

2022 / 2023



ST STEPHEN'S HOUSE  
**NEWS**



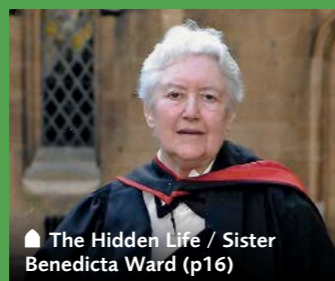
## PRINCIPAL'S WELCOME



I am very pleased to introduce to you this year's college newsletter. It has been a momentous year: we have emerged from the restrictions of the Covid pandemic; we have established the Edward King Centre; and we have mourned our late Sovereign and acclaimed our new King. We have also said goodbye to respected and long-serving staff, and are preparing to welcome new people and new opportunities for teaching and learning. Theological Education remains in flux – as it has ever since I began here in 2006 – and the House Council and college staff continue to discern the signs of the times while remaining faithful to the core purpose of the College, the formation of priests in the Catholic tradition to serve in the Church of England and in the Anglican Communion.

This newsletter brings to you a rich variety of activities and reports from members of the College. In what will be the last edition to come to you while we are a Permanent Private Hall of the University, I want in particular to acknowledge the way in which those students of the House who have not been ordinands have enriched our life in the last twenty years, and made such a signal contribution to our work and mission. ♥

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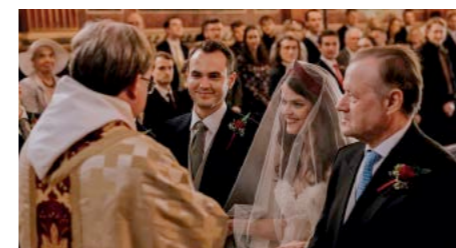
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### St Stephen's House

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## NEWS



### Congratulations to...

- Clara Westhaver and Richard Keeble, who were married at Pusey House in September. Richard is a former Benson scholar and now an ordinand at SSH, and Clara is the College administrator.
- Former ordinand student Tati Kalveks and Joel Gutteridge, who were married in Worcester College Chapel in May.
- Fr Aidan Bartlett (SSH 2015-2018) and Dr Elizabeth Miller (SSH 2016-17), who have welcomed baby Adelaide Anne.



### College gaudy dinner

Around 30 alumni and friends of the College joined us for the College gaudy dinner in

September. It was lovely to welcome some familiar – and new – faces back to College, and we hope a good time was had by all.



### Footballing success

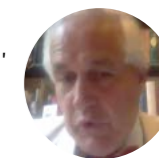
The College football team saw a series of triumphs this year, including a 5–4 win over Cuddesdon in May, and a 4–2 win over Pusey in April. Three SSH players were also selected for the Oriel XV for the Cuppers Plate.

- The floriated stone cross which sits on top of the church roof has been replaced following its deterioration due to weathering and erosion. The new cross, seen here being carved, was crafted by OG Stonemasonry.
- Sadly the Catalpa tree situated in the College gardens near the chapel and Moberly Close blew



down in early September. Thankfully no-one was hurt and no buildings were damaged.

- The College's relationship with Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue, New York City continues to develop and this summer saw an online lecture programme, delivered by Principal Robin Ward, on the topic of the Oxford Apostles. All the lectures are available to view on the Saint Thomas Church website.



### Edward King Centre

The Edward King Centre welcomed Heidi Crowter and James Carter to the college in March for the centre's first conference: Prenatal Testing, Disability, and the Ethical Society: Reflections following 'Crowter'. They are pictured here with the Principal.

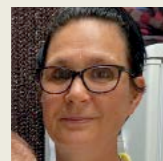


- Former student Raveena Balani (SSH 2015–16) is seen here about to perform at the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations at Windsor Castle in May.
- Congratulations to Canon Stephen Race (SSH 2000–2002) on his appointment as the new Bishop of Beverley.



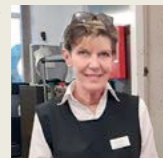
### People

Head of Housekeeping Louise Gregory celebrated 15 years working with the College in 2022, after joining in 2007 on a temporary 6-week contract as a Scout.



The College said fond farewell to Bursar Alison Parker in September, after her expert steering of the college through Covid. Alison has been a great colleague, and we wish her the very best for the future!

The College also said a reluctant goodbye to Christine Wilcox, who retired after many years of



### SJE Arts 10th anniversary – an update from Artistic Director Michèle Smith

It has been a curious time to celebrate our tenth anniversary while the pandemic was still very much affecting public performances. Last minute cancellations as people found they tested positive for Covid meant a once fully booked performance was played to much smaller audiences, and we also noticed missing regular concert goers which was very sad.

Another hurdle, due to Brexit, was that European performers had to receive a formal invitation in order to obtain their permit to perform. This turned out to be pretty much a formality but added to uncertainty.

Looking forward, we will be celebrating the tenth anniversary of the SJE Arts International Piano series in 2023. Who would



have thought back in 2013 this would have become such a major event in our calendar.

We will start the series early on 11 January 2023 with the Georgian pianist, winner of the 2014 International Franz Liszt Piano Competition, Mariam Batsashvili, performing a programme largely based on music by Liszt but also including Beethoven's "Appassionata". Other performers include Maki Sekiya, Sir Stephen Hough, Steven Osborne, Angela Hewitt OBE, cellist Laura van der Heijden with Jâms Coleman on piano, Eric Lu and Tamara Stefanovich.

service as a key part of the College's catering team, and the acquaintance of hundreds of students, ordinands and priests.

Nick French has joined the College as the new Bursar, following a career in catering, predominantly in London, and more recently in Oxford, where he held Domestic Bursar roles at both St Hugh's college and Keble College.



Professor Ian Boxall has been appointed as Senior Tutor and Tutor in Biblical Studies, joining the College

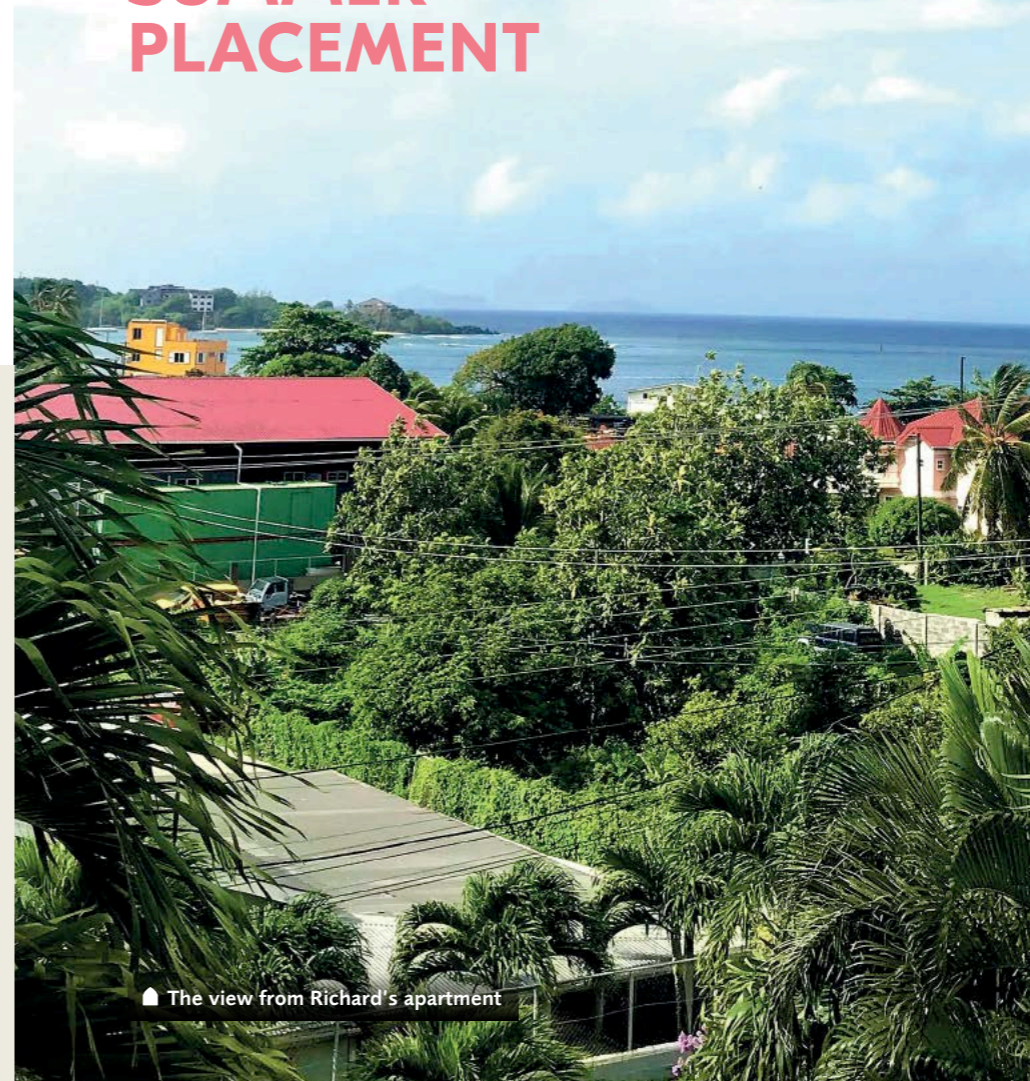


in January 2023 following his time as Associate Professor of New Testament at The Catholic University of America in Washington DC. Ian was a tutor at SSH from 1994 to 2013, and we are delighted to welcome him back.

The College was sad to learn of the death of Sister Benedicta Ward SLG, an Honorary Fellow, who died on May 23rd.

The College was also sad to learn of the death of Harry Hague, Bursar of the college between 1988 to 2002, who died aged 97. Harry was very fondly thought of by his former colleagues and greatly enjoyed and valued being part of the wider St Stephen's community.

# A CARIBBEAN SUMMER PLACEMENT



As part of his ordination training, Seminarian Richard Keeble recently travelled to St Vincent and the Grenadines to spend three weeks at St George's Cathedral, Kingstown. Here he describes the experience...

"It's not a holiday!" is what I kept saying when telling people about my summer placement in the Caribbean.

This was quite a hard sell.

Located 120 miles west of Barbados, St Vincent and the Grenadines is undeniably a picturesque cluster of idyllic islands, complete with sand and palm trees. A tourist could easily glide through Bequia (the second largest island in the Grenadines) and be charmed by its stunning beaches, seaside bars and cocktails. And yes, I did enjoy some of these things – it is the Caribbean after all. However, the key aim of my placement was to see what a tourist wouldn't, if possible, and get a sense of the Church's mission in this beautiful part of God's vineyard.

🏠 The view from Richard's apartment



ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES



Richard (R) with Fr Otis Nicholas (L), Dean of St George's cathedral

I was aided in this by my supervisor, the indefatigable Very Revd Otis Nichols, Dean of St George's Cathedral, Kingstown. He helped show me that, beneath the colourful exterior, these islands have known poverty and suffering that it is hard for most Westerners to imagine. On top of an economic decline which has lasted decades, in 2021 alone, on top of the Covid pandemic, Vincentians dealt with a major hurricane and the devastating eruption of local volcano La Soufrière. Thousands lost their homes and thick ash covered much of the island. We passed through towns cloven in two by mudslides, or completely abandoned in the

face of coastal erosion. Access to advanced healthcare is severely limited, so it is necessary to go abroad – often Barbados or Cuba – for more complex procedures. Sadly, the reality is that few can afford this.

I thought the beaches proved something of a metaphor for the general situation: since 2017 huge volumes of seaweed floating south from Florida have choked St Vincent's coastlines, reducing once glorious locations to amorphous quagmires.

Life for Vincentians is tough, and not something we in the UK hear much about.

Through all this the Church does what it can to provide support, stability and prayer. Fr

Otis works tirelessly, wearing 'ten faces a day' as he puts it: juggling the responsibilities of a public figure, construction manager, teacher, landlord, and therapist all at once.

With a population of only 100,000, everyone seems to know everyone else (we would walk down the street and pass senior government ministers on a regular basis). The priest's burden is being a kind of social crossroads, universally recognised and often taken for granted. Fr Otis lives out this calling selflessly, meeting the needs of people across the community with little privacy or rest. I was blessed to accompany him throughout the placement, which involved daily worship,

parish visits and study groups. It was a particular joy (and challenge) to preach one Sunday at 5:30am, for the first of three Masses that morning!

The placement gave me a lot to reflect on. Anglicanism, especially its historic association with empire, has a rather ambiguous place in St Vincent. On the one hand the cathedral's furnishings point to its colonial past, filled with marble memorials to British naval officers, politicians, and lawyers. There are calls to remove these, following heightened tensions over the legacy of the transatlantic slave trade. Yet among worshippers there is also a strong appreciation for their Anglican heritage. The West Indies' Prayer Book,

inspired directly by the Church of England's liturgy, sets all the major events of life in the context of the Church: birth, baptism, marriage, having children, illness and death. Fr Otis consequently advocates humility in our judgment of the past; we will also be judged for our failings by future generations. The Church is complex, he argues: simultaneously an institution bound up with human sin, and the Body of Christ continually 'aspiring' for union with God. Negotiating the tension between the two, however, remains a difficult and ongoing task.

As important as these conversations are, I was struck most by the character of the people I met. One young man I spoke to, about my

age (26) lost his home and livelihood to the eruption. Yet, working in construction, he had found a renewed sense of purpose, firmly believing that the Holy Spirit was with him and guiding him to help others. The Vincentian attitude towards suffering and death in general was inspiring. Funeral services there are more celebratory than those I had experienced before, with loud music, dancing and uplifting songs about meeting Christ in heaven.

We could learn so much from our brothers and sisters in St Vincent and the Grenadines, if we just moved past the clichés. I encourage anyone who has the opportunity to go and see for themselves. ♥



St George's cathedral, Kingstown



The island of Bequia



# A NEW FUTURE FOR THE COLLEGE

**From 1st October 2023, the College is changing its relationship with the University of Oxford and looking to a new future focused on its core status as an Anglican theological college. In this interview with the Principal, Robin Ward, we explore what the upcoming change means for the College, and what the future looks like for St Stephen's House.**

**Can you share more about the changes currently taking place at the College?**

Yes. After 20 happy and successful years as a permanent private hall (PPH) within the University of Oxford, the College's House Council has reviewed its commitment to the College's core mission, and as part of this, from October 2023, we will have a new relationship with the University, with the formal status of an Anglican theological college.

**Why has this change of relationship with the University taken place?**

In 2003, when St Stephen's House first became a PPH, almost all our ordinand students were studying for Oxford qualifications. However, since the introduction of the Church of England's Common Award, in partnership with the University of Durham, many of our students have chosen to study on this pathway.

Our new relationship with the University of Oxford means we can maintain relationships with both Durham and Oxford Universities and in turn offer the widest range of courses to ordinands. It also means that we can respond to the way in which training and professional development is moving and in doing so, to better support the overall aspirations that the Church of England has for both lay and ministerial formation.

**What does this mean for the College?**

It means that we have secured a future for the College in which we can continue to offer qualifications appropriate for ordinands of every educational background and every age. This was a key aim of the House Council.

Whilst it does mean that we will no longer welcome other cohorts of students, such as teachers, who have studied with us since 2003, it means that we can develop new ways to offer development and education – both remote and in person – to both ordinands and those who are already ordained.

**Will the focus moving forward be solely on ordinands and those already ordained?**

Yes. And that was one of the more challenging aspects of the decision. The cohort of non-ordinand students and in particular trainee teachers has contributed enormously to the life of the College community over the last 20 years, and I – together with many who have studied and lived alongside them – am thankful to them for this.

**How will the College be developing its core offering moving forward?**

Last year saw the launch of the Edward King Centre, the College's online learning portal, which is our response to the way in which we

see people increasingly want to learn, and indeed the way that training and professional development is moving.

The Edward King Centre will be an important part of the College's offering moving forward, alongside the core residential training we currently offer. It will enable people all over the UK and wider world the chance to access the internationally-renown academic excellence and teaching that takes place at the College, and to access it in a way that suits them, which is often online.

We also hope to expand the range of subjects we offer. For example, we're currently considering the topic of Canon Law.

**At a practical level, what changes will take place at the College?**

We have, with the support of a substantial grant from the Fellowship of Saint John, been able to lay very strong foundations for the first cohort of students studying for the Masters in Theology course through the Edward King Centre. Some staff time will be dedicated to delivering this course, alongside their teaching of residential ordinand courses.

As part of our aspiration to deepen and expand our educational offering, we're delighted that Dr Ian Boxall will be returning to the College as Senior Tutor following his time at The Catholic University of America in Washington, USA. As well as bringing his skills teaching New Testament studies, he also brings expertise in delivering online and virtual teaching, which will be a great asset to the College.

Finally, with the pressure on college rooms reduced in the immediate term, we are in the fortunate position of being able to welcome more visiting academics from around the world, as well as those on retreat or sabbaticals. I expect this to contribute greatly to our aim of widening our offering and expanding our community beyond Oxford.

**Any parting thoughts?**

In a few years, the College will celebrate the 150th year of its founding by Bishop Edward King. It is a great responsibility to be leading this exciting new chapter for the College. I believe it is the trajectory which stays truest to the College's founding – and still core – mission: to train priests in the Anglo-Catholic tradition, whilst evolving and responding to new ways of teaching and learning and making the very best of what we have here to enhance lay and clergy lifelong learning. ♥

# A LASTING IMPACT

The College this year said a sad goodbye to two much-loved and greatly respected members of staff, Dr Mark Philpott and Fr Andrew 'AKMA' Adam. We asked them to share their memories of their time at SSH...

Fr AKMA spent almost nine years with SSH as New Testament and Greek Tutor, living with his wife Dr Margaret Adam, herself a well-respected academic (and their two rescue dogs Minke and Flora) in nearby James Street, and playing an active role in the local community.

"My fondest memories of SSH are of the students and colleagues, of course! Nothing can compare with the privilege of offering the Mass with devoted, beloved ordinands; and their permitting me their trust in formation and in my endeavours to help their faith send roots down deep in the study of Scripture and in all that we can learn from and about the New Testament.

Margaret and I both are especially grateful for lasting friendships with former students, colleagues, and families. We come away with a keen sense of having been able to offer some pastoral help, some useful advice, a bit of perspective, and possibly a lived testimony of how one might join up the fractured parts of lives joined by grace, in service of God, the Church, and one another."

Fr AKMA and Margaret will remain in Oxford, with AKMA taking up a new teaching role at Regent's Park College whilst continuing as a Tutor at Oriel College.

Margaret, meanwhile, continues her work as Ethics Tutor at SSH, as well as with the University of Aberdeen on the Christian

Ethics of Farmed Animal Welfare (CEFAW).

Asked for any parting words, in time-honoured tradition, Fr AKMA replied: "Remember to keep up your study of the biblical languages!"



Dr Mark Philpott joined SSH in January 2014 and was later joined by much-loved (and spoilt!) cats Llyr, Llywelyn and Niles. Prior to joining the College, Dr Philpott had lived and worked in Oxford for many years, teaching at Keble since the mid-1990s and holding the role of Senior Tutor at the Centre for Renaissance Studies since 1999. Mark's calmness and kindness, as well as his sharp wit and great sense of perspective will be much missed by those whose time at SSH overlapped with his.

"I applied for the post at SSH amongst other things because I really wanted to return to being a teacher and a pastor; but also, because I relished the privilege of teaching ordinands what I consider a vital discipline in shaping them for future ministry.

I had been lucky enough to spend time socially at SSH before I took up the role, so I knew how vigorously the Christian vocation to hospitality was taken, but I was really surprised by the way in which everything was suffused with a seriousness of purpose which yet did not exclude laughter and enjoyment. One of the vital differences about SSH compared to other parts of the University in which I had worked was how staff and ordinands seemed to form a proper community.

My happiest memories of being a residential part of the SSH community I think fall into five categories: in the classroom with the ordinands; having the privilege of trying to help support ordinands and other students; working with colleagues like Mrs Sparkes, Fr Damian and Mthr Lucy; spending time with the children (particularly perhaps playing trains during tea, and babysitting one little girl while her brother was being born); and some noisily fun Group Socials."

Dr Philpott remains both in Oxford and actively involved in university life. ♥



**Priests who have trained at SSH go on to pursue their vocations all over the globe, in many different places and parishes. Contrasts exist between all the various locations that priests can be called to, but arguably amongst the most stark of disparities are those presented by urban versus rural ministry. Here we hear from two members of the SSH alumni community who come from both extremes of the rural-urban scale.**

**Name: Revd Crispin Pemberton**  
**Age: 63**  
**Location: Herefordshire**  
**Years at SSH: 1984–86**



StowCable benefice is a group of seven parishes situated between Hereford and Ross-on-Wye, all rural and farming focussed. The River Wye runs through the heart of the benefice, with three parishes on one side and four on the other, and only a single bridge linking the two halves.

There is one bus that passes briefly through the benefice twice a day, otherwise this is a car-based ministry, although one parish is really on the outskirts of the town of Ross.

My urban experience in London and Gloucester in the 1980s and 90s was as part of a very different church to rural ministry today. In towns and cities there are far more people that one can call on to do the essentials of keeping churches open, engaged and functioning fully. In the current rural church, every parish is hugely stretched to fill offices (Warden, Treasurer, Secretary), indeed one of mine is completely without Wardens currently.

Liturgically, the rural church is much less creative in worship and there is strong representation of the Prayer Book Society with a desire for BCP services only. Nevertheless, Messy Church is still possible in some, and links with the local primary schools are vital, just as in urban areas, but many children get bussed into schools from outside my parishes, making forging a genuine local community link more challenging.

With village populations much smaller than in urban areas, it is possible to build stronger relationships with more local folk and become immersed in the local community. Pastoral offices are very important and rewarding. There is lots that can be achieved with even small groups of Christians, and lots of fun and laughter to be had. However, it does tend to be the same faces providing the Harvest lunch, doing the online bible study group, attending Compline in Lent, doing the Walk of Witness on Good Friday.



For someone who does not thrive on administration, having to treat each parish separately and have seven Parochial Church Council (PCC) meetings quarterly and seven Annual Parochial Church Meetings, plus other meetings with the Diocesan Advisory Committee, Deanery, Chapter etc. is not to my taste. Far too much time is taken up with desk work, checking parish dashboards to ensure that all the diocesan information and financial returns are in order, and preparing for the next meeting. This takes up too much of my time and prevents me being as present and visible to my parishioners as I would like.

Rural ministry has its frustrations and joys, but my principal concern is that numbers are getting critically low in many rural parishes and we're soon going to have to re-imagine what being a parish church really means, and how the presence of these buildings in our communities can be more of a blessing and less of a burden on the faithful few in the pew.

I don't think I expected to be routinely leading worship for congregations of 15 or fewer people week by week, or being quite as swamped by paperwork, as has proved the case. But did I expect to know the humbling privilege of walking alongside people through the most significant moments of their earthly lives? Yes, I think I did expect that, and it has proved just as moving and humbling as I had imagined. Ministry isn't all High Mass and Benediction after Evensong (even if we'd quite enjoy that).

On the theological and liturgical side, St Stephen's House prepared me very well for my ministry, and I'm hugely grateful to SSH for instilling in me a sense of the 'right' way of leading worship, and of serving people in a sacrificial ministry. It is always better to have a clear framework that is the pattern from which one can work flexibly, than to have no guidelines, and just be making stuff up as you go along. We've all seen the latter. SSH had a very strict culture, from which, no doubt, I may have digressed in some of the smaller details, but I have never lost sight of the Mass as the focal point of the Church's life, nor that it merits the greatest care, respect and humility in its celebration.

Today, I have no support network beyond the local Chapter. Nowadays, curates leaving college seem to have lots of peer groups to which they can turn – this didn't happen 36 years ago. But I endeavour whenever possible to take an annual retreat and will do so next week for the first time in three years.

**Name: Revd Daniel Howard**  
**Age: 32**  
**Location: Anfield, Liverpool**  
**Years at SSH: 2012–2014**



My parish, Saint Columba's, is situated to the north of the city of Liverpool, with both Everton FC and Liverpool FC on the edge of the parish boundaries. The Church was consecrated in 1932 and stands firmly in the catholic tradition, the unique art deco architecture reflecting the principles of catholic theology, with the aim of drawing the eye to the altar. In the words the architect, Bernard Miller, 'the supreme importance that the liturgy attaches to the consecrated altar which... is identified with the divine presence and, therefore, the central focus for the eucharistic sacrifice, the supreme act of worship of the Church. In this light, the Church is the shrine of the altar'.

The tradition of the parish was consolidated further due to the influence of the Anglo-Catholic congresses, the first incumbents were devotees, and embedded theology and practice into parish life. Whilst warmly received by most, on the day of consecration there were protests, brass bands, mounted police and an arrest!

Saint Columba's has continued in this tradition to this day offering the divine life through sacramental worship.

The parish is a largely residential area, and includes a wide variety of housing styles, from flats to small terraces and slightly larger semi-detached. We do not have a 'high street' in any sense, but there are clusters of shops to the north and east of the church. The number of people within the locality is increasing, new homes are currently being built within our boundaries and there are large number of social housing properties. The Church Urban Fund statistics detail that the area is considered one of deprivation, and is ranked in the top 150 most deprived places in the country.

My experience of rural ministry is very limited, it must be said. That taken into account, the bridging factor is of course, people. People are broadly the same wherever ministry is exercised: there will always be those who are lost, those who are poor, those who are searching. Rural and urban ministry have that much and more in common. I think that fundamentally, the differences lie in perception, sense of community and of course, size.

The real joy of being a priest in an urban area is the level of contact that it affords. Urban parishes, whilst generally smaller geographically, are bigger numerically. So that opportunities for ministry and ministering to those quite literally on the doorstep are a joy, that, and of course the opportunities for proclaiming the gospel that this brings.

But whilst there are many joys of being in an urban parish, the challenges are significant. The constant problem of anti-social behaviour and general disrespect for the church building is a constant source of frustration. Living in very close proximity to two premier ship football clubs can also be a challenge – particularly on matchdays!

The social problems, such as poverty in all its forms, anti-social behaviour, addiction and so on are not always as apparent as it might seem when statistics are offered. I think the cost of living crisis in which we find ourselves will lead to a great increase in awareness of many of these problems and we as a church are trying to provide means of support.

Prior to ordination, I felt that urban settings tended to be more connected: there would be a common identity and people would share a 'common life', this perception has been increasingly challenged. Whilst there is a level of connectedness – personal investment in a community seems to be more limited with people preferring to live more 'private lives'; this is certainly a challenge for any priest.

My life as a priest is not quite what I imagined when I was studying at St Stephen's House, that is for sure! But this proves that formation is necessary to ground the ordinand and future priest into the rhythms of life that will sustain them in the exercise of their ministry.

SSH is particularly good at consciously building groups of people into Christian communities. Ordinands from radically different backgrounds share that common Christian life and so become one through prayer, study and active participation in the liturgy. This has always remained with me, and I have tried – with successes and failures – to try and replicate this style of living within the parishes I have served. Through prayer, learning and a eucharistic spirituality, I have hoped to draw my own people deeper into the mystery so that they may be better equipped to proclaim it.

One thing that is a real challenge in urban ministry is getting time to rest and recharge – it can be very difficult when you are in such close proximity to all those in your parish. The demands are constant so the best thing that we can do as a family is to physically get away from time to time when possible. The other advice that is always given is to be protective of time off, I'm not very good at that! ♥





## REMEMBERING HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

**Following the death of Her Majesty the Queen, we spoke to present and former members of the College Community about the different roles they played in the events surrounding the death of the Monarch.**

### **The Ven Luke Miller, Archdeacon of London (SSH 1988–1991)**

Fr Luke Miller was made a Chaplain to the Queen in 2020 and is now Chaplain to the King, a largely honorific role which involves him preaching at the Chapel Royal, Windsor.



In his core day-to-day role as Archdeacon of London, he played a part in the resilience planning for Operation London Bridge, and was also present at the public service of remembrance which took place at St Paul's Cathedral the day after the Queen's death.

"For the last ten years, I have Chaired the Faith & Belief panel within the London Resilience Forum (LRF), a role which sees me and my colleagues work in partnership with over 30 organisations in the capital to help plan the city's response to a major emergency or event.

We coordinated amongst the 88 churches that I work with to ensure that some in key locations could open to serve as centres for volunteer marshals and medical staff; to provide hubs for people to collect equipment and use to re-charge their phones, use the toilet or get a cup of tea in their breaks.

When the time came in September all the careful planning was put into action.

Following a request to look again at what we had not thought possible, I worked to support the team at Lambeth Palace to establish ecumenical and multi faith chaplaincy support to offer care to the many thousands of people expected in London upon the death of the Queen, and specifically to the queue for the lying-in-state.

As soon as the news of Her Majesty's death broke, St Paul's cathedral had to be closed to allow a full security sweep to take place in advance of the public service of remembrance due to take place the next day. With many people arriving at St Paul's in order to pay their respects and pray, we opened up nearby churches outside their usual hours to provide alternative places of worship for people to go to.

It was a busy week, but one in which I am very pleased to have been able to play a small part, and to help coordinate practical, spiritual help to so many people."

### **Dr James Whitbourn, SSH Senior Research Fellow & Planning Editor and Producer for BBC Radio Events**

"At 11 o'clock in the morning on Monday 19th September, the funeral procession brought the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II to the West doors



of Westminster Abbey. At this time, as the BBC Producer responsible for the radio broadcast from the Abbey, I was in the 'Sound 3' vehicle at the East end of the church, working with the sound balancers and engineers on the music and speech mix and in constant communication with the commentator situated in the triforium.

These broadcast moments are there for all to witness. For those of us working on such an event, they are career-defining—and the times when actions and instincts are drawn from professional training and experience honed over many years. But in some ways, the most precious moments for me are the times beforehand and afterwards, when the Abbey sits in repose. Entering the near-empty building early that morning was to inhabit a place of ordered calm. The catafalque sat in readiness and the lofty vaults stood exactly as they have for hundreds of years.

Such events bring a particular moment of history into the context of a long-lasting community which has witnessed so many momentous occasions. So much is made possible only by continuity.

For the choir of Westminster Abbey, September—the beginning of the new academic year—must have been the last period they would have chosen to broadcast to the world: all the senior boys had left the choir and their replacements had barely begun their new roles as leaders. Yet those children rose to the occasion magnificently because they had been there so many times before (albeit as juniors) singing the Daily Office. As the coffin moved before them, they had the reassurance of knowing that they were in their familiar stalls alongside their friends, doing what they do every day. They learnt and performed two new choral works in record time. Such is the beauty and might of a community that worships daily in song. The audience was bigger, the scale was considerably larger, but the endeavour was the same. Like me in Sound 3, the choristers were doing what they had done so many times before."

### **The Revd Canon Anthony Howe, Chaplain of His Majesty's Chapel Royal, Hampton Court Palace (SSH 1998–2001)**

"I had the honour of being appointed one of the members of the Domestic Ecclesiastical Household in 2015 and met Her Late Majesty The Queen on several



occasions, including when she visited the Chapel Royal here at Hampton Court Palace.

The chapel here functions – in some ways – not unlike a parish church, but with a very tiny parish; namely the small administrative team living within the Peculiar (royal parish) of Hampton Court.

Our congregation is varied, from members of staff and the volunteers helping to run the Palace, to tourists, and those living in the wider community. Our worship is based on the Book of Common Prayer, and we are fortunate to have exceptionally good music, as well as a fantastically beautiful building.

2022 has been an extraordinary year, and the contrast between the joyful celebrations of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee and the events of her death in September are stark.

I had been involved in discussions as to how we might support members of the Royal household in the event of the Sovereign's death, and as soon as the news broke, we quickly changed chapel around and announced that there would be a Requiem the next day. The Chapel was full, and it was a very moving moment when we sang the National Anthem with the words 'God save the King'.

Very few of us living today have ever witnessed the succession of a Monarch, and the events around the Queen's death reminded me that, fundamentally, the role of the Monarch is a spiritual one. The Monarch brings together the nation as a family, a community, and this was very clear to me when I witnessed the grief and floral tributes here at Hampton Court Palace.

My immediate focus was on pastoral care of the community here in the days afterwards. The Chapel was open for people to pray and reflect, and we also held memorial Evensong and Sung Requiems. I attended the Committal at Windsor alongside other members of the Royal Household. I was right in the sanctuary, by the altar, and it was a simple and beautiful service, led of course by David Connor, another SSH alumnus.

We now look to the coronation. Traditionally there has been representation from here, but of course we wait to see – whatever the role that is required of me, I look forward to fulfilling it and to continuing to provide a public face of the private spiritual side of the monarchy." 🇬🇧



# THE HIDDEN LIFE

## Remembering the late Sister Benedicta Ward, Serenhedd James looks at Fairacres Convent in Oxford.

When a don dies, a sombre ritual invariably follows, in which surviving colleagues descend to pick over the deceased's books in the period of *limbus librorum*, which is to say after the professional booksellers have been and before the arrival of the charity-shop van with a bloke called Dave.

It was in those circumstances that the Principal and I found ourselves at Oxford's Fairacres Convent in June, at the invitation of the Prioress, going through what was left of the library of the late Sister Benedicta Ward.

Benedicta's death in May 2022 was a loss to the academy as a whole; she was one of the leading medievalists of her generation, and her output was prodigious. It was a loss to St Stephen's House, too, for she was an Honorary Fellow, and (like all the best people) a former resident of Moberly Close. Staggers lore holds that her scout here in College, knowing that Benedicta was a woman who wrote books and collected Peter Rabbit memorabilia, somehow came to the conclusion that she was in fact Beatrix Potter herself.

Most of all it was a loss to her sisters at Fairacres, where for decades, Benedicta walked the tightrope – not always to her own satisfaction – between a distinguished academic career and her vocation to the contemplative life within the enclosure of her convent, from which of necessity she was so frequently dispensed. Many reading her obituary in the *Daily Telegraph* on 3 June may well have been surprised to discover that such a community, cloistered and contemplative, exists in the Church of England at all.

The growth of the contemplative life in the CofE owes a great deal to George Seymour Hollings. As Peter Anson put it in his book *Call of the Cloister*, after its rediscovery at around the turn of the twentieth century, Christian mysticism "soon became a fashionable craze and

much of it was of an extremely superficial character". It also flirted dangerously with heterodoxy, which is where Hollings came in; he was an orthodox expert with a wide ministry of reconciliation, who encouraged many of his penitents to engage in contemplative prayer.

Hollings was also a member of the Society of St John the Evangelist (SSJE), and so the College's buildings had their part to play in this development in the life of Anglican prayer. It had become clear that there were many women who felt called to the religious life, but not necessarily to the active sisterhoods that had led the way from the 1840s. In 1906 the Superior General of the Cowley Fathers, Robert Lay Page, encouraged Hollings to use his gifts to found a contemplative women's community: the Sisterhood of the Love of God.

The nascent sisterhood grew steadily under Hollings's guidance, and the first life professions took place in 1910. Ever-increasing numbers prompted a move to its present site a year later, tucked away between Oxford's Iffley Road and the Isis. Hollings died there suddenly in 1910, while saying mass for the Sisters in the chapel. His work was picked up by Lucius Cary, also a member of the SSJE.

By 1920 the community had again run out of space. In an appeal for funds for new building work, Page's successor as Superior General of the SSJE, Henry Power Bull, explained in the *Cowley Evangelist* that "The enclosed life [...] is no self-centred idle life, no dram of prayer or following of self-will. It is a burning desire to love God, in great humility, and with an ever increasing intensity of worship and self-oblation."

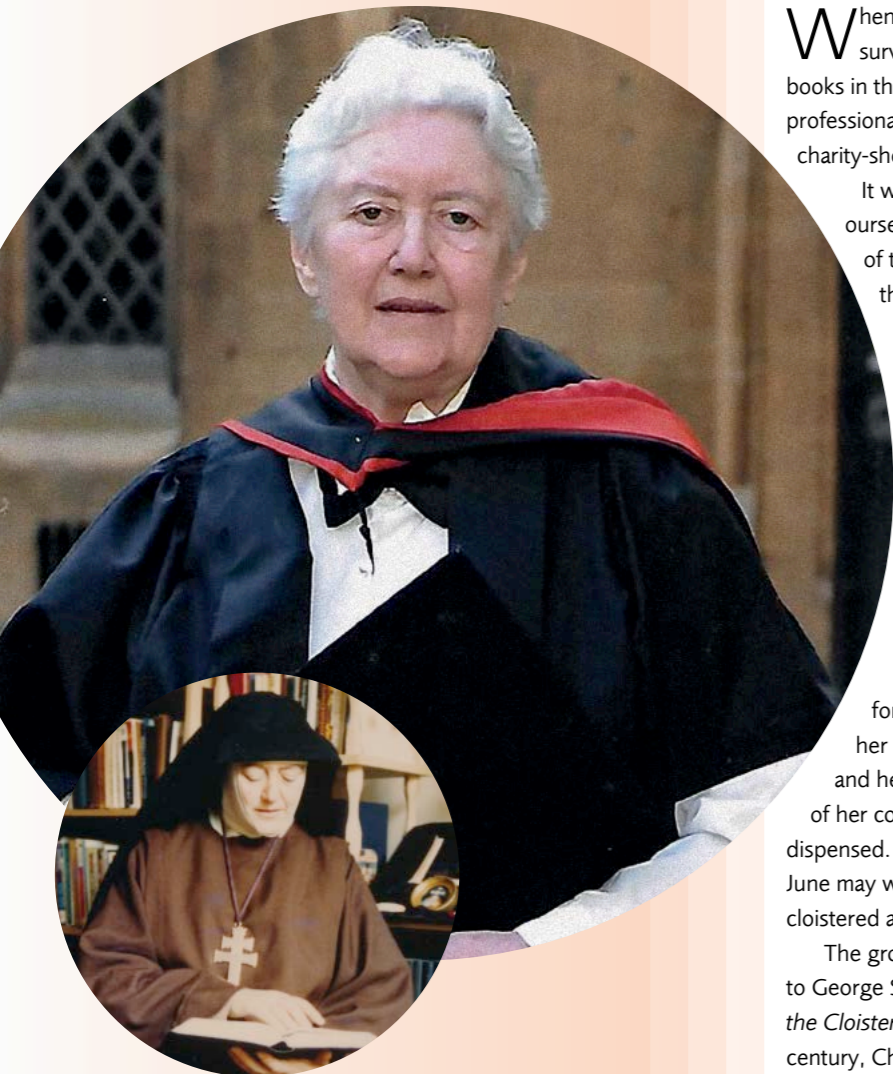
The same rings true today; in their brown habits and black veils, the Sisters of the Love of God continue their round of prayer and intercession on the same site whose buildings were enlarged, together with a new chapel, in the early 1920s. A hundred years later, a new wing now allows the sisters to access the library, chapel, chapter house all on one level, and there is more guest accommodation.

Reverend Mother has observed that "A newly renovated building is only the beginning of the story, and can only be brought alive by the Community living within it." With only one lay brother now surviving, the last chapter of the English Congregation of the Cowley Fathers will be over soon; the American Congregation, from whom we hear regularly, continues to thrive in Boston, MA.

For the Sisters of the Love of God at Fairacres, whose story is so much part of that of the buildings that we ourselves now inhabit as a community, a new chapter has only just begun. ♥



Fr Cary (and another SSJE Father, identity unknown) with Mother Mary Frances and Sister Anne SLG visiting the site of the proposed joint foundation outside Jerusalem in 1938



Fr Hollings

Fr Cary



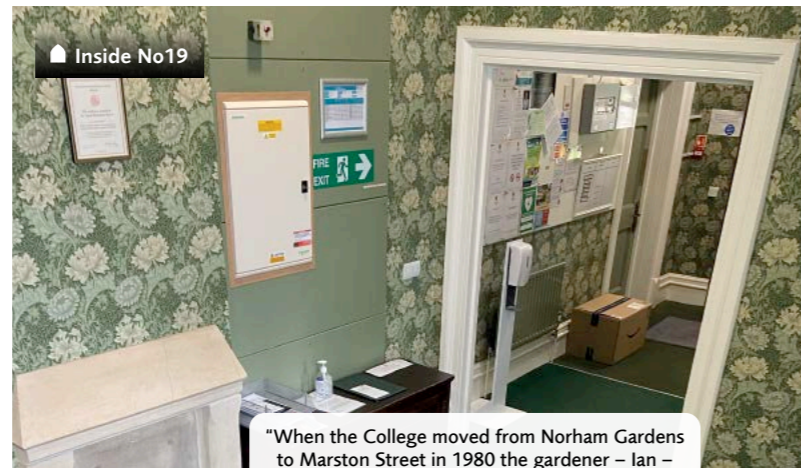
Fairacres, Oxford

# NORHAM GARDENS

For many, particularly those who have studied at the House in more recent years, it is hard to imagine St Stephen's House being based anywhere other than Marston Street.

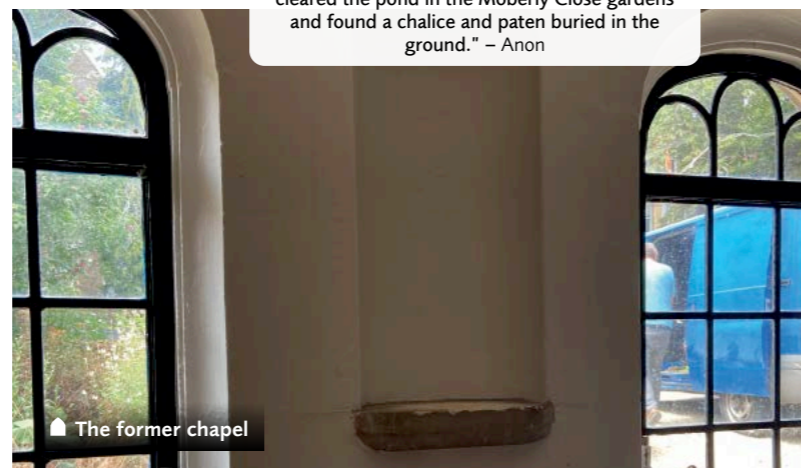
SSH has, however, previously occupied two sites elsewhere in Oxford. The original House was in Parks Road, nearby Wadham College, and in 1919, it moved to Norham Gardens, where it was based for 61 years until 1980 – longer than anywhere else (so far) in its history.

In September, as part of this year's alumni reunion event, we arranged a tour of two of the College's former buildings: numbers 17 and 19 Norham Gardens, a sweeping residential road in north Oxford. We share here some photographs from this visit, together with memories of time spent by former students at the site.

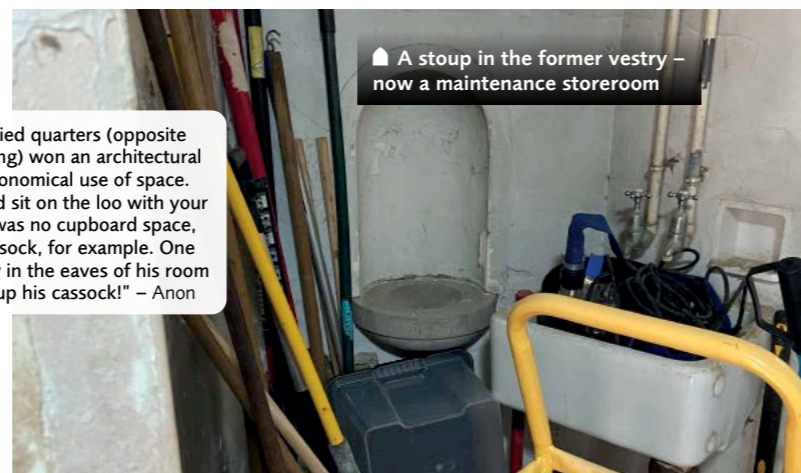


Inside No19

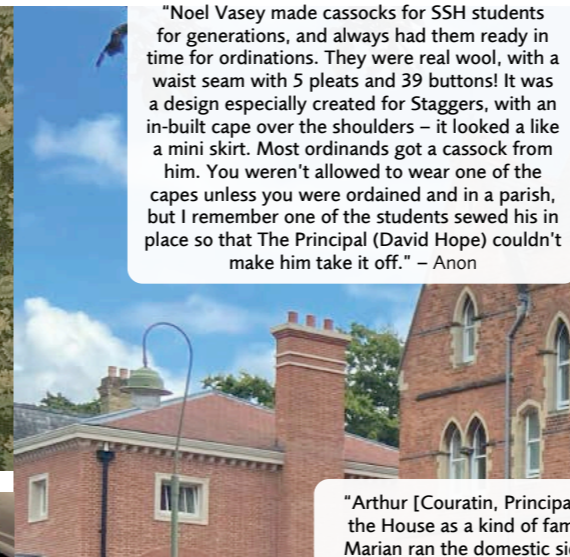
"When the College moved from Norham Gardens to Marston Street in 1980 the gardener – Ian – cleared the pond in the Moberly Close gardens and found a chalice and paten buried in the ground." – Anon



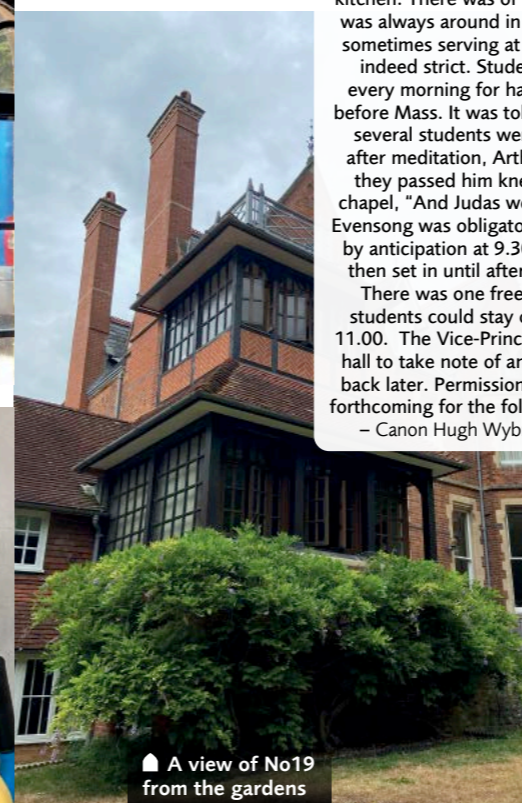
The former chapel



A stoup in the former vestry – now a maintenance storeroom



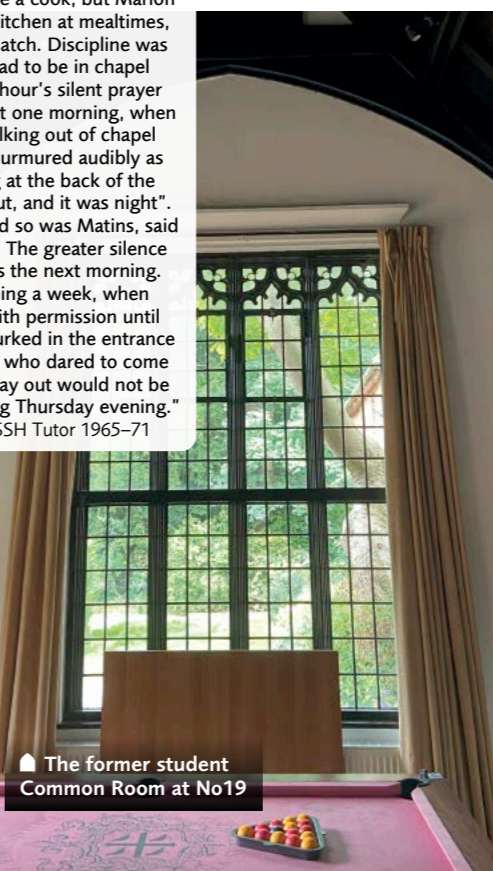
"Noel Vasey made cassocks for SSH students for generations, and always had them ready in time for ordinations. They were real wool, with a waist seam with 5 pleats and 39 buttons! It was a design especially created for Stagers, with an in-built cape over the shoulders – it looked like a mini skirt. Most ordinands got a cassock from him. You weren't allowed to wear one of the capes unless you were ordained and in a parish, but I remember one of the students sewed his in place so that The Principal (David Hope) couldn't make him take it off." – Anon



A view of No19 from the gardens



"For the first years of its existence in Norham Gardens, the House used to hold its services in the chapel left behind by St Hugh's, which was afterwards incorporated into the dining-room. The chapel was built as a result of the Jubilee Appeal and dedicated in 1927. The painting of the Vision of St Stephen which still dominates it is a youthful work by a former student Vincent Lucas (1905) the then Bishop of Masasi, Lorimer Rees (1929) now a member of the Governing Body, serving as the model or the Christus." – The late Canon Peter G. Cobb (a former student) in his 1976 book 'A Brief History of St Stephen's House'



The former student Common Room at No19



The Vice Principal and Principal in the repurposed former chapel at No17



Fr Hugh Wybrew and The Principal on the steps of No.19 Norham Gardens at the Alumni Reunion in July

"I remember the married quarters (opposite the main College building) won an architectural award for the most economical use of space. Certainly true! You could sit on the loo with your feet in shower! There was no cupboard space, nowhere to store a cassock, for example. One ordinand put up a pulley in the eaves of his room so that he could hang up his cassock!" – Anon

– Fact File –

# THE EDWARD KING CENTRE

## Location

Online (but based at and run by St Stephen's House, Oxford)

## Key contact

Fr Andreas Wenzel, Vice Principal –  
ekc@ssho.ox.ac.uk

## About/history

Launched in 2022 by St Stephen's House, Oxford, the Edward King Centre for Pastoral Theology (EKC) is an online hub which provides a range of content to enable the College's world-renowned academic knowledge and teaching to be accessed by a wider audience. Content is varied, ranging from pre-recorded and live lectures to formational talks and recordings of church music and chants.

The Centre has the following key aims:

- To provide ongoing theological formation and education to a wider audience, lay and ordained
- To resource the wider Church in contemporary debates from a Catholic Anglican perspective
- To engage with adjacent academic disciplines, cultural issues and theology in the public domain
- To strengthen the network and associatship of those wishing to engage

with SSH as a place of theological, liturgical and spiritual formation

## Qualifications available

The Edward King Centre offers graduate qualifications in Theology, Mission and Ministry as taught at St Stephen's House, Oxford, ranging from certificate level to Masters. These courses focus on sacramental, liturgical, moral, and pastoral theology in the Anglo-Catholic tradition. The qualifications form part of the Church of England's Common Awards and are validated by the University of Durham. Depending on previous qualifications there are different entry and exit points for graduate students.

## Who can apply?

The Edward King Centre's graduate qualifications are open to both lay and ordained people who wish to reflect on their own contribution to the life and mission of the Church. The normal entrance requirement for postgraduate study via the Edward King Centre is an upper second-class honours degree in theology or related subject, however other qualifications or

significant relevant experience can sometimes form the basis for exceptional admissions.

Its courses are not limited to those within the Anglo-Catholic tradition: prospective students of other traditions and denominations are equally welcome. Tuition via the Edward King Centre is non-residential and makes use of online teaching facilities such as live Zoom lectures, live Zoom seminars, and some pre-recorded material. Furthermore, wider study support is provided for those worried about returning to academic study, for example after a long break.

## How much does it cost?

Many resources on the EKC hub are free. For formal qualifications, fees start from £2,500.

## Are bursaries available?

Yes, a range of bursaries are available. Please contact the Centre for more details. ♥

🖥️ [www.edwardkingcentre.org.uk](http://www.edwardkingcentre.org.uk)



# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

In each issue of the College newsletter, we catch up with an alumnus to find out what they have gone on to do after leaving the College and their memories of studying here...



**Name:** Raveena Balani

**Studies undertaken at SSH:** MSc Child Development and Education

**Year of graduation:** 2016 (MSc)

**Undergraduate degree/other studies:** Undergraduate degree in BBA at Assumption University, Thailand (2012); Masters of Education, Framingham State University, Massachusetts (2020).

**Current role:** Head of Marketing and Events at SI-UK Education Council in London.

## Please briefly describe a typical day (for you, in your current role)

I help UK universities formulate plans to recruit students from all around the world. My office is in London and I tend to be office based most days. We liaise with our university partners, planning events such as our University Fairs which attract 80+ universities and thousands of international students. Some of my time is also spent attending and speaking at Higher Education conferences. No two days are the same!

## Could you tell us about your time at SSH? What was life like when you were here?

I am originally from Thailand and I was quite nervous when I first arrived. However, I went on to meet some of my closest friends here and my year wouldn't have been the same without them. I also volunteered at the church. I miss the late-night reading in the library and the Thursday night formals.

## How did SSH prepare you for what you've subsequently gone on to do?

SSH was so unique! I grew up fast and learnt to be independent in a

new country. I learnt to interact with people from all walks of life which is so helpful in my day-to-day as my current team consists of people from 17 different nationalities.

## Are there any particularly memorable moments or experiences from your time at the College?

My most memorable moments would have to be the surprise party for my 23rd birthday where I met so many new people and made close friends. I also loved being able to invite my parents to a Thursday formal at graduation. That was truly special.

## What advice would you give to someone considering studying here?

Everyone is so lovely, from the chef, to Father Robin. Be open minded and don't be afraid to ask for help! Get involved in college activities or sports – that's one thing I wish I'd done more of.

## Any parting thoughts?

It's been exactly seven years since I arrived in the UK and it changed my life. I'm grateful for all the doors this has opened for me, and all the experiences I have had. Thank you SSH! ♥



## THE PRINCIPAL'S PERSPECTIVE

At the college reunion in September we had the great pleasure of touring the former buildings of the college in Norham Gardens, thanks to the generosity of the current owners, St Edmund Hall. It was particularly good to have with us some old members of the college who had trained or taught at Norham Gardens, and who had not been back since the 1970s. We did not know at the time that the buildings are about to be re-developed, and that the 1926 chapel at 17, Norham Gardens familiar to many of our old members is to be demolished as part of this extensive project. I want to reassure everyone who spent so much time in prayer in that building during their time at the House, that we removed all the furnishings and fittings of the chapel when we moved in 1980, and in particular the rather striking painting of the stoning of St Stephen that is now displayed in the Founder's Chapel. It was evocative to visit the site, and unravel some of the complexities of which houses we used and when.

One of our key aims in establishing the Edward King Centre is to extend our

educational outreach using the flexibility of new means of communication and the scope of the Common Award. It has been very good then to enable candidates who have been with us for two years to complete their Diplomas to BA with further study after ordination, and to offer to suitably qualified candidates the opportunity to study for the Common Award MA over two years. Michaelmas Term saw the beginning of our first mixed mode teaching, with some students present in person and some joining via Zoom. So far it has been a stimulating and enjoyable experience, with our external students bringing lively engagement and a wider experience to the seminars. Our intention is to focus on aspects of theology which cannot be learned easily elsewhere and which are fundamental to Catholic formation: liturgical theology, sacramental theology and moral theology. We look forward to building on this work in the years ahead, especially in expanding our capacity for the study of canon law.

The exceptionally high standards of ceremonial and liturgical observance characteristic of British state occasions was very evident at the State Funeral for the late Queen, and it was particularly impressive to see the involvement of old and current members and friends of the House. The Dean of Windsor Bishop David Connor (SSH 1969–71), Canon Paul Williams, Rector of Sandringham and a frequent sabbatical guest, and Canon Anthony Howe, chaplain at Hampton Court, all had clerical parts to play, and James Whitbourn our Senior Research Fellow was responsible for producing the radio broadcast for the BBC. We are grateful to them for sharing some of their experiences in this newsletter. I was honoured myself to attend as part of the University delegation to hear the proclamation of the King at Carfax, and it has been poignant to hear for the first time ordinands at the Office praying 'O Lord, save the King.' 🇬🇧

Canon Robin Ward

### The 1876 Society Thank you to all members of the 1876 Society for their support:

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1876  
SOCIETY



### ORDINATIONS TO THE DIACONATE 2022

- Andrew Bailey, London Docks (St Peter) with Wapping (St John), *London*
- Millie Day, Ferrybridge (St Andrew) & Brotherton (St Edward the Confessor), *Leeds*
- Daniel Heaton, Horbury (St Peter & St Leonard) & Horbury Bridge, *Leeds*
- Tristan Meares, Rufford (St Mary the Virgin) and Tarleton, *Blackburn*
- Thomas Cotterill, Brighton (St Bartholomew), *Chichester*
- Michael Dixon, Cantley (St Wilfred), *Sheffield*
- Sebastian Way, Reading (St Giles with St Saviour), *Oxford*
- Stephen Miller, Hammersmith (St Luke) & Hammersmith (St Matthew), *London*
- Tatiana Gutteridge-Kalveks, Greenwich (St Alfege), *Southwark*
- Daniel Vickerstaff, Leamington South (St John the Baptist), *Coventry*

Calvin Robinson Christ Church, Harlesdon

### ORDINATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD 2022

- Luke Demetri, Croydon (St Michael & all Angels with St James), *Southwark*
- Seamus Hargrave, Narberth and Tenby, *St Davids*
- Anthony Lawrence, Ventnor (Holy Trinity, St Catherine) and Bonchurch (St Boniface), *Portsmouth*
- James Walton, Castlefields (All Saints with St Michael) and Ditherington, *Lichfield*

The Revd Glen Thomas was ordained to the priesthood in 2021 and is now Curate, *Potteries, North, Comprising Burslem St Werburgh, Smallthorn, and Sneyd.*

GDPR rules prevent us from publishing examination results without the explicit consent of our students. So we congratulate all our students who successfully completed their courses in 2020, and who were awarded the Postgraduate Certificate in Education, the degrees of Master of Studies, Master of Science, Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy. We are very proud of all you have achieved during your time with us.



# HAVE YOU JOINED THE 1876 SOCIETY?

The 1876 Society is a membership society for alumni, friends and supporters of St Stephen's House, with the aim of providing a community of stewardship to help support the work and future of the College. Simply by becoming a member you are supporting this aim. You can join yourself, join in memory of someone, or gift someone else membership.

Membership starts from just £10 per month.

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