

## William Burreby de Morland, a Catholic martyr in 1537

This text, which was published in the 2011 winter edition of *Le monde Berrubey*, reminds us that the earliest Berrube or Berrubey traces found around Rouen, since 1540, belonged to a family that probably left England at the beginning of the XVth century. They may have arrived by Harfleur, an English colony from 1415 to 1450, before settling in the neighborhood, the *Pays de Caux*, and in Rouen. They probably settled in Rouen because of the evolution of the textile trades. During the XVIth century, our ancestors still had a distant kinship in England, people who were probably Catholics in great number. Tradition was then shook up by a profound crisis set off by King Henry VIII. The will of this Tudor to divorce from his spouse Catherine d'Aragon led to a break with the Roman Catholic Church, an event that certainly had an influence on the life of our cousins still living in England.

Our ancestors remained faithful to the Catholic Church in Normandy. We know for instance that **Marin Berrube** was clerk at Rouen in the 1560s and that he was attached to the bishopric. In 1989 his signature appeared on page 1 of our second issue of *Le monde Berrubey*. It was dated 1588, more than 425 years ago, while he was the priest in charge of Saint Cande-le-Jeune, a parish in Rouen. We didn't find traces of Protestantism among people named Berrubé, Bérubé or Barubé from the area of Rouen. It could have been different in Dieppe, the Protestant movement being very strong there, while it was also active in Rouen and elsewhere in Upper Normandy around 1560-1570.

It's quite possible that our ancestors had come before then from the *Midlands* (from the Daventry area for instance), where the surname was sometime ending in « be » instead of « by ». We can't however completely exclude that they came from the North, Yorkshire or Lincolnshire, where the surname was always ending in « by » at that time. According to Emilia Jamroziak quoted in an earlier paper, these people (descending from the Danes in good number) were fervent Catholic not very inclined to change, apparently as conservative as their Normandy cousins. We quoted André Siegfried in Volume II of *Les Bérubé d'hier et d'aujourd'hui*, page 16, about the nature of these Normans: in his view, they didn't like change. This makes me think that people from northern England, in part *Dane* descendants, were probably as different to other Englishmen as the Normans to other Frenchmen. And if they were from the *Midlands*, our ancestors were probably Anglo-Normans (or Normans from England if you prefer), who had come from France with the invasion of 1066 or following it.

In the mid-1530s, Henry VIII closed monasteries and priories, a decision which unleashed a storm: *Now after the suppression of the smaller monasteries Yorkshiremen were furious*<sup>1</sup>. The movement of opposition that followed during the fall of 1536 had nevertheless a pacific name, the *Pilgrimage of Grace*<sup>2</sup>. At the same time, this pilgrimage led to a rebellion in the south of Yorkshire and mainly, in

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<sup>1</sup> Jamroziak, page 33.

<sup>2</sup> *Pilgrimage of Grace*, a subject treated in the third episode of the series *The Tudors* which was presented on the CBC in the fall of 2009.

Lincolnshire, which started after the closure of the Cistercian Abbey of Louth Park near Lincoln:

*With support from local gentry, a rebel force, whose size has been estimated at up to 40,000, marched on Lincoln & by October 6 had occupied Lincoln Cathedral, demanding the freedom to continue as practising Catholics & protection for the treasures of Lincolnshire churches. The rebellion was effectively ended on October 10, 1536, when King Henry sent word for the occupiers to disperse or face the forces of Charles Brandon, 1st Duke of Suffolk, which had already been mobilised.<sup>3</sup>*

Those events are of a particular interest to us. Among the men who were arrested, there was a priest, who was also a monk from Louth, named **William Burreby**, also known as Morland. The spelling of his surname was certainly not familiar to people from London because it is written Burraby, Burrobe or Borrowby in the papers related to his trial. If he was originally from Morland, he could belong to an old lineage of Berubys<sup>4</sup> from West Yorkshire. He was then accused of plotting against the King, in accordance with the Treason Act just adopted in 1534 at the request of Henry VIII. His trial was held on March 26, 1537 and he was executed three days later, on March 29. It is said about him:

*... made his deposition with frankness and simplicity, and no attempt to save himself at the expense of others. He was swept into the mob at Louth whether he would or not, but afterwards seems to have played his part willingly enough. He did what he could to prevent acts of violence, saving the life of John Heneage, the chancellor's proctor, under the market cross, and thrusting through the crowd a little later to shrive and help the fallen servant of Lord Burgh. He owned that he had for a while worn sword and buckler; at another time a 'breastplate and sleeves of mail with a gorget.' (fn. 30) It is scarcely wonderful that when conspicuous examples were selected for execution his name could not be passed over<sup>5</sup>.*

In a document establishing a list of the accused, he is identified as follow: Wm. Burreby of Louth, clk., monk of the late monastery of Louth Park. The proof against him showed at the trial that William Burreby was carried away by anger. In The King's Reformation, G.W. Bernard showed nevertheless skepticism about the alleged role of William (page 315)<sup>6</sup>; *a more sceptical reading would present him as stirring and co-ordinating*. For this writer, he also had to defend himself against the accusation of having stirred up people in different abbeys: Meaux, Byland and Rielvaux, in Yorkshire, as well as where the insurrection started.

Despite the arguments provided for his defense, he was condemned and executed. He was later recognized as a martyr on a list constituted by the English Catholic Church.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.lonympics.co.uk/EnglishrevoltsunderTudors.htm>

<sup>4</sup> The surname was also written Bereby or Berheby according to the *Kirkby's Inquest*, London 1867, p. 493, which is phonetically closed to Burreby, while coming from the Scandinavian name Bergebi or Bergaby, the g erased.

<sup>5</sup> 'Houses of Cistercian monks: The abbey of Louth Park', *A History of the County of Lincoln: Volume 2* (1906), pp. 138-141. URL: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=38005>

<sup>6</sup> <http://books.google.ca/books?id=HOiXAhKkTNEC&pg=PA314&dq=burreby&hl=fr#PPA700,M1>