

A JESUIT SCHOOL IN THE CITY IN 1688

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During the reign of James II the English Jesuits opened two schools in London; one, the larger and better known, at the Savoy in May 1687, the other, in the City in March 1688. Both ceased to exist at the Revolution. It is with the second, the Lime Street or Fenchurch Street school, that this article is concerned.

The story of the school is closely connected with the story of a 'popish' or Catholic chapel in Lime Street. In the reign of Charles II the only Catholic chapels in London, apart from the Queen's chapel at St James and the Queen Dowager's (later the Queen's) at Somerset House, were those belonging to the ambassadors or residents of Catholic states. With the accession of a Catholic King the Chapels Royal at Whitehall and St James's Palace were used for Catholic services, as was, of course, the widowed Queen Catherine's at Somerset House. A chapel was opened at the Savoy in 1687. In addition, the King wished to see Catholic chapels established nearer to or in the City. Thus the Benedictine monks opened one at St John's, Clerkenwell, the Dominican and Franciscan friars in Lincoln's Inn Fields and the Carmelites in Bucklersbury, all in 1687 or 1688. The Lime Street chapel was earlier than any of these and was first used in April 1686.¹

This chapel is described as having been at the Fishmongers' Hall, not the Fishmongers' Hall in Upper Thames Street, but a building on a site bequeathed to the Fishmongers' Company. Of this building it is recorded:

Sir Thomas Abney . . . kept his mayoralty (1700–1) in a grand old house in Lime Street which seems to have been built by Richard Langton about the year 1600. The site of it had been occupied by Lord Scrope of Bolton and was left by Richard Knight in 1501 to the Fishmongers' Company. From a monograph with measured drawings by G. H. Birch and R. P. Spiers one learns that it was standing in 1872.²

This house was on the east side of Lime Street and towards the northern end. It was taken early in 1686 at the King's desire by the representative of the Elector Palatine, James Stanford.

According to one tradition some secular priests opened the chapel here under Stanford's patronage and protection, near to or perhaps in his house. The house had been taken on a thirty-one year lease in 1676 by Dr John Betts, a Catholic physician, and it is possible that three priests, Andrew Giffard, James Dymock and Christopher Tootell, with the assistance of a fourth, John Gother, had opened the chapel before Stanford took over the property.³ Another possibility

is that Stanford made alterations to a building in the garden at the back and *fitted it up as a chapel appointing the three priests as chaplains. Both traditions may be true.* A chapel in the house was followed by Stanford's chapel in a separate but adjacent building which was opened on 18 April 1686. It seems likely that the site of the chapel would roughly correspond to Nos.3 and 5 Fenchurch Avenue, on the left as one enters from Lime Street, part of the area now occupied by Lloyd's.⁴

The King desired the chapel and so did Stanford. The Elector Palatine, Philip William, pointing out that he was the Catholic ruler of a largely Protestant state, was prudently less than enthusiastic but his objections were brushed aside by the King and he eventually gave his consent.⁵ The Lord Mayor and the City authorities complained that as Stanford was English he could have no true ambassadorial status. The London mob made trouble and there were riots the day the chapel was opened. *Some contemporary accounts describe these:*

On Sunday the 18th was a tumult made in Cheapside occasioned by the meeting at the popish chapel in Limestreet, some of the rabble having followed the preists thither; so that the lord mayor and alderman were there with the train'd bands to quell the same; some of the cheif ringleaders were taken; and his majestic . . . sent for the lord mayor and told him to take care of the peace of the city or otherwise he should be forced to send some assistance to them.⁶

A correspondent provided further details:

On Sunday, the London hot-heads were bantering Mr Sandford's Chapel, got away a cross, and set it by a pump, paying very disorderly adoration to it, with halloaing, and then going back and taking a crucifix, and saying they would have no wooden gods worshipped. These frightening the priest, but not hurting him. Then comes the Lord Mayor and commands the peace. The answer was in a scornful way. 'What! the Lord Mayor of our city come to preach up popery! too sure it cannot be.' Then the guard militia was ordered to send the rabble away; and asking what they meant, the answer was, 'Only pulling down popery', and their return was, 'If that be all, we cannot in conscience hinder'. But vespers not going on in the chapel, they dispersed. By next Sunday more matters may occur.⁷

A newsletter of the time reported:

19 April 1686. Some time since Mr Stamford Resident of the Elector Palatine at his house in the city built a chapel there which was lately finished and yesterday being the first day it was preached in the rabble . . . while they were at service assaulted them; it might have had ill consequences had not my Lord Mayor taken all imaginable care to suppress them. The Resident has been to-day to complain to the King of it . . . about 20 of them are taken and in prison.⁸

More trouble was feared about a month later:

Some apprehensions there were that the apprentices designed to be troublesome to Mr Sandford's Chapel these holidays. I do not hear they stir.⁹

In June 1686, for a reason or reasons not now clear, the King had Stanford replace his secular priest chaplains by Jesuit priests. By this time the riots had died down and the popish chapel in Lime Street continued in use, apparently undisturbed, for the next two years.¹⁰

The Jesuit school started at the Savoy in May 1687 was very successful,

attracting some 400 boys more than half of them not Catholics.¹¹ And, as a newsletter of December 1687 reported:

A school for maidens in St Martin's Lane erected by the Queen will be opened on St Thomas's day under four women in the habit of nuns. No religious distinction will be made; the poor and rich to enjoy the benefit provided they come in clean and decent habits.¹²

The establishment of these schools drew attention to the need of education for Londoners:

Four [Church of England] bishops design to erect a free school in Lincoln's Inn Fields and the project is afoot in divers other places, the Protestants being resolved not to be outdone in charity by any of a different persuasion.¹³

In view of the success of the Savoy school the King gave orders for the opening of a school attached to the Lime Street chapel and made it an annual allowance of £350. It was opened on 25 March 1688.¹⁴ It seems probable that Stanford was dismissed or retired as representative of the Elector Palatine in February or March and that the Jesuits took over his house and bought another house adjacent to the chapel in which to open the school. Several Jesuits from the Savoy moved in to live in the establishment, Charles Petre, the brother of Edward Petre the Jesuit adviser of the King and privy councillor, being appointed to manage and teach in the school.¹⁵ It was not a large one. Initially there appears to have been only one class but it made progress and was well attended during the eight or nine months of its existence. It is possible that one or two young Jesuit assistant masters were brought over from the Continent as an addition to the staff before the end.¹⁶

An interesting survival of this attempt to establish a school for Catholics (but not only for Catholics) in the City is what may best be described as its prospectus. It is entitled 'The Rules of the Schools at the Jesuits in Fanchurch-Street' copies of which 'are to be sold by the Cushion-Man at the Chapel in Lime-Street'. The rules are ten in number.¹⁷

I. The Invention (*sic*) of Opening these Schools is to Teach Youth Vertue and Learning: They shall be Taught *Gratis*; nor shall they be at any farther Charges or Expences than the buying of their own Pens, Ink, Paper and Books.

II. These Schools are common to all, of what condition soever, and none shall be excluded, when they shall be thought fit to begin to learn Latin, and Write sufficiently well: And in the Schools shall be taught Greek and Latin, as also Poetry and Rhetoric, as they shall rise to higher Schools.

III. And altho' Youths of different Professions, whether Catholick or Protestants, come to these Schools; yet in Teaching all, there shall be no distinction made, but all shall be Taught with equal Diligence and care, and every one shall be promoted according to his Deserts.

IV. There shall not be, either by Masters or Scholars, any tampering or meddling to persuade any one from the Profession of his own Religion; but there shall be all freedom for every one to practise what Religion he shall please, and none shall be less esteem'd or favored for being of a different Religion from others.

V. None shall upbraid or reproach any one on the account of Religion; and when any Exercise of Religion shall be practised, as hearing *Mass*, *Catechising*, or *Preaching*, or any other; it shall be lawful for any *Protestant*, without any molestation or trouble, to absent himself from such Exercise, if he please.

VI. All shall be Taught to keep God's Commandments, and therefore none shall be permitted to Lye, Swear, or Curse, or talk uncivil Discourse; Nor shall fight or quarrel with one another; and he who shall be observed to fail in these Duties, shall be punished according to his demerit; And when any one, for these, or other Faults, shall be adjudged to any Chastisement, if he shall refuse to receive such Chastisement quietly, or be stubborn, he shall be Expell'd the Schools, and not be re-admitted again, until he shall have given satisfaction for such his Fault.

VII. All shall be in their respective Schools by a quarter before Eight in the Morning, and shall there stay until Ten and a half; Again at a quarter before Two, until half an hour after Four. And all Parents are earnestly desired to send their Children timely to School, and not easily to stay them at home; for the neglect of some Days may hinder the Profit of many Weeks and Months; And they are to send them decently Clad.

VIII. The other hours of the day they shall Study at their own Homes, and prepare those Exercises, which the Masters in the Schools appoint to be brought, at their next coming to the Schools. And therefore all Parents are desired to allow their respective Scholars such conveniency for their Studies at their own Houses, that they may comply with those Duties, which are appointed them.

IX. All are required to be exact and diligent, in daily frequenting the Schools, and being there, none are to go out without leave of their Master; and when any one shall be absent from School, he shall the next day he comes bring from his Parents a Ticket of the lawfulness of such his absence; Yet they shall have every Week two Afternoons of Recreation, in which they come not to School; unless a Holy-day happen that Week, which shall then be their Recreation day.

X. Such as come from the Writing-School, and have no Entrance in Latin, are to be received but three times in the Year, *viz.* at the beginning of the *New Year*, at *Easter*, and about our *Lady-day* in *September*.

As Professor A.C.F. Beales wrote 'We can see the revolutionary character of these London Jesuit innovations at the Savoy and Lime Street nowhere better than in the *Rules* of this Fenchurch Street school.'¹⁸

When the Revolution came this school shared the fate of the Lime Street and other chapels. The first disturbances occurred early in October 1688. 'On Sunday last there was a great disturbance in Limestreet at the Romish chappel there, occasioned by the preists scurrilously reflecting on the translation of our Bible.'¹⁹ Shortly afterwards Dr Tenison preached at St Martin's '... this sermon was chiefly occasion'd by a Jesuite, who in the Mass-house on the Sunday before had disparaged the Scripture and rail'd at our translation, which some present contradicting, they pull'd him out of the Pulpit, and treated him very coarsly'.²⁰ The Jesuit Annual Letters recorded that as the Prince of Orange was waiting for a fair wind. . . .

. . . at first the fury of the mob poured itself out on our City College. At first the preacher was interrupted, presently the priests were disturbed when saying Mass. Soon after the people assembled in crowds, broke down the doors and pelted all who came out with stones. This violence, however, was forcibly repulsed by the Catholics and was afterwards put down by the Mayor by order of the King.²¹

Lime Street and other chapels were threatened again early in November:

Great endeavours are used to prevail with the lads of London to be troublesome under the pretence of pulling down the Popish Chapels in Lime Street, Bucklersbury, and St John's; some scores of them have rendezvoused these last two nights, but upon beat of drum, and appearing of any small part of the Militia have scampered away and by flight provided for their safety.²²

A month later, on 11 December the end came. It was the night the King left London in flight:

On Tuesday night there was an alarm, occasioned by burning the Papists' Lincoln's Inn Fields Chapel; they did the like to the Chapels of St John's Clerkenwell, and Lime-Street, but not easily breaking into the latter, cried they would down with it, were it as strong as Portsmouth. And accordingly, having levelled them, they carried all the trumpery in mock procession and triumph, with oranges on the tops of swords and staves, with great lighted candles in gilt candlesticks, thus victoriously passing of the Guards that were drawn up. And after having bequeathed these trinkets to the flames, they visited Harry Hills' Printing House, which they served in like manner.²³

A further detail is recorded in Luttrell, 'The 11th the rabble assembled in a tumultuous manner at St John's, Clerkenwell, the popish monastery there, on account of gridirons, spits, great cauldrons &c to destroy protestants till the horse and footguards were sent to suppress them. . . .'²⁴

With the destruction of the Lime Street chapel the school ceased to exist. 'The masters . . . who were teaching the classics in both Colleges left London to cross to the Continent. . . .'²⁵ Charles Petre was captured, probably at Canterbury and lodged in Dover Castle and . . .

although he was well known to be a Jesuit and to be a brother of the very Fr [Edward] Petre who was pursued with such special hatred, yet he succeeded in so softening the hearts of his keepers that he was most humanly treated and shortly after by an order obtained by petition to the Court was liberated and passed over into Belgium.²⁶

Of the other masters the Annual Letters reported 'The four masters who taught humanities in the Savoy College and a laybrother were captured at Canterbury on their way to Belgium, plundered of all they had, and after receiving most brutal treatment both by words and blows were thrust into prison . . . but after a time were set at liberty.'²⁷

It is probable that there were in all five or six young Jesuit masters at the two schools that autumn—Richard Plowden, John Hall, John Turberville, Philip Percy, Stanislaus Green and, perhaps, Edward Meredith. If four of them were at the Savoy school it is likely that the others had, as suggested above, been brought over from the Continent to increase the staff at Lime Street.²⁸

It is a pity that the opening of these schools in Lime Street and at the Savoy 'was represented at the time, and for long after, as an attack, not on the ignorance of Londoners but on the Protestant religion'.²⁹ In the circumstances of the time this, though sad, may have been almost inevitable.

NOTES

1. E. Taunton *The English Black Monks of St Benedict II* (London 1897) 174–5; J. Miller *Popery and Politics in England, 1660–88* (Cambridge 1973) 245. Clerkenwell became the residence of the representative of the Elector of Cologne.
2. T. R. Way and P. Norman *The Ancient Halls of the City Guilds* (London 1903) 53–4; J. Gillow *Bibliographical Dictionary of the English Catholics II* (London 1885–1902) 451; G. Macdonald ‘The Lime Street Chapel’ *Dublin Review* 180 and 181 (1927) who makes use of the despatches of Barillon, D’Adda and the Dutch envoy Van Citter; Stanford’s name is spelt in a variety of ways—Stanford, Stamford, Sandford, Stanford, etc.
3. Gillow *op. cit.* in note 2, II 451; *Dublin Review* 180 (1927) 257–8.
4. *Dublin Review* 180 (1927) 254–5. Dates are Old Style throughout.
5. *Dublin Review* 180 (1927) 261–5 and 181 2–6. The Elector feared Louis XIV and believed that James could influence him.
6. N. Luttrell *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs from September 1678 to April 1714 I* (Oxford 1857) 375.
7. H. Ellis *Original Letters Illustrative of English History* 2nd Ser. IV (London 1827) 94.
8. HMC. *Downshire Papers I* 153.
9. HMC. *Downshire Papers I* 172. Further accounts of the riots are in M. V. Hay *The Enigma of James II* 230 (Barillon’s despatch) and *Dublin Review* 181 (1927) 1–2.
10. *Dublin Review* 180 (1927) 257–60 and Miller *op. cit.* in note 1, 246–7. See too the Jesuit Annual Letters (reports on the Order’s missionary work sent more or less regularly to Rome) 1685–90 (transcripts in the Archives of the English Province of the Society of Jesus (EPSJ)).
11. A. C. F. Beales *Education under Penalty* (London 1963) 251; Macaulay *History of England from the Accession of James II II* (Oxford 1931) 85.
12. HMC. *Downshire Papers I* 282, 286; *London Recusant I* (1971) 24–8, 107–12. It is possible that this school was in St Martin’s Le Grand.
13. HMC. *Downshire Papers I* 246; Beales *op. cit.* in note 11, 253; Hay *op. cit.* in note 9, 97–8.
14. Jesuit Annual Letters, 1685–90. There is a reference to the way in which the school was financed in a letter from England (9 April 1691) to the Jesuit Superior General in Rome in the Stonyhurst College Mss. Anglia V f.241.
15. *Dublin Review* 181 (1927) 13; Miller *op. cit.* in note 1, 247; Beales *op. cit.* in note 11, 252. According to the Annual Letters, 1685–90, it was Edward Petre who had obtained the foundation from the King, for Charles Petre see DNB.s.v. Edward Petre.
16. Jesuit Annual Letters 1685–90; *In Supplementum Historiae Provinciae Anglicanae S.J.* (transcript in the Archives EPSJ); Gillow *op. cit.* in note 2, IV, 32. The Jesuit Superior General wrote expressing his pleasure at the opening of the establishment—see *Epistolae Generalium II* (3) f.482 (copies in the Archives EPSJ).
17. A copy of these Rules is in the Bodleian Library—see Beales *op. cit.* in note 11, 252n. The word ‘schools’ is used here for ‘classes’.
18. Beales *op. cit.* in note 11, 252.
19. Luttrell *op. cit.* in note 6, I 465. It may be considered that it was hardly the time for sermons on matters of controversy.
20. W. Bray *Memoirs Illustrative of the Life and Writings of John Evelyn, Esq. I* (London 1818) 614.
21. Annual Letters, 1685–90 (Archives EPSJ).
22. Ellis *op. cit.* in note 7, IV 144.
23. Ellis *ibid.* IV 171.
24. Luttrell *op. cit.* in note 6, I 474 and see also 472, 475, 486. B. Zimmerman *Carmel in England* (London 1899) 326–7, quotes from the *Universal Intelligencer* (15 December 1688) and the *English Current* (14 December 1688) on the destruction of the chapels in the City. See too Bray *op. cit.* in note 20, I 616, 618, 619 on these riots, and also the Jesuit Annual Letters 1685–90.
25. *In Supplementum Historiae Provinciae Anglicanae S.J.* (Archives EPSJ).
26. Annual Letters, 1685–90.
27. Annual Letters, 1685–90; *In Supplementum Historiae Anglicanae S.J.* The order of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal (11 December) for the seizure of all Jesuit priests in the ports of Kent and Sussex is in ‘CSP. Dom. James II (3) 379.
28. *Catalogus tertius Personarum Provinciae Angliae S.J.* for 1689 in Archives EPSJ.
29. Hay *op. cit.* in note 9, 96.