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*The Father  
Ignatius  
Memorial  
Trust*

Charity Commissioners'  
Registration No. 253225

# NEWSLETTER

NO. 37, SUMMER 2009

website at:  
[www.fatherignatius.com](http://www.fatherignatius.com)

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## *Contents*

- 2 THE PILGRIMAGE ASSOCIATION  
Caroline Woollard
- 3 LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN:  
Canon Jeremy Winston SSC
- 5 RETIREMENT OF FR JEREMY DOWDING  
Canon Jeremy Winston SSC
- 6 PILGRIMAGE: A SACRAMENT  
OF LIFE'S JOURNEY  
Fr Martin Williams
- 8 EXTRACT FROM *From Monk to Busman*  
Bertram Cannell
- 9 REPORT ON THE ABBEY CHURCH  
Stanley Knill
- 10 ABERGAVENNY MUSEUM EXHIBITION:  
*A WORLD UNTOUCHED: ERIC GILL, DAVID JONES  
& EDGAR HOLLOWAY AT CAPEL-Y-FFIN*
- 12 PILGRIMAGE 2009  
Details of Programme
- 12 FATHER IGNATIUS AT WORK

# *The Pilgrimage Association*

**T**HE IDEA OF FORMING AN ECUMENICAL PILGRIMAGE ASSOCIATION has been well received.

After much planning and discussion, the Trust is to launch The Llanthony Pilgrimage Association (The Friends of the Fr Ignatius Memorial Trust) at this year's pilgrimage.

The ecumenical Association will seek to further the spiritual ideas of Fr Ignatius in two ways; through the annual pilgrimage to Our Lady of Llanthony at Capel-y-ffin, and by mutual support and prayer for those causes dear to his heart.

These include the evangelisation of our country, the renewal of community and monastic life in the Church, and the reconciliation of divided Christians in the faith and practice of the undivided Church.

It is hoped to encourage a wide range of people, including those interested in the Llanthony Valley, walkers, local history enthusiasts and, of course, pilgrims.

Members of The Llanthony Pilgrimage Association will receive a copy of the annual Newsletter and of the Pilgrimage Manual, together with a list of monthly prayer intentions.

The joining fee is £6 per person, free for people under the age of 18 or in full-time education—this fee also covers the first year's membership. Thereafter the annual subscription will be £6. But, of course, any donations above this figure, to enable the work of the Trust to continue, will be very gratefully received.

Membership forms will be available at the pilgrimage or by writing to:

The Membership Secretary,  
The Llanthony Pilgrimage Association,  
10 Llwynu Road,  
Abergavenny,  
Monmouthshire NP7 5TB,  
email [caroline@woollard.go-plus.net](mailto:caroline@woollard.go-plus.net)

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## *From the Chairman...*

The Vicarage,  
Monk Street,  
Abergavenny,  
Monmouthshire

*Feast of Saint Benedict, 11th July 2009*

My dear fellow pilgrims,

**I**F YOU DRIVE along any of the major roads leading to South Wales you will be impressed by the way in which the hills and mountains rise to greet you. For people like me, who live amidst these hills, there is a sense in which we very much take them for granted. They are very picturesque, of course. But they also seem to draw the wettest of weather systems and I often find myself living in a town shrouded in greyness.

But there is no getting away from the fact that these hills and mountains retain a very special atmosphere. This might be thought of as some sort of Victorian sentimentality, whereas, in reality, there is little sentimentality when you come to consider the situation in which local people find themselves. The lovely green hills, and the rippling streams do not

provide local people with incomes. Traditional hill farming may well have been going on in these valleys since the days when monks first came here. But nowadays, sheep farming is onerous and hardly worthwhile. Few people care. Just think of this the next time you put on your fleece! Cereal crops were once planted on the sunny sides of the valleys, true. But the keen-eyed visitor to Abergavenny, to Cwmyoy, Llanthony and Capel-y-ffin, will notice how fields which were once cultivated and grazed are overwhelmed by ferns and reeds. Even the churches, that have withstood the test of time so far, rely not on the support of local people, but on the gifts and donations of the very many visitors. Indeed, so many of the houses and cottages you pass as you make your way along a hallowed route belong now to those who earn their living in our cities. For them, interestingly, the hills and mountains provide respite from the rat-race of our urban conurbations, as once they did for those who sought solace, tranquillity and the spirit of holiness.

Father Ignatius was himself something of a well travelled individual. Long before the network of motorways he found himself traversing the land,

preaching the Gospel. But whatever the success (or otherwise) of his endeavours, he discovered within these same hills and valleys something of God which was unique and compelling.

That sense of the Holy has been captured over and over again by pilgrims to Llanthony and Capel-y-ffin. At various times these have been a trickle. At other times, great numbers have come to worship, to listen, and to seek the intercessions of Our Lady of Llanthony.

In this tradition we make our visit once again this year. But the sense of holiness is not escapism. Whatever the inspirational beauty which the valley affords we are drawn to the reality of life in Jesus Christ and the reality which is his in the lives of those who seek to serve him.

When we celebrate the Eucharist at the beginning of our pilgrimage we are proclaiming Christ's death, resurrection, and his coming again. We shall be worshipping in a tradition represented by generations of people who held the Faith. We shall be affirming our own part as a pilgrim people, setting out from the church on that uniquely beautiful walk, yes, along the valley side to Capel-y-ffin, celebrating God's creation, and that new creation which is ours through

baptism. Then, in commemoration of Fr Ignatius, we shall climb the hill from Capel-y-ffin's remarkable church to the abbey ruins, passing the Calvary, and offering intercessions for all who seek God's healing, grace and pardon.

This year Archdeacon Martin Williams will be presiding at St David's, Llanthony, and we very much hope that as many people as possible will join us for this memorable day. Please come prepared to walk with us, if you are able, to Capel-y-ffin, after our picnic.

The preacher at Capel-y-ffin is to be Fr Jonathan Baker, the Principal of Pusey House, Oxford, and a superb preacher. We are immensely pleased he is able to be with us.

Most importantly, may I ask you to spread the good news of the pilgrimage, to share the message, the purpose and the joy. Don't just come alone—bring people with you. It really does promise to be a wonderful day.

**The Rev'd Canon Jeremy Winston**

## *Retirement of Fr Jeremy Dowding SSC*

**F**R JEREMY DOWDING's association with the Father Ignatius Memorial Trust stretches all the way back to his youth.

Brought up in Abergavenny and worshipping at the town's Holy Trinity Church in Baker Street, he has always had an enormous enthusiasm and passion for the work of the Trust and the maintaining of the Pilgrimage.

His knowledge about Fr Ignatius is remarkable and his custodianship as Chairman has been extremely well appreciated by pilgrims and supporters alike. Fr Jeremy has served in the Diocese of Monmouth, since when he has been in Devon and now, Essex.

But the sheer practicality of serving as Chairman, at such a distance, has been very difficult. Nonetheless, he continues to play a very significant part in the life of the Trust.

We want to thank him for his dedication as Chairman over the past few years, and we know he will continue to be fully involved in all that the Trust and Association is seeking to do.

**The Rev'd Canon Jeremy Winston**



Father Jeremy



Father Ignatius

## *Pilgrimage: a Sacrament of Life's Journey*

**P**ILGRIMAGE, LIKE religion itself, is ancient, universal and enduring.

It seems to be born of a human instant to explore, to strive and to extend the horizons of everyday life: to search for what is beyond and behind everyday experience, to find the beauty which lies behind the beauty of this world, to find the truth and meaning of life, not just my life but all life, to pay homage to that goodness which I glimpse every day reflected in the lives of those who love me or of people who are acknowledged to have been outstandingly good or holy.

Christian pilgrimage, like Christian monasticism, 'baptises' a practice which is much older than the coming of Christ. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition the first pilgrim is Abraham, called to leave the comfort and security of his ancestral home for an unknown destination by an unknown way—unknown, that is, to him, but not to the God who called him. He left with his family, his flocks and herds, living and travelling a day at a time, until eventually he settled in the land of promise; and it remained a land of promise, as it was his descendants, literal and spiritual, who would come to

dwell permanently in the land we Christians recognize as the kingdom of God .

So any pilgrimage a Christian undertakes is a kind of sacrament of his/her life as a whole, a journey from this world to the kingdom of God. We may not have to travel far, we may not have to leave much in the way of this-worldly security behind, but we shall still be on a journey, which reminds us that our life has a beginning, God's gift of life itself, a middle, in which God invites us to strive for his kingdom in abandonment to his divine providence, and an end or destination, when we hope to share with all creation in the heavenly destiny of the children of God.

We shall normally travel with others, as those who set out on their own usually meet up with others on the way, and at the place or object of pilgrimage there will always be others present, fellow pilgrims, not to mention all those who have gone before us, encouraging us on our journey and welcoming us to that holy place which is a sacrament of our heavenly destination. A pilgrimage reinforces our Christian hope, because we experience in our pilgrimage destination as a confirmation of God's promises.

The Llanthony pilgrimage is a many-layered affair. It does not necessarily involve great physical effort. It may involve some who do not necessarily regard themselves as pilgrims at all, but simply appreciate the walk up the valley in such beautiful countryside, or who are interested in the extraordinary historical heritage of the area, from the age of the early Welsh saints, through the Middle Ages, to Father Ignatius and modern times. It is difficult to see, however, how such unintentional pilgrims could fail to be touched by intimations of ultimate beauty, truth and goodness in such a landscape trodden by the feet of saints and pilgrims for fifteen hundred years.

And where is the main focus of the pilgrimage? Is it St David's Church, the most ancient Christian site in the valley, where the pilgrimage Mass is celebrated? There may be those whose main (or only) participation in the pilgrimage is through attending the Mass—and the Eucharist is indeed itself a 'pilgrimage', a movement with and in Christ from this world into the conditions of the world to come.

Is it in the ruins of the medieval Priory, where pilgrims mingle after the Mass or sit and enjoy their picnic? Is it the walk up the valley along the old road to Capel-y-ffin? Is it the tiny church of St Mary, where ecumenical Vespers is usually

celebrated and the main pilgrimage sermon is preached? Is it the procession to our Lady of Llanthony, the image in the grounds of what was Fr Ignatius' monastery, built to commemorate the apparitions which took place in last August and early September 1880? Or is it the ruins of Fr Ignatius' Abbey Church, where the pilgrimage ends? (Or could it be the delicious tea provided by local parishioners in the garden of the house afterwards?)

As I see it, our Lady presides over it all, showing us Jesus in the lives of his saints and servants who have gone before us, inviting us to share the divine life of her Son and to join with her in prayer for the healing and salvation of our broken world, assuring us of her motherly care and protection as we continue our life's pilgrimage with all the joys and sorrows that attend it. She inspired Fr Ignatius himself, in his evangelical preaching, in his monastic foundation and in his concern for the restoration of the Church's visible unity. May we who take part in this pilgrimage also pray fervently with Mary for the conversion of our country, for the renewal of monastic and community life in the Church and for the restoration of her visible unity. Our pilgrimage is itself, of course, an act of prayer.

**Fr Martin Williams**

## MORE FROM THE MONASTIC BUSMAN

In the previous Newsletter, the Trust's Archivist, Mr Douglas Lyne skilfully introduced a brief sojourner at the Abbey of our Lady and St Dunstan, B.G.A. Cannell who later set down his experiences in the out of print volume 'From Monk to Busman: an Autobiography.'

Here is a further extract from his account of life with Father Ignatius

'AFTER SOME time it was decided that I should become a Postulant...'The service was very simple; having to knock at the gates of the choir, and telling the superior I wanted to enter the order...I had a wreath of evergreens placed on my head, and that was the first step. You had plenty of rules to study, called 'observances'. You were given a book, and every day you were supposed to study them and write down in the book any you had broken...Evidently there had been a long correspondence going on between my father and Father Ignatius about my future. After twelve months in the Monastery I was still a Postulant—and this was supposed to last six weeks.

In the meantime new brothers kept coming to test their 'vocations', but gradually disappeared—the new life was too hard.

St Benedict wrote his Rule many years ago in Sunny Italy. I think Father Ignatius expected too much when he asked men to try and carry this out in the 'wilds of Wales' where the sun shines for about three months of the year, and then only on one side of the valley—and not the Monastery side.

After Compline one night there was a long conference in the Abbot's cell with the other brothers. I suppose it must have been about myself and the two others who had decided to 'make the plunge'.

We were informed we were to be made novices on the following Sunday. I found

myself getting quite excited about it, after waiting so long, but now I think I was too young to realize what I was undertaking.

The day arrived, and we were allowed to stay in bed later that morning, because the Service of Admission was a long one...You already had your habit on, and during the ceremony the Abbot placed a Scapular over your head, as a token of Obedience to him in everything. A girdle made of rope with three large knots was tied round your waist, indicating your Vow of Chastity. A pair of sandals were then given as a sign of Poverty...A crown of flowers this time was placed on your head, and you wore this for the remainder of the day. I was made the Senior Brother of the new Novices. Of course you leave your secular name behind...We were told to choose a name from the Welsh Saints— I chose Brother Gildas—he was a great Welsh historian—and I did not think much of the others.

After we had our dinner we were instructed to go to the Abbot's cell, where he would personally shave our heads.

I found this a very painful operation, and I noticed I had only a circle of hair round my head. This was supposed to resemble the Crown of Thorns...

When the operation was finished, the Abbot actually produced a bottle of green Chartreuse, and gave a small glass to each one.'

## STOP PRESS: REPORT ON THE ABBEY CHURCH

THE ORIGINAL application to the Heritage Lottery Fund was in two phases, as suggested by them, to overcome the problem of an applicant having to provide 25% of the cost of the project where it exceeded the critical figure of £100,000, and only 10% if it was below that figure.

The First Phase having been completed, based on a sum of just under that critical figure, an application in respect of the Second Phase appeared to be a formality, but the Heritage Lottery Fund has changed its rules and ignores anything it had previously suggested. The new processes which are said to be 'swifter and more straightforward' than the old system, now involve two competitive assessment rounds and require applicants to consider three aims which relate to **Learning**, **Conservation** and **Participation**.

A pre-application submission has been made which covered the required aims, albeit in general terms, and received a favourable response which pointed out that to be successful a round one application would require specific statements in respect of **Learning** and **Participation**.

### **Learning:**

- The project must help people learn about their own and other people's heritage.
- Consideration should be given to on-site and web-based learning

opportunities, also the possibility for training volunteers/participants in new skills (perhaps as site guides).

- Without these key learning aspects the project will not be prioritised.

### **Participation:**

- Help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about heritage.

IT IS IMPERATIVE that we complete the necessary tie-bolt bonding and pointing of the masonry or the structure will merely deteriorate. In order to achieve this we need further funding, which we will not get unless we comply with the Heritage Lottery Fund requirements.

If we can do that successfully then we can make an application which will embrace the structural work, making good Fr Ignatius' tomb, a less maintenance intensive floor covering, an invalid ramp, interpretation panels and making good the approach to the Abbey Church, ruined by heavy vehicles under the First Phase. If there are any specific costs that can be identified in respect of **Learning** and **Participation** these could also be included in our application.

Proposals as to how we can meet the challenge introduced by the requirement of fulfilling these two specific aims, either on a voluntary or otherwise costed basis, are now urgently required.

**Stanley Knill**

## *Abergavenny Museum Exhibition: A World Untouched*

THE LIFE AND WORK of three outstanding artists who lived and worked at the monastery in Capel-y-ffin is on display at Abergavenny Museum until September 27th.

Made possible through the Welsh Assembly's Sharing Treasures Scheme, *A World Untouched: Eric Gill, David Jones and Edgar Holloway at Capel-y-ffin* features works by all three artists.

Eric Gill was a renowned craftsman who lived in the Llanthony Valley in the 1920s; joined by well known poet and artist David Jones whose heritage is reflected in his work; and Edgar Holloway who returned to Capel-y-ffin several times to pursue his art.

Gill, sculptor, engraver, typographer and writer, was born in 1882 and began to earn his living as a letter cutter in 1903. In 1913 he moved to Hopkin's Crank at Ditchling Common, the following year meeting the typographer Stanley Morison. After the war, together with Hilary Pepler and Desmond Chute, Gill founded The Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic at Ditchling, where his pupils included the young David Jones, who soon began a relationship with Gill's daughter, Petra.

Gill had become a convert to Roman Catholicism in 1913 and was

commissioned to make the Stations of the Cross at Westminster Cathedral, fourteen relief carvings which he carried out in 1914-18. These and the Prospero and Ariel group on Broadcasting House (1929-31) are his best-known sculptures.

In 1924 he moved to Capel-y-ffin, where he set up a new workshop, to be followed by Jones and other disciples. In 1925 he designed the Perpetua typeface, with the upper case based upon monumental Roman inscriptions, for Morison, who was working for the Monotype Corporation. The Perpetua design was followed by the Gill Sans typeface in 1927-30, based on the sans serif lettering originally designed by Edward Johnston for London Underground.

A deeply religious man, Eric Gill published numerous essays on the relationship between art and religion. He also produced a number of erotic engravings. Gill died of lung cancer in Harefield Hospital, Uxbridge, Middlesex in 1940.

David Jones (1895-1974) was both an artist and one of the most important first generation British modernist poets. His work was formed by his Welsh heritage and his Catholicism. T.S. Eliot held David

Jones to be a writer of major importance and his *The Anathemata* was considered by W. H. Auden to be the most important long poem written in English in the 20th century.

Jones spent much of the years 1924 to 1927 living with the Gills and assorted hangers-on in the rambling former monastery just outside Capel-y-ffin. He had already become engaged to Gill's middle daughter, Petra, whose characteristic long neck and high forehead continued as standard female features in Jones's artwork for the rest of his career, even though his engagement to her did not last more than a couple of years.

On 11 November 1985, Jones was among 16 Great War poets commemorated on a slate stone unveiled in Westminster Abbey's Poets' Corner. The inscription on the stone was written by a fellow Great War poet, Wilfred Owen. It reads: 'My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity.'

Edgar Holloway (1914-2008) was an artist and print maker best known for his prints and etchings. Born in Doncaster in 1914, he largely taught himself printmaking from books, although he did attend evening classes at Doncaster School of Art, and later during the 1930s at the Slade in London. His first one-man exhibition was held at the Twenty One Gallery in 1931.

Since that time his work has been regularly purchased by the British Museum which now has a collection of sixteen Holloway prints.

Influenced by the writings of Eric Gill, Holloway visited Capel-y-ffin where he met and within six weeks married Gill's model Daisy Monica Hawkins. Through most of the 1940s they lived in Capel-y-ffin. In 1949 he was invited by Philip Hagreen to join the Guild of St Joseph and St Dominic, and moved to Ditchling Common.

During the 1950s and 60s he made his living drawing maps and designing book jackets and only resumed etching in 1968. His reputation as a printmaker grew steadily with exhibitions in Britain and America, culminating in a major retrospective at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.

The Abergavenny exhibition includes some of the sculptures Gill created at Capel, alongside examples of his drawings and engravings, as well as works by the other two artists who were influenced by Gill. There is a selection of Jones' illustrative work and watercolours on show, and some of Holloway's landscapes of Capel-y-ffin are on display together with his etched portraits, the work for which he is best known.



# PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMME

## Saturday 29th August 2009

**12 noon**

Solemn Eucharist at **St David's Church, Llanthony.**

**1.30pm**

Assemble **outside St David's Church** for Pilgrimage Walk.

**3.30pm**

Ecumenical Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary at **St Mary's Church, Capel-y-ffin** with address by Fr Jonathan Baker, Principal of Pusey House.

This service is followed by the Procession to **The Monastery and Abbey Church** with stations at **the Wayside Calvary** and at **the Statue of Our Lady of Llanthony.**

Car parking is available in the official Car park at Llanthony Priory for the Eucharist at S. David's and in the field at Chapel Farm, Capel-y-ffin by kind permission of Mr & Mrs Watkins, for the afternoon event.

The usual pilgrimage walk will take place in the afternoon. Stout footwear is essential and weather-proof clothing is suggested.

n.b. The Father Ignatius Memorial Society is on the web:  
[www.fatherignatius.com](http://www.fatherignatius.com)

