

PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMME

Saturday 21st August 2004

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 Trevor Jones ssc, the vicar of Saint Peter's, London Docks. 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 the Archives...

A FAVOURITE BOOK OF IGNATIUS'S was Hawker's Daily Portion, a volume of meditations by Robert Stephen Hawker's grandfather, Dr Robert Hawker, the famous Calvinistic divine and vicar of Charles Church, Plymouth. Here at the Monastery of Capel-y-ffin we have Father Ignatius's own copy of this book, with annotations in his hand. The Vicar of Morwenstow and the Abbot of Llanthony were lone pioneers of the Catholic Revival in the national church... Ignatius was

a pioneer of the monastic revival; Hawker was a pioneer in restoring harvest festivals and ruridecanal synods, neither of which had been seen or heard for centuries. Ignatius and R. S. Hawker were indeed both of them 'beyond' men; certainly beyond most of us in their love of God and of men...they had their faults and failings...and their times of depression and discouragement. Yet they were men of unconquerable faith, true men of God.

*Extract from the 1975 Pilgrimage address by
FR BROCARD SEWELL, O. CARM*



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NEWSLETTER

No. 32, SUMMER 2004

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NO. 5, OF SUMMER 1976

From the Chairman...

Corpus Christi, 2003

Dear friends and fellow pilgrims,

IT IS MAYBE A LITTLE LATE in the year to be writing this letter and I hope you all receive it in good time to make your arrangements for coming to the annual pilgrimage in honour of Our Lady of Llanthony on Saturday 21st August. It seems that these days wherever I go I meet Llanthony pilgrims and I am delighted when they stop me to say hello. I hope they will continue to do this because very often I am, as they say, miles away in my thoughts and so cannot be relied upon to notice the presence of a friendly face. A few weeks ago I was at the Walsingham National Pilgrimage and met there some of our pilgrims, four or five at least, who were keen to make sure they had the date of our pilgrimage. As you will see in the notice elsewhere in this newsletter, it is 21st August, this year.

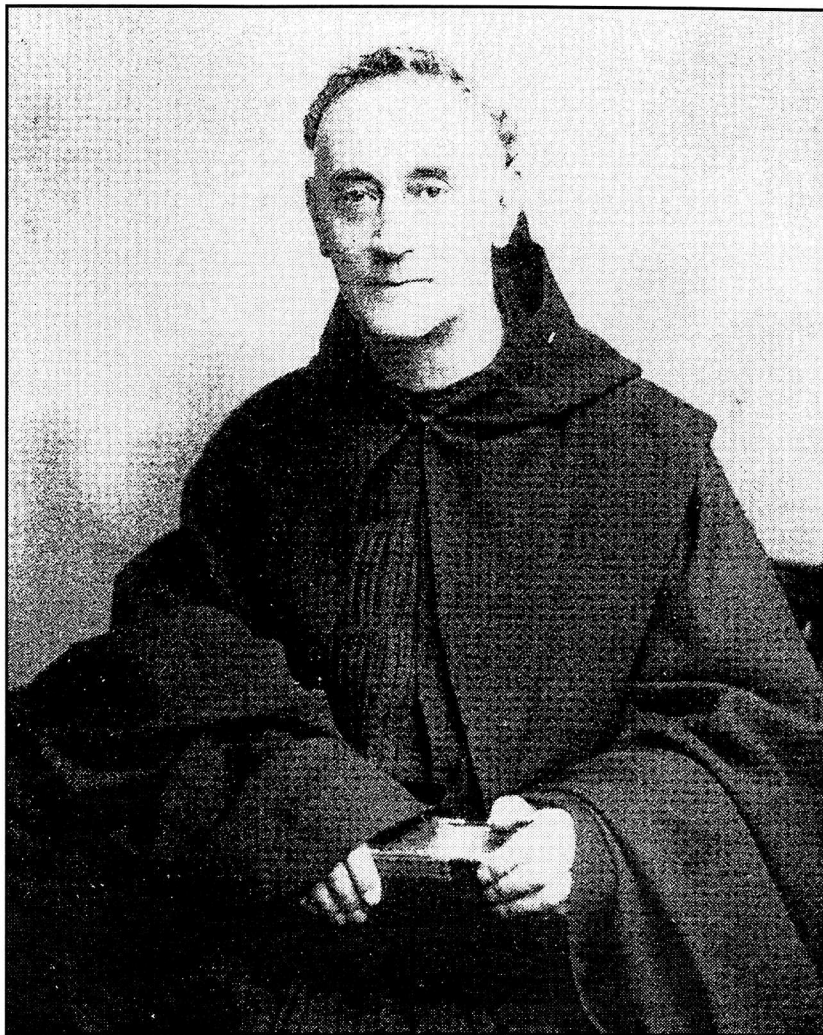
Last years pilgrimage was well attended and after the Mass, at which one of our trustees, Fr Roger Shambrook presided and preached, we all set about having our picnic and pub lunches before setting off for Capel-y-ffin.

The preacher at the Office of Our Lady was Prebendary Sam Philpott the vicar of Saint Peter's Plymouth, where the Reverend Joseph Leicester Lyne (Fr Ignatius) served his title. Father Sam preached an admirable and inspirational sermon

in which he spoke of the influence of Mother Lydia (Lydia Sellon) who had founded in Plymouth a sisterhood dedicated to the Holy Trinity. The sisterhood was originally in the parish of Saint James the Great, Devonport; which is of special interest to me because my church, Saint Chad's in the post war Plymouth suburb of Whittleigh, contains the high altar from Saint James the Great which was bombed in World War II. By the time Fr Ignatius came to be curate of Saint Peter's, Mother Lydia and her sisters were there, based at Saint Dunstan's Abbey in Plymouth's North Road West. And of course, it was largely from Mother Lydia and Dr Pusey that the young Lyne took his inspiration to form a monastic community.

Also included in this newsletter is part of an article delivered as a lecture by a member of the congregation of Saint Peter's Plymouth, Mr Ted Luscombe, at Plymouth's Athenaeum Theatre on 23 May 2002. It is entitled 'Fr Prynne, Mother Lydia and Brother Joseph.' I am indebted to Mr Luscombe for his kindness in letting us use it here.

From Plymouth, Joseph Leicester Lyne, now known as Brother Joseph, went to another Saint Peter's and like Saint Peter's Plymouth, Saint Peter's London Docks was a 'flagship' of the Anglo-Catholic movement. The vicar, perhaps the first Anglo-catholic



Father Ignatius

From a photograph taken during his tour of
The United States & Canada during 1890-91

priest to be known by such a title was 'Father' Lowder, Charles Fuge Lowder, who in his lifetime was vilified by protestants for ritualistic practices (which now seem as natural in the Church of England and the Church in Wales, as in any other branch of the Catholic Church) but by the time of his death, Lowder was regarded as a saint for his tireless work on behalf of his poverty stricken parishioners, and thousands lined the London streets for his funeral. Father Lowder is also famed as the Founder Master of SSC (*Societas Sanctae Crucis*) or the Society of the Holy Cross. SSC was founded at the House of Charity, Soho, London, in 1855 by Fr. Lowder and five other priests of the Church of England to:

1. strengthen and consolidate the spiritual life of its members according to Catholic belief and practice;
2. to maintain and extend the Catholic Faith and discipline, and to defend truth against error;
3. to unite its members in a special bond of mutual charity arising from their common faith.

In practice this meant adopting a rule of life with much we now take for granted as part of the pattern of a priestly life: among these are the regular celebration of the Eucharist, the Daily Office, Penance, etc. Essentials of the Faith but for so long then, sadly neglected.

It was not surprising that the young deacon, Joseph Leicester Lyne

should become a member of SSC, it embodied many of the ideals which he had begun to cherish.

Next year, SSC now a society of about 1,000 members, the majority in England, celebrates its 150th anniversary with a great Anniversary Mass in the Royal Albert Hall on Saturday 9th, April 2005. This is intended as a celebration for the whole of the Anglo-Catholic Movement and I do hope that I will see many Llanthony pilgrims there just as I see them at Walsingham, Glastonbury, etcetera.

Anyone wishing to come can book through the Box Office at the Royal Albert Hall from Holy Cross Day, 14th. September, this year. You can book via the Website (www.royalalberthall.com) or by telephone, and the number is 020 7589 8212.

Because of the connections with St Peter's, London Docks, Fr Lowder and SSC, this year's preacher at Capel-y-ffin will be Father Trevor Jones, SSC, the present vicar of Saint Peter's, London Docks who tells me that he has, for years, intended to come to our pilgrimage. I am sure we will all be very glad to welcome him.

I very much look forward to seeing you on Pilgrimage Day.

With every blessing.

In Christ and Our Lady,

Your friend and fellow pilgrim,

Father Jeremy

The Reverend

Jeremy C. Dowding ssc

Fr Prynne, Mother Lydia & Br Joseph

The first part of an edited lecture by Edward Luscombe delivered to the Plymouth Athenaeum on 23 May 2002

FATHER PRYNNE, MOTHER LYDIA and Brother Joseph were three very remarkable people who were associated together in the newly formed parish of St Peter, Plymouth in the years round and about 1850. Father Prynne (born 1818) became the first vicar of the parish in 1848. Priscilla Lydia Sellon was the daughter of a Commander Sellon RN who headed a family of some means, and was born in 1821.

St Peter's Church tower stands high above Plymouth, and nearby, in North Road West are the surviving buildings of St Dunstan's Abbey. Both church and abbey date from c.1850, though the tower was not built until 1906. Few Plymouthians, though, will know of the two remarkable people, Father George Rundle Prynne and Mother Priscilla Lydia Sellon who were the founders of these institutions, and apart from the buildings, their names have been preserved in the housing development at Western Approach (in St Peter's parish).

In 1848, the population of the great naval port of Plymouth had hopelessly outgrown all existing provision for religious teaching and worship, and Bishop Philpotts of Exeter asked for at least four new churches. St Peter's was to be

one, in this most poverty stricken and degraded part of the town. The Bishop invited Prynne to become the vicar of the new district of St Peter's Plymouth. It was a task after Prynne's own heart, and gave full scope for just those gifts which he possessed. He arrived in July 1848, and began the great work of his life.

At about the same time the Bishop issued an appeal for help to relieve the spiritual and moral destitution of the Three Towns. The appeal dwelt especially upon the urgent need of increased provision for the education of the children. Miss Lydia Sellon heard the call and offered herself for this work. Brother Joseph, (The Revd Joseph Leicester Lyne—born 1837) was also briefly associated with St Peter's, when he became (in 1860) a deacon, at about this time. He also was remarkable, something of an eccentric in the Church of England. He subsequently founded a monastery at Llanthony and became widely known as 'Father Ignatius of Llanthony'. Although he plays but a minor part in our story, he did, for a while, work with Prynne and Sellon in the parish, and they helped him, as far as they could, in setting up a Brotherhood in the

Anglican church. I was intrigued to discover his link with St Peter's, and so have included him in this talk. More of him later. But all three are more than worthy each of a lecture in themselves.

Father Prynne

Before Prynne arrived, The Revd Edward Godfrey, the first vicar (although he stayed for only six months) had negotiated for the purchase of a disused proprietary chapel (known as Eldad Chapel—'Favoured of God') in Wyndham Square. We still have Eldad Hill. This chapel had been the scene of a free-lance cleric, the Revd John Hawker. Hawker had been the curate at Stoke Damerel Church for some 30 years. (The Rector there was, like so many at that time, non-resident in the parish and the much loved and respected Hawker was effectively in charge of the parish). When the Rector died, the Patron, Lord St Levan appointed one of his family William St John Aubyn. The new Rector dismissed Hawker, whose many admirers and followers promptly collected £3,000 to build the Eldad Chapel for Hawker, who continued to attract very large congregations. Hawker died in 1846 and the Chapel became unused. Incidentally Hawker's nephew was to be the famous Revd Robert S. Hawker, the poet Vicar of Morwenstow.

Prynne, just thirty years old, entered on his work with vigour and hope, but he had before him a long and bitter struggle. Prynne was a son of the Catholic Revival in the Church of England. This was initiated by John Keble in his famous Assize Sermon at Oxford in 1833. He had argued that the Reformation's purpose had been simply to eliminate abuses of the Catholic faith, which was basically true, and that old rituals and customs should be revived, to facilitate eventual reunion with Rome. Prominent leaders of the Oxford Movement, as it came to be known, were John Henry Newman (later to secede to the Roman Catholic Church, and eventually to become Cardinal Newman) and Dr Edward Pusey. Pusey was to become Prynne's close friend, adviser and confidant. But through all his worst years Prynne was not only to be spared the pain and difficulty of episcopal opposition, so often the lot of the Catholic pioneers, but was to have, on the contrary, the sympathy and understanding, the wisdom and unfailing counsel of his Bishop. Bishop Philpotts stood out from the majority of his episcopal brethren; he was one of the few who stood by the Revivalists and supported their work both in public and in private with great wisdom and

unflinching bravery. Prynne was instituted to the new district on 16 August 1848, and at once began services in the old chapel. Various alterations were made to the building; an organ was presented by Miss Emily Fellowes, daughter of a distinguished naval officer. In the following year Prynne married her, and for more than 50 years she was his devoted wife and helper.

The opening of the church of St Peter in November 1848, marked the beginning of a struggle which, in the circumstances was inevitable. Prynne was already definitely 'labelled' by his teaching, and by his known friendship with Pusey. The opposition to the Revival was particularly virulent in Evangelical Plymouth, and from the start Prynne was subjected to an organised campaign fanned by a particularly hostile press. The things of which he was accused (e.g. the use of the surplice in the pulpit) seem to us supremely trivial, but such were the inflammatory articles, that his Bishop and many friends advised him to sue a local journalist, one Latimer, for libel. But despite a summing-up by the judge wholly favourable to Prynne, the jury of local Dissenters found for his opponent. The costs of the action left Prynne and his wife almost penniless, but the happier outcome was a rallying

round of all his old friends and many new ones. Prynne never reproached Latimer; indeed many years later he met him in the street, arid condoled with him on the death of his son.

But controversy was set aside in 1849, when a terrible outbreak of cholera devastated Plymouth. The selfless devotion of Prynne and his helpers in the fight against the epidemic, was recognised by many as an inseparable part of the religion for which Prynne and St Peter's stood. And this is where Lydia Sellon comes into our story.

Lydia Priscilla Sellon

As has been briefly mentioned, Bishop Philpotts, in January 1848, appealed for help to relieve the spiritual and moral destitution of the Three Towns. Miss Lydia Sellon was on the point of leaving England to winter in Madeira, on account of her health. But on reading the Bishop's appeal she changed her plans abruptly and, with her father's consent, offered herself for this work.

Some three years previously she had visited the little Community of the Holy Cross founded by Dr Pusey, at Park Village, Regent's Park, London, on 26 March 1845 (the first revival of the Religious Life in the English Church since the Reformation). It was there that she



Lydia Priscilla Sellon

received some training in the care of the sick, and in teaching.

Dr Pusey sent her with a letter of introduction to Mr Kilpack, the first incumbent of St James the Great, Devonport, (which church survived until the 1960s) where the need was especially great. Her methods were simple but effective. She would go into the streets and lanes of Morice Town, and ask the children she met

whether they would like to come to her and learn to read and write. If they responded, she would follow them to their homes and gain the permission of their parents. A room was opened in Milne Place, and here, she with a friend began their educational work. This educational work soon developed into something larger and deeper as was inevitable in a district devoid of Church or other

means of organisation, where the clergy could scarcely touch the spiritual needs of the five thousand souls committed to their care. (It was the tiny seed from which the St Dunstan's Abbey school was to develop). Not only did Dr Pusey and Bishop Philpotts approve of their work, they sanctioned the establishment of the Sisterhood—the Society of the

Holy Trinity, generally known as the Devonport Society of the Sisters of Mercy. It was linked with the Society of the Holy Cross at Regent's Park, and so was one of the first with an active religious life since the Reformation. But there were many who did not approve of the Sisters with their Romish dress, and their Sisterhood which smacked of Popery.

Part Two will feature in the next Newsletter

The Sins of Society, 1896:

An Interview with The Reverend Fr Ignatius O.S.B.

AMONG THE PAPERS AT THE Abergavenny Museum there is one that shows Ignatius in an unfamiliar light. It is the record of an interview he gave in 1896 to *The Humanitarian* (Vol. IX, October, 1896), an American Journal of liberal views, in which he talks about the problems of sex and the sins of society. It may be that Ignatius mellowed as he grew older or perhaps he spoke more freely to Americans after his travels in their country.

The first question put to him seems to have been inspired by the transatlantic fascination with the British class system:

Q. 'Do you think there is any more general disposition to recognise the principle of noblesse oblige among the upper classes, or do you think they are corrupt?'

Ignatius' reply is reasonable though it reveals his pride in the rather elevated circles in which the Lyne family moved and his distaste for the emerging class of wealthy

industrialists and businessmen:

A. 'The question is too sweeping. I could not generalise on such a subject. But speaking of our old nobility—and apart from the merely nouveaux riches, whom I consider corrupt to the core I am bound to say that I have met many...who have a considerable sense of the duties of their position.

On the subject of sexual laxity Ignatius shows some insight and even a little humour:

Q. 'Do you consider that disregard for the Seventh Commandment is characteristic of Society?

A. 'The sins of the flesh are on the increase, from the simple reason that they are no longer regarded as 'sins', but excused on the ground of their arising from 'congenital tendencies'. For instance, lust is called 'love'; marriage is 'tyrannous slavery' or 'priestly invention for the creation of marriage fees', 'a relic of superstition'.

It is noteworthy that both Ignatius and his interviewer are thinking about Society with a capital 'S' rather than society at large. This is still more evident in the next question:

Q. 'Don't you think the 'Society 'mother' has much to answer for?'

A. 'Most certainly. The marriage bond is being reduced to a commercial transaction. And for this the 'Society mother' is largely responsible. I can find no words too strong to condemn her.... What have you done, you

mothers, for the temporal and eternal prospects of your daughters? ...When you come, in your looking-glass, to catch sight of your first grey hair, you had better go and blow your brains out; you are an old she-devil, and you know it.'

This last sentence is a bit over the top. Perhaps Ignatius was getting tired. One wonders whether the interviewer was a woman?

She – or he – had one last question:

Q. 'In your opinion have the 'sex novel' and the problem play worked for evil?'

A. 'Decidedly. ...The young, innocent girl takes them and reads them by her bedroom fire, and her pure mind becomes tainted. She has thoughts put into her mind she never dreamed of.'

Again a question arises. What were the novels and plays Ignatius was thinking of? Had he read or seen them himself? And was he naive in his estimate of young ladies?

The interview should have ended at this point. Put perhaps Ignatius felt he had been a little harsh and wished to show himself in a more tolerant light. So he concluded the conversation by answering a question he had not actually been asked:

'I hardly think it well to make Total Abstinence a necessity for salvation.'

Fr Ignatius on the Llanthony Valley

This article is taken from the Homily preached by Fr Roger Shambrook ssc (a Trustee) at a Mass in the Church of St David at Llanthony Priory, on Saturday August 23rd, 2003.

I RECENTLY FOUND an interesting leaflet called *The Official Handbook to Abergavenny, Crickhowell, Raglan and Usk*, with specially written articles (and amongst them one by Fr Ignatius). Fr Ignatius is writing about hospitality. He starts at the Skirrid Inn where, he says,

...you can hire a trap and drive to both the Priory and the Abbey in an hour and a half. When two miles on this road the traveller will pass the very snug little wayside Inn, The Queen's Head, kept by the worthy host Mr James Hughes, who would do his very best to satisfy the cravings of the pilgrim's inner man, or even afford him a comfortable night's repose, if he desired to so break his journey at this delightful Gorphwysfa, or resting place.

The scenery all the way up the vale of Ewys is unspeakably lovely, a sense of the most profound repose fills the mind, while the great mountains on either side entirely exclude all view of the grating world beyond, and seem to shut in the mighty hush of a sublime silence that forces the soul into communion with nature's great father and creator—God.

Still pursuing our way, we soon descry on our right the little hamlet of Cwmyoy, straggling among the rocks by a huge 'Daren' (mass of loose stones) with its ancient parish church of St Martin, not long since restored through the zeal of the late Vicar, the Rev George Lewis and his sister, Miss Kate Lewis. Yet on again and we come to the tiny hamlet street

of Henllan. Here there is a Baptist chapel attended by a devout and godly congregation and usually served by a good and earnest minister, for the folk of this valley are mostly pious and God-fearing people. It is not long after leaving Henllan that we come into sight of the solemn ruined pile of Llanthony Priory which must not be confused with Llanthony Abbey of modern date. In the remains of The Prior's Lodge and the south-west tower, a very comfortable Inn exists, of which the host is Mr Matthew Knight, a most polite and careful entertainer of his guests. A few houses form the hamlet of Llanthony and a little to the south of the Priory ruins is the very ancient Parish Church of St David, the Priory being dedicated to St John the Baptist. Continuing on our journey to the New Abbey – four miles further on – just beyond Llanthony Hamlet is another comfortable Inn, The Half Moon, kept by Mr David Williams who has secured as housekeeper a most able and superior hostess, Miss Williams, who will not disappoint the Pilgrim, the fisherman or the tourist: she is attentive and kind to all. Our journey now becomes rougher and more desolate and finally Llanthony Abbey is reached with the hospitality that one would find there. The author calls this 'the Llanthony Spirit'.

Our Lord said, 'Come to me all of you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest', Mt 11:28. So on this day of pilgrimage for this holy valley we continue with what is at the heart of Benedictine life, hospitality.