

Samlesbury, the stunning half-timbered Lancashire mansion that was home to the Southworth family, dates back to 1325 and was originally the abode of the de Samlesburys, and later through marriage became the property of the Southworths. Although it seems hard to believe now, it fell into disrepair in the early years of the twentieth century and by 1920 had been earmarked for demolition. It was saved after six local business leaders stepped in and raised the cash to buy it – £1,500 – and set up a trust to preserve and run it.

Today it's a fun place for a family day out – as well as the house oozing all that history, and gardens including a rose garden and woodland walks, there's a small animal farm with goats, sheep, rabbits, guinea pigs, pigs and hens. Children will also enjoy the adventure playground, which echoes another family story: there were Southworths on board the *Mayflower* when it sailed to America in 1620, and for that reason the play area has a nautical flavour.

If you've time while visiting Samlesbury, it's worth popping in to see the church of St Walburge's in nearby Preston. It's a Grade 1 listed Catholic church in French Gothic style, and its spire, at 309 feet, is the tallest of any parish church in England. Completed in 1873, it was designed and built to celebrate the end of the years of Catholic persecution, and is a lasting reminder of the hardships and suffering those years of persecution and division delivered, not only for the institutions but for the lives of many individuals.

For more information, or to plan a visit, see samlesburyhall.co.uk

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

O sing a new song to the Lord, for he has worked wonders; in the sight of the nations he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.

FIRST READING Acts 9:26-31

PSALM Psalm 21

RESPONSE **You, Lord, are my praise in the great assembly.**

Or **Alleluia!**

1. My vows I will pay before those who fear him. The poor shall eat and shall have their fill. They shall praise the Lord, those who seek him. May their hearts live for ever and ever! **R.**

2. All the earth shall remember and return to the Lord, all families of the nations worship before him. They shall worship him, all the mighty of the earth; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust. **R.**

3. And my soul shall live for him, my children serve him. They shall tell of the Lord to generations yet to come, declare his faithfulness to peoples yet unborn: "These things the Lord has done." **R.**

SECOND READING 1 John 3:18-24

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia! Make your home in me, as I make mine in you. Whoever remains in me bears fruit in plenty. Alleluia!

GOSPEL John 15:1-8

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

I am the true vine and you are the branches, says the Lord. Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears fruit in plenty, alleluia.

Next Sunday's Readings:
Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48
1 John 4:7-10
John 15:9-17



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SUNDAY BULLETIN



A HOUSE FULL OF STORIES

It's a stunning house brimming with character and informal friendliness; but what sets Samlesbury Hall near Preston apart, and stays in the memory long after your visit is over, are the stories contained in its walls.

My favourite is of a seventeenth-century Romeo and Juliet with, inevitably, a tragic end – and a fascinating twist. The hall was the ancestral home of a recusant Catholic clan called the Southworths, and, according to the tale, one of the daughters of the house, Lady Dorothy, fell in love with the son of another of the local landed families, Richard de Houghton. So far, so delightful; but there was a problem, because the de Houghtons were as fiercely Anglican as the Southworths were Catholic, and the families ruled that the union of Dorothy and Richard was simply impossible. Inevitably, the young couple disagreed – and made plans to elope and marry in secret. But word got back to Dorothy's brothers, who decided to take matters into their own hands. They ambushed Richard and two of his friends, and killed them. Dorothy was completely distraught and went to live in a convent – where she starved herself to death.

The story speaks to the tragedy of the Reformation fallout and the long years when Christians from one side of the fence felt they could not fraternise with those from across the divide. And as to whether it's true: who knows? But more recently, several centuries on, three skeletons were discovered outside the moat.

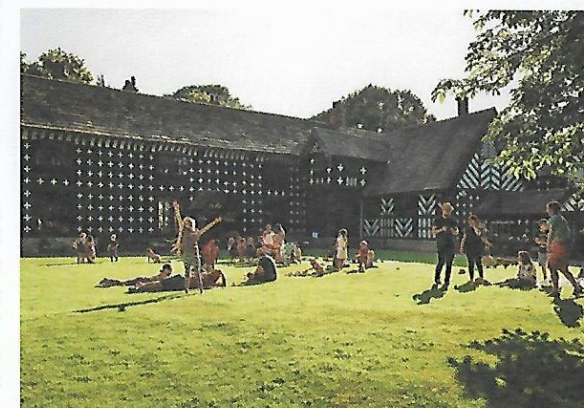
A few years later another daughter of the house, Jane Southworth, was accused of witchcraft along with two other women; the court case rocked the north of England, and eventually they were acquitted.

But the best-known story from this house centres on one of its sons who became a priest and then a saint, John Southworth. During the years of Catholic persecution he studied for the priesthood at the English seminary at Douai in France. He then returned to England but was arrested and executed in 1654 – many years later, in 1930, his body was brought to Westminster Cathedral in London, where it lies in a side chapel. He is numbered among the English Martyrs, whose feast day is celebrated this week, on Tuesday 4 May.

Catholic heritage in Britain



Joanna Moorhead visits Samlesbury Hall in Lancashire.



2 MAY 2021

5TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

YEAR B

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK I