

SHERBORNE

Spiritual life...

VIVAT!





SCHOOL CUSTOS

FROM THE HEADMASTER

One of the School's objectives, as published on the website and elsewhere, makes it clear that we aim 'to maintain Christian values and worship at the heart of the School's spiritual life, while respecting other paths to spiritual awareness'. This is no idle claim.

Sherborne has been a spiritual centre for more than thirteen centuries and the legacy of St Aldhelm, of the Benedictine monastic foundation, of the Anglican tradition since the 16th century and of the School's own Christian values is indeed a rich heritage.

In the twenty-first century we try to preserve the essence of that heritage while providing an appropriate and balanced spiritual climate in which the School community can flourish and which encourages a sense of service for others through both charitable work and fundraising.

Within the pages of this edition of Vivat! you will find many examples of the strength of the School's spiritual life. At the heart is the rhythm of worship in the Abbey, Chapel and in the Houses with the numbers coming forward every year for Confirmation indicating health and vitality, nourished by the wonderful work of the Chaplain, Revd Stephen Gray, and his assistant, James Clark. Naturally we seek to nurture the needs of those of other faiths and of those who find it

difficult to accept the pattern of communal worship which the School holds dear.

Above all, however, we hope to equip every Shirburnian with, at the very least, a travelling spirituality which enables him to go out into the world with a sense of the numinous and of the need to look beyond just himself.

Simon Elliot

OUTSTANDING SCHOOL

In a report published by Ofsted on 13th February this year, Sherborne was pronounced an Outstanding School, the highest category of commendation Ofsted can award. Sherborne was judged in six categories which were:

- Helping children to be healthy
- Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe
- Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do
- Helping children make a positive contribution
- Achieving economic wellbeing
- Organisation

Headmaster, Simon Elliot thanked all the staff and boys who had worked so hard to prepare for this rigorous inspection and he particularly mentioned Michael

Weston, Deputy Head Pastoral, who the inspectors told him was 'the best and most efficient pastoral leader that they had ever come across'.

The full report can be seen at www.ofsted.gov.uk or go to the School's website www.sherborne.org and follow the link.

VIVAT!

A TYPICAL CHAPEL WEEK

Monday	Junior Chapel	18.30	(Third, Fourth & Fifth Form)
Tuesday	Chapel Prayers	08.15	(Voluntary)
Wednesday	Holy Communion	08.00	(Voluntary)
	Choral Evensong in the Abbey	18.45	(Whole School)
Friday	Junior Chapel	08.30	(Third & Fourth Form)
	Candlelit Eucharist	21.30	(Voluntary)
Sunday	Abbey Service	11.30	(Whole School)



A 'SHIRBURNIAN SPIRITUALITY'

It was my first time in the pews, so to speak.

I had been in the Abbey many times since my arrival at Sherborne, but on this evening I realised that my perspective was limited. I had never looked on the spectacle of 'Sherborne at prayer' other than from a slightly elevated position at the front.

I have never been to an Advent Service like it.

This remarkable, now familiar Abbey has a strange warmth to it. It manages to combine overwhelming splendour with a sense of being approachable and comfortable. It's a fine expression of the Christian God it represents in this sense; the omnipotent creator who is also the one who becomes human, accessible, vulnerable.

In the obscurity a reader begins with those staggering words from Genesis telling us that we are here, somehow, because God wills it and loves what he has willed. The reader is solemn, almost chanting, until, with all the power of an incantation, he pronounces the dramatic words: '*And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.*'

And then, there was, quite literally, light. A single acolyte carried a single candle down the aisle as the words were spoken and the

warm candlelight brushed us all with its glow as it passed us by. He was joined by choir and clergy in procession and there was music and more candles and more readings until the whole place was infused with the hope and promise of Advent. I remember being so grateful at that service. Grateful for this place, for these people, for this service in this Abbey and for God's words and the Church that proclaims them in spite of her limitations.

I looked around and wondered whether this is how the boys feel. Are they responding to the sheer beauty of the whole thing as I am? Is this mysterious process of transmitting Faith, Hope and Love, which is the Christian Liturgy, soaking into their souls too?

I don't know.

And then, a little less than an hour later, it was all over.

In much the same way that we had come into the great Church, quietly, allowing unfinished conversations to die away into a murmur, we all spilled out of the Abbey, into the cold darkness of winter, heading for well-worn pathways back to our respective Houses and tasks and friendships and lives.

Hopefully we are carrying something of God's warmth and light back out into the obscurity.

At the time I didn't theorise but the whole thing has left me with a sense that I had just lived through a profound metaphor of the Spiritual Life at Sherborne.

I have been dropped into this gentle, sure rhythm of prayer and worship, work and leisure, centred on the Benedictine Abbey that once housed our patron saint, Aldhelm (himself a monk).

This circular rhythm of prayer and work and leisure characterises our lives here to a certain extent. The services quieten and centre us, holding us all still in the presence of God, the creator, for a moment before we are propelled back out into the corridors and classrooms and studios and pitches where we exercise our own 'creativities' as best we can.

I have often heard it said that Old Shirburnians come to remember their time in the Abbey with gratitude and fondness. It doesn't surprise me at all. The whole experience makes its way into the depths of a person until it begins to feel a bit like being 'at home' in a strange sort of way.

It is more powerful than any sermon.

James Clark, Assistant Chaplain
(Since 2008)

VIVATI!



MEMORIAM
1939-1945

PERSONAL THOUGHTS ON SPIRITUALITY

Wherein lies the spirituality of the School? The Chapel is at its centre. The School itself nestles under the nurturing wing of the Abbey. There is surely no doubt that over the years many have discovered meaning and fulfilment in their lives from their regular attendance at Abbey and Chapel. Nevertheless, the spirituality of the School extends out from both these buildings to spread its influence throughout the School.

Each of us will have our own memories of school. For C Day-Lewis, an old boy of Harper, his most lasting memory was as follows:

“If I had to offer one picture as the most representative of the many which crowd into my mind when I look back on my days there, I should choose, not any of the high spots or the dramatic passages, but the walking back from school on autumn evenings, along the crooked length of Hound Street towards Harper House. The gas lamps are lit; the strong, slow, golden boom of the Abbey clock striking sends ripple after ripple through the air; there is a south-west wind blowing, warm and moist on my cheek as if it were the breath of my own most indefinable longings made flesh and whispering to me”.

The Buried Day

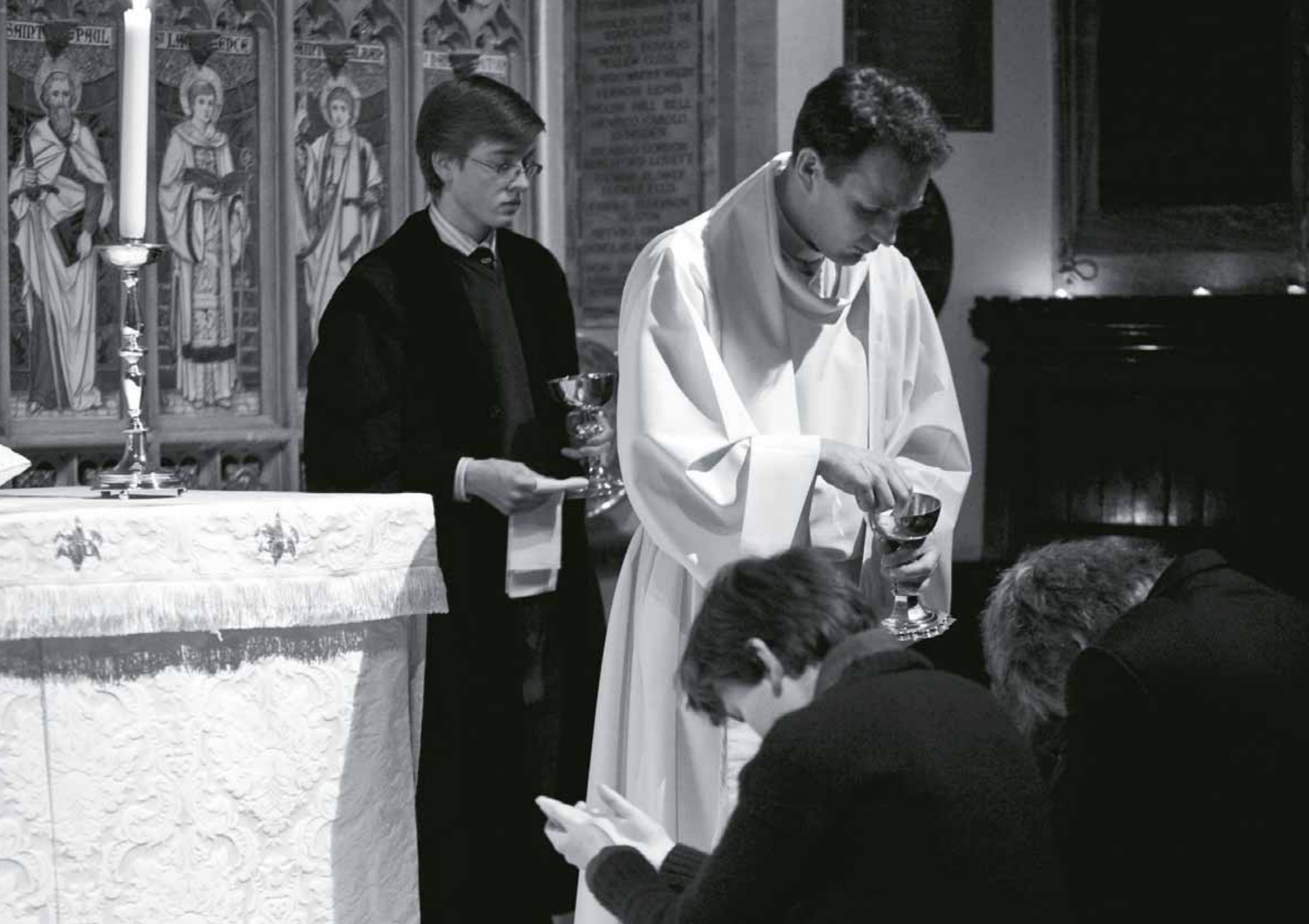
I have followed the boys of the House out of the Abbey and made that walk back up Hound Street to Harper. Liberated from the strictures of sitting attentively at Evensong they chase each other playfully up the road, some riding ‘piggy-back’ and jousting with others. Laughing, calling out to each other and wrapped up in the moment they are oblivious to their surroundings and the significance of the journey they are making. In the House library we all assemble again; seventy two of us collected in this small room, surrounded by an even greater gathering of past Housemasters and Harpoons. One is immediately conscious that between Day-Lewis’ time and our own, there is a continuity at the centre of which stands the Abbey and the Chapel. Today’s Sherborne School may be electronic and digital. Our visitors via the internet can be from all around the world. The School is slickly promoted and publicised. Nevertheless, at its centre beats the same heart. The OFSTED inspectors have checked out our welfare programmes, our risk assessments, our fire safety and even our door wedge policy; and declared us ‘Outstanding’. It is a shame that they did not see the boys moving from Abbey back to House, or assembled in the Harper library. They would have understood the School

better had they witnessed an informal house Eucharist, or attended the candlelit service on a Friday evening. They would have appreciated that the Shirburnian can put his beliefs and values into practice had they looked at the charitable work that is done through the Chaplaincy and the Houses. Frankly, they missed what makes Sherborne ‘Outstanding’. There is no box to be ticked for spirituality. But there is, and has been for a very long time, an intangible and special quality which underpins education at Sherborne. This I would define to be spirituality. Again Day-Lewis has described it better than I.

“I never revisit the place without falling under the spell – a charm blended of its mellow physical beauties and the sense of the generations of young life which, passing through court and cloister, have left something of themselves behind to form an invisible compost, wherein vice and virtue, triumph, failure and routine are transmuted to a single, undifferentiated element, and have taken away in exchange something that each individual, whether he cherish or deprecate it, will for the rest of his life have with him”.

The Buried Day

Simon Tremewan
Housemaster of Harper House and teacher of Classics



CONFIRMATION – A BOY’S VIEW

When 53 boys put themselves up for confirmation, you can tell that the spiritual side of Sherborne is flourishing. The journey is by no means easy, as each boy must attend weekly classes from early November, headed by the Chaplain, Mr Clark, Mr Carling or Mr Nurton. Having said this, our classes were a relaxed affair, involving us lounging on the Rev’s sofas, drinking tea and stroking the dogs. However, we did discuss Christianity’s many aspects and what it meant to be confirmed.

After a dozen or so of these classes, the day before the service arrived, and this is always set aside for a retreat for all 53 boys. This year was different from the last few retreats, as the Chaplain had organised a walk for us. Although strong winds and rain were forecast, the weather held, and it was a great day.

The aim was to be walked through the Eucharist service by visiting three beautiful churches in the rolling hills of Dorset, next to Yeovil. At Over Compton Church, Mr Carling discussed the issue of penitence and forgiveness. After a ten minute stroll, we arrived at the next stage of the Eucharist, at Nether Compton Church. Here, Mr Clark talked about the Liturgy of the Word. After a slightly longer walk, we arrived at our final

destination, Trent Church, where the chaplain talked about the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

It was fortunate that soup was on hand at the Rectory, which the Rev. Henry Pearson kindly allowed us to use. After lunch, we had a few hours to reflect on the day’s events, before returning to Sherborne.

The next morning, having eaten a hearty Confirmation breakfast, served by George Richardson and his team of Chapel Wardens, we descended upon the Abbey for the service. Although it was long, the time flew by, with each boy going up to the step with his sponsor. The service was sympathetically conducted by the Bishop of Ramsbury.

For me, the experience has been very enjoyable, and one that I would recommend to anyone. I would like to thank all those who made it possible for us.

Harry Walker (a, Upper Sixth)

THE BOW AWARD: ‘THE PRIZE FOR ALTRUISM’

Amongst the collection of awards unique to Sherborne is one which you will rarely hear the winner crow about. The Bow Award, nominated by the boys and teaching staff, is given annually to a boy who has made an outstanding contribution towards the pastoral welfare of others in the School.

There are many reasons why a boy might be nominated including helping a boy or boys through a difficult time in their home or school lives or helping those who may not at first fit in to become better integrated into the School. It is true that senior boys are more likely to show such maturity, but any boy may be nominated.

History of the Bow Award

The Bow Award was first given in 2003 as a legacy of local coal merchants, Mr and Mrs Charlie Bow. They delivered coal to the Houses of Sherborne School for many years and valued the friendship and courtesy shown to them by Sherborne boys. After their sad deaths both money and land occupied by the Bows (now the International College) were bequeathed to the School. It is therefore fitting that the award for an outstanding contribution to pastoral welfare should bear the Bow name.

Past winners:

- 2008 – Daniel O Jones (d)
- 2007 – Mark Corfield-Moore (d)
- 2006 – James Gilman-Wells (f)
- 2005 – Edward Selfe (c)
- 2004 – David Kirk (a)
- 2003 – Tom Edwards (a)

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PERSPECTIVES IN TIME

A view by Richard Morgan

To grow up without a spiritual dimension in one's life is at best a limited experience. Spirituality in its many forms takes us beyond day to day living into a world of many questions. Why are we here? What is the purpose of life? These eternal questions have been asked in the School since 1550.

The Abbey and Monastery may have been dissolved by Henry VIII but that great building remains dominant over the town and the rhythm of the monastic day still has echoes in the School timetable of Chapel and work. Over five years, the Shirburnian has something rooted into his spinal column by that rhythm, the landscape, the atmosphere and the people. In particular, I think of Sherborne Chaplains I have known: Freddy Carpenter, Ken Anderson and now, Stephen Gray and James Clark, all of whom have kept the light alive.

Sherborne seems to me to invite everyone – and it is an invitation that can be rejected as well as accepted – to start on the spiritual journey. And how right it is we should start with as much knowledge as possible about one religion, in our case Christianity. That gives everyone a knowledge and depth for thought and debate quite apart from matters of Faith. Across time, even if that Faith is elusive, it is maybe as important to pose the questions on the journey as

to find the answers. Some such questions are frightening, for example, How do you want to be remembered? No wonder many turn their back on such a thought but if that happens, can one ever fulfil what one might be?

Questions, questions. In a world in which it seems to me that the only certainty is uncertainty, the good news for all present day Shirburnians is that they have a lifetime in front of them to mull over these matters and thus find fulfilment on the way.

Richard Morgan (d, 53-58) is a Governor, was Warden of Radley (91-00) and Headmaster of Cheltenham (78-91)

Looking back by Michael Kusnetsov

My time at Sherborne was marked by numerous clashes with the School about religious observance. Almost ten years on I haven't suddenly embraced religion. But, paradoxically, I am more aware of the spiritual aspects of our lives thanks to the many discussions I had with my Chaplain and Housemaster.

Faith schools occupy a unique niche in our education. They recognise the need to address spiritual and ethical concerns that go beyond national curricula. That is certainly a role that should be encouraged. Where they stumble is in adopting a dogmatic approach, which either fails to recognise the diversity (or

lack) of beliefs entirely or does so in a narrow and formulaic way.

I frequently felt that there was little (overt) recognition that spirituality and faith do not entail adopting a religion or following a rite. Moreover, the view that parents are best placed to determine a child's beliefs seemed to me a patent fallacy.

Of course, it is logistically impossible for any school to accommodate the full spectrum of beliefs. Nor should the School disregard parents' desires, which is why the correct approach is not to impose a particular religion but to foster an atmosphere of open-mindedness; not to enforce service attendance but to place more emphasis on discussion and religious study classes.

As a newcomer in the early nineties to Britain and to the Anglican tradition, I found Sherborne's attitude puzzling at first. Now, though, I feel able to express gratitude that I had the opportunity to see at close quarters something which underpins the culture of the country I have made my home.

Michael Kusnetsov (m, 96-01) came to the International College at Sherborne before joining the School. He is now a trainee solicitor at Farrer and Co in London



PERSPECTIVES IN TIME

Choice for the Individual

Sherborne approaches religious matters in that most effective of ways: it allows a sense of spirituality to permeate most aspects of school life without ever saturating it. What is perhaps most successful about the School's approach is that there is never an attempt to force or foist religion upon its students - simply a reassuring feeling that there is some sense of greater purpose in the institution's endeavours. Whether one agrees with that purpose or not is entirely a choice for the individual, but in today's world, where ideology and principle are so sorely lacking in public life, the knowledge that there is a certain set of values which defines the School's attitude is of some comfort.

There is a quiet simplicity to the School's spiritual life, which is omnipresent without being overbearing, and which is embodied at its most significant in the absolute stillness of the Friday Night Eucharist service. The thirty-or-so minutes of music and reflection, passed in the candlelit atmosphere of the stunning chapel, rest amongst some of the most powerful of memories in the minds of many OS. That is not to say that the services conducted in Sherborne's soaring Abbey are all pomp - they are, in fact, a triumphant signal of the School's success in its spiritual approach -

but to sit in the contemplative tranquillity of the Chapel at the end of the week is something which I would guess many, regardless of religious persuasion, miss greatly on leaving the gentle surrounds of the School.

Hugo Soul (d, 00-05) is currently at Durham University studying politics

CROSSFIRE

Crossfire, the School's Christian Union, meets weekly as it has done for over forty years. The format consists of a short talk on a passage from the Bible, often given by a visiting speaker (a number of whom are old boys of the school), and is then followed by a chance for questions from the boys. After this we enjoy a light meal together, allowing more discussion of the talk or simply as a time to relax and chat about anything.

On average 15 to 20 boys come along each week to this entirely voluntary meeting, and in the course of a year one can expect approximately 50 boys to come through the doors at some stage. I hope the atmosphere is friendly and welcoming.

Nick Scorer (m,95-00) teacher of Chemistry

'By the time I left Sherborne I was resolved to direct my career towards practical ways of caring for the sick and poor. This has led to a career in medicine and surgery which has taken me to destinations far removed from the rarefied atmosphere of public school. I spent my gap year nursing in a Cheshire Home in Sheffield and trained in the east end of London before it became a fashionable City encampment. I migrated through tough hospital jobs in the UK and for three years ended up serving a third world rural population in a mission hospital in south west Uganda. Since then my life has taken another wild course and I have joined the Navy as a surgeon. I have now served on land in war zones such as Iraq and Afghanistan and at sea have visited countries all around the near and far east. What I take with me is the spiritual concept of serving God and others as being of far greater importance than the promotion of self. This comes from faith in the living God and I have Sherborne's Christian Union to thank for that.'

Peter Taylor (f, 76-81)



LIFE AS A MUSLIM IN SHERBORNE

When I first arrived in the third form I was into my Muslim roots and traditions as much as an English boy would be into the Premiership.

I wasn't sure what my new peers would think of my religion and culture. It wasn't a surprise that many, if not most of them, didn't know the country of Kuwait which I come from but they did have some academic grasp of what Islam might be about.

I changed a lot over the first term here. Initially I found being at Christian acts of worship strange. My mother (also Muslim) had been educated at a Roman Catholic boarding school in Lebanon and she made it clear that I was to attend acts of worship – she said she learnt from the experience and my Father was also in favour of me attending.

Ramadan came along that year and I didn't know what I was going to do. It was hard to play rugby, keep up with the studying and fast. Fortunately Ahmad Al-Thani (Lower Sixth at the time) had a house in Sherborne where I and the few Muslims of the school would go to break fast every night.

Over the years I have become a more open-minded Muslim about all of life's questions. This came as a benefit of

having two of the world's most interesting cultures and traditions embedded in me. Last Ramadan at school for our Eid celebrations Mr Clark and the Chaplain took me and the other Muslims to Yeovil for a delicious pizza dinner. It was very nice and thoughtful of them to do so and it was a dinner to remember.

If I am honest, I would have to say that there are days when I would rather not attend services. There are Sundays when I would rather lie in and attending Junior Chapel can be a chore. There are other days when the sermon is interesting and I can happily join in a Hymn. There are also days when the moral content of the sermon can make me want to be a better person.

My own Islamic faith has matured considerably since I first arrived. I am more tolerant of others and more open-minded when it comes to the beliefs and practices of others.

I hope and think I have also broadened the minds of others in return.

Yousef Al-Qatami (b, Fifth Form)

THE CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE

Whilst Sherborne is an avowedly Anglican foundation, literally in the shadow of Sherborne Abbey (at the right time of day), it has always welcomed members of other denominations and, indeed, faiths. Since I first came to this school, as a Roman Catholic, I have been made to feel completely at home by the two chaplains, Mark Aitken and Stephen Gray.

As a school, we have been unreasonably fortunate in our chaplains – surely one of the most crucial appointments any pastorally-minded headmaster has to make – but we Catholics are twice blessed, through our close links with Leweston School; not only do we enjoy Stephen's excellent pastoral care, but we also have our own honorary Catholic chaplain, Fr Richard Meyer. Though one of the more recently ordained priests of the diocese of Plymouth, Richard is not wet behind the ears. He has plenty of relevant experience himself, as a former Anglican priest and teacher; he converted to the Roman Catholic Church in the 1990s. A brief career teaching at Leweston and St Mary's, Ascot followed his conversion, until our bishop's decision to ordain him a priest, unusual perhaps, because he comes with a wife and family. One of the (occasionally justified) criticisms made of Catholic clergy is that, with their vow of celibacy, they might

VIVATI!

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SAMUEL HEY TO
1904-1977
HOUSEMASTER
SECOND MASTER
& DEVOTED SERVANT
OF SHERBORNE SCH
MULTIS ILLE BON
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have difficulty empathising with some of their flock. This is certainly not the case with Richard; having had children of his own, he has entirely reasonable expectations of all those in his charge.

Indeed, as the member of staff with notional responsibility for Catholics, I live in the school up the hill. Whilst the vast majority of our links as schools are secular in nature (none more so than school discos) our sacramental links take the place they deserve. Every Sunday morning in full term, a coach is laid on to enable Catholic boys to go to Mass, in place of the school service in the Abbey; the number of RCs on the school roll tends to hover around 8%, and at present around thirty souls are bussed up every week. Then, every two years, the Bishop comes to confer the Sacrament of Confirmation. In May 2009, around a dozen Shirburnians are to be confirmed alongside a similar number of Antonians. Despite any visible differences in tradition and practice, here at Sherborne, we take the ecumenical prayer 'Ut Unum Sint' seriously.

Paul Ryan
Teacher of Mathematics

THANKS, BUT NO THANKS

Religion at Sherborne can be looked at like football; beautiful and fulfilling to some and dull and pointless to others. I fall into the latter category.

I am, however, a believer in tradition and religion happens to be one fundamental aspect of Sherborne life, so I can accept the compulsory services in that respect. On some level I also envy those who have retained their faith; and, if God does exist, praying might not be such a bad idea, just to be on the safe side. As an impressionable child I too shared this belief, as may be the case with many, but it left me as I grew older and I acquired the view that if there isn't any hard evidence to prove something then it is not worth believing in.

Compulsory services are also regarded as essential for those who do believe in God however I'm confident that I'm not alone in having that sense of despair when another service comes looming up on our supposedly free day of the week and I'm certainly not alone in feeling the injustice of having to sit through something I wouldn't chose to participate in if it were left up to me. Wouldn't it be simpler for the atheists and agnostics among us not attend, rather than slipping into the inevitable boredom that sometimes results in distracting behaviour? Why disrupt the atmosphere for those who genuinely want to listen? I would not, however, venture as far as to say that the services at Sherborne are unnecessary either. What they do

provide is a 'taste' of religion that you are free to take or leave when you depart from the School. I have personally found this taste a difficult one to swallow, and I am unlikely to return for a second helping in later life, but I am not ungrateful for being given it in the first place.

What's more, some steps have been taken over the last year or so to lighten the load of services that the boys must attend. The Fifth Form now only has to go to one Junior Chapel a week and the Sixth Form don't have to go the School Chapel at all if we don't want to (a welcome privilege, in my opinion). Besides, it is not as though atheism is not given a fair hearing; if it wasn't then I wouldn't have licence to write this article. My point is that, whilst the services may be forced on you at Sherborne, religion is not.

The Friday Eucharist is a voluntary service and this seems to be a much more popular alternative to any of the others. It is well attended by people who have an honest desire to be there which perhaps demonstrates the difference between having to attend and wanting to.

I am not saying that every aspect of the services is terrible (I mean who doesn't enjoy a bit of peace and quiet and a good sing-song now and again?) but, overall, if I had been asked at the beginning of my time at Sherborne if I wanted to attend several compulsory services every week, I think the response would be a resounding, 'thanks, but no thanks'.

George Day (f, Lower Sixth)



CHARITY AT SHERBORNE

“As we turn to go I look back and in the darkness see the form of the marble Christ gazing down on the dead. The rats scuttle in the classrooms again.”

Fergal Keane *Season of Blood*

The genocide in Rwanda of 1994 was both brutal and intense. Brutal because most of the murder was by machete and club and often at the hands of someone known to the victim; intense because 800,000 men, women and children were butchered in just 100 days. The brutality, the intensity and the sheer hatred involved has left an indelible shadow on the hearts and minds of not only the survivors and the perpetrators but also those who bore witness like Fergal Keane.

How would the party from Sherborne, who visited Rwanda in October 2008, be affected by their visit to genocide memorials and by working with and talking to both survivors and killers? Our six days with REACH were cleverly and carefully planned by the Chaplain and Rev Philbert Kalisa. The beginning of our time in Rwanda exposed us to the horror of the genocide itself and none of the lectures or reading or films that we were exposed to before our trip could have prepared us for the stench and the agonised contortions of the preserved corpses at Murambi or the heartbreaking testimonies at the Kigali Memorial Centre of parents who had watched their children being killed.

The middle of the week saw us hard at work digging foundations for a community centre sited next to The Upper, Rwanda – the football pitch made possible by the generosity of all at Sherborne through our Link charity work. Whilst most laboured under an equatorial sun, some of the party travelled a short distance to meet and hear the story of some of the survivors and some of the perpetrators of the genocide. REACH (Reconciliation Evangelism and Christian Healing) accomplishes the truly remarkable by bringing those from either side of the conflict together and using faith to stimulate both atonement and forgiveness. Towards the end of the week we experienced and participated in some of the activity that REACH uses to achieve these ends when we played football against Kayonza and were treated to some uplifting performances by choirs and by groups of drummers and dancers.

It was a week that saw tears of both sorrow and unbridled happiness. We witnessed horror, but also great joy and remarkable feats achieved through faith. None that went on the trip could have possibly returned unaffected but I am sure that we would all express this differently and perhaps take different lengths of time for the experience to really sink in. There are *some* memories of Rwanda that I try *not* to have, but praying for peace, tolerance and understanding in the world as we sat in

the heat beneath the umbrella thorn outside Murambi often comes back to me and reminds me how fortunate I am and how precious life is.

Peter Watts is Housemaster of School House and Head of Science

CHARITY LINKS

As well as our main School charities such as Kid's Company and REACH Rwanda, I am thrilled to share with you our new 'House Adoption' scheme for Charity. The eight charitable links have all been inspired by pupils, parents, staff and former members of staff that make the connections truly Shirburnian. The links, beyond the monetary giving, offer locations of service where the practical giving of time and energy are such an integral part of this two way initiative. We have had no fewer than 50 boys take advantage of this scheme through contributing to the respective Communities, and as I write we have boys in Ecuador, South Africa, Rwanda, Kenya and Sri Lanka, where I know that unforgettable memories and lessons of life have and are being experienced. We are continually impressed at the boys' capacity to serve, to help and to enrich the lives of others, and I firmly commend these links to you all.

The Chaplain

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The Houses have adopted the following Charities:

- Craggs Primary School, South Africa
- Charlie Sumption memorial Fund (Kenya sponsoring a child's education)
- Spinal injuries clinic, Salisbury Dorset Disability Cricket
- St Thomas' School, Sri Lanka
- The Vanessa Grant Trust
- Ecuador- Alan Howard link
- The Rati Moyo Memorial Fund in Zambia (a school in his memory)
- Julia's House (a children's hospice near Bournemouth)



END PIECE

// Last term I was coming back in a coach from a rugby match and I was sitting next to Mr Davis: we were talking about the first match I watched at Twickenham: 'We won 11-8.' said Mr Davis. 'I was playing... in fact it was the one occasion I captained England.' The match was played in thick fog. Shortly afterwards England broke off sporting relations with South Africa in protest over Apartheid and that breakdown has always been connected in my mind with that match when, significantly, I couldn't even see the points scored at the other end.

Why raise today that horrible ghost – Apartheid – which ended so dramatically with the triumphant return to public life of Nelson Mandela after his long, long imprisonment? Because over Christmas the world quietly paid tribute to a very remarkable woman, Helen Suzman, who died after a brilliant career spent in total opposition to Apartheid.

Helen Suzman was a politician in South Africa: the one woman in that country's parliament of 165 MPs; the one opponent to Apartheid in that parliament. For 13 years she was the only parliamentary representative of the Progressive Party. She stood up to three successive leaders of South Africa who defended Apartheid. In 1989 she proposed a vote of censure against a

senior judge who had imposed a 5 year suspended sentence and a small fine against a white man who had beaten a black servant to death. When the president said to her in parliament 'The country has written you off,' she replied immediately 'The world has written you off!' She was the one woman to visit Nelson Mandela on Robbin Island. It is now a tourist attraction, as you will know. It wasn't then.

So let us not forget Helen Suzman. 'Ah,' you may say, 'That is all past!' Well, I take you back again to 1969 when I was roughly your age. On Sundays, I went off to church with my family and there was a bit in the service called the Intercessions, when we prayed for different trouble spots in the world. I can remember thinking. 'What's the point of this? South Africa, Ireland, Middle East. Nothing will ever solve their problems.'

And yet. The Nelson Mandelas and the Helen Suzmans worked away for a resolution in South Africa. And others have done the same in Ireland: groups of parents, for example, whose children had been killed in the atrocities!

Which brings me to the Middle East. Don't write off a problem as I was tempted to do. Don't say, as I heard a well-paid diplomat say in a documentary

on interviewing candidates for the Foreign Office: 'he didn't seem to realise that there is no solution to the Gaza Strip.' You can do better than that.

I would like to think that someone in Chapel this morning may help find a solution to the Gaza Strip. Who knows what your contribution may be: as a doctor; a teacher; as a diplomat; an aid worker?

That is what I think the Headmaster was talking about recently in Lists; a humane, broad view of [ambition](#). These days we have a poor view of politicians. But *ambitio* in Latin originally meant 'walking around and canvassing votes', and if you did that as Helen Suzman did, it would be a very remarkable ambition indeed.

Eventually enough people wanted and prayed for the same thing in South Africa and in Ireland. Peace in the Middle East requires the right words and the right actions. But prayer is not a bad place to start. //

This talk was delivered in Junior Chapel on Friday 9 January 2009, by William Duggan, Head of Classics

VIVATI!

Three priests relax in the sunny cloisters of the San Marco monastery, Florence. They were caught on camera by one of the U6 Art Historians visiting the monastery in February to look at the Annunciation by Fra Angelico and the Last Supper by Ghirlandaio.



VIVAT!

The next edition of VIVAT! will appear in August 2009. This will cover all aspects of the School and replaces The Sherborne Review.

This 'Spiritual Life' is the first of an occasional series of VIVAT! highlighting specific areas of Sherborne.

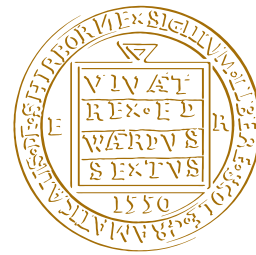
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