

**THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY
OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND**

A hand-drawn sketch in black ink on a white background. It depicts a landscape with a path leading towards the right. A butterfly is flying in the upper right quadrant. On the left, there is a small animal, possibly a dog or a cat, looking towards the path. The drawing is simple and expressive, with some faint lines suggesting a horizon or distant hills. The text 'the road to joy' is overlaid on the drawing.

the road to joy

**4-6 APRIL 2014 OAKHAM SCHOOL
RUTLAND**

Tenth General Meeting & Conference

Creative arts at Oakham 2014

Exhibition of Contemporary Artwork

Throughout the conference there will be an exhibition of artwork by two artists:
Benet Haughton & Charles MacCarthy

*Cover image: The Road to Joy
drawing by Grace Sisson,
presented to Thomas Merton, May 1967*

"The Road to Joy"

The second of five volumes of Merton's letters is a celebration of the significance of friendship. The title to the volume was inspired by a picture of a house sent to Merton by five-year old Grace Sisson followed five years later with another drawing entitled "The Road to Joy". Merton, thanking her for the drawing wrote,

"I hope you and I together will secretly travel our own road to joy, which is mysteriously revealed to us without our exactly realizing. When I say that, I don't want you to start thinking about it. You already know it without thinking about it."

p352-3



Image: Grace's House
drawing by Grace Sisson,
presented to Thomas Merton, May 1967

Welcome to the tenth Conference and General Meeting for the Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland and the seventh to be held at Oakham School.

You will find here all the information you will require to navigate your way around the conference, including a comprehensive outline of our programme and biographical information about each of our speakers.

Keynote, Concurrent & Workshop Sessions

The location of all sessions is shown in the programme timetable. Last minute alterations will be clearly indicated. Please note that a short period of **quiet meditation** will precede and follow each of the keynote addresses. It would be appreciated if you could make every effort to be in the *Wilson Auditorium* a few minutes before the start time.

Meals and Refreshments

All our meals and refreshment breaks will take place in the dining hall in **Barraclough**.

Bar Area

In the **Merton Room**, upstairs in **Barraclough**, you will find a comfortable area where you are free to relax during the conference. The bar will be open in this area before dinner on Friday and Saturday. In addition there will be a small display of Oakham school's **Merton memorabilia**.

Conference Bookshop

In Barraclough the **Christian Resources Bookshop** from Leicester will be providing a conference bookstall which will be open on Saturday.

Prayer times and Worship

Morning and Evening prayer are offered as part of the programme. The worship will be very simple with a few Taize refrains, silence and a short Scripture reading concluding with some intercessions. The Sunday morning Eucharist is traditional and you are welcome to participate as fully as you wish.

Quiet space

A quiet space is provided in the Common Room in Stevens. Please feel free to make use of this at any time, except when it is being used for one of the sessions or for meditation/worship.

Security

Please note that access to your accommodation is by door entry code. **The codes needed for the conference are listed on the inside flap of your conference pack.** Doors **must** be closed at all times. It is advisable to try to keep ground floor windows closed. Individual bedroom doors do not lock so valuables should not be left unattended.

If you have any questions at any time please look for someone wearing a coloured badge who will help you.

Before you leave the conference please complete and post your evaluation form in the box which will be available at lunch on Sunday, or give it to a member of the committee. There will also be a sheet about ideas for the future of the society and the format of events in future years. Your ideas are very much welcomed.

We hope you enjoy the conference and have a comfortable stay while at Oakham.

Conference Programme

Friday 4th April

10.30am
Registration
Barraclough

1.00pm
Buffet Lunch
Barraclough

2pm
General session I
Wilson Auditorium
Welcome to the conference

2.15pm
Keynote Address
Gary Hall
Moved by Grace:
The Joy of Escaping and the
Misery of Creativity

4.00pm
Tea

4.30pm
**10th Biennial General Meeting of
the Thomas Merton Society of
Great Britain and Ireland**
Merton Room

5.30pm
Evening Prayer
Stevens Common Room

6.00pm **Wine Reception**
*meeting the Conference Artists and
Keynote Speakers*

7.00pm
Conference Dinner
Barraclough

8.30pm
“Giving an account of oneself.....”
**A music-themed workshop led by
Anthony Purvis**
Wilson Auditorium

Saturday 5th April

7.30am
Morning Prayer
Stevens Common Room

8am
Buffet Breakfast

9am

General session II

Wilson Auditorium

Keynote Address

Christine Bochen

*From Solitude to Communion:
Writing Letters, Making Friends*

10.30am Coffee

11am

Concurrent Sessions I

A Buchanan's Common Room

William Apel

Hiroshima Notes: The Merton and Morishita Friendship

Gosia Poks

The One-Person Revolution as a Way to Joy: Thomas Merton, Ammon Hennacy, and Christian Anarchism

B Stevens Common Room

Sonia Petisco Martinez

Silence as the path to joy in the poetry of Thomas Merton and T.S. Eliot

James Cronin

An "Apostolate of Friendship": Thomas Merton's Letters to Fellow Writers, 1958-61

12.45pm Buffet Lunch

2pm

Concurrent Sessions II

C Buchanan's Common Room

Paul Pearson

"I love beer, and, by that very fact, the world" – the humour and humanity of Thomas Merton.

Maurizio Renzini & Mario Zaninelli

Thomas Merton's Influence on Young Italian Friends – Walking Their Road to Joy

D Stevens Common Room

Peter Ellis

Like a demented woodpecker

Stephen Dunhill

Merton's Poetic Recovery of paradise

3.30pm Tea

4.00pm

Sessions III

E Buchanan's Common Room

Nass Cannon

Travelling the Road to Joy: Thomas Merton's Pursuit of the True Self

Fiona Gardner

'Both IT and NOT IT ...This is the way I look at it...' Exploring personal experiences of God

5.30pm

Concurrent WORKSHOPS

F *Buchanans Common Room*

Detlev Cuntz

Merton and the Poetic Experience of the
Duino Elegies

G *Stevens Common Room*

Marianne Heib

Road Marks and Turning Points: Integrat-
ing conference themes with visual and
verbal journaling prayer

6.30pm

**Reflections on “Thomas Merton
in his own voice” by Paul Pearson**

Wilson Auditorium

7:30pm **pm** Buffet Dinner

8.30pm

Our conference artists

Benet Haughton &

Charles MacCarthy

Wilson Auditorium

9:30pm

a trip to an English Pub

meet at Barraclough

Sunday 6th April

8.00am

Morning Prayer

Stevens Common Room

8.30am

Buffet Breakfast

9.30am

General Session III

Wilson Auditorium

Keynote Address

Daniel Horan

*The Joy of Writing, The Road to
Friendship: Following the Path of
the Unpublished Correspondence of
Thomas Merton and
Naomi Burton Stone*

11am

Coffee

11.30am

Conference Eucharist

Buchanans Common Room

with Sarah Burroughs and the formal
ending of the conference by the Chair
of TMS GB&I

12.45pm

Keynote Speakers

Christine Bochen

Christine M. Bochen is professor of religious studies at Nazareth College in Rochester, New York, where she holds the William H. Shannon Chair in Catholic Studies. A founding member and past president of the International Thomas Merton Society, she is chairing its Centenary Committee. Christine edited *Courage for Truth*, a volume of Merton's letters to writers; *Learning to Love*, volume six of Merton's journals; and *Thomas Merton: Essential Writings*, an anthology of Merton's writings. With William H. Shannon and Patrick O'Connell, she co-authored *The Thomas Merton Encyclopedia*. With William Shannon, she co-edited *Merton's Cold War Letters* and *Thomas Merton: A Life in Letters*.

Gary Hall

Occasionally masquerading as an academic, Gary is a theological educator at the ecumenical Queen's Foundation in Birmingham, where students train for ordained ministries in the UK alongside independent and international students who together make up a vibrant and diverse learning environment. As Methodist presbyter, Gary has served with churches and communities in the marginal centres of urban Leeds and Leicester, before returning to Birmingham to work in global mission training at United College of the Ascension. As learner and teacher, Gary has worked internationally with partners in many countries, including a brief spell with Phil and Dan Berrigan in New York and Washington, with Mother Teresa and KC Thomas in Calcutta, and with many saints who leave deep imprints, some of them living on the precipices of life in all its rawness. After studying theology at Cambridge, then working as a farm labourer and in a factory, Gary lived with the Taizé community in France, deeply grateful for the hospitality, simplicity and generosity of brothers and sis-

ters there. He was introduced to Merton by a friend who knew the tension between contemplative living and radical activism, and has enjoyed getting to know Merton's world and Merton's friends ever since. With mid-life creeping and some mileage covered, Gary is getting down to writing something more substantial than the essays and articles he has previously contributed to journals. It's slow going because he generally prefers spending time with his wife and children, playing piano, walking in the woods or reading other people's work.

Daniel P. Horan, OFM,

Daniel is a Franciscan friar of Holy Name Province (New York), a columnist for *America* magazine, and the author of several books including, most recently, *The Last Words of Jesus: A Meditation on Love and Suffering* (2013), *Francis of Assisi and the Future of Faith: Exploring Franciscan Spirituality and Theology in the Modern World* (2012), and *Dating God: Live and Love in the Way of St. Francis* (2012). He is the author of dozens of scholarly and popular articles, and a frequent lecturer and retreat director around the United States and Europe. He has previously taught in the Department of Religious Studies at Siena College and in the Department of Theology at St. Bonaventure University. Fr. Dan is currently completing a PhD in Systematic Theology at Boston College and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the International Thomas Merton Society. You can learn more about his work and speaking engagements at www.DanHoran.com

Concurrent & Workshop Session Presenters

William Apel is Emeritus professor of religion at Linfield College in Oregon. He has published in the *Seasonal*, the *Annual*, and with Orbis Books – *Signs of Peace: The Interfaith Letters of Thomas Merton*. He teaches a course once a year on Merton and serves as moderator of a progressive (Matthew 25) church.

Nass Canon is a Clinical Professor of Medicine at the University of Alabama and former Chief of Staff at Cooper Green Mercy Hospital in Birmingham, Alabama. He has given presentations at the meetings of the International Thomas Merton Society and The Thomas Merton Society of Great Britain and Ireland and has published in their respective journals.

James G. R. Cronin is a member of staff School of History and Adult Continuing Education, University College Cork, Ireland. His research focuses on the history of ideas. He is a contributor to *Reviews in History* (The Institute of Historical Research, University of London). Currently he is investigating Thomas Merton's historical consciousness.

Detlev Cuntz lives in Bavaria/Germany and is a retired director of corporate development for an international sports lifestyle company. He is an International Advisor of the ITMS for Germany.

Stephen Dunhill is a retired teacher, now living on the Northumbrian coast overlooking Holy island. He has been interested in Merton since the age of 27 when his father, an Anglican vicar, gave

him a copy of *The Seven Storey Mountain* with the words, "I think it is about time you read this." He now gives talks about Merton's life and work, and has been a committee member of the TMS for 8 years.

Peter Ellis lives in Bath. He has a recent MA in Christian Spirituality from Sarum College, Salisbury, and has a particular interest in linking Christian thought with contemporary secular ideas. He likes Merton's writings because they appear in a different guise at every new reading, and because they recall the 60s and the seriousness of its (continuing) revolution. Now retired he has spent 40 years in British archaeology writing on sites in the west country, the midlands, the Welsh borders, and East Anglia. He has also worked in archaeology book and journal production.

Fiona Gardner currently works as award leader and senior lecturer for the MA in Counselling and Psychotherapy Practice at Bath Spa University. She trained in social work and as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist and more recently as a spiritual director. She is the author of a number of books and articles and her latest book is *Precious Thoughts, daily readings from the correspondence of Thomas Merton* (DLT 2011). She is co-editor of *The Merton Journal*, and UK advisor for The International Thomas Merton Society.

Marianne Hieb, MFA, D.Min, directs the Wellness Spirituality Program of Lourdes Wellness Centre in New Jersey, USA. She is a studio artist, a retreat and spiritual director and a registered art therapist. Her book 'Inner Journeying through Art-Journaling' presents a tool for a creative journaling practice. She has presented workshops at ITMS, and her workshop at the 2012 'Raids on the Unspeakable' TMS Conference became her subject for an article for *The Merton Journal*. She is a Sister of Mercy.

Sonia Petisco Martinez PhD in English Studies to the University Complutense of Madrid (Spain) and MSc in Applied Linguistics and Translation to Edinburgh University (Scotland). She specializes in the work of the 20th century North-American contemplative Thomas Merton, being currently concerned with a bilingual edition of his collected poems. Her main publications include book chapters, articles, and reviews on this controversial author in national and international journals, having delivered lectures in meetings and conferences related to the field. Since 2008 she teaches at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting in Granada. In 2010 she becomes Visiting Fellow at RCC Harvard University. She has recently been invited by the Institute for Ecumenical Research at Tübingen University (Germany) to pursue further studies on Language and the discourse of identity.

Paul M Pearson is Director and Archivist of the Thomas Merton Center at Bellarmine University, resident secretary of the ITMS and chief of research for the Merton Legacy Trust.

Małgorzata Poks holds a PhD in American literature. She recently wrote articles on Thomas Merton, Toni Morrison, Paul Auster, Denise Levertov, and Mary Oliver. Poks is an International Advisor of the ITMS for Poland. In 2009 her book *Thomas Merton and Latin America* received the “Louie” award. She is currently working on Merton’s late poetics.

Anthony Purvis lives and works at the Well, Willen. This is a residential religious community which is a work of the *Society of the Sacred Mission*, an Anglican religious order. Before moving to the Well, he was Programme Director of Undergraduate Studies in the School of Arts and Cultures at Newcastle University (UK).

Maurizio Renzini, Foligno – Italy, actually retired, he is biologist and has been principal in high school; he is very involved in cultural area on promoting events about several scientific fields.

Mario Zaninelli, Milan – Italy, teacher in Phys. Ed. and has a MD in Spirituality. In these last years he has developed a huge interest about monastic spirituality.

2014 Conference Artists

Benet Haughton is a psychotherapist and artist. His painting work draws on the inner life, the psyche, on poetry and colour. This strong psychospiritual element expresses itself through figurative work. Recently he has been experimenting with abstraction as it arises through observation of natural forms particularly flowers.

Charles MacCarthy trained at Camberwell School of Art and exhibits regularly in London, Shropshire and Herefordshire where he lives. Charles has drawn inspiration from painters of still life, such as Chardin and Morandi as well as from an intimist tradition including artists such as Bonnard and Gwen John. His artistic practice is one of observing and responding to everyday surroundings. Is it possible to combine these two things ? “I have been trying and in this the photographs of Thomas Merton have been a wonderful example. The quality of stillness and attention that is to be found in them comes surely from his finding these things in himself.”

Oakham School in Rutland

In one of his earliest attempts at autobiography Merton explains that Rutland is the smallest county in England and that Oakham School, set in the ancient county of Rutland is surrounded by some of the most attractive countryside to be found in England. Built over 400 years ago by Robert Johnson, Archdeacon of Leicester, the original schoolroom of 1584 remains in use today. The buildings of the school, both traditional and modern, together with its extensive playing fields, blend naturally with the town, spreading over 60 acres. Thomas Merton attended Oakham School from 1929 to 1933 and is probably still its most famous pupil.

THE THOMAS MERTON SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

aims:

- to promote interest in, and study of, Thomas Merton and his concerns
- to encourage the formation of local groups or chapters of the Society
- to organise national meetings of the Society
- to encourage publication of works by or about Thomas Merton in the Great Britain and Ireland
- to issue twice a year the *Merton Journal*.

www.thomasmertonsociety.org.uk