Feature

State Visit

College of St George

Renewal

St George's Chapel

Sir Edmund Hillary
The writer of those words clearly understood that the real significance of this place lies in what it represents, what it stands for. Today, we at St George’s still share that understanding. We hope that the impact of our physical buildings lies in their inviting the imagination to go deeper, the inner eye to go further, and the heart to rise higher in the enjoyment of some spiritual restoration.

We are grateful to our friends, benefactors and supporters for sharing and encouraging that hope.

The Right Reverend David Conner
Dean of Windsor

On St George’s Day this year, a Service of Thanksgiving for the College of St George 1348-2008 was held in St George’s Chapel.

Members of the College and a host of friends gathered to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the re-establishing of the regular observance of the Garter Ceremonies, and the 660th anniversary of the Founding of the Order of the Garter and the College of St George. It was also a very special opportunity for us to give thanks for the progress so far made in the present restoration of the Chapel and its surrounding buildings.

In a short address, I quoted some words from *The Times* of 4 November 1930; the day of a service at St George’s to mark the completion of the major restoration programme of the 1920s. “Perhaps nothing better could be wished for our land than that this material restoration should be quickly followed by a spiritual restoration of the ideals which such a place as St George’s seems to affirm.”

We are grateful to our friends, benefactors and supporters for sharing and encouraging that hope.

The Right Reverend David Conner
Dean of Windsor

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At noon on Wednesday 26 March 2008 the President of the French Republic and Madame Sarkozy arrived at the Royal Dais in Datchet Road and were met by Her Majesty The Queen and His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh.

A Sovereign’s Escort of the Household Cavalry, with two Standards and the Mounted Band of The Blues and Royals (Royal Horse Guards and 1st Dragoons) were mounted on Datchet Road commanded by Major Anthony Tate, the Life Guards and a Royal Salute was fired by the King’s Troop Royal Horse Artillery (Major Erica Bridge) from the Home Park Private. At the same time a Royal Salute was fired at the Tower of London by the Honourable Artillery Company.

Following initial presentations on the Royal Dais the Sovereign’s Escort gave a Royal Salute and the French National Anthem was played.

President and Madame Sarkozy accompanied by The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh, left the Royal Dais in a Carriage Procession with a Sovereign’s Escort of the Household Cavalry. The Carriage Procession moved away while the French and British National Anthems were played.

Her Majesty The Queen and President Sarkozy travelled in the first coach, Madame Sarkozy and The Duke of Edinburgh in the second and The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall in the third. The Processional Route was Datchet Road, Thames Street, High Street, Park Street, Cambridge Gate, and through the George IV Gateway into the Quadrangle.

Military Knights of Windsor were in position at the Sovereign’s Entrance, the Equerries’ Entrance and on the Equerries’ Staircase. A Detachment of the Household Cavalry was at the Sovereign’s Entrance and the Equerries’ Entrance and Her Majesty’s Body Guard of the Honourable Corps of Gentlemen at Arms were in position at the Sovereign’s Entrance. The Queen’s Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard were in position in the Quadrangle. A Guard of Honour found from Nijmegen Company Grenadier Guards was mounted in the Quadrangle with The Queen’s Company Colour, the Royal Standard of the Regiment, and the Band of the Grenadier Guards (commanded by Major Edward Paintin).

As the Carriage Procession entered the Quadrangle the Guard of Honour gave a Royal Salute and the Band played the French and British National Anthems. President Sarkozy inspected the Guard of Honour accompanied by The Duke of Edinburgh. At the end of the Inspection the King’s Troop Royal Horse Artillery Marched Past and the Sovereign’s Escort of the Household Cavalry Ranked Past.

President and Madame Sarkozy were entertained to a Luncheon in the State Dining Room following which Her Majesty and His Excellency exchanged gifts in the Crimson Drawing Room before viewing an exhibition of French items from the Royal Collection.

At 2.50 p.m. President and Madame Sarkozy left the Castle for Westminster Abbey and the Palace of Westminster where the President addressed the Members of both Houses of Parliament. Later the President met the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party in Buckingham Palace after which he returned to Windsor Castle with Madame Sarkozy.

Later that evening a State Banquet was given by The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh in honour of President and Madame Sarkozy in St George’s Hall. At the start of the Banquet, The Queen proposed the health of the President and Madame Sarkozy and His Excellency replied. Throughout the Banquet music was played by the Orchestra of the Irish Guards (Major S. Barnwell) and at the end of the Banquet, Pipers of the Royal Regiment of Scotland (Pipe Major R. Weir) played a selection of Pipe Tunes. The Queen’s Body Guard of the Yeomen of the Guard were on duty in the State Rooms and a Detachment of Household Cavalry was on duty on the Grand Staircase.

At 10.10 a.m. the following morning President and Madame Sarkozy took leave of The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh at the Sovereign’s Entrance. The Windsor Guard found by F Company Scots Guards presented Arms and the Drummer sounded a Royal Salute in the Quadrangle as The President’s car departed.
An Interview With
The Duke of Westminster

Hurrying down Davies Street and turning right onto Grosvenor Street, I am on my way to meet the third richest man in Britain. His family's association with our nation's capital began with those from whom these two central London streets take their name.

Sitting in his offices, Gerald Cavendish Grosvenor, sixth Duke of Westminster tells me about Sir Thomas Grosvenor, who, in 1667, sold Lord Berkeley by 2000 guineas for the hand of Mary Davies and – more importantly – her 'dowry of the five fields of Mayfair and Belgravia', the original (and spectacularly beautiful) colour washed 1614 map of which hangs on the wall beside him.

It is with a rasping, mischievous chuckle that he notes the sale of Constitution Hill to Lord Arlington that same year for the princely sum of £3,500. Property acumen is clearly something he has inherited, surviving four recessions and overseeing the development of the Grosvenor Group into the UK's only truly international property company, with interests in 17 countries. In discussion, it is clear that the Duke takes his inherited role as a 'caretaker' for some of London's grandest buildings very seriously.

The Grosvenor family's role as 'guardians' is nothing new. Arriving in England with William the Conqueror in 1066, Gilbert le Grosvenor, kinsman to the new King and Master of his Hunt, was dispatched to Chester as one of the border families 'to keep back the Celtic fringe of North Wales'.

Over 800 years later, the second Duke of Westminster, having fought in the Boer War, predicted the need for a 'light, manoeuvrable armoured vehicle' to replace the horse on the battlefield. Turned down by the Army Generals of the day, the Admiralty asked him to 'develop it and come back to us'. He bought 32 Rolls Royce motor cars, stripped them down and rebuilt them as armoured vehicles, manned by workers from the family's Eaton Hall estate in Cheshire. In 1916, this 'private regiment' (the Cheshire Yeomanry) was dispatched 400 miles out of Cairo into the desert to rescue the kidnapped merchant crew of the HMS Tara, which they duly did. The current Duke proudly dines with the successors of those Holyhead merchant shippers to this day.

In 2004, following in the footsteps of his forward-thinking ancestor, the Duke was appointed Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Reserves and Cadets), testament to his role in the change of the Territorial Army from, as he said, 'a reinforcement of last resort in a time of total war' to 'a reserve used extensively...in regional conflicts'. He was 'hugely privileged' to receive this tri-service, two-star appointment – the first reservist to do so since 1938 – and then to oversee the largest mobilisation of servicemen since World War II (to Iraq).

As 'a terrific time' and 35 years service in the TA comes to an end, the Duke is looking for new challenges. One of these has been the refurbishment of the yacht, Ilona of Kylesku. Named as one of Britain's most historically important vessels she was wrecked in 1894. Her history is a colourful one, including military service in two World Wars and use by a Lancashire Mill owner who sailed her back and forth to the West Indies to negotiate his cotton prices. Calling himself 'marginally dotty', it is clear that the Duke could not resist her – 'A 'talbot' in heraldic language...most historically important'.

Overall the banner has a crest (coronet for Ladies). Gerald Cavendish Grosvenor, the sixth Duke of Westminster's Arms featured here is an old grant.

College of St George seem obvious. The Chapel and the lodgings that surround it are, as the Duke says, 'a place where the past embraces the present...a living monument to Englishness'- very much like the energetic and passionate man sitting across from me in fact.

Georgie Grant Haworth
Development Director

On installation each Knight or Lady of the Garter is allocated a stall in the Quire where the plate displaying the full Coat of Arms is fixed and over which is displayed the banner and crest (coronets for Ladies). Gerald Cavendish Grosvenor, the sixth Duke of Westminster's Arms featured here is an old grant.

Banner Overall the banner has a blue background. The first and fourth quarters (top left and bottom right) feature a gold portcullis with hanging chains, representing Parliament. Above the portcullis there is a cross flory (a cross ornamented with fleur-de-lis) set between five gold martlets (a bird similar to a house martin) representing Westminster Abbey, founded by Edward the Confessor, whose arms they are. On either side of the cross, on a gold background there is the united rose of York and Lancaster in its natural colours. These devices together represent the arms of the City of Westminster. The second and third quarters feature a sheaf of wheat, which represents the Grosvenor family.

Crest: The Crest is the heraldic hunting dog in gold in the standing position. This mythical creature is known as a 'talbot' in heraldic language.

Colonel David Assan
Higher Education: More than a Degree

Throughout the history of St George’s House, every Warden and Director of Studies has introduced consultations which reflect their own previous experience and particular interests: Kenneth Adams, Business Ethics; John Long, Private Risk and Public Benefit; Charles Handy, Leadership in Society; Hugh Beach, Just War; Michael Brock, Education and Culture.

So, given my background in higher education and university management, it was not surprising that on arrival at St George’s House six years ago, I should have sought to initiate some reflective work on what is happening in higher education today.

Higher education has changed almost out of recognition over the last two decades. The participation rate has vastly increased, with a government target of 50 per cent of all school leavers going on to university. The range of degree courses has mushroomed and the number of universities has risen to over 130. In promoting this growth, the government stresses the economic benefits of universities, their support for business and their contribution to UK plc. It encourages young people to go to university with the lure of better jobs and the prospect of enhanced salaries on graduation. Universities have become full of economic expectation, rather than the spirit of exploration and adventure.

Higher education is not just about the development, dissemination and application of knowledge. It is not just about enhancing the frontiers of knowledge through certain forms of research. It is not just about enabling graduates to be more employable.

Higher education, we concluded, should be a life-changing and enhancing experience for students and researchers of all ages. It should help students value and capture a range of experiences so as to better prepare them for an uncertain future. It should be an experience that better equips graduates for life as well as work; help them appreciate their wider responsibilities and obligations to society, and help develop personal and community values.

Dr Martin Gaskell
Director of Studies, St George’s House

‘It should be an experience that better equips graduates for life as well as work’
In a sermon given recently in St George’s Chapel, the preacher spoke of Father Mario Borelli, the celebrated Roman Catholic worker priest of the 1950s and 60s. Borelli was a controversial figure in the Catholic Church, not least because he once notoriously remarked that no institution should be made to last forever. In an age when the Church held a more stringent social and moral stand, Father Borelli scandalized many by his genuine compassion towards the scugnizzi, or street children, of Naples. Morris West’s 1957 novel The Children of the Sun transformed this project virtually overnight into an international concern, and Borelli himself into a putative saint. As a result Borelli’s influence on the social conscience of the Church was forged forever. Part of the magnetism of Father Borelli’s character was his ability to be disarmingly incisive. In a BBC interview from 1983, Borelli said, “You never know what you want to be in your life, especially when you are a child. But I would say that I loved to have more education, probably because I wanted to escape my (social) class”. This powerful statement is a sobering jolt for any educator. For Borelli, education was what moulded his character and galvanized his intellect to become that driving force for change in the face of a prejudiced society. The power of education to inspire, to challenge, to form both the personality and the mind seems therefore absolutely paramount.

A great deal of soul searching has been done over the past few decades about the nature of education and its provision. Though, of course, this is a question that educators should constantly ask of themselves, the unhealthy profusion of league tables and the inappropriate obsession with academic qualifications have left the contemporary idea of education tainted and compromised. If an educational body is to fulfil its fundamental vocation, rather than to fall into the trap of introspection and self-preservation at any cost, then it has a duty to respond to Father Borelli’s challenge: how can educators make people sense that they would love to have more education?

The answer, I think, lies in the chemistry between inspiring teaching, a broad and balanced curriculum – which encourages young people to use their imagination and creativity – and effective pastoral care. How many of us remember the actual contents of lessons over the often dynamic characters who taught them? How many of our subsequent lifelong interests are developed through the germination of those interests in the school community? If pastoral care, social integration and personal development are not prioritized in any educational institution, it will surely have failed, irrespective of its academic results.

One of my fondest memories is of a don at Oxford whose wisdom and eccentricity was quite renowned. Little of what he taught was of relevance for Finals but none of his pupils could deny that one tutorial with him could inspire a lifelong interest in the Classics. This is the highest compliment that any teacher could win.

The Revd Andrew Zihni Minor Canon and Chaplain St George’s School

“I loved to have more education ...”

In a sermon given recently in St George’s Chapel, the preacher spoke of Father Mario Borelli, the celebrated Roman Catholic worker priest of the 1950s and 60s.
RENEWAL

Throughout the centuries, the College has witnessed a cycle of major restoration of its buildings. Our current restoration programme is the most recent of these, and already much has been achieved. Three phases of external repair have been carried out on the Chapel. This work has included stone, glass and sculpture conservation and cleaning, and has restored these exteriors to their original beauty. Internal work in the Chapel has included such projects as the conservation cleaning of the Bray and Rutland Chantries and the replacement of an old and unreliable sound system. Skilled carpenters have repaired the ancient bell frame in the Curfew Tower, and work has begun on the magnificent lead roofs around the College. Refurbishment of the many domestic buildings has commenced, and although probably the least glamorous of projects, the renewal and rationalisation of services such as gas and electricity will have one of the biggest and most beneficial impacts for the College. It is a tremendous achievement so far, and over the coming years work will continue to ensure the future of these historic buildings.

Roxanne Hardie

A Celebration

On 23 April 2008 a service of thanksgiving was held at St George’s Chapel, attended by Her Majesty The Queen and other Members of the Royal Family, to celebrate the achievements of our great restoration.

The service was attended by members of the College and Chapel community, by donors, and by many craftsmen and experts who have been working on the restoration project. It was a celebration of the excellence of the work carried out so far and recognition of the blend of contemporary technology and traditional skills. It was also a moment to thank not only those who work on the project but also all those who, through their generosity, have made this glorious work possible.

As well as the service there was an exhibition in the Dean’s Cloister. Using large panels and some computer-generated graphics the story of the restoration was told through the disciplines involved. So there were panels on timber structures, glasswork, stone restoration, and lead renewal, to name but a few. There was an opportunity to view this exhibition on the day of the service itself but many of our visitors took the time to walk around in the six weeks that the exhibition was open.

Of course, both the service and the exhibition celebrate a moment in time. This is a celebration of what has been achieved to date. There is, however, much more to do. We are now working hard to complete projects currently on hand and look forward to beginning the planning stages of new elements of the overall refurbishment project in the not too distant future. We do so in the knowledge that – as the Dean put it in his sermon delivered at the service of thanksgiving – we continue, in this place, to make a ‘contribution to the common good’. The Revd Canon Dr Hueston Finlay

Canon Steward
THE NAVAL KNIGHTS OF WINDSOR

There is nothing favourable to report about the Naval Knights of Windsor, for, while the Military Knights are still usefully engaged in the life of the College, the Naval Knights were never useful and only caused trouble.

They existed from 1795 to 1892 and were created out of a bequest from Samuel Travers, one time MP for Windsor, whose foundation also assisted the Greenwich Hospital. Travers died in 1728, but his will took many years to be settled. So the first Naval Knights, who were to be ‘Seven Gentlemen who are to be superannuated or disabled lieutenants of English Men of War’, were not nominated until 1795. Seven such men were installed in 1803, though they were not officially called ‘Naval Knights’ until an Act of Parliament of 1861.

They lived in Travers College, specially built for them, each dwelling having a sitting room, bedroom and bathroom. They had uniforms of embroidered blue coats and were expected to lead ‘devout lives’ and ‘to attend service in St George’s Chapel’. Only once did they take part in a Garter Ceremony – in 1805.

The Naval Knights had to be bachelors without children. Filling in his application, one candidate wrote that he had no children ‘so far as is known’. They were not allowed to haunt the town or taverns. It was a vain hope. These old salts used to get extremely drunk and behave disgracefully. It was said that, when drunk, ‘they used to un-strap and beat one another with their wooden legs’. Discipline was poor, attendance at chapel no better. In the latter part of Queen Victoria’s reign, the Governor of the Castle, Admiral Count Gleichen, attempted to discipline them over allegations of bad behaviour. The Naval Knights were eventually disbanded in 1892, but proved unwilling to go. Three left under protest, and in March 1893 their Governor, Commander Willis, had to be forcibly evicted. The money designated for their keep was then diverted into the ‘Travers Pension’, from which deserving elderly and infirm naval officers could profit. Travers College itself was absorbed into St George’s School.

Hugo Vickers

This week I’ve been trying to get a definitive answer from my Volvo dealership on whether my car can run on biodiesel. After a couple of e-mails and several telephone messages, I finally get through to the helpful Andy in the Service Department. Apparently I was the first person to ask such a thing, and my question therefore took him completely by surprise. He could not say, but promised to get onto the Head Office and find someone who could. After an hour, the admirable Andy called back; my car could indeed run on biodiesel, but that Volvo could not recommend it. Why not? ‘Again, madam, I could not say’.

These enquiries have been prompted by the receipt of the Environmental Audit Report carried out by the Carbon Trust on behalf of the College of St George. The College’s carbon footprint was calculated by inspecting everything from our energy bills to how employees travel to work. The results were not surprising considering the inefficiency of our outdated boiler systems, but what was encouraging was that there were a number of recommendations made that could decrease the College’s carbon footprint significantly:

1. Replace lighting with low energy voltage lighting
2. Install occupancy detectors for circulation areas
3. Instigate monitoring and targeting
4. Decentralise boilers
5. Replace Chapel heating

A number of these recommendations are currently being put in place; for example a programme of replacing the tungsten filament lamps with energy saving lamps has already begun, and through the refurbishment programme the College’s boilers will be decentralised and replaced with condensing combi boilers. With the exception of replacing the Chapel heating which is beyond the College’s funding capabilities, these and other measures will produce both carbon emission and cost savings across the College.

The College is committed to reducing its energy use and carbon emissions, and this is the first step in what we hope will be a continuous effort to reduce the impact the College has on the environment.

Roxanne Hardie

Climate Change

PART TWO
On 2 April a service was held in the Chapel to commemorate a man of outstanding achievement and international stature.

The Presentation of the Garter Banner of the late Sir Edmund Hillary took place in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen, several Members of the Royal Family, Lady Hillary, members of the Hillary family, many distinguished New Zealanders, in a Chapel filled to capacity. The service was broadcast live to hundreds of people standing outside and by TVNZ to many thousands watching in New Zealand. It was estimated that three out of four New Zealanders watched at least part of the service - either live or by replay.

For two New Zealand born members of the College, Michael Boag and Lay Clerk Nick Madden, it was particularly poignant. Michael helped prepare the order of service and read the prayers while Nick sang with the Chapel choir, including a solo spot for myself. It was satisfying to be part of the New Zealand commemoration for this great man in such a special place.

While he was being interviewed on his mobile phone, in Michael’s dining room, by the Auckland’s daily morning newspaper, Mereana Hond, of the London Maori Club, was doing the same with Radio New Zealand.

Mereana: This was to be the first time Maori customs were incorporated into a ceremony of such national significance, the first time the karanga, the Maori ceremonial call, was to be heard in St George’s chapel - the interest was incredible!

I performed that day as a voice for my people, bidding farewell to a man of great mana, of great standing. And as the words of the karanga rang out around St George’s chapel, I felt a wonderful sense of peace descend. It was like nothing I’d experienced before. Also taking part was New Zealand-born Samoan bass baritone Jonathan Lemalu, who had shared a stage at the Sydney Opera House with Sir Edmund and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra while Sir Edmund was the narrator in the Symphony Antarctica. Having sung at many international venues this was a different experience for Lemalu: This was not just a performance. It was a moment in time, to celebrate a true Kiwi icon of global status in one of the most spiritual of places, St George’s Chapel. To be a part of that was a truly special occasion and as a proud New Zealander, an honour to be present to witness a tribute to a quintessential Kiwi.

The Revd Michael Boag
Succentor & Dean’s Vicar

The words of the karanga

Hoki wairua mai e te totara whakahii o te wao tapu nui a Tane
Return in spirit, you who are like the huge totara tree of the great forest of Tane

Whakahuihui mai ko o tatou tini mate
Join with our ancestors of this holy place and with those who have passed recently

Kia tangihia e te aoe
So that the world may mourn you

Haere atu ra, moe mai ra, oti atu ra
Return to your ancestors, rise peacefully, rest in peace

E re re a te haki whakamaumahara
My proudly O flag, the representation of this great man

I te tupaia
and song

I te kaeka maunga
in mourning

I te whakaruruhua o te iti o te rahi e a shelter for all people, showing love and compassion to great and small

Tena e koro kua tiri ia nei koe ki te piki kotuku o te rangatira e Farewell old man...you are one of our great leaders

Whakarehehu ai koe e koro e May you be carried in the arms of your ancestors...to your resting place, old man

Tena ra koutou e te kawai rangatira o Ingaringi e I stand here to acknowledge the chiefly line of England

Heke iho nei ki a koe e te Kuini Descending to you, Your Majesty The Queen

Puakinia mai tou whare kia tangihia o tatau mate e I acknowledge you for opening the doors to your home so that we all may mourn our dead

Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena ra koutou katoa I greet you, I greet you, I greet you all - on behalf of all in Aotearoa (New Zealand)
**OUR COMMUNITY**

**FORTY YEARS AGO**

I was appointed to my first professional post as assistant organist at Ely Cathedral, another remarkable building. How did Alan of Walsingham erect that extraordinary Octagon - surely an architectural miracle? That, and the imposing Galilee Porch, the exquisite tracery of the chantry chapels around the east end (though much damaged at the Dissolution in the 16th century), the stunning Norman arcade of the Nave, and the unique free-standing Lady Chapel combine to create something that leaves an indelible memory.

**THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO**

it was the landscape more than the buildings that appealed when I moved to St Michael’s College, Tenbury Wells. Set on the borders of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire, walking the dog early in the morning in glorious countryside raised the spirits as much as any ancient building can.

**TWENTY-THREE YEARS**

at St George’s Chapel, and living in Marbeck, brought a new set of wonders. The view from the organ console when the sun sets behind the great west window is a joy as is the stunning roof vault. Walking past the Hastings Chantry I always look at the late 15th century paintings and marvel at their preservation. On a sunny morning the woodwork in the Quire is simply outstanding, and the lightness of the Nave another architectural miracle to wonder at.

All this and being paid to do what I love - how fortunate is that? Yea, I have a goodly heritage.

**THE STALL PLATES**

**Photograph: David Clare**

The size of the plate was regulated by the Statutes, and the design and quality varies depending on the artistic taste of the age. The early plates are cut outs in the shape of a shield and crest, which changed to rectangular in the early 15th century. Today, new plates are made of copper etched with acid and filled with colour, and measure 4 inches by 6 inches. The legend is, apart from a few exceptions, in French reflecting the original language of the Statutes.

This stall plate is that of Charles Howard, second Lord Howard of Effingham and later first Earl of Nottingham. Measuring 10½ inches by 7 inches, it shows his arms within the Garter, and a lengthy legend describing his achievements. Installed in 1575, he was Lord High Admiral, and was in command of the fleet at the capture of Cadiz and the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Both of these events are commemorated in the legend, as is his creation as Earl of Nottingham in 1597. This suggests that this stall plate has replaced an earlier one, since if the Statutes of Henry VIII were followed, his stall plate should have been erected within a year of his installation. Housed in the Archives is his copy of the Statutes received on his creation.

Eleanor Cracknell
Assistant Archivist

**COMMUNITY NEWS**

'Respecting the Material'

If you could eavesdrop on our conversation as we evaluate proposals for new grotesques, in the Chapel’s refurbishment, you would hear from time to time,

’Now this young sculptor respects the material.’

So far as I can detect ‘respecting the material’ conveys a quite complex experience hard to express in detail. It helps understanding if you, yourself, have had some similar experience perhaps with other materials. However, on the face of it, a lump of stone is a lump of stone which being unable to comment on what happens to it under the chisel can hardly gain respect!

However, it is worth remembering that most sculptors’ stone is the result of immensely powerful geological forces brought to bear on the remains of long dead organisms to form a record of the processes of creation. Also, it is helpful to know that stone comes in many varieties and ‘qualities.’ Michelangelo carved David from marble that had been discarded because it had a fault.

Sculptors simply cannot do what they want with stone. Some stone (e.g. alabaster) is easier to work and encourages detail. Some (e.g. granite) is harder to work and demands a bolder approach. It is pointless getting annoyed with your material. You have to respect it for its limitations and its potential.

A sculptor’s respect for the material reflects something of our human relationships. In people we love we have to respect the marks of the long history of humankind that they exhibit; we have to respect individual personality, never expecting ‘soft-stone’ to respond to heavy pounding or ‘hard-stone’ to react to attempts at fine detail. Most of all we have to learn that a truly creative relationship results from a proper respect for the opportunities and limitations of what it is to be human.

The Revd Canon John White
Vice-Dean & Canon Treasurer