

Profession of Br Christopher

No 22

Spring 2005

BR Christopher Greener pronounced solemn vows on January 8 during Conventual Mass. By this act he committed himself to live as a member of the Douai community for life. Members of his family and friends were present as well as family members of other monks and several oblates. Oblate Peter Griffiths was deacon at the Mass.



Br Christopher standing in the choir during his profession ceremony.

Br Christopher was born in Oxford on St Benedict's Day in July 1969. He was baptised at Thame and brought up in Wantage where he attended King Alfred's West Secondary School. During 1995-8 he studied at Cheltenham College of Higher Education where he gained a BA in History. He became a novice at Douai in August 1999 and made his first profession on October 2, 2000.

After completing his novitiate, Br Christopher studied theology at Oxford, and spent the academic year 2004-5 at the Catholic University of Leuven where he gained an MA. He has written about his experiences in Leuven in the current issue of *The Douai Magazine*.



Signing the Profession chart upon the altar.

During the profession rite, Br Christopher was first asked what he desired. He replied, "I ask for perseverance in God's service and in this monastic community all the days of my life." The abbot immediately granted this and then gave the homily, after which Br Christopher affirmed that he freely accepted the monastic way of life. He then read out the profession formula and signed it on the altar. Following this he sang the verse *Suscipe me Domine* three times, assisted by two cantors.

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Douai Abbey Newsletter



Br Christopher's Profession continued



that Br Christopher was now a full member of the monastic chapter, and all the solemnly professed monks greeted him with the sign of peace.

After the Mass there followed a celebratory festal lunch.

That evening after Compline Br Christopher went into silent retreat for three days.△

With family and friends afterwards.

Singing the Suscipe me Domine

After this he prostrated himself upon a funeral pall, symbolising that he was now dead to the old life of the world; meanwhile everyone prayed for him by singing the Litany of the Saints. The rite ended with the abbot announcing



Monastery Development

Since the completion of the sale of the lease of the erst-while school buildings, we have been able to make progress with our monastery building development. In January, the service road, which had been begun by Fr Wilfrid, was completed. This will allow access for contractor's vehicles to the site where the new refectory and kitchen are to be built. It crosses the southern end of the monastery

garden and then uses the path to the east of the garden that school pupils used to use to get to the playing fields .

As we reported in the last issue, new boilers have been installed in the monastery to replace the original ones which were life-expired after forty



The refurbished boiler room

years service. The refurbished boiler room is pictured above. The new system is more economical in fuel and considerably more cost effective. To gain maxi-

imum benefit from it, however, the individual room showers, which were in poor condition, needed to be replaced, and this task also has now been completed. During the coming summer all the room radiators will be repaired and fitted with new thermostats, and essential repairs will also be made to the monastery roofs. △



The service road at the southern end of the garden.

School Site Development.

On January 17 the completion of the sale of the lease of the former school buildings took place at the office of Bewley Homes plc. This meant that work on developing the site could go ahead in earnest. Some work had already begun, roof timbers and sewage pipes had been delivered, and work on



The crane seen from the park

the road junction at the school front entrance had started a week earlier.

A large elegant crane, which

can span most of the site has been erected outside the former entrance to the school lavatories.

At the time of writing, the two houses, St Gregory's and St Mawe's have been demolished, as have the workshop, the art department building and Ditcham. The workshop had actually been erected in 1916 as a temporary building in the school quadrangle next to the parish church. It remained there until 1960 when it was moved to its present site, next to the temporary buildings which had been put up in 1947 to serve as laboratories, and which latterly had been used by the art department



Ditcham block in course of demolition

and which had also housed the monastery printery. It had been necessary, at the time of construction, to put up temporary buildings be-

cause of wartime and post-war restrictions on the use of ordinary building materials.

The later laboratory and geography buildings are due for demolition next, as is the swimming bath, theatre and music school block. Already, tiles are being carefully removed from this building for re-use, and the stone from the doorway that graced the entrance to the theatre has been dismantled and re-erected on the former laundry building.

The road outside the main entrance is being re-aligned to provide increased safety. There will be an area of grass immediately outside the front door of the tower, and also outside the gates of the cottages opposite. The trees at the north end of the park have had to be cut down, the old tennis pavilion removed, and the bank cut back. The old park gates have had to be demolished too. The road priorities will be changed, so that all traffic coming past the abbey will have to give way at the junction.



This picture shows how the road has been diverted away from the tower entrance, and where the bank, trees and park gates have been removed.

A new footpath is going to be made inside the park, parallel with the road, leading down to where the pavement begins just above the village school so that pedestrians will not have to walk where the road is dangerously narrow.

Bat boxes have been hung in trees bordering the Beenham path to house bats that will have to be moved from the roof of the theatre block.

Everyday brings interesting activity, and during the next few months we shall see a lot of changes as the new homes take shape. △

Community Notes

Fr Nicholas

At the end of December, Fr Nicholas resigned as assistant Vicar for Religious for our diocese of Portsmouth. It has required the appointment of two people to take his place.

Br Hugh

Br Hugh has completed an MA in theology by distance learning from the University of Sydney.

Fr Alexander

On Candlemas Day Fr Alexander Austin celebrated the silver jubilee of his ordination as a priest. He presided at an evening Mass at Douai, which began with the procession and blessing of candles. There was a congregation of about a hundred of invited friends and parishioners. The previous day he had had a celebration in the parish at Studley where he is parish priest.

New appointments

On March 1, Fr Oliver Holt will become monastic bursar in succession to Fr Peter Bowe, who will shortly be going to study French in preparation for life in the foundation we are about to make at Douai, France. Abbot Finbar Kealy, who will also be going there, will be leaving the parish of Ormskirk in April, where he will be replaced temporarily by Fr Benjamin Standish. Fr Romuald Simpson will be relinquishing the post of parish priest of Woolhampton at the end of August and will be replaced by Fr Benedict Thompson who until now has been assistant priest. Fr Romuald will be celebrating

the golden jubilee of his priestly ordination later this year.

Fr Oliver

Fr Oliver travelled to Holland to give a weekend retreat at the end of January for the English Speaking International Parish of The Hague, at the Cistercian monastery of Our Lady of Koenigshoven near Tilburg.

Fr Dermot

Fr Dermot continues to be busy with *Spirituality-in-the-Workplace* projects. He has given workshops for the ordinands for the Anglican Dioceses of Oxford and of St Albans at London Colney; and at Douai for the ordinands of the Oxford Theological Colleges, and for the chaplains of Bloxham School. He has also led the discernment process for the Regional Leadership teams of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph. He was a lecturer at a weekend conference at High Leigh *Streams in the Desert: being Church in Contemporary Society*. At the same time he is working on a doctorate at Oxford.

Monastic Distance Learning

Fr Henry Wansborough OSB of Ampleforth Abbey held a seminar in December for monks from various monasteries who are following the monastic distance learning programme.

Monastery of the Holy Trinity

On Epiphany Day we welcomed the monastic community of the Holy Trinity for Mass and lunch. This community of nuns, who came from Stanbrook, is established at East Hendred. Several members of our community have visited and celebrated Mass with them.

Choral Evensong

On December 29 the BBC broadcast Choral Evensong from the Abbey Church. It was sung by the Rodolfus Choir. Fr Oliver presided. Several people contacted us afterwards to express their delight at the broadcast.

Novitiate Studies

Since September our novices have been joined once a week by the novices of St Michael's Abbey, Farnborough, and the Salesian novices also from Farnborough for classes on Church History, given by Fr Abbot, and on the Psalms, given by Fr Gervase. ◊

Archaeologists claim to have discovered St Paul's tomb

A report in *The Times* on February 17 said that archaeologists claimed to have identified a 4th-century stone sarcophagus, believed to contain the bones of St Paul, beneath the high altar of St Paul's-outside-the-Walls, at the ground level of the original 4th century basilica.

Catholic World News reported that an archaeologist, Giorgio Filippi, maintains that is the one that Emperor Theodosius (379-395) claimed to be St Paul's tomb.

Our Fr Edmund is Prior-administrator of St Pauls. ◊

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If you would like to receive a copy of the *Magazine* please send a self-addressed C4 envelope with a 35p stamp on it. ◊

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