

Introduction

WILLIAM GIBSON, OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY
GEORDAN HAMMOND, MANCHESTER WESLEY RESEARCH CENTRE
AND NAZARENE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Peter Benedict Nockles was an undergraduate between 1972 and 1975, then graduate student at Worcester College, Oxford, and subsequently at St Cross College, Oxford, between 1976 and 1982, when he was awarded a DPhil for his research.¹ His thesis was supervised by Geoffrey Rowell, chaplain and fellow of Keble College, and later bishop of Gibraltar in Europe. Jeremy Gregory, who in his doctoral studies was researching the Church of England before 1829, writes of this period:

Peter's thesis confirmed that religious history before that date was much more nuanced and far richer than the conventional labels ('High [and Dry]', 'Low Church', 'Evangelical') allowed, and that George Horne, one of the deans of Canterbury I was studying, was an important (but neglected) figure in Anglican theology. As I completed my thesis, Peter was a source of good advice and we both contributed to a number of what turned out to be seminal publications in the 1990s.

Peter's thesis was admired and widely consulted and, urged on by his examiner John Walsh, he produced a significantly revised and extended version of it as a monograph. Entitled *The Oxford Movement in Context: Anglican High Churchmanship, 1760–1857*, it was published by Cambridge University Press in 1994. It was a book that was widely anticipated; numerous books and articles had cited the thesis before it was published. *The Oxford Movement in Context* is one of those groundbreaking books that it is difficult to imagine being without. Bringing to life such little-known figures as Edward Churton, Hugh James Rose and William Palmer of Worcester College, it shows how High Churchmanship did not disappear between the Nonjurors in the eighteenth century and the Tractarians in the nineteenth, nor was it asleep. It was alive and well; scholars had simply overlooked it. This revisionist rehabilitation of Anglican High Churchmanship provides the context for Peter's thematic analysis of the historical and theological continuities and discontinuities between it and the Oxford Movement. Peter's landmark study won deserved praise from reviewers. What especially stands out in the reviews is the consensus that the book is impressively detailed, along with similar descriptions about it being meticulous, thorough and methodical. Reviewers also often commended it as being convincing and persuasive.²

In 1975, Peter spent a year at the Bodleian as an archival trainee. In 1979, he was appointed as an assistant librarian at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, responsible initially for cataloguing. He was also the English and History

subject librarian. In 1987, he moved to be the assistant librarian in Special Collections at the John Rylands Library in Deansgate and in 1990, became the librarian in charge of the Methodist Church Archives at the Rylands. Jeremy Gregory recalls:

I got to know Peter well when I moved to the University of Manchester in 2000 and I remember his generosity in showing me round the John Rylands Library, Deansgate, on the morning before my interview. A key rationale for my post was to make the early Methodist collections at the Rylands better used and I was extraordinarily fortunate to be able to have Peter on the supervisory teams for several of the outstanding doctoral students who came to work on these sources in the 2000s. Peter, Gareth Lloyd, and I collaborated on the conference celebrating the tercentenary of John Wesley's birth in 2003.

From 2010 to 2016 Peter was librarian in Rare Books and Maps in Special Collections, with responsibility for all theological book collections. He retired from the Rylands in 2016. In his retirement he has retained his strong and long-standing connection with the University of Manchester's Religions and Theology Department, where he is an Honorary Research Fellow, and also with Nazarene Theological College in Didsbury, Manchester. Peter's professional life has been one of dedication and service to the scholarly community. There can be few Methodist scholars, or indeed scholars of religious history more generally, who have used the collections at the Rylands, who do not owe a considerable debt to Peter's quiet and unassuming support and encouragement. His frequent offers of 'have you seen this?' and suggestions of 'we also have this, which you might wish to see' have brought material to numerous researchers that they would not otherwise have found. This is why his name appears in so many of the acknowledgements pages of books on Methodist and religious history. Jeremy Gregory notes:

There was always something slightly ironic, if not faintly amusing, that Peter, one of the leading scholars of the High Church Anglican establishment, was the custodian of the Methodist Church Archives, though in truth, as Peter's own publications demonstrate, there was more overlap and influence between these, and particularly in early Methodism, than has often been recognised.

Peter's long-time librarian colleague and friend Bill Simpson worked in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester from the time Peter first arrived there up to the mid-1980s, returning as University Librarian and Director of the John Rylands Library from 2002 to 2007. Regarding his early interactions with Peter, Bill commented that he found him a pleasant and unassuming colleague who wore his great learning and scholarship lightly in his everyday dealings with readers and fellow members of staff. He writes: 'I suspect that most of his colleagues were, in fact, largely unaware of the scholarly reputation that he was already building even at that early stage in his career. My recollection is really of a quiet young man who went about his daily tasks helpfully and with diligence and commitment in the role that had been assigned to him and which did not, at least initially, allow him a great deal of scope for the use of his academic expertise in his working life.'

By the time he returned to the Rylands, Bill noted that

Peter had become well established and hugely respected both as a scholar and as a research librarian based in the historic John Rylands Library. He was, and still is, a man of great integrity and generosity, a devout Christian who has given freely of his time and expertise to both established scholars and young researchers alike, who has done a vast amount to enhance the reputation of the Rylands as a centre for research into the history of Methodism and who has been a valued colleague and friend to a large number of people in the Library, in the University of Manchester, and in the wider world of academic life.

Jeremy Gregory regards Peter as one of the increasingly rare breed of scholar-librarians:

Peter's career and publications stand firmly in the tradition of the 'scholar-librarian', a post which sometimes sits uneasily with modern university librarians being at the forefront of Information Services, Digital Technology, and Public Engagement. But, as in Peter's case, the scholar-librarian can be crucial in making the riches of the collections of which they are guardians well known, both to academics and the wider public, and can be a seamless link between the sources they curate and the scholars who study them.

In addition to his professional role as a librarian, Peter has been a dedicated scholar of the Oxford Movement and the religious history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, including Anglicanism, Catholicism, Methodism and Non-conformity. He has held visiting fellowships at Oriel College, Oxford; the University of Lund; and the University of Notre Dame. Alongside this Peter developed strong library and scholarly links with the Bridwell Library at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University; Point Loma Nazarene University; and Asbury Theological Seminary and Asbury University. These relationships and Peter's academic research – he has given papers in a number of countries including Sweden, Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States – have connected his library and scholarly lives with his love for travel. Peter's standing as a scholar of John Henry Newman has meant that he has been asked to speak at conferences and seminars all over the world. He has sat on around a dozen doctoral and master's supervision panels and has served as an external examiner over a dozen times at several different universities. Besides contributing sixteen articles to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and reviewing manuscripts for an enormously wide range of journals, he has undertaken some of the more abstruse tasks of academic life, such as question-setting for the BBC Radio 4 programme *Mastermind* in 1999. He has also been an indefatigable book reviewer, whose judgement is always sure-footed.

Peter has been a voluminous contributor to collections of essays. He contributed two essays to the history of Oriel College and one to the history of Worcester College.³ He has also edited and co-edited a number of collections of essays.⁴ Most recently he has been one of the co-editors of the *Oxford Handbook of the Oxford Movement*.⁵ In 2020, Peter was awarded the prestigious Gailliot Award by the National Institute

for Newman Studies in the United States in recognition of a lifetime achievement in promoting and advancing the study of the life, writings and influence of Newman.

Peter is known for his extraordinary generosity with his time given to supporting scholarly and academic organisations. He has been a conference organiser and council member of the Catholic Record Society; a trustee of the Andrew Duncan Trust and the Catholic National Library. He has served on the committees and advisory boards of a wide range of organisations including the Church of England Record Society, the Historic Libraries Forum, Religious Archives Group, the Methodist Church Archives and History Committee, the Manchester Wesley Research Centre, and the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, and has long been a valued member of the Ecclesiastical History Society.

This volume is an expression of thanks for the scholarly generosity and friendship extended by Peter for over three decades to researchers at the John Rylands Library and in his many professional and personal connections with scholars of early modern and modern religious history. A one-volume *Festschrift* cannot do justice to the range of Peter's scholarly specialisms, nor can it provide space for articles from many of his friends who would want to honour him with an article in a volume dedicated to him. Despite these limitations, we trust that this *Festschrift* is a fitting tribute to Peter's scholarship and friendship. With articles on a range of topics relating to the Church of England (particularly High Churchmanship and the Oxford Movement), Catholicism, Methodism, and even Church–state conflict relating to the Church of Ireland, this issue of the *Bulletin* can be considered broadly representative of Peter's scholarship and scholarly networks.

In honour of Peter's prodigious scholarly contributions, a select bibliography of his published work is provided in the following section.

The Principal Published Writings of Peter B. Nockles⁶

'Saint John Henry Newman: Anglican and Catholic', *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church*, 20:2 (2020), pp. 98–109.

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'The Oxford Movement', in Frederick D. Aquino and Benjamin J. King (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of John Henry Newman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 7–27.

'Pre-Tractarian Oxford: Oriel and the Noetics', 'Conflicts in Oxford: Subscription and Admission of Dissenters, Hampden Controversy, University Reform', 'Histories and Anti-Histories', in Stewart J. Brown, Peter B. Nockles and James Pereiro (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Oxford Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), pp. 79–93, 123–36, 605–21.

'Newman's Tractarian Receptions', in Frederick D. Aquino and Benjamin J. King (eds), *Receptions of Newman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), pp. 137–55.

- ‘The Oxford Movement and Evangelicalism: Parallels and Contrasts in Two Nineteenth-Century Movements of Religious Revival’, in Robert Webster (ed.), *Perfecting Perfection: Essays in Honor of Henry D. Rack* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2015), pp. 233–59.
- ‘The Reformation Revised? The Contested Reception of the English Reformation in Nineteenth-Century Protestantism’, in Peter B. Nockles and Vivienne Westbrook (eds), *Reinventing the Reformation in the Nineteenth Century: A Cultural History*, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 90:1 (2014), 231–56.
- ‘Worcester College and the Oxford Movement’, in Jonathan Bate and Jessica Goodman (eds), *Worcester: Portrait of an Oxford College* (London: Third Millennium Publications, 2014), pp. 58–67.
- ‘Oriel and Religion, 1800–1833’ and ‘A House Divided: Oriel in the Era of the Oxford Movement, 1833–1860’, in Jeremy Catto (ed.), *Oriel College: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 291–327 and 328–70.
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- ‘The Making of a Convert: John Henry Newman’s Oriel and Littlemore Experience’, *Recusant History*, 30:3 (2011), 461–83.
- ‘The Nineteenth Century Reception’, *The Acts and Monuments Online* [TAMO], John Foxe’s Protestant Martyrology (Sheffield, HRI Online Publications, 2011): www.johnfoxe.org/index_realm_more_gototype_modern_type_essay_book_essay9.html.
- “‘Emissaries of Babylon’ or ‘Brothers in Christ’? Charles Wesley and Anti-Catholicism”, *Wesley and Methodist Studies*, 2 (2010), 3–23.
- ‘The Changing Legacy and Reception of John Foxe’s “Book of Martyrs” in the “Long Eighteenth Century”: Varieties of Anglican, Protestant and Catholic Response, c.1760–c.1850’, in Robert D. Cornwall and William Gibson (eds), *Religion, Politics and Dissent, 1660–1832: Essays in Honour of James E. Bradley* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 219–47.
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- The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds), 60 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004 and www.oxforddnb.com/): articles on Richard Bagot, John Bowdler, Richard Lynch Cotton, George Croft, Charles Daubeny, Ashurst Turner Gilbert, Alexander Knox, Thomas Lathbury, Henry Handley Norris, William Patrick Palmer, Edward Pearson, Henry John Rose, Hugh James Rose, William Stevens, Joshua Watson, Samuel Wix.
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- Contributor to: F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
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- ‘A Review Article: Rowan Strong, *Alexander Forbes of Brechin: The First Tractarian Bishop*’, *Anglican and Episcopal History*, 66:3 (1997), 391–9.
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- 'Oxford, Tract 90 and the Bishops', in David Nicholls and Fergus Kerr (eds), *John Henry Newman: Reason, Rhetoric and Romanticism* (Bristol: Bristol Press, 1991), pp. 28–87.
- 'The Oxford Movement: Historical Background, 1780–1833', in Geoffrey Rowell (ed.), *Tradition Renewed: The Oxford Movement Conference Papers* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1986), pp. 24–50.
- 'Pusey and the Question of Church and State', in Perry Butler (ed.), *Pusey Rediscovered* (London: SPCK, 1983), pp. 255–97.

Notes

We would like to thank Stewart J. Brown for his helpful comments and suggestions that we have incorporated into this introduction.

- 1 P. B. Nockles, 'Continuity and Change in Anglican High-Churchmanship in Britain, 1792–1850' (University of Oxford DPhil thesis, 1982).
- 2 See, in particular, the admiring review article by Boyd Hilton: 'Apologia pro Vitis Veteriorum Hominum', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 50:1 (1999), 117–30. One indication of the book's ongoing influence is that Google Scholar lists 357 citations of it in articles (as of March 2021).
- 3 'Orientalism and Religion, 1800–1833', and 'A House Divided: Orientalism in the Era of the Oxford Movement, 1833–1860', in Jeremy Catto (ed.), *Oriental College: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 291–370; 'Worcester College and the Oxford Movement', in Jonathan Bate and Jessica Goodman (eds), *Worcester: Portrait of an Oxford College* (London: Third Millennium Publications, 2014), pp. 58–67.
- 4 For example, Peter B. Nockles and Vivienne Westbrook (eds), *Reinventing the Reformation in the Nineteenth Century: A Cultural History*, *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 90:1 (2014); Peter B. Nockles and Stewart J. Brown (eds), *The Oxford Movement: Europe and the Wider World, 1830–1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

- 5 Stewart J. Brown, Peter B. Nockles and James Pereiro (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of the Oxford Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).
- 6 This bibliography does not include dozens of book reviews written by Peter. Details on some of these reviews can be found on his pages on the University of Manchester and Manchester Wesley Research Centre websites.