

documented Benedictine presence in the late 12th century (they needed lawyers); others on the first mention of a Benedictine house (1277, when a tax of 2d in the mark was imposed on the southern English monasteries to support a house of studies), on Gloucester College (1283-1539), Canterbury and Durham Colleges, the nunnery at Godstow (early 12th century to 1540), the Cistercians, Uthred of Bolton ('the most outstanding monk-scholar of late medieval England'), and much else up to the Dissolution. The history of more recent times includes a chapter on Justin McCann (Master of St Benet's Hall 1920-47, a fine scholar, who turned away as so 'many scholars did in the middle years of the twentieth century ... from the dangerous areas of theology' into ... something that could be nothing other than safe', in his case the origins of the Rule of St Benedict), and another on Gerard Sitwell (another fine scholar) and James Forbes (an affectionate portrait of another legendary figure, more substantial however than Frideswide). It is a fascinating story, with a reproduction on the cover of a detail from the 15th-century window from Durham College, now in the Fellows' Library of Trinity College, Oxford: St Benedict and a secular scholar praying to the saint.

CATHOLIC CONVERTS: BRITISH AND AMERICAN INTELLECTUALS TURN TO ROME by Patrick Allitt, *Cornell University Press, New York, 1997, 343 pp., £27.50.*

The story here, by a professor of history at Emory University, author of *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985*, is that, from Newman in the 1840s to the 1960s, there was no serious Catholic intellectual endeavour in the English-speaking world which did not originate with 'converts' — men (mostly men) who came as adults to Catholicism, bringing an education and a set of questions and attitudes with them which would not have been open to most people born into Catholic families at the time. There is little that is new about the converts as individuals; the author's intention is, rather, to highlight their collective impact. He points up the extensive contacts among them, in the United States and Britain, and argues that they helped to create a distinctive style of Catholicism. Chapter 11, on the convert historians, deals with Carlton Hayes and Christopher Dawson, neither of whom has had much lasting effect, understandably or not. Chapter 12, on the novelists, Frederick Rolfe, Robert Hugh Benson, Compton Mackenzie, Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, makes one wonder which of them would have happily regarded himself as an 'intellectual'; it is surely also questionable whether they had much in common, or whether they had a deep and lasting impact on Catholicism. Chapter 13, dealing with the pre-Vatican II generation, discusses Thomas Merton, Marshall McLuhan, Avery Dulles, Richard Gilman and Walker Percy. In short, the book may well show how completely converts dominated the intellectual life of English and American Catholicism; it also helps to explain why so many Catholics, after Vatican II, wanted to breathe a different air.