English Catholic History Association

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NEWSLETTER

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NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

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NEWS & NOTES

- Greetings to you all, I hope that the winter has been kind to you. In this edition I have news on visits lined up for the first half of 2015, three articles from members of the Association and a round-up of news from The Press. On page 19 I have listed websites relevant to the places we are visiting in this first half of the year.
- The Parish Priest of **St Catherine's Church in Farington**, a village near Leyland in Lancashire has made contact with us. He is organising a Requiem Mass on Thursday 26th March for King Richard III. You possibly saw the article in The Catholic Herald which I reproduce below, but Father Simon Henry PP has added a few comments. See the Events Guide which starts on page 6
- **St Augustine's shrine in Ramsgate, Kent**, has been given a £25,000 grant by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation. The grant is for a proposed education and visitor centre at the shrine.Fr Marcus Holden, rector at St Augustine's, said: "*This project is locally driven, but it is a project that has a national importance. The things you see here inspired the architecture of a nation – Parliament was inspired by Ramsgate. We are very grateful for the donation from the Andrew Lloyd Webber Fund and for Lord Lloyd Webber's personal interest and support for our project. "It takes us one step nearer towards the church's restoration and the setting up of a centre for Pugin inside the church*."
  The cost of the centre is likely to be £800,000. Over 400 people have donated to the project so far. The church was officially declared a shrine of St Augustine in 2012.
  The establishment of the new pilgrimage site had followed a 500-year gap created following the destruction of the last shrine of St Augustine of Canterbury in the 16th century, when it was demolished during the Reformation. A shrine to St Augustine, known as the "apostle to the English", existed on the Isle of Thanet in the early Middle Ages, near where the saint arrived in the Kingdom of Kent in 597.
  The church was designed by the eminent Catholic architect Augustus Welby Northmore Pugin, who wrote in his letters that he had selected the Ramsgate site because "*blessed Augustine landed nearby*". Cardinal Raymond Burke was to celebrate Mass at the church on 9th March.
- You may remember we published an article in the ECHA Newsletter recently on the plight of the new owners of **Sawston Hall in Cambridgeshire**. Upkeep and repairs to this historic home seem to have

taken their toll as it has been on the market – and seems to have been sold. This is from the Rightmove website – "*The house has strong royal connections having been built over 27 years with the stone from Cambridge Castle between 1557 and 1584. The Huddlestones and the house played a key role in Queen Mary securing her crown and Mary assisted the build. During the reign of Elizabeth I the hall became a famous catholic safe house resulting in the famous priest hole being created by Saint Nicholas Owen. During the Second World War Sawston Hall briefly housed the operations room for Duxford and then became the headquarters of the US 66th Airforce. Since the War the house was for a time an important local tourist attraction and was also the location of several films including Michael Winner's 1971 film "The Nightcomers" starring Marlon Brando. Sawston Hall is a very beautiful and complete Elizabethan stone manor house of the highest quality constructed of limestone, ashlar and clunch all under a predominantly peg tiled roof*." We have been unable to find out who bought the property.

- And whilst we are on the topic of real estate. One of the committee noticed this apartment for sale (£899,995) **St Joseph's Gate, London NW7.** It was one of the 115 *studio* suites in a landmark grade II listed building in Mill Hill, north-west London. St Joseph's for many years was home to the St Joseph's Society for Foreign Missionaries. There was an interesting quote on the web "*as you approach Mill Hill, heading North from London on the A1/A41, the sight of St Joseph's College on Lawrence Street looms into view. The gold leafed Statue of St Joseph on the top is a well-known and loved landmark. Sadly the college is currently an empty shell, home to pigeons and other nesting birds. The Mill Hill Missionaries moved out in June 2008 and the only vestige of their presence is a residual right to visit the graves of buried priests at the site. The college was first opened in 1871 as a seminary for Priests training to go on missions to far flung places*". The developers moved in during the spring of 2010.

EVENTS GUIDE

March -Thursday 26th 7:30pm
Requiem Mass for King Richard III on the occasion of his internment

"A Requiem Mass in the traditional Latin form is to be offered at a Catholic church in Lancashire to mark the re-interment of King Richard III, which will take place on the same day at Leicester's Anglican cathedral.

The mortal remains of Richard III, who died in the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, before the Reformation, will be reinterred in the cathedral on March 26, in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury and an invited congregation.

The Requiem Mass for the repose of Richard III's soul will be held on the same day St Catherine's Church, in Leyland, Lancashire, at 7.30pm. It will be a Sung High Latin Mass with singers from the Laeta Cantoribus Choir, "in the style and manner of (Richard III's) day".

"*The idea is that it will be closer to what he might have experienced in his own lifetime, as a pre-reformation Catholic,"* said parish priest Fr Simon Henry.

After the service, refreshments will be served, also in keeping with what King Richard might have expected in his lifetime.

"*The food afterwards will make at least a nod in the direction of the 15th century, or at least to his Yorkshire connections,"* said Fr Henry*. "Though wild boar sausages are a little difficult to come by*!"

The skeleton of Richard III was found under a car park in Leicester in 2012. In the days before the re-interment service at Leicester Cathedral, the coffin will be taken to Leicester University and Bosworth Field, where the king was killed in battle.

Following the Leicester Cathedral service, Richard III's body will lie "in repose" for three days before being reinterred.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols of Westminster will be part of the week-long run of events to mark the re-internment. He will preach at a service of compline on the day the king's remains are received into the cathedral and will celebrate a Requiem Mass the next day at a nearby Catholic parish.

Dominican friars will also sing vespers at the cathedral in the run-up to the re-interment and Fr David Rocks OP, parish priest, will preach at a lunchtime Eucharist". The Catholic Herald 4th March 2015

"*It is the traditional form of the Mass - more elaborate in its ritual, full sung Requiem Mass Latin. There will be a small Schola to sing the chant. We are only a homely little parish here but with a reputation for carrying out the liturgy well. We came to the idea of arranging the Mass after some of the disappointing*

decisions around the re-interment and wanting to do something as fitting as we could manage to mark the occasion - especially offering a Catholic Mass for a Catholic monarch. I wondered if any of your members might be interested in attending. Of course, people of all Faiths - and none, are very welcome to attend the Mass and the Reception afterwards." Fr Simon Henry
St Catherine's Church, Stanifield Lane, Farington, Leyland - PR25 4QG
(Off Junction 1 M65 or Junction 28 / 29 on M6)

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April – Wednesday 15th

ECHA meeting St Augustine's Catholic Church, High Wycombe, Bucks

Daily Mass is at 9:30, Afterwards, coffee and tea will be available and the meeting will get underway in the Upper Room. The morning speaker is **Mr Tony Reynolds**, author of **St Nicholas Owen – Priest-Hole Maker**. The book was reviewed in the December newsletter.

"During the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I it was high treason, and therefore death, to be a Catholic priest in England. It was consequently vital that there be somewhere to hide when the pursuivants came battering at the door. One name is prominent in the construction of priest-holes – that of Nicholas Owen. A very short and later crippled man, he built the majority of these shelters, so saving the lives of untold numbers of priests and fugitives. His early apprenticeship as a joiner and his knowledge of construction served him well as he burrowed into walls and constructed near-invisible entrance holes. Although a well-known figure in Recusant studies, and almost invariably mentioned in histories of the Gunpowder Plot, this is his first detailed biography. St Nicholas Owen was born in Oxford, the son of a carpenter. Two of his brothers were to train as Catholic priests on the continent. A third, Henry, the first apprentice at what was to become the Oxford University Press, went on to assist the Mission with the production of Catholic books and pamphlets. Nicholas was himself apprenticed to an Oxford joiner in 1577. Acting as a servant to Fr Henry Garnet SJ for nearly twenty years, Owen had many adventures, narrowly evading capture, and assisted in the escape of the Jesuit Fr John Gerard from the Tower of London in 1597. St Nicholas was tortured at the Poultry Compter in 1594 but later released. He was finally taken in one of his own priest-holes during the rigorous pursuit of Catholics that followed the failure of the Gunpowder Plot, and died upon the rack in the Tower of London in 1606. Evidence of St Nicholas Owen's work is still visible in country houses and mansions across England, and recent research has unveiled greater detail of his

fascinating career assisting the English Mission at the close of the 16th and beginning of the17th centuries.**"**

Tony Reynolds - Tony Reynolds read Architecture at University College London in the 'sixties, and became interested in the application of computers to architecture, then very much in its pioneering stages. A staunch member of the caving club at college, this love of confined spaces combined with his architectural training may have given him special insight into the construction of priest-holes. Working as a computer manager and resident programmer, he has published several textbooks on computer use by architects, and, most recently, a well-received book of pastiche Sherlock Holmes stories.

If you look at Daphne Pollen's painting of **The 40 martyrs of England and Wales** (it is reproduced on the ECHA website), you will see Nicholas Owen kneeling in the foreground and the Tower of London, where he died in the background

Following lunch, the afternoon speaker – **Mrs Margaret Osborne** will discuss

Dudley Charles Cary-Elwes, A Forgotten and Underrated Bishop

The 5th Bishop of Northampton Cary-Elwes was born in Nice, 5th February 1868. Ordained1896. Bishop of Northampton 1921-1932. He is buried at Great Billing.

Margaret Osborne was educated at St Joseph's Catholic School Swindon then Cardiff University where she read History then obtained a Local History Certificate at Leicester University in 1992, Margaret worked as the Archivist for the Catholic Diocese of Northampton from 1984 to 2008. She has published articles for the Diocesan Directory, the Northampton Record Society and Catholic archives. She has contributed to The Vine newspaper (Northampton) since its inception, Mrs Osborne currently works as a volunteer for the Northampton Record Office and this is where she unearthed the forgotten documents on Bishop Cary-Elwes.

Saint Augustine's Church, 24 Amersham Hill, High Wycombe, HP13 6NZ

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MAY - Wednesday 20th

ECHA Pilgrimage to Glastonbury

This year is the 60th anniversary of the re-establishment of the shrine of St Mary of Glastonbury, and the 50th anniversary of the crowning of the new statue of St Mary of Glastonbury which is venerated in the shrine church of St Mary which we will be visiting.

This is an extract from the shrine church website: *"The Church of Our Lady St Mary of Glastonbury is the centre of a thriving Catholic community, living in Glastonbury, Street, and the surrounding villages. It is the Diocesan Shrine of Our Lady, where Mary is venerated as mother of God and there is an annual diocesan pilgrimage to the shrine each summer.*
The church community is part of the Glastonbury Churches Together *group, in which all Christian denominations are invited to work together for unity and understanding.*
The Church is situated on Magdalene Street, opposite the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey."

Glastonbury Abbey needs little in the way of introduction. Here is a link to the official website http://www.glastonburyabbey.com/ The chronology (one of the buttons on the website) is pretty remarkable – here are a couple of early records:
AD63 Traditional Building of The Old Church and possible foundation of the first Christian community at Glastonbury by Joseph of Arimathea
AD 443 Probable Visit of St. Patrick
AD712 First stone church built by King Ine.

You may have time to climb Glastonbury Tor. This site is managed by the National Trust and here is a note from their website – "*It's no **ordinary** hill: people develop personal profound relationships with it. It has been recognised as a holy hill for millennia*.**"**

Programme
10.30am Meet for refreshments in the parish rooms (alongside the church)
11am Talk by **Dr Tim Hopkinson-Ball**
12.30pm Mass in the shrine church celebrated by Fr Malcolm Ferrier
1pm Lunch – bring your own or go to one of the many eating places in the town.
Tea and coffee available in the parish rooms
2.30pm **Tour of Glastonbury Abbey** with Dr Tim Hopkinson-Ball as guide
4pm Benediction in the shrine church, followed by tea
All are welcome – not only members of the Association but anyone interested in joining us for this special day.

St Mary of Glastonbury Catholic Church, Magdalene Street, GLASTONBURY, BA6 9EJ

JUNE – Saturday 6th

20th York Catholic History Day

The speakers include **Professor Alan McClelland** on **The Early Life and Religious Development of Henry Edward Manning** and **Dr James Hagerty** on **Notes from the Front: Ushaw College in the Great War.**

The conference will take place at the **Bar Convent**

17 Blossom Street, York, North Yorkshire YO24 1AQ.

Further details from: Judith.smeaton@btinternet.com tel: 01904 704525

JUNE - Tuesday 16th

ECHA visit to Stonor Park, Henley on-Thames

Stonor will be closed to the public when we go, so this is a private visit. Following 10:30 am Mass in the Chapel and then refreshments, we will be taken on a tour (1.5 hours) of the house. We will have an official Stonor tour guide plus our own Martin Blake, who will provide additional commentary on the Catholic history of this historic manor house. The Stonor story is one of continuity of faith and place and reflects the history of the Catholic Faith in England before the Reformation, through the persecution of the recusancy period to Catholic Emancipation in 1829 and on to the present day. We will be shown the Edmund Campion Room. This is above the front porch and higher still is a medieval statue of Our Lady of Mercy – too high for the 16th century iconoclasts to reach it. It is said that Edmund Campion would doff his hat to her on entering the house, the house where he was given sanctuary by the Stonor family from 1580. The 13th century chapel and parts of the house are currently undergoing essential restoration work. This is due to be completed prior to our visit.

The tour will finish by 12:30 approx, so you could then walk around the grounds and gardens. There are benches dotted around so that you can enjoy your packed lunch. Martin tells me that there are several excellent country pubs nearby or you could take yourself off to Henley. The River and Rowing Museum has a nice cafeteria and river boat trips set off from a nearby wharf.

Please refer to the Booking Form for timings and cost.

Stonor Park, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 6HF

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ARTICLES FROM MEMBERS

SOLESMES - Part 2

In my first study of Dom Gueranger and Solesmes I brought the story up to 1860 and Gueranger's one visit to England. I showed how the revival of religious life in France after the Revolution coincided with the Oxford movement and the conversion of Newman, which led to the revival of Catholicism in England. In this second part I shall focus on the anti-Catholic hostility of the Third Republic, following the Franco-Prussian War, and how France and England became even more involved.

Dom Gueranger died in 1875, five years before the First Vatican Council and the fall of Rome to the forces of Victor Emanuel; he was succeeded as abbot by Dom Charles Couturier, who administered the abbey for fifteen years. By this time the sister foundation in another part of the village, Ste Cecile de Solesmes, headed by Cecile Bruyere in the 1860s (still in her twenties), was flourishing with plenty of vocations. The other rising star was Dom Paul Delatte, who succeeded Couturier in 1890, and was the outstanding abbot during the coming troubles. But by then the monks had been excluded from their abbey by the hostile government and were living in a series of houses in the village. Delatte was a great admirer of the writing of Fr Faber, founder of the London Oratory. Shortly after Dom Gueranger's death Solesmes became involved in a new foundation in England, namely Farnborough Abbey which the widowed Empress Eugenie, Napoleon III's wife, who had taken refuge at Chiselhurst in Kent after Bismark's victory in 1870, had built in the French Gothic style; in due course it became the mausoleum for her and her husband and their only son the Prince Imperial, sadly killed in the Zulu War serving in the British army.

By 1909 Farnborough numbered forty monks, and it remained in the French Congregation until 1947, when Prinknash Abbey took it over. More remarkable still was Cardinal Vaughan's attempt to restore the Benedictine life to his new cathedral in Westminster with monks from Solesmes. But despite friendly relations, Abbot Delatte dismissed the idea, and the running of Westminster Cathedral was entrusted to secular clergy.

Meanwhile the storm broke in France with the passing of the Act of Association in1901 by the French Parliament. This gave the state complete control over religious congregations, and nearly all chose to leave France, including the two communities at Solesmes. Already they were living in houses in the village, deprived of their buildings. The monks, about ninety strong, moved into a large manor house on the Isle of Wight called Appuldurcombe House, on a seven year lease. The nuns of Ste Cecile found refuge in Ryde on the coast nearby. Other houses of the congregation found havens in Belgium, Holland, Italy and Luxembourg, where they bore fruit.

They remained in exile until 1920. While yachting at Cowes, Queen Alexandra called to visit the deposed Queen of Portugal who, as Mere Adelaide of Braganza, had

become a nun of Ste Cecile; and Abbot Delatte wrote an official 'Thank you' to Edward VII for his generous hospitality to the order. After seven years the lease expired and the monks built the new house at Quarr, followed two years later by the striking chapel designed by Dom Paul Bel.

At the same time various monks of Solesmes were continuing their research into the origins of Gregorian Chant with improved photography of documents. St Pius X who succeeded Leo XIII early in the 20th Century set his seal on the reform of church music in his Motu Proprio of 1903 that officially adopted Gregorian Chant in its traditional form, and it wasn't long before the monks in exile were entrusted with editing the liturgical books for the entire Church.

From 1880 to 1920 the history of the Church in France was a turbulent one. The appalling sacrifice of life to little purpose in World War I was a judgement on the loss of Christianity in both France and Germany, and the rise of Lenin in Russia and the Revolution of 1917 was to lead to the near domination of Communism in Eastern Europe and later China. At the same time the return of the Jewish nation to Palestine was initiated by the Balfour Declaration in 1917 after the occupation of Jerusalem by General Allenby. Only the apparitions of Our Lady at Fatima provided a glimmer of hope to Christians in that dramatic year, while warning of a second world war.

Ironically the expulsion of the Solesmes communities led to a large expansion, and fifteen new monasteries were founded in various countries. The devastation of World War I was followed by a temporary collapse of anti-clericalism in France, and both Quarr and Ryde returned to their home in Solesmes in 1920, leaving the houses on the Isle of Wight diminished but flourishing. The revival of Benedictine life, led by the Solesmes communities played a big part in the renewal of Catholicism between the wars, aided by the birth of new ecclesial movements such as Opus Dei and the Foyers of Charity.

My own introduction to Solesmes occurred in 1953 while studying in Tours at the Institut de Touraine, and I met Dom Phillipe Jobert who had joined the community at the age of 17 during the occupation, and had just been appointed assistant Guest Master. He was very knowledgeable on England and the situation there, and within two years I had been received into the Church, and remained in close touch for sixty years. The abbot who welcomed me in 1953 was Dom G. Cozien, who was only the fourth Abbot in a hundred and twenty years, and succeeded Dom Delatte in 1937.

Martin Blake, Oblate OSB (2014)

The following article appears in the current edition of the 2015 Clifton Diocesan Directory.

1914-18
OUR BELGIAN GUESTS

'Plucky little Belgium' in autumn 1914 became 'poor little Belgium' by spring 1915. Whilst Allied soldiers crossed the English Channel, vast numbers of Belgian refugees arrived in Britain. (Academic estimates suggest upwards of 225,000).

Already hard-pressed, the nation's sympathy was stirred. Many towns formed committees, and voluntary associations swung into action. The Catholic Church felt an added duty of care since many of the refugees were Catholic. Indeed all denominations were willing to work together for these unfortunate souls, who often arrived with little more than the clothes on their backs.

In Bristol, 9 Victoria Square was lent by Mr. G H Boucher (of Bristol United Breweries Ltd) and furnished with all necessities ready for the first fifty refugees who arrived on 22nd September. Within a few months it became clear that this was needed as a 'clearing house' and additional accommodation was sought. Many local businesses and individuals came to the rescue. The Bristol Building Society and Dr Watson Williams offered 5 and 6 Victoria Square respectively. W.D. & H.O. Wills provided a sports pavilion for a hundred refugees, and the Packers Chocolate Factory gave a concert hall to house a further fifty. This hall later became a military hospital.

The Catholic Women's League felt a strong affinity with the homeless Belgians. The Bath Branch, led by Mrs Geraldine King (wife of Diocesan solicitor, Austin King), was one of the first to offer hospitality. She wrote to the Bishop on 8th September, saying they had been busy fitting out a house and could 'take at least 30 or more if necessary – the Bath people, both Catholic and Protestant have been most generous in every way possible'. Bishop Burton accepted her invitation to attend a tea party to welcome the refugees.

The Clifton Diocesan Archives hold letters which highlight the concern of parish priests to ensure the refugees scattered around the diocese, often in isolated villages, had access to the sacraments. Permission was sought to say Mass in a variety of halls and rooms. Some priests deployed their language skills, giving sermons in French. Others took in a refugee Belgian priest to help, as at Campden, Minehead and Glastonbury.

Unfortunately for those wanting family history details, there is no central catalogue of those helped, nor of the helpers. Contemporary newspaper reports, however, give a flavour of what was happening at local level. The *Somerset Standard*, for example, reported on efforts made in Frome.

Frome was a busy market town with a strong rural background. Very shortly after the outbreak of war, Mr White the postmaster, realising the dire need for homes for

refugees, called a meeting of townsfolk at Mr Wheeler's Auction Mart. The gathering was enthusiastic and well attended. On October 11th the Duchess of Somerset spoke at a public meeting and afterwards she telegraphed the Belgian Hospitality Committee in London to say the town was able to take fifty refugees. Eleven adults and a child arrived by train the following day, and five more the day after. They all looked 'worn and sad'. Most were accommodated as guests in private houses, some were provided with small houses, lent rent free. Mrs Evans, for example, offered a house in Milk Street. Furniture and other necessities were borrowed and everything made 'bright and cheerful'. In one house a mother and her seven children were accommodated and they stayed in the town until March 1919.

Language was a problem so a sub-committee of French speaking ladies was set up. It included the Mother Superior of St Louis Convent (A French Religious Order), who offered the use of the orphanage grounds for the children to play together. Parish priest, Fr James Lonergan spoke French. Some refugees, disconcertingly to the locals, spoke Flemish.

In December, a Christmas party was arranged for nearly sixty refugees (adults and children), the Anglican Rev W Klamborowski took the part of Father Christmas. The paper reported that at the party their 'faces were radiant with spontaneous delight'.

But life was not always smooth: there were worries that Belgians would take the jobs from English folk. There was a case in July 1915 of a dressmaker's shop in Frome where assistants had left after a Belgian lady was put in charge.

There were around sixty refugees in Frome by the end of 1914, and they were all supported entirely by donations to the committee. Local doctors provided medical care (the NHS would not be created for another thirty years). Various people provided entertainment and amusement. Some refugees found work elsewhere and numbers fluctuated, until they settled at around thirty until the Armistice. By 1916, all still remaining were able to support themselves, with the exception of four girls at the Convent.

By January 1919 the repatriation was well in hand, but the committee felt that while the refugees had been able to support themselves for some time, they would have had little chance to save money. They arranged a fundraising 'sacred concert' to give the refugees a little financial help. In early March, the paper reported, a few of the townsmen assembled at Frome Railway Station, to say farewell to a party of thirty Belgian refugees who were leaving in a 'special carriage for Tilbury Docks en route for Antwerp'.

Mr White made a final report, on behalf of the Committee, saying that many in Frome had given weekly sums until the need ceased. This and through the canvassing by a band of ladies had resulted in 'quite £500' being raised, 'which was spent carefully and advisedly'. From time to time invitations for more refugees had been sent to London and it would be difficult to estimate how many have been received in Frome, but the number is a

large one, approximately 150, which speaks volumes for the hospitality of the town… In conclusion, we in Frome felt, and still feel, deeply grateful to the Belgian people for the miraculous and heroic way in which they held back the Germans during the first few critical weeks of the war.

In July 1919, the *Bristol Times and Echo* reported that "The King of the Belgians has conferred upon Canon Lee of Clifton, a Knighthood of the Order of the Crown, in recognition of his service to the Belgian refugees". Lee was also appointed an MBE. Both honours were for services as chairman of the Bristol Refugee Committee 1915-18. By the Second World War, Canon Lee had become Bishop of Clifton and was ably shouldering responsibilities for evacuees within his own diocese.

Gill Hogarth
Assistant Archivist, Diocese of Clifton

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The Conversations at Malines 1921-26

A bizarre qualifier for English Catholic History, as the five conversations took place in Belgium, contained no English Catholic, and was largely over the heads of the English Catholic Hierarchy. The subject matter was highly relevant to England. It was the possibility of reunion between Catholicism and the Church of England, sundered in 1534 and again in 1558/9. A failure to do more than create some goodwill, but after 400 years of hostility it was remarkable that the attempt was made.

As there were no powers of negotiation granted, and given the pragmatic selection of those attending and of the items discussed, the personalities of the participants were a key factor. The prime mover in 1921 had been the 2nd Viscount Halifax (1839-1934), the President of the High Anglican English Church Union, the grandson of the prime minister, Lord Grey of First Reform Bill fame, and father of the 3rd Viscount, dubbed 'The Holy Fox', who would have succeeded Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister in 1940, had not Winston Churchill narrowly shaded the appointment. The 3rd Viscount accompanied his father to one session at Malines, but Andrew Roberts, his biographer, pointed out that: "he was far too much of a realist ever to invest much emotional capital in this, the ultimate will-o'-the-wisp." The 2nd Viscount was zealous for unity with Rome, although it has been written that recognition by Rome outweighed his wish for unity with it. He accepted the Anglican Three Branch theory, whereby the Catholic Church had split into Rome, Anglican and Greek. It has been suggested that, as an upholder of the mighty British Empire, Halifax could not countenance that God would regard the Anglican body as outside the bounds of the Catholic Church. Lord Halifax was a person whose enthusiasm and personal authority sometimes outran his objectivity. Nor was he averse to putting a favourable spin on accounts of discussions. When his account of the Conversations was published in 1930, four of his Protestant colleagues at the

Conversations published a disclaimer in 'The Times'. For this reason I have ignored him as a source.

Balancing Lord Halifax was, to me, the most sympathetic figure of Randall Davidson, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury. He was wary of Halifax, and had the ability to get to the root of the matters discussed, though he himself never attended the Conversations. He was faced throughout the 1920's with the difficult problem of holding the Body together, as there were ritualists who wanted the prayer book moved from the austerity of the Reformation; to legalise practices which had a Roman feel about them. Malines would fan the fears of those grounded strongly in unyielding Protestantism. (In 1928 the House of Commons rejected the Revised Prayer Book).

I have done no original research, but have attempted to distil four books, which I recommend to those who really wish to delve into detail. The two biographers of Cardinal Bourne have been Ernest Oldmeadow (published in 1944, Volume 2 Chapter 53), and Father Mark Vickers ('By the Thames divided: Cardinal Bourne in Southwark and Westminster', published in 2013, Chapter 22). Certainly they didn't see eye to eye on Malines. The Anglican, W H Frere, who was present throughout the Conversations, published a short fair-minded book: 'Recollections of Malines' in 1935. Volume 2 of G K A Bell's biography of Randall Davidson, also published in 1935, devotes Chapter 79 to the Conversations (and has another excellent chapter on the Prayer Book controversy).

The story of Malines begins on Madeira in 1889, where Charles Lindley Wood, 2nd Viscount Halifax, was holidaying with his family. He met a Lazarist French Catholic priest on a rest cure, the Abbé Portal, and they undertook long walks together. Halifax persuaded Portal that there was very little difference between Rome and the Anglicans, and probably Portal didn't know much about the Low Church wing of Anglicanism. (Halifax, himself, had reservations about Papal Infallibility and the Immaculate Conception). On the strength of that, the two campaigned for recognition by Rome of Anglican Orders, and later for corporate unity.

The signs were not propitious. In 1864 English Catholics had been forbidden to join or remain in the Association for the Reunion of Christendom, because of the Branch theory. Cardinal Vaughan, Archbishop of Westminster, became so suspicious of the thrust for unity that he wrote that the Unity Movement was 'a snare and delusion of the evil one.' But the cause of Halifax and Portal initially made some progress in Rome. Pope Leo 13th appointed a commission to examine the possible validity of Anglican Orders. In 1896 he acted on the report, condemning, in 'Apostolicae Curae', Anglican Orders as 'absolutely null and utterly void. The opposition of the English Catholic hierarchy to recognition was not forgotten by Halifax and Portal.

The unity question then remained dormant for almost a quarter of a century. Portal was commanded to cease his pro-Canterbury activities, and Pope Pius 10th entrenched the Catholic position in his struggle against modernism.

The unity issue was re-awakened by the 1920 Lambeth Conference. It was resolved that 'No satisfactory project for the reunion of Christians could exclude the great Church of Rome'.

Halifax spotted his chance, and linking up with Portal, visited Randall Davidson, who was probably rather trapped by the resolution. Halifax also visited Cardinal Bourne, but it is contentious how much he revealed of his intentions. Decisively, Halifax and Portal then visited Cardinal Mercier in Belgium. Cardinal Mercier had gained immense prestige during the German occupation of his country, but it is doubtful whether his knowledge of English Catholic history exceeded Portal's. It is alleged that he didn't even know that Anglican Orders had been condemned. His heart left him vulnerable to Halifax's persuasion and he agreed to host the Malines Conversations. Cardinal Bourne and the English Catholic Hierarchy were, in effect, frozen out, and reports back to England were directed to Randall Davidson.

Davidson gave the Anglican members no negotiating powers, and insisted that the Conversations should be conducted in absolute secrecy. Cardinal Mercier, his Vicar-General, Mgr Van Roey, and the Abbé Portal were the Catholic element. Lord Halifax had managed to veto two Catholics hostile to Anglican Orders. He was accompanied by W H Frere, the future Anglican Bishop of Truro, and Dr Armitage Robinson, the Anglican Dean of Wells.

The first Conversation took place between December 6th and December 8th 1921. The opening session lasting two hours, covered the Council of Trent, the 39 Articles, the First Vatican Council and the process by which Catholic beliefs became articles of faith. After lunch, the topics were baptism, the eucharistic sacrifice, communion in both kinds, dogma, jurisdiction, extreme unction and penance. On Day Two, the 1920 Lambeth Appeal to Rome was considered but, as it was also directed to the orthodox and non-episcopal Protestant bodies, no progress was made. On Day 3 the minutes were tidied up. One feature of this and subsequent Conversations was an absence of acrimony, despite disagreements.

15 months later, on March 14th and 16th 1923, the second Conversation took place, between the same members. Each party submitted a memorandum. The Anglican one seemed to rush the fence by suggesting that the Archbishop of Canterbury would become a patriarch of the Catholic Church, recognised by a General Council of the Church, whose powers would be greater than those of the Pope. The residual English Catholic Hierarchy would report directly to the Pope and not to Canterbury. As the Anglicans would not assent to the dogmas of Papal Infallibility and the Immaculate Conception, unsurprisingly nothing came of it.

The third Conversation occurred 8 months later on 7th and 8th November 1923. Each side expanded its membership from 3 to 5. Dr Davidson recommended Dr Gore, the former Anglican Bishop of Exeter, and Dr Beresford Kidd, the Warden of Keble College. The Catholics added Mgr Pierre Batiffol and the Abbé Hippolyte Hemmer. The Anglicans, Dr Robinson and Dr Kidd respectively, read papers on St Peter in the primitive church and on the Petrine texts as used up to 461 AD. No agreement was reached on the principle of jurisdiction.

Secrecy was exploded on Boxing day 1923 when Randall Davidson made public to the newspapers that the Conversations had been taking place sporadically for two years. This went down badly with the Low Church element, but he defended it in the light

of the 1920 Lambeth Declaration. English orthodox Catholics were also upset, but as the Cardinal had been cold shouldered, he was less vulnerable. It was realised that the Conversations had 'no teeth' It also underlined the obvious point that Malines could never speak for the Church of England as a whole.

The fourth Conversation took place on May 19th and 20th 1925, with the same ten participants. On the second day an Anglican asked Cardinal Mercier whether the Catholic Church could be enlarged to take in the Anglican body. The Cardinal referred the question to a Belgian Canonist, Dom Lambert Beauduin, a Benedictine monk. The question put was, 'Is it possible that the English Church could be reunited, without being absorbed in the Roman Church?' The Canonist suggested minimalist unity with the papacy: virtual autonomy, with its own liturgy and possibly a married clergy. (A foreshadow of the ordinariate, but for all Anglicans). This radical document was not included in the official papers and complete copies were not permitted to be taken away.

At this point, Randall Davidson wrote to Cardinal Mercier, introducing a dose of reality. "The fundamental question – is there, or is there not, a Vicar of Christ upon earth, who possesses 'Jure divino' a distinctive authoritative position in relation to the whole of Christendom? Upon that great question, if it has in its largest aspect been discussed (at Malines) at all, there has been, so far as I know, no approach to agreement, and that fact must beyond question, be set forth clearly in any record which is made public. I have no hesitation in saying that to publish a record or summary of the discussions without making outspoken reference to that great unremoved mountain of difficulty would be worse than useless".

A row then broke out as Lord Halifax stated publicly that reconciliation with Rome does not involve denial of the historic claims of Canterbury. A Jesuit, Father Woodlock, challenged this and wrote to Cardinal Mercier. This was treated with disdain and later with sarcasm by the Cardinal. This provoked Cardinal Bourne finally to remonstrate on 29th October 1925 with Cardinal Mercier on his treatment. "Your Eminence has kept honourably the silence imposed upon or accepted by you but it is manifest that the same discretion is not being observed by Anglicans and they openly declare that the views of the Holy See held at Malines are not the same as those taught by us in England. The Abbé Portal is allowed to speak in Belgium and we are not allowed even to have an accurate account of what he actually said. The Anglicans are treated as friends. We, the Catholics of England, apparently as untrustworthy." The letter continued in the same devastating vein. Cardinal Mercier's replies were unconvincing, but it is hard to see how he could escape Cardinal Bourne's allegations. Mercier had stomach cancer and had entered his final 3 months.

It was the grim reaper that finally terminated Malines. Cardinal Mercier died on 23rd January 1926 and the Abbé Portal in July 1926. The 5th and final Conversation was convened for 12th October 1926. Dr Frere, Lord Halifax and Dr Kidd were the Anglican members and Mgr Van Roey, Mgr Batiffol and the Abbé Hippolyte Hemmer formed the Catholic team. But the two days were occupied with a review of the Conversations and the drawing up of an overall report. This was not published until 1928.

By that time Rome had pronounced sentence on such talks. On 6th January 1928, Pope Pius 11th spoke out on the issue of true religious unity in the encyclical, 'Mortalium Animos', setting out the Catholic stance in wholly unambiguous and uncompromising terms: "Shall we commit the iniquity of suffering the truth, the truth revealed by God, to be made a subject for compromise?" Cardinal Bourne wrote a highly sympathetic introduction to the English edition. Had this clear statement been made 8 years earlier, it seems unlikely that Malines could have got off the ground.

It is ironic that Lord Halifax's Herculean efforts to obtain unity have placed two weapons in the hands of those Catholics, who don't share his enthusiasm for it. His 1890's crusade for recognition of Anglican Orders resulted in an absolute papal rejection of them. Thirty years later, unity only on terms dictated by Rome, slammed the door on corporate reunion with the Anglican body as a whole.

Alan Whaits.

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WEBSITES

ECHA WEBSITE http://echa.org.uk/

HIGH WYCOMBE VISIT

http://www.st-augustines-church.org.uk/
http://www.northamptondiocese.org/

GLASTONBURY VISIT

http://www.glastonburyshrine.co.uk/StMarys/index.php
http://www.glastonburyabbey.com/
http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/glastonbury-tor/

STONOR VISIT

http://www.stonor.com/home.htm
http://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=624
http://www.southernoxfordshire.com/henley.php

2015 PROGRAMME

- **MARCH: Thursday 26th Farington – Leyland, Lancs**
  Requiem Mass for King Richard III On the occasion of his interment
- **APRIL: Wednesday 15th High Wycombe, Bucks**.
  St Augustine's Church. **St. Nicholas Owen – Priest-Hole Maker** to be discussed by the book's author -Tony Reynolds. **Dudley Charles Cary-Elwes, A Forgotten and Underrated Bishop** presented by Mrs Margaret Osborne.
  ECHA Organiser: Mrs Sheila Mawhood - booking form enclosed
- **MAY: Wednesday 20th. Glastonbury**
  An Overview of Devotion to Our Lady in Glastonbury from Earliest times to the Present Day. Speaker Dr Timothy Hopkinson-Bell.**Tour of Glastonbury Abbey.**
  ECHA Organiser**:** Mrs E Hunter-Johnson - booking form enclosed
- **JUNE: Saturday 6th York** – 20th Catholic History Day
  Organiser – Judith Smeaton
- **JUNE**: **Tuesday 16th Stonor Park** nr Henley
  Mass in the family chapel and private tour of the house.
  ECHA Organiser – Mrs Sheila Mawhood - booking form enclosed
- **JULY**: **Worcester** jointly with Midland Catholic History Society - St George's R.C Church and the Cathedral Library.
  Date to be advised.
- **SEPTEMBER: Coventry** St Osburg's R.C. church, Holy Trinity Anglican church (medieval Doom painting), Coventry Cathedral (three cathedrals' group tour)
  Details to follow
- **SEPTEMBER**: visit to Northamptonshire planned– the Triangular Lodge and Lyveden New Bield.
  Date and details to follow.
- **OCTOBER**: Annual Day conference and AGM.
  Date and details to follow.