



We speak so easily of the Cross without thinking about what it means. This year, we all made a special act of devotion in the vibrant medieval spirit of our English Catholic forefathers; a devotion that brought home to us the suffering and humiliation of our Saviour at Calvary.

Most boys in the College were involved in some way in the production of a sequence of three medieval mystery plays, performed on the last Friday of term. The plays depicted the Agony in the Garden, the Trial before Pilate and the Crucifixion.

The plays were modernised versions of plays from the medieval Corpus Christi

pageants of York and Chester. Originally, these plays would have been performed around the town by members of the different professions (formed into their separate guilds.)

Between each of the three scenes, acted out around the College, Lenten and Passiontide hymns were sung. Prayers in the Chapel were said before and after the Play, our chaplain reminding us that this was an act of piety to be approached in a reverent manner.

Dominic Lloyd was very edifying in his role as Christ. His calm and dignified bearing throughout encouraged the other actors to enter into the true spirit of the plays.



Above: the apostles asleep in the Garden of Gethsemane; the good thief asks Christ to remember him when he comes into his Kingdom, as Caiphias, Annas, Pilate and soldiers look on.



Mother, behold thy son!

Gregoire Daumy was a suitably imperious Pilate, dressed like a modern middle-eastern dictator, complete with medals and cordons on his army shirt. The Jewish clergy were dressed in cassocks, strikingly reminiscent of the scheming Vatican officials of some recent Hollywood storylines.

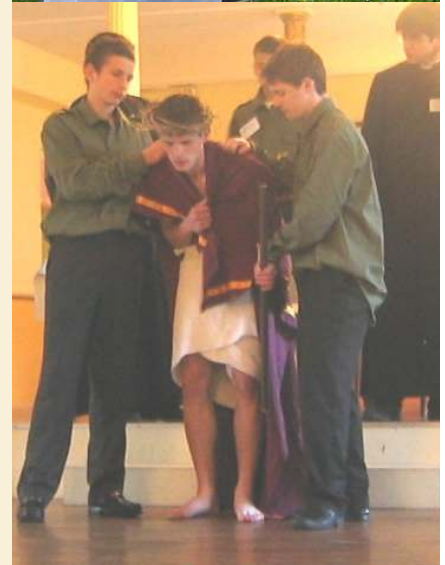
We all followed Christ on his way to Calvary, skirting the outbuildings of the College and singing hymns, while the soldiers shoved and jostled Dominic along his sorrowful way. Aurele Champion, as Simon of Syrene, helped to carry the Cross, while the girls of Bonne Nouvelle stood in for the women of Jerusalem.

Marija Morrison was perfect in the role of Our Lady, faithfully praying at the foot of the Cross.

Thomas Readings, as the good thief, somehow brought fresh insight to his ostensibly naive but faith-filled petition to the humiliated man dying beside him: "Remember me, when you come into your kingdom!"



“Watch and pray!”; “Father, Thy will be done!”;
“Peter, put up thy sword!”; “Ecce Homo! Behold the Man!”



*Father, forgive them.
They know not
what they do.*



I thirst!



*Father, into Thy hands,
I commend my spirit!*



It is accomplished

Here and there ...

The J1 Geography class invested considerable time and effort constructing three-dimensional maps of South-Eastern Asia (see photos, below.) The countries spanned from the Malaysia Peninsula to war-torn Afghanistan. With 11 countries in all, the J1 class had to exert considerable effort to complete the task by the date due.

Each student traced his country from an over-head project of Asia onto a Styrofoam board. The maps were modeled in a homemade flour and salt clay. Each map was set to the same horizontal and vertical scale, which allowed for the countries to fit together like a giant jigsaw puzzle. After each country had been painted, the maps were put on display in the College library.

Building bridges ...

In our recent bridge-building competition boys from across the age-range designed and built balsa wood bridges for a contest in which the bridges were broken, and the one that carried the most load was declared the best.

Each boy was required to conceptualize and design a 30 cm long single-span bridge which he would build from a small amount of balsa wood (800 cm per student). Besides balsa wood and wood glue, no other materials were allowed. Each bridge also had to meet size restraints, including: a minimum inside width of 5 cm, a minimum vertical clearance of 5 cm, and a maximum bridge length of 36 cm. Considering that each piece of wood was a slim 0.3 x 0.3 cm in cross-section, the students had a challenging task on their hands.

David Mobberley built a modified deck truss that took 13.9 kilograms (approximately 31 lbs) of load; for which he won the competition and a free pizza! In second place was another J1 student - Dominic McHugh - who built a stunning, tied arch truss that resisted 11.9 kg (approx. 26 lbs). The best J2 in the competition (Joseph Dovel) placed third with his inverted arch truss. Congratulations to the winners of the competition and to all those who competed; it was your effort that made this event so successful and enjoyable for us all!

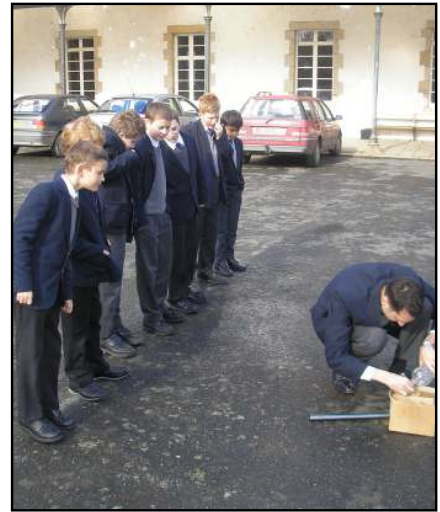


Bridges awaiting testing in the Chavvers answer to the *Bridge over the River Kwai*.

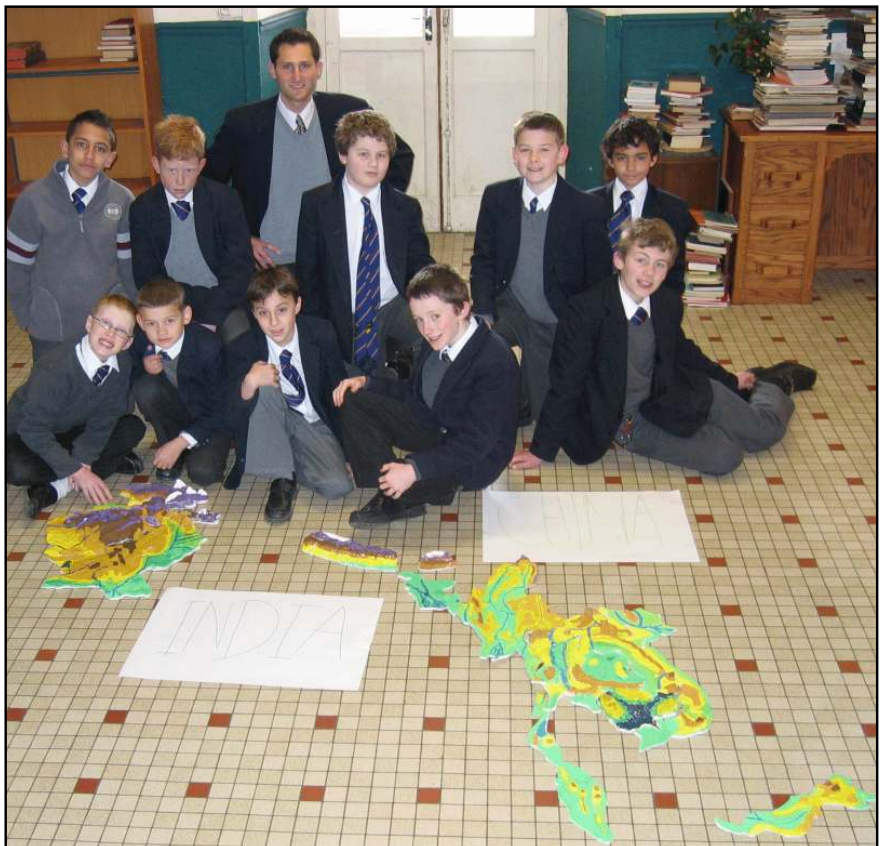
Assembly from a Fellow of Trinity

Dr Joseph Conlon, a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge (and son of our Head Master) with research interests in particle physics and cosmology, spoke briefly to the boys on how we know, by analysing the light they emit, of what elements the stars are made. The boys were interested to learn that the foundations of this study had been laid in the middle of the 19th century by a Jesuit priest, Fr. Angelo Secchi, who was director of the Vatican observatory from 1850 until his death in 1878.

Right and below:
Homemade 3-D maps brought Geography to life for the Juniors this term.



Above: A rocket made with a pop bottle proved a popular science demonstration. Not to be tried at home!



The end of the term brought with it the beginning of a new endeavor at Chavagnes - the 2007 Chavagnes Stock Market Competition. The competition lasts for three months and utilises a virtual stock exchange simulator title: VSE. Each participant was given \$100,000 in virtual money to be played on the stock market. All the rules of the actual market apply, and real stocks from the NYSE, AMEX, and NASDAQ are available for purchasing at live market rates. At the end of the three months, the student with the most money in his portfolio will receive a 40 Euro reward.

The boys have shown overwhelming enthusiasm for this competition, with some 50% of the student body participating! Furthermore, many students have spent considerable time learning the ins and outs of the stock exchange system, and now know how to buy, sell, sell short, and place limit/stop orders on previous transactions. We are excited to find out who are the most business-minded students at Chavagnes, and will keep you updated on the progress of the competition.



Our young investors, Patrick Adams, Daniel Cansick and Dominic McHugh study the financial papers for the latest stockmarket news.

their friends from the Chavagnes village football teams. One wonders what they made of the whole experience, but they seem to have enjoyed themselves!

The following day was *Laetare* Sunday, one of the two days in the year when rose vestments are worn at Mass. Then on Monday we honoured St Joseph with a procession down to his chapel (which still needs a benefactor for its restoration, incidentally).

After the solemn celebration of Ash Wednesday, the absence of the organ at Mass for weeks on end, the privations which all boys and Masters had subjected themselves to in true Lenten spirit, plus the variable temperatures to which we are often subject at Chavagnes; all of these things conspired to make a special three-day reprieve from penance particularly welcome.

This came over Saturday, Sunday and Monday (17th-19th March), with special thanks to our beloved bishop, Michel Santier, who has granted us an indult allowing us to observe Feasts such as that of St Patrick and St George as major solemnities, while they pass largely unnoticed outside the College gate.

Father Pilon read to us from St Patrick's *Confession* during his homily, revealing fascinating insights into the saint's life and spirituality. In the evening, a litany to St Patrick was recited at Benediction, and then followed a delicious meal of Irish stew, followed by a selection of Irish music led by Mrs Lloyd (on the flute) and Messrs Lloyd (piano), Verrier (accordion) and McDermott (penny whistle).

Brother Moylan treated us to a recitation and led the singing of 'When Irish Eyes are Smiling', and annual favourite.

Mr McDermott offered a rendition of the Tom Lehrer classic *The Irish Ballad*, in which a very unkind little girl who does not like her family 'does every one of them in, and dances around the funeral pyre, playing a violin, ricket, tickety tin ...' (etc.)

Our older boys had invited along some of

We also marked St David's day (1st March) with a candlelit feast that featured leeks and roast lamb. Matthew Prall had been helping in the kitchen that day, which means he now knows how to make pears stewed in wine, a dish that delighted everyone's taste buds.

The Refectory was bedecked with Welsh flags, leeks and daffodils. Musical entertainment (including *Men of Harlech* and *Mae Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau*, harmonised, and in 'proper' Welsh, was provided by Messrs McDermott and Verrier, assisted by Peter Morrison.

Students of the history of Chavagnes will know that the 'ecclesiastical school of Chavagnes' was founded by the Venerable Louis Marie Baudouin in 1802, after the carnage of the French Revolution and the Civil War in the Vendée. It was the first minor seminary authorised by Napoleon after the Revolution and received a Royal Charter from Charles X in 1825.

For many years it was the only place of secondary education in the department of the Vendée, and many famous bishops, priests, poets and other personalities passed through its gates over nearly two centuries.

The days of the 'petit séminaire' came to an end in the seventies, but it continued as an annexe of the local Catholic school until 1997, reopening in 2002 as an international Catholic college.

In recent months we have received several visits from old boys of *the old Chavagnes*. Many of them are priests, but there are also others from all walks of life, most of them remembering fondly the time they spent here. Three old boy reunions are being organised over the next twelve months for alumni from different year groups. The eldest of them were here at the end of the Second World War, when half of the building was occupied by German soldiers.

An important development in the life of the College is the Governors' decision to phase in a bilingual programme from September 2007 in the junior part of the College. The idea is to give intensive language tuition to all boys in Years 7 and 8 with the aim of achieving bilinguality at a basic level by Christmas and the equivalent of GCSE knowledge (with better oral fluency) by the end of the academic year.

This means that in addition to about eight hours per week of language tuition, boys will be involved in other activities at evenings and weekends, aimed at supporting language learning. In fact, these activities already exist, but from September there will be a special effort to ensure that, in the Junior School, drama, choir and the other cultural activities are carried out with language learning particularly in mind.

Concretely, this will mean including at least two or three French carols in our Christmas repertoire, involving English boys in a French play and French boys in an English play, and so on.

The long-term aim is that both French and English boys should be prepared for GCSEs in Years 10 and 11 and also the French National Brevet exam in Year 10. Those remaining in the VIth Form would study for British A-levels exclusively. For more information, please see the news page of our website: www.chavagnes.org