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Hampshire Recusants in the time of Elizabeth I, with special reference to Winchester

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A RECUSANT is literally one who refuses. In a special historical sense recusants were those Roman Catholics who refused to attend the service of Common Prayer in the Church of England, and this was the meaning attached to the term by the Government and the Catholic authorities. Such attendance at Common Prayer was compulsory under the Act of Uniformity of 1559 (1 Eliz. C.2). If a person refused he was liable under that Act to the 'censures of the Church' and also to a fine of twelvepence for every offence. In 1581 under *The Act to retain the Queen's Majesty's subjects in their due obedience* (23 Eliz. C.1) this fine was increased to the crippling sum of £20 a month, equivalent, perhaps, to something well over £500 today.

'Church-Papists' were those persons, Catholic at heart, who outwardly conformed by attending the Established service as a formal measure, interpreting such attendance as an act of civil obedience owed to the Crown. Many went to Common Prayer, which was a *legal* requirement, but shrank from receiving Communion, which was not. (It was, however, an *ecclesiastical* obligation, and an offender could be excommunicated, suffering any penalties which might arise from such excommunication.) Some, through fear, received Communion. In the second half of Elizabeth's reign outward conformity was practised, ostensibly to escape the severe financial penalties under both the recusancy Act of 1581 and that of 1586-7, to which complete abstention from the services made persons liable. It is chiefly of those Church-Papists who were non-communicants that there are records in episcopal and other contemporary documents. Although they were not actual recusants in the accepted sense, they formed a significant class throughout the country, and in Hampshire, as elsewhere, they were present in good numbers. These non-communicants cannot be ignored in examining the whole problem.

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So far as recusant history on a county basis is concerned, there has been little examination of the available material and until research on a more considerable scale is undertaken serious gaps in ecclesiastical and social history will continue to exist. When dealing with recusancy national historians in the past have too often attempted generalisations based on altogether insufficient investigation. And yet the means of approach to a proper understanding of the problem has existed for many years in the form of such essential but little utilised documents as the various diocesan records, together with the Pipe and Recusant Rolls. Fortunately, there is now an awakened interest in this important subject. Dom Hugh Bowler, O.S.B., has recently published a much-needed and scholarly article on technical aspects of the Recusant Rolls,¹ which is to be followed by similar work, whilst valuable studies of Yorkshire recusancy have also appeared in print.² When research has been made into the extent and incidence of recusancy in other counties, especially in some of the more recusant counties, and the results collated, it should be possible to draw some valid general conclusions.

For a study of Hampshire recusancy the chief surviving ecclesiastical documents are the *Act Books* of the Consistory Court. A few visitation books for Elizabeth I's reign survive, but they yield very meagre information in any case and nothing about recusants. Nor do any records of presentments to the Archdeacon's Court, which would have made a fuller assessment possible, or of Quarter Sessions, survive. Nevertheless, the *Act Books*³ throw very considerable light on the problem during most of the reign. The recorded citations to the Consistory Court are of unique importance because they not only enable unimpeachable statistics of recusancy to be compiled, but also because the statements of individual recusants at the Court, with the precise terms of the charges against them, provide interesting and vivid relief, and often enable the reactions of the Ecclesiastical authorities to the recusants' derelictions to be known. The last record, the *Processus contra Recusantes*, 1598-1603, deals entirely with recusants and from it a fairly full consideration of the situation in the concluding years of the Queen's reign can be made. In addition to these records, the State Papers and the Acts of the Privy Council, among other contemporary documents, contain many references to Hampshire recusants and are essential for studying the problems which the Bishops were called upon to face and solve.

A necessarily somewhat short survey of the recusancy position in Hampshire during the reign may be considered in respect of four rather well-defined periods: (1) the earlier years to 1570, during which, before crucial issues arose, ecclesiastical surveillance and persistent action had for their object the removal of all symbols and manifestations of a surviving Papistry; (2) a period of approximately a decade, commencing with the issue of the Papal Bull, *Regnans in Excelsis*, in 1570, after which a gradually-increasing tightening-up of the official attitude towards recusants is detectable; (3) the period of vital resurgent Catholicism in the 1580's; and (4) the concluding period from 1590 to the end of the reign, which, lacking the newly-born enthusiasm of the 1580's, could still show that recusants existed in fair numbers. The account which follows observes these divisions. So far as actual subject-matter is concerned, it does not deal with the complicated and extensive problem of recusancy finance, which would require much space for a full and precise examination, nor in any detail with the legal aspect of recusancy.

1. *Recusant History*, Vol. 4, No. 5, April 1958 (Arundel Press, Bognor Regis).

2. *The First Stages of Romanist Recusancy in Yorkshire, 1560-1590* (Yorkshire Archaeological Journal, Part 138, 1941) and *The Extent and Character of Recusancy in Yorkshire, 1604* (Y.A.J., Part 145, 1948), both by Professor A. G. Dickens.

3. The present writer wishes to thank Mr George Gardner, Diocesan Registrar, for kindly allowing access to the records.

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(1) THE EARLIER YEARS

In the first half of the 16th century few counties were more fundamentally Catholic in culture than Hampshire, which had contained the ancient capital of England and where abbeys, priories, friaries, convents, churches and guilds abounded. Winchester itself had an ancient and majestic cathedral and a famous school of mediaeval origin. The roots of this culture, deeply embedded in the past, were not destroyed when the doctrines of the Reformation began to spread through the land. Indeed, Protestantism in its earlier manifestations seems to have taken little hold of the county; and when Catholicism was officially restored in Mary's reign Hampshire was found to be still strongly Catholic. Strype, for instance, does not mention the county at all in considering the Marian martyrs, and there seems to be a record of only one execution in Winchester, though Archdeacon Philpot suffered at Smithfield.⁴ Possibly one reason why Winchester itself was strongly recusant for many years was the constant reminder to its citizens, in so many monuments and memorials, of a not long-departed Catholicism. Significantly, too, and perhaps symbolically, it was in Winchester that Philip and Mary were married in 1554.

It is not therefore surprising that early in the Queen's reign there should have been opposition in the city to the new settlement of religion. The Act of Uniformity of 1559 laid down the date for the introduction of the reformed services as the 24th June, 1559. On 27th June the Spanish Ambassador wrote to Philip II that 'in the neighbourhood of Winchester they have refused to receive the church service book . . . and the clergy of the diocese had assembled to discuss what they should do. No Mass was being said, whereat the congregations were very much disturbed'.⁵ At the same time the Dean and Canons of the Cathedral, the Warden and Fellows of Winchester College and the Master of St. Cross continued to say Mass, because it was against their consciences to do otherwise.⁶ Later, the Dean and five Canons, including the Headmaster of the College, were deprived of their offices for refusing to accept the new Established religion.

By June 1561, Robert Horne, a Puritan and strong anti-Papist, who was consecrated as Bishop of Winchester in the preceding February, had begun a visitation of his diocese. He finds the clergy generally 'conforming themselves as it was required of them',⁷ but the state of the laity was unsatisfactory, for, said Horne, 'as touching religion I have found more disorders by this inquisition . . . than I could in my visitation by churchwardens . . . But whatsoever is found and reformed by us . . . we cannot perceive that much is done elsewhere in the shire, making, as it seemeth, little force thereof . . .'.⁸ Winchester itself is still a difficult problem and in January 1562 Horne is telling Cecil that he has attempted in many ways to bring the inhabitants 'to good conformity, namely, to have the cures there served as the Common Prayer might be frequented, which hath not been since Massing-time' [that is, for over three years]; 'and that good sound doctrine might be taught amongst them (which they as yet do not so well like and allow), I could not by any means bring the same to pass'.⁹ He proposes that some of the city livings should be combined 'without which I see no way how to have them served, but that they shall continue and be further nossed [nursled] in

4. *Vict. County History (Hants)*, 2, p. 72.

5. *Span. Cal. No.* 39, p. 78.

6. *S.P. Dom. Eliz.*, No. 72.

7. *S.P. Dom. Eliz.*, 17, No. 23.

8. *Ibid.*

9. *S.P. Dom. Eliz.*, 21, No. 7.

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superstition and Popery, lacking not some priests in the Cathedral Church to inculcate the same daily into their heads'.¹⁰ The citizens are very stubborn.¹¹

The records of Bishop Horne's episcopate show that he was energetic, regular and thorough in his visitations and that he made determined and continuous efforts to remove all traces of Catholicism in the county. There are altogether, apart from Books of Instances, 14 Act Books which deal with all kinds of ecclesiastical offences (including recusancy and non-communicating) for the whole of Horne's episcopate (1561-1579), covering practically every year. During the earlier years citations for recusancy or non-communicating are not numerous, but there is much evidence of religious 'irregularity' on the part of both the clergy and laity, and relics of papistry are found in different parts of the county. It should perhaps be emphasised here that Horne's work was concerned with the signs of a lingering Catholicism which had its roots in a survival from a mediaeval past: he had not to contend—at least not perhaps till his closing years—with the forces of the Counter-Reformation as seen in the activities of the new Seminary priests, who, with their high endeavour and often, it is generally admitted, heroic capacity, succeeded in effecting so many conversions. This aspect of the problem will be evident when the time comes to deal with the Catholic Renaissance.

We soon see the effect of Horne's work. In October 1561, for instance, apparently as a result of his first visitation, the Rector of Winnall and Richard Smith, the churchwarden, were accused of not having having abolished the altar in the church.¹² Richard Smith was to be an obstinate non-communicant for many years, and was frequently cited on this ground.¹³ His wife was a recusant.¹⁴

At Romsey in the same month (October 1561) the Vicar confessed to having conducted a papistical burial, bringing 'the corpse to the church with candles and tapers'.¹⁵ Moreover, he had 'suffered the parishioners to ring *None* on our Lady's Even which was no Holy Day'.¹⁶ The vicar was Thomas Cheston, an ex-Marian priest.¹⁷ He may have been a relative of Stephen Cheston, another ex-Marian priest, who remained on the staff of the Cathedral.¹⁸

In September 1562, Robert Newman, Vicar of Christchurch, was ordered to preach a sermon against 'auricular, idolatrous confession',¹⁹ and Robert Taynton, Rector of East Tisted, was required to preach against the 'usurped jurisdiction of the Pope', the private Mass and in favour of the supreme authority of the Queen.²⁰ In February 1563 it was stated that Thomas Williams, Rector of Fifield, 'uses [*sic*] statues of idolatry in his house . . . is unwilling to supply paraphrases' (*The Paraphrases of Erasmus*).²¹ In June 1563 William Copege, Rector of Nuneham, was instructed to preach, in the presence of the Mayor (the town is not specified) and of the congregation, against the Papal jurisdiction and in favour of the Royal Supremacy.²²

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Liber Actorum* 1558-1562, f. 95.

13. *L.A.* 1470, f. 305v, *L.A.* (II) 1572-4, f. 115v., and *L.A.* 1575-7, f. 168.

14. 'Marie, the wife of Richard Smith,' was presented as a recusant for Winnall in 1583: S.P. Dom Eliz., 160/26.

15. *L.A.* 1558-62, f. 95v.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Transcript with notes of C.C. College, Camb., MSS 122 in *Hants Field Club Proceedings*, Vol. XIV, p. 63.

18. *Ibid.*

19. *L.A.* 1562, f. 4v.

20. *Ibid.*, f. 8v.

21. *L.A.* 1563-4, f. 58.

22. *Ibid.*, f. 8.

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Robert Potter, the Curate of Sutton Scotney, was said, in June 1563, to have carried a wooden cross in procession 'in the week of perambulations' (that is, at Rogation-tide); and, subsequently, on two Sundays he had carried such a cross in Sutton church and on another day in the church of Brambledean (presumably Bramdean). He had also genuflected in the middle of Divine Service.²³

In December 1567 the Vicar of Odiham was charged with having buried Sir Thomas White of South Warnborough 'with tapers (or candles) and other papistical ceremonies'.²⁴ The Vicar was Hugh Laiver, an ex-Marian priest, who had been inducted to the living on 29 April, 1558.²⁵ Sir Thomas White was the *brother-in-law* of John White, the deprived Catholic Bishop of Winchester, and had been Master of Requests to Queen Mary.²⁶ It was to his home that the Bishop had been allowed to retire after being released from the Tower.

In April 1569 the Rector of Meonstoke and the Rector of Droxford, a neighbouring parish, were accused of not having preached against the Pope according to the Royal Injunctions. They were ordered to preach against 'papistical depravity, the usurped jurisdiction of the Pope and the private Mass'.²⁷ The Rector of Meonstoke had been a Marian priest, whilst the Rector of Droxford had been inducted to the living in the reign of Henry VIII—in 1525.²⁸

With regard to lay people, Philippa, wife of Robert Prynce, had to meet the charge at the Bishop's Court of 11 June, 1563,²⁹ that about twelve months previously, she, being a midwife, had been present 'at the christening of Mistress Windsor, the wife of William Windsor's child in the chapel of the Vyne in the parish of Sherborne St John'. She said that 'the same child was christened with a taper lighted . . . in Latin service . . . She remembereth not of any Latin service that was there said'. Those present were 'My Lord Sandys, godfather, my Lady Paulet and my Lady Pecsall, the goodwife Stiffe, of the same Sherborne . . .'.³⁰

Papistical remains were found in various parts of Hampshire. At Christchurch in 1562 the churchwardens had not destroyed a crucifix.³¹ In February 1563 it was mentioned at the Bishop's Court that Popish articles had been found in Hayling—'candlesticks, Pope's crosses and mass books';³² and Thomas Travers, a substantial yeoman of Alresford, who appears in later records as a consistent recusant and who was imprisoned for his recusancy,³³ had 'certain articles which he used in a certain white book, and a certain other prayer book with a black cover . . . containing prayers to the Blessed Virgin, prayers for the dead, rosaries [*sic*] of the Blessed Virgin Mary etc.'. ³⁴ In 1568 'idolatrous monuments were found at

23. *L.A.* 1562, f. 73v.

24. *L.A.* 1567, f. 31.

25. *C.C. Coll. MS.*, *op. cit.*

26. For the genealogy of the White family, see *Harl. Soc.*, Vol. 64 (under *White*).

27. *L.A.* 1568, f. 114.

28. *C.C. Coll. MS.*, *op. cit.*

29. *L.A.* 1563-4, f. 6.

30. *L.A.* 1563-4, f. 6.

31. *L.A.* 1562, f. 46.

32. *Ibid.*, f. 49.

33. Strype, *Annals*, II, Part II, p. 660, and *S.P. Dom Eliz.*, 203, No. 39.

34. *L.A.* 1563-4, f. 51.

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Portsmouth and Micheldever.³⁵ The church at Sopley in 1569 lacked a bible and a communion book, whilst various 'papistical things' were found there.³⁶ There were also 'superstitious relics' in the same year at Hurstbourne Priors, Popham and Stratton.³⁷ In 1569 William Dunton of Sopley 'erected a wooden cross inscribed with his name'.³⁸ At the Bishop's Court he denied 'that the cross was superstitious', a view that was apparently not accepted, for he was required to do penance in the church on the next Sunday.³⁹

Churchwardens were in trouble because they followed the old Catholic custom of ringing the bells of their parish churches on All Saints' Day,⁴⁰ whilst in 1566 the churchwardens of Bishopstoke had neither exhibited the bill of reception of Holy Communion,⁴¹ nor, in 1569, had they presented absentees from church or levied the twelvepenny fine.⁴² Similarly, in 1566 the churchwardens of Chilton Candover were charged with not having exhibited the bill of participation at Holy Communion for Easter last.⁴³

In 1568, at Winchester, John Scrut of the parish of St Clement, and his wife, formerly Joan Foster, had apparently undergone a clandestine Catholic marriage, for the two were charged with having been married before it was light.⁴⁴ In this connection it may be observed that there were known to be two ex-Marian priests in the city at this time, for Simon Palmer and Thomas Cook, both described as 'clerks', were cited as non-communicants.⁴⁵ Later, in 1570, they were cited as recusants as well as non-communicants, and excommunicated.⁴⁶

All these examples of cited ecclesiastical offences afford some illustration of the anti-Papist zeal at work in these earlier years, but the Council itself, apparently aware of the surviving strength of Catholicism in Winchester, seem also to have watched the city carefully at times. In November 1564, for example, the Mayor, Robert Hodson, Richard Bird, Bailiff, and others were summoned to London 'touching matters of religion',⁴⁷ and, after examination by the Council, were committed to the Marshalsea prison 'for their contemptuous behaviour in not aiding John Bedlam, being appointed by the Sheriff . . . to apprehend the wife of one Harman in Winchester'.⁴⁸ A few days later Harman's wife, who had been excommunicate for two years, had taken no steps to be absolved and had 'contemptuously shifted herself out of the way' was also committed to the Marshalsea.⁴⁹ On 24 November, 1564, the Mayor and Bailiffs were released on bond.⁵⁰ They had clearly connived at Papistry, and, indeed, the Mayor was himself a Papist together with others prominent in the life of the city. For example, in the previous month (October 1564) Bishop Horne, in common

35. *L.A.* 1568, ff. 47 and 52.

36. *L.A.* 1569, f. 100v.

37. *Ibid.*, ff. 124v, 110.

38. *L.A.* 1569, f. 100v.

39. *Ibid.*

40. *L.A.* 1558-62, f. 104v, and *L.A.* 1567, ff. 15 and 32.

41. *L.A.* 1566, f. 52.

42. *L.A.* 1568, f. 96.

43. *Ibid.*, f. 60v.

44. *L.A.* 1567, f. 32.

45. *L.A.* 1568, f. 94v.

46. *L.A.* 1570, f. 199v.

47. *A.P.C.* (N.S.), 4 Nov., 1564.

48. *A.P.C.* (N.S.), 11 Nov., 1564.

49. *A.P.C.* (N.S.), 14 Nov., 1564.

50. *A.P.C.* (N.S.), 24 Nov., 1564.

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with the other Bishops, was asked to classify Justices of the Peace in the county according to their attitude to the Government's religious policy, and, in particular, to say whether they were favourable to it or 'mislikers'.⁵¹ In replying to the Council, Horne names those upon whom the Government can rely. But as for the city of Winchester, he says, 'all that bear authority there, except one or two', were 'addict to the old superstition, and earnest fautors thereof'.⁵² He mentions in that connection Hodson the Mayor, Bethel the elder and Bethel the younger, William Lawrence, White, Pottenger and Coreham.

(2) THE BULL OF 1570 AND AFTER

The year 1570, in which the Papal Bull, *Regnans in Excelsis*, excommunicating Elizabeth was issued, makes a significant division in the history of recusancy. Whatever may have been thought of the Pope's action in promulgating the Bull—and the action was regarded by Catholic powers like Spain and the Emperor Maximilian as a political blunder—there is no doubt that it had an important effect on many English Catholics. Henceforth, they were to experience an increasingly rigorous action on the part of the Government towards them. In particular, the quickened Papal policy closely influenced their lives, for it made many of them cease attending the Established services, whether this had been done innocently or not.

In Hampshire the changed situation is reflected almost immediately in the surviving diocesan records. For instance, the figures for citations for recusancy and non-communicating during the period 1561–1569 show a total of 303, of which 248 citations were for not receiving Communion and only 55 were for abstention from the church services.⁵³ The total itself is significantly small and seems to point to the fact that local presentments of some Papists for either recusancy or non-communicating were not being made, whilst other Papists were probably formally attending church. In 1570, however, there were citations of 245 persons—128 non-communicants and 116 recusants, the bulk of the citations occurring during the last three months of the year.⁵⁴ Moreover, many of the Catholic gentry, absent from earlier records, are now being cited, whilst a further impressive feature of the record is the citation of the churchwardens from no fewer than 24 parishes for not communicating—a fact which is perhaps itself one measure of the considerable amount of connivance that was probably being exercised.

In the next year, 1571, the Government passed three penal statutes in answer to the Bull of Excommunication. In the same year Bishop Horne made visitations of both Winchester College and the Cathedral.⁵⁵ Things were not very satisfactorily Protestant at the Cathedral, and the Dean, in particular, had not preached against the Pope and 'the superstitious Mass', and favoured rather 'superstitious religion' than 'true religion now received'.⁵⁶ In 1572 four Tichbornes, Mistress Elizabeth Tichborne of West Tisted, the mother of the first baronet, Sir Benjamin Tichborne, from whom the present Tichborne family descends, with her Catholic kinsmen, John, Nicholas and Roger Tichborne, appeared before the Ecclesiastical Commission at Winchester for 'matters respecting religion'.⁵⁷ Horne had, in 1569,

51. Camden Misc., Vol. 9 (1895).

52. *Ibid.*

53. L.A. 1558–1562, 1566, etc.

54. L.A. 1570.

55. *Visitation Articles and Injunctions*, III, 1559–1575 (ed. Frere, pp. 318 and 324, and Horne MS. Reg, f. 81 *et seq.*).

56. Horne Reg., ff. 81 and 81v.

57. H.M.C. Cal. Sal. Papers, Vol. 2, 96.

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asked for this Commission in order to deal with the Papists, for, he said, they 'will never do good until they be enforced, which will not be long if I have the Commission'.⁵⁸ It has already been seen that many people were cited for recusancy and non-communicating in the latter part of 1570.

Episcopal records cover continuously the years January 1571-2 to November 1574.⁵⁹ There were 145 non-communicants and 42 recusants for this period, embracing 51 parishes. The period, April 1575 to March 1579, is also covered by records: there were 200 citations in all—103 for not receiving Communion and 97 for recusancy, and they concern 71 parishes, mostly different from those involved in the other figures.⁶⁰ According to the available figures of citations, therefore, there is an increase in recusancy as compared with the first period (1571-2 to November 1574). This may be, in part, due to the activities of the Seminary priests who began to come to England in 1574, only four, however, coming in that year.

Though the figures are small there were some noteworthy concentrations of Papists. Winchester and the district beyond the city (e.g. places like Winnall) have a total of 38 citations during the period April-December 1570.⁶¹ For the period 1571-1579 only 43 persons appear to have been cited made up of 21 recusants and 22 non-communicants.⁶² In the Isle of Wight in 1570 there were 18 recusants and 6 non-communicants;⁶³ for the period 1571-1579 there were 15 citations (4 recusants and 11 non-communicants).⁶⁴ In 1574 there were 47 non-communicants at Bishop's Waltham.⁶⁵ The Bishop of Winchester lived there and a thorough investigation seems to have taken place. At Andover in 1570 there were 11 non-communicants and 6 recusants,⁶⁶ and in 1575 a total of 24 non-communicants.⁶⁷

Relics of Catholic days were discovered in the searching visitations made between 1570 and 1575 and there were still lingering Catholic observances. The churchwardens of Lyndhurst had not destroyed 'idolatrous monuments'. They did not appear when cited to the Court and were excommunicated.⁶⁸ The wardens of Steep had concealed 'papistical vestments'. They were ordered to be cut up for use in the church.⁶⁹ In 1570 the churchwardens of Bramley had not destroyed the rood loft. This was not done till November 1572 for the charge was renewed against them at that date.⁷⁰ In 1570 the churchwardens at Owslebury were not only charged with not having received Communion, but also with not having destroyed certain vestments in the church.⁷¹ In 1575 Andrew Adams of Bradlie was questioned about three copes which remained in his custody, and he was warned to produce 'the cross, the clothes and banner'.⁷² John Fry of Bedhampton, where Anthony Cope, a well-

58. Lansd. MS. 12, 63.

59. *L.A.* 1571, *L.A.* 1572-4, and *L.A.* 1574.

60. *L.A.* 1575, *L.A.* 1575-7, *L.A.* 1578.

61. *L.A.* 1570.

62. *L.A.* 1571, 1572-4, 1574, 1575-7, and 1578.

63. *L.A.* 1570.

64. *L.A.* 1571, 1572-4, 1574, 1575-7, and 1578.

65. *L.A.* 1574.

66. *L.A.* 1570.

67. *L.A.* 1575.

68. *L.A.* 1570, f. 56.

69. *Ibid.*, f. 56v.

70. *L.A.* 1570, f. 273, and *L.A.* 1571, f. 103v.

71. *L.A.* 1570, f. 306v.

72. *L.A.* 1575, f. 78.

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known Papist gentleman lived,⁷³ had made invocations to the Blessed Virgin: he had to perform public penance in the church for this offence;⁷⁴ and Mistress Norton of East Tisted 'observes festival days which must not be observed'.⁷⁵ In 1570 the Vicar of Godshill, Isle of Wight, was in trouble. He was Henry Hays, LL.B., an ex-Marian priest.⁷⁶ It was stated that he was 'much suspected' of Papistry. He put away his wife from him in Queen Mary's days . . . He confesseth he never read the confession of uniformity in religion these nine years⁷⁷ and hath not monthly prayed against the Pope as in the Injunctions'.⁷⁸

In 1576 a serious matter came to the notice of the Government. On 9 June of that year, the Council wrote to certain Hampshire J.P.s saying that Alexander Dering, living in the Soke of Winchester, kept in his house 'a great store of vestments, books and other massing tools to serve lewd purposes, *when any so evil is disposed to have use of them*, he himself being a man very perversely bent against the present state of religion'.⁷⁹ This reference to the possible use of the vestments and of the 'massing tools' is of particular interest, because the increased vigilance of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and the Government was no doubt due in part to the movements of the Seminary priests in England (the priests had begun to come from Douai two years previously—in 1574). William Allen, the future Cardinal, in this same year, 1576, said that Winchester was one of the towns in England where the priests might do much good, and he described it as one of the most Catholic towns or parts of England.⁸⁰ He mentions it with York, Lancaster and other cities, but refers to no other town in the whole of the south.

The advent of the Seminary priests seems, indeed, to be beginning to influence the situation considerably by 1577, for in July of that year Walsingham is told that news had been received from the Bishops that 'the Papists marvellously increase both in numbers and in obstinate withdrawing of themselves from the church'.⁸¹ There is obvious concern, and in October the hierarchy were asked, apparently with a view to future penal action against the Catholics, to furnish a return of the recusants in their dioceses, stating the value of the recusants' lands and goods.⁸² The information supplied proved to be unsatisfactory, since the time allowed was far too short. In sending in his own return, Horne seemed to imply that he was at a loss, even with his long administrative experience, to know how to deal with the Papists. He told the Council that 'he was most heartily desirous to hear that your wisdoms will devise some such remedy in these causes as their most wilful obstinacy may be the better restrained and corrected, which daily groweth more and more'.⁸³

The stage seems set for the Catholic renaissance of the 1580's.

73. Anthony Cope was the son of Stephen Cope of Bedhampton and grandson of Sir William Cope, Knight-Cofferer to Henry VII (Harl. Soc., Vol. 64, pp. 21, 22). He was included in a return of recusants in 1577 (S.P. Dom Eliz., 117, No. 10 and 10 (1)). In 1583 he is returned as a recusant for Bedhampton (S.P. Dom Eliz., 160 (26)). In 1586 he is stated to be dead. (S.P. Dom Eliz. 188, No. 16 (1-13)).

74. L.A. 1570, f. 106.

75. *Ibid.*, f. 238v.

76. C.C. Coll. MS. transcript, *op. cit.*

77. That is, since Horne came to the Sec of Winchester in 1561.

78. L.A. 1570, f. 79A.

79. S.P. Dom Eliz., 108, No. 40. The italics are mine, there is no underlining in the original.

80. Cath. Rec. Soc., Vol. 9, pp. 62-69 cited Pollen, *op. cit.*, p. 258.

81. S.P. Dom Eliz., 114, No. 22.

82. S.P. Dom Eliz., 116, No. 5.

83. S.P. Dom Eliz., 117, No. 10.

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(3) THE CATHOLIC RENASCENCE IN HAMPSHIRE

There was some relaxation of the Government's pressure on the recusants generally in 1579, due to the re-opening of the negotiations for a marriage of the Queen with the French King's brother, Anjou. Walsingham, probably about this time, wrote secretly to leading gentlemen in certain shires asking them to deal more leniently with the recusants.⁸⁴ This relaxation was, however, short-lived and the whole situation was radically changed by the arrival in England of the so-called 'Jesuit Mission' of 1580. The leaders were the Jesuits, Persons and Campion, and with them came two Wykehamists and Fellows of New College, William Gyblett and Edward Bromborough, who had gone to Douai and become priests. Drives against the Papists by the Government, who were soon to be armed with fresh penal legislation, were now intensified. The missionary leaders also made their plans and left London for the country, but, before leaving, Campion, at the request of his friend, Thomas Pounce,⁸⁵ a noted Hampshire recusant (of Farlington, near Havant), first cousin of the Catholic Earl of Southampton, and former courtier of the Queen, wrote the famous *apologia* for the mission which came to be known as the *Challenge* or *Brag*⁸⁶—a superb piece of Elizabethan prose addressed to the Lords of the Privy Council. It seems to have been in busy circulation in Hampshire in the autumn months of 1580, and the new Bishop, Thomas Watson, who had been appointed to the See of Winchester after the death of Robert Horne, and some associated J.P.s became very much disturbed at the effect. Campion's writing, they said, seemed to 'such like backward persons [in religion] very plausible'.⁸⁷

By 1583 it is clear that reconciliations to Catholicism in the county are being made on a considerable scale and that the effect of the work of the missionary forces of the Counter Reformation is being felt in fuller measure.⁸⁸ Before the advent of the Seminary priests—at least before they came in any number—the English Catholics, left for so many years to themselves, had been unenthusiastic and despondent, but in the 1580's they have apparently become inspired with new hope and courage, and present an entirely different front. The Government are manifestly alarmed and some time in 1583 Burghley wrote to the Queen that 'your strong and factious subjects are the Papists. Strong I account them both in number and nature'.⁸⁹ There is abundant evidence of the new situation in Hampshire and of the way in which it had been created.

In this same year (1583), for instance, tribute was paid in opposing quarters to the labours of two schoolmasters, John Body and John Slade, in the county, who, apparently joining forces with the Missionary priests, had succeeded in substantially increasing the number of the recusants. Little is known about Slade, but a good deal about Body,⁹⁰ who had been a scholar at Winchester College and a Fellow of New College, Oxford. Both men had been tried for denying the royal supremacy and had been convicted of treason.⁹¹ Writing to

84. S.P. Dom Eliz., 45, No. 27, cited Conyers Read, *Mr Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*, Vo. II, p. 284.

85. For full biographical notes see Foley: *Records of the Society of Jesus*, Vol. III, p. 572, *et alia*.

86. See *Elizabethan Recusant Prose 1559-1582*, pp. 153-155: A. C. Southern, PH.D. (London) (Ldn. 1950).

87. S.P. Dom Eliz., 144, No. 3.

88. A very similar situation is discernible in Yorkshire during the three years following 1578, the change being reflected in *detecta* of Sandys' visitations begun in June 1582: *Romanist Recusancy in Yorkshire*, by A. G. Dickens in *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, Part 138, p. 160.

89. Somers 'Tracts', (Ldn. 1809), pp. 164, 165.

90. See Kirby, *Winchester Scholars*, under date 1562, and J. Gillow, *A Literary and Biographical History of the English Catholics*, I, p. 255.

91. Their executions took place in the autumn of 1583, Slade's in Winchester and Body's in Andover.

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William Allen on 24 April, 1583, the Rev. George Birket said that at their trial the impression made by the two men was so favourable that almost the greater part of the people of Hampshire had withdrawn themselves from the churches of the Establishment; and that not only members of the gentry were recusants, but also many country people.⁹² Allowance must be made for some amount of exaggeration here, but a claim partly in some such sense was to be supported a little later by the English ecclesiastical authorities themselves and by others who were certainly in a position to know the facts.

Thus, in July 1583 the Bishop of Winchester and some J.P.s wrote jointly to the Council that '... no small number of the meaner sort, many of them poor husbandmen and artificers, some wives, servants and young men unmarried of divers parishes within three or four miles of this city [Winchester], who, about Easter last frequented the church and there received Holy Communion, are since suddenly revolted and do as yet obstinately absent themselves; their dangerous example (as we hear) encouraging others to do the like'. Some, when they appeared before the Justices, said that their consciences would not serve them to come to church. Others were anxious to share in the punishment for recusancy, explaining that 'those of the wealthier sort only [were] to be dealt with according to the statute [the Act of 1581] and themselves to remain untouched'. Others again 'have boldly affirmed that it is necessary to have Mass and they hope to hear it'.⁹³ The letter went on to say that the cause of the 'disorders' was free access to, and conference with, not only recusants 'of good livelihood hereabouts', but also with the 'two traitors' (Body and Slade). There is also a reference to the 'secret persuasions' of the Seminary priests 'travelling to and fro [who] gave great occasion of the revolt in these parts'.

The Jesuit, Robert Persons, gives some supporting evidence about these recent events. On 24 August, 1583, he wrote from Paris to Rome referring to 'four priests who in one single county (Hampshire by name) since last Easter brought back to the bosom of the Church upwards of four hundred persons...'.⁹⁴

Dr Bennet, Master of St Cross, is greatly disturbed. Writing to Burghley on 3 November, 1583⁹⁵ he spoke of 'the great backwardness of the county in religion' and says that he finds it with more experience 'far above my expectations. For being present very lately at the execution of the two traitors and required by the Justices for the better satisfying of the people to debate with the parties of the cause of their death, I found in them so marvellous, perverse and most obstinate resolution against the regiment and sovereignty of Her Majesty in ecclesiastical causes. . . . In the people [he found] a favour and a liking of them. . . . And the opinion of the wisest is that the long delay of their execution hath wrought the county's great harm, which doth marvellously appear by the multitudes of their late revolts and the general contempt of the preaching of the Word, specially in this town [Winchester] above all probability of report'.

In 1584 John Watson, Bishop of Winchester, died and Dr Bennet is now able to air his opinions more freely. He tells Burghley on the 24 January⁹⁶ that he attributes the 'evil case' of the county partly to the delay in appointing a successor to Robert Horne, which the Seminarists took as an opportunity to overrun the whole shire, and partly to 'this man's [Watson's] too much lenity'. He wants the new bishop to be well qualified to deal with the

92. *Douai Diaries*, I and II, p. 353.

93. Cotton MS. Titus N. III, No. 81.

94. C.R.S. 39, p. 179.

95. Lansd. MSS. 39, No. 46.

96. Lansd. MSS. 40, No. 23.

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special problems which had arisen and hopes that the vacation 'be not too long lest the insolency of recusants be too great a height of pride'.

We see the new situation reflected in the contemporary episcopal documents containing particulars of citations for recusancy and non-communicating, and also in the result of a special inquisition undertaken in 1583. The former cover a short period immediately before the penal Act of 1581 and a further period immediately following, the total continuous period being January 1581 to July 1583.⁹⁷ During this period there was a total of 297 citations: 187 recusants (including 8 cases of 'rarely going to church' and 10 of 'not duly going to church') and 110 non-communicants. The citations are from 92 parishes and apparently one visitation is involved. Thirty-five citations are marked *indictatus* (indicted), these being cases of obstinate recusancy justifying legal trial. The number bears fairly close relationship to the number of recusants who were actually convicted at this time and concerning whom particulars of fines at the rate of £20 a month under the recusancy Act of 1581 are entered on the Pipe Rolls. For example, 22 recusants' names appear on the Hampshire portion of the Pipe Roll for 1582-3⁹⁸ and 10 on that of the Pipe Roll for 1583-4.⁹⁹

The result of the special inquisition made apparently in 1583 was produced in April of that year.¹⁰⁰ It consisted of some 300 recusants¹⁰¹ (not 'non-communicants') and 65 parishes were involved. The inquisition was perhaps more reliable than a list based on churchwardens' presentments would have been, but even so it included a covering statement furnishing the names of many more recusants which had been omitted, 'either by reason of their departures out of the parishes or else *by the negligence of the sworn men Inquisitors who should have presented them*'.¹⁰² It would seem that chosen 'inquisitors' were, like churchwardens and others, capable of connivance. Most of the well-known recusants (including many of the recusant gentry) whose names appear in other records and, later, in the Recusant Rolls are represented in this list of 300. There are 29 recusants in the gaol at Winchester.

The return indicates that Winchester (46 recusants) and the neighbourhood—Winnall, etc. (5 recusants)—accounted for a total of 51 recusants. A group of places three to six miles to the north-east of Winchester returned a total of 15 recusants and consisted of Itchen Abbas (6 recusants), Itchen Stoke (4), Easton (2), Ovington (2) and Avington (1). Most of these places were associated with the recusant gentleman, Nicholas Scrope.¹⁰³ A concentrated Twyford—Otterbourne group, a few miles south of Winchester, had 37 recusants and was associated with the recusant esquire, Gilbert Wells.¹⁰⁴ Farley Chamberlayne, a small village, some six miles south-west of Winchester, which was associated with the martyr,

97. *L.A.* 1581 and *L.A.* 1581-2.

98. *P.R.O.* E. 372/428.

99. *P.R.O.* E. 372/429.

100. *S.P. Dom Eliz.* 160/26.

101. The actual number is at least 299. It is not possible to state the exact number because some entries are in such terms as: 'One Allen and resorters to the house of Anthony, his wife . . .'; 'Lawrence Young and others . . . servants'; 'the Lady Mary West and all her family'.

102. *S.P. Dom Eliz.* 160/26. The italics are mine, there is no underlining in the original document.

103. *Nicholas Scrope* was the son of Anthony Scrope of Herefordshire and a direct descendant of Richard, Lord Scrope, Lord Treasurer to Edward III (*Harl. Soc.* 64, pp. 72, 73). He was returned as a recusant in 1577 with his wife, Winifred (*S.P. Dom Eliz.* 117, Nos. 10 and 10 (1)). He was in Winchester gaol for recusancy in 1583 (*S.P. Dom Eliz.* 160 (26)) and was later imprisoned in Wisbech Castle.

104. *Gilbert Wells* was the eldest son of Thomas Wells of Brambridge, Twyford (*Harl. Soc.* 64). He was High Sheriff of Hampshire in 1570 (*P.R.O.*: List of Sheriffs). Seven years later he was in Bishop Horne's list of recusants for 1577 (*C.R.S.* 22, pp. 39-41), and his name appears in many recusancy records subsequently.

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Ralph Miller, returned 17 recusants.¹⁰⁵ It will be seen that all these places within short distances of Winchester together with the city itself, accounted for 120 recusants, that is, two-fifths of the total for the county.

There were 49 recusants in a coastal group of places—Titchfield (8), Portchester (4), Fareham (2), West Boarhunt (near Wickham, a few miles inland) (10), Farlington (3) and Warblington (22). Warblington itself was associated with the wealthy esquire, George Cotton.¹⁰⁶

The list of 1583 implied a legacy of troubles which Bishop Watson was obliged to leave to his successor, Thomas Cooper, who was translated from Lincoln in 1584. The new Bishop was a vigorous opponent of the Puritans and also of Catholics, and had claimed in 1577 that he had practically cleared his diocese of the latter.¹⁰⁷ He was to find Hampshire a more difficult problem.

Cooper soon set to work. Writing to Burghley on 2 May, 1584, he asked leave 'to go out into the country with such authority and direction of assistance there that my endeavour may take effect among them [the Papists]'.¹⁰⁸ He had instructed the Archdeacon of Hampshire, he says, to make enquiry about those who were obstinate recusants and had been informed that there had *already* been presented by the churchwardens recusants to the number of 400 and in some parishes 40 or 50.¹⁰⁹ This number was evidently based on presentments to the Archdeacon's Court of which, unfortunately, no records survive: the presentments there must have been many more than the number of citations in the surviving episcopal records. Yet, even here, as in the case of the inquisition of 1583, local connivance seems to have been considerable. 'And yet is it thought certainly,' Cooper goes on to say, 'that by the slackness of the churchwardens, a great number are omitted.'¹¹⁰ Some 'extraordinary authority' is necessary to put down the recusants and 'that to be committed not to many. For I understand that there be divers of great countenance will speak very well and deal very hollowly.' He seems here to betray suspicion of the non-Catholic gentry who might be manifesting too much sympathy with hard-pressed Papists. Cooper wants either a local Ecclesiastical Commission or a commission of oyer and determiner, or both. An Ecclesiastical Commission is known to have been in operation in Winchester in the next year (1585).¹¹¹

Recusants who were considered sufficiently well-to-do were indicted under the Recusancy Act of 1581 and then possibly convicted or fined, or imprisoned, if they did not or could not

105. *Ralph Miller*, a husbandman, of Slackstead, Farley Chamberlayne, was closely associated with the work of two priests, Thomas Stanney and Roger Dicconson (R. Challoner, *Memoirs of Missionary Priests*, Pt. I, pp. 145, 230: Ldn. 1741). He was executed with Dicconson in Winchester in July 1591.

106. *George Cotton* was the eldest son of Sir Richard Cotton of Warblington and Bedhampton, Comptroller of the Household to Edward VI (Hants Visitations, Soc. 64, p. 129). He lived at Warblington Castle, built expressly for Margaret Pole, Countess of Salisbury, daughter of George, Duke of Clarence, and executed by Henry VIII.

George Cotton came under notice for recusancy at an early date. In 1577 he was included in Bishop Horne's return of recusants (C.R.S. 22, pp. 39-41). He paid recusancy fines at the rate of £260 a year regularly from 1587 till his death in 1609.

107. S.P. Dom Eliz., No. 13, and S.P. Dom Eliz., 118, No. 9, cited Kennedy, *Eliz. Episc. Adm.*, I, clxxiii and clxxiv.

108. Lansd. MS. 42 (41).

109. *Ibid.*

110. *Ibid.*

111. S.P. Dom Eliz. 184, No. 21: Exam: of Stephen Chesten.

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pay the fines. It was difficult to know what to do with the recusants of lower social class, who, quite clearly, were not able to pay the exacting fine of £20 a month. Nor could the process of the law keep pace at this time with the growing numbers of the Papists in the county, and, moreover, the prisons themselves were filling up. Cooper, for instance, in December 1585, was to mention in a letter to Walsingham that he had sent 'the wife of one Pitts of Alton' to the Clink in London to 'disburden the prison here'.¹¹² Imprisonment, in the circumstances, necessarily had its limits; whilst, in addition, it resulted in increased cost to the Crown, unless, of course, a recusant paid for his keep, which he frequently did if he could afford it. In this same year (1584), therefore, flogging as a punishment and possible deterrent was employed in Winchester, according to Robert Persons, who told the General of the Jesuit Order in Rome that five recusants were publicly flogged in the city but that 'none gave way'.¹¹³

The recusancy problem in Hampshire becomes still more acute in 1585 or thereabouts and the Clerk of the Peace is in serious difficulties. He says that the number of recusants to be indicted is so great that he is driven to spend 'not only by himself or by his deputy and a servant or two, a great deal of time before and after every sessions, but also the most part of the sessions itself in drawing and engrossing the indictments, judgements and processes thereupon'.¹¹⁴ The Justices are fully occupied with recusancy business and the Sessions are continued for more days than in the past. Almost all other causes, in consequence, have to be omitted. And with it all there has been no financial profit to the Crown for the convicted recusants are '... not found to have lands or goods to answer their condemnations and also without any reformation of any recusants...'.¹¹⁵

During these earlier years of the Catholic revival, some individual conversions which the Seminary priests effected had 'tactical' advantages. For example, there was David Ringstead, an under-keeper of the Gaol in Winchester, who, when cited as a recusant in June 1583, quite dauntlessly told the Consistory Court that it was well known that he had been a Papist for three years.¹¹⁶ He must have been of inestimable service to imprisoned recusants at this critical time. Moreover, when the Bishop of Winchester sent him to the Clink in London in June 1586, it was stated that 'it is suspected [Ringstead] hath been a carrier of priests from place to place by the space of three or four years'.¹¹⁷ He was still in the Clink in 1595.¹¹⁸

A further interesting case was that of Stephen Cheston, a pursuivant at Winchester, who was reconciled to Catholicism some time in 1585. It is not clear when exactly he became a Papist, but it was presumably after 3 May, 1585, for on this date the Bishop of Winchester wrote to Walsingham commending 'the especial and faithful diligence of our messengers, Stephen Cheston and Thomas Bedham' in seizing a Seminary priest, John Owen (*alias* John Gardiner) and two others in Winchester.¹¹⁹

Cheston's conversion was of singular significance. Had he been conniving at the escape of the priests? Had the authorised searches for them, in which his duty had obliged him to

112. S.P. Dom Eliz., 185, No. 17.

113. C.R.S. 4, p. 141.

114. S.P. Dom Eliz., 185, No. 83 (of ? 1585).

115. *Ibid.*

116. L.A. 1581-2, f. 138.

117. C.R.S., II, p. 241.

118. *Ibid.*, p. 284.

119. S.P. Dom Eliz., 177 (3).

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take part, been conducted—at least so far as he was concerned—with calculated carelessness or even with secret forewarning? It is true that he would have had a colleague or colleagues in the searches, but in the atmosphere of sympathy with Papistry which seems to have existed in the city it would probably not have been difficult to bribe them. At any rate, the authorities were patently alarmed and on 13 November, 1585, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in some force and presided over by the Bishop, held a 'long conference' with Cheston.¹²⁰ If the questions which he was asked were searching, the report of the proceedings shows that Cheston's answers were models of evasiveness or boldness about both his recusancy and his conduct as a pursuivant.¹²¹ One particular question asked whether he did 'apprehend all recusants which he had warrant to apprehend and might have apprehended?'. To which he merely replied that he had 'executed his office faithfully'. Like David Ringstead, Cheston was sent to the Clink.

Papists of standing in Winchester were also playing a considerable part in the Catholic Renaissance. There was, for example, the Lady Mary West, widow of Sir Owen West, a half-brother of Thomas West, Lord de la Warr, who was known to the Government for harbouring priests¹²² and whose house (now the Royal Hotel)¹²³ was searched in December 1583. No priest was discovered, but a great many Catholic articles were found. In a report¹²⁴ jointly made by the Bishop of Winchester, the Mayor and others, it was stated that 'in a secret place enclosed with boards were laid divers new and old papistical books, printed and written. In another place, more secret, vaulted underground, was found a chest bound with iron, wherein was all kind of massing apparel; a chalice of tin; a box full of singing cakes; a rich canopy of silver, of goldsmith's work; needlework clothes upon velvet for the altar; corpus cakes; a pax [pyx] of ivory set in wood. There was also wrapped in green silk two Agnus Deis enclosed in satin, broken in many pieces. . . . And also in the same chest were divers new Mass Books, manuals and catechisms. In one other place of the same house were found above forty old Mass and Latin service books'. The discovery of so much religious 'material' was incriminating enough, whilst the presence of so many Missals seems to indicate that the house was a supply centre for the district. But more was discovered: 'In the ladies' chamber was found a super-altar [i.e. for the celebration of Mass]; and it is confessed by one Frances, her servant, that the same chest was that morning also in the Ladies' chamber and removed into the vault when they heard there was search in the city. . . .' Lady West was allowed to remain in her house, but the servant was committed to prison.¹²⁵

The Mayor who, with the Bishop and others, signed the report of this search was Anthony Bird, the father of James Bird, executed in 1593 for his conversion to Catholicism. James had been present at a Mass celebrated in Lady West's house at some unspecified date.¹²⁶ In 1583 he was returned as a recusant for the parish of St Lawrence, Winchester, being described as 'Jeames Burde sonn of Mr Anthony Bird Mayor'.¹²⁷ He was no doubt a very active Papist during the period of ten years, 1583–1593.

These examples show the effect of the missionaries' efforts and also give some idea of the vigilance which was being exercised. Nor, moreover, as the tension in the country generally

120. S.P. Dom Eliz., 184, No. 21.

121. *Ibid.*

122. S.P. Dom Eliz. 168, No. 34.

123. C.R.S. 42, p. 2.

124. S.P. Dom Eliz., 164, No. 14.

125. S.P. Dom Eliz., 164, No. 14.

126. S.P. Dom Eliz., 127, No. 42.

127. S.P. Dom Eliz., 160, No. 26.

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increased with the mounting opposition to Spain and Catholicism, did Bishop Cooper's watchfulness relax. In 1586 he makes suggestions to Walsingham for 'repressing the boldness and waywardness of the recusants' who 'had so multiplied by revolting from religion'.¹²⁸ He wants diligent watch to be made on the seaside and creeks of Hampshire for 'the coming in or going out of evil-disposed persons' and increased domiciliary searches for Jesuits and Seminary priests. He thinks that a hundred or two obstinate recusants, 'lusty men, well able to labour' might be shipped off to Flanders as pioneers or labourers in the Army. He urges that some recusant gentlemen should be removed from the county where they would do less harm: they steal people's hearts, he said. 'For, even this last Easter [1586] upon some secret pact purposely wrought, 500 persons have refused to communicate more than did before.'¹²⁹

This report seems to indicate how acute the recusancy problem had become. If Cooper could speak of 500 *additional* non-communicants in this year and could also make the suggestion that a quite considerable body of *male* recusants of a *lower* social class should be sent abroad, the position must have been serious. Unfortunately, there are no surviving ecclesiastical documents which would have thrown light on the gravity of the problem at this time, but a report to the Privy Council made a few months before the Armada gives some supporting evidence of a considerable number of recusants. Thus, on 21 February, 1588, Captain Nicholas Dawtrey, member of a Hampshire family of standing, in reporting on the defences of the county, said that there were many recusants and that 'My Lord Bishop told me he was able to give a note of 200 in a little corner . . .'.¹³⁰

On the other hand, two Act Books which do survive for this period place rather a different emphasis on the situation. They cover two periods, December 1586—July 1587¹³¹ and the beginning of 1588 to May 1589,¹³² and concern only 76 parishes. There were 296 citations in all. Although no general conclusion can be drawn from these two records, an interesting feature which they demonstrate is that, of the total of 296, not more than 47 citations were for *some* kind of non-attendance at church, including only 7 for absolute recusancy, 36 for 'negligently' attending church, 2 for 'very negligently' attending, 1 for 'slackly attending' and 1 absence for the space of a month. The non-communicants formed by far the greater proportion of the total, namely 249. This high proportion, together with the number cited for occasional conformity, is no doubt attributable to fear of the financial and other penalties under the stringent recusancy statutes of 1581 and 1586-7. This aspect is brought out clearly in the terms of the citation of Elizabeth Fisher of Martyr Worthy in 1586: she is charged with being a non-communicant and for coming negligently to church (that is, for conforming occasionally), 'only to save the penalty of the statute'.¹³³ Later, she appears in records as a recusant, for in 1592-3 she was fined £180 for recusancy,¹³⁴ whilst on 6 October, 1598, she was cited to the Consistory Court as a recusant.¹³⁵

128. Strype, *Annals*, 2, Part 2, pp. 344, 345.

129. Strype, *Annals*, 2, Part 2, pp. 344, 345.

130. S.P. 208, No. 75.

131. *L.A.* 1586.

132. *L.A.* 1588 (no precise date of commencement given).

133. *L.A.* 1586, f. 7.

134. C.R.S., 18, p. 288.

135. *Processus contra Recusantes*, 1598-1602, p. 24.

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(4) LAST PERIOD, 1590-1603, AND SOME CONCLUSIONS

The defeat of the Spanish Armada did not seem to have radically altered the recusancy situation in the county, for less than two years afterwards—in May 1590—the Council wrote to the Bishop of Winchester mentioning that ‘very many recusants in that county to the number of 300 or upward are *yet at liberty*’.¹³⁶ The Bishop was informed by the Council that he would have the assistance of the Lords Lieutenants of the county in apprehending and committing ‘the most dangerous and worst affected both of men and women to some convenient place for their safe and close restraint, those of best quality to the Castle and the rest to the common gaol or to some other place . . .’¹³⁷ This was necessary ‘during these doubtful times’.

Thomas Cooper died in 1594. In March 1596 William Day, newly-appointed as Bishop and recently arrived in his diocese, is very much disturbed at the extent of recusancy in Hampshire. In writing¹³⁸ to Sir Robert Cecil about the profits of his See, he mentions that for two years no bishop has been in charge, the last bishop having died before he could come to Winchester.¹³⁹ History is thus repeating itself, for a situation has been created similar to that which existed after the death of Robert Horne in 1579. There was much delay in appointing a successor to Horne and, as has been seen, the Seminary priests during the interval overran the county.¹⁴⁰ William Day now says that the county is ‘full of recusants and men backward in religion’. ‘There hath [*sic*] been landed of late (as I am informed) some Jesuits and seminaries provided to seduce the people’.¹⁴¹ Unfortunately for the Government, Day had little time to do much visitation work, for he died in 1596, but his successor, Thomas Bilson, who was appointed in June 1596, remained at Winchester till his death in 1616.

No records of citations for recusancy or non-communicating survive for the years 1588-9 to 1598, except a partial record of 113 citations confined to the month of November 1593.¹⁴² The fact that a good deal of activity for that one month of November is recorded seems to suggest that other citations took place—more especially as the vigilant and exacting Bishop Cooper did not die till 1594—but that the records have been lost.

During the last five years of the reign proceedings against recusants cited to the Consistory Court are numerous and important enough to warrant the making of a separate record, *Processus contra Recusantes*, 1598-1602. This record deals with 587 citations for recusancy from March 1598 to March 1602/3. Some of the recusants were cited more than once and the *net* number of recusants concerned in the total citations is 437. The distribution of the recusants over the county can perhaps best be indicated as in the Table which follows, the places where the recusants are chiefly found being more or less geographically arranged in groups:

136. A.P.C. (N.S.), 5 May, 1590.

137. *Ibid.*

138. S.P. Dom Eliz., 256, No. 102.

139. This was William Wickham, appointed in 1595.

140. See page 3.

141. S.P. Dom Eliz., 256, No. 102.

142. L.A. 1593 (ii).

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PERIOD 1598—MARCH 1602/3

Group	Towns or parishes, with number of recusants
I. Winchester	Winchester 75 plus Weeke 7. <i>Total</i> 82.
II. Timsbury—Somborne	Timsbury 6, King's Somborne 8, Somborne 2, Farley Chamberlayne 2, Michelmersh 3, Romsey 3. <i>Total</i> 24.
III. Coastal Group I	Southampton 1, Eling 1, Titchfield 3, Fareham 3, West Boarhunt 18, Southwick 8, Wymering 16, Portsea 1, Widley 1, Bedhampton 1, Farlington 5, Havant 1, Warblington 19. <i>Total</i> 78.
IV. Coastal Group II	Ringwood 1, Holdenhurst 11, Hythe 2, Christchurch 13, Milford 2, Fawley 2, Hordle 3, Lymington 1. <i>Total</i> 35.
V. Meon—Ropley	Droxford 7, Hambledon 17, East Meon 9, Warnford 1, Exton 3, Meonstoke 3, West Meon 1, Soberton 3, Wickham 1, Privett 1, West Tisted 1, Bramdean 1, Bishop's Waltham 3. <i>Total</i> 51.
VI. Twyford—Otterbourne	Compton 4, Stoneham (North and South) 15, Owslebury 9, Hursley 7, Otterbourne 31, Twyford 4. <i>Total</i> 70.
VII. Itchen Abbas	Itchen Abbas 9, Avington 1, Easton 7, Cheriton 3, Ovington 6. <i>Total</i> 26.
VIII. Buriton	Buriton 13, Idsworth 3, Steep 1, Catherington 1, Petersfield 1. <i>Total</i> 19.
IX. Outlying	Basing 10, Long Sutton 5, Bramshott 5. <i>Total</i> 20.
<i>Remainder of total of 437</i>	32 recusants.

Of the total number of recusants, 437, the women very much outnumber the men¹⁴³ There were 155 men and 282 women, and these included 27 gentlemen and 47 gentlewomen. Of the women, there are numerous cases where they are cited as *wives*, without the citation of their husbands, indicating that if the husbands were indeed Catholic in essential belief, they conformed outwardly. There are actually fifteen cases in which only the wives of *gentlemen* were cited for recusancy. Here the husbands were probably *Church-Papists* in order to avoid, as they were persons of position, the financial penalties of the recusancy laws.¹⁴⁴

Recusants in Winchester (and Weeke) numbering 82, formed one-fifth of the total (437), the city thus retaining its position as the chief centre of recusancy in the county. Moreover, if we associate Winchester with the Twyford Group, a short distance to the south, the total is 152 recusants, or over one-third of the total. A similar concentration is observable in 1583. Two further interesting groups, though not concentrations, are the two coastal groups, accounting for 113 recusants. At these coastal places the recusant gentry, like Henry Carey at Hordle Bremor, John Tichborne at Christchurch, the Ludlows at Cams (Fareham), the Brunings at Wymering, the Pounds at Farlington, George Cotton at Warblington, some of whom were *known* to the Government as harbourers of priests, were in 'strategic' positions along the coast, their manor-houses being near creeks or small harbours where the missionaries

143. This is also a feature of recusancy in Yorkshire, see Dickens, *Recusancy in Yorkshire*, 1604, in *Yorkshire Arch. Journal*, Part 145, p. 39.

144. A husband was not financially liable for his wife's recusancy until the Act of 1609 (7 & 8 Jas. I, C. 6).

HAMPSHIRE RECUSANTS

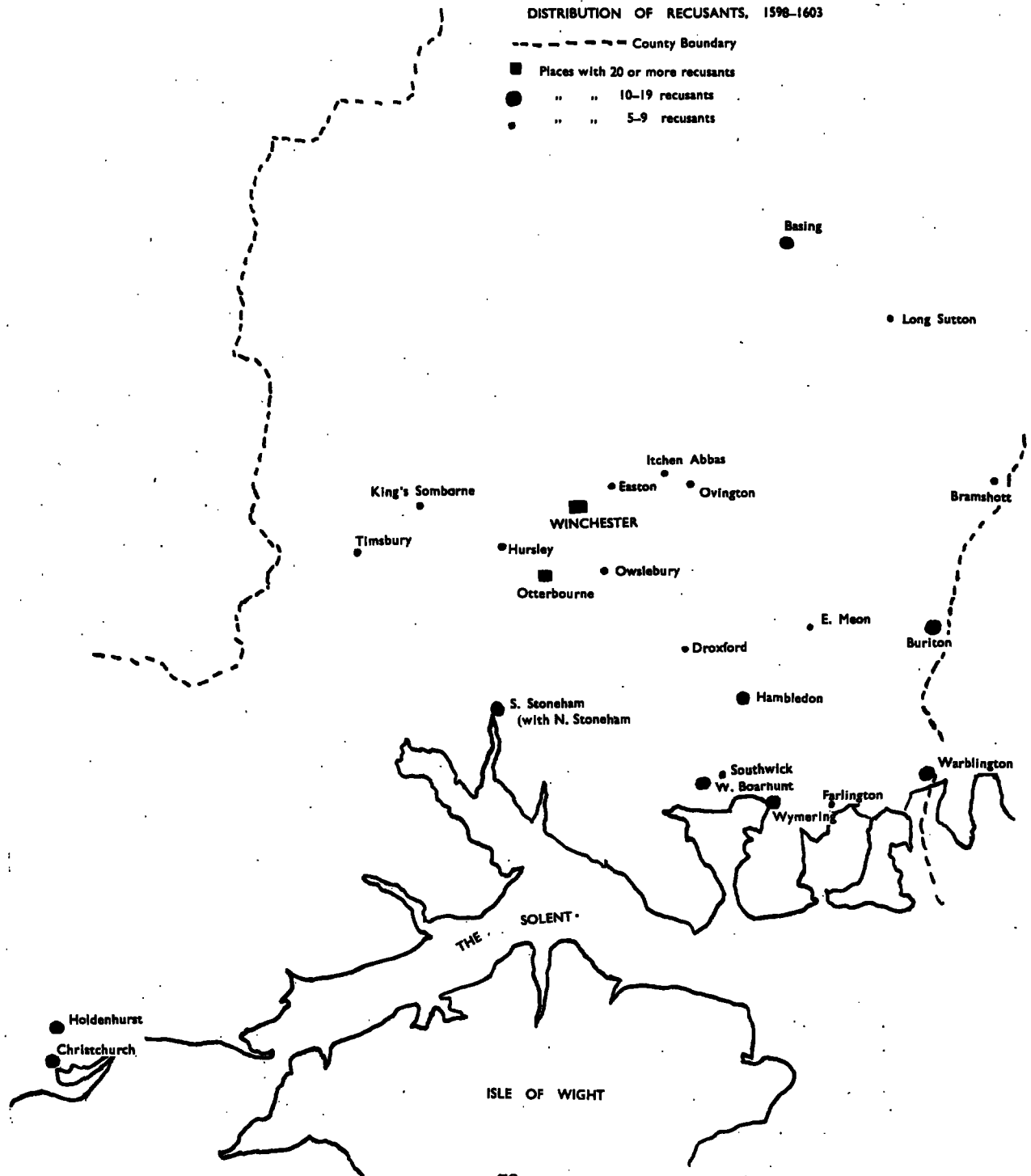
DISTRIBUTION OF RECUSANTS, 1598-1603

--- County Boundary

■ Places with 20 or more recusants

● " " 10-19 recusants

• " " 5-9 recusants



could be landed in reasonable security. Moreover, it is possible that the Seminary priests were coming to Hampshire—conveniently situated opposite French ports like Havre or Dieppe—where there were many ‘hospitable’ recusants, rather than to the coast near London or to more Protestant Essex or Kent, where there would have been greater risk of capture. The Hampshire coast was constantly receiving the attention of the authorities in order to seize incoming priests.¹⁴⁵

Any concentration of recusants at places within a group must be associated with recusant gentry whose manor-houses inevitably formed Mass-centres. Indeed, a noteworthy feature of recusancy in Hampshire, as in other markedly rural counties, was the close dependence of surviving Catholicism on the constancy of the Catholic gentry, who provided the necessary leadership. But Hampshire recusancy was more than a movement of the Papist gentry. It has been seen, for instance, that in 1583 there was a great ‘revolting’ of people of the lower social classes, whilst among the *convicted* recusants in 1602-3 there were, besides 27 members of the gentry, 151 persons of lower status (yeomen, husbandmen, tailors, weavers, labourers and their wives).¹⁴⁶

Altogether 95 parishes are concerned in the total of 587 citations for the last five years. At this time there seem to have been 232 parishes¹⁴⁷ in the Archdeaconry of Winchester, or, in other words, Hampshire. According to the records, therefore, there were no recusants in many parishes and to a large extent the north, north-west and west of Hampshire were unrepresented.¹⁴⁸

The figure of 437 recusants is arrived at by a detailed knowledge of the individual citations, but it possibly does not represent the full strength of Hampshire recusancy. Records of presentments to the Archdeacon’s Court would have made the position clearer, but no records survive. Moreover, there is a good deal of evidence to show that connivance at Papistry was considerable in the county, and some evidence of it has already been indicated. But it is, of course, impossible to estimate its effect in actual figures.

The general Diocesan Return of 1603 gives a total figure of 398 recusants for the whole of the Winchester diocese.¹⁴⁹ The diocese, however, then included besides the Archdeaconry of Winchester (or Hampshire), the Archdeaconry of Surrey, and this figure is hardly a representative one. Fortunately, details for 1603 are available in another return.¹⁵⁰ In this return, under the heading *Southampton* (that is, Hampshire), the figure of 398 is repeated, but particulars of the recusants for every parish in the whole of the Archdeaconry of Winchester immediately follow. By a simple process of addition, the total number of recusants in 1603 is found to be 447, which reasonably corresponds to the number of recusants already mentioned, 437. The figure of 398 is thus demonstrably not accurate. The number of non-communicants (Church-Papists) was 230.

In considering any figures for recusancy it has to be borne in mind that a person did not legally become a recusant till the age of 16 and that, since Elizabethan families were generally large, statements of the numbers of recusants in a county do not fully represent the strength of Catholicism there. It would not, therefore, be a valid procedure to compare such a

145. Strype, *Annals*, 2, Part 2, pp. 344, 345. A.P.C. (N.S.), 25 May, 1586; 2 August, 1586. Strype, *Life of Whitgift*, II, p. 3, etc.

146. E. 377/11.

147. *The Parish Register and Parochial Documents in the Archdeaconry of Winchester* (edited W. A. Fearon and J. F. Williams), p. 2, N. 1.

148. Similar ‘patchiness’ is observable in Yorkshire (Dickens, *Recusancy in Yorkshire 1604*, Yorkshire Arch. Journal, Part 145, p. 96.

149. Harl. MS. 280, pp. 157-172.

HAMPSHIRE RECUSANTS

number with the total population of the county, even if a reliable figure for this were available. A comparison with the total communicant population is, however, more reasonable.

In 1603 the communicant population for Hampshire is given as 58,707.¹⁵⁰ It will be seen that, even if a margin of error has to be allowed in examining this figure, the proportion of recusants is inconsiderable.¹⁵¹ Nor is this, perhaps, altogether surprising. Human nature being what it is, the number of those people who, in an essentially underground movement like that of Catholicism in Elizabeth I's reign, were prepared to incur the penalties of stringent laws was small. In other words, the Elizabethan State, through the enforcement of its penal legislation, had secured an habitual religious conformity among the bulk of the people. It is probable that many persons at the end of the reign were Catholic at heart, though outwardly conforming, but attempts to estimate their total number in the country have resulted in widely differing figures. All such attempts are, perhaps, bound to end in failure. We are on firm ground in dealing with actual recusants, and the important factor here was the existence of strong *nuclei* of 'obstinate' recusants round whom, if the circumstances became favourable, Catholicism would increase and thrive. That was the essential danger for the government of Elizabeth, which never for a moment lost sight of it. Such a strong nucleus was always present in Hampshire, where Cooper, who was called upon to deal with the Catholic Renaissance in the '80s and early '90s, was not able, despite all his vigilance and zeal, to eradicate Papistry as he claimed in 1577 to have practically eradicated it in his previous diocese of Lincoln.¹⁵²

150. Harl. MS. 595, pp. 213-241.

151. For Yorkshire, the largest English county, it is estimated that in 1604 recusants and non-communicants together formed 1.5% of the population (*Recusancy in Yorkshire*, 1604, by A. G. Dickens: Yorkshire Arch. Journal, Part 145, p. 33). At this time recusants were increasing owing to more relaxed conditions and the hope of concessions from James I. For Hampshire, there is a total (*net*) of 451 recusants on the Recusant Roll for 1604-5 (P.R.O. E. 377/13). This represents the number of recusants indicted, convicted and financially penalised, not the number of recusants from which convictions took place. In 1606-7 there is a total of 1202 names of convicted, etc., recusants for Lancashire—the chief English recusant county—and 1075 for Yorkshire (P.R.O. E. 377/15), but some of the names are duplicated and a material reduction must be made to obtain the net figures.

152. S.P. Dom Eliz., 117/13, and S.P. Dom. Eliz., 118, No. 9, cited Kennedy, *Eliz. Bpis. Admin.*, pp. clxxiii and clxxiv.

HAMPSHIRE FIELD CLUB PROCEEDINGS

