



**The Tang Hall History Group presents**

**The notes of  
Father Armand Carre of  
St Aelreds Parish  
1982**



After the 1st World War , York City was becoming overcrowded and a large section of the population came to dwell outside the walls. Nowadays it is hard to imagine " Tang Hall " as a large field stretching from Heslington to Maine Avenue with only three houses along Tang Hall Avenue : a Wind-mill outside Hull road , a farm-house, now a post office , close to St George's Methodist church, and ... " Tang Hall " , the Manor of the Starkeys.

#### The Starkey family .

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The Starkeys were an old family , an army family . They had made a name for themselves and consequently were quite acquainted with and highly respected by both the gentry and the nobility all over the country .

Edward Charles STARKEY ( 1840 - 1906 ) , a Captain in the 13<sup>th</sup> Hussars , was the youngest son of Thomas Starkey, a Justice of the Peace for the West Riding, a descendant of the Starkeys from Norwood Park, Southwell in Nottinghamshire His mother was Charlotte Stanton, a daughter of William Stanton of the TRUPP , a well known family from Stroud in Gloucester .

The Captain had a brother, Thomas who lived at Huttons Ambo, and 4 sisters Ann Maria of Tang Hall who married Major Gen. Frederick Smith/Stanton in 1862 . He was to become Agent and general Consul for Egypt . Constance, married to Lewis Randlo STARKEY of Norwood Park- Margaret, her twin sister, married to Sir Edw. Stanton. Finally Charlotte Blanche, the youngest one, was a spinster who died in August 1910, at 73 years of age, in St Peter's grove , Clifton .

Upon Mr Thomas Starkey's death, his widow Charlotte Stanton and his family came to live all together at Tang Hall in the Captain's house. But in July 1888 Captain Starkey married Evelyne Agnes Henty ( 1864-1925 ). Her father Richmond Henty was a son to the Hon.S.C. Henty of Melbourne ( Australia ), one of the pioneers of Australia. Her mother, Agnes Barbara REED was born at Misserden Park , Stroud, Gloucester ( 1837 - 1895 ) , the daughter of the late Rev E. REED and a grand daughter of the late Sir E. Sandys, the Baronet . She herself at her husband's death came to live at Tang Hall where she died .

On the 12<sup>th</sup> January 1906 , at the age of 65 , Captain Starkey died at T.H.

The funeral took place at All Saints Church, Pavement in York. Since then in Heworth Church, opened in 1870, a tablet has been erected to pay homage to his memory . In the Minster, next to the Zouche Chapel, another tablet describes the Captain as " a good citizen who worshipped in this place for 50 years .

The top of the tablet displays the bright coat of arms of the Starkeys ; " Argent, a bend engrailed vair between six storks sable " , with the motto : " Homo proponit , Deus disponit ." ( Man proposes, God disposes .

In 1925 , September 3<sup>rd</sup>, Evelyne his widow died also. The Yorkshire gazette of Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> told the City that she was acknowledged as " an extensive traveller, " capable and artistic , having a wide circle of interests. " She left no children Her grave stone in York old cemetery reveals that her three brothers, Ernest , Richmond and Percival, all connected with the pioneers of Australia, died abroad, respectively at 32 , 22 and 21 years of age .

Therefore letters of administration of her property were to be granted to her only sister, Agnes Dorothy BUSH , nee HENTY, of 96 Brixton Road, London, as one of the next of kin. The gross value was impressive for those days:£ 43,444-2/11

At once the Starkey's estate was put on sale. York council saw it as a godsend and bought it for development . From then on , the Eastern green belt of York was about to give way to the red bricks of a new suburb .

### 1926 , a Turning Point in Tang Hall .

It is at this time that the " TIP " of Laythorpe became famous in Tang Hall. To build houses, bricks were urgently needed and to get them at low price, no better place could be found than the large pit of clay, stretching from James street up to the present Rawdon and Fifth Avenue, in the vicinity of the Railway Line.

Day after day, clay was dug out, shaped into bricks and baked in kilns. Millions of them were made to cover the acres of green from Laythorpe to Osbalwick, and from Hewarth to Hull road. The diggings left holes like ponds filled with water that one day will have to be filled by the dumping of rubbish, but at present a delight for rats, rabbits and night sleeping tramps.

In fact, since 1922, building was in progress in the western part of 5th Avenue and Carter Avenue, especially where the Church Commissioners put a parcel of their land for sale along the Railway line and the Council had obtained it for housing development.

In 1926, the sale of the Starkeys' estate came as a boom in the business. A new world was taking shape between Tang Hall and Melrosegate. People rushed to rent houses provided by the Council. It was rewarding to leave the slums of Walmgate and to enjoy dwelling in the countryside, on Tang Hall, a land of freedom between the becks.

Mrs Starkey must have turned in her grave! But it was too late for her to use her gun to shoot nails at trespassers. By now, no one was frightened anymore. Boys playing along the northern beck seemed to have forgotten the Australian ghost which was alleged to live permanently in the coach shed, next to the Hall.

### The 1926 Strike -

After the war, ideas of social changes were encapsulated in a well known slogan: " A fit country for heroes to live in. " Even York dreamt of it.

It was the time of a persistent unemployment and of a severe housing shortage. Therefore 1926 happened to be a new dimension in human psychology. A strike began at midnight on the 3rd of September, based on the national coal dispute, which very soon was to be extended to other industries, and more especially to the railway and the confectionary trade.

Apparently things went on fairly smoothly in York. The police and the garrison with its 2 regular battalions did their best and succeeded in keeping the majority of men out of trouble. But when the strike was called off on May 12th, no profit came out of it, except harassment for many and distress for all.

It was not un-common then to see poor people with no money to pay the rent coming with jewellery, sheets or anything they had, trying to deal with pawn-brokers in an attempt to obtain the money they owed to the council, and so to avoid being thrown out of their houses.

So, 1926 will always be remembered as a year of great disappointment. Nevertheless it was also the time when the Labour Party rapidly grew in strength and prestige.

The old saying has it that every cloud has a silver lining: It is true. 1926 and the following years may have been black for the workers, and yet, in the same period, the housing development of the Tang Hall estate was acknowledged as a success. What a success indeed it was.

### The Flaxman Hut . . . . .

By now the slums of Walmgate were in the process of being demolished and instead some 800 new houses had brought a lot of new comers to Tang Hall. These people longed for a community centre, a nucleus of social activities, a focal point to welcome everybody, a centre of attraction, in one word, a CLUB.

It is fact that after a day's work, and more especially at week-end, all friendly people like a common place where to meet and enjoy company of acquaintances. That is why in Tang Hall something had to be done. Land was found in Flaxman Avenue along the southern beck, and the project of a hut to be built had generous response. A six-penny subscription per week was organised. Volunteers jumped to the occasion as to make the dream come true as soon as possible.

On 19th February 1927, the Flaxman Club was officially open by Arnold Rowntree, the Lord Mayor of Yor. The local Gazette emphasised the state of idealism and romance in Tang Hall, when "Allotment holders had built their own social hall", and were rightly proud of their solidarity, as humble and courageous working class people normally are.

£ 200 had been collected, but wisdom made those in charge decide that the subscription was to go on to be up to date with the hut maintenance and also to face any kind of risks for the future. From now on, dances, weddings and meetings brought fame to the place. Who could ignore the Flaxman club in York?

### The Church mission

At this stage of the development in Tang Hall, Church authorities, conscious of their duty, realized that the time was ripe for them to step in, for by now a soul had to be breathed into such a body without any more delay.

The very first representatives for Christ happened to be the Salvation Army. Very wisely they approached the organisers of the Flaxman Hut and requested the favour of using the Club for their weekly meeting of hymns and prayers. Permission was spontaneously granted to them and everybody enjoyed their cheerful presence for 90 minutes every Sunday afternoon.

But "Noblesse oblige", and by now the Church of England had to move to make its action felt in the estate. Where was to be its base? Those who enjoy Maths or maps will notice that St Lawrence's, Holy Trinity (Heworth) and St Thomas's (Osbadwick) lie on the circumference of a circle, the very centre of which, curiously enough, is the Flaxman hut.

Therefore, at a point practically equidistant from those three churches, a site was chosen for an Anglican Church which was to be dedicated to St Hilda, the famous foundress and Abbess of Whitby in the 7th century. It is a new landmark in Tang Hall just at the junction of Tang Hall Lane with Alcuin Avenue. It all started with a church army caravan in 1927- then a hut was put up on Jan. 1929. Finally the present church was solemnly opened on Sept. 22nd 1934.

To keep up with the times, the Free Church also had to consider a suitable location for an appropriate ministry. The 1st St George's Methodist Church was a school chapel off Walmgate built in 1826 in the parish which gave it its name. There is still a Chapel Row off St George St as to witness to the past. A new St George's chapel was opened in St Nicholas St, off Hull road, in 1899 and closed in 1937, when the present St George's Methodist chapel was built in Mill-field Lane, in the middle of the then new Tang Hall housing estate.

It is a fact that the development was a sign of the times, a sign to be read accurately for the CHURCH to be present and work efficiently.

From George's up to Aelred's

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In every pastoral ministry, tactfulness based on objectivity has always proved to be the secret of leadership. Now the time had come for the Roman Catholic Church also to take notice and make the best of it.

The great majority of the Catholics of St George's was of Irish origin. They had come over here at the time of the potatoe famine. Daily they used to go to the beet factory, the cattle market or the different chocolate factories. Women themselves were driven in carts, weather permitting, to Lord Derrmore's estate. There they worked for hours in the fields of potatoes, turnips and chancery for a derisory salary.

To all of them, strangers as they were, St George's was a HOME, an image of the Church in which they had been brought up in their native Ireland. But, by the time they left Walmgate and "the George's" to come and live in Tang Hall, they did experience the famous slogan: Out of sight, out of mind!

It was obvious that week after week, "The George's" was losing a tremendous lot of parishioners, which confirms the well-known opinion: No church... No parish. Consequently to those in charge, the question came out quite clearly: How to congregate those scattered Christians into a lively Community?

Canon Lynn, a responsible shepherd.

In those days, a happy team of 3 priests worked in St George's parish. Two young men, William Clifford and Alban Nolan had been appointed assistants to Canon Patrick Lynn.

The canon was a man of vision. The Catholics of Middlesbrough saw it when as Administrator of the Cathedral, he bought the site which has now become the Sacred Heart parish church in the very centre of the town. Very few would have tackled such a business so well, as it demanded discernment and courage.

A similar situation occurred in York. Quite objectively did the parish priest face the future. It was imperative to have the parish split for the spiritual profit of the whole flock; a new community centre was urgently needed in Tang Hall, an area which stretched from Hull Road to Malton Road.

Spontaneously, Canon Lynn got in touch with the officials of the City and bought the land in 5th Avenue. By pure coincidence, one of his best parishioners Thomas MORRIS, both an Alderman and a builder, happened to be the organiser for the housing development in the Tang Hall district. No better man could have been found as a negotiator.

A new site - a new Saint.

In 1926, like mushrooms in the fields, houses were growing everywhere. Melrosgate bridge had just been put up over the railway line, and the northern site of the 5th Avenue, with odd numbers, was covered with brand new buildings. Suggestions then were made that on the other side, among the even numbers, at the very corner of the 5th Avenue and Melrosgate, a site should be reserved as it seemed to be the right spot for a Catholic parish centre. An exchange of lands took place and the present ground of the parish complex was then turned into temporary allotments, each one rented to parishioners for 10 shillings a year.

From then on, a patron saint was to preside over all kinds of progress. It was a saint whose name means: "Noble Counsel", a fairly common old English name with the sound: Aethelred, transformed into Ailred, and finally AELRED.

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Lay people action . . .

In the year 1928, the laity revealed itself active and efficient . On his own initiative , Jim Melody approached Jack Foley, Lawrence Tracy, John Cox and Herbert Shear-Smith with the intent to set up a committee. Then with a full approval from the local clergy, the 5 men started a kind of a christian responsibility campaign in order to congregate many a Catholic scattered all over the Tang Hall district and to have them united in a community of its own .

To be more efficient, they began negotiations with the Council. Like the Salvation Army , their plan was to obtain permission to use the Flaxman Hut for a weekly Sunday mass . The board were not too keen on such a Catholic project and the discussions could have dragged on and on. But Jim didn't hang about, as he would never have taken no for an answer . Therefore pretty soon the case was won, which was an important step forward for the church .

Without wasting time , the committee of five grew in number and , as an excellent way of publicity, they organised a door to door collection and received what people could afford in anticipation of the building of a new parish centre . It is a fact that York Council had made it very clear from the start that the use of the Flaxman Hut would only be permitted until such a time when the Catholics could find their own premises .

Mass in Flaxman Avenue .

In July 1928 , Canon Lynn transferred from York to St Peter's, Scarborough, where later on he was made a Monsignor. Canon Matthew O'Connell took over and as early as September the Flaxman hut was put at the disposal of the Catholic community for one hour on Sunday .

Each Sunday at 9 a.m. , the 2 curates took it in turn to come from St George's to say Mass . The 1st one to take the lead was Fr Clifford, a future P.P. at St Wilfrid's . Austin Graham who got the opportunity to light the candles was at once promoted as the official server . Then the next Sunday , it was for Fr Nolan, ( now Mgr Nolan of Redcar ) to be in charge of the newly born community. Meanwhile the Catholics were taking stock of their number and qualities. Already were they dreaming of a great fulfillment for the near future .

From now on , things were speeding up. More and more people became conscious of their duty. Therefore the church was made visible in the Tang Hall district . Already in the 5th Avenue, the building of the present parish hall was in progress, as it was intended to have it open before the winter season , 1928 .

What about a School ?

In every country, wise leaders acknowledge schools . Isn't a Christian school the very quarry in which to carve stone to build a church ? St Lawrence's, Heworth and Osbaldwick knew it and enjoyed their own Anglican Schools , and rightly so . The Catholic clergy also cherished the idea and were fortunate enough to have a large St George's school at their disposal .

Now with the development of the Tang Hall estate , what could be done ? Of course the State has always had the obligation to provide schools and York was quite prepared to do so and to receive children both at Tang Hall ( 1928 ) and Derwent ( 1938 ) schools. But the Clergy of St George's considered it to be common sense to welcome Catholic children into a place where Christ could preside over the teaching of the three Rs. in quite a familiar way .

The question was : How to put it into practice ?

St AElred's Catholic School. I929 .... I932 .

Where there is a will, there is a way . It is a fact that the Catholic Population was on top of this world when in the Flaxman hut, the priest disclosed quite an un-expected piece of good news : " From next Sunday onwards, Sunday Masses will be said in our 5 th Avenue Parish Hall . " It was around November 1928 .

-1/ Miss Quirk . ---- Tradition has it that lively parishes are normally set against the background of strong schools . Therefore St AElred's experienced it in a very practical way . The hall was to be a Sunday Church and a weekly school - Of course it was pretty demanding, but parishioners were only too happy to give time and labour and have either pews or desks ready to suit both Sunday worshippers and weekday " Scholars " .

The mass centre had hardly opened its doors, when as early as January 7 th 1929 , a teacher from St George's was appointed Head Mistress at St Aelred's . So , Miss Quirk welcomed some 56 Children in her class on the very first day - In April, there were 90 Children ; in August, 128 ; in November 132 ; Assistant teachers had to be appointed as well .

Eventually the Hall proved to be too small. A new building was to be put up urgently. In October 17 th 1931 , a foundation stone was laid which gave hope and delight at a time when the child population was growing in Tang Hall . Nine months later, on the 1st of July 1932 , a brand new school opened with 260 pupils . In January 1935 , they numbered 378 , 18 too many for a school planned to accommodate 300 . Once more, on weekdays the Hall had to be used to welcome surplus boys and girls .

-2/ The nuns . ---- In 1946 , the school was given into the care of the Sisters of Charity of St Paul, an Irish Foundation . St AElred's became then so highly regarded by the local authority, that it was used as a " demonstration school " for the whole city of York .

In 1949 , under the leadership of Sister Colombiere, his Majesty's inspector came to St AElred's. Here is his report : " The school is a happy community in which the children are friendly and responsive. They are enthusiastic about their work, and their standards of speech and conduct are good . They are developing a sense of responsibility and the ability to work independently and to think for themselves... Home and school relationships are excellent . The parents are co-operative and support the school loyally; the children are making splendid progress. "

Those who know how reluctant with praise school inspectors are will appreciate the great homage paid to St AElred's , and rightly so .

The II plus .

After their passing of the II-plus, girls were fortunate enough to join the Bar Convent, the famous Grammar School which reminds York of her saintly foundress , Maty WARD. The other option was to continue at St Wilfrid's until the new Margaret Clitherow school was built , as secondary Modern , at the end of 5th Av.

Boys had 2 alternatives : either travel to Leeds and study at St Michael's then run by the Jesuits, or to be welcomed at St George's by the De Lasalle Christian brothers. Canon Lynn is reported to have had a wonderful vision. He wanted to buy the present Working Men Club at Burnholme, which was the Colonel Preston's estate, then for sale, and to turn it into a Grammar school for Boys . But the Leeds Diocese objected to the project, anxious as they were to preserve the fame of St Michael's , a perfect match with the Bar Convent of York , in the same diocese

Today, more than ever before , York would need such a man of vision to solve the delicate question of Christian education for the young generation . May everything come to him who waits ....



St AElred's' Clergy

York people still remember 1931 as a bleak year, a year of strikes, which made things extremely hard for the working class. Nevertheless St Aelred's school smoothed the way for many by bringing parents closer together. By now their community had reached a stage which was to be acknowledged as a sign of vitality. That is why St AElred's had to be declared a parish of its own.

The 1st two Parish priests

In 1932 July 1st, the Rt Rev. Thomas Shine, bishop of Middlesbrough, appointed Father Maurice O' Regan 1st resident Priest of Tang Hall. The school was flourishing and the presbytery new. Unfortunately the job proved to be too heavy on the shoulders of a simple man. He did his best to please everybody but got overpowered by too many on account of a club put up at the back of the parish hall. He left in October 1934 and went to Driffield where he died in October 27th 1958.

As a reluctant successor, Canon Denis Luddy took over with a mandate to carry out new policies. As previous administrator of the Cathedral of Middlesbrough, he realized that St AElred's was not his cup of tea. He made no secret about it, and very happily transferred to Thornaby where he died in November 30th 1958.

Canon Patrick Mc Aniff -

Finally in March 1938, from Northallerton, Father Patrick Mc Aniff was inducted at St AElred's. He was to stay there for 33 years until his retirement to Malton, in December 1970.

Father Mc Aniff was a priest of dedication, the very shepherd the parish needed. Nature may have created him shy and reserved, but grace did give him the secret for bonds of friendship. That Irishman from CO Kerry, who spent 2 years at Ashaw College, near Durham, before his ordination to the priesthood, had a gift to mix with the English. He was always acknowledged and respected as a "Father", even when he was promoted to be a Canon.

Everyday, all year round, in all weathers, he used to go out of the presbytery, visiting people, knocking at doors, discussing with anybody, but above all sharing with the sick and the poor.

Each one knew him as a Pastor, a Shepherd. He became part of the Tang Hall scenery, popular as he was with his visiting book and his dog, his bicycle or his stick. He got familiar with every path and snicket, with every street and avenue, with every child and adult in the parish.

Under his guidance, the SVP worked hard, harder than ever before since they had been established in the parish in 1935. Through gifts and parcels, the underprivileged got to know and cherish the dream of the Catholics who all wanted a house for Christ in the Tang Hall district.

In the Parish, one particular place was the Canon's delight; The school. Regularly, punctually, scrupulously, he would go to the playground, listening, talking, joking, smiling, laughing, feeling so much at home among children. Isn't a school a providential meeting place? a highly spiritual melting pot for parents, teachers and clergy alike? a large quarry in which to find the right stones for the building up of a lively community?

A church to be built in Tang Hall; such was Father Mc Aniff's ambition! Yes, a new church, body and soul! Who could have resisted him?



The new Church : 1955 March 12 th

One day , quite naturally , the Visitor turned to be a builder .  
In the parish allotments, vegetables gave way to backfill and cement . A mountain  
of bricks caused great joy. At last a church was building, designed by Mr Stephen  
SIMPSON , an architect from Leeds .

March 12 th 1955 happened to be the day chosen for the laying of the Founda-  
tion Stone. Had the date any connection with the happy memory of Gregory the Great  
the pope who sent Augustine to Canterbury, whose feast celebration was then on that  
day ? God knows ! At all events , the following year, exactly one year to the day,  
Bishop George Brunner was surrounded by a large congregation. He had come to Saint  
AElred's to bless the new Church and have it declared opened officialy . Since the  
Tang Hall has enjoyed its best landmark, with a huge Chucifix put on display at the  
very top of what looks like a kind of a tower facinf York Minster in the distance .

In every church, the internal decoration always proves to be the very last  
phase when the completion marks a silver or even a golden jubilee, an appropriate  
time for a consecration by the Bishop .

But without any delay , Canon Mc Aniff ( By now he was then a Diocesan Canon  
wanted an altar of his own liking . For a long time he had been looking for one .  
In 1967 , he had made up his mind to have a stone of great beauty . Sainly people  
for a good while, believed that it was a stone that only Ireland could produce .  
In fact it was a kind of a " missionary " stone. The table and the feet were of  
Balmoral Red Granite from Sweden. The red granite, with black spots, was <sup>then</sup> in relief  
against white and orange mottled panels, and the risers of the steps, all stones ~~of~~  
the Greek "Skaros Island." Mr Joseph Rotherham of Market Weighton had been chosen as  
stone mason . Then the parish was thrilled with joy to get such a beautiful altar  
for £ 2,100 and to offer it as a token of love for the Risen Christ .

In 1932, it had been Bishop Shine's will to select AELRED as Patron saint  
for the new Parish, as to commemorate his 800 th anniversary as a monk at Rievaulx  
Abbey, the then famous Cistercian Monastery in Yorkshire .

In this very year of the Parish Golden Jubilee , when for the first time  
in history , a Pope comes both to England and to YORK , it may well be Canon  
Patrick Bluett's unique privilege , as present parish priest and successor to Canon  
McAniff , to have Saint AElred's church consecrated .What a glorious event indeed

The Builders dreamt of it ....  
The Faithful would love it ...  
and so would AELRED of Tang Hall .

Armand Carre  
Middlesborough  
March 12 th 1982

Fr ARM CARRE  
St FRANCIS CHURCH,  
5 LEVICK CRESCENT, ACKLAM,  
MIDDLESBROUGH,  
CLEVELAND. TS5 4RL.  
TEL (0642) 81-81-90

