

CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN KINGSTON UPON THAMES, 1850-1856.

David A. Kennedy, PhD

28 June 2018

ABSTRACT

The first mission in Kingston upon Thames, mentioned in the *Catholic Directory*, was St. Raphael's Church, in Surbiton. Built by Alexander Raphael [see www.kingstonhistoryresearch.co.uk], this opened on 1 September 1850 and flourishes today as a Catholic parish. A second Kingston mission, with a chapel and a school, was that of St. Mary and St. Patrick. The *Directory* recorded that it opened on 10 April 1853 and closed between 1855-1856. The *Religious Census* of 1851 recorded that the parish priest and chaplain of St. Raphael's, then owned by Edward Raphael, the nephew of Alexander Raphael, was Fr. Jeremiah Donovan and it appeared that the church was open only on Sunday morning. An appeal for funds to support SS. Mary & Patrick indicated Diocesan concerns that the Catholic residents of Kingston were "dependent for their spiritual requirements on the pleasure of a private gentleman" and that the children were denied moral training because the schools provided by Alexander Raphael were not open. This evidenced the need for a second mission in Kingston. The *Directory* recorded that throughout its existence the priest at SS. Mary & Patrick was Fr. Henry Clark. He was a very active and dedicated man. The *Directory* recorded also that in 1855 the priest at St. Raphael's was Fr. James Doyle. Both served as military chaplains in the Crimean War and both suffered poor health as a consequence. Shortly after he returned to Kingston, Fr. Doyle died of a heart attack, possibly on church premises, on 29 July 1855. A report of his death in the *Surrey Comet*, a local newspaper, said that his "life was a constant practical exemplification of real Christian virtue". Martin Corkery [1995] concluded that SS. Mary & Patrick's mission closed because funding for its support was not forthcoming. However, a hypothesis emerged that the mission closed because, before or shortly after Fr. Clark went to the Crimea, an accord was reached between the Diocese of Southwark and Edward Raphael, the owner of St. Raphael's Church and its associated schools, whereby they could be opened to provide all the services necessary for the

expanding Catholic population of Kingston, with Fr. John Ainsworth as the priest. More research is needed to explore this hypothesis.

INTRODUCTION

On 29 September 1850, Pope Pius IX's Apostolic Letter, *Universalis Ecclesiae*, re-established the Catholic Hierarchy in England.¹ While this enabled the renewal of Roman Catholic dioceses in England and Wales, according to Michael Gandy [1993], a parish system was not set up until the end of the First World War. Previously, Catholic places of public worship were missions based on a priest who served anyone he could reach, perhaps over a wide area.² The 1855 *Catholic Directory* recorded that Kingston upon Thames, then in the County of Surrey, was in the Diocese of Southwark.³

John Martin Corkery [1995], stated that the first mention of a church or chapel in Kingston in the *Catholic Directory* was the mission of St. Raphael's Church in Surbiton. He gave a brief account of a second mission in Kingston, that of St. Mary and St. Patrick [SS. Mary & Patrick].⁴ Shaan Butters, who cited Gandy [1993] as her source, also gave a brief account of this mission.⁵ The paper takes a closer look at these early missions in Kingston.

MISSION OF ST. RAPHAEL

The 1851 Religious Census for Surrey recorded that the Church of St. Raphael the Archangel was the property of Edward Raphael Esquire and was opened to the public on "service days". Construction of the church started in 1848 and it opened on 1 September 1850. The church had sittings for 214 persons, all free, and there was standing room for about 100 persons. There was a tribune, or private area, for the owner's use. At the Census on Sunday, 30 March 1851, the priest and chaplain was Fr. Jeremiah Donovan. On Census morning, the general congregation totalled 106. There was no service on the afternoon and evening of the Census day.⁶ Perhaps in 1851, St. Raphael's Church, the centre of a flourishing Catholic parish today, was available for public worship only on Sunday mornings.⁷

MISSION OF SS. MARY & PATRICK

The Catholic Directory of 1855 stated that this mission opened on 10 April 1853. It was in Clarence Street, "near the Bridge" [i.e., near the bridge over the River Thames] according to *The Directory*, and on the "corner of Clarence

Street” according to *Mason’s Court Guide* of 1853.⁸ Throughout its short existence, the priest was the Rev. Fr. Henry Clark according to both sources.

The *Directory* of 1854 recorded that on Sunday there was a Mass at 9 am, High Mass at 11 am and at 7 pm there were evening devotions with Rosary, a sermon and Benediction. On weekdays, there was a Mass at 7 am. At 6.30 pm on Thursday evenings the Rosary was said, with Benediction. Confessions were heard from 6-10 pm on Saturdays and from 8-9 am on Sundays. On Mondays the Mass was offered for benefactors of the mission. There was a school with forty children whom Fr. Clark instructed. The *Directory* of 1855 provided further evidence that throughout its short life, as recognised by Corkery [1995], the mission of SS. Mary & Patrick provided a full range of services for the spiritual nourishment of the local Catholic population. The signs were that its development was due mainly to Fr. Clark’s efforts. He must have been a very active, dedicated servant of God.

THE APPEAL

The Catholic Directory of 1855 carried an appeal for support of the mission of SS. Mary & Patrick. An edited transcript of this is appended.

The first paragraph clearly referred to St. Raphael’s Church and its owner Edward Raphael. The sentence, “*Catholic residents, the poor of the workhouse, the soldiers of the neighbouring barracks...on the pleasure of private gentleman...the children destitute of moral training*” suggested concerns that before the mission of SS. Mary & Patrick opened Edward Raphael could have withdrawn at any time the privilege of the use of his private church and the associated schools that were part of Alexander Raphael’s original foundation.⁹ Also it appeared that there were concerns that missionary work in the town was at risk. As the appeal had the formal approbation of Thomas Grant, the Bishop of Southwark, these concerns must have been shared by him.

There was an incomplete letter in the archives of St. Raphael’s Church from Fr. Clark to Bishop Grant. While it was not dated, it sought the approval of the Bishop for the appeal and therefore it must have been sent before the publication of the *Catholic Directory* of 1855. It talked of plans for a new chapel that would be of “*sufficient distance*” from St. Raphael’s, plans for a boys’ school to be run by Christian Brothers and a girls’ school to be run by

nuns. Moreover, it suggested that Edward Raphael had rebuffed an attempt to bring St. Raphael's Church within the control of the Diocese of Southwark saying that it would never happen during his lifetime. Fr. Clark's letter indicated that God alone had the power to determine whether Raphael's plans would come to pass.¹⁰ Possibly, friction between Edward Raphael and the Diocese of Southwark over restricted public use and control of St. Raphael's Church led to the opening of the mission of SS. Mary & Patrick on 10 April 1853.

The third paragraph of the appeal showed that the mission had been very successful. Many people attended the Sunday evening services, the number of children at the school had risen to fifty and Fr. Clark continued to instruct them. However, the temporary chapel now was much too small and much bigger classrooms were needed for the expanding congregation. Funds were needed to repay a debt of £150 that was incurred for the establishment of the mission and to build a permanent church for the greater glory of God, with schools of sufficient capacity for the needs of the expanding congregation. To this end, donation cards were available. Each card contained 240 divisions, each to record a donation of one penny to the mission. Thus, when completed the benefactor would have donated £1.

THE CRIMEAN WAR

The research highlighted the effect of the Crimean War [October 1853-February 1856] on the Catholic missions of Kingston.¹¹ In particular, Fr. Henry Clark of SS. Mary & Patrick and Fr. James Doyle of St. Raphael's served as military chaplains in the Crimea. The effects of this are considered below.

PRIESTS OF ST. RAPHAEL'S CHURCH

Bernard Kelly [1909] recorded that Jeremiah Donovan was the priest of St. Raphael's in 1850 and that "*H. Clark*", presumably Henry Clark, was its priest in 1852. Moreover, he recorded that "*J. Ainsworth*", presumably John Ainsworth [below], was its priest in 1855.¹² Moreover, the *Catholic Directory* of 1855 reported that Fr. James Doyle was the priest of St. Raphael's, but Kelly [1909] made no mention at all of Fr. Doyle.

If Henry Clark truly was the priest at St. Raphael's in 1852, it raised the question whether he left to open the mission of SS. Mary & Patrick, in 1853,

because of restrictions placed by Edward Raphael on the range of services that he was allowed to provide at St. Raphael. More research will be needed to explore this [below].

The *Morning Advertiser* newspaper of 31 July 1855 reported that, having just returned from the Crimea “to recruit his health”, Fr. Doyle, after saying Mass, had died, possibly on church premises, from Asiatic cholera. The *Surrey Comet* of 4 August 1855 also reported his death but emphasised that he had suffered a heart attack. Examination of his death certificate showed that Fr. Doyle died on 29 July 1855 from a heart attack.¹³ The newspaper article went on to address fears of a local outbreak of cholera by stating that the deceased had no symptom “approaching in the slightest degree to that fatal disease.”¹⁴

The *Morning Advertiser* reported that Fr. Doyle was much beloved by all the soldiers in his camp for his amiable and kind disposition. The *Surrey Comet* noted that he had been indefatigable in his attention to the sick and the dying. The author of the *Surrey Comet* report, probably Thomas Philpott, the founder of the newspaper, pointed out that although Fr. Doyle and he differed greatly in matters of religion, it was necessary to pay tribute to the memory of one whose life was a constant practical exemplification of real Christian virtue. Philpott was a man of deep Protestant religious conviction and strong social commitment.¹⁵ The report concluded that the sudden death of Fr. Doyle had deprived the poor of a friend and his church of the services of a faithful and self-denying minister. This was indeed a great accolade for Fr. Doyle, and an example of the sense of fairness and independence of Thomas Philpott, considering that the *Surrey Comet* circulated in Kingston, an area where anti-Catholic prejudice abounded and whose council had reacted strongly to the re-establishment of the Catholic Hierarchy in September 1850.¹⁶

CLOSURE OF THE MISSION OF SS. MARY & PATRICK

Corkery [1995] wrote that although the *Directory* of 1856 had an entry for St. Raphael’s Church, it said nothing about SS. Mary & Patrick’s mission in Kingston and concluded that it had closed because Fr. Clark’s appeal for funds was unsuccessful. The *Directory* of 1856 confirmed Corkery’s report that Fr. Clark, at the time of its publication, was a naval chaplain in Portsmouth. Moreover, the *Directory* of 1855 reported that both Fr. James

Doyle and Fr. Henry Clark both were “*with the Army in the East*”, meaning that both were military chaplains in the Crimea. Fr. Michael Clifton wrote that just after Fr. Clarke [*sic*] returned from the Crimea, in poor health, he was the first civilian naval chaplain to be appointed.¹⁷ A letter in the archives of St. George’s Cathedral, Southwark, confirmed that he suffered poor health which necessitated a stay in a hotel at Therapia on the Bosphorus. Later, sickness caused him to resign his appointment as a military chaplain and to return from Scutari to England in late May, 1855.¹⁸

According to Clifton [1990], from 1853 onwards, the aforementioned Bishop Thomas Grant, on behalf of the Catholic Hierarchy, became the chief negotiator with the British Government for the provision of army and navy chaplains at home and at foreign bases. The Crimean War was the first big test whether strong anti-Catholic feelings, stimulated by the restoration of the Hierarchy in 1850, had cooled sufficiently to allow priests to accompany the forces as chaplains. Clifton [1990] reported that eight priests served as chaplains. They were not commissioned and served only for the duration of the conflict, having been engaged by Bishop Grant on a “*semi-voluntary basis*”, i.e., an invitation to serve was the equivalent of an order.¹⁹

Thus, on the face of it, Fr. Henry Clark and Fr. James Doyle of St. Raphael’s were *ordered* to the Crimea by Bishop Grant. Evelyn Bolster [1964] noted that Bishop Grant was untiring in his efforts to increase the number of Catholic chaplains in the Crimea and it was tempting to think that, for political expediency, he sometimes put the needs of Catholic soldiers before those of Catholic civilians.²⁰

Returning to the debts of SS. Mary & Patrick, a letter in the archives of St. George’s Cathedral, Southwark, sent from Scutari by Fr. Clark to Bishop Grant, probably on 22 April 1855, contained a sentence to the effect that if he had been allowed to remain in Kingston, the mission’s debts would have been cleared by June 1856.²¹ Indeed, an incomplete letter in St. Raphael’s archives, dated 4 March 1856, sent from Ryde, from Fr. Clark to Bishop Grant talked of paying off the bills of the late Kingston mission.²²

Fr. Clark’s deployment to the Crimea offered a more credible account of the closure of SS. Mary & Patrick than failure of the appeal for funds, as suggested by Corkery [1995]. However, it begged the question whether

Bishop Grant would allow SS. Mary & Patrick to close knowing that the expanding congregation would be denied the full range of services that reliably were provided by Fr. Clark; instead being dependent upon the “*pleasure*” of Edward Raphael [see **Appendix**] and in the absence of Fr. Doyle.

HYPOTHESIS & NEED FOR MORE RESEARCH

A hypothesis emerged that before or shortly after Fr. Clark went to the Crimea an accord was reached between Bishop Grant and Edward Raphael whereby St. Raphael’s mission was opened to the public to provide the full range of services provided by the mission in Clarence Street. Certainly, St. Raphael’s had the physical capacity for this. The church could accommodate about 314 worshippers, there were schools for boys and girls and there was a house for the priest.²³ However, St. Raphael’s would have needed a priest to stand in for Fr. James Doyle while he served as a military chaplain in the Crimea. *The Directory* of 1856 reported that Fr. John Ainsworth was the priest at St. Raphaels’ Church. In 1855, in a list of Catholic Clergy, it reported that he was at 1, Parker’s Row, Bermondsey, within the Diocese of Southwark. Possibly, as part of the accord with Edward Raphael, he was sent in 1855 to St. Raphael’s by Bishop Grant to cover Fr. Doyle’s absence. Indeed, Kelly [1909] gave Fr. Ainsworth’s tenure at St. Raphael’s as 1855-1880 and after Fr. Doyle died he would have continued in office. More research is needed to explore this hypothesis and the relationship between Fr. Henry Clark and Edward Raphael before the mission of SS. Mary & Patrick was opened [above].

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the Archivist at St. George’s Cathedral, Southwark, for finding references and Michael Pearce, Manager of St. Raphael’s Church, Surbiton, for stimulating discussions during the research.

APPENDIX

EDITED TRANSCRIPT OF THE APPEAL FOR SUPPORT OF THE MISSION OF ST. MARY & ST. PATRICK, CLARENCE STREET, KINGSTON UPON THAMES, CATHOLIC DIRECTORY, 1855, PP. 48-49.

Kingston upon Thames

This old town of the Saxon monarchs had been without parish chapel or Catholic school, from the period of the Reformation to the spring of last year. The Catholic residents, the poor of the workhouse, the soldiers of the neighbouring barracks, were dependent for their spiritual requirements on the pleasure of a private gentleman and, alas! the children destitute of moral training.

The Rev. Henry Clark asked our Dear Lord "*who useth the weak things of the world to confound the strong*" that he might bring the humble instrument to work a change; and with the blessing of the good Bishop on our labour of love, the present Mission of St. Mary and St. Patrick was solemnly opened on April 10 1853.

The young plant has, thank God, taken root. Many a Catholic heart that was cold has become warm: the sinner has returned to his God; several have turned from the troubled waters of heresy to find calm in the fisherman's bark; crowds of inquiring minds flock to the Sunday evening devotions, and fifty children rejoice in a Catholic school, with their parish priest for their instructor.

Kind reader, much remains yet for the perfecting of the good work. A debt of £150, necessarily incurred for the establishment of the mission, has yet to be liquidated. The present temporary chapel is now much too small, and school rooms at least double the size of the *one* in use have become requisite. We now, therefore, throw ourselves on your charity. We ask you to assist us, that we may become clear of debt – that we may raise a church suitable for the wants of the mission and more worthy of our God – that we may erect schools where the youthful mind may be trained around the life of Jesus – His Faith – His hope – his Charity – His punishments – His rewards.

Take then a Card – ask your friends to take a Card; one twelve-month is given for the filling of the same. Each Monday morning shall the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass ask blessings on thy house, and when thou shalt be where the world nor its dignities can avail thee, shall thy cry of distress be heard "*Have pity on me, have pity on me, at least you, my friends*" and the earnest, grateful response of the befriended child – the reclaimed sinner – the convert wanderer – shall be, "*Eternal rest give to them O Lord; and let perpetual light shine upon them*".

N.B., Each Card contains 240 divisions, each division, when dotted or pricked, stands for one penny; hence when filled, exactly £1 will have been contributed.

EPISCOPAL APPROBATION – As the Rev. Henry Clark hopes to be able to build a commodious and inexpensive church for the inhabitants and soldiers in and near Kingston, we recommend his charitable undertaking to the faithful, on account of the spiritual wants of the neighbouring poor.

November 12th, 1853.

✚ THOMAS GRANT

¹ David A. Kennedy, 2018, From Madras to Surbiton, Alexander Raphael, unbeatn

² Michael Gandy, 1993, Catholic missions and registers 1700-1880, Volume 1, London and the Home Counties, Whetstone, Michael Gandy, p.1.

³ Catholic Directory, Almanack and Ecclesiastical Register, 1855, London, C.Dolman, Cited as "Catholic Directory" or "Directory".

⁴ John Martin Corkery, 1995, Catholicism in Kingston upon Thames from the Reformation to 1850, Catholic Ancestor, Vol. 5, No. 4, February 1995, p.156.

⁵ Shaan Butters, 2013, That famous place. A history of Kingston upon Thames, Kingston, Kingston University Press, p.274.

⁶ Surrey Record Society, 1997, The 1851 Religious Census:Surrey, Volume XXXV, Surrey Record Society, Guildford, p.135.

⁷ However, the letter in the Surrey Comet of 4 August 1855 indicated that in that year more Masses were said at St. Raphael's on Sundays.

⁸ Catholic Directory, 1855. Mason's court guide and general directory for Brentford, Kew, Ealing, Isleworth, Twickenham, Teddington, Richmond, Kingston, Hampton, etc., etc. 1853. <http://specialcollections.le.ac.uk/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p16445coll4/id/167072/rec/1>

⁹ Kennedy, 2018.

¹⁰ In his letter, Fr. Clark cited the New Testament Letter of St. James, 4.14, "*What is your life?*"

¹¹ <http://www.crimeahistory.org/crimean-war/>

¹² Bernard Kelly, 1909, Historical notes on English Catholic missions, London, Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., p.383.

¹³ His death certificate stated that the cause of Fr. Doyle's death was medically certified "*valvular disease of the heart, eight hours*" and that he was aged 46. The place of death was given as "*Surbiton Kingston*" and that Eliza Lewis of "*Surbiton Kingston*" was present at the death. Possibly Eliza Lewis was Father Doyle's housekeeper.

¹⁴ Cholera was much feared in the middle of the nineteenth century and then its cause was unknown. For example, fear that cholera that was prevalent in Brixton Prison might spread to the immediate neighbourhood was a factor in its closure and the closure of Kingston House of Correction.

See www.kingstonhistoryresearch.co.uk A local prison for the poor. A study of Kingston House of Correction. Part 6, Costs and Closure, Final stages in the closure of the Kingston Prison, 1841-1852.

¹⁵ <http://www.surreycomet.co.uk/comet150/intro/>

I am grateful to June Sampson for pointing out that Thomas Philpott was the owner and editor of the Surrey Comet from 1854 until he died in 1866 and that his grave is in St. Mark's Churchyard, Surbiton.

¹⁶ See www.kingstonhistoryresearch.co.uk From Madras to Surbiton. Alexander Raphael, Unbeaten Champion, anti-Catholic prejudice.

¹⁷ Michael Clifton, 1990, The quiet negotiator. Bishop Grant, Bishop of Southwark, Formby, Print Origination [NW] Limited, p.106.

¹⁸ St. George's Cathedral archives, ref. R. 70.8, 15, letter from H. Clark to V. Rev. Canon Cox, DD, 21 March 1855 and letter ref. 70.8, 21, from H. Clark. 22 May 1855.

¹⁹ Michael Clifton, 1990, p.95. Michael Snape, 2005, The redcoat and religion, London, Routledge, p.171, records that 21 acting Catholic chaplains were dispatched to the Crimea. Both authors record that Catholic nursing nuns also were dispatched to the Crimea.

²⁰ Evelyn Bolster, 1964, The Sisters of Mercy in the Crimean War, Cork, The Mercier Press, pp. 180-192.

²¹ St. George's Cathedral archives, ref. 70.8, 42, letter from H. Clark to Rt. Rev. Dr. Grant. This was dated "22 April, Sunday evening" and was probably sent in 1855. The language suggested that Fr. Clark was *ordered* to go to the Crimea by Bishop Grant.

²² It was assumed that Fr. Clark was living at Ryde on the Isle of Wight at the time.

²³ The 1851 Religious Census:Surrey, 1997, p.135. Kennedy, 2016.