

VENERABILE VIEW

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The Chairman's Report

SUMMER 2003

First let me thank all of you who have responded by changing your subscription to the new rate or beyond. Thank you to all who give substantial funds for the College which is in great need of our financial help as well as our support and prayers.

I was over in Rome in late March this year and as well as getting up to date with the sacristy mending I chatted to everyone that I could find who had time to pause for a while, but I did have proper constructive talks with the Rector, the Vice Rector and the Administrator as well as the Senior Student.

Financial Help

I came away with two ideas that we could look at to support financially this year. The first was to help bring the pool at the College back into use. We can now call it the pool and not the tank as the Belle Arte have recog-

by
Jo Barnacle

nised it as such. There have been two bequests toward this and at our Committee Meeting we agreed to take this on as our project for the next couple of years. We have given the College £10,000 this year and will give what is needed to complete the job next year, a possible £9 or £10,000 more. The College could not possibly do this restoration without our help.

Powerpoint

The students too had a worthwhile project, I think it is called Powerpoint technology, which enables one giving a presentation to project notes, diagrams etc from a computer onto a screen. Unfortunately we have been unable to find the money for it this year. My apologies to you for a change in venue for this year's Annual Meeting. We

had hoped to have it in Henley on Thames on 6th September but because of Ordinations on that day, no one from the College could be with us. We had to change the date to 13th September, but then Father Wilcox could not accommodate us on that day, so we will now meet in London, at St John the Evangelist, near the Angel, Islington where Father Gerard Skinner is the Assistant Priest. I do hope that many of you will be able to come. Our day at Ingatestone Hall in April went very well. Our thanks to Lord Petre and his son for making us so welcome and in opening the house for us. We all enjoyed the venue, the hospitality, and the weather. Our thanks too to Elizabeth for arranging it. Do you have any suggestions for further days out at places of Catholic interest, especially connected with our Martyrs?

**Keep up the
Prayers!**

Aperitivo Romano by Susie and Tom Finnigan

The Pope's helicopter hovered over the lake. We had arrived at an old monastery perched on the steep side of Lake Albano in the Roman Castelli. Convento di Palazzola. It sits opposite Castel Gandolfo where Pope John Paul was ending his summer holiday.

The Via dei Laghi, Mussolini's road through the delectable wine growing area south west of Rome, buzzed with traffic. The very names of villages intoxicate you. Velletri, Marino, Albano, Nemi, Grottaferrata, Squacciarrelli, Rocca di Papa, Frascati. The approach to Palazzola from the Lake road is untidy, a lovers' lane strewn with litter, cars squeezed into the bushes and Italians squeezing into each other. Through a barrier is an open area. Here coaches turn and taxis unload in front of a thirteenth century church built by Cistercian monks and dedicated to Our Lady of the Snows. Lake Albano gleams five hundred feet below. To the left a wooded hillside spreads in a volcanic arc towards Albano and Castel Gandolfo and peters out to allow a view of Rome, the Campagna and the distant sea.

This Saturday the wind was dead. In the lake the domes and towers, the whole irregular skyline of the Pope's holiday town with its yellow ochre roofs, burnt sienna tiles and brilliant white walls were captured upside down in the deep water. The umbrella pines above Albano shaded the road emerging from the woods. It was ten minutes before one in

the afternoon, warm, still and silent after the taxi left. Dare we expect food?

'You will be joining us for lunch?' smiled Gertrude as she opened the door to our room in the New Wing. Closing the long wooden shutters to dim the September sunshine we humped the suitcases onto the beds, grabbed the key and traipsed along the corridor. Down the stone stairs to the church door and down further we dipped under the Lady of the Snows and rose into the Cistercian cloister. Enclosed in glass, sparsely furnished but cascading with flowers, the cloister surrounds a deep well with walls and overhanging bucket. Above it the tufa rock face catches the afternoon light. To the right is a sitting room. Then through a rickety door and we are in the bar.

A black haired, ruggedly built figure turns with a huge grin. Father Terry is a well-bred Scouser, a talented linguist and the newly appointed Director of Palazzola. A cigarette in one hand he seizes my arm and hugs Susie. Terry seems genuinely pleased that we are staying for almost a week. Behind him, tall, slim and tanned, shining in white is George who looks after the bar. George teaches English in Warsaw from October to June. From July to September he presides over drinks with elegance. A gin and tonic to the sound of a Chopin waltz is de rigueur for this Polish gentleman. Terry leads us onto the terrace. There is hardly need for intro-

ductions to the other guests. Fr Anthony yells a welcome. A former Director of this place whom we have known since childhood. Tony still swims every day in Todmorden, retains the enthusiasm of a twenty year old and addresses his bemused Lancashire congregation in Italian and African Luo! John is a school friend now running an international Christian movement based in Rome. A guitar and rugby boots will figure on his coat of arms if they make him a bishop. Patrick and Stephen we get to know later.

Behind us the ancient monastery walls shine white. From the terrace a formal Italian garden stretches alongside and above the lake. Four precise pathways run in parallel. Each is bordered by a clipped box hedge rising to waist height and enclosing a lawn. Behind the garden is a volcanic rock face. Here, in the first century after Christ, teams of slaves hacked a platform to build this summer house for a Roman senator. We passed his tomb as we rattled down the pathway from the Via dei Laghi. It is thought to be one of the Scipios who did great things in Africa. His summer house became a monastery, a friary, a health clinic and a summer house again. At the bottom of the rock is a pergola covered in vines. The garden paths lead to tall cypress trees caught in silhouette against the blue Italian sky. Perfect symmetry executed with a grant from the Belle Arti - Italy's ministry of culture. There is a fountain with a cavorting fish. *(continued over)*

They say Bernini carved the fish. Manicured trees give shade and scent, their thin tapering trunks shorn of branches to head height. Even Italian trees in an Italian garden need to have style.

From the terrace we move behind a low wall beside the designer garden and sit under bay trees at a long wooden table set for an alfresco lunch. The shaded light is layered with leaf smells. Chattering is mixed with the clink of glasses and the inimitable gurgle of wine spilling from a full carafe. 'A simple meal today', warns Antonia, laying a steaming dish of penne al pomodoro in front of us. Bread is ripped apart and shared. Chewy crusts are softened with oil and dipped in the bright tomato sauce. Shafts of brightness flicker through glasses and jugs as the pale Castelli wine is passed from hand to hand. Bread, wine, oil, flour and water are seldom mixed to such effect. There is easiness about this first meal at Palazzola. Platters of sliced tomatoes and Mozzarella cheese doused in olive oil appear. The sun moves lower and the wine glints yet again. It is the oro pallido of late summer, the pale gold of Italy.

All very seductive. So easy is it to fall in love with Italy when the sun is shining, the stomach full and you gaze through the prism of a wine glass. After a long journey from Donegal this seduction by Palazzola demanded sleep. Siesta beckoned and we succumbed. When we woke up the sun had gone, not only for the day but for the rest of our stay.

Friends' Visit to Ingatestone Hall

On a beautiful, sunny Saturday at the beginning of April about 30 Friends visited Ingatestone Hall, Essex, which has been in the hands of the Catholic Petre family since the 16th Century. We were privileged that Lord Petre allowed us to visit the Hall in advance of the normal opening season and that he and his elder son, Dominic, were on hand to welcome us and show us around.

From about 950AD the estate belonged to the Abbey of Our Lady and St Ethelburga at Barking. At the dissolution of the monasteries the manor at Ingatestone (or Yenge-att-Stone) was first rented, then in 1539 purchased, by a young lawyer from Devon, William Petre, who, under Thomas Cromwell, had been engaged on the inspection and recording of the monastic houses. He had the existing house demolished and replaced by a much grander one, which has undergone many changes over the ensuing centuries. During the difficult years many fugitive priests were sheltered at the hall, among them St John Payne prior to his capture and subsequent execution in 1582.

Own Chapel

Our visit began with the celebration of Mass. For centuries the Hall had its own chapel, which was enlarged several times to accommodate the Catholic

population of Ingatestone village and the surrounding area as well as the Petre family and household. This chapel was closed when a Catholic Parish Church was established in Ingatestone, so our Mass was celebrated in the Stone Hall adjacent to the former chapel. At the concelebrated Mass Bishop Walmesley officiated and Ingatestone's Parish Priest, Mgr Christopher Brookes preached. (Both are Old Romans.) The wooden altar table dates back to the early part of the 16th Century, so it is probable that St John Payne celebrated Mass at it when he was staying at the Hall. Another historic link is that the embroidered panels on the chasuble and stole worn by Mgr Christopher Brooks formed part of vestments dating from the same period and have recently been skilfully incorporated on to new vestments by our Chairman, Jo Barnacle.

Extensive Gardens

After Mass we had some free time to explore the extensive gardens surrounding the house, with their lakes and tree-lined walks. As it was such a warm day, chairs had been set out for us on one of the terraces overlooking the gardens, so we were able to sit outside and enjoy both the sunshine and the delicious buffet lunch that had been prepared for us.

(continued overleaf)

After lunch the Hall shop was opened up especially for us so that we were able to buy literature about the house and other items.

We then divided into two groups, led respectively by Lord Peter and his son, for a guided tour of the house. The furnishings, pictures and tapestries are from a range of periods and together convey the feeling of a home occupied by a family over many decades.

On our tour we were able to see the two priest-holes or hiding places, both of which were apparently forgotten for many years and only rediscovered accidentally in the 19th and 20th Centuries - one of them when floorboards were taken up to retrieve a child's toy!

Long Gallery

Our tour finished in the Long Gallery on the first floor, which contains furniture, portraits and other family memorabilia. While St John Payne was betrayed to the authorities by a household servant, the members of the Petre family managed to avoid similar betrayal although continuing to practise their Catholic faith.

Goodbye

The time had come for us to bid goodbye to our hosts and thank them for a most enjoyable day at Ingatestone Hall.

Our grateful thanks also go to Elizabeth Usherwood for making all the arrangements for this interesting visit.

Yvonne Veal

The First College Confessors Part 2

by Elizabeth Usherwood

Fr Edward Rishton, a native of Lancashire, who had been tried and condemned with St Ralph Sherwin, was reprieved, returned to the Tower, and kept prisoner there until exiled in 1585. The author of A Diary of Events in the Tower, and contributor to Dr Sander's History of the English Schism, he died an exile, on 29 June, in the year of his banishment.

Rishton had travelled to England in 1581 with forty-five other priests, among them Fathers William Harrington (the third Archpriest, who was imprisoned), Fr Arthur Pitt, and Fr William Smith.

Arrested soon after landing, Fr Pitt was in the Tower with Bl George Haydock, where they were described as 'men of great courage'. Fr Smith, from Yorkshire, had entered the College in 1579. He and Pitt were among the priests banished in 1585, when Pitt went to Lorraine, but within five years Smith was once again serving in the English Mission.

From 1579 until the suppression of the Society of Jesus in 1773 all Venerable Rectors were Jesuits. Their influence was great. Many priests joined the Order, and the Annual Letter sent by the Superior in England is a prime source of information about the College Confessors of Tudor and Stuart times.

Telephone Access

There seems to be some confusion about the Friends' office, so I thought I'd try to clarify the situation.

We rent a small space in one of the offices of the Staffordshire Moorlands Council for Voluntary Service and the telephone number on our letter heading is theirs.

There is no one else at Bank House who knows anything about the Friends and if I am not in the office no one else can help.

I am normally in the office on Fridays from mid-morning until around 6pm, but I must emphasise that there are occasions when I am not there at those times.

By all means continue to ring the office, but if I am not there, please remember that no one else can help, and ring my home number instead.

*The two numbers are:
Office 01538 381356
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John Broun

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