



# HAAS

## Heythrop Association of Alumni and Staff

Edition Five

December 2008

**W**ELCOME TO THE FIFTH EDITION OF THE HAAS MAGAZINE, timed again to coincide with the Presentation Day celebrations, this year being held at Imperial College. With the numbers of new students rising steadily year on year, membership of the Association is also on the increase; there are currently somewhere in the region of 3,500 students with whom HAAS are actively in touch, dating back to 1970. It is always thought provoking to think of those who have studied at Heythrop, and what they have gone on to do. In this edition there is a reflection on the way that theology and the arts can go hand in hand, from the first-hand experience of one of our alumni. There's also much historical information in the form of a trip to 'Old' Heythrop in Oxfordshire, and an illustrated talk of the 'New' Heythrop site, the Maria Assumpta Centre, in Kensington.

I'm delighted to say that the "old" and the "new" are happily co-existing on the HAAS Committee, freshly elected at the recent AGM. Although my election as president on 4<sup>th</sup> November hasn't received as much coverage as a certain Mr. Obama's election to a presidential office on the same night, I'm sure he couldn't have found himself working with a better team of people. Mary Black, Amanda Williams, Moira Siara, Bill Russell and Alan Rainer have all agreed to continue for another year, and this year we're delighted to welcome two new members to the committee in Imelda Pye and Helen Granger to ably assist in HAAS undertakings. All this is, of course, backed up by the College resources, particularly in the person of Annabel Clarkson (Academic Registrar) and assisted by Mariann Jakob who works unstintingly to keep our expanding database up to date.

Please check the website from time to time - we'll try to keep it relevant and informative, and welcome news from any former students as to their current location and activities. News and articles for the next edition are always welcome as we aim to bring together all those who form part of Heythrop's wider family.

*Simon Gillespie*  
HAAS President

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*Sister John Mary Northcote ra  
and her trusty slide projector*

### AGM Presentation

After the conclusion of the formal business part of our AGM in November, we were delighted to welcome Sister John Mary Northcote ra to address the meeting. Accompanied by a glass of wine (always good after an AGM), Sr John Mary showed the Association about 60 slides of images of the Maria Assumpta site, taken during the Centre's 150 year history. From cows and pigs being kept in Kensington to the fire that nearly burned down the Chapel, we saw the whole history of the site and its many uses during the long ownership by the Sisters of the Assumption.

And not only were we able to see the slide views, but thanks to Sr John Mary's long association with the Maria Assumpta Centre, and her nearly-encyclopaedic knowledge of what has gone before, we entertained to many first-hand accounts and reminiscences of the life and times of 23 Kensington Square. Whilst the Centre has been used for many different purposes over the years, the constant in all this has been the religious teaching element which has always been the *raison d'être* of all that has happened here. Whether it be Peter Vardy and a power-point presentation, or a Sister teaching human biology with the aid of a full-size skeleton, the work of the Centre has always been to train young (and not so young) minds to go out into the world. Thanks to Sr John Mary these memories haven't been forgotten.

# Heythrop College

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

## BA in Abrahamic Religions

Heythrop College, the specialist Philosophy and Theology College of the University of London, has launched the first degree in Europe focusing on the three great monotheistic religions – Christianity, Islam and Judaism. The BA in Abrahamic Religions is a degree of the University of London and, as would be expected, is academically rigorous and carefully balanced.

The course has been designed with the assistance of experts from the three traditions and teachers will be drawn from practicing members of each faith. Dr Mohammad Shomali of the University of Qom in Iran has advised on the Islamic part of the course throughout the last academic year. The course will cover texts, law, ethics, philosophy and other aspects of the three great monotheistic faiths.

The Coexist Foundation has generously agreed to provide funding of £2000 per student towards the cost of this three year degree. A limited number of places are still available for this degree which commences at the end of September 2008.

Further details are available on the College web site at [www.heythrop.ac.uk](http://www.heythrop.ac.uk) or contact can be made with the Assistant Registrar, Anthony Charles, on 020 7795 4202.

### BURSARIES FOR FORMER HEYTHROP STUDENTS

Heythrop is offering a 50% bursary from the normal EU fee for all former Heythrop students who have completed an undergraduate degree in the last seven years and who wish to study for a taught Masters degree at the College from 2008/9. However due to new government financing regulations for Universities, the College will no longer receive any HEFCE funding for students who already have a Masters degree (irrespective of subject or where the Masters degree was taken). These bursaries are, therefore, available subject to the following conditions:

- Normal entry requirements for the course being applied for are met
- The applicant must have completed an undergraduate degree at Heythrop within the last seven years
- The applicant must not already hold a Masters or higher degree from any University.

Please contact Annabel Clarkson if further details are needed – [a.clarkson@heythrop.ac.uk](mailto:a.clarkson@heythrop.ac.uk)



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Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2009 - 7.00pm - Heythrop College

**Theology Themed Study Evening in the Year of Saint Paul  
Presented by Sr Josette Zammit-Mangion IBVM**

Although the title of this Study Evening has yet to be announced it promises to be an informative and thought-provoking time, highlighting some of the issues in contemporary theological debate about Saint Paul  
Josette Zammit-Mangion is on the staff as a Visiting Lecturer  
for a number of years,  
and HAAS are delighted to welcome her to address our February meeting

*Please email [simon.chrism@btinternet.com](mailto:simon.chrism@btinternet.com) to apply for free tickets for this event*

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2009 - 7.00pm - Faulkner Hall and Heythrop College Gardens

**" Summer Success "**

**An evening to celebrate exam success and welcome members both new and old**

A Cheese and Wine evening to celebrate the end of the academic year  
Open to all HAAS members for a small charge  
and to those just finishing their studies (and so joining the Association) free of charge

*Please see the website: <http://www.heythrop.ac.uk/index.php/content/view/40/67/>  
for further details; or email [alumni@heythrop.ac.uk](mailto:alumni@heythrop.ac.uk) or [simon.chrism@btinternet.com](mailto:simon.chrism@btinternet.com)*

**Summer Success - June 2008**

*The story in pictures . . . .*



# The “Luther Tour”

*Georgina Forbes writes about the tour organised earlier this year by Robert Hampson*

The scene starts at Stansted Airport, mid-day on a busy Saturday. Robert Hampson is trying to recognise his little flock amongst the semi organised queues at the Ryanair check in desk. By the time we board he knows we are all present and correct, the plane takes off and we disappear into cloud. Fortunately we fly above in the clear sunlight, but have to descend through it in order to land at Altenburg. Our first sight of East Germany is of a small airfield, surrounded by, what look like, wartime camouflaged hangers. As we draw to a halt, we are at an air terminal that reminds me of Harare in the 1960's, very small, with family and friends of incoming passengers waving behind the perimeter fence.

We travelled to the Kloster Helfta, Eisleben by taxi and had our first opportunity to study the countryside. We passed through miles and miles of agricultural land punctuated by clusters of slowly turning wind turbines. On arrival there was time to unpack before dinner and an evening in which to introduce ourselves and learn a few more details of our movements over the coming week.



*The Guest House at Kloster Helfta*

Sunday, off to Eisleben for morning worship, Lutheran style, at St Peter and Paul, the Church where Luther was baptised. The service was in German and we sat for most of the time, standing for the reading of the Gospel and towards the end. Even the hymns were sung seated. There was a beautiful golden triptych behind the altar and a large crucifix on the left side of the sanctuary. Between the altar and the congregation stood the renovated font where Luther was baptised. After the service we were taken on a guided tour of the house where Luther was born and given some free time to wander around the town and

St Andrew's before travelling to Mansfeld where we were shown round a castle that was so well fortified that it resisted all attempts to take it during the thirty years war. It is now used for youth activities. Below in the town, Luther's parents lived and Luther attended the local school.

Monday, and we had our first experience of travelling by train. We arrived in Erfurt in time to have a guided tour of the Cathedral. This beautiful building was approached by a wide flight of steps from a large town square. In a



largely Lutheran area, it is a Catholic Cathedral and has a Franciscan Church beside it. One gem in the Cathedral was a striking triptych of Mary and the unicorn. In the afternoon we visited the monastery where Luther trained as a monk and was ordained. It is now a museum and we were shown round by a local guide. At one point she explained that the library had been bombed during the war and we were aware that it was British bombers who had been responsible. Later we were permitted some free time to wander around and admire the architecture or sample German beer and/or ice cream, before heading back to Eisleben and dinner.

On Tuesday we were due to attend a talk on Luther's life. I have to confess that having read two biographies before departure, I played truant and visited Leipzig. A visit to Thomaskirche, where Bach used to play, was a must, as was trying local sausages. In the evening we were asked to consider Luther's theological imperative, 'Justification by Faith'.

On Wednesday we arrived at Wartburg in time to have lunch before a guided tour of the fortress. This is the castle where Luther was kept after he was placed under a ban by the Emperor. Returning from the Diet of Worms Luther was 'kidnapped' by some of his friends and taken to Wartburg. Here he lived under the assumed name of Junker Georg. It was here he translated the New Testament into German and wrote

numerous sermons and pamphlets. Back in the town of Eisenach we had time either to explore the town or visit the Bach museum before returning to the trains.

Thursday was another early start as we headed for Wittenberg, the town where Luther lived, lectured and preached for much of his adult life. We visited the Church where he posted his ninety-five theses and St Marien, where he frequently preached and which contains an altar triptych painted by Lucas Cranach, and The Luther House. We learned that Lutheranism nearly retained three sacraments and these are painted on the triptych. However after later modifications Lutheranism retained two sacraments, baptism and communion. We passed Melancthon's house and Cranach's. Even the spot where the Papal Bull was burned is commemorated. We could have spent more time just absorbing the atmosphere. The town was not crowded and walking along virtually car free roads was a joy.

On Friday we packed early. There was just time for half an hour in the meditation garden and a short Communion Service before heading back to the airport.

I have only been able to give a short review of the principal places we visited. There is no room to describe what it was like to spend a week in a country where one did not know the language or the currency. The buildings were very different from those in England and the pace of life appeared much slower. There was little chance of getting run down even if one forgot that the traffic drove on the right side of the road. There was relatively little traffic. The trains travelled at a sedate pace. Mining has clearly been an important activity as there were slagheaps littered round the countryside. Wind farms were another feature of the landscape and I am still puzzled by the 'allotments' which proliferated. Some were beautifully maintained and even appeared to be lived on. Thank go to Robert for organising the tour. We went in search of Luther, but we were also given a glimpse of another culture. It was fascinating.

*Georgina Forbes*



# Heythrop Revisited

*Dr William Russell recounts the reminiscences of a return visit to Heythrop, Oxfordshire  
given by Gerry J Hughes*

What is the connection between the Twelfth Earl of Shrewsbury, the English Congregation of Jesuits and the owner of Oxford United Football Club? Instead of waiting for the next issue, I'll give you the answer now. But at least forty members of the Association already know or can guess the answer as they were those who gathered in the mist in Kensington Square outside the "new" Heythrop for a day at the old Heythrop.

Yes, the answer is that they all, at some time, were or are the owners of a stately Palladian pile in the Oxfordshire countryside. The portents were good as Fr. Gerry J Hughes got on the coach in Oxford and the sun broke through as we were driven along the mile-long carriage-way towards the magnificent house. Alas, it's not the Jesuits' any longer, but instead belongs to Firoz Kassam. Expelled from Uganda in the late 1960s, Firoz progressed from opening a fish and chip shop in Brixton to becoming hugely wealthy.



*Part of the formal gardens  
as seen from the Main House*

But enough of worldly matters. We came to see how some of our mentors lived and discovered that, although they lived in most beautiful and impressive surroundings, they had managed to capture the austerity of the religious life by locating the toilet block some distance away in the grounds. Even more so when the facilities froze in the winter! Our group, joined by others who had made their own way to Heythrop Park, as it is now known, were entertained by Gerry Hughes who gave a running commentary on the history and people during a conducted tour of the building.



*Heythrop (Park) today*

Amazingly, the only changes to most rooms have been in the wall coverings and carpeting. Only the Moral Theology lecture room has seen structural change since it is now, in a strange twist of fate, the bar. And only one room has lost some of its grandeur and that was the former Bishop's Room which at one time was very grand indeed and is now an anteroom.

If you visit the web-site of Heythrop Park, in the photograph of the house you will notice an east and west wing, both of which were added by the Jesuits when they bought the building in 1920. The wings were accommodation for the students, one wing for the incoming Philosophy students

and one for the more mature Theologians. The two groups rarely met, the exception being the annual football match in which the (unnamed) Rector joined the Theologians. On one occasion the Rector, who was himself inclined towards vigorous tackling, became the



*Fr Gerry reminiscing*

victim of a sharp tackle from one of the new group. "That boy will go far", was the general consensus. No marks for guessing who that boy became!

It was a great day out and an absolute bargain at £20. If you go on your own you may need that sort of money for tips!



*The Community Cemetery*

*William Russell*

# The Arts and Theology: Creativity and Communication

*Anna Wheeler graduated from Heythrop in 2003 and later trained as an actor  
She is a member of Radius, the Religious Drama Society of Great Britain*

*Here she reflects on her ongoing examination of the benefits of the arts, theology and belief, socially, culturally and emotionally*

'The arts are part of being human', says Jude Kelly (BBC Radio 4 *Loose Ends*, 26.7.08), former director of the West Yorkshire Playhouse, now at London's Southbank. And I think a great many people would agree with Kelly if they thought about the arts in their broadest sense. Below I discuss how the two link for me in a way maybe people wouldn't expect - perhaps controversially in some cases.

Looking back on my study of theology I realise I did it because of an unstoppable urge to look into the human condition and communicate my curiosities. I saw people opening up and becoming more approachable, and being 'present' human beings; we all saw how easy it is to be able to live 'absently' - what I call living, but not being alive. University was a safe, thriving and raw environment to do this. I was 'allowed' to analyse and comment on a philosopher's arguments for the existence of God and it was trendy, believe it or not, to do this. Likewise, I went to drama school three years later in 2006 to do the same thing (I also happen to enjoy acting). Both subjects contain one central paradox: by studying both, I felt more anchored in the world and therefore more able to face it but at the same time, less able to comprehend it. With drama especially, I escaped from the world by immersing myself in an imitated reality but at the same time sought to understand it (the world).

Isn't this one of the reasons why people go to the theatre? - as an audience member you watch a play to briefly dismiss reality but by watching 'real' people on stage, some thing in some way will resonate with you. David Hare in his terrific book *Obedience, Struggle and Revolt* has the same thought: "It is hard to understand why anyone would choose to go into the theatre in the first place unless they were interested in relating what they make happen on a stage to what is happening off it" (p.108). As a violinist, I also agree with Daniel

Barenboim when he says of another arts discipline: "music provides the possibility, on the one hand, to escape from life but, on the other, to understand life much better. It is one of the best ways to learn about human nature."

Investigation into anything can be troubling, even if ultimately fulfilling. But it is unavoidable; we do it just by being. But why was I so interested in thinking about life via two potentially emotionally draining disciplines? I didn't need to choose them and moreover, I didn't need to ask questions at all about humanity and the meaning of life. Did I?

During one of my Alexander Technique classes at drama school, I got talking to my tutor about this. She reassured me I was not alone and explained that her teacher, Walter Carrington, a pupil of Alexander, had a choice to either become a Jesuit or a teacher of Alexander Technique (used by many people, not just actors and musicians). He chose the latter because he felt he could still reach people through creative work on posture and balance; a less explicit way of bringing people to their centre, and yes, allowing them to be present - a desire I would say all people want for themselves whether people of faith, actors, a combination of these or nothing to do with art or belief at all. We all search, some less obviously than others.

Joseph Rowntree (we've all had his sweets), another pupil of Alexander, said we all desire the Unknown and that the Unknown is approached via creativity. The Known on the other hand is simply 'habit' (what I called earlier living absently). The latter is unfortunately the category we fall into because of the pressures of daily life. If we wish to have mortgages and bread on the table, we succumb to patterns to earn our wage and 'stay safe'. We have routines that are often un-enjoyable - we knock ourselves out in order to live (funny irony

that) and we call this being alive. Alexander Technique is employed for this reason with actors, to release them from habit and find neutrality and honesty with which they can approach their craft. Another paradox: the stage is the home of pretence, yet there exists no more of a genuine, unrehearsed place to be, and where any element of routine in fact results in the worst acting. Every moment is new as if for the first time, and cherished. Life is not a rehearsal and the stage and film set is the forum for 'stuff' that goes on in life.

Most people assume my main interest has to be religious drama but this would be too much of an easy link. I am interested in anything artistic that challenges us to think how we treat the world and its contents (both abstract and concrete), and if in the process we ask "Is there a God?" or "Is there something rather than nothing?" then this is even better. In the Beckett season at the Barbican in 2006, there was a brilliant lecture on his influence and the meaning of his plays. There is an argument as to whether or not Beckett's plays are symbolic or not. Sir Peter Hall says *Waiting for Godot* is, and when he directed a production of it during the Cold War, it carried with it overtones of this period (much like Miller's *The Crucible* during 1950s America). Other commentators say that Beckett is not symbolic but is about actualities and possibilities. In *Godot*, he literally writes about the human 'state': what is it to wait? What are we really waiting for? What is it to wait - when there is the possibility of nothing happening? And in *Godot*, nothing does. Is it a play about nothingness where we see characters in a state of anxiety and despair? It is absurd, tragic and at times funny. So is this not something? This is not nothing. There is stuff happening here and if we were not living as hectic lives as we possibly could consumed with progress (yes sorry folks, routine), are Estragon, Lucky and Vladimir not us? Take away our routine and we would be searching

and waiting for something to happen (and I'm talking about 'social life' routine as well as work - take away the pub and the office, and anarchy would reign).

Take Lucky's speech which goes from a "crazed jumble into one of unmissable significance. Despite our hopes, moral pretensions, scientific advances - everything - humanity continues to 'stink and dwindle', 'waste and pine'. Even the smug, bullish Pozzo is left cramming his hat...over his ears in an effort to avoid the truth." (Benedict Nightingale, *The Times*, April 2006). Symbolic or not, because of its absurdity and unreality, *Godot* and other plays less 'real' paradoxically become terrifyingly lifelike. Hare calls this "artistic paradox": "that by telling lies we reach truth" (p.73).

It is not for nothing that Plato thought music should be banned because it could bring audiences to a state of frenzy. Barenboim again: "music teaches me that you cannot separate the heart from the head. If they don't go hand in hand something is wrong" (*Radio Times*, September 2001). I recall the amazing Stephen Fry at one BAFTA Award Ceremony earnestly saying how films and the arts were so necessary in a world like ours; keep creating, he said, as this is humanity at its best. Hare says: "The world is not tired. Our reactions to the world are not tired. What becomes tired is the deadly habitude of our descriptions of that world. The artist exists only to externalise what we all do internally anyway. By making the descriptions new, we do not create alternative worlds. We remind people of the breathtaking beauty of the original" (p.86).

The artist David Hockney at his "Life, Love, Art" exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery in 2006/7 remarked: "What an artist is trying to do for people, is bring them closer to something, because of course art is about sharing: you wouldn't be an artist unless you wanted to share an experience, a thought."

Sharing. Yes. But what do humans do most? Answer: Conceal. Emotionally and culturally. And these stunt us socially. We live in our own bubbles as individuals and as groups, but we don't break out of those. We don't even think about the impact of the "way we live now" on others. All art forms can burst

bubbles. We should let them. Continuing the theme of sharing - what about the "bringing people together" aspect of the arts and faith? It does do this, as much as any church, in fact these days unfortunately, more so. Big names in all artistic fields have used their talent to do this in order to send a message. Because of the urgency in their art and the way it is related to the common man, John Lennon, Yoko Ono, Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Sting, Bono, Annie Lennox, Bob Geldof, David Hare, Harold Pinter, Al Gore, George Clooney, Bruce Springsteen...have made our ears prick up at some point or another in relation to Vietnam, Africa, Iraq and so on, because of their artistic clout. Although we should remember that as there is a curtain call for performers in these charity concerts, there will be no curtain call for the people they are trying to help unless we all think about how we live. Mandela has already warned us.

Good religion, like any decent art form, should bring this home and the word 'art' in the quote below could easily be replaced by religion. Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George* is a musical about this very experience: George has lived in his art and put life on hold; I am suggesting we put neither life nor art on hold and use one to enrich the other: "an acceptance by the younger George that attachment to people in the form of love is as crucial to life as art" (Nicholas De Jongh, *Evening Standard*, 24.5.2006). If the arts presently have the edge in declaring the message, that much maligned institution of church gives form and structure in which the roles of becoming vulnerable, sharing pain and confronting tyrants can take place.

My conclusion is nothing surprising: neither religion or the arts can be studied or lived in a vacuum. People are less scared of theatre. You can go for a good night out and in the process be presented with a range of issues that you can think about, or not. There will always be an entertainment aspect I suppose; I'm not sure you would call a sermon entertaining (although whether you would call films like *Boys Don't Cry* or *Saving Private Ryan* more entertaining than a sermon on eternal life I doubt, since the possibility of redemption in the sermon is resounding whereas the sickness of humanity in the two films is quite opposite). The director of the second of the two films, Stephen Spielberg, says that you can pay

psychiatrists a lot of money to work things out for you, or you can pay a film director to do it instead. He has a point. But I am not slamming Ministers of Religion or Psychiatrists and Psychotherapists: the theatre is not therapy and nor is religion. A performance of drama must be grounded in the real world - where it is not, the actor fails his or her audience and in a profounder way does the human condition an injustice. Theology likewise has often failed God's people by failing to address their human condition.

These two disciplines remind us who we are, what we are not and perhaps what we could become either for better or for worse, if we're not careful - and in some cases, it is too late to right wrongs. As soon as we form an opinion about a character in a film, we need to remember that "realistic fiction" is no oxymoron, but facts, told as story. Take this next example: without the West's ruthless hold on those countries it knows to be at the mercy of its trade and so-called development, films such as *The Constant Gardener* and *Blood Diamond* would not exist; in an ideal world the hellish subject matter in the films would indeed only be fiction. Although like all things, the vile big picture is only a magnified version of the vile small one: while we as individuals continue to wear diamonds, we will hardly stop to think how many kids we have killed going down a mine to get them for us.

I'll leave it to two other much more eloquent and experienced people to illustrate this with Sir Richard Eyre's quote from his Foreword to Arthur Miller's autobiography *Timebends*: "he [Miller] wasn't a political play writer, nor was he a moralist; and he was only a realist in the sense that he was concerned with the realities of the forces that affect people's lives rather than the superficial appearance of reality...If there was a touch of the evangelist in his writing, his message was this: there is such a thing as society and art ought to be used to change it. Though it's hard to argue that art saves lives, feeds the hungry or sways votes, *Death of a Salesman* comes as close as any writer can get to art as a balm for social concern."

Anna Wheeler

For information on Radius, please see the website [www.radius.org.uk](http://www.radius.org.uk)  
We have a great deal to offer and are a very open minded bunch of people



# Kevin Donovan SJ - An Appreciation

*Homily preached at the Requiem Mass for Kevin Donovan SJ, by Gerry J Hughes, SJ*

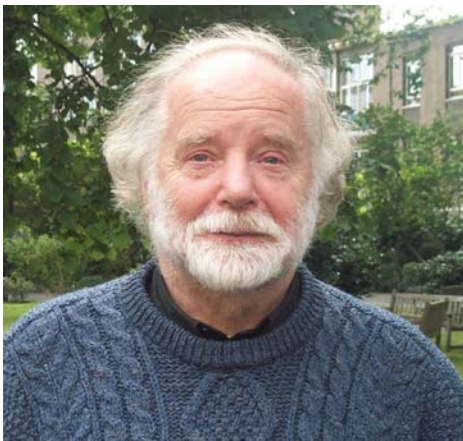
Kevin Donovan was born in Northern France, near Cambrai, the family home of his mother and her family. His father died when Kevin was only 10 months old which must have been a terrible blow to Kevin and to his mother. But she was a very remarkable woman; she had a strong sense of purpose as she faced the challenge of bringing up her only child alone; but she also had a sparkling, very French, élan, an artistic flair combined with a lively sense of fun. It is not hard to see that it was these very characteristics which she succeeded in passing on to Kevin her son.

The Gospel of today's Mass reminds us that in our Father's house there are many rooms; and perhaps, somewhat fancifully, we can see in that phrase a kind of metaphor for Kevin himself. For he was at home in many different milieux, and his talents were correspondingly many and various.

Perhaps the most obvious of these was his gift for music. It was a gift which revealed itself in many different settings. I recall the first time I ever heard him accompany himself on the guitar, singing the old French folksong 'Chante, rossignol, chante', with such plaintive beauty that I shall never forget it. It was sheer magic. In our undergraduate days he could flourish in the enormous Oxford Bach choir (where one could almost sing God Save the Queen in the back row and not be noticed), as well as in a much smaller group which was one of the first to specialise in very early polyphony, and where every breath was crucial. His tastes extended from Josquin des Prez to Harry Belafonte's banana man. He played the flute with verve; he accompanied on the piano (very forgivingly) my efforts to sing some Hugo Wolf songs, and while he was teaching at his old school Beaumont College, he trained a fife and drum band for the Combined Cadet Force. Now there's versatility for you!

He was a gifted linguist. Quite apart from being bilingual in English and French, he had the kind of feel for the Classical languages which eventually led to his getting a First in Greats at Oxford. Here again, he treated his studies with a characteristic combination of love for the literature - his special subject was Greek Lyric Poetry in which he took a lovely romantic pleasure - and a kind of irreverent delight, for instance in the nonsense word, to phlathothrat, which turns up in an Aristophanes play and means 'sound without sense'. Once he'd discovered it, he somehow made it his own, and often took a wicked pleasure in describing not a few lectures as pure phlathothrat.

He was, then, academically very gifted. Yet I do not think he ever really believed that he was; certainly he quite unjustifiably played down his own abilities in philosophy or theology, somehow discounting the fact that he taught liturgy at Heythrop College for many years, and did so most effectively. Perhaps, though, he rightly saw that his temperament was not that of the dedicated professional scholar; and wrongly thought that this was an intellectual shortcoming, when he might rather have recognised it as an indication that it was in direct pastoral contact with people that his true gifts showed at their best. For that is where he did his best work, and where his scholarship and intelligence really bore most fruit. Kevin was a devoted priest in the Jesuit parishes in Stamford Hill and in Wimbledon. Here are few vignettes of



theology at the service of the young, sent to me by people who appreciated him precisely as a priest in touch with his parishioners of all ages and backgrounds: A child asked him "what will heaven be like - what age will we be - will we recognise each other?". Kevin's reply went a bit like this - "Well, we don't have the exact answer to this - we haven't got there yet - but I am sure of this - we will be at our best!"

At a Prep School Mass a little boy of about 5/6 years old asked him "Does God love the Devil?" - a moment's pause and then Kevin replied "I think that God does love the Devil but the Devil has forgotten that God loves him"

The serious theology is there - there is nothing at all that the kids would ever have to unlearn -- but it is transformed: not dry, but warm; not couched in learned terms, it is yet deep, giving to those children a true taste of the reality of God. And how did it all go down? Well, one child, after being introduced to some famous Jesuits - Ignatius, Francis Xavier, Pierre Favre and the rest - was asked to draw his own image of what a great

Jesuit might look like: what he produced was a drawing of a Jesuit with wild hair, wild beard, playing a flute & wearing open toed sandals. No prizes for guessing who that might have been! As a priest, he was large-hearted, unfailingly welcoming, sensitive and wise. His own faith was personal, committed, perhaps most easily seen in what he shared with his parishioners. One person told me that they had been brought back from the fringes of unbelief to the heart of their faith just by Kevin's sensitive understanding and gentle example. Perhaps what really made him tick was the effort was to convey to people something of the reality of a God who is beyond the words of even the most gifted scholar.

For all his abilities with people, beneath the bravura, the humour, the warmth and the magnetism, he was in himself quite a shy person. He had more than a tinge of self-doubt; and all the time I knew him he had to cope with a life punctuated by emotional highs and lows. I vividly remember asking how some talk he had given had gone, and he said it was 'Another sickening success' - as if he himself could not believe in the gifts which everyone else could see. His life as a Jesuit was quite bleak at times, especially in the earlier years when Jesuit training was quite ill-adapted to his temperament, but he consoled himself with the thought 'We'll outlive them!' - as indeed we did. Yet in a strange way the very difficulties he had to surmount brought out the best in him - an unostentatious and yet total dedication, and a deep compassion for others, born of his own personal understanding of how much discipleship could at times cost; cost his students, his parishioners, his Jesuit brethren. Our Lord's parable of the talents does not suggest that even the person with the ten talents found it easy to live a fruitful life in the service of his Master. Nobody who knew Kevin at all well could possibly think his life had been an easy one; yet for that very reason there is a crucial lesson he can still teach us: in the last analysis, what matters is not how we feel about our achievements: the only thing that we are asked to do is to set ourselves steadfastly to be instruments in the hands of God wherever we are. That is what Kevin did; and we may trust that the many rooms of our Father's house are even now resounding to his music, his humour, filled with the love of God, and warmed by the presence of Kevin himself, now and forever 'at his best'.