

Who was here?

As we know, in 1769, Rev. Fletcher (Fletcher Mission) opposed the opening of a Mass House in High Street, Madeley. The Mass House was incorporated in the rear part of the newly built presbytery, on land gifted by the Giffards. This apparently replaced an earlier one. The Mass House opened in 1770. Rose Giffard's daughters owned shares of the manor. Oddly, Fletcher's widow, Mary, maintained friendly relations with the Catholic Priest, John Reeve, who attempted her conversion.

1841 Census shows the priest Clement Jefferson living in "Madeley Town". He is aged 30, born about 1811. Living with him are William Barnes, aged 75, a previous priest, although listed on the census as "Clerk", as was Clement. William was born in 1766, but there are no other records of him. Also in the residence were Ann Law, aged 35, housekeeper—baptised in Stoksey on 27/10/1805, daughter of Thomas & Margaret—and a Phebe Darvant, aged 15, born 1826, a general servant.

1851 Census shows the priest, William Molloy, living in 210 High Street—this no longer exists—he is 34 years old and was born in Ireland in 1817—baptised 20/04/1817 in Cashel, Tipperary, his father Michael and mother Cath Murphy—and living with him are Catherine McDonough, 18, born Salop, Wellington in 1833, general servant, and Elizabeth M. Presso (Pressi?), age 40, schoolmistress, born in Lingfield, Lancashire @ 1811.

The Rev. William Molloy took over the Mission in 1849 and led the efforts to build a new church, anticipating further expansion as a result of the Emancipation years. So on April 21st 1852 the foundation stone of St. Mary's was laid and the church opened on August 18th 1853.

The original intention was that the church would accommodate 500 worshippers but the inharmonious terminations of the east and west ends show that this ambition was never realised.

1861 Census shows that William moved on to be resident priest at Hanley, Stoke upon Trent, St. Mary and St. Patrick's Chapel, staying first with a John Emery and his wife Susannah and then 10 Church Street. With Hanley went also Shelton, Bucknall, Milton, Far Green, Northwood and their outskirts. He had a housekeeper, Emily Field, 35, born in Stoke Newington and a general servant girl, Bridget Dumphrey, 19, born in Ireland. William died in 1901 and was buried on July 31st in Ford Roman Catholic Cemetery, Liverpool, Grave no. 3191.

In the 1871 Census, the priest serving St. Mary's is a Theophilus Degan, age 40, from Nymegan, Holland (Sacred Heart Fathers?). He is resident in New Street, Shifnal, the resident priest of St. Mary's, Shifnal. With him is a Julia McCoy, age 34, born in Broseley, listed as a School Mistress. In 1880 he is in Cape May, New Jersey, USA. He died in 1900.

A Presbytery through time

It has been interesting to discover some details of people who lived and were connected to the Presbytery at 70 High Street.

From the 1911 Census it appears that an Annie McCoy, aged 47, who was born in Ironbridge, is here—it is now called Arundel House; a girls boarding school. She is a teacher, widowed and living with her 2 daughters, Winifred, age 23 and Honora (Margaret), age 19.

Annie was married to (Francis) John McCoy. John was born in Ireland, County Mayo, in 1838 and is some 23 years older than Annie (perhaps a second marriage?)¹. He was working from home as a shoemaker, living at 74 Delph Side, Broseley, and died in 1906.

Working backwards, we see in the 1891 census that they are a family living at 69 High Street. John is still a shoemaker but their children are listed as: Marion Hannah, age 9; Hilda, age 7; and Winifred, age 3. By 1901, Hilda is a servant at 86 Anthrobus Rd., Hansworth in the household of Harry and Florence Davis. Harry is a schoolmaster.

In 1911, Marion Hannah is a Parlour Maid, working at The Grange, Butterley, Derby. Her employer is a Melville Wright, age 40—Director and Coal Salesman at Butterley Co. Ltd. (Iron Works).

Back in 1881, they are registered at 205 Hockley Hall Street, Broseley and living with them are Agnes (19) and Nellie (11). Ten years later and Nellie, age 22, is at 85 Albion Street, Werneth, Oldham as a boarder, working as a dressmaker. The head of the house is an Ellen Kerr, age 45.

Forward to 1939 and No. 70 High Street is now occupied (rented?) by a Joseph P. O'Neill, Bricklayer, born 14.01.1888; his wife Jane E., Unpaid Domestic Duties, born 29.03.1891; and their son James P. also a bricklayer, born 25.07.1913.

Does anyone remember anything about them?

They are living at 81 King Street, Broseley

¹ *From 1871 Census it would appear that John was married, in 1853, to Bridget Agnes Gollarker (1828-1877). She is a Boot Binder. They have 4 children: Agnes (1860-1877) / David (1862-1939) / Agatha (1864-?) and Julia Ellen (1868 -?)