

**THE EMERGENCE OF A CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND THE NEED FOR
EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL PROVISION IN NINETEENTH CENTURY**

BRIGHTON

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ABSTRACT

The 1829 Act of Emancipation was designed to return to Catholics the full rights of citizenship which had been denied them for over two hundred years. In practice, Protestant mistrust and Establishment fears of a revival of popery continued unabated. Yet thirty years earlier, in Regency Brighton, the Catholic community although small seemed to have enjoyed an unprecedented degree of tolerance and acceptance.

This thesis questions this apparent anomaly and asks whether in the century that followed, Catholics managed to unite across class and nationality divides and establish their own identity, or if they too were subsumed into the culture of the time, subject to the strict social and hierarchical ethos of the Victorian age. It explores the inevitable tension between 'principle' and 'pragmatism' in a town so heavily dependent upon preserving an image of relaxed and welcoming populism.

This is a study of the changing demography of Brighton as the Catholic population expanded and schools and churches were built to meet their needs, mirroring the situation in the country as a whole.

It explains the responsibilities of Catholics to themselves and to the wider community. It offers an in-depth analysis of educational provision in terms of the structure, administration and curriculum in the schools, as provided both by the growing number of religious orders and lay teachers engaged in the care and education of both the wealthy and the poor. The evidence for this is based on evidence drawn from on a wide range of primary sources material relating to Catholic education in the nineteenth century. It shows, too, how this disparate Catholic body, both religious and secular, was subject to a number of significant

national and international influences which had a profound effect in formulating a distinctive Catholic presence.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- 1 lit de plume - one bed of feathers
- 1 lit de paille - one bed of straw
- 1 traversin de plume - one feather bolster
- 1 oreille de plume - one feather cushion
- 3 couvertures laine - three blankets
- 6 tais d'oreilles - six feather [cushion] covers
- 3 drapes - three bed sheets
- une chemise - one shirt
- 2 camisoles - two undershirts
- 2 corsets - two corsets
- 1 robe - one dress
- 4 jaquettes - four morning coats
- 2 pas de bas - two pairs of socks
- 4 bonnets - four caps
- 1 chapeau - one hat
- 2 mochoir de poche - two pocket tissues
- une Pendle - one clock
- 1 gilet de flanelle - one flannel /cloth waistcoat
- 1 cravatte - one tie

- Elle/il est dans un club qu'elle pai elle meme les Religieuse d'Arundel envoient £10 tous les trios moins pour un servant - she is in a club which she pays for herself while the religious of Arundel send £10 every three months for a servant

- Sa fille a proms de paier l'enternment - her daughter has promised to pay for her [mother's] burial

- A donne £5 per moins .A donne £100 a la maison en entrant - she pays £5 a month and will give £100 when her mother enters the home.

- En autre donne 7s 6d per semaine - another 7s and 6d a week
- Recommande par le Rev. Johnston il a une pension £1 par mois pour lui et sa femme- He has a pension and gives £1 a month for himself and his wife
- Il a une pension et donne quelque chose a la maison – he has a pension and gives something to the house (community)
- Mal y pense - who thinks of evil
- Soit - so be it
- Deo volente proficiam – Go willing I shall advance
- Women Religious - This refers to religious orders of nuns
- Alb - Along white robe with tapered sleeves worn by a priest and gathered at the waist with a knotted belt, known as a cincture.
- Catholicism/Catholicity - Terms which are often used interchangeably but not strictly correctly. The former relates to specific traditions of the Catholic Church and the latter stresses its universality i.e. of being in conformity with a Catholic church.
- Missal - Roman Catholic liturgical book for following the order of the Mass prayers.
- Ultramontanism - Religious belief with emphasis on the powers and prerogatives of the Papacy

ABBREVIATIONS

- C. P.S.C. - Catholic Poor School Committee
- C.R.S. - Catholic Record Society
- C.T.S. - Catholic Truth Society
- E.S.R.O. - East Sussex Record Office
- H.M.S.O. - Her Majesty's Stationery Office
- HMI - Her majesty's Inspectors
- P.R.O. - Public Record Office
- S.F.H.G. - Sussex Family History Group
- S.A.C. - Sussex Archival Collections
- WDA – Westminster Diocese Archives
- W.S.R.O. - West Sussex Record Office

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a historical study of Catholic identity in nineteenth century Brighton. It focuses on the spiritual, educational and social needs of the Catholic body. It looks to the impact this had on the wider non-Catholic community in terms of its ability to both acknowledge and respond to these needs. It suggests that there emerged a distinctive Catholic profile and that the Catholic experience was, for much of the century, very different from the one experienced by Catholics in other parts of the country.

The research raises three questions which may be defined as 'general' to the Catholic situation, 'specific' to Catholic provision, and 'reflective' as to the relevance of such research and the way the findings resonate in contemporary Catholic society.

1. Were the experiences of the Catholics in Brighton determined by class and social grouping or by religion, and how did this compare with the experiences of Catholics in other parts of England?

This raises the complex issue of identity. Mangion¹ in her thesis on the 'contested identities' of 'women religious' acknowledges that the term embraces a 'myriad' of definitions. It is inextricably linked with class, gender and ethnicity. It also, as Stone contends, 'involves the social, political and religious relationships and connections between individuals in relation to the environment of the times'.² Integral to the discussion therefore is an understanding of the legacy of the laissez-faire traditions of the Regency period as well as the strict hierarchical observances of the Victorians. While religious belief and practice informed every aspect of life in the nineteenth century there were social, economic, gender and international influences often wholly or partially unrelated to religion from which the Catholic community itself was not immune.

2. What was the real nature of the educational and social provision provided for and by the Catholic community?

This question raises a number of related issues as to whether Catholic education was really distinctive, and if there was a link between recruitment to religious orders and the type of work the different religious communities were assigned to do. A number of contemporary historians focus in depth on this subject and seek to evaluate the significance of the work of the religious. O'Donoghue (2004)³ and Walsh (2002)⁴ provide insights into why young women were called to the religious life. Walsh particularly focuses on the effects of the religious on society as a whole. This question also provides an opportunity to identify the effects of certain political initiatives, influential bodies and individuals associated with this provision.

3. Can the history of nineteenth century Brighton offer anything to the city of the twenty-first century?

This is a reflection on the findings of the research, and asks how relevant they are to the Catholicism of Brighton in the twenty-first century. Implicit in this question is the issue of what has survived of the traditions and restraints of an uncompromising religion in an uncompromising age and if there any parallels to be drawn with the political, religious and social issues of the city as it is today. The importance of recognising the links between historical research with the present is emphasised by Aldrich:

An accurate historical map may serve not only in a cautionary capacity but also as a means to providing answers to what may otherwise be baffling contemporary questions.⁵

The research is set within a designated time frame, 1798-1902, and covers a period of particular international, national and local significance, thereby acknowledging the fact that the topic cannot be viewed in isolation from the national and international events of the time. The destabilising effects of the national liberal movements that had swept through Europe in the

latter half of the eighteenth century were still being felt, while the aftermath of the French Revolution continued to have a significant impact on English attitudes towards Catholics. Until the defeat of Napoleon in 1815, the early years of the century were dominated by the French Revolutionary Wars but the army continued to be engaged in localised skirmishes and major battles as Britain fought to maintain a powerful presence in her newly acquired territories. It is, though, the Crimean War of 1854-56 which is often regarded as the only other major conflict of the period to which a number of factors have contributed. The alliance between two traditional enemies, France and England, was less significant than an increased public awareness of the appalling conditions suffered by British casualties, poor government administration and flawed military commands. The war also saw the active involvement of women in the care of wounded soldiers, with a significant presence of those from religious orders. Florence Nightingale, established principles of care which served to dignify the nursing profession and for which she is best remembered. There was evidence too that even in the face of misery and hardship 'class' proved often to be a more defining feature than religion. Wells (1988)⁶ discusses the situation of a young volunteer, later to become Mother Magdalen, Foundress of the Poor Sisters of the Mother of God, but not then a nun nor even a Catholic, who was sent to the Crimea as part of an advanced party of helpers. All were advised against any form of proselytising. While this was accepted and never appeared to be a problem among Anglicans, Catholics or Dissenters, there were many references to class issues, which included negative comment on differences in manners and expectations. There were also difficulties in reaching agreement as to what were nursing as opposed to purely domestic duties and who should be responsible for them.

In terms of national significance, 1798 brought in a relaxation of some of the harshest and most discriminatory measures of the Penal Code which had oppressed the Catholic community for over two hundred years. This marked the beginning of active negotiations towards the passing of

the Catholic Act of Emancipation in 1829, to be followed twenty years later with the Restoration of the Hierarchy (1850), the culmination of a period of internal reorganisation leading to the full recognition of the Church in England. By the middle of the century two events took place which greatly changed the shape and identity of English Catholicism. The economic hardships of the Irish resulted in a mass immigration in 1847 of Irish poor, while debates within the Anglican Communion contributed to the formation of the Oxford movement. This precipitated the conversion to Catholicism of a number of eminent Anglican clergy and an explosion in the numbers of middle class converts which was to continue throughout the century.

Despite this population growth, the scale of the problems of the Catholic poor and the increasing contribution and involvement of Catholics in every sector of society, acceptance and acknowledgement of their rights to equal social and educational provision was slow and fraught with difficulties. It was to take over half a century for Catholic schools to have an established place in the national system of education, as provided by the Balfour Education Act of 1902,⁷ which required local authorities to maintain from public funds voluntary elementary schools in their area.

The physical boundaries of the thesis are those of Brighton, although Brighton's Catholicism was influenced and determined by events outside its increasingly expanding borders. This one-time fishing village that gained prominence in the 18th century as a fashionable sea resort favoured by Royalty was later to lose its royal patronage with the accession, in 1837, of Queen Victoria. It continued to attract Continental visitors because of the comparatively easy access to France, and maintained, for similar reasons, a very strong military presence. The introduction of the London to Brighton railway, started in 1837 and finally completed in 1841, ensured its continued expansion, and an ever increasing popularity supported a vibrant economy.⁸ The pattern of this

growth is also of interest and questions how far it reflected similar features of urban regeneration as were taking place in the country as a whole. It is claimed that this regeneration 'became a potent influence on attitudes and the provision of educational facilities',⁹ but did Brighton, because of its particular profile and population distribution remain generally distinctive and detached from these national trends?

A study of the religious orders reveals the extent of their contribution in terms of social and educational provision for both the wealthy and the poor. Research into the schools provides evidence of the ethos behind their organisation and the curriculum they pursued and also portrays something of the 'lived experience' of teachers and children. Investigations into the provision of places for Catholic worship, from temporary chapels to the building and consecration within a period of thirty years of three Catholic Churches, indicate how each reflected and became a focus for its own distinctive Catholic community, while the expansion of the local Catholic press illustrates how the community was given a public voice.

The current research addresses all the factors that comprised and sustained the Catholic community, in an attempt to form a comprehensive picture of what constituted a 'Catholic presence'. This is a term that also needs clarification, for although it is more commonly associated with 'visibility' and 'active engagement', there can be a presence that remains in the shadows, albeit less obvious but no less influential and demanding of attention. This is how the position of Catholics in the town, most particularly in the first half of the century, may need to be understood. While it is important to acknowledge all that contributed to the separateness of Catholics the thesis will continue to focus on issues other than religion. Catholics were also residents of a town and citizens of a country, and were both united with and divided from their

fellow townsfolk and citizens by the powerful and all-defining features of nationality, ethnicity, gender and class.

I have a two-fold personal and professional interest and commitment to this subject. The first can be traced back to research I undertook many years ago into the history of the Catholic Poor School Committee. I was particularly interested in the influences that moulded Catholic identity and I resolved then, that at some time in the future, I would try to engage with the subject again. Of the two groups which were to significantly alter the composition of the Catholic Church, namely the impoverished Irish escaping from the hardships of the potato famines of the 1840s, and the disaffected Anglicans swelling the numbers of converts to Rome in the aftermath of the Oxford Movement, it was with the second that I could most closely identify. John Henry Newman, one of the most famous of these converts, gave a damning critique of Catholic alienation and difference in his famous, but in many Catholic circles much criticised sermon,

The Second Spring:

I bear witness to you from without, of what you can witness so much more truly, from within. No longer the Catholic Church in the country; nay, no longer, I may say, a Catholic community; - but a few adherents to the Old Religion, moving silently and sorrowfully about, as memorials of what had been. "The Roman Catholics;" - not a sect, not even an interest as men conceived of it, not a body, however small, representative of the Great Communion abroad, but a mere handful of individuals, who might be counted, like the pebbles and detritus of the great deluge, and who, forsooth merely happened to retain a creed which, in its day indeed, was the profession of a Church. Here a set of poor Irishmen, coming and going at harvest time, or a colony of them lodged in a miserable quarter of the vast metropolis, there, perhaps an elderly person, seen walking in the streets, grave and solitary, and strange though noble in bearing, and said to be of good family, and a "Roman Catholic." An old - fashioned house of gloomy appearance, closed in with high walls, with an iron gate, and yews, and the report attaching to it that "Roman Catholics" lived there; but who they were, or what they did, or what was meant by calling them Roman Catholics, no one could tell; - though it had an unpleasant sound, and told of form and superstition.¹⁰

These words drew pictures which I, at the time, could instantly recognise. I believed he vividly captured the way Catholics were perceived which explained the dislike and suspicion of the non-Catholic world.

The second reason for this interest is the fact that Brighton is my home town, and again I am as familiar with its historical traditions as I am with its colourful and controversial associations. The Royal Pavilion built by the Prince Regent towards the end of the eighteenth century epitomises excess and difference. It houses well documented and colourful images of a scandalous age and is a constant reminder of a town that has always had its own distinctive identity. The square temple-like building a few streets away also plays a part in this distinctiveness. It is the Church of St John the Baptist, one of the first Catholic churches to be consecrated in England after the Reformation, where Maria Fitzherbert, the Roman Catholic wife of the Prince Regent is buried. It is here too that the two sources of my interest, history and Catholicism, come together. I was only just eleven when I discovered this church and began to attend the Sunday Mass, celebrated in a language which I could hardly understand, and to a congregation which comprised a complete cross section of society and was so large the people spilled out on to the road. Just as Newman's sermon had captured nineteenth century attitudes to Catholicism, Graham Greene's novel *Brighton Rock* brought together the town's twentieth century violent and shady practices and through the character of the dysfunctional Pinkie, focussed on the tensions and contradictions of Catholic practice.

Brighton today is no less controversial, ranked as the most irreligious city in Britain¹¹ and its religious communities have needed to compromise to accommodate an irreverent liberalised society. The sectarian conflicts of the nineteenth century are barely relevant and rather than divide, the various denominations and religious bodies seek not only a common Christianity but a common humanity to deal with the issues of the day.

This is essentially an historical research project which will draw on primary and secondary sources. McCulloch and Richardson identify 'freedom of enquiry' when discussing opportunities

available for those undertaking historical study of education. They suggest that the wealth of subject matter which they are able to draw upon can produce text 'rich in analytical perspectives'.¹² It is of interest to note that in areas that have not been researched before, as is the case with this thesis, this view may be regarded as further justification for what might at times be seen as a rather fractured process, where evidence must be drawn 'from fragments of a great variety of local and national records in which much has to be gleaned from unrelated sources and primary materials'.¹³ This quotation by Rowlands (1999) more than any other reflects my experiences in pursuing this research. Despite the apparent value of all the sources I have identified, missing data, particularly in relation to Brighton per se, and inaccessibility to information as detailed in the Methodology chapter and frequently in subsequent chapters, leave a vacuum which cannot always be filled. For this reason, and when possible, any analysis of data will involve careful cross referencing so that certain patterns of consistency and inconsistency can be identified, and while the purpose of the analysis is to find answers to the research questions, these answers may not be definitive or conclusive. They rather provide an in-depth, multifaceted profile of the topic which deliberately acknowledges and allows for plural readings and individual interpretation.

Just as it has become increasingly accepted that historical research looks for its home in a number of traditions so the literature that supports this thesis is similarly broadly based. It includes general histories of the time covering local, national and international affairs supported by relevant government papers and contemporary news reports so as to acknowledge the secular influences that contributed to Brighton's Catholic history. Catholic social histories with the reports of the Catholic Poor School Committee, later known as the Catholic Education Council, provided a full and comprehensive account of the political background to education change. The

study also acknowledges the doctrines of the Church in which religious observance presupposes control over the way Catholics were expected to live their lives.

The research data to support the central area of study, Catholic educational and social provision in nineteenth Brighton, comes principally from primary sources, and is dependent upon access to archival material. The *Public Record Office* (PRO) is the repository for the National Archives and has a wealth of records available for research. These include the names and addresses of managers of schools applying for government grants from 1830 onwards, along with a biographical description of these schools and detailed HMI Reports. Some of this information is also available from the East Sussex Record Office where details of all Brighton schools, Primary, Secondary and Independent are held, and this cross referencing of data has proved to be of great value. The PRO also identifies a number of the main repositories of other documentary evidence, of which correspondence with senior members of the *CPSC* (*Catholic Poor School Committee*), the Cardinals Newman, Wiseman and Manning, is of particular relevance. The Catholic Archive Society assists in gaining access to these records and other private collections as well as details of meetings and conferences. The process of opening up new archival records is ongoing and many of these are particularly related to my field of study. The membership of the society includes many of the most informed authorities on the history of Catholic education and there is a genuine interest in making contact, and disseminating information. *The Brides of Christ*, now known as *The History of Women Religious* is a pro-active website and a rich source of information about national and international research. There are regular updates of events, details of, and invitations to, private readings, seminars and conferences. Even the online sharing of information between members has proved to be unexpectedly relevant. As with the Catholic Archive Society, the membership of this website is wide, immensely knowledgeable and supportive.

The dioceses of Southwark, Westminster and Arundel and Brighton have their own archives which are helpful, as many of the institutions I refer to, that is, prisons, orphanages, Workhouses, industrial and charity schools were run under the auspices of the religious. There were also a number of national organisations with specific functions, some purely social, others offering practical help for poor families, the Society of Saint Vincent and Paul being the most famous and still active. While there is clearly information available about all these organisations and their activities, it is not generally categorised under the same headings and is more likely to be found in the records of the religious orders working in Brighton.

The three Catholic churches in Brighton, which were in existence in the nineteenth century, have accessible Baptism, Confirmation, and Marriage records. In some cases, there is detailed information about parish events and activities. The records of the primary schools attached to these churches are available, but as mentioned earlier they are held elsewhere. The Parish priests have details of the religious orders who worked in their parishes and they, as with the religious themselves, have provided formal and anecdotal information about their own members as well as about the community they served. *The Catholic Directory* first published in 1839 and the *Laitie's Directory* that preceded it, covering the years from 1799 and yearly since then, contains the most comprehensive description of priests, religious orders, schools, organisations and other related diocesan activity. Other publications include the *Catholic Miscellany* first published in 1822 with similar and more anecdotal information with comment from the lay Catholic body and less emphasis on matters of liturgy and doctrine. After Catholic Emancipation there was a steady increase in the publication of influential Catholic Newspapers, *The Month* (1840) *The Tablet* (1840), *The Dublin Review* (1836), *The Universe* (1860) and *The Recusant* (1951). These provide information and comment about significant events affecting the Catholic community and identify prominent Catholic figures, often members of 'Old Catholic' families. The private

collections and histories of those with a particular connection to the Brighton story can be found by accessing the online data bases of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts. Brighton's History Museum has a great deal of archival material relating to the city dating from its earliest roots as a small fishing village. The city has been well researched in its own right and the University of Sussex holds comprehensive reports and papers about population growth and dispersal. While there is little specifically on Roman Catholics, as the Catholic population expanded and both its needs and contributions to the community increased, it is possible with reference to street directories, local newspapers and local and national censuses to build a compelling profile of Catholic life.

Twenty-first century Britain is generally regarded as a secular society but religious issues continue to dominate the social, political and educational agenda. The players may have changed but problems of religious observance, ethnicity and identity are as real for the Islamic community of Britain today as they were for Catholics two hundred years ago. Understanding our past, it is often claimed, is a way of dealing more effectively with our present so it follows that there will always be some value in all forms of historical research; although the quality of that research will greatly influence the extent of that value. The study of the history of education has moved to a multidisciplinary approach in response to a call first made by Fred Clarke for historians 'to explore the connections between education and other social institutions and the social structure as a whole'.¹⁴ Thirty years later the social historian Asa Briggs further developed this theme and wrote 'The study of the history of education is best considered as part of the wider study of the history of society, social history with the politics, economics and, it is necessary to add, the religion put in'.¹⁵

It is this pluralism that characterises a new wave of historical studies of religion which, as far as

studies of Catholics are concerned, includes a movement away from the narrow focus on specific issues and the lives of eminent individuals towards an in-depth analytical study of local areas. Such studies may form the basis of a more general and all-embracing understanding of Catholicism. This presupposes the need for a degree of collaboration of which there is still relatively little evidence. Mahoney also noted that 'moral and religious questions, neglected in earlier work needed attention'.¹⁶ Her further comment, that the literature on the history of education failed to give due attention to international trends and contexts, is of particular relevance as international influences are of particular significance to this research. Harold Silver has argued that the history of education, has become 'complicated by the recognition of relationships with other social phenomena'.¹⁷ The need to emphasise the connection between education and other social institutions and the social structure as a whole is now recognised. Elliott notes that the absence of a 'national and effective central archive', along with the absence of a similarly 'effective central authority' means that 'the full story of Catholic educational history [to include social history] will eventually have to rely on a high quality of local historical work'.¹⁸

This view resonates with three words pivotal to my thesis, 'Catholic', 'nineteenth century' and 'Brighton'. I believe they conjure up contradictory images of conflict, conformity and colour. The history of Catholic Brighton captures the tensions between the demands to conform and the need to be distinctive. This conflict between Principles and Pragmatism is one that is played out throughout the thesis and represents a response to the social and political events of the time. The town itself depended for its survival upon the presence of a widely cosmopolitan population. It could not afford to indulge in overt anti-Catholicism, entrenched political allegiances and socially discriminatory practices as the informed and actively engaged press was ever ready to acknowledge.

The thesis is organised into five specific periods: Chapter 4: 1798-1837, Chapter 5: 1837- 1854, Chapter 6: 1855-1870, Chapter 7: 1871-1884, and Chapter 8: 1884-1902. These dates were selected for their relevance to international, national, and local events which had a significant impact on the town's Catholic community. Following this Introduction (Chapter 1), the Methodology (Chapter 2), identifies the main sources of data which inform the research. There is further reference to the inclusion of what may be described as Audio and Visual imagery in the field work chapters as a way of complementing and reinforcing the information provided. The Historical Context and Literature Review (Chapter 3) places Brighton's Catholic story in the context of international, national, and local events through the literatures that recorded the events of the time. The main focus of each of the field-work chapters is on Catholic activity and the way both the Catholic and non-Catholic community reflected, adapted to and even rejected the national mood and why this was so. Chapter 4, 1798-1837, deals with the growth of Brighton from small fishing village to popular seaside resort. It focuses particularly on European conflicts in the later years of the eighteenth century which accounted for the presence of an influential international community. In respect of its burgeoning Catholicism it details the influence of Maria Fitzherbert and her pivotal role in Brighton's early Catholic history. With the major exception of the Crimean War, as previously stated, Britain was less directly involved in external conflicts during the period 1837-1870. Subsequent chapters look more closely at the political divisions which became more clearly defined in Victorian England and show how these were translated into distinctive policies in relation to electoral reform and social and educational provision. The arrival of religious orders to the town saw the beginning of a distinctive policy of educational and social provision for Catholics. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 also examine the distinctive roles of the priests Cullin (St John the Baptist); Crispin (St Joseph); and Oldham (St Mary Magdalen). These chapters also record how for the first time, anti-Catholic feelings within the country as a whole were played out in the town. An anti-Catholicism which was generally

controlled by the measured reporting of a discerning press, despite their distinctive political leanings, and excepting a short period in the mid-1870s, when it was fanned by an unexpected wave of inflammatory coverage. The latter part of Chapter 7 and Chapter 8 consider the events of the last third of the century in which Catholics were finally accepted into the mainstream of public life and their rights to a fair and equal educational and social provision were acknowledged. By 1870 there were three Catholic churches with attached schools and active communities of religious working in the town. The later chapters discuss in detail the effects of this as a way of explaining a further shift away from the virulent anti-Catholicism of the middle years.

Chapter 9 draws together significant and recurring issues from each of the preceding chapters. It is this analysis and comment relating to Catholic identity and educational and social provision which provides a response to the first two research questions and in part addresses the third question supported by an overview of Brighton's current Catholic population, and the educational and social provision provided with reference to the religious and social issues with which it is currently confronted.

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- ¹¹ Brighton and Hove Religion UV 15 2011. Census 42.9% of the population identified themselves as Christian compared to 71.1% of the population. The number of people with no religious affiliation 42% is twice as high as in the country as a whole. See also *Evening Argus* headline December 12, 2012 'Losing Our Religion - The Most Godless City.'

- ¹² McCulloch, G. and Richardson, W. (2000). *Historical Research in Educational Settings*, Buckingham: OUP, p.125.
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- ¹⁶ Mahoney, K. (2004-2006). *ESRC Seminar Series*.
- ¹⁷ Silver, H. (1983). *Education as History: Interpreting Nineteenth and Twentieth Century*. London: Methuen, pp.7-8.
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CHAPTER 2: THE METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The methodology for this research has relied primarily although not entirely on various forms of documentary evidence accessed from Diocesan Archives and the Archives of the Religious. This has not been without difficulties as access to archives is often restricted and most archivists work part time. Brighton's Catholic history, as acknowledged by the present Archivist has not been well preserved. The evidence that does exist is often fragmented and much is missing. Isolated articles, often anonymous, undated, and not sourced, can be found in designated boxes in the Westminster and Southwark Archives and if such pamphlets quote without reference one cannot always know the provenance of that quote or evaluate its overall importance or effectiveness. As a researcher I have been frustrated in my attempt to find out what is available. I have made requests which archivists, perhaps quite rightly regarded, as too ill defined. The concerns and experiences of a contemporary researcher, although related to researching religious orders, sums up the situation which can accurately be applied to archival research in general. 'The researcher is directly dependent upon the archivist for the identification of and access to relevant material. Materials are brought to the researcher and browsing through collections is frequently prohibited'.¹ There have been exceptions to this, most notably the Priests and the Sisters who have said simply 'Here it all is, but handle with care', and librarians who have voluntarily engaged in my research and searched for and identified relevant materials and useful contacts. Each of the field-work chapters, while drawing on similar forms of evidence, has differed in the emphasis placed on each of these forms mainly because of availability and relevance to the particular period being examined and the events and people involved.

Taylor and Bogdan, in their discussion of triangulation, emphasise the 'need to check insights drawn from different sources of data in order to gain a deeper and clearer understanding of the

situation and the people involved'.² This acknowledges the importance of data which is private and public, qualitative and quantitative, and the approaches used to gather such data. It leaves aside the debate as to the often subtle distinctions between the first two and the individual strengths and weaknesses of the latter. To this discussion comes a comment from Marsden who supports an 'eclectic and pluralistic approach that values all methodologies'.³ A further consideration is the need, as Burstyn urges, for 'evidence from the past to be examined within its own terms not from any predetermined ideological standpoint'.⁴ In recognition of these issues, I have categorised the sources used under five separate headings: 1. The Written Word, 2. Statistical Data, 3. The Public Voice, 4. Audio and Visual Imagery, and 5. The Contemporary World. This particular method of grouping can be challenged, and there have been at times an overlap of the sources consigned to each category, but this seemed nevertheless a viable way of assessing such a wide range of available evidence.

1. The Written Word

1.1 General Social Histories

These sources, which are named and discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 - The Historical Context and related Literature - have provided the first point of reference for my research by setting the scene and presenting an informed overview of significant international, national and local issues of the time. This does not mean that there is unanimity in their interpretation of events, nor can it be assumed that the works are purely objective, uninfluenced by external factors. Tosh writes extensively about this and acknowledges the difficulty of achieving 'objectivity in history', noting that 'like everyone historians are affected by the values of their society and that historical interpretation is subject to constant revision'.⁵ So it follows that the voice of the historian is never absent from the finished work by virtue of a personal style of writing, a selection and emphasis on data obtained and an acknowledgement of both the time frame and the potential audience. The three brief histories of St John the Baptist reflect these

points (Johnston, 1904; Jones, 1940; and Pugh, 1997). The first two were cautious and unemotional in tone and tended to blur the distinction between assumption and fact. This is a point noted by Trevor Pugh in his updated history of the Church. He pays his respects to his predecessors 'whose work guided his steps' but notes that, 'while strong on faith and personal reminiscences they contained many errors particularly with regard to the early times of the Catholic, particularly Brighton's revival'.⁶ He might also have noted that the two earlier histories to which he referred were particularly deferential and non-confrontational in tone and gave no indication of tensions within the Catholic community.

1.2 Unpublished Secondary Sources

An interesting set of materials which related to Brighton's early history came from the final assignments of third year undergraduates from the University of Brighton,⁷ and were accessible to the general public at what was for many years the town's local history museum. The students had to choose from a wide range of subjects all of which are identified in the bibliography. These were generally well researched although brief and gave insights into issues which contributed to an understanding of the town.

1.3 Biographies

It has been said that 'the study of individual lives has been developed in isolation from broader considerations of historical and social dimensions'.⁸ There may also be some justification in the claim that the allegiance of biographers to their subjects can compromise their ability to be dispassionate which leads to an inaccurate interpretation of events. Further to this, in a response to a need to criticise or flatter, truth becomes distorted. It is true that 'warts and all'⁹ biographies may have come into their own in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries but early biographies, particularly of the religious, tended to be overly sympathetic. It is worth noting that the life history of a member of the religious community is in part the history of the Order and writers, often members of the same Order, who felt bound to protect both, particularly when it means

releasing information into an environment which is suspicious, ignorant and even hostile to religious life. An understanding of Catholicism in nineteenth-century Britain has often been revealed in the biographies of eminent nineteenth-century Catholics, the Cardinals Newman and Manning, and increasingly of the founders of religious orders, those of Catherine McAuley, founder of the Sisters of Mercy, being of particular significance. It is never possible to isolate these subjects from the times in which they lived or the attitudes that prevailed and as such they support the counter claim that biographies 'provide a social history of the times'.¹⁰ The biographies of Mrs Fitzherbert are notably important, for without them there would be a dearth of information about attitudes to Catholics and the emergence of a Catholic community in Brighton in the later years of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth. The first of these biographies, written by Charles Langdale in 1856, was a powerful attempt to counter attacks on Mrs Fitzherbert and the Catholic Church. In his dedication to one Lord Stourton, a kinsman by marriage to Mrs Fitzherbert he writes, 'I feel myself bound to fulfil the pledge given to my brother, your reverend Father; and to employ all means placed at my disposal to rescue both a Catholic Lady and the Catholic Church from the opprobrium which would attach to them if the aspersions contained in the memoirs of the Whig Party by the late Lord Holland and edited by his son were founded on facts'.¹¹ The contents of this paper were printed in the *Dublin Review* 1855 and based on claims made in the *Edinburgh Review*, no.136, 1837 which implied that, 'Mrs Fitzherbert had no scruples, exacted no conditions and set no value on the ceremony that took place on December 5 1785'. Langdale's biography sets out in detail the events surrounding the marriage, the situation of the Church at that time and the conditions surrounding Catholic marriages. He was able to refer to personal letters and documents, the most important of which were later withheld and not released into the public domain until 1937. Later biographies of Maria Fitzherbert were also genuinely complimentary and avoided any mention of fault or failings. Each focussed on the devoutness of Mrs Fitzherbert

and appeared to justify her right to be seen as an essential pinnacle of Brighton's Catholic History. They also accurately described the social scene, the complicated relationships between the Prince Regent and the King, and their shared understanding of the divide between social acceptance and religious equality. To support this were biographies which, like those of Langdale, gave details of a meticulous search of primary sources used and how they could be accessed.

1.4. Novels

An interesting but more personalised perspective comes from novels which like all creative literatures offer insights into the social and intellectual milieu in which the writer lived, and often vivid descriptions of the physical setting as well. Or, as Watt describes it, they offer 'a vivid social commentary into the private dilemma of modern life'.¹² The point at which *a novel* may depart from complete fiction and begin to reflect the experiences of known persons or indeed of the author of the story is not always easy to determine. Alma Maitland writing in 1866 about the 'Season in Brighton' incorporates insights into religious identity,¹³ while the romantic novelist Jane Austen reflects on the norms of a particular social group.¹⁴ Almost certainly Charlotte Bronte was influenced by the virulent anti-Catholicism of the middle of the nineteenth century and her novels frequently reproduce the dark, repressive foreignness of the Catholic Church and its followers.¹⁵ Without the novels of Charles Dickens, 'The condition of England question',¹⁶ a phrase used by the 1840s to denote the questions surrounding the problems of poverty squalor and relations between the rich and poor in Victorian England might never then or now have been properly understood. They are all part of a 'literature' which even Marwick, a purist and defender of the value of primary sources says, 'is the product of society', while he continues to claim that 'what we know about the past will continue to come from conventional sources they remain an important documentary source, whenever written however resourced'.¹⁷

1.5 Diaries

Of real interest to this study are the words of those most intimately involved with Brighton's Catholic story and it is here, as Tosh claims, that 'the letters, the diaries and other memorandum, [to include autobiographies] are sources par excellence'.¹⁸ It has been suggested that the diarists came into their own in the nineteenth-century as 'bloggers' have come into their own in the twenty-first century and these 'private writings are the spice of history' and were enjoyed by an 'increasingly educated and well-read public'.¹⁹ Latham and Mathews explore the possibility that diarists can and do both 'conceal and reveal'.²⁰ This requires the reader to consider the real intention of the Diarist as to whether it was intended for public scrutiny or an essentially private exercise. It is probable, as Tosh again suggests that 'the most revealing source is the one which was written for no thought of posterity', or as in the case of Mrs Fitzherbert, 'the best revelations are those which may not reach the public domain'.²¹ The diaries of foreign travellers to Brighton in the early nineteenth century proved to be particularly enlightening in their expose of the local scene as they made no attempt to expunge details of gossip, or indiscretion. They captured the sentiments of the age and the atmosphere of the town, which made it such a welcome refuge not only from the terrors of revolutionary France but from the strictness and disciplines of French society.²² It is not always clear whether diarists would have wished their confidences to be shared with a wider audience even after their death, but in the case of Mrs Fitzherbert there can be no such uncertainty. She destroyed her diaries along with most of her personal possessions some years before her death. Their loss is considerable as they would have greatly contributed to the work of her biographers and provided further insights into the everyday reality of her Catholic world. Fortunately the diaries of Archbishop Douglas and those of his successors are accessible in the Westminster and Southwark Archives. The Archbishop recorded details about Catholic Brighton, and referred to his visits to the town, the selection of priests, the financing and construction of the first Catholic Church, while his wider remit focussed on the rights of

Catholic soldiers and the more contentious issue of the status of the marriage of Mrs Fitzherbert. Bishops Poynter, Bramston and Grant continued this practice and from their personal accounts come further insight into a wide range of religious and educational issues which would continue to concern Brighton's Catholic community.

1.6. Annals and Memoirs

Each of these, the first the Annals of the Mercy Sisters²³ and the second a series of memoirs by Sisters of the Sacred Heart²⁴ provide first-hand accounts of social and educational endeavours and experiences. The Annals tend to be descriptive and informative but rarely critical and lacked the edge found in some of the letters exchanged between the sisters and the priests. It is not clear whether this is because there is an expectation that they will be more widely read. The Memoirs of the Sisters were closer in format to Diary entries although more focussed and reflected and recorded events which were less immediate.

1.7. Letters

Dobson (2009), makes an interesting claim when she suggests that letters represent a 'troublesome genre'²⁵ as a way of explaining the many different types of letter, why they have been written, and for whom they may be read. While I have frequently noted the lack of general materials relating to nineteenth century Brighton, it has however been possible to draw upon a rich and informative supply of letters. The lengthy correspondence between the Archbishops Douglas, Poynter and Bramston to their clergy, O'Leary, Barnes and Wyndham respectively, a selection of which are referenced, provide the basis for historical insights into concerns, many of which may seem comparatively insignificant to the contemporary reader. These letters were genuinely interactive, written in response or requiring a response, and as such they were often poignant and dynamic. An example of this is a letter from the 11th Duke of Norfolk to the King which highlights certain rigidity in etiquette and form which could not be compromised.²⁶ It gives further evidence of the dangers of appearing in any way to show disrespect to the Crown.

While there are letters that have clearly been written for public consumption, searches through the archives also reveal letters from less illustrious correspondents: private notes written by priests and parishioners often personal requests for favours, thank you notes for some form of indulgence or prayers for help. They can make uncomfortable reading and are a reminder of a type of relationship between servant and master or priest and parishioner, which may no longer exist. They focus on a different style and register and remind the reader that great care needs to be taken to understand the message and not to place incorrect interpretations on what is written. Letters which were written specifically to facilitate a public discussion of issues are discussed under the section 'The Public Voice'.

1.8. School Log Books

The determination of the government to impose a structure on the way schools were organised led to the introduction in 1862 of the school log book, the regulations of which stated the need for, 'the briefest entry which will suffice to specify ordinary progress'. The New Code of 1871 was very precise in its stipulations, 'In every school receiving annual grants, the managers must provide out of School funds besides Registers of Attendance, a diary or log-book, a portfolio to contain official letters which should be numbered in the order of their receipt'.²⁷ The principal teacher was required to make at least one entry a week relating to all aspects of school life. The log book was to contain an exact summary of the reports of the inspector who was expected to 'call for the log book at every visit and report whether it has been properly kept'. The names and status of each teacher were essential entries but there was an added interesting comment that, 'No reflections or opinions of a character are to be entered in the log-book'.²⁸ Clearly such a recommendation was not always adhered to; one entry referred to 'gutter snipe children admitted at present here consist wholly of outcasts from other schools'.²⁹ The language in the Brighton log books was far more measured but there was one constant across all log books and that was the references to sickness and children's work responsibilities, 'wanted at home', 'harvesting', 'bird

scaring'.³⁰ Wright was therefore correct in her claim that 'log books offer valuable evidence regarding the life of the school...they are also important social documents relating much about the life of the community in which the school is located'.³¹ It is the log books of the schools attached to the missions of St John the Baptist, St Joseph, and to a lesser degree St Mary Magdalen, the entries of which are detailed and discussed in the field-work chapters, which provide the sole evidence of the 'life experiences' of Brighton's Catholic children. Despite these entries their voices are silent and their thoughts and feelings are never heard lending much truth to the claim that 'our historical understanding of the experiences of nineteenth century schooling is limited'.³²

2. Statistical Data

The use of the term 'quantitative evidence' has been interpreted very broadly in this research and has been applied to any data that could be tabulated in any form. Yet the number of inaccuracies and inconsistencies I encountered leads me to support a more balanced view. While statistics can give an 'impression of accuracy and precision', they can lead to the presentation of data that has been insufficiently cross referenced and inferences which are unsupported. This makes it as unreliable as any other form of documentary evidence'.³³ Carpentier (2008), reinforces this point noting that, 'all educational statistics are dependent upon a number of factors which affect their reliability'.³⁴ Statistical data almost certainly reveals trends and patterns and proved to be effective in monitoring and control particularly when it involved the allocation of money, whether at national level in deciding upon the provision of grants for education or at a localised level, when reference to church returns was used to in justify the call for the further provision of places of worship for an expanding population.³⁵

2.1. Directories

A source that proved to be very valuable were the *Brighthelmstone Street Directories*, the first printed in 1799 and then published yearly throughout the nineteenth century. These, in the

earliest years of the century, provided the only form of reasonably comprehensive and substantive evidence about the population, the infrastructure and the organisation of the town, although even these were flawed. There were details relating to the identity of many of the residents, their occupations and the streets in which they lived but, while some of this information could be cross referenced, there was still much that was missing: details about poorer families, the exact numbers and names of military personnel attached to the camps and the names of the town's many itinerant figures. The absence of this information made it impossible to provide an exact profile of the Catholic population of the town. The *Laity's Directory*, later to become the *Catholic Directory* and also established in 1799, might have been expected to carry details about Brighton and its Catholic community but there was surprisingly little information. From 1806 there were regularly a few lines requesting money for the building of the first chapel and later the new Church, but no mention of the opening of one and the Consecration of the second. There was the briefest reference in the Directory of 1838 backdated to the death of Mrs Fitzherbert, 'March 27th Mrs Fitzherbert born July 26th, 1756, at Brighton'. The obituary of a fellow but unknown Brighton resident, one Henry Best who died a few months earlier included details of his education and occupation, but again there are no entries relating to the deaths of any of Brighton's Catholic priests. In fact in the whole period leading up to 1837 only three Brighton names were recorded in the obituary column and just two personal references, one advertising a school for young ladies and another the services of a gentleman's outfitters. This sparse coverage continued throughout the century with only the names and addresses of the Church and Mass times provided, the priest in charge of each of the churches was identified but not assistants or visiting priests. As before there were isolated entries in the obituary columns, but no reference at all to the opening and consecration of the churches of St Josephs and St Mary Magdalen or to the work of the religious who opened up the schools, convalescent homes, orphanages and other training establishments. There seems to be no

explanation for this, but Brighton compares unfavourably with the detailed entries for other religious and educational establishments both in Britain and overseas.

2.2 Church Records

As the *Brighthelmstone Directories* were essential in understanding the demography of Brighton, so it was that the Baptismal records of St John the Baptist were for fifty years the only record of the state of the town's Catholic identity, an identity which should not be confused with accurate figures of the resident Catholic population. At some point in the history of St John the Baptist, which recorded its first baptism in 1799, and was for fifty years the only official source of a Catholic presence in the town, an unidentified priest had copied out the original entries and noted interesting facts about specific entries. He had also calculated the number of baptisms for each year, recorded the names of converts and commented upon inconsistencies in dates and names. There are no entries for 1801 which for a long time fuelled gossip, quite unproven, that the page was removed because it contained details of a child born to Maria Fitzherbert and the Prince Regent.³⁶

While much could be gleaned from these records the failure to match so many of the names with listed Brighton residents resulted in an inaccurate record of the town's Catholic population. The situation became clearer with the legalisation of Catholic marriages in 1837 and Catholic burials thirty years after that. Indifference to Catholics or recognition of their invisibility is further reflected with reference to the Sussex Burial Index which recorded quite erroneously that in Brighton, between 1813 and 1837 of the 70,000 entries 'there were no Roman Catholic burials in this area'.³⁷ By the middle of the century Church records became more detailed. More, although not all, marriages were recorded, as were first communions, confirmations as well as the names of an ever increasing number of converts. The newly established dioceses in the post-Restoration

period required their Churches to return Scrutiny papers so that the body absolute could maintain its own records of the state of Catholicism in England. By the end of the century the records of the town's three Catholic churches, with St Mary Magdalen and St Joseph consecrated in 1862 and 1869 respectively, make it possible to draw up a complete data base of the Brighton's developing Catholic community, which could be cross referenced against more sophisticated street plans and detailed censuses.

2.3 Censuses and Military Records

The refinement of the Census is again of particular interest. There is limited value in the early County Censuses of 1800, 1811, 1821, and 1831 as they did little more than support the details provided in the *Street Directories* and they too failed to mention the number of children in each household. It was not until the first official National Census in 1841 that this anomaly was addressed, and only in 1851 was the Census recognised as being wholly accurate. As for the first Religious Census of 1851 there were justifiable concerns as to its reliability. The National Census had claimed that there were 520 named Catholics in Brighton, but on that Sunday 920 Mass attendances were recorded. There was also no attempt made to differentiate between the numbers of people who attended one service as opposed to those who attended two or more, nor was account taken of other conditions which might have made Mass attendance difficult or even impossible. The situation of the Irish, who numbered 720, was also unclear as less than a third were on the mass register. Did this mean that the Irish were negligent in their practice of the faith or did it mean that being Irish did not necessarily equate with being Catholic? These are issues which are discussed in further detail in later chapters. The accuracy and detail of the ten yearly censuses made it possible to identify the Catholic community. What at one time could only be inferred could now be proven as the names, ages, addresses, occupations and places of birth of Brighton residents were recorded.

2.4. Surveys

The findings of a contemporary researcher who set out to challenge the assumption that in the middle of the nineteenth century Brighton's poorest streets were dominated by the Irish, provided relevant information. Working with street names, baptismal records, and the censuses of 1851 and 1861, the research revealed categorically that in the poorest streets the Irish made up less than 1% of the population. The obsession about the excessive number of Irish poor is further refuted in the 1851 survey of Brighton's Work House inmates. In the *SFHG* of 1978 the editor recorded this comment, 'a surprising number of inmates were not natives of the country a great many may come from Ireland'. He continues, 'The Historical Researcher may bend the facts to his own purpose'³⁸ and as proof of this are the figures which show that of the 550 names recorded in the Census of that year only eleven were born in Ireland, six of whom were a family of which four were children. This evidence supports the findings detailed in Chapters 5 and 6 that in the poorest streets of Brighton there was actually resistance to Catholics living there.

A survey which has been constructed in the course of this present research, as part of the database for the thesis, sets out to identify and categorise the Catholic population during the nineteenth century over the 100 year time span of the research. It relies primarily on church records, street directories and town censuses but may be supported by casual references from other sources. It reveals details of the national and regional origins of the Catholic community, the areas of the town in which Catholics lived, their occupations, the schooling of the children and supplies added insights into how they consolidated their position and became an integral part of the local community.

The decision to list maps within this category is based on the fact that they are intrinsically involved in the presentation of the data that other sources have revealed. They provide an instant

image of the location of Catholic households and areas where non-resident Catholics were known to stay.

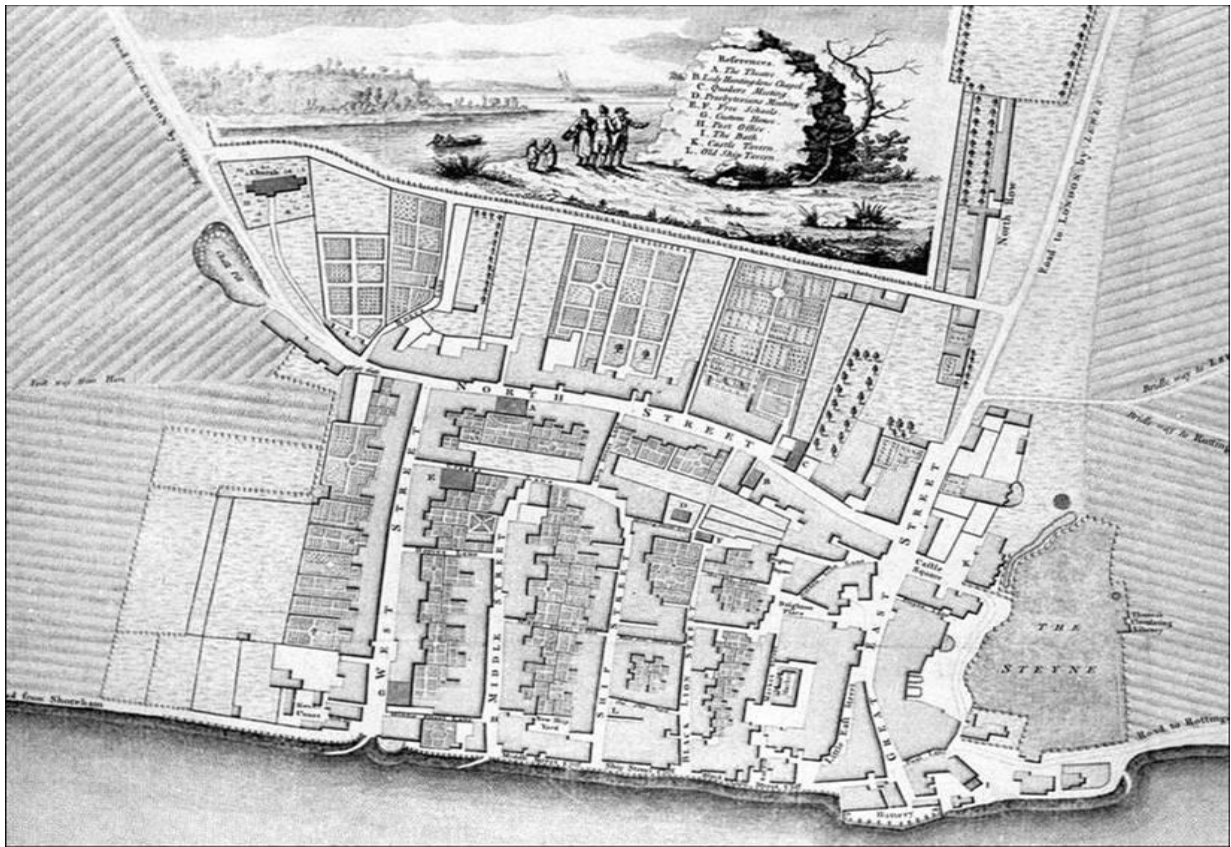


Figure 1: Brighton circa 1800³⁹

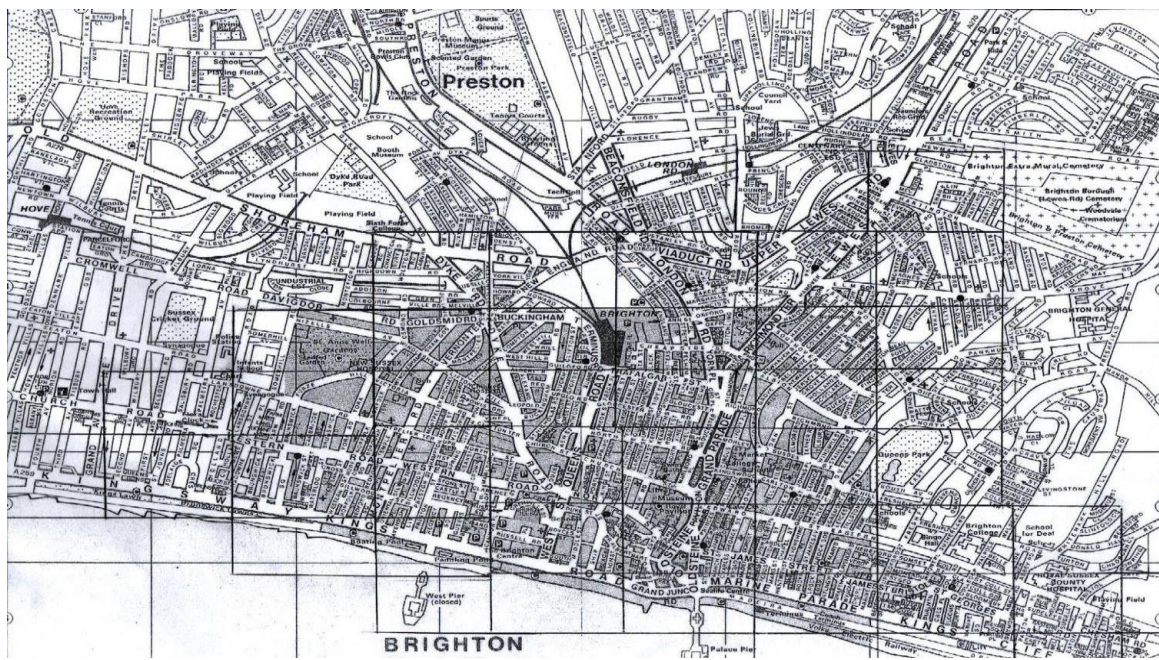


Figure 2: Brighton Circa 1890⁴⁰



Figure 3: Brighton Districts for 1850⁴¹

As the census and records of the Catholic community become more sophisticated and clearly defined so too do the street maps. This pattern of identification continues throughout the century as new Catholic churches, schools, institutions and households become identified in situ on the maps of a town of ever increasing density and growth. This reinforces the claim I made from the outset of the study that the Catholic body, although relatively small, crossed all social boundaries. In conjunction with research into housing conditions in Brighton these social boundaries are clearly identified, as this provides evidence of the distinctive differences in housing standards from elegant Georgian mansions close to cultural and leisure centres to terraced multi-tenanted lodging houses, expanding trading centres, strategically placed army barracks and streets of houses for the poor, effectively near slums. Yet this segregation was not as distinct as in large cities and tended to relate to streets rather than larger areas and could, in part, be accounted for by the fact that those who served in whatever capacity lived, if possible, in close proximity to where they worked. There were poor Catholics but never ghettos of Catholic

Poor, and there were wealthy Catholics, but their housing choices were dictated by their social position and not their religious allegiance; the first Catholic Mission had from the outset provided for both. The second Mission of St Mary Magdalen was built close to the hotels in acknowledgement of the fact that Brighton had begun to attract a new holiday-making middle class, while the third Mission of St Joseph situated close to the Barracks was designed to meet the needs of Catholic soldiers. Neither the holidaymakers nor the soldiers were predominately Catholic so Rubenstein's claim that 'religious differences added significantly to the complexities which the planners of urban education had to face' could not really be accurately applied to the situation in Brighton.⁴²

2.5. Wills: Bills: Collections and Endowments

To this list of statistical evidence I chose to add Wills, Bills, and other monetary references for they too provided illuminating insights into what might be considered priority areas when it came to the allocation and willing of money. Contributions and wages could be compared and the unequal distribution of support better understood. Money was constantly a divisive issue and featured in every aspect of this research from the provisions in the Wills of Mrs Fitzherbert and those of the Reverend Cullin to the longstanding legal entanglements about endowments and the conditions attached to them.⁴³ The eight year battle to free funds from the Rosaz Foundation for the provision of an orphanage to be run by the Mercy sisters is but one of many similar conflicts. Financial constraints controlled policy and provision at both national and local level, underpinned power and privilege and became the reason why patronage was so desperately sought.

3. The Public Voice

It could be said that the 'public voice' was silent in Brighton in the early years of the century, or at least that through the medium of the local Press it remained quietly sympathetic to its Catholic community and echoed the wider national sympathy of the country's Continental neighbours. In

the middle years of the century there was a marked shift in attitude and far more evidence of official reports and political speeches written to influence public opinion. This reflected a growing confidence in the Catholic community but equally it was a response to increasing Protestant hostility aroused by the dictates of an overly demanding pope who, in seeking greater control of his Church, appeared to be interfering in the affairs of a predominantly Protestant England.

3.1. Sermons and Speeches

The nineteenth century was dominated by the pulpit and bodies of all denominations exploited the unrivalled access it provided. Edicts and pronouncements from the Vatican gave clear evidence of the intentions of the Popes and how, in the view of Pius IX, the English Catholic community under Cardinal Wiseman, generally sympathetic to Rome if not necessarily to all the Catholic body, should be reorganised. One of the Church's most famous converts, John Newman, captured in his sermon the *Second Spring* a disturbing image of what many, though not all, saw as the tribulations of Catholic life in England. Brighton, a town with an active and vibrant religious tradition, responded with an unexpected fervour to this revived anti-Catholicism. Under the auspices of the *Brighton Protestant Defence Committee* (1850) it hosted a number of renowned speakers whose sermons were at first published in the *Brighton Pulpit* and later in *Brighton Tracts*.⁴⁴ The titles alone were inflammatory, 'Pretended Sacrifice of the Catholic Mass' (1851), 'Priestly despotism of Rome Repugnant to the Word of God and fatal to Christian Liberty' (1851). There were frequent references to 'popery as irreformable and corrupt', the Virgin Mary's elevation to a goddess and the linking of confessions to Chaucer's 'Pardoner's Tale'. Reports of Dialogues were also incorporated into these publications. In one entitled, 'A Dialogue on Confession between a Puseyite Clergyman and a Working Man', the man bewails the effect of confession by an over-zealous Tractarian clergyman on his wife, ending his dialogue with a warning, 'Depend upon it, Sir, these Popish practices will never be tolerated in

the Church of England, and therefore the sooner the Bishops put a stop to these practices the better for the peace of the Church'.⁴⁵ There were letters too, in which speakers further elaborated on sermons given at an earlier date. Rev. R. J. McGhee in response to a report of his sermon in *The Guardian*⁴⁶ (January 26 1853) writes, 'I hope the inhabitants of Brighton who have been seduced into the Popish confessional, will see that a system of superstition, which their teachers are unable to test in God's Holy Word here, is not likely to stand the solemn ordeal of his judgement seat hereafter'.⁴⁷ Added to this were the tirades of the Bishop of Chichester prior to the opening of St Joseph and the controversial sermon of the Reverend Manning at the consecration of the second mission of St Mary Magdalen, which suggested that in the 1850s and 1860s there were vehicles for prompting anti-Catholic rhetoric, and Brighton's traditionally liberal residents were seemingly receptive to them. But as with the whole Brighton story there were moderate voices too and the Sermons of the Rev. Aitken Hay and other more measured clerics and politicians who advocated calm and understanding are equally well reported and referenced in later chapters.

3.2. *The Press*

The newspapers of nineteenth-century Brighton tried, and with some success, managed to both reflect and *respond* to public opinion. As politics became more polarised these newspapers too represented all shades of political opinion, but frequently managed to address imbalances of opinion even within their own papers. In this they did as Tosh suggests, 'offer valuable insights into the age, while it is impossible to deny that there is always a controlling element that threatens to limit, distort and falsify'.⁴⁸ Traditionally anti-Catholic newspapers such as the *Gazette* continually attacked the papacy, warning of 'Popish aggression in the high places of the land', but could be warm in praise of priests who earned the town's respect and churches which could be complimented for their beauty.⁴⁹ Such examples of inconsistency were revealed in both the *Brighton Herald* and the *Brighton Examiner* generally seen as Liberal papers and

tolerant to religious differences, but in 1874 the *Brighton Herald*, echoing all the vituperative anti-Catholicism of Gladstone claimed, 'No middle path is left for Catholics in the present day; they must give up their soul and conscience to Rome',⁵⁰ and the *Brighton Examiner* engaged in somewhat unsophisticated word games with the association of papists and Puseyites in which the latter are referred to as 'The 'Pope's warming pans paving the way for the restoration of the Papacy'.⁵¹ The one paper which remained open minded and tolerant was surprisingly the *Brighton Guardian* owned by Jewish brothers who it is claimed 'disapproved of the religion', but remained consistent in its concern for Brighton's Catholic residents and careful to defuse potentially charged situations.⁵² At the time of the consecration of the Town's first Catholic Church it appealed to sceptical residents to use it as an opportunity to attempt to understand the Catholic religion.⁵³ The contribution of the Catholic Press was in contrast far more muted. There had for many years been a dearth of Catholic publications, a problem that the *Miscellany*, first founded in 1822, tried to address. In 1829 it published letters about the conditions of Catholic servants and the disparity in the treatment of Catholic soldiers, and for the first time the Catholic body was being admonished from within its own community for its inactivity and reluctance to unite and accept responsibilities. Towards the end of the century the town produced its own *Catholic Magazine*, but it was essentially apolitical and carried only 'safe' non-controversial stories. As the three Catholic Missions became more established there was further access to home grown publications, but these tended to mirror the style of the newsletters of other denominations and focussed entirely on parochial matters. This does not diminish their importance in relation to research of the Catholic community; it rather supports the view that there is a commonality about religions and the needs of religious communities that transcends sectarian differences.

3.3. Committee Papers and Public Records

The Victorians were reported to be devoted to writing reports and keeping records, as evidenced throughout this research. As the research moved from the Georgian period into the age of Victoria it is possible to access detailed Government legislation and directives along with the requests and responses of individuals, institutions, and schools towards these directives. At both a national and local level such reports spoke for the times reflecting the concerns, the tensions, and the priorities of both. The complexities surrounding the educational debate addressed in chapters six, seven, and eight exemplify this, while the reports of the *Catholic Poor School Committee* are an acknowledgement of the need for religious tolerance and even-handed regulation. At best these official documents were particularly forthright and honest. *The Town Mission Report* submitted in 1849 made no attempt to pander to the sensibilities of the privileged visitors, whose limited view of Brighton's elegant buildings and participation in a multiplicity of pleasurable activities hid appalling squalor and deprivation, the existence of which had been clearly outlined in a similar report twenty five years earlier. Others reports hid an alternative subtle but anti- Catholic Agenda, as in the Mission statements of Brighton's many Charity schools. These contained a carefully worded clause that required children to attend designated places of worship, but the Catholic chapel was not named as one of them. In addition to this there was the weaving of 'proven facts' with unsubstantiated comment as in another report which noted that Brighton's streets were 'rough and dangerous' and also inaccurately 'Catholic' for which there was no evidence.⁵⁴

Of later significance were reports that gave prominence to Catholic concerns and Catholic rights under the town's provision for children in the Workhouses, a right pursued by the often reviled but successful Reverend Crispin.⁵⁵ Even when reporting was scrupulously fair there was no control over the way interested groups chose to interpret the information. Official documentation

and analysis of the setting up and subsequent role of the School Boards provides a clear picture of the challenges facing the Catholic Schools and further evidence of subtle manoeuvring which effectively marginalised the possibility of an effective Catholic voice.⁵⁶

For the purpose of this research the most revealing reports were those of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMIs) and the Diocesan Inspectors. Their brief was defined by the Government and the Diocese of Southwark and their findings are recorded in detail in later chapters and commented upon in depth in the log books of the school.

4. Audio and Visual Imagery

'We should conceive of visual imagery as central to the view of the past',⁵⁷ is a comment which supports an integral part of this research which has been the importance of referring to music, photos, and paintings as an essential source of data. They consistently prove to be most compelling in capturing the conflicting moods of the time. The exaggerated focus on certain aspects of life and the careful avoidance of others is effective in telling the story of the prejudice and preoccupations of the country and its people. For this reason I have incorporated into subsequent chapters references to buildings, pictures, cartoons, music and even tombstones⁵⁸ as a way of complementing the findings as stated in Chapter 1. In this I am encouraged by the increasing recognition of their importance. Antonio Novoa delves deeply into the issue of imagery, arguing that it has been undervalued in the past. He argues for a serious in-depth analysis of visual materials, and provides a comprehensive methodological appendix, an analysis of which is beyond the remit of this section of the methodology chapter but which underlines the message that 'images show the educational space and cannot continue to be the terra incognita of our intellectual work'.⁵⁹

5. Contemporary World

5.1 Membership of Societies, Attendance at Conferences

This contemporary voice is accessed in many ways and membership of Historical Societies both general and specific to Catholic issues, and attendance at the conferences and meetings which they promote has proved to be a most effective way of communicating with those with similar research interests. This offers a unique opportunity to respond to challenges to one's own work as well as to reflect on the different perceptions and interpretations of others. This is an ongoing and living experience as religious communities particularly continue to open the door to the life experiences of members of their readers and, in so doing, offer vivid oral accounts of events and attitudes which have been unexplored and often misinterpreted for so long. An interest in Family Ancestry has become a twenty first century phenomenon and one which is enriching Catholic research. The 'Catholic Sussex Family Group' is at the present time building up a data base of Catholic military marriages and burials, a previously un-researched area but significant in understanding the Catholic contribution to Brighton's role as a military town.

Of interest too is evidence of localised research into Catholic issues, and in the case of Brighton, a long overdue focus on aspects of nineteenth century underdevelopment that had been largely ignored. Not that Brighton is likely to forego the focus on its more glorious past, indeed it is uniquely positioned and has a vested interest in keeping the past alive. The active Brighton, Regency, and Victorian Societies attract a membership of those who are both informed and interested in all aspects of the town's history and are active in promoting events which bring to the city of today, and to the researchers of today, vivid images and fascinating unrecorded details of the past. The media that brings instant access to all of this is the World Wide Web, the Internet, and Social Media including Electronic Mail. Yesterday's world can now so easily enter

today's world that to exclude some form of active engagement with the past would leave the research incomplete.

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to bring into focus the reality of the Catholic experience in nineteenth century Brighton and to further facilitate an understanding of how things would then have been seen and judged. Even at this stage I am acutely aware that there are documents which I have missed and information that I should have included. This is in part my reason for citing such a wide range of materials, but I continue to believe that the generalised references to music, paintings, cartoons, engravings, and all other artefacts mentioned further strengthens the imagery which is essential to the understanding of the town's Catholic story.

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- ² Taylor, S. and Bogdan, R. (1998). *Qualitative Research Methods* (3rd edition), New York: John Wiley, p.80.
- ³ Marsden, W.E. (1979). 'Census enumerators' returns, schooling and social areas in the late Victorian town: a case study of Bootle'. In R. Lowe (Ed.) *New Approaches to the Study of Popular Education, 1851-1902* (History of Education Society, Leicester), pp.16-35.
- ⁴ Burstyn, J. N. (1987). 'History as Image: Changing the Lens' *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol.27, No 2, pp.167-180.
- ⁵ Tosh, J. *The Pursuit of History* (2006). London: Pearson Longman. Tosh discusses individual interpretation and 'objectivity' noting that hindsight is a strength that allows the historian 'to make sense of the past.' p.193.
- ⁶ Pugh, T. (1999). *The Church of St John the Baptist*. Published in Brighton by the Church, p.4.
- ⁷ *University of Brighton Centre for Contemporary Studies*. Undergraduate third year assignments indexed separately in the bibliography and dated accordingly.
- ⁸ McCulloch, G. (2004). *Documentary Research in Education, History and the Social Sciences*, London: Routledge, p.8.
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- ¹⁰ Tosh, J., op. cit. p.22.
- ¹¹ Langdale, C. (1856). *Memoirs of Mrs Fitzherbert and an account of her marriage to HRH the Prince of Wales, later George IV*. London: publisher unclear. The contents of this paper were printed in the Dublin Review 1855 and based on claims made in the Edinburgh Review

N0136 1837 which implied that, 'Mrs Fitzherbert had no scruples, exacted no conditions and set no value on the ceremony that took place on December 5.1785'.

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¹³ Maitland, A. (1886). In *The Season in Brighton: A Romance of Fashionable Life*. (no publisher or place indicated)

¹⁴ Austen, J. (1813). *Pride and Prejudice*. Whitehall: Egerton.

¹⁵ Peachier, D. (2005). *Nineteenth Century anti Catholic Discourse: The Case of Charlotte Bronte*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

¹⁶ Tosh, J., op. cit. p.68.

¹⁷ Marwick, A. (2001). *The New Nature of History: Knowledge Evidence, Language*. London: Palgrave, p.188.

¹⁸ Tosh, J., op. cit. p.62.

¹⁹ Ponsonby, A. (1932). *A Review of English Diaries from the 16th Century*. London: Methuen.

²⁰ Latham, R. and Mathews, W. (1970) (Eds.). *The Diary of Samuel Pepys, Vol.1, 1660*. London: Bell and Sons Ltd.

²¹ Tosh, J., op. cit. p.59.

²² Underwood, E. (1978). *Brighton*. London: Battersford Ltd. p.23. This book contains extracts from the diaries of Le Compte de la Garde which Underwood translated separately.

²³ *Annals of the Mercy Sisters*. Archives of the Mercy Sisters. Bermondsey (n.d.).

²⁴ *Memoirs of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart*. Designated Box in the Archives of the Sisters of the Sacred Heart Roehampton.

²⁵ Dobson, M., and Zeimann, B. (2009) (Eds.). *Letters in Reading Primary Sources*. London: Routledge, pp.57.

- ^{26.} *Arundel Archives*: 'Letters of the 11th Duke of Norfolk'.
- ^{27.} 'Abstract from the New Code 1871 Diary or Log Book'. London: Knight and Co.-Local Government Publishers in *ESA*, 167/1/.
- ^{28.} Salisbury Road Board School (1887). 029/04.
- ^{29.} Aldingbourne Board School 1880.
- ^{30.} East Grinstead Board School (1871-1888).
- ^{31.} Wright, S. (2002). 'Family and Community in the Urban Elementary School: Evidence from English School Log Books c.1800-1918' *Journal of the History of Education Society*, 41:2, pp.155-173.
- ^{32.} McCulloch, G. (2011). 'The experience of schooling in the nineteenth century', *ANZHES* keynote paper, December 6, 2011.
- ^{33.} Finch, J. (1986). *Research and Policy: The Use of Qualitative Methods in Social and Educative Research*. London: Falmer, p.37.
- ^{34.} Carpentier, V. (2008) 'Quantitative Resources for the History of Education', *History of Education*, Vol. 37, No. 5, pp.701-720.
- ^{35.} In 1833 Parliament voted the first grant for The 1833 Act allocated a government grant for Primary Education, which this was later extended to Roman Catholic Schools following the 1870 Elementary Education Act. Financial constraints were consistently an issue for the church and the decision to build and expand these places of worship was heavily dependent upon the recognition of church returns and the particular needs of the town's expanding population.
- ^{36.} Ford-Kelecy, P. (1991.) *Mrs Fitzherbert and Sons*. Hove: Book Guild Ltd. (fly leaf). The book documents an interesting account of a 'secret family' comprising three girls and four boys purported to be the children of the Prince Regent and Mrs Fitzherbert. The present parish priest recounts visits from supposed descendants. It is likely that past incumbents experienced the same level of enquiries but the claim that the tomb of Mrs Fitzhebert has been opened and DNA taken is pure hearsay.

- ³⁷. *Sussex Burial Index 1813-183*. Compiled by Lord and Lady Teviot. Introduction privately published, no date given.
- ³⁸. Burchall, M. (1978). *Eastern Sussex Work House Census 1851*. Introduction, p.1, pp.5-15.
- ³⁹. Brighthelmston(e) circa 1800.
- ⁴⁰. Brighthelmston(e) 1884.
- ⁴¹. Brighton Districts at the time of the 1850 Census.
- ⁴². Rubenstein, D., op. cit. p.18.
- ⁴³. Wilkins, J. (1914). *Mrs Fitzherbert and George IV*. Paters Row: Longman's Green and Co.
- ⁴⁴. Brighton Tracts (1850s). *Brighton Pulpit/Brighton Sermons* SB 32/33
- ⁴⁵. *Brighton Tracts* SB, 204, p.2 et seq.
- ⁴⁶. *The Guardian* – the origins of this newspaper are detailed on page 80.
- ⁴⁷. Ibid., SB 32/33
- ⁴⁸. Tosh, J., op. cit. p.68, (in the latter part of this quotation Tosh extends the comment to encompass all published documents noting that publication sets a limit on their value).
- ⁴⁹. *Brighton Gazette*, December 12, 1839.
- ⁵⁰. *Brighton Herald*, August, 1874.
- ⁵¹. *Brighton Examiner*, March 14, 1854.
- ⁵². Jacobs, C. (1989). *Brighton Newspapers in the Age of Reform 1820-1850*. M.A. Brighton Polytechnic.
- ⁵³. *Brighton Guardian*, March 14, 1854.
- ⁵⁴. Bannier, R. (1989). *Into the Streets and Lanes the Brighton Town Mission 1849-1889*. (no reference to publisher).

^{55.} 'National Archives Work House Provision in Brighton' *TNA MH 12/1275*. 'Brighton 471 Correspondence with Poor Law Unions and other local authorities' 01January 1867, 31 December 1869.

^{56.} Newbold, R. (1997). *Electoral Procedures and the Implementation of the 1870 Education Act*. M.A. thesis, University of Sussex.

^{57.} Cappelletto, F. (2003) 'Long Term Memory of Extreme Events' *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, no. 9.

^{58.} White, L. Monuments and their inscriptions Society of Genealogists p123 date not given A statutory bar on burials for three hundred years with the only form of recognition being a small embossed cross with the letters R.I.P.

^{59.} Novoa, Antonio (2000). 'Ways of saying ways of seeing public images of teachers in the 19th century'. In *Paedagogica Historica* (2000) Vol. 36, No.1 pp.39, and Depaepe, M. and Henkins, B. (Eds.), *The Challenge of the Visual in the History of Education* 'ways of saying ways of seeing public images of teachers in the 19th century'.

CHAPTER 3: THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter is intended to establish the historical context of the thesis and form the basis of a review of local, national and international literatures and their perspective on the changes that took place during the period. It considers Britain's extensive military engagements and how they affected national perceptions of identity in relation to other countries. It focuses also on the changing role of the papacy and how individual Popes alternatively reaffirmed and tempered anti-Catholic prejudice and suspicion. The chapter also examines social changes and the tenuous situation of Catholics in the early years of the nineteenth century. Of greater significance to the Catholic community in England was the change in its own identity following the influx of Irish in the middle of the century and the powerful influence of the Oxford Movement. How Brighton emerged as a town with a distinctive identity of conflicts and contrasts can only be understood by examining its history as it moved from an impoverished fishing village to a prosperous seaside resort, but such an understanding is essential to this thesis.

1. International Developments: Britain's military engagements and the role of the Papacy.

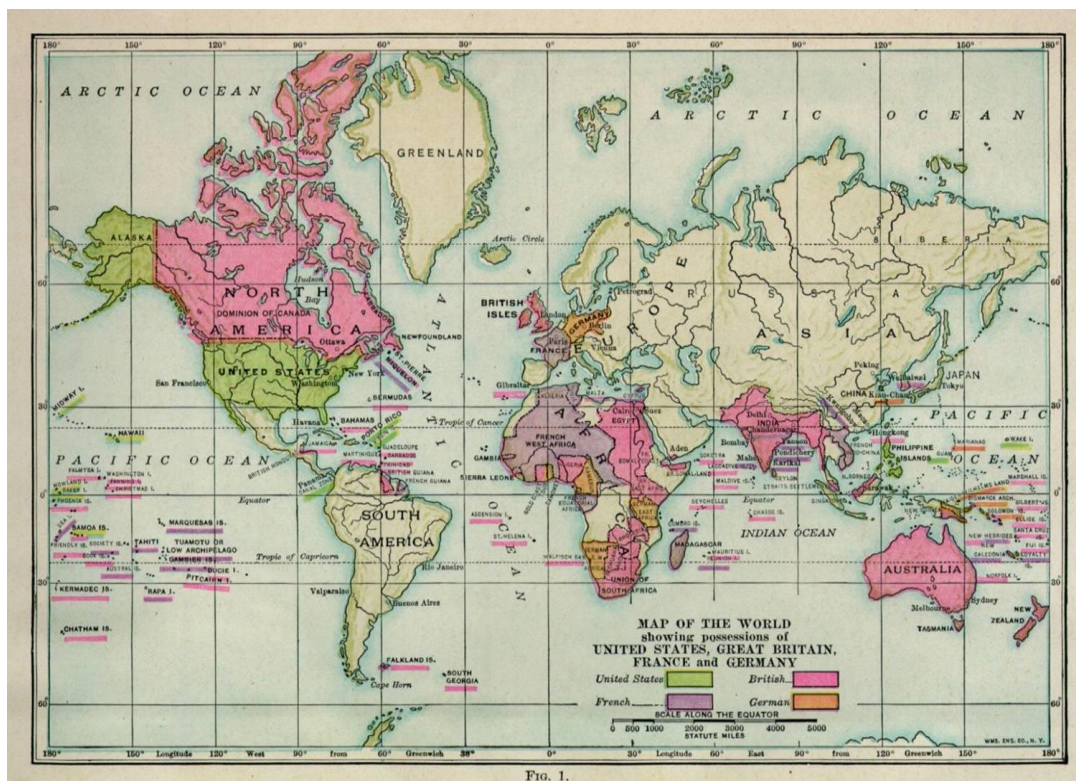


Figure 4: World Map circa 1800, areas marked in red showing the extent of British influence

Both the eighteenth century and the nineteenth century were dominated by international conflicts, although those of the nineteenth century were fought in other theatres of the world and did not constitute a threat to the country's mainland, as the French Revolutionary wars had threatened to do. A cursory glance at the world map above shows the extent of British involvement in international affairs and the rapid expansion of the British Empire.

The American War of Independence and continual colonial unrest had long provided evidence of a potential challenge to this dominance. The need to offset serious internal conflicts had resulted in a more even-handed approach to Ireland and led to the passing of the Catholic Relief Act of 1793. Both served as exemplifiers of the claim that, 'greatness is influenced or determined by the ability to respond to forces of change'.¹ British politicians proved to be particularly successful in anticipating challenges to this dominance and thereby consolidating power. This entailed entering into a complex and often seemingly inconsistent pattern of alliances and confrontations which enabled the country to retain 'a unique position of maritime supremacy which gave her virtually a free hand outside Europe as well as a major role in European diplomacy'.²

It was the French Revolutionary Wars which were ultimately to define this supremacy. The Prussian General Gneisenau acknowledged this and more ironically attributed it in part to Napoleon, for the efforts of European powers to free themselves from French domination had left them and France severely weakened, 'Great Britain, he is quoted as saying, 'has no greater obligation on earth than to this ruffian. For through the events which he has brought about, England's wealth and prosperity have risen high. She is now mistress of the sea and neither in this dominion nor in world trade has she now a single rival to fear'.³

Europe meanwhile continued to be ravaged by internal unrest as both Italy and Germany sought the unification of their countries. In comparison England appeared to be stable and Queen Victoria in the early years of her reign was to speak of the 'hiccoughs of other sovereigns'.⁴ The English, too, viewed their institutions as superior, describing the French as 'debauched, the Spanish cruel, and Catholic Europe, 'idle and poor'.⁵ In a country where anti-Catholic bigotry was so easily tapped for political expedience, with dark warnings of papists challenging the authority of the Established Church it is essential to understand the nature and effects of international conflicts on the lives of English Catholics. This is often not well described in general histories although there is an advantage in reading detached, non- partisan overviews of events which avoid a tendency to exaggerate and misinterpret the religious influence. For this reason it is the literature that focuses on the effects of the national liberal movements that swept through Europe and their challenges to Catholicism, often cited as 'a religion of despotism, repression and Medievalism', which is particularly relevant.⁶ Of equal importance is an examination of the role of the Papacy.

Each of the six nineteenth century popes and that of Pius VI, whose papacy ended at the dawn of the nineteenth century, fought to retain a strong hold on their spiritual authority as they saw their 'temporal power' ebbing away with the growing conflation of Church and State.⁷

The papacy of Pius VI (1775-1799), which ended ignobly with his imprisonment and death in 1799, was symbolised by the loss of control of the Papal States and his failure to prevent the introduction of the Civil Code led to the expulsion of the religious. Yet the plight of European Catholics and persecuted religious orders aroused the sympathy of the English, as evidenced by the way French émigrés, both religious and secular, were welcomed to Britain in order to escape the atrocities of the French Revolution. Edmund Burke in his reflections on the French

revolution believed it to have been 'a severe blow to social order'.⁸ Thompson writing nearly two centuries later saw it as a 'crucial stage in the development of class consciousness'.⁹ In this Ward proved to be particularly prophetic in claiming, 'it indisputably had a permanent and far reaching effect on the future of Catholicism in England'.¹⁰

By 1817 under the more liberal Papacy of Pius VII (1800-1823), or rather one which had initially attempted a level of 'rapprochement' with Napoleon, most of the émigré priests and many of the religious orders had returned to France, but their schools and most significantly their influence remained. As had his predecessor, Paul found himself confronting irreconcilable difficulties with the State. This short-lived rapprochement with Napoleon collapsed when the Concordat, in which Catholicism was recognised as the religion of the French people, was restored but was found to contain unacceptable caveats.

In 1804, Napoleon, in the presence of the Pope, crowned himself Emperor. This apparent rebuttal of papal authority, along with a five year expulsion from Rome for continued refusal to accept State control of essentially doctrinal affairs, earned Pius VII great respect in Catholic Europe, particularly France where it is claimed there developed 'passionate devotion to the person of the Holy Father'.¹¹ This was not a devotion felt in England where George III, in common with other European monarchs, eyed the spread of liberalism with concern but feared Catholicism more and remained resistant to increasing demands for Catholic Emancipation. Nor was he placated when in 1822, the Pope wrote to assure him that there was no conflict between the practice of religion and loyalty to the Crown stating, 'every attempt to design against the lives of the king and prince under the pretence of religion is a detestable crime'.¹²

The six year papacy of Leo XII (1823-1829) who succeeded him was distinguished by resurgence in the movements of 'Liberal Catholicism', a movement with which he had little

innate sympathy, despite the fact that their leader Felicite de Lammenais was a supporter of the Papacy.¹³ In France, repressive measures against Jesuit colleges were introduced by a government influenced by old Galician traditions which favoured the rights of the Monarchy over the authority of the Pope, who once again adopted a more authoritarian and unpopular role in his relationship with the Papal States.

The succession of Pius VIII (1829-1830) was equally contentious. Initially he had been anxious to cooperate with 'legitimate' governments, although not to the extent of supporting measures which would separate Church and State. For this reason, his short papacy, too, was marked by dissent and the emergence of a 'Liberal Mission' which set out to promote the social regeneration of Europe through the Renaissance of Catholicism. Its supporters believed, 'that the Church should break with all royalist regimes, that the papacy should be the guardians of liberty and the champions of democracy and the people, in whom was the hidden word of God should be sovereign'.¹⁴ This put the Liberal Mission and those sympathetic to it into conflict with France and Austria, countries who tended to support legitimate monarchies whether Catholic or non-Catholic, while Germany and Italy continued to explore ways to separate the Church and the State.

The attempt to counter the spread of Liberalism continued under Gregory XVI (1831-1846) who must be credited for his active reengagement with the religious orders which, after periods of violent State repression, had been restored to the Papal States, following periods of expulsion from their own countries. Gregory realised that he needed the cooperation of religious institutions for work in the missions and through Concordats and other Papal Bulls appointed bishops sympathetic to this mission.¹⁵ This was entirely compatible with the ways in which many of the religious orders were seeking to redefine their position and gain for themselves a more 'distinctive socialising and educative role'.¹⁶ The suppression of the Jesuits had had a

catastrophic effect on the educational world, and once again restored they were able to continue and extend their missionary work in Australia and other continents, while newly found orders such as the Society of the Sacred Heart saw value in establishing a dual role of 'professional school and religious institution'.¹⁷

It was Gregory's successor, Pius IX (1846-1878), whose thirty year papacy was to prove so momentous. The Unification of Italy led once again to the loss of the Papal States and the Pope would have faced another period of expulsion had not Napoleon III intervened to save Rome for him. While he too was committed to strengthening the power of the papacy and supporting the expansion and influence of religious orders, in his relationship with England he had a far wider remit.¹⁸ Archbishop Wiseman wanted a more formal reorganisation of the structure of the Church in England which would bring it more in line with Europe, and to this end the Hierarchy was restored in 1850. As predicted, it revived much of the virulent anti-Catholicism that had preceded the passing of Catholic Emancipation twenty years earlier. It also alienated many of the Old Catholic families who had traditionally distanced themselves from the Pope and the power of Rome and had been mistrusted by the papacy for their 'Englishness'.¹⁹

In 1870, Pius IX called the First Vatican Council and after a long and often acrimonious debate about the doctrines of Papal Infallibility was passed. This pronouncement confirmed the worst fears of the English of an authoritative papacy presiding over an increasingly powerful church and was used as such to support the anti-Catholic rhetoric of the Liberal Prime Minister William Gladstone. But it was the Unification of Germany in 1871 which finally defined the political role of the Pope. The French were expelled from Italy and the Pope lost both Rome and all his temporal powers although his sovereignty over the Vatican was recognised. Yet, with this freedom of the State from Church control, the Papacy was forced to focus completely on its

spiritual responsibilities and, as such, this period has come to be regarded as the 'beginning of the modern Papacy'²⁰ with a revival of religious devotion and a consolidation of the influence of Ultramontaniam.²¹

Throughout Europe, and most particularly in Italy, the secularisation of education continued and with it further expulsions of religious orders. In this secularised environment many orders found both security and acceptance by turning from education to nursing, prison welfare running of orphanages and inevitably they came to influence the culture of the welfare organisations with whom they worked.²²

The last of the nineteenth century popes, Leo XIII (1878-1903), was the first not to be encumbered with the divisive issue of Church/State controls. He continued the process of healing the old divisions by stressing that there was 'no conflict between the claims and doctrines of Christianity and the lawful aspirations of mankind to freedom and political liberty', but in this endeavour he was only partially successful.²³ In France there was a new anti-Christian Republicanism that was unsympathetic to these ideas but in Germany Bismarck, the new Chancellor, saw the Pope as an ally against the spread of Socialism. Unlike France, anti-clerical restrictions were lifted and fewer religious communities were expelled. In England the Pope's 1891 *Encyclical Rerum Novarum*, which was devoted to the needs of the working class, resonated well with the work of Cardinal Manning who believed that improving the conditions of the working classes should be the basis of all the Church's extensive social action.²⁴

Under this papacy the positive effects of separation of Church and State were fully realised. Its expansion, which was first initiated by the popes and then accelerated because of the expulsion of the religious orders prevented it from becoming marginalised and resulted in forceful Catholic

Activity world-wide.²⁵ It is of interest that 'Ultramontanism with its emphasis on the supremacy of the papal office, Roman centralisation, education of the clergy in Rome', was ultimately set to define the revival of Catholicism in England.²⁶

The nineteenth century Papacy has been described as 'A story of dominance that effectively remained unchanged, a story of shifting allegiances and priorities'²⁷ but this comment alone might as accurately describe nineteenth century England, the country with whom it had such a fraught and painful history but with whom it remained so intrinsically linked.

2. Social challenges of nineteenth century England and the tenuous situation of Catholics in the early years of the nineteenth century



Figure 5: An Idealised picture of rural England with reference to 'Cobbett's Rural Rides'. Circa 1800



Figure 6: More realistic image of the Industrial Revolution mid 1850s

As the Church strove to define its role in the context of the wider international stage so too did it struggle to find a place in the complex, controversial, endlessly suspicious world of nineteenth century England. For all its apparent wealth and affluence England was both socially and economically divided. These divides were to become even more apparent as the rural economy of the eighteenth century was overtaken with the industrialisation of the country in the nineteenth century.

William Cobbett, on his *Rural Rides around England* described the tranquillity of the South, but highlighted the problems of the North which was the first to experience the hardships of the new industrialised age. By 1830 half the population had moved to the towns, which led to a complete restructuring of the traditional way of life in terms of both loyalties and obligations. As these towns grew they became hot beds of crime and worker exploitation. Those who stayed in the countryside fared little better for they found themselves working in a more organised and productive system but were often subject to a new class of entrepreneurial absentee landlords

who regarded the poor rate subsidy given to the destitute as justification for freeing himself from responsibilities.

The Great Exhibition of 1851 cemented England's reputation of 'economic' and even 'intellectual' supremacy and with control of 40% of world trade, 'not only was Britain the workshop and banker of the world, it was also a nation of shops and shopkeepers, an economy devoted to consuming as well as producing'.²⁸ Yet despite the attempts of succeeding governments to confront the hardships of industrialisation and meet the challenges of a new social order, the nineteenth century remained for many a 'desperately uncertain place'.²⁹

Certainly politics became more polarised as the century developed. There was less emphasis on family names and connections which crossed party lines, as the distinctions between Whig and Tory became more clearly defined. The Whigs drew support from the middle classes and were traditionally pro-reform, fronting movements for the abolition of the slave trade, electoral reform, and the removal of clauses relating to religious disability. The Tories, traditionalists, and conservative were closely aligned to the Anglican Church and were more wary of reform. They were particularly fearful of the 'liberalising movements' that swept through Europe with disastrous consequences for the old order, the monarchy and the nobility with which they were so closely identified. Yet there remained many issues where the divisions were blurred so that successive Prime Ministers and their governments often acted in contradiction to their own particular personal and political convictions, to support measures which at any one time might seem to be for the better good of the country. In their commitment to maintaining national security and upholding their loyalties to the crown both parties were united.

Not that the crown itself, in the person of its rulers, commanded particular loyalty or respect.

George III (1760-1811) and George IV (1811-1830) were inconsistent in the measures they supported and the decisions they made or encouraged. William IV's short reign (1830-1837) was not unpopular but relatively brief and respect for Victoria (1837-1901) was more closely associated with what she as Empress represented, namely the Empire which served as the 'rallying point for patriots to distance themselves from contested politics of Church and King at home'.³⁰ The Hanoverian Kings and the Queen believed that the granting of Constitutional Rights to Catholics might result in the unwelcome influence of the papacy and compromise the Coronation Oath. Yet it was loyalty to the King which sustained the military policy, which, as already indicated, was so fundamental to securing the greatness of the country: 'I am no politician and I do not understand nice distinctions, my sword is the King's and when he commands I draw it to his cause'.³¹

There is a certain irony to the claim, virtually undisputed, that of the 30,000 British soldiers who fought at Waterloo ten thousand at least were Catholics.³² Despite the strength of numbers the situation for Catholics in the Army had long been discriminatory and unequal and the struggle to redress these inequalities was fraught with difficulties. Catholics were not allowed to hold a commission in the British Army so young Catholics who wanted a career in the military joined the Irish Brigade, a recruiting ground for the Catholic nobility, or they fought in foreign armies. The Irish Act of 1807 had allowed for Catholic Officers in the Irish Brigades, which enabled them to reach the rank of Colonel in the Army and Captain in the Navy but if they transferred to England the ranks were withdrawn. The situation was even more iniquitous because both the Army and the Navy tended to recruit 'almost exclusively from out of the ranks of some of the poorest and most oppressed of the Irish population',³³ while reminding the Irish government not to recruit soldiers who might be 'popishly affected'.³⁴ In 1798 Bishop Douglas had appealed to the king and Parliament reminding both of the sacrifices made by Catholics for king and country,

'without proper place to pray or home for their priests'.³⁵ In 1811, the government was forced to confront the situation and an order was made to the effect, 'that no soldier of the Roman Catholic religion shall be subject to any punishment for not attending divine worship in the Church of England'.³⁶

In 1817 another inequality in relation to the children of Catholic soldiers was removed and the rights of Catholic soldiers reinforced:

Catholic children should not be compelled to attend Protestant schools or read Protestant Catechisms in the Adjutant's Office. Every soldier shall be at liberty to attend the worship of the Almighty God according to the form presented by his religion.³⁷

In 1813 one Capt. Whyte (a Brighton Resident) petitioned that 'ranks of both services should be open to all persons without distinction of creed'.³⁸ In the same year the Duke of Norfolk presented to Parliament a Bill to allow Catholic and Irish Officers to hold commissions,³⁹ although it was not passed until 1827, the year that full records of the numbers of Catholics in the Army began to be kept and when regimental returns highlighted the unequal situation that 30% of all soldiers were Catholic but less than 1.4 % of soldiers were Catholic officers, that is 14 officers to one thousand men.⁴⁰

Despite these rulings the situation for Catholic soldiers and their families remained uncertain. Parliamentary Returns of 1836 put the numbers of Catholics in the Army at 60,000, half its strength, but there were still no Catholic Chaplains and opportunities to attend Mass were entirely dependent on the goodwill of Anglican chaplains.⁴¹ Orphans of soldiers were sent to Military Asylums and still brought up as Protestants, all of which highlighted, 'a great unfairness in treatment which acknowledged but did not address their needs while expecting from them the greatest sacrifice'.⁴²

But it was the ethos of Victorian society which continued to observe clearly defined social and gender roles, a strict moral code that valued 'self-help and charitable endeavour' but did not generally see this as a way of encouraging social mobility which equally constrained both political parties. 'The rich man in his castle the poor man at his gate God made them high and lowly and ordered his estate' were the illuminating words of a famous nineteenth century hymn.⁴³ A further more negative interpretation of the social enterprise encouraged by Victorian poverty was that Church sponsored charities were less concerned with curing the causes of poverty than with resisting of the spread of liberalism',⁴⁴ and Donovan, writing in the mid-eighties noted that 'merely humanitarian services do not appear numerous among Catholic communities'.⁴⁵ Connolly makes the point that 'Catholics were no different from other religious groups and society at large and there is no reason not to expect them to mirror the spirit of their age'.⁴⁶ What does emerge is a relationship between Catholics, the Crown, successive governments, and society in general which is both paradoxical and unique.

This situation is better understood by accepting that there were tensions within the Catholic community itself both in relation to its history and identity. John Bossy in his study of the *English Catholic Community 1570-1850* urges the reader to acknowledge, 'a viable and distinctive English Catholicism that did not owe its identity to the Catholicism of the Irish or to that of the continent'.⁴⁷ He was also unwilling to accept that the Church was in decline; to him the Catholic body although small was steady and 'in a condition to face the future with confidence'. This is a view consistent with the description by Halevy of 'Old Catholic' families who, with their Catholic servants and tenants were seen as 'islands of Catholicity',⁴⁸ a small but powerful minority.⁴⁹ Cobbett too would seem to echo this sentiment, 'to be sure the Roman Catholic Religion may in England, be considered as a Gentleman's Religion, it being the most ancient in the country'.⁵⁰ In support of this claim, they, the Roman Catholics, are further

described as 'hearty cordial Country Gentlemen, true English men and patriots taking their part in the country business; but before all came their religion; that was their life. Their neighbours felt here was a mystery an inner chamber that was not to be penetrated'.⁵¹ While these are the positive views of sympathetic Catholic historians, it was more generally believed that the Catholic presence was not acknowledged and that those in the community who might have been expected to speak out did not do so. This was a view echoed in the editorial of the *Catholic Miscellany* of 1822 bemoaning the failure of the first Emancipation Act to pass, 'due to the divisions and intrigues in the Catholic community',⁵² although the painstaking efforts of the small Catholic aristocracy to get the Act of Catholic Emancipation through Parliament and onto the Statute books should not, as Ward urged, be ignored.

While Bossy was not alone in his analysis, statistics supported the view that until the middle of the century the Catholic community was in decline. In 1800 the Catholic population in England and Wales was estimated to be 60,000 with a further 30,000 in Scotland.⁵³ This comprised an elite upper class of Old Catholics, a small middle class and an insignificant number of urban labourers settled in the North and East. Despite the relaxation of the Penal Code in 1798, as a result of the passing of a number of Relief Acts during the last decade of the eighteenth century, the Catholic body remained subject to a number of rigid controls and restrictions. *The Catholic Emancipation Act* (1829), nominally at least, gave them full rights of citizenship. There were still restrictions, two of which caused particular resentment: the continued exclusion of Catholics from Oxford and Cambridge and their debarment from holding ministerial office. This led to the bitter comment by Murphy that 'it reflected Protestant mistrust and suspicion in almost every line'.⁵⁴

3. The redefining of Catholic Identity. The influx of the Irish and the Oxford Movement. Educational challenges and the emergence of a Catholic voice

Regardless of which view is accepted, either that of a small but steady Catholic population or of one in decline, two events in the middle of the century drastically affected both the size and identity of the Catholic community. The Irish potato famines of the mid 1840's led to an influx to England (mainly Liverpool and London) of three quarters of a million of Ireland's poorest and most disadvantaged people. J.D. O'Connell had commented in his crusade for Catholic Emancipation that 'The English do not dislike us as Catholics they simply hate us as Irish'.⁵⁵ Few historians would make this distinction. The traditional antipathy to the Irish goes back many centuries and is well documented. Mary Hickman draws upon the writings of Lebow, quoting *The Chronicles of Giraldus Cambrensis*, 'The Topography of the Irish', to support her claim that the English had long regarded the Irish as being 'barbaric' and 'inferior'.⁵⁶ She also referred to the comments of senior public figures made during the 1830s and 1840s, which were equally derisive and inflammatory. To accept O'Connell's argument would be to deny an essential truth that the English saw Catholicism as somehow not English and it was this sentiment that secured a deep distrust of Catholicism which was to last throughout the century and well into the next. There seemed to be little sympathy for the Irish even from the Catholic community. A Northumbrian Lady wrote in her 'Recollections', 'English Catholics are responsible beings who are taught Right from Wrong. Irish Catholics belong to an as yet savage nation, know no better and are perhaps excusable on that account'.⁵⁷ There was a general consensus that, 'English Catholics were confronted with a people distinguishable from themselves on every count except one, their religious denomination and were alienated in every way from the thousands of fiercely nationalistic Irish who were not a natural growth of their own poor and whose poverty was not counter balanced by any abundance of their own riches'.⁵⁸ Even these negative comments hid a

far more disturbing division relating to Irish Catholic practice often regarded as 'an assembly of strong faith and much superstition'.⁵⁹

The second addition to the Catholic community resulted from the Oxford Movement which had initially started as an attempt within the Anglican community to standardise doctrine in order to promote a stricter and more controlled and disciplined High Church which for many became an inevitable 'Path to Rome'. From this growing body of converts came some of the most famous names in the history of a Church enjoying its '*Second Spring*'. These educated Anglicans, including many senior churchmen, were comfortable and familiar with the norms and traditions that governed the Establishment. They were unencumbered by memories of past restrictions endured by the Old Catholic families. Their leaning towards Ultramontaniam with its closer link to Rome, reverence for the Pope, and adherence to the Roman liturgy was particularly controversial. They also supported the Catholic bishops who believed that the Church needed to formalise its status so that the responsibilities and obligations of Church and State could be more clearly defined and its authority over its own organisations recognised. The Restoration of the Hierarchy became therefore the 'modus operandi' of the Church. Essentially this was to involve a withdrawal of power from the laity into the hands of the Bishops. A Cardinal Archbishop would oversee twelve bishoprics and attempts were made to place the newly divergent Catholic Church in the context of a universal church closer to Rome and the Catholic churches of Europe. Olaf Blum wrote, 'The pastoral revitalisation was the spiritual and liturgical catalyst that greatly facilitated the essential bonding'.⁶⁰ This move was, as predicted by many of the Old Catholics, an even greater 'catalyst' to the return of anti-Catholic sentiments culminating in riots in many of the heavily populated Catholic cities including Liverpool and Birmingham. They distanced themselves from the emotional eulogy of Wiseman who, when announcing the Restoration of the Hierarchy, spoke of Catholic England having 'been restored to its orbit in the ecclesiastical

firmament, from which its light had long vanished',⁶¹ and they had equally resented Wiseman's dictum that; 'it was not the custom of the Catholic church to pray for those out of communion with it'.⁶² A popular writer and priest, Frederick Faber, continued this message in his famous hymn 'Faith of Our Fathers. He writes of 'our Fathers chained in prisons dark' and claims 'that Mary's prayers shall win our country back to thee'.⁶³ All this was disquieting, as was the *Times* leader which forewarned the idea of a Church being, 'Italian in devotion and Irish in composition'.⁶⁴

So it was that the Catholic community in the middle of the century was very different from the one of fifty years before. Mary Heimann, with some authority, claimed that the Church spoke of a 'Holy Poverty' and embraced 'an educational mix in Catholic Churches not noticeable in others'.⁶⁵ There were certainly conscious attempts to build bridges between rich and poor with evidence of shared devotions as the 'saying of the rosary, florid Latin missals and exaggerated rituals' became part of Catholic practice.⁶⁶ The real challenge for the Catholic Community was to consolidate its position nationally and speak with a common and unifying voice. Langford suggests that the 19th Century Church 'had long ceased to be the domain of devotional sectarianism and increasingly figures in a more sensitive portrayal of the political and social influences that affected Catholic communities'.⁶⁷ Almost certainly that was the hope of Cardinal Manning who succeeded Wiseman as Archbishop of Westminster in 1865 and believed 'that the educational and social institutions established after the Restoration, and the Diocesan reorganisation that facilitated it would be a way for the Church to meet its social obligations to the poor'.⁶⁸

As the most serious problem for the Catholic community, one which was common to all denominations and endemic to the Victorian Age was 'the education of the poor', it seems in

retrospect surprising that a collective response to deal with this could not have been agreed upon. Unfortunately, in matters of education the sectarian divides certainly in the first part of the century were strong and uncompromising. *The National Society*, which addressed the needs of the Anglicans, and *The British and Foreign Schools Society*, which served the Non-Conformists, were committed to the saving of the souls of their children, but in the matter of providing fair and equal provision for Catholic children entrenched prejudice triumphed.

In 1833, the first government grant for the purposes of education had been awarded. At the time, Catholics, along with Quakers, Presbyterians and all other dissenters from the Established Church had no expectations of receiving any money, but it did mark the beginning of State involvement in the education of the poor, and Lord Stanhope's controversial question as to whether this was 'reasonable or just', although unanswered at the time, was not forgotten. The Catholic community continued unaided to provide limited education in its Charity Schools, based on the Lancastrian Plan of Monitorial teaching, consisting of reading, writing and a little arithmetic with considerable emphasis placed on moral and religious instruction, orderliness, discipline and cleanliness as evidenced in the school log books. In this the education would hardly have differed if at all from that which was provided by the other denominations.

In 1838 a *Society for the Diffusion of Catholic Publications* was set up, in an attempt to counteract the malicious and often incorrect gossip that circulated about Catholics and their faith. D. O'Connell, an Irish MP, suggested that the name should be changed to the Catholic Institute and it was given the additional function of securing aid for the erecting of Catholic chapels and the extension and support of Catholic charity schools. An indirect Government response came a year later, which further emphasised the unfairness of the system. The *Committee of Council*,⁶⁹ set up to administer the fund, laid out clearly that only those only

applications connected to the National Society and the *British and Foreign Schools Society* would be successful in their attempt to erect a school. O'Connell meanwhile was pushing for a National System of Education similar to that which had been set up in Northern Ireland. This would establish schools, which would be open to children from any denomination, and provide a secular education in all subjects except religion, and would be the responsibility of the respective ministers of religion. For a while it had seemed that this initiative might take off as such a system had, after all, been trialled with reasonable success in Liverpool. In the end, due to the reluctance of all churches to compromise the idea was shelved. Then in 1846 the *Tablet*, in a move designed to pressure the Catholic community to marshal its forces and formalise some form of official directive, published six conditions, which they felt further encapsulated the Catholic position.⁷⁰ On September 17 1847 after several years of dispute as to the role of the Catholic Institute it was relieved of all its responsibilities other than education and was finally subsumed under the title of the *Catholic Poor School Committee*, empowered by the Roman Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, to be their 'organ of communication on the subject of education'.⁷¹ Three months later, *The Committee of Council* formally recognised the *CPSC* as 'the ordinary channel of enquiry as may be desirable as any school applying for aid as a Roman Catholic School'. The *CPSC* made clear in its mission statement that its function was to act as the Bishops' representative to provide education for the Children of the Catholic poor. It was their intention that such children should be 'useful citizens and loyal subjects', sentiments fully in accord with Victorian philosophy. It deliberately underscored the 'Irishness' of the situation so the word 'Irish' was removed although in effect 'Catholic Poor' meant 'Irish Poor'. Selby too suggested that, 'without the Irish there would have been no Catholic elementary school problem in the second half of the century',⁷² a point reinforced perhaps controversially by Grace, that the 'Catholic Community in Britain was largely poor, working class and Irish'.⁷³

The detailed *Annual Reports of the Committee* reflect that within five years it had achieved a considerable degree of success. Fund-raising was essential, as the government grant given was in direct proportion to the amount raised. This was fully supported by the Bishops whose appeals through their pastoral letters reached every church-going Catholic in the country. The devotion of the Catholic Community to any cause the Church defended was absolute. In terms of fair and equal distribution of aid to Catholic schools the proportion of money awarded to them still fell far short of that awarded to other bodies, although this was less a political act of discrimination than the result of inbuilt provisions in the Act which were designed 'to encourage and stimulate local exertions not supersede them'.⁷⁴ This rarely provided for more than one third of the total required, which left the remaining two thirds to be provided by the schools and the Catholic community. The reports of the *Catholic Poor School Committee* appear to recognise this. The reality was that four fifths of the Catholic population comprised, even by Victorian standards, many of the poorest and most destitute people in the country. For this reason, they were, from the outset, disadvantaged in having a proportionally smaller number of their schools staffed by certificated teachers, in a poorer position to obtain Pupil Teachers and therefore eligible for inspection, all of which were further prerequisites for government funding.

The Catholic community, or more accurately the Catholic Church, through the *CPSC* attempted to confront the ongoing problems in two ways. First it ensured that it played an active part in the national educational debate by protecting the rights of Catholics, demanding equitable treatment for them but attempting to meet, where possible, the challenges and demands of the government. Second it pursued a vigorous policy to recruit and educate Catholic teachers. While Catholic schools continued to take part in the Pupil Teacher System initiated in 1846, the absence of a Catholic Training College or Training School meant that even those pupils who finished their apprenticeship could not look forward to a college education. It was a problem that greatly

concerned Thomas Allies who became chairman of the *CPSC* in 1853. His argument that, 'as is the trainer so is the teacher and as is the teacher so is the child', was to be the rationale behind his determination to increase opportunities for Catholic teachers to be properly trained.⁷⁵

Cardinal Manning in a paper in 1853 entitled 'The Necessity of Training Colleges for Lay Teachers', outlined his belief as to the 'superiority of the religious as school teachers', but he accepted that it was impossible to replace the existing secular teachers with an agreed number of religious, and he further acknowledged that these teachers were 'entering on the most important of all works without training or preparation, intellectual, moral or spiritual'.⁷⁶ This matter was also alluded to by the government inspectors and cited in the 1856 Annual Report of the *CPSC* and for this reason the college at Hammersmith was finally opened to laymen. The problem for boys at least remained seriously exacerbated by the fact that the Catholic community had so few of the 'shopkeepers and higher Merchants from which Protestant Pupil Teachers were recruited'.⁷⁷ Not that the Protestant community could claim to be significantly better off and the damning description of school teachers of all denominations widely reflected the situation in Victorian England where, 'none are too old, too ignorant, too feeble, too sickly, too unqualified in every way, to be regarded by others as unfit for school teaching'.⁷⁸

The religious orders had rallied to this cause as early as 1847 when the *Brothers of Christian Instruction* at Ploermel in Brittany had been selected by the committee to be best suited to provide training for young men who wished to enter the priesthood and train to teach in elementary schools. The commitment of the Abbe J.M. Mallais and his understanding of the needs of the teachers was recognised by his insistence that the instruction of the young seminarians/teachers should be based on the text books that they would be required to use in English elementary schools training. But when the brothers were invited to run the first Training

College for Young Men in Hammersmith in 1851, the rigorous nature of the order proved to be an obstacle to recruitment.

The situation for girls was less worrying because the religious orders were able to recruit potential teachers from among a wider social mix. In 1850 it was estimated that over twenty different orders of nuns were engaged in the work of education. Of these, the *New Orders* embraced quite different attitudes to the religious life; they were neither contemplative nor cloistered and as such were better suited to be teachers.⁷⁹ There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that 'the religious who ran the convents were capable and dedicated educationalists'.⁸⁰ The attractions of a convent education, although it must be acknowledged that this was more directed to the convents which educated middle and upper class girls, were such that many Anglicans and dissenters warned parents against, 'being seduced by the possible attractions and of subtle proselytising which could lead Protestant girls to Rome'.⁸¹ A more damning indictment was that 'by example these celibate women downplayed the vision of woman keeping the hearth warm for their men fighting wars in foreign places',⁸² and once again the issues of both gender and class, came into play which were, as already mentioned, all defining features of Victorian society. These same critics also claimed that the curriculum of the convents was limited and many of the sisters were not qualified to teach. This criticism was challenged and refuted by her Majesty's Inspectors who reported, 'It is admitted and proved very conclusively that by the remarkable results of members of the religious communities in Roman Catholic Schools the employment of women of superior social position and general culture had a refining and excellent effect upon the scholars whom they teach'.⁸³

Walsh provides a more current challenge to the critics in her study of the effects of the religious on the 'fabric of Victorian Society' and rightly asks whether 'the work of the religious made them

the moral voice of the government'.⁸⁴ She acknowledges that even within the communities a strict hierarchical order existed, and there was no reason to believe that the church had a mission to liberalise women, although the dynamism of many of the founders of religious orders would suggest that is exactly what did happen. O'Donoghue writes of the 'freedom experienced by nuns teaching in Catholic boys schools',⁸⁵ and to a degree he is correct, but it was a freedom within the strict disciplines of their order. What is more controversial are his claims of 'an innate superiority' felt by the religious towards the lay community and that even while engaged in social and educational work they distanced themselves from those with whom they were in contact'.⁸⁶ This relates to the social and behavioural practices of the times and in that context such behaviour was normal and acceptable.

Despite these successes, the most serious problem continued to be the financial disabilities imposed on Catholic Schools. To offset these difficulties Cardinal Manning initiated the establishment of Diocesan Funds to assist both Pupil Teachers and the schools. By the middle of the decade, what been the concern of individual denominational groups over the educational problems of their own, seemed finally to be developing into a national consciousness. In 1870 it was estimated that 178,000 children required schooling, but there were places for less than 100,000 and there was little chance of providing for the surplus before the compulsory provisions of the Education Act came into force and Board schools were empowered to create rate aided schools to fill the gaps. Thomas Allies in an Inaugural address to the National Education League had been adamant: 'Catholic Schools for Catholic Children'.⁸⁷ while Cardinal Vaughn warned, 'No Catholic can vote for any candidate who is prepared to saddle the country with a secular and godless system of education'.⁸⁸

The system militated against the Catholic schools in many ways and by 1881 it was widely accepted that they were losing out to Board Schools in terms of buildings, equipment and teachers and, more seriously, in academic standards. The Catholic schools had been forced to make drastic cuts in salaries and the stipends paid to Catholic teachers were far lower than those paid to teachers in Board schools. While Catholic bishops continued to caution against 'Catholic teachers teaching in non-Catholic school',⁸⁹ the desertion of Catholic teachers, particularly men of whom there was already an extreme shortage, was inevitable.

In 1885 Catholics began to petition Parliamentary candidates in respect of two issues, their willingness to put Voluntary schools on an equal footing with Board schools, and their intention to support a Royal Commission to report on the state of education in England. For the first time, a Catholic minority swayed the vote. The Conservatives came to power, albeit briefly, and a strongly denominational Commission under the Chairmanship of Lord Cross was appointed. Demands for universal elementary education had intensified. *The Dublin Review*, (July 5 1869) often the most critical and outspoken in its demands on behalf of the Catholic population issued this call, 'All the world is agreed upon one point, Conservatives, Liberals, Catholics, Protestants, English and Scotch that popular education must be extended, so as to meet the whole population'.⁹⁰ In a further move to strengthen the denominational lobby Bishop Vaughan (later to be Cardinal Vaughan) founded the *Voluntary Schools Association*, deliberately inter-denominational and supported by those who believed in definite and dogmatic religious instruction.

The Cross Report of 1888 marked the turning point in Catholic Education; a majority report favoured further support for Voluntary schools and underlined 'the importance of religious education and the rights of parents to send their children to a school suitable to their religious convictions' but a 'minority report' continued to hold out for 'unsectarian' education.⁹¹ Finally, in

1902 came the Balfour Education Act which empowered Local Authorities to maintain from public funds any voluntary elementary schools and to maintain buildings and pay salaries for all teachers from the rates 'Rome on the Rates' as the slogan of the bitterest Non-Conformists opponents had it. It had taken a century for the Catholic community to move from its position of insignificance and isolation to one in which its schools at least were recognised as having a permanent and essential place in the national education system. It did not though meet the Catholic demand for full and equal maintenance which left the managers of the school still bound to provide sites, repairs and maintenance. The *CPSC* in its 1902 Report defined the Voluntary Schools as 'non provided and bond' and Council Schools as 'provided and free'. Cardinal Manning did not live to see the fulfilment of his mission but his successor Cardinal Vaughan wrote, 'we must take care lest by seeking the ideal we do not lose what we have hitherto gained, we are not likely to ever get a more satisfactory settlement'.⁹²

4. Brighton's early history from fishing village to seaside resort. A town with a distinctive identity of fascinating contrasts and conflicts

While there is little secondary material available that deals specifically with Catholicism in nineteenth century Brighton, the town's broader social history has always been carefully documented. For the early part of the century there was an overemphasis on the glamour of the Regency period and little information about the working class in Brighton, that a local twentieth century historian noted had to wait until 'the awakening of a social conscience in Victoria's reign'.⁹³ This observation was accompanied by practical and valuable steps by academics at each of the town's universities to uncover what was described as a 'rich vein of material as yet unsourced'.⁹⁴ Academics, historians and students continue to address issues which provide an essential backdrop in understanding how the Catholic community slowly evolved.

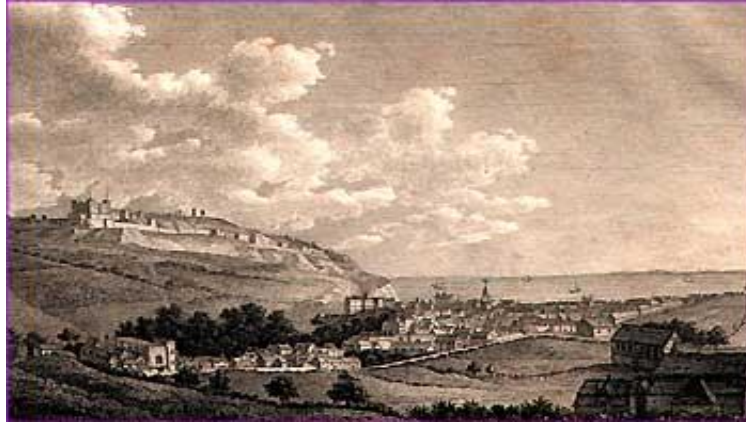


Figure 7: Brighthelmstone 1800

The city of Brighton, as it became in 2001, has a history that precedes the colourful and notorious Regency period with which it is so often identified. The town of Brighthelmstone was first recorded in the Domesday Book and there are references to the landings of Julius Caesar and unsubstantiated claims that Charles II escaped from there in 1651. The Directory of 1800 describes it as a 'market town' noting that it was granted a Charter to trade on a Thursday as far back as 1313.⁹⁵ An Act of Parliament in 1772 enabled it to become a Daily Market as well as a thriving fishing village, and a successful base for the smuggling of contraband from Dieppe, the French seaside port a mere 22 miles across the Channel. By the middle of the eighteenth century the town's fortunes had changed, due in part to the collapse of the fishing industry, the gradual erosion of the cliffs and a number of damaging altercations with the French.⁹⁶

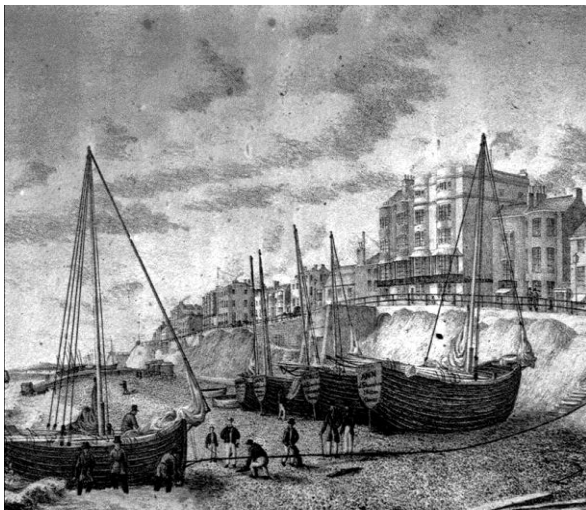


Figure 8: East Cliff in Old Brighton (Fishermen at their nets prior to the ongoing altercations with the French and the continuing erosion of the cliffs)

The decline might have been irreversible had it not been for the publication of a book by a Doctor Russell entitled, *The Use of Sea Water and the Affections of the Glands*, in which he advocated sea bathing as a cure for many ailments and a selection of sea-based potions as aids to good health.⁹⁷ This message was further reinforced by his successor Dr. Relhan, who took over the Russell Practice and continued to write about the therapeutic effects of sea bathing as well as publishing an early history of the town. The philosophy of both doctors caught on and Brighton became established in the minds of the affluent and influential as a fashionable place to 'take the waters'.⁹⁸ There is evidence to suggest that the townspeople initially resented this intrusion and the fishermen, struggling to maintain a living, were particularly frustrated by the invasion of socialites and seasonal visitors. In time they too began to appreciate the financial benefits and many one-time fishing families took up jobs more closely related to the needs of a prosperous seaside resort. The same *Directory* is the source of one of the most quoted references to Brighton at the beginning of the century as being 'quiet without dulnefs, buffy without noife, and fashionable without a cout'.⁹⁹

It was undoubtedly the decision of George Prince of Wales (later to become Prince Regent) to move to Brighton in the latter half of the eighteenth century which effectively sealed its reputation.

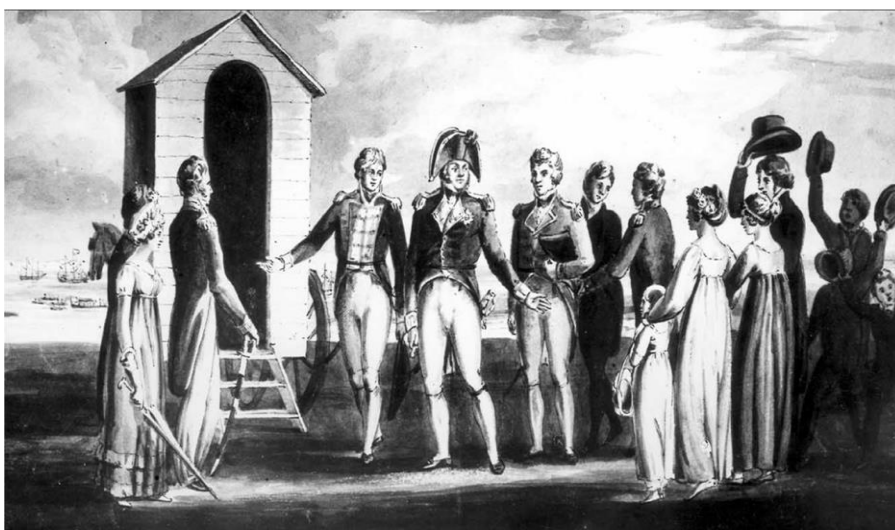


Figure 9: Regency Buxton. This stylised and flattering sepia drawing image of the Prince Regent is one of many which reinforced the image of Georgian society circa 1818

The young Prince had been instantly attracted to the town when he visited his uncle the Duke of Clarence. Far removed from the austerity of the Court, and his prudish and unstable father, it was a safe place where he could indulge his love of music and the arts and enjoy a life of unrestricted pleasure. The illustrious list of residents and visitors was further enriched by the members of the French nobility seeking to escape the ravages of the French Revolution, who were welcomed into a Royal court sympathetic to their plight. The local Directories provide evidence of how the town made every effort to cater for the national, cultural, social and religious diversity of the resident population and its visitors. There are details of horse racing, pleasure boat rides and other less sophisticated activities. The maps of the town in separate appendices show the location of the Theatres, Libraries and Assembly Room, and highlight the boundaries which enclosed a relatively small residential area. 'The town thronged with distinguished visitors who spent their money freely, houses and lodgings were at a premium and trade was at its briskest'.¹⁰⁰ But it was its informality which made it attractive not only, as already mentioned, as a haven from persecution but a place where it was comfortable to live freed from the restraints of formal society. George IV's close connection to Brighton came to an end even before his death and in his later years he seldom visited The Royal Pavilion, the construction and design of which he had spent so many years overseeing. Whether ordinary townspeople had held a genuine affection for the Prince is debatable but they certainly welcomed his successor William who, with his wife Adelaide, delighted the population by casually walking around the town chatting easily to the locals. The accession of Victoria in 1837 saw the end of Brighton as a Royal residence, for she claimed to find Brighton and the people, 'troublesome and indiscreet, which made the town seem like a prison'.¹⁰¹ This scarcely mattered, for although the Census of 1821 had recorded a reason for the burgeoning population, 'a three-fold increase was chiefly the result of the town a being the occasional residency of his Majesty

and the nearest point on the sea coast to the metropolis',¹⁰² nearly half a century of George's patronage had already assured the town a place in history.

Queen Victoria ascends to the throne

[people were]
"troublesome and
indiscreet, which made
the town seem like a
prison"



Figure 10: Queen Victoria ascends to the throne(1837)

It is of interest that France, the country that had nearly precipitated the downfall of Brighton should contribute to its colourful popularity. Its position on the South Coast of England made it an obvious escape route for those wishing to leave the continent; equally it made it vulnerable to attack. In 1793 just as it was beginning to consolidate its reputation as a 'pleasure Dome of excesses, uninhibited by the conventions of formal society',¹⁰³ a military onslaught from its one-time enemy was once again predicted. A *Defence of the Realm Act 1798* had led to a census of all males between the ages of 15 and 60, in order to recruit for the Home Guard, and much of the South of England was fortified. There is some discrepancy as to exactly how many soldiers were involved although Army records suggest that between 1800 and 1815 the number of soldiers stationed in forty-two barracks across the country as a whole increased from 60,000 to 204,000. Soldiers were stationed in barracks at Church Street and Windsor Street and because of its direct access to London there were several thousand at the Preston Park Barracks.¹⁰⁴ A further 800 men of the Prince of Wales Regiment, the 10th Light Dragoon Guards, were always in attendance. The population of the town was boosted by several thousands in the last years of the eighteenth

century and the early years of the nineteenth, and included not only military personnel but the wives, children and support services that accompanied the regiments, thereby earning Brighton the reputation, among others, of being a 'military town'.

The reality of this presence is depicted in different ways, cold statistics and military histories will record the barracks, the intolerably harsh living conditions, the rigid and uncompromising discipline, descriptions of military parades and Royal inspections. Jane Austen, the definitive nineteenth century romantic novelist allowed her heroines to fantasize about 'the streets of that gay bathing place covered with officers in their scarlet tunics' adding another dimension to Brighton's colourful and ever contradictory image.¹⁰⁵ The defeat of Napoleon removed the threat of an imminent invasion and the military presence was reduced, but, by the middle of the century the intentions of Napoleon III in the aftermath of the Crimean War raised concerns. With so much of the regular force engaged overseas there was a need for a revival of a Volunteer Force. Brighton appeared to be particularly successful in recruiting from the middle and artisan classes, a substantially different group from the peasant classes who had swelled the ranks in the Napoleonic wars. Heavy emphasis was placed on 'Sporting Prowess and Patriotism' and the Annual Reviews, generally held at Easter, in the latter years of the century were hugely successful. The Review of 1860 blazing a banner of '*Loyalty Welcomes Royalty*' attracted 20,000 volunteers and over 150,000 spectators. The town received warm praise for the way it was able to cope with vast numbers of visitors and the Railway Company, it is claimed, 'showed exemplary skill in the transporting of troops to and from the venues in an orderly manner and in good time'.¹⁰⁶

A further contributory factor to the increasing population of the town, one which would offset any possibility that the loss of Royal patronage might lead to a decline in the town's popularity came in 1837 with the introduction of the Brighton to London Railway.

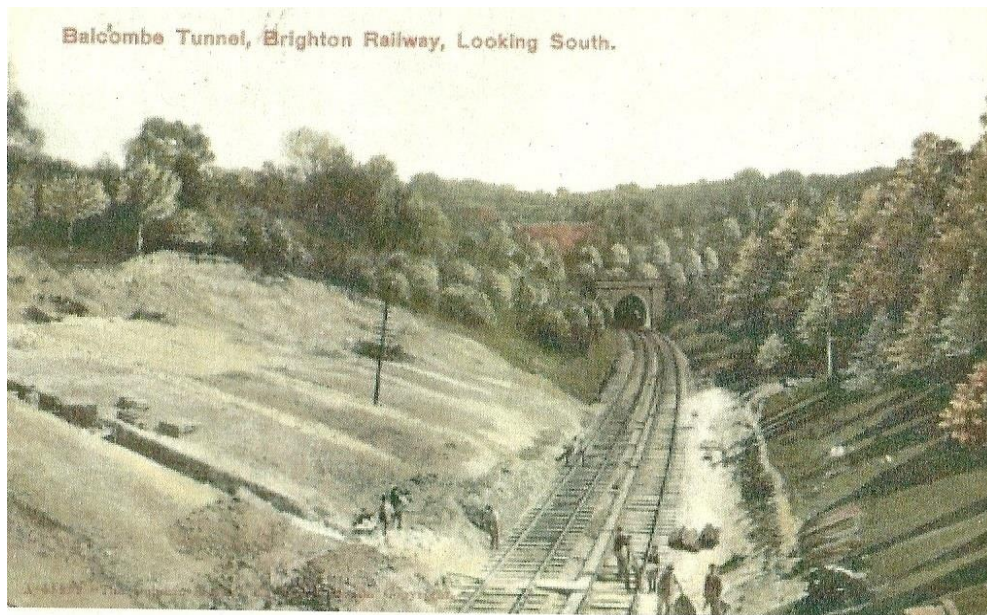


Figure 11: Brawny Navvies building the Railway Balcombe Tunnel section of the line

This figure of workman on the railway appeared for many years in the Brighton Museum with the caption 'brawny navvies building the railway'. This comment was later disproved but was effectively controversial at the time suggesting that they were Irish workers. Musgrave (1970) took up the idea equally erroneously, The work was pursued with feverish activity by large teams of Irish navigators or navvies who although rough, uncouth and addicted to drinking and fighting at the weekends were nevertheless devoted to the building of the railroads and took pride in their ability to work harder than two or three ordinary labourers.¹⁰⁷

A journey which in 1800 had averaged twelve hours could, by 1822, be completed in six, but with the railway it took less than two hours. If Russell had been responsible for boosting the town's image as a 'health resort' then the Railway, in giving access to different types of visitors, the affluent middle classes and the more controversial 'Day Trippers', cemented its claim to be 'a Service Town whose population depended upon its popularity.'¹⁰⁸



Figure 12: Brighton and back for 3s 6d. Rossiter, C.9 (1869)

According to a report in a monthly magazine, the town's residents were divided between 'those who make the town a(n) hotel and those who live by providing for their entertainment'.¹⁰⁹ The most popular of over two hundred of the local trades were associated with a moneyed pleasure-loving class and although many of town's residents were particularly dismayed by the invasion of the 'lower orders', the townspeople effectively adapted the scale and style of the accommodation and entertainment required to meet their interests and needs and fulfil the function of the Victorian seaside resort which Walton identifies as:

being important not only as a repository for investment, consumer spending and social emulation, but also as a crucible for conflict between classes and lifestyles, as wealthy and self-conscious visitors and residents competed with plebeian locals and roistering excursionists for access to enjoyment and amenities'.¹¹⁰

Just as Disraeli was to speak of 'Two nations between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy they are ignorant of each-others thoughts habits and teachings as if they were dwellers on different zones or inhabitants or different planets', so there were two Brightons.¹¹¹ The housing boom of 1804-1808 which had given the town its palatial palaces and ornate fronted houses also contributed to appalling living conditions where disease was rife and sanitary-

conditions were non-existent. 'The town' one visitor claimed, 'was constructed in such a way as to generate all kinds of vice and disease'.¹¹² As in other parts of the country many of the attempts to alleviate the problems of the poor were led by religious and other charitable organisations. This link was so strong that a declared affiliation to a church or the promise of future religious observance was often a precondition for receiving assistance. In the case of schooling for the poor there were examples of subtle discrimination. The Mission Statements of schools and other charitable organisations often appeared to imply that no child could be excluded from a school on account of the religion of its parents, but a further clause would insist on regular attendance at a 'designated place of Christian worship'. This excluded Jewish children and the Catholic Chapel was frequently not listed. There were exceptions, The Union Charity School Middle Street's Mission statement read:

The Institution has received from its founder the name Union School because it concentrates the exertions and influence of Christians of all denominations and embraces the children of those parents who belong to the Established church, as well as Dissenters and allows them the freedom /liberty of attending their respective places of worship.¹¹³

The general inadequacy of the provision was illustrated in the Directory of 1833. It recorded seven Charity Schools, including an Industrial School, one orphanage and three religious societies providing help for widows, but the total number of children receiving some form of aid was less than one thousand in a town whose population was then in excess of twenty thousand.

The existence of two hospitals and a specialised lying-in centre supported by the Maternal Benevolent Society suggests that the town was not indifferent to the health of the people. The People's Dispensary founded in 1809 specifically administered to the poor and provided free advice and medicine but, like the Brighton hospital founded in 1821, it was wholly dependent upon subscriptions and charitable donations. The Brighton hospital, also separately categorised provision for children under seven, pregnant women, and patients with mental disorders or infectious diseases, as those not eligible for care. Comparable figures of the two hospitals

indicate that the Dispensary received less money but treated four times as many people. As with the charitable schools the figures imply that provision was unequal and inadequate. The strangely ambivalent attitude of the town to its needs and responsibilities is best illustrated by its cautious response to taking effective measures to deal with its social problems. In 1825, the *Brighton Town Act* was passed with the aim of 'better regulating, improving and managing the town of BRIGHTHELMSTONE in the county of SUSSEX and the poor thereof'. The 264 clauses were all embracing and ranged from lighting public ways, emptying privies, disposing of rubbish; building regulations were introduced and grants made available for the industrious poor. Despite these initiatives and frequent reports that continued to highlight the seriousness of unresolved issues, there was official resistance when it came to signing up to the Public Health Act of 1848. It was described at the time as a 'triumph of prejudice, ignorance and private enterprise'.¹¹⁴ The Town's Commissioners were notably anxious not to lose their overall autonomy and those who opposed the Act dismissed the mortality rate among the poor with the claim that 'they were born in gin, lived in gin and died in gin and the great cause of death from that area was from the habit of its people'.¹¹⁵ Brighton was not immune from the same mixture of compassion and contempt which so characterised Victorian England as a whole. Thirty years earlier Brighton's displaced fishermen had been similarly accused: 'It is well known how many of the fishery of the town are idle drunken - idleness and drunkenness consumes that which ought to be laid up for a rainy day'.¹¹⁶ Such attitudes could not be an excuse for inaction and within ten years the town began to take a proactive stance to slum clearance when in 1854 it became a Borough which consolidated and formalised its position. By the end of the century no major epidemics were recorded, its sanitary conditions had been upgraded and it boasted a lower mortality rate than thirty-three other similarly sized towns.

In national politics as in local politics the contradictory image of Brighton was again in evidence. Despite its Royal connections the town consistently returned Whigs to Parliament.

This may in part have been a rebuttal against the unsuccessful Tory attempt to campaign against Brighton being franchised in the 1832 election but there was a general acknowledgement that the Whig candidates were the more competent to represent Brighton's interests.

In religion too there was again an interesting and seemingly inexplicable mixture of tolerance, contempt and caution. Brighton, like the country as a whole, was not in any way a secular society. The churches were part of this cosmopolitan mix and had a significant part to play in contributing to the welfare of their people and to the spiritual needs of the visitors no less than to their amusement. This religious diversity was acknowledged and 'every sect was represented by the Church or Chapel appropriate to its particular worship'.¹¹⁷ The Town Directories detailed the addresses, times of services and names of the religious ministers serving the nine Anglican churches, the Catholic chapel, the Synagogue and each of the 13 Dissenting Chapels for Quakers, Non Conformists and Methodists. While there was potential for the town to become the focus of religious tension, and it certainly did so in the middle years of the century, incidents of religious intolerance are not highlighted, although one self-congratulatory anonymous note written towards the end of the century is evidence it once existed. 'How far have we advanced in toleration that neither the Salvationists nor the robed priests are molested'.¹¹⁸

Much of Brighton's history has been vividly captured due to the early development of a number of local newspapers. This would suggest that the wealthy, apparently frivolous, and fun loving society that dominated the town in the early years of the century was well read and informed. It was not a view supported by one editor who claimed, 'We are a prosperous town; we suffer a small degree of those privations and hardships which face with such force and hardship the labouring population of the large manufacturing towns of the North, we are not a place for deep Political thought'.¹¹⁹ Another writer of the time took an entirely different perspective believing

'Brighton to be a town where everything, whether it be a parish meeting or a debate at Westminster, is analysed, anatomised and criticised but no one lobby ever completely silences the other place for everything and everybody is consistently unpredictable'.¹²⁰ *The Herald*, founded in 1806, and supportive of the Whigs, provided news about the military, fashion and gossip and looked primarily towards the 'interests and sensitivities of the visitors'. The Tory *Gazette* which followed in 1821 was committed 'to protecting our religious and Civil rights'. Both papers gave considerable coverage to international and national news and comparatively little to local news other than items which would engage the interest of fashionable visitors. Finally in 1827 *The Guardian* appeared, financed by a Jewish proprietor who intended to focus on the, 'radical reform of civil rights' and less on international affairs. *The Patriot* (1835) was again generally liberal but regarded itself as the Brighton paper and covered local issues at the expense of national and international news. Despite these apparent differences, there is little evidence to suggest any sign of serious political or religious tensions in the early years of the century, as all three were careful not to be too politically outspoken for fear of offending their readership. Nevertheless, each did have a distinctive viewpoint on events and issues which was to become more polarised and influential with time. The claim that the paper's content, language and editorial style were dominated by commercial considerations and relations with the local community cannot easily be dismissed, a view it would seem supported by an editorial in *The Patriot* which noted that being 'visited by people of power and influence and also by the court we are a little subdued and tongue tied'.¹²¹

Gilbert speaks of Brighton as 'a victim of Victorian elephantiasis', its population swelled out of all proportion and every literary man visited it'.¹²² Of these, the novelists William Thackeray and Charles Dickens were the most famous and it is to Thackeray that one of the most effusive claims can be attributed. 'Brighton, best of Doctors, there is no mutton as good as Brighton

mutton, no flies as pleasant as Brighton flies, no cliffs so pleasant to ride on or shops so pleasant to look at as the Brighton gem crack shops and the fruit shop and the market'.¹²³

Nor was this cultural input restricted to writers. Turner, who painted the Chain Pier wrote, 'there is nothing here for the painter but sky and sea which have been lovely indeed and always varying'.¹²⁴ Today, Brighton's architectural heritage reflects the classical styles of Nash and the ammonite buildings of Amos Wilde and his son which dominated the Regency period and is so evident in the grand Georgian Squares, while in nearby streets there are the vast domed vaults and towering spires of Pugin, the godfather of Victorian Gothic.

Throughout the century there was a continued expansion of all forms of educational provision. The Directories recorded the names and addresses of teachers, both male and female, teaching arts and crafts and other skills relating to the pursuits and interests of the leisured classes and listed, too, privately owned Boarding schools, Day schools and seminaries both religious and secular. It would seem that that in 1899, as in 1799, Brighton 'had it all'.¹²⁵ This was the rich inheritance and fascinating diversity of a town that became the unrivalled title holder of 'London by the sea'¹²⁶ and where one visitor claimed, 'no one can really be good in Brighton, that is the real charm of it'.¹²⁷ It is therefore no surprise that the Catholic identity that emerged over the century was so distinctive.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was not to address the three research questions per se but rather to emphasise the fact that Brighton's Catholic story was subject to influences beyond the borders of the town. This does not mean that the town necessarily mirrored events taking place across the country or actively responded to Catholic initiatives for change. In the early years of the century foreign visitors many of whom were Catholic were part of the fabric of Brighton society as was

the presence of the Prince Regent and his court. The town continued to expand as did other towns and cities in the country and in time the nobility were replaced by a moneyed middle class, but it remained a service town, and was not urbanised as were many of the big cities with ghettos of Catholic poor. The needs of the Catholic poor were less obvious and not distinguishable from the town's poor regardless of religion. National initiatives regarding recognition of Catholic rights and educational provision were being put in place but it was to take some time before they filtered down to assist the relatively small Catholic community. The 'modus operandi' of the town was to maximise pleasure for its visitors and ignore if possible potential areas of conflict.

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- ⁵ Haydon, C. (1993). *Anti-Catholicism in 18th Century Britain*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, p.253.
- ⁶ McRorie, I. (1984). *AntiCatholicism in Mid-Victorian Brighton 1830-1880*, CNAA: University of Brighton, p.11.
- ⁷ Halperin, S. (2006). 'Religious Revivalism'. *Royal Holloway Department of Politics and International Relations, Working Paper Series No.2*. Halperin expands on the exclusive sovereignty of the pope in which the Papacy 'exercised direct authority over political and class struggles, economic life, education social welfare, crusades, dethroning monarchs, bequeathing kingdoms raising revenue throughout Europe. All supported by the Papal Legates overseeing the carrying out of Vatican orders and the maintaining of discipline'. p.3.
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- ⁹ Thompson, P., op. cit. ch.15, p.426.
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¹¹ John, E. (1964) (ed.) 'Popes: A Concise Biographical History'. *Historical Surveys*. London: Burns and Oates, p.402.

¹² Catholic Miscellany (1922).

¹³ Liberal Catholicism. Religious Information Source website:
<http://mb-soft.com/believe/text/libcatho.htm> The conflict with the Papacy related less to the spiritual authority of the pope in which the Ultramontanist position i.e. centralisation of papal authority in matters of church and doctrine was accepted but with demand for complete separation of Church and State. Later Liberal thought moved towards the secularisation of the state leading Pius IX to claim that it was not possible to be a Liberal and a Catholic.

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- ³⁸ Fontana, J., Ibid.

- ³⁹. Ibid.
- ⁴⁰. *Catholic Records in Army*. See detail WO 12. pp.593-785.
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- ⁴². Douglas Diary, op. cit. p.1.
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- ⁴⁹. There is much discussion about the terms 'Catholicity' and 'Catholicism'. In many instances they are used interchangeably. Essentially 'Catholicism' refers to Catholic devotions and practices in churches in communion with Rome. This may apply to 'Catholicity' with an upper case 'C' but lower case 'c' suggests universality.
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^{68.} Bossy, J., op. cit. p.361.

^{69.} *Committee of Council 1839* set up to supervise the grants given by the government for the erection of schools and colleges.

^{70.} *The Tablet*, May (1846) 1) No Catholic Schools to be allowed unopened to government Inspectors. 2) No child of protestant parents may enter a Catholic School. 3) No pecuniary aid to be given to a Catholic School. 4) No pecuniary aid to be given to any school not managed by an Anglican or taught by an Anglican master. 5) No poor Catholic be allowed to get any instruction whatever if the government can help it, unless his parents consent to have him taught heresy out of the falsified fraudulent Protestant version. 6) These schools to be kept as far out of reach of Catholic priests as possible. 7) No provision at all for the religious education of Catholic children, while every possible inducement is to be given to them to submit to the infliction of a Protestant education.

^{71.} 'First Annual Report of the Catholic Poor School Committee 1847', citing *The Catholic School*. London: Burns and Oates, p.7.

^{72.} Lannon, D. (1974). *Catholic Education in the Salford Diocese 1870-1944*. University of Hull: PhD. Thesis, p.157.

^{73.} Grace, G. (2002). *Catholic Schools: Missions Markets and Morality*. London: Routledge/Faber, p.9.

^{74.} Kennedy, S. (1976). Citing *Annual Reports of the CPSC*, pp.11-14, also in Maclure, S. (1965). *Educational Documents*. London: Methuen and Co ltd. pp.42-45 for details relating to the creation of the *Committee of Council Act* and the *Pupil Teacher System*, an initiative encouraged by Dr Kay (later Kay-Shuttleworth) in which boy assistants worked as Pupil Teachers.

- ^{75.} Allies, M. (1907). *T. W. Allies*. London: Burns and Oates, p.35.
- ^{76.} Manning, B. (1853). *The Necessity of Training Colleges for Lay Teachers*, also quoted in full in Kennedy p.19.
- ^{77.} *Annual Report of the Catholic Poor School Committee* (1856).
- ^{78.} Curtis, S. J., and Boulwood, M. E. (1960). *History of Education in Great Britain*. London: UTP Ltd.
- ^{79.} Battersby, W.J. (1950). 'Work of the Religious Orders' in Beck, G. op. cit. p.339.
- ^{80.} Battersby, in Beck Ibid. pp.342-343 for details of the curriculum of Mother Connolly of the Sisters of the Holy Child.
- ^{81.} Kollar, R. (2002). 'Foreign and Catholic: A plea to Protestant Parents on the dangers of Convent Education in Victorian England'. *History of Education* , Vol. 31. This article covers in depth the very controversial issues of patriotism and un-Englishness which were perceived in Victorian England to be such a threat. pp.335-350.
- ^{82.} Felt, K., and Gomersall, M. (1989). 'Discussion Papers Sex or Class: The Education of Working Class Women, 1800-1870' in *History of Education*, vol.8, no. 2, pp.145-162.
- ^{83.} Marshall, (1865). HMI as quoted in *CPSC Annual Report*.
- ^{84.} Walsh, B. (2002). *Roman Catholic Nuns in England and Wales*. Irish Academia Press in the foreword, p.v.
- ^{85.} Donoghue, T. (2004). 'Rescuing Lay Teachers in Catholic Schools from Anonymity 1870 - 1970' in *Education Research and Perspectives*, vol.31, no. 2, p.79 et seq.
- ^{86.} Ibid.

⁸⁷. Beales, A.C. (1950) 'The Struggle for the Schools' in Beck, G.A. (1959) London: Burns and Oates. op. cit. p.374.

⁸⁸. Connolly, op. cit. p.66, quoting Vaughn in *Ad Clerum*, January 30 1874.

⁸⁹. Connolly, Ibid. vol.3, pp.252-260, quoting 'Hierarchy Resolutions 1878' *Ad Clerum*, June 16 1882.

⁹⁰. *Dublin Review*, July 5 1869.

⁹¹. 'Great Britain'. *Royal Commission on the Elementary Education Acts Cross Report England and Wales* (1880). HMSO.

⁹². Cruickshank, M., op. cit. p.81.

⁹³. Underwood, E. (1978). *Brighton*. London: Batsford, p.25.

⁹⁴. This refers to the *History of Brighton Project*, work undertaken by Drs. J. and S. Farrant and their Colleagues from the Humanities Department of Brighton Polytechnic now the University of Brighton from 1975-1980 and sponsored by the University of Sussex Centre for Continuing Education. This research has resulted in a number of localised subject specific projects by past students which are referenced separately.

⁹⁵. *Cobby's Directory of Brighthelmstone*, 1800.

⁹⁶. *The Growth of Brighton 1750-1860*. Resource for Schools: Brighton and Hove Regeneration Partnership A – Resource for Key Stage 3.

⁹⁷. Ibid. refers to Dr Russell's book *The Use of Sea Water and Affectations of the Glands*.

⁹⁸. The reference to taking the waters needs further clarification. Although it generally referred to 'drinking sea water' it was later taken to mean enjoying the delights of sea bathing.

⁹⁹. *Cobby's Directory of Brighthelmstone*, 1800.

- ^{100.} Wilkins, W. (1903). *Mrs Fitzherbert and George IV* (vols.1 and 2). London: Longman's, Green and Co., p44.
- ^{101.} Letters of Victoria to her aunt the Duchess of Gloucester on display at the Royal Pavilion also *Times* 09/02/1845.
- ^{102.} Brighton Census 1821
- ^{103.} Underwood, E. (1978). *Brighton*, quoting from letters of Le Compte de la Garde London: Batesford Ltd., p.67.
- ^{104.} May, T. (2002). *Military Barracks*. Oxford: Shire Publications, p.12.
- ^{105.} Austen, Jane, *Pride and Prejudice* as quoted in Gilbert et al.
- ^{106.} Woodward, C. (1992). *The Volunteer Reviews 1861-1879* M.A. Thesis CNAABrighton, p.5.
- ^{107.} Musgrave, C. (1970). *Life in Brighton*. John Hallowell Publications, p.261.
- ^{108.} Farrant, S. (1980). *Georgian Brighton 1740-1820*. Humanities Department, Brighton Polytechnic, p.47.
- ^{109.} *Brighton New Monthly Magazine 1841* vol. xi, p.163.
- ^{110.} Walton, J. K. (1983). *The English Seaside Resort*. Leicester: Leicester University Press p.3.
- ^{111.} Disraeli, B. (1846). *Sybil or the The Two Nations*. Recent publication 1998 by O.U.P.
- ^{112.} *A Graduate of London University (1860) Brighton its Pleasures Practices and Pastimes, being a complete guide for the residents and visitors*, p.6.
- ^{113.} *The Union Charity School Mission Statement 1806*.
- ^{114.} Dale, A. (1976). *Brighton Town and Brighton People*. London: Phillimore, p.324.

- ^{115.} Anonymous quote reference unknown in *Sussex Boxes* possibly written in 1846 to protest against the National Health Act being accepted by the town authorities.
- ^{116.} Dale, *Ibid.* p.35, with reference to a visiting report on the town April 17 1811.
- ^{117.} Sitwell, J., and Barton, C. (1935). *Highlights of History from Brighton*. London: Faber and Faber, p.244.
- ^{118.} Bannier, R. (1989). *Into the streets and lanes, the Brighton Town Mission 1849-1989*. No publisher and now missing from the Brighton History Museum.
- ^{119.} Jacobs. (1989) *Brighton Newspapers and the Age of Reform*. M.A. Thesis, Brighton Polytechnic, Falmer, p.10 from *Patriot*, Dec. 10 1838.
- ^{120.} Underwood, E., *op. cit.* p.67.
- ^{121.} *Patriot*, 18 Sept.1838.
- ^{122.} Musgrave, C. (1970). *Life in Brighton*. John Hallowell Publications. p.256.
- ^{123.} Sitwell, J., and Barton, C. *op. cit.* p.267, quoting Thackery from *The Newcombes*.
- ^{124.} Gilbert, E. W. (1954). *Brighton Old Ocean's Bauble*. London: Methuen and Co. Ltd. p.255.
- ^{125.} *Brighthelmstone Town Directory 1799*.
- ^{126.} References to Brighton as London by the sea are so numerous it is impossible to find the origins.
- ^{127.} Gilbert, E. W., *op. cit.* p.153, quoting one Richard Jefferies.

CHAPTER 4: A CATHOLIC PRESENCE (1798-1837)



Figure 13: First steps

Introduction

This chapter identifies the events and personages most closely linked with the gradual emergence of a Catholic presence in Brighton in the latter years of the eighteenth century, up to and beyond the passing of Catholic Emancipation in 1829. It follows the efforts of a small, disparate, quietly influential but increasingly more confident Catholic Community to move away from the discreet celebration of Mass in a 'chapel of ease'¹ to the much publicised splendour of the consecration in 1835 of St John the Baptist, the town's first purpose built Catholic church. It concludes with the death and celebrated Requiem in the same church of Maria Fitzherbert, frequently renowned as Brighton's most famous Catholic.

1. Brighton's Early Catholic History. Father O'Leary and the West Grinstead Mission. The advantages and disadvantages of Royal Patronage

Norman Caplin writing about Sussex Catholics refers briefly to the town, 'Brighton was the only place that did not date back as the Catholic Centre from the 17th century. It was, as it remains a special place'.² It is a distinction that explains in part the challenge of researching the Catholic presence in Nineteenth century Brighton and adds weight to the claim of Gandy in his

introduction to *Catholic Ancestry* that 'Catholics appear in a great many records which do not relate to their religion or treat them as a group'.³ Important evidence relating to Brighton Catholics and to Catholics in Sussex in general has been destroyed⁴ and the little evidence that does exist is poorly documented and often contradictory. This resonates with a comment by Kitch in his *Studies in Sussex Church History* in which he claims 'that the adherents of a particular faith do not commit anything to writing if they can help it'.⁵

A Catholic Truth Society pamphlet written in 1938 by one C. Jones provides another revealing quotation from an anonymous source:

It is difficult to discover with any approach to exactness the circumstances attending the introduction of the Roman Catholic form of worship to Brighton or the date of the first services to be held after the Reformation. Bearing in mind how clearly the movements of other religious bodies can as a rule be traced it does at first sight seem remarkable that in relation to times which by comparison are modern that is the close of the eighteenth century and the commencement of the present one there should be so great an amount of uncertainty. It is a fact however that the origin and early history of the church in Brighton is so vague so to be little more than a matter of conjecture.⁶

In 1724, a Commission had been issued by Thomas Lord Bishop of Chichester to investigate the numbers of families, papists and dissenters in the diocese. While the returns concluded that 'there were no papists in Brighthelmstone',⁷ there are parallel claims that the town had a long tradition with Catholicism dating back to Tudor times and had 'never been entirely stripped of its Catholic identity'.⁸ As for the County of Sussex, throughout the later years of the eighteenth century the Catholic population, more significantly in the West than in the East of the county, had slowly increased; although it remained noted for its demographic imbalance of Catholics particularly compared to the North of England.⁹ According to *The Tablet*, 'it is still of peculiar interest to Catholics for the fact of it being the last to succumb to the doctrines of the Reformation'.¹⁰ By 1758 numbers had reached 541 and Bishop Challoner in 1773 concluded that there were several hundred Catholics in the County (excluding servants) and seven priests.¹¹ Berrington had observed, 'excepting in the towns and out of Lancashire, the chief situation of the

Catholics is in the neighbourhood of the old families of that persuasion'.¹² But Whatmore had made an additional observation about Brighton's particular Catholic situation, 'one place which was not either dependent upon a family or had an endowment and which can be called parish independent of such was Brighton the latter in fact had grown into a sizeable town under royal patronage between 1783-1830'.¹³ This does not diminish the influence of the Old Catholic families in Sussex or their contribution to the survival and revival of Brighton's Catholicism, which was always destined to respond to events far beyond the borders of the town.

In common with the rest of England, the faith had been kept alive in the Houses or Missions, as they were known, of Old Catholic families.¹⁴ The Norfolks of Arundel, the Cowdrays at Slindon, the Carlylls at West Grinstead, and the Gages at Lewes maintained self-sufficient communities of Catholicity. It was these Missions which accounted for a small but sustained Catholic presence. This is exemplified by reference to the records of the Catholic mission at Cowdrays House which state that there was 'a known and recorded priest, a doctor, two dressmakers, a cobbler, an innkeeper, a blacksmith, farmers, craftsmen, labourers and gentry'.¹⁵ Such a profile is reflected in the other Missions where baptisms are recorded along with fewer, but significant numbers of marriages and burials. These records also note that 'the absence of an urban proletariat and a new entrepreneurial middle class preserved the Sussex Catholic community from the intestinal conflicts common in London, the North and the Midlands'.¹⁶ Such findings support the traditional view so often forwarded by the 'Old Catholics' and as Bishop Berrington described them in 1796 as 'Steady Catholics and Steady Englishmen'.¹⁷ This may also explain the comment of one Sussex gentleman, 'No Catholic who recollects the passing of the bill will ever forget the smile and friendly greeting with which his Protestant neighbours greeted him the day after it passed'.¹⁸ This would seem to support the view that Sussex Catholics were quite open in their acknowledgement of their faith and practices. While it cannot be proved that this was a

view widely shared, it does suggest a degree of acceptance from the wider community and a lack of the tensions which so frequently surfaced in other parts of the country.¹⁹ It also reaffirms the opinion of a contemporary historian who noted that, 'Catholics lived, travelled, worked, prayed and related to their neighbours and each other. It was important to know who they were and more of their standing in the parishes and congregations'.²⁰

It is the Mission at West Grinstead, where the Franciscan Friars had from 1775 enjoyed the patronage of the Caryll family, which provides irrefutable evidence of a continuing Catholic presence in Brighton. Letters to Bishop Douglas refer to the claim that it was from there that priests rode over to Brighton to say Mass at a 'chapel of ease', probably at the Ship Hotel.²¹ The first named Priest was a Father Arthur O'Leary, a Capuchin monk, who in his not infrequent letters to Bishop Douglas offered interesting but on occasions unsubstantiated insights into this early period. In December 1793 he writes to thank the Bishop for:

receipt of your last favour which has greatly eased my mind, as it informed me of the limits of the Ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the district and enabled me to exercise the ministry in favour of several strangers especially from Ireland who came here last summer for the benefits of their health, some Catholic soldiers belonging to the militia who are quartered along the coast, and some servants in Protestant families, for to my knowledge there is not a Catholic family within many miles of where I am.²²

As a member of a religious community but living outside it he was bound to seek guidance from the bishop, but there is no obvious explanation as to why he was in Brighton although he mentions his retirement and refers in other letters to the state of his health, 'There are here two libraries which render my retirement the more agreeable. I live all alone as a real hermit in a state I intend to continue for a couple of months'.²³ But in a further letter he complains that:

There is no approved clergyman for the English mission within 23 miles of me at Arundel which makes my situation somewhat uncomfortable as being accustomed to frequent confessions it distresses me to go so far at the risk of not finding him. There are in this neighbourhood and at Lewes about twelve or thirteen French émigrés priests who inform me that they only have the power to hear each others confessions.²⁴

It also suggests a certain tension between the regular clergy both secular and religious and the émigrés priests which is rarely referred to. The Duke of Norfolk's Chaplain, Philip Wyndham, in a letter to Bishop Douglas had touched on the issue of 'clerical indiscipline',²⁵ while O'Leary too had worried about 'ecclesiastical jurisdiction' and suggested that 'what might at first have appeared as 'attractive and picturesque was ultimately alien'.²⁶

This is of interest because the English clergy, during the long period when the religious houses had been exiled from England, had generally been educated in France;²⁷ yet the Arundel Archives record a situation of an émigré priest being mistaken for a tramp and Lord Petre, doyen of a famous Catholic family, some years later refusing to see 'the Frenchman'.²⁸ This was the Rev Mouchel, the second Chaplain of the Brighton Mission, whose difficult relationship with the Duke of Norfolk's chaplain Philip Wyndham will be discussed later in this chapter.

Father O'Leary was perhaps not correct in the first of his letters bemoaning the absence of Catholic families. In 1793, Mrs Fitzherbert was almost certainly in residence surrounded by a coterie of friends, 'many of whom were wealthy and most of whom were Catholic'.²⁹ If, as one Brighton Catholic writer claims, 'Our real history begins with the advent of Mrs Fitzherbert, and her marriage to the Prince of Wales in 1785',³⁰ then her importance cannot really be overestimated and O'Leary's lack of reference to her is surprising. The significance of the patronage of the Prince of Wales to the history and status of Brighton has already been acknowledged, but it is Mrs Fitzherbert, the twice widowed society beauty with impeccable Catholic and high society connections and with whom the dilettante Prince of Wales became besotted, who provides the town with a distinctive Catholic identity. It was her Catholicism and the disciplines of Rome which determined her relationship with the Prince and were equally the cause of the controversy, silence and denials which reverberated throughout her life and long

after her death. That this twice widowed socialite should have become the mistress of the pleasure loving philandering Prince Regent would have been of little surprise or concern to the Court and no threat at all to the monarchy but the standards of 'court and church' differed and Maria Fitzherbert was not prepared to accept the role of mistress. Charles Fox, the Whig politician pleaded with the Prince Regent to consider the serious implications of formalising their relationship reminding him that, 'it is neither honourable for any of the parties nor with respect to your Royal Highness even safe'.³¹ His pleas were ignored as were the words enshrined in an ancient poem that warned against marrying in Advent:

When advent comes do thou refrain
Till Hilary set thee free again
Next Septuagesima
Saith thee nay
But when Low Sunday comes thou may
Yet at Rogation thou must tarrie
Till trinity shall bid thou marry.³²

On 15 December 1785 the Prince and Mrs Fitzherbert were married by an Anglican priest in Carlton House London. This event was duly witnessed and signed by two kinsmen of Mrs Fitzherbert, John Smythe and Henry Errington:

We the undersigned did witness that George Augustus Frederick, Prince of Wales, was married unto Maria Fitzherbert this 15th day of December 1785.³³

For Mrs Fitzherbert this was certainly a valid marriage as it was not until 1837 that marriages before a Catholic priest were recognised. The legality of this union in respect to the Prince has often been challenged. It almost certainly contravened the Royal Marriage Act and Hardwicke's Act of Settlement which forbids the marriage of a member of the Royal Family to a Roman Catholic and had it become officially recognised his later succession to the throne would not have been possible. One of her biographers, although sympathetic to her dilemma, was to write, 'She was not a saint or she would have entered a convent rather than endanger the prospects of her future sovereign and bring her own faith into jeopardy'.³⁴ The Royal Family and society in general suspected that some form of marriage had taken place but it was not officially

acknowledged. Indeed, Charles Fox had been forced to make a public denial of the fact in Parliament, perhaps on the basis of the disingenuous and discredited promise of the Prince just before his marriage 'believe me' he had told Fox, 'the world will now soon be convinced that there not only is, but never was any grounds for these reports'.³⁵ When he was later challenged by Maria Fitzherbert he is purported to have said 'Charles got rather carried away last night',³⁶ but the statement was not retracted and the unusual arrangement was accepted if not approved.

All evidence points to the fact that the Prince and Mrs Fitzherbert spent most of the next nine years in a happy and extravagant existence in Brighton and while the same biographer may have been correct in his claim that, 'at no time was England ready to accept a Catholic Mistress, much less a Catholic wife to the throne',³⁷ this seemed not to apply to the non-judgemental and wholly pragmatic inhabitants of Brighton. Throughout the periods of her marriage from 1785 to 1807 and with the exception of the period of separation from 1794 to 1799 she never lived in the Pavilion, the formal residence of the Prince, but maintained her own home in Tilney Street. Perhaps it was this combination of devotion and discretion which led to the reverential description that she was 'universally loved and respected'.³⁸ Her own religious practice was quiet and unobtrusive. She rarely spoke of her Catholicism and never tried to influence or proselytise. In this she reflected her own background as an 'Old Catholic', very wary of the Romanising influences of the Ultramontanists. This almost certainly allowed her to be active in support of Catholics and Catholic interests, and the small Catholic community flourished under a tolerant Royal patronage and the influence of its continental neighbours, who sought not only the pleasures of a more relaxed society but refuge and protection from the worst atrocities of the French Revolution. In this both she and the Prince were at one with the national outpouring of sympathy for the émigrés and a 'cautious' willingness to welcome those escaping persecution in France. One of many recorded events describes the arrival on 17 October 1792 of a group of

religious ladies from the Benedictine Monastery at Montangis who were met by both Maria Fitzherbert and the Prince and housed by them until they could be safely relocated.³⁹ This followed on from three earlier landings, on September 3, September 10, and September 17, bringing a total of three hundred and twenty Emigrants, mostly priests. According to the *Sussex Weekly Journal* which recorded in detail these events Brighton had become 'the refuge of the persecuted noblesse of a neighbouring state',⁴⁰ and the paper further claimed that 'John Bull may dam their religion and politics but will never let the friendless foreigner starve in a land of characteristic humanity'.⁴¹ Outside the town some people had reservations about a religious presence which might prove to be too dominant. Bishop Douglas in his Diary records the concern of the Mayor of Thetford who in response to a request that a small group of sisters could be allowed to take sanctuary in the neighbourhood, feared 'disturbances by the people if nuns began appearing in the country'.⁴²

Despite the apparent happiness of the Prince the issue of the succession and the welcome prospect of having his mounting debts underwritten by the King, led to a separation from Mrs Fitzherbert in 1794. A year later he entered into a marriage with Princess Caroline of Brunswick. Mrs Fitzherbert then left Brighton and the house at Tilney Street was closed and with it her own private chapel where Mass had been celebrated regularly by her own chaplain, possibly the Reverend Lopez from the Portuguese Embassy.⁴³ An anonymous article written in 1837 claimed, 'that Mrs Fitzherbert had made it possible to have a priest resident at Brighton' and the author noted, 'we cannot doubt that she admitted Catholics if any to hear Mass in her Oratory: and we may fairly reckon that the house (situated at the bottom of Church Street) was the first approach to a public chapel in Brighton', although there is no official documentation to support or discredit this view.⁴⁴ Nevertheless the departure of Mrs Fitzherbert could justify the observations of the Rev. O'Leary in what were to be his last letters to Bishop Douglas. On June 12 1794 he had written, 'I have never enjoyed better health, the place agrees with me so much,

besides the opportunity of books and of entertaining my acquaintances, noblemen and gentlemen from all quarters', and in August of the following year he wrote again this time pleading for a chapel 'to help the people keep the faith alive habituating them to their worship'.⁴⁵

From these letters it must be assumed that his ministry was continuing, even expanding, and that he was correct in his claim that there was not at that time a place for Catholics to worship. These concerns were finally addressed in 1799 when Brighton received its first resident priest known as the Presbyter of Brighton and referred to in the 1802 *Laity Directory* as Mr Barnes. There is no mention of whether O'Leary ever met Mr Barnes or attended Mass in the little room in Margaret Street which the Presbyter used as a chapel. Perhaps by then he had returned to London because there is a record of his lavish funeral at St Patrick's Church Sutton Street on 14 January 1802, befitting a man who the Cork Amicable Society, in honouring him for services to Ireland had written, 'To the Reverend O'Leary who taught Irish men that however they might be divided in speculative points of religion in Christian charity and generosity should be borne by all to all'.⁴⁶

If 1799 was propitious for Brighton's Catholics it was more so for Mrs Fitzherbert as her separation from the Prince Regent and his brief marriage with Caroline of Brunswick came to an end. Given that in 1794, the year of their first parting, he had recorded in his Will that, 'the picture of my beloved wife, still such she is in the eyes of heaven, is and was and will be such in mine, my Maria Fitzherbert, may be interned with me and placed upon my heart',⁴⁷ some form of reconciliation seemed as inevitable as the marriage with Caroline appeared doomed. This was further strengthened by the addition of a letter to the Will dated 1799, 'There is nothing in it my dear Maria to hurt your feelings, you will only know me better than ever you did and why you should wish to remain in ignorance whilst I live of what you and the whole world must be

acquainted with when I am no more'.⁴⁸ These words alone would appear to support the view that both considered their marriage to be a binding and meaningful contract, although there seemed also to be an understanding that it would remain officially unacknowledged. The documents relating to this, which included her marriage certificate and the name of the clergyman who married them, were saved by Mrs Fitzherbert until a few months before her death when, under instruction from the Duke of Wellington,⁴⁹ and in agreement with Mrs Fitzherbert herself, they were transferred to Coutts the bankers and eventually returned to the Royal Family. It was not until the reign of Edward VII, over a hundred years later, that the public was finally granted access to them.⁵⁰

In the country at large this reconciliation was not welcome. Bishop Douglas records in his diary that a certain, 'Mr Butler laments the renewed connection with the Prince of Wales who told him that the Prince was determined to bring about living publically with her [Mrs Fitzherbert] and that he had finally separated from the Princess of Wales with whom he had a daughter'.⁵¹ Whether it was this or similar correspondence which influenced the Bishop, as Vicar Apostolic whose authority extended over Sussex and Brighton, to refer the question of the marriage to the Holy See is unknown, but a Reverend Naussau, acting as an emissary for the Bishop, was sent to Rome to petition the Pope. In 1799, the Bishop received a judgement affirming the validity of the union. This did little to deter the critics; indeed it might have inflamed them. Poets, Politicians and cartoonists added their own unique and personalised interpretation of the situation. Baker K. (2005) wrote 'it is in the field of cartoons and caricatures that the most exciting prospects appear with their particular licence to reveal and revile'.⁵² The infamous Punch cartoon of his Highness in Fitz' mocks both the Church and Royalty with the added inclusion of the crucifix and the Prince of Wales feathers.



Figure 14: His Highness in Fitz. April 1. 1786

(Maria's garter reads 'mal y pense' and George's 'soit' no previous cartoon had been so explicit)

Dryden wrote of the marriage, 'thou curse of love and snare of life which first debased a mistress to a wife'⁵³ and Pope's 'Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady'⁵⁴ was a barely concealed acknowledgement that it was not an honour to be a mistress of a Prince. This was undoubtedly an age of 'coarseness and the license permitted to the caricaturists was great', 'Fat and Forty', 'Wife or no Wife', 'The follies of the Day',⁵⁵ these damning slogans accompanying equally suggestive pictures, along with open letters of condemnation and open support for the wronged Queen Caroline, nevertheless haunted the last eight years of her life with the Prince. The people of Brighton though remained not only sympathetic but devoted to her. One Brighton Habitué declared that she was 'recognised as the queen of hearts throughout the length and breadth of fast expanding Brighton'⁵⁶ and from the same source is the suggestion that, unlike the Regent, she had a very warm relationship with the Royal Family, particularly the King. She even enjoyed generous praise from the Brighton Press famed for measured comment and always careful not to offend those whose presence enriched the fortunes of the town.⁵⁷ When in 1807 the twenty two

year relationship with the Prince finally ended, this 'sympathy and devotion' was undiminished and her very considerable influence remained. This was fortuitous for Brighton's Catholic community as it was to need more than the presence of a priest to become established and something more permanent than a room over a 'garage' to serve as a place of worship.⁵⁸

2. The Reverend Barnes - The First Presbyter of Brighton: The Reverend Mouchel and the first Catholic Chapel.

As for the Reverend Barnes, despite the obvious need for a priest in Brighton there appears to have been little effort spent in accommodating him and enabling him to exercise his priestly mission. In a letter to Bishop Douglas he wrote:

I have had no answer about my vestments and of consequence have written to Mr Gibson about them requesting that he will cause them to be sent to me. Mr Wyndham has had the goodness to lend me for the present one Vestment and a Chalice as there is nothing of the kind here. If your Lordship could lend us a Ciborium and just a few necessaries I should endeavour as soon as possible to return them.⁵⁹

These items were clearly received as he wrote again to the Bishop thanking him, but a further letter in 1799 raised the issue of the unsuitability of his accommodation:

First on account of it being over a boat house and consequently on days of devotion it could not be made use of because of the noise; secondly because it was too small and thirdly because the proprietor was a man given to drinking and of consequence an unfit person to deal with.

Having explained the situation he petitioned quite strongly for some help:

All endeavours therefore have been used to provide a situation sufficiently decent for the purpose as cheap as possible. But with regard to the point in question the great difficulty is that here in Brighton nothing can be found anywhere answerable under four or five and twenty pounds per annum Your Lordship therefore will be pleased to take things into consideration what you think would be more advisable Deo volente posificiam. If anything could be allowed for a time towards defraying the rent of a situation, I make no doubt but that by continuing to observe a strict economy my exertions after a year or two would prove successful which is exactly conformable to Mr Wyndham's opinion.⁶⁰

There is a still a further plea for what would certainly be regarded as essential religious objects:

I beg your Lordship will inform me if it be in your power to furnish me with a Missal and Alb as Mr Wyndham has written for his things and consequently I am very desirous to send them as soon as possible.

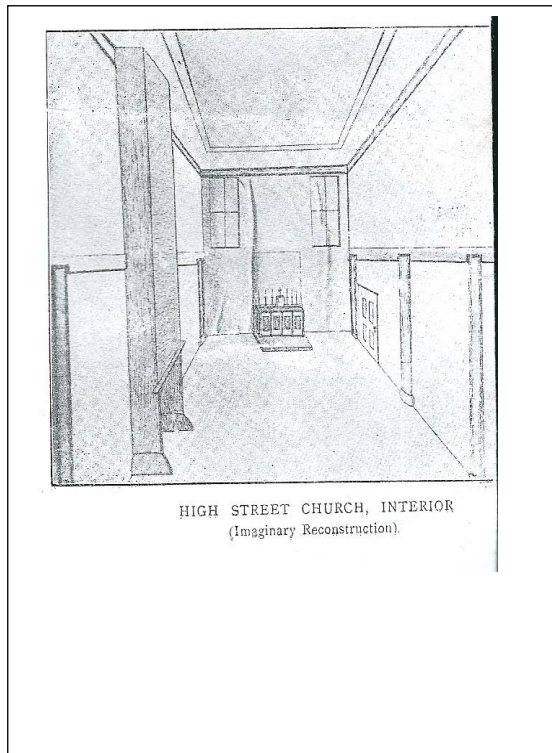
This apparent impoverishment is difficult to reconcile with the supposed affluence of Brighton's itinerant wealthy Catholic community, a fact supported by another anonymous source, 'It is in this chapel that one of the most distinguished congregations in England could be found worshipping in Brighton'.⁶¹

There is confusion as to what happened to his concerns about the suitability of St Margaret's Chapel except for the mention of a visit by the Bishop in the summer of 1799 to a 'new chapel in Prospect Row', alternatively identified as Middle Street, but subsequent events showed that if this was indeed a new chapel it was only temporary.⁶²

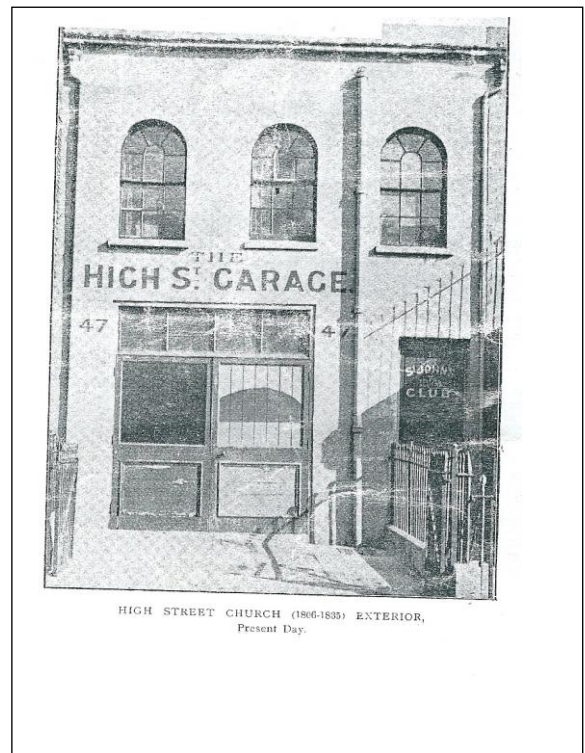
This situation was soon to change with the arrival in 1806 of the French émigré priest Joseph Mouchel who, in negotiation with Philip Wyndham the Duke of Norfolk's chaplain, is credited with building the first Catholic Church in Brighton. The Relief Act of 1791 had made it legal for Catholic churches to be built, 'as long as they did not look like churches, without a bell or spire with neither bell nor steeple', so the building which emerged in the High Street and was listed on the town map and in the local Directory (1808) as the 'Catholic Chapel' was both small and understated, a mere 55ft x 20 x 20 ft.⁶³ It was designed to accommodate 230 people and according to reports, 'the Mass was very simple, with little music, or regular reciting of the rosary'.⁶⁴ Even so, the plans which proved to be far more costly than expected contributed to the worsening relationship between Mouchel and Wyndham who happened to be close to Bishop Douglas. From the outset Wyndham's correspondence with Douglas seemed overly cautious. He wrote on 22 April 1805:

The affairs of Brighton perplex me so much that I must have further advice how to act at this present moment. Mr Mouchel has a very large room to say prayers in and that he can only have for a month longer, it is not even big enough for the present congregation, what the company will do in the summer when they come here I cannot conceive for the person at present in my house tells me they are ready to be stifled now. I must acquaint you at the same time that if this cannot be accomplished this summer then Mr Mouchel

must leave for it will never be in his power to accommodate the gentry that come here consequently the income that should support him will entirely be stopped.⁶⁵



HIGH STREET CHURCH, INTERIOR
(Imaginary Reconstruction).



HIGH STREET CHURCH (1806-1835) EXTERIOR,
Present Day.

Figure 15: Interior of High Street Chapel

Figure 16: Exterior of High Street Chapel

The money was found as the chapel was opened, but the issue of unpaid debts remained. In 1810 the promoters of the Chapel, including the Duke of Norfolk, Bishop Douglas and Philip Wyndham, were forced to issue an appeal in the *Laity's Directory* for funds to offset the debts incurred:

The necessity of a place of worship for Roman Catholics at Brighton had long been felt, till at last active exertions were made to procure permanent resources for so desirable an object. A chapel has been built but the costs incurred higher than expected and a debt of £305 3s 05d remains. More need not be said to influence the Catholic nobility and gentry who derive benefit from the chapel.⁶⁶

The Catholic nobility rallied round and the debts were finally cleared although these appeals appeared in subsequent Laity Directories up until 1818 when it might be presumed they were finally cleared. But Wyndham particularly felt ill served. As early as 1806 he had written to Douglas of his concerns:

If Mr Mouchel is to go on his own hand in everything it is impossible for me to stand it longer. I literally starve myself and pinch myself in every gratification to pay everybody

still with all I can do I cannot not possibly go on at this rate and now am fully convinced that while Mr Mouchel is there things will go worse and worse each year.⁶⁷

It would seem that Wyndham was not only frustrated with the Brighton venture but that he felt undervalued by the Arundel mission and each of the three Dukes who had served for so long. It might be logical to think that 'common purpose' against such odds, where the case for Catholic Emancipation was still being fought, would have been enough to forge a strongly united Catholic body, but this was not the case. There is a particular poignancy in one of Wyndham's final letters, this to Bishop Poynter who succeeded Douglas. He asks to move from Arundel so that he could be freed from the responsibility of the Brighton debt:

My intention was if I lived a few years longer, to leave my furniture to my successor if the Brighton debt could be liquidated, but as it is it must be sold to pay for it.⁶⁸

The public voice seems divided as to who should be credited for establishing Brighton's Catholic Chapel. On the one hand Wyndham was famously described as having the 'most singular role in the history of the town'.⁶⁹ On the other, it was noted of Father Mouchel:

Let Brighton Catholics never forget the name of Fr Joseph Mouchel, who brought the Church out of private rooms and lodging houses and inaugurated for us the second spring of church building and multiplication.⁷⁰

The same author offers another perhaps more controversial accolade:

How little the French atheists foresaw the great work they were doing for England, for sending us the priests for whom they had no further use.⁷¹

3. Identifying Brighton's Catholic community - the initiatives which led to the consecration of the first Catholic Church in Brighton

The Catholic community finally had a Church, a Priest and a popular benefactor but the problem of accurately identifying and locating individual Catholics and their families remained. It is generally assumed that Catholics accounted for a mere 1% of the total population, perhaps fewer than seventy people at the beginning of the century. With few exceptions it has been impossible to cross-reference street records with church records of baptisms, marriages and deaths.⁷² Catholic marriages as indicated were illegal until 1837 and all marriages had to take place before

an Anglican clergyman who was under no obligation to note the religious persuasions of those he married. Likewise Catholic burial services were forbidden and when they did take place there was no formal record of this other than the tendency of Catholic families to adorn the tombstones with the letters IRS and other symbols more closely related to Catholicity. There are frequent references to an eclectic and itinerant body of Catholics, the names of whom are sprinkled liberally in a variety of sources relating to Brighton's early Catholic history, but they are only rarely formally recorded as inhabitants of the town. This is why the carefully preserved baptismal records of St John the Baptist from 1799 to the present day provides the first formal record of the town's Catholic identity. J.D. Connolly, who had also undertaken research into Catholicism in Manchester, made an interesting and pertinent comment relating to the reliance upon baptismal records. The notion, that a history of Catholicism could begin in 1799 simply on the grounds that Baptismal Register began in 1799, was considered quite literally to be the work of an unhistorical curiosity more akin to genealogy.⁷³ He went on to show in his comprehensive research that such records provided illuminating insights into the history of local Catholicism, just as those of St John the Baptist Church would do.

These early records give the name of the child and the parents but not, unfortunately, the parents' address. It is possible that these entries were not restricted to children of Brighton residents, while Catholics who did not have children or who had been baptised elsewhere remained anonymous. It is known that during the period 1799-1829 there were 442 recorded baptisms but of these only 82 could be linked to names in the Street Directories, an anomaly that would continue until the introduction of the first official census and the legalising of Catholic marriages and burials.⁷⁴ From 1829 to 1837 a further forty names were added but again these could not be accurately checked against street records. Even so a picture of a Catholic presence does emerge. There are three baptisms, for example, recorded for the Tierney family identified as living in

Ship Street.⁷⁵ The same Lord Tierney is listed separately as a nobleman and as a Commissioner who sat on the Board of the County Hospital. The first name to appear in the Baptismal record is that of Louise Kennedy whose father was listed as an Academician living in Duke Street.⁷⁶ Louise Kennedy had a brother born in Brighton but baptised in Arundel in 1791. When there are two addresses and two occupations for one name there is obvious confusion. A Joseph Hughes, for whom two baptisms were recorded, could have been a poultry man, a pork man, or a nobleman, and it is also possible that he may have lived in lodgings, been a visitor, or have had links to the military.⁷⁷ There is little confusion about the Morganti family, provider of French Fancy Goods who lived at 17 East Street.⁷⁸ The records clearly state that the family of Gulielus Cooper, who was baptised on 26 June 1837, lived in Ship Street.⁷⁹ The son of John Edward Carew, the artist who sculptured the Statue of St John the Baptist for the church by that name, was baptised on 17th March 1834 and was born at Marine Parade.⁸⁰

In an annotated record of the baptisms provided by an unknown priest, possibly within the last fifty years, some interesting comments have been made with reference to the child's parentage noting in the margins whether the father was titled. Of even greater interest and the basis of much speculation is the neat removal of the Baptism pages for the years 1800 and 1801 which some theorise include the name(s) of the offspring of Mrs Fitzherbert and the Prince. This has never been proven and is generally, but not totally, discredited. In a further attempt to give a more defined shape to a Catholic presence all reference to those who are believed to have been Catholics and who may have lived in or visited Brighton during this period have been added to the database and again, where possible, these are linked to specific addresses. The Mrs and Misses Hobson are recorded in the *Laity's Directory 1819* as Governesses and owners of a teaching establishment and the name of a Miss Hobson appears on a guest list for a dinner party at Arundel castle in the same year.⁸¹ The sparse reference to any form of teaching establishment

is not surprising as evidence would suggest that the youth of the upper classes would be schooled in boarding establishments while the children of émigrés would have governesses and tutors of which there were many in Brighton. It was widely acknowledged that a small establishment without a mission had less chance of a school being set up and surviving.⁸² A more cynical comment on such schools can be found in correspondence between one priest and Bishop Douglas: 'afford to Catholic youth as cheap an education as possible. It is today and tomorrow maybe but without much loss to themselves'.⁸³ This may not have been the fate of the establishment of the Hobson family but it reflects the wider problem of education for Catholic children exacerbated in Brighton at this time because their numbers were so small.

There are other names of those whose Catholicism is assumed although not officially stated. These include musicians, such as Senor Heurta the Spanish guitarist,⁸⁴ and Madame Vestris the actress,⁸⁵ both of whom stayed at the Gloucester Hotel and hoteliers such as Mrs Bierley Maitresse of the Ship Hotel, 'the first chapel of ease' where Mass was regularly said in the days before the establishment of the first Catholic chapel.⁸⁶ Added to this list were writers and travellers, such as the Comte de La Garde,⁸⁷ and Prince Pauklar Muskau⁸⁸ who wrote of attending mass sitting next to a Mr Stoner,⁸⁹ and observing from afar Mrs Fitzherbert. Then there were Mrs Fitzherbert's friends and confidants, Lady Jersey⁹⁰ and Laetitia Bonaparte⁹¹ to name but two. It is also likely that many of the people commissioned to work on the construction of St John the Baptist and who attended the Consecration of the church were Catholics. A further unidentified group would be the servants in a 'service town' where an estimated 25% of the population were in service.⁹² It is also possible that those few Catholic families in a position to do so would have hired Catholic servants, perhaps in response to appeals recorded in *The Miscellany* which reminded Catholic families that they had a moral duty to hire Catholic servants.⁹³ What this might have meant in terms of numbers is difficult to gauge, but the census

of 1833 puts the numbers of servants working in Brighton at that time as 10,315 out of a population of 40,634.⁹⁴ Given that the Catholic body is assumed to be 1% of the population, approximately 400, one quarter of this number might be working as servants. In fact there is listed in the town Directory, 'An Agency in Duke Street set up for the purpose of hiring Catholic servants'.⁹⁵ Based on this information it can be reasonably inferred that Mrs Fitzherbert's servants, especially those recorded who had been with her for many years, attended her funeral and were beneficiaries in her Will, were also Catholics. These would have included Miss Viney⁹⁵ her housekeeper of thirteen years⁹⁶ and her maids Mills⁹⁷ and Townsend⁹⁸ who had been with her for thirty-eight and twenty-one years respectively and Mrs Hazelhurst her cook for thirteen years.⁹⁹ Her footmen Street¹⁰⁰ and Fisher¹⁰¹ were also listed, along with Daykin and Bassett her Butlers.¹⁰²

A further group not recorded would be the poor. Again there is a paucity of information relating to Catholic charitable effort in Brighton. *The Laity's Directory* of 1800 notes that the *Southwark Charity Society* included Brighton, but there are no specific references to provision in the town. The Reverend Bew, who served as a priest in Brighton from 1811 to 1818, is acknowledged in the same Directory as being involved in the Beneficent Society which provided apprenticeships for destitute boys, but it seems the work was based in London. Catholic charitable endeavour probably existed in the hands of individuals but there are no records of this. With reference to the particular benevolence of Mrs Fitzherbert the Reverend Cullin wrote:

I was fully authorised by her to contribute in her name to all our little charities. She usually headed the list in our collection and she always gave five pounds annually to the support of the children. Then came something for the clothing for the poor, for Charity Schools. The sick, the aged the widow the orphan were all helped by her. Easter was commonly the pay time. The sum varied from 14 to 20 pounds rarely less. I recollect I received from her at Easter last year 20 pounds with a few additional pounds for the little boy who served her mass.¹⁰³

The final group and one which is still inadequately documented in respect of religious persuasion at least in these early years, is the military. Army records state that in 1794 there were 15,000 soldiers at the Brighton Camp and between 1800 and 1815 the number of soldiers stationed in barracks at Church Street, Windsor Street, and Preston Park exceeded 8000.¹⁰⁴ If, as is claimed, Roman Catholics made up one third of the Army then this would have considerably boosted the number of Catholics in Brighton; although there is little evidence of formalised attention given to the needs of the Catholic soldiers other than one scant reference to, 'A special Mass set at 8am for the Catholic soldiers at Brighton barracks who were marched to and from the High Street Chapel'.¹⁰⁵ It would be reasonable to assume that many of the unidentified names in the Baptism records of St John the Baptist could have been the children of soldiers although there is no proof of this, nor do Marriage or Burial records identify Catholics any more than they had identified other Catholics in the town.

This general overview of Brighton's Catholic population, although fragmented, acknowledges the fact that the Catholic Community mirrored the diversity of the town. The street plans show Catholics to be widely disseminated and not concentrated into a particular area, consistent with what most understood was essential to acceptance, a quiet unthreatening presence. As the population of Brighton continued to soar, trebling in the years 1811-1821, so too did the Catholic population certainly boosted by a significant rise in the number of converts.¹⁰⁶ The first, William Youngman, was received into the Church on the 26 April 1812 by the Reverend Bew.¹⁰⁷ There were now frequent calls for a larger church and once again it was the *Laity's Directory* that was used to garner support; although it must be noted that the few references to Brighton all related to pleas for money and, unlike other parishes and missions in the country, no mention at all was made of other activities, even those as notable as the appointment of the first priest of the

Catholic mission, the opening of the first Catholic chapel and the regular visitations of Bishops.

The first appeal was published in 1821, *The Brighton Chapel*:

The Pecuniary aid of visitors to the above place is earnestly solicited to enlarge the present chapel in order to make it sufficiently capacious and respectable for the inhabitants and frequenters of the place in the summer season.¹⁰⁸

In 1827 one Colonel Stoner, an influential Brighton Catholic, and confidant of Mrs Fitzherbert writing in the *Truth Teller* and the *Miscellany 1827*, outlined the situation in more precise detail with greater urgency:

the inconvenience and smallness of the Catholic Chapel scarcely adequate to the congregation habitually resident in Brighton, the great influx of visitors and strangers been severely felt, complained that of a Sunday many could not have the benefit of hearing mass without remaining exposed to the inclemency of the weather.[He went on to appeal to] Catholics of rank, whose liberality in supporting charities and religious undertakings is so honourable to devise the means of providing a more capacious chapel commensurate with the needs and wants of the rapidly increasing population.¹⁰⁹

Within two years the passing of the Act of Catholic Emancipation brought about new freedoms, judicial and administrative rights and responsibilities for Catholics and may have inspired Brighton's Catholics to look beyond expansion to the building of a new church on a new site. In 1832 Bishop Bramston who succeeded Poynter launched a new public appeal. In essence it echoed the sentiments of all other appeals, the need for more space, the comfort of the visitors who flocked to Brighton, and the fact that similar chapels were being built elsewhere in the country. He referred to 'the wants of a large congregation and the convenience of our respectable visitors'. He noted that 'Brighton is a town so much frequented by rank and opulence' and in conclusion he hoped, 'that an undertaking that will be no less advantageous to Religion than to the general interests of the town will prove successful'.¹¹⁰

It is sufficient to say that the appeals were successful and that an initial total of £6000 was raised. Several wealthy benefactors came forward and Mrs Fitzherbert, it is said, personally donated £1,000. There was no evidence of the ongoing problems of debt that had surrounded the

High Street Chapel, although a collection towards the arrears in building costs was made after the sermon at the opening ceremony. By 1835, the building renowned for its classical simplicity, Corinthian pillars and pilasters was complete. On 7th July 1835, the Church was consecrated and formally opened by Bishop Bramston two days later. There is no doubt that it was, as claimed, the fourth Catholic Church to be consecrated nationally since the Reformation, although the little chapel in Middle Street had once erroneously been given that distinction. Both the four-hour service of Consecration and the Opening Ceremony were highly publicised events with extensive and positive coverage particularly in the widely read and influential Brighton press. *The Brighton Patriot* reported in detail on the form of the opening ceremony, carefully listing the names of the most influential members of the congregation.¹¹¹ *The Gazette*, generally less sympathetic to the Catholics welcomed 'a place of worship for a considerable proportion of our residents and a numerous and respectable class of visitor'.¹¹² However it was the coverage in the *Brighton Guardian* which was particularly detailed. While it reinforced the known differences in belief between Roman Catholics and members of the Established Church, it also emphasised the fact that the Catholic population of little more than 300 persons comprised, with few exceptions, those in 'humble circumstances'. For this reason it made their efforts to build the church even more commendable. It drew attention to the numerous and respectable class of visitors and the benefits to the town but even more illuminating and radical were the sentiments expressed in the concluding paragraph that:

the townspeople, if they are so inclined learn from the mouths of Catholic teachers themselves the real nature of their religion it will give them the means of ascertaining whether the doctrines of catholicity are really as unscriptural and anti-social as its enemies would sometimes represent them and it will perhaps, by these means, ultimately tend to extinguish the few remaining prejudices which may exist relative to the doctrines of the ancient faith.¹¹³

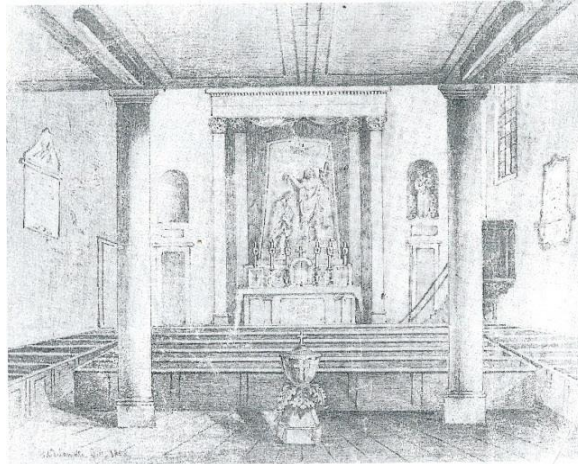


Figure 17: Interior of St John the Baptist



Figure 18: Exterior of St John the Baptist at time of consecration 1837 (contemporary photo but the exterior has not substantially changed)

The contrast between this building and those of the High Street Chapel (figures 15 and 16) more than justified the comments of Middleton 'it is fascinating what buildings can tell you'.¹¹⁴ The first chapel, hidden and bare the second 'a spacious temple' as *The Guardian* described it, fitted up with elegance and taste.¹¹⁵ It tells of a growing confidence and cautious acceptance of the needs of a Catholic community which had not been present in 1806. The voice of protest was not entirely silenced, as the comments in *The Patriot* report revealed. 'We leave the Roman

Catholics the freedom of religious exercise which we neither claim for ourselves nor can we but censure those who in the chapel last night expressed audibly their detestation of the presence of their rights'.¹¹⁶

4. The death of Mrs Fitzherbert

Within two years of the consecration of the Church there was an equally splendid ceremonial. If for England the year 1837 was momentous for the accession of Victoria and the end of the Georgian Age, then for Catholic Brighton it was for the death of Maria Fitzherbert. The end of her relationship with the Prince in 1807 had not, as already indicated, resulted in a decline in her influence and throughout her long life she lost neither the support of the people of Brighton nor indeed of the Royal Family. When George died in 1830 his successor William IV was seemingly anxious to make amends for the lack of official recognition given to her and offered her the title of Duchess which she refused; she did though acquiesce with his instruction that, 'You shall wear mourning for my brother and my livery', the symbolism of which cannot be overestimated.¹¹⁷ There is no evidence that Mrs Fitzherbert converted the ceremonial so beloved by the Ultramontanists but *The Gentleman's Magazine* May 1837 reported that 'The little port had seldom seen a costlier funeral'.¹¹⁸ The press coverage was certainly extensive and *The Gazette*, a paper not generally noted for pro-Catholic sympathies, concluded that the service was, 'varied and dignified, not unlike the life of Mrs Fitzherbert herself',¹¹⁹ which fully justified the statement that 'Mrs Fitzherbert was nearly as important for Brighton as Doctor Russell, but to Catholic Brighton she was very much more'.¹²⁰ The initial inscription on her memorial plaque, later simplified, acknowledged this:

The record of her extensive charity and benevolence will be enshrined where it will be best preserved in the hearts and grateful recollections of those of the surviving inhabitants of the town where she drew her latest breath.¹²¹



Figure 19: Memorial to Maria Fitzherbert

This comparatively simple memorial proved to be very different from the one envisaged by George IV as written in his Will:

I likewise wish and desire of my adored Maria Fitzherbert that, whenever she quits this life and is interred, my coffin should be taken up and placed next to hers, and if she has no objection, that the two inward sides of the coffin should then be soldered together, as the late King's and Queen's were, but anywhere as privately as possible, in order that my ashes may repose in quiet, until they are placed next to hers, or united with hers.¹²²

Conclusion

In this chapter I have attempted to give reasons for the gradual re-emergence of Catholicism in late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Brighton. It has also been possible to address the first of the three research questions, as to whether the experiences of the Catholics in Brighton were determined by class and social grouping or by religion, and how this compared with the experiences of Catholics in other parts of England.

The Catholic population was still very small and difficult to fully identify. The wealthy Catholic aristocrats were to a degree protected by their class but there was a clear separation between social acceptance and political power. Both George III and George IV welcomed Catholics to

their courts but were wary of any religious freedoms which could detract from the power of the Crown and weaken the State. The eleventh Duke of Norfolk fell victim to this when he raised the loyal toast to, 'the Majesty of the people' instead of the King and found himself immediately relieved of all military commands and openly censored.¹²³

The émigrés were likewise protected by recognition of the unfortunate circumstances that brought them to the town in the first place but it would be wrong to assume that the acceptance was unconditional as the fraught relationship between Philip Wyndham and the Reverend Mouchel revealed. The professional class and traders, equally small in number, were acknowledged by the service they provided rather than by the religion they conformed to, while the servant class and the soldiers were still shadows in terms of Catholic identity. The Catholic presence was colourful, occasionally derisory, even amusing, but sufficiently insignificant not to be threatening, although there was always a suggestion of underlying tensions which might yet be aggravated by an increase or a realignment of the Catholic population so that elements within the town would see it as a threat and respond to the anti-Catholic rhetoric so often in evidence in the country as a whole.

In terms of social and educational provision there is virtually no evidence of any provided specifically for Catholics other than details of Mrs Fitzherbert's donations to charities for orphans, reference to the fact that the children of émigrés were tutored in French¹²⁴ and one entry in the Catholic directory of a school in Brighton. Generally it can be assumed that education provided for Catholic children, as for those from other denominations, would almost certainly be determined by class and social position.

A response to the question as to whether nineteenth century Catholic Brighton had anything to offer Brighton of the twenty first century comes from two quite different sources but the message is essentially the same – there existed a conscious determination not to offend either the small Catholic population or the considerably larger non-Catholic community. The first proponent of this was Father Cullin, the popular and widely respected priest who had served the community through the potentially controversial days leading up to and following Catholic Emancipation eight years earlier. There is little doubt that his concern for the sensitivities of Brighton's non-Catholics and an unwillingness to exploit the more Romanising influences of Catholic practice helped to ensure that the Catholic population were little affected by an Act, which had caused so much consternation in other parts of England. The message from the town as recorded through the medium of its popular and influential press was the same. Indeed on January 14th 1829, just weeks before the passing of Catholic Emancipation, press coverage had been entirely devoted to the return of 'Mrs Fitzherbert the excellent benefactress and patron of the town one time Lady Patroness of the Balls'.¹²⁵ Brighton was primarily a Service Town, and what mattered was its success and that required acknowledgement and acceptance of people who were vital to this success. It is this pragmatism that more than ever marks those years and may prove not only to be a dominant factor in the town's past but also in its present.

Notes and Sources:

- ¹ Shipley, B. (2001). 'Mass at the Ship' *Lost Churches of Brighton and Hove*. Plymouth: Optimus Books
- ² Caplin, N. 'The Sussex Catholics 1600-1800' *Sussex Archeological Collections*. vol. 116. pp.19-29.
- ³ Gandy, M. (1998). *Introduction to Tracing your Catholic Ancestry*. Bury: FFSH, p.i
- ⁴ Parish Returns of 1834 are missing from the archives of the CRS although all other counties are well documented. This is because they were destroyed in a fire.
- ⁵ Kitch, M. J. (1981) (ed.). *Studies in Sussex Church History*. Oxford: Leopards Head Press, p.1.
- ⁶ Jones, C.L. (1938). *Brighton Catholicism*. A paper given at a Catholic Truth Society Conference in Brighton. 09.09.38.
- ⁷ *Sussex Archeological Collections*. No 35., p.191, Note 9, also WSRO QDR 7EW2 Papist returns 1780.
- ⁸ The Reverend Whatmore refers briefly to Brighton in *Sacred Congregations for the causes of Saints* Prot. No.953, Rome 1983.
- ⁹ HLRO 21.12.1767. NB It was not until 1865 that there was a formal division between East and West Sussex, until that date Sussex was recognised as an undivided county.
- ¹⁰ *The Tablet*, February 8 1879.
- ¹¹ *ESRO* Records of Papists Estates QDR/EW/10.
- ¹² Berrington. As quoted in QDR 8/EW/10 p.115.

- ¹³. Whatmore. op. cit. Saints. Prot. No. 953 et seq.
- ¹⁴. There is considerable discrepancy in dates as to when these Houses were recognised as Missions. It is accepted that the families were nominally Roman Catholic as their names are listed on Recusant roles. There is documented evidence of family members suffering for their faith. Others for political reasons left the Church although 'death bed recantations' as in the case of the 11th Duke of Norfolk were also recorded. During such periods and even when the families finally left the houses as in the case of the Carlylls in West Grinstead (1790) money was nominated for the continuance of a mission generally to a religious order or to the secular clergy.
- ¹⁵. *Catholic Missions Registers of Cowdray House 1745-1822*. See also *House of Lords Record Office Returns of Papists*, p.131.
- ¹⁶. Caplin, N. (1962) 'The Sussex Catholics 1600-1800'. *S.A.C.* vol.116, pp.19-29.
- ¹⁷. Fitzgerald, P. (1901). *Fifty Years of Catholic Life and Progress*. London: Fisher Unwin vol.3, p.20.
- ¹⁸. Turner, E. quoting 'Butler Historical Memoires'. *S.A.C.* op. cit. 111 p193.
- ¹⁹. Diary of Archbishop Douglas refers to concern of a Norfolk mayor about the presence of nuns *WDA Vol Axlv*. see ref. 41.
- ²⁰. Rowlands. M. (1998). *Catholics of Parish and Town 1558-1778*. Wolverhampton University on fly leaf of book.
- ²¹. Anon, 'Our History in Our Beginnings' *Sussex Pamphlets Vol 76*. This article, anonymous without further references, has interesting detail about the early church. It is possible that it was compiled by the Reverend Malden circa 1936, who was a priest at St Joseph Church and an historian. Unfortunately, all the archival material, of which I understand there was a great deal, 'has disappeared'. This is a comment from the present incumbent!
- ²². *WDA* vol. axle. Bishop Douglas letters O'Leary to Douglas.

- ^{23.} Ibid.
- ^{24.} Ibid.
- ^{25.} Ibid. Wyndham to Douglas
- ^{26.} Ibid. O'Leary to Douglas.
- ^{27.} Reference to the continental education of the Catholic clergy e.g. Wyndham born Rome educated at St Omer-France.
- ^{28.} *Arundel Archives* ref. to Petre.
- ^{29.} Munson J. (2002). *The Secret Wife of George IV*. London: Robinson, p.11.
- ^{30.} 'Our History' anon in 'Our Beginnings'. *Sussex Pamphlets*. vol.76.
- ^{31.} Langdale, Charles (Hon) (1935). *Memoires of Mrs Fitzherbert*. Richard Bentley new Burlington Street. Reference to a letter Charles Fox wrote to the Prince Regent Dec 10th 1785.
- ^{32.} *Arundel Archives*. Poem anonymous.
- ^{33.} Leslie, S. (1951). *Salutation to Five*. London: Hollis and Carter, p.27. Signatories to the Marriage now stored in *Portlington Papers* and quoted in all biographies of MFH including the one referenced.
- ^{34.} Leslie, S. (1939). *Mrs Fitzherbert*. London: Burns and Oates.
- ^{35.} Langdale, C., op. cit. p.6.
- ^{36.} Ibid.
- ^{37.} Leslie, S., op. cit. p.30.

³⁸ Irvine, V. (1971). *The Kings Wife*. Hambledon and London, Quoting Prince Pucklar Muskau, of whom it was said 'the one who loved nothing' Underwood p.88.

³⁹ WDA, vol. Axlv. 'Diary of Archbishop Douglas'.

⁴⁰ *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*. 26.09.92

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Bishop Douglas Diary. Ref. to correspondence with the Mayor of Thetford.

⁴³ *Recussant*. vol.2, no.1 January 1972. 'The Embassy Chapels in 18th Century London' pp.19-20. The Embassy chapels had always provided a safe haven for Catholics and became famous for the extravagant and beautiful liturgy. MFH chaplain William Lopez came from the Portuguese chapel. Also *Catholic Ancestor* vol.5, no.4.

⁴⁴ 'Mrs Fitzherbet – her position in Brighton' anonymous article. *Sussex Boxes* vol.76.

⁴⁵ WDA, op. cit. letter dated 1794 date unclear.

⁴⁶ WDA, op. cit. axlv. Unidentified reference to O'Leary's funeral.

⁴⁷ Wilkins W. (1902). *Mrs Fitzherbert and George IV*. London: Longman's Green and Co.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Langdale, op. cit. records details of the visit of the Duke of Wellington to Maria's House in Brighton where all but a few documents were burned on August 24 1833.

⁵⁰ All biographies of Maria Fitzherbert as listed, record details of the decision to release the remaining private papers into the public domain - a request that had been consistently refused by Queen Victoria.

- ⁵¹. WDA, axlv. December 1798, letter referring to the Bishop's concern about the proposed reconciliation of MFH and the Prince
- ⁵². Baker, K. (2005). *A Life in Caricature*. London: Thames and Hudson, p. 88.
- ⁵³. Ibid.
- ⁵⁴. Shane, L. op. cit. p.30 et seq.
- ⁵⁵. Musgrove, C. (1981). *Life in Brighton*. London: Chatham, p.90.
- ⁵⁶. Irvine, V., op. cit. p.57.
- ⁵⁷. The four Brighton newspapers – the *Brighton Herald*, the *Brighton Gazette*, the *Brighton Patriot* and the *Brighton Guardian* each with a different political slant all reported favourably about Maria Fitzherbert.
- ⁵⁸. WDA, axlv. *Letters of Rev. Barnes to Bishop Douglas 1799*.
- ⁵⁹. Ibid.
- ⁶⁰. Ibid.
- ⁶¹. Malden. P. (1936) 'The Catholic Church in Brighton' in *Columba*. vol. 1X. New Series no.9.
- ⁶². WDA. axlv. Reference to Bishop Douglas visit to Brighton.
- ⁶³. Dale, A. (1989). *Brighton Churches*. London: Routledge and Paul. p.185.
- ⁶⁴. Description of the first chapel in 'Our Beginnings'. *Sussex Boxes*, 76. Author not identified.
- ⁶⁵. WDA, Letter of Philip Wyndham to Bishop Douglas.
- ⁶⁶. *Laity's Directory 1810*.

^{67.} WDA, axlv. Wyndham to Douglas 1806.

^{68.} Ibid.

^{69.} McRorrie, E. (1984). *Anti-Catholicism in mid Victorian Brighton 1830-1880*. CNAA. University of Brighton, p.8.

^{70.} *Our Beginnings* (Anonymous) op. cit.

^{71.} Ibid.

^{72.} Catholic marriages not allowed until 1837 and burials ten years later in 1847. Both the *WSRO* and the *ESRO* have details of all marriages and deaths in the town in the period 1789-1837 but Catholics are not identified. The Baptisms recorded for St John the Baptist may include the names of children not resident in the town.

^{73.} O' Connolly J. (1980). *Catholicism in Manchester and Salford 1770-1837*. PhD. Thesis, University of Manchester.

^{74.} Baptismal Records for St John the Baptist 1798-1837.

^{75.} Ibid.

^{76.} Ibid.

^{77.} Ibid.

^{78.} Ibid.

^{79.} Ibid.

^{80.} Ibid.

^{81.} *Laity's Directory 1819*.

⁸² Kinoulty, M. *History of Catholics in West Sussex*. M.A. Thesis, University of Lampeter p.105.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁻⁹¹ Reference to the inclusion of names of proven or possible Catholics identified in the general reading not specifically sourced.

⁹² Cobby, E. (1827). *Brighthelmstone Street Directory*.

⁹³ *Catholic Miscellany 1822*.

⁹⁴ *Brighton Census 1833*.

⁹⁵ *Cobby's Street Directory*.

⁹⁶⁻¹⁰² See notes 82-89 these named appear in all named biographies of Mrs Fitzherbert: Landale (1935), Irvine (1971), and Wilkins (1902).

¹⁰³ Irvine, V., op. cit. p.197.

¹⁰⁴ May, T. (2002). *Military Barracks*. Brighton: Shire Publications, p.12, also Fontana, V.J. *Journal of the Army for Historical Research*, vol.84, no.338, pp.131-157.

¹⁰⁵ Pugh, T. *The Church of St John the Baptist*. Published by the same Bristol Road Brighton, p.15.

¹⁰⁶ *Cobby's Directory*.

¹⁰⁷ Church records of St John the Baptist.

¹⁰⁸ *Laity's Directory 1821*.

¹⁰⁹ *Catholic Miscellany 1827*, Stoner's appeal.

110. Archbishop Bramston in open letter in *Miscellany* as above.
111. *Brighton Patriot*, July 10 1835.
112. *Brighton Gazette*, July 10 1835.
113. *Brighton Guardian*, July 10 1835.
114. Middleton, J. (2008). 'The Ornamental School'. *History of Education*. no.81, p.21.
115. *Brighton Guardian*, July 10 1835
116. *Sussex Weekly Advertiser*, July 1835. An open letter from Lord Egremont also printed in the *Brighton Patriot*.
117. Bibliographies of Maria Fitzherbert as listed.
118. *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1837.
119. *Brighton Gazette*, 1837.
120. Anonymous Source, *Sussex Boxes*, vol.76.
121. Commemoration Plaque.
122. Shane, L., op. cit. p.57.
123. *Arundel Archives*: Charles the eleventh Duke gave up his religion, although recanted on his death bed. He kept the Mission at Arundel and retained a chaplain. He was popular with the Prince Regent and Fox but his letter of apology, the appeals of the latter and those of fellow officers did nothing to appease the anger of the King.
124. Underwood, E. (1978). *Brighton*. London: Batesford Ltd. p.98. In addition to frequent advertisements for French tutors in the Brighton directories Underwood details the popularity

and use of the language as experienced by one visitor, Le Compte de la Garde, “today everyone speaks to a Frenchman in his own tongue to a point where they positively discourage him from talking English”.

¹²⁵. *Brighton Gazette*, January 14 1829.

CHAPTER 5: UNCERTAIN TIMES (1838-1854)



Figure 20: An uneasy calm

Introduction

This chapter traces the path of Brighton's Catholic history as it moves from years of relative calm towards a period of distinctly overt anti-Catholicism. It also revisits the international, national and local events of the period to understand how, if at all, they impacted upon the Catholic Community. It further continues to build up a profile of the Catholic body with reference to the increasingly more detailed and accurate censuses of 1841 and 1851, the first National Religious Census of the same year (1851) and the Street Directories of the town. All these are used to clarify and support entries in the Baptismal registers of St John the Baptist (which, during this period remain the only formal records of Brighton's Catholicity) and give substance to what are still relatively isolated accounts of Roman Catholic activity. There will be a particular focus on the finer details of the Irish and military presence, recognition of the significance of the Reverend Cullin's legacy, and the slow and seemingly difficult attempt to secure the establishment of a religious order in the town. I will also discuss the hostilities that were directed towards the Catholic body from outside the Catholic community but note the tensions that were generated from within the community itself. These were not unlike those that had existed between Philip Wyndham, one time chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk, and The

Reverend Mouchel in their fraught but ultimately successful attempts to establish Brighton's first Catholic Chapel. The chapter will also consider the period following the death of Mrs Fitzherbert and the succession of Queen Victoria which initially at least continued to be a period of relative calm for Brighton's Catholics.

1. National Initiatives and their relevance to Brighton

Within a few years of Queen Victoria's succession there was evidence within the wider national Catholic community of willingness to acknowledge and accept responsibilities for the country's Catholics. It is not entirely clear how far Brighton's Catholics benefited from these exertions or actively contributed to them. Records of activity in the London District to which Brighton belonged until 1850 are generally detailed but, as in earlier years, there are few references to the town.¹ There is unfortunately nothing like the rich and informative correspondence that took place between the Vicar Apostolic Bishop Douglas and the Reverend Arthur O'Leary (the itinerant Capuchin monk) and William Barnes (Brighton's first Rector). If the Reverend Cullin (1818-1850) did communicate with his bishops Griffiths (July 1836-August '47), Walsh (July 1848-February 1849), and Wiseman (1849-1850] then these letters have been lost.

In 1838, Charles Langdale, (founder of the Catholic Institute later to become the Catholic Poor School Committee) in a letter addressed to each of the Vicars Apostolic urged them to obtain:

An accurate enumeration as possible of the number of Catholics in each district. An examination in all cases of oppression or deprivation of rights of conscience of the poorer classes of Catholics, especially of soldiers, sailors, mariners, prisoners, convicts, persons in Workhouses and hospitals and other individuals of the humbler and unprotected classes. Press pulpit and the lecture room teem with libels on our church and even within the walls of Parliament voices are continually raised to swell the tide of calumny against it.²

He further suggested the formation of local 'Auxiliaries', that is Societies, to oversee this process.

By 1838, seventy such Auxiliaries had been set up but not in Brighton, although there were

Catholics in each of the categories identified. The Catholic Institute was also responsible for circulating a document entitled, *Queries for Catholic Clergy* requesting specific information in respect of eighteen areas relating to the education of local children.³ Some but not all of this information could be found in *Returns from Collection for New Chapels*.⁴ April 16 1837 covering the period 1834-1837, and in an additional document *State of Brighton Congregation 1837-1840*.⁵ but no information was recorded for the following: - specific education for infants; the numbers of children in Protestant Charity Schools, Work Houses, and Factory Schools; reports of interference with the religion of Catholic children in the Factory Schools; requests for Pecuniary Assistance (which would be dependent upon details of school debt, details of a Master's salary and income received). The absence of such detail was possibly due to numbers being so small. There were, though, references to the 'Numbers of Souls in the Congregation (between two and four hundred), Easter Communicants, Baptisms, Converts received and Children educated by Charity which numbered fifty'.⁶ This figure is significant as it is followed by numbers of children educated by parents, given as twelve, and those catechised in the chapel between thirty and forty. In these returns for 1837 there is no formal evidence of the existence of a Catholic School although in her will Mrs Fitzherbert had made specific reference to a Charity school.⁷ A more worrying situation for the Reverend Cullin may have been the inexplicable decline in the Collection which amounted to £10 11s 8d in 1837 and £8 11s 4d in 1840. There are documents which record the number of services and opportunities for Confessions and Public Instruction in the Chapel, which have been salvaged from an unrelated Archival box and are consistent with Church records. The estimated Catholic population supports a report in *The Guardian* at the time of the consecration of St John the Baptist which referred to a 'Catholic population of a little over 300'.⁸

Despite the fact that the 1837 Act had allowed for Catholic marriages to be celebrated in a

designated chapel there are no records of marriages until 1851, or of deaths until 1854. It is difficult to explain why this might be. There is the possibility that the entries for those years may have been incorrect, that Catholics were married in other places, or failed to have their unions sanctioned by the Church. This absence of marriage records is of particular interest as evidence suggests that the church of St John the Baptist did fulfil the very precise terms of the 1837 Marriage Act which, in allowing for the celebration of Catholic marriages, marked an important step in acknowledging that Catholic sacramental rights should be respected. The first condition required that: the chapel which must have been licensed as a place of Religious Worship and must have been used as such for a year. Failure to respect that condition meant that 'Marriages so performed were void and those conducting them guilty of a felony'.⁹ This anomaly was raised continually by both the Hierarchy and the Catholic Institute in the hope of gaining a more liberal interpretation of what constituted a 'licensed place of Religious Worship' but seemingly to little avail as the Reverend Tierney Fergusson discovered when he was tried and found guilty of conducting an illegal marriage in his vestry:

At the Central Criminal Court Rev Thomas Tierney Fergusson DD a Roman Catholic Priest was arraigned and tried, convicted of felony and fined £500 for having knowingly and wilfully solemnized a marriage between one Cokely and Searl in the vestry room of the Roman Catholic Chapel without having first obtained the requisite authority and in the absence of a Registrar of Marriages.¹⁰

It seemed a high price to pay for a priest who was obeying the dictates of his church as outlined in a pastoral letter from Bishop Griffiths:

We doubt not that you will strongly dissuade the faithful trusted in your care, from having their marriage solemnized in other place than the Catholic Chapel.¹¹

Given that an Act of 1827 had allowed for the registration of the religion of Catholic soldiers, it might have been expected that precise figures would have been available but this was not the case. Although officially it had long been accepted that Catholic soldiers should be allowed to practise their religion it seemed much still depended upon the agreement of senior officers and the availability of priests. A Reverend Ignatius Collingdale writing in 1850 in response to a

claim in the *Catholic Standard* that Catholic soldiers could not attend church services, noted that in his church a number of soldiers had attended a Catholic mass including two officers – but he added that there was no problem for 'individuals as long as they did not go in a group'.¹²

Meanwhile records from the Military Hospital in Winchester had recorded that 'a Roman Catholic priest had no standing in a military hospital and no right of access unless directly asked for'.¹³ This unclear situation certainly raised concerns among the hierarchy. In 1854 Manning had written to Bishop Grant urging that 'the government should send more priests and nuns to minister to the 7,000-8,000 soldiers in near and far places and with many wounded in hospitals',¹⁴ while in 1855 a Charles Wood writing from the Admiralty wanted to provide accommodation for Roman Catholic sailors when the ships were in large ports, 'an object which I consider so desirable as to afford to these men the means of attending Divine worship according to the form of belief which they hold'.¹⁵

In Brighton which had at one time boasted a military presence of several thousand there was, and had long been, a certain degree of provision not necessarily available or encouraged in the country at large. Earlier reference has been made to the fact that Catholic soldiers in the town were regularly 'marched to mass', this in contrast to the situation at the Reverend Collingdale's church.¹⁶ The cessation of hostilities with the French inevitably led to a significant reduction in the numbers of soldiers in the town. The *National Census of 1841* recorded a mere 243 men and 13 officers at the Preston Park Barracks.¹⁷ In 1851 there was a slight increase to 265 men and 17 officers. Of these, 84 soldiers and 4 officers were recorded as Irish born which would suggest that 194 of these soldiers were probably English, although there were Scots to be taken into account which may have reduced that number.¹⁸ Nevertheless the number of Irish born is consistent with national figures that put the numbers of Irish Catholics at approximately 37.2%,

just over one third of the total of those serving in the army.¹⁹ Added to this figure for Irish born were 26 wives, 23 children and 10 servants, a possible Catholic presence of 258.²⁰ While there were deficiencies in provision for Catholic children there is sufficient evidence to suggest that there continued to be well regulated opportunities for Catholic worship.

Records of prisoners and convicts were even less accurate. A government directive of 1837/8 had stated that:

if any prisoner shall be of a religious persuasion differing from that of an established church, a minister of such persuasion at the special request of such prisoner shall be allowed to visit him or her at proper or reasonable times under such restrictions imposed by the visiting judges who shall guard against the introduction of improper persons and shall prevent improper communications.²¹

Again it should be emphasised that in Brighton the Catholic population was relatively small. In support of this are the figures for the East Sussex Quarter Sessions from 1810-1854.²² Of the 11,000 entries only 3,000 cases related to Brighton. At best this would have involved less than 300 hundred Catholics over the whole fifty year period. It must also be acknowledged that the Sessions only listed serious offences and did not include the more common offences of theft, drunkenness, vagrancy, and common assault. At the time of the *Census 1850/1851* only ninety names were recorded from Brighton and only six names can be cross referenced with names in the 'Baptismal Records of St John the Baptist'. Even so the Catholic link is by no means conclusive. But an undated letter written by the Reverend Reardon does refer to visits to Lewes gaol with an added comment that 'such visits had not always been possible'.²³

Langdale's third area of interest related to 'persons in work houses' and again the Catholic body had long agitated for the inequalities to be addressed. In a petition to the House of Commons and the House of Lords members of the Congregation of the Roman Catholic Church noted:

i. That in the Union Work Houses throughout England there is generally a mixture of Protestants and Roman Catholics, both Adult and Children, the Roman Catholics being for the most part in the minority.

ii. That no means are neither furnished nor adequate facilities given for the free exercise of their religion on the part of such Adult Roman Catholic Inmates. The petitioners note that this is in sharp contrast to the situation in Ireland.

The petitioners asked that:

as regards the Roman Catholic Adults Inmates of Workhouses in England the Law should provide an ample freedom in the exercise of their religion together with the unimpeded ministrations of a recognised Chaplain' [there were also precise requests with reference to children to be discussed in detail with reference to education provision].²⁴

The 1841 Poor Law Amendment Act of 1841 had acknowledged the right of clergy to make such visits, a right that was challenged in Brighton in February 1851 when the Reverend Reardon was called to the Woodvale Workhouse to baptize a baby. This caused a degree of anger and a proposal to ban such visits was put forward. Such antagonism is surprising given the fact that Brighton's total Workhouse population in the 1851 Census only numbered seven hundred and fifty.²⁵ Of these a mere twenty three adults and nine children were Irish born and potentially Catholic, a detail discussed in Chapter 4. Of these, only two families, Leary and Crawley, had children born in Brighton and both names appear in Baptism records. In response to this proposed ban a number of Directors and Guardians of the Workhouse raised objections and *The Gazette* famously published a full report of the dissenting comments particularly noting those of one My Hye, who claimed that:

He was one of those who desired to give every person the liberty of enjoying his religious feelings and he should be extremely sorry that the faith which they held as Protestants should be contaminated by bigotry. He did not believe that they had the power of preventing a Catholic priest from visiting the house. He conceived it was a piece of bigotry to put such a resolution on the statute book.²⁶

These attempts by Langdale to obtain accurate records of the Catholic population across the country as a whole were often frustrated, although by the 1851 Census serious measures were being undertaken both nationally and locally to formalise such records.

2. Brighton Population details

The Religious Census of 1851 had, as has already been identified in Chapter two, merely noted the numbers of Catholics who worshipped in the Catholic Chapel on a certain day. It did not really help to explain the discrepancy between this figure and the large number of baptisms of that year, the numbers of Irish born and the absence from that number of other nationalities who may at least have been nominally Catholic. For this reason the National Census of 1851 proves to be of greater interest.

The town was divided into six areas: ²⁷

- i. Kemp Town
- ii. Old Town
- iii. Albion Hill
- iv. The Level
- v. Regency Square
- vi. North Road.



Figure 21: Districts for 1851 Census

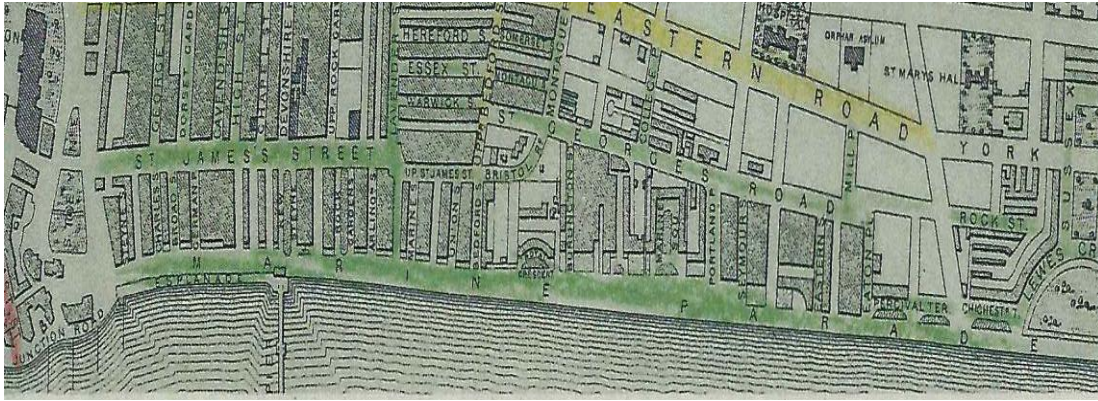


Figure 22: Kemp Town

In Kemp Town covering one hundred and ten streets Irish born families or family members are listed in twenty two of these. Twelve names can be found in Church records, including those of the two Catholic Priests from St John the Baptist and one Mr Heneague, noted as a scion of a family and landed proprietor. There is only one listed as a Pauper and all other names are linked to some form of employment. There were eight French families, two German, and four Italian and a total of sixty children.²⁸

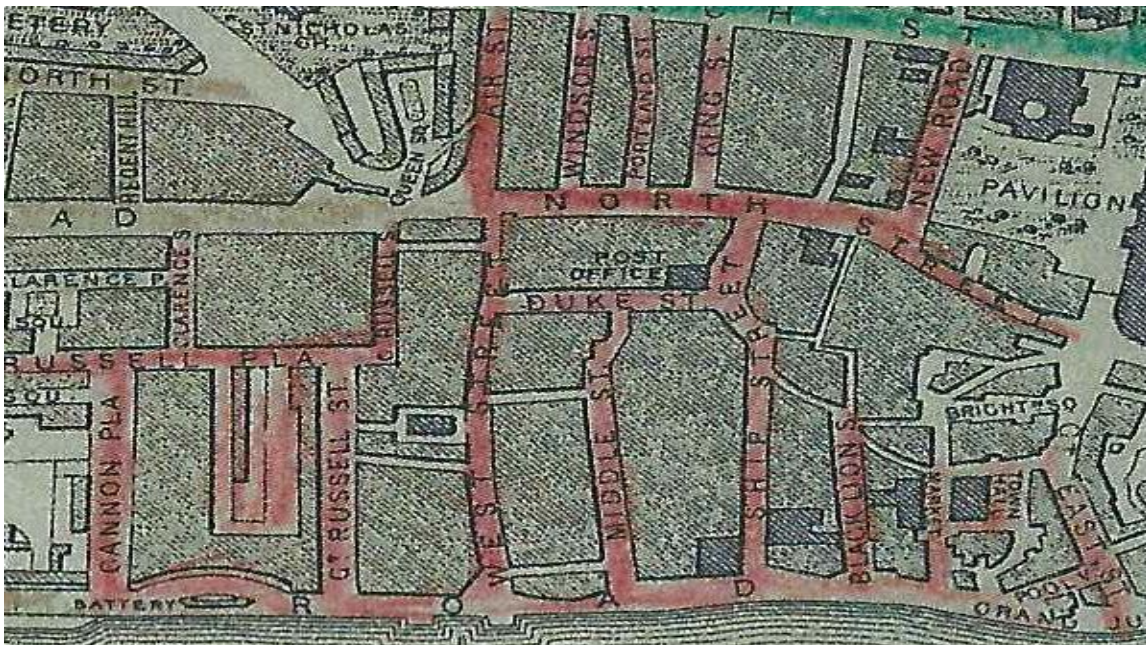


Figure 23: Old Town

In Old Town with one hundred and three streets there are twenty nine names of Irish birth with five French and four German families and one French and one Italian visitor. All are listed as

employed, retired or of independent means. Twenty four children are listed; the largest number of children belonging to French and German families. Four names can be cross referenced with recorded Baptisms.²⁹

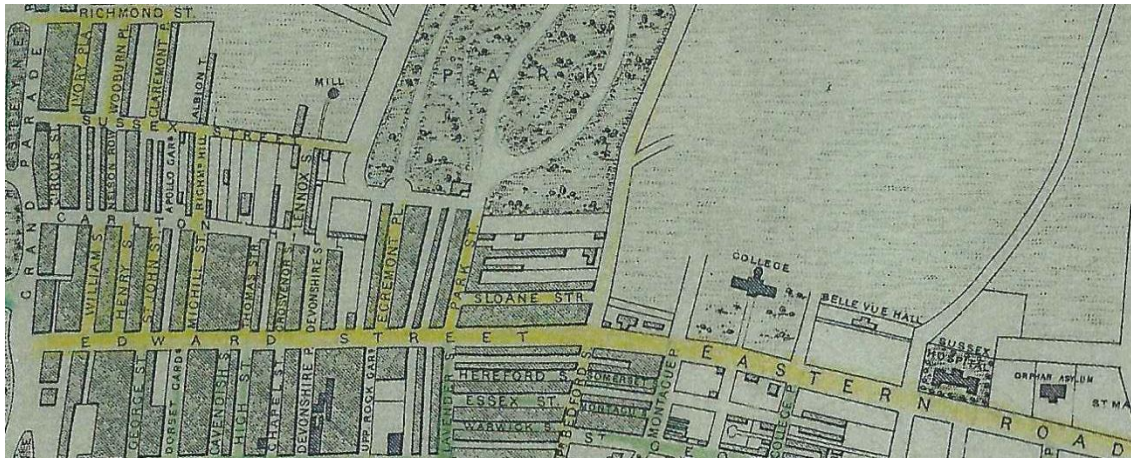


Figure 24: Albion Hill

Albion Hill has seventy-one streets and records sixty-seven, the highest number of names of Irish born and forty-two accompanying children. Although all list employment, more than two thirds can generally be categorised as, 'persons supporting themselves by Manual labour or in the means or same social position of those who do'.³⁰ It is never clear which families were definitely not Catholic although it has long been recognised that being Irish did not necessarily equate with being Catholic. The widow of an Irish clergyman in Annieharvey Terrace and a Chelsea Pensioner in John Street were obviously more likely to be Anglicans.³¹ This area also records the most international profile; six German names, all but one unaccompanied, eight French born, seven single and all but one employed as tutors or teachers. Also included is the name of a Miss Tisseyre, the teacher who worked with the Sisters of Charity and St Paul, but interestingly she is not identified under this name in their records. From Italy there were two resident Italian families and six visiting musicians. In William Street there were also musicians from Russia, Poland and Holland and a Swiss governess, a resident in Sussex Square - of these names nineteen can be cross referenced.³²

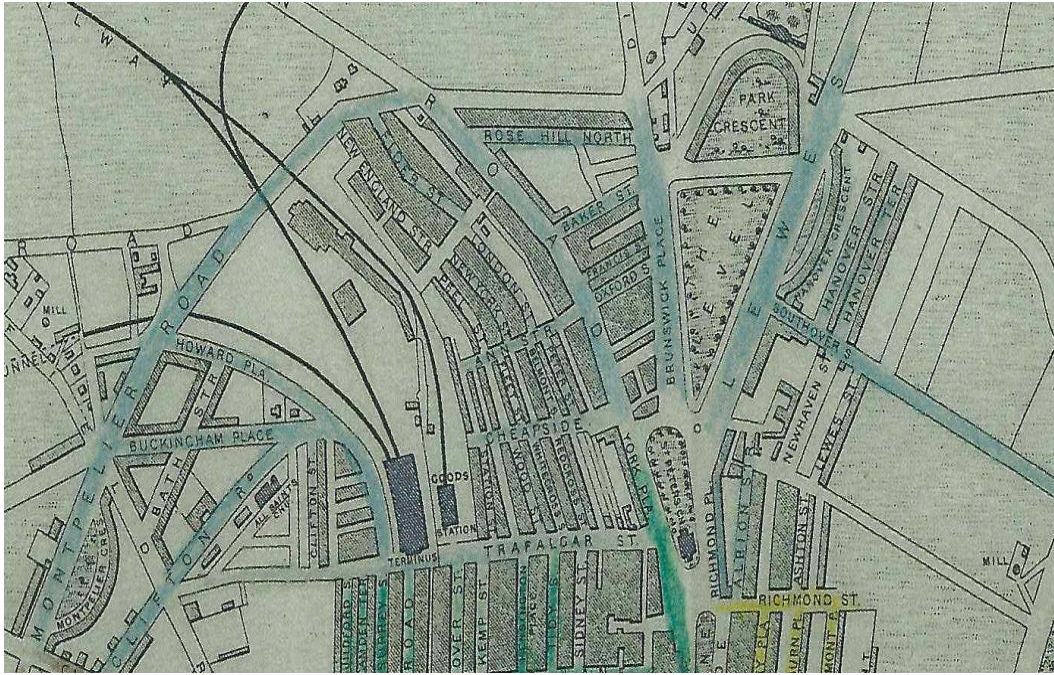


Figure 25: The Level

The Level, which includes the Brighton Workhouse, the details of which have been discussed separately, comprised eighty streets and there are thirty six Irish born listings of whom the Curator at the Chapel Royal was almost certainly not Catholic. From all the names recorded, five from France, three from Germany, two from Italy and one each from Portugal, Jersey and the Isle of Man and a total of forty four children, only six can be referenced with church records.³³

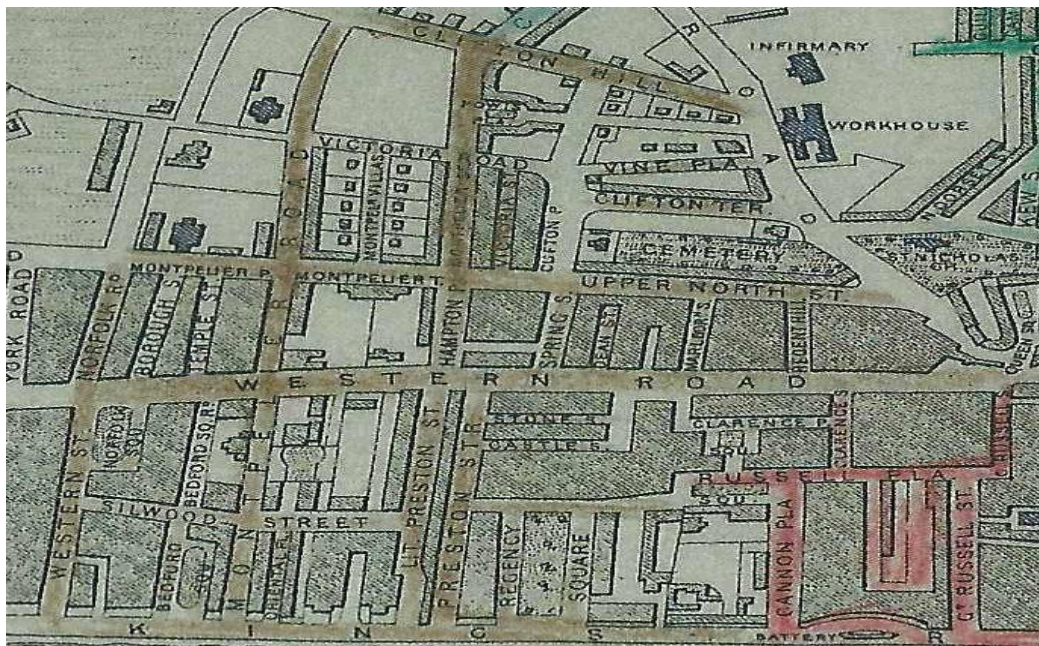


Figure 26: Regency

In the Regency area of seventy six streets there were fifty two names of Irish born these were generally professionals or widows and dependants of professionals and included members of the military, annuitants or servants. This area also recorded the lowest number of children, a total of thirty five. In addition there were sixteen French names either tutors or servants, the family Estampes from the French nobility. There were seven Italian names eight German and one Swiss but only seven names can be referenced in Church records.³⁴



Figure 27: North Road

North Road, the smallest of the six designated areas with fifty-eight streets, recorded twenty-five names of Irish born, four French families, one Prussian and a total of eighteen children. Of these, seven entries can be referenced with church records.³⁵

3. Cavalry Barracks

These figures exclude names from Cavalry Barracks and Church Road Barracks but there is a possible correlation of twelve names which can be found in church records.³⁶ These data, which despite the attempt to cross reference with other records, are not infallible. It is possible to make assumptions about religion from names and country of birth but no more than that. *The Laity Directory*, already noted as being particularly sparing in its coverage of Brighton's Catholic Community, identified three deaths of Brighton residents in 1844, a school in 1853, 'Misses Grandineau Establishment for Young Ladies Montpelier Road'³⁷ and a boarding house in 1854:

Well established highly respectable Boarding offers to Ladies and Gentlemen visiting this favourite and healthy watering place all the comforts of a cheerful and domestic home without the care and trouble of housekeeping At No 4 Manchester Street Wickar's Pier Mansion opening on to the East Cliffe but a short distance from the Chapel.³⁸

Even allowing for the recognised increase in its activity, the Catholic presence remained small and, for the greater part of the period under discussion, relied on the steadying influence of one priest.

4. St John the Baptist - The Rector - The Reverend Edward Cullin

There is a certain irony therefore in the fact that the name of this influential figure in Brighton's Catholic History cannot be found in the first Religious Census nor in the National Census of the same year, for the Reverend Cullin, the Rector of St John the Baptist and confidant of the late Maria Fitzherbert, died in March 1850. There is very little primary evidence relating to his life but that which does exist helps to explain in part why he was so important and so well deserving of the respect accorded to him.

Cullin had been born in Ireland but studied at Ware where he was ordained in 1812. In 1818 he succeeded the Reverend Mouchel and in the years that followed oversaw the construction of St

John the Baptist where he served as a priest for over thirty years, effectively the whole of his ministry apart from a brief period at St Patrick's Chapel in Soho. His popularity and success have often been attributed to two factors that served him and Brighton's small eclectic Catholic community well. He was non-confrontational and not overly Romish. He was also it would appear humorous, realistic and humble, the first illustrated by an account of a conversation he had with a young visitor on the morning that the church was being consecrated:

'Good morning Father Cullin', [said the visitor] 'I thought you were having a great function in the church?'

'Indeed we are sir I never saw such ceremony in my life there are two bishops and they are putting up ladders and putting oil all over the church. I got rather tired so I am taking the air come take a glass of wine after your journey'.³⁹

On another occasion when challenged as to why he did not ask for more favours for his community he replied, 'what should we small flock as we are want more'? This may have seemed a strange comment for a priest who fought to secure funds for the poor children in his charity school but his measured responses were both noted and understood. Perhaps it is this final comment that also explained the character of the priest who again when challenged as to the dangers of being 'imposed upon' replied, 'We shall not hereafter be censured by God for having been imposed upon'.⁴⁰

In earlier chapters his cautious approach to Romanizing influences and the importance of not intentionally offending the non-Catholic Community has already been commented upon. 'The young man [Fr Rymer] wants me to put up the Blessed Sacrament so the Protestants can stare at it' he once claimed, appalled, and when a younger curate introduced a Missa Cantata on Sunday morning with vespers and benediction in the afternoon, the practice was immediately stopped 'What' implored Cullin, 'would the Protestants say'?⁴¹ The Protestants would probably have been less offended by the ancient chants intoned in a language they did not understand than by the proselytising hymns sung in a language that they did:

The Catholic faith spreads again in spite of wicked laws
The effort of the worst of men can n'er impede her cause
Thousands daily join her flock
And free from error's way
To rest on Christ's eternal rock
Secure from all dismay
Behold her temples through the land
In pleasing grandeur raise
On Albion's shores again they stand
With spires that touch the skies
The vilest laws that o'er were made
Can ne'er destroy her power
The efforts of her foes will fade
Like a blighted flower.⁴²

When Rymer finally became rector many years after Cullin's death he wrote to Bishop Danell in terms that would have pleased the old priest, 'I know from past difficulties how careful we have to be in making changes'.⁴³

It was Rymer who wrote very movingly to Archbishop Wiseman on the evening of March 5th telling him of Cullin's death:

Brighton March 5 1850

My Lord;

It is my melancholy duty to announce to you that poor Mr Cullin has just died 6hrs $\frac{3}{4}$ [sic.] Sunday.

I gave him Holy Communion he was then very ill yesterday and much the same - this morning he appeared barely conscious. I proposed that he should receive extreme unction but he wished me to wait a little time. Soon after he fell into a heavy sleep and thinking he would not awake from this I administered the last anointing. He continued in this state of insensibility apparently without any pain until a quarter to seven pm when he calmly expired without any trouble. His servants, some friends and myself had been constantly with him for some hours – I trust he is in eternal rest.

Believe me my lord with every sentiment of respect

Your humble child in Christ.⁴⁴

His letter continues to ask for instruction with reference to informing other members of the clergy and guidance with regard to funeral arrangements to which he invites Wiseman although it is not clear whether this invitation was accepted. Certainly there is no record of this in the obituary in the *Laity's Directory* or mention of his presence in the Brighton Press which gave full coverage to the funeral.

A particularly moving account of this funeral was given by a Reverend Frederick Hopper. He wrote:

It is impossible for me to convey any idea of the deep feeling and sorrow which pervaded the chapel throughout the ceremony all seemed to lament as though bereft of a father. The children of the poor school were clothed in mourning and had a place allocated to them during the service. I shall never forget the heartfelt sobs with which they evidence their love for him who had ever shown towards them the fondest affection.⁴⁵

The Reverend also provided a detailed account of what had constituted a typical Sunday for this priest - the 8am mass for soldiers - followed by instruction - a further mass at eleven - a service at 4 and special catechism classes for the children, but according to a report in *The [Brighton] Herald*, Cullin had done far more than attend to the spiritual needs of his Catholic community. The editorial spoke of the character of the priest, 'who secured the respect of the highest rank and in the sincere esteem of his fellow townsmen, of whatever class or religious persuasion, when the name of Catholic was a bye word and a reproach'. 'Cullin's' life, it concluded, 'was the best refutation for those who cast aspersions on the Church he served',⁴⁶ and while the ever critical *Gazette* was to report in full that, 'Cullin's funeral cortege was followed by many Roman Catholic residents and visitors, as well as by hosts of poor Irish.'⁴⁷

The latter was an exaggerated claim which has already been disproved, the general sentiments expressed were a warm and worthy accolade to this Irish priest whose memorial is positioned alongside that of Maria Fitzherbert.



Figure 28: The Memorial to Cullin

Pray for the Soul of the Reverend Edward Cullin upwards for 30 years pastor of his congregation, whose influence and exertions procured the erection of this chapel, whose frugality and self-denial provided resources for the poor who truly exemplified the lessons which he taught.

Born in Tralee Ireland July 8th 1776 Died in Brighton March 5th 1850 in the 40th year of his priesthood may his soul rest in peace.⁴⁸

Even in death the influence of Cullin remained and his will interestingly provides evidence of the educational needs of the poor which he tried to promote, and also provides a blue print which others were later to follow. His final letter of instruction to a Mr Cooper was held by one Mr Dolan and forwarded to the Reverend Reardon who succeeded him as Missionary Rector. He left £718 18d which with certain deductions provided £681 4d:

The remaining sum whatever my property may realise and whatever description I give and bequest for the purpose of building a charity school on the chapel ground premises

for the education of children of the Catholic poor sufficiently capacious for the erection of two school rooms quite apart the one for the boys the other for girls with convenient accommodation of two teachers a master for the boys and mistress for the girls in the hope that they can be properly and advantageously carried out.

97 Market street London July 24th 1850⁴⁹

How far these hopes were realised leads into an examination of the continuing attempts to secure this educational provision.

5. St John the Baptist Early Educational Provision - The Sisters of Charity of St Paul and the Sisters of Mercy

In 1850 the Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle sent two members of the Community to Brighton, (Sr Winfride Tasker, Sr Paul Young, and a French novice Heloise Bouchervand) to set up a Convent at 12 Egremont Place. It is believed that this was an initiative encouraged by Bishop Grant and the sisters were 'unsalaried and all in their twenties'.⁵⁰ The present Archivist of the order suggests that there was a problem and the Mother Foundress withdrew the sisters despite pleas by the Bishop for them to remain. There is little conclusive evidence to explain the reasons for their departure but the condition of the house was identified as one cause 'a small inconvenient house in Egremont Street where they taught Catholic Children'.⁵¹ according to a letter written by a Sister Mary May, and personality clashes with one of the sisters, possibly a Sr. Antonio, who subsequently left the order, appeared to be another. The sisters themselves have few records and they too wonder why the Brighton mission failed while the Order was so successful elsewhere. Certainly Bishop Grant was full of praise for their efforts and wrote a particularly complimentary letter to Doctor Tandy, Chaplain to the Order:

The very grateful sense which I shall ever retain of the zeal, piety and laborious services of the good sisters, I hope you will do me the favour of conveying my thanks to the Superiors of the Order, and that you will assure the two sisters that I heartily wish them and yourself my blessing.⁵²

The Bishop then turned again to the religious and the Sisters of Mercy were approached. This order was founded first as a House of Mercy in Dublin by Catherine McAuley in 1827.

Catherine McAuley's personal background is of particular interest; although baptised a Catholic she was orphaned early and partially educated by Protestants and had siblings who reverted to the Protestant faith. Before starting her Order she researched educational establishments to learn more about their work, particularly the Quaker Institutions in Dublin. This knowledge and her Protestant connections gave her access to and credibility with the Establishment figures so frequently wary and resistant to Catholic initiative and influence. Within four years she, and a number of the women who had joined with her to provide care for the destitute, took religious vows and a Congregation was born whose mission was specifically to serve the poor, sick and ignorant.⁵³ By the time of her death in 1841 there were, in addition to ten convents in Ireland, two in England, one a very successful house in Bermondsey. Despite their efforts the Restoration of the Hierarchy had once again fuelled suspicions and distrust towards religious communities that perhaps should have been abated and was certainly ill deserved.

A letter to the Queen undersigned by 'Roman Catholic Ladies in England and your Majesty's Loyal Subjects protests against a Bill before Parliament to prevent the Forcible Detention of Females in Religious Houses'. The signatories stated that:

Having sufficient knowledge of knowing we are decidedly convinced that there is not one Female forcibly detained in any one of the religious houses in this country religious communities in the country are voluntary organisations of ladies having no recognition or privilege from the State and for the most part they are associated with the purpose of instructing the poor, educating in piety future mothers of the families, taking care of orphans, training the young and often the frail to virtue and visiting the sick and afflicted in England.⁵⁴

It was certainly in all these areas that the Mercy Sisters would commit themselves and their arrival marked the beginning of active involvement in the town, that continues to the present day. The Community's Annals record that three sisters first visited Brighton on June 11 1852 and by September one Sister Helen with six sisters moved into Egremont Street to circumstances

which were as inadequate and impoverished as those experienced by the Sisters of Charity. They also provide a vivid account of these early days:

The winter set in with great severity and the poor would have suffered much if we had not been generously assisted by the numerous visitors who were there and provided the sisters with coal, tickets, blankets, soup and warm clothing. On Christmas Day seven children from this made their first Holy Communion dressed, according to the entry, in blue dresses with white capes and veils. The priests seemed afraid of the novelty and objected to them going without bonnets but the congregation was so much pleased and satisfied that the difficulty was not raised again.⁵⁵



Figure 29: Humorous depiction of life for the Postulants from the Annals in 1862 in which it was claimed that they were required to sleep with umbrellas to protect them from the rain coming through the roof

Within a year a house opposite the church was hired and according to the Annals of 1853, 'after much anxious thought the priests sacrificed their garden for a school and at a cost of £1500 a school was set up in Bedford Street'.⁵⁶

6. Sources of Conflict: Financing the Mission and the School and the early stirrings of anti-Catholicism in the town

Detailed correspondence between the sisters and the Bishop and the sisters and the Rectors suggest that their task was not easy and the process of settlement was lengthy and problematic. The main area of concern was one of finance, a difficulty that had strained earlier relationships and continued to reverberate through the whole of Brighton's Catholic story. While both the Reverend Cullin and Mrs Fitzherbert had willed that money should be spent on the schools there were clearly conflicts between the religious and the priests as to how to carry out these requests while responding to changes in the situation and meeting the needs of both the church and the school. Further to this was the subject of buildings in terms of suitability and upkeep. Both Bishop Grant and The Reverend Tierney, Chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk, were drawn into these disputes and although the petitions are well documented there are few letters indicating what had been the response.

Certainly the Community itself was not rich due in part to its dependence upon dowries as Sister Aloysious explained in a letter to Bishop Grant. Of the 23 sisters in the community only four brought full dowries, 2 had annuities which ceased on their deaths, one of £30 per annum, another of £60, while some brought nothing and 7 brought a small part. She was uncertain about Mother Angela and the Rev. Mother was not included.⁵⁷ This accounted for the fact that the Mother House was unable to finance the Brighton school which had to rely on the Mission along with a small allowance from the *Catholic Poor School Committee*. It did seem that the priests resisted allocating too much money to the school. A letter written by Sister Catherine to Bishop Grant refers to this and suggests that there was further disagreement in relation to asking for money from the children:

I was obliged to be content with £90 [rather than the £100 originally promised] plus a guarantee not to ask money from the children and a promise that he would sometimes give money for the poor. I objected too to the condition in the agreement about getting

money from the school children telling him the words from the Rule and he promised to obviate the difficulty so as not to oblige us to ask payments from the children ...⁵⁸

Two days after that, Sister Angela wrote a particularly revealing letter to Reverend Rymer, urging him to consider the value of the contribution of the sisters, while hinting again that relations between priests and nuns was not as easy as might have been expected:

You may be assured it will be more advantageous to you in the end if the convent be allowed to get fully established during the first few years it afterwards becomes a great help to the missions in many ways...you may also be convinced that the sisters will not encroach on your generosity one day longer than is absolutely necessary [this relates to the fact that the sisters did not have their own chapel and were required to use the Church] I hope that you did not consider that I meant to put you to any expense in fitting up the chapel for us We are obliged to say office in the choir I thought well to mention it as it is likely that you might have some old furniture to spare which you might let us have the use of.⁵⁹

This seems reminiscent of the Reverend Barnes' sad pleas to Bishop Douglas for a chalice and other essential religious items fifty years earlier. In fairness to the Church it too had cash flow problems. Despite its few wealthier residents and itinerant visitors the stable Catholic community was small and impoverished as evidenced by the returns of 1837. Even Mrs Fitzherbert's legacy to the Church was reduced as a result of declining interest rates. In her will she had conferred £50 yearly to the Brighton Chapel with a wish to remit that interest half yearly to:

The Revd Cullin so long as he shall continue to serve the Brighton Mission and afterwards to the Resident Missioner at Brighton provided he be a priest approved by the Bishop.⁶⁰

The conflict between the needs of the school and those of the church and the prioritising of funds for building and repairs money was ongoing. In a letter from Reardon to Bishop Grant there is reference to:

The erecting of a boy's school on the present site is as Fr. Cullin required, 'he thought we should have a school mistress and that would leave them 'ac Soho' but of course he did not make any time provision half the money then can go to the boys school the other half can mostly be approved for the girls. This explanation at once I think settles the whole difficulty.⁶¹

The difficulties as will be seen were far from settled but the religious were in place and by 1854 there was for the first time in Brighton's Catholic history a formalised attempt to address the needs of the poorest and least advantaged members of its Community. An *Education Act of 1851* tends to support this for it notes that Catholic provision of two schools out of 218 listed and its education of 1% of its children, 169 out of 8,654, was consistent with the percentage of the Catholic population.⁶²

It is interesting nevertheless that these educational initiatives corresponded with the first stirrings of genuine anti-Catholic feeling in Brighton. There had always been muted rumblings of disquiet but in 1841 *The Tablet* of that year reported on the discussion of two controversial figures:

There is a curious theological controversy at present carrying on in this town versus Sortain and Addison as to whether the Roman Catholic Church was the anti-Christ.⁶³

The particular political and religious leanings of the Press have been addressed in Chapter 3 in addition to references about Brighton's Protestant Defence Committee and the libellous rankings of many Brighton clergy men and visiting preachers to which Langdale refers. But the 'Progress of Popery',⁶⁴ and the challenge 'Shall Protestants sit tamely by and see themselves outbid by Papists for their boasted freedom?',⁶⁵ fed perfectly into the age-old fear that Catholicism was foreign-threatening and un-English. As also mentioned earlier there were still curbs on overt anti-Catholicism, and the chairman of Brighton Town Mission Society was forced into an apology over a remark he made in speaking of 'the propagation of Roman Catholic doctrines in certain districts in Brighton where no clergyman of the Church of England would go. I did not intend to allude to the Roman Catholic Church in St Georges Road and I have no idea that Popery is on the increase in that district'.⁶⁶

These denials do not entirely ring true as there were indeed streets where Anglican Clergy need not go and certainly many of these were near the Church, but although poor the area was not

predominantly Catholic. This pragmatic handling of the religious question by the press was further reflected in its coverage of Bonfire Celebrations. *The Times* of November 6 1850 recorded 'Guys on donkeys representing Wiseman, a Jesuit priest and the Pope parading about Brighton for several hours attracting crowds and exciting considerable laughter'.⁶⁷ It suggested that had there been any ill feeling there would have been a violent confrontation. This explanation is not entirely convincing given the size of the Catholic population but *The Guardian's* comment in its column entitled 'Jack O Lanterns' a year later was to focus on Guyology as a 'social corrective' on objects and institutions more likely to face ridicule in the town at large notably the Steyne and the Pavilion.⁶⁸ This seemed to be a more positive attempt to divert attention away from anti-Catholic symbols.

Even more disturbing is further evidence of conflict within the Catholic Community itself. On the wall at St John the Baptist alongside the memorials to Mrs Fitzherbert is one for Isaac Cooper one time tailor to the Prince Regent and stalwart member of the Brighton's Catholic Community certainly according to the citation on the memorial itself:

Of your charity pray for the soul of Isaac Cooper, Esq. Born at Tenehealy County Wicklow Ireland September 21 1781 died Brighton Sept 6 1852. By his death the church lost a munificent benefactor, to the poor a kind and generous friend.⁶⁹

As was the custom and one that remains so today, Isaac Cooper made provision in his will for masses to be said for deceased members of his family but it would seem that after his death others felt that his own provision was not equal to the demand Lawrence Dolan wrote to Bishop Grant November 3 1853 in which he claimed he had only just put his hand on Mr Cooper's papers. He went on to refer to a letter of Mr Cooper written several months before his death in which he leaves the sum of £400 pounds for a number of petitions for masses (totalling seven for family members) and money for 'The Brighton Catholic School'.⁷⁰ A further letter discussed the number of masses for the Cooper family with the suggestion that the money should come from

the school fund. This prompted a quick response from The Reverend Tierney (Chaplain to the Duke of Norfolk):

In effect that Cooper has no right to ask for family masses. Cooper's bequest is to the schools only. He gives nothing to the chapel, nothing to the incumbents. From the chapel and the incumbents therefore he can require nothing; Strictly speaking his positive injunction is a mere sound. He has no right to require masses at all. Such masses can be imposed as an obligation on the Church *only* by taking a stipend from the funds of the school surly you must confine the masses within the narrowest limits which verbal and technical accuracy will permit a stipend from the school.

Now this was decidedly not his intention. In the very same breath that he requires the masses he desires Mr Dolan to say the money is for the school. There is nothing equivocal nothing doubtful about this. The money is intended for the schools and nothing else. The letter continues to urge the bishop to 'confine the number of masses to the narrowest limits which verbal and technical accuracy will permit'.⁷¹

There is no documentary evidence available to indicate how this problem was resolved although the contemporary view is that the masses would have been said. There remains something quite disconcerting about the mean-spirited tone of the letter and as with the tensions between the priests and the religious it again focused on money.

Conclusion

This chapter concludes with evidence of fledgling expansion and simmering negativity. The inevitable loss of Royal patronage led to a realignment in the character of the population. Although not in any way less international the emphasis was less on the presence of both foreign and English nobility and more on the emergence of a moneyed middle class. There is some evidence to suggest that Catholics sought to deal with fellow Catholics in their business dealings but this did not result in preferential treatment or prevent grievances being voiced and acted upon and as such Catholics did not appear to be acting in any way differently from their fellow countrymen. There is clearly evidence of intent in making provision for the Catholic poor although the education of the children of Catholic soldiers and the care of the orphaned children of soldiers seems not to have been addressed. Particularly significant was the way the Catholic community was beginning to engage with its needs. The establishment of the *Catholic Poor*

School Committee being one such initiative. There was also provision for Catholics in the Workhouse from which statistical evidence proved that derisory comments about the surge in numbers of Irish poor were misplaced. The conflicting responses to the needs and rights of the inmates suggest that many of Brighton's residents were not entirely at ease with its emerging anti-Catholicism. It still needs to be acknowledged that the educational and social needs of this community although obvious were not dangerously inadequate as in many of England's larger cities. In 1829 when Catholic Emancipation was being passed the Brighton press had been far more engaged with the activities of Mrs Fitzherbert. Likewise the death of the Reverend Cullin received a degree of sympathetic coverage that dignified his church and invalidated many of the hysterical fears surrounding the Restoration of the Catholic Hierarchy. McRorie was undoubtedly right in her analysis of a 'two sided policy',⁷² which once again acknowledged 'non-Catholic hatred of the Institution of the religion but neutrality or even personal regard for its practitioners'. With regard to the Catholic community itself it might be suggested that in many instances love for the Church was accompanied by personal disregard for many of its practitioners both among the lay and the religious.

Notes and Sources:

- ¹ *Diocese of Westminster Archives, Records from Public Record Office* RG 4/5 London Catholics 45,000 Home Counties Catholics 15,000 no specific reference to Brighton.
- ² WDA. Langdale, Charles. (1838). *Petition to the Vicars Apostolic*. June 8 1838.
- ³ WDA. 'Queries for Catholic Clergy'. Circulated by the *Catholic Institute* 1838. *Westminster Archives*.
- ⁴. 'Returns from Collections for New Chapels, April 16 1837 - St John the Baptist'. *Brighton and Arundel Archives*.
- ⁵ State of Brighton Congregation 1837-1840
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Irvine, V. (1971). *The Kings Wife*. London: Hambledon, p.197.
- ⁸ *Brighton Guardian* 1837.
- ⁹ WDA. Boxes W2 /4/8Griffeths, T. V.A.L. Letter from Griffeths to his clergy detailing the conditions of the Marriage Act and advising them how to avoid mistakes and preserve uniformity. S Keating and Brown Printers to the Vicars Apost in England. Sept 25 1837.
- ¹⁰ Ibid. 'Report of the trial of Reverend Fergusson'. (No date given). Miscellaneous cutting, 29/11/54
- ¹¹ Ibid. p.9. Griffeths letter.
- ¹² *Southwark Diocesan Archives*. *Catholic Standard* cutting 1854, Bishop Grant's Boxes.
- ¹³ *Southwark Diocesan Archives*. Miscellaneous article found in 'Bishop Grant Boxes' Circa 1855.

14. Ibid. Manning, then Provost at Westminster to Bishop Grant. (Date obscured).
15. Ibid. Charles Wood letter in Bishop Grant's Boxes 1855 (Actual date unclear).
16. Pugh, Trevor. *The History of St John the Baptist*, p.14.
17. Census Figures for 1841. p.10.
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24. Langdale's Petition, June 8 1838.
25. Brighton Census 1851. Brighton's Workhouse population.
26. *Brighton Gazette*, February 7 1851.
27. Detail of residences in Brighton for 1850 Census with accompanying maps identifying location of streets figs i-vii.
28. Kemp Town Census, 1851. PRO Record Film Ref: HO 107/13644, Folios 13-39.
29. Old Town, PRO Ref: HO 1307/1646, Folios 4-238 & 590-668.

- ^{30.} 'Memorandum relating to the organisation of School Log Books' *East Sussex Records Office*
- ^{31.} Albion Hill Census, 1851. PRO Ref: HO 107/1645, Folios 4-349, SFHG, 1997.
- ^{32.} The Level Census 1851. PRO Ref: HO 1307/1645, Folios 354-5133 & 895 -1060.
- ^{33.} Regency Census 1851. PRO Ref: HO 107/1646, Folis 242-585.
- ^{34.} North Road Census 1851. PRO Ref: HO 1307/1645, Folios 518-8903.
- ^{35.} Cavalry Barracks Census 1851. PRO Ref: HO 1307/13647 Folios 142-1353 and V. Rev Grant, R.C. 'The Brighton Garrison 1793-1900' *Local Studies Library*, p.44.
- ^{36.} *Laity's Directory 1844.*
- ^{37.} *Laity's Directory 1853.*
- ^{38.} *Laity's Directory 1853.*
- ^{39.} Pugh, T., op. cit. p.8 et seq. Quotations ascribed to the Reverend Cullin
- ^{40.} Johnstone, M. (1904). *Short History of the Catholic Church in Brighton.* p.10 et seq.
- ^{41.} Hooper, Fred. (1827). *Catholic Magazine.*
- ^{42.} Connolly, G. (1980). *Catholicism in Manchester and Salford 1770 1850.* PhD. Thesis Manchester University, Vol. 3., p.118 – quoting a poem by Teer.
- ^{43.} Rymer to Dannell, B101/3, Clergy Correspondence St John the Baptist, Brighton and Hove Diocesan Records.
- ^{44.} Original letter from Rymer to Wiseman found in 'Wiseman's boxes' *Archives of Westminster Diocese.*

^{45.} Reverend Frederick Hooper. *Catholic Magazine* 1827. This article appeared in this magazine. It suggests that Hooper himself was witness to the funeral of Cullin but there are no specific details to support this.

^{46.} *Brighton Herald* March 12 1850.

^{47.} *Brighton Gazette* March 12 1850.

^{48.} Memorial Stone in St John Baptist.

^{49.} Original letter held in Archive Boxes for Brighton and Arundel.

^{50.} Records of the Sisters of Charity and St Paul as quoted in *Laity's Directory 1852*, p.76 also in Scarisbrick , J.J. (1997) *Sedgely Park and Beyond*. Published by Sisters of Charity and St Paul.

^{51.} Ibid. *Laity's Directory*, p.7.

^{52.} Dr Tandy's original letter sent to Sisters of Charity.

^{53.} Annals of the Mercy Sisters. (1852). The Annals are stored at the *Archives of the Sisters of Mercy Convent* in Bermondsey some parts are typed others in long hand. It is not possible to provide page references.

^{54.} Petition sent to the Queen in *Westminster Archives Boxes* (undated) .

^{55.} Annals of the Mercy Sisters.

^{56.} Ibid.

^{57.} Letter from St Aloysious to Bishop Grant 1852, September 10.

^{58.} Sister Catherine to Bishop Grant 1852, October 6.

- ⁵⁹. Sister Angela to Bishop Grant 1852, October 8.
- ⁶⁰. MFH Will Ref: B106/3. Contribution constantly under review see further references in Chapter 6.
- ⁶¹. Reardon to Grant (date unclear). *Brighton and Hove Archives Boxes*.
- ⁶². Religious Census Brighton 1851.
- ⁶³. *The Tablet*, 1841.
- ⁶⁴. *Brighton Protestant Defence Association*. A continuation of utterances attributed to them and published in *Brighton Tracts*.
- ⁶⁵. Ibid.
- ⁶⁶. Banier, B. (unpublished 1989). *Into the Streets and Lanes: The Brighton and Hove Town Mission 1849 -1899*, p.41.
- ⁶⁷. *Times*, November 6 1850.
- ⁶⁸. *Brighton Guardian*, 1851.
- ⁶⁹. Cooper's Memorial.
- ⁷⁰. Dolan to Grant *Arundel and Brighton Papers*, November 3 1853.
- ⁷¹. Tierney to Dolan original letter.
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CHAPTER 6: POSITIVE ACTIVITY BUT NEGATIVE RESPONSES (1855 -1870)



Figure 30: Turning tides

Introduction

This chapter continues the pattern of commenting upon international and national issues in respect of the ways both influenced Brighton's Catholicity. It also marks a stage when the Catholic story emerges from the shadows and becomes more clearly defined. This is undoubtedly due to the steady growth of a Catholic community, the establishment of two more Catholic Missions, (St Mary Magdalen 1861/64, St Joseph 1869) to meet this need, the expansion of the work of the religious, and the stricter and more formalised adherence to Catholic practice. As evidence of this are the church records which detail Mass attendance and the numbers of those receiving the Sacraments of first Communion and confirmation, generally seen as a more reliable indicator of devotion to the Church. The Catholic population continued to reflect an interesting cross-section of the community, but the apparent growth in numbers should not be allowed to mislead as the Catholic population never exceeded 1% of the town's total population and no more than 3% in the most populous Catholic areas.¹ For this reason the anti-Catholic tensions that reverberated in the town throughout this period are not easy to understand

or justify, which may explain in part the often contradictory responses by the town's people and the ever vibrant and influential press.

1. National Issues–Education

As the country at large attempted to deal with the social demands of Victorian England so did the Catholic Church struggle to achieve a more equitable provision for its own poor. Although Catholics still did not have a say in determining national policy they were affected by national educational issues. They were wary of the spread of Liberalism in Europe which led to a secularisation of education, anathema to Catholics and bitterly opposed by the Catholic hierarchy who feared that this might influence educational policy in England. In this, their fears were not unjustified. After several years of discussion they had reached a compromise about the management of their schools agreeing, albeit reluctantly, that lay members should share in their management but securing agreement that left 'ecclesiastical authorities in charge of religious and moral instruction with any controversial matters being decided by the Bishop'.² This agreement enabled them to take advantage of the grants offered by the Privy Council but subsequent educational initiatives were to prove far more challenging. The Newcastle Commission set up 'to enquire into the present state of popular education in England, and to consider and report which measures if any are required for the extension of sound and cheap elementary education to all classes of the people', led first to the Revised Code which in effect made the awarding of the grant dependent upon success in three main subjects, Reading Writing and Arithmetic.³ John Hurt suggests that, 'the state was no longer going to subsidise schools whose primary aim was to rear the young in the principles of the Christian faith' which was exactly what the Catholics saw as the prime function of their schools.⁴ Indeed this was emphasised both in Papal encyclicals from Rome and regularly from the Bishops in their pastoral letters to the laity. Henry Edward Manning, Archbishop of Westminster, declared, 'those who are taught only in secular instruction are not educated. A system of education not based on

Christianity is an imposture, it is not education'.⁵ These principles had already been underlined by the introduction in 1865 of Ecclesiastical Inspection, considerably strengthening this section of the school curriculum:

We propose to appoint in our respective Dioceses, ecclesiastical inspectors of schools to examine the scholars in the religious portion of their education, to grant certificates and award prizes in it, and to give anyone who aspires to be a teacher of Catholic children, the same means as proving himself fitted for the office, and prevent the unworthy of obtaining so serious a trust.⁶

The most radical changes were to come with the 1870 Elementary Education Act and the introduction of rate-aided Board Schools to which attendance would be compulsory for all children, if education could not be provided by a voluntary school of their denomination. This for the Catholics in 1870 meant a short fall of 78,000 places and the *Catholic Poor School Committee* (C.P.S.C.) petitioned the government as to their concerns:

They regretted that the bill did not promote the extension of the existing system of denominational schools as they would desire—[they] prayed the house that in any law enacted it would extend the religious freedom under which the education of the poor are now educated and would not pass any measure which would compel the poor of the Catholic Community to send their children to schools in which the discipline and course of instruction would be a violation of conscience and spiritual grief to them as Catholics.⁷

There was no overt intention on the part of the government to close the denominational schools nor were denominationalists denied the opportunity to open new ones, but to qualify for a continuation of their grant they would have to meet certain conditions. This meant a total of two hundred and fifty attendances, the presence of certificated teachers, set hours of secular instruction, a ratio of Pupil Teachers to children 1:40 and the provision of reasonable facilities.

The Catholic schools along with those of other denominations were given six months to provide schools for their children and schools that met these conditions. A Crisis Fund was set up; the most famous founded by Lord Howard of Glossop, the 14th Duke of Arundel, a family with close connections to Brighton's Catholic story. The response was immediate but it was to take ten years rather than six months to come close to their initial target of raising the number of

school places to 71,518.⁸ This Act was in effect a threat to all voluntary schools but despite the apparent unity of purpose the religious issues proved to be dominant and divisive.

The Restoration of the Hierarchy meanwhile, as with Catholic Emancipation thirty years earlier, had reminded Catholics that they were ever vulnerable to intense, often violent, anti-Catholic attack. Politics was becoming increasingly more polarised and the Catholic vote was to become more significant but it was not at all clear which party best served Catholic interests. The Establishment, essentially Tory and Anglican, feared a strong Papacy and had disliked the strong Ultramontanism of Wiseman, but the ideals of Liberalism challenged Catholic philosophy. Brighton was to become a victim of this paradox and continued to respond to political and religious issues in its own unique way.

2. Political issues in Brighton and a Catholic backlash

In 1864 *The Protestant Defence Association*, intent on continuing its anti-Catholic agenda put forward its own Protestant candidate, a Mr Harper, to contest a newly vacated Parliamentary seat. Harper was widely regarded as a political nonentity, famous only for his call for a 'Bloody end to the Pope'.⁹ This proved to be an ill-chosen move for at his nomination he was actually heckled. There were yells of 'we don't want more of your nonsense',¹⁰ and he received a mere handful of votes. This did not mean that anti-Catholic voices were silenced nor did it herald a genuine religious tolerance. Mr Moor, a Liberal Conservative, was then put forward but his popularity too was short lived and by the time of the General Election of 1865 he had been accused of 'flirting with Rome',¹¹ for nothing more contentious than stating that he claimed to be 'a Protestant who favoured civil and religious liberty for all, with no interference in the forms of rites or observances of any religion'.¹² This did not go down well in Brighton and the Liberals won in 1865 and again in 1868 despite strong words from the influential *Tablet* that Catholics should return to Parliament Conservative candidates more sympathetic to the Catholic cause, as

this was the 'obvious course where Catholic duty and Catholic principle lay'.¹³ Nor had Brighton's Catholics been swayed by the warnings of a Conservative Catholic landowner urging 'every legitimate means for stemming that flood of democracy that threatens to overwhelm us'.¹⁴

Unfortunately there were no signs that Brighton's Catholics were rewarded for their support of the Liberals and many felt particularly betrayed by the Liberal M.P. William Fawcett who was returned as Brighton's MP after the 1868 election but who did not vote for the provision of Catholic education in the Brighton Workhouses. This should not have come as a surprise as Fawcett was vociferous in his concerns for the education of children in the country as a whole, one in which religious convictions were of a secondary importance:

The whole nation is gradually awakening to the truth that every boy and girl in the United Kingdom must be educated, and that as long as the vast numbers of our population are permitted to grow up in ignorance all our efforts to deal with such evils as pauperism, crime and drunkenness, will prove to be only temporary and palliative.¹⁵

In respect of Workhouses one disillusioned Brighton resident wrote, 'I trust Brighton Catholics will not overlook this act of ingratitude at the next election, at all events, it will not be forgotten or forgiven by one who is Catholic and had a vote in Brighton'.¹⁶

3. Tensions surrounding the opening of the Second Mission of St Mary Magdalene and its early years

It was not the anti-Catholic rhetoric of the *Protestant Defence Association*, or the outcomes of the local and general elections which were to be most controversial in the 1860s, but rather it was the opening and subsequent consecration of two new Missions, the first in 1861, the second in 1869. Brighton was fast becoming a resort for a new middle class - effectively a 'holiday destination'. These new visitors, unlike the 'trippers' of the past did not come to indulge in a day's heavy drinking and rioting. They wanted something more stable and appealing for family holidays. It is of interest that by the 1860s, 22 of the 29 major hotels were situated West of the Old Steine far from the Pavilion and Marine Parade and equally distant from the poor and

disadvantaged areas of Egremont Street, Petty France and The Level.¹⁷ This situation had already been acknowledged by Bishop Grant in a circular issued in February 1858:

The Catholic clergy of Brighton have long felt the necessity of building another church, on account of the rapid extension of the town The present chapel [St John the Baptist], erected in 1835, through the zeal of the late Edward Cullin, has become insufficient for the wants of the faithful.¹⁸

Although mass was often celebrated in private houses by visiting priests a number of small mass houses/church houses existed for the small but growing number of Catholic residents who did not live in the vicinity of this Church (St John the Baptist). These Mass Houses/house churches were recognised but were not seen as constituting a threat or of violating Protestant sensitivities. At No 2 Stanford Road, at the house of a Mr and Mrs Broderick, a Reverend Simmons was known to regularly say Mass and for two years, from 1858 to 1860, Henry Rymer of St John the Baptist said Mass each Sunday at the private chapel of St Mary and St Nicholas in the house of the Munster Family of Sillwood Lodge in Sillwood Place. Bishop Grant made a specific reference to this in a further appeal for funding for a second Mission in which he once again emphasised the importance of the town:

The clergy of Brighton are desirous to establish a mission on the West Cliff of this large and important town. An eligible site has now been secured for this purpose, and subscriptions are earnestly solicited for the erection of a church. By the kind permission of the family residing there a temporary chapel is opened at Sillwood Lodge Western Road, Mass at 10 Afternoon Service at 3, after rosary, benediction, sermon and catechism.¹⁹

Later Rymer's place was taken by a Reverend Oldham, an Anglican clergyman who had converted to Rome, and whose strenuous efforts resulted in sufficient income to build what was to become Brighton's second Mission. Two years later, on September 14 1860, the Reverend Oldham issued his own circular in which he outlined detailed and comprehensive plans for the building which had been initiated before his appointment as Priest of the District. This circular was in effect a plea for the whole Catholic body to aid him and the work that was being carried

out. The reasons he outlined in many ways resonated with those of Bishop Bramston in his pleas for money to fund the building of St John the Baptist thirty years before:

All Catholics have an interest in Brighton. It has already become a great sea suburb of London. Thousands pour into the place every year and Catholics are in fair proportion to the rest. It is a place, therefore, where our Holy religion should be worthily represented by a good church in each district. Wealthy visitors come here in search of health and relaxation; but they can hardly expect that Church accommodation should be provided for them at the expense of the comparatively poor resident congregation. The work therefore has a strong claim to their support I earnestly hope that they will make a generous offer of thanksgiving for the benefits which they have found and the recreation they have enjoyed at the seaside. There can be no doubt about the work itself. It is a sure work and merciful. It is full of spiritual blessing for those who take part in it or come beneath its influence.²⁰

In a further circular just three days earlier Bishop Grant had praised the local Catholics and their priest although his main focus had been on the spiritual, the zeal of local Catholics and the devoted charity of the Pastor the Rev George Oldham, who has dedicated his services to the good work of establishing the new mission and building the proposed church of St Mary Magdalen. 'May her intercession [Mary Magdalen] draw many to sit at the feet of our Lord, and receive a share in the reward promised and given to her, and may He who praised and defended the charity that was directed to him, bless all who raise a church in which they may have Him always with them, and may always bring their offerings to him.'²¹

The subscription lists in the appendices for the period 1858/59/60 would suggest that the response was generous with benefactors drawn widely and beyond the boundaries of the town and the district, although Father Oldham's personal donation of £600 far exceeded all other subscriptions. In his circular of September 14th he had made clear his own personal commitment, 'I am determined on my own responsibility to build part of the church and thus supply a free place for our present congregation'.²²

There appeared to be an assumption at the time of Oldham's appointment (1860) that there had been a coming together of Catholic needs and Brighton's readiness to accept them. In a letter to

Bishop Grant an unnamed resident made an innocent but unwise observation of Brighton's attitude towards its Catholic residents or at least to their church. The letter suggested that, 'as an existing Mission [Sillwood Place] had been in operation for nearly two years without exciting public comment or notice of any kind that peoples minds had been gradually prepared and Father Oldham's coming here will be scarcely remarked upon or noticed at all...religious opposition and bitterness has been quiet in Brighton lately'.²³ In expectation of continuing support from the non-Catholic community and generous financial help from Catholics building work commenced in 1861.

The formal inauguration of St Mary Magdalen which marked the opening of the entire nave took place on Tuesday August 16 1864. As described in an earlier chapter, the press, at least were in complete unanimity in their praise of the building:

Religious Views apart, the opening of the new Catholic church of St Mary Magdalene's (sic) Upper North Street, is a subject of congratulation since the completion adds to the town a choice of architectural ornament all things considered, this new church is perhaps the finest architectural example in Brighton ... beauty as no other church can rival.²⁴

The Herald of the same year was no less effusive, 'Concerning the carving and the roof praise of which however we may add, can scarcely be overdone'.²⁵

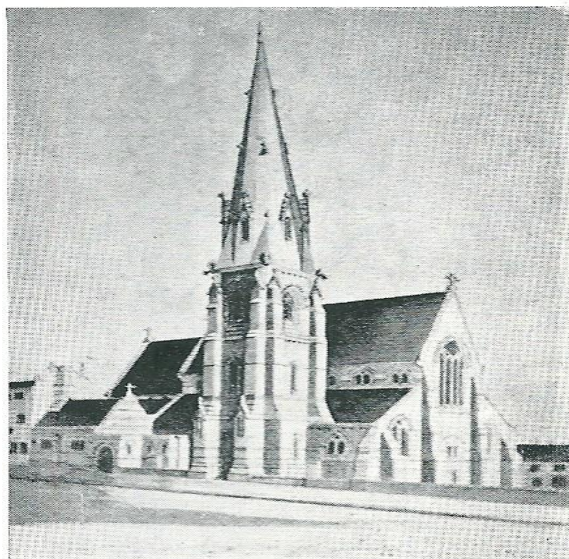


Figure 31: Exterior of St Mary Magdalen at time of Consecration



Figure 32: Contemporary photo of St Mary Magdalen

Bishop Grant celebrated a Pontifical High Mass and Henry Manning, then Provost of Westminster, preached a sermon which lasted for nearly an hour. *The Herald*, which had been full of praise for the building was less enthusiastic about the ceremony noting, rather disparagingly that, 'the services, with the exception of the sermon were altogether musical, the music was good but to our notion redundant'.²⁶ The editorial explained that the reporter had been 'unfavourably placed' but the sermon was printed in its entirety. One section particularly was to excite the town's Protestants, this was Manning's claim that, 'the Catholic Church was the sole barrier against the inundation of scepticism and infidelity'.²⁷ Although *The Gazette* rated the sermon, 'a masterpiece of eloquence', subject to more intense scrutiny, as that undertaken by the Reverend Ainslie it led to a storm of protest.²⁸ Ainslie, in a sermon preached in a local church and subsequently quoted in both *The Examiner* and *The Herald* challenged the 'extraordinary and unfounded statements of Dr Manning'. He demanded that people should 'search the scriptures for their grounds of belief and judgement;' the press appeared to sympathise with him.²⁹ *The Guardian* reported that he spoke to a 'full congregation'³⁰ and *The Examiner* noted that this audience had listened attentively'.³¹

Prior to this flypapers had already appeared all over Brighton with the notice, 'Opening of the Nave of the Synagogue of Satan Upper North Street'. Ainslie might have used these to further encourage dissent but his response was measured and he urged 'every Protestant to scorn the act of producing them'.³² At a subsequent meeting of the *Protestant Defence Association* on August 26 to protest the opening of the church and attended by 800 people, Paul Foscott, (founder of the Association) owned up to being the author of the pamphlets and brought to the meeting one William Murphy, later to become a renowned anti-Catholic, anti-Irish 'rabble rouser'. Murphy denounced Catholics and Tracterians, and another speaker declared that, 'Popery should not be tolerated' but such rhetoric was apparently 'punctuated by laughter and catcalls' and not for the first time an initiative designed to further inflame anti-Catholic feeling failed in its intent.³³ A self-proclaimed Presbyterian further frustrated matters when he claimed he had worked with Catholics and believed, 'that they had the same rights as any to practise their religion'.³⁴ These were early days for Murphy but the rather lack-lustre response from Brighton was in sharp contrast to the riots which were to follow his lectures in the North, the Midlands and London in 1867-1868. Foscott himself died in 1867, his Association denounced and derided as 'a menace to local peace',³⁵ but the Catholic community was reminded that it needed to be ever watchful as the Reverend Cullin had so often warned.

The Mission of St Mary Magdalen continued to expand although Father Oldham's claim that Catholics expanded in 'fair proportion to the rest' may have been overstated. In his reply to a Diocesan questionnaire for 1863/4 he had noted that:

The Mission includes half Brighton. Its boundaries were fixed by the Bishop in 1860. It is bounded on the East by the New Steine and then follows the course of the London road touching Clayton and then it comes round by Kingston to Hove. Catholics are scattered thinly over the whole of this division of Brighton, but most are to be found near the Railway Station and at the North East boundary of Brighton by the Level. It is a secular Mission. It has a fluctuating population with about 500 Catholics about half the congregation are converts. [About 30 or 40]³⁶

Throughout this period many of the Marriage and Baptism records can be cross-referenced with the Censuses of 1861 and 1871, and these street directories do show that the Catholic community was widely scattered and remained socially mixed. By 1869 Father Oldham had turned his attention to the establishment of a school for the poor in response to the 1870 Elementary Education Act. In a letter to the Bishop he wrote:

I intend at my own expense to transform a stable and a cottage on our land into a temporary school room. This will cost £50 with fittings and the whole of the money which I can collect will go for a new school.³⁷

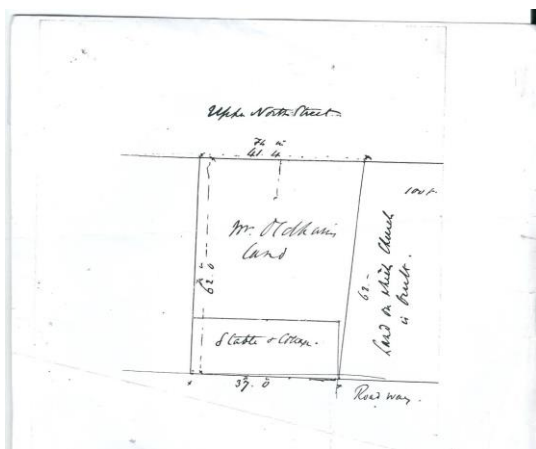


Figure 33: Oldham's own sketch of the plan for his school

4. The call for a third Catholic Mission of St Joseph and the work of the Reverend Scofield and the Reverend Crispin

While clearly preoccupied with the second Mission Oldham, in his circular of 1863/4, had noted that, 'most of the town's scattered population could be found near the Station and at the North East of the town' that is, The Level.³⁸ This might be seen as the initial incentive to provide for a third Catholic Mission, which, as with the other missions, was to be a slow and problematic process, dogged by financial constraints and heavily reliant on the good will of its priests and the enthusiasm of influential parishioners. Between 1864 and 1866 there was frequent correspondence between a Mr Searle, (Reverend) and Sister Mary Angela of the Mercy Sisters, who spoke for a Miss Searle, the sister of Mr Searle, and Bishop Grant, as to the possibility of acquiring suitable premises and land for a third Mission. It emerged that a piece of land at Elm Grove was purchased by Miss Searle and that Mr Searle was prepared to offer his own cottage

adjoining this land for use by the Mission. According to Sister Angela this had the added attraction of being near a Wash House at the top of the hill. 'so the poor old men and women could easily get to mass'.³⁹ Sister Angela, who was in daily contact with the Bishop, made known the fact that Miss Searle favoured the idea of the mission being called St Joseph. 'Miss Searle is charmed by the name St Joseph and would prefer it to any other name and Mr Searle wants the house taken by Dec. 25'.⁴⁰

Sister Angela also showed interest in the appointment of the first rector. She put forward the name of a Mr Riley who she suggested:

is much accustomed to the military, he knew Mr Oldham at Ascot so perhaps would get on better with him than another He is strong and active and zealous and his sisters would do anything to provide the requirements for his mission, yesterday you did say something about the difficulty of finding the proper person.⁴¹

Despite these overtures, Mr Riley did not get the position, for on March 12 1866 Grant wrote to Reverend Schofield offering him the job and informing him of the generosity of a lady who purchased land. He wrote too of his own anxiety to see a small church and school for the many Catholics in the district removed from the two Missions of St Mary Magdalen and St John the Baptist, and his hope that some of the town's more wealthy brethren would cooperate in this undertaking.⁴² In his letter of acceptance Schofield informed the Bishop that he intended to move to Searle's Cottage (Sydney House) which would be renamed St Joseph's. He provided careful details as to how the house could be rearranged to serve as a Mission.⁴³

On Friday April 20 1866 the Mission of St Joseph, Elm Grove, Brighton was blessed by the Reverend Canon Rymer Rector of the District, who afterwards celebrated the first Mass. Seven days Later Bishop Grant too formally recorded the event:

The rapid enlargement of Brighton has attracted a large number of Artisans, Labourers and Working People with their families to the Northern Boundaries of the Town, and the Reverend Richard Schofield has been appointed to take charge of the chapel of St Joseph and the surrounding district. A piece of ground on which a church may be built has been

obtained through the generosity of one of the congregation. We have endeavoured to provide all the requisites for the chapel and the presbytery, hoping that others will be ready to begin the building of the church.⁴⁴

The Reverend Schofield's relatively short term as Rector appeared to be beset with problems as recorded in his frequent letters to Bishop Grant. Within a month of the opening he warned, 'If a Mission is formed here it will be done slowly and by degrees'. He added that he only had '13 Catholics and 9 good Catholics who continue their mission at St Johns'.⁴⁵

A few weeks later he acknowledges that his part was over and he intimated that there were tensions among the priests as to who should have ultimate responsibility for the Mission. A month later a Mr Dolan was working at the church and the Mission appeared to be in the hands of Oldham. Apparently weary and sick Schofield wrote again:

My spirits are failing in the loneliness of my position and the little interest or no interest that anyone has taken in it.⁴⁶

This lack of recognition is compounded by the fact that the *Laitie Directory*, which has a tradition of being particularly sparing in its reports of Catholic activity in Brighton makes no mention of the Reverend Schofield in the 1866/67 and 68 editions and states, quite erroneously, that the Reverend Searle was the first Rector. The most telling of Schofield's letters came in July and August when he declared sadly that:

The mission is going nowhere it is making no real progress and requires a priest of some energy to carry out the building of the church and also by his sources attract families to settle in the district, with very few Catholics in the district and the best preferring St Johns.⁴⁷

Despite these difficulties Schofield did continue with his ministry and he provided insights into the provision for Catholic prisoners and the military in Lewes prison which, due to its close proximity to the town, served Brighton's inhabitants:

On Monday I visited the county jail and see all, not having been visited for three months a longer time was taken up than be required in the future. I saw the prisoners separately; permission was not given to see them together for prayers and instruction. The governor was very courteous and every facility is given. On Tuesday I visited the government prison where sailors and marines are sent for light offences and short terms, they are very

young 19-24 and receiving instruction most of them are preparing for confession next week. The Chaplain gives other prisoners full service daily and I am allowed to have them together for service from nine to ten and a half daily and from Sundays nine to twelve and a half. I have been to the prison two mornings for prayers instruction and a litany they were most attentive took their part in the responses and were very grateful. I go on Monday from Brighton but having two prisons I cannot give them so much time. There are few Catholic families here i.e. only six and very poor.⁴⁸

5. The Mission of St Joseph and the work of the Reverend Crispin

By January 1867 the Reverend Schofield had left Brighton and Neil Crispin was formally installed as Rector. He was to provide in his six year stay the energy that Reverend Schofield felt the Mission needed. Crispin, another convert, and the son of an Admiral committed himself to acquiring a purpose built church and championing the rights of Catholic children in the Workhouse. In his earliest communication to Grant he focussed upon his new responsibilities to the Barracks. With reference to Canon Rymer, he wrote:

The Canon thinks it is advisable that I should become Chaplain at once at the moment the soldiers come to St Joseph. I have arranged with Rev. Rymer to take all sick calls and visit the barracks regularly in his name in the event of an increase in number he offered a soldiers mass.⁴⁹

The issue of numbers was particularly contentious as priests did not receive any income of service from the War Office for numbers of less than fifty and at the time of writing there were according to his records only 8 Catholic soldiers and two officers from the Cavalry listed in the Garrison at the Barracks.⁵⁰ This does not seem consistent with figures that suggested that in 1866, 27% of army personnel were Catholic.⁵¹ The Census of 1861 recorded one hundred and sixty soldiers in the Barracks all from the Dragoon Guards, twenty eight of these were Irish born and ten had accompanying wives and children, It might therefore have been assumed that the total number would have far exceeded fifty and Crispin had also stated that more soldiers were expected, a possible 60-65 from the First Lancers.

For the next two years he continued to agitate for funds to build an iron church, and in a further letter to Grant he wrote:

If you could allow me to spend the money now in hand upon an iron church many difficulties would vanish I should have space and soon a congregation.⁵²

He also claimed he had a special duty to provide for the soldiers and the poor and was being forced to respond to claims about lack of seating. In further correspondence, he asked for contributions from both Oldham at St Mary Magdalen and Rymer at St John the Baptist in the hope that:

They might also wish to aid St Josephs in its infancy, noting that the clergy at St John the Baptist could afford £2 per annum for the Workhouse which they would have to attend if St Johns were not there.⁵³

He also makes reference to 'burying their dead for whom there are no cemetery fees whatever'.⁵⁴

By 1868, the problem of accommodating the military in what was described 'as the little house in the grove' became more acute and the soldiers themselves organised subscriptions to assist in the building of a chapel in Milton Road Elm Grove. In his letter to the Bishop in September there was further reference to this situation:

The building is in progress and the troops are in excellent spirits but we cut a dreadful figure here as in other military stations in church accommodation.⁵⁵

On 13 May 1869 a small iron church designed to accommodate two hundred people was opened. The ceremony received full and generous coverage in the local press, with reference to the band of the Fourth Dragoon Guards, the members of the united choirs of St Mary Magdalen and St John the Baptist singing Hayden's Mass Number 1 with full orchestral accompaniment. An 'impressive sermon' by a Dominican priest, the Reverend Buckler, also helped to avoid the controversy that had surrounded Manning's inaugural sermon at St Mary Magdalens' five years earlier.⁵⁶

While provision for the military was one of Crispin's considerations it was to be his work with children in the Workhouse and Industrial school that was to mark his most significant contribution to Brighton's Catholic history. Shortly after his arrival he wrote to Grant to say that

the town's Guardians had granted him admittance to the Industrial School and that providing there was written permission from the parents he would be allowed to instruct the children. He also seemed confident that he could obtain from the Workhouse authorities 'every concession and privilege we could desire'.⁵⁷

This level of confidence was to be challenged by two notable cases. The first involved two little girls, Mary and Ellen Tucker, whose Aunt (Elizabeth Lodge) wished them to be sent to a Catholic Industrial school at Norwood as she felt that would have been the wish of their parents. The long and acrimonious process is evidence of the conflict that could take place when it came to implementing a law that was seen by many to be contentious and threatening. Despite the support of Crispin and supporting Baptismal records from Rymer the request was refused. The Brighton Guardians noted that such a concession could only be awarded if children had first been received in the Workhouse which did not apply in this case. The girls were subsequently sent to the Brighton Industrial school and a second request was made for their transfer to a Catholic Institution. An account of a meeting that took place in February 1868 to decide whether to forward the case for approval is again illuminating. A Mr Woolett claimed:

The priests had no interest in the children . The only objects the priests had in getting possession of the children was to show the yearly increase in point of numbers of Roman Catholics in the country.⁵⁸

A Dr Russell, (not to be mistaken for the Dr Russell who had pioneered the therapeutic effects of sea bathing), was generally supportive but bemoaned the fact that the priests did not visit the Industrial schools and he apparently suggested to cries of protest that, 'the religious views of the Roman Catholics were somewhat deeper and he dared say had more enthusiasm than theirs'.⁵⁹

A Mr Philips defended the schools overseen by the *Board of Guardians* and like institutions and asked why the people of Brighton should contribute money to support Catholic orphanages. He reminded the Board that 'the Industrial School had been built at great expense and as Catholic

priests could visit such children at any times he opposed the request'.⁶⁰ Perhaps more disturbing, and a reflection of widely held but erroneous views, was the contribution of Mr Ashdown who read a pamphlet from the *Protestant Alliance* entitled, 'Prison Chaplains, Magistrates and Ratepayers'. It attempted to show that in proportion to the population, Roman Catholic paupers and criminals greatly exceeded those belonging to the Protestant faith and their numbers were rapidly increasing. With reference to this he did not see why they (the Board) should hand over poor children to 'crime and pauperism which were the effects of the Catholic teaching system of education'. He, it was reported, 'hoped his hand would be withered before he held it up in support of the motion increasing the Catholic faith'.⁶¹ Perhaps it is surprising in the light of these bitter comments that the motion was carried at all, although only by a majority of one.

On April 13 1868 a formal document of approval was issued by the *Poor Law Board* signed and sealed by the President and Secretary quoting statute 25/26/Vict .c 48:

To Guardians Directors/Churchwardens and Overseers/Managers of Orphanage at Norwood /Mrs Elizabeth Lodge.

that the said children may be removed to a Certified School of the Religion to which religion it has been proved to the satisfaction of the board that the said children belong plus requirement to pay costs for maintenance and clothing amounting to six shillings a week for the duration of their stay.⁶²

The law had been upheld and extremes of prejudice were once more defeated but the process had been unnecessarily slow.

A second well recorded case related again to the proper implementation of legislation which was on the statute books. Act 31 and 32 Vic cap 122 specified that ministers could visit inmates on any day except Sundays between the hours of ten and twelve noon for the purpose of giving religious instruction. It also upheld the principle that no child or adult should be required or permitted to be instructed in any religion other than that of his own Church. A Bridget Dwyer, a distant relative of two illegitimate brothers in the Brighton Workhouse, felt that they should be

removed to a Catholic Orphanage at North Hyde near Southall. This request was denied. In their letter of March 15 the Board referred to the situation of the brothers and challenged the woman's claims suggesting that her requests were not the words of an uneducated woman, but they were the words of the priest.⁶³ The chairman James Flower concluded that the Reverend Mr Crispin had applied to have two children of the same family removed from the schools without the slightest authority on his part to do so and the Guardians very properly refused his application.⁶⁴ One Mr Ireland, another member of the board, saw the attempt as 'an act of priestcraft'.⁶⁵ By September of that year the Guardians had once again been overruled and Neil Crispin had earned himself the title of 'one of the most troublesome priests in England'. It is of interest that Crispin's relationship with the Guardians was not always confrontational and a letter written in 1871 in support of the Workhouse suggests that he was also willing to be fair in his assessments. Contemporary sources suggest that this was a mere diplomatic ploy and that in return he was hoping for further concessions, but there is no evidence available to support this theory:

For three years and a half I have been a regular attendant at the Brighton and county Workhouse. I have had free access at all times to every department contact with all departments and all officials with no other brief than as beyond the spiritual welfare of the Catholic inmates.....it was my duty and honour to support the medical staff who showed good discipline, order, cleanliness and conscientious attention to the comforts of the inmates. I offer this in evidence of personal regard and the justice due to all.

I REMAIN YOURS FAITHFULLY

Neil Crispin 19 Elm Grove March 9 1871⁶⁶

Despite this high profiling of Catholic causes the Mission at St Joseph continued to struggle financially and failed to attract regular Parishioners. Crispin himself was to write that of all the benefactors only Miss Searle remained and his Returns to Southwark in 1869 were equally depressing and tended to support the view of an Ursuline nun who spoke of a 'poor little place that could never have kept going but for the priest's private means'.⁶⁷

The Returns recorded by Crispin in 1869 put the estimated number of Catholics in the Mission at 190 including children and infants. It noted that 54 children between the ages of three and twelve attended Mass and they gave the number of children baptized as 14 in 1867, 13 in 1868 and 21 in 1869. The number of children in Military Schools was recorded as twelve, in Union Schools as eight. Catholic children of all social classes in Protestant schools numbered 19 boys and 12 girls' respectively.⁶⁸ He pencilled in a further note, that there were twenty children from this parish at present educated at St John the Baptist and Crispin signed off with the comment, 'This is a new and Struggling Mission', and in so doing he lent support to the words of Reverend Schofield 'that if a Mission was to be founded it would have to be slowly and by degrees'.⁶⁹

6. The continuing work of the first Catholic Mission of St John the Baptist

As the Missions of St Joseph and St Mary Magdalene attempted to strengthen their positions the Mission of St John the Baptist and the resident rectors clearly remained very influential within the Catholic Community. *The Index Baptismal* records 1198 baptisms over the sixteen year period and a total of 268 converts. Although the burial and marriage registers were incomplete and there are vague references to confirmations and visits by the Bishop, the health of the Church is perhaps better understood with reference to the services that were provided. Three Sunday Masses at 8am, 10am, and 11am with Catechism for the children, Benediction at 3pm, and a further Sermon and Benediction at 7pm. The *Laitie Directories* of the period record daily Mass, Stations of the Cross, Forty Hour Devotions and instruction to the Military. The Church continued to be patronised by more illustrious figures, Napoleon III and the Empress Eugenie were known to worship there. The comment of the Reverend Scofield, 'that many of his congregation continued to worship at St Johns' is significant.⁷⁰ Almost certainly the character of the priests influenced Mass attendance as evidenced by a letter written by an Irish Catholic in the Elm Grove area who was frustrated by what he perceived had been anti Irish remarks made by

his priest at St Josephs. With reference to those 'demanding justice for our unhappy country' (Ireland) he wrote:

There is not an honourable man amongst them they went into the movement with blood stained hands. The priest at Kemp Town Father Rymer is as a good father of his people'. It is in his district in which nearly all the Irishmen in Brighton live and scarcely a dozen of his countrymen could be numbered with the congregation of Father Crispin at St Joseph'. It is evident from his language that he [Father Crispin] knows nothing of our country, of the wants of the people or the grievances under which she at present suffers.

Signed your obedient servant An Irish Catholic in Brighton. (*Irishman*, March 19th 1870)⁷¹

In support of this are the Brighton Workhouse figures of 1871 which show that a mere thirty five inmates out of a total of eight hundred and six were Irish born.⁷² The story is a reminder too that there were often deep-seated divides within the Catholic Community which the Church needed to manage as sensitively as in its dealings with the Protestant majority of the town.

Throughout the 1850s and early 1860s the frequent correspondence between the Rectors of St John the Baptist, the Sisters of Mercy and Bishop Grant reflected a range of concerns and provided insights into their close interdependence with regard to Catholic issues. Sister Mary Angela thanked the Bishop for a deal relating to Groceries, at the same time she mentioned the possibility of two girls becoming Postulants and helping the Training School.⁷³ Rymer was concerned about sick parishioners who had not been confirmed and could not go to the Church.⁷⁴

The debate about the terms of Mr Cooper's will continued as did the arrangements regarding a legacy from Mrs Fitzherbert and the settlement of legacies and endowments.⁷⁵ The Mission's continued involvement with the Barracks was highlighted by the comments of a young curate who, in a letter to the Bishop written in 1860, reminded him that legislation had been passed by which Catholic soldiers should be given the Douai version of the bible. He requested an increase in the number of prayer books and stated that more 'common soldiers are attending

mass'.⁷⁶ He indicated that he made frequent visits to the Barracks and referred to a soldier's orphan school with three children, a boy of ten and two girls of eight and fourteen.⁷⁷

7. The work of the Mercy Sisters

It is the work of the Mercy Sisters in their institutions and their schools which begins to throw light on the reality of what might be termed the 'lived experiences' of the poorest of Brighton's Catholic children and their families. As with the country as a whole, Brighton's Catholic community was disadvantaged when it came to meeting National requirements in respect of levels of attendance, standards of accommodation and the provision of trained teachers. Essentially this involved the withholding of the annual grant if these conditions were not being met. For this reason the tensions between the religious and the priests needed to be carefully managed. In their role as Rectors of the Church, the Reverend Rymer and more frequently the Reverend Styles took on the position of School Managers regularly visiting and inspecting the schools and acting as important links with Her Majesty's Inspectors. The role of the priest and his responsibilities in respect of the religious education of the children were consistently emphasised. 'The duty of priests is to attend to the education of the children - the Catechism should be taught by the priests not handed over to others' was an edict from the 1852 Synod of Westminster.⁷⁸ Ten years later *The Tablet* was even more emphatic on this issue, 'teachers touched the souls of thousands but did not have the supernatural powers and honour founded on the power which is given to the priesthood'.⁷⁹ It would clearly be of little benefit to the schools or the Church if there were perceived divisions and unwillingness on behalf of the priests to assist the efforts of the religious to provide for the educational and social needs of the Catholic Community. It needs to be remembered that the priests were required to continuously remind parents of their sacred duty to send their children to Catholic schools with the added warning that they would be accountable to God at the Last Judgement if their children were lost to the faith through their own fault.⁸⁰

The Sisters, in effect, provided two forms of regular schooling in addition to their Industrial School and Night School, an Infants' School for both Boys and Girls and a Girls' school. It is in the log books of the Infants' and Girls' schools and later those of the other two Missions that one finds the evidence for this complex and challenging story. While there were strict guidelines as to what should be incorporated into the school records it is the daily entries which are informative and often poignant, touching on both the serious and the more mundane within a single entry in a way that is somewhat disconcerting to a modern reader. In content and language, they provide fascinating insights into the reality of these schools which needed to accommodate national demands, local needs, religious responsibilities and inflexible Victorian practices and expected codes of behaviour. Over the period 1862-1869 inclusive, 95 children were admitted to the schools. Their ages ranged from one to fourteen which explains why many entries refer quite accurately to 'the babies'. But poor weather, ill health, and seasonal work commitments, mainly hopping and hay making, even for the 'babies', led to erratic irregular attendance.

The earliest log for the Infants' school (1862) included a detailed Memorandum on Christmas treats with comment about the inadequacy of the recipe for the cake which cost £33 17s 9d. There are precise details of school purchases ranging from bulls eyes to pencils. On a more serious note the dimensions of the school room are listed 30ft long 12ft wide and 13 and one half feet tall. The log also records that there was a Principal teacher (a member of the religious community) and four monitresses. While the logs avoid criticism of the teachers and there was an official stipulation that references should not be personal, this stipulation was not always respected.⁸¹

There are entries which are less sympathetic to the monitresses and the criticism could be unsparing to those who at the ages of twelve and thirteen were little more than children

themselves. An entry for December 9 1862 notes 'the Monitresses are rather negligent today and consequently the children went home rather badly in their sacks'.⁸² On the same day the log records the school being in receipt of a government grant of £74 12 2d.⁸³ Punishment was severe for five year old Edward Townsend, 'sent home for telling immeasurable lies to hide his faults in staying away from school by putting pepper on his tongue'.⁸⁴ Children also received treats from the priests and visitors, good behaviour was rewarded, 'the best twelve children being given suits of clothes', but with the treats came the warnings, 'those who did not attend first communion would not get school privileges'.⁸⁵

The visits of the Inspectors and details of their responsibilities were described as when an Inspector 'examined the children saying their tables and drafted sixteen boys to the boys' school and sixteen to the girls' school'. This must have included some of the babies who, (just a year before) 'had seemed terrified and would not make the sign of the Cross'.⁸⁶ The state of the buildings and the effects on the children are equally well documented. 'A partition has been made to keep out the draughts but still the school is intensely cold and the poor infants half frozen'.⁸⁷ It was not only the children who seemed to suffer in this way and successive priests attempted to inform the Bishop of the state in which they were required to live. The Reverend Sullivan wrote, 'my room is like a rabbit burrow the sitting room full of smoke' and he added that he had discovered a cesspool just under his window which had not been emptied for eight years and possibly accounted for the health problems of the other priests.⁸⁸

The first entry for the Girls log was May 1863 and followed a similar pattern of formal and anecdotal recording as evidenced by a sample of the entries from the period 1863 to 1870. The School was divided into five classes graded according to a child's proficiency in Reading and Arithmetic with a sister in charge of each class and two sisters assigned to teach needlework and singing. The Principal teacher superintended all the classes, marked the quarterly examinations,

advanced the children to the upper classes and lower classes according to their proficiency and dispensed awards and punishments. The log detailed the dimensions of the school, the names, the responsibilities of the teachers and the number of hours taught for each standard is described and contributions from boys (3s 0d) and girls (5s 6d). In both these areas there are few clear guidelines as to how these objectives for each standard could be interpreted.⁸⁹ The financial details seemed particularly inconsistent seeming to encompass examples of uncompromising attitudes to non-payment of fees with generous recognition of parental hardship.⁹⁰

Entries for the early years included information about equipment, the names of donors (often influential parishioners) and their gifts in addition to a daily record of activities. A July entry noted 'three children being sent home to be washed and made tidy' while a Mrs Malony complained that her daughter Maggie 'wont learn her lessons at home' and ordered the sisters to 'beat her black and blue' and threatened to tell the clergy when they informed her that 'flogging was against the policy of the school'. According to the same entry she then boxed the child's ears herself which caused great consternation.⁹¹ There were once again frequent examples of this interplay between rewards and punishment. On October 16, several children who played on the beach were reprimanded.⁹² In December, the Reverend Styles examined the classes in school and distributed prizes for those 'who are most distinguished for good conduct and attention to lessons'⁹³ and in February, 'children were cautioned to be more particular in the preparation of house tasks'.⁹⁴ A month later the Quarterly examination were held by the Reverend Canon Rymer, and a new arrangement; made to secure silence 'viz the passing of a board to those who speak unnecessarily', was recorded on the same day that the children were treated to the Phenomenon of Nature at the Old Ship Hotel.⁹⁵ A few days later there was a return to issues of classroom behaviour and an attempt to prevent copying (seen as prevalent) by distributing white cards with different rules, and 'the two Conollys had to undergo public ablutions'.⁹⁶ There are two interesting references to possible variations in the curriculum and the suggestion of a

possible sliding scale of payment – 'eight children entered an upper class paying 5s 0d a quarter where they learned Geography/Sacred History/Marching and Shirt Making'. One particularly colourful entry noted, 'the school received an unwelcome visit from a Protestant Parson who complained of the 'overeducating of the lower classes who were treading on the heads of the middle classes'. The Reverend Mother was apparently so incensed that she gave orders for the school door to be locked. An additional entry on the same day noted that 'Isabella Kelly was dismissed for lying and impertinence but reinstated after a public apology'.⁹⁷

The dismissal of a child is of interest. The children educated by the Sisters of Mercy were invariably poor and disadvantaged so it might have been expected that a higher level of tolerance would have been exercised. Perhaps it was because such entries of dismissal were rare that one in 1865 stands out, 'Maggie Shaw has been very naughty since she returned to school it is probable that she will have to be expelled as she is doing harm to others'.⁹⁸

This May entry also records one of only a few references to the Industrial School whose pupils gave a performance of Puss n' Boots. The situation of the Industrial School, appears rather vague and is poorly documented. It had initially been financed by a donation from a Lady Granville and was supported by 'over-zealous ladies', as described by the Reverend Rymer. The enthusiasm of these ladies apparently waned and control was subsequently given to the nuns who, according to Rymer, could not really afford to manage it but continued to do so.

In June 1865 a particularly unfortunate entry noted that 'almost all the poor Irish children are away either selling flowers or working in the fields'.⁹⁹ Such an entry was misleading for this work pattern was consistent for all poor children regardless of nationality and the assumption in this case was that 'Irish' meant 'Catholic'.¹⁰⁰ This was underlined by a localised study in 1870 which noted that 59% of Brighton children did not attend school compared to the national

average of 76.1%.¹⁰¹ This issue of children absenting themselves from school to help in the fields was highlighted by poor attendance as reflected in a subsequent October entry, 'after examining the children who had been absent in the hop fields for three months it was discovered that they had forgotten almost everything and as a result the dunces of the fourth class were sent to the Infants school'. Yet on the same day entries moved once again from the serious to the more mundane with an account of the sad experience of eight year old Maria Antonio, 'who came to school with an enormous crinoline and was sent home but her mother refused to remove it'.¹⁰²

Meanwhile the ongoing challenge of meeting educational standards was further compounded by the results of an official inspection on October 10 1870 for 120 children including the infants. As the school was now subject to the conditions set out in the 1870 Act, the results of exams and the satisfactory recording of registers were a primary consideration. It is here that the decade ended badly for the school. The Government Inspector W. Morell on his first visit to the Girls' School May 16 1863 had reported that 'This school is in a flourishing condition. Grammar reading and all essentials are very satisfactory. In the Upper Classes Needlework is good and the deportment of the children pleasing and proper'.¹⁰³ He had also stated that the clergy visited regularly and on all occasions the Registers were in order.

This was not reflected in the findings of the Inspector in the 1869/70 Report which was particularly damning for a school already suffering under strict financial constraints and serving an area of great impoverishment. According to the Inspector, the Registers had not been accurately kept and that by testing them on the evidence of the children he found some mistakes.

On this account one tenth had been deducted from the grant to the Girls' School:

As the Girls school had not been properly conducted since May last year my Lords must decline to award any grant for the last six months'. It will not be possible my lords to recognise the service of the two Pupil Teachers performed under the conditions of the

Revised Code unless a certificated teacher is appointed at once'. The two Pupil Teachers should be transferred to a school where this requirement could be met.¹⁰⁴

The Reverend Styles in his role as School Manager had referred to this apparent anomaly in his own 1870 summary by acknowledging the fact that while the two certificated teachers, Pauline Duttonhoffer and Catherine Brandon had done well, their appointment did not meet the ninth supplementary rule of the 1870 Act which required supervision of a certified teacher and therefore no grant could be awarded. He added that new standards and the increase in attendance demands meant that few of the 250 children over 7 presented could pass. The reference to the Pupil Teachers is particularly distressing for it refers less to the care provided by the teachers and their personal commitment but to the lack of approved qualifications of the teachers and the fact that the respective monitors had not found a Training place for Pupil Teachers.¹⁰⁵

This rather woeful report should not diminish in any way the progress made by the Missions and the religious in addressing the needs of the Catholic community. This Order had once been disparagingly referred to by Sidney Herbert in a letter to Florence Nightingale in relation to their efforts in the Crimean War. In this letter he had claimed, 'The real mistake we made in the selection of these ladies [between ourselves] is that they are Irish. You cannot make their lax minds understand the weight of an obligation'.¹⁰⁶ These were the Sisters who in addition to the schools and other educational institutions they had set up were recognised even by the clergy with whom their relationship was sometimes strained as being 'a great blessing to this perilous town'.¹⁰⁷ The injustice of this comment may have resonated more with Florence Nightingale for within a year of Herbert's letter she had submitted her own response to the Sisters. 'I should be glad that the Bishop of Southwark should know, and Dr Manning that you were valued here as you deserve and the gratitude of the army is yours', April 1856.¹⁰⁸

8. Educational Initiatives for the Boys

For the boys' school there is a paucity of information. A brief mention in the girls' log July 20 1864 'admitted some little boys to prevent them being on the streets' but it may be assumed that the hardships endured by the girls and the moral codes which conditioned their lives would have affected the boys equally if not more so.¹⁰⁹ There are brief references to the boys in occasionally detailed but incomplete reports of the Diocesan Religious Inspectors. The first for 1850 describes a semi-permanent building fairly provided with furniture and books of Irish board, also maps and apparatus. The report noted there was a good library and the school was under the control of a certificated teacher, Michael Colbert. The school had sixty names on its books and thirty five attended the religious exam. There is a further reference to the boys in the correspondence between a temporary priest with Bishop Grant in 1860. The priest noted that, 'the Boy's school was getting on well with numbers up to 50' but added that 'some boys had been transported'.¹¹⁰ His letter also states that the *Society of St Vincent and St Paul* (which had started an evening school and agreed to look after the boys who had left school) regretted that they hardly ever came to chapel.

While the situation for these boys seemed unstable due mainly to their home circumstances there appeared to be interesting educational initiatives for boys who were not necessarily poor and concerns that education should not necessarily be in the hands of the religious. A letter in the *Rambler* 1860 by the Reverend Sullivan¹¹¹ alludes to this; he writes:

That the secular clergy should take matter in hand or it will be done by the religious who in the course of time will swamp and drive out the clergy or by other seculars who would perhaps be even more dangerous because they would divide the resources and each would linger on without adequate support Now both these things might be obviated by taking matters in hand ourselves and with this view I have seriously began to think of a directory and trying to increase the boarding school opposite the chapel as a preparatory school for our own colleges.¹¹²

There is little evidence to substantiate this letter, only the possibility that he must have been influenced by the apparent success of *The Brighton Catholic Preparatory Boarding School* at Charlotte Street, Marine Parade, Brighton sponsored by the Canon Moore, St Mary Magdalen, the Rev. du Plerney, Elm Grove and the Rev Sammons, of Stanford Road. The details for this school are very sparse. On one piece of headed paper discovered in an archival box there is the name of the school, the benefactors and an address but even this cannot be matched in the Street directories. On the reverse of the page there is a detailed and daunting syllabus for boys as young as six which included Christian Doctrine/English/French/Latin/Spanish/Greek/Geometry/Reading/Writing/ and Geography under the guidance of a Miss Barrington with the aid of Masters and English and Foreign Governesses. They claimed to give individual attention to the health and happiness of delicate and backward pupils and of those whose parents are abroad and pay special attention to the moral and social training of the pupils.¹¹³

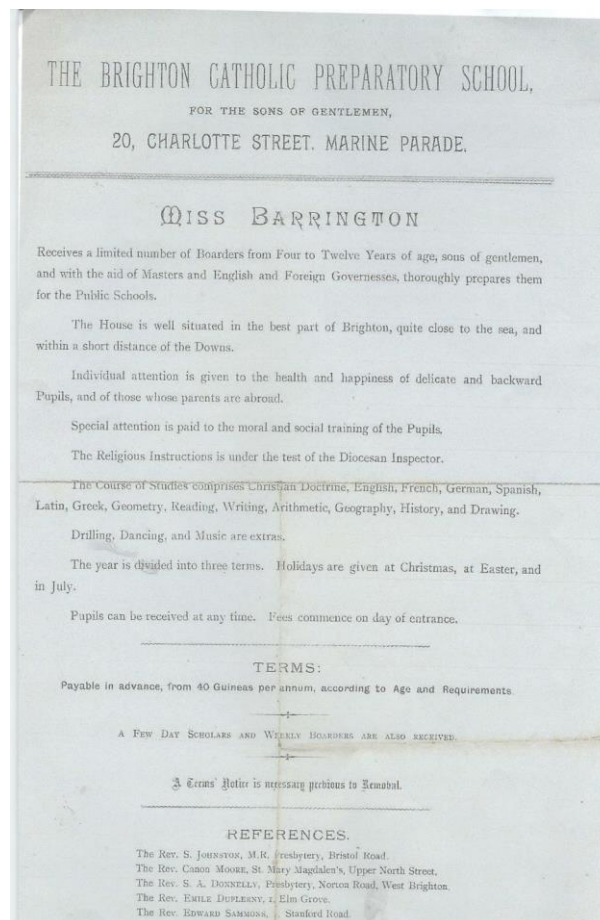


Figure 34: *The Brighton Catholic Preparatory School*

The school boys were, according to Sullivan in his letter, 'well taught excellently attended and with regard to religious instruction and moral supervision are much better off than at any of our colleges where the numbers make it impossible' and he refers to the fact that Bishop Grant himself was purported to speak well of the school.¹¹⁴ It also highlights an observation of the Brighton Town Clerk who in 1870 spoke of Brighton as a town of 'extremes of wealth and high class education and extremes of poverty and want of education'.¹¹⁵

Conclusion

This evidence addresses in part both the first and second research questions. While there are very real attempts to address the social and educational needs of the town's Catholic children there remained a gap between what was legally underwritten and what could actually be implemented. The establishment of the *Catholic Poor School Committee* had signalled a possible way forward in giving the Catholic body a formal organisation with whom the government could negotiate but neither the Newcastle Commission nor the implementation of the Revised Code had actually acknowledged the needs of Catholic Children and the provision of grants available for other denominations since 1833 was still denied them. It would appear that class and social grouping continued to be of great significance, as in the country as a whole. This was the issue raised in the Chapter 1 when Mother Magdalen referred to the class divides of the volunteers who went to the Crimea and further evidenced by the inflammatory comments of Sidney Herbert quickly refuted by Florence Nightingale herself. The chapter also acknowledges the fact that the caution of the Reverend Cullin and Bishop Grant, so needed in the early part of the century, could be replaced by more confident and strident voices. These were able to give voice and champion measures to promote Catholic causes as demonstrated by the commitment and success of the two convert priests Crispin and Oldham and the respect accorded to the convert Cardinals Newman and Manning.

There remains one constant in this history and that is the need for Brighton to be ever conscious of its dependence upon its cosmopolitan population. There also begins to emerge recognition of 'common cause'. This being the case would it lead to the support and acceptance of educational and social provision from wherever it came as long as it benefited the common good?

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- ¹¹ McRorie, op. cit. p.55, also reported in *Brighton Gazette*, June 29 1865.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ *Tablet*, November 21 1868.
- ¹⁴ *Tablet* November 14 1868.

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27. *Ibid*.
28. *Brighton Gazette*, August 1864.
29. *Brighton Examiner*, August 23 1864.

- ^{30.} *Brighton Guardian*, August 24 1864.
- ^{31.} *Brighton Examiner*, August 23 1864.
- ^{32.} 'Report of the Protestant Defence Association Meeting August 31 1864' as reported in both the *Brighton Guardian* and *Brighton Gazette*.
- ^{33.} Ibid.
- ^{34.} Ibid.
- ^{35.} McRorie op. cit. MA Thesis Brighton, unidentified quote.
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- ^{38.} Ibid.
- ^{39.} 'Sister Angela to Reverend Searle Correspondence' found in *Brighton and Hove Archives St Joseph Boxes December 1865*.
- ^{40.} Ibid., December 21.
- ^{41.} Ibid., December 22.
- ^{42.} 'Bishop Grant to Scofield', March 12 1866.
- ^{43.} 'Scofield to Grant', March 24 1866.
- ^{44.} 'Grant Circular', August 27 1866.
- ^{45.} 'Scofield to Grant', May 20 1866.

46. 'Scofield to Grant', June 16 1866.
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55. 'Crispin to Grant' ref. rebuilding of Chapel September 1868.
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⁶⁰ Ibid., Mr Phillips comment.

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⁶³ Act 31/32, Vic. cap. 122 rights of children to be educated in Workhouses of their religious persuasion with reference to the letter of Bridget Dwyer, May 15.

⁶⁴ Ibid., James Flower's comments.

⁶⁵ Gardner, J. (2012). *History of the Brighton Work House*. Gosport Hants: Ashford Colm UC Press, p.124. Gardner details the problems with the *Brighton Guardians* and the Local Government Board who after lengthy negotiations agreed that Catholic Children should be provided with Catholic Schooling at least up to the age of 14 when they would either return to the Industrial School or find work. Gardner quotes the words of one committee member with reference to Crispin but does not identify the exact source.

⁶⁶ TNA, MH 12/12775, op. cit. Crispin's 'Letter to the Guardians'.

⁶⁷ 'Letter from Ursuline Nun' found in boxes *St John the Baptist* circa 1869.

⁶⁸ *Brighton and Arundel Archives* boxes for St Joseph unidentified date reference only to source.

⁶⁹ Ibid. Sources for 1865 Returns.

⁷⁰ Ibid. 'Scofield's letters to Grant'.

⁷¹ *The Irishman*, March 19 1870.

⁷² *Brighton Workhouse* figures.

⁷³ *Brighton and Arundel Archives* St Joseph Boxes, undated, 'Sr. Angela to Grant'

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- ¹⁰⁵. December 1870, Report by Reverend Styles in his capacity of School Manager Styles.
- ¹⁰⁶. Bolster, Evelyn (1961). *The Sisters of Mercy in the Crimean War*. London: Mercier Press, p.125.

^{107.} 'Bishop Grant to Sisters of Mercy', December 1856, with reference to the girls who attended night school and the dangers they might face going home alone.

^{108.} Ibid., July 20 1864.

^{109.} Diocesan Records, 1850.

^{110.} Ibid

^{111.} Sullivan comments 1860 to Bishop Grant October 1860. His note about 'boys being transported' is a possible reference to the sending of young people, often only children, who may have broken the law, to colonies overseas.

^{112.} *The Rambler*, 1860.

^{113.} *School Prospectus*. dates and further details not given nor can the school be identified in the Street Directory.

^{114.} *The Rambler*.1860.

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CHAPTER 7- THE PEAKING OF DISSENT IN THE TOWN (1870-1886)



Figure 35: Rough waves

Introduction

This chapter continues to consider educational issues as they affected the country as a whole. It shows how the very measures set up to meet the dire need for educational provision for the poor set standards which further disadvantaged Catholic schools. This is revealed in the log books of the town's Catholic schools with reference to Inspector's Reports and manager's comments. The chapter also examines how and why anti-Catholicism in Brighton finally peaked in the late 1870s before it moved towards a long-term phase of quiet acceptance. It focuses on the polarisation of political issues, and how these came to influence the educational debate. It attempts to explain the intemperate utterances of the Prime Minister, William Gladstone, against the papacy and the Catholic body in general and how this led to a period of bigoted reporting by the traditionally Liberal Brighton Press.¹ It continues to examine the steady growth of the three Missions, the work of the Religious and the more active involvement of the Laity. It focuses too on the influential and diverse roles of the convert cardinals Newman and Manning and their subtle but not insignificant contribution to Brighton's Catholic history.

1. The Politics of Britain and the effects of the Educational debate on Brighton

In the post 1870 period when the less advantageous clauses in the Education Act were beginning to be realised, as detailed in Chapter 3, there appeared to be the possibility of rapprochement with the Voluntary schools. Bishop Vaughn's Voluntary Schools Association was intended to be wholly inter denominational, in his belief that:

When there is a common cause for the attainment of which all can unite without yielding anything in matters of doctrine there may be a wise and healthy cooperation with other denominations.²

Almost certainly the introduction of the School Boards, their intention to forbid the teaching of Religious catechism or religious formulary distinctive of any particular denomination, and the financial advantages gained from being fully rate-aided, contributed to the threat to the Catholic schools and added to the anxiety of the Bishops.³ Although the report related below primarily refers to the situation in London, this Catholic paper, *The Echo* had commented upon the likely outcome:

Those who are acquainted with the league of the mass of rate payers in the Metropolis will readily believe that a Roman Catholic will have but a small chance of being elected to a school Board.⁴

Brighton, with only two small Catholic schools, had initially appeared to be an exception to this and a George Dudley Ryder was elected to its first School Board on December 13, 1870. It has been suggested that he had been able to secure representation because of the system of cumulative voting and because religion had not become a major issue at this election, but this was the only time a Catholic candidate was successful.

By 1873 the issue of 'No Popery' and 'Romish Practices' began to be voiced and heralded a growing fervour of Non-Conformity. It should also be remembered that the Education Act had essentially been the work of Liberal, Non-Conformist men, determined to address the problem of poor or non-attendance among the children of the country's poor, a situation referred to in Chapter 6 in relation to the Liberal MP for Brighton, William Fawcett. Writing a hundred years

later, Asa Briggs accurately noted, 'It was it seems difficult for those who engaged in promoting education to understand the attitudes of those for whom they were promoting it'.⁵

For the purpose of voting members for the Board, it simply became Voluntary schools versus Board schools, a situation recognised by Mr Ryder himself. Giving evidence to the *Select Committee on Board Schools* in 1885, the Rev. J. Hannah said he spoke to Mr Ryder, (on the eve of the 1873 election) who was by then sure he would fail to regain his seat:

In quieter times there were [he was sure] plenty of people who thought a Roman Catholic ought to be elected to the School Board, and would spare him a vote , but at the time of an exciting contest nobody had a vote to spare for him and, if left to the Romanists alone, he was sure to go out.⁶

It was the statistics from the Board School, supported by those of the Mission Schools, which were of great concern for they showed that standards of attainment by Catholics in the first two standards tended to be above average, but fell well below average in the higher standards.⁷

Standards	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Average	69.3	69.48	62.5	57.98	60.32	61.41
Roman Catholic	76.07	71.84	60.23	53.88	56.2	51.79
Board	73.02	73.07	67.17	63.08	65.75	68.29

Table 1: Standards achieved by children in Catholic and non-Catholic Schools. CPSC Report 1876, p16.

The reasons for this are not difficult to ascertain and have been outlined in previous chapters. The poorer the family, the greater the need for children to go to work earlier and many very young children were working full time as well as attending school. In addition, Catholic Schools had been forced to make drastic cuts in stipends paid to their teachers which were considerably lower than those paid to teachers in Board schools and in those attached to other denominations. This iniquitous situation was to lead to an alignment with a Conservative government which

Catholics believed would institute a Royal Commission to inquire into the *Working of the Elementary School Act* and increase public subsidies to Voluntary Schools. Such a political realignment was interesting as it was the Liberal Party which had traditionally appeared more tolerant to the Catholic position.

2. Religious Issues and the anti-Catholic backlash in Brighton

It could justifiably be said that the Vatican Council of 1870 did not help those who wished to focus more on educational and social issues and less on religious divides. Certainly the edicts that emerged as relating to the Infallibility of the Pope played well into the hands of those who saw a Church preoccupied with papal power and disproportionate Marian devotion. For Catholics in Brighton, so often protected from the most extreme physical attacks and verbal rantings of the anti-Catholic lobby, protest and discrimination came from an unexpected quarter. They found themselves in conflict with the Liberals and Brighton's avowedly Liberal Press, namely *The Guardian* and *The Herald*, both more often seen as the bastion of even-handed reporting and tolerance.

The initial cause of the break had been political rather than religious. Despite careful posturing by both the sitting Liberal MPs and the Conservative candidates to cement their opposition to any form of Popery, Brighton returned two Conservatives to Parliament in the election of 1874. *The Guardian* reported, 'The Catholic vote has also gone against the government' and referred to it as 'The Political Transformation'.⁸ A breakdown of the votes suggests that this was too simple an explanation and the Irish Catholics, of whom there were still relatively few in Brighton, had returned Liberals and it was the English Catholics who had voted for the Tories. This was a late response to the pleas of *The Tablet* at the 1868 election. Whatever the reason, Gladstone was angered by the result and produced two anti-Catholic Pamphlets. The first was 'The Vatican Decrees in their bearings on Civil Allegiance: a Political Expostulation'. In his condemnation of

the liberality of the Church he demanded that 'Roman Catholics in the nineteenth century should do what their forefathers of England did in the Sixteenth century'.⁹

In this way he tried to exploit known or suspected divisions in the church between the Old Catholics, traditionally less loyal to the Papacy and reportedly distrusted by the Pope, and the converts or Ultramontanists with whom Wiseman, then Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster was most closely identified. *The Herald* mischievously noted, 'it makes good Mr Gladstone's accusation when put to the test the Roman Catholic Church is found to be no more united than Protestantism itself'.¹⁰ This was a veiled reference to the divisions in the Established Church between the Ritualists, the Romanising wing of the Church, fast gaining popularity in Brighton, and the more accepted reformed Protestantism as supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury. *The Herald* further played on these divisions noting, that 'crowds frequent these Romanward churches who would never think of worshipping in a genuine Romish Chapel', but by way of contradiction it identified two clergymen who had converted to Catholicism, condemning them as avowed enemies of the Protestant Church and reminding the unwary that 'Ritualism leads to Rome'.¹¹

Three years later similar sentiments were still being expressed by The Bishop of Chichester, in no less damning terms. Speaking of Brighton he, (the Bishop) claimed:

From one Church alone five clergymen have lately passed over to Rome, and they have to the most of their power leavened all they could influence with Romish doctrine. Craft subtlety and secrecy are the characteristics of Romish propaganda and in this instance they have been unsparingly employed. No man can say how far the poison has extended.¹²

These fears were not unfounded as The Church of St John the Baptist recorded 486 converts between 1850 and 1879. The Second Mission of St Mary Magdalen listed 52 in the period, 1868-1879, and from 1878 to 1880, 87 people, which included the clergyman identified above, who

moved from St Bartholomew's, the famed centre of worship for the Ritualists, to the struggling third Mission of St Joseph.¹³ These two institutions were further unmercifully linked in the coverage of Bonfire Night celebrations of that year. The Lord Bishop reminded those gathered there of 'the traitorous and blood intended massacre of gunpowder', and he continued:

In our town the Ritualists seek to stifle free speech in setting forth truth, by crying down those who lecture fairly to expose their errors. It must be a source of regret to see how upholders of popery are putting forth their power around us, covertly in that towering Babel St Bartholomew's on the one hand and the Church of St Josephs on the other - the difference betwixt which is not great, with a further extension of a Dungeon church near St Pauls and the Nunnery on the Dyke Road we can only see a different stage of the same system Anti Protestant and idolatrous. We mark our protests against it by consigning the effigy of his holiness Pope Leo X111 to the flames'.¹⁴

In the same edition of *The Herald* which reported the words of the Bishop there was extensive coverage of the warnings of a Doctor Geikie (a Brighton resident) who was intent on reinforcing the messages of the Reformation:

What Reformers have done for us: - freed the land of monks and monkery, which even Romanist countries have since put down as an intolerable evil [*reference to the expulsion of religious orders*]. They have abolished the most fruitful source of immorality, the celibacy of the clergy, and have made laymen and clerics subject to the civil courts. They have exploded the doctrine of purgatory the richest mine of priestly wealth and popular superstition [*reference to indulgences*. They have removed from between the soul and God the crown of priests and saintly mediators, and taught men to go to Christ rather than to the Virgin Mary or to the glorified dead].¹⁵

The Vatican Council's formal acknowledgement of Papal infallibility, albeit limited to when the Pontiff speaks *ex cathedra*, brought about a further response from Gladstone. In his second pamphlet, *An Answer to the Replies and Reproofs*, he claimed:

The State and the people of the United Kingdom had a right to rely on the assurances that papal infallibility was not, and could not become, an article of faith and that the obedience due to the pope was limited.¹⁶

The Catholic response was immediate and interesting. Newman, a frequent visitor to Brighton, in a letter addressed to the Duke of Norfolk wrote, 'it bears upon the domain of thought it scarcely concerns the politician'.¹⁷ Archbishop Manning, to be made Cardinal later that year, added a supporting view:

The Vatican decrees here in no jot or tittle changed either the obligations or the conditions of Civil Allegiance. We are not content to be tolerated as suspect or dangerous persons.¹⁸

Finally Bishop Ullathorne accused Gladstone of 'inflaming prejudice and enkindling strife' and warned that Mr Gladstone would never succeed in making Catholics loyal to the Queen by making them disloyal to the Pope.¹⁹

The Catholics it seemed had found a voice, their champions being two converts, one time ministers of the Established church, both to become Princes of the Church of Rome. Their intervention also fulfilled a prophecy of the controversial Cardinal Wiseman, 'my work will be carried on by the converts for whom 'old Catholics like him must be ready to give way'.²⁰

It may be that Gladstone's decrees and the spirited responses marked the peak of anti-Catholicism in Brighton although the Liberal Press maintained vestiges of hostility for several more years. When Newman returned from Rome where he had received his Cardinal's hat he stayed at the Royal Albion Hotel and heard mass at St John the Baptist, but the comments in *The Guardian* were far from congratulatory:

What is the meaning of all this glorification of the Prelate who first embraced Calvinism in the Protestant Church and then perverted to Rome after dragging through years of obscurity in the church he had embraced?²¹

The editorial continued with equal malevolence: 'Mankind has cast off the swaddling rags of infallibility.'²²

On the other hand it was the Conservative *Gazette*, traditionally the most anti-Catholic paper that demonstrated that particular brand of pragmatism special to Brighton:

The honesty and purpose of John Newman, throughout manifested by him when passing through changes in religious views, has preserved for him the great respect of Englishmen.

The editorial went even further:

The Manifesto which the Pope Leo made on Newman's elevation is unequalled in grace courtesy and candour, by any speech which even proceeded from the Papal Chair; we enrich our columns by that unrivalled speech.²³

Into this contradictory political climate Brighton's Catholics were about to enter into a new era in which they both needed to and could, concentrate on their churches, their schools and their charities, aware that in addressing their responsibilities to their own community they would inevitably be contributing to the general betterment of the town. This was entirely compatible with the guidance from Rome where the new Pope Leo XIII (Friend of the Working Class) wished to focus on the needs of the poor and disadvantaged and less on the tenets of the Papacy as identified in the *Encyclical Rerum Novarum* - 'to promote the social and moral welfare of the whole nation and should take an active part in public movements having this end'.²⁴ It was also a focus entirely at one with Cardinal Manning's understanding of the role and responsibilities of the church. The Provost, who had so offended Brighton's Protestants in 1861 as Cardinal had, in the words of Elliot Binn, 'allayed the suspicions of the English by his patriotism and by the prominent part he took in moral and philanthropic enterprises'.²⁵ A Missionary preacher, one Aitkin Hay, had an equally profound message focussing more on common Christianity, 'whether you are a churchman or Methodist or Baptist or Roman Catholic if you have got that repentance and the faith of baptism we may differ on the parts very seriously but if you have got that we are brethren in Christ'.²⁶

3. The Mission of St John the Baptist

However noble the sentiments of Aitken Hay and others there was continuing evidence of subtle discrimination against the town's Catholics. An example of this was the omission of St John the Baptist in the comprehensive list of Church services published in *The Gazette*. This may seem surprising for a Church that served the needs of the most illustrious of residents and visitors, including members of the English nobility and displaced foreign royalty (The Empress Eugenie, Prince Imperial other members of the extensive Bonaparte dynasty). It also claimed a link with

one of the Church's most famous converts, Cardinal Newman, whose mother and sister had been residents of the town. The ministry of the Rectors of this, the most senior of the three Missions, extended far beyond the needs of the wealthy. The church records continued to record in precise and accurate detail the baptisms, less frequently the marriages and deaths, and the names of the ever-increasing number of converts. The *Laitie Directories* of the years also noted that the Church offered daily mass and three masses on Sundays, in addition to mention of Sermons, Catechism, Confessions, Vespers and Instruction for children and soldiers.²⁷ There was the inclusion of the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, indicating a further leaning towards the devotional practices of the Roman Church which the Reverend Cullin had so carefully avoided. Although the public face of the church suggests an active and united effort to promote the Catholic cause and the well-being of the population, the inner tensions continued. These can be found in the frequent letters exchanged with the Bishop, as evidenced in both early and later chapters, when the priests, the religious and members of the congregation penned their concerns about one another.

The Reverend Rymer writes in confidence to Bishop Dannell with reference to the Reverend Styles whom he regards as, 'A zealous able priest the difficulty being he does not like to submit to another'. In the same letter he, Rymer, appears to be even less receptive to another young priest whom he describes as 'equally zealous but difficult to manage'.²⁸

A rather awkward letter written by a parishioner is more critical of the elderly rector himself:

The Catholic House is never visited except when one is in danger of death C/F yearly visit of the parson. It requires zealous priests like the young one to improve numbers of Catholics in a few months. Were your Lordship to visit Brighton, or 'London by the sea' requires its bishop to come, and must have a proper share of his time –Wishing your Lordship every good wish - apologising for writing ... I remain your humble servant.²⁹

There were also letters to the Bishop regarding buildings and costs particularly regarding the hitherto mentioned refurbishment of the church and a casual glance at just some of the sums being paid for this restoration in times of genuine hardship may justify some of these complaints - £75 for an altar, £133 for benches, £160 for two side altars, £50 for new porches and £20 for fixing a pulpit rail, licence for entrance to ground £20 and the cost of extra work £175. Rymer sends a cheque of £27. 9s. to the bishop towards these expenses but notes that in 1875 there was still a balance of £800 to be paid.³⁰

4. The Reports of the Diocesan Inspectors

Aside from these localised concerns, the Bishop (Grant) had a wider responsibility and was particularly exercised by the question of religious teaching and the need for the continuation of rigorous Diocesan Inspections. In this he needed the support and commitment of the religious and the priests and their cooperation in the management of the Catholic Schools. One of the most distinguished of these Inspectors, J. Wenham, had written to Grant in 1872, noting that 'Teacher's Certificates and Pupil Teacher's prospects were entirely dependent upon secular subject success':

I fear that timetables would be set by secularists if not by an enemy to religion. The inspector is not the guardian of education but is to examine whether we comply with the conditions of the grant.³¹

The detailed religious syllabus attests to the demands it placed on both the children and the teachers. It specified that the children should be taught the Catechism, the Life of Jesus including all Parables and Miracles, an understanding of the Old Testament from the Deluge to the flight of the Israelites and the Ten Commandments. In addition to this they were required to say their prayers, notably the Our Father and the Hail Mary in both Latin and English, as identified in two specific log book entries on May 3 and May 4 1869; 'Father Styles plus one other heard the children say their prayers and the Hail Mary in Latin'.³²

Given that rolls were not marked for religious functions and days of religious examinations attendances it is of interest that the quality of the religious instruction was frequently commented upon in HMI reports and there was consistently a high correlation between the numbers of children on the books and their attendance on the days of the religious examination. In the period 1871 to 1884 less than half of the children on the books attended regularly, but of those who did there was virtually a 90% attendance at the religious examinations. The 1872 entries for the schools attached to St John the Baptist are an illustration of this: ³³

Type of school examined	Total number on roll	Average attendance	Number examined
Girls	57	40	50
Boys	97	51	50
Infants	67	60	54

Table 2: The percentage of children who attended the religious examinations in 1872 in relation to the numbers on the roll

It is by no means certain that a more equitable treatment of the Catholics would have changed things, for their uncompromising approach to the religious nature of their schools was seen as the sole justification for their existence. Bishop Dannell who succeeded Grant, was committed to strengthening the allocation of time and the quality of religious instruction. He asked for 45 minutes per day on religious instruction, the details of which should be hung in the school room as a basis of the inspector's examination. Further to this he insisted that, 'graded catechetical instruction was to be explained not parroted' (although it is doubtful, with such a premium placed on recitation throughout the education system as a whole, if this was really achievable).³⁴ An entry for February 15 1870 notes that 'Father Rymer brings a paper to be signed by all the children who *could* sign their names', this suggest that for many children, 'recitation' was the only way that the vast amount of religious knowledge required could be learned.

It was, though, the generally measured and not uncritical comments of the Diocesan Reports which in many ways added to their credibility. In 1870, in relation to the Infants School, the

Inspector had noted that the 'room was too small'.³⁵ Two years later 'religious instruction was deemed unsatisfactory although the first class could repeat well'.³⁶ By 1874 there was an added note, the 'children seemed interested'.³⁷ In 1875 the report stated that, 'under the Sisters of Mercy there was a good standard of religious education but not highly advanced although the school was good in discipline and general character',³⁸ and by 1876 it concluded 'that under the Sisters of Mercy the school continues very well in instruction and discipline but the premises are insufficient'.³⁹ The June 1881 report was less encouraging. The Reverend Johnston summarising the Diocesan report, found that 'Religious Instruction was very weak order and discipline not all that could be wished. The Sister in charge has more than she can possibly do well without efficient assistance'⁴⁰ a veiled reference to the acute problem of finding suitable candidates to be teachers, but by March 1884 there was praise once again, 'The children repeat prayers very devoutly and show signs of being carefully taught but it would be well to teach Standard 1 how to prepare for confession'.⁴¹

As mentioned in earlier chapters it is these Diocesan reports and only these which give some insight into provision for the boys. In 1872 Religious Instruction was recorded as 'good' 'but the school needs life and spirit'.⁴² Although two years later it was worthy of commendation - a rare accolade awarded only once to the girls school and infrequently across the diocese as a whole. In 1875 there was further praise and recognition, that in the school under Patrick Quinlan every boy was presented for examination and all passed - the upper classes were very good,⁴³ but in 1876, due to changes, instruction was not satisfactory although the general character of the school was good.⁴⁴ All this challenged, at least in part, the explanation put forward by Robert Rycroft and countersigned by J. Miller acting clerk, which refers to the situation at St John the Baptist boys' school in the early 1870s and the apparent lack of records (although the data that provided the basis for this entry is not available. He states that the dates of learning had not been

entered and the index of admissions registers had not been posted. The 1873 admissions registers contained no columns for recording medical inspections and in many cases the ages were wrongly recorded. In 1874 apparently the headmaster attempted to clarify the situation but in years past different boys were admitted under different periods and under different admission numbers and the numbers were hopelessly mixed up.⁴⁵

5. The continuing work of the Mercy Sisters in their schools

The overall organisation of the Girls' and Infants' schools continued to be recorded in the daily logging of events which, as before, presented a colourful myriad of activities as evidenced in the selected entries for the Infant School identified below. In the 1871 Report, the school had been described as a 'desideratum', failing to meet government regulations in regard to size of room, numbers on the roll and the presence of certificated teachers and thus contravening Article 17c of the Code which prescribed the average area of the room. It noted that the numbers of infants should not exceed 41 although, for all the social reasons mentioned in earlier chapters, that number was rarely reached. Nevertheless the 1871 log book recorded that 49 infants under 6 were presented for examination, each having completed more than 200 attendances,⁴⁶ in a year when, five new babies were admitted of whom three could not speak, and a further entry noted that 'in want of better clothing the little babies are nearly naked'.⁴⁷ There was evidence too of continued intervention by the managers in an attempt to improve the situation; as a February entry for 1872 noted, 'The Reverend Styles furnished the school during the past month with an objects case, several picture books writing table and forms also a new fire grate which greatly adds to the comfort of the children today'.⁴⁸ Meanwhile the 'babies', according to the log, 'were learning to march',⁴⁹ a feat it seemed which quickly became too challenging, as an entry for October 1875 stated: 'the Infants were unable to march but have exercises and tables instead'.⁵⁰ An entry two years earlier refers to the fact that the Reverend Rymer had examined the Infants in tables and counting.⁵¹ There are frequent references to the issue of clothing, usually linked

with occasions that marked the giving of a 'treat', often a trip or a party and generally provided by generous patrons. 'The usual treat was given to them and 30 of them received presents of frocks and underclothing'.⁵²

The Reverend Styles concluded his report of 1876 by acknowledging that 'The children are managed with great kindness'.⁵³ A significant entry for December 11 1876 suggested that the clergy and the religious had responded to Government directives as the Infant school had been transferred to a new site. The improvement in conditions was highlighted by the Government Report of 1877: 'An excellent new room has been provided for the infants'.⁵⁴ They were the same infant girls who, according to the June entry for that year, 'had begun to make pinafores and garments and will begin knitting next month'.⁵⁵

Also incorporated into these log entries were details of sickness, a constant reminder of the severe hardships experienced by the children, hardships which were not confined to the Catholic children but applied to the population of the town in general. In 1880 there was an epidemic of scarlet fever, which affected both teachers and the children. One child, Ellen Grosvenor, died and the infants were said to be in a 'perilous condition'.⁵⁶ On December 18 of that year only one child appeared in school and throughout 1883 and 1884 there are further references to the deaths of children. These figures would have been reflected in the population of the town as a whole and appear not to have been referred to in the reports of the HMI inspectors. The Reverend Johnston, who had taken over from the Reverend Styles as resident priest and school manager summarised the 1884 HMI report of that year and only stated that under Miss Farley (Sr. Stanislas) who had taken over and her assistant Bridget Doherty (Sr. Margaret Mary) 'the school was doing well'.⁵⁷ A year later there was a recommendation that the staff should be strengthened

to meet the requirements of Articles 83 and 115 but the children were 'well-ordered and seem to be fairly well prepared for the upper classes'.⁵⁸

The log book entries for the Girls' School continued to be equally detailed. Most noticeable were the meticulously kept attendance records, of particular importance as this had been the reason for withholding the grant in earlier years. These showed an increase in numbers and reference to standards reached, although few children achieved the higher standards. The profiles of two children taken from 1876 records suggest possible reasons for this.⁵⁹ Mary Brickley, the daughter of a Labourer, whose situation was less usual, entered the school in 1862 at the age of five and stayed for nine years. She was first examined at six and then yearly until she was 12 finally reaching Standard 6. Compare this with Matilda Sharp who entered school at three and stayed for only one year, which reflected a more common experience of children who entered school as babies and left after two or three years. Added to this were recorded, as there had been for the Infants, frequent instances of ill health of the teachers and family members, premature death, adverse weather conditions which made it impossible for children to get to school, and the irrefutable need for them to take on some form of paid work. It is perhaps these external factors which make for apparent inconsistency in the reports. There may have been a general trend upwards but equally a positive report about one aspect of the school or detail of the curriculum in one year was often reversed in the next. An example of this is the *Government Inspector's Report of 1876* which agreed the awarding of a grant of £57. 11. 9. It noted that, 'Arithmetic was weak other subjects were well taught and needlework was very good'. The Lower Classes were excellent and the Upper Classes very good but a little uneven - a very good school'.⁶⁰ Nine years later the Government Inspector reported that 'the school is progressing very nicely under Miss McLoughlins (Sr. Mary Joseph) and Hannah Culhane (Sr. Mary Gertrude) ' but it tended to be less encouraging in its assessment of specific areas 'The younger children are very well taught -

Arithmetic in the fourth standard is not fair - Recitation is well said - Grammar is not above fair in the fourth fifth and sixth standard - needlework good - medical drill very good - songs are fairly good - with the exception of standard three all the classes have done very well.⁶¹ By 1886 it was noted that Drawing had been added to lessons, a grant for music by note has been recommended; and that an assistant teacher or a Pupil Teacher needed to be transferred from another school under Article 5c. This was the year when two children reached standard six for the first time. The report concluded, 'the school is now in capital working order and promises to be one of the best in the diocese'.⁶²

The work of the Mercy Sisters was not confined to the schools and the Sisters continued in their efforts to meet the diverse social needs of the Community. As early as 1876 they had built a laundry and in the same year a parishioner (Chevalier de Rosaz) had provided an endowment for thirty orphans although it was to take nearly four years of legal wrangling for the money to be released. In 1879 Bishop Dannell agreed to the 'unofficial laying' of a foundation stone for this orphanage for fear that a more public display, 'might injure the neighbourhood of Bedford Lodge who might be opposed to the purchase of a Catholic orphanage set next to the Industrial School which had been opened since 1860'.⁶³ In 1883, as intended, 30 orphans were finally admitted. These children were later allowed to attend the day school and were also trained to serve the lady boarders who stayed at Bristol Lodge. The situation of young girls, in what had been described as a 'perilous town', continued to cause concern despite the work of the Elizabeth Society and in 1877 the Ladies of the Congregation formed themselves into a Committee for the protection of such girls. Their initiative was supported by the Reverend Rymer and a house in College Street in the vicinity of the Church was hired. After 6 months the project was handed over to the Sisters, who purchased the house but incurred a large debt in the process as the ladies had initially agreed to pay the interest on the sum of £1700. The generosity of members of the

Catholic Community could not be questioned but there were often unseen and counter-productive complications involved in donations, legacies and promises of assistance.

6. The Mission of St Mary Magdalen and the School

At St Mary Magdalen, the Reverend Oldham continued to support his fledgling school and minister to a congregation boosted, as indicated in earlier chapters, by the church's close proximity to new hotels and guest houses being established to the west of Old Steine. In 1873 his health appeared to cause concern and an anonymous letter sent to the Bishop suggested that the Reverend Styles might be sent to assist him. Given that Styles had been writing regularly to the Bishop about a number of his own ailments the request was not accepted and the Reverend Crispin was transferred from St Joseph to St Mary Magdalen. Two years later at the comparatively young age of 55 Oldham died. He dedicated money to the Brighton Eye Hospital and the Brighton Blind with a further generous legacy of £600 towards the founding of a fourth mission (to be the Sacred Heart in Hove). This was given in his own words as, 'an act of gratitude for my reception into the Catholic Church'. He had spoken some years before of, 'how inestimable is the spiritual blessing of conversion to the faith and how foolish it is to spend so much money on self and the world, when there are such objects on which to spend it'.⁶⁴

Two years after his death a two-storey building at the cost of £1242 was constructed specifically to house a school and a Miss Green was appointed as headmistress. There is, as mentioned in an earlier chapter, little written evidence relating to the daily running of the school other than reference in an anniversary pamphlet which quotes from Miss Green's log, officially recorded as 'missing in transit' which states that she (Miss Green):

Spent her entire teaching life in the school. She ran the school on two floors, with the aid of a constant succession of monitors for nearly twenty years [1877-1897]; while she was on one floor the monitress would be on another supervising written work and trying to keep order'.⁶⁵

Miss Green's log is concerned mainly with her anxieties for the children in her care, with the lack of books and equipment and with trying to satisfy the demands of the Inspectors who, if at their annual visit found the school 'well taught', would sanction the payment of £15 to the Rev. Manager to assist him with the cost of paying the teacher, running the school and buying books. The children were expected to contribute two pence each week to help with the cost.⁶⁶

Unlike the schools run by the Mercy Sisters, boys and girls were taught together, as evidenced with reference to the admission records. According to the Diocesan Inspectors the Sisters had direct contact with the school in its early years. The 1874 report which followed the examining of 52 children refers to it as being 'lately opened under the Sisters of Mercy - a fair room and altogether satisfactory for so short a time'.⁶⁷ A year later the report noted that the school was 'small but good', but there are no references to the Mercy Sisters after Miss Green took charge.⁶⁸ Church returns for this period would suggest that this still remained a small Mission with a heavy dependence upon itinerant visitors. In the ten year period from 1874 to 1884 there was a decline in the number of Baptisms, eleven in 1884 compared to 36 in 1879. Likewise the number of Catholics was recorded as 800 in 1874 and 1876 but only 430 in 1884. The 1881 entry alone identifies the number of visitors (500) which is a more likely explanation for this anomaly. The one positive figure refers to 48 children in the school in 1886 with none lost to the Board schools compared to 19 lost to the Board School in 1879.⁶⁹

7. The Mission and School of St Joseph

The Mission of St Joseph was strengthened with the long awaited construction and opening of a church which the realisation of a hope recorded by Grant ten years earlier, 'that a rich benefactor will take up the cause of the troops and give them a large and imposing building of which they could be truly proud'.⁷⁰ This expansion in numbers was not due entirely to the troops nor to the supposed exodus of 'perverts' from St Bartholomew. It was generally acknowledged that the

school room which had been serving as a Roman Catholic Church for about 12 years had become too small for what was estimated in 1878 to be a Catholic Population of 300. Again it was the Brighton Press which provided an interesting mix of cynicism, praise and caution in their factual reporting of the construction of the church and its initial opening on May 17 1879.

The Herald outlined details of the rich benefactor:

Haddock a widow to whom her husband had bequeathed the whole of his property [the site of Wellington Villas and a large sum of money] with, 'an expressed verbal wish that at her death it should be returned to Almighty God'. Mrs Haddock 'in loving remembrance of her husband's desire gave up her residence for the erection of a Church; and has since rendered material aid to the work'.⁷¹

The Gazette was more guarded in its reporting, noting:

That there are already three Roman Catholic places of worship in Brighton one in Elm Grove, a short distance from the structure now in course of erection, and which, probably, will supersede it. But of this we know nothing certain, a good deal of reticence being shown as to the so called Cathedral neighbourhood refers to the Catholic cathedral, but this article questions this; its dimensions will scarcely justify that appellation, although it will be of considerable size and some architectural pretensions'.⁷²

The Herald too underlined the fact that:

Most Brightonians are also familiar with the present unsightly appearance of that building, that it was only a third complete and bore little resemblance to the drawings of the architect Mr. W. C. Broder brother of the then rector Nicholas Broder who had recently taken over from the Reverend Crispin [but adding a note of reassurance] there is no doubt that when completed in every detail it will be a handsome and stately church.⁷³



Figure 36: A contemporary photo of St Joseph

Whatever may have been the reservations of the Press and the non-Catholic community the Service of Consecration was given extensive and respectful coverage, attended by the splendid

ceremonies of the Roman Church - an altar loaded with flowers, the wall in contiguity to the altar draped with crimson and gold cloth, full orchestral band to accompany the fine choir and the celebration by Bishop Dannel of a Pontifical High Mass. Such displays of Romanesque grandeur as witnessed at the consecrations of the Missions of St John the Baptist and St Mary Magdalen as well as at the lavish funeral of Mrs Fitzherbert may justify Walpole's comments, 'Our partiality to the pageantry of Popery I do approve and I doubt whether the world would not be the loser in its visionary enjoyment by the extinction of that religion'.⁷⁴

Within a year of the consecration of the church there was a further development in respect of the school of which until then there had been few recorded details other than a mention that', it owed its early existence to the sterling work of Father Crispin' and brief references in the Diocesan Reports of 1874 and 1876.⁷⁵ The first referred to 'a new school orderly and good in knowledge'⁷⁶ and the second to one that was 'very fair but cannot be good without better time regulations.'⁷⁷

On January 1880 Elizabeth Ennis, who had graduated from Wandsworth Road Training College on January 12 of that year was placed in charge of the school 'for the purpose of placing it under governance'.⁷⁸ The log book records details not dissimilar in form to those recorded by the Mercy Sisters in that serious issues appear interspersed among more mundane matters.

The first entry notes that the school was to prepare children for standards 1, 2, and 3 and that there should be weekly visits by the priest and school manager.⁷⁹ A later entry in 1883 confirmed this: 'Fathers Millar Fletcher and Ryan visit regularly'.⁸⁰ The entries address the problem of the weather⁸¹ and the frequent incidences of contagious diseases, whooping cough, measles, mumps and scarlet fever,⁸² and their effect on school attendance which in the first year peaked at 50.3%.⁸³

Both Government and Diocesan Inspections are recorded, the most significant being the first Government inspection which took place on April 5, the conclusions of which stated that:

The children were examined by me and found to be very uneven in their knowledge. The school is in an inchoate state. The Arithmetic is weak and the writing of the lower standards backwards. Registers, not having been kept before, need to be more accurately kept. Provision for heating and ventilation need to be improved but the report added, 'a competent mistress [Elizabeth Ennis] was appointed at Christmas under whose management it is likely to improve.'⁸⁴

There is comment too about the teachers both their success and possible failure, with notes as to who has been recommended as an Assistant teacher and who has not; although the reasons for rejection are not always given it is likely that they relate to specifications laid down in the Revised Code as evidenced with the Inspector's recommendation for an Assistant teacher (Article 50) or for a teacher to be transferred from another school (Article 115). Other isolated entries provide insight into the place of the school within the activities of the wider community. They mention tickets for bread and coffee which had been sent by the School Board for distribution to the poorer children.⁸⁵ Prizes were also awarded by the *Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals* to children who successfully entered an essay competition at a ceremony held at the Pavilion.⁸⁶ There are, in these early entries, few specific references to the curriculum other than a note that 'Geography was being added and that full drill tables will be given throughout all classes',⁸⁷ but the 1884 Report by R. I. Hoe HMI was particularly detailed and encouraging:

The school is conducted by Miss Harrison with much care and diligence and in most cases with creditable results. Grammar is weak in most classes but the repetition is well said no second subject taken by the boys but a grant awarded for needlework. Singing by ear good, mental arithmetic fairly good. She has managed to produce elementary subjects better than last year. Standard 3 very good - Standard one unsatisfactory.

There had been similar improvements for the Infants where it was stated that:

Miss Costello works with tact and understanding; appliances for their instruction were fairly limited and should be more liberally provided. A Gallery for them had been erected. The school was generally in good order.⁸⁸

The Mission, too, appeared to benefit from the formalising of arrangements for the school. Although there was not a notable rise in Catholics, the numbers of baptisms increased significantly-52 in 1883 compared to 29 in 1873. The returns for 1886 recorded 132 children in the school with only 4 being lost to other schools and there was, for the first time, reference to the number of regular child communicants (24).⁸⁹

8. The Order of the Sacred Heart

With the three Missions carefully consolidating their position two more religious congregations of women arrived in Brighton. The first, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart was an order which had been founded in France in 1800 when a new philosophy was then being promoted, namely that while contemplative prayer was the *raison d'être* of the religious life, the religious themselves had a role to play outside the confines of the cloister.

The order first opened houses in England and Ireland in 1842 but it was the arrival in Roehampton of Mabel Digby which was to be of particular significance. She was concerned not only with the education of children but with the need to provide Catholic teachers who were able to give Catholic instruction, a view compatible with the plea of T.W Allies, 'Catholic Teachers for Catholic schools'.⁹⁰ Under her guidance a Training School was set up in 1874, approved by the government and eligible for a grant. A further aim of Mother Digby was to establish a boarding school and Brighton, it seems, was chosen because of its 'healthy position', a dubious but recurrent reason for sending children to schools in the town that had been popular from the early years of the century.

An area of land, from Dyke Road to the Old Shoreham Road, was purchased in 1876 although the building was not completed until 1878. In the interim period a small house was rented near Preston Park and received six children. There is confusing evidence as to when the Sisters

moved into the large house. Sister Elise Brooke suggests it was in the Autumn of 1879 but Mere Vercruysee in *Lettres Annuelles* (1878) writes of 'notre foundation, nee il y a deux ans a peine' and indicates that there were seven sisters and fourteen children.⁹¹ There does seem agreement that the house was still incomplete; there were many inconveniences at first, water shortages and makeshift living conditions, but these were not perhaps as dire as those experienced by the Mercy sisters forty years earlier. There is the first reference to a separate Elementary School for twenty eight children. According to the memoirs of Sister Elise Brooke the school was opened on the 13 January with 25 children enrolled. By the end of the year there were 28 and Sister Elise Brooke records:

During this year we had the joy of a reception into the Church of two non-Catholic Children of our school.⁹²

There are no references to 1881 but in 1882 twelve children were enrolled. Again there are no entries for 1883 or 1884 other than that two more children from the elementary school were received into the Church and in 1885 36 children were enrolled but these are the only details available for these early years. Information about the fee paying school is by contrast particularly detailed.⁹³ The profiles of the girls as outlined in the records of the school show that it catered predominately for children from other countries, and give dates of birth, first communion and confirmation. A further section on 'observation' suggested that that a very demanding code of behaviour and approved life style from both the children and their parents was expected (more apparent in later entries) and failure to conform inevitably resulted in the child being withdrawn. From 1877 to 1886, inclusive of the 153 children admitted, only nine came from Brighton, the others from other parts of England, mainly London as well as Ireland, Malta, The West Indies, Brazil, France, Germany and Portugal. All but three paid between 40 and 50 guineas per annum. The profile of Julia Geneste is an example of this detailed recording. The daughter of Frank and Julia Geneste she was born on 26 May 1864 and entered the school on the 13 June 1879. She received her First Communion on the 21 October 1882 (surprisingly late if the record is correct)

and was confirmed a month later on the 6th of November. She left school on the 21 October 1884. According to the section on Observations she later married a Monsieur Baupfield. She died at the age of ninety and was described as 'a most loving and faithful old child'.⁹⁴

9. The Little Sisters of the Poor

Within two years of the arrival of the Sacred Heart Nuns, a second Religious Order arrived in Brighton with an entirely different Mission, which was to set up a home to care for the aged. Four Sisters from the Congregation of the Little Sisters of the Poor whose order, like that of the Sacred Heart, had been founded in France initially took over two houses in Wellington Road. Unlike the Sacred Heart Sisters and rather echoing the experiences of the Mercy sisters they were very dependent upon the kindness of the local community in their attempt to administer to an ever increasing number of old people seeking admission. The records from the Order indicate that in 1882 they moved to a larger site in the old Shoreham Road and, according to the same records, 'in order to maintain it the sisters counted on Divine Providence, St Joseph's help and the generosity of local tradesmen and people from whom they solicited alms day by day'.⁹⁵ Despite evidence of severe deprivation among the Catholic elderly and the claims of the order that these numbers were increasing, the early records of admissions suggested that the residents in most cases had some form of pension, or relatives paid a regular contribution; many had been employed, some in what might be regarded as a professional capacity. In the period 1880-1886 a total of 52 residents were admitted, slightly more women than men, 36:26; most were listed as married, the youngest was 60 and just under half were from Ireland. Many of them were servants but the entries included an optician, a lodging house keeper, two wives of soldiers and a couturiere. The source of their funding was varied as evidenced with reference to the following: in 1881 one Thomas Munroe, listed as a servant from Ireland, gave £350 to the house. The daughter of Eileen Hatcher, also from Ireland paid £3.00 every three months towards her mother's keep. One Mrs Bowers, formerly a lodging house keeper from England, paid £1.50 a

month. The records for a number of residents also state that, as with the Murphy's elle/il est dans un club qu'elle/il paie elle meme while 'Les Religieuses d'Arundel envoient £10 tous les trios moins' for a servant.

Of even greater interest are the inventories of their belongings which seemed in terms of clothing to be very generous, this in complete contrast to the inventories of a century later when a number of residents were listed as having 'nothing'. Elizabeth Fagdon, a servant from Ireland, was married to a man who worked for the Gas Board and according to the first entry brought with her, '1 lit de plume, 1 lit de paille, 1 traversin de plume, 1 oreiller de plume, 3 couvertures laine, 6 tais d'oreilles, 3 draps une chemise, 2 camisoles, 2 cachons, 2 corsets, 1 robe, 4 jaquettes, 5 chales, 3 fichuslaine, 2 paires de bas, 4 bonnets, 1 chapeau, 2 mouchoirs de poche, 1 Pendle, et 1 lanapot', compared with William Durrant, a labourer from England who in addition to the clothes he wore when admitted only had '1 chemise, 1 gilet de flanelle, 1 paire de bas, et 1 cravatte'.⁹⁶

Conclusion

This colourful entry from the Sisters of the Poor records provides further compelling evidence of Catholic activity in respect of education and social issues. Certainly the experiences of Brighton's Catholics were determined by class and social grouping although there is some evidence to suggest that the Little Sisters of the Poor did accept impoverished residents and a few children, educated by the Sacred Heart, Sisters did not pay fees. It seems unlikely that these children, comparatively few in number, would have been drawn from the poorest areas of the town. The frequent reference to the suitability of both the child and the parents suggests that this was an influencing factor when it came to admitting and keeping a child in the school. This would not only have been the experience of Catholics in other parts of England but the experience of the population as a whole living in a strictly class dominated society. This in part

answers the second of the research question as to the nature of this educational and social provision.

The education provided in the Catholic schools had to conform to current government regulations in terms of the quality of teachers, the range of subjects studied and the provision of adequate accommodation. Failure to meet these specifications resulted in the withdrawal of much needed funding, and the school log books, annals of the religious personal and public correspondence refer frequently to such a situation. As already indicated, the introduction of the Board Schools had a negative effect on the Voluntary Schools, particularly the Catholic Schools. There was no evidence of compromise in the emphasis placed on Catholic teaching and the warnings from the pulpit reverberated throughout the Catholic community.

The chapter does indicate that 19th century Brighton might have something to offer the 21st century. There is the suggestion that people can tire of endless negativity as expounded by Gladstone towards the Church and yet interference in deep-seated beliefs and practices is equally resented. Concern for the poor led to commendable voluntary endeavour with the provision of generous donations and legacies but this could not be interpreted as evidence of classlessness or tolerance, and deep seated prejudices continued to prevent the full realisation of a Common Christianity or a Common Humanity.

Notes and Sources:

- ¹ William Ewart Gladstone served four terms as Prime Minister. The first term 1868-1874 corresponded to the furore surrounding the *Vatican Council of 1870*.
- ² Bishop Vaughn of Salford founded the Voluntary School Association in 1884 – these comments are reported in the *Annual Report of the Catholic Poor School Committee 1885*.
- ³ Beales, A. C. F. (1950). 'The Struggle for the Schools' in Beck G.A. (1959). *The English Catholics 1850-1950*, London: Burns and Oates, p.375.
- ⁴ *Echo*, March 1870.
- ⁵ Briggs, Asa. 'The Study of the History of Education', in *History of Education* Vol. 1.
- ⁶ *Guardian*, February 11 1874.
- ⁷ Figures taken from the *Report of the Catholic Poor School Committee 1876*, p.16.
- ⁸ *Guardian*, 1874.
- ⁹ Gladstone, W. E. (1874). *The Vatican Decrees and their bearing on Civil Allegiance: A Political Expostulation*, London: John Murray, p.64.
- ¹⁰ *The Herald*, June 4 1879.
- ¹¹ op. cit.
- ¹² Bishop of Chichester as quoted in the *Herald* May 1879.
- ¹³ Statistics drawn from Church Returns and Scrutiny papers in respective boxes of the two missions held in the Brighton and Arundel Archives.
- ¹⁴ Lord Bishop quoted in both the *Herald* and the *Gazette*, November 1879.

15. *Herald* 1879, letter from Reverend Gilkie.
16. Gladstone, W. E. (1875). *An Answer to the Replies and Reproofs*. London: John Murray p.109.
17. Newman, J. A. (1876) 'Letter addressed to his Grace the Duke of Norfolk on the Occasion of Mr Gladstone's Recent Expostulations,' London: B.M. Pickering, p.5.
18. Manning, H. (1875). *The Vatican Decrees and their Bearing on Civil Allegiance*. London Longman Green and Co., p.8.
19. Ullathorne, B. (1875). *Mr Gladstone's Expostulations Unravell'd*. London: Burns and Oates, p.78.
20. Cardinal Wiseman, source unknown.
21. *Guardian*, May 29 1879.
22. *Guardian*, May 29 1879.
23. *Brighton Gazette*, May 29 1879.
24. *CTS Conference*, June 29/30/July1 1891, as quoted in the Introductory, p.1.
25. Elliot-Binns, L.F. (1946). *Religion in the Mid Victorian Era* (2nd Ed.). London: Butterworths Press.
26. Aitkin-Hay, W.H. (1869). *Sermons Preached at St Margaret's Church Brighton and the Dome by the Missionary Preacher Brighton Mission Charles E Verrall*, Vol. 12, passim p.258.
27. Archives of Brighton and Arundel Bishop's House Correspondence in Boxes of Designated Churches.
28. Parishoner Correspondence, August 26 1876.

- ²⁹. Parishoner/clergy correspondence, October 22 1873.
- ³⁰. December 1875, (day obscured).
- ³¹. Archives of Southwark Correspondence in Boxes of identified Bishops. Diocesan Inspector Wenham J. to Bishop Grant 1872. (date obscured).
- ³². 'St John the Baptist 1872' Entries for *Diocesan Religious Examination*.
- ³³. Ibid.
- ³⁴. 'Southwark Archives' Bishop Danell correspondence with Wenham.
- ³⁵. Diocesan Reports, ref: Infant School 1870 et. seq.
- ³⁶. Ibid., 1872.
- ³⁷. Ibid., 1874.
- ³⁸. Ibid., 1875.
- ³⁹. Ibid., 1876.
- ⁴⁰. Ibid., June 1881.
- ⁴¹. Ibid., March 1884.
- ⁴². Diocesan Reports Boys School 1872.
- ⁴³. Ibid., 1875.
- ⁴⁴. *East Sussex Record Office*. 'Miscellaneous Correspondence relating to St John the Baptist' ESC/256. Letter by Rycroft, R. countersigned by J. Miller, 1994, with ref: to lack of documentation for Boy's School.

^{45.} Infant School Log, 1871, HMI Report ref: et. seq.

^{46.} Ibid., May 7.

^{47.} Ibid., May 9.

^{48.} Ibid., February 1872.

^{49.} Ibid., March 9.

^{50.} Ibid., October 1875.

^{51.} Ibid., October 1873.

^{52.} Ibid., 1875 January.

^{53.} Ibid., 1876.

^{54.} Ibid., 1877.

^{55.} Ibid., June 1877.

^{56.} Ibid., 1880.

^{57.} Ibid., 1884.

^{58.} Ibid., 1885.

^{59.} Log Book entries - attendance records 1862-1871.

^{60.} Ibid., 1876.

^{61.} Ibid., 1885.

^{62.} Ibid., 1886.

^{63.} As referenced in the *Annals of the Sisters of Mercy 1852-1886*.

^{64.} *History of St Mary Magdalen*, p.10, also ref in *Parish Boxes of Brighton and Hove*, p.10.

^{65.} Flower, F.B. (1971). 'The One Hundred Years of Our School' *Souvenir Programme of the Century of St Mary Magdalen Roman Catholic Primary School*. BP Box 300.

^{66.} Ibid.

^{67.} *Diocesan Inspector's Reports*, 1874.

^{68.} Ibid., 1875.

^{69.} St Mary Magdalen Church Returns 1874-1886.

^{70.} Bishop Grant, Ref: Chapter 6.

^{71.} *The Herald*, May 17 1879.

^{72.} *The Gazette*, May 1879.

^{73.} *The Herald*, May 1879.

^{74.} Mathew, D. (1936) *Catholicism in England 1535-1935*. Catholic Book Club, p.139.

^{75.} *The History of St Joseph*.

^{76.} *Diocesan Report*, 1874.

^{77.} *Diocesan Report*, 1876.

^{78.} ESC, St Joseph Log Book Entries 1880-1884.

- ⁷⁹. Ibid., April 1882.
- ⁸⁰. Ibid., April 1883.
- ⁸¹. Ibid., December 1882.
- ⁸². Ibid., December 1882.
- ⁸³. Ibid.
- ⁸⁴. Ibid., April 5 1882.
- ⁸⁵. Ibid., December 1883.
- ⁸⁶. Ibid., December 1883.
- ⁸⁷. Ibid., April 1883.
- ⁸⁸. *Inspector's Report*, 1884.
- ⁸⁹. Church returns 1883.
- ⁹⁰. Allies, Mary (1907). *T.W. Allies* London: Burns and Oates ltd.p.83.
- ⁹¹. Selected Articles from *Archives of the Order of the Sacred Heart*, 'Sister Lillie's Memoirs of Brighton' (undated).
- ⁹². Mere Vercruysee, *Lettres Annuelles* (1878).
- ⁹³. 'Memoirs gathered by Sister Elise Brooke'. (Undated).
- ⁹⁴. *School Record Book*, 1877-1886.

^{95.} 'Centenary of the Arrival of the Little Sisters of the Poor in Brighton' (anonymous) ii 'Hove Centenary' also anonymous in *Records of the Little Sisters of the Poor*.

^{96.} Lists of the Residents of the Home from 1880 to present day.

CHAPTER 8: A CATHOLIC COMMUNITY AT PEACE WITH ITS NEIGHBOURS (1886-1902)



Figure 37: The ebbing tide

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the continuing expansion of educational and social provision for Catholics in Brighton, but places considerable emphasis on the ever-increasing influence of the wider Catholic community in its attempt to gain fairer and more equitable provision for Catholic schools. It details the continuing struggle of the Voluntary Schools to receive adequate government support in the face of competition from the more generously funded Board Schools and the piecemeal attempts by the government to satisfy the concerns of the Catholic community. The main focus of the chapter is the expanding work of the Catholic Missions, the influence of the clergy and the extensive work of religious communities who moved into the town. There is, as in previous chapters, emphasis on the social and educational problems specific to the town's Catholic Schools but once again the social deprivations that affected all children regardless of religion have not been ignored.

1. National Educational debate as it affected the Catholics

The Cross Report of 1888 which had been expected to achieve so much for Catholic schools by

addressing the inequalities between the Board Schools and the Voluntary Schools detailed in Chapters 3 and 7, left most of the problems unresolved and effectively ignored the Catholic cry for 'rate aid without hesitation or qualification'.¹ So it was that the hardships felt by the Voluntary Schools were intensified in the 1890's. In 1891 Cardinal Manning who had been a firm supporter of the 1870 Act voiced his concerns:

I do not see how it is possible for voluntary schools depending only upon the liberality of private resources to continue to exist and multiply themselves adequately to the extension of rate supported schools.²

In the same year one Canon McGrath focused on the issue of the financial hardships imposed on Voluntary Schools which he concluded, 'obliges us to be content with inferior school buildings, apparatus and staff.'³ Such views continued to be echoed across the Catholic community. In 1896 the 15th Duke of Arundel enlarged on the problem:

That the state hinders the advancement of National Education and is chargeable with injustice and with ingratitude to trustees and managers who save the country of the entire cost of administration and school premises when it refuses to pay even the market price for voluntary schools while it pays lavishly for administration for buildings and maintenance in board schools.⁴

The cry for a 'Common Christianity', as pleaded for by Aitkin Hay,⁵ could still be heard as when James Hall, speaking at a Public Meeting in 1896, reminded the audience of:

The one central principle that helped to make England great and we hope her people happy in the future is the principle that above and before all it is the duty of the state to see that the children growing up in our midst shall be brought up before all things in the love and fear of God.⁶

In reality among fiercely protective denominationalists it was a principle that proved very difficult to implement. There were throughout the period piecemeal concessions to the Catholics, perhaps in response to the charge that:

Her Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, in the conscientious discharge of their parental duties, are unable to avail themselves, for the elementary education of their children, of schools where religious belief is not taught at all or is taught at variance from the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church; and they are thus deprived of all benefit of the elementary Rate aided schools commonly called Board Schools although they contribute

in like manner with their fellow subjects to the rates levied for the support of these schools.⁷

These concessions involved a proposed share in the *Consolidated Fund*, some relief from the burden of the rates and limited aid to 'necessitous schools', but continued to demand compliance in respect of the regulations and conditions which the impoverished Catholic schools found so burdensome. Cardinal Vaughn referred to this legislation as 'something on account'.⁸ It was not until 1902 that the *Balfour Act*, as already stated, finally addressed the issue by giving the Catholics what the *Tablet* of fourteen years earlier had demanded, 'equality of educational opportunity for all parents whether they value definite religious instruction or not'.⁹ Even at this significant moment the divisions within the Catholic community, which had so frequently frustrated Catholic efforts in the past, were still in evidence. The Catholic Poor School Committee continued to define Voluntary Schools as 'non provided and bound' and Council Schools as 'provided and free'.¹⁰ A call to renowned Catholics to attend a meeting to discuss amendments to the Act in relation to these perceived financial inequalities received little support. Despite the fact that there had been many promises to attend there were only three acceptances from the twenty invitations issued. Perhaps the words of Cardinal Vaughn, first quoted in Chapter 3, had been particularly influential. 'We must take care lest by seeking the ideal we do not lose what we have hitherto gained ...we are not likely ever to get a more satisfactory settlement'.¹¹

2. Brighton profile 1886 onwards

While the Education debate was being played out at a national level Brighton's Catholic story continued to unfold. In the last two decades of the century its Catholic population had continued to expand but remained small, still a mere 1% of the total population of the town. The overt anti-Catholicism of the 1870's was no longer in evidence as tensions were far more rampant within the Anglo-Catholic branch of the Church of England by which Brighton's Roman Catholics were largely unaffected.

The intense military activity which had so dominated Britain in the earlier years of the century was now confined to more remote regions of the world. While the rights of Catholic soldiers and sailors were often fiercely debated elsewhere in the country, such tensions were not experienced in Brighton where the military presence had been drastically reduced. There was only one barracks at Preston Park and the needs of the Catholic soldiers and their families were recognised and met, primarily by the priests of St Joseph which, given the history of the Mission, its close proximity to the Barracks and the involvement of the Dragoon Guards, had led to it being recognised as the 'soldiers' church'.

Meanwhile the care of the Catholic community continued to be provided for by the three Missions, their attendant schools, the increasing numbers of religious orders and the activities of a more engaged Catholic community all, as ever, subject to the effects of local conditions and national restraints.

3. The Mission of St John the Baptist and the work of the schools

The Church of St John the Baptist remained the largest mission in which the longevity of its rectors generally proved to be an advantage. These priests had always remained acutely aware of the sensitivities of the town underlying one of the most significant references to their influence':

Brighton's Catholics owed much to a succession of highly respected priests - that a town so distinguished by its outbursts of Protestant zeal, the Roman Clergy would have enjoyed for so many years the respect and esteem of so many Protestants'.¹²

In 1887, The Reverend Canon Rymer died. Rymer had come to the church as a young curate under the revered Father Cullin and stayed there for 18 years witnessing some of the most difficult moments for the town's Catholics. A year later the Reverend Styles, who had served the church for over twenty years also died, and the memorials for both priests can be seen in the Church close to that of Mary Fitzherbert.



Figure 38: Memorial to Styles

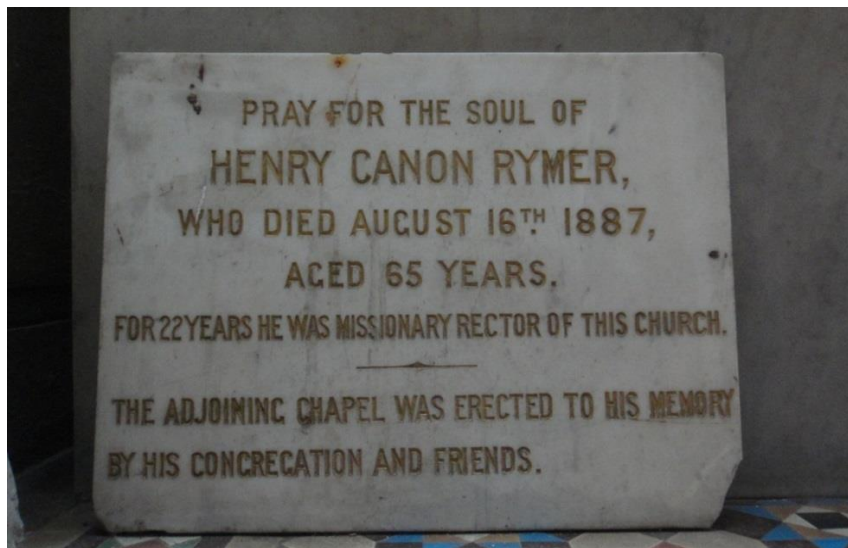


Figure 39: Memorial to Rymer

The Reverend Johnston, later Canon Johnson, who succeeded Rymer, was to serve the church for forty years. He too, in following the practice set by his predecessors, was to become respected in the wider non-Catholic community. His more grandiose plans for extensive decoration of the church were often thwarted but he did introduce electricity, the first Catholic Church in the country to be lit this way. There are interestingly no records as to how he dealt with the cold; an ever recurring cause of distress for the children and the priests, as recorded in school log books and in many carefully preserved letters to the Bishop.

A Mr Hay writing to the Reverend Butt Nov 5 1888 from Freshfield Terrace noted that:

The heating is so inadequate that I am practically debarred from attending Mass but the priest refuses to allow or entertain the idea of subscribing to a proper stove.¹³

In September 1896 the same Mr Hay again writes to the bishop again on the subject of 'draughts at St John the Baptist from open doors in the summer as well as heating in winter'.¹⁴ Attached to this letter is the response that:

Mr Hay when last seen on a summer's day sat in the church wearing 'two or three coats, a pair of top boots that covered his trousers over his knees and his legs and feet and were further covered with a heavy carriage rug. In order to be quite protected he was sitting in Father Connell's Confessional a few days after I heard he had caught a very bad cold.'¹⁵

An interesting, perhaps irrelevant, but humorous reminder that, while the Bishops dealt with matters affecting the Catholic Community at large they were by no means inured from the minor concerns of the parishioners in their Diocese. To this must be added the all-important fact that Brighton's Catholic inhabitants consisted of the young, the old, the noble and the idiosyncratic and could and should be defined by factors other than religion.¹⁶

Throughout this period (1886-1902) it is again the records of the Church that provide detailed evidence of the Catholic population, as identified in the database, citing nine hundred Baptisms and ninety five Conversions. There are still relatively few marriages listed or precise references to deaths.¹⁷ It is of interest that this Mission seems not to have completed Scrutiny papers sent out by the Diocese as provided by the Missions of St Joseph and St Mary Magdalen or if it did they are no longer available.

The Mercy Sisters continued to run the Girls' School and the Infant school, the latter providing education for both Boys and Girls and in 1894 was officially recognised as St John the Baptist Roman Catholic School.¹⁸ For St John the Baptist, and the other Mission Schools it is still only the log books, traversing a range of subjects; - Sickness, Building provision, The Curriculum, Pupil Teachers, Special Events and, significantly, the Reports of both the Government and the Diocesan Inspectors that tell of the experiences of the children. A surprising feature of these log

books is not the lack of standardisation that characterises and even enlivens the entries, but the fact that they rarely, if at all, even mirror one another even, in the case of serious epidemics, when the whole town must have been affected.

3.1. Weather conditions and sickness

The 1887 report from the schools run by the Mercy Sisters schools gives a bleak picture of the effects of cold weather. 'Weather very cold - no writing in copy books as the cold prevents the children writing with pens more - cases of measles'.¹⁹ A month later the death of James Hurley was recorded.²⁰ Conditions in the town became increasingly serious as evidenced by later entries, 'fifty five children absent including Miss Davenport the Pupil Teacher , the Sanitary Officer demanded that 'children with measles should absent themselves from school for three weeks also their siblings'.²¹ Another disease particularly prevalent in the town was typhoid but a 1890 report suggests that the Sanitary Inspector nevertheless found 'the premises in proper condition' despite the fact that one boy in the school, William Harris, had been diagnosed with the condition.²² This was fortunate as an unusual entry later in the year noted that thirty Girls from the Upper School Department had been kindly invited to the Sacred Heart Convent - an invitation which might not have been forthcoming had there been serious health risks.²³ The school, as with others in the town, was carefully monitored and in the winter of 1892 with a further outbreak of scarlet fever the Department of Health wrote to the school requesting help in preventing the spread of this diseases and the Town Clerk issued a formal demand for school closure from November 29 to December 20 on the grounds of 'general ill health among the children, this ruling was contested by the Reverend Johnston and the outcome is not recorded'.²⁴ In 1893 Albert Fulgony who died from diphtheria had siblings ill with same disease and a corresponding entry referred to an unnamed 7 year old admitted to the school with 'eye problems; who is not to use her eyes by looking at a book or anything to try them'.²⁵ Three years later both scarlet fever

and measles remain rampant and the former 'so severe that the medical officer again proposes shutting the school'.²⁶

3.2. School buildings

The inadequacy of school buildings, described in earlier chapters, again features in the Inspector's reports. A report of 1888 noted 'While a considerable improvement has been effected there is need for further space for marching'.²⁷ Another entry stresses 'the difficulty of efficiently teaching so many children in one room and keeping them in good order is very great',²⁸ while a third commented upon the general disruption. 'The decorations to the church and the transfer of children to larger room in the convent because of this and the laying of drains with a subsequent three week loss of schooling'.²⁹

3.3. Pupil Teachers

There are frequent references to the situation of the Pupil Teachers. At a national level it had long been understood that Catholic Pupil Teachers were at a disadvantage drawn as they so often were from socially deprived backgrounds and denied, it was claimed, the extensive curriculum provided by Board Schools. In 1873 *The Catholic Poor School Committee* had been forced to acknowledge that Catholic Pupil Teachers were not able to present the same scope of knowledge as their non-Catholic counterparts which was not surprising as the Board schools had money available to provide a more extensive curriculum, but the Committee referred particularly to:

Poverty of the class of children attending elementary schools, character of their homes and difficulty involved in home study. The roughness of manners in all with whom they are in the habit of associating are circumstances very unfavourable to progress and antagonistic to all attempts to refine them.³⁰

The comments in the 1890 entry, although true, may still seem unduly harsh. There was a specific reference to the disappointing results of the Pupil Teacher's exam, 'excitement considerably abated they gave with doleful faces a list of their mistakes with many promises to be careful in the future' and an additional comment seemed even less sympathetic:

It is well from time to time to post in the log book the progress of the Pupil Teachers in their studies especially in home tasks or private studies. Judging from the general results of these studies it would seem that they follow the opinion held by some that every time one thinks a molecule of the brain is used up they carefully try to escape all day study.³¹

The Inspector noted that 'the offices of the Girls and Infants must be made to conform to the requirement of rule 13[d] of schedule VIII, and he referred to the status of the teachers and the articles relating to them'.³² There is, for the first time, mention of both the given and religious names of the teachers, E Murphy known as Sr. Alphonsus and M Farley known as Sr. Stanislas. This is an anomaly which proved particularly confusing when analysing Census returns.³³

3.4. Curriculum and Standards

While the schools were bound to teach to the specifications laid down by the Department of Education they could not control the 'quality' of the children in terms of their readiness for school or freedom to attend regularly. These entry levels and recorded periods of absence invariably affected the standards they achieved as this entry by the head teacher highlighted. 'Children of 7 and 8 admitted but who have no foundation whatever and cannot possibly work with Standard 1.'³⁴

But the rigidity of the Grant system allowed for few compromises in the content of the curriculum and the way it should be delivered as a further entry for 1896 demonstrates – 'As the older girls are only taught by ear the Grant is only allowed at the lower rate'.³⁵ Overall these HMI reports were positive but they did focus upon every aspect of the school provision from the keeping of the school registers 'the registers need to be more accurately kept'³⁶ to the delivery of the objects lesson, as with reference to the following as taught in Standard 1 :- Lace, Cotton, Tea, Coffee, Sugar, Silkworm, Beehive, Elephant, Whale, Ox, Cow, Sheep, Calf, Pearl, Oyster, Fur, Goat Earth, Coin, Paper, the Horse, Coal, Cork, Tree, Oak, Willow, Birds, Mercury, Sycamore - 'object lessons should receive more attention further development of intelligence and

accuracy appear to be required'.³⁷ Even times allocated for break were determined - '10 minutes play from 10.45-10.55 and 3.15-3.25'.³⁸ Nor was the school exempt from parental pressure, an entry for 1891 refers to the wish of parents that babies (those under seven) should 'learn nursing and domestic economics in addition to Kindergarten as many take turns about to stay at home to acquire these useful occupations'.³⁹

3.5. Treats/visits and related Town activities

As in previous years the log books recorded a wide range of comment and miscellaneous activity. The acknowledgement of treats, as for the visit to Preston Park⁴⁰ a need to clarify the nature of prizes - 'Money prizes are in the nature of returned fees and should not appear on the expenditure',⁴¹ and the detailing of entries relating to visits by important personages - 'His worship the mayor accompanied by [Rev.] Mr Singleton visited to see if the children were wearing the boots given to them at Christmas. He expressed satisfaction at seeing them so clean and in use and was pleased at the bright and orderly appearance of the little ones'.⁴² There was recognition, too, of the place of the children within the town's community, which also supports earlier references to absenteeism. 'The school was closed on Monday owing to the Hawkers Demonstration - most of our scholars are children of Hawkers so they were kept by their parents to join in the procession'.⁴³

3.6. Diocesan Inspector Reports

It is the Diocesan Reports, from 1890-1895, disappointingly few in number, which provide further insight into what both the schools and the Church believed was their primary responsibility, namely to provide for the religious education of the children in their care and for this reason the comments have been included in their entirety.⁴⁴ These reports also deal specifically with the boys' school. Patrick Quinlan was listed as teacher in charge until 1895 when he is replaced by Jessica Plummer. Numbers on the book ranged from fifty-nine to seventy-seven and there was always a high correlation between those on the books and those

who took the Religious Exam. The school was in all instances classed as either 'good' or 'very good'.⁴⁵

The girls too were similarly well-evaluated again classified as either 'good' or 'excellent' and there was consistently a close correlation between those on the books and those presented for the religious exam, as for example in 1890 with eighty six girls on the books and seventy eight presented. In this year the Inspector noted 'Prayers and Texts excellent throughout; more life wanted in Standards IV and V'.⁴⁶ Numbers were up the following year but there was a cautionary note that 'many of the children are old for their class'.⁴⁷ In 1893 the school was found to be 'in a very satisfactory condition'.⁴⁸ In 1894 of the seventy-seven girls on the roll twenty-three were from the orphanage but the overall comments of the Inspector remained positive.⁴⁹ In 1895 he again concluded 'The Children answered readily and gave complete satisfaction'.⁵⁰

As with the girls the infants were also classed as excellent but there was considerable disparity between those on the books and those presented for examination. The worst result was recorded in 1892 with 154 children on the books, a total of 83 boys and 71 girls, of whom 67 boys and only 43 girls were presented.⁵¹ In 1893 with 167 children on the books 123 were presented for examination and the inspector also noted – 'All classes were bright, Prayers and Hymns singularly distinct and accurate'.⁵² The final report of 1894 was equally complimentary 'the little children were generally bright, repeating well and showing great interest'.⁵³

Of particular interest in these reports is the reference to the number of Protestants being educated in these schools. Over the five-year period a total of 67 boys to 77 girls, a profile which was reflected in the other Mission Schools.⁵⁴ There is no evidence to show why non-Catholic children attended Catholic schools; it could simply have been a question of availability and proximity to their homes, but the final comment for the end of the Victorian era, as recorded by

one of the Government inspectors, would suggest that these children should have had a good educational experience. 'This is an extremely orderly and well taught school. The young scholars are happy and seem really interested in their work'.⁵⁵

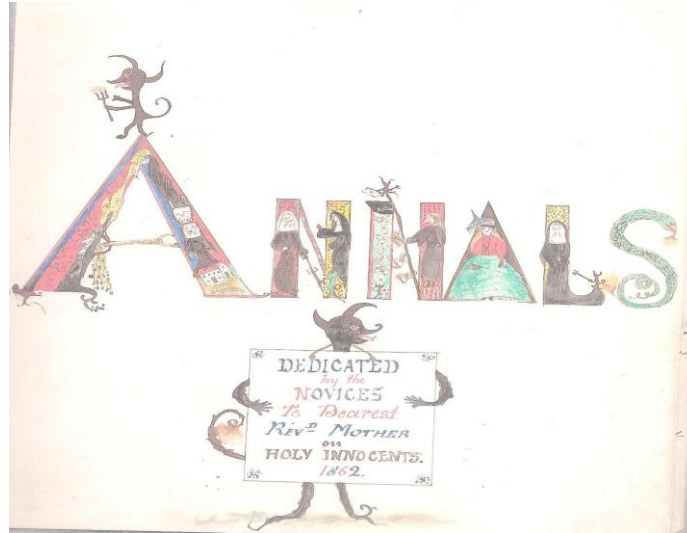


Figure 40: Activities of the Mercy Sisters as recorded in their Annals

In addition to their work with the Schools the Mercy Sisters continued with an extensive programme of social provision for the Town's Catholics. There are references in their Annals of the further development of Bristol Lodge for lady boarders and the finalising of the legal dispute surrounding the Rosaz foundation which allowed for the expansion of the orphanage.

A particularly illuminating entry concerns their relationship with the Government and the Education committee which would seem not to have been as fraught as might have been expected. A handwritten entry for 1901 contained in a *Universal Handbook* which accompanied the Annals of the Order reflected on the government initiatives and noted:

A measure of justice had been conceded to denominational schools by a conservative government. Financially it was greatly appreciated but when the schools were taken over by the Committee, the Sisters in charge were obliged to sacrifice something of the complete Catholic tone of former times although full liberty was given for Catholic teaching. The conduct of the Committee to the sisters has always been considerate and kind.⁵⁶

4. The Second Mission of St Mary Magdalen

This Mission too continued to expand in order to meet the needs of its noticeably itinerant population. The chart below gives a picture of the Catholic population in this Parish only from 1887 through to 1895 with isolated entries for 1896 and 1898 obtained from *Scrutiny Papers*. There is a lack of consistency in these records, and figures of marriages, baptisms and conversions for the remaining six years of the century can be found in Church Records, the names of which are recorded in the Data Base. There is no obvious reason for the increase in numbers in the years 1894 and 1895, although the figures of 795 and 896 refer to the number of visitors and explain in part the explosion in the numbers of Easter communicants.⁵⁷

	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1898
Catholics in Parish	350	600	300	350	350	360	350	501 - 795*	435 - 896*		350
Baptisms	30	14	36	56	21	27		29	41		2
Marriages	5	2							6		
Easter Communicants	300		2100 (including visitors)	2000	1400				1600	1350	
Children in Catholic schools	53	57	60		71				68		
Children in Non Catholic Schools	9	5			4						
Children in Board Schools	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None		
Child Communicants	12		20	24	13						
Confirmations		yes			yes						

Table 3: Catholic population 1887-1895 of St Mary Magdalen

**The inflated numbers are due to the influx of visitors during the summer seasons*

In 1898 in preparation for his visitation Bishop Butt wrote to the Mission:

I shall be much obliged if you will fill up the following schedules and may add any observations that might elucidate your own difficulties, the spiritual and temporal conditions and prospects of your people and the measures which in your opinion might be desirable to introduce for their improvement.⁵⁸

In writing this he may have hoped for detailed information as demanded by a questionnaire sent to the various Missions to sound out the effects of the Elementary Education Acts and Their Working. This paper had specifically asked if the Missions had:

- experienced any difficulty in placing a school on the List for the Annual Grant

- suffered any reductions from the Grant
- any cause of complaint with regard to the practical administration of the merit grant
- along with the teachers and scholars been under undue pressure in order to gain a good grant
- knowledge of any schools in the Mission who not received a grant but would apply for one if the restrictions regarding numbers were removed.
- needed to find by Collection or Donation money to meet the requirements of the Schools in addition to that provided by the Government Grant.
- found the collection of the above a sensible hardship as taking much time, trouble or self-denial
- knowledge of any school in the Mission that had been refused recognition as a Certified School.

In addition to these questions they were asked to give:-

- Details of the number of children on their books, adding how many were paid for by guardians, how many by parents, for how many of the parents this might have constituted a hardship and if fees had been paid for by Guardians if this had this caused inconvenience or annoyance.⁵⁹

Unfortunately there are no returns to this questionnaire which was probably first distributed in 1876. The fact that such questions were asked would suggest that these had already been identified as areas of concern. The details, which were returned to the Bishop, identified issues which were rather more specific to each Mission. The papers from St Mary Magdalen referred to an overall Brighton population of fifty thousand with the resident Catholic population for the Parish of three hundred and fifty. There was an added note that the population was constantly changing which may explain the rise in Mass attendance referred to earlier.

There is an interesting breakdown of nationality groups although there is no repeat of the concerns of the Reverend Sammons who, on June 15 1887 wrote:

It is the condition of the French principally they are very numerous and I do not think I exaggerate when I say our losses through them far outnumber our gains nothing whatever is done for them and they drift away or are lost.⁶⁰

In 1898 it seems there were but ten English/Irish perverts, ten French, thirteen Italians and twenty single foreigners whose nationality was not given. To this figure was added two Baptisms, a very considerable drop in comparison to other years and seven Conversions. There was an additional reference to money received from Voluntary contributions £335.3.9d, the Government Grant £49 and Government Fees £32 17. The Salary of Miss Green was given as £93 and for Ann Burge then an uncertificated teacher £40. There are also references to seating for four hundred and fifty people and there was a question as to how much was charged as an entry fee. There is no mention of such a fee in the other two Missions although St John the Baptist does distinguish between places for seating and standing, so there can only be speculative comment as to what this actually refers to. The number of children was given as one hundred and forty which almost certainly refers to the number of children in the Parish rather than the number of children in the school.⁶¹

The Church again benefited from the personality of its Rector and as with other influential priests his role was not insignificant. Provost John Moore who served the Parish from 1886 to 1902 was 'universally popular' and served under the Board of Guardians, the first Catholic to do so and as such had a voice outside the Catholic Community a fact acknowledged in his obituary:

During his long residence in Brighton Provost Moore, by his geniality, his kindness of heart benevolence and devotion to duty won the love of his own people and the deep respect of friends outside the church.⁶²

As for the Reverend Oldham's 'fledgling School' it continued to flourish under Miss Green and a further succession of teachers named in the database. Evidence of school life relies on admissions records and reports from the Diocesan Inspector 1891/92/93 and 94, and as with those referring to St John the Baptist they do not appear to be complete.⁶³ Again such evidence that has been provided has been included in full. These records show a steady increase in the number of children admitted to the school and suggest that over the seventeen year period 1885-1902 two hundred and forty-three children were admitted whose names are recorded in the

database. There were noticeable peaks in 1895 and 1900 of forty two and forty entries and lows in 1898 and 1900 of ten and nine respectively although there is no obvious reason for this.⁶⁴ Another feature of the returns shared by other schools was the generally short time the children stayed at the school, an average of three years. A further anomaly was reference to Standards reached but not examined as in the case of Charles and Percy Beetholme who were admitted at ten years and seven years and stayed for three years while Louise and Elise Wingfield who transferred from the *Middle Street Board School* were exceptions entering at eight and six. Each child stayed for five years and both were examined for Standard IV.⁶⁵

The Diocesan Reports for which, as already mentioned, there are limited records were generally very complimentary. The classes under Miss Green were described as either 'excellent' or 'very good'.⁶⁶ Of particular interest are references in the reports of 1892/93/94 to Protestant children in the school - two boys in 1892⁶⁷ and nine boys in 1893⁶⁸ and in 1894 four boys and eight girls.⁶⁹ As with the returns from St John the Baptist there remained a high correlation between the numbers on the books and those who attended the religious exams. Only in 1894 was this of greater significance when only sixty-eight children presented for the exam while eighty-six names were on the books.⁷⁰ The word 'mixed' appears in the margin for this year and it may account for the fact that infants i.e. children under five had been admitted to the school in 1890. Although it was agreed that they should be taught separately and an assistant teacher had been appointed, there may have been a breakdown in this arrangement which led to the Inspector's recommendation that 'there should be a separate school for infants'.⁷¹ This situation that was not properly resolved until 1901 when an Infant teacher was appointed although a new room had been added for Infants in 1896.⁷²

The overall comments of the Inspectors were interesting and continued to be reflective of attitudes to learning and the prioritising of religion. In 1890 and 1891 the Inspector wrote

'Repetition particularly accurate - all very satisfactory'⁷³ an observation which would not have pleased Bishop Dannell whose concerns about the limitations of repetition are recorded in Chapter 6. There were, though, no references to 'Repetition' for 1892 when 'all classes passed well and showed interest in their work'⁷⁴ nor in 1893 when 'Knowledge shown in the life of Christ was above average'.⁷⁵ The report of 1895 concluded that the religious instruction 'continues in a very satisfactory condition'.⁷⁶

There is, as already stated, a complete absence of the more colourful and insightful description of daily activities as provided in the logs of the schools belonging to the other two Missions. All that can be gleaned from the reports of the log [now lost] was that in 1897 the school acquired a lavatory and that each room had a coal fire purported to be 'far from adequate; for Miss Green recorded that 'the ink in the inkwells was frequently frozen and that on occasions she had had to close the school because it was so cold'.⁷⁷

5. The Third Mission of St Joseph

The third Mission, as for the other two, also continued to expand as the chart below shows, but the entries are incomplete leaving once again a somewhat fragmented profile of the Catholic population; although entries in the Church records, referred to in the database, provide a more detailed picture.

	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894
Catholics in the Parish	500	580 excluding the Little Sisters of the Poor	600	600	650	800		
Baptisms	32	17	21	28	44	24		
Marriages	1	2	3					
Easter Communicants	120	336 including the Little Sisters of the Poor	234	251	201	298		Mass attendance for Lent averaged 200
Number of children communicants	13		28			20		
Children in Catholic schools	111	111	120	108	116 34 Protestants	123 21 Protestants		
Children in non-Catholic schools	22	24	21	37		8		
Children in Board schools	4	6	3	7		8		
Converts								25
Barracks							15	100 soldiers
Workhouse					A note that the Mission had responsibility for this			children and women left the barracks

Table 4: Catholic Population of St Joseph 1887-1894

There is definite lack of clarity about non-Catholic schools and the number of children attending them seems surprisingly high particularly in comparison to those attending Board schools both of which would have been unacceptable to Catholic parents and the priests given the availability of a Catholic school. Certainly the rise of the Board Schools exercised the minds of both the Reverend Du Plerny of St Joseph's Mission and Canon Johnston. In 1894 the Reverend Johnston, bemoaning perhaps initial support for the first School Board to which a Roman Catholic had once been elected had written:

What a fiasco our electioneering for the old school board has been. How much better it would be to stand aside from all such work and marshal our meagre forces in a demand for the well-being of our own schools.⁷⁸

Three years later Du Plerny's observations were particularly despondent:

That the many subjects taught in Board Schools are outside the range of elementary education the attraction of these elaborate establishments proves so great that the children of the better classes are drawn in while the waifs and strays, the gutter children, are cleverly excluded for whom they were so chiefly intended.⁷⁹

The log book entries for the School again offer evidence of conditions and tribulations which affected the whole Community, Catholic and non-Catholic, adult and child. There are many entries in relation to sickness and the general impoverishment of the children and their families but few to the inadequacy of the buildings per se, other than to note that the classrooms were cold and too small. 'The school very cold - infants room should be heated- Gallery seats should have backs - a classroom suitably furnished for the youngest children would greatly promote the efficient working of the infants classes'⁸⁰ - the School must be more effectively warmed - 85a of the Code. 'The Special attention of the Managers is requested'.⁸¹

The coldness almost certainly contributed to sickness and absenteeism. The Infants were less advanced than last year, 'severe cold had interfered with attendance'⁸² 'attendance very bad throughout the week much illness through the town'.⁸³ In 1898 incidences of sickness were so serious that daily lists of families affected had to be sent to the Medical Officer, and Attendance

Officers were twice sent to the school. Of the illnesses that were noted, whooping cough and bronchitis were common as was scarlet fever, resulting in the death of Mary Green, a teacher following a letter from the Department of Health requesting help in preventing the spread of the disease.⁸⁴

Illness was not the only cause of absenteeism and impoverished children in Victorian England. Both Catholic and Protestant were expected to be involved in some form of employment; 'Attendance very poor twenty one of the children have gone to the hop fields for six weeks' was but one of several similar entries.⁸⁵ Details of donations, often including the name or names of the donors, was further recognition of this poverty and evidence too that assistance also came from the wider non-Catholic Community. 'Twelve pairs of boots, sixty articles of clothing distributed to the most needy, seventy articles of clothing and twenty pairs of boots also for the needy'.⁸⁶ The issue of tickets to provide dinners twice weekly for the poorest families, cotton and needles from Kerr and Co and Cocoa from Cadburys.⁸⁷ Just as the Hawkers' children at St John the Baptist were taken away from school to join the Hawkers demonstration the children of St Joseph's were often 'dismissed on account of the races', the school being so close to the race course.⁸⁸ In line with the other missions there was the regular bestowing of treats and 'promises of future prizes'. The first entry for the century refers to one such event, 'seventeen of the poorest children invited to the New Year's Dinner at the Dome',⁸⁹ while the Sacred Heart Sisters regularly invited over 100 children to a Christmas Party.⁹⁰

It was the reports of both the Government and the Diocesan Inspectors in relation to the children, their teachers and the curriculum which dominated the log entries of St Joseph's School. The first in 1887, within a few years of it being put under Governance and with one hundred and four children on the books, stated that 'the School deserves the highest Merit'.⁹¹ Within a year of that report things were less positive and the Inspector wrote that the infants, who had once been so

highly commended under Miss Costello were not being well disciplined and their instruction was 'barely fair'.⁹² These reports were frequently linked to the role of specific teachers, noting in one year that the absence of a Miss Harrison led to the school not doing so well and the younger children 'not being properly advanced' with a recommendation that a further assistant was needed. St Josephs, it concluded, 'was understaffed'.⁹³ The return of Miss Harrison a year later led to an improvement and the Inspector was again able to conclude that 'the school was in a very satisfactory condition, the infants taught with care and the children orderly'.⁹⁴

The reports did include commentary about salaries, the delivery of the curriculum and how this affected the awarding of the government grant as evidenced by two entries. An 1899 entry states that Hunt received £15, Flynn £12 and the unnamed Pupil Teachers £10.⁹⁵ Such sums were considerably lower than stipends paid to teachers in the Board Schools and to those in schools attached to other denominations. A second entry was an ever constant reminder that even if given on one occasion, an award was not automatically continued:

A grant of £42 will be paid to the school account as soon as possible for the purpose of increasing salaries improving apparatus and maintaining the efficiency of the school It must not be assumed that the school will necessarily receive a similar grant in future years.⁹⁶

The syllabus requirements seemed particularly challenging and it would be reasonable to ask if the contents of many of the poems were really understood, but these were children who were required to learn their prayers in both English and Latin at a time when memorisation was the *modus operandi* for learning in all schools across all classes. The Inspectors meanwhile were consistent in their attention to detail. With reference to darning one noted, 'more attention should be paid to the regularity of the stitching it is not necessary to have such a large margin around the hole'.⁹⁷ It was rare for the reports not to include some critical comment whether it was the 'weakness of Standard 2 in Reading and Arithmetic'⁹⁸ and the fact that, 'the children's singing is

not yet good enough' accounted for the Inspector's refusal to recommend the Highest Principal Grant.⁹⁹

The chart below reveals a particularly disturbing trend which effectively shows the decline in the numbers of children presented for examinations in Arithmetic and English for Standards five and six.

Standards	1	2	3	4	5	6
Numbers presented	18	17	17	6	4	4
Passes in Arithmetic	14	13	13	6	4	4
Passes in English	17	9	6	5	3	3

Table 5: The effect on all subjects of the decline in passes as children grow older

This situation is due in part to the fact that as the children grew older their attendance became more irregular. This was a situation that particularly concerned the Rector, the Reverend du Pleurny who believed that the boys should be educated in a school which specifically focussed on their needs.

The boys leave too soon on account of the need for a good central Boys School under a Master. If such a school could be established, the parents might be induced to leave their boys at school for year or two longer and they would be under more Catholic influence. The Rector of St Johns has views on this subject with which the clergy of St Josephs would like to cooperate.¹⁰⁰

Of equal importance to the school were the reports of the Diocesan Inspectors who were both critical and complimentary and in some instances supportive of the comments of the Government Inspectors. The Report for 1889 identified the school as Mixed and classed it as 'Very Good'. It also noted that there were 27 Protestants on the register and 113 children were presented for the religious examination. Unlike the HMI report for that year which expressed concern about the younger children, the Diocesan Inspector wrote that 'the infant classes have visibly improved' and he added that 'prayers were well taught throughout the school'.¹⁰¹ A year

later there were 36 Protestants on the roll out of a total of 150 children registered, and 127 were presented for examination. The school was classed as 'excellent' for the next three years with added reference to the 'excellent spirit' in the school and the fact that 'all concerned worked with great zeal, the Children's knowledge was excellent, they showed considerable interest and their repetition was accurate'.¹⁰² While the numbers presented for examination increased there were concerns in the 1897 report that the 'Catechism was particularly weak'. The Inspector also supported the HMI regarding Infant provision 'the present accommodation being quite inadequate for their number'.¹⁰³ A year later there was reference to prayers that were once, 'known so well', and were 'now unsatisfactorily known' - 'this gives the impression that children have been allowed to forget what they learned in former years'.¹⁰⁴ Such comments, were few, and the report of the School Manager Joseph Livesey in 1899 appeared to link the secular and the religious:

The infants in the school have been most carefully taught and have greatly improved since last year The mixed school does the teachers great credit, the knowledge of the children is thorough and intelligent. The very good discipline and Catholic Spirit make this school a very efficient one.¹⁰⁵

It was in 1901 as the Victorian era came to a close that this school, situated in one of the most deprived area of the town, received praise from both Inspectorates. Irvine Neave Inspector of the Southern Diocese wrote:

It has been a most pleasing duty to examine this excellent school which is keeping upon its very good record. The discipline is most praiseworthy. It is gratifying to find that Her Majesty's Inspector has recommended the Highest Government Grant which the school most richly deserves.¹⁰⁶

6. The Society of the Sacred Heart

While the work of the three Missions appeared to be particularly influential in their work with Brighton's Catholic poor there were other educational and social indicatives that acknowledged a

more broadly based Catholic society, which had always been a distinguishing feature of Brighton's Catholic identity.

The Order of the Sacred Heart continued to flourish primarily as a Boarding School, recruiting as in earlier years girls from overseas. According to the school records¹⁰⁷ between 1887 and 1901 of the three hundred and fifty entries seven did not pay fees and only twelve girls came from the Brighton area. Of these twelve, there are some brief references; two, who had been day girls, 'were removed, as the distance from their home in Clifton Terrace and the school was found to be too great'. A third girl, a Protestant, left after a year and a fourth had to be 'removed from her mother's influence'. 'Three sisters left for another convent some miles away'. The figures provided by Sister Elise Brooke over the same period gives the numbers of boarders as 'three hundred and forty' which is generally consistent with the school records. The strict and uncompromising standards set by the Sisters continued to be upheld. In 1888 one girl it was claimed 'could not settle down her previous education made it undesirable to keep her and she was withdrawn at our request the pension being refundable'. In the same year one girl returned to Mexico without her Blue Ribbon [the much treasured and coveted award. 'Her virtue had not been sufficiently tried'. In 1897 a third girl was found to be 'totally unfitted to be with our children', and a year later a mother was found to be lacking: 'serious reasons regarding the mother obliged us not to receive the children'. There were others who did make the grade. In 1899 there was young girl from Vienna who came to teach German and got her blue-ribbon, 'nice child from Vienna' was the note in the observation column. The reference to teaching German suggests that many of the older girls did have a dual role - to be educated and to help educate the school - which was perhaps being seen as a finishing school for young Catholic women although the general age of entry was thirteen with some entering the school at eleven.

Given that the intention of Mother Digby was to provide Free Schools alongside Boarding Schools it is surprising that there are so few references to this school and these rely, as in earlier entries, on the memoirs of Sister Elise Brooke and limited Educational Statistics 1889 -1895 from the Diocese of Southwark. Sister Brooke notes that in 1887 there were forty children in the Poor School, fifty in 1888, sixty eight in 1890, sixty two in 1891 and fifty in 1894. By 1898 the number had risen to one hundred and sixteen a year when she wrote that 'there was an epidemic of scarlet fever' but noted 'it was not too serious'. There are no details for 1899 other than to record that was the year when the School had a serious epidemic of influenza resulting in the death of two Sisters.

The Diocesan Inspectors' Reports, in addition to being limited, are confusing.¹⁰⁸ The distinction between the two schools is not clear. In the section, Educational Statistics, the schools are listed as The Sacred Heart Mixed and The Sacred Heart Convent; each has a designated teacher except for 1895 when the 'Religious of the Sacred Heart' is entered under Principal Teacher. The numbers on the roll for the mixed school are significantly higher than those for the Convent, i.e. one hundred and seventeen to forty-nine. There are also a number of boys listed with seventy two enrolled for the Mixed School and Eighteen for the Convent. The Diocesan records of 1894 refer to a Boys' Preparatory classed as 'Eminently Satisfactory'. The lack of clear data makes it difficult to state conclusively what the situation was. What does appear to be reasonably clear that in the period 1890-1894 inclusive, the Mixed School was under a Miss McArthy, supported by two certificated teachers. Numbers on the roll ranged from fifty in 1890 to one hundred and forty-six in 1893. Throughout this period the school was classed as either 'Good' or 'Very Good'. The number of children presented for the religious examination also appeared to be close to the number on the rolls, which again would suggest a strange anomaly that Protestant children may have been entered for this exam. In all instances the remarks were very positive. The comment

for 1890 suggests that this may have been the starting date for the school, 'A good start has been made'. The next year 1891 the Inspector writes, 'the school makes great progress and is taught by trained teachers'. 'School in excellent order the children are being carefully trained' were the concluding comments of the following year 1892, then came 'there is evidence of great pains being taken'. The final entry refers only to the examination of which the results 'were very satisfactory'.

There always appeared to be equal numbers of boys and girls in the school and a significant number of Protestants in the period 1892/1893/1894 when there was a considerable drop in numbers 120 in 1894 to 20 in 1895. The Diocesan Inspector noted this. 'The opening of the Board School accounts for falling off in numbers of non-Catholic children'.

The Convent entry under Miss Holland who is listed as a Second Year Pupil Teacher are less clear. The numbers on the roll ranged from fifty-three to seventy-eight with relatively few boys, approximately one third of the total, and even fewer Protestant boys. In the period 1890 to 1895 the ratio of boys to girls was forty-eight to one hundred and twenty-five. There was only one brief comment for the period 'This is a carefully taught school'. This less than precise picture does nevertheless add to the Catholic profile. In an area with an estimated Catholic population of four hundred and twenty, the two Catholic schools had on their books two hundred children as identified in the 1893 figures.

7. The Convent of the Blessed Sacrament

In 1886 a fourth religious order, The Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament, came to Brighton from France with the intention of starting a school. This time it was to be middle class girls who were to be the main beneficiaries of this education. There is very little primary material about these early years, although it may be assumed that the Sister who wrote about the Convent's early

history must have had some access to this data which is probably in the Mother House in France. What is known is that the first three Sisters arrived in 1886 and were later joined by two more. By 1887 there were thirteen pupils in their school although the Sisters knew very little of the English language. Father Johnston, the Rector of St John the Baptist, was, according to Sister Mary Xavier Stothert, fluent in French and instrumental in helping them acquire a suitable place to build and later expand their school. Their experiences were similar to those of the Mercy sisters who like them had arrived with little money at their disposal. A letter written by one of the Sisters to the Mother House would support this. It was clearly not the primary mission of these Sisters to provide education for the indigenous poor although there is an isolated reference to the opening of a small school for poor children in Clarendon Place about five minutes from the Convent:

You will see by the address on this letter that we have left Atlingworth Street and have moved into our new building at Walpole Lodge. The thought of the large rent[£225.pa] to be found every year terrifies me, and when I think of all the things we need to furnish this place as a school and a residence for lady boarders, I am near despair. In spite of this, however, I hope we shall be able to buy the houses [£5000,00] and arrange them as we like instead of being subject to Mr Boxall's general approval.¹⁰⁹

There is no record of how this money was acquired but in 1891 the Sisters purchased the house and in time much of the adjoining land. This school continued as a fee paying, part boarding, part day school, guest house for short term visitors, and longer residence for carefully vetted lady boarders, for over ninety years.

When the Order was founded in 1715 the Mission of the Sisters was to educate the young and care for the sick and the poor. Evidence as to how far they addressed all these needs relies only on an understanding of what the presence of a religious house signified. In her *History of Walpole Lodge* Sister Stothert writes:

People from all walks of life came to Walpole lodge, sometimes for definite help, sometimes just to talk over their problems because they knew they would find ready and

sympathetic listeners. The poor and the hungry soon get to know the green door at the foot of a short flight of stairs, where they could ask for food and a hot drink, with the certainty of never being turned away.¹¹⁰

While there is no record of the Annals of the school before 1906 later entries in the post 1906 log book reflect in tone the ethos and initiatives of earlier years and record 'Entertainment for the children at Clarendon Place and for the orphanage of the Sisters of Mercy'; the children of Clarendon Place came up to the Convent for their rewards fund raising for the Red Cross; - donations to the Sussex County Hospital - all of which quietly but effectively contributed to the cementing of a respected and recognised presence in the community.¹¹¹

8. The Little Sisters of the Poor

The Little Sisters of the Poor, having moved to more comfortable premises in Shoreham Road, also opened their doors to more residents. Again there is evidence of a possible conflict in the Mission statement of the religious order which was to provide for the poor and destitute and the practical reality of extending provision to those who were able to contribute towards their care.¹¹² In the period from 1887 to 1901 the house received one hundred and ten residents. Of the sixty-two women, twenty-seven came from Ireland, two from Belgium, six from France, six from Germany and two from Brittany. While servants dominated the job descriptions of the women, a total of twenty three, there were also seven housekeepers, three teachers, three cooks, a laundress, a stationer and three residents described as 'independent'. In all instances there appeared to be some form of financial support as identified in the previous chapter – 'Sa Fille a promis de paier l'enternment, elle a un club, A donne £5 per moins, A donne £ 100 a la maison en entrant -En autre donne £7/6d a semaine'.

The profile for the men differed slightly: of the forty-eight men twelve came from Ireland, five from Germany and two from France, one a French soldier. Their jobs, if listed, included a

labourer, four coachmen and two soldiers, but it is the payment details which are of interest and suggest that with the men there was a degree of impoverishment. Six were either fully or partially supported by the Parish including two placed by the Sisters of Mercy, - 'on la renouje Mr Wolff lui fait une pension on a aussi parish money' -- 'Recommande par le Rev Johnston' (one parishioner) 'Il a une pension £1 par mois pour lui et sa femme' – (a named soldier) Royal Artillery 'Il a une pension et donne quelque chose a la maison', and as was more common with the woman, there was reference to family assistance – 'Sa fille a promis de payee son enterment'.

9. Servantes du Sacre Coeur de Jésus

This was the final order to arrive in the town within this period and they established a Convalescent Home close to Marine Parade in the Parish of St John the Baptist. There are few references to this Home in a Celebratory Handbook in which the contributor, also chose to highlight what he saw as an example of, 'The Harmonious working of active zealous Religious Orders according to the strict laws of their Founders and according to the system adopted in Rome for the blending of the religious with the Secular Clergy'.¹¹³ Of the Sisters he wrote:

They have done excellent work in this Diocese of Southwark since they have been here since 1898. They are a great credit on their leader and their finder The Reverend Pere Victor Braun. They opened a Convalescent Home in Brighton in 1898 where they have done exceedingly good work all this time and continue to do so. Theirs is indeed a great service of charity and they show it in their lives and in the care with they take of the sick entrusted to them. A congregation born of popular needs.¹¹⁴

The writer concludes with the words, 'A Wonderful Community Spirit'.¹¹⁵ Quite ominously a contemporary writer is far more scathing in his own distant memories describing it as a 'rest home for the elderly and a sanctuary for the mad'. He recalls:

Streams of old people filing past, undressing their skin like parchment their flesh stringy their night gowns yellowed. They were like ghosts from another world.¹¹⁶

Perhaps such a comment is a reminder of the bleakness of the situation for the elderly just as some of the log books entries highlighted the dire situation of the children, which in no way detracts from the efforts of those who tried to provide for their care.

Conclusion

As the Victorian era drew to a close it could be said, that to a degree, the wider political battle for equality in educational provision had been won. Catholics enjoyed a level of freedom and recognition which would have been unimaginable a century earlier. Brighton's Catholics were finally at peace with their wider community and were fulfilling an essential role in the history of the town. The three main churches were dignified by the attention given to the continuing restoration work ordered by their rectors who were able to rely for financial support from the more affluent members of the community. Class and social grouping continued to be determining factors in educational provision but remained a feature of society at large. Catholic schools, now freed from the burdens placed on them in earlier days, were clearly meeting both the secular and religious needs of the children educated in them. The private fee paying schools also had the effect of extending Catholic influence across a wide social divide and ensured that the 'ghettoing' of Catholics, as so often occurs with minority groups, did not take place in Brighton. In addition to their care for the elderly there is evidence of further involvement of the religious in the form of clubs, societies and reading rooms. This contribution by the religious orders was noted at the time. 'A special feature in the religious aspect of Brighton now is the multiplication of convents belonging to different Roman Catholic Orders: one of these is of considerable extent, others will follow'.¹¹⁷

The non-Catholic Community could not be unaware of the powerful and pervasive religious messages that characterised Catholic practice, Catholic schools and other institutions. These were visible in the seemingly complex and varied forms of devotion of which the Mass was but

a part. The decoration of the churches, the veneration of the statues and the frequent colourful street processions contributed but such customs were no longer seen as threatening- Catholics were first and foremost seen as Brightonians. Even in this moment of calm one author felt drawn to sound a warning and, if not prophetic, it carried a note of caution against complacency and has as much meaning in the twenty-first century as it did in the nineteenth.

'A popular commotion against Catholics is still quite amongst the possibilities of our position, the mob of our day is much the same as the mob of the 1850s'.¹¹⁸

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¹⁶ In conversation with David Lannon, whose M.Ed. and Doctoral theses on Salford are ones of only a few localised studies, emphasises this point.

¹⁷ There are detailed records of Catholic burials at the Woodvale Cemetery in Brighton but it is not clear to which parish the deceased belonged.

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²⁰ Ibid., 1887 February 8.

²¹ Ibid., 1888 May 24.

²² Ibid., 1890 September 19.

²³ Ibid., 1891 October 12.

²⁴ Ibid., 1892 November 27.

²⁵ Ibid., 1893 July 7.

²⁶ Ibid., 1896 July 17.

²⁷ Ibid., 1888 March 8.

²⁸ Ibid., 1895 December 5.

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³⁰ *Annual Report of the Catholic Poor School Committee 1873*, p.3.

^{31.} 1890 October 7.

^{32.} Ibid., relating to Pupil Teacher Annie Brown.

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^{36.} Ibid., 1892 December.

^{37.} Ibid., 1891 October.

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- ^{77.} Flower, F.B. 59. *Archives of Arundel and Brighton*.
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- ^{107.} *Archives of the Sacred Heart*, held at the Roehampton House 1887-1901. Details of girls enrolled in the school with supporting evidence from the memoirs of Sr. Elise Brooke.
- ^{108.} *Diocesan Inspector Reports* 1890 -1895.
- ^{109.} Sister Mary Xavier Stothert. (No date given for publication.) *The Blessed Sacrament Convent - Walpole Lodge 1889-1970*. Brighton: Faulwood & Herbert, p.4.
- ^{110.} Ibid. p.17.
- ^{111.} Entries from the *Log Book of the Towers School Convent of the Blessed Sacrament 1906*.
- ^{112.} Ibid.

^{113.} Archives of the 'Little Sisters of the Poor Resident's Lists 'with payment details. Translation in Glossary.

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CHAPTER 9 - THE CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to examine the emerging identity of the Catholic community in nineteenth century Brighton and to consider the myriad of influences that moulded this identity, many of which were rooted in events outside local and national borders.

Subsumed under this were two distinctive questions. The first related to the experiences of Catholics in Brighton and how these experiences were dictated as much by the norms of Regency and more particularly Victorian society as by the dictates of the Church.

The second question asked what educational and social provision was provided for and by the Catholic community and again it was necessary to look not only at the Catholicism of the institutions but at the class and social standing of those for whom it was provided.

The third question proved to be even more complex in that it attempted to address the issue of what Catholicism of the nineteenth century could offer the Catholic world of the twenty-first century. It seemed relevant to the research to sound out contemporary attitudes to the Church and I was interested to see which, if any, of the issues that dominated the minds of Brighton's Catholics two hundred years ago still resonate today.

The research showed that eighteenth century Brighton lacked a Catholic presence and, while Catholics had suffered across the country as a whole from the indignities and deprivations of the Penal Code, Brighton's Catholic community had effectively disappeared. Inevitably the tide of Liberalism that swept through Europe, the varying influences of the nineteenth century Popes and the redefining of the roles of the religious all affected to a greater or lesser extent Catholic England. It was though the French Revolution which, it was claimed, 'had a permanent and far

reaching effect on Catholicity in England that played a significant role in the emerging Catholicity of Brighton.¹ The plight of a persecuted French nobility, coinciding with the Prince Regent's devotion to an aristocratic Catholic woman, from one of the most revered Old Catholic families heralded the emergence of a very small, tolerated body of Catholics in the town and, in so doing, contributed to the ever complex issue of Catholic identity. The 'noblesse oblige' were granted status and a measure of respect but not more than that. England was a Protestant country ruled by a Protestant king and the Act of Allegiance ensured it stayed that way. Maria Fitzherbert's marriage to the Prince Regent may have been accepted by the Pope but it was never acknowledged by the State. Ultimately the relationship between the two broke down although Maria Fitzherbert's reputation as the doyenne of goodness and respectability remained and it was widely accepted that the burgeoning Catholic Community owed her a great deal.

The Victorian era was to witness an even greater change in the composition and identity of Catholic society. The Irish potato famine led to an influx of Irish poor, while the Oxford Movement gave to the Catholic body the voices of a highly educated and influential class of converts. So it was that in Brighton a diverse body of European visitors and residents, Old Catholic families, impoverished Irish peasants and intellectual converts were to come together to forge a Catholic community. This blend of nationalities, cultures, class, and social and religious traditions did not always sit comfortably together nor was their presence easily accepted by society at large either individually or as a group. Yet they ultimately needed to unite if they were to gain respect for their religion, recognition of their rights and equality of opportunity.

While the problems of poverty and lack of education were certainly not confined to the Irish, their presence contributed to an awareness of the need for political reform and educational provision: The Catholic situation, however contentious, had to be addressed. The tensions this generated in many parts of the country were generally not reflected in Brighton in the middle

years of the nineteenth century. Despite outpourings of inflammatory statements from certain sections of the press and pulpit, efforts at rabble-rousing were unsuccessful and with only a small Irish presence in the town's poorest communities there was relatively little anti-Catholic feeling. One Mission and one religious order provided educational and various forms of support for young Catholic women but the initiatives were undertaken quietly and the influence of cautious priests prevailed.

This was to change as the Catholic population grew. Another two Missions were opened with accompanying schools and by the end of the century there were five religious orders engaged in meeting Catholic educational and social needs. The most famous of convert Cardinals, Manning and Newman, and the close affiliation of Newman to the town itself empowered the Catholic community in the country as a whole. Yet it was Brighton's convert priests, notably Crispin and Oldham, who proved to be particularly effective, replacing the once necessary caution of Cullin and Rymer with a more aggressive approach to securing fair provision for the Catholic population. The importance attached to the character of these nineteenth century priests and their Bishops and how each responded to the situation at the time and the particular demands of their mission cannot be underestimated. Brighton society, no less than the country at large, proved particularly unforgiving if they misread the mood of the people.²

The religious orders also become increasingly influential. Their Mission Statements bound them to the care of the poor, but they proved to be realistic and enterprising in the way they financed their work. They provided for both the wealthy and the poor and those who could afford it were required to pay. The church as a whole was not slow to remind its wealthier benefactors of their spiritual and temporal obligations.

For much of the century, Catholic schools continued to be disadvantaged and Brighton's Catholic schools were no exception to this since the demands of the Government were not equalled by the assistance provided. The schools though were not prepared to compromise on their religious agenda and in this matter the Catholics were neither more nor less uncompromising than other religious groups. Recognition of Catholics and legislation to secure their rights was slow in coming and often divisive. The initial government grants had excluded Catholics, The Newcastle Commission (1861) had made the provision of grants subject to quite rigid constraints in terms of numbers of children, provision of buildings and the availability of trained teachers. Forster's Education Act (1870) with its introduction of generously funded Board Schools furthered the divide. While the Cross Commission (1888) had highlighted, not for the first time, the divisions among the Voluntary bodies; it was not until the Balfour Act (1902) that Catholics finally achieved full recognition and equality of provision, but with certain reservations as noted in Chapter 3.

Brighton was though ravaged throughout the century with far more serious issues - poverty, crime and sickness. These issues did not discriminate between religions but they needed to be addressed. For this reason, the town came to see that institutions and churches which tried to deal with these problems really did not constitute a threat, and this unity of purpose resulted in the same pragmatism which had demanded that, as a Service Town, Brighton's priority above all else was not to offend either the nobility of the late Regency period or the new moneyed middle Classes of the Victorian age, regardless of their religious affiliation. It was this pragmatism that really defined Brighton and allowed it to claim a degree of uniqueness. As it struggled to escape from the bleakness of the early years of the 19th century, it courted unrelentlessly those who could secure its status. Not until the Victorian reign did it allow Government inspections which would reveal the reality of its poverty, long hidden in Georgian times so as not to endanger its attraction to its well-heeled visitors. When the aristocrats moved away, the town equally

successfully catered for the middle class visitors and those of the lower orders. Its electoral choices often defied expectations but again they were well thought through to benefit the town rather than offer loyalty to a party despite a particular party's stated allegiances. The press too cleverly emphasised the uniqueness of the city and carefully weighted criticism and praise particularly in the matters of religion. The attractions and appeal of the town to a world of writers, artists, and musicians has guaranteed the longevity of this appeal recorded in the richness of their works.

The third question, which sought to relate the past with the realities of the present proved to be the most challenging. Brighton's Catholics then as now remain a small percentage of the population, a mere 13,000 out of a population of 275,400. The town has six schools educating 3,532 children of whom 2,667 - that is over 75% - are non-Catholic.³ The town is famed for being richly cosmopolitan and accepting of alternative lifestyles but it is also an unequal society with serious social problems and attempts to resolve these inequalities by means of crossing religious and secular divides. Catholic doctrine and church teachings may not have changed but the emphasis placed on aspects of them certainly has. In this, the present Pope Francis seems to be following in the footsteps of Leo XIII by focussing more on provision for the innocent than punishment for the sinful and as such is likely to earn greater respect and acclaim for his Church than those of his predecessors who were obsessed with the morality of the laity but impotent in dealing with the immorality of the religious. The question as to what remains of the intransigent and uncompromising views of the nineteenth century Church may, in part, only be fully answered by delving into the level of spirituality and understanding of the Catholicism of today's children and adults. This I came to see would require further more sensitive research and is beyond the remit of this thesis.

It is though possible to draw from the thesis 'some general observations and consider what might

be the contemporary relevance to both social and educational issues of today'. With regard to the 'changing character and the purpose of Catholic education,'⁴ Catholic Schools, as with all faith schools, face a particular challenge with religious teachings often at variance with government directives. This country has long had a tradition of maintaining the rights of schools to educate children in a particular faith and has not sought the complete secularisation of education provided by the State, a policy followed by most of Europe. Faith schools have been able to dictate the religious background of the children who entered their schools, and Catholic parents in particular were in the past told quite forcibly that they had a moral duty to send their children to Catholic schools. It is inconceivable that any Bishop today, as referenced in Chapter 6, would issue an edict to be read in all Catholic churches stating that 'parents who failed [to send their children to a Catholic school] would be accountable to God at the Last Judgement if their children were lost to the faith through their own fault'.⁵ Although it was not Saint Ignatius who uttered the famous phrase, 'Give me the child I'll give you the man'⁶ the Church at least was confident that this would be so and that Catholic youth, if educated by Catholic teachers and most preferably the religious, would be inculcated with Catholic teachings. The law also allowed Catholic parents who did send their children to Catholic schools the right to ask that the children be withdrawn from religious lessons and religious assemblies although this was not a right given to non-Catholic children attending Catholic schools. This situation is changing by the day as the government sets tighter controls on quotas attending faith schools and on the curriculum that has to be taught. Of even greater interest is the increasing evidence that religious bodies are coming on board. According to a press release in *The Independent*:

'Religious leaders want end of exclusion by Faith schools',

Religious leaders today join with secular campaigners (which includes Christian, Jewish, Hindu and Muslim clergy as well as humanists) to demand that ministers ban faith schools from excluding pupils because of their beliefs and make it illegal for them to refuse to employ staff from other religions.⁷

This statement would be anathema to Catholic educationalists of the nineteenth century, who were unequivocal in their demands for 'Catholic Teachers for Catholic Schools'.

It needs to be recognised that Catholic teachers, both lay and religious, although the latter are in decline, as well as many non-Catholic teachers working in Catholic schools, feel safer discussing a broader social morality and an understanding of all world religions with classes made up of large numbers of non-Catholics and non-practising Catholics. This happens to be particularly true of the one Catholic comprehensive school in Brighton, as evidenced by the religious diversity of the numbers on the roll.

This acknowledgement of the commonality between faiths as emphasised in the above press release particularly relates to those of minor religions with distinctive cultural traditions and codes. This country has a history of subtle marginalisation although Brighton less so for reasons already identified. At the beginning of the century, it was Eastern European Jewry, later the Irish, then waves of immigrants from former colonies, and now it is the Muslim community, who may feel such marginalisation. This is as much, if not more, a result of social inequalities but one in which religious differences have been, and are, used to inflame public opinion. So it is that the words of the nineteenth century Bishop Ullathorne, as previously cited, should resonate so loudly today: 'You cannot make the Irish loyal to the Queen by making them disloyal to the Pope'.⁸ Maybe, despite what the lessons of history could teach us, to paraphrase Santayana, 'we are doomed to repeat the mistakes of history'.

For many traditional Catholics, the reforms of Vatican II orchestrated a significant divide between nineteenth century and twentieth century and subsequently twenty first century Catholicism. As the people took greater control of their churches, the priests and the religious became more vulnerable, more exposed and ultimately more challenged. The deference once

showed to the priests simply because they were priests has perhaps gone for ever. There are priests in Brighton greatly respected and much loved but these words from *The Tablet* of 1862, echoing the words of the 1852 Synod, in defence of the claim that the education of children should be in the hands of the priests and the Catechism should only be taught by them would, at best amuse, if not appal, most Brighton Catholics:

Teachers touched the soul of thousands but did not have the supernatural power and honour founded on the power which is given to the priesthood.⁹

The changes to the liturgy while bringing the mass closer to the people of one nation may have divided it from those of other nations. Brighton's twenty-first century Catholic services and devotions reveal little of the Romanising influences so beloved by Wiseman, loved by the Irish and disliked by the Old Catholics. Gilley had argued, perhaps correctly, that it was the 'Ultramontanization of the Church that made it a success as the new gaudy chapels with their altars and statues and smell of incense and melted beeswax projected a sense of the sacred'.¹⁰ There is little of this in Brighton's Catholic churches where one traditional priest valiantly says Mass in Latin to a dwindling congregation once a month.

The following quotation is of particular interest:

An impassable and hourly widening gulf intervenes between Catholicism and the spirit of the age which does not consider itself bound to believe fables and falsehoods that have been invented for ecclesiastical ends.¹¹

This is not a contemporary comment uttered to support recent statistics which claim that Brighton is the most irreligious city in England. Rather it was written a hundred years ago when the town believed the greatest threat to religion was secularisation. Perhaps there are more similarities with the past than we would choose to admit.

As with all research, one asks how it could be further developed. The most obvious answer is to continue the story into the twentieth century bringing Brighton's Catholic story up to the present.

This invites an even more interesting development that might be entitled 'Contemporary Voices', an extension of the third question which referred briefly to the relevance of the findings to present day issues. This would, as I have already indicated, demand a response from a wider Catholic audience and need to employ a different research methodology. A second challenging and potentially valuable contribution would involve the development of an extensive database which would far more accurately plot Catholic presence and movement, such as is currently being undertaken in a research project on female religious orders of women in Britain '*Who are the Nuns?*'¹²

The final concluding comment has to be what I as a researcher have learned. My overriding concern is that there is so much more that could be said. I opened doors which led to other doors that perhaps might have been better explored. I accept that one cannot change history but certainly one can change the focus and interpretation of events, which is what makes such research enriching but ultimately quite humbling. On a more positive note, I have drawn on the varied if sometimes fragmented material available to present what I believe to be the only account of Catholic educational and social provision in nineteenth century Brighton.

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- ³ *The Diocese of Arundel and Brighton Parish and School returns for 2012*.
- ⁴ See page 2 of Chapter 1 and note 6 (page 16)
- ⁵ Gilley, S. 'The Roman Catholic Church in England 1780-1940'. In Gilley S., and Shiels, W.J. (Eds.) *A History of Religion in Britain*. Oxford: Blackwell. p.359.
- ⁶ Draper, J. (1901). *History of the Conflict between History and Science*. London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co Ltd., p.362.
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- ⁹ *The Tablet*, 1862
- ¹⁰ Gilly, S., op. cit.
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