

---

ENGLISH CATHOLIC CONVERTS  
AND THE OXFORD MOVEMENT  
IN MID 19TH CENTURY BRITAIN

.....

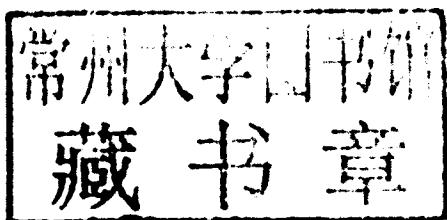
THE COST OF CONVERSION

---

PAULINE ADAMS

ENGLISH CATHOLIC CONVERTS  
AND THE OXFORD MOVEMENT IN  
MID 19TH CENTURY BRITAIN

THE COST OF CONVERSION



PAULINE ADAMS

ACADEMICA PRESS  
BETHESDA—DUBLIN—PALO ALTO

Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

Adams, Pauline.

English Catholic converts and the Oxford Movement in mid 19th century Britain: the cost of conversion / Pauline Adams.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p. ) and index.

ISBN-13: 978-1-933146-84-3

ISBN-10: 1-933146-84-2

1. Catholic converts. 2. Oxford movement. 3. Great Britain—Church history—19th century. I. Title.

BX4668.15.A33 2010

248.2'42094109034—dc22

2010020475

Copyright 2010 by Pauline Adams

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews.

Academica Press, LLC  
Box 60728  
Cambridge Station  
Palo Alto, CA. 94306

Website: [www.academicapress.com](http://www.academicapress.com)

to order: 650-329-0685

# ENGLISH CATHOLIC CONVERTS AND THE OXFORD MOVEMENT IN MID 19TH CENTURY BRITAIN

## FOREWORD

Converts from Oxford Movement Anglicanism to the Roman Catholic Church have been a source of fascination since the 1840s. Jules Gondon published his sympathetic *Conversion de soixante ministres Anglicans ou membres des universités anglaises* in 1846, and E.G.Kirwan Browne produced a yearly accounting of converts from 1842 to 1860 in his *Annals of the Tractarian Movement* (1861). Henry Manning, from 1851 to 1865, kept a list of hundreds of persons he had helped convert, adding them to a special locked book.<sup>1</sup> In 1933, Gertrude Donald published a collection of essays on five noted converts to Catholicism, which bears the title, *Men Who Left the Movement*. In 2001 Stanley Jaki prepared a series of reflections on converts who came to Rome under John Henry Newman's influence.<sup>2</sup> As recently as 2007, John Beaumont published a directory entitled, *Converts from Britain and Ireland in the Nineteenth Century*. Yet no work in print surpasses Pauline Adams' richly documented and clearly narrated account of the Oxford Movement converts' experiences.

I discovered Pauline Adams' BLitt thesis (1977) in the Bodleian Library in March 2007, while researching a book on the role of Oxford Movement converts in the papal infallibility debates of the 1860s.<sup>3</sup> What immediately impressed me was the wealth of archival research and published primary source material that she brought to the subject. Not only were English diocesan archives extensively used, but the Vatican Archives as well. The linguistic versatility of the

---

<sup>1</sup> Gray, *Manning*, 153; Leslie, *Manning*, 123.

<sup>2</sup> Stanley Jaki, *Newman and Converts: An Existential Ecclesiology* (Pinckney, MI: Real View Books, 2001).

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth L. Parker and Michael Pahls, eds., *Authority, Dogma, and History: The Role of Oxford Movement Converts in the Papal Infallibility Debates* (Bethesda, MD: Academica, 2009).

author was impressive, for sources in French, Italian, and Latin were employed throughout. This was no ordinary thesis.

Yet it was the structure of the study that proved most impressive and useful. In the chapter on the reception of candidates, Ms. Adams explored the varieties of ways converts were brought into full communion with the Catholic Church. Her chapter on family reactions to conversion captured the spectrum of struggles that occurred when competing religious values collided within families. Ms. Adams' study of convert priests, and married Anglican clergy converts, illustrated the complex circumstances faced by persons of conscience, who had to weigh the consequences they faced because of their principled decisions. Chapter six, in which she explored the conversion of Anglican laity, highlighted the social, economic and political impact of becoming a Roman Catholic, and the price paid for that step. Yet even more interesting was the penultimate chapter, that considered life after conversion, the financial struggles experienced by some, and the pioneering presence of others that resulted in new "mass-centres" which expanded the outreach of the Catholic Church in Britain. She concluded with an intriguing examination of converts who apostatized, and cases of some who converted twice. Each thematically organized chapter drew me into a deeper understanding and appreciation for the experience of persons who converted from Oxford Movement Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism.

On these and other topics, Ms. Adams displayed a mastery of the archival resources and exhibited a clear conception of her subject, employing a synthetic analysis sometimes lacking in doctoral theses and published books. It seemed a travesty that such a rich and textured account of these converts should not be more widely known and used. After I spoke to the director of *Academica*, Robert Redfern-West, about this valuable work, he discovered that Ms. Adams was on the verge of retiring from an active and productive career as the Librarian of Somerville College, Oxford. I am delighted that she has agreed to share this text with a broader readership. While there has certainly been much advancement in the field of Oxford Movement studies in the last few decades, the fate of converts

to Catholicism remains an underserved area of study. Pauline Adams' contribution, with its careful use of archival material, will enrich our discourse and encourage greater nuance as the study of Oxford Movement converts to Roman Catholicism gains momentum.

Kenneth L. Parker  
Department of Theological Studies  
Saint Louis University

## PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The converts who joined the Roman Catholic Church in the middle years of the nineteenth century were placed in a position of special prominence, their secession being seen as an important comment on trends within the Church of England, and their acquisition as of great potential consequence for the Church of Rome. This study is concerned primarily with the ways in which the converts' own lives were affected by their change of religion. It first saw the light of day as a thesis submitted for a BLitt degree at the University of Oxford in 1977,<sup>1</sup> but its origins go back to the late 1960s when, as Archivist to the Harrowby MSS Trust at Sandon Hall in Staffordshire, I discovered among the papers in my charge a volume of correspondence relating to the reception into the Catholic Church in 1846 of a nephew of the 1st Earl of Harrowby, the Reverend George Dudley Ryder. On being invited to give a paper to the local Catholic History Society, I decided to take as my subject how a prominent evangelical family in mid-Victorian England reacted to the conversion to Rome of one of its members.

The publication at about this time of David Newsome's *The Parting of Friends*<sup>2</sup> drew attention to the wider ramifications of George Ryder's conversion, through his Tractarian formation in Oxford and his links by marriage to the Wilberforces and Henry Manning. Overshadowed, both at the time and since, by his more celebrated in-laws, George Ryder is in some ways a more representative figure than they of the general run of Oxford Movement converts, and in particular of those clerical converts who as Roman Catholics were debarred by marriage and family commitments from ordination to the priesthood. My return

---

<sup>1</sup> When the Oxford BLitt degree was changed to MLitt in the mid-1980s, and existing holders of the degree were offered the chance to convert their title retrospectively, I opted (on historical grounds) to retain the original form.

<sup>2</sup> Newsome, David. *The Parting of Friends* (London: John Murray), 1966).



to Oxford in 1969, as Librarian of Somerville College, provided an opportunity to explore the subject further; by registering as a BLitt student I set myself what seemed an achievable target, and also gained the inestimable benefit of supervision first by Dr John Walsh, and subsequently by the late A.E. Firth. Taking George Ryder as a starting point, I set out to apply to as wide a constituency as was practicable some of the questions which his experience raised. Although it was the married clergy converts and their families who had first sparked my interest, I found that many of the questions were applicable also to converts who did become priests, or who felt no call to do so.

The resulting study is based primarily on the experience of a network of men and women, more or less influenced by the Oxford Movement, who in the middle years of the nineteenth century joined the Church of Rome. It is an important part of my thesis that the Tractarian converts were a small minority of those received into the Church in this period, and their experience of limited relevance to that of the body of converts as a whole. My concentration on them was neither deliberate nor exclusive. I asked certain questions about the practical consequences of conversion, and took answers wherever I could find them: in the archives of the Sacred College of Propaganda in Rome and of the English dioceses, the records of Catholic seminaries and missions and religious communities, the press, and the private papers and the published biographies of individual converts. In all these sources the same group of names—essentially those of the educated, articulate, and well-connected—constantly recur. The special circumstances of such converts, and their special importance to the Catholic body in England, provide historical justification for a limitation imposed in the first instance by the nature of the sources. The problems of the poor are less easily accessible to the historian. Much of the material which I used has the character of spiritual direction. The educated convert might be counselled by post, the illiterate only under the seal of the confessional.

Partly for reasons of space, I made no attempt to explain why these converts became Catholics in the first place; and I remain convinced of the virtual

impossibility of doing so convincingly. My starting point is their reception into the Church and my chief concern what became of them afterwards: how conversion affected their relations with family and friends, their work, and their daily life. Because the chief witnesses were the converts themselves the ensuing account is necessarily individual and personal. But the record of individual dilemmas can be extremely revealing of the societies and institutions which give rise to them. From the study of personal response to religious crisis surprising facts emerge about the Victorian family. The professional sacrifices required of converts indicate some of the secular implications of a religious Establishment. Above all, the experience of converts is valuable for what it shows about the Catholic Church. Much may be learned of the Catholic priesthood from the difficulties with which it absorbed its convert recruits; the disabilities of the laity are poignantly exemplified in the lives of clerical converts for whom conversion meant permanent relegation to lay status. The struggles of converts to accustom themselves to the demands made by the Church on their faith and their taste, their political loyalties and their social habits, have an intrinsic human interest; they are also episodes in the process by which English Catholicism, after Emancipation, gradually came to terms with the mainstream of English society.

It was not purely for reasons of space that I deliberately excluded from my study the most famous of the converts as well as the most numerous. Newman and Manning have long dominated convert studies, and might easily have overwhelmed my thesis. Though both play a part in my narrative it is only in a secondary capacity. My chief concern is not with their personal experience as converts, which was by any reckoning extraordinary, but with the more humdrum experience of their followers, especially Newman's. Throughout his Catholic life he was pre-eminently the convert's convert. His correspondence is a major source not only for the processes by which men became Catholics, but with the practical details of their lives as Catholics, with how they earned their living, where they

lived, how they educated their children; and his interest in converts extended far beyond his own immediate circle of friends. Without the publication of the Catholic volumes of Newman's *Letters and Diaries*<sup>3</sup> my task would have been—if not impossible—incomparably more difficult; the indices to volumes XI-XXXI, which cover this period of his life, remain by far the best biographical guide to the grouping on which my study is based.

My text was put aside for many years, until in May 2009 I was approached by Academica Press with a view to its publication. It remains essentially in its original form. I have corrected some obvious errors, made some stylistic changes, supplied additional information at some points, incorporated into the main body of the text some material previously contained in the footnotes, and transferred my discussion of *communicatio in sacris* from the chapter on “Conversion and the family” to what, on reflection, seemed a more appropriate position in the chapter on “The Catholic life of converts.” That the work is basically a product of the 1970s will be evident not only from the bibliography, but from its almost exclusive focus on England and English converts, and the fact that women are discussed without reference to feminist or gender theory. Since then, scholarship has moved on, and in my Postscript I discuss some of the ways in which the subject has developed in the years since the thesis was submitted.

After so long a gap it is, alas, too late to thank in person many of those who helped me in my research. Pre-eminent among these were my former employer the 6<sup>th</sup> earl of Harrowby, who encouraged my use of the Harrowby MSS; his cousin Mrs M.H.L. Pirenne, who made available to me her transcripts of George Ryder's papers; Fr Charles Stephen Dessain of the Birmingham Oratory, who not only put his encyclopaedic knowledge of the Newman MSS unstintingly at my disposal, but personally fetched and carried every item which I consulted to the parlour which was as near as a woman might approach to the library and its

---

<sup>3</sup> *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, ed. C.S. Dessain et al. Vols. XI-XXX (London and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961-76).

catalogue; and my principal Supervisor, Tony Firth, an incomparable guide to the history of the old Catholic world in which my convert subjects found themselves.

Somerville College has been a constant in my life throughout this period, and I am deeply grateful to the Principal and Fellows for encouraging me, early on in my career as Librarian, to pursue my own research and for granting study leave at a crucial moment to enable me to visit distant archives. I was extremely fortunate in having been supervised for the first year of research by Dr John Walsh, who has been an inspiration and guide to generations of church historians, and who brought a bracing Methodist perspective to bear on a potentially esoteric subject. The Church History Seminars which he organised together with Dr Geoffrey Rowell provided an invaluable forum for meeting, and exchanging ideas with, scholars working in related fields. Among the many friends and colleagues who took a more informal interest in the work while it was in progress I benefited particularly from the insights and comments of James Campbell, the late Dr Henry Chadwick, and Robert Franklin (my future husband, though I did not know it at the time).

In preparing the text for publication I have incurred numerous debts to custodians and archivists whose 1970s predecessors facilitated my research: Br. Lewis Berry of the Birmingham Oratory; Michael Bosson, my own distant successor as Archivist to the Harrowby MSS Trust; Mgr Luis M. Cuña Ramos, Archivist of the Sacred College *de Propaganda Fide*, Rome; Canon Anthony Harding of the Clifton Diocesan Archives; Ms Iris Jones, Archivist of the Venerable English College, Rome; Liam Kelly of the Ampleforth Abbey Trust; the Rt. Rev. Declan Lang, Bishop of Clifton; Dr Michael Lang of the Brompton Oratory; Fr Thomas McCoog, S.J., Archivist to the British Province of the Society of Jesus; Dr Richard Ovenden, Keeper of Special Collections at the Bodleian Library; Fr Nicholas Schofield of the Westminster Archdiocesan Archives; Fr John Sharp of the Birmingham Archdiocesan Archives; Matthew Watson,

Librarian at St Cuthbert's College, Ushaw; the staff of the Devon Record Office at Exeter and of the Lancashire Record Office at Preston. I am especially grateful to Anna Edwards, Assistant Archivist to the British Province of the Society of Jesus at Mount Street, London, and to Fr Michael Phillips, O.S.B., Librarian of St Benet's Hall, Oxford, for their detective work in tracking down manuscripts which, since I consulted them in the 1970s, had been moved to other repositories. Vanessa Cazzato kindly checked my Italian transcripts, and Charlotte Graves Taylor filled me in on the extraordinary family history which provided the inspiration for her novel *Doubting Thomas*.<sup>4</sup>

Quotations from *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman* are by permission of Oxford University Press, and those from Maisie Ward's *The Wilfrid Wards and the Transition* by permission of Continuum International Publishing Group. For permission to cite unpublished material I am grateful to: Conroy, 8<sup>th</sup> earl of Harrowby; Ampleforth Abbey Trust; the Bodleian Library, Oxford; the British Province of the Society of Jesus; the archdioceses of Westminster and Birmingham; the dioceses of Clifton, and Hexham and Newcastle; the County Record Offices of Devon and Lancashire, the Birmingham and Brompton Oratories; St Cuthbert's College, Ushaw, Durham; the Sacred College *de Propaganda Fide*, Rome; the Venerable English College, Rome. In a small number of cases I have failed, despite my best efforts, to identify or locate possible copyright holders, and I apologise if for this reason my acknowledgments are incomplete.

I am most grateful to Professor Kenneth Parker for having brought my thesis to the attention of Academica Press, and to the Director of the Press, Robert Redfern-West, for sanctioning its publication. Making their acquaintance, and reacquainting myself with a fascinating subject which I had thought to have abandoned long ago, have been among the greatest pleasures of retirement.

---

<sup>4</sup> Charlotte Graves Taylor, *Doubting Thomas: A Marriage in Faith* (Oxford: published by the Author, 2009).

I owe a final, and double, debt of gratitude to the late Rev. Professor Jack McManners, Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Oxford from 1972 to 1984. I encountered him first as an examiner when, together with the late Dr David Newsome, he conducted my BLitt *viva* in 1977; in 1983, having in the meantime become a friend, he officiated at my wedding. Until his death in 2006 his invariable (but diminishingly hopeful) greeting was “When are you going to publish that thesis?” It is, alas, too late now to present him with a copy, but I dedicate it to his memory with affection and gratitude.

Pauline Adams  
Oxford  
June 2010

## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>BAA</b>	Birmingham Archdiocesan Archives
<b>CDA</b>	Clifton Diocesan Archives
<b>DNB</b>	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> . 63 vols., plus Supplements. London: Smith Elder / Oxford University Press, 1885-1913.
<b>HNDA</b>	Hexham and Newcastle Diocesan Archives
<b>LD</b>	<i>The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman</i> . Edited by C.S. Dessain, E.E. Kelly and T. Gornall. London: Nelson (Vols. XI-XXII) and Oxford: Clarendon Press (Vols. XXIII-XXXI), 1961-1977.
<b>ODNB</b>	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> . Edited by H.C.G. Matthew et al. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004- (online edition).
<b>VEC</b>	Venerable English College, Rome
<b>WAA</b>	Westminster Archdiocesan Archives

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	vii
<i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xix
Introduction: The Case of George Dudley Ryder	1
Chapter 1: The Conversion of England?	9
Chapter 2: The Process of Reception	29
Chapter 3: Conversion and the Family	47
Chapter 4: The Convert Priests	77
Chapter 5: Reluctant Laymen: The Married Clergy Converts	105
Chapter 6: Conversion and the Laity	137
Chapter 7: The Catholic Life of Converts	167
Chapter 8: Conclusion: Old Catholics, Converts and Apostates	201
Postscript, 2010	213
<i>Bibliography</i>	231
<i>Index</i>	247



## INTRODUCTION

### THE CASE OF GEORGE DUDLEY RYDER

In the summer of 1846 Mrs. Henry Ryder, the widow of the Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, received the condolences of her friends on the loss of two of her sons.<sup>1</sup> On May 1st Edward had died of dysentery in Ceylon; four days later his brother George was received into the Catholic Church in Rome. It is striking how many of the correspondents—so far as they distinguished between the two kinds of loss—described the latter as the more severe. “My heart truly bleeds for your dear bereaved—doubly bereaved—mother”, wrote Lady Sandon to Mrs. Ryder’s daughter, Lady Grey, when news of the earlier event at last reached England.<sup>2</sup> Lady Georgiana Ryder took the view that, overwhelming as was the news from Ceylon, she could “conceive of it being *in fact* less painful than the previous blow.” Mrs. Ryder herself wrote of Edward’s death: “It is a most *affecting tender grief*—such a contrast to that bitter blast which came from Rome.”<sup>3</sup>

George Ryder was not, in fact, the first of his family in recent times to have become a Catholic. Twenty years previously his first cousin, and near contemporary, Ambrose March-Phillipps, had been received into the Church as a schoolboy of sixteen after learning—as he believed, in a vision—that Mahomet, not the Pope of Rome, was the Anti-Christ of prophecy.<sup>4</sup> The cousins belong to two distinct traditions of conversion. Ambrose March-Phillipps was an

---

<sup>1</sup> Harrowby MSS, Vol. CIII, June-July 1846.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. CIII, ff.515-6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. Mrs. Ryder to Lady Grey, June 1846, CIII, f.512.

<sup>4</sup> E.S. Purcell, *Life and Letters of Ambrose Phillipps de Lisle* (London, 1900), I, 28-30. Ambrose March Phillipps assumed the name Phillipps de Lisle in 1862.