



Samlesbury, the stunning half-timbered Lancashire mansion that was home to the Southworth family, dates back to 1325 and was originally the abode of the de Samlesburys, and later through marriage became the property of the Southworths. Although it seems hard to believe now, it fell into disrepair in the early years of the twentieth century and by 1920 had been earmarked for demolition. It was saved after six local business leaders stepped in and raised the cash to buy it – £1,500 – and set up a trust to preserve and run it.

Today it's a fun place for a family day out – as well as the house oozing all that history, and gardens including a rose garden and woodland walks, there's a small animal farm with goats, sheep, rabbits, guinea pigs, pigs and hens. Children will also enjoy the adventure playground, which echoes another family story: there were Southworths on board the *Mayflower* when it sailed to America in 1620, and for that reason the play area has a nautical flavour.

If you've time while visiting Samlesbury, it's worth popping in to see the church of St Walburge's in nearby Preston. It's a Grade 1 listed Catholic church in French Gothic style, and its spire, at 309 feet, is the tallest of any parish church in England. Completed in 1873, it was designed and built to celebrate the end of the years of Catholic persecution, and is a lasting reminder of the hardships and suffering those years of persecution and division delivered, not only for the institutions but for the lives of many individuals.

For more information, or to plan a visit, see [samlesburyhall.co.uk](http://samlesburyhall.co.uk)

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**O sing a new song to the Lord, for he has worked wonders; in the sight of the nations he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.**

FIRST READING Acts 9:26-31

PSALM Psalm 21

RESPONSE **You, Lord, are my praise in the great assembly.**

Or **Alleluia!**

1. My vows I will pay before those who fear him. The poor shall eat and shall have their fill. They shall praise the Lord, those who seek him. May their hearts live for ever and ever! **R.**
2. All the earth shall remember and return to the Lord, all families of the nations worship before him. They shall worship him, all the mighty of the earth; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust. **R.**

3. And my soul shall live for him, my children serve him. They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come, declare his faithfulness to peoples yet unborn: "These things the Lord has done." **R.**

SECOND READING 1 John 3:18-24

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia! Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. Whoever remains in me bears fruit in plenty. Alleluia!**

GOSPEL John 15:1-8

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**I am the true vine and you are the branches, says the Lord. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears fruit in plenty, alleluia.**

Next Sunday's Readings:

Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48  
1 John 4:7-10  
John 15:9-17



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A HOUSE FULL OF STORIES

It's a stunning house brimming with character and informal friendliness; but what sets Samlesbury Hall near Preston apart, and stays in the memory long after your visit is over, are the stories contained in its walls.

My favourite is of a seventeenth-century Romeo and Juliet with, inevitably, a tragic end – and a fascinating twist. The hall was the ancestral home of a recusant Catholic clan called the Southworths, and, according to the tale, one of the daughters of the house, Lady Dorothy, fell in love with the son of another of the local landed families, Richard de Houghton. So far, so delightful; but there was a problem, because the de Houghtons were as fiercely Anglican as the Southworths were Catholic, and the families ruled that the union of Dorothy and Richard was simply impossible. Inevitably, the young couple disagreed – and made plans to elope and marry in secret. But word got back to Dorothy's brothers, who decided to take matters into their own hands. They ambushed Richard and two of his friends, and killed them. Dorothy was completely distraught and went to live in a convent – where she starved herself to death.

The story speaks to the tragedy of the Reformation fallout and the long years when Christians from one side of the fence felt they could not fraternise with those from across the divide. And as to whether it's true: who knows? But more recently, several centuries on, three skeletons were discovered outside the moat.

A few years later another daughter of the house, Jane Southworth, was accused of witchcraft along with two other women; the court case rocked the north of England, and eventually they were acquitted.

But the best-known story from this house centres on one of its sons who became a priest and then a saint, John Southworth. During the years of Catholic persecution he studied for the priesthood at the English seminary at Douai in France. He then returned to England but was arrested and executed in 1654 – many years later, in 1930, his body was brought to Westminster Cathedral in London, where it lies in a side chapel. He is numbered among the English Martyrs, whose feast day is celebrated this week, on Tuesday 4 May.

Catholic heritage in Britain



Joanna Moorhead visits Samlesbury Hall in Lancashire.



2 MAY 2021

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK I



was an important place to make the case for the continued validity of the Roman Catholic Church, and where he knew he still had a following. He decided he'd make most impact if he published a pamphlet setting out his arguments; it was called the *Decem Rationes* or "ten reasons" why the Catholic Church remained fundamental.

The Catholic Stonor clan supported his ambition and agreed to give him refuge; they had a printing press secretly installed in the attic, and Campion spent some weeks working on his document and getting it printed. The pamphlet was ready for distribution in the summer of 1581: it was handed out around Oxford and, as Campion had intended, it caused a sensation. But it also put the authorities on his tail; in August

he was captured in Wantage, and tortured before being tried and executed. The connection with the Stonors was uncovered, and the family were financially penalised and ostracised from political and social life for many years – the price people paid, in those days, for being Catholics. The impact of that, however, has been that Stonor Park has not been changed or remodelled the way it might have been if the family had been wealthier – so the house you see today is very much the house Campion knew.

In recent years Stonor has been the location for movies and TV series including the 1987 James Bond film *The Living Daylights*, and two years later it was the setting for a film version of the Roald Dahl book *Danny, the Champion of the World*. It's regularly used for events including food festivals, antique fairs and outdoor concerts.

For more information, or to plan a visit, see [www.stonor.com](http://www.stonor.com)

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**Proclaim a joyful sound and let it be heard; proclaim to the ends of the earth: The Lord has freed his people, alleluia.**

FIRST READING Acts 10:25-26. 34-35. 44-48

PSALM Psalm 97

RESPONSE **The Lord has shown his salvation to the nations.**

Or **Alleluia!**

1. Sing a new song to the Lord for he has worked wonders. His right hand and his holy arm have brought salvation. **R.**
2. The Lord has made known his salvation; has shown his justice to the nations. He has remembered his truth and love for the house of Israel. **R.**
3. All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Shout to the Lord all the earth, ring out your joy. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 John 4:7-10

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!**  
**Jesus said: "If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him."**  
**Alleluia!**

GOSPEL John 15:9-17

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**If you love me, keep my commandments, says the Lord, and I will ask the Father and he will send you another Paraclete, to abide with you for ever, alleluia.**

Next Sunday's Readings:

Acts 1:15-17. 20-26  
 1 John 4:11-16  
 John 17:11-19



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STANDING TESTAMENT TO HISTORY

Stonor Park is a grand country mansion in the English tradition; but unlike many of the homes of privileged people in the south of England, it belongs to a family that remained loyal to the Catholic faith throughout the persecution years after the Reformation, despite the accompanying privations.

The house stands testament to this history, and also to the story of how Catholicism was established in these islands by first becoming intertwined with the ancient pagan beliefs, as directed by Pope Gregory the Great in 601. He called on English Catholics to build their Church on the faiths that had gone before; and at Stonor this direction was taken seriously. The chapel was built on the site of a prehistoric stone circle; in fact one of the stones was used as a foundation stone and can be seen to this day.

It's a warm, red-brick house nestled in the heart of the Chiltern Hills, and it makes a great day out: there's an exciting children's playground, a kitchen garden lined with apple and plum trees, miles of walks, and one of the oldest deer herds in the country grazing in the park. Indoors there's a fabulous art collection that spans from Old Masters and Renaissance bronzes to tapestries and twentieth-century works. Treasures inside the chapel include a series of Stations of the Cross carved out of Red Cross packing boxes during the Second World War by a Polish prisoner of war called Jozef Janas, and later gifted to Stonor by the writer Graham Greene, who was a regular visitor. Also of note is the colourful stained glass *Salvator Mundi* east window by artist Francis Eginton.

But the standout story, especially for Catholic visitors, is that of Edmund Campion, one of the English Martyrs whose feast was celebrated last Tuesday. His life and its end in particular is inextricably linked with Stonor Park, and there's an exhibition dedicated to him there. Campion was an academic at nearby Oxford University in the sixteenth century, but at the Reformation he felt he couldn't go along with the split from Rome. As he was a well-respected teacher, that meant he had to resign his post. He travelled to Rome where he joined the Jesuits and was ordained there in 1581. His plan was to return to Oxford, which he knew

Catholic heritage in Britain



Joanna Moorhead visits Stonor Park in Oxfordshire.



9 MAY 2021

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK II

As you'd expect, secret Masses were held at Coughton for many years after they were outlawed at the Reformation; the house contains a particularly unusual priest's hiding hole, in that it's a double-decker space designed to outwit the keenest of searchers. The idea was that, if soldiers arrived to search, they'd find the top layer hole (which would be empty) but wouldn't detect the second hole below, in which the priest would be hiding.



Mary, Queen of Scots, also has a special place in Coughton's history: one of the family's forebears, Francis Throckmorton, was one of her aides, and after she was beheaded during the reign of her Protestant cousin Queen Elizabeth I, the family came into the possession of a chemise which, legend has it, she was wearing at her execution. Another item of great interest to Catholics, dating from slightly earlier, is a bishop's cope whose intricate needlework is said to have been worked on by Queen Catherine of Aragon, first wife of Henry VIII; it was in divorcing her that he cut himself, and England, off from the Catholic Church in Rome.

COLOURFUL GARDENS

Coughton is a beautiful mansion with a turreted, castle-like central building and black-and-white-beamed wings to either side. It's ranged around three sides of a courtyard, and the gardens lie mostly behind – they're a vibrant high point of a visit here, colourful and flower-filled, with the same feel of informal friendliness that runs through the entire place – they were designed by Magnus Throckmorton's mother, Christina Williams. Find yourself there on a summer's day and you'll feel like you've stumbled on the quintessential English country dream.

For more information, or to plan a visit, see [www.coughtoncourt.co.uk](http://www.coughtoncourt.co.uk)

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**O Lord, hear my voice, for I have called to you; of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face; hide not your face from me, alleluia**

FIRST READING Acts 1:15-17. 20-26

PSALM Psalm 102

RESPONSE **The Lord has set his sway in heaven.**

Or **Alleluia!**

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord, all my being, bless his holy name. My soul, give thanks to the Lord and never forget all his blessings. **R.**
2. For as the heavens are high above the earth so strong is his love for those who fear him. As far as the east is from the west so far does he remove our sins. **R.**
3. The Lord has set his sway in heaven and his kingdom is ruling over all. Give thanks to the Lord, all his angels, mighty in power, fulfilling his word. **R.**

SECOND READING 1 John 4:11-16

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia! I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord; I will come back to you, and your hearts will be full of joy. Alleluia!**

GOSPEL John 17:11-19

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Father, I pray that they may be one as we also are one, alleluia.**

**Next Sunday's Readings:**  
Acts 2:1-11  
Galatians 5:16-25  
John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

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REMEMBER, REMEMBER:  
THE GUNPOWDER PLOT HOUSE

It's been described as one of the finest treasure troves of Catholic history in Britain, and it's not difficult to see why. Every room at Coughton Court, a fifteenth-century amber-stoned manor house, has its tales to tell. Take the Tower Room, where on the morning of 6 November 1605 a young mother called Lady Mary Digby waited for a messenger on horseback, who would bring her news about whether the plot to blow up Parliament, in which her husband was heavily involved, had succeeded or not.

As we remember each year on Bonfire Night, the plot had failed. Mary never saw her husband again, although there is a story that as he was being taken to the scaffold in London she held her toddler son up to the window so he could catch sight of his father one final time, before he was executed, along with fellow conspirators including Guy Fawkes.

Coughton Court was where the plotters planned to regroup, if things had gone their way. Many of the plotters had family connections with the house, and indeed a dinner is held each year, with a tour – it must be one of the most evocative Bonfire Night venues in Britain. But the gunpowder plot is only one part of this house's close connection with Catholic history. Central to it all is the family that has lived in it for twenty generations: the Throckmortons, who chose – when Henry VIII broke with Rome in the sixteenth century – to stick with the “old faith”, a decision that led to countless hardships for them through the years.

It's their presence that gives the house its friendly feel – the hats on the stand in the hall, and the family photographs everywhere, remind you that you're in a family home. The National Trust has owned the house since 1946, but the Throckmortons – currently represented by Magnus Throckmorton and his family – are still in residence, and the place oozes the love and attention they have lavished on the handsome building that encompasses so much of their family's fascinating story.

Catholic heritage in Britain



Joanna Moorhead visits Coughton Court, Warwickshire.



16 MAY 2021

7TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK III

museum include the book that was passed from abbot to abbot from the twelfth century to the sixteenth, in which was recorded the story of the monks, their lives and the abbey's fortunes. Other threads of Whitby's history include the story of *Dracula*, written by Bram Stoker after a visit here in 1890, and it has also inspired books and paintings by J.R.R. Tolkien, Lewis Carroll and J.M.W. Turner.



A few years ago Whitby Abbey was named Britain's most romantic ruin in a poll published in the BBC's *Countryfile* magazine, and its dramatic location stays with you long after you've left. If you want to stay for longer than a day, the YHA hostel next door has some of the loveliest bedrooms in town, and certainly the best views.

### ST HILDA AND THE SNAKES

Whether you're overnighting or not, the town is well worth a wander around – and if you do have time, a boat trip is hugely enjoyable. As you walk around the abbey and down into the town, look out for ammonites, which are closely intertwined with the story of St Hilda. The tradition tells that they were created by Hilda, as she got rid of a plague of snakes by fossilising them – the snake-like pattern in the stones is apparently the legacy.

One final legend is centred on the bells that once rang at Whitby Abbey. Apparently after the dissolution they were transferred on board a ship to be taken away and sold. But the ship sank, the bells were lost – and to this day, it is said, if you listen carefully you can sometimes hear them ringing on the breeze.

For more information, or to plan a visit, see [www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/whitby-abbey/](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/whitby-abbey/)

## Mass text

### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Spirit of God dwelling within us, alleluia.**

### FIRST READING Acts 2:1-11

### PSALM Psalm 103

**RESPONSE Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.**

Or **Alleluia!**

1. Bless the Lord, my soul!  
Lord God, how great you are.  
How many are your works, O Lord!  
The earth is full of your riches. **R.**
2. You take back your spirit, they die,  
returning to the dust from which they came.  
You send forth your spirit, they are created;  
and you renew the face of the earth. **R.**

3. May the glory of the Lord last for ever!  
May the Lord rejoice in his works!  
May my thoughts be pleasing to him.  
I find my joy in the Lord. **R.**

### SECOND READING Galatians 5:16-25

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!  
Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful  
and kindle in them the fire of your love.  
Alleluia!**

### GOSPEL John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

### COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**They were all filled with the Holy Spirit  
and spoke of the marvels of God, alleluia.**

**Next Sunday's Readings:**  
Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40  
Romans 8:14-17  
Matthew 28:16-20

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## THE CHURCH ON THE CLIFF-TOP



Whitby is day-tripper paradise; and the most dramatic and fascinating landmark of the town is the ruined abbey, perched on the headland, a monastery once presided over by one of the most impressive and important figures of the early Catholic Church. She was St Hilda, confidante of popes and kings and convenor of one of the most important meetings in Christian history.

Hilda founded the abbey here in AD 657 and, in common with most monasteries of its day, it was an institution for both monks and nuns (living in separate accommodation). Hilda was the overall head of both sections, and in 664 she was at the centre of a synod that debated the hottest topic of the day (and one with a resonance in Britain's recent history): how connected England was to Europe, and how far it was on a separate island that wanted to make its own rules. The question had been brought into focus by a clash over how to calculate the date of Easter Sunday. In Europe they worked it out using a method championed by Rome, but in this country there was a Celtic formula. In the end, the synod voted to stick with Europe.

Hilda died in 680 and in subsequent centuries the monastery fell into ruin, triggered at least partly by Viking raiders who ransacked the buildings, causing the monks and nuns to flee. Soon after the Norman conquest, though, a soldier called Reinfrid arrived on the headland and was so moved by the ruins that he decided to found a new monastery on the same foundations. Its outline can still be seen in the grass on the abbey site – it remained until the dissolution of the monasteries in the mid sixteenth century.

Two years ago in 2019 English Heritage, which owns Whitby Abbey, invested £1.6 million on a new museum that pays tribute to the history and spirituality of the place across thousands of years. Among the exhibits are stones from an ancient cross that go back possibly as far as Hilda herself. Other standout attractions at the

## Catholic heritage in Britain



Joanna Moorhead visits Whitby Abbey in Yorkshire.

23 MAY 2021

PENTECOST SUNDAY

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK IV



influenced by both Catholic and classical art. Walking into the arched entrance hall feels more like arriving in a great cathedral, while the private chapel is lined with the whitest of marble, lit by red-coloured stained glass windows above. The effect, as no doubt was planned, is reminiscent of a blood-bathed sanctuary, dramatically stunning.

Mount Stuart's art collection is one of the finest private collections in the country, and boasts works by, among many others, Gainsborough and Reynolds. In the archive are many items central to British history, including a Shakespeare first folio of 1623 that was discovered only recently, an eyewitness account of the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, and documents relating to the sinking of the *Titanic*.

**PATRON OF THE NEGLECTED**

Unusually for a man of his privilege and times, the Marquess was a staunch supporter of women's rights, and a keen patron of the sort of people who were often overlooked by the art world. Included in his collection is an 1870 bust of Christ sculpted by a nineteenth-century US artist of colour, Edmonia Lewis, whose studio he visited in Rome and whose work he helped champion.

The gardens are spectacular in the summer and there are endless walks across the estate; but of particular interest to Catholic visitors is a garden designed by the Victorian landscape architect Thomas Mawson, designed to replicate the Via Dolorosa, the route followed by Christ on his journey to Calvary.

For more information, or to plan a visit, see [www.mountstuart.com](http://www.mountstuart.com)

**Mass text**

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

**Blest be God the Father, and the Only Begotten Son of God, and also the Holy Spirit, for he has shown us his merciful love.**

**FIRST READING** Deuteronomy 4:32-34. 39-40

**PSALM** Psalm 32

**RESPONSE** **Happy the people the Lord has chosen as his own.**

1. The word of the Lord is faithful and all his works to be trusted. The Lord loves justice and right and fills the earth with his love. **R.**
2. By his word the heavens were made, by the breath of his mouth all the stars. He spoke; and they came to be. He commanded; they sprang into being. **R.**
3. The Lord looks on those who revere him, on those who hope in his love, to rescue their souls from death, to keep them alive in famine. **R.**

4. Our soul is waiting for the Lord. The Lord is our help and our shield. May your love be upon us, O Lord, as we place all our hope in you. **R.**

**SECOND READING** Romans 8:14-17

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia, alleluia! Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, the God who is, who was, and who is to come. Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL** Matthew 28:16-20

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

**Since you are children of God, God has sent into your hearts the Spirit of his Son, the Spirit who cries out: Abba, Father.**

**Next Sunday's Readings:**  
Exodus 24:3-8  
Hebrews 9:11-15  
Mark 14:12-16, 22-26



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**SCOTLAND'S GOTHIC MASTERPIECE**

The Scottish island of Bute had its heyday in Victorian times, when thousands of Glasgow workers would descend for their holidays; plenty of reminders of those glory days remain, such as the concert hall and the parades of shops in the main town of Rothesay selling ice creams and souvenirs. Times have changed since and the place is a lot quieter than it would have been back then; but today, as in the past, the beating heart of Bute is a vast Gothic gem called Mount Stuart, whose history is intertwined with that of one of the most important Catholics of the nineteenth century, John Crichton-Stuart.

Born in 1847, Crichton-Stuart was just six months old when his father died and he succeeded to his title, becoming the 3rd Marquess of Bute. He was to lose his mother young, too: she died when he was just twelve. By that time he was a pupil at Harrow; he went on from there to study at Oxford University, and it was during this period of his life that he decided to become a Catholic. Received into the Church at a chapel in Southwark, he was later confirmed in Rome by Pope Pius IX. From that point on, religion was at the centre of his life, both as an art collector and as a scholar.

He was fascinated, too, by architecture – and Bute gave him an opportunity, because the family home there was destroyed by fire in December 1877. Soon afterwards, when the Marquess commissioned the eccentric architect Robert Rowand Anderson to design a new Mount Stuart, the die was cast for what would become one of the most splendid buildings not only on the west coast of Scotland, but in the whole of the United Kingdom. The Marquess was the wealthiest man in the UK, so no expense was spared with his great house: the costliest marble, the most skilled craftspeople, the most ambitious interiors were designed. Mount Stuart was the first place in the world to have a heated indoor swimming pool and the first house in Britain to have electric lighting.

Visiting today, you feel as though you've taken the wrong turn on the road from Glasgow and ended up in Venice or Rome: the Marquess was a frequent visitor to Italy, and was clearly much

**Catholic heritage in Britain**



Joanna Moorhead concludes her tour of places of Catholic historical interest with a visit to Mount Stuart on the Isle of Bute.



30 MAY 2021

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK I