

PULVERTAFT PAPERS

A Newsletter on the Pulvertofts & Pulvertafts

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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".

