

AT THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

This building was first used as a Roman Catholic Church in 1908

Mass was first celebrated in 1901 in the house of John Mee in Golden Square and then services moved to Samuel Smith's in Tanners Lane.

The building was actually erected in 1846 as a United Methodist Chapel - Sam Smith who was manager of the Co-Op completed the delicate negotiations.

Catholic church of St Winefred's (1841) inherited bell from Dishley when it closed in 1845 and the Shepshed bell came to Hathern.

In 1841 there were 50 converts in Hathern - rather less than Belton

Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829 - debarred from universities until 1856 but not MA

1871 Universities Test Act cleared the way.

Father Luigi Gentili came to the area in 1840 with a mission field covering Shepshed, Hathern, Belton & Osgathorpe - much walking!

The process of mission was to visit house to house and engage people in the street.

He used a pub room in Shepshed and then hired a Baptist Hall - withdrawn very shortly!

Open air services followed.

This was a period of great depression in both agriculture and hosiery - Chartists agitation

Mr Phillips father last week was obliged to rush to Shepshed an hour after midnight to read the riot act and was attacked with stones so that he had to send for soldiers from

Loughborough and a policeman was seriously wounded. In Loughborough the soldiers have had to stand under arms to disperse the crowds that collected from all the villages and the news that comes from the whole district is bad. Thank God we have not been molested except for the crowds of poor who come fifty at a time and it means giving them all bread.

Not to be able to help these poor people is for me a great trial. Many cannot come to chapel to be received or to receive the sacraments or hear Mass because they have no shoes, no hats, no decent clothing as they are in rags and half naked..... The ignorance and vice of these people are such as to beggar description and the destitution such that I cannot think of it without tears of compassion.

These observations should be tempered by Gentili's dislike of England.

But what brought Father Gentili to Leicestershire - the Phillips family were responsible

Ambrose Lisle March Phillips was born in 1809 - eldest son of Charles

He was converted to Catholicism in 1824 (aged 15)

Married in 1835 and lived in Grace Dieu Hall on the Ashby Road (William Railton)

Grace Dieu is the site of an old Augustinian Convent - ruins still visible.

With the emancipation act of 1829 he saw Grace Dieu as the centre of Leics Catholicism.

He sponsored the building of Mt St Bernard's Abbey - Cistercian 1837

Succeeded his father in 1862 and moved to Garendon Hall - site of Cistercian Abbey

dissolved by Henry VIII 300 years earlier.

Changed his name to Ambrose DeLisle - the current family name.