

Memories of Fr. Thomas Wrangham C.Ss.R

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by Fr. Beverley Ahearn C.Ss.R

Fr. Thomas Wrangham or Tommy – Tommy Wrangham he died in 1979 while on holiday, but was a member of the Perth community and is buried there.

Tommy came from the North East of England, and he told me of a story, a tradition rather in the North East about the hymn 'Hail Queen of Heav'n'. Fr. John Lingard who was a historian in the mid-1800s, priest and historian, and he lectured at Ushaw college but while he was out one night he passed a pub late at night where he heard them singing quite late on, very raucously, out of tune but some local tune he could recognise. And it came to him at that moment that was the inspiration that he needed to make a translation of the Latin hymn 'Ave Maris Stella', and he wrote his translation Hail Queen of Heav'n and it's used to this day. Now I've read the life of Dr Lingard and there is no mention of it in his life at all but Tommy Wrangham reckoned that it was a strong oral tradition in the North East that he was prompted by a local song and its interesting too that if you look in the hymn books where there is music as well as the text you'll find that the hymn has the name of a Northumberland village, and I just cannot remember the name at present.