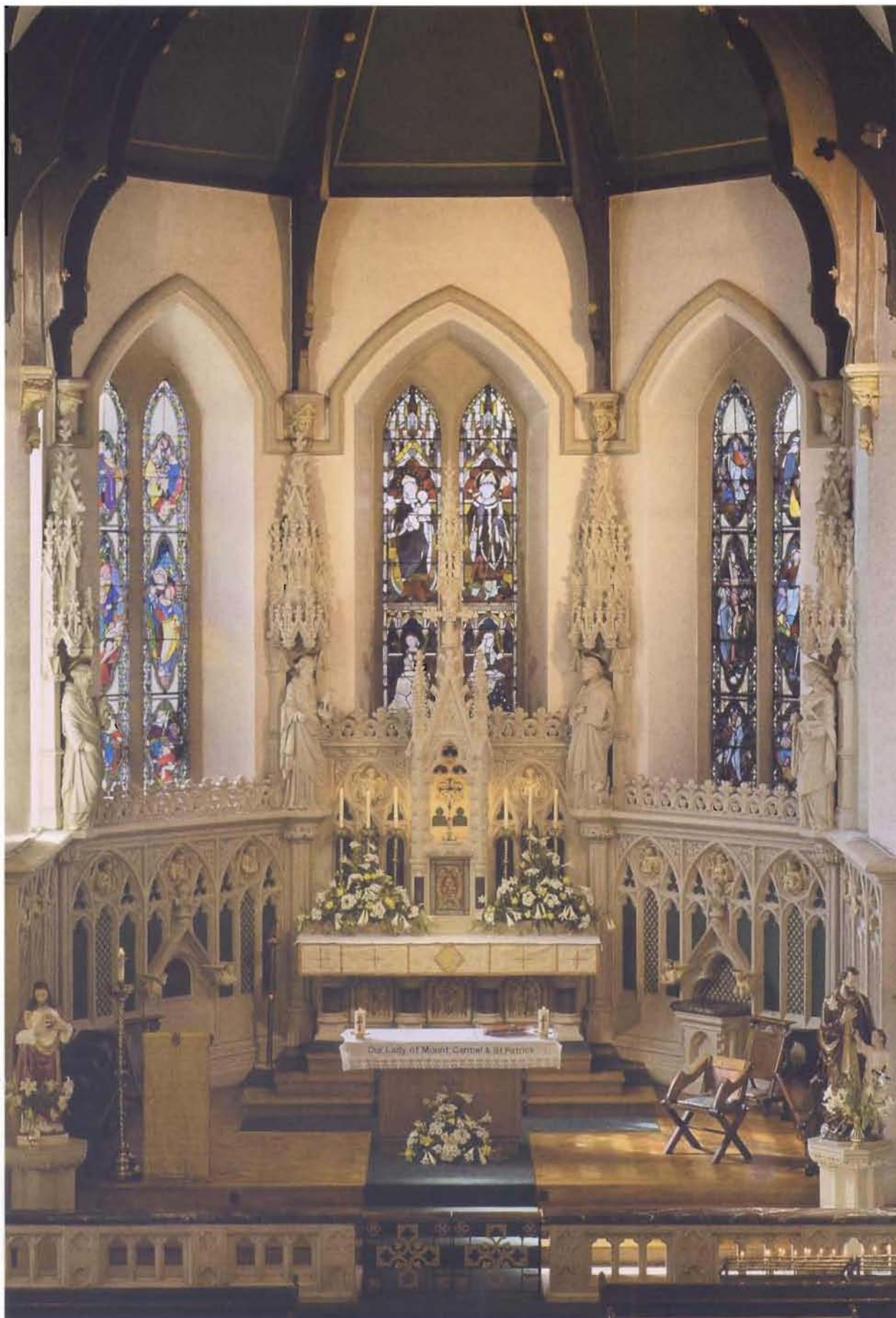


# FAITH OF OUR FATHERS



OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL & ST. PATRICK OLDHAM



1919, 27TH JULY -  
CELTIC CROSS

(MADE OF ABERDEEN GRANITE COSTING £135.)

ERECTED AS A MEMORIAL  
TO 163 MEN DIED WHO  
DIED IN THE GREAT WAR -  
PLACED IN FRONT OF THE  
CHURCH



## Foreword by + Terence Bishop of Salford

“When you read through the history of the last 142 years of Catholics living in the Oldham area we have a lot to be thankful of and it shows how much progress has been made, even if today we think there is still a lot more progress needed.

We don't have a William Murphy coming to give a weeks lectures in the town with a pistol after being being banned by the Justice of Peace for inciting riot (1868). We don't have 50 children to a class and no qualified teachers (1871). We don't have the factory masters refusing to release children from work to go to a Catholic school (1871) and we don't have to face smallpox epidemics (1892) and a general lock out for three months from the mill (1892-3).

Yet during this period with its lack of proper schooling, lack of well paid work, while all this sectarianism was rife in Oldham, our forefathers had the confidence in God to put down the roots that today have blossomed into the Catholic parishes and schools and societies that make up the eastern part of our diocese.

As we begin the new century, we who have

received this inheritance must also have the confidence in God to proclaim his Truth in our time. We must be prepared to share in the public and civil life in our town: be prepared to take responsibility together in our parishes and schools, nurture our young people, and old, and look beyond our own back yard to the wider world and Church.

People in this part of the world always had a sense of God. There is an ancient prophesy known as the Christis Crofte recorded at the time of the Domesday Book:

*"When all England is aloft  
Happy they that are in Christis Crofte;-  
And where should Christis Crofte be?  
But between the Ribble and the Mersey."*



### Message from Father Frank Waterworth, Parish Priest

“I am privileged to contribute to this “History of Our Lady and Mount Carmel and St. Patrick Church” as your Parish Priest and custodian of this magnificent building dedicated to the glory of God.

St. Patrick's stands as a tribute to the foresight, generosity and hard work of many previous generations of parishioners, particularly people who suffered extreme hardship, deprivation and social injustice in the name of Catholicism. In Gods name we thank them.

We offer our gratitude and thanks to the many

predecessors who have served as parish priest and curates. They have ministered to their flock, cared for the building but most importantly they have created a devotion and loyalty to this church which is firmly established throughout the town of Oldham.

St. Patrick's is unique. An invisible tread draws you “home” and within its stout walls it offers refuge, peace and a strong sense of belonging- which appears everlasting regardless of where you travel.

May God's grace and peace linger forever within it's walls and may God's love and blessings permeate into our lives and remain in the hearts of every parishioner past present and future.

Thanks be to God for the blessing of belonging to the family of this Church.”

**THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED TO PAST PARISHONERS WHOSE LOVE OF THEIR FAITH INSPIRED THE BUILDING OF ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH AND TO ALL PRIESTS WHO HAVE SERVED THIS PARISH IN THE LAST 142 YEARS.**

# The Hundreds of Salford and Blackburn

The Acts of Succession and Supremacy in the early 1530's marked the break with Papal authority in Britain. King Henry VIII now assumed an additional title, Supreme Head of The Church Of England, and it became a treasonable offence to deny this by failing to take the Oath of Allegiance to the King.

The two Acts marked the beginning of "Penal Times", more than 200 years of varying degrees of persecution for Catholics, especially those caught in the act of practising their faith; for priests, the punishment from a gruesome death to a heavy fine and imprisonment.

Priests travelled the length and breadth of the country preaching, celebrating Mass, carrying out baptisms and hearing confessions at secret gatherings of the faithful. Nowhere where these gallant priests safe, but Lancashire offered the next best thing for once they crossed the Mersey they found themselves on friendly soil, offered succour and sanctuary by Lancashire Squires who for the most part were old Catholic families.

Although persecution gradually became less ruthless the Penal Acts remained and so did the oath which ensured that

Catholics remained second class citizens.

In 1778 King George III gave his Royal Assent to the Catholic Relief Act which allowed Catholics to buy and inherit land this meant that priests were no

longer to be the prey for informers and liable to imprisonment for life.

In Manchester three parishes were built, St. Chad's, St Mary's and St. Augustine's: whilst these churches were being built the first massive population explosion

occurred when Irish navvies came to build the railways bringing with them their staunchy Catholic families.

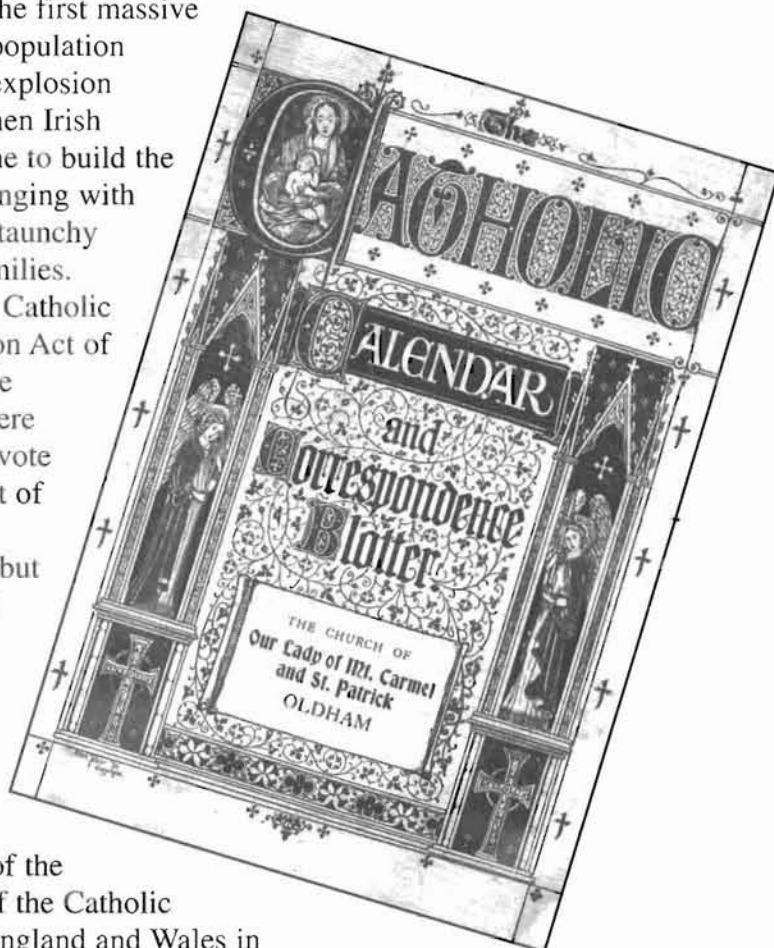
Under the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 eligible Catholics were granted the vote and the right of election to Parliament, but all civil and military offices remained barred to them.

Under the restoration of the Hierarchy of the Catholic Church in England and Wales in

1850, the existing district of Lancashire was divided into the diocese of Liverpool - covering two thirds of the county - and Salford covering the remaining third. It comprised the Hundreds of Salford and Blackburn and William Turner (1799 - 1872) was appointed Bishop.

Herbert Vaughan (1832 - 1903) succeeded him but was transferred to the Archdiocese of Westminster in April 1892. His successor was John Billsborrow who became third Bishop of Salford.

**"Once they  
crossed the  
Mersey they  
found  
themselves on  
friendly soil"**





# Irish Immigrants

## Settlement in Oldham

Immigration to England in the 1840's was not only as a result of crop failure and a fragile economic and political climate in Ireland but more so on the prospects of long or short term employment, social opportunity and the improved quality of life for an Irish immigrant enabling him to provide a stable opportunity for bringing up a family and enjoying a comfortable life.

In migrating to England these "seekers" were taking a gamble which in many cases paid off (the journey invariably being a one way ticket). People settled in and began to embroider the fabric of the "Irish Community", integrating culture, religious and folk lore into the areas in which they settled.

By 1851 a census indicates that over 80% of England's Irish immigrant population was living in towns with populations exceeding 10,000 people - such a town was Oldham. The census recording a population of 52,820 in Oldham some 2743 of whom were born in Ireland - if we offer that second generation of Irish emigre to this figure than the Irish population of Oldham increased to over 3,000 people



even at this early date.

The Irish came to Oldham possibly because of the textile industry, it's growth and thereby it's offer of employment but also because of the proximity of areas of canal development in the North West which tempted gangs of Irish workers with good prospects of employment couples with the retained ability to "rove" from area to area as the canal network evolved.

In recorded information as early as 1818 - such names as Peter Connell (tailor - Market Place) - T. Cawley (Cheese Monger Henshaw Street) - indicating a positive achievement of social status within the area of Oldham. Perhaps an indication that these families had resided and prospered in the town over a long period of time.

Irish immigration to Oldham appeared to be initially male dominated - young men venturing into the world or husbands and fathers seeking a

new start for their wives and families. Oldham being a town of potential prosperity and development acted as a magnet to young people and families who were prepared to pursue



*Traditional Irish village: Gweedor, County Donegal.*

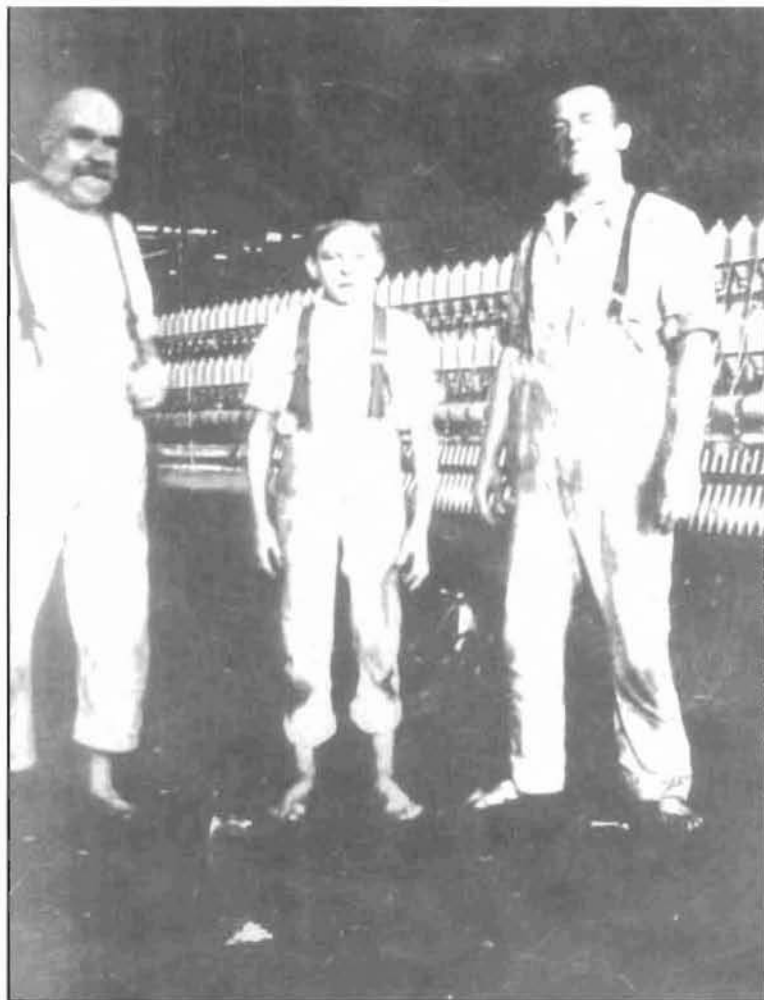
advancement, however a lack of education, skills and confidence on the part of the Irish immigrants, coupled with a high

degree of illiteracy and prejudice from those with land, capital and employment at their disposal hindered their anticipated growth in wealth and prosperity.

Such an exception was Alderman John Riley - from Irish stock - who made his fortune from a cotton spinning partnership with a Mr. Wainwright of Chadderton.

Mr. Riley was closely involved in politics within the Chadderton area and was Mayor of Oldham on 3 separate occasions in the 1860's - he represented the Westwood Ward where his mill was situated, as an independent from 1855 until his death in

**"the North West tempted gangs of Irish workers with good prospects of employment."**



*Bank Top Spinning*

**“The Oldham textile operative had a reputation for being the highest paid in Lancashire in 1841”**

The expansion and survival taking active steps to coexist with the local people but retaining their religious and cultural identities within a foreign and mainly protestant land.

The first Catholic/Lancashire marriage being recorded in the Catholic Church in Oldham was Eliza Bentley to Mr. James

1893.

Equally famous at that time was an Irish Tailor of the town who was the “figurehead” of the town’s radicals, both English and Irish, in the 1840’s. He also took a close and active interest in local politics, organising Chartist activity in Oldham and later being instrumental in the “strike” action of the town’s cobblers and tailors in 1844.

McCabe’s activity in the

Chartist movement - as one of the many charges levelled at the immigrant Irish both by their bigoted contemporaries in that their apparent unwillingness to work through strikes and refusal to join trade unions somehow undermined the position of “the working class”. Yet in Oldham we have evidence of Irish immigrants participation in a cause that had genuine democratic aims.

Corrigan - evidence of acceptance of relationships between ‘Lancastrians’ and ‘foreigners’. The Irish immigrants nevertheless experienced prejudice, bigotry and sectarianism but within the years 1851-1861 there is evidence that the Irish accounted for ONE out of every NINE Oldhamers.

The Irish were drawn to Oldham as the textile mills expanded-bringing relative prosperity as the Oldham textile operative had a reputation for being the highest paid in Lancashire in 1841. The immigrants were lured from Liverpool to Oldham to experience the expanding and lucrative financial rewards from the growth of this industry and appeared successful in employment as a result of their

*Oldham mills provided many Irish people with employment.*







*Tommyfield, Oldham at the turn of the century*

reputation for being hard workers. Established foremen or overseers in mills or gangs on building sites used their influence to secure work for their fellow immigrants and there then developed clear areas of Irish employment resulting in separate communities.

For the newcomers to Oldham integration into the town itself became important but this was often hindered by:

1. Their belief that their stay in England was of a temporary nature - on achieving their financial security they could return to their 'roots'.

2. Their tendency to create distinct geographical areas of their own communities.

The local paper talked of "the rapid influx" of the immigrants and also talked of the "considerable amount of danger" that was concurrent with cultural, social and economic

"swamping". During the 1850's the sectarian relationships in Oldham took on a more intense complexity with the growth of the 'Orange Movement'; Oldham having at least 11 active "lodges" of the Grand Association of Loyal Orangemen."

In 1855 under the directorship of reverends Walsh and Ireland a branch of the Pastoral Aid was set up - this being a national Protestant organisation that was aimed at checking the spread of Catholicism in England.

In a revealing survey the Oldham branch assessed that 60% of households within St Peters Parish were Irish Catholics - indicating the strenght of immigrant "ghettos." In April 1855 an Irish imported speaker addressed the Oldham

branch of Pastoral Aid and decreed Catholicism as an "anti social, anti human and anti Christian confederations against God and man."

In 1857 the Oldham Protestant Association was formed, ironically about the same time as the intended opening of a second Catholic Church in Oldham - that being St Patrick's. This generated increased anti Catholic feelings amongst Protestant



*Many Families came to England to escape starvation and poverty.*



activist thereby generating more antagonism towards the settling Irish immigrants.

In 1861 Oldham witnessed the trial of Father Conway the priest of St. Mary's Catholic Church and his conviction for assault on his schools head mistress Miss Mullarhy who refused to leave the school premises when requested to do so by Father Conway. In attempting to help her "on her way" he stood on her dress, she fell and thus he was charged.

This incident gave fuel to the an already smouldering fire of anti papist feeling and the tension between Protestant and Catholic parties increased, resulting in actual conflict in May 1861, when the tail end of the procession of Roman Catholic Churches and Schools on Whit Friday collided with the end of Protestant Walks.

### **The Oldham Standard quotation of the incident was;**

*"The Hiberian ladies particularly distinguished themselves in the use of their tongues and fists and after the encounter, bonnets, ribbons and shawls were in anything but the order in which they were a few minutes previously. Men had also come to blows and the policemen had to use their sticks rather freely-to restore anything like order." An uneasy truce followed the restoration of order but cat calling like "drive the Irish out of the town" was responded to by the boast of the Irish "they would soon have Oldham to themselves".*

Albeit this incident took on a comic face - the underlying resentment between parties held

a more sinister threat. During the next few weeks the Anglo-Irish relationship (or lack of) deteriorated and ill feeling was generated daily - gangs met on Tommyfield and jeered at the "base, bloody and brutal Saxons"- the threat resulting in a few scuffles by tongue and claw. The following day saw English and Irish youths throwing down their caps by way of a challenge and the whistling of the "Bayne Water" increased the simmering tension already abounding in the town.

Incidents of mob violence both verbal and physical are clearly recorded the in Oldham Standard, but more severe escalation is evident in an incident of domestic dispute between an English 18 year old and a older Irishman in a residential area joining the town centre resulting in a youth being



stabbed.

On Friday 15th June a crowd of not less than 15,000 met on Tommyfield. Leaflets distributed by the "Oldham Boys" urged the people of Oldham to rally together to solve the "Irish Question". The crowd descended on St.

Mary's Church but were met by a large police presence; the police baton charged the mob dispersing them successfully however a hard core of hooligans headed for the St. Patrick's Church with violent intent on mischief and destruction. These hooligans attacked the church with violent intent and damage. On their arrests the police found priest and parishioners hiding in the Presbytery in fear of their lives.

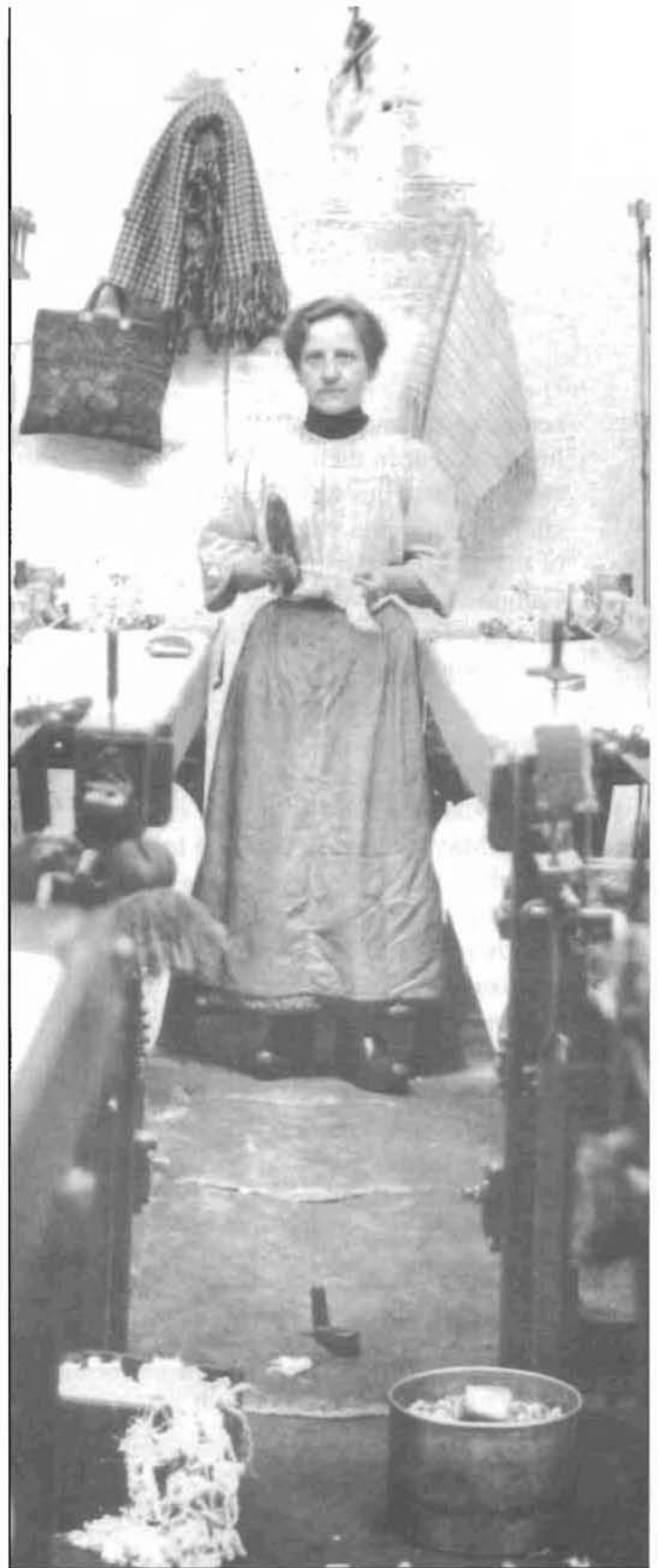
In climaxing the sectarianism, uneasy tension remained albeit that much pressure had been ventilated. The five day spell of violence came to constitute Oldham's "Orange and Green Riots". Though the troubles had a religious root they were also coloured by social grievance illustrated in a speech made by one of the five men acquitted of charges relating to "unrest" at Salford Assizes - the Irish "They would work at any price and he averred that plenty of them were doing the same kind of work he had to do at 7p per day less than

**"Murphy dismissed  
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up the Mayoral letter."**

he got." His speech illustrates what image the Irish immigrant had in his mind of the industrial worker, the strict non-unionised worker, undercutting native labour and this clarifies the grievance aspect.

The events of 1861 appeared to alienate further the Irish from their native inhabitants of Oldham; the key to the integration of the immigrant appeared to lay in their ability to lose their "foreign" label and become more established in the town.

The solutions to sectarianism that the Oldham Chronical proffered was one of integration of the Irish, to avoid the dangers of creating a religious and cultural underclass. This would be achieved by an amalgam: "To fuse, as far as possible, the two



*Mill Worker at the turn of the century.*

discordant elements - not by lowering the English standard but by raising, humanising and by civilising the Irish."

However the Irish consolidated their position in Oldham and built strength in a positive, confidence inspiring manner, setting down a permanence and



acquiring the mantle of improvement in their communities; this however was challenged by the visit in 1886 of the notorious Irish anti-Catholic lecturer Williams Murphy who came to give a week long series of talks. Murphy's infamous talks had aroused such anti-Irish passion that riot had erupted - even in such local areas as Ashton.

The Mayor at the time wrote to Murphy requesting he postpone his visit - thus *"I have to inform you that it is in their (The Magistrates) opinion that in the present state of public feeling the delivery of your lectures is highly impolitic and would excite angry feeling in the minds of a considerable portion of the community."* **Oldham**

**Chronical 11th January 1868.**

Opening his lecture in the

Cooperative Hall, Murphy dismissed Oldham's Irish people as "Ragamuffin Fenians" - he waved his revolver and tore up the mayoral letter. Despite such attempts to incite violence, the police tactics and presence enabled the town to remain calm.

In 1870, Archbishop Manning was invited to formally open St. Patrick's Church. The acceptance of this invitation by a most prestigious member of the Church hierarchy was seen as a

true accolade and inspired a new confidence in the Irish Catholic population of the town.

In a period of 10 years from riots and unrest to the opening of St. Patrick's Church, the Irish immigrants had finally made a positive mark and contribution to the community and town of Oldham.

**References: Oldham Standard  
Oldham Chronical  
Irish Immigration in Oldham. C.J.  
Murphy 1990**



Waterloo dock 1850



## DEDICATION OF ST. PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHAPEL BANKTOP

On Sunday October 10th 1858 the above named Chapel will be solemnly DEDICATED by the Right Rev. Dr. Turner Lord Bishop of Salford.

Pontifical High Mass at 11 o clock and a sermon by the Right Rev. Canon Benoit of the Cathedral Salford. Music-Hayden's No 2 Mass with Full Orchestra.

Vespers and Benediction of the Most Holy Sacrament at 6pm and a Sermon by the Rev. J. Conway. Music- Selections from Eminent Composers with Orchestral Accompaniment.

Morning Service-Reserved seats 4/-; Front seats 2/-; Back seats 1/-

Evening service- Reserved seats 2/- Front seats 1/- Back seats 6d

Tickets for admission to the service may be had at St. Marie's Presbytery Shaw St. and of E. Bullman Esq. Clegg ST. Messrs. John Bently and John Simpson High St.

On Sunday October 17th two Sermons will be preached in the same Chapel at 11 o clock by Rev. John Tracy and at 6pm by the Rv. P.J. Phelan of St. Patrick's Liverpool.

Silver will be thankfully received at the door.

# The beginning of Catholicism in Oldham

## St. Patrick's Chapel of Ease 1858

In 1801/2 a notable Irishman Daniel Tynon brought his family to Oldham and made his home in Lord St. From his tiny nucleus of one family the Catholic population

began. Oldham was initially served from St. Augustine's Granby Row Manchester, but after the founding of a new mission in Ashton, Oldham was incorporated into the new mission of Ashton-Under-Lyne. Holy Mass was said in a public house in Henshaw Street known by such names as "General Cornwallis", Harp and Shamrock" and "The Lamb and Lark." In 1826 the Catholics moved to a room referred to as "The Pidgeon Cote" which was a garret over the shops of the 14 and 16 Henshaw St. In an attempt to find more suitable accommodation for his flock Fr. John Fisher leased the Unitarian Chapel on Lord Street however the lease expired and the people returned to the public house now renamed "The Harp and

Shamrock" A young priest appointed to the Ashton Mission in 1837

created his residence in Oldham and after fundraising across the country, the building

of the first Catholic Church in Oldham began, that being St. Mary's it was eventually opened on 3rd March 1839. Ground was consecrated around the church as a Catholic graveyard and Catholics were buried there from 1844 until 1857.

### THE MISSION AT BANKTOP.

In 1851 a place had been erected at Banktop at a cost of £350=00 in addition to their labour, by a group of men who had separated themselves from the Baptist congregation. Part of this cost was obtained by a mortgage from a lady in Stalybridge, who had with it the right of sale. Not being satisfied with the manner in which the interest and principle was being repaid, she put the building up for public auction and it was purchased by Mr. John Bentley on instruction of Father Conway for £157-00. The internal fittings cost £6.00 more. It was then fitted out as a Catholic Chapel at a cost of £50-00. There was seating for 380 people but it could be made to accommodate 400. The chapel was situated near the site of the present car park, and was dedicated to Our Lady Of Mount Carmel and St. Patrick. The holy Sacrifice of the Mass was first offered up in the new Chapel of Ease on Sunday October 10th 1858.



*St. Patrick's Church at the turn of the century.  
NOTE: Boundary wall being built, no confessional boxes  
no porch, Statue of our Lady under bell tower*

### THE OPENING OF ST. PATRICK'S CHAPEL OF EASE

The dedication service was performed on Sunday morning by the Rev. Dr. Turner the Catholic Bishop of Salford. Pontifical High Mass was performed, the Bishop being the celebrant, the Rev Canon Beniot of the Cathedral Salford. Deacon; the Rev. John Tracy sub-deacon and the Rev James Conway assistant priest. Second Mass was performed by the choir of St. Marie's chapel, and a band specially engaged under the leadership of Mr. Bodden. Mr. Bolton & Mr. Jackson of the Cathedral Salford were the masters of ceremonies. Chevelier Lee, knight of the Order of St. Gregory, who was expected to have been present kindly lent his carriage to the Bishop.



At the commencement of the mass after the incensation of the altar and the singing of the Kyrie Eleison, he intoned the Gloria, which was then sung by the choir. The bishop then sang the collect of the day and afterwards recited the epistle in a low tone during which time the sub deacon sang it. The Deacon chanted the Gospel and afterwards preached from 1st Malachi 11th verse. He concluded by an appeal on behalf of the Chapel Funds.

After the sermon, the offertory was made and in the attendant music the clear bass voice of Mr. Samuel Hamer jnr. was particularly noticable; he sang "O Saulutaris Hostia" The bishop then intoned the Credo which was sung by the choir and afterwards he ascended the altar and proceeded with the mass. After singing the Preface the choir sang Sanctus and the Benedictus, a quartet which was beautifully rendered, the voice of soprano Miss Margaret Towney being very effective. Then followed the consecration, the elevation of the host and chalice and the mass proceeded to "Agnus Dei" the music to which was most exquisite and was rendered with a high degree of feeling. The communion followed and the congregation was dismissed by the deacon singing "ite Missa est" the choir singing the "Hallelujah" in a superior manner. The sum of £39-5-9 was received at the offertory.

In the evening there was another service, the sermon being preached by the Rev. James Conway. On both occasions the congregation was large.

In January 1862 the chapel of Ease became a seperate mission, the first rector being Rev. Peter

Cardinael who remained at St. Patrick's for the next 6 years. On the 9th of January 1868 the Rev. Robert Brindle was appointed Rector of St. Patrick's. He had attended Stoneyhurst College and subsequently St. Cuthberts College Ushaw eventually being ordained to the priesthood at St. John's Cathedral in September 1858 and appointed assistant priest at Salford Cathedral.

To enable Fr. Brindle to commence his task of building a Church Mr. John Lees Ainsworth ( a Convert) provided a plot of land large enough for a church and Presbytery to be built.

On Easter Monday March 1869, the foundation stone of the present structure in Union Street was laid by the Very Reverend Canon Cantwell.

A procession of scholars and parishioners from St. Mary's Shaw St. arrived at the ground and having joined the parishioners from St. Patrick's a vast assembly was headed by cross- bearers and acolyts with torches. On arrival at the spot which was marked by a big wooden cross indicating



*The Presbytery, built 1898.*

the future position of the High Altar, the ground was blessed and sprinkled with

Holy water;-the foundation stone was blessed and the Litany of the Saints was intoned. The celebrant then placed in the cavity of the stone a bottle containing an account of the Church written on parchment, a medal cross and a few coins together with some hymns in





honour of the Blessed Virgin. (The foundation stone is situated is situated beneath the High Altar and can be seen on the outside wall of the church on Union St. West next to the Presbytery)

**ON SUNDAY 4TH JUNE 1870 THE CHURCH WAS OPENED FOR DIVINE SERVICE.**

On Sunday 4th June the church was opened for the first time for divine service. At 11.00am the clergy and people

assembled at the old chapel and walked in procession to the new church, carrying with them everything they had venerated for so long in the new sanctuary. Solemn High Mass was sung; at the

"Gloria in Excelsis Deo" the statue in honour of the Mother of the world's Redeemer was unveiled and the Rev. R. Brindle read from the altar.

**FORMAL OPENING OF THE CHURCH BY RIGHT REV. DR TURNER BISHOP OF SALFORD - AUGUST 20TH 1870.**

On Sunday 20th August 1870 the Right Rev Bishop of Salford paid a visit to St. Patrick's when he formally opened

the church. A procession consisting of the Bishop, the clergy and acolytes was formed in the vestry, and proceeded round the church and ascended the high altar when the church was solemn. At the evening service dedicated by his Lordship under the patronage of "Our Lady Of Mount Carmel and St. Patrick". The Mass was sung by Rector Rev. R. Brindle. The special preacher on this occasion being the Rev. Fr. Clarke S.J. who preached both morning and evening. The music of the Mass Haydns Imperial No. 3 was performed by the full choir with band accompaniment. At the close of Benediction in the evening service the band and choir gave a rendering of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus."

**REOPENING OF THE CHURCH BY HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF WESTMINSTER.**

In 1873 His Grace the Archbishop of Westminster, Archbishop Manning re-opening the church after decoration and the addition of anew high altar and reredos.

At 11 o'clock, High Mass was sung with orchestral accompaniment and the notices of the day were read. Rev Brindle took the opportunity to remind the congregation of their duty to pray for the benefactors of the church especially Mr John Lees Ainsworth and his wife who since his death has become a nun in the Order of the Redeemer in Dublin. As a mark of respect and piety and devotion to her husband she caused this church to be adorned with such splendour.

At the evening service, in which His Grace the Archbishop was announced to preach, the church was packed. A throne



draped in scarlet had been erected on the Epistle side of the altar. His Grace, arriving at the centre of the sanctuary, knelt for a few moments in prayer and then proceeded to the throne prepared for his visit. He was robed in a purple cassock and sash surplice and biretta. At the close of the sermon Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament was given. His Grace, robed in a white cope of silver tissue, having his mitre on his head and crozier in his left hand, followed the long train of clerks, acolytes and torch bearers. He dispensed blessings with his right hand as he passed along to the high altar. The flood of light from the innumerable candles, the incense, the clergy and the clerks in their cassocks, formed a spectacle of beauty and magnificence never to be forgotten. At the conclusion the Archbishop mounted the steps and, taking the Monstrance in his hand, blessed the vast congregation.

The church was at that time in the Deanery of St Patrick's Manchester and for 26 years Father Brindle worked tirelessly for this mission and set St Patrick's firmly in place. In 1886 he was made Dean of the Oldham Conference and when he died in 1894 he was greatly mourned.

Dean Brindle was followed by Fr. Thomas O'Callaghan who came from St Anne's Greenacres. He was faced with the awesome task of re-building schools which had been condemned and took on a major parish debt of £2750. The burden of building new schools on any parish is necessarily a heavy one but when a new presbytery has also to be added it makes the task all the more oppressive. in this case it



involved the demolition of the old presbytery to create space to utilise for the new schools. Consequently a new presbytery had also to be added to the already heavily burdened mission, involving an outlay of nearly £11000. In 1906 he undertook major restoration works within the church and the church was opened by Bishop Casastelli in 1907.

### **CHURCH RESTORATIONS 6th October 1907**

There confessionals built in the walls, a porch at the entrance, two new windows in the chancel and under the gallery, two new side altars (Our Lady and St Joseph), new altar rails (marble), a new terazzo floor in front of the altar and to the rear of the church, three new vestibules, new stairs to the gallery and new seating throughout. The plate glass in all the windows replaced by tinted glass, leaded in diamond shaped sections; in

the artificial lighting - electricity takes the place of gas, a fascia to provide for ventilating purposes and the whole church painted in order and decorated.

Many other items added materially to the cost - laquering of brasses, branch and votive candle stems, new sanctuary lamp, votive lamps and monstrance, marble holy water font, decoration of the same and Stations of the Cross; considerable repairs done to the exterior of the church to make it damp and waterproof and much rep[air to the interior plastering before painting.

Total cost - £2000

Dean Brindle remained in the position of Parish Priest until his death on Rosary Sunday 1917.

Little else is recorded regarding further development of St Patrick's church except for a major fundraising Bazaar which helped to off-set the Parish Debt.



# Our Church - *a devotional church*

**S**ituated within five minutes walk from the centre of Oldham, the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Patrick's is known and revered by many people. In the midst both of the noise and bustle of this modern world, many find peace and tranquillity within its walls. The Church is seldom without a caller. Here hearts find consolation in prayer before the tabernacle, and new courage to face the cares of everyday life.

The church was designed by Mr. Mitchell, an Oldham Architect, and built by Mr. Finnigan of Manchester. The architecture of the Church is gothic, and consists of naves and aisles with lofty arches terminating in an octagonal apse. Over the gable end of the main entrance is a belfry surmounted by a cross. The Sanctuary is raised above the nave and is flanked by two side chapels, having the altars. The beautiful high altar and reredos is of Caen Stone and Devonshire marble pilasters. There are four canopied niches containing the statues of the four Evangelists, and fourteen panels depicting Angels bearing in their hands the titles of Our Blessed Lady. The tabernacles adorned by figures of wheat and vine entwined with foliage. Circles of shamrock surround the throne, which is surmounted by a cross. The reredos itself is crested with the fleur-de-lis.

The altar portion consists of a massive slab of Sicilian marble supported by four octagonal marble shafts. In the spaces between is depicted the Annunciation, the Coronation of Our Lady and the Offerings of the Magi. The tabernacle is a fine specimen of the goldsmith's art and was made in Paris.

The stained glass windows above the High Altar give a religious atmosphere to this sacred place and portray scenes from the life of Our Blessed Lord and His Mother. The two windows directly above the high altar show the patrons of the Church, Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Patrick.



The Baptistry is worthy of note with its font of Derbyshire stone, octagonal in shape and carved on the panels and mouldings. The stained glass windows depict the Baptism of Our Lord and Christ blessing little Children. Beneath the window is the following inscription: "Of your charity pray for the response of the soul of Margaret, the beloved wife of George Kighley who died September 3rd, 1871." A small tablet records that fact that George Kighley erected the baptistry in memory of his wife. A choir gallery which covers the main entrance of the Church contains the organ.

Since Vatican II in the early 1960s, the main altar has been reordered and the centre area of celebration of the Mass now faces the congregation. This major change prompted the purchase of a new altar and lectern to meet requirements.

# The Bazaar: 1907

**I**t was in 1907 that refurbishment of St. Patrick's Church was undertaken and a major fund raising project was initiated in the form of a 'Bazaar'.

To quote 3 confessionals built in the walls, a porch at the entrance, 2 new windows in the chancel and under the gallery, 2 new side altars (Our Lady and St. Joseph), new altar rails (marble), a new terrazzo floor in front of the altar and to the rear of the church 3 new vestibules, new stairs to the gallery and new seating throughout, The plate glass in all windows replaced by a tinted glass leaded in diamond shaped sections; in the articial lighting electricity to take the place of glass, a facia to provide for ventilation purposes and the whole church painted in order and decorated.

Many other items added to the cost - lacquering of brasses, branch and votive candle stems, new sanctuary lamp, votive lamps and monstrance, marble holy water font, decoration of the same and Stations of the cross; considerable repairs done to the exterior of the church to make it damp and waterproof also much repair to interior plastering before painting."

The estimated total of the whole project was to be £2,000 - £2,500 in total.

11 years previously a similar "Bazaar" had been held to raise

funds for the building of the schools and Presbytery, resulting in the provision of school accommodation for boys, girls and infant children and the face of St. Patrick's had undergone substantial change.

The scale of the 1907 Bazaar and the planning and publicity of the event proved well organised and extensive. The Bazaar was to involve members of the Catholic community of St. Patrick's regardless of age or ability; people were encouraged to bring money, parcels of goods, flowers, plants and such articles for sale.

The opening ceremony was undertaken by Mr. Alexander Carus J.P. KSG on Wednesday 7th November at 3.00pm. The second day event was opened by councillor Ruddin Esq. J.P. P.L.G. - admission 6d.

The final days proceedings were launched by Mr. Joseph Nannetti MP - Lord Mayor of Dublin.

A polite ditty in the programme reads thus:-

**Your's not to  
reason why  
Your's but to  
come and buy  
For we mean  
to help and try  
To raise the  
TEN  
HUNDRED**



Stalls at the Bazaar were manned by different sodalities functioning within the church at the time-

**Rose stall** - Lady members of the congregation assisted by Guides of St. Agnes.

**Lily Stall** - President and Members of Children of Mary

**Chrysanthemum Stall** - The head and assistant teachers of St. Patrick's and Dunbar Street schools and a few lady members of the congregation.

**Sunflower Stall** - The president and brothers of St. Patrick's Conference and St. Vincent de Paul.

## SUNFLOWER STALL.

### **Marguerite Stall**

-Lady members of the congregation assisted by the Children of Mary

### **Flower Stall**

- Young Lady members of the congregation

Other attractions at the Bazaar were...

### **Gypsy Tent**

"your character most graphically portrayed and fortune of the rosiest hue



Opening . . .  
Ceremony.





guaranteed by Madame Cantellam" - don't forget to cross her palm with the needful silver.

**Hat Trimming** - 1st. prize 1s 6d - second prize 1s 0d to be spent at the Bazaar.

"Limited to gentlemen between the age of 6 and 66. The competitors will each be supplied with a Shape and Trimming also needle and thread and at the word "GO" will proceed to business. All hats to be sold to the highest bidder - entrance fee 2d.

**Box Making Competition** - for ladies only. 1st. prize 1s 6d - second prize 1s 0d to be spent at the Bazaar.

"A number of specially prepared pieces of wood with

hammer and nails will be given to each competitor. At the word "GO" each competitor attempts to bring their wooden facilities into play to make the best shaped box."

**Fish Pond** - "the Fish Pond is well stocked with fish - come early and often with your money. This is the only preserved water where you can catch fish without catching cold. A charge of 1d will PURCHASE the right for fishing."

**Darning Competition** -

"open to gentlemen only - 1st prize 1s 6d - second prize 1s 0d to be spent at the Bazaar." "Each competitor will be supplied with a stocking worse for wear, a darning needle and some wool. The spectators to be the Judges whose decision is final."

**Bran Tubs** - "you have two dips for your money - one into your



**DYSONS  
ART  
PHOTOGRAPHERS  
29 King Street.**

pocket and one into the bran tubs - if at first you don't succeed Dip Dip Dip again."

**Cloak Room and Parcel Office** was designated near the entrance

to the Bazaar - Note the charges -  
Parceling up Goods Purchased 1d. -  
Storing 1d.  
Umbrellas, Hats, Coats and Parcels may be left at a charge of 1d. Visitors having made their

purchases can leave their parcels here and then partake of refreshments. Afterwards they will be able to walk round with greater comfort and to have their hands free to get to their pockets.

It is hoped that this will prove a great boon to ladies and gentlemen who wish to make presents but are too shy to

**JOHN  
BOOTH.**

**FURNITURE  
REMOVER,**

**WERNETH COAL  
YARD.**

**JAS. SHANNON.**

**Importer of Irish  
Eggs and Butter,**

**55 Manchester  
Street.**

**John J. Naughton.  
Fruit, Fish, Poultry  
and Rabbit  
Salesman -**

**IMPORTER OF  
IRISH EGGS,**

**190 Manchester  
Street.**





deliver them.

A 160 page brochure was prepared and printed for the Bazaar, on sale for 1s 0d. The brochure outlined the objectives of the Bazaar, proffered a programme of events and an extensive amount of advertising (a total amount of 85 subscribers) by the many small businesses both within the Parish and the town.

The final quote in the Brochure states:-  
*"It is recognised that the scheme is one of great magnitude and to bring it to a successful issue it is*



*support to the Bazaar by attending on each of the opening days and generously responding."*

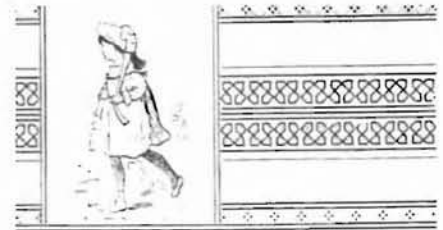
#### Church Notices

Church notices referring to the Bazaar as recorded quote:

*"There will be a meeting of all stall workers and all those men and women who collected for the Bazaar, in the club on Monday night at 7.30 punctually, to arrange about the stall.*

*Those who have not paid for their admission tickets yet, be good enough to do so today as it is the last day for collecting - urge you to come to the Bazaar to support your own stall.*

*necessary that each and all should give substantial*



*On Wednesday, Thursday and Friday the schoolchildren will get home in the morning at 11.45 and must be back in school at quarter to one, the mothers therefore must have their dinners ready for 12 as the register will be closed at five minutes to one.*

*The Bazaar will open on Wednesday at 3.00 and all officials as far as possible must be at the stalls ready for opening and members of the congregation are requested to go to the Bazaar and support their own stall as soon as they can after work in order to make the Bazaar a complete success."*

## Cunninghams High Class Furniture

56 Manchester Street.

Mrs. Taylor,  
High Class Confectioner and Pastry Cook,  
 101 Union Street West.

JOSEPH  
MASPERO

Cabinet Maker,  
 French  
 Polisher

85  
 Union Street  
 West.

# Beginning of St. Pat

St. Patrick's mixed school opened on 20th March, 1871, under the charge of Miss Jane Glennon, a certificated teacher. On the opening day the school was equipped with:-

*72 reading books,  
one set of reading cards,  
12 dozen slates,  
1 signal bell  
and one blackboard and easel.*

254 children were admitted on the first day with Miss Glennon as the only teacher!! Several classes were formed and Monitors were appointed until assistant teachers could be employed.

The following week a further 50 children were admitted, taking the total number of children to over 300. Two days later Assistant Teacher Miss Bergin joined the school, from Walsall. Two more blackboards and easels were provided. The children by this time had been re-classified according to which "standard" or examination they were to work towards. In May Miss Purcell joined the school to take charge of Standard II.

The following week 20 more children were admitted and then the school closed for the Easter holiday.

**On 2nd. May 1871,** Miss McMahon came to take charge of 132 Infants and so the Infant School, as a separate establishment, was begun. The Infant School was given some new apparatus:-

*60 slates,  
6 boxes of slate pencils,  
2 blackboards and easels,  
1 ball frame,  
6 spelling cards,  
2 alphabet cards  
and one signal bell.*

Miss McMahon, in her Log Book, records the number of children admitted as 50 divided into 2 classes. As Miss Glennon had noted that 132 Infants had been transferred to Miss McMahon's charge they seem to have lost 82 children on the way!!

**By 16th. June** there were 90 children in the Infant school, according to Miss McMahon, and she asked the Manager, Rev. Fr. Brindle, for an assistant teacher. On 24th. June Miss Devereaux arrived to take charge of the younger children in the "Gallery", whilst the Mistress, Miss McMahon, took charge of the children preparing for Standard

I. Later that year, on 25th.

September, Miss McMahon left to be replaced by Teresa Ann Kirk, a certificated teacher, who took charge of the Infant School.

One of the particular problems that became obvious from reading the Log Books of St. Patrick's School is the lack of staff and the problems of pupil-teachers. The pupil-teacher system had replaced the old Monitorial system. As the monitorial system lost support, the problem was to obtain satisfactory entrants aged eighteen or over to the new training colleges that were

**"254 children  
were admitted  
on the first day  
with Miss  
Glennon as the  
only teacher!"**

opening. An attempted solution to the problem was the introduction of the pupil-teacher system by Kay-Shuttleworth in 1846. Pupil-teachers were selected at the age of thirteen to serve an "apprenticeship" until they were eighteen.

They were required to teach all day and depended on their headteacher for the improvement of their own knowledge and this had to be accomplished outside normal school hours. Headteachers were required to give their pupil-teachers one and a half hours instruction each schoolday.

It would seem that Miss Glennon had a number of problems with her staff. The following extracts are all taken from the Log Book:-

**6th. June 1871.** Miss Bergin returned having taken two days



# rick's School, 1871



more than time allowed. Miss Purcell stopped off poorly. Great disorder in school.

**12th. June.** Obligated to complain to the Manager of unpunctuality of teachers - having frequently remonstrated with them myself without avail.

**8th. July.** Several complaints made by parents of being too severe with the children. Examined first standard and found the children had made very little improvement - recommended a different method

to be adopted - Teacher (Miss Bergin) replied "She knew how to teach."

**1st. August.** First Standard reduced to about 50 children not more than 8 of whom have been more than one month in school. Called Manager's attention to the fact and recommended him to change the teacher.

**16th. Aug.** Miss Bergin went away.

**4th. Sept. 1871.** School opened after a week's holiday. No assistant in school.

**6th. Sept.** Miss Purcell returned. Several complaints having been made by the parents that the children in the class which she had entire charge from 17th May were not receiving due instruction (the fact of which I was fully cognisant and had duly represented to the School Manager several times).

The problems of absences, harsh treatment and lack of teaching obviously came to a head on 27th September 1871, as this entry shows:-





it again and walked out of the school, to the very great satisfaction of the few children she left behind her - there being only 27 in the class the day she left though I had at various times sent her one hundred and thirty five children.

*Obviously stress is not the late 20th. Century disease we would like to think it is.*

The staff turnover was extremely high in that first year. Miss Kearns came in September and left in November, Miss Kenny came in December and left in February 1872 and Miss Grey arrived in March 1872. As Miss Glennon's final entry into the Log Book points out;

**11th. June 1872.** Since school opened there have been 760 children admitted (132 of whom were Infants, which were transferred to the Infant Department in May 1871). 628 children, 50 of whom have since been transferred to the Infant School, by the School

Manager - to (as he put it) equalize the Teaching Power. Since opening there has been twenty one weeks (at various intervals) in which there has been only one assistant in School and three or nearly four weeks without any, though numbers present weekly would be 250 - 150 of whom were half timers. With such excessive numbers the Mistress found it impossible, with the very limited teaching staff at her disposal, to do justice to the children.

**On 25th, June 1872, Miss**



**27th. Sept.** Some altercation took place between Miss Purcell and a child named Ann Kenny when her teacher struck her eight times with a cane upon the shoulders and arms before I could reach down. When I told her she placed herself within the power of the Law, as she had done frequently before, especially in the case of Hannah Caffrey, James Hartley, Ed Flaherty, Dan Mitchell and others whom she literally beat out of school - as well as the opprobrium which it would cast upon us. She said she would do

**"The problems of absences, harsh treatment and lack of teaching obviously came to a head on 27th September 1871.**

Glennon ceased working at St. Patrick's and the school was re-classified into three separate schools.

The staff problems continued however. The Boys' School opened two weeks later under the charge of Mr. Hugh Harper, with an average attendance of eighty children, but he had no assistant teachers or pupil-teachers to help him. He had to appoint two monitors instead. However, the two Monitors, James Kelly and John Harper, passed their examination in August 1873 and became pupil-teachers. They received good reports the following year from the Head and the Manager Rev. Fr. Brindle. Unfortunately it is noted in the Log Book in **August 1874:-**

**Friday 7th. August.** Many boys absent during the past week through illness. James Kelly has been absent since Wednesday, seriously ill.

**Wed. 12th. Aug.** School closed this afternoon in order that an opportunity might be given to the children to attend the funeral of James Kelly who died on Saturday last.

John Harper was then joined by another pupil-teacher Joseph Geraghty. There seems to have been a certain amount of trouble from then on! In **July 1875** it is noted:-

*"The Manager has been obliged from time to time to complain of the pupil-teachers, John Harper and Joseph Geraghty for their rough and bad behaviour in school after school hours.*

*signed Richard Brindle. 8th. July '75."*

However, the age of the pupil-teachers comes to mind

on seeing these entries in the Log:-

**19th. Aug. 1875.** Cautioned the pupil-teachers against playing with school children after school.  
and:-

**1st. Oct.** Cautioned Joseph Geraghty against playing with the boys in his class.

Unfortunately things seem to have got worse after this. There are a number of complaints against them in the Log:-

**14th. June 1876.** A complaint was made today against Joseph Geraghty by the father of Patrick Doyle, said to have been beaten, but on enquiry Geraghty was found very little to blame. Cautioned the pupil-teachers against beating the children in their class.

**4th. Feb. 1877.** The pupil-teachers are more troublesome and cause more uneasiness to the Manager than the children do. In fact nearly all their work consists of undoing the little work done. If a change does not take place soon in their behaviour the Manager will be obliged to discharge them.

**6th. March.** The pupil-teacher John Harper ran away from school and remained away all day to the inconvenience of the school.

**27th. June.**

## **"...Some factory masters have refused to allow children to come to Catholic schools..."**

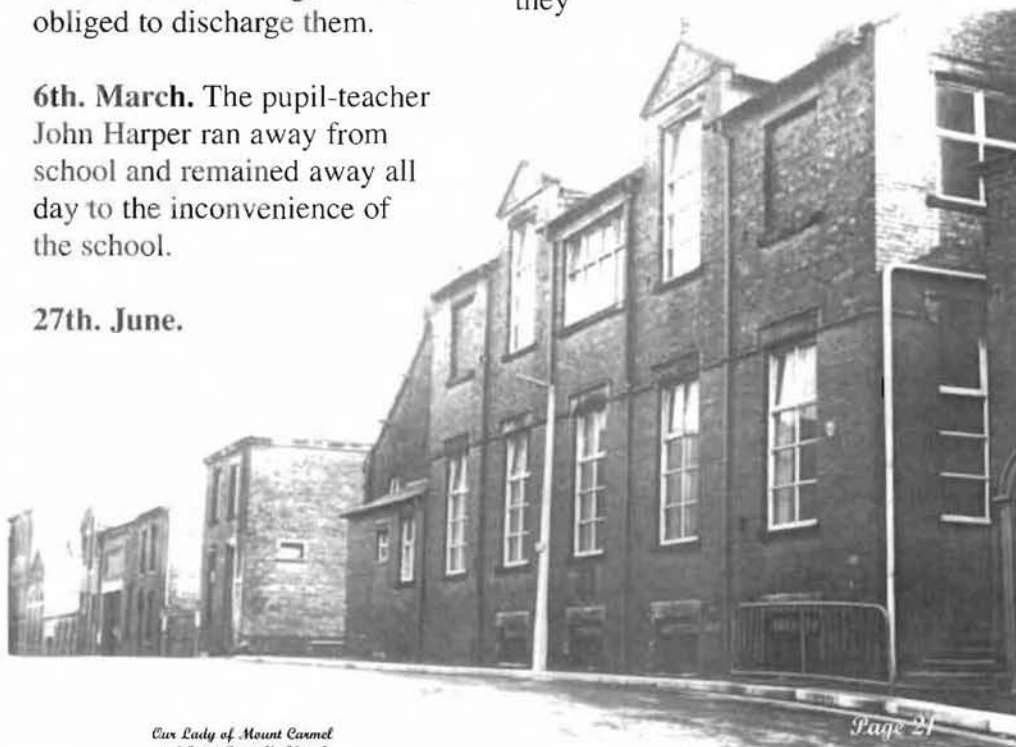
Pupil-teacher John Harper has given up teaching and gone to work without leave and sanction of the Manager.

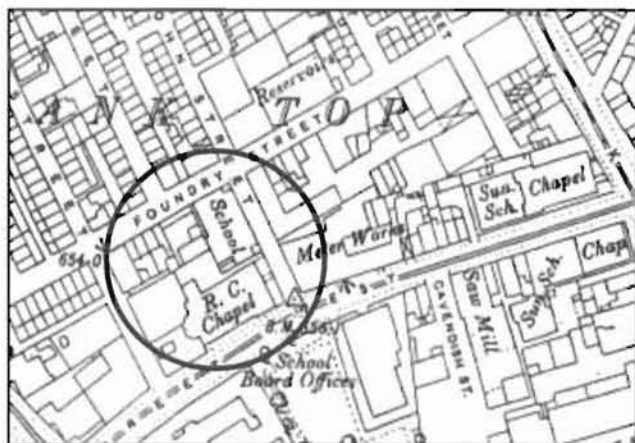
A new Assistant Teacher, Joseph Corrigan, arrived in August.

Thus even from such a small selection from the Log Books it can be seen that there were many staffing problems in the early stages after the 1870 Education Act. From the setting up of these three schools in July 1872 there were numerous and frequent changes of staff.

The social problems of the times can also be seen reported in the School Log Books. Child labour, poverty and disease are all reported.

After many attempts to introduce compulsory education, the Mundella Act of 1880 required all School Boards, as they





Miss Kathleen English (left) - well loved and long serving member of staff. R.I.P.



**"The social problems of the times can also be seen reported in the School Log Book. Child labour, poverty and disease are all reported."**

were then known, and School Attendance Committees to pass by-laws for compulsory attendance and to enforce these laws.

They were to require unconditional attendance from five to ten years, whilst providing exemption arrangements for the ten to thirteen year olds on grounds of

proficiency (i.e. reaching a given standard under the payment by results system) or satisfactory attendance during each of the five consecutive years. (This became known as the "Dunce's Certificate.") No child could be forced into school after his thirteenth birthday.

The issue of "half-timers" also caused problems in the running of the school. The Factory Act 1844 had fixed hours during which young people of different ages could be employed. Between the ages of eight and thirteen, children were obliged to spend three days or six half days at school. Every employer was obliged to obtain a certificate from the schoolmaster to the effect that each child had attended school for the prescribed number of hours.

This was the origin of the "half-time" system. This must have caused considerable organisational problems and stress at school as different children were present, and absent, on different days.

The amount of confusion is shown in this entry in the Log Book in 1871:-

*"Obliged to alter timetable to adapt it to the requirements of children who may be subdivided into four divisions: viz (a) those who come regularly. (b) those who attend the mornings only. (c) those who come in the afternoon. (d) those from W. Platt who come on Tuesdays and Thursdays of one week and on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays of the week following. (20th. June 1871)"*

There were about ninety half-timers on the register at that time. Later in the Boys' School an entry reads:-

*"Tomorrow (Good Friday) is a holiday and on that account much of the time today has been taken up marking "Time Books". (18th. April 1873)"*

This mention of "Time Books" is repeated many times. Some help was at hand, however:

*"Visited by Mr. Sale, the Factory Inspector, yesterday, who kindly offered to help us with our "troublesome half-timers" (31st. Oct. 1873)"*

It is also noted:-

*"Several of the "half-timers" have gone to other schools, one or two of them have been compelled to attend schools chosen by the Masters for whom they work. (7th. Feb. 1873)"*

This is perhaps for the same reason as is mentioned in this earlier entry:-

*"Some Factory Masters have refused to allow children to come to Catholic Schools. (11th. Sept. 1871)"*



**15th Jul. 1940** Warning of enemy planes in the vicinity received about 1.30 this afternoon. The children were hurried to the shelters and remained there until 2.20 when the "all-clear" was received.

**19th Sept. 1940** Raid warning 10.40 - 11.14. Children in shelters. One class returned from the baths 10.42.

**8th Aug. 1941** Holiday granted by Mayor to the Oldham Schools as a reward for large sums of money collected by the Schools' "War Weapons Week."

**14th Aug. 1942** The Summer holidays for the children began this evening. It has been decided that all schools in the town should remain open during the holidays and each teacher should serve a week on duty in school.

A rota was formed.

Two teachers did duty the first week. At the commencement of the second week the scheme was cancelled due to lack of attendance.

**23rd Jul. 1946** Today was a holiday to celebrate "Victory."

**20th Nov. 1947** Holiday from school to celebrate the wedding of Princess Elizabeth.

**6th May 1953** Thirty two children will take part in the Coronation Dancing Exhibition given by the children of all the Oldham Schools.

**15th Jan. 1954** 100 children accompanied by four teachers went to the Palladium Cinema this morning to see "The Conquest of Everest."

**10th Sept. 1973** The new St.

Patrick's Schools opened on Lee Street.

**18th July 1974** The new Schools (Infant and Junior - Lee Street) were blessed and officially opened by his Lordship Bishop Thomas Holland.

**28th May 1976** School visited by Geoffrey Burke, Auxiliary Bishop of Salford.

**1st Sept. 1983** The new primary school formed from the amalgamation of the separate Infant and Junior Schools opened today.

**31st Aug. 1991** Sr. M. Camillus officially ceased duties at School today ending the long tradition of service to the school by the Sisters of Mercy.





*Saint Patrick's school today.*





*Teaching staff from the 1950s*



# St. Patrick's mixed school opened 20th March 1871

## Headteachers

ST. PATRICK'S MIXED SCHOOL OPENED 20TH. MARCH 1871:

Jane Glennon.

The school then subdivided into the following groups: Infant School, Girls' School, Boys' School

2/5/1871 Miss Mary McMahon  
8/7/1872 Miss Catherine Morley  
July 1872 Hugh Harper  
25/9/1871 Teresa Ann Kirk  
1/5/1873 Sr. Mary Joseph  
Aug 1881 Joseph Corrigan  
13/11/1871 Miss Catherine

Morley 18/5/1906 Sr. Mary Berchmans  
Aug 1882 James Jones  
25/6/1872 Miss Catherine Fagan  
30/6/1919 Sr. M. Immaculata  
Apr 1888 William Ross  
26/1/1873 Miss Katherine E. Kane 4/11/1929 Sr. Margaret Mary Sep 1889 James Fleming  
9/8/1875 Miss Mary Hart  
18/4/1955 Sr. M. Michael  
Oct 1926 Charles Doran  
9/2/1880 Sr. Mary Juliana  
7/9/1964 Sr. M. Carmel  
Feb 1948 Patrick J. Murphy  
4/12/1893 Sr. M. Gertrude  
1/1/1973 Sr. M. Camillus  
Nov 1955 J. Donoghue

1/10/1923 Sr. M. Augustine  
Sep 1967 Joseph P. Darby  
1/10/1940 Sr. Mary Joseph  
1/4/1966 Sr. M. Camillus

## **NEW INFANT SCHOOL OPENED**

1/9/1973 New Junior School opened 1/9/1973  
Sr. M. Camillus  
Mr. Jack Kelly

## **NEW PRIMARY SCHOOL FORMED FROM THE AMALGAMATION OF INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS**

1/9/1983 Sr. M. Camillus



*New Infant and Junior School opened by Bishop Holland.*

*Baby Class 1946/7*



# Memories of The Cellar.

*St. Patrick's "old" school building had several places of interest for the curious Infant school child. The staffroom was one of those fascinating "not to be entered areas", and the door leading to the Boys' School was another. The outside, seemingly remote, toilets provided small children with a challenge to test their courage and a focal point around which legends were woven.*

*As a new-comer to the Infant school staff in 1969, I found somewhat daunting the visits to the cellar room, where Music and P.E. activities took place. Descending the steps and peering into the dark shadows, imagination ran riot. One could immediately spot the timid, the downright nervous, the adventurous and those children who were utterly delighted to see such a spacious room, so full of potential! In these inauspicious surroundings our children enthusiastically sang hymns and songs, skipped and danced - dislodging floor bricks - and practised and performed most beautiful Nativity plays and concerts. On such occasions, the Junior Girls formed the audience, taking great pride in the performances of their siblings and extending our school family. Children and teachers alike have many fond memories of those joyful times when that plain cellar was transformed into a place of enrichment and happy participation.*

**Angela Thackeray.**

**S**t. Patrick's was one of the first schools to try out the new method of teaching children to read using I.T.A. (Initial Teaching Alphabet).

Mr. Pitman, the initiator of this new idea came into the school one day to see for himself how it was working. He came into Class 1 and sat with different children, listening to them reading. In the meantime, one of the small boys had gone down the yard to the toilet.

Suddenly the door opened and in walked the boy quite unabashed and undressed, pants in hand, informing his teacher in a loud voice, "I've done now Miss!"

Mr. Pitman roared with laughter and said, "I've seen it all now!"

I wonder how many times this little episode was related at later meetings to add a little humour to the proceedings and to point out the various "motherly duties" the teacher must undertake with a smile!!!

**A. Melia.**



*A recent 'millennium' picture of St. Patrick's pupils.*

# “Baby Class 1945”

*Rita Marsden*

**A**s I walked through the door of the “Baby Class” on that morning in September 1945, a shy and nervous 4 year old, little did I realise that 16 years later in September 1961, I would be entering the same room again as a petrified teacher of the Reception Class!

The same battered old rocking horse was tethered in a corner of the room but today I wouldn't be galloping away on its back. My thoughts went back to the happy times I had spent in that room with its wooden chairs and tables, the latter now covered with brightly coloured contact.

I have such fond memories of the seven years I spent in the Infant and Girls' Departments and of all the teachers who had such a wonderful influence on my life: Miss Feely, Sister Mary Philomena and Sister Mary Michael in the Infants; Mrs. Owens, Mrs. Winterbottom, Miss English and Sister Mary Michael in the Girls' School.

Both my parents and many other members of my family had attended St. Patrick's. My mother used to tell the tale of Sister M. Philomena teaching Irish Dance steps to the girls, only to be told, “Sister we can't see your feet. Your frock is too long!!” I remember winning a penny from Sister M. Joseph for knowing the names of the two men who removed the body of Jesus from the Cross. One year I was chosen to play the part of Molly Malone in the annual St. Patrick's Night concert. Unfortunately my road to stardom was halted by the presence of boils in both my ears, requiring kaolin poultices to be applied. I actually made it to the stage of the King Street Stores on another occasion, dressed in a lilac dress and singing “Here's a bouquet of fair flowers to fill you with delight.” Another year, probably in Junior 4, we performed a play downstairs in the clubroom about a cotton plantation in the deep south, during which I played a piano solo.

The clubroom, down the cellar steps, with its so called “parquet flooring” was also the venue of many Christmas concerts and Nativity plays during my teaching career. I remember one of my little angels (who shall remain nameless) setting off for the performance in her white dress, silver wings and tinsel, still wearing her wellington boots! Another year Dean Porter fell asleep during the Christmas concert and was awakened by the voices of the children singing “O Christmas Tree” to the tune of “Tannenbarum.” In his thank you speech he remarked that this was the first time he had heard “Keep the red flying” during a Nativity Play! Dean Porter was also responsible for the introduction of “snaking” round the vestry during one of the May Sunday processions. He insisted that the whole school should walk round the church but there were so many children that the front of the procession overlapped the

end, and so the children had to walk or snake round the vestry to avoid collision. Altogether, I spent 44 years at St. Patrick's as pupil and teacher. During those years I was privileged and fortunate to work for and with many wonderful people - Governors, Headteachers, colleagues, parents and children. I will be forever grateful for the love and friendship I experienced during those years.

*A recent picture of the staff at St. Patrick's*







1978 Bi-Centenary of Venerable  
Mother M. Catherine McAuley's birth.  
(Foundress of the Sisters of Mercy.)

# The Sisters of Mercy

**S**isters of Mercy were invited to come to Oldham in 1863 and initially lived in the schoolmistress's house before retiring a house in Rhodes Bank. In April 1865 they moved to a new convent house next to St. Mary's School in Cardinal Street and finally moved to the present convent in Werneth in 1907. The Sisters of Mercy accepted responsibility for St. Partick's Girls' and Infants' Schools in 1870. Sister Mary Berchmans took charge in 1872 and remained there until her retirement in 1907. An application for grant was submitted in 1871 (Grant Application March 22nd. 1871 Pro ED7-66). The building in question in 1856 and consisted of a school room 85'x34'x14' high in size, used only for

school purposes. Although boys, girls and infants all used parts of the same building - it was intended to eventually make separate provision for each group. As the school was just beginning, no idea of annual income could be formed. The first teacher was Jane Glennon (born 1836, trained at Liverpool 1859 - 1860 and was certified in 1862) who commenced her post in march 1871. She had no assistants, although mention was made of engaging some as soon as possible. Three months later a further grant application was submitted for a mixed infant school. The preliminary application included a similar sketch plan to the previous application with a note that a "gallery" measuring 15'x11' was an addition to the plan.

Further teachers - Miss McMahon and two assistants Miss Jane Purcell and Mary Berger all served under Miss Glennon as Principal.

## 1873 Statistics - St. Patrick's

Boys	On roll	165
	Average attendance	101
Girls	On roll	346
	Average attendance	178
Infants	On roll	331
	Average attendance	165

# Sisters who served in St. Patrick's School.

## 1871 - 1991.

1871 - 1873 - Sister Mary Aloysius

1872 - 1877 - Sister Mary Berchmans

1872 - 1893 - Sister Mary Juliana

1873 - 1879 - Sister Mary Augustine

1873 - 1906 - Sister Mary Joseph

1875 - 1880 - Sister Mary Baptist

1883 - Sister Mary Catherine

1893 - 1923 - Sister Mary Gertrude

1906 - 1919 - Sister Mary Berchmans

1919 - 1929 - Sister Mary Immaculata

1923 - 1941 - Sister Mary Augustine

1927 - 1940 - Sister Mary Juliana

1940 - 1945 - Sister Mary Philip

1940 - 1966 - Sister Mary Joseph

1945 - 1964 - Sister Mary Michael

1954 - 1961 - Sister Mary Consilii

1956 - Sister Mary Benignus

1956 - 1960 - Sister Mary Berchmans

1964 - 1973 - Sister Mary Carmel

1964 - 1991 - Sister Mary Camillus

1973 - 1982 - Sister Mary Imelda



*Venerable Mother M. McAuley.*

**1883**

Number on roll 708  
Actual attendance 688  
Half timers 85

**1893**

Number on roll 822  
Certified teachers 4

**1903**

Number on roll 692  
Certificated teachers 6

**1923**

Number on roll 773  
Certificated teachers 19

**Dunbar Street**

**1903**

Number on roll 182  
Certificated teachers 2

**1923**

Number on roll 159  
Certificated teachers 5

**On 25th. July 1991,**  
Sister Mary Camillus  
retired as Headteacher  
of St. Patrick's  
School. Thereby ended  
a long tradition of  
service to the school  
by the Sisters of  
Mercy from Werneth  
Grange Convent,  
Oldham.

Their dedication and  
loyalty to the school is  
well remembered by  
the many thousands of  
former pupils who  
were in their care over  
the past one hundred  
and twenty years.

# Dunbar Street School

## INITIAL ENTRY IN SCHOOL LOG.

School Rooms 47'x24'  
Height 16'  
Infants 23'x24'  
Classrooms 16'x16'  
Numbers 4

## DUNBAR CATHOLIC SCHOOL OPENED ON MONDAY JUNE 29TH 1885.

Teachers - Mary Elizabeth Bennet -  
Certified December 184 also Mary  
Frances Heasey, Candidate.

Hours of attendance from 9-12 in  
the morning and from 1.45 to 4.00  
in the afternoon. Religious  
instruction given from 9-10 in the  
morning and from 1.45-2.00 in the  
afternoon.

### List of school furniture.

9 school desks  
1 teacher desk  
3 Chairs  
1 Stool  
1 Table  
3 Blackboards  
2 Easels  
1 Cupboard  
3 Stoves  
1 Clock

### List Of Schools stationary

1 Log book  
1 Summary  
1 Attendance register  
6 Slates  
3 Primer readers No 1  
3 Primer readers No. 2  
3 Paragon readers Standard I



1 packet material for paper  
plaiting

1 packet stepping stone for  
embroidery

10 packets of pads for paper  
pricking

40 needles

5 bundles of sticks

1 parcel of needles for plaiting

2 boxes of chalk

10 boxes of pencils

1 box of penholders

1 box of cubes

38 charts for object lessons

1 bottle of ink

1 ball frame

6 Alphabet cards

AND SO IT BEGAN..

From June 29th -30th, 69 children  
enrolled and were arranged  
according to their different ages.  
The growth of pupils attending  
Dunbar Street continued, however  
not all children attended regularly  
and such incidents as the Cotton  
Operations strike in July 1885 and  
the subsequent depression in the  
cotton trade had a direct effect as  
many families moved elsewhere to  
obtain work.

Entries in the school log give

clear indications of social  
deprivation, outbreaks of disease  
and general incidents of mischief.  
eg.

**October 12th 1885** - 17 frames  
of glass put in windows which had  
been broken by boys not attending  
the school.

**October 20th 1885** - Average  
attendance lower than last week  
owing to cold weather, many of the  
younger children not attending in  
the mornings.

### November 16th - 1885

7 new scholars admitted during  
past week making a total of 114 on  
the books. Several children  
suffering Chicken Pox and unable  
to attend.

**Feb 15th 1886** - Several children  
still suffering from measles and  
unable to attend school. An account  
for 13/- had to be paid for windows  
broken in the school. Thus Dunbar  
Street school continued to provide  
a good level of education to the  
children who lived in the many  
terraced houses nearby. A syllabus  
began to develop which included  
religious education, maths, english,  
object lessons, singing and



exercise, history and records show that the school was visited on a weekly basis by Father Brindle and regularly by HM inspectors.

### **HMI report for 1886-7**

*"this school has made a good start - 32 children were examined in the first standard and 10 in the second standard but in the latter case it is understood that permission was granted to retain them for the first half year when the position of the school had been somewhat uncertain."*

It is recorded that at the commencement of the school year 1891-1892, 40 boys and 47 girls attended school in the "large room" whilst 25 boys and 29 girls attended in the infants room. The development of the school continued and the tempo of school life was interrupted by H.M. Inspectors, Religious Examinations and visits by various people of importance eg Very Rev Dean Brindle, Parish Priest of St. Patrick's.

Financial information recorded at the year 1900:- Total grant for mixed class £85-12-3

Total grant for infant class £26-16-6

Total School Grant £112-8-9

### **1908-1909**

Copy of report on physical training.

1. Turns should be taught by numbers
2. Jerkiness should be avoided in head and trunk
3. Boys and girls should be formed in separate rank
4. Classes should be size and number from right to left.
5. In all trunk movements chests should be arched as much as possible.
6. Breathing exercises should be introduced more often as many of the children are unable to breathe properly

### **Copy of HMI report 1908**

#### **MIXED**

*The teaching is conducted with much vigour and the children are well behaved and attentive. The extreme deafness from which the headmistress disadvantage of a serious nature and might even be disturbing to the working of the school, were it not for the loyalty of the staff. An enhanced interest would be given to the history lessons if a good series of historical pictures were available.*

*It is desirable that a few smart physical exercises should be taken at the change of lessons, all the more so as many of the desks are of an unsuitable height for the children this producing a tendency to assume positions which are not hygienic.*

#### **INFANTS**

*The room is crowded with desks there is no floor space for movement or games. Owing to the present numbers a re-arrangement has been effected in grouping by which the less advanced children in Class 2 are taught with the babies, considerably to the disadvantage of the latter. The practise of making the back row of the class stand on the seat of the desk is open to serious objection both on the score of danger and on account of the dirt communicated to the seat.*

### **Copy of HMI report 1932**

*Since the date of the last report the managers have grappled vigorously with the disrepair which formerly characterised this building. New offices have been built the playground has been reflagged and a new floor laid down, whilst lighting, heating and ventilation have all received attention. These improvements have been a*

*boon to pupils and teachers and it is hoped that the dingy walls will soon be recoloured. The Headmistress and staff continue to take a keen interest in the welfare and progress of the children and are to be praised for the efficiency attained in the school. The bright readiness and expressiveness with which the scholars enter into all they do, and the work teachers put upon them and the soundness of the results whenever they are tested reflect the tone, skill and industry of the whole staff.*

### **Copy of HMI report 1965**

*Since the last inspection in 1952 there has been a progressive decline in numbers due to changes in the area and to the opening of a new school just over the near by boundary with Lancashire County. There are 39 children on roll and 6 are to be admitted at Easter. Although the premises impose certain restrictions on the work of school, they are well cared for and much has been done to create an environment which provides and attractive contrast with the surroundings.*

*Recent improvements include substantial re-flooring but obsolete sanitary facilities for both staff and children remain outside.*

*The children are successfully encouraged to be self-reliant. The ITA used on the younger children in the top class appears to re-enforce this confidence, but older children traditionally taught are also making satisfactory progress in reading. In quality, quantity and variety writing reaches creditable levels and the standard of creative work commanded in previous reports has been maintained.*

*In small the opportunities which this small school presents for individual development are fully*

exploited and the vital, yet intimate atmosphere which has been created more than compensated for the severe restriction on the capitation allowance.

PRAISE WELL DESERVED

## CLOSURE OF DUNBAR STREET

DUNBAR STREET  
CLOSED IT DOORS  
ON 27TH JULY 1973.

SCHOOL LOG -

*A reporter called today from the Odham Chronical - He had been asked to call by somebody who said Dunbar Street School had been one of the happiest schools he had known. Revs Fr. McKie and Devaney came to say goodbye to the children and staff.*

*The photographer took a photo of the last children leaving the school.*

*At the time of closure 31 Children attended the school - at various times during the life of the school attendance reached over 100 pupils but redevelopment of the area and demolition of the terraced houses in the school catchment area forced the school to close. It was a quiet, peaceful and a wonderful educational and caring establishment*

## It was a happy school by A. Melia

I was a pupil at Dunbar Street School in the 20's and I have many happy memories of those early school years.

The big rocking horse in the "baby class" room helped to soothe many a fretful child in those first days at school.

The old family names on the roll-call: Darker, Corcoran, Maloney, Kenny and Joe May who was the biggest boy in the school at that time. Sadly some of them, as young men, gave their lives in the Second War.

The memory of Miss Doran, the Headteacher, gentle and kind, asking at Christmas time, for the children whose fathers were not working, to stand on the bench so that she could put down their names for the great Christmas breakfast in the Co-op, King St. Hall. We others, more fortunate, thought we were missing out! No class distinction there. Every child in the school got a

small parcel at Christmas.

Miss Doran had a box of sweets open on her desk and if we got all four sums right in an exercise we were supposed to take a sweet, but we were so shy, we would gaze longingly at the box until we were invited to dip in!

The day we had to leave Dunbar Street and go over to St. Patrick's we were fearful of the big forbidding looking building and if we had had a leader, we would have gladly run back to our peaceful little school. We soon settled in but I think it never measured up, in our minds, to our own little peaceful school, where we all knew one another. I was fortunate to return in the 50's as a teacher with Miss Morley, the Head, and Miss Finnerty, both remembered with great love and respect. Nothing much had changed. The furniture and the whole set up



was the same. The children were a different generation, some of them the family of the children I was at school with in the 20's. They were not as we used to be, but thankfully, the necessity for the free Christmas breakfast had gone and family life had become easier. I was very happy to be back on "home-ground" and realised the good fortune of having had such a happy start in our small "village school."

The cat had gone from the mat and "Old Lob" and his dog had taken over!

PROGRESS!

# The Caretaker

**HENRY (HARRY) DORAN. CHURCH AND SCHOOL CARETAKER. 1946 - 1969**

**Harry Doran 1906 - 1969**

**F**or a quarter of a century Harry Doran was caretaker at St. Patrick's, involved in looking after the church and school and giving support to both clergy and staff until his death in 1969. He was involved in the Cub and Scout movement that enjoyed great success during the early post war years. They won the Cubs' swimming trophy mainly through points gained for each competitor (they changed the rules the year after) allied to some wonderful swimmers. Harry had a major involvement in the St. Patrick's Whit Friday procession, seen by over 60000 spectators in its heyday, being the Marshall. Another side of him was his enjoyment of fires, and Oldham has seen the destruction of factories in spectacular fashion. Towering infernos which finished up with the collapse of the whole building, Harry never knowingly missed one. All this was before television. During the severe winter of 1947, with the country almost at a standstill, Harry kept St. Patrick's coke boiler fires going by going to work day and night to ensure that the water pipes did not freeze. There was no extra pay for this, just the satisfaction of a job well done. Needless to say the children did not appreciate Harry's interest in fires, even though many had little or no heat at home.

## **A CARETAKER'S LOT**

**CLEANING** the large cellar window grids in the girls' schoolyard, things like paper, trinkets, spinning tops and balls used to get dropped down there over the year. Periodically the things had to be cleaned out. Could this be where the Doran boys got their constant supply of footballs?

## **GOOD FRIDAY.**

Church cleaning. Every year the church was thoroughly cleaned by an army of volunteer parishioners. Harry had to organise and provide gallons of hot water

and cleaning materials and always managed to ensure that everyone got a cup of Nescafe as a refresher.

## **WHIT FRIDAY.**

The Altar Boys and St. Patrick's banner led the annual procession of faith, followed by the Middleton Prize Band providing the appropriate music throughout. In preparation for the big day, Harry, with a few helpers, brought the banners out of storage, assembled and displayed them from the choir and the walls of the church. The big men of the parish collected them on the day and took up their positions in the procession. After the event, Harry had to put the banners away and lock up the premises when everyone had gone.

## **HEATING.**

Have any of us thought how the church and the school were kept warm during the winters? What about the severe winters of 1947 and 1962? The boiler and heating systems comprised of a single coke-fired boiler in each building. No automatic controls were available to Harry, the sort that is available to us today. The fuel had to be handled manually and every shovel full of coke was moved six times, from delivery to waste ash. Coke was delivered and tipped on Foundry Street near to the girls' entrance, over the bunker door. Harry then cleared the footpath and filled the bunker. Inside the boiler house, the coke was shovelled from the bunker into a barrow, transported and tipped into another small bunker in front of the boiler. From here, it was shovelled into the furnace of the boiler. After the coke had burned through, the ash and clinkers had to be raked out of the boiler to make room for the next charge of coke. The hot ash and clinkers were allowed to cool before being loaded into a barrow and then taken out to the ash cans in preparation for the dustbin men to collect. To ensure that the

heating was available and the system protected from freezing, Harry started work at 06.00 and stoked up the boiler ready for the pupils and staff arriving at about 08.30. Because of the boiler capacity and performance, Harry had to bank up the boiler for the night. Depending on the weather, the visits had to be maintained over the weekends and Christmas holidays for the church and school. No wonder the long summer holidays were welcome.

**KINDNESS.** After Harry's death in 1969, his family learned for the first time from a recipient of his good will, A Mr. K. As a boy, Mr. K. was required by his parents to leave the house early in the morning, often without breakfast, irrespective of the weather. He would arrive at school before other pupils. The school was not open for access at that time in the morning. Mr. K. had to wait outside until the doors were open.

One day Harry was outside shovelling a newly delivered load of coke into the bunker. Mr. K. approached Harry and offered his help.

"Can I help you Mr. Doran?"

"Do you think you are strong enough?" Harry asked.

"Let me have a go"

"OK, I'll get you a shovel. By the way, have you had any breakfast?" Harry enquired.

"No."

"No?" queried Harry and continued, "you had better come with me."

Mr. Doran took me to the boiler room and made me a mug of tea and gave me some of his fresh sandwiches. Having filled my tummy, we both returned to the coke problem. Though I was never asked to move such a load of coke again, I was given breakfast by Mr. Doran on many occasions afterwards and had the extra benefit of being warm at the same time. I will never forget Mr. Doran's kindness.



# Thomas Payne

**R.I.P. 1909 - 2000**

When the history of St. Patrick's is finally written one person's name is sure to be among the top few laymen who have given most to our parish. His name is Thomas (Tom) Payne and his is a remarkable story.

Tom was born in Oldham in October 1909 into a family comprising of five boys and one girl. His father had been a boy soldier in the South African War, and being a reservist, was recalled to the colours in August 1914. He served in the retreat from Mons, Paschendale where he was awarded the Military Medal, and on The Somme, where he was killed on November 5th. 1918. Tom remembered the telegram boy delivering the news to his mother. The shock was so great that his mother never recovered and died in 1920, leaving the five boys and one girl. The children were entrusted to the care of their Aunt Margaret and Uncle Jeremiah Mulvaney, they went to live in a house in Phoenix Street and, as their aunt and uncle already had a girl of their own, it must have been a bit cramped. They were a good Catholic family and Tom participated fully in the life of the church, becoming Cub Leader, joining the SVP and being a apparitor.

Tom married Myra in 1936.

He was a victim of The Depression but was eventually offered employment at a local provision merchant. He enjoyed the work but his favourite tale



was of the long hours people had to work, and even on Christmas Eve he was not allowed home until the last turkey had been sold, usually about 10 p.m.

When the war started, Tom was conscripted into the Royal Artillery and eventually landed in France on "D Day plus 3". His battery was engaged in many battles, including relieving the paratroopers at Arnhem and the crossing of the Rhine. When the war was over, Tom was privileged to fly in an American plane to witness damage to the Rhur and Essen and was also in attendance at the trial of the Wardress at Belsen Camp. She was found guilty and hanged the following day.

Back home to his beloved Myra and employment as a caretaker at the local library, and then at St. Alban's School. Possibly the happiest time of Tom's life but it could not last. Myra was taken ill and died at the age of 56. Tom and Myra had been to Lourdes just before she was ill and Tom determined

that from then on he would visit Lourdes as often as possible. He retired from work and spent his time at church and looking after the priests' house where he arrived at about 4 o'clock every weekday allowing the priests to do their visiting etc., and staying until the priests arrived back home.

He concentrated on organising the annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes and was Lay Leader from 1968 to 1993 and made an incredible 30 visits. His favourite story was of the time he was passing a local hospital where they were asking for volunteers to take the sick to the Grotto. Tom pushed the wheelchair to the Grotto and was waiting for Mass to begin when the patient left his chair, jumped over the barrier and sped off.

For his church work, Tom was awarded the Benemerenti medal in 1982 and he took great pride in being the first Eucharistic Minister of the parish.

*Well done Tom. R.I.P.*

# The Clergy

## LIST OF PARISH PRIESTS

**1862 - 1868.**  
**Rev. Peter**  
**Cardinael**

For four years St. Patrick's continues to be served from St.

Mary's. In January, 1862, the Chaple of Ease became a seperate mission, the first Rector being the Rev. Peter Cardinael who remained at St. Patrick's for the next six years.



he was loved and respected for his charity and devotion and love of his flock.

He died on November 4th. 1894 after spending his life for the honour and glory of God.

He rests in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Moston. R.I.P.

**1894 - 1917. Very**  
**Rev Dean**  
**Thomas O'**  
**Callaghan.**

Father O'Callaghan came to St.

Patrick's in November 1894 as Parish Priest and was appointed Dean of St. Mary's Deanery.

At that time the Parish capital debt was £2750 and the church was badly in need of repair and renovation and the schools were totally inadequate for their purpose and required urgent replacement, due to their structural faults.

In 1907, The Very Reverend Dean was responsible for, along with his parishioners, organising a Bazaar which was to fund major renovation works within the church and the rebuilding of the schools and presbytery. This proved a highly successful event which enabled the Dean to action all his proposals, at the same time encouraging and ministering to his parishioners with great enthusiasm.

On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of his ordination to the priesthood, he was given many gifts in celebration - Mass vestments, a missal and stand, Benediction vestments, a cheque for £350 and an illuminated address. This celebration



involving all his parishioners, fellow priests and colleagues indicating the close relationships he had developed in his ministry and was a clear barometer of the love and respect in which he was held.

He became closely involved with local education and its development, and he successfully fought and was elected to the Board of Guardians - a post which he held for the benefit of Catholic education in all its facets.

November 1907 saw Dean O'Callaghan appointed as Canon of the Salford Chapter. Though many Canons graduated in Oldham, this was the first time in which a priest on active mission work in the town, had been appointed a Member of the Chapter since the Reformation.

The Dean was noted for his commitment to education for the benefit of his flock - for his remarkable strength of character, great ability for organisation and work, his eloquent and convincing preaching and his readiness to help and assist.

A marble pulpit was erected to his memory in August 1918. R.I.P.

**1917 - 1937.**  
**Father**  
**Nugent.**

Father Nugent succeeded Father



O'Callaghan as Parish Priest in 1917.

He was responsible for the installation of the memorial to

**1868-1894, the**  
**Very Rev. Dean**  
**Brindle**

In 1868, the Very Rev.

Robert Brindle was appointed

rector of St. Patrick's, a developing mission at Bank Top, Oldham.

He was a Lancashire man, born in Wigan to a businessman father and mother who produced six sons, five of whom joined the priesthood.

He was ordained at Salford Cathedral and was immediately appointed priest at the Cathedral.

The Bishop of Salford appointed him to take charge of the Bank Top Mission where there was no school, church, or presbytery - a small chapel existed - however the people were very poor. Therefore, with great enthusiasm, Father Brindle set about his mission to build and expand.

Apart from his 10 years served at the Cathedral, Father Brindle devoted all his ministerial life within St. Patrick's Parish where



Father O'Callagan - the pulpit - and for the erection of a Celtic Cross sculptured from Aberdeen granite in memory of 163 men of the Parish who perished during the Great War of 1914 - 1918 (No record is available of the names of the deceased men).

Father Nugent celebrated his Silver Jubilee in 1922 and was presented with an address and cheque for £550 from his parishioners - most of his money funding repairs to the exterior of the church and presbytery. In 1923 he was appointed a Canon and subsequently in 1929 was appointed Vicar General to the Bishop of Salford, Dr. Henshaw.

In May 1935, Canon Nugent resigned as Vicar General owing to ill health and his health deteriorated resulting in his death on December 21st. 1936.

His epitaph describes him as *"an exemplary Priest, a man of a kindly and generous disposition who did great work both for the Diocese and St. Patrick's."*

R.I.P.

#### **1937 - 1940. Very Rev Canon Michael McGrath.**

Father Michael McGrath was appointed as successor to Canon Nugent at St. Patrick's on 6th. February 1937.

After a short illness Canon McGrath died on 21st. April 1940. News of his death was received with great regret by all sections of the community. During the comparatively brief

time that Canon McGrath was rector at St. Patrick's he had endeared himself to all his parishioners.

R.I.P.

#### **1940 - 1966. Right Rev. Provost Michael Fitzgerald.**

Monsignor Michael Fitzgerald was educated at Maynooth College, Ireland. He took a post-graduate course in Social Services at Louvain University, France and was ordained in 1912.

After serving in several Lancashire parishes he came as Parish Priest to St. Patrick's, Oldham in June 1940. He was elevated to a Canon and in 1958 he took a 500 strong pilgrimage from the Salford Diocese to Lourdes. In June 1962 he was presented with a parchment from the Pope, raising him to a Monsignor to mark the Golden Jubilee of his ordination. At a reception, 700 people stood and cheered as he received a cheque from his parishioners and a solid gold chalice from the Catholic Doctors of the town.

Four days prior to his death in June 1966, Monsignor Fitzgerald had joined his parishioners in the Whit procession, although he was very ill and was forced to ride by car - such was his devotion to his vocation and his people. Speaking at his requiem, Canon Early stated, "This loss to our parish is the loss of possibly

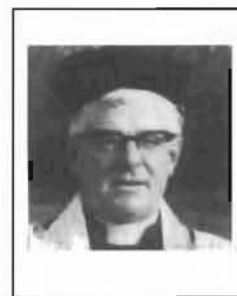


one of our most eminent priests - a great leader, cultured and gifted in many ways, he set a shining example to all and we shall feel his loss very deeply."

He rests in peace in St. Joseph's Cemetery, Moston. R.I.P.

#### **1966 - 1969. Very Rev Dean Joseph Porter.**

Joseph Porter was appointed as Parish Priest coming from St. Mary's Bulington n/r Blackburn.



Porter was born and bred in Ashton. During his period of service Father Porter was elevated to Rural Dean of St. Mary's Deanery Oldham. He was closely involved in all the negotiations for the new primary schools during a period of extensive change in the education system. ie secondary schools becoming comprehensive schools.

Dean Porter was responsible for renovation and improvements of the presbytery, having the house rewired, plumbed, decorated and refurbished. In 1968 Dean Porter was responsible for the construction of the Narthex screen at the rear of the church and the alteration of the Baptistry dedicated to the memory of the late Provost Fitzgerald. Dean Porter died in the 36th year of his Sacred Priesthood on 30th December 1969, R.I.P.



**1969 - 1978.**  
**Father Sean F.**  
**Diggins. J.C.I.**



Father Diggins, an Irishman from Dublin, was ordained to the priesthood in 1950 and continued his studies for a further two years to become a Licentiate of Canon Law.

He began his work at a rescue home in Eccles and went to St. Mary's, Swinton and from there to St. James', Pendleton where he was appointed as chaplain to the Little Sisters of the Poor in Newton Heath. St. Patrick's, Oldham was his first parish. The induction ceremony was held in March 1970 and whilst in Oldham Father Diggins continued his work on marriage tribunals.

Father Diggins was Parish Priest at the time of the serious fire in 1973 which caused extensive damage to the back of the church, the choir loft and the organ. The fire occurred just a week before the Christmas celebrations began and left Father Diggins feeling very sad and depressed.

Recorded: Parish log. *"The fire brigade were a wonderful help on the night of the fire - they stayed all night with us to ensure that there were no sparks which they told us could jump from beam to beam in the old church.*

*Please God next year will bring better things."*

Father Diggins died suddenly aged 50 from a heart attack whilst recovering from an operation. He rests in peace at St. Joseph's Cemetery, Moston. R.I.P.

**1978 - 1994.**  
**Very Reverend**  
**Canon Thomas**  
**Wilson.**



My first memory of Fr. Wilson was when he came to St. Bede's to study for the priesthood, in the sixth form prior to going to the Seminary. His earlier years were spent in Bolton where his family lived. He rapidly became popular at St. Bede's and played for the first XI at football and later was appointed Head Boy and School Captain.

It was a great personal pleasure to me when he was appointed to St. Patrick's as a newly ordained curate in 1945. When Father Reynolds went on holiday, Fr. Wilson deputised at the Youth Centre giving moral support and religious guidance to the youth. I remember him saying when Fr. Reynolds was due to return that it had been an interesting and enlightening experience to meet the youth of the parish and join them in this centre. He thanked Winnie Burns and myself as Youth Leaders for the help and guidance we had given him and promised to say a Mass for us although we were unaware of any guidance we had contributed. He later said to me privately that he had been terrified when Canon Fitzgerald had asked him to take over this aspect of Fr. Reynold's duties in his absence.

I was sorry when he left St. Patrick's in 1951 but delighted when he returned having been appointed Parish Priest in 1978.

He served the parish in this capacity until he retired in 1994 after wonderful service to the parish and a regular visitor to Catholic families in their homes.

D.G. McMAHON.

**1994 - 1999.**  
**Father Dermot**  
**Heakin.**



Father Heakin was born and bred in Salford and attended De La Salle College. He was ordained to the Priesthood in 1975 and served as a Curate at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Blackeley. His service to the diocese of Salford included St. Mary's Blackburn 1978-79, Our Lady of the Rosary Davyhulme 1979-84, The Diocese of Kisumu, Kenya (Madiany Nyang'oma Aluor) 1984-90, Our Lady and Lancashire Myrtars Little Hulton 1990-94 and Our Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Patrick's Oldham 1994-1999.

Father Heakin was responsible for major renovataion projects during his service at St. Patricks installing a new lighting system, a modern efficent sound system, decoration of the church, - planning and laying-out of the car park, a major refurbishment of the presbytery and many other projects which enhanced the beauty of St. Patrick's. Thank you to Father Heakin, who left the parish to serve at St. Anne's and St Mary's Ashton.

**Frank Waterworth** was appointed as Parish Priest 10th October 1999.

# ***Stanley Advanced Company!!!***

## **Youth Club...**

**By Des McMahon**

**T**he compilation of the life of St. Patrick's R.C. Church and the part it has played in the communal life of the Parish and indeed the larger area of Oldham itself would be by no means complete without some observations on St. Patrick's Youth Centre. During the darkest days of the last war, which I sincerely hope will be the last, the Youth Centre played a huge part in the lives of the youth of those years and indeed their families. It would be difficult to even estimate the value this important foundation had on the ordinary lives of the people of those dark years. It also had an extremely beneficial and long lasting effect because no less than thirty and even many more Catholic marriages took place among couples who had first had the opportunity of meeting their future partners for life in the Youth Centre.

The first idea for the foundation of a Youth Centre was the brain child of Fr. P. Reynolds who had a tremendous rapport with the minds, ideals, ambitions and dreams of the youth of the parish. The first Youth Centre was situated over a shop in Manchester Street. The first time I went there I was amused and intrigued by the location, indeed I regarded it as something of a joke. The room reserved for the meetings and activities as organised by the older members was a large attic

room which was approached by climbing a steep staircase and raising a trapdoor in the floor of the activities room. This extraordinary location somehow appealed to the adventurous side of the youth coming to the Youth Centre for the first time. A lot of cleaning and arranging had to be done and it was tackled with gusto by all the youth who attended working alongside Fr. Reynolds with his sleeves rolled up and the older members of the gathering who allocated tasks to younger members. This corporate activity transformed the place in a very short time. After a limited period in this location the potential danger of the steep stairs and the ever present danger of plunging unwittingly down through the open trapdoor in the floor led Fr. Reynolds to look for more suitable premises. In due course a safer and more suitable location was found. This was at the premises of Stanley Advance Company who occupied the front office for business purposes which was occupied by a great stalwart of the Youth Centre, Tom Regan, who worked there as Secretary. The Youth Centre occupied the rest of the building which comprised a table tennis room, a large meeting room and several other small rooms which later served as activity rooms and meeting rooms for the Committee and for a very active Legion of Mary

group. In due course, by the voluntary work of the youthful members, suitably guided by their seniors, a canteen was formed on the ground floor. This became a welcome social gathering point at refreshment time in the evenings. One remembers such great people as Anne Rydings, Maureen Cummins and others who worked for the needs of the youth. It was all part of the wonderful voluntary spirit which prevailed in the Youth Centre from its inception.

The club activities were organised by an elected Members Committee of which for six years I was appointed by Fr. Reynolds as Youth Leader. The two female Youth Leaders during this time were Mary Molley and Winifred Burns. A



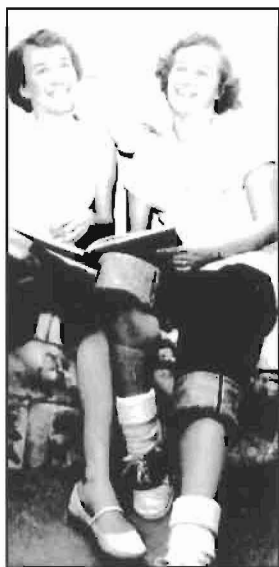
*Father Reynolds.*

**“it was all part of the wonderful voluntary spirit which prevailed in the Youth Centre from its inception.”**

multitude of activities were organised as it was felt this was the best way of retaining the interest of the youth. Debate, discussions, talks by invited guests, communal games and competitions were regular features. On Saturday in the large room upstairs there was a dance where many youngsters overcame their initial shyness in their first steps on the dance floor. On Sunday night it was a communal evening and selected members were chosen by the Members Committee to arrange and organise communal games. These were very popular as were the Sunday night talks by invited guests. Many of these distinguished guests were quite genuinely surprised by the reception they received and the courtesy, kindness and goodwill they experienced on their visits.

It was felt that the best way of allaying boredom and creating active interest was by having activities arranged by senior helpers. This proved to be a great success. A boys choir was formed under the direction of Mrs. Russell - an excellent musician. This choir was later to receive awards and certificates of excellence at a Youth Choir Festival for the youth of Oldham at Oldham Hulme Grammar School. A very active dramatics group was formed and directed by the two Miss McMahons. "The Sixth Hour" was

performed and received great acclaim at Oldham Lyceum and later at Oldham Repertory Theatre. We won trophies from the Oldham Education Youth



Organiser who said it was surely one of the best run Youth Centres in Lancashire. This was later reiterated when we won prizes at the Salford Diocesan Youth Drama Festival held at Broughton Secondary School in Salford. We later performed the "Upper Room" by Robert Hugh Benson which received tremendous acclaim by the people of the parish and was

greatly acclaimed by Canon Fitzgerald - our Parish Priest.

Fr. Reynolds was our guiding light in all our activities which continued to expand. He was expert at finding knowledgeable adults to lead and train the youth in many crafts.

Woodwork took place in the cellar. Mr. Rainsford became a regular and helped in leather work and teaching our members cobbling in the cellar. He also did voluntary decorating in the Youth Centre and many youngsters were trained by him in the art of painting and decorating. Miss Andrews ran a soft toys class every Thursday evening and under her tuition a multitude of dolls and soft toys built up. As a result of this the contribution from the Youth



**"On Saturday in the large room upstairs there was a dance where many youngsters overcame their initial shyness in their first steps on the dance floor."**

Centre to the Parish Christmas Fair along with proceeds from other Youth Centre activities was nearly £300 which was probably well over £1000 in present currency.

Every evening at the Youth Centre at the conclusion of the activities all present knelt down for Night Prayers before we went home. This custom was started by Fr. Reynolds and continued by members of the Members Committee when Fr. Reynolds could not be present.

One outstanding memory of this was when I was walking up Hartley Street with a newly enrolled boy who had paid his second or third visit. He was about 15 years old. He said to me, "You know they make you say prayers in that school - and you pray

in church but I never knew you did it at the Youth Centre." As I was wondering how to respond he carried on and said, "It's all reet int it" - a succinct, terse but profound statement on either the value of communal prayer - or the Youth Centre itself. I agreed with him whichever he meant.





*Re-union of members -Youth Club, St. Herbert's Parish Centre.*

# The "Conference of Charity" -

By Monica Sullivan.

The "Conference of Charity," from which the society of St. Vincent de Paul sprang, was founded in Parisian April 1833, by a few young Catholic students, the Principal being 20 year old Frderick Ozanam. Their first project was to bring some assistance to the homes of a few poor persons, and from these small beginnings came world expansion, and last year the beatification of Ozanam himself.

Originally the main objective of the Society in this country was to do all possible to alleviate the poverty which was rife in the 19th and the first half of the 20th Century. Since the advent of the Welfare State the need for material assistance had been less important.

We have not been able to discover exactly when the first SVP conference was founded at St. Patrick's, but it is likely that it was flourishing in the early days of this century if not before.

One of the earlier Presidents was Mr. T. Windle. The meetings were held in the "club", the cellar under the school, the members stamping their feet to frighten away the mice before the arrival of the Canon and the Curates, who would take their place at the top table. Mr. Tom Payne, a former brother, remembers there were 14 districts, 2 members to a district, and as the Canon called the member of each district they would stand up and give their report mainly the amount of relief given to individual families, (half a crown being the usual amount).

This money came from the secret bag collection taken at the end of the meeting. At one time it was Brother Jim Shannon (a one time Mayor of Oldham) who went round with 2 bowler hats, one on the top of the other. The Brothers of the SVP would form a guard of honour of deceased parishoners accompanying the hears down Manchester St. on its way to Moston.

One of our former District Presidents remembers that as a 16 year old SVP member he was instructed to take a bucket of coal from the Presbytery cellar to a house on Primrose Bank. When he arrived there he was asked to go round the back so that the neighbours would not see.

Help was still being given in the post war period, but now it is mainly in kind rather than financial. Examples include help with electricity bills, pyjamas for a man going into hospital, second hand furniture from stores, furniture donated by parishoners.

In the late 80's the SVP members were, from time to time, asked to distribute EEC surplus butter, cheese and canned meat. There were very strict rules as to who should be the recipients; those in need. Our members found this a very difficult task it would certainly have been much easier in the pre war years.

Women first joined the SVP in 1980 and now our Conference consists of 6 women and one man. In 1958 there were 27 men.

After World War 2 parties were arranged for elderly parishoners.

The Odham Conferences joined together to hold them at the Land League Club but in addition St. Patrick's had their own party in the School. Parties ceased to have any attraction for the elderly in the early 80's so it was decided to abandon the parties and have an evening trip in May instead. This trip always ended in a pub in Heywood. Canon Wilson joined the trip, but he always sat outside the pub.

On one of their trips there was a tremendous thrill for some, when Bet Lych of Coronation Street was found sitting by the bar. She happened to have with her a huge bouquet. Imagine the delight when she gave to all who approached her autograph and a carnation. And finally waving the coach off as it left.

Typical activities carried out by the SVP in the Salford Diocese include housing the homeless, provisions of sheltered accommodation for the mentally ill, offender care, holidays for children and families in need of a break, day centre provisions for the homeless, third world links with overseas groups and furniture/thrift shops.

St. Patrick's Conference is mainly centred on visiting the elderly or sick in their own homes, hospitals for sheltered accommodation, but will liaise with members on other Conferences when a special request is made.

There is a great need for more members particularly younger parishoners who will carry on the work begun all those years ago. Think about it..



# UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS

## Parish Log Entry. June 1928.

“A branch of the Union of Catholic Mothers was established in St. Patrick’s Parish with over 100 members who will meet every Wednesday in the club room.”



This branch of the Union of Catholic Mothers still functions in the Parish in 1999. It provides a spiritual bond between women of the Parish and serves as a social occasion at their weekly meetings.

“The Mothers” have always provided and continue to provide a valuable financial contribution to the Parish by means of fund raising events during the year, coupled with their valiant efforts at the Christmas Fayre.

They have also taken on the care of the church cleaning and polishing till the shine dazzles and have been responsible for the arranging of flowers on the altars.

**LONG MAY THEY CONTINUE.**



Communion Breakfast, set by the Catholic mothers.



# “Walking Out

People greatly rejoiced when Whitsuntide came and for a week or part of a week the people of the town ceased to work - to play; however expected signs of merry-making were few - principally consisting of the increased brilliance of colour in drapers' shops caused by the exhibition of bright hued ribbons, flowers and other articles pertaining to female attire and in the addition of particularly well cut coats and splendid waistcoats in the ordinary stock of the tailors' shops. Anxious consultations were undertaken in many homes

as to what should be worn on “Walking Out Day” - i.e. Whit Friday.

A constitutional in the country for the purpose of laying in a stock of health and strength to enable people to do more work in less time appears to have been the order of the day.

Pleasure outings recorded in the early part of the century consisted of “Trips via wagon to Manchester, then by rail to Bowden” - “Trips via wagon to Greenfield”. Other Whit festivities noted were “Fields loaned by benefactors - e.g. Oldham

Edge, Fitton Hill, Chamber Colliery - where all children were given buns and drinks and played games. (Oldham Chronicle - May 1858).

However, all was not festival and fun - such an instance is recorded in 1866 when the custom of Whit Religious Processions was being initiated - thus “on Whit Friday May 25th. 1866, an unseemly interference was made when Catholic Scholars were passing the end of Rope Street and Lord Street. As soon as the band commenced to play, some drunken men rushed out of



**“For a week or  
part of a week  
the people of  
the town  
ceased to  
work.”**

# Day"

"Postman's Knock" beer house and attempted to break into the procession. The attention of the police was drawn to their conduct." (Catholic History of Oldham - T. Curley)

The concept of new clothes and Whitsun Religious processions went hand in hand and the tradition of procession through the town by "The Catholic" became an annual event of great importance.

As a procession of Faith, the walks took on great ceremony with bands being booked to escort and keep everyone "in step"; banners

being purchased and carried, indicating the Church and different sodalities functioning in the Parish; the major roads through the centre of the town being closed and policed to enable the safe passage of the many people both walkers and spectators.

It was deemed a great honour to process through the town; to carry a banner or hold a ribbon was a supreme accolade (despite having to battle with high winds when it was likely



that the banners could become airborne). It is interesting to note from Parish Notices that clear instructions were given from the pulpit - 4th. June 1922 "Whit Friday Procession" - leave school at 9, children here soon after 8 to get ready - along Union Street up Beever Street, follow St. Anne's out of Cardinal Street along Yorkshire Street and Manchester Street and back along King Street to corner

of Crossbank Street and back along to this school. Good order - large body of men - no dropping out.

Field in Keb Lane Bardsley - Band - 1-6pm - Sports. Any parishioner may have a stall on the field but must get a note from the rector."



# Who Said It Was A Holiday?

By John Cosby.

At last the day had arrived. Preparations had been made, the banners exhibited in the church, the Priests had borrowed their top hats, the ladies' and children's dresses had been bought, washed and sometimes exchanged. The boys were able to purchase uniforms from school at approximately 35 shillings and those not able to afford uniforms were allowed to walk in normal clothes and being only five days after the showing of new clothes on Whit Sunday everyone looked smart.

It was Whit Friday - any Whit Friday after 1924 which was the first year the roads were closed to traffic from 10.30 until 12 o'clock until the late fifties when Whit Friday became a

normal working day and the processions were switched to the following Sunday and eventually ceasing altogether.

We had been waiting for the weather and the day dawned bright and clear. This was the start of a four day rest from work and we were going to enjoy it. From early morning music could be heard as various churches paraded but they had to be over to allow the Catholics to walk. We arrived in good time in order to get a glimpse of the May Queen and Retinue and also hoping to be asked to carry a banner and with a bit of luck get your photograph in the paper. If you failed it was walking at the back with the men and the only music was from the Boy Scouts who only

knew one tune. After 1936 we were privileged to have a Pipe Band which brightened things up.

The band struck up. Time to be off, led by the Parish Priest and three Curates, about thirty Altar boys and the large St. Patrick banner.

Each banner would have two carriers and two reserves and up to eight ladies on the ribbons who always looked lovely but I couldn't find out if they were useful or not. There were also four men pulling the ropes. Next came the band and May Queen and Retinue, the infants, the girls' school dresses in white and the boys' school. Another May Queen and retinue from Dunbar Street. The Holy Angels in white but with red capes and red medallion ribbons, the Children of Mary in white with blue capes and ribbons and then the ladies. Each sodality had its own banner and it was a lovely sight to see all the colour. We then had the men's section headed by the Scouts. It was customary for men to wear dark clothes but were able to impress by the sheer number. Union Street West was used to enable us to form into lines of three or four and by the time we had reached the Star Inn there was order. From here on the crowds, four or five deep, lined the streets, the road was wider and the streets





## **“We’d been waiting for the weather and the day dawned bright and clear”**

were ours. Proud and straight we walked with banners flying along Union Street to Rhodes Bank, up Yorkshire Street negotiating the tricky roundabout at Market Place with still the massive crowds looking on. Somewhere along the route we were joined by processions from St. Mary's and St. Anne's so that the whole route was filled with parading Catholics. In later years we had contingents from various European countries which added more colour to the spectacle. From the Market Place we proceeded down Manchester Street, along King Street and back to church where we were applauded by the people who had completed the walk. Banners had to be stored, children and friends reunited and if you could get into church there was a service of Benediction.

Tired but happy it was time to go home, have a quick meal and then off to Keb Lane to take part in the field events. In the evening there would be a dance to attend in the School room.

## *Who said it was a holiday!*



# The Polish Community

By Genowefa Marzec

The 10th. of February 1940 is firmly embedded in the minds of Polish nationals who came to England after the Second World War, for it was the start of mass deportations of Poles from the eastern borders of Poland to remote parts of Siberia in Russia. As a result of these deportations, the Second World War dispersed the Polish nationals all over the world. Wherever they settled, not only did they integrate into that

country's way of life but managed to enrich their lives by cultivating their own customs and traditions and passing them down to their children. In 1946 the first group of demobbed soldiers of the Polish army, who gallantly fought for a free Poland side by side with the allies, arrived in Oldham. These were followed by Poles who were in German concentration camps and forced labour camps. Due to the shortage of labour in

England after the war, this group came under contract to meet the needs of the local textile industry in Oldham. In 1948 an act was passed to reunite the soldiers with their families and as a result, the wives and children of the soldiers arrived from Africa and India, where they had found shelter and had survived the war. They could not return to a free Poland but as England offered them hospitality, the people had to



*The Blessing of the plaque by bishop Stefan Regmunt from Poland.*



*Polish Parish Priest Rev. Jan Wojczynski with his parishoners. March 1976*

once again build a new life in an alien country. Life was not easy - the strife and struggles can be imagined - completely different language, surroundings, customs, and lifestyle.

Being a deeply religious nation, they were anxious to participate in the traditional church ceremonies. Initially, Fr. Jan Bas came from Manchester to say Mass in St. Patrick's church but this was not on a regular basis. The first Lenten retreat was held in March 1948. From the 10th. July Fr. Wladyslaw Cienski celebrated Mass every other Sunday until 6.7.1952 when Fr. Boleslaw Polak was nominated as the Polish R.C. parish priest for Oldham and Rochdale. From this date and up to the present time, Holy Mass for the Poles has been celebrated every

Sunday at St. Patrick's.

Furthermore, all Polish religious activities are centred around the church. e.g. Lenten and Advent retreats and confessions. Also, as is usual for the Poles, all national festivities e.g. 3rd. May

Constitution, Soldier's Day, Independence Day, are strongly connected to the church and during solemn Mass the banners of organisations bow humbly before Almighty God and every concert and event commence with a prayer for God's blessing. Regretably, statistics are not available as to the numbers of marriages that were solemnised or the numbers of children that were baptised but suffice it to say that they were quite numerous during the initial years. In the early 60's there were approximately 700 (250

## **"in 1946 we celebrated the 1000th anniversary of Poland's acceptance of the Christian Faith."**

families) Polish people living in Oldham. During the last few years, however, due to the law of nature, more and more requiem masses are offered.

As well as cultivating our own religious traditions we have also taken part in the "Whit Walks" processions with St. Patrick's parish congregation. Both children and adults dressed in Polish national costumes carried the picture of the Black Madonna and other religious banners, symbolising our faith and nationality.

Many Polish churches and



Polish independent organisations were formed. e.g. Polish Catholic Action, the Rosary group, ex-combatants Association, choir "Bard", the Saturday School for children born in Oldham, the singing and dancing "Podhale" and the Polish Girl Guides who every year were responsible for making "palms" for Palm Sunday. With the passing of time, the palms also became very popular with the English congregation and as a result, the Girl Guides had to double the numbers that were made to meet the demand. The proceeds from the contributions received were always used towards a worthy cause. e.g. to help the poor and needy in Poland.

In 1946 we celebrated the 1000th. anniversary of Poland's acceptance of the Christian faith. Throughout this time, in spite of adversity, the Polish nation has remained faithful to Christ and to His Blessed Mother, who is especially venerated in the shrine of Czestochowa. We celebrated this event by attending a solemn Mass of thanksgiving at St. Patrick's church and organising a concert.

After the death of Father

**"For the last 50 years we have worshipped regularly in the beautiful neo-gothic church"**

Boleslaw Polak on the 13th. June 1971, Father Jan Wojczynski was nominated as the new Polish parish priest as from July 1971 and was with us until November 1983. He and all his successors come from Poland and are members of the Congregation of the Society of Christ for emigre. List of Polish Parish Priests in Oldham which followed:

**Fr. WERNER Roman  
27.11.1983 to 30.9.1985**

**Fr. ZACHARA Tadeusz  
1.10.1985 to 31.12.1988**

**Fr. SOSKA Edward 1.1.1989  
to 16.11.1997**

**Fr. SOPALA Edward  
17.11.1997 up to date**

On the 21st. August 1981 the Missionary Sisters of Christ the King arrived from Poland to work in Oldham and Rochdale. Sister Agnieszka Ciborowska and Sister Canisia Piekniowska soon set to work in both parishes giving practical help to the sick, the elderly and those living in solitude. With time their duties increased to e.g. teaching in the Polish Saturday schools, looking after the chapels and preparing meals. In 1987 Canon Wilson approached the Sisters and asked them to construct an "Easter Garden" in the side altar of Our Lady. The congregation appreciated the beauty and good taste of the garden which helped the faithful to relive and experience the significance of the Resurrection of Christ. The

**"The painting was commissioned to be done by Sr. Julitta Golebiowska, a Pallotyne nun from Poland"**

"Easter Garden" was erected every year until Canon Wilson's retirement in 1994.

During the past 50 years the Polish parish has been visited by Bishop Szczepan Wesoly (1972, 1973, 1974, 1976, 1982 and 1988) also by Bishop Wladyslaw Rubin (1972 and 1977), both from Rome and both delegates of the primate of Poland for emigre Poles. In 1975 Bishop Thomas Holland and in 1979 auxiliary Bishop Geoffrey Burke visited our Polish parish. Bishop Holland made an official visitation of our Polish parish once again in 1983 and this visit was preceded by a three day Lenten retreat. Each visit always commenced with offering of a solemn concelebrated Mass at St. Patrick's and was followed by lunch at the centre. In 1976 we received congratulatory letters from, amongst others, Bishops Thomas Holland and Geoffrey Burke on the occasion of the silver jubilee of the Polish parish: 25 years to the service of God and country. On the 2nd. May concelebrated solemn Mass was offered by Bishop Szczepan WESOLY - a TE DEUM for our

life and work in Oldham. Once again for some of the young members of our community it was a specially memorable occasion - for they received the Sacrament of Confirmation. A meal for honorary guests and parishioners (including the young people), followed the Holy Mass. Fr. Wilson nearly always (duties permitting) participated in our celebrations both at church and at the centre.

When Canon Wilson was approached for permission to mount a picture of Our Lady of Czestochowa in St. Patrick's church, this was enthusiastically given. The painting was commissioned to be done by Sr. Julitta Golebiowska, a Pallotyne nun from Poland. The members of the parish funded this picture and it was consecrated by Bishop Wesoly on the occasion of the 30th. anniversary of celebrations of the Polish parish on the 25th. April 1982.

In December 1995 an appeal letter was sent out to the Second Generation Poles of Oldham to finance a plaque, as a tribute to their parents. Once again, Fr. Heakin, as the new parish priest of St. Patrick's, gave not only his permission but his blessing to the idea and proved very helpful. The appeal was successful and a plaque was permanently fixed under the picture of the Black Madonna and was officially consecrated by Bishop Stefan Regmunt from Poland. Also present were Monsignor Stanislaw Swierczynski, Rector of the Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales and other invited clergy. The inscription on the plaque is in both Polish and English.

**THIS COMMEMORATIVE  
PLAQUE FUNDED BY  
THE CHILDREN OF  
POLISH REFUGEES IS A  
TRIBUTE TO THEIR  
PARENTS, WHO BEGAN  
LIFE AS EXILES IN  
OLDHAM AFTER THE  
STRUGGLES OF THE  
SECOND WORLD WAR  
AND WAS BLESSED ON  
THE 6TH OCTOBER 1996  
IN THE PRESENCE OF  
THE FOUNDERS AND  
THEIR FAMILIES.  
OUR LADY OF  
CZESTOCHWA -  
PRAY FOR US.**

# Memories

By ALEXANDRA RYMASZEWSKI.

**I**n 1939 armies of two totalitarian dictators, Hitler and Stalin, overrun and devastated Poland. Horrific struggles for freedom followed. At the end of the war in 1945 Poles that survived persecution, deportation to hard labour and concentration camps, many that fought alongside the allies on various fronts, could not return to their beloved country. By unjust political decisions Poland was left in the power of Communist Russia. Millions of Poles chose the fate of "displaced persons" rather than return to their homeland in grip of a cruel and godless regime. By unfathomable judgements of providence several hundred of us were offered a chance to settle and work in Oldham. Oldhamers probably never guessed what it meant to be welcomed into Catholic parishes. I am one of many to whom St. Patrick's parish magnanimously opened its doors.

For the last 50 years we have worshipped regularly in the beautiful neo-gothic church, so different from our secret places of prayers in frozen wastelands, malaria ridden jungles, hot deserts, prison cells or army barracks. While in Poland clergy and congregations had to become the silent church - as many priests, even the Primate Cardinal Stefan Wysujuski were arrested, some lost their lives - we in St. Patrick's could attend services held by our own priests and vicars and listening to inspiring sermons, contributed also by visiting missionaries on their way to Africa, South America and the Far East. We were free to invite bishops from Rome, our war heroes and many celebrities. We could display our banners -

accompanying religious organisations, ex combatants and Polish Girl Guides during rallies on special feasts and historical dates.

As at first we did not have our own parish hall, the Polish congregation used to meet before and after Mass, around the church to exchange news from the Fatherland, to speak freely on all possible topics - confident that no one will denounce them, even if someone criticised authorities. For this feeling of security, for friendliness of St. Patrick's people we shall be grateful for ever. We greatly appreciated your understanding of our needs, your support in our fund raising efforts for war invalids, orphanages and shelters for sick and homeless, for medical aid to Poland.

I remember for instance happy Polish Girl Guides, as their pussy willow branches, decorated by greenery for Palm Sunday were bought by many kindly ladies. Thanks to the dedication of St. Patrick's school teachers, many Polish children not only gained a sound education in the 3 R's but also high moral standards. Now scattered all over the world pursuing their jobs and vocations they remember with gratitude how the good beginnings led to their successes in further education.

Ten years ago Poland regained independence - our prayers have been answered - but it is too late for us veterans to go back, especially as the places where we lived are still outside Polish boundaries.

*May God bless you and reward you for all your good will - for letting us exiles - feel at home amongst you.*



# The Cellar Club, *Oldham - not Liverpool*

By Vincent Hall.

## PARISH LOG ENTRY

“October 1957 - Fr. D. O. Kane came as Curate to this Parish. Newly appointed”

This entry in the Parish Log changed my way of life. Through Fr. O Kane's Guidance my involvement in Parish Life was to start and continue throughout my life.

At this time there were no activities for the young people in the parish and Father O'Kane recognised this and began the task of founding a youth centre.



**13th April 1958:** An Inaugural General Meeting was held in the cellars of St. Patrick's School to initiate St. Patrick's School

Youth Club. A committee was elected:-Chairman J. Gallagher-Treasurer Harry Doran; Secretary D McCue. A Junior Committee was also formed; the members being Gerard Doran, Bernard Stiles.

At this time a "Men's Club" was already in existence using the Cellars to play billiards and snooker. Such was the popularity of this club that St. Patrick's always appeared at the top of the snooker leagues in the town and the reputation of the club was firmly established as were the rules and conduct of all members. There was always a peaceful and tranquil atmosphere in the club; no running, shouting or fooling about. The snooker and billiards tables were cared for and treasured like pieces of valuable art, being brushed, ironed and washed and dusted to perfection. The prospect of an "invasion" of young people into this male adult domain must have been horrendous and after some time the "Youth" were given permission to conduct their "Youth Clubbing" in the school gym - sited in the school cellars next door to the Men's club.

After lengthy discussion it was agreed that, soccer, basket ball, swimming, rambling, table tennis, billiards and snooker be the main activities within the centre. Opening times Mon-Fri 7.30pm-10.00pm; Sunday 2.30pm-5.00pm. A fundraising

event to provide money to set up and equip the club was organised at the handland league club - subscriptions to the youth club 6d per week (*record from the minute book*)

**October 26th 1958 - General Meeting.**

Treasurers Report £32-4-3d.

Expenditure

£20-8-6d

B/C £11-15-9d

4 new members added to committee. Joe Riley, Peter Fog, Vincent Hall, Kevin Newton. Club room to be decorated by members (Mr. Owen Supervisor).

Father O' Kane promised to see the Children of Mary to arrange a Social in the Club (*now this was exciting - girls!!!*)

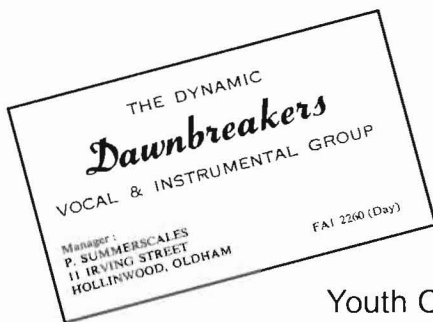
It was also agreed to supply minerals at 3d each to sell at 5d each (*we knew how to have a good time*)

At a later date Father O' Kane confirmed that the C.O.M had agreed to hold a social in the club room on **Friday 5th**

**December 1958** - admission 1/ from 8.00pm to 11.00pm.

Some of the members who played in a skiffle group offered their services and after discussion it was agreed by a narrow majority to accept their offer.

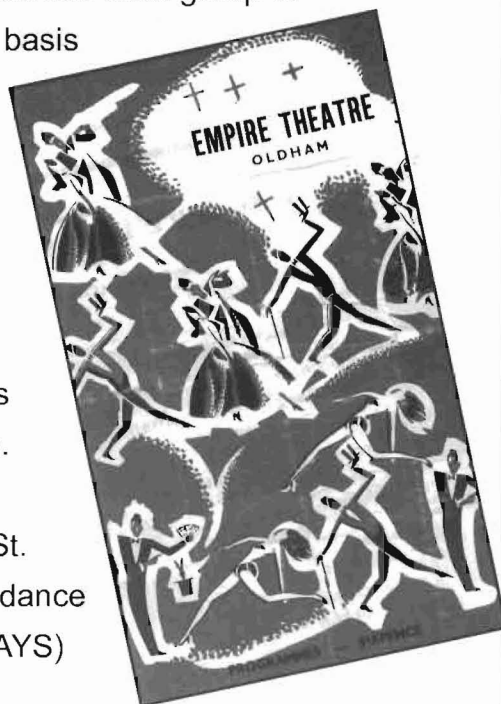
Father O' Kane expressed his concern about the apparent excessive card playing which appeared to be taking place; (a



The DAWNBREAKERS - a talented local group of musicians came on a regular basis to play at St. Patrick's Youth Centre. They generated a great following and the Youth Centre became one of the "in-places" providing live music, dance and good company.

As a result of the Youth Centre many Catholic marriages developed and were blessed within St. Patrick's church.

Couples today remember their first meeting and the progression of their relationship within the confines of St. Patrick's Youth Centre where Father O'Kane patrolled the dance floor in case you got too close to each other (HAPPY DAYS)



*The Dawnbreakers - St Patrick's answer to the Beatles !!!!!  
(Pete Johnson - Peter Summerscales - Dave Clegg - Pete Barber)*

# **"Father O Kane proposed to operate a mixed club on Friday nights (GIRLS!!)"**

major financial loss to some members of the club if this was stopped).

**Meeting Feb 1959** A discussion took place regarding the "Social" life of the youth club. A sub committee was formed to organise and improve this aspect of the club. Members Peter Fog, Kevin Newton, Vincent Hall. It was suggested that the price of a "record player" be investigated. Treasurers Report £34-15-3 1/2d Expenditure £15-7-6d. B/C £19-7-9 1/2 d.

Permission was granted to buy 8 records for 1.0-0 (WOW the expense)

Vocational Exhibition at Belle Vue was organised sufficient young people agreed to attend to fill two buses (*It was the prospect of a day out which drew the members.*)

My personal memory of this event bears no relation to the vocational aspects of the day but is more to do with being "dared" by two girls to ride the Big



The Operatic and dramatic society



Dipper where at the top of the ride I threw all the leaflets into the air. (*This was how I tried to spread the Gospel.*)

**Meeting July 1959** - Record Player bought for £15.00

Father O' Kane proposed to operate a mixed club on Friday nights (*Girls!!!*) Morcambe Illuminations Sun Sept 13th. Cost 16/- including Tea - mixed group.

**October 1959** - Ladies appointed to the Committee - M. Foley, Pat Maloney, Maureen Heneghan, Mary Colheran. Junior - C. Egan, A. Wright. Oldham Youth Council - representative, V.

Hall and M. Colleran.

**9th December 1959.**

Father O' Kane to start Drama Club (*first production was The Love Match - performed at St. Anselm's School.*) Success - played to full houses and was the fore-runner to St. Patrick's Operatic and Dramatic Society.

**Wakes Holiday 1960** - Father O' Kane proposed a trip to Ireland, intending to take male members only. The takeup was very poor until it was opened to female members and ultimately 39 members spent a very enjoyable week at Skerries.

**Annual General Meeting**



# The Love Match





*Trip to Skerries*



**1960 -**  
82 members  
present - Cash in  
Hand £53-11-4d



By 1960 the membership had increased to such an extent that it became almost impossible to run a Youth Centre in the cellars of the school. The Parish

Priest Canon  
Fitzgerald

agreed to purchase the Old Welsh Chapel on Hartley St. for the purpose of a seperate Youth Centre.

**Jan 6th 1960 -**  
The next two

weeks were spent painting the premises - members beginning their D.I.Y career. Health and safety at work was never an issue as people stood on chairs, swung from scaffolding, lay ladders on table tennis tables in order to reach and eventually by sheer enthusiasm a divine intervention the job was completed without any major accidents. The first Social/Dance was held in the new Centre on Sunday 29th May and the Centre was packed to overflowing.

*In closing this feature I wish to express a profound debt of gratitude to Father O'Kane, Dennis McCue and John Howe (pictured on the left) who gave of their time and without who's dedication St. Patrick's Youth Centre would not have blossomed to become such a success.*



# It was 'Amami'

Friday night was "Amami" night. There is nothing like a touch of nostalgia to bring out the old cliches. It is rather alarming to realise that such clear memories (albeit in the head) actually happened over 30 years ago. Impossible!

Picture the scene - Friday afternoon at the well known Convent Grammar School. The resounding question from all the Oldhamers - "See you in the club tonight?" To the uninitiated this could be construed as a "Hip Joint" in the seedy backstreets of Manchester but to the knowledgeable it was St. Patrick's Youth Club in the swinging Crossbank area of Hartley St.

Can you remember when the biggest trauma of the weekend was, -"Is my fringe long enough?" or "Have I really got another spot on my chin?" or most importantly "Will that lad who scored the winning goal last Saturday be there, will he talk to me or does he really fancy soon to be ex best mate."

Off the



No. 9 bus and a quick hike up Belmont Street. Satchel thrown into a corner (homework will wait till Saturday night at a pinch Monday morning on the bus) and out of dreaded school uniform always hoping that mum was in a good mood and would fall yet again for the promise that I would wash and dry it on Saturday and Sunday - at 15 it is important to have 3 hours to get ready.

The Ritual bath and hairwash-how to make sure there are no kinks in the hair- good old mum to the rescue-amazing what she can do with brown paper and a medium hot iron.

Time for the slap---check the main ingredients-cover stick for the spot, white Panstick, mascara and a fine paint brush-Good. The face and lips

are completely white-now for the eyes. Much more civilized to put a bit of tap water in the mascara box but somehow spit always worked a bit better - the original "thicken and curl". Last but not least a steady hand to paint the eyelashes then ready for battle.

No self respecting teeny bopper would venture out without being suitably attired in

**"Can you remember when the biggest trauma of the weekend was 'is my fringe long enough'?"**

black roll neck sweater and straight skirt (courtesy of Silvana's) and suede, cuban heeled t-bars (19/11 at Morris's)

Ready at last-the gang meets outside the Town Hall and off to the high spot of the week - the club "A" for effort for trying to sidle through the spacious doorway only to be

met by the dulcet tones

"have you paid your subs" - "That's the oddy gone for another week - must get that job at Littlewoods!!!!"

Quick glance at the coffee bar manned by Dennis - cream Soda or Dandelion and Burdock-we certainly knew how to live.!!

Time to head for the disco or more importantly eye up the



# Night

By Christine Harrison

talent, however it is still early enough to dance round our handbags. We were ready to rave to the Fab Four, Gerry and the Pacemakers and good old Cilla - what did we get boring old Cliff and a touch of rock and roll.

Mind you I use the term dance loosely- it all depended on who had won the great debate- ie were the tennis tables set up or not- if they were it meant dancing round them, or in any other available space. Combining this with dodging stray darts and we made up some pretty wacky dance moves. World war 3 would break if you stood on a ping pong ball!! Who would pay for it - who would replace it?

Now the interlude - this was when one was introduced to the joys of half a lager and lime, by Jimmy Gartside RIP in the Garibaldi. The beginnings of the end. Amazing to think we had to force it down and pretend we liked it - practice makes perfect and 31 years on and the tastebuds are truly matured. The landlord must have rubbed his hands with glee as between 9-9.30pm the place was full of Youth Club Refugees. Pity he didn't do a side line in polo mints to disguise the smell, we could always dash up to the shop though to get a packet of Beech Nut out of the machine.

Rumour had that if you smelled of beer or strong mints you were barred from the second half of the club or faced the



Spanish Inquisition.

During the second half the lights seemed brighter the music louder and the "talent" more evident.

How did the night end!!!! We were walked home by handsome Beau??

Who needs a computer dating agency- St. Patrick's was the original meeting place.

Horror of horrors did you link arms and giggle your way home with your best friend or worse did you go home on your own because your best friend had "clicked".

So what became of the bright lights of Harley Street - the young people of St. Patrick's youth club lured away by the brighter lights of Union Street, Astoria Ballroom- therein lies another tale...!!

**"We were ready to rave to Gerry and the Pacemaker, the Fab Four and good old Cilla - what did we get? Boring old Cliff...."**





# "The Club"

By The Turner family

## The Club

**O**ur Lady of Mount Carmel and St. Patrick's Community Centre, known simply as "The Club" first opened its doors in 1974. It was originally staffed by a willing band of lunatics - full of enthusiasm and somewhat limited in experience. Indeed the very first time it was open for business there were 4 barrels, no optics and lots of small bottle openers behind the bar along with lots of people with little or no experience of bar work. We soon realised that this was a little excessive, so we moved the barrels!

In truth we developed things quite a lot over the first few months, creating a cellar (actually a room next door to the bar) so that all the barrels could be stored there and we could stop falling over them, except when we had to change one. We raised the height of the bar so that the regulars could adopt the time-honoured stance leaning against it. Optics were

provided which helped a great deal. Previously, however many measures we had, there were never enough, leading to frantic scrambles when anyone had the audacity to order spirits, or worse still, sherry (we had even less sherry measures). Soon we really went up-market and got real bottle openers with a box to catch the tops .... was there no stopping us?

Oldham Brewery helped with some equipment and soon we had tables and chairs which matched. The only problem being that as the room was also used by the school, at the end of every evening all the chairs and tables had to be stacked up in a corner of the room, which made for lots of fun and back breaking work.

In the early days The Club was open on Friday nights and only to parishioners, so there was a "Dunkirk" spirit with most people being very forgiving when things did not go entirely smoothly. However, in order to recoup the costs and earn some funds for the

parish, it was soon decided to open for business, hiring the room out for functions. This was when the real fun started!

On one of the early nights, although the bar was closed and most of the customers had gone home, one lady, somewhat the worse for drink, was sat at a table looking as though she was settling in for the night. This led to a debate concerning how to politely get rid of her. The method we adopted was for two of the staff to approach, one asked her to pick up her drink while we wiped the table. As soon as this was

**"We underestimated the quantity of alcohol which could be consumed in tribute to our beloved patron Saint, people could drink beer faster than the pumps could produce it."**

**“Over the years our self trained staff aquired a pretty good ability to deal with anything that could go wrong behind and in front of the bar.”**

done the second person grabbed the table and ran off with it, adding it to the herd in the corner. This did not get the message over to her, so after sweeping all the floor, including sweeping around her, we asked her to stand up while we swept the floor ... yes you’ve guessed it, we then ran off with the chair. This did the trick and she finally left.

A few nights stick in the mind. The first St. Patrick’s Night was a wonder to behold with the entire population of Oldham and surrounding towns in there (well it felt like that). We underestimated the quantity of alcohol which could be consumed in tribute to our beloved patron saint. We also found that people could drink beer faster than the pumps could produce it. As the night progressed, more and more things were “off” as we ran out and people progressed onto more

obscure combinations of drinks. Gin and Coke, and whisky and tomato juice became normal ... and if anyone asked for a pint of mixed, the possibilities were endless!!

Everyone was entertained by The McShanes. They were to spend so much time at The Club in the ensuing years that they eventually applied for citizenship. As well as drinking, people somehow found time to dance, with the favourite, The Seige of Ennis, getting more frantic as the evening wore on; maybe this was connected to the consumption of alcohol.

Of all the years The Club was open, probably the most memorable night was

Our Lady of  
Mount Carmel  
and  
St. Patrick’s  
Community  
Centre

the one when Father double booked the room!!!! By the time anyone realised, it was far too late to find an alternative room, so we “borrowed” the infant school hall as well. This required some major re-organising. We had to convince the paying guests that the infant school hall really was a function room. Everyone helped to decorate the school hall - this including “borrowing” drapes and lights from the Grange Arts Centre to



*The Missing Link.*

transform the room. We also had to build a bar, provide tables and chairs, move enough glasses to the other bar etc. The only things we could not disguise were the toilets. They had been designed with 6 year olds in mind, except for the staff toilets. From the beginning of the evening we had the fun of tactfully directing guests to the correct function. Our limited bar staff had to routinely dash from function to function as we ran out of glasses, beer, spirits etc. Meanwhile our customers hunted for the grown-up toilets. Unbelievably, the night was a complete success, so much so that the people in the infant school wanted to book the room again for another function. Oddly enough, we said "no" ... actually we screamed it. I think they got the message. Father was very careful not to double book again,

*Volunteers!!!! Sumer Gala 2000.*



maybe the threat that he would have to do the bar himself provided a good incentive.

Over the years our self-trained staff acquired a pretty good ability to deal with anything which could go wrong behind and in front of the bar. On only one occasion did we have to call the police when a family party got totally out of hand. That was a very unpleasant night which none of us ever wanted to relive. Other small calamities such as dropping entire trays full of glasses or stacks of crates, we took in our stride.

Another example of the indomitable spirit of St. Patrick's staff was evidenced when Tetley's, our usual beer supplier, went on strike. This left us with a slight problem, where could we get the vital supplies we needed? The

**"Over the years our self trained staff acquired a pretty good ability to deal with anything that could go wrong behind and in front of the bar."**

answer was quite simple ... from anywhere we could. On one occasion, the beer did not have far to travel as we persuaded the landlord of the Prince Albert, Union Street West, to let us have a barrel of this essential commodity. This sounds simple. However, there were a few small issues. Unloading a full barrel into a cellar is easy. Gravity does all the work. The barrels normally only come up from the cellar when empty but we wanted a full (and heavy) barrel. The building of the pyramids may have been a marvel of man's ingenuity but it was nothing compared to getting a single barrel up from the



cellar. Once this Herculean task had been completed, there was only the minor job of getting it down Lee Street to The Community Centre, with the emphasis on DOWN. Four idiots were seen chasing a runaway barrel. Had it not been for the invention of kerbs, the barrel would have made it to Manchester Street, rather than the Club's cellar, and at last all was well with the world ... until someone tried to connect it to the pumps and found that the fittings were different. Simplicity itself, the beer was siphoned from one barrel to another and eventually the problem was solved. Luckily the strike did not last for too long.

We always had superb support from the clergy; one example of this was in the late 1970's when a group of six young blades (not Gillette) set out for their annual holiday to Cornwall. The transport for

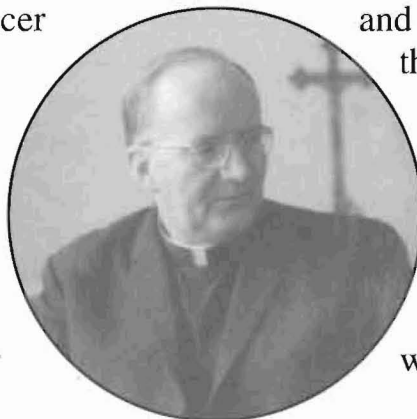
the mission was in the form of an extremely dilapidated and fragile looking Land Rover. As the team embarked, the entire assembled masses in the Club came outside to witness Father McKie blessing the vehicle (and the lads) in the hope that they would survive the trip and return to St. Patrick's, leaving the frail womanhood of Cornwall no worse off from the visit unlikely!

Another example of the clergy's support was shown as the club went through its gestation period. On a regular basis the licensing officer from Greater Manchester Police came to visit and discuss matters with the parish priest, Father Diggins. It became a standing

joke for the licensing officers to be offered a "small whisky". Father Diggins had a little trouble with the definition of "small". (Police 0 - Parish Priest 1)

One of the annual events at The Club was the Christmas Fair. There involved more planning than in the Second Front. Stalls were planned, people allocated, prizes and gifts were begged, borrowed and aquired. They all came together the night before the event. At this time a stalwart crew set up the stalls and did all the preparatory work. Then,

and only because of the value of all the gifts, they stayed the night to look after things. To while away the lonely hours in licensed premises, what else could they



**"It became a standing joke for the licensing officers to be offered a 'small wiskey', Father Diggins had a little trouble with the word 'small'."**



*Volunteers!!!! Sumer Gala 2000.*



do but run a poker school. This in itself is a curious thing. All night long it was a penny to open (Getty and Rockefeller did not attend). All night long a certain curate lost. And then for the final few hands, it was ten pence to open. Miraculously, for these hands, the curate was never dealt less than four aces. After losing all night, he always walked away a

winner.

As with all good clubs there was a Committee. This consisted of people who were involved in the running of all aspects of the club and some heated debates followed. Sadly, they were not always followed by constructive action.

A lot of people helped at the club in many capacities and to say "Thank you",

once a year we had a party, but this was no ordinary party. It was fancy dress!

The outfits showed great originality. We had Carmen Miranda, a fairy, a washerwoman, nurses and

ballerinas .. and that was only the men, king Henry VIII, a fireman, a Roman Centurion gnomes etc., etc.

All took part in these evenings.

These were never serious nights and consequently were always great fun.

We somehow managed to draft in a few sane people to look after the bar. To ensure that

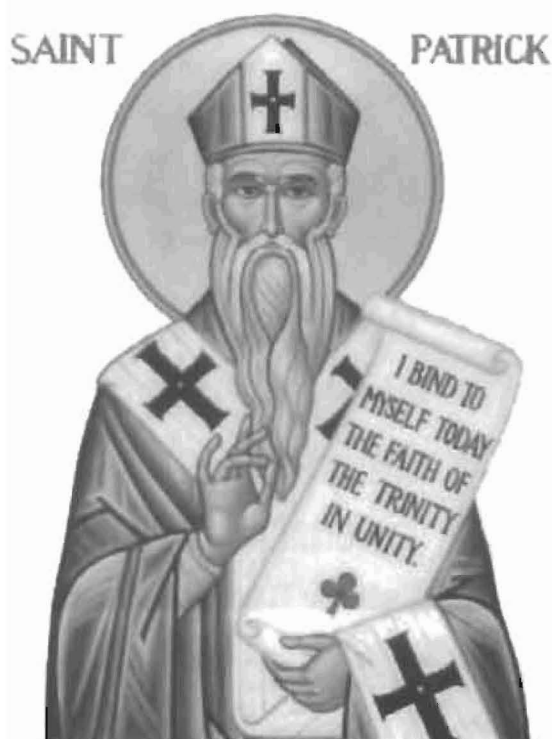
the surrounding district got into the spirit, a few people went to the local pub for a quick drink. The poor pub singer was never the same. Imagine trying to sing with Count Dracula drinking a pint of blood (lager and blackcurrant) looking deeply into your eyes!! These nights are greatly missed by all who attended.

Sunday nights were very different from the busy Friday nights, they could best be described as "An Adult Youth Club". The bar was open but it was a much more relaxed evening with a few children around which meant that the adults got to play in the gym. Many a game of volley ball, football, or rugby was played, with Fr. McKie usually being the hot favourite. Rules were considered to be a hindrance to the flow of the game, so we tended to make them up as we went along.

During all the disasters which happened we all had the confidence that it would all work out well. The Club seemed to lead a charmed life, our Irish Patron Saint was definitely looking after us.

THE TURNER FAMILY

**"The Club seemed to lead a charmed life, our Irish patron Saint was definitely looking after us."**



# It's a KNOCK-OUT

By The Turner Family

In 1977 St. Joseph's at Shaw arranged an It's a Knockout competition. At the eleventh hour

the photographic evidence of the final scoreboard no one would believe this. This evidence has now

one side dropped out and St. Patrick's were asked to enter a team for the competition and a team of cheerleaders. This we did with our usual style and panache. As a last minute entry we had little time to practise, which was just as well as it gave us a good excuse not to. On the big day we realised with a growing sense of concern that the other churches' teams not only had been practising but were also taking the whole thing very seriously. In true St. Patrick's spirit we turned up well provided for, i.e. we had lots of food and drinks (including a barrel of beer). No one had ever told us that food would be provided!

Once we arrived there, the team put heart and soul into the competition and by some means managed to win. Were it not for



**“At the 11th hour one team dropped out and St. Patricks were asked to enter a team”**

been passed on to the X-Files.

However, this still left the cheerleaders ... Each of the other churches had a team of about 20 girls immaculately turned out in beautifully matching outfits who did wonderful displays of cheering and dancing. They were a wonder to behold. St. Patrick's were ... well ... different. We had six men in white t-shirts (suitably padded), green skirts and assorted wigs, several sporting moustaches. The singing and dancing is better not described!!! Then came the judging. The three other teams were all so close the judges could not decide between them and so they awarded the-prize to St. Patrick's (for originality, or pity .. we were never sure). Which all goes to show that practice is not all it's cracked up to be.

Oddly enough we were never invited to take part in any further events.

***"We had 6 men in white t-shirts, green skirts and assorted wigs, several sporting moustaches!!"***



*St. Patrick's Cheer/Beer leaders.*



*And this is how it should be done.....*



*They think it's all over....it is now!!!.....*

# The Papal Visit 1982

## Heaton Park , Manchester, May 31st

By Noel Enright

In 1982 Pope John Paul visited Britain. There was a great feeling of anticipation and excitement. In order to get the maximum out of the visit, each parish was sent information and topics for discussion with the Youth of the Parish.

A group of young people from St. Patrick's met on several Sunday afternoons to discuss and debate various issues, e.g. Belonging, Community Work and Peace - these sessions were most enjoyable and lively. The climax was the trip to Ninian Park, Cardiff to see and listen to Pope John Paul who called the Youth of Great Britain together under the banner of Hope of Tomorrow. We joined the Youth from all corners of the United Kingdom in welcoming John Paul.

### 1983

The Pope's visit was so successful that in 1983 a diocesan Youth pilgrimage to Rome was organised. In order to make the trip, young people from St. Patrick's joined forces with Fr. Drainey, Salford and Fr. Kusak, Oswaldtwistle. we travelled overland by coach to Rome and had a most enjoyable and eventful pilgrimage.

### Papal Visit Prayer

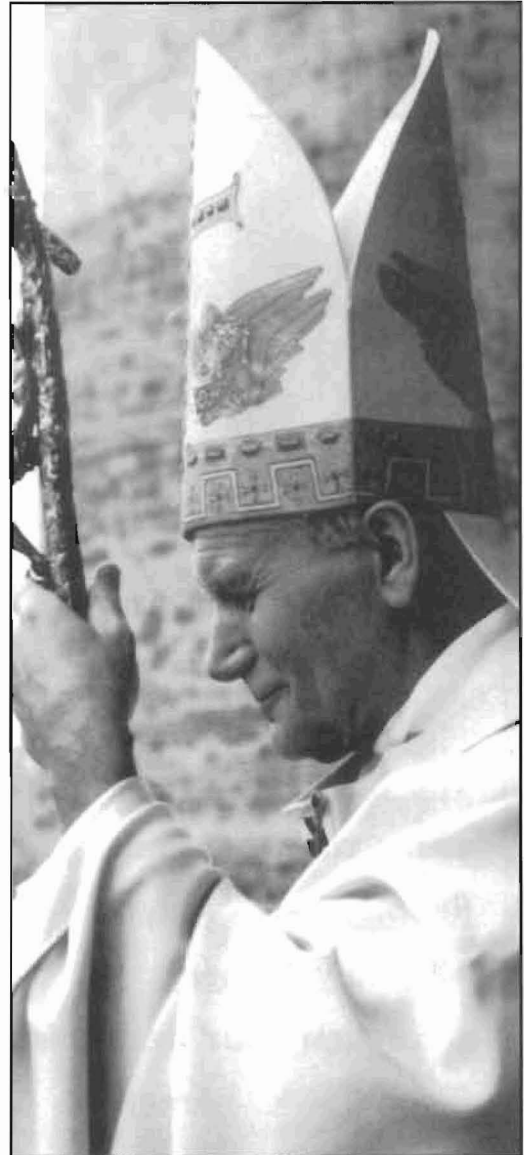
*Let us pray for John Paul, our Pope.*

*May the Lord bless, guide, protect and strengthen him, that,*

*inspired by the Holy Spirit he may lead us to greater unity, confirm our faith and the faith of our brethren, and urge us to live more generously as disciples of Jesus Christ who with the Father and the Holy Spirit lives for ever. Amen.*

### INTERESTING ORGANISATION FACTS

1. 800,000 communion breads for the Heaton Park Mass were made by the Carmelite Sisters, Kersal, Salford.
2. The chalice was made from beaten silver with gilt inside the cup.
3. Two practices for the choir were held at Old Trafford football ground. The choir consisted of 1500 sopranos, 640 altos, 400 tenors and 400 basses.
4. The nuns at Carmelite Convent, Blackburn, made 200 chasubles and 200 stoles for priests celebrating Mass.
5. Sisters at the Convent of Mercy, Werneth Grange made the albs to measure for each of the young deacons who were to be ordained.
6. 100 miles of scaffolding was used on the site to section areas and coral visitors.
7. 1600 square metres of dark champagne colour carpet





was used on the podium. 75 metres of red carpet was used on a walkway for the Pope.

8. There were 9 entrances to the park opening at 8 p.m. the day before the Papal visit, with 20 channels at each entrance.

9. 10 service areas provided

toilet and catering facilities and eight casualty collection points with free ambulances at each - a field hospital was made ready at the north side of the park.

10. A specially prepared Mass Book costing £1.50

was available - approximately 200,000 would be sold - approximate weight of the Mass Books was 27 tons.

11. On sale - one and a half million drinks which would mean boiling 18,000 gallons of water. Half a million hamburgers - one

and a half million soft drinks, all to be served in disposable plastic containers.

12. 800 people working 4 shifts would give a continuous catering service.

13. Accommodation in the park divided into 9 colour coded areas - each area enclosing 100,000 people



## THE BLESSING

**The Holy Father:** May the God of all consolation bless you in every way, and grant you peace all the days of your life.

**People:** Amen.

**The Holy Father:** May he free you from all anxiety and strengthen your hearts in his love.

**People:** Amen.

**The Holy Father:** May he enrich you with his gifts of faith, hope and love so that what you do in this life will bring the happiness of everlasting life.

**People:** Amen.

**The Holy Father:** May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

**People:** Amen.

# Oldham Royal Infirmary

By Declan Lyons



Only the youngest generations will need reminding that opposite St. Patrick's Church there stood from 1872 until 1990 Oldham Royal Infirmary. The church and the hospital were intimate neighbours, the main entrance of the Infirmary was directly across from the presbytery door. Oldham Sixth Form College now occupies the site of the Infirmary and the old neo-gothic hospital doorway was moved to form the entrance to the new

college, where it stands as a reminder of the Royal Infirmary that served the people of Oldham for 118 years.

The Infirmary, with its Casualty Department, was a busy and vibrant hospital. The streets around St. Patrick's and the hospital were constantly alive with traffic. Through the nights the hospital lights may have dimmed but the

building never darkened.

The priests from St. Patrick's were familiar figures around the hospital. In an

emergency a priest was

across the road and by a bedside in minutes. In order to season this little piece I have tried to remember some dramatic story involving the priests but can think of none, but what wonderful stories there

**"The Royal infirmary served the people of Oldham for 118 years."**





must be, known only to the angels.

During the fifties and sixties the Nurses' Home was bursting at the seams with

Irish nurses. The Matron, Miss Pakenham, was Irish, while many of the domestic and ancillary staff were from around the hospital locality and parishioners of St.

Patrick's, thus creating the impression that the Infirmary had a certain Catholic ethos, full it was said of "left footers". In

**"...many of the staff would attend Sunday morning mass if possible"**

the days before evening Masses many of the staff would attend

Sunday morning Mass if possible.

St. Pat's was always there for Mass or a "visit"

whenever a little quiet was needed. For many people at the hospital St. Patrick's was their second parish where they felt at home, for that reason we salute the priests from there who served the Infirmary so well.

The most recent memory is of Canon

Wilson jovially stomping from ward to ward, telling the staff how wonderful they looked and what a wonderful job they were doing. May he rest in peace.

St. Patrick's was for many years a place of refuge for those distressed by illness in Oldham Royal Infirmary across the road.

Now the only reminder of the hospital is the old doorway, preserved as the entrance to the Sixth Form College; and the church looks across at the new generation of Oldhamers.





THE CHURCH IS NOT A FINISHED, SOLELY BUILT OR FURNISHED HOUSE IN WHICH ALL THAT CHANGES IS THE SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS WHO LIVE IN IT.  
The Church is a living reality which has a history of it's own and still has one" Karl Rahner

*This book is about the living reality of a Parish and a brief record of events. St. Patrick's remains a devotional church and a sanctuary in the centre of Oldham, offering peace and a time for reflection. Thomas Curley, author of "The Catholic History of Oldham" motivated and inspired me to undertake the compilation of this book.*

*He trusts that his name be sometimes remembered by the faithful before the altar of God for his eternal welfare. I commend him to your prayers.*

*Deo Gratias.*

**Vincent Hall**  
**(Editor)**

*Many people have contributed to towards the compilation of this "History of St. Patrick's" We thank sponsors for financial support, contributors of articles, photographs and information. Sincere thanks to typist, printers and photographers who have given so freely of their time and expertise and finally for anyone who has supported and encouraged us in achieving our end result.*

*Finally sincere thanks must be extended to Mrs. Helen Moston (nee Brierley) who undertook the major task of producing and designing the book and who's patience was tried to the limits when the format changed with regularity,*

*Mr. Anthony Farrell offered his guidance, expertise and ideas in the format of this book - he utilised his business contacts to assist in photography and printing and he set out the schedule and deadlines to enable the finalisation of the "History of St. Patrick's" in time for the 130th anniversary of the church.*

*Sincere and everlasting thanks. May God Bless you all.*

**Father Waterworth**

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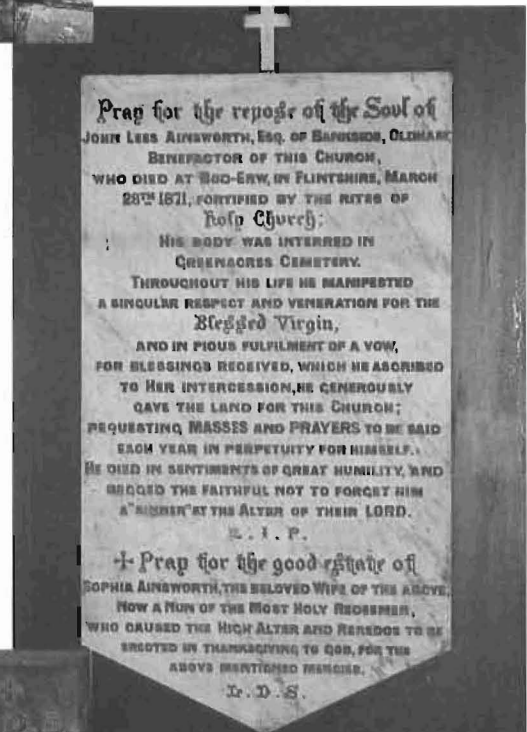
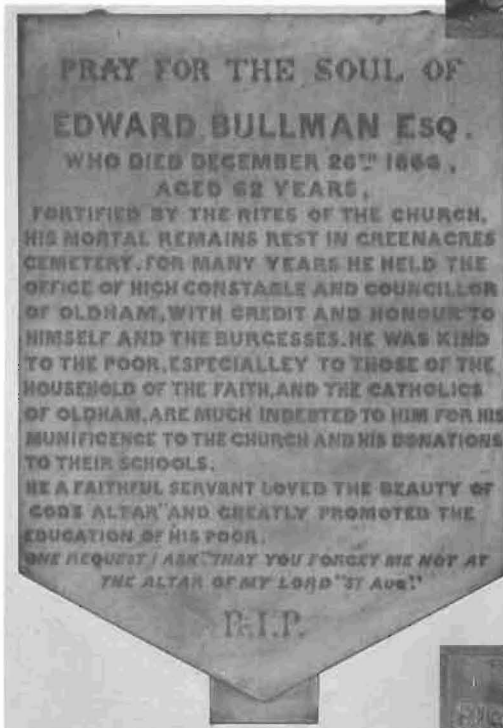
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## BAPTISTRY

(pictured on back cover)

THE FONT IS MADE OF DERBYSHIRE STONE, OCTAGONAL IN SHAPE WITH CARVED PANELS AND MOULDINGS. THE TWO MEMORIAL WINDOWS REPRESENT THE BAPTISM OF CHRIST BY ST. JOHN; AND CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN. BEARING THE FOLLOWING INSCRIPTION: OF YOUR CHARITY PRAY FOR THE REPOSE OF THE SOUL OF MARGARET THE BELOVED WIFE OF GEORGE F. KIGHLEY RSQ WHO DIED SEPTEMBER 3RD 1871

## FOUNDATION STONE



THE VERY REV. CANON CANTWELL, THE DEAN OF THE DISTRICT PERFORMED THE CEREMONY. THE FOUNDATION WAS BLESSED AND THE LITANY OF THE SAINTS INTONED.

THE CELEBRANT THEN PLACED INTO THE CAVITY OF THE STONE A BOTTLE CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE CHURCH WRITTEN ON PARCHMENT, MEDALS AND CROSSES AND A FEW COINS TOGETHER WITH SOME HYMNS IN HONOUR OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.



LET US REJOICE AND GO  
FORWARD IN FAITH  
IN THIS YEAR OF JUBILEE 2000