



H A A S

Heythrop Association of Alumni and Staff

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WHEN THE COLLEGE starts its new Academic Year, this will be the first time that we will be occupying the whole of the site. It will be, for example, the first time that the Student Residence will be run by Heythrop: its 96 bedrooms will be occupied entirely by Heythrop students, the majority of them first year students, with a small number of second and third year students to provide the continuity.

We have also re-furbished the lecture rooms above the theology library; last year, there was not the time to do this, and the place looked shabby. But now, with new carpeting, blinds, furniture, IT projection and screens, it's enormously improved. We've also refurbished another part of the site, the section opposite the theology library called the William Kyle Centre: one lecture room able to take 60 students has been developed, and the second one,

able to take 90 students, is being planned and should be ready for January. These rooms will give us much better space than we've had before and should add to the quality of the student experience at Heythrop.

We continue to have Fordham University, the Jesuit university in New York, as our tenants: they have set up their European theatre studies programme and their business programme in the wing that Heythrop previously used for its lecture rooms (Copleston and Brinkman rooms). Those who come to the College and expect that they will come in by the usual entrance to the right will be surprised to find that this is now occupied by the Royal College of Music who lease this area from us for administration. (I am grateful that it is not used as practice rooms.) The leasing of these parts of the site is part of the overall management of the site: making use of some sections to generate income that supports the main work of the College. But Fordham also gives us the

The Principal explains a little of the changes that have affected Heythrop College since the Jesuits bought the Kensington site

possibility of developing an international partnership that could be profitable for both institutions. This is something we want to explore in the medium term.

Recruitment for the College is well up to the level of last year. At this point, we're expecting 186 students to start their undergraduate studies, and what is notable is the increase in students coming to take the BA in Theology. There seems to be a growing interest in theology, and in 2010 a redesigned version of this degree will be launched. Postgraduate recruitment is also high, with a larger number coming particularly to take the MA in Philosophy. One of the important changes is that the BA in Philosophy, which has been until now a federal degree taught by Heythrop, UCL, Birkbeck and Kings, will now be College-based. Other Colleges have decided to award degrees in their own name, and so the pattern of federal degrees is being discontinued by the University. Heythrop has always been a strong supporter of this collaboration, but it is no longer possible and so we will be taking full responsibility for the BA Philosophy this year.

I am confident that the College will continue to give its students an excellent education and I hope that you continue to take an interest in how the College develops.

John McDade SJ
Principal



The new front entrance to Heythrop College

Being a Missionary at the Home Front

Sr. Anne Falola, OLA, Secretary/ Coordinator of the Missionary Formation, Pontifical Mission Societies (Missio Nigeria) in the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria, recounts some of her experiences after recently returning to Africa

I was quite romantic about coming back to Africa after thirteen years of living and working in other continents: I had spent eleven years working as a missionary in Cordoba, Argentina in South America and the last two years of my time away from Africa was at Heythrop where I did an MA in Spirituality (2006 - 2007). After the time of renewal and updating in England, I was really equipped and energised to continue my missionary work, this time on the home front.

My congregation, Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles (OLA), was founded in France in the nineteenth century for evangelization in Africa and with particularly focus on the promotion of the dignity of the African woman. So it was a thing of joy when I was assigned to start a project at the national level under the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Nigeria and the Department of Mission and Dialogue of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN). The project involves forming Nigerians for mission *ad extra* and *ad intra*. It was an exciting proposal for me and my Institute, especially as we have the legacy of missionary experience of over a century in West Africa. It is irrefutable that Africa, and especially Nigeria (the most populous African country with a population of over 140 million), is a great reservoir of human resources. Most of the African population, although economically poor, are young and promising. The Church is enjoying a bountiful harvest of religious and priestly vocations with a dynamic and participatory laity; this creates an urgent need for formation at the human, theological and spiritual levels. In spite of this great potential there are few facilities for on-going formation and updating. Due to my missionary experience and my studies in spirituality, I am employed by the Bishop's Conference and the Pontifical Mission Societies in Nigeria to organize and coordinate various formation programmes for Nigerian priests, religious and laity.

They have been eighteen exciting and educative months since I came back

to Nigeria. In the first place, thirteen years away have made me a 'stranger' in my own culture. My office is located in Abuja, the new Federal Capital, which was a mere geographical expression when I left the country in 1994. Today, it is a big modern city and, according to statistics, the fastest growing city in the world. Presently, I organise and coordinate three kinds of courses to respond to the most urgent needs. The first one is an Orientation for Missionaries *Ad Extra*, which focuses on Nigerians, mostly priests and religious who have been assigned by their superiors and bishops to work outside the country. It is a two-week intensive programme which touches on many aspects: theological, spiritual, cultural, socio-political and anthropological dimensions of mission in the contemporary world. In the past year, we have had twenty-nine candidates departing to surprisingly diverse destinations: Burkina Faso, Kenya, South Africa, Cameroon, United States of America, Pakistan, Senegal, Australia, United Kingdom, Rwanda, Holland, Ghana, Germany, Malawi, Angola and Tanzania. Each programme was very exciting because of the diversity and the expectant enthusiasm of these new missionaries. Another beautiful part is that I have practical experience on most of the issues facing Nigerians abroad. In Argentina, I did both pastoral and social work in a Latin American setting; and in England I had a part-time job with the Lay Missionary and Volunteer Network (LMVN), where I was the Network Administrator. With others on the team, we shared experiences and prepare volunteers for overseas mission.



The second course we are putting together is for Nigerians who have been assigned to work as missionaries/volunteers in a region of the country different from their own. This has become necessary and urgent due to the cultural disparity in our vast country. The challenge of 'being missionaries to ourselves' entails learning to overcome age-long prejudices and ethnic rivalries and learning to live authentic Christian witness with those who think and behave differently. We are finding this an enriching experience for us as a local Church and a valuable contribution towards building up our national identity.



The third course I organise is what we call 'Floating Institute of Missiology'. This is a mobile programme designed especially to respond to the needs of the teeming lay faithful in Nigeria who hunger and thirst for participation and practical expression of their faith. The Church in Nigeria can boast of the most dynamic laity, always enthusiastic and eager to participate. This course combines theory with course work on varied topics, distant study with group sessions and a practical project to be carried out locally by the participants. This is a slow process as we have to follow up and meet the people where they are, in order to gently spur them to growth.

It is a sheer privilege to be part of this stage of growth in the Nigerian Church. Africans are moving from being mere 'receivers' to being 'givers and receivers'. The generosity and eagerness to learn and to give is palpable. The major stumbling block is the limited resources. Many people cannot avail of the programmes because they cannot afford the cost and I have not yet found Funding Agencies for these programmes. Also, we have no suitable physical

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The Weaker Brother for whom Christ Died

HAAS continued in the tradition of high standards for its study evenings with a presentation on 11 February by Sr. Josette Zammit-Mangion IBVM, a visiting lecturer at the college. Sr. Josette concentrated upon discernment of the type of behaviour which Paul desired within a Christian community. This she did by a close examination of his letters, with special emphasis upon his letters to the Corinthians. Paul had visited Corinth, a port with a multi-cultural population, and his letter to the community was in response to a deputation from the community somewhat later. Paul was distressed to hear that the Christian community was splitting into factions, that sexual immorality was rife, that there were problems regarding mixed marriages and disputes concerning the consumption of food offered to pagan idols. Sr. Josette concentrated on the latter issue to show how Paul dealt with the problem. Although ostensibly an ethical issue, it is one that Paul used in order to illustrate his message and to advocate allowing God to shine through all our actions.

The faction in Corinth who believed it to be morally licit to eat food

previously offered to idols, Paul considered "strong". Those who had qualms over the idea and abstained from eating such food, Paul termed "weak". Then having pronounced the factions strong and weak, he said that those who asserted their right to eat food of idols to be wrong, even though morally correct, insofar as their behaviour caused wounding of their weaker brethren. He held up before the Corinthians the image of Christ. Christ did not hold onto his rights but instead gave them up. In much the same way, Paul spoke of himself as an apostle, having, as such, the right to be supported by the community. He, however, had given up his rights in imitation of Christ. The plea for Christians to imitate Christ is one that permeates all Paul's writings.

Paul viewed the building up of the community to be dependent upon the strong giving up their rights in order to assist the weak since the needs of the weak in society are greater than the rights of the strong. Love does not involve claiming one's way but involves bearing one another's burdens. Indeed, the question is raised of whether there is a place for the concept of rights in the

context of a God who gives up his life for others.

Finally, Sr Josette said that Paul felt that divine assistance would be available for those who tried to imitate Christ and that, in doing so, they would be then transformed. She thought Paul to have been surprised and taken aback to discover the types of problems being experienced by the community in Corinth.

There was a lively question period including a query regarding Paul's attitude towards Jews. Sr. Josette thought that Paul struggled with the concept of Judaism after Christ. His vision of a new creation, whilst solving the situation regarding the Law, did not answer questions concerning the salvation of Jews. She was also asked whether the island upon which Paul was shipwrecked was, in fact, Malta. Although she looked upon Acts as not necessarily historically accurate, Sr. Josette, a native of Malta, felt that the account in Acts fits in well with maritime writings of the time. Perhaps this was just as well, since the day of the study evening was also the day of the Feast of the Shipwreck of St Paul in Malta!

At the Home Front

infrastructure and it can be very frustrating looking for a conducive environment to learn and reflect without distraction. The funding of this new office is a joint collaboration of the Catholic Bishops Conference and the Pontifical Mission Societies; now that the initial setting-up is in place, the next stage is to draw up the long-term plan to consolidate this important ministry.

Together with the challenge of setting up this office, I am pioneering the presence of my Institute in Abuja. We have found a plot of land and we have started the construction of the 'Cenacle House'. We hope this house will create a small space for reflection and preparation for various missionary activities to respond especially to the African need for local resources and trained personnel.

On the sidelines, I have been organizing what I nicknamed, 'Retreat for Women'. This was in response to the felt need of developing spirituality where silence and calmness are cultivated to

lead to a deeper sense of awareness. We are a passionate and vivacious people. When this is exaggerated, we could become a very noisy culture where shallow and superficial values thrive. Initially, the idea of spending a few hours or even days in silence frightened many of our people. The response has been very interesting and women come out of the experience feeling invigorated and more aware of their inner world which affects the way they relate with others around them. It is a slow process and we need faith and perseverance. My studies in Spirituality at Heythrop opened me up to raise some serious questions about the interface between the multitudinous religious practices of my people and the struggle to develop an authentic spirituality which responds to our deep desires as African Christians. My work is giving me a unique opportunity to listen again to my people and, together with them, search for answers from our shared journey and struggles, the fruit of our day-to-day experiences and reflection.

Summer Success

Another splendid evening was held in Heythrop's Faulkner Hall in early July, when past students and present staff mixed and mingled for an enjoyable celebration of the end of term. Whilst welcoming new graduates into the Heythrop Association of Alumni and Staff, we also previewed some of the latest titles that Faculty and Alumni have written and published. As ever Heythrop's small size belays the diversity of research interests, keeping the College at the forefront of its specialist subject areas.



The Assumption Convent

Sr Clare ra reflects on some of the changes and challenges that have faced the Community during their time in Kensington

On the 14th February 1860 a procession of eleven sisters enveloped in black cloaks, plus three or four postulants in long black dresses and white bonnets, set out in the biting wind and snow from their temporary convent in Earl's Court Road. They were about to take possession of their new property in Kensington Square. The ailing superior, Mother Marie Emmanuel, enveloped in blankets and furs was transported in Madame Uzielli's carriage. Father Bernard Dalgairns of the Oratory the chaplain, dressed in his soutane, and Mr. Lewis the financial adviser wearing an alb which billowed in the wind like a crinoline, followed behind the cavalcade, both sprinkling holy water along the way. The sisters who preceded them managed with difficulty to suppress their laughter. The cows followed later.

Their former home, known as Earl's Court Lodge or 'the Priory', was built and owned by the Gunter family who had made their fortune via confectionery. The aristocratic neighbours however had named it 'Currant Jelly Hall'. Since it was not being offered for sale, it was important for the future of the Sisters and their apostolate that they find a suitable place which they could buy.

Frederick Barlow, property developer and entrepreneur, died in 1858 leaving his entire property to his son, who had no wish to remain in the family home at number 24 Kensington Square. Aided by their various advisers, who conducted all the negotiations, on September 9th 1859 the Sisters became possessed of numbers 20, 23, 24, 25, 38 and 40, all of which fronted onto the Square, for the sum of £11,500. The identity of the purchasers was kept a strict secret. Each house had a garden, stables and coach-houses. Behind No. 25 were 8 cottages, and behind No. 23 was a large market garden within which were three or four buildings known as 'Victoria Cottages'. In Albert Villas and Albert Buildings in James Street (now South End Row) and South End Mews were 14 other cottages. All were occupied by tenants except number 24, the Barlow's home. The rents, together with the 'pension' of the lady boarders housed in the convent

in No. 24, provided a somewhat inadequate income for the sisters for a few years. A supplementary source of money was from the sale of apples, pears and jam made from the other fruits in the garden.

The public face of Kensington was superficially idyllic for the contemplative life, for, apart from the High Street, notorious for its highwaymen, Kensington was in the main an agricultural district, fruit trees overhanging nearly every road and flower sellers with their carts on every street corner. However, Francis Tucker's candle factory on the corner of King Street (now Derry Street) produced suffocating clouds of black smoke every day, and behind the grand facades of Kensington House and Colby House, were the slums of Market Buildings and Jennings Court occupied by the poor and mainly Catholic Irish. To the far end of South End Mews was the forge with its constant procession of horses, whilst if the wind was in the wrong direction one also received the not so pleasant aromas of the breweries in Allen Street and Ball Street.

The priority was to organize a suitable temporary chapel. Arranged with the advice of Cardinal Wiseman and John Joseph Scoles, architect of the Oratory, it was eventually situated in a 'parlour' on the ground floor of No. 24. The altar was approximately where the soup is nowadays to be located in the College

Dining Room. The sisters occupied the area behind the altar, in a now demolished balcony, whilst 'strangers' came to Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction via the street door. The first Mass was on Thursday February 16th 1860.

The sisters in those days were almost completely enclosed and at this stage their main 'work' was the Liturgy and Adoration. Cardinal Wiseman for many years had insisted that he wanted the Assumption sisters in London, but could not be brought to specify exactly what he wanted the sisters to do there. Eventually the foundress Mother Marie Eugenie persuaded him that Adoration, individual retreats for women, and preparation for First Communion of young women converts, would be their special task. The first advertisements for the Kensington Convent in the Catholic Directory name it 'The Convent of Perpetual Adoration'. In fact funds never sufficed to provide the number of candles needed for this to occur.

Life in those early days was not too eventful, but with the arrival of Sr. Ignace from Richmond Yorkshire in March 1862 the community gained an experienced catechist and outside influences came to bear on the little community. A project requested by Monsignor Manning for First Communion instruction, initially for the poor children of the streets was launched. In the same



The trees may be the same as when the Convent was founded, but the tower blocks behind are certainly something of a change

year a group 'Retreat for Ladies' took place in Passion Week, an event to be repeated annually.

In July of the same year Mrs. Abercrombie was persuaded to give up her lease of No. 25, which enabled Fr. Hermann Cohen, the convert Jew and discalced Carmelite, to set up his community there in August, a private chapel for the friars being arranged on the ground floor. The Oratorians had already given up being chaplains to the sisters so the Carmelites gave their services for several years. The Carmelites continually defaulted on their rent, on payment for vegetables and cleaning services. The expectation of meat at every meal and that the sisters would cook and wash for them, created a rather tense situation. Nevertheless, they and the Assumption sisters, co-operated in a scheme to prepare 'better class' children for First Communion. Manning himself presided at the first such ceremony on the eve of Pentecost 1864, a function he committed himself to until his death. The 'Communion Breakfast' was provided for all present by the widowed Dowager Lady Doughty Tichbourne, then a tenant in No. 23. The Carmelites, having been refused the purchase of their house, then earmarked for the convent chapel, moved to Church Street.

Meanwhile, in late 1861, at the suggestion of Monsignor Howard, the sisters had considered building a boarding school at the end of the garden, but by 1863 the plan was for a regular convent, with an entrance in Kelsoe Place, near the Parish workhouse. However, an Act of Parliament in late 1863 approved the building of a railway obliquely across the property, cutting the kitchen garden in two, removing the wells used for livestock and plants, slicing up the cowfield, demolishing the pigsty and involving the compulsory purchase of the James Street cottages. Our neighbours in the boys' Grammar School, whose property extended as far as the modern Scarsdale Place, were similarly affected. There was a frantic search over many months for alternative premises, the sisters fearing that the noise would drive people away. Mother Marie Eugenie, after a personal inspection of the site, told the sisters that they were lacking in common sense. They would never find a better property in the whole of London and the railway



The present buildings, with the Chapel to the right-hand side

would not take people away, it would bring them in. As for the noise, there couldn't be anything noisier than the continual rumble of carriage wheels and clapping hoofs around the Square. Manning, now Archbishop, also advised staying put, and so it came to be.

Compensation from the railway, plus the gift of a piece of land known as 'Tucker's Yard', enabled the sisters to think seriously about the development of the site and the apostolate. Fr. Foley the parish priest concurred with Manning in asking for evening classes in religious instruction for poor women. For the moment however, the priority was to build a proper chapel, but with the railway so close, the plan to site it at No 25 was abandoned.

Discussion about the establishment of a school was re-opened in late 1866, but the only place to build was occupied by the stables of No. 24. Early in the following year Fr. Foley invited the convent to house the parish poor school for girls, which from about 1850 had been run by the 'Filles de Marie' in Church Street. In 1867 140 children were transferred to the stables, coach house, hayloft and cottages of No. 24, each 'classroom' being 10 foot square. A coat of whitewash, and the 'dreadful holes' long since threatened with demolition, were ready. At the same date it was foreseen that war and revolution in France might necessitate the transfer of pupils to England. A start on building had to be made, and the property consolidated.

Sr. Marie Marguerite, an experienced head-teacher, arrived about 7th November 1867 after a choppy crossing and in a more than depressing London pea souper. The boarding school opened on 21st with two children, daughters of the architect George Goldie living in the Square. Conditions were not ideal, the one 'classroom' doubling up as accommodation for the sisters night and day. The eventual departure of Lady Doughty from No. 23 in 1872 released much needed space, but numbers grew rapidly, and purpose built rooms became more and more necessary. The 150 children in the 'Poor School' were in greater need, for among them were 60 Protestant children needing salvation. Work meetings had also been established for the Kensington 'Ladies' with talks from notables who laboured for the poor. The annual 'Ladies Retreat' and the meetings of the 'Children of Mary' without a proper chapel, became more and more of a problem.

At last, Nos. 40 and No. 38 were sold, enabling the purchase of 21 and 22, now planned as the site of the chapel. Meanwhile, in March 1870, the Franco-Prussian war resulted in the sheltering of refugees, both sisters and lay people, in these two houses. The Board of Education continued to demand better conditions for Poor Schools. Sr. Marguerite, superior from June 1869, urged on by Monsignor Thomas John Capel, newly arrived in Kensington, became prime mover in the necessary building developments. Work began on the chapel foundations in the back gardens of 21 and 22 on March 19th 1870, the 'corner stone' being laid on 15th July. The sanctuary end was finished in March of the following year and Mass said for the first time on the 19th. Stained glass with the theme of Adoration was inserted about October the same year. The houses themselves were demolished between 1874 and 1875 and the completed shell of the chapel was ready for use on 15th July 1875.

On 15th July 1872 the foundation stone of a new Poor School was laid by Henry 15th Duke of Norfolk, on the site of Lunn's cowsheds near the houses of 'respectable quiet coachmen'. The £2000 it had cost was raised entirely by friends of the sisters. It had room for 200 children, girls only, mainly from the slums behind Kensington High Street. It opened on 19th March 1874, still being

taught by secular mistresses. However moves were afoot to train the sisters for the work, some of them going to Liverpool for this purpose. Gradually they took over the management and most of the teaching until the 1950's, when the building was needed for Maria Assumpta Training College.

As time went on, Sr. Marguerite, with her unbounded energy and zeal and the aid of the Kensington Tertiaries, Srs. Philippa and Etheldreda, also began 'good works' in the form of a Visiting Society, the finding of situations for servants and the organization of a group to make and distribute clothes for the poor. There was also a 'soup kitchen' in one of the cottages in the garden.

In 1874 there was question of buying numbers 18 and 19 Kensington Square, which from April were rented as a home for converts expelled from their families, and as a 'workroom' for the training of needlewomen and domestic servants. Technically these were under Mgr. Capel's direction, but practically the sisters were responsible. Those who were residents slept in the roof area of the Poor School. About the middle of July 1875 the building of a boarding school and convent were commenced, the children moving into the new school in September 1876. Further additions to the building and improvements to the playgrounds were made between 1879 and 1882.

Early in 1878, after a major disagreement with the sisters, Capel set up his own girls' school in Cromwell Crescent, run by Miss Pole, in opposition to the convent, threatening to bring in other religious to run it. Despite his encouragement to parents to remove their children from the convent, no lasting harm was done. Similarly, in November, he removed the workroom under a new director, Margaret Mary Plues, as well as the convert's home, to No 13 in the Square. When Capel was forbidden from priestly duties both works were transferred to the convent and continued to exist until the beginning of the Second World War. The workroom was known as 'St. Margaret's Home', orphans being received there as well as ex pupils of the Poor School. The convert's were housed in No. 25 then called 'St. Anne's'.

In June 1878 Cardinal Manning preached a retreat for all women teachers of Diocesan Catholic schools in

the convent, an event which provided useful contacts for the future, and paved the way for similar 'governesses retreats'. The same year the Poor School became eligible for Government Grant, which relieved some of the pecuniary difficulties this establishment had produced. As for the Chapel - it was embellished with a new altar of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, designed by Goldie and provided by Ada Howley, a cousin of Sr. Marguerite. The design for the fresco of the Assumption above the sanctuary of the chapel was approved and executed by Mr. Westlake, as well as stars on the roof such as were to be seen in the great cathedrals.

In January 1879 was the 'purgatory' in which Mother Marguerite had to appear as a witness before the Diocesan Tribunal dealing with Capel's case. The following years were occupied in large part with attempts to pay off ever increasing mortgage costs. Despite constant debts Mother Marguerite could never resist giving hospitality to foundlings left on the chapel doorstep, to sisters of other Congregations needing temporary accommodation and to pleas for help from the poor.



The front of the buildings, showing how surrounded by trees and greenery the Convent is on all sides

In 1884 the chapel building and its garden were free of debt and on Thursday June 5th, Feast of St. Boniface, the consecration took place, the ceremony lasting from 7am till mid-day. Mgr. Weathers officiated and in attendance was the community of 19 choir sisters, 15 lay sisters, 7 novices, and six postulants, together with 10 priests and seminarists and a lone Carmelite friar. A solitary policeman

guarded the chapel entrance to the Square.

In 1891 the convent was once again called upon to house refugees from France, after the passing of the 'Laws of Association'. In August Benedictine nuns from Solesmes and Kergonan arrived, staying in 24A until they could travel to their new homes.

Little of note occurred over the following few years save problems about the finding of a regular chaplain, the financing of the Poor School and in 1893 the arrival of the Sacred Heart sisters in Hammersmith. Would they 'steal' our pupils or not? The same year there was a dispute over walls and roofs with the residents of No. 19. The departure of our tenants the Horne-Paynes from No 20 in 1894 released the property for development by the sisters. Our neighbours objected to the 'Middle School' built in the garden, as cutting off the ancient lights from the stables, but this seems to have been resolved to mutual satisfaction. The school was successful for a time, educating about 30 children by 1900. However it was short lived - for it contained little boys up to eight years of age, to which the second

Superior General raised objections, even though the Foundress had permitted it. The boys were sent away at Easter 1902 and the school closed with a week's notice in July 1904 to the distress of the sisters involved in it. The vacated premises were now occupied by 'St. Margaret's Orphanage'.

Boys, as mentioned above, were not on the agenda of the inexperienced Superior General. When the sisters were

asked to house the boys from St. Edward's Catholic School housed in the crypt in the Holland Street Church since 1813, Mother Celestine would not countenance it. Their building had been condemned, and the children might be obliged to go to - horror or horrors - a Board School. Canon Surmont, Father Fanning and Father Cox, aided by the Archbishop, persevered and after three years succeeded in getting the boys accepted into the girls school. Mother Celestine strictly forbade the sisters to accompany the children to the Parish Church on any pretext whatsoever, even First Communion days. In June 1905 they were being counselled to 'get rid of the boys as soon as you can' and in April 1906 they finally departed for Warwick Road for their new school now named 'Our Lady of Victories'.

In December 1906 the aged superior, Mother Marguerite, was replaced by Mother Agnes, and in the following January was yet another wave of expulsions from France. Within a few days about 25 sisters and an unknown number of children arrived in Kensington, others going to Ramsgate and Sidmouth.

Bishops and dignitaries for the Eucharistic Congress in 1908 provided a little excitement, but not until the arrival of Mother Elizabeth (Dease) in November 1911 were there any major developments. Worried about the decreasing number of children in the boarding school, swamped by too many foreigners, and by the proximity of so many other Convent Schools, in 1912 she opened a Kindergarten, but it had little success. In November of the same year the girls of St. Margaret's moved from their premises opposite the Elementary School, to rooms above the laundry. Their former building, once the Middle School, was now given over to a Finishing School, known as 'St. Catherine's' and intended primarily to boost the finances.

Soon after, in 1914, war was declared, and the convent was again full of refugees, sisters from other religious Congregations, children and lay people, totalling about a hundred people in all. Every part of the various buildings was filled with mattresses on the floor until the exiles could move on. The advantage was the increase in Kensington pupils, augmenting the income & enabling the paying off of some of the crippling mortgage. The lawns where the children played, reverted to their original use as vegetable gardens.

After the war, in 1919, Dr. Maria Montessori gave a course in the 'Montessori Method' in the convent, some of the sisters attending. The end result was the setting up of the first Montessori School in England, in the former 'Recreation Room', the training of teachers in the method, with granting of Diplomas, and the definite putting of Kensington on the educational map. Once more the sisters were told to get rid of the boys. This time they resolved the problem with the aid of Cardinal Bourne by allocating to them No. 20 with their own teachers. A wall was built to separate them from the girls and the sisters. 'St. Thomas More's Montessori School' opened in October 1922 and continued until the outbreak of World War II.

In 1921 the Montessori Department and the Senior School had an official Government inspection for the first time, in the hope of obtaining official 'Recognition'. The Montessori School grew rapidly, and in September 1929 a second building for its use was constructed in Tucker's Yard.

With the advent of World War II in 1939 the Senior School transferred to Aldenham, Shropshire, never to return. A few Montessori children and students went to Boxmoor near Hemel Hempstead and 300 ARP workers arrived in the convent. Most of the sisters dispersed to other houses. The bombing of the Church of Our Lady of Victories in 1940 resulted in the re-opening of the closed convent chapel, where Masses, weddings and funerals rapidly succeeded one another. Some of the children of the Elementary School were evacuated to Penzance, but others continued their schooling in air raid shelters in St. Margaret's.

With the loss of so much life in the war, teachers, particularly Catholic teachers, were in short supply. A scheme for the setting up of a Training College for Catholic Montessori teachers was proposed in November 1943, but the Board of Education would not hear of such a specialist Training College. Thus in 1946 Maria Assumpta Teacher Training College was born, seventy students occupying the rooms previously used by the Senior School, St. Catherine's Finishing School and St. Margaret's Home and Domestic School. The Primary School returned to its old haunts, and the Montessori Department re-opened. The

Senior School continued in the country but the Finishing School and Domestic School were at an end.

The College expanded, increased residential accommodation being eventually provided in Cottesmore Gardens. An Art and Craft Department was built in 1955 in the mews behind what was now 'Our Lady of Victories Mixed Primary and Infant School'. The Government required ever greater expansion of Training Colleges and so the Montessori Infant and Junior Departments were closed in 1959. A large hostel was built next to the railway wall in 1963 as well as a separate convent, replacing the former St. Catherine's. Projected further growth of the college involved not only the acceptance of young men as day students, but also the examination of several schemes for 'twinning' with another College. Eventually the decision was made to steer the ship in other directions.

The College closed in 1978 and the Maria Assumpta Educational and Pastoral Centre opened with the sisters occupying administrative positions. With time the title became shortened to the Maria Assumpta Centre. Various organisations rented premises, including the National Society for Religious Education, the Westminster Pastoral Foundation and others with an educational slant. Sister Mary John, a retired teacher began work in dyslexia, eventually running a mobile unit known as 'Owl's Corner'. This evolved into what is now the Dyslexia Centre.

Various organisations and groups moved on and others moved in. In 1993 the decision to rent to Heythrop College, made with much heart searching, involved also the setting up of a second Assumption community in part of the hostel, for sisters in need of care. This is now St. Catherine's House and community.

An equally momentous decision was to appoint a lay manager. John Cater began his work as General Manager in September 1996, continuing in harness until the long negotiated sale of the bulk of the property to Heythrop College was completed in February 2009. The purchase has not been without its trials and tribulations and the adaptation of premises for both the College and the Convent are ongoing, involving necessary disruptions and problems which no doubt will be resolved with time.

Fr Ed Houghton

Father Edward Houghton, 40, assistant priest in Chiswick, West London, was killed in a car crash in North Yorkshire on Friday, August 21 2009

Ed was born in Preston on 7 November 1968, the youngest of six children. An interest in religion saw Ed studying theology at Heythrop in the late 80's and early 90's, before teaching English and Religious Studies at St Charles Sixth Form College in London.

Entering Allen Hall seminary in Westminster in 2002, Ed was ordained by Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor on 31 May 2008. Having only recently celebrated the first anniversary of his priestly ordination he will be hugely missed by all those who knew him, not least in his parish. One parishioner commented that Fr Ed's homilies were amongst the most thought-provoking she had heard, drawing on his intellect and his experience.



May he now rest in eternal peace.

Annual General Meeting

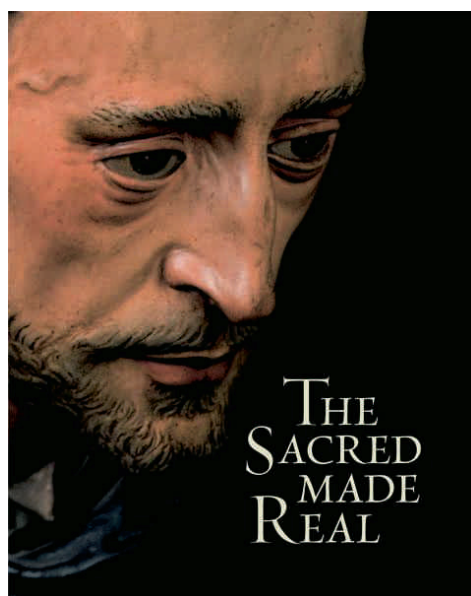
Our AGM will be held on

**Wednesday 21st October 2009
at 7.00pm**

The business part of the evening will be completed first, and then after light refreshments, we'll be entertained by a short presentation.

If you have any suggestions to make about the future work of HAAS, please send them to our Secretary, Moira Siara, on moira.siara@btinternet.com

I look forward to seeing you there!



Saturday 21 November
National Gallery
£7 per person

Our visit to this fascinating exhibition will begin with an Illustrated Introductory Talk at 12 noon (and lasting about an hour) in the Sainsbury Wing Conference Room, given by staff from the National Gallery's Education Department. We then have time to get lunch, or visit another part of the Gallery, before our tour begins at 2pm.

Forthcoming Event!

The Sacred Made Real

In 16th- and 17th-century Spain, sculptors and painters combined their skills to depict, with astonishing realism, the great Christian themes. Wooden sculptures of the saints, the Immaculate Conception and the Passion of Christ were painstakingly carved, gessoed, and intricately painted, even embellished with glass eyes and tears and ivory teeth. Sometimes shockingly graphic in their depiction of Christ's sufferings, or beautifully clothed, as if brought to life, these were objects of divine inspiration to the faithful, whether on altars, or processed through the streets on holy days.

Painter and sculptor worked together in a unique relationship. Velázquez's teacher and father-in-law, Francisco Pacheco, often painted the flesh and drapery of wood carvings by the celebrated sculptor Juan Martínez Montañés, and taught a generation of students. The skill of painting these hyperrealistic sculptures was an integral part of an artist's training, enhancing his sensitivity to visual impact and physical presence - evident in paintings of the period.

The technical challenges involved in making polychrome sculptures, and the artists' ingenious solutions, are displayed with breathtaking detail in this selection of works. Gathered together for a single exhibition is a truly inspiring and humbling collection of the very essence of the work that came from Spain in this most religious and devout of periods.

To reserve a place, please contact Simon Gillespie
on simon.chrism@btinternet.com
or 07760 372105, by 20th October