

A HISTORY OF THE PARISH

**ST PAUL'S
CATHOLIC
CHURCH, HYDE**



1848 - 1998

B Marshall MA; BA(Theol); MIEE

COMMEMORATING
150 YEARS
OF THE
PARISH

1848 - 1998

Father Denis Maher, Parish Priest

Son of Denis Francis and Elizabeth Maher (née Long), he was born in Tipperery in 1940. Educated at Thurles in Ireland between 1958-1964, he was ordained at Thurles Cathedral on 14th June 1964, and took up his first appointment as Curate at Gt Sutton St Saviour between 1964-1970. From there, he was transferred as a Curate to Heald Green Christ Church 1970-1972, and then went on to his final appointment as a Curate to Birkenhead St Lawrence 1972-1976.

He took up his first appointment as a Parish Priest at Stockport St Joseph between 1977-1978, moving on to become Parish Priest at Bramhall St Vincent de Paul 1978-1983. He then became Parish Priest at Barnton Our Lady of Fatima between 1984-1986; and then was Parish Priest at West Timperley St Hugh of Lincoln 1986-1996. Finally, he arrived here in Hyde, as Parish Priest of St Paul's, in 1996.

FOREWORD

These notes are the outcome of the initial curiosity of a relative newcomer to the parish about its origins, and cannot do more than give a chronological flavour only of parish life, not its complete history. The notes are largely taken from newspapers, books, and other records contemporaneous with the events mentioned. Memories are likely to conflate events and dates, no matter how much fact they relate at their core. Nevertheless, personal anecdotes do help to fill in the background, and so I must acknowledge the information given by some older parishioners; in particular: Helen Renwick, *Ann McDermott, *Agnes Molloy, Kathleen Cooke, Ellen Molloy, Kathleen Smith, *Patrick Lennon, Arthur Prudence, and Jack Murphy, who gave me much information about the past. Most of the biographical details of priests were obtained from Canon E M Abbott's volume, 'To Preserve Their Memory' (1997), and much of the biographical details on the Catholic Mayors from William Cullen.

The main text includes the names of parishioners whenever it seemed appropriate, but these represent a minuscule part of the thousands of Catholic people, who for long or short periods must have lived in the parish, whether practising or not. About 7,500 baptisms have taken place in St Paul's parish since 1848. A token attempt has been made to acknowledge the many active people who have given the parish its visible face (church cleaners, flower arrangers, choir, Lourdes group, altar linen laundresses, outdoor collectors, housekeepers, Burial Society collectors, altar servers, and in recent years, catechists, plus all the members of the Confraternities and Associations which have flourished at some time in the parish). Appendix VI gives details of a few events with the names of those actively involved over the parish's 150 years, and may possibly even result in the odd De Profundis being said for those named!. It is impossible, unfortunately, to give any tangible recognition to the many generations of quiet ones who have so loyally supported the parish and the church, but without whom St Paul's could not have survived. Fortunately, the faces of at least a tiny number of these parishioners have been captured in the Group photographs included with this History, and may trigger some memories.

It is probably inevitable that there will be some errors in these notes, which are entirely the author's fault, as are any opinions expressed. If, inadvertently, some of the facts recorded may have given offence, then an apology is given in advance. It is to be hoped that on the 200th anniversary, someone, better equipped than this author, will be interested enough to produce an updated history.

The author would like to express his gratitude to his brother who has spent so much time in advising on the technicalities of preparing a manuscript for publication, and providing numerous drafts for this purpose, and to his wife for her unlimited patience with his frequent bouts of unsociability whilst engaged on writing this history.

* parishioners now deceased

ABBREVIATIONS USED

R	Rector or Missionary Apostolic	PP	Parish Priest
C	Assistant Priest or Curate	MB	Metropolitan Borough
Clr	Councillor	Ald	Alderman
CRO	Cheshire County Records Office	SDA	Shrewsbury Diocesan Archives
CYMS	Catholic Young Men's Soc.	YMS	Young Men's Society
COM	Children of Mary	SVP	St Vincent de Paul Society
Mix	Mixed Marriage	NCH	North Cheshire Herald
	UCM		Union of Catholic Mothers or Christian Mothers.

CHAPTER 1 : BRIEF SURVEY OF RELIGION IN HYDE AND ITS ENVIRONS UP TO 1848

The appeal written by the Reverend John Bradford in 1555 from one of Queen Mary's prisons to the inhabitants of the villages and townships of South East Lancashire and North East Cheshire - which included Ashton-under-Lyne, Mottram-in-Longendale, Manchester, and Stockport, 'where I have truly taught the word of God'⁽¹⁾ - beseeched them to hold onto the Protestant faith. This may provide a clue to the origin of the subsequent dominant Puritan and radical Protestant ethos in these and surrounding areas. Although his influence may have been small personally, his contacts no doubt helped to spread his radical ideas. In 1550, he had been given a license to preach by the sickly boy-King, Edward VI, who was controlled by his uncle, the Duke of Somerset who was Lord Protector, and by the powerful faction of extreme Protestants in the established Church of England during his reign. Once Edward had died, aged 16, Mary Tudor, his half-sister and daughter of Henry VIII by Catherine of Aragon, was crowned in the Abbey in 1555 after a tumultuous welcome from the London dignitaries and ordinary people rejoicing in the removal of the unpopular Edwardian government.

Unfortunately, as far as the still-Catholic majority in the Kingdom was concerned, Mary died 5 years later and, in 1559, Elizabeth I, Mary's half-sister and daughter of Anne Boleyn, Henry second wife and a convinced Protestant, became the new Queen, and a new religious settlement defined England thereafter as a Protestant nation. The immediate effect was that anyone who refused to accept the new religion, and attend the official Church services suffered fines or distraint of their property. Margery Booth, wife of George Booth, yeoman of Mottram and a Catholic, was indicted in May 1582 at the Quarter Sessions for 'Absence from Church', presented at the Metropolitan Visitation in 1590 as an 'obstinate Recusant', accused of 'Absence from Church' again at the Quarter Assizes in April 1591, and in 1595, by which time she was a widow, she was once more presented at the Metropolitan Visitation for the same offence of 'Absence from Church'. In the previous year, April 1594, she had had goods distrained to the value of 30d, which was subsequently increased to 30s-0d. Another offender, John Didsby, also of Mottram, was accused of being an 'obstinate Recusant' at the Metropolitan Visitation in 1590, and as an 'absentee and non-communicant' at the Diocesan Visitation of 1598. No doubt there were many others who were outwardly conformist (known later as 'Church Papists'), who kept their beliefs secret and attended the Parish Church.⁽²⁾

The growing textile industry in the Midlands and the West Riding of Yorkshire during these years had links with localities such as Dukinfield, and made their populations amenable to the more radical religious ideas which accompanied the

industrial development independently of the established Church. Moreover, since the appointment of the Puritan Reverend Arthur Storer in 1593 as the Rector of Stockport, which had spiritual charge of the Dukinfield and Hyde townships, his successors were also Puritan in practice. Consequently the gentry, the landed proprietors, the yeomen, and the tenantry were almost wholly Puritan as well. This religious stance, supported by most of the Hyde people mainly living on isolated farms, was reinforced during the Laudian 'Act of Uniformity' under King Charles I.

Although 2000 of the established Church clergy were expelled from their parish churches for refusing to accept the Book of Common Prayer, the Reverend John Angier, a zealous Puritan who had been ordained by the Bishop of Bangor in 1605 and appointed as Curate to Denton in 1632, was allowed to retain his benefice, apparently because of his age and his popularity with the Bishop of Chester. He exerted a powerful influence in solidifying the Puritan preferences of Hyde, and he was greatly helped in this by the geography of the town for, although Godley and Newton people were in Mottram parish, those of Hyde and Werneth villages were in Stockport parish. Hence for these latter people and some others, Denton Church was much nearer and more convenient than their own distant parish churches. Even after John Angier died, his son Samuel carried on his work, and formed a Presbyterian congregation in his own home. ⁽³⁾

Thus during the Civil War, most of the gentry, and through their influence the ordinary people of Hyde and the surrounding area as well, took the side of the Parliamentarians against the King and the Established Church. Robert Duckenfield of Duckenfield Hall, 1619-1689, took part in the defence of Manchester between July-September 1642, and in the siege of Wythenshawe Hall, seat of the Tattons, by the Royalists under Prince Rupert in 1644. ⁽⁴⁾

Up to 1708, Hyde never had a place of public worship. The Established Church felt no need to provide one for the small clusters of people in the villages and the scattered families inhabiting the countryside in and around Hyde, and the strong Puritan affiliations of these people would not precipitate any demand for such a church. It was only the evangelical impulse of the Angiers and their Presbyterian congregation which prompted them to build their first chapel in 1708, in Gee Cross Hamlet in Hyde district, subsequently named Hyde Chapel, which had a cemetery in the churchyard used by many families of other denominations. At that time, the only buildings of note in Hyde were Hyde Hall, the home of the Clarkes, Lords of the Manor, and the Lumn, the home of the Shepley family. These names are remembered by the present town of Hyde, by 'Clarkes Way', and 'Shepley Street' off Lumn Road. ⁽⁵⁾ It was not until 1831, when the population of Hyde was increasing rapidly due to industrial developments in cotton and coal, that the first Church of England Parish, St George's, was established, and a church built. By this time, however, non-Conformists had already built chapels in Hyde and District, such as the Muslin Street (now Talbot Road) Methodist Church in Newton in 1815. Meanwhile, the Catholics were becoming increasingly visible as Irish immigration was on the point of becoming a flood.

These events were still over a hundred years away, so that when Bishop John Leyburn, the Vicar Apostolic for England and Wales, made his journey round the Northern Counties of England in 1687 to administer their first post-Reformation confirmations, his registers show that he bypassed all that swathe of land enclosed by Manchester and the modern Tameside, presumably because no Catholics were

known to live there.⁽⁶⁾ This surmise seems to have been corroborated by the Bishop of Chester as far as Hyde is concerned in 1706, when he asked each incumbent of the Church of England parishes in his diocese to submit a 'Return of Papists', and both the Vicar of Mottram-in-Longdendale and the Vicar of Stockport gave a Nil return. The area covered by these two parishes included the villages of Hyde, Newton Moor, Godley, Flowery Field, Gee Cross, Staley, and Werneth. The Vicar of Stockport's comment was: "I thank God there are no Papists or reputed Papists within the parish of Stockport, and I heartily wish that an effectual course be taken to extinguish the hopes, and repress the insolence of them and their friends within this kingdom"⁽⁷⁾. In 1717, he advised his bishop that there were 'no Catholiks in Duckenfield'

Another 'Return of Papists' was called for in 1767, and the Vicar of Stockport replied that there were 8 Papists or reputed Papists in his parish, in the Marple area, but one only, Hannah Barber, aged 21 and wife of Anthony Barber, shoemaker, was living in the Mottram side of his parish. The Vicar of Glossop reported that he had 45 Papists, 2 priests, 2 cotton spinners, weavers and shoemakers, and a tailor, in his parish.⁽⁸⁾ It may well be that as Glossop is so near to the Hyde area there were other Catholics as well as Hannah Barber living in this area, but because of the official persecution of their religion in those days, they did not wish to reveal their affiliation. The influence of the Catholic Howard family can probably explain to a great extent the huge difference in the number of Catholics living in the two areas. Some confirmation of the returns may be adduced from the fact that there were no Catholic landowners in the nearby Ashton, Denton, and Mossley townships or surrounding areas between 1718-1788.⁽⁹⁾ Even as late as 1871, there is no record of a Catholic landowner in the general Hyde area.

The estimated Catholic population in the townships of Manchester, Salford, Bolton, Rochdale, Trafford, Stockport, Glossop, and Macclesfield in 1773 was a mere 600 persons, who were served by a Father Holmes, from a tiny chapel consisting of one room only, in a building at the corner of High Street and Chapel Street in Manchester, and was entered through an alleyway, known later as Roman Entry. When Father Holmes died in 1773, he left £200 in his will to build a house-chapel in Rook Street, Manchester, near the present Lewis's store in Piccadilly. His replacement was a Father John Orrell, who was himself replaced in 1788 by Father Roland Broombank, who became Pastor of the Mission. The vast immigration of Irish, mainly Catholic, into Manchester made the provision of a large chapel essential; and in 1794, the Chapel of Our Lady of the Assumption was erected in Mulberry Street, at that time a most vile locality. The idea that it was a suitable area for a chapel was incongruous⁽¹⁰⁾.

During the 18th Century, and up to 1840, England and Wales was partitioned by Rome into 4 Vicariates: London, Midland, Western, and Northern; each with its own Vicar Apostolic. The Northern Vicariate, or District as it was known, included the counties of Lancashire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire. On 3rd July 1840 however, Pope Gregory XVI created eight districts out of the existing four, all coming under the Province of Westminster. The Northern District was then split into 3 Districts: Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the Northern. The new Lancashire District included not only Lancashire parishes, but some in Cheshire County, such as St Mary's, Dukinfield, and these were placed under Bishop George Brown. Ten years later, with the restoration of the English hierarchy on 22nd September 1850, Pope Pius IX created 12 Diocesan Bishoprics which followed strict geographical lines; so that,

instead of being a part of the Salford Diocese, the North-East Cheshire parishes found themselves in the far-away, and socially incoherent Shrewsbury Diocese, under Bishop James Brown.⁽¹¹⁾

Immigration by distressed hand-loom weavers and other trades inflated both the Catholic and the general population of South-East Lancashire and North-East Cheshire, in the latter years of the 18th Century. Nevertheless, such inflation had not reached Hyde up to 1780, because another 'Return of Papists' in 1780 showed no change for the Hyde district from that of 1767. It had, however, reached Ashton and the district around, including Dukinfield to some extent, for in 1798 or 1799, an abandoned Methodist Church in Harrop's Yard, off Cricket's Lane (or Crickety) in Ashton, which John Wesley had opened for his adherents in 1791, was re-opened as a Catholic Chapel, served by priests from the recently founded St Chad's parish in Cheetham Hill Rd in Manchester, and from St Mary's (Our Lady of the Assumption) in Mulberry St, Manchester. A Father James Crooks is recorded as offering Mass in the Harrop's Yard Chapel in 1822, being described as a Missionary Apostolic, the correct designation for a parish priest up to 12th November 1918 following the Great War. Curates were designated as Missionary Coadjutors. The titles of Parish Priest and Curate were often used nevertheless before then.

The explosion of the Catholic population of the industrial areas to the East of Manchester meant that not only Father Crooks, but 2 other priests, Fathers John Ashurst and Henry Gillon, had to serve this part of the Manchester Mission from Mulberry St, to cope with baptisms and marriages among the relatively youthful immigrants which, in the 1820s, had reached about 4,000. In December 1824, Father James Fisher was appointed to open up a parish in Dukinfield. An indication of the scale of immigration of Catholics, almost all Irish, into the Dukinfield and surrounding area was that, in 1824, there were 64 babies baptized, but in 1825 the number had doubled to 129. A local mineowner, with unusually liberal instincts for that era, offered Father Fisher a site for a chapel in Astley St, Dukinfield, for a reasonable price in 1825. An immediate start was made on building a chapel dedicated to Our Lady, and this was completed by the next year, 1826. Father Fisher also purchased a site adjacent to the chapel for a Catholic burial ground. He fixed the charges at one guinea (£1 1s 0d) for a private grave for Dukinfield parishioners, and 3 guineas (£3 3s 0d) for strangers. For a second opening the charge was 10s 0d. This latter charge was made for a common grave for those over 10 years old, and 5s 0d for those 10 years and less. The burial ground had to be closed in 1859 because of its poor condition and the smell emanating from it. The Dukinfield parish records show that, in 1832, out of 115 burials, 8 were from the Hyde, Newton, and Godley areas, whilst in 1833 the figures were 134 and 14 respectively.⁽¹²⁾

By 1836, the number of Catholics in Ashton, Dukinfield, and Stalybridge, mainly Irish, had reached 5,132, including 2,532 in Stalybridge alone,⁽¹³⁾ and another chapel to relieve the pressure on Dukinfield became essential. In 1839, a chapel was therefore opened in Stalybridge, St Peter's, which had a significant effect in reducing baptisms and marriages at which the Dukinfield St Mary's priest had to officiate. It is difficult to determine how many of the brides and grooms who were married at Dukinfield Church came from the Hyde and district areas for, in the parish registers, their places of residence were not given, only the residence of their parents, and these were often still in Ireland. In addition, some registers are missing. Only 2 of the 58 marriages at St Mary's, Dukinfield, in 1838 are identifiable as being

of Hyde and district: James Goodwin of Hyde town, and Jane Heiney of Newton Moor, both of whom married Irish partners, the residence of whose parents was given in each case as Ireland. Even so, by 1841, the Catholic population had reached about 1,250, based on the assumption that about 95% of all Catholics would have at least one parent who was Irish, and most would have Irish names. 350 of the 1,250 were aged 10 years or less in the extensive area running from the Hyde-Dukinfield boundary to the arc encompassing Werneth and Mottram villages.⁽¹⁴⁾ The 1841 census revealed the names of some families which subsequently were to be part of the early parish history, including the Shaws, Harts, McCanns, Rooneys, Coffeys, Jennings, and many others, mainly concentrated in the Hoviley, Newton Green, and Godley areas, although another early family, the Vickers, was from the Flowery Field district.

There is no certain way of knowing how many from Hyde attended Mass at St Mary's Dukinfield in the 1840s, but some did for one of the original St Paul's families, the Morriseys, had to face a barrage of missiles thrown at the ones brave enough to make the journey from Hyde to Dukinfield early on Sunday mornings.⁽¹⁵⁾ This was a time when antipathy to the Irish and to Catholic people was intense, which feelings had been accentuated by the so-called 'Irish Rising', which took place in Hyde in 1841. This had been sparked off by a talk given by an Irishman called Traynor, on Thursday 17th June 1841, in which he denounced the legislative union between England and Ireland. A large number of Chartists attended the talk, and attacked Traynor as an enemy of England. His supporters, mainly young Irishmen working on the construction of the M.S & L. Railway line swore vengeance, and after finishing work on the following Saturday, they surged through Hyde armed with picks, spades, and other weapons, led by a Peter Callaghan. They attacked local shops and anyone in their path, shouting, "Hurrah for the Repeal, and down with the.....English!". They declared the Irish would govern Hyde, and sang, "The Pope shall have his own again", the second verse of which is "Your Kings are dead, your Queen may die / the Stuarts have lost the throne / His reign extends from earth to sky / And the Pope shall have his own". No wonder some of the indigenous population reacted violently!. Callaghan was arrested on Sunday, and thus was saved from lynching by a local mob, singing, "Britain never shall be slaves!", whilst ransacking every Irish house in Platt St, Lewis St, Clarendon St, and the lower part of Mottram Rd. Order was restored by the evening of Sunday, 20th June 1841 by 2 troops of Hussars.⁽¹⁶⁾

In 1846 and 1847, cracks began to appear in the structural fabric of the St Mary's Dukinfield chapel, which, unknown to the builders, had been erected over a disused coal-mine. In 1849, the chapel had to be demolished, and the parish had to worship in a room in the Old General public house in Crescent Rd, owned by a Mr Harrop. It was therefore a matter of urgency with the growing Catholic numbers in Hyde, that an alternative chapel to the ones in Dukinfield and Stalybridge, should be provided, and in June 1848, a Mass Centre was established in Hyde⁽¹⁷⁾ by Father John Quealy, in a room above Solomon Wagstaffe's Ironworks in Hamnett St. (Fr Quealy was the assistant priest to Fr George Fisher of St Mary's Dukinfield); and he concelebrated the first Mass in Hyde with Father Prendergast, the curate of St Peter's in Stalybridge, before 200 people. As was fairly usual at that time, the lapsation rate amongst the Irish immigrants was probably between 60-70%; meaning that out of an estimated Catholic population of 1, 400 in Hyde and district, each belonging to

families which averaged just less than 5 members, there were likely to be 70-80 active Catholic families, which suggests that approximately 2 members of each family attended this first Mass. The first full-time Missionary Apostolic [parish priest] appointed to the new St Paul's parish was Father John Reah from Mulberry St; and because there was no living accommodation for him at the Mission in Hamnett St, Hyde, he lived at Furnace St, Dukinfield.⁽¹⁸⁾ This was convenient, for he also had some partial responsibilities at the church in Dukinfield where, as St Mary's records show, he officiated for a time at baptisms and funerals.⁽¹⁹⁾

CHAPTER 2 : CONFLICT & GROWTH

1848 - 1918

This little group of Catholic families who went to St Paul's, and was almost entirely Irish, lived in the most undesirable parts of Hyde town and Newton, were usually desperately poor, and often illiterate, in English at least. They had to face bigoted opposition from an English Protestant majority who were often as poor as they, but were encouraged in their anti-Catholic prejudice by Anglican and non-Conformist clergy. The Hamnett St Chapel must have provided a weekly haven for the immigrants, homesick and despondent, even though it was probably sparsely furnished, for it gave them familiar liturgies, particularly the Mass, with the singing of Catholic hymns, accompanied on a harmonium which was owned and played by William Henry Vickers, one of the congregation and 'a mere boy at the time', who was English and the product of a music-loving family.⁽¹⁾ One of the principal attractions would have been that the chapel gave them the feeling of being a part of a close community, which provided a sense of security among a hostile people convinced of Romish evils. A typical anti-Catholic diatribe was advertised in the Glossop & Hyde Advertiser in July 1851, a book entitled: 'Awful Disclosures of Maria Monk during her 5 Years residence as a Novice, and 2 Years as a Black Nun in the Hotel Dieu Nunnery, Montreal', obtainable from George Booth's General Book & Stationery Warehouse at 34 Market St, Hyde, price 6d,⁽²⁾ which was calculated to send a frisson of horror through any good Protestant.

As for Father Reah, he consolidated his little community - mainly having their roots in the distressed West and South of Ireland - into a cohesive parish whilst, at the same time, impressing some of the wealthy factory owners and leading citizens with his personal integrity. The consequence was that, in 1852, Mr Ashton, owner of the Newton Banks Print Works and other industrial operations, gave him a plot of land off Newton St in Newton Moor, to build a Catholic church, which was a testament to Father Reah's hard work and dedication. The problem then, of course, was how was he to raise the necessary funds for the erection of a church - from his impoverished flock?. Without knowing the answer, he nevertheless trusted that the money would somehow be found, and went ahead, commissioning as architects, Weightman, Hadfield & Goldie, of Sheffield, to produce a suitable design. It is possible that he had been advised that a diocesan benefactor, Michael Hamnett, who, together with his brother John, owned a broker's business in Fenwick St, Liverpool as well as a private residence in Heswall, Gt. Neston, might help in the same way as he had already done in other parishes.⁽³⁾

Disappointingly for Father Reah, in February 1853, he was replaced at St Paul's by Father John Hill, an Irishman from Drogheda with an outgoing personality and outstanding amateur artistic and musical talents, who, being admired by many non-Catholics, did much during his ministry to mitigate the prejudice and hostility in the town towards Catholics. On Friday, 20th May 1853, the foundation stone of the church was laid, and it opened for worship on 21st June 1854. The building work

had been contracted to Messrs F Robinson & Sons at a total cost of £1,560. Apart from the relatively small contribution of the parishioners, albeit generous in their penurious circumstances, the costs were met by a loan from Bishop James Brown of Shrewsbury. The cost was smaller than it might have been, had some of the labour not been voluntarily offered by many of the young Irishmen employed on construction work for the M. S. & L. Railway Company.

The opening of the church was described by one journalist as: ‘This body of religionists have long laboured under great inconvenience for want of accommodation, that it was utterly necessary that a chapel be erected..... They ultimately succeeded on Wednesday 21st June 1854 in building a neat chapel. The officiating ministers were the Rev. J. J. Brown [i.e., the Bishop] and the Rev. Canon Lennon. The attendance was numerous’.⁽⁴⁾ A report of the opening of the Catholic Chapel also appeared in a Catholic publication, the Weekly Telegraph of 8th July 1854. This original church on the site was of rectangular construction, 84 feet long by 54 feet wide, and without a sanctuary or side chapel. A further loan of £432-9s-8d was obtained from the Bishop in May of the next year, presumably for the necessary furnishings.

A start was made in 1854 in building, ‘a sound and commodious school’, designed by the church architects, adjacent to the church and the presbytery, but separate from them. This desirable project, whose main aim was to provide the children with a Catholic education under the influence of the Church - in order to stem the leakage which had occurred previously - was also able to give cohesiveness to the parish by using the building as a social centre. It was completed in 1855 with the appointment of the first teacher so that the children could start lessons straight away. This fine adjunct to the church was in fact due to the generosity of Michael Hamnett, previously mentioned above, who donated £1,000 for the school, a huge sum in those days (a little over £150,000 in 1997 money probably).⁽⁵⁾

Many parishioners in those days lived in the most degrading conditions; single men and women often surviving in lodging houses packed well beyond their legal capacities, and often owned by fellow immigrants from Ireland. An instance of this was when Bridget Kilmartin owned an unregistered lodging-house in Fernally Street, and could only speak Irish. She had to rely on her son to interpret for her when she had to attend before the Hyde Magistrate. Constable Maiden, who had laid the charge, alleged that she had 4 beds in one room and several others in other rooms in the house. He declared that the accommodation was ‘the filthiest he had ever seen’. She was given a fine of 40 shillings or, in default, one month’s imprisonment.⁽⁶⁾ Sanitation and hygiene was primitive, and diseases like cholera almost endemic, taking the lives of many infants and children, as well as adults.⁽⁷⁾ For many of the families, the new school provided some relief in their overcrowded houses, if only for a few hours each day, and the children acquired a basic literacy and numeracy up to the age of 10 years before being swallowed up in the numerous factories and coalmines abounding in the area.

Their first teacher was an Irish schoolmaster named Lawrence Rooney, who had probably already been giving basic instruction at Sunday-school in the Hamnett St Chapel, in emulation of the non-Conformist practice, or possibly even in his own house, like the ‘Dame’ schools of an earlier era. He must have been obliged to endure the same adverse living conditions as the rest of the parish, since he lived at

N^o 2 Hoviley Lane with his wife and 2 children, and 5 lodgers.⁽⁸⁾ That is possibly the reason he died two years later, in 1857!.

Coincidentally with the opening of St Paul's school, George Booth, the local bookseller and publisher of the North Cheshire Herald, advertised Catholic books for sale: 'The Garden of the Soul' by Bishop Challoner and 'The Key of Heaven'; both still favourite prayer-books among Catholics up to the 2nd World War (and sometimes used by the older generation today), and selling at 6d, 1s 0d, 2s 0d, and 2s 6d - the price reflecting the quality, and a Little Vespers Book and Catechism at 1s 0d each. In addition, Booth sold 'The Ordinary of the Mass' at one penny. For use in school, he made available the Irish National School textbooks, covering general knowledge in 4 lessons, and priced at 10d each lesson; and also to be had were Geography, Arithmetic, and Grammar texts at 4½ d each. For some parishioners at that time, these textbooks would be familiar from their childhood in Ireland, and were commonly used in English Catholic schools during the 19th Century. Two unusual books also available were 'An Illustrated Church History' and 'An introduction to Ignatius Loyola and the Jesuits', said to be 'well worth the money!'.

In March 1855, Lord John Russell's Education Bill was introduced in the Commons, which offered to provide schooling in any Church of England parish area wherever 50 parishioners asked for it. Attendance at church services and for Scripture reading were part of the package, but Catholic and Jewish children needed to attend only if their parents agreed.⁽⁹⁾ This Bill represented a threat therefore to any specifically Catholic school system, and thus to the new St Paul's RC School, because Catholic schools were perforce obliged to charge for each child, to meet the overheads, albeit only about 1d or 2d per week per child. In April of the same year, a rival Bill was introduced by Sir John Packington, called the 'Common Schools Bill', which offered free education at all new schools which would be non-denominational. The schools would be supported out of the rates, and children would be able to opt-out whenever a particular religion's teaching was being given. Both of these Bills were backed by 'The National Public Schools Association', but both failed in May 1856.

One of Father Hill's concerns was that, as far as possible, the children learned their religion even if their parents had fallen away. In co-operation with the school, he held Sunday Schools at which he gave the youngsters religious instruction, and prepared them for the Sacraments. This initiative was proved a success when, on 20th May 1855, Bishop Brown confirmed 69 boys and 168 girls in the first Confirmation Service to be held in the parish. The sponsor for the boys was Charles 'Moracy', almost certainly a mis-spelling of 'Morrisey', as Moracy never again appears in the parish records. According to the note, a Catherine 'Mullowney' sponsored the girls, but since 'Maloney' is the only similar sounding name appearing in all subsequent records, it can be presumed that that was the sponsor's real name.⁽¹⁰⁾ An interesting sidelight on this spelling: 'Mullowney', is that, apparently even now, country people from the West of Ireland still pronounce Maloney as 'Mullowney'. The number of children attending Sunday School may be judged from a report regarding the laying, in 1855, of the foundation stone of the new Church of St Mary, Dukinfield, where it claimed that 800 Sunday scholars from Hyde attended.⁽¹¹⁾ This is almost certainly an exaggeration, but probably is in the right order of numbers of Sunday School children attending St Paul's at the time.

In his evangelistic fervour to reclaim the lapsed adults for the Church, Father Hill also arranged evening lectures in the school on various topics of Catholic interest; such as one by a Mr William Hill of Manchester (no relation to the priest), who spoke on 'The Practical Improvement of the Moral, Social, Intellectual, and Religious Conditions of the Working Classes of the Catholic Community'. The response from Father Hill's parishioners is not mentioned, but considering Irish people's interest in politics, there were probably not a few who attended.

The Parish Registers for Confirmation began in 1855, those for Baptisms and Marriages in 1856, and for Deaths in January 1857. It is certain that these Sacraments would have been available between 1848-1855, but details cannot be known definitely as there are no records nor registers of them having been administered. It is, maybe, of interest that the first baptism in the 1856 Register was of Thomas Duffy, born 12th December 1855, son of Patrick and Helen Duffy, by John Hill PP, on 20th January 1856.

John Hill PP, also officiated at the first two marriages registered, both of which took place on 6th January 1856:

- Francis Healey, son of John and Catherine Healey, and Bridget Wates (widow), daughter of John and Honor Coffey
- Robert Moss, son of James and Margaret Moss, and Maria Jennings, daughter of Edward and Mary Jennings

The first death recorded was of Margaret Pickett of Newton, on 6th January 1857, who was buried at Stalybridge Cemetery on 11th January 1857, following a Requiem Mass at St Paul's Church, Newton, offered by Father John Hill PP. The second death recorded was of the schoolmaster, Lawrence Rooney, on 18th January 1857. It is of note that the average age at death, of all age groups combined, in the Parish Records 1857 was less than 22 years.⁽¹²⁾

An illustration of the priorities in morality of the Irish immigrants was provided by Bridget McHugh who, in late September 1856, properly married James Murray, another immigrant, in the Catholic Church at Hyde. However, 3 weeks later, she was in trouble for obtaining money falsely by claiming to be Father Hill's maid. She had obtained 4 shillings from the Dukinfield priest through her devious stories, as well as £2 from the Catholic priest in Oldham!⁽¹³⁾

To celebrate the approach of the 3rd anniversary of the opening of the church, Father Hill took 500 parishioners, teachers, and Sunday School children, on a rare treat for them, an outing by train to Stockport on 12th June 1857. On the following day, the first St Paul's Whitsuntide procession took place, when the priest, teachers, and 600 scholars passed through the principal streets of the town, and returned via Flowery Field and Newton Green, back to the school.⁽¹⁴⁾ Already, the outline of the life of a Catholic parish which would be recognisable up to Vatican II as typical, was in place at St Paul's. Father Hill also celebrated the anniversary in the week following, for he invited Frederick Maccabe, 'ventriloquist, mimic, and musical troubadour', to give one of his 'merry' entertainments entitled 'Begone, Dull Care', illustrated with mirthful stories and original songs, to entertain his flock.

The third anniversary of the opening of the church was actually celebrated on Sunday, 5th July 1857, with the 9.30am Mass offered by Bishop Brown, and the

11am Mass concelebrated by the Bishop and Father Hill. In his homily, the Bishop contrasted, adversely, the paucity of Christian festivals in England with those in Catholic countries, and described what these feasts meant in the lives of Catholics.⁽¹⁵⁾ A letter in the newspaper from 'A Reader' sourly denounced the Bishop even for referring to St Paul, 'when the great Apostle's teaching contradicted him'. Father Hill's pugnacious reply was that 'A Reader' was a bitter bigot and, with reference to an earlier letter to the newspaper attacking the character of the Irish in Hyde, he said that the vast majority of Irish Catholics in the town were as honourable as the English people, as the English employers would testify.⁽¹⁶⁾

However, this pugnacity was only one side of the priest's character, which only tended to exhibit itself when his Catholic people were being slandered. Although there is no doubt that the reputation of Irish Catholics for drunkenness was justified to some extent, and exacerbated the antipathy already felt, and openly expressed in the Press, yet he was able to mollify the scorn by earning respect for his own personality and leadership qualities. The September wakes, and other holidays, were often an opportunity for raucous and anti-social behaviour by many young Irishmen and women. To combat this, Father Hill organized concerts and other amusements in the schoolroom to divert his parishioners from joining the hooligan element. As a consequence in September 1858, he earned an unusual shower of praise for his initiative from the editor of the North Cheshire Herald, who wrote of him: 'He provided an alternative for parishioners, who might otherwise have been lured to corrupt pleasures elsewhere, consisting of 3 talented vocalists - Mr and Mrs Page, and Miss Amelia Bellot, assisted by a choir accompanied on the harmonium'. The editor urged other Ministers to emulate Father Hill.⁽¹⁷⁾

Music was integral to the life of the parish, for not only had Father Hill established a choir he had personally trained to sing at Masses and social events, but he had also persuaded Joseph Turner, a member of St George's Church of England Parish, to provide an instrumental accompaniment with his orchestral group. Sometime in 1858, however, he procured an organ, and appointed as organist, at a salary of £3-0s-0d per half-year, the same William Henry Vickers who had consistently played his harmonium for Masses, and other Services, in the Hamnett St Chapel up to 1854. William Henry continued to hold this position for around 50 years, until his son, another W H Vickers, took over the organ from him.⁽¹⁸⁾ It may be of interest that the first organist had married Ellen Kelly, an Irish girl, between July-September 1857, and hence his was one of the earliest marriages at the church.

In addition to the choir, Father Hill enhanced the life of the parish by introducing: firstly, for the spiritual and social benefit of the young women parishioners, the 'Children of Mary' (known then as the Enfants de Marie); secondly, for the young men, the 'St Joseph's Young Men's Society', which eventually became the 'Catholic Young Men's Society' (CYMS). This same year, at Easter 1859, the Bishop made his 2nd Visitation to St Paul's, confirming another 48 boys and 64 girls. Most of these took part in what was now the annual Whit Walk, led by a band, with Father Hill, 30 teachers, and 700 pupils from the Sunday School, who walked through the streets of Hyde, Flowery Field, and Newton, stopping for refreshments at the houses of local notables along the way, and then on to a field in Godley, where everyone gathered for recreation and more refreshments. All these activities, and the pastoral burden of dealing with the continuing settlement of new arrivals from Ireland, made some assistance for the priest a necessity, and on 29 June

1859, a newly ordained priest from All Hallows Seminary in Dublin was sent to St Paul's as its first Assistant Priest. Father Denis Maguire however, stayed for only a year before moving on to St Edward's, Runcorn.

Religious passions sometimes erupted in Hyde whenever the extreme Protestant associations marched into areas thronging with young Irish Catholics, such as George St and Charles St, denouncing the Pope and mocking Catholic beliefs. One such occasion was Sunday, 25th September 1859, when James de la Haye, a member of the 'Working Men's Protestant Association' accused Catholics of worshipping 'little gods with brass toes and wooden bodies' and worshipping the Virgin Mary more than God. The result was that in Charles St, Mary Dunleavey and Bernard Lee assaulted him, when 'he was merely walking to a house there for a cup of tea!'. The outcome was their arrest, and a fine of 20s 0d for each of them.

On New Year's Day in 1861, Father Hill received tangible evidence of how much the parish appreciated his untiring care for their spiritual and physical welfare, when he was presented with an Illuminated Address signed by John Ross, Chairman of the organizing committee, J Flanagan, Treasurer (and also the Stationmaster at Newton railway station), and J T Cayley, Secretary, on behalf of all the parish. He was also presented with a purse filled with gold sovereigns, by Doctor L McGettigan in the presence of the Catholic priests of the area. Another present to him around this time was a replacement for Fr Maguire, who had left in 1860, by the arrival of Father William Stanton, who then stayed on for 2 years.

A correspondence ensued in the Press in January 1861 between Father Hill and a Rev. W Urwick who had lectured in favour of Mazzini's programme in Italy in support of Garibaldi's 'Risorgimento' movement. Father Hill pointed out that only recently, Mazzini had spoken in Scotland claiming that his policy was one of 'Liberty, the Rights of Man, Progress, Equality, and Fraternity'. This was the programme which Robespierre proclaimed in terror-ridden France in the 1789 Revolution. Father Hill said that Mazzini's agenda was to overturn existing governments and institutions, including even Christianity, for Ricciordi, one of Garibaldi's companions, had spoken of Christianity as 'that fatal plant born in Judaea'. The Rev. Urwick replied that Father Hill's information on the Mazzini issue was gleaned from a recent book published under the strict censorship of the Pope. In fact, he said, Garibaldi had been welcomed by both Catholics and Protestants in Italy, as he did not attack true Christianity, but the corrupt government in the Papal States. He was, he said, an example of truth, bravery, perseverance, disinterestedness, and childhood simplicity. The bulk of English people, he asserted, supported Lord John Russell's denunciation of the Pope's government.

Urwick followed up his argument in the Press during a lecture soon afterwards at Zion School, and accused the Catholic priest of wanting to see in England censorship by a Board with Cardinal Wiseman at its head, who would correct the Press at the behest of the Pope, and Romish priests who held Father Hill's views. Father Hill did not respond, presumably realising that it was pointless to argue further with an incorrigible bigot!⁽¹⁹⁾

Later, in July 1861, Charles Bradlaugh, the notorious atheist MP and iconoclast, appeared in Hyde to give 3 lectures in the Temperance Hall. The editor of the NCH reported that his language was blasphemous, as he had claimed that the Bible supported slavery, and had ridiculed the Lord's Prayer, which he said would never

provide the people with bread which they had to obtain by thought and action, not by prayer. The editor ended his article by saying: “We can tell him, Bradlaugh, that he has made no impression in Hyde. We truly pity him, and pray that God will change his heart”. In referring to the visit by the atheist, Father Hill fully concurred with the editor’s sentiments.⁽²⁰⁾

A notable date in the parish was 12th April 1862, for on that day Bishop Brown consecrated a large cast iron bell, designed by Michael Hadfield, architect from Sheffield, who had it cast in his home town at the Naylor Vickers & Co. Foundry. Being mounted in the bell turret, erected above the West gable of the nave, it raised the total height of the church to 72 feet above street level, and made the church the highest landmark of the town to be seen from the countryside around.⁽²¹⁾ The inscription read :

ST PAUL AND ST PATRICK PRAY FOR US NAYLOR, VICKERS & CO. SHEFFIELD 1861 N°2825

Many of the donations to defray the cost came from friendly non-Catholics of Hyde

The cotton famine was at its height in 1862, and severely hit the textile areas of the North, but none more so than the impoverished people of Hyde who were thrown out of work. A Hyde Relief Fund was set up for the distressed people of the town, under the control of the Vicars of St George’s, Hyde, and St Mary’s, Newton. At the 11am Mass on Sunday 30th November, Father Hill read a pastoral letter from the Bishop appealing for contributions to the Cotton Districts’ Distress Funds. On the following Sunday when the collection was taken up, it totalled £2-10s-0d. Commenting on this, the editor of the North Cheshire Herald wrote: ‘Although this was a small sum, it exhibits the large-heartedness of the Catholic Community of the district, for we understand that few of that congregation are independent of relief, and the collection was thus spared out of the relief they received’.⁽²²⁾ The Bishop of Kerry in Ireland, Dr Moriarty, also appealed in his own churches for help for the distressed, many of whom were “..from their own kith and kin”.

The apparently amiable cooperation of the clergy of the churches and chapels of Hyde, over the distribution of relief, was shattered however when the Minister of Flowery Field Unitarian Church accused the Vicar of Newton of diverting most of the relief under his control to people who attended his own church, to entice them to convert to the established Church. Moreover, the Vicar had attempted ‘to get all the educational text books provided from the Relief Fund for his own Church school, to ensure that all the scholars went to it’. The Minister further asserted that Father Hill had been refused permission to enrol scholars for his own school because it had no certificated master, although it had a certificated mistress, Helen Murphy. Father Hill in fact overcame this problem adroitly by appointing a certificated master, and therefore got both the scholars and his share of the textbooks!⁽²³⁾

The Whit procession on Friday, 5th June 1863, was led by the St Paul’s Catholic Brass Band, and was followed at the rear by the St Paul’s Fife and Drum Band, made up from boys who attended the Sunday School. Both bands were founded and encouraged by Fr Hill, whose musical abilities had been of great use in training the boys in the use of their instruments during the previous year (1862).⁽²⁴⁾

The serious distress which still plagued cotton districts, including Hyde, throughout 1862, due to unemployment among the operatives, led Father Hill to arrange an entertainment in the Concert Hall on Mottram Road over the New Year 1863, as it had recently been opened as a recreation centre for those operatives affected. At his own expense, the priest engaged Miss Amelia Bellot and her duettist and piano accompanist, Edward Page, as principal singers, with support from St Paul's Church choir and members of Hyde Choral Society, for a concert of songs and music from Mozart's '12th Mass' and Haydn's 'Creation'. The comments of the newspaper's music critic were revealing, for he said: "The 2 pieces were inefficiently performed, but as everyone had given their services gratuitously it would be impolite to criticize, as the ordinary listener would not be aware!. Father Hill's love of music was indicated by his taking part himself in several of the choruses". What the unemployed operatives thought of the rather high-brow musical selection is not recorded, but the concert was judged to be a success, and all the performers enjoyed it. A useful profit was apparently raised for the unemployed fund.⁽²⁴⁾

The Prince of Wales (the future King Edward VII) married Princess Alexandra in early March 1863, and great celebrations were held in the town. The Gibraltar Mill's employees were each given a bonus of one shilling, and the Mayor arranged for a procession by the various dignitaries of the town, followed by representatives from all the town's schools, and by the ordinary townspeople. The Catholic community's contribution to the gaiety of the procession was an embroidered banner showing the Prince of Wales' feathered plumes surrounded by a collar of the Most Illustrious Order of St Patrick, which stimulated much admiration.⁽²⁵⁾

The NCH headline of the 10th October 1863 reported a sad event which had occurred on 5th October with the 'unlawful wounding at Hyde; when, on the following day, in the morning of 6th October 1863, Anthony Francis Gillespie (aged 21) schoolmaster at St Paul's Catholic School, Newton, was charged before Thomas Thornley, Esq., with unlawfully beating, abusing, and wounding his wife, Nancy Gillespie, at Hyde on the 5th instant. His wife appeared in court 'with her face covered in wounds and bruises, and one of her arms cut and mangled frightfully. The prisoner is rather low in stature, dark complexioned, and blind in one eye'.

Nancy Gillespie said they had married at St Paul's Catholic Church on the 3rd of August last, and on the morning of 5th October about 1am., her husband had got up and left the house for about a quarter of an hour. When he returned he had asked her if she had anything to tell him regarding a Scottish tinker, Black, and if she had ever had any improper intimacy with him. She told him that she had not, at which her husband called her a liar, and accused her of having had intercourse with Black. Although she repeatedly denied having had any such intercourse, he took out a kitchen knife, and gave her up to a count of twenty to admit she had. He then threw down the knife, punched her, ordered her with an oath to lie down, and threatened her he would run her through. He cut her wrist, then put the knife on the mantelpiece and ordered her to stay in bed all day, and not go out. However, when he left the house later, she went to the police station to take out a warrant for her husband's arrest, and he was committed to Chester Castle. In the October 17th edition of the NCH a letter from Black was published, denying the slanderous allegations about Mrs Gillespie and himself, and enclosing a copy of a letter from Anthony Gillespie to his wife, Nancy, from Chester Castle. In it her husband asked

for forgiveness for what he had done, and promised God and Nancy that he would never do such a thing again. He admitted he had now arrived at the truth, and promised that he would treat her with kindness thereafter.

The December 12th edition reported that Gillespie had been found guilty of unlawfully wounding his wife under provocation. His solicitor testified that Gillespie had never intended to use the knife, and was extremely sorry for what he had done. He added that the wife was expecting their baby, and consequently hoped the sentence would be as light as possible. Gillespie was much affected with remorse, shedding tears copiously as his wife gave her evidence. He was sentenced to 3 months imprisonment in December.⁽²⁶⁾ The couple were subsequently reconciled, but he was, of course, dismissed from his position at St Paul's School, and a new master, Michael McGovern, was appointed in his place.⁽²⁷⁾

In the New Year of 1864, a rather strange picture of Ireland was painted in a lecture by a Mr Finnigan of Manchester, which was held at the Temperance Hall in George St, Hyde. Presented under the auspices of the Hyde Branch of the National Brotherhood of St Patrick (presumably the Fenians or the Ribbonmen), it was attended by many of the Catholic Community who filled the hall, but could hardly recognize the country he described. He claimed that Ireland was a land flowing with milk and honey, which the people had ploughed and reaped its harvest, but had not tasted the bread thereof!. At this point there were loud cheers, for the large audience could empathize with his very last sentiment. Finnigan then appealed for Irish men and women to unite together to gain back their country, and finished by vehemently denying that the Brotherhood was a secret society with secret signs and oaths.⁽²⁸⁾ A report on immigration from Ireland to America a year before, in 1863, which stated that 86,691 persons had actually left the country, begged of his audience the question of where was this milk and honey of which Finnigan spoke?.

Concern to liquidate the parish debt of £1,400, and complete the Chancel (Sanctuary) area at a further cost of £400, persuaded some of the parishioners to consider how this was to be achieved, even though most of them were still themselves on Relief support. In June 1864, the Secretary, Michael McGovern, announced that they proposed to introduce a lottery, and he appealed for prizes. The aim was for 300 prizes, and by May 1865, £250 had been received. He said, "It had been hoped to raise another £100 for the remaining prizes, but so far only £61-4s-0d has been given, and, of that, only £20 has come from the parishioners". As an extra way of raising funds for the church, the choir, aided by the Hyde Choral Society, gave a concert in the school. The report indicated that, 'the 3 sopranos: Misses Wilson, McKeone, and Galvin, sang brilliantly, and a duet by Miss Galvin and Mr Lees was well received'.

At this point in the concert after giving a brief history of the parish, Father Hill said that the Bishop often held up St Paul's as an example to other parishes of their devotion to their holy religion. He expressed the hope that, before he departed this life, St Paul's Church building would be completed, and be free from debt. Following this, the band struck up with a medley of popular tunes, but as they went into the strains of 'Home, Sweet Home', the gas suddenly failed, and the incandescent lamps dimmed, and then went out. Father Hill angrily complained that it was the third time the supply had failed, and that "he had reason to suspect that someone was tampering with the pipes connected to the school". A subsequent

investigation by the gas company's technicians however, revealed that the trouble was caused by a valve in the gas meter becoming displaced.

The profit on the lottery was announced on St Patrick's Day 1866, with the 1st prize, a gold watch, being won by Thomas Flanagan, and the 2nd prize, a silver watch, by Miss Margaret McGuinness. Mr Samuel Shaw of Back Lane was in the chair, and Father Hill announced the amount of the profit at £140, after all expenses had been paid.⁽²⁹⁾

The North Cheshire Herald, under the heading of 'An Egg for Naturalists to crack', advised that Father Hill had claimed that one of the ducks which he kept, had laid an egg measuring 10½" in length, and 9" around the middle. Inside, he had asserted, was a smaller, but perfectly formed, egg without a shell. The paper commented with some justice: "It was a circumstance without parallel!". No doubt his mother and sister, now installed as his housekeepers in the presbytery, were pleased at the unparalleled circumstance, for it was said at this time that his health was showing signs of decline.

The rather serious consequences, as distinct from either the laughable or distasteful effects of excessive drinking, was demonstrated in this year, 1866, when a large group of Irish people who had been celebrating at one of the local inns began arguing amongst themselves. Unfortunately, this argument developed into a full-scale fight between two groups. The police were called, and PC Ardern was the unfortunate officer who had to take action. One of the rioters, Matthew Mannion, a fairly frequent offender for drunkenness, apparently became enraged and 'feloniously wounded PC Ardern with an axe'. He was charged, and subsequently sentenced to 6 years penal servitude.⁽³⁰⁾

The Murphy Riots, instigated by an ex-priest who mocked Catholic beliefs and urged his followers to wreck Catholic churches, had caused havoc in Ashton and Stalybridge. In 1867, one priest, Father Daly of Stalybridge, had been charged but subsequently exonerated, of wounding a rioter, Reuben Beeley.⁽³¹⁾ When Father Hill heard that a Murphyite speaker was to deliver a course of anti-Papacy lectures in June 1868, he urged the parishioners to show restraint, as he had been assured by his Protestant fellow-townsmen that they would not tolerate the violence seen elsewhere.⁽³²⁾

Over Christmas and New Year, several performances of Charles Dickens 'The Christmas Carol' were staged by the teachers and Sunday School pupils, accompanied by St Paul's Band. This seems to have been the first time a dramatic performance, disregarding concerts and other entertainments, was given at St Paul's. The players making up the cast were referred to under the banal title of: 'The Drama Class'.

It is probable that it was round about this time, that the gravestone which stands 4 yards or so from the North-West corner of the church, was erected, as its design and the type of script chiselled on its face, is of this period. Although it was found to have been badly eroded by the weather when inspected in 1992, there were enough letters and words still legible to be reasonably certain of the original inscription, as shown. The one laid to rest could have been a man or woman, for the last letters of the Christian name is partially obliterated, and could be either Mary or Martin, as indicated, and the surname is completely indecipherable.

OF YOUR
CHARITY, PRAY
FOR THE SOUL OF
ITINERANT, MARY [or Martin]..... DECEASED.
AGED 17 YEARS
MAY SHE [or he] REST IN PEACE
A....~.....~.....
I. H. S.

Subsequently, possibly in February 1872 during Father Hopkins' time, another corpse was apparently interred, for the word '*soul*' was re-inscribed '*souls*', together with an additional inscription beginning, '*And.....*' (*or 'Also.....'*) One suggestion is that it referred to a baby called McLoughlin, but in that case there would hardly be a need to pray for the baby's soul too!. However, in the Registrar General's records, there is reference to a female called 'McLoughlin' without a prefixed Christian name, who died in February 1872, so it was possibly she - presumably another adult - who was the second person interred. Why Father Hill, or Father Hopkins, would erect a headstone for an itinerant is mere speculation. Maybe it was to circumvent the active hostility displayed by a Mr Huxton, who lived in the house at the corner of the present Newman St and St Paul's St. A gravestone in that location would ensure that access to the church and school was maintained for those parishioners needing to go past Huxton's house, by providing a pretext that they needed a path in order to pay their respects to a departed parishioner!. It is possible

that, in fact, no-one was ever buried in the grave as the Registrar of Deaths in the parish of St Paul's, from its beginning in 1856 to the 1880s does not indicate that any such burials had occurred, nor do the Parish Mission Accounts refer to any expenditure on a gravestone during that same period. Maybe Father Hopkins just procured a reject headstone, and placed it in position as a subterfuge to deceive Mr Huxton!. It is however a matter of interest that for many years, stretching back into the previous century, the grave has been tended and flowers placed upon it - which is rather peculiar for an empty plot!.

Because of his failing health, Father Hill called off the Whit procession in 1869. By the beginning of August he had become seriously ill, and died on 6th August 1869, aged 50. The newspaper article praised him for:

‘his generosity, even at his own expense, to the many poor of his parish; for his artistic decoration of the pillars and arches, in a neat and chaste design by himself; and the East window over the altar, so well done and rich in colour, as to be indistinguishable from stained glass; whilst, as a musician, he had no equal in the town. During his time in Hyde he has made no enemies, but kept on the best of terms with everyone.’

He was buried on Wednesday, 11th August 1869 in Dukinfield Cemetery,⁽³³⁾ and a headstone was erected over his grave in December of the same year.

Father Hill’s successor as Missionary Apostolic was Father Henry Hopkins, whose tenure as such, up to 1879, was a significant decade for the parish. He was a Birmingham man who, prior to coming to Hyde, had been the Cathedral Administrator for 2 years. This experience and expertise showed in the immediate changes he made to the rather easy-going practices of Father Hill. The times of Masses, published locally and in the Catholic Directory, were as follows:

Sunday:	Mass at 9am & 11am,	Sermon & Benediction at 6pm
Holyday:	Mass at 5am & 9am	
Weekday:	Mass at 8am,	Rosary & Benediction at 7-30pm

He probably always kept careful accounts of the income and expenditure of the parish for, from the week beginning 4th July 1875, when Mission Accounts Books were made mandatory in all churches, he meticulously detailed every item of income and spending which occurred on each day. In the first Mission Accounts Book for the parish, he usefully gave a brief account of the parish since its inception, including the debts and borrowing made since then. When he became the Missionary Apostolic in 1869, he said that the parish at that time owed £432 1s 8d to the Chapter of the diocese, and £654 9s 0d to the Bishop, both debts bearing interest on them of 4½% per annum. He also had to borrow another £100 from the Bishop to cover unpaid accounts at Father Hill’s demise, and for his funeral expenses, bringing the total owed by the parish to £1,186 18s 8d. As was usual then, Father Hopkins’ salary was £40 per annum, paid in 4 quarterly instalments; whilst the curate’s salary was £30, also paid in 4 equal apportionments.⁽³⁴⁾

A Commons motion, proposed in 1870 by an anti-Catholic MP, John Newdegate, and supported by James Sidebottom, MP for Stalybridge, together with a petition signed by 9,674 of his Stalybridge constituents, called for a ‘Government Inspection of Nunneries’, inspired by the alleged escape of a nun from a convent near to Knowle. The Duke of Norfolk, and Lord Howard of Glossop, opposed the motion, and Masses were offered in all churches, including St Paul’s, on Sunday, 24th April 1870, that it would be defeated as it was. Subsequently Sister Agnes was diagnosed as being insane!.

When the First Vatican Council, in 1870, defined the doctrine of Papal Infallibility it produced hostility and brought out sarcastic comments in the local and national press. The local Orangemen’s Lodge asserted that, despite all the Pope’s claims to infallibility, all his powers had gone, and commented: “Whilst man proposes, God disposes!”, apparently under the impression that the Pope’s powers were material, not spiritual as defined. A pathetic anti-papal joke circulating in Hyde at that time was: ‘What did the Pope say when asked which part of Rome he

intended keeping (most of the papal states had been confiscated by the new Italian state at that time) ?. The Pope's reply was: 'Vat - I - can!'.

The life of the parish was, however, little affected by the events in Rome, or by the bigotry which surfaced in the Press and other organs of opinion, and a concert took place on 17th October 1870 in the school, to raise money for the purchase of new instruments and the repair of existing instruments for the St Paul's Catholic Brass Band. Under the leadership of Mr J R Kilroy, the Band played a selection of Irish Airs, whilst Misses Georgeson, Wilson, and Carroll sang sentimental ballads, such as 'I'm lonely since my mother died'.

The Forster Education Act 1870 had the effect of driving many children into a school for the first time and, at St Paul's, alterations to cope with the increased numbers became necessary. The total population in Hyde and District had risen by 20% at the National Census for 1871, compared with that of 1861. An equivalent rise in the Catholic population would, at the very least, have occurred, so to meet the extra accommodation requirement, the parish had to burden itself once more with a further loan from the diocese. Father Tracy, another Irish priest, joined Father Hopkins as his assistant during 1871; and they formed an excellent team. Both were very popular pastors, and apparently struck a close rapport between themselves. The financial good-housekeeping of Father Hopkins enabled him to reduce the parish debt to the Bishop by £80 in 1871, representing 30% of the parish income for that year.⁽³⁵⁾

The bitterness felt by the non-Conformists to the provisions in the Forster Act, laying down mandatory grants for denominational schools in proportion to the number of children attending, was only surpassed by their opposition to the presence of Catholic and Church of England school representatives on the Local Schools' Board. This opposition was so intense locally, that when one member of the Board asked for fair play for these denominations, he was severely assaulted!.

Attendances at concerts and other entertainments held at the school was almost always good. When the annual concert in aid of the Brass Band funds was held on the 30th September 1872, the audience overflowed, and a repeat performance was promised to satisfy the clamour.⁽³⁶⁾

The parochial tea party held on New Years Day 1873 was another example of the strong support given, since between 500-600 attended in 'the beautifully decorated schoolroom. Suspended from the ceiling were two large flags or banners; one saying: 'Long live Father Hopkins', whilst the other declared: 'Long live Father Tracy'. Several non-Catholic notables attended, and Father Hopkins expressed his pleasure at this, "which contrasted with the bigotry displayed by certain MPs". A group of parishioners, joined by Father Tracy, concluded the evening by performing a burlesque with the title of: 'Dr O'Toole, the Irish Tutor'.⁽³⁷⁾

Local Catholics lost one of their active members in March 1873, when railwayman John McKeon decided to emigrate to America where he felt he would have better prospects than in Hyde. A farewell concert was held at the Church Inn, Newton Green, to wish him well in his venture. The evening was taken up mainly with singing Irish ballads and patriotic songs. J G Roddy rendered the 'Groves of Blarney', and William Delaney 'Kathleen Mavourneen and 'The Minstrel Boy', T Turner gave a rousing 'I am a True-born Irishman', and the group surrounding the

departing comrade lustily sang many other airs. The evening ended with the health of the Queen being proposed, which was fervently supported by Mr McKeon.⁽³⁸⁾

The parish was consecrated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in October 1873 by Bishop Brown, who celebrated the 11 o'clock Mass which was attended by a full congregation.

On the occasion when the Parochial Tea Party was held on New Years Day 1874, Father Hopkins expressed his appreciation that some parishioners had been willing to provide trays of food for those hungrily attending the 'do', so that the parish had avoided having to use its funds to buy-in food, as it had always done previously. He also spoke of his wish that this occasion could become an annual event, but "hoped that the 'whistlers' would cease demonstrating their appreciation!". The dangers of allowing a lower, and uninhibited class of person to attend were illustrated by those present at the bottom end of the room who indulged in "fighting and creating a commotion"! However, Fathers Tracy and Hopkins stood no nonsense from them, but put a stop to the disturbance by physically expelling the offenders⁽³⁹⁾ Finally, songs by John Brady were followed by the Dramatic Society's sketch: 'Ireland As It Was or The Old Mountain Hut'. Father Tracy then expressed his appreciation to all who had attended, particularly to the Protestants who had come; and rounded off the night's entertainment with a special thanks to the players who had so delighted the audience.

On the feast of St Joseph, 80 members of the St Paul's Parish Society of St Joseph's Young Men were present at a High Mass celebrated by Fathers Hopkins and Tracy, with each member wearing a crimson sash and a silver medal. The Brass Band ushered in the procession, headed by a Cross-bearer and 2 acolytes in white surplices. A silk banner, on which was emblazoned golden crowns encircled by lilies, had the inscription in gold beneath, of 'O Clemens, O Pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria, and it was carried by one of the society's members. Another banner, emblazoned with a golden chalice, was inscribed 'Ecce Panis Angelorum', whilst 4 younger members carried a statue of St Joseph behind it, and these were followed by the President of the Society, altar-boys in surplices, and then Father Hopkins. Father Tracy preached to a full church in aid of St Paul's schools from the text of Genesis 12:40. He began: "Dear Brethren, the blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God has a throne in Heaven above the glory of all the saints, for she is not only united to the great King in grace but she is also His Mother, and none can approach her in dignity. Yet, next to her is the saint most nearly related to her, her spouse St Joseph, our model in virtue and in devotion to Him". Father Tracy ended his sermon by recommending the traditional prayer to the Holy Family: 'Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony', to be said each day.⁽⁴⁰⁾

Father Tracy was an ardent admirer of Father Matthews' Temperance Crusade among the Irish immigrants, and made every effort to persuade his predominantly Irish congregation to take the Pledge to be lifelong teetotallers. Like Cardinal Manning, he was convinced that lapsation from the Faith, as well as financial and social impoverishment among the Irish in England, was a direct result of alcohol abuse. On St Patrick's night in 1874, he announced after Benediction, that 400 parishioners had already taken the Pledge. The local non-Conformist leader of the Temperance Movement in Hyde, John Taylor, hoped that other denominations

would follow St Paul's example; and the North Cheshire Herald's leader column commented that: 'The good seed sown by Father Matthews over 20 years has germinated in Hyde'⁽⁴¹⁾

In January 1875, the hopes that Father Hopkins had expressed in 1874, regarding donations of trays of food for the annual Tea Party, bore fruit - and other goodies besides, of course - in the 100 trays which had this time been donated for the 400 expected partakers at the Party. That was an increase of 70 trays over the number received at the previous Tea Party in 1874. In view of the generosity of the parishioners, he expressed the hope that there would be 200 trays next year, for the 1876 party!. He pointed out that the social events in the parish were the only means of generating sufficient income to obtain the matching Government grant for the school. As an example of the difficulty, he quoted the figures for 1874, which showed that the grant should have been £148 1s 0d, but because the parish School Fund had only realized £130 1s 0d, that was the amount of grant which the Government had allocated, a loss to the parish of £18. Having got that off his chest, the party continued; and the entertainment which followed was the rendering of Irish songs by the following men: R Hill, J Cunningham, J A Miller, J Vickers, and J Brady, and Misses: S Vickers, M Fleming, M E Hart, H Needham, and E Needham, with finally a comic recitation by Master William Reynolds, who 'was a bit of a card!'⁽⁴²⁾

The Temperance issue was brought to prominence again at St Paul's, when a Father O'Keefe of Rochdale spoke at another meeting arranged by Father Tracy. Father Tracy claimed that a few of the 400 people who had pledged to abstain from all alcohol in the previous year, had fallen by the wayside., but that most had risen again. He also claimed that in the past 9 months, not one member of St Paul's had appeared before the Hyde magistrates for drunkenness, as all the Catholics who had appeared, had been from outside the town. He announced that the funeral club, with 200 members, had associated itself with the St Paul's Temperance League [This funeral club was in fact the precursor of the Catholic Burial Society in the parish]. The result of the joint arrangement between Temperance & Burial societies was that the Temperance League membership rose to 600, who all signed a petition to Parliament to protest against the Permissive Bill's committee proposal to relax restrictions on Sunday opening of public houses.⁽⁴³⁾

The Newton Wesleyans opened a new school and chapel in June 1875, which enabled Father Hopkins to purchase from them their old schoolroom, which fronted onto Newton Street (now Newman Street), as a sorely-needed Infant School, to accommodate the ever increasing number of infants attending the ordinary school. The cost was £270-0s-0d, plus £11-3s-1d for legal fees, so a special collection was taken, which raised £68-7s-0d. A loan of £160 was obtained from the Bishop as well, leaving a deficit of £43-16s-1d. Nevertheless the purchase went ahead on 25th September 1875, when the full price of £270 was handed over to the Wesleyan School Trustees.

To meet the deficit, Bishop Brown preached at a special Service in November, and in December 1875, the Dramatic Society presented 'Colleen Bawn Or The Brides of Garryowen', in 3 Acts, a play on several phases of Irish life by Dion Boucicault⁽⁴⁴⁾ It was a popular item on their programme for many years up to World War I. It has recently been presented by a drama company at the Royal Exchange

Theatre in Manchester. Another dramatic performance took place before 400 people on St Patrick's night in 1876, of 'The Martyrdom of St Cecilia' and 'Pike O'Callaghan'. Afterwards, J W Fielding gave a cornet solo, followed by a song by George White, accompanied by Thomas Barber on the harmonium. Stephen Taylor on the violin and Joseph Conway on the accordion completed the instrumental section.⁽⁴⁵⁾

An unusual compliment to the priests of St Paul's, especially Father Tracy, and to the despised Irish Catholic residents of Hyde, was paid in a letter to the North Cheshire Herald by a James Higinbotham, an obvious temperance supporter, headed 'St Patrick's Day in Hyde' which seemed radically to contradict the current and subsequent certainties held by English people about the permanent addiction of the Irish to drink and unsocial behaviour. He said he had lived adjacent to the parts of the town composed mainly of Irish people, and he had been pleasantly surprised at the quietness and sobriety which prevailed on St Patrick's Day in 1876. It was in great contrast to previous years, and great credit must be given to the RC priests and others associated with St Paul's Church, who had been using their influence to exhort their people to eschew drink. He was sure it was no easy task weaning the Irish from drinking and getting drunk on that day. He hoped that the reformation taking place amongst Catholics would become permanent, and that the numbers joining the Catholic Temperance Society was pleasing. The example set by the two Irish priests in this respect was worthy of imitation by the Ministers of the various Protestant denominations.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Regrettably taking the shine off the above encomium for Father Tracy was a report, one week later in the North Cheshire Herald, headed 'Bridget's Weakness', which read: 'Bridget Mahon, whose face we have seen before in the Police Court at Hyde, appeared again on Monday last, carrying a child in her arms, to answer a charge of being drunk and disorderly in Bottom Street, Newton, on the 16th April!. She was fined 5s 0d, but appealed for time to pay the fine. Captain Arrowsmith, the Magistrate, allowed her a week's grace'. Captain Arrowsmith was the magistrate most often dealing with offences related to drunkenness and fighting in the streets which involved Irish people. He was invariably humane and compassionate in his sentencing.⁽⁴⁶⁾

An illustration of the attitude of many Hyde people to Catholics and Irish at this time was displayed in April 1876, when Joseph Goodwin appeared at the Hyde Police Court to answer a charge of assaulting Thomas Hulme of the Union Foundry where Goodwin himself was a labourer, and Hulme the watchman. As Goodwin and a group of men made their way past the watchman's hut on their way home after finishing work for the day, Hulme was alleged to have shouted "Where are you Irish going?". As Goodwin was the only Irishmen present he strongly objected to the remark and, after reaching his home, he went out again, calling at Hulme's house, and punching the watchman as he opened the door. In his defence, Goodwin said he thought it very hard that anyone should be allowed to use such language, and he pleaded in mitigation of this particular offence that it was the first time he had collided with the law. Hulme claimed that his remark was not intended to be personal, and that Goodwin had no right to come to his house to assault him. The Magistrate found Goodwin guilty, and fined him 20 shillings with costs, or, in default, one month's imprisonment with hard labour; and he warned that Goodwin would get worse if his unprovoked attacks on people occurred again.

After returning from a holiday in his hometown in Ireland, Father Tracy was delighted and surprised to find himself the recipient of a gold watch, a purse of money, and an Address eulogizing his efforts, which were jointly presented on behalf of the Temperance League, the St Joseph's YMS, and St Paul's congregation. The watch was inscribed: 'Presented to Rev Fr Tracy as a token of respect and esteem, 28th August 1876'. A concert followed, which was led by the choir with solos by various vocalists, and supported by the music of the Catholic Brass Band.⁽³⁵⁾ Father Hopkins stressed that the gifts were a spontaneous effort by the people themselves, out of their great love and respect for Father Tracy. They came, he said, not just from the confraternities and organisations, but from the entire Catholic Community of Hyde.⁽⁴⁸⁾

Marital discord and female resentment was just as likely to occur then as now. An Irish woman, Ann Burns, had applied to the Magistrate at Hyde for an order of protection from her husband, apparently not to stop him from taking her earrings or other assets, but to stop him having any legal rights or control over her. The Magistrate had already told her before that she must get a copy of her marriage certificate from Father Hopkins or Father Tracy to prove her case, but she had failed to obtain one by the time she appeared. She was upbraided by the Magistrate, and told that 'this was the second occasion this had happened', and she should not come back to him again unless she got the certificate'.⁽⁴⁹⁾

The problem of romantic entanglements between Catholics and Protestants in Hyde in those difficult years of religious antipathies was exemplified by a summons of affiliation brought by a young Protestant girl, Mary Ann Oldham, against a young Catholic man, William Schofield, before Hyde Petty Sessions, to show why he should not be adjudged the father of her illegitimate child, born on 17th February 1877. Miss Oldham said Schofield had promised marriage, and they had gone to St Paul's Catholic Church, Newton, to put up the 'axings' (i.e., the banns). The priest had asked her if she meant to become a Catholic, to which she had replied that she would see in time. She said that the priest then gave her a book, and told her that if she became a Catholic she would get to Heaven so much the sooner. Schofield then took her to his home to see his mother and sister, who told him tartly that he must marry a girl 'from the altar and not mix bread with a Protestant'.

George Sidney Oldham of Well Meadow Street corroborated his sister's story, and said he had known his sister and Schofield were keeping company. As a result, he had advanced 3s 6d to Schofield to put in the 'Spurrins' (i.e., the announcement of the banns made by the priest from the pulpit) at the Catholic church, and went with both of them to the church to do so. Schofield also acknowledged to him that he really was the father of the unborn baby, and told him that he would marry Mary Ann and take her to America. The 'Spurrins' had been put in on the Monday, but on Wednesday Schofield told her he had taken the money out again and had cancelled the 'Spurrins', as his own sister had again insisted he must marry someone from the altar. The Magistrate found for the girl, and ordered Schofield to pay her 3s 0d per week for 16 years, and also to pay the court costs.⁽⁵⁰⁾

The strength of the community spirit at that time was exemplified well on 12th May 1877, when 50 members of St Joseph's YMS paid tribute to a deceased member, Henry Hughes, aged 30, by processing to his home in Fernally St, Hyde in their crimson scarves. From there, four of them carried his coffin to the hearse,

which everyone then followed, on foot, to the church for a requiem Mass. To the tolling of the church bell, they then went on to Dukinfield cemetery for the interment, led by St Paul's Brass Band playing 'The Dead March of Saul'. With that duty completed, the entire procession reformed to accompany the dead man's relatives back to their home.⁽⁵¹⁾

On the Feast of Corpus Christ in 1877, a procession was led by Father Tracy carrying the Blessed Sacrament in a gold monstrance, as he walked beneath a canopy supported by 4 gilded poles held by men of the parish. Eight little girls preceded the Host, strewing flowers in the path of the priest, as he processed round the church itself and then moved on into the grounds, with the Sodalties, St Joseph's YMS, COM, and the schoolchildren following on behind. Father Hopkins preached the sermon on John 6:55 'My Flesh is meat indeed'; and then the event was used as an occasion to celebrate the Pope's Golden Jubilee.⁽⁵²⁾

Each year, Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools, the Reverend J Lomax visited the 4 St Paul's schools, to the trepidation of the teachers, but on the whole he reported favourably in spite of the poor standards of accommodation. His report for 1877 was:

Infants: This Department is conducted still with very decided ability and success. Discipline is good and the instruction very intelligent.

Girls: These girls are in excellent order, and the instruction deserves great praise. The work of the 1st and 2nd Standards is excellent, and the compositions of the 5th Standard are remarkably good. The results are very creditable, considering there has been a change of teacher since the last inspection.

Boys: There is evidence of much careful instruction. The work of Standards 1 and 2 is excellent. The reading and spelling in the upper Standards needs a little attention. The discipline is excellent.

Evening School: These scholars have done their work reasonably well, and the order and discipline deserve great praise.

The report was hardly imaginative, but the emphasis on good order and discipline probably indicates the Reverend Lomax's main interest.⁽⁵³⁾

There seems to have been a rapid turnover of maid-servants at the presbytery in 1878; for 'Phoebe Yates' was replaced by 'Janet' in March, and with 'Janet' being replaced by 'Cicely' in July; finally, in December, 'Meg' arrived. The surnames of Janet, Cicely, and Meg, are not revealed - it could be they were in and out too quickly for anyone to discover them. However, at a salary of 13s 4d per month, it is fairly obvious that, even with board and lodging, the long day's work for 6 days a week would not be very attractive. The turnover of housekeepers was almost as quick, for 'Mrs McCann' left in April, and her replacement, 'Mrs Lupton', was replaced by 'Mrs Burton' 11 months later. The housekeeper's salary was £1 3s 4d per month, or 10 shillings a month more than that of the maids. Although such remuneration was poor, that of £3 6s 8d per month for Father Hopkins, the Parish Priest, and of £2 10s 0d for Father Tracy, the Curate, were still hardly generous, making a private income for the priests almost essential.⁽⁵⁴⁾ It is almost a platitude to say that, in the 19th Century and earlier, it was only the dedication and, often, the self-sacrifice of our Priests that enabled many English Catholic parishes to survive.

It is interesting to compare the income and expenditure of St Paul's parish in 1876, for instance, with that of 1991-1992, one hundred and fifteen years later. In 1876, the income was £70 16s 7d; whilst expenditure, including interest paid on loans, was £157 4s 6d, leaving a deficit balance of £86 7s 11d. The combined salaries for the 2 priests came to £70 for the year. The comparative figures for 1991-1992 were £76,197 income, and £81,890 expenditure, giving a deficit balance of £5,693; the salary of the priest and personal insurance being £4,301.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Early in 1879, Father Hopkins had taken up residence at the church of Our Lady & The Apostles in Edgeley, Stockport, and Father Tracy initially took over as Missionary Apostolic in an acting capacity. There was a great sense of loss at Father Hopkins' departure, for he was a powerful personality who had dominated the parish. Yet he was held in great affection and esteem for his devoted pastoral work.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Twenty years later a parishioner remembered: 'his portly figure, bright blue eyes, ruddy face, and silvery hair. He was a model priest and a friend to all'

In July 1879, the Rev T J Butler of Salford Cathedral Chapter was asked by the St Joseph's YMS to lecture on 'Irish Missionaries in England', and attracted a large attendance from the parish. His theme was that Catholicism in England was an Irish thing, carried out by monks in the early centuries, and latterly by Irish immigrants, who thus fulfilled the most noble functions for which they had been destined by God - His words must have been most uplifting for the 'Irish' parish of St Paul's, Hyde!.

The winter season of plays in 1879 was inaugurated by another change of title by the St Paul's Dramatic Society, to the St Paul's Amateur Dramatic Society. Their first production was 'Peep o' Day', or 'Savourneen Deelish', about the Irish secret society of that name anglicized, meaning 'Loyal Friends', followed by a comedy, 'Aunt Charlotte's Maid'. Although the cast included some of the old hands, many of the regulars were unavailable 'because of the Depression'.⁽⁵⁷⁾ In attendance in the audience was Father Tracy, whose fervent Irish nationalism, combined with his uninhibited and outgoing character, had made him very popular in the parish; and who had, by now, had his full appointment ratified as St Paul's Missionary Apostolic in place of Father Hopkins. His contribution to parish life since coming to Hyde had been considerable, especially in the beneficial effect of the Temperance League on the overall behaviour of many people of the parish, whilst his foundation of the St Joseph's YMS had given an outlet for the social energy of its young men.

Another cause of self-satisfaction for the Irish majority in the parish, were claims made in a talk by a Rev J G Williams, which recounted, 'The Early Glories of Ireland'. One of his claims was that among all the unique achievements of Ireland, was the little known fact that the first man on Christopher Columbus' expedition to set foot in the Americas, was an Irishman. There are no limits to the achievements of the natives of that land of Saints and scholars!. It being St Patrick's Day, the talk was inevitably followed by songs of Ireland sung by a chorus of 6 little girls, by Eileen and Ann Needhams' rendition of 'St Patrick and the Shamrock', and, to great and prolonged applause, Patrick Caveney singing, 'I am a True-Born Irishman'.⁽⁵⁸⁾ An assistant was appointed to help Father Tracy in August 1880. Unusually for the parish, Father Bernard Thompson was English born and bred, and, coincidentally, his brother John was subsequently sent to St Paul's as its priest.

It is probable that Fr Tracy was already beginning to suffer from the illness which eventually led to his death in the following year, for no Mission Accounts

were produced for 1880, and parish statistics were left incomplete. The two priests were kept fully occupied, for they continued to celebrate Masses on Sundays at 8am, 9-30am, and 11am, with a sermon and Benediction at 6-30pm. Holydays involved Masses at 5am and 9am, whilst Weekday Masses were at 8am and 8-30am, with Rosary and Benediction at 7-45pm every Thursday evening.⁽⁵⁹⁾ Of course, they still had all the usual pastoral visiting to parishioners to carry out.

The solid support for the Liberal Party among Irish Catholics was resented by many of the leading citizens of Hyde; and maybe as an attempt to demonstrate that Catholic clergy were neutral in the forthcoming 1881 local elections, Father Tracy invited the Conservatives to hold a meeting at St Paul's. Their speaker, Harvey Smith, maintained that the Liberal Government had misruled Ireland, and done nothing for it. It was, he said, the Conservatives who had supported Church Schools against the 'infidels' who had wished to ban denominational religion from education. The Liberals, in fact, won the election and, after this victory, a letter from P Cleary - 'the pedagogue from the Catholic School', as an outraged Conservative letter-writer called him - rather destroyed any illusion which Father Tracy had sought to create, by saying: "Well done, the Liberals!". Fr Tracy strenuously denied an allegation by a Werneth Councillor, that he had told his congregation that, if they voted Tory, "they would go down to the black place". Another Tory Councillor's claim that it was the 'low filthy Irish' who had thrown out the Tories, elicited from Father Tracy the response that, "It proved how discriminatory the Tories really were".⁽⁶⁰⁾

During the summer of 1881, Father Tracy fell seriously ill, and it did not help that his curate, Father Thompson, was replaced by Father George Carton, aged 24, and newly ordained. Father Carton was a considerable linguist, being proficient in 5 languages. One advantage for Father Tracy was that his new assistant was a fellow-Irishman, born in C^o. Laois. However, during the next month the ailment from which Father Tracy had previously suffered, flared up again. In December, Father Carton went on holiday to Ireland, but, whilst he was away, Father Tracy became very ill. Fortunately for him, he did manage to travel to his own village of Ballinahown, Kilmallow, C^o. Limerick, for the last time on about 10th December 1881, accompanied by Father Colman, the then curate of St Peter's, Stalybridge. There he died, 12 days later on 22nd December 1881.⁽⁶¹⁾ The COM sent a wreath designed by Misses A Roddy and M Lyons, which enclosed the floral tribute in a glass bowl mounted on a marble pedestal, with a request that it be placed on his grave. His sister gratefully responded by acknowledging their thoughtfulness.

Father Tracy's successor in February 1882 was Father Charles Langdon, another Irishman, born in C^o. Kilkenny. He quickly experienced the latent, but ever-present, anti-Catholicism of Protestant sects, when, in May, members of the Gospel Army Mission (now the Salvation Army) deliberately marched down the solidly Irish Fernally Street in Hyde town centre, voicing their provocative slogans. Edward Morrissey and Hannah Mannion, both from St Paul's parish, retaliated, and were charged with striking William Walker of the Gospel Army, who said he was merely going to a friend's house for a cup of tea. Morrissey was fined 5s 0d, or 7 days in gaol.⁽⁶²⁾

The explanation offered to the court by the religious provocateurs showed little originality over 23 years, for the same excuse had not changed since 1859!.

The generosity of the parishioners was taxed by Father Langdon in August 1882, by his appeal to them to contribute one day's pay from each family to clear off outstanding debts which had been accumulated up to Christmas 1881. He received £42 10s 4d, an outstandingly good result from such a poor people.⁽⁶³⁾

A row blew up in March 1883, when the School Attendance Officer reported on the poor attendance of children at the school, which was worse than any of the Borough schools. He added that, when questioned, some of the parents had claimed that they had kept their children at home because the schoolroom was too cold, and that it was too far to travel between their homes in Hyde and the school in Newton, especially for the infants. He said they demanded that the Governors of the school should provide an Infant's School in Hyde. Fr Langdon wrote an angry denunciation in the press, objecting to the impression being given that no heating was provided, when all three schools: boys, girls, and infants, had fires burning daily.

As for the re-siting of the Infant's School, he had tried to find out from the Education Department, who were the complainants, but without success. He believed they were a few malcontents who would neglect to send their children to school, even if it were on their very doorsteps. The best attendances came, in fact from homes sited farthest from the school.

Further altercations between the Parish Priest and the Education Committee in the press, ended with Father Langdon claiming that any improvements in attendance would be entirely due to his curate - now Father Camille D'Hooge, who had replaced Father Carton - doing the job which the Attendance Officer was supposed to do. Quite justifiably, the poor official complained that he had merely been doing his job by reporting what the parents had alleged.⁽⁶⁴⁾

In order to raise funds for a new Lady Altar, some special collections were made, which reached a total of £248 16s 1d an exceptionally generous response. But for Father Langdon, inadequate!. Looking round for another channel of funds, he introduced 'Bench', or pew-rents, common enough elsewhere and in non-Catholic churches, but not before in industrial and immigrant areas. It attracted sufficient people willing to pay for the privilege of reserving seats, to raise £10 17s 5d in 1883. However it was a 'faux-pas', for what was given with one hand in rents was taken back by the other, because the 'Admission' or door collections fell from £4 10s 0d per month to an average £3 10s 0d.

Like Father Tracy before him, Father Langdon was a supporter of social events in the parish, especially when those events also helped to provide an extra income.

In 1883 alone, 6 events took place:

- ◆ the parish Tea Party & Ball, sponsored by the Brass Band, was held in the Mechanics Institute in Hyde centre;
- ◆ the Amateur Dramatic Society presented two performances of 'Rory O'More' in 3 Acts;
- ◆ a new parish group, 'The Christy Minstrels' (mainly drawn from the Brass Band and Dramatic Society) entertained with songs, such as 'Where My Love Lies Dreaming', and 'Happy Are We, Niggers So Gay' (Who would dare to sing that song in these politically correct days?);
- ◆ the same new group also put on a clog dance;
- ◆ and finally, the Minstrels put on 2 comic sketches: 'The Tooth-Drawer' and 'The Mulligan Guards'.

The financial benefits of these events was shown in the Mission Accounts for 1883, producing receipts of £301 10s 2d, with payments of £272 5s 11d, a credit balance of £28 4s 3d.⁽⁶⁵⁾

The strenuous life of the priest who gave Parish Missions, and the devotion expected from - and often given by - the parishioners, is indicated by the programme of the Lenten Mission from Sunday, 14th March 1884 to Palm Sunday, 4th April 1884, prepared by two Capuchin Fathers from Pantasaph. On weekdays and Saturdays, the daily Masses were at 5am, 7am, 8am, 9am, with Rosary, Sermon, and Benediction at 7-30pm. In addition there was a children's Service in the afternoons. On Sundays, of course, there were the usual Masses, with Sunday School in the afternoon, and Rosary, Sermon, and Benediction in the evening. On Palm Sunday, 70 children made their First Communion, whilst 900 people renewed their Baptismal vows, 40 enrolled into the 3rd Order of St Francis, and a good number of people pledged themselves as total abstainers from alcohol. The Mission ended after Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, Sermon, Benediction, and the Papal Blessing.⁽⁶⁶⁾ Such an outpouring of religious emotion must have gone a long way to confirm the Faith of the people, and their attachment to the Church. The Missioners jointly received the princely sum of £12 0s 0d to cover their expenses for the 3 weeks!⁽⁶⁷⁾

Father Camille D'Hooge left St Paul's for St Albans in Macclesfield, in August 1884 and, until the middle of 1885, Father Denis Fitzgerald, who for 2 years had not exercised his Ministry, took his place. In 1886, Father D'Hooge returned to St Paul's, leaving again early in 1887. Eventually, he decided to leave England to work elsewhere as a priest.

The Mission Accounts for 1884 record that a sum of 5s 0d was received from a Mr Woolley, whose window overlooked the presbytery. Apparently this large amount was for 5 years unpaid dues, at 1s 0d per annum. This Mr Woolley was probably the same person who had a butcher's shop on Commercial Brow.

The need which Father Langdon felt to bring in extra income, encouraged him to give strong support to the St Patrick's Night concert in 1885, held at the Hyde Mechanics Institute, and produced by the Christy Minstrels. There was a large attendance, and the better than average proceeds helped to finance the purchase of a new organ in August, to replace the organ purchased by Father Hill in 1858. The cost, paid to Messrs Harding & Son, was £93 0s 0d, but a further outlay of £10 8s 5d was necessary later, to provide a much-needed extension to the floor of the church, and for new altar rails.⁽⁶⁸⁾

The new Hyde Town Hall was opened on 28th June 1885 before 100,000 people. A contingent of 447 from St Paul's attended, which, as usual, included the Brass Band, the COM, the St Joseph's YMS, and the Temperance League (now renamed as the League of the Cross). Father Langdon was invited to the official luncheon, where the guests were entertained to a Print Dress contest judged by the staff of Messrs Kendal, Milne & Co. Two St Paul's parishioners gained prizes of 10 shillings each: Miss Rixon of Mount Street and Miss Elizabeth Bradbury of Old Street, Newton.⁽⁶⁹⁾

Father Langdon appeared on the same platform as T P O'Connor, MP, in November 1885 in St Paul's church hall, in support of Colonel Legh of Lyme Hall, Disley, the Conservative candidate for the Hyde Division. The priest was attacked by 'a Papist' and a 'Catholic',⁽⁷⁰⁾ for publicly supporting 'a Land Leaguer like O'Connor', and they hoped the 'Catholics of Hyde would vote in allegiance with their consciences, their country, and their God'. Father Langdon robustly replied

that, when Faith and Fatherland were threatened, he was proud to appear in defence of civil and religious freedom with a gentleman worthy to represent not only an Irish constituency, but also an English one.⁽⁷¹⁾ Unlike present day rules prohibiting priests from indulging in politics, priests in 1886 apparently felt no such inhibitions about attending political meetings, and overtly supporting one side. Father Langdon showed his independent political stance when he attended a meeting in June organized by the Liberal Party, Hyde Branch, in preparation for the general election. The meeting was held in the Mechanics Institute in support of Thomas Gair Ashton, a member of the factory-owning family of Hyde, and the Liberal candidate. The chairman was Rev. H E Dowson MA, Minister of Hyde Chapel, a Unitarian, and a vehement supporter of all Liberal causes, even those for Catholics, and including Home Rule for Ireland. He was supported by Father Langdon and Father D'Hooge, the Curate, and by Mr Miles of Dublin who was a representative of the Protestant Home Rule association. The Rev. Dowson put a motion of support for Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, which Father Langdon seconded, saying he believed the Bill would be carried by the nation because he knew that the English nation was a just one. A prominent parishioner and I.L.P member, Luke Kenny, moved that 'this meeting is of the opinion that Thomas Gair Ashton is a fit and proper person to represent Hyde Division in Parliament'. As it turned out, Mr Ashton failed to be elected as MP in 1886.⁽⁷²⁾

The Medical Officer of Health for Hyde, Dr Michael de Courcy O'Grady MD (Dublin), developed a cyst at the top of his windpipe and, in spite of surgery, died aged 46. The last Rites were administered in hospital by Father Vaughan SJ of Manchester. Dr O'Grady had followed his brother, Dr Thomas Standish O'Grady in 1879 as M.O. for Health in Hyde, after leaving his Worsley practice, and had settled in Mottram New Road, Hyde, where he had built a house and surgery. His demise ended the family line which originated in Limerick, Ireland. He had a studious and reserved personality, but was well-regarded. His burial took place at Anfield Cemetery, Liverpool after a Requiem Mass had been said for him at St Paul's, Hyde, where he had been a regular worshipper. The mourners left from Godley railway station by special train, with the family occupying the first carriage, whilst town dignitaries and Father Langdon had the second carriage reserved for them.⁽⁷³⁾

Another of the multifarious groups which constantly sprang up at St Paul's, was formed in 1886 with the name of 'The St Paul's Singing Class', under the direction of the choirmaster, G J Robinson. In November it gave a concert consisting of 5 solos: 'When other lips', by James Hart; 'Anchored', by James Murphy; 'The Diver', by G Taylor; 'Patsy Fagan', by P Caveney; 'Dolly's Revenge', by Miss M Shufflebottom, and other items, including a duet: 'Silver Moonlight', by Misses McDermott and Devine, whilst the Singing Class gave 'Come Lads and Lasses' in chorus, accompanied by T Vickers on the piano.

The Hyde branch of the Irish National League was formed at the Mechanics Inst. towards the end of January 1887, with Father Langdon as president, and Father D'Hooge supporting. Its purpose was to press for Home Rule for Ireland. In effect it was just an extension of the Irish parish of St Paul's, for almost all members of the Branch were parishioners, and had taken offices in the Irish National League. The League's premises were in Hoviley Brow for many years until, after the Great War, they moved into premises, now demolished, in Ridling Lane. Presumably, Father Hooge's presence was not with any enthusiasm, since he had no Irish connections,

and he left Hyde during the next week, to become parish priest at Congleton. Father Langdon, acting as Chairman, ended the meeting by saying he hoped that by the next annual meeting, they would be able to rejoice over Ireland having its own parliament. The room was then cleared for dancing and song, with St Paul's Brass Band supplying the music. The songs included 'Kathleen Mavourneen' sung by G J Robinson, 'The Harp That Once' by Miss M Shufflebottom, 'The Minstrel Boy' by Miss J Carroll, and 'The Land for the People' by P Caveney.

An elaborate joke was played on Mr Fred Woods, landlord of the Bridge Inn, Cheapside, Hyde, and on St Paul's Parish, on Saturday, 3rd March 1888, when 2 Red Indian chiefs with their squaws visited Hyde and were invited to lunch at the Inn, where they carried on a very intelligent conversation, proving them to be a credit to their master, Colonel Cody (Buffalo Bill). On Sunday morning they attended Mass at St Paul's, being of the Roman Catholic persuasion. Afterwards they caused much amusement when they enquired after an old acquaintance, 'Sambo', who just happened to turn up at the time. The children looked on in amazement never before having seen a Red Indian nor 'Sambo'. The party of Red Indians and 'Sambo' spoke well of English liberty and its people, and bade everyone, 'Salaam!' before leaving, promising to return in a fortnight's time. They never returned, and no-one ever heard of them again. It seems likely that the 5 strangers were parishioners who had been well made-up for their parts.⁽⁷⁴⁾

Fund-raising to complete the church, opened 34 years earlier, by building a Chancel (or Sanctuary) onto it, was one of Father Langdon's great hopes. Apart from concerts by the Christy Minstrels and the Dramatic Society, he also had high expectations from a bazaar to be opened by Alderman Hibbert, JP, in April 1888, who had promised a personal donation of £50 if the event raised a net profit of £200 or more. Fortunately it reached £209 10s 0d; and this great achievement was the result of determined efforts by many parishioners, who collected items for sale and manned the stalls.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Optimistically, Father Langdon repeated his ploy of 1882, 6 years previously, when, in July 1888 he asked all parishioners to donate one day's wages during the next month, to the Chancel Fund. Apparently, any residual enthusiasm for a repeat of such an altruistic gesture, was flagging by then, for the contributions only amounted to £14 4s 11d this time. Thoughtfully on 25th August 1888, the Bishop sent him off to Hooton Parish, and replaced him with Father Thomas Ratcliffe, to whom Fr Langdon presented the £274 15s 4d accumulated towards the Chancel Fund.⁽⁷⁶⁾ He was recalled by the parish in October, to be presented with an illuminated and effusive Address, read by Mr R Wilkinson, the schoolmaster, which was signed on behalf of the parish by Michael Hart, William Gleeson, Bernard Halliday, Robert Hill, Lawrence Morrissey, and Luke Kenny. He also received a purse of gold guineas. In spite of his sometimes abrasive manner, he was visibly moved by the regard in which he was held, and thanked everyone at St Paul's. He only asked that he be given the privilege of being invited to return to the parish once a year, and to attend on the occasion of the laying of the new Chancel foundation stone.⁽⁷⁷⁾

A meeting of Church people at St Thomas' Church, Hyde, was held to protest at the arrangements being proposed by the Town Council regarding the decision to dispense with two of the three chapels originally planned to be built at the Municipal

Cemetery on Stockport Road in Gee Cross. It had recommended that the Church of England and Catholic chapels should not be provided, and that the cemetery grounds should be left unconsecrated. The Vicars of Newton, Godley, St Thomas', and Gee Cross, Father Ratcliffe, Assistant Priest of Hyde St Paul's, and Father Robinson of Our Lady's Catholic Church, Stockport, were present, as well as various Councillors and other notables. The point made was that dissenters and everyone else should be allowed to worship, and to bury their dead, in their own way, and that Church people and Catholics were simply asking for the same privilege in the 19th century. Father Ratcliffe's contribution was that it was clearly the right of the Town Council to allot the ground in proportion to the adherents of the 3 major religious groups, but insisted that each should have its own chapel, and consecrate its own allotment as it desired. If economy was the motivation for the Council proposal, there was no reason why a single building with 3 separate compartments could not be built. He did not care how small the building was, or how little was spent by the Council, provided he had a place to read the burial service and a consecrated plot in which to lay his dead.⁽⁷⁸⁾ In fact, when the cemetery was opened in 1895 it did have 3 chapels with allotted grounds for the non-Conformists, the Catholics, and the Church of England respectively.

Father Ratcliffe's stay as Missionary Apostolic ended in April 1889, when he was moved to St Joseph's, Stockport, as a consequence of 2 priests of the Diocese dying suddenly. Canon Clegg, from N Wales, acted as relief pastor until July, when Father John Thompson, brother of Bernard, the erstwhile curate to Father Tracy in 1881, became his replacement. Father Thompson stayed until 1896 although he was not in good health, serious doubts having already been expressed about him in 1887. From 1892-1896, the Mission Accounts were not kept, probably because of his health, which caused some accounting problems for his successor, Father Hennelly, for one or two years.

There were 2 matters of interest in 1891 which affected all Catholic schools. In October, a Government Bill was passed, which forbade all children under 11 years of age to work half-time after 1892. This affected every school in England and Wales, not just the Catholic ones of course.⁽⁷⁹⁾ The second matter, restricted to this Diocese, was a questionnaire from Bishop Knight to all parish priests, which asked 4 questions.

The Hyde responses were as follows:-

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. -Are teachers required to work on Saturdays? | Usually; mainly for Church Services. |
| 2. -Is payment made? | No!. |
| 3. -Is it difficult to get Pupil Teachers? | Yes; because of poor pay compared
with factory work |
| 4. -Are male teachers satisfactory? | Yes!. |
| -Are female teachers satisfactory? | Yes!. |

At this time, up to the Great War, almost all entertainments in the parish were orientated towards the preferences of the Irish, and consisted almost entirely of Irish songs and sketches, whilst help for Irish causes was always forthcoming. An instance was the St Patrick's Night concert in 1892, when all the proceeds went to provide financial aid to the 'Irish Evicted Tenants Relief Fund'. Speeches by all the Hyde priests, including Father John Thompson despite him being an Englishman,

often gave support to the 'Home Rule for Ireland' cause. One month after the St Patrick's concert, Father Thompson shared the platform in Union Street School, in support of Michael Davitt, speaking on 'Labour and Home Rule'.⁽⁷⁹⁾ The consequence of his support for militant Irish nationalism is that he became the target of verbal abuse by Unionists, such as W J Austin, JP, an Ulster Protestant, whose ire was raised by Father Thompson's objections to his speeches against the Fenians. Austin raged against Father Thompson as 'the Romish priest', and much worse. Father Thompson exacerbated the antipathy regularly displayed by the Unionist newspaper, the North Cheshire Herald, by refusing to reply to Austin's vituperation. He said he refused to reply "merely to increase the paper's circulation as, in any case, his congregation were not great readers of the Herald, nor of any other newspaper".⁽⁸⁰⁾

A rather obvious contrast to the present day mores of teachers, in respect of their attitude to pupils, was the comment made by Robert Wilkinson, the Schoolmaster, about the personal appearances of his charges, in September 1892. He said he noticed that, "boys coming to school have cleaner hands and faces than hitherto, and had their clogs and shoes polished."⁽⁸¹⁾ However, a comment in the HMI Report of August 1893 still adversely criticized the cleanliness of the boys as compared with the girls.

A Labour demonstration was held at the 'Tip' in Hyde under the auspices of the Hyde Branch of the Independent Labour Party (ILP), consisting of trades unionists and others sympathetic to their aims. Many of their supporters were from the Catholic community, including Councillor Luke Kenny of Godley, who sent his apologies for not being able to be present, and R Ryan who had failed to obtain election to the Council for Newton Ward in 1891. The demonstrators moved off in procession through the town centre streets, carrying banners, and were followed by the Hyde Borough Band and St Paul's Reed Band under their leader, John Long.⁽⁸²⁾

Due to objections from certain local officials, it was agreed that Father Thompson's name should be removed from the Voters (Occupiers) List in September 1893, on the grounds that he was an employee of the Church who lived in the presbytery rent-free. Father Thompson maintained before the Revisions Court that, unlike non-Conformist Ministers, he could live where he liked, and paid Rates on the property out of the interest on church offerings. The court accepted his claim, and retained him on the Voter's List.⁽⁸³⁾ In 1895, his right to vote was again challenged, by Councillor Barron, another bitter anti-Catholic Ulsterman, and member of the Protestant Association. Barron argued that Father Thompson was no more entitled to vote than a bank manager, who resided in a house belonging to the bank. Father Thompson again offered the defence that he was not an employee, but an independent professional. Nevertheless he lost his case, and was disenfranchised.⁽⁸⁴⁾

The bad blood existing between Father Thompson and the editor of the North Cheshire Herald, was resurrected when the latter urged its readers to vote for the Rev J F Messenger, Vicar of St Mary's, Newton, as the member for Hyde Township on the Ashton Board of Guardians, instead of Father Thompson, 'the Radical Romanist'.⁽⁸⁵⁾

Nevertheless, some indication of how much dislike of Catholics and other non-Anglican groups still lay dormant among Councillors and others, was shown when,

in May 1895 when the editor published a sarcastic article in the North Cheshire Herald, headed ‘Miracle working at the Cemetery’, reporting that Councillor Ward ‘had found an altar erected in the RC portion of the cemetery, and no-one knew how it had got there!’. The Committee denied any knowledge of the affair, and were sure they had been taken advantage of. It transpired that Alderman Hibbert admitted that in May he had given the order for it to be erected in the RC Chapel, after Father Thompson had promised to defray the costs over and above the cost of a reading desk which the Committee had laid down as the only furniture needed for conducting a funeral service in cemetery chapels. Alderman Hibbert apologized for forgetting to let the Committee know. The editor commented, ‘If this was so, why did it get the go-ahead?. We wonder how it is that some sects, like the RCs, can have anything they want, whilst the Churchmen cannot even be allowed a religious rite of consecrating their ground?. It is suggested it is because of the November election, and the Radicals who do not really ‘care a button’, but wish to spite the Churchmen’.⁽⁸⁶⁾

For a period from 1894-1895, the parish priest had the assistance as curate, of his brother, Bernard, presumably because of his deteriorating health. Due to industrial closures in the cotton and coal trades, severe distress occurred in 1894-1895, and a Mayor’s Distress Fund was set up with the full support of St Paul’s Parish, for many of the members of the Catholic community were severely affected by unemployment, and they constituted a part of the 200 applicants for relief among the local population. A subscription list included donations from Father Thompson and Councillor L Kenny, who was an insurance agent for the Royal Liver Society at this time. To raise funds, the St Paul’s Reed Band gave a concert in the school on 12th February 1895. Selections were played by the Band, and well-received solos were sung: Miss Carroll - ‘The Vale of Arklow’; James Hart - ‘Alice, Where art Thou?’ and ‘Let Me Like a Soldier Fall’; and Miss McAndrew - ‘The Last Rose of Summer’ and ‘On the Banks of Allan Water’. Unfortunately, presumably because many in the Community were unemployed themselves, the attendance was poor and the takings minimal. Even the usual St Patrick’s night concert had to be abandoned because of the distress of the Irish community.

Some indication of the church-going habits of the population of Hyde was furnished by a speaker to the Water Street Methodists in 1896, who quoted the number of people attending evening Services in all non-Catholic places of worship, and those at the 11am Mass at St Paul’s on a particular Sunday. The relative numbers of persons attending, together with the number of churches and chapels that were checked (as shown in brackets), were as follows⁽⁸⁷⁾ :-

Church of England (7) 1,570 (224 per church)	Non-Conformist (21) 2,920 (139 per church/chapel)	Catholic (1) 500 (500)
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The attendance at Services is surely a glaring indictment of present day Catholics in Hyde, where not many more attend in total at all 3 Masses than then, out of an estimated Catholic population today of 1,100 more than in 1896.

Rumours that Father Thompson had died in June 1896, following a serious bout of influenza, was refuted when he was seen pottering about in the presbytery garden. His haggard appearance, the tolling of the church bell, and the Town Hall flag at

half-mast out of respect for the death of the Mayor's sister, had all combined to begin the rumour.⁽⁸⁸⁾

In July, 26 members of the choir, and their friends, went on their annual outing to Knutsford in a smart waggonette drawn by 4 horses belonging to Messrs J & T Fowden, Undertakers. Canon Hopkins, Parish Priest at St Paul's 1869-1879, gave them refreshments at St Theresa's Church, Wilmslow. After dining at Knutsford, they moved on to Tatton Park, and thence back to Hyde via Cheadle Hulme, where they visited G J Robinson, ex-choirmaster at St Paul's. On their return to Hyde, a hearty vote of thanks was given to Mr Mee, their Secretary.⁽⁸⁹⁾

On 6th December 1896, Father Thompson was transferred to Birkenhead, and Father James Hennelly became the new Missionary Apostolic. He declared in the Mission Accounts for that year that he had taken over as Parish Priest, and began to keep the parish records and other records which had been neglected by Father John Thompson. He was able to pay off the accrued debts with loans of £100 in December 1896 and £200 in January 1897 from the Bishop, Samuel Allen.⁽⁹⁰⁾ In contrast to the North Cheshire Herald's snide report of Father John Thompson's departure, the Liberal Hyde Reporter expressed deep regret at his departure on health grounds. The editor said that, whilst in health he had earned the respect of all, and had always stretched out his hand, especially to the poor.⁽⁹¹⁾

The play, 'Peep o' Day', produced by R Wilkinson in aid of school funds on St Patrick's Day 1897, with a cast of 15 men and 7 women, was a great success. At its conclusion, Father Hennelly thanked the Producer, the Secretary G W Smith, and the cast. He gave as his opinion that St Patrick's Day may be losing its attraction, but not at St Paul's.

The desire of Father Langdon to build a new Chancel was reflected by Father Hennelly, but he had an even more ambitious project in mind; an extension of the church itself, to accommodate not only a new Chancel, but a Lady Chapel with a new Lady Altar. Consequently, in November 1897, he arranged to hold a December bazaar to raise funds.

He invited the Liberal Alderman, Mr Turner, who, in opening the bazaar, was quick to remind his audience that the Conservative candidate for the next local elections was Councillor Barron, the man who had been active in denying voting rights to their priest. The various stalls were in the charge of old stalwarts: Mesdames: Farrell, G Smith, O'Connor, R Hill, as well as Misses A Roddy, M E Hart, S A Hart, Cleary, Cooke, with Mr Molloy acting as general assistant. The proceeds reached £20, helped along by a donation of £5 from Alderman Turner.⁽⁹²⁾

A Grand Bazaar was planned for April of the next year, 1898, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the parish. Its intention was to reduce the £600 debt which had been incurred for improvements and alterations to the school. Funds were also needed to repay the £150 loan for folding screens to be placed in the open-plan schoolroom, to allow disparate classes to be taught there. The bazaar lasted from 11th - 13th April 1898, and had 6 stalls, designated as: Mission stall; COM stall; Mrs Ashton's stall; YMS stall; Flower stall, Refreshments stall. The Bishop was persuaded to open the bazaar, and Father Hennelly's facility for making friends, and having good relationships with non-Catholics was shown when the hitherto unfriendly Rev Messenger, Vicar of Newton, attended and made some very kind

comments about the current priests of St Paul's, Father Hennelly and Father Cronan (the new Curate since January); and also remarked on the quality of the religious instruction they gave. In reply, Father Hennelly praised Mr Messenger for his dedicated and energetic pastorate. Total receipts from the event were £300, a very good result for any working class parish!.⁽⁹³⁾

Father Marrs, born in Seacombe, arrived in place of Father Cronan in May 1898. Whether or not there was a connection between his arrival and the number of Baptisms performed between 1896-1898, the rate of Baptisms in the parish decidedly increased from 51 in 1896, to 95 in 1897, and to 123 in 1898. In 1899, at 71 it was still much higher than in 1896. It does suggest that a determined effort was made after Father Marrs' arrival to pursue the lazy and the backsliders to fulfill their most important duty, of bringing their children into the Church, and into God's Grace. Another feature, following Father Marrs' arrival, was that cricket was on the menu for the first time, suggesting that, at last, the Irish parish was absorbing some English cultural ways. In October 1898, the St Paul's Cricket Club was formed with Father Marrs as Chairman, Walter Weld as Secretary, and Lawrence Morrissey as Captain. The cricket club advertised in the Reporter that all dates for the 1899 season were open.⁽⁹⁴⁾

Father Hennelly was determined, in the New Year of 1899, to go ahead irrespective of difficulties with building the new Chancel and Lady Chapel. He announced, apparently without anyone objecting, that he would like every adult to donate one guinea (£1 1s 0d) to the project fund, either as a lump sum, or in instalments. Social events which reaped profit, such as the annual Parish Tea Party, would find all these profits channelled into the Chancel & Lady Chapel Fund.⁽⁹⁵⁾ Smoking concerts were often held in the Irish National League Club in Hoviley Brow, and Father Marrs would give recitations from Shakespeare, Jerome K Jerome, Rudyard Kipling, and other literary greats, along with solos by men of the parish. These became fund-raisers, and were a feature of parish life up to the time of the 1914-1918 war.⁽⁹⁶⁾

The teaching staff at St Paul's School were given a day's outing by Father Hennelly in July 1899, when he, along with Father Marrs and Father Jones of Stalybridge St Peter's, procured a waggonette, and filled it with the staff for a trip to Northenden. The main pleasure once the party had arrived was to go sailing on the lake. For tea, they went to Crawford's Dining Room, where a concert of popular ballads was held. Father Hennelly began with 'The Meeting of the Waters'; followed by Father Jones singing 'The Last Rose of Summer' and 'Consider the Lilies'; then Father Marrs sang 'The Holy City'; and Mr ConCannon the Headmaster 'Alabama Coon'; and finally, Misses Mellor, Body, and Devitt made up a trio to sing a medley of Irish songs with Miss Body accompanying on the piano. The return journey was light-hearted, beginning at 8pm, and reaching Hyde via Wilmslow at about 9.45pm.⁽⁹⁷⁾

Meanwhile, to return to the last years of the 19th Century; the Boer War tended to be rather jingoistic, with leaders of opinion trying to outdo themselves in proving their patriotism. Father Hennelly saw this mood as an opportunity to prove that Catholics in Hyde were just as patriotic as their Protestant neighbours, for in December 1899 he claimed that 34,000 Catholics, many of Irish descent, were fighting for the Crown in South Africa. Two parishioners of St Paul's, Bombardier J

Renwick of 77th Field Battery, and Patrick Kinsella of 1st Battalion Enniskilling Fusiliers, were already in action, whilst Patrick Kenny of the Dublin Light Infantry, was on his way. A collection for soldier's widows as part of the Mayor's Transvaal Fund raised £4 0s 6d.⁽⁹⁸⁾

By this time, the plans for the new Church and Lady Chapel had been approved in respect of a design by E Kirby, Architect, and building work began in 1899 by Messrs Robinson & Sons. A loan of £400 from the Bishop, added to the money already raised in the parish, helped raise Father Hennelly's hopes that the estimated total cost of £1,000 would soon be reached. Essential furnishings were being obtained through private donations, such as £8 11s 0d from the teachers and children for a new altar crucifix. The solemn opening of the Chancel was performed by Bishop Allen on Sunday, 6th May 1900.

A month later, Father Hennelly proposed that a pulpit be erected, made of Caen stone with Connemara green marble panels, in honour of the late Canon Henry Hopkins, ex-Parish Priest of St Paul's. The Bishop, who had suggested a stained glass window instead, nevertheless donated £25 towards the pulpit. This was supplemented by many gifts from individual parishioners to reach the full cost of £109 0s 0d plus £12 15s 0d for architect's fees.⁽⁹⁹⁾ The beautiful stained glass window over the high altar was nevertheless incorporated in the Chancel work in July 1900, at a cost of £83 0s 0d paid to Messrs Hardman & Co.

The Lady Chapel, with the new Lady Altar and Statue, was finished and consecrated by the Bishop in November 1900. Other items provided at this time was a lightning conductor, costing £7 14s 0d, and new altar rails, costing £15 10s 0d.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ The pulpit, in honour of Canon Hopkins, was not completed until March 1901, and on one panel a stone plaque was fitted, which read:

This pulpit was erected in memory of Henry Canon Hopkins,
for 10 years Rector of this church ⁽⁸¹⁾

The removal of this pulpit as a consequence of the re-ordering of the church for liturgical reasons following Vatican II, caused some understandable unhappiness amongst the descendants of those many parishioners, suffering poverty, who had nevertheless given to the Pulpit Fund at the turn of the century.

A spirited response to the HMI schools report in August 1902 that, 'one class at St Paul's was the dullest lot he had ever met', appeared in the Hyde Reporter's letter column. It was in dialect, accusing the Inspector of 'cockiness', and said: "Ony foo' con ax questions. Answer this, 'If id taks 320 yards o' white corduroy to mak a helifant a black waistcoat, heaw long could it tak a lame cockroach to crawl throo' a berrel o' trakel?'"⁽¹⁰²⁾

On the occasion of the death of Pope Leo XIII, the loyalty of the Catholics of Hyde was displayed, in July 1903, when the church was packed on the Sunday evening afterwards, to pray for his soul, and to ask for guidance for the College of Cardinals in choosing his successor. Father Hennelly said that the late Pope had truly been the working-man's Pope.

The latter weeks of 1903 were a time of general refurbishment and re-painting, after the paint on the dressed stone pillars had been removed, and the old plaster on the walls replaced with a cement rendering. A new Sacred Heart altar, donated by

the Vickers family, was placed on the North side of the church at a cost of £96, and a full set of Stations of the Cross in carved oak frames was installed for £70 15s 0d. New altar rails were put in place, and the replacement of the old lighting with incandescent gas lamps was carried out. This work was all completed by January 1904, almost 50 years after the opening of the church.⁽¹⁰³⁾

To the dismay of the parish in June 1906, Father Marrs left for Latchford parish, for he had proved himself an energetic and popular priest. One of his last acts had been to set up a Relief Fund, to help necessitous families affected by the calamitous storms in January 1906, which flooded large areas of low-lying ground and properties, such as in Commercial Street and Hoviley. At the end of May, he was given an oak armchair by members of the various groups in the parish, and on 24th July 1906, he was asked back to be presented with an Illuminated Address and a purse of gold. He said he left with a heavy heart, and thanked everyone for their many kindnesses.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

In June 1907, many children from St Paul's joined others on the train to Blackpool, accompanied by Mr Wilkinson, Miss Body, Miss Crotty, and 3 other adults, for a treat provided by the Mayor's 'Poor Children Fund'. Each child received 2d, spent mainly on Blackpool rock and fishing nets. They were given a substantial meal of hotpot and rice pudding, and entertained with George Royle's 'Troubadours', with a visit to the Tower, menagerie, and aquarium.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ This was the first of the annual outings under the Fund, which only ended after the Great War, and the social changes which followed.

In 1907, probably because her parents had a shop on Commercial Brow which was used by the priests during the 20 years or so before 1900, Miss Margaret Conlan donated £60 to be used by the parish 'for special purposes'. Out of this money, the heavy gold chalice still used at Sunday Masses was purchased for £34 9s 6d, and engraved in Latin on its base, to her memory. Out of the remaining £25 10s 6d, a new Monstrance was bought for £18 11s 0d.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

The first adult football team at St Paul's was formed for the 1906-1907 season, and continued to play until its demise in the early 1980s. The cricket team, which had begun with high hopes and in 1904 had been top of the league, was abandoned in 1907 after the end of that season, and has not been resuscitated since.

Another instance of the bitter antipathy to Catholics which still lay in the hearts of many of the prominent people of Hyde was highlighted in September 1908, when the Will of Thomas Beeley JP was published. He left estate valued at £86,114, which in present-day terms would be several million pounds. Of this he left £12,000 intrust to his grand-daughter, Edith Evele Wood Calvert, and her issue, with the clause that 'No part of the income of these trust funds shall be paid, or allowed, to any church, associate, nunnery, house, convent, or any other institution used or controlled by priests, nuns, sisters, or any other persons professing to give spiritual instruction in which the practice or teaching or encouragement of what is known as auricular confession is sanctioned, allowed, or permitted; it being his expressed will that each of his grandchildren shall be brought up in the tenets of the Protestant religion'.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

Alderman Luke Kenny, a councillor for Godley Ward, and an ardent advocate of Catholic and Irish affairs since he arrived from Galway 30 years previously, was

installed as the first Catholic Mayor of Hyde for the municipal year, 1908-1909. He nominated Father Hennelly as his chaplain, and the civic Service took place at St Paul's in November 1908. The only objector to his installation was Alderman Barron, who had been the cause of removing the priests of St Paul's from the Voter's List in 1895.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

The continuing deficit in the finances of the parish encouraged Father Hennelly to conceive the idea of holding another Grand Bazaar in 1909, especially as the Mayor of Hyde was Luke Kenny. The main aim was to purchase the field to the West of the church, for an urgently needed playground to be laid out for the school. A small committee was formed to plan the event, and the Bazaar finally took place in Hyde Town Hall, from Thursday 14th October to Saturday 16th October 1909. A comprehensive brochure, with pictures of Father Hennelly, and Alderman & Mrs Luke Kenny, side by side on the front cover, was issued. Inside were details of the stalls and daily events for the 3 days, together with a brief history of the parish, and an explanation of the purpose of the Bazaar, on the frontispiece. H F Poole, a bank manager, was the Treasurer, and, subsequently, he issued a detailed financial statement, audited by J Molloy and F Vickers on 25th November 1909. The net profit was £477 8s 3d, an unheard of result for St Paul's up to then.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾

Whenever parish finances were at stake, Father Hennelly was always a determined man. On 26th November 1909, he wrote to Father Kelly at Shrewsbury Cathedral, objecting to having to pay for repairs to what would become St Paul's Street. The field beyond the school playground was being built on by J Toughey for housing (as Fleet Street), and the street adjacent to St Paul's was consequently being ploughed up by the builder's use of it as access to his site. Father Hennelly said that the parish did not object to paying its proper apportionment for repairs to the street, once it had actually been made up, but at present it remained unmade, and there were no plans for it to be paved. Hence, a conclusion in respect of the cost of repair to be levied on the parish, may not be arrived at in the near future. Father Hennelly thought the Bishop's lawyers had been caught napping over the conveyancing agreement when the land for the school playground was being negotiated!. The matter was eventually settled amicably at a cost to the parish of £4 7s 6d.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

Two events of interest to the personalities of the parish happened in 1910, for Father Hennelly was consecrated as a Canon, and Alderman Kenny was reported as being selected to stand as a candidate in the coming Parliamentary Bye-Election for North Galway, as he had been born in Glynsk, North Galway. His candidature did not eventuate, and he had a further disappointment when he lost his seat for Godley Ward in October 1910.

Early in 1911, Canon Hennelly was transferred to Birkenhead. He had been a popular priest, and not only among Catholics, for his services to the town were generally acknowledged in 1924 when streets in the various districts of Hyde were renamed to avoid duplication of the same name in more than one district. In deference to him, Platt Fold and Platt Street in Newton were renamed as Hennelly Street. Unfortunately this name disappeared when Oak Street spread over the Platt Fold area, and was then chosen as the name for the whole street between Fleet Street and Commercial Brow. The successor to Canon Hennelly was an appointment widely welcomed in the parish: Father Thomas Marrs, the ex-Curate who had left in 1906.

The second Catholic Mayor of Hyde, installed for the Municipal Year, 1911-1912, was Councillor William J Pope, JP, a Trade Union leader originating from Preston. His Chaplain was Father Marrs, and the Civic Service took place in November 1911 at St Paul's. Mr Pope was asked to carry on in 1912, but refused because of the private expense it entailed, and the commitment it demanded.⁽¹¹¹⁾

A proliferation of new groups took place in 1912. The YMS began a Debating Society, and arranged lectures by prominent Catholics; the 'Shamrock Pierrots, a concert group, gave performances in outside locations; and a St Paul's Literary Society was formed, undoubtedly an initiative of Father Marrs, who was in great demand by church groups and secular organisations for lectures on literary and general Christian topics.⁽¹¹²⁾ The parish Boys Brigade was also founded in the parish in 1912. It seems to have sprouted in many Catholic parishes at this time, possibly as a result of the rising tide of militaristic feelings generated by the anti-German rhetoric of public personalities, although in later years it became an entirely non-Catholic church organisation. Its first officers were Lieutenants T J Kelly and G Tollett, with Father Fogarty, the Curate, as its Chaplain. A potato pie supper was held in February 1913, in aid of its funds, in the rooms of the Catholic (previously St Joseph's) Young Men's Society in Mottram Road.⁽¹¹³⁾ Subsequently Walter Long became Captain, and Mr Verley, the teacher, was his assistant in charge of the Brigade.

The Great War dominated parish matters as well as national affairs, but the furnishings of the church were enhanced in 1914 by the provision of new Confessionals. Also, the reduction of debts which had accumulated was achieved from welcome bequests from the estate of Ann Oldham, who had died earlier that year.

The greatest effect on parish life, however, was the call-up to the Forces of 95 men before the end of 1914, of whom 23 were members of the CYMS, greatly hindering its activities, and, indirectly, those of the other sodalities and organisations. The first fatalities among the parish servicemen were Stoker 1st Class Frank Duddy, aged 22 and single, of George Street East, who was drowned in the sinking of HMS Good Hope, and of Sergeant Terence McDermott, killed by a sniper,⁽¹¹⁴⁾ whose daughter, Anne, was housekeeper to the Parish Priest for several years after World War II, but who died in April 1997, almost 90 years old.

The arrival in Hyde of a group of 42 Belgian refugees involved St Paul's in a commitment to house 12 of them, 4 families in all, in the large and roomy Hamilton House in Cross Street, now Water Street, Hyde. The Irish National League members pledged the rent of 10 shillings per week, and the menfolk were given employment in Ashton Brothers' factory, and in the Jacobsen and Welch works.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ A collection for the refugees at St Paul's on the Sunday following, reached £7 0s 0d.⁽¹¹⁶⁾

The Belgian Relief Fund organisers divided Hyde into districts, each with its own team of collectors based mainly on church and chapel congregations. St Paul's team was made up of: Captain - Father Fogarty; Collectors - Mrs Edward Devlin, Misses Mary King, Nellie Long, Kate Devlin, Nellie Caveney, Maggie Caveney, Jessie Kitchen, Jessie Muldoon, Mssrs Thomas Warden, Thomas Martin, Edward McGowan, Harry Close, James Bunting, Austin Bunting.⁽¹¹⁷⁾

By November 1915, 202 men from St Paul's were serving in the Forces, and 9 were either dead or injured. These 202, representing approximately half of all men between 16-50 years of age who had been removed from the parish, had a devastating effect on its social life. To some extent, this lack of social events was made up for by the school concerts and dramatic productions. An example was a mix of songs and sketches by the infants and older girls and boys on 31st October 1915.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ In November 1915, a Sale of Work was held in aid of church funds, in which the COM, Christian Mothers, CYMS, and the teachers all manned stalls, and raised £180. This year was also the last time Bench Rents, introduced by Father Langdon in 1883, were paid. Only one parishioner, Mrs Burke, was any longer paying a Rent of 7s 6d per annum.

Attempts to maintain the links between the serving men and the parish, resulted in April 1916 in a nice khaki wallet with stationery, a packet of cigarettes, and a message from Father Marrs, promising a welcome home 'after they had done their bit', being sent to every serving man.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

An indication of how easy it was in the years before the 1st World War, 1914-1918 and for some years afterwards, for priests, by some incautious word, to lose members of the Catholic community from the parish was related by one old lady in her late 80s, maiden name McCormick, who claimed to be a born Catholic. By this she meant, of course that her parents were Catholic, and she had been baptized in the Catholic Church in Hyde. She described what had happened when she was only 6 years old, as part of a large Irish family with an unemployed father, and she and her siblings had not been going to Mass on Sundays. Father Fogarty had had the facts brought to his notice and, naturally, knowing the family's circumstances, was anxious to find out the reason in case they needed help for sickness or other problems. When he arrived, the father was in, so he was asked if there was some problem causing the family to miss Mass. The father pointed out that, being poor, he could not afford good shoes for his children so that they could go all the way from the house, beyond Greenfield Street, to the church. Father Fogarty's reply was, "You know, Robert, that having no shoes is no excuse for not going to Mass on Sundays". Robert, apparently fired up, shouted, "Get out of this house and do not come back again. Any Catholic religion they need, I can teach them myself". Whether he was able to move them from St Paul's School is not clear, as the local Education Authority, for financial reasons, normally insisted on Catholics attending the Catholic school, but none of them ever attended St Paul's Church again, and raised their families as non-Catholics. So much for the father's claim!

Father Fogarty, who had been the Curate since 1906, returned to his homeland in 1916, with the heartfelt good wishes of Father Marrs and the parish generally, to take up the position of Rector of Kilbehenny Parish in the Archdiocese of Cashel. He was presented with an Illuminated Address, a purse of 50 guineas, and a reading lamp, during the interval between solos and duets, in an entertainment given by parishioners.⁽¹²⁰⁾ His replacement was Father James McNally, ordained in June 1917, at St Vincent's, Altrincham, by Bishop Singleton.

In the highly charged climate of these tragic times when sons were serving, and many dying in the front-line of the European and other war zones, it is not surprising that many apocryphal and mythical reports abounded of supernatural interventions, such as the tale of the 'Angel of Mons' appearing on the side of the British

Expeditionary Force early in the war. Nevertheless, one story testified to by an old Catholic lady that her mother-in-law was wakened one day in 1915 by the cry of 'Mother!' from her soldier son, convincing her it was his death cry. A telegram from the War Office later confirmed that he had indeed been killed about the time his mother had said. This story, suggesting a mysterious telepathic communication between son and mother, was repeated in various places during the war, so it does appear to have some factual basis.

The psychological and emotional need for a tangible tribute to the sacrifices made by serving men who had died, and the impact on their families, resulted in the erection of a war memorial, unveiled by the Mayor of Hyde in June 1917. It consisted of a Calvary scene with a large Crucifix, around which were arranged statues of Our Lady, St Mary Magdalene and St John. Mounted on a marble pedestal, a plaque had been affixed which listed the names of the 22 men who had been killed up to then. The local newspaper printed photographs of the dead.⁽¹²¹⁾ During the same year, one parishioner, Sgt-Major Tom Long, sent a letter to his wife, Edith of George Street, advising her he had been wounded by a bullet in his right-hand side. His mother, of Cheapside, had then 6 sons, all serving in France. Two of them crossed paths, whilst one was going to the front-line trench and the other was coming back. She later received a letter signed personally by the King, thanking her for giving so much for the nation's defence. Two of her sons were killed during the next year

The Whit Walks continued throughout the war, as did the May processions. The local people of Newton looked forward eagerly to seeing the St Paul's contingent, led by Father Marris and his Curate, with the Confraternity and the Sodality banners waving, the girls and boys dressed in their special outfits, the men and women in their Sunday best, and the St Paul's Band playing hymns and marching tunes. An old lady, Lily Cooke (née Greaves), lived in Helen Street as a girl. When interviewed by her daughter in 1990, she said that almost every family there were Catholics; and hence, the procession included many of her neighbours, giving it a special interest.

She also recollected the large numbers of Irishmen who came over to the local farms at harvest time, many of whom were 'with drink taken' on Saturday nights, leading to much fighting. Someone would always call out Father Marris to sort out the trouble, and so he did, for these six-foot men became little boys again when he intervened. Before he left he would say, 'You'll let me see you in the morning!'. And they would meekly answer, 'Yes, Father', and be at Mass on the following day.

His attractive personality gained Father Marris many friends and favours from the non-Catholic people of Hyde. However, occasionally, he left a memory less than enthusiastic about him than he would probably have liked. Lily Cooke remembered how, when she was about 14 in 1917, that having an expertise in crochet work she was recommended to Father Marris as being the one to repair a damaged altar-cloth. When she had finished the repair, which needed 2 balls of cotton at 4½d per ball, which her mother could ill-afford (at that time 9d would buy 9 gills of milk) Father Marris thanked her for her good work. When, during the interview, she was asked by her daughter whether she was paid by Father Marris, Lily replied, 'Did he b----- !. He said the Lord will pay you. I'm still waiting o't Lord paying me!' ⁽¹²²⁾

The annual Corpus Christi procession in June 1918 was notable for the presence of 2 soldiers on leave, who supported the canopy poles under which Father Marris carried the Blessed Sacrament: Corporal Duggan and Private Walsh. Assisting them were Captains Long and Verley of the Boys Brigade, who supported the other two poles. Father Marris' sermon urged the need for frequent reception of the Eucharist.⁽¹⁰¹⁾ Two months later, the war ended, in August 1918, to great rejoicing, not least in the parish. The newspapers printed the photographs of all the local men who had lost their lives in the services. In addition, the names of the St Paul's men who had died since the War Memorial had been erected in June 1917, were now added to the plaque attached to it.

CHAPTER 3 : CONSOLIDATION AND ACCEPTANCE 1918 - 1958

In recognition of its 70 years existence, the canonical erection of St Paul's from a Mission to a Parish under Canon Law, was carried out by Bishop Singleton, by means of an official letter, dated 18th November 1918. An 'ad clerum' letter, dated 13th November, 1918, had been sent to Father Marris, redefining the duties of the Missionary Apostolic, whose new name became the Parish Priest, and also suggested that a local map should be made, based on the Diocesan archival map, delineating the actual boundaries of the parish. Father Marris noted on the letter that these were: Along the north side of Cheetham Hill Road to Yew Tree Lane; the road north of Oakfield Hall, by Roe Cross and Mottram-in Longdendale to the Derbyshire border; and south-west along the Cheshire County border to a point south of the cliff, and a line by Werneth Lane passing north of Woodley Station to the River Tame.⁽¹⁾

The mood of the political world, both national and local, was of a great desire to give the returned servicemen the 'heaven on earth' which they had been promised once the war was over. Church leaders in Hyde were all asked by the news media to give their views on social problems, a living wage, the role of the trade unions, etc., and Father Marris was asked to speak on the views of the Catholic community. His reply was that 'these urgent problems clamouring for a reply were clearly defined by Pope Leo XIII in his luminous encyclical, 'On the Conditions of the Working Class', which Father Marris outlined. He ended, "In the long run, human society depends for its preservation on the establishment of the main principles of Christianity. Philanthropy vainly endeavours to remedy social evils if it does not rely on Christianity, which alone is capable of regenerating human society, and makes men recognize the eternal laws of God's justice and charity. A spurious Christianity however, will not do'. How this peroration was received was never discovered by the author!⁽²⁾

By mid 1919, all the servicemen had returned to their homes and, in celebration of this, a highly successful dance was held in the Town Hall to pay for the redecoration of the church, which raised £40. The May and Whitsuntide processions were held, and the Bishop's Visitation took place, at which he confirmed 39 boys and 42 girls. A parish reunion Tea-Party was later held; the sodalities each had a week's Retreat; and the football team was not doing very well, becoming second from the bottom in November. All of these events, in 1919, indicated that the parish had virtually resumed where it had left off in 1914.

There was still a strong Irish element in the parish, and concerns about British rule in Ireland. The fatal 73-day hunger strike of the Lord Mayor of Cork, Thomas MacSwiney, in 1920, aroused passions and protests from many, which Father Marris

and Father Corcoran (who had replaced Father McNally as Curate) often joined in. Consequently, Father Marrs was the focus of local Press attention, and when the Irish Peace Settlement established the Irish Republic's sovereignty in December 1921, he commented, "May it bring abiding peace and strength to Ireland and the Empire".⁽³⁾

Public houses proliferated in Hyde and district, and the environs of St Paul's Church in Newton was no exception, with many of the problems being shared by the Catholic community. Around the Commercial Brow area alone there were 6 inns: the Railway, the Friendship, the Church, the Commercial, the Beehive, and the Duke of Sussex. The Commercial Inn was notable for its place as a terminal for a stagecoach which its landlord, Garlick, ran to Manchester before the Railway rendered this service obsolete.

Another of its claims to fame was that it was used as a courthouse in the 1830s to the 1850s, and was the venue for the Chartists P McDowell and John Bradley, a clogger from Hyde, being charged there in 1839. Since those days it has been frequently used by members of St Paul's organisations for celebrations and annual parties. The Friendship Inn at the corner of Commercial Brow and Newton Street (now Newman Street), however, was the most popular drinking place for St Paul's churchgoers. It was colloquially known as 'Johnny Mannion's', after the Irishman who was its landlord from 1896 to 1922 when he died. His daughter Mary, another member of St Paul's Parish, took over the management until it was closed down in 1937.⁽⁴⁾ Especially during Johnny's reign, it was particularly popular with the parishioners who always developed a raging thirst during the Sunday morning Masses!. Another service he offered on the occasions of the Whit Walks and other processions, was to open early so that the participants could sustain themselves for the walk, with a jar or two. Sometimes, of course, the pre-Walk drinks were more than they should be, and one procession was thrown into disarray when two of the pole-bearers, out of the 4 men carrying one of the statues, had taken more than was good for them, and at the bottom of Commercial Brow, they turned left whilst the two sober ones were turning right. Another of Johnny Mannion's tales is of the apparitor who took advantage of the 20 minutes or so of the Benediction Service before he had to take the collecting plate round, to quench his thirst. The result was that, as he passed each bench, the people putting an offering in the plate were able to briefly enjoy the smell of Johnny's tap-room.⁽⁵⁾

Electric lighting, costing £200, replaced the gas lamps in the church in 1922, and rotting floor-boards also had to be dealt with, at a further cost of £26. Although trivial if compared with today's prices, the parish income in the years 1919-1921 was less than £1,000 p.a.⁽⁶⁾

Robert Wilkinson, who had been Headteacher of St Paul's School since 1899, resigned at the end of the Autumn term, as did his two daughters, Mrs Morrisey and Mrs Wright, who were also teachers at the school. He had been a dedicated member of the parish, frequently involved in organizing functions, and producing plays and concerts. As a teacher he had the reputation of being a man of meekness and humility, despite being a strict disciplinarian.⁽⁷⁾ His replacement was Miss Isobel Body, a long-serving teacher at St Paul's.

The Silver Jubilee of Father Marrs' ordination took place in May 1923, and he received many congratulations and fine tributes from the parishioners, who saw him

as a sincere man of genial and kindly disposition, particularly with children. A parishioner recalls that he could often be seen walking in Hyde with a string of children hanging on to each of his hands, laughing as they chatted to him. He was presented with a large cheque, and an Illuminated Address framed in gilt and signed on behalf of the parish by Alderman W J Pope JP, Father Vincent Corcoran, and Timothy Flanagan; after which he was entertained by the St Paul's Orchestra under the baton of H Crean, with solos by Misses A Kenny, M Caveney, C Toughey, and from Messrs J Vickers, T Lomax, and James Clayton.⁽⁸⁾

Meanwhile, Father Marrs ubiquitous popularity as a lecturer in the town was shown by his being invited to speak at the public library on 'Charles Dickens, his life and work', followed later in the month at St George's on the Oberammegau Passion Play!. He also lectured to the Hyde Co-operative Men's Guild on 'A Universal Living Wage' between February and April. In November, he was invited by the Rosemount Primitive Methodists' Men's Class to talk to them on 'Christian Manliness', which was cordially received, and the hope was expressed that he would come again.⁽⁹⁾

He returned to Rosemount to talk on 'Christianity in relation to Labour' three months later.

As well as Father Hennelly, Canon Hopkins was also given recognition by the Borough in March 1924, when the renaming of streets to avoid duplication of names in the various districts took place. Water Street, which lay just to the north of the church, was changed to Hopkins Street, with Lawton Street following on. Hopkins Street is still a recognized street name although there are no dwellings in it. Only the Railway Inn car park remains, although Lawton Street has bungalows. Another change of street name of interest to Catholics was that Newton Street became Newman Street, after the great convert Cardinal.⁽¹⁰⁾

Two prominent members of the Catholic community, both involved in local politics and both ex-Mayors of Hyde, suffered from serious health problems in 1923. Alderman Luke Kenny, who had been ailing since 1921 (which had meant that he was frequently unable to attend to Town Council duties) was able to go to the Irish National Club on St Patrick's Day, and make an eloquent speech on the events which had occurred in Ireland since its achievement of Home Rule, and the consequent establishment of the Irish Free State.⁽¹¹⁾ At the same time, Mr William J Pope JP was in New Bedford, USA, being interviewed by a journalist from the New Bedford Evening Standard, in connection with

trade unions in the textile industry of the United Kingdom. Mr Pope was there on holiday from his duties as Secretary of the Hyde and District Weavers Association, with the agreement of his Executive, and after he had suffered a breakdown in his health some weeks previously. His hosts in the city of New Bedford were Mr and Mrs Yates, Mr Yates having been a union colleague of Mr Pope until he had emigrated to the USA. He was now Head of the Cloth Department at the Gosnold Mill in that city. Mr Pope indicated that as the holiday had recharged his batteries, he expected to return home in the near future; and on his return he said that the American mills were all working full-time, and that there were no housing problems there because many tenements were being built. He commented that eggs were 3d-3 ½ d each, i.e., more or less the same as here, but that men's clothing was 25% more expensive.

In the Summer, Father Marrs persuaded a number of unemployed parishioners to tackle the serious state of the school playgrounds, and, supremely confident, he elected himself as Clerk of Works, maintaining oversight over the concreting of the entire surfaces. This obviously enabled the work to be done within the limitation of parish funds, which a commercial contract would have made impossible, but it was a good enough job to allow the girls' playground to be used for hard-court tennis. The cost of the materials came to £71 6s 7d.⁽¹²⁾

Father Marrs was popular, not only with his own community, but with non-Catholics, and even with the Press who gave him publicity when the Liberal Party decided to nominate him as their representative on the Stockport Board of Guardians. The Editor of the Reporter said: "He enjoys to a high degree the regard of all denominations. His long residence in the town, and his sympathetic and intimate knowledge of the social and difficult conditions under which many of the people labour, and leads him to think he could give a useful service, pledging that 'he would place his time and faithful service at the disposal of all'. The Liberal Party were fortunate in the choice of their representative".⁽¹³⁾

A highlight of 1925 was the consecration by Bishop Singleton of a new high altar, which replaced that installed when the new chancel was added to the church by Father Hennelly in 1900. This replacement was made possible by a bequest from the estate of the late Ann Oldham, and it is still in place in the chancel today. It is made of white mercuil stone from France, and hand-carved in 3 square sections. The centre section contains 3 panels, with the designations on them of: IHS, a plain cross surrounded by thorns, and XP, respectively. The left-hand and right-hand sections each have the monogram of St Paul's. The traceried door of the tabernacle, the praedilla, and the altar steps are in oak.⁽¹⁴⁾ The total cost of purchase and fitting of the altar, paid to W Griffiths, was £515, with fees to the architect, E Kirby, of £51 11s 0d.⁽¹⁵⁾ In May of the next year, 1926, a reredos of Australian oak, designed by E Kirby for a fee of £43 12s 6d and supplied by W Griffiths for £458 3s 0d,⁽¹⁶⁾ and consisting of semi-arches and a niche for the monstrance, was placed behind and over the high altar. The Christian Mothers subsequently provided a carpet for the floor, for £21 10s 0d.⁽¹⁷⁾

Because of the very inadequate accommodation in which to hold functions, that was afforded by their rooms in Water Street, Hyde, the CYMS, in 1927, moved into 212 Mottram Road, which had originally been a non-Conformist chapel but, for many years, had been used as a 'gentlemen's club'.⁽¹⁸⁾ This added considerably to the parish's facilities.

Around this time, Father Marrs went off on a 5-weeks European tour, which included acting as leader of a pilgrimage of 150 people to the Holy Land and Rome for a week, where he met the Pope.⁽¹⁹⁾ On his return he was advised of his appointment as a Canon of the Shrewsbury Cathedral Chapter, in place of Canon O'Grady of St Peter's, Stalybridge, who had died. The schoolchildren were delighted as they were given a day's holiday at his request. The parish gave him a cheque for £64 14s 0d to pay for the new canonical instruments he would need.⁽²⁰⁾ On the authority of the Pope, received while he was in Rome, he gave the Apostolic Blessing, and handed out medals blessed by the Pope, on the day in December 1927 allocated for the Peter's Pence collection.⁽²¹⁾ Alderman Luke Kenny JP, died in November 1928 after a 6-year illness. To a great extent he had been responsible for

the acceptance of Catholics in the town's political and community life, even if the community still had some reservations. His daughter, married to George Aubury, had died in the previous year, and it was a bequest of £36 in her memory which enabled the purchase of the episcopal chair for the chancel.⁽²²⁾

The 1930 Whit procession included James Hart, who claimed he had walked in 70 processions. He was the oldest man in the parish, and had been a tenor in the choir for 60 years. His father, Michael had been a tenor in the first choir formed in the parish by Father Hill soon after he had arrived at St Paul's early in 1853. Michael had told him that when the foundation stone of the church was to be laid, it was carried on a horse-drawn lorry, followed in procession by many parishioners from the builder's yard to the church site.⁽²³⁾

Since he had had to have internal surgery at the Catholic Providence Free Hospital in St Helens in October 1928, Canon Marrs' health was not of the best, although he still took an active part in both parish events and lecturing to secular audiences, such as the Hyde Students Association. However, because of his increasing frailty, in June 1931 the Bishop transferred him to the more congenial parish of St Agnes, West Kirby. The Hyde Reporter wrote a long and complimentary article which commented on the friendship he displayed to the non-Catholic people of Hyde, and praised him for his services, not only to St Paul's, but to the town's own secular activities, such as the Hyde Library Committee, and the Board of Public Guardians.⁽²⁴⁾ He was called back in November to attend the unveiling ceremony of the new altar rails of the sanctuary, paid for by a donation of £78 from Luke Kenny's estate. Whilst there, he was presented with a cheque for £75 from the parishioners.⁽²⁵⁾ An excellent raconteur, Canon Marrs reminisced about the memories he had of St Paul's. One story he told about himself was that, as usual when he got up, he closed the oven door on the old-fashioned kitchen range, set and lit the fire, and then went into the church to say Mass. About a hour later he came back into the kitchen, where there was a most unusual smell. He opened the oven door only to find his cat well-roasted. He said, 'if I had been Chinese no doubt she would have made a delicious lunch, I suppose!'

New Year 1932 opened with an ominous warning from the Town Surveyor that the church was unfit to be used, because many floorboards on the northern side of the church were dangerously rotten, and the roof was in need of extensive repair. The parish finances were hardly in a fit state to meet the cost of a full commercial contract, so during 1933 a number of tradesmen from the congregation, including T Murphy, J Murphy, J Lennon, D Renwick, and some others, assisted by Father Twomey, the Curate on loan from Salford Diocese, volunteered to carry out the floor work. The sound boards were stored, and replacement boards obtained. It was then discovered that no air-ventilation bricks had been positioned when the church was built. The consequence was that much excavation was required. One of the weary diggers commented, 'I bet that fellow Twomey couldn't do this kind of work'. A voice behind him said, 'I go back to Ireland for two weeks every year, and spend all the time hay-making and doing other farm work. Don't tell me I can't shovel a little bit of soil!', and he proved it. The ventilation bricks were subsequently fitted; and then the new floorboards, and the old sound ones, were replaced after their undersides had been greased by the altar boys. There was some objection voiced that contractors were being deprived of work, but as most of the volunteers were unemployed at the time, this was ignored. The major outdoor work and roof repairs

were done by Messrs S Goddard & Sons, for a charge of £1,000. A loan of £800 was obtained to cover most of the costs, and this was repaid over the period, 1932-1935 from a special Repair Fund set up by Father A J Wilson, who had become Parish Priest after Canon Marrs had departed.⁽²⁶⁾ He had four brother priests, and a sister a nun. He was described as being full of vitality, big, breezy, and likeable. This year also saw the establishment of the SVP Society at St Paul's, with W H Poole as President, and Brothers F King and E Bowker.

Miss Catherine (Kate) Quinn, living in Lumn Road, Hyde, died in August 1932, aged 59, after an illness lasting a few months. She was originally from C^o. Cork in Ireland, and in 1897, after training as a teacher specializing in mathematics, she took up a 3-year appointment at St Paul's, and then left the school, returning in 1904 and becoming Headmistress of the Infants in 1907. Several generations of Catholic children passed through her hands, remembering her efficient control of them when she was teaching, and afterwards. She was a prominent figure in managing the children during parish processions. Like most teachers of her era, the cane was used at times, and she gave the impression of severity, but many children felt affection for her once they became old enough to appreciate her motives.⁽²⁷⁾

News was received in February 1933 that Robert Wilkinson, ex-Headmaster of St Paul's School, had been knocked down by a motor car, and subsequently died in hospital. His son John, who was the priest of St Mary's, Middlewich and an old pupil of St Paul's School, said the Requiem Mass at St Paul's, which was attended by the teachers, numerous ex-colleagues, and parishioners, many of whom had been his pupils.⁽²⁸⁾

A contingent of 30 mothers from St Paul's were part of 3,700 women who, in May 1933, met at Belle Vue for a rally addressed by Archbishop Macdonald and Bishop Henshaw of Salford. After the address, they had refreshments, and this was followed by an enjoyable evening's entertainment of songs and sketches. The event closed with the singing of 'Faith of Our Fathers'.⁽²⁹⁾

Father Wilson's ire was raised soon after he came by the frequent late arrivals for Mass, which he considered disturbed both himself and his congregation, in addition to them giving an indication that some regarded the need to be there from start to finish as unimportant. He therefore arranged for the church door to be locked promptly as soon as he began the Mass. However, one enterprising young parishioner who arrived a little late, showed his initiative by gaining access to the sacristy, and then calmly opening the door into the church whilst Father Wilson was part way through the Epistle. The priest was absolutely furious, both because the boy had circumvented his strategic plan, but had, horror of horrors, been in the sacristy which was, except for special reasons, barred to anyone but the priest and altar-boys on Sundays. The culprit was sufficiently harangued that he never dared such a dire act again, even if he was late.

The St Paul's Amateur Dramatic Society, which had begun as the Drama Class in the 1850s and later was known as the Dramatic Society, decided in January 1934 to adopt the new title of St Paul's Players. Their first performances, produced by Annie Kenny under that title, were 'Love among the Tea-leaves', 'Husband and Wife', and 'Man on a Sofa'; all presented on the same evening.⁽³⁰⁾

Father Wilson celebrated his Silver Jubilee as a priest in March 1935, with a day's holiday for the school. In the following May, King George V celebrated the Silver Jubilee of his Coronation. All the teachers and pupils attended an address by the Mayor, and a concert of patriotic songs. Each child was given a colourful flat tin-box containing a bar of chocolate, about 6oz in weight and made at the Rowntree's factory; and on the lid had been engraved the heads of King George and Queen Mary separated by crossed Union flags, with a legend underneath as a memorial of the occasion. In addition the children were given commemorative medals, as well as a 2-day holiday.⁽³¹⁾

Further refurbishment of the Sanctuary (Chancel) took place in 1935, with new altar rails donated by the Kenny family. The presbytery and the link with the sacristy and sanctuary were extended and panelled in oak, as was the baptistery, to match the oak used for the reredos; and all this panelling was fitted by D Renwick.⁽³²⁾

St Paul's acquired a microphone and amplifier system in 1935, which enhanced its social events. The Press described the event as follows: "The highlight of the Grand Broadcast Concert, held under the auspices of the COM, was 'the silver voice of the announcer, Mr J J Kinsella, at the mike' ".⁽³³⁾

Miss Isobel Body, Headmistress of St Paul's School, who had been appointed after Robert Wilkinson's retirement in 1922, herself retired after 40 years of teaching, since 1896, at St Paul's. A presentation to her in January 1936 consisted of a gift of money, much of which she gave back to provide a party for the schoolchildren, and a picture followed by songs from members of the choir.⁽³⁴⁾ She acquired a reputation for great severity, epitomized by the refrain ruefully recited by successive generations of children: 'Isobel Body prays at church on Sunday for strength to cane the kids on Monday'. However, her generosity at her presentation suggested that a real love for the children motivated her discipline, the norm at this time.

It was always rather hazardous to go into the presbytery unless Father Wilson was present, for he had a large dog - probably a mastiff - called Don, which ensured that his master was safe at all times, even if others were not. One inoffensive parishioner called to see Father Wilson at the presbytery at a time when he happened to be out for a short time, and the housekeeper let him in to await the priest's return. When Father Wilson came back, he was horrified to see this poor visitor pinned up against the wall by the dog, which had its front paws on his shoulders, and was snarling in his face. No doubt in these days the visitor would have been encouraged to claim compensation for P.T.S. (post-traumatic stress)!

A tragic event affected a family in the Catholic Community of Hyde in September 1936 when ex-Naval Stoker Joseph Barlow, aged 26, of Field Street, was charged with the murder of a 17 year old girl called Kathleen, a parishioner working as an envelope machinist at Newton Paper Mill. The two had been friends for about 9 months, and on the evening in question they had apparently decided to walk over to the golf links at Godley, but Kathleen never returned home. Her body, lying near the footpath through the links, was found by Arthur Cowley, a Hattersley man employed as a motor engineer at the Walls factory, at about 7.45am on the following day, 10th September. When charged with her death, Barber maintained it was an accident as he had been provoked by her response to his suspicions about a man named Schofield, also a naval ex-stoker, who, he believed, Kathleen had been seeing

covertly. He asserted that he pushed her to the ground rather roughly, but she had seemed alright until she had suddenly become still, and he had realized that she was dead. He panicked, and went home, leaving her lying there. The doctor who examined her said she had died of syncope, or sudden stopping of the heart. There was evidence of asphyxiation by intentional obstruction of her breathing apparatus. Arthur Cowley, who had found her, maintained there were no signs of violence to the body except for one of the deceased shoes being unfastened, and the presence of dirt on the knee of one of her stockings. The defence argued that during their altercation she had clung to Barber who had pushed her away, and they had both fallen, with the accused on top, causing her to die immediately. The jury accepted this explanation of the events, and the judge commented that, in his opinion, the jury had taken the merciful view, but he nevertheless concurred with the jury's verdict of manslaughter, not murder. After a Requiem Mass at St Paul's Church, offered by Father F P Bailey, following prayers over the corpse at the home of the girl's parents, the body was taken to Hyde Cemetery for burial before 2,000 people, many of whom were at school with her, or knew her as a member of their community.⁽³⁵⁾

The Spanish Civil War raised great passions, and fuelled the anti-Catholicism latent in many English people, who tended to support the Republican side as a consequence of the barrage of anti-Franco propaganda from a majority of the Press and left-wing politicians. Special collections were held at St Paul's for all victims of the war. A number of priests and nuns were murdered by the Republicans, and some of these were beatified by the Pope in 1996, as martyrs for the Faith. A letter to the Herald at the time claimed that priests were killed because they were using money collected for Spanish charities for guns, which they then stored in their churches!. Another, from 'A Catholic', denounced the Church as having a vested interest in maintaining the war.⁽³⁶⁾ It is unfortunate that the emotions engendered among some of the idealistic politically inclined Catholic people by the Spanish Civil War should have caused a few of them to decide to transfer their allegiance to the Communist Party, or to the extreme left wing of the Labour Party, from that owed the Church. To do this it was necessary for them to turn a blind eye to the appalling inhumanities inherent in atheistic Communism, and its political implementation in political life which even then was being publicized by independent observers of the Soviet system.⁽³⁶⁾

The producer for St Paul's Players, Annie Kenny, was ill, so J J Kinsella, the Headmaster, took over, and produced 3 plays in 1937: 'The Creaking Chair'; 'Meet the Family'; 'Pearly Pearls'. The cast in all three plays was as follows:- Messrs J Moore, H Bowler, A Prudence, and Fred Threlfall, a stalwart of several local amateur dramatic societies,⁽³⁷⁾ and Misses W Herrick, E Brooks, and Ann Long, with others playing minor parts.

A rally of 2,000 members of the COM in the Shrewsbury Diocese was held in Stockport in June 1937. A contingent of 40 went from St Paul's, led by Miss C Moss, the President. After a celebration Mass at St Joseph's, they went on to the Plaza Cinema, Stockport, where they were given a very interesting talk by Mrs Lyons, wife of the Australian Prime Minister, who was also a Catholic.⁽³⁸⁾

Problems in respect of Catholic schooling for senior children at St Paul's were a constant worry in these inter-war years. In 1938, Father Wilson made two proposals which were both rejected. The first was to extend the existing school, but it was

claimed to be unsuitable for an extension. Moreover, Alderman Spencer could not see why vacant places in the area's Catholic schools could not be used, instead of a new school being foisted on the Hyde Education Committee!. His second suggestion was that a site should be purchased at the junction of Johnson Brook Road and Markham Street. As the Board of Education was not willing to finance this, the Hyde Education Committee rejected the application.⁽³⁹⁾ Contributions to the new School Building Fund prompted a multiplicity of concerts, plays, dances, whist drives, etc., whilst individual donations were always welcomed. The Catholic Burial Society were particularly generous in this matter. Additions to the sacred vessels for the altar were occasionally needed, and in 1939, Miss Beeley gave Father Wilson £50 to cover the cost of a new monstrance.⁽⁴⁰⁾

The outbreak of the 1939-1945 war closed all schools, initially for an indefinite period, although the teachers had to report for duty to plan half-time attendance by the children, and to comply with other Government requirements. However, the closure was for only a short duration, and the schools reopened in October 1939.⁽⁴¹⁾ In spite of conscription, and the loss of the young men, the various sports teams (football, table-tennis, etc.) were generally carried on, but with a definite decline in their quality. The Christian Mothers took an active part in the Hyde Services' Comforts Committee's programme of sending gifts to the Forces. In June 1940, Mrs L C Stark, Leader of Tameside's Forces Comforts Fund addressed a meeting of St Paul's, explaining the work being done in Hyde for this Fund. The outcome of this meeting, and of meetings held in other churches and chapels, was a joint effort by the 24 churches in Hyde for Hospitals & Forces Comforts at Hyde Town Hall, which adopted a suggestion that they should hold a series of 'Everyday Sales'. This meant that on one day of every week a stall selling items appropriate to a particular day would be staffed by representatives from one of the churches or chapels participating. Captain Mair of the Salvation Army and Mr Enright of St Paul's thanked the organizers of the meeting, Mr Mark Beanes and Mrs J A Redfern. St Paul's parish agreed to staff the Wednesday (Baking Day) Stall.⁽⁴²⁾

In February 1940, Father Wilson purchased a grave plot in Hyde Cemetery for parish clergy, for £15 4s 6d. Ironically he was its first occupant in 1944.⁽⁴³⁾

The Bishop wrote to all Parish Priests on 31st May 1940, with the decisions of the hierarchy at its Low Week Meeting that:

- no priest may write to newspapers or other publications without his Bishop's permission
- all 'Ad Clerum' instructions were binding on all religious who exercised facilities within his diocese
- to avoid the problems which occurred after the Great War; that all baptisms, marriages, and confirmations, of Refugees must be advised to the Bishop⁽⁴⁴⁾

The gates to the church grounds and school which stood across St Paul's Street from Newman Street, which were usually kept locked, and the gate in the boundary wall to the north of the church, leading into Lawton Street, were removed in this year under the Government's Compulsory Requisitioning Order. This latter gate had been provided for an annual charge of one shilling.⁽⁴⁵⁾

The conscription of all women aged 20 years was a portent of extra difficulties for the social life of the parish, as there was no doubt that other age groups would be included as the war continued. The COM and the Christian Mothers were virtually the only organisations in the parish to keep social events going. Nevertheless, in 1941, the New School Fund alone received £1,101 9s 1d, mainly from their activities.⁽⁴⁶⁾

The concern of the Bishop for the spiritual welfare of young people was evident after the Board of Education began the registration of all youths between 16-18 years, to direct them to join national organisations serving the war effort. The Bishop recommended that Parish Priests should carry out a census of all such young parishioners, and advise their parents of suitable organisations where Mass and Holy Communion would be available on Sundays. Further, clergy were urged to volunteer as Chaplains to the Air Training Corps and similar organisations, to ensure facilities would be available.⁽⁴⁷⁾

The St Paul's branch of the Forces' Comforts Fund introduced a banking scheme in 1943 for parishioners serving, and, in that year, interest of £70 was distributed among the 202 Service personnel who participated in the scheme. The Fund also sent Catholic newspapers and other literature, to ensure that those serving would be kept informed of the work being done at home by fellow parishioners to provide them with a peaceful future when the war had ended.⁽⁴⁸⁾

The Education Act of 1944 eliminated the Hyde Education Committee, as all its responsibilities became those of a Cheshire County Council Education Authority. The Act entrenched the rights of voluntary schools as far as Governors were concerned, but the financial arrangements meant that Catholics would have to find 50% of incalculable future costs, on top of the Education Authority Rate.⁽⁴⁹⁾

Since 1941, Father Wilson's health had not been too good, but his death in the Manchester Royal Infirmary in May 1944 was unexpected. His body was brought back to Hyde, and received into the church by Bishop Moriarty, with a choir of several priests chanting the Office of the Dead. The Bishop officiated at the Requiem, whilst Father Wilson's brothers, Canon Edmund Wilson and Canon Thomas Wilson acted as his Deacon and Sub-Deacon respectively. A choir of 50 priests sang the Mass. The Bearers of his body to the grave in Hyde Cemetery, which he had purchased for the use of St Paul's clergy four years before, were W J Robson, J J Kinsella, J Moores, L J Nagle, T Moss, J Clayton, and F Enright.⁽⁴⁹⁾

A convert from the Salvation Army, Henry Nixon, became the next parish priest some weeks later. During the intervening time, Father J Murphy, subsequently Bishop of Shrewsbury, temporarily acted as a supply priest to the parish. The presence of Father J Matthews, who had been Father Wilson's curate since 1937, was invaluable in the confusion which followed his death.

Mr W J Pope JP, who had been the 2nd Catholic Mayor of Hyde, a staunch supporter of Catholic interests in public life, and a committed President of the CYMS, as well as a Governor of the school for 40 years, died in July 1945. The dignitaries of the town and his Trade Union colleagues attended in force at the Requiem Mass, concelebrated by Father Nixon, Father Matthews, and Father Ring, CSSR.⁽⁵¹⁾

The end of the war in Europe, VE-Day, began the return of many of the men and women, which was accelerated after the war against Japan was concluded on VJ-Day. Christmas 1945 thus became a very joyful occasion for the parish, with a social attended by about 200, mainly young people. Father Nixon was pleased that, “so many of them preferred these parish events to the commercial alternatives”. 500 people went to Midnight Mass on Christmas Day, and a social arranged for Boxing Day was almost as well attended.⁽⁵²⁾

The effects of the 1939-1945 War on the Catholic ex-Service men and women of Hyde can only be stated in general terms, as it was likely that it had had the same impact as on the Catholic communities of every other city and town. The experience of being exposed for the first time to an alien environment without family support, and to people who were often irreligious, sceptical of all past traditions, resentful of authority, and frankly hedonistic, must often have resulted in undermining the previous certainties of many of them. Some, a small minority, were influenced by the Sword of the Spirit movement which intensified their spiritual awareness, and others, urged on by Catholic Action, entered political and trades union activities. However, the majority of the veterans were only interested in getting home and enjoying the good things of the new world which their political masters had promised them. Of these, a small number wanted to resume the life in the parish which they had known before. It was this latter group which fully responded to the efforts of Father Nixon to reintegrate them into parish and community life, whilst the larger number sought their recreation and amusements outside of parish social activities, which now tended to be too limited and constrained for their acquired tastes, which only commercial interests could satisfy. Most limited their parish interests to Sunday Mass, sending their children to the parish school, and supporting appeals for funds

Nevertheless, social and religious events in the Catholic life of the Community brought about a resurgence although the strong Irish influence, still evident before the war, had virtually evaporated amongst the young returned ex-Servicemen and women, and the entertainments offered were now distinctly of the English variety. Parish activities were resumed, including the May Procession, which, in May 1946, was able to attract 600 walkers.⁽⁵³⁾ In September, 300 returned veterans were formally welcomed by the clergy and the Forces Fund Committee, with a social and dance in the Town Hall. Father Nixon advised the audience that, at its peak, 270 parishioners had been in the armed forces, and, of these, 15 had been killed. The Fund had distributed £700 in total during the conflict, as well as despatching about 10,000 Catholic newspapers. After welcoming the veterans back to the parish, he advised them that a week's Retreat had been arranged for 8th - 15th October 1946, to regenerate their spiritual batteries. Lawrence Ratigan replied on behalf of the returned men and women, and expressed their thanks for the efforts made for them in their absence.⁽⁵⁴⁾

St Paul's Players now had a new producer, John Cobham, who had replaced J J Kinsella in 1946; and, in February 1947, he presented 'Tons of Money' in the school, charging 2s 0d and 1s 3d respectively. The play was notable for the versatility demonstrated by Fred Threlfall, who played three main parts.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Miss Isobel Body, who had been at St Paul's for 40 years as a teacher, and had taken over as Headteacher in January 1923 (after the former Head, Mr R Wilkinson,

had retired) died during April 1947. She had achieved a high reputation as a teacher among her colleagues, but some of the children had a different view, as the rhyme, quoted earlier, indicated!. She was buried in Southern Cemetery on Maundy Thursday, 3rd April 1947.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The Parish Centenary in June 1948 was celebrated during the week, 26th June to 4th July in 1948. A souvenir programme was produced by an organizing committee, comprised of representatives from all the parish organisations, with W J Robson as Chairman, and J Moores as Treasurer. The foreword, by Father Nixon, gave a brief resumé of the founding of the parish by Father John Reah, before 200 parishioners, in 1848. Each day had a programme of entertainments in turn by St Paul's Players, the schoolchildren, the Christian Mothers and COM combined, as well as a cricket match between the single men and married men, each group being responsible for its own day. The events ended with a Mass celebrated by the Bishop on Saturday, and a Civic Reception for the Bishop by the Mayor, followed by Sunday morning Masses. In the evening, Benediction and Sermon by the Bishop took place, with the Te Deum being sung by the choir.⁽⁵⁷⁾

On a visit to Rome, Father Nixon had been rather taken with a Lady Altar and a statue of Our Lady, and wished to see a similar one in St Paul's. He set up a Lady Altar Fund for this purpose, and constantly urged support for the Fund from the pulpit, and in church notices. It almost became an obsession with him apparently, for he began to make public the names of donors, and the amounts donated by them. The target he aimed for was £1,000.⁽⁵⁸⁾ He was, nevertheless, a keen advocate of purely spiritual practices as well. In 1948 alone, he arranged Days of Recollection for the Christian Mothers, and for the CYMS and men of the parish, whilst in September he led a week's pilgrimage to Lourdes.⁽⁵⁹⁾

Increasingly, young Catholics looked for amusement and involvement in activities extraneous to the parish, which was unable to offer the variety which town and commercial organisations were able to afford, and some of them distinguished themselves in these activities. One of these youths was Donald Frain. His mother, Linda, was a convert to the Faith, and he attended St Paul's School. By 1948, he was already an outstanding member of the Hyde Seals Swimming Club, which had gained national status. He was only 15 in this year, but between 1948-1953 he won very many trophies, and broke several records. Some of his achievements over these years include: The Shepley Cup (for schoolboys - over 2 lengths) 1948; the Men's Worrall Cup (50 yards sprint) 1948 to 1952; the Gilbert Cup (100 yards men's freestyle) 1948 to 1953; the Kerr Cup (for youths under 17) 1949; the Shenton Cup (200 yards race) 1949 to 1953; and the George Wilkinson Memorial Aggregate Trophy (awarded to men or women who score most points in a season) 1951 to 1952.⁽⁶⁰⁾

The Hyde Town Council determined in February 1949 that Alderman F Mullings (Labour) was to be deprived of his seat as he had not attended a meeting for 6 months. This motion was passed under Section 64 of the Local Government Act 1935, and it was passed in Alderman Mullings' absence. He was one of a number of Catholic Councillors at that time, and had been first elected to the Council in 1929. He served until 1938 when he lost his seat, but in 1945, under the Labour landslide in the country, he was re-elected onto the Council, and became an Alderman in November of that year.⁽⁶¹⁾

The second Annual Speech Day was held at St Paul's School, and to everyone's surprise it was attended by the Mayoress, Mrs Bayes, who Father Nixon himself had invited so that she could present cheques to 3 teachers in appreciation of their long service to the school, as well as presenting prizes to the first placed pupils in Forms 1-3. The teacher recipients were:

J J Kinsella, Headteacher, with over 30 years service, Miss Frances Molloy, Headmistress of the Infants, with 25 years service, and Miss Gertrude Reynolds, a retired teacher who had given over 40 years of her life.

The 3 children who received prizes were: Pat Myles - Form 1; Mary Fletcher - Form 2; Maureen Godfrey - Form 3

Denis Herrick, a one-time member of St Paul's, son of T P Herrick, a founder of the Hyde Labour Party, and one of those disillusioned by their personal perceptions of the Church's international alignments, her social preferences, and the power exercised at local level by her priests and other representatives, stood as a Communist candidate for the Stalybridge and Hyde Constituency in the General Election of 1950. At one of his electoral meetings he only attracted an audience of 7, of which 3 were anti-Communists!. Nevertheless, despite this clear warning of how lukewarm the local electorate were, he followed this up with a meeting in Hyde itself, at which he claimed he had no intention of splitting the Labour vote. He accused the Philharmonic Hall officials of discriminating against him, as he had been refused the use of the Hall for this meeting when he had tried to book it. The officials later denied that he had ever approached them to book the Hall, but that it was their policy in any case not to allow its use for political meetings. Labour need not have trembled about him splitting the Labour vote, for the declared voting results for the Labour and Communist parties were: Gordon Lang (Lab) 23,462; Denis Herrick 389.⁽⁶⁷⁾

The War Memorial was reconstructed in November 1949, with the 1917 commemorative tablet being removed from the pedestal, and a new plaque being affixed to the church wall behind the memorial. It was updated to include the names of those parishioners who had died in the 1914-1918 war and the 1939-1945 war on separate lists. A souvenir programme of the unveiling and blessing of the new War Memorial was printed, selling at 3d each.⁽⁶³⁾

In December, the parish was consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary by Father Nixon, followed by the recitation of the Rosary. He had purchased two statues of Our Lady of Fatima for the occasion, which he blessed, and placed in the care of CYMS and COM respectively. He also announced that the Pope had authorized a Midnight Mass to be said on New Year's Eve as well as Christmas, to begin the Holy Year of 1950 which he had proclaimed, provided the Mass was preceded by a Holy Hour.⁽⁶⁴⁾ The Masses for New Year's Day attracted a total of 876 parishioners,⁽⁶⁵⁾ out of an estimated 2,000 or so people.

In November 1950, St Paul's Players presented 'For the Love of Mike', produced by John Cobham, with John Kinsella in the cast. This was the last play John Kinsella took part in, for he died suddenly during the next week, aged 51. He had been active in the National Union of Teachers and the Catholic Teachers' Association, as well as being in demand for organising social events. Miss Ellis became his temporary successor as Head Teacher of St Paul's School.⁽⁶⁶⁾

The St Paul's Lourdes Club was formed by Father Nixon in 1950, to raise funds to send sick parishioners on the annual Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. The club was able to send 3 parishioners in that year.⁽⁶⁸⁾ By 1953 the club's membership was 70, but gradually declined subsequently, although in the 1980s and 1990s Mrs N Bunting, its organizer during these latter years, still sent disabled parishioners to Lourdes from funds collected from jumble sales, etc., in the years beforehand.

The parish lost Father Nixon in 1952 when he was transferred to Northwich. His achievements during his 9 years as Parish Priest had included a complete redecoration of the church; the grounds were laid out; the war memorial was reconstructed; and a start made on cleaning and renovating deteriorated stonework. He had also raised about £800 towards the Lady Altar, for which he had commissioned A Gilbert Scott, architect, to produce a design in blue Honiton stone with a gilt wooden surround, carved in Italy. The statue of Our Lady was to be of wood, stained and hand-carved, also in Italy.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Three months later, his curate, Father Osbyrne, was transferred, and replaced by James Hoskinson from Liskard parish. As a going-away present Father Osbyrne received a cheque for £143 from the parish, and one of £20 from the CYMS, presented by Councillor E F Myles, a future Mayor of Hyde. Father Osbyrne's comment after thanking everyone for the presents was that, "Priests come and go at St Paul's, but their memories of the parish and its people last for ever".⁽⁷⁰⁾

Father Nixon's hopes for a new Lady Altar were fulfilled after he had left, by Father Irish, the new Parish Priest, because in September 1953 it was installed in preparation for the Centenary of the opening of the church in 1854, with a blessing and dedication by Bishop Murphy. The Mass was concelebrated by the Bishop and Fathers Irish, Hoskinson, and Nixon, with the Mayor and Mayoress in attendance. The overall cost of the project, including the necessary reconstruction and renovation work on the chapel however, went far beyond Father Nixon's original estimate, reaching about £5,000.⁽⁷¹⁾

The year from 8th December 1953 to 8th December 1954, between the feasts of the Immaculate Conception, was declared a Marian Year by the Pope, when plenary indulgences could be gained by a visit to any church dedicated to Our Lady on the opening and closing days of that year, as well as on the feasts of Christmas, the Annunciation, the Purification of the B.V.M., the Seven Sorrows of Mary, and the Assumption.⁽⁷²⁾

St Paul's Church was consecrated by the Bishop on Wednesday, 26th June 1954, the centenary of its opening. Funds for the event, which were to cover church repairs as well as the ceremony itself, were helped by a Christmas Fair which raised £500, and a St Patrick's Fair at the Town Hall which raised another £533. After the consecration, a procession formed up from the school, conveying relics of St Innocentia in a golden casket which was placed on a bier carried by 3 former priests of St Paul's: Fathers Nixon, Bailey, and Matthews, and Father Wilkinson. It was carried to the Lady Altar, where the relics were placed in a cavity on the altar, and covered with a stone which was then sealed.⁽⁷³⁾

The Producer of St Paul's Players, John Cobham, left the town in 1955, and Father Irish asked Mrs K Cooke (nee Ross) who had a broad experience of amateur dramatic groups, to take his place. The unsuitable accommodation for staging plays in the old school was abandoned, as she was able to secure more suitable

accommodation in the Hyde Festival Theatre. Her first production was 'Madame Louise' by Vernon Sylvain.⁽⁷⁴⁾

The unremitting efforts of the clergy and Governors of the Catholic schools in the area to obtain Catholic educational facilities for senior children, were rewarded in Jan. 1956 by an agreement, in principle, for the Cheshire County Council Education Authority to provide a modern senior school for Catholic children from Dukinfield, Stalybridge and Hyde in the 1957-1958 building programme.⁽⁷⁵⁾ It proved to be a disappointment to some extent, for it was placed on the reserve building programme only, in September 1956, despite protests from Councillor Myles.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Some alleviation was forthcoming for St Paul's School in November because of the acute accommodation crisis caused by having to take in children up to 15 years old. The Hyde & Longendale Education Executive promised to provide additional accommodation in the form of two large wooden huts, to be erected on the Infant's and Girl's playgrounds, to accommodate the Infants, and to authorize an extra teacher.⁽⁷⁷⁾

Mr Frederick Robinson and his wife, Monica, who were active parishioners of St Paul's Catholic Church, had the joy of seeing their son, Frederick, ordained in Lisbon as a priest by Archbishop Cento, the Papal Nuncio to Portugal, in June 1957. He was only the 4th priest who had been born in Hyde since the Parish was founded in 1848. Accompanying them on their 11-day stay in Portugal were their other son and their daughter. Father Robinson had been studying at the English College in Lisbon since 1951, having gone there from Ushaw College, C^o. Durham. He had attended St Paul's School as a child, and served on the altar. His first Mass was said at Hyde on 25th June 1957.⁽⁷⁸⁾ A claim to fame was his appearance in 1962 on the pages of the NCH, which reported that, as he innocently rode his motorcycle down Market Street, at the junction with Croft Street, he hit an estate car which pulled out in front of him. He somersaulted off his motorcycle, but he is still going strong. The other driver had to go to hospital however!.

In 1957, the parish presented Father Irish with a cheque for £200 to celebrate his Silver Jubilee as a priest, in addition to other gifts from the Christian Mothers and the CYMS. At a dance on the following Friday evening, the St Paul's Girl Guides gave him a cigarette lighter. In his speech of thanks, Father Irish said that when he came to Hyde he felt it was the back of beyond, but his experience had proved why the parish was so highly thought of by the rest of the diocese.⁽⁷⁹⁾ Another presentation took place in October 1957, to Frances Molloy, Headmistress of the Infants School, that of the Papal 'Bene Merenti' medal, by Bishop Murphy, in recognition of her 25 years as head teacher, and 33 years total as a teacher at St Paul's. She was also given a floral bouquet by the Christian Mothers.⁽⁸⁰⁾

CHAPTER 4 : VATICAN II AND DECLINE

1958 - 1998

The 100th Anniversary of the apparition of Our Lady to Saint Bernardette at Lourdes in 1858, was celebrated at St Paul's with a performance of 'Hail, Holy Queen', the story of the event, by St Paul's Juvenile Players at the Festival Theatre, and this was followed by 'The Mime of Bernardette', by Hugh Ross Williamson, and produced by Kathleen Cooke.⁽¹⁾

The average attendance at Sunday Masses in 1958 was 900,⁽²⁾ and a new curate, Father F Whitehead, arrived that year. However, he left in May 1959, and was eventually laicized and married. He had 4 children, but died whilst they were still quite young. Father Brendan Huggard arrived as his replacement.⁽³⁾

A play, 'Late Love' was performed by St Paul's Players in December 1960, for 3 evenings to full houses at the Festival Theatre. An impressive £500 profit was realized on behalf of the New School Building Fund.⁽⁴⁾

An extraordinary proof of how members of the Catholic community had become the most significant grouping within the Hyde Labour Party since the end of the World War II, was clearly shown by the installation as Mayors of Hyde of 3 Catholics, all attenders at St Paul's, between 1960-1965. In addition, Catholics such as Richard Matthews had also been elected to the Council, if only for a single term.

The 3rd Catholic Mayor of Hyde in the history of the Borough, Councillor Herbert J Leech, was installed in May 1961. The 140 guests at the Mayor's luncheon were greeted by the Mayor and his wife, Edith (nee Redfern). He appointed Father Irish as his Chaplain, and the Civic Service took place at St Paul's before a congregation of 600 people. Councillor Leech declared his installation as Mayor to be the proudest, and yet the humblest, day of his life.⁽⁵⁾

A 'Sale of Work' in November 1961 raised £1,000 towards the New School Building Fund. This exceptionally good result may have been helped by many new parishioners from the Manchester overspill estate at Hattersley, for the number of Easter Communicants in 1962 was a record, at 1,400, and the average 1962 Mass attendance on Sundays reached a record figure of 1,502.⁽⁶⁾

A historic moment in the history of St Paul's School occurred in September 1962, when it reopened as a mixed Junior and Infants school, with W J Robson as Headteacher with 6 assistants for the Juniors, and Miss Frances Molloy as Headmistress with 3 assistants for the Infants. All the 11+ children were transferred to the new SS Peter & Paul Secondary Modern School, situated off Kenyon Lane and Ashton Road, Dukinfield, along with similarly aged children from Dukinfield and Stalybridge.⁽⁷⁾

In 1963, Harrytown Convent School celebrated its foundation 50 years earlier. It had begun with 2 or 3 French nuns who spoke little English, and opened with only 11 pupils. As there was no Mass available in Romiley then, they used to come by

train to Hyde Central Station, and wait in a house in Croft Street, Hyde, owned by the Mellors, a Catholic family, until the 11am Mass at St Paul's.

Another Catholic, E F Myles, and his wife Rose, were installed in 1963 as Mayor and Mayoress of Hyde. A Londoner by birth, he came to Hyde when 10 year old. He was a retail fishmonger in Clarendon Place by profession. He was also a member of the Hyde and Longendale Division Education Committee, and a Governor of St Paul's School and Oakfield County Primary School. Both Councillor and Mrs Myles were active members of St Paul's Parish as well as of the Labour Party, and Councillor Myles was also a member of the Workers Educational Association in Hyde, whilst his wife was a member of the Hyde Townswomen's Guild, the Hyde Savings Committee, and the Mayoress of Hyde's Ladies Committee. He asked Father Irish to be his chaplain, and the civic Service was consequently held at St Paul's Church before 2000 people, and concelebrated by Bishop Grasar of Shrewsbury Diocese, and Father Irish, the current Parish Priest.⁽⁹⁾

Father Irish was an authoritative figure in the parish as he was every inch an army officer, tall and upstanding. However, he was not one to leave all the manual jobs around the church property to others. A story is told that on one occasion soon after he had arrived, and a group of men were doing some essential maintenance work, when one of them noticed that one of the labourers was wearing an army uniform which had become rather soiled, and that his face and hands were filthy. He asked his companion, "Who is that man over there carrying bricks?". His companion was as puzzled as he was, until they suddenly realized it was their father-in-God!⁽¹⁰⁾

The death of Father Irish in September 1963 was an unexpected shock for the parish, even though he had not been too well during the year. He had celebrated the First Friday special Mass that evening, had a meal, and then retired to his study. It was only when the housekeeper took up his usual cup of tea later on, that she found him dead. He had a reputation for being hot-tempered but, according to those who knew him well, he was a generous man, compassionate and kind, especially to the sick and housebound. He was also very courageous. In his duties in the army, he had been decorated for gallantry by the King of the Belgians, with the Croix de Guerre, and the Belgian Chevalier of Honour, with Palm. He was buried in his home town cemetery in Warrington. His curate, Father Murphy, was on holiday in Ireland, and had to dash back to Hyde when he heard the news. He was just in time to say the 11am Mass on Sunday, 8th September. Father Robert Abbott, who had said the 8am and 9-30am Masses on that Sunday, replaced Father Murphy as Curate later in this month.⁽¹¹⁾

The new Parish Priest was Father James Fitzgerald, from St Mary's, Congleton. He was a stout man, and suffered from asthma. However, he was not deterred by his ailment, and was responsible for a number of changes in the parish before he left in 1973. One of his first duties was to split the Hattersley Estate from St Paul's Parish. The Hattersley Parish was dedicated to St James, and he and Father Abbott concelebrated its first Mass in 1964 in a builder's hut before a congregation of 100 people. He announced that, until the parish gained a priest of its own, a priest from St Paul's would say a Mass on Sunday mornings at 9-30am. He also announced that a permanent church, a presbytery, a church hall, , and a Junior and Infants school had been planned for St James, and would cost about £200,000.⁽¹²⁾

In preparation for a Mission which he had arranged for November 1964, Father Fitzgerald advised in March 1964 that he and Father Abbott would make pastoral visits throughout the parish, beginning with the Sheffield Road area. This innovative step in bringing up to date the numbers of parishioners, also meant that most parishioners would have a priest in their home for the first time for many years, if at all.⁽¹³⁾

The Silver Jubilee of Father Fitzgerald's ordination was due on 25th March 1964, and on St Patrick's Night he received a watch from the children, and a substantial gift of money from the parish. A special Mass was concelebrated by him and Father Abbott on 25th March, and a day or two later he flew to Lisbon for a visit to his old college there, of which he was intensely proud.⁽¹⁴⁾

Another parishioner, William Cullen, and his wife Joyce (nee Turner) were installed in May 1964 as the 64th Mayor and Mayoress of Hyde, and the third Catholic to be so honoured since 1961. He had several accomplishments, but was a Sales Representative at this time. His wife was involved in social work, and was a driver for the WRVS. The Civic Service was a High Mass celebrated by Father Fitzgerald, with Father Abbott as the preacher.⁽¹⁵⁾

Vatican II Council's influence on liturgical practices cast its first shadow on St Paul's, when, in this year, the prayer said by the priest at the distribution of the Eucharist was shortened to a simple 'Corpus Christi' (Body of Christ) only.⁽¹⁶⁾

Another event in 1964 was the organisation by Father Fitzgerald of a pilgrimage to Our Lady's shrine in Walsingham, when coaches were filled with 300 parishioners. The party left at 10-45pm on Friday evening, 26th June 1964, the patronal Feast of St Paul, and returned at about the same time on Saturday, 27th June. This pilgrimage was an annual event in the parish for many years, although the numbers going declined considerably over time.⁽¹⁷⁾

Frances Molloy retired in July 1964 after many years as a teacher, and then as Headteacher of the Infants School. She had intended leaving six months earlier, but had stayed on to facilitate the legislative changes consequent on St Paul's combining Juniors and Infants, under one Head, and adopting the new name of St Paul's RC Aided Primary School from September 1964. Her presentation, delayed until April 1975, consisted of an electric clock, a canteen of cutlery, a dressing gown, and a statue of Our Lady of Willesden after Father Fitzgerald had expressed his, and the parish's gratitude, for her long and loyal service.⁽¹⁸⁾

By October, the priests advised that they had completed their visits to every one of the Outdoor Collection districts. In December, Father Fitzgerald announced two further liturgical changes, the use of English at all Masses, and also for Absolution after Confession, plus the easing of the fasting rules before receiving Holy Communion, to one hour only. These changes were to be implemented on Palm Sunday 1965.⁽¹⁹⁾

Up to 1965, social events, and confraternity meetings, etc., had usually taken place on the school premises. This was often inconvenient for the school's work programme, and in any case was an unsuitable arrangement, as shown by plays having to be staged at the Festival Hall. A fairly large hut of wood and plaster board was purchased for use as a church hall in 1965, and was erected in the vacant space between the entrance to the old Infants School, and the house on the corner of

Newman Street and St Paul's Street, once owned by Huxtons, and latterly the school office. One of its first uses was for the St Patrick's Night Dance, which proved very popular. A social and dance in April was attended by the Mayor and Mayoress, Mr & Mrs William Cullen, the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress, Mr & Mrs E F Myles, Alderman Leech, ex-Mayor, and Miss Frances Molloy who belatedly received her retirement gifts from Father Fitzgerald.⁽²⁰⁾

The year 1966 saw the first pilgrimage from St Paul's to Lourdes travelling by air from Manchester. About 55 parishioners, led by Father Abbott, departed. Then, in August 1966, 180 parishioners left in 2 coaches for a tour of France and Italy, and on to Rome with Fathers Fitzgerald and Abbott, where they had the privilege of an audience with the Pope.⁽²¹⁾

A vote of thanks was about to be offered by the Labour Group to Councillor E F Myles for his long service on the Council, before he left the town for Poole in June 1966. However, a discordant note was struck suddenly when it was alleged that he was only leaving because he was an 'embittered man' at not being included on an official visit to Hyde's twin town, Colmar, although he had been invited personally by the Mayor of Colmar at the Mayor's expense. It was suggested he would expect to be included every year in the future, and that he had got his public and private activities mixed up. He was also known to have voted in the Municipal Election for the Independent candidate, instead of the official Labour candidate. This was obviously the real reason for his being expelled from the Party, his expulsion being a duty which unfortunately fell on his brother, H J Myles, President of the Hyde Labour Party.⁽²²⁾

The Football Club suffered a tragedy at the end of February 1967, when a car carrying the driver and 4 passengers hit a lamp standard on Manchester Road, Hyde, while travelling to a Sunday morning fixture. Two of the young men, Peter Graham [23], and David Harrison [18] were killed, and the 3 others were severely injured, and taken to hospital. The injured men were: Lawrence Graham (20), brother of Peter; Michael Anthony Nagle (21), of Denton; and Michael Woods (23), driver of the car.⁽²³⁾

The encyclical, 'Humanae Vitae', issued by Pope Paul VI in April 1968, resulted in the Pope being viciously denounced by the media. Some parishioners, like some in other parishes, unfortunately supported the media's side of the argument, and were outraged that their expectation, that contraception would be morally acceptable to the Church - as trumpeted by some influential Catholics - was shattered by the Pope's reiteration of the consistent teaching of the Magisterium. The Vicar of Glossop put it succinctly when he said: "It is not a crisis over artificial contraception, but a crisis over accepting the authority of the Pope, the Vicar of Christ".⁽²⁴⁾

Evidence of the determination of some liturgists to radically alter the traditional form of the Mass, using the excuse of implementing the intentions of the Vatican II Council Fathers, was the announcement of a new style of Roman-rite Mass, which would be the standard in 1970 in all churches. The priest would, in future, face the congregation, requiring the altar to be moved forward as in non-Catholic churches. It was obvious that such re-ordering would present some problems in St Paul's church.⁽²⁵⁾

Since he took up his duties as Assistant Priest to Father Fitzgerald, in place of Father Abbott in 1965, Father Moorhouse had thrown himself into parish life, especially that of the young adults in the choir, and other groups which were primarily for youth, i.e., the Children of Mary, the Football Club, etc. He arranged days out for them, accompanied them on breaks in the Peak and Lakes Districts, and organized light-hearted matches between the young men and women. He was adept with the guitar, and enjoyed nothing more than a sing-song. His popularity in the parish, and in the local community generally, which he admitted had given him the happiest times of his priestly life, meant that it was with real regret that he learned he was to be transferred to Alsager as Parish Priest.

Just before he left the parish in September 1971, Father Moorhouse, with his usual enthusiasm for activities, made a sponsored walk which raised £77 for church funds.⁽²⁶⁾ His successor as Curate to Father Fitzgerald was Father Patrick English, who came direct from Thurles Diocese in Ireland. He was a keen horseman, whose parents kept several steeds. In the following June, 1972, two young parishioners, Michael Quinlan [22] and James Matthews [21], received a rousing send-off on their sponsored walk to Bristol, which raised £100 for the church.⁽²⁷⁾

The structural safety of the original St Paul's School, built in 1855, was in serious doubt in 1972, so that when, towards the end of the year, some of the floorboards in the upstairs classroom pulled away from the wall, it indicated that the outer wall had begun to bulge, and was in a dangerous condition. Fortunately the new school, which had already been approved by the LEA because of prior knowledge of the poor condition of the old school, was almost completed, so that the school was able to reopen in January 1973 on its site off Victoria Street, Newton. The old school, considerably vandalized, and an eyesore to residents nearby as well as to parishioners, was demolished in 1992, and replaced by a block of apartments, St Paul's Court, considerably reducing vandalism in general.

Father Fitzgerald was unenthusiastic about the liturgical changes being introduced, and, as his health was poor, he decided to retire from the active Ministry in July 1973. In his last Mass at St Paul's, he spoke about the loss of, 'My dear Latin Mass'. He went to live with a relative in Cottingham, near Hull, where he died in 1977. His replacement was Father Vincent Turnbull, who had been a Professor at Ushaw Seminary, Durham.⁽²⁸⁾

A matter of concern in 1974 was that the Parish Returns showed that, out of an estimated Catholic population for St Paul's Parish of 2,900, the average Mass attendance at weekends was 784 only, which compared unfavourably with the average of 1,502 in 1962, or even with the 1,280 who attended in 1964 after the Hattersley portion of St Paul's had been set adrift. Moreover, only 30 men and 80 women were attached to any Catholic association, such as the SVP Society, the Christian Mothers, the COM, or the CYMS.⁽²⁹⁾ Is there not a remarkable coincidence, both in the catastrophic decline in religious observance, especially among younger Catholics, so soon after Vatican II closed, and in the way its actual documents and decrees have been interpreted and implemented since, especially in the Western World?.

The passing of the 1967 Abortion Act made many in the Catholic community in Hyde and elsewhere, as well as of other groups especially in other denominations and faiths, realize how far from the basic Christian understanding about the sanctity

of human life the nation had strayed, particularly in Parliament. The enormous and mendacious campaign waged by supporters of an abortion law, e.g., regarding the number of backstreet abortions (one claim was of 2 millions per year), and the lack of compassion shown, especially by the Catholic Church, for the alleged large numbers of mothers overburdened by unwanted and excessive pregnancies, and the mental agonies they suffered, was successful. It persuaded the House to pass David Steele's Bill, with a mere 29 MPs voting against.

Over the years since, in spite of valiant efforts by the 'LIFE' organization, with a branch still in Hyde to assist girls who have had, or are considering having, an abortion, and of the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) which concentrates on parliamentary lobbying and holds an annual 'White Flower' appeal, the various amendments to restrict abortions have all been lost. The collusion of the various governments has never permitted even a minimal time to debate the issue, to counter the filibustering tactics of the small percentage of MPs who are actively pro-abortion. Large rallies against the law took place in the 1970s, including a silent march of about 70,000 through Liverpool centre, an 80,000 strong rally in Hyde Park, London, addressed by a number of notables in public life, including the convert journalist, Malcolm Muggeridge, and a full-house meeting in the Methodist Central Hall in London. It is an unfortunate fact that here in Hyde, attempts to persuade the Ministers of the various non-Catholic congregations to influence their members to give ecumenical support to the anti-abortion campaign, by asking them to sign petitions, or help in other ways, have mostly failed, apparently because the Ministers were afraid of the hostility from their parish committees to involvement in anything which is controversial. The only alleviation in the Abortion Law obtained so far is that the latest age at which abortions are permitted is now at 24 weeks gestation, excepting for certain medical defects when the termination is permitted up to full term, instead of the previous 28 weeks!.

The opportunity to buy an electric organ for the bargain price of £5,000, following the closure of a Wesleyan Chapel in Ashton Road, was seized by Father Turnbull, and enabled him to discard the manual organ which required 2 youths to pump it whenever it was played. To pay for it, a barrel was placed opposite the entrance door from the church porch, for donations to be dropped in. Unfortunately, churches are no longer sacrosanct, and one day the barrel and the offerings disappeared!. Nevertheless, money was found to pay for it.

Father English left for Moreton Parish in 1976, and Father Peter Cryan came. He was a late vocation with a science and industry background. Meanwhile, Father Turnbull introduced another liturgical change, reception of the Host in the hand instead of on the tongue. Twenty years later, probably a quarter of the people still prefer to receive it on the tongue, as being more reverential and less likely to allow abuse. This, of course, had been the main reason for oral reception, rather than in the hand, being decided by the Church in earlier times.

The property at 212 Mottram Road, which Father Marrs had bought in 1927 for the CYMS and other parish functions, which had served as the parish hall until the wooden hut had taken its place in 1965, was in a dilapidated state by 1977. The occupant of 210 Mottram Road claimed that the next door property was adversely affecting his gable end.. The diocesan solicitor recommended that 212 Mottram Road should be sold, as an offer of £100 had been received for it. The property was

eventually sold through an estate agent for £150. As expected, the buyer demolished it, and erected a new house on the site.⁽³⁰⁾

The Silver Jubilee of Father Turnbull's ordination in Rome, where he had been a student between 1947-1953, was a pleasant occasion, and the parish showed its appreciation of his pastorate by presenting him with a cheque for £600.

During the latter months of 1979, the re-ordering of the church in accordance with the current liturgical changes, compelled the priest to face the people when offering the Mass. The stone front and side panels of the high altar were detached, and moved forward for the new altar. The remainder of the original altar and the oak reredos were left in position, for 'visual and sentimental reasons'!. The floor of the sanctuary was raised, and the altar rails were cut into two halves, each half being fixed at right angles to its previous position. The pulpit, erected in 1901 to the memory of Canon Hopkins, was also removed. The overall cost, which included redecorating, and repairs to the boiler and the roof, came to £25,218.05. Whilst work on the high altar went on, Father Turnbull discovered that the reliquary deposited therein contained a small amount of incense and ossified material, the latter apparently being relics of 2 martyrs, Saints Sabintani and Casti. According to the revised order for the dedication of a church and altar (Rome 29.5.77) the relics must be recognizably human and authenticated. As Father Turnbull felt that neither condition had been met, he merely placed the relics, without ceremony, underneath the present altar table.⁽³¹⁾

Mrs Ann Ilett, a very popular and competent Infants teacher, died in April 1981, aged 57, of a heart complaint. Her funeral was at Boule, Suffolk, where she was interred after a Requiem Mass, and the rather poignant words she had asked to be read, were spoken: "Now cracks a kindly heart. Goodnight sweet friends. May flights of angels sing me to my rest".⁽³²⁾ A memorial Mass was said for her at St Paul's on 7th May 1981.⁽³³⁾

In December 1981, the Bishop gave notice of the Pope's forthcoming visit in 1982, and urged Catholics to purchase goods and souvenirs to help defray the cost. His visit to Heaton Park in May was a stirring event, being the first time that any Pope had visited England. Father Turnbull was fully involved in coordinating the programme for the visit, and took his place with the Pope on the dais carrying the altar; and he had to ensure that the altar vessels were in place, whilst assisting in other ways. Five parishioners assisted in the distribution of the Eucharist, and many parishioners were in the congregation at the Pope's Mass, including 2 policemen on duty as security men. On the following Wednesday, Father Cryan led 34 parishioners to the Pope's open-air Youth Mass at Ninian Park, Cardiff. They took with them a selection of porcelain gifts for the Pope from the Shrewsbury Diocese, made in Godley by ex-teacher Mrs Morris.⁽³⁴⁾

The St Paul's Football Club ceased playing at the end of the 1981-1982 season. Many of the seasoned players had moved out of Hyde, and the manager, R Edwards, was having great difficulty in recruiting replacements who would be up to the standard required for league matches. The first season in which the parish football team had played was during the 1906-1907 season, and excepting for breaks during the two wars, it had played continuously since with varying degrees of success. Its demise was a tragedy for the parish, and was a portent of the collapse of parish

activities which occurred in the 1980s. Two cups which it had successfully gained over its 75 years career in local leagues are held by its ex-manager.

A feature of Father Turnbull's tenure was ecumenical cooperation: with participation in meetings of the Hyde Council of Churches; joint services during Unity Week; and active lay support for Christian Aid. He was consecrated a Canon early in 1982 for his exceptional services as Liturgical Advisor to the Bishop, prior to his transfer to St Werburgh's, Chester, in November 1982. His successor was Father John Woods. Father Cryan left in February 1983 for the Kenyan Missions, and Father Patrick O'Brien came, 'an amiable young man' in Father Woods' introduction.

Father Woods was an ardent promoter of Lourdes Pilgrimages and of Marian devotion. This latter enthusiasm was made evident at his first May Procession in 1983, which attracted 500 participants, when 5 statues of Our Lady were crowned; (viz., Our Lady of Righteousness; of Lourdes; of Pity; of Newton Green; and of Calvary), and during which the 56 parishioners who had lost their lives in the wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, were recollected. The flower arrangements on this occasion were especially admirable. Father Wood's talent for languages was frequently demonstrated at Lourdes where his facility for switching from one language to another at services was admired.

The parish hall erected in 1965 was, by 1983, in an abysmal state of repair, with unsafe electric wiring and unsanitary kitchen and toilet facilities. Consequently, the organisations of the parish: the Dramatic Society, the COM, the CYMS, and the UCM (the renamed Christian Mothers), found it difficult to generate enthusiasm for recruitment to their ranks, and replace those members who had fallen away, for whatever reason. The result was that, one after the other, these organisations ceased to function, leaving an apathetic parish, with no social organisations which could compete with commercial attractions. The loss of the UCM in particular, was a serious blow, as this group had been the backbone for most events in the parish latterly. In an attempt to halt this decline, Father Woods held a meeting to consider options on how to provide the parish with a social centre, at which 3 or 4 viable options were suggested. The eventual decision made by Father Woods was to link the 2 abandoned Infants classrooms, and renovate them at a cost of about £6,000. However, the split level floor, lack of heating, inadequate electrical power and toilet facilities, made the hall unsatisfactory for use for any purpose, leaving the problem of the absence of a parish centre unsolved. His inability to drive exacerbated his problems which were only mitigated by the unofficial chauffeuring in their own cars by Messrs F Clarke and F H Radcliffe. Some community spirit was maintained by the formation of a Senior Citizens Group, still meeting weekly, by Miss K Smith, whose father had been talented musically.

In the years following the Second World War, there has been a considerable immigration from the Indian sub-continent into Hyde, many coming from Bangladesh and Pakistan, and almost all of them Muslims. Some of them are not happy with the religious and moral climate which exists in the State school system; and one family approached Father Woods to ask if their children would be allowed to enrol into St Paul's School. The outcome was that a small number of Muslim children attended the school during the 1980s. Father Woods took a great deal of interest in these children, and became friendly with some of their community's

adults, which could help to draw the two communities together. One beneficial consequence was that one of the Muslim boys, after leaving the All Saints High School eventually decided to join the Police force, and he also took instructions in the Catholic Faith from Father Woods. This resulted in his decision to convert from Islam, into Catholicism. His sponsor was one of the teachers at All Saints High School, Mr Hughes, who himself later became a late vocation to the priesthood, and was ordained in June 1995. What would normally have been a joyful occasion for any young convert and his family was vitiated, because, to avoid vocal or even physical hostility from his former Community, he was compelled, perforce, to take his spiritual leap secretly, even to keeping it from his own family. He obtained a position with a Midlands police force soon after his reception, and left Hyde.

The introduction of Metropolitan Boroughs abolished the offices of the Mayors of Hyde and the other townships which were incorporated into the new Tameside Metropolitan Borough in 1974. The new office of the Mayor of Tameside was created, and in 1987, a parishioner, Joseph Fitzpatrick, was installed as the first Catholic Mayor of Tameside for the Municipal year 1987-1988. He appointed Father Woods as his Chaplain, and the Civic Service was held at St Paul's Church.

In 1989, Mary Travis, the wife of James Travis, Headteacher of St Paul's, died.. She had been a teacher there before she married. Being musically well-qualified, when Father Fitzgerald decided to introduce younger people into the choir - at that time made up mainly of older people - he appointed her as Choir Mistress, and she welded these newcomers very quickly into a highly admired choir. Her Requiem Mass was at St Paul's Church before a packed congregation, and the hymns sung at the Mass had been chosen by her in anticipation of her death. Joan Ridgway, the church organist, was her niece and a teacher at the school, and she took over as Choir Mistress in Mary Travis' place

Father Roderick Strange, who had served a number of years as the Catholic Chaplain to the students at Oxford University until returning to the Diocese, came in 1990 when Father Woods, no doubt to his relief, was transferred to Much Wenlock, a rural parish. The main problem, that of vandalism which Father Woods had faced during his 8 years at St Paul's, and which had brought him unhappiness, soon befell Father Strange, for his car was damaged twice in the first three months, and the church and presbytery were in an appalling condition. However, the problem of car damage was overcome at the same time that the poor accommodation was solved. At a cost of around £100,000, obtained from the Diocese as a loan, the church and presbytery were completely renovated, the roofs repaired, and a garage provided. During this work, Father Strange was kindly given succour by Father Canning of St Mary's, Dukinfield, who allowed him to lodge with him.

In 1991, after the refurbishing, it was discovered that the large cast-iron bell, erected in 1862, was making the bell-turret unsafe because of its weight. Consequently it was taken down, and replaced by a much lighter bell. The old bell was left lying on the ground behind the War Memorial for over two years, when it was then sold for scrap in 1994, and the proceeds used for a celebration at the presbytery.

In 1991, Father Strange recommended to Bishop Gray that a parishioner, Mary Shufflebottom, should be awarded the 'Bene Merenti' papal medal, in recognition of her long and devoted services to St Paul's Parish. She had been of regular assistance

to the priest in various ways, and had carried out many church duties, including opening and locking the church as required, and ringing the church bell daily for the 12 o'clock Angelus, and also at the Consecration during Masses. Parishioners were invited to the presentation of the medal at a Mass in her honour, and to a small buffet celebration afterwards. This award was notable for the Community, as it was only the second occasion on which this medal had been awarded to a member of St Paul's, the first having been presented to Frances Molloy, Headteacher of the Infants School in October 1957

The same year, 1991, was sadly marred by a serious act of vandalism, as, on the evening of the day on which the Arabian Gulf War began, the figure of Christ on the Cross and the statue of Our Lady were severely damaged with some heavy weapon. Another act of vandalism occurred in the next year, 1992, damaging the arms of the figure of Christ, which had to be repaired. A further sacrilegious act of vandalism occurred for the 3rd consecutive year, in May 1993 as the Bosnian Croats attacked Mostar, when the figure of Christ was decapitated, with the trunk ripped from the Cross, and 2 of the figures beneath the Crucifix were smashed.⁽³⁵⁾ The memorial Crucifix and statues were subsequently removed, and placed in the baptistery area inside the church, whilst the plaque showing the names of the dead servicemen of the two wars, was fixed to the wall adjacent to the re-sited Crucifix. It was felt that this location for the Calvary should prevent any reoccurrence of the vandalism.

In his anxiety to introduce even more liturgical changes emanating from Vatican II, Father Strange, beginning with a small core of 6 parishioners who, in Father Wood's time, had attended a course at Malpas for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, arranged for a roster of 18 Ministers to assist at all Masses for the distribution of the Eucharist under both species, and for some of these Ministers to take the Eucharist to the sick and housebound. Another roster, of Readers at Mass was also drawn up. A Cafod group, under the chairmanship of D. Mulvey appeared during 1992, and proved to be a most successful collector of funds for the needy in the Third World. It complemented the work of the SVP which, apart from the Choir and the Senior Citizens Group, was the only parish association still operating by then. A statue of St Paul, 5 feet tall and made of fibre glass, was also purchased out of a donation of £500 made by a parishioner, and was placed in the empty niche in the West wall on the outside of the church, thus completing the external accoutrements at last, since its erection in 1854. Soon afterwards, a Rosary Group was formed which recites the rosary every Monday after Mass.

An uplifting event occurred on 26th June 1993 when a parishioner, Philip Atkinson, was ordained by the Bishop before a crowded congregation, including several priests who had been associated with the parish. His was the first ordination of a parishioner of St Paul's since that of Kevin Prince in the late 1970s. Philip's father, Derek, himself went to St Paul's School as a boy. The ceremony was captured on video, and several copies were made for friends and family. A subsequent buffet was provided in the school, to round off a great occasion.

During his stay at St Paul's, Father Strange was often asked by the NCH and the Advertiser newspapers for his views on current matters, and for a period he also contributed a series of articles on religious matters. Father Strange's workload increased greatly in 1993, when he was appointed as the Diocesan Director of Religious Education. He also had responsibilities for the National Conference of

Priests. Consequently he was given Father Paul O'Grady, who was currently assisting at St Peter's, Stalybridge, as his assistant priest in September 1993. The latter was given equal nominal status to the parish priest, and the ability to exercise all his functions. The blurring of authority resulted in liturgical and devotional innovations, and abandonment of traditional practices. Up to September 1993, careful housekeeping, and a doubling of the offerings at Masses, had produced a credit balance of £11,179, as shown in the audited statement of parish finances published in that month by Father Strange. In addition, it achieved a reduction of the debt owing to the Diocese for refurbishment costs, by £30,000.⁽³⁶⁾ However, during the 3 years, 1993-1996, no detailed audits were provided, with not unexpected results. Presumably as a result of concern expressed by parishioners at the lack of financial information, a parish Finance Committee, led by a qualified accountant, was introduced late in July 1996.

The decision by the Church of England to accept women as official Ministers, led, in 1993-1997, to a number of Anglicans seeking to be received into the Catholic Church. One of these, a Vicar from Broughton, Salford, converted at Easter 1994 at St Paul's, intending to become a priest. It was unfortunate that he had obviously never fully appreciated the essential nature of the Catholic priesthood which is dependent on ordination by a bishop in the Apostolic succession, as he believed he was already validly ordained, and therefore he was disappointed that he would be required to undergo re-training, and re-ordination by the Bishop. In 1995, he decided to apply for, and to accept, a team minister's position in a Church of England parish, and abandoned the Church.

An innovation for the 4 parishes of: St Paul's Hyde, St Peter's Stalybridge, St Raphael's Millbrook, and St Mary's Dukinfield, occurred in 1994. It was arranged that the Bishop would administer the Sacrament of Confirmation at Copley Leisure Centre in Stalybridge, instead of in a church. Some parents were unhappy, and one expressed the view that: "It deprived many children of the one chance in their lives of direct contact with the Bishop, and gave the impression of an American-style evangelist's circus, with no serious religious devotion!". In 1995, the same venue and arrangements took place; but the Bishop left the Confirmation completely to the priests in attendance with him,, and the public address system developed a technical fault as well unfortunately, causing some chaos. This innovation was discontinued in 1996, when Confirmations took place at St Peter's Church, Stalybridge, by the new Bishop, Brian Noble.

The parish benefited in 1994 from the recruitment of a part-time secretary, and the installation of a computer system containing a library of parish records, previously only available in manuscript. A Young Ladies group was started, and the presbytery garden was tidied, and laid out properly for the first time since Father Turnbull's enthusiastic personal tending.

In December 1994, Father Strange celebrated the Silver Jubilee of his ordination. After a Mass before a full church, the entertainment took place in the school hall. This was attended by about 300 people, including Father Strange's family, Father Coglioli, the Dean, and other priests associated with St Paul's. The superb buffet was, as usual, provided by the same ladies as at the ordination in 1993. The highlight, however, was the remarkably agile and proficient tap-dance solo from 'The Boy Friend', performed by Father Strange himself. A gift from the

parishioners of £1,000, plus a video of the event, was given to him to express the general appreciation of his work for the parish.

In May 1995, it was the Pope's 75th birthday, so the St Paul's SVP Conference sent him a fax, assuring him of its love and loyalty. A reply was received from the Pope's Secretary of State, expressing the Pope's gratitude and appreciation of the sentiments forwarded to him, and that he was sending his Apostolic Blessing to all members of the Conference.

By September 1996, both Father Strange (at the end of June) and his assistant, Father O'Grady (in September) had been transferred, to Wallasey and to Runcorn respectively. At his last Masses at St Paul's, Father Strange showed his great sadness at leaving a parish which he had come to regard with deep affection. The parishioners on the whole reciprocated this emotion, and a representative group of 60 people from the parish journeyed to his new parish in Wallasey, for his Induction Mass in November 1996. Another group travelled to Runcorn later, for Father O'Grady's induction. Both priests were invited back to the parish on Friday evening, 21st February, 1997, for a buffet and a joint presentation, by B Nagle, of money collected from parishioner's donations. The amount collected, £700 in total, was equally divided between them!. Nevertheless, Father Strange gave a characteristically gracious reply of thanks, and expressed his pleasure at being back.

The new parish priest, in September 1996, was Father Denis Maher, an Irishman who had previously been at St Hugh of Lincoln's Parish at West Timperley, and resulted in traditional liturgical and devotional practices being resumed. His first experience of St Paul's was a deficit in the parish finances, which was fortunately retrieved by a loan of £5000 from Shrewsbury Trustees, and by the record profit of over £4,000 which the Autumn Fair, held at Hyde Town Hall in early October, had achieved. He impressed the parish by his evident intention to try to visit the homes of as many parishioners as possible, not just the sick and housebound - not a notable feature of many parishes nowadays.

On the Friday before Bonfire Night, 3rd November 1996, vandals set fire to the two derelict huts which had served as the Infant School before 1962, and which had been linked to provide a parish hall in 1983 - to the delight of most parishioners. This incident had, of course, led to the possibility that the insurance claim, which was for £40,000, may provide sufficient funds for a deposit on a custom-built, and sorely needed, parish centre. As well, it removed the dangers of a plague of vermin, and of possible accidents to young intruders, some of whom, it was presumed, were responsible for much of the vandalism it had suffered. It was subsequently discovered that the 15 year olds detected as responsible had also caused £20,000 worth of damage to St John the Evangelist Parish Hall in Godley.

The usual Christmas Party organized by the SVP Society, and crucially helped by the ladies who always make themselves available since the demise of the Christian Mothers Society, was held in the school at Christmas 1996. It carried on a tradition stretching back to the earliest years of the parish. Originally attended by up to 300 or more poor parishioners in those days, the 1996 Party consisted of a meal, and the opportunity for 80-100 of the elderly and housebound to meet some old friends at Christmas time for 2-3 hours, beginning with a Mass offered by Father Maher.

On 9th March 1997, the Bishop confirmed 24 candidates from St Paul's itself and 40 from St Christopher's, Romiley, at St Paul's Church. The next Sacrament of Confirmation will apparently take place in 1999. After the ceremony, a representative delegation of 3 men and 3 women handed a petition signed by 486 parishioners to the Bishop. It requested him to allow the insurance claim mentioned above, to be used by the parish itself as a deposit for a parish centre, instead of being taken up by the Diocese. The impression left by the Bishop was that he was sympathetic to the proposal, but that he needed to consider its implications first.

An audited statement for the year April 1996-March 1997 was provided in May 1997, which showed a balance of £9,144, with a total income of £80,138, an indication of how generous St Paul's parishioners are as compared with those of many other parishes with similar socio-economic backgrounds.⁽³⁷⁾

As part of the preparations for the 150th Anniversary, Fr Maher announced at the same time that he had arranged for the outside of the church to be cleaned, and asked parishioners to increase their weekly giving by 25p each which would ensure a sufficient extra income to pay for the work required.

A subsequent request to the Bishop was made in early June to advise whether he had made a decision regarding allowing the parish to use the £40,000 paid out by the Insurance Company for a parish centre. His reply indicated he was still undecided. Later in the month, Father Maher was asked by the Diocesan Finance Officer to provide specific details of what the Parish wanted for the Centre. He was also told that the insurance cover of £40,000 had still not been paid by the Royal London Insurance Company. He then asked the small committee of 6 members to let him have their views. This information was submitted to him in July by the Chairman, B Lenehan. In spite of the cogent reasons advanced to the Bishop for allowing the Parish to use the £40,000 insurance money as a deposit on a custom-designed centre for completion in 1998, Father Maher was told that, although the Parish needs were understood by him, other more urgent diocesan needs must be given priority. Despite this, the Committee intend to continue their efforts

A Summer Fair was held in July, arranged by the Parents and Teachers Association, to raise urgently required funds for the school, which was well attended by parents, friends, and other parishioners. A popular competition was to guess the identities of six babies whose photos were displayed, and then to guess which St Paul's teachers they had grown up to be. The first prize, a Granada Studio's Tour family ticket, was to be drawn by Mr Toms, the Headteacher, on the following Thursday and, apparently, the winner caused some embarrassment!. The general opinion of those attending was favourable, and the receipts approached £3000, suggesting that another Fair would be worth considering for 1998.

James Travis, the former Headteacher, whose popular wife died in 1989, had the happiness of marrying a long-term friend, also a teacher, in St Paul's Church in August 1997. It was reported that, on learning of the coming event, one of his children exclaimed: "Good, we'll get a proper meal again.

During this month, Father Maher went to a parish in Long Island, New York, as a relief priest for a month, a practice he had maintained for several years. A problem arose this year, as the replacement for himself, which he had arranged, was prevented from coming because of immigration queries. However, Father Chuwa, a

Holy Ghost Father temporarily based in Glossop, filled in for much of the time, and proved to be very popular with those who met him.

At the end of September 1997, Patrick Lennon, a former SVP member, died aged 88 after being unwell for about 3 years. He together with Edward McLoughlin and Edward Molloy, both also dead, had joined the Hyde St Paul's Conference of the Society in 1933, a year after its foundation in the parish. They had committed themselves to its charitable work for a total of about 160 years altogether, an outstanding achievement by any standards.

The 1997 Autumn Fair took place in Hyde Town Hall on Saturday, 18th October, and, as usual, was a very successful and admired event for the quality of its organisation and displays. There was some consternation on discovering that many of the posters put up in the town had been torn down beforehand, but satisfactory takings of £4,000 were still achieved. It was unfortunate that, unbeknown to the organising committee, another Autumn Fair was being held in Hyde Central Methodist Hall on the same day, as otherwise an even better financial return may have resulted.

In the midst of a natural satisfaction felt over the 150th Anniversary of the Parish foundation, a sober realization must sometimes surface that unless the continuing haemorrhage of our youth from religious practice, and commitment to the Faith, is stemmed, humanly speaking nothing can halt an inevitable decay of the Parish Community. The reasons for the haemorrhage are complex, of course, and include the prevailing secularism, hedonism, and sceptical peer pressure. Rightly or not, many parents locate the problem in the schools, where, with the tacit approval of bishops, inadequate Catholic religious texts and guidelines have been imposed on teachers. Among young Catholics, the consequence has been the subtle undermining of, and belief in, the Church's God-given authority, and his normal unique channel of salvation for mankind. They are thus bereft of any ability, or even desire, to articulate any defence in higher education establishments or workplaces against misunderstandings or misinterpretations of Catholic beliefs. It is to be hoped that the new Directives, based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church, may help to reverse the rising tide of unbelief and apathy so evident since the closure of Vatican II

However, we should not be too despondent. Our Blessed Lord promised before he returned to His Father that He would never leave us orphans. So, just as 'with the morn those angel faces smile',⁽³⁴⁾ we can be certain that, in spite of all, our Parish will still be witnessing to Him on its 200th Anniversary in AD2048!.

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- 118 NCH 6th November 1915
- 119 NCH 13th April 1916
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Popes 1831-1998

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APPENDIX 1 : STATISTICS OF THE PARISH

1855-1996

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>ESTIMATED RC POPULATION</u>	<u>BAPTISMS</u>	<u>MARRIAGES (MIX)</u>	<u>DEATHS</u>	<u>CONFIRMATIONS</u>
1856	1500	83	22 (0)	23	196 (1855)
1860	-	78	17 (0)	18	129
1865	-	73	11 (0)	21	57 (1864)
1870	-	57	12 (0)	25	247 (1871)
1875	-	75	13 (0)	47	196
1880	-	-	12 (1)	34	not known
1885	-	55	6 (0)	26	131 (1886)
1890	-	66	8 (0)	44	158 (1891)
1895	-	49	11 (0)	44	-
1900	-	57	9 (0)	24	173 (1899)
1905	-	32	10 (1)	21	209
1910	-	46	8 (5)	30	94
1915	1875	49	12 (5)	37	102 (1914)
1920	-	35	9 (4)	29	81 (1919)
1925	-	37	19 (10)	22	88
1930	-	28	20 (10)	30	97 (1932)
1935	-	44	26 (15)	27	107
1940	-	31	20 (13)	15	74 (1941)
1945	1631	35	27 (20)	20	45 (1944)
1950	-	41	22 (4)	23	145 (1949)
1955	-	46	incomplete	19	158
1960	-	51	12 (1)	16	152 (1961)
1965	-	95	36 (17)	--	248 (1966)
1970	-	67	32 (21)	--	-
1975	2900	42	29 (17)	29	112
1980	-	35	13 (8)	25	30
1985	-	25	12 (5)	incomplete	57
1990	-	40	11 (8)	incomplete	80 (1988)
1996	2742	28	11 (not shown)	21	24

APPENDIX II : POPES

1846 - 1998



Gregory XVI	1831 - 1846		
Pius IX	1846 - 1878	Pius XII	1939 - 1958
Leo XIII	1878 - 1903	John XXIII	1958 - 1963
Pius X	1903 - 1914	Paul VI	1963 - 1978
Benedict XV	1914 - 1922	John Paul I	1978 - 1978
Pius XI	1922 - 1939	John Paul II	1978 -

APPENDIX III:VICAR-APOSTOLIC & BISHOPS

VICAR APOSTOLIC OF LANCASHIRE DISTRICT

George Hillary Brown 1840 - 1850

BISHOPS OF SHREWSBURY 1851 - 1997

James Brown	1851 - 1881	Ambrose Moriarty	1934 - 1949
Edmund Knight	1882 - 1895	John Murphy	1949 - 1961
John Carroll	1895 - 1897	Eric Grasar	1962 - 1982
Samuel Allen	1897 - 1908	Joseph Gray	1982 - 1995

Hugh Singleton 1908 - 1934 Brian Noble 1995 -

APPENDIX IV :

(a) PRIESTS WHO HAVE SERVED AT ST PAUL'S AS MISSIONARY APOSTOLIC OR AS

PARISH PRIESTS

John Reah	1848-1853	Aloysius Wilson	1931-1944
John Hill	1853-1869	Henry Nixon	1944-1952
Henry Hopkins	1869-1879	Joseph Irish	1952-1963
Patrick Tracy	1879-1881	James Fitzgerald	1963-1973
Charles Langdon	1882-1888	Vincent Turnbull	1973-1982
Thomas Ratcliffe	1888-1889	John Woods	1982-1990
John Thompson	1889-1896	Roderick Strange	1990-1996
James Hennelly	1896-1911	Denis Maher	1996-
Thomas Marrs	1911-1931		

(b) ASSISTANT PRIESTS OF ST PAUL'S

John Maguire	1859-1860	Percy Rees	1928-1933
William Stanton	1861-1863	Michael Twomey	1933-1933
Patrick Tracy	1871-1879	Percy Bailey	1933-1937
Bernard Thompson	1880-1881	James Matthews	1937-1948
-o-	1894-1895	Thomas Osbyrne	1948-1952
George Carton	1881-1883	Henry Hoskinson	1952-1956
Camille Dhoogue	1883-1884	Francis Whitehead	1958-1959
-o-	1886-1887	Brendan Huggard	1959-1960
Denis Fitzgerald	1884-1885	James Murphy	1960-1963
Edmund Cronan	1898-1898	Robert Abbott	1963-1965
Thomas Marrs	1898-1906	Kevin Moorhouse	1965-1971
E D Kirby	1906-1906	Patrick English	1971-1976
William Fogarty	1906-1916	Peter Cryan	1976-1983
Frederick Whittaker	1916-1916	Patrick O'Brien (Jnr)	1983-1989
James McNally	1917-1919	Paul O'Grady	1993-1996
Thomas Corcoran	1919-1928		

(c) BRIEF HISTORIES OF HYDE PRIESTS

PRIESTS WHO HAVE SERVED THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

(i) Missionaries Apostolic or Parish Priests

John Reah

Son of Jonathan and Ann Reah; Born at Esh, C^o Durham, 1st July 1820; Educated at English College in Lisbon 1835-1844; Ordained 24th July 1844; Curate at Liverpool St Joseph Church 1844-1845; 1st Resident Priest in Bollington 1845-1846; Curate at St Mary's Mulberry St, Manchester 1846-1848; Rector at Hyde St Paul's 1848-1853; Appointed Canon 1852; Rector in Wrexham 1853-1857; Retired to Ringwood Rd, Poole, Dorset; Died 19th Dec 1859; Buried Poole Cemetery, Dorchester Rd.

Sources: CD; SDA; Lisbon Coll.Hist. - Croft; Hyde census

John Hill

Parent's names unknown; Born Drogheda, C^o Louth, Ireland, 1819; Educated Old Hall, Ware & Ushaw; Ordained 1843; Rector at Holy Cross Church in Burton-on-Irwell 1843-1845; Rector at Congleton St Mary's 1850-1853; Rector at Hyde St Paul's 1853-1869; Died 6th August 1869; Buried Dukinfield Cemetery

Sources: SDA

Henry Hopkins

Son of William and Winifred Hopkins (née Pratt or Bratt); Born Birmingham 9th October 1817; Ordained Mt.St Bernard's Abbey for the Rosminians 18th Sept.1847; On staff of Ratcliffe College 1847-1849; Rector at Rugby St Marie's 1860-1861; Joined Shrewsbury Diocese, Curate at Stalybridge St Peter's 1861; Rector at Chester St Werburgh's 1861-1865; Curate at Shrewsbury Cathedral 1865-1867; Administrator Shrewsbury Cathedral 1867-1869; Rector at Hyde St Paul's 1869-1879; Rector at Stockport SS Philip & James 1879-1883; Rector at Wrexham Cathedral Church 1883-1895; Appointed Canon 1889; Rector Wilmslow St Theresa's 1895-1900; Died 16th March 1900; Buried Stockport Cemetery, date in register 19th March 1900

Sources: Rosminian Archives

Patrick Tracy

Parent's names unknown; Born Ballinahown, Kilmallock C^o Limerick, Ireland; Ordained by Bishop Brown at Birkenhead St Werburgh's 22nd April 1863; Curate Birkenhead St Werburgh's 1864; Curate Stockport St Joseph's 1864-1865; Rector at Oswestry Our Lady Help of Christians 1865-1868; Curate at Stockport St Joseph's 1864-1865; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1871-1879; Died 22nd December 1881 at Ballinahown, Kilmallock C^o Limerick, and was buried there.

Sources: SDA, North Cheshire Herald

Charles Ignatius Langdon

Son of Joseph Langdon (a gamekeeper on the Mostyn Estate at Talacre, N Wales) and Harriet (née Manus); Born Jenkinstown, C^o Kilkenny, Ireland 6th October 1844; Educated at English College, Lisbon; Ordained 4th February 1874; Professor at English Coll. Lisbon 1874-1877; Linguist; Rector at Wrexham Cathedral Church 1878-1880; Rector at Wellington St Patrick's 1880-1882; Rector at Hyde St Paul's 1882-1888; Rector at Hooton St Mary of the Angels 1888-1902; Rector at Market Drayton SS Thomas of Aquinas & Stephen Harding 1902-1907; Appointed Canon 1903; Retired to Hope Villa, Church Stretton 1907; Died 12th December 1908; Buried at Pantasaph

Sources: Baptismal Certificate, CFA 1910 page 136, Miss Langdon, a relative.

Thomas Ratcliffe

Son of Charles and Eliza Ratcliffe (née Kavanah); Born Macclesfield 29th June 1852; Educated at English College Valladolid, and at Ushaw 1873-1876; Ordained by Bishop Brown at Birkenhead Our Lady's 9th July 1876; Curate at Shrewsbury Cathedral 1876-1877; Chaplain at Mawley Hall, Shropshire 1877-1881; Rector at Oswestry Our Lady Help of Christians 1881-1886; Rector at Dukinfield St Mary's 1886-1888; Rector at Hyde St Paul's 1888-1889; Rector at Stockport St Joseph's 1889-1891; Rector at Bangor Our Lady & St James 1891-1906; Rector at Llandudno Our Lady Star of the Sea 1906-1920; Appointed Provost of Menevia Diocese 1909; Died 21st May 1920

Sources: CWW 1919; Universe Supplement 1985; History of Our Lady's Bangor, by R Owen; Ushaw Diary

John Thompson

Son of John & Catherine Thompson (née Gaffney); Born Congleton 25th Nov. 1850; Educated Ushaw 1873-1877, where he did a shortened course. Ordained by Bishop Brown at Chester St Werburgh's 24th June 1877; Curate Stalybridge St Peter's 1877-1879; Curate at Birkenhead St Werburgh's 1879-1881; Curate at Birkenhead Our Lady's 1881; Rector at Latchford Our Lady's 1881-1889 (in 1887 there was concern about his health); Rector at Hyde St Paul's 1889-1896; Curate at Birkenhead St Werburgh's 1896-1904; Rector at Plowden St Walburga 1904-1907; Curate at Birkenhead Our Lady's 1908-1910; Retired to St Agnes, W Kirby 1910; Entered Alexian Brothers Nursing Home, Moston, Manchester 1927; Died 16th May 1929; Buried at Brooklands Cemetery, Sale

Sources: Ushaw Diary; Baptismal Certificate Congleton St Mary's; SDA

James Hennelly

Parent's names unknown; Born at Partry, Cong C^o Mayo, Ireland 17th March 1860. Family came to Saltney, Chester 1872; Educated at Cotton College, Douai, and Ushaw 1882-1886; Ordained by Bishop Knight at Chester St Werburgh's 8th August 1886; Curate at Stalybridge St Peter's 1886-1889; Curate at Stockport St Joseph's 1889-1890; Curate at Seacombe Our Lady Star of the Sea 1890-1891; Rector at Latchford Our Lady's 1891-1896; Rector at Hyde St Paul's 1896-1911; Appointed Canon 1910; Rector at Birkenhead St Werburgh's 1911-1934

Sources: Mgr M Curran; Ushaw Diary; SYB 1935 pp.128-129; SDA

Thomas Matthew Marrs

Son of James & Margaret Marrs (née Kelly); Born Seacombe 20th November 1873; Educated Liverpool St Francis Xavier, Douai, and Ushaw 1893-1898; Ordained by Bishop Allen at Shrewsbury Cathedral 6th March 1898; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1898-1906; Curate at Latchford Our Lady's 1906-1908; Rector at Latchford Our Lady's 1908-1911; Rector at Hyde St Paul's 1911-1931 (redesignated as Parish Priest in 1918 consequent on canonical changes); Appointed Canon 1927; Parish Priest at W Kirby St Agnes's 1931-1935; Died 29th September 1935; Buried Grange Cemetery, W Kirby

Sources Mgr M Curran; Ushaw Diary; Baptismal Certificate

Aloysius Joseph Wilson

Son of Edward and Emma Lucy Wilson (née Gandy); Born Leeds 14th April 1883; Educated at Cotton College, Douai, and English College Lisbon 1906-1910; Ordained by Bishop Singleton at Birkenhead Holy Name 19th March 1910; Curate at Birkenhead Our Lady's 1910-1912; Curate at Latchford Our Lady's 1912-1913; Curate at Birkenhead St Laurence's 1913-1916; Curate at Stockport Our Lady & the Apostles 1916-1920; Curate at Birkenhead St Joseph's 1920-1925; Parish Priest at Market Drayton SS Thomas Aquinas & Stephen Harding 1925-1931; Parish Priest at Hyde St Paul's 1931-1944; Died 5th May 1944; Buried Hyde Cemetery

Sources: Baptismal Certificate; Lisbon Register; SYB 1945 p.62

Henry Nixon

Son of William & Harriet Nixon (née Metcalfe); Born Oldham 29th January 1904. Convert from Salvation Army; Educated Douai and Oscott 1924-1930; Ordained by Bishop Singleton at Stockport Our Lady & the Apostles 22nd June 1930; Curate at Crewe Immaculate Conception 1930-1936; Curate at Shrewsbury Cathedral 1936-1940; Parish Priest at Lymm St Winefride's 1940-1944; Parish Priest at Hyde St Paul's 1944-1952; Parish Priest at Northwich St Wilfrid 1952-1954; Parish Priest at Seacombe Our Lady Star of the Sea & St Joseph 1954-1963; Appointed Honorary Canon 1961; Director of Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimages 1951-1963; Died 31st October 1963; Buried at Frankby

Sources: SDA; SYB 1964 pp.223-224; Oscott College Registers 1838-1988

Joseph Irish

Son of Joseph & Mary Jane Irish (née Gortland); Born Latchford 19th January 1906; Educated at Liverpool St Francis Xavier and Ushaw 1921-1932; Ordained by Bishop Moriarty at Latchford Our Lady's 24th July 1932; Curate at Chester St Werburgh's 1932-1934; Curate at Stockport Our Lady & the Apostles 1934-1935; Curate at Liscard St Alban's 1935-1940; Curate at Chester St Werburgh's 1940-1941; Chaplain to Forces 1941-1946; 1st Parish Priest at Alderley Edge St Pius X 1946-1948; Parish Priest Congleton St Mary's 1948-1952; Parish Priest at Hyde St Paul's 1952-1963; Died 6th September 1963; Buried at Warrington Cemetery

Sources: SYB 1964 pp.220-221; Ushaw Diary; SDA

James Francis Fitzgerald

Son of James & Helen Fitzgerald (née Towry); Born Birkenhead 16th February 1909; Educated at Birkenhead St Hugh's College and Lisbon English College; Ordained Lisbon 25th March 1939; Curate at Birkenhead St Joseph's 1939-1945;

Curate at Latchford Our Lady's 1945-1947; Curate at Stockport Our Lady's 1947-1949; Curate at Birkenhead Holy Cross 1949-1952; Parish Priest at Congleton St Mary's 1952-1963; Parish Priest Hyde St Paul's 1963-1973; Retired early to Cottingham in Hull 1973; Died 6th November 1977; Buried at Landican, Birkenhead

Sources: Lisbon Registers; SYB 1979 p.118; Baptismal Certificate; Canon E M Abbott

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Vincent Turnbull

Son of Charles and Millicent Turnbull (née Laurie); Born Timperlay 10th October 1928;

Ordained in Rome 12th July 1953; Educated at Ushaw and English Coll. Rome 1947-1954; Cambridge University 1954-1957; Professor at Ushaw Seminary 1972-1973; Deputy Head at Upholland Seminary 1972-1973; Parish Priest at Hyde St Paul's 1973-1982; Appointed Canon 1981; Parish Priest Chester St Werburgh's 1982-1992; Parish Priest and Mgr. Canon at Hoylake SS Catherine & Martin

Sources: SDA

John Leonard Vere Woods

Born at Penrith in Cumbria 20th June 1933; Educated at Adams Grammar School, Newport Shropshire, and at Ushaw 1950-1957; Converted from the Church of England as a youth; Ordained by Bishop Murphy at Shrewsbury Cathedral 21st July 1957; Curate at Altrincham St Vincent's 1957-1965; Curate at Wellington St Patrick's 1965-1970; Curate at Birkenhead Holy Cross 1970-1971; Parish Priest at Pensby Holy Family 1971-1982; Parish Priest at Hyde St Paul's 1982-1990; Parish Priest at Much Wenlock St Mary Magdalene 1990 - present

Sources: SDA

Charles Roderick Strange

Son of Charles Alfred and Honora Strange (née Murray); Born W Kirby 13th December 1954; Educated at Stonyhurst and English College in Rome 1963-1970; Ordained at Heswall by Bishop Grasar 21st December 1969; Oriel College, Oxford University 1970-1974; Curate at Wallasey English Martyrs 1974-1977; Assistant Chaplain then Chaplain to Oxford University from July 1977 to March 1989; Curate at New Ferry St John the Evangelist 1990-1990; Parish Priest at Hyde St Paul's 1990-1996; President of National Conference of Priests 1994, and Director of Diocesan Religious Education 1994; Parish Priest at Wallasey English Martyrs 1996-

Sources: SDA

Denis Maher

See frontispiece

(ii) **Assistant Priests**

Denis Maguire

Son of Brian & Rose Maguire (née Duffy); Born Dromard in C^o Longford, Ireland 10th January 1820; Educated Dublin All Hallows'; Ordained 26th June 1859; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1859-1860; Rector at Runcorn St Edward's 1860-1876; Rector at Welshpool St Winefride's 1876-1879; Rector at Shifnal St Mary's 1879-1883; Died 7th January 1883; Buried at Pantasaph Monastery
Source A H Matricula 386

William Stanton

Son of John & Mary Stanton (née Harding); Born Liverpool 21st February 1836; Educated at Ushaw 1849-1861; Ordained by Bishop Brown at Hyde St Paul's 4th August 1861; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1861-1863; Curate at Stockport SS Philip & James 1863-1865; Rector at Holyhead St Mary Help of Christians 1865-1868; Rector at Northwich St Wilfrid's 1868-1878; Rector at Liscard St Albans 1878-1887; Rector at New Brighton SS Peter & Paul's 1887-1906; Rector at Wallasey English Martyrs 1906-1908. He founded the New Brighton Mission in 1879, and Wallasey English Martyrs Mission in 1902, whilst Rector of Liscard and New Brighton respectively. Retired to 89 Rowson St, New Brighton in 1908; Died 10th October 1909; Buried at Rake Lane Cemetery, Wallasey
Sources: Abbott pp.106-109; Baptism and Death Certificates; CFA 1910 p.139; Ushaw Diary

Patrick Tracy See entry above

Bernard Thompson

Son of John & Catherine Thompson (née Gaffney); Born at Congleton 1st August 1853; Educated at Sedgley Park, Douai, and Ushaw 1876-1880 (shortened course at Ushaw); Ordained by Bishop Knight at Birkenhead St Laurence's 25th July 1880; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1880-1881; Curate at Wrexham Cathedral 1881-1883; Curate at Birkenhead St Werburgh's 1883-1887; Rector at Bollington St Gregory's 1887-1894; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1894-1895; Rector at Wellington St Patrick's 1895-1902; Rector at Neston St Winefride's 1902-1913; Rector at Sale St Joseph's 1913-1929; Died 16th September 1929; Buried at Brooklands Cemetery, Sale. He was a brother of John Thompson, Rector of Hyde St Paul's 1889-1896
Sources: SDA; Centenary of Sale St Joseph's 1966; Ushaw Diary

George Carton

Son of George & Mary Carton (née Mullin); Born at Cumber, C^o Derry Ireland 16th November 1856; Educated at Mountrath Monastery in C^o Laois Ireland, Dublin All Hallows, and Oscott Seminary 1869-1880; Ordained by Bishop Knight at Birkenhead St Laurence's 25th July 1880; Curate at Crewe Immaculate Conception 1880-1881; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1881-1883; Curate at Birkenhead St Werburgh's 1883-1884; Curate at Stockport SS Philip & James 1884-1885; Rector at Congleton St Mary's 1885-1887; Sick leave 1887-1889; Chaplain to Talacre Hall in N Wales 1889-1894; Chaplain to Birkenhead Holt Hill Convent 1894-1898;

Founded Birkenhead St Joseph's Mission 1898-1901; Rector at Macclesfield St Alban's 1901-1903; Rector at Wilmslow St Theresa's 1903-1909; Rector at Bollington St Gregory's 1909-1913; Rector at Hooton St Mary of the Angels 1913-1926; Died 25th December 1926; Buried at Hooton Cemetery

He had a remarkable facility in languages (French, Irish, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish), and he kept his own carriage and pair.

Sources: CD; CFA; A H Matricula 1416; Miss Daly of Bollington and Mgr M Curran; Oscottian Jubilee Issue 1888

Camille d'Hoogue

Parents name not known; Born in Belgium 1857; Educated at Oscott Seminary 1880-1882; Ordained at Oscott by Bishop Brown 11th June 1882; Curate at Birkenhead St Laurence's 1882-1883; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1883-1884; Curate at Macclesfield St Alban's 1884-1885; Chaplain to Mawley Hall in Shropshire 1885; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1886-1887; Rector at Congleton St Mary's 1888-1889

In 1889, Bishop Knight permitted him to offer his services out of England. No records of his whereabouts between 1889-1898. Died 12th August 1898; location of burial no known

Sources: SDA; Oscottian Jubilee Issue 1888

Denis Fitzgerald

Son of William & Mary Fisher (née Kelleher); Born in Fermoy, C^o Cork 7th March 1858; Educated at Dublin All Hallows and Ushaw Seminary 1878-1883; Ordained by Bishop Knight at Birkenhead St Laurence's 12th August 1883; Curate at Macclesfield St Alban's 1883-1884; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1884-1885; Chaplain to Mawley hall Shropshire 1885-1887

He moved to Newcastle-u-Lyne in 1887, and in 1888 to Radford, Finstone, Oxfordshire, but his whereabouts were not shown in the Catholic Directory after 1890

Sources: A H Matricula 1453; Ushaw Diary; CD

Edward Cronin

Son of Timothy and Mary Cronin (née Morton); Born in Raheen, Kanturk, C^o Cork 16th April 1869; Educated at Ushaw Seminary 1889-1895; Ordained by Bishop Carroll at Birkenhead St Laurence's 11th August 1895; Curate at Stockport St Joseph's 1895-1902; Curate at Hyde St Paul's January-May 1898; Curate at Chester St Werburgh's 1902-1904; Curate at Stockport St Joseph's 1904-1906; Rector at West Kirby St Agnes' 1908-1910; Died 5th May 1910; Buried Flaybrick Hill Cemetery, Birkenhead

Sources: SDA; Ushaw Diary

Thomas Matthew Marrs see entry above

William Fogarty

Parent's names not known; Born C^o Tipperary, Ireland 26th June 1878; Ordained 21st June 1903; Curate at Birmingham St Francis' 1903-1906; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1906-1916; Appointed Rector of Kilbehenny Parish, in the Archdiocese of Cashel, Ireland November 1906. No further details known

Source: SDA, NCH

James McNally

Son of Alfred & Matilda McNally (née Brown); Born in Hayrat St, Manchester 29th January 1889; Educated at Douai and English College in Rome 1910-1916.

Due to illness he had to return to England, where he completed his studies under Father Edmund O'Connor, Rector of Plowden St Walburgs

Ordained by Bishop Singleton at Altrincham St Vincent's 21st January 1917; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1917-1919; Curate at Birkenhead Our Lady's 1919-1923; Bishop's Secretary 1923-1933; Parish Priest at Birkenhead Holy Name 1923-1933; Parish Priest at Wallasey English Martyrs 1933-1941; Parish Priest at Liscard St Alban's 1941-1951; Appointed Canon 1950; Parish Priest at Birkenhead Holy Name 1951-1960; Died 9th January 1960; Buried at Landican Cemetery in Birkenhead

Sources: SDA

Thomas Vincent Corcoran

Son of Charles & Grace Corcoran (née Barker); Born Manchester 19th May 1888; Educated at Cotton College and Lisbon English College; Ordained by the Patriarch of Lisbon 18th March 1916; Curate at Seacombe Our Lady Star of the Sea 1916-1919; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1919-1928; Parish Priest at Wellington St Patrick's 1928-1934; Died 21st October 1934; Buried at Wellington Cemetery, Shropshire

Source: SDA

Percival Edward Rees

Son of George Percival and Frances Elizabeth Rees (née Emery); Born in St George's Oakengates in Shropshire 18th June 1903; His father was a convert, and his mother was descended from French emigres at the time of the Revolution; Educated at St John's Preparatory School in Alton, Cotton College, and Oscott Seminary; Ordained by Bishop Singleton at Wellington St Patrick's 3rd June 1928; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1928-1933; Curate at Dukinfield St Mary's 1933-1935; Curate at Shrewsbury Cathedral 1935-1936; Parish Priest at Lymm St Winefride's 1936-1939; Parish Priest at Moreton Sacred Heart 1939-1984; Appointed Canon 1953; Vicar-General 1960-1961 and 1964-1984; Protonotary Apostolic 1978-1989; Died 27th January 1989

Sources: Canon E M Abbott; SDA; SYB 1990 pp.102-104; SYB 1985 p.137; SYB 1979 pp.21-23

Percival Bailey

Son of Percy & Clarissa Bailey (née Lacey); Born Liscard 28th August 1910; Educated at Ushaw Seminary 1928-1933; Ordained by Bishop Moriarty 5th August 1933; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1933-1937; Curate at Sale St Joseph's 1937-1939; RAF Chaplain 1939-1966; Retired to 37 Wellesly Rd in Wallasey 1966-1986, then to 11 Jarrow Close in Oxtton Merseyside 1986 -

Sources: SDA

James Joseph Matthews

Son of James and Lily Matthews (née Waters); Born Birkenhead 12th December 1908; Educated Lisbon English College; Ordained Lisbon 6th April 1935; Curate at

Sale St Joseph's 1935-1937; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1937-1948; Parish Priest at Greasby Our Lady of Pity 1948-1951; Parish Priest at Sandbach St Winefride's 1951-1961; Parish Priest at Knutsford St Vincent de Paul's 1961-1968; Retired early due to ill-health to Maryvale, Taly Cafn, Colwyn Bay, and in 1978 to Maryvale, Llys Helig, Deganwy, Gwynedd; Died 27th June 1995 at Sisters of Mercy Home, Lansdowne Rd, Colwyn Bay; Buried Gt. Orme Cemetery in Llandudno
Sources: Lisbon Register, SYB 1996 p.111; Harris pp.54-55; SDA; Baptism Certificate

Thomas Osbyrne

Son of Charles and Ann Osbyrne (née Lang); Born Liverpool 27th November 1910; Educated at Liverpool's St Francis Xavier College and Ushaw Seminary 1925-1930; On Sick Leave 1930-1934, Ushaw Seminary 1934-1939; Ordained by Bishop Moriarty at Seacombe Our Lady Star of the Sea 25th June 1939; Curate New Ferry St John the Evangelist 1939-1944; Curate at Crewe Immaculate Conception 1944-1948; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1948-1952; Parish Priest at Bollington St Gregory's 1952-1963; Parish Priest at Hazel grove St Peter's 1963-1970, where he built a school without a grant, which had been refused by Cheshire County Education Committee on the excuse that no school was needed. History has proven that the Education authorities were wrong; Died 4th April 1970; Buried in Bollington Cemetery
Sources: SDA; SYB 1971 pp.219-221; OS; Ushaw Diary; Canon E M Abbott

John Hoskinson

Son of William and Mary Agnes Hoskinson (née Graham); Born at Birkenhead 16th September 1916; Educated at Ushaw Seminary 1930-1942; Ordained by Bishop Moriarty at Birkenhead St Werburgh's 21st June 1942; Curate at Liscard St Alban's 1942-1953; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1953-1956; Curate at Stockport Our Lady and the Apostles 1956-1957; 1st Parish Priest at Partington Our Lady of Lourdes 1957-1965; Parish Priest at Northwich Our Lady, then St Wilfrid's 1965-1982; Retired to 55 Laurence Deacon Court, Birkenhead 1982-1986, and then to Priests' House on Miles Lane, Greasby, Wirral 1986-1996; Died 19th December 1996
Sources: SDA

Francis William Whitehead

Son of William and Eleanor Whitehead (née Werde); Born Gateshead, C^o Durham 4th October 1927; Educated at Ushaw College & Seminary 1939-1952; Ordained by Bishop Murphy in Shrewsbury Cathedral 21st December 1952; Curate at Macclesfield St Alban's 1953-1958; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1958-1959; Curate at Wellington St Patrick's August-October 1959; Curate at Macclesfield St Alban's 1959-1960; Curate at Moreton Sacred Heart 1960; Laicized 1960; Died 23rd July 1978; Buried Urmston Cemetery. Married, and left 4 children
Sources: SDA; Ushaw Diary

Brendan Martin Huggard

Son of Martin and Julianne Huggard (née Doyle); Born Waterville, C^o Kerry, Ireland 18th April 1921; Educated at National School, Waterville; Mungret College, Clongowes Wood, St Brendan College, Killarney 1927-1944; All Hallows and Ushaw Seminary 1944-1949; Ordained by Bishop Murphy at Killarney Cathedral 10th July 1949; Curate at Birkenhead St Werburgh's 1949-1956; Curate at Moreton Sacred Heart 1956-1959; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1959-1960; Parish Priest at Shrewsbury St Winefride's 1960-1971; Parish Priest at Birkenhead St Laurence's 1971-1976; Died 28th August 1976; Buried at Waterville, Ireland
Sources: Canon E M Abbott; Ushaw Diary; Baptism Certificate

James Patrick Gerard Joseph Murphy

Son of Nicholas and Mary Murphy (née Smith); Born Birkenhead 20th September 1913; Educated at Ushaw Seminary 1929-1938, then left; He joined the Army 1942-1946. Accepted by the Menevia Diocese 1946, and returned to Ushaw 1946-1949; Ordained by Bishop Petit at Saltney St Anthony's 17th July 1949; Curate at Llandudno, Dagenham, Bangor, and Haverford West. Accused of being over-scrupulous, he transferred to Shrewsbury Diocese in 1955; Curate at Chester St Werburgh's 1955-1957; Curate at Birkenhead St Werburgh's 1957-1960; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1960-1963; Curate at Altrincham St Vincent's 1963-1965; Curate at Seacombe Our Lady Star of the Sea 1965-1966; Curate at Stockport St Joseph's 1966-1967; Parish Priest at Whaley Bridge Sacred Heart 1967-1982; Retired to 32 North rd, Birkenhead; Died 11th October 1987; Buried at Pantasaph
Sources: SDA; SYB 1989 p.106; Ushaw Diary; Baptism Certificate

Robert Abbott

Son of Ernest Albert and Hélène (née Morris); Born Sale 24th April 1924; Served Royal Signals 1942-1946; Educated at St Bede's College, Oscott, and Rome 1946-1953; Ordained at St John Lateran Basilica, Rome 19th December 1953; Curate at Weaverham St Bede's 1954-1958; Teaching in Africa 1958-1963; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1963-1965; Parish Priest at Offerton St Philip's 1969-1973; Kenya Mission School 1973-1976; Parish Priest at Whitchurch St George's 1976-1978; Parish Priest at Macclesfield St Alban's 1978 - 1986; Parish Priest at Cheadle Hulme St Ann's 1986-present Sources: SDA

Kevin Moorhouse

Son of Arthur and Bridget Moorhouse (née Honan); Born Stockport 1931; Educated at Our Lady & the Apostles, Heaton Mersey Convent, St Bede's College, Ushaw College, 1951-1956; Ordained by Bishop Murphy 15th July 1956; Curate at Altrincham St Vincent's 1956-1957; Curate at Nantwich St Wilfrid's 1957-1965; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1965-1971; Parish Priest at Alsager St Gabriel's 1971-1980; Parish Priest at Stalybridge St Peter's 1980-; Parish Priest at Wilmslow St Teresa's - present
Sources: SDA

Patrick English

Son of Patrick & Bridget English (née Hayes); Born at Old Palace, Limerick, Ireland 5th December 1946; Educated Thurles Seminary 1965-1971; Ordained at Thurles Cathedral by Bishop Grasar; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1971-1976; Curate at Moreton Sacred Heart 1976-1981; Curate at Runcorn St Edward's 1981-1982; Sick

Leave 1982-1985; Curate at Macclesfield St Alban's 1985-1993; Parish Priest at Ellesmere St Michael's 1993-Present
Sources: SDA

Peter Cryan

Son of Arthur John and Aileen Gabrielle Clare Cryan (née Gill); Born Stockton Heath 5th July 1943; Educated at Leeds University 1961-1964, Franciscan Capuchins at Pantasaph 1964-1971, Oscott College 1974-1976; Ordained by Bishop Grasar at Stockton Heath 17th July 1976; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1976-1982; Curate at Blacon St Theresa's 1982-1984; Kenya Missions 1984-1989; Curate at Wythenshawe St Anthony's 1989-1991; Parish Priest at Whitchurch St George's 1991-1994; Parish Priest at Wythenshawe St John's 1994-1995; Parish Priest at Harlescott Our Lady of Pity 1995-Present
Sources: SDA

Patrick Joseph O'Brien Jnr.

Son of Richard & Irene O'Brien (née Hennessy); Born at Leasowe, Wallasey 27th August 1951; Educated at Osterley 1968-1970, Oscott Seminary 1970-1976; Ordained by Bishop Grasar at Leasowe Our Lady of Lourdes 27th June 1976; Curate at Hazel Grove St Peter's 1976-1980; Curate at New Brighton SS Peter & Paul's 1980-1983; Curate at New Ferry St John the Evangelist's 1983-1985; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1985-1989; Parish Priest at Birkenhead St Paul's 1989-1992; Sick Leave 1992-1996; Parish Priest at Stalybridge St Raphael's 1996-Present
Sources: SDA

Paul O'Grady

Son of (John Joseph and Mareen Kathleen O'Grady (nee O'Sullivan); Born at Cobh in Ireland 1954; Educated at Oscott Seminary 1972-1977; Ordained by Bishop Gray at Sale 10th December 1983; Hospital Chaplain and Relief Priest 1983-1993; Curate at Hyde St Paul's 1993-1996; Parish Priest at Runcorn Holy Spirit 1996-Present
Sources: SDA

IIIb) PRIESTS BORN IN HYDE, BUT NEVER SERVED LOCALLY

John H Jennings

Son of John & Bridget Jennings (née Mannion); Born Hyde 6th June 1865; Educated at Oscott College 1882-1890; Ordained by Bishop Knight 21st December 1890; Curate at Birkenhead Our Lady 1891-1892; Curate at Crewe Immaculate Conception 1892-1895; Joined Menevia Diocese; Rector at Flint St Mary's 1895-1920; Appointed Canon 1918; Died 14th February 1927

Sources: Oscott College 1838-1988 ed. J Champ; Baptism Certificate

John Stanislaus Wilkinson

Son of Robert and Helene Wilkinson (née Morris); Born Hyde 6th January 1894; Educated Cotton College and Ushaw Seminary 1914-1920; Ordained by Bishop Singleton at Stockport St Joseph's 25th July 1920; Curate at New Brighton SS Peter & Paul's 1920-1923; Curate at Birkenhead St Laurence's 1923-1931; Parish Priest at Middlewich St Mary's 1931-1961; Retired to Colsmere, Peel Hall Lane, Ashton, Chester. Came out of retirement 1962 to become Parish Priest at Church Stretton St Milburga's 1962-1968; Retired again, and went into Our Lady of the Vale Nursing Home, Bowden Vale, Altrincham; Died 19th January 1977; Buried at Middlewich Cemetery. His initiative whilst at Ushaw was to show that the students were receiving less than the rationing regulations allowed, and in getting this rectified.

Sources: SDA; SYB 1978 p.116; Ushaw Diary

James Gerard Devlin

Son of Edward and Elizabeth Devlin (née Roddy); Born Hyde 16th December 1909; Educated Oscott College 1934-1940; Ordained by Bishop Moriarty at Hyde St Paul's 16th June 1940; Curate at New Ferry St John the Evangelist's 1940-1947; Curate at Birkenhead St Laurence's 1947-1960, and ran the Parish when Canon Griffin became bed-ridden; Parish Priest at Heswall Our Lady & St John's 1960-1973; where he acquired land to build Heswall Primary School in Ladymount. He died shortly after conducting a funeral 11th December 1973; Buried at Neston Cemetery

Sources: Abbott p.41; SYB 1975 p.139; Heswall Parish History p.59; Oscott College 1838-1988 ed. J Champ CDA

Frederick Robinson

Son of Frederick & Monica Mary Robinson (née Lewis); Born Hyde 19th June 1931; Educated at Xaverian College 1942-1948, Ushaw College 1948-1951, Lisbon English College 1951-1957; Ordained by Archbishop Cento in Lisbon 1957; Curate at Shrewsbury Cathedral 1957-1958; Curate at Wythenshawe St Peter's 1958-1963; Curate at Macclesfield St Alban's 1963-1966; Rwandan African Missions 1966-1972; Parish Priest at Chester St Theresa's 1972-1975; Parish Priest at Tarporley St Thomas à Beckett's 1975-1980; Parish Priest at Birkenhead Holy Cross 1980-1986; Parish Priest at Stalybridge St Raphael 1986-1996; Parish Priest at Macclesfield St Edward the Confessor's 1996-Present

Sources: SDA

Kevin Prince

Son of John and Hannah Prince (née O’Leary); Born Hyde 9th May 1955; Educated at Dublin All Hallows Seminary 1974-1979; Ordained by Bishop Gray at All Hallows 16th June 1979; Curate at Runcorn St Edward’s 1979-1983; Army Chaplain 1983-Present

Sources: SDA

Barry Hodgin

Parent’s name not known; Born Hyde 1951; Converted from Church of England; Educated at Bishop Eaton Presentation College; Sent on Mission to South Africa, he left the priesthood, married, and became an Anglican Minister under Archbishop Tutu. No further details known

Source: Author

Philip Atkinson

Son of Derek and Jane Atkinson (née Oliver); Born Hyde 20th January 1963; Educated at All Saints High School, Dukinfield, Ushaw Seminary, Durham University; Ordained by Bishop Gray at Hyde St Paul’s 26th June 1993; Curate at Hazel Grove St Peter’s 1993-1995; Curate at Latchford St Augustine & English Martyrs 1995-Present

Sources: SDA

APPENDIX V : TEACHERS WHO HAVE SERVED AT ST PAUL'S SCHOOL [trained or certificated only]

Lawrence Rooney	1855 - 1857	Kate Quinn	1897 - 1932
Helen Murphy	1857 - 1869	Mary Wroe	1897 - 1898
Anthony Gillespie	1860 - 1863	Wm Concannon	1898 - 1900
Sarah Wilson	1862 - 1872	Bridget Doyle	
Michael McGovern	1863 - 1865	(Mrs Molloy)	1898 - 1904
Margaret Wilcock	1867 - 1868	Mary Davitt	1898 - 1909
Elizabeth Christian	1871 - 1872	Maria Murphy	1898 - 1904
Michael Connor	1871 - 1872	Agnes Heath	
Julie Davies		(Mrs Shakeshaft)	1899 - 1900
(Mrs O'Shaughnessy)	1872 - 1883	Elizabeth McQuoin	1900 - 1901
Margaret McBrearty	1872 - 1885	Mary Day	1900 - 1907
Teresa Ann Kirk	1872 - 1874	Gertrude Reynolds	1900 - 1946
Margaret Grimshaw	1874(4 months)	Clare Newton	1902 - 1908
Ellen McCormick	1875(4 months)	Sarah Whitehouse	1902 - 1908
Mary McCormick	1875(4 months)	Norah Mahoney	1903 - 1909
Frances Thomson	1875 - 1876	- o -	1913 - 1914
William O'Connor	1875 - 1877	Joanne Crotty	1904 - 1933
Mary Emma Power	1877 - 1891	Mary Agnes Wilkinson	
Peter Cleary	1877 - 1887	(Mrs Morissey)	1905 - 1922
Mary Frances Ridd	1881 - 1883	Louis Vickers	1907 - 1913
John Hayes	1882 - 1883	Alice Wilkinson	1911 - 1919
Elizabeth Shea	1884 - 1885	(Mrs Wright)	1921 - 1922
Emily Shields	1886 - 1888	Thomas J Verley	1914 - 1919
Harriet Blackburn	1886 - 1888	Lucy McGroarty	1914 - 1917
Peter Cottrell	1887 - 1889	Mary Ryan	1917 - 1921
Robert Wilkinson	1887 - 1897	Kathleen Feeney	1919 - 1921
-o-	1900 - 1922	John J Kinsella	1919 - 1950
Kate Bergin	1888 - 1889	M Keeley	1923(6 months)
Elizabeth Walker	1888 - 1889	Mary Daley	1923 - 1924
Alice Purcell	1889 - 1890	Ada Wright	1923 - 1924
Louise Bolger	1889 - 1891	Miss Bryan	1923 - 1925
Margaret Monan	1890 - 1895	Muriel Daniels	1924 - 1946
Ellen O'Hanlon	1890 - 1896	Frances Molloy	1924 - 1964
Margaret O'Hanlon	1890 - 1892	Ellen Duffy	1925 - 1936
Eliz. Fitzpatrick	1891 - 1893	Mary Agnes Molloy	1925 - 1966
Elizabeth McCann		Miss Ellis	1930 - 1967
(Mrs Haase)	1893 - 1896	Stephen J Grundy	1936 - 1937
Isobel Body	1896 - 1935	William J Robson	1937 - 1948
Sarah McLean	1897(6 months)	- o -	1951 - 1970
Janet Mellor	1897 - 1899	Mrs Isobel Welsh	1941 - 1974

Mrs E McMahon	1946 - 1947		
M F Lynch		Mary Darling	
(Mrs Scott)	1947 - 1948	(Mrs Travis)	1967 - 1973
M M Judson		Mr Sudlow	1968- 1969
(Mrs Regan)	1948 - 1950	Mrs Barton	1970 - 1979
J Ronald Regan	1948 - 1950	James Travis	1970 - 1990
Miss Hargreaves	1948 - 1949	Mrs Ilett	1970 - 1981
(Mrs Bailey)	1962 - 1964	Kieran Battle	1970 - present
Thomas Dillon	1948 - 1952	Mrs M Loots	1971 - 1989
Sheila Warden	1948 - 1949	Anne McLeish	1972 - present
(Mrs Cainan)	1958 - 1967	Nora McGrath	1974 - 1978
Mrs M Frost	1949 - 1954	C Medina	
Miss P Pendleton	1950(1 year)	(Mrs Thomson)	1976 - 1979
Miss H F Clarke		Jacinta Lancashire	
(Mrs Chapman)	1950 - 1951	(Mrs Farrell)	1976 - present
C A Chapman	1950 - 1954	Miss D Kilmartin	1980 - 1981
Miss Owens	1951 - 1952	Miss Brzyski	1980 - 1987
Miss Dilger	1951 - 1952	Mrs Marshall	1980 - 1996
J B Duckett	1952 - 1963	Anne O'Neil	1980 - 1996
William Shaw	1952 - 1979	Joan Ridgway	1982 - present
Miss M Ellard	1952(6 months)	Mrs Smith	1985 - 1989
Miss Lewis		Mrs J Rathburn	1986 - 1987
(Mrs Barber)	1953 - 1979	Mrs Stoddard	1986 - present
C H R Pell	1954 - 1955	Marion Chester	1986 - present
Susan Hughes	1955 - 1957	Mrs S Basterfield	1987 - 1988
Brian Kinsella	1955 - 1962	Mrs S Morris	1988 - 1989
Mrs Thornton	1958 - 1963	Jacqueline Yates	
Miss M Bennett	1961 - 1964	(Mrs Walker)	1988 - present
Miss Lord	1963 - 1968	Mrs Allen	1990 - present
Rosaleen Trayner		Kevin Toms	1991 - present
(Mrs Raffinon)	1964 - 1970	Kieran McDermott	1996 - present
Margaret Renwick			
(Mrs Fewster)	1964 - 1975		
Mrs Wake	1966 - 1967		

APPENDIX VI : PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE BEEN CATHOLIC MAYORS OF HYDE OR TAMESIDE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH

<u>HYDE BOROUGH COUNCIL</u>	<u>TAMESIDE</u>	<u>METRO</u>
<u>COUNCIL</u>		
Luke Kenny	1908 - 1909	Joseph Fitzpatrick
William J Pope	1911 - 1912	1987 - 1988
Herbert J Leech	1961 - 1962	
Edward F Myles	1963 - 1964	
William Cullen	1964 - 1965	

BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF CATHOLIC MAYORS OF HYDE BOROUGH OR TAMESIDE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH

HYDE BOROUGH

Luke Kenny JP (1855 - 1928)

Born: Glynsk, Toberoe in C^o. Galway, Ireland

Education National School, Toberoe

Employment

1873 Came to Hyde, and joined the Royal Liver Friendly Society. Subsequently became Manager.

Politics

1892 Joined the Independent Labour Party, and stood as its candidate for Godley Ward; lost to William Higginbottom (Conservative) by 9 votes

1893 Stood as Trades Council candidate for Godley Ward; won the seat

1899 Lost his seat for Godley Ward whilst standing as a Liberal

1900 Gained the seat for Werneth Ward as a Liberal

1903 Elected for the Liberals in Newton Ward

1904 Appointed an Alderman

1908/9 Elected 1st Catholic Mayor of Hyde

1910 Rumoured to be the parliamentary candidate for North Galway, but nothing further was heard about it. He lost his seat for Newton in this year

1913 Re-elected as Liberal candidate, and as an Alderman, until 1923

1917 Rejoined the Labour Party

1923 Retired on grounds of ill-health

Died : Died at his home on 10th November 1928

Personal Warm-hearted and courteous. Popular and able local administrator. He took a leading part in securing a borough Police Force for Hyde, and was appointed one of its first magistrates

Source NCH

William J Pope JP (1862 - 1945)

Born Born at Barton near Preston in 1862

Education Elementary School

Employment

Became a mill-worker and an active trades unionist

1898 Came to Hyde as Secretary of Hyde and District Weavers' Society.

Politics

1903-1918 Councillor for Godley Ward as the Trades Council representative

1908 Jointly led the 13-week Cotton Strike by the Hyde weavers, in protest at the introduction of the American Northrop loom, which required less manpower to operate them than hitherto because operatives could now work 24 machines instead of 20. The weavers gained a 7½% wage increase

1909 Elected an Alderman

1909-1919 Overseer of the Poor for Hyde, and a Magistrate

1911-1912 2nd Catholic Mayor of Hyde

1918 Retired as Councillor for Godley

Died Died in 1945

Personal Maintained a good relationship with employers and his union members. He was distinguished by his able chairmanship of the Market and Baths Committee. He was a magistrate for many years.

Source William Cullen JP

Herbert Joseph Leech JP (1908-1980)

Born Hyde 1908

Education 1912-1922 at George Street and Water Street Elementary Council Schools in Hyde

Employment

1922 Began work at Ashton Bros. Ltd mill as a textile operative, ending as a loom Overlooker until his retirement in 1972 at Wharf Shed

Politics

1935 Joined Hyde Labour Party

1950 Appointed Sub-Agent, and then as Agent for the Labour Party

1954 Elected as Labour Councillor for Newton Ward, and retained his seat until he retired

1956 Chairman of Council's Housing Committee until 1959
1961 Elected as 61st Mayor of Hyde and 3rd Catholic Mayor
1964 Elected as Alderman
Died Died in 1980. Cremated at Dukinfield Crematorium
Personal He was a modest and sincere man, well balanced and steeped in the life and day-today interests of Hyde Borough and its people. He was a very hard worker on Council Matters
Source William Cullen JP

Edward Francis Myles (1913- not known)

Born London 1913
Education 1917-1927 at St Francis Roman Catholic School, London, until 10 years old. After the family had moved to Hyde, at Hyde St Paul's Roman Catholic School
Employment
1927 Worked initially in the Mill, but from the beginning of the
1939-1945 War with the Transport Commission of the Ministry of Food. Subsequently he set up as a wholesale and retail Fishmonger in Clarendon Place, Hyde

Politics

1954 Joined the Hyde Labour Party
1955 Elected as Labour Councillor for Newton Ward, and retained his seat until 1965
1957 Deputy Chairman of the Housing Committee
1959 Appointed Chairman of the Housing Committee. He was responsible for a major reorganization of the Housing Department, and introduced the 'Houses for Sale' scheme on the Council's Wych Estate
1963 Elected as 63rd Mayor of Hyde and 4th Catholic Mayor
1966 Expelled from the Labour Party for allegedly supporting an Independent in the Council elections. Soon afterwards he left the town to make a new home in Poole, Dorset

Died Year of death unknown

Personal During his service on the Council, Edward Myles was a doughty fighter on behalf of Catholic Education for Primary and Secondary pupils. He was an active member of the Knights of St Columba organisation in Ashton, and of the Workers Educational Association in the district

Source NCH

William Cullen JP (1920-)

Born Hyde 1920
Education 1923-1937 Leigh Street Council School. Then London College of Music. Qualified Diploma of Associateship in Music

Employment

1937-1982 Education Liaison Officer at Ogee Ltd and Boots Chemist . For a period he was also Sales Representative. Latterly, he was self-employed

Politics

1953 Joined Hyde Labour Party

1955 Elected as Labour Councillor for Werneth Ward, and retained his seat until his retirement

1964 Elected 64th Mayor of Hyde and 5th Catholic Mayor. He has been deeply involved in education, and music in particular, in Hyde. Chairman of Hyde Libraries Committee for six years

Personal Governor of various Hyde schools, including the chairmanship of his old school. President and Chairman of Hyde Musical Society; and responsible for Hyde Music Week since its inception. He is still active in the work of the Tameside Heritage, and edits the 'Living Memories of Hyde'

Source William Cullen JP

TAMESIDE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH

Joseph Fitzpatrick (1921-)

Born Dublin, Ireland 29th April 1921

Education National School and Christian Brothers, James Street, Dublin

Employment

1948-1981 Process worker at ICI Newton Hyde. Shop Steward 27 years; Chairman of Works Committee 3 years

Politics

1966 Joined Labour Party in Hyde

1970 Elected as Labour Councillor for Newton Ward

1987 Elected Mayor of Tameside Metropolitan Borough and 1st Catholic Mayor of Tameside

Personal Governor of St Paul's RC School and Greenfield Street Council School, Hyde. He has taken a real interest in housing problems of the disadvantaged, and in the conditions of the Residential Homes in the Tameside area. Chairman of Flowery Field Primary School. His son, James, is also a Councillor on Tameside MB Council.

Source J Fitzpatrick

APPENDIX VII : SOME PARISH EVENTS

1. 1st SEPTEMBER 1858

Concert in the School:

- ◇ Direction: under Father J Hill in the school
- ◇ Vocalists: Mr Edward Page, Mrs Edward Page, Miss Amelia Bellott

2. 5th OCTOBER 1872

Amateur Dramatic Performance of 'William Tell' in the School:

- ◇ Cast: D. Daniels, J Cunningham, H Georgeson, S Georgeson, J A Miller,
J Welsh, P J McGrath, J Brady, W Delaney, James Hart, J. Howell,
M Rooney, T Webster

3. 22nd DECEMBER 1883

Presentation (Religious Examination) to Scholars

- ◇ Presenter: Very Rev. Canon Clegg, Ecclesiastical Inspector for Shrewsbury Diocese
- ◇ Medallions: Frederick Molloy, James Moores, J T Killalee, F Connolly
C Brooks
- ◇ Certificates: W Riley, F Vickers, T Mitchell, M Blythe, P Riley, M Nolan
C E Ross, F Grimes, F Caveney

4. 17th MARCH 1888

Bazaar for the New Chancel Fund

- ◇ Secretary: Miss M Shufflebottom
- ◇ Stall 1: Misses Jennings, McQuillan, M Cooke; Mrs Brady
- ◇ Stall 2: Mrs Giblin, Mrs Farrell, Misses Hughes, S Hart, J Markland, A Brooks
- ◇ Stall 3: Mr J Hart, Mr H Long, Mr Riley, Mr McDermott
- ◇ Refreshments: Mesdames Riley, Carroll, Hill, Doogan

5. 16th JUNE 1888

Mission Service

- ◇ Chaplain: Father Willebrord OFM of Gorton - Mozart's 7th Mass
- ◇ Singing Class: Directed by G J Robinson, Tutor
- ◇ Organist: W H Vickers
- ◇ Instrumental: Violins - Noah Thornley, Aaron Bradbury, Stephen Taylor
Viola - John Barber
Bass - John Vickers
D.Bass - J Brierley
Flute - Robt Hannibal
- ◇ Singers: Miss M Shufflebottom, Miss S A Hart, Mr A Vickers,
Mr J Murphy, Mr James Hart, Master John Clayton

6. 16th APRIL 1898

Bazaar for School Repairs

- ◇ *Christian Mothers Stall*: Mesdames Molloy (president), P Hill, Smith, O'Connor, Farrell, J Hughes, Flanagan
- ◇ *COM Stall*: Misses M F Hart, E Hart, E Devlin, M Mannion, M Dobbins, T Dobbins, T Nolan, L Toole, L Bunting, M F Hughes, A Morrissey, M A Cain, Cooke, Smith
- ◇ *Mrs Ashton's Stall*: Mrs Ashton, Miss I Body, Miss Mellor
- ◇ *YMS Stall*: Messrs John Vickers, G Smith, J Gill, W Hughes, Jas Vickers, M Nolan, W Walsh, E Brady
- ◇ *Refreshments Stall*: Mesdames L Kenny, Burke, J Vickers, Hughes, Ogden; Misses Hill, L Roddy, M Cleary, N Morrissey, A Devlin, K Duffy, M E McDermott
Messrs F Molloy, T Molloy, C Brooks, B Gillon
- ◇ *Flowers Stall*: Misses A Reynolds, L Reynolds, H O'Connor, L Hart, A Keating

7. 27th APRIL 1901

St Paul's Cricket Club V Trinity Mutual Cricket Club

- ◇ Score: St Paul's 27 runs Trinity Mutual 82 runs
- ◇ Team: R Hill (captain), L Morrissey, Smith, J Elliott, E Hill, P Elliott, J Stroud, B Hill, N Renwick, J McGee, J Molloy

8. 25th OCTOBER 1913

St Paul's Old Boys' Association: 3rd Annual Meeting & Smoking Concert

- ◇ President: J Hart
- ◇ Quartet: G W Burgess, H R Burgess, W Buttery, O Hadley
- ◇ Solo Vocals: J W Vickers, J Brady, T Molloy, M Nolan
- ◇ Violin: J Clayton
- ◇ Piano: F Burgess

9. 21st MAY 1923

Presentation in the School: to Reverend Father T M Marris on His Silver Jubilee

- ◇ Presiding: The Bishop of Shrewsbury, Rt Rev Hugh Singleton
- ◇ Chairman: William J Pope
- ◇ Vocalists: Misses A Kenny, M Caveney, C Toughey,
Messrs J Vickers, T Lomax, J Clayton
- ◇ Accompanied: by St Paul's Orchestra, who chose the Selections

10 11th APRIL 1933

An Evening Entertainment Presented by the Christian Mothers Soc. in the School

- ◇ Cast of Sketch: 'The Owd' Pawnbroker'
Mesdames: H Cooper, T Hargreaves, E Bowker, P Kinsella,
S Seabome, T Brady, J Morris, C Henshaw, G Lancashire
- ◇ Cast of: 'The Black & White Minstrel Show'
As for the sketch, plus Mesdames: J Cooke, C Blanchard,

J Johnson, T Lindop, K Hurst, J Ratigan, A Eyre, J Cooper,
R Ellor, K Ward, A Stagg, A Johnson

◇ Pianist: F King

11. 30th OCTOBER 1942

Football Match : Glossop Amateurs V St Paul's Football Club, at North Road

◇ Score: Glossop 9 St Paul's 2

◇ Team: Messrs: Knight, Gregory, Smith, Delaney, Knowles, Kemp,
Broadhurst, Fotheringham, Devaney, Berry, Minster

12. 15th MAY 1953

First Holy Communions on Ascension Day

◇ Itinerary: Mass and Holy Communion, followed by breakfast for all
communicants

◇ Boys: P Robinson, E Deary, C Pluck, J Mullineux, T O'Brien,
G Rowbottom, P Oldham, P Gilmore, M Armitage, P Forde,
P Bunting, A Grimshaw, A Allman, H McGrory, P Brookes,
S Holt, M O'Gillivan

◇ Girls D Gately, C Kirby, M Bone, J Jenks, M McGrory,
K Shufflebottom, P Renwick, P Parker, K Wilkinson, P Redfern,
E Birch

13. 17th SEPTEMBER 1954

Shrewsbury Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes

Travellers:

◇ Priests: Fathers Irish, Hoskinson, Nixon

◇ Parishioners: N Blake, V Smith, A Vickers, R Ellor, D Dearing, K Lindop,
M Martin, M Shufflebottom, L McGowan, M Magee, L Magee,
M Vickers, Mary Vickers, Mr & Mrs J Ratigan, Chas Molloy,
Francis Enright

14. 20th JANUARY 1956

Pantomime: 'Alice in Wonderland' in the School

◇ Players: St Paul's Juveniles

◇ Producer: K M Ross

◇ Story-Teller: Eileen Mullings

◇ Alice: Eileen Mackie

◇ Mother: Ann Ryan

◇ Cast: Misses: K Shufflebottom, B Moss, C Hollinshead, A Slate,
A Matthews

◇ Stage Staff: R Matthews, V Everall, W J Robson, J Kilgannon, T Moss

15. 16th NOVEMBER 1973

A Presentation of 'Jane Eyre' by St Paul's Players, at the Festival Theatre

- ◇ Producer: Kathleen Cooke
- ◇ Players: Pauline Renwick, K Howarth, Mary Taylor, Margaret Fewster, Bernard Nagle, Moya Nagle, May Gorman, Mary Ilett, Joan Cooper, Paul Wooliscroft, Ronald Sugden, A Gaskell, Walter Renwick

16. 21st JUNE 1993

Ordination of Father Philip Atkinson in St Paul's Church

After the ordination ceremony, a splendid buffet was laid on in the school, which was attended by Bishop Gray, Canon Turnbull, Father Cryan, and other priests who had been associated with the parish, as well as the Atkinson family and friends, and about 200 others. All the meats were kindly supplied by Mrs S Daly of Gossop, and the rest of the food was freely given by various ladies of the parish, principally Mesdames: M Ramsbottom; M Hudson; A Edwards; J Barnes; M Carroll; M Marshall; M Ball; W Mellor; M Farrell; plus others not identified. The fine meal was washed down with coffee, tea, fruit juices, and an alcoholic 'punch' which was highly popular, particularly with one senior clergyman!.

APPENDIX VIII



PHOTOGRAPHS

Priests of St Paul's

Parish Groups

St Paul's Church

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