



Catholic Association
of Performing Arts



CAAPA NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2021

Dear CaAPA members,

We hope this Newsletter continues to find all our members, families, friends and loved ones healthy and safe as we come to the end of this lockdown. And especially for anyone who finds themselves alone. We hope that you are finding the courage and resilience to live with the changing guidelines, and able to keep spirits high despite the challenges. Spring has arrived and a new sense of hope!



As we reported last month, the appeal for playlets on our theme **Action for the Church in Need** continues apace and has resulted in another two very welcome submissions. But we still welcome more, of course! Do be daring and post those masterpieces! *(The intended date for the event will (almost certainly!) be this autumn.)*

We also always welcome any news that members would like to share.

Are you involved in online projects – theatrical, musical, hobbies?

What are your future professional plans?!

How have you kept yourself busy during the lockdowns? Have you learnt new skills?

Please do write!!



(for this Newsletter we are indebted to Michael Slater, Robin Marchal and, for her formatting magic, Nadia Ostacchini).

We begin by remembering the past members of CaAPA whose anniversaries occur at this time. This includes those who have made an invaluable contribution to the life of our predecessor, The Catholic Stage Guild.

MEMORIAL LIST FOR FEBRUARY

David Kelly

Nessa Hughes-Smith

Margaret Hotine

Lionel Jeffries: Vice-President & Chairman

Louise Lister



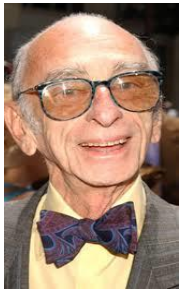
Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace. Amen





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We are very grateful to Michael Slater for his memories of these dear departed souls:



David Kelly was a member of the **Catholic Stage Guild** for many years and appeared in many TV series and films. Particularly memorable are **Waking Ned**, with our own **Kitty Fitzgerald** and **Ian Bannen**, in which David rode a motorbike in the nude! He was also in **Fawlty Towers** and was a leading character in **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**. There were many others.

Nessa Hughes-Smith, though not an actress, gave unstinted service to the Catholic Stage Guild, helping to run the office at **Corpus Christi**, in the days when we had an office open every day except the weekend. Quite a number of Hollywood stars would pop in for a chat, including **George Raft**. She was devoted to **Brompton Oratory**.

Whenever **Richard Codd** was playing the organ at Corpus Christi he always stayed with Nessa; she was so charming and very much the "lady". She had a lovely house in Kew and on one occasion treated members to tea after visiting the **Richmond Theatre** to see **Gemma Craven** in a musical; sadly, Gemma was off that day.

Lionel Jeffries was Vice President and, for a time, *Chairman* of the Catholic Stage Guild. He was the most talented of men, giving wonderful performances in films, TV and radio, and never to be forgotten as he directed that quintessentially English film **The Railway Children**. We all remember **Jenny Agutter** running along the platform of the little station, smoke swirling all around her, crying 'Daddy, my Daddy' as said father emerged from the iconic steam train. The audience wept buckets!



Michael Slater continues:



Louise Lister, and her husband **Cyril**, gave so much service to the Catholic Stage Guild it would be impossible for me to give them full justice. Their influence still goes on; the Students' evening is still going strong thanks to *their daughter Gaby*, who has always been involved with the many aspects of CaAPA. Gaby's wise advice is invaluable.

Gaby remembers that Louise would smuggle in home-made chocolate cakes, a large cheese board and bowls of French bread and apples to offer the students after the event, always aware that students are forever hungry!

Louise joined **ENSA** as Louise Lister, having married Cyril just before the war. She toured North Africa, the Far East and Italy in various theatre productions, including James Bridie's comedy **It Depends What You Mean** with **Ursula Jeans** and **Roger Livesey**.

After the war she retired from acting to raise a family of four daughters but returned from time to time to play in theatre and radio productions. In 1961 she appeared in the West End production of **JB**, with **Constance Cummings**, one of her dearest friends. The production also starred **Donald Sinden**, **Paul Rogers** and **John Clements**.



Besides the annual Catholic Stage Guild bazaars, she also worked tirelessly to promote and help organise other very successful fund-raising events. These included variety shows at **Drury Lane** (acts included **Val Doonican**, **Mike Yarwood** and **Eamonn Andrews**, a *chairman of CSG*), religious pageants and concerts at the **Royal Albert Hall** and **Westminster Cathedral**. She also organised *charity balls* at venues like the **Dorchester**.

Gaby remembers attending a charity event at the **Hurlingham Club**, at which the guests of honour were **Christopher Plummer**, **Milo O'Shea** and **Edward Woodward**.

One of Gaby's sisters (aged 16) was roped in to help serve drinks at **Drury Lane** and remembers unwittingly making herself very popular in the Green Room by innocently filling performers' glasses to the brim with wine and spirits!

Louise was a most talented actress, being part of the **Liverpool Playhouse** company in its heyday, working with **William Armstrong** and that true giant of the theatre **Basil Dean**. **Sir Michael Redgrave**, **Rachel Kempson**, **Robert Donat**, **Robert Fleming** and **Harry Andrews** were just a few of the company who were to become major film and theatrical stars. Louise was known as **Louise Frodsham** in those days.

Michael Slater recalls:

Some years ago, I was a guest at the **Gallery First Nighters'** Dinner, together with **Derek Nimmo**. He introduced me to **Robert Fleming** a much-respected supporting actor of many years. Derek said, 'oh, this is **Michael Slater**, he is with the Catholic Stage Guild.' GREAT MISTAKE!! Robert Fleming then waxed lyrical about Louise for half an hour! Derek was in agony, as he was unused to not being centre stage! I loved Derek, having met him in rep at **Rotherham** during the **Coronation Year**, and he later became my Best Man when I married Ann.



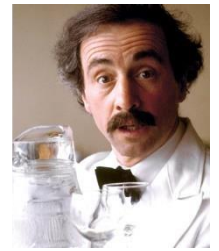


Frank Finlay was remembered last month in our Memorial feature, and this reminded **Kenneth Michaels** of the time he worked with Mr Finlay, and another true gentleman of the stage **Andrew Sachs**. 'This was on a nationwide touring production of **Peter Pan**. I was assistant director and also understudy for the role of **Mr Smee**, played by Mr Sachs. I regularly escorted Mr Finlay round the stalls, circle and 'gods' of the various **Matcham theatres** we visited, as he practised his voice exercises. This was all done very discreetly and without any fuss and shows his impeccable and enduring professionalism. I remember following Frank as we navigated the steep steps at **His Majesty's Theatre** in chilly **Aberdeen**, while he mimi'd and momo'd and generally startled the auditorium cleaners! He was a little frail then, but we all witnessed a nightly miracle. As soon as he donned his **Captain Hook** wig, he lost 20 years instantly and was utterly the villainous rogue for the next three hours. He was extraordinarily athletic, ever perfect in diction and displayed rare swordsmanship. Frank Finlay was at all times friendly and courteous.



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Andrew Sachs was similarly gentlemanly and helpful, but occasionally bedevilled by migraine attacks. You've guessed it – if I got an early morning call, yours truly had to go on as Mr Smee - to howls of disappointment from the audience when it was announced that an unknown was to take the part. Of course, they had all turned up to see Manuel!



Whilst chatting to Michael Slater about Andrew Sachs, Michael mentioned that he too had been at the **Liverpool Playhouse**, in the early 1950s and so was lucky to be part of a company that included **Hugh Paddick**, **Manning Wilson** (later to become a leading radio actor), actor (and stage manager) Andrew Sachs, student ASM **Patricia Routledge** and future film star **Rita Tushingham**. And if they weren't enough, **Richard Briers** and **John Thaw** later joined that illustrious company.

Michael concludes:

Years later I asked Andrew Sachs to present the **Sir Alec Guinness Award**. He was such a charming man, but sadly he was already booked. However, he was kind enough to send me a programme of our time together at the Playhouse.

Huge thanks to Robin Marchal for contributing this article. He writes following the death of the HonSec's father in December and with his family links to Ireland:

Drogheda



'(So sad that your Dad passed, but I get the impression that you will always have a wealth of happy memories of him.

Touching on **County Louth** - the general area, the last holiday I had with both parents was in 1960 -we stayed in **Drogheda** - having salmon from its river for breakfast, lunch and supper - I still love salmon and we travelled around the whole area including the site of the **Battle of the Boyne**! A memorable visit - everlasting memories.)

Below, a piece for the next Newsletter:

FORWARD THINKING. CaAPA AND THE POPE. UPLIFTING.

In these difficult times of Covid 19, I find it uplifting to look ahead with hope for a brighter future.

I've read and re-read CaAPA's December/January Newsletter – appreciating the contributions which prompt memories of so many of our deceased members and friends. May they all rest in shared, gentle, eternal peace.

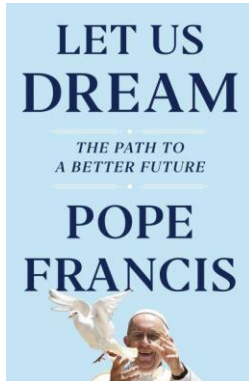


Uplifting, is the final paragraph in the Newsletter, which encapsulates CaAPA's hopes for the future: - 'Our diverse group of members Increasingly share in a creative community where (we) can also grow in (Our) spiritual values. We also aim to serve the wider community by presenting productions for charitable causes – taking



(them) on tour to schools, local theatres, parishes and elderly homes.' How satisfying it would be to include a CaAPA Retreat – perhaps involving us all in discussions as to the social side of our wider Church.

It's almost as if CaAPA's hopes and intentions - as per the above - are prompted by the book I am currently reading:



'LET US DREAM. THE PATH TO A BETTER FUTURE'. POPE FRANCIS in conversation with Austen Ivereigh. (Simon & Schuster 2020).

'In the history of the Church there have always existed groups that have ended up in heresy because of this temptation to a pride that made them feel superior to the Body of Christ. ... In every case, what marks them out is rigidity. Rigidity is the sign of the bad spirit concealing something.' (Page 69).

'Changing institutional culture is an organic process which calls for integrating, without clericalizing, the viewpoints of women.' (Page 66).

I'm not suggesting that CaAPA has 'ended up in heresy', far from it, but, like the Pope it now appears to be looking ahead with wider, positive, more inclusive thinking. That is uplifting.

Here's to hope and happy years ahead! Cheers everyone.

Robin



*P.S. Oh, Kenn, re your Newsletter reference to your Irish links which coincide with those of **President Joe Biden** – I know he's 'busy' at the moment, but how about inviting him to become an Honorary LAY President of the Catholic Association of Performing Arts?!*

**Wow! Has any member any influence Stateside?!'.

And now for a few recent articles that caught our attention:



Jesuits launch first online exhibition, celebrating Forty Martyrs

St Thomas More's hat



Prompted by the 50th anniversary of the canonisation of the **Forty Martyrs**, the **Jesuits in Britain Archives** has launched its first ever online exhibition in collaboration with **Stonyhurst College Collections**. The virtual showcase, "*How bleedeth burning love*": **British Jesuit Province's Relics of the Forty Martyrs of England and Wales**, presents treasured relics belonging to some of the priests and laypeople martyred for their Roman Catholic faith in England and Wales in the 16th and 17th centuries - many of whom were canonised by **Pope Paul VI** on 25 October 1970.

These relics shine a light on an extraordinary period of English history, when men and women were persecuted and executed for their religious beliefs. Some of the relics in the exhibition demonstrate vividly the barbaric nature of the penalties inflicted upon those who held fast to faith and conscience, while others tell very personal stories of individual spiritual journeys of historic figures such as **Thomas More** and **Mary, Queen of Scots**. These relics have been



treasured for centuries, valued for the powerful stories they tell, which have been passed from generation to generation.

Dr Jan Graffius, curator of the *Stonyhurst Collections*, said:

"The exhibition relates the stories of some of the many men and women whose bravery and resourcefulness helped to keep the Catholic faith alive in those days. It also explores the extraordinary, and often perilous, journeys of these relics before they came into the sanctuary of the possession of the British Jesuit Province."

Among the relics in the exhibition are those of the *famous Jesuits*, **St Edmund Campion**, **St Robert Southwell** and **Blessed Edward Oldcorne**, who were all sent to be clandestine missionaries in **Elizabethan England** at a time when Catholics faced persecution.



Edmund Campion was arrested by priest hunters, convicted of high treason, and then hanged, drawn and quartered at **Tyburn** in 1581. On display is the rope that tied him to the hurdle, on which he was dragged from the Tower to Tyburn.

St Robert Southwell was also executed at Tyburn in 1595 - he was famous for his literary works, including the 16th century poem '*Christ's bloody sweate*' which provided the quote for the title of the exhibition. On display is a bone.

Blessed Edward Oldcorne had been a school friend of **Guy Fawkes** and was tortured in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot. Although no evidence was found to link him to the failed assassination attempt against **King James I**, Oldcorne was hanged, drawn, and quartered in 1606. He was beatified in 1929. On display is his right eyeball.

The exhibition also includes the relics of some famous lay people:

St Thomas More, executed on the orders of **Henry VIII** in 1535, and canonised in 1935. On display are two of his hats, a piece of his famous hair shirt and a gold penitential crucifix.

Mary Queen of Scots once possessed a remarkable relic of the **Crown of Thorns**. Its fascinating story is highlighted in the exhibition, spanning the **Byzantine Empire**, the **Crusades**, Mary's own turbulent life, through the **Rising of the Northern Earls** until it found a safe home with an extraordinary **Elizabethan Jesuit missionary**, **John Gerard**. The thorn is housed in a beautiful gold 16th century reliquary, with Mary's pearls wrapped around it.

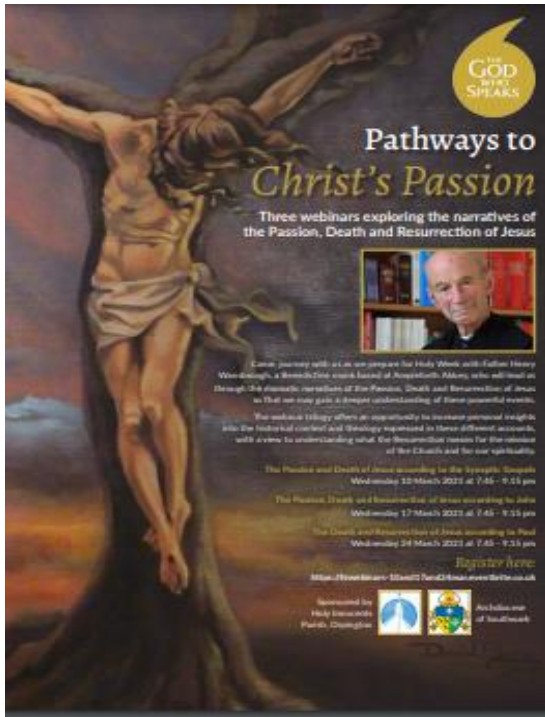
One new discovery is the identity of a group of skulls and bones associated with **Holywell Shrine** in North Wales, which have now been identified, during the course of research for this exhibition, as those of the **17th century Saints Philip Evans** and **John Lloyd**.

Dr Graffius describes the process of research and identification: *"After years of speculation as to the identity of these two skulls, and the collection of associated bones, it is thrilling to be able to announce that we can finally put a name to the men whose bones they are. It's an intriguing detective story involving forensic science, archival research and curatorial skill. The story of **Evans and Lloyd** is a powerful one: priestly dedication, betrayal, faithfulness to death, Welsh harp music and tennis. Their identification has been an extraordinary process, and one of the most rewarding in my curatorial career."*





The relics all form part of the **British Jesuit Province's collection**. Much of the collection resides in the **Jesuits in Britain Archives** in London, and a significant part is on loan to, and cared for, by **Stonyhurst College Collections** in Lancashire.



Rebecca Somerset, **Jesuits in Britain Archivist**, said: "The current situation meant we could not put on a physical exhibition as originally planned to celebrate the **50th anniversary of the Forty Martyrs**, but by presenting the exhibition virtually, we are now able to reach a much wider audience. We are always keen to make these artefacts more easily available to others, and we are looking forward to presenting a series of online exhibitions.

"In order to make the exhibition as accessible as possible, we are presenting the collection as a visual and audio experience, with images of the relics accompanied both by text as well as a recorded narrative."

View the online exhibition here: www.jesuitcollections.org.uk.

WEBINAR SERIES: PATHWAYS TO CHRIST'S PASSION

Explore the hidden depths of the narratives of the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus, in a trilogy of webinars with renowned

biblical scholar Fr Henry Wansbrough

Wednesdays 7.45 pm to 9.15pm on 10, 17 & 24 March.

***** DETAILS & TO REGISTER [HERE](#) *****

The renowned *biblical scholar*, **Father Henry Wansbrough**, a **Benedictine monk of Ampleforth Abbey**, will be giving a series of evening webinars on the Passion narratives, hosted by **Holy Innocents' Church Orpington**. The evening will explore the different accounts of The Passion and Death of Jesus according to the **Synoptic Gospels**, The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus according to **John**, and The Death and Resurrection according to **Paul**.

The webinars are free and offer an opportunity to increase personal insights into the historical context and theology expressed in these different accounts, with a view to understanding what the Resurrection means for the mission of the Church and for our spirituality. After each lecture there will be an opportunity for those attending to ask the speaker questions.



Father Henry Wansbrough has written over twenty books. He edited the **New Jerusalem Bible** (1985) and recently single-handedly the **Revised New Jerusalem Bible** (2019). He has lectured in Africa, Australia and North America. He was for twelve years **Master of St Benet's Hall in Oxford** also **Chair of the Oxford University Faculty of Theology** and more recently **Professor of Biblical Studies at Liverpool Hope University**. He has served on several **Vatican Commissions**, including the **Pontifical Biblical Commission** and the **Anglican Roman Catholic international Commission**.



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Maria Nethercot, Chair of the Parish Co-Responsibility Group, said the parish hosted their first webinar. last year. "It was so successful; Parish Priest Fr Victor Vella was keen to have a series of webinars on the Passion narratives to help us prepare for Holy Week. We are delighted that **Fr Wansbrough** accepted our invitation."

For this event the parish is working together with the **Archdiocese of Southwark** through the Agency for Evangelisation and Catechesis.

Dr Mark Nash, director of the agency said: "**Archbishop John Wilson** has called on us all to help make Southwark become a 'missionary diocese'. This is made possible with each person playing their part and where good work already undertaken, like the Holy Innocents' webinar series, is highlighted and shared. The role of the Agency, therefore, is to help and encourage all parishes to greater fruitfulness."

- The events will be live streamed on three consecutive **Wednesdays from 7.45pm to 9.15pm.**
- The Passion and Death of Jesus according to the Synoptic Gospels on **10th March**
- The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus according to John on **17th March**
- The Death and Resurrection of Jesus according to Paul on **24th March.**

[Book tickets to attend here.](#)

LINK Holy Innocents' Catholic Church www.holyinnocentsorpington.org

PAX CHRISTI TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



Photo: Sr Katrina Alton and Mary T Yelenick Source: Pax Christi

Next Monday, 8 March, Pax Christi England and Wales will celebrate **International Women's Day** with an on-line event celebrating nonviolence and women peacemakers.

For many years Pax Christi has marked this day by acknowledging the role that women play in peace-making around the world. More recently, Pax Christi has distributed postcards for members to send to women on 8 March, thanking them for their contribution to building peace and justice.

This year Pax Christi will host an on-line webinar on 8 March with two guest speakers, **Mary T Yelenick**, who works with *Pax Christi International UN-NGO*, in New York and **Sr Katrina Alton**, a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of St Joseph of Peace, a peace activist and member of Pax Christi. Mary will reflect on the role of advocacy as a tool and strategy of nonviolence and Katrina on the role of religious in making public their commitment to nonviolent peace-making. There will also be time for discussion and prayer.

The gathering is at 7pm (GMT) on 8 March.

Everyone is welcome and registration is via the following link – click [here](#)





POPE FRANCIS: PRAYER LIFTS US OUT OF SPIRITUAL LAZINESS TO HELP OTHERS

During his Angelus address on Sunday, **Pope Francis** reflected on the Transfiguration of Jesus, and urged Christians to turn the experience of prayer into a desire to carry hope to the world.

Reflecting on the Transfiguration, recounted in the Sunday Gospel (Mk 9:2-10), he began by considering what Jesus told His disciples before taking them up the mountain. Jesus had just revealed that He would be condemned to death but would rise again.

"The image of a strong and triumphant Messiah is put into crisis, their dreams are shattered, and they are beset by anguish at the thought that the Teacher in whom they believed should be killed like the worst of wrongdoers," said the Pope.

With these concerns in their hearts, the disciples follow Jesus up the mountain, where He is transfigured before them.

'Pope Francis said Jesus thus reminded them that He would overcome death. "His face radiant and his garments glistening, providing a preview of his image as the Risen One, offer to those frightened men the light to pass through the shadows."

The Pope went on to reflect on Peter's words: ***"Rabbi, it is good that we are here!"***

He said the Apostle's expression of appreciation is a reminder that the Lord never lets darkness have the final word. When we face seemingly endless trials, said the Pope, we need another point of view: ***"a light which illuminates in depth the mystery of life and helps us to move beyond our frame of mind and the criteria of this world."***

We too, he stressed, are called to climb the mountain with Jesus to have every fragment of our lives illuminated by His victory at Easter.

Yet, warned Pope Francis, we must not let our joy at the Transfiguration become ***"spiritual laziness."*** He said:

"We cannot remain on the mountain and enjoy the beauty of this encounter by ourselves," he noted. "Jesus himself brings us back to the valley, amidst our brothers and sisters and into daily life."

Spiritual laziness, said the Pope, pushes us to rest in the satisfaction of our own well-being, while ignoring the struggles faced by others.

"Going up the mountain does not mean forgetting reality; praying never means avoiding the difficulties of life," he said.

Pope Francis concluded his catechesis urging Christians to transform our experience with Jesus and carry His light throughout the world.

The mission of every Christian, he said, is to ***ignite "little lights in people's hearts; being little lamps of the Gospel that bear a bit of love and hope."***

And the Pope asked the **Blessed Virgin Mary** to accompany us to welcome the light of Christ, to care for it, and to share Him with our brothers and sisters.

After the Angelus, Pope Francis appealed for the release of 317 schoolgirls kidnapped in Nigeria on Thursday night. (See: www.indcatholicnews.com/news/41638) . He also mentioned that it was the 16th World Rare Diseases Day. He thanked medical researchers for their work and called for prayers for those suffering with rare diseases, especially the children. See: (www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-02/pope-francis-cardinal-





[turkson-message-world-rare-diseases-day.html](#))

Watch today's Angelus on the Vatican Youtube channel: www.youtube.com/watch?v=GKjcy21yAq4



CHILDREN'S BOOK: THE LITTLE WITCH WHO WANTED TO BE GOOD

'*The Little Witch Who Wanted to Be Good*' by Catholic writer, Kristina Cooper is a children's book with a difference.

It tells the story of a little witch called Esmeralda who lives with her aunts in the forest. Rather than turning milk sour and casting spells, Esmeralda wants to join the Readies and do good, which causes all kinds of problems for her!

Not only does the book seek to entertain and amuse but also to encourage children to be kind and help others.

Ideally the book is to be read by adults to children, so that the issues that come up in the stories- like bullying or lying or dissatisfaction with one's appearance - can be discussed.

Its suitable for reading in the home or classroom.

As well as the book, to help encourage children to do good deeds, ladybird stickers are also available (100 for £2.50) so children can keep a record of their good deeds.

The 76-page full colour soft back book, with its quirky and endearing illustrations, appeals to both children and adults. Young readers say:

"I think it was the best story I ever heard! I absolutely loved it!" (Laura, age 8)

"I would like to hear it again. I really liked this book. It makes me want to do good deeds". (Robyn age 8)

"I thought it made me feel as if I was really seeing it happen. I loved it." (Minxie, age 8)

Available from Goodnews Books £7.95 plus £1.85 p&p:

<https://goodnewsbooks.co.uk/our-catalogue/product/1854-esmeralda.html> tel 01582 571011.

Nadia Ostacchini *has suggested the following* **FILM:**

Words on Bathroom Walls is a 2020 American romantic drama film directed by Thor Freudenthal and written by Nick Naveda, based on the novel of the same name by Julia Walton. Whilst it is a coming-of-age love story, what sets this one apart is the intelligence of its screenplay and the positive depiction of the Catholic Church in helping the character of Adam to find himself.



A reminder that archive copies of the Newsletter are available on the CaAPA website Members' area.

You can access this only if you have a [login](#) and [password](#). Do set up an account next time you visit if you haven't already registered. Go [here](#)



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Lastly, please do send in any items you have written, or may be of interest to members, for inclusion in future Newsletters to kennethmichaels@hotmail.com



Feel free to send us any accompanying **photos** too!

Until next month, may you all remain safe.

God Bless.



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www.catholicassociationofperformingarts.org.uk/



**PS: Join us
on Facebook
& Twitter!**

PS: Don't forget that the clocks go forward on 28 March!



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