

Royal dialogue

IT WAS THE historian David Starkey, no mean curmudgeon himself, who called Prince Philip “HRH Victor Meldrew” during a BBC Radio 4 broadcast to mark the Prince’s ninetieth birthday earlier this year. And when 350 members of the British media gathered at Buckingham Palace on Monday night for a reception to mark the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee next year, plenty of them were hoping to hear one of the Duke of Edinburgh’s cantankerous remarks or witty quips, for which he has been famous throughout his time as consort. Unlike Victor Meldrew, there was no sense that the Queen, 85, or her husband has one foot in the grave: both stood throughout the time spent receiving each of their guests in person. Among them were editors of national newspapers, television commentators and royal reporters, as well as the editors of some religious weeklies, including this one. Announced before her to the royal couple was Stephen Pollard, editor of *The Jewish Chronicle*. As the *Tablet* editor stepped forward to meet the Prince, he joked: “You’re in good company with that one,” gesturing at Pollard with his head. No wonder HRH liked the idea of a spot of interfaith dialogue: he himself was raised in the Greek Orthodox faith and converted to Anglicanism on marriage, and founded St George’s House, Windsor, a centre for discussions on ethics and religion.

While the Prince clearly recognised *The Tablet*, it’s not clear whether he reads it at Buckingham Palace. But down the road at Clarence House, *The Tablet* appears to be popular. “I read our copy every week,” said a member of Prince Charles’ team, also at the reception.

Work of love

WHEN VINCENT Nichols was first ordained a bishop by the then Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Basil Hume, in 1992, his friend and mentor said to him in his homily: “Your model must be St John Fisher ... this bishop of great scholarship, this man of prayer, this lover of the poor was a true man of the Church, humble, faithful, courageous. Those are qualities to esteem and make our own.”

Hume knew, as he wrote those words, that Nichols had written an MA dissertation on Fisher. But neither at that time would have suspected that 40 years after Nichols first wrote his Manchester University thesis, and when Nichols, too, was Archbishop of Westminster, that it would be rediscovered and published.

On Friday, Archbishop Nichols celebrated publication of his book, *St John Fisher: bishop and theologian in Reformation and controversy*. He told guests at the reception



in Archbishop’s House that he owed publication by Alive Publishing to an Archdiocese of Westminster colleague, Edmund Adamus, who first got him to dig out the decades-old thesis, to Eamon Duffy, professor of the history of Christianity at Cambridge, who read the text, and to Professor Jack Scarisbrick, who first helped him with his thesis.

But most poignantly of all, the archbishop recalled the help of his late father, who, realising that his son wanted to do some pastoral work as a new priest as well as study, helped him by typing the entire manuscript. “He used an old typewriter, carbon paper for a copy and lots of Tipp-Ex,” he said. “He painstakingly worked out the layout for every page, allowing for the many footnotes on each of them. It was a work of great love.”

Roll over, Loyola

HEYTHROP COLLEGE considers its particular strengths to include ethics, interfaith relations and the philosophy of religion, but none of these featured in a recent students’ pub quiz.

Instead, the questions which could not be repeated in a publication that children might see were all about sex and the prizes were euphemistically described as being of an “adult” nature. This was a pub quiz which “smashes into the quiet world of Heythrop to challenge your expertise both mentally and physically”, according to the event’s blurb.

The “sex quiz” was held last Wednesday at the west London college’s Loyola Hall and hosted by the students’ union. The organiser was a postgraduate philosophy student, John Ord, who also works for the adult retailer who supplied the prizes. When asked if the quiz conflicted with the Jesuit-run college’s Catholic ethos, Ord said it was an educational event that was in line with “Heythrop’s ethos of inclusivity ... the Catholic ethos, as John McDade [former principal of the college] used to put it, of bringing

everyone together to learn from one another.”

He stressed, however, that the students’ union was separate from the college. A spokesman for the college said the event was educational and run independently by the students.

Margaret’s day

IT WAS NOT healing but justice that Dr Margaret Kennedy sought as she pursued her case against an Anglican priest who sexually abused her nearly three decades ago.

In February, she accepted £30,000 from the Diocese of London as compensation for the abuse and as a condition of the agreement she also requested a service of “Remembrance and Proclamation” at St Giles-in-the-Fields in central London, attended by other abuse victims. Speaking at the service last Saturday, the rector of St Giles, the Ven. Dr William Jacob, who is responsible for the safeguarding of children in the London Diocese, told the congregation that the Church [of England] had taken steps to root out child abuse by clergy but there was still some way to go to addressing the sexual abuse of adults.

Dr Kennedy, 59, who was born a Catholic, explained how as a troubled 30-year-old receiving counselling she sought pastoral care from the priest who assaulted her. She went on to found a survivors’ group, Minister and Clergy Sexual Abuse Survivors (Macsas). She described the day as “marvellous”.

Farewell, Richard Willson

THE CARTOONIST Richard Willson, who died this week, produced a series of memorable *Tablet* covers for 12 years from 1995.

Willson was a fine caricaturist whose pen produced likenesses of Tony Blair, Ronald Reagan, Pope John Paul II, Yasser Arafat and many others. Some of his *Tablet* covers tackled difficult subjects and produced disturbing images: one about the Rwanda genocide portrayed the Grim Reaper as a sower flinging skulls instead of seeds from his bag. Another, for an article about corporate greed, showed grotesque, pinstriped figures clawing at banknotes from a tree sprouting money. Born in London in 1939, Willson was a shy, softly spoken man who campaigned on human-rights issues and the environment. He produced cartoons for many publications including *The Times* where he worked from 1971 until around 2008.

The Times’ political cartoonist Peter Brookes, who worked alongside him for many years, said: “He was an amazingly fast worker and extremely valuable to newspapers on tight deadlines. His value lay in his very great ability to capture likenesses in his caricatures.” To see a selection of Richard Willson’s *Tablet* covers, visit www.thetablet.co.uk