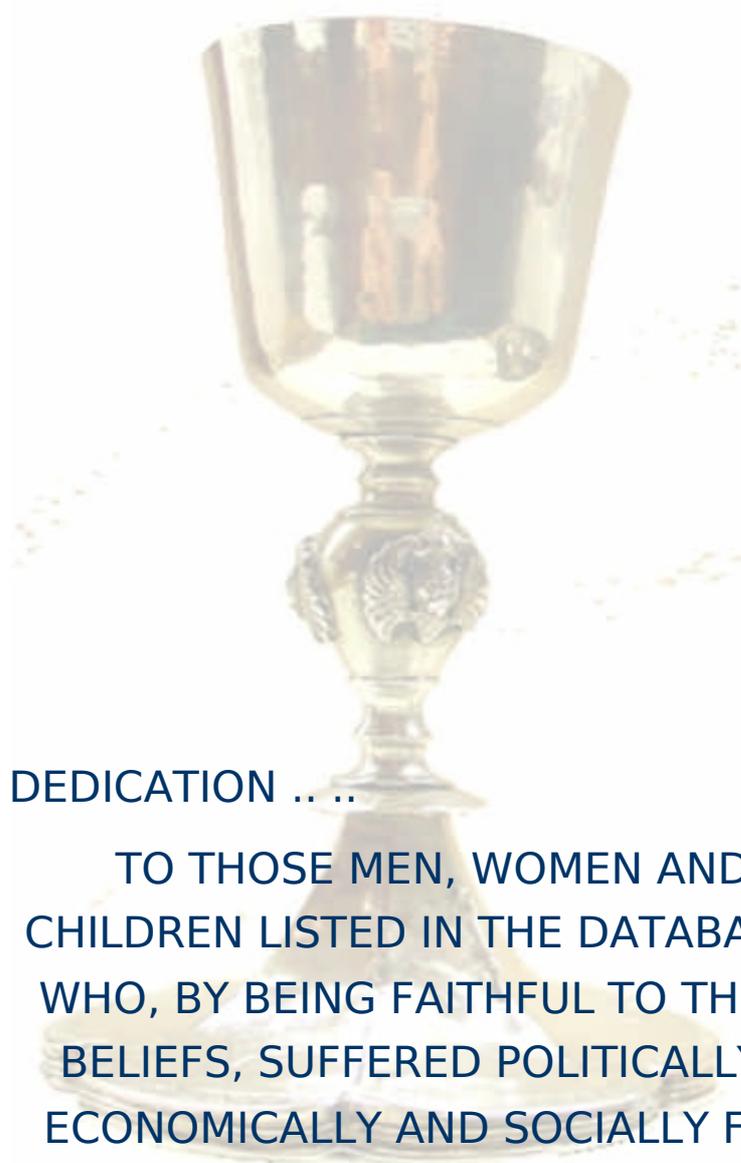


THE MARGARET HIGGINS
DATABASE
OF
CATHOLICS IN ENGLAND
AND THEIR FRIENDS
1607-1840



DEDICATION

TO THOSE MEN, WOMEN AND
CHILDREN LISTED IN THE DATABASE,
WHO, BY BEING FAITHFUL TO THEIR
BELIEFS, SUFFERED POLITICALLY,
ECONOMICALLY AND SOCIALLY FOR
THEY ARE NOT
“FORGOTTEN AMONG THE LILIES”

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VIEW STATIC PAGES OF THE DATABASE in PDF FORMAT

There are 3,348 pages of text, each measuring 35½"x 18", requiring sideways scrolling.

Although word searchable, this is a slow and inefficient way to find the data,

[CLICK TO HERE VIEW](#)

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**DOWNLOAD THE EXCEL VERSION (.xlsx) of THE DATABASE
TO YOUR COMPUTER for Personal manipulation and analysis using Filters.**

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INTRODUCTION

The Roman Senator, Cicero says, “The life of the dead lies in the memory of the living” (Philippic, IX). This quotation will serve as one of the bookends of this introduction. The other bookend will be a quotation from that Christian Berber of the 4th century, which will be given at the conclusion of this introduction.

Cicero’s words, “The life of the dead lies in the memory of the living” provide one of the reasons for compiling a database of names and details of over a quarter of a million Catholics and their friends in England from 1607 to 1840.

Simply, I wanted the men, women and children who are listed in the database and who freely chose to be politically, economically and socially disadvantaged, to be named and remembered and not forgotten. For we carry their genes and culture in us. In some ways, they help us to define who we are.

October of this year marks the 250th anniversary of the submission of the Returns or lists of Papists of 1767 to Parliament. This is known because the Bishop of Lincoln required his clergy to submit the returns for his diocese before Michaelmas in order that the Returns could be submitted at the next session of Parliament (Worrall, Edward: *Returns of Papists of 1767*, Vol.2, London, Catholic Record Society, px). The Returns of 1767 are significant for students and researchers of English Catholic history, historians and family historians. Why? The Returns contained the surname and Christian names of ordinary and extraordinary people, their occupations are given, their ages, where they lived and even how long they had resided in their places of abode. Without those returns and the returns of other years, the names of many would be lost forever. The lists or returns of 1767 remained housed in the House of Lords for hundreds of years only to be published in our lifetime.

As a result of criticism in the newspapers that the Anglican bishops were not doing enough to stop the spread of Catholicism, early in 1767 the House of Lords began an enquiry. The result was that on 22nd May the House voted an address to the King asking that the bishops of England and Wales direct their parish clergy to “correct and complete lists as can be obtained of the papists or reputed papists, distinguishing their parishes, sexes, ages and occupations and how long they have been there resident” (John Bridge: *The Lowe House Story 1743-93*, p48). Somehow, and thankfully for us, two hundred and fifty years later, it turned out that the Anglican parish clergy thought names had to be also submitted.

More than half of the Catholics in England in 1767 are named, with their ages, occupations, place of abode and length of residence. Their names can be found in the database. It needs to be said

that while the database provides names in alphabetical order for the Returns of 1767, this is a small percentage (15%) of the total number of names that are contained in the database.

Imagine that this evening upon your return to home you are sitting at your computer and opening up a database listing names of over 275,000 people living between the period of 1607 and 1840 who may be your ancestors. The database has provision for the surname of your ancestors or person of interest, the Christian name, occupation, age, the name of the parish, the length of residency, other details and the source or reference from which you may find further relevant information.

This database has been made possible through the support of a number of persons and organisations. It is with great joy and gratitude that the financial support given to the project by the Trustees of the Andrew Duncan Trust led by Doctor Leo Gooch and Professor Alexandra Walsham and the Catholic Family History Society be acknowledged. The database would not have been as good as it is without their financial assistance given.

Having completed the task of compiling the database, the constant theme running through out the project has been the goodness of people in supporting the project. Through the Society's journal "*Catholic Ancestor*", I asked members if they would be prepared to visit county record offices and other archives to find lists of Catholics. Various members of the Society stepped forward and sent the lists to me. In particular the present Chairman of the Society, Mrs. Sylvia Dibbs, was outstanding in compiling thirty or forty lists of thousands of names for which I am very grateful and so will you be and many future researchers and historians.

In 1977, I was reading James Hugh Donohoe's published list of *The Catholics of New South Wales, 1788-1820* and their families. I began to wonder from where did these Catholics come. What were their origins and circumstances, which led to their transportation to and settlement in New South Wales?

At the same time while I was wondering about the origins of these Australian Catholics, Mr. Edward Worrall and his team of fellow historians had discovered lists of names of Catholics in the House of Lords from the same period, namely that of pre-transportation to New South Wales.

There was a problem. These lists of names from 1767 were parish based. If you knew the name of parish in which your ancestor lived, it would be quite easy to find if the person was listed. If you did not the name of the parish, you would have to go painstakingly through the list of some 28,000 names. I set out to enter the names from 1767 into a database and after six months the work was completed. With the press of a button, within 30 seconds the 28,000 names were sorted and an alphabetical list appeared. It was then that I found there were other returns of papists of 1767 that had not been sent to the House of Lords. These Returns covered the dioceses of Oxford, Norwich,

Salisbury and Worcester. Through the Internet it was discovered where these Returns existed and after suitable arrangements were made, copies of the lists were ordered and received.

The question emerged, “Were there other Returns other than those of 1767? Because the government wanted to keep surveillance on Catholics and a possible, and in some cases enacted, a means of financial extraction, it was found that beside the 1767 returns there were many returns, for example, for the years 1705-6, 1711, 1735, 1745 and 1780. Some Returns were made for reasons of fear and of surveillance. As an example is the returns of 1711 that were made in the response to the murder of Robert Harley by French Catholic Marquis de Guiscard (Holt, Geoffrey: *The English Jesuits in the Age of Reason*, Tunbridge Wells, Burns & Oates, 1993, pp40-41). Later it was found there were lists of names regarding the oaths of allegiance that Catholics took in 1778 and 1791. As the Internet expanded more lists became available online. These returns and other sources proved to be gold mines of information.

In setting out to create the database, it was thought that it may be helpful to have the facility of doing searches not just on the surname but also on place of residence as a way of bringing together, and with one glance, to see the names of all the people in that parish. There is a reason for this. Over a period of two hundred and fifty years, pronunciation and spelling of family names change yet these people belong to the same family. With the desire to have the facility of sorting the various fields of surname, the Margaret Higgins Database of Catholics in England has the capacity to sort not just on surname, but on any of the other fields, such as, occupation and place of residence either parish or even village.

The question could be asked why not call the database of papists rather than a database of Catholics because it was the name “Papist” which was applied to the returns? This is a good question.

As we know, the victors write the history. If so, is this the reason why the dissolution of the monasteries is so called rather than the stealing from men and woman religious as well as the people of England who gave to the monasteries? Is this the reason why Glorious Revolution of 1688 is so called rather than the invasion of the Dutch, or even the use of such adjectives as Bloody Mary or Good Queen Bess? While, Mary burned between 300–400 Protestants, after the Northern Rebellion 1569-70, under Elizabeth far more were executed.

The decision was made that the database would have the name that those listed in the database called themselves, that is Catholic, rather than a name such as Papists, which was applied to them by forces that were not always supportive.

The title of the database is *The Margaret Higgins Database of Catholics in England and their friends 1607-1840*. It could not be a database of English Catholics for the reason that there were thousand of names in the database belonging to Catholics who lived in England but were French,

Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Welsh, Scottish and indeed Irish Catholics. Their names are included in the database.

When Catholics married or wrote their wills, their non-Catholic friends were present as witnesses to the marriage or the signing of the will. Their names are to be found in the database. In one case, I even found the non-Catholic George III and his wife, Queen Charlotte, were godparents for a Catholic baptism (George Charles Ferdinande De Starhemberg) at the Imperial (Austrian) Embassy Chapel on 23.Jan.1802. The name of friends of Catholics who acted as godparents or witnesses is also included in the database.

It is from my mother, Margaret Higgins, after whom the database is named, that my English ancestry derives. As a result of finding that my great grandfather was born in London in 1854, I wondered what would be the probability of finding that Thomas More was an ancestor. Having taught mathematics for thirty years I worked out the probability. There was a chance of one in forty of being descended from such a man of integrity. The task of finding out was worth a try. I set out to do so and managed to trace the family back to the time of the Tudors. I did so only to find out, for my pride, that I am descended from a person who was a friend of Thomas More. His name was Richard Rich, a perjurer. It was on his so-called evidence that Thomas was convicted and executed. So much for my pride! And thank you, mother!

From Sylvia Dibb's book, "*The Family of John Weetman*", we read these touching words from the book of Sirach.

“Let us now sing the praises of your ancestors ...
Some of them have left behind a name, so that others declare their praise.
These were godly people, whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten!
Their offspring will continue forever, and their glory will never be blotted out!
Their bodies are buried in peace, but their name lives on generation after generation.
The assembly declares their wisdom, and the congregation proclaims their praise!”
(Sirach 44 Ecclesiastes)

Let's spend some time examining the evidence for believing that these words from Sirach are not idle words in reference to those named in the database. Why? The answer is for the reasons of appreciating those extraordinary men and women.

The year is about 1776. The place is London. One woman recalls; “We started from our lodgings at five in the morning to be present for the first time at a Catholic religious service, or at prayers, as it was generally called, for the word Mass was scarcely ever used in conversation. We arrived at a public house in some back street (of London). I felt rather frightened, seeing some very rough looking poor people as we passed through the entrance, though all were very quiet. These people, I was told, were Irish workmen, who, with a few women, were assembled on that Sunday morning to

hear prayers when they could be admitted. We hurried passed them but I could not help but cling to my husband having a sense of undefined fear of what was going to happen. We mounted higher and higher. When we arrived at the top the door of the garret was unlocked. A young man placed a few chairs and cushions for our seats. In a few minutes the door opened and the venerable Dr.Challoner entered the garret, the door of which was secured inside. After receiving four sacraments, I knew the fifth and the most solemn was to come. We heard the door key turn, and several rough footsteps enter the garret, then some gentle taps, and words were exchanged between a powerful-looking Irishman who kept his post close to it, and those outside, which were passwords of admission. The key was again turned each time any one entered, and just before the Bishop vested himself to say Mass, bolts were drawn also, and no one else could pass into the garret. When all was over, and I was praying to God to increase my faith, I heard the door key turn once more, and all the rough footsteps leaving the garret - an ordinary one in appearance.”

From this edited story comes from Henrietta Barnewall’s *One Hundred Years Ago*, (1877, pp53-57), regarding her grandmother, the reader senses fear. The year was about 1776, nine years after the Returns of 1767. Catholics lived in fear and chose to do so because of their faith.

The thought might be that this was an isolated incident. From the same author comes the fascinating and amusing story of Sir George Mannock, of Gifford Hall, Suffolk. He was lord of the manor. To disguise that he was a priest, he wore silk coats, made in the most fashionable style, ruffles of the finest lace, a diamond ring, pin, and buckles and with his sword conspicuous (p89). George and the parson, who knew of George’s priesthood, were good friends and often travelled together. On one of these travels they had arrived at a village inn in the next county and while they were at dinner they discovered that a rumour had spread that a priest would arrive in the same village that day. The village was close to a country town and a large crowd assembled outside the inn. Shouts were heard. “Where is the Popish rascal?” “Where is the villain?” “We’ll serve him out.” The mob got worse, renewed its shouts, and swore great oaths that the priest would not leave the inn and enter the carriage. The more soberly dressed parson was identified as the Catholic priest. Stones were levelled at him. With coolness of mind, the real priest, introduced himself as Sir George Mannock of Gifford Hall and assured the mob that his companion was neither priest nor papist but “one of your own clergy of the Church of England.” Fearing that George might be a magistrate, the ringleaders apologised and the priest and the parson entered the carriage unmolested (Henrietta Barnewall: *One Hundred Years Ago*, 1877, pp93-97) with relief and laughter. This incident occurred between 1781, the date George received the baronetcy and 1787, the date of his death. Catholics had good reason to be afraid of the mob even in the dying years of the 18th century. Further to this, the anti-Catholic riots led by Gordon, a few years earlier in 1780 give credence to the view that Catholics could be targeted at any time.

The cover of the CD includes a picture of a recusant chalice. Such a picture was chosen in an attempt to bring to the fore the notion that it was the celebration of the Eucharist that was the source and summit of the life of Catholics during the penal times, as it is today. It was not without reason that Queen Elizabeth knew that by passing a law (27 Eliz.c.2) in 1585 of making it high treason for priests to function in England, there was a good chance that Catholicism would die (*Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1913, Penal Laws) because the Eucharist could not be celebrated.

The importance of the celebration of the Eucharist to Catholics is illustrated by two short stories. One is from Somerset around the year 1767 and the other from Lincolnshire in the 1740's.

It is known that from Shepton Mallet, Somerset, William Hippisley and his wife, Ann, would walk twenty miles to go to mass at Bristol and sometimes even to Bath (*Recusant History*, Vol.26, No.1, May.2002, p114).

The second story comes from Lincolnshire in the 1740's. It was still a capital crime to harbour a priest. At the risk of their lives, men conveyed family, friends and priest in the dead of the night to one secret place or another among the neighbouring recusants' country houses, where they would hear Mass at break of day, and to return, as unobserved as they might be, to their homes (Haile, Martin and Bonney, Edwin: *Life and Letters of John Lingard 1771-1851*, London, Herbert Daniel, 1911, pp2-3).

Earlier in the year, the hugely successful novelist, historian and twice winner of the Booker Prize, Dame Hilary Mantel in her BBC Reith Lectures gave us the insight and I quote, "One of the hardest things to put over to a modern audience is the faith mindset. But having said that, in our present-day world, faith is a driver of so many world events and people's concept of the next world, of eternal punishment and of eternal reward. It is one of the most powerful drivers of human conduct" (BBC Radio 4, Reith Lecture 1: *The Day is for Living*, Manchester, 2017, accessed June.2017). This database is an attempt to present a view that faith was a significant component in the lives of many people.

According to Eamon Duffy (*Fires of Faith Catholic England under Mary Tudor*, px), the historian's task is to explore that other country, the past, and to bring back news of how its people differed from, as well as resembled, ourselves.

Combining the insights of Hilary Mantel and Eamon Duffy, this introduction includes the touching story about a woman named Ursula Hawkswell.

The time is winter 1734 and Ursula stands in front of a crowd of Yorkshire people. Twenty-four years before she became a Protestant and prosecuted two priests: one was sent to gaol and the other fled. Ursula betrayed all the grounds and house of the priest and sold them, kept all the church plate, goods and furniture of the house and chapel. Yet, on that wintry third Sunday of Advent in

December 1734 she stood with lighted torch openly confessing her faults and great evils, humbly desired to be reconciled to the Church which was done before the people, they crying for joy, and she for sorrow of her crimes and scandals. Ursula died 25.May.1735, having received all the holy rites of the Church: aged four score and three (*Catholic Record Society*, Vol.14, pp372f).

Her story, to a larger or smaller degree, may resemble our own story of conviction, confession and hopefully conversion.

Why did I do the database? Over the thousands and thousands of hours spent in researching and entering data this question has emerged for me a good number of times. With further thought, the reasons can be narrowed down to two. The first is that for many, if not most, of the persons whose names are contained in the database, they were what the Church calls “The Faithful”. That was what and who they are, “the Faithful”. I am inspired by men and women who forsook power, privilege, possession and prestige for what they believed and in doing so, knowing that they will be financially, socially, educationally and politically deprived. Having potatoes in the soup rather than potatoes and beef was a real choice, which people faced on a daily basis. It was felt in the stomach. People consciously made that decision. I wanted those good people to be remembered. They are ancestors of which you can be proud. My hope is that in compiling this database, the names of these men and women will not be forgotten. To find your ancestor among those listed in the database, with all their sins, faults and foibles, is nevertheless something of which to be proud.

There is a second reason for the compiling this database. One of the things we say at the Sunday Eucharist is the creed and in which we say, “I believe in the communion of saints”. I like to believe the database contains the names of people who in choosing to live poorer economic, social, political and educational lives are saints now in heaven and that as I entered their names into the database, they would pray for me.

We began this introduction with the bookend borrowed from Cicero, “The life of the dead lies in the memory of the living.” The other bookend for this introduction comes from Augustine and he says that the life of the dead is not just in the memory of the living. His words are “The dead are invisible but they are not absent” .. “for we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12:1).

The database, presented to you today, is a reminder that the dead are not forgotten but honoured.

THE VALUE and AN ANALYSIS of THE DATABASE

It is estimated that in 1687 there were about 60,000 Catholics in England (Hilton, J.A & Mitchinson, A.J et al: *Bishop Leyburn's Confirmation Register of 1687*, North West Catholic History, 1997, p4). By 1767 there was an increase of 7,000 making a total of 67,000 (Worrall, E: *Returns of Papists 1767*, Vol.2, London, Catholic Record Society, pix). For the period from 1687 to 1767 the database contains approximately 120,000 names. In total, the database gives names and details for more than a quarter of a million names.

This is not to say that the database is perfect. It is not. Accuracy in recording the names is an ever-present difficulty. The person says his or her name. Another person writes it down as they hear it. Later, copies are made. This copy might then be copied and sent to London. In the meantime, differences in spelling have emerged. Researchers have to be careful. The website Familysearch estimates that its data for the International Genealogical Index has about a 5% error rate. This translates to one mistake for every twenty words or letters typed. One needs to be careful in taking everything as being correct.

As mentioned above, the Returns of 1767 indicate that there were about 67,000 Catholics in England. The database provides the names, occupation, ages and place of residency for more than half the Catholic population in England for that year. If some names were missed, then there is the chance of them being found in the earlier Returns of 1758, or 1765 or that next big Return which occurred in 1780. The net for the database has been cast wide and deep.

Sadly, and with a sense of frustration, there are lists from 1767, which do not name the person but give his or her initials. Thankfully, other details such as age, occupation and place of abode are also given. From the Returns from other years in which names are given, there can be some cross-referencing. Sorting on the field of parish and town may reveal further information and possibilities.

Two examples should suffice for the usefulness of sorting on fields other than surname and Christian name. When the researcher sorts on parish, it can be seen that for the parish of Charmouth in Dorset there is only one Catholic listed for 1767. He is a gentleman aged 58. Sadly there is not a name. However, because the researcher has sorted on parish, there is only one person in Charmouth living there in 1791. He is a Catholic gentleman and he is named Samuel Farmston.

The second example concerns the 1767 returns of Papists for Patricksburn, a parish in Kent. There is found only one Catholic. His name is not given but he is a shoemaker, aged 43, with a wife, a son aged 11 and a daughter aged 9. However, when the 1758 Returns are examined, there is only one Catholic in that parish: a shoemaker with the name of Thomas Somers. The fact is that if the

researcher is prepared to sort on the fields of County and Parish as well as just Parish alone, more is to be discovered.

Persistence does pay and with some joy. There was some joy in the exercise. The Oxfordshire History Centre has two sets of documents for 1767. One set titled "Ms.Oxf.Dioc, B.101" gave the name of Francis Allibarton, of Somerton labourer, aged 47 and wife Sarah aged 38 and four children while another document titled "Ms.Oxf.Dioc, Papers 430" gave the names and the ages of the children.

The use of multiple sources provides opportunities for success. The 1767 Returns for the Oxfordshire parish of Great Tew gave only initials rather than the complete name of Catholics. Yet, from the sources found in the Birmingham Archdiocese Archives it looks as if the whole family with ages and occupations can be identified. What is interesting is that only the initials are given. This begs the question; why not provide the full name? It might be that the returning officer was attempting to protect himself if he listed a Protestant as a Catholic. A list titled "Papists or reputed Papists" could be an attempt to avoid prosecution.

Occasionally in examining the database, the researcher will notice the presence of Irish names long before the Irish famine of the 1840's forced massive emigration. As early as 1687 those of Irish name of Murphy can be found in York. It is there at Jubber Gate that Clara and Teresa Morphy [sic] caused to be listed in a confirmation register (Hilton, J.A: *Bishop Leyburn's Confirmation Register of 1687*, Wigan, North West Catholic History Society, 1997, p256). Further Irish names can be found in the database for the period throughout the 1700's, especially for those living in London.

The database is a great resource for those interested in Irish ancestors. Besides Clara and Teresa Morphy living in York in 1687, there are the Murpheys, the O'Briens, the Ryans and the Kellys listed in the database between 1750 and 1837. From this it can be seen there were large numbers of Irish in England before the famine. Even before 1750 the Irish were present. From the Derbyshire Record office it can be discovered, a memorandum of a conversation dated 19.Nov.1745, where Alexander Garl or Gell, then a Chelsea out-pensioner, stated that there were many Irish papists in the battalion of the Royal Scotch (Derbyshire Record Office: (D3155/c/705). This not surprising when this battalion was stationed in Ireland for twenty or more years, only to leave Ireland in 1742.

There is another reason why the database is valuable? The reason refers to what is lacking in other databases. Many Catholic marriages, births and family connections that are given in the database are not to be found at "www.familysearch". Perhaps the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints is waiting for an appropriate time to commence the extensive amount of work required to enter the information contained in the publications of the Catholic Record Society into its own database.

A word of warning! If the researcher is able to use the software, Microsoft Access, it would be worthwhile to make use of the asterisk, “*”, in searching for names. This wildcard will reveal possibilities for the various spellings of names. In the database, it is possible to find nineteen variations of the name “Donoghue” and that does not include the variations for “O’Donoghue”. As an example of using the asterisk “*”, the database contains the name of John Clarimbolt, a cobbler, living in Shovel Alley in the London parish of St. Michael, Wood Street in 1706 and he kept a stall at St. Martin’s Le Grand. In using the asterisk the database reveals that a John Clarinbowle married Anne Noblet on 2nd February 1709 in the Portuguese Embassy Chapel and in 1711 a John Claringboule was living in Shovel Alley, St. Michael, Wood Street parish. If this is the same person, the difference in spelling could well be the difference in the interpretation of particular letters by the reader of the document or even the person compiling the list of papists when he heard the name in 1706 or the celebrating priest in 1709 in trying to remember how the name was pronounced.

Throughout most of the 1700’s, it was still illegal and punishable by death if it was proved that a Catholic priest functioned as a priest in England. For this reason a priest could be reluctant to keep a record of any wedding, baptism or death at which he officiated. What is surprising is the existence of so many records of baptisms, marriages and deaths. Michael Gandy is to be congratulated on producing six volumes giving details of the locations and details of many English Catholic registers.

The database is more than a list of births, deaths and marriages. Owing to strong government interest in Catholics, lists of those who took oaths of allegiance and/or adjuration were compiled and these are given in the database. The oath of allegiance was an oath to the ruling monarch of the times while the person taking the oath of adjuration adjured the Stuart’s claim to the throne (Geoffrey Holt: *The English Jesuits in the Age of Reason*, Tunbridge Wells, Burns & Oates, 1993, p49). Confirmation lists, lists of godparents, called gossips, those who were reconciled with the Church, or even in the case of Marlow Sidney and his wife Mary receiving five sacraments in the one day (Henrietta Barnewell: *One Hundred Years Ago*, London, R. Washbourne, 1877, p56) are included for viewing in the database. The beauty of the database is that it brings home the notion that people’s lives are more than being born, marrying, having children, writing a will and dying. The database provides insight into the spiritual lives of people, (*Catholic Record Society*: 25, pp249-50). The database provides opportunities for the researcher to discover those personal events, if not movements of the heart of one’s ancestors.

Catholic Baptismal registers are a valuable resource. Unlike the other Christian denominations, the Catholic registers more often than not record the names of the godparents. As one can imagine this can lead to the naming of other relatives such as siblings and uncles and aunts of the one being

baptised. It is thought that at least one of the godparents had to be a Catholic. If so, this may explain the inclusion of George III in 1802 as one of the godparents even if he was the supreme governor of the Church of England.

One day, I was asked by one of my sisters if I knew anything more about our ancestors other than the dates of births, deaths and marriages. This is the reason for including the names from lists of Easter communicants, those enrolled in the Rosary Confraternity and lists of those who received the sacrament of Confirmation. The researcher is encouraged not to underestimate the value of the Confirmation lists. Part of the function of a bishop is to confer the sacrament of confirmation. The bishop would visit parishes and it may be years later till he returned to the same area, having visited other parishes in the mean time. This means that often brothers and sisters were confirmed together and were listed as such. This information can be vital in looking for ancestors among further marriages of their brothers and sisters as well as looking among the wills of their brothers and sisters where one's ancestors may be listed. It is to be found that even parents' names can be given when the sacrament of confirmation was given, as is the case for the Lancashire parish of Brindle in the 1740's. From Staffordshire, Thomas Talbot's confirmation list for 1784 give not only the names of those receiving the sacrament but also the father's names.

In 1745 Bonnie Prince Charlie with his army reached Derby on his way to London to claim the throne of his ancestors. He got no further but for us we are a little further in our searching for ancestors. Lists were made, and kept, of papists and non-jurors. Sadly, sometimes the names of non-jurors were not distinguished from those of Catholics. The decision was made to include both sets of names in the database, as there was a need not to exclude the name of a possible Catholic. On a positive note, there was found a list of men who had joined Charles' army who were named as Catholics.

There is a word of caution for the Lists of Papists and Non-jurors for the year 1745. While the recorders were required to list both sets of people on occasion the only title given to the list is of Papists only. This may be correct but there is no guarantee that those named in the list were all papists. Nevertheless, all names, be they papist or Protestant non-jurors have been included in the database.

For wills of Catholics, the names of beneficiaries and witnesses are to be found in the database.

There appears to be a predominance of female names in the database. An example can be found in the list of Egton (North Riding of Yorkshire) recusants presented at Thirsk on 26.Oct.1680. There are 38 people of whom 29 are women and 9 are men. Eleven years later for the same place, the number of males listed was still lower than that of females (61 to 77). Are women more inclined to be Catholics than men, or is it that women are more recusant than men? This raises the question are women more religious than men. Then again, they may be more women than men in Egton.

A comparison for the whole county of Lancashire in 1678 might assist in reflecting on some of the above questions. In that year, 54% of the recusants were female, including many spinsters and widows. On the other hand, many known spouses of Catholic women are not listed. There is a suspicion that the men may have found it more convenient to conform to the Established Church until the penal laws were relaxed, leaving their wives to pass the Catholic faith on to their children (Gardner, Norman: *Lancashire Quarter Sessions Records; Register of Recusants 1678*, Wigan, North West Catholic History Society, 1998, p9).

Admittedly, the small sample is insufficient to draw any conclusions as to the possible predominance of female names in the database. As a comparison, it would be interesting to see the gender balance in one's place of worship today.

With an estimated English population in 1750 of 5.74 million, (J.Jeffries: *The UK Population: Past, Present and Future*, National Office for Statistics, accessed 4.July.2017 <https://www.ons.gov.uk/.../focus-on-people-and-migration-->) the Catholic population of 67,000 in 1767 made up around 1.1% of the population in England. With this information, it is not unreasonable to believe that many, if not most, Catholics rubbed shoulders with others of another religious tradition, and even had close friends among them. If so, there was an ebb and flow among the friendship set of Catholics with others of a different faith. This is borne out in a letter written in 1738 by the vicar of Somerton in Oxfordshire to his bishop saying that Protestants and Papists by a long living together in the same parish were blended and united”(Oxfordshire Record Office: Oxford Diocese; *Clergy answers*, Ref: DIOC/3/D/A/3). Catholics had even entered the Anglican rectory as seen in the case of Catherine Roddam being the wife of the rector of Rumbald, Yorkshire

In 1705 (Durham Record Office: *Returns of Papists 1705*) and of Mary Wake, the wife of William Wake, the rector of Walgrave, Northamptonshire in 1723 (Northamptonshire Record Office: *Returns of Papists' Estates* in Quarter Sessions papers 1723). Where Catholics lived, they mixed with their wider community, even to the extent of one Catholic gentleman, Robert Clifton of Clifton, Nottinghamshire having seven wives (*Essex Recusant*: Vol 12, p82-83).

Less than ten miles away from Somerton in the parish of Kiddington, but admittedly twenty years later, the vicar wrote that there were 64 Catholics and more than 130 Protestants (Oxfordshire Record Office: 1/E/5/2, *Papists in Kiddington*, 6.Oct.1756). Such a significant percentage of Catholics would have forced blending and union as the vicar of Somerton noted earlier.

While some parishes had the presence of Catholics, there were some that had none. John Banks, the vicar of Wootton, reported the absence of both papists and dissenters on the 11.Oct.1780 (Oxfordshire Record Office: *Ms.Oxf.Dioc, Papers 431*, folio 258 (145)). His nil report for Catholics was not unusual as can be seen from many other parish returns.

One of the discoveries in compiling the database is that Catholics were not necessarily living with a ghetto mentality. According to the Returns of Papists for 1767 there were about 67,000 Catholics in England. Yet working through the names given in Fr. Godfrey Anstruther's Index of Catholic Marriages and Baptisms in and around London from 1700, what is surprising is that so few names are to be found in the database when the database, at the time, consisted of around 200,000 names. The database listed, at that time, solely the names of Catholics. After the 200,000 name, the database began to include the names of witnesses at wedding and these names may belong to non-Catholics. How to explain that those witnesses to marriages as given in Anstruther's index were not to be found in among the 200,000 names of Catholics? There are at least two possibilities. One possibility is that many Catholics were not named among the lists composed by vicars in parishes or county officials. This, however, is doubtful. Lists of Catholics made by vicars or churchwardens were made again and again. The other possibility is that Catholics, in having close connections with the wider social set than their own, named many non-Catholics in their wills and marriages. This would seem to be the explanation for the appearance of so many new names as found from wills and in marriage registers. English Catholics of the 1700's were different from the vast majority of people but they were part and parcel of the English landscape as they had been for centuries. They socialised with their neighbours, asked them to be witnesses to their marriages, invited them to their weddings, asked them to witness their wills and gave them bequests, as well as received from them.

IMPOSING THE LAW

In his book, "Soul Survivor", Philip Yancey makes the observation that the word "oppress" is derived from a popular torture technique which was used on unrepentant Catholics who were placed under a board on which heavy boulders were heaped to literally press the life out of the martyrs (Yancey, P: *Soul Survivor*, London, Hodder & Stoughton, 2001, p198). If Yancey is correct, then the treatment metered out to Catholics has had an impact on the English language in the usage of the word "oppress". For centuries, to be a Catholic in England put oneself in an oppressive situation.

Imagine that you are at home tonight sitting at the table having the evening meal. The police enter your home. Your neighbour has suspected that you are a Catholic and that you know a Catholic priest. Your neighbour has informed the police and knows that if he or she informs the authorities and a Catholic priest is caught, he or she will receive 100 pounds (*London Recusant*, Vol.5, No.1, 1975, pp21-23, c.1700). To be a Catholic, meant to be under surveillance.

The seriousness of the situation is indicated in 1606 when an Act of Parliament was passed to discover and repress Catholics by ensuring that churchwardens and constables in every town, parish or chapel once a year were to bring before the justices for trial at the Quarter Sessions those popish recusants who had not attended the Anglican church services for one month. These law-breakers were to be fined twenty pounds for every month they had been absent from divine service (*Catholic Encyclopaedia*: Penal Laws in England, 1913, 3 Jac.I,iv). As of 8.July.2017, the National Archives website's currency conversion records that 20 pounds in 1606 was equivalent to approximately 2000 pounds in 2005.

Among the names given in the database, the researcher will find (*Essex Recusant*, December 1964 and April 1965) names of people who were fined forty pounds for not attending the services in their parish church for more than one month during the 1640's. According to one calculation, the relative value of forty pounds is 5,698 pounds in 2016 (Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, "*Five Ways to Compute the Relative Value of a UK Pound Amount, 1270 to Present*," at www.MeasuringWorth, accessed June.2017). In the database, it can be found the names of wives who were fined for non-attendance. The husbands have not been fined and presumably because they attend the parish church. Can you imagine what was the strain on the marriage as a result of the wife deciding not to go to the parish church? What about the financial burden on the family incurred by such an action? This financial burden was intended by the authorities to force people to attend the parish church. To give another perspective on the impact of a fine of forty pounds, it is noted that according to the 1702 will of Bishop John Leyburn, his servant, Roger Betts, was to receive a year's salary that amounted to 8 pounds. A fine of forty pounds was no trifling amount. This information can be found in the database.

The reference to the high cost of non-attendance, perhaps led Eamon Duffy to observe in his "*Poor Protestant flies*": *Conversions to Catholicism in Early Eighteenth-Century England*" in Derek Baker (ed.), *Studies in Church History*, 15, London, 1978, pp293), that "The eighteenth century, however, brought a marked falling away from the catholic aristocracy, and a decline among the gentry which was offset by a growing catholic middle and lower class. An illustration of a growing and educated middle and lower class is illustrated in the fascinating life of poet, schoolmaster, linguist and slave trader, Peter Newby.

The injunction to attend the parish church was no idle threat. While the Act was passed in 1606 regarding fines for recusants, almost eighty years later, the law that Catholics had to attend the parish church was not forgotten. Around the year 1683 it can be found that the new rector in residence of Rushock, Worcestershire sought a warrant on those absenting themselves from attendance at the divine service. (*Worcestershire Recusant*, No.16, December 1970, p44).

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, further acts (11 & 12 Gul.III, 4) were passed. In 1699 a reward of 100 pounds was offered for the apprehension of any priest (*Catholic Encyclopaedia: Penal Laws in England*, 1913) and that any Catholic over eighteen in not taking the oaths of supremacy and allegiance should be incapable of inheriting or purchasing any lands, and any lands devised to a Catholic who refused to take the oaths should pass to the next of kin who happened to be a protestant.

In 1700 it became illegal for a Catholic to conduct a school. If so, the person was to receive the punishment of perpetual imprisonment (*London Recusant*, Vol.5, No.1, 1975, pp21-23). Yet, in York and Hammersmith, Catholic women, who knew the consequences acting contrary to the law, conducted schools. These nuns in York had the cheek to call the school, "The Nunnery". In the same year of 1700 it became illegal to be sent overseas to be educated as a Catholic and furthermore, if anyone informed the authorities of someone sending another overseas, the informer would be awarded 100 pounds. This is no small sum. In fact, as of 8.July.2016, the National Archives website's currency converter records that 100 pounds in 1700 was equivalent to approximately 7,800 pounds in the year 2005. The amazing thing is that there appears to be so few stories of attempts to make money from the execution of this law. It seems many decent people, who knew of priests, chose not to inform the authorities.

On 11.Jan.1702, it was proclaimed that all papists were to leave London and Westminster and were to remain outside a ten-mile limit. This was not a new law but one that had been passed during the reign of James I (*Catholic Encyclopaedia: 1913, Penal Laws in England*, see (3 Jac.I, v). Regarding the 1702 proclamation, Catholics were to remove themselves from London within eighteen days. Those papists remaining were to be listed by the constables and the lists to be given to the justices of the peace who were to proceed against those named in the lists (*London Recusant* Vol.5, No.1, 1975, pp21-23). By the same Act (3 Jac.I, v), Catholics were not to leave their place of residence for more than five miles unless they had a licence from four magistrates and the bishop or the lieutenant of the county. The restrictions on Catholics were real. One could not go about freely. The story from 1745 regarding Thomas Owst of Halsham in the East Riding of Yorkshire in wishing to see his seriously ill wife illustrates this fact. Sadly, his wife had been visiting her son-in-law but he lived more than five miles from her home. Thomas had to request four Justices of the Peace of the said Riding and obtain the assent of one of the Deputy Lieutenants for him to travel from his said usual place of abode to Drax. Thomas received permission on 18.December.1745 but he had to return on Wednesday, 15 January next or sooner (*The Frontispiece of Catholic Record Society*, Vol.1, 1905). The law was there, had to be obeyed and was applied.

An example of the difficulties Catholics experienced is seen in 1717. The three brothers, William, Samuel and Jacob James were to feel the force of the law when their father William James died in 1717. Because of the above mentioned law (11 & 12 Gul.III, 4) that was passed in 1699, it meant

that any Catholic over the age of eighteen in not taking the oaths of supremacy and allegiance would be incapable of inheriting or purchasing any lands, and any lands devised to a Catholic who refused to take the oaths should pass to the next of kin who happened to be a protestant, the three sons of William were taken to court. There they were accused of being Catholics and therefore debarred from inheritance. The court case dragged on till 1721 (Bristol Record Office; AC/JS-AC/AS, *Ashton Court, Somerset-Jarrit Smith*).

Two-thirds of the estates of convicted recusants had, since the time of Elizabeth I, been technically forfeited to the Crown, but this law had never been fully enforced. In 1715 it was proposed to impose an annual tax of 100,000 pounds in lieu of forfeiture. This was due to the part some Catholics played in the Jacobite Rising of 1715. The proposal titled "Returns of the Papist's Estates" were laid before the Commons in 1719 and it was not until 1723 that "An Act for Granting an Aid to His Majesty by laying a tax on Papists" was passed by a narrow majority of 187 to 154. The tax was imposed for one year only; it never became an annual tax. The amount raised was 63,013 pounds and after 1733 all attempts to collect arrears were abandoned (Magee, Brian: *The English Recusants A Study of the Post-Reformation Catholic Survival and the Operation of the Recusancy Laws*. London, Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1938, p176-7).

According to Geoffrey Holt in his work "*The English Jesuits in the Age of Reason* (Tunbridge Wells, Burns & Oates, 1993, p42), because of the Act (4 Geo.I, c.60), Catholics were to be doubly taxed under the annual land-tax acts. A few years later in 1722 an Act (9 Geo.I, 18) was passed by which the intention was to raise not 63,000 pounds but the sum of 100,000 pounds was to be wrung from the Catholics (*Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1913: Penal Laws in England).

The following extract from the *Gentleman's Magazine* (February 1735, p106) tells the story both of the devotion of Catholics to the Eucharist and the fear experienced by priest and people to be sent to be prison or worse because of the law being applied. To get a sense of the England of old and the fear experienced by those concerned, the extract is quoted in full, and as given in the magazine. The incident occurred on Sunday, 23.Feb.1735. "About 11 o'clock, the Peace Officers going their Rounds to the Publick Houses, to prevent disorderly Smoaking and Tippling in time of Divine Service, discover'd a private Mass-House, at a little Alehouse the back of Shoreditch where near an hundred People were got together in a Garret, most of them miserably poor and ragged, and upon Examination appear'd to be Irish; some few were well dressed: Several Mass books were found with them. The Priest made his Escape out of a back Door, leaving the rest to shift for themselves; whereupon some got out of a Trap-Door, and others, after giving an Account of their Names and Places of Abode, were let quietly depart. Not withstanding a great many met in the Evening, at the same Place, declaring that Mass should be said there." It is noted that most of the people were miserably poor. No wonder some escaped for fear of a fine, yet "a great many met in the Evening ... declaring that Mass should be said there." There was a desire to have the Eucharist celebrated.

It was not just in London that Catholics were wary of being discovered attending mass. At a similar time as the Shoreditch episode, people would “go in a cart at night to hear Mass, the priest dressed in a round smock to resemble a poor man,” (*Recusant History*, Vol.26, No.2, October.2002, p396) in Lincolnshire. Catholics were devoted to the mass and hence the reason for the photograph of a recusant chalice being on the cover of the CD.

Fear of betrayal was the result of imposing the law. This fear and consequences are seen in the case of Ralph Pierceson (Pierson). Monox Hervey, a Catholic priest, tells the story in his register. “On the 12th of December 1736, Ralph Pierceson was reconciled to the Church by me before the Congregation at Ugthorpe. Ralph Pierceson (pray good reader take notice of this Yorkshire chap), late constable of Ugthorpe, from this day to December 1745, behaved himself exceedingly well, and was very good and regular and not singular. His wife died in childbirth and left him five small children. I took one boy from him, named Jacob, and bred him up, gave both the boy and his father clothes and money to keep him from starving, and married him for nothing to a good careful Catholic. But in the year 1745, when the troubles started in Scotland, this my Saint turned tail, and swore against me, and became the main evidence against me at York Castle. He swore enough to hand all the priests in the kingdom, as to their functions, and all this in the hope of getting a reward, which was at last but shame and confusion. God pardon him, I freely forgive him” (*Catholic Record Society*: Vol.14, pp373-74). As a result, Hervey was imprisoned.

Another example that Catholics had to work clandestinely comes from the city of Bath. Richard Bostock of that city asked in his will that if he died within a day’s journey of Bath, to be buried between eleven and twelve at night in the left hand aisle of the Abbey Church. A monumental stone against the wall bears the inscription of “Richard Bostock, M.D., formerly of Whixall, Shropshire died. Rest in peace”. Richard’s will is dated 29.Jan.1746, proved 7.Apr.1747 (John Orlebar Payne: *Records of the English Catholics of 1715*, London: Burns & Oates, 1889, p47) and by all accounts, it seems it would not have been possible for Richard to be buried in public view in the Abbey Church as he was a Catholic.

The government took seriously its concern regarding Catholics even to the extent of having a Catholic boy at a Catholic school removed from school and family and brought up as an Anglican. This was the case of the priest’s nephew in 1759. Theth7 Viscount Molyneux, Fr. William Molyneux died and his nephew, Charles Molyneux, inherited the title. He was a minor at school. The boy was removed at once, taken out of the hands of his family and brought up as an Anglican. As a reward for becoming one, he was made the first Earl of Sefton (Giblin, J.F: *Molyneux Family and the Missions at Scholes Hall and Our Lady’s*, Portico. *North West Catholic History*, 1994, Vol.21, p7).

The reward for a Catholic priest for ministering to his flock was harassment. Fr. William Heatley suffered for many years from the enmity and opposition of Dr.James King in the parish of Cheam

in Surrey. In 1765, Dr. King reminded a mother that it was death for a Catholic priest to exercise priestly functions in England (John Orlebar Payne: *Old English Catholic Missions*, London: Burns & Oates, 1889, pxx).

Even as late as 1766, a Catholic could be challenged on inheriting an estate because he or she was a Catholic. Henry Errington on 16.July.1766 received such a challenge from his non-Catholic relation, Mary Soulsby, at the Hexham Quarter Sessions. Mary Soulsby was the niece of William Errington, Esq, of Sandhoe. Henry was William's nephew. Both were named in William Errington's will. With Henry, being a Catholic, Mary took Henry to court to claim she and not he was the rightful claimant to uncle William Errington's extensive estates (Edward Bateson et al; *History of Northumberland*, Vol.4, Newcastle upon Tyne, Reid u.a.1897, p192f).

The Catholic priest, John Baptist Maloney, was convicted at Croydon on 23.Aug.1767 for administering the sacrament to a dying man. He was sentenced to perpetual punishment. Thankfully, he was only imprisoned for four years and at the end of which he was banished from England for life. It was serious business to be a priest. The sick man was not convicted of high treason as he could have been according to the 13 Eliz.c.2 which made it high reason to be absolved (*Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1913; Penal Laws in England).

It may be that the Maloney case is considered as an isolated incident. It was not just in people's minds that the law could be used to punish priests. In 1770, The Rev. Richard Robinson, curate of Egton, Yorkshire wrote a letter warning Fr. Bradshaw of high treason for him functioning as a priest (J.L.O'Connor: *Hearts of Oak: Study of Recusancy in the Moorlands of North-East Yorkshire 1569-1840*, accessed 16.Apr.2015 - http://hogarth.info/resource/extra/hearts_of_oak2.pdf). In the same year, Fr. Watkinson at Middleton, near Ilkley, was warned for the same reason and told to quit the country or to feel the full force of the law (*Catholic Record Society*, Vol.4, p271).

There was an ever-present possibility, if not reality, of surveillance. Even after Bonnie Prince Charlie had retired from Britain and the crisis had passed, it was noted by the authorities, in the parish of Hope, Derbyshire, that the papists, John Wilcockson and Thomas Marsden, had not attend the parish church for one whole month. Three years, later in 1750, Ed Flecher, another papist, was reported for his absence as well (Derbyshire Record Office: D331/12/22/1-13 is on the reverse of Peak Forest Constable's presentment). For the three men and their families, the prospect of a fine and therefore of reduced financial circumstances was the price to be paid for following their consciences.

It was not just the fines and the prospect of fines and gaol that ever loomed on the horizon; it was the lack of opportunity given to Catholics. As far back as 1606, Catholics were disabled as lawyers, physicians, and apothecaries. They were barred from holding any office in any court or corporation, from joining the army or navy, of any office under the State and from discharging any duties of

executors, administrators or guardians (*Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1913, Penal Laws, 3 Jac.I, v). Any married woman who had not received the sacrament in the Anglican Church for a year before her husband's death forfeited 2/3 of her dowry, 2/3 of her jointure, and was debarred from acting as the executrix to her husband or claiming any part of his goods. Every convicted recusant was excommunicated from the Established church with the result that they were debarred from maintaining or defending any personal action or suit in the civil courts. There was the added injunction that Catholics could not enter university without denying their faith (*Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 1913, Penal Laws, 3 Jac.I, v). Yet, so many Catholics chose to remain living with the fear of apprehension, to face penury and to live with exclusion from recognized higher learning, with inferior economic and social positions in exchanged for what they deemed to be of a great and eternal value

One author wrote that to some extent the severity of the penal laws ensured they were rarely enforced except at times of crisis such as the Popish Plot. In normal times fines were left uncollected as a threat for use on a future occasion (Gardner, Norman: *Lancashire Quarter Sessions Records; Register of Recusants 1678*, Wigan, North West Catholic History Society, 1998, p7). Nevertheless, fines were collected even when peace reigned in England. This can be verified by examining the database when in 1684 fines of 40 pounds were levelled at popish recusants for not attending the Anglican parish church. The story told by Elizabeth, the mother of the historian and priest, John Lingard, is relevant. Her father, a yeoman of Claxby, was imprisoned for harbouring a priest. Reduced to poverty by the heavy fines and other penalties imposed on the father, the children were scattered with Elizabeth, being one of them (see <http://newspapers.bc.edu/cgi-bin/bostonsh?a=d&d=BOSTONSH19120217-01.2.21>, accessed 21 June 2107 - *The Sacred Heart Review*, No.9, 17.Feb.1912, p7). The unity of a family was destroyed. It is difficult to believe this was the only family to experience such a disruption. Perhaps the penal laws need only to be rarely enforced if their mere presence and occasional use affected the desired result of financially crippling recusants and the minimisation of popery.

LIFE WAS HARD

Life was hard without even being a Catholic as well as being one. Life was not easy as can be seen from the lives of the tailor, Robert Johnson and his Catholic family from Holm, Yorkshire. He and his wife, Jane, lost eight of their children to either smallpox or consumption in less than four years between April 1782 and November 1786 (*Catholic Record Society: Vol.4*, pp309-10). Being Catholics, life was even harder but it had its own rewards.

The pressures and restrictions imposed on Catholics made life not as easy as it could have been. While difficulties came from outside the faith, there were added difficulties, which also came from within the faith. An example is the regime of fasting that was asked of Catholics. Becoming a Catholic meant a life-style change. It is of interest that George Elliot in her novel "*Middlemarch*", makes reference to the fasting practice of Catholics when she has her main character, Miss Dorothea Brooks, described as having "strange whims of fasting like a papist" (Penguin Classics, 1994, p9). Catholics fasted.

In 1676 there was a complaint that the Catholic people in the North were eating eggs on Friday during Lent. Later when Bishop Gifford was serving in London, he was obliged to allow flesh three times a week in Lent and gave some concession for eating of eggs and cheese. There seemed to be no relaxation even for Sundays as Lady Molyneaux was told while roasting chicken on a Sunday morning that she was not entitled to it and had to change to red herrings (Bossy, John: *The English Catholic Community 1570-1850*, London, Darton, Longman & Todd, 1979, pp113-14).

During the most of the eighteenth century, Catholics were expected to fast before all holydays and it seems there were many. It was only in 1777 that there was a relaxation and it was only on the eve of the Lord's Day and eleven other days that fasting was required. Nevertheless, it is to be noted that "As to the fasts that have been annexed to the eves or vigils of those holydays, which are now reduced, the obligations of the fast to be henceforth transferred to the Wednesdays and Fridays of the four weeks of Advent" (*London Recusant*, Vol.5, No.2, 1975, p91). Being a Catholic, and deciding to remain as such, made demands on the person.

The seriousness of life is told in the life of Father Albert Underhill who left Selby in 1802 and moved to Leeds. "For a long time he had to struggle on in deep obscurity and poverty. His dwelling, with the room in which he assembled the few Catholics whom he could collect together to hear mass, stood in the miserable alley or yard behind the public shambles, and was so straitened were his means that very often he had nothing more for dinner than potatoes mashed with buttermilk. It was one of his economical expedients to go to the shambles late on the Saturday night, when the general marketing had closed, and buy scraps of meat and bones remaining on the butcher's hands, and this supply which you obtained at a very trifling cost, served him for the whole of the ensuing week" (John Orlebar Payne: *Old English Catholic Missions*, London, Burns & Oates, 1889, pxxi). There is a good chance his flock was too poor to do much else to support him. Yet, Albert Underhill was like so many others before him who choose to live a life of faith.

CLIMATE of THE TIMES TOWARDS CATHOLICS

It would be safe to say that the climate towards Catholics varied by both time and place.

In February 1706, Bishop Bonaventure Giffard wrote that for sixteenth months he could scarcely find a place to rest in safety. Then in 1714, between 4th May and 7th October, Giffard had been forced to change lodgings fourteen times in London (Gillow, Joseph: *Bibliographical Dictionary of English Catholics*, Vol.2, p455).

In the parish of Somerton (Oxfordshire) the vicar, John Watson was able to demonstrate religious tolerance and either astute judgment or wise counsel. In 1738 he wrote that there were many Catholics in his parish but he advised his Bishop to be careful in handling them as they “generality live quietly and neighbourly amongst us and behave with a good deal of civility and respect towards me”. He ended his letter by saying that “Protestants and papists by a long living together in the same parish are so blended and united, that should we put laws into execution against them, I am afraid that instead of bringing them over to the church it would be a certain means of driving some of our own away” (Oxfordshire Record Office: Oxford Diocese; *Clergy answers*, Ref: DIOC/3/D/A/3).

While this is comforting, this situation applied to the parish of Somerton. All places and all times did not replicate Somerton. This is seen in various places and guises.

One could be forgiven in thinking that there was a greater tolerance of Catholics as the eighteenth century wore on. Perhaps there was greater tolerance by some. In some ways the situation is analogous to that of a person’s body. The person may be 99% well but owing to the severe toothache in a very small area, the whole body can be affected. In a similar way, the 99% of Catholic body can be in relative peace but because of the ever-present reality that penal punishment could be applied, there was good reason to be wary.

A case in point is the Anne Fenwick case of 1772, which because of her Protestant brother-in-law’s actions deprived her, a Catholic widow of her husband’s estate and also of the considerable inheritance she had received from her father. Thankfully many, if not most, were appalled at the decision (Serenhedd, James: *George Errington and Roman Catholic Identity in Nineteenth-Century England*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, p9) and would have contributed to the view that penal laws were outdated.

A few years later, in 1778 there was the First Catholic Relief Act. One of the things, which the Act did, was to allow Catholics to join the British army without having to take the religious test. The British army needed to recruit more men to fight in America (Serenhedd, James: *George Errington*

and Roman Catholic Identity in Nineteenth-Century England, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016, p12). A similar Act was passed in Dublin allowing Irish men access to a military career. Catholics in England were given freedom of worship, to hold some public offices, to take up some professions and to lease land for 999 years (Bloy, Marjorie: *The Age of George III ...* <http://historyhome.co.uk/c-eight/ireland/irenorth.htm#savile>, accessed 23.Nov.2015) The climate of public opinion towards Catholics was changing.

While the First Catholic Relief Act of 1778 allowed Catholics to join the British army, there were in fact Catholic soldiers already in the army. This information was discovered in the Lambeth Palace Library. The Returns of Papists for the Diocese of London in 1767 named six men living in Knightsbridge, Westminster, in the parish of St. George's, Hanover Square. They are listed as grenadiers with the names of Bradley, Butterworth, Briton, Kempson, Nott, and Marshall. Sadly their Christian names are not given. It may be that they became Catholics after joining the army. Perhaps their continued presence gives an indication that Catholics were welcomed to stay in the army with no questions being asked.

Ease of the penal laws came about not just for the purposes of good will but of political expediency. As mentioned, Britain needed to change the law in order to overcome the revolt in its thirteen colonies in North America. Change of law did not equal change of some people's feelings towards Catholics. A significant section of the population in London and Bristol held onto anti-Catholic feelings. Some were not convinced that relaxation of the penalties for Catholics was a good thing. These strong and simmering feelings expressed itself in the Gordon Riots of 1780.

On the outbreak of the Gordon riots (2.Jun.1780) William Murray, the Lord Chief Justice, experienced the vengeance of the mob. His carriage windows were broken, and he was hustled as he passed to the House of Lords, of which he was then speaker pro tempore, and on the night of 7th June his house in Bloomsbury Square was sacked and burned. With Lady Mansfield, he made his escape by a back door shortly before the mob entered his house. His books, manuscripts, pictures, and furniture were entirely destroyed or dispersed (Marjorie Bloy quoting James McMullen Rigg's, *William Murray, first Earl of Mansfield 1705-1793*, published 1894 at ... <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/people/mansfld.htm>, accessed 23.Nov.2015). These events beg the question, "Why would this happen to a protestant judge of the realm?" Murray had helped Catholics by a judgement that he gave in a court case of James Webb versus Payne in 1767. The latter was an informer who hoped of being awarded a hundred pounds. He brought to court a man who he saw celebrating mass. Murray was the presiding judge and seemed determined that seeing a man celebrate mass was insufficient evidence that the man was a priest. The informer had not only to see the man perform the functions of a priest, the informer had to prove that the man was a priest. If he could do so, then the priest could be punished, exiled or executed as required by law and for the informer to receive the hundred pounds. After all, the man could be a bogus priest

(Holliday, John: *The Life of William, late Earl of Mansfield*, P.Elmsly, London, 1797, p178). As a result of Murray's ruling, the priest, James Webb, was released. Thirteen years later during the Gordon Riots, Murray's judgment was remembered and with a vengeance. His support of the First Catholic Relief Act of 1778 would not have helped his cause.

The words from Murray expressed in 1767 highlight the importance and power of law. In admiration of Murray's dexterity of a lawyer's mind, one cannot but recall the words of a previous lawyer, Thomas More, in arguing with his daughter Meg, as presented by Robert Bolt in his play, "*A Man for All Seasons*." "Listen, Meg, God made the angels to show Him splendor, as He made animals for innocence and plants for their simplicity. But Man He made to serve Him wittily, in the tangle of his mind." William Murray in the tangle of his mind gave relief to Catholics in England. He also is remembered for his influence in the disappearance of slavery in England. As a result of Murray's decision in the Somerset vs Stewart case of June 1772, between 14,000 and 15,000 slaves were immediately freed in England (Heward, Edward: *Lord Mansfield, A Biography of William Murray 1st Earl of Mansfield 1705–1793 Lord Chief Justice for 32 years*, 1979, Chichester, Barry Rose, p141).

If feelings of the Gordon rioters towards a Protestant judge, such a William Murray, could be described as "strong" and "simmering", then one wonders what were the feelings towards Catholics?

These feelings, among some of the population, persisted as can be seen in the anti-Catholic riots of Cheltenham (Gillow, Joseph: *Bibliographical Dictionary of English Catholics*, Vol.2, p493) even as late as 1850 and Stockport two years later. The climate towards Catholics ensured that they kept their heads down and not just in prayer.

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SOME ABBREVIATIONS USED in THE DATABASE

BC = Buckfast Chronicles

BR, BRS = Brother, Brothers

c, ca = circa

CA = Catholic Ancestor (Journal of The Catholic Family History Society)

CRS = Catholic Record Society (Record Series) Publications

DA, DAU = Daughter

FR = Father

JUNR = Junior

MRS does not mean that the woman is married

“Mrs” was a title of respectability. Some nuns had the title of “Mrs”

QS = Quarter Sessions

SENR = Senior

SR, SRS = Sister, Sisters

PA = Per Annum

p, pp = page, pages

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- CO207 Lists of Papists in Mapledurham parish, Oxon, e.g. Lyster Blount & family and Fr.John Grimstone. List compiled by the curate of Mapledurham
- CO367 List of names (?) of Catholics in Warwickshire, 28.Nov.1723
- CO368 List of names of Catholics (?), Old Stratford, Warwickshire 21.Nov.1723
- C1116 Petition of Bath Catholics, Oct-Nov.1791
- C1662 Petition of Lichfield Catholics, 1.Jul.1802
- Z5/1/5/7/3 Robert Freeman's will, 6.Jan.1763, legacy to the poor Catholics at or near Wheston, Tideswell & Hathersage, Derbyshire & at Oscott, Stafford
- Z5/1/6/9/1 Notes on Catholics and Catechumens in Heythrop & district, 1763-68
- Z5/2/7/3 Fr.Andrew Bromwich's testamentary instructions with a list of bequests, 16.Sep.1702
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- Z5/6/7 List of popish recusants, 20.Jun.1706
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- ZM/F/132 List of Papists 1715-16
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No dates

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- CLA/047/LR/02/04/054 Returns of March.1712/13
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