

David Scott recounts his first encounter with Merton

It was while I was still at school and having just two periods of time allotted to going out to the village between four and five o'clock, I decided to go into the public library. I had never heard of Merton, but using the spaces between the shelves to spy on the young female librarians, my eye slipped sideways to the cover of a book, set up on the shelf to show its front. The cover showed a monk staring out over a forest. There was something hugely attractive to me about this picture. The mood was quiet, peaceful and thoughtful, and all those abstract feelings were focused onto a person intent on contemplation. I borrowed the book from the library. It was summer and warm, so I went into the churchyard of the parish church and read bits of it. It was utterly compelling. ... There were words like 'silence' I had not heard anyone use creatively before. I had heard them shouted as orders, but never whispered as an invitation. This was in 1963 when I was sixteen. It should have been girls, but actually it was contemplation.

from David Scott – The Mind of Christ