

IN MEMORIAM      KATE ASHLEY      FUNERAL AT BURFORD 25th June 1979

We are here to thank God for revealing himself to so many through the earthly life of Kate Ashley. I speak as one of the generations of her boys at Saint Michael's who caught, whilst being taught, a vision of holiness which has been with me ever since. Hers was a robust, unashamed, unswerving acceptance of the Catholic Faith as received by the best traditions of the Church of England. It was this which shone through the considerable contribution which she made to the History of the College and which touched the lives of those chastised by her "taize vous" for being noisy in the French Lesson or those who took part in the Grand Howl round the camp fire. The loyalty which she showed to the College was reflected in the loyalty of many old boys during her long retirement at Davenham, where this same faith sustained her during the frustrations of adapting her purposeful stride to the manipulation of a wheelchair in a manner almost worthy of the paraplegic Olympics!

It must be left to one worthier than I to pay a full tribute to her at some later date. Suffice it for me to say that she represented what seems to be a dying race - one of those who served God and School with complete and utter dedication, and without whose presence and inspiration, earth is the poorer, but heaven the richer. She was a great Spiritual reader, and I can remember her talking to me of Father Andrew a long time ago. In one of his letters to a friend after the death of Lilian Bayly he wrote this:- "I have been preaching much about a "right spiritual ambition" that is what is wanted. And there is nothing so thrilling as fighting oneself, and trying to climb the hills of holiness. Fighting and climbing seem to be two words which apply to Katie. Only the other day, she told me to go and see the little upstairs Chapel where daily intercessions were offered - although she could not climb the stairs, she would take her wheelchair up in the lift, for the matter of prayer was essential to her life. I was so glad that Andrew & Sally Walters were able to share that visit, for Katie was able to know that Saint Michael's was in safe hands, and that the same love for Our Lord which she showed was as strong as ever. Another giant of the Anglo Catholic Movement was Fr Stanton, who quoted these words in sermon. After these, I will read a lesson from the First Epistle of Saint Peter. Ch 1 v 3-9. I hope that both will reflect the benefit we have gained from knowing this life and giving us the opportunity to pray for her soul, that being



for years that is from to without a break! She served under wardens and with countless other staff. She must have taught over boys in her time, to say nothing of those at the small private school in Tenbury before she came to S.M.C.

Her belief in all that the Scout movement demanded was passed on in full measure to her cubs, and no one can forget the dedication - the infectious dedication of one of Akela's investitures, or the great burden and privilege which she made clear when a sixer was appointed. The responsibilities of handling the members of the Red Six still lie heavily upon my shoulders, and the dire consequences which would ensue are almost more relevant than the charge at Ordination!

I do not know how long the College was using "En Route" "En Marche" and "En France" but I can always remember the great expression which she put into the episode when that ghastly prig of a child Toto, the pride of Monsieur et Madame Lepine, fell into the duckpond. The descriptive word was FLOC and I can hear Katie say it now!

The loyalty which she showed to the College stemmed from her deep faith and to a large degree the working out of that faith through the worship of the Chapel. The music meant much to her, and her well done to the solo boy afterwards was a great encouragement. She was never a "Yes" person - I am sure that there were many times when she disagreed with the particular holder of the

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Garden's Office, but having made her point she would abide by the decision taken. This same loyalty was reflected in her work for this Society of which she was Secretary for years. She kept up a considerable correspondence with a number of old boys and during her retirement - a very long one - at the lovely house Davenham in Malvern, the faith she had lived out at Saint Michael's sustained her. The contacts she was able to maintain kept her mind alert and active, and she was a very active member of the house and of the parish of Saint Gabriel's. She had been a great and intrepid motorist, and it was a great sadness to her to have to give this up. However, as with everything her great faith and sheer determination sustained her as she adapted her purposeful stride of former years to the manipulation of a wheelchair in a manner almost worthy of a place in the paraplegic Olympics!

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Madam  
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