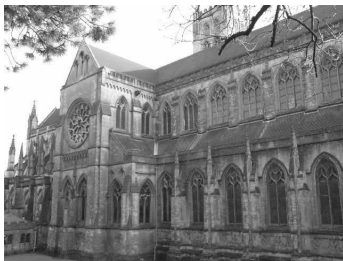




Retreat to Downside Abbey with Cardiff University's CathSoc



From the 9th of March to the 11th of March we held a joint retreat to Downside Abbey with Cardiff University's CathSoc, on the theme of the Holy Spirit. When I first heard about this retreat I was very excited to have the opportunity to make some friends from another university and to have the chance to visit Downside Abbey, leaving the hustle and bustle of Bristol

behind for a weekend.

We left in Matthew French's car at 5.00pm on Friday 9th March. It was a bit squashed, with all the food for the weekend taking up the space in the boot, which Matt and I had got in a massive rush the day before (I think Dale Winton, presenter of Supermarket Sweep, would have been proud of our efforts in Asda that day). We made it to Downside in one piece, despite one very steep hill the poor car only just conquered.

At Downside we went straight to our home for the weekend, Bainesbury House. The house was great and met our needs comfortably for the weekend, the living room had lots of comfy sofas and the kitchen was well equipped. The people from Cardiff's CathSoc were already there, so we chatted for a bit and prepared dinner.

After dinner, we rushed off to the Abbey Church for Compline, the Night Prayer of the Church. We managed to find the Abbey in the dark just and upon entering the church I was struck by the sheer size and beauty of it, the high ceiling and the rows of columns drawing me into the church. It was the first time I'd been in a church with monks singing and it was an amazingly peaceful and spiritual experience. After Compline we had a talk from Dom Alexander, the monk leading our retreat, welcoming us to Downside and introducing the retreat.

The next morning I decided to go to Vigils, the first Prayer of the day for the monks, at 6.00am, which meant getting up at the incredible time of 5.30am. This was followed by Lauds, the morning office of praise, at 7.10am with a chance for silent prayer in between. We ate a much needed breakfast after Lauds. We celebrated Mass with the monks at 8.30am, followed by another great talk from Dom Alexander. After the talk we headed out for a walk around the nearby countryside. It was great to have a walk in the countryside, something I don't get a chance to do in Bristol and we made friends with a horse in a field on the way.

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The CASSOC Committee 2007/2008

THE PRESIDENT

Alex Goater

I'm Alex and I'm the president. I'm in my second year of a Mathematics degree. In my spare time I enjoy playing and watching sports, especially football, cricket and tennis, reading and Latin American and ballroom dancing.



THE VICE-PRESIDENT

Steve Brusatte

I'm Steve, vice-president and a MSc student studying palaeontology in the Department of Earth Sciences. I was born near Chicago and have lived in the United States for my entire life until this year. My undergraduate degree is in geology and I'm a big fan of American professional sports.



THE TREASURER

Francis Ng

I'm Frank, and I'm the treasurer, which involves writing cheques and taking cash to the bank. When not playing jazz trombone, I strive to turn the world into an Edwardian, Liberal utopia. I am reading history.



Continued on back cover.

Retreat continued...

We got back in time for lunch before Midday prayer with the monks in the Abbey Church. In the afternoon we had a tour of the Abbey Church, lead by Dom David. He showed us the amazing artwork and windows around the church, and his knowledge of the building, the architects and painter was exceptional. Dom David also showed us round the Library, it's an odd looking building from the outside, but don't judge a book by it's cover as it contained some very interesting and extremely old books. In the St Bede centre, a former school dormitory, we had another talk from Dom Alexander, followed by Vespers, the evening prayer, in the church. Another great meal was shared back at the house and we headed back to the church for Sunday Vigils. After Vigils we went to the local pub, for a few drinks and games of pool and darts.

On Sunday we went to Lauds in the church at 7.30am, followed by breakfast back at the house. At 10.00am we had Mass in the Abbey Church with Downside school, the mass was mainly in Latin, which was a great experience. After Mass Dom Alexander came back to the house with a bottle of wine for a chat with us, he's a really good person to talk to and always came across as very wise. Following Midday prayer in the Abbey we had a roast dinner in the house and then sadly the retreat was over, the people from Cardiff left by minibus and we left shortly after for Bristol by car. Downside Abbey is a beautiful and spiritual place and the monks are warm and friendly, which meant that overall I had a great weekend. I highly recommend to anyone wishing to get away from Bristol for a bit to consider Downside first.

Alex Goater



Easter Party - 60s/70s Theme

On Friday March 16 members of CASSOC were swept up in a disco inferno, as the Chaplaincy Bar played host to the annual Easter fancy dress party, with a 60s/70s theme. The bar was awash in colourful lights and the dizzying twinkle of a disco ball, which illuminated a wall covered in balloons and posters sporting the cultural highlights of 60s and 70s. Attendance was sparse at first but the bar gradually filled up as the night went on and the disco inferno grew hotter. Sadly, only a handful of people dressed in proper time period clothing, but the costumes were intriguing. Although Father Robert's half-hearted attempt to pass off his priestly garments as 70s ware was well appreciated ("this is what priests wore in the 70s"), the prize for most impressive costume was rightfully earned by Alex. And this was no underhanded tactic to shower praises on our president, as Alex's ensemble of a psychedelic head scarf, trance-inducing trousers, and a shirt similar to one belonging to a certain member of the Czastka family was amazing indeed. Fortunately, the underwhelming effort that many (including yours truly) put into their costumes was not reflected when it came to the night's array of games (which were wonderfully orchestrated by yours truly). We began with a name game focusing on some of the greatest personalities of the 60s and 70s and concluded with a limbo and box-biting contest, which unexpectedly produced one of the greatest rivalries in CASSOC sports history: Frank vs. Michelle. I don't quite remember who won what, but I do know that Frank impressively managed to not tear or get dirty his authentic dress suit which was genuinely produced and worn in the 1970s. After games the party continued into the wee hours of the next morning, and was a fitting end to a fun and successful second term. Thanks to everyone who helped out, and to Frenchie for not only managing the bar as usual, but also for momentarily leaving the bar to take part in one round of the limbo contest.

Steve Brusatte



Charity cake sale

On Sunday 18th March we held a cake sale at the Chaplaincy in order to raise money to help support disadvantaged students in Uganda with their education fees. I would like to thank everyone who baked cakes and the people who bought them (there was a sumptuously mouth watering variety). I must admit I feared that people may have given up cakes for Lent! But this proved not to be the case, as we raised a fantastic £41.30! I would like to give you some background to the education system in Uganda and tell you a bit about the young people that will be helped.

In England we are very fortunate with our high quality free education system. However, the free education in Uganda is largely ineffective, in contrast with the Catholic schools, which in fact enable pupils to progress further in their education. Students find it difficult especially at higher level education to acquire sufficient funding for their school fees. It of course goes without saying that education, especially in a developing country such as Uganda, presents a wide range of benefits not only for the student, but also for the rest of his or her society.

This need was brought to my attention by a friend of mine who is living and working as a teacher with the Benedictines at the Priory of Christ the King in the Ugandan town of Tororo. One of the monks there, Fr. Benedict Stephen Obbo O.S.B., in particular requested help for the education of his eleven siblings and another very poor student. Fr. Benedict's mother who was recently widowed, is both unemployed and in ill health and struggles to support the studies of her many children (one child in primary school, four in secondary school, two in tertiary institutes and five at university). Fr. Benedict wishes us to know that we will be remembered in his prayers.

Thank you once again for your support and if anyone has any further ideas on how we can raise money for this cause, or any others, don't hesitate to let me know. God bless.

Patricia Douglas



Jester's Trip

Last term we were entertained at the Jester's Comedy Club. It was an evening full of laughs. Surprisingly enough we weren't the most heckled group there: who would have thought that! Fortunately there happened to be a squash group present and another guy that seemed to want to be picked out. Overall the evening was a great success, and hopefully there will be another trip soon.

Michelle Lockwood



THE SECRETARY**Michelle Lockwood**

I'm Michelle and I'm from the Cayman Islands (three very small islands in the Caribbean). I'm a second year Law student, and I live at the Chaplaincy. I'm the secretary for CASSOC. God Bless and Good Luck with Exams!

**THE CHARITY OFFICER****Patricia Douglas**

Hi my name is Patricia and I'm the charities coordinator. I am a second year music student and I sing a lot! While I am on the committee I would like to put on events in order to raise money for a variety of charities.

**THE ENTS COORDINATOR****Dan Blackman**

Hi I'm Dan the new Ents Rep for the year. I'm from London, support Chelsea FC, single-handedly keep the chaplaincy bar in business and study Theology, one of the most under rated subjects around.

**THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER****Laura Partridge**

Hi, I'm Laura - the communications officer. I'm currently in my 3rd year of studying French and German, which explains why I'm not around much at the moment (as I'm completing my year abroad). Next year I'll be seeing a lot more of you though and hopefully helping you to keep up with everything going on! Besides Cassoc, I enjoy tennis, Latin-American/ballroom dancing and playing the flute and piano.

**QUIZ-TASTIC!**

We had a cracking evening with MethSoc not so long ago. After Mass we headed over to the Multi-Faith chaplaincy ready to do holy war and pit our half-wits in a good old fashioned quiz. We were treated to pizza, soup, cakes and drinks then settled down to business. The quiz went well, about 7 teams altogether, the geek team taking a clear lead from the start...obviously! We all tried hard to pretend we didn't hear what the other team had written down, and trying to dispute the answers was done in vain! The evening ended in good spirits and we look forward to our next University challenge attempt...

Dan Blackman**NON-PORTFOLIO OFFICER****James Parker**

I'm James and I am a second year Chemistry & Law student from Bridgend in South Wales. Naturally, I am a big rugby fan (both league and union) and also follow American sports closely.

**Cassoc News edited this time by James Parker**

Next issue out in the Autumn term. Please email any articles for the next issue to jp5368@bris.ac.uk by the 15th September 2007.