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**INDEPENDENCE, EMANCIPATION AND  
ESTABLISHMENT: A CRITICAL EXPLORATION  
OF THE IMPACT OF THE MONASTIC VISION OF  
DOWNSIDE ABBEY (1880-1900)**

Alice Morrey

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
PhD History in the Faculty of Arts.

University of Bristol  
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# **ABSTRACT**

## **INDEPENDENCE, EMANCIPATION AND ESTABLISHMENT: A CRITICAL EXPLORATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE MONASTIC VISION OF DOWNSIDE ABBEY (1880-1900)**

by Alice Morrey

Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee:      Dr Benjamin Pohl  
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The revival of monasticism in the nineteenth century was reflected in the increasing ambition of the English Benedictine Congregation (EBC). In particular, Downside Abbey in Somerset saw increasing numbers in their community, the expansion of their authority and the creation of their neo-gothic abbey. The history of Downside has always showcased a sense of tradition, continuity and collective memory. However, during 1880-1900, the community was gripped by a constitutional crisis that transformed the governance of the EBC. It dealt with issues of authority within the monastic community, ideas of historical narrative and how the monks built their relationship with the past. This thesis will explore the issues that arose during this period, and how the constitutional crisis transformed the relationship between the mission, the monastery and the traditional framing of the monastic vocation. Significantly, nostalgia was used by the monastic community to justify their relationship with the past – and to provide context for the constitutional reforms they desired. This thesis will analyse how the monastic community used nostalgia to present the context for reform – not as only as a monolithic entity but as individual members who desired varying reform models to advance their own agendas.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: .......... DATE: 7/10/2022

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## GLOSSARY: ABBREVIATIONS, SHORTHAND AND DEFINITIONS

**Community.** Refers to members of each house, for example, the Downside community.

**Congregation.** The body of Benedictine monks in England. Also more formally referred to as the English Benedictine Congregation (EBC). Houses that were part of the EBC are listed: Downside, Ampleforth, Stanbrook, Fort Augustus and Douai, England.

**Controversy.** Events that occurred during 1880-1900 at Downside Abbey. The source of controversy was the position of the missions in the modern monastic setting, and how this was reflected in the constitutions of the time.

**Douay, Netherlands.** The former home of Downside Abbey. The location in Somerset was not given the same name as it was expected that eventually the community would return to the continent. This did not happen, and the monks who had taken over the Parisian house (St Edmunds) gave their home in England the name instead.

**English Benedictine Congregation.** (EBC) Collection of monasteries in England under Benedictine governance.

**Extraordinary Meeting.** Held when either the General Chapter was delayed, or in most cases when the General Chapter was too far away from the initial source of discontent.

**General Chapter.** Meetings held between senior members of the Congregation that were held every four years. Each meeting had a representative from each house. These representatives were usually the most senior monk at each house, usually the prior.

**Papal Bulls.** *Plantata* (1634), *Rescript Cliftonien* (1883), *Religiosus Ordo* (1889), and *Diu Quidem* (1899)



**Rome.** Both a geographical location and used by the monks to identify the body of high-ranking Benedictine monks that surrounded the Pope, whose influence was important regarding the receipt of petitions and dispensations to monasteries in England. Members of the Congregation often travelled to and from Rome, and the individuals involved in Rome represented affiliations of the Pope.

## GLOSSARY: MAIN CHARACTERS

*Note, names are given in this order: given name if known, religious name, surname. Dates given are birth and death dates, with relevant significant dates for religious titles. In the main text, the first time a person is mentioned his religious name is given, with birth and death dates and home monastery if known.*

*Titles have been removed for clarity. Instead, in the first instance they will be referred to as: Monastic Name, Surname (birth-death, House, relevant title plus dates held) or Forename, Surname (birth-death, relevant information)*

*Afterwards: Monastic name, surname or in regard to laymen - full name.*

### **Founding members of Downside Abbey and associates**

**Sigebert Buckley.** (1517-1610). A secular priest. Professed at Westminster in 1558. Remained the last link between old Westminster and the ancient and restored English congregations.

**Original members of the Douay congregation.** Augustine Bradshaw (c.1530-1617), William Johnson (1580-1663), Joseph Prater (c.1550-1631), John Roberts (1576-1610), John Hutton (1578-1643) and Leander Jones (1575-1635).

### **‘The Movement’ or ‘Neo-Monastics’ - looking to reform the EBC constitutions.**

The members of the Downside Community that were in favour of reforming the constitutions and fought against the more senior members to enact change. At the start of the Controversy, there were thirteen.

**Hugh Edmund Ford.** (1851-1930, Downside). Clothed, 1868. Priest, 1877. Prior of Downside between 1894-1899. Priest at Beccles, 1890-1894. First abbot of Downside between 1900-1906.

**Francis Aidan Gasquet.** (1846-1929, Downside). Prior of Downside between 1878-1885. Created a cardinal in 1914.

**Edward Cuthbert Butler.** (1858-1934, Downside). Clothed, 1876. Priest 1884. Abbot of Downside between 1906-22. President of the EBC 1914-22.

**Aelred Kindersely.** (1960-1934, Downside). Clothed 1879. Priest 1887.

**Conrad Banckaert.** (1843-1910, Downside). Clothed 1879. Priest 1886.

**Elphege Cody.** (1847-1891, Downside, then Fort Augustus).

**Gilbert Dolan.** (1853-1914, Downside). Chaplain at Stanbrook.

**Joseph Colgan.** (1857-1938, Downside). Clothed 1875. Priest 1883.

**Meinrad Fulton.** (1860-1912, Downside). Clothed 1877. Priest 1885.

**Osmund Knight.** (1853-1935, Downside). Clothed 1877. Priest 1885.

**Stephen Rawlinson.** (1865-1953, Downside). Clothed 1884. Priest 1892.

**Wilfred Corney.** (1851-1926, Downside). Procurator in Curia, 1906.

**Wilfred New.** (1859-1931, Downside).

**The Traditionalists – wanting to uphold the status quo.**

*The senior members of the Congregation who were opposed to changing the constitutions in anyway. They mainly consisted of the elder members of the community and were represented in almost every senior position within the EBC.*

**Clement Fowler.** (1851-1929, Downside). Clothed, 1870. Priest, 1876. Prior of Downside between 1890-1894.

**Norbert Sweeney.** (1821-1883, Downside). Clothed, 1838. Priest, 1848. Prior of Downside 1854-59. Prior of Belmont 1859-62. Abbot of St Albans, 1878. Provincial of Coventry, 1881.

**Placid Burchall.** (1812-1885). President-General 1854-83.

**Terrance Benedict Snow.** (1838-1905, Downside). Clothed, 1856. Priest, 1865. Last

Provincial of York, 1888 and Abbot of Glastonbury.

**Thomas Austin Bury.** (1827-1904, Ampleforth). Clothed, 1843. Priest, 1850. Provincial of York 1878-83.

**William Bede Prest.** (1831-1903, Ampleforth). Clothed, 1849. Priest, 1856. Prior of St Lawrence's, 1866-74. Annalist of the EBC, 1883.

### **Other Members of the Downside Community of Importance**

**Bernard Murphy.** (1840-1914) Clothed, 1860. Priest, 1868. Prior of Downside, 1870-78. Began building the church and monastery. Allied with the Movement's aims and ideas.

**Leander Ramsay.** (1863-1929, Downside). Clothed, 1897. Priest, 1900. Headmaster of Downside 1902-1918, Abbot of Downside 1922-1929.

### ***Other members of importance***

**Anselm O'Gorman.** (1833-1901, Douai Abbey.) Clothed, 1849. Priest, 1857. Elected Prior of St Edmund's, 1870. President General 1883-88.

**Augustine O'Neill.** (1841-1911, Douai Abbey.) President of the General Chapter.

**Boniface Krug.** (1838-1909, Monte Cassino). Apostolic Visitor to the EBC in 1881. Was heavily in favour of the reforms desired by the Movement.

**Edmund Bishop.** (1846-1917). Lay member of the Downside community, renowned for his work on Catholic history with Aidan Gasquet.

**Francis Weld.** (1819-1899) Associated with Downside and firmly in favour of the Downside Movement. Lay member of the Downside community, and a great benefactor to the monastery.

*Bibliographical information taken from Aidan Bellenger, 200 Downside Monks: A Photographic Record, (Stratton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 2014), and Benedict Snow, Obit Book of the Benedictines, 1600-1912, (Farmborough: Gregg International, 1970).*

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# INTRODUCTION

## **Independence, Emancipation and Establishment: A Critical Exploration of the Impact of the Monastic Vision of Downside Abbey (1880-1900)**

### **Introduction**

English Catholicism experienced a renaissance during the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> This shift in fortune since the expulsion of the monasteries during the Reformation was also reflected in the activities of the monastic communities that resettled in England during this period. Monasteries, such as Downside Abbey in Somerset, saw increasing numbers of novices and the expansion of their authority in both religious and secular circles. In building both a physical and spiritual home in Somerset, the monks used the neo-gothic architecture to clarify modern monasticism in England. This was the impact of an increasingly confident Catholic community on the religious landscape of the nineteenth century and reflected the changing religious, political and social concerns of the community. These changing concerns impacted the Downside community immensely and resulted in a constitutional crisis which the monks referred to as the Downside Controversy (1880-1900) within the English Benedictine Congregation (EBC) that changed how monastic lives were conducted and whose constitutions are still in use today.<sup>2</sup>

This thesis will attempt to draw out the motivations of the community in the form of the little-known Downside Controversy – the internal conflicts of the community of which Edmund Ford (1851-1930, Downside) was the protagonist. It will also analyse the actions of the community through a thematic framework of nostalgia, tradition and reform. This sense of nostalgia is can also be found in scholarship on historical memory – the concept of ‘usable pasts’ of the nineteenth century is prevalent throughout.<sup>3</sup> Alice Chandler’s work on the tension between the

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<sup>1</sup> The rise of Catholicism in England can be clearly seen in the proliferation of parishes that originated in the nineteenth century, Downside Abbey amongst them (1840). For more on the foundations of Downside Abbey, see *Records of the English Catholics: Douai Diaries 1&2*, ed. by Thomas Francis Knox, (London: David Nutt Publishers, 1878). For more on the English Catholic renaissance, see John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community: 1570-1850* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975), David Lunn, *The English Benedictines 1540 - 1688: From Reformation to Revolution*. (London, Burns & Oates, 1980).

<sup>2</sup> The Downside Controversy, henceforth referred to as the Controversy with a capital C.

<sup>3</sup> See Alice Chandler, “Order and Disorder in the Medieval Revival.” *Browning Institute Studies* 8 (1980): 1–9, Ayla Lepine, “The Persistence of Medievalism: Kenneth Clark and the Gothic Revival.” *Architectural*

imagined past as a metaphor versus real factual life as a quest for order speaks volumes about the Downside experience – which was coloured by their nomadic past. The associations that can be made with the wider nineteenth century experience of medieval culture indicates that this subject has merit beyond the monastic condition.<sup>4</sup> Despite the stereotypical monastic desire for solitude, the community cannot be held entirely separate from their environment. Likewise, Price's concept of a 'metaphor of change' underpins the social and political architecture which transcends the unique moment this thesis is centred on.<sup>5</sup>

The Controversy eventually led to the Reformation of the EBC into its modern form and altered the EBC's relationship with its mission work through the Papal Bull *Religiosus Ordo* (1888), and the Apostolic Letter *Diu Quidem* (1890). It also seeks to explore the relationship between the monastic individual and the emergence of a new style of Catholic culture in nineteenth-century England. This thesis will explore the correlations between the Church's medieval foundations and its return to a medieval-centred religious model following the upheaval of the Reformation in 1527 and the return to foundational stability in 1880.

This period of reform occurred between 1880-1900, with Edmund Ford of Downside Abbey being seen by the community as the leader pushing for the constitutions of the EBC to be reformed. The members of the Controversy were known as 'the Movement' and this term is used within this thesis to refer to the group of newly professed young men who saw Ford as their leader, who intended to reform the monastic community along more medieval constitutional lines. This group included future leaders of the EBC, such as Aidan Gasquet, and many of the youngest monks at Downside at the time, including those who had recently undertaken their noviciate at Belmont Abbey and had used their noviciate to develop the reform movement. This collaborative effort in shaping their monastic futures continued throughout their lives and helped shape their approach to their own monastic identities. Although the term 'community' implies a monolithic unified presence, the members of Downside were seldom in unity: internal debate was vital – both within the general chapters and in Rome. The community

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*History* 57 (2014): 323–56 or Richard Price, "Historiography, Narrative, and the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of British Studies* 35, no. 2 (1996): 220–56 for more on nineteenth century medieval and narrative histories.

<sup>4</sup> See Alice Chandler, "Order and Disorder in the Medieval Revival." *Browning Institute Studies* 8 (1980): 1–9.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Price, "Historiography, Narrative, and the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of British Studies* 35, no. 2 (1996): 221.

was often divided and even within the members of each ‘side’ of the Controversy there were often lively discussions as to the extent of the reform.

Against them were all the senior members of the community, including the abbot of Downside during the earliest period of the Controversy; Clement Fowler (1851-1929, Downside), as well as the superiors of the general chapter and many of the leaders of the other houses in the EBC.<sup>6</sup> This opposition – referred to as the ‘Traditionalists’ in this thesis – fought to maintain the traditions that had shaped the community since its inception in 1606 in Douai, France. This included a strong missionary presence and the dependence on a hierarchical structure outside of the abbey to sustain the community. This structure had been made essential by the circumstances under which the Catholic community operated before the period of Catholic emancipation.<sup>7</sup> The repercussions of the illegality of Catholicism and the resulting martyrdom of many followers had lasting effects and shaped the response of the Catholic community in the ensuing centuries.<sup>8</sup>

It also shows how the development of a complete monastic vision and reform was influenced by the ambitious building plans the community developed.<sup>9</sup> Ford was responsible for much of the abbey's construction – which was finally raised to the rank of a minor basilica in 1935 by Pope Pius XI. Although Pugin's plans, which remain in the Downside Archive Collection today, were ultimately unfulfilled due to cost, the ambition was clear.<sup>10</sup> The building of Downside Abbey and the thoughts of the community echo the principles laid out in the actions of the Movement throughout the Controversy. For Gasquet and Ford, the building was the outward demonstration of an ambitious community, as suggested here in a letter between the two in 1874 – ‘Most certainly if we are not good in that place [Downside] it will not be from the want of a beautiful place’.<sup>11</sup> In developing the reform movement, the young monastic

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<sup>6</sup> These will be explored in subsequent chapters. The houses of the EBC were almost unilaterally against the Movement. Within the community only Fort Augustus and Stanbrook supported the Movement's aims.

<sup>7</sup> In England, these were the Papist Act 1778, the Roman Catholic Relief Act 1791 and the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1829. For more on the Catholic Emancipation, and for details of the Acts, see: *Irish Historical Documents 1172-1922*, ed. by, Edmund Curtis and R B McDowell (London, Methuen Press, 1943) pp. 194-196.

<sup>8</sup> The martyrs were widely venerated throughout this period.

<sup>9</sup> For an introduction to the cultural influence of Pugin's ideas and Victorian medievalism see Rosemary Hill, *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* (London: Penguin, 2007).

<sup>10</sup> These can be found in the Downside Archives. See Stratton on the Fosse, Downside Abbey Archives [DAA], Maps and Plans Collection, *Pugin Plans*.

<sup>11</sup> Downside Abbey Archives, Stratton on the Fosse, Aidan Gasquet Archive, *Gasquet to Ford: May 14th 1874*.



community sought to match the grandeur of the rising stonework and develop the monastic community beyond its walls. Aidan Gasquet, in his introduction to Forbes' *The Monks of the West*, wrote: 'here, and here alone on English soil, we are linked not only to the beginnings of English Christianity but to the beginnings of Christianity itself'.<sup>12</sup> This typifies the approach the Movement took in their desire for reform, a connection to the past and authority steeped in a medieval tradition. This was complemented by the neo-gothic structure of Downside, and the way this was attached to a particular view of English national identity, which avoided the Protestant Reformation and affirmed the Catholic past.

Although much of the scholarship is centred around the Anglican experience of building religious architecture, there remains a clear connection between the nostalgia of both the imagined medieval past and its reality and the building efforts of religious communities in the nineteenth century.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, for example, the significance of Glastonbury stone at Downside is linked to the revival of Gothic architecture. This emphasis on a medieval tradition is visible throughout the whole of the monastery, and the use of architecture to present the values the community felt was important was deep-seated motivation in the Gothic Revival movement of nineteenth-century England.<sup>14</sup>

Despite the vibrancy of the Downside community during this time, the historiography surrounding the monastic culture of the nineteenth century is limited in contrast to the increased interest in the post-reformation history of women religious.<sup>15</sup> The vibrant resurgence of monasticism in nineteenth-century England has been sparsely researched, especially when compared to the extensive exploration of the pre-Reformation period. Likewise, in the discussion surrounding nineteenth-century Catholicism, there is yet again little focus on the individual monastic communities outside of the dominant narrative histories. For example, John Bossy, as one of the main scholars on this period, establishes the context for the missionary zeal that was prevalent at this time, and that is echoed in so much of Downside's

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<sup>12</sup> Francis Aidan Gasquet, 'Sketch of Monastic Constitutional History', in *The Monks of the West from St. Benedict to St. Bernard* by Charles Forbes, (London: J. C. Nimmo, 1896) p. 4.

<sup>13</sup> See G. A. Bremner, *Imperial Gothic: Religious Architecture and High Anglican Culture in the British Empire, C. 1840-70* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Richard D.G Irvine, 'Stability, Continuity, Place An English Benedictine Monastery as a Case' in *Religious Architecture: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. by Oskar Verkaaik. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2013), p. 33.

<sup>15</sup> See Ayla Lepine, 'Modern Gothic and the House of God: Revivalism and Monasticism in Two Twentieth-Century Anglican Chapels', *Visual Resources*, (32, 2016) , 76-101.

history.<sup>16</sup> The most significant writings on the English Benedictines during this period remain an in-house affair, with a particular increase in scholarship during the period of the Downside Controversy. It produced scholars such as Francis Gasquet (1846-1929, Downside), Edmund Bishop (1846-1917) and Cuthbert Butler (1858-1934, Downside).<sup>17</sup> This created a legacy of historical research that was continued by members of the community such as Hugh Connolly (1873-1948, Downside), David Knowles (1896-1974, Downside) and today, Aidan Bellenger (1950-present, Downside).<sup>18</sup> The work produced by Gasquet, Butler and Bishop in particular not only developed a Catholic centred narrative of the medieval period but also highlighted the preconceptions of the contemporary community concerning ideas of authority, governance and tradition.

There has, of course, been substantial discourse around monastic culture in the medieval period, which was greatly influential at Downside.<sup>19</sup> The Controversy placed great emphasis on echoing medieval precedence on constitutional reform during high periods of monastic renewal. Likewise, medieval governance was highly influential, for example within the Lateran Council of 1216, where houses acted as a loose federation with individual autonomy.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, the restorations of French and other continental houses had also been on Lateran lines. The emphasis on reform and diplomatic negotiations during the Downside Controversy was indicative of a tradition of renewal that was demonstrated in the English Congregation during this period, where ‘all Catholic religious orders, past and present, originally arose as ‘revitalisation movements’.<sup>21</sup> This pattern of monastic tradition stemmed from the medieval period which often incorporated subtle alterations to survive societal circumstances and by

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<sup>16</sup> John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community: 1570-1850* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975).

<sup>17</sup> Examples of their work include: Aidan Gasquet, *The Greater Abbeys of England*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908), Edmund Bishop, Bishop, Edmund, *Liturgica historica: papers on the liturgy and religious life of the Western church*, (London: Clarendon Press, 1918) and Cuthbert Butler, *Ways of Christian Life: Old Spirituality for Modern Men*, (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932).

<sup>18</sup> Examples of their work include: Hugh Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum: Syriac Version*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), David Knowles, *The Religious Orders of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956) and Aidan Bellenger, *Monks with a Mission: English Benedictine History* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> Such as *Monks of England: The Benedictines in England from Augustine to the Present Day*, ed. by Daniel Rees (Guildford: EBC Ltd, 1997) and David Knowles, *The Religious Orders of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956).

<sup>20</sup> Roger Finke and Patricia Wittberg, ‘Organizational Revival from within: Explaining Revivalism and Reform in the Roman Catholic Church’, *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 39 (2000), 154 - 170.

<sup>21</sup> Patricia Wittberg, ‘Deep Structure in Community Cultures: The Revival of Religious Orders in Roman Catholicism’, *Sociology of Religion*, 58 (1997) 239 - 259.

necessity deviated from St Benedict's model.<sup>22</sup> The emphasis on continual renewal suggests precedence on reform during high periods of monastic renewal.<sup>23</sup>

This thesis marks the first full-scale investigation of the events of the Downside Controversy. Previously published material on the Controversy has been chiefly produced by the monastic community and has used the Downside Controversy to footnote other aspects of the community's history.<sup>24</sup> This includes the most prolific of the modern monks associated with the Downside community, Dominic Aidan Bellenger, a recent Abbot of Downside and scholar. The dual publication of Downside's histories in 2014 offers the most complete writing on the Downside Controversy to date. It remains probably the most extensive writing on Ford's role during the Downside Controversy, and chapter three of *Monks with a Mission* begins to make a rudimentary exploration of the influence of Ford in the events of the Controversy. Bellenger remains the most prolific author on Downside related material. He was placed in a unique position as Abbot of Downside, with access to the depth and breadth of archives. However, in being an active member of the community, it is hard to separate the scholar from his vocation, and it could be seen as a very selective and pro-Catholic centralised history. It could also be argued that Bellenger prefers the more colourful characters of Downside, and is particularly Gasquet-focused in the selection of evidence he presents. However, *Monks with a Mission* is also a testament to Bellenger's ability to float potential research avenues, and it could be suggested that the volume's strongest element is that it acts as an indication of future research projects, of which the Downside Controversy is clearly remarked on. To this end, as James E Kelly suggests, Bellenger presents the Controversy as indicative of the battle between the un-Benedictine-like missionary impulse and the younger reformers within the congregation who had never tasted exile and wanted a monastery to reflect the medieval sense of martyrdom and contemplation. As a result, the Controversy became a series of disputes over the very tensions of mission versus monastery. By then settled in Somerset, some newer members of Downside started to look for a stricter or more primitive monasticism, echoing the similar monastic

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<sup>22</sup> Roger Finke and Patricia Wittberg, 'Organizational Revival from within: Explaining Revivalism and Reform in the Roman Catholic Church', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 39 (2000), 154 - 170.

<sup>23</sup> For more on religious reform during the medieval period, see Alison Beach, *The Trauma of Monastic Reform: Community and Conflict in Twelfth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017) or Steven Vanderputten, *Reform, Conflict and the Shaping of Corporate Identities: Collected Studies on Benedictine Monasticism, 1050–1150* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013).

<sup>24</sup> Such as Aidan Bellenger, *Monks with a Mission: English Benedictine History* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 2014) which includes a chapter on the 'Downside Stirs' which was another name for the Controversy.

movements in France in the nineteenth century. Kelly's comparison to the position of French clergymen and the position of French monasticism also gives another aspect of comparison, and a potential source of research material to study for methodological implications.<sup>25</sup>

## Archive Material

The above highlights the potential for new research into the revival of monasticism in England in the nineteenth century. The archives at Downside Abbey in particular have never been fully examined by scholars, and the later material belonging to post-1800 monks has not been used extensively. A Heritage Lottery-funded project spanning 2013-2016 began to advance the cataloguing process of material which can only enhance its research potential.<sup>26</sup> Much of the material relating to Ford has been previously inaccessible and was unsorted and uncatalogued. Likewise, mislabelling has rendered much of the material relating to the Downside Controversy relatively inaccessible until now. Overall, there is little current research on the church of St Gregory or the monks that resided there, likely due to the fact it is little known outside of the Catholic community. However, as the seat of the Benedictine Congregation in England, and the widespread importance of the monks therein, its value should not be underestimated in the history of monastic culture. Therefore, it is time for the sources to be revisited and the material published. With the present archive system reaching a key point in its Heritage Lottery-funded project, it seems only appropriate for the collection to be brought to greater attention.

The main collection held at Downside Abbey consists of the personal archives of previous Downside monks - diaries, accounts, letters, and personal writings. These are barely touched archival resources; therefore, the material is an emerging research area that will aid our understanding of the monks' relationship with the building and the society they existed in. The use of the Downside archives has real potential, as nothing has been fully explored since the last monastic archivist Phillip Jebb stepped down and is still being processed under the current archive team. Whilst it is true that members of the monastic community have accessed and used the material found in the archive, this thesis intends to place the material found in the

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<sup>25</sup> James E. Kelly, 'Dominic Aidan Bellenger, Monks with a Mission: English Benedictine History, Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 2014' *British Catholic History*, 33 (2016), 163–165.

<sup>26</sup> Heritage Lottery Funding, 'UK's Largest Monastic Library to be Opened to the Public for the First Time', < <https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/news/uks-largest-monastic-library-be-opened-public-first-time>> [Accessed 30 August 2022]

personal collections of key individuals centre stage. Therefore, as well as building on the work done in recent histories of Downside, it will endeavour to move beyond these previous works.

Within the archives are three key collections belonging to protagonists of the Downside Controversy, and key members of the Downside Movement. These are:

- Cuthbert Butler Collection.
- Edmund Ford Collection.
- Aidan Gasquet Collection.

There are, of course, other monks of interest who are noted in the glossary. These include the rest of the group that made up the neo-monastics, as well as those who opposed them. With Downside being the seat of the EBC, the Downside archives holds many collections, and so material belonging to them has also been consulted during the production of this thesis. Likewise, there is also material to be found beyond the Downside collection and are to be chiefly found in other monastic collections and will be used to extend and complement the Downside collection by revealing a greater response to the building.

However, such usage of other archive material has been limited in this thesis due to time limitations caused by a combination of the Covid-19 pandemic and the problematic organisation of much of the archive material held at Downside Abbey. These factors restricted my ability to engage with material beyond the initial collections. In order to use the material referred to in this thesis, I had to act as both archivist and researcher, which inhibited my ability to meaningfully engage with some wider material. The material at Downside remains uncatalogued and without meaningful organisation in many parts. During my time in the archives, I endeavoured to sort the material into meaningful categories, and my footnotes reflect this attempt. They do not mimic previous studies of the Downside community (such as Bellenger) as the material has been moved from those locations and shelf marks. Further studies of the Downside Controversy would certainly benefit from comparative studies within the EBC archives.

Outside of the published material, the main source of information regarding the Controversy includes an unpublished typescript written by Cuthbert Butler, who endeavoured to record the

events as they happened.<sup>27</sup> It was composed between 1892-1905 and acts as a part historical document, part diary of the events of the Controversy. There are two copies, one of which appears to be a revised version with some distinct editorial moments, edited by David Knowles.<sup>28</sup> The marginalia by Knowles, who appears to have studied the manuscript and material related to it, which can be found throughout the manuscript, have been considered in this thesis to be a separate entity outside of the typed sections of Butler's manuscript and will be acknowledged as such.

### ***The Downside Review***

Another key material that will be utilised in this thesis that needs to be introduced here are articles from the earliest editions of *The Downside Review*. When the *Downside Review* began in 1880, it was not the same journal that exists today. It was a combined resource for the monks of Downside and Downside school. Although it contained many aspects familiar to current researchers, such as academic articles and book reviews, it was also used to provide anecdotal histories, local gossip and school news. In early editions, *The Downside Review* was also used to explore aspects of Downside's history and give updates on the progress of building Downside Abbey. Although many articles can be traced through the archives to their original author, many are unattributed.<sup>29</sup> For these reasons, early editions of *The Downside Review* will be used as primary sources.

For material directly associated with Downside, *The Downside Review* offers itself as a solid area for research. As one of the oldest theological journals of its kind in England, offers itself as both source material and potentially as a body of analytical research. This does however present problems in establishing a position to critique, and as a house publication is also ambiguous in its authorship as many articles in the earlier period of its canon are unattributed, although due to the body of draft works in the Downside archive, educated guesses can be made. It charts the construction of the Abbey from its foundations in 1880 and offers regular insights into the community spirit present throughout the period. Later contributions prove to be more analytical and provide robust scholarship into the position of the Abbey after the

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<sup>27</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*.

<sup>28</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*.

<sup>29</sup> If the author can be confidently identified, it will be given in the footnotes.

Downside Controversy. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter two, which analyses the centenary (1914) edition of *The Downside Review* in detail. This edition celebrates many of the traditions that were considered important to the community throughout the Controversy.

Using these sources in conjunction with secondary research, this thesis will explore the arguments for and against reform within the EBC at this time. It will also explore the link between the reimagining of Downside's history, the Benedictines' medieval past and the changes within the structure of authority within nineteenth-century monasticism. This will occur through an analysis of the written output of the monks of Downside and how they justified the medieval basis of their reforms and contextualising the effects of reform. To do this, this thesis will examine the papal bulls, mandates and constitutional revisions that occurred during the Downside Controversy. By evaluating the use of the medieval in the Downside narrative, it will explore the relationship between the medieval monastic past, and the revival of nineteenth-century monasticism.

## **Key Themes and Methodology**

In this thesis, the term 'The Movement' or 'neo-monastics' will refer to the protagonists of the Downside Controversy, many of whom were newly professed monks at Downside. The senior clergy will be known by the grouping 'the traditionalists' in their efforts to uphold the status quo of the EBC. This 'status quo' consisted of the settled traditions of the EBC since its arrival in England, which promoted a missionary-centred vocation and a centralised government outside of the monastery for administrative purposes.<sup>30</sup> As already mentioned, the neo-monastics were in direct opposition to the traditionalists; who were made up of many of the senior clergy, many of whom remembered the hardships that had befallen the community before their settlement in Somerset and wished to honour this tradition.

Overall, this introduction has underscored the clear gaps in Downside's foundational narrative when considering the Controversy, and the community's emphasis on the relationship to a medieval monastic tradition. This emphasis is also on a missionary presence that had been established after the Reformation and continued to the nineteenth century. This tension between

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<sup>30</sup> See Aidan Bellenger, *Monks with a Mission: English Benedictine History* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 2014).

missionary activities and the progression of the community in the nineteenth century highlights the need for a focus on this period. Likewise, this thesis intends to explore the events of the Controversy using several key themes which will be used to analyse key events and source material that was produced during this period. These themes are:

1. Nostalgia
2. Revival of medievalism
3. Use of authority

These themes are apparent throughout the Controversy and are linked to many of the issues that arose during the Controversy period. Nostalgia for the medieval past was prevalent within the community and was clearly communicated by those involved in the Controversy. Not only was the medieval past built into the abbey church, but the constitutional change that occurred also evoked a nostalgic reimagining of the past. This return to a medieval structure of hierarchy was also imbued with the authoritarian culture that was highly prevalent amongst the monks. The four key sources: *The Downside Review*, the building of the abbey church, the pamphlets and the work of the general chapter all evoke these traditions and will be used to explore these themes in greater detail later in this thesis.

In this thesis, nostalgia is defined as the sentiment and desire of the community to recreate the past in the contemporary. For the older members, they sought to continue ‘the tradition of the last 300 years’ which had originally been developed in reaction to persecution in England.<sup>31</sup> The younger members wanted to reimagine the past differently, to return to what they perceived to be the high point of medieval culture. Nostalgia was key in seeking a connection to a shared monastic past, and by using a particular narrative of the past. The sociologist Michael Hviid Jacobsen wrote in his latest book that nostalgia was

a highly collective phenomenon at times gripping larger groups of people, even entire populations and nations that give in to nostalgic sentiments by longing for a return to a great historical period, celebrating past victories or honouring legends and long- gone

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<sup>31</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 65.



heroes of importance to their local/ national community.<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, nostalgia became an integral part of the response of the community to upheaval and change, as well as the desire to ground themselves in an English historical narrative. In many ways, the community were “keeping the past alive in their lives, actively resuscitating and reviving the things that previously made sense and provided comfort and meaning.”<sup>33</sup> It was derived through the various ways of using rules, customs and laws within the community of Downside and the wider context of the EBC that had been practiced for long periods of time. This use of nostalgia was weaponised by the two factions of the community during the Controversy and was defined in opposing ways by each group. The main source of contention stemmed from the source of nostalgia – the older members of the community wanted to uphold the nostalgic traditions from when the community was started in Douai. The younger members recognised earlier traditions and customs from earlier medieval communities predating the inception of Downside. This ‘invention of tradition’ is reminiscent of Hobsbawm and Ranger’s collection of essays on the same concept. Here, the concept of the distinct culture and traditions as retrospective innovations is clearly apparent at Downside.<sup>34</sup>

Paul Readman’s recent article on the place of the Middle Ages in the nineteenth and twentieth century is also pertinent, and whose examples can be easily transposed onto the Downside community – the concept of the late Victorian and early Edwardian engagement with the medieval landscape and medieval heritage – where much of this engagement with the past had a patriotic inflection, being focused on the maintenance of a sense of national continuity at a time of rapid social, cultural and technological change.<sup>35</sup> The relationship between the community and the Middle Ages had similar hallmarks – the sense of continuity with a distinctly English monastic presence during a period of rapid change for the community socially and physically. These conflicting and contested uses of the medieval past for contemporary purposes tied into the community’s conceptions of nostalgia, the gothic revival and the wider concept of Victorian medievalism. Scholarship such as Marc Girouard’s seminal

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<sup>32</sup> Michael Hviid Jacobsen, *Intimations of Nostalgia: Multidisciplinary Explorations of an Enduring Emotion*, (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2021), p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Michael Hviid Jacobsen, *Intimations of Nostalgia*, p. 3.

<sup>34</sup> Paul Post. “Rituals and the Function of the Past: Rereading Eric Hobsbawm.” *Journal of Ritual Studies*, (10, 2, 1996), 85–107. See also Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, ed. *The Invention of Tradition*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>35</sup> Paul Readman, ‘Landscape, National Identity and the Medieval Past in England c.1840-1914’, 1174-1208.

work *Return to Camelot* explores the nature of Victorian medievalism and its connections to a chivalric and heraldic tradition.<sup>36</sup> The culture of Downside in the eighteenth and nineteenth century similarly reflects these ideas regarding chivalry, heraldic influences and medieval culture.

Furthermore, the advent of the Gothic Revival, and the evidence of its influence on the building of Downside Abbey is very much apparent in this period. Like Ayla Lepine argues in her article on the architecture of twentieth century Anglican chapels, the architecture of Downside undergoes a similar neo-gothic revival.<sup>37</sup> Like these chapels, John Ninian Comper (1864-1960) was employed to work on Downside Abbey and his investment in gothic architecture is clearly apparent throughout the building. Here, this thesis argues that the return to neo-gothic architecture signals a return to a medieval monastic approach both architecturally and constitutionally. This aspect of historical memory not only signals the influence of the past, but a desire to experience the sacred using the richness of the medieval monastic past.

These themes will be key in answering the following sets of questions:

- What was the Downside Controversy? What was its effect on the members of the Downside Community? Why did individuals desire or reject reform?
- With nostalgia being a key framework for understanding the Downside Controversy – how is nostalgia defined by the community? What was the impact of nostalgia on the community? How did it affect decision-making? How did it affect how the community saw itself?
- What were the established traditions of the Downside community before 1880? What was the historic precedence of the community's constitutions? How did the events of the Downside Controversy change this narrative?
- How did members of the community use the medieval past to further their aims and ambitions? How did this sense of the medieval past outwardly appear? Where was Victorian medievalism used in the community?

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<sup>36</sup> Marc Girouard, *Return to Camelot: Chivalry and the English Gentleman*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981).

<sup>37</sup> Ayla Lepine, 'Modern Gothic and the House of God: Revivalism and Monasticism in Two Twentieth-Century Anglican Chapels', *Visual Resources*, (32, 2016), 76-101.

- How was authority used by the senior and junior monks? Who felt able to administer or reject authority? What happened when senior authority was rejected?

As such, it applies several methodologies in a tool-kit approach using archival material to provide sections of narration from which analysis takes place. The central text – *The Controversy* manuscript – informs the methodological decisions and acts as an anchor for analysis. How it interacts with other texts and archive material is central to this thesis – some texts are written by senior members of the community who engage with arguments in very different ways to their younger counterparts in the Movement. Likewise, the Movement were prevented from engaging with material and discussions at times, which affects how the source material developed. In this thesis, this takes the form of critical conversation and comparison between source material – which has not been done from an academic viewpoint before, only monastic. Likewise, this has created an academic conversation – an insider versus outsider perspective – on the Benedictine traditions that have been presented in the Downside Controversy. This is significant as it builds on the work of David Knowles and the importance of monastic archives. It also engages with the history of memory, as evidenced by the themes of nostalgia and medievalism that are highlighted above. These themes depend on the use of memory to expose and continue the traditions that were so badly fought for during the Downside Controversy. This invention of tradition is reminiscent of the scholarship of Hobsbawm who - as part of the larger tradition surrounding memory – used memory and tradition to demonstrate capitalist society.<sup>38</sup> Here, the development of a nostalgic tradition shaped the monastic culture of the twentieth century.

## Parameters of the Study

The above-mentioned absence of historiography surrounding the circumstances of nineteenth-century monastic culture, and a deeper investigation into the constitutional crisis exposes the key research question of this thesis: What was the impact of the events known as the Downside Controversy on the religious experience of the monastic community? This question is important not only because it answers the issues raised by the lack of research into the

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<sup>38</sup> See Eric Hobsbawm, *Interesting Times: A Twentieth-century Life*, (London: Pantheon Books, 2002). *The Invention of Tradition*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). See also James Young, 'Between History and Memory: The Uncanny Voices of Historian and Survivor.' *History and Memory*, 9, (1997), 47–58 which touches upon many themes in Hobsbawm's work.

Controversy, but also because it relates to these broader debates in medieval and nineteenth-century Catholicism.

This thesis will describe and analyse the events of the Downside Controversy using contemporary material written by the monks of Downside Abbey involved in the Controversy. This has so far been overlooked in scholarship and whilst there is no complete study of the Downside Controversy as such, it has been mentioned in passing by several historians, with the most notable work on it by the former abbot of Downside, Aidan Bellenger.<sup>39</sup> To this end, as James Kelly suggests, Bellenger presents the Controversy as indicative of the battle between the missionary impulses of the older generation of monks and the younger reformers within the congregation who had never tasted exile and wanted a monastery to be just that. The Controversy thus emerges as a series of disputes over the very tensions of mission versus monastery.<sup>40</sup>

The previous sections have identified the disparity between the traditional historical narrative concerning the history of Downside, and the source material relating to the Downside Controversy (1880-1900).<sup>41</sup> In essence, the history of Downside is widely recognised as one that values continuity, community and collective memory. However, the Downside Controversy reveals that this sense of continuity, community and collective memory has not been without discord. Furthermore, during the period 1880-1900, the fundamental issue of the Downside Controversy was regarding the fundamental character of the EBC (EBC). This ‘fundamental character’ was the tension between a monastic life devoted to the missionary activity of the EBC and an internalised contemplative life. This divide resulted in tensions between the senior clergy, and a group of young monks from Downside known as the Movement. These community tensions can be seen in aspects of archive material relating to the events of the Controversy and the wider interpretation of the community’s sense of their identity.

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<sup>39</sup> For example, Aidan Bellenger, *Monastic Identities* (Downside Abbey Press: Bath, 2014) or Aidan Bellenger, *Monks with a Mission: English Benedictine History* (Downside Abbey Press: Bath, 2014).

<sup>40</sup> James E. Kelly, ‘Dominic Aidan Bellenger, *Monks with a Mission: English Benedictine History*, Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 2014’ *British Catholic History*, 33 (2016), 163–165.

<sup>41</sup> In this chapter, the term ‘Downside Controversy’ or ‘Controversy’ will refer to the events that occurred. ‘The Downside Movement’ or ‘Movement’ will refer to the protagonists of the Downside Controversy, all of whom were newly professed monks at Downside.

The four themes use nostalgia as a response to collective memory, which is prevalent in much of the archive material that will be used throughout this thesis. The selection of archive material will be used to frame each chapter. These are:

- Chapter two: *The Downside Review* which actively demonstrated the narratives that the community wanted to present as collective memory. The centenary issue, published in 1914 demonstrates this.
- Chapter three: The architecture of the abbey church which outwardly demonstrated the monastic setting for reform. This section will use the architectural plans, notes and physical structures to demonstrate this.
- Chapter four: The ‘Pamphlet War’ promoted the rhetoric between the houses of the EBC and acted as a ‘battleground’ for the various grievances of the two sides of the Controversy.
- Chapter five: The letters of the general chapters demonstrated the complex authority structures within the EBC and the type of authority that the Movement wanted to modify.

The next four sections of this chapter will identify in preliminary form the most important community tensions evident within the Downside archive material. After that, subsequent chapters of the thesis will examine each section of archival material in greater detail and ultimately provide the foundation upon which my argument about the disparity between current historiography and the Downside Controversy stands. An overview of these sections will be present in the next chapter, along with explanatory material which will provide context and understanding.

The next chapter will contain a fuller linear historical narrative of the events of the Controversy which will highlight areas within the Controversy that this thesis will explore in further detail in subsequent chapters. This will act as important reference material for the rest of the thesis. It will give a brief outline of the major events in Downside’s history, accompanied by relevant reference material. After this, the thesis will continue with a history of the Downside Controversy, with details taken from Butler’s copy of *The Downside Controversy* manuscript.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*.

The current scholarship regarding Downside values continuity, community and collective memory. The theological debates surrounding the Controversy were clarified and examined in the post-Controversy period, wherein ‘the restoration of normal Benedictine government and life [and] the Bull *Religiosus Ordo* and subsequent events will go far to justify [the events of the Controversy]’.<sup>43</sup> The effects of the Controversy on the community demonstrate the sense of history that the Downside community evoked throughout the reform period and how their diplomatic actions were inspired by their medieval monastic past. The influence of the controversy had far-reaching implications and not only affected the state of monasticism at Downside but within the wider EBC as well. The community expanded greatly during this time, not only in the recruitment of novices, but in the community as well in places such as Ealing (1897) and Beccles (1889).

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<sup>43</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 2.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Downside Abbey: A History

This chapter will provide a brief overview of the history of Downside Abbey and the community it serves, from its inception to the present day. The community was founded in the seventeenth century in France and grew into a vibrant community of monks renowned for its teaching and learning. Central to their vocation was the mission, which resulted in the martyrdom of several monks after returning to a hostile environment in England. This chapter will describe how the community grew from a small missionary group in Douai, France, to its arrival and settlement in England interacting with the historical accounts currently available. This will expose the inconsistencies within that literature and demonstrate the areas of Downside's history that have yet to be widely studied. Fundamentally, it was the tension between the community's missionary activities and the younger members' desire for a contemplative life that drove the events of the Controversy. This was driven by a sense of nostalgia for an imagined past, informed by the history of Downside and the concept of 'usable pasts' of the nineteenth century.<sup>44</sup>

#### The History of Downside Abbey

The Benedictine community of St Gregory the Great was founded in 1606 at Douai, France, in what was formally the Habsburg Empire and part of the Spanish Netherlands.<sup>45</sup> It was a university town that had developed into a haven for English Catholic exiles during the Elizabethan period.<sup>46</sup> As such, since 1568, Douai had also been home to Cardinal Allen's English College for secular clergy since 1568, which had been established after the death of Mary I (1516-1558).<sup>47</sup> The arrival of Elizabeth I (1533-1603) led to a reaffirmation of the anti-clerical rhetoric that had precipitated the Reformation, leading many to return to the

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<sup>44</sup> See Alice Chandler, "Order and Disorder in the Medieval Revival." *Browning Institute Studies* 8 (1980): 1–9, Ayla Lepine, "The Persistence of Medievalism: Kenneth Clark and the Gothic Revival." *Architectural History* 57 (2014): 323–56 or Richard Price, "Historiography, Narrative, and the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of British Studies* 35, no. 2 (1996): 220–56 for more on nineteenth century medieval and narrative histories.

<sup>45</sup> It is sometimes referred to as 'Douay' especially by early members of the community. For clarity, I will use the spelling of Douai throughout, and refer to it by its modern location – France.

<sup>46</sup> Hubert Van Zeller, *Downside By and Large* (London & New York: Sheed and Ward, 1953), p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Cardinal Allen (1532-1594). See P.R Harris, 'The English College, Douai, 1750–1794', *Recusant History*, 2, 10, (1969), 79–95. For more on Cardinal Allen see Eamon Duffy, 'William, Cardinal Allen 1532-1594', *British Catholic History*, 22, (1995), 265-290.

continent.<sup>48</sup> This led to the foundation of several institutions for the training of a missionary priesthood, and the establishment of the first English colleges, Douai (1568) and Louvain.<sup>49</sup> These two colleges became missionary in nature to counteract the Church of England's supremacy and in 1574, the first priest was sent to England.<sup>50</sup>

However, the future Benedictines of Downside consisted of a group of English and Welsh monks who had established themselves at Douai in order to lead a conventual life. In 1599, several English students from the college at Valladolid were professed, and six of them joined the English Mission. The English Mission was seen as the responsibility of exiled Catholics to return to England to convert others to Catholicism.<sup>51</sup> It was strictly forbidden to practise Catholicism in England, and those who undertook the mission did so at great personal risk.<sup>52</sup> Likewise, how the missionaries should conduct themselves was also widely disputed, which eventually led to Pope Benedict XIV's (1675-1758, papacy 1740-1758) *regulae observandae in anglicanis missionibus* (1753) which attempted to offer guidance to the religious superiors on the requirements for a good missionary.<sup>53</sup>

The students who joined the mission were Augustine Bradshaw (c.1530-1617), William Johnson (1580-1663), Joseph Prater (c.1550-1631), John Roberts (1576-1610), John Hutton (1578-1643) and Leander Jones (1575-1635).<sup>54</sup> They spent the next year petitioning the

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<sup>48</sup> Catholics during Elizabeth's reign. See Hugh Connolly, *Some Dates and Documents for the Early History of Our House*. (Stratton on the Fosse, Downside Abbey Press, 1930), David Lunn, *The English Benedictines 1540 - 1688: From Reformation to Revolution*. (London, Burns & Oates, 1980).

<sup>49</sup> Douai and Louvain signaled the convergence of two distinct movements. Louvain was founded by Catholic scholars from Oxford such as Thomas Harding (1516-1572), who had been a fellow at New College, and Regius Professor of Hebrew before his exile during Elizabeth I's reign. C. J. Fordyce, 'Louvain and Oxford in the Sixteenth Century' *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, (1933) 645-652. Also see Norbert Birt, *The Elizabethan Religious Settlement* (London, 1907) for more on the settlement of Catholic exiles during the Elizabethan period.

<sup>50</sup> John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community: 1570-1850* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975), p. 18. Bossy also gives a full account of Cardinal Allen and the English College.

<sup>51</sup> See James E. Kelly and Susan Royal, ed. *Early Modern English Catholicism: Identity, Memory and Counter-Reformation* (Leiden: BRILL, 2016). The first section relating to religious identity is particularly pertinent to this discussion.

<sup>52</sup> See Stephen Marron, 'The Second Benedictine Mission to England', *DM* (1923) 157 or Hugh Connolly, *Some Dates and Documents of Our Early House* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 1930).

<sup>53</sup> Thomas M. McCoog, 'Liberate nos Domine': The Vicars Apostolic and the Suppressed/Restored English Province of the Society of Jesus' in James E. Kelly and Susan Royal, ed. *Early Modern English Catholicism: Identity, Memory and Counter-Reformation* (Leiden: BRILL, 2016) p. 84. See also R.E. Scully, *A Companion to Catholicism and Recusancy in Britain and Ireland: From Reformation to Emancipation* (Brill, 2021).

<sup>54</sup> Hugh Connolly, *Some Dates and Documents of Our Early House* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 1930), p. 1.



Spanish General Chapter to obtain permission from Rome to take part in the English Mission, which, although granted in 1601, was delayed by the Archpriest/Appellant Controversy between Rome and the English Clergy;<sup>55</sup> in 1602, the monks were granted the faculty to join the mission by Pope Clement VIII (1536-1605, papacy 1592-1605).<sup>56</sup> The controversy, however, would reappear when the monks tried to establish Douai, as the lack of hierarchical consistency since the Reformation implied that ‘the English Benedictines had not re-entered on their ancestral patrimony’.<sup>57</sup> This lack of coherence has been highlighted most recently by scholars such as Stephen Vanderputten or Alison Beach in the medieval church.<sup>58</sup> These foundations of medieval instability provide important context for this study, as the implications of the medieval instability within monasteries are echoed in their nineteenth-century counterparts.

Permission to go on the mission was given to the English Monks belonging to the Italian Cassinese or Spanish Valladolid congregations that had settled in the area. The two groups acted independently from each other, with separate superiors, with the Spanish congregation being more numerous and influential.<sup>59</sup> The early members of the Downside were part of the Spanish Congregation. As the community became more secure, the monks acquired buildings of their own, on the same site in which they remained until the French Revolution. The expulsion of the monks after the French Revolution has been thoroughly explored by many historians such as Desan, Hunt, and Nelson and will be covered in further detail as to its relevance to the Downside monks in due course.<sup>60</sup> Although the exact date is unknown, the Douai Archives

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<sup>55</sup> This controversy related to the precarious hierarchical structure of the English exiles on the continent, and Rome’s decision to not appoint any successors to the Marian bishops who had been deposed. For more on this subject, see Thomas M. McCoog, ‘Libera nos Domine’: The Vicars Apostolic and the Suppressed/Restored English Province of the Society of Jesus’ in James E. Kelly and Susan Royal, ed. *Early Modern English Catholicism: Identity, Memory and Counter-Reformation* (Leiden: BRILL, 2016).

<sup>56</sup> Edwin H Burton and Thomas L. Williams, *The Douay College Diaries: Third, Fourth, and Fifth, 1598-1654, with the Rheims Report, 1579-80* (London: J. Whitehead & Son, Leeds, 1911)

<sup>57</sup> Frédéric Fabre, ‘The Settling of the English Benedictines at Douai: As Seen Chiefly through Unpublished Documents of the Vatican Archives (1607–1611)’ *The Downside Review*, 1, 52, (1934), 93-128 (p. 95).

<sup>58</sup> Alison I. Beach, *The Trauma of Monastic Reform: Community and Conflict in Twelfth-Century Germany* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2017) or Steven Vanderputten, *Reform, Conflict and the Shaping of Corporate Identities: Collected Studies on Benedictine Monasticism, 1050–1150* (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2013).

<sup>59</sup> For a history of Catholicism in Spain, see William A. Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

<sup>60</sup> For the global context of the French Revolutions see Suzanne Desan, Lynn Hunt, and William Max Nelson, eds. *The French Revolution in Global Perspective*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013). There are also accounts from the early monks of Downside of the effects of the Revolution on the monastery. See Green Collection, Downside Abbey Archives, Stratton on the Fosse.

indicate that they were living in their new residence by 1596.<sup>61</sup> They began to build a room for a chapel on 22 June 1600, and the foundation stone was laid on 22 February 1603.<sup>62</sup>

In 1603, five English monks were sent to England from the Spanish and Italian communities to spread the word of God. They were Augustine Bradshaw (c.1530-1617), John Roberts (1576-1610), Joseph Prater (c.1550-1631), Thomas Preston (1567-1640) and Anselm Beech (c.1571-c.1634).<sup>63</sup> This coincided with a larger exodus from Valladolid which was exacerbated by the death of Elizabeth I and the accession of the Catholic James I in March 1603.<sup>64</sup> However, Augustine Bradshaw (clothed 1599, professed in 1600 at the Abbey of St Martin's, Compostella) was recalled from the mission to the Spanish General Chapter in 1604. In the General Chapter, arrangements were made for the studies of the English monks, and two colleges in the Spanish monasteries were set aside for theology and philosophy.<sup>65</sup> This was known as the English College.<sup>66</sup> Between 1604-5 at least one more student joined the Benedictines - John Barnes - and the first recorded instance of a Benedictine movement in the English College at Douai was recorded, with its foundation credited to Augustine Bradshaw and John Bradshaw.<sup>67</sup>

The establishment of the Benedictines at Douai was in part due to Bradshaw's connections on the continent. Bradshaw had been Chaplain-Major to Thomas Lord Arundell (c.1560-1639), Commander of the English Regiment in Flanders and had been the chief military chaplain for the army of Archduke Albert VII (1559-1621), ruler of the Spanish Netherlands (1598-1621)

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<sup>61</sup> Edwin H Burton and Thomas L. Williams, *The Douay College Diaries: Third, Fourth, and Fifth, 1598-1654, with the Rheims Report, 1579-80* (London: J. Whitehead & Son, Leeds, 1911)

<sup>62</sup> Edwin H Burton and Thomas L. Williams, *The Douay College Diaries*, p. 24, p. 47.

<sup>63</sup> Bradshaw, Roberts and Prater were from Spain and Preston and Beech were from the Italian community. Ten others went on the mission during 1603 - Andrew Shirley, (William) Gregory Grange, (Lewis) Justus Edney (alias Cook or Rigg), Thomas Emerson, (Hugh) Bede Helme, (Robert) Paulinus Appleby, (Humpfrey) Anselm Tuberville, Robert Haddock (or Haydock), Nicolas Becket, and (Francis) Boniface Kemp. For more, see Hugh Connolly, 'The First Six', *The Downside Review*, 1,46, (1928) 31-49.

<sup>64</sup> See Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor: The Episcopate of James I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990) and W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998). See also J. N. Figgis, *The Divine Right of Kings* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965).

<sup>65</sup> Charles Dodd, *Dodd's Church History of England from the Commencement of the Sixteenth Century to the Revolution in 1688* (London: C. Dolman, 1839) p. cccxiii.

<sup>66</sup> See in particular Aidan Bellenger, (1986). *The French Exiled Clergy in the British Isles after 1789: An Historical Introduction and Working List*. (Downside Abbey Press: Bath: 1986).

<sup>67</sup> Bernard Ward, 'Douai' *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, 5 (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909). Information regarding the foundation of the Douai College can also be found in the Douai Seminary Archives, France.

before the inception of Douai.<sup>68</sup> On 28 September 1606, Bradshaw obtained a letter of recommendation to Abbot Phillippe de Caverel of Arras (1555-1636) from the Archduke to help them establish themselves.<sup>69</sup> Abbot de Carevel was sympathetic to the English monks' plight and so promised to help facilitate a permanent home for them if they could obtain official permission from the King of Spain, Phillip III (1578-1612, reigned 1598-1621) and Archduke Albert. In 1606, permission was granted, and the exiled monks established their own monastic house. This marked the official start of the Douai Monastery, and the foundations of the community began here in 1606.<sup>70</sup>

The first stages of the monastery were rudimentary, taking the form of a 'dormitory' in Anchin College – 'a mere lodging in which there could have been no sense of conventual life'.<sup>71</sup> However, this proved to be unsustainable, and through the combined support of Cardinal Allen, and under the patronage of Abbot de Caverel, who provided much of the early financial backing, the community's fortunes were quickly transformed.<sup>72</sup> On 11 October 1611, Abbot de Caverel turned over a spacious college building and chapel to the monks, which they shared with visiting monks from St Verdest's in Arras who were studying in the town.<sup>73</sup> Four days later, the Chapter of Arras, who held authority over the diocese, granted permission for the new monastery the right to celebrate the Divine Office publicly, erect altars and ring bells.<sup>74</sup> The new monastery was dedicated to St Gregory the Great. It was much more spacious than their original lodgings, as in 1573 it consisted of four large buildings, which by the end of the seventeenth century had increased to fourteen.<sup>75</sup> However, the connection to Anchin College

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<sup>68</sup> [In September 1605, Fr Bradshaw left the mission in England to become a military chaplain to the first Lord Arundell of Wardour who had recently been given command of the English Catholic regiment serving under the King of Spain in the Low Countries. By May 1606, he was no longer chaplain, and was able to turn his attention to securing a home for the exiled English monks. Here, he gains a letter of recommendation from Archduke Albert. Bradshaw was also endowed with the newly created office of vicar-general of the English-Spanish Benedictine missionaries at this time.] Norbert Birt, *History of Downside School* (London: Keagan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1902) p. 25.

<sup>69</sup> Hugh Connolly, *Some Dates and Documents of Our Early House* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 1930), p. 12.

<sup>70</sup> See Hugh Connolly, 'Abbot Caverel's Foundation for St Gregory's', *The Downside Review*, 2, 56, (1938) 191–211.

<sup>71</sup> Hugh Connolly, 'Abbot Caverel's Tercentenary', *The Downside Review*, 55, 1, (1937) 1–11 (p. 5).

<sup>72</sup> Hubert Van Zeller, *Downside By and Large* (London & New York: Sheed and Ward, 1953), p. 3.

<sup>73</sup> Norbert Birt, *History of Downside School* (London: Keagan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1902) p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Norbert Birt, *History of Downside School*, p. 3.

<sup>75</sup> G Cardon, *La Fondation de University de Douai*, (Paris: Publisher Unknown, 1892) p. 450.

was never completely severed, and a close relationship continued between the two colleges, 'whose superiors worked together in the greatest harmony and concord'.<sup>76</sup>

On average, the newly established community contained around twenty-four monks and expanded quickly. Soon after St Gregory's, the English monks founded Dieulouard in Lorraine, a third at Paris with a cell in Chelles, Lamspringe and Rintelin in Westphalia and St Malo in Brittany. These houses formed the 'English Congregation'.<sup>77</sup> In the words of Norbert Birt (1861-1919, Downside), these communities 'were the actual representatives of the ancient English congregation consisting of the abbeys and houses and cathedral chapters which covered the land before Henry VIII's suppression of the monasteries'.<sup>78</sup> This emphasis on representation and continuity by Birt is typical of scholarship at the time, and indicative of the narrative that the Downside monks desired for their monastery.<sup>79</sup>

However, the re-establishment of the monasteries in exile after their devastation by Henry VIII in the sixteenth century necessitated a constitution geared to urgent missionary work in England under strong centralised control.<sup>80</sup> The Congregation at this time replicated their government policy from the dominant forms found in the Spanish Congregation, Cuthbert Butler asserts that the early constitutions were no more than an adapted version of the constitutions of the Congregation of Valladolid where most of the monks had settled.<sup>81</sup> This assertion that the early constitutions were merely adaptations is fundamental to the desire for reform that was exhibited in the nineteenth century.<sup>82</sup> The expansion of the mission to the continent, and the colonial impact of the English mission – to which Downside was deeply connected – had a great impact on the English monasteries and acted as an extension of the missionary impulse that drove the

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<sup>76</sup> Frédéric Fabre, 'The Settling of the English Benedictines at Douai: As Seen Chiefly through Unpublished Documents of the Vatican Archives (1607–1611)', *The Downside Review*, 1, 52, (1934), 93–128 (p. 99).

<sup>77</sup> Norbert Birt, *History of Downside School* (London: Keagan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1902) p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> Norbert Birt, *History of Downside School*, p. 4.

<sup>79</sup> For more on the monks' desire for foundational stability see [Anon.], 'From Douai to Downside' *The Downside Review*, 1, 2, (1881) 93–128 as a prime example of articles of this type in *The Downside Review*.

<sup>80</sup> Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard, ed. 'Downside's Foundations and Missions', *The Raven*, (2012), 17–25.

<sup>81</sup> For the history of constitutional monastic reform see Guy Bedouelle, *The Reform of Catholicism (1480–1620)*, trans. James K. Farge (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2008).

<sup>82</sup> See *Historical Notes on English Catholic Missions*, ed. by B. W. Kelly, (London: Keagan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1907), Aidan Bellenger, 'The English Benedictines and the British Empire', in *Victorian Churches and Churchmen: Essays Presented to Vincent Alan McClelland*, ed. by Sheridan Gilley (Woodbridge: Boydell Press for the Catholic Record Society, 2005), 94–109 or Colin Barr, *Ireland's Empire. The Roman Catholic Church in the English-Speaking World, 1829–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

return to England.<sup>83</sup> The Downside Controversy was in part caused by the difficulty in defining what exactly should constitute missionary status in the nineteenth century, wherein the circumstances were very different to those which had necessitated such actions during the Reformation.

The monks of Douai developed a monastic tradition which was distinctly English in character and much influenced by their connections to Sigebert Buckley (c. 1520-1610) and medieval Westminster.<sup>84</sup> The community felt very strongly about their continued relationship with their medieval past and believed that despite the fragmentation of a direct lineage to the ancient monasteries they had the right to recall and appropriate this past.<sup>85</sup> The historical works of many of the monks at this time emphasise a coherent continuation of the lineage between medieval monks and the present Benedictine Community. These narratives are frequently tenuously linked in nature but demonstrate the desire for strong foundational stories and an emphasis on a hierarchical structure. The monks of Douai believed they could trace back their monastic presence to pre-Reformation monasticism at Westminster Cathedral. At Westminster, a singular Benedictine and Old Gregorian, Father Sigebert Buckley remained at the Royal Chapel throughout Mary I's reign. During this time, he received two members of the Cassinese community – Robert Sadler (c.1582-1621) and Edward Mayhew (1570-1625) and effectively restored the community through Cardinal Pole's dispensation (1555).<sup>86</sup> This dispensation was signed by Buckley and acted as the foundational material and inspiration for many of the post-Reformation communities regarding foundational authority and monastic governance.

For many, including the Downside Community, Buckley was regarded as representing the continuity of the community and its constitutions throughout the English Reformation. The constitutions remained unchanged throughout the various revisions of the EBC up to and

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<sup>83</sup> For more on the mission's colonial context, see *Empires of Religion*, ed. by Hilary M Carey, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008). Peter Cunich's chapter on Archbishop Vaughan is particularly relevant to the Downside cause.

<sup>84</sup> Hugh Connolly, 'The Buckley Affair', *The Downside Review*, 30 (1931), 49-7.

<sup>85</sup> For examples see Francis Aidan Gasquet, 'Sketch of Monastic Constitutional History', in *The Monks of the West from St. Benedict to St. Bernard* by Charles Forbes, (London: J. C. Nimmo, 1896) Cuthbert Butler, *Benedictine Monachism: Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule*. (London: Longmans Green) 1919 or Cuthbert Butler, *Western Mysticism: The Teaching of SS. Augustine, Gregory and Bernard on Contemplation and the Contemplative Life: Neglected Chapters in the History of Religion* (London: Longmans Green, 1927).

<sup>86</sup> Hugh Connolly, *The Abbots of the Ancient Monasteries and the Cathedral Priors* (St Benet's Hall: Oxford, 1942).

including 1888 when several domestic reforms occurred.<sup>87</sup> The formation of the EBC at this time was the first serious attempt to instigate a revival of the ancient Benedictine houses of Britain under the papal bull *Plantata* (1633). At this point, many English monks undertook missionary work, overseen by the General Chapter, who coordinated all monastic activity. The Douai community returned to England in 1643 and began to involve itself in missionary activity. *Plantata* was considered to denote the restoration of authority to the Congregation - the 'palladium of our [the Benedictines'] liberties'.<sup>88</sup> The bull was designed to emphasise and re-establish the governance of the EBC in England and invoke the restoration of the monasteries for the first time since the Reformation. Ultimately, it gave the English Benedictines the right to return to the monasteries of Britain that had been inhabited by their medieval forefathers. However, by necessity, it also cemented the Congregation's missionary presence as a result of the Reformation's removal of property and parishes. Whilst *Plantata* gave the re-established English Congregation authority over the original medieval monasteries, the Reformation assured that this was only a theoretical debate. *Plantata* instead ratified the English Benedictines' missionary mandate, through which the President of the Congregation had the sole authority to transfer them to or from the mission.<sup>89</sup>

Douai would become the home of the St Gregory's community until their expulsion from France in 1795.<sup>90</sup> They left French shores on 26 February and arrived in Dover on 2 March.<sup>91</sup> The monks then travelled to Acton Burnell Hall, Shropshire, which was the family seat of the prominent Catholic - Sir Edward Smythe (1758-1811, 5<sup>th</sup> Baronet).<sup>92</sup> Smythe had been taught by the monks at Douai, and so extended hospitality to the exiled monastic community.<sup>93</sup> A portion of the mansion was set aside for the monastery and a wing was given for school use.

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<sup>87</sup> David Lunn, *The English Benedictines 1540 - 1688: From Reformation to Revolution* (London: Burns & Oates, 1980).

<sup>88</sup> Hugh Connolly, *The Abbots of the Ancient Monasteries and the Cathedral Priors* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1942) p. 55.

<sup>89</sup> Richard D. G Irvine, 'Stability, Continuity, Place An English Benedictine Monastery as a Case 'in *Religious Architecture: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. by Oskar Verkaaik. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2013), p. 31.

<sup>90</sup> Hubert Van Zeller, *Downside By and Large* (London & New York: Sheed and Ward, 1953), p. 4.

<sup>91</sup> Norbert Birt, *History of Downside School* (London: Keagan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1902) p. 122.

<sup>92</sup> John Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage of the British Empire*, 2 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1832).

<sup>93</sup> Precise dates have been lost but Norbert Birt records his tenure at Downside school as around 1770 - 1777. See Norbert Birt, *History of Downside School* (London: Keagan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1902) p. 124.

However, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, and with the revival of Catholicism underway, Acton Burnell became ill-suited to the needs of a growing community.<sup>94</sup>

The monks sourced the site in Somerset, which at the time of purchase in 1814 only consisted of a small country estate now known as the 'Old House' and its various outbuildings. However, it remained a small institution as the members of the community dreamt of a return to France. The restoration of Louis XVIII as France's leader indicated that conditions might be favourable to return to Douai. Under Louis XVIII, the French government were attempting to repatriate property with their owners, and so the monks foresaw a return to the grand monastery they had built there. In 1816, two monks - Augustine Lawson (1758-1830, Downside, Prior 1814-8) and John Harrison (1773-1846, Downside) - returned to Douai to take possession and plan for the removal of St. Gregory's from England to the old College. Whilst the monastery and church were destroyed, the College had been preserved. It was decided that this would suffice for both students and monks until a new monastery could be built.<sup>95</sup> However, the archives suggest that the rough channel crossing and the lack of residential property lessened the community's desire to return to Douai.<sup>96</sup> At the chapter held in 1818, Lawson resigned the priorship, and Bernard Barber (1790-1850, Downside) succeeded him. This change in leadership signalled the beginnings of a determination to build in Somerset. As the relocation to England was thought to be temporary, the site in Somerset did not share its name with Douai. When the Somerset location became permanent, the rights to the name of Douai were forfeited, and the community became Downside. Downside takes its name from its location – 'downside of Mount Pleasant'.<sup>97</sup> The remains of Douai were offered to St. Edmund's, formerly the Paris house, whose community were homeless. They accepted it as a loan, and it now forms the flourishing community and college on the original St. Gregory's property.<sup>98</sup> The monks that relocated to Berkshire, England from the Paris community were the ones to name their new monastery Douai. Douai Abbey in Berkshire continues to flourish to this day.<sup>99</sup>

Despite the yearning for France, plans were made in 1814 for new monastery buildings by John Tasker (c.1738-1816) the architect who had recently rebuilt Acton Burnell Hall. However,

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<sup>94</sup> The monks outgrew their home at Acton Burnell and began to search for a larger location.

<sup>95</sup> [Anon.], 'From Douai to Downside' *The Downside Review*, 1, 2, (1881) 93-128 (p. 103).

<sup>96</sup> For an amusing account of the return voyage to Downside from Paris, see DAA, The Green Collection, *Manuscript 12*.

<sup>97</sup> Aidan Bellenger ed., *Downside Abbey: An Architectural History* (London: Merrell, 2011)

<sup>98</sup> [Anon.], 'From Douai to Downside' *The Downside Review*, 1, 2, (1881) 93-128 (p. 103).

<sup>99</sup> P.R. Harris, 'The English College, Douai, 1750-1794', *Recusant History*, 2, 10, (1969), 79-95.

these drawings were not favoured by the community, and the task of building Downside was eventually given to H. E Goodrich (1797-1864). The foundation stone was laid with great ceremony on the feast of St. Benedict on 11 July 1820.<sup>100</sup> Despite the chapel not being finished, the solemn opening took place on 10 July 1823, presided over by Bishop Baines.<sup>101</sup> By 1838, the community had yet again outgrown Goodrich's small structure, and plans were once again made for expansion. In 1845, the community began the plans for an abbey intended to be a monument to the English Catholic Revival. This coincided with the rise of Catholic liberalism in political spheres, and the Lamennais principle described by Wilfred Ward that 'the Church was to be the principle of construction for the civilisation of the future'.<sup>102</sup> Coupled with increasing tolerance to English Catholicism, the monks' increasing confidence in their position in England reflected the rising buildings.<sup>103</sup> It was here that the Benedictine community laid the foundation stone to the new abbey in 1863, dedicating it to St Gregory the Great.<sup>104</sup> In the words of Downside monk, Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard (1941 - present, Downside) "the building of the abbey church of St Gregory the Great in 1876 demonstrated the culmination of the efforts of the monks who made it their lives' work to dedicate themselves to God".<sup>105</sup>

Under the priorate of Aidan Gasquet (1878-85) and the successive abbacies of Edmund Ford (1894-1906), and Cuthbert Butler (1906-22), the abbey took shape and was finally raised to the rank of a minor basilica in 1935 by Pope Pius XI (1922-39). As the seat of the EBC, it experienced the revival of monasticism in the nineteenth century, with record numbers of men entering the community at this time.<sup>106</sup> The monastic experience could be both inclusive and isolated, and with the abbey's focus on missionary zeal, it was common for a monk to be detached from the large community to spread the word further afield. During this period, Downside had over fifteen active missions, which necessitated distance from the motherhouse.

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<sup>100</sup> [Anon.], 'From Douai to Downside' *The Downside Review*, 1, 2, (1881) 93-128 (p. 103).

<sup>101</sup> 'From Douai to Downside' *The Downside Review*, p. 103.

<sup>102</sup> Wilfrid Ward, *William George Ward and the Catholic Revival* (London, 1912) p. 85.

<sup>103</sup> See either Josef L. Altholz, *The Liberal Catholic Movement in England: The 'Rambler' and its Contributors, 1848-1864* (Burns and Oates: London, 1962) for more on Catholic liberalism at this time as one of the most comprehensive studies on this period.

<sup>104</sup> For an interesting take on foundational stone ceremonies in Ireland see Niamh Nicghabhann, 'A Development of Practical Catholic Emancipation': Laying the Foundations for the Roman Catholic Urban Landscape, 1850-1900' *Urban History*, 46, 1, (2019) pp. 44-61. The foundational ceremony at Downside was perhaps not as harmonious as Nicghabhann suggests of Irish ceremonies, with tensions from disagreements over constitutional reform meant that some senior clergy chose not to attend the ceremony.

<sup>105</sup> Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard, ed. 'Downside's Foundations and Missions', *The Raven*, (2012), 17-25.

<sup>106</sup> For evidence of the expansion of the community during this period see [Anon.], 'From Douai to Downside' *The Downside Review*, 1, 2, (1881) 93-128.



Monks of Downside could be found as far as Sydney, Australia, or establishing missionary activity in Sussex or London or indeed serving the Pope at Rome.

The Priory (later Abbey) Church was built under the guidance of many successive architects: Dunn and Hansom (1872-95), Comper (1899-1900), Garner (1901-5), Walters (1911-2), and Gilbert Scott (1923-5).<sup>107</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner considered the abbey church to be ‘one of the great masterpieces of the Gothic Revival’.<sup>108</sup> Certainly, it is this spirit of revival that pervades at Downside, which contains stone taken from the ruins at Glastonbury Abbey, and rebuilds them into what Nikolaus Pevsner also described as ‘the most splendid demonstration of the renaissance of Roman Catholicism in England’.<sup>109</sup> This revival in gothic architecture is prevalent throughout the whole of the monastery and is only broken away from in the creation of the library and guest wing, which was created under Francis Pollen (1926-87) in 1970. A living monastic presence even today, Downside is also home to the largest collection of religious material in the Southwest and remains the depository of the EBC. The monastery demonstrates the continuing relationship between monastic building efforts and the lives of the monastic community. In many ways, the history of Downside is can be seen as one that values continuity, community and collective memory. However, this is not the complete picture.

## **The Downside Controversy**

In the late nineteenth century, a group of newly professed monks of Downside sought to change the governance of the EBC and the hierarchy of power inside and outside the monastery. They were inspired by medieval history and the history of the foundation of Downside.<sup>110</sup> The monks involved in the Controversy used historical narrative to further their agendas. The archival material found at Downside Abbey that belonged to these monks suggests that much time was spent using papal bulls associated with Douai and the medieval Benedictines in England to justify their resolve for constitutional reform. Using the medieval monastery as a template, the

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<sup>107</sup> This introductory material regarding the abbey church itself is primarily taken from a few sources, including the current guidebook, Pevsner’s *Buildings of England* and the Historic England Grade I description. See Guidebook, (Downside Abbey Press: Stratton on the Fosse, 2017) and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Somerset North and Bristol*, (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2011).

<sup>108</sup> *Downside Abbey: An Architectural History*, ed. by Aidan Bellenger, (London & New York: Merrell, 2011), pp. 18.

<sup>109</sup> Nikolaus Pevsner, *Buildings of England: Somerset North and Bristol* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2011).

<sup>110</sup> See DAA, Edmund Ford Collection. *Research Notes*; Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Research Notes*, and Aidan Gasquet Collection, *Research Notes*.

group of monks known as the Movement endeavoured to return to a more centralised abbatial government and a greater emphasis on the sanctity of monastery-centred living. The members of the Movement felt that the post-Reformation relationship between abbey and superior was unequal and believed that it prejudiced the relationship between monk and mission against a true monastic vocation.<sup>111</sup> The Movement's aims had developed out of the foundations of the abbey and were influenced by their fledgling monastic careers. The events of the Controversy confirmed the progressive ideas of the Movement, eventually raising Downside to a minor basilica and giving monasteries control over their own properties, monks and missions.

The events of the Controversy took place primarily at Downside Abbey, but in doing so, involved all the communities of the EBC that existed in England at that point - Ampleforth (1802), Stanbrook (1838) and Belmont (1875). It also included the daughter house of Downside, Fort Augustus (1876) and all of the missions that were attached to the monasteries.<sup>112</sup> The opposition to the Movement was vast, and at points included all of the houses of the EBC. The opposition was centred around several senior members of the Congregation. These included Austin Bury (1827-1904) who had been promoted to the Provincial of York (1878-83) and Benedict Snow (Downside, 1838-1905). They were hugely influential within the EBC and largely responsible for guiding the President of the Congregation, Richard Placid Burchall (1812-85; President 1854-83). For Downside, Clement Fowler (1851-1929) led the opposition. This meant that in the words of Cuthbert Butler, 'a succession of men who were dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the congregation... resulting in the malcontents being sent on the mission as 'dangerous men'. In 1880 there were half a dozen such men at Downside'.<sup>113</sup> The 'dangerous men' of Downside involved were under the informal leadership of Hugh Edmund Ford (1851-1930), Francis Aidan Gasquet (1846-1929) and Edward Cuthbert Butler (1856-1934). The rest of the Movement were: Bernard Murphy (1840-1914), Wilfred Corney (1851-1926), Gilbert Dolan (1853-1914), Joseph Colgan (1857-1938), Conrad Banckaert (1843-1910), Osmund Knight (1853-1935), Wilfred New (1859-1931), Meinrad Fulton (1860-1912), Aelred Kindersley (1960-1934) and Stephen Rawlinson

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<sup>111</sup> See Richard Yeo, *The Structure and Content of Monastic Profession: A Juridical Study, with Particular Regard to the Practice of the English Benedictine Congregation since the French Revolution* (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 1982).

<sup>112</sup> The dates given refer to their arrival and foundation in England.

<sup>113</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p.14.

(1865-1953).<sup>114</sup>

The main aim of the Movement was to transform the system of governance used within the monastery and to remove the monasteries' dependence on a missionary presence. The system that was used in England until 1880 had evolved out of the necessity for a centralised government to organise the fragmented missionary presence of monks in England.<sup>115</sup> As stated in the introduction, the re-establishment of the monasteries in the sixteenth century necessitated a constitution tailored towards urgent missionary work in England under strong centralised control.<sup>116</sup> The congregation at this time replicated their government policy from the dominant forms found in the Spanish Congregation and were primarily adapted from the constitutions of the Congregation of Valladolid where most of the monks had settled.<sup>117</sup>

By the nineteenth century, the EBC was firmly entrenched in an oligarchical style of governmental structure. In Butler's manuscript, he describes the circumstances of the President's power within the general chapters and EBC itself. This manuscript contains a chapter that details the state of the EBC as perceived by the Movement. Here, this thesis will explore the Movement's perception of the EBC, and the authority held by the senior members of the community. By examining these preconceptions, the Movement's motivations for inciting the Controversy will be revealed.

First, Butler explains how

all power and jurisdiction radically invested in the general chapter which met every four years... [and was] defined at the beginning of the constitutions to be the fountain whence all the power of the Superiors was derived.<sup>118</sup>

As such, the general chapter consisted of the superiors of each of the monastic houses, who met several times a year to discuss business necessary to the running of the Congregation. Outside of the general chapter meetings, Butler described how 'the supreme power of the Congregation was vested in the President and a board of three Councillors... [who were] elected

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<sup>114</sup> See DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 77.

<sup>115</sup> Hugh Connolly, *Some Dates and Documents of Our Early House* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 1930), p. 1. See previous chapter for the history of the Downside community.

<sup>116</sup> Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard, ed. 'Downside's Foundations and Missions', *The Raven*, (2012), 17-25.

<sup>117</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 3.

<sup>118</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p.4.

by the chapter.<sup>119</sup> Likewise, Butler described how the community had to obtain the President's permission for many aspects of community life – 'he had one great power, that of translation: here he was absolute; he could move any monks from one monastery to another, or from monastery to mission'.<sup>120</sup> For the monastic individual, Butler explained that this meant 'at profession every monk took an oath to leave his monastery for the mission... as the President should command'.<sup>121</sup> Ultimately, Butler saw that 'by the year 1880 the English Congregation was the sole survivor of the oligarchical type of government among Benedictines'.<sup>122</sup>

Butler also described how it was the Movement's firmly held belief that the congregation was in a 'transitional stage' and was waiting for favourable conditions to enable the EBC to return to its former glory.<sup>123</sup> The events of the Controversy were preceded by a sense amongst the members that there was an appetite for an 'openly pronounced movement on foot for a monastic reform... and a widespread feeling that things were wrong in the congregation'.<sup>124</sup> Furthermore, the appointment of conservative men to the General chapter indicated that in the eyes of the Movement, it was certain that under Bury, Snow and Abbot Burchall the monasteries were in danger of being 'put under the provincials, and of other measures that would soon have eradicated the monastic elements of the Congregation'.<sup>125</sup>

The Downside Movement chiefly sought to enact the following manifesto, copied here from Butler's manuscript:

1. That Missions and missionaries should be put under the monastic superiors.
2. That the monasteries should be erected into Abbeys, and the Abbots eventually chosen for life.
3. That as soon as the monasteries were ready for it, they should each have their own noviciate.
4. That the General chapter should be reformed, so as to lessen the missionary element and strengthen the house element.
5. That the individual monks should be given some kind of fixity of tenure in the monastery, so that they might look forward, during good behaviour, to remaining in their monastery if they felt that such was their vocation.
6. The reorganisation of the studies.

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<sup>119</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p.4.

<sup>120</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p.4.

<sup>121</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p.4.

<sup>122</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 4.

<sup>123</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 13.

<sup>124</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 13.

<sup>125</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 14.

7. An improvement in the discipline in the monasteries.
8. The appointment of a Rector to work the school.
9. A change in the Vocation system.
10. The erection of Missionary Pories and better discipline in the Missions.<sup>126</sup>

The events of the Downside Controversy can be primarily seen as occurring from 1880 to 1900, however, the background for the reformer's movement can be seen as beginning in 1878, when a key member of the group, Aidan Gasquet was elected as Prior of Downside (1878-85). At the same time, Edmund Ford was made Prefect of Studies and Clement Fowler was elected as Master of Discipline. By 1880, Ford (acting under Gasquet's encouragement) had enacted many reforms within the school and monastery. Ford introduced lay masters and reorganised the syllabus and teaching style in the school with a greater focus on university degrees, and cultivating literary and artistic tastes.<sup>127</sup> However, the process was not always popular; such as among those who Butler considered to 'sigh for the good old thing' and wanted no change, and those who considered Ford's reforms as beyond the remit of the Prefect of Studies. Clement Fowler, as Prefect of Discipline, was a vocal critic, who saw Ford's actions as an attempt to usurp his power. Traditionally, Fowler's position as Prefect of Discipline was higher ranked than the Prefect of Studies, and so the extension of Ford's power through the reforms process led to resentment and distrust between the two men that would never be fully resolved.

The events of the Controversy began with a visitation from Boniface Krug (Prior of Monte Cassino, 1838-1909) in June 1880. Although the manuscript appears to suggest that visit had been greatly desired by the Downside Movement, the Movement themselves had not been able to articulate this to Rome as it was not the desire of much of the community. However, at the previous Centenary meeting of the Congregation in Rome, plans had independently been made for a thorough report on the EBC. These plans had been discovered by Francis Weld (1819-99), who was a close confidante of the Downside Movement, and whose close connections to Rome ensured that the visit was centred at Downside. Weld was not a member of the monastic community, but instead educated at Downside and was ordained a priest in 1842 and became an Apostolic protonotary soon after. Weld came from a notable Catholic family who were great benefactors of the Catholic Church.

However, 'the news — came as a bolt from the blue — caused no small indignation and alarm

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<sup>126</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 30.

<sup>127</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 11.

at headquarters' and the conservative faction headed by Bury worked to disrupt the visitation.<sup>128</sup> After Downside, the Apostolic Visitor went to each of the monasteries in turn. At Belmont, the prior, Wilfred Raynal (1830–1904) was resistant to the Movement's aims, and so had advised his community to speak in opposition of the proposals made, as well as monitoring their communications with the Apostolic Visitor. Likewise, at Ampleforth, the reception to the Apostolic Visitor was hostile; the prior, Placid Whittle (1858-1920) held equally strong missionary views. After interviewing both sides of the Controversy for many hours, he returned to Rome. Before his return to Rome however, he returned to Downside to deliver the news that 'in face of the great opposition to change, all he could hold out to us [members of the Movement] was that some fundamental measures would probably work their effect in course of time, and gradually bring things round.'<sup>129</sup> Instead, the production of the report led to the delay of the General chapter in 1882. The consensus was that Downside's eagerness to welcome the visitor and their influence on the publication of Krug's report caused the delay to the General chapter. Because of this, Downside was the subject of much anger amongst the wider Benedictine community, who saw the Downside Movement's actions as attempting to 'destroy the Congregation'.<sup>130</sup> To demonstrate their displeasure, the President of the Congregation, Burchall and many of his followers refused to come to the opening of the new transepts at Downside, which occurred soon after the report was made public.<sup>131</sup>

Whilst waiting for the results of the report Butler described how a 'great and very unequal struggle began in the Congregation'.<sup>132</sup> Whilst touring the EBC, Krug had spoken of the 'spirit and views' that prevailed at Downside.<sup>133</sup> The conservatives within the EBC had feared its meaning, and it led to many assumptions as to the extent of the reforms intended. It was taken, by the Movement's most extreme detractors, that the Movement were in favour of the abolishment of the missions, which in the words of Cuthbert Butler – 'this was not the case; but in spite of all protests, it continued to be generally believed'.<sup>134</sup> This led to a pamphleteering

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<sup>128</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 23.

<sup>129</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 31.

<sup>130</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 15.

<sup>131</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Opening of the Transept Guest List*.

<sup>132</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 34.

<sup>133</sup> See Luke Beckett, 'The Exploration Of Benedictine Identity Among English Benedictines In The Early 1880s', *English Benedictine Congregation History Commission Symposium, Buckfast Abbey*, 2013.

<sup>134</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 34. Indeed, the post-Controversy period saw the continuation of many of the missions, and the inception of several new ones.

war between the two sides as they sought to promote their respective positions.<sup>135</sup> This was started by Bury who issued the tract which depreciated any changes to the constitutions and urged those who opposed the current regime to leave the Congregation.<sup>136</sup> This was followed by a booklet on the missionary endeavours of the Congregation by Benedict Snow, the Provincial of York.<sup>137</sup> This more moderate booklet gained more traction within the Congregation than Bury's and introduced the need to examine the fundamental reasons behind the constitutions. As the Movement on both sides grew, the pamphlet war spread with Austin Bury's publication in both English and Italian of *Le Conseguenze Funeste alla Congregazione Anglicana della Perdita delle sue Missioni - The Disastrous Consequences of Any Change to the Constitutions* - which declared that the changes proposed by the Movement would do 'greater injury to the English Benedictines than had been by Henry VIII or the French Revolution'.<sup>138</sup> The reply was penned under Weld's name, for the monk responsible, Elphege Cody of Fort Augustus feared what would happen to him if he was found to be publishing material without the president's permission.<sup>139</sup>

However, Weld also published his own pamphlet which caused great divisions within the Congregation, and within Downside itself.<sup>140</sup> It was designed to counter the pamphlet *Le Conseguenze Funtese*, and unlike the other pamphlets - which attacked institutional change only - Weld included personal attacks on those opposing the Downside Movement. It resulted in the schism of the community and led those who were generally inclined to be indifferent to the situation joining the conservative movement in protest. Weld's actions were seen as being unfaithful to the community, and so he was also asked to leave Downside indefinitely. Although he remained a friend of the most radical members of the group and funded many parts of the monastery from a distance, he did not return to Downside until the matter was settled some twenty years later.

During this time, the Fort Augustus community- who had been in support of the Downside Movement - had been actively attempting to remove itself from under the same authority as

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<sup>135</sup> These pamphlets have been bound together and can be found in the Downside collection. See DAA, Tracts 182.

<sup>136</sup> DAA, Tracts 182, *Bury Pamphlet*.

<sup>137</sup> DAA, Tracts 182, *Benedict Snow: The Missionary Work of the English Benedictines*.

<sup>138</sup> DAA, Tract 182, *Bury; Le Conseguenze Funeste alla Congregazione Anglicana della Perdita delle sue Missioni*.

<sup>139</sup> DEC - Identity unknown.

<sup>140</sup> DAA, Tracts 182, *Weld: A Reply to 'The Missionary Work of the Benedictines'*.

the rest of the EBC houses. Unknown to the Movement, it was to be annexed from the EBC and erected into an exempt abbey dependent immediately on the Holy See. There were mixed feelings amongst all factions of the EBC towards the move. Overall, it was seen as an extreme blow to the prestige of the EBC. For the most conservative, it was seen as a relief, as Fort Augustus was seen as a rebellious house under Prior Jerome Vaughan (1841-1896) and who had great support from members in the English Catholic body intent on reform. For the Movement, it left them without allies within the EBC. However, for some members of the Movement, it did suggest that a similar annexation could be the remedy for their troubles. However, Gasquet was resolved against leaving Downside, and so nothing came of it.<sup>141</sup> On the other hand, the removal of Fort Augustus alarmed the more moderate members of the Movement such as Raynal, Prest, and Sweeney, who instead considered if a compromise could be made. By March 1883, such a scheme had been produced. It proposed that priors would become titular abbots with monastic churches as their '*quasi-ecclesiae propriae*', a missionary priory, with monks spending some time in their home monasteries before the mission. Missions were to be better connected to each other, and singular missions were discouraged. However, the proposal was rejected by the council that had assembled within the Movement.

By July 1883, Krug's report had been presented to Rome, and Pope Leo XIII was ready to decide. The removal of Fort Augustus had weakened the position of the Movement, and so when the Pope asked the English Benedictines for their opinion on the report, the result was unanimously opposed to reform.<sup>142</sup> The result of the report spanned many aspects of monastic life in England. It resulted in the Bull named *Rescript Cliftoniensis*, which said that the Bull *Plantata* should be continued to be adhered to in full, apart from in the clause that gave the general chapter the power of altering the constitutions without recourse to the Holy See. It also decreed the continuance of Belmont as the location for the common novitiate. Both clauses were seen as confirming the current position of the EBC, and a decisive defeat for the Downside Movement. In a slight concessionary movement within their favour were decisions that the Chapter should consist of *solī titulari* and that the President should reside in the monasteries. Finally, a revision of the constitutions was ordered which 'while keeping their character - *salva*

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<sup>141</sup> DAA, Aidan Gasquet Collection.

<sup>142</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 25.



*indole* - should take account of the changes'.<sup>143</sup>

When the general chapter went ahead in 1883, the general chapter took *Rescript Cliftoniensis* as confirmation of the status quo. *Rescript Cliftoniensis* advised that the English Benedictines

should take account of the changed political and religious situation in England and while retaining the missionary character of the Congregation should not lose the monastic spirit of St Benedict but rather maintain it in a more lively manner.<sup>144</sup>

In an effort to distract from the misdemeanours of Downside in the build-up to the general chapter, Ford as Prefect of Studies presented a radical report on the school and reorganisation of the ecclesiastical studies of the congregation. This, in Butler's opinion, 'blunted the volume of indignation felt by the chapter against Downside and warded off some of the blows that were threatening'.<sup>145</sup> The rest of the chapter meeting involved Gasquet as the most prominent member of the chapter from the Downside Movement defending his position as a radical, and the election of O'Gorman as the defender of the status quo and now President of the general chapter.

The general chapter was so confident of its position that 'it was thought... that the Movement at Downside has been quite crushed' and so 'dangerous men' were elected to positions as the general chapter felt strong enough to resist the weakened Movement.<sup>146</sup> Despite his performance at the general chapter, Gasquet was re-elected Prior of Downside, due to the unwavering support of a minority of senior members. The rest of the Movement were removed or dismissed from their positions. Ford and Gilbert Dolan were sent to the English College in Rome to study theology. However, due to ill health Gasquet did not see out the full term of his priorship and resigned in 1885. In his place, Ford was elected as prior. His election was met by an opposition supremely confident in the Movement's demise — Butler assumed that 'several took for granted that the Congregational questions were finally settled and could not be reopened'.<sup>147</sup> The silence from the Vatican since the last general chapter led the senior opposition within the congregation to believe that the reform that the Downside Movement

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<sup>143</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 26.

<sup>144</sup> *Rescript Cliftoniensis*, in Justin McCann, *The Rule of St Benedict*, (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd., 1921) p. 231.

<sup>145</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 31.

<sup>146</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 30.

<sup>147</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 36.

pushed for was unsupported.

However, the Movement capitalised on their positions within the Downside community to gather support for their intended reform. In his active role in the pursuit of the Downside Movement's aims as prior of Downside, Butler demonstrated that Ford 'did much to promote the cultivation of that side of Benedictine life... the prosecution of higher ecclesiastical studies and the production of historical and other writings'.<sup>148</sup> During this time, Ford began work with Butler to revise Movement's aims by looking at Benedictine history. Similarly, Gasquet began work on what would become a series of publications on Benedictine history in London. In 1887, Butler published *Notes on the Origins of the Benedictines* which Butler suggested was perceived as a 'declaration of war' by the Movement's opposition.<sup>149</sup> Combined with the unearthing of the Bull *Behemoth* by Ford during his period of investigative research, Butler portrayed how it 'emboldened those who desired changes to be put forward' in part due to the supposed historical precedence developed in *Notes* and *Behemoth*, which detailed the normal constitutional practices of the EBC.<sup>150</sup>

At the time of the House Chapter in May 1888, the continued persistence of Ford and the rest of the community advocating for change had begun to attract attention. Downside by this time had split into two distinct factions, those who support Ford and those who did not. Buoyed by the number of monks who had aligned themselves with the Movement, Ford and Gasquet had sent a petition to Rome regarding the new constitutions, which had allegedly been already signed unchanged from the original by Cardinal Masotti (1817-88). This petition entreated Rome to modify its position, and grant Downside its own conditions.<sup>151</sup> However, the general chapter at Ampleforth was unexpectedly hostile, as the Movement and Butler had 'clung to the idea that some modifications had been sent to the chapter' and that the positive assurances they had been given on receipt of their petition had been heard.<sup>152</sup> This proved to be untrue, and instead, Ford was subject to interrogation over his use of his authority as prior of Downside without consultation with senior members.<sup>153</sup> By the time the election for prior was due, the members of the Movement had been removed from Downside and so Ford was without support.

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<sup>148</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90.

<sup>149</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 36.

<sup>150</sup> David Knowles, 'Abbot Butler: A Memoir', *The Downside Review*, 1, 52 (1934), 347-440.

<sup>151</sup> DAA, *Tracts* 182.

<sup>152</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 36.

<sup>153</sup> See DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Prefect of Studies material*.

Ford was removed to Beccles, Norfolk, 'where nothing Catholic existed' and Clement Fowler was elected prior.<sup>154</sup> This was symbolic of exactly the type of authority the Movement was campaigning against — the ability of a superior to remove a monk to the mission without any input from the monk himself. Abbot Moore had recommended Ford to the Beccles Mission, and Moore was the Provincial of the South, so Ford was under his authority. Meanwhile, Augustine O'Neill (1841-1911, of Douai Abbey) returned to Rome with the Downside Movement's petition. With the removal of all the 'dangerous men' from Downside and the petitions refused, December 1888 was described by Butler as 'the lowest point of the Movement'.<sup>155</sup>

After the refusal of Rome to grant Downside exemption status, the Movement returned to Downside to explore their options. A 'Council of War' was held between the members, and it was decided that Ford should begin enquiries to see if the Movement could be annexed from the community. This had been discussed in the previous year, and it was proposed that the Movement would leave Downside and start their own monastery; with Australia as a viable prospect through their connection with the Australian Catholic community.<sup>156</sup> Fortunately, in the latter part of December would see that this solution was never realised. By Boxing Day 'a great reversal of fortune had taken place'.<sup>157</sup> The general chapter made several conciliatory promotions across the EBC to formerly disgraced members of the Movement, considering the fact directives from Rome meant that the policy of dispersion was no longer acceptable. Amongst other favourable positions, Cuthbert Butler was made Prefect of Studies by Prior Fowler at Downside, and in a more advantageous move, O'Neill was appointed as Superior of the Congregation. These appointments were seen as a great success for Movement.

Furthermore, a President's Circular brought from Rome by O'Neill which promoted reform and demonstrated that Rome wanted further changes to the EBC constitutions. This renewed hope amongst the Downside Movement and demonstrated that the Movement's aims were in line with Rome, and so were 'no longer a set of rebels'.<sup>158</sup> With new confidence in their alignment

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<sup>154</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 15.

<sup>155</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 39

<sup>156</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, Correspondence, *Ford to Butler Letter*. See also DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 75.

<sup>157</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*.

<sup>158</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 80. Also, DAA, Tract 182, *Pope's Circular*.

with Rome, the Movement ceased to be wholly Downside dependent, and their ideas spread to the other monasteries. The Prior of Ampleforth, Anselm Burge (Ampleforth, 1846-1929) brought his whole monastery on side and gave O'Neill use of Ampleforth as a centralised headquarters for his work. With O'Neill acting both as President and leader of the Movement, Downside was left in a more ambiguous position. Downside itself was ironically the centre of the opposition, as the prior and sub-prior had been elected to defend the old regime. However, Butler firmly stated that the Movement still held Ford as their leader first and saw themselves as 'an independent wing of his army'.<sup>159</sup>

The progress that had been made since the last general chapter, and the new directives from Rome meant that an extraordinary general chapter was held at Ampleforth in July 1889. However, despite the progress made, the conservative factions of the community were still in the majority within the council and so although the reforms to the constitutions were heavily discussed within the extraordinary meeting, a resolution was passed that no changes were to be decided until they had confirmation from Rome. In the winter of 1889 both the conservative Abbot Snow and reforming President O'Neil went to Rome to argue their cause. They stayed in Rome until they were recalled for the reassembly of the congregation in November 1890, hopeful of a speedy resolution. All parties left Rome confident that they had succeeded in persuading Rome.

On 12 November 1890, Leo XIII issued *Religiosus Ordo* which outlined his vision for the future of the congregation.<sup>160</sup> *Religiosus Ordo* supplied the congregation with the first clear directive from Rome. It set out the theoretical solution to several aspects of the Controversy. First, that the congregation was to required do pastoral work – that the mission was important. However, this could come in many forms, and the mission was only one such work. Education, clerical studies and the writing of books were explicitly included and raised to the standard of mission work. Secondly, it contained an explanation of *Rescript Cliftoniensis*, which declared that the original definition of *Rescript* by Ford and his followers was correct.<sup>161</sup> It abolished the provinces and the office of the Provincial and ordered that the missions should be returned to the control of the superiors of the monasteries. This necessitated the constitutions to be rewritten. However, the language and intentions of *Religiosus Ordo* divided the community,

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<sup>159</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 85.

<sup>160</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Religiosus Ordo*.

<sup>161</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Pamphlets*.

with the Movement and those opposing it interpreting the extent of reform required differently. The Movement believed it called for a complete revision of the Congregation (in line with their radical proposed reforms) whilst the conservatives proposed that the new constitutions should only be what was explicitly required by *Religiosus Ordo*. For the Movement, David Knowles in his biography of Butler and a later historian of the community, 'it declared the essentially 'monastic' character of the Congregation... And declared that apostolic, educational and literary work came equally under its scope.'<sup>162</sup> However, the conservatives within the community saw this as a radical imposition on the chapter's authority and sought to temper the change to be limited to the abolishment of the provincial system.

In 1892 the next general chapter was due. Unfortunately for the reformers, the conservative faction of the chapter was in the majority still, due to a brief from Rome that decreed that until the constitutions were revised, no elections should take place.<sup>163</sup> It was universally felt that this brief was a sign that Rome would not force any changes against the clearly expressed wishes of the majority. Because the conservatives were still in positions of power, they were able to exert their influence on the commission responsible for the new constitutions. As such, the eventual chapter determined that no changes were to be made unless necessitated by the abolition of the provincials. For Butler, this signalled the 'perfectly hopeless collapse of the Downside Movement'.<sup>164</sup> However, when the new constitutions were presented to O'Neill as President, he rejected them. O'Neill declared the revisions to be 'running counter to the spirit of *Religiosus Ordo*'.<sup>165</sup> In response, O'Neill began to draft a new set of constitutions.

Anticipating the direction of change at Downside, Fowler resigned as prior. Butler suggested that the new direction presented by O'Neill suggested that the 'system of government and constitutions and the whole range of ideas which he [Fowler] had been made prior in order to defend' were now untenable.<sup>166</sup> Whilst this occurred, Ford returned from Beccles in 1894 to be elected prior in Fowler's place almost unanimously. At the time, Butler explains that Ford was considered the 'best man for the job' and as 'the maker of modern Downside' by the rest

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<sup>162</sup> David Knowles, 'Abbot Butler: A Memoir', *Downside Review*, 1, 52 (1934), 347-440.

<sup>163</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, Butler's Downside Controversy, p. 102.

<sup>164</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, Butler's Downside Controversy, p. 102.

<sup>165</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, Butler's Downside Controversy, p. 102.

<sup>166</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, Butler's Downside Controversy, p. 105.

of the Movement.<sup>167</sup> Now in a position of great power, and aided by a significant minority within the community, Ford began to draw up plans for the new constitutions using the template which had been made by O'Neill in 1892.<sup>168</sup> However, in 1895 O'Neil was elected as Bishop of Port Louis in Mauritius. This removed him from the EBC, and instead, O'Gorman was elected as President. The removal of O'Neill meant that the constitutions he had drawn up, and the ones Ford amended were no longer viable. Consequently, the new abbot primate of the Benedictine Confederation, Hildebrand de Hemptinne (1849-1913) was commissioned by the Bishops and Regulators to conduct an Apostolic Visit and again interviewed the missions and monasteries. He came in 1895, and again, Downside was asked for their opinion. By the time this was over, O'Gorman and Pope Leo XIII were very old and infirm, and so it was presumed by the Downside Movement that no change would be undertaken unless it was by his successor.

Another cause of delay was the decision over who would become chairman of the board to draw up the constitutions, as O'Gorman's paralysis had become so bad that he was partially comatose. The alternative suggestion, Gasquet, met with much resistance. Before the Pope's illness, Gasquet had been his choice. Gasquet had worked closely with the Pope on the controversy with the Anglican Orders and had become good friends with him. Ultimately it was the President's decision, rather than the Pope's, and O'Gorman had not wanted Gasquet.

However, in 1899 a resolution was published. It took the form of the publication of a second papal bull on 29 June 1899 - *Diu Quidem* - which indicated radical changes to the constitution.<sup>169</sup> *Diu Quidem* brought Downside

under the common law of the Church and gives them [gave the monasteries] a fixed and recognised position... emphasising once more the identity of the present English Congregation with that existing in England before the Reformation.<sup>170</sup>

It raised Downside to an abbey and gave the Movement the radical changes they had desired since 1880. It made clear the intentions of *Religiosus Ordo* and showed that in fact, '*Religiosus Ordo* revealed to those who had eyes to see it that the 'old' Congregation was dead and that

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<sup>167</sup> Cuthbert Butler, 'Abbot Ford', *The Downside Review*, (1930).

<sup>168</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90.

<sup>169</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Diu Quidem*.

<sup>170</sup> 'The Bull *Diu Quidem*', *The Downside Review*, 18 (1899) 205-206.

the 'reformers' had won'.<sup>171</sup>

Under the new constitutional reforms, Gasquet was promoted to the position of chairman of the board of revision of the constitutions. When the constitutions were published in 1900, Ford was elected as the first abbot of Downside. With Ford being made abbot, Downside was raised to a minor basilica and made independent in a return to the more medieval structure of authority shown by both *Religiosus Ordo* and *Diu Quidem*. This reorganisation of the monasteries meant that the monasteries of Downside, Douai and Ampleforth regained the independence they had theoretically kept before the Reformation. Dictated by *Religiosus Ordo* and *Diu Quidem*, this also suggested that there would be less emphasis on missionary activities for all professed monks and regardless, would not be dictated by superiors outside of the monastery. Instead, ultimate authority for the monastery would be held by the abbot of the monastery in question. Those with strong missionary zeal would still be able to go on the mission and those preferring a more contemplative life could stay at their home monastery without fear of being removed to the mission in times of strife. The domestic policy would also be in the hands of the community, in the form of an annual chapter of the whole conventus by both residential and non-residential monks and most importantly to the Downside Movement indicated 'the revival of an institution that existed in the Middle Ages in England... and had its basis in St Benedict's Rule itself'.<sup>172</sup> It signalled radical change and the return to a constitution based on medieval structures. To the members of the Downside Movement, the new constitutions heralded the

great religious development which had a landmark in this the jubilee year of the Restoration of the Catholic Hierarchy in England' and in 'the constant growth which was always showing itself in new buildings at Downside... as teaching a lesson of patience and perseverance'.<sup>173</sup>

## Conclusions

In summary, in this chapter, I have given an overview of the history of Downside Abbey, the events of the Controversy and explored the parameters of the study in three parts: from the perspective of the senior clergy, the Downside Movement and after the Controversy. This has

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<sup>171</sup> Alban Hood, 'Chapter 3: Douai Abbey 1818-1903' in *Douai Abbey* (2019).

<sup>172</sup> 'An Aspect of the Bull 'Diu Quidem', *The Downside Review*, 18 (1899), 219-223.

<sup>173</sup> Cuthbert Butler, 'The First Abbot of Downside', *The Downside Review*, 19 (1900), 209-213.

highlighted the varying perspectives of the community regarding these aspects of tension throughout the period 1881-1900. The older members of the community wanted to continue the high level of missionary activity, whereas the younger members desired a more contemplative, monastery centred life. Fundamentally, it was this tension between mission and monastery that drove the events of the Controversy. The constitutions that were subsequently implemented reflect this progression and demonstrate how the concerns of the community during the Controversy resulted in a more monastery-centred vocation. These concerns had a direct relationship to the Downside community's sense of their own history and the importance of continuity, community, and collective memory. In doing so, I have highlighted the inconsistencies and areas of agreement both within the Movement and the wider community associated with the EBC.

The next chapters of the thesis will take the four areas identified in this chapter: *The Downside Review*, the architecture of the abbey church, the 'pamphlet war' and the general chapter and using these key questions, expand upon the themes identified. Through deeper analysis of the key areas of archive material, the thesis will explore how the Movement and the senior clergy engaged with the preoccupations of their time: the essential nature of the EBC and how this was to be achieved. The next chapter will analyse *The Downside Review* centenary edition – published in 1914 – to celebrate the centenary of the community and explored key ideas surrounding the constitutions and shared history that had been developed during the Downside Controversy.



## CHAPTER TWO

### DOWNSIDE AND THE EXPRESSION OF LEGACY

The previous chapter gave the context and overview for the parameters of this thesis. This chapter will on the key themes within *The Downside Review* that highlight the Downside Movement's propensity for nostalgia by linking chapters of the centenary issue with themes within the wider context of the Downside Controversy. It will also analyse the events chronicled in *The Downside Review* such as the building activity at Downside, both as a missionary presence and as a physical community. The *Downside Review* was also a medium for the monks to explore the past as a historical memory. These were often imagined pasts that acted as metaphors for the Controversy.<sup>174</sup>

The centenary issue of the *Downside Review* captures the sense of tradition and nostalgia that formed part of the historical consciousness that provided the legitimising power to use Downside's history to reform the EBC.<sup>175</sup> As previously stated, the *Downside Review* was the in-house publication of the community and acted as both an academic publication and a way of disseminating information to the wider Catholic population associated with Downside. The Centenary edition was produced in 1914 to celebrate one hundred years since the establishment of the community in Somerset. As such, the centenary edition takes a nostalgic approach to the history of the community and emphasises the narrative of continuity, community and collective memory. Through this background of history curation, the community at Downside used aspects of history to engage with the issues of nineteenth-century monasticism. Both the Movement and the senior members of the community used the retelling of Downside's history to evoke and contribute meaning to the future of Downside. This chapter will explore how this occurred.

*The Downside Review* has traditionally been used as secondary material – utilising its functional nature as a journal for academic articles written by the monastic community.

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<sup>174</sup> See Alice Chandler, "Order and Disorder in the Medieval Revival." *Browning Institute Studies* 8 (1980): 1–9.

<sup>175</sup> Hans-Werner Goetz, 'Historical Writing, Historical Thinking and Historical Consciousness in the Middle Ages', *Revista Diálogos Mediterrânicos*, 2 (2012), 110-128. Many of the themes of Goetz' argument can be applied to the situation at Downside, and the same manner of historical consciousness is displayed by the Downside community.

However, at its inception, the role of the journal was much more varied and informal. Here, it will be used as a primary resource, using articles from the centenary edition to demonstrate how nostalgia and tradition were embedded into Downside's culture. *The Downside Review* highlights the community's relationship to nostalgia and enables them to continue a long tradition of monastic scholarship. Here, it will be used to answer questions regarding the relationship between tradition and scholarship and reveal how the perception of the community changed over time. It will also be used to explore how the Controversy influenced the academic writing of the monks, and how they used their own scholarship to explore their identity.

In the Centenary edition, although the Controversy is not explicitly referenced in the journal, the repercussions of the reform movement are present. This edition was written fourteen years after the Controversy, and the editorial board of the journal consisted of members of the Movement, including the editor – Cuthbert Butler (1858-1934, abbot of Downside 1906-22). In the below passage, written by Butler, it is evident that he is referring to the Movement's belief in their position within monastic history, one that connected the monastery to a wider inception narrative beyond its own foundational history.<sup>176</sup>

There is no phenomenon more wonderful than the persistence of the spirit of a community through long ages in spite of what vicissitudes soever... there will always be a succession just enough to hand on intact the sacred flame.<sup>177</sup>

In contrast, the senior members of the community fought to defend the legacy that they had inherited from the monastery at Douai.<sup>178</sup> They wished to continue the constitutions and legislation that had been part of their foundation in the seventeenth century. The conservative members of the Controversy used tradition and heritage to convey a sense of constancy and refute the need for reform.

Downside's sense of its own historic identity served as the impetus behind many of the actions of the community during this period and was particularly pertinent during the Downside Controversy. This historic identity was multi-faceted and fluid, with an emphasis on continuity, community, and collective memory which enabled the community to connect to a wider and

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<sup>176</sup> See James Kelly, 'Counties without borders? Religious politics, kinship networks and the formation of Catholic communities', *Historical Research*, 91 (2018) 22–38.

<sup>177</sup> The Douay Inheritance, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], (1914), 5-17 (p. 9).

<sup>178</sup> Hugh Connolly, *Some Dates and Documents of Our Early House* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 1930), p. 1.

more stable Christian narrative.<sup>179</sup> This sense of historic identity was reflected in the actions of the monks, and the growing confidence of the community throughout the period. The community also saw the revival of the school's fortunes under the leadership of Gasquet and Ford during their times as prior (Gasquet, 1878-1885) and prefect of studies (Ford, 1878-1885). This impetus was continued after the appointment of Leander Ramsay (1863-1929, Downside) as headmaster between 1902-1918.<sup>180</sup> This emphasis on expansion gave the monastery 'a reputation for learning as an Edwardian Athens of English Catholicism' due to the scholarly efforts of Gasquet, Butler, Edmund Bishop and others, as well as a revival of the education system in the school.<sup>181</sup> At this time, Downside also saw its first students accepted into Oxford and Cambridge, as well as tentative plans to start their own House at Cambridge.<sup>182</sup> Likewise, the introduction of lay masters for the first time in the school brought about the raising of the standards of teaching.<sup>183</sup>

This desire for academic representation culminated in the publication of *The Downside Review* in 1880, which remains the in-house publication of the community today and is still published quarterly.<sup>184</sup> From its first publication and until its transformation into a modern academic journal in the twenty-first century, *The Downside Review* has carried a clear attachment to the community's own history. Early editions acted as a depository for news, information and articles written by members of the community and their associates. Much was unattributed, but many of its monastic authors can be traced through their respective archive material in the abbey archives.<sup>185</sup> The first edition was published in July 1880 and featured quarterly editions

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<sup>179</sup> There are many examples of the community inserting itself into wider historical scholarship and Catholic history, such as in Nobert Birt, *Downside: The History of St Gregory's School from its Commencement at Douay to the Present Time* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1902), Francis Gasquet, 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914), Aidan Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*, (London: John Hodges, 1888), *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer*, (London: John Hodges, 1890) and *The Eve of the Reformation*, (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1900).

<sup>180</sup> Leander Ramsay was headmaster between 1902-18, after which he retired due to ill health.

<sup>181</sup> *An Architectural History*, ed. by Aidan Bellenger, (London: Merrell Publications, 2011), p. 18.

<sup>182</sup> This would become Benet House, which still exists today.

<sup>183</sup> Nobert Birt, *Downside: The History of St Gregory's School from its Commencement at Douay to the Present Time* (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd: London, 1902), p. 238. During the abbacy of Gasquet, lay masters such as the classics scholar Prof John Fletcher Davis, formerly of Trinity College, Dublin was employed to help the monastic staff.

<sup>184</sup> Since the 1940s onwards *The Downside Review* has shifted from the community focused approach to content to a more academic audience.

<sup>185</sup> For example, much of the centenary edition, which will be discussed in this chapter was written by Cuthbert Butler, whose drafts can be found in the Downside Archives. See DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Drafts*.

produced to coincide with the school terms.<sup>186</sup> It was primarily designed as a way of keeping in touch with the wider Downside community and sent to alumni and benefactors with ‘the aim of *The Downside Review* [being] that it should be addressed to and be more exclusively the work of the ‘old boys’ known as Old Georgians’.<sup>187</sup> As such, early editions were designed to keep readers up to date with the progress of the building work, and the endeavours of the school community, with regular updates on the school cricket scores for example.<sup>188</sup>

However, the journal’s scope reflected the community’s interests which were heavily influenced by the Controversy in the development of a broad approach to the inheritance of monasticism in England. It was part of a growing sense within the community that they must

be allowed to grow in number and in age: only so could the work of monastery and school be efficiently carried on, and only so it was possible that Downside should take its due position, ecclesiastical and social in the Church life of the country or exercise the special well-recognised functions of a great Benedictine House.<sup>189</sup>

This, of course, led to the Apostolic visit in 1881 but was also indicative of the drive that led the community to begin *The Downside Review* and increased the academic potential within the monastery. Historians such as Owen Chadwick noted that Catholic journals like

*The Downside Review* (1880) were of a high quality in literary criticism and Catholic history, always had a European slant and were strongly interested in the history of the Roman Catholic past in England and the continuity of the great Roman Catholic families.<sup>190</sup>

This interest in the history of the Roman Catholic past was particularly pertinent to the community and in part, was the physical manifestation of the desire to understand their past in order to present a strong foundational structure. As well as this, these articles on the history of the Benedictines were also used to waging internecine conflict during the Controversy. Articles within *The Downside Review* were written by both parties to underline their position within the Controversy and to use historical narrative to provide evidence for their claims. The use of *The Downside Review* as a medium for this gave a sense of authority in its position as the journal

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<sup>186</sup> *The Downside Review*, (1880).

<sup>187</sup> Editorial, *The Downside Review*, (1880) p. 1.

<sup>188</sup> ‘Early Cricket at Downside’, *The Downside Review*, 1 (1887), 136–46.

<sup>189</sup> ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18–90 (p. 63).

<sup>190</sup> Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church II*, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1980), p. 409.

of an esteemed monastic community. In the first edition of the *Downside Review*, the senior clergy proclaimed that the aim of the *Downside Review* was to:

To serve as a record of the present time and of past history, so far as regards that Alma Mater to whom we all look back with affection and solicitude... [and] to keep our readers au courant of the inner life of those who have succeeded them in the places which they once occupied...<sup>191</sup>

The senior members used the history of Downside to defend the status quo and reject reform. However, this use of tradition was consistently rejected by the Movement, who identified the use of conservative tradition as an impediment to the restoration of what Butler described as a ‘complete monastic culture’.<sup>192</sup> This is typical of the references to how the Movement saw its position within monastic history, one that connected the monastery to a wider inception narrative beyond its own foundational history.<sup>193</sup>

Despite this, at the heart of *The Downside Review*, was its position as a community-led project that aimed to, in the words of the editor in the first edition, ‘serve[d] as a record of the present time and of past history’ which was ‘undertaken in the interests of the College of St. Gregory’s at large’.<sup>194</sup> The focus on communal history also underlines the purpose of *The Downside Review* as:

a publication undertaken in the interests of the College of St. Gregory’s at large, and in those of the Sr Gregory’s Society in particular, as a medium for the furtherance of the objects which the Society have in view.<sup>195</sup>

Within its issues, continued reference was made to the wider historical scholarship written by the monks of Downside. Like much of the literature in *The Downside Review*, it places the article within a community-driven context and reflects the original agenda of the *Review*, to convey news and events to the wider community of Downside. This localised historical agency is reflective of the desire of the community in modern times to be seen as scholarly. *The Downside Review* is a direct result of this desire. Historical issues were consistently raised

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<sup>191</sup> ‘Editorial’, *The Downside Review*, (1880) p. 1.

<sup>192</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 11.

<sup>193</sup> See James Kelly, ‘Counties without borders? Religious politics, kinship networks and the formation of Catholic communities’, *Historical Research*, 91 (2018) 22–38.

<sup>194</sup> Edmund Bishop, ‘Editorial’, *The Downside Review*, (1880), 1-3.

<sup>195</sup> Editorial, *The Downside Review*, (1880) p. 1.

throughout *The Downside Review* and reflected the thoughts and preoccupations of the community at the time. As such, the articles often reflected the current topics of the more scholarly monks – for example, in the first edition (1880), there were articles about Monte Cassino, Gregorian martyrs, Wells Cathedral and modern Benedictine history.<sup>196</sup> *The Downside Review* often contained serialised entries which concerned immediate Downside events such as the building of the new church.<sup>197</sup>

## Writing History at Downside

*The Downside Review* acted as an outward representation of the community's desire for the continued presence of learning in a monastic setting. From the beginning of Downside and its relationship to the university town of Douai, this was embodied in Caverel's desire that the monastery should embody 'a love of regular discipline and learning and especially a serious study of philosophy and divinity'.<sup>198</sup> This desire for academic outputs was a tradition that was taken seriously by the community, especially amongst those in the Movement, who were amongst the first to be given the opportunity for an education at the previously barred Oxford and Cambridge.

Likewise, from the foundations of Douai, the education of Catholics had always been an important aspect of their history. Norbert Birt, a prolific writer and scholar of the community (1861-1919) makes the connection between the foundation at Douai and the foundation in Somerset. The new emphasis on both the school and the novice's education that arose out of the Movement was deeply connected to the academic legacy of the monks at Douai. At Douai, Birt suggests that even in their infancy as a community:

[after] the English monks were solidly established in Douay, their reputation for learning was recognised, and they were at once called upon to provide professors of philosophy for Marchienne College in that town, and to occupy Chairs in the

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<sup>196</sup> See various articles in *The Downside Review*, vol I (1880-83). For Monte Cassino pp. 27, for martyrs pp. 197, 279, 346, Wells Cathedral 231 and for modern Benedictine History see pp. 17, 113, 190, 271, 360, 441.

<sup>197</sup> See 'The New Church' *The Downside Review*, (1880) 15-24.

<sup>198</sup> The Douay Inheritance, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], (1914), 5-17 (p. 13).

University.<sup>199</sup>

This highlights the importance of scholarship to Benedictine culture. Likewise, the growth of the community was not only represented in buildings, but in the growth of the education systems it supported:

Thus at last did Downside and the sister-houses enter on their full inheritance as Benedictine monasteries, the outcome of a natural process of growth and development of as true as it was inevitable... It symbolised ideas and it recognised facts.<sup>200</sup>

Furthermore, the result of the 1870 Education Act, described as ‘a landmark in the history of religious education in England’, was directly responsible for the expansion of Downside School – and many other Catholic establishments.<sup>201</sup> This marked a period of stability for Catholic education after the uncertainty of the status of learning under the various Catholic Relief Acts, particularly the Catholic Relief Act of 1791 which had prohibited the foundation of Catholic schools in clause XV.<sup>202</sup> The school developments were also echoed in the acquisition of Benet House in 1896 and the impact this had on the relationship with the monks’ training. Benet House was opened after the removal of the ecclesiastical bars that prevented the monks’ attendance at Oxford and Cambridge.<sup>203</sup> In *The Downside Review*, Ford was credited with raising the status of the community – ‘the establishment of Benet House Prior Ford did much to raise the tone of ecclesiastical studies within, and to add to the prestige of Downside’.<sup>204</sup> It was a residential house at Cambridge where monks could follow the university courses in preparation for teaching in the school, and the older monks could utilise the academic knowledge of the university for their own studies.<sup>205</sup>

This was further emphasised in the community’s relationship with public and private history.

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<sup>199</sup> Nobert Birt, *Downside: The History of St Gregory’s School from its Commencement at Douay to the Present Time* (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd: London, 1902), p. 6. It is also confirmed in Owen Lewis, *Running Register*, 1626.

<sup>200</sup> ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90 (p. 71).

<sup>201</sup> Marjorie Cruickshank, *Church and State in English Education, 1870 to the Present Day* (Macmillan and Co Ltd: London, 1963), p. 36.

<sup>202</sup> For more on this subject, and more examples of Catholic suppression, see *Monks of England: The Benedictines in England from Augustine to the Present Day*, ed. by Daniel Rees, (Guildford: EBC Ltd, 1997) or Scott Bennett, ‘Catholic Emancipation, the “Quarterly Review,” and Britain’s Constitutional Revolution’ in *Victorian Studies*, 12, (1969).

<sup>203</sup> See Adrian Morey, ‘Benet House, Cambridge, Some Early Correspondence, 1895-1900.’ *The Downside Review* 103, (1985): 230–38.

<sup>204</sup> ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90, (p. 73).

<sup>205</sup> See ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90.

During this period, the community took great interest in the curation of history and historical objects.<sup>206</sup> The community placed a great emphasis on the curation of history. This period also saw the expansion of the library by Dom Raymond Webster as well as the creation of a small natural history museum and observatory. This was demonstrated in *The Downside Review* for example through the inclusion of essays and articles regarding the curation of natural history in the Downside Museum.<sup>207</sup> The objects in the museum were primarily donated by alumni, with some items coming from the monks' travels abroad. For example, the collection of Australian mammals described in *The Downside Review* came from Ford's travels during his noviciate to Australia and were intended for exhibition at Downside.<sup>208</sup> They were eventually given to Bristol Museum they were on display as late as 1930, according to Butler's obituary of Ford.<sup>209</sup> The evolution of the natural history museum at Downside is an example of the desire of the community to engage with the world at large and was an influential factor in the development of the scholarship generated at Downside. The observatory linked Downside with the works of William Herschel through the Benedictine Bishop Charles Walmesley (1722-97, Downside) who was also a great astronomer.<sup>210</sup>

Similarly, the relationship between monks and scholarship has always been fruitful. Newman, writing in 1852, saw academia and education as particularly important to a community engaging in intellectual pursuits:

when the Church founds a University, she is not cherishing talent, genius, or knowledge, for their own sake, but for the sake of her children, with a view to their spiritual welfare and their religious influence and usefulness, with the object of training them to fill their respective posts in life better, and of making them more intelligent, capable, active members of society.<sup>211</sup>

This would have resonated particularly well with the Movement's aspirations for developing the school who proclaimed in *The Downside Review* that only 'ours [will] retain its historic character as a Monastic School'.<sup>212</sup> Indeed, a great point of pride for the community was the

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<sup>206</sup> For example, see 'The Formation of a College Museum' *The Downside Review*, (1880) p. 126.

<sup>207</sup> The impact of *The Downside Review* will be explored in greater detail later in this chapter.

<sup>208</sup> 'The Downside Collection of Australian Mammals' *The Downside Review*, (1884) pp. 89-96.

<sup>209</sup> See Cuthbert Butler, 'Abbot Ford' *The Downside Review*, (1930), 1-21, p. 3.

<sup>210</sup> For examples of astronomy in *The Downside Review* see 'The Observatory', *The Downside Review*, 5 (1886) 31-39.

<sup>211</sup> John Henry Newman, *Discourses on the scope and nature of university education*, (Dublin: James Duffy, 1852), xii.

<sup>212</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90 (p. 81).



fact that the school's alumni claimed many who used their education at Downside to 'fill their respective posts in life better' such as members of parliament, military positions and other vocational careers.<sup>213</sup> These connections also expanded the influence of the community and gave members access to the government, foreign ministries and prestigious institutions.

One such institution was the British Museum, where Gasquet spent much of his time conducting research for his books. In 1885, after ill health prompted his resignation as prior, Gasquet was permitted by Cardinal Manning (1808-92) to work on historical studies of the English Benedictines.<sup>214</sup> At the time of Gasquet's tenure as prior (1878-85), the community lacked any academic outputs, which Gasquet believed to be

a lamentable gap in the activity and utility of a Benedictine community, a failure to make a contribution pre-eminently Benedictine to the progress of religion and the strengthening of the Church.<sup>215</sup>

This was remedied by the first publication by the community of Gasquet's *A Sketch of the Life and Mission of St Benedict*.<sup>216</sup> Gasquet himself was seen as 'the most representative Downside man of the day, uniting in himself the various currents of thought and aspiration that were beginning to run strongly through the minds of many' and it is clear that in the centenary issue he is presented as the instigator of the change in Downside's academic position.<sup>217</sup> After the success of Gasquet's *Henry VIII and the Monasteries*, further scholarly ambitions were enabled through the influence of Lord Emly (William Monsell, 1812-94), who proposed that Gasquet set up a house of studies in Dulwich.<sup>218</sup> Likewise, in light of the new academic direction, *The Downside Review* became an important part of continuing the community's academic legacy. In 1880, *The Downside Review* began 'which provided field and scope for the literary efforts of the community, opportunities that the monks availed themselves to the full'.<sup>219</sup> Since Gasquet's time as a historian, his work has been widely disputed and perhaps can be seen as a connection between the high points of monasticism that were echoed in the community's

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<sup>213</sup> John Henry Newman, *Discourses on the scope and nature of university education*, (Dublin: James Duffy, 1852), xii.

<sup>214</sup> His work includes: Aidan Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English Monasteries*, (London: John Hodges, 1888), *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer*, (London: John Hodges, 1890) and *The Eve of the Reformation*, (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1900).

<sup>215</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90 (p. 64).

<sup>216</sup> See Aidan Gasquet, *A Sketch of the Life and Mission of St Benedict*, (London: John Hodges, 1895).

<sup>217</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90 (p. 61).

<sup>218</sup> Shane Leslie, *Cardinal Gasquet*, (London: Burns & Oates, 1953), p. 117.

<sup>219</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90 (p. 65).

foundational myth-making and revival of scholarship by Gasquet and other monks in the community.

### **The Centenary of *The Downside Review***

Nostalgia, tradition and narrative story-telling are typified in the publication of its celebratory centenary issue in 1914 known as the 'Record of the Century'.<sup>220</sup> That year marked the centenary of the settlement of Downside in Somerset and was celebrated through a special edition of *The Downside Review*, a centenary dinner and a pontifical high mass as well as coinciding with Gasquet becoming a cardinal.

The centenary issue was edited by Cuthbert Butler, who also contributed many articles to both this edition and *The Downside Review* more generally. Butler was abbot between 1906-1922, and the abbot typically had oversight over the contents of *The Downside Review* and was often the editor. The issue was dedicated to Gasquet by the community on being confirmed as a cardinal priest in 1914 and expresses the legacy of the Downside Controversy.<sup>221</sup> The dedication was 'conferred on one so identified with Downside and with every phase and movement in its life and work during the past forty years' is a subtle reference to the transformative power of the Controversy.<sup>222</sup> *The Review* had been one of the notable achievements of Gasquet's time as prior and had even edited it for a year, and in the words of David Knowles 'supplied a sounding board to every development of doctrine and a stimulus to every interest – literary, archaeological and historical'.<sup>223</sup> From the beginning, Butler's forward to the edition highlights the idealism that had defined the Movement and was still present ten years later. The next section will analyse the contents of *The Downside Review*. It will focus on key sections within the centenary issue: the foreword, the Douay inheritance, the buildings, the Australian mission, the library, and literary output, and finally, the school and the wider community

The contents of the centenary edition are fairly typical of the type of publication *The Downside Review* was during the period 1880-1914. From its inception, its contents can be divided into

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<sup>220</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90.

<sup>221</sup> Gasquet was made cardinal on 25 May 1914.

<sup>222</sup> Foreword, 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. vii.

<sup>223</sup> David Knowles, *The Historian and Character*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964) p. 296.

categories of articles, reviews and editorials. Further inspection of the contents reveals deeper categories; which divide the *Review* neatly into two categories – school-related and monastery-related content. Monastery content included items such as obituaries, histories, religious dogma and theology, and wider histories of the community and St Gregory's itself as well as updates on the current community and building progress. For school content, *The Downside Review* included prize lists, athletic achievements, school trips, and occasionally essays written by students as part of the curriculum. All of the content of *The Downside Review* was focused on building community links and engaging with members of the school alumni, the monastic community or benefactors of the monastery. This focus on communal history also underlines the purpose of *The Downside Review* as:

a publication undertaken in the interests of the College of St. Gregory's at large, and in those of the Sr Gregory's Society in particular, as a medium for the furtherance of the objects which the Society have in view.<sup>224</sup>

Within early editions of *The Downside Review*, continued reference was made to the wider historical scholarship written by the monks of Downside. Like much of the literature in *The Downside Review*, it places the article within a community-driven context and reflects the original agenda of the *Review*, to convey news and events to the wider community of Downside. This localised historical agency reflects the desire of the community to be seen as scholarly. The context of *The Downside Review* was always ambitious – with the first edition containing an editorial written by the then abbot - Clement Fowler (1851-1929, Downside); which contained a 'few lines wherein to express our programme and aspirations for the future'.<sup>225</sup> Whilst the centenary edition was a singular occurrence in the history of *The Downside Review*, historical issues were often raised within its pages, which contained scholarship from within the community on subjects such as the early history of the Benedictines.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>224</sup> Editorial, *The Downside Review*, (1880) p. 1.

<sup>225</sup> Editorial, *The Downside Review*, (1880) p. 1.

<sup>226</sup> For example, *Succisa Virescit: A Study of the Benedictine History of the Last Hundred Years*, *The Downside Review*, (1880) 17–24 or *From Douai to Downside*, *The Downside Review* (1881) 102-104.

The table below gives the contents page of the first edition, which is indicative of the substance of many editions of *The Downside Review*.

TABLE 2.1. CONTENT OF THE FIRST EDITION OF THE DOWNSIDE REVIEW<sup>227</sup>

Content	Page Reference
Editorial	vi
Ad Multos Annos	vii-viii
The Right Rev. Thomas Joseph Brown	1
Travelling to Downside in 1815	5
Succisa Virescit	18
St Gregory's Church, Monastery and College, Downside	91
The Fourteenth Centenary of St Benedict at Monte Cassino	27
The St Gregory Society Medal	39
A Retrospect of the Year	43
English Prize Poem - 1879	49
Prize List [Midsummer 1879 and Athletics]	51
Reviews	53
Odds and Ends	63
Correspondence	70
Catalogue of Black Letter Books in the Library of St Gregory's Monastery	72

The centenary edition of *The Downside Review* conveys a retrospective of the foundations of the Downside community.<sup>228</sup> Reflective essays in *The Downside Review* often remarked on the history of Downside and the Benedictines and frequently included essays that related to aspects of wider Benedictine history to the community.<sup>229</sup> It is also interesting to note that the centenary edition carries similar themes to the first edition published in 1881, by relating the community to Benedictine history by examining aspects of its foundational history. The first edition

<sup>227</sup> Contents, *The Downside Review*, (1880) i.

<sup>228</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90.

<sup>229</sup> Such as the connection with Sigebert Buckley of Westminster. See J.C.M. Weale, 'Registers of the Catholic Chapels Royal and of the Portuguese Embassy Chapel, 1662-1829. Vol. 1, Marriages' *Catholic Record Society Record Series*, (1941). At Downside, see AS Barnes, 'Catholic Chapels Royal', *The Downside Review* (1901).

includes references to the wider missionary presence of the community, themes that would reoccur in the centenary issue.<sup>230</sup> Common themes in *The Downside Review* demonstrate the continuing desire for strong foundational stories, and the emphasis the community placed on hierarchical structure and foundational stability.

The below table (Table 2.2) shows the contents of the centenary issue which will be the focus of this chapter.<sup>231</sup>

TABLE 2.2 CONTENT OF THE CENTENARY ISSUE.<sup>232</sup>

Content	Page Reference
Dedication to Cardinal Gasquet	vi
Foreword	vii-viii
<i>Alma Mater's</i> Centenary Song	1
The Douay Inheritance	5
The Record of the Century	18
The Controversy with Bishop Baines	91
The Australian Mission	118
Buildings:	
Domestic	142
The Church	159
The Library	171
Literary Output of the Century	181
St Gregory's Society	197
Rolls of Honour:	
The Martyrs	203
Our Benefactors	204
Members of the Sacred Hierarchy	208
Distinguished Alumni:	
Ecclesiastics	210

<sup>230</sup> For examples see 'Fort Augustus', *The Downside Review*, (1880), p. 104; 'Memoir of Archbishop Polding' *The Downside Review*, (1880), p. 165.

<sup>231</sup> Contents, *The Downside Review [Centenary edition]*, (1914), p. i.

<sup>232</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review [Centenary Edition]* (1914), 18-90

Laymen	212
Academic Distinctions	220
Athletic Distinctions	221

The centenary of *The Downside Review* was a highly reflective edition, which looked forward to the future of the community and backwards at the legacy of Downside. This issue characterises the sense of nostalgia Downside had towards their sense of communal identity, one that was often used for political gain by both the traditionalists and the neo-monastics of the Downside Controversy. Although written several years after the Controversy concluded, the centenary issue highlights the continued presence of the desire for a historic legacy and used this historic legacy of the Benedictines to legitimise the position of the nineteenth-century mission.

Within this edition, *The Downside Review* emphasises the Movement's victory within the political tussle of the Controversy and the acceptance by the traditionalists of *Religiosus Ordo* and *Diu Quidem*. Butler's significant role in the controversy is subtly emphasised within *The Downside Review*, and also shaped Butler's time as abbot. Further to his role in the Controversy, Butler's main desires for further reform rested on the ability of the monk to remain permanently in the monastery, and to further lessen the missionary burden of the community Butler's resignation in 1922 was in direct response to the effects of the Downside Controversy. He tried to reinvigorate the desire for reform amongst the community and continue the work he had started under the Controversy. His principles revolved around increasing the principal community until the monastery 'attains to the full stature of an adequately manned and completely organised Benedictine Abbey' and the fact that 'the time had come to begin lessening our sphere of missionary activity'.<sup>233</sup> This attempt to continue Controversy under his priorate was unsupported by the community and eventually led to his resignation after two terms as abbot.<sup>234</sup>

Both the Movement and the traditionalists adhered to the principles shown in the centenary issue of *The Downside Review*; however, the Movement used this nostalgic sense of belonging

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<sup>233</sup> David Knowles, *The Historian and Character*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964) p. 313.

<sup>234</sup> For more information on the second Downside Controversy, there are several sources. See either Dominic Aidan Bellenger, *Monks with a Mission: English Benedictine History* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 2014) or for primary material, DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Second Downside Controversy*.

to justify their radical changes. Therefore, the sensibilities encapsulated within of the centenary edition holds much relevance to this thesis.

## **The Downside Review and Expressions of Legacy**

### ***i.* Reflections on the Future**

The centenary edition begins with a foreword written by Butler, who was abbot in 1914 and opens with the news that the monastery's first home, Acton Burnell has been destroyed in a fire.<sup>235</sup> After leaving Douai, the community had first settled at Acton Burnell, Shropshire at the family home of the Old Gregorian, Lord Acton.<sup>236</sup> Once the community had outgrown the country estate, and with the relaxation of anti-Catholic laws which had previously prevented the monks from owning real estate or holding titles, the land near Stratton on the Fosse in Somerset was purchased. This can be seen as mimicking the fortunes of medieval monasteries, who went through periods of decline, dissolution and renewal such as Luxeuil, Cluny and Cîteaux.<sup>237</sup> This tradition of renewal is clearly demonstrated in the English Congregation at this time, where 'all Catholic religious orders, past and present, originally arose as 'revitalisation movements' they were, and are, 'deliberate, organised, conscious effort[s]... to construct more satisfying culture' than exist[ed] in the world at large'.<sup>238</sup> The Controversy period highlights this desire for more satisfying culture and the deliberate decision to attempt to construct a narrative that suited the needs of the community. However, it is clear that the senior and junior members of the Downside community had differing ideas about what constituted 'a more satisfying culture'. This emphasises the continual pattern of Catholicism in England, with its waning and reviving of good fortune. Equally, by the beginning of the nineteenth-century Downside had already undergone several transformations, having initially arrived in England under the guardianship of Lord Acton and taken shelter in his country estate in Shropshire. The relationship that Downside had with Acton Burnell meant that emphasis that was placed on the 'sense of personal loss' that the community felt over its demise. As a

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<sup>235</sup> Butler, Cuthbert, 'Foreword', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], (1914) vii-viii (p. vii).

<sup>236</sup> For more on the foundations of Downside Abbey and its associated missions, see Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard, 'Downside's Foundations and Missions', *The Raven*, (2012); *Architectural History of Downside*, ed. by Aidan Bellenger, (Oxford UP: Oxford, 2012) or *Records of the English Catholics: Douai Diaries I&2*, ed. by Thomas Francis Knox, (London: David Nutt Publishers, 1878).

<sup>237</sup> Roger Finke and Patricia Wittberg, 'Organizational Revival from within: Explaining Revivalism and Reform in the Roman Catholic Church' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 39 (2000), 154- 170.

<sup>238</sup> Patricia Wittberg, 'Deep Structure in Community Cultures: The Revival of Religious Orders in Roman Catholicism', *Sociology of Religion*, 58 (1997), 239-259.

result, the centenary issue emphasised the need to connect to the current building work, and the stability this supplied the community.<sup>239</sup>

It is also interesting to note that Butler uses a considerable section of the foreword to justify the use of the portraits and architectural views included in this edition. Butler emphasises the significance of legacy and achievement, with the images used to promote Downside as a place of importance. These photographs and sketches present both a historical narrative and a sense of foundational structure – ‘and no book on St Gregory’s could be without our great founder [Abbot Caverel]’ as well as sense of ambition and growth – ‘only those four whose terms of office seem to stand out as landmarks in the history of the House are repeated here’.<sup>240</sup> This is in reference to the priorates of Bernard Barber (1818–30), Bernard Murphy (1870–78), Aidan Gasquet (1878–85) and Edmund Ford (1894–1906) whose ‘successive phases of ideas’ had transformed Downside.<sup>241</sup>

The foreword also acts as a narrative device for Butler’s own awareness of the Movement’s position in the post-Controversy period. This mirrors his narrative structure in the Controversy manuscript, where he suggests that his role in the creation of the document is for:

the part of a future historian to compare, weigh, adjust and weave into impartial history all letters, public documents and recollections like the present.<sup>242</sup>

Butler desired *The Downside Review* to contain work that seemed ‘more historical and characteristic [of the community] with the ultimate hope that ‘it may bind us all to one another and to *Alma Mater*’’.<sup>243</sup> This can be linked to the emphasis within the Movement on the importance of education and academia. According to Butler, within the Downside Controversy, Ford had done ‘much to promote the cultivation of that side of Benedictine life [and of] the prosecution of higher ecclesiastical studies and the production of historical and other writings’.<sup>244</sup>

The foreword to the centenary edition is also highly reflective of the past hundred years. In

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<sup>239</sup> Butler, Cuthbert, ‘Foreword’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], (1914) vii-viii (p. vii).

<sup>240</sup> Butler, Cuthbert, ‘Foreword’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], (1914) vii-viii (p. viii).

<sup>241</sup> See Butler, Cuthbert, ‘Foreword’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], (1914) vii-viii (p. vii).

<sup>242</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*. p. 5.

<sup>243</sup> Butler, Cuthbert, ‘Foreword’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], (1914) vii-viii (p. viii).

<sup>244</sup> ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18–90.



many ways, it mirrors the structure of the 1881 edition which set out the ambitions of the community at the inception of *The Downside Review*. This had coincided with Gasquet's priorate which had been seen as:

a notable phase in the history of Downside: it was a time of overflowing life in all directions, a period of transition wherein ideas previously flitting before men's minds began to take coherence and shape, and to be held consciously as practical aims.<sup>245</sup>

As well as being a commemorative act, the centenary edition ends with an ambitious projection for the next century at Downside. Butler bookends this projection with historical precedence, which emphasises the community's desire for stability and achievement:

She [the monastery] can look back on a record of solid achievement in the past, and she faces the future under conditions that justify much good hope – the house full of young life, the school well-equipped and full, the efforts of the past hundred years crowned in many ways with substantial success.<sup>246</sup>

The tangible growth of the community is highlighted for the coming century, with its relationship to material growth through the physicality of the monastery clear. In the Centenary issue, Butler emphasises the design of *The Review* not to be

a chronicle of events... nor a set of reminiscences... what is aimed at is... an appraisal of the house in its developments and its works during the century, and of the ideas underlying and informing the various phases of both development and work.<sup>247</sup>

The reflective nature of the centenary issue also acts as a written exploration of the effects of the Downside Controversy. As a key member of the Downside Movement, Butler appears to have used his authority as abbot, editor and writer to present the Movement's reforms as an attempt to make the Controversy into 'a period of development, consolidation and expansion, during which his ability and inspiration were felt throughout the entire system, and the foundations laid on which will be built up the enlargements of many years to come'.<sup>248</sup> Likewise, Butler uses *The Downside Review* to reiterate the aims of the Movement, and how

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<sup>245</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90 (p. 65).

<sup>246</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90 (p. 87).

<sup>247</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90.

<sup>248</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90 (p. 71).

the Controversy's impact on tradition led to

the appeal to the past [which] was now recognised as at best a double-edged weapon, for the movement of which Prior Ford was leader of was now (if centuries and not decades were to be counted) seen to be conservative [as a return to a medieval monastic model and], not revolutionary in tendency.<sup>249</sup>

Ultimately, the foreword acts to define the characteristics that Downside wanted to convey and demonstrates a reflective past and an ambitious future. Themes in the foreword are also found within the articles of the centenary issue. In *The Record of the Century*, Butler reiterates the vision the community wished to present– ‘it is an attempt to show throughout the century at Downside the working of the self-same Spirit of St Gregory’s that has been seen infused into the house from the beginning’.<sup>250</sup> The sense of legacy here is important, not only does Butler link the community to its foundational heritage, but to that of their forefathers – St Gregory himself.

## **ii. The ‘Douay’ Inheritance<sup>251</sup>**

This article, which marks the opening of the centenary issue was written by Butler, whose own views took a more radical approach to the mission and echoed much of the themes that Butler emphasised in the Downside Controversy Biography. The rooting of the movement in its past at Douai is unsurprising, as the uncertainty of Douai's presence in France had long coloured its relationship with the monk's vocation. Many early letters from the founders of Downside indicated a deep desire to return to Douai and framed Downside's Somerset location as a temporary measure.<sup>252</sup> However, this was not to be. The perilous journey to France was not popular and so necessitated the monks' permanent home in Somerset. As such, the Downside Movement was founded on idea that ‘a succession of men who were dissatisfied with the state of affairs in the congregation... handed down from St Gregory's at Douai, and a tradition of discontent had smouldered on at Downside’.<sup>253</sup> However, it is important to note that at the time

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<sup>249</sup> David Knowles, *The Historian and Character*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964) p. 287.

<sup>250</sup> ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90 (p. 22).

<sup>251</sup> In the context of *The Downside Review*, Douai is referred to by the spelling ‘Douay’. For accuracy, direct quotations will use the spelling used within *The Downside Review*, and elsewhere ‘Douai’ will be used.

<sup>252</sup> See DAA, Green Collection. A brief summary of these events can also be found in the centenary issue. See ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90.

<sup>253</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 13.

the Controversy manuscript was written, the community remained firmly in favour of missionary activity.<sup>254</sup> Likewise, in *Downside's Foundations and Missions*, Dom Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard suggests that the link between medievalism and the reforms was in part due to:

The re-establishment, some four hundred years ago, of English monasteries (albeit in exile) after their devastation by Henry VIII in the sixteenth century necessitated a constitution geared to urgent missionary work in England under strong centralised control. By the end of the nineteenth century that sense of emergency was over and Abbot Ford, Downside's last Conventual Prior and (from 1901) its first Abbot, headed a campaign for a more monastery-centred and traditional constitution for the English Benedictine Congregation.<sup>255</sup>

Here, nostalgia is intertwined with the idea of inheritance and Downside's desire for a legacy. This continued reference to the English Mission places great importance on the traditions associated with early mission activity. This was a central point in the Controversy and was seen as a point of contention. The attitude towards missionary activity varied, and the traditionalists who were against the changes to the constitution such as Benedict Snow (1838-1905, Downside) declared that:

As Missionary work has ever accompanied the Black Monks from the sixth century during the irruption of the barbarians, through the middle ages to the time of the Reformation, so now it should be a source of gratification and a sign that they are true to the instincts of the Order, to find that they are still mainly engaged in the work of their forefathers.<sup>256</sup>

This sense of legacy was very important to the community, and this view was common amongst most of the community regarding the mission.<sup>257</sup> With the status of the missions having been a central argument against the reforms proposed by the Movement during the Controversy, it is perhaps interesting to note the repeated references Butler reiterates of the community's position regarding missionary activity. However, in both the Controversy manuscripts and the centenary issue, Butler emphasises the importance of the influence of *Sancta Sophia* on the

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<sup>254</sup> The manuscript was written alongside Controversy activity. Butler started it in c.1900 and continued to work on it after the conclusion of activity. It was revised by a later monk, David Knowles – although the date this happened is unclear.

<sup>255</sup> Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard, ed. 'Downside's Foundations and Missions', *The Raven*, (2012), 17-25.

<sup>256</sup> DAA, Benedict Snow Collection, *The Missionary Work of the Benedictines: 1881*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>257</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*.

community.<sup>258</sup> Baker resided at Downside between 1634-38 and is reputed to have become the spiritual guide of the monastery.<sup>259</sup> In the centenary issue, Baker was seen to embody the spirit of Downside:

in regard to the cultivation of the spiritual life – the interior life of prayer – the spirit of St Gregory’s may be found in Fr Augustine Baker’s *Sancta Sophia*.<sup>260</sup>

Baker’s *Apostolical Mission into England* was prescribed reading for the novices of Downside and inspired Butler and the other members of the Movement immensely, especially the line: ‘no one should enter the monastery with the view to go on the mission. Private religious contemplation is paramount’.<sup>261</sup> Baker’s emphasis on contemplative prayer and minimising missionary activities echoed strongly throughout the Movement’s intended reforms and was a focal point of the community in 1914.

The clear emphasis on the ‘restored English Congregation’ throughout the article has clear connections with the ‘settled tradition and practice of nearly three hundred years’ which had been ‘cherished and maintained by... men who held every position of legitimate authority in the body which they belonged’ that Butler describes in the Downside Controversy manuscript.<sup>262</sup> This sense of tradition formed part of the historical consciousness that provided the legitimising power to use Downside’s history throughout the period to achieve the political reforms that either side of the reform process desired. This is apparent in Goetz’s work on historical consciousness.<sup>263</sup> Many of the themes of Goetz’s argument can be applied to the situation at Downside, and the same manner of historical consciousness is displayed by the Downside community. The monks’ relationship to medievalism – through the return to a medieval form of liturgy, the building of the abbey church and a return to a contemplative life - and desire to create a much older sense of history is also seen in the medieval examples that Goetz employs. Goetz’s work remains relevant to the Downside community as they sought to mimic the medieval communities that appear in Goetz’s work. The deliberate act of mimicking

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<sup>258</sup> The Douay Inheritance, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], (1914), 5-17 (p. 11).

<sup>259</sup> See Peter Salvin, *Life of Father Augustine Baker*, (Salzburg: Poetry Salzburg, 1997). See also Norbert Sweeney, *The Life and Spirit of Father Augustine Baker*, (London: Kessinger Publishing, 2010).

<sup>260</sup> ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90 (p. 11).

<sup>261</sup> Fr Hadley, ‘Father Baker’s *Sancta Sophia*’ *The Dublin Review*, 79 (1876).

<sup>262</sup> Bruno Hicks, *Biography of Abbot Ford* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 1970), p. 101.

<sup>263</sup> Hans-Werner Goetz, ‘Historical Writing, Historical Thinking and Historical Consciousness in the Middle Ages’, *Revista Diálogos Mediterrânicos*, 2 (2012), 110-128.

medieval history at Downside is an act of historical consciousness.

The article also cites the early influences on the foundation of the community, which also places a great emphasis on foundational stability and connection. These are highlighted as the Benedictine congregation of Spain where the monks followed a monastic life of ‘considerable austerity and observance on a high level’.<sup>264</sup> Likewise, the abbey of St Verdas of Arras is also described in effusive terms, as containing the ‘most illustrious of the abbots’, where ‘everything is [was] great and magnificent’ with the community having an ‘intimate connection with the great abbey, which maintained its high character till the end’.<sup>265</sup> The last cited influence is, however, not a physical community but described as the ‘atmosphere of Douay’ which exerted great impact on ‘the spirit of St Gregory’s, and the zeal, truly apostolic, it engendered among the monks to labour for the return to Catholic Unity’.<sup>266</sup> This continued emphasis on the community’s relationship to a wider Benedictine past is typical of the monks’ desire for legacy and is similarly demonstrated in the connection to Douay itself, whose physical manifestation indicated stability for the monks.

Equally, the Movement believed the medieval past provided context to their mission and examined the use of monastic governance and the negotiation of authority within the community to provide foundations for their ideas.<sup>267</sup> This was a firmly held belief of the Movement and was frequently articulated. Gasquet, in the introduction to Forbes’ *The Monks of the West*, wrote that ‘here, and here alone on English soil, we are linked not only to the beginnings of English Christianity, but to the beginnings of Christianity itself’.<sup>268</sup> As such, the foundation of the Benedictine movement was hugely influential to the members of the Controversy.<sup>269</sup> The governance of ‘the beginnings of Christianity’ was a source of influence to the Movement – demonstrated here in a letter regarding the constitutional reforms: ‘Before our constitutions in this matter are finally framed it might perhaps be wise to examine the

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<sup>264</sup> Formative Influences, ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 7

<sup>265</sup> Formative Influences, ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 7.

<sup>266</sup> Formative Influences, ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 8.

<sup>267</sup> See Francis Aidan Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English monasteries. An attempt to illustrate the history of their suppression* (London: J. Hodges Publishers, 1888), Cuthbert Butler, *Benedictine Monachism: Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919).

<sup>268</sup> Francis Aidan Gasquet, ‘Sketch of Monastic Constitutional History’, in *The Monks of the West from St. Benedict to St. Bernard* by Charles Forbes, (London: J.C. Nimmo, 1896) p. 4.

<sup>269</sup> See *Records of the English Catholics: Douai Diaries 1&2*. ed. by Thomas Francis Knox, (London: David Nutt Publishers, 1878).

practice of our congregation before its suppression under Henry VIII'.<sup>270</sup> The community felt very strongly about their continued relationship with their medieval past and believed that despite the fragmentation of a direct lineage to the ancient monasteries they had the right to recall this past.<sup>271</sup>

The article also stresses the formative influences on Downside by referencing the activity found before the foundation at Douai within the Benedictine Congregation. The idea of this 'Reformed Observance' is linked to the formation of the EBC at the beginning of the seventeenth century was the first attempt to instigate a revival of the ancient Benedictine houses of Britain under the papal bull *Plantata* (1633).<sup>272</sup> *Plantata* was considered to denote the restoration of authority to the Congregation - the 'pallium of our [the Benedictines'] liberties'.<sup>273</sup> Connolly's metaphor here highlights the community's relationship with Rome and the authority which it claimed through the renewal of *Plantata*. The bull was designed to emphasise and re-establish the governance of the EBC in England and invoke the restoration of the monasteries for the first time since the Reformation. Ultimately, it gave the English Benedictines the right to return to the monasteries of Britain that had been inhabited by their medieval forefathers. However, by necessity, it also cemented the Congregation's missionary presence, which the centenary issue reminds its audience that the community was immersed in martyrdom and that the 'zeal for the Conversion of England is a side of the spirit of St Gregory's that is obvious and needs no enforcement'.<sup>274</sup>

After 1886, Ford began to work with Butler to revise the Movement's aims by looking at Benedictine history. Similarly, Gasquet began work on what would become a series of publications on Benedictine history in London. In 1887, Butler published *Notes on the Origins of the Benedictines* which was perceived as a 'declaration of war' by the Movement's opposition.<sup>275</sup> Combined with the unearthing of the Bull *Behemoth* by Ford during his period of investigative research, it 'emboldened those who desired changes to be put forward' in part

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<sup>270</sup> DAA, Hugh Connolly Collection, *Papers presented to the Sacred Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, Part I: October 1889, Division of the Missions and Common Deposition*.

<sup>271</sup> David Knowles, *The Religious Orders of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956) pp. 444-455.

<sup>272</sup> Douay inheritance p. 10.

<sup>273</sup> Hugh Connolly, *The Abbots of the Ancient Monasteries and the Cathedral Priors* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1942) p. 55.

<sup>274</sup> Spirit of Old St Gregory's: The Douay Inheritance, 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 15

<sup>275</sup> DAA, David Knowles, Collection *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 36.

due to the historical precedence developed in *Notes* and *Behemoth*, which detailed the normal constitution of a Benedictine Congregation.<sup>276</sup> Likewise, the Movement's agenda was developed through scholarship. This can be undoubtedly seen in the role of Butler as the author of the Controversy material and as editor of *The Downside Review's* centenary issue. In the Controversy manuscript, Butler declared that:

I acquired a strong taste for historical research and monastic studies from a long essay I worked on up in the Lent of 1879, which involved a wide range of reading, and investigation of original sources.<sup>277</sup>

This 'high standard in the cultivation of ecclesiastical studies' would reinforce the legacy that would create the conditions for Raymond Webster (1880-1957), who became Downside's monastic librarian in 1913.<sup>278</sup> Committed to the craft of cataloguing, his efforts were concentrated on building the community's collection of rare manuscripts. He also drew up ambitious plans for a new library in the same neo-gothic style as the monastery. These did not come to fruition, however, and instead, the library was built in the 1960s by the architect and Old Gregorian Francis Pollen (1926-87).

### **iii. The Australian Mission**

The mission to Australia was deeply connected to the Downside Movement. Whilst this article highlights Downside's continued relationship with Australia, it also represented new traditions and pathways for the community. However, the Australian mission was also part of an established tradition of missionary activity by Catholics during this period as exemplified by scholars such as Bossy, Ward and Chadwick.<sup>279</sup> At Downside, this was seen by members of the community as part of the continued move towards enabling and developing a wider Catholic culture. This is exemplified in the piece written about Ford for the centenary issue

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<sup>276</sup> David Knowles, 'Abbot Butler: A Memoir', *Downside Review*, 52 (1934), 347-440.

<sup>277</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, Butler's Downside Controversy, p. 9.

<sup>278</sup> Spirit of Old St Gregory's: The Douay Inheritance, 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 13

<sup>279</sup> Indeed, Birt is part of a long canon of writing on the mission during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. For example, see John Bossy, *The English Catholic Community: 1570-1850*, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1975), Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part Two: 1860-1901*, (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1972) and Bernard Ward, *The dawn of the Catholic revival in England, 1781-1803* (London: Longman Green & Co, 1909).

quoted below:

He [Ford] set himself to carry out the spirit of the policy enjoined by the recent papal legislation, and also by General Chapter, that in addition to the abbeys should be set up lesser conventual houses, wherein pastoral and educational work should be carried on under the normal conditions of Benedictine community life.<sup>280</sup>

This was seen in the creation of many daughter houses in England, and in the creation of links made abroad.<sup>281</sup> The formalisation of the relationship under John Bede Polding (1794-1877, Downside) as Archbishop of Sydney, and his successors Roger Bede Vaughan (1834-83, Downside) and William Bernard Ullathorne (1806-89, Downside) as Vicar General has always been a point of pride for the Downside community and demonstrates how important the relationship between monastery and mission was.<sup>282</sup> The relationship with the Australian mission, in particular, was pertinent for the Movement, as the community building that had occurred there had been directly witnessed by Ford who went to Australia as a young novice (1873-76) under the supervision of another Downside eminence as Polding's successor, Roger William Bede Vaughan (1834-83).<sup>283</sup> Likewise, Birt's *Benedictine Pioneers in Australia* makes the connection between the historical significance of Australian expansionism on its conclusion in 1884:

Thus ended the connection – a long and honourable one – of the English Benedictine Congregation in general, of Downside Monastery in particular, with New South Wales. The English Benedictines of Downside had done in the Southern Continent what St Augustine and his companions had done for England, what St Boniface had done for Prussia, St Willibrord for the Low Countries, St Ansgar for Scandinavia.<sup>284</sup>

As well as a method of expansionism under the new freedoms that Catholics were afforded after the repeal of the penal laws, for Downside, it was also a method of reconnecting with the past. As Butler stated: 'one of the objects of the reconstruction of the English Congregation at the beginning of the seventeenth century was that its monks might when called upon, go to England on the apostolic work of the English mission. As the monasteries were abroad, it was

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<sup>280</sup> Abbot Ford, 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 73.

<sup>281</sup> For example, the communities of Ealing, Beccles, Great Malvern, County Wexford, and Liverpool. For more on the various communities see the series of articles in *The Downside Review*: Charles Fitzgerald-Lombard, 'Downside's Foundations and Missions.' *The Downside Review* (2014) 16–99.

<sup>282</sup> See 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914).

<sup>283</sup> Australia was also the proposed location for the Movement had their constitutional reforms failed. This will be discussed in the following chapter in more detail.

<sup>284</sup> Norbert Birt, *Benedictine Pioneers in Australia Vol II*, (Herbert & Daniel: London, 1911) p. 460



necessary to supply Superiors in England to govern the missionaries'.<sup>285</sup> After the establishment of the monasteries in England, the opposite was formed: monks in England left to spread the mission abroad.<sup>286</sup>

However, as a result of the Controversy, *Religiosus Ordo* and *Diu Quidem* dictated that there would be less emphasis on missionary activities for all professed monks within the community and would not be dictated by superiors outside of the monastery.<sup>287</sup> Instead, the ultimate authority for the monastery would be held by the abbot of the monastery in question. Those with strong missionary zeal would still be able to go on the mission and those preferring a more contemplative life could stay at their home monastery without fear of being removed to the mission in times of strife. However, the Controversy was also a period defined by intense expansion of the community by its members and this was echoed in the creation of the wider Downside community. This expansion can be first seen in the proliferation of building work within the community and in the development of a missionary presence within the EBC.

The influence of the Controversy had far-reaching implications and not only affected the state of monasticism at Downside but within the wider EBC as well. Importantly, the context for the dispute between the traditionalists and neo-monastics was not the pre-Henrician Benedictine foundation but rather the post-Reformation 'English mission' and the English and Irish Colleges which supported recusant Catholicism.<sup>288</sup> Despite the emphasis placed by opposing factions on the group's desire to remove the missionary element of the monastic oath, post-controversy activity demonstrates this in reverse. The centenary issue continues to emphasise this point and collectively acknowledges the many 'men [associated with Downside] that have served on missions in every part of the country during the period of revival and reconstruction and enlargement of Catholicism in England that was ushered in by Emancipation'.<sup>289</sup>

Likewise, in the words of Cuthbert Butler, Ford 'had always maintained the principle that whatever works Benedictines carry on should be done by monks living in the community' and throughout his career, Ford endeavoured to form centres of community life outside of

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<sup>285</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 5.

<sup>286</sup> See [Anon.], 'From Douai to Downside' *The Downside Review*, 1, 2, (1881) 93-128.

<sup>287</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*.

<sup>288</sup> See John Bossy, *Peace in the Post-Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) or Diarmaid MacCulloch, 'The Myth of the English Reformation,' *Journal of British Studies*, 30 (1991).

<sup>289</sup> Works of Downside, 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 85.

Downside.<sup>290</sup> The constitutional crisis also signalled the development of the reach of the community and its ability to transform the landscape of monasticism. In many ways, the community saw the foundation of the Australian mission as important. Butler thought that it was ‘without any doubt the practical founding and organising of the Catholic Church in Australia stands out as Downside’s greatest work during the Century’.<sup>291</sup> However, this was not shared by everyone in the community. Norbert Birt in the article *The Australian Mission* gives a more measured response to the Australian Mission:

The sacrifice was great, and it was real; there can be no doubt that it definitely retarded the natural growth of St Gregory’s, and set limits to its works, and this was for a generation or more. On the other side, the gain to religion in Australia was immense, and is the proudest of all Downside Records.<sup>292</sup>

This suggests that for the community of the early twentieth century at least, the missionary question was still not fully settled. Despite the actions of the Movement during the Controversy, the fundamental question that was asked in the earlier section of this thesis: ‘what should the essential nature of the EBC be?’ appears to be still unresolved to yet be resolved in 1914. However, its claim as ‘the proudest of all Downside Records’ is deeply connected to the foundational narrative of the EBC, and its connection to the displacement of the monasteries after the Reformation.<sup>293</sup> This was perhaps answered in the centenary issue where ‘greater prominence [was given to] the work of the Mission in England, for the propagation of the Catholic Faith’.<sup>294</sup> Similarly, this ‘essential nature’ was perhaps what was implied by Cardinal Weld, quoted in the centenary issue here, concerning the importance of the missionary activity of the monastery:

[it] made the community see the case in its true light when he wrote the noble words: ‘*date et dabitur vobis*’ [‘Give and it will be given to you’] is never better exemplified than in the case of those religious Orders who generously send their members to the

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<sup>290</sup> Cuthbert Butler, ‘Abbot Butler on Abbot Ford’, *The Downside Review*, 59 (1931), 13.

<sup>291</sup> The New School, ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 81.

<sup>292</sup> Birt, Norbert, ‘The Australian Mission’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], (1914), 118-141 (p. 141). Interestingly, *The Downside Review* had a strong connection to the publication of work on the missions to Australia. Cardinal Moran’s *History of the Church in Australasia* had lifted many of Birt’s articles on the Australian Mission from *The Downside Review*, and so prompted the publication of Birt’s *Benedictine Pioneers in Australia*.

<sup>293</sup> Peter Cunich, ‘Archbishop Vaughan in New South Wales’ in *Empires of Religion*, ed. by Hilary Carey (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 150.

<sup>294</sup> Spirit of Old St Gregory’s: The Douay Inheritance, ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 15.

foreign missions.<sup>295</sup>

The sense of achievement shown by the community in Downside's presence in Australia suggests that the 'Benedictine dream' that Peter Cunich described in his chapter on Australian Benedictines lost traction over time.<sup>296</sup> The attitude of Butler and Birt within the centenary issue goes some way to explaining attitudes towards this and perhaps indicates the reason for the loss of traction regarding foreign missions. Although describing the loss of traction in Australia, many other missions across the globe suffered similar fates. Again, Birt ends his article with this conservative refrain on the successes of the missions in Australia:

Downside can look with complacency at the progress daily recorded. The labours of her sons were blessed by God, they sowed in tears and hardship, and as is so often the way in God's Providence, others have entered into their labours and have garnered the harvest. But the noble record of their work remains as a possession of pride, as an incentive to those who shall come after them to be ready at the call of duty and of authority to emulate their spirit of self-sacrifice and devotion.<sup>297</sup>

This echoes much of the reasoning behind the missionary presence of the monks during the nineteenth century and reflects the concerns and desires of many of the monks at Downside. These concerns helped exacerbate these conditions during the Controversy and thus emerges as a series of disputes over the very tensions of mission versus monastery.<sup>298</sup> Even so, the centenary issue clearly utilises this sense of legacy to bring legitimacy to what has been achieved by 1914.

#### **iv. Building the Work of God**

Unsurprisingly, the centenary issue also celebrates the newly completed monastery, wherein 'the architectural views have been selected not with the intention of illustrating Downside, which is admirably done in the Album; but of illustrating the successive phases of ideas that

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<sup>295</sup> Birt, Norbert, 'The Australian Mission', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], (1914), 118-141 (p. 124).

<sup>296</sup> Peter Cunich, 'Archbishop Vaughan in New South Wales' in *Empires of Religion*, ed. by Hilary Carey (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 149.

<sup>297</sup> Birt, Norbert, 'The Australian Mission', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], (1914), 118-141 (p. 141).

<sup>298</sup> James E. Kelly, 'Dominic Aidan Bellenger, Monks with a Mission: English Benedictine History, Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 2014' *British Catholic History*, 33 (2016), 163-165.

found expression in plans, whether realised or left undone'.<sup>299</sup> The ambitious nature of the community is noticeably demonstrated in the monastery buildings. Combined with the unrealised Pugin plans and the plans for a grand library, it is clear that the Downside community wanted to convey strength and power within their establishment. The proliferation of buildings that were built also provided context for their ambition – such as the observatory, great hall and main quad outside the Old House which established a scholarly detail designed to rival Oxbridge colleges.<sup>300</sup>

Ambition is also prevalent in the repeated references to the relationship between the grandeur of the buildings and the relationship with God. This was encapsulated in the way in which the community saw the building's relationship with religion: 'thus asserting the great Benedictine principle that the work carried on in it [the abbey church] is the most important carried on in Downside, for it is the 'Work of God''.<sup>301</sup> This is particularly true of the new choir, which coincided with the third centenary of the foundation of St Gregory's. The celebration for the opening of the new choir took place in September 1905 and was framed in terms of architecture and faith:

they [the community] dedicate it [the new choir] as the symbol of that devotion to the Divine Office and the zeal for its perfect performance which, as the humble children of St Benedict, they have inherited and dearly cherish.<sup>302</sup>

The connection between the foundational history and the community was markedly felt by the community:

It was already felt that there was a need of producing at Downside something more like the Benedictine Monasteries of Old England than was possible in the Old House. It was the days of Pugin and the enthusiasms of the Gothic Revival...<sup>303</sup>

This sense of history was echoed in the development of the new building, which was designed in the neo-gothic style to represent a sense of continuity with the past and optimism for the

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<sup>299</sup> Hudleston, Roger, 'Buildings', *The Downside Review*, [Centenary Edition], (1914) 142-170

<sup>300</sup> The observatory was sadly lost to a fire in 1867, one which also destroyed much of Downside's natural history collection. See Hubert Van Zeller, *Downside By and Large* (London & New York: Sheed and Ward, 1953).

<sup>301</sup> The New Choir, 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 75.

<sup>302</sup> The New Choir, 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 75.

<sup>303</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 46.

revival of Catholic fortune. The historian Richard Irvine suggested that ‘the use of architecture to present contrasting sets of values was an important motivation in the Gothic Revival movement of nineteenth-century England’.<sup>304</sup> This was a subject that preoccupied many of the newly re-established communities, including those at Downside. The architecture at Downside was specifically crafted to suit the needs of the monks and indeed to represent the community as a physical presence in England.

The resurgence of medieval culture was seen throughout the nineteenth century in the revival of medieval practices, for example in the works of John Ruskin and William Morris – both of whom were proponents of the virtues of medievalism.<sup>305</sup> Ruskin and Morris were greatly influenced by the cultural impact of medievalism in the Victorian period. In *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), Ruskin put forward the notion that gothic architecture and medievalism had a great influence on the nature of building and were used by cultural figures to support and transform social cohesion, artistic impetus and technical skill.<sup>306</sup> Likewise, Morris declared that ‘the untouched surface of ancient architecture [bore] witness to man’s ideas’ as the legacy to the relationship between history and innovation.<sup>307</sup> The relationship between the medieval and modern provided moral and artistic inspiration for the Movement. The abbey church itself represented the Movement's medieval nature and provided neo-gothic inspiration. This attitude towards the revival of medieval thought and culture was of great influence on the Movement who were building a revived monastic community under such circumstances. Because of this, they felt a strong connection to the strength of the medieval church and monastic community. The abbey church itself represented the Movement's medieval nature and provided neo-gothic inspiration. This was also provided in the connection to the community’s choice to move to Downside,

where so much of Old St Gregory’s owed in every way to the abbey of St Vedast... Nor were these ties to be severed by the ruin of the abbey and our own departure from Douay. New St Gregory’s still stands under the shadow of St Vedast’s.<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>304</sup> Richard D.G Irvine, ‘Stability, Continuity, Place An English Benedictine Monastery as a Case’. in *Religious Architecture: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. by Oskar Verkaaik. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2013), 33.

<sup>305</sup> See John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (Orpington: George Allen, 1894) and William Morris, *Architecture, History and Westminster Abbey*. (London: Longmans, Green, 1900).

<sup>306</sup> Ayla Lepine, ‘The Persistence of Medievalism: Kenneth Clark and the Gothic Revival,’ *Architectural History*, 57 (2014), 323–56.

<sup>307</sup> William Morris, *Architecture, History and Westminster Abbey*. (London: Longmans, Green, 1900), p. 1.

<sup>308</sup> The Coming to Downside, ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 21.

Likewise, Pugin, who initially sketched designs for Downside, proclaimed the relationship between the gothic revival and the emergence of a new Catholic culture in England as ‘on the eve of the great change of religion, we find Architecture in a high state of perfection, both as regards design and execution’.<sup>309</sup> Despite the fact Pugin’s designs were never realised at Downside, the sentiment of his ideas was well favoured by the community, who saw ‘the constant growth which was always showing itself in new buildings at Downside... as teaching a lesson of patience and perseverance’.<sup>310</sup> In this time of great change, the building and constitutions evidentially inspired and reflected each other.

Downside’s relationship to building in the Gothic style echoed Pugin’s relationship to Gothic – what Pugin called the ‘English Style’ or more correctly the ‘pointed style’ was designed to act as an assertion of English dominance and imperial nationalism as well as a ‘nostalgic’ reflection on the past.<sup>311</sup> Like Pugin, who was firmly in favour of the ‘English Style’ the monks of Downside were particularly interested in an English variation of the Gothic revival, and in particular what they called the style of the abbey church – ‘Somerset Perpendicular’.<sup>312</sup> Pugin was firmly in favour of English Gothic (which he called the ‘pointed’ style). The mania for the Gothic past went through numerous phases but was especially important in new foundations including in Ireland and the colonies. The ubiquity of the style was cemented by the advocacy of the Anglican Church Commissioners who mandated it to churches seeking funds for restoration.<sup>313</sup>

In promoting the Gothic revival, Butler suggests that ‘nowadays it seems incredible that such a type of plan could be adopted; but as yet the Gothic revival had scarcely dawned and such incongruities as a wing of classrooms and dormitories masquerading as an early pointed church vexed not the souls either of architect or clients’.<sup>314</sup> This clearly demonstrates the link between medieval monastic history and the presentation of the Movement and its aims. The below quote, taken from the centenary issue also suggests that the neo-gothic provided a relationship

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<sup>309</sup> Augustus Pugin, *Contrasts* [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.] (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1969).

<sup>310</sup> Cuthbert Butler, ‘The First Abbot of Downside’, *The Downside Review*, 19 (1900), 209-213.

<sup>311</sup> See Augustus Pugin, *True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture*, (London: John Weale, 1843).

<sup>312</sup> Augustine James, *Downside Abbey*, (Stratton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 1970).

<sup>313</sup> See Rosemary Hill, *God’s Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain* (London: Penguin, 2007).

<sup>314</sup> Hudleston, Roger, ‘Buildings’, *The Downside Review*, [Centenary Edition], (1914) 142-170 (p. 145).

between the medieval and modern which in turn supplied moral and artistic inspiration for the Movement.

Nor at any time were there wanting in the community men of desires, before whose minds floated such visions of better things as Pugin tried to concrete in his idea of the monastery but which were ever destined to postponement and disappointment.<sup>315</sup>

The Downside Controversy also demonstrated how the development of a complete monastic vision was aided by the construction of the abbey church — ‘most certainly if we are not good in that place it will not be from the want of a beautiful place’.<sup>316</sup> This reference to the ambition of the monks of Downside was not only realised in the depth of reform but in their use of sacred space as well. At many points the article could as easily be communicating the necessity for constitutional reform as well as architectural; for example – ‘but the discomfort of the status quo remained and grew acuter as the numbers increased in community and school, and so the problem was grappled with a second time’.<sup>317</sup>

The rapid progress of the building work that occurred at Downside similarly inspired this sense of introspection and the impetus to reform the Congregation. Amongst all the communities, Downside was undergoing the most dramatic changes in its landscape. The centenary issue explores the first sections of the monastery to be finished, with work completed by Giles Gilbert Scott in a reproduction gothic style, where ‘the Middle Ages architecture... gave the sentiment of a larger and freer existence... The grand monastery embodied an ideal and inspired us’.<sup>318</sup> The sentiment of the community here echoes Pugin, in the way in which many of his writings suggest that the dissolution of the monasteries led to artistic and cultural losses.<sup>319</sup> In contrast, Butler talks of having visited Ampleforth, whose buildings made Butler ‘feel how much we owe[d] at Downside to our majestic buildings’.<sup>320</sup> This sense of majesty

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<sup>315</sup> Prior Murphy, ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 57.

<sup>316</sup> DAA, Aidan Gasquet Collection, *Gasquet to Ford: May 14<sup>th</sup> 1874*.

<sup>317</sup> Birt, Norbert, ‘The Australian Mission’, *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], (1914), 118-141 (p. 141).

<sup>318</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 14.

<sup>319</sup> Rosemary Hill, ‘Reformation to Millennium: Pugin’s Contrasts in the History of English Thought’ *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 58, (1999) 26–41.

<sup>320</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 14.

drew together medieval and Victorian designs into a manifesto for the prospect of their revival, drawing on medieval models and allowing them to speak afresh.<sup>321</sup>

This manifesto of progression was emphasised by the rapid progression of the building at Downside. Butler noted that:

[Prior Murphy] determined that the church should not be relegated to a dim future, but should be part of the actual immediate building scheme; and should be no college chapel, but a real monastic church on the scale and after the manner of an abbey church of old.<sup>322</sup>

This demonstrates that the building endeavours of the community were ambitious as well investing nostalgia. The idea of building a monument to ‘the manner of an abbey church of old’ created a sense of connection to the community with an imagined medieval past.<sup>323</sup> This culminated in the building plans of Dunn and Hansom which ‘should be worthy of the traditions associated with the Benedictine name’.<sup>324</sup> This confidence was reflected in the building work that took place at Downside, wherein the building acted as a tribute to the confidence the community possessed –

the monks found themselves dwelling in a monastery and erecting a church, which as far as material buildings went, placed Downside in the ranks of the greater Benedictine monasteries of the world.<sup>325</sup>

This sense of importance noted here in their own in-house publication also denoted the confidence in their own position and the assurance of their relationship with history – one that they felt was equal to the high medieval period and the great monasteries they wrote about in *The Downside Review*.

On the other hand, the building experiences of the other houses of the EBC acted as a counterpoint to the ambition of Downside. The new buildings were seen as ‘a great influence in inspiring and developing monastic ideas at Downside must be attributed to the then-new

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<sup>321</sup> Ayla Lepine. ‘Theology and Threshold: Victorian Approaches to Reviving Choir and Rood Screens’, *British Art Studies*, 5 (2017).

<sup>322</sup> ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 58.

<sup>323</sup> ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 58.

<sup>324</sup> ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 64.

<sup>325</sup> ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 63.



buildings. We [the community] felt that we had to live up to them'.<sup>326</sup> Therefore, it is apparent that the identity of the community was constantly renegotiated, and dependent on the changing circumstances. Butler also uses the centenary issue to briefly discuss the constitutional questions of the Downside Controversy that had overshadowed most of his early career. The centenary issue is intrinsically bound up in ideas of inheritance and legacy, as well as a profound connection to the past. This connection to the past exposes the deep desire of the Movement to receive what they perceive to be rightfully theirs in power and circumstance: 'thus, at last, did Downside and the sister-houses enter on their full inheritance as Benedictine monasteries'.<sup>327</sup> Throughout the section on the Controversy, Butler reiterates aspects of the Controversy that were perhaps discredited by detractors such as the movement to reduce the missionary presence of the monastery. Instead, Butler emphasises the return to a medieval structure within the movement's aims as being:

deeply pledged to the principle that the monasteries of the Congregation should be given their chance of growing to the normal statue of greater Benedictine Houses, and that all restrictions and limitations impeding this consummation should be removed.<sup>328</sup>

The nature of the Controversy was settled by the time the centenary issue was published (1914) however, the repercussions of the events were still felt by the community in 1914.

there is no phenomenon more wonderful than the persistence of the spirit of a community through long ages... there will also be a succession just enough to hand on intact the sacred flame; and when the period of revival comes, the old fire smouldering in the heart... bursts into flames... until in time the pristine spirit is restored.<sup>329</sup>

The Downside Controversy had resulted in the division between the established members of the congregation who opposed change and the 'radical' movement – considered by the senior hierarchy within the EBC to represent the division between the 'mischievous young men' and 'all senior clergy who opposed [the reforms]'.<sup>330</sup>

It has to be remembered that the monasteries of the Restored English Congregation at its initiation in the opening years of the seventeenth century stood for what was then

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<sup>326</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, Butler's Downside Controversy, p. 103.

<sup>327</sup> Downside an Abbey, 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 71.

<sup>328</sup> Growth of Ideas, 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 65.

<sup>329</sup> The Douay Inheritance, 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review*, (1914), pp. 9-10.

<sup>330</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 2.

connoted by the term ‘reformed observance’. Yet in St Gregory’s, as compared with other houses of the Congregation, there was a certain mitigation or moderation in the matter of observance.<sup>331</sup>

The reforms also emphasised individual control and gave monasteries control over their own properties, monks and missions. This emphasis on individuality was also reflected in the centenary issue where the prominence of the ‘great men of Downside’ appears throughout. The period of the Controversy (1880-1900) can be seen as a high point of ecclesiastic culture at the monastery and the building of the abbey church a celebration of the ‘great men’ who made it. It is notable that the two protagonists of the Controversy – Ford and Gasquet – are visibly represented throughout the abbey church in many ways.<sup>332</sup> In many ways, the Controversy can be seen as a way for the next generation of the monastic community to make their mark on the esteemed history of the community. *The Downside Review* echoes this ambition and pays homage to the ‘great men’ of Downside. The centenary edition is dedicated to Gasquet and reads:

To his eminence Francis Aidan Gasquet, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church of the title of S. Giorgio in Velabro, Monk of Downside. A Tribute of respect and love from all Gregorians.

Likewise, the golden age of Downside’s ‘great men’ saw an influx of bishops and was considered a point of pride to the community. The centenary issue of *The Downside Review* used its celebratory theme to highlight the impact Downside had had on the Catholic hierarchy in England - ‘Downside has given two great Bishops to the Catholic Church in England, Thomas Joseph Brown and William Bernard Ullathorne’.<sup>333</sup> These men were highly celebrated by the community and it was considered to be a great honour to be connected to them. These high points of monastic culture were important to the community, who saw themselves as leading figures in the EBC. Gasquet in particular would enjoy high office – becoming cardinal priest in 1914.

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<sup>331</sup> The Douay Inheritance, ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 10.

<sup>332</sup> This will be explored in greater detail in a later chapter. It refers to the likenesses of Ford and Gasquet that appear in several places in the abbey church – through symbolism, their prominent tombs and carvings of their faces above doorways.

<sup>333</sup> Two Great Bishops, ‘Record of the Century’, *The Downside Review*, (1914), p. 83.

## Conclusions

This chapter has explored the contents of the centenary issue of *The Downside Review*. The various articles highlight the continued preoccupation with a sense of nostalgia and ambition within the Controversy and the resulting constitutional changes. The articles also highlight the community's propensity for nostalgia by linking chapters of the centenary issue with themes within the wider context of the Downside Controversy. The centenary issue also highlights how the monks used scholarship to promote the agenda of the community and disseminate to interested parties such as the Old Gregorians. In this aspect, it also presented opportunities for self-promotion and had potential fund-raising opportunities.

The Movement also used *The Downside Review* to promote the changes they wished to make in the community. They referred to what they considered to be the high points of the monastic past in order to promote the sense of tradition and inheritance they desired to see in the community. They used *The Downside Review* to promote their own agenda and to present ideas regarding missionary activity. The transition to a more scholarly community took place on the pages of *The Downside Review*. Many of the authors became celebrated scholars, and this has continued until the present day. These men used – such as Gasquet – used *The Downside Review* not only to promote the reforms they desired to see in the community, but also to explore the connections between their lives and the medieval monks that came before them.

The next chapter will be a deeper analysis of the building of Downside abbey, which was briefly explored within the contents of the centenary issue. Its inclusion in *The Downside Review* has always been a point of pride for the monks, as they used the pages of the journal to keep alumni and distant members of the community informed as to the progress of the abbey church. It is known affectionately as 'Gasquet's Church' due to his energy and involvement during his time as prior.<sup>334</sup> The architectural decisions surrounding the abbey church were directly impacted by the Controversy and controlled at many key points during the process by members of the Movement. The next chapter will analyse these decisions.

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<sup>334</sup> *Downside Abbey: An Architectural History*, ed. by Aidan Bellinger (London & New York: Merrell, 2011), pp.18.

## CHAPTER THREE

### DOWNSIDE AND THE BUILDING OF AUTHORITY

During the period 1880-1900, the abbey church underwent a grand transformation which was documented in many issues of *The Downside Review* – cataloguing the work of the architects and master masons. The last chapter demonstrated how nostalgia was embedded in the community's outputs and yet the *Downside Review* also enabled the community to record the construction process of the abbey church. The physical representation of the medieval past was intrinsic to the Downside community and is reflected in the monastery's architecture that the monks built in Somerset between 1823-1900. For the community, the monastic landscape at Downside comprises the monastery, abbey church, and school buildings which were all built incrementally over time as the community and school grew. This chapter will explore the various aspects of the building process and the architecture itself that also evokes nostalgia for the medieval past and the representation of the values inherent in the aims of the Movement throughout the Downside Controversy (1880-1900). This chapter will focus primarily on the building of the abbey church, whose foundation stone was laid in 1873 and was finally consecrated in 1925. The building of the abbey church was important as it represented the physical manifestation of the ideas of the Movement, who admired and reinvented medieval architecture for their own purposes. The permanent nature of building is indicative of the confidence of the Movement, whose success in revising the constitutions was reflected in the medieval influence in the abbey church. Within the architecture of the abbey church, there are many connections between the ancient abbeys and cathedrals of the medieval past. This chapter will focus on the relationship between the Controversy, the construction of the abbey church and the foundational myth-making that occurred during this period.

The emphasis on the importance of the abbey church is highlighted throughout the community's history and relationship with its scholarship. The inception of the *Downside Review* happened to coincide with the first stages of the building work and so acted as both a celebration of progress and gave the wider community updates on its progress. This sense of importance is repeatedly shown throughout Downside's history and in the publication by the community of texts regarding the abbey church's construction. The history of the abbey church has been charted by many of the monks, such as Augustine James (1883-1970) in *The Story of Downside Abbey Church* (1961) and Aidan Bellenger (1950-current) in *Downside Abbey: An*

*Architectural History* (2011).<sup>335</sup> In *The Story of Downside Abbey Church*, James refers to the excitement of the community during these early stages:

These notes and articles not only cover practically all that was accomplished, but they are written with great enthusiasm. It almost seems as if the monks of those days were so excited by what they were doing that they were impelled to get it all down in black and white and tell the world.<sup>336</sup>

This is evocative of the ambition and confidence that was shown by the community during the building process. Both the building and the publication of the *Downside Review* demonstrate how the community wanted to establish itself in a permanent landscape. One, by physical presence, the other by promoting themselves beyond the monastery walls. Likewise, the foreword at once ties the building to both an emphasis on history and the Controversy:

We hope that the historical treatment of the church given in this little book may help the reader to understand the building, to increase his appreciation of it as the result of generations of thought and effort, and to share with us our gratitude to those past generations, and our desire to carry forward that effort to further achievements in harmony with the religious and aesthetic principles which they have bequeathed us.<sup>337</sup>

This suggests that the community continued to be aware of the historical significance of building the abbey. This demonstrates the community's emphasis on the foundational history that continued to dominate James' time as a monk. It presents the abbey as a symbol of the religious principles that were reaffirmed during the Controversy and asserts the presence of the community in this location. The historian Richard Irvine suggested that 'the use of architecture to present contrasting sets of values was an important motivation in the Gothic Revival movement of nineteenth-century England' and it was a subject that preoccupied many of the newly re-established communities, including those at Downside.<sup>338</sup>

Bellenger, writing as the twelfth abbot of Downside in *Downside Abbey: An Architectural*

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<sup>335</sup> See 'Record of the Century', *Downside Review*, (1914) or Augustine James, *The Story of Downside Abbey Church*, (Stratton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 1961), and *An Architectural History*, ed. By Aidan Bellenger, (London: Merrell Publications, 2011).

<sup>336</sup> Augustine James, *The Story of Downside Abbey Church*, (Stratton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 1961), p. 1.

<sup>337</sup> Augustine James, *The Story of Downside Abbey Church*, p. 1.

<sup>338</sup> Richard D.G Irvine, 'Stability, Continuity, Place An English Benedictine Monastery as a Case'. in *Religious Architecture: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. by Oskar Verkaaik. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2013), 33.

*History*, reaffirms the principle that the building of the Abbey church embodied:

a developing modern view of the revived monastic life... The abbey church as it now stands, complete except for its west front (for which various plans have been made) is the product – and sign – of the renewal of monastic life, in its fullness in the last hundred years.<sup>339</sup>

The connection between the modern and the medieval here is important. The renewal of monastic life was a central aspect of the Controversy, and Bellenger indicates the importance of this connection between the building and the Controversy. Likewise, the building took shape during an interesting and unusual period of the community's life. As such, it reflects the innovation that was taking place - the building started as a priory but was finished as an abbey. Furthermore, the architectural decisions made within the abbey church become symbols of the historically significant time for both the building and the community. In writing about the abbey church, Bellenger highlights the community's desire to connect to its medieval past.

The monastery itself acted as part of this nostalgia towards an imagined, enlightened past in the creation of physical space. As members of the Movement sought to challenge the internal and external perception of monasticism in the nineteenth century, they were also creating monastic buildings. The construction of Downside Abbey and the splendour this had produced remained a constant source of inspiration for its community. The Movement wanted to produce a modern monastic theology that reflected their neo-gothic inspiration. The resurgence of medievalism within Downside inspired this sense of introspection and the need for reform within the Congregation. The Controversy was also a period defined by intense expansion of the community by its members and this also can be seen in the creation of the wider Downside community. This expansion can be first seen in the proliferation of building work within the community and in the development of Ealing Abbey by Ford, as the first parish to be established after the Controversy occurred.<sup>340</sup> The influence of the Controversy had far-reaching implications and not only affected the state of monasticism at Downside but within

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<sup>339</sup> *An Architectural History*, ed. by Aidan Bellenger, (London: Merrell Publications, 2011), p. 13.

<sup>340</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 2.

the wider EBC as well.

## Modern Downside Begins

After the arrival of the community in Somerset in 1814, the monks made their home in the existing buildings on the Downside estate.<sup>341</sup> Further building work was necessitated by the expansion of the community, and the increased pressure on the school buildings. Bernard Murphy (1840-1914), who was elected prior on their arrival in Somerset, commissioned the first plans for the monastery.

The absolutely necessary condition of expansion was the building of the monastery... With true Benedictine instinct Prior Murphy (elected by the community in 1870) determined that the church should not be relegated to a dim future, but should be part of the actual immediate building scheme; and should be no college chapel, but a real monastic church on the scale and after the manner of an abbey church of old... the foundation stones of the three portions of the building, church, monastery and school – were laid on October 1, 1873.<sup>342</sup>

This, from the recollections of Wulfstan Phillipson (1907-84) who documented memories of the community, demonstrates the scale of the ambition needed to build the abbey church. It also indicates that the relationship between the medieval church and modern monasticism was part of a wider discourse and had its origins beyond the Controversy. Murphy's vision for the church also highlights the community's relationship with the past and how the community desired foundational stability. This theme of using the building to present an outward narrative was also echoed by later members of the community, such as Roger Hudleston (1874-1936) who suggested that 'there had always been a dislike of building for building's sake... and that the community had been determined to get what it, rather than the architect wanted'.<sup>343</sup> This use of neo-gothic to further the aims of the community and emphasis on internal direction is widespread within the archives and reveals the community's desire to present itself as the foremost Benedictine monastery in England.<sup>344</sup> Indeed, during the placement of the foundation stone ceremony, its position from Old House led Cardinal Manning (1808-92) to ask if they

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<sup>341</sup> The first buildings inhabited by the community were part of the original structure and included what is now known as 'Old House'. For more on the early origins of the community see <sup>341</sup> Nobert Birt, *Downside: The History of St Gregory's School from its Commencement at Douay to the Present Time* (Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd: London, 1902).

<sup>342</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Wulfstan Recollections*, p. 18.

<sup>343</sup> *An Architectural History*, ed. by Aidan Bellenger, (London: Merrell Publications, 2011), p. 60.

<sup>344</sup> 'St Gregory's College, Downside', *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, (9 October 1873).

were planning on building a town.<sup>345</sup>

Amongst all the communities, Downside was undergoing the most dramatic changes in its landscape. Initially sketched by Pugin, and with work being completed by Giles Gilbert Scott in a revised gothic style, which ‘gave the sentiment of a larger and freer existence...[,] the grand monastery embodied an ideal [sense of monasticism] and inspired us [the community]’.<sup>346</sup> The Movement saw the building work as the mark of the revival of Catholicism in England and accentuated Downside’s position at the centre of this sense of innovation and renewal. Through this, members of the Downside community used the traditions that had been passed down from Douai and a sense of nostalgia for an imagined early medieval past to further monasticism in the nineteenth century. Nostalgia was an intrinsic part of Downside’s identity and was used by both the Movement and the senior clergy to evoke a connection to the past. The use of identity in this way demonstrates how tension occurred whilst both sides used the same foundational myths to build a sense of authority into their agendas.

In the restoration therefore of our monastery to its proper position in the Congregation, (for I venture to speak only of our own house), we should like to see its governance and organisation made complete, according to the traditional form of the Benedictine Order.<sup>347</sup>

Here, it is clear how the nostalgia associated with this imagined medieval past framed the way the Movement used history.<sup>348</sup> The Movement had developed out of the foundations of the abbey and was influenced by their fledgling monastic careers. In developing the reform movement, the young monastic community, led by Ford sought to match the grandeur of the rising stonework and develop the monastic community beyond its walls. Using the medieval monastery as an idealised template, they endeavoured to return to medieval constitutional stability and to use this as a framework for the EBC. The Movement believed the medieval past supplied context to their mission, and so monastic governance and the negotiation of authority within the medieval community gave context to their proposed reforms.<sup>349</sup> This medieval past

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<sup>345</sup> Augustine James, *The Story of Downside Abbey Church*, (Stratton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 1961), p. 8.

<sup>346</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 14.

<sup>347</sup> DAA, Hugh Connolly Collection, *Ford to President*, 26/2/1889.

<sup>348</sup> See George Hersey, *High Victorian Gothic: A Study in Associationism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972).

<sup>349</sup> See Francis Aidan Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English monasteries. An attempt to illustrate the history of their suppression* (London: J. Hodges Publishers, 1888), Cuthbert Butler, *Benedictine Monachism: Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919).



was also used in the construction of the abbey church and its transformation in 1900 from priory to abbey.

## **The Abbey Church of St Gregory the Great**

Its ambitious design and neo-gothic construction mark the abbey church of St Gregory as what Sir Nikolaus Pevsner would later describe as ‘the most splendid demonstration of the renaissance of Roman Catholicism in England’.<sup>350</sup> It was an ambitious project for the community, with the foundation stone being laid in a grand ceremony on 1 October 1873.<sup>351</sup> It would not be consecrated until 1935 when the sanctuary decoration had been completed.<sup>352</sup>

The abbey church was built in Gothic Revival style by a succession of architects: Dunn and Hansom between 1872-1895; Comper 1899-1900; Garner 1901-5; Walters 1911-2; and Gilbert Scott 1923-5.<sup>353</sup> Dunn and Hansom oversaw the earliest sections of the abbey church including the east end, ambulatory and exterior of the Lady Chapel which are in the French Perpendicular style. The transepts with chapels and the base of the tower are dated c.1882 are also by Dunn and Hansom but in rich Early English style. Much of the interior was rib-vaulted in the thirteenth-century French style, and many of the carvings, tombs, paintings and stained glass, tombs and recesses are by Sir Ninian Comper as well as the Lady Chapel. Garner completed the chancel between 1901-5 in Early Perpendicular style. The furnishing and decoration of St Benedict’s were under the instruction of Fredrick Walters as well as decorative work on several other chapels. The nave with its blind aisles, Perpendicular arcades and triforium in the Decorated style and south gallery chapels over a north cloister is by Gilbert Scott which is connected to the ‘temporary’ west front in a simplified Perpendicular style. Likewise, the tower was finished in 1938 by Gilbert Scott in ‘Somerset’ Perpendicular, and houses the bell named the Great Bede – a memorial to Archbishop Roger Bede Vaughan of Sydney (1834-83) – and

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<sup>350</sup> Colin Amery, ‘Amazing Grace’, *The Spectator*, 12 (2011).

<sup>351</sup> ‘St Gregory’s College, Downside’, *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette*, (9 October 1873).

<sup>352</sup> See ‘The Consecration of the Abbey Church’, *The Downside Review*, (1935) 421-429.

<sup>353</sup> This introductory material regarding the abbey church itself is primarily taken from a few sources, including the current and previous guidebooks. See Guidebook, (Downside Abbey Press: Stratton on the Fosse, 2017) and Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Somerset North and Bristol*, (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2011).

remains the second-highest in Somerset.<sup>354</sup>

## Building the Downside Controversy

The events of the Downside Controversy are intimately linked with the building work. In 1899, Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903) promulgated the Apostolic Letter *Diu Quidem* to complement the directions of *Religiosus Ordo* (1890).<sup>355</sup> These two directives were intended to clarify the positions of the EBC and to revise the constitutions which had last been altered in 1619. After these actions had taken place, the priory was raised to the dignity of an abbey alongside Ampleforth and Douai in 1899. Instrumental to these changes were the actions of Ford and Gasquet, who were influential figures in both the Controversy and the construction of the abbey church, and it is their shared vision that is represented throughout the building.

Francis Aidan Gasquet (1846-1929) was born in 1846 in London and eventually rose to become Prior of Downside, Cardinal and Vatican Librarian. In his lifetime, he was notable as a historian and for his work on the revision of the Vulgate in 1907. Ford was twice elected as Prior and Abbot of Downside and became titular Abbot of Glastonbury. They met as schoolfellows at Downside, and followed each other into the church, completing their novitiate at Belmont before returning to Downside to continue their monastic careers. As noted in Bruno Hicks' biography of Ford, it appeared that 'the most significant factor in the school life of Hugh Ford was the friendship he made with Francis Gasquet, who came to the school in 1862 and was some four years his senior', and this is notable in the archival material that is preserved at Downside Abbey Archives.<sup>356</sup>

This was reflected in the correspondence between the two monks, which occurred from the days of their noviciate to old age. Here, in a letter from Gasquet to Ford in May 1874, when the two were novices, Gasquet focuses on the early stages of the building work:

...the building is getting on famously. I wish you could get a glimpse of it now and then. It has really exceeded the 'monasteries in the air' we had any of us built. The idea given

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<sup>354</sup> For more on the bell 'Great Bede' see *Architectural History of Downside*, ed. by Aidan Bellenger, (Oxford UP: Oxford, 2012).

<sup>355</sup> 'Downside Consecration'. *Wells Journal*, (13 September 1935).

<sup>356</sup> See Gasquet files in DAA, Edmund Ford Collection. Likewise, see Ford files in DAA, Edmund Ford Collection.

in the drawing falls very short of the reality unlike what it usually does. Most certainly if we are not good in that place it will not be from the want of a beautiful place.<sup>357</sup>

This letter marks an important moment in the two monks' lives, as it demonstrates how the progression of the monastery impacted their developing monastic careers. This can be seen as being rooted in their relationship as young men, as 'before Gasquet left for the novitiate at St Michael's Priory, Belmont, they would get up quietly before the other boys, and go down quietly to one of the classrooms to discuss their plans for the future'.<sup>358</sup> This demonstrates their shared vision and circular influence, as their plans for the future resulted in the progression of the house, through successive abbacies, and acted as the driving force behind Downside's successful revision to Minor Basilica.

It also shows how the development of a 'complete monastic vision' and reform was influenced by the ambitious building plans they developed.<sup>359</sup> This collaborative effort in shaping their monastic futures continued throughout their lives and helped shape their approach to their own monastic identities, as well as the building itself. In developing the reform movement, the young monastic community, led by Ford, sought to match the grandeur of the rising stonework and develop the monastic community beyond its walls.

The ambitious nature of Ford and Gasquet can also be seen in the influence they had over the decorative elements of the abbey. Not only do the two men appear above the doorway, but also in symbolic gestures around the abbey church, which demonstrates the confidence they had in their positions. These acts of memorialisation were not the work of their successors but by the men themselves – displaying overt confidence in their positions and future memory within the context of the abbey church. It also suggests that the two men believed they were influential and important in the building of the abbey church. This act of self-commemoration also indicates that Ford and Gasquet believed that their actions during the period of the Downside Controversy would make them 'great men of history' and favourably remembered.

For example, the church contains references to the saints both men were named after - St Francis of Assisi can be found at the foot of Gasquet's tomb in the abbey church and up past

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<sup>357</sup> DAA, Aidan Gasquet Archive, *Gasquet to Ford: May 14th 1874*.

<sup>358</sup> Bruno Hicks, *Biography of Abbot Ford* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 1970).

<sup>359</sup> *An Architectural History*, ed. by Aidan Bellenger, (London: Merrell Publications, (2011), p. 12.

the high altar, St Hugh of Lincoln and his swan. Many heraldic symbols around the church symbolise the Gasquet family, who also gave many donations to the community to help support the building work. Several windows in one of the upstairs chapels are dedicated to the Gasquet family who paid for the work to be completed. In the choir, the cockerel motif of the Gasquet family appears on several occasions. Likewise, the Ford family also gave money to the abbey and small plaques can also be found around the abbey church.

As previously mentioned, Gasquet's speech in 1905 at the opening of the Choir suggested that 'the present suggests a word about the past' which typifies the attitude of the community and more specifically the Movement on the relationship between themselves and the past.<sup>360</sup> The whole speech is highly reflective of matters of the past, Gasquet having sought to connect his recent elevation to a cardinal priest in 1914 and the manifestation of the Church to historic precedence. This demonstrates how the community saw the past as important. The speech not only reflects on the past but instead places the current struggles of the Movement into a historical narrative, of which the Movement is certain of its historical significance:

We are living in an age of restlessness and religious doubt, and revolt against authority. The shadow of impending changes in the old order is already on the world; and what the next decades are to bring to society no man can foretell, although many fear for the future. Meanwhile, the mission of God's Church remains ever the same. It stands for peace and security and individual rights; and amidst the clash of interests so apparent in the world of today, it alone, with its principles of religious authority and democratic liberty, can secure the due observance of law and order, necessary for the safety of society.<sup>361</sup>

This awareness has followed the building since its inception – as Phillipson recalled 'the occasion was felt to be as it indeed it was – a great one in the life of St Gregory's: it was the inauguration of Modern Downside.'<sup>362</sup> It is interesting to note that Ford's acceptance of the role of abbot in 1900 was later couched in similar terms – Butler's obituary called him 'the maker of modern Downside'.<sup>363</sup> The justification for reform, or indeed upholding the status quo was often in terms of an appeal to history. This is reflected in what the community believed to be their connection to the medieval and desire to create a medieval past in the architecture

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<sup>360</sup> Cardinal Gasquet's Address, 'Record of the Century', *Downside Review*, (1914), p. 226.

<sup>361</sup> Cardinal Gasquet's Address, 'Record of the Century', *Downside Review*, (1914), p. 229.

<sup>362</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Wulfstan Recollections*, p. 18.

<sup>363</sup> Cuthbert Butler, 'Record of the Century', *Downside Review*, (1914).

and symbolism of the abbey church. As a result, Ford was elected the first abbot of Downside and was blessed on 13 October 1900.

However, the senior clergy saw this inherited tradition differently. They were greatly influenced by what Cuthbert Butler saw as:

The settled tradition and practice of nearly three hundred years which had been cherished and maintained by... men who held every position of legitimate authority in the body to which they belonged.<sup>364</sup>

This had been handed down from Downside's inheritance from the ancient Westminster Cathedral and was equally influential amongst the architectural plans for the new monastery buildings and is reflected in the ambitious plans that were produced during this period. The senior community felt very strongly about their continued relationship with their medieval past and believed that despite the fragmentation of a direct lineage to the ancient monasteries they had the right to recall this past.<sup>365</sup> Downside believed they could trace back their monastic presence to pre-Reformation monasticism at Westminster Cathedral. At Westminster, a solitary Benedictine and Old Gregorian, Sigebert Buckley (c.1520-1610) remained at the Royal Chapel throughout Mary I's reign.<sup>366</sup> For many of the senior community at Downside, Buckley was regarded as representing the continuity of the community throughout the English Reformation.<sup>367</sup>

## **Connections to the Medieval Past**

The abbey church represents the community's relationship to the past. Not only is it related to the foundational history of the community that begins in 1606, but it is also an imagined past – one that is connected to the medieval monastic past. This medieval past can be seen in the community's representation of the ancient cathedrals. This is a key concept in the architecture of the abbey church which developed through the perceived shared history with pre-reformation monastic culture. It was designed in the neo-gothic style to represent a sense of continuity with the past and optimism for the revival of Catholic fortune. This was important

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<sup>364</sup> Bruno Hicks, *Biography of Abbot Ford* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 1970) p. 101.

<sup>365</sup> David Knowles, *The Religious Orders of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956).

<sup>366</sup> An 'Old Gregorian' is the name given to alumni of Downside School.

<sup>367</sup> Hugh Connolly, 'The Buckley Affair', *The Downside Review*, 30 (1931), 49-7.

to the Movement where ‘the Middle Ages architecture... gave the sentiment of a larger and freer existence... The grand monastery embodied an ideal and inspired us,’ according to Butler in the Controversy manuscript.<sup>368</sup> This idealisation of the medieval past was persistently emphasised by the Movement and formed a significant part of the Movement’s plans to return to a medieval monastic model for the community.

This relationship with the past was also firmly embedded within the architecture of the abbey church. The monks of Downside consciously built this revival of medieval monasticism into the physical body of the church, which the community felt connected to through the papal bull *Plantata* and Buckley’s dispensation at Westminster. *Plantata* had been given by Pope Urban VIII in 1633 and in the eyes of the monastic community acted as the official restoration of the ‘enviable medieval privileges to the English Benedictines’.<sup>369</sup> Most importantly for the monastic community in England, it reaffirmed the fact that the ‘English Benedictines had jurisdiction here; and had and still have great privileges and by their Bull *Plantata* twelve Cathedral Chapters’.<sup>370</sup> Likewise, Buckley’s dispensation represented the link between the pre-reformation monasteries, and the modern monastic communities, in which he proclaimed:

lest the rights, privileges, insignia, should perish which were formerly granted by Princes and Pontiffs and which for some years, God so permitting, have been preserved in me the sole survivor of all the English monks... to them did grant, impart and assign all rights, privileges, ranks, honours, liberties and graces which in times past the monks professed and dwelling in the said monastery did enjoy. And the same by these presents I do again approve, ratify and confirm.<sup>371</sup>

This connection was deeply important to the community and especially to the members of the Movement, who saw this relationship between medieval and modern as being a significant factor in the progression of the EBC towards a more centralised model of authority, and a reclamation of the past privileges that medieval monasteries enjoyed. This relationship continued until the late nineteenth century when under Cardinal Vaughan and Ford, the second revival of Westminster was attempted using the Downside community. This eventually ended

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<sup>368</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 14.

<sup>369</sup> Geoffrey Scott, ‘England in Rome: The English Benedictine Procurators in Curia Romana (1607-1808) Vol 133 (467)’, *The Downside Review* (2015), 46.

<sup>370</sup> John Hudleston, *The Divine Truths of the Church of England*. (London: Unknown Publisher, 1793) p. 188.

<sup>371</sup> Hugh Connolly, ‘The Buckley Affair’, *Downside Review*, (1931) 49-74.

in the settlement of a Downside Mission to Ealing, in outer London, which was intended to serve the Westminster parish, but eventually became a separate community.<sup>372</sup>

The connection to a more significant, medieval past is not only centred around the monastery's foundational history but extended to the ancient cathedrals, such as Glastonbury. This relationship with the medieval past (of which Glastonbury represented) was also firmly embedded within the architecture of the abbey church. It is reflected, for example, in the altar stone of the abbey church. The altar contains stone taken from the ruins at Glastonbury Abbey – which as Irvine described in his case study on the links between monastic architecture and foundational stability was seen by the community as a potent 'symbol of England's monastic heritage'.<sup>373</sup> The Glastonbury stone retains on the inside evidence of the original window mouldings or door jams, which have been untouched in their new position. Indeed, the significance of Glastonbury stone for the community is linked to the revival of Gothic architecture, which is visible throughout the whole of the monastery, as well as within English religious architecture and culture more widely at this time. Furthermore, the altar decoration also contains links to Glastonbury, with six candlesticks and a crucifix made of bog oak from the area.

The community at Downside were deeply interested in the relationship with Glastonbury Abbey and was the source of considerable scholarship within the Movement during this period. These aspects were heavily petitioned by Ford and spearheaded by Gasquet during his time as prior. Gasquet in 1908, wrote *The Last Abbot of Glastonbury and His Companions: An Historical Sketch* in which he declared that 'the history of Glastonbury is the history of its abbey; without its abbey Glastonbury were nothing'<sup>374</sup> which is an interesting insight into the thoughts of one of the main forces behind the abbey church and the reform movement within the community and connects the building and its relationship to the past with conviction. Furthermore, a few lines later, Gasquet took the motif between history and the physicality of space to be 'here and here alone, we are linked, not only to the beginnings of English

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<sup>372</sup> See Rene Kollar, *The Return of the Benedictines to London: A History of Ealing Abbey from 1896 to Independence*, (London: Burnes & Oates, 1989).

<sup>373</sup> Richard D.G Irvine, 'Stability, Continuity, Place: An English Benedictine Monastery as a Case' in *Religious Architecture: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. by Oskar Verkaaik. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2013), 33.

<sup>374</sup> Aidan Gasquet, *The Last Abbot of Glastonbury and His Companions: An Historical Sketch*, (London: Marshall, 1895), p. 3.

Christianity, but to the beginnings of Christianity itself'.<sup>375</sup> There was also great physical interest in Glastonbury, which was marked by a pilgrimage organised by Ford during his time as abbot, and the excavation work done by Ethelbert Horne (1858-1952) joint director of excavations at Glastonbury Abbey in 1928.<sup>376</sup> Shane Leslie, in his 1953 biography of Gasquet also saw how influential Glastonbury was:

It was more than the ghost of Glastonbury, it was one of the great abbeys rearisen from the pages of his first book as though Glastonbury were restored, rebuilt for England.<sup>377</sup>

It suggests a highly romantic attachment to the idea of Glastonbury, which was also shared by the community as part of a clear connection to the idea of the construction of Downside being part of the restoration of the monasteries. The community were inspired by the grandeur of the early monasteries and wanted to evoke the same sense of historic context within their construction work. Glastonbury, in its mythical position, connection to Arthurian legend and holy status would have appealed to members of the Movement who wanted to develop a sense of authority and permanence in the Somerset countryside. As such, the abbey church also contains heraldic references to the legacy of the ancient monasteries. The Lady Chapel's altar contains arms of each of the ancient west country abbeys: Glastonbury, Tewkesbury, Milton and Sherborne. This grounds the abbey within its local contextual history and emphasises the abbey's place within its geographical location.

Furthermore, the abbey church was consistently inspired by other ancient cathedrals and consisted of features that took direct inspiration from the major medieval cathedrals in the country. The Garner-designed woodwork of the choir was modelled on the stalls in Chester Cathedral and contained amongst the depictions of the psalms, images such as the cockerel motif of Gasquet. Gasquet's sermon for the opening of the choir reminded the community that it had been three hundred years since St Gregory's had been founded in Douai and placed great stress on the Westminster connection 'for it is the glory and boast that there has never been with us any breach of continuity with Catholic England'.<sup>378</sup> This was a clear reference to the

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<sup>375</sup> Aidan Gasquet, *The Last Abbot of Glastonbury*, p. 5.

<sup>376</sup> There is much archive material in the Ethelbert Horne collection at Downside Abbey. Horne also published many reports on Glastonbury – for example: Ethelbert Horne et al., 'Interim Report on the Excavations at Glastonbury Abbey.' *The Antiquaries Journal*, (1930), 24–29.

<sup>377</sup> Shane Leslie, *Cardinal Gasquet*, (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd, 1953) p. 263.

<sup>378</sup> Aidan Gasquet, 'The Makers of St Gregory's', *The Downside Review*, 24 (1905), p. xvii



Movement's activity and a reflection on the new monastic spirit that was developing under the reforms of the Controversy, which would be continued under Ford as abbot.

The relationship with the ancient monasteries, cathedrals and abbey is also prevalent in other architectural decisions made within the abbey. The North Wall window's design was insisted upon by Ford, of three lancets inspired by St Alban's. Indeed, St Alban's appears in many forms in the abbey church, including in the previously mentioned example of St Isidore's Chapel, whose coat of arms appears next to Glastonbury's in the sacristy. This spirit of revival rebuilt the ruins of the ancient monasteries into what would be considered by 'the perceptive stranger visiting it today, [who would have] no doubt that it possesses the atmosphere of a medieval church.'<sup>379</sup> Indeed, Bellenger in his architectural primer described the paintings by old masters that adorn the chapel walls as a way of connecting the abbey to that of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. He stated that 'the use of works of art to complement the architectural detail also stressed the continuity of the church building with the lost world of English mediaeval monasticism'.<sup>380</sup> In presumably the same manner of thought, Gasquet donated the Madonna and Child, evocative in dark wood which dated from the 1460s, and adds emphasis to the historic importance of the abbey church.<sup>381</sup> This adds precedence to the community's desire for a church that would evoke a medieval atmosphere, something that was often referenced by the community. Here, in a letter to Edmund Bishop, Gasquet references the ambition of the community to present the abbey as a continuation of their supposed medieval past:

the church is making great progress and in a couple of weeks we should have the whole ground plan worked out in stone. The more I see it rise the more impatient I get to see the choir. It will certainly be most like one of the old churches of any in England.<sup>382</sup>

This emphasis on the creation of the abbey as a medieval relic shows that for the community the construction was as much about providing a place of continuity and precedence as a new and established home for the community. However, the abbey is also a repository of many important relics, such as a fragment of the True Cross that perhaps once belonged to

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<sup>379</sup> Augustine James, *The Story of Downside Abbey Church*, (Stratton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 1961), p. 6.

<sup>380</sup> *An Architectural History*, ed. by Aidan Bellenger, (London: Merrell Publications, (2011), p. 20.

<sup>381</sup> *An Architectural History*, ed. by Aidan Bellenger, p. 20.

<sup>382</sup> DAA, Aidan Gasquet Collection, *Gasquet to Bishop*, 2 June 1885.

Westminster, and the head of St Thomas of Hereford links Downside to the medieval church.<sup>383</sup> The heraldic legacy of the ancient monasteries is also represented thoroughly within the abbey church. As with the Chapel of St Vedast, which contains the arms of the houses directly connected with Downside's foundational history, the Lady Chapel's altar contains the arms of each of the ancient west country abbeys: Glastonbury, Tewkesbury, Milton and Sherborne. This grounds the abbey within its local contextual history and emphasises the abbey's place within its geographical location.

The origins of the Movement were closely linked with the historical celebrations that were occurring within the EBC at this time, and which were seen by the Downside community as an important part of their relationship with the wider Catholic community. This was typified in their relationship with Monte Cassino – where in '1880, there was a great celebration of the millenary of St Benedict at Monte Cassino, and at the request of our President-General I [Gasquet] undertook to write a brief sketch of St. Benedict's mission concerning England'.<sup>384</sup> The interest in Monte Cassino was also undertaken by his contemporary, Bede Camm (1864–1942) whose travel diaries and sketches of Monte Cassino eventually led to the publication of *Pilgrim Paths in Latin Lands* in 1923.

### **The Community's History and Comparisons to the EBC**

The use of history in the building of the abbey church can be also seen in the iconography that was symbolic of the relationship Downside had to its foundational history. The building of the abbey of St Gregory the Great allowed the community to demonstrate how the revival of Catholicism in England was to be physically manifested. For the community, this led to points of comparison with others within the EBC and beyond into the wider Catholic community. Within England at the time of the Controversy, the EBC consisted of Downside which became the first to return to England in 1795, Ampleforth (1802), Belmont (1859) and Buckfast (1882). Ealing was established under the stewardship of Ford in 1899 and Douai was re-founded in Woolhampton just after the events of the Controversy in 1903.

The connection to the community's past can be seen in the architectural and spiritual decisions

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<sup>383</sup> See *An Architectural History*, ed. by Aidan Bellenger, (London: Merrell Publications, (2011).

<sup>384</sup> Shane Leslie, *Cardinal Gasquet*, (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd, 1953), p. 30.

made within the abbey church. One of the most obvious is the Chapel of St Vedast, which sits on the east end of the abbey. St Vedast shares an intimate connection with the community, as the founder and first abbot of the Benedictine Abbey at Arras in Flanders, and through his relationship with one of his successors: de Caverel, the founder of the monastery at Douai. Within the chapel at Downside are four shields that represent the founders' coats of arms: Caverel, Barberini, Smythe and Hapsburg impaling Castile and Leon. Ten smaller shields represent the arms of the English Benedictine Houses within the EBC: Washington, Buckfast, Belmont, Ampleforth, Ealing, Worth, Douai, Downside, Fort Augustus, Portsmouth and St Louis. Likewise, the window in the chapel represents several key events in the history of the EBC. The first is an image of St Gregory the Great, to which the abbey church is dedicated to. It also contains an image of St Gregory blessing St Augustine on leaving for England, and an image of St Vedast himself. The trefoil contains an image of the monastery at Douai as it appeared before the events of the Revolution. Significantly, the window also contains an image of Abbot de Caverel giving his charter to the founding monks of Downside. These images are all strongly connected to the foundational history of Downside, and act to tell the story of the monastery's foundation. Despite the abbey church's decidedly nineteenth-century origin, this window simultaneously emphasises the legacy that the community desired to present outwardly.

Furthermore, the rising building work was repeatedly referenced as a great inspiration for the Movement's ideas, acting in the word of Bellenger as 'not only a building but also the setting for a living community and a complete model of a developed monastic view.'<sup>385</sup> This emphasis on the abbey's manifestation of monastic spirit would be continually referenced, including here by James in his architectural biography of the building:

The Abbey Church is in fact the outward and visible sign of that monastic spirit, which especially in Downside, inspired the recovery for the Congregation of normal Benedictine Life. In itself, from one point of view, the fabric of the Abbey Church and its decorations are no more than sticks and stones, destined in the course of time to return to the dust from which they arose; but from another they are fundamentally significant; they are the expression of a religious spirit which will remain.<sup>386</sup>

This continued historic precedence of the monastery and abbey highlights the need for historic

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<sup>385</sup> Aidan Bellenger, ed., *An Architectural History*, (London: Merrell Publications, 2011), p. 5.

<sup>386</sup> Augustine James, *The Story of Downside Abbey Church*, Statton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 1961), p. 6.

continuity by the community and the emphasis on historic narrative. However, the settlement of the community at Downside and the relationship with the monastery have not always been so stable. After the move to England in the early nineteenth century, the Prior at the time, Augustine Lawson (unknown-1830, Downside) attempted to commit the community to return to Douai. This was anticipated after the settlement of hostilities in France after Waterloo. However, the body of the community was comprised of younger monks such as Placid Morris (1794-1872) and Polding who wanted to remain in England.<sup>387</sup> In a move that foreshadowed the worries of the Movement, outside influences in the form of the President and his council issued a decree to begin the return to Douai against the express wishes of much of the community. However, the buildings at Douai were so destroyed that by April 1817, all such plans to relocate were abandoned and plans were committed to England. In 1820, the foundation stone for the abbey church was planted.

In contrast, the Movement described visits to Ampleforth which appeared to be ‘uninspiring’ and whose buildings made Butler ‘feel how much we owe at Downside to our majestic buildings’.<sup>388</sup> Ampleforth had been traditionally in favour of the status quo, and for much of the Controversy, acted in active resistance against the reforms proposed by Downside. Eventually, Ampleforth became the seat of the constitutional changes after 1900 and was used as the meeting place for the constitutional committees. However, it had previously been the seat of unrest, as although reluctant to discuss the situation at Ampleforth within the *Biography of the Controversy*, Butler suggests that the movement was partially rooted in the fear of a repeat of the episode at Ampleforth which occurred in the Spring of 1880. The Prior of Ampleforth resigned on Bury’s advice and Bury succeeded in getting approval to elect a new Prior from Rome, without the input of the Ampleforth community. The entire episode was ‘seen as the beginning of the threatened attack on the monasteries’.<sup>389</sup>

The spirit of revolution within Downside had also coincided with the opening of Fort Augustus (1876) on the Scottish Border by the EBC. It was seen by the Downside Community as the mark of a new beginning and contained the potential for the revival of Catholicism in England. For the Movement, this emphasised that Downside did not want to be left behind by this sense of innovation and renewal. However, the community at Fort Augustus did not remain part of

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<sup>387</sup> ‘Record of the Century’, *Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], 33 (1914), p. 24.

<sup>388</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 14.

<sup>389</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p.15

the EBC for long, and by the time the General Chapter proceeded in 1883, Fort Augustus had actively worked to become separate from the English congregation, backed by the nationalistic sentiment of both local bishops and laity. By 5 January 1883, Fort Augustus was an exempt Abbey dependent on the Holy See.<sup>390</sup>

The split between the EBC and Fort Augustus left Downside standing alone and prompted many outside the Movement to wish to remain under the current system and prevent further separation. At the same time under the General Chapter, Belmont was formally designated as the common noviciate. The split unsettled the Movement, and it was noted by Cuthbert Butler that:

The separation of Fort Augustus put into the heads of some of the younger more ardent spirits in Downside the notion: could not our differences being solved in the same way? Could not Downside be separated from the English congregation?<sup>391</sup>

This had an immediate effect on the response to independence within the abbey and highlighted the importance of the historical resonance of the EBC. The annexation provided the argument that there was a valid reason behind the ‘public discussion on religious questions, of theological and devotional and ecclesiastical writing and of church building at home and expansion overseas’.<sup>392</sup> Below, Butler describes how the impact of the removal of Fort Augustus gave rise to the idea that those in the community who wanted independence may be pushed to remove themselves from Downside completely.

Our wish was not to secede from the congregation, for we valued highly the privilege of being English Benedictines with all the historic associations attached to the name; and if such a house should not be possible in the Congregation, we would see if it could be established under one of the English bishops, thus reproducing the ordinary relation in pre-Reformation England between the bishops and the monks.<sup>393</sup>

What is important about these discussions is the fact that the Movement continued to emphasise the monastery’s relationship to ‘pre-Reformation England between the bishops and the monks.’<sup>394</sup> Beyond a relocation to Fort Augustus, plans for an Australian monastery were

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<sup>390</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>391</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 23.

<sup>392</sup> *Anti-Catholicism in Victorian England*, ed. by GR Elton, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1968), p.19

<sup>393</sup> DAA, , *The Downside Controversy*, p. 74.

<sup>394</sup> DAA, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 74.

made, and Ford was given instructions to petition the President of the Congregation for a proposal for a new monastery.<sup>395</sup> Fortunately for the community, *Dui Quidem* meant that ‘under the common law of the Church and gives them [gave the monasteries] a fixed and recognised position... emphasising once more the identity of the present English Congregation with that existing in England before the Reformation’.<sup>396</sup> Most importantly to the Downside Movement, it indicated ‘the revival of an institution that existed in the Middle Ages in England... and had its basis in St Benedict's Rule itself.’<sup>397</sup>

## Unrealised Dreams

This sentiment of debt to inspiring buildings was a common theme at Downside. The revival of the medieval monastic presence at Downside led the community to propose many ambitious plans for the site. As such, many plans are unexecuted in the abbey archives. The ambition of the community was not always grounded in financial reality and from the first plans, and the subsequent enlargement, Gasquet’s memoirs highlight this ambition:

And he [Gasquet] had begun to dream - dreams of a bigger school, bigger monastery, bigger community and at last of a towering minster like the great English abbeys of old.<sup>398</sup>

One such example is the work of Augustus Pugin (1812-52) who was an early collaborator of the design process at Downside. Pugin’s vision of Catholic architecture, proclaimed the relationship between the gothic revival and the emergence of a new Catholic culture in England as ‘on the eve of the great change of religion, we find Architecture in a high state of perfection, both as regards design and execution’.<sup>399</sup> Downside approached Pugin in 1839 for design inspiration, and he designed a set of plans that can still be found in the monastery archives today.<sup>400</sup> However, Pugin’s involvement with Downside was complex, having been invited to Downside in September 1838, and having proposed his first scheme in October 1839. This intended to ‘Gothicise’ the Old House and to run a new 300-foot front

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<sup>395</sup> DAA, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 75 and DAA,, David Knowles Collection, *The Downside Controversy, Book II, Left Side Notes*, p. 2.

<sup>396</sup> 'An Aspect of the Bull Diu Quidem', *The Downside Review*, (1899) 219-222.

<sup>397</sup> 'An Aspect of the Bull 'Diu Quidem', *The Downside Review*, (1899), 219-223.

<sup>398</sup> Shane Leslie, *Cardinal Gasquet*, (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd, 1953), p. 263.

<sup>399</sup> Augustus Pugin, *Contrasts* [2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Reprint] (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1969).

<sup>400</sup> DAA, Architectural Plan Collection, *Pugin*.

northwards from its eastern side, with a towered gatehouse, a grand refectory, library, and cells for monks arranged around a grand cloister. This was succeeded by an even more ambitious scheme in December 1841 which doubled the original footprint of his design. However, like many of the schemes that have been unrealised at Downside, an expected donation did not materialise and so the designs remain unexecuted. Today, the only contributions that can be seen of Pugin's time at Downside include a few church plates and the monastery seal which is still in use as a bookplate today.

Like Downside, the Catholic seminary of St Patrick's College, Maynooth was undergoing great change when Pugin's plans were being drawn up. In 1845, the newly instated Irish Education Acts provided funds for the seminary for 'extensions, alterations and repairs' as part of the government's commitment to maintain the college.<sup>401</sup> One part that the plans for Maynooth and Downside had in common was expense and authority. The Treasury had to sign off on the plans in a move of executive authority, and so the community at the seminary and the commissioners on the Board of Works had very little control over the proposals. Like Downside, the Maynooth community ultimately did not use Pugin's design due to a lack of funds. Pugin's proposals came in at twice the seminary's budget and so he resigned. However, his role as the architect was eventually reinstated, and Pugin was told he could only build two-thirds of his proposal and not the church. Initially, 'Pugin declined remuneration, preferring the 'lesser evil of losing money and time, to the greater one of being architect of an unworthy building, for an important purpose.''<sup>402</sup> This idea of the 'worthy building' and religious sentiment was what would bring Pugin back to the project, when Senior Dean Dr Miles Gaffney wrote to Pugin hailing him as the man whose genius, talents and 'truly Catholic spirit were sure to leave a solemn impress of Catholicity, within and without the walls of this national establishment, which for fifty years has presented no emblem, to the eye, as of a Catholic seminary, save for the tabernacle which decorates the altar'.<sup>403</sup>

Likewise, in 1846, all projects were brought to a halt due to financial problems, leading to Hansom's designs for the community being greatly delayed and reduced in size by the time it

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<sup>401</sup> See Tom Walsh, 'The National System of Education, 1831–2000', in *Essays in the History of Irish Education*, ed. by Brendan Walsh (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016).

<sup>402</sup> Frederick O'Dwyer, 'A. W. N. Pugin and St. Patrick's College, Maynooth.' *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 12, 1996, 102–109, p. 104.

<sup>403</sup> Frederick O'Dwyer, 'A. W. N. Pugin and St. Patrick's College, Maynooth.' *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 12, 1996, 102–109, p. 105.

was approved. This was not an isolated incident, and there is plenty of evidence regarding the benefactors of the abbey church. Gasquet and Ford were particularly involved in the search for methods of funding their ambitious project as evidenced in this letter from Gasquet to an unknown recipient:

I have written to the President for leave to build the cloister and on that permission coming I shall attack Dr Bennet, who has shown no signs of being generous as yet. Madame de Paria and her sister have each promised a Chapel.<sup>404</sup>

As well as directly targeting those who had the funds to help build the abbey, Ford founded the St Gregory's Society in 1880 which indirectly connected the community with people who were associated with Downside, such as past alumni of the school who were in a position to donate funds. The society was designed for the less nebulous purpose of keeping the connection between those away from the monastery in touch with events, and as such was also responsible for the proposal for the *Downside Review* which was first made by Mr Alfred Maskell, who remained a close friend of the community.<sup>405</sup> This outreach using the *Downside Review* also enabled the community to inform associations of the building's progress.

While he [Gasquet] was prior, the great Church at Downside was still a dream unvisioned by the community. One morning he received a large cheque for the lady chapel. After breakfast he felt inspired and rushing out trod the present noble proportions, leaving pegs where the nave should reach and eventually did.<sup>406</sup>

This connection between donations and building is clearly seen in the architecture and fabric of the abbey. Many of the chapels and cloisters have connections to the donors and families associated with Downside, which was often intimately linked to the monks' families. One such example is the window from the Petre Cloister which celebrates the Berkeley family as donors to the building of the abbey church. It also contains their coat of arms, which can also be found on the maniple of the Berkeley set of vestments which was also donated to the abbey. This collection of donations was given to the community when Oswald Berkeley (1866-1924) became a priest in 1895. Likewise, in the Chapel of St Isidore, a monumental brass can be found on the south wall, which is both dedicated to St Isidore, and its donor Isidore Green

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<sup>404</sup> DAA, Aidan Gasquet Collection, *Gasquet letter: 24 Nov 1878*.

<sup>405</sup> Bruno Hicks, *Biography of Abbot Ford* (Bath: Downside Abbey Press, 1970), p. 56.

<sup>406</sup> Shane Leslie, *Cardinal Gasquet*, (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne Ltd, 1953), p. 14.



(1837-1912). The monumental brass is based on medieval examples that commemorate Benedictine monks based on brasses surviving in St Alban's Abbey.

Another example is the monastic library. The designs for the library take many forms, and here in these archived plans from 1929-30, it is clear that the community wanted a grand space to house the growing book collection.<sup>407</sup> These designs were possibly influenced by the plans Gilbert Dolan drew up in 1879 in a gothic style. In essence, the plans for the library appear to have been another ambitious project that was never realised by the community but was highly desirable due to the ever-growing collection of books. This was in part due to the presence of a new scholarly direction of the community, led by the intellectual pursuits of Gasquet and Butler, but also the presence of a new era in the monastic librarian, which lay the foundations for the great monk librarian, Raymond Webster (1880-1957). The plans for the new library that were developed during this period were never fully realised, however, and instead, the library was finally built in the 1970s by the architect Sir Francis Pollen.

On the other hand, the building of the Choir appears to have been a difficult process from the offset, and as Abbot Butler wrote in the 1931 *Downside Review*, 'we owe to him not only the Choir, but also the fact that it is Garner's Choir; for strange as it appears now, there was at the time great opposition, and it required all the Abbot's firmness and tact to satisfy the community that Garner should be trusted'.<sup>408</sup> Garner also had difficulty in replicating Westminster for modern monastic requirements and the needs of a growing community. This was typified by the difficulty in replicating Westminster's medieval altar, which had no need for a Benediction throne. Ultimately, Garner's contribution was so important to the community, that Garner and his wife were buried in the abbey (1906, and 1931 respectively) in a vault beneath the choir he had designed. This relationship between architect and memorialisation was a recurring theme within the abbey church, for example in the event of the death of Leonard Stokes, Leander Ramsay suggested that 'the school buildings at Downside are more deeply impressed with the spirit of Leonard

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<sup>407</sup> DAA, Architectural Plan Collection.

<sup>408</sup> Cuthbert Butler, 'Abbot Ford', *The Downside Review*, 59 (1931), p. 21.

Stokes than any other of his works and are therefore his best memorial.’<sup>409</sup>

## Memorialisation in the Abbey Church

The embodied history of Downside extended past the inclusion of the historic monasteries, abbeys, and cathedrals within the architecture of St Gregory’s, and included a wider sense of history within its walls. The contribution of Downside to the war effort had a profound impact on the community, and the abbey church reflects this. It transformed the abbey church from not only a memorial to the ancient monasteries of England through the replication of a medieval past but joins the abbey church in memorialising a very real present for the community. It transforms the abbey into a living history of the community, one that is both reflective and introspective of the time in which it was produced. This appeared not only in the war memorial, but in the very fabric of the architecture of the abbey itself.

These aspects were heavily petitioned for by Ford, who was also the main instigator behind the employment of Garner as the architect of the next stage of the abbey church after Dunn and Hansom – which had not been a popular vote amongst the community. The building of the choir can be seen as one of the most significant aspects of the project to create the abbey church. It was spearheaded first by Gasquet, and then by Ford during their times as prior and abbot respectively. It would also become a highly symbolic part of the church in the post-war period when Leander Ramsay (1863-1929) dedicated it to the memories of the boys in the school who died in the Great War.<sup>410</sup>

During the war, Downside sent fifteen monks to the front lines as army chaplains, such as Stephen Rawlinson, who was a novice under Ford’s guidance.<sup>411</sup> These included Bede Camm (1864-1942) who served as a chaplain at hospitals in Egypt, Stanislaus Chatterton (who served with the Royal Navy (1882-1967) and those that served on the Western

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<sup>409</sup> Leander Ramsay, ‘In Memoriam’, *Downside Review*, 44 (1926) 74-77.

<sup>410</sup> See Lucius Graham, *Downside and the War*, (London: Naval Military Press, 2006) and Sarah Wearne, *To Our Brothers: Memorials to a Lost Generation in British Schools*, (London: Hellion & Company, 2018).

<sup>411</sup> For more on this subject, and in particular Downside’s role in war see James Hagerty and Steven Parsons, *Monks in the Military: Benedictine Chaplains in the British Armed Forces during the Twentieth Century*, (Stratton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 2017).

Front such as Urban Butler (1882-1961). Two were wounded; Richard Davey (1889-1963) and Ambrose Agius (1890-1978). The Aguis family sent all five of their youngest sons to Downside and all but one survived. Richard, the youngest, left Downside in 1914 and eventually ended up on the Western Front in 1917. Sadly, he was killed at Poelcappelle, near Ypres on 26 October 1917. According to his family, had he survived he would have become a monk like his brother Tancred Ambrose at Downside.<sup>412</sup> He is commemorated on the War Memorials at Downside.

The loss of the boys from Downside school in the war caused great personal distress to Leander Ramsay who as headmaster at the time spearheaded the inclusion of the choir as a memorial to those who had lost their lives.<sup>413</sup> The memorialisation of the loss can also be seen in a war memorial in the abbey grounds and on the wall of the west end of the abbey. The completion of the Nave was also dedicated to the fallen boys and dedicated in a triduum of ceremonies between 25-27 July 1925. This included the Hallowing of the Memorial Nave, a thanksgiving for survivors, and a *Requiem* for those that fell along with the unveiling of memorial tablets.<sup>414</sup> At the unveiling of the memorial, Gasquet's speech also made the connection between the physicality of the building and remembrance:

the very stones of our Church, carved with the names of those who died for their country will be eloquent with the lesson of their life and death, inspiring those who should come after them - as in their turn they kneel before the altar - to see God's holy will in every call of duty and by his grace to answer it nobly.<sup>415</sup>

Whilst the abbey acts as a memorial to the boys in the school, it also acts as a celebration of the lives of the 'Great men of Downside', whose tombs can be found within the transepts. Like much of Downside's history, there has been an emphasis on individual achievements. For example, the angels that are suspended above the arches of the nave contain the names of the abbey's superiors since the monastery's inception. Like much of Downside's history, there has been an emphasis on individual achievements. However, the emphasis on individual achievement can be seen most clearly in the presence of Edmund Ford and Aidan Gasquet in

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<sup>412</sup> See Aguis Family website [<http://agiusww1.com/about/>] Accessed 12 September 2022.

<sup>413</sup> See Leander Ramsay, 'In Memoriam', *Downside Review*, 44 (1926) 74-77 or Lucius Graham, *Downside and the War*, (London: Naval Military Press, 2006).

<sup>414</sup> C.F Kernot, *British Public Schools War Memorials*, (Antony Rowe Ltd: Eastbourne, 1927), p. 85.

<sup>415</sup> DAA, War Memorial Collection, *Gasquet's Speech*.

the building itself. As already stated, they left their mark throughout the church building process during their times as superiors of the monastery, and as key members of the Movement. This can be seen symbolically in the carvings of Ford and Gasquet above the door which demonstrates the confidence they felt in their positions within the community. This demonstrates the confidence of the Movement in their position, both constitutionally and personally. It centres both men as important parts of the history of Downside, and acts a reminder to all those who enter the community after them. They too, are part of the traditions and legacy of Downside, as well as echoing medieval traditions of commemoration. These small touches add to the sense of importance that these two men had upon the building and are commemorated by the community in the presence of their memorials in the transept. Gasquet also appears in the nave, where a scheme by Dolan was to represent all the saints celebrated in the Benedictine calendar on the arches. However, this scheme was abandoned, and instead, the heads of significant figures in the community appear - Gasquet, Dolan and Thomas James. These figures are all involved in the building of the abbey, with Thomas James being the clerk of works during this period.<sup>416</sup>

Their tombs can be found beyond the altar. Gasquet died in 1929, and Ford in 1930. First, the death of Cardinal Gasquet on 5 April 1929. It occurred in Rome and was a momentous and solemn occasion for both the community and the wider Catholic society. His body was laid in state at the Palazzo San Calisto, Rome. After three days, the body was sealed and carried to the church of Santa Maria in Trastevere where Gasquet's funeral requiem was sung by the Abbot of Monte Cassino and the Absolutions were given by the Dean of the Sacred College. After the ceremonial in Rome had been completed, Gasquet's body was returned to England and buried at Downside. Gasquet's tomb at Downside was finished in grey Palombino marble, with the head of its intended supported by an angel and the feet by a figure of history. It stands close to the Chapel of St Benedict, on the south side of the choir. Scott himself regarded the tomb of Gasquet to be one of his finest pieces of work. It is interesting to note the juxtaposition between the traditional medieval form of the tomb monument, with the neo-gothic interpretation that Scott gave to the piece.<sup>417</sup> The figure of history is that of Bede, who sits at his feet. As well as the obvious scholarly connection to Bede, he was actively venerated at Glastonbury. The abbey possessed a set of relics belonging to Bede which had been presented by a royal donor in the

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<sup>416</sup> Augustine James, *The Story of Downside Abbey Church*, (Statton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 1961), p. 19.

<sup>417</sup> *An Architectural History*, ed. by Aidan Bellenger, (London: Merrell Publications, 2011), p. 190.

tenth century to Glastonbury. Bede appears at many points in the abbey including on the altar frontal in the Chapel of St Oliver Plunkett in the North Transept and painted onto the reredos in the Chapel of St Placid.

A year later, Ford died on 31 October 1930. In *The Story of Downside Abbey*, James proclaims Ford as being considered the ‘best man for the job’ after the constitutional questions were settled and the community required the first abbot.<sup>418</sup> Likewise, Butler, in his obituary of Ford wrote:

Abbot Ford was laid to rest, fittingly, in his own choir of the Abbey Church, near his lifelong friend, Cardinal Gasquet. No man of course can do such a work alone, and other names stand out as co-operating — Cardinal Gasquet and Abbot Ramsay. But as things appear to me looking back on the past fifty years, Abbot Ford more than any man can claim the title ‘Maker of Modern Downside’.<sup>419</sup>

This communal effort refers to the period after Gasquet’s resignation as prior when Ford was left to continue the building work. Ford was left with two major projects - the Lady chapel and the remaining parts of the tower. Ramsay’s importance to the school at Downside has already been discussed in this chapter, but it remains here to add the detail that it was Ford who appointed him and gave him the freedom to reform the school. His memory at Downside was described by Philipson below in his personal recollections as being impactful on the community:

The name of Hugh Edmund Ford will never be a Memory to Downside School for a memory is of the dead. It is a Presence, a living and spiritual thing in a heart that is worthy of it that can never die.<sup>420</sup>

Giles Gilbert Scott designed the tomb for Ford, which was carved in Cheltenham and showed Ford in full pontifical, and with three small monk figures on the front of the tomb mourning him. James in *The Story of Downside Abbey* proclaimed that the effigy of Ford bears very little likeness to him, and yet the records show that there was much back and forth between Garner and the community regarding Ford’s likeness.<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> Augustine James, *The Story of Downside Abbey Church*, p. 24.

<sup>419</sup> Cuthbert Butler, ‘Abbot Ford’, *The Downside Review*, (1931), p. 21.

<sup>420</sup> DAA, Wulfstan Phillipson Collection, *1097 Personal Reminiscences*.

<sup>421</sup> Augustine James, *The Story of Downside Abbey Church*, Statton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 1961), p. 102.

## Conclusions

This chapter has explored the relationship between the representation of the medieval past and the monastic community. The building of the abbey reflected the development in the Catholic community at the time and the transformation of the constitutions during this period which raised the priory to abbey status. Within the architecture of the abbey church, it is clear there are many connections between the ancient abbeys and cathedrals and the vision of neo-monasticism that was created during the Controversy. The relationship between foundational myth-making and the construction of the abbey church was clearly influenced by members of the community, and as such Ford and Gasquet were prominent figures in both the Controversy and the construction of the abbey church. It is their shared vision that is represented throughout the building. This ‘shared vision’ is similarly reflected in the community’s connection to the medieval and desire to recreate the medieval past in the architecture and symbolism of the abbey church.

This also indicates that the vision for the abbey church would be in harmony with the other aspects of the landscape – the monastery and school. This was not without great financial cost to the community, and many of the chapels are dedicated to the memories of those who funded the project. The architecture of the abbey also gave inspiration to the community and acted as the physical embodiment of the aspirations that members had for the EBC. This also had a strong relationship with the sense of authority the community wanted to cultivate, in the transition from priory to abbey, and a more centralised governance within the community.

The next chapter will explore the effect of the pamphlets that were sent as a result of the events of the Downside Controversy. It will examine how these propaganda articles aided or abetted the community in achieving their aims. Known as the ‘pamphlet war’ – these documents were often emotive and examined the use of history to further the aims of the Benedictine community. This chapter will examine several of the pamphlets and use them to examine how the different factions thought about the mission, tradition and the future.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DOWNSIDE AND PUBLISHING THE CONTROVERSY

Cuthbert Butler's (1858-1934, Downside) manuscript was never published and instead was left, in the words of its author, 'for the part of a future historian to compare, weigh, adjust and weave into impartial history.'<sup>422</sup> Whilst this thesis is an attempt to do so, the Controversy did however generate many other forms of published outputs. This printed output included the publication of five pamphlets during a period described by Cuthbert Butler as 'the pamphlet wars' (1881-2), several articles, as well as other works of non-fiction such as essays, articles and books by both the older members of the EBC and the Movement.<sup>423</sup> Members of the community used this printed output to defend and attack the status quo of the constitutions within the EBC between 1880-1900. These publications also indicated how the monastic community felt about their relationship with the past, how they articulated a sense of authority and the ambitions the monks had for the future. The publication of the Controversy itself underpinned what outwardly appeared as a stable community, instead disguising tensions as a 'metaphor of change'.<sup>424</sup>

This chapter will first examine the production and circulation of pamphlets during this time. The reception of these pamphlets evoked mixed emotions and was bound up in attitudes concerning authority and authorship. In this context, this thesis will also examine four of the main pamphlets that the monastic community produced during this period. The content of these pamphlets will be outlined below and then analysed in detail. This thesis is primarily interested in how these publications defined and shaped the community's attitude towards the changes that occurred during the Controversy and how they reflect the community's attitude towards their sense of historic legacy.

The pamphlets which will be analysed are: *The Missionary Work of the Benedictines, Reply to The Missionary Work of the Benedictines, I Benedettini Inglesi – The English Benedictine* and

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<sup>422</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 5.

<sup>423</sup> The first mention of the pamphlet war is in DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*.

<sup>424</sup> Richard Price, "Historiography, Narrative, and the Nineteenth Century." *Journal of British Studies* 35, no. 2 (1996): 221.

Downside's sense of its historic identity served as the impetus behind many aspects of the Controversy. Its foundation in 1606 and its connections to medieval England supplied the community with a historical identity that was echoed in its constitutions. This identity was intrinsically linked to the monastery's governance, its liturgy and the monks' sense of identity. The missionary vow was central to this sense of identity, and the traditions within the community it evoked. There was great tension between the missionary impulses of the senior monks and the younger reformers within the congregation who wanted the monastery to reflect their chosen exclusion from the outside world.

Andrew Pettegree's *Brand Luther* is a good illustration of this sense of tension in a previous period of religious history in describing the 'pamphlet war' surrounding the publication of Luther's writings from 1521-5.<sup>425</sup> His description of the battle between Luther and 'the defenders of the traditional order' is deeply reminiscent of the Movement versus the traditionalists in 1881-2.<sup>426</sup> However, despite the similarities in the transmission of ideas, the pamphlets written here were part of a private battle between members of the community, who circulated the pamphlets amongst the various houses of the EBC involved in the Controversy. These pamphlets became also symbolic of other issues within the community, such as the use of authority, and what was perceived to be the fundamental purpose of the EBC. As such I am also interested in the way in which these pamphlets explore the relationship between the EBC, the missionary purpose of the monasteries and the community's relationship with the historic past.

Pamphlets also incurred the wrath of the general chapter over the role of authority, as the constitutions expressly forbade publication without the support of the president general. This was often contentious for the Movement, as the senior authorities in the community were all men who supported the status quo. The next section of the chapter introduce a fifth pamphlet written by Cuthbert Butler (1858-1934, Downside) in 1887, which highlights how these pamphlets were received, as it was the centre of much debate amongst the community and

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<sup>425</sup> See Andrew Pettegree, 'Luther's Friends', *Brand Luther*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2015), p. 167-197.

<sup>426</sup> Andrew Pettegree, 'Luther's Friends', *Brand Luther*, (New York: Penguin Press, 2015), p. 215.



general chapter of 1888.<sup>427</sup> The correspondence connected to the publication of this pamphlet indicated how the use of authority was evoked by the more senior members of the community to repress the desire for reform and the independent authority of the communities they served. Butler's pamphlet demonstrates how the authority evoked in the general chapter by senior members of the community affected the activity of the individual monasteries and their communities.

## Publication and Reception: Print Culture at Downside

Historians have often seen the nineteenth century as the 'second print revolution' which also encompassed a quickly developing tradition of Catholic printing and readership aided by reforms to copyright and advancements in printing technology.<sup>428</sup> Indeed, as Josef Altholz asserted, 'every movement, every school of thought, every sect, and every party had to have at least one periodical organ of expression' during this period.<sup>429</sup> For the Catholic population, the rapid progress of religious education within the country assisted the inception of several Catholic-centric periodicals such as *The Dublin Review* in 1836, *The Catholic Directory* in 1837, *The Tablet* in 1840 and *The Rambler* in 1848.<sup>430</sup> Later on, Downside involved itself in this tradition with the *Downside Review* in 1880 and the *Raven*, the school magazine which was founded in 1884.<sup>431</sup> The *Raven* in its first issue declared itself the periodical to 'mark the course and build up the history of our Alma Mater' and to replace the recently defunct 'Literary Magazine' which had stopped publication the year before, and the 'Downside Magazine' which had not been published since 1845.<sup>432</sup>

The *Downside Review*, which was analysed in an earlier chapter was also connected to this revival of printing at Downside.<sup>433</sup> The preoccupation with the dissemination of approved

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<sup>427</sup> DAA Tract 182, Cuthbert Butler, *Notes on the Origin and Development of the Restored English Congregation*.

<sup>428</sup> For a history of Victorian print culture during this period see Josef L. Altholz, *The Religious Press in Britain, 1760–1900* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989) or Alexis Weedon, *Victorian Publishing: The Economics of Book Production for a Mass Market, 1836–1916*. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).

<sup>429</sup> Josef L. Altholz, *The Religious Press in Britain, 1760–1900* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), p. 1.

<sup>430</sup> See entry on periodicals in Andrew Hilliard, 'Periodical Literature (England)', *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, 11, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911).

<sup>431</sup> All editions can be found in DAA, Downside Abbey Library Collection.

<sup>432</sup> *The Raven*, 12<sup>th</sup> April 1884, Issue 1, p. 1. The magazines it replaced gives an idea of its scope as a school magazine. For the *Downside Magazine* and *Literary Magazine*, see Archives.

<sup>433</sup> See Chapter X of this thesis for more on the Downside Review and its reception during the Controversy in the Centenary issue.

material to the wider community was often the subject of missionary-based activity. In the missionary outpost in Dunedin, New Zealand, the message was clear that printed output was a moral necessity. The *Tablet* had a clear focus on the expression of establishing communities with large sections of its pages dedicated to overseas territories and yet was not only used to celebrate Catholic history and achievements, but to disseminate approved material to the community. Here, in an article contemporary to the Controversy, the Bishop of Dunedin uses the opportunity of a public address to emphasise the importance of Catholic led publication. This is taken from an article in *The Tablet* from June 11, 1881, concerning the address of the Catholic community of Dunedin by Mr JB Callan on the event of the Bishop of Dunedin's silver jubilee and departure for Rome.

A Catholic press is indispensable. People who have been taught to read will and must read; and if sound literature be not provided for them, the moral certainty is that they will become victims of writers whose works are neither truthful or useful. And if this is true in reference to all time, it is particularly so at the present moment, when detraction, calumny and error have armed themselves to make a combined attack on all that is true, most sacred and venerable.<sup>434</sup>

The rhetoric displayed here is also indicative of the attitude of monastic communities on the importance of dissemination of material that was moral, important and religious in vocation. The Downside community also couched their ambitions for the Downside Abbey Press and *The Downside Review* in similar tones, as well as using such vocabulary within the forewords, editors notes and essays in *The Downside Review*. This article from *The Tablet* indicates that such narratives were common across all types of Catholic presses during this period. This also highlights how central moral and religious works were to the missionary endeavours of the community – the use of a Catholic press was not only to print suitable works, but to disseminate them amongst the mission.

Likewise, historians such as Matthew Rubery suggested that the characteristics of the periodical led to the production of elements of serious discussion from a specific point of view. As such the dissemination of these views to discriminating audiences was made easier by the proliferation of publication and the ease at which distribution could occur.<sup>435</sup> For religious

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<sup>434</sup> 'Address to the Right Rev. Dr. Moran, Bishop of Dunedin [by Mr J. B. Callan]' *The Tablet, Supplement to the Tablet, Saturday June 11, 1881*. 957-958, p. 958.

<sup>435</sup> Matthew Rubery, 'Journalism' in Francis O'Gorman (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Culture*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 117-194, p. 181.

communities, the printed medium were also a quick and easy method to spread the word of God to many people and to convey information across the community.

However, the periodical also symbolised control over narrative and content. This control was also present in the *Downside Review*. It had been originally edited from London by Alfred Maskell (between July 1880 – September 1884) and circulated almost exclusively among Old Gregorians.<sup>436</sup> It was then edited by members of the Downside monastic community, and in particular members of the Movement: Francis Gasquet (1846-1929, Downside) until July 1885, after which Edmund Ford (1851-1930, Downside) took over until January 1887, after which editorial control was passed onto Edmund Bishop (1846-1917). Bishop was a lay member of the Downside community, whose ill health had prevented him from following a monastic vocation. Instead, he would become renowned for his work on Catholic history with Gasquet.<sup>437</sup>

However, despite the influence of the Movement, the *Downside Review* was a community publication, which was controlled by the superiors of the monastery and as a result gives very little indication that any sort of conflict was occurring within the monastery. Despite the presence of Gasquet as Prior, there would not have been any opportunity to publish material relating to the reform process nor would the Movement have been able to publish anything inflammatory. Until the articles regarding *Diu Quidem* (1890), which explicitly noted the changes in the constitution, references to the Controversy had to be oblique.<sup>438</sup> These manifested themselves in articles exploring the early foundations of the community, such as in *Queries and Answers: Origins of the English Benedictine Congregation* and in Gasquet's *How the Bull Plantata Was Promulgated*.<sup>439</sup>

Indeed, the *Downside Review* was subject to different conditions than the original *Downside Magazine*. In a letter between Edmund Ford and Aidan Gasquet when Ford wanted to know

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<sup>436</sup> David Knowles, 'Cuthbert Butler: A Memoir', *The Historian and Character*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964) p. 296.

<sup>437</sup> Such as Edmund Bishop, Francis Aidan Gasquet, *Edward VI and the Book of Common Prayer* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1928).

<sup>438</sup> See 'An Aspect of the Bull 'Diu Quidem', *The Downside Review*, (1899), 219-22 and 'The Bull 'Diu Quidem'', *The Downside Review*, (1899), 205-206.

<sup>439</sup> These are just two examples, see *The Downside Review* for more. 'Queries and Answers: Origins of the English Benedictine Congregation' *The Downside Review*, 1 (1887), 175-6 and Aidan Gasquet, 'How the Bull Plantata Was Promulgated', *The Downside Review*, 2 (1897), 146-152.

the level of censorship the *Review* faced, Gasquet said that a member of the senior clergy – Norbert Sweeney (1821-83, Downside) - had told him that ‘as a college magazine he should not consider any censorship requisite. D. [Placid] Burchall (1812-85, President-General, 1854-83) thought the same.’ However, when it became the *Review*, Gasquet said ‘this is what I always acted upon, on the plea that it was a ‘family matter’, but I must say I think, on reflection, that the view taken is open to doubt; as the present *Review* is very different to the old *Downside Magazine*.’<sup>440</sup>

Despite this potentially contentious relationship with freedom of expression, Downside had its own printing press, which was prolific in both the publication of their own authored content and publication for the internal Downside community.<sup>441</sup> Its first effort was the work of an unknown member of the community, *A Sketch of the Life and Mission of St Gregory’s*, which combined with the forces of the newly established *Downside Review* led its reviewer to proclaim:

This sketch is the first fruit of a printing press belonging to the Monastery of St Gregory’s. Those who have no curiosity concerning the life of S. Benedict may be curious enough to see the first issue from one of the first monastic presses in England since the Reformation.<sup>442</sup>

However, the *Review* was never printed on-site, instead, the community used first the Chiswick Press which gave ‘a precedent for ourselves of unimpeachable typography’.<sup>443</sup> However, the Chiswick Press was unable to cope with the volume of copies required, and so work was moved to the St. Gregory’s Press at Stratford upon Avon. This was quickly succeeded by a string of printers: Day of Shepton, Burnes and Oates, and finally the Western Chronicle Press, Yeovil which provided the community with the required ‘cheapness and efficiency’ they required.<sup>444</sup> This practical concession meant that they could increase production and reach a wider

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<sup>440</sup> DAA.Aidan Gasquet Collection: Abbot’s Archive, *Gasquet to Ford*, 26<sup>th</sup> Nov 1885,

<sup>441</sup> Unfortunately, little information survives about the printing press, which closed c.1960. I am told it was based in where the modern visitor centre now stands.

<sup>442</sup> A Monk of St Gregory’s Priory, *A Sketch of the Life and Mission of St Gregory’s*, (Downside Printing Press: Radstock, 1880) which was reviewed by the Downside Review. See ‘Reviews: A Sketch of the Life and Mission of S. Benedict’, *The Downside Review*, 1 (1880), 53-62, p. 58.

<sup>443</sup> ‘Odds and Ends’ *The Downside Review*, (1890) 70-1, p. 70.

<sup>444</sup> ‘Odds and Ends’ *The Downside Review*, (1890) 70-1, p. 70.

audience.

The dissemination of *The Downside Review* to a greater audience reflected the return to the production of scholarship throughout the community. Indeed, in his active role in the pursuit of constitutional change as prior of Downside, Cuthbert Butler wrote that Ford ‘[did] much to promote the cultivation of that side of Benedictine life... [through] the prosecution of higher ecclesiastical studies and the production of historical and other writings.’<sup>445</sup> Many of the members of the Movement were prolific scholars. Although Ford’s printed output was modest compared to members such as Gasquet or Butler, his entry for St Benedict of Nursia for the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* includes a few interesting lines considering the social and political context it was written in.<sup>446</sup> The *Catholic Encyclopaedia* was also another example of the rise of Catholic publishing. Despite its American origins, it had many entries by English authorities including many Old Gregorians.<sup>447</sup> Written in 1906, Ford’s writing was an obvious reflection of the political turmoil that had recently occurred at Downside. The editors had asked for ‘special attention [to be] given to the influence of St Benedict in English-speaking countries and to the development and influence of his rule,’ and Ford delivered a rendition of the saint through the eyes of a reformer:<sup>448</sup>

The Rule, therefore, is entirely occupied with regulating the life of a community of men who live and work and pray and eat together, and this is not merely for a course of training, but as a permanent element of life at its best... No work is foreign to the Benedictine, provided only it is compatible with living in community and with the performance of the Divine Office. This freedom in the choice of work was necessary in a Rule which was to be suited to all times and places, but it was primarily the natural result of the end which St. Benedict had in view.<sup>449</sup>

These lines are evocative of the type of authority that the Movement desired for the community and coloured the readings of the histories that the Movement were involved in producing for

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<sup>445</sup> Cuthbert Butler, ‘Record of the Century’, *Downside Review* [Centenary Edition], 33 (1914).

<sup>446</sup> Edmund Ford, ‘St. Benedict of Nursia’ in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907).

<sup>447</sup> Other examples include Aidan Gasquet, ‘Suppression of English Monasteries under Henry VIII’ in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911), Cuthbert Butler, ‘St. Anthony’, in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907).

<sup>448</sup> DAA. Edmund Ford Collection, Correspondence 1906, Named Correspondence, *Fallow to Ford*, 13<sup>th</sup> November 1906.

<sup>449</sup> Edmund Ford, ‘St. Benedict of Nursia’ in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1907).

public consumption.<sup>450</sup> It also represented many of the Movement's ideals of combining both past and present to create a distinct identity. The idea of having the freedom to choose was central to the position of the Movement and was shared by others in the community. This can be seen in Dame Margaret Turan's essay on Dom Laurence Shepherd (1826-85, Ampleforth) and his relationship with the EBC during this period.<sup>451</sup> Here, although Turan gives greater agency to an actively hostile Ampleforth than appears in the Downside records, she argues that Shepherd was also actively seeking reconciliation with a certain sense of nostalgia and romanticism through a more monastery-centred approach.<sup>452</sup> This approach was a common-held belief amongst those advocating for reform.

Likewise, in Butler's *Benedictine Monachism: Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule*, which was eventually published in 1919, there is a marked emphasis on the fact that no monk could be ordered to spend time outside of the monastery if he did not desire to. In the chapter *A Benedictine Abbey in the Twentieth Century*, Butler examines modern monasticism, clearly considering the events of the constitutional reforms. He writes:

It is admitted now on all hands, as Abbot Ford puts it, any kind of work, mental or manual, is suitable for Benedictines, provided it is compatible with living in community and with the performance of the divine office in choir.<sup>453</sup>

This balancing of mission versus monastery clearly shows Butler's pride in this particular duty of the Benedictines to the English mission, and yet also demonstrates the Movement's ongoing concern regarding the monastic traditions of the order. This strong sense of tradition also was reflected in the production of pamphlets in Catholic circles, especially around the period of emancipation in England. Downside took great care to preserve and catalogue these in their library, which now contains collections of pamphlets in their thousands. Attitudes towards the value of pamphlets were mixed, as recorded in *The Downside Review*, 'the post which pamphlets hold is certainly that of the lowest dregs of the populace... [however] we have

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<sup>450</sup> Similar instances of the revolutionary spirit that resided in the Movement can be seen in the outputs they produced. See for example Cuthbert Butler, *Benedictine Monachism: Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1919) or Aidan Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English monasteries. An attempt to illustrate the history of their suppression* (London: J. Hodges Publishers, 1888).

<sup>451</sup> See Margaret Truran, 'Dom James Laurence Shepherd's Vision of the EBC' *English Benedictine Congregation History Symposium*, 1985.

<sup>452</sup> Margaret Truran, 'Dom James Laurence Shepherd's Vision of the EBC' *English Benedictine Congregation History Symposium*, 1985, p. 2.

<sup>453</sup> Cuthbert Butler, *Benedictine Monachism: Studies in Benedictine Life and Rule*, (London: Longwell & Green, 1919), p. 373.

undoubtedly the nucleus of a very interesting, not to say valuable collection.’<sup>454</sup> Pamphlets themselves were often seen as inflammatory material and were often the medium of choice for controversial matters and dialogical debates. This was seen throughout the period, such as the anonymous response to A.W Pugin’s *Contrasts* or the pamphlets surrounding Cardinal John Newman’s *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* in response to an attack by Charles Kingsley (1819-75).<sup>455</sup> Likewise, George Orwell’s assessment of pamphlets rings equally true in the case of the Downside Controversy. Although Orwell’s words were written at a much later date, the implication of ‘honest and gifted men’ must not have been far from the thoughts of those involved in the Controversy.

a pamphlet may be written ‘for’ or ‘against’ something, but in essence is always a protest... Pamphleteering will flourish when there is some great struggle in which honest and gifted men are to be found on both sides.<sup>456</sup>

The publication of the pamphlets that were produced during the Controversy was made difficult by the constitutions that were in force at the time of writing which limited individual freedoms over the collective body. As the Movement were in isolation against ‘all the higher Superiors, the General Chapter, and the bulk of the rank and file of the various communities,’ they were often unable to declare individual authorship in publications, nor freely publish material that was deemed divisive.<sup>457</sup> Whilst in the Controversy manuscript Butler proclaimed that ‘whilst disclaiming an impossible impartiality, I do claim for my Recollections the strictest truthfulness’, this does suggest that pamphlets were the result of men whose attitude towards the Controversy denoted a sense of character.<sup>458</sup> This implication within the pamphlets of personalities is that Butler would ‘take for granted throughout that the general scope of the Movement was legitimate and good’.<sup>459</sup> Yet the importance of publication cannot be overstated in this case. Sometimes private letters from the community offered strident views that were not normally disclosed publicly, but during the Controversy period the pamphlet offered the

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<sup>454</sup> ‘Our Pamphlets.’ *The Downside Review*, 4 (1885), 225–231. See also ‘Catalogue of the Pamphlets.: I.—Catholic Relief Movement, (1778-1800)’, *The Downside Review*, 4 (1885), 231–233.

<sup>455</sup> See Anonymous, *Reply to ‘Contrasts’ by A. W. Pugin* (London: J. Masters, 1837), and John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (London: Longman Green, 1864).

<sup>456</sup> George Orwell and Reginald Reynolds, *British Pamphleteers*, (London: Allan Wingate, 1951), p. 8-9.

<sup>457</sup> Hicks, Bruno. *The Life of Abbot Ford*. (Stratton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 1948), p. 100.

<sup>458</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 3.

<sup>459</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Preface: Downside Controversy*, p. 2.

strongest opinions on the events of the Controversy.

## **The Pamphlet War (1881-2)**

The ‘pamphlet war’ is marked as a distinct period in the Controversy manuscript and lasted from 1881-2.<sup>460</sup> In the opinion of Cuthbert Butler, the pamphlets ‘formed for some months a prominent and lively episode in the course of events’ of the Controversy.<sup>461</sup> It was then revived in 1887 after the publication of Butler’s *Notes on the Origin and Development of the Restored English Congregation*, which was published without the permission of the General Chapter.<sup>462</sup> This resulted in a series of aggressive letters between Edmund Ford and Bede Prest (1831-1903, Ampleforth), who was acting under presidential authority for the EBC.

The impetus behind the pamphlets came from the aggravation caused by the recent visitation by the Apostolic Visitor Prior Boniface Krug of Monte Cassino (1838-1909). Pope Leo XIII appointed the Apostolic Visitor in his decree *Inclita* (1881), which swiftly followed the Apostolic Constitution, *Romanos Pontifices* (1881). This called on the religious orders in England to bring their missionary way of life into better accord with the letter of their respective rules. After which, Krug would be sent to the various houses to evaluate the character of the EBC from July – October 1881.<sup>463</sup> Krug was in favour of the type of regime that the Movement favoured – namely a monastery-centred vocation with less emphasis on the mission – which was displeasing to the older members of the community who felt that the visit had been engineered to push through the reforms wanted by the Movement.

Ultimately, ‘there was a widespread feeling that the monasteries were sacrificed to the missions’ according to Butler.<sup>464</sup> This sentiment was shared by other members of the Controversy. However, this sentiment was seen as part of an aggressive move to abolish the mission hastened by Krug’s visitation. The older members of the community, who wanted to uphold the status quo had been made nervous by the visitation by Krug and believed that the changes Krug and the younger members hoped for were imminent. They responded to the

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<sup>460</sup> See DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, pp. 11-21.

<sup>461</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 11.

<sup>462</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Downside Controversy Box I*.

<sup>463</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Notes on the Origin & Early Development of the Restored English Benedictine Congregation*, *Downside Controversy Box I*.

<sup>464</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 15.



visitation by proactively publishing their first pamphlet. Until this point, the motivations for reform, and the scope this would form had not been cohesive, with Butler writing that the Movement's 'objects were perhaps somewhat vague; [and] its promoters did not all desire the same thing'.<sup>465</sup>In response to this coordinated attack, the Movement published its reply. This formed the pamphlet war. For clarity, the pamphlets that were sent during this first period known in Butler's manuscript as 'The Pamphlet War' (1881-2) are outlined below.<sup>466</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 13.

<sup>466</sup> Full references will be given below, but they have all been bound into one volume of tracts relating to the Controversy. See DAA, Tract 182.

TABLE 4.1 DETAILS OF PAMPHLETS FROM 1881-2.<sup>467</sup>

Author	Affiliation	Date	Title	Format
Austin Bury	Senior clergy/ the traditionalists	July 1881	<i>Protest</i>	Petition
Benedict Snow	Senior clergy/ the traditionalists	25 August 1881	<i>The Missionary Work of the Benedictines</i>	Pamphlet – also translated into Italian
Elphege Cody	Neo-monastics/ Movement	1881	<i>Reply to The Missionary Work of the Benedictines</i>	Pamphlet
Austin Bury	Senior clergy/ the traditionalists	December 1881	<i>Le Funeste Conseguenze – The Disastrous Consequence of any changes in the policy of the Congregation</i>	Pamphlet, first in Italian and then translated into English. Very few printed, seen by Butler in translation.
Signed ‘La loro voce – Their Voice’	Neo-monastics/ Movement was considered to be by the Movement more generally. Was in fact by M. Weld.	15 <sup>th</sup> February 1882	<i>I Benedettini Inglesi – The English Benedictines</i>	Pamphlet, first in Italian and then translated into English
Bede Prest	Senior clergy/ the traditionalists	June 1882	<i>Notes on the pamphlet ‘I Benedettini Inglesi’</i>	Pamphlet, first in Italian and then translated into English

<sup>467</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Controversy Manuscript*.

## Austin Bury's *Petition*

To give context, the first publication was a petition written by Austin Bury (1827-1904, Ampleforth) in July 1881 during Krug's visitation. A monk of Ampleforth, Bury was stationed on the mission at St Mary's, Warrington at the time of writing his petition and had spent much of his monastic life on the mission.<sup>468</sup> In his obituary, it was noted that 'the Abbot was in the thick of the fight [over the constitutional reforms]. And during these events, he displayed much of the strength of his character and something of its weakness.'<sup>469</sup> Likewise, Butler noted that Bury was 'of strong will and a great determination of character, and from his youth upwards had been noted for holding missionary views in their extremest form.'<sup>470</sup> Bury had intended to gather signatures and send the petition to Rome.

No copies of this petition appear to have been preserved at Downside, but within the Controversy manuscript, Butler provides a summary of its contents, outlined below.

It set forth clearly and without compromise, the view of our state held by Fr Bury's school, deprecated any change in the Constitutions, and finally urged that any not satisfied with the existing state of things should leave the Congregation.<sup>471</sup>

Unwonted energy had been put into the *pusillus grex* [trans. small flock] by the fact that those of the other way of thinking – those, that is, who held strong missionary views – had just become very aggressive... Those monastically inclined were compelled to make a protest and strike a blow for their principles.<sup>472</sup>

This aggressive language demonstrates the discord felt on both sides of the Controversy. However, this use of violent rhetoric was not a new phenomenon. Andrew Pettegree in *Reformation World* describes the formation of the Catholic 'popular voice' in the post-reformation period in the rebuttal of the protestant polemic. The way in which the 'violence of the Catholic assault introduced a new defensiveness into much Protestant writing' can also be seen to be mimicked here in the language used between the two groups.<sup>473</sup> However, the climate that this sense of anger had been bred in was partly due to the misconceptions of the

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<sup>468</sup> For more on Austin Bury see 'Sermon at the Requiem of Abbot Bury', *The Ampleforth Journal*, 3 (1904) 199-301, or 'Abbot Bury', *The Ampleforth Journal*, 3 (1904) 302-313.

<sup>469</sup> 'Sermon at the Requiem of Abbot Bury', *The Ampleforth Journal*, 3 (1904) 199-301, p. 300.

<sup>470</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 15.

<sup>471</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 33.

<sup>472</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 16.

<sup>473</sup> Andrew Pettegree, *The Reformation World*, (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 123.

attitudes of those associated with the apostolic visitation:

it was naturally inferred that our views coincided to the full with [Prior Krug], including what practically amounted to complete withdrawal from missionary work; this was not the case; but in spite of all protests it continued to be generally believed.<sup>474</sup>

However, the petition was withdrawn after being regarded by the community ‘as too violent in expression and therefore imprudent’ as Butler puts it in his *Controversy* manuscript.<sup>475</sup> In the end, the first pamphlet to formally open the discussions into the missionary status of the EBC came from Benedict Snow (1838-1905, Downside). Snow was a senior member of the clergy, and one of the more vocal members of the group of traditionalists advocating for the status quo. In 1881 he was on the mission at St Mary’s, Liverpool (1878-94), whilst also acting as the procurator of the North Province. In 1883, he was made secretary to the General Chapter. A vivacious writer, he also contributed many articles to the *Downside Review*, *Dublin Review* and *The Tablet*. Butler described him as ‘able and clear-headed [and] the right-hand man [of Bury, the Provincial of York] ... For a couple of years [they] became the dominant power in the Congregation.’<sup>476</sup>

The Movement saw this pamphlet as the first to ‘introduce [into] the discussion [as to] the essentials and accidentals of our institute – a question [that would be] authoritatively defined in the Bull.Rel.O. [*Religiosus Ordo*, 1889].’<sup>477</sup> However, despite the advent of *Religiosus Ordo* which directed the EBC to reform the constitutions with the first clear directive from Rome, the language and intentions of the papal bull further divided the community. The papal bull was met with much opposition, with the Movement and those opposing it interpreting the extent of reform required differently. Cuthbert Butler believed that many of the older members of the community believed the reforms were ‘sweeping away the ‘Good Old Thing’ of those days.’<sup>478</sup>

### **Benedict Snow’s *Missionary Work of the Benedictines***

On 25 August 1881, Benedict Snow published the first pamphlet of the *Controversy*:

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<sup>474</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 33.

<sup>475</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 2.

<sup>476</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 15-16.

<sup>477</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 12.

<sup>478</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 10.

*Missionary Work of the Benedictines*.<sup>479</sup> In this, Snow argued that missionary work was both essential and true to the nature of Benedictine monasticism. It was based on two main factors: that the mission had historical precedence, and that the vitality of other global monasteries that had missions was proof that the mission was an important aspect of the monastic life.

In the first instance, the *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* promoted the historical precedence of the mission using the authority of the constitutions, the existence of the single mission, and foundational material to provide evidence for the presence of missions. These aspects demonstrated that the mission had an important tradition within Benedictine culture, and the mission had in Snow's opinion, 'laid the foundations of that civilisation that is now our glory and pride.'<sup>480</sup> The second - the global context - showed that the mission was a thriving aspect of monasteries across the globe. The use of case studies from other monasteries showed that the presence of missions aided the scope of education, economics and the vitality of the motherhouse. The crux of the matter was, that to Snow, houses with missionaries were deeply monastic houses, even within single missions.

For Snow, the presence of papal bulls throughout history which had emphasised the presence of the mission gave the mission historical precedence. Without the constitutional mandate of the mission and the privileges bestowed on the EBC, the mission could not have occurred. He quoted the work mandated by *Dominici Gregis* (1603), *Cum Accepimus* (1612), which was formally sanctioned under *Ex Incumbenti* (1619) and finally confirmed by *Plantata* (1633) to prove this. These papal bulls brought together the English congregation into one body and laid the foundations for the necessity of missionary work whilst the congregations were in exile. As such, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* was heavily in favour of the missionary practices of the EBC during the last three centuries, and repeatedly connected the current missionary presence of the monastery with the foundational narrative the traditionalists wanted to promote. Here, Snow proclaims that

missionary work is a constituent part of the system. The English Congregation is essentially Missionary; Missionary work is its *raison d'être*; the Congregation was formed, the Constitutions framed, and the Monasteries founded for the express purpose

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<sup>479</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines*.

<sup>480</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, p. 8.

of supplying the English Mission.<sup>481</sup>

By emphasising the constitutional aspect, Snow also evoked the authority of the Holy See concerning the status and activity of the current EBC. This was an important point for the traditionalists and would be repeated in Bede Prest's pamphlet *Notes on the pamphlet 'I Benedettini Inglesi'*.

For Snow and the rest of the traditionalists, the essential character of the EBC was in the distinctly English experience of the mission post-Reformation which had also necessitated the lone missionary. Whereas the neo-monastics saw the single mission as evidence of the 'unnatural' state of monastic houses in the present, Snow's *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* emphasised the importance of missions with a single priest, and how this was typical within both the EBC and the other Benedictine communities in Europe. Likewise, the foundational precedence evoked by Snow in *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* was designed to emphasise a sense of tradition and continuity. The status quo defended by the traditionalists was exactly this, handed down from Sigebert Buckley and the ancient monasteries in England. They saw the neo-monastics push for constitutional reform as Bruno Hicks surmised: 'endeavouring to destroy the Congregation.'<sup>482</sup> Instead, Snow suggested that

[i]t must be remembered that this method of Monastic Missionary life is not a modern experiment flourishing through the enthusiasm of the moment, but it has endured for centuries. The English Congregation has practised it for nearly three hundred years.<sup>483</sup>

This reference to a 'modern experiment' was a common indictment of the Movement's motives. This language repeatedly occurred throughout much of the literature surrounding the Controversy, even after the end of the pamphlet war. Here, *The Downside Review* article 'An Aspect of the Bull *'Diu Quidem'*' (1899) emphasises modernity in relation to the papal bull.<sup>484</sup> However, unlike in *Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, where a 'modern experiment' is evidently a negative motion, it proclaimed that:

its [*Diu Quidem*] character and significance is that it is *modern*, sketching a polity which bears the impress of our modern days... [and is the] very life of our English institutions

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<sup>481</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* p. 13.

<sup>482</sup> Bruno Hicks, *The Life of Abbot Ford*. Stratton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press (1948), pp. 111.

<sup>483</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, p. 15.

<sup>484</sup> 'An Aspect of the Bull *'Diu Quidem'*, *The Downside Review*, (1899), 219-223.

the world over... is in our own sphere of influence at home in a modern sort of world as in any previous age.<sup>485</sup>

Instead for Snow, tradition and foundational stability were vital.

Yet the work of the salvation of souls is the same as it was then; it is only the external circumstances that have changed, and those who engage in Missionary labour must, if they wish to gain souls, accommodate themselves to that change.<sup>486</sup>

Here, Snow demonstrates how despite the changing circumstances of Catholic communities in England, the need to continue to convert people would always be necessary. Similarly, the spread of Christianity across the globe, and therefore the missionary zeal of the Benedictines is particularly pertinent to Snow's argument.

As in other nations, so in England, the Benedictine Monks spread all over each of the Saxon kingdoms... and when the whole nation was converted, adapting themselves to the altered circumstances they still continued the Missionary work.<sup>487</sup>

This global context showed that the flourishing state of monasteries in Europe could be achieved in England and that preserving the mission appeared to be key to this success. Snow suggested that:

this comparison tends to show that the strength of the Order lies in those Monasteries where the Missionary work is more completely carried out; that the fact of Monks living outside the Monastery, and apart from the discipline of the Cloister, is not incompatible with a vigorous, healthy monastic spirit.<sup>488</sup>

Snow also connects the mission to financial success, a rebuke to the argument that the Downside and the other motherhouses could not sustain unprofitable singular missions.

Experience also teaches us that they actually do form a source of strength to the congregation: they are centres of Benedictine influence, they supply the colleges with students, the Monasteries with vocations and directly and indirectly assist in

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<sup>485</sup> An Aspect of the Bull 'Diu Quidem', *The Downside Review*, 1899, 219-222 (p. 222).

<sup>486</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, p. 11.

<sup>487</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, p. 10.

<sup>488</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* p. 15.

maintaining the funds of the Monasteries<sup>489</sup>

It is interesting how here Snow connected the economic argument to a broader discussion on the vitality of the monasteries. Snow used statistical data to show this was not true, using the *Album Benedictum* of 1879, and the reply based its argument on what they considered to be Snow's incorrect reading of the data. The *Album Benedictum* had been produced for the 14<sup>th</sup> centenary of St Benedict and contained an account of each congregation and monastery, as well as a list of all the bishops, priests, and religious men at that time. It also contained a necrology of the entire order since 1866 and an appendix of catalogues of each monastery. It was produced by Gilbert Dolan (1853-1914, Downside).<sup>490</sup>

Snow argued that if it was true that to be in keeping with the 'spirit of the Order', monasteries would be cloistered and not missionary in nature, they would be, therefore 'strong, vigorous and numerous.'<sup>491</sup> Instead, Snow used the data from the *Album Benedictum* to demonstrate that the reverse was true: un-cloistered monasteries focused on the missionary impulse were not 'sickly and weak.'<sup>492</sup> The economics of the mission also aided other vocational work that occurred within the monasteries, and connected the necessity of mission work to a circular argument:

A moment's reflection will show that the connection is a natural one:- The multiplication of Missions extends Benedictine influence; this produces students for the colleges; from these rise vocations and the supply of Missioners is secured.<sup>493</sup>

Here Snow's *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* highlights the importance of the mission to the EBC. Throughout *Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, there is a repeated emphasis on the historical precedence of the mission, which was considered an important aspect of the EBC

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<sup>489</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* p. 22.

<sup>490</sup> This information is taken from a letter by Gilbert Dolan to an unknown recipient. See DAA, Gilbert Dolan Collection, *Letter from Gilbert Dolan 19<sup>th</sup> October 1880*.

<sup>491</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* p. 14.

<sup>492</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* p. 14.

<sup>493</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* p. 17.



and as such began the defence of the mission against the Movement.

### **Elphege Cody's *Reply to the Missionary Work of the Benedictines***

The attack by the traditionalists, and the accession of Bury and Snow into positions of power concerned the Movement greatly. Butler records that this caused a cry of 'the monasteries [are] in danger [to be] raised and those monastically inclined were compelled to make a protest and strike a blow for their principles'.<sup>494</sup>

The Movement responded to Snow's pamphlet in May 1882 with Elphege Cody's (1847-1891) *Reply to the Missionary Work of the Benedictines*. Cody was a monk of Fort Augustus which became independent from the EBC in 1888. He had been sent to Fort Augustus in 1879 and apart from a brief period in Prague, remained there until his death. Until this point, the inception of Fort Augustus had been seen by the Movement as a positive contribution to the structure of the EBC. Butler wrote:

all understood that it [Fort Augustus] was intended to a certain extent as a new departure. Those at Downside did not wish to be left behind by the new monastery.<sup>495</sup>

However, the Scottish monastics evidently saw their new monastery in a different light and the prior, Jerome Vaughan (1841-1896) had been actively working on a petition to Rome to leave the EBC. The petition was forwarded to Rome by Cardinal Manning, and on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1882, Campbell of the Scots College in Rome wrote to Prior Vaughan that the petition had been accepted and that Fort Augustus was under Rome's jurisdiction.<sup>496</sup> Cody wrote about the removal of Fort Augustus from the EBC in the *Weekly Register* on 20<sup>th</sup> January 1883, in which he made connections between the removal of Fort Augustus from the EBC and the Reformation.

It is also noticeable that this is the first Benedictine Abbey erected within the three kingdoms since the days of England's schism, to which England, and Scotland too,

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<sup>494</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 15.

<sup>495</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 15.

<sup>496</sup> See DAA, Aidan Gasquet Collection, *EBC Monasteries, Fort Augustus Papers*.

owed so much of their former ecclesiastical vigour and renown.<sup>497</sup>

Cody also linked the idea of tradition and renewal to Fort Augustus, an idea that was deeply connected to the views of the Movement. In invoking the Council of Trent's (1545-63) mandate regarding senior authority, Cody demonstrates the relationship between the community and the congregation. Despite the emphasis on the unusual situation, it clearly reflects on the wider discussions surrounding the mission and the monastery. From Rome, the decree *Summa cum animi* brought Fort Augustus under the jurisdiction of the Holy See on 12<sup>th</sup> December 1882, to make Fort Augustus an exempt Pontifical Abbey.

In regard to Downside, Cody's pamphlet was published by Rt. Rev. Monsignor Francis Weld (1819-1899). This was noted by Butler in his manuscript as being because Cody himself felt unable to claim authorship.

He [Cody] felt a difficulty about printing his pamphlet owing to the prohibition of the Constitution against printing anything whatever without the President's permission; so Mgr Weld fathered the 'reply', and himself printed and circulated it as having been written to him by a friend.<sup>498</sup>

Weld's deep friendship with Downside had roots in many of the issues that had preceded the Controversy. He had wanted to become a monk but was unable to due to ill health. This was a point of contention, as it was the conditions to which the monastic life was held to that prevented his monastic ambition. Butler suggested that Weld had originally 'entered the noviciate but was not satisfied with the religious life offered by the congregation.'<sup>499</sup> This was of course the missionary element of the monastic life that Weld disagreed with. This was one of the key motivations of the Movement - in the Controversy manuscript Butler noted that Weld 'deplored that man after man whose great desire was to live in the monastery should be set out on the mission.'<sup>500</sup>

It should be noted here that the inability of men like Weld, and Edmund Bishop - mentioned earlier in this chapter as the editor of *The Downside Review* - to fulfil their ambitions to become members of the monastic community was also a preoccupation of the Movement. They saw

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<sup>497</sup> The Weekly Register, Jan 20<sup>th</sup> 1883 'The Scotch Abbey' 81-82, p. 81

<sup>498</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 14.

<sup>499</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 18.

<sup>500</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 18.

the senior clergy's refusal to be flexible around the missionary endeavours as preventing men whose talents would benefit the congregation from joining. During this period:

President O'G[orman] wrote to Pr. F[ord] that he considered them both [Edmund Bishop and Francis New, who was studying for the priesthood, a former solicitor] most unfit subjects for the English Congregation, because they would not be able to undertake missionary work.<sup>501</sup>

Both men, Butler stated, were the type that 'any Benedictine Congregation would have welcomed with gladness.'<sup>502</sup> Whilst members of the community like Butler became monks but did not want to spend their lives in solitary missions, this was sometimes the deciding factor for others. The Movement saw this as the central point of their reforms – 'what was to be combatted was the notion that the Congregation was essentially missionary.'<sup>503</sup>

Despite this, Weld was, however, a great beneficiary to Downside and funded the lower cloister up to the church and the community refectory. He was also granted permission to be buried at Downside, near the altar of the Blessed Sacrament. Highly regarded by members of the community, Ford personally conducted his funeral, whilst his prayers were said by Gasquet.<sup>504</sup> In the context of the Controversy: in 1880, he preached the Downside Retreat, in which he promoted the reforms desired by the Movement.<sup>505</sup> In the manuscript, Butler says that Weld's retreat 'was the first time they [ideas of reforming the mission] had been formally and publicly uttered and so that night of Weld's retreat deserves to be marked as an epoch in the Movement.'<sup>506</sup>

Weld had also been responsible for facilitating the visitation of the EBC by Prior Krug and was a close confidante of many members of the Movement including Gasquet, Ford and Butler. On the advent of the visitation, he wrote to Rome after talks with Gasquet who was prior at the time. Gasquet felt that he was unable to ask for the visitation himself, and so this desire was conveyed through Weld instead. Weld enquired at Rome and found that the visitation had

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<sup>501</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 40.

<sup>502</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 40.

<sup>503</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 41.

<sup>504</sup> For Weld's obituary in the *Downside Review* see 'The Late Rt. Rev. Mgr. Weld' *The Downside Review*, 1898, 291-2.

<sup>505</sup> The Downside retreat took place each Easter. The abbot invited a member of the wider community to preach over a weekend on subjects relating to theology, spirituality and monastic education.

<sup>506</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 18.

already been practically decided on through movements by the bishops present at the Centenary of St Benedict in Rome. In the Controversy manuscript, Cuthbert Butler reported that

when the right time came Mgr Weld was summoned to Rome. Very soon afterwards he went to Rome and had an audience with the Pope who promised to send a visitor.<sup>507</sup>

The announcement for the visitation appeared in the *Tablet* on 11 June 1881. This was the first that many in the EBC knew of the visitation, as Weld had not communicated the desire for a visitation beyond Gasquet and the other members of the Movement. The work by Weld had been done without reference to the superiors of the congregation, as Butler notes it

all was done so secretly that I [Butler] believe the first the Superiors of the Congregation heard of the matter was the announcement in '*The Tablet*.' This was on June 11<sup>th</sup>, and within a week Fr Krug was in England.<sup>508</sup>

This again exposes the distinction between authority in the congregation and the power to make decisions within the individual monastery. During the period the Movement were active (1880-1900), permission had to be sought for any actions. Members of the Movement remained anxious over their lack of authority and ability to maintain independence over their own monastic autonomy. This was only exacerbated when the *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* was published. For the Movement, there 'openly pronounced movement on foot for a monastic reform... and a widespread feeling that things were wrong in the congregation'.<sup>509</sup>

The pamphlet, *A Reply to the Missionary Work of the Benedictines* was structured as a response to the first pamphlet - *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* - and so systematically worked through Snow's argument to provide counter-evidence against the EBC's dependency on the mission. Cody's defence provided historical context for reform – 'St Benedict himself was a reformer... reform of some sort has been constantly necessary' and an emphasis on the need for continued prosperity amongst the English Congregation.<sup>510</sup> This prosperity would only be achieved, Cody said, if monasteries were allowed to govern themselves and labour under circumstances that best fit the individual member of the community. Here, Cody refutes Snow's argument that missionary work was part of the essential character of the EBC, and emphasises

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<sup>507</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 23.

<sup>508</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 23.

<sup>509</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 13.

<sup>510</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Elphege Cody, *Reply to the Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, p. 5.

how extra-ordinary the circumstances of the post-reformation church was:

the fact of performing missionary work alone, ‘out of the cloister’ is ‘opposed to the Benedictine Rule’, for it breaks the vow of stability, and therefore requires special reasons and special sanction to authorise it. That sanction was once given to the English Congregation; but as the reasons no longer exist, the authority which gave it now wishes to see it recalled. It is also ‘contrary to Benedictine spirit and the traditions of the Order.’<sup>511</sup>

Historical precedence and the invention of tradition was a key concept behind all the pamphlets during this period. However, how this was evoked differed between the two groups depending on how they perceived the status quo. In *Reply to the Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, Cody refuted the historical precedence set by Snow, suggesting that in fact the use of the ‘missionary’ congregations ‘ignore[d] all the historical circumstances of the Benedictine Order’ and ‘especially the fact that a work of restoration had begun’.<sup>512</sup> This emphasised the ‘the restoration of normal Benedictine government and life’ after being in what the Movement perceived to be ‘a state of emergency’ in the post-reformation period.<sup>513</sup>

This differing opinion over the historical foundations of the EBC was also connected to the way in which the return to England was perceived by the community. Under the bull *Plantata*, which acted as the official restoration of the ‘enviable medieval privileges to the English Benedictines’.<sup>514</sup> Likewise, Snow made connections to other monasteries and European communities and linked them distinctly to the history of Downside, such as the communities based in Spain or Italy. This is in part due to the Spanish origins of the community, and how the oligarchical structure of the Spanish congregation had been mimicked by the EBC to centralise control and enforce missionary activity. Whereas:

The answer had little difficulty in showing that the English Congregation differed from all others in the proportion of monks living permanently out of the monastery, in the fact that there alone were the youngest monks left to work the monasteries, and in fact that the monks on the mission were withdrawn from the jurisdiction of the monastic

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<sup>511</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Elphege Cody, *Reply to the Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, p. 28.

<sup>512</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Elphege Cody, *Reply to the Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, p. 7.

<sup>513</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 2.

<sup>514</sup> Geoffrey Scott, ‘England in Rome: The English Benedictine Procurators in Curia Romana (1607-1808) *The Downside Review* (2015), 42-64, p. 46.

superiors and put under other superiors.<sup>515</sup>

The basis of the *Reply*'s argument was defined by the fact that:

The Answer showed that other arrangements and readings of the statistics might make the figures yield other [results] and certainly were such tables drawn up from the newest *Album Benedictum* (1705) they would tell a very different tale.<sup>516</sup>

Likewise, the *Reply* argued that 'the words 'vigorous and active' are open to some objection... colleges and parishes are not the only means of activity and vigour.'<sup>517</sup> The various interpretations behind both the terminology and data used were the foundation of the reply to *Missionary Work of the Benedictines*. This careful emphasis on the statistical element surrounding these pamphlets can be contrasted with Snow's use of 'cursory' below:

[From] A cursory glance at the rise and spread of the Order of St Benedict will suffice to make manifest that it was brought into existence by Divine Providence for a great Missionary work.<sup>518</sup>

### **Bury's *Le Funeste Consequenze – The Disastrous Consequence of any changes in the policy of the Congregation***

After the petition in 1881, Bury revisited some of his ideas in the pamphlet *Le Funeste Consequenze – The Disastrous Consequence of any changes in the policy of the Congregation*, (known also by the shorthand *Le Funeste Consequenze*). In the manuscript detailing the recollections of the Movement, Butler stated that 'very few copies were circulated in England, and I [Butler] never saw the pamphlet itself but only a translation in M.S.'<sup>519</sup> As such, Butler gives a summary in his manuscript where he says that the pamphlet:

advocated even more strongly, with emphasis, the same views as D.S [Benedict Snow] and it declared that the proposed changes would do greater injury to the English

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<sup>515</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 14.

<sup>516</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>517</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Elphege Cody, *Reply to the Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, p. 17.

<sup>518</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, p. 7

<sup>519</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 12.

Benedictines than had been by Henry VIII or the French Revolution.<sup>520</sup>

However, a copy remains at the Ampleforth Abbey Archives, where Bury was a monk.<sup>521</sup> In the introduction to his pamphlet, Bury also indicated the unrest that occurred after Krug's visitation and the overwhelming opinion of the senior clergy that Krug had 'told the young monks, and perhaps many others, that our Congregation should withdraw from the mission'.<sup>522</sup> The rest of the pamphlet discusses in fatalistic terms what would happen to the congregation if the mission was abandoned. This was bound in dramatic rhetoric – 'those who do not work, may not eat' – which also implied that certain death to the monasteries if this policy was pursued.<sup>523</sup> The implication was that there were too many missionaries on the mission to be recalled, and if they were to return, they would be faced with secularisation or having to leave the country.

Bury also invoked a sense of the context of the historical past and its effect on the future – 'they are poor, after having the French Revolution confiscate all their assets' and so would not be able to sustain a returning missionary population.<sup>524</sup> This reiterates the link between aspects of the EBC's history such as *Plantata* and nostalgia for a great monastic past. Despite the differences in opinion in how this was to be outwardly demonstrated, namely through the mission, Gasquet for example suggested that '*Plantata* was issued to facilitate the expected return of our Order to England and even to some at least of our old homes.'<sup>525</sup>

For the traditionalists, the sense of the monastic past was deeply connected to the missionary presence of the community. Without it,

the inevitable result of the loss of the missions would be similar to what happened to us during the Revolution, that is, that the dispersion or secularisation of the monks and the

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<sup>520</sup> , DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 12.

<sup>521</sup> Yorkshire, Ampleforth Abbey Archive, Austin Bury, *The Disastrous Consequence of any changes in the policy of the Congregation*.

<sup>522</sup> Yorkshire, Ampleforth Abbey Archive, Austin Bury, *The Disastrous Consequence of any changes in the policy of the Congregation*, p. 1.

<sup>523</sup> Yorkshire, Ampleforth Abbey Archive, Austin Bury, *The Disastrous Consequence of any changes in the policy of the Congregation*, p. 6.

<sup>524</sup> Yorkshire, Ampleforth Abbey Archive, Austin Bury, *The Disastrous Consequence of any changes in the policy of the Congregation*, p. 2.

<sup>525</sup> Aidan Gasquet, 'How the Bull *Plantata* was Promulgated' in *The Downside Review*, 16, 7, (1897), 146-152, p. 147.

ruin of the monasteries.<sup>526</sup>

The pamphlet continued to be a rebuff to the supposed remarks of Krug and continued throughout the pamphlet – ‘the second assertion made by Fr. Krug is that the Congregation must at least let go of the missions where there is only one priest.’<sup>527</sup> Instead, Bury maintained that in the many types of missionary endeavours that the EBC were involved were ‘all are necessary for our Congregation.’<sup>528</sup>

An article by Luke Beckett, of Ampleforth Abbey written for the EBC History Symposium in 2013 emphasises the link between the contents of the pamphlets and Benedictine identity further.<sup>529</sup> Bury also claimed that there was a need for two sorts of mission, one in the city and one in the country, and evoked the contemporary situation of Austin Davey as evidence. He was stationed at Morpeth during the Controversy, which was a small village mission, after nineteen hard years at Liverpool. Bury suggested that if he had not been able to retire to Morpeth, and with Douai unable to give him lodging or maintenance, his only options would have been secularisation or death.<sup>530</sup>

The reception of this pamphlet was mixed and further exacerbated the pamphlet war.

At Downside it was felt that some sign of life was called for in face of all these utterances, and the Council drew up a protest chiefly against Fr B[ury’s] pamphlet, which was signed by the whole community with a single exception, and sent to Fr K[rug] for transmission to the Congregation of [Bishops and Regulars]. Also, in course of time appeared an answer to D.S [Benedict Snow’s] pamphlet.<sup>531</sup>

However, the reply that was circulated was not written in consensus with all those involved in

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<sup>526</sup> Yorkshire, Ampleforth Abbey Archive, Austin Bury, *The Disastrous Consequence of any changes in the policy of the Congregation*, p. 5.

<sup>527</sup> Yorkshire, Ampleforth Abbey Archive, Austin Bury, *The Disastrous Consequence of any changes in the policy of the Congregation*, p. 3.

<sup>528</sup> Yorkshire, Ampleforth Abbey Archive, Austin Bury, *The Disastrous Consequence of any changes in the policy of the Congregation*, p. 3.

<sup>529</sup> See Luke Beckett, ‘The Exploration of Benedictine Identity Among English Benedictines in the Early 1880s’, EBC Congregation History Commission Symposium, 2013 Buckfast Abbey.

<sup>530</sup> See Luke Beckett, *The Exploration of Benedictine Identity Among English Benedictines in the Early 1880s*, (EBC Congregation History Commission Symposium: Buckfast Abbey, 2013)

<sup>531</sup> Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, DAA, p. 12.



the Movement and caused much unease within the community because of its strong rhetoric.

### **Weld's *I Benedettini Inglesi* – *The English Benedictines***

The pamphlet *I Benedettini Inglesi* – *The English Benedictines* was produced by Rt. Rev. Monsignor Weld on 15 February 1882. It appeared in three parts, with introductory material that referred to the Italian translation. The introduction is concerned with the events of the apostolic visit and Weld's involvement. The emphasis of this section is that Krug was 'charged not to make changes, but only charged to ascertain in person the state of your Order, and to hear from yourselves your views and wishes.'<sup>532</sup> In doing so, Weld also references *Le Funeste Conseguenze* – *The Disastrous Consequence of any changes in the policy of the Congregation*, which although not readily distributed or preserved in archival form was distributed in Rome - 'un-heard of course of publishing the supposed opinions of the Apostolic Visitor, anticipating the decrees of the Sovereign Pontiff, and announcing their fatal consequences to the Order.'<sup>533</sup>

The main body of the pamphlet takes the form of two letters, one to William Clifford, Bishop of Clifton (1823-93) and the other to President O'Gorman. To the Bishop of Clifton, a longer tract on the reaction to *Le Funeste Conseguenze*, and the impact of the relationship the diocese and the bishop's authority had to Downside. Here Weld references the 'power of the monasteries to support the additional members' created by the missionary outposts, and only to return 'to prepare for death'.<sup>534</sup> Like much of the literature, 'it would appear ridiculous to say that the Benedictines are still suffering from the spoliations which they underwent during the French Revolution'.<sup>535</sup>

To O'Gorman, a similar attack is given, with a focus on the normal existence of the Benedictines, and how the EBC was 'divided into two parts – the monastic and the missionary'.<sup>536</sup> He suggested that the members of the Movement, as the last major intake of the monastic community have been 'received into the Congregation under false pretences' and are unable to commit to their vows due to the circumstances under which the EBC operate –

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<sup>532</sup>DAA, Tract 182, Weld, *I Benedettini Inglesi* – *The English Benedictines*, p. 2.

<sup>533</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Weld, *I Benedettini Inglesi* – *The English Benedictines*, p. 3.

<sup>534</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Weld, *I Benedettini Inglesi* – *The English Benedictines*, p. 7.

<sup>535</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Weld, *I Benedettini Inglesi* – *The English Benedictines*, p. 7.

<sup>536</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Weld, *I Benedettini Inglesi* – *The English Benedictines*, p. 13.

namely the missionary system and current governance.<sup>537</sup>

The pamphlet was also self-conscious in its relationship with its publication and distribution. It referenced both the production and distribution of the pamphlet itself: ‘the nature of the case obliges him [Weld] to bring their contents before a greater number than he could satisfy with manuscript copies’ and here it suggests that the ability to print the pamphlet allowed much greater access.<sup>538</sup> Outside of the jurisdiction of the superiors and president general, Weld would have been able to distribute his pamphlet as he saw fit without asking permission from the chapter. The pamphlet is also similarly conscious of its authorship, and the call and response nature of these pamphlets. Weld refers to how the last pamphlet’s slanderous wording led him into being ‘forced into the publication of an answer.’<sup>539</sup> This was since Weld was

bound to put before them the whole case; and I may add that I have already shown both the pamphlet and my letter to the President to several Fathers of the Order, with an earnest request that they would point out to me any misstatements they might contain, and the invariable answer has been, ‘what you state is true’ or ‘you are within the truth.’<sup>540</sup>

This is reflective of the way in which Weld’s pamphlet’s relationship with anonymity also created problems. In publishing the pamphlet on behalf of the community, the community were made responsible for its outcomes. Its reception caused much concern within the community and was considered to be an extreme pamphlet by all sides. The two quotations below are taken from Butler’s Controversy manuscript and demonstrate the effect that Weld’s pamphlet had on the community and wider EBC.

The pamphlet contained personal attached on individuals, with which those at Downside did not sympathise, and it was felt as it professed to speak on behalf of the young monks who desired changes in the system, and was signed ‘La Loro Voce’ – Their Voice – Downside would be held responsible for all that was in it and would be hopelessly compromised.<sup>541</sup>

After the publication of his pamphlet, Weld was asked to leave Downside by the senior community and never return – despite this he continued to fund Downside activity and provided

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<sup>537</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Weld, *I Benedettini Inglesi – The English Benedictines*, p. 13.

<sup>538</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Weld, *I Benedettini Inglesi – The English Benedictines*,

<sup>539</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Weld, *I Benedettini Inglesi – The English Benedictines*, p. 3.

<sup>540</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Weld, *I Benedettini Inglesi – The English Benedictines*, p. 3.

<sup>541</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 15.

money for several buildings until his death in 1899. Butler notes that the reception of his pamphlet not only created discord amongst the opposition from other senior members of the Benedictine congregation to the Movement but also created divisions within the community of Downside itself. Butler explains the split below:

The foreseen results inevitably happened: a perfect storm arose against those at Downside... a division was caused in Downside itself only those views were clearest and strongest being able to stand up to their guns through the turmoil and unpopularity whereas several who had hitherto to been more or less in sympathy with various aspects of the movement, came to regard any cooperation with Mgr Weld as disloyalty to the Congregation: thus the solidarity of the Downside community was broken and there were two distinct parties in the house until the diversions were healed by the final settlement nearly twenty years later.<sup>542</sup>

This clearly shows the effect the pamphlets had on the community, and how emotive the relationship between what was being printed and the characteristics of the community were.

This had been predicted by Gasquet who wrote in May 1882:

I am sorry to hear a report that Monsignor Weld is about to print and circulate his pamphlet and letter among the brethren. I fear his actions in this matter is causing direct harm, as it is sowing considerable distrust naturally amongst the brethren. Why should he try and keep up bad blood?<sup>543</sup>

The implications of Weld's vocal support for extreme reform had repercussions beyond the pamphlet war. In a letter written to Gasquet in 1884, O'Gorman warned against further radical action. However, after Weld's banishment from Downside, a new speaker at the retreats was needed, and the radical Aidan Hamilton, who had a 'reputation of being a restless reformer... convicted of immoral conduct of a very nasty description' had been chosen.<sup>544</sup> O'Gorman wrote:

After the retreats given by Mgr Weld and their effects, one would expect Downside to have been more cautious in the selection of the Retreat Giver and even to have taken

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<sup>542</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 15.

<sup>543</sup> DAA, Aidan Gasquet Collection: Abbot's Archive, *Gasquet to Burchall, May 11<sup>th</sup> 1882*.

<sup>544</sup> DAA, Aidan Gasquet Collection, Correspondence Letter Books Part One, *O'Gorman to Gasquet, 22nd July 1884*.

public opinion into account.<sup>545</sup>

This was obviously seen as controversial amongst many in the community and further established Downside's reputation as being full of controversial men with controversial ideas.

### **Prest's *Notes on the pamphlet 'I Benedettini Inglesi'*.**

In reply to Weld's pamphlet, the traditionalist-published *Notes on the Pamphlet 'I Benedettini Inglesi'*. It was written by Bede Prest (1831-1903, Ampleforth) in June 1882. Prest was one of the first members of the EBC to publicly take his vows, after the establishment of the English Hierarchy in 1850. He served two terms as the prior of Ampleforth (1862-70) and left to go on the mission, after which he was made Chapterman, Definitor and later President-second elect.<sup>546</sup>

It acted as a direct response to *I Benedettini Inglesi* and strongly contested all the claims Weld had made by taking pertinent quotes from Weld's work and replying in turn. This too was split into three parts: specific charges, general charges and notes on the aims and character of the EBC. These sections all employ highly emotive language and uses rhetorical questions, exclamation points and direct address to emphasise the attitude of the writer regarding the previous pamphlet. This can be seen as a direct reaction to the strong emotions that Weld's pamphlet created. The return to history was again invoked by contextualising the EBC with his papal authority. Here Prest declares that:

the system of 1882 is essentially the same as that of 1633, blessed, confirmed and approved by various Pontiffs. It has borne the test of times and circumstances for more than 250 years, and now shows vitality and fruitfulness, as a living protest against misrepresentation and slander'<sup>547</sup>

In this context, the emotive language continues beyond the character of the EBC and was also invoked in a more historical context. Likewise, the Movement's use of history is also attacked

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<sup>545</sup> DAA, Aidan Gasquet Collection, Correspondence Letter Books Part One, *O'Gorman to Gasquet*, 22nd July 1884.

<sup>546</sup> For a summary of Prest's life see 'Obituary', *The Ampleforth Journal*, 2 (1904) 216-221, or 'Notes', *The Ampleforth Journal*, 2 (1904) 247-50.

<sup>547</sup> DAA, Tracts 222, Bede Prest, *Notes on the Pamphlet 'I Benedettini Inglesi'*, p. 4.

– the Movement’s argument over the lack of control in the missions was seen as

a pseudo-historical fabrication! The more inexcusable, as a glance at the *Bull Plantata* would have established beyond all doubt, that the office of ‘provincial’ is as much a pontifical creation as that of prior.<sup>548</sup>

In reference to this quote, the Bull *Plantata* stated, ‘that the English Congregation so established should be governed by... two Provincials in England immediately subject to the said President.’<sup>549</sup> This had always been acknowledged by the Movement but was argued that it was only applicable to the circumstances under which the bull was written. This was part of a wider argument surrounding *Plantata*’s jurisdiction - Gasquet suggested in the *Downside Review* that in fact:

in reality, the issue of the *Plantata* was intended to facilitate the reconstitution of the Benedictine Order in England on the ancient and normal lines of the old pre-Reformation congregation.<sup>550</sup>

This would therefore result in what Gasquet considered to be the ‘continuity of life... [and] an actual corporate identity with the illustrious Benedictine Congregation, which existed in pre-Reformation days.’<sup>551</sup> He and the rest of the Movement defined the relationship between the authority dictated in *Plantata* as transactional based upon the state of Catholicism at the time. When the Movement was appealing against the status quo, they believed that the extreme measures of authority required in *Plantata* were no longer necessary. The Traditionalists believed that *Plantata* gave the conditions of authority – ‘that the office of ‘provincial’ is as much a pontifical creation as that of prior.’<sup>552</sup> This connection to the past was important to both the Movement and the Traditionalists within the senior clergy.

The pamphlet also struggled with ideas of authority and identity, in connection with references to the character of the congregation. Recent work on this concept can be found in Luke Beckett’s *The Exploration of Benedictine Identity Among English Benedictines in the Early 1880s*, where he argued that the pamphlets produced at this time argued about the context of

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<sup>548</sup> DAA, Tracts 222, Bede Prest, *Notes on the Pamphlet ‘I Benedettini Inglesi’*, p. 4.

<sup>549</sup> DAA, Bull *Plantata* (1633).

<sup>550</sup> Aidan Gasquet, ‘How the Bull *Plantata* was Promulgated’, *The Downside Review*, (1897) 147-152, p. 148.

<sup>551</sup> Aidan Gasquet, ‘How the Bull *Plantata* was Promulgated’, *The Downside Review*, (1897) 147-152, p. 147.

<sup>552</sup> DAA, Tracts 222, Bede Prest, *Notes on the Pamphlet ‘I Benedettini Inglesi’*, p. 4.

the constitutions and the vision of what monastic life entailed.<sup>553</sup> The pamphlets did this by using similar language – such as in Snow’s *Missionary Work of the Benedictines* and Cody’s subsequent *Reply* – to describe the health of the EBC. The emphasis on misrepresentation is interesting not only in the context of the pamphlet being a complete refutation of Weld’s work but in the context of the other pamphlets which have attempted to use statistical data to represent this ‘vitality’. The dual context suggests that Prest is connecting his pamphlet to a pamphleteering history beyond the reply to which it is authored. Here Prest indirectly addresses Weld in the pamphlet:

I [Prest] call the Pamphlet libellous, because it tries to defame an approved Order of the Church, the Superiors, including the President-General, the Monasteries and the Members generally<sup>554</sup>

This marked the last pamphlet to be produced during this period. The discord and bad blood sown by Weld evidentially brought an end to the pamphlet wars. To Weld, Gasquet wrote:

Even those who desire [change] most amongst us begin to fear that all external influence that is brought to bear upon Rome will not, or may not, bring any assurance that the result will be what Rome wants.<sup>555</sup>

For the community, the quadrennial General Chapter was due to take place in the summer of 1882. The news of its postponement caused much anger within the wider community, even though as Butler remarked ‘the celebration of Chapter was plainly impossible before the ‘decisions on the Ap[stolic] Visitor’s Report, and on the points of controversy’ had been made by Rome.<sup>556</sup> Downside was held largely responsible for this, and as a result, ‘the President refused to come to the opening of the New Transepts, and many followed his example – they could not keep festival in the humiliation of the Congregation.’<sup>557</sup> Instead, Bishop Ullathorne

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<sup>553</sup> Luke Beckett, ‘The Exploration of Benedictine Identity Among English Benedictines in the Early 1880s’, EBC Congregation History Commission Symposium, 2013 Buckfast Abbey.

<sup>554</sup> DAA, Tracts 222, Bede Prest, *Notes on the Pamphlet ‘I Benedettini Inglesi’*, p. 1.

<sup>555</sup> , DAA, Aidan Gasquet Collection: Abbot’s Archive, *Gasquet to Weld, 28<sup>th</sup> October 1882* p. 35.

<sup>556</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 21.

<sup>557</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 21.

preached at the ceremony, who ‘was known to be altogether in favour of the Movement’.<sup>558</sup>

### **Butler’s *Notes on the Origin and Development of the Restored English Congregation* and its reception**

Cuthbert Butler (1858-1934) began researching what would become the pamphlet *Notes on the Origin and Development of the Restored English Congregation* (known by the shorthand *Notes*) in 1881. It was put aside until 1885, during the period when the Movement was considered without support, and the constitutional questions were closed by the advent of *Rescript Cliftonien* (1883). *Rescript Cliftonien*, produced by the special Congregation of the Cardinals, had cut the powers given to the general chapter, and whose implementation had been restricted by the senior clergy who made up the committee tasked with its translation into the constitutions.

At the advent of the postponed general chapter, by the end of 1883, the Movement appeared to be defeated. In the words of Butler, who saw:

Prior G[asquet] broken in health, and crushed in spirit, Frs Ford and Dolan, the two most forward and energetic leaders of the Movement out of the house, never (apparently) to return; a committee of men of extreme mission views revising the Constitutions all those in Downside who had been only on the outer circle or fringe of the Movement acquiescing in the *Rescript*, and the verdict of the majority of the Congregation as final.<sup>559</sup>

Even those involved felt that ‘if ever a Movement seemed dead, it was the Downside Movement of 1880-3.’<sup>560</sup> As a result, the members of the Movement were moved to various missions, and the matter of the constitutional reforms was considered to be closed by the senior clergy. Ford himself was removed to Beccles, Norfolk ‘where nothing Catholic existed’ and Clement Fowler (1851-1929) was elected prior.<sup>561</sup> This was symbolic of exactly the type of authority the Movement was campaigning against — the ability of a superior to remove a monk to the mission without any input from the monk himself. Abbot Edmund Moore (1824-99) was the

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<sup>558</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 22.

<sup>559</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 35.

<sup>560</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 35.

<sup>561</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 15.

Provincial of the South, and so Ford was under his authority.

The Movement indeed was at a low ebb. The only sign of life was a great scheme for the study of Benedictine Traditions and history in England – organised by Fr. E. F [Edmund Ford].<sup>562</sup>

This scheme was obviously *Notes on the Origin and Development of the Restored English Congregation*. The return of key members to Downside in 1885 led to the reforming of the Movement, and eventually culminated in Ford's election as Prior, and the reopening of the constitutional questions. After Ford's election in 1885, Ford encouraged Butler to write the pamphlet in full to be presented to the community to aid the Movement's cause. It was printed in May 1887. Over eighteen months, Butler had conducted research on all aspects of the Benedictine mission and its relationship to the EBC – regarding the 'central and chief question in controversy [which] was the theoretical one of the nature of our institute' as relating to the propositions made in Krug's visitation report and the advent and lack of implementation of *Rescript Cliftonien*.<sup>563</sup>

The prior [Ford] had promised the Council that he would not take any action in Congregational politics without their knowledge. He now informed them that I [Butler] had been preparing a catena of extracts from the primitive documents of the Congregation, illustrating the views held at the beginning; and he asked the council to agree to their being printed. The council agreed.<sup>564</sup>

It was born out of the pamphlet activity of the earlier period and 'the widespread endorsement these pamphlets [those of Bury, Snow and Prest] received... and in 1889, when another crisis provoked another outburst of pamphleteering, the same views found compromising utterances on the part of Fr. P. Wilson, one of Fr Bury's school.'<sup>565</sup> This period also saw a revision of the constitutions to bring the houses further under the control of the superiors, which was directly opposed to the aims of the Movement.<sup>566</sup>

The *Notes* showed that the continuity of the English Benedictines depended on a 'real living

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<sup>562</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 35.

<sup>563</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 37.

<sup>564</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 50.

<sup>565</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 38.

<sup>566</sup> See DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 42.



identity' where 'no substantial or essential change had been introduced.'<sup>567</sup> It examined the identity of both the restored and ancient regimes, and the constitutions that they upheld, as well as the effects of *Plantata* and the authority of the original general chapters.<sup>568</sup> Likewise, the early constitutions of 1617 showed that the first monks manifested observance of St Benedict's rule in daily life, and vowed to follow it as closely as possible. The second half of the pamphlet attempted to deal with the 'burning question of the mission and the place it held in our [EBC] institute in the mind of the monks who revised the constitution'.<sup>569</sup>

On 19 May 1887, a copy of *Notes* was sent to all the fathers of the congregations. The reception of the distribution and publication of *Notes* had several effects. For many at Downside, it allowed the Movement to define more clearly their aims within the constitutional crisis and develop a more rounded view of their desires. For Ford and the immediate members of the Movement, it brought more allies as it demonstrated that the aims of the Movement were not radical, but instead were attempting to reconcile themselves with the use of history in the community.

Inside the house it materially strengthened the Prior's [Ford's] hands, winning to the Movement some who had hitherto stood aloof but were now satisfied that the Movement was not revolutionary but really conservative [ie based in the history of the community].<sup>570</sup>

The above is evidence that the pamphlets were not only used by the Movement to counter the arguments made by the senior clergy. Instead, they were also used to explain their position, and the concluding paragraph of *Notes* was considered to be a succinct summary of the Movement's policies, which is outlined below:<sup>571</sup>

From what has been brought forward in the preceding pages it is clear that the movement towards a monastic revival in the English Benedictine congregation is in no way revolutionary or subversive of the institute. Though custom and prescription can do much, they cannot change the essence of the congregation, which must be the same now as it was in 1633. Those of its members, therefore, who, while desiring that it may retain its missionary character, desire too that, in view of the altered politico-religious

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<sup>567</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 46.

<sup>568</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Cuthbert Butler, *Notes on the Origin and Development of the Restored English Congregation*, pp. i.

<sup>569</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 47.

<sup>570</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 52.

<sup>571</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 49.

condition of England, it may enter more fully into the spirit of the monastic Rule of St Benedict, so that alongside of the missionary element; aim at nothing else than the application to present circumstances of the principles and methods that prevailed among the first two generations of the Restored English Congregation.<sup>572</sup>

This final paragraph identifies the core elements of the arguments surrounding the Controversy and emphasises how the Movement's aims are in line with the *Rescript*, which identified that changes should be only made that would 'shall maintain with greater earnestness, the spirit of the monastic Rule of St Benedict.'<sup>573</sup> This, and the emphasis that their reforms were neither 'revolutionary' nor 'subversive' indicates that *Notes* was intended to act as a less inflammatory way of affirming the Movement's position. However, to the traditionalists opposed to the idea of constitutional reform, it was seen as an antagonistic move and created much tension - leading to a hostile general chapter in 1888, in which Ford was severely reprimanded and dissolved of his responsibility as prior. Here Butler remembers the strength of feeling against the publication:

the publication of the *Notes* was felt to be a declaration of war... People were very angry; some returned their copies unopened; others wrote deploring 'that foolish pamphlet'; President O'G[orman] was in Rome, and the receipt of his copy upset him so much that he went to bed for a few days.<sup>574</sup>

However, for the Movement, it was felt that the publication of the *Notes* would aid the reform movement.

It was felt that they were a serious contribution to the controversy that had been agitating the Congregation for the past seven years, and that in many respects they threw a new light on the most crucial points in dispute and put matters on a new footing. It was evidently of first importance that they should be printed and circulated.<sup>575</sup>

The discourse surrounding the publication of *Notes* and its contents remained firmly on the idea of the historical past of the community. Here Butler demonstrates this desire for a

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<sup>572</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Cuthbert Butler, *Notes on the Origin and Development of the Restored English Congregation*, pp. 68.

<sup>573</sup> DAA, *Rescript Cliftonien*, 1883.

<sup>574</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 51.

<sup>575</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 50.

continued relationship with the past:

it was soon felt that the results of the investigations should be printed, in order to make manifest that the extreme views then dominant as to the nature of our institute were unhistorical.<sup>576</sup>

*Notes* also allowed the leaders of the Movement to refute the pamphlets that had been written by the opposition between 1881-2. The first section looked at these pamphlets and discussed the authorship and content that was relevant to the purpose of *Notes*. It also noted the climate within the congregation that the pamphlets were written in – that ‘it should be remembered that these pamphlets were written in conflict’ and as such the evidence presented in these pamphlets should be seen as having ‘undue prominence and exaggerations of thought as well as expression.’<sup>577</sup>

The preface was written by Bernard Murphy (1840-1914, Downside), whom Butler remembered in his manuscript as someone ‘who had taken a great share in the literary revision of the *Notes*... [and] wrote a very remarkable Preface, in which the questions in controversy were defined with great clearness.’<sup>578</sup> In this, the preface to *Notes* goes on to give examples from each of the opposition’s pamphlets, in which Murphy suggests that emphasis on the prominence of missionary work within the community has been presented unfairly.

This anger over the publication also had a direct impact on the nature of authority. It led to a series of letters being exchanged between Ford as prior, and therefore responsible for the publication by his house, and Bede Prest (1831-1903), a member of the EBC who had been delegated supreme authority by President Edward O’Gorman (1833-1901) whilst he was in Rome. Unable to fully commit to his role as President due to his commitments in Rome, O’Gorman made Prest his deputy in England. On 26<sup>th</sup> May, Prest sent a letter to Ford regarding the recently published pamphlet – which expressed his lack of support for its publication. However, the letters themselves were less concerned with the content of the pamphlets, but instead their method of transmission.

I have seen sufficient to warrant my expression of surprise that a superior of a

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<sup>576</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 50.

<sup>577</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Cuthbert Butler, *Notes on the Origin and Development of the Restored English Congregation*, pp. 1-2.

<sup>578</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 51.

monastery should have the imprudence to circulate such a document without any previous communication with the President General.<sup>579</sup>

The pamphlet had been produced without an *imprimatur* – permission from the President General - which was normally printed on the inside cover of the pamphlet. This method of permission had already been brought into conflict, however, when in 1882 Gasquet wrote to Burchall (President General 1854-83) to ask him to revoke his permission to Prest's *Notes on the pamphlet 'I Benedettini Inglesi'*.

The pamphlet appears to maintain a position which we have no right to accept. It tells Rome that if our single missions are given up even by degrees it will be a worse injury than did the English Persecutions<sup>580</sup>

Gasquet continues the letter to say that the position that the pamphlet takes is in direct opposition to the general feeling amongst the community, and against what has been previously stated by Rome. Rome had previously stated twenty years ago, according to Gasquet that single missions would be eventually phased out. To this end, Gasquet said: 'I cannot understand how it is right on the face of it to pledge the congregation by this pamphlet to the opposite course'.<sup>581</sup> Prest's *Notes on the pamphlet 'I Benedettini Inglesi'* was printed, and so Gasquet's letter presumably went unheeded.<sup>582</sup> This highlights the contentious nature of authority between the community and senior members. It also presents the discord within the EBC clearly, when the Downside community felt that the information being sent to Rome was unrepresentative of their views.

The final battle over pamphlets was fought in a series of fourteen letters which were sent between 26 May to 13 June between Prest and Ford, which expressed the divide between senior authority and the type which the Movement wanted to exist within the monastery. The letters were heavily centred around the question of Prest's authority under canon law, and whether the delegation of O'Gorman's duties in England was permissive under the constitutions. In canon law, permission is required from the president-general on matters that are intended for publication.<sup>583</sup> Prest's letter asked Ford to provide evidence that he had asked permission

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<sup>579</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection: Abbots Archive, *Prest to Ford*, 26<sup>th</sup> May 1887.

<sup>580</sup> DAA, Aidan Gasquet Collection: Abbots Archive, *Gasquet to Burchall*, 7<sup>th</sup> March 1882.

<sup>581</sup> DAA, Aidan Gasquet Collection: Abbots Archive, *Gasquet to Burchall*, 7<sup>th</sup> March 1882.

<sup>582</sup> I have yet to find a letter in the archives to confirm this, but in light of the publication of *Notes on the pamphlet 'I Benedettini Inglesi'* it seems likely that the reply was either negative or not forthcoming.

<sup>583</sup> See Title IV: the means of social communication and books in particular (Can. 822 - 832).

before publishing Butler's *Notes*. In response, Ford asked to see documentation of the appointment of Prest as O'Gorman's deputy. This evidence was never produced. Ford saw the delegation as further evidence of the need for reform – that the role Prest was inhabiting was similarly unconstitutional.

It is most unusual – I believe it is unprecedented for the R. Rev F. President to delegate his whole authority to anyone and it appears to me that in doing so, he is delegating wider powers than he is allowed to delegate.<sup>584</sup>

Instead of answering Prest, Ford appealed to Rome to confirm Prest's authority. This appeal took three parts: that Ford was not bound to comply unless Prest showed his letter of delegation, that the delegation itself was invalid as it involved an abdication of power by the President General and that the use of the title 'deputy president' was 'truly injurious to the authority of superiors.'<sup>585</sup> However, Rome refuted Ford's claims, and decreed that Prest's authority was valid – 'an absolute delegation of authority'.<sup>586</sup> This appeal for and by authority demonstrates a key component of the Controversy, the retaining of control over a community's actions, and the development of authority within the monastery itself.

On the enquiry into authority over publication, however, senior clergy and their Rome counterparts were divided. Wilfred Raynal (1830-1904), a monk of Downside, wrote to Ford expressing his incredulity at Ford opposing Prest: 'you had better not dabble in Canon Law, when you are not admitted to office until you rule and obey the constitutions.'<sup>587</sup> This exposes how the monks thought about the hierarchy and who was fit to wield power. Here, Raynal expects Prest's senior authority to be unquestionable. Likewise, canon law dictates that the Pope to be the head of the Catholic Church and therefore supreme authority. In this instance, Ford's knowledge of canon law anticipated Rome's response. Rome replied that the constitutions only provided guidance on books, and not pamphlets. 'moreover was for private circulation... the *Notes* might be printed without infringements of the Constitutions.'<sup>588</sup> This had been anticipated by Ford, who had written a preface to the pamphlet, which took

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<sup>584</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection: Abbots Archive, *Ford to Prest*, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1887,

<sup>585</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection: Abbots Archive, *Answer of the Regimen to an Appeal Presented by the Very Rev. Prior Ford of St Gregory's Downside, against the Very Rev. Fr. Prest's action in re 'Notes'*.

<sup>586</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection: Abbots Archive, *Answer of the Regimen to an Appeal Presented by the Very Rev. Prior Ford of St Gregory's Downside, against the Very Rev. Fr. Prest's action in re 'Notes'*.

<sup>587</sup> DAA Edmund Ford Archive: Abbot's Archive, *Raynal to Ford*, 26<sup>th</sup> August 1887.

<sup>588</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 52.

responsibility for the publication and highlighted its private, rather than public consumption. Below, is Ford's preface:

These 'notes,' printed in order to save labour in the multiplication of copies are not intended for 'publication'. As their object is to show the tradition of our congregation upon certain important questions with a view to a memorial to the approaching general chapter, they are written only for the members of the English Benedictine Congregation.

Hugh Edmund Ford, Downside, 19 May 1887

The result of the battle over authority between Ford and Prest was eventually ruled in Prest's favour. However, the 'punishment assigned in the Constitutions – those due to a *culpa gravissima* [trans. serious fault] – deposition, deprivation of active and passive voice, suspension from Orders &c' did not occur.<sup>589</sup> Instead, Ford was reprimanded in the general chapter and was not re-elected as prior.

## Legacy of the Pamphleteering Wars

This chapter has investigated the pamphlets produced by the various groups involved in the Controversy. These pamphlets acted as a way in which members of the community were able to protest or defend the status quo of the constitutions. However, they also revealed how the community saw itself within the wider context of the EBC, their relationship with the past, and how they articulated a sense of authority. This sense of authority was demonstrated in the production of the pamphlets, which was exhibited in the series of letters exchanged by Ford and Prest after the publication of *Notes*. This struggle over authority was apparent in the general chapter of 1888. The general chapters often acted as a bookend to the Movement's struggles, as was in the case of both the 1883 chapter, where the Movement was practically defeated and 1888 where the Movement felt that the constitutions had not been fully reformed under the *Rescript Cliftonien*.

The general chapter symbolised the decision-making process within the community and reflected the Movement's desire for better representation. Previous general chapters had ended in increased power to the senior clergy and the dispersal of the members of the Movement to small missions around the country. The General Chapter occurred on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1888 at

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<sup>589</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 53.

Ampleforth, with Ford as prior of Downside in attendance. He attended the meeting with the expectation that some ‘modifications had been introduced by bishops and Regulars into the Constitutions as presented by the Revisors, or else some special decree securing the positions of Downside and its Prior had been sent to the Chapter’.<sup>590</sup> However, it transpired that in the promulgation of the new constitutions, it became apparent that the Movement’s assumptions over the content had been wrong. Instead, the centralised government had been strengthened, and the powers of the Chapter, President and Regulars increased, and as Butler stated, ‘neither was there any sign of any injunction or other document from Rome.’<sup>591</sup> Instead, ‘they found themselves in the presence of a very hostile and angry assemblage.’<sup>592</sup>

After the constitutions, the second half of the general chapter was dedicated to investigating what Butler called the ‘various misdemeanours of which Prior [Ford] had been guilty. These were legion. There was a prolonged irregular discussion in which everyone gave vent to his feelings pretty freely.’<sup>593</sup> Primarily, there were eight issues raised against Ford which were: the printing of the notes without permission, resisting the president’s authority, being in communication with the Holy See, the mismanagement of monastery capital, neglecting the studies of his community, interfering with the missionary fathers, encouraged sedition amongst the junior members by promoting a spirit counter to the constitutions, and that his health was poor, and yet allowed him to be elected prior.<sup>594</sup>

Ford was not allowed to defend himself against these accusations, and instead, the meeting proceeded to the elections. Butler identifies that the various grievances against Ford were merely symptomatic of a greater agenda by the senior clergy – ‘it was not any of the specific charges raised that was, in reality, the question at stake: what was at stake was crushing and stamping out of ‘the rebellion at Downside’’.<sup>595</sup> This inevitably led to the forcible dispersal of the Movement after the elections took place and the repudiation of Ford’s policies. Clement Fowler of the traditionalists was elected prior of Downside in his place. The general chapter also elected the ‘*definitors electors*’ – men in the general chapter who were responsible for the election of all the superiors of the monasteries. The following were chosen: Edmund Moore,

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<sup>590</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 64.

<sup>591</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 64.

<sup>592</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 64.

<sup>593</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 64.

<sup>594</sup> See DAA, Edmund Ford Collection: Abbot’s Archive, *1888 General Chapter*, p. 7.

<sup>595</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 66.

Alphonsus Morall, Aidan Hickey, Bede Prest and Augustine Davey. Ford noted that ‘for years it had been customary that one of the *definitors electors* should be a conventual: on this occasion they were all missionary fathers.’<sup>596</sup>

Several things should be noted here: firstly, the emphasis on the division in defending and rejecting the status quo, and secondly, the invocation of authority. Both observations highlight contentious points within the debate surrounding the constitutions which were exposed during the pamphlet war. In the division of opposition in the report on the general chapter, Ford makes repeated references to the junior-senior divide. As previously mentioned, Ford’s biography makes note of the opposition being ‘all the higher Superiors, the General Chapter, and the bulk of the rank and file of the various communities.’<sup>597</sup> Here, one of the accusations against Ford was that he had ‘misled the junior part of the community, and introduced divisions into the house.’<sup>598</sup> This division in the community was also present in the discourse surrounding the report of the general chapter that was compiled by Ford. It was moderated by Murphy, his only supporter at the general chapter, who wrote to Ford to say that he believed his report would ‘appear to the F. President and the opposite party a ‘hostile’ report.’<sup>599</sup> This also shows the strength of feeling within the Movement and was also reflective of the language that had previously appeared in the pamphlets.

The other contentious issue within the general chapter was the evocation of authority both within the general chapter and with Rome. The election of the missionary fathers to the *definitors electors* was symbolic of the active engagement of the senior clergy to prevent changes to the status quo. Ford highlighted the conflict of interests within this group to make non-partial decisions, ‘[Morall] had been actively engaged in forming a party with a view to the election of the prior of St Gregory’s’ and ‘[Morall and] Moore had signed a circular for this purpose.’<sup>600</sup>

However, for Gasquet, *Religiosus Ordo* evoked ‘the greatest change since *Plantata*.’<sup>601</sup> In fact,

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<sup>596</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection: Abbot’s Archive, *1888 General Chapter*, p. 9.

<sup>597</sup> Bruno Hicks, *The Life of Abbot Ford*. (Stratton on the Fosse: Downside Abbey Press, 1948), p. 100.

<sup>598</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection: Abbot’s Archive, *1888 General Chapter*, p. 6.

<sup>599</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection: Abbot’s Archive, *1888 General Chapter: Murphy to Ford, 9<sup>th</sup> August 1888*.

<sup>600</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection: Abbot’s Archive, *1888 General Chapter*, p. 9.

<sup>601</sup> Francis Aidan Gasquet, *Henry VIII and the English monasteries. An attempt to illustrate the history of their suppression* (London: J. Hodges Publishers, 1888), p. xiv.



in the words of Alban Hood, writing on the reform connections to Douai Abbey, ‘*Religiosus Ordo* revealed to those who had eyes to see it that the ‘old’ Congregation was dead and that the ‘reformers’ had won.’<sup>602</sup> For the Movement, the proliferation of the bull *Religiosus Ordo* and apostolic letter *Dui Quidem* (1899) indicated a return to the past and ‘the revival of an institution that existed in the Middle Ages in England... and had its basis in St Benedict’s Rule itself.’<sup>603</sup> The language of *Religiosus Ordo* also emphasised the changing situation of the EBC, and its relationship to the political, social and religious climate in England.

For the form of government which now exists was ordered by Urban VIII in the constitution *Plantata* because at that time there was no monastery in England, and because both the political and religious state of the country prevented there being any... But when the condition of things throughout England changed, and some monasteries began to be restored there, and were governed by their own prelates, it was sure to happen, which indeed soon did happen, that if this system of government continued, many and considerable inconveniences would arise, viz that owing to this kind of double authority the government of the whole congregation would be thrown into utter confusion.<sup>604</sup>

These two sections of *Religiosus Ordo* demonstrate the relationship between the constitutions and the English religious climate. The Movement’s desire for reform echoes this historic precedence and the return of authority within the individual communities. However, both sides placed great emphasis on authority from Rome, and its link to the continuity of the English Benedictines. From these instances of authority, he drew the conclusion that

[i]t may be then fairly concluded that the fact of engaging in active Missionary work outside the Cloister, far from being contrary to the spirit of the Order and Holy Rule, is the very means that God adopts to vivify, strengthen and perpetuate the order.<sup>605</sup>

This highlights the desire for supreme authority and its relationship to the vocational practices within monasticism. The relationship the missions had to the papal bulls, and as such authority would be transformed by *Diu Quidem*. In *The Downside Review*, this was seen as the return to ‘a fixed and recognised position... emphasising once more the identity of the present English Congregation with that existing in England before the Reformation.’<sup>606</sup> In fact, Gasquet in his article, *How the Bull Plantata Was Promulgated* suggested that it was for this reason that the

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<sup>602</sup> Alban Hood, ‘Chapter 3: Douai Abbey 1818-1903’ *Douai Abbey* (2019).

<sup>603</sup> ‘An Aspect of the Bull ‘*Diu Quidem*’, *The Downside Review*, 18 (1899), 219-223.

<sup>604</sup> DAA, *Religiosus Ordo* (1889).

<sup>605</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Benedict Snow, *Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, p. 18.

<sup>606</sup> ‘An Aspect of the Bull ‘*Diu Quidem*’, *The Downside Review*, (1899), 219-223.

wording of *Plantata* had insisted upon the identity of the restored congregation being ‘without variation or change [of the] substance and essence of that venerable body’.<sup>607</sup> This invocation of history was indicative of how different members of the community interpreted the ‘substance and essence’ of the EBC.

For the senior monks, the mission work they undertook was an important part of their identity. In the public letter quoted below, Benedict Snow (Downside, 1838-1905. Titular Abbot of Glastonbury, 1888-1905) demonstrates the connection missionary work has to their past:

As missionary work has ever accompanied the Black Monks from the sixth century during the irruption of the barbarians, through the middle ages to the time of the Reformation, so now it should be a source of gratification and a sign that they are true to the instincts of the Order, to find that they are still mainly engaged in the work of their forefathers.<sup>608</sup>

Here, Snow uses the historic legacy of the Benedictines to legitimise the position of the nineteenth-century mission. This sense of legacy was important to the senior monks.<sup>609</sup> From as early as 1881, pamphlets protesting the Movement’s actions had been instigated. The first was by Thomas Weld (1808-83. An associate of Downside) and yet initially held little traction.<sup>610</sup> The pamphlet never reached Rome, as it was perceived to be radical rhetoric and so was moderated by Snow several months later.<sup>611</sup> This revision by Snow formed a public letter which argued for the existence of missions:

The author [Weld] betrays ignorance of the very elements of the monastic spirit: he cannot understand what a monastic missionary is: he looks at the skin and has not discovered the existence of the heart: his thoughts are occupied with external observance and the outward show of monasticism: obedience is obedience only when under inspection: ‘conversio’ [conversion] must be something that the world may see: unless there is some special ritual there is no monastic spirit: even stability is localised and made external: he has not realised the old adage ‘cucullus non facit monachum,’ [the cowl does not make the monk] and hence a monastic missionary living apart from the cloister is, to him, no more than a secular priest. To find the monastic spirit we must probe beneath the cowl and the skin and seek the heart, and then we shall see how far a monk on the

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<sup>607</sup> Aidan Gasquet, ‘How the Bull *Plantata* Was Promulgated’, *The Downside Review*, 2 (1897), 146–152, pp. 146-152.

<sup>608</sup> DAA, Benedict Snow Collection, *Missionary Work*, pp. 13-14.

<sup>609</sup> See Frédéric Fabre, ‘The Settling of the English Benedictines at Douai: As Seen Chiefly through Unpublished Documents of the Vatican Archives (1607–1611)’ *The Downside Review*, 1, 52, (1934), 93-128. Also, Hugh Connolly, ‘The First Six’, *The Downside Review*, 1, 46, (1928) 31-49 and Hugh Connolly, *The Abbots of the Ancient Monasteries and the Cathedral Priors* (St Benet’s Hall: Oxford, 1942).

<sup>610</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, Downside Controversy A, *Weld Petition: 1881*.

<sup>611</sup> For the collection of pamphlets sent during this period see DAA, *Tracts 182*.

mission differs from a secular priest.<sup>612</sup>

Snow defined the relationship between monk and mission as being intrinsic to the monastic experience and rejected the Movement's view of the mission as being secondary to the monastery. The second pamphlet published by the senior clergy argued the validity of the mission, followed by an Italian version for Rome written by Austin Bury (1827-1904. Provincial of York, 1878-83). Interestingly, the early pamphlets were written by the senior members before the Movement had printed anything. This characterised much of the Movement's public interactions with the senior clergy, a rhetoric based upon attack and defence. This resulted in a series of documents between both sides, defending and defining the positions of each side.<sup>613</sup> Behind the pamphlets was an active exchange of letters between members of the community. Here, in a letter from Bernard Ullathorne (Downside. 1806-89) to Ford, written in 1883, Ullathorne referenced correspondence that became the basis for a pamphlet to refute the protests made:

The organisation which you sketch embraces everything that I have contemplated, and will effect all I ever desired to see... And that the English Benedictines may again become that solid, learned and influential body, which it has always been in its best times.<sup>614</sup>

However, in a surprisingly forceful letter to Snow, the Movement anticipated the above desire for reform would be met with resistance. This was exacerbated by a protest movement to discredit Ford and the other members of the Movement.<sup>615</sup> It was instigated by Bury who attempted to coerce each of the monasteries to 'get them to fall in with his policy'.<sup>616</sup> In rebelling against the accepted format of the EBC, the Movement promoted the idea that the congregation had been held in a 'state of emergency' since the Reformation and the resulting dispersal of monks.<sup>617</sup> This was equally true within letters to sympathetic members as it was to

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<sup>612</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, Early Letters, *Snow's Letter: May 1882*.

<sup>613</sup> See DAA, Tracts 182, *Mgr Weld, I Benedettini Inglesi, Mgr Weld, 1882*, and [anon] *Notes on the Pamphlet 'I Benedettini Inglesi', [Prest], n.d. [1882], A Reply to 'The Missionary Work of the Benedictines.'*, anon [linked to Weld], n.d. [1882].

<sup>614</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, Early Letters, *Ullathorne to Ford*.

<sup>615</sup> 'Record of the Century', *The Downside Review* [Centenary Edition] (1914), 18-90

<sup>616</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*, p. 24.

<sup>617</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 10.

members who opposed any changes.

I have seen Father Prest's [Bede Prest, Ampleforth. 1831-1903] circular: it doesn't seem to me to be business – merely 'non possumus' [we cannot] and will only give the President's text the advantage of being the one constructive scheme in the field. It is moreover based on a denial of what the President positively asserts viz. that the constitutions amended by the General Chapter will not be accepted and approved. Father Prest's assumption may be right, but it is mere gambling to stake all your chances on such a throw.<sup>618</sup>

The petitions between the Downside Movement characterised the interactions between individual and group authorities, eventually to be represented in papal bulls. Likewise, Ford and the Movement attempted to transform Downside by adopting a rhetoric which recognised the modern monastery's capacity for inspiring change.<sup>619</sup> This is again indicative of the Movement's support within the broader religious community. Here in a letter to Ford, Dubois highlights the play between the intimacy of the interior of the monastery and the publicity generated by the pamphlets and petitions that arose during this period.

How short-sighted people are when they thus create or throw in fulgent light the otherwise private and divergent feelings of a community... I thank God that you feel so calm under such an ordeal, and that the bruising pain does not disturb your rest.<sup>620</sup>

## Conclusions

During the Downside Controversy, members of the community used printed output to defend and attack the status quo of the constitutions within the EBC. The material used throughout this thesis is predominately printed material that had limited circulation amongst the houses of the EBC. Using these pamphlets, the monastic community explored their relationship with the past, articulated authority and expressed how they saw the relationship between their vocation and the missionary impulses of the EBC. Often described in terms of nostalgia, these pamphlets expose the sense of historic myth-making the monks used to justify or reduce the mission. Furthermore, the call-and-response nature of the pamphlets frequently explored and framed

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<sup>618</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, Letters 1880-1890, *Ford to Abbot Snow*: 10/1/85.

<sup>619</sup> See Richard Yeo, *The Structure and Content of Monastic Profession: A Juridical Study, with Particular Regard to the Practice of the English Benedictine Congregation since the French Revolution* (Rome: Pontificio Ateneo S. Anselmo, 1982).

<sup>620</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, Nun Material, *Dame Gertrude Dubois to Ford*: 25/7/1888.

debate within the context of what had already been said by the opposition. This was very unlike the eventual culmination of the debate – the general chapter of 1888 - where the Movement were unable to defend itself as they were not permitted to attend the meeting as they did not hold enough positions of seniority. The pamphlets were used to attack the authority and position of the opposition when unable to do so in the general chapters. This was also symbolic of the wider issues the Controversy engaged with, such as nostalgia, authority and self-identification with their own history.

The pamphlet war rapidly developed after the visitation by Prior Krug in 1881, under the authority of Pope Leo XIII in the decree *Inclyta*.<sup>621</sup> Firstly, a petition by the Ampleforth monk Austin Bury, it rapidly progressed to include Benedict Snow's *The Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, Elphege Cody's *Reply to The Missionary Work of the Benedictines*, Bury's *Le Funeste Consequenze – The Disastrous Consequence of any changes in the policy of the Congregation*, Francis Weld's *I Benedettini Inglesi – The English Benedictine* and Bede Prest's *Notes on the pamphlet 'I Benedettini Inglesi'*.<sup>622</sup> These pamphlets primarily dealt with the context and history of the Benedictine mission, which was at the centre of the debate surrounding the Controversy. The traditionalists argued that the spirit of the order was intrinsically bound with the missionary sense of the community and that the post-revolutionary spirit whose foundations had laid the English mission after the monastery's inception in Douai was to be followed. The Movement, however, looked to the lineage of the great monasteries of the past that were tied to the community through *Plantata* and other instances of authority to promote a more reflective vocation. Both saw their positions as vital to the well-being of the monasteries and imperative for their continued survival.

All of this was expressed at a time when print culture was rapidly developing. The advent of the *Downside Review* in 1880 is intimately connected to the Controversy and revived a printing culture at Downside which had been in hibernation since the *Downside Literary Magazine* had been out of publication the year before. The relationship between print culture and pamphlets depended on a preoccupation with disseminating information across the EBC. The role of the *imprimatur* in the pamphleteering war and more widely within print culture within the EBC

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<sup>621</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Notes on the Origin & Early Development of the Restored English Benedictine Congregation*, *Downside Controversy Box I*.

<sup>622</sup> See DAA, Tract 182.

also exposes the relationship between authority and what was written. The pamphlets were often inflammatory and caused rifts between members of the community. This was made evident in the letters that were exchanged between Ford and Prest regarding the publication of Butler's *Notes on the Origin and Development of the Restored English Congregation* which had been printed without permission from the authority of the general chapter: the *imprimatur*.<sup>623</sup>

The next chapter will develop this theme further and explore the authority of the general chapters. The use of authority had powerful connotations for the traditionalists and the Movement and had far-reaching effects during this period. Within the context of the general chapter, what is particularly interesting in this period is how the Movement negotiated with these levels of authority, and particularly how they interacted with the General Chapter. The next chapter will examine several of the general chapters that occurred during this period to explore issues of authority and diplomatic negotiation.

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<sup>623</sup> DAA, Tract 182, Cuthbert Butler, *Notes on the Origin and Development of the Restored English Congregation*.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### DOWNSIDE AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE GENERAL CHAPTER

The previous chapter ended with an exploration of the effects of the pamphleteering war (1881-2), and the reception of the publication of Butler's *Notes* in 1888 respectively) upon the community. This culminated in Ford being reprimanded at the 1888 general chapter. In this chapter, I wish to further explore the relationship that the community had with the general chapter and the authority that it represented. This framework of tradition enabled power to be concentrated amongst the senior members of the community and this tradition also allowed for a social and political architecture that underpinned this authority. The use of authority had powerful connotations for the traditionalists and the Movement, enabling legislation to be passed and decisions to be made. The events and effects of the chapters had far-reaching consequences during this period. Of particular interest to me is how the movement negotiated with the resistance presented by authority, and particularly the way in which they interacted with the general chapter.

This chapter will examine the interactions that occurred between the elected officials of the chapters and the community. Firstly, the thesis will outline the chapter meetings that occurred during the Downside Controversy. The next section of this chapter will explore the origins of the general chapters, and how the community and the members elected interacted. The next sections will look at the different types of authoritative interactions during this period: the Movement's actions, the senior clergy and finally interactions with Rome. Underscoring this is the authoritative use of tradition, its relationship to both the power that the two groups wielded and its use in the justification of constitutional reform. Finally, the thesis will explore the consequences of authority in the forms of the papal documents *Plantata* (1634), *Rescript Cliftonien* (1883), *Religiosus Ordo* (1889), and *Diu Quidem* (1899).

The successes and failures of the Movement during the Downside Controversy were marked by general chapters and extraordinary chapters. The figure below sets out the main chapters

that occurred during this period, and the pertinent events that occurred during them.

TABLE. 5.1 – The chapters of the Downside Controversy.<sup>624</sup>

Date	Type	Main events
November 1883	General Chapter	Postponed from 1882 due to the visitation by Krug. Commission appointed to look at the missionary constitutions. Some constitutional ‘suggestions’ were adopted. O’Gorman was elected president.
July 1888	General Chapter	The work of the committee was presented, and the constitutions remained unchanged. O’Neill was elected president.
July 1889	Extraordinary General Chapter	A decided majority was still against the wishes of Rome.
July 1892	Extraordinary General Chapter	Commission appointed to draft a new set of constitutions.
September 1899	General Chapter	New constitutions were presented.
August 1900	General Chapter	The Bull <i>Diu Quidem</i> (1899) appointed a commission to draw up new constitutions in response to the requirements of the Bull. Ford elected the first abbot of Downside.

These chapters were preceded and proceeded by meetings of the Bishops and Regulars, the communities themselves and various constitutional commissions, as well as meetings amongst those who support change and those that did not.

## What is the general chapter?

The general chapter originated as the meeting of the representatives of the order, which the *Catholic Encyclopaedia* defines as

amongst Benedictines, each congregation has its own separate chapter, which is composed usually of the abbot and an elected delegate from each monastery, with the president of the congregation at their head. A general chapter usually elects the general or president of the order or congregation, sometimes appoints the various superiors and

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<sup>624</sup> A full list of the general chapters of the EBC can be found here: <http://www.plantata.org.uk/docs/genchaplist2006.pdf>. There is also a list in a bibliography of the Downside Controversy compiled by Theodore James, see DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy Box F: Bibliography*, pp. 2-24.



other officials, settles matters of business and discipline, hears appeals from its subjects, and in some cases also has the right to draw up or sanction changes in its constitutions.<sup>625</sup>

The *Catholic Encyclopaedia* expands further on the historical circumstances of the general chapter where at the beginning of the ninth century they were first introduced, with the idea being revived a century later at Cluny.<sup>626</sup> This development continued throughout Europe over the following centuries in abbeys such as Fulda, Citeaux and Savigny for example and was eventually defined in the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, which incidentally was of great inspiration to the Movement.<sup>627</sup> The council suggested that:

in every kingdom or province let there be held every three years, saving the right of diocesan bishops, a general chapter of those abbots, and priors who do not have abbots over them, who have not been accustomed to hold one. All should attend, unless they have a canonical impediment, at one of the monasteries which is suitable for the purpose.<sup>628</sup>

For Butler and members of the Movement, the early origins of the Benedictines provided evidence for authority within the general chapters to be centred more around the individual monasteries and their abbots. For the Movement, the Lateran Council and the methods of governance provided evidence that

according to the early idea of Benedictine Congregations, begun at the Lateran Council in 1216, the houses were units which were joined in a loose federation, preserving their autonomy, and the president was but a *pres primus inter pares*, who merely presided at Chapter and elections and was Visitor and Representative of the Congregations.<sup>629</sup>

This idea of ‘preserving autonomy’ was a key aspect of the Movement’s manifesto. However, Butler stated that ‘by the year 1880 the English Congregation was the sole survivor of the

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<sup>625</sup> GC Alston, ‘General Chapter’, *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909).

<sup>626</sup> GC Alston, ‘General Chapter’, *The Catholic Encyclopaedia*, (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909).

<sup>627</sup> See DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 4.

<sup>628</sup> <https://www.papalencyclicals.net/councils/ecum12-2.htm#12>

<sup>629</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 4.

oligarchical type of government among Benedictines'.<sup>630</sup> This was also the model that the Spanish Congregation followed, under which many English monks had been professed after the Reformation. This oligarchical structure had been handed down from their foundations at Douai, and as such was transferred across to the English monasteries. Furthermore, for the purpose of the general chapters, 'during the interval between the chapters the supreme power of the Congregation was vested in the President and a Board of three Councillors, called *Definitores Regiminis*, elected by Chapter.'<sup>631</sup> The voting process also centralised the government, as although the nominees were presented by each of the monasteries, they were often perceived as being part of the cliques within the general chapter itself.

Likewise, the idea of the general chapter being an institution of authority was a well-established rhetoric. The use of senior guidance is key to the work of historians such as McGuire and Vanderputten, which predisposed the community towards reform.<sup>632</sup> What is also interesting is McGuire's assertion that the 'Cistercians were wonderful storytellers, aware of their past and eager to maintain the traditions that they considered essential for the maintenance of their identity.'<sup>633</sup> Whilst the Downside community are Benedictine rather than Cistercian, this sense of story-telling resonates deeply with the monastic experience of the Downside community during this period. However, this was also a period of complex decision-making based on personal and political-religious ideologies, as Steven Vanderputten described early analysis of the 1131 meeting of Benedictine abbots as lacking framing, and instead required a broader view of the actions of various agents 'pursuing a broad range of political, ideological and institutional interests.'<sup>634</sup> These early frameworks establish a history of reform and constitutional authority, which was evidentially continued throughout the history of the EBC,

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<sup>630</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 4. See also Chapter two of this thesis for a summary of how this style of government fitted into the wider history of the Downside congregation.

<sup>631</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 3.

<sup>632</sup> See Brian Patrick McGuire, 'Constitutions and the General Chapter,' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order*, ed. by Mette Birkedal Bruun, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 87–99 and Steven Vanderputten, 'The First 'General Chapter' of Benedictine Abbots (1131) Reconsidered,' *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 66 (2015), 715–34.

<sup>633</sup> Brian Patrick McGuire, 'Constitutions and the General Chapter,' in *The Cambridge Companion to the Cistercian Order*, ed. by Mette Birkedal Bruun, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 89.

<sup>634</sup> Steven Vanderputten, 'The First 'General Chapter' of Benedictine Abbots (1131) Reconsidered,' *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 66 (2015), 715–34, p. 715

and how the community pursued their own political, ideological and institutional interests.

## **What Did the Movement Think was Wrong with the General Chapter?**

During the Downside Controversy, the general chapters carried a powerful significance for the community. However, the Movement regarded the centralisation of power within a general chapter as difficult to work with. The weighting of traditionalist members meant that their views were always the majority vote. The below quotations are from Butler's manuscript on the Controversy, which indicates how the Movement perceived this missionary-centred approach to the general chapter. Missionary-centred in the Movement's eyes, because the system that was used for the election of the members of the general chapters meant that 'there was no representative element in the chapter; the chapter men had been in one way or another co-opted by the previous chapter.'<sup>635</sup> As such, the senior members elected those who shared their views and ensured the continuity of the policies they agreed with. Furthermore, this meant that 'by the middle of the nineteenth century it had inevitably come about that the chapter was almost wholly composed of missionary fathers.'<sup>636</sup> This emphasis on the missionary way of life meant that it was regarded as 'the essential object of our [Benedictines'] institute' and so was afforded much importance by the mission-centred general chapter.<sup>637</sup> Furthermore, the emphasis on the general chapter also made the decision-making process highly centralised. Even amongst the senior members who sympathised with the Movement, the governance of the general chapter was prioritised.

Fundamentally, the aim of the Movement was:

the raising of the monasteries from the abject estate in which they lay, and the winning for them that power of controlling their own destinies, and that autonomy which is the birthright of a Benedictine monastery, that they might take their due place in the Order and in English Catholic life.<sup>638</sup>

The Movement wanted many changes within the EBC in order to bring the system under more centralised governance and increase the monastic elements of their vocation. For the

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<sup>635</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 4.

<sup>636</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 6.

<sup>637</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 7.

<sup>638</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 43.

measurement of authority, they wished ‘that the General Chapter be reformed, so to lessen the missionary and strengthen the house element... and the erection of Missionary Pories and better discipline in the Missions.’<sup>639</sup> Butler continues with the fact that ‘all power and jurisdiction was radically vested in the general chapter,’ and so the constitutional questions that the Movement wanted to explore were frequently dismissed.<sup>640</sup> To the Movement, the general chapters demonstrated the differences in seniority and ability to enact change between the two groups: the traditionalists and themselves. Even though governance by the senior members of the congregation was an ancient and established tradition, Butler saw the repercussions of this tradition negatively, as ‘when a monk was sent on the mission by the President, he was completely removed from the jurisdiction of the superior of his monastery.’<sup>641</sup> This was the opposite of what the Movement wanted and emphasised the power of the President over the monasteries themselves. For Butler and the Movement, this meant that ‘under such as system the President was in the last resort the real Superior of each and all monks.’<sup>642</sup> Furthermore, this placed the monks under precarious circumstances as

[the president’s] permission however, had to be obtained for all sorts of things, and he had one great power, that of translation: here he was absolute; he could move any monks from one monastery to another, or from monastery to mission.<sup>643</sup>

This was the principal concern of the Movement - they could be moved to a mission without any recourse. Many of the missions were solo operations and without the structure of what they perceived to be a truly monastic life. They wished that other vocational work, such as research or teaching would be seen as a vital constituent of the monastic life and thus important work for the monastery. The emphasis on the mission was seen as

the real motive power was that we were possessed with the idea that the English Congregation must enter on its full Benedictine inheritance as the premier Congregation of the Order.<sup>644</sup>

The senior monks, whose lives had been defined by the mission, were not in agreement. However, the Catholic landscape that the younger monks were making their vows in was

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<sup>639</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 29.

<sup>640</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 3.

<sup>641</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 5.

<sup>642</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 3.

<sup>643</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 3.

<sup>644</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 78.

markedly different to that of their predecessors. The recruitment of these men between what Butler pinpoints as being between 1830-1880 lacked the same missionary impulse:

a certain number of monks joined St Gregory's because they wished to be monks, and to live a monastic life, and only went on the mission because they could not help themselves.<sup>645</sup>

The idea that the revolution was already underway was not a new concept for the Movement and indicated that they felt there was a tradition to the sense of discontentment they felt during this period.

### **Senior Authority and its Consequences**

The weighting of the decision-making processes of the community towards the general chapter inevitably prioritised the senior clergy and the missionary-centred monastic life. However, the decision-making process of the general chapter was a sacred part of the community's processes. The senior clergy held many positions of power within the community during the Downside Controversy and often used their substantial power to block the Movement's actions. Within the monastery, the Downside Movement desired the ability to decide how each individual would spend their vocation. This would stipulate a significant emphasis on a more centralised abbatial government with the ability to decide who went on the mission.

Butler summarises this regarding enacting the reforms that were desired: the Movement were advised to 'wait until General Chapter took the initiative: he had unbounded reverence for Chapter, and 'memorialise chapter' was his [Smith's] panacea for all ills'.<sup>646</sup> However, the general chapters during this period quickly reveal the many divergent opinions that could be found across the EBC at this time, and the clear divide between those who, in Butler's opinion 'sighed for the Good Old Thing' and those who wanted change within the community.<sup>647</sup> The general chapters during the Controversy period were often framed as a battle between the two opposing sides of the community – those that wanted reform and those who did not. The below

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<sup>645</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 8.

<sup>646</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 20.

<sup>647</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 11.

quote from Butler's manuscript covers the range of feeling against the Movement:

Those, that is, who held strong missionary views had just become very aggressive. At the Chapter of 1873, Fr Bury had been chosen Provincial of York (i.e., Superior of the Missions and missionaries of the North); he was a man of extraordinary ability and learning, of strong will and a great determination of character, and from his youth upwards had been noted for holding missionary views in their extremest form. Fr Snow, a Gregorian, also able and clear-headed, became his right-hand man; and these two soon gathered a following around them and for a couple of years become the dominant power in the congregation. The President, Abbot Burchall, being mostly guided by their advice. Rumours were afloat that they talked openly of getting the monasteries put under the provincials.<sup>648</sup>

This shows that senior authority existed in its own echo chamber and therefore confirmed its status quo. Furthermore, the senior monks such as Bury and Snow were able to use these positions to influence general chapter outcomes and maintain the status quo. This continued the dominance of feeling toward the mission and protected missionary interests. For the Movement, it highlighted the fragility of the Movement's ability to change the narrative, which was successively blocked by senior members. The use of language here also denotes the (lack of) power of the Movement possessed during much of the Controversy period - 'aggressive', 'extreme', 'dominant power' – demonstrating how the senior authority was able to defend their positions.

At the General Chapter of 1883 resistance came in many forms within the senior authority. Most notably within the Downside community was the resistance of Clement Fowler, who was Prefect of Discipline and was presented by Butler as 'even then they were representatives of opposite schools of thought.'<sup>649</sup> His resistance, like much of the senior clergy, was based on the changing scope of the 'studies question'. It had begun as a proposal to reinvigorate the subjects taught to novices, which Ford and the Movement had pushed to include a greater revision of aspects of the setup of the noviciate, including the value of a separate place of studies: Belmont. The Movement argued, in their appeal to the ancient regimes that the program of studies should be included within a novice's home monastery, and as such, Belmont

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<sup>648</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 16.

<sup>649</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 12.

should either be dissolved or turned into an independent monastery.

In response to this, throughout the period 1880-1900 members from across the EBC engaged in letter writing and pamphlet production on the proposed reforms to the constitutions. The archival evidence suggests that despite the unity and coherence previously suggested by scholars within the Downside historiography, the events of the Downside Controversy were fraught with tension and hostilities. Personal letters composed by members of the EBC demonstrate the opposing positions on the reforms of the community.

During the Controversy, Ford wrote many letters to the president of the EBC, Abbot Augustine O'Neill to convey the desires of the Downside Movement after the publication of the papal bull *Religiosus Ordo* (1889). These letters petitioned O'Neill to allow Ford to go to Rome to convey Downside's desires and set out the Movement's policies concerning the mission, and the use of authority within the community. Many of the letters are combative and are underscored by debates on the constitutions that the papal bulls then revised. The senior clergy interpreted the changes to the constitutions very literally and used the papal bulls as confirmation of the status quo. Although a commission was drawn up through the General Chapter, no practical change occurred. The revisions made by the senior clergy removed the references to mission work but did nothing to change the fundamental structure of the EBC. When Ford wrote to convey the Movement's opinion on this to O'Neill, he received the following:

I am in substantial agreement with the Sovereign Pontiff and with His officials. If you oppose me you oppose them, and that you must do on your own responsibility and without any consent or approval from me.<sup>650</sup>

This invocation of authority by O'Neill highlights the tension between the monastery and the General Chapter. The constitutions in place since the formation of the EBC conferred ultimate authority to the General Chapter, and heavily emphasised a missionary centralised vocation. Under these constitutions, the Chapter was able to displace monks from their home monasteries and place them on the mission. This was often the result of being perceived by the Chapter as being part of the group of 'dangerous men' who were likely to disagree with the decisions

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<sup>650</sup> DAA, Hugh Connolly Collection, *Ford to President: 9/9/1889*.

within the monastery.<sup>651</sup> This letter suggests that the senior clergy are keen to distance themselves from those wanting reform, and O'Neill appears to want to isolate Ford's opinion. In the next General Chapter, the minutes and accounts from other members suggest that Ford was indeed isolated in the meetings, and his senior authority revoked.

A series of letters between the incoming President General, O'Neill and Ford occurred earlier in 1883 that set the tone for the general chapter.<sup>652</sup> His obituary in the *Downside Review* made a light reference to the unsettled climate of the congregation at the time: 'for several years before his elevation to this responsible office that the Congregation had been, with respect to its form of government, in a state of unrest.'<sup>653</sup> However, Butler considered that he was 'elected President, specifically because he had taken such a prominent part in opposing change in the system of the Congregation.'<sup>654</sup> In the matters regarding the proposed changes to the system of studies, he wrote to Ford:

For my part, I take my stand on our own constitutions, not only because I consider myself pledged to them, by my profession, but also because well understood, they offer a sufficient solution of the problem... As to the ecclesiastical studies, I say simply, keep the constitutions.<sup>655</sup>

Ford replied to O'Neill and emphasised that:

the state of the studies of the congregation is widely felt to be unsatisfactory: some have gone as far to affirm that in this is the real cause of the serious discontent that has found expression in various ways, especially of late.<sup>656</sup>

To this end, on 5 June 1883, O'Neill wrote to Ford regarding the changes:

Not that we shall ever succeed in pleasing everyone. Opinions are too widely divergent

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<sup>651</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 3.

<sup>652</sup> Peter Augustine O'Neill (1841-1911) had been Definitor of the Regimen between 1884-88 and was made President-General of the EBC between 1888-96.

<sup>653</sup> 'Right Rev. P. A. O'Neill' *The Downside Review*, (1912) 1-18, p. 10.

<sup>654</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 31.

<sup>655</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, Prefect of Studies Material, *O'Neill to Ford, June 5 1883*.

<sup>656</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, Prefect of Studies Material, *O'Neill to Ford, June 5 1883*.



to hope for that. But I do hope that calm discussion will lead to unanimity on the practical front at least... But from what I hear we shall be fortunate, if the chapter will go as far as I have.<sup>657</sup>

These letters culminated in two petitions in November 1883. They were presented to the chapter at the same time from each side of the controversy: the Movement and the traditionalists. Both petitions were sent to General Chapter on 24 November 1883. The first was signed by several members of the senior clergy whose content formed part of the traditionalists' ideology. They included Wilfrid Raynal (1830-1904, Downside), Basil Hurworth (1836-1907, Ampleforth), Vincent Dolman (1842-1918, Downside), Austin O'Neill (Douai, 1841-1911) and Cuthbert Doyle (1842-1932, Downside).<sup>658</sup> It emphasised the position of the mission and its importance to monastic life. The petition presented the changes to the course of studies as being disruptive to 'our most vital interests,' and asked the 'wise judgement of the Fathers of the General Chapter' to confirm their position.<sup>659</sup> This position was highlighted by two points marked in the petition which are transcribed below:

1. That, since the English Benedictine Congregation was re-organised and authorised especially to labour for the conversion of England, and this mainly by the apostolic work of missionary life, the General Chapter would authoritatively define that this is still our great and principal work in this country.
2. That since this is our chief and highest work, all means should be taken to enforce on all our members the proper and adequate prosecution of ecclesiastical studies.<sup>660</sup>

This was echoed in the constitutional committees that were formed out of the actions of the general chapters, and the weighting that was given to those opposing the reform process. Below are examples of the committees that were formed and their weighting to the missionary-focused members of the community:

At the general chapter of 1883, a Commission was appointed, consisting of DD. O'Gorman, Prest, Snow, Morall, and Raynal... Their authenticity was called into

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<sup>657</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, Prefect of Studies Material, *O'Neill to Ford, June 5 1883*.

<sup>658</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 31.

<sup>659</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, Prefect of Studies Material, *Petition sent to the General Chapter, Nov 24 1883*.

<sup>660</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, Prefect of Studies Material, *Petition sent to the General Chapter, Nov 24 1883*.

question, but no satisfactory solution has ever been given. The Missionary Constitutions, were, in any case, unaltered and had no fresh authentication.<sup>661</sup>

There had been in the monasteries an uncomfortable feeling that the Commission for the revision was almost entirely representative of Mission Interests to the exclusion of the three monasteries – FF O’Gorman, Prest, Snow, Morall and Raynall did not inspire confidence that fair play would be given to the Monasteries. However, we thought that Rome had gone carefully into the matter...<sup>662</sup>

The actions of the commissions demonstrate how heavily missionary-orientated they were and how the senior authority dictated many of the decisions that occurred during this period. There were however a few members of the senior authority who agreed with the Movement, such as Cuthbert Smith (1815-84), who had ‘considerable sympathy for the young men [the Movement] and even for some of their views – only it was too soon to urge them’ and advised they wait for the general chapter.<sup>663</sup> He had been prior between 1859-66, and provincial of the South 1866-81. Likewise, in a letter to Ford on 24 November 1883, Bishop Ullathorne wrote:

If the chapter will only enter into the spirit of the report [from Krug’s visitation], and legislate accordingly, and the best is done to provide... If you only succeed in electing a good president, the rest will come with time and patience.<sup>664</sup>

And finally, Bishop Vaughan, who was looked upon very fondly for both his relationship with Ford and his actions in promoting the reforms the Movement desired. For Butler, the support Vaughan gave was vast, he had actively spoken to Krug during the visitation and had written letters and speeches. Instead, Vaughan ‘made no concealment of his views concerning the Congregation or of his sympathy with the Movement... We looked on him as handing on the old Gregorian tradition that had come from old St Greg’s at Douai.’<sup>665</sup> In particular, he spoke at the opening of the abbey church, where Butler recalls that he gave a similar ‘exhortation to his English Benedictine brethren to return to Community life and form missionary priories’; an event that had been missed by many of the senior members of the congregation in retaliation

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<sup>661</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 3.

<sup>662</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Abbot Burge Recollections*, p. 1.

<sup>663</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 20.

<sup>664</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, Prefect of Studies material, *Ullathorne to Ford, Nov 24<sup>th</sup> 1883*.

<sup>665</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 78.

for Downside's stance at the general chapter of 1883.<sup>666</sup>

Despite this, Ford appears to have remained confident of community action. In writing to Gertrude d'Aurillac Dubois (Stanbrook. Unknown-1897. Abbess 1872-1897), it appears that the Movement had allies outside of the senior clergy. Stanbrook was a particularly strong ally after Ford was made responsible for representing the nuns' affairs on several occasions. Here, Ford seems aware of the personal repercussions of his involvement in the Movement:

You see I am embarked on strong waters, but the result whatever it may be to me personally, will do good to the position of the houses... Dom Gueranger's letter is really a comfort to me – for in spite of many opinions and traditions to the contrary, I have striven to follow what he there advises – So long as I am Prior I live for the community.<sup>667</sup>

In fact, by 1888, Ford had been deposed as Prior and removed to Beccles 'where nothing Catholic existed' by his Superior, Edmund Moore (Downside, 1824-99. Provincial of the South).<sup>668</sup> However, whilst the members of the Movement had been forcibly dispersed from Downside, they had support from other areas of the Catholic community. Whilst the Controversy was seen within the EBC to be the work of 'dangerous young men', the manuscript written by another member of the Controversy, Cuthbert Butler (Downside, 1856-1934. Abbot of Downside 1906-22) suggested that the Movement

had the warmest sympathy of the most influential members of the Hierarchy, of several prominent members of Religious Orders... and of a large number of the secular clergy and of the educated laity.<sup>669</sup>

The events of the Controversy brought Downside 'under the common law of the Church' and gave the monasteries 'a fixed and recognised position... emphasising once more the identity of the present English Congregation with that existing in England before the Reformation'.<sup>670</sup> With Ford elected as abbot, Downside was raised to a minor basilica and made an independent abbey. Dictated by *Religiosus Ordo* and *Diu Quidem*, this also suggested there would be less emphasis on missionary activities for all professed monks and would not be decided by

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<sup>666</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 78.

<sup>667</sup> DAA, Wulfstan Phillipson Collection, *Ford to Abbess Gertrude Dubois of Stanbrook: 29/8/1887*.

<sup>668</sup> Bruno Hicks, *Hugh Edmund Ford* (London: Sands & Co., 1948), p. 62.

<sup>669</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 2.

<sup>670</sup> 'An Aspect of the Bull 'Diu Quidem', *The Downside Review*, (1899), 219-223.

superiors outside of the monastery. By contrast, ultimate authority for the monastery would be retained by the abbot of the monastery in question. In addition, the domestic policy would be under the community's authority, in the form of an annual chapter of the whole conventus by both residential and non-residential monks. Overall, the use of authority was heavily weighted towards the senior monks, who held the greater positions within the community. However, they too were subject to the authority of Rome. However, the interpretation of Rome's authority regarding the missions also caused tension between the two groups.

## **The General Chapter and Roman Authority**

By 1883, the postponed chapter took place. It had been delayed from 1882 by the advent of the report into the EBC by Prior Krug, and the general feeling amongst the populace was the delay was caused by the Downside community. Before the general chapter could take place, however, the result of the visitation report was required. It occurred under the influence of much petitioning in Rome, which occurred as soon as Krug had left England. However, petitioning Rome at this time was profoundly unequal, and centred around seniority.

the Procurator [Snow]... had gone to Rome to counteract Fr [Krug] and to defend the status quo in the congregation... Those of the Movement could of course have no direct representation at Rome, but Bishop Clifford and Mgr [Weld] energised in our behalf.<sup>671</sup>

This had a great impact on what Rome thought about the EBC and their wishes. The result of the senior clergy being the only representatives in Rome meant that when Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903, papacy 1878-1903) asked for the wishes of the EBC, Butler suggested that there could be 'no doubt at all as to the tenor of the reply – an overwhelming majority was all together opposed to any change at all.'<sup>672</sup> And most notably,

their opinion is that a Commission be deputed, composed of the President General, who shall have the direction of it, and four monks of the English Benedictine Congregation, with the task of drawing up a plan for the reform of the Constitutions, yet preserving their substance... and to the changed political-religious condition in England, with the intent, that the said Congregation, although it retain the character of a mission, shall not lose, but on the contrary shall maintain with greater earnestness, the spirit of the

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<sup>671</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 25.

<sup>672</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 25.

monastic Rule of St Benedict.<sup>673</sup>

These last two aspects gave, in the words of Butler, the Movement ‘some crumbs of comfort in the decisions [made].’<sup>674</sup> However, the Movement was disadvantaged by their positions in the EBC, as the system was designed to promote the actions of the general chapter, which were supposed to be in an accordance with the wishes of the congregation. The split in the congregation could never be accurately portrayed to Rome because of this. In fact, in 1888, after the publication of Butler’s *Notes*, the changes in the governance of the congregation were again suppressed.<sup>675</sup>

The recollections of Anselm Burge (1846-1929, Ampleforth) who was originally opposed to the idea of reform explores this.<sup>676</sup> After 1888, when the fortunes of the Movement were reversed, members of the Ampleforth community began to become more amenable to the idea of reform, especially regarding communications from Rome that indicated that they would also be inclined to reform. This demonstrates how the reform process within the EBC was dictated, despite the efforts of the Downside Movement, the use of authority within the monastic sphere meant that direction had to come from Rome first. As such Burge’s *Recollections* indicate that when

in November 1888 [the new] President O’Neill went to Rome, and there to his astonishment he found all the authorities asking him when the proposed reforms of the EBC were going to be started.’<sup>677</sup>

However, this did not signify success for the Movement, as Burge here highlights the outgoing president, O’Gorman’s actions:

It is difficult to excuse O’Gorman for this suppression of Papal directions. He and the Missionary clique had entered upon a Conspiracy of silence which was later destined to be their undoing’<sup>678</sup>

This demonstrates how the senior community could manipulate the use of roman influence and were present where decisions were made. Likewise, the geographical separation between Rome

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<sup>673</sup> DAA, *Rescript Cliftonien*.

<sup>674</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 27-8.

<sup>675</sup> See DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Abbot Burge Recollections*.

<sup>676</sup> For his obituary see ‘Right Rev Abbot Burge’, *The Ampleforth Journal*, (1929), pp. 16-23.

<sup>677</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Abbot Burge Recollections*.

<sup>678</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Abbot Burge Recollections*.

and Downside meant that Rome relied on the word from senior members, which could be used to their advantage.

F. O’Gorman was the only one in chapter who knew how correct and opportune were F. Ford’s propositions.<sup>679</sup>

It is well known that FF Bury and Snow had been in Rome in the previous spring, and that they were very anxious to obtain the approval, that some of the officials are not too conscientious about taking bribes and putting these facts together we may draw our own conclusions.<sup>680</sup>

On the other hand, when it was discovered that Ford had opened communications with Rome, O’Gorman cited the ‘constitution which said it was the duty of the *Procurator in Curia Roma* to transact all business of the congregation in. Rome... he said there was no other lawful channel of communication and issued an injunction.’<sup>681</sup> To this, Ford ‘obtain[ed] the opinion of a competent canonist on this letter, and the answer was that such a constitution is intended to bind the Procurator to transact all business put into his hand, but that no constitution or superior can deprive anyone of his indefensible right of free personal recourse to Rome’<sup>682</sup>

However, a similar situation occurred in 1889, in a series of letters written between Ford and O’Neill (who became president after O’Gorman) which expose the difficulty that occurred when the monks had authority within the general chapter.<sup>683</sup> This series of letters occurred after the General Chapter of 1888, but before the advent of *Religiosus Ordo*, and the extraordinary meeting of 1889. In these letters, which occurred between 26 Feb 1889 to 10 October 1889, Ford again, articulated the changes that the Movement wanted to occur - for the monastery to be made an abbey, to have its own noviciate, that the superior’s office should be lengthened to between ten to twelve years, that houses should be empowered to found residences dependent on the monasteries, and the president’s power of translation should be limited.<sup>684</sup> Here, missionary work was also clearly still a focus, with three other stipulations added: that the missionary oath no longer taken, that missionary work should come under the ordinary obedience, and that any professed Gregorian may accept the dispensation from his missionary

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<sup>679</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Abbot Burge Recollections*, p. 4.

<sup>680</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Abbot Burge Recollections*, p. 5.

<sup>681</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Abbot Burge Recollections*, p. 58.

<sup>682</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 59.

<sup>683</sup> See DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Downside Controversy*.

<sup>684</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 2

oath.

Ford wrote to O'Neill first on 31 July 1889 asking permission to go to Rome on behalf of and 'in the interest of those who have entrusted me to act from them.'<sup>685</sup> However, the resulting letter and its subsequent correspondence were a series of negative replies from O'Neill. He replied:

I think you can scarcely have realised the situation, for your request puzzles me. The followers of FF Snow and Bury by their crowning acts of folly have deprived the general chapter of any further voice in the question before Rome.<sup>686</sup>

For O'Neill, the reports to the Holy See took precedence over Ford, and his letter also expressed confusion as to what exactly would be Ford's purpose in going. To this, Ford replied:

My purpose in going to Rome is to see how we i.e. those for whom I am acting, can best get ourselves re-constituted as a community under a Superior who would accept the traditions of Benedictine life...<sup>687</sup>

O'Neill replied in the negative. This was for several reasons; that Ford did not realise the current situation – that Rome was already acting and that in either opposing or supporting the change, it showed a distrust of the president and the general chapter.

### **The Use of Tradition to Justify the General Chapter's Actions**

The general chapter was meant to promote consensus and the views of the entire community. However, the authority to do so within the general chapter was only one part of the process. The chapters were also used to settle the fundamental issues that plagued the community during this period. Of particular concern across the community was the idea of 'tradition' – a notion that was particularly pushed by the Movement. The actions of the Movement had already highlighted Downside as different in attitude from the rest of the monasteries that formed the

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<sup>685</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Ford to President, 31 July 1889*, p. 13.

<sup>686</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *O'Neill to Ford, 1 August 1889*, p. 14.

<sup>687</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Ford to O'Neill, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1889*, p. 15.

EBC.

The use of ‘tradition’ during this period had many uses within the community. As has already been seen in this thesis, it was used to query grievances and was used by both sides of the Controversy to justify their actions. However, the notion of ‘tradition’ and the ‘traditional framework’ of the EBC were also used to settle the fundamental issues that plagued the community during this period. The Controversy was fundamentally a dispute over what constituted this tradition, and what exactly this meant for the community. This was generally framed as a mission versus a monastery-centred vocation but was used by the community to suit their own purposes.

For Butler in particular, this difference was due to how the younger members of the Downside community felt about going on the mission. For example, Ampleforth and Douai were much more missionary based. Regarding this difference in the character of the houses, Butler saw that ‘the mission evidently played a fair more important part in the minds of the Ampleforth and Douai men than it did in mine.’<sup>688</sup> It also perhaps highlights the difficulty in the Movement’s position at this time – they were trying to impose a sense of character onto the whole community, one that perhaps did not fit Ampleforth or Douai, as well as it did Downside. Butler describes how this Downside’s relationship with the mission has, in his opinion historical precedence. This nostalgia is intertwined with the idea of the community’s ‘character’:

‘I [Butler] believe myself that the early records of the congregation afford evidence of a difference of view in regard to the character and work of the Congregation as conceived in St Gregory’s from that prevailing in the other houses, notably at St [Lawrence’s] and that from the earliest times.’<sup>689</sup>

This was echoed by Morall in a letter between him and the then prior [Fowler] in 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1888:

The most that was said of Downside was that the Superiors of both Ampleforth and Douai, and that the young men of those places seemed more anxious to go upon the

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<sup>688</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 5.

<sup>689</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 78.



mission than we at Downside were. Some few years back this was not the case.’<sup>690</sup>

This stemmed from previous agitations within the community regarding the context of education and its impact on the monastic vows. Previously, in 1883, Ford attempted to change the system of education within the novices across the EBC to improve the standard of theology and learning. However, the individual will of the monasteries prevailed in this instance over the will of the general chapter. Despite the wishes of the general chapter, Ampleforth and Douai elected to continue with the older style of studies and ‘the authorities met the new programme with a policy of passive resistance’.<sup>691</sup> This resistance from Ampleforth and Douai meant that change did not occur.

The desire for reform was framed as a Downside centred movement and evoked a sense of a ‘Downside tradition’. What is also notable about the letters above is that Ford stressed that it was a Downside movement and that the actions he wanted to be taken were to change Downside, and not speak for the other communities. Throughout the period known as the Controversy, the actions were almost uniquely attributed to the Downside community:

President O’Neill wrote a letter to DWC in which he described us [the Movement] as ‘12 mischievous young men’ who were destroying the congregation. This statement is of interest as showing clearly that up to this point, Christmas 1888, the Movement was still an exclusively Downside Movement.<sup>692</sup>

These instances are a fundamental insight into the core problems of the Controversy, and the reason that the Movement was seen as solely the actions of Downside until 1889. Ford and Morall both set the idea of individual house action and a mission-based tradition as opposed to one another. The concept of ‘tradition’ as having historic precedence is also questioned here, with both Ford and Morall using different ways in which to measure this. Morall is evidentially referring to the tradition of Downside since its return to England, whereas Ford is presumably

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<sup>690</sup> DAA, Morall Archive, *May Meetings 1888: Stanbrook Documents, Morall to the Prior May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1888*, p. 36.

<sup>691</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, [Book III. Notes on left hand side, before p. 83], p. i.

<sup>692</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 77.

looking further back as the Movement advocated.

This idea of tradition was contested greatly in discourse between the senior and junior monks. From the senior clergy, tradition came from the history of the community itself since its inception in 1606 and the resulting migratory tradition of the relationship between Douai and England. For the younger monks, monastic tradition was more ancient and was found in the histories of the ancient monasteries. It transcended Downside's own personal history and was instead a collective and collaborative inheritance. The house element was more important to the younger monks involved in the Movement. The idea of individual action by the houses was not unique to these letters. An example of this can be found in a set of letters between Ford and Morall which were circulated between May and August before the General Chapter of 1888.<sup>693</sup> Here Ford links the idea of 'tradition' with his intended reforms to the missionary vow. On 27 May 1888, Ford wrote:

It has been I think for a long time clear that there is a vital difference between this work tradition and to our characteristics, and our own, I have never, until quite recently, heard this contradiction. Until comparatively late years, each house was allowed to claim its own traditions independently and without offence. But almost within my memory a spirit of intolerance has overrun us and never, it seems to me, the northern view is being forcing upon us, and the monks that are teaching the congregation the Gregorian tradition as I have never seen a Gregorian may, ought to be stamped out.<sup>694</sup>

In reply, Morall refuted Ford's idea of the 'Downside Tradition':

As to that exaggerated notion, which (I think) you have called the 'tradition' of Downside, I believe I could throw some light on its origin, and the means by which it was propagated. It is not very old... I call into question and query what if I correctly understand you, you call the Downside Tradition. I confirmed this by instances which have occurred at Downside during the last fifty to my own knowledge.<sup>695</sup>

However, the value of individual action was reconsidered in 1887 when the constitutions were again called into question. Throughout the EBC there were 'rumours that the Revision of the

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<sup>693</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection: Abbots Archive, *Morrall Letters*.

<sup>694</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection: Abbots Archive, *Morrall Letters*, *Ford to Morrall 27<sup>th</sup> May 1888*,

<sup>695</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection: Abbots Archive, *Morrall Letters*, *Morrall to Ford Aug 7<sup>th</sup> 1888*.

Constitutions had been approved by the Pope'.<sup>696</sup> By 1888, and the appointment of O'Neill as president the climate for change began to get warmer when as Butler recalls, O'Neill said:

that he was in sympathy with 50 percent of what we wanted, and would be glad to see it introduced into the congregation, and the other 50 percent he could see might be for the advantage of Downside, but detrimental to the Congregation.<sup>697</sup>

However, the Movement discovered that the constitutions that had been sent to Rome, and consequently accepted by Rome had been 'approved practically without alteration.'<sup>698</sup> This demonstrated two aspects of the issues here: that the weighting of feeling towards those in authority who could petition meant that Rome presumed that the EBC did not want change and that the weighting of the houses against the fundamental character that Downside desired had also been favourable. Considering this, the Movement began to consider that

a policy of separate treatment for Downside – we would apply to Rome for certain privileges that would entrench Downside against interference from outside, and enable her to go her own way along the lines which the authorities in Rome were saying they would like the whole Congregation to go.<sup>699</sup>

This took the form of a petition which was given to the Bishops and Regulars but was received by the secretary who said: 'there is no occasion for any anxiety – it is all provided for'.<sup>700</sup> This ambiguous message, however, would not become clear until the end of the Controversy's activity and the publication of the final papal instructions: *Diu Quidem* (1899) and *Religiosus Ordo* (1900).

## **The Movement and Authority**

Inevitably, the Movement's relationship with authority was fraught with difficulty. The imbalance of power between the traditionalists and the Movement meant that the Movement

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<sup>696</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 61.

<sup>697</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 82.

<sup>698</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 61.

<sup>699</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 63.

<sup>700</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 64.

was often reacting to the actions of the general chapter or was unable to counter their measures. However, for the Movement, the effects of their actions also had more immediate consequences. Inflammatory members such as Dolan or Ford were, as Butler put it, ‘summoned to the mission – this was well understood to be a precautionary move to prevent any recrudescence of the Movement.’<sup>701</sup> Ford was moved to Beccles, where ‘nothing Catholic existed’ as a punishment for his role in the Movement.<sup>702</sup> Butler also went further to summarise the effects of the 1883 General Chapter:

Prior G[asquet] broken in health, and crushed in spirit; Frs Ford and Dolan, the two most forward and energetic leaders of the Movement out of the house, never (apparently) to return; a committee of men of extreme mission views revising the constitutions. All those in Downside who had been only on the outer circle or fringe of the Movement acquiescing in the *Rescript*, and the verdict of the majority of the Congregation as final; one or two enthusiasts reading English monastery history: if ever a Movement seemed dead it was the Downside Movement of 1880-83.<sup>703</sup>

In the same manner, after the General Chapter of 1888, the authority of the chapter was used to move members of the Movement onto the mission and away from the centre of activity at Downside:

the sub-prior, Fr GM was called on the mission... soon after Fr Gilbert Dolan was summoned to the mission – this was well understood to be a precautionary move to prevent any recrudescence of the Movement, for Fr Gilbert Dolan was clearly marked out for his tastes, historical and monastic’<sup>704</sup>

The general chapter of 1888 saw similar misfortune for the Movement, with the constitutions in favour of the traditionalists, and with no changes made. The result of the chapter was again the disbandment of the Movement, with as Butler suggested, ‘a good deal of talk outside the house of a general scattering of the young Downside party to the mission’.<sup>705</sup> This was in effect exactly the sort of situation the Movement feared, being forcibly put onto the mission. However, the appointment of O’Neill to the role of President signalled a change in fortune for

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<sup>701</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 34.

<sup>702</sup> Bruno Hicks, *Hugh Edmund Ford*, (London: Sands & Co, 1947), p. 62.

<sup>703</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler’s Downside Controversy*, p. 35.

<sup>704</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 35.

<sup>705</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 76.

the Movement Peter Augustine O'Neill (1841-1911) had been Definitor of the Regimen between 1884-8 and was made President-General of the EBC between 1888-96. Butler in his manuscript referred to him as being

looked upon as an able but quiet man, and a student, but he was known to some, as having a certain sympathy with monastic aspirations for the Congregation, though he did not go with young Downside.<sup>706</sup>

On the advent of the Papal Bull *Diu Quidem* of June 1899, the committee that was appointed to draw up the constitutions in response had a very different agenda and comprised of a very different group of monks. The appointment of O'Neill had weighted authority into much more equal standing between the traditionalists and the Movement. The commission comprised was of 'Gasquet, Ford, Smith, O'Neill, Raynal and Mackey [who were] to draw up Constitutions according to the detailed requirements of the Bull. Their draft was approved by the Pope on 4 July 1900'.<sup>707</sup> Here, we see the first attempts at a truly neutral committee of the Controversy, comprised of two members of the Movement (Gasquet and Ford), two neutral parties (Smith and O'Neill) and two from the traditionalists (Raynal, Downside 1830-1904 and Mackey, Douai 1846-1906). It is interesting to note how this new committee was biased towards Downside, if not by attitude to reform.

However, despite their representation within the new committee, the traditionalists were still displeased and used their authority to oppose the changes. 'On March 27 1889, the superiors of the Congregation met at Belmont in accordance with the terms of the President's circular... It was apparent in the first meeting that the majority were opposed to the President'<sup>708</sup> Likewise, this meant that the senior congregation was still heavily divided and as such entered upon a 'period of violent agitation and controversy that lasted several months.'<sup>709</sup> Although O'Neill had been elected on a moderate stance that had shown that he was inclined to reform as Rome wished, 'the cry was raised: 'the consul is betraying the state, the President has gone over to the young Downside party.'<sup>710</sup> This statesmen-like language is interesting and gives a

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<sup>706</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 32.

<sup>707</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy Box F: Bibliography*, p. 3.

<sup>708</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Abbot Burge Recollections*, p. 3.

<sup>709</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 85.

<sup>710</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 83.

political feel to the proceedings.

Changes continued throughout the EBC that gave the Movement a stronger position to negotiate their reforms. Two members of the council went on the mission and so were unable to continue as members of the general chapter. As tradition dictated, and the hierarchies of the community promoted, Butler's manuscript shows that:

the vacancies in the council thus caused were in the ordinary course filled up by 'stalwarts', DIC and myself [Butler] who came next in the community. Thus, by Easter 1888, and before the actual fighting began, Prior Ford could rely on a clear working majority on the council, 5 votes out of 8.<sup>711</sup>

However, the prior of Ampleforth declared himself for the Movement and O'Neill set up his constitutional headquarters there. As such, Butler saw that the Controversy had 'ceased to be a Downside Movement and became congregational... indeed by an irony of fate Downside became the head centre of the opposition to the President' since the general chapter had elected the anti-reform senior clergy into the positions of prior and sub-prior (Fowler and Morall respectively).<sup>712</sup> However, Butler also suggests that the grievances were not lightly forgotten by the Movement, who 'took pains to make it felt that we still looked on Fr Ford and not the President as our general.'<sup>713</sup> The change of policy had not lessened the antagonism towards the Downside party, who still perceived themselves as victims of previous propaganda against reform.

However, this was a significant moment in the Controversy for several reasons: the centre of the reform movement was no longer solely Downside-based, meaning that the Movement were no longer in the minority. Secondly, the leadership within the congregation were now open to reform, so meaningful change would be able to occur. These factors were all aided by clear

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<sup>711</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 60.

<sup>712</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 85.

<sup>713</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 85.

guidance by Roman authority and the publication of several papal directives.

## **Papal Instruction and the General Chapter**

The above themes can be seen in starker terms regarding the advent of the papal bulls and letters that were published during this period. They directly pit the authority of the general chapter against those who desired change, and the committees that were formed to control this change. All are marked by a tendency to evoke a nostalgic past and typically begin by summarising both past decisions and the historical precedence they perceive. These documents acted to define authority and are in fact themselves authoritative documents. They act as a connection to Rome and the authority of the Pope to the community.

### **i. *Plantata* (1633) and the *Rescript* (1883)**

The formation of the EBC at the beginning of the seventeenth century was the first attempt to instigate a revival of the ancient Benedictine houses of Britain under the papal bull *Plantata* (1633). It was this pattern of monasticism that the opponents of the Downside Movement sought to defend. Many had undertaken the settled tradition and practice of monasticism which they believed was rooted in three hundred years of history, the Constitution and the Bull *Plantata*. *Plantata* ratified the English Benedictines' missionary mandate, through which the President of the Congregation had the sole authority to transfer them to or from the mission.<sup>714</sup> Butler stated that it was the Movement's firmly held 'belief that the congregation was in a 'transitional stage' and was waiting for favourable conditions to enable it to return to its former glory.'<sup>715</sup>

Within *Plantata*, the bull provided a historical summary of the English Benedictines with an emphasis on the continuity of the congregation since its origins in Europe, and the nature of its

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<sup>714</sup> Richard Irvine, 'Stability, Continuity, Place An English Benedictine Monastery as a Case' in *Religious Architecture: Anthropological Perspectives*, ed. by Oskar Verkaaik. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2013), p. 31.

<sup>715</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 13.

restoration. As such it dictated that the monks should:

be governed by one superior, called the President... that no one whatsoever save the said President or his express delegate should have authority thereafter to give or delegate faculties for the English mission... that the monks should take a missionary oath to the President<sup>716</sup>

*Plantata* also defined the power of the general chapter:

We grant to the President, Regimen and General Chapter of this English Congregation the faculty of making whatever lawful and proper constitutions and laws shall seem useful and necessary for the preservation, direction and government.<sup>717</sup>

At the General Chapter of 1883, however, the *Rescript Cliftonien* confirmed the missionary mandate and ‘thus in the essential points in dispute, the Movement received a crushing defeat – the status quo was to be maintained.’<sup>718</sup> The *Rescript Cliftonien* which was promulgated on 6<sup>th</sup> July and gave answers to the questions regarding the usage of *Plantata* in the modern age alongside the authority of the general chapters, and the administration of the mission. It decided the following:

that General Chapter be deprived of the unlimited power conferred upon it by the paragraph commencing ‘Denique’, of the said Bull *Plantata*... that no new missions be taken without permission of the Holy See, and that those sent to the Missions be subjects advanced in learning and in regular observance... and that the General Chapter be composed only of ‘Titolari’.<sup>719</sup>

In the words of Butler, ‘the bull thus sanctioned explicitly the form and government, the provincial system and missionary oath.’<sup>720</sup> However, there was one clause that gave the Movement hope, on the nature of the general chapters, said: ‘that General Chapter be deprived of the unlimited power conferred upon it by the paragraph commencing ‘Denique’, of the said

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<sup>716</sup> DAA, *Plantata*.

<sup>717</sup> DAA, *Plantata*.

<sup>718</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 27.

<sup>719</sup> DAA, Hugh Connolly Collection, *Rescript Cliftonien*.

<sup>720</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 27.



Bull *Plantata*.<sup>721</sup> This paragraph in *Plantata* stated:

Finally, we grant to the same Congregation and its General Chapter the faculty of making whatever constitutions shall seem useful and necessary for the government of the Congregation, and of changing, altering, entirely abolishing, and re-enacting the constitutions which have been made hitherto or shall hereafter be made, according to the character, needs and variety of places, times and circumstances.<sup>722</sup>

In reflection of this, the chapter was reorganised to consist of only those with titles, which was taken as meaning those with jurisdiction over a particular group, or location, and would have reduced the number in the general chapter by what Butler considered to be around fifteen members.<sup>723</sup> However, in practice permission was obtained for the cathedral priors to be excluded from this count and so ‘the missionary element... [and at the next two chapters held under these regulations, did in fact] still outnumber[ed] the conventual by two to one.’<sup>724</sup> The *Rescript* did however mandate that ‘that no new missions [were to] be taken without permission of the Holy See.’<sup>725</sup>

In the Movement’s view, ‘those opposed to the Movement naturally exulted in their victory. Abbot Bury started on a lecturing tour around the missions of the North Province exposing his views on the *Rescript*.’<sup>726</sup> Incidentally, Bury’s views also evoked a historicised view of Benedictine culture and its relationship to the modern character of the houses:

the purport of the lecture was to apply to our life the principles on the religious state laid down by St Thomas, to show that our life on the mission corresponded to the form of life declared by St Thomas to be the ‘most perfect’ of all, while a life spent in the monastery (unless occupied in teaching) is neither contemplative nor active.<sup>727</sup>

However, the ideas behind the *Rescript* in Butler’s opinion, ‘were vague and large enough to

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<sup>721</sup> DAA, Hugh Connolly Collection, *Rescript Cliftonien*.

<sup>722</sup> DAA, *Plantata*.

<sup>723</sup> See DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 27.

<sup>724</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 27.

<sup>725</sup> DAA, Hugh Connolly Collection, *Rescript Cliftonien*.

<sup>726</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 28.

<sup>727</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 29.

admit of widely different practical interpretations.’<sup>728</sup> Unfortunately for the Movement, this was largely dependent on the committee tasked with interpreting it, and because of the bias of the general chapter, which consisted of members of the traditionalists who were opposed to the idea of any reform and were inclined to alter as little as possible. As Butler wrote, this ‘selection was left in the hands of the President, and he chose four missionaries, all of whom had taken a leading role in opposing any change... [and were] committed to the missionary view of our institution in its extremest form’.<sup>729</sup> The *Rescript*, therefore, changed very little for the monks, monasteries and missions.

## **ii. *Religiosus Ordo* (1889) and *Diu Quidem* (1899)**

At the extraordinary meeting in 1889, Burge’s *Recollections* state that:

The President opened with an exceedingly clear and able address. He gave a full account of the negotiations with Rome during his term of office... he put in forcible language the wishes of the Holy See and made it clear that if the Chapter refused to present a scheme, we should have one forced upon us.<sup>730</sup>

The Bull *Religiosus Ordo* demonstrated to the community that Rome was at last ready to take decisive action. However, the committee for the revision of the constitutions continued to be staffed by those who opposed any changes. This was despite Rome presenting itself as fully committed to reform, according to Burge’s *Recollections*:

The answer of Rome to the obstructive tactics of the Opposition in the Chapter of 1889 was not long delayed... On Nov 20th 1890 the Bull ‘*Religiosus Ordo*’ appeared. It was in the pages of the Tablet that we first received the startling news that Rome had taken up the matter in real earnest and had abolished the Provincial-ships with radical and almost severe completeness.<sup>731</sup>

Again, *Religiosus Ordo* begins by recalling the historic narrative of the Benedictines, including their connection to Sigebert Buckley of Westminster. This is framed by the missionary endeavours of the EBC, and its relationship to the post-reformation missionary requirements

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<sup>728</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 44.

<sup>729</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Downside Controversy*, p. 44.

<sup>730</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Abbot Burge Recollections*, p. 2.

<sup>731</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *Abbot Burge Recollections*, p. 1.

of the congregation, that monks were sent to:

instruct that nation, which was in deplorable ignorance of the gospel, and to bring it into true unity with Christ. By their continual labours, by their great learning, by the striking holiness of their lives, these men, with the help of God, most successfully accomplished their mission.<sup>732</sup>

It also highlights what Rome saw as a key difficulty within the EBC – the ‘present difficulties of the double government’ - and indicates that the governance of *Plantata* was in part due to the unavoidable missionary-only based activities of the EBC. Most importantly, it decreed the terms for the relationship between the mission and the monastery in clear terms:

But these Superiors are under obedience to the President-General and his council in those matters also which relate to the missions and missionaries: and they may not send any monk to the mission except with their knowledge and consent.<sup>733</sup>

The missions... are to be joined with the monasteries, and are to be governed by the superiors of the monasteries, under whose jurisdiction both in things spiritual and temporal we place both the missions and the missionaries.<sup>734</sup>

This explicitly laid out the relationship between the monasteries and the mission and highlighted the return of authority to the monasteries and their superiors. It also finally confirmed the position of the Movement and removed the ability of the President to send a monk to the mission without his consent. Despite the progress made in response to the firm position by Rome, the receipt of *Diu Quidem* in 1899 suggested that the reforms that had been made had not been far-reaching enough. Butler highlighted how:

The bull began by saying that the Congregation had not been able to carry out the provisions and policy of the *Religiosus Ordo* in regard to the revision of the constitutions, ‘not from any lack of goodwill or devotion to the Holy See, but because

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<sup>732</sup> DAA, [*Religiosus Ordo*] Hugh Connolly Collection, *The Bulls Religiosus Ordo, Diu Quidem and Other Documents* (1910).

<sup>733</sup> DAA, [*Religiosus Ordo*] Hugh Connolly Collection, *The Bulls Religiosus Ordo, Diu Quidem and Other Documents* (1910).

<sup>734</sup> DAA, [*Religiosus Ordo*] Hugh Connolly Collection, *The Bulls Religiosus Ordo, Diu Quidem and Other Documents* (1910).

some had thought these wishes had not been clearly expressed<sup>735</sup>

However, regarding the constitutional issues, *Diu Quidem* brought coherence to the range of interpretations that had occurred before the production of the bull. This was explicitly mentioned by Rome here and indicated that Rome was aware of the previous pushbacks against the reforms by senior members.

Therefore it is Our wish and instruction that everything which is decreed, published and approved in this Letter should be observed by all who are concerned, and that there should be no possibility of it being criticised, infringed or called in question for any reason, pretext or by any authority.<sup>736</sup>

*Diu Quidem* was concerned with two major aspects of the Controversy. Firstly, the system of authority:

The President is to govern at all times the whole Congregation, with the proviso that the authority of Abbots over their own monasteries should not be diminished. He ranks first on all occasions.<sup>737</sup>

And secondly the missionary oath:

Now that the taking of the missionary oath has been abolished, in the actual form of profession after the words 'according to the rule of our holy father Benedict' the following should be added: 'and the Constitutions of the English Congregation. I further promise, with the approval of the Apostolic See, that I, if ordered by my Superior, will undertake or relinquish pastoral ministry, under the Right Reverend Lord N.N.....etc.'<sup>738</sup>

Again, this resulted in a constitutional committee, this time headed by Gasquet. He had been put forward for the role by Cardinal Vaughan, who had been asked for his opinion by the Pope's private secretary the previous summer. Gasquet prepared a draft of the constitutions 'embodying all the operative portions of *Diu Quidem* and *Religiosus Ordo* and adapting certain

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<sup>735</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 118.

<sup>736</sup> DAA, [*Diu Quidem*] Hugh Connolly Collection, *The Bulls Religiosus Ordo, Diu Quidem and Other Documents* (1910).

<sup>737</sup> DAA, [*Diu Quidem*] Hugh Connolly Collection, *The Bulls Religiosus Ordo, Diu Quidem and Other Documents* (1910).

<sup>738</sup> DAA, [*Diu Quidem*] Hugh Connolly Collection, *The Bulls Religiosus Ordo, Diu Quidem and Other Documents* (1910).

sections of the old constitutions.<sup>739</sup> This also involved removing the missionary section of the monastic vow, which was agreed upon by the authorities in Rome. Finally, the new constitutions were presented to the Pope on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1900. The constitutions were approved in the spring of 1901 under a new final consensus of the community. Combined with the cumulative effect of the bulls, it raised Downside, Douai and Ampleforth to abbeys, with the first abbots to be elected after the approval of the constitutions. These were Edmund Ford of Downside, Oswald O'Neill of Douai, and Oswald Smith of Ampleforth.

## Conclusions

This chapter has examined the usage of tradition and authority and how it was defined by those wielding power. By looking at the interactions that occurred between the elected officials of the chapters and the community, and the consequences of authority in the forms of the papal documents *Plantata* (1634), *Rescript Cliftonien* (1883), *Religiosus Ordo* (1889) and *Diu Quidem* (1899), clearly the general chapter during this period heavily influenced constitutional reform. By exploring the consequences of the general chapters and the authoritative interactions of the Movement, the senior clergy and by Rome, we can see that the justification of constitutional reform was a complex matter underscored by the community's sense of tradition. The authoritative use of tradition, and its relationship to both the power that the two groups wielded, affected how the general chapters, the community and the members elected interacted.

The use of authority in this chapter has highlighted the discrepancy between the older, more senior members and the junior members of the Controversy. The senior members were able to resist change due to their position in the community which gave them the ability to vote together to protect the constitutions and traditions that they felt were important. Similarly, their senior authority also enabled them to move members of the Movement to smaller missions in order to prevent them from challenging their authority. In removing Ford to Beccles, they attempted to stop the reform process. However, as the members of the Movement gained seniority, this position changed. The Movement were able to vote in a way that reflected their beliefs and so change occurred. However, without Roman influence the Movement would not

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<sup>739</sup> DAA, David Knowles Collection, *Butler's Downside Controversy*, p. 118.

have been able to engage with the reform process. The ability to communicate with Rome was vital.

The next chapter will draw together the analysis of the Downside Controversy and summarise the findings of each chapter. It will also give an overview of the research that could be continued after the conclusion of this thesis. It will bring together the many thematic elements that have been highlighted throughout this thesis and attempt to make some wider connections between the Downside Controversy and the themes of nostalgia, tradition and legacy.

# **CONCLUSION: SUMMARY AND FINDINGS**

## **Independence, Emancipation and Establishment: A Critical Exploration of the Impact of the Monastic Vision of Downside Abbey (1880-1900)**

In the introduction, the following questions were asked:

- What was the Downside Controversy? What was its effect on the members of the Downside Community? Why did individuals desire or reject reform?
- With nostalgia being a key framework for understanding the Downside Controversy – how is nostalgia defined by the community? What was the impact of nostalgia on the community? How did it affect decision-making? How did it affect how the community saw itself?
- What were the established traditions of the Downside community before 1880? What was the historic precedence of the community's constitutions? How did the events of the Downside Controversy change this narrative?
- How did members of the community use the medieval past to further their aims and ambitions? How did this sense of the medieval past outwardly appear? Where was Victorian medievalism used in the community?
- How was authority used by the senior and junior monks? Who felt able to administer or reject authority? What happened when senior authority was rejected?

The answers to these questions are summarised here. As such, the Downside Controversy was a series of disagreements, debates and meetings regarding the future of Benedictine monasticism in England. Two parties - the neo-monastics and the traditionalists – fought for the style of monasticism they thought was more in keeping with St Benedict's rule. This resulted in tension between a missionary and monastery-based approach to the constitutions. The community's missionary activities were seen as directly impacting the quality of education amongst the novices and younger monks – who wanted time to live contemplative lives before going on the mission. Most importantly, it was the younger members' desire for a contemplative life and fear of being sent away from the monastery that drove the events of the

Controversy.

The effects of the Controversy finally resulted in two papal bulls - *Religiosus Ordo* (1890) and *Diu Quidem* (1899) - and the changing of the constitutions of the EBC. The constitutions that were subsequently implemented reflect this progression and demonstrate how the concerns of the community during the Controversy resulted in a more monastery-centred vocation. The result, a change of status for Downside, raising it to an abbey and Ford being elected first abbot as a result of his position in campaigning for change. On a localised level, the architectural decisions surrounding the abbey church were the result of Controversy activity and were controlled at many key points during the process by members of the Movement – such as Ford and Gasquet, whose image and crests appear on many aspects of the abbey church.

For the wider community, the hierarchy of authority within the EBC changed, with more control given to the abbots. For example, when the General Meeting of World Benedictine Abbots in Rome occurred in 1893, the priors of the EBC were admitted but were informed that they would need to be abbots for future meetings. After the events of the Controversy, they would be abbots and so the problem was resolved. The consequences of authority in the forms of the papal documents *Plantata* (1634), *Rescript Cliftonien* (1883), *Religiosus Ordo* (1889) and *Diu Quidem* (1899) demonstrate how authority was a complex matter underscored by the community's sense of tradition. The authoritative use of tradition, and its relationship to both the power that the two groups wielded, effected how the community and the members elected to positions of power interacted.

Likewise, throughout this thesis, nostalgia, the revival of medievalism and the use of authority are apparent in the source material. They relate directly to the Downside community's sense of their own history and the importance of continuity, community, and collective memory. This thesis has taken four areas of Downside's history: *The Downside Review*, the architectural of the abbey church, the 'pamphlet war' and the general chapter to explore these themes of nostalgia, medievalism and authority. The building of the abbey church in the neo-gothic style reflected the developments made by the Movement at the time and the transformation of the constitutions during this period which raised the priory to abbey status. The relationship between foundational myth-making and the construction of the abbey church, the constitutions



and the importance of missionary activity was clearly influenced by members of the community. It is the shared vision of the Movement that is reflected in the community's connection to the medieval and desire to recreate the medieval past in the symbolic architecture of the abbey church and the everyday activity of the monastic community.

This symbolic framework – nostalgia, tradition and reform – underpinned the actions of the community. This use of historical memory and the concept of usable pasts was key to the Controversy, as well as the associations that can be made with the wider nineteenth century experience of medieval culture. This thesis has also revealed new ways of working with source material, and indeed, the use of material that has previously been understudied in scholarship. Likewise, this new analysis of *The Downside Review* as an exploration of the type of source it is reveals - as a primary source and not just an academic journal - reveals new ways of working with primary sources. *The Downside Review* was used by the Movement to present key ideas surrounding the constitutions and shared history that had been developed during the Downside Controversy, as well as confirming their own history and connection with the medieval past. The articles also highlight the community's propensity for nostalgia by linking chapters of the centenary issue with themes within the wider context of the Downside Controversy.

In essence, the history of Downside is widely recognised as one that values continuity, community and collective memory. However, the Downside Controversy reveals that this sense of continuity, community and collective memory has not been without discord. In this thesis I wanted to understand the following questions: What was the established tradition of Downside? What was the historic precedence? How did the events of the Downside Controversy change this narrative? In each chapter I have returned to these questions. The established traditions of Downside now appear fluid – they changed as the community changed, and reflected the preoccupations of a dynamic sense of monasticism meant in the nineteenth-century. The historic precedence was that of decline, dissolution and renewal throughout time. This continued throughout the period discussed here in this thesis, and the events of the Controversy continued this tradition and legacy.

Today, the Downside community looks very different to its nineteenth-century counterpart. However, it continues the traditions set by the Movement and the same constitutions are used since its reorganisation in 1900. In 2022, the monks have begun a new chapter, and have once again transposed the community to better suit modern monasticism. They have now joined with

the Buckfast Abbey community in Devon. The Downside monks voted in the general chapter in 2021 to leave Somerset, and have moved into Southgate House, part of the Benedictine estate in Buckfastleigh. It has been described by the Abbot of Buckfast – David Charlesworth – as a ‘stepping stone’ – a temporary move before making a more permanent decision about the community’s future.<sup>740</sup> The school will continue under a lay administration, whilst the progress in archive will continue under the supervision of the monks and the trustees. Monks will continue to return to the abbey to celebrate mass with their former parishioners.

Buckfast Abbey is part of the later nineteenth century Benedictine building project in England, after being formally reinstated as an abbey in 1902 by French and German monks on the site of a former dissolved foundation. The church was started in 1907 and was consecrated in 1932 but not completed until 1938. Like Downside, the modern community have only a nostalgic connection to the medieval past, having moved to the site after it was purchased by French Benedictine monks in 1882. This is part of a wider displacement history that was common to most communities in England – not just Downside and Buckfast. Unlike Downside, the site itself has deeper connections to a medieval past, having had a Benedictine presence and a monastery on the site since 1018. It’s tumultuous past saw precarity during the Norman Conquest, its evolution into a Cistercian monastery and finally its dissolution in 1539. It changed several hands until it fell into the hands of Dr James Gale in 1872 who placed an advertisement in *The Tablet* to find a monastic community willing to ‘restore it to its original purpose’.<sup>741</sup> This marked the resurgence of Benedictines at Buckfast with the first abbot, being Boniface Natter (1866-1906, Buckfast) being elected in 1902 after its consecration. This also marked the anniversary of Dissolution of the Abbey in 1539.

This is part of the community’s wider search for a new home, and they will be called the Community of St Gregory. As such, it demonstrates how universal the concepts of nostalgia, authority and medieval monasticism are to the EBC. The community continue a great tradition of upheaval and change, handed down from the days of the Controversy to today. In 1880, the same traditions that had led the monks to move from Douai to Somerset, led to the Downside Controversy. The connection to Downside remains as mass continues – upholding the traditions of the monks that have come before them. Despite the move appearing to be a radical departure

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<sup>740</sup> Community Update, *Downside Abbey*, [<https://www.downsideabbey.co.uk/community-update/>]

<sup>741</sup> ‘Advertisement’, *The Tablet*, (1872).

from the past, this thesis demonstrates that it is merely the inheritance of a migratory and radical monastic community who have already changed homes several times and transformed the way they live constitutionally.

To summarise, this thesis has provided an overview and analysis of the events of the Downside Controversy (1880-1900). It then focused on four key areas of the Controversy, as evidenced by archive material and referenced in the manuscript written by Cuthbert Butler (1858-1934, Downside). This revealed previously undiscovered archive material and used material in a new and innovative way compared with previous histories of the Downside community. In doing so, I have placed the material centre stage. This thesis has explored the events of the Downside Controversy, and its relationship to the constitutional changes that occurred within the EBC during the late nineteenth century. The Downside Controversy occurred between 1880-1900 and was primarily a battle of pamphlets, letters and chapter meetings between opposing sides of the community.

Through work on this thesis, the opportunity for further research is clear. Already, I have given several lectures relating to subject matter to interested parties and been asked to give architectural tours of the abbey church.<sup>742</sup> With the University of Bristol, there have also been opportunities to display artefacts from the Controversy period in an online exhibition.<sup>743</sup> On the other hand, not only are there opportunities for future research, but the manuscript itself also could have publication potential.<sup>744</sup> The contents of the manuscript give an interesting perspective of nineteenth century monasticism and was originally intended for publication.

This thesis obviously only examines the case for Downside, but the Controversy and its effects impacted all of the other houses in the EBC at the time - Ampleforth (1802), Stanbrook (1838), Fort Augustus (1876) and Belmont (1875) – and so there is likely to be archival material present at each of the houses to support this. In particular, there is material in the Ford archive which supports a similar sense of upheaval in constitutional controversies during the same period as

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<sup>742</sup> For more information on the outreach projects of the abbey, see their website [<https://www.downsideabbey.co.uk/downside-library/the-archives-collections/>]

<sup>743</sup> This can be found at History and Community: 20 Exhibits from Downside Abbey [<https://www.historyandcommunity.com>]

<sup>744</sup> DAA, Cuthbert Butler Collection, *The Downside Controversy*.

Downside (1880-1900) that would make an interesting study and comparative work.<sup>745</sup> The vast depth and breadth of the Downside Archives implies that there is much more research to be done. All of the above highlight the potential for new research into the revival of monasticism in England in the nineteenth-century. Despite the monastic migration away from Downside, the community at Downside have already demonstrated their ability to transform their traditions, legacy and past history.

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<sup>745</sup> DAA, Edmund Ford Collection, *Nun Material*.

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