

Preface

This book is an introduction to the remarkable life of Charles Plomer Hopkins. It started life as a thesis.¹ I have reduced the number of footnotes, adjusted the text to make it readable, added the results of further research and completely restructured the whole. Those who need more detail will find it in the thesis, together with a full bibliography.

The book straddles the twin subjects of trade unionism among seafarers and the Christian sea apostolate. Trade unionism has been dealt with extensively by others, the sea apostolate less so, but neither with any particular attention to Hopkins. In combining the two disciplines I have tried to indicate the background to industrial organisation for those who study the sea apostolate, and vice versa. I first encountered Hopkins in Peter Anson's *Call of the Cloister* in 1964. As I tried to discover more about Hopkins it became apparent that here was an important but forgotten man, and somebody Anson neither understood nor knew much about.

A major problem has been in sourcing Hopkins. I used the archives of the National Union of Seamen and the Shipping Federation in Warwick University's Modern Records Centre. Documents kept there appear in footnotes with the prefix 'Mss'. Alton Abbey, which Hopkins founded, seemed an obvious and promising source of information but proved reluctant to open its archives for me until the first abbot allowed me to see copies of Hopkins's publication, *The Messenger*, at the Abbey. I managed to read as far as 1912 in the time available. Dom Andrew Johnson, the Abbey librarian, generously made a copy of his own study available, which was then in its early stages. I have made little progress with Alton Abbey since the first abbot's departure. *The Nautical Guildsman*, *Shipmates*, and others of Hopkins's work are in the British Library. I am grateful

to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Librarian of Lambeth Palace Library for allowing me to see those records of Archbishop Davidson which refer to Hopkins. The Family Welfare Association kindly gave permission for me to see files in the Greater London Records Office. Society for the Propagation of the Gospel papers held at Rhodes House Library, Oxford, contain correspondence with colonial bishops. Many references to Hopkins were found in *Proceedings* and some newspapers held in the India Office Library. Most newspapers were consulted at the Newspaper Library, Colindale, in North London. St Andrew's Waterside Church Mission records were made available by The Missions to Seamen (now The Mission to Seafarers).

There have been frustrations. It seems that many documents relating to Hopkins and his work in the field of seamen's welfare were thrown away at Alton Abbey in the 1950s. Japanese action during the Second World War accounted for the absence of Rangoon church papers. I failed to find a complete run of Calcutta newspapers. Surviving records of Holy Trinity parish, Shoreditch, carry no mention of Hopkins, so it has not been possible to verify his version of events during his stay there. Union records for the period before and during the strike are at best patchy and often non-existent. Havelock Wilson, the Union President, ended volume one of his autobiography just as he met Hopkins ... but never wrote volume two.

There have been pleasures, too. I record my thanks to those who have been specially helpful. Dr Tony Mason of Warwick University supervised the original thesis. He also suggested the title of this work. The late Joseph Kyaw Zan of Burma confirmed for me the destruction of Rangoon church records. Stephen Friend of what was then the University College of Ripon and York St John pointed me towards FWA records. The late Fr Gabriel Sanford CR checked community records at Mirfield for me. The Rev. Canon N. Panter generously provided an extract from the diary of his late father, The Rev. C.E. Panter. Dr Herma Barz provided translations from the German. Alton Abbey's first abbot could not have been more helpful. The Diocese of Southwell granted study leave. The Rev. Canon Dr Michael Austin gave patient encouragement. Dr David M. Williams of Leicester University indicated various nineteenth century leaflets. Hopkins's grand-niece, Mrs Janet Rees, explained details about the family. Abner K. Pratt II kindly helped by investigating records at Cape Cod. Dr Alston Kennerley, Plymouth University, provided the

reference to Hopkins in Shalimar and has been a constant source of advice, encouragement and friendship. I am also grateful to Dr Jan Settington, Plymouth University, for her helpful comments. The final text would have been much worse without the editorial skills of Elaine Proudlove and Rachel Baguley.

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