

THE RECUSANT RIOTS AT CHILDWALL IN MAY 1600: A REAPPRAISAL

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THE development of recusancy in Lancashire in the Tudor period has attracted considerable attention from historians. Accounts of that development have tended to stress the deliberate defiance of the Lancashire Catholics in the last years of Elizabeth's reign: J.S. Leatherbarrow claimed that "there seems to have been something like rebellion on a small scale in Lancashire"¹ during the summer of 1600, whilst Christopher Haigh considered that in 1598 "there began six years of intermittent resistance by local Catholics."² Central to both claims were riots at Childwall, led by tenants of Edward Norris who were also "involved in an assault on a justice of the peace and the constable of the hundred" and Haigh claimed that it was a seminary priest "who had organised the Childwall disorders."³ More recently still, the priest, Thurstan Hunt, has been regarded as the "probable ringleader" in assaults on William Brettergh, inspired by "recusant hostility."⁴

Childwall was the most southerly parish of Lancashire, contained ten major townships,⁵ and was approximately ten miles long and five miles wide at its greatest extent. The parish was part of the diocese of Chester, itself newly formed in 1541 from the archdeaconries of Chester and Richmond, and its population by 1563 seems to have closely paralleled the average for the county. In that year a survey by the Bishop of Chester recorded a total of 350 households in the parish (including its constituent chapelry at Hale)⁶ whilst Haigh has estimated an average parish population of 1,700 at that date on the assumption that a household consisted of five members.⁷

The English Reformation and the establishment of Protestantism are no longer viewed as speedy and rapid events. Claire Cross has recently observed that "It is no longer

possible . . . to talk of England being protestant by 1536, 1547, 1559 or even perhaps 1603,"⁸ whilst Haigh has claimed that "the minimum period for the completion of a 'Reformation' in all its senses is 1529 to 59, while for a maximum period a good case could be made for the years 1378 to 1660."⁹ It remains true, however, that "the offence of recusancy was created by the 1559 Act of Uniformity":¹⁰ those who chose to absent themselves from the parish church were liable to a fine of 12 pence each week, levied by the churchwardens. It is not possible to recognize when recusancy commenced in Childwall parish but it was not until 1590 that the churchwardens referred to the offence.¹¹

It may be that until that year the churchwardens of Childwall were under no constraint to present recusants. In 1578 none were presented when the diocese was visited by Archbishop Sandy's commissaries and Haigh has claimed that Bishop Downham's "negligence and conservative sympathy"¹² from 1561 to 1577 had provided the opportunity for the growth of recusancy in Lancashire. Only two vicars, William Crosse and David Catton, held office at Childwall during that period. Crosse had been ordained deacon at Chester and he answered as vicar at visitations in 1562 and 1565,¹³ although he was absent and excused by the bishop in 1563.¹⁴ However, in the year after his resignation in 1570, a curate at Hale chapel also named William Crosse (and possibly to be equated with the former vicar) was a "naughty papist."¹⁵ The successor to this possible conservative was David Catton, one of the 'old clergy' who had been ordained priest in 1542.¹⁶ Catton's immediate successor, Lawrence Blackborne, can have made little impression on the parish since he was instituted on 24th October, 1588, and almost at once replaced by Thomas Williamson. Williamson's impact can have been no greater: he was instituted in January 1589, only to be succeeded in June of the same year by Edmund Hopwood.¹⁷

Hopwood's arrival at Childwall was soon followed by a period of pressure on the churchwardens to exercise their responsibilities with regard to recusancy in the parish — although the two events were not necessarily connected. The difficulties of enforcing religious conformity in Elizabethan Lancashire have been thoroughly explored: they included the sympathies of Catholic gentry and a lack of diligence — or even connivance — among the clergy themselves, with large parishes containing numerous chapels to confuse the issues. It has been claimed that Lancashire's exemption from the

jurisdiction of the Council of the North "made it something of a sanctuary for Catholics."¹⁸ The creation of the Chester see had solved nothing: Chester had "proved to be a most unsuitable centre, especially for controlling Lancashire"¹⁹ and the diocese lacked appropriate finances.²⁰ At a local level, Palliser has observed that strong social pressures must have been exerted on churchwardens not to betray their recusant neighbours.²¹

Childwall's churchwardens had been little troubled by the affairs of the diocese before 1590. William Woodward had appeared at Preston "before therle of Derby and other His Highnes Comysioners for cawses ecclesiastical" in February 1575,²² when the Commission had been instructed to proceed against recusants.²³ His appearance had no apparent effect on the parish and the churchwardens were relatively undisturbed by diocesan affairs for a further fifteen years, being concerned with little but attendance occasioned by visitations at Wigan in September 1575 and 1586.²⁴

This apparent unconcern with diocesan affairs ended with the first year of Hopwood's incumbency. In that year, 1590, Archbishop Piers of York held a metropolitan visitation which, locally at least, heralded a new and more aggressive phase of the Protestant campaign against Catholicism.²⁵ Regionally, the visitation has been seen as an unsuccessful attempt to introduce to the north the anti-puritan policies of Archbishop Whitgift of Canterbury. The attempt to breach Bishop Chadderton's complaisant attitude towards Lancashire's puritans may well have caused them to feel threatened — and to react the more harshly against recusants — particularly at a time when Thomas Walmesley, a suspected papist, was punishing protestant nonconformity rather than Catholic offences at the assizes. It is clear, for example, that Piers' visitation had revealed that the surplice was not worn at many churches and chapels and he was not prepared to ignore such nonconformity on the part of the Protestant clergy:²⁶ he informed the preachers of the Manchester deanery firmly that they should "have divine service celebrated in their churches and the sacraments administered in a surplus."²⁷

The new incumbent of Childwall would appear to have conformed to this requirement since the churchwardens soon paid 16 pence for "washing the sirples and other Church clothes twoe tymes and for sope" before also buying "cloth to make a sirples. . . according to an article Enjoyned to us for that purpose."²⁸ Locally, however this was not the only impact produced by Piers' visitation. The archbishop had been left in

no doubt concerning the strength of recusancy in Lancashire: a number of Puritan preachers had drawn up a petition concerning the state of their county where there was "continual recourse of Jesuits and Seminarie Priestes," whilst "notorious Recusantes" existed in all areas, undisturbed by corrupt officials such as churchwardens who were "chosen by the singular nomination of the gentlemen . . . without the consent of the Pastor."²⁹ No matter that their complaints may have been exaggerated, the preachers presented a powerful case which would have been difficult to ignore: action was soon taken.

At the parochial level, the consequences of this visitation may be seen in the new pressures which were placed on the churchwardens: they attended "My Lord of York his Chancellor in his visitacion" at Wigan and also spent 3 days at Manchester before "Mr. Chancellor of Yorke," concerning his visitation. Soon afterwards, in November 1590, they appeared at the Dean's Court at Prescott to "certify whether we had performed the order set down by the Chancellor of York." They were soon reporting to the Dean's Court again, concerning church ornaments, but the real nature of the Chancellor's order is surely revealed when the churchwardens went "to warn the Parishioners according to our articles for xiid a Sunday:" for the first time since 1559 the churchwardens were clearly exercising their responsibilities under the Act of Uniformity.

Nor was this new pressure relaxed. Soon afterwards, one of the churchwardens appeared at Warrington before the Dean to certify that they had performed his order concerning recusants — their first use of this word. Nor was such certification enough: William Halewood apparently returned to Warrington "to make a presentment to Mr. Dean of such as came not to the Church:" his presentment was "respite for one month" because of the absence of his partner Richard Orme but both were then compelled to attend. Shortly afterwards, the churchwardens were busy at Hale, Chester, Childwall and Wigan in connection with a Commission established at the behest of the earl of Derby: it was at the earl's direct command that the wardens went "abroad in the parish six days to warn the parishioners to come to church," paying a scribe and buying paper for him to write down the names of all parishioners.³⁰

The pressure thus exerted on the churchwardens was maintained throughout the 1590's and they may be observed presenting themselves before the Archbishop, Bishop and

Dean — as well as the earl of Derby — at Wigan, Prescott, Ormskirk, Warrington, Chester and Billinge. They went through the parish “to admonish according to the new statute” and in Easter week of 1598, at least, they made “bookes of presentments for Communicantes and non Communicantes.”³¹ The pressure on the churchwardens was paying dividends over the decade in terms of presentations for recusancy — although presentations were less evident in the diocesan Visitation Correction Books³² than in the Recusant Rolls of the Exchequer.³³ The Recusant Rolls reveal the prosecution of 35 people from Childwall parish in 1592–1593, 33 in 1593–1594 and 23 in 1595–1596.³⁴ Additionally, in 1595 no less than 82 parishioners were listed as recusants.³⁵

It is not difficult, perhaps, to recognize the cause of this eruption of activity against the recusants of Childwall — and of Lancashire, which had become “synonymous with Catholic recusancy.”³⁶ Carol Wiener has made clear that despite the differing realities of the situation, many Englishmen regarded the King of Spain as a puppet of the Pope in launching his Armada of 1588 and that contemporary pamphleteers reinforced that view.³⁷ If the Armada was the cause of the intensification of anti-Catholicism in the 1590s, it is also clear that the vehicle through which anti-Catholicism was expressed was Puritanism. Puritan preachers had long been encouraged in the Chester diocese as the means by which irreligion and recusancy could be opposed: as Richardson has recognized, “The puritan onslaught on Catholicism in the diocese of Chester was a part of the wider, official, campaign to extirpate the old religion.”³⁸

That official campaign was extended to Lancashire largely through the instructions of the Privy Council, which in 1590 alone required the Bishop of Chester to provide information concerning recusants and the “contempts and abuses” committed within the diocese, instructed the earl of Derby that in “these doubtful and daungerous tymes” suspected persons “whose liberty maie breed daunger to the State” should be “comytted to some sauf place”, and charged the Justices of Assize to “bestow some good tyme with some extraordinary care” to proceedings against recusants. The Council clearly saw the means of countering recusancy to be through protestant preaching and declared that the Bishop of Chester should give thought to the “instructing of them by good teaching to reforme themselves.”³⁹

The encouragement of protestant preaching in practice meant the encouragement of puritan preaching and it was not

a new venture. In 1584 a system of monthly preaching Exercises had been established at various centres in the Chester diocese with the express approval of the Privy Council. These provided the opportunity for "the learned sort" among the clergy to speak and "the meaner sort" to take notes and to undergo examination⁴⁰ with the object of raising the educational standards of the clergy, to enable them to combat Catholicism more effectively. In 1599 four Queen's Preachers were established for Lancashire in a further intervention by the central government with the object of converting the region. The determined aggression which was now being displayed towards the Lancashire recusants is made evident by Bishop Vaughan of Chester who informed Cecil that he had seated the Preachers where their teaching might be most effective: "following the records of presentments made to me and the Judges of Assize of late years, I have put one in every part of the country where there are most recusants."⁴¹ In fact, the places thus chosen were Leigh, Ormskirk, Garstang and Huyton⁴² — a parish immediately adjoining Childwall — and three of the first four preachers to be appointed "were inclined to puritanism."⁴³

Puritans, then, were to spearhead the next phase of the attack on Catholicism and the attack was to be concentrated in south west Lancashire, with three of the newly appointed preachers sited in the Deanery of Warrington. It is difficult to estimate their reception from neighbouring incumbents such as Edmund Hopwood at Childwall but it does seem that he may have raised his own standards even before the appointment of the Queen's Preachers — possibly, but not necessarily, as a result of the puritan Exercises.⁴⁴ In 1590 he was regarded as "no preacher"⁴⁵ but in 1595 it was claimed for him that "The minister a preacher laboreth with dailie exhortations, instructions and teaching to reclaim them [the recusants] and seeks there reformation and amendments."⁴⁶

Hopwood, it seems, would thus have earned the approval of any puritans among his congregation — and there were puritans within the parish. Katherine Brettergh had been born in 1579, the daughter of John Bruen and sister of John Bruen of Stapleford. Whilst still young "she was distinguished by earnest religious feeling"⁴⁷ and at about the age of twenty she married William Brettergh of Brettergh Holt in Little Woolton. It seems probable that Brettergh, one of the most prominent parishioners of Childwall, already shared her puritan sentiments⁴⁸ and clear that Katherine "carried to her husband's home . . . that intensity in religion with which her

own background had been associated."⁴⁹ Her background was indeed intense: her brother was able to impose his puritan beliefs upon a predominantly Catholic parish."⁵⁰ It would be surprising indeed if Katherine did not urge upon her husband a similar desire to impose such beliefs on a parish which possessed a strong Catholic minority. It may be unjust to suggest that she was the driving force in the pair's relationships with their Catholic neighbours but women had "a role of acknowledged importance in the development and organisation of puritanism";⁵¹ a strong character such as Katherine Brettergh possessed cannot have been without influence upon her husband. Indeed, it was claimed that "her husband was further builded up in Religion by her means and his face dailie more and more hardened against the diuel and all his plague agents."⁵²

The Devil's most obvious 'plague agent' in the parish was Edward Norris, lord of the manors of Speke and Garston: he was described in 1590 as being "in some degree of conformitie, yet in general note of evil affection in religion."⁵³ Norris' "degree of conformitie" would appear to be that he attended the parish church at times: he certainly was present at some half dozen parish meetings of the 1570's and 1580's.⁵⁴ His pre-eminence in the parish was usually made clear on such occasions when the churchwardens, for example, were "elected and chosen by Edward Nores Esquyer and the rest of the paryshe."⁵⁵ His recusancy having been noted in 1590,⁵⁶ however, and both he and his wife having been prosecuted as recusants in 1592-3,⁵⁷ he did not appear at a parish meeting between 1590 and 1600.⁵⁸ His absence from parish meetings (and his customary contribution of one shilling to the celebration of Coronation Day⁵⁹ as a means perhaps of demonstrating his loyalty) did not remove him from the notice of informers as anti-Catholic feeling increased under the influence of puritan clergy who, it has been claimed, "may have judged it expedient to exaggerate the Catholic threat which faced them."⁶⁰ In 1599 Norris was accused of harbouring priests and of receiving visitors by night in a letter designed to arouse government fears of Irish and Lancastrian Catholics finding a common cause.⁶¹

It was because of accusations of this kind that Catholic households tended to become almost enclosed communities: Mervyn James has observed that in the Durham region recusant communities consisted mainly of "gentry households with their dependent bodies of servants and tenants."⁶² Bishop Vaughan complained frequently of the problem created in his

diocese by "gentleman recusants that harbour them [seminary priests] . . . ; they countenance all lewd practices and despise authority."⁶³ He claimed that "this kind of men have so many spies and kindred and alliances that it is almost impossible to seize them"⁶⁴ and that "certain gentlemen Recusants, . . . are so linked together and have such command in this corner that the vulgar people dare not profess religion." In particular, he railed against Edward Norris: "although he sometimes goeth to Church, yet is his house well known to be a sanctuary of all lewd resort and a nursery of popery; his might great and his malice more."⁶⁵

Vaughan and his supporters must have looked for one to oppose the might of Edward Norris — and an opponent was not hard to find. William Brettergh was approximately 29 years old in 1600,⁶⁶ he was a Puritan newly married to an even stronger adherent to Puritanical views. He was a social rival of Norris within the parish of Childwall — and there must surely have been ill feeling between his family and that of Norris. This claim is based upon a small group of documents related to a lease of Woolton Hey by William Norris to William Brettergh.⁶⁷ In 1583 Edward Norris (or his steward) drew up a list of items to be received from Mr. W. Brettergh by 19th June. They included "the rased acquyance for mydsomer payment . . . a forgent indenture for the payment . . . a forgett acquyance for ii of the last payments . . . a forgett bonde against my master . . . the counterfett grant of Woolton Hey." Some of these demands at least were successful: Norris was soon able to acknowledge receipt of £30 referred to in his list of demands from Brettergh and of "The forgett rasure of the acquyance done by young William B. to have served his father's turn for mydsomer . . . payment."⁶⁸ The precise meaning of these claims is not clear, but there can be little doubt of the cumulative effect of their references to forged indentures, acquittances and bonds. Land holding and financial disputes must have soured relations between the Brettergh and Norris families.⁶⁹ It was presumably for this reason that William Brettergh's only recorded appearances at the parish meetings of the 1590's coincided with Edward Norris' period of absence from them.⁷⁰

Brettergh, then, appeared to be a convenient vehicle for a further attack upon local Catholics — and perhaps even against Edward Norris. In April 1600, presumably following the normal procedure of election by the justices in quarter sessions,⁷¹ William Brettergh took office at Prescott as High Constable of West Derby Hundred.⁷²

The vehicle had been prepared. At or about the 8th May, Brettergh received warrants from Bishop Vaughan and the Ecclesiastical Commission for the apprehension of recusants within the parishes of Huyton and Childwall: amongst those to be apprehended was Ralph Hitchmough, a husbandman of Much Woolton. Hitchmough's wife was buried at Childwall on 16th May⁷³ — at a ceremony which may have been particularly distressing. When the corpse was laid in the grave, the officiating incumbent Edmund Hopwood saw that a large cross of red cloth had been attached to the covering sheet over the breast whilst two other crosses were made upon the sheet with a burning iron.⁷⁴ Hopwood reprovved Hitchmough for his "blindness and folly" but Hitchmough told the vicar to be sorry for himself — he would have a cross as long as he lived. Hopwood said he would inform the Bishop of this "contempt and evil example", complaining that "the like disorder and contempt was not shewn" since he came into the Parish. He further complained that Hitchmough and other recusants came into the churchyard but not into the church to divine service. Following that unhappy experience on Monday, 16th May, Brettergh chose to arrest Hitchmough on Friday, four days later.

Brettergh commanded William Plumpton of Much Woolton and Thomas Chisnall of Little Woolton to accompany him; they found Hitchmough at work in the Ackersfield.⁷⁵ Brettergh arrested him there, offering to read him the warrant, but Hitchmough "shrank back" — which Brettergh claimed he viewed as an attempt to get away, so he struck him to the ground with a short staff, casting Hitchmough's own staff from him. Plumpton and Chisnall also seized Hitchmough.

Clearly, this struggle was observed — and help was at hand. Large numbers of people were attending the funeral of Katherine, wife of Thomas Chaloner of Speke. She was a "notorious recusant"⁷⁶ but not only recusants were attending her funeral: the vicar claimed that it was usual in the parish "that all neighbours go one with another to their burials" and William Richardson of Speke, husbandman, said that it was the "custom for one to go from every house to funerals." The crowd was estimated by John Poole of Hale to be "fourscore or more." When the funeral procession reached Grange gate, near Childwall, the wife of Thomas Almond of Allerton called to the people, saying "Help, help for the passion of God;" James Molyneux also heard the "sudden cry of women."⁷⁷ John Poole claimed that only five people stayed with the

corpse whilst the rest raced to the scene of the struggle in Woolton.

Among the first to arrive at the scene, where Ralph Hitchmough had now drawn a knife, were James Molyneux of Garston, John Hitchmough, John Gleast and John Ballard. Brettergh demanded their help but Molyneux begged Brettergh (his cousin) not to execute his warrant at that time and the group dragged Brettergh from Hitchmough — who promptly fled, pursued by Brettergh. Plumpton and Chisnall were detained: Plumpton claimed that Edward Hitchmough of Speke and John Hitchmough of Garston gave him “many blows with their staffs, hurting him very sore upon the arms, shoulders, breast and head” — but he broke away and went after Brettergh; Chisnall had been wounded in the shoulder with a knife. After 20 roods Plumpton was seized by William Edwardson of Allerton and others, who bade him “stand still and be quiet or else they would make him quiet” — but again he broke loose and went after William Brettergh. He was stopped again by the crowd, who pulled him to and fro: he drew out the dagger of James Molyneux and offered to strike him, but the crowd struck him down again and gave him many blows. Then, recovering himself, he went to Woolton — apparently without further opposition.

Ralph Hitchmough, meanwhile, had fled to the safety of his own house, where his maid, Margery Farrer, had barred the door against the pursuing William Brettergh, who had been seen to run up Woolton Hill by John Poole and other slower members of the funeral party. On his arrival at Hitchmough's house, Brettergh called for the town's constables; at first he could not find them, but eventually William Pendleton and Thomas Plombe arrived on the scene. Poole and some others went to Much Woolton but could get no drink at an alehouse there, so returned to the corpse and thus to the uncompleted funeral! The vicar went to the church stile to meet the corpse and thence to the porch: hearing no sound of people following him, he looked back and saw that the corpse was being taken direct to its grave. He called to James Barker who stood next to him “Bid the people bring the corpse unto the Church, or else I will not bury it.” His demand was ignored: although he waited in the church, the people put the corpse of the unfortunate Katherine Chaloner in its grave. William Halewood of Little Woolton claimed that those who did so made such haste that they broke the feet off the bier and were about to lay Katherine in her grave with her head to the East — but he stopped them, so that they turned her and so “decently

buried the corpse, without the minister.”⁷⁸

After this burial, Poole and others returned to Ralph Hitchmough's house, where the unfortunate man was at his window, asking if he might escape. William Ireland was guarding the laneside with a pitchfork at the orders of Brettergh, against such an escape, and claimed that Hitchmough had passed a pitchfork and a naked sword through the window to the crowd of men from Speke and elsewhere. Richard Plombe, also guarding the house, refused Hitchmough's appeal to let him escape and summoned the constable, Pendleton. They were then threatened by Edward Hitchmough with a bill, whilst Ralph Hitchmough emerged from his house holding a bent bow and set arrow, together with Margery Farrer holding a pitchfork. When the constable called for aid, all three entered the house, Ralph Hitchmough telling his guardians "villains this was in unneighbourly part" and that he "would sit upon their skirt". The rest of the crowd which had returned to the interrupted funeral now came back to Hitchmough's house: under their protection the Hitchmough brothers and the maid, Farrer, emerged once more. Despite the demands of the constable that they should be stopped, the crowd accompanied them away, followed by their erstwhile guards, who were mocked with such cries as "Away with him," "Turn again, fools!" and "If you would have Ralph Hitchmough, you must fetch him in the Speake!" Such was the riot at Childwall.

Hitchmough later testified that after his escape he went to the house of Robert Ballard in Speke, drank there for a short space of time, then returned to his own house. The riot had taken place on Friday, 19th May, 1600. On the night of 22nd May, cattle belonging to William Brettergh were maimed in his grounds. By 28th May the justices had sent some account of these events to the Privy Council and Bishop Vaughan had added his letter blaming the local recusant gentry and particularly Edward Norris, since "the late rioters appear . . . to have been his servants or tenants."⁷⁹ The Council replied on 13th June, referring to the "riotous behaviour of divers Recusantes" at the attempted apprehension of Hitchmough "a dangerous Recusante, and some others of that sorte and condicion." The Privy Council appears to have been given the impression that more than Hitchmough's arrest had been attempted on this occasion — yet that is not so. It consequently ordered that Norris and six other Lancashire gentlemen, against whom Vaughan had complained previously, should be brought before it: "because you advertise us that these

riottes are committed under the countenance of divers cheefe persons that are landlordes of the offenders.⁸⁰ Only Norris and two other submitted themselves to the Council,⁸¹ in their absence cattle belonging to John Wrightington of Wrightington, a prominent J.P. of the county, were maimed on 25th June. On 15th August William Brettergh's cattle were again attacked and slaughtered — immediately after he had indicted at the Assizes not only Hitchmough's rescuers but "many other recusants dwelling near unto him."⁸²

Following this second attack on Brettergh's cattle, Richard Nutter, Dean of Chester, and Sir Richard Molyneux of Sefton, J.P., accompanied Brettergh as he conducted them "to divers and sundry rioters' houses (as he then termed them)" on 18th August, for the purpose of "searching out of such persons as . . . Brettergh suspected to bee parties to the killinge of the cattell." At these houses in Garston and Speke, nobody could be found — save "one very old man" and young children. Nevertheless the searchers took from some of those houses "sundrie sorte of weapons, as breere hook, longe staff, bills, and pykefork most suspiciouslie spotted and sprinkled with blood" as evidence against their owners, Hugh Pilkington, Edward Hitchmough, Thomas Chaloner, Edward Pendleton and Hugh Heyes. Molyneux and Nutter took pains in informing Bishop Vaughan of the outcome of their search, to commend Edward Norris, who "hath assisted us to the uttermost, going with us from howse to howse, most duetifullie and carefullie behaveinge himselfe. He was greatlie greeved for this chance fallinge out soe neere him, and hath offered to use his best meanes for the apprehendinge of such persons as Mr. Brettar suspectethe most."⁸³

Vaughan evidently did not pass on to the Privy Council this commendation, nor did Brettergh who personally delivered the Bishop's letter concerning these fresh events. The Council again sent for Edward Norris, "on whom the whole rabble of these malefactours seeme to depend." They also required that four other rioters should be sent to them.⁸⁴ Vaughan and the Lancashire J.P.s decided to send Ralph Hitchmough,⁸⁵ Hugh Hey, James Pilkington and Edward Hitchmough. Ralph Hitchmough failed to provide sufficient sureties for his appearance before the Council so the J.P.s decided to send Edward Pendleton instead; however, the Council's messenger chose (for no known reason) to take John Hitchmough in his place.⁸⁶

Events elsewhere in the county had partially overshadowed the importance of affairs at Childwall by this time. Sir

Richard Houghton apprehended a seminary priest named Robert Middleton in the Fylde on 30th September.⁸⁷ He was committed to the Mayor of Preston, who arranged for him to be escorted next day to the castle at Lancaster; the escort was attacked at Haworth Moor, near Garstang, by four armed men who attempted to rescue Middleton. The attempt was overcome and one of the would-be rescuers was himself captured: he proved to be another seminary priest who called himself Robert Greenlowe, but eventually admitted to the name of Thurstan Hunt.⁸⁸ The Privy Council required the two priests to be sent to London, ensuring that special arrangements were made against the danger of further rescue attempt.⁸⁹ Bishop Vaughan predictably seized upon potential scapegoats to emphasise yet again the difficulties of his own struggle (and implicitly, the excellence of his achievements) in the barbaric north. He sent reports of the examinations concerning affairs at Childwall to Sir Robert Cecil, claiming that "The principal seducer of the people in that part to such barbarous practices was Thurstane Hunt, a desperate seminary priest, who . . . shall, I hope, receive the just reward of his many iniquities. This treacherous practiser and barbarous butcher has plotted and performed all the outrages in these parts. . . If speedy and sharp justice be done on him and his confederates, I conceive strong hope that this country will be in a short time better appeased and sooner reformed."⁹⁰

The Council was obviously not unsympathetic to Vaughan: it passed the examinations concerning the outrage on Brettergh's cattle to the Attorney-general Edward Coke, Solicitor-general Thomas Fleming, serjeant-at-law Christopher Yelverton and to Francis Bacon, Counsellor-at-law, with the instruction that "this matter should be severely punished." They demanded at the same time that "exemplary proceeding should be taken" against the two priests.⁹¹ A week earlier, on 2nd November 1699, the Council had been more charitably disposed when dealing with Edward Norris. The Councillors accepted his denials of knowledge concerning the cattle-killing and permitted him to return home, sending to Vaughan (to his presumable chagrin!) a copy of Norris' bond promising "to reduce his tenantes and followers to be conformable to . . . in matter of religion."⁹²

The two priests could offer no such bond. They were held at the Gatehouse, in chains "and straitly kept, without pen, paper, or speech of any, until this hurley burley brought us together."⁹³ They wrote these words at some date before 5th March, 1601; it would seem that the "hurley burley" which

brought some improvement in their prison conditions may have been the rebellion of the earl of Essex which took place on 8th February, 1601, and the subsequent trial of the earl and his followers. By the beginning of March the Council had determined to return Hunt and Middleton to Lancashire — an agonising journey, with their “legges bound under the belly of the horses they shall ryde upon and their hands behinde them,” — to be tried at the next Assizes.⁹⁴

This seems a curious decision, after the previous instruction to Coke, Fleming, Yelverton and Bacon that the two priests should be used as an example. It is also curious that when they were returned to Lancaster “it was discovered that their examinations, which should have been brought by their escort, were missing.”⁹⁵ It may have been that a trial of the priests in London at that time and the publication of their examinations would have been embarrassing.

Middleton, in fact, re-examined by the Lancashire justices, revealed little of moment. Hunt’s examination, together with a declaration he appears to have made in London and papers found on him at the time of his arrest, as well as one written in the Gatehouse show a remarkable consistency.⁹⁶ He had addressed one letter to the Queen, claiming that “conspiring Puritans . . . traitorously intended the death or deposition of your Majesty.” He freely admitted his Catholicism, strongly denying, however, the Puritan claims that Catholics were “a rebellious people, disobedient to laws and magistrates, unmeet to live.” The essence of the Puritan conspiracy which he claimed, was that it had been intended that the earl of Essex should return with his forces from Ireland into Wallasey Lake. There, in the north-west he should have received the support of ten thousand men provided by Sir Richard Molyneux, together with further aid from none other than Bishop Vaughan of Chester. Hunt named Dean Nutter as a go-between for this pair and implicated a number of other people including Sir Thomas Gerrard. He claimed grounds for these accusations in the Bishop of Chester’s preaching when Essex went to Ireland “that the Irish wars were great, but that afterwards there would be more bloody wars” and in conversations he had held with Valentine Richardson, a servant of Sir Richard Molyneux. Hunt said that Richardson told him that the earl of Essex would have the crown of England and that Molyneux would have taken his part if he had come into England with force. Brought to the assizes Richardson naturally denied this (though he admitted the conversations which had certainly taken place before Essex’s return from Ireland)

and Molyneux himself sent word of the denial to Cecil with positively indecent haste.⁹⁷

Hunt was clearly aware that he had little evidence to support his claims — yet his words in the Gatehouse seem to suggest that he knew of Essex's attempted coup and felt that he and Middleton had been proved right although the Council would grant them no respite when he referred to "letters which the Earl sent out of Ireland to divers worshipful of our country that they should be ready against his coming, the proof whereof urged the Earl to this tumult, and yet we have no relief, whether it come of the forgetfulness of the Council, or malice to religion will not suffer them, we know not."⁹⁸ Certainly other of Hunt's words have a ring of truth about them, although he was aware that he could not prove what he said: "Mr. Bretter, or his disciples, have said that if Her Majesty should grant any toleration to the papists, that She was not worthy to be Queen, and before that should be, they would give bobs, or bobs should be given, which speech of toleration was then greatly in use. Also that the Earl of Essex was the worthiest to be King."⁹⁹ Christopher Haigh has viewed Hunt's claims as a "plan to prevent persecution by discrediting those responsible" and regarded him as "a determined and imaginative fellow, and no mean propagandist."¹⁰⁰ He may be right — there can now be no remaining proof — but Hunt's claims do stand together. The Earl of Essex *did* attempt to seize power: any element of truth in the supposed plot would certainly help to explain Bishop Vaughan's early attempt to blame Hunt for the Childwall disorders and his demand for exemplary punishment.

Whatever the truth of Hunt's claims of a Puritan conspiracy, the two priests were executed at Lancaster in April, 1601.¹⁰¹ Hunt has been blamed for acting as ringleader and organizing the Childwall disorders yet the only link between himself and Childwall is that he referred to 'Mr. Bretter' and was blamed by Vaughan for plotting all outrages "in these parts": did Vaughan mean all parts of his diocese? It is surely evident that the Childwall disorders were not organized: the riot involving Ralph Hitchmough was spontaneous, its timing provoked by the aggressive hostility of Brettergh himself. It is also evident that although many recusants were present at the riot, after attending Katherine Chaloner's funeral, not all of those present were Catholics. William Richardson, a young husbandman from Speke, may be taken as an example: he testified that he had gone to the funeral with Hugh Hey, Edward Pendleton, John Hulgreave, Edward Norris, James

Johnson and one of the Chaloner family. He further testified that none of these "had any weapons about them, saving little rods or sticks:" yet Richardson was clearly a protestant conformist who was married at Childwall church on 1st September, 1600 and whose daughter was baptised there on 16th August 1601.¹⁰² The claim that "a seminary priest had been involved in the planning"¹⁰³ simply cannot be so: few events can have been so spontaneous as the riot at Hitchmough's house.

Richardson's testimony survives among the recorded examinations of many witnesses concerned with the riot and the three cattle-maiming incidents, examinations taken before the J.P.s at Wigan and Prescott.¹⁰⁴ It is surely not necessary to look for planning — by Thurstan Hunt or anybody else — in the cases of cattle maiming. Animal maiming has been claimed as "an East Anglian speciality" in expressing rural protest in the mid-nineteenth century:¹⁰⁵ in fact, it has always, and in all regions, been an easy form of protest or retaliation, a form of malice, secretly expressed. Certainly the offence was not unknown in Childwall at this time: Henry Mossock of Allerton entered a close belonging to Randle Bushell at Much Woolton and cut off the left ear of a heifer on 17th August, 1591, in apparent retaliation for Bushell's removal of a heifer belonging to him, three days earlier.¹⁰⁶ The only difficulty involved in cases of cattle maiming was surely in identifying and punishing the offender: even Henry Mossock was found not guilty.¹⁰⁷ William Harrison, the Queen's Preacher, had no difficulty in assuming that Brettergh's cattle were maimed on the first occasion by Hitchmough and his rescuers in retaliation for his attachment and that on the second occasion the animals were slaughtered by Hitchmough's 'rescuers' because of Brettergh's widespread indictment of rioters and recusants. Vicar Hopwood shared these opinions: neither of these clergymen with local knowledge saw any need to assume planning by — nor indeed any involvement of — seminary priests.

Turning to the attack on John Wrightington's cattle, it is difficult to see any connection with the people of Childwall. Christopher Haigh is guilty of a minor error or confusion when he says that "Norris' men were involved in an assault on a justice of the peace and the constable of the hundred. . . A mob of about fifty people was involved in the attack on the justice."¹⁰⁸ Certainly, fifty or more people were involved in the riot at Hitchmough's house — but the justice, John Wrightington, was not present then. The assault on his cattle took place more than twenty miles from Speke and fifty people did

not go to Wrightington to assault his cattle. It would be simplest to assume that Haigh intended that fifty people were involved in the attack on the *constable*, i.e. Brettergh. The principal evidence presented to the J.P.s relating to the cattle maiming at Wrightington was given by Katherine Parpoynthe, wife of an alehousekeeper of Upholland. She testified that on the evening before the cattle were attacked, 3 gentlemen had visited her house; one of these was a man of reasonable stature dressed in black, wearing two pairs of stockings of green and blue with garters edged with lace, a scarf about his neck, a button behind his back, a red beard "somewhat long," having a black head — or a scarf on it — with a cap by his side and a crooked hanger. Richard Tyrer and George Bolton of Speke were both produced to claim they had seen the younger Edward Norris on several occasions wearing a black doublet, scarf, button, red beard and garters edged with silver lace: it must surely have seemed to the justices of 1600 that this was strange wear for cattle-maiming. Young Norris merely claimed to have been alone in bed at the time of the event.¹⁰⁹ his father's servant William Hughson, confirmed that he never went out whilst his father was in London at the behest of the Privy Council.

Edward Norris the younger's evidence was given in May, 1601 — a year after the original offences. When the bulk of the evidence was taken by the J.P.s in October, 1600, he and 24 of his father's tenants had fled rather than be examined.¹¹⁰ That fact, together with the apparently confused decisions concerning the examination of Hey, Pilkington, John Hitchmough and Edward Hitchmough led Leatherbarrow to the conclusion that "very little was done to bring the bulk of the offenders to justice" and that "the administrators of justice seem to have been quite powerless to curb or punish the unruly recusants."¹¹¹ Dr. Quintrell has agreed that "Little progress was made in bringing the local miscreants to justice."¹¹² It would seem more probable that little attempt was made to bring the rioters to justice as a matter of deliberate policy on the part of the administrators, not because they were powerless. The riot at Childwall was not exceptional: it fell into a well-worn pattern which has been observed elsewhere.

Thus, John Walter has noticed that, in the early 17th century, "Riot and response fell into a familiar pattern. While calling for the punishment of the riot, the government was careful to respond . . . to the popular grievances that had prompted disorder. Prosecution of the rioters was not actively

pursued."¹¹³ Peter Clark has also recognized that in Kent "local justices usually acted with caution in punishing participants in small-scale disturbances." Clark found, in fact, that "the typical disorder was small-scale, localised and customary, confirming rather than challenging the hierarchic structures and central norms of parish society."¹¹⁴

Riots were common in early modern England: indeed, it has been claimed that there was "an actual tradition of riot, a pattern of crowd action on the part of the common people."¹¹⁵ A riot, technically, meant only an unlawful meeting of three or more persons.¹¹⁶ A crowd greatly in excess of this number had gathered at Hitchmough's house and assisted his escape from Brettergh, ignoring the constable's appeals for help: he had consequently been within his legal rights in indicting large numbers of the community as 'rioters'. In fact, however, the whole community including the J.P.s will have been well aware that Brettergh had provoked the incident. Brettergh was typical only of the over-zealous officer who provoked local conflict, dragging it "out of the neighbourhood to the judicial bench, thus triggering a chain reaction of enmity which might be stabilized only with difficulty." The community thought ill of such officials, and officers who presented local recusants elsewhere "were generally maligned as being too 'presyce'": Brettergh would have been better-advised to imitate Robert Fazakerley of West Derby, who conscientiously attempted to serve warrants upon several neighbours "after first advertising the fact in the hope that they would keep out of his way."¹¹⁷

Riots and riotous assemblies were common in Lancashire, as they were elsewhere in this period. Between 1500 and 1592 rioters were presented at the Lancashire Quarter Sessions for disturbances at Ince Blundell, Ashton under Lyne, Skelmersdale and Withington. There were riots at Manchester and Garstang in 1603, at Ashton in 1605 — whilst in the intervening year of 1604 no less than four riots took place.¹¹⁸ Many of these riots were far more violent affairs than that at Childwall and officials were not exempt from attack: the constable of Ashton under Lyne was assaulted in 1591 and one of William Brettergh's immediate successors as High Constable, Richard Hill, was also subjected to an assault.¹¹⁹ Even more common, perhaps, was the rescue of attached persons: at least 15 such rescues took place between 1600 and 1605 in Lancashire: the majority of people thus rescued had been apprehended for debts.¹²⁰

Riots were common, rescues were common — violent behaviour to secure 'justice' was common. In 1537 Sir Wil-

liam Norris and 9 others of his household and tenants (including the chaplain) had "in warlike manner, with long staves, swords, bucklers and short daggers" ejected William Griffyth from the Mosse Graunges in Childwall, whose ownership he disputed. In August 1555 Sir William had seized loads of barley, oats, wheat and rye at various points in the parish — part of the tithe corn, whose ownership Norris disputed with Andrew Vavasor.¹²¹ Following these examples by the leading family in parish society it is not surprising that local people practised violence in protection of their supposed rights.

By his own admission, William Brettergh had been first to use violence against Ralph Hitchmough on 20th May, 1600. Evidence was given at Wigan by John Green, one of the Queen's Messengers, however, which attempted to establish both Hitchmough's violent nature and his dependence on Norris. Green claimed that about twelve months before the riot he had been sent by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to apprehend "wilful Recusants." He went to Hitchmough's house to arrest him, and his wife and Margery Farrer, knocked at the door and called for it to be opened. According to Green, Hitchmough then called him "A rogue, rascal or false knave" and cut Green's left leg with a pitchfork, poked under the door. Hitchmough then threatened to scale anybody who came near with boiling water, but Green continued to demand that the door be opened or he would cause it to burst open. A voice within was heard to say "God save my master's life" and Green was told that this referred to Norris. No other evidence bore upon this incident: it is difficult to comment upon it, since this attack on a Queen's Messenger (if true) apparently had gone unpunished and ignored whilst Bishop Vaughan railed against the failure to apprehend and punish malefactors at neighbouring Prescot who had assaulted several pursuivants.

Those who had taken part in the riot of May 1600 were seldom sorry for their part in it. Of those examined, a husbandman named Edward Norris confessed to being one of the rioters and Randle Mosley, a miller from Much Woolton, admitted that "he behaved himself very unseemly" towards Brettergh "both in words and proferring strokes." There is a strong sense of 'neighbourliness' and 'unneighbourliness' about the examinations, however, rather than many indications of a division of behaviour on religious grounds. Hitchmough had told his guardians their behaviour was "unneighbourly" and William Anson, one of those guards, affirmed that when

Thomas Moones offered to take his staff from him he told him "If thou be a good fellow thou wilt give it to me." Those who took part in the riot seem to have expected the support of all for Hitchmough — not merely the support of his co-religionists. The support of Willam Richardson for his Catholic neighbours has been mentioned already. Humphrey Walley, a labourer from Much Woolton, who was also a religious conformist,¹²² confirmed the evidence of some of the guardians at Hitchmough's house — but specified that apart from not hearing the speeches because he was hard of hearing, he did not see Margery Farrer do anything at all.

Not everybody took a neighbourly attitude, of course. In any small community there were old scores to be paid. Thus, Thomas Cooke of Allerton claimed that Hitchmough had passed his house about midnight on the night Brettergh's cattle were maimed, carrying a long staff "with two pycks in it." Robert Plombe, on the same night at "about daylightgate" saw Richard Tyrer "but knew not where he went." Alice Ballard claimed she had heard John Poole say he would pull down the house of Brettergh's servant, Plumpton, and would beat Brettergh like a dog. Apart from malicious gossip of this nature, other witnesses revealed their fear of arrest in the aftermath of the cattle maiming rather than any fear of repercussions from the riot. Thomas Hitchmough claimed that his father had hid in a ditch all night after the first cattle maiming and in a barn after the second, for fear of a search.

Several of those who gave evidence, remained recusants. Ralph Hitchmough defiantly claimed he had not been at "Divine Service as is now used in the Church of England for the space of two years last past — neither will he yet go." Robert Bayly merely claimed that he "was and is a Recusant." But it was in this area of conduct that the patience of the Privy Council may have achieved most good. Bishop Vaughan's tirade against Edward Norris had not persuaded the Council to take action against him and they had accepted his promises to bring his tenants to conformity. Hugh Pilkington now gave evidence that on his return from London, Norris "called before him all his tenants as were Recusants or suspected Recusants" and "gave them open admonition and warning to reform themselves and to become churchmen as becomes good subjects or else he would discipline them and put them off his land and put others in their place." This warning was confirmed by John Cutler — and William Norris claimed that Edward Norris had actually evicted tenants and made entries into the tenements of George Boulton and of the widows

Ballard, Milner, Plumpton and Pendleton. Anne Pendleton claimed that Norris had also turned her and her children out of their tenement, whilst her husband Edward was held in gaol at Chester, putting Henry Corker in their place; her claim was confirmed by Lawrence Gleast. Anne Pendleton hoped she and her family would recover their tenement if they "hereafter use themselves dutifully toward their master." Edward Pilkington confirmed that conformity brought the restoration of their properties to Norris' tenants: Norris, he said, "frankly, had taken their livings from them in respect of their disobedience and backwardness in religion."

Far from being powerless to curb unruly recusants, the Privy Council had successfully persuaded Edward Norris to bring pressure to bear upon his tenants.¹²³ Norris' actions brought a number of tenants into line. Edward Williamson confessed that he had been a recusant but "sythence which time" he had "reformed himself in religion." John Lake claimed he "was dutiful in religion." The vicar himself admitted that after Norris' return from meeting with the Privy Council, Edward Pendleton, William Norris, Widow Ballard, Widow Milner, Widow Plumpton, George Boulton, Widow Pendleton and other of his tenants who had been recusants "dutifully repaired to the church at Childwall at time of Divine Service." This was indeed important; the truth which William Trimble recognized with regard to Edward Norris applied also to each of these tenants. It was that his case "illustrates the progressive weakening of an occasional conformist's Catholicism, once he was willing to compromise with his conscience," that in other words "an occasional conformist was a lost Catholic."¹²⁴

Unquestionably, Norris and some of his tenants did become occasional conformists. Norris was present at the parish meeting of July, 1604. Edward Williamson was similarly present in June, 1606. John Lake attended the meeting of June, 1607; Edward Pendleton was there in July, 1601, in August 1602, in September 1603 and on a number of other occasions.¹²⁵ Nevertheless one would have expected that in the immediate aftermath of these disturbances a large number of people from Childwall parish would have been presented for recusancy — which several of them had admitted and for which many had been indicted by Brettergh. In October, 1601, however, just fourteen recusants were presented from the Hale chapelry, and ten more from the remainder of the parish, for absenting themselves for divine service.¹²⁶ It was not until November 1604 that the people of the parish were

presented for recusancy in numbers large enough to justify Christopher Haigh's claim that Childwall was one of the 'most Catholic' parishes in the 'Catholic' deanery of Warrington.¹²⁷

By then, perhaps, William Brettergh was less concerned with his neighbours. His wife Katherine, a puritan extremist, had died on 31st May, 1601. Although Brettergh "had to go to considerable lengths to counter local recusant gossip that she had 'died despairing and . . . comfortless,'" ¹²⁸ it had, apparently, been "her dread that her husband would renounce Protestantism."¹²⁹ Be that as it may, William Brettergh and Edward Norris, former opponents, were both present at the parish meeting in Childwall church of July, 1604.¹³⁰ Both, possibly, had withdrawn from the extremist positions which they had formerly occupied, as a result of the Childwall disturbances.

Those Childwall disturbances should not, perhaps, be viewed as they have been in the past. The evidence suggests that after a late start, the parish of Childwall began to conform to the requirements of the religious establishment after 1590. That movement towards conformity was too slow to satisfy the growing swell of anti-Catholic opinion, fomented by Puritanism and encouraged by the Privy Council. With support from the Council, Bishop Vaughan mounted an aggressive campaign against areas in his diocese where recusancy remained strong, siting the extremist Queen's Preachers in those areas and attacking the gentry of those districts. Vaughan found in William Brettergh, a young man soured by family disputes and fired by an extremist wife, an instrument to further his campaign against the recusants in a district dominated by Edward Norris. As High Constable, Brettergh attempted the apprehension of Ralph Hitchmough at a foolishly insensitive time: the result was the riot at Hitchmough's house — an event bordering on farce, rather than indicating any degree of organization or planning. The use of force by the crowd to rescue Hitchmough was within the tradition of riot, of rough behaviour and of rescue which applied in this period: one senses the attitude among the rioters that they were expressing their "right to participate in securing justice."¹³¹ Within two days, Brettergh's cattle were attacked, presumably in retaliation for the abortive arrest, in a traditional although objectionable manner. Vaughan attempted to place the blame for these events upon Norris, the landlord of many of the rioters.

When Brettergh indicted many of the rioters and local

recusants at the Assizes, his cattle were again attacked — and so were those of John Wrightington, a Lancashire J.P., in an incident which may have been quite unrelated. In another incident elsewhere in Lancashire, which may initially have been unrelated to events at Childwall, the priest Thurstan Hunt was captured and promptly blamed by Vaughan for all ills — an accusation which may not have been unrelated to Hunt's accusations of a plot in the northwest to support the earl of Essex and the establishment of a puritan regime.

Hunt was executed and it is difficult to see that the authorities were powerless to deal with the Childwall offenders had they so desired. They may have displayed more understanding than they were usually credited with in recognizing the strong sense of injustice commonly displayed by crowd action: certainly they displayed understanding and sound sense in accepting Edward Norris' promises to make his tenants to conform. Freeing Norris did not merely defuse the situation: it was a recognition by the Privy Council that their own power "was upheld by a comparable complex of relationships between individuals and groups occupying different positions in the hierarchy of wealth and power: between governor and governed, landlord and tenant, master and servant."¹³² Norris fulfilled his own obligation to the Council by using his power as landlord to enforce conformity on some at least of his tenants. Viewing events at Childwall in these lights is in no way intended to negate the views of Catholic resistance and rebellion which have been presented on wider evidence than that gleaned from Childwall alone. No attempt has been made to review the evidence of Prescott, of Garstang, of Chipping and elsewhere:¹³³ however, the riot at Childwall in May, 1600 and the subsequent cattle maimings, can surely no longer be regarded as an example of organized resistance tending to rebellion.

NOTES

- 1 J.S. Leatherbarrow, [*The*] *Lancashire [Elizabethan] Recusants* (C.S. 3rd series, XXI, 1947), p. 146.
- 2 C. Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance [in Tudor Lancashire]* (Cambridge, 1975), p. 328.
- 3 *Ibid.*, p. 328, p. 329.
- 4 B.W. Quintrell, 'Government in Perspective: Lancashire and the Privy Council, 1570-1640', *T.H.S.L.C.*, CXXXI (1982), p. 48.
- 5 Theophilus Kelsall, as vicar of Childwall, listed the townships of his parish in 1722: C.R.O., EDA 6/7/4. For discussion of the townships, see R.G. Dottie, 'The People of Childwall in the Stuart Period,'

- (Liverpool University M.Phil. thesis, 1981).
- 6 B.L., Harleian MS. 594.
 - 7 Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 22. Haigh also estimated that "the average Lancashire parish contained 350 households," *ibid.* p. 231.
 - 8 C. Cross, 'Recent Writings on the English Reformation' a paper delivered to a C.O.R.A.L. seminar on Diocesan Records, Institute of Historical Research, 6th November, 1982.
 - 9 C. Haigh, 'Some Aspects of the Recent Historiography of the English Reformation', in W.J. Mommsen, ed., *The Urban Classes, the Nobility and the Reformation* (Stuttgart, 1979), p. 88.
 - 10 J. Miller, *Popery and Politics in England 1660-1688* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 52.
 - 11 Liverpool City Record Office [hereafter City R.O.] *Childwall Churchwardens' Accounts*, Vol. I, 1571-1674, transcript, Miss E.B. Saxton, H. 238. 1 ALL [hereafter CCA] p. 26.
 - 12 Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 265.
 - 13 C.R.O., EDV 1/3, fo. 70.
 - 14 *V.C.H. Lancs.*, III, p. 107.
 - 15 Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 335.
 - 16 *V.C.H. Lancs.*, III, p. 106.
 - 17 *Ibid.* Haigh nevertheless claims that "his various parishioners complained of his pluralism and neglect in 1589, 1598 and 1601", C. Haigh 'Puritan Evangelism in the Reign of Elizabeth I', *E.H.R.*, XCII (1977), p. 37.
 - 18 D.M. Palliser, 'Popular Reactions to the Reformation during the Years of Uncertainty' in F. Heal and R. O'Day, eds., *Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I* (1977), p. 45.
 - 19 *Ibid.*, p. 46.
 - 20 C. Haigh, 'Finance and administration in a new diocese: Chester, 1541-1641' in F. Heal and R. O'Day, eds., *Continuity and Change: Personnel and administration of the Church in England 1500-1642* (Leicester, 1976), pp. 145-166.
 - 21 Palliser, 'Popular Reactions', p. 52.
 - 22 City R.O., CCA p. 7.
 - 23 Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, pp. 262-263.
 - 24 City R.O., CCA p. 7, p. 16.
 - 25 See Haigh, 'Recent Historiography', p. 98 for an account of the political reconstruction which made this advance possible.
 - 26 P. Collinson, [*The*] *Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (1967), pp. 406-407 and Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, pp. 302-303, 327.
 - 27 'Archbishop of York's Visitation, 1590', ed., F.R. Raines, *Chetham Miscellanies*, V (C.S., o.s., XCVI, 1875), p. 19.
 - 28 City R.O., CCA pp. 24, 25. It would have been particularly surprising if Hopwood had not conformed to the Archbishop's requirement since Piers had addressed himself (see note 27 above) to his namesake, Edmund Hopwood. It would seem highly probable that the two were kinsmen; the latter Hopwood was a J.P. and ecclesiastical commissioner: see *Chetham Miscellanies*, V, note 20, pp. 19-22.
 - 29 'State Civil and Ecclesiastical of the county of Lancaster', *Chetham Miscellanies*, V, pp. 1, 3, 9.
 - 30 City R.O., CCA pp. 25-29 *passim*. Haigh observed that "The efficient detection of recusancy required a regular parochial census combined with the weekly marking of a register but . . . this was not attempted until 1592, and then only with limited success" (*Reformation and Resistance*, p. 268).

- 31 City R.O., CCA pp. 29-44 *passim*. The "new statute" of which they gave warning to parishioners was, presumably, the Act against Popish recusants, 35 Eliz. c.2 *Statutes of the Realm*, IV. 843, which enacted that such recusants should be restrained by not departing more than five miles from their dwelling places: see, for example, P. McGrath, *Papists and Puritans under Elizabeth I* (1967), pp. 270-271.
- 32 C.R.O., EDV 1/10 was transcribed and published: W.F. Irvine, 'Visitation of Warrington Deanery by the Bishop of Chester in the year 1592', *T.H.S.L.C.*, XLVI (1895), pp. 183-192. This has subsequently been adduced as evidence of "the condition of the parish" — bearing an implicit suggestion of widespread recusancy: *V.C.H. Lancs.*, III, p. 102. In fact, the presentations for piping on the Sabbath, talking in church and churchyard, and frequenting alehouses instead of attending divine service are indicative of indifference rather than of recusancy. C.C.R.O., EDV 1/9 and 1/11 refer to presentations for fornication and adultery only, although many presentations for recusancy were made at neighbouring parishes.
- 33 These are the annual Sheriffs' accounts which record fines and forfeitures imposed on recusants: they are preserved in the P.R.O., class E 377.
- 34 *Recusant Roll No. 1, 1592-3*, M.M.C. Calthrop, ed., Catholic Record Society [hereafter C.R.S.], XVIII (1916); *Recusant Roll No. 2, 1593-4*, H. Bowler, ed., C.R.S. LVII (1965); *Recusant Rolls Nos. 3 and 4, 1595-6*, H. Bowler, ed., C.R.S. LXI (1970).
- 35 'A Book of Recusants — Cecil Papers', ed., Clare Talbot in *Miscellanea*, C.R.S. LIII (1961), p. 86.
- 36 Quintrell, 'Government in Perspective', p. 43.
- 37 C.Z. Wiener, 'The Beleaguered Isle. A Study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti-Catholicism', *Past and Present*, 51 (1971), p. 35.
- 38 R.C. Richardson, 'Puritanism and the Ecclesiastical Authorities: The Case of the Diocese of Chester,' in B.S. Manning, ed., *Politics, Religion and the English Civil War* (1973), p. 4.
- 39 *A.P.C.*, XIX, pp. 66, 156, 336, 339.
- 40 Collinson, *Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp. 210-211.
- 41 H.M.C., *Salisbury*, X, p. 41.
- 42 E. Axon, 'The King's Preachers in Lancashire', *T.L.C.A.S.*, LVI (1944), p. 70.
- 43 Richardson, 'Puritanism and the Ecclesiastical Authorities', p. 7.
- 44 The "Network of Exercises as a whole had probably ceased to exist by the early 1590's": R.C. Richardson, *Puritanism in North-West England* (Manchester, 1972), p. 66.
- 45 T.E. Gibson, *Lydiat Hall [and its Associations]* (1876), p. 249.
- 46 'Book of Recusants', *Miscellanea*, C.R.S. LIII, p. 86.
- 47 L. Stephens and S. Lee (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography*, (1908) *sub* Brettargh, Katharine.
- 48 Richardson, *Puritanism in North-West England*, pp. 95-96 draws attention to the considerable intermarriage which took place among puritans.
- 49 *Ibid.*, p. 111.
- 50 *Ibid.*, p. 169.
- 51 *Ibid.*, p. 179.
- 52 *Lancashire Funeral Certificates*, ed. T.W. King (C.S., o.s., LXXV, 1869), p. 40. Such a strong-minded woman will not have been content to practise her religion "within the family circle: Puritans were evangelizers. They wanted to spread their views", B. Coward, *The Stuart Age*

- (1980), p. 74. Katharine Brettergh will necessarily have wished to impose her views on her neighbours.
- 53 Gibson, *Lydiat Hall*, p. 244.
- 54 City R.O., CCA pp. 1, 9, 13, 15, 17, 19.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 56 At that time, or soon after, his house was marked on the well-known map annotated by Burghley: see *Miscellanea IV*, C.R.S. (1907).
- 57 *Recusant Roll No. 1*, C.R.S. XVIII, p. 201, p. 173.
- 58 City R.O., CCA pp. 9-14.
- 59 City R.O., CCA pp. 37, 43.
- 60 Richardson, *Puritanism in North-West England*, p. 180.
- 61 H.M.C., *Salisbury IX*, pp. 18-19.
- 62 M. James, *Family, Lineage and Civil Society: A study of Society, Politics and Mentality in the Durham Region, 1500-1640* (Oxford, 1974), p. 141.
- 63 *C.S.P.D. 1598-1601*, p. 389.
- 64 *Ibid.*, p. 7.
- 65 H.M.C., *Salisbury X*, p. 160.
- 66 *V.C.H. Lancs.*, III, p. 119.
- 67 University of Liverpool, Sidney Jones Library, Special Collections, Norris Deeds 210.
- 68 City R.O., Norris deeds, 920 NOR 2/493, 2/633, 2/622. The young William Brettergh to whom reference is made was the father of William Brettergh who married Katherine Bruen. He died shortly after this document was written and William Brettergh, who became High Constable in 1600, became heir to his grandfather's property in 1585: *V.C.H. Lancs.*, III, p. 119.
- 69 Dr. Quintrell has agreed that "local antagonisms of a non-religious kind also found plenty of opportunity for expression in these years", ('Lancashire and the Privy Council', p. 48). I am grateful to Dr. Quintrell for his helpful comments on a draft of this paper although the views expressed here, together with any misconceptions, remain my own.
- 70 City R.O., CCA pp. 32, 40. Brettergh had contributed 6d. to the cost of Coronation Day celebrations in 1595 and 1596, possibly in rivalry with Norris, *ibid.*, p. 37. Relations between the families had clearly been better in the earlier half of the sixteenth century, when Bretterghs witnessed a number of deeds on behalf of the Norris family, Liverpool University, Norris Deeds 169a, 171, 172, 209.
- 71 *Lancashire Quarter Sessions Records*, ed. J. Tait, (C.S., n.s., LXXVII, 1917), p. xxxii.
- 72 P.R.O., Star Chamber STAC 5 8/31. I am grateful to my colleague, Miss J.E. Hollinshead, for drawing this document to my attention. Much of what follows is gleaned from the evidence given by various deponents at Wigan and Prescott. No separate ascription will normally be given for the items thus gleaned from individual depositions: all further references and quotations in this paper will relate to that document unless differently specified.
- 73 *The Registers of the Parish of Childwall, Part I, 1557-1680*, ed. R. Dickinson, (L.P.R.S., CVI, 1967), p. 132.
- 74 The sign of the cross had been given up by the second Edwardian Prayer Book, as part of the "Protestant attack on sacramental magic." Keith Thomas also points out the importance of funeral customs in helping to "ease the social adjustments necessary to accommodate the fact of death": K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (1971), pp. 39, 57.

- 75 Acresfield Road is to be found on Woolton Hill at the present time.
- 76 Despite this claim by William Brettergh, Katharine Chaloner had not been presented for recusancy in the 1590's.
- 77 John Walter has commented on the role of women in riots of the period, because their legal position "was very unclear": J. Walter, 'Grain riots and popular attitudes to the law: Maldon and the crisis of 1629' in J. Brewer and J. Styles, eds., *An Ungovernable People* (1980), pp. 62-63.
- 78 For the convention that the corpse should face East, see Thomas, *Decline of Magic*, p. 39.
- 79 H.M.C., *Salisbury X*, p. 160.
- 80 *A.P.C.*, XXX, pp. 368-370, *C.S.P.D. 1598-1601*, p. 389.
- 81 *A.P.C.*, XXX, p. 542-3.
- 82 P.R.O., STAC 5 A 8/31 — evidence of William Harrison, Queen's Preacher at Huyton.
- 83 City R.O., 920 NOR 17/6.
- 84 *A.P.C.*, XXX, pp. 662-663.
- 85 Whilst Edward Norris was in London meeting the Privy Council, his son William had instructed the constable of Speke township, William Hulgreave, to try to take Ralph Hitchmough. He apprehended him within two days and conveyed him to the gaol at Lancaster: P.R.O., STAC 5 A 8/31, STAC 5 A 47/32.
- 86 *C.S.P.D. 1598-1601*, p. 482.
- 87 G. Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests*, Vol. I, (Durham, 1968), pp. 230-231.
- 88 *Ibid.*, pp. 179-181; H.M.C., *Salisbury X*, pp. 335-336; *C.S.P.D. 1598-1601*, pp. 485-489.
- 89 *A.P.C.*, XXX, p. 721.
- 90 H.M.C., *Salisbury X*, p. 373.
- 91 *C.S.P.D. 1598-1601*, p. 485.
- 92 *A.P.C.*, XXX, p. 746; XXXI, p. 137.
- 93 H.M.C., *Salisbury XI*, p. 109.
- 94 *A.P.C.*, XXXI, pp. 194-195.
- 95 Anstruther, *The Seminary Priests*, p. 180.
- 96 H.M.C., *Salisbury XI*, pp. 165-167; *C.S.P.D. Addenda, 1580-1625*, pp. 399-400; *C.S.P.D. 1598-1601*, pp. 486-489; H.M.C., *Salisbury XI*, p. 109.
- 97 H.M.C., *Salisbury XI*, p. 160.
- 98 *Ibid.*, p. 109.
- 99 *C.S.P.D. Addenda, 1580-1625*, p. 400.
- 100 Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 329.
- 101 The merits of the pair were remembered in verse, "Hunt's dauntless courage stout, with Godly zeal so true, Mild Middleton, O what tongue can half thy virtue shew?": A song of four Priests that suffered death at Lancaster, *English Martyrs, 1584-1603*, C.R.S. V (1908), p. 385.
- 102 *Registers of Childwall*, pp. 9, 54.
- 103 Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 328.
- 104 P.R.O., STAC 5 A 8/31.
- 105 J. Archer, 'Rural Protest in Norfolk and Suffolk, 1830-1870', a paper delivered to C.O.R.A.L. conference on Rural Social Change and Conflict since 1500, Dartington, 10th July, 1982.
- 106 *Lancashire Quarter Sessions Records*, pp. 30, 39.
- 107 *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- 108 Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, p. 328.

- 109 P.R.O., STAC 5 A 47/32.
- 110 The document in question (*C.S.P.D. 1598-1602*, p. 482) refers to "servants" rather than tenants of Norris: I am satisfied that tenants were intended, implying their dependence on Norris rather than their direct employment by him.
- 111 Leatherbarrow, *Lancashire Recusants*, p. 147.
- 112 Quintrell, 'Lancashire and the Privy Council', p. 48.
- 113 Walter, 'Grain riots and popular attitudes', pp. 50-51.
- 114 P. Clark, 'Popular Protest and Disturbance in Kent, 1558-1640', *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser., XXXIX (1976), p. 381.
- 115 K. Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (1982), p. 173.
- 116 Because the definition of riot in this period poses problems of arbitrary decisions, Peter Clark chose to use the word to mean "the collective action or demonstration of at least five people, joining together to voice a communal grievance or remedy a communal wrong": Clarke, 'Popular Protest', p. 366.
- 117 K. Wrightson, 'Two Concepts of Order', in Brewer and Styles *An Ungovernable People*, pp. 29, 30, 31.
- 118 *Lancashire Quarter Sessions Records*, pp. 16, 18, 27, 59, 171, 198, 244, 176, 207, 218, 230, 238-9.
- 119 *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 141, 149.
- 120 *Ibid.*, see, for example, pp. 85, 119, 120.
- 121 *Pleadings and Depositions in the Duchy Court of Lancaster*, vols I & II, ed. H. Fishwick (L.C.R.S., XXXV, XL, 1897, 1899), I, pp. 116-18; II, pp. 152-231. Violence may be considered commonplace: Sir Richard Buckley even offered violence to Mr. Holcroft in the house of the Bishop of Chester in 1592, *A.P.C.*, XXIII, p. 359.
- 122 He was married at the parish church in June, 1600 and his daughter was baptised in the following month: *Registers of Childwall*, pp. 9, 53.
- 123 W.R. Trimble also recognized that the Council was "unwilling to press further a case where pressures and fears had reacted so much in its favor": W.R. Trimble, *The Catholic Lady in Elizabethan England, 1558-1603*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964), p. 174.
- 124 *Ibid.*, pp. 174, 175.
- 125 City R.O., CCA, pp. 59, 64, 73, 45, 54, 59.
- 126 C.R.O., EDV 1/126.
- 127 Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, pp. 316-318.
- 128 Quintrell, 'Lancashire and the Privy Council', p. 48.
- 129 *V.C.H. Lancs.*, III, p. 119. Brettegerh married Anne Hyde of Urmston at Stockport on 5th August, 1602, J.P. Earwaker, *East Cheshire*, I, (1877), p. 405. She seems not to have been a Puritan. Their son, Nehemiah, "was most of his life a heavy drinker" and took part in the defence of Lathom House in the Civil War: *V.C.H. Lancs.*, III p. 119.
- 130 City R.O., CCA, p. 59.
- 131 Brewer and Styles, *An Ungovernable People*, p. 16.
- 132 J. Walter and K. Wrightson, 'Dearth and the Social Order in Early Modern England', *Past and Present* 71, pp. 22-23.
- 133 Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance*, pp. 328-329.