

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

There has been a wealth of material about the old parish, much of which had perforce to be discarded due to lack of space and it has been gleaned from so many people that it is impossible to give the sources of all the information but I must mention a few who have contributed interesting facts and to these I am deeply indebted.

Some of the material is from notes written by the late Mr Tom Booth, a Weldbanker and teacher at Holy Cross. Much has been taken from various books on our Martyrs by many writers. Mr Jack Critchley of Burgh Lane, whose knowledge of the old church is perhaps unrivalled, has been a great help, as have many old Weldbankers. Much of the information has been obtained from notes and cuttings over the past half century in my possession; some from personal recollections since my boyhood and maybe some are not quite accurate which must be put down to advancing years as time dims the memory.

I must not forget the help given by Mr Heyes of the Chorley Public Library staff, nor Mrs Rawlinson of Horwich for access to the notes of her late husband, Mr John Rawlinson, and indeed to many others too numerous to mention, including the staff of the Lancashire Records Office and, of course, the writings of the late Mr John Wilson.

Also, my thanks go to my old friend, Mr Austin Lister, who has been ever ready with his camera and to Mrs Jean Carter of Euxton, for painstakingly deciphering and typing the manuscripts. Lastly, I wish to express my thanks to Fr. Croghan, parish priest at Weld Bank, for permission to publish this book. I only hope that he and his flock think the effort has been worthwhile. I regret no photograph of Dean Lennon suitable for publication has been obtainable, while Fr. Croghan did not wish his to be included.

## **INTRODUCTION**

When I first began to write this book, it was intended to be the story of Weld Bank as I have known it for the past 60 years but, unearthing more and more facts and figures as I went along and hearing the stories and the deeds of men and women long since dead and gone and reading of the struggles and triumphs and failures of our Catholic forefathers of 200, 300, nay even 500 years ago, it was obvious that much of this material must be included or the book would be incomplete. Indeed I found myself writing not so much the Story of Weld Bank but the Catholic history of Chorley from its coming in Roman times down to the present day and, as obviously this would have filled more than one volume, I had perforce to leave out much of interest.

November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1774, when Mass was first celebrated in Weld Bank Church, just 200 years ago, was an obvious starting point but much had happened before that date, so perhaps my readers will forgive me if I go back even further than that and relate incidents before, during and following the Reformation that may have been forgotten but had some bearing on Weld Bank as we know it today. No connected history of these times, as far as I am aware, has ever been compiled. I have now attempted in some degree to remedy that omission. Conscious of my limitations, it has, however, been a labour of love and I trust readers will find the same satisfaction.

June, 1974

Tom C. Gillett