

# Durham University IMEMS Library Fellowship Report

**Dr Eilish Gregory**

## **Project Title:**

Catholic Integration in English Society, 1642-1689.

## **Project Overview:**

My project at Durham analysed how Catholics in the north-east of England assimilated in society between 1642 and 1689 when Catholics were barred from public office-holding roles because of their religion. It strove to explore how Catholics were treated by local Protestants by focusing on manuscript material that was compiled by both Catholic and Protestant authors during the seventeenth century. The project aligned with the IMEMs research strands ‘17<sup>th</sup>-Century Studies’ and ‘Social relations and everyday life in England, 1500-1640’. It also allied with the interests of IMEMs scholars including Alec Ryrie, Susan Royal, and James Kelly.

## **Project Aims:**

The project had two strands of interrogation:

1. To analyse how Catholic and Protestant relationships functioned in this period by examining the extent to which Catholics were prosecuted for religious reasons.
2. To focus on how the Catholic gentry demonstrated their loyalty as English subjects through participation in their communities.

## **Project Activities:**

My project focused on the personal papers which belonged to the Kennetts of Coxhoe, the Radclyffe, and Derwentwater families to evaluate their contributions to their local communities, as well as to analyse their discussions concerning Catholic loyalty across this period. The project also intended to concentrate on official papers which charted the extent to which Catholics were prosecuted across the late seventeenth century. While the diary of Richard Wharton revealed only a few references to Catholic presentments across Durham and Northumberland during the Restoration, the Sharp Manuscript Collection in Durham Cathedral Library provided the names of Catholics who subscribed and refused oaths of allegiance and supremacy during the late 1680s. Through these lists, I was able to verify the names of Catholics against earlier lists compiled in 1669 in manuscripts held in Durham Cathedral Archive who took loyalty oaths, who refused, and their reasons why they refused to subscribe.

These manuscripts have been beneficial to my research, as these lists can enable us to comprehend the long-term mind-sets of Catholics living in the north-east of England, and crucially, they allow us to see whether Catholics were willing to swear loyalty oaths at times of political tensions, such as the Glorious Revolution.

Although my project originally planned to focus exclusively on the seventeenth century, the range of material at Ushaw College has enabled me to extend my research conclusions up until c. 1715. The manuscript materials at Palace Green Library, the Cathedral Archives, Cathedral Library, and Ushaw College varied. While the Kennett family papers contained only thirty-three items in its collection, the Radclyffe and Derwentwater collection contained over a hundred items spanning from the 1650s until the late eighteenth century relating to the issue of Catholic loyalty, oath-swearing, and the expropriation of property for treason against Georgian rule. Moreover, one letter, dated in 1657, in UC/P30 revealed how Dorothy Radclyffe attempted to convert Edward Moore to Catholicism, despite the revival of anti-recusancy laws that year. The Mickleton and Spearman manuscripts contain dozens of mentions of Catholics who, despite being barred from holding public office-holding roles, could still contribute to society through other means. For instance, MSP 31 named Catholics who provided horses and men to help quash Protestant dissenting riots a few years after the Restoration of Charles II. Moreover, MSP 91 contains a list of over a dozen known Catholic chapels that were in close proximity to the Bishop of Durham's Palace c. 1700, which not only reveals the public flouting of laws barring Catholic chapels, but also that local clergymen communicated with Catholic priests who served these chapels.

### **Outcomes:**

The substantially rich collections at Durham have generated lots of material that are being turned into articles. As a result, I am working on producing two articles that will be submitted to major journals so that the material can reach wider audiences in academia. The first article addresses Catholic oath-swearing during the Exclusion Crisis and in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution in 1689, exploring how Catholics sought to differentiate themselves from other Catholic factions living across England. The second article concerns how Catholics still contributed to their local communities during the dissenting riots of 1663, and how they sought to help provide aid to support local forces and troops to quash the rioters when they were unable to hold those positions themselves.

**Concluding Remarks:**

I have enjoyed my time as a IMEMs Fellow at Durham. The funding has allowed me to continue my research while still in this early stage of my academic career. It has also permitted me to develop new research strands on early modern Catholicism by considering other ways Catholics integrated in English society across the late seventeenth century, and how the implications were still prevalent after the accession of George I in 1714. I would like to thank the staff at Palace Green Library, the Cathedral Library and Archive, and Ushaw College for being professional and patient with my manuscript requests across the fellowship.