

Francis Augustus Fitzwilliam Dunham (1837-1905)

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His Family (1837-1856)

Francis Augustus Fitzwilliam Dunham (a.k.a. Denham) was born in Hampstead, Westminster, on 17 September 1837,¹ the second son of Samuel Astley Dunham, LL.D. (1795/6-17 July 1858) [non-Catholic],² and Maria Isabella Chandley [Catholic].

Samuel Astley Dunham was famous in his own right. He is the subject of an article in the Dictionary of National Biography and his works are found in the catalogue of the British Museum.³ Many of his multi-volumed historical works appeared in Ladner's *Cabinet Cyclopaedia*, and included histories of Poland, Spain and Portugal, Denmark, Sweden and Norway, Imperial Germany, and *A History of Europe during the Middle Ages*. His history of Spain and Portugal was described in the early 20th century as being accounted the best work on the subject in the English language. It obtained for him the distinction of being made a member of the Royal Spanish Academy. He also wrote *Lives of the Most Eminent Literary and Scientific Men of Great Britain*, 3 vols. 1836-7. These volumes include lives of many dramatists and early writers. After 1845, he was largely occupied with

reviewing books for significant journals and magazines. In his later years he engaged in biblical work, much of which was never printed.

It is not surprising in a man of such high literary pursuits to find that he was on intimate terms with various other literary figures. One of these was possibly Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Another was Robert Southey, after whom he named one of his sons, Robert Southey Dunham, who also became a Catholic priest. A third associate was the priest-historian John Lingard, who almost certainly became the godfather of Francis Augustus Fitzwilliam Dunham.⁴ A final point of interest to note is that Samuel Astley Dunham died suddenly as a result of a paralytic stroke, in July 1858. Fr. Francis Dunham was to meet a similar fate at the end of his life too.⁵

Francis Dunham's mother, Maria Isabella Chandley, is reported to have belonged to the circle of Cardinal Manning. The couple married at St. Luke's Church of England in Chelsea, on 14 April 1829.⁶ Beyond this, nothing is known of Maria's life, but from the people with whom she was associated one can imagine something of what it may have been.

Their eldest son was named Samuel Astley Dunham after his father, and he achieved some distinction in the United Kingdom. After some years as editor of the *Daily News*, of which he was the founder, and also the proprietor, he worked on the London weekly *Money Market Review* and later the daily newspaper *The Financier*.⁷

A sister, Winifred (born c.1840) and single, also accompanied her priest-brothers – Francis and Robert – to Queensland. Nothing is known of her after her arrival.

A third brother, Robert Southey (Timothy) Dunham (born 11 May 1835),⁸ also became a priest, and accompanied Francis to Queensland. The U.K. Census of April 1871 records him as living at Shepton Mallet, Somersetshire.⁹ As the years passed, Fr Robert Dunham moved to Armidale diocese. Fr Francis Dunham visited him, at Bindarra – on the Darling in far western NSW. – in that diocese in 1891/2. Later in 1892, he moved to Akaroa, New Zealand, in the Christchurch diocese. There is no mention of him in the Directories after 1903. From this, it may be surmised that he either died or returned home to England. The latter would appear the more probable, as the UK Census for 1911 records a Fr Robert Dunham as living at 11 Fairview Rd, Salisbury in Wiltshire.¹⁰

Seminary Studies and Early Clerical Career (1857-1871)

Francis's seminary studies were undertaken at Stillorgan Minor Seminary, a suburb of Dublin area.¹¹ From there he progressed to All Hallows, Dublin (1857-1863) and on completion he was ordained priest for the English diocese of Liverpool, on 22 June 1863.¹²

Between 1863 and 1871, he served as a priest of Liverpool Archdiocese under its second bishop in the restored English Roman Catholic hierarchy, Bishop Alexander Goss (1814-1872).¹³ Within the Liverpool Archdiocese, he is remembered as the first Parish Priest of All Saints' Church at Golborne, a centre within the Borough of

Wigan, some 22km west of Manchester and approx. 10 km north-west of Warrington.¹⁴

To Australia (10 June 1871-19 Sept. 1871)

Following the violent events in Rome which had brought to conclusion the First Vatican Council, Queensland's first Catholic bishop, James Quinn, who had been a participant at the Council, embarked on a recruiting drive of priests and religious personnel for his expanding diocese. Several highly qualified Italians, as well as a number of Irish were attracted by the missionary promise offered by a land far away in the antipodes. Similar considerations may have inspired Fathers Francis and Robert Dunham, together with their sister Winifred, to leave behind both the soulless mills of the English Midlands or the poverty of the Liverpool docks for a land of promise, limitless expanse and unending opportunities to spread the message of the Gospel of Christ.

Whatever of all this, it must remain mere conjecture, for no written record survives of what it was that inspired the Dunhams to set forth. The facts of their voyage are another matter; for an independent account of the voyage survives in Queensland's John Oxley library, in an account of one of their fellow passengers, Henry Plantagenet Somerset.¹⁵

They sailed from London on 10 June 1871, aboard the barque *Polmaise*, master WH Seaward, and were welcomed to Queensland on 19 September the same year. Besides the Dunhams – Francis (aged 44), Winifred (aged 31) and her maid, and Robert (aged 27) – the ship had a number of other passengers who would later play a

significant part in the Catholic Church in Queensland. In the first place was a number of Bishop Quinn's Italian priest recruits – all significantly listed on the shipping list as being aged 27: Eugenio Ricci, Joseph Pompei, Michele Antonini, and Oreste Terdozzi¹⁶ in the Saloon. In the second cabin, was Antonio Benvenuti (aged 57), his wife Caterina M (aged 34), and their children Antonio (aged 11), Angelo (aged 10) and Giuseppe (aged 8). Antonio Benvenuti was to become Bishop Quinn's manservant, and provide him with much comfort during the dark, depressive days of Quinn's last years.

At the outset of the voyage, Henry Plantagenet Somerset told an episode of how sectarianism revealed its ugly face. The priests and Catholics were accustomed to meet for Mass in the saloon on Sundays, during which the layabouts among the crew used to hurl abuse at them. When Somerset became aware of this he was horrified. Although not a Catholic himself, he believed they had the right to practice their religion in peace. He challenged the abusive ring-leaders to a fight in the fo'c'sle; and took great pleasure in declaring that he had beaten the lot of them.¹⁷

For its part, *The Age* newspaper observed, "Father Dunham was a highly cultured, kind, and courteous gentleman who won the respect, admiration, and confidence of all who knew him; a wise counsellor to all who sought his advice."¹⁸

Travelling North: Clermont and Charters Towers (Sept. 1871-June 1873)

Though the circumstances of his coming to Queensland were unclear, Francis Dunham

was soon appointed to bush mission duty in the Western and North Western districts of the State, having his nominal residence at Roma – which town at that time might be regarded as being on the outskirts of civilisation. ... priests were consequently few, and the priest in such a district was able to be at his headquarters only for a short time at lengthy intervals. In fact, almost his whole lifetime while on such a mission was occupied in the arduous and wearing duty of continuously travelling through the bush to find and minister the Sacraments to, and celebrate Mass for, the few and widely scattered Catholics. There were then no railways in those districts, the “roads” were often nothing more than bridle tracks – but seldom used and consequently indistinct and easily lost.¹⁹

It is not only the roads that could become lost in the bush - sometimes the identity of individual priests could be lost also. It surely no coincidence to find the in the *Dictionary of National Biography* article on Samuel Astley Dunham (mentioned above) the expression: ‘One of his sons, is a missionary priest, at present (1888) labouring in the Australian bush.’ And when it was a case of ‘two of his sons’ the case is all too obvious. The confusion between the two brothers – and wider – often is manifested during the several years that followed. For example, Francis Dunham is recorded as having officiated at the marriage of John Griffen and Annie Pool, at Blackall on April 20 1871. But the ship that brought them to Brisbane did not arrive until 19 September 1871. So who *did* marry John Griffen and Annie Pool? Answer: Who knows; but it wasn’t one of the Dunhams.

What *is* known is that they left Brisbane by the *Queenslander* heading for Maryborough and northern ports; during the months that followed they came into contact with Fr Nazareno Clementoni on Friday 9th February 1872, at Bowen – Clementoni had been in Bowen since the death of Fr William McGinty in November 1871; that their authorisation to celebrate marriages in Queensland was granted in the *Government Gazette* of 22 March 1872; that Francis Dunham travelled north on the *Lord Ashley*, from Brisbane (22 July 1872) in the company of Fr. Charles Murlay; and that, when the ship sailed on to Mackay and Townsville two days later, Dunham continued on alone.

At this time, 1872-1875 the two brothers served in what may generically be described as ‘outback missions’. Robert Southey Dunham appears to have led a wandering existence in an area that extended from Clermont and Longreach, down through places like Tambo, Wooloni, Windorah, Thargomindah, Surat and Roma - a huge territory.²⁰

Francis Augustus Fitzwilliam Dunham was also active in the same area, but he appears to have had the mining centre of Charters Towers as his base. In early January 1873, a miner named Donahue went missing in the nearby bush. Francis Dunham gathered a search party of twenty horsemen, with indigenous black-trackers, at the Royal Hotel, Charters Towers, and set out in search of the missing man. The party managed to find Donahue’s camp site, but of him they saw nothing. The searchers returned to ‘The Towers’, having given the man up as lost.²¹

By mid-1873, Francis had decided to approach the territory from the south, as administrator of the Roma Mission. His place at Charters Towers was taken by Nazareno Clementoni. Prior to his arrival, the Roma District had come under the supervision of Fr Horan, of Warwick. The 'official' boundaries of the of Roma parish were the Condamine River in the East, the New South Wales border in the South, the South Australian border in the West, and Tambo and Blackall in the North.

The Roma Mission (June 1873-July 1881)

It is not known precisely when he took up this appointment, but his first Baptism is recorded at Roma on 13 September. By 19 September 1873 the *Queensland Government Gazette* had caught up with events by noting the move for the purpose of the celebration of marriages. The first of his marriages, between Reginald Arthur Whipham and Catherine Carigg, took place at the residence of the bride's brother-in-law. A presbytery was erected, and by 27 February 1874, the first church, All Saints, had been built at Roma for a cost of £300. The money had been raised in just under six months.²² This is surely a testament to his abilities as a fund raiser. (It was not to be the last time such things happened.)

Francis Dunham received some capable assistance during his time at Roma. Fr. Denis Fouhy was there from 1873 to 1875; his brother Fr. Robert Dunham was there 1877-1878, during which time he also served Surat; and Michael McKernan was there 1879-1880. Dunham's preference, however, lay in more remote areas.

He was a noted bushman,²³ and set about visiting all parts of his parish, even those lying west of the Bulloo River. All his trips were done on horseback. When leaving Roma, he often set out with 10 to 12 horses. A regular companion was the boy Fred Garland, who later worked for the Brisbane *Courier*. Conditions of travel were far from easy. One has only to remember the disastrous Burke and Wills expedition (1860-1861) which took place about this time to understand something of the environment which faced this pioneer priest. Yet, whereas Bourke and Wills died of exhaustion and starvation, no such disaster befell Francis Dunham. Why was this so? Let us listen to his own words: ‘How did I manage about rations all that time? I lived chiefly on my gun. Fortunately no game laws to trouble me, so I could blaze away at anything and everything. Of course, there was not the same amount of habitation then that there is now, nor would such journeys as mine now be required from others.’²⁴

Every year brought its fresh journeys and tales of his life in the bush. Perhaps the most dramatic came in 1874 when he undertook a journey of some 3,000 miles over a period of almost five months. Fr. Denis Fouhy, his curate, understood him to be visiting St. George, and when Dunham had not returned by 16 May, he alerted the police. Inspector Richard Moran and his native police searched for him in the Cunnamulla region, and it was Constable Wright and his party who found him safe and sound on the Warrego River at Sadliers Waterhole. During his time away, he had visited Ellangowan (today’s Augathella), Tambo, Adavale, Bulloo River, Cooper’s Creek, Thargomindah, Eulo and Charleville.²⁵ Later in the year, on 16 December 1874, at Mt. Hutton near Taroom,

a man named McInness had attempted suicide by cutting his throat. It was Dunham who stayed with the poor man until a policeman arrived from Roma to take him to Woogaroo Lunatic Asylum at Goodna.

The travels for 1875 found him once more in the Western districts. On 27 January, he was on the Warrego, where he had married two couples in Charleville that week. Later, on 21 September, a drunken John Geeran used abusive language against Dunham at Donnybrook. He subsequently made a public apology in the *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*.²⁶ Finally, on 8-9 November he was on the Maranoa, where he held a service at Mitchell Courthouse.²⁷

The year 1876 began in the Roma Police Court. Francis Dunham brought a charge of horse stealing against one James Madden. Madden, having been convicted, was discharged, while the stolen mare and two foals were returned to Dunham.²⁸ The long journeys through the bush to scattered parishioners continued in 1877-8; often with the celebration of a marriage taking place on occasion (e.g. that of Michael Walsh and Mary Monahan, at Mr. Clayton's residence in Blackall; that of E. McLauchlin and E. Sloane, at Pickinginny; and that of Patrick Bourke and Annie Moynihan, at Roma).²⁹

It would have been on these journeys that he came to meet E.J. Stevens on the Bulloo, perhaps the John Costello of Davenport Downs, the Tullys at Wathagurra, and of course the Duracks at Thylungra. Mary Durack, in her book *Kings in Grass Castles* recounts a number of episodes which involved Francis Dunham.

Dunham, apparently, would time his visits to coincide with local community events, such as the Cooper Carnival, when Ned Hammond and Dinnie Skehan took to one another with stirrup irons.

It seems to have been a poor show for Dinnie all round. His horse ran a close finish with one of Horrigan's and after some discussion Father Dunham, who had nicely timed his annual visit with the Cooper carnival, gave a decision in favour of Horrigan. Dinnie, primed with hard liquor and no great respecter of persons at the best of times, challenged the priest to a fight, whereupon Father Dunham, to the surprise and joy of the community, not only took on the hot-headed Irishman but promptly laid him flat. Dinnie, scrambling from the dust amid the jeers of the onlookers, came adroitly to his own defence: 'And what sort of a man is it at all would be hitting a praist [sic]?'³⁰

On another occasion, the Baptism of Patsy Durack was claimed to have been the origin of the 'Banjo' Patterson poem *A Bush Christening*:

He recalled being ushered up to the improvised baptismal font where the awesome stranger stood in outlandish regalia, amid an unusually hushed gathering of relatives and friends. In a flash he was through the door and across the yard, to the protection of the blacks' camp. Pumpkin pushed the terrified child into his humpy and stood guard until the boy was at last coaxed forth with many reassurances and promises of rich reward.³¹

A third tale is a tragic one, reflecting on a mother who lost her little child in the bush:

It was during one of Father Dunham's visits, when the family at Wathagurra was assembled at Mass, that the three-year-old Annie Amy Tully disappeared. Nobody, not even one of the blacks, had seen her go and when they found her little pannikin beside the creek they at once began dragging the waterhole.

Helpers, black and white, came over from Thylungra and Kyabra and for three days the search went on. Even Pumpkin, Willie and Scrammy Jimmy, notorious trackers though they were, could find no trace of footprints on that stony wind-swept plain where the child had wandered in hopeless circles among the breakaways.

Young Michael, my father, riding with Pumpkin, found the little body lying in a gully with some bush flowers clutched in her hand as though she had died in sleep. They brought her to Thylungra and buried her with her baby brother Francis.

Father Dunham spoke of 'another angel in heaven' and of 'resignation to the will of God', but Sarah, acquainted with sorrow, keening in the tradition of her people, wanted no formal words of comfort.

'And who is any Englishman whatever to be telling an Irish mother how she must bear her cross? This is the fourth child He has taken from me, Father, and I shall thank Him in my own way and my own time but I shall have my grief out.'³²

Dunham continued to visit the Duracks each year, honoured as guide, philosopher and friend. When Stumpy Michael Durack moved his family to the Kimberley district of Western Australia, he named the river which passed through his property Dunham River.³³

Other honours were more immediately forthcoming. John Costello presented him with 'a small cattle station' of

100,000 acres on the Diamantina River, known as 'Dunham Towers' (located near Stonehenge); the Duracks presented him with enough cattle to stock the property; and other graziers promised to construct yards and fence the property.³⁴ Edward Noone (also known as Noonan) became the manager of Dunham Towers on Fr. Francis Dunham's behalf.³⁵

While the Western graziers held Francis Dunham in great esteem, that admiration was not universal. The editor of the *Western Star and Roma Advertiser* adopted a hostile approach towards Dunham. This reached a high point in the edition of 18 September 1879, when the paper's editor launched a sectarian *ad hominem* attack on the priest. Dunham replied by writing a series of 'Letters to the Editor'. With the advent of the 'Irish Relief Fund' relations between the two antagonists improved, but it was an uneasy truce, as revealed in a snide comment on 30 June 1880: that, while Catholics are in the majority of the population, Dunham visits them casually 'about once in three months,' when he 'duns' (pesters) them with great success for his mission.³⁶

Comments such as this last one had been circulating within the Roma and St. George communities for some time; but it was impolitic on Dunham's part to further 'fuel the fires of discontent' at a time when Bishop James Quinn was visiting the district. Bishop Quinn had secured the services of the noted Redemptorist preacher to present a mission in the district. He found Dunham 'absent on a distant journey in the far interior,' and that it had been necessary to summon Fr. James Horan to supply the honorifics of welcome, etc.³⁷

It mattered little that Dunham had been absent at Charleville, where he had said Mass in the Courthouse and baptized seven children.³⁸ Ecclesiastical protocol had been disparaged. On 11 June, Quinn replaced Dunham as Parish Priest, with Peter Capra, a devout and scholarly priest who held the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the Sapienza University, Rome.³⁹ When one speaks of pioneer priests in Roma it is usually Capra who is referred to.⁴⁰ Dunham performed his last baptism at Roma in late June 1880, and then moved out once more into the ‘far interior’.

Blackall and Tambo (April 1881-1883)

The *Western Champion* of 27 October 1880, announced that Francis Dunham would be at Blackall, his new parish, before the end of the week, when he was expected to say Sunday Mass in the Public Hall. In fact, he did not arrive until Monday 1 November, and the longed-for Mass was finally celebrated on Sunday 7 November.⁴¹ The travelling lifestyle continued throughout the Western districts, as had been his custom at Roma, with one exception: a decision had to be made about where his base of operations was to be established.

His approach appeared to involve playing off the centres of Blackall and Tambo against each other. Arriving from Aramac to say Mass in Blackall’s Public Hall on Sunday 17 May 1881, he informed those present that he had finally severed his ties with Roma, and henceforward was to be considered the priest of the Barcoo. Tambo, he continued, looked an attractive place to establish as his headquarters. He is found the following week at Tambo, presumably peddling a similar argument to its people

about Blackall. Then it was back to Blackall once more for 31 May.⁴² By July, it seems that a decision had been made to construct two churches, one at Tambo⁴³ and the other at Blackall.⁴⁴ Under these circumstances, it would be necessary to resort to unusual means to achieve the project's successful completion. Members of the Young Australian Circus were engaged to give two performances in aid of the Building Fund. £60 was raised for the purpose.⁴⁵ On 6 August Francis Dunham's transfer from Roma to Blackall was acknowledged, for the purpose of celebrating marriages, in the Queensland *Government Gazette* of that date. Dunham, for his part, announced that he intended to reside permanently in the district.⁴⁶

So what went wrong? It cannot have related to his brother Robert, for the two had parted company in 1878, when Robert went to Armidale diocese, while Francis was still at Roma.⁴⁷ Neither can it be attributed to his friends among the parishioners leaving for other districts.⁴⁸ The move to Brisbane cannot be attributed to poor health either. That much can be seen from a glance at the blistering pace of his work on the Brisbane Mission. The years of ill health were still in the future. The reality is that the reasons for his move from outback to the capital of the Colony remain unknown. The best that can be done is to hypothesise.

Brisbane (August 1883-1887)

Francis Dunham first appears on the Mass list of the Brisbane Mission on 29 June 1883, the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul. But it is only from August 5 that he became a regular feature of life in and around the capital.⁴⁹ That the move to Brisbane was not intended as a disgrace

may be seen from a number of factors. In the first place, he lived at St. Patrick's, Fortitude Valley – along with Fr. Canali, and later also with Fr. Corrigan – whereas the remainder of the Mission's clergy lived at St. Kilian's College, South Brisbane, under relatively close supervision.

Secondly, he was given a significant part to play in the liturgical life of the local church. The first regular task he was given came on his very first day on the Brisbane Mission, Sunday 5 August 1883, when Bishop Dunne confirmed 340 children in the Cathedral, with Dunham the celebrant of the Mass.⁵⁰ Similar events continued on later occasions. Moreover, he was known for his orthodoxy in matters of doctrine. This made him a desirable instructor of adult converts to Catholicism – as, for example, when Bishop Dunne asked him to undertake the preparation of a Mr. Alfred Poole for Baptism.⁵¹

Thirdly, he shared in the fellowship of the other Brisbane priests. An example of this can be seen in September 1883, on the occasion of Fr. Philip Corrigan's transfer from St. Kilian's to St. Patrick's. A farewell function was held at the Ship Inn, South Brisbane at which Frs. Corrigan, Dunham and Scortechini were present.⁵² The Bishop's Secretary, Fr. Denis Fouhy, used often turn to him for advice.

Fourthly, his priestly ministry was an active one, not a sedentary one. Living at St. Patrick's, he would say two Masses each week on Sundays, as well as undertake station duty within the Greater Brisbane region on other assigned days. Not all his priestly colleagues were asked to undertake the diversity of stations that he did. Dunham

undertook station duty at the following places: Whiteside/North Pine, Eagle Farm, Figtree Pocket, Moggill, Chinaman's Crossing near Caboolture, Lytton Boys' Reformatory, St. Helena Penal Establishment, Cleveland, Moreton Island, and South Brisbane Gaol (Boggo Road).

On 6 July 1885, all this changed. Denis Fouhy described St. Patrick's as having become a 'lazarette'. All the clergy there came down with influenza; but while the others recovered, Francis Dunham remained in a semi-invalid state, which developed into a paralytic stroke. This proved to be the beginning of the series of illnesses that were to plague the rest of his life. It was decided to send him to Sydney and then Katoomba for some rest and recovery time. Accordingly, he sailed for the South aboard the *Ranslagh* on 13 January 1886.⁵³

When he returned, on 14 November 1886,⁵⁴ his activities were adapted to meet what remained of his abilities. Station duties were now a thing of the past, as was the regular Sunday celebration of Mass at St. Patrick's. Other priests had arrived in the meantime, enabling such events to be looked after by the more recent arrivals. Francis Dunham was able to concentrate his attention on specific activities. These may be summarised as Requiem Masses for notable people,⁵⁵ the celebration of marriages,⁵⁶ assistance at confirmations in the Cathedral,⁵⁷ filling in to the Mass roster in case of emergencies,⁵⁸ and celebrating Mass at Christmas and Easter time.

During this time, business from the past, continued to play its part in Francis Dunham's life. At his cattle property, Dunham Towers, a series of misfortunes was taking place.

In the first instance, the death of the 7-month-old infant son of the station's manager Edward Noone and his wife B.J. (Bridget?) occurred on 5 September 1883.⁵⁹ The fate of poor little Amy Annie Tully was repeating itself.⁶⁰ The fact that the child was called Francis William Noone can have done nothing to lessen the grief.

As in the case of Sarah Tully, referred to above, a beloved child's death in the bush seems to have made the parents hard. Edward Noone began to get a reputation for 'cattle duffing', a not uncommon pastime in Western districts, where owners of stock could not be as scrupulous as in the ideal, and where cattle roamed unrestricted in land that was often inadequately fenced. Mary Durack may have spoken light-heartedly of the practice;⁶¹ but the reality was a serious matter. The outcome, for Dunham was a stiff letter from the Archbishop suggesting to his minister that the roles of property owner and parish priest were incompatible.

And so it was that Dunham Towers was put up for sale. Advertisements appeared in *The Queenslander* from 1 November 1884 until 18 July 1885, without any evidence of a tangible result.⁶² The issue of cattle duffing continued to escalate until, in December 1886, Edward Noone was brought before Judge Miller on that charge. At that trial it emerged that Noone was part owner of Dunham Towers – providing a partial answer to the result of the property's sale. After a complex trial on 11 and 13 December, Noone was discharged with a verdict of 'not guilty'.⁶³ By that time Fr. Francis Dunham had other things to fill his time.

Late in 1886, Dunham suffered a fresh stroke, and, as on the previous occasion, he sailed south for treatment and

rehabilitation. When he returned to Brisbane in early March 1887, he arranged for his last move to a house located not far from Holy Cross Church, Woolloowin and its proposed Magdalen Home for women in distress.

Woolloowin (1887-1899)

Francis Dunham's last appointment was as priest in residence, at Holy Cross, Woolloowin. His house there was located in James Street, but a search for it under this designation will not reveal anything. At the time of Dunham's residence, Woolloowin was known as Thorrold Town,⁶⁴ while the land over towards Clayfield was known as Albion Heights. Following a redesigning of the plan of the suburb, James St. is today known as Inwood St. In 1884, Dunham's old friend Patrick Durack built an 'old Queenslander' named Maryview in Albion Heights, where he lived for some years.⁶⁵ In August 1894, another Durack, 'Stumpy' Michael, died at his home in the area 'leaving his affairs in a bad way.'⁶⁶ A Church hall was erected in Stoneleigh Street, near the home of the Hon. John Murtagh Macrossan. This hall was blessed by Archbishop Dunne on 22 August 1886. The first school building went up on site ten years later, in 1896.⁶⁷

Unbeknown to Francis Dunham, another figure was coming to spiritual maturity under his influence during these last years of his earthly life. This was none other than the future Archbishop James Duhig. In his own later years he reflected on the significance of 'the touching little sermons on the passion of Christ delivered by the late Father Dunham.'⁶⁸

The programme of duties that Dunham had adopted on his

return to Brisbane in November 1886 continued after he returned from a second stroke in March 1897, though with passing of time he can be seen to have been struggling under the strain. He continued to play a part in St. Stephen's Cathedral at the funerals of notable people: 18 August on the anniversary of the death of Bishop James Quinn (1891, deacon; 1892, celebrant; 1895, celebrant; 1896, deacon; 1897, celebrant); 20 January 1892 at a Requiem Mass for Cardinals Manning⁶⁹ and Simeoni⁷⁰ (deacon); 10 March 1892 at the funeral of Mother Vincent Whitty RSM (celebrant); 26 June 1894, at the Month's Mind for Fr. Cranfield, OP (celebrant); 1 August 1894 at the funeral of 'Stumpy' Durack and at his Month's Mind on 22 August 1894 (celebrant); 16 August 1894, present at the funeral of the mother of Thomas Joseph Byrnes⁷¹; February 1895, present at the Requiem Mass of Fr. Hanley, who had died recently in Sydney; 21 February 1898 at the Requiem Mass of Thomas Mooney (celebrant); 7 October 1898, at the Requiem Mass of Premier Thomas Joseph Byrnes (celebrant).

The celebration of Mass on Christmas Day (from 1888 to 1896) and at Easter (from 1887 to 1893) became significant liturgical occasions during his last years. His love of liturgical music revealed itself in the celebration of Christmas Mass at Woolloowin in 1893,⁷² and 1894,⁷³ when a *Missa Cantata* was held. When the Easter liturgy became too taxing for him, he switched his attention to the celebration in the Cathedral of either Tenebrae or the Good Friday liturgy (from 1893 to 1900). This liturgy contains some of the oldest and most evocative examples in the Latin Liturgy.

Last Days (1901-2 March 1905)

The project which dominated his last years was the establishment of the Holy Cross Asylum, a Magdalen Asylum and Laundry, conducted by the Sisters of Mercy. To this end, Fr. Denis Fouhy, Secretary to Archbishop Dunne wrote him on 18 July 1890 a letter of introduction to Sydney's Cardinal Patrick Moran.⁷⁴ The Cardinal proved to be obliging; and, in March 1892, Dunham attended a meeting of the Albion Benevolent Society, held in the Albion Mission Hall.⁷⁵ On Sunday, 29 November 1896, Archbishop Dunne blessed and opened the first Holy Cross School.⁷⁶

Finally, on 22 October 1899, in what was a spectacular occasion for Holy Cross, Archbishop Dunne laid the foundation stone for a new wing of the Magdalen Asylum. Cardinal Moran preached. Accompanying the Cardinal were several distinguished Prelates: Right Rev. Dr Gilbert (Coadjutor Bishop of Sandhurst, Vic), Most Rev. Dr. Corbett (Bishop of Sale, Vic), and Very Rev Dr. Revill. An ailing Fr. Francis Dunham was also there, in the company of various priests of the Archdiocese: Frs. Hegarty, Lee, Dorrigan, Baldwin and Morris. Representatives of the secular establishment were also in attendance: Mr. Justice Real, Hon. George Wilkie Gray MLC, Messrs. John Leahy and Frank. McDonnell MLA, Miss Quinlan, Mr and Mrs. Agnew, Dr. McNeely, Alderman and Mrs. Hechelmann, as well as members of the Hibernian Society.⁷⁷ Francis Dunham could go to his rest in peace.

Life, however, does not come in the nice neat little bundles that historians often like to shape. So let it be with

Dunham. Two other points need to be remarked upon before the pioneering priest can be consigned to eternity. The first relates to what could possibly have been his last outing. This took place on Friday 30 October 1896. The occasion was the Christian Brothers' Annual Sports and Athletics gathering, held at the Association Ground, Bowen Bridge. There is reported to have been a good attendance at the event. Frs. Dorrigan, Power, Lee and Dunham were among those present.⁷⁸ It is inspiring to see the 'old campaigner' finding enjoyment in the physical pursuits of the young men of tomorrow.

The death of Francis Dunham was extended over a number of years. It came as a series of paralytic strokes.⁷⁹ The first came in 1885/6 when he was obliged to give up parish work and concentrate on specific duties at Woolloowin and at the Cathedral. Then, sometime around 1900, a third stroke confined him to his room at Inwood St. Woolloowin, unable to speak and communicating only by means of a typewriter. What an end for a man whose parish had extended from Roma to Tambo and places in between!⁸⁰

Those who loved him were upset by what they saw. On 5 April 1903, Archbishop Dunne wrote to Fr. Michael Potter of Warwick (then on holiday in Ireland): 'Fr. Dunham is slightly better. Reads and type-writes but does not speak: can take no solid food and has lost flesh considerably.'⁸¹ It is probably the last description we have of him.

One thing caused him to speak out. It was the appointment, in 1902, of Right Rev. George Horstfall Frodsham (1863-1937) as Anglican Bishop of North

Queensland.⁸² Consecrated in Sydney on 17 August 1902, Frodsham is revered in North Queensland as the founder of the Bush Brotherhood of St. Barnabas. In his claim to be the first clergyman to work in the back country elicited this response from Francis Dunham: 'It was impossible for any priest to travel on missionary work more extensively than I had to do during the time I was stationed at Roma. One of my actual journeys to beyond Cooper's Creek was more than three thousand miles, and took six months to do it.'⁸³

But time had run out for Dunham. People like Frodsham could only make the claims they did because he had been forgotten in the land which he had served so faithfully. When he had first arrived in Queensland in September 1871 insufficient notice was taken of where he first went. His pastoral work in the West is undeniable; but much of it is lost in the heat haze of the 'gibber plain'. The prolonged nature of his dying led to his slipping away almost without being noticed. (One report even had him still living at Wooloowin in 1913).

Francis Augustus Fitzwilliam Dunham died in his Inwood St. house on the evening of 2 March 1905, aged 68. Requiem Mass was celebrated in St. Stephen's Cathedral, on Saturday 4 March, in the presence of Archbishop Robert Dunne, with Fr. Francis Burton (celebrant), Fr. James Byrne (deacon), Fr. William Lee (subdeacon), and Fr. Michael Baldwin (Master of Ceremonies). At the conclusion of the Requiem Mass his body was taken to Nudgee Cemetery for burial.⁸⁴ He would have been buried in the first row of 9 priests to be buried in Nudgee Cemetery.

Probate was awarded in the Estate of Francis Dunham on 11 March 1905. Executors were Fr. Francis Burton, of Toowoomba, and Fr. Joseph Nolan, of Dalby. The solicitor in the case was John O'Mara, of 257 Queen St., Brisbane.⁸⁵ Thus passed 'one of the oldest, most widely known, and revered of the Catholic priests of Queensland.'⁸⁶ May he rest in peace.

¹ *The Age*, Sat 11 March 1905 p.3.

² According to Warne's *Bijou Biography*, Samuel Astley Dunham, LLB (d.1858), was a historian, and an intimate friend of poet Robert Southey (d. 1843), and of Dr, John Lingard (d. 1851), (*The Age*, 2 June 1894, p.6)

³ Charles William Sutton, "Dunham, Samuel Astley (1795/6-1858)", *National Dictionary of Biography*, Vol.VI: Drant – Finan, ed by Leslie Stephen and Sydney Lee, London 1908, Smith, Elder & Co, p199.

⁴ Sutton, p199. For John Lingard see Thompson Cooper, "Lindgard, John, D.D. (1771-1851) *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol. XI. Kennett – Lluelyn, ed by Leslie Stephen and Sydney Lee, London 1908, Smith, Elder & Co., pp.1199-1202.

⁵ In Francis Dunham's case, however, death took some time in coming: he lingered on as a chronic invalid for a further 17 years, before dying on 2 March 1905.

⁶ *Church of England, Marriages and Banns*, London, 1754-1921, Parish Register, St Luke Church of England, Chelsea, 14 Apr. 1829

⁷ *The Age*, Sat 11 March 1905 p.3.

⁸ *Non-Conformist and Non-Parochial Registers, England and Wales 1567-1970*. Esh Laude Chapel, Durham, 12 May 1835.

⁹ *England Census*, 2-3 Apr. 1871

¹⁰ *England Census*, 2-3 Apr. 1911

¹¹ "Stillorgan", Wikipedia, accessed 27/11/2016

¹² *The Age*, Sat 11 March 1905 p3, gives the date 14 June; but information from Liverpool Archdiocesan Archives indicates it was 22 June 1863. Similar enquires made of All Hallows College, Dublin received no reply.

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- ¹³ Bishop Alexander Goss (5/7/1814-3/10/1872) was an archaeologist who was related to the Rutter family. He was ordained co-adjutor to Liverpool's first Roman Catholic Bishop George Henry Brown. On the latter's death, in 1856, he assumed the See in his own right.
- ¹⁴ E-mail from Liverpool Archdiocesan Archives of 11/1/2016. See also "Golborne", Wikipedia. accessed 27/11/2016.
- ¹⁵ Henry Plantagenet Somerset *Trombone's Troubles: Experiences of a Queensland Jackeroo in Early Pastoral Days*, manuscript, John Oxley Library, Brisbane [edited by Denise Bender, Boolarong Press, Salisbury, Brisbane 2010]. HP Somerset (1852-1936), served as liberal MLA for Stanley in Queensland's Legislative Assembly from 1904 to 1920. Queensland's Somerset Dam is named after him.
- ¹⁶ Recorded by the shipping clerk as Aserte Terdejigo.
- ¹⁷ Somerset.
- ¹⁸ *The Age*, Sat 11 March 1905 p.3.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*
- ²⁰ See *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, Sat. 6 Nov 1875, p.3. Not long before his death, Dunham observed: 'There are nine priests now stationed in different parts of that district which was formerly mine, besides parts given to neighbouring priests and other parts now belonging to the Rockhampton diocese, such as Hughenden, Winton, etc.' *The Age*, Sat 11 March 1905 p.3.
- ²¹ *The Age*, Sat 11 March 1905 p.3.
- ²² R.B. Taylor, *Roma and District 1846-1885*, p.132
- ²³ Mary Durack, *Kings in Grass Castles*, Constable & Co., London 1959 (rpt1961) p135.
- ²⁴ *The Age*, Sat 11 March 1905 p3.
- ²⁵ *The Brisbane Courier* 16 June, p.2, & *The Queenslander* 20 June, pp.4 & 10, reported that he was safely back in Roma, having chosen to visit parishioners on the Bulloo River instead of St. George.
- ²⁶ *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, 11 December 1875, p2.
- ²⁷ *Western Star & Roma Advertiser*, 27 Nov. 1875, p3.
- ²⁸ *Western Star & Roma Advertiser*, 26 Feb. 1876, p3.
- ²⁹ *Western Star & Roma Advertiser*, 5 Oct. 1878, p2, Sat.21 Dec. 1878, p2.
- ³⁰ Mary Durack, *Kings in Grass Castles*, p.167.
- ³¹ *Ibid.* p136.

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- ³² *Ibid*, pp156-157.
- ³³ See Mary Durack, p137.
- ³⁴ Noel Francis Milner, *Centenary of the Blackall-Tambo Parish 1884-1984*, p4.
- ³⁵ Mary Durack, p137. Elsewhere, in Court reports of a ‘cattle duffing’ case, he is described as the part owner of Dunham Downs.
- ³⁶ See *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, 6 November 1876, p3; 18 September 1879, p.; 14 January 1880, p3; 17 January 1880, p3; 21 January 1883, p3; 29 May 1880, p3; and 30 June 1880, p3.
- ³⁷ *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, 29 May 1880, p3.
- ³⁸ 26 June 1880, *Brisbane Courier*, p6 and *Queenslander*, p806.
- ³⁹ *The Australian* 19 June 1880 [clipping].
- ⁴⁰ Indeed, when the centenary of Roma parish was celebrated by two articles (Frances [Sr. Xaverius] O’Donoghue, ‘100 Glorious Years’ – Episodes 22 and 24, *Catholic Leader* 12 and 26 Jan. 1961, both p9), Francis Dunham was not even mentioned.
- ⁴¹ *Western Champion*, 27 October 1880, p2; 3 November 1889, p2
- ⁴² *Western Champion*, 20 May 1881, p2 (repeated *Western Star & Roma Advertiser*, 8 June 1881, p2)
- ⁴³ *Western Champion*, 1 July 1881, p2: Subscribers list for church at Tambo.
- ⁴⁴ *Western Champion*, 8 July 1881, p2. Only eight people had been present at the Blackall meeting.
- ⁴⁵ *Western Champion*, 15 July 1881, p2: (repeated *Rockhampton Bulletin*, 25 July, 1881, p2 and 30 July 1881, p14)
- ⁴⁶ As in previous note.
- ⁴⁷ Indeed, Francis subsequently visited Robert, in 1891-2, at Bundarra in Armidale diocese, just before Robert moved to St. Patrick’s, in the diocese of Christchurch, N.Z.
- ⁴⁸ Mary Durack pp161-162, tells that John Costello left Davenport Downs for Cawarral in coastal Central Queensland in the late 1870s, while Francis Dunham was still at Roma; while on p345 Patsy Durack moved into his house at Albion Heights in 1884 and ‘Stumpy’ Michael Durack died in August 1894, both events after Francis Dunham had moved to Brisbane. In fact, she doesn’t appear to know much about Francis Dunham’s movements at this time, for she portrays him as travelling from Roma for Stumpy’s funeral and Months’ Mind, motivated by old ties of friendship (p. 348).

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- ⁴⁹ What follows comes mainly from material held in the Brisbane Archdiocesan Archives.
- ⁵⁰ *Brisbane Courier*, 6 August, 1883, p5.
- ⁵¹ 9 June, 1885
- ⁵² *Brisbane Courier*, 26 September 1883, p 4; *Queensland Figaro*, 29 September, 1883, p 9)
- ⁵³ *Brisbane Courier*, 14 Jan. 1886.
- ⁵⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 15 Nov. 1886, p. 4.
- ⁵⁵ For example, on the anniversary of the death of Bishop James Quinn (August 1883) and the Requiem Mass for Bishop Matthew Quinn (16 January 1885).
- ⁵⁶ *The Queensland Government Gazette* noted his move to Brisbane on 25 January 1884, and he celebrated the wedding of Thomas Ogilvie Porter and Minnie Power, in the Cathedral, on 15 January 1885.
- ⁵⁷ For example, on 5 October 1884, Bishop Dunne confirmed 400 people in the Cathedral with the assistance of Frs. Denis Fouhy and Francis Dunham.
- ⁵⁸ For example, when Fr. Philip Brady injured himself in a fall from a horse, it was Dunham who was asked to take over.
- ⁵⁹ *The Queenslander*, 3 Nov. 1883, p727; *Brisbane Courier*, 7 Nov 1883, p. 6.
- ⁶⁰ See above p. 6.
- ⁶¹ Mary Durack, pp.136-137: “Before long, however, the ‘natural increase’ of the ‘holy herd’, as it was called, became nothing short of miraculous, and so often were the cows of neighbouring stations seen running with calves that bore the Dunham Towers’ brand that the settlers rose in protest. Noonan [*sic*] made counter-accusations declaring that he was doing no more than protect the interests of Holy Church against black-hearted marauders.”
- ⁶² Mary Durack.
- ⁶³ *Western Champion*, 21 Dec. 1886, p. 1.
- ⁶⁴ This was because the original land had been purchased by one Robert Lock Thorrold and it was subsequently subdivided. After Dunham’s death it was bought by Mr. and Mrs. Mick Connelly as their family home.
- ⁶⁵ Mary Denise Sweeney, *Holy Cross Woolloowin, 1886-1986* (typed booklet), p. 12.
- ⁶⁶ Mary Durack, p. 345.

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- ⁶⁷ M.D. Sweeney, p. 13.
- ⁶⁸ *Catholic Leader*, 2 October 1930, p. 22.
- ⁶⁹ Remember his mother's association with Cardinal Manning (see above, p1).
- ⁷⁰ Cardinal Prefect of *Propaganda Fide*, Rome.
- ⁷¹ Then Queensland's Attorney General.
- ⁷² *Brisbane Courier*, 27 Dec. 1894, p. 3. The Choir sang Haydn's Mass No.16.
- ⁷³ *Brisbane Courier*, 27 Dec. 1894, p3: The Choir sang a Cantata from Haydn's Mass No.2, as well as Weber's Mass in G.
- ⁷⁴ Fouhy to Moran, 18 July 1890, Brisbane Archdiocesan Archives. In the letter, Fouhy informed the Cardinal, among other things: 'he has been off duty for some four years solely on account of ill health.'
- ⁷⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, Mon. 21 Mar. 1892, p. 4. For more about the Hall, see above p. 11.
- ⁷⁶ *Brisbane Courier*, Mon. 30 Nov. 1896, p. 3.
- ⁷⁷ *Brisbane Courier*, Mon. 23 Oct. 1899, p. 6. A further description of the Magdalen Asylum and of Fr. Dunham's residence appeared in the *Brisbane Courier*, Tues. 25 Dec. 1900, p. 5.
- ⁷⁸ *Brisbane Courier*, Sat. 31 Oct. 1896, p. 6.
- ⁷⁹ His father Samuel Astley Dunham had met a similar end in July 1858 (See above p. 1).
- ⁸⁰ *The Age*, Sat 11 March 1905 p. 3.
- ⁸¹ Dunne to Potter 5 April 1903, Potter Collection, *Fryer Library*, University of Queensland.
- ⁸² John Charles Volker, "George Horstfall Frodsham (15-9-1863 – 6-3-1937)", *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 8, Melbourne University Press 1981, [on-line copy accessed 28/11/2016]
- ⁸³ *The Age*, Sat 11 March 1905 p. 3.
- ⁸⁴ *Brisbane Courier*, 4 March 1905, p5; *Queensland Times*, 4 March 1905, p3; *The Queenslander*, 11 March 1905, p. 9.
- ⁸⁵ *Brisbane Courier*, 11 March 1905, p.7; Queensland State Archives, Series 4486, Item 2814385.
- ⁸⁶ *The Age*, 11 March 1905 p. 3.

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