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A dancer made a recusant: dance and evangelization in the Jacobean North East of England

Gašper Jakovac*

Department of English Studies, Durham University, Hallgarth House, 77 Hallgarth Street, Durham, DH1 3AY, UK. Email: gasper.jakovac@durham.ac.uk

In the summer of 1615, a newly discovered Catholic conspiracy prompted William James, bishop of Durham, to vigorously correspond with the archbishop of Canterbury. On 3 August, in the midst of the crisis, the bishop incarcerated a professional dancer, Robert Hindmers (b. 1585). Together with his wife Anne, Robert was associated with the Newcastle-based secular priest William Southerne and involved in Catholic evangelising in the diocese of Durham. This article discusses the biography and career of Robert Hindmers, and speculates about the role of dancing within the Durham Catholic community. It also analyses how the activities of the Hindmers were perceived by the ecclesiastical authorities. The case of Robert Hindmers traverses and links many related issues, such as Counter-Reformation culture, traditional festivity, religious politics, and the interconnectedness of elite and popular cultures. But above all, it expands our understanding of Catholic missionary strategies in post-Reformation England by suggesting that dance instruction might have been used by Catholics to access households and assist the mission.

Keywords: dance, recusancy, evangelization, festivity, north-eastern England

The bishop's letter

On 16 August 1615, Bishop James wrote a letter to the archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot (1562–1633), in which he discussed a rapidly escalating Catholic crisis.[1] At least since mid-July, James' spy, Christopher Newkirk of Gateshead, a surgeon of Polish origin, had been infiltrating a well-organized network of priests

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[1] William James to George Abbot, 16 August 1615, Kew, The National Archives (hereafter TNA) State Papers Domestic, James I (hereafter SPD Jam. I), SP 14/81, ff. 92r–93v.

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and lay Catholics in the north-eastern counties, including Yorkshire, who were apparently devising a new gunpowder plot, an attack on the king and his family ten years after the failed attempt of 5 November 1605.[2] On 16 August, however, Bishop James was yet unaware of the full extent of the conspiracy which his spy had been uncovering. He so far remained uninformed of the three engines allegedly built by Ambrogio Spinola's engineer Alexander Malatesta somewhere in the hills of Cardiganshire, nor of the level of logistical sophistication of the plotters, who, in Newkirk's words, 'haue almost in eu*er*ye Creake, or haven Towne, some Vessils'.[3]

Only a week later, James reported back to the archbishop yet again. This time, amazed by the scale of the unravelling plot, he wondered whether the Privy Council was already aware of its pending danger for the state and had taken the necessary measures to prevent the catastrophe.[4] Indeed, the most striking feature of the available state papers surrounding the correspondence is the absence of any immediate interest in James' reports. George Abbot shrewdly communicated Newkirk's intelligence to the secretary of state Ralph Winwood on 17 August, but on the whole, the Council appears not to have shared William James' anxieties.[5] The impression we get from the available documents, and the affair in general, seems to confirm James' suspicions that the London government had already been aware of the scheme from other sources. In any case, the conspirators experienced setbacks and the attack ultimately never took place.[6]

Although national concerns already feature prominently in Bishop James' deliberations from 16 August – he comments on the rumours of a Catholic invasion and wonders what Winter and Digby, two Worcestershire men, are doing in the northern parts – he seemed to be, for the time being, more alarmed by the local repercussions of the unprecedented 'flocking*e*s of Priest*e*s […] in Newcastle, a Haven, & walled Towne, wherein there was w*i*thin thes fewe yeares not one Recusant'.[7] James' formulations seem hyperbolic, contrived to persuade the head of the Church of England that the situation in the

[2] The papers relating to the plot are known to scholars, see Ann M. C. Forster, 'Ven. William Southerne: Another Tyneside Martyr', *Recusant History (hereafter RH)* 4 (1957–1958): 199–216. The article was later republished with slight alterations in *Northern Catholic History* (hereafter *NCH*) 26 (1987): 6–16.

[3] Newkirk to James, 20 August 1615, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/81, f. 115v. Manuscript sources are quoted in their original spelling. For the sake of clarity, superfluous punctuation is sometimes omitted, abbreviations expanded in italics, and superior letters and superscriptions lowered to the line.

[4] James to Abbot, 23 August 1615, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/81, f. 113r.

[5] Abbot to Winwood, 17 August 1615, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/81, ff. 96r–97v.

[6] See Newkirk's last report from 17 September 1615, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/81, ff. 167r–69v, and excerpts from his memorials dating between 17 September and 22 October: TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/88, ff. 217r–18r.

[7] James to Abbot, 16 August 1615, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/81, f. 92r.

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North is dire, that the king 'must be pleased (if he will regarde his owne safetye, and the safetie of his kingdomes) to alter this lenitye towardes the Priestes, who (whatsoeuer they, or their fauourers enforme his Maiestie) thirst after nothing but bloode'.[8] However visceral James' rhetoric may sound, his language remains precise. He is careful not to dissociate the rise of recusancy from the missionary activity of the seminarists, nor to mislabel Catholics in general for recusants.

Since 1583, when Queen Elizabeth I granted the ninety-nine-year Grand Lease of the immensely profitable coal mines in Gateshead and Whickham to then mayor Henry Anderson and his associate, alderman William Selby, Newcastle-upon-Tyne's civic institutions had been overwhelmingly in the hands of the influential coal-merchant families, which were, after 1600, newly incorporated as the Company of Hostmen.[9] Many of these families, such as the Selbys, Chapmans, Jenisons, Tempests, Riddells, and Hodgsons, had strong Catholic leanings and secretly supported the Catholic community, although, due to local political and social legacies, they tended to conform, cooperate with authorities, and remain staunchly loyal.[10] William James, who had been working in the diocese since 1596 (first as dean, and then, from 1606, as bishop), was more than aware of the supposed religious backwardness of the North East.[11] He knew how widespread church-papistry was in the diocese and that this semi-conforming Catholicism and specific local attitudes towards state policies dangerously thwarted any efforts by the diocesan authorities to bring Newcastle to genuine conformity.[12]

[8] *Ibid.*, f. 92r.

[9] On Newcastle Hostmen and their coal-trade monopoly, see John Hatcher, *The History of the British Coal Industry, Vol 1. Before 1700: Towards the Age of Coal* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 509–25; Robert Welford, *History of Newcastle and Gateshead*, 3 vols. (London: Scott, 1884–7), 2:53–55, 136–43; F. W. Dendy, *Extracts from the Records of the Company of Hostmen of Newcastle-upon-Tyne*, Publications of the Surtees Society, vol. 105 (Durham: Andrews, 1901), xxix–xxxiii; Simon Healy, 'The Tyneside Lobby on the Thames: Politics and Economic Issues, c. 1580–1630', in Diana Newton and A. J. Pollard, eds. *Newcastle and Gateshead Before 1700* (Chichester: Phillimore, 2009), 219–40.

[10] Rosamund Oates, 'Catholicism, Conformity and the Community in the Elizabethan Diocese of Durham', *Northern History* (hereafter *NH*) 43/1 (2006): 53–76 at 67–76; Eric Clavering, 'Catholics and the Rise of the Durham Coal Trade', *NCH* 16 (1982): 16–32; Mervyn James, *Family, Lineage, and Civil Society: A Study of Society, Politics, and Mentality in the Durham Region, 1500–1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 70, 138–40; see also the report of Zeth Beridge alias William Morton the vicar of St. Nicholas' in Newcastle and archdeacon of Durham, to Winwood on religious inclinations of Newcastle aldermen from 24 September 1616: TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/88, f. 149r–v.

[11] See his first letter to Robert Cecil from 16 January 1597: TNA, State Papers Domestic, Elizabeth I (hereafter SPD Eliz. I), SP 12/262, f. 18r–v. Describing the North as uncivil and Catholic was a commonplace in the early modern period; for a succinct discussion of the issue see Diana Newton, *North-East England, 1569–1625: Governance, Culture and Identity* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), 105–25.

[12] Oates, 'Catholicism, Conformity and the Community', 71–3; cf. James to Cecil, 9 December 1605, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/17, f. 32v; A list of recusants in Durham, 1608, Lambeth Palace Library (hereafter LP), Thomas Murray Papers (hereafter TMP), MS 663, f. 50r–v.

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After James I's accession, the enthusiastic support for the Stuart dynasty among the northern Catholic gentry of the Neville circle complicated matters even further. Particularly in the North, '[p]apistry was regarded as a threat precisely because of its malleability, its capacity to adapt and its readiness to integrate'.[13] Therefore, notwithstanding the bishop Toby Matthew's recusancy report from January 1596, which lists only four recusants in the city parishes, Newcastle had by then already developed into an auspicious Catholic centre.[14] Thereafter, recusancy grew.[15]

Yet micro-variations in its figures during the eleven years of William James' incumbency in the diocese of Durham are important for our subsequent discussion. In the palatinate of Durham alone, which at the time included substantial lands in Northumberland, the number of convicted recusants decreased from around 450 individuals in 1608 to merely 289 in 1613.[16] However, recusancy gained ground again in the following years. Around 1615, there were 432 convicted recusants in Palatinate alone.[17] Bishop James clearly and openly articulated these developments in June 1616 in a letter to Ralph Winwood. Speaking with the whole diocese of Durham in mind, James claimed that ten years earlier, at the start of his episcopacy, the number of recusants was around 700.[18] This number had been after '4 or 5 yeares by the Eccl*esi*a*sti*call Com*m*ission, & other Meanes, brought to 400', but 'lately encreased againe to the number of 500 & odd'.[19] The latest number James is referring to must be from 1613, since it had been

[13] Michael Questier, 'The Politics of Religious Conformity and the Accession of James I', *Historical Research (hereafter HR)* 71/174 (1998): 14–30 at 30.

[14] Clare Talbot, ed. *Miscellanea: Recusant records*, Publications of the Catholic Record Society, vol. 53 (London: Catholic Record Society, 1961), 60. Cf. John A. Hilton, 'Catholicism in Elizabethan Northumberland', *NH* 13/1 (1977): 44–58 at 53. This is not to deny that a strong residual Puritan tradition, stretching back to John Knox's ministry, was equally if not more prevalent in the city; see Roger Howell, *Newcastle upon Tyne and the Puritan Revolution: A Study of the Civil War in North England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), 63–119; Christine M. Newman, 'The Reformation Era in Newcastle, 1530–1662', in *Newcastle and Gateshead Before 1700*, 189–218.

[15] James, *Family, Lineage, and Civil Society*, 142–3; John A. Hilton, 'Catholicism in Jacobean Durham', *RH* 14 (1977): 78–85.

[16] See the extant recusant report for county Durham in LP, TMP, MS 663, f. 50r–v and a list of recusants in the diocese of Durham from 4 November 1613 appended to William James' letter to the Privy Council regarding the recent musters in the county, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/75, ff. 3v–4r.

[17] A list of recusants indicted in the county of Durham, c. 1615, LP, Miscellaneous Papers (hereafter Misc.), MS 930/123, 1 f.; and Durham quarter session indictments of 19 April 1615, in C. M. Fraser, ed. *Durham Quarter Sessions Rolls, 1471-1625*, Publications of the Surtees Society, vol. 199 (Durham: Surtees Society, 1991), 245–9. The number suggested by MS 930/123 is in contradiction with the number in the 1615 Quarter sessions. The former reports 432 recusants, indicating that the levels of recusancy had almost returned to those of 1608, while the latter amount to c. 330 individuals. The reason for this discrepancy may be due to the missing Michaelmas and Epiphany Quarter sessions records for 1615. Cf. Hilton, 'Catholicism in Jacobean Durham', 81; James, *Family, Lineage, and Civil Society*, 142–3.

[18] James to Winwood, 17 June 1616, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/80, f. 184r.

[19] *Ibid.*

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communicated to the king at the last parliament, in spring 1614.[20] However, a new 'p*ar*ticular & true Certificate of all the Recusant*es* w*i*thin this Diocese' was soon to be prepared, following the bishop's three-week visitation of the diocese, so James was not yet sure whether the figure had increased or diminished.

The numbers had in fact increased. In March 1616, Henry Anderson, at the time sheriff of Northumberland, already reported to the Council that there were 507 popish recusants and 432 non-communicants in Northumberland alone.[21] It is highly probable that the Lambeth Palace Library recusancy report provisionally dated to c. 1615 is actually based on James' 1616 diocesan visitation mentioned in his letter to Winwood. If that is the case, then recusancy numbers in the diocese of Durham had grown drastically, from 519 convicted recusants in 1613 to almost 1,000 in 1616.

Thriving evangelization and revived Catholic confidence in Durham and the English Middle Shires can generally be ascribed to the increased influence of the pro-Catholic Howards after the death of George Home, Earl of Dunbar, the chief border commissioner, in January 1611, and Robert Cecil, Dunbar's vigorous supporter, in May 1612.[22] The revival of factionalism in the region and increasing religious tensions may have contributed to the concurrent growth of recusancy in Newcastle.[23] By the mid-1610s, several recusant strongholds in the Tyneside region provided indispensable support for seminary priests working in Newcastle. The most significant were the residences of Sir Robert Hodgson at Hebburn and Dorothy Lawson, first at Heaton and sometime after 1613 at Saint Anthony's, on the north bank of the river Tyne.[24] Although both houses, often working in tandem, were notorious for harbouring priests and recusants, the authorities were unable to arrest the ringleaders and suppress their subversive enterprise because they were tolerated by the Newcastle elite.[25]

[20] *Ibid.*

[21] Henry Anderson to the Privy Council, 28 March 1616, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/86, f. 197r, published in George Ornsby, ed. *Selections from the Household Books of the Lord William Howard of Naworth Castle*, Publications of the Surtees Society, vol. 68 (Durham, 1878), 432.

[22] Sheldon J. Watts and Susan J. Watts, *From Border to Middle Shire: Northumberland 1586–1625* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1975), 179–91.

[23] Cf. Clavering, 'Catholics and the Rise', 18; Newton, *North-East England*, 126–35.

[24] Information of Christopher Newkirk, 2 August 1615, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/81, fol. 85r; James, *Family, Lineage, and Civil Society*, 138–9; William Palmes, *Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson of St. Anthony's near Newcastle*, ed. G. B. Richardson (London, 1885).

[25] In 1626, Bishop Neile was still struggling to break this Tyneside connection. Neile to Privy Council, 20 June 1626, TNA, State Papers Domestic, Charles I, SP 16/30, ff. 62r–63v. In November 1625, the Protestant mayor of Newcastle, Thomas Liddell, defended his Catholic neighbours by dismissing Neile's claims. Welford, *History of Newcastle and Gateshead*, 3:264–65.

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The rise of nonconformity and increased activity of priests indicate that the Catholic population throughout the diocese felt confident enough to step into recusancy. It is during this period that we first hear of Robert and Anne Hindmers. In August 1615, in order to illustrate to the archbishop of Canterbury the graveness of recent developments, Bishop James intriguingly chose to expand on an unusual account of persecution:

> Since that time, my Intelligencer hath bene w*i*th me, & deliuered to me this, w*hi*ch I send your Gr*ace* herein enclosed wherein I use his owne wordes. He maketh mention of a dauncer, a poore mans sonne, borne in this Citie, yet proude, & insolent, and lately made a Recusant, and by his daunceing crept into manie houses, and his wife a younge woman (being both Recusants) haue done much harme and might haue done more. At his first com*m*ing before vs, I vsed him (knowinge his frendes to be verie poore, & needie, & his mother blinde) in the best sorte I coulde, and he refuseing all conference; as also to take the oathe of Allegian*n*ce; wee com*m*itted him to Prison the third of this instant, where he hath remained, & yet doth. Vpon Considerac*i*on of the enformac*i*on herein enclosed, I willed the Gaoler, to offer him from me, that if he would be content to be instructed by anie learned man, that he might haue his lib*er*tie, and time to thinke of the oathe of Allegian*n*ce; But he grewe so resolute as that he woulde accept of neither, whereby your Gr*ace* maie see what hopes, & encouragement they haue.[26]

The letter, which is of considerable importance for dance history, not least because the dancer's wife had clearly travelled and quite possibly danced alongside her husband, has not yet been considered by performance experts.[27] The letter is not explicitly acknowledging the dancing abilities of Hindmers' wife, but taking into account similar records of itinerant performers from the period, in which professional husbands were accompanied by their lay wives, who nevertheless contribute to the performance in some capacity, allows us to reasonably speculate about the active involvement of the dancer's wife.[28] Moreover, although the description offers scant details of the couple's itinerant venture, their activities, including dance, seem to be linked in the bishop's mind to confessional issues and Catholic evangelization.

James uses the dancer's case to articulate the current concerns within the diocese and convey his own political appeal. The bishop's

[26] James to Abbot, 16 August 1615, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/81, f. 92r.

[27] The itinerant recusant dancer has only received a short remark by J. A. Hilton, who mentions the episode to illustrate glimpses of cultural life among Durham Catholics, in 'Catholicism in Jacobean Durham', 82.

[28] On the ambiguity of the records of performance, particularly those involving women, see Sara Mueller, 'Touring, Women, and the English Professional Stage', *Early Theatre* 11/1 (2008): 53–76. Although evidence is scarce, scholars have been increasingly more interested in women's performance in England before 1660, see Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin, eds. *Women Players in England, 1500–1660: Beyond All-Male Stage* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2005); M. A. Katritzky, *Women, Medicine, and Theatre, 1500–1750: Literary Mountbanks and Performing Quacks* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007).

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narrative challenges not only the expected social and economic *modus vivendi* of the post-Reformation Catholic community, but, more importantly, defies the government strategies used to enforce religious conformity: pecuniary punishments for church non-attendance do not necessarily prevent those without land or goods from recusancy. The dancer thus becomes a symptom of a wider disease. For James, he encapsulates the new "papist" zeal made fresh by numerous illegal priests, a zeal which, quite unlike what leaders of the national Church would expect, is receiving its impetus from the lower orders of society. However, the tenor of the exemplum is not only in illustrating the importance of seminarists' ministry, which can successfully exhort even poor dancers with blind mothers to stubbornly keep their apostasy, but also that "popish seducers" can assume the most unusual shapes: that of itinerant dancers.

Robert and Anne Hindmers

Legally speaking, the dancer was incarcerated for his recusancy and, more importantly, for refusing to take the controversial oath of allegiance.[29] The oath was evidently tendered to him by the bishop and not the two justices, since William James is quite precise in describing his personal involvement in the legal process. More details on the case survive in the only extant Jacobean court book of the Durham High Commission, which covers the period from 1614 until 1617.[30] Often written in a small, barely legible secretary hand and mostly in English, the *ex officio* correction cases are interspersed between long lists of recusants, the majority being gentry, for whom attachments, i.e. arrest warrants, have been issued by the commission. The sheriffs' success in apprehending recusants was poor and on each subsequent session of the court, which usually occurred once every month, the warrants for the great majority of the accused were reissued.

In his letter to the archbishop, James claims that he incarcerated the dancer on 'the third of this instant', i.e. 3 August 1615. The commission was indeed in session on that day, during which the sheriff of Newcastle, John Cook, 'c*er*tyfied that none of the p*er*sons named in the said attachm*en*t could be found w*i*thin his baliwick excepte Rob*er*t Hindm*er*s & Anne his wife'.[31] There is no mention of Robert's or

[29] On the controversies surrounding the oath see Michael Questier, 'Loyalty, Religion and State Power in Early Modern England: English Romanism and the Jacobean Oath of Allegiance', *The Historical Journal* 40/2 (1997): 311–29; Johann P. Sommerville, 'Papalist Political Thought and the Controversy Over the Jacobean Oath of Allegiance' in Ethan Shagan, ed. *Catholics and the "Protestant Nation"* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 162–84; Stefania Tutino, *Law and Conscience: Catholicism in Early–Modern England, 1570–1625* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), 132–93.

[30] The High Commission court, 1614–7, Durham Cathedral Library (hereafter DCL), DCD/D/SJB/7.

[31] The High Commission court, 1614–7, DCL, DCD/D/SJB/7, f. 27v.

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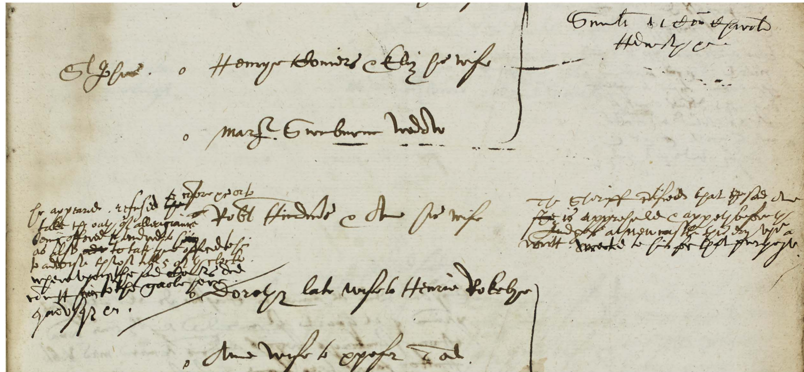

Figure 1. Durham High Commission court book, August 1615. Details on the incarceration of Robert and Anne Hindmers. Durham Cathedral Library, Durham, DCD/D/SJB/7, fo. 28r. By kind permission of the Chapter of Durham Cathedral.

Anne's occupation, but the details found in the proceedings on the next folio match perfectly with the bishop's narrative in the letter (fig. 1). '[H]e appeared', the small writing next to Robert's name affirms, and 'refused to co*n*form &c or to take the oath of alleagiance being offered to tend*e*red to him as also to tak tyme off*ere*d to him to advise th*er*eof till 5 of the clock'.[32] Since Robert refused to take the oath or be advised on it in a private conference, 'the said Com*missione*rs did com*m*itt him to the gaole'.[33] Anne did not appear at the Durham session together with her husband. She was instead, the sheriff reported, 'appreh*end*ed & app*ear*eth before the Judges at Newcastle this day'.[34]

Robert and Anne Hindmers were included in the commission's recusant lists since May 1615; they were seized less than three months after the first warrant for their arrest had been written, which is unusually fast considering the generally poor rate of the sheriffs' success. What happened afterwards remains a mystery. The Durham quarter sessions records are missing for the period between July 1615 and April 1616. It is very likely that during those Michaelmas or Epiphany sessions Hindmers appeared before the court again, swore the oath, and was subsequently released as the later sources seem to suggest.

What more can we learn about Hindmers' life, dancing, and his role within the Catholic community? Following the bishop's assertion that he was a poor man's son, born in Durham, his family background can be pursued in parish registers. Robert, son of Richard Hindmers, was baptized on 24 January 1585 at St. Mary-le-Bow, North Bailey,

32 *Ibid.*, f. 28r.
33 *Ibid.* Such conferences with nonconformists were common particularly in High Commission cases, see Michael Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580–1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 173.
34 The High Commission court, DCL, DCD/D/SJB/7, f. 28r.

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Durham.[35] His father had married Jane less than three months before, on 4 October 1584 at St. Nicholas.[36] Sometime before 1589, when the death of Richard's and Jane's infant son (due to plague) is recorded, the family moved to or near Newcastle, to the parish of St. John the Baptist; perhaps in search of a better life in a city with a booming coal industry.[37] Tragedy soon struck the family again: on 11 April 1591 they had to bury Richard himself at St. John's. For a family of insufficient means the death of a father was not only an emotional but also an economic blow; all the more so, if we consider Bishop James' claim that Jane eventually turned blind. Nothing else is known for certain about Robert Hindmers' youth. By May 1615, Robert and Anne's religious non-conformity and vagrant lifestyle had already been noticed by church officials and on 23 May the first known warrant was issued for their arrest. The date of their marriage remains unknown. It is possible that the couple got married clandestinely, the Catholic rite perhaps conducted by William Southerne, a Newcastle-based missionary, who had returned to England in 1605, after finishing his studies at the Jesuit College in Polish-Lithuanian Vilnius and the English colleges at Douai and Valladolid.[38] In any case, Southerne was close to Robert Hindmers.

Christopher Newkirk's memorials, copies of which were regularly attached to James' correspondence with George Abbot, give substantial details of the Hindmers' social milieu. On the evening of 7 August 1615 the priest William Southerne met with Newkirk at his house in Gateshead. The spy had recently returned from Durham and received the priest at 9 o'clock, offering him wine, pears, walnuts, and east country gingerbread, which sufficiently fuelled their conversation.[39] Intriguingly, the most pressing matter that evening was not the rumours of a foreign invasion, or logistics of the mission, but the dancer himself, imprisoned four days before the Gateshead meeting. Southerne was keen to learn about any further developments:

> Then he asked me, if I had not heard of the prisoner, a dauncer (taken by the sheriffe and brought to Durham to take his oathe and confess the Supremacye of his Ma*ies*tie, w*hi*ch he denyed). I told him no. And further he said that the said dauncer had his maintenance from the Catholick*e*s.[40]

[35] St. Mary-le-Bow parish register, Durham County Record Office (hereafter DRO), M42/313.
[36] St. Nicholas parish register, DRO, M42/325.
[37] At the time, Newcastle's population was growing due to the expanding coal trade. The relocation of the Hindmers family agrees with general migration patterns and would not have been uncommon; see Andy Burn, 'Work before Play: The Occupational Structure of Newcastle upon Tyne, 1600-1710', in Adrian Green and Barbara Crosbie, eds. *The Economy and Culture of North East England, c. 1500–1800* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2018), 115–35.
[38] Forster, 'Ven. William Southerne', 203–05.
[39] See Memorials of Newkirk, 7 August 1615, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/81, f. 94r–v for all the details of that particular evening.
[40] Memorials of Newkirk, 7 August 1615, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/81, f. 94r.

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It is likely that the allowance Robert received from the Catholics was given to him in exchange for his itinerant activities, but we cannot be certain. Unfortunately, the priest also remains silent about who exactly supported him, although it is fair to assume that the dancer's *viaticum* was administered to him through the hospitality of Catholic households and the funds raised by priests and the faithful.

This last speculation is substantiated on the subsequent page of Newkirk's report. Although the spy's narrative is emotionally detached and focused on factual details, it nevertheless conveys Southerne's concern for Hindmers' fortunes. He must have known the dancer very well and evidently trusted him. He tells Newkirk that 'the dauncer now in prison, hath been a good member vnto vs, but he shall not want, for wee priest*e*s gather for him'.[41] Southerne acknowledges Hindmers' worth for the community and assures Newkirk that the dancer will not suffer deprivation in prison, but will be relieved by the funds collected on his behalf. Whether this collection is in some way related to the maintenance Hindmers had received before his imprisonment is unclear, but probable.

Prompted by the disagreeable state of the dancer, Newkirk suddenly feigns fear of similar imprisonment, to which Southerne offers a brisk and disparaging response:

> Then I saide, how shall I doe, I am like to incurre such daunger. ffye fye, neu*er* take such care said he, yow are none of them that convert others, & yow are a straunger & nothing to loose but yo*u*r goods, and if the ban*n*ishe yow, yow shall haue o*ur* l*ett*res of p*re*ferm*en*t. If yow be imprisoned, yow shalbe relieued.[42]

Although the priest assures the spy that he too will receive support from the community if the worst happens, Southerne nevertheless seems to be implying a distinction between Newkirk and Hindmers, who is, unlike the spy, a man ready to 'convert others'.[43] However, the syntax of the passage is imprecise and Southerne may be referring to himself rather than the dancer. In any case, true conversion to Catholicism could only have been obtained through a sacramental confession conducted by a priest, although Hindmers could have somehow participated in greasing the wheels of conversion, possibly in tandem with Southerne himself, who was, after his martyrdom in 1618, particularly credited for his apostolate among the Tyneside poor.[44]

The assistance offered to missionaries by lay commoners, which stretched from harbouring and escorting priests to acting as messengers, distributing Catholic books, and actively "seducing" their neighbours

[41] *Ibid.*
[42] Memorials of Newkirk, 7 August 1615, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/81, f. 94v.
[43] *Ibid.*
[44] Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion*, 174–75; Forster, 'Ven. William Southerne', 208–10.

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to Catholicism, was not uncommon in post-Reformation England.[45] John Parkinson of Knayton, North Yorkshire, was in 1595 'thought to be a conveyor of Seminaries from place to place', while Lyonell Forster, a 'malicious recusant' and a yeoman of Rothbury in Northumberland, often travelled further north to 'Balmebroughshire and Glendiall seeking to seduce others'.[46] George Swalwell of Wolviston, yeoman, was in 1634 accused by Durham High Commission 'to have seduced some of his Majestie's good subjects from their allegiance and obedience to his highness, and for teaching schollars without a licence, he being a recusant papist'.[47]

As travelling Catholic commoners, the Hindmers were probably engaged in similar activities. We know that the couple worked for the seminary priests, were financially supported by the mission, and that their enterprise was, according to the bishop, harmful. What is particularly significant about the couple and makes their case unique is that they were known to practice dance; at least Robert was, for he is explicitly identified as a dancer by both Bishop James and William Southerne. Although the evidence about the exact role of dancing in the Hindmers' itinerant venture is unclear, Robert's alleged occupation should not be dismissed as a mere pretence.

In 1592, pursuivants John Worsley and William Newell reported that in visiting Mrs. Marchant's house in Gloucestershire, they found 'a very bad man, and by Report one that doth great [a word missing] in the contries for vnder the cowller of teching the childer mvssiket, it is thought that he doth teche them worse matters, for he is a notable Recwesant'.[48] Although Worsley and Newall are explicit in claiming that imparting musical skills to children was only a pretext, probably for Catholic catechizing, it would be wrong to assume an absolute disjunction between the teacher's cover and his actual activities. In other words, teaching 'worse matters' most likely included practicing music.

[45] See Marie B. Rowlands, 'Hidden People: Catholic Commoners, 1558–1625', in Marie B. Rowlands, ed. *Catholics of Parish and Town, 1558–1778*, Publications of the Catholic Record Society, Monograph Series, vol. 5 (London: Catholic Record Society, 1999), 10–35 at 15–19, 26–30.

[46] Talbot, *Miscellanea*, 45, 57.

[47] W. H. D. Longstaffe, ed. *The Acts of the High Commission Court within the Diocese of Durham*, Publications of the Surtees Society, vol. 34 (Durham: Andrews, 1858), 77–78.

[48] TNA, SPD Eliz. I., SP 12/151, f. 44v. I am greatly indebted to one of the anonymous reviewers, who brought to my attention the sources relating to musician John Jacob. The reviewer also suggested to me that in spite of being bound in a volume of papers for 1581, the report by Worsley and Newell actually dates from 1592–93. It mentions antiquarian Thomas Habington as being held in prison at Worcester: TNA, SP 12/151, f. 44r. Habington was kept in the Tower from 1586 until 1592 and was only for a brief period, before his final release in 1593, confined at Worcester. The revised date fits well with the date of Jacob's committal to the Clink in January 1593. See Anthony G. Petti, ed. *Recusant Documents from the Ellesmere Manuscripts*, Publications of the Catholic Record Society, vol. 60 (London: Catholic Record Society, 1968), 60.

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Worsley and Newell claim that this Gloucestershire teacher had been previously arrested at Francis Yate's house in Lyford, 'when Camppan [Campion] was taken'.[49] Amongst those arrested with Edmund Campion was indeed a musician. On 14 August 1581, the privy councillors sent a letter to the vice-chancellor and the heads of colleges of the University of Oxford, demanding that they question three masters of arts and search the houses for suspected Catholics, for they were worried

> that most of the Seminarie priestes w*hi*ch at this p*re*sent disturbe this Churche haue ben heretofore Schollers of that vniu*er*sitie & that they & likewise one Jacob a Musitian taken in Campions co*m*panie haue ben tolerated there manie yeres w*i*th out goinge to the Churche and receavinge of the Sacrament*es*.[50]

Described as a "musician" rather than a "minstrel" and being active at Oxford, as the letter seems to imply, Jacob was almost certainly a formally trained occupational musician; most probably he was a student and a chorister at New College, Oxford, in the mid-1560s.[51] On 16 August 1581, John Jacob was committed to the Marshalsea, where he remained at least until 8 April 1584.[52] On 24 August 1582, he was found at Mass in Mr Parpoynt's chamber in the same prison.[53] Being close to Campion, Jacob was also a friend of John Gerard, who visited him after his transfer to Bridewell prison.[54] Although Gerard provides a gruesome description of the musician, who was 'wasted to the skeleton', Jacob did not die in prison, as Caraman assumed.[55] He was released and at liberty for at least five years before he was once again imprisoned, this time in the Clink, on 21 January 1593, after being arrested in Mrs Machant's house in Gloucestershire by Worsley and Newell.[56] On 17 April 1593, Jacob was examined and described as

[49] TNA, SP 12/151, f. 44v.

[50] TNA, Acts of the Privy Council of England, PC 2/13, f. 489r; cf. Richard Simpson, *Edmund Campion: a Biography* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1867), 300.

[51] See David Mills' discussion of the nomenclature in Elizabeth Baldwin and David Mills, *Paying the Piper: Music in Pre-1642 Cheshire* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University, 2002), 14–24; cf. Timothy J. McGee, 'The Fall of the Noble Minstrel: The Sixteenth-Century Minstrel in a Musical Context', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 7 (1995): 98–120; for the employment prospects of early modern musicians, see Christopher Marsh, *Music and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 107–72. For New College, Oxford, see Joseph Foster, ed. *Alumni Oxonienses: The Members of the University of Oxford, 1500–1714*, vol. 2 (London: Parker, 1891), 797; cf. Andrew Clark, ed. *Register of the University of Oxford*, vol. 2, part 2 (Oxford: Oxford Historical Society, 1887), 22. At the time, Jacob would have been in his twenties; in 1593, he was around 55 years old. Petti, *Recusant Documents*, 60.

[52] *Miscellanea II*, Publications of the Catholic Record Society, vol. 2. (London: Catholic Record Society, 1906), 233, 235.

[53] *Miscellanea II*, 221.

[54] Philip Caraman, ed. *John Gerard: the Autobiography of an Elizabethan* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 5–6.

[55] *Ibid.*, 6, 271.

[56] Petti, *Recusant Documents*, 60, 83; the identification of John Jacob from the Clink with Jacob arrested in Lyford in 1581 was first made by Petti in notes to this examination: *Recusant Documents*, 81–82.

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of Avill (near Dunster) in Somerset.[57] He sometimes owned a house in Oxfordshire, but the last five years he spent in Abingdon, London, the Stonor household near Henley, and at Mrs. Mercer's.[58] Jacob was confident in his Catholicism; he declined a conference with a minister and refused to come to church. However, the more intriguing details are given in the summary of the examination, where, echoing the language of Worsley and Newell, the commission described Jacob as 'a syngyng man' and 'a goar from one recusante's houwse to another undar the collar to teche mewseke'.[59]

Although Jacob seems to have been an Oxford-trained chorister, his teaching repertoire would probably not have been limited to sacred music. Popular music too played an important part in Catholic culture and evangelization. Emilie Murphy has demonstrated that English seminarians followed Jesuit missionary practices by 'learning the tunes of the most popular songs in order to utilise them and disseminate Catholic adaptations to their melodies'.[60] For example, a tune, now lost, of the secular ballad 'Dainty come thou to me' was used to accompany a new sacred text of the ballad 'Jesus come thou to me'.[61] Although we cannot be certain whether Jacob was indeed catechizing children by using such "converted" songs, it remains a real possibility, especially because he was associated with the Jesuit mission.

Conversely, neither the Hindmers' case nor any other known example explicitly demonstrates that practicing dance by itself could have been an instrument for religious instruction. Although in certain contexts, dance could have been quite strongly associated with pre-Reformation culture, the links between dance and Catholic evangelization remain tenuous. The key evidence, which may suggest that the Hindmers did not use dancing merely as an outward appearance, is the fact that like John Jacob, Robert too was, as will be demonstrated, a professional: teaching fashionable dance was probably his main source of income. Undoubtedly, Robert's occupation conveniently justified the couple's peregrinations before the authorities; but the mission's employment of a dancing master may also indicate the cultural significance of dance among Catholics in the North East.

A dancing master to the Howards

At present, only one of Robert Hindmers' patrons can be identified: Lord William Howard of Naworth Castle near Brampton in

[57] Petti, *Recusant Documents*, 60.
[58] *Ibid.*, 61.
[59] *Ibid.*, 82.
[60] Emilie K. M. Murphy, 'Music and Catholic Culture in Post-Reformation Lancashire: Piety, Protest, and Conversion', *British Catholic History* 32/4 (2015): 492–525 at 522.
[61] Murphy, 'Music and Catholic Culture in Post-Reformation Lancashire', 523.

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Cumberland. Lord Howard was an avowed Catholic, a notable antiquarian, and the most powerful and influential landowner in the English borderlands.[62] Being a Catholic, William Howard was barred from holding a public office. But he nevertheless exerted considerable authority in the borderlands, particularly after 1614, when his conforming nephew Theophilus Howard de Walden became a commissioner and a co-lord lieutenant of the English Middle Shires.[63] Because he was a staunch loyalist and supporter of the oath of allegiance, he enjoyed the patronage of both James I and Charles I, who protected him from being prosecuted for recusancy.[64] Being a beneficiary of the sovereigns' favour, Howard remained unimpeded in exercising his influence and in supporting individual Catholics in need, in spite of sporadic vicious attacks by northern Protestant officials.[65]

Lord William Howard's household accounts, which cover (albeit with considerable gaps) a period from 1612 until his death in 1640, demonstrate his family's taste for dancing. Disbursements to Lady Elizabeth Dacre, Lord William's wife, often include purchases of various necessities for their children and grandchildren, from luxurious clothing to toiletries and gambling money. On 1 August 1612 three pairs of 'red dancing pumpes for the children' were acquired for four shillings.[66] The flamboyant pumps were probably purchased for William and Elizabeth's youngest daughter Mary and/ or their oldest grandsons, William, son of Sir Philip Howard, and Thomas, son of Sir Henry Bedingfield, a Norfolk Catholic, and Elizabeth Howard.[67]

[62] For more on Lord William's life as a politician and a man of letters see Ornsby, *Selections from the Household Books*, i–lxxiii; H. S. Reinmuth, 'Lord William Howard (1563–1640) and his Catholic Associations', *RH* 12 (1973–4): 226–34; and Priscilla Bawcutt, 'Lord William Howard of Naworth (1563–1640): Antiquary, Book Collector, and Owner of the Scottish Devotional Manuscript British Library, Arundel 285', *Textual Cultures* 7/1 (2012): 158–75.
[63] Watts, *From Border to Middle Shire*, 182–4.
[64] Reinmuth, 'Lord William Howard', 232; Michael C. Questier, ed. *Newsletters from the Archpresbyterate of George Birkhead*, Camden Fifth Series, vol. 12 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 117.
[65] See the story of a recusant hagiographer Nicholas Roscarrock (d. 1634), who became tutor to Lord Howard's sons: Reinmuth, 'Lord William Howard', 232–34; an account of Lord Howard's alleged misconducts in the North, February 1616, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/ 86 ff. 68r–69v, published in Ornsby, *Selections from the Household Books*, 423–5; *REED: Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire*, 218); Morton to Abbot, 7 May 1616, TNA, SPD Jam. I., SP 14/87, ff. 18r–19r; Morton to Winwood, 9 May 1617, TNA, SPD Jam. I., SP 14/ 92 ff. 86r–87v. Calendar states that the last letter was written by William Morton, but it is clearly in the hand of Henry Anderson, an influential Puritan citizen of Newcastle. It is likely it was written a year before the stated date of 9 May 1617. Anderson's letters to Winwood in April and May 1616 should be read in the context of his Northumberland shrievalty, which concluded at Michaelmas.
[66] *Records of Early English Drama* (hereafter *REED*): *Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire*, eds. Audrey Douglas and Peter Greenfield (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 135.
[67] Ornsby, *Selections from the Household Books*, 9–10n§*; Reinmuth, 'Lord William Howard', 229.

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Dancing education at Naworth was taken seriously. On 12 August 1613, the considerable amount of forty shillings was paid to one Robert 'for teaching the gentlemen to daunce'.[68] After a substantial gap of six years, which is due to missing accounts, we find another payment made on 23 July 1619 'to mr Heymore for teaching to dance in part'.[69] "In part" must refer to partial payment. In autumn 1620, Lady Elizabeth visited Thornthwaite hall, a family residence in Westmorland, where between 31 October and 10 November a similar reward of 20s was given 'to the dawncer'.[70] This could not have been a payment for a performance because the sum is simply too large. We only need to compare it with a reward given to anonymous players from the same period, who as a group had received merely half of the amount given to the dancer. The payment to the Thornthwaite dancer almost certainly represents the second part of the reward due to Mr Heymore in 1619, and must have been issued in exchange for dancing lessons.[71]

The last dance-related entry in Lord William's household books is the most fascinating of the set and sheds new light on all the previous expenses. On 22 August 1634 a payment of 40s was made to 'Mr Robert Hymers for one Moneth Teachinge Mr William Howard and Mrs Elizabeth his Sister to daunce'.[72] It is worth pointing out that Douglas' REED transcription errs in rendering Robert's last name as "Hymes" instead of "Hymers", although the same surname could at the time be spelled either way (fig. 2).[73] The scribe's final "es" is normally very clear; the letters are neatly connected with either horizontal or slightly descending link.[74] However, in the case of Robert's last name, where the double stemmed "r" is squeezed between "e" and "s", which gives an appearance of an ink blot, this is clearly not the case.

We can therefore conclude that Mr. Robert Hymers, found in Lord William Howard's household books under a variety of spellings, is most probably Robert Hindmers, the recusant dancer imprisoned by Bishop James in August 1615.[75] Bearing in mind the considerable

[68] *REED: Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire*, 136.
[69] *Ibid.*, 138.
[70] *Ibid.*
[71] Perhaps Lord William's youngest daughter Mary, who sometime in December 1620 bought a new pair of expensive dancing pumps, was taking extra lessons that autumn at Thornthwaite (*REED: Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire*, 138).
[72] Household account book, 1633–4, Carlisle Archive Centre (hereafter CA), Howard Family Papers (hereafter How.), DHN/C/706/12, f. 74v.
[73] Cf. *REED: Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire*, 144; and Ornsby, *Selections from the Household Books*, 344, whose transcription is correct.
[74] See the words "Clothes" and "Ladies" in the previous line or "boyes" in the next entry (fig. 2).
[75] In parish and probate records of the period, the spelling of the surname Hindmers is particularly inconsistent and appears in many variants: Hindmarsh, Hyndmarsh, Hynmers, Hymners, Hymers, Hinmers, Hindners, Hemers etc. The identity of "Mr Heymore" may seem more problematic, yet Heymore is again merely a spelling variant of a more common form Hymers, since the original meaning of the suffix "moor" was identical to "marsh/merse" (see *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "moor," "marsh" and "merse").

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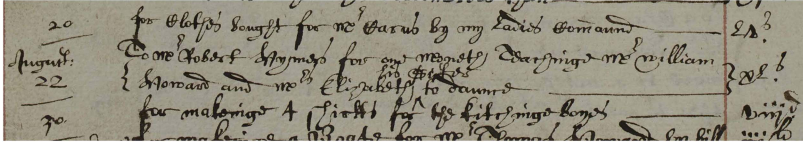

Figure 2. Lord William Howard's household accounts book, 1633–34. Payment to Robert Hymers for dancing lessons. Howard of Naworth Archive, Carlisle Archive Centre, Carlisle, DHN/C/706/12, fo. 74v. By kind permission of Philip Howard.

lapse of time between the first and the last payment for dance instruction at Naworth – in 1634, Hindmers' would have been in his sixtieth year – and the fact that in the early modern period musical and dancing professions were often transmitted within one family from one generation to the next, we need to recognize the possibility that the accounts from 1610s and 1630s could be referring to two different dancers bearing the same name. If all payments to dancing masters in Lord Howard's account books refer to dance instruction conducted by a single individual, which is more likely, then Robert, who started off teaching young gentlemen to dance at least in 1613, reappears in 1630s as an established family dancing teacher. For over two decades, Hindmers would have been visiting Naworth rather regularly, providing dance education to at least two generations of Howards. Considering the social standing of his employers, we are safe to assume that Robert's expertise was far from limited to rustic hopping and skipping. Although he must have been thoroughly familiar with popular country dances, whose derivatives were in vogue at Court, his dance repertoire could not have been limited to that tradition alone.[76] Since Robert Hindmers was a professional dance teacher employed by the aristocracy, he had to keep track of the latest tastes and fashions in order to satisfy his clients.[77]

If Robert's father, Richard Hindmers, was indeed a poor labourer as Bishop James suggests, then his wage in 1590 would have been around six pence, which would probably amount to around five pounds of yearly income, although such estimates of annual earnings are notoriously uncertain.[78] In contrast to his father, Robert earned two pounds for only one month of dancing lessons at Naworth Castle.

[76] On the appropriation of country dances by the upper classes see Marsh, *Music and Society*, 383–87; Barbara Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume, and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 41–5.

[77] For a succinct discussion of various dancing traditions at early Stuart Court, see Ravelhofer's introduction in Barthélemy de Montagut, *Louange de la Danse*, ed. Barbara Ravelhofer (Cambridge: RTM Publications, 2000), 30–42; Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque*, 27–45.

[78] Cf. Donald Woodward, *Men at Work: Labourers and Building Craftsmen in the Towns of Northern England, 1450–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 131–5, 271.

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Although such high earnings were probably irregular, it is hard to imagine Hindmers leading a life as financially precarious as his father. Robert's income would have been substantially smaller than the earnings of the court-based dancing masters, whose annual income could amount to more than 150 pounds, but Hindmers' monthly rate was nevertheless the same as those of other dance instructors to the aristocracy in the south, such as William Jarman's, a dancing master to Algernon Percy, the future 10th Earl of Northumberland.[79]

Given Hindmers' social background, his connection with the Howards is even more significant: how could a labourer's son became a dancing teacher in a noble household, and more importantly, where did he learn the art in the first place? At present, no satisfying answers can be given. Dancing masters were proficient in a number of skills tangential and auxiliary to their fundamental expertise in teaching fashionable dance. Apart from possessing substantial musical knowledge – they were versed instrumentalists, often using a kit (a portable miniature violin), which enabled them to provide music during the lessons – professional dancers were also choreographers of entertainments, and mediators of civility and bodily deportment.[80] Robert Hindmers would possess these gentlemanly qualities, which were deemed essential for appropriate conduct in polite circles, and duly impart them to his socially superior students.

Until now, the earliest evidence of a dancing master residing in Newcastle-upon-Tyne dates to the late seventeenth century.[81] Many occupational musicians, fiddlers, and pipers can be identified in early seventeenth-century Newcastle, and although their main profession was teaching and performing music, some of them might have occasionally offered dancing lessons as well in order to capitalize on the proliferation of courtly fashions at Newcastle and its growing market for a more sophisticated dance culture.[82] Moreover, dancing was not only central to the emerging town civility and sumptuous festivities at Court, but also to the rural sociability in the country, where, according to Nicholas Breton, 'dancing on the greene, in the market

[79] Montagut, *Louange de la Danse*, 19–22; Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts, *Sixth Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, 2 vols. (London, 1877–78), 1:229.

[80] Cf. John Playford, *The English Dancing Master* (London, 1651), 2; see Jean E. Howard, *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598–1642* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 162–208, for the importance of dance in shaping London town culture in 1620s and 1630s.

[81] Dancer Jacob Watson was a resident of All Saints parish; two of his children were buried in 1695 and 1698. All Saints parish register, TW, MF 250; cf. Marsh, *Music and Society*, 331.

[82] See in particular the All Saints parish registers, TW, MF 250; cf. Marsh, *Music and Society*, 136.

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house, or about the May-poole' was essential on holydays.[83] Robert Hindmers and his wife Anne would have probably engaged socially and professionally both with the polite society and the rustic milieu of mirth, which earlier in their lives would have allowed them to practice their first dance steps and develop an appreciation for the art. The Hindmers were bridging and crossing social divides and boundaries and were not too unlike brothers George and Robert Cally, musicians and dancing masters of Chester, who, according to Christopher Marsh, acted as 'cultural conduits', traversing society and transporting 'tunes, terms and choreographies from one place to another'.[84]

Although we should not expect Robert Hindmer's mastery of dance to be on a par with the virtuoso dancers active at Court, such as Barthélemy de Montagut, author of a plagiarized dance treatise and a dancing master of George Villiers, his skills were nevertheless considered exquisite enough to secure him employment in the noble household.[85] Sometime between c. 1600 and 1613, Robert must have refined both his manners and dancing abilities, which could hardly have been picked up on Sunday evenings in a local alehouse, and had become by the 1610s a fully developed dancing master, generously supported by Catholic patrons.

Dance and the Catholic community

For Robert Hindmers, dance, or more precisely, teaching dance was not merely a pretence, but his occupation. According to James, Robert 'by his daunceing crept into manie houses', where he and his young wife Anne, who accompanied him on his travels, 'haue done much harme'.[86] It is very unlikely that dance itself would have been the cause of this harm. However, it is worth stressing that within particular circles and contexts dance in post-Reformation England could have been perceived as a sinful practice associated with traditionalist culture and the old faith.

In the course of the Reformation, dance, as well as stage plays, bearbaiting, May games, church ales, rushbearings, and other traditional pastimes and festivities, came under increased scrutiny and were by the end of the sixteenth century a focal point of

[83] Nicholas Breton, *The Court and Country, or A briefe Discourse Dialogue-wise set downe betweene a Courtier and a Country-man* (London, 1618), B2v.
[84] Marsh, *Music and Society*, 387–88. For more on the Callys see Baldwin and Mills, *Paying the Piper*, 67–70; *REED: Cheshire including Chester*, 2 vols, eds. Elizabeth Baldwin, Lawrence M. Clopper, and David Mills (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 1: lxii–iv, lxxix–xx, 391, 408.
[85] For Montegut's career see Montagut, *Louange de la Danse*, 9–24. Montagut plagiarized François de Lauze's *Apologie de la danse* (1623); see Joan Wildeblood' edition in *Apologie de la danse by F. De Lauze 1623: A Treatise of Instruction in Dancing and Deportment* (London, Muller, 1952).
[86] James to Abbot, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/81, f. 92r.

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sabbatarianists' cultural criticism.[87] The more zealous sort of Protestants were not only attacking the habit of Sunday dancing, but also denounced dancing itself, which was normally considered *adiaphoron*, as intrinsically sinful and nearly unacceptable at any time or in any form. Although authors such as Christopher Fetherston and, half a century later, William Prynne tolerated dancing found in the Holy Scriptures, which is always single-sex, sombre, unaffected, and devotional, they deemed it fundamentally alien to the dancing practices of their own times.[88] To defend biblical dance, they historicized it and presented it as culturally obsolete. In contemporary society, they argued, spiritual joy finds its principal expression in 'Psalmes, and Himnes, and spirituall Songes' rather than in dance, which is now solely driven by lust.[89] The Neoplatonic notions of dance, which dominated the Court and were famously articulated by John Davies in *Orchestra* (1596 and 1622), could not be further from the moralists' perspective, who described dancing as lewd, lascivious, heathen, and closely associated with practices of the old, superstitious faith. [90]

Reformers broadly agreed to 'prohibit dancing that either coincided with church services or took place in the sacred space of the church or churchyard', but up to the publication of James I's *Book of Sports* on 24 May 1618, the more fervent ministers could extend such orders to any part of the Lord's Day.[91] Therefore, the acceptability of dancing in practice generally depended on whether it occurred in suitable places, at suitable times, and in a reverent and seemly manner. Moreover, those involved in parish dancing were rarely presented before visitation commissions and subsequently tried at a consistory court if the local community had not already been burdened by the 'pre-existing tensions and disagreement about the acceptability of

[87] Cf. Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400–1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 69–152; Marsh, *Music and Society*, 354–81; Kenneth L. Parker, *The English Sabbath: A Study of Doctrine and Discipline from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). On Puritanism, often perceived as a driving force behind these moralistic attacks, and its relationship with the Church of England, see Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Cape, 1967) and Peter Lake, *Moderate Puritans and the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[88] See Christopher Fetherston, *A dialogue agaynst light, lewde, and lasciuious dauncing* (London, 1582), D2^{v}–D5^{v}; William Prynne, *Histrio-mastix. The players scovrge, or, actors tragaedie, divided into two parts* (London, 1633), 220–61.

[89] Fetherston, *A dialogue*, D3r.

[90] Sara Thesiger, 'The Orchestra of Sir John Davies and the Image of the Dance', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 36 (1973): 277–304; Mary Pennino-Baskerville, 'Terpsichore Reviled: Antidance Tracts in Elizabethan England', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 22/3 (1991): 475–94; Marsh, Music and Society, 357–8; Skiles Howard, 'Rival Discourses of Dancing in Early Modern England', *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 36/1 (1996): 31–56, 37–40, 43–50; for extensive analysis of traditional pastimes' association with Catholicism see Jensen, *Religion and Revelry*, 38–53.

[91] Marsh, *Music and Society*, 367–68; Hutton, *The Rise and Fall*, 168–9.

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dancing in particular contexts, such as on Sundays, in the churchyard, or as part of traditional festivity'.[92]

In the eyes of the Puritan ministers and preachers, dancing and other pastimes had been hindering the formation of a truly godly nation by representing means for Catholics to defy the ecclesiastical establishment and engage in unwanted conviviality, which reiterated their survivalist identity.[93] The association between traditional festivity and Catholicism was particularly strongly articulated from 1587 onwards by a number of Lancashire ministers. Their periodical fervent suppressions of Sunday recreations, and local resistance to their policies, stimulated the formation of the *Book of Sports*, initially issued in August 1617 exclusively for Lancashire as a *Declaration Concerning Lawful Sports*.[94] William Harrison, a preacher of Huyton near Liverpool, blamed the slow progress in bringing people to the obedience of the Gospels on 'popish priests' and 'profane Pypers', who every Sunday drew hundreds of people away from the church onto the village greens to participate in 'lasciuious dancing'.[95] The greatest 'maintainers of this impiety', he claimed, were 'our recusants and new communicants', who by such means 'keep the people from the Church, and so continue them in their popery and ignorance'.[96]

The cultural activity of the recusant and musically talented Blundell family of Little Crosby in Lancashire testifies that the preachers' outbursts were not simply rhetorical fantasies of the godly.[97] Rushbearings and May games in Cheshire, Lancashire, and Yorkshire would often have recusant overtones.[98] There is evidence of similarly contentious festivity and sociability amongst Catholics in Westmorland, Northumberland and Durham, including

[92] Emily Winerock, 'Churchyard Capers: The Controversial use of church space for Dancing in Early Modern England', in Jennifer Maria DeSilva, ed. *The Sacralization of Space and Behaviour in the Early Modern World: Studies and Sources* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 233–56 at 237.

[93] Jensen, *Religion and Revelry*, 38–9.

[94] *REED: Lancashire*, ed. David George (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), xxiv–vi; the Lancashire *Declaration* is published on pp. 229–31; for a detailed discussion of the *Book of Sports* controversy see Alistair Dougall, *The Devil's Book: Charles I, the Book of Sports and Puritanism in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2011); Parker, *The English Sabbath*, 139–77; Leah Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 106–39.

[95] *The Difference of Hearers* (London, 1614), in *REED: Lancashire*, 27–28.

[96] *REED: Lancashire*, 28.

[97] Murphy, 'Music and Catholic Culture in post-Reformation Lancashire'; cf. Phebe Jensen, '"Honest Mirth and Merriment": Christmas and Catholicism in Early Modern England', in Lowell Gallagher, ed. *Redrawing the Map of Early Modern English Catholicism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 213–44.

[98] Elizabeth Baldwin, 'Rushbearings and Maygames in the Diocese of Chester before 1642', in Alexandra F. Johnston and Wim Hüsken, ed. *English Parish Drama* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1996), 31–40.; Siobhan Keenan, 'Recusant Involvement in a Robin Hood Play at Brandsby Church, Yorkshire, 1615', *Notes and Queries* 45 (2000): 475–8.

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the setting up of a Christmas Lord, communal hunting, bowling, and horse-racing.[99] Intriguingly, the association of pastimes with Catholicism is also present in the *Book of Sports* itself, yet this time in order to curb and not advance the suppression of Sunday recreations. The king believed that Puritan disregard for traditional pastimes was in fact hindering 'the conversion of many', who might, prompted by popish priests, think 'that no honest mirth or recreation is lawful or tolerable in Our Religion'.[100] Nevertheless, the *Book of Sports* denies the benefit of Sunday recreations to convicted recusants and church absentees. In other words, one had to conform to take part in parish sociability. The management of mirth was clearly significant not only for preserving royal authority and promoting royal policies, but also for achieving religious conformity.[101] With the *Book of Sports*, King James reacted not only against Puritans, but also Catholics, who had already taken advantage of controversies surrounding traditional culture by using it for proselytizing and asserting their religious identity.

Early-seventeenth-century traces of dancing practices in north-eastern England are scarce, and even more so among the Catholics. Yet the evidence of social occasions which might have included dancing are not difficult to identify. Trade companies and civic corporations of Durham and Newcastle regularly hired musicians for their annual feasts and holyday recreation, which undoubtedly included dancing.[102] The order of Newcastle Merchant Adventurers from 1603, which aimed to curb unseemly sociability of their apprentices, names dancing, along with dicing, carding, mumming, and taste in expensive clothes, as one of the vices the youths were forbidden to indulge in on the city streets.[103] There is also some

[99] *REED: Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire*, 218; Henry Sanderson on the insolence of the recusants, October 1603, TNA, SPD Jam I, SP 14/4, ff. 7r–8v; Anderson to Privy Council, 28 March 1616, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/86, ff. 196r–197r; James to Cecil, 9 December 1605, TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/17, ff. 32r–33v; Act and visitation book of the archdeacon of Northumberland, 1619–24, PG, DDR/A/ACN/1/1, f. 88r–v; Diary of Thomas Chaytor of Butterby, May 1612–December 1617, PG, Add.MS. 866, ff. 2v, 13v–14r, 22r, 23r, 24r, 32v, 33r, 46r, 57r.

[100] *The King Majesties Declaration to His Subjects, Concerning lawful Sports to be used* (London, 1618), in *REED: Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire*, 366. The same argument was used decades earlier in George Gilbert's 1583 instructions for Jesuit proselytizing; although priests were advised to abstain themselves from excessive banqueting, dancing, and gambling, they should not be 'over scrupulous and strict' in trifling matters, in order to prevent 'the heretic to think that the Catholic religion is an intolerable yoke and too austere' L. Hicks, ed. *Letters and Memorials of Father Robert Persons, S.J., Vol. 1: to 1588*, Publications of the Catholic Record Society, vol. 39 (London: Whitehead, 1942), 336.

[101] Cf. Marcus, *The Politics of Mirth*.

[102] *REED: Newcastle*, xvi–vii; in 1599, in addition to paying the quarterly wages to the city waits, Newcastle paid for at least three itinerant musical companies: King of Scot's (James VI's), Earl of Cumberland's, and Lord Willoughby's musicians (126–32). For Durham, e.g. The Masons' company accounts, 1606–1658, PG, DCG 10/2, ff. 1–53; The Cordwainers' company accounts, 1596–1704, PG, DCG 4/1, ff. 13–39.

[103] *REED: Newcastle*, 139.

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evidence of professional instruction aside from the work of Robert Hindmers. In Durham City, Thomas Edlin was teaching dancing before he died in May 1620; most likely, he was an itinerant teacher, since he is described as 'a strainger'.[104]

Although Counter-Reformation Catholicism harboured similar attitudes towards superstitious devotional practices and profane recreations as Protestantism, it nevertheless, when necessary, harnessed festivity and popular rituals as instruments of confessionalization instead of bluntly suppressing them.[105] Even some Jesuit-friendly households, most strictly fashioned according to Tridentine values, did not completely oust holiday revelry from within their walls. Such was Dorothy Lawson's semi-monastic institution near Newcastle, which was publicly marked as a Catholic house of worship with a sacred name of Jesus (the Jesuit emblem) on its wall facing the Tyne waterside. Behind its walls there was a chapel consecrated to the Mother of God, while each of the other rooms in the house was dedicated to a particular saint according to Robert Southwell's recommendations.[106] It was a Catholic recusant space *par excellence*. In St. Anthony's on Christmas Eve, after confessions, litanies would begin at eight in the evening, and would last, together with a sermon, until midnight, when three Masses were celebrated consecutively. Afterwards, the attendants broke their fast with a Christmas pie and then departed to their respective homes.[107] However, Dorothy Lawson did not feast her neighbours and tenants only spiritually, but also corporally, unbinding 'in this time of mirth and joy for his birth who is the sole origin and spring of true comfort' her ascetic stiffness to allow herself playing cards on Christmas day for 'two hours after each meal' and spending a shilling 'among her friends to make them merry'.[108] Furthermore,

> [s]hee had in a room near the chappell, a crib with musick to honour that joyfull mystery, and all Christmass musicians in her hall and dining chamber to recreate her friends and servants. Shee lov'd to see them dance, and said that if shee were present, greater care would be taken of modesty in their songs and dances.[109]

[104] Robert Surtees, *The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham*, 4 vols. (Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1972), 4:42.

[105] Alexandra Walsham, 'Translating Trent? English Catholicism and the Counter Reformation', *HR* 78/201 (2005): 288–310 at 302–06; Hutton, *The Rise and Fall*, 111–12; Jensen, '"Honest Mirth and Merriment"'; for clerical attitudes towards popular culture in early modern Europe see Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd ed. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 289–334; John Bossy, 'The Counter-Reformation and the People of Catholic Europe', *Past & Present* 47 (1970): 51–70.

[106] Palmes, Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson, 30–1; Lisa McClain, *Lest We be Damned: Practical Innovation and Lived Experience among Catholics in Protestant England, 1559–1642* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 57–9.

[107] Palmes, *Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson*, 44.

[108] *Ibid.*, 44–5.

[109] *Ibid.*, 45.

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The Jesuit William Palmes constructs the life of Dorothy Lawson in accordance with post-Tridentine ideals of piety and Christian living. Revelry, which the matriarch observes with a slight suspicion, does not at all assume a central role in the household holiday celebrations, but it is nevertheless vital, since, to use Southwell's words, 'tyred spirites for mirth must haue a time'.[110] Dorothy Lawson's monastic restraint from worldly pleasures is thus balanced by acknowledgement that on feast days bodily recreations and outward expressions of joy through music, gaming, and dancing are as important as penance and religious meditation. At St. Anthony's, whose first stone was laid by Richard Holtby, a Jesuit Superior, and where Jesuits were employed as resident chaplains, festive revelry was clearly indispensable at Christmas and in spatial proximity to richly adorned chapel and sacred solemnities.[111]

Ecclesiastical records can give us further insight into the social life of the north-eastern parishes. In 1607, Toby Matthew, who had vacated the see of Durham in benefit of William James and assumed the archbishopric of York, produced a set of influential visitation articles for the whole province. The articles request the ministers and churchwardens to inquire whether in their parishes and chapelries there are any 'rush bearings, bull-baytings, may-games, morice-dances, ailes, or any such like prophane pastimes or assemblies on the sabboth to the hinderance of prayers, sermons, or other godly exercises'.[112] Extant visitation books for the diocese of Durham only rarely mention illegal dancing. Instead, they refer to a number of controversial social occasions on which dancing was commonly practiced or encouraged.[113]

In November 1615, William Harrison, his wife Isabella, and John Gowling were presented before archdeacon William Morton at Barnard Castle – the latter for piping and 'those two dauncing vpon the saboth'.[114] No information is given of either exact time or place of their dancing. Other cases heard before archdeacons John Pilkington and Morton convey a picture of pervasive communal recreations and thriving festive culture. At Winston, a village near Darlington, John Stanton and Robert Hewetson were presented in 1603 for 'maikinge a drinkinge on the Sabbaoth daie' and 'makinge a may game on the Sabbaoth daie' respectively; undoubtedly they were both involved in organizing the same event.[115] We find more contested may-gaming

[110] Robert Southwell, *Saint Peter's Complaint, With other Poems* (London, 1595), A3r.
[111] Palmes, *Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson*, 30, 32–3.
[112] Kenneth Fincham, ed. *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church*. 2 vols. (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1994), 1:59; Marsh, *Music and Society*, 367.
[113] We know this from other sources, for example, *REED: Lancashire*, 4–93, 213–28; *REED: Cumberland, Westmorland, Gloucestershire*, 329–43.
[114] Act and visitation book of archdeacon of Durham, March 1600–September 1619, PG, DDR/A/ACD/1/1, f. 289r.
[115] Act and visitation book, PG, DDR/A/ACD/1/1, f. 147v.

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two years later at Bishop Middleham, where Randal Watter and five others were suspected of bringing 'a may pole into the towne vpon assention day last'.[116] May game celebrations often included morris dancing, but setting up and dancing around the maypole would have been even more common.[117]

A strong resistance to John Pilkington's sabbatarianist tendencies can even be detected at the heart of his archdeaconry, at St. Nicholas in Durham. On 7 July 1603, the churchwardens of the parish were presented for allowing 'drinking banquetting & playing at card*e*s, and other vnlawfull gaimes' in alehouses in time of divine service.[118] It was precisely due to such leniency on the part of churchwardens that more unlawful dancing had not been detected in the city.[119] Disorderly Sunday gatherings in alehouses and private homes which involved drinking and gaming are otherwise often reported throughout the county.[120] Occasionally, such conviviality is more distinctly paired with charges of non-communicantcy or even recusancy. In Benton, just outside Newcastle, Christopher Dawson entertained 'a companie of fidlers playing at cards in his house on the first sondaie after the Epiphanie last [in 1620] all the tyme of dyvine service and administratio*n* of the holy Co*mmun*ion'.[121] The fiddlers, John Hobkirk of Newcastle and John and William Hatherwick, had abstained from fiddling during the service, which they failed to attend, but instead amused themselves with cards before probably assuming the revels again after divine service. Agnes Walker, a Berwick recusant, entertained a 'Companie drinking in her house on sundaie vij° Junij 1620' and kept her front door closed 'ag*ains*t the Churchw*arden* that daie, and let the Companie goe forth at the back dore'.[122]

Although dancing is never specifically mentioned in such cases, the alehouse keepers at least, such as Robert Burden and Anthony Learman from Bishopwearmouth (now part of Sunderland), who hosted 'drinkers in ther houses in tyme of prayers', had a vested interest in attracting and entertaining their guests by providing dance music.[123] They might have employed someone like John

[116] *Ibid.*, f. 176v.
[117] Marsh, *Music and Society*, 335–6. Cf. Hutton, *The Rise and Fall*, 28–34.
[118] Act and visitation book, PG, DDR/A/ACD/1/1, f. 144v.
[119] Cf. a presentment of Richard Briggam, a churchwarden of Kirby Grindalythe, East Riding of Yorkshire, who was charged with failing to present 'two or three pypers […] and A great multitude dauncing' in a local alehouse during evening prayer in 1613: Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York, York Diocesan Archive, Archiepiscopal Visitation, GB 193 V. 1615, f. 171c.
[120] See, for example, Act and visitation book, PG, DDR/A/ACD/1/1, ff. 40r, 48v.
[121] Act and visitation book of the archdeacon of Northumberland, 1619–24, PG, DDR/A/ACN/1/1, f. 61r.
[122] Act and visitation book of the archdeacon of Northumberland, 1619–22, PG, DDR/A/ACN/1/2, f. 31v.
[123] Act and visitation book, PG, DDR/A/ACD/1/1, f. 214r.

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Wilson from South Shields, who was presented to the Cathedral authorities in February 1612 'that being the Piper & the wait, there pipeth eu*er*ie sabboth daie & hollidaie at Alehouse in the forenoone'.[124]

Whether there were ulterior motives behind any such instance of disorderly drinking, gaming, and dancing in private homes, such as luring Catholic sympathizers away from church-going, is hard to ascertain. The post-Reformation attack on traditional culture had stimulated some Catholics to preserve and treasure those ceremonies and recreations which in the eyes of the radical Protestants defined them as a coherent and oppositional religious group, but we should be careful not to associate just any unruly festivity with Catholicism.[125] However, the Hindmers' case informs us that the crowd of Durham Sabbath profaners must have also included recusants, some of whom, like Anne Hewes from Cheshire, might have been both 'seduceing papist[s]' and 'daunceinge vpon ye Saboth daie'.[126]

Creeping into houses

Although moral critique of dancing is undoubtedly implied in the private correspondence between two Calvinist clergymen, the language of Puritan sabbatarianism, linking Catholicism with disorderly, heathen, or even seditious festivity, is absent in Bishop James' letter, not least because his main concern is fervent recusancy, and not festive traditionalism. Rather than claiming the harm was caused by dancing itself, James seems to be suggesting that dance, much like music in the case of John Jacob, had been cunningly used as an expedient to gain entry into private houses and disseminate without suspicion far more harmful matters than the latest dance moves. By employing the language of religious controversy, James strengthens his identification of the Hindmers as Catholic proselytizers. The aforementioned report on recusancy in the bishopric, issued by William James in 1608, uses familiar phrasing:

> There is no doubt but amongst so many Papist*e*s in so remote a Countrey sondrie Semynaries are crept in & keepe resdenc*e*s, to the dalie w*i*thdrawing of the king*e*s people, who though they be not verie obvious, yet vpon searches might no doubt be app*re*hended.[127]

[124] Dean and Chapter act and visitation book, April 1608–4 December 1617, DCL, DCD/D/SJC/3, f. 59r.
[125] Cf. Jensen, *Religion and Revelry*, 2008, 38–53. Emily Winerock uses a convenient term 'festive traditionalists' to describe all those who actively resisted suppression of traditional festivity regardless of their religious provenance: 'Churchyard Capers', 235.
[126] *REED: Cheshire including Chester*, 2:518.
[127] List of recusants in Durham, 1608, LP, TMP, MS 663, f. 50r.

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In the bishop's vocabulary, the verb "to creep in" does not denote just any stealthy, cautious, scheming, and unobserved intrusion or advancement. It is particularly associated with the practices of "popish" priests, who, in order to evade persecution, had to abandon their clerical dress and travel in disguise. The expression is in fact a commonplace in both anti-Catholic and anti-Protestant polemics and derives from Paul's second epistle to Timothy: 'For of this sort are they [hypocrites] which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts'.[128] Protestant works, such as John Baxter's *A Toil for Two-Legged Foxes* (1600), Samuel Harsnett's *A Declaration of Egregious Popish Impostures* (1603), and John Gee's *The Foot out of the Snare* (1624), which attacked and exposed alleged devious missionary practices of Catholic priests, thrive on identifying Jesuits and seminarians with sly false prophets, invaders of households, and undercover womanizers.[129]

In numerous Catholic households, the spousal division of labour in upholding Catholicism was necessary. In order to avoid recusancy fines, maintain Catholic identity, and satisfy the dictates of conscience, husbands would outwardly conform and 'peepe into the Church once in a month', while their wives would abstain from attending the parish church entirely.[130] Although married women were convicted and fined for recusancy, their forfeitures could never be extorted while their husbands were alive, since legally they did not possess any goods or lands.[131] Later Elizabethan and particularly Jacobean statutes tried to address the issue of non-conforming wives more vigorously by threatening their husbands, who were deemed bad patriarchs for not securing religious conformity in their households, with additional penalties and civil disadvantages.[132] The popular imagination responded to women's substantial influence in Catholic households and their role in harbouring priests. Because sharing a roof with secular women became a norm for priests in seventeenth-century England, anti-Catholic and particularly anti-Jesuit tracts were keen to point out that popish seduction was not

[128] KJV 2 Tim 3, 6; Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett, eds. *The Bible: Authorized King James Version* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[129] Cf. Arthur F. Marotti, *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy: Catholic and Anti-Catholic Discourses in Early Modern England* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 53–65.

[130] John Baxter, *A toile for two-legged foxes* (London, 1600), 108; on spousal agreements in Catholic households see Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity, and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1993), 78–82.

[131] On recusant women, see Marie B. Rowlands, 'Recusant Women 1560–1640', in Mary Prior, ed. *Women in English Society, 1500–1800* (London: Methuen, 1985), 112–35; Frances F. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 45–94.

[132] Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, 70–1.

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only religious, but also sexual: priests were frequently accused of adultery, recusant women of whoredom.[133] Anti-Catholicism was paired with misogyny.

In light of the subversive role of Catholic women, it does not come as a surprise that polemicists adopted 2 Tim 3,6 as a focal reference for describing the unsettling heterosocial relationships between popish priests and recusant women, while the phrase "creeping in" or "creeping into houses" became widely used with regard to secret intrusions of priests, sin, abuses, and superstitions either in private homes or worship more generally. John Baxter thus claims that Jesuits (or Foxes), 'by dissembled zeale & palpable flaterie creepe into mens houses, winde themselues into mens consciences, lead away the simple captiue'.[134] In the fervently anti-Jesuit epic *The Locvsts, or Apollyonists* (1627), Phineas Fletcher laments that the 'little Isle' did not escape the scheming priests who

> […] with practicke slight
> Crept into houses great: their sugred tongue
> Made easy way into the lapsed brest
> Of weaker sexe, where lust had built her nest,
> There layd they Cuckoe eggs, and hatch't their brood unblest.[135]

After the Fatal Vespers in 1623, John Gee, a minister with previous Catholic inclinations, turned distinctly anti-Catholic. In the wake of the accident, Gee was prompted by Archbishop Abbot to write a penitential tract exposing proselytizing strategies of popish priests. In the introduction of *The Foot out of the Snare* he wittily asserts that 'our Countrey, which ought to bee euen and vniforme, is now made like a piece of Arras, full of strange formes and colours'.[136] The blame for religious divisions lies with lukewarm ministers and, more importantly, the emissaries of Rome, who

> make them, whom they can get to work vpon by their perswasions, to become retrograde […] and become Apostates in matters of orthodox Christianity.

[133] *Ibid.*, 85–94; Marotti, *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy*, 53–65; also Marotti, 'Alienating Catholics in Early Modern England: Recusant Women, Jesuits and Ideological Fantasies', in Arthur F. Marotti, ed. *Catholicism and Anti-Catholicism in Early Modern Texts* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 1–34; an example of such fantasies manifesting itself in the bureaucratic writings can be found on a Wisbech Castle prisoners' list from 1587, in which Francis Tillettson is described as an 'Amorous prieste making muche of Catholikes wyves & a greate p*er*suader of women'. TNA, SPD Eliz. I, SP 12/199, ff. 172r–173v. Cf. also Topcliffe's insinuations in Caraman, *John Gerard: the Autobiography*, 119–20.
[134] Baxter, *A toile for two-legged foxes*, 27.
[135] Phineus Fletcher, *Locvstae vel Pietas Iesvitica* (Cambridge, 1627), 56; cf. Marotti, *Religious Ideology and Cultural Fantasy*, 63, who does not identify nor expand on the relevance of the biblical allusion.
[136] John Gee, *The foot out of the snare: with a detection of svndry late practices and impostures of the priests and Iesuits in England* (London, 1624), 2. See also Theodorus H. B. M. Harmsen's edition *John Gee's Foot out of the snare (1624)* (Nijmegen: Cicero Press, 1992).

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> Easily can they steale away *the hearts of the weaker sort:* and secretly do they creep into houses, *leading captiue simple women loaden with sinnes, and led away with diuerse lusts.*[137]

Gee's patron and the addressee of William James' letter, George Abbot, had also engaged in anti-Catholic discourse in the *Reasons which Doctor Hill hath Brought for the Upholding of Papistry* (1604), as well as in a voluminous collection of thirty sermons, *An Exposition upon the Prophet Jonah* (1600). In the closure of the twenty-ninth sermon, Abbot explains that although there is no apology for sin, the fact that the weakness of sinners is often transformed into strength by God's grace can also be used as a just defence against

> Seminarie priests of Rome, who take occasion by reason of some slippes in our Cleargie, & defects in our ministerie […] to vnder-mine any good opinion of our religion in the simple: But this is practised most of all to the ignorant, and to silly women, into whose houses they creepe, and leade them captiue being laden with sinnes, and led with diuerse lustes.[138]

The semantic field of Catholic "creeping" can be further extended by discussing a pious observance which might have informed and reiterated the Protestant pejorative use of the verb in anti-Catholic tracts.

Early in 1548 the government of Lord Protector Somerset (c. 1500–52) forbade a number of old Church ceremonies, such as the blessing of candles at Candlemas, ashes upon Ash Wednesday, foliage on Palm Sunday, and creeping to the cross, a Good Friday custom of venerating the crucifix.[139] How elaborate the practice of the creeping to the cross would have been in pre-Reformation England can be observed in the *Rites of Durham*, a work of Catholic nostalgia from the end of the sixteenth century, describing ceremonies in and around Durham cathedral before the dissolution of the monasteries.[140] It is easy to see why the Reformers abhorred such extravagant expression of faith, and also how infiltrating priests might have been reintroducing the practice in Catholic households. The ceremony was certainly observed in Dorothy Lawson's house, where both Easter and Christmas were celebrated lavishly. During Holy Week, Lawson performed in her chapel 'all the ceremonies appropriated to that blessed time', including creeping to the cross, 'which kissing shee bath'd with tears'.[141]

137 Gee, *The foot out of the snare*, 2–3.
138 George Abbot, *An Exposition upon the Prophet Jonah* (London, 1600), 614–5.
139 Hutton, *The Rise and Fall*, 80; cf. Eamon Duffy, *Striping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 443–4, 457.
140 Joseph T. Fowler, ed. *Rites of Durham*, Publications of the Surtees Society, vol. 107 (Durham: Andrews, 1903), 11.
141 Palmes, *Life of Mrs. Dorothy Lawson*, 43–4. Cf. creeping to the cross on Good Friday 1595 in the Clink: Caraman, *John Gerard: the Autobiography*, 123–24; and a report on private creeping to the cross in Golborne, Lancashire, at the home of Peter Croncke in 1604: McClain, *Lest We be Damned*, 55.

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Returning to the bishop's letter, we can now decisively conclude that James's language consciously compares the Hindmers and their itineracy with that of undercover seminary priests. He is not only describing Robert Hindmers as a dancer and a recusant, but also as a "seducing papist", who 'by his daunceing crept into manie houses' and with "divers lusts" led people away from religious conformity.[142] For James, the fact that Robert is accompanied by his recusant wife reinforces Protestant stereotypes about the unruly Catholic women and gynocentric Catholic mission. Dance itself, on the other hand, is only tangentially under attack, although James seems to be anticipating later Caroline anxieties about the proliferation of the new French dance and decorum, which were often associated with emasculation, lewdness, Catholicism, and Jesuit influence.[143] In the 1608 recusancy report, the consequences of creeping in of seminary priests is described as a 'daily withdrawing of the king's people', namely the shifting of individuals into religious and political nonconformity.[144] Bishop James clearly perceived and measured the damage of the Hindmers' venture in similar terms.

Conclusion

We lack evidence to determine how precisely the Hindmers utilized dance in their proselytizing efforts. Bishop James certainly believed that Robert's ability to teach dance enabled him to enter households and access particular communities. However, it remains unclear whether dancing lessons were anything more than a convenient cover story for unrelated missionary activities.

Using worldly recreations to evangelize was not an unprecedented practice. Jesuits did not understand proselytizing as a primarily polemical exercise and indeed used a variety of approaches to successfully convert heretics, schismatics, or lukewarm Catholics.[145] John Gerard took advantage of Sir Everard Digby's love for hunting and converted Sir Oliver Manners over a game of cards; he clearly approached the spirit from the flesh.[146] Dance, so prevalent in English early modern culture and already widely associated with Catholicism, both in the country as well as at Court, particularly due to the two

[142] TNA, SPD Jam. I, SP 14/81, f. 92r.
[143] Strigood in Richard Brome's *The New Academy* (1635) is represented as a Catholic, who learned how to behave as a dancing master from a Jesuit Howard, *Theater of a City*, 189.
[144] List of recusants in Durham, 1608, LP, TMP, MS 663, f. 50r.
[145] Hicks, *Letters and Memorials*, 321–41; cf. Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion*, 178–86.
[146] Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion*, 183; Caraman, *John Gerard: the Autobiography*, 206, 233–6.

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Stuart Queens, could hardly have been an inappropriate method for accessing festive-traditionalist elements of society, who sympathized with the old faith.

Although the notion of 'converted' dance forms, which might have mirrored the 'converted' ballads discussed by Murphy, is compelling, we have no evidence to confirm their existence. However, dance would not have to be necessarily made "Catholic" in order to serve the mission. In the early modern period, dancing was perceived to fulfil an important social function of bringing young men and women together. In fact, the social mixer dances, a special group of dances designed to achieve more unexpected intermingling of the participants, provided 'a structured form for flirtation, usually in a safe and supervised context'.[147] If dancing lessons were conducted by the Hindmers, they may have been utilized to facilitate such sociability among the local Catholic youth. Moreover, it is not hard to imagine how private dancing might have brought like-minded people together not only to socialize, but also to exchange news, pray, and worship.

Much like the Simpson players, a semi-professional recusant theatre company from Egton, which toured the North Yorkshire households in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the Hindmers' dance events probably participated in communal affirmations of Catholic identity.[148] However, such entertainment, which involved individuals both physically and mentally, could quickly yield more subversive and far-reaching consequences. A telling rumour spread in the wake of the Simpsons' Christmas performance at Gowlthwaite Hall in 1609. Some of the 'Popishe people' present at the performance of the Saint Christopher play alleged to their neighbours 'that if they had seene the said Play […] they would neuer care for the newe lawe or for goinge to the Church more'.[149] Participating in communal entertainment could have a significant impact on individual's religious identity.

Robert Hindmers used his talents to defy poverty and advance the Catholic cause. He received maintenance from local priests, but also managed to acquire more wealthy and powerful patrons, such as Lord William Howard of Naworth. Although Bishop James is quite clear with regard to the nature of the harm which Robert and Anne caused, the evidence does not explicitly link dancing lessons with religious

[147] Emily F. Winerock, '"Mixt" and Matched: Dance Games in Late Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century Europe', in Allison Levy, ed. *Playthings in Early Modernity: Party Games, Word Games, Mind Games* (Kalamazoo: Westerm Michigan University, 2017), 29–48 at 36; Marsh, *Music and Society*, 331–32, 362–3.

[148] On the Simpson players, see especially G. W. Boddy, 'Players of Interludes in North Yorkshire in the Early Seventeenth Century', *North Yorkshire County Record Office Journal* 3 (1976): 95–130; and Phebe Jensen, 'Recusancy, Festivity and Community: The Simpsons at Gowlthwaite Hall', in Richard Dutton, Alison Findlay, and Richard Wilson, eds. *Region, Religion and Patronage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 101–20.

[149] Deposition of Sir Stephen Procter, TNA, STAC 8/19/10, f. 18.

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instruction. And yet, precisely because Robert Hindmers was a professional dancer, the importance of dance in his evangelizing activities should not be underestimated. Allowing a dancing master to assist the missionary priests without utilizing his unique skills would seem like a conspicuous waste of talent.

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