

PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMME

Saturday 23rd August 2003

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 the Reverend Prebendary Sam Philpott, Vicar of St. Peter's, Plymouth. 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 will be available in the field at Chapel Farm by kind permission of Mr & Mrs Watkins.

Visitors are asked not to park at or near The Monastery itself, please, as this will cause difficulty, congestion and obstruct the Pilgrimage.

There will be a Walk Leader for the Pilgrimage Walk. The route will be up the secluded lane on the east side of the valley, not on the main road that carries the valley vehicle traffic.

Stout footwear and weatherproof clothing are essential.

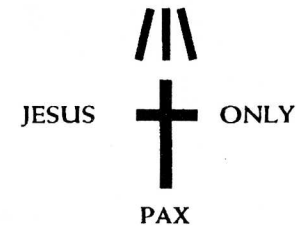
From Newsletter No.2, of November 1970

We should like to thank all those – correspondents, visitors, pilgrims, new friends of Father Ignatius as well as older ones – who have helped us with donations or with the work of their hands. We remember especially Mr Peter Coleman and the members of the Tredillion Venture Scouts who, together with Mrs Ward and the Young Adventurers Club of Hampstead

N.W.3, did most of the work of removing about one hundred tons of masonry and rubble from the floor of the church and various restoration tasks. Also Mrs Rogers and the Abergavenny Guides who sustained the workers with refreshments and cleaned the statue of Our Lady which stands on the monastery forecourt.



Y GWIR YN ERBYN Y BŶD



*The Father
Ignatius
Memorial
Trust* Charity Commissioners'
Registration No. 253225

NEWSLETTER

No. 31, SUMMER 2003

Trustees

The Revd Jeremy Dowding SSC
Hon Chairman

Mr Andrew Knill
Hon Treasurer

Mr Douglas Lyne
Hon Archivist

Mrs Elizabeth Hacket Pain
Hon Secretary

Canon Ivor Ll Davies
Mr Stanley Knill
Mr Will Jackson
The Revd Roger Shambrook SSC
The Revd Richard Williams
Canon Jeremy Winston
Miss Deborah Lyne
Hon Independent examiner of accounts
Mr Adrian Bruton IRRV

Correspondence to:

Hon Secretary
The Father Ignatius
Memorial Trust
C/O Dixton Lodge
Hadnock, Monmouth
Mon. NP25 3NQ
Telephone: 01600-712006

Contents

- 1 FATHER IGNATIUS
- 2 LETTER FROM THE NEW CHAIRMAN
Jeremy Dowding SSC
- 5 RETIREMENT OF TRUSTEES
- 6 PILGRIMAGE 2003: A REPORT
by Jeremy Dowding
- 8 A NOTORIOUS BOOK
by Michael Woodward
- 10 A SHEPERD'S TALE
by Canon Ivor Davies
- 11 THE ABBEY CHURCH:
A Report by Stanley Knill
- 12 PILGRIMAGE 2003
Details of Programme
- 12 ARCHIVE SPOT: FROM NEWSLETTER
NO. 2, OF NOVEMBER 1970

From the New Chairman...

Feast of S. Dunstan, 2003

Dear Pilgrims

I write to you from my home in Plymouth where I am the parish priest of Saint Chad's, Whitleigh.

I am really a native of South Wales and, apart from college, the whole of my life prior to ordination was lived in Abergavenny.

There, in my youth, our front door was but a few short steps from the public library where there was, in a small upstairs room, a collection of books too old or too valuable, certainly too special, to be allowed out on loan. To access these books you had to seek permission of the librarian.

There were books on the history of Abergavenny and Monmouthshire and other antique and antiquarian tomes, enough to keep an enthusiast going for years. Here, especially in the school holidays, I spent many hours absorbed in what I perceived to be the most wonderful collection of books possible. I particularly regretted Wednesdays when the library closed for a half day.

It was in this upper room that, as a teenager, I first read about Father Ignatius of Llanthony, a character remembered by some of the older people. I became an 'enthusiast' and I remember from my research, that when 'Llanthony Abbey' (not the

Augustinian Priory but Father Ignatius' monastery) was first built, its original dedication was to 'Our Lady and St Dunstan' and was changed to Our Lady and St David later, when Father Ignatius became a bard of the Gorsedd.

Saint Dunstan

After a long absence, St Dunstan has recently re-appeared in the Roman calendar for England and it is his day as I write this (19th May). He was retained by the Church of England in the prayer book of 1662 and by the Church in Wales Prayer Book of 1984.

Dunstan was one of the most famous saints of Anglo-Saxon England. Born near Glastonbury he was educated there at the abbey before becoming a monk and abbot of Glastonbury. As a monk he was skilled in painting, needlework and metalwork, and lived a life of great fervour, dividing his time between prayer, study and manual labour. During the reign of King Edgar, to whom he was chief adviser, he became Bishop of Worcester in AD 957 and Archbishop of Canterbury in 961. He was also appointed by Pope John XII as his Legate in England.

Dunstan was a very dutiful Archbishop, as he had been a monk, and he did not even spare his royal patron, Edgar, whose



coronation was postponed for fourteen years for an act of immorality.

He was influential in the making of laws and, with the king, commanded the payment of tithes, Peter's Pence and other church taxes, whilst enjoining upon the clergy the practice of some handicraft.

Fr Ignatius, Pusey & Lydia Sellon

Before taking the title 'Father Ignatius' and setting up a monastic life for men in the Church of England, Joseph Leicester Lyne was ordained deacon by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, serving his first curacy at S. Peter's Plymouth, under George Rundle Prynne. The following is extracted from a little autobiographical pamphlet, written in 1896.

My first curacy was at S. Peter's, Plymouth, where I met Dr. Pusey and Lydia Sellon, the lady who first restored the monastic life for women in the Church of England. Through these servants of God the monastic idea definitively formed in my mind, and I determined, in the year 1861, to embrace the life of a monk. One of Miss Sellon's nuns made me my first monastic dress, and Dr Pusey sent it to me.

Today the name of Lydia Sellon lives on in Plymouth, where her nuns cared for the victims of a cholera epidemic in 1849-50. Her

community and its old abbey was dedicated to Saint Dunstan, perhaps because of his West Country origins but it could have been for many other reasons. He was a good English saint. The old S. Dunstan's Abbey, now converted into flats, dominates a large section of Plymouth's North Road West. The dedication also lives on in a girl's school founded in the old abbey, now removed to other premises.

Ignatius used to visit Lydia Sellon and Dr. Pusey at S. Dunstan's, and from them drew inspiration and enthusiasm to begin the first monastic community for men in the post-Reformation Church of England.

Dunstan & Llanthony

After a couple of false beginnings at Norwich and Claydon, the foundation stone for what was intended to be the permanent abbey 'Llanthony Abbey' was laid at Capel-y-ffin on S. Patrick's day 1870 and the dedication was to 'Our Lady and S. Dunstan'; Ignatius, perhaps paying tribute to the formidable Miss Sellon by bringing with him, as it were, from Plymouth, the S. Dunstan connection.

Where is all this leading? Directly to this year's pilgrimage, at which Prebendary Sam Philpott, the present vicar of S. Peter's, Plymouth, will join the distinguished list of

preachers at evening office. Having trained for the priesthood in the monastic setting of Kelham, Fr Sam has a real insight into the community life as well as being vicar of Fr Ignatius' title parish. I commend him to you, not as an expert on Fr Ignatius but as a working priest with a love of Our Lady.

Hope to see you at this year's pilgrimage,

Your friend and fellow pilgrim,

Father Jeremy
The Reverend
Jeremy C. Dowding SSC

Retirement of Trustees

Our prayers, thanks and good wishes go to recently retired trustees Fr Thomas Dunn SSC, and Hugh Allen.

Hugh Allen has served the trust faithfully and well for many years and many will remember him as a young priest MC at pilgrimages 30 years ago and more. His faithful presence at meetings of the trustees in Fr Ignatius' room at the monastery and more recently at Abergavenny Castle, latterly as chairman, is already sadly missed. Now living in Devon as an RC layman, he will continue to support the aims of the trust and the pilgrimage in whatever way he can, including D.V. being available to lead the walking pilgrims along the road that winds from Llanthony to Capel-y-ffin on pilgrimage day.

Thomas Dunn joined us as a trustee soon after becoming vicar of Llanfihangel Crucorney, Cwmyoy and Llanthony with Oldcastle. From the outset he took a great interest in the pilgrimage and delivered some erudite sermons. As a trustee he couldn't have been more committed and gave a great deal of his time and energy to the trust, serving as secretary and later as chairman. Now retired, Thomas' health has been giving some problems and we hope to hear better news of him soon.

On behalf of the trustees may I thank them both for all their hard work, loyalty and dedication and wish them both improved health.

New Trustee

At the March meeting, the trustees elected the Reverend Canon **Jeremy Winston**, Vicar of S. Mary's, Abergavenny to their number.

Pilgrimage 2002: A Report

LAST SUMMER I had a few days away with my wife when she was doing a few days study at Warwick University and I visited Coventry Cathedral for the first time. The duty guide said prayers in such a rich Welsh accent and we spoke afterwards. He turned out to be a Llanthony pilgrim and invited me to say the next prayers with him. The compliment was repaid at last year's pilgrimage

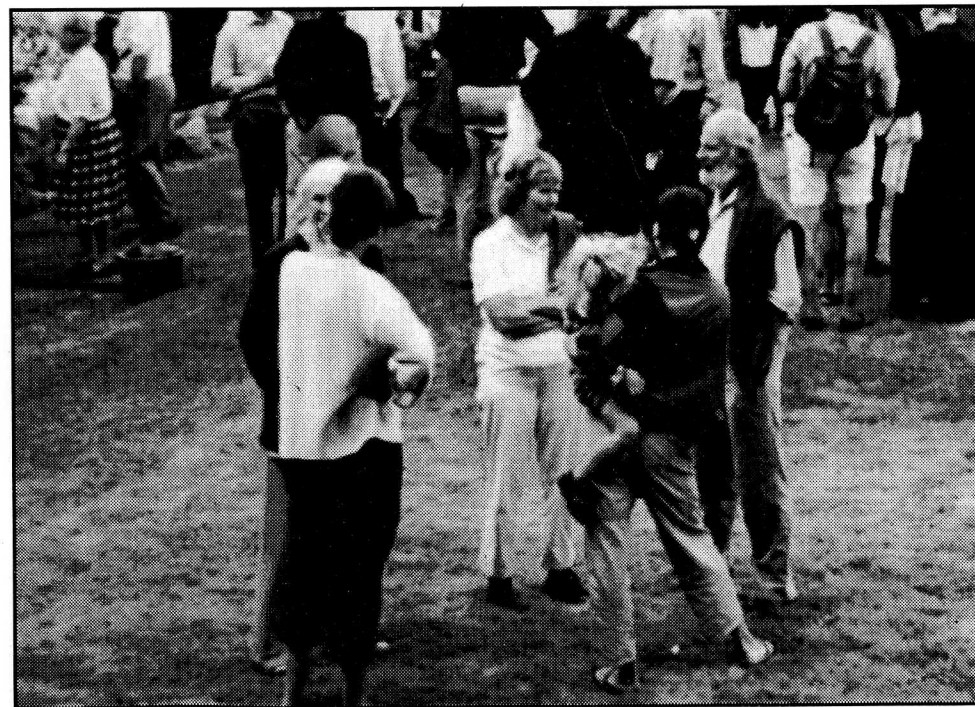
on 24th August, when Dewi read the intercessions at the Mass.

The new vicar of Hay-on-Wye and Llanigon, Fr Richard Williams, whose parish includes Capel-y-ffin, was preacher for the Evening Office. Fr Williams is now also one of our trustees. Whilst our little pilgrimage to the Vale of Honddu, never seems to grow a great deal in numbers neither does it seem to lessen



any. Some of our pilgrims travel enormous distances year after year, others come from neighbouring villages and towns. Some may just come once or twice whilst others become regulars. One year my churchwarden's twin brother and his family turned up from the Midlands. The next time I saw him was in Plymouth for a family confirmation.

I am sorry to report that an old friend of our pilgrimage, Roy Cresswell, the Secretary General of the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary, is seriously ill. Roy has often been the Master of Ceremonies for one or both of the pilgrimage services and we will miss him as he will be unable to join us this year.



A Notorious Book

READERS MAY not have come across the book whose title page is reprinted opposite.

The author named is Miss J.M. Povey. Arthur Calder Marshall tells us that she first heard Fr Ignatius preach in the City of London as a girl of 14. She was taken by her mother and introduced to Ignatius, who said 'God bless you, my child.'

She was so drawn by his personality and inspired by his preaching that she wanted to become a nun. She was accepted first on a probationary visit, then as a postulant and later as a novice. Even though this caused a rupture with her mother, Sister Mary Agnes persisted in her desire to become a professed nun. *The Enthusiast*, p.222

It seems that Ignatius included a very transparent portrait of Mary Agnes in *Leonard Morris or the Benedictine Novice*, the sequel to *Brother Placidus and Why He Became a Monk*, where there is a character with the same name.

She unwittingly became one of the many causes of tension between Father Ignatius and Mother Hilda. Mother Hilda held out against her profession, perhaps because she was too immature to know her vocation or, as Sister Mary Agnes herself believed, because Ignatius wanted her to be raised above six or seven others, senior in profession and years. The book itself is alive with the sound of grinding axes and scores being settled. As Calder Marshall puts it:

Sister Mary Agnes was a casualty of conventual life. Whatever vocation she had had been warped and thwarted by Mother Wereburgh, and at last, having left or been expelled, she had returned to the world, from a mundane point of view a child in her early thirties.

She had fallen in with the militant Protestants and had been induced to write her nunnery experiences, which were then given a polemic slant by a notorious Catholic-baiter named Holland... After it was published [she] realised the ends for which it was being used and wrote a public recantation. *Enthusiast*, p.248

A description of Sister Wereburgh rather gives the game away:

she copied every saint, whose life she happened to be reading at the time, in his or her foolish actions, whilst if they did anything sensible, she left it out. *Nunnery Life*, p.80

There is enough detail to show that the woman had been mistreated but, to her dismay, it was her beloved Ignatius whom the book was used to attack. In its own way it is quite poignant, and provides some valuable details on life at Llanthony. The petty rules described make it clear how completely Fr Ignatius failed to comprehend or apply the Rule of St Benedict.

There is a 16 page advert for Hodder & Stoughton's *New and Recent Publications* of May, 1890; a real slice of history, telling its own story!

NUNNERY LIFE

IN THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND;

OR,

Seventeen Years with Father Ignatius.

BY

SISTER MARY AGNES, O.S.B.

EDITED, WITH PREFACE,

BY THE REV.

W. LANCELOT HOLLAND, M.A.,

Vicar of All Saints', Hatcham.

THIRD THOUSAND.

London:

HODDER AND STOUGHTON,

27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

MDCCCXC.

A Shepherd's Tale

MY ONLY EXPERIENCE, albeit at second hand, of anything comparable to the Llanthony Apparitions, dates from half a century ago in my first parish. The story is true in that I tell it as it was told to me.

The parish of Llanwrthwl in North Breconshire is mostly wilderness with more sheep than people. There is a village beside the Wye and a church dedicated to S.aint Gwrthwl.

Two miles away there used to be a cottage, Ty-Seigr, the last habitation on the track that leads to the mountain called Gamrhiw.

Hidden on the hillside are seven stones, the Saith Maen, said to mark the graves of seven warriors. I should never have found the stones without the help of Jack Price, the shepherd who lived at Ty-Seigr.

Jack's cottage was dark inside and heavy with the smell of peat burning on the open hearth. There were two broken armchairs, a wooden table, odd bits of crockery and, hanging from the ceiling, flitches of bacon.

The old shepherd was a kindly man, not particularly religious, though he always attended the Harvest Thanksgiving at Peniel Chapel.

What brought our conversation round to religion one day was the picture that hung above Jack's fireplace. It was blackened by soot

and one had to peer hard to see what it was. I could just make out the body of a woman clothed in a white dress with lilies on her breast. She lay in a glass coffin that appeared to be built into the front of an altar.

Jack was unsure as to the picture's provenance, but it prompted him to tell me of an experience that had befallen him some years previously.

He had been out on the mountain late one winter's night looking to see if his sheep were safe when he noticed a bright light on the summit of Gamrhiw.

As he watched, the light grew brighter and he could see the figure of a woman looking down on him. She had stars shining in her hair and what seemed to be a sickle moon under her feet.

The hill was too steep to approach her, so he waited for a while; then called to his dog and went off to see to his sheep.

Such was Jack's story. I do not know whether he told it to the deacons at Peniel, or what they made of it if he did. I do not think he made it up.

Perhaps he had read in his Bible the twelfth chapter of the Apocalypse. Or it may have something to do with the smoky picture hanging in his cottage. Yet shepherds who watch over their flocks by night do sometimes see odd things.

The Abbey Church

OUR APPLICATION to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funds to enable the Abbey Church to be stabilised has at last been accepted.

Unfortunately some new problems have arisen causing yet further delay.

The east wall has considerably deteriorated since we embarked upon our application, not to mention the other collapses, and the Architect, David Harvey, and structural engineer, Jeremy Drinkwater, have had to reconsider the overall approach to the work involved. However,

they have now agreed a timetable for the final design, tender of submissions and construction. The effect is that we should see a start on the stabilisation of the east wall by September. This major work will be completed before the onset of winter this year, and the remainder of the stabilisation and pointing will be undertaken in good weather next year.

If all goes to plan we should be able to celebrate the completion of the work by holding the 2004 pilgrimage service in the Abbey Church.

Stanley Knill

Roy Cresswell

WITH SADNESS we record the death on June 22nd of Roy Cresswell, the Secretary General of the Guild of Servants of the Sanctuary.

For many years he has been a faithful pilgrim and served at the Eucharist and at Evening prayer. He will be very much missed.

May he rest in the peace of Christ