

# WORD FROM THE CLOISTERS

diary@thetablet.co.uk

## ‘The women are up to something’

IN THE SPRING of 1956 the University of Oxford announced its intention to bestow an honorary doctorate on the former US president Harry Truman. He called it his “floppy hat” degree. Elizabeth Anscombe – a woman on a radiant spectrum all her own – was among a handful of Oxford academics who were not amused. Truman was responsible for Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The intentional killing of innocent people was murder. “If you do this,” she told the assembly preparing to vote to approve the honour, “what Ghengis Khan, what Hitler or what Stalin will not be honoured in the future?” But word got round. “The women are up to something. We have to go and vote them down.” Dons were meekly herded in to smother Anscombe’s protest. In 1968, she and her husband Peter Geach held a party to celebrate the publication of *Humanae Vitae*. When she was entering her seventies, she was arrested for blocking the entrance to an abortion clinic. The same thread of respect for the sanctity of life bound the parties and the protests.

Now an American philosopher, Benjamin Lipscomb, has made the nervy dons’ rallying



cry the title of a book to be published by Oxford University Press next week: *The Women Are Up to Something: How Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Mary Midgley, and Iris Murdoch Revolutionized Ethics*. He claims to have the skinny on the old chestnut about the maitre d’ declaring that Anscombe could not enter his restaurant wearing trousers. She promptly took them off. Lipscomb spoke to one of Anscombe’s old graduate students, who told him he and a bunch of other graduate students were sitting around with Anscombe one day and asked her whether the famous

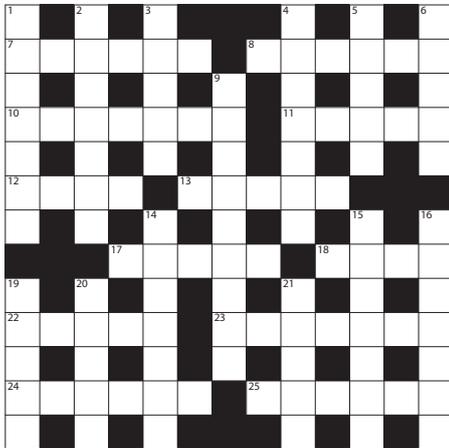
story was true: had she really stripped off her trousers in a posh Boston restaurant? “Oh, no, it was nothing like that,” she’d told them. “It was a bar, and it was in Toronto.”

THE CATHOLIC Union’s Autumn gathering took place last Saturday at Stonor Park, the recusant family house in Oxfordshire where you can see the press on which St Edmund Campion secretly printed his book “Ten Reasons” for being a Catholic, which was to cost him his life. Mass in the private chapel, celebrated by the Jesuit Provincial Damian Howard SJ, was offered for the repose of the soul of Sir David Amess, who had been fatally stabbed 24 hours earlier. The chairman of the Catholic Union, David O’Mahony, and former MP Rob Ffello spoke of his contribution to public life, and the president, Sir Edward Leigh MP, who had entered the House of Commons with Amess in 1983, struggled to hold back tears during his speech to the 45 guests.

NIGEL PARKER, the director of the Catholic Union, tells us that Amess and Leigh were two of the so-called “four knights” he and other leaders of Christian groups in Parliament knew they could turn to for help in fighting their often lonely battles in Westminster, particularly around life issues.

## PUZZLES

### PRIZE CROSSWORD No. 778 Enigma



#### Across

- 7 The Lhasa Apso, among others, is a ----- (6)
- 8 Rousseau’s was noble (6)
- 10 An ill-fated lover in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (7)
- 11 A Thai canal (5)
- 12 Frederic Farrar’s unfortunate fictional hero (4)
- 13 Silver coin worth fourpence (archaic) (5)
- 17 Small crustaceans eaten by sea lions (5)
- 18 Greek goddess of the underworld, aka Persephone (4)
- 22 The Montagne de Bueren with its 374 steps is found here (5)

- 23 American version of yeti (7)

- 24 Its parents are a pen and a cob (6)
- 25 Distinctive ornament at apex of a roof (6)

#### Down

- 1 Russian ecoregion of treeless grasslands (7)
- 2 Metric foot in poetry, also called dibrach (7)
- 3 Emperor Charles V called an assembly here in 1521 (5)
- 4 *Corvus monedula* (7)
- 5 Elder brother of Moses (5)
- 6 Neolithic circular bank with internal ditch over 66ft in diameter (5)
- 9 After the seventeenth century it was replaced by the quadrant and sextant (9)

- 14 German educator of young children, born 1782 (7)
- 15 Nineteenth-century Russian composer who founded a college of medicine for women (7)
- 16 One of those studied by herpetologists (7)
- 19 Christiaan Huygens invented a type of this in 1656 (5)
- 20 ----- Gainsbourg wrote France’s winning entry for Eurovision 1965 (5)
- 21 Type of floury potato used in making gnocchi (5)

Please send your answers to: Crossword Competition 23 October, The Tablet, 1 King Street Cloisters, Clifton Walk, London W6 0GY. Email: thetablet@thetablet.co.uk, with Crossword in the subject field. Please include your full name, telephone number and email address, and a mailing address. Three books – on God, Miracles and Pilgrimage – from the OUP’s Very Short Introduction series will go to the sender of the first correct entry drawn at random. **■ We are processing entries but there may be a delay in notifying winners and sending out prizes. Please keep entering.**

### SUDOKU | Moderate

	4							7
				9	3			4
		7	2				3	
	6		8					9
			9					5
				4	7	8		
7	9						2	
5		8			2			3
	3	4						

Each 3x3 box, each row and each column must contain all the numbers 1 to 9.

#### Solution to the 2 October puzzle

6	5	9	7	4	2	8	1	3
7	8	2	3	5	1	9	4	6
3	1	4	6	8	9	2	5	7
9	7	1	8	6	3	5	2	4
8	2	3	5	9	4	6	7	1
4	6	5	1	2	7	3	8	9
2	3	7	9	1	8	4	6	5
5	9	8	4	7	6	1	3	2
1	4	6	2	3	5	7	9	8

#### Solution to the 2 October crossword No. 775

**Across:** 1 Social; 5 Media; 8 Eaten; 9 Charity; 10 Inca; 11 Estragon; 13 Blend; 14 Bliss; 19 Untoward; 21 Haka; 23 Toccata; 24 Satin; 25 Nasal; 26 Harare. **Down:** 2 Optical; 3 Iona; 4 Locust; 5 Meat roll; 6 Doing; 7 Anyone; 8 Exit; 12 Snowball; 15 Shatter; 16 Button; 17 Preach; 18 Darn; 20 Ticks; 22 Tsar.

Prizes kindly donated by  
**OXFORD**  
UNIVERSITY PRESS  
www.oup.com