

# Bishop Lloyd's Palace

A Grade 1 Listed building in the heart of Chester



## HISTORY MONOGRAPH No 6 – BISHOP LLOYD'S PALACE AND THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

### Bishop Lloyds Palace and the Oratory of St Francis, Chester

This rather dark photograph below shows the words "Oratory St Francis" on the beam above the Row. Next to the words is an arrow pointing towards the entrance to Bishop Lloyds Palace.

An account in the Chester Chronicle on 24 December 1858 reads as follows:-

*On the 21st December the Capuchin Fathers from Pantasaph opened a very neat oratory, public chapel, in Watergate Street Chester. The Very Rev Fr Seraphin of Bruges, at that time Superior of Pantasaph, said mass assisted by Fr Elzear. The oratory will be conducted like similar institutes abroad.*

*There will be two or more public services every morning, commencing at seven o'clock and one at seven o'clock every evening. It will be open all the day for private devotions.*

The Oratory in Bishop Lloyds Palace could only accommodate about 70 people.

In 1860 the Chapel was removed to a wooden shed in 25 Watergate Row which accommodated about 300 persons and then a house and land between Cuppin Street and Grosvenor Road were purchased. The foundation stone of the present church of St Francis was laid on 23rd September 1862.



The Chester Civic Trust

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When the Oratory moved there may have been another connection to the Catholic Church.

As the nineteenth century progressed the rapid growth of the Catholic population, about 3000 to 4000 in 1858, made it imperative that its children should receive some form of elementary education in a Catholic school if they were not to be lost to the Church.

Hugh Rigney, an Irishman by birth, was teaching Catholic children in 1838 and his 'school' was a small room attached to the Queen Street Chapel. By 1854 Hugh Rigney had been replaced by Mother Louise of Dee House who was teaching in the same small room. In 1858 the boys moved to a newly built school in Queen Street and the girls to two 'small' rooms in Watergate Row while a new building was erected for them at Dee House.

### ***Jan Hore***

**Sources:** (with thanks to Peter Bamford).

*Chester Chronicle*, 24 December 1858, page 8

St Francis Mission from *The Catholic Manual of Instruction and Official Guide*, 1928

Mary Winefride Sturman, *Catholicism in Chester*, [1975]

Mary Campion McCarren f.c.j, *A Mine of Gold: A celebration of 150 years in the service of Catholic Education on the Wirral by the Sisters, Faithful Companions of Jesus 1849-1999*

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