

Redmond Parker Cafferata

Redmond Parker Cafferata was born in Liverpool on 6th January 1847, the third son of Liverpool stockbroker William Cafferata and his wife Elizabeth Waterworth. As a young boy he attended Mr Baron's school in Lytham, Lancashire along with his elder brother, William Madden. They moved from Mr Baron's to Stonyhurst College in Clitheroe, starting on the 18th September 1855 ⁽¹⁾. A cousin, Charles Edward, was the first Cafferata to attend Stonyhurst, but over the years several of Redmond's brothers, children and grandchildren followed in his footsteps.

In a school career that lasted until September 1862, Redmond was one of the youngest members of Father Pinnington and Father Boardman's classes. He was popular with his teachers who christened this group of youngsters "The Noble School". Another of Redmond's contemporaries, who wrote his obituary for the Stonyhurst magazine, still remembered his singing many years later: *"The opening of the Alma Redemptoris Mater ever recalls the singing voice of Redmond Cafferata"*.

A school friend later recollected: *"He was only nine years old when he was with us in Figures, under Fr. Pinnington. His abilities being decidedly above the average, he was always well up in the six first of the school, and, unlike many precocious children, showed more abilities as he grew older. He sang alto in the choir. Being so young prevented him from being in any way distinguished in games or athletics. He was only fifteen in the summer of 1862, and so was too young to matriculate at London. He would otherwise have obtained a high place in the Classical Honours List. He was most exemplary, and was never a subject of anxiety to masters or prefects."* ⁽²⁾



Stonyhurst College

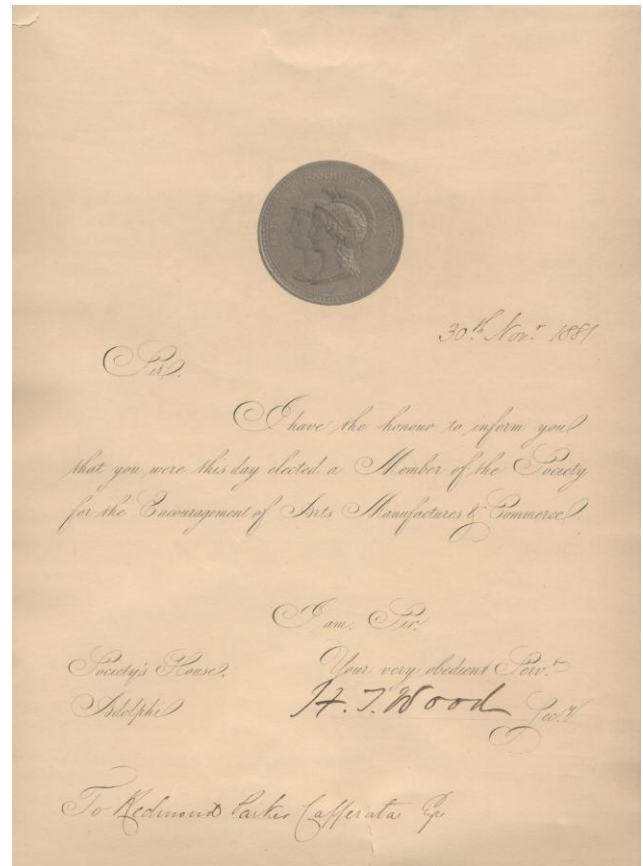
Around the end of Redmond Parker's time at Stonyhurst, his father bought the Great Northern Works on Beacon Hill, Newark on Trent, starting the business that Redmond would inherit and which would thrive for the next century. After leaving school, Redmond started working for the family firm, rising to the position of Cashier by the time of the 1871 census. Initially Redmond would probably have lived with his parents, but in his early twenties, he courted Ellen Barton, daughter of Frederic Barton, manager of Smith & Sons Bank, Market Place, Newark. They were married on the 19th January 1871 at the Catholic Church on Parliament Street, then set up home together at 48 Millgate, a short distance from his father's residence at number 23. Their first child, Francesca, was born in this house a year later on the 6th February 1872. Shortly afterwards the family moved to number 30 Magnus Street, where their next two children, Beatrice and Hubert were born. After staying in Magnus Street for a couple of years, the family moved back to Millgate, to number 60, a large Georgian house. They

stayed there for five years with Ellen giving birth to another four children, Louis, Cecilia, Redmond Barton and Wilfred. Having a large family was by no means unusual in Victorian times but it was less common for all the children to survive to maturity and whilst at 60 Millgate the youngest child, Wilfred, died of Tuberculosis aged just five months.

Redmond's mother Elizabeth sold him her interest in Cafferata & Company in 1881 and it may have been this sale that prompted Redmond to move his family again, this time to the house which had been occupied by his father, 23 Millgate. When the census was taken on 3rd April 1881 the family were still living at number 48, but by the time Ellen gave birth to Basil on the 23rd November 1881, they were established at number 23. Only a week after Basil's birth, Redmond was elected a member of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures & Commerce. Then, as today, the Society (now the Royal Society of Arts) was an influential body and membership reflected Redmond's status. Whilst at number 23 another two sons followed, Bernard and Clement.

Redmond was becoming more and more successful and this was reflected in the family's next move, to the ostentatious Irnham Hall, in Lincolnshire. At Irnham, Redmond lived the life of a Victorian gentleman in a medieval house at one time owned by the Lutrell family, having a large household that included another two children, Cyril and Helen, who were both born at the Hall. There was domestic tragedy whilst at the hall though as, in September 1888, Ellen gave birth to a stillborn baby boy. Irnham Hall's domestic staff included a governess, two nurses, cook and six maids within the house, along with a coachman and his family living in the stables. Redmond's social status was confirmed in the invitation he received to a banquet held by the Duke of Newcastle at Clumber Park, to celebrate the young nobleman's coming of age in 1886.⁽³⁾

Redmond was a keen sportsman and shooting, a sport at which he excelled, was one of his passions. He also entertained lavishly as part of his lifestyle and on Saturday 12th November 1887 Redmond hosted a shooting party with more than 40



Redmond's certificate electing him to the Society for the Encouragement of Arts



Irnham Hall, Lincolnshire



The fire at Irnham, 1887

guests. They were just about to sit down for dinner at about 6.30pm, when Ellen entered the dining room and discovered it full of smoke. At the same time, some of the guests heard the ceiling crack and in just a few minutes the whole north wing, which consisted of the chapel, library, nursery, dining room and state rooms was ablaze. When the guests evacuated to the courtyard, flames could be seen on the roof, which was soon a single mass of fire. The intensity of the blaze made it almost impossible to tackle, so the servants and some guests

concentrated on saving the remainder of the hall. The fire brigades from Grantham, Colsterworth, Bourne and Grimthorpe were called to deal with the blaze, under the leadership of Captain S.G. Gamble and they had it under control by midnight. The Penny Illustrated Paper reported that “The old armoury trophies and much of the furniture were removed, and 4000 cartridges, stored near the billiard room, were also got out. The portion of the building destroyed was of the early Tudor period.” The Nottinghamshire Guardian surmised that the blaze started in the principal guest chamber (above the dining room and next to the chapel) with the woodwork of the chimney igniting and causing the fire. Luckily the building was insured as the damage amounted to £13,000 which was a huge amount for the time. Equally fortunately, despite the seriousness of the blaze, there were no injuries at the house, but the driver of the Colsterworth engine fell from his machine on the way to the fire and broke his leg in two places. The Grantham fire brigade remained on the scene until ten the following morning.⁽⁴⁾

As well as the demands of the family business and running a country estate, Redmond enjoyed many other pastimes, notably football, with the Newark Advertiser reporting: “As a matter of fact, Mr. Cafferata, we believe, introduced Association football into Newark. Coming here as a young man from college, and very fond of the game, he persuaded a few friends to take it up, and formed a team.”⁽⁵⁾

The Nottinghamshire Guardian reported that Newark Football Association had been formed in 1868, playing its first game on Saturday 31st October between teams chosen from the members. Redmond scored a goal for his team, but ended up on the losing side. Some weeks later, in January 1869, Redmond featured in the Newark team that drew against Nottingham Forest. He continued playing for Newark regularly, playing alongside his elder brother William Madden Cafferata. The games included a one-goal loss against Hull in November 1869 and another match against a team of “Gentlemen Visitors”, in which Redmond scored.⁽⁶⁾

In his obituary the Newark Advertiser summed up Redmond’s hobbies, saying that he “was an exceedingly keen golfer, playing a good game, the last of which he took part in six weeks ago, while as a billiard player he was wonderfully proficient, and could hold his own with almost anyone. On one occasion at the Hotel Russell, London, he made a 150 break, which was a fine performance for an amateur... Years ago he was a participant in cricket matches but this did not appeal to him so much as the winter pastime did. Mr. Cafferata was one of the earliest members of the Newark rowing club, and was a really capital sculler a decade or two ago. It will

therefore, be seen that he was a thoroughly all-round sportsman, and was popular with colleagues and opponents alike.”⁽⁵⁾

Showing agricultural horses was another of Redmond’s interests and he won several awards, including the Rose Ribbon for the best cart mare or gelding at the 1887 Newark Agricultural Show, won by his six year old roan, Captain.⁽⁷⁾ He was also a regular winner at the Royal Agricultural Show, Islington.

Redmond and his family stayed at Irnham Hall until the early 1890s but by the time his youngest daughter, Dorothy, was born in 1893 the family had moved again, this time to Clumber Crescent South in The Park, a highly desirable area of the City of Nottingham, near the castle.

The Cafferatas stayed in Nottingham until around 1898 when they moved again, to Staunton Hall, near Newark, another large country house which dated from the sixteenth century. The Hall was large enough for the family to live together, even though many of the children were, by that time, growing up. The 1901 census revealed that eight of the children were still present, along with a domestic staff of



Staunton Hall, Nottinghamshire

six – a cook, nurse and four maids. Redmond’s sons, Clement and Cyril, were both away at Stonyhurst College at the time this census was taken, or the house would, no doubt, have been even more crowded. At Staunton, the family had a private chapel in one of the upstairs rooms, which they used regularly. Basil, Redmond’s fourth son, was noted for the frequency of his visits. In delicate health since an accident in childhood, he suffered from epilepsy and sought solace in his religion. Some years later, Basil entered the Order of St. Dominic at Stroud as a novice lay brother. It was there he died following a fit on 7th April 1910. On the morning of his death Ellen, Basil’s mother, received her last letter from him in which he expressed his contentment with the religious life. “I assure you,” Basil wrote “If you only knew what peace of mind I have had since joining the Order, and what daily Communion brings, you would be astonished.”⁽⁸⁾

The family lived at Staunton until Redmond relinquished control of the family business, passing it to his sons in 1908. Since taking over in 1881, Redmond had built Cafferata & Company up from employing 100 men to more than 500 by the time of his retirement. He did whatever he could to promote his business interests – he was a long time Chairman of the

Gypsum Association of Great Britain and he was a director of the Trent Navigation Company. In 1896 he was appointed a Trent Navigation Commissioner.

As one of Newark's leading citizens, Redmond had also been offered his fair share of civic responsibility – he was appointed a Justice of the Peace some years before his death, an honour he declined. He had also stood for a seat on the Town Council, but had been defeated in the election.

There were two main reasons for Redmond's retirement from business; there were some financial problems with the company and Redmond had a breakdown in health. The two, of course, may well have been linked. He then moved to his final home, Harrowby House, Grantham. It was there that, around three months before his death, Redmond's health began to give cause for concern, and it led him to become bedridden. The Newark Advertiser speculated that *"his strenuous life and keen application to business over many years had undermined his constitution."*⁽⁵⁾ Redmond died just before Christmas, passing away on the 19th December 1913. When he died flags were flown at half mast at the Cafferata works as well as at several other local businesses. The local press was typically effusive, as might be expected when reporting the passing of one of Newark's leading lights, giving enough detail to satisfy the most curious of observers. On its arrival in Newark, the coffin was met at the church door by Bishop Brindle of Nottingham, draped in a black pall, decorated with a huge golden cross. Massive candles were placed at each corner and Gregorian chants completed the solemn atmosphere. In a spectacle that saw the hearse followed by fourteen carriages of mourners and between 200 and 300 employees on foot, Redmond was transported in an elm coffin with an outer case of English oak with brass fittings which bore the inscription "Redmond Parker Cafferata, died Dec. 19th, 1913, aged 66 years." When the procession arrived at Newark Cemetery, Redmond was laid to rest in the family plot, which had been suitably dressed for the occasion.⁽⁹⁾



Redmond and Ellen's grave in Newark

Sadly, further tragedy was to follow as, just a few weeks later, on the 12th February 1914, Ellen Cafferata was found dead in her bed at Harrowby House. In funeral arrangements organised by Messrs. G. Brown & Son, Bishop Brindle was called upon to officiate for a second time, assisted by no less than six other priests. Once again the family gathered to mourn as Ellen was interred next to her husband in a grave that had been lined with evergreens, with arum lilies on each side and dozens of floral tributes, including over 30 dedications from her children, family, friends and the prominent citizens and businessmen of Newark. Family tributes included "In loving memory, from Louis, Bernie, Clement and Cyril" and "In loving memory of a darling mother from her heart-broken daughters Secca, Nell, Beattie and Dossie" and "To darling Grannie from her grandchildren Randolph, Gerald and Sonia".⁽¹⁰⁾

Notes:

- (1) Stonyhurst College Entry Log, David Knight, Archivist. Letter dated 22/3/2010
- (2) Stonyhurst Magazine No. 193, April 1914
- (3) The Morning Post, 7th September 1888
Nottinghamshire Guardian 30th April 1886
- (4) The Times 14th November 1887, page 7 and The Penny Illustrated Paper, 19th November 1887. The Nottinghamshire Guardian of 19th November 1887 states that Mrs Cafferata found the blaze on entering a guest chamber.
- (5) Newark Advertiser, 24th December 1913
- (6) Nottinghamshire Guardian 6th November 1868
Sheffield & Rotherham Independent 21st January 1869
Nottinghamshire Guardian 26th November 1869
- (7) Nottinghamshire Guardian 20th May 1887
- (8) Stonyhurst Magazine No. 160, June 1910
- (9) Newark Herald 27th December 1913
- (10) Newark Advertiser 18th February 1914