

Abbatial Election

Abbot Geoffrey Scott was re-elected for a second eight-year term of office on Tuesday July 25. The Abbot President, Richard Yeo, had arrived the previous day, and the tractatus, the discussion of all the nominated candidates, took place that afternoon. All the community were present except Fr Timothy Kelly, who was seriously ill in hospital and who voted by proxy, and Abbot Edmund Power, Abbot of Saint Pauls-outside-the-Walls in Rome.



In preparation for the Abbatial election, Abbot Laurence O'Keeffe, Abbot of Ramsgate gave the community a talk on the role of the abbot, on July 3. Abbot Laurence knows our community well, having studied his basic, pre-graduate theology course at Douai in the 1960s. △

Br Hugh makes final profession

On Saturday May 6 Br Hugh Somerville-Knapman made solemn profession. He is a native of Sydney, Australia, and came to England first in 1994 and worked for a year in Douai School. He then joined the novitiate for a time, but left in 1996 and returned to Australia, where he worked in education before spending three years with the Communications Branch of the NSW Police Service, then returning to Douai as a postulant at the end of December 2000. He had an BA in history from Sydney University, and while at Douai obtained an MA in theology through distance learning, as well as concluding his studies at Blackfriars, Oxford.



Br Hugh outside the cottages.

At present Br Hugh is part of the hospitality team with responsibility for the Cottages. He also works on our telephone and internet systems.△

Douai Abbey Newsletter



Building Works

In recent months good progress has been made on the construction of our new monastery buildings, which are now only seven weeks behind their planned schedule. The visual impact of the work is less dramatic than in the earlier stages, because the tasks being done are more detailed and painstaking, involving the installation of complex electrical wiring circuitry, all the plumbing provisions, air handling and heating systems, as well as tiling and surfacing of walls and ceilings.

Conference Room & Chapel

A direct cloister link is being made between the Reception area and the new guest facilities through the smallest of our present conference rooms; so two conference rooms are being provided in the new building, one being a roof-top structure on the second floor. There will also be a beautifully designed chapel/meditation room for the use of our guests.



The new cloister linking the Reception area with the new guest facilities. The doors at the end used to lead into the small conference room.

Re-wiring & Re-roofing

In addition to the new construction, the whole of the existing monastery has been re-wired, since our insurers warned us that the forty-year old electrical installation was life-expired and would become unsafe. Re-roofing had to be undertaken because of persistent leaking. The roof works began last November and the electricians moved in during the first week of February. The re-wiring of each floor took three

weeks, during which time the monks had to consolidate their furniture and in the middle of their rooms and move into spare rooms so that work could progress. The main task is now completed although there is still much detail to be finished and everything is covered with dust.



The guest courtyard; the guest refectory is on the left, the entrance cloister at the rear with the lift shaft and stairwell above.

Refurbishment of the North Block

At a chapter meeting on July 18 the community decided to go ahead with the refurbishment of the north block, so that the monks, currently living in the south block, can move into it. This will enable the south block in its turn to be refurbished. Its ground floor rooms will then become the monastery infirmary, whilst the first floor will become available for both male and female guests, since it will be linked to the corridor from the new guest rooms.



The conference room on the roof of the new building.

Guest Rooms

Although when the work is complete we shall have more guest accommodation, for a few weeks from September whilst the refurbishment is taking place we shall only have seven guest rooms in all, which will increase to eleven by the middle of October.

Organ Recital

Former School Buildings

While all this is happening, work is also progressing on the former school site. Several of the apartments and houses have now been sold and people have begun moving in. The landscaping of the grounds is particularly effective. One noticeable alteration is to the roof line of the 'ark'. A new gable has appeared on the north side to accommodate the lift shaft, which has been installed where a small archway used to lead from the school through to the monastery. △



The 'Ark' cleaned and restored with the new gable, seen in the early morning sunlight.

On July 22 Peter Wright, organist of Southwark Anglican Cathedral, and president of the Royal College of Organists, gave a recital on the two organs of the Abbey Church in aid of the Nicholas Danby Trust.

The trust was set up in memory of Nicholas Danby who had been professor of organ at both The Royal Academy of Music and The Royal College of Music, to enable young British organ students to study in Europe, or young Europeans to study in England. Nicholas Danby had recorded a recital, as well as a number of short pieces for filling gaps between programmes, for BBC3 on our Tamburini Organ. He used to bring his students to study on it, in order to illustrate the type of organ for which Italian liturgical music was composed.

The recital, which demonstrated the capabilities of both our organs, included music by Widor, J.S. Bach, Frescobaldi, de Grigny, Franck, Bairnstow, Mendelssohn and Cochereau. △

Book Review. A Monk's Alphabet by Fr Jeremy Driscoll OSB. London 2006. 144pp 7"x5" £9.95

FR Jeremy, a monk of Mount Angel OR, who spends half of the year teaching in Rome, has compiled this delightful compilation of thoughts and experiences in the form of a 'monastic dictionary'. It is a series of thoughts, in alphabetical order of places, people, events which have touched him, seen in the light of his own monastic life. It is a perhaps whimsical and certainly serendipitous selection of thoughts which may appear random but which fall under the aim which he expresses in his Introduction: 'In most cases, the interior life ... produces a variety which is indeed the spice of life. What people see outwardly of a monk's life might lead them to expect that things would be different, that a monk's inner life would be dull and plain. With this book I want to testify, 'Not for me, it isn't.' I want to share some of my life ... I want to bear witness to it.'

And so he does in a series of reflections, serious and light, grave and joyful, shorter and longer. Reflections on his monastery, on the life of St.

Benedict, on travel, are interspersed with shorter reflections on mosquitoes, pain and shooting-stars. The longer reflections express his monastic experience with some depth, the shorter items also convey real feeling, and the lighter, more jocular references, carry truths worth attention. The whole adds up to a most human presentation of monastic experience, and reflects the man, whose superb lectures on 'praying the psalms with Christ' are combined with a truly gentle and human personality.

The anthology is easy reading and with its short sections makes for a comparatively accessible entry into a world of *Lectio*. Lightly presented, it is by no means lightweight, but it is very pleasant and enjoyable reading and a seedbed for prayers and thoughts of many varieties.

Boniface Moran OSB

Fr Abbot attended the launch of this book at the Garrick Club, London, on May 5. △

Community Notes

Monastic Conferences

Fr Gervase was invited to give one of the papers at a conference of young solemnly professed nuns from Europe, held at Turvey Abbey, Bedfordshire from June 19 - 23. The topic of the conference was Good Zeal. There were nuns from Sweden, Germany, France, Belgium, Spain and Britain. This was the first time such a conference had been held, and it was agreed another should be held at Montserrat, Spain, next year. He reported that it was encouraging to meet with so many enthusiastic young monastics.

Br Placid took part in the meeting of juniors from British monasteries held this year at Minster Abbey, Kent, from June 25 to 28..

Plainchant

Fr Alban and Dr John Rowntree took part in a monastic conference on plainchant at Mount St Bernard Abbey, Leicestershire. They, and Fr Gervase, attended a symposium at Southwark Cathedral on the new Solesmes Method of plainchant organised by the Academy of St Cecilia, which was led by Fr Sautier of Solesmes. Dr Rowntree was elected a Fellow of the Academy.

Fr Louis O'Dwyer

Fr Louis will be moving for a year to *Maison St-Benoît, Douai*, in September to become the third member of the community there. He will be working on a book on the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. The parish of Scarisbrick where he has been parish priest will be administered from Ormskirk.

Fr Paul Gunter

On June 7, Fr Paul Gunter defended his thesis entitled 'Edmund Bishop and the Genius of the Roman Rite' at the Pontifical Institute of Liturgy at *Sant' Anselmo*, Rome, and was awarded a Doctorate of Sacred Liturgy (SLD) with *magna cum laude*. Subsequently the Abbot Primate has requested that he be appointed to teach at the Pontifical Institute of Liturgy, a work he will begin in the autumn.

Fr Terence FitzPatrick

At the end of January Fr Terence was feeling tired and unwell; a visit to the doctor showed he was suffering from cancer. Months of treatment have followed and he is happily regaining his health. At present he is residing in Winchester.

Fr Dermot Tredget

Fr Dermot has had a busy term giving talks and papers, which have included: 'Redeeming leisure with the Rule of St Benedict' at the Symposium on Church, Society and Monasticism' at the Pontifical Athenaeum of *Sant' Anselmo*, Rome; 'The RB and Spirituality of Work' to the Black Country Urban Industrial Mission; 'The economy of leisure' at the Implicit Religion Conference at Denton Hall, Derbyshire; 'Integrating work with a spiritual practice' to Agora, Bristol; 'Trust and leadership' to the alumni of IESE Business School, Barcelona held at Douai; 'The spiritual dimension of work' for St Mary's Burghfield. He led Business Ethics workshops for the sixth

form theology students at Canford School, Dorset, and facilitated meetings of the leadership team of the Daughters of Mary and Joseph. He also led workshops for RAF and Army Chaplains preparing for service in Iraq and Afghanistan on 'sustaining a spiritual practice under fire', as well as attending meetings of the Commission for *Sant' Anselmo* in his capacity as a member of the Advisory Finance Committee.

Fr Alban Hood

Fr Alban was awarded a doctorate from the University of Liverpool on July 23 after defending his thesis "The English Benedictines 1795 - 1850". In June he gave a talk at Oscott College, Birmingham, on Bishop Ullathorne entitled "Rabbits and Hedgehogs: Monks, Bishops and the English Mission".

Prior Boniface Moran

On July 9, Prior Boniface represented the community at the closing Mass at St Bernard's Convent, Slough, Berks. The Bernardine community is moving to Brownhill near Stroud, Gloucestershire in August. It had been in Slough since 1897. Sisters with some of their pupils have been frequent visitors to Douai, holding retreats in the cottages, and coming to the Abbey Church for drawing classes. The school will continue at Slough under lay leadership. ◊