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## Celebrating Canon A. J. C. Scoles – A Centenary Tribute

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A collection of four biographical sketches of this Pastor and Ecclesiastical Architect

Collated by Richard Barton in 2020



Canon Scoles in 1893

### Our Church Architect – Canon A. J. C. Scoles (1844-1920) by Michael Huscroft

Alexander Joseph Cory Scoles was born in Hammersmith, London, on 30<sup>th</sup> November 1844, the third son of Joseph John Scoles and Harriet Cory. His father, J. J. Scoles, was a well-known architect, born of Catholic parents in 1798 and educated at the Franciscan school at Baddesley Clinton, near Birmingham, during the Napoleonic Wars. Joseph was apprenticed to another Catholic architect, John Ireland, who did much work for Dr John Milner, Vicar Apostolic of the Western District from 1803-1826. J. J. Scoles designed numerous Catholic churches, notably:

the Jesuit college chapel of St. Peter at Stonyhurst and the Jesuit church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street, London – he also designed the college church of St Mary at Prior Park, which was completed over twenty-five years later by his son, Alexander.

After completing his general education in Bruges, Belgium, in 1862, Alexander began to serve articles with his father, but the latter died the following year. He completed his articles under Samuel Joseph Nichol, a relative and former pupil and successor to his father. On completion of his pupillage, Alexander first practised on his own account and then, briefly, with his cousin, John Myrie Cory. In 1873 his cousin left England to join an architectural practice in Shanghai, China, and, shortly afterwards it seems, Alexander entered the seminary at Prior Park, Bath, to study for the priesthood.

He was ordained in 1878 and spent the first twenty-three years of his priesthood in the diocese of Clifton, serving first at Taunton, then as parish priest of St. Joseph's, Bridgwater, until 1891, before taking over the Holy Ghost Parish, Yeovil, until 1901. Father Scoles designed the churches for both these parishes and the presbytery at Yeovil; he became a canon of the pro-cathedral of Clifton in 1893.



Holy Ghost, Basingstoke

It is claimed that once, when on the train to London sometime in 1901, Canon Scoles looked out from Basingstoke station and saw the impressive ruins of the Holy Ghost Chapel – he was fascinated, particularly as he had just completed his church in Yeovil which was dedicated to

the Holy Ghost, as was the town of Basingstoke. Bishop Cahill of Portsmouth could not afford a resident priest in Basingstoke at the time so was delighted to accept Canon Scoles' offer to go and serve there as parish priest. Not only that, he was prepared to pay for and design a new church of the Holy Ghost. The consecration of the church by Bishop Cahill in 1903 coincided with Canon Scoles' silver jubilee as a priest. He resigned his canonry in Clifton in 1904 and was made a canon of St. John's cathedral, Portsmouth, in 1905. The Canon remained parish priest of the Holy Ghost, Basingstoke, until his death in the hospital of Saints John and Elizabeth, London, on 29 December 1920.

The fact that someone should first train as an architect and then become a priest is not, in itself, remarkable. What is remarkable, however, is that after becoming a priest Fr. Scoles continued to practice professionally as an architect almost until his death, albeit he did take a partner, Geoffrey Raymond, in 1903. The practice was then known as Scoles and Raymond.



Immaculate Conception, Clevedon

The number of works involving Alexander Scoles are too numerous to mention here, but they included: churches, chapels, presbyteries, convents, friaries, monasteries, schools, a teacher training college and an orphanage: many in entirety, others just extensions or alterations. In the Clifton diocese alone he was involved in the design and/or building of over a dozen churches or chapels, most notably St Mary's, Prior Park, Bath, where he completed the design originated by his father over twenty-five years before; St Joseph's, Bridgwater; the Immaculate Conception, Clevedon; St Joseph's, Portishead; the Holy Ghost, Yeovil; extensions to J. A. Hansom's small church of St. Joseph, Weston-super-Mare. Canon Scoles continued his practice after moving to the diocese of Portsmouth in 1901, including extensions to the cathedral, and also work in Devon and Cornwall. It is likely that his involvement slackened somewhat in these later years and that much of his work was undertaken by his partner, Geoffrey Raymond. In addition to the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Clevedon, Canon

Scoles also designed the church and friary of St. Francis of Assisi, South Ascot, Berkshire, the church of St. Joseph, Portishead, and the church and friary of St. Thomas of Canterbury, Woodford Green, Essex, for the Order of Friars Minor. He must have been working on Clevedon, Portishead and South Ascot all at the same time. Perhaps there was some family recollection of his father's education by the Franciscans at Baddesley Clinton so many years before.

Accounts describe the Canon as being eccentric in character, but that his rough exterior covered a gentle nature and a heart of gold. His generosity cannot be doubted as evidenced by his many gifts (including the whole church at Basingstoke), altars and church furniture. He was clearly an able architect, although professional opinion varies as to the quality of some of his work. It should be remembered, however, that he was often struggling with schemes where funds were scarce with consequential limitations on his freedom of action. He also courted controversy when, in 1908/09, the Tablet published correspondence from certain Catholic architects and others calling for the church authorities to stop him practising – some said his buildings were cheap and ugly. It seems that the Canon was charging low, if any, professional fees for some of his work and, thereby, denying work to lay architects! Mother Clare, head of the Ursuline convent and school in Brentwood, Essex, and a great admirer of the Canon, came to his defence with a poem, the last line of which read, “..... God bless Canon Scoles.”

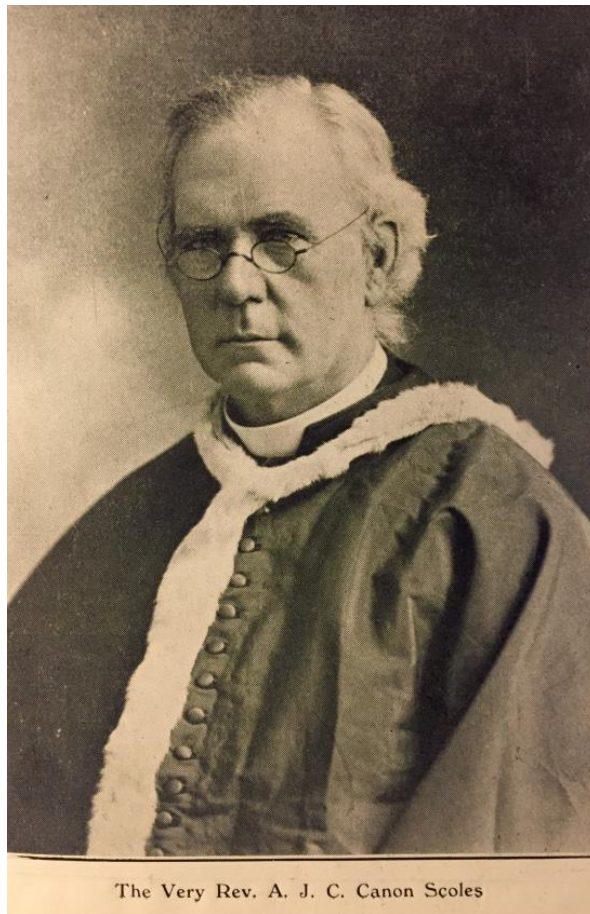
Apart from his passion for architecture, it appears that the Canon was skilled in lace-making and embroidery. He had a keen interest in the welfare of underprivileged children and many owed him a proper upbringing. Whilst the rest of Basingstoke had gas and paraffin heating, the Canon operated a small engine which generated electricity for his church hall, the church being heated from a boiler in the presbytery cellar.

During the 1914/18 War, the Belgian royal family lived in exile near and regularly attended Mass at the Holy Ghost Church. On one occasion, Queen Elizabeth of Belgium was accompanied by Queen Annelie of Portugal; the Canon instructed his thurifer, “Before you do the congregation go down and incense the two queens.” Reputedly, he had a powerful voice with which he showed his disapproval of late comers to Mass, and it seems that ladies with new hats came in for special attention during the Asperges. Once, when asked why he had built such a large church for such a small congregation, he bellowed in reply, “I built the church, my successors will fill it.”

Altogether, the Canon must have been a most remarkable man, albeit one not to be trifled with by the sound of it, and one whose like it is difficult to imagine could exist in either the priestly or architectural ranks today. He died, aged seventy-six years, at Basingstoke, where there is still a very substantial memorial.

( I was given a copy of this article some years ago and, so far, I have not been able to obtain the author's permission to use it. I will take it down immediately if the author wishes me to do so)





### ‘Rev Alexander Joseph Cory Scoles’ by W. Drum

Most of my knowledge about Fr Scoles concerns the period which he served as priest-in-charge at St Joseph’s Bridgwater from September 6<sup>th</sup> 1881 to June 1891. He was thirty-eight-years-old when he arrived at Bridgwater from St George’s Parish, Taunton, so presumably he was born during 1843. His father was an architect who carried out architectural requirements by Clifton Diocese and Fr Scoles himself, in addition to his training for the priesthood, was also trained as an architect. I cannot say where Fr Scoles was born and I have no information about the places of education that he attended. He left Bridgwater at the end of June 1891 to build a church and presbytery at Yeovil and was made Canon of the Diocese by Bishop Brownlow on July 5<sup>th</sup> 1894. Fr Scoles died on December 20<sup>th</sup> 1920, at the age of seventy-seven, in the Hospital of St John and St Elizabeth, St John’s Wood, London.

Before the Reformation Bridgwater had a Franciscan monastery and a Hospice for travellers which was also an Augustinian monastery. There were several chapels and churches including the present Church of England parish church, St Mary’s, but the monasteries and chapels were destroyed and St Mary’s Church ceased to be used for Mass at the time of the Reformation. There was no Catholic church in the town after the Reformation until 1846 when a small

building was erected to serve as a chapel and school. About thirty years later when Catholic children from Highbridge were travelling by train to attend the school in addition to those from Bridgwater, Bishop Clifford decided that the old chapel/school was too small. A friend of the Scoles Family, Mr Philip Hewitt of Langport, who was retired and living in Boulogne, offered financial support if plans were made to enlarge the old building or to build new premises. Eventually he covered the whole cost of the present St Joseph's Church.

Bishop Clifford after consultation decided that a new church should be built near the centre of the town and in 1879 a large house and grounds near the River Parrett was purchased as a presbytery and site for the new St Joseph's Church. Fr Scoles was at that time architect for the Bishop and serving as priest at Taunton. He was involved in all the negotiations and decisions and was given the job of designing the new church and supervising the building work.

Fr Scoles drew the plans and designs and assisted by a local solicitor prepared the contract. A local builder, who gave the lowest tender of £886-10-0d, was given the contract which was signed on September 5<sup>th</sup> 1881, the same day that Fr Scoles was appointed priest-in-charge at Bridgwater. He took up residence at the presbytery two days later and from there he kept a constant watch on building work going on alongside the house. Work began immediately and Bishop Clifford was also a regular visitor to the site. The church was completed sufficiently in less than ten months for the opening on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1882. Fr Scoles then had repairs carried out to the roof of the old chapel/school so that children could still attend for lessons until a new school could be built. This did not take very long as Fr Scoles, again with financial help from Mr Hewitt, purchased some land from next door to provide the site. He designed a single building with a dividing wall to make two classrooms and on March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1883 it was completed and opened as St Joseph's School.

In May 1883 the founder and benefactor, Mr Philip Hewitt, was failing in health when Fr Scoles travelled to Boulogne to bring him to live at the presbytery in Bridgwater. Provision was made for Mr Hewitt to attend Mass without leaving the house by building a small raised platform into the wall of the side altar and a doorway cut into the wall to give access from the presbytery. A curtain and curtain rail enabled the invalid to be out of sight of the congregation. The tribune and doorway are still in the wall of the Church.

Fr Scoles was meticulous in everything that he undertook whether it concerned building work or church services and other duties. He arranged several 'Missions' with special preachers and on at least one occasion re-introduced the pre-Reformation practice of carrying the Blessed Sacrament in procession through the main street on the Feast of Corpus Christi and he sent a full report to the local newspaper. He made a regular practice of supplying items of news about the parish to the local papers and cuttings from these newspapers provided much information about St Joseph's Bridgwater during the ten years that Fr Scoles was priest-in-charge. One item described a visit to Glastonbury on July 6<sup>th</sup> 1883 when 54 parishioners, including children, travelled in twin horse-drawn brakes.

He was very good at handiwork particularly needlework and embroidery which was highly commended at the Bath and West Show. It is said that he could often be seen rolling wax tapers for use in the church and house. Fr Scoles was very determined to keep the Church and its work before the local people and never missed an opportunity of defending it against any false accusations by bigots who wrote in the papers. One outstanding example was his action in reply to a lecture given by a woman in Bridgwater Town Hall. She used a pseudonym, 'Biddy O'Gorman' and described herself as an 'escaped nun.' The theme of her lecture was that convents were places of ill-repute and she made disparaging comments about nuns. The lecture was fully reported in a local newspaper and caused much comment in the town. Fr Scoles obtained a sermon by another priest which answered the type of false accusations which had been made by the lecturer. He read the sermon in church and then sent a full report of it to the local press and one paper published the sermon. A local clergyman then wrote to the paper complaining about the publication of the sermon and claiming that convents and nuns were as described by the lecturer. The Editor on receiving that letter answered the clergyman in his editorial and described the complaints about the nuns as "bristling with inaccuracies." He also published letters from readers supporting the sermon read by Fr Scoles. It was fortunate that Fr Scoles took this action because he had just converted property near the church for use as a convent for the Sisters of Mercy from Bristol. Some nuns were qualified teachers and they provided the staffing complement at St Joseph's little school next to the convent.

Fr Scoles took a very great interest in the local affairs of Bridgwater and showed that interest in a practical way. He built several houses in the town and purchased land for the installation of Bridgwater's first swimming pool. He purchased some property next to the little convent so that a laundry could be built for the nuns which enabled them to take in washing from the townspeople. Fr Scoles designed the lay-out and obtained equipment which was advanced for those days. The water was heated by copper furnaces, an oxygen drying oven gave the effect of fresh air drying to the washing and two steam-driven spin driers were installed. The nuns engaged twenty local ladies in the laundry which was well patronised.

Many of Fr Scoles activities showed his strong feelings for the under-privileged. He served on the Board of Guardians and worked with activities to help the Home for the Elderly. He was also a member of a local friendly Society and the Cemetery committee and secretary of Clifton Infirm Priests' Association.

On one occasion he became the arbitrator in a dispute of the local Brick and Tile Industry when the management proposed a reduction in wages. The matter was resolved without any reduction in wages.

Fr Scoles took a personal interest when a Friendly Society member was wrongfully expelled and the case was taken to court at Manchester. He travelled there to give evidence for the man who won the case and on their arrival in Bridgwater railway station they found the local brass band and a crowd of people waiting to greet them and to escort them back to the town centre where Fr Scoles had to make a speech.

In 1891 when it was announced that Fr Scoles was being transferred to Yeovil the parishioners and the Sisters of Mercy arranged a farewell concert for two evenings. Sadness was expressed by parishioners and many Non-Catholics and the Bridgwater Town Council made a special effort to express their feelings for Scoles and to record their appreciation for the work he had done in Bridgwater.

A large crowd attended a meeting to see Mr Henry Knight, Mayor of Bridgwater, present Fr Scoles with a purse of £50 donated by the townspeople and an illuminated Address which read:

*'To the Rev. A. J. C. Scoles,*

*In asking acceptance of the accompanying testimonial the subscribers desire to convey their extreme regret that you are about to sever your connection with the town of Bridgwater and also to record their appreciation of your connection with the town of Bridgwater and also to record their appreciation of your private virtues and public benefice. In your capacity of Guardian of the Poor and member of a Rural Sanitary authority you have proved yourself alike a friend to the necessitated poor and a zealous representative of the interest of ratepayers; the personal and active interest you have taken in the work of the Friendly societies have been productive of thrift and independence, the cause of elementary education has been promoted by your establishment of new schools in our midst. St Joseph's laundry founded and erected by you has opened up a new and useful industry in Bridgwater. Last but not least the inhabitants generally will remain indebted to you for the provision of a much needed town requirement in the shape of a Public Swimming Baths and recreation grounds which have proved an inestimable boon and with your name be identified. We sincerely hope that in your new sphere of labour at Yeovil and elsewhere that you will be blessed with good health and happiness and enabled to pursue those works of Philanthropy which have conferred so much benefit upon the town of Bridgwater.*

*Signed on behalf of the subscribers*

*Henry Knight, Mayor of Bridgwater and Charles E. Hayman, Hon. Sec. and Treasurer'*

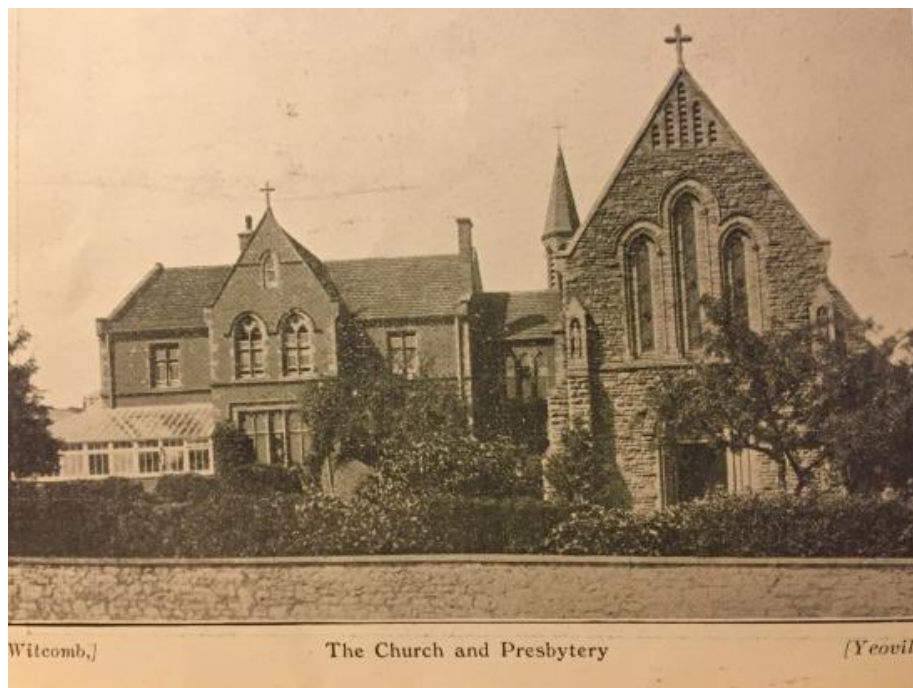
During Fr Scoles' ten years at Bridgwater it was said that there was a period of five consecutive years when he took no holiday. It is also said that he built many other churches in the South and South West of England and that he completed the design of the collegiate church at Prior Park which was started by his father but I cannot confirm that.

One of the local histories of Bridgwater by Sydney Gardener Jarman, published in 1889, mentions Fr Scoles and Fr Kennard (Cannington) in the preface for help with the book and

His departure from Bridgwater was a great loss to St Joseph's made much worse by the departure of the Sisters of Mercy from Bridgwater at the same time leaving the school for a short period without teachers.



The school was replaced by the present school on a different site in September 1963. The present St Joseph's church built by Fr Scoles was extended and adapted to accommodate double the congregation in April 1982 just two months after the centenary celebrations.



From 'The Catholic Church of the Holy Ghost, Yeovil' by Rev J. Anthonioz (1928)

#### A New Shepherd

The neighbouring Mission of Bridgwater was served at that time by the Rev. Father A. J. C. Scoles, a Priest remarkable for his talents as an architect. He had been ordained Priest in 1878, and then sent to Taunton as curate and later to Bridgwater as parish priest. During the few years had had spent at the latter place he had by his zeal and generosity, already added a great deal to the beauty of the little church.

While Father Badger (of Wincanton) was praying and considering how to ensure the future spiritual welfare of his flock, a sudden inspiration came to him; perhaps his friend, Father Scoles, might be willing to take charge of Yeovil and do for this Mission what he had done for Bridgwater. It was the month of March (1891) and close to the Feast of St. Joseph, the Patron of the whole Catholic Church, and in particular of Father Scoles himself. Father Badger entrusted his undertaking and its success to the great Saint. On the 17<sup>th</sup> he wrote to his friend, both to wish him a happy feast-day and to tell him of the subject he had so much at heart. The good Father's hopes and prayers were not in vain. By return of post Father Scoles replied that he had submitted the proposal to the Bishop and that if His Lordship were agreeable, he was prepared to come to Yeovil.

On hearing from Father Scoles, Bishop Clifford's astonishment was surpassed only by his esteem for the self-denying zeal of Bridgwater's Parish Priest, as will be shown by a few extracts from His Lordship's reply:

*Monastery of the Visitation, Westbury-on-Trym, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1891.*

*Dear Mr. Scoles,*

*Your letter of the 18<sup>th</sup> with the enclosure from Father Badger reached me last night. The very generous offer you make of undertaking the Mission at Yeovil is in keeping with the generous and self-sacrificing spirit you have all along exhibited in working for the glory of God, the advancement of His Church and the good of the diocese. I should never have thought of asking you to exchange Bridgwater for Yeovil after all you have spent and done for the former place, and all the plans you have formed for completing the work.*

*When your letter reached me, making the offer yourself I was quite taken aback, but after thinking the matter over last night and this morning, after praying for light, I look upon your offer as an inspiration...*

*If therefore you feel the courage to undertake the work at Yeovil, I will appoint you to it ...  
Believe me, yours most sincerely,*

*+ William Clifford, Bishop of Clifton*

If Father Scoles was lacking in anything, it certainly was not in courage and determination, and so he was appointed to the place of his choice. On the 26<sup>th</sup> September, 1891, the little Yeovil Mission bade farewell to its first Pastor and welcomed its new Shepherd.

At Work

The arrival of the Rev. Father Scoles in Yeovil marked the beginning of a new era in the history of the Mission: the ten years that followed witnessed most important material developments.

The new Shepherd, Alexander Joseph Cory Scoles was born at Hammersmith on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1844. His father, a distinguished architect, was vice-president of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and one of the founders of the Syrio-Egyptian Society. The young Scoles received his education at the College of St. Louis, Bruges, and in 1862 he was articled to his father. After practising with him in London till 1872, he decided to study for the Priesthood, and accordingly, he repaired to Prior Park, Bath, which was then a Seminary. His father was at the time building the church there but died before it was completed. The son carried on and finished the father's work.

Ordained in 1878, he was sent to Taunton as a curate and allowed by his Bishop to exercise his talents as an architect on behalf of the Church. From Taunton he went, as has already

been said to Bridgwater and now he had come to Yeovil to devote his strength, his talents and his means to the glory of God in this new Mission-field.

He started work at once. A few months after his arrival a local paper published the following item:

“The Rev. Father Scoles, recently appointed Parish Priest at the Roman Catholic Church, has just purchased from Captain Prowse, Lord of the Manor, about seven acres of land in Higher Kingston. On this he intends to erect a Church, a presbytery and a school. The main road through the estate will be an Avenue 40 feet wide and houses will be erected on either side. The erection of a Convent is also contemplated, and this will probably be built on the site of the residence known as ‘Whitefriars.’”

When the diocesan trustees had acquired Devonshire Cottage, it was with a view to building there a Church, a presbytery and a school, but Father Scoles had soon realised that the property was too small. He judged that the land he had just bought would be far more suitable. He accordingly set apart for that purpose a large piece of ground in the corner formed by Higher Kingston and The Avenue. That was God’s heritage; the portion which he intended building the Presbytery and later on the beautiful Church which was to enshrine the Divine Presence for many generations.



### New Church and Presbytery

About the middle of 1895 Father Scoles left Devonshire Cottage which he had occupied since coming to Yeovil and took up residence in the new Presbytery. Attached to it on the east side he had also built the sacristy of the future church with the organ loft over it. Both were spacious and could accommodate a fairly large number of people. Father Scoles thought that

the time to give up the Chantry had arrived. The altar and ornaments were brought to the Sacristy, which was thus transformed into a temporary chapel and used as such until the completion of the church. By an ingenious arrangement he doubled the seating accommodation. The organ loft was built, as already said, over the Sacristy. By boarding only the back part of it, the resourceful architect seated there a score of people, while allowing them, through the unboarded front portion, a full view of the altar below. This arrangement lasted from 1895 to Easter, 1899.

A life so full of zeal and devotedness could not fail to meet with recognition. This had come to Father Scoles sometime in 1893 in the form of a canonry. It was one of Bishop Clifford's last acts.



Holy Ghost Yeovil 18th May 1899

After ruling over the diocese of Clifton for more than 37 years, he died on the 14<sup>th</sup> August 1893. Two years later on August 17<sup>th</sup>, his successor, The Right Rev. W. R. Brownlow, paid his first canonical visitation to Yeovil, and administered Confirmation to 16 candidates...

Canon Scoles was already busy preparing plans and gathering means for the building of the church. In less than two years from the day of the Confirmation, he was able to invite his friends to the laying of the foundation stone. The ceremony took place on Wednesday,

2<sup>nd</sup> June, 1897, the 13<sup>th</sup> centenary of King Ethelbert's baptism by St. Augustine. A large congregation assembled in beautiful weather to witness the solemn ceremony, a ceremony such has had not been performed in Yeovil for 500 years, since the laying of the foundation stone of the old Parish Church...

Two years later, by Easter, 1899, the church was practically finished, and could be used for the services. There was no debt on the building, (Mr Charles Gatty) the founder's generosity having defrayed all expenses. There was no reason, therefore, why it should not be consecrated at once. The great festival of Whitsunday was approaching and surely no more fitting occasion could be found for the consecration of a church in honour of the Holy Ghost. The Wednesday within the Octave of the Ascension, the 17<sup>th</sup> of May, was chosen for the ceremony, which took place amid circumstances of unusual ecclesiastical pomp and splendour... On the following day, Thursday, the 18<sup>th</sup>, the solemn opening took place.



### Change of Pastors

After a ministry of 10 years in Yeovil, Canon Scoles thought that God was calling him to another sphere of work. Besides, had he not promised himself that he would build two more churches in honour of the Holy Ghost, one in the diocese of Portsmouth and the other in that



of Plymouth. The Canon often travelled by rail to London, passing through Basingstoke. It is impossible for one so travelling not to notice some ruins on rising ground to the north-west of the railway station. These are the remains of a once famous sanctuary of the Holy Ghost. To Canon Scoles their fascination was irresistible, and from those broken walls and crumbling arches he conceived the idea of building another shrine in honour of the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity at Basingstoke. Accordingly, he resigned his rectorship and canonry, and on 30<sup>th</sup> May 1901, he left Yeovil and took charge of the Mission of Basingstoke. What he had done here he did there. The beautiful Church and fine Presbytery he built at Basingstoke speak eloquently of his untiring zeal and munificent generosity. He was still Rector there when God called him to his reward on the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, 1920.



Canon Scoles was a man of indefatigable energy and his architectural activities were extended over a very wide area. He designed over 80 altars during his life, and a large number of churches, schools and ecclesiastical buildings. From the time of his ordination to that of his death, he spent himself in labouring for the glory of God. Under a rough exterior he had the gentlest of nature and with all his zeal and ability for business he retained the heart of a child. On the 4<sup>th</sup> of January, 1921, the present writer, with three of his parishioners, assisted at the last rites at Basingstoke, and saw the Canon's remains lowered into the grave, which he himself had prepared close to his church, at the back of the Lady Chapel. There he awaits the resurrection of the just. May he rest in peace!





Canon Scoles 1893

## ‘Our Good Friend, Canon Scoles’ by Father Ambrose Whitehead, C.R.L.

“Our Good Friend, Canon Scoles” thus wrote Fr Augustine White when he suggested that the Very Reverend Canon Cory Scoles FRIBA., be granted Letters of Participation in the Order, adding “he has been very generous to Swanage and he will no doubt help St Ives.” On designing the presbytery at St Ives Scoles himself claimed: “the Canons Regular of the Lateran and myself have always pulled together.” They had “pulled together” in Cornwall, Dorset and London. He could be relied upon to do a practical and inexpensive job. On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of Bodmin he gave £5 to each community in the Province, with a further £5 to the Visitor Provincial of CRL, “if you are not too cussidly proud to accept it.”

He was nothing if not out-spoken. “I have written sharp to Sandry about the impertinence of joining to our Church the puritanical though parliamentary, nickname of R.C. I never let it pass for any tradesman to put R.C to us as if we were an Italian or Roman branch of the Catholic Church.” When his plans were queried he was stung to reply: “Am I to take it that your surveyor can dictate to an architect as to what style and period of architecture he is to design it. It is about the best bit of effrontery that I have heard for a long time.”

Asperity of tongue and pen cloaked a warm and generous nature. “I thought as you are now old friends” he wrote to Fr. White who had asked for his charges in connection with the building of the church in Stroud Green, “my fees are £174. I think the verdict will be that you have the best value for your money of any modern church in London and if I can do as well at Shepherds Bush I shall shake hands with myself.”

When the work at St Ives was dragging on far too slowly, he wrote to Fr. Scully: “I am ashamed of the waste of time so take another £5 fine to help you keep a cheerful face.” When the work was almost complete he wrote: “keep the windows open as much as possible on dry days, as a stone church takes a lot of drying.”

The tender accepted for the St Ives church was £2,060, though Scoles had expressed his anger that estimates for granite had been obtained from Freeman of Falmouth. “It is a bit of an impertinence for you to have done so ... of course if you can afford granite outside, it will be better, as few stones stand the sea air very long.” Despite his annoyance when it came to the crunch he charged only £105 for his services, thus fulfilling Fr White’s prophecy: “he will no doubt help at St Ives.”

Nor did he hesitate to put his professional reputation on the line as in the case of Newquay where he was asked to design only the nave of the church, funds being lacking for a chancel and porch. Nor were his CRL clients always clear in what they wanted. “What style; how many to be accommodated and how much to spend” were the questions he had to put to Fr Scully in 1905 when the church at St Ives was contemplated. And when it came to building the presbytery there he had to write: “You did not specify the exact rooms you wanted ... Fr Brighton hoped there would be a corner suitable for use as a dark room ... I have shown

ordinary sash windows and if you have plain granite heads you will save considerably ..." The building cost just over £1,000 but his fees were only £35.

Canon Scoles designed both the church and "mini" priory in Swanage. It was the first occasion on which his red Bridgewater roofing tiles were objected to by the local surveyor. The tart reply came: "Majors tiles have been extensively used all over the country – I have roofed 10 – 15 churches with them. They are the only ones which have obtained the gold medal at Paris and Philadelphia exhibitions among hundreds of others exhibited. I have used them for about 17 years as the best covering I can get." They have certainly proved the test of time. Having attended the ceremony in Stroud Green to mark the building of the altar and reredos, he proudly wrote: "the consummation of Stroud Green; a good success, also the altar looks fine; the theatrical scene paintings around the sanctuary are cheap enough but not to my taste."

In 1910 he accepted his last commission from the CRL's, to draw up plans for the conversion of the newly purchased property, Eagle House in Eltham, as a house of studies. He felt unable to accept the designing of the church there, which he left to his partner, Raymond, though he was happy to attend the opening ceremony.

Alexander Cory Scoles was the third son of Joseph Scoles, founder of the Syro-Egyptian Society and an architect of repute, who designed many churches and drew up plans for Gloucester Terrace, Regents Park. Alexander followed his father's footsteps and gained his FRIBA before studying for the priesthood, which he received on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 1878.

He served in Clifton pro-Cathedral before his appointment to Bridgewater. Disagreement with his bishop made him leave Yeovil where he had built the church to take charge of Basingstoke in the recently created diocese of Portsmouth, of which chapter he was elected a member.

The church at Basingstoke, dedicated to the Holy Spirit, for whom he had great devotion, he designed and built at his own expense which he lavishly adorned. He also spent himself for his people, establishing Mass centres in Andover, Fleet and Deanbury. He died in 1920 and lies buried in a marked grave beside his church of the Holy Spirit, Basingstoke.



His Grave – From Taking Stock, Holy Ghost, Basingstoke

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READERS ARE URGED TO VISIT THE 'TAKING STOCK' See: <https://taking-stock.org.uk/>

### What is Taking Stock?

The Taking Stock initiative, which began in 2005, aims to assess the historical and architectural importance of every Catholic church and chapel in England and Wales, categorised by diocese. The project is a partnership between the Patrimony Committee of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, individual dioceses, and Historic England. It is part-funded by Historic England

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### Buildings designed by Canon Scoles in Clifton Diocese:

Churches at Wincanton, Yeovil, Trowbridge, Bridgwater, Cirencester, Wroughton, East Harptree, Portishead, Clevedon, Minehead and Tisbury

Completed Prior Park Chapel

Presbyteries at Yeovil, Gloucester, St Gregory's Priory at Cheltenham, Cirencester and Minehead

St Gregory's Convent in Cheltenham, Nazareth House Chapel in Cheltenham, Convent at Minehead, Convent at Burnham, Wincanton Priory and the Guest House at Woodchester Convent

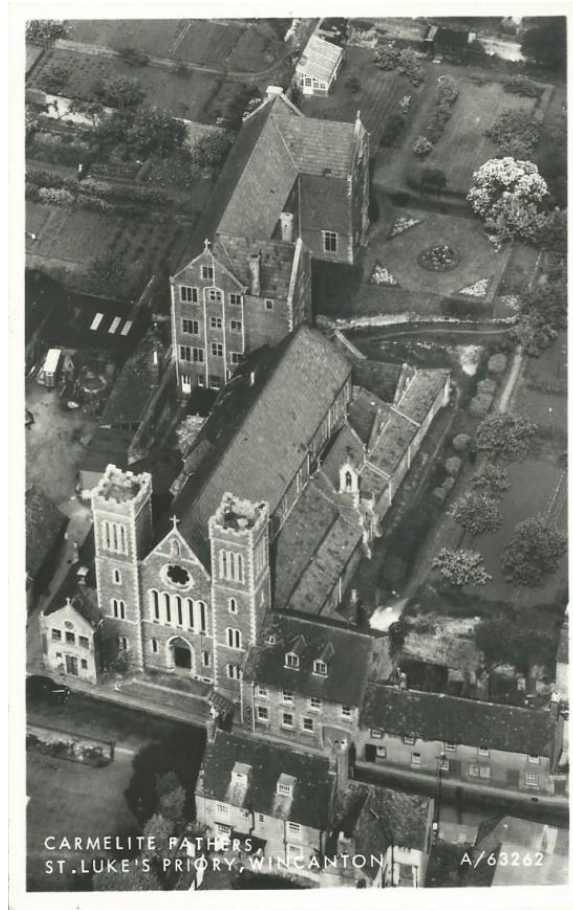
Images from around the Diocese of Clifton

WINCANTON



Reverse of the above postcard





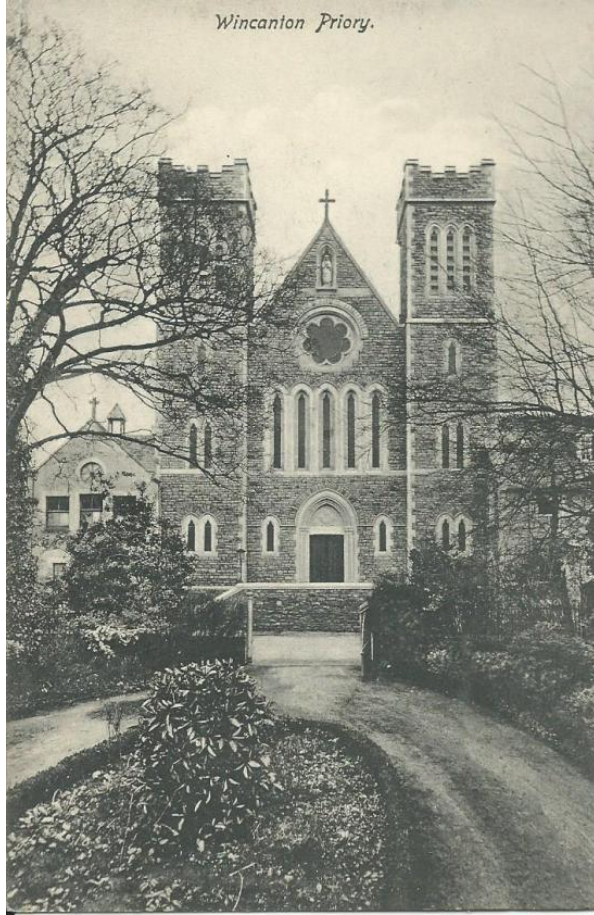
CARMELITE FATHERS,  
ST. LUKE'S PRIORY, WINCANTON. A/63262



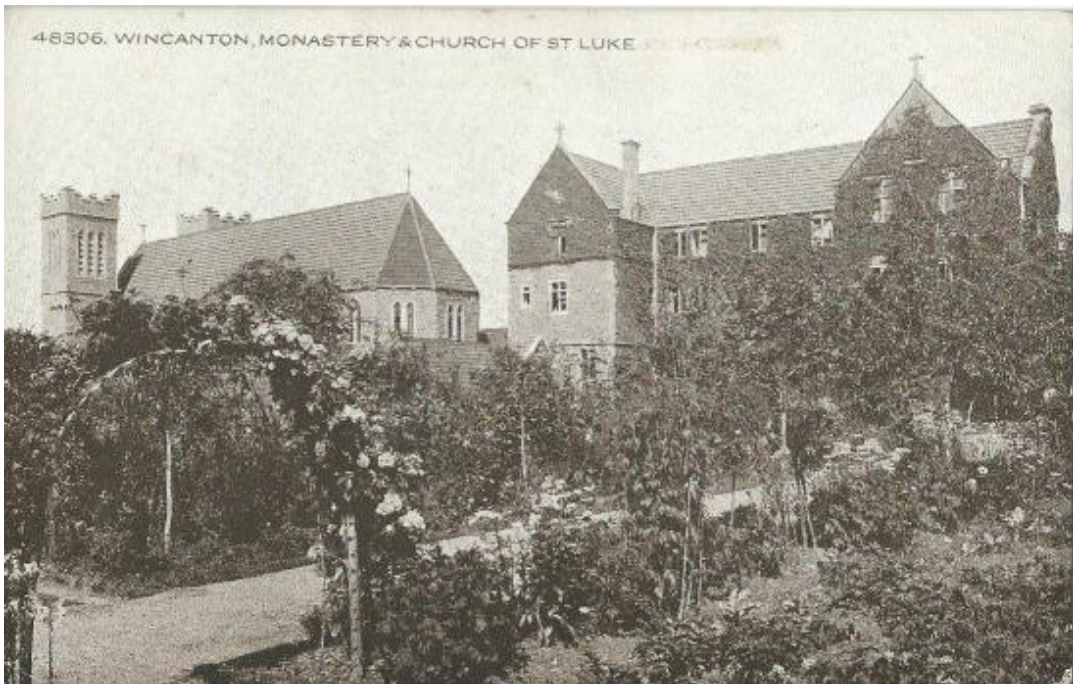
*Wincanton Priory.*



*Wincanton Priory.*



48306. WINCANTON, MONASTERY & CHURCH OF ST LUKE









*Church of St. Luke & Teresa,  
Wincanton.*

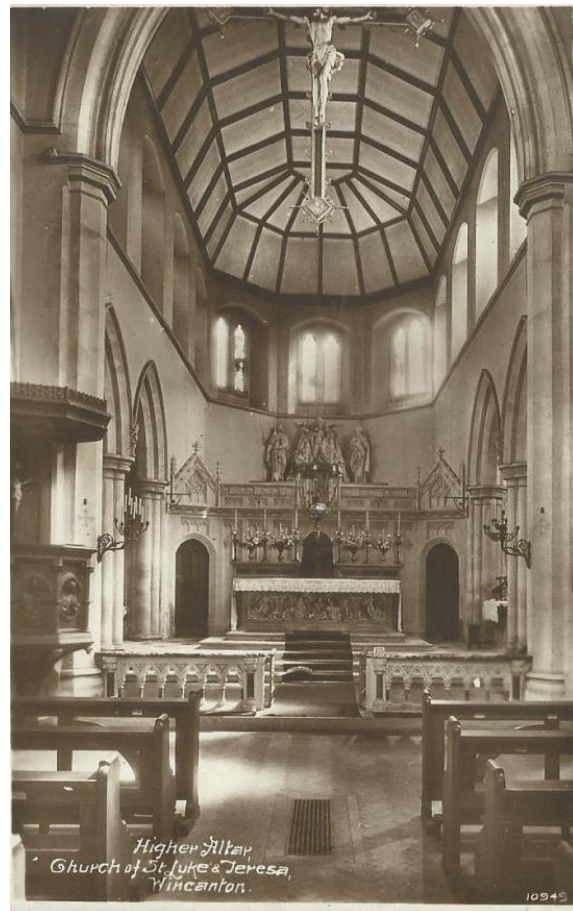


*Interior,  
St. Luke's Church,  
Wincanton.*



Church of St. Luke & Teresa  
Wincanton

10931



Higher Altar  
Church of St. Luke & Teresa,  
Wincanton.

10945





TROWBRIDGE



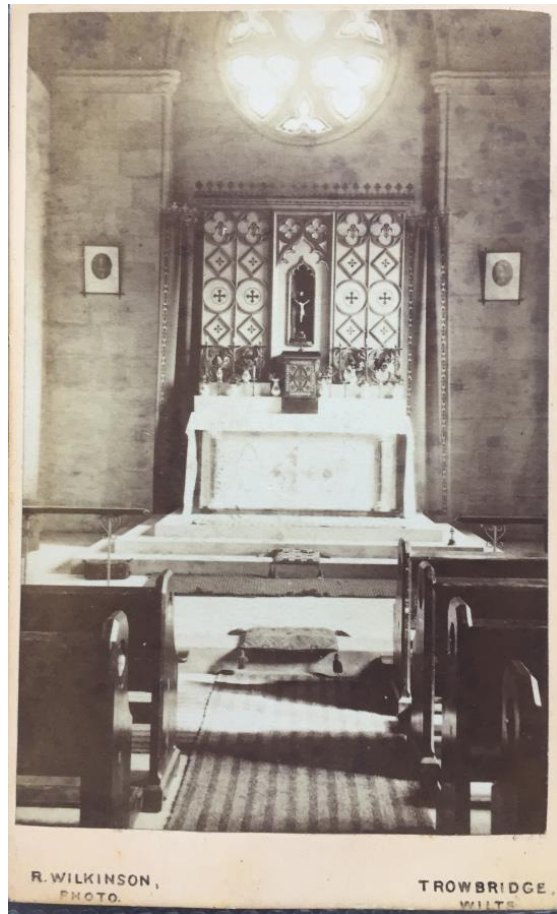
*Trowbridge, Wingfield Road.*



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, TROWBRIDGE.







R. WILKINSON,  
PHOTO.

TROWBRIDGE,  
WILTS.

CLEVEDON



Friary Church, Clevedon.

7.9.11





The Friary, Clevedon.



A0708. Clevedon.  
Priory Church. (Interior.)







ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, CLEVEDON. E. Lippitt, Copyright, Clevedon.  
*Please come to Clevedon for our holidays this year.*



HIGH ALTAR  
CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, CLEVEDON.





*Altar of St Francis  
Catholic Church, Cleveland.*



MINEHEAD



Minehead

The Church of the Sacred Heart







Minehead. R.C. Church

Valentines Series



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH, INTERIOR, MINEHEAD. 18706

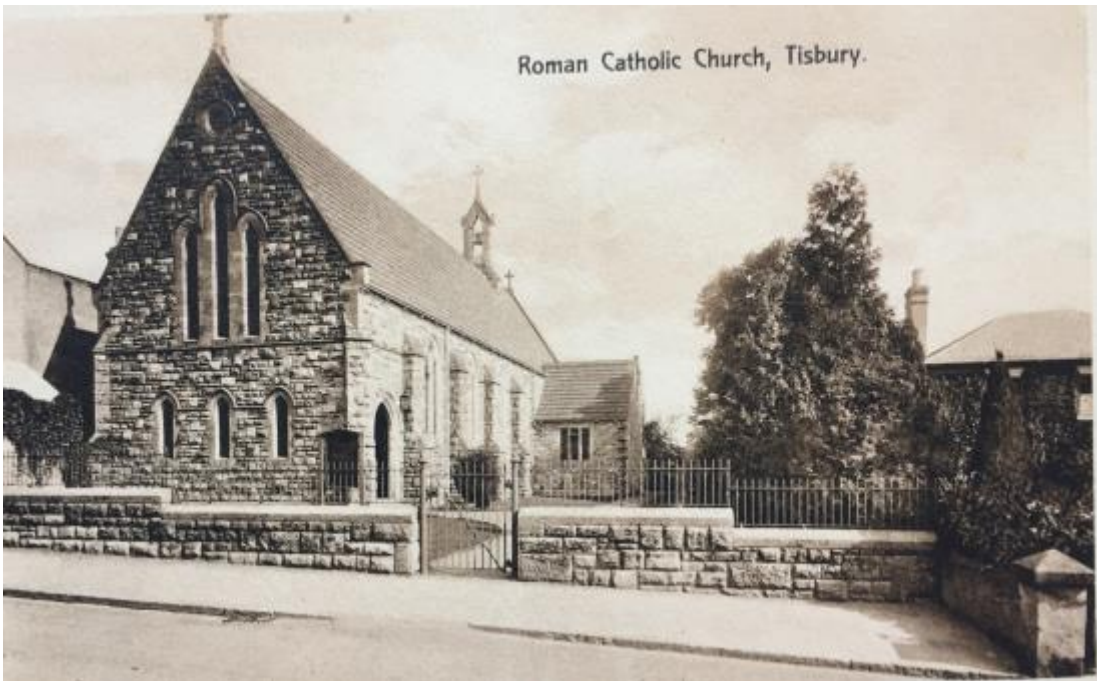




CIRENCESTER



TISBURY



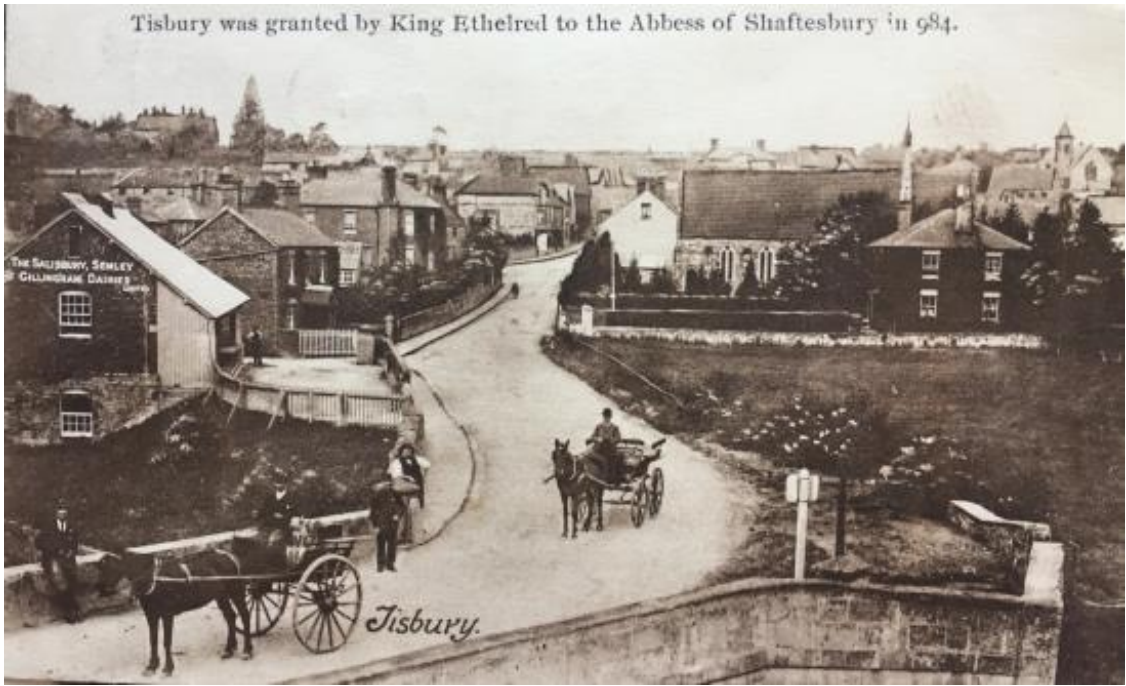




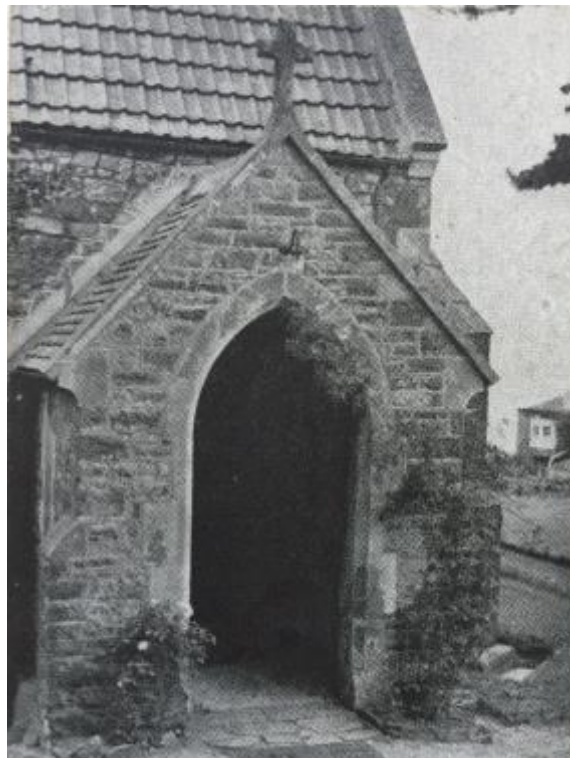
*Roman Catholic Church  
Tisbury, Wiltshire*



Church of Sacred Heart  
Tisbury, Interior.



PORTISHEAD

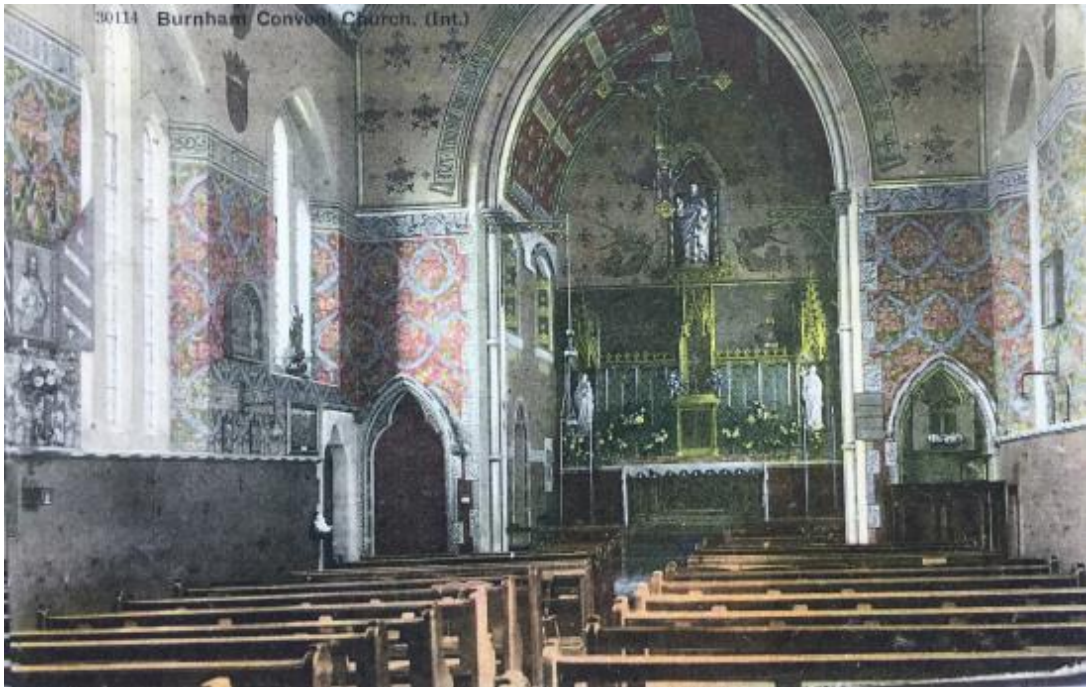






BURNHAM CONVENT

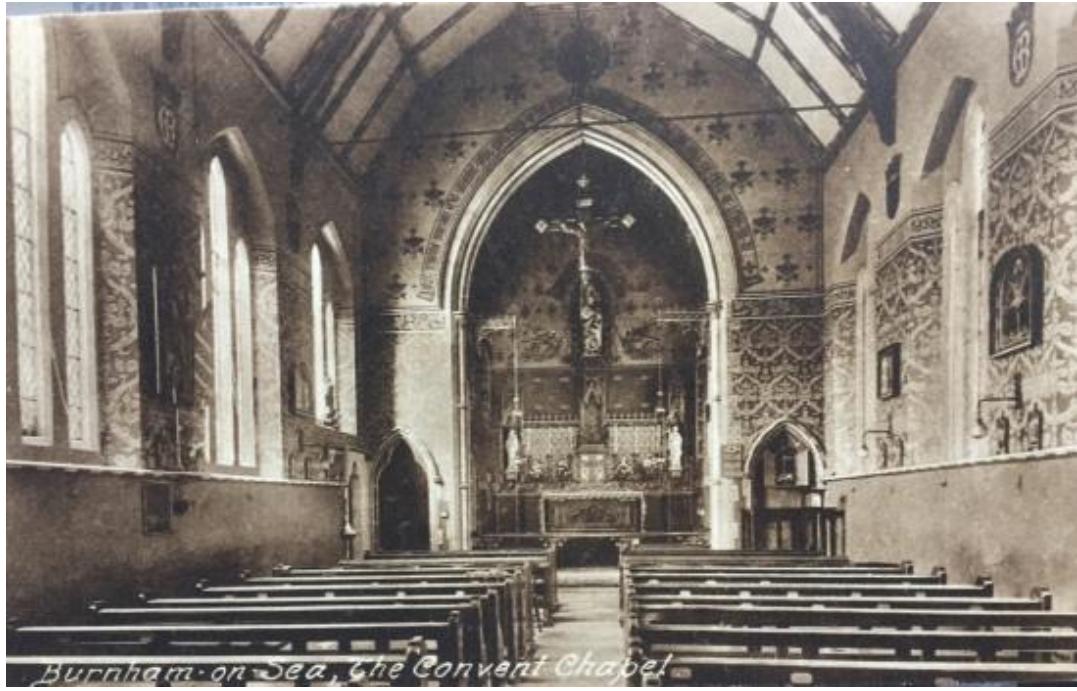












*Burnham-on-Sea, the Convent Chapel*



*Convent Chapel, Burnham, Somt.*

James Knight, 3 Regent Street, Burnham, Somt

MINEHEAD CONVENT







With thanks to: Adrian and Janet Quantock / *St Michael's Catholic Church East Harptree* / CC BY-SA 2.0



PRIOR PARK (Completed by Canon Scoles)

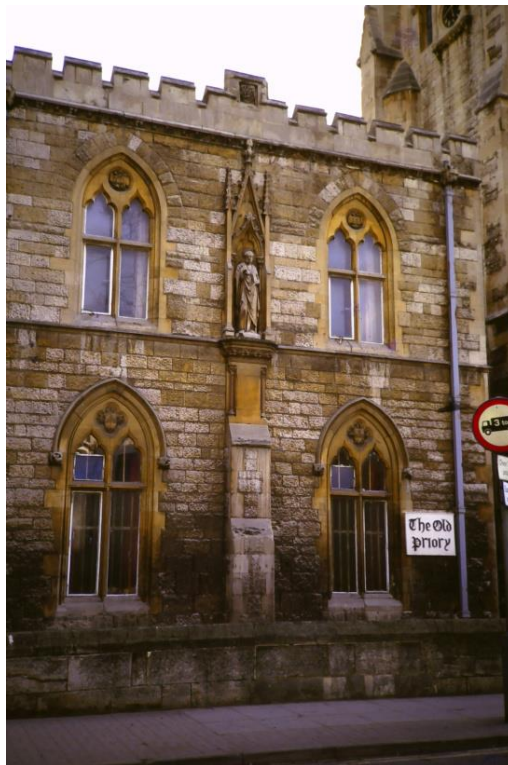


PRIOR PARK CHURCH, 1870  
(From an old photograph.)





CHELTENHAM



Former St Gregory's Benedictine Priory, Cheltenham