ANGLO-CATHOLIC HISTORY SOCIETY

Newsletter—December 2017

www.achs.org.uk

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

The death of our President, Bishop Geoffrey Rowell, a few days before our June meeting was a shock. I had been in touch with him only a few weeks before. He told me then he was feeling unwell and was undergoing tests. Alas, unbeknownst to him, cancer had spread widely and he went downhill rapidly. I was able to attend his funeral in Chichester Cathedral which was exactly as a traditionalist Anglo-Catholic bishop would have wanted. There was a strong ecumenical presence, especially of Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox reflecting his important role in ecumenical dialogue. Bishop Rowan Williams preached and the Cathedral was packed. He was buried at Boxgrove Priory. There was a memorial Service at Keble College on 21st October.

I first met Geoffrey when I began my doctoral studies in Oxford in 1970 and he was assistant chaplain of New College. He later moved to Keble where he enjoyed a long and fruitful pastoral and academic ministry before becoming a bishop, firstly as +Basingstoke, in the Winchester diocese, and latterly Bishop of Europe. That post suited him down to the ground with its opportunities for ecumenical contacts and travel, which he loved.

Our society owes so much to him. When Brent Skelly and the late Michael Farrer approached him with the idea of creating an Anglo-Catholic History Society he was fully supportive. He realised his duties would preclude much active involvement and so asked me if I would become involved. And so I became Chair with the primary brief of finding speakers. Geoffrey gave the inaugural lecture at St Mary's, Bourne St, on 26th June 2000, choosing as his subject *Prejudices and Perspectives: Anglo-Catholic History Reconsidered*. We kept regularly in touch about the Society's affairs and it seemed fitting to invite him back on our 15th anniversary when he spoke to us about Father Benson of Cowley. He will be sorely missed in his many different roles: scholar, bishop, ecumenist, pastor and friend to so many. His passing, as some have remarked, was in a way the passing of an era. I cannot imagine another Tractarian scholar don from an Oxbridge College being elevated to the episcopate. May he rest in peace or, as our Orthodox friends would say, Memory Eternal!

I will end by quoting the final paragraph of his inaugural lecture as I think it is suggestive of his approach to scholarship and remains pertinent more generally. I am not sure how many of us who heard that lecture guessed then that we would still be in business seventeen years later and with some creditable achievements behind us!

> *There is a rich vein to be mined (and is already being mined) in the study of Anglo-Catholicism. It must be concerned with the religious impulse that is at its heart, sacramental piety, liturgy and devotion, and service. In that sense it may legitimately have a dimension properly described as hagiography, but it must also be critical, analytical and perceptive, understanding the movement against a wider canvas, and so making a contribution to Church history as a whole, but also to theology and the doctrine of the church. I wish this new society well.*

Best wishes to you all for Christmas and the New Year. I look forward to seeing some of you in 2018.

Perry Butler

Lecture Programme 2018

All lectures take place in the Crypt of St Clement Danes in the Strand.

29th January at 7 p.m.
The Catholic League and the Second Vatican Council—Michael Walsh, formerly Librarian of Heythrop College

11th June—following the AGM at 6.30 p.m.
Exploring the Protestant Underworld. The origins and early history of the Protestant Truth Society and Anglo-Catholicism—Revd Martin Wellings, Superintendent Oxford Methodist Circuit

1st October at 7 p.m.
Ship shape and Sheffield Fashion: the impact of George Campbell Ommaney (1850-1936) on a

Low Church Parish and a matching Industrial City—Clyde Binfield, Emeritus Professor, University of Sheffield

Fr Kenneth Leech

We have received a short memoir of one of our distinguished members, the late Fr Kenneth Leech who died in September 2015. I was able to attend his Memorial Mass at St Paul's Bow Common in April last year, and some of you may have attended his funeral in Manchester. It is written by his friend Terry Drummond, entitled *Ken Leech Priest, prophet and theologian* and is published by the Diocese of Liverpool.

Ken Leech was a priest rooted in the Anglo-Catholic social tradition especially the more radical tradition of Stewart Headlam and the Guild of St Matthew but also influenced by more recent East End priests like Fr Joe Williamson. He fell in love with the East End as a student at King's College and it was very important to him, although latterly he returned to his native North West. His ministry spanned many areas, from work with drug addicts in Soho, the founding of Centrepoint for the young homeless and race relations. While rector of St Matthew's, Bethnal Green, Ken started the Jubilee Group. This was to revivify the catholic social tradition in the Church of England. He also had a wide and internationally important ministry through his writings, especially his classic *Soul Friend* and *True God*, and so much else.

I am grateful to Fr Drummond for sending us this brief memoir. Ken Leech was an inspiring figure and an outstanding contemporary example of that distinctive and much needed strand of Anglo-Catholic social thought and action. We need perhaps to have a lecture or two exploring this tradition in greater depth in the future. The memoir is available from the author at 29 Orchard Rise Croydon CRO 7QZ terry.drummond@hotmail.com

Perry Butler

The Newsletter

Thank you very much to those who have contributed articles. The next edition will appear in May 2018.

Please send in your articles and reviews at any time to: stephen.leeds@btinternet.com or by post to: Stephen Savage, 4 Austhorpe Gardens, Leeds LS15 8TF

Cover Photo
Needlework at Llandaff Cathedral

A Visit to Cardiff—2018

Though its history has yet to be thoroughly researched and written, Anglo-Catholicism forms an important thread in the religious history of Wales and of South Wales in particular. The Society's expedition to Cardiff on Saturday 21st April will explore the impact of the movement on this cosmopolitan city, once the world's greatest coal port.

The rapid growth of the city from the early 19th century onwards made new churches an urgent necessity. The appointment in 1872 of

two High Churchmen to the livings of St Mary, Cardiff, and St Margaret, Roath, was a seminal event. St Mary's, a huge 1840s Neo-Norman edifice on Bute Street, was transformed from a preaching box into a setting for Catholic liturgy, with a new sanctuary by J.D. Sedding. In Roath, the new churches of St German, (photo below) a masterpiece by Bodley & Garner, the same architects' St Saviour, and St Martin served dense areas of terraced housing. All continue in active use and are on our itinerary.

St Martin's is an attractive reconstruction of the 1950s following severe war damage. We shall also visit Roath's mother church, St Margaret's, rebuilt by John Prichard, Wales's most important Gothic Revival architect, with its remarkable Bute Mausoleum, and the little church of SS Dyfrig & Samson, Grangetown, which contains some treasures from the Sedding church of St Dyfrig, sadly demolished in the 1960s. Finally, we shall visit St Augustine, Penarth, across the Bay from Cardiff's docklands and a major work of William Butterfield, its polychromatic interior little altered. We shall be having tea there before concluding our tour around 6 p.m. at Cardiff Central Station.

For those who wish to come to Cardiff on the Friday—and perhaps visit the extraordinary Castle and the rich collections of the National Museum—it is planned to organise an afternoon visit to Llandaff Cathedral, with an opportunity to attend Evensong. The cathedral is notable not only for its exquisite medieval architecture but equally for the inspired reconstruction carried out by George Pace after severe war damage. We shall also visit the chapel of the former St Michael's College, a remarkable work by Pace which merges Welsh tradition with the influence of Le Corbusier's Ronchamp. Full details of the tour and a booking form will be included in a Society mailing early in 2018.

Ken Powell

A Walk in Oxford—8th July 2018

The annual trips of the Society have traditionally been accompanied by warm weather. This year was no exception: we walked round Oxford on one of the hottest days of the year. It was exhausting but interesting and there was a great deal to see, apart from the fellowship which these trips always engender. It was good to see some new faces this year.

We met at St Barnabas', Jericho, which was new to some and not seen for many years by others. It is a stunning building with traditional furnishings and we were warmly welcomed by the honorary curate, Father Andrew Greany, who then walked with us to St Thomas', which is now in the same parish and has an interesting history as a pioneer church of the Oxford Movement. Its convent next door has been demolished, but the interior was of interest (especially, to me, the Martin Travers statue of Our Lady). We next went to Pusey House where one of the interns showed us the chapel, as splendid as ever, and the library, which is being reorganised.

There was then a welcome lunch break and we met again at Keble College, where the chapel is almost unchanged since it was built and is a monument to Anglo-Catholic taste of the time.

We then moved on to St Mary Magdalene, made famous by Father Colin Stephenson and still furnished as it was in his time. Some of us concluded by visiting the University Church of St Mary, where Keble's 1833 sermon was preached. The statues over the altar were restored by donations from the Anglo-Catholic Congress.

A good time was had by all and the format of walking around a provincial city which would be inaccessible by coach was successful.

Michael Yelton

A Tour of Churches in Hackney—28th October 2917

This was an entirely new area for some of us, and we are very grateful to Brent Skelly and David Vinnels for planning the trip so meticulously. The Notes were exemplary. First stop was the Georgian Orthodox Cathedral, Stamford Hill, which was previously the Agapemonite Church, (Ark of the Covenant). Their legacy is this fine church. In its early days there were some troubled and controversial times. The most striking feature of the church is the superb set of windows by the Arts and Crafts painter and illustrator Walter Crane (1845-1915), which present Old Testament imagery, allegorical scenes and symbolic flora using thick, semi-opaque glass. A fascinating building but the devotional darkness makes photography difficult.

Being ahead of schedule we made an impromptu stop at St Thomas's, Clapton Common. Unsurprisingly this was locked but we heard something of what glories are inside from Bobby Drake. We moved on to St Barnabas', Shacklewell Row, originally the Merchant Taylors' School Mission. The original building has been well refurbished and is the church hall. The church is tucked behind, off the road. It is a stripped down version of a Byzantine basilica with a concrete barrel vault and shallow dome. Its interior, dominated by exposed brickwork and concrete, looks surprising contemporary. The nave has concrete tunnel vaults and broad transverse brick arches. All windows are square leaded lights. The whole place needs a good tidy-up. When we were there the nave had been cleared of chairs. I hope that it does have a future as it is not too big to be useful.

Next was St Mark's, Dalston, where we were enthusiastically welcomed by the vicar who gave us an introductory talk. It is sometimes called "The Cathedral of the East End", an evangelical

church and traditional. Very big—and still very useful. It can seat 2,000 but this appears not yet to have been achieved. The chancel ends in a three-sided apse, with triple lancet windows. The ceiling here has moulded ribs with corbels in the shape of angels and scrolls. The walls are stencilled and behind the altar is a mosaic depicting the Last Supper. There is a mosaic floor. Furnishings of special note include the stone and coloured marble pulpit with figures of the Apostles in niches, the elaborate brass lectern, the stone font, surmounted by a wooden Gothic Revival cover on pulleys, and with figures of the Evangelists standing at the angles. The original gas fittings have been turned upside down for electric lights. The tower houses a carillon. For some this church was the high-light of the tour— and we were treated to most welcome tea and biscuits in the stylish church hall!

Suitably excited we moved on to the very different St Michael & All Angels, London Fields. The plain exterior gave no clue about the joys to be found within. Again, we were given an introductory talk by the vicar, and Bobby Drake spoke to us about Cachemaille-Day, he being an authority. The present St Michael's was consecrated in 1961 and combined the former parish of St Michael with that of St Paul, Haggerston. That church was demolished in 1970. In appearance, St Michael's is a striking contrast to its Victorian predecessor, being designed by the architect Nugent Francis Cachemaille-Day (1896-1976). He designed many churches from the 1930s up to the 1960s in an avowedly modernistic fashion. This church is the product of a close collaboration between the architect and the artist John David Hayward (1929-2007). Both men were influenced by the Liturgical Movement which was concerned with what churches were for, not what they should look like, although there are some fine works of art. It is a practical, functional building, of a suitable size, clean and very well-kept, serving its community well.

We were hungry after so much excitement and it was time for a stroll to Broadway Market where we were able to graze whilst watching the world go by. What a totally fascinating and vibrant area this is. Soon we were back at the coach for the short ride to St Mary at Eton, Hackney Wick, our second public school mission of the day. The foundation of this Eton College Mission owed much to William Walsham How, the hymn writer, Bishop of Bedford from 1879 to 1888 when he was appointed the first Bishop of Wakefield. During his time at Bedford his area of responsibility was the East End of London, where he became the inspiring influence of a revival of church work. He lectured at Eton College about the poor social and religious conditions of East London and in 1880 set about establishing a Mission at Hackney Wick. Although the Mission had become a parish in 1893, the clergy were all Old Etonians, with as many as five in residence during the Mission's heyday before WW1. Most of the money to maintain the buildings and sustain the Mission's social work came from Eton College and Old Etonian charities. Major works in 1958 were paid for by a special Etonian Appeal.

However, by 1975 all formal links between St Mary's and Eton College had ended, except that four Eton masters continued to be patrons of the living. The landmark church is part of a complex of buildings and entry is through an impressive courtyard. There is useful meeting space at the west end of the long nave.

The final call was at the magnificent St John of Jerusalem, Lauriston Road, where the curate welcomed all with a friendly handshake. Parish Historian, Geoff Taylor, gave a most informative talk about the Hackney Phalanx, which tends to be overlooked in the history of "movements," but it was significant—and as you know it is included on the ACHS membership leaflet. The first rector, the Revd Henry Handley Norris (1771-1850) was instrumental in raising funds and commissioning the design of the new church. Norris was a leading member of the Hackney Phalanx—a group of High Church defenders prominent between 1805 and 1835. They were also known as the Clapton Sect by analogy with the evangelical Clapham Sect and consisted of clergy and laymen and filled many of the higher posts of the Church of England of the time. He was also one of the founders of the National Society which campaigned for more churches and church schools to be built in populous areas. Norris enjoyed a brief period of national prominence in 1812-1827 as an advisor to the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, on the religious affairs and the appointment of bishops.

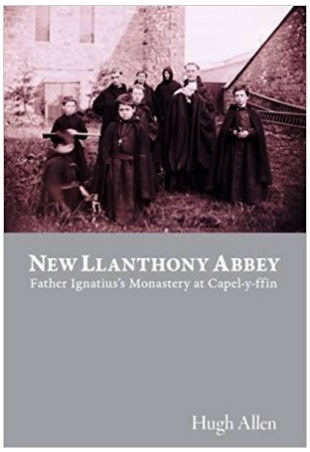
There is a detailed and well-researched Parish History: *A Parish in Perspective: A history of the church and parish of St John of Jerusalem South Hackney* by Geoff Taylor, which will be of interest to some. Only £10 + £2 for postage. From St John of Jerusalem Church, c/o The Rectory, 9 Church Crescent, London E9 7DH. Make out cheques to St John of Jerusalem.

This was our final venue and before departure we were treated to a first-rate Anglo-Catholic tea: scones with jam and cream. Then we were transported back to King's Cross by our friendly and very capable driver. There is great scope for another visit to the area.

Stephen Savage

BOOK REVIEWS

New Llantony Abbey: Father Ignatius's Monastery at Capel-y-ffin
by Hugh Allen
£18.50 from
Peterscourt Press,
3 St Peter's Court,
Tiverton,
Devon EX16 6NZ
ISBN 01884 258031



Father Ignatius has been the subject of much writing, but a great deal of what has been said about him is inaccurate and based on conjecture. The known facts are peculiar enough, but he clearly had a considerable effect on many who heard him preach. This book adds very considerably to the information available not only on Ignatius himself, but on the extravagant monastery which he erected in a remote setting at Llanthony, in the hills of South Wales. It also tells us much which was hardly researched before, namely the identity of and information about those who joined the community. Some of them stayed at Capel-y-ffin for a very short period: others put up with the harsh conditions and the eccentricities of Ignatius for a long period. In addition, there is a great deal of material on figures peripheral to Ignatius, many of whom were unstable or at the very least eccentric. As an example, the Revd R.H. Maister spent time at Llanthony in 1883-4

as an abbey priest—one of the few ordained men that were recruited to the monastery. Although everyone else who knew him thought that he was gentle and kind, Ignatius claimed to have expelled him for violence to others. He spent a further 19 years as an Anglican curate (although it was at one stage asserted that he had gone over to Rome) but then became a Unitarian. Another recruit was Bertie Cannell, who told his story in his strikingly titled autobiography *From Monk to Busman*.

The author has used modern genealogical materials to good advantage and is thus able to provide material on those who stayed at Llanthony for only a short time: often such men were expelled for disobedience to Ignatius' arbitrary demands, such as that Nones be sung in Welsh. There is a description of the various miraculous appearances at the Abbey—including the appearance of Our Lady among the rhubarb. The book also sets out the history of the Abbey following the demise of the Community and the recent efforts to revive the memory of Ignatius with pilgrimages. This book is highly recommended and fills a gap. There is information on every page which will be new to the reader and will sometimes make him or her draw breath.

Michael Yelton

All Souls Church, Brighton 1833–1967: A History
by Malcolm Kemp.
Available from Malcolm Kemp (to whom cheques should be made payable) at 39 Bear Road, Brighton, BN2 4DA
£7, including post/packing

This is a well-illustrated little book of only 63 pages, yet packing in a lot of fascinating information. There are some wonderful churches in Brighton, all worth a visit—and to be visited by ACHS members next year. Only recently did I learn that there used to be more! All Souls was demolished in 1967, owing to road-widening proposals and redevelopment schemes, after serving its community well for 134 years.

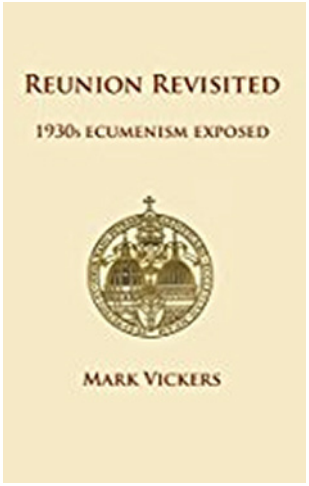
Malcolm Kemp is a local enthusiast with a vast knowledge of the Brighton church-scene. He has used memories—his own reminiscences and those of others—primary source material in a variety of offices, photographs and artefacts, to tell meticulously the story of All Souls, Eastern Road. The ACHS exists to encourage projects of this kind and it is good to see works regularly being produced pertaining to different parts of the country by local enthusiasts with local knowledge.

The population of Brighton grew rapidly in the nineteenth century and new churches were needed. The generous work of the Wagners is well-known and recorded in detail elsewhere. All Souls was built in 1833 and became a separate parish in 1883. From that date an increasingly Anglo-Catholic style was introduced, particularly from 1890 when the Revd E.F. Macreath was appointed. In 17 years he advanced not only the churchmanship but every aspect of parish life. His success built upon a solid foundation. The Centenary Year of All Souls church was also that of John Keble's Assize Sermon, usually taken to mark the start of the Oxford Movement.

The history of every parish is interesting. From all there are lessons to learn and inspiration to be drawn. Malcolm Kemp makes some good points: about Eucharistic, contextual, practical and incarnational theology; about the impact that really good Anglo-Catholic worship and ethos can make upon young people; about the unfortunate tendency of some dioceses to reduce involvement in inner-city areas, where pastoral ministry is most needed. I recommend this book.

Stephen Savage

Reunion Revisited: 1930s Ecumenism Exposed
by Mark Vickers
(Gracewing, £14.99)
Gracewing Ltd,
2 Southern Avenue,
Leominster,
Herefordshire
HR6 0QF



Father Mark Vickers is a former Anglican who is now a Roman Catholic priest in the Diocese of Westminster. He has already written a biography of Cardinal Bourne. In this book he has added substantially to the small library of material on Anglican Papalism and has discovered a hidden series of talks between Roman Catholics, with the encouragement of the hierarchy, and members of the Papalist Movement in the Church of England.

These talks took place in the 1930s and show that the exchange of ideas between Roman and Anglo-Catholics did not cease after the Malines Conversations, as has generally been thought, but continued: Vatican II of course led to much more friendly relations between the two churches.

The book provides pen-pictures of well-known Papalists such as Father H.J. Fynes-Clinton, Father W.R. Corbould (whose nephew, a Roman Catholic priest, was at the launch party for the volume at Lambeth Palace), and others perhaps less well known, such as Father William Monahan, an Irishman who was originally a Methodist minister, and Dr Herbert Drane-Scott, rector of Oddington, Oxfordshire, and a man of considerable personal pugnacity who was quick to take offence. There is also material on two prominent Papalists who succumbed to the lures of Rome, the Revd Thomas Whitton and the wealthy American Revd Henry Pierce. Father Whitton was married and so at that time could not be reordained: Father Pierce was not and was soon reordained, with a mission to assist other Anglicans to come over.

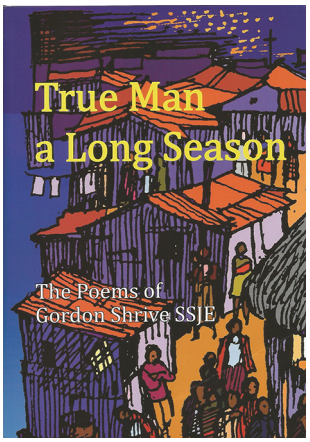
The book is highly recommended to those with an interest in the rather esoteric field with which it deals, but will also be of interest to many with more general knowledge.

Michael Yelton

Still Available

The Church of Blue Columns—Anglo-Catholicism in a New District, being the story of St Olave, Mitcham 1928–39
£7.50 to include postage, from Keith Penny,
29 St Olave's Walk, London SW16 5QQ.
Cheques made out to 'St Olave's PCC Mitcham.

True Man a Long Season. Poems of Gordon Shrive, SSJE
edited by Fr Mark Woodruff.
The Fellowship of St John (UK) Trust Association,
St Andrew Holborn,
5 St Andrew Street,
London EC4A 3AB
£5 + £3 post/packing



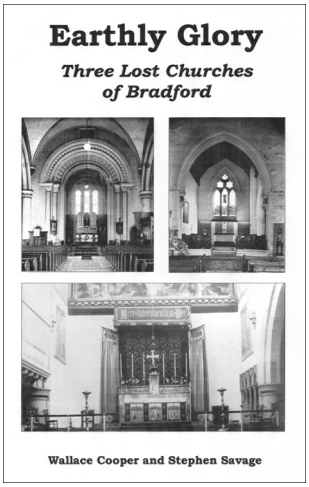
Fr Gordon Shrive (1896–1987) joined the SSJE when he was 35 and was ordained in 1950. During the Great War he was badly injured but despite his difficulties he worked in South Africa for 50 years. He loved the people and they loved him. From a blind teacher he learned the Xhosa language and the local culture. He was a talented musician and he also designed churches, which presumably still survive. He was a shy, determined, wise, saintly, prayerful priest. In 1981 his eye-sight was failing, compounding his physical difficulties. To his very great sadness he was returned to the UK, now very different. He was based at St Edward's House, but his 'heart' remained in Africa. Bishop Trevor Huddleston, CR, was later to say that Fr Shrive had taught him "everything I knew" about Africa. Tragically, in his latter years he was unable to say Mass. In a nursing home towards the end of his life, he was prevented from wearing his habit and compelled

to wear lay dress for the first time in 50 years. It seems such an unnecessary restriction.

This book of 165 pages contains 30 pages of biography and background. The rest is his poems, preceded by an appraisal of them. These serve to make this book unique in the large library of 'Religious' biographies. The poems are from various dates: some from his time in South Africa during the time he was at the House of Prayer, which he established with Bro Josiah at Upper Mjika. Some are from more unhappy later years. Some were published in the Society Newsletter but it is a miracle that so many more did survive, being on scraps of paper. We can be grateful to Fr Mark Woodruff for his meticulous research and editing. Fr David Campbell, Superior General of the Community, perceived that Fr Shrive, through his poems, could "communicate the kingdom of God in which he was utterly absorbed, through the verse that sprang both from his desert loneliness and his longing for humanity to find its true self in Christ". There are several photographs and a striking front cover. Alas, the binding is not strong. This is unfortunate as the greatest care has been taken in the preparation of this rather special book. It is a book to keep and the poems grow on you as you re-read them. Do not read the biographical pages alone and not the poems; do not read the poems only, without the introductory section. You need to read both, as one illuminates the other.

Stephen Savage

Earthly Glory—Three Lost Churches of Bradford
by Wallace Cooper and Stephen Savage.
Price £7 (including post) available from:
Stephen Savage (to whom cheques should be made payable)
4 Austhorpe Gardens,
Leeds LS15 8TF



When you have spent almost 70 years living in Brighton and you know the churches of the London, Brighton and South Coast Religion pretty well it can come as a shock to realise that there are, or were, plenty of similar churches up north of which you have no knowledge whatsoever. The joy of this book (116 pages) is that it grabs the reader's interest immediately making you want to delve further, find out more and answer questions of your own. There are plenty of familiar surnames banded about and you instantly want to know whether those people are related to others of the same surnames. Was the Corfe family related to a former organist of Durham cathedral? Was musician John Popplewell related to a later church music Yorkshireman called Richard Popplewell? There are Redheads, Bullivants and Bardsleys whilst any Ffynes-Clinton has to have been related both to the composer Hubert Parry and to a former rector of St Magnus the Martyr, London Bridge. It is all very intriguing

The book is about St Jude's and St Mary Magdalene's, both in the Manningham area of Bradford, and Holy Trinity, Leeds Road, and how I wish there were more pictures of St Jude's because the one internal photo suggests some rather interesting architecture. However, the book is also about lay people and their roles in building up and maintaining the Catholic Faith in these parishes and one such layman, Joseph Kershaw, is given a whole chapter to himself. In an age of current changes in diocesan structures in Yorkshire it is interesting to be reminded that the Diocese of Bradford was formed in 1919.

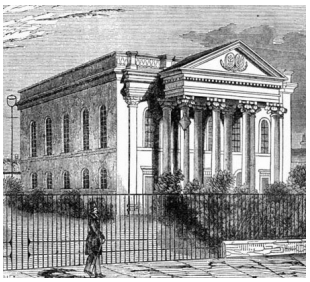
Where these churches seem to have differed from their southern counterparts is in the considerable involvement of the laity which was much greater in Bradford than, for example, Brighton. Like others elsewhere these churches originated as a response to growing populations in towns and their decline and ultimate demise resulted from moving populations and changing conditions of life and work. The longest chapter is about Holy Trinity, Leeds Road, and I found the narrative of its closure and the sensible,

organised way in which that was handled, in order to avoid vandalism, quite moving.

Of course, this book covers an era when fashions in church furnishing and liturgy were very different, as were both the needs of the parishioners and the administrative problems, and I wonder how many churches would now have the text "Thrust in Thy Sickle and Reap" over an altar. But all that is part of the charm of this book. Buy it, read it, enjoy it and then delve further.

Malcolm Kemp

A History of St George's Church, Belfast: Two Centuries of Faith, Worship and Music



by Brian M. Walker,
Ulster Historical Association
£19.99 from
www.booksireland.org.uk
ISBN 978-1-909556-53-9

Also available from:
Ulster Historical Foundation
The Corn Exchange, 1 Gordon Street
Belfast, BT1 2LG Tel: (0) 28 9066 1988

After 1860 St George's became influenced by the High Church movement which had sprung to life in England. This emphasised that the Anglican Church is part of the universal Catholic Church, and encouraged a renewed focus on the Sacraments. In the 20th century, the residential population of the City Centre dwindled to almost nothing as people moved to the new suburbs. St George's suffered from declining congregations for most of the 20th century, and there were several attempts to close the church. In the 1941 Belfast Blitz, the School, empty at the time, which stood on the site of the current Parish Hall, was destroyed along with many other buildings. When The Troubles began, St George's was the middle of the IRA's City Centre bombing campaign. It was damaged on 17 occasions, most notably in 1972 when a 150 pound bomb, hidden in a coffin in Church Lane exploded, causing serious structural damage to the church, and many parishioners became too afraid to travel into the City Centre. The future for St George's looked bleak, although through the difficult years a faithful few kept the Parish and its unique traditions alive. St George's was sustained in those difficult times by its distinctive 'High Church' ethos, which has attracted people from a distance.

As the level of violence slowly declined through the 1980s, renewal came to St George's, with a revived men and boys' choir and a steady growth in numbers attending services, leading to the vibrant, thriving Parish that exists today. Professor Walker has been working hard on this over recent years and has brought the keen eye and scholarship of a professional historian to the task—and uncovered many gems and forgotten aspects of St George's history. The book is sumptuously illustrated with many colour plates and has 240 pages.

Information from the parish website:
www.stgeorges.connor.anglican.org