
ORIENTALE LUMEN

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Free to members



The Editor writes

This edition of *Oriental Lumen* contains details of the exciting discovery of a hitherto unknown clandestine domestic chapel in a Norfolk house that puts us directly in touch with the world of Elizabethan Catholicism – a time when Catholics were routinely forced to dissemble or suffer for their faith. The last year and more has been very trying for us all, but as some semblance of normal life – and normal worship – returns, it does not go amiss to remember that East Anglia's Catholics historically endured far worse trials than the Covid-19 pandemic. As the Diocese of East Anglia looks ahead to the future in a time of uncertainty, it is always helpful to remain grounded in an understanding of the past and what our predecessors bequeathed to us, both in the form of built heritage and the community of living people of whom we are a part.



The newly identified secret Catholic chapel at Barnham Broom Old Hall © Brigitte Webster

DIOCESAN HISTORIC CHURCHES SUPPORT OFFICER APPOINTED

The Diocese of East Anglia has recently appointed Eloise Limmer as its Historic Churches Support Officer. Eloise will be working closely with parishes responsible for listed churches to help them to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of their historic church buildings. This will build on the work completed as part of the 'Taking Stock' review which created a catalogue of the churches within the diocese describing their architectural details and highlighting features of significance. Eloise will also support parishes in developing effective maintenance programmes and organising major repair projects alongside helping them through the relevant faculty, planning, and grant applications.



Oriental Lumen (meaning 'Light from the East') is the newsletter of The East Anglian Catholic History Society (East Anglia Diocesan History Society)

A SECRET CATHOLIC CHAPEL BARNHAM BROOM OLD HALL, NORFOLK

July's edition of *The Catholic Herald* magazine reported on the identification of a hitherto unrecognised Elizabethan-era secret Catholic chapel inside Barnham Broom Old Hall near Norwich. The chapel was first uncovered in the late 1990s (but not yet recognised for what it was) when wallpaper was removed in a first floor bedroom, revealing a much faded wallpainting underneath featuring bands of black and white decorated with drops representing the blood and water that flowed from Christ's side during his Passion. This is a very similar decoration to one found in a domestic chapel at Harvington Hall in Worcestershire. In 2007 a conservator restored three walls of the chapel, which also features an aumbry and another niche that might have been used as a piscina. By this time the room was recognised as a chapel, but it was not until earlier this year that the connection with Harvington Hall and the theme of the Holy Blood was made, rendering it all but certain that this was a Catholic chapel.

A curious feature of Barnham Broom Old Hall is that the Chamberlayne family who lived there in the late 16th century were not recusants. However, the brother of George Chamberlayne of Barnham Broom, Sir Ralph Chamberlayne of Gedding, was presented as a recusant in the 1560s so there was recusancy in the family. The most obvious explanation for the chapel is that the

Chamberlayne family were ‘church papists’, Catholics who reluctantly attended Protestant services at their parish church but worshipped privately as Catholics at home. If this is true, then the chapel at Barnham Broom Old Hall is a very rare survival of a church papist’s private chapel.



Barnham Broom Old Hall © Brigitte Webster

Barnham Broom Old Hall is open to the public on specific days of the year, and further information can be found on the Historic Houses website (invitation to view). For group bookings, please email brigittewebster@tudorexperience.com or visit the website www.tudorexperience.com.

vicar of Beccles, Bence Sutton, and his brother Robert of nearby Worlingham Hall. Chateaubriand returned to London in 1795 but was back in Suffolk again in 1795-6, this time to Bungay where he lived at 34 Bridge Street in the house of the Reverend John Clement Ives (1766-1812), vicar of Ilketshall St Margaret’s, close to Bungay, from 1794-1812 .

Chateaubriand was tutor to Ives’s daughter Charlotte (1780-1852), later (in 1806) married to Samuel (afterwards Admiral Sir) Sutton (1760-1832) and, according to Chateaubriand, they fell in love. Chateaubriand was already married and the affair came to nothing .In 1822, when Chateaubriand was French Ambassador in London, he renewed Charlotte’s acquaintance.

Chateaubriand’s later reputation as a Catholic polemicist seems to have postdated his Suffolk stay. He is not mentioned in Edward Crouzet’s excellent history of Catholic Bungay and there is no evidence of any contact with the Catholic chaplain at Flixton Hall.

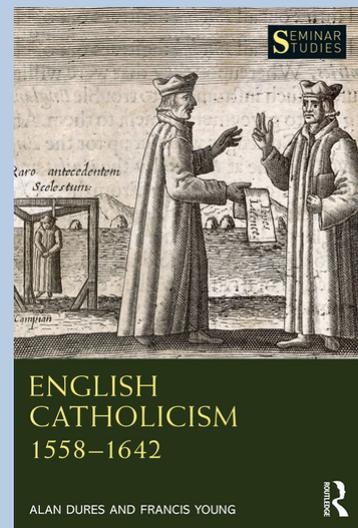
CHATEAUBRIAND IN SUFFOLK

By Dominic Bellenger

Francois-René de Chateaubriand (1768-1848) was a dominant figure in 19th-century France whose long career, in politics and diplomacy, as well as in the world of letters, contributed greatly to the development of Romanticism and to the revival of the Catholic Church in his native country especially through his work the *Génie du Christianisme* (1802) which was a rich evocation of the ‘poetry’ of Catholicism.

A Breton noble , born in Saint-Malo, he became a soldier, supported the royalist cause, and spent the years of the French Revolution in exile, mainly in London. He also lived for a time in Suffolk, although the information provided by his autobiography, published after his death, has to be read with caution; he was addicted to fanciful elaborations. He arrived in London in 1793 and was given the patronage of the influential French exiled journalist Jean-Gabriel Peltier (1760-1825). He seems to arrived in Beccles early in 1794 where he eked out a living as a teacher of French. He was assisted in his literary efforts, which had become his principal occupation, by access to the libraries of the

New and Forthcoming Books of Interest



Alan Dures and Francis Young, *English Catholicism 1558-1640* (Routledge, 2021). This book is a 2nd (and much expanded) edition of Alan Dures’s book of the same title published in 1983, and is a thorough historical introduction to English Catholicism aimed at undergraduate students. The book can be pre-ordered here: <https://www.routledge.com/English-Catholicism-15581642/Dures-Young/p/book/9780367672300>