

PAST NATIONAL EVENTS

2015

London Newman Lecture, Thursday 12 March

Dr James Le Fanu gave the 2015 London Newman Lecture on **Neuroscience and the Soul** at Heythrop College, London. In a well-attended lecture, Dr Le Fanu described some recent advances in neuroscience; in spite of these we cannot explain many human attributes such as free will. Dr Le Fanu successfully took us into some understanding of Neuroscience, moving from knowledge of physical anatomy of the brain, towards the breakthrough of modern C.T. scanning of brain activity. *(His talk is printed in the May 2015 Newman Journal)*

Durham Study Day, Saturday 21 March

A joint study day entitled **Catholic Perspectives on Poverty** took place at Ushaw College, Durham. Professor Jonathan Bradshaw gave a stimulating opening session on poverty from a social scientist's perspective and was very critical of the government's role in maintaining such high levels of poverty. Dr Richard Finn OP explored the ideals and history of holy poverty whilst Alison Gelder brought the meeting back into the 21st century with her description of modern day homelessness and the efforts of Christians of all denominations to try to remedy the situation. The day concluded with Sr Helen Alford, OP attempting to answer the perennial question *What is Enough?*

This study day was held in association with the National Board of Catholic Women and the Centre for Catholic Studies in Durham. *(A summary of the talks is printed in the May 2015 Newman Journal)*

Manchester Newman Lecture, Wednesday 15 April

About 70 members and guests attended the inaugural Manchester Newman Lecture given by Dr Anna Rowlands at the Friends Meeting House. Dr Rowlands's talk was entitled **The Politics of the Common Good: What does Catholic Social Teaching have to contribute to electoral politics?**

In the course of her excellent talk, Dr Rowlands explored in depth the term Common Good and provoked a lively question and discussion session which continued long after the official end of the talk. *(Her talk is printed in the May 2015 Newman Journal)*

This lecture was made possible thanks to the generous legacy left to the Association by Tom and Mary Brogan.

AGM, Saturday 13 June

The 2015 AGM was held in Gladstones' Library in Hawarden, a magnificent building erected by William Gladstone to house his books. After an excellent lunch at the Library the meeting moved St Beuno's at St Asaph for our talk on Gerard Manley Hopkins by Revd Michael Burgess. He told us something of GMH's life and the joys and difficulties he experienced in the different places he was sent to. He was happiest at St Beuno's and at his lowest ebb whilst he was in Ireland teaching which he found very burdensome. His poetry reflected his state of mind. Revd Burgess praised his use of words which he said was unique and succeeded in expressing

the depths of his feelings and in containing a complexity of literary and spiritual meaning. The talk was very well attended and we were all captivated by Revd Burgess' delivery as well as his broad understanding of the priest-poet.

Newman Assembly 10/11 October

Council held a 24 hour residential session at Hinsley Hall, Leeds for Circle Representatives with the title *The Newman Association is it worth saving?* Needless to say the title provoked some lively discussion. Council will produce a summary paper which will appear in the January Journal but this is not liable to be the end of the debate. Socially the Assembly appeared to be a great success.

As a first step all the individual reports are available on the website. Click on [Hinsley Hall Assembly October 2015](#) to see all the papers Working groups are being established on the main outcomes of the Assembly; 1 Membership and the Membership Form, 2 Mission, 3 Communication and 4 Finance. These working groups will be formed of Council members and Assembly delegates.

This Assembly was funded by generous bequests and grants from the Fattorini Family Trust, Miss M Fitzpatrick, Miss M Archibald and Mrs N Aylward.

Ecumenical Conference 14 November

Some 40 people attended a stimulating day held in Coventry in November. The occasion was the joint Newman- NBCW conference *Learn to Learn - Receptive Ecumenism in Action*. The keynote address was given by Dr Clare Watkins and chaired by Bishop William Kenney. In her address Dr Watkins stressed the importance of changing from being a teaching church to being a learning church. The panel session in the afternoon also included Rev David Cornick, General Secretary of Churches Together in England, and Rev Callan Slipper, Ecumenical Officer in Hertfordshire. Also taking part in the discussions were the Bishop of Warwick, Canon John O'Toole, the Ecumenical spokesman at the Bishops' Conference, together with local representatives of the Methodist, URC and Anglican Churches.