

HAAS

Heythrop Association of Alumni and Staff

Edition Seven

April 2010

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ELLO! AND WELCOME TO the new edition of the HAAS newsletter.

A little about me - I'm the newly elected President of HAAS. I

graduated from Heythrop in 2005, having read Philosophy. During my time at Heythrop I was the Treasurer of the Heythrop Students' Union, and also co-founded, what I believe to be, Heythrop's first real ale appreciation society (enigmatically named The Donkey Club - a story for another time). I have firsthand experience that this society is flourishing to this day. Since leaving Heythrop I have worked in university finance at a London University only a stone's throw away, and I'm currently studying towards CIMA (Chartered Institute of Management Accountants).

HAAS is here for you !



Chris Kendrick, BA 2005

Our newly elected President, Chris Kendrick, introduces himself, and explains something of his vision of our Alumni Association

So what have we done recently, and what have we got planned for the coming months? Well, on Monday 12th April 2010 50 alumni met at the Renoir Cinema, Bloomsbury, for a special screening of the film 'No Greater Love', with a Q&A session after the film with the Director, Michael Whyte. The film itself was quite something - documenting a year in the monastic life of the Discalced Order of Carmelite Nuns who live in Notting Hill. The cinematography would not have looked out of place in a Tate Modern exhibition, whilst the content was profoundly deep, mixed with some light-hearted moments, and always very thought provoking.

Back in November '09, we organised a group to attend 'The Sacred Made Real' exhibition at the National Gallery. You can read more about this event in this magazine.

In May we are organising a visit to 'Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance drawings' at the British Museum, whilst in June we will be hosting the annual 'Summer Success' - a chance for us to welcome the new Alumni to our membership. Later in the same month we will be hosting Professor Keith Ward, who has very kindly offered to present an evening talk on Revelation. These events



The College Garden
a familiar oasis in the midst of busy lives for many students

will be wonderful opportunities for us to mix with individuals of a similar background, whilst continuing our lifelong learning of the disciplines that Heythrop has encouraged in us.

At this point I feel a heartfelt 'thank you' should be given to both past and present committee members. Since my election, the current committee have shown genuine goodwill and enthusiasm when they have volunteered their time for the HAAS cause. So thank you all - and may it continue.

It would be wonderful to hear from 'old Heythropians' - be it an email just to say "hello", memories of student life in W8 (or before!), or a piece of writing or some images we could include in the newsletter. So please do get in touch.

I hope to see you at an event soon!

With best wishes

Chris Kendrick

BA (Philosophy) 2005

President, HAAS

HAASPresident@heythrop.ac.uk

The Sacred Made Real

Anna Wheeler recounts her memories of the National Gallery's exhibition of sixteenth and seventeenth century Spanish poly-chromatic sculpture

The day began with a lecture at the gallery by Karly Allen, taking us through the exhibition room by room. We then made our way around the gallery in the afternoon - I decided to have the audio guide as well, giving further insight into the sculpture and painting *and* the bonus of James Hanvey doing some of the commentary. Allen pointed out at the start of the lecture that the Curator, Xavier Bray, was very keen to think across media in this exhibition: in an age of 'ultra specialism' she said, where people think of things on boxes, this was an exhibition that deserved not to be pigeon holed. I will touch on this more later.

I can safely say that for the whole exhibition, the figures of Christ and the saints come out of the paintings or off of the platforms to meet us.



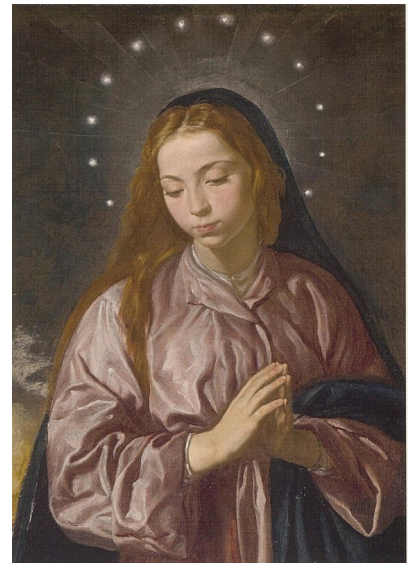
Dead Christ (c.1625-30)
Gregorio Fernandez (1576-1636)

It is not a case of necessarily going to them: their reality enters into your personal space. There is an interesting paradox at work here, highlighted in another lecture 'Shocking the Senses to Stir the Soul' given by David Davies of the University of London, where it was remarked that the sculpture is like a vision since it is so clear, even if slightly unreal (i.e. perfect looking): we are

tricked into believing that this *is* real because the membrane of looking at a real dead person and simultaneously a work of art is so fine* (as in 'Dead Christ' by Gregorio Fernandez). This 'grotesque naturalism' would have been designed to reignite ecstasy in viewers in Spain in the 1600s and to us now, wherever we stand on faith in God, cannot fail to acknowledge the intense spirituality and suffering depicted in these paintings, and sculptures in particular. 'The more real these sculptures and their associated paintings seemed, the more effective they were deemed as links between the human and divine. They bleed, they groan, they endure in silence and they die, the marks of suffering explicit - and in shared emotion, we come near to suffering too.' (Brain Sewell, Evening Standard, 22.10.09).

I was particularly struck by 'Dead Christ' as mentioned above but also 'Christ as the Man of Sorrows' by Pedro de Mena and 'Ecce Homo' by Fernandez. As Man of Sorrows, Jesus' back is horrifically bloody and scarred and with the effect of these injuries recognised in the rest of his body and face. His whole body is realistically shattered under the torture. In 'Behold the Man' by Fernandez we are presented with a more muscular, less marked body but with bruised and red markings on the back and a look of pained desperation on Christ's face.

People's responses to this exhibition will be different but now coming to reflect on these immensely real works of art - theatrical in their presentation but shockingly believable, I would like to suggest that it is not only the 'sacred' made real but the *human made real*. Man of Sorrows is Christ but it can also be every man: the harrowing look on Christ's face before and after he is crucified is not a look bound to that time and that place - it is one that you will see in the pictures from Amnesty showing the torture and abuse of people today. Suffering, inflicted by others, is never far away. Sewell again: 'Wherever we stand in this Christ's proximity we become the mourners who stood about his corpse two thousand years ago, while Joseph of



The Virgin of the Immaculate Conception
(c.1628)
painting: Unknown artist
statue: Juan Martinez Montañés
(1568-1649)



Arimathaea asked Pontius Pilate for the body; with them we are confronted by Christ dead, unwashed and unanointed, before the wrapping in fine linen. Can anyone, unmoved by it, see this sculpture only as a document of art history, belief and taste?

Allen's point of not seeing this exhibition in a box is crucial if we are to appreciate its true magnitude and that the suffering of Christ is as real now as it was then, in more ways than one.

Anna Wheeler
BA (Theology) 2003

* 'The Culture Show' on The Sacred Made Real, BBC, October 2009

Heythrop Celebrates Success

Presentation Day is always an occasion for celebration; this year the College presented Gerry J Hughes SJ with an Honorary Doctorate in Literature; here we reprint (with kind permission) Peter Gallagher SJ's request for the Degree, and Gerry's speech of acceptance

Vice-Chancellor, There is a legend that graduates of Heythrop College attending the formal Presentation of their Degrees arrive in this hall intent on pursuing worthy careers, building, in a spirit of public service, on their serious studies of philosophy, theology and psychology. They are, however, it is alleged, completely thrown off balance by the ceremony. They hear so much well-deserved praise of themselves and their achievements and they are so awestruck by the colourful rituals that they undergo a strange conversion. To the horror of their families and friends (the legend has it) the graduates suddenly renounce their sober ambition to work hard and to be of service to the community and they resolve to devote themselves from now on, without thought of reward, to simply looking, to gazing in awe, to resting on their laurels and just contemplating what has already been done. Will the conferring of an honorary degree on Dr Gerard Hughes do anything to stem the flood of such sudden conversions to the contemplative life? By swathing him today in the magnificent robes of a Doctor of Literature, the University of London does at least prevent him from appearing here in the even more glittering outfit of a PhD of the University of Michigan. He earned the right to wear that finery in his youth, after winning a Double First at Oxford and then writing a brilliant thesis on Aristotle. For about forty years - as tutor, teacher, Head of Department, Vice-Principal and Fellow, Dr Hughes has adorned Heythrop degree-presentations in an inexplicable splendour of Michigan blue and gold. Might his new, higher-ranking but more understated London glory make less of an impression? Gerard Hughes's consistent, friendly invitation to his students to think more does not emerge from glitter but from literature. His challenge to all of us (richly rewarding, disconcerting, life-altering) is contained in such important books as *Authority in Morals*, *The Nature of God*, *Aristotle on Ethics* and *Is God to Blame?* and in innumerable articles on moral philosophy, on ancient and medieval

philosophy, on philosophy of religion and on theology and spirituality. The impact of this consummate teacher, this stimulator of generations of students at Heythrop and Oxford to think and to think again, is contained in these unshowy writings of his. Something of his unforgettable lectures and tutorials is captured in this very un-theatrical *oeuvre*. It is his monument (to which he is still adding and to which we hope he will continue to add for many years to come).

Today, here, anxious families, eyeing the starry-eyed graduates, noting their temptation to abandon everything in order just to look, should know that in the writings of Dr Hughes is strong encouragement to live a useful life, to engage in activity of a worthwhile sort, to have the kind of interests and enthusiasms which are of service to others. In his books, as in his life, there is plenty of effective leadership. His literary style is modest and learned, persuasive and logical, constructive but also troubling. The shimmering Ann Arbor silks may, in the past (as the legend suggests they might) have unsettled some of those who glimpsed them, but it is really the Hughes ideas which prompt gifted people to reconsider what they are doing with their life. Dr Hughes has long wondered whether Aristotle thought that the contemplative life could be the totality of happiness or whether other virtuous behaviour can also contribute to an 'accumulated well-being' which includes contemplation, but is not exclusively that. He has argued trenchantly for a rich, combinatorial vision of human flourishing. As a teacher, however, his energy has gone into helping his students decide for themselves. His own view is bound strongly to commend itself to us. It is his mature opinion and he shares it with us with great authority. The matter is more important, for him, however, than even the challenge of solving a famous crux in Aristotelian ethical theory. He wants to understand, and to help us to understand, something about the right way to live. Dr Hughes is a *phronimos*

exercising practical reason to decide when to be contemplative and when to do and be good in other ways. He has succeeded in making the morally constructive life attractive and feasible for everyone. He has demonstrated that meeting the obligation to contribute and to be fruitful is not merely a burden which any sensible person would avoid in favour of delightful contemplation. Dr Hughes understands the imitative nature of human beings and he himself is an Aristotelian in the manner of Averroes and Aquinas. His convictions about what are the truly good habits arise from close study of texts and arguments. One of Dr Hughes most influential short works is his 'Ignatian Discernment: A Philosophical Analysis' which appeared in the *Heythrop Journal* a few years ago. In these luminous pages an account of the practice of the good life is unveiled which is both ambitiously deliberative and contemplative. The *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius Loyola are, in that essay, explained both in their context in the history of ideas and as a model of Aristotelian rationality enlightened by faith. There is a confident summons in this, as in all Dr Hughes's work, to a change of heart issuing in good deeds and to contemplation. He is himself a contemplative in action and helps others to be their own version of that highly desirable combination.

The legend suggested we should all be spellbound by this ceremony. Dr Hughes is too self-effacing to like the idea that we are frozen in admiration of him, rendered inactive by the sight of his being honoured in this way. He calls us to action, but on this contemplative day, Heythrop College and the University of London pause to try to express to our former teacher and Vice Principal, to our friend, our recognition of what he has done, our gratitude for his service and our great, personal affection for him. Vice-Chancellor, I request you on the authority of the Governing Body of Heythrop College and on the authority of the University to admit Gerard Hughes to the degree of Doctor of Literature, *Honoris Causa*.

Peter Gallagher SJ



Gerard J Hughes, SJ, D Litt

Vice-Chancellor, Principal, Fellows, esteemed former colleagues, ladies and gentlemen:

First of all, let me say how honoured, delighted, astonished and humbled I feel at the award of this degree. I would like to thank the College and the University most sincerely, not only for this compliment, but also for all that was I given and gained from my many years at Heythrop College in the University of London. It is a privilege to have been here.

I don't know how many of you are regular fans of the early morning Weather Forecast. A couple of weeks ago, on Radio 4 the representative of the Met Office, a propos of no less than three areas of the UK, said that given the gales and floods, the actual temperatures were 'academic'. 'Academic', I take it, in the sense of 'irrelevant'. Well, I have been an academic for more than forty years..... Quite so!

And, as if that were not bad enough, my sister, sitting on a bus in my native Glasgow, overheard a conversation between two women in the seat behind

her. One was rehearsing a long list of woes, to which the other was making sympathetic noises. [Examples...]

Eventually, she said, 'See here, hen (strangely, 'hen' is a Scottish term of endearment), 'see here, a' you can dae in they circumstances is just to be philosophical and no' think about it at all.'

And here am I, academic and a philosopher. Not, you might think, a promising start!

So on this grand occasion I am almost lost for words. My eldest niece once explained to me why this should be so. The setting was the lounge in my brother's house, and the eldest niece, Helen, a mature 6 year-old, accompanied by her 5-year old sister Laura, was talking to me. I think their mother must have explained to them that their uncle Gerard was a priest. So Helen, demonstrating that she understood the implications of this, said, 'Uncle Gerard, you're a priest?' Yes. So you're not married. No. So you're not my Daddy (this did not seem to me to follow, but she was only 6, so I let it pass.) No. and

you're not my mummy. No. And you're not a cat. No. And you're not a squirrel. No. By this time Laura was contemplating with awe her sister's effortless display of iconoclastic dialectics. 'And you're not mud - eergh Eeergh, repeated Laura. And you're not - a slug, eergh! 'Eeergh!' No. Helen paused, and a look of strange insight came into her eyes: 'When you come to think of it', she said, 'You're hardly anything at all'. Hardly, she clearly implied, a candidate for an honorary degree.

I take rather cold comfort from the example of a much more distinguished philosopher.

Two cabbies were talking to one another. One of them said, 'D'you know, I was driving down Piccadilly one day, and this old gent flagged me down, and got in the back. And when I looked in the mirror, I said to myself 'I know 'im!' So I said, 'Aren't you Bertrand Russell, the famous philosopher?' 'Yes, as a matter of fact I am'. Well then, says I, tell me what it's all abaht, then.' 'And you know', he said sadly to his mate, 'He couldn't tell me!'

And that really is sad, in a way. Not perhaps, that it was altogether fair to suppose that a philosopher could give an instant answer to the deepest questions about the meaning of life. But perhaps we could be expected to make a start. I recall a conversation (at a rather dull interlude in an Examiners' meeting here in London one summer, when I was chatting to the late Gerry Cohen, then at University College, and subsequently a Fellow of All Souls College in Oxford, who sadly died very suddenly this last year.) He pointed out that I was at Heythrop: Yes. And you're a Jesuit, right? Yes. So you believe in God? (This was beginning to sound a bit like my dreaded niece.) 'Yes, I do', said I. 'Well done!' he said, with the kind of admiring astonishment with which one might greet someone who had just climbed Everest before breakfast.

So chalk up one success for the philosopher. But I honestly do not think that philosophy has an answer to all our deepest questions, and certainly not an instant answer. What the philosopher might perhaps aim to do is to provide a forum, and many of the tools, with which the deepest questions of life can at least be honestly, intelligently, and fruitfully discussed. On the other hand, I certainly

do not subscribe to the view that philosophy, or science for that matter, will instantly demonstrate the meaninglessness of most, perhaps even all, of these deep questions about ourselves and our world. I have always thought that the existence of a College such as Heythrop provides us with a living example of the ways in which several different disciplines, theology, psychology, and philosophy together can add up to much more than the sum of their parts.

More seriously, I suppose many of you will have read the article by Stephen Collini in a recent TLS about the revised procedure for assessing departments, the Research Excellence Framework. One major element in how the work of the College is to be assessed in future involves what is described as the 'impact' of our work. This in turn is spelt out almost entirely in economic terms - the ways in which our work helps local industry, or contributes to the research of pharmaceutical companies, or its impact on other disciplines of rather more immediate market relevance - mathematics, for instance, might assist engineering research. As the author argues, such a commercialisation of the

aims of a university poses a dreadful threat to the humanities. I doubt if any of my work has or has had the slightest commercial value. But then, I have always believed that rather than any kind of commercial impact, the value of education in general, and of philosophy in particular, has to do with the development of people's minds. Any teacher worth having surely waits for, and treasures above all else, those moments when one can see that look of sudden comprehension come into a student's eyes as a whole vista of thought reveals itself to them. I believe it is such moments of insight that Heythrop College has always sought to foster. Long may that continue. But from such high ideals perhaps I ought to return to the real world; and perhaps the real world never impinges upon students more than in their final examinations. Over the years, I have made a collection of those deep thoughts exactly as they occurred to students of one or other of the colleges of the university, and which they recorded in their examination scripts. I offer two of them to you now.

Primitive man probably did not cause tidal waves inadvertently...

(Repeat)

Don't laugh too soon. Think about it: it is undoubtedly true; and it may be a truth never put into words until that student had that insight. And note the scholarly caution of that word 'probably'. How often have you ever heard something which is at once delicately qualified, totally true and utterly original? You heard it here first!

The other insight, more cosmic, is perhaps a shade more controversial; it is this:

The world is like --- the world is like a large complex zip-fastener; the trouble is to discover why it exists at all.

Again, think about it. Not quite so daft as it sounds. Poetic, perhaps, rather than daft - modern poetry of course, what with the zip-fastener. But the question remains: why is our 'zip-fastener' world there at all?

Perhaps that's it! perhaps that's what it is all about! - and poor Bertrand Russell missed it!

I wonder if I can find that cabbie?

Once again, Vice-Chancellor, Principal, thank you: I feel truly honoured.

Gerry J Hughes, SJ



*Celebrating Success: Presentation Day 2009 in the Great Hall, Imperial College
and a warm welcome to all the new alumni, members of this Association!*

Fra Angelico to Leonardo: Italian Renaissance Drawings

The BP Special Exhibition

Thursday 13th May - 6.00pm - £10 per person
The British Museum Reading Room

Drawn from the two foremost collections in the field, this major exhibition features 100 exquisite drawings by Italian Renaissance artists including Raphael, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Verrocchio and Botticelli.

A unique collaboration between the Uffizi in Florence and the British Museum, the display charts the increasing importance of drawing during this period, featuring works by Leonardo da Vinci, Fra Angelico, Jacopo and Gentile Bellini, Botticelli, Carpaccio, Filippo Lippi, Mantegna, Michelangelo, Verrocchio and Titian.

In 15th-century Italy there was a fundamental shift in style and artistic thinking in the use of preparatory drawings. What began as a means of preserving artistic ideas became the ideal way to perfect more naturalistic forms and perspective - a new approach by painters, sculptors and architects.

This exhibition is a unique opportunity to discover the evolution of drawing which laid the foundations of the High Renaissance style of Michelangelo and Raphael.



Andrea del Verrocchio
Head of a woman. c. 1475
© Trustees of the British Museum

Summer Success

Our annual opportunity to meet old friends and welcome new members of the Association as they celebrate their Graduation from Heythrop and become *at last* Alumni!

Come and join us for a glass of wine and a bite to eat, all in the relaxing surroundings of Heythrop's Gardens.

Meet some of your former tutors, see some of the changes that have taken place, and share in the wider family of Heythrop College.

Friday 4th June - 7pm - £5

Complimentary Entry
for all our New Graduates

Revelation in the World's Religions

A topical Study Evening being presented by

Rev Dr Keith Ward

*Professorial Research Fellow centre for Research in
Philosophy of Religion, Heythrop College
Emeritus Student of Christ Church, Oxford*

Wednesday 30th June - Loyola Hall, Heythrop College

6pm - Arrivals, Tea and Coffee

6.30pm - Study Evening starts, including Dr Ward's talk, and followed by a Question and Answer session

Complimentary Entrance, all welcome - simply email as below to reserve a place

Our AGM will be held on

Wednesday 20th October 2010 at 7.00pm

The business part of the evening will be completed first, and then after light refreshments, there'll be a short presentation about the role of Heythrop today.

If you have any suggestions to make about the future work of HAAS, or are able to help at all, please do come along and let your voice be heard! We look forward to seeing you there!

To reserve a place at any of these events, or for further information, please contact Simon Gillespie (Vice President) on simon.chrism@btinternet.com or 0776 372105

Belief in God - in the real world

The Enclosed Life: Jesus Hopped The A Train, Director Esther Baker and No Greater Love, Director Michael Whyte

Within the space of four days, I saw two very different interpretations of belief in God - both utterly convincing and truthful and both referring to two groups of people living in an enclosed world. The first was the play 'Jesus Hopped the A Train' at the Trafalgar Studios performed by the superb Synergy Theatre Project (working with prisoners, ex prisoners and professional actors). It is directed by former Radius Drama Summer School Tutor, Esther Baker and is a tour de force of acting. Having worked with her I knew I was in for something special.

I feel to do the play justice would take a better reviewer than me - I came out shaken, with questions about the prison system, of right and wrong, of judgement, of torment: yes, if you can't cope with hard hitting questions and raw description of criminals' actions this is not a play to put yourself through but I am very glad I did. Two prisoners pick at morality and each other during their moments of shared recreation in a 23-hour lockdown wing of a protective custody unit in the US, and we learn about their backgrounds (serial killer but since born again Christian, Lucius Jenkins' particularly hideous one, matching the crimes he has committed) and why they committed what they did. It would be crude to say that it is one of the prison guards Valdez (a trained actor and former real-life prison officer at Brixton Prison) who is more vile and sadistic (and proud of it since he thinks he is 'good punishing bad') than the prisoners themselves, but it makes us alert to the danger of labelling people. Anyway, what the hell does 'good' mean, and is it the same as 'right'? The play even manages to get some laughs, bitter sweet though they are, which only points to the play's brilliance at treating complexity with honesty and openness. Thank you to Esther and her crew for making me so troubled but boiled over by the acting of Ricky Fearon (Prisoner Lucius), Theo Jones (Prisoner Angel Cruz), Denise Gough (Lawyer Mary Jane Hanrahan), Dominic Taylor (Prison Officer Valdez) and Ricky Copp (Prison Officer D'Amico). Fearon, pardon the pun, was particularly fearless - one of

the most mind blowing performances I have ever seen.

The second is the film 'No Greater Love', which I review now.

Needless to say this film is no performance but a frank insight in to the daily lives of the Carmelite Nuns at the Monastery of the Most Holy Trinity, Notting Hill. The nuns lead a cloistered life dedicated to prayer and contemplation, rarely leaving the monastery except to visit a doctor or dentist. Silence is maintained throughout the day with the exception of two periods of recreation. There is no TV, radio or newspapers and the only technological device seen is a computer where a nun orders shopping online (bringing a chuckle from the audience, as this seemed so out of the ordinary bearing in mind the general rejection of materialism). The film interweaves a year in the life of the monastery with the daily rhythms of Divine Office and work. Centred in Holy Week, it follows a year in which a novice is professed and one of the senior nuns dies.

As soon as the film started I felt I was entering in to a world of peace, away from the glitzy (dare I say, false at times) and frenetic world outside where there is no time to think or reflect. A world of peace it may be inside, but it is absolutely not one of escape - one of the nuns pointed out that once you are without the distractions of all the outside world has to offer, you come to face to face with yourself, the hardest, and most 'real' thing to face (and this surely is not always a peaceful experience). Their honesty is poignant and humbling - one sister talks of a period of doubt that lasted 18 years and even now has the baffling honesty to say on film (with a little laugh) that there is always the fear that the atheists are correct and there is nothing. This shows that the nuns do not live this life because they have certainty: they live it because they have doubts but go on because they have such a deep belief in God that they give themselves selflessly. Sceptics might ask what this achieves, other than loneliness together with uncertainty, but one of the nuns answers this in her explanation of the need for silence; she says having this

(almost governing their lives it would seem) gives them the freedom to explore and understand these doubts - the silence not only becomes like music but it allows the presence of God *in*. We might think of these nuns as trapped inside such confines, but in fact paradoxically, it occurred to me that those of us outside the confines have more need to watch that we don't get trapped by everything that is not real and non-silent...faith or no faith, take away the craziness of daily life and we would all have doubt and void. And nor do I feel the nuns *choose* to fill the void with God - it is a genuine call to a life dedicated to God because they *feel* it.

As we are taken around the Monastery, we see the nuns engaging in the activities of eating, gardening, keeping the Monastery clean, praying... We even see them dancing, which Whyte says they do once a month for 40 minutes! Whyte himself, in the Q&A session afterwards, said how privileged he was to make the film and have this kind of access. The film was 10 years in the making after he put a series of notes through the Monastery letter box, which were politely rejected before he finally was accepted via the same method of communication - letter. The author Kazuo Ishiguro says 'the film looks breathtaking, like various Dutch Masters come to life' and Whyte does indeed capture the stillness and tranquillity that recall this Dutch domestic painting of the 17th century - the Vermeer-style angle of light as a nun stands by a window. It is visually stunning.

I would have liked to have written down all the interviews the nuns gave, to turn to for words of wisdom on the human condition - which says something for the film's universal appeal. One describes her own torments of the soul as 'darkness, boredom, dryness, deadness', a feeling that no human person has not experienced and it is for this reason that the film is moving since it is a testament to these ladies and is far reaching to us. There are few of us who would live this closed life, but at the end of the film it is quite obvious that these nuns are as open as it gets when it comes to facing life, oneself and reality.

Sandra Betton RIP

A previous editor of the Heythrop Association Newsletter, Sandra Betton died in October after a year's palliative treatment for cancer. After a first year of an MA course at Heythrop at the end of which her father died aged 101, she had suffered a relapse of an old condition and then underwent treatment which gave her just over a year in which to put her affairs in order.

She had grown up in Peacehaven, graduated from Sheffield University, and taught English. She was married to Malcolm who died in 1991. After that she attended Heythrop from 1992-'93 gaining a Diploma in Theology. From the early '90s she was a regular at Living Theology. Meanwhile in Brighton she turned to pastoral work in her parish and in the Deanery Social Concerns office. She undertook catechetical work, hospital chaplaincy work, and bereavement counselling. She was also involved in ecumenical and interfaith

work in Brighton. When she died, her parish priest was stopped in the street by complete strangers who mourned her passing.

Her home had been an open house and home to a group of Chinese students to whom she had been a second mother while they attended school in Brighton, and then university in London. Then, as young professionals, they returned to spend each Christmas with Sandra and a few years ago took her to visit their homes in China. When she fell ill, they dropped everything to visit her.

Those whom she befriended repaid her with great loyalty. She never denied help to any who sought it and had a wide circle of friends. Her chief indulgence in life was books, and her home was a veritable library, much of it theological. In a quiet way she was involved in many aspects of parish life and happily her parish was a haven which fully supported



her in the end. Her chief carer during her final illness was a friend and neighbour with whom she had shared some happier times. Someone from the parish wrote of the tremendous dignity with which she endured her final year, which she spent preparing for her death, but also enjoying what remained of life. She was buried high on the Downs with her husband. As we stood round the chalk grave, the heavens opened and a gale blew for just that ten minutes of an otherwise fine day.

May she rest in peace.

Pam Wearing

Pure Contemplation

In the depths of my soul a light flickered;
Stirred, my mind awakened with the dawn.

Heaven opened its window as joy so pure
Filled my heart seeing flowers across the lawn.

Brimming over with ecstasy: my mind
Held in contemplation of your glory,
Knowing your love, feeling delight
As the sun glows on the human story.

The growth in knowledge and wonder to behold
As life unfurls with constant surprise
And visions of the beautiful universe
Are held silently in the inner eye.

Captivated as in a trance,
Movement is caught in the dance:
The rhythm gentle, melody sweet
Beyond experience but pure romance.

I wonder at this quiet presence
That shares all it has with me.
It is the same for all to see and feel:
It is our one true destiny.

Surrounded, enfolded, held so close.
Guided, enlightened and free,
We move with choice, enthralled
By our sharing in this destiny.

We need to share in this delight
Like children at a tea-party:
To hear what each has to say
Savouring the variety of day and night.

Not by thinking of self alone
But opening to the other to find
Not what is in one's own heart
But what is in their will and mind.

By trying to understand to please
And serve the other,
We move beyond one's limitations
And, like God, become a lover.

With that purity so true
As in a flame that lasts for ever
As it flickers with delight
Across the moon in the night.

Alan Rainer

Saturday 24.3.07
2.30-3.45 pm in Orange Flex café

Keep in Touch !

We regularly email out information about forthcoming activities to all our Alumni for whom we have email contacts, and post this magazine to all those where we have a postal address.

If you don't receive one or other - or you know of others from your time at Heythrop who aren't on our lists, please let us have their details.

Send any contacts to:
simon.chrism@btinternet.com