

PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMME

SATURDAY 29th AUGUST 1998

12noon

Sung Eucharist at St David's Church, Llanthony celebrated by the Rt Revd David Thomas, Provincial Assistant Bishop.

3.30 pm

Solemn Evensong at St Mary's Church, Capel-y-ffin and address by the Revd Canon Peter Cobb, 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 will be available both in the official car park at Llanthony for the morning service at St. David's Church and also in the field at Capel-y-ffin by kind permission of Mr & Mrs Watkins of Chapel Farm. Visitors are asked not to park at or near The Monastery itself, please, as this will cause difficulty, congestion and obstruct pilgrimage arrangements.

This year arrangements will be made for a Pilgrimage Walk from Llanthony to Capel-y-ffin. Those wishing to join the walk are invited to assemble in the car park at Llanthony Priory at 1.30 pm. There will be a Pilgrimage Walk Leader and the route will be mainly up the secluded lane on the East side of the valley, not on the main lane that carries the valley vehicle traffic.

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THE FATHER IGNATIUS MEMORIAL TRUST

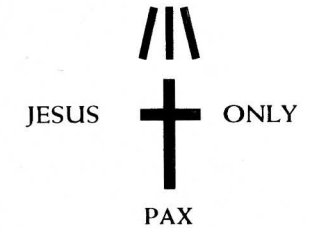
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By the courtesy of the Baroness de Bertouch

*FATHER IGNATIUS
at the age of 70*

Y GWIR YN ERBYN Y BŶD



Newsletter No. 26

March 1998

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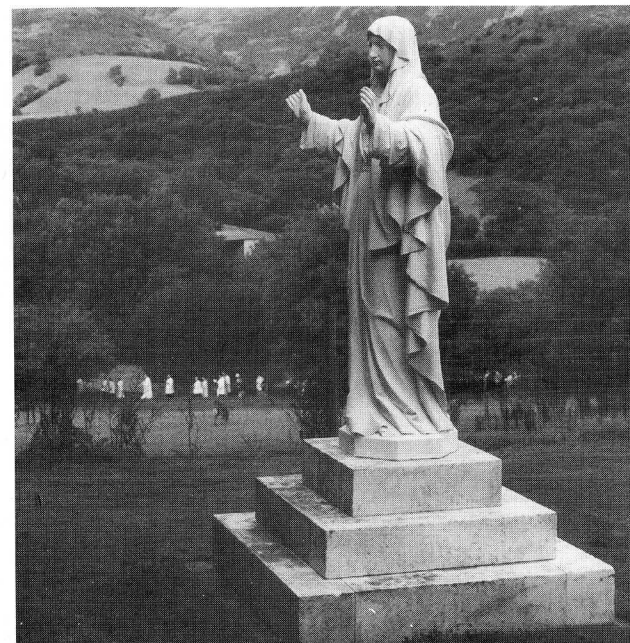
The Annual Pilgrimage - 1997

On Saturday 30th August, a full congregation gathered in St David's Church, Llanthony at midday to welcome the Rt Revd David Thomas, Provincial Assistant Bishop, and to join him in a celebration of the Eucharist. The address on this occasion was given by the Chairman of The Fr. Ignatius Memorial Trust, the Revd Canon Ivor Ll Davies. We are pleased to include this in full in this issue of the newsletter for the benefit of those unable to attend.

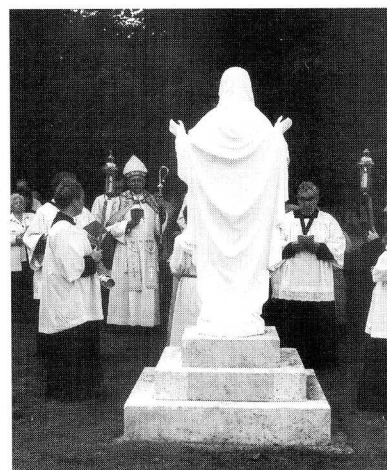
Afterwards, Bishop Thomas was entertained to lunch at the Abbey Hotel and most people attending the service stayed in the customary way to enjoy a picnic in bright summer sunshine in the precincts of the magnificent and beautifully conserved ruins of Llanthony Prima. The pilgrimage continued later, as usual, with Solemn Evensong at St Mary's Church at Capel-y-ffin four miles further up the valley at 3 pm. The little church soon filled up and the congregation overflowed into the churchyard but the provision of a public address system enabled all to take part in the service. On this occasion we were particularly glad to welcome for the first time the Revd Jeremy Winston, Vicar of St Mary's, Abergavenny and to enjoy his fine sermon on the significance of Our Lady in the life of the Church. The procession then moved from the church's tiny hamlet setting, crossing the bridge over the River Honddu and thence by the lane to the forecourt of The Monastery and the statue of Our Lady.



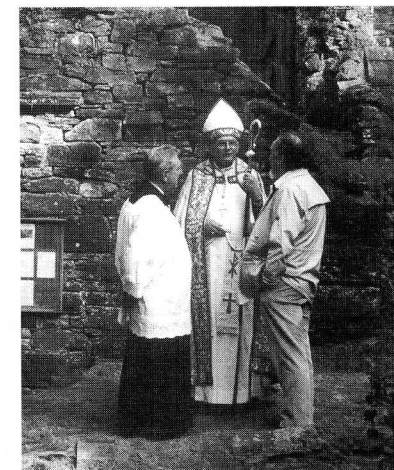
The pilgrimage sets off from St. Mary's at Capel-y-ffin.



The Pilgrimage procession approaches singing the Lourdes Hymn.



Prayers at the statue of Our Lady.



Bishop Thomas at the Abbey Church

The afternoon ended very agreeably as usual with tea and conversation on The Monastery lawn.

FATHER IGNATIUS - THE CELTIC HERITAGE

A sermon by Canon Ivor Davies at St David's, Llanthony during the annual pilgrimage on Sat 30th August 1997:-

Ezekiel 43:2 *'The glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east'.*

Fr Ignatius is often portrayed as a man of simple-minded devotion. In reality he was a complex character. Not an original thinker, he gathered ideas from a variety of sources sometimes inconsistent with each other. Contemplative and showman, medieval monk and revivalist preacher, British Israelite and flat-earthier.....he was all of these. Once he took hold of a notion he adhered to it uncritically, even fanatically. Yet there is one aspect of his personality that surely appeals to us today - his affinity with our Celtic heritage.

Ignatius's love of Wales was shown in his sympathy for the Welsh language and his support for the National Eisteddfod. 'Y Gwir yn erbyn y Byd' was his chosen motto. But his links with the Celtic past go deeper than this. He was descended on his father's side from an old Welsh family long settled in Cornwall. He seems to have possessed to an unusual degree the insight, so characteristic of Celtic religion, that the veil between the seen and unseen worlds may often be drawn aside. As R.S. Hawker, the Vicar of Morwenstow, once put it:-

'The Two Worlds are nearer than we think, and the transactions between them are daily and graphic.'

Ignatius felt an affinity with the saints of Wales as much as he did with the monks of the Middle Ages. He knew that S. David once lived at Llanthony and he himself felt more at home in the Vale of Ewyas than anywhere else. His choice of Capel-y-ffin for his monastery was a wise one. The place suited the man and the man the place.

For the Welsh saints of the 5th and 6th centuries the natural world was the embodiment of supernatural powers. They identified the holy with specific places, even with particular objects like springs, stones, trees and mountains. At such hallowed locations epiphanies - manifestations of God's glory - might be expected. Ignatius was within this tradition when he associated the Abbot's Meadow and its burning bush with visions of the Blessed Virgin.

We look askance at some of the things Ignatius did, or said he did, like the fatal cursing of poor Lizzie Meek - the girl he was supposed to have raised from the dead. There are, of course, parallels in the Bible. Yet similar stories have been told nearer home. S. Beuno was especially good at cursing people who annoyed him. He is also said to have restored S. Winifred's head to the rest of her body - as effectively as Ignatius resurrected Tom Hope, the builder's mate from Hay.

The saints of Wales were being rediscovered in the second half of the 19th Century. It became fashionable among High Anglicans to believe in an ancient Celtic Church with its own liturgy and customs, totally independent of Rome. Had Christianity first come to Britain from the east, carried by Phoenician traders buying Cornish tin for trinkets? Was it possible that Joseph of Arimathea had really settled at Glastonbury? At the turn of the century the Monmouthshire novelist, Arthur Machen, saw the Welsh Church as an outpost of oriental Christendom. Its orders derived from S. James, the first patriarch of Jerusalem, not from S. Peter and the Church of Rome. The lost liturgy of the Celtic Church fascinated Machen. He claimed it contained '*distinct traces of something queer*' - to do with the Holy Grail and the mystical priesthood of Melchisedek.

There is much scope for imagination in all this and the independence of the Celtic Church may be a day-dream. Yet there could be traces of oriental spirituality hidden in our tradition, memories that make us different from the Church of England and unique among the provinces of the Anglican Communion. Perhaps our Liturgical Commission may yet find a place for the Holy Grail in some future revision of the Prayer Book?

You will recall that Ignatius was ordained to the priesthood by a self-styled oriental prelate. There was much speculation at the time that he intended to become head of an independent British Catholic Church in communion with the See of Antioch. On August 1st 1898, The Times announced:- '*The Revd Joseph Leycester Lyne, commonly known as 'Father Ignatius', who was ordained deacon on behalf of Bishop Henry Philpotts by the then Bishop of Bath and Wells 38 years ago, was only last week raised to the priesthood at Llanthony Abbey by His Grace, Archbishop Mar Timotheus, belonging to the Patriarchate of Antioch, in the presence of a considerable congregation*'. The Church Times took the threat of secession seriously. It foresaw a rival Church whose work it should be to protest, not against governmental arrogance, but against latitudinarian indifference.

One can understand Ignatius's readiness to receive ordination from a dubious eastern prelate. No bishop of the Church of England was willing to ordain him and it was extremely difficult to run a monastery without a resident priest. Ignatius appealed to the custom of the old Celtic Church in which heads of monastic communities enjoyed a high degree of independence. As early as 1886, in an address at Westminster Town Hall, he had praised the saints of Wales, David, Dyfrig, Cadog, Illtyd and Samson.....

'From whom did our old British bishops receive their jurisdiction?..... We know perfectly well that they repudiated....the authority of the Pope'.

Having disposed of papal authority in 1886, it was a comparatively easy matter to jettison the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1898.

Fr Ignatius was erratic, eccentric and a law unto himself. Nonetheless, the Church owes him a debt of gratitude, certainly as a pioneer of revived monasticism, but also for his part in the rediscovery of our Celtic origins. Celtic spirituality is a subject of renewed interest at the present time, not least among young people. It would be encouraging to hope that the leaders of the Church in Wales would take advantage of this to give our Province the distinctive ethos it deserves. If this should happen the man we remember today may claim some posthumous credit. He recognised our descent from the saints of Wales and ultimately from the Fathers of the Desert. He drew the attention of the late nineteenth century to the bond that has always existed between Celtic Christendom and the Churches of the Orient. In the words of the old Prophet:-

'The glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east.'



ABBOT AELRED CARLYLE

When Fr Ignatius was in his early sixties it was time for him to begin looking for a successor at Capel-y-ffin. Not one of his own community seemed to be suitable for consideration. Ignatius was already familiar with the work of the youthful Brother Aelred Carlyle who at this time had already founded his own Anglican Benedictine Order on the Isle of Dogs. Indeed, he had already decided that Carlyle should be the man to succeed him. Desultory negotiations went on for several years and visits were exchanged but all came to nothing. After the death of Fr Ignatius in 1908 Carlyle wrote of him '...his strong convictions about the religious life were very different from mine who had been so differently trained ...I confess that the pronounced opinions he had formed during fifty years of struggle did not appeal to me as a man so much younger than himself who desired only to lead the contemplative life in a community established under proper authority.' In the end, the monastery and lands at Capel-y-ffin were transferred to the Benedictines of Caldey Island where Dom Aelred was now their Abbot. Peter Anson's book, *'Abbot Extraordinary - A Memoir of Aelred Carlyle'* is a fascinating account of the life and times of this remarkable man.

Peter Anson was himself a no less colourful figure, and we are pleased to be able to include below the following delightfully informal piece by Dr Patrick Nuttgens. This first appeared in Issue No 3 of *Twentieth Century Architecture*, the journal of Twentieth Century Society, and we are grateful for permission to reproduce it here. Many of our readers will recall the occasion during the Annual Pilgrimage of 1988 when the address in the Abbey Church at Capel-y-ffin was given by Dr Nuttgens who, at that time, was Director of Leeds Polytechnic.

FOIBLES AND FASHIONS

Recollections of Peter Anson by Dr Patrick Nuttgens.

In the middle of the 1950s, exploring the North East Lowlands of Scotland and studying its villages and vernacular architecture, I found myself one evening in Macduff on the Moray Firth and called on Peter Anson at his house in Shore Street. I had met him before when I was a schoolboy. Most years he came to talk with Eric Gill, first at Ditchling and later at Llanthony or Pigotts. At the latter I found him talking to Gill and my father. I was puzzled by this man who looked like a sailor but had for fourteen years been a monk. Now in Macduff I met him again and made a new friendship. Peter was endlessly hospitable. I slept in a 'bun-in' bed (box bed) under the stairs and set off each morning on my explorations.

One afternoon he shouted down from his study and asked me to check if there was anyone at the front door; he had been disturbed by a loud hammering on the window. There was no-one there. "Don't worry," said Peter, "it must have been Aelred on his way to heaven; he promised to call again before he died." The next day there was a telegram saying that Aelred Carlyle had died - at exactly the time Peter had heard the hammering on the window. Peter went back to his typewriter and began the book *'Abbot Extraordinary'* that was published to considerable acclaim three years later.

'Aelred Carlyle', said Rose Macaulay in her foreword to the book, 'had immense character and dash.....What went on in his strangely split mind? He seemed to live from boyhood in a romantic dream.....His charm was almost (though never quite) all-conquering.....Of this charming and questionable eccentric, Mr Anson has made a fascinating study, at once amusing, analytic and affectionate.'

Peter loved Aelred but was under no illusions. He joined the Anglican Benedictine community which Aelred had founded on Caldey Island and became a Catholic when the whole community joined the Church of Rome. Within three years, Aelred (ordained and consecrated as a Catholic abbot with unseemly haste) had to leave after various visitations, rumours and appalling debts. He went abroad, travelled in South America and Canada and found a new life as 'Father Carlyle' and chaplain to old people and sailors, ending as the prison chaplain in Vancouver. He accompanied prisoners to their execution. "Just look at me", he said to a terrified young man and helped him to die in some sort of peace. When he left Vancouver he was given the freedom of the city. After a lifetime of absurd and grandiose monastic schemes he had found his true vocation.

Peter kept all Aelred's letters and stayed at Caldey until 1924, visiting other communities from time to time and trying his vocation in other monastic orders. He spent some months as a Carthusian, stayed at the Benedictine abbey at Fort Augustus and eventually became a member of the Tertiary order of the Franciscans, changing his name from Dick to Peter. In 1921 he founded the Apostleship of the Sea, to give shelter and spiritual help to seamen.

Before he joined the monks at Caldey, Peter was already a compulsive artist. He spent two years at the Architectural Association school in London, made sketches all his life and spent several months in Chipping Campden learning from the great topographical artist and engraver, F.L. Griggs. Most of his many hundreds of sketches were pen and ink drawings, with the occasional water colour. His accuracy was phenomenal and appreciated, notably by the many fishermen whose boats he drew and who (I know from experience) would never fail to spot an error, however small. And he wrote books and articles. Of his many books (there are said to be about forty), many are about the sea and ships. One of the best is *Fishing Boats and Fisher Folk on the East Coast of Scotland* (1930); one of the most personal, *Life on Low Shore* (1969); the most successful and running to many editions was *How to Draw Ships* (1941).

Drawing and writing (his typewriter seemed always to be in action) by no means filled the whole of his life. When he first came to Macduff he acquired a low white house on the end of the harbour and made it a centre of social and religious life. He called it *Harbour Head* (and wrote a book under that title) and opened its doors to all, eventually creating a chapel in the attic. Fishermen and boys, old and young, especially those suffering from some form of disability (like Alec John Mackay who had had polio), crowded into the cottage so that it was always full of life and laughter. The kettle was always boiling and ready for tea. It was a simple life, austere and unpretentious. But for me the most compulsive conversations were about the Church and monasticism and the bewildering oddities of clerical life. Aelred Carlyle, for example, despite having no money except what he borrowed, had built an absurdly romantic abbey with towers and turrets; he visualised an even greater abbey, with a church more than 300 feet long. When a tower fell down he rebuilt it still higher. And he lived well, travelling first class and staying only in the best hotels

Peter's speech was impaired; he stammered at the beginning of every sentence. That, and the twinkle in his eye, meant that I was never quite sure whether he was serious or joking. It might be, I occasionally thought, that he found it all fundamentally absurd. When I drove him one day to Pluscarden, the ruinous abbey restored and occupied by the white Benedictines who had left Caldey for Prinknash in Gloucestershire, old friends whisked him away and indiscreetly gossiped even though they must have known that he would gossip to all of us in the evening. Or it may be that they valued his fantastic erudition. He knew more about churches than anyone else I had encountered. If I had ever doubted that, I would have been completely convinced by his *magnum opus* on ecclesiastical buildings, *Fashions in Church Furnishings 1840-1940* published in 1960. The title is precisely correct. He saw the changes as fashions - and his basic theme was announced in the Foreword: "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose" with some superb photographs of the most unlikely as well as brilliant exercises in ecclesiastical décor and over 100 of his own drawings, sedate, elaborate or witty.

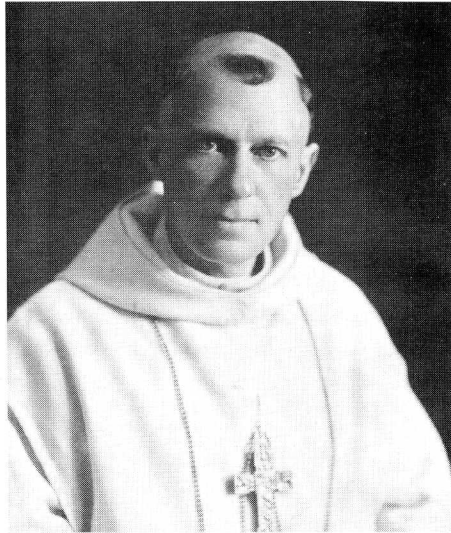
He analysed and explained places with which he was obviously familiar - not only architecture and furniture: he put in people - mainly women - in fashionable clothes that precisely reflected the fashions in furnishings.

Who were his heroes? He started with A.W.N. Pugin, the architectural and literary phenomenon who died at the age of 40 having re-established Gothic as the right style for churches and carried out as much as five ordinary men. He ended with Eric Gill and Gill's discovery that the altar should be in the centre of the church. "The altar must be brought back again into the middle of our churches, in the middle of the congregation, surrounded by the people." Gill's own chapel at Pigotts was like that. I remember it well having served Mass there for many years.

In between, he describes as many scenes and as many changes, delighting in materials as well as design. "The Exeter Cathedral huge altar and reredos (1876) were an astounding mixture of marble, alabaster, amethyst, cornelian, jasper, onyx, garnet, bloodstone and lapis lazuli." As for fashions in clothes he notes that at St George's, Lancaster, "The older men still sport standing collars and cravats but the younger ones prefer neckties. A few more dashing gentlemen may sport a cloak instead of a coat. Rather tight striped trousers are regarded as suitable wear with 'Second Pointed' ecclesiastical architecture." As for the women, "Fully to appreciate a typical Scott church, designed at the peak of his middle period, one must visualise it filled with well-to-do ladies dressed in enormous crinolines. By 1860 a fashionable skirt was ten yards round. As much as a 100 yards of material was needed for tulle dresses worn in summer.....The crinoline did away with the many petticoats of the eighteen-forties, which went with the 'First' and 'Second Pointed' churches of that decade."

Was he being serious, or, as he often was when reminiscing about Carlyle and his church, wicked or just naughty? His basic theme was clear: "Between 1840 and 1940 the circle was completed. Today we have gone back to the 'auditory church' of Sir Christopher Wren and his followers. The reasons for this change of fashion can be found in various factors - social and economic as well as liturgical." For me the story of Peter Anson continued as bizarre as it started. I had hardly finished reading *Fashions in Church Furnishing* when George Howard, the owner of Castle Howard, saw it on my desk and asked if he could borrow it briefly. That was in 1962. When I started to write this article I thought I should get it back and recovered it from the Castle Howard library 33 years after lending it to him.

Peter, your jokes are not over - and I still don't know whether you were serious or not!



Abbot Aelred Carlyle, 1919 - from Peter Anson's book 'Abbot Extraordinary'.

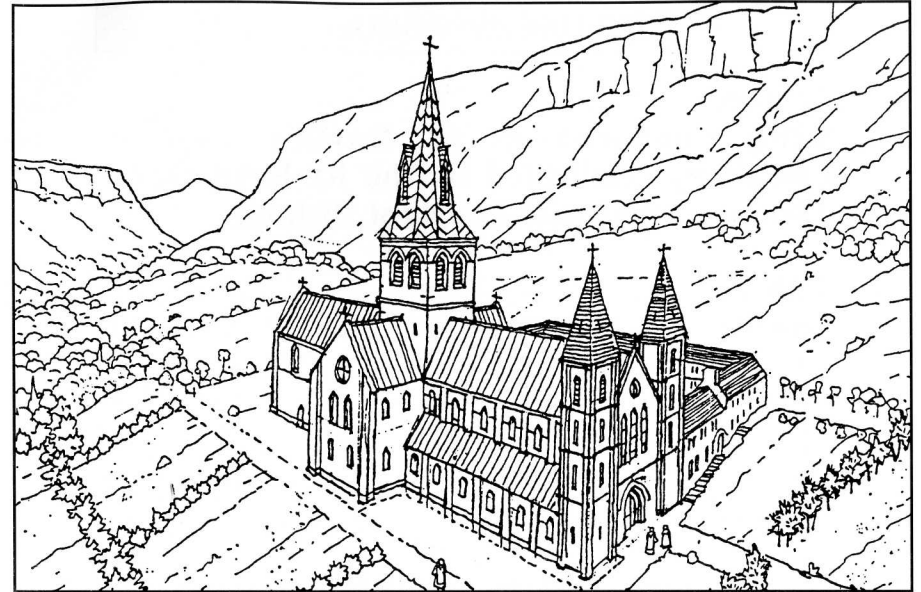


THE ABBEY OF OUR LADY & ST DUNSTAN

We are also indebted to Peter Anson for the following extracts from his book *Building Up The Waste Places.....*

'Refreshed after a week or two at Aberdaron, Ignatius made the long journey across Wales. On March 17th 1870, St Patrick's Day, Fr Husband celebrated the Holy Communion on a table in the old farm-house at Capel-y-ffin, after which the Monk laid the foundation stone of the future monastery. Mr William Buckeridge agreed to design the first abbey to be built for Benedictine monks in communion with Canterbury since the sixteenth century. He was told that it must be an exact replica of the one four miles down the valley, erected by the Canons Regular of St Augustine after 1103. This involved a length of 212 feet with western towers, aisled nave of eight bays, central tower. Transepts and a choir of three bays without aisles.'

The drawings throughout the book illustrate Anson's technical brilliance. The following one of the New Llanthony Abbey as it might have appeared had the ambition of Fr Ignatius OSB ever come to fullest fruition is of especial interest.



*The 'Dream Abbey' of Fr. Ignatius.
With acknowledgements to Peter Anson's 'Building Up The Waste Places'.*



THE ABBEY CHURCH TO-DAY

A great deal of careful preparation went into our application to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a grant last year. This was to reduce the height of the dangerous walls and stabilise them so that the place would remain a permanent and dignified setting for the tomb of the founder, Father Ignatius of Llanthony. In the meantime we had had to close the Abbey Church because of the danger to the public of collapsing masonry. In their response, however, the Heritage Lottery Fund trustees found themselves unable to approve our application in its present form. We had, of course, already applied for and been granted Listed Building Consent by the Brecon Beacons National Park planning authority for the reduction of the walls to a safe height. However, the view of the Heritage Lottery Fund trustees was that the advice of a conservation engineer should still be sought to study the options available to consolidate the structure. The Heritage Lottery Fund Trustees went on to affirm that their decision on this occasion did not preclude the submission of a fresh application taking account of the points raised.

CADW Welsh Historic Monuments had already approved our Listed Building Consent for the works the Trust had proposed. We have therefore applied to the Historic Buildings Administration at CADW for help with this latest setback and will look forward to preparing a fresh application to the Heritage Lottery Fund in the coming months.