

A Tale of Two Curates (and Manygates House)

When William Donne came to Wakefield in 1892 as Vicar of Wakefield and Archdeacon of Huddersfield, he recruited two curates who had been with him at Great Yarmouth where he had been the vicar since 1886. This short essay considers the very different paths taken subsequently by these two men and, in the case of one, his (modest but real) impact on the Wakefield Diocese.

The new curates were Philip Dyson Hornby and Richard Phipps. Both were Cambridge men. Hornby had graduated from Pembroke College in 1889. Phipps, the slightly older of the pair, graduated from Clare College in 1887. Both trained for the church at Wells Theological College.

During his brief time in Wakefield, Hornby was, simply, a curate. Phipps, however, held the prestigious Jane Lectureship, a position which had been reserved since 1876 for the senior curate at the parish church. (An account of the founding of the Lectureship in 1801 and its subsequent holders is in Dr Walker's *Wakefield - Its History and People*, 1939.)

Looking back, it might be fair to say that Hornby was a quietly dedicated pastoral figure. Reports of him in *The Cathedral Magazine* of the time, record his holding 'cottage meetings' in the unsalubrious areas of New Street and Providence Street. When a Cathedral Cricket Club was formed in 1893, Hornby was chosen as its captain. Whilst at Wakefield he founded a 'mission army' with the aim, in particular, of raising funds for missionary work abroad. After his departure the 'army' met quarterly, sometimes at the home of the Misses Gissing, sisters of the novelist, George Gissing, in Wentworth Terrace.

Phipps, on the other hand, was (I dare to suggest) a 'career' clergyman. In 1893 he was appointed as the Bishop's Diocesan Chaplain, the herald of a future role in the Wakefield Diocese.

Hornby's dedication to the poor took him first, in 1894, to be head of the Cheltenham College Mission in South London. From there he went in 1896 to South Africa to serve as priest in charge of the immense parish of Lusikisiki, Pondoland, in what was then the Cape Colony. He kept in touch with his friends in Wakefield and the *Cathedral Magazine* for December 1897 includes the first of his many reports of his work. Two months later he wrote to the Wakefield parish to ask for help in providing cassocks for some of his assistants. A local fund was established to support Hornby's mission and a year later the cassocks were sent.

Hornby's many (and sometimes lengthy) letters, published regularly in the *Cathedral Magazine* may well provide one of the best insights we have into the life of a missionary clergyman in black Africa. In 1899 he wrote of the effects of the nearby war, at the same time requesting surplices and altar linen. He also gave news of his marriage. He had moved on by 1901 to St John's, Kaffraria. The congregation at the Cathedral set up a Kaffraria Mission to support his work. In 1902 Hornby returned on leave to England, visiting Wakefield and speaking at a service for the work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. He died in Kaffraria in 1905 from cancer, leaving a widow and young child. He was only thirty-eight. Richard Phipps remained in the Wakefield Diocese which he was to serve for the length of his career. Between 1894 and 1896 he remained the Diocesan Chaplain and for a year was also the chaplain of the Industrial Home for discharged female prisoners at St John's, Wakefield. Then, in 1896, he was appointed to the living of Brighouse, one of the new parishes of the early Victorian period, with a respectable stipend for the time of £285 a year, and with a house. The living was in the gift of the bishop. In 1901 Phipps was given the living of Kirkburton, which was again in the gift of the bishop and which brought a stipend of £414. In May 1905 Phipps married Agnes Mary Lambert, daughter of the vicar of Christ Church, Bradford on Avon. The wedding service was conducted by the Bishop of Salisbury. Wedding gifts included a silver

mounted paper knife from the St John's Home.

Whilst in Kirkburton, Phipps became a freemason, being initiated into Beaumont Lodge there. In 1912 he was the master of the lodge and in both 1911 and 1913 he served as the Provincial Grand Chaplain. He also represented Kirkburton on the West Riding County Council. Meanwhile, in 1909 he was made an honorary canon of Wakefield Cathedral.

Phipps resigned his living in 1912 to become the Wakefield Diocesan Secretary. In this post he masterminded a restructuring of the financial organization of the diocese. Under his guidance, the over-arching Wakefield Diocesan Board of Finance was established, to take control from 1 January 1914, of the Wakefield Diocesan Board of Education and the Wakefield Diocesan Fund (an amalgamation of the Wakefield Church Extension Fund and the Spiritual Aid Fund).

Phipps moved in 1913 to live at Manygates House, Sandal, as the tenant of Percy Tew (on what terms is not known but Tew was something of a benefactor of the diocese). The house was (and still is) a substantial dwelling in some 6 acres of parkland, pleasure grounds, a conservatory, a fernery, stabling and a coach-house. In the absence at the time of any other diocesan administrative base, Manygates House became the centre for meetings of the Diocesan Board of Finance and other committees. In 1923 Phipps was appointed as the Archdeacon of Halifax. He continued to work from Manygates House which he bought from Tew's heir, Thomas Percy Tew of Brightling Park, Sussex, in 1924 for £2,000. The Diocese gained permanent offices in South Parade in 1926. When the deaneries of Hemsworth and Pontefract were added to the Diocese of Wakefield (from York) in 1927, Phipps' title was changed to Archdeacon of Pontefract (the Archdeacon of Huddersfield becoming the Archdeacon of Halifax and the title Archdeacon of Huddersfield lapsed).

After 38 years in the Diocese, Phipps resigned at the end of 1930. He retained the titles of Emeritus Canon of Wakefield and Emeritus Archdeacon of Pontefract and, although moving to Harrogate, he continued to attend and speak at the annual Diocesan Conferences.

Manygates House, and all its land, was sold to Wakefield Corporation in 1931 for £2,125. Wakefield's maternity hospital was subsequently built there and opened in 1935.

Phipps died on 5 October 1834 at his home, Stonecroft, Leeds Road, Harrogate. He was 69. His funeral took place the following week in Kirkburton.

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