

PULVERTAFT PAPERS

A Newsletter on the Pulvertofts & Pulvertafts

*Printed by Captain D. M. Pulvertaft, Royal Navy,
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EDITORIAL

I am pleased to be able to report that this issue has been edited on my personal computer. (For the technically minded, WordStar on an Amstrad PC 1512 controlling a Brother CE-500 typewriter). Although I have thus mastered word processing, I have not yet progressed to indexing and that for Volume 1 is therefore still outstanding.

I include in this issue the first of what I hope will be an occasional series of articles on members of the Pulvertoft or Pulvertaft families whose lives or achievements are sufficiently well known to make an article appropriate and interesting. In this case, I am indebted to Mrs Nancy Pulvertaft for providing the photograph of her father-in-law, Thomas Pulvertaft, and much of the information about him.

If members of the family - or indeed any other readers - have enough information to create another article in the series, I would be delighted to hear from you.

THOMAS JOHN PULVERTAFT

Born in Cork on 23 June 1867, the eldest son of Robert Pulvertaft and Elizabeth Ann Bogan, Thomas John Pulvertaft had a most successful schooling. He won his first prize in 1878 and by 1884/5 his achievements were mounting:

"First of First Class Prizes Senior Grade Intermediate.
Second Class Exhibition, Royal University.
Honours in Greek, Mathematics & Experimental Science.
First Class Scholarship, Queen's College, Cork.
Third Mathematical Scholarship, Q.C.C.
Oratory Prize Y.M.C.A.
Sessional Prizes Q.C.C. in Greek, Latin, English and Natural Philosophy.
Second Exhibition First Class, Royal University.
Honours in Latin, Greek & Experimental Science."

And so he continued, with the prospect of his joining the family brassfounding business diminishing year by year.

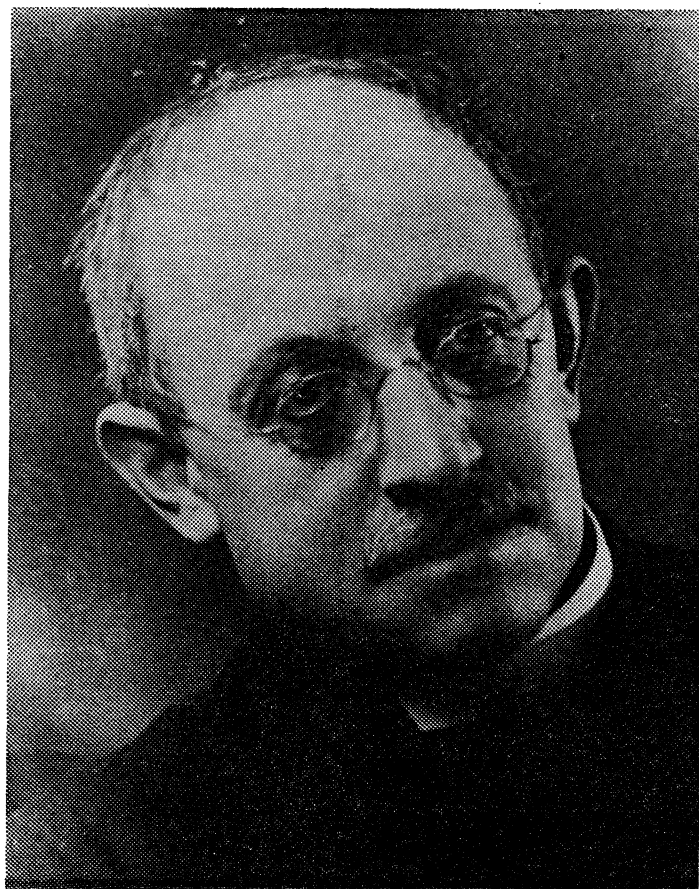
At the Royal University of Ireland he read Medical Science and Political Economy and gained his Bachelor's degree in 1887. The following year he was granted a Master of Arts degree with honours in Mental and Moral Science. He studied at the Divinity School of Trinity College, Dublin and in 1891 took a Divinity Testimonium.

He was ordained deacon in 1890 and served his only two curacies in the Dublin parishes of St Thomas's (1890 and 1891) and - on his admission to the priesthood - St Catherine's (1891 to 1894). It was during the latter period that, in 1892, he married Barbara Charlotte Denroche, a graduate in Modern Languages and understood to have been the first woman in Ireland to be granted a BA. As may be seen on page 28 of Pulvertaft Papers Vol. 1, they had three children - Grace Elizabeth, Robert James Valentine and Thomas Charles Bryan.

In 1894, because of poor health, he was appointed Chaplain of Seville and, although he stayed there only a year, it was this appointment which initiated his long connection with the Spanish and Portuguese Church Aid Society (described in one of his obituaries as existing "to keep the lamp of the Reformation alight in those strongholds of Popery"). For four years from 1895 he acted as secretary of the society in Ireland and in 1899 he moved to London and became General Secretary; a post which he held until 1918. During these appointments he made frequent visits to the Iberian Peninsula where his encyclopaedic knowledge and mastery of the language endeared him to the local church leaders by whom he was affectionately known as "Don Thomas".

In 1918 he was appointed vicar of St Paul-at-Kilburn and it was there that he spent the last thirteen years of his life, ministering to a parish which had special problems and difficulties. He died at St Thomas's Hospital, London on 8 April 1931 and was buried at Hampstead Cemetery.

There were many obituaries to him in both the national and ecclesiastical press, praising his capabilities as an evangelist and as a religious journalist. For over thirty years he was the London Correspondent of the "Church of Ireland Gazette", his weekly letter being recognised as one of the best features of the journal and widely appreciated for its acute analysis of (and outspoken comments on) the ecclesiastical position in London. He was the London Correspondent of "The Chronical" of New York and a regular contributor to the "Church of England Newspaper", the "Church Gazette", "Evangelical Christendom" and the evangelical quarterly - "The Churchman". For the last six years of his life he was closely associated with the editorial conduct of "The Record" and wrote almost all the leading articles and "Notes of the Week".



THOMAS JOHN PULVERTAFT

From 1911 he was a member of the Council of the World's Evangelical Alliance, he served on the Council and Executive Committee of the National Church League, he was intimately associated with the management of the National Club, being chairman of its House Committee, and was Hon. Secretary of St Johns Hall, Highbury for many years.

Clearly he was a man of great scholarship. In an article in the Journal of the Cork Historical & Archaeological Society in 1897, the President, Robert Day, says in passing "...the Rev T.J.Pulvertaft was one of the most brilliant pupils I ever put through my hands.....". He was also a man of the people. In a tribute to him in "The Record", one of his parishoners wrote:

"In his ministry amongst us he was a friend to all - particularly to children. A Sunday school outing without the vicar would have been impossible. He took part in their games and so won their hearts....."

He was also a modest man. In a note to his daughter-in-law, Nancy Pulvertaft, in which he had listed his many school and academic achievements, he ended with a postscript which gives us a glimpse of this:

"I cannot help smiling after reading the enclosed list. In reality I am a London nobody - who works from morning to night and rests content if I do some little thing day by day. Once I was ambitious - now I am content to do my duty".

PULVERTOFTS UNDER ANOTHER NAME?

It has long been assumed that the Pulvertoft family became extinct with the death of Mary Ann Pulvertoft in 1900 as this is the last reference to the name in the General Register Office - see Pulvertaft Papers Vol 1, page 22. A search of the parish register of Aslackby to confirm two 19th century baptisms has prompted a rethink of this assumption, even though the surname itself may have disappeared. The two Aslackby baptisms were found initially in the International Genealogical Index where they are recorded as:

William, son of Robert & Maria Pulvertoft
christened at Aslackby 25 July 1817.

and

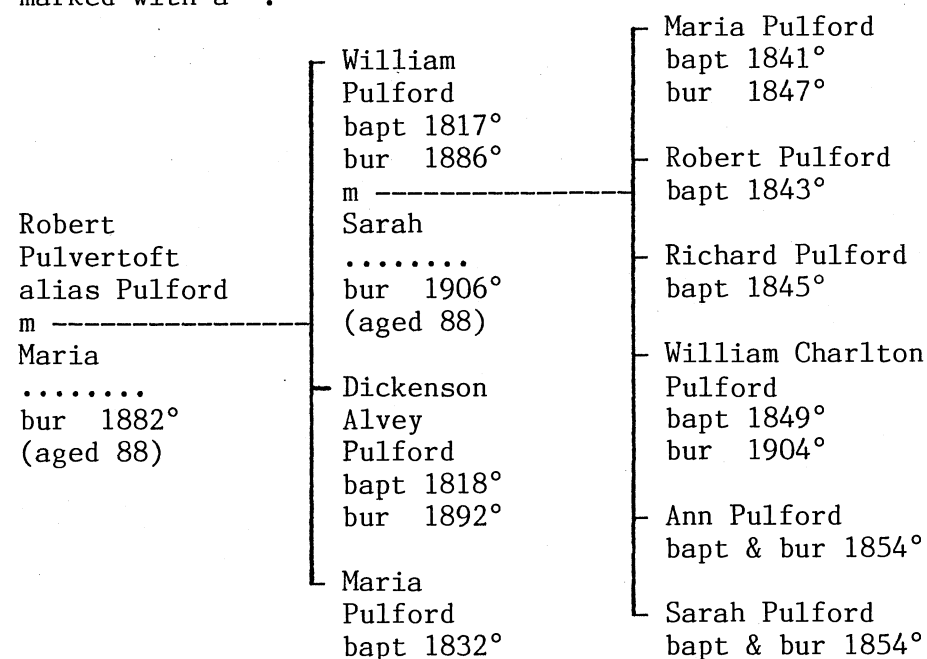
Dickenson Alvey, son of Robert & Maria Pulvertoft
or Pulford, christened at Aslackby 23 Oct 1818.

When the events were checked in the Aslackby Parish Register they were found to have significant differences. At the baptism of William, Robert and Maria are named as "Pulvertoft alias Pullfords" and at that of Dickenson Alvey as "Pulvertoft alias Pulford". The registers were therefore searched for all Pulford and Pullfords entries in the hope that the relationship between the surnames would become clear.

The Register of Baptisms included eleven Pulford entries, one of particular interest being that of "Maria, dau of Robert and Maria Pulford" in 1832. She is assumed to be the sister of William and Dickenson Alvey even though Robert and Maria did not use the Pulvertoft alias at her baptism. The register also includes the baptisms of six children of William and Sarah Pulford between 1841 and 1854 and four which cannot immediately be connected with this group. The Register of Marriages contained no Pulford or Pullfords events, but the marriage in 1823 between Thomas Pulvert and Catherine Thacker was noted,

initially because of the general confusion of the surnames, 'though subsequently found to have been a sensible decision when Thomas and Catherine were seen to have used the Pulford name at the baptism of their son Joseph in 1824. The Register of Burials included fourteen Pulford entries, most of them being easily identified with known members of the Aslackby family.

The pedigree which emerged is shown below, the events which were found in the Aslackby Parish Register being marked with a °.



The assumption that it was William, son of Robert, who - with his wife Sarah - were the parents of the six children baptised at Aslackby was confirmed when their marriage was found in the indexes of the General Register Office. The certificate tells us: "William Pulford of Aslackby, son of Robert Pulford, married Sarah Charlton

of Folkingham on 4 Feb 1840 at Folkingham". Dickenson Pulford witnessed the marriage and it will be noted that the Pulvertoft alias was not used.

Who was Robert Pulford? Was the male line continued through Robert, Richard or William Charlton? More research may show whether Pulford is here a "variant" of Pulvertoft and whether the name has thus almost survived.

NOTES AND QUERIES

What a coincidence that, while I was in the midst of preparing the article on Thomas Pulvertaft, I should receive from Mrs Alison Evans (Nee Pulvertaft) extracts from a book called "Postbag from Paradise", sent all the way from Australia. Actually they claim to have come from even further afield, as the book is a collection of 33 "Automatically Written Letters", recorded in 1949 by Daisy O. Roberts and received from individuals "no longer earth-tied"; that is received from the spirit world.

One of the letters has the title "The Vicar in a Higher Pulpit", it is a treatise on the Love of God and ends with: "My name was Thomas Pulvertaft". Mrs Roberts attributes the letter to the Rev. Thomas Pulvertaft of Kilburn. Surely this must be a new slant on family history.

Marriage

Congratulations to Caroline Pulvertaft, daughter of Michael and Ann Pulvertaft, and John Giardini who were married in Wagga Wagga, Australia on 10 January 1987.

Obituary

It is with deep regret that the death is recorded of Ethel May O'Leary (nee Pulvertaft) on 29 November 1986 in the United States of America.