

CARDINAL JOHN HENRY NEWMAN 1801 -1890

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Visits to the Isle of Wight

William Ward, a lifelong friend and member of the Oxford Movement, inherited the property of Northwood and later started a mission at Totland. Ward did not entirely share Newman's liberal views yet he visited him on several occasions while on the Island.

He also had other friends on IW such as Sir John Simeon of Swinston, MP for the Island who resigned on becoming a Catholic but was re-elected nevertheless. As there was a general election in 1865 it was in Simeon's interest for prominent secular and churchmen to visit him and this partly explains his visit in 1865,

Alfred Lord Tennyson lived at Farringford and dined with Newman and Simeon on several occasions.

Newman had friends at Ventnor and he celebrated mass there in 1861 in a temporary chapel before St Wilfred's was built.

In the same weeks cardinal Wiseman was also on the Island as was William Gladstone and they both stayed at the home of Gladstone's sister at St Helens. She was a convert to Catholicism and had a private chapel. Newman called on them at St Helens during his stay.

In 1865 Newman was back on the Island. As well as visiting William Ward, Lord Tennyson and Sir John Simeon, he stayed for several days at St Mary's, Ryde which at the time was one of the principal Catholic Churches in the south of England, thanks to the generous gift of the Countess of Clare, wife of the Viceroy of India, who met Newman and offered him the use of her private chapel above the sacristy at St Mary's to say his office. He said mass in the church and preached. At the time of his visit in 1865 Newman was at the height of his fame. "Apologia pro Vita Sua" which answers his critics in the Anglican Church and clearly laid out his beliefs and how he came to the Roman Church.

At that time he was working on another famous book, "The Dream of Gerontius" which was poems and hymns based on the Requiem offices.



The Dream of Gerontius

Probably Newman's greatest work was published in 1865; the same year that he stayed at St Mary's, Ryde. It is a dramatic poem which portrays the death of an old man named Gerontius and what happens to his soul immediately after death and contains prayers for the dying in a Roman ritual. A priest has been called to administer the last sacraments while the old man's family are gathered at his bedside. Intercessions to Our Lady and the angel and saints are invoked. The power of the poem is its dramatic depiction of the passage of the soul from this life to eternity.

Hymns of the Cardinal still loved today by many denominations

I believe and truly
Help Lord the souls,
Praise to the Holiest in the height
Lead kindly light

John Henry Newman 1801 – 1890

1801 Born in London

1822 Elected Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford

1825 Ordination in the Anglican Church

1845 Baptism into Roman Catholic Church

1847 Ordination as an RC priest

1848 Opens Birmingham Oratory

1852 Rector of the Catholic University in Dublin

1861 Visits to the Isle of Wight

1865 Visits to the Isle of Wight

1879 Created a Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII

1890 Died at Oxford

1901 Centenary of Newman's birth

1958 Newman's "Cause for Canonisation" introduced by Abp of Birmingham

1990 Centenary of Newman's death

2001 Bicentenary of Newman's birth exhibition at Ryde

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