



# FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER



## 2007

### *Chaplain's message*

We have been blessed in many ways over the last eighteen months, not least in the remarkable success which the Appeal has seen, due entirely to the greatly appreciated generosity of so many of you. To have arrived at £1.7 million (target £2 million) in such a relatively short time is extraordinary and vivid testament to the affection in which Fisher House is held and the degree to which its role is prized.

We could not have received a more encouraging endorsement than the personal donation, widely reported in the press, given to us by the Pope himself. My letter of thanks was conveyed to him in the diplomatic bag from the Nunciature.

I must express here our gratitude to Mrs Janet Lash, who has co-ordinated the Appeal from the beginning. Her indefatigability and enthusiasm have been indispensable. I should also like to thank Jonathan Riley-Smith for his wise steering of the Appeal Strategy Committee, the other members of the committee for their devotion and industry, and Mrs Liz Jacobs for her friendly efficiency in the Appeal office. John McCaffrey, based in London and himself a former member of Fisher House, will guide the Appeal to its completion which, with your help, is projected for Christmas.



Gilding the crucifix

Many of you were very generous in an earlier appeal for funds to provide Fisher House with a new crucifix in the Hall. I am delighted to report that it is very close to completion. It is an exact replica of the crucifix by Cimabue, in the church of San Domenico, Arezzo,

and authentic materials and construction techniques have been used in its production. The photograph of the artist, Lara Wilson, working at the Hamilton Kerr Institute, which is part of the Fitzwilliam Museum, was taken in June. I have seen the crucifix at various stages and can assure you that it will be a magnificent adornment.

The Fisher Lectures took place again in February this year and were well attended and much appreciated. We were privileged to have three extremely distinguished lecturers: the historian, Michael Burleigh, the philosopher, John Cottingham and the theologian, Gerald O'Collins SJ.

Since our last Newsletter, we have said farewell to two assistant chaplains. Abbot Stephen Ortiger, who came to Fisher House in 2001, has become Episcopal Vicar for Religious in the Arundel and Brighton diocese. Fr Stephen's many gifts were greatly appreciated during his time with us and his popular, light-hearted and gentle presence added much to the genial atmosphere of the chaplaincy.

The end of the present academical year saw Sr Pauline Bürling's departure. Sr Pauline came to Fisher House in 2000 and her two complete terms as Chaplaincy Assistant have been a huge success, leaving the chaplaincy greatly enriched and its work enhanced in many



Sr Pauline Bürling & Abbot Stephen Ortiger

different ways. Sr Pauline has not yet received a new appointment but we wish her every blessing for the future. She will be succeeded in October by Sr Mirjam Magyar OP, a Dominican sister from Hungary, who is completing a PhD thesis.

Both Abbot Stephen and Sr Pauline will be much missed and long remembered and I personally owe them an inestimable debt for all their hard work and support.

The vital work of the chaplaincy relies entirely on your generosity and you can be certain that in securing its future, you are contributing directly to the work of the Church not just in Great Britain but throughout the world. Thank you and God bless you for your continuing support. Mass is regularly offered for your intentions.

*Fr Alban McCoy*  
Chaplain

### *The Fisher Society*

The Fisher Society is open to all current students attending Fisher House and membership is free, thanks to the kind generosity of CUCA. We are a large and diverse community and the society reflects this in its activities. We offer lunch at the chaplaincy six days a week; this invaluable opportunity to meet helps sustain the strong community feeling of the society and has become a veritable institution for some. This year's social highlights have included a welcome for freshers, a fancy dress Saints and Sinners Party, an Italian Evening, and a leavers' barbeque. Almuni may be pleased to hear that the Fisher Dinner continues: this year's night of revelry was attended by over ninety people.

The flourishing state of the Fisher Society is reflected in some new initiatives. A Society of St Vincent de Paul has been established which has enabled us to engage in rewarding community work. There have also been several opportunities for vocational discernment as well as retreats and a pilgrimage to Walsingham.

I know I speak for the whole committee in saying we are honoured to serve the society and we trust God that the coming academical year will see it go from strength to strength.

*Dominic F. Palma*  
Chairman, 2007-8

# The Fisher House Appeal

## Patrons of the Appeal

The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster

The Duke of Norfolk, Archbishop Couve de Murville, The Rt Hon Lord Patten,  
Lady Arnold, Professor Eamon Duffy, Mr Julian Filochowski CMG OBE, Canon Richard Inledon,  
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### President's Message

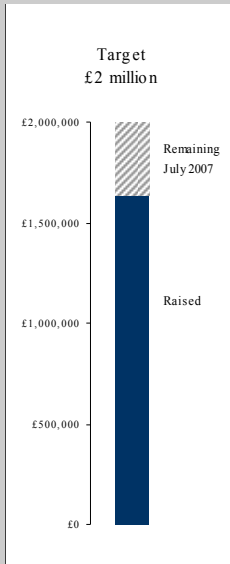
This short issue of the Fisher House Newsletter is primarily to keep you informed of the progress of the Appeal. I'd like to thank all of you who have contributed. With £1,700,000 already given, we are approaching our goal of £2,000,000. Our team in Cambridge has been inspirational, but we could never have raised a sum of this magnitude so quickly without the great generosity of benefactors, including Pope Benedict XVI. We are convinced that your response recognizes the chaplaincy's success in fostering the faith and encouraging vocations.

The first £1,000,000 has relieved us of the obligation of letting the Hall to traders on a regular basis. The second million will allow the chaplaincy to absorb the predicted growth in the number of Catholics at the University: there is already a Mass attendance of nearly 500 persons on Sundays in term. The last batches of letters from or on behalf of past chaplains are on their way and we hope that those who receive them will be as generous as others have been. Please help us. Since we intend to reach the two million mark by Christmas, you could give no better Christmas present to the chaplaincy.

It goes without saying that we shall still need support. We are most grateful to those who are prepared to make annual donations and we have plans to establish a group of Friends of Fisher House, who will be ready to lend a hand when needed.

I cannot end without saying how overwhelming we in Cambridge have found the goodness and generosity of so many Catholics, in this country and overseas.

*Professor Jonathan Riley-Smith*  
President of CUCA



Mr Peter Ffrench-Davis  
fascinating memorabilia with him.

### Raising the funds

With the Appeal in full swing, the last year has been packed with activity. At the public launch, in November 2006, Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor and the Apostolic Nuncio joined former chaplains, past students, friends and well-wishers in the gracious surroundings of the Travellers' Club - where the memory of Mgr Gilbey is still green. Prelates aside, the most distinguished guest was Mr Peter Ffrench-Davis, President of the Fisher Society in 1933, who brought

many also gave more than they could easily afford. To each and every one we extend our heartfelt thanks. As we go to press, the appeal stands at £1,701,397 of which about £50,000 is pledged in the form of standing orders over five years. Two years ago the target looked hopelessly ambitious; now we are approaching the final hurdle. Please help us onto the home straight.

*Mrs Janet Lash*  
Appeal Co-ordinator

### Treasurer's Report

The Fisher House Appeal, launched in January 2006, has been a resounding success. We envisage achieving our goal of two million pounds by December of this year. Almost all of the donations - large and small - from our generous benefactors are invested with our investment managers on a discretionary basis and are currently producing approximately 3.75% per annum. A cash reserve equal to one year's average expenditure is held on deposit to meet any unforeseen commitments.

Refurbishment and repair works - both major and minor - continue at Fisher House and Hall when they are needed and when sufficient funds are available. In the past year, for example, the chimney to the right of Fisher House has been taken down and re-built using the original bricks and lime mortar; the roof has been repaired and the guttering renewed at both the House and Hall; the tiles on the roof garden adjacent to the library have been taken up and re-laid; and electrical installations in both buildings have been renewed or repaired as necessary.

A full copy of the accounts for the current financial year (up to 30 June 07) is available on request from the Treasurer.

*Mrs Susanna Yates*  
Treasurer of CUCA

There were other highlights. In September, the second Alumni Mass was celebrated by Archbishop Couve de Murville, attended by many who were students under his care. Soon after, a packed weekend in Dublin saw Fr Alban and Professor Eamon Duffy whirled from the serious to the seriously festive as they lectured, preached and partied with friends old and new gathered to celebrate and support the work of Fisher House. In Lent, Professor Nicholas Lash's lecture on Richard Dawkins's *The God Delusion* (its Cambridge airing reported elsewhere) drew a lively crowd to Westminster Cathedral Hall. In June, thanks to Fr Peter Newby, we celebrated the Feast of St John Fisher with Mass and lunch at St Mary Moorfields in the City of London.

In the Appeal office there was a daily frisson when the post brought - or failed to bring - donations. January produced the elation of the Pope's personal gift, swiftly followed by £250,000 from the US. Later, Fr Alban was reaching for the smelling-salts after being handed a cheque for a cool half a million after Mass. And so the total climbed. Many gave of their abundance, but

# Thanks to our benefactors

Our thanks to all those who have given since the last newsletter (19/4/06 - 30/6/07)

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Donations should be sent to: The Fisher House Appeal, Fisher House, Guildhall Street, Cambridge CB2 3NH.





Fr Aidan Nichols OP and Acolytes

### Music at Fisher House

It is noon on the bank-holiday Monday, May 2007: in the University Church of Great St Mary's, the organist introduces the well-beloved hymn, 'All my hope on God is founded'. Singing lustily, the choir processes up the aisle before the celebrants and servers. On this day each year, Catholic members of the University celebrate the Feast of St John Fisher, patron of the Catholic Chaplaincy named

after him and one who contributed so much to the development of the University in the sixteenth century. The liturgy on this patronal feast is always particularly splendid, with the two choirs from Fisher House combining to illustrate the rich diversity of musical practices at the chaplaincy.

During term time, the two morning Masses at Fisher House are enriched by very different styles of music. Those who rise early on Sunday and attend the 9.30 Mass will encounter the *Schola Cantorum*. As the name suggests, this group specialises in music from before 1600, with a particular emphasis on Gregorian chant, which thus complements the *Novus Ordo* Latin liturgy at the Mass. The *Schola* also sing at a number of college Masses, and at Masses celebrated in the Tridentine rite. The music provided by the English Choir at the 11.15 Mass is more diverse, but has in general a strong congregational bent. Its scope ranges from some chanted Ordinaries up to music written the previous week.

On occasions of particular solemnity, which in recent years have included visits of the Papal Nuncio and the Cardinal-Archbishop of Westminster, the two choirs join together and, in consultation with the chaplain, the directors agree a programme which incorporates elements of both liturgical practices. In spite of the seeming eclecticism, these programmes have always proved musically satisfying and have significantly enhanced the liturgy. A particular favourite with choir, congregation (and dare we say it, with the visiting prelates themselves) has been Bruckner's *Ecce Sacerdos Magnus* (Behold a great priest).

The Fisher Mass this year involved chant, sixteenth-century polyphony and nineteenth-century German music, as well as a number of hymns. Apart from a choral eight-part setting of the Sanctus by Mendelssohn, the Ordinary was chanted (*Missa Orbis Factor*), as were the Introit and Communion antiphon.

Mendelssohn was featured again at Holy Communion, when the choir sang his setting of Psalm 42 (43) *Richte mich Gott* (Judge me, O God). The Offertory motet was Byrd's *In Manus Tuas*, and the rousing 'Faith of Our Fathers' served as the recessional hymn. This varied programme gives some idea of the scope of musical activity at Fisher House: our long-term aim is to establish some type of choral foundation to enhance still further the musical contributions to the liturgy.

David Larkin

Musical Director, *Schola Cantorum*

### Dumb Biology and the Lash

Cambridge is one of the best places in the world to study the natural sciences. Being part of a tradition which includes such icons as Bacon, Darwin, Maxwell, Dirac and Hawking is the thrilling realisation of a lifelong dream for most members of that illustrious crew, the NatScis. I remember the constant sense of gratitude which characterised my first year's study. I couldn't escape the feeling that I was incredibly *lucky* to be studying science at Cambridge.

Yet there's another side to the story. A scientific education at Cambridge, although it can lead to deep and detailed knowledge, can lack the breadth of understanding that comes from a holistic education. By way of helping to remedy this situation, Professor Nicholas Lash delivered a lecture at Fisher House addressing (perhaps too polite a word!) the flawed arguments of Richard Dawkins in his latest bestseller, *The God Delusion*.

The topic drew about 100 to Fisher Hall. The sea of unfamiliar faces was most encouraging, as was the eager notetaking. (They must have been NatScis – arts students, it seems, don't need such mental crutches.) The lecture itself was a masterclass in argument. Dawkins came out looking something of a simpleton. More importantly, the lecture served an educational purpose. Professor Lash spoke rigorously and eloquently on the Christian doctrine of God, and on 'how to take texts', a skill that eludes many scientists. Those students in attendance who have, thus far in their education, lacked a subtle presentation of the relationship between science and religion can only have come away from the lecture much better informed.

As Professor Lash said: 'good argument is as indispensable ... as good measurement'. Here's to the flourishing of good argument at Fisher House!

Conor McDonagh

King's College

### CUCA Officers

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### University Alumni Weekend Alumni Mass, Reception and Lunch Sunday 23rd September 2007

Mass at 11am  
followed by Wine Reception  
Lunch at 1:30pm

Three course lunch with wine: £20

For lunch tickets please apply to:  
The Fisher House Appeal, Fisher House, Guildhall Street,  
Cambridge CB2 3NH  
Tel: 01223 742191 Email: [appeal@fisherhouse.org.uk](mailto:appeal@fisherhouse.org.uk)

**Everybody Welcome**