that your failing health compels you to sever your connection with us, a connection that cannot fail to leave in the minds of all of us many pleasant recollections of your sojourn amongst us and on the other hand, pleasure that it affords us an opportunity of presenting you with a small token of our appreciation and esteem, for all you have done for us, not only spiritually, but temporarily in beautifying our Church, and the manifold benefits we have received. We therefore humbly beg your acceptance of the accompanying Breviarium, trusting that it may be useful to you, and also that it will be a constant reminder of those you leave behind. Praying for you and soliciting your holy prayers, we beg to remain, your children in Jesus Christ: J Wilson, W J Clark, A J Floyd, C W Land, J S Gerald. On behalf of 120 subscribers and friends worshipping in St Edmund's Church.

He then said it was his duty that evening, a duty which he thought was an honour that should have fallen to the lot of an order and more tried Catholic than himself, who offered to the Rev Father Lazenby their most sincere congratulations on his restoration to health and strength. During his long residence in Bury he had endeared himself to all by the many obligations he had conferred on them. It was under God due to him some of those present had been brought into the Church, whilst by his life and self-denying labour in his priestly capacity as their spiritual father and superior, as well as by word-of-mouth he had urged them on to lead pure Catholic lives. In his private capacity he had been their honoured friend and they had all experienced his kindly congratulations offered in prosperity, his advice in times of trouble and his words of comfort in sorrow and bereavement. On all sides they saw proofs of the reverend Father's zeal in forwarding the Holy Catholic faith. They had to thank him for the ornate decoration of their Church as well as for their commodious and well-appointed school. His late illness found him, as usual hard at work for his people, and now that his removal to another mission had taken place, their sorrow at losing him was mitigated by the knowledge that he was still within easy reach of Bury. In offering for his acceptance, in the name of the Catholics of Bury St Edmunds, a token of their gratitude, they asked that he would favour them by accepting the gift and with it the earnest prayer that God may reward him for all he had done for the worshippers in the Church and shower upon him every blessing. In conclusion they asked for a continuance of his prayers on their behalf and his blessing. Mr Floyd said that they had received more money than was required for the present, and the surplus would be expended in erecting a shrine to St Edmund, in honour of Father Lazenby.

The Rev J Lazenby in responding said he appreciated their beautiful present and he heartily thanked them for it. When he first came to that mission there was a very different state of things to that existing when he left it. That was in a great measure due to their assistance and, of course, to the assistance he received from his superiors and other friends. The object of his exertions had been to raise the Catholic religion in Bury so that it might approach nearer to that grand standard of catholicity which existed in olden times and hence it was

that he had taken such pains in embellishing their Church with everything which Catholics venerated, such as statues, pictures and stations, as well as with the new organ and various other additions and alterations. He had done this in order to promote a Catholic spirit amongst, and although they did not perceive a very great increase in the numbers, yet the increase had been far greater than it appeared. There had been 100 converts received into that Church during the past 11 years, and although many of them had left the town still there was a good number amongst them still who had been received into the church during the period. He was glad to think that they had got to such zealous pastors as Fathers Strappini and Drake (applause) who were carrying forward the work much more efficiently than he could have done; he trusted that the result of their efforts would be visible in a very short time. He thanked all for their kind feelings towards him and for their prayers. He was quite convinced that he owed his restoration to health as well as his increased energy and strength to their prayers which he asked them to continue in his behalf. He could assure them that on his part a day never passed in which he did not pray for them all. He prayed for them just as much now as he did when he was their pastor, joining them in his prayers with his present congregation, school teachers etc. In conclusion he again thanked them for their gift, assuring them that every time he took up those Breviaries which would be frequently every day of his life, he would always be reminded of the kind feelings they had expressed towards him. He should never forget to pray for their success in all things, both spiritual and temporal (applause)'.

During the time of Fr Lazenby there was the opening of the side door of the Presbytery into the garden to facilitate access to the library and garden which had previously been approached either through the house or the Church as far as the library was concerned. This door formerly existed as a way into the old Chapel built by Fr Gage, tending to suggest that the Chapel was used as the library.

Around 1886 a proper confessional box in the sacristy to the left of the sanctuary was established and six new benches installed to accommodate the increasing numbers of Protestants frequenting the Church on Sunday mornings.

The dedication and reliability of the Jesuits recording in the Commemoranda the history of Catholicism in Bury St Edmunds was of great benefit to those who years later decided to write this account. However, the task was not straightforward because much of their work required transcription from their customised style of Latin, resulting in the italicised extracts shown throughout this Chapter which have been reproduced virtually verbatim.

Although some of the following extract duplicates what you will already have read, it serves as a chronicle of their times:

'After the destruction of religion under the monarchs Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth there was no trace of the Church in Bury, the town of St Edmund. Thanks to the solicitude of Baron Petre and the Jesuit Grand Provincial, the College of the Holy Apostles was founded by Fr Richard Blount for the fellow travellers of Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridge. Among the places visited by missionaries was Bury St Edmunds. Further, it is certain that, under the reign of James II, a very pious and generous king, the sacred mysteries were enacted in a Church and college established in the palace of the former Abbot of St Edmund's monastery. However, perturbed by the political situation, all the fathers left the town having been

expelled and found refuge in Coldham Hall with the truly Catholic Rookwood family along with the Gage family of Ingham.

In 1735, Elizabeth, the long-time widow of John, the adolescent son of Sir William Gage Bart, of Coldham Hall in Stanningfield, bought from Roger Houghton the meadow known as Fresel's in Westley, for her son, John Gage, a Jesuit priest. John, in his last will and testament bequeathed this to Joseph of the same Society at Bury St Edmund's, the aforesaid will dated 7th August 1788 with probate granted in the Archdiaconal Court of Sudbury on 6th November 1790. The manor was held by the Abbey of St Edmund, with one part land held by Freemen, the tenants of the Abbey.

The first Church was erected by Fr Gage behind the presbytery, now however part of the presbytery. In 1835, our Society erected in the Presbytery garden a Church large enough for a good number of Catholics at major festivals. The idea was to keep everyone together. On this venture the Jesuits spent £9,400 in sovereigns. Unadorned until 1857, in which year truly through the care of Fr Joseph Lazenby, a Jesuit missionary, as far as possible the Classical Roman style was favoured. A new organ lent solemnities to the Offices of the Church. A statue of St Edmund, the gift of Lord Milner, and a painting of the saint, the gift of his son, inspired the piety of the faithful.

Thereto, a school building was desirable for boys and girls, for they were crammed into the Crypt of the Church. With the elapse of a vexatious year, our Society spent £600 on the inspired project to build a spacious school in the grounds of the presbytery where at least 100 pupils came together of which at least half were Catholics. All that was desired was achieved happily by 1881. Our brotherhood was founded, that which is called "first school", and in 1882 a library was opened for the people with great benefit not only to Catholics but also Protestants'.

In 1876 the sum of £265 was paid to Mr Park of Preston by Fr Provincial for decoration/stencilling of the interior. The Sanctuary pillars were painted/marbled to blend in with the new scheme. Oil-based paints and oil gilding was used.

In 1883 members of the Children of Mary numbered 33; the men's sodality comprised 20.

Fr Walter Strappini succeeded Fr Lazenby in 1886 and set about tackling local problems.

'During the second half of winter 1886 and the first half of the spring months, owing to the severity of the weather, the poverty of the people and depression in trade, Fr Strappini originated a plan for supplying dinners to 14 or 16 of the poorest children on all school days. It is useless to add that this was an immense boon to them. The expense which was very moderate was borne partly by the mission, and partly by voluntary contributions'.

'In the month of May 1886 our school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors. If the results of the children's examination did not come up to anticipations after the immense pains taken by all three school teachers, still they were satisfactory judging from the increase of the Government allowance. The 52 children forming the Infants' Division did remarkably well'.

'One of the two deaths mentioned in the 1886 ministeria was of an old woman named Austin who had lived for more than 30 years in the village of Hesselst 6 miles from Bury. Her husband was a Protestant; she seldom was able to come to Church, yet died as she had lived full of faith and piety. She was buried in the old parish grave-yard, this being the first burial performed there with catholic ceremonial since the so-called reformation. The whole village were present and behaved with great respect; thanks to the Protestant Rector, the Rev. Mr Morphy. Furthermore the latter, besides making arrangements to secure order at the burial, carried his civilities so far as to offer the use of his carriage to the officiating priest: and after the burial invited him to dinner'.



Fr Walter Strappini - reproduced with kind permission of Jesuits in Britain Archives



The eight years that Fr Thomas Parkinson was to spend at the Mission commenced in 1887. This former Anglican minister was a fine scholar and persuasive preacher. The number of converts rose steadily: Ten in 1889, 14 in 1890, 22 in 1891.

A report in the Bury Free Press of 17 November 1887 recorded the fiftieth anniversary of the opening of the Church. The feast-day of St Edmund was celebrated in style with emphasis on the musical accompaniment. It cost sixpence to gain admittance to the Church, a practice later forbidden by Canon Law.

Fr Thomas Parkinson - reproduced with kind permission of Jesuits in Britain Archives

On 29 December 1890 tenders were invited for hot water heating apparatus, presumably as a replacement for the Church stove which had been installed in 1870. It is uncertain when the heating contract was fulfilled although records in 1917 show that hot water apparatus was donated by the congregation, much assisted by Mr Eyre.

The decoration of the altar costing £6 was paid by the congregation and the Stations of the Cross cost £19 and a processional cross was purchased for £2 17s 6d. In July 1877 Irish drovers gave a sanctuary lamp costing £30.

On 22 July 1891 Fr Parkinson went to Northampton to see the Bishop about Mr Eyre's Oratory at Moreton Hall. On 7 September the Oratory opened with Fr Parkinson celebrating its first Mass with Fr Murphy from Liverpool in attendance. Mr Eyre was a great benefactor to the Church. Annually he also provided a day of treats for children of the parish at the Hall.

The local outbreak of influenza was such that on 9 January 1892 a soup kitchen was started, a situation which escalated during the following month. On 7 March 1894 a fire in the sacristy occurred when a thurible used during Benediction was upset. Although it was soon extinguished, the floor was burnt and considerable damage done to furniture and vestments of the Benedictine era.

On 27 March 1895 extensive damage occurred to the stone wall between the Presbytery garden and the back yard when strong winds blew down this and paddock fencing. Minor damage was also caused to the Church roof.

Between 1892 and 1916 Mr A J Floyd was Church organist. Virtually unpaid, he was active in many ways for the benefit of the parish including being president of the Men's Sodality.

In 1894 the Board of Education ordered the school to be enlarged. Fr Thomas left to be Spiritual Father in St Beuno's in North Wales.

The next Superior was also a former Anglican minister, Fr Frederick Jones, another notable preacher but with much less success in converting his hearers.

On the feast of St Edmund, 20 November 1895, Frs Jones and Perrin made a peace pilgrimage to the place of the martyrdom of St Edmund at Hoxne. They noticed an oak tree not more than 100 yards from the Cross erected to mark the spot where the oak stood to which St Edmund was fastened. It is now to be as old as its fallen neighbour.

Fr Jones recognised the importance and potential benefit in establishing an Order of nuns in the town. His first effort was on 16 February 1899 when he tried to persuade the Ursuline Nuns to come to Bury St Edmunds. His visit to Swansea was in vain as ultimately the nuns declined the offer. His persistence was maintained when on 8 October 1901 he went to Mayfield and on 30 October on his visit to Gumber House with the same object but with the same result. Fr Jones continued his quest and on 30 June 1902 he rode to Bocking to ascertain if any from that Community would consider taking charge of the Schools. This also proved fruitless.

Frs Jones and Perrin accompanied by Mr Long and Mrs Faeirs repeated their pilgrimage to the place of St Edmund's martyrdom at Hoxne on 20 November 1899. Such was the state of the influenza contagion in the town that no midnight Mass was celebrated at Christmas in 1899.

On 15 July 1901 the relics of St Edmund arrived from Toulouse at Arundel Castle. The following Sunday following Missa Cantate it is reported that there was exposition of the relic of St Edmund in the Church. This does not confirm that the relic on this occasion was that which had come into the possession of the Church in 1881 or whether it was part of those sent from Toulouse to Arundel

Castle. However, a subsequent letter was sent by Fr Jones to Cardinal Vaughan and the Duke of Norfolk asking if they would give permission for him to pursue the relics of St Edmund if the Commission enquiring as to their authenticity gave credence to the relics, this indicating that the relic referred to was that received in 1901. The outcome was that the Cardinal stated his inability to present them to Bury St Edmunds as they had been given for installation at Westminster Cathedral.

The memoranda records that 'on 7 January 1902 "a casual" coming to the town brought smallpox to the town. About 14 contracted it and about 6 died. Fr Jones had much difficulty in procuring permission to visit Catholics who had contracted the disease. Permission was granted by the Sanitary Committee for him to do so but he was in danger of death'.

It is also not known if this was the same relic referred to as having been (privately) carried by Fr Jones through the main street of the town on 9 March 1902 from which he was inclined to believe that no further reported cases of smallpox occurred in Bury St Edmunds (Chapter 5 refers).

The poor health of Fr Jones led him to the bracing air of Great Yarmouth and Fr James Foley came straight from the seminary to supply for him. He arrived on Saturday evening, June 23 1900, and served his Sunday duties. He was seen to falter and he retired to his room where he was found dead the next morning.



Fr Joseph Kenny, a former Rector of Malta College, had recently returned from India as troop chaplain and was hurriedly sent to replace Fr Jones. Two other priests were also in residence; Frs Roger Perrin and John Gretton who was an invalid.

In 1906 Fr Kenny arranged to clean the Church thoroughly for the first time in 30 years with soap and water which allowed the old decorative work to be fresher and brighter and as thought recently painted. Its beauty was captured in the following photograph taken around that time.

Fr Joseph Kenny - reproduced with kind permission of Jesuits in Britain Archives



The esteemed parishioner Captain Rushbrooke subsequently moved to Guildford, Surrey, but his love of St Edmund's Parish remained and he informed Fr Jones that he intended to leave in his will the sum of £1,000 to the Mission of Bury to assist the choir and towards the salary of the organist. Following discussion he most generously offered to hand it over at once to the Mission for it to be invested in securities of which Fr Jones and Fr Perrin were Trustees, the interest to be devoted to achieve his wishes. It was known as the Rushbrooke Choir Fund although originally Captain Rushbrooke had desired his name should not be disclosed until after his death. The association of the Rushbrooke family with the parish is preserved on a plaque in the Church porch.



Fr William Shapter - reproduced with kind permission of Jesuits in Britain Archives

In April 1907 Fr Kenny was sent to replace Fr Kernan at Worcester. He was replaced by Fr William Shapter as new Superior. He was infirm but his short and attractive sermons were greatly appreciated and Services well attended. His diaries reveal him as a careful administrator looking after the physical needs of the Church and house; rebuilding the roof over the porch, providing a bath, repairs to the kitchen range and bringing in a supply of town gas. He also had a careful eye for legal matters; negotiating a more sensible lease for letting out a house next door to, and belonging to the Mission, to a Miss Everard. He dealt with income tax liabilities using Mr John Greene (who was to become the first registrar of St Edmundsbury Cathedral) the solicitor, and invested the Rushbrooke Choir Fund. On being told that the terms of the gift were invalid he sorted the matter out with the Provincial and clarified the custody of the Fund. St Edmund's Altar had suffered rain seepage from the window above it so he put this right.

The Easter of 1908 saw a heavy fall of snow that damaged the glass roof of the passage to the kitchen. An iron roof replaced it while other extensive work was needed in the kitchen. Fr Shapter also rearranged rooms to make the house more suitable. Physical improvements to the School followed in 1910. Fr Shapter achieved much in the three years of his tenure.

At the end of 1910 Fr Vincent O'Gorman took charge of the Mission for a lengthy period of 15 years. He too was very active, controversial and a priest who ruled with an excess of firmness. He concentrated on the financial state of the Mission and was especially good at raising the money needed for many improvements.

In the School, when the National Union of Teachers found favour with the Head Mistress and her assistant, Fr O'Gorman reported that he had often to *'teach them many lessons, some by private interviews'*. He regarded the Head as wanting in tact and startled her by saying that he did not care for the School unless it could show itself more Catholic! It had too much Protestantism about it. *'She is getting careful'*, he wrote. Other examples of his firmness appear in the diaries but he also protested, successfully, at excessive use of the cane in the School.

The assistant priest, Fr Timothy Courtney, restored the Guild of the Children of Mary and set up the boys' Sodality Guild. He also took charge of catechism classes on Sundays, achieving much better standards of the children's learning.

In February 1914 Fr Perrin, an important priest of the Mission who had been at Bury St Edmunds since 1889, struck his leg against the step of the bus as he was taking Communion to the sick. His foot swelled and he was confined to bed for two weeks which resulted in constipation. He was

subject to surgical operation by Mr Floyd but in spite of careful nursing he died two months after the accident. It was a shattering loss to the Mission.

There were also some happenings at that time which might now be regarded as comedic:

'Just after Easter 1914 Miss Alma Floyd resigned the Sacristy and left the town. Fr O'Gorman put on a newly arrived couple Mr and Mrs Pritt. They soon showed that they intended "Everybody" to obey them! He received complaints in a month from all sides. They began to talk aloud in Church, showed no respect – bullied people and the servants especially. Fr O'Gorman began to caution them. Mrs Pritt had forced her way into Fr Perrin's sick room and was ejected by the Brother Infirmarian who luckily was in there at the time. She had got in after a physical struggle with the housekeeper. Soon afterwards he refused to let her send an alb to the wash. It was quite clean and only a little crumpled. Then a Storm! Both threw up the Sacristy. Mr Pritt resigned as Church Passkeeper and the School Manager's position. He also ceased to serve any Mass and collecting for Propagation Of Faith. Mrs Pritt vowed vengeance on the housekeeper, and later on (with Fr O'Gorman away) she strove to seize and thrash her in the Church porch after Mass. But Madam Gaencan, cool and active, gave her a splendid box on her ear and got away. Then lawyer's letter for apology or else a summons. Madam Gaencan stated facts to the lawyer and threatened a cross-summons! The lawyer refused to take the case after that. Pritt wrote to the Bishop and Father Provincial demanding of them that Fr O'Gorman should compel the housekeeper to apologize! He explained and they were very curt with the Pritts who then packed up and went to the Isle of Wight'.

'Much work in the way of Church and house repairs were done this year (1914). Huge water-pipes and a large drain under the Church were found to have done no work for years!! These pipes had been entirely walled in with masonry! In all (with Fr Provincial's leave) some £60 has been this year well spent on Meadow Land, on the Church and on the Presbytery. For how many years these roofs and drains and pipes have been entirely neglected! The Church door and front and railings were all repainted by Mr Pettit. The water from Church and Presbytery roof was then made to flow away from the Church foundations into the large visible pipes to run away'.

Fr O'Gorman was sometimes more driven by finance than forgiveness: *'I took a girl into Court whom the police saw tearing down a piece of Meadowland palings and selling it for firewood. The fines were happy and I covered costs. But for years this game has been going on. So I spent £18 17 6d on some yards of wrought iron railings to fill gaps caused by these enterprising imps'.* However, his railings proved a long-term investment either side of the 21st century car park entrance.

The opening of St Edmund's Hall:

'In early March 1919 Fr O'G got the idea of using up as much of cellar space under the Church as possible to form a parish Hall. By Fr Provincial's permission Fr O'G and W Thomson had jointly overhauled during many weeks the more worthless old books that Fr Shapter had stored under the Church and only by joint agreement were any books cast out as worthless. And as a result some 2,000 books were kept and taken up in the Presbytery.

January 15th 1919, the rest were sold off at 8/- per cwt. The old School under the Church, when thus cleared of books, was used for a whist drive yielding £8.4.6 at the close of Feb 7 1919, this room having been cleaned up and distempered and windows hung with curtains. After this drive the lath and plaster wall at its end was removed and rebuilt so as to form a room in the central portion of the cellar under the baptistry. By building a solid wall across the part formerly used as a cemetery another room was gained and after much cleaning and distempering and filling up a deep well and levelling the rough cellar floor (finishing with an asphalt top) we found ourselves possessed of a Hall which could seat 160 people for a whist drive’.

From reading the diaries we might judge that Fr O’Gorman was something of a martinet with individuals in his parish. The following entry is typical:

‘This “High and Mighty” Committee needed a fall, and so Fr O’G allowed them to plan and print a “Tremendous Programme” of Events in the Hall from Oct 1st to Xmas. It was most amusing to watch them putting off and scratching off Event after Event – being too lazy to do “the Work” needed for success in whist drives, plays, socials and debates etc. Hence the Season only cleared some £12, and it especially showed up the hopelessness of the Men’s Association, so that it came to an end (practically in Feb 1921), by Mr Armison resigning the post of Secretary at a meeting. Their Chief Aim had been to avoid “Priestly Interference” and hence they had invited every “Layman of Note” to lead them! But all “the Nobs” were content to be nominated and to do “Nothing”’.

On 5 September 1917 nuns of the Order of the Congregation of Jesus and Mary under the Mother General (Mother St Clare) had arrived to reside at Meadowland, 19 Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds. Fr Provincial had consented that the Nuns should tenant Meadowland and that it should be put into working order for them. Considerable renovation took place costing the nuns £78 and the Society £130. By July that year there was no money from the Suffolk Fund available but Fr Provincial authorised a loan from the Area Fund. A legacy of £300 to Fr O’Gorman from his father had gone to the area and this was drawn on.

Between September 1921 and the following May, Fr O’Gorman gave a course of lectures in the Hall to educated Protestants. All went well but it would have been wiser not to have chosen Sundays. The Archdeacon invited Fr O’Gorman to dine and they discussed the possibility of holding similar lectures in his own house. He was fearful that his Bishop, described as low-church, might object. Three months later, in a ‘nice long letter’ he wrote saying that indeed prejudice made it impossible. However:

‘In the last three months of 1923 Fr O’Gorman gave nine lectures on the faith and its origin in the house of a wealthy lady. She invited 40 of the most educated eg Col. Freeman and his wife, Major and Mrs Archer, the Archdeacon Rev’d. Wood and wife, the Mayor and wife, Mr Cocksedge the famous atheist, Mr and Mrs Snow, Mrs Hicks, Mrs Stiff (Doctor’s wife), a banker’s wife and many other notables. Some 30 came but only 15 went through the course. Held 3 – 4 pm Fridays from October 12th to December 7th, it had “excellent results”’.

Within the Commemoranda the dominant and pedantic style of Fr O’Gorman is frequently apparent.

'In 1922 Fr O'Gorman was presented with a fine crucifix by Mrs Gurney of Hardwick House and he gave it to the Convent to hang in the first room but clearly stated that he did not give it to the nuns. It is property of the Society and must be left in the house number 19 Westgate Street if the nuns remove. In the same year and at the same time a beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin was brought by motor van to the Presbytery and set up in a guest room, a gift from Mrs Milner Gibson Cullum of Hardwick house. Fr O'Gorman received a notice from his solicitors Partridge and Wilson of this gift on December 7, 1921, it was made clear that the gift was not to the Society of Jesus but to the church as Mission. By a printed circular Fr O'Gorman got the votes of the parishioners preferring that this statue of BVM should stand in public guest room. This was also made emphatic by one of the executors who heard that we wished to sell the statue'.

For some time it had been clear that Mother St Clare was thinking of taking her nuns elsewhere. She had hoped that the Society would have found postulants to join their numbers. She made her feelings known to Fr O'Gorman but they stayed in place until she gave notice of leaving in her letter of September 1923, to depart on Christmas Eve. Fr O'Gorman wrote to 11 different heads of Orders before meeting with success and on 17 January 1924 the Sisters of St Louis came to Bury St Edmunds as outlined in Chapter 4.

In 1925 Fr O'Gorman left for Loyola Hall. Some of the congregation asked that a testimonial to him be made. This brought in £40. Of this he returned £20 to buy a ciborium for St Edmunds (SJ property). He also bought library books, for which he paid £8, from the parish collection.

The new arrival at Bury St Edmunds in 1925 was Fr Edward Field from Worcester where he had proved popular with his parishioners who had presented him with a handsome monstrance studded with stones (SJ property). He joined the existing staff, Frs Edgar Blount and John McGowan. The Presbytery needed attention and improvements were made at a cost of £110.6.3:

'Complete redecoration, a new bathroom and lavatory, a small library on the Priests' floor, two of the Fathers' rooms were fitted with gas fires'.

Within the Church, having obtained the necessary faculties from the Bishop, a set of new Stations of the Cross was installed on 9 August 1925 with plaques denoting the names of donors. One erected in memory of deceased members of the congregation was subscribed for by some of the poorer people of the parish.

It was a fine year of spiritual activity too: Fr Field gave a Lent Mission lasting a week. The Corpus Christi procession into the street and on to an Altar of Repose in St Edmund's grounds attracted around 450 including parishioners from Thetford, Sudbury and Stowmarket. Eighteen children and six converts received the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Since May Fr Field had only Fr Blount (he an invalid) to share the workload. There was much to be done; he took charge of the sodalities – first the Children of Mary and soon afterwards he split the juniors into two guilds, one devoted to St Agnes and the other to St Aloysius. Both prayed their office together on Sunday afternoons. The local Girl Guides were under the leadership of a Catholic teacher at the Guildhall Feoffment School.

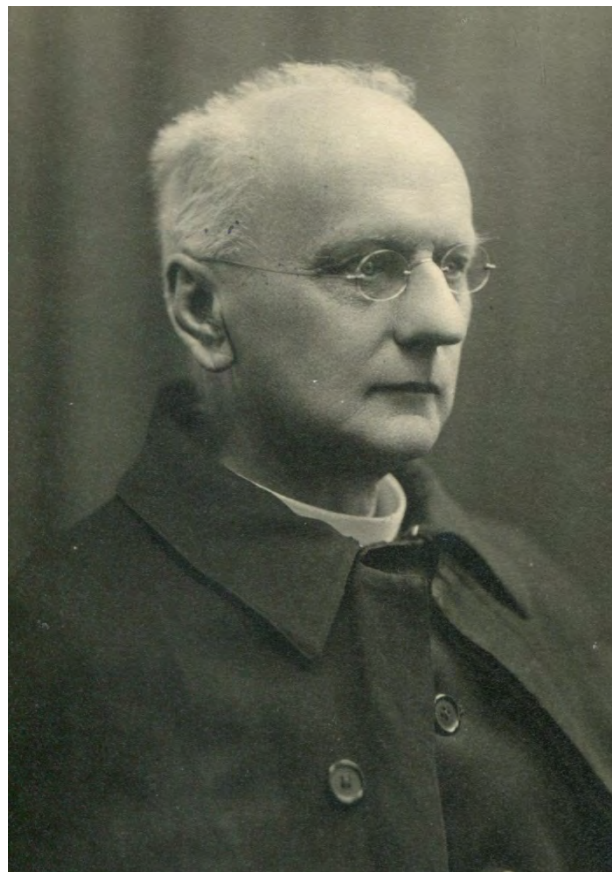
Every effort was made to get people to the Sacraments yet numbers were lean. There were few infant Baptisms and not many converts to enhance the meagre congregation. Fr O’Gorman had launched a fund to go towards a new hall but this idea was abandoned and the money (£450) was transferred to the School Fund.

The men’s section of the Guild of the Blessed Sacrament was inaugurated on 25 October 1925 with Mr Annison as Warden and Messrs Pettit and Harnett as Counsellors. They held a monthly Communion. New members were consecrated on Sunday 30 May 1926 followed by Children of Mary and the Agnesians.

Fr Field’s health deteriorated and he finally left in January 1927 to be replaced by Fr Ashton. By March Fr Blount too was recovering from a heart attack but he left soon afterwards. Bury missed him greatly as his lectures and his friendship with local Anglicans had broken down much of the prejudice against Catholics. One of his lectures in 1924 on the Benedictine monks of the monastery of Bury St Edmunds attracted Fr Blount a significant audience comprising chief citizens, catholic and protestant, all of whom were full of enthusiastic appreciation of it.



Fr John Ashton



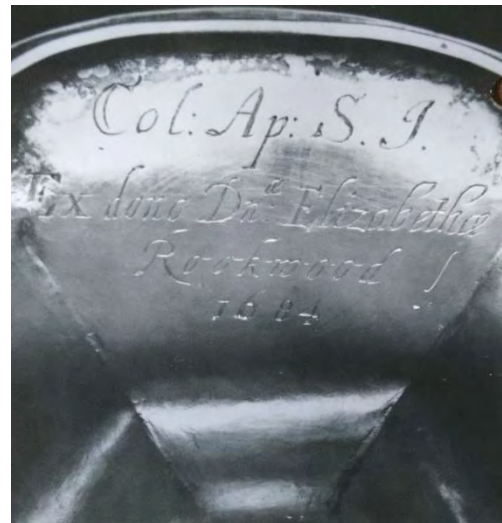
Fr Edgar Blount

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The success of the schools was apparent and it became necessary for the Convent school with 80 pupils to be moved in 1929 from Meadowlands to the Castle in St Andrew’s Street. Similarly, the

numbers attending St Edmund's school grew under the guidance of Sr Fanchea who remained its headmistress for 31 years. The majority of children at both schools were non-Catholic – at the elementary school the total of 115 pupils comprised only 37 Catholics.

That summer Fr General arranged with the Bishop of Northampton for secular clergy to take over the Mission. Fr Provincial ordered the Society's departure date to be September 1929. Around 5,000 books (some of which had come from Norwich or had been gifts of the Fathers of the College of the Holy Apostles) were distributed to St Beunos (North Wales), Heythrop, Farm Street, Stonyhurst, Manresa, Stamford Hill. Other items from the Church were similarly dispersed to different places run by the Society, including a late medieval chasuble which had come from the Abbey and is now believed to be held at Stonyhurst.



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Archives at Heythrop contain the above pictures of one of the 'Rookwood chalices' that was dispersed upon the Jesuits leaving Bury St Edmunds, this now is in use somewhere in the British Province in a Jesuit Parish Church.

The detail of this silver chalice is described and the engraving under the foot bears the inscription: Col Ap S J / Ex dono D nae Elizabethae Rookwood / 1684. In full this translates as Collegium Apostolicum Societatis Jesu / Ex dono Dominae Elizabethae Rookwood / 1684 confirming it as one of the 50 chalices that she donated (as referred to at the beginning of this Chapter). The chalice bears the coat of arms of Ambrose Rookwood (argent, six chess-rooks sable) impaling those of his wife Elizabeth Caldwell of Dunton, Essex (argent, a cross formee fitchee between eight mullets azure).

Another of the Rookwood chalices found its way to the Loyola University Museum of Art (Luma) in Chicago and is held there within the Fr Martin D'Arcy collection. A further Rookwood chalice is held within the Diocesan archives at Norwich Cathedral.

According to the Commemoranda, the dispersal also included a white cope which had been given to Fr Blount on the occasion of his Jubilee, this being sent to St Beunos. Two monstrances were parted with, the smaller of these being sent to Stamford Hill. The sending of the larger monstrance to St Beunos is of greater intrigue because it might have been the one that was used to expose the claimed relic of St Edmund which came from Toulouse in 1881 and was closely connected with a relic of the Saint held at Douai. That monstrance was described as being 25 inches high, set in Emerald, with the triangular base bearing medallions 'M' 'XP' and 'SJ'. The relic has since disappeared from the parish.

The best furniture from the Presbytery was moved to Heythrop.

At this time the Catholic Church in Bury depended largely on its converts, having received 26 in its past two years. Not one Catholic remained from its congregation of 40 years earlier. It had also been a time of great change in Bury St Edmunds and in the Country at large.

The Society of Jesus was to leave Bury St Edmunds after 174 years of service with the fabric of a sound parish that was undergoing change. Its roots were established in one of the few towns in East Anglia to have a promising Catholic presence. The Diocese of Northampton had been founded for less time than our own parish Church. It covered a huge area of disparate communities, many of them industrial rather than rural. But a succession of energetic and holy priests was charged with building up both numbers and influence on this side of England.

The Jesuits had embarked on a successful mission to create a solid foundation in the district. Their departure at the beginning of September 1929 drew an end to a most important chapter in Catholic life of Bury St Edmunds.

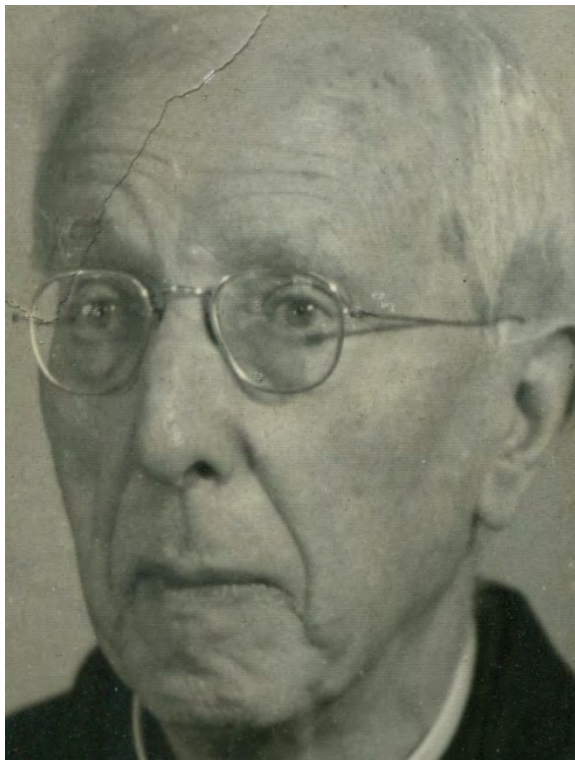
Other Jesuit Priests who served the Bury St Edmunds Mission
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Fr John Benson



Fr Frederick de Betham



Fr Peter Bontemps



Fr Richard Sumner



Fr William Thompson



Fr David Thompson

CHAPTER 2 – THE REMAINDER OF THE 20TH CENTURY

From 1929 the diocesan priests coming into the Parish were to see it fit into a wider context demanding support from our relatively prosperous area. Many of these priests came from the grass roots rather than from an institution.

Whereas the Jesuits had maintained diaries that showed the development of the Parish, those who followed were less inclined and this history has relied on the research of a range of documents and the memories of parishioners.

1929 – 1943 Canon Ernest Garnett

Arriving from Wellingborough on 2 September 1929, Canon Garnett, who had been ordained in 1898, was the first priest to be appointed by the Bishop of Northampton to Bury St Edmunds. It was a turbulent time in the Country's history. The Labour Government led by Ramsay MacDonald could never have survived the collapse of the American stock exchanges which brought about the great depression. Another general election here in 1931 failed to stabilise matters. The resulting National Government led still by MacDonald but, with few members of his own party in the House of Commons, was even less stable. A year later in 1932 there were three million unemployed in Britain. In rural areas there had already been years of hardship due to the level of food prices. Another election in 1935 installed Stanley Baldwin as Prime Minister with mainly Conservative support. Neville Chamberlain succeeded him and soon held meetings with Adolf Hitler, the German Chancellor. At the third of these encounters he presented an ultimatum that German military invasions must cease. The inevitable war followed in September 1939.

Members of the Guild were active in attending to the needs of the Church, noting in 1932 the lack of a chalice, that cassocks and cottas were worn out and beyond repair. Guild members held a whist drive so that proceeds could go to the redecoration of the statue of the Sacred Heart. On 13 November 1938 the Guild's accounts recorded that a new pole had been bought for the banner of St Edmund.

In 1935 King George V died, to be succeeded by his son who became King Edward VIII. A year later he abdicated in order to marry a divorcée. His younger brother then became King George VI. The Coronation in 1937 was close to the centenary of our Church. Canon Garnett played a very large part in the celebrations. A centenary fête was opened by Lady Home in the convent grounds of St Andrew's Castle. There was a baby show judged by Dr O'Meara, a concert given by the pupils of St Louis High School and another by R W Cobbold and company. A whist drive in the convent, dancing in a marquee, many stalls and sideshows were also enjoyed. In the Church Haller's Missa Tertia included a motet from the Mass of Dedication of a Church.

An official luncheon in the Guildhall was attended by 50 invited guests including the Mayor and Mayoress with other dignitaries. The Mayor gave a warm speech referring to the important part played by St Edmund's in the Town's life. Canon Garnett replied by referring to one of his predecessors in the early 17th century, a chaplain to Coldham Hall, Thomas Garnett SJ, who had been arrested on the orders of the Chief Magistrate prior to being hanged, drawn and quartered. Canon Garnett said that it cheered him that on this occasion the Chief Magistrate (the Mayor) had surrendered his chair amicably to another Catholic priest.

Canon Garnett had been an avid cricketer and tennis player in his earlier days and his recreations included fishing and shooting. He held Vespers on Friday evenings. Social events took place in the bare Crypt as they had in Fr O’Gorman’s time. And each year there was a fête for the schoolchildren. His housekeeper, Miss Russell, was a formidable lady who ruled the roost but scared the schoolchildren more than a little.

1943 – 1953 Fr Frederick Lockyer

He was popular but in poor health, with the reputation of being a theologian.



His first curate was Fr Anthony Throckmorton (of the famous recusant family) who visited the sick and others on his large motorcycle. Very tall, he wore a war-surplus flying jacket and usually a large crucifix. He moved to Cambridge (English Martyrs) and is somewhat strangely commemorated by a brass plaque on Southwold Pier.

Fr Lockyer’s next curate was Fr Gerald Conlon who had come from the Durham area where he had been a teacher. He had also been a member of the local amateur operatic society and knew all the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas – all parts! With his great devotion to Our Lady he arranged the flowers himself with blooms set in tiers as a background to Our Lady of Lourdes. He took over the parish until Fr Houghton arrived after Fr Lockyer’s departure to become parish priest of St Mary Magdalen in Ipswich. He later moved to Luton where he eventually died following a heart attack.

1954 – 1969 Fr Bryan Houghton

His towering presence made him as flamboyant a priest in the post-war years as Fr Vincent O’Gorman had been during the Great War and inter-war years. Born in Dublin in 1911, the son of a professional soldier and a mother who had served as a Hoffraulein in Berlin in the household of Princess Victoria, his upbringing was across Europe where his mother had homes in Paris, Berlin and the Cote d’Azur. At the age of 13 years he went to Stowe School soon after its foundation; thence to Christ Church, Oxford where he graduated with a first in modern history. He returned to Paris to be a banker. Following a visit to the Soviet Union with his friend Christian Dior where he became indignant at the cruelty by Bolsheviks to minority ethnic groups, he converted to Catholicism in 1933. He studied in Rome for the priesthood and was ordained in 1940. He served in Slough where he provided large amounts of his money for the Church and Catholic education there.

His arrival in Bury St Edmunds in 1954 occurred at the same time as his curate, Fr Cureton. Fr Houghton maintained a somewhat opulent yet eccentric style at the Presbytery and within the Chapel. A man of great intellect, his forte was an ability to converse at all levels and to use humour to good effect. His sermons were legendary and attracted large audiences, often demonstrating contrast. Perhaps this was exemplified best in his discourse to his congregation that they could not *‘pop up to heaven like champagne corks’*; yet on each celebratory parish occasion, especially on the feast of St Edmund, he provided champagne for all to savour!



Fr Houghton and his curate began with a programme of visits to known Catholics, the former covering those in the villages whilst Fr Cureton was assigned the town and the hospitals. At this time our Catholic population was just short of 2,000 an unusually high proportion for East Anglia. Fr Cureton was replaced by Fr Robert Owen after four years and later he too gave way to Fr Casapieri (pictured left). He went in 1967 and Fr Stephen Kealey came in.

Fr Houghton's major interest was to achieve growth in the local Catholic population together with the expansion of Catholic education and schools development. His influence on St Edmund's Catholic School is fully described in a separate book entitled *'Taught to be Good'*. This also speaks of the energy and personality of Fr Houghton. It is not unknown for a parish priest to drive the school bus but few of them acquire a second-hand postman's overcoat to keep the cold out (it is said to have cost sixpence).

In 1959 it was Fr Houghton's initiative to create the new central door at the time of redecoration of the Church. As reported in the Bury Free Press of 9 October 1959 the colour scheme was to replicate that of the 1830s – dull yellow pilasters, white wall surfaces, grey recesses, white cornice, gilt capitals, the coffers of the ceiling true blue, the mouldings white and grey and the main straps white.

On the Queen's visit to the town in 1960 Fr Houghton drove his blue sports car to join other clergy greeting her. His rich connections and ability to get on with dignitaries helped the parish and its schools to develop into excellent educational establishments.



In 1960 St Edmund's Church was the centre of a gathering of 300 Catenians, followed by lunch in the Athenaeum. In October that year it hosted the diocesan rally of the Catholic Women's League, again numbering around 300. As reported in the Arrow magazine, the extensions to St Edmund's School were opened and blessed during a visit that day by the Bishop. The picture shows the Bishop Mgr Leo Parker blessing the School crucifix in the presence of Fr Houghton, the Mayor Mr Davies, Major Cotton. The altar server was John Saunders.



The humour of Fr Houghton was always evident in his parish writings, especially where monetary appeals were made. His account of the school opening read as follows, *'The school is really as smart as the ladies. Real lovely I call it! The architect Mr Boxall deserves lots of praise. The parishioners were wonderful. Fr Houghton had a vision of a platform full of VIPs addressing a solitary, wide-eyed child with a running nose and sucking a lolly. Not a bit of it! All the folk were there – and they clapped at the right time and laughed even when it wasn't very funny. A good time was had by all except the headmistress, our splendid Sister Gabrielle who had the task to provide tea for a couple hundred more people than she expected. The task was rendered no easier by the urns leaking, the gas failing, the sugar falling into the hot water, the milk running out and the children playing marbles with the biscuits.*

However, she carried the whole thing off with the dignity and good humour of one schooled to suffering, to whom even the unexpected is inevitable. One of the remarkable things about the school is that it is paid for. This is due in no small measure to the work carried out on the duplicator appeals and that sort of thing, you know. In fact, the parish has had to invest in a larger and better one. This explains the following advertisement:

ADVERTISEMENT

No parish complete without a DUPLICATOR

FOR SALE: portable Roneo 250, latest model, perfect condition

Only £23

Apply immediately: Houghton's Stores, Ecclesiastical Furnishers,

21 Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

In his era the organ was chosen with the aid of Dr Alan Rowe continuing the commitment in the parish to provide music of the highest quality.

Fr Houghton was devoted to our patron St Edmund. In 1960 he commissioned and paid for a German sculptor Maximilian Leuthenmayr to create a shrine to the Saint. God the Father surmounting the shrine was a wood carving by a renowned 18th century sculptor Ignaz Gunther. God the Son was in the form of the processional cross, the figure of Our Lord was Florentine of the early Renaissance, mounted in 1775 by Caspar Xavier Spideldey, a goldsmith of Augsburg. The Holy Ghost and shroud were the work of Mr Leuthenmayr. Opinion within the congregation was divided - a work of art or a garish monstrosity? Upon the departure of Fr Houghton it was removed and only the Saint's statue remained in its position. At this time, in the process of intended relocation, the marble font sustained damage and became cracked.



As mentioned in Chapter 5 Fr Houghton acquired many additions to the fabric of the Church. His other notable provision was the replacement of the wooden High Altar. Whilst visiting his friend Dr Patrick O'Meara who lived in Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds, he saw what appeared to be a marble Italian bath in the garden and decided that this would make a very fine altar. Dr O'Meara willingly donated the bath (which had originally been in a house in Guildhall Street). The bath was dirty and full of rust marks but Mr George Pemberton agreed to fund its cleaning and installation. It was hauled manually by six men through the streets of the town to Mossfords' stone masons in King's Road where it was cleaned and fitted with four clawed feet and four marble columns (carved by Mr John Coffey) and provided with a new marble top. Weighing five tons, it was then transported on a four-wheeled truck and pushed and pulled on its return journey to Westgate Street before being manipulated by planks, ropes and rollers into its resting place within the Sanctuary in 1964. The parish magazine 'The Arrow' (September 2006) stated '*The three (sic) teeth of St Edmund were placed in the altar before the top was sealed on. At the rear of the Altar appears the inscription 'D D George Pemberton 1965'.*



Although the Church had then been used for worship for 128 years, it had lacked a 'proper' altar. The installation of the altar led to the Church being consecrated on 31 March 1965 by The Right Rev Leo Parker, Bishop of Northampton. As reported in the East Anglian Daily Times *'Catholic schoolchildren waving yellow and white papal flags greeted the Bishop and a party of Catholic clergy from the deanery as they walked the bounds of the Church in procession before entering the Church for the consecration service'*.

However, the altar's large size allowed little room for manoeuvre around it and together with the steps in the sanctuary posed a safety hazard - as described in Chapter 3, by 2011 its days were over.

It was not surprising that over 200 people including non-Catholics gathered at the Athenaeum in 1965 for a reception to mark his silver jubilee as a priest. A cheque for £925 was presented to him by Mr Pemberton as a token of appreciation and a book containing the names of all 1,070 subscribers was presented on behalf of the youth of the parish by John Saunders. With typical humour, Fr Houghton said, *"I am God's commercial traveller, what I have to sell is worth buying. I hope I have managed to sell it reasonably adequately to you. My parish is about 200 square miles and covers about a dozen villages."* Dr O'Meara organised the presentation which was made in the presence of the Mayor Mr Sewell who added that in the 11 years that he had been in Bury Fr Houghton had earned widespread esteem and affection. *He had made an immense contribution to the life of the town.*

St Benedict's opened in 1967 as a mixed secondary school but later became an upper comprehensive school for ages 13 -18. The Head Teacher was Francis Pardon.

Fr Houghton was also a traditionalist who, dismayed by the changes brought about in the liturgy by Vatican II, expressed his disgust and retired in 1969. In a tribute to him John (later Judge) Sheerin stated, *"His service to the parish over the past 12 years cannot be overstated and he has been responsible for maintaining the dignity and respect for the Roman Catholic Church not only in Bury St Edmunds but throughout East Anglia. It is difficult to imagine how the present strength of our parish could have been achieved without his leadership and guidance."*

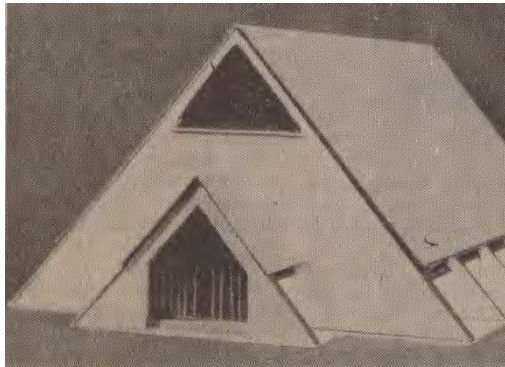
He settled once more in France, this time in Viviers, where he tended his land and, with permission from the Vatican, celebrated the old (incorrectly referred to by some people as the Tridentine) Mass each day at the Cathedral of St Vincent. His writings showed him to be sympathetic to the ideas of Archbishop Lefebvre but not to the point of supporting the schism. His time in France provided an opportunity for his talents as a linguist, historian, writer and theologian to be revealed, more so than had been appreciated during his life in England.

He died in 1992 and is buried in his adopted land. His autobiography, "Prêtre rejeté", was written in English but translated by the French publisher and issued in 1990. No published copy exists in English.

1969 – 1973 Fr Ronald Bustin

It would have been difficult for anyone to have followed the Houghton years with the factions engendered in the wake of Vatican II.

In 1971 upon establishment of the comprehensive education system, the Convent school became St Louis Middle School with St Edmund's joining St Alban's to be the feeder primary schools and St Benedict's becoming the upper school.

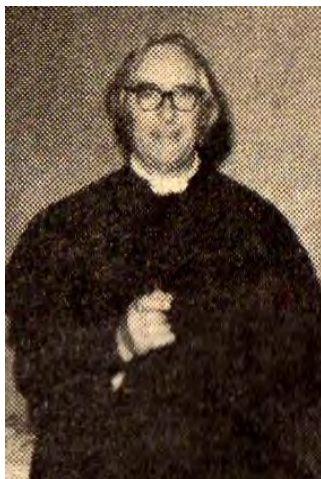


Plans to provide a Catholic Church on the Mildenhall Estate alongside Prince Charles Avenue and Derwent Road failed to materialise and the proposals were ridiculed in the Bury Free Press of 3 September 1971 as 'The Milking Parlour Church' (see picture alongside).

The Sisters of St Louis did much to contribute to the moral and religious life of the Parish, creating a framework for parents and children to follow. Mass attendance at the Convent Chapel attracted a dedicated number of parishioners who were able to worship in an atmosphere of tranquillity. Their work among the wider community saw them active in visits to the sick.

The Bishop transferred Fr Bustin to another parish after only four years.

1973 – 1977 Fr Gerard Langley



His firm but patient ways charmed the parishioners and helped people to settle into the new liturgy and regain a sense of unity.

In 1973 the Church bulletin recorded: 'By fire (69), theft (70) and natural breakage (72) we now have no decent candlesticks'. The invitation to donate replacements was met by unknown donors and during that year four new candlesticks were provided.

Fr Langley (picture courtesy of Pace Monthly 1975) is remembered for being a bit of a technician who left dismantled items about the presbytery. Mass was televised on 10 August 1975 and a recording made. The following year St Louis Middle School was granted Voluntary Aided status.

East Anglia was constituted as a new diocese on 13th March 1976. Our patrons were Our Lady of Walsingham, St. Felix, first Bishop of the East Angles, and St Edmund, King and Martyr. Bishop Alan Clark was the first to take charge of the diocese and St John's Church in Norwich became our Cathedral.

Like his predecessor Fr Langley also left after four years.

1977 – 1982 Fr Harry Wace



Educated by the Benedictines at Ampleforth where his brother was a monk, he was well versed in theology and did not neglect to show this in his sermons. Forward-looking, he fully accepted the modern teaching of the Church. He was also enthusiastic for house masses and prayer groups for which there were plenty of hosts within the parish. One of his ancestors had been a high ranking and famous Anglican clergyman, which made him welcome at the Anglican cathedral. During his time the vicar of St Mary's gave permission for our Bishop to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation there to accommodate the large number of candidates and their families. What a contrast with earlier times when a Protestant legacy had paid St Mary's vicar to preach anti-Catholic sermons.

Thanks to Fr Wace (picture courtesy of East Anglian Daily Times 2 August 1978) and his curate Fr McNally, what is now known as the Blessed Sacrament Chapel was restored and again used for the celebration of Mass. The Church was re-decorated and Fr Wace also insisted that a side entrance to the Church should be opened to enable disabled folk to come and go and funds for a ramp were supported by a sponsored cycle ride by a parishioner Philip Pitcher. Fr Wace and his predecessor certainly put our parish on an even keel. The Bishop thought him just the man to become the Administrator of the Cathedral. Other priests of this era were Frs Arthur Speight, Gerard Quigley and Peter Leeming.

1982 – 1987 Fr Richard Wilson



He came to us from his parish in Ipswich having earlier served in Cambridge. Older parishioners describe him as a compassionate and wise man with a keen sense of humour though able to deliver fiery sermons. He took part in the charity bike ride in aid of historic churches. Fr Wilson started the parish council at the end of 1985, setting up sub-committees to coordinate adult religious education, ecumenism, liturgy and worship, finance, social activities and welfare.

Fr Wilson was also responsible for creating a repository and library, turning the clock back to the days when books had been so important to the clergy and parishioners. Through donations and purchases from various sales the number of books ultimately rose to 637 and 319 audio tapes.

Once again the Bishop wanted Fr Wilson's wise head to administer diocesan finances from his new parish in Costessy on the western edge of Norwich. He died in July 2010 at the age of 79 years.

In 1986 Sr Helena Moss founded the St Louis Family Service (see Chapter 4). The year was also the 25th anniversary of Fr Peter Wilson's ordination, he being the grandson of Sir Pierce Lacy.

1987 – 1992 Fr John Drury

Though he had a soft Irish accent he had been raised in England before his studies in Ireland. He had received his own mother into the Church. At one time he worked among the poor in Peru and Bolivia. The warmth and eloquence of his first sermon won the congregation over while his approach to work, prayer and play went along with sympathetic tact. The Bishop sent a newly ordained curate Fr Paul Madison to help him – he had been an altar server at Fr Drury's former parish in Cambridge. Both were keen on ritual and music. Every Tuesday morning Mass was celebrated in St Edmund's School and sometimes ended with the children leaving Mass skipping to the music they had heard.



Fr John often celebrated Mass for villagers living outside the town with the consent of friendly Anglican vicars. He was also on visiting terms with the Methodist minister. The 150th anniversary of our Church was celebrated in 1987 with an ecumenical and civic service, televised in the autumn of that year in a programme with Fr Phillip Graystone commentating .

On 31 May 1989 a Mass of Thanksgiving for the Silver Jubilees of Frs John Drury and Dick Wilson was celebrated in our Church.

In his last year an arsonist burnt down part of St Edmund's school in a fire which also damaged the sacristy. The parish was also sad to lose Fr Madison when he became secretary to the Bishop. 1991 was the 200th anniversary of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. It was also the start of Faith 2000; initially the adult religious education programme ran from 26 November to 3 March but subsequently continued to the end of the decade. The Bishop appointed Fr Drury to be Administrator of the Cathedral in Norwich. This post was not to his liking and he soon returned to his former work in South America.

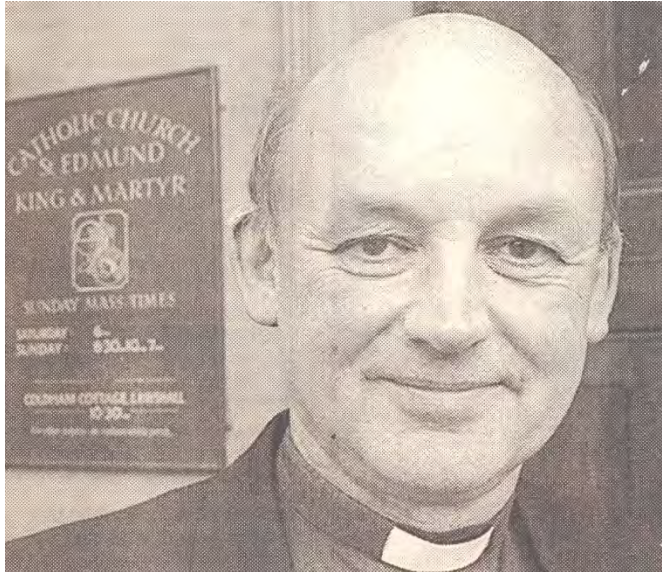
1992 – 1996 Fr Tom Murray

When our new parish priest arrived his induction in St Edmund's was packed with parishioners supplemented by two bus-loads of people from his former parish in Gorleston with several of the

ladies in tears. His careful approach to the liturgy was slightly at odds with his taste for contemporary vestments.

Fr Jon Warrington, who had previously had a placement in the parish as deacon, came to assist Fr Murray in 1995. Also during this era Fr Jonathan Salt came to the parish. Trained at Innsbruck, he was an accomplished musician able to play several instruments and at one performance in the Church he donned his lederhosen and waistcoat. He left the priesthood after a short period; not long afterwards Fr Murray too left for another parish.

1996 – 2001 Fr John Barnes



A former Anglican Rector of the parish church in Walsingham, he later became Rector of a large abbey church in Wymondham. After his ordination as a priest he spent time in a temporary appointment with Fr Anthony Sketch in Lowestoft before coming to Bury again as a temporary priest. He would have learned something of his new parish as Fr Sketch was himself ordained on 17 June 1962 in Bury, the first since the Reformation. The warmth, kindness and mannerisms of Fr Barnes endeared him to his new flock to the point that some of them wrote to the

Bishop asking that he should remain in our parish. This entreaty worked and eventually he was confirmed as Parish Priest. He had previously written several books and was something of an artist, drawing line and wash pictures of old churches and buildings. But he too was posted away from his beloved Bury, this time to Dereham.

Fr John Barnes
pictured with Altar
Servers on the feast of
St Stephen 26
December 1998



CHAPTER 3 - THE 21st CENTURY

2001 – 2014 Fr Philip Shryane

St Edmund's had for over thirty years been suffering from the premature departure of its priests. Fr Houghton's departure in 1969 seemed to have accelerated the turnover rate. The year of 2001 saw the arrival of Fr Philip Shryane. Ordained in 1975 for the former diocese of Northampton, Fr Philip, as he became known to all, arrived in Bury St Edmunds from St George's, Norwich. He immediately cemented sound ecumenical relationships within the town and achieved great respect from the wider community.



The achievements of Sr Sheila McGovern were recognised with the award of the Pro Ecclesia Et Pontifice medal in January 2005 at a special Mass in West Belfast. Presented to people who have made a special contribution in the different areas of Church work, Sr Sheila had worked tirelessly over the 50 years that she had been a nun in the Order of St Louis in Ireland, Nigeria and the 20 years spent in Bury St Edmunds.

Bishop Michael Evans made his first visit in February, 2005. Later in the year he led the diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes. Building work began after Easter to make ramped access to the club. Full access to the toilets was also essential. The cost of £46,000 had already been put aside.

On 14 May AGAPE (a Greek celebration of Christian love) stories were performed in the Church. Proceeds went to St Nicholas's Hospice in memory of Ann Winning who had died in December. She was a parishioner, a former teacher at St Edmund's school and later Head of Thurston School.

An appeal was made for clothes for Fr Tim Peacock to be sent to help the poorest folk in Zimbabwe. Fr Tim had local connections, his mother having resided at Lawshall.

The new website for the parish was set up in February 2006. In April the Sisters of the Assumption left Hengrave. In July Alan McMahon celebrated his ordination as Permanent Deacon. The LIFE group led a discussion in the club about stem cell research.

Following a message from our twin diocese of the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem about the dire situation in Gaza and the West Bank parishioners were asked to write to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

The Housekeeper/Cook, Aline Hargreaves, retired in November along with our cleaner, Norma Evans after longstanding service to the priests and the parish.

Our young folk recorded a compact disc of Christmas music and sold cakes after Mass, all to raise funds for World Youth Day in Sydney 2008.

During 2005 we began a twinning link with the parish of St John in Siem Reap in Cambodia, a place that most people had not really heard of except for the horrors of the Pol Pot regime in the 1970s. In January 2006 Fr Philip went to visit the parish and came back with many stories of the work of the Church there among very poor people and its deprived communities. In June we welcomed three young people from Cambodia for a five week visit to England. They had a wonderful visit and were made very welcome by the people from St Edmund's. Our links continued and in January 2007 Fr Philip took the first group of 20 parishioners to pay a return visit to Siem Reap. This twinning link has been maintained, raising money, supporting projects and exchange visits, bringing great benefit to both parishes.

In January 2007, week-long united services and lunches were held in successive Churches – St Edmunds, Garland Street Baptists, Trinity Methodists, St Edmundsbury Cathedral, Ixworth Methodists and the United Reformed Church.

Fr Shryane led the Parish to recognise that everyone in life had a part to play and was important in the eyes of our Lord. Irrespective of the physical or mental challenges facing people, they were embraced, for example signed Masses for those with impaired hearing. From our twin diocese and school at Ain Arik three Palestinian teachers came to our parish to sell hand-made religious objects. A Syro-Malabar pilgrimage took place on 5 August to Walsingham for a rite of Mass in Malayalam.

On 7 October 2007 the newly formed organisation Helping Hands to assist those who needed help of a practical nature reported that 20 requests for their services had been made in five weeks. They recorded Midnight Mass and other Masses on a DVD for the benefit of the housebound parishioners.

The History Group proposed a carved plaque to commemorate our parish priests and this was installed in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel (the chronology of priests is included in Chapter 9 and records some minor amendments that had arisen since the plaque was created).

The St Edmund's Day dinner was held at Clarice House. There was an appeal for help with the Gatehouse Christmas lunch.

As the decade continued work within the Parish was shouldered by Fr Shryane, supported whenever possible by Frs Quigley (of Lawshall), Mason and Mercer, all of whom were in ill health. The

assistance of Deacons Alan McMahon and Chris Heath and laypeople became even more important in sustaining parish life.

Consultation with parishioners remained fundamental to the future, discussions centring upon proposed structural changes/redecoration of the Church, Chapel and Crypt. Changes to the liturgy were also on the horizon.

An all too familiar situation was apparent – vocations were never more important to the future but there was wonderful news when one of our parishioners, Henry Whisenant entered the seminary at Oscott to train for the priesthood for our Diocese.

In 2012 the History Group published a booklet entitled *'The Present From Our Past'* at a time when much was happening at the Church of St Edmund King and Martyr, Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds. In fact, the profits from that booklet contributed in a significant way to an ambitious overall project launched by Fr Philip Shryane to raise £500,000, the cost of renovating and redecorating the Crypt, Chapel and Church. After much consultation and conferring with appropriate authorities, work began.

The Crypt

The Crypt had long been used for a variety parish and social activities including the staging of plays, whist drives and dances; as an additional teaching area and dining room for pupils of St Edmund's School; as premises for the many parish clubs and associations; as a members' social club and originally as a place of burial. Although at intervals it had benefited from alteration and decoration it was in much need of a makeover. Its transformation in 2011 was dramatic, resulting in a hall that was not only fit and comfortable for its modern purposes but had been tastefully restored to expose its brickwork and archways, features that had been somewhat obscured in intervening works. It now provides an area in which parishioners can congregate for meetings and events, is available for private hire for family functions and it continues as the home of St Edmund's Social Club.

Fundraising involved a range of initiatives including Fr Shryane providing £10 to parishioners, encouraging them to mirror the parable and use their talents to increase the amount.



It also brought together teams of Catholics and non-Catholics for a competitive town trail followed by tea in the newly renovated Crypt.

Fr Shryane enthused, *"The re-opening of the Crypt gave the incentive and the will on my part and yours to go forward. I felt from that time on the people of St Edmund's trusted me to do a good job!"*

During the weekend 23 – 25 November 2012 an event entitled ‘Treating Your Senses’, organised by John Saunders, was held with 25 separate parts. This included displays of registers, vestments and memorabilia within the Church. Talks were provided and attracted the interest of many people who were unaware of the significance of the Catholic history of Bury St Edmunds. The event also encompassed musical performances in the Church and Crypt, cookery demonstrations, floral displays and the exhibition of art and craft. The Indian, Polish and Filipino communities generously provided food to enable people to experience different cultural tastes. The weekend drew together many members of the Catholic community, attracted visitors from elsewhere and raised £3,400.

The Chapel



That weekend also heralded the completion of work within the original Chapel at a cost of £58,000. This was commemorated more formally on 8 December 2012 when a congregation of around 200 gathered to mark its 250th anniversary.

A special blessing of the Chapel, its altar and tabernacle formed part of a celebratory Mass presided over by Fr David Bagstaff who had been appointed Diocesan Administrator following the death of Bishop

Michael Evans. He was joined by past and present clergy and Fr Matthew Power representing the Society of Jesus. Fr Shryane acknowledged the craftsmanship which had preserved the beauty and tranquillity of the Chapel whilst making it more accessible to those with disability – his tributes included the architect Charles Brown; Bream’s builders; the carpentry and painting; the upholstery skills of Cindy Mason and David Wall for the Chapel’s 40 chairs each of which cost £80 (some of which were sponsored by parishioners), and the carpeting provided by Rod Jourdan.

The Mass brought together diverse parish groups and included invited guests of other denominations. Music blended the traditional choir and young musicians. After Mass, a large gathering took place in the Crypt.



The Church

Built in 1837, and one of the oldest Catholic parish churches in East Anglia, the Church of St Edmund King and Martyr in Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds closed its doors on 5 January 2014. However, this was only a temporary measure whilst

the final part of the project of redecoration and restoration was carried out. The Church had previously been redecorated in during the times of Fr Houghton (1959/60) and Fr Wace (not as shown on page 31 of *'The Present From Our Past'*) and it had then been possible for the liturgy to be celebrated.

This time however the scope of the work and the requisite scaffolding necessitated closure. Throughout the restoration video recordings were made to show the state of progress.

It was necessary for services to be held elsewhere including the Crypt, St Edmund's and St Benedict's Schools. On Ash Wednesday Mass was celebrated at the United Reformed Church.

The Church reopened on 13 April 2014, significantly Eastertide, the time of resurrection and new life. The project had involved a range of contractors with the primary work being undertaken by Breams at a cost of £170,000, local builders and contractors. Other firms included Milbury Scaffolding; Welton's Electricians; Alexandra Carrington Decorative Stone & Plaster Conservator; Campbell Smith and Company Limited, specialist painting contractors. The satisfactory conclusion of the project was materially assisted with money received from the Kristina Martin Trust and The Suffolk Historic Churches Trust and was added to by the generosity of parishioners and the sterling fundraising efforts of the community. That the project was completed without incurring huge debt was a tribute to the planning of Fr Philip Shryane, the Parish Finance Committee and the Parish Pastoral Council.

The magnificent decoration skillfully retained the past image but was enhanced by a light and tranquil ambience. Additions included a new altar, upgrading the communications system, new carpeting and lighting.

Whilst the improvements to the Church, Chapel and Crypt provided the main focus over a period of three years, many other pieces of history were being created, requiring the booklet *'The Present From Our Past'* to be superseded.

In December 2012 the decision was taken to no longer provide Parish Mass books, these being replaced by the opportunity to purchase Sunday Missals for personal use.

The Parish bulletin of 6 January 2013 issued a reminder to resume the practice of genuflecting to the Blessed Sacrament in the Chapel when entering Church as an expression of faith in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Encouragement was given to teach children how and why this should occur.

The news in February 2013 of the resignation of Pope Benedict XVI due to his declining health was received with inevitable sadness and understanding but with optimism that his successor Pope Francis (the first Pope from the Americas) would take the Church forward in a changing and difficult world.

On 6 July 2013 the ordination of Deacon Henry Whisenant took place at St John's Cathedral in Norwich witnessed by his family and friends who added to a full congregation that included clergy, fellow seminarians and Fr Panus and two visitors from Siem Reap. The following day, Fr Henry celebrated his first Mass in St Edmund's Church before taking up his first appointment as assistant priest at the parish of Our Lady and the English Martyrs at Cambridge.

On 16 July 2013 Bishop Alan Hopes was installed at St John's Cathedral, Norwich at a service attended by a contingent from the parish.

Fr Henry Whisenant celebrated Mass in the afternoon of 8 August 2013 in the Abbey Gardens near the site of the High Altar. This began the annual Saint John Paul II pilgrimage for the new evangelisation led by the Dominican Sisters of St Joseph. Pilgrims stayed in the town before setting out on the 50 miles route to Walsingham.

The 32nd sponsored bike ride/walk in aid of Suffolk Historic Churches Trust took place on 14 September 2013 in which Fr Shryane participated. This annual event continued to receive support from the parish but between 2011 and 2014 the Trust generously gave grants amounting to £23,000 towards the work carried out to the Church, Chapel and Crypt.

A new director of music, Patricia Mason, was appointed in September 2013 and she embarked on a campaign to attract new members. She replaced Marie-Therese Cunningham who had given years of sterling service and who, in recognition, had received a Papal Blessing on 16 December 2012.

The marble altar that had been installed during the time of Fr Houghton had been described by him as a sarcophagus but further studies revealed that its most probable previous use had been as a bath! The following inscriptions had been made inside the bath: J Tuffin; Robert Simon Last (RIP), 3 Boyne Road, BSE; C J Emms (known as Emo), 127 Priors Road, BSE; C Palmer; Fixer: J Coffey; All dated 22 9 64. The weight of the marble was estimated around 4.5 tons. The bath had a seat at one end and a plug-hole at the other; it contained a pre-decimal penny dated 1961. Its removal from the Church was accomplished between 28 November and 2 December 2011 by Harvey Frost Builders of Bury St Edmunds. The plaque in memory of George Pemberton shown in Chapter 2 was relegated to a free-standing position in the porch.

The decision was made for the bath to be sold at auction in September 2013 when it realised the sum of £3,600.

In October 2013 Fr Tim Peacock, a former resident of Bury St Edmunds, visited St Edmund's and Lawshall. His work in Hwange diocese, Zimbabwe, often in difficult conditions, continued and as well as ongoing support from parishioners, a donation of £500 was given.

The solemnity of St Edmund in 2013 on 20 November was marked with evening prayer at which Dean Frances Ward of St Edmundsbury Cathedral preached. This was followed by a gathering in the Crypt.

Further consultation relating to the Church took place in November 2013. Parishioners were invited to vote regarding the retention of the tapestries in the Church; whether the elaborate architraves that framed the doorway to and the rear of the Lady altar should be removed; the design of the new altar. Whilst it was felt that 51% was not sufficiently conclusive to remove the architraves and pediments that had not been an original feature of the Church, the other matters received assent.

The generosity of the Parish was apparent in December 2013 in sending £4,500 to support St John's Parish in Siem Reap and in the Christmas collection which amounted to £6,037.36.

On 28 April 2014 a service was held for the dedication of the new altar and for the blessing of the Church after its redecoration and renovation, details of which are more fully described in Chapter 5.

An Ecumenical Evening Prayer at St Edmund's the following month enabled people from other denominations to view the restoration and refurbishment. Approximately 60 attended including members of the Cathedral and the Churches of Southgate, St Peter, St Mary and the United Reformed Church and afterwards they enjoyed refreshments in the Crypt.

Having become parish priest in 2001, the time came for Fr Philip Shryane to depart in September 2014. Initially he undertook a sabbatical for four months in Siem Reap, the Cambodian parish with which St Edmund's is twinned before moving to St Mary's at Great Yarmouth. Amongst his treasured memories of his time at St Edmund's he cited, "*The amazing, generous and heart-warming support I received around the time of my mum's final illness and her death. I also think of the Church as it is now as the finished article. I never liked it before; it was dark and dull, now it has life and colour and is beautiful in the sunlight.*" The example of Fr Shryane in making the parish an inclusive community, promoting the importance of family life and preserving our place of worship very much etched him into our history.

2014 – 2019 – Fr Mark Hackeson

Succeeding Fr Shryane was Fr Mark Hackeson who celebrated his first Mass at St Edmund's on 7 September 2015, the date coinciding with his 50th birthday. On 30 October 2014 he was inducted as Parish Priest at Mass celebrated by Bishop Alan Hopes. The customary social gathering in the Crypt followed.

The St Edmund's Day dinner was held at Edmund Restaurant, West Suffolk College on 22 November.

Alan Hodgson, having previously been employed by British Airways until October 2014, moved into the Presbytery the following month to enable him to gain pastoral experience before beginning final seminary studies. A new and popular face he proved a huge asset in assisting Fr Mark and fully committed himself to working in the community. In September 2015 he headed off to St Bede's seminary, Beda in Rome to continue his studies for the priesthood.

Having spent over 28 years of his priesthood in the parish, on 26 March 2015 Fr Gerry Quigley celebrated his 40th anniversary with Mass followed by a reception in the Crypt. Since 2000 he had been resident at the Church of Our Lady Immaculate and St Joseph, otherwise known as Coldham Cottage, Lawshall and had done much both there and within Bury St Edmunds particularly in support of young people. His ability to relate to the younger generation was perhaps assisted by his contemporary style – clad in black leather as he rode his motor cycle!

The Cross of Evangelisation was in St Edmund's Parish between 10 and 16 May 2015 as part of a pilgrimage of prayer around the diocese. This was an icon painted by young people, including students from St Benedict's School, for the end of the Year of Faith. 40 hours of exposition of the Blessed Sacrament which drew parishioners and visitors day and night into the church and prayer was held at St Edmund's Church. The icon visited all four Catholic schools and Montana and in each a whole day of prayer was celebrated.

Over the weekend of 30/31 May 2015 the 'Annual Celebrate – East Anglia' was held at St Benedict's School with Mass being celebrated, teachings, groups for children and young people, praise, worship, education, workshops and drama.

Corpus Christi was celebrated on 7 June 2015 with the First Holy Communicants' Thanksgiving Mass in Church, followed by the Blessed Sacrament being venerated by parishioners along Westgate Street and Friar's Lane and Benediction in St Edmund's Primary School.

Having enjoyed Fr Quigley's 40th anniversary of ordination, it was time to do likewise for Fr Philip Shryane who returned to St Edmund's on 27 June 2015 for his celebration. A full congregation comprised people from all previous parishes in which he had served and the Mass was poignant for its inclusiveness with many from ethnic groups and the deaf community attending. A high proportion of the congregation joined him and members of his family in the Crypt afterwards.

On 28 September 2015 Monsignor Kike Figaredo, the Apostolic Prefect of our twin Diocese of Battambang in Cambodia visited Bury St Edmunds.

In November 2015 Fr Alvan Ibeh of the congregation of the Sons of Mary Mother of Mercy arrived as one of the assistant priests of the Parish. Coming from Nigeria he encountered the huge difference in culture and climate but quickly settled and showed himself to be popular, a great asset to our community and with those from other faiths whilst giving much needed support to Fr Hackeson.

On 22 November 2015 the feast of St Edmund was celebrated at 10.30 am Mass, attended by the High Sheriff of Suffolk, the Mayor of St Edmundsbury, Councillors and representatives of the community, the Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of St Edmundsbury and presided over by our own Bishop, Alan Hopes. Afterwards, tea and cakes were served in St Edmund's School to parishioners to thank them for their patience during building work which had recently occurred at the School.

Between 29 November and 13 December 2015 our Catholic schools created and exhibited Christmas cribs within the Church. Parishioners were also encouraged to participate in the old Mexican Advent tradition of Posada where crib figures of Mary and Joseph would be moved between their houses and hosted by them in their windows as a reminder of the journey leading up to the nativity to re-enact the nativity.

In February 2016 the sound system in the Church was improved. However, the downside was the malfunctioning of the heating system which seemed a perennial problem especially during periods of cold weather.

In 2016 the decision was taken to provide three statues in the Church, representative of each of the three main ethnic minorities that had settled in the parish. These are more fully described in Chapter 5.

On 17 March 2016 Fr Mark Hackeson (front row, 2nd left) was installed at a Solemn Mass at St John's Cathedral, Norwich as one of nine Canons forming the Cathedral Chapter and College of Consultors. The Chapter was designed to create a clearer line of governance and consultation with the clergy and laity of the Diocese.



On 1 May 2016 at the 8.30 am and 10.30 am Masses a total of 30 young people received Holy Communion for the first time.

A parishioner, Julia Wakelam became Mayor of St Edmundsbury in May 2016 and led an extremely active year not only in the discharge of her mayoral duties but in services within St Edmund's Church. Her tenure significantly contributed to a wider understanding of Catholicism across the Borough. On 3 July the Mayor's Civic service was celebrated in Church, accompanied by young people from all of our schools who joined the choir in leading the music and singing. The diversity of the town was notable with an impressive procession of national flags.

The parish bulletin indicated that there had been some understandable disquiet following the publication of the parish accounts for 2015 which showed a deficit (not a debt) for the year. The lack of a supporting report to explain the figures was considered by Fr Hackeson as regrettable and although the matter was discussed at a PPC meeting, it was decided to call a special meeting on 18 July 2016 to enable concerns and questions to be aired. It was reiterated that the parish was not in debt, the explanation being that in 2015 more was spent than received due to the main necessary works on buildings that would not be repeated in succeeding years. This had required dipping into reserves.

On 19 July 2016 there was a huge gathering at St Edmundsbury Cathedral of those who had connections with St Louis Middle School on the occasion of their last Mass. There was palpable sadness at the decision to close the School which had brought educational richness to the parish and the town for the previous 40 years and was rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted. The moving service represented the contributions of pupils, staff, governors and clergy past and present. That month also saw the retirement of Hugh O'Neil from his position as Head of St Benedict's School.

On 8 September 2016 the parish mourned the death of Fr Paul Mercer who, since his ordination in 2001 and despite ill health, had practiced his ministry at St Edmund's Church and as Chaplain at Montana in Great Barton.

Parishioners of three newly refurbished churches in the deanery engaged in a 'church crawl' on 24 September starting with Mass at St Mary's Church Thetford, a lunchtime talk at St Edmund's by John Saunders on the history of the Church and concluding the journey at the Church of Our Lady, Stowmarket

In September 2016 on the occasion of her 90th birthday, Joy Rowe a leading historian of Catholicism in East Anglia, was presented with the Diocesan Medal by Fr David Finegan of Stowmarket. Not only was she nationally acclaimed but she had been a significant supporter of St Edmund's Church History Group.

Sadly, on 27 September the death of Jack Steggles occurred. He had been a staunch supporter of the St Edmund's History Group and co-author of *'The Present from Our Past'*. An extremely interesting character and devout Catholic, Jack was blessed with a wealth of knowledge across so many subjects, a wry sense of humour and occasional irreverence in his comments.

The feast of St Edmund was celebrated on 16 November 2016, the 10.30 am Mass being attended by Councillor Julia Wakeham and other civic dignitaries.

'Alive in Faith' was launched in March 2017 to raise spiritual awareness and funding for vocations and retired clergy.

To celebrate 30 years of Bury in Bloom's organisation being established as part of the Bury Society, 30 trees were planted in the town amongst which was a tree (*Sorbus Vilmorinii*) planted in the raised bed next to the Church ramp had been donated as part of the 'Love where you live' initiative. It was an example of the energy of St Edmund's Church Gardening Group in keeping the environs of the Church as attractive as possible.

On 18 June 2017 Mass at 10.30 am was celebrated at Moreton Hall School for the whole parish, to enable children to receive their first Holy Communion.

A sponsored walk by Church Altar Servers, organised by Damian Wallace took place on 15 July 2017 to raise funds for a new chair for Kieran Horgan which would better facilitate a range of movements including standing up and lying down.

In September the new Saturday ritual Mass was introduced, involving singers and instrumentalists.

The equivalent of Harvest Festival took place on 8 October 2017 when parishioners were invited to bring gifts of food to be auctioned in the Crypt after the 10.30 am Mass funds with the money raised being used to provide teachers and rice soup for the children in the schools of the twin parish of Siem Reap.

'Alive in Faith' concluded having raised £1.8 million across the diocese, resulting in 14 projects in various parishes utilising the money available. The diocese had 13 seminarians at varying stages of training. Plans were also being developed to provide accommodation and support for retired priests.

The feast of St Edmund was celebrated on 19 November 2017 with the Mayor, Terry Clements in attendance.

The parish Advent Carol service was held on 8 December 2017 with a selection of music and readings led by adults and young people of the Saturday evening choir followed by mulled wine and mince pies in the Crypt.

The end of 2017 saw the departure of Fr Peter Sok Na who had spent almost six months in Bury St Edmunds.

In February 2018 the Bishop's Lenten Mass was held at St Edmund's Church. The Lenten programme included exposition and confessions, Mass, soups and refreshments in the Crypt. Some members of the parish travelled to Cambodia and were able to meet Fr Sok Na alongside the River Ton le Sap.

In April 2018 in response to a request from Bishop Alan Hopes, a new Tabernacle and free-standing lamp was installed to the left of the Sanctuary to enable more discreet access to the reserved Sacrament during the celebration of Sunday Masses. Ideally, only those hosts consecrated at a particular Mass were to be used for Holy Communion at that Mass. The hosts reserved in the Tabernacle were primarily to be used in communion for the sick and for devotion to Christ truly present in his body and blood. It was felt that the transfer of the ciborium from the Chapel drew attention from the Lord who was already present on the Altar. The Bishop requested that this should be a temporary measure whilst the design, production and purchase of a more permanent hanging pyx which would be suspended centrally above the altar could be considered.

In April 2018 congratulations to Dickon Fincham-Jacques were recorded because his ordering of the sung Mass of St Benedict had received full approval from the Bishops' Conference Liturgy Committee. The history of St Albans Catholic School which existed between 1971 and 2000 was published in a booklet '*Ahead of its Time*' written by John Saunders.

The requiem Mass for Chris Harding was held on 26 April 2018. A former teacher, who had a flamboyant and somewhat eccentric style, he held the respect and gratitude of many former pupils of St Benedict's Upper School. As a Catholic he had been a beacon of his faith in his younger days as an Altar Server and member of the Blessed Sacrament Guild.

The annual international Mass was celebrated in May 2018 with the colourful spectacle of national flags in a procession from the car park into Church. On 19 May, as part of the international weekend, members from the parish described their cultural differences in talks delivered in the Crypt.

The first publication of '*Years of Faith*' on the parish website occurred in June 2018. During that month participation again took place with the Presbytery garden being open to the public as part of 'Hidden Gardens of Bury', the fundraiser for St Nicholas Hospice.

The retirement of Fr Gerry Quigley in July 2018 brought an end to a lengthy period of service at St Edmund's and Lawshall, also encompassing ministry at St Benedict's School, RAF Honington and HMP Highpoint. Having arrived in the parish in the 1980s and achieving 42 years since his ordination, Fr Gerry had become a great friend to those who knew him and had fulfilled parish

duties in spite of ill health. He was presented with a television, two statues and a monetary gift following his retirement Mass on 27 June 2018.

On 27 July Christine Mason invited friends and parishioners to join her for the blessing of Fr Bill Mason's headstone at Kedington.

A total of £400 was raised by a strawberry tea held in the Presbytery Garden in July 2018.

In August 2018 appeals were made by the SVP for aid for the people of Kerala, Southern India following devastation of the area by torrential flooding. It resonated within our parish as many of our members had come from Kerala to settle in Bury St Edmunds.

In July 2018 a change in personnel having a responsibility for safeguarding took place with Andrew and Jo Herlihy replacing Rick Shepperson and Celia Gladden who had held this responsibility for four years.

In September 2018 the Church participated in Heritage Open Days with exhibitions provided by members of the History Group highlighting the 'extraordinary women' in our parish history including Susanna Milner Gibson, Elizabeth Rookwood Gage, Lady Miriam Hubbard, Joy Rowe and the Sisters of St Louis. Talks relating to parish history were also given by John Saunders. It was warmly appreciated that Joy Rowe was able to attend and be part of the photograph taken on a Heritage Open Day showing some of the members of the History Group and helpers.





During 1943 and 1945 the American Forces were based at Rougham Airfield. Whilst there, their Chaplain Major Joseph N Collins who was known to all as Fr Joe worked closely with the priests of the parish, Fr Frederick Lockyer and his curate Fr Anthony Throckmorton. In recognition of this special relationship, on his departure from England Fr Joe was presented with a chalice of Spanish/Flemish origin dating back at least to the 1600s together with a paten.

When he died these items passed to his nephew Bill Christie who together with his wife Maryann made the decision to restore the items to St Edmund's Church. On 17 September 2018 they visited our Church and presented the chalice and paten where the items were received Fr Alvan on behalf of the parish.

On 19 September 2018 the parish said farewell to Fr Alvan as he headed for his new duties in Great Yarmouth. The Church was full of well-wishers at his final Mass; he was someone who had made a huge impact during his relatively short stay, especially engaging with younger people. He was succeeded by Fr Jay Magpuyo who had studied for the priesthood in the Philippines, had been ordained in 2017 and had been serving as assistant at St Laurence's parish in Cambridge. Also resident in the parish at this time were Frs John Warrington, Gerry Quigley, Peter Marsh, Deacon Chris Heath (retired). Although it seemed that the parish was over-staffed, ill-health affected them and their contribution to parish life had to be commensurate.

In October 2018 Brett Gladden was instituted as Acolyte at the Cathedral, Norwich and proved a great asset to the ministry at St Edmund's.

Huge numbers gathered on the Angel Hill, Bury St Edmunds on Sunday 11 November 2018 to observe the Civic open-air service and march past on Remembrance Day. Fr John Warrington represented the Catholic Church within the procession. At all Masses that weekend the names of the war dead (as at Chapter 6) were read out. The evening Mass on Sunday concluded with Benediction and the tolling at 7.05 pm of the Church bell, reminiscent of the occasion when 100 years previously the bells had rung out to proclaim peace. The congregation took part in a dignified

procession in which they placed lighted candles in the Sanctuary and offered their own prayers for peace.



Towards the end of 2018 the weekend Masses generated £1423.92 in the collection and £655 and standing orders and £238.10 from Lawshall.

Following the annual civic Mass on 18 November in the presence of the Mayor Margaret Marks, St Edmund's Day was celebrated in the Crypt with ale stew with crusty bread, followed by apple strudel. It was reported on 16 November that an evening dinner at the Golf Club by the parish had been poorly supported.

The year 2018 had proved particularly testing for Fr Hackeson who had been affected by two close family deaths and coping with changes in personnel at the Presbytery. Midnight Mass 2018 proved a sad occasion when he was stricken with illness during the homily and the service had to be completed by Fr Jay. On 27 January 2019 Fr Hackeson announced that he had offered the Bishop his resignation as our parish priest and that this had been accepted. His farewell Mass was celebrated on 28 February 2019 followed by a gathering in the Crypt. After a break from parish duties and an opportunity to restore his health, he was welcomed later in 2019 to the parish of Our Lady of Pity at Swaffham.

Fr Michael Griffen, a priest in retirement was appointed by the Bishop to assist Fr Jay and Fr John Warrington in parish duties but sadly, within a matter of weeks Fr Michael succumbed to serious ill health and his role in the parish ceased. Fr David Bagstaff of Diss was appointed to oversee the parish and a lengthy period followed during which the ministry of the parish was reliant on Fr John Warrington (who was receiving weekly hospital care), Fr Dick White (retired) and Fr Gerry Quigley) to

support Fr Jay and the newly arrived Fr Johane Antonio Nguluwe from St Laurence's, Cambridge. Despite this, the spiritual aspects of the Church were extremely well-provided.

In February 2019 Mrs Imogen Senior became the new head-teacher of St Benedict's School, replacing Kate Pereira.

On Good Friday members of the church joined the procession of witness with friends from other Christian churches in the town and the ecumenical service in the Cathedral at 10.30 am, culminating in coffee and hot cross buns at Garland Street Baptist Church.

On 5 May 2019 St Edmund's Gardening Group held a spring plant sale outside the Church.

A Mass was held on at St Benedict's School on 29 June 2019 to commemorate the contribution of St Louis to education in Bury St Edmunds between 1929 and 2019.

The international Mass was celebrated as usual in June 2019 followed by food in the Crypt. The enrichment provided by having our ethnic minority communities was again evident on the feast of St Thomas when the Indian parishioners attended Mass and provided food afterwards in the Crypt.

The diocesan medal was awarded to Jim Whyte for his long service to the Church.

On 22 June 2019 Brett Gladden was ordained to the Permanent Diaconate and the following day this was recognised at the 10.30 am Mass. Brett stated: *"I am truly overwhelmed by the generosity of people from the parish the many cards and generous gift. As I mentioned at Mass, the community of St Edmund's from the very first time we came as a family through the doors of the Church, has been so wonderful to Celia, the boys and of course me, so fulsome in the welcome I received in becoming a Roman Catholic and attentively sharing and praying with me through my formation and discernment for the Diaconate. The support, the words of encouragement and the sense of love has been so important a part of my journey. I will, I very much hope, continue to share in that love and much needed support in prayer so God who has begun the good work in me brings this to fulfilment and I can serve as one amongst the large body of faithful disciples of Christ of which we are all so much a vital part."*

Alan Hodgson too held a special place in the hearts of many members of the parish who had followed his journey to Holy Orders and travelled with great delight to witness his ordination at St John's Cathedral, Norwich on 6 July 2019 and attended the celebration of his first Mass in St Edmund's Church the following day.

It seemed that the challenging times for the parish had abated with the announcement of Bishop Alan Hopes: *"I am pleased to announce that Canon David Bagstaff has generously accepted my request that he should be appointed as your new parish priest. He will take up this new appointment as from the weekend 7 to 8 September. Fr Jaylord will continue to work in the parish. I am also delighted to inform you that Deacon Michael Brookes who is being ordained priest on Saturday 6 July has been appointed to the parish. This will make a team of three full-time resident priests. The two permanent deacons of the parish will also work alongside the priests. Canon David Bagstaff will remain as the vicar general for the diocese so he will have commitments outside the parish that he will also need to attend to. I'm grateful to Fr Jaylord and Fr Johane for all that they have done over these past few months to provide sacramental and pastoral needs of the parish, together with those*

who have helped during this time – Frs John Warrington, Dick White, Gerry Quigley and Jonathan (Great Barton). I am also pleased to tell you that Fr Mark will be taking up a new appointment in the diocese as from September.”



The above picture shows the five priests ordained at St John’s Cathedral, Norwich on 6 July 2019.

Fr Mike Brookes (front, 2nd from left) Fr Alan Hodgson (rear far right)

The consequential changes took effect with Fr John Warrington moving to live at Montana whilst still having dialyses at Hospital; Fr Johane Antonio Nguluwe returned to St Laurence’s, Cambridge; Fr Alan Hodgson taking up his position as assistant priest at St Mary’s, Ipswich.

The arrival of Fr David Bagstaff and Fr Mike Brookes to join Fr Jay Magpuyo created stability for the parish and a much loved and respected team. On 9 September the service of installation for Fr Bagstaff was held in our Church with a reception in the Crypt afterwards.



Picture with kind permission of the Bury Free Press

The feast of St Lorenzo Ruiz once again provided the Filipino community an opportunity to celebrate and on Sunday 6 October their Mass was made even more special by a tribute from Stephen Dunn, Chief Executive of West Suffolk Hospital to the contribution made by the medical staff from that community. He also announced that approval had been given for the building of a new hospital for Bury St Edmunds. The feast afterwards in the Crypt raised £155 and was donated to parish funds.



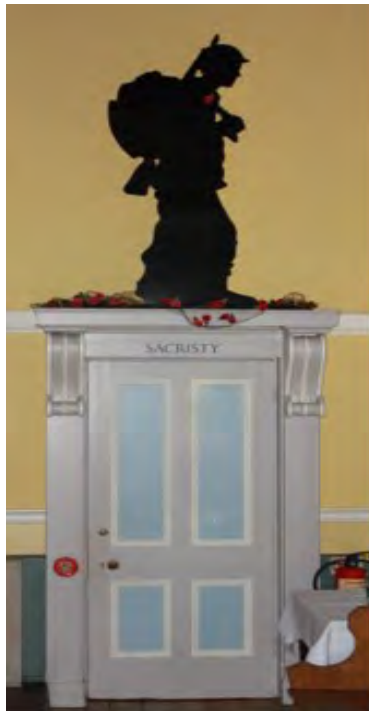
By November 2019 a big 'clear out' had been planned – not more changes to the team of clergy! It was necessary to clear redundant items that had been stored in the Presbytery and the garages within the car park and this was accomplished with due diligence to ensure that items of interest to our history and heritage were preserved. It led to the discovery of two drawers which had been part

of the pews in the Church, a redundant processional cross (believed dating back to 1876 when it was purchased for £2 17s 6d), poles used to carry the parish banners and an assortment of items that had hitherto been discarded. Members of the History Group had also embarked on an ambitious project to record all items within the Church, there not being an inventory of its assets. It was hoped that this would lead to a catalogue which could be updated in the future as new items arrived or old ones were removed.



The annual 'Ride and Stride' to raise money for Suffolk Historic Churches suffered a setback when the parish rider Hugh O'Neil was previously injured in an accident. However, a ready replacement was found in Kevin Murphy who successfully completed the event on 14 September 2019.

One of the most moving stories with a happy ending was that of a parishioner, John Franklin. This is more fully described in Chapter 8 but, in summary, he was able to celebrate his 100th birthday at 10.30 am Mass on 3 November 2019.



The annual commemoration of Remembrance Day was observed during the weekend of 9 and 10 November 2019. The combined efforts of the History Group and Flower Group brought home the reality of past atrocities. Summaries of the deceased listed in Chapter 6 were displayed; the silhouette of a soldier, wreaths and poppies strewn around the Church created a poignant aura and the names of the War Dead were read aloud at Masses.

On 17 November 2019 members of West Suffolk Council, Bury St Edmunds Town Council and Canon Matthew Vernon representing St Edmundsbury Cathedral joined members of the congregation in the civic Mass offered to commemorate the feast of St Edmund. Fr Bagstaff preached a very pertinent sermon highlighting the life of Edmund as King and Martyr and the founding of St Edmund's Abbey 1,000 years previously. The music was provided by all three Music Groups of the Parish, the flower arrangements beautifully adorned the Church and the ale lunch 'went down a treat'.

Continuing prayers were sought for Fr John Warrington who, after lengthy waiting for a donor kidney, had received surgery at Addenbrookes Hospital on 21 November 2019, the outcome of which appeared a success.

The annual appeal for Gatehouse occurred at the beginning of December. Once again, the congregation provided magnificent support.

A packed Crypt was treated to the Pan-Afro Band concert provided on the 'one-night only' return of Fr Alvan on 30 November 2019. This proved a great success in terms of enjoyment and raising £758 for the Lawshall Church Restoration Fund. The fundraising efforts of this cause were boosted with a further £1257 from a wine tasting evening in the Crypt.

The Advent and Christmas services were well-attended and showed the degree to which the various parish groups combined. In registering his thanks, Fr David Bagstaff wrote: *'There are always so many people to thank at this time of the year – everyone involved in the journey of Advent as we prepared for the solemnity of Christ's birth. The Church looked beautiful for the Christmas Masses – many thanks to all who clean the Church week in and week out. Thanks to the flower arrangers and those who decorated the Christmas tree. Thanks to all our musicians and singers and altar servers, welcomers, collectors, readers and extraordinary ministers of Communion. Thanks too to everyone involved behind the scenes – those who clean the linen so faithfully. In short, thanks to everyone in the parish for all you do. The clergy would also like to say 'thank you' for your many cards and gifts and your very generous Christmas offering.*

These words seemed an ideal way of closing this Chapter as a new decade was about to dawn with the prospect of many events to celebrate a millennium – 1000 years since the Abbey of St Edmund had been founded in our town.

Except that the Chapter could not close without mention of the Coronavirus which started in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and by February had been declared a pandemic. As the virus spread across the world, by 2 April 2020 nearly 50,000 people had died and a million cases were confirmed. As Britain headed towards its predicted peak, by the same date a total of 2,921 deaths had been recorded and 34,000 people were confirmed as having Covid-19.

Unprecedented arrangements and rules led to communities in lockdown and revised arrangements for religious services. On Ash Wednesday 11 March 2020 announcements were made at Masses that no longer would holy water stoups be filled, Holy Communion was to be received by the hands only, cessation of consumption from chalices, the sign of peace was to cease and priests would rigorously comply in washing hands at intervals during services.

Rapid escalation of the epidemic resulted in an edict from the Bishops' Conference that with effect from 23 March 2020 all Churches in England should close. The news was received by congregations with great sadness and inevitable alarm that the disease might ultimately spread to the town. Fearful parishioners were obliged to make use of technology to keep in touch with their Church and information on the website increased and daily and Sunday Mass was streamed through You Tube.

Events planned as 'Abbey 1000' to celebrate the millennium of the founding of our Abbey were put on hold. Other local, national and international events were similarly suspended.

John Saunders highlighted in written articles on the Church website and an interview through Radio Suffolk the significance of St Edmund at times of historic plaque, his patronage having been sought by the residents of Toulouse in the 17th century and the belief that his intercession had quelled an outbreak of smallpox in Bury St Edmunds in 1902 (see Chapter 5).

The events of the spring of 2020 would have world-changing effects which would be etched in history. An uncertain future lay ahead for many.

CHAPTER 4 – SAINTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHURCH

St Edmund – Our Patron, King and Martyr



Edmund ruled as King of East Anglia from around AD 856 to AD 870. He defended the kingdom from attacks, but was captured in battle by the Danes. Refusing to renounce his Christian faith, he was beaten, tied to a tree then shot with arrows before finally being beheaded.

His body was brought to the town of Beodricsworth, now Bury St Edmunds. Miracles reported at the tomb attracted a stream of pilgrims; a Benedictine community was established there in 1020, and a new, larger Abbey, to contain the shrine of St Edmund, was completed in the 1140s.

Kings came to pay homage, and the Abbey developed into one of the richest and most powerful in Europe. Coins, minted posthumously, bearing Edmund's name and the proliferation of medieval religious art representing him, attest to the

rapid spread of his reputation and popularity. He was venerated as Patron Saint of England until the advent of the Crusades when he was superseded by St George. The Abbey was dissolved in 1539, torn down and the ruins can still be seen today. St Edmund's martyrdom is commemorated on 20 November.

His brother St Edwold was a hermit who lived as a recluse at Cerne, Dorset and is commemorated at Stockwood Church, Dorset's smallest church.

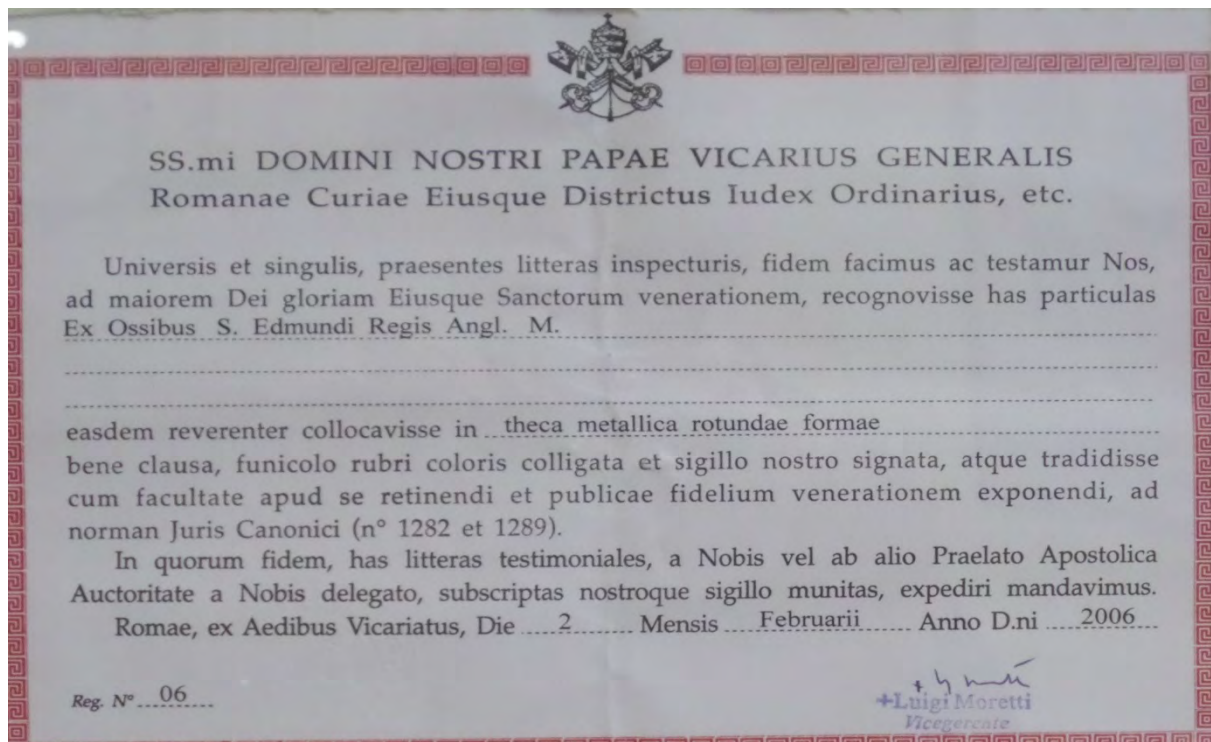
The history surrounding St Edmund has from time to time been subject to challenge and newly advanced theories. For example, whilst many believed Hoxne to have been his place of martyrdom the more modern contention is that it was Haegelisdun around six miles south of Bury St Edmunds. The removal of his remains from the shrine at the Abbey has featured in debates with claims that they were taken to France and counter-claims that his relics have been recovered to England and that his body may still lie within the town's former Abbey precincts. Given the history of this, including the separation of various corporeal remains to disseminate the cult of particular saints, there may be elements of truth in a number of apparently conflicting theories. Such arguments tend

to deflect attention from the man himself – our patron Saint, who was prepared to sacrifice his life rather than renounce his faith.



At present the Church has custody of an authenticated relic of St Edmund, a small piece of bone, given to Fr Mark Hackeson during his time in Rome.

As described in Chapter 5 it would appear that other relics were also once within the Church.



St Alban and St Alban Roe

There are two Saints who sometimes cause confusion to our parishioners and visitors because they both bear the name of Alban. In summary, an icon of St Alban is displayed in the Church and recognition of him appears on the glazed door of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel; relics of St Alban Roe are contained in the altar. So, what links do these Saints have to our Catholic Church in Bury St Edmunds? The answers to this seemingly simple question are slightly more complex.

St Alban

The birthdate of St Alban is unknown and the date of his death is disputed, but is variously described as 22 June AD 209 or the year 251 or 304. He is venerated as the first recorded Christian martyr in Britain, his feast-day being celebrated on 22 June. He is listed as one of four martyrs from Roman Britain.

One might be somewhat sceptical as to the veracity of records of his life since most of what was written about him was documented centuries after his death. As with many such situations, there is room for doubt as to accuracy and the problem of stories being embellished over time.

In the 3rd and 4th centuries Christians in Britain underwent extreme persecution and legend has it that Alban, who lived in Verulamium, the modern day St Albans in Hertfordshire, provided shelter to a priest who was fleeing those who were pursuing him. Alban, impressed by the faith and dedication of the priest who prayed throughout the day and night, was inspired to follow his example and converted to Christianity.

The authorities were informed that the priest was being given sanctuary by Alban and Roman soldiers were instructed to search Alban's house. As they came to arrest the priest, Alban purported to be the priest in order to save him. Alban was brought before a judge who became irate that Alban had sheltered a person who 'despised and blasphemed the (pagan) gods' and he imposed all the punishments that would otherwise have been handed down to the priest. As an alternative, Alban was offered the opportunity to accept the pagan rites but he refused, allegedly saying, "*I worship and adore the true and living God who created all things.*" The enraged judge ordered Alban to be whipped but he endured this torture, resulting in the judge decreeing that he should be beheaded.

As Alban was led to be executed, he, his executioners and the townspeople, who had gathered to watch the execution, encountered a fast flowing river which was incapable of being crossed and prevented their passage. Alban apparently raised his eyes heavenwards and the river dried up allowing them to proceed. The executioner threw down his sword and fell at the feet of Alban, pleading to be allowed to suffer the same fate as Alban. The procession continued to the summit of a hill when Alban announced that he was thirsty and prayed to God for water. His prayer was answered when water flowed from a spring at his feet. It was at this spot that he and the soldier who had earlier been converted were beheaded. The eyes of one of the executioners fell from their sockets onto the ground alongside Alban's head. It is further suggested that Alban's head rolled down the hill and that on coming to rest a well sprang up.

The judge, on learning what had occurred, ordered all persecution to cease and honoured Alban's name.

In AD 429 Germanus of Auxerre, a bishop, visited Britain and revealed that the previously unknown Alban had appeared to him in a holy dream describing his identity and martyrdom, resulting in Germanus recording the Saint's history.

St Alban's Cathedral is located in proximity to the site of Alban's execution and a well exists at the bottom of the hill. Various campaigns over the years have suggested that he should be the patron Saint of England. Saint Alban is venerated in the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican traditions.



So why is he referred to in St Edmund's Church in Bury St Edmunds? In 1971 a new Catholic primary school was constructed on the Howard Estate, catering for primary-aged children living north of the town. Dedicated to St Alban, this school survived until 2000 when its closure led to those of primary age being accommodated at St Edmund's Catholic School. The existence of St Alban's School was commemorated in the glazing of the Chapel door which was undertaken in 1978 by Stefan Oliver, signifying the part played by his mother Gabrielle Oliver in the establishment and development of education in the parish. Each corner of the door shows the symbol of each of the four patron saints of the schools of the parish: St Edmund; St Alban; St Louis; St Benedict.

Upon the School's closure on 21 July 2000, a request was made by the School Governors to Helen McIlldowie-Jenkins to create an icon of St Alban and this is displayed on the wall in close proximity to the Chapel, inscribed 'In thanksgiving for St Alban's Catholic School'. You can read more about this in Chapter 5.

St Alban Roe

Although the precise place of birth of Alban, born Bartholomew Roe, is not known and his date of birth may not be accurately recorded (there is reference to him being born on 20 July 1583), research shows that he was born in or near to Bury St Edmunds and that he was baptised locally at St Mary's Church on 27 February 1583, his parents being of the Church of England. He attended Cambridge University, and while there began to have doubts about the reformed religion and he and his brother James subsequently converted to Catholicism.

Whilst in the city of St Albans, he learned that a Catholic recusant (see Chapter 7 for more about recusants) had been imprisoned there for his religious beliefs and he decided that he would visit the prisoner with the intention of persuading him to renounce his faith. It was an argument that Bartholomew lost because the prisoner convinced him that it was Bartholomew's views that were erroneous.

The argumentative side of Bartholomew is mentioned at various times of his life. His eagerness to become a priest took him in 1608 to the English College seminary in Douai, France, but three years

later he was expelled for being critical of its principal. However, undaunted, he remained in France and joined the novitiate at another English monastery, St Lawrence's at Dieulouard (from which the monastery at Ampleforth is descended) around 1612/1613 and was professed as Brother Alban in 1614.

In 1615, taking the name of Alban, he was ordained a priest and he returned to England to minister in secret but in 1618 he was imprisoned under laws that outlawed his priesthood and rendered him liable to the death penalty. In 1623 King James I announced a general amnesty and Alban was released from prison but exiled from his Country. Two years later he came back to England, was re-arrested and sent to prison at St Albans where conditions were extremely severe. His friends interceded and he was moved to the Fleet Prison in London where a more relaxed regime of punishment existed and he was allowed out by day but confined at night. His period of freedom was spent ministering to many people in the area.

During the time that Charles I ruled without parliament no imprisoned priests were executed but this changed when the Long Parliament convened and 20 priests were hanged between 1641 and 1646. This period coincided with his transfer in 1641 to Newgate to face trial for treason under the statute 27 Eliz c.2 an offence for which he was convicted.



On 21 January 1642 after celebrating Mass, Fr Alban Bartholomew Roe and his fellow priest Fr Thomas Reynolds were led to the gallows. It is recorded that Roe showed 'joy, contentment, constancy, fortitude and valour' as he approached his death.

On 25 October 1970 St Alban Roe was canonized by Pope Paul VI. As one of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales he shares a common feast day of 25 October, though his feast day was once also celebrated on 21 January.

St Alban Roe is therefore commemorated at St Edmund's as someone who was born in or near the town whose example of his good works and his willingness to profess his faith even in the face of death inspires us even today. On 28 April 2014 Bishop Alan Hopes consecrated the newly installed altar in St Edmund's Church which, as described in Chapter 5, contains a relic of St Alban Roe.

St Ignatius of Loyola

The youngest of 13 children, St Ignatius was of wealthy parentage having been born in 1491 in the family castle at Guipúzcoa, Spain. He enlisted in the Spanish Army to fight against the French but was seriously wounded and discharged in 1521. The fighting spirit was not diminished and he vowed to dedicate his life as a 'soldier of the Catholic Faith' and took to writing his famous 'Spiritual Exercises', a simple 200-page set of meditations, prayers, and various other mental exercises. He travelled and studied, attaining his master's degree in Paris at the age of 43 years. His companions included St Francis Xavier.

His ideals, especially his humility and absolute obedience to the Pope were followed by other companions. In 1534 Ignatius founded The Society of Jesus or Jesuits as they became known,

becoming its first Superior General in 1541. He was vigorous in opposing the Protestant Reformation and promoting the Counter-Reformation. He sent his companions as missionaries around Europe to create schools, colleges, and seminaries. In 1548 'Spiritual Exercises' was finally printed leading to him being brought before the Roman Inquisition but released. Of the Jesuits, 38 were subsequently declared Blessed and a further 38 canonized as Saints.

The Society had great difficulty in finding acceptance in England although St Ignatius visited in 1531 and 1558. Their Order was proscribed and several followers therefore went to seminaries in France to study for the priesthood whilst other like-minded people sought refuge abroad or became foreign missionaries. In Elizabethan England Jesuits were reviled as the embodiment of the Catholic threat to government and ruthlessly persecuted, many being martyred for their cause. Mass was celebrated in secret.

After Catholic emancipation in 1829 there was greater public acceptability of Catholicism. The Society of Jesus subsequently spread across England with the opening in 1849 of its London Church at Farm Street which holds many of its archives, as do Stonyhurst College in Lancashire and Campion Hall, Oxford.



St Ignatius Loyola died from Roman Fever (a form of malaria) in 1556 aged 65 years. He was beatified by Pope Paul V in 1609, canonized by Pope Gregory XV in 1622, and declared patron of all spiritual retreats by Pope Pius XI in 1922. His feast is celebrated on 31 July, the date of his death.

Within our Church at St Edmund's we are indebted to the contribution made by the Jesuits in restoring our opportunities to publicly profess our Faith and creating our Chapel, Church and the attached presbytery which have endured as beautiful places of faith and worship. The recognition of the continuance of the Society of Jesus to the Catholic mission in Bury St Edmunds is maintained by the presence of his relics in the altar (see also Chapter 5).

St Louis



The origins of the Sisters of St Louis can be traced back to Strasbourg 1797 with a spiritual union between three people which influenced a priest Abbe Bautain to found the Institute of St Louis in Juilly near Paris in 1842. This received the approbation of Rome in 1844 but in 1850 the priests disbanded leaving the Sisters remaining in the Order. In 1859 the first Irish foundation was established in Monaghan.

The Order modelled the life of Louis IX who was King of France from 1226 until his death from dysentery in the Crusades at the age of 56 years. Following the death of

his father, Louis was crowned King at the age of 12 years although his mother ruled as Regent until he reached the age of maturity. Illustrations of him vary but the one shown is an icon created by staff of St Louis Catholic Middle School in 2016 during their day of recollection at Clare Priory.

Louis was devoted to his people, driven by Christian values and was a reformer who overhauled the French judicial system to bring about fairness whilst penalising the excesses of life. He was a devout Catholic and he shunned pomp and ceremony so that greater help could be given to those in poverty. He was renowned for daily personally feeding and serving 13 poor people and he founded hospitals and visited the sick including those with leprosy.

The adult life of Louis was turbulent in his own country, with the challenges of Henry III of England and his personal involvement in two Crusades; in 1250 he was captured by the Egyptians but was released upon payment of a ransom.

He was responsible for the building of Sainte Chapelle in Paris and cathedrals, churches, libraries, hospitals and orphanages throughout France.

He died in 1270 and was canonised in 1297 by Pope Boniface; his feast is celebrated on 25 August.

The Order of the Sisters of St Louis expanded separately across Ireland and France. In 1903 the first Belgian foundation was established by the French Institute. In 1912 a group of Sisters of St Louis led by Mother de Sales O'Byrne came from Monaghan, Ireland and arrived in Redditch to start the first English foundation.

In 1920 at the request of Fr Thompson SJ, the Parish priest of Gt. Yarmouth, who needed nuns to take charge of the Secondary and Elementary Schools, the sisters all moved to Gt. Yarmouth and thus began many years of Service in the East Anglian area of Northampton Diocese. A request from Fr O'Gorman was favourably received and on 17 January 1924 Mother Ephrim as Superior arrived from Monaghan bringing with her Sisters Mary John and Francis Regis for the high school and Sr. Frances for the elementary school. They were met with relief and a sincere welcome.

Two days after their arrival in the town they opened a Convent School at 19 Westgate Street. It grew so rapidly to accommodate a mix of 80 Catholic and non-Catholic pupils that it moved in 1929 to the Castle in St Andrew's Street South. The senior section of the Convent School was granted grammar school status in 1958.

The success of the schools was apparent; the numbers attending St Edmund's School grew under the guidance of Sr Fanchea who remained its headmistress for 31 years. The majority of children at both schools were non-Catholic – at the elementary school the total of 115 pupils comprised only 37 Catholics.



In 1971 as part of local authority education changes to the three-tier system the St Louis Sisters took their Convent School into the system to form St Louis Middle School which combined a mix of lay-teachers and nuns. The demise of the School in 2016 resulted from the decision to revert to a two-tier system of education and use of the site to accommodate pupils of St Benedict's Upper School.

At the conclusion of the academic year in 2019 use of the as a school ceased and in 2019 a planning application was lodged by M & D Developments for its demolition and the creation of nine homes and a car park for the town.

Until 1988 the nuns had resided within the Castle which contained their chapel. The Sisters of St Louis were heavily involved in pastoral care throughout the parish.

In 1986, having been tasked by her Order with community work, Sr Helena Moss founded the St Louis Family Service. She had come to our parish from Telford where she had been involved in the running of a Family Advice Centre. She exuded strength and was renowned by the expression, *"When St Helena asks you for something, you never say no!"* She concluded that Bury St Edmunds and Mildenhall had people with similar needs to those of Telford.

Within Bury St Edmunds the main action was to supplement the work of other churches, existing agencies and initiatives but she extended this through a group of 25 volunteers to reach out to families, the elderly and homeless people.

St Louis Family Service went from strength to strength from its small offices at the entrance to the Convent - these subsequently provided the charity's rebranding with the use of the name 'Gatehouse'.



Gatehouse progressed to a point where it engaged 17 staff and over 100 volunteers and it moved to larger premises at Dettingen Way, Bury St Edmunds, providing services and activities that included a

project to reuse furniture, day care for the elderly and day care for those under 65 with long term neurological illness. The services at Mildenhall also addressed the needs of the vulnerable elderly.

Annually a team of willing volunteers provided a full lunch at no cost to the vulnerable, needy and lonely on Christmas Day in Bury St Edmunds, arranging transport as necessary. In addition, food hampers were distributed throughout December to those in need. The growth of Gatehouse was the legacy of Sr Helena, sensitively and non-judgmentally working with and for the most impoverished and helping them where possible to help themselves.

St Benedict

As with the lives of many of the Saints, myth and legend sometimes cloud reality. When the monastery of Monte Cassino was rebuilt in 1964, Pope Paul VI proclaimed St Benedict the principal heavenly patron of the whole of Europe. St Benedict had not established this monastery but it is fact that monasteries that followed his Rule were places of learning and responsible for preserving significant manuscripts.

It is believed that St Benedict was born in Nursia, Rome and that his life spanned the years 480 to 547. He was educated in Rome but finding life there to be too decadent he moved to live as a hermit in rural Subiaco. Three years later he was discovered by a group of monks who persuaded him to become their spiritual leader but then regretted his strict regime and planned to poison him. When Benedict blessed the cup containing poisoned wine, it shattered. For this reason Benedict is often depicted with a broken cup with a snake creeping out of it, a symbol not dissimilar to that of St John.

Benedict ceased his association with these monks but he moved to establish 12 monasteries to the south of Rome, each with 12 monks. He subsequently moved to Monte Cassino where he destroyed the pagan temple to Apollo and replaced it with his own monastery, imposing his own Rule.



The Rule of St Benedict was set out in 73 short chapters covering how to live a spiritual life and how to efficiently administer a monastery. Emphasis was placed upon the virtues of obedience and humility. Monks were expected to daily devote 8 hours to prayer, 8 hours to sleep and the remainder to manual labour, reading or charitable works.

Benedict was canonised in 1220, Rome by Pope Honorius III. His feast is celebrated on 11 July.

The Order of St Benedict was established in Bury St Edmunds in the 11th century and grew in the 11th and 12th centuries with the building of its Norman Abbey to house the remains of our patron Saint, Edmund. Within the Abbey's Infirmary was the Church of St Benedict which consisted of a tower and portico and was the repose of some of the deceased Abbots. The Abbey was amongst the richest in the Country and became the place of pilgrimage to St Edmund's shrine. In 1327 it was attacked by local people rioting at the power and influence of the Monastery which extended across the Liberty of St Edmund (all of West Suffolk). The Abbey was rebuilt but went into decline in the 15th century until its dissolution in 1539.

The local significance of St Benedict is etched in our parish memory through St Benedict's Catholic Upper School, Beetons Way, Bury St Edmunds which was opened on 28 February 1967 and extended in 2019.

CHAPTER 5 – A GUIDE TO THE CHURCH AND CHAPEL

External

Before entering St Edmund's Church it is worth considering some of its external features. The Greek revival church was built in 1836/1837 and was dedicated on 14 December 1837. It is identical in many respects to the Church of St Francis Xavier at Hereford which opened in 1839, unsurprising because both were designed by the architect Charles Day. One difference between these churches is apparent – the one at Hereford has no windows, a design that prevented rioters throwing missiles inside. St Edmund's does have windows although these might be considered to be above a height to attract such wilful acts! The interior dimensions of St Edmund's Church make it an imposing building, 81' x 41'9", its height being 35'11". The Ketton stone quarried in Rutland creates a somewhat austere façade but on top of the Church the stone cross symbolises this as the house of God. Mainly at the expense of Sir Pierce Lacy, the original cross was replaced at a cost of £15 4s 6d in 1921 due to cracks appearing in the stone and its dangerous state. Additional funding came from parish donations and profits from a whist drive and a garden fête.

A new flagstaff was erected on 3 March 1902, to recognise the Anniversary of the Coronation of Pope Leo X111 and two new flags costing £3 11s 0d were purchased in 1921.



Within the Presbytery Garden are the headstones of three Jesuit priests, Fathers Cole, Lane and Jenkins who were amongst the many listed in *'The Present From Our Past'* who cemented Catholicism in Bury St Edmunds from the time our Chapel was built. The Garden appears to have been the original place of their burial.



The International Year of the Disabled occurred in 1982 and was also marked with a visit on 28 May by Pope John Paul II, the first occasion of a reigning pope coming to the United Kingdom. Fr Wace had recognised the need for an access point for disabled visitors and a side entrance to the Church was created. The sum of £2,500 towards the target total of £5,500 was raised by a parishioner Philip Pitcher through a sponsored cycle ride covering 420 miles. On 23 July 1982 Bishop Alan Clark officiated at Mass at which the sick were anointed. A brick within the wall alongside the ramp provides a reminder of these events.

Internal

Many people pass through the porch without appreciating the history it depicts. Attention is immediately drawn to the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes which was donated in 1883 by Captain William Rushbrooke. The gold halo 'Je suis l'immaculée conception' commemorates the apparitions of Our Lady that had commenced 25 years earlier. The statue came from the firm of Perry and Company, London, is 5'8" high and stands on a pedestal. At the time of its unveiling the statue was within the rails at the east end of the Sanctuary.

In the late 20th century the statue was restored by a parishioner, Helen McIldowie-Jenkins. She described her amusement on taking it back to the Church: *"On the day I returned the newly restored statue to the Church, it had to be carried past the presbytery dining room window. It was lunchtime and the three priests inside who were having lunch just saw only the top part of the statue as it went past the windows - they rushed outside to see what was going on - they thought they were having a group vision of Our Lady!"*

The Rushbrooke family were great benefactors to St Edmund's and the plaque in the porch depicted in Chapter 1 commemorates their association with the Church.

Your attention will be drawn to another memorial, that of Hon Charles Berney Petre who was born 17 December 1794 at Writtle, Essex. Little is known about his association with the Church apart from him being a member of the family Petre who were amongst the most prominent Catholics in the Country and who did much to perpetuate the faith and the building of places of worship.

He was the son of Robert Edward Petre, 10th Baron Petre (1763 – 1809) of Thorndon Hall, Essex. His mother was Mary Bridget Howard (1767 – 1843) and his maternal grandmother was Juliana Molyneux (sister of the 12th Duke of Norfolk). He was the second of seven children.

On 31 May 1822 Hon Charles Berney Petre married Elizabeth Howard (born 1801) at New Church, Mary-le-bone (*Bury and Norwich Post and Suffolk Herald* 15 June 1822). *Genealogical Collections: Roman Catholic Families of England* describes her as the natural daughter of Edward Charles Howard of Nottingham Place in the Parish of St Marylebone, Middlesex; her death being shown as 5 September 1835 aged 34 years, with her burial at Ingatestone three days later. As reported in the *Bury and Norwich Post and Suffolk Herald* 9 September 1835 she died in tragic circumstances:

'A shocking accident occurred near Tilbury Fort on Friday. The Hon Chas Petre of Shenfield with Mrs Petre, their son and daughter and a female servant took a boat to be put on a Margate steamer when by the unskillfulness of the ferryman the boat got under the paddle and was upset. They were all taken up by a Gravesend boat and carried ashore in a senseless state from which they were restored by proper attention; but on Sunday Mrs Petre who was in delicate health was about to enter a boat to return home when the idea of recrossing the river gave her nerves such a shock that she was suddenly taken worse and died in a few minutes. Mr Petre remains very ill and the nursemaid is in a dangerous state'.

What brought Hon Charles Berney Petre to Bury St Edmunds, when, why and the extent of his good works are questions that lack real answer but what is clear from Church and media records is that he became an esteemed member of the local community and that his family connections with the town were established:

- At the point of Census 1841 Hon Charles Berney Petre was at Hurley Street, Marylebone, London with his mother Lady Petre 70 years and members of his mother's family/household
- His signature appears as a witness to the marriage of William and Lucy Bocock at the Registrar's Office, Hatter Street and afterwards at St Edmund's Chapel on 4 August 1845
- In 1846 he was living at Northgate Street (*Kelly's directory 1846, page 1382*)
- Louisa Frances Petre (his daughter) was godmother at the Baptism on 29 November 1847 of William Charles Bocock
- He attended balls and dinners and in 1849/50 was a vice-patron of the Athenaeum
- The Census 1851 showed he was at Leamington with his son Charles Edward Petre and members of his son's family/household
- On 10 June 1853 he was one of six people nominated by the Town Council to become a Magistrate. However, he subsequently declined to qualify for this position. The Magistracy of the town was at that time subject to fierce debate amongst members of the Council and allegations
- He was a prominent member of the Liberal party
- He enjoyed the company of his family (he attended The Fair Ball at the Assembly Rooms along with Miss Petre, Captain and Mrs Petre – *Bury and Norwich Post and Suffolk Herald* 11 October 1853)
- He was connected to those in the agricultural community and was listed as a holder of a Game Certificate (*Bury and Norwich Post and Suffolk Herald* 19 September 1838)
- He enjoyed watching cricket matches in Bury St Edmunds

Hon Charles Berney Petre died on 18 June 1854 aged 59 years, having lived at Highland House, Northgate Street, Bury St Edmunds (this was part of the Duke of Norfolk's Estate and later became the Wesleyan Middle Class Boys' School – pictured on page 53 of *'Yesterdays Town Bury St Edmunds'*).

His death was announced in the *Bury and Norwich Post and Suffolk Herald* 21 June 1854:

'On the 18th instant at his residence in Northgate Street in this town, in his 60th year, the Hon Charles Petre 2nd son of Robert Edward, 10th Lord Peter, and uncle to the present peer'

An extract from the report in the *Bury and Norwich Post and Suffolk Herald* 28 June 1854 gave greater detail of his death and funeral:

'The remains of the late Hon Charles Berney Petre were interred on Saturday last at the Catholic Chapel in this town, of which an ancestor of the deceased was the original founder. The procession from the residence of the lamented gentleman (conducted by Mr Hunter) consisted of the hearse, preceded and surmounted by plumes, and three mourning coaches, in the front of which were Captain Petre, son of the deceased (chief mourner), the Hon Robert Petre and Hon Francis Petre, his brothers; and Lord Peter, his nephew; in the second, Lord Stafford, Mr Michael Blount and the Rev Henry Weld; and in the third his medical attendants, Messrs Smith and Wing. Many houses along the line of procession and elsewhere had their shutters closed. Sir Thomas and Lady Gage, Sir Thomas Cullum, Captain and Mrs Rushbrooke, and other families of the neighbourhood, with many of the tradesmen of the town, attended at the Chapel, to shew their respect for a gentleman who, during his residence in this place, was held in the highest estimation for his charity to the poor and his kind and gentlemanly deportment to all classes. The service of the Roman ritual was performed by the Rev Mr Jarrett; and the body in a coffin handsomely covered with velvet and ormolu furniture was deposited in the Crypt under the Chapel. We are requested to publish the following letter from Captain Petre:

Sir – Having been informed that a number of tradesmen in Bury had their shops closed, or partly so, during the Funeral of my lamented Father on the 24th inst, I beg through your paper to return my sincere thanks to them, and also to those inhabitants who out of respect to his memory attended the last service.

Your obedient Servant, Charles E Petre.

His son's comments echoed those of his family who subsequently installed a commemorative plaque in the porch of St Edmund's Church. The translation of its Latin wording gives credence to the account that he is buried in the Crypt:

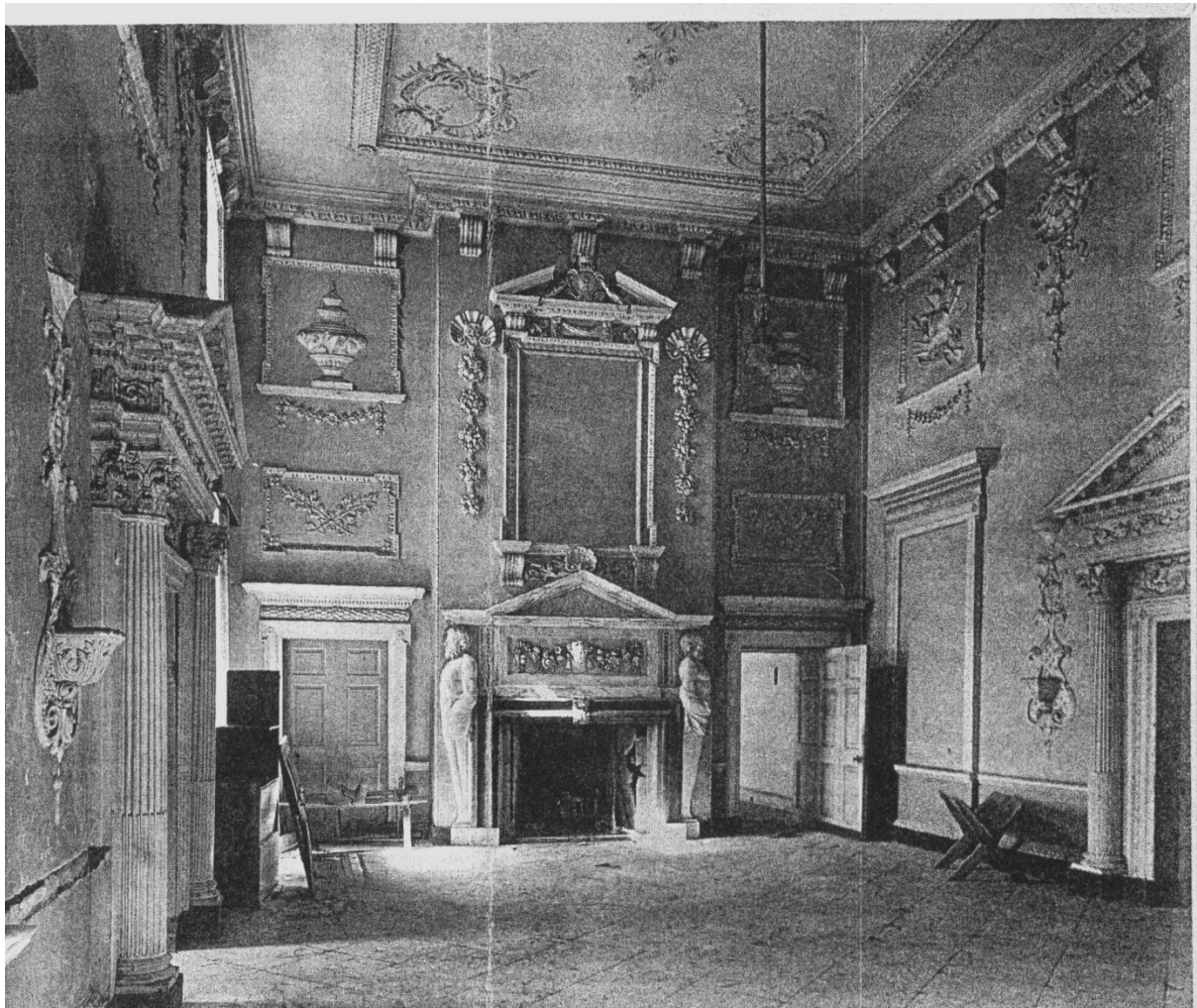
He who believeth in me although he shall be dead shall live (St John chapter XI verse 25)
Pray for the soul of
Hon Charles Petre
Who died 18th June 1854
He is buried in the Crypt of this Church
In whose memory his children have erected this memorial
May God grant mercy on his soul

A further plaque commemorating Hon Charles B Petre was placed in the Crypt but unfortunately this escaped the notice of two parishioners who around 1973/74 were engaged to carry out refurbishment. During the course of this whilst laying a new floor they knocked a hole through into a vault where they saw a coffin. They described it as raised on two plinths, approximately 3' – 4' below floor level, apparently lead or metal with no sign of rusting, covered in material with a silver crucifix approximately 7" - 12" in its centre. No nameplate was visible but it appeared to be the remains of someone of nobility. They kept the matter secret apart from informing a member of the clergy.

Full details of the marble memorial to those who died in the First and Second World Wars are provided in Chapter 6.

Either side of the porch are stairways to the choir, one also providing access to the belfry. On 21 November 1896, the feast of the Presentation of Our Lady, Fr Jones rang the Angelus on the bell which had that day been erected on the roof of the Church. The bell, weighing 2 cwt 8 lb from Warnes was hired with an option of purchase and after being properly hung was rung on Easter Eve on 10 April 1897 for Regina Cæli. Originally the bell was manually tolled but these days its ringing is automatically generated without the need for physical exertion. It is perhaps worth remembering that during the days of repression the tolling of a bell in a Catholic place of worship would have been unlawful.

Although not a route of public access, it is possible to enter the Presbytery via the porch, passing through the small sacristy which now displays the carving of the Madonna presented by people from Peru and Bolivia in 1987 to mark the 150th anniversary of the Church.



The former Rushbrooke Hall showing its fireplace surround



The impressive entrance to the Church depicts two classical figures supporting a large marble portico, these having previously formed a fireplace surround of the now-demolished Rushbrooke Hall. Prior to the piercing in 1959 to create this central entrance, inner side doors (opposite the stairwells) were the only routes of access and egress, these since having been blocked off to provide a toilet and a storage cupboard. The funding for this derived from the bequest of £400 from Harold Martin, a parishioner who had endured total paralysis for five years. An anonymous donor also contributed £1,000.

Entering the Church one is immediately struck by its size and the beauty of the decorative work carried out in 2014. We suggest you start by standing beside the baptismal font for many of us the gateway to our journey of faith. The font and its wooden casing were donated around 1996 by Kevin Mayhew, a book and music publisher, who for many years also led the singing at folk masses.

Allow your gaze to travel around for an overall perspective.





To your left you will see the Lady Altar surmounted by the Carrara white marble statue of Our Lady. This was bequeathed to the Church by George Gery Milner-Gibson-Cullum (who died in 1921) in memory of his mother, Susannah Arethusa Milner-Gibson, who converted to Catholicism and who had died in 1885. The donor also left to the townspeople the Cullum library but his home at Hardwick Hall reverted to the Crown. Having been delivered by motor van to the Presbytery and set up in a guest room in 1922, the ownership of the statue initially proved somewhat controversial. Fr O’Gorman received a notice from Mr Cullum’s Solicitors Partridge and Wilson of this gift on 7 December 1921, when it was made clear that the gift was not to the Society of Jesus but to the Church as the

Mission. By a printed circular Fr O’Gorman obtained the votes of the parishioners preferring that this statue should stand within the public guest room. According to Fr O’Gorman, this was also made emphatic by one of the executors who had heard a rumour that it was intended to sell the statue. In 1925 the statue was moved to the porch before its current position.

Fr Houghton recorded that the statue was of Roman design and originated from the workshop of the renowned sculptor Bertel Thorvaldsen, one of the major artists of the Neoclassical movement. Mrs Milner-Gibson died aged 71 in Paris but, as reported in the Bury Free Press of 7 March 1885 she was buried in Bury St Edmunds in 1885 having been an important benefactor to the Parish.

Two large door-cases from Rushbrooke Hall, in the style of William Kent, were used to frame the altar of Our Lady, creating two columns and a pitched heading, in which appear the words ‘Salve Porta Caeli’ translating as ‘Hail the gate of Heaven’. Symmetry is observed in the structure opposite surrounding the entrance to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

The marble altar itself was formerly dedicated to the Sacred Heart, having been provided in 1920 by Mr Henry Francis Harvey in memory of his son who had been killed at Ypres in 1917, more fully described in Chapter 6. In 1879 a statue of the Sacred Heart was bought for £8.10s 0d but its ultimate location has not been traced.

The walls of the Church exhibit the Stations of the Cross which date from 1925. Various individual donors combined with members of the congregation to replace the former Stations of the Cross and these were supplied on 9 August 1925 by Maurice Vanpouille, 260 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London. Nameplates beneath 13 of the Stations gave an indication of people who subscribed in thanksgiving or to commemorate the memory of their loved ones, featured names including Arthur Eyre, Patrick Crosby, Barbara Floyd, Frank and Sarah Harman, Hilda Floyd, Blanche Manson, Harold Martin, Walter Rouse, Henry James and Emma Lucy Rolfe, Henry Francis Harvey, Mary Theresa Pemberton,

Elizabeth Rouse and Robert Grimmer. Upon redecoration of the Church in 2014 the names of the subscribers were removed but this record serves as a reminder of their past importance.

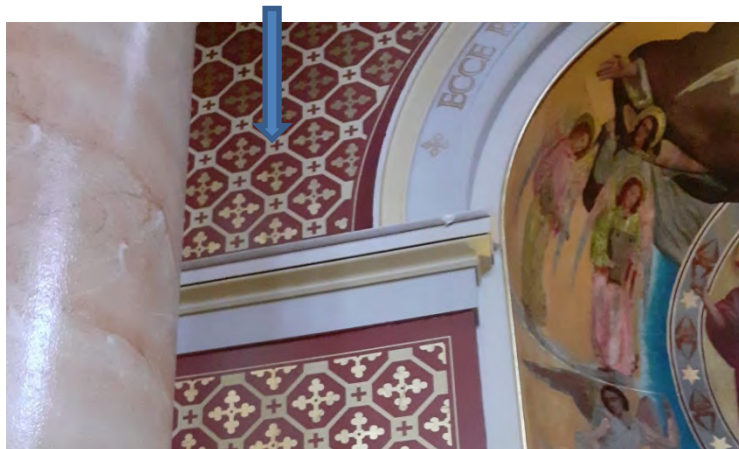
The original Stations of the Cross were designed in 1855, described in Latin and according to the Commemoranda were installed in 1876:

'I the under-signed blessed and erected the Stations of the Holy Way of the Cross in the Church of Saint Edmund, King and Martyr, on 24th November in the year 1876, with permission granted by the distinguished and Reverend Lord Bishop Francis Kerril Amherst. Joseph Lazenby, Missioner of the Apostolic Society of Jesus'

The rows of box pews, each bearing Roman numerals, are an increasingly rare survival and were the only ones of this design within the Catholic Churches of Suffolk. Within some can be found small compartments beneath the seats where the parishioner paying bench rent would be able to store prayer books and other personal items under lock and key. As stated in Chapter 3, two of these compartments were discovered in the Presbytery cellar in 2019. The passage of time has also meant the removal of the bronze plaques that previously denoted the paying occupant of the pew, a practice that certainly existed until the late 1950s.

In addition to the pews, the beautiful pulpit and iron altar rails remain from the original state of the Church. In 1886 hangings for the pulpit were worked and given by Miss J Nunn and in 1921 it included a crucifix, 2'9" long, in carved wood and decorated, costing £2.18.6. The sanctuary would have held a warmer appearance in 1881 when Susanna Milner-Gibson provided a Brussels carpet. The Sanctuary was again carpeted in 1916 at a cost of £40 from funds raised by the congregation. Chandeliers within the Sanctuary were provided around 1913 by the Countess Cadogan and carpeting outside the Altar rails was donated by Mr Eyre in 1912.

The columns, on either side of the altar, were for some years painted over, but have now been restored and are similar to the pillars of Scagliola at nearby Ickworth House which are purely decorative. The construction of these contains a plywood frame plastered over with gypsum as it takes a good polish. Often coloured pigment is included so as the plaster is spread the pigment streaks to give an appearance of marble. The Church pillars are therefore imitation and a very much cheaper product than using marble.



In the apse is the Victorian painting on copper of the Ascension of Christ headed by the words *'Ecce panis Angelorum, factus cibus viatorum'* (*Behold the Bread of Angels, become the food of the pilgrims*). According to the Whites History, Gazetteer and Directory of Suffolk 1855 it had 'recently been adorned with the painting'. It is not known who originally painted this but in 1921 it

was retouched as written on the painting 'Restored by G H Pettit Builder and Decorator etc H O U 4 12 21' and was subject to further cleaning and artistry in 2012. Those who are sharp-eyed will notice

that to the left of the apse, the stencilling bears the decorator's mark (the top of the arrowed cross is missing).

The original high altar (depicted on the rear cover) which had been refurbished by Mr Pettit in 1925 at a cost of £41.17.0 has long since disappeared but it would have been the focal point of the Church. Its splendour incorporated a crucifix purchased in 1886; a new Tabernacle, installed in September 1896 which was blessed on the first of the following month, was enhanced on 1 June 1897 with the addition of precious stones set in silver gilt being placed in its door.

Walk to the sanctuary where you will be able to admire the beauty of the altar. It represents the final part of restoration work in 2014. The base slab, the Mensa and the columns of the altar were constructed from the former altar, thus maintaining linkage with the past. The previous altar contained relics of unknown origin that were sealed within by Bishop Parker when the Church was Consecrated on 31 March 1965 and these were transferred by Bishop Hopes at the dedication of the new altar on 28 April 2014. They were sealed into the floor of the new altar along with other relics symbolic to our parish. These include a relic of locally born St Alban Roe (see also Chapter 4), generously donated by the Sisters of Tyburn, this comprising a piece of sponge soaked in the blood of St Thomas Reynolds and St Alban Roe who died together. The provincial of the Society of Jesus provided a relic of St Ignatius of Loyola (see Chapter 4), the founder of the Jesuits, together with unauthenticated mementos as a symbolic link with the wider Church. The unauthenticated mementos are marked as "Ex S Petri, Apostle", "Ex S Pauli, Apostle" and "Ex Sep BVM".



Fr Philip Shryane described the significance of the adornment of the altar: *"The IHS emblem was one I saw in a small medallion in the chapel of Hothorpe Hall near Market Harborough. The important thing about it is that it is vertical, which I thought important as it is on a column, most other images of IHS are horizontal."* The adornment was the work of a parishioner Virginia Wright who, having studied glass and fine arts became self-taught in the craft of kiln formed glass using minerals including gold and enamel. At the request of Fr Shryane, and after the production of many prototypes, Virginia produced her exquisite pieces of work.

To the right of the altar stands the wooden lectern which portrays the second example of Virginia Wright's craftsmanship. Fr Shryane explained, *"The emblem on the lecture is taken from the front of the deacons' book of the Gospels. IC XC are abbreviations in Greek and Slavonic for Jesus Christ. NIKA is a Greek verb that means 'conquer'. So 'Jesus Christ conquers', the victory of Christ that we celebrate is that over the world, the devil, sin and death. This is the great victory of the cross and*

resurrection which is found in the scriptures, hence it is often on the cover of the Bible and here on the place where the Bible is proclaimed for the people to hear.”



On top of the altar is the St Thomas Cross (Mar Thoma Cross), an ancient depiction which belonged to the community of St Thomas Christians of Kerala, a state in India. The community traces its origins to the evangelistic activity of St Thomas in the first century, making it one of the oldest Christian groups of the world. The cross does not carry the effigy of Christ and through its elements symbolises life rather than suffering or death. It's four floral edges are indicative of fruition and life; the lotus flower beneath the cross is the national flower of India and a symbol of purity in both Buddhism and of Christianity in India; the absence of an image of Jesus on the cross acknowledges the empty tomb and Our Lord's resurrection; the dove above the cross represents the Holy Spirit, the Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead and bestows gifts upon the faithful of the Church.

Within the Sanctuary you can also see the processional cross which will vary at times of the year. The traditional style crucifix with the Corpus was mounted on mahogany as described in Chapter 8. The other crucifix bears the image of Christ the amputee and symbolises our links with the people of Cambodia and Christ's solidarity with the suffering peoples of this world.



Three statues represent the minority communities of the parish. The Indian community commissioned a wooden statue of St Thomas, the Apostle of India. Hand-carved in Kerala and after the long journey to St Edmund's Church, the statue was blessed on the Saint's feast day on 3 July 2016 in front of a packed congregation.

In 2000 nurses from the Philippines were recruited to work at West Suffolk Hospital and over the next two decades their community grew in size. The statue of St Lorenzo Ruiz, the first Filipino Martyr was donated by the Filipino community and was blessed at Mass on his feast day on 25th September 2016. St Lorenzo was born in Binondo, Manila of a Chinese father and Filipino mother. As Catholics they brought up their son as part of the local church. Educated in part by the Dominican Friars, he became a member of the confraternity of the most holy Rosary. As a young man he married Rosaria and together they had three children. They led a peaceful, content and faithful life



together, until in 1636 he was falsely accused of killing one of the Spanish colonialists. In 1636 he left the Philippines for Japan where Christians were being persecuted. As a native Filipino he was not guaranteed a fair hearing and fled on board a ship bound for Japan with the company of missionaries, both religious and lay. There he was arrested, tortured and finally martyred by being hung for two days in extreme agony after valiantly refusing to give up his Christian faith. He was canonised by Pope John Paul II in 1987.



The feast day of St Lorenzo Ruiz in 2017 was celebrated at a special Mass followed by lunch, music and dancing in the Crypt.

Commemorating the Polish community is the statue of St Wojciech, the first Bishop of Prague to have been born in Bohemia. He became a missionary to the Hungarians, Poles and Prussians and was martyred in his efforts to convert the Baltic Prussians to Christianity. He was canonised in 999. On 23 April 1997 (his feast day) the 1,000th anniversary of his martyrdom was commemorated by a pilgrimage to the Saint's tomb in Gniezno, Poland.

Either side of the apse are credence tables both donated in 2014, one by the Catenians' Circle 362 Bury St Edmunds; the other in memory of the Pratt family.



To the left of the sanctuary is the parish library in which is displayed in a massive gilt frame a painting by Duckett depicting the Martyrdom of St Edmund, the original of which by Charles de la Fosse is housed in the Irish College in Paris having formerly been the reredos in the Chapel of the English Benedictine monastery in Paris until the French Revolution. The dying Martyr King is represented tied to a tree and angels are removing from his body the arrows by which his life has been destroyed. This was donated by George Gery Milner Gibson Cullum in 1878 and unveiled by Fr Lazenby on the eve of St Edmund's Day when it was hung directly over the pulpit.



A painting of Christ crucified was moved from the Church during 2014 to the Presbytery stairway.

The door to the right of the sanctuary leads to the main sacristy. As you turn away from the sanctuary there is much to view on the western side. The statue representing the martyrdom of St Edmund (pictured in Chapter 4) was presented to the Chapel by Mrs Milner-Gibson and was unveiled on St Edmund's Day 20 of November 1877 by the Right Rev Francis Amherst, Bishop of Northampton. The occasion was described in the Bury Free Press four days later:

'Last Tuesday being St Edmund's Day, it being exactly a thousand and seven years since the good King of East Anglia suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Danes, a solemn ceremony was celebrated. Some time ago Mrs Milner-Gibson presented a handsome statue of the Royal Saint to the Church ... There was a large congregation to witness the ceremony. The altar had been more than ordinarily beautified for the occasion with flowers, ferns and other plants, while it was also fully illuminated, and very handsome drapery ornamented the front, in the centre of which appeared the borough arms, the device, however, being somewhat different to that which we are accustomed to see, it consisting of two wolves supporting a red shield, with the crown of St Edmund above it... The statue was then unveiled, and the Bishop with his priests took up their position before it, while the religious formularies adopted for the occasion were proceeded with; and arrows were fixed in the body of the statue by an attendant priest. ... St Edmund is represented in Royal robes, and suffering martyrdom at the hands of the Danes. The statue is about four feet high and now forms a handsome and conspicuous ornament to the Church ...'

Interestingly, the Jesuits' Commemoranda attributed the donor as being Lord Milner and there being a painting of the Saint gifted by his son (this would have been the picture referred to above, representing the martyrdom of St Edmund).

In close proximity is the icon of Christ Pantocrator, the version of Helen McIlldowie-Jenkins. It was a memorial commissioned in the late 20th century by a parishioner Mrs Peggy Whitehouse in memory

of the lives of her son and daughter Roy Douglas (born 27 November 1943, died 20 February 1969) and Patricia Ruby Whitehouse (born 14 September 1948, died 18 January 1978).

In October 1960 an accident occurred during the construction of an extension to St Edmund's School; fortunately no fatalities resulted. In thanksgiving Fr Houghton provided the wall plaque inscribed '*Oct 1960 in thanks B H*'.

The first archway commences a series of framed tapestries that hang on the walls of the Church and are an important part of the history and heritage of West Suffolk, these being worked in 1970 to celebrate the 1100th anniversary of the martyrdom of St Edmund. Olga Ironside-Wood was a lady whose interests in the arts benefited Bury St Edmunds, most notably at the theatre and in the production of the town's pageant in 1959. She was an expert in costume and came up with an idea of creating the story of St Edmund as a tapestry in nine panels, each of which could be worked independently. She approached the chief education officer responsible for the secondary schools in the Liberty of St Edmundsbury (modern West Suffolk) and was delighted to receive his cooperation.

All the secondary schools in the area were approached and, under the care of Jane Page the regional representative of the Embroideries Guild, a panel was individually worked by the following:

- Beyton secondary school
- Clare secondary school
- Convent of the Assumption, Hengrave
- Girls' County grammar school
- Hadleigh secondary school
- Haverhill secondary school
- Ixworth secondary school
- Silver Jubilee Girls' school
- Sudbury Girls' High school

The outcome was the production of a colourful tapestry that was put on display in the St Edmund Chapel of St Edmundsbury Cathedral. However, in 2002 the wall on which the tapestry hung was demolished during the extension of the Cathedral and a new home was needed.

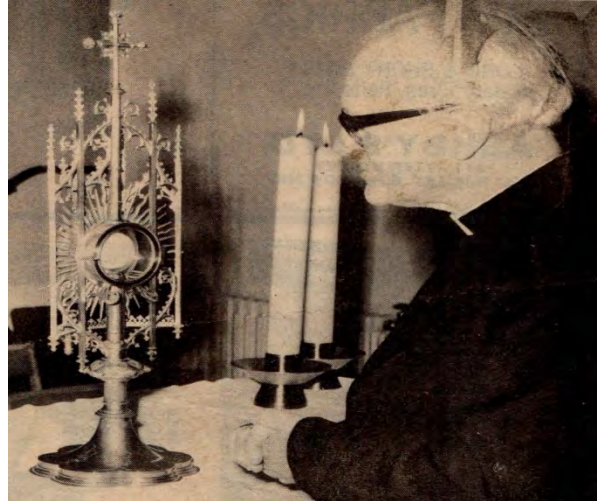
At the suggestion of the Cathedral guides the tapestries were gifted to our Church and this was supported by the Dean, the Very Rev James Atwell and they were accepted in May 2002. Following approval from the Historic Churches committee, the nine tapestries were framed and sited in the wall recesses of the Church. An ecumenical service to dedicate the tapestries was conducted by Fr Shryane on 23 January 2003. They continue to serve as a reminder of the life and martyrdom of our patron Saint and are an interesting chapter from the past - no longer do any of the named education establishments exist.

To the right of the door of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel we see an icon of St Alban inscribed '*In thanksgiving for St Alban's Catholic School*', donated by its governors upon closure of the School in 2000. The icon was another composed by Helen McIldowie-Jenkins. Further to the right is a statue of St Joseph.

Looking upwards towards the rear of the Church enables us to view the choir and organ loft. Beneath, divided by the fifth of the tapestries, are the statues of St Therese of Lisieux (purchased for £7 10s 0d which was blessed on the day of her canonisation 17 May and St Anthony of Padua, costing £7 which was donated by Mrs Horne. These statues were installed in 1921. At ground level, either side of the entrance doors are cupboards where once stood the confessional boxes.

The somewhat hidden jewel of the Church is the Blessed Sacrament Chapel dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, referred to in Chapter 1. Over many years the religious significance of the Chapel had declined and it had been used as a storeroom, a kitchen and during the times of Fr Houghton it served as his study, adorned with a grand piano, expensive paintings and other comforts.

The Chapel was restored in the time of Fr Wace and was dedicated in August 1978 by Bishop Alan Clark who is seen in the picture (courtesy of Bury Free Press) admiring the monstrance which was within the Chapel.



Before entering, we observe two features of significance. First is the sanctuary lamp, its red light indicating the presence of the Blessed Sacrament but also reminding us that it was one of the early gifts to the Church, donated by Irish drovers who took cattle across Europe during the mid-19th century. They saw that the Church did not have a proper sanctuary lamp and provided one made of brass bearing the inscription '*Hibernae Donum Sancto Edmundo AD MDCCCLXXVI*' confirming the date of this '*Gift from Ireland*' as 1876. It is a quality that has remained as our generations have continued to welcome to our parish newcomers from whatever part of the world they come or whatever their circumstances.

Second, the entrance door which was created in 1978 and glazed by Stefan Oliver as a memorial to his mother who had recently died. She had been a member of the Suffolk County Council Education Committee and a prominent figure in the establishment of the schools' pyramid. Stefan also dedicated the glazing as a memorial to his deceased father and sister.

The basis of Stefan's idea came from the side chapel of Coventry Cathedral where one steps through a metal crown of thorns that creates the doorway. His intricate design is notable for:

- Its centre: The traditional symbol of the Blessed Sacrament – the elevated Host and chalice, engraved '*Agnus Dei*' and the symbol '*Chi-Rho*' (abbreviated Greek meaning Christ); wheat ears symbolising the Bread of Life; a never-ending crown of thorns
- Each corner of the door shows the symbol of the patron saint of the schools of the parish: St Edmund; St Alban; St Louis; St Benedict. This recognises the major part Gabrielle Oliver played in the establishment and development of education in the parish
- Each pane depicting foliage of spiritual significance



Sadly only the schools of St Edmund and St Benedict have survived the passage of time.

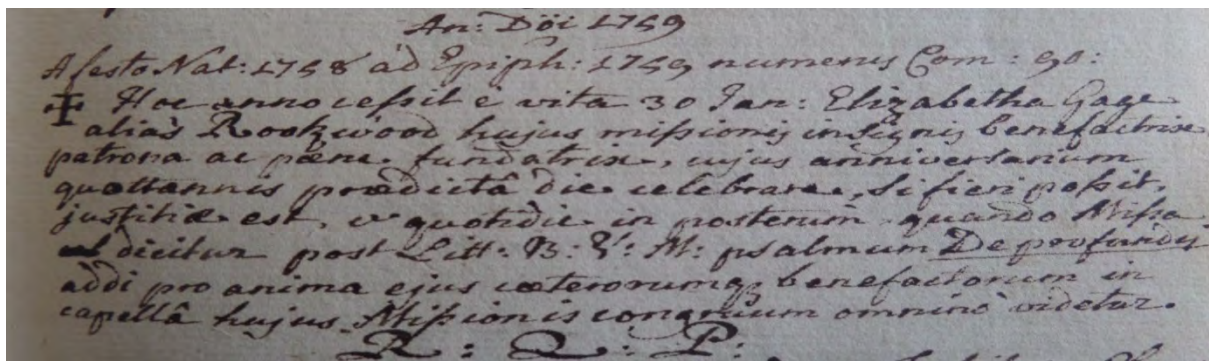
Mirroring the surrounds of the Lady Altar are the door-cases originally from Rushbrooke Hall which complete the entrance to the Chapel. The words above '*Ecce Ostium Ovium*' translate as '*Behold the gate of the sheepfold*' a quotation from St John's Gospel.

This is the gateway to a place of peace and prayer. Please acknowledge the presence of the Blessed Sacrament by genuflecting as you enter the Chapel, an expression of our faith in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. We especially ask visitors to respect the sanctity of the Chapel and to refrain from talking or otherwise distracting people at prayer.

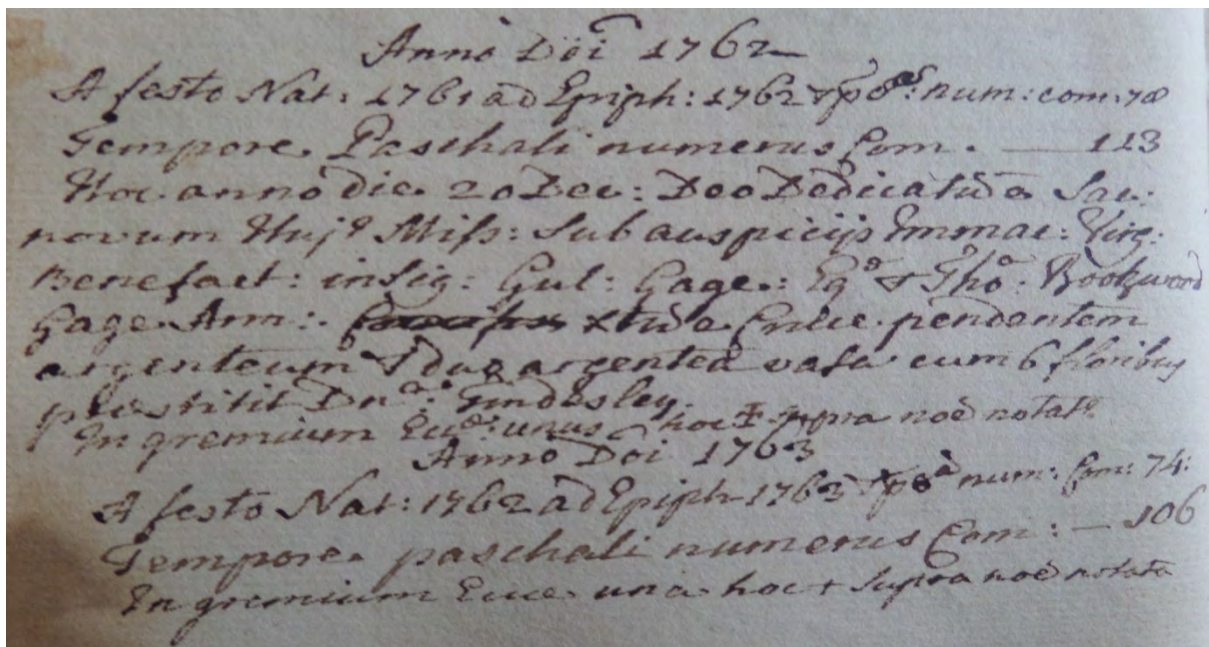
The restorative work within the Chapel in 2012 included re-siting the tabernacle and altar, the sympathetic painting of the interior, raising the floor level and providing new seating. The only

original features are the 'Strawberry Hill Gothick' cornicing, two Georgian windows and the gallery. The licence under the Second Catholic Relief Act of 1789 for the Chapel to be used as a place of Catholic worship can be seen in the Chapel together with the names of the parish priests who have served the community since its opening. The statue of St Edmund dates from the early 20th century but its origin is unknown. The wooden carving within the Chapel, seemingly dating from the early 20th century, of St Edmund (with two arrows, the third is missing) is of unknown origin. A painting from the School of Rubens depicts the crucifixion of Our Lord, this being donated by Sir Pierce Lacy.

The Presbytery holds details of parish records for which we owe a debt of gratitude to Joy Rowe for ensuring their preservation. Amongst these is reference to the first Parish Register which records baptisms, marriages, burials and communion numbers between 1756 and 1797. It includes notes in Latin on the state of the Mission. Within are references to the death of Elizabeth Rookwood Gage:



The dedication in 1762 of the Chapel (with a description of the hanging cross and silver vase) is also mentioned:



In 1778 the offering of prayers for King George and the Royal Family took place. This was an unusual act but a demonstration of the desire of Catholics to demonstrate that adherence to their Faith did not involve disloyalty to the Crown.

1770

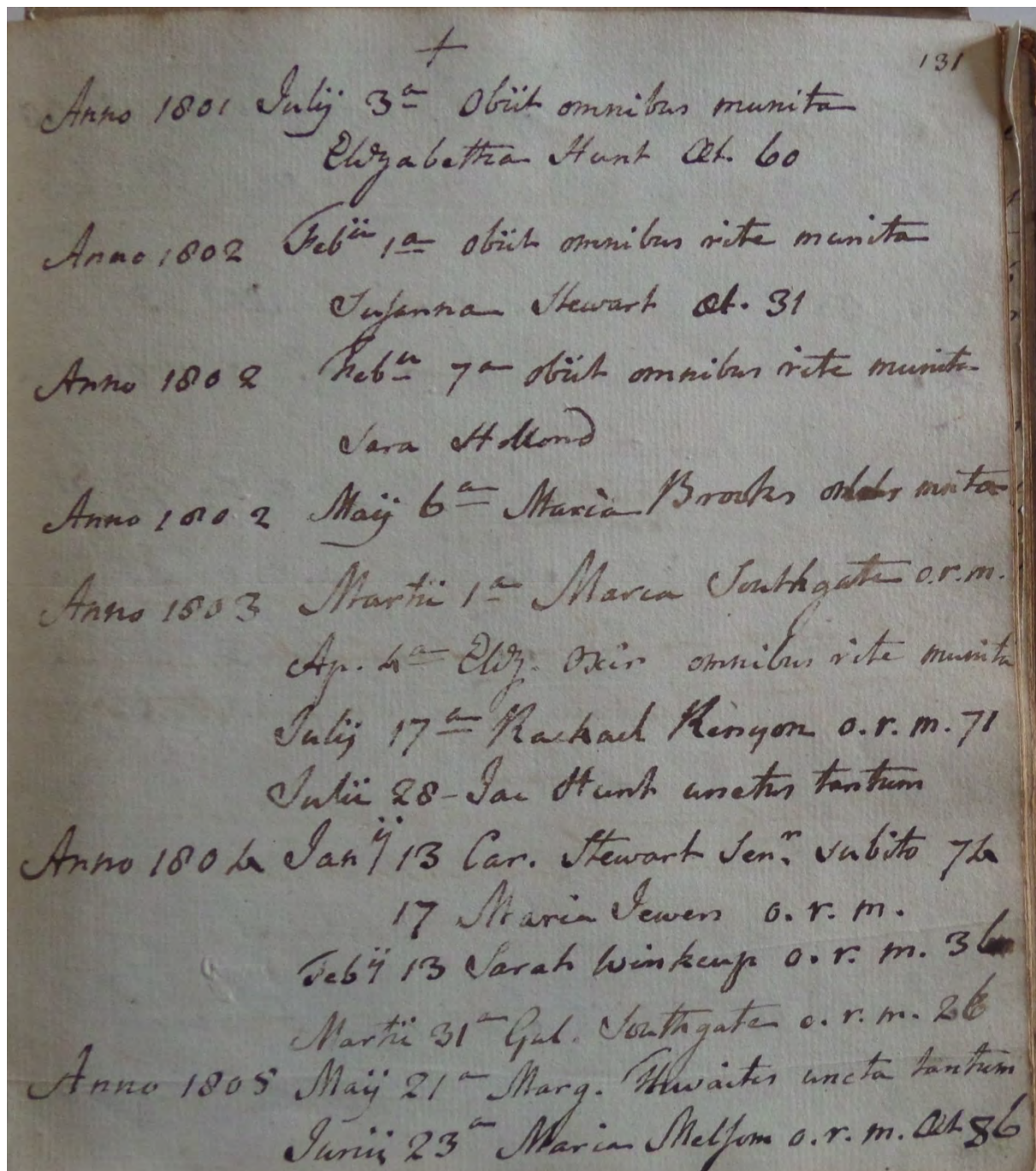
Apostolica ad 0^{us} Epiph num^{us} commun. 74
 Pro paschali communione
 Hoc anno Die 21 Junij R^{om} Do^{us} Coadjutor ⁹¹
 contulit Sac^{ra} Confirmationis Catholice huj^{us}
 Missionis, hoc & signo post nomina notatis,
 uni supra triginta
 Hoc anno die 10. Aug: Decrees publicè di-
 cendæ pro Rege Geor: Regina & familia re-
 gis prescriptæ sunt a Dno G: Ap:

The second register spans the years 1789-1832 and again includes the detail of those within the parish baptised, confirmed, married and deceased. The handwritten records represent the eras of priests of the parish: Frs Charles Thompson, P Jenkins, Thomas Angier, Henry Wright John Laurensen, Joseph Tate, Henry Brigham, Bernard Jarrett, James Brownbill and Thomas Knight

It is interesting to note the choice of names by those confirmed in 1793. Of the 38 listed in the register of that year 9 chose Joseph, 2 James, 1 Francis, 1 John, 1 Charles, 13 Mary, 4 Anne, 2 Teresa, 1 Frances, 1 Martha, 1 Lucy, 1 Elizabeth, 1 Agnes.

<p>110</p> <p>Anno 1793-4^o Die Auguste confirmati sunt sequentè</p> <p>Nomina</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Bapti.</td> <td>Famil.^a</td> <td>Confir.^o</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thomas Wright</td> <td>—</td> <td>Josephus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Joannes Faulkner</td> <td>—</td> <td>Joannes</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Joannes Faver</td> <td>—</td> <td>Franciscus de Sales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Abraham Steed</td> <td>—</td> <td>Josephus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5 Gulielmus Griggs</td> <td>—</td> <td>Josephus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Joannes Hasleton</td> <td>—</td> <td>Josephus Aloysius</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thomas Harris</td> <td>—</td> <td>Carolus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Gulielmus Snelling</td> <td>—</td> <td>Josephus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Thomas Holland</td> <td>—</td> <td>Josephus Francis Dau</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 Carolus Steward</td> <td>—</td> <td>Jacob (caro Carolus)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Joannes Barham</td> <td>—</td> <td>Josephus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Franciscus Steward</td> <td>—</td> <td>Josephus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carolus Spencer</td> <td>—</td> <td>Josephus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Ignatius Harnd</td> <td>—</td> <td>Jacobus</td> </tr> </table>	Bapti.	Famil. ^a	Confir. ^o	Thomas Wright	—	Josephus	Joannes Faulkner	—	Joannes	Joannes Faver	—	Franciscus de Sales	Abraham Steed	—	Josephus	5 Gulielmus Griggs	—	Josephus	Joannes Hasleton	—	Josephus Aloysius	Thomas Harris	—	Carolus	Gulielmus Snelling	—	Josephus	Thomas Holland	—	Josephus Francis Dau	6 Carolus Steward	—	Jacob (caro Carolus)	Joannes Barham	—	Josephus	Franciscus Steward	—	Josephus	Carolus Spencer	—	Josephus	Ignatius Harnd	—	Jacobus	<p>111</p> <p>Anno 1793-4^o die Auguste</p> <p>Nomina</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Bapt.</td> <td>Famil.</td> <td>Conf.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15 Maria Clarke</td> <td>—</td> <td>Anna</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sarah Holland</td> <td>—</td> <td>Maria</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maria Perry</td> <td>—</td> <td>Maria</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Elizabeth Whitton</td> <td>—</td> <td>Maria</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Margarita Barham</td> <td>—</td> <td>Maria</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 Sarah Michaelfield</td> <td>—</td> <td>Anna</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Susan Androni</td> <td>—</td> <td>Lucia</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maria Coker</td> <td>—</td> <td>Anna</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Anna Rebec Adams</td> <td>—</td> <td>Maria</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Maria Steward</td> <td>—</td> <td>Elizabetha</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25 Ursula Holland</td> <td>—</td> <td>Maria</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Anna Jewers</td> <td>—</td> <td>Maria</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Caroletta Peiffer</td> <td>—</td> <td>Teresa</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Franciscus East</td> <td>—</td> <td>Maria</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Susan Southgate</td> <td>—</td> <td>Anna</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30 Anna Cole</td> <td>—</td> <td>Maria</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Celia Annis</td> <td>—</td> <td>Martha</td> </tr> </table>	Bapt.	Famil.	Conf.	15 Maria Clarke	—	Anna	Sarah Holland	—	Maria	Maria Perry	—	Maria	Elizabeth Whitton	—	Maria	Margarita Barham	—	Maria	20 Sarah Michaelfield	—	Anna	Susan Androni	—	Lucia	Maria Coker	—	Anna	Anna Rebec Adams	—	Maria	Maria Steward	—	Elizabetha	25 Ursula Holland	—	Maria	Anna Jewers	—	Maria	Caroletta Peiffer	—	Teresa	Franciscus East	—	Maria	Susan Southgate	—	Anna	30 Anna Cole	—	Maria	Celia Annis	—	Martha
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The third register covers the baptisms of the parish between 1888 and 1909, entries being made by Frs Parkinson, Perrin and Jones.



Another document of interest relates to a Friendly Society established in 1794, governed by rules, orders and regulations:

The booklet describes what a person might receive if unable to work; that £4 may be paid towards funeral expenses; six shillings to be paid to the bearers; the requirement to attend Church on Sundays and Holy Days and that any absence is punishable by a fine deposited into the overall fund. The annual meeting of the Friendly Society (held in a public house) required attendance, failure resulting in a fine of one shilling which had to be spent in the pub! No one was allowed to drink in

the pub whilst business was ongoing, contravention being punishable by the payment of sixpence!
The organisation was allowed and confirmed at the Quarter Sessions and became a legal entity:



Rules,
Orders, and Regulations,

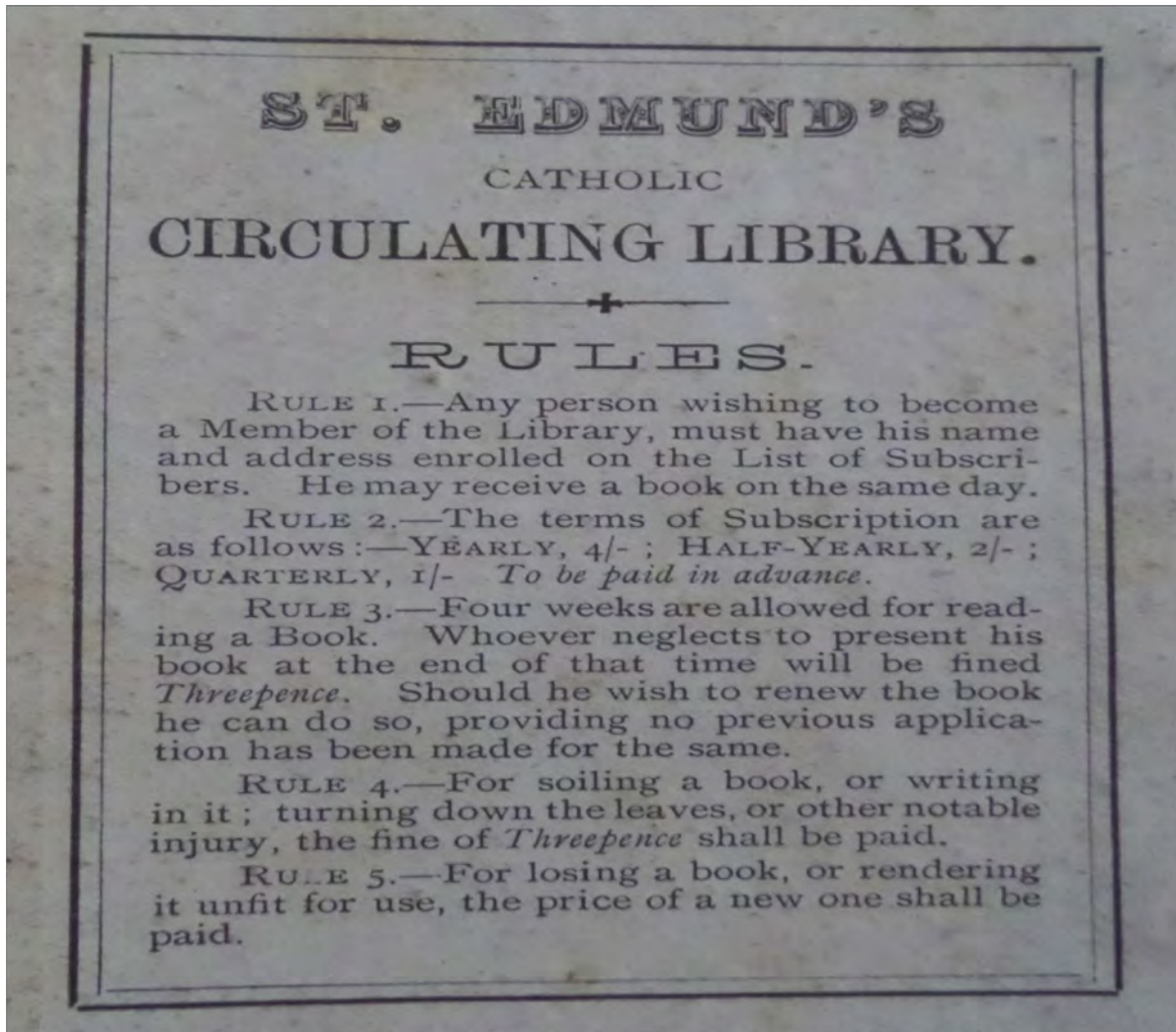
FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE FRIENDLY
AND CHARITABLE SOCIETY OF PERSONS PRO-
FESSING THE ROMAN CATHOLIC RELIGION,
INSTITUTED AT BURY ST. EDMUND'S, IN THE
COUNTY OF SUFFOLK, FOR THE RELIEF AND
MAINTENANCE OF THE SEVERAL MEMBERS
THEREOF, IN SICKNESS, OLD AGE, AND
INFIRMITY.

Printed by J. Rackham,
BOOKSELLER, STATIONER, AND BOOKBINDER,
Angel-Hill, Bury St. Edmund's,
Suffolk.

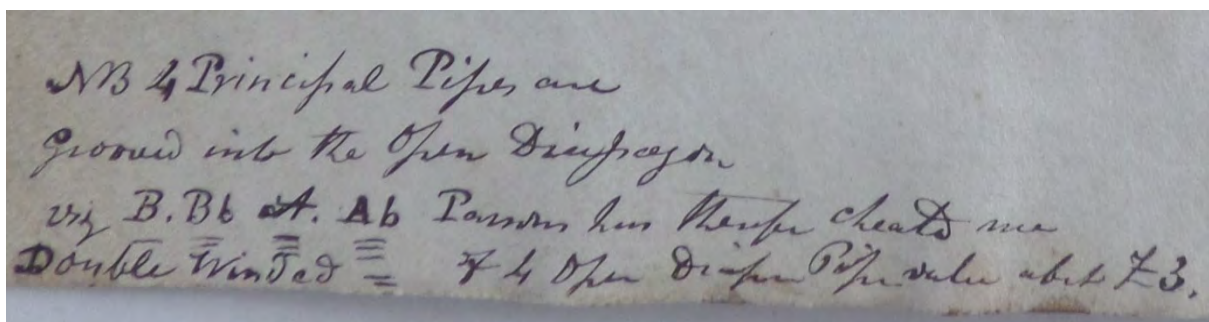
*SUFFOLK.—The general quarter sessions of the peace
of our sovereign lord the King, holden by adjournment at
Bury St. Edmund's, the 31st day of December, 1794, before
John Ord, D. D. Capel Lofft, Esq. and others, justices as-
signed, etc.—This court doth allow and confirm the fore-
going rules, orders, and regulations, pursuant to the directions
of an act of parliament in that case made and provided.*

By the court, Notcutt, dep. cler. par.

St Edmund's Church has always recognised the importance of books and other reading material. Amongst the materials rescued by Joy Rowe is a book entitled 'Histoire de la Chine' which was at one time available through St Edmund's Catholic library. It bears the embossed marking 'St Edmund's Catholic Library Bury' but also has the handwritten name of P G Milner Gibson, one of the notable donors to the Church. Within the book's cover are the rules relating to the library:



Documents illustrating the nature of music used every-day and on special occasions within the Chapel have also been preserved. These include information about the original organ pipes and stops.



Pipes		
Stop Diapason =	58	Wood B A
Principal - =	38	Metal Bb Ab
Fifteenth - -	58	Metal
Open Diapason -	47	Metal
Flute - - -	30	Wood 1/2 Blakes
Dulciana -	30	Metal
Clarebells -	30	Wood & Open
<u>Organs contain</u>	<u>301</u>	<u>Pipes (say 307)</u>
out of which there are	57	Pedal Pipes
deduct	4	
	53	

Included amongst the documents is the music used at the dedication of the Church in 1837 and for the Coronation.

Music has been an important element in our Church history, particularly through the enduring periods of tenure of our choir leaders and organists Mr A J Floyd, Miss Hilda Prigg and Dr Alan Rowe who between them served the parish for a period in excess of 150 years. The installation of a new organ in 1912 would therefore have been greeted with delight – the outlay of £587 was met through donations from Mr and Mrs Johnston, he being a blind musician, (£467), Miss Taylor (£50), the congregation (£35) and the sale of the old organ (£35). Three years later Miss Taylor made a further donation of £74 to provide organ blowing machinery.

No inventory of the assets of the Church has existed and therefore it has been necessary to rely on historic records to identify its other possessions over time.



The story of the Hoxne oak in the Presbytery Sacristy produces a situation of belief and counter-belief. The *Gentlemen's Magazine* 1848 mentions that wood from the oak at Hoxne, allegedly the tree to which St Edmund was tied, had been used to create an alms box within St Edmund's Church, Bury St Edmunds. This is the alms box donated by Percy Milner-Gibson which is now sited in the Presbytery sacristy. The veracity of this story needs to be viewed in the context of Chapters 4 and 5. This is elaborated on in the Commemoranda in which it stated that in 1878 Mrs Milner Gibson presented an alms box from the tree to which St Edmund was bound and tortured.

Legend records that Edmund fled to Hoxne where he fell into the hands of the victors, who offered him his life on

condition of renouncing the Christian faith. Refusing to do this, the King was bound to a tree, beaten with clubs and shot at with arrows. Tradition long pointed out 'St Edmund's Oak' in Hoxne wood as the site of the King's martyrdom, and when this ancient oak fell down in 1848, an iron arrow head was found embedded in the trunk, which is believed to have been one of those discharged against the Royal Martyr. (This relic was exhibited at a meeting of the Royal Archaeological Institute at Bury St Edmunds in 1869 through the courtesy of Sir Edward Kerrison Bart.

Transcription of the Latin inscription on the brass plate of the alms box reads: *'From the wood of a tree to which the most blessed king and martyr, Edmund was bound for a very, very long time, flogged and pierced with arrows: the most renowned Knight Edward Kerrison made me and gave to the Church of St Edmund on 11th of October in the year 1878'.*



It is clear that in the late 1800s particular interest was shown from this Church in the life and relics of St Edmund. Were the clergy, parishioners and the likes of Mrs Milner-Gibson and Sir Edward Kerrison (Baronet and MP) deceived or is there credibility in this history?

Over the years many improvements were made as a result of subscriptions from the congregation and friends outside Bury St Edmunds. In 1878 a set of High Mass vestments, colour red, were provided at a cost of £34. In October 1885 a set of vestments was given by the nuns of Roehampton and another set (red and purple vestments) by the Rev Fr Provincial. Another white vestment was purchased. In January 1886 a further three new vestments were given by the Rev Fr Provincial. In

commemoration of her sister having professed at New Hall, on 11 October 1893 Miss Bevan presented the Church with a vestment. New High Mass vestments, colour white, were used for the first time on Easter Day 1898. In 1915 unspecified vestments were repaired at a cost of £20 and in the same year sets of green and black vestments and three palls were supplied by the Sisters of the Poor Child Jesus, Our Lady's Convent, Southam, Warwickshire.

In 1875 the old organ was replaced with the purchase of a new model; this was repaired in 1899. The organ was sold in 1912.

Redecoration of the Church and high altar took place in 1876 and in January 1886 the altar was redecorated and new linen supplied. The Church was cleaned in 1900 and the high altar was further decorated in 1926.

During his Visitation between 28 and 30 October 1881 the Very Rev Fr Provincial took away two pyxes and two sets of stocks for the Holy Oils, all of silver, to give to foreign missions.

The years of 1885, 1886 and 1887 saw several additions. Collections and donations from parishioners provided a new roof for the Chapel. In November 1885 a new Confessional was erected in the second sacristy and six new benches were put into the Church for the poor. In December two white altar veils, two book covers, new altar cards and artificial plants were also donated. In April 1886 a white book cover was created by Mrs Morphy who also donated Benediction books – it is not known if she was related to Rev Mr Morphy referred to in Chapter 1. In 1887 a new carpet around the Sacred Heart Altar was bought. Part of the old Library was converted into the Sodality Chapel.

The movement has not been recorded of a picture of St Lucy which was presented around 1898 by a parishioner, Mr Todd, or of the painting of Our Lady of Good Counsel which was hung in the Church and blessed by Fr Jones on 2 February that year, followed by a procession in honour of Our Lady.

In 1921 considerable activity, as described previously, took place including the provision of two votive stands and hangings for the Lady altar.

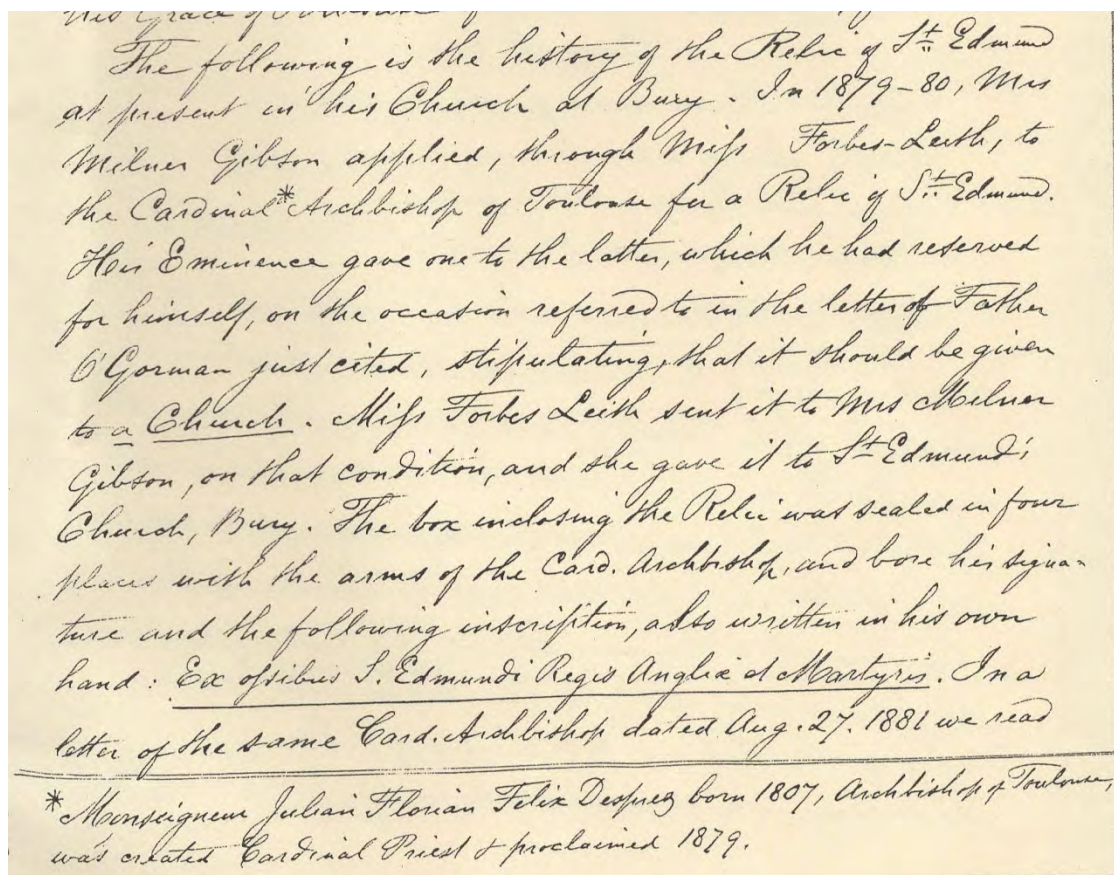
In 2017 currently held vestments and plate were photographed by David Bowden to ensure accuracy of future records and to create a catalogue of such possessions. It was also ascertained that within the East Anglian Diocesan archives is a chalice originating from the Rookwood family of Coldham Hall.

To conclude this Chapter we are left considering the authenticity of the claimed relics of St Edmund and the theories surrounding where his body was laid to rest. First we may be puzzled by the body of St Edmund being revered by pilgrims from across Europe at St Edmund's Abbey, Bury St Edmunds until the dissolution of the Abbey in 1539. If we are to believe the theory that the body of the Saint was taken to Toulouse in 1217 and enshrined there, then it is patently obvious that one or other legend is incorrect. Most disturbing is that between 1217 and 1539 the two shrines were being visited by pilgrims in the belief that his body was present. However, this was not an uncommon situation with the remains and relics of Saints – the reassembly of their mortal remains sometimes produced more body parts than could have existed!

Chapter 1 highlighted the mystery surrounding the disposal of the monstrance that was used for the exposition of the relic of St Edmund. The history regarding the relic which was provided in 1881 is set down in various places within the Jesuits' Commemoranda:

'The Cardinal Archbishop of Toulouse gave it to Miss Forbes Leith for Mrs Milner Gibson in a box sealed by him. Bishop Arthur Riddell took the relic from this box and duly authenticated it on November 1881 so that it was in time to be exposed for St Edmund's feast November 20 of that year'.

The following extract from the Commemoranda reiterates these details:



Fr Lazenby's account is more comprehensive: '... and we learn that the body of St Edmund which according to Jocelyn de Brakelond has been preserved incorrupt from 870 date of his death. It was so discovered at the date of his removal to a new shrine in 1198 by Abbot Sampson. It was stolen from its shrine in 1217 by Prince Louis of France and given to St Sernin's Church, Toulouse. It remained there until 1644. A terrible plague devastated Toulouse from 1628 to 1631, the citizens vowed to place Edmunds remains in a silver shrine if he would obtain the cessation of the plague. At once it ceased but the people could not fulfil their vow until 1644. Then however the whole Archdiocese engaged in the solemnities of the translation which lasted eight days, the relic this (parish Bury St Edmunds now possesses) was extracted from the shrine in Toulouse by Cardinal Archbishop Duprez in 1867 for himself and the Cardinal himself gave it for this church in Bury (see also page 99 this book). The box containing the relic was sealed in four places with the Cardinals's arms. Also inscribed on the box in the Cardinals writing were the words *Ex ossibus St Edmund Regis et Martyre Angliae*'.

The Cardinal Archbishop of Toulouse in 1867 took the relic of St Edmund for himself, also for prior A O’Gorman OSB president of the English College of Douai and Fr O’Gorman enclosed a copy of the authentication of his relic for Fr Lazenby to look at. Fr A O’Gorman’s letter is dated September 21, 1881. Our relic here in Bury is thus closely connected with the Douai one. Bishop Arthur Riddell himself took our relic out of its sealed box and authenticated it and set it in its presence silver reliquary (of silver and gold), it is set on a dark crimson groundwork surrounded by a crown of thorns. The relic is encircled by the Cardinal’s inscription *Ex ossibus St Edmundi Regis et Martyris Angliae*.

The commemoranda states, “It has a monstrance to display it. The whole is enclosed in a stand 25 inches high, surmounted by a small cross. It is richly chased in designs emblematical of martyrdom, and set with emeralds. The base is triangular and bears the medallions, “M”, “X P” and “S J”. While a monstrance is normally reserved for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, the word monstrance is used explicitly as housing the relic.

It is also not known if this was the same relic referred to as having been (privately) carried by Fr Jones through the main street of the town on 9 March 1902 from which he was inclined to believe that no further reported cases of smallpox occurred in Bury St Edmunds (Chapter 1 also refers).

In 1901 a request was made for some of the relics of St Edmund to be transferred from Toulouse via Rome to England with the intention of them being deposited in Westminster Cathedral which was then being built. An assortment of bones was provided but following lengthy media debate these were discredited because they were a mix of male and female bones and it was conceded that they could not have been those of the Saint. These bones remain at Arundel in the custody of the Duke of Norfolk. However, there is still a theory which may one day be tested: The Cathedral of St Sernin had relics of many Saints. At the time of the French Revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries it is contended that various relics were removed for safe keeping which could well account for why bones comprise a mix.

The next epoch in the history of the relics of St Edmund occurred when Fr Houghton managed to obtain two teeth from the relics of St Edmund retained in Toulouse – these were installed at the St Edmund’s Day Mass on 20 November 1969 (as described in Chapter 2, Fr Houghton claimed that the relics comprised three teeth, an error he corrected in a letter in 1987). However, upon the sale of the altar in 2013 there was no trace of the relics although Fr Houghton had previously indicated that he had sent them to Douai.

The relic of St Edmund referred to in Chapter 4 with its authentication of 2006 provided by Fr Hackeson remains in our Church and is exposed on the Saint’s feast day.

The truth must be that no one knows the whereabouts of St Edmund. Excitement exists in Bury St Edmunds in 2020 that after 1000 years since the founding of St Edmund’s Abbey explorations will result in unearthing his body but such hopes must be thin. Whereas in Leicester it was possible to pinpoint the burial of King Richard III and use DNA to verify his remains, in respect of St Edmund the only potential way forward seems to rely on comparing any remains with the claimed relics.

CHAPTER 6 – REMEMBERING THE WAR YEARS

Wartime in our society is often something that occurs without recording its potential future relevance in history. Many of us had relatives who experienced the trauma of war but maintained their silence on the subject. Families thought better than to ask their father or grandfather, “*What did you do in the war, where did you serve, what was it like?*” Only later in life or in the pursuit of family history does the desire emerge to find answers to difficult questions or to unravel facts of local or personal interest.

Throughout the First and Second World Wars the Catholic community of Bury St Edmunds continued to function despite the number of men from the parish who were drawn into service abroad. Surprisingly, little was documented. For example, the St Edmund’s Church register of burials is devoid of any entries for the years 1914 to 1920 and for the years 1922 to 1924. However, to best to discover relevant information, research of the interments at the Borough Cemetery that occurred in these years where a Catholic priest officiated, revealed 41 names that would otherwise have been forgotten in the annals of Church history. The details are not included in this book but are available from the authors.



The work of David Bowden in connection with The War Graves Photographic Project has also proved vital in the construction of this chapter, especially his research of the names of those who appear on the marble war memorial in the Church. This was erected in 1927 following donations that included £14.5.0 from members of the Blessed Sacrament Guild.

The plaque implores: ‘*Remember in prayer the Catholic officers and men of this congregation who gave their lives for us in the Great War 1914-18*’ and identifies those who died. The plaque

was unveiled by Sir Pierce Lacy following mass on 23 October 1928. It was subsequently updated to record those from the parish who died during the hostilities of 1939-45, the work being carried out by Hanchetts, now of Cratfield Road, Bury St Edmunds. Later research indicated misspellings occurred at the time of creating the plaque identifying the incorrect spelling of the names of McMurdo and McMullen.

The First World War saw many soldiers billeted locally and in need of a chaplain. Fr O’Gorman made many unsuccessful requests to General Inglefield commander of Based Anglia Division and to his

staff. He finally abandoned them and asked the War Office to assign a Roman Catholic chaplain for Catholic soldiers of all arms within 10 miles of Bury St Edmunds. The request was granted at once and General Broadwood of Mounted Division was told to appoint Fr O’Gorman’s nominee at a cost of £100. Fr Provincial undertook to find a priest for this appointment. Meanwhile Fr O’Gorman did make some notes of what was happening:

‘1916: A mighty Zeppelin raid took place here on Friday 31st. A large anti-aircraft gun kept blazing at the Zepp which dropped over 35 large explosive bombs in and around the town for 20 minutes. Ten people were killed practically outright and three died a few days later of heart shock. The nearest bomb fell some 400 yards away (below Cullum Road) in a field. The noise, said a soldier from the Gallipoli peninsular, resembled a small battle. Thousands of windows were smashed. I stayed in bed till near its close and then hastily dressed and rushed into the street – just too late to see the Zepp.

This incident relates to the Zeppelin raid so well documented in the book of Gareth Jenkins entitled ‘Zeppelins Over Bury: The Raids on Bury St Edmunds 1915 & 1916’ in which he indicates the probable route of the Zeppelin as entering the town from the area of Barton Hill in a circuit that overflowed Eastgate Street, the Abbey ruins, Westgate Street, Hardwick Lane, skirting what is now Parkway and returning via Tayfen, the Grove Park area, Chalk Lane, King’s Road and from there re-tracing a route similar to that of its entry.

The dropping of 11 incendiary bombs is recorded as occurring in the vicinity of Tayfen/Grove Park and Eastgate Station. A further six Explosive bomb/aerial torpedo attacks took place in Spring Lane, Chalk Lane, Mill Lane and Prussia Lane leading to loss of life, serious injury and the devastation of homes

Fr O’Gorman’s account is interesting in that he specifically makes mention of Cullum Road which does not appear to have been traversed in the route described by Gareth Jenkins. It might either mean that Fr O’Gorman’s version is inaccurate or that somewhere in a field in Cullum Road lies an unexploded bomb. His account continued:

Many houses had to be rebuilt (so shaken were they or even smashed in). For months after this raid the Special Constables created panic by their warnings to expect raids which never came off. We noticed a considerable improvement in piety (till the summer came) as a result of the Raid-Panic. This wore off when Zepps began to be destroyed by our new methods and security seemed to increase. But one result was the decision of good old Mr Harvey to go under instruction and later to Church after nearly 20 years putting it off. He had lost 2 men in the raid, who used to work for him’.



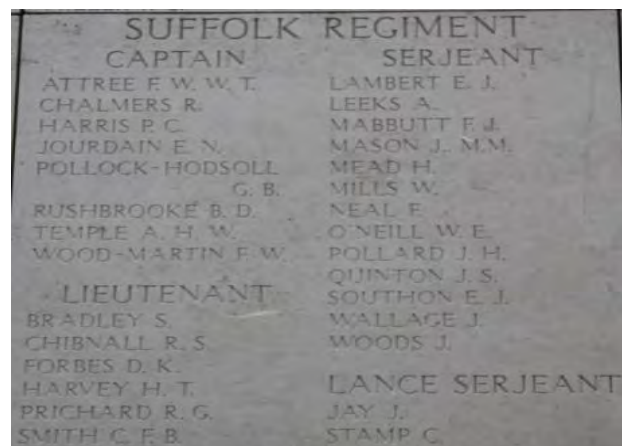
The importance of religion to those in the armed services is demonstrated at various public services, ceremonial occasions and through the sterling work of the chaplaincy. For the individual, belief and prayer are strengths that insulate against fear. Although few examples of artefacts remain, the Suffolk Regiment Museum in Bury St Edmunds has amongst its exhibits a home-made rosary used by an officer during World

War I. The rosary was made from an old necklace with cardboard dividers cut from a Woodbines cigarette packet.



While the words *'Of your charity pray for the soul of Lieut Harry Thomas Harvey who fell in action at Ypres July 31, 1917. RIP'* are self-explanatory, the history of the Lady Altar tells a greater story.

Harry Thomas Harvey was born in the town in 1892 and became a young lieutenant in 1/5th Battalion Suffolk Regiment attached to 23 Company Machine Gun Corps (Infantry). He took part in the 3rd Battle of Ypres as part of 8 Division and was killed in 1917 at either Pilkem Ridge (31 July/1 August) or Westhoek (31 July).



No known grave exists but he is remembered on panel 21 of the Menin Gate Memorial at Ypres.

Harry Harvey was the son of Henry Francis and Caroline Elizabeth Harvey (nee Pierce) of 5 Brentgovel Street (subsequently Boot's Opticians), Bury St Edmunds. Church records show that he was baptised in St Edmunds on 14 December 1892 and had two younger sisters May Caroline and Daisy Agnes.

In 1919 Henry Harvey approached Fr O'Gorman to raise subscriptions for an altar dedicated to the Sacred Heart in memory of his son but this was rejected because funding was required for a new hall in the Crypt. Mr Harvey, a local fishmonger and game dealer therefore took it upon himself to provide the altar, made by James and Willis of London of marble and costing £600 (equivalent in 2017 to £7,000), in memory of his son. Beautifully adorned with flowers, the first two masses were said at the altar on 7 March 1921.

The Misses Harvey that year also donated six fine candlesticks and the later stage hangings for the altar. It is apparent from the other locations within the Church of the mention of Lt Harvey that his loss to his family was deeply felt.

On 28 July 2017, 100 years after Harry Thomas Harvey's death, Mass was celebrated by Fr Mark Hackeson at the altar in memory of all who had died in World War 1, the service being concelebrated with Fr Bill Mason and Fr (Peter) Sok Na who had only that week arrived from Cambodia for 3 months. It was a reminder that atrocities across the world continue and the importance of our prayers for peace and to comfort those affected by conflict.



It was an occasion when vestments donated by Sir Pierce Lacy that had not been seen for many years were worn. During the poignant service the names of those on the narthex plaque were read out. Work in moving Church furniture to allow for the service was appreciated by over 30 parishioners who attended.

Fr Mark and David Bowden continued their weekend by both going to Passchendaele for ceremonies to honour those killed in battle there.

On 22 October 1939, with the outbreak of the Second World War, the future of St Edmund's Social Club, held in the Crypt, was discussed. The Chairman Mr Miller reported that he had approached the police authorities with a view to restarting the usual activities but their consent was not granted for the time being. In view of this and coupled with the fact that certain members of the committee had extra calls made upon them as a result of the war which prevented them from giving the necessary time to the running of the Club, it was agreed that the only option was to hand Canon Garnett all the cash (£12.10s 0d) standing to the credit of the Club and to temporarily close down.

However, on 6 November 1939 it was announced that through the kind action of Lieutenant Head it had been possible to obtain permission from the police to reopen the Hall subject to black-out conditions being observed. The Club was to be restarted immediately, primarily in the interest of the Catholic members of H M Forces stationed in and near Bury. In consequence, although he was not at the meeting, Lieutenant Head was elected Chairman of the Club with Corporal King deputising in his absence. Due to military commitments, these appointments did not materialise and Mr Pierre remained Club Chairman. It was the beginning of an era when the social events took into account the needs of servicemen with nightly events and dances taking place and subsidised admission costs being granted to the troops. Life at the Club continued with the register of members (Catholic and Non-Catholic) from 12 November 1939 listing around 152 names.

It was proposed that comforts made by members of the club be given to those serving in H M Forces. The term 'comforts' perhaps needs explanation – on 10 November 1940 Miss Neary reported that 63 pairs of gloves and socks had been given to the troops up to date. It was also decided to give a Christmas party to members of H M Forces and evacuee children, on similar lines to the one given the previous year.

The activity in 1940/41 to provide comforts for the troops saw members and their friends busily knitting from wool supplied by the Club. Whilst it might seem that this labour of love was somewhat unnecessarily added to by a register showing every pair of socks or gloves knitted, it is once again, a useful insight into history and the names of those who participated in this charitable act and, perhaps more interestingly, the name of each recipient. The registers can be viewed at the Suffolk Records Office.

The East Anglian Guild Magazine was a valuable source of historic information but as reported in No 1, Vol 13, issued spring 1943 its existence was threatened because of sanctions that limited production to only 6% of pre-war paper supplies.

The magazine's edition No 5, Vol 13, issued spring 1944 considered the implications of post-war planning and conveyed a somewhat evangelical message ... *'In the first place we see that East Anglia is a sparsely populated district, the inhabitants for the most part living in the innumerable villages and small towns with populations up to 4,000; in the three counties there are only 15 towns with a population over 5,000 and the total permanent population of the area is approximately 1,100,000; assuming the percentage of Catholics at 1%, we number 11,000. The problem then is how we can best give our own people the facilities to practice their religion, and the best method of approach to the 99% without the "one, true fold."* Let us be under no illusion as to our responsibilities in regard to those in the latter category, the first object of the Guild is the *"re-conversion of East Anglia to the ancient Faith ..."*

Financial aid was important and on 16 March 1944 St Edmund's Catholic Social Club arranged a dance at the Bury Corn Exchange in aid of the British Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund. This attracted around 500 people and the amount sent to the fund was £137 2s11d. Several items were raffled, and the tickets were drawn and prizes given away by a junior girl of St Louis Convent.

According to the East Anglian Guild Magazine No 9, Vol 13, issued spring 1945, on 4 December 1944 the Sisters of St Louis Convent arranged a fancy dress party for the children which was held in the Corn Exchange, Bury, in aid of the Bishop's new War Orphanage; when it was over, an American Band (The Flying Yanks) played music for a public dance which realised £85, and a cheque for the amount was sent to the Bishop.

On 16 March 1945 the Catholic Social Club held a very successful dance in aid of the British Red Cross Prisoners of War Fund. A grand total of £140 8s 10d was raised, and a cheque for the amount handed to the Fund's Secretary.

The influx of American forces to the County of Suffolk during the Second World War was immense – at one stage one in every seven people in the County was American. Between 1943 and 1945 their forces were based at Rougham Airfield. Their Chaplain was Major Joseph N Collins who was known to all as Fr Joe.

Fr Joe's role was one that should not be underrated. At that time the separation of airmen from their families, the young ages of those serving, the loss of life in conflict, the psychological effects of not knowing what tomorrow would bring were amongst the challenges facing the Eighth Air Force personnel. Post-traumatic stress disorder was not then a recognised condition and the Chaplain multi-tasked as counsellor, spiritual adviser and a shoulder to lean on.



Fr Joe's role brought him into close contact with local Catholic parishioners and it is apparent that he formed a close working relationship with the two priests at the Church of St Edmund King and Martyr in Bury St Edmunds (Fr Frederick Lockyer and his curate Fr Anthony Throckmorton).

The bond between the Bury priests and Fr Joe (pictured) was incredibly strong. When the time came for Joseph to depart for France and Germany (post-occupation) in

1945, Frs Lockyer and Throckmorton presented him with the chalice and paten as a gift for his service to the community at St Edmund's Church.

S. Edmund's Presbytery,
21, Westgate Street,
Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk.
.....

To: The Revd. J. Collins,
6th. Station Complement Squadron,
94th. Bombardment Group,
A.P.O. 559. E.T.O.
.....

Easter, 1945.

Dear Father Collins,
On behalf of the Clergy and laity of St. Edmund's,
we offer you our best wishes for 'gaudia paschalia'.
As an earnest of our regard we ask you to accept the accompanying
chalice and paten.
The chalice is of about the year 1600, and is of Spanish-Flemish
work; it certainly was in use before the Pilgrim Fathers set out
westward - the paten is newly made to correspond with the old work.
In begging you to accept this we wish to mark our keen appreciation
of your kindly interest in our ancient, if poor parish, and the
generous help the personnel of Rougham have so cheerfully given.
We wore the new vestments bought from their offerings this morning,
and the congregation was told how we came by them.
We feel that your men will take the tribute to you, as including
themselves.
May it be for you a real 'Parvum non parvae pignus amicitiae', and
in long years to come remind you of your sojourn in the land of
St. Edmund, King and Martyr,

With renewed felicitations, Yours sincerely in Christ,
F. W. Lockyer
Anthony Throckmorton.

P.S. When the chalice had been restored, it was re-consecrated
by Bishop Mathew of Westminster, with the paten.

In 1984 Fr Joe died and his nephew Bill Christie came into possession of the chalice and paten and generously decided that it should be gifted back to St Edmund's Church.

On 17 September 2018 Bill and his wife Maryann made a visit to Bury St Edmunds where they were able to see our Chapel which was founded by the Jesuit priests in 1762 and the Church which was built in 1837. They were struck by the beauty and history of what they saw. They were also able to visit Rougham and step back into the former Forces' Chapel, now a store-shed, where Fr Joe would have said Mass.



Bill and Maryann Christie handing to Fr Alvan the chalice and paten referred to in Chapter 3, etching an important occasion in our parish history.

The East Anglian Guild Magazine No 1, Vol 14, issued spring 1946 indicated that the Ex-Servicemen's Catholic Association was intending to give its final 'welcome home' dinner to Catholic servicemen and women. During the war it had collected £806 and dispatched 2,647 comforts to Catholic personnel in the Forces.

Whilst the above commentary is of a general nature in showing life during the Wars, David Bowden's research registers the local connection and the harsh reality of the effects on our parish.

Henry Frederick Hugh Clifford DSO was Brigadier General having been born 13 August 1867 in London. He served on the General Staff of the British Expeditionary Force, commanding 149 Brigade, late of the Suffolk Regiment.

His death occurred on 11 September 1916 at the age of 49 years. He was shot by a sniper from Delville Wood whilst inspecting recently dug advanced assembly trenches as part of the battle of the Somme.

He is buried at Albert Communal Cemetery Extension, plot 1, section L, grave 1.

He was the second son of Major General the Honourable Sir Henry Hugh Clifford VC, KCMG, CB and Josephine Elizabeth Anstie. He was the seventh child of eight, having 5 sisters and 2 brothers. He served with the 2nd Battalion of the Suffolk Regiment in the Boer War in 1899 and 1902 as Lieutenant Colonel and Brevet Colonel. He also commanded the Battalion from the outbreak of war before joining the General Staff in 1915.

During World War I he was wounded in the right arm on 5 May 1915 at Vierstraat but remained in command. He was also mentioned in despatches and awarded the DSO and the Order of St Stanislaus of Russia (3rd Class). On 25 May he left the Battalion for home leave, returning on the 9 June and then finally left the Battalion to take command of 149th Brigade on 28 June 1915. He was gazetted temporary Brigadier in August the same year.



James Vivian Reynell De Castro was born in Torquay on 19 May 1891 and held the rank of Captain of the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion Suffolk Regiment, having been appointed on 2 September 1914 and attached to 2nd Battalion on 28 January 1915, arriving at La Clytte (Belgium) on 4 February as a 2nd Lieutenant.

He died 1 October 1915, aged 24 years and is buried at Bedford House Cemetery, West Vlaanderen, Belgium, near Ypres, enclosure 4XV row B, grave 3. 'Requiscat in Pace' is inscribed at the foot of the headstone.

He was the son of Major James A and Mrs de Castro of

Collingwood, 20 Whiting Street, Bury St Edmunds.

The 3rd Battalion was based in Felixstowe for the whole of the war. The first draft was sent to France on 6 August 1914. At the outbreak of war James was in Turin working for an American car company, but immediately returned home. On 9 June 1915, with three fellow officers he went to GHQ near Poperinghe to be 'experimentally gassed'. He was involved in the aftermath of a mine detonation on 19th July and defended the crater at Hooge. The Battalion War Diary states 'Good work done by Lieutenant de Castro'. On 30 September, now a Captain, he was defending the western edge of the crater and under heavy machine gun fire cut the barbed wire which was hindering the advance. He was recommended for the Military Cross in July 1915 and the Victoria Cross in September, neither of which was confirmed.



Charles D'arcy Edmund Wentworth Reeve



Born 5 September 1894 at Ousden, Charles D'arcy Edmund Wentworth Reeve was 2nd Lieutenant, Temporary Captain and Flight Commander from 1 May 1916. Serving in the Suffolk Regiment, he was attached to the Royal Flying Corps, being commissioned 17 March 1915.

He died 18 July 1916 at the age of 21 years and is buried in the family grave at St Peter's churchyard, Great Livermere.

He was the son of Mr C S and Mrs Beatrice Wentworth Reeve of Thorpe Satchville, Melton Mowbray and Livermere Park, Bury St Edmunds. He obtained his aviator's certificate on 24 April 1915 at Farnborough and was posted to Loos in August before moving to Ypres. He had the reputation of being an excellent night-pilot. He was invalided home from France in September 1915 and killed whilst flying at Hounslow. The Royal Flying Corps brought his body to Bury St Edmunds for a Requiem Mass before burial at Livermere with full Military Honours. The Last Post was provided by a bugler of the Suffolk Regiment.

Hugo Charles Meynell (Meynall) was born in 1889 at Paddington, London. He was 2nd Lieutenant in the 12th (Reserve) Battalion Essex Regiment. He died of wounds on 27 September 1915 aged 26 years. He is buried in Bethune Town Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France in section 11, row J, grave 7.

At the foot of his headstone are the words 'Jesus mercy, Mary help. R I P'

He was the son of Hugo Thomas and Mary Julia Meynall of 43 Old Elvet, Durham and his name appears in the 1911 census as residing in Newmarket.

He was transferred to the 11th Battalion in April 1915 and was possibly wounded at the battle of Loos where the Battalion were in the reserves for the battle. They took the German second line defences at Chalk Pit as part of 71st Brigade. In the battle the Battalion casualties amounted to 371 including 18 officers, one being Hugo.

The 12th Battalion was based at Harwich from 10 April 1915 to 1 September 1916 after which it became part of 6th Reserve Brigade.



William Ernest Seal. Born in 1889 at Aldershot, Hampshire, he was a resident of Bury St Edmunds. He was Sergeant (Service number 6829) in the 2nd Battalion Suffolk Regiment, serving with the Battalion in 1911 and stationed at Aldershot.



His death came on 30 September 1915 at the age of 26 years.

He is buried in Perth Cemetery (China Wall) Ypres in section XII, row A, grave 6.

Inscribed at the base of his headstone is the reminder, 'He made the great sacrifice'.

He was the son of Ernest and Julia Seal of 141 Lansdowne Road, Seven Kings, Ilford, Essex.

The Battalion was part of 8th Brigade in 3rd Division between 25 October 1914 and 22 October 1915, which took part in the battle for Loos (Bellewaade).

From the Battalion War Diary it appears that he was serving under Captain de Castro at Hooge defending the western edge of the crater when he was killed.

Edward Longdon McMurdo was born in 1874 in Edgbaston but lived locally. Serving as Staff Sergeant (Service number 41) he was a member of the 54(1/1 East Anglian) Casualty Clearing Station, Royal Army Medical Corps.

Records show that he was lost at sea on 13 August 1915 aged 41 years.

Although there is no known grave, he is remembered on the Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey. panel 199 and 200 or 236 to 239 and 328 - the spelling of his name is shown as McMurdo.

54 Clearing Station was part of 54 (East Anglian) Division which departed for Gallipoli between 14 and 19 July 1915 and landed at Suvla Bay between 10 and 15 August.

Edward worked for the Royal Liverpool Insurance Society and lived in Fornham All Saints at the time of his enlistment.

Nearly all Medical Unit records were destroyed soon after the end of hostilities so little is known about his wartime activities.

Robert Charles McMullen was born in 1884. He was a Sergeant (Service number 8635) in the 2nd Battalion Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry.



On 27 September 1918 at the age of 34 years, two days before the War ended he died of malaria. He is buried at Karasouli Military Cemetery, Greece. Grave D 914 shows the spelling of his name as McMullen.

He was the only son of Mrs S A Broughton (formerly McMullen) of 1 Short Brackland, Bury St Edmunds and the late Corporal P Mc Mullen. He was serving in South Africa before the war

started in 1914. The Regiment embarked for Salonika in 1915 and served on the Dorian Front as part of 82nd Brigade of 27th Division of XVI Corps commanded by Lt Gen Charles James Bridge. He took part in various actions against the Bulgarian Army until his death.



Francis Joseph Floyd was born 8 November 1888 and baptised at St Edmund's Church ten days later. He was a Sergeant (Service number 97107) in the Royal Army Medical Corps, 49 General Hospital.

He died on 5 January 1919 aged 30 years and is buried at Mika British Cemetery, Kalamaria, Greece in grave 1184.

Francis was the son of Mr and Mrs Arthur James Floyd of 68 Whiting Street and husband of Edith Jesse Floyd (married 19 August 1916) of 14 Hatter Street, Bury St Edmunds. His father was Church organist. Francis was a chemist and signed up in December 1915. In May 1916 he was called up and posted to the Suffolk Regiment with a Service Number of 29264. He later transferred to the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Nearly all Medical Unit records were destroyed soon after the end of hostilities so little is known about the wartime activities of Francis.

Nelson Godfrey Dutton. He was born in 1897 in Bury and enlisted in the Suffolk Yeomanry at Culford (Service number 225 which became 320284 when the regiment was re-designated 15th (Suffolk Yeomanry) Battalion, Suffolk Regiment in 1917. He was a Private who was killed in action during 3rd battle of Gaza on 6 November 1917 at the age of 20 years. He is buried in grave M48 at Beersheba War Cemetery, Israel.

Nelson was the son of James and Louisa Elizabeth Dutton of Castle Hotel, 39 Cornhill, Bury St Edmunds and worked in the hotel as a gentlemen's servant.

The Regiment was formed in Egypt in January 1917 from dismounted Yeomanry Regiments as part of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and came under the command of 230th Brigade in 74th (Yeomanry) Division.



Amos Jack Hargrave was born in Bury St Edmunds on 20 November 1893 and baptised at St Edmund's Church on 5 February 1894.

He joined the 1/5th Battalion Suffolk Regiment and served as a Private (Service number 2291).

His death occurred on 21 August 1915 at the age of 22 years.

Although there is no known grave, he is remembered on Helles Memorial, Gallipoli, Turkey, panel 46/47. Sadly the ravages of time have made the panel shown in the photograph virtually illegible unless large scale viewing is used. However the Commission is embarking on a long term project to replace all the First World War headstones.

Amos was the son of Henry and Catherine Hargrave. He lived at 30 College Street, Bury St Edmunds in 1911.

The Regiment was part of 163rd (Norfolk and Suffolk) Brigade formed in Bury St Edmunds in August 1914, and 54th (East Anglian) Division. On 30 July 1915 they embarked at Liverpool on HMT 'Aquitania', with a complement of 290 Officers and 978 other ranks for Sulva Bay via Mudros and arrived on 10 August landing on 'A' beach near Kiretch Tepe Sirt. On 18 August they moved into reserve trenches but were under constant shelling and sniper fire. They were carrying out improvements to existing trenches and dugouts. Conditions were very difficult due to the heat, steep ground and lack of water. The daily allowance was 1 pint per day for all purposes. It was possible to cool off in the sea but that required a 400 feet climb each way. He was declared missing in action on 21 August 1915, by which time the Battalion complement was 12 Officers and 499 other ranks.

Cecil Jack Walton Boone. Having been born on 13 June 1920, he was another to have been baptised in St Edmund's Church, this occurring on 7 November 1920.

He attained the rank of Warrant Officer (Pilot) (Service number 1162710) in 166 Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, Part of No 1 Bomber Group.

He died 2 September 1943 aged 23 years. He is buried in the War Grave Section at Bury St Edmunds Cemetery, compartment 56, grave 141.

The inscription at the foot of his headstone reads 'One of our pilots is safe'.

He was the son of Jack and Olive Emily Boone (nee Proctor) of 112 Kings Road, Bury St Edmunds. He had married his wife Olive Boone (nee Booth) of Moreton Hall at St Edmund's church on 13 May 1943, tragically only five months before his death.

He was based at Kirkmington Airfield in Lincolnshire (now known as Humberside International Airport) about 6 miles north east of Brigg and 11 miles north-west of Grimsby. He piloted the Wellington MkIII bomber AS-J ED875. His death was registered at Caistor, Lincolnshire.



Herbert John Cahill was born 27 November 1907 and baptised at St Edmund's Church on 11 February 1908.

He served as Gunner (Service number 1733787) in 181(M) HAA Regiment, Royal Artillery. He died on 31 December 1943 aged 36 years.

He is buried in the War Grave Section Bury St Edmunds Cemetery, compartment 56, grave 140. The inscription at the foot of his headstone reads 'Deep in our hearts a memory is kept of a son we loved and can never forget', words that portrayed the depth of love of his parents Charles and Anne Cahill of 46 Chalk Road, Bury St Edmunds.

The Regiment was formed in October 1942 and disbanded in March 1945. No Regimental records survive.



Reginald Edmund Defew was born in Singapore on 27 February 1914 and baptised at St Edmund's Church on 1 December 1917.

A Lance Sergeant (Service number 5832558), he served with the 1st Battalion Cambridgeshire Regiment as a member of B Company having enlisted on 20 June 1940.

He died on 15 February 1942 aged 27 years. No known grave exists although he is remembered on Singapore Memorial at Kranji, column 57.

THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE REGIMENT	
WARRANT OFFICER	PRIVATE
CANT A	ALISTON A
COY QMR SGT	AINOTT FCM
WATLING H	ANDREWS C
SERGEANT	ARNDL R
AUSTIN RGC	AVERY F W
BURRELL LG	AYLOTT E J
CLARY CE	BAKER W
EVERARD J W	BALDWIN A W
HOLLAND P I	BARRETT A A
HOLYHEAD W	BARTON H J
KNEUSS P C	BATEMAN H E
LONG H W	BAXTER A E
PORTER C A	BAXTER C H
RANSOME E D	BEARD E A
SMITH R J	BELL J
WRIGHT H G	BELL R I
LCE. SERJEANT	BENNETT A D
DEFEW R E	BIRD D A
KELETT M J	BLAIR W
PRESTON W C H	BLOOMFIELD
SMITH F	BLUNDEN C P
SPINKS R W	BOLDEN J A
WENN G W	BREWSTER J W
CORPORAL	BROOKES J W
ABRAHAM G F	BROWN A W
ASHMAN S G	BROWN S H A
BUNNING S T	BROWN W
	BUCK G A
	BUNKALL J A

On 24 September 1938 he married Muriel Ettie Defew (nee Cross) at St Edmund's Church. Before enlisting, he lived at 60 Cannon Street and was a grocery manager. His parents were William and Jane Defew.

In late 1941, along with the 2nd Battalion, as part of 18th (East Anglian) Division he embarked for the Middle East. However, whilst at sea Japan entered the War and he and his colleagues were diverted to the Far East. The

1st Battalion landed in India, but after a very brief stay they travelled to Singapore. They arrived on 29 January 1942 in time to take part in the final battle of Singapore. The Battalion moved in to the line on 4 February and dug in around Sime Road Camp, close to the MacRitichie Reservoir. It held its position against constant attacks by large numbers of infantry and tanks, being surrounded for 2 days but was unbroken. When the order to surrender was given the Battalion was possibly the last to lay down their arms. Reginald was killed in the Bukit Timah area of Singapore.

Francis Thomas Gladwell. Born on 19 February 1920 in Myanmar it was not until 22 March 1922 that he was baptised at St Edmund's Church.



He was a Private (Service number 5828483) in the 5th Battalion Suffolk Regiment D Company.

Dying on 25 August 1943 aged 23 years, he was buried at Thanbyuzayat War Cemetery, Yangoon, Myanmar, section B3, grave G5.

Before joining up he was a metal machinist. He was the son of Alfred and Maria Gladwell of 2 Chalk Lane, Bury St Edmunds. According to Battalion records his father lived at 13 Springfield Avenue.

Francis served with the Battalion as part of 54 Infantry Brigade, 18th Division which embarked at Liverpool on 27 October 1941 for service in the Middle East. The route was across the Atlantic to Nova Scotia, down the west coast of

America and across the Caribbean to Trinidad. From there they crossed the Atlantic again, to Cape Town arriving on 9 December. By then Pearl Harbour had been bombed and as a result they were sent to Singapore, via India, arriving on 29 January 1942. When Singapore surrendered, he became a prisoner of war on 15 February 1942 and died of diarrhoea at Nicki working on the Burma Railway. The Battalion strength on arriving in Singapore was 979 Officers and men. During the defence of Singapore 35 were recorded as killed in action or missing with a further two dying of wounds. 289 died as prisoners of war, 14 went missing at sea, three died after release, one went missing after release, one died on USS Wakefield, and for one other no information is available.

Jack Denis Thompson. It is believed that he was born around 1920. Variations occur in the spelling of his forename of Denis/Dennis.

He joined the 75 (NZ) Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, part of No 3 Bomber Group where he served as Sergeant (Wireless operator/air gunner) (Service number 1152206).

His death on 7 November 1941 occurred when he was aged 21 years. He is buried at Bergan-op-Zoom Canadian War Cemetery, Noord-Brabant, Netherlands in a collective grave 8H 3-7.

His headstone bears the words of a grieving family: 'Treasured memories of a dear only son and brother. At rest. God knows best'. His parents were Ernest



Alfred and Edith Ellen Beatrice Thompson of Ipswich. He was also remembered on a memorial at Cranfield's Mill, Ipswich which has since been demolished.

He died in bad weather on a bombing raid on Berlin from RAF Feltwell. He was in one of two Wellingtons in the squadron lost that night.



Karel (Charles) Valach highlights the contribution made by those from outside the United Kingdom. He was born on 26 January 1918 at Kroměříž, Czech Republic and joined 311 (Czech) Squadron, Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve, serving as Flight Sergeant (Air Gunner) (Service number 787551).

He was the husband of Doreen Francesca Valach (nee Todd) of Langton House, Bury St Edmunds whom he married in St Edmund's Church on 10 December 1940.

At the age of 23 years, his death came on 23 June 1941 only six months after marriage.

No known grave exists but his name is remembered on the RAF Runnymede Memorial, panel 37.

He was one of the gunners on Wellington bomber Serial number KX-T T2990 flying from East Wretham airfield, Norfolk. They took off at 2316 hours on 22 June 1941 on a bombing mission to Bremen and it is believed they were shot down by Ob Lt Prinz zur Lippe Weissenfeld of 4/NSGI. The plane crashed about 0213 hours on 23 June at Nieuwe Niedorp north-east of Alkmaar in the Netherlands. The pilot, Flight Sergeant Vilen Bufka bailed out and was taken prisoner. The rest of the crew, including Karel, were reported missing. They were Pilot Officer Leonhart Smrek, Flight Sergeant Alois Rozum and Sergeant Jan Hejna. The plane hit the ground with so much force that it was buried to a depth that made it impossible to recover the bodies. The spot is marked by a small enclosure with a marble cross and plaque.



Earlier mention was made on the spelling of names. The names used above are those listed in The Commonwealth War Graves Commission's official listings. The War Memorial spellings are shown in brackets where different.

On Wednesday 11 November 2015 a poignant hour of reflection, readings and music held in St Edmund's Church commemorated Remembrance Day. In particular the performance of 'The Christmas Truce' by pupils from St Louis School was deeply moving. Organised by Francis Watts, who was unfortunately unable to attend the evening due to illness which sadly led to his death, it brought together those of all ages to remember the fallen and included the reading out of the names of those on the Church memorial.

CHAPTER 7 – CATHOLICISM AROUND BURY ST EDMUNDS

The work of the History Group in this booklet has concentrated on the history of St Edmund's Church, Bury St Edmunds but it is worthwhile viewing this in the context of Catholicism around the locality. That said, to produce an all-encompassing chronicle would exceed the Group's remit, time and effort and would perhaps repeat what can be easily read elsewhere, especially in the excellent works of the local historians Joy Rowe and Francis Young.

Recusancy and suppression around Bury St Edmunds

A recusant was an English Roman Catholic in the period 1560 to 1791 who refused to attend services of the Church of England and thereby committed a statutory offence. This did not necessarily mean that they were rebellious to the State – it included people who did not attend for a variety of reasons but who rejected the Oaths of Supremacy and Uniformity.

Suppression of recusants was used by the State as a way of keeping them in check – imprisonment; heavy fines on those who could not afford to pay impoverished them and denied them the money that would be required for them to go abroad to train for the ministry; sequestration of the land of the rich often resulted in the land being rented back to them. At different times they were not allowed to be a doctor, member of parliament, member of the armed forces, own a horse or attend the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge.

The effects of the Protestant Reformation were experienced in England following the excommunication of King Henry VIII and across Europe with the spread of Lutheranism. In 1561 Bishop Parkhurst of Norwich in the course of his Diocesan Visitation required that all symbols of the Popish Mass should be removed – no longer was it acceptable to have altars decorated, tabernacles, vestments, rosary beads, holy water stoops, Catholic service books, statues. Most importantly, information was required on those who contravened the Acts of Uniformity.

Among the earliest recusants were the Rookwoods of Stanningfield and their cousins at Euston. Robert Rookwood of Stanningfield eventually made some attempt at a show of conformity, attending Lawshall parish Church, but declining to receive communion. His wife Elizabeth Heigham, the daughter of old Clement Heigham, was more stubborn still and did not even come to church at all.

At one end was Elizabeth Rookwood, refusing altogether to attend Church. Her husband Robert, came to Church but did not receive communion. There are stories of Catholics putting wax in their ears, ostentatiously fingering rosaries or playing cards during sermons. These individuals were either 'Church papists', Catholics who regularly attended Church or 'occasional conformists' who attended Church just enough times to avoid incurring penalties or whenever the authorities were looking.

Recusant families amongst the local gentry included the Bedingfelds who lived in Suffolk at Bedingfield and at Oxburgh Hall and Quidenham in Norfolk, and the Rookwoods of Stanningfield and Euston. Their connections with the Duke of Norfolk who owned land at Fornham All Saints ensured that there were local Catholic connections functioning at a high social level.

Other recusants included members of the Savage family of Long Melford, the Bond family at Bury St Edmunds (Sir Thomas Bond was H M Comptroller of the Hengrave Household) and the Tyldesley family of Fornham St Genevieve (a staunch Lancastrian Catholic family who moved to the area).

There were other notable people who criss-crossed between Catholicism and Protestantism including the Drury family of Lawshall who married into the Rookwood family. The Jermyns of Rushbrooke (Sir Thomas Jermyn subsequently became Member of Parliament for Bury St Edmunds) also fell into this category.

A family named Short, renowned as pharmacists, maintained a chapel in their home in Risbygate Street. Around 1691 they endowed a secular mission in Bury St Edmunds served by Hugh Owen who remained the only priest in the town until 1731 when Alexius Jones, a Benedictine became chaplain to the Bond family in Eastgate Street (many years later their home was ultimately demolished under a road-widening scheme). Fr Hugh Owen carried out his ministry in local hostelrys including the Greyhound Inn (which later became the Suffolk Hotel and is now Edinburgh Woollen Mill), the Angel Hotel on Angel Hill and Hannibal's coffee house. Also in the area at this time was another Benedictine, Dom Francis Howard.

At a more local level recusants included 'everyday' people who maintained a belief in and commitment to Catholicism.

The clergy who served those who sought to remain faithful to Catholicism during times of suppression often did so at great risk to themselves and those who hid them. To avoid detection, many of them travelled to and from the Continent or when in England remained mobile by riding to places of worship, some of which provided them with the refuge of priests' holes, for example at Oxburgh and Coldham Halls. However, there were some families who maintained a resident chaplain, examples being the Rookwoods and the Shorts.

Hengrave Hall and the Gage Family



It is not intended in this booklet to detail the full history of Hengrave Hall or its occupants but the building and members of the Gage family have great significance to Catholicism and the following summary may inspire an enquirer to greater research.

In 1538 Sir Thomas Kytson completed the building of the present Hengrave Hall using materials from the former priories of Burwell, Ixworth and Thetford.

His offspring included Thomas Kytson (junior) who in turn had two daughters, one of whom, Mary Kytson, inherited Hengrave Hall upon his death in 1540. In 1583 she married Thomas Darcy 1st Earl Rivers from Essex and their second daughter Penelope Darcy was born in 1593.

Penelope Darcy was simultaneously courted by Sir George Trenchard, Sir John Gage (the 1st Baronet of the Gage family of Firle, Sussex) and Sir William Hervey (of Ickworth). Whether in jest or by desire she told them that they would each have to wait their turn, a pronouncement that came true as she married each, one after the other! Her marriage to Sir John Gage produced nine children before he died in 1633. She became regarded as the female head of the families at Hengrave in which she resided from 1640 and the domain at Firle.

Through her family and social connections Penelope Darcy maintained her connections across the upper echelon of society, including her son-in-law Sir Francis Petre 1st Baronet of Cranham, Essex who had married Elizabeth Gage and was the founder in 1633 of the Jesuit College of the Holy Apostles at Norwich. It is apparent that members of the Petre family were granted refuge at Hengrave at intervals between 1640 and 1650.

In 1643 the county's High Sheriff and 30 officers, on the orders of the State, conducted a search at Hengrave Hall and seized a cache of weapons. Penelope denied any criminal intent and contended that some guns were antique, but it was believed that some of the recusants were in possession of arms. Attempts were made to sequester Hengrave Hall from Penelope Gage who was a convicted recusant but as the house was actually owned by her mother Mary, Countess Rivers, it was not achievable in law.

Amongst the offspring of Penelope Darcy and Sir John Gage was Thomas Gage who inherited the Baronetcy of Firle, Sussex. Penelope died in 1644 whereupon Edward Gage, her grandson, took on the running of Hengrave Hall, later becoming 1st Baronet of Hengrave in 1662.

Edward Gage was active in the arena of marriage, acquiring five wives and producing 12 children. His wives included key Protestants – Mary Hervey of Ickworth (the daughter of Penelope Darcy's third husband Sir William Hervey), Frances Aston of Staffordshire and one of the Feildings of Warwickshire. The wealth and standing of Edward Gage increased to the extent that he was the richest Suffolk Catholic with properties and land scattered across the west of Suffolk and premises in London, a house in Southampton Square, London (now known as Bloomsbury Square), St Saviours Hospital in Fornham Road and places that had formerly been part of the Abbey, as well as a large house in Northgate Street in Bury St Edmunds which has since been sub-divided and serves as the Farmers' Club. However, this was not without personal issues – his chaplain was arrested, Lord Aston (his father-in-law) was incarcerated in the Tower of London and his son was forced to leave the Country. He appeared at the Quarter Sessions at Bury St Edmunds in 1674 as an alleged recusant, a situation that was to again be publicised in 1681 when he and his brothers Henry Gage and John Gage were listed as reputed Suffolk Papists. He adopted a lower profile and in 1690 he disposed of his wealth to his son and took on religious study and writing using them to persuade people to convert. He died in 1707 by which time the Catholic mission was very much being steered from the Rookwoods' home at Coldham Hall.

Links with the continent were established and the French mother-in-law of Edward William Gage was permitted to live at Hengrave Hall between 1675 and 1696 when she died.

In 1716 the 2nd Baronet Sir William Gage was affected by the laws that provided hardship for Catholics, obliging him to mortgage Hengrave and entrusting the management of his land to Edmund Howard.

In 1718 John Gage married Elizabeth Rookwood, this being recorded by Fr Hugh Owen on a marriage certificate which is amongst the earliest known to have taken place at the Bury mission. This brought together the two richest and most prominent Catholic families in the area, particularly as Elizabeth was the heiress of the Rookwoods of Stanningfield and she also inherited the estate of her mother Tamworth Martin of Long Melford. By this time the family adopted the surname of Rookwood-Gage.

Catholic worship in the area of Bury St Edmunds was supported around 1730 by two Benedictine monks Dom Francis Howard and Dom Alexius Jones, who worked in conjunction with a secular priest, Fr Hugh Owen (who is likely to have been the same priest, mentioned in the previous section, who served the Short family). The Gage family was instrumental in the survival of this which lasted until the monks died.

The first greengage is reputed to have been produced at Hengrave Hall. Historians and botanists have never reliably come to a conclusion on this but give the credit to Sir William Gage for growing the fruit. Some schools of thought consider that around 1724, John Gage sent plum trees from France to his brother at Hengrave and that because the labels on them had detached, they were named as greengages. Others contend that the plants were imported to the Gage family at Firle and were therefore unconnected with Hengrave. The different Baronetcies of the name Gage make it hard to establish fact, Sir William Gage 7th Baronet of Firle lived between 1695 and 1744; Sir William Gage 2nd Baronet of the Rookwood-Gage Baronetcy lived from 1651 to 1727; Sir William Gage 4th Baronet of the Rookwood-Gage Baronetcy lived from 1712 to 1767. Therefore any one of these having the forename of William might lay claim to the discovery and naming of the greengage, as could any of the brothers of Fr John Gage. However, the likelihood of the fruit being sourced by Fr John Gage does suggest that Hengrave was the most likely place of planting the greengage.



Fr John Gage, born in 1720, son of John Gage and Elizabeth Rookwood, studied at St Omer for the priesthood and came to Bury St Edmunds to take over from the Benedictine Mission. He celebrated Mass in private in a Chapel at a house at 43 Southgate Street. These premises had seemingly been in the ownership of the Gage family before passing to Madam White, a Protestant. The enforcement of anti-Catholic legislation was lax in the town, as is mentioned in the diaries of the visiting Frenchman Le Roche Foucauld and Mrs White had no problems in acquiring it. The house was mentioned in Pickwick Papers as

the site of the boarding school that Mr Pickwick foolishly climbed into one night to rescue a young heiress. The book describes the house well but mistakenly places it in Westgate Street.

Not only did Fr John Gage serve the townspeople but he also ministered in other parts of the County. His mission register documented those who were baptised, married and deceased. In a decade commencing 1756, Fr John Gage baptised 81 children, one of whom appears to have come to Bury St Edmunds as part of the slave trade with which the Gages had connections.

Fr John Gage was financially supported by his mother Elizabeth Rookwood, who owned the manor of Fresels at Westley, his brother Thomas Rookwood-Gage and the Provincial of the Jesuits, Fr James Dennett. By 1761 sufficient money totalling £2,000 had been amassed for Fr John Gage to purchase and build the new mission house and Chapel in Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds. In 1791 Fr John Gage died but his legacy continued and the Church of St Edmund King and Martyr was built alongside the Chapel in 1837. He is buried in the family vault in Stanningfield.

By 1767 the direct Gage dynasty ceased and the estate was inherited by Sir Thomas Rookwood-Gage, another of the sons of John Gage and Elizabeth Rookwood. This combined two of the most prominent Suffolk Catholic families, a situation that continued until 1874. The relationship between the Rookwood-Gages and the non-Catholic community around the 1800s features in the renowned diaries of James Oakes, *'The Oakeses were always on the friendliest terms with the Roman Catholic Gage family'*.

Whilst some may regard the lineage of the Gages as being somewhat incidental to Catholicism in Bury St Edmunds and the surrounding area, the evidence shows that not only were they amongst the Country's wealthy gentry but they also established networks across counties with like-minded Catholics whilst also maintaining Protestant associations and preserving a degree of tolerance of their beliefs. This assisted those in religious orders by providing venues for the celebration of Mass and giving them sanctuary. Several of the Gages over time became priests and nuns. They were prepared to accept the label of recusants and to undergo the pecuniary penalties that this incurred. The building of the Chapel and Church in Bury St Edmunds ensured the endurance and future growth of Catholicism in the town and surrounding area.

Following the departure of the Gages, the estate then passed through various owners and had a range of uses. During the First World War the Hall's annexe was used as a field hospital.

Between 1952 and 1974 the Sisters of the Assumption occupied Hengrave Hall using it as a school, a retreat and conference centre and as their convent.

The estate passed into private ownership in 2006 resulting in its sympathetic renovation and refurbishment. Its Church remains a place of beauty and historic relevance with its tombs and characteristics reminding us of its significant prominence in local Catholicism.

Coldham Hall and the Rookwood Family

Coldham Hall is within the parish of Stanningfield and until 1759 was owned by the Rookwood family and then by the Gage family until 1868. In 1869 the estate was sold to Richard Holt-Lomax, whose

family held it until 1893. The estate was then purchased in 1893 by Colonel Henry Trafford-Lawson and it remained in his family until 1918 when it was sold to Colonel Everard Hambro who lived there



until his death in 1952. In 1952 the estate was purchased by Richard Duce who owned the property until 1979 before selling it to David Hart, an adviser to Margaret Thatcher. It then transferred to Jens Pilo. Since the beginning of this century it has been owned by Claudia Schiffer who is understandably protective of her privacy and the Hall is therefore not accessible to the public.

In 1357 the Rookwood family were owners of Coldham Hall, situated in the parish of Stanningfield and in the years up to 1559 their crests were depicted in the parish Church. From the mid-14th century their cousins occupied Euston Hall.

In 1574 Robert Rookwood built a new house at Coldham to provide a Mass centre. In its attics Coldham Hall contains a Chapel which was probably in use during the reign of Elizabeth I. The secular priests Anthony Tyrell and John Ballard (who was subsequently hanged at Tyburn) visited Coldham in 1585 as did many Jesuits. There was therefore a need for secrecy and the attic was just off the long gallery extending the length of the Hall from wing to wing, north and south along the width of the Hall. A stairway at both ends of the gallery led to the floors below. The thickness of the wall of a chimney stack concealed a doorway. A priest's hiding place was built over the entrance porch of the Hall.

During 1578 whilst Queen Elizabeth I was on her summer progress of East Anglia she visited Euston Hall where she received the young Edward Rookwood and invited him to kiss her hand. Realising that he was a papist, the Lord Chamberlain ordered him from his house and committed him to prison at Norwich and subsequently at Ely from 1588 to his death ten years later. It was alleged that a piece of plate belonging to the Court was missing and a search of the premises was commenced resulting in a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary being discovered concealed in a hayrick. The Queen ordered the image to be burned in the presence of those in attendance.

The Rookwoods were fervent supporters of the Jesuits and during the year commencing 1590 they and the Drury family at Lawshall permitted Fr John Gerard to run the English Jesuit mission from their homes and encourage Anthony Rous (of Dennington), John Everard (of Linstead Parva) and Henry Walpole to take up the priesthood. Gerard, the first of the East Anglian Jesuits who resided at Lawshall from 1589 to 1591, was arrested in 1594. He was sent to the Tower and was tortured. In

1597 he escaped in a daring feat with the help of friends by means of a rope stretched across the Tower's moat. In the wake of the Gunpowder Plot, because he had connections with many of those arrested and had been named as a principal instigator, he left England. In his autobiography, he attributes his miraculous escape by ship at a moment when he was nearly rearrested to the intercession of Fr Henry Garnet, who died at that very moment. Fr Gerard's superiors would not allow him to return to England and he died in Rome in 1637 at the age of 73 years.

In 1603 there were 11 recusants in the parish of Stanningfield. The Jesuit priest Thomas Garnet, nephew of the martyr Fr Henry Garnet, who also assumed the aliases of Rookwood and Sayer, was at Coldham Hall between 1599 until his arrest in October 1607 leading to his martyrdom at Tyburn on 23 June 1608. Sir Robert Rookwood owned the Hall between 1606 and 1679 and his visitors included the secular priest Robert Keyes.

The failed plot to assassinate King James I in 1605 was led by Robert Catesby, a member of a prominent recusant family from Warwickshire. Although married to a Protestant he maintained his Catholicism and was disappointed that the promises of the King to bring tolerance for Catholicism were not fulfilled. He and Ambrose Rookwood of Coldham Hall were close friends.

Catesby gathered together a group of 12 like-minded people, including Robert Keyes and Ambrose Rookwood of Coldham Hall with the intention of carrying out the Gunpowder Plot in Parliament. It was Rookwood who bought the barrels of gunpowder that Guy Fawkes secreted in the basement of the Houses of Parliament and he was also responsible for arranging the 'getaway vehicles' – horses to be ridden by his accomplices. It is apparent that attempts to dissuade Catesby from his plot were made by Fr Henry Garnet who was at that time Jesuit Provincial for England.

In the early hours of 5 November 1605 Catesby informed Ambrose Rookwood of the arrest of Fawkes but it was not until around 11 am that day that Rookwood left London to ride north. He met Catesby at Brickhills in Buckinghamshire and they rode together to Holbeche House, Kingswinford, Staffordshire where they were given refuge.

On 7 November 1605 a proclamation was issued in London for Rookwood's arrest. It did not take long for him and others to be tracked down and Rookwood was captured at Holbeche House during the course of which he was shot in the arm. Their trial commenced on 27 January 1606 and, having been found guilty, on 31 January 1606, Ambrose Rookwood, Fawkes, Keyes and Thomas Wintour (alias Winter, cousin of Catesby) were hanged, drawn and quartered for high treason. Ambrose's assets were stripped and forfeited to the State. However, in 1636 after legal argument, the assets seized were restored to Robert Rookwood, son of Ambrose, through a rather complex trust.

Fr Henry Garnet was also indicted as a co-conspirator in the Gunpowder Plot and imprisoned in the Tower of London for three months where his treatment was less severe. However, he was then executed in May 1606 as a traitor.

Mary Ward (1585 – 1645) was a nun of the Order of the Poor Clares, initially in Flanders before returning to England in 1609 where she became acquainted with Winifred Wigmore, Susannah Rookwood (sister of Ambrose Rookwood), Jane Browne and Catherine Smith. Together they went to St Omer and opened a school for girls and in the face of considerable opposition from the State and Church (particularly the Jesuits who resented female intrusion), Mary Ward adopted the Jesuit

constitution and led the English Jesuitesses. She established an underground mission in England which was led by her cousin Susannah Rookwood and operated at great risk at various locations to perpetuate Catholicism. Ultimately Susannah Rookwood became the first superior of a new house which was established in Naples in 1623 but within six months she died of illness. The two branches of the Mary Ward foundation are now known as the Congregation of Jesus and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The religious persecutions of the 1630s led to several members of the Rookwood family seeking a new life in Maryland, America where religious freedom prevailed. Several slaves there who took the names of their masters bore the name of Rookwood.

In 1646 Edward Rookwood of the Rookwoods of Euston sided with the King in the battle against the Parliamentarians resulting in his capture and a massive fine of £706. His downfall was exacerbated when six years later he was fined for recusancy. Unable to survive the financial ruin, he surrendered the estate of Euston to George Feilding in 1655.

Ambrose Rookwood had left a widow Elizabeth Tyrwhitt and two sons Robert (previously mentioned above) and Henry. Robert was knighted by King James I in 1624 and his son Ambrose (1622-1693) married Elizabeth Caldwell of Essex and was the father of Thomas Rookwood (1658-1726) the last male of the Rookwood family. The daughter of Thomas Rookwood was Elizabeth Rookwood (1683-1759) who married John Gage the father of Fr John Gage who set up the mission in Bury St Edmunds.

The grandson of Ambrose Rookwood (of the Gunpowder Plot) was also named Ambrose Rookwood (1660-1696). He enlisted in the army and supported the Jacobite cause. He was led by Sir George Barclay in the planned abduction and assassination of William of Orange but one of their co-conspirators turned King's evidence and Rookwood was arrested. Following his trial and incarceration at Newgate prison he was taken to Tyburn where he too was hanged, drawn and quartered.

In 1699 Henry Rookwood lived at Coldham Hall and left Coldham in 1717 but was buried at Stanningfield in April 1730. Chaplaincy at Coldham Hall continued through Fr William Anderton OSB until he died in 1718, succeeded by another Benedictine Francis Howard who remained until he went to Hengrave Hall around 1730.

Elizabeth Rookwood was an extremely wealthy lady who was fluent in Latin, French and Flemish and by 1737 she had a library of nearly 2000 books at Coldham Hall, many of them scarce Continental works; her house was adorned with choice European works of art selected for her by her Jesuit chaplains, including Fr James Dennett. It is thought that a large proportion of the library's contents had been retrieved from the former Abbots Palace in Bury St Edmunds.

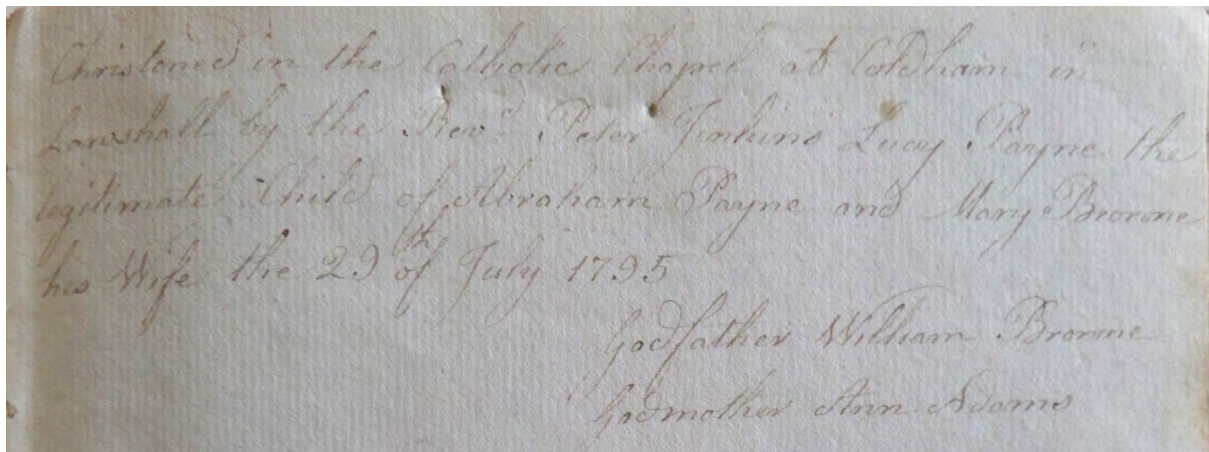
In the 1760s James Dennett, the Jesuit Provincial for England was resident chaplain at Coldham Hall. Fr Edward Baptist Newton succeeded Fr Dennett in 1784 by which time the congregation had declined to only four people. He extended his ministry to include the area surrounding Sudbury, Long Melford and Clare but died in 1788.

By this time the Jesuit John Gage had become chaplain to his mother Elizabeth Rookwood Gage in a house at 43 Southgate Street, Bury St Edmunds. This led to an era when Catholicism was practised in the Chapel in Westgate Street which was built in 1762.

Within the Coldham estate a farm building known as Barfields was converted for use as a chapel and school on those occasions when the Hall could not be used. In 1867 the Coldham estate was sold and Barfields was again used as a chapel.

Elizabeth Inchbald (born Simpson at Stanningfield in 1753) was educated by the Jesuits at Coldham Hall. Famous as an actress, novelist and playwright, her novel 'A Simple Story' published in 1791 was based on characters who were Catholics of the Suffolk gentry. It was acclaimed for its realistic portrayal of the Catholic lifestyle of that era, showing the strong character of the personalities in the book and the tensions that arose for practising Catholics.

In 1794 a brick chapel was built onto Coldham Hall and this served the Rookwood family and members of the community. A register commencing 1795 not only indicates the beginnings of activity at the chapel but is significant in the context of local religious and social history. Its first entry relates to the baptism by Rev Peter Jenkins of Lucy Payne, the child of Abraham and Mary Payne on 29 July 1795.



Five further entries are recorded by Rev Peter Jenkins, these relating to two other members of the Payne family (Abraham 1798 and Mary 1800) and three children named Mayston (Lucy 1796, William 1797 and Sharron [?] 1800).

Rev Francis Marie conducted 28 baptisms between 1801 and 1811, of families named Goodrich (Simon 1801, Frances 1803, Elizabeth 1805, Thomas 1806, Clement 1807, Teresa 1808, Cecilia Mary 1809, Robert 1811); Mayston (Ann 1801, Martha 1803, Agnes 1804, Teresa 1804, Robert 1805, Joseph 1806, Edward 1807); Payne (William 1802, Harriot 1804, Elizabeth 1805, John 1807, Mary Ann 1809); Bowers [?] (Lucy 1802, John 1805, James 1808, John 1811); Churchyard (John 1810); East (Harriot Ann 1810); Betts (Robert 1811, James 1811). It should be realised that in some instances the names related to cousins and that the details of the parents are included in the register.

A lack of entries in the register occurs until 1824 when Rev L Simon baptised 16 children from families with the surname of Reeman, Wilding, Howe, Mayston, Wright, Alderton and Gill. In 1837 Rev Henry Brigham recorded the baptism of George Reeman, followed by two entries from Rev Tate for the baptisms in 1838 of William Smith and William Betts.

Between 1838 and 1841 James O'Neill made 12 entries in the register for the surnames of Wilding, Mayston, Pate [?], Reeman, Middleditch, Mead, Rollinson, Gill and Betts. In 1842 Rev Thomas Rimmer baptised Thomas Phillipson and in 1843 Rev R P Gates Baptised Lucy, the surname of whom is illegible.

The rear of the register records other parish information. On 26 July 1841 Thomas Philipson and Charlotte Mary Stannard married with Pastor O'Neill officiating. An additional baptism is shown of Isaiah Moore in 1839. The deaths are recorded of Edmund Rolfe (1839); [?] Meakins (1840); Henry Mayston (1840).

Coldham Hall and the Rookwoods have a significant place in local and national Catholicism. In 2015 a wealth of documents setting out the history of the Hall and including tracings of the building was deposited at the Suffolk Record Office and summaries can be accessed in electronic form. The tracings depict the plans of the concealed stairs used by priests as a route of escape from the attic Chapel.



The small Chapel of Our Lady and St Joseph in the village of Lawshall seven miles south of Bury St Edmunds also serves the parish and is worth a visit for its beautiful Victorian taste and charm. In the nineteenth century it was converted from a school building and it lies within sight of the original recusant family home of the Rookwoods.

Moreton Hall, Bury St Edmunds

Sometimes overlooked in the rich history of Catholicism in Bury St Edmunds is Moreton Hall which since 1962 has been an independent co-educational school catering for pupils between the ages of 5 and 13 years, 10% of whom board at the Hall. Facilities also exist for children of pre-school age. The School was founded by Lady Miriam Fitzalan-Howard, daughter of 3rd Baron Howard of Glossop. Known by her married surname of Hubbard she held the office of Deputy Lieutenant for the



County but was perhaps best known for her charity work and as chairman of the fund that established St Nicholas Hospice in 1984 at Turret Close in Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds and subsequently moved to its site at West Suffolk Hospital. The choice of the Saint's name for the Hospice derived from the former chapel in Hollow Road/Barton Road, Bury St Edmunds dedicated to Saint Nicholas. Her husband Lieutenant Commander Theodore Bernard Peregrine Hubbard was co-founder of the School and he and Geoffrey de Guingand served jointly as the first headmasters. In 2009 Moreton Hall Trust acquired the freehold to the building and parklands.

Originally known as St Edmund's Hill, Moreton Hall was designed by Robert Adam, famed for his national and local architecture which included the construction of the Market Cross in Bury St Edmunds. Its foundation stone was laid on 12 April 1773 to provide a home for Dr John Symonds (1730 – 1807), Professor of Modern History and Languages of the University of Cambridge.

The Bury Post of 19 October 1785 records the occasion of the first hot air balloon to take off from Bury St Edmunds and within a painting in 1789 to commemorate this event, Moreton Hall can be seen in the background.

In 1844 Henry Francklyn took ownership of Moreton Hall. He was succeeded in 1884 when the house was sold by auction to Ferdinand Eyre (1854 - 1928) and renamed Mount House. Eyre was a person of local notoriety having become Deputy Lieutenant for the county; Sheriff of Suffolk in 1893; mayor of Bury St. Edmunds in 1898. He was married to Mary Gabrielle Paston-Bedingfeld whose family lived at Oxburgh Hall, Norfolk. The Eyres were devout Catholics, local philanthropists and benefactors to the Church. They maintained a chapel within their premises (in later years this became the School sick-bay when the chapel moved to the ground floor), the reredos from which was subsequently relocated to Dersingham Church. It is believed that it was the Eyres who changed the name to Moreton Hall.

On 18 June 2017 the parish held the Corpus Christi procession and Sunday morning Mass at Moreton Hall School.

Montana, Great Barton

Montana is a 'House of Hospitality' run by the Benedictine Sisters of Grace and Compassion in Great Barton just six miles from Bury St Edmunds.

In the early 1960s the late Mrs Cynthia Oakes started the project of a retirement home built next to her home which was named Montana after her love for that state in the United States of America



and the sisters came to look after the first nine residents.

The Chapel is large and delightful and the whole was officially opened on 11 March 1969 by Bishop Charles Grant the then bishop of Northampton.

Mrs Oakes died in 1970 and many further extensions and developments took place. The care home and self-

contained flats provide accommodation for residents, staff and a resident retired priest.

On 30 August 2014 Bishop Alan Hopes attended Montana, Great Barton to bless the Chapel and its new stained glass window.

CHAPTER 8 – WELCOME TO OUR PARISH

The enduring image of Catholicism in Bury St Edmunds shows its survival through times of persecution and adversity. However, St Edmund's Church has shown itself as a place where people can gather and worship, this being apparent in the following extract from 'Suffolk Summer' by John T Appleby:

'On Sunday the 24th June (1945) I met Bernard Cox in Bury St Edmunds and we went to High Mass at St Edmund's together. As a Catholic, it always did my heart good to contrast the large crowds at St Edmund's with the mere handful of people who attended the Church of England services. The Catholic congregation showed a heart-warming vigour and vitality, with troops of soldiers clattering in, rosy-cheeked young men in the Sunday best, and swarms of children all over the place, as against the staid, decorous and superannuated few who showed up at St James' and St Mary's ...'

Whilst the pattern of religious life and Church services may since have altered, parishioners have continued to profess their faith in a manner that not only meets their inner needs but with openness and example. The Church has gelled well with other local faith groups to the extent that services of a joint nature sometimes occur, voluntary groups work together, clergy deliver a common message. But the 21st century brings new challenges – an ever-increasing secular approach and sometimes apathetic attitude across society, extremist attitudes and a declining number of vocations to the ministry.

In looking to the future, it is important to learn from the past. Reading the historic events set out in this book will show that there have been testing times, perhaps causing clergy to wonder where the next batch of parishioners will spring from. New faces have appeared in our congregation – the beet sugar factory provided an annual influx of Irish workers; families of those displaced by the Second World War settled in our midst; air bases brought servicemen and their kin to our Church; our hospital and care industry brought in skilled workers from Asia and Eastern Europe; the town's economy attracted those with business acumen.

History has shown the strength of our diversity, evidenced in the following small selection of comments (obtained in 2016) from people who have moved to our parish.

Michael John Franklin (Christened Mieczyslaw Frackiewicz)

The story of Michael John Franklin (known as John) was included in the 2016 version of 'Years of Faith' but for the following reasons it had to be significantly amended in 2019 because of extraordinary events.

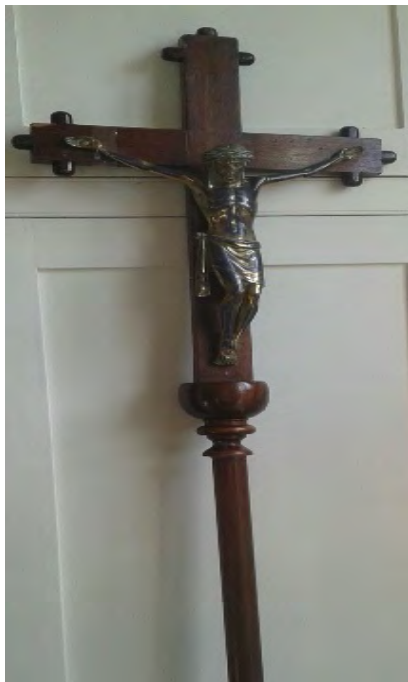
John was born in Poland and was Christened Mieczyslaw Frackiewicz. As a young man he was planning to study in Warsaw to become a doctor. World War II completely changed his life. In 1938/39 the Russians marched into his home town, rounded up all the young men and took them to Siberia to work on building the railways. Communism ripped the Catholic Church from people's lives and denied education to those who had wanted to become politicians, doctors, church leaders etc. Life in a labour camp in Siberia was harsh with extreme cold, little food and sleeping in railway carriages with straw as blankets. This resulted in many men perishing under such terrible conditions. John's ambitions of becoming a doctor were shattered.

In 1941 whilst the Nazis were occupying western Poland and driving forward across the Country, Stalin granted a one-off amnesty for Polish citizens deported to the Soviet Union. The evacuation of the Polish people from Siberia lasted from March to September 1942, allowing the formation of the Polish armed forces, the purpose being to join the Allied forces to fight Hitler.

John joined the Polish forces in 1942 and travelled through Uzbekistan, Persia (Iran) and Africa to reach the United Kingdom. He elected to join the Royal Air Force and undertook training to perform the role of radio operator. In August 1944 he was assigned to Squadron 304, initially as part of the crew flying Wellington bombers over Germany and later undertaking reconnaissance missions focussed on anti-submarine warfare. He was decorated with four medals. Many Polish people died fighting for Britain between 1939 and 1945.

At the end of the War the boundaries of Poland were redrawn and territories in the east were lost and became part of the sovereign regions of Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania. The area of Grodno in Eastern Poland where John was born became part of Belarus.

The displaced Poles settled around the world including the UK, where the 1947 Polish Resettlement Act allowed people connected to the armed forces to stay and work. John was discharged from the RAF in 1947 but a discrepancy in his date of birth was discovered because although his true date of birth had been recorded by the RAF, a document 'In Lieu of Birth Certificate' was sent from Elk in Poland to RAF East Wretham showing John's date of birth as 7 November 1921 which was then transferred to his discharge/resettlement documents. Facing an uncertain future, he was obliged to adopt this date of birth in order to move on with his life whilst holding the hope that his faith as a Catholic would one day resolve matters. He had lost his family in Poland, he had no original documents (which may never have existed), he could not return to his homeland and he had to make a new life for himself in a foreign country. He was obliged to make use of his adopted new name of Michael John Franklin and the 'lieu of birth certificate' to complete the process of resettlement.



He was demobbed in 1948, gained British Citizenship under his new name and settled as a businessman to live in Bury St Edmunds where he married and had two daughters. He forged strong connections with the Church in Bury St Edmunds and made a processional cross which is still in use.

He employed a Polish investigator to try to find documentation on his but to no avail. However, his faith was not in vain. In May 2019 he was contacted and visited by a representative of the Polish Embassy in London. He wanted to hear about John's history and his experiences in the Polish Forces and British RAF. This resulted in John receiving a comprehensive set of documents dating from 1942 reflecting his service and training history from both the Polish Forces and RAF. This was the first time he had seen these documents. What it highlighted was that all the documentation confirmed his genuine birth date as 3 November 1919.

John's family sought further clarification as did the Polish Embassy and the authenticity and provenance of the documents was confirmed, including photographic evidence of John joining the Polish forces.

The significance of this story is that John attained the age of 100 years two years earlier than people expected, celebrating it at Mass at St Edmund's Church on 3 November 2019. As he explained, "*St Edmund's Church holds special memories, especially when I see that processional cross. It is a place where I can reflect in God's presence on the experiences of my life.*"



Following Mass John was able to share his story and enjoy celebrations in the Crypt organised by the Polish community.

Christine Mason

Bill and I had been married for 15 years having met in Walsingham, Norfolk when he was Assistant Priest at the Anglican Shrine there. We married in 1972 and had three children Lucy, Ben and Joseph (who has Down's syndrome). For all of our first 15 years of married life we lived in Kedington near Haverhill in Suffolk where Bill was Rector. We were very happy there with the children growing up and Bill working successfully with the village community.

However, in 1987 after 33 years as an Anglican minister, Bill felt called to become a Roman Catholic. As a family we all discussed this and decided that for all of us this would be the right thing to do.

Bill resigned his position at Kedington and we moved to Bury St Edmunds and began worshipping at St Edmund's. The children and I were received into the Church in August and Bill in October. At the time of our move we did not imagine that Bill would continue in any form of ministry and I returned to work as a residential social worker.

Fr John Drury was parish priest at St Edmund's and it was his suggestion that Bill should consider going forward to Catholic Ordination. He consulted Bishop Alan Clark who agreed to recommend Bill as a candidate for Ordination. It was just becoming possible for married men who had been ministers in the Anglican Church to be considered for Ordination.

Altogether the process took five years and involved a lot of pressure on the family. We were helped by the St Barnabas Society who provided practical help and also employment for Bill.

Finally Bishop Alan Clarke phoned to say permission had been obtained with the condition that Bill should spend some time at Seminary; Bill went to Womersley where the future Bishop Peter Smith was Rector.

Bill was ordained Deacon, on 14 August 1992 at Walsingham. St Edmund's sent a coach of people to support him and we were very pleased that the Priestly Ordination took place at St Edmund's on 3 April 1993. All the family took part – I read, Joe was boat-boy, Lucy and Ben provided brass backing for the music.

Fr Bill made history as the eleventh Anglican Minister to be Ordained as a Catholic Priest.

We were all made to feel very welcome at St Edmund's both before and after Bill's Ordination. Bill sang with the choir and Lucy and Ben sang, played and served in the Church.

After Ordination Fr Bill assisted at St Edmund's and supplied for many parishes in the Diocese. He was also Chaplain at the West Suffolk Hospital and Hospice and served as a Chaplain to RAF Honington and Marham and assisted at the Army Camp at Bassingbourne.

He worked at St Edmund's with Frs Murray, Barnes, Shryane and Hackeson. Following retirement, he sadly died on 31 October 2017 and is buried in the Churchyard at Kedington.

Mercy Thomas

I am from Kerala in South India. In 2005 I was amongst a group of 19 people who came to Bury St Edmunds to work at West Suffolk Hospital. My family came with me. My husband and I are strong Catholics, so wherever we go our first priority is to find a Catholic Church. When the preceptor took our group to show us the town, we asked him about the Catholic Church and he showed us where it was and we noted the Mass times. On our first Sunday, with the help of road map we walked to the Church. In the beginning it was difficult because we were strangers and we couldn't fully understand the local accent. We met Father Philip who was a very welcoming and supporting priest. He accepted us and made us feel part of the parish. Although we are part of a small community within the Church, we enjoy parish life.

Our sons Joshua and Jerome made their first Holy Communion in this Church and soon after that they started altar serving. My older son was also confirmed at St Edmund's. They are both altar servers and serve every weekend; they are also both readers. Father Philip encouraged my husband and I to join the Eucharistic Ministry. We are so happy for the opportunity given to us to serve the Church as a whole family. We are far away from our home town but being welcomed and involved at Church makes us feel at home. Father Philip supported and encouraged us to start Malayalam mass and Catechism. He accepted all our invitations to participate in our community events.

My son Joshua did a 40 miles sponsored walk to raise money to attend the World Youth Day. The support from Fr Mark, Catherine (the parish secretary) and all the parishioners was amazing – without this he could never have done it. We, especially our children, really enjoy coming to the Church and being part of the parish. We are very thankful to Father Philip, Father Mark and all the clergy and parishioners for all their love and support but, most importantly, for accepting us as a part of the community.

Rose-Anne Payne

In 1978 I moved to Ipswich from Glasgow and met my husband there. I moved to Bury St. Edmunds on 4 July 1979 (my husband says it was the day he lost his independence!).

When you move away from family and friends it can be quite a daunting prospect meeting new people. It is made easier when you yourself have a family as you can meet new people at the schools and youth clubs etc, but I moved to the parish in 1979 and didn't start my family until 1984. So I feel it is very important to be a 'welcomer' at Mass. I like to offer a warm welcome and smile to everyone but especially to those who are new to the parish, or just visiting the parish. As I was told a long time ago, "A smile goes a long way" and I like to make people feel as welcomed as I did, when I moved to the parish all those years ago.

Maria Velarde

Around the year 2000 I arrived in Bury St Edmunds excited that I would be working at the hospital but dreading what might lie ahead since I had left my home Country in the Philippines. Although I

was apprehensive I believed that the good Lord would lead me through my new life in England. The first thing I did was to try to find the Catholic Church so that we could thank God that we had arrived safely at our destination. We did not know Bury St Edmunds and we ended up at the Methodist Church by mistake. I was wondering why everyone was dressed up nice and glamorous! A nice lady who was approachable asked if we were looking for a Catholic Church and we all said 'yes'. She kindly directed us to St Edmund's Church and we managed to find our way there. I believe it was the Blessed Mother Mary guiding the way to our destination because when we arrived at the Church everyone made us welcome. God is good all the time and I know that he wants us to be part of this wonderful community.

Regina Collender

My husband, David, moved to England in the spring of 1988. I visited him for Easter and had my first encounter with the late Fr John Drury. He spotted me after mass and welcomed me to St Edmund's. When I returned for a second visit in August, he had remembered me and wished me "*Auf Wiedersehen*," and also provided me with some English material for our wedding in Germany. We lived out of town for the first two years but soon got to know our regular 'neighbours' at the eleven o'clock mass. Once our first child was born I had time to get involved in more parish activities. Faith 2000 with weekly talks in the Crypt was very informative and got people talking to each other and forming friendships. I was elected to the parish council and enjoyed my three years, again becoming involved in more activities. Although our children only joined the Catholic school pyramid in St Louis, they knew many other children and enjoyed their special time on Saturday mornings, preparing for their first Holy Communions. As a regular weekday mass attender I got to know a range of people and many I would regard as my English 'relatives'. Even though there are three masses with as many different communities and sometimes little time to have a chat after the service, I always experienced St Edmund's as a very welcoming parish. There is a great variety of nationalities but our common faith makes it feel like a very big family. I remember many a time when we were saying the Rosary on a Saturday morning. There was only six or seven of us, but we were representative of five continents. I'd recommend any newcomer to just approach one of our 'welcomers' at Mass or have a chat with the parish priest. There is a whole range of clubs and activities on a weekly basis and the Church cleaners, flower arrangers, choir members etc are always looking for more support.

A common theme is that, irrespective of their background, people have always been welcomed by our congregation. This is at the heart of our religious beliefs and is not an attribute that rests in its history – whoever you are a special welcome awaits you at St Edmund's.

Andrzej Wiecha

My wife Wiesława and I were both born in Pyrzyce, a small town in the north-west of Poland. She is the youngest of eight and I am one of five siblings. We married in 1997 and have two daughters, Martyna and Wiktorja.

In Poland I worked in a warehouse handling general stock and Wiesława worked in a shop and then for an inkjet recycling company. We had enough money for our everyday needs but for anything else it was a struggle; conditions were much better than in Communist times, but still difficult. We felt that there were better opportunities elsewhere and decided to investigate with the help of a friend who put us in contact with his friend in Bury St Edmunds.

In 2006 I came to Bury St Edmunds and was able to find work and was provided with accommodation and transport to my job at Linton. After 3 months I was given a contract but then had to find housing and my own transport. I had only intended to come for a few years, but in 2007, after discussing it further with the family we decided we should be all together. So in July, after the girls' schools had finished for the summer the rest of my family came.

We were able to rent a house. We had to send Martyna to St James's School for two years and Wiktoria to St Edmundsbury but they both transferred to St Louis when places became available as we wanted them to have a Catholic education. The girls were worried about coming as they were quite young and everything was a bit strange, but we managed to help them through.

I found St Edmund's Church quite quickly; this was important to me as it was near Easter. This is a very important season for the Polish people. The Parish Priest was extremely helpful and put me in touch with people who could help. My English was not very good so someone who could translate for us all and help to fill in forms was a great help.

In return I have helped at Masses and done some maintenance work in the Presbytery and the Church. We now have our own Mass in Polish once a month which we all like. It reminds us of Poland.

As time passed I decided it was time to settle down and so after 3 years in England we bought our own house and I changed jobs. I now work in a hotel in the town as the maintenance man and I have renovated parts of it. Wiesława worked for a food processing company for five years before setting up her own cleaning business.

We have no regrets that we came to England. We have much more in the way of luxuries that we would not have been able to afford in Poland and the girls are doing very well. We have no idea what will happen in the future as it may largely depend on what the girls decide to do.

The English people in Bury have been very welcoming and helpful to us all, as have many Poles. This has made things, for us, much easier. We are very grateful.

Martyna Wiecha.

When I was a little child I came to Britain with my parents Andrzej and Wiesława Wiecha and my sister Wiktoria. Without knowing a single word in English or anybody here, it was a tough journey to adapt to a different culture and environment.

When we lived in Poland, my family attended Church every Sunday, therefore finding a Catholic Church here was a priority. My dad had arrived in England before we came and he was already a

member of St Edmund's Church so my first Sunday in Britain began with us going to Church. It was very overwhelming as it was an enormous Church compared to the one in Poland.

Although the Catholic Mass is the same anywhere in the world, it was at times frustrating that I couldn't understand the words spoken by the priest. I wanted to integrate with the St Edmund's community through shared prayer but I didn't know the language; my only option was just to listen but as the time went by I began to understand.

It definitely helped that the people were very welcoming and invited us for tea and coffee after Mass, as well as coming to barbecues and different parties. Through that I was able to meet more people and it didn't feel so strange living in this new culture. Also having the readings provided in my language made me feel like I was still living in Poland.

I'm also very glad that the Church is so open to different cultures and has allowed the Polish community and other nationalities to have their ways of giving thanks and for making us feel part of the community. This is through allowing us to have Polish evenings to show our culture as well as allowing us to have Mass in Polish. This has definitely made things easier.

I attended St James's Middle School when I first came here. However when a place became available I moved to St Louis. Both schools were very encouraging and supportive in making me feel part of the community.

In the beginning it was very difficult to understand anything in class. The teachers gave me a dictionary and I had regular meetings with other girls who were also Polish; they helped me with my school work. This made it easier for me to know what was happening in class and I was able to learn English quicker. My peers were very friendly and they encouraged me to attend clubs. I was introduced to netball, a sport not known in Poland and played for the Jets. All this made me feel part of the community – I had a role to play. I was able to work at weekends in a hotel in the town as a waitress.

After Middle School I moved on to St Benedict's Upper School. There I passed all my GCSEs. I was asked to help younger Polish students who were having difficulty with their lessons. I finished sixth form and I'm preparing for university at Lincoln.

On Pentecost Sunday 4 June 2017 the Church was full when parishioners wearing their national dress joined together to celebrate their unity in diversity, the idea of Fr Alvan. Mass began with a procession of the different national groups into the Church, including groups from Poland, India, Philippines, Ghana, Vietnam, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, Mauritius, USA, South Africa and Singapore. The photograph depicts some of those present who afterwards enjoyed a truly international feast in the Crypt.



From the past, the future will bring us new experiences, fresh challenges and continuing change. The parishioners of the future will prove that the past has served as a template on which Catholicism in Bury St Edmunds will not only survive but thrive.

CHAPTER 9 – CLERGY OF THE PARISH

Research has shown that the following priests served the Parish of St Edmund. Some dates derive from Baptismal Registers and are therefore approximate:

Priest	Commenced	Departed
John Gage	1755	1790
James Dennett	1762	1789
Edward Baptist Newton	1784	1788
Charles Thompson	1790	1795
James Lane	1800	1832
Robert Cole	1803	1812
Thomas Angier	1803	1826
Henry Wright	1826	1832
John Laurenson	1832	1834
Joseph Tate	1835	1837
Fr Henry Brigham	1838	1845
Bernard Jarrett	1845	1854
James Brownbill	1854	1867
Edward Bird	1867	1869
Thomas Knight	1870	1874
Richard Sumner	1874	1877
Joseph Lazenby	1874	1885
Frederick de Betham	1885	1886
Walter Strappini	1885	1887
Charles Drake	1885	1886
Alfred Yates	1887	1889
Thomas Parkinson	1887	1895
Frederick Jones	1894	1906

Roger Perrin	1889	1914
James Foley	1900	1900
Joseph Kenny	1900	1907
John Benson	1904	1904
John Gretton	1905	1907
William Shapter	1907	1910
David Thompson	1909	1909
Patrick Flynn	1911	1912
Vincent O’Gorman	1910	1925
Timothy Courtney	1913	1915
William Thomson	1917	1924
Edgar Blount	1924	1927
John McGowan	1925	1925
Edward Field	1925	1927
Peter Bontemps	1927	1928
John Ashton	1927	1929
Ernest Garnett	1929	1943
Arnold Madden	1940	1940
Frederick Lockyer	1943	1953
Anthony Throckmorton	1943	1946
David Thomson	1945	1945
John Mossly	1946	1946
Anthony Chadwick	1946	1948
Gerard Conlon	1948	1954
William Sharp	1951	1952
Bryan Houghton	1954	1969
John Cureton	1954	1958

Robert Owen	1958	1963
Paul Casapieri	1963	1967
Stephen Kealey	1967	1970
Ronald Bustin	1969	1973
Thomas Kenny	1970	1975
James Smith	1973	1977
Gerard Langley	1973	1977
Arthur Speight	1975	1980
Harry Wace	1977	1982
Desmond Mullin	1977	1977
Gerard Quigley	1977	1981
Peter Leeming	1977	1980
John McNally	1980	1982
John Reffitt	1981	1981
Gary Cawthorne	1981	1983
Joe Farrell	1982	1983
Richard Wilson	1982	1987
Simon Talbott	1982	1983
Dermot Fenlon	1982	1986
Richard Healey	1984	1989
John Drury	1987	1992
Paul Madison	1989	1991
Simon Blakesby	1990	1990
Bernard Heath	1991	1993
Gerard Quigley (returned)	1991	2000
Thomas Murray	1992	1996
John Warrington	1992	1995

William Mason	1993	2017
Jonathan Salt	1995	1995
John Barnes	1996	2001
Brendan Moffatt	1996	1999
Dom Edmund Egglestone	1997	2001
Philip Shryane	2001	2014
Paul Mercer	2001	2016
Martin Fears	2006	2007
Mark Hackeson	2014	2019
Alvan Ibeh	2015	2018
Peter Sok Na	2017	2017
Peter Marsh (retired)	2016	
John Warrington (returned)	2018	2019
Richard White (retired)	2018	
Gerard Quigley (retired)	2018	
Jaylord Magpuyo	2018	
Michael Griffen	2019	2019
Johane Antonio Nguluwe	2019	2019
David Bagstaff	2019	
Mike Brookes	2019	

Deacons:

Paul Mercer	1991
William Mason	1992
Christopher Heath	1996
David Ward	1996
Alan McMahan	2006

CHAPTER 10 – LIST OF ASSETS PAST AND PRESENT

This Chapter has sought to identify assets during the time of the Jesuits in Bury St Edmunds and thereafter. Included are references to some events, for example redecoration of the Church. The list does not purport to comprehensively describe items currently in the Church and Chapel; this will be part of an ongoing project by members of the History Group to create an inventory to assist the recording of the future movement of assets. It will be restricted for reasons of security because its content will include items of value or those not publicly displayed.

	Item	Cost	From	To	Comment
1	Document			1728	States 'that the books and the effects belonging to the old school remained at Bury St Edmunds' until removed by Fr Shireburn
2	Church building including pews, altar, altar rails, organ,	£9,400	1837		
3	Candlesticks, six		1837		
4	Flower vases, six		1837		
5	Church painted	£616	1838		By Mr Fairs
6	Memorial to Hon Chas Berney Petre		1854		
7	Apse painting of the Ascension		Circa 1855		Referred to in White's directory 1855
8	Gurney stove	£48	1870		First used 30 November 1870
9	Library water closet		1871		
10	House painted	£32 18s 11d	1875		Painted by Wilson
11	New organ	£79 15s 3d	1875	1912	Sold to priest at Luton
12	Processional cross	£2 17s 6d	1875		
13	Church decorated	£265	1875		By Park of Preston
14	Scaffolding	£48	1875		
15	Stations of the Cross	£19	1875		
16	House painted	£33	1876		By Wilson
17	Easel	£23	1876		By May and Brook. Written on piece of paper in Fr Lazenby's diary
18	Organ	£79	1876		
19	Tombstone for Fr Gage	£13	1877		
20	Sanctuary lamp	£30	1877		Given by Irish drovers
21	Stations of the Cross	£6	1877		
22	Statue of St Edmund	£19	1877		Given by Mrs Milner Gibson
23	Painting – Martyrdom of St Edmund		1878		Given by Gery Milner Gibson Cullum – copy (by Duckett) of original by De la Fosse
24	Altar cloth with crown and arrows depicted		1878		Made and presented by nuns from East Bergholt
25	Processional banners,		1878		

	some new				
26	High Mass vestments, red	£34	1878		Made by Herrmann
27	Alms box from Hoxne oak		1878		Originally from Sir Edward Kerrison, given by Mrs Milner Gibson
28	Statue of Sacred Heart	£8 10s 0d	1879		
	House painted	£28 11s 3d	1879		By Stable
29	Vestment, best white		1879		
30	Large plain candlesticks, three		1879		
31	Brussels carpet, with border, in the Sanctuary		1881		Given by Mrs Milner Gibson
32	Authenticated relic of St Edmund		1881		Mrs Milner Gibson applied via Miss Forbes Leith to Cardinal Duprez for relic (no description) which was provided
33	Library opened		1882		
34	Processional canopy on four poles		1883		
35	Statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, 5'8" high on pedestal of four feet		1883		Purchased from Perry and Co, London. Given by Captain Rushbrooke
36	Torn red vestment		1884		Required mending
37	Vestments, two sets, white		1884		One set given by nuns of Roehampton, other set by Rev Fr Provincial (Jesuit property)
38	Vestment, white		1884		Purchased from Norwich
39	New confessional		1885		In the second sacristy
40	New benches, six		1885		For the poor
41	Altar cloths, two, white		1885		
42	Bookcases, two		1885		From Norwich
43	New altar candles		1885		
44	Artificial plants		1885		
45	Altar redecorated		1886		
46	New altar cloth	£3	1886		Made by nuns
47	Vestments, three		1886		Given by Rev Fr Provincial (Jesuit property)
48	Amices, six		1886		Given by Rev Fr Provincial (Jesuit property)
49	Purificators		1886		Given by Rev Fr Provincial (Jesuit property)
50	New carpet for Sacred Heart altar				
51	New alb		1886		
52	Part of old library converted to Sodality Chapel		1886		
53	New vase		1886		
54	Lavabo	£1 1s 0d	1886		

55	Hangings for the pulpit		1886		Worked and given by Miss Nunn
56	Book cover, white		1886		Worked by Mrs Murphy(?)
57	Crucifix for High Altar		1886		
58	Swell and additional manual added to organ		1886		
59	Semi-circular cushions for altar steps		1886		
60	Vestment, white		1886		Given by Mrs Murphy (or Morpley)(/)
61	Picture of St Lucy		1890		Given by Mr Todd
62	£1,000		1890		Given by Captain Rushbrooke to assist choir and organist
63	Benedictine furniture and vestments		1894		Damaged by fire
64	Church bell installed		1896		
65	Church walls cleaned	£34	1900		
66	Carved statue of St Edmund		Circa 1900		
67	Relic of St Edmund		1901		Exposition of relic at Church (relic subsequently discredited)
68	New flagstaff		1903		
69	Church cleaned		1903		
70	Marble plaque to commemorate members of the Rushbrooke family		Circa 1906		
71	Roof above the porch rebuilt		1907		
72	Chandeliers for Sanctuary		1912		Given by Countess Adele Cadogan
73	New organ	£587	1912		Mr and Mrs Johnston contributed £467. Old organ sold for £35 – Fr O'Connor of Luton eventually paid after complaint was made
74	Organ loft alterations	£36	1912		
75	Carpet outside the Sanctuary		1913		Given by Mr Eyre
76	Electric apparatus for organ	£74	1915		Given by Miss B S Taylor
77	Vestments repaired	£20	1915		
78	Carpet for Sanctuary	£40	1916		Given by congregation
79	Wrought iron railings beside Church frontage	£18 17s 6d	1916		
80	Church windows repaired	£18 7s 3d	1916		
81	Hot water pipes in Church	£128	1917		Given by Mr Eyre and congregation
82	Two ventilators	£32	1917		
83	Hot water introduced to Church	£60 6s 0d	1919		
84	Books – around 2,000		1919		Moved from the Crypt to the

	retained, worthless ones cast out for £8 4s 6d				Presbytery
85	Sacred Heart marble altar	£590	1921		Given by Mr Hervey, supplied by Jones and Willis, London
86	Candlesticks, five, for Sacred Heart altar		1921		Given by daughters of Mr Hervey
87	Renovation of apse painting and lighting above	£38	1921		
88	Crucifix		1922		Given to Fr O’Gorman by Mrs Gurney – allowed to hang in the Convent first room (Jesuit property)
89	Statue of Our Lady, marble		1922		Given from the estate of Mrs Milner Gibson (as per letter from Patridge and Wilson of 7 December 1921). Property of the Church.
90	Ciborium	£20	1924		Given by Fr O’Gorman (Jesuit property)
91	Hangings of the Sacred Heart altar	£7 0s 9d	1925		Given by the Misses Hervey
92	Hangings of the Lady Altar	£18 0s 3d	1925		
93	Statue of St Theresa the Little Flower	£7 10s	1925		From voluntary subscriptions
94	Statue of St Anthony	£7			Given by Miss Home or Mrs Horne (?)
95	Votive candle stand	£18 0s 3d	1925		
96	Stone cross on top of the Church replaced	£15 4s 6d			Expense defrayed by Sir Pierce Lacy
97	Two flags	£3 11s 0d	1925		
98	Painting, gas stoves and electrical fittings for house	£120 10s 6d	1925		
99	Hangings at the statue of Our Lady	£24 16s 9d	1925		
100	Votarie stand	£10 4s 3d	1925		
101	Candles for high altar	£8.14s 0d	1925		
102	Holy oil stocks	£3 10s 6d	1925		
103	Holy water stoup	£1 3s 7d	1925		
104	High altar redecorated, large candlesticks re-gilded	£41 17s 0d	1925		
105	New Stations of the Cross, each accompanied by a brass tablet showing donors’ names		1926		In 2012 the brass tablets were removed
106	Porch and sacristies redecorated		1926		Through subscriptions
107	Books, about 5,000 in			1928	Distributed to Jesuit houses

	total				
108	Chalice, known as a 'Rookwood chalice'			1928	Originally given by Elizabeth Rookwood, sent to Heythrop
109	Monstrance, large			1928	Originally presented to Fr Blount on leaving Worcester, sent to St Beuno's
110	Monstrance, small			1928	Sent to Stamford Hill
111	Cope, white			1928	Originally presented to Fr Blount on his Jubilee sent to Heythrop
112	Chasuble, thought to be mediaeval			1929	
113	Furniture, best items from the house			1928	Sent to Heythrop
114	War memorial in the porch	£45		1928	Unveiled by Sir Pierce Lacy 23 October 1928

1929: Departure of the Jesuits

	Item	Cost	From	To	Comment
115	Redecoration of the statue of the Sacred Heart		1932		
116	New pole for banner of St Edmund		1938		
117	Processional cross		Circa 1954		
118	Church redecorated		1959		
119	Frames surrounding Lady Altar and Chapel installed		1959		
120	Porch door surrounds installed		1959		
121	Wall plaque inscribed 'Oct 1960 in thanks B H'		1960		
122	Creation of shrine to St Edmund		1960		
123	Bath used as the altar		1964	2013	Sold at auction
124	Teeth of St Edmund, three, within altar		1964		Removed by persons unknown – not present at time of disposal of bath
125	Memorial plaque 'D D George Pemberton'		1965		
126	Memorial plaque to B H				
127	Candlesticks, four		1973		
128	Glazed door to Chapel		1978		
129	Church redecorated		Circa 1980		
130	Access ramp with commemorative brick		1982		
131	Books, 637, audio tapes		1987		

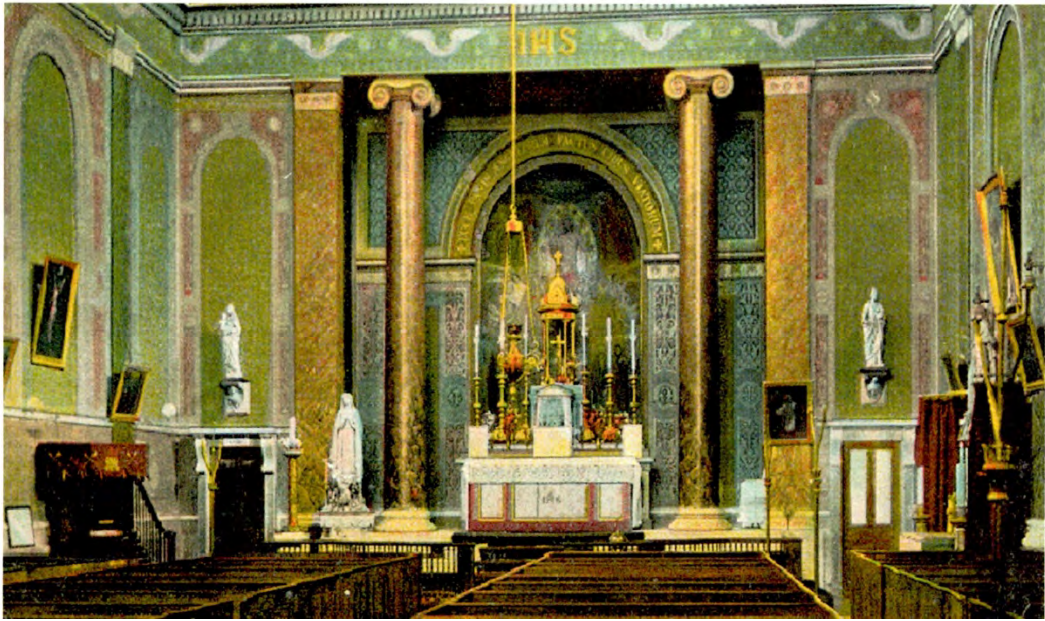
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132	Carving of the Madonna		1987		
133	Baptismal font		1996		
134	Tapestries, nine, depicting martyrdom of St Edmund		2002		
135	Icon of Christ Pantocrator		1999		
136	Icon of St Alban		2000		
137	Cambodian processional cross Christ the Amputee		2006		
138	40 chairs for Chapel	£3200	2012		
139	Carpeting of Chapel		2012		
140	New altar		2014		
141	New carpeting of Church		2014		
142	New lighting in Church		2014		
143	Relic of St Alban Roe		2014		
144	Relic of St Thomas Reynolds		2014		
145	Relic of St Ignatius of Loyola		2014		
146	Unauthenticated relics of unknown Saints				
147	Church bell converted to remote timer operation		2014		
148	Credence tables, two		2014		
149	Mar Thomas Cross		2015		
150	Improvements to sound system		2016		
151	Statue of St Thomas		2016		
152	Statue of St Lorenzo Ruiz		2016		
153	Statue of		2016		
154	Tree (Sorbus Vilmorinii)		2017		
155	Tabernacle and free-standing lamp		2018		
156	Chalice of Spanish or Flemish origin, circa 1600		2018		
157	Silver paten		2018		

SOURCES OF INFORMATION AND A SIGNPOST TO FURTHER RESEARCH

This publication has been compiled from a variety of sources, including those listed below. Of necessity it has excluded a considerable amount of other information that has been researched but which remains available to those who might wish to delve deeper into the history of St Edmund's Parish.

- *The Present From Our Past* - St Edmund's History Group
- Documents held at Suffolk Record Office, Bury St Edmunds
- Census records
- Various editions of the *Bury and Norwich Post and Suffolk Herald* and the *Bury Free Press*
- *Records of the English Province of the Society of Jesus* – Henry Foley
- *Yesterday's Town Bury St Edmunds* – Margaret Statham
- Kelly's Directories (various dates)
- *Genealogical Collections Illustrating the History of Roman Catholic Families of England* – Henry Lawson and others
- *Gentlemen's Magazine 1848*
- *The Oakes Diaries* - edited by Jane Fiske
- Information from the Diocesan Archives at the Cathedral of St John the Baptist, Norwich
- Information from the archives maintained by the Society of Jesus at Farm Street, St Beuno's, Heythrop and Stonyhurst
- Registers maintained at St Edmund's Parish Church, Westgate Street, Bury St Edmunds
- Various Church 'blotters' and bulletins
- Editions of *The East Anglian Guild Magazine*
- Records of interments at Bury St Edmunds Cemetery
- Various written works of Joy Rowe
- Various written works of Francis Young

- Information supplied by Marian Read
- Records of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC)
- Various military records, Regimental records
- Grave/memorial tablet locations as shown in Chapter 6. Cemetery plans can be downloaded from the CWGC website <http://www.cwgc.org/>
- Grave headstone photographs as shown in Chapter 6, courtesy of The War Graves Photographic Project. Copies of these and photographs of memorials can be obtained for a small charge through <http://www.twgpp.org/>
- Suffolk Regiment Museum Records
- Websites relating to the Cambridgeshire Regiment:
 - <http://www.1914-1918.net/cambridge.htm>
 - http://www.suffolkregiment.org/cambridgeshire_history.html
 - http://www.cofepow.org.uk/pages/armedforces_r_camb.html
- Cambridgeshire Regiment archives held at Cambridgeshire Record Office, Cambridge
- Various Regiment and RAF Squadron Web sites
- Battalion war diaries
- Information and photograph supplied by the family of Karel Valach (deceased)
- *A Simple Story* - Elizabeth Inchbald
- *Suffolk Summer* - John T Appleby
- *A Nun's Story* - Sister Agatha with Richard Newman
- *Prêtre rejeté* - Rev B R S Houghton
- *Taught to be Good* - John Saunders



The Church of St Edmund King and Martyr circa 1915