

The Father Ignatius Memorial Trust

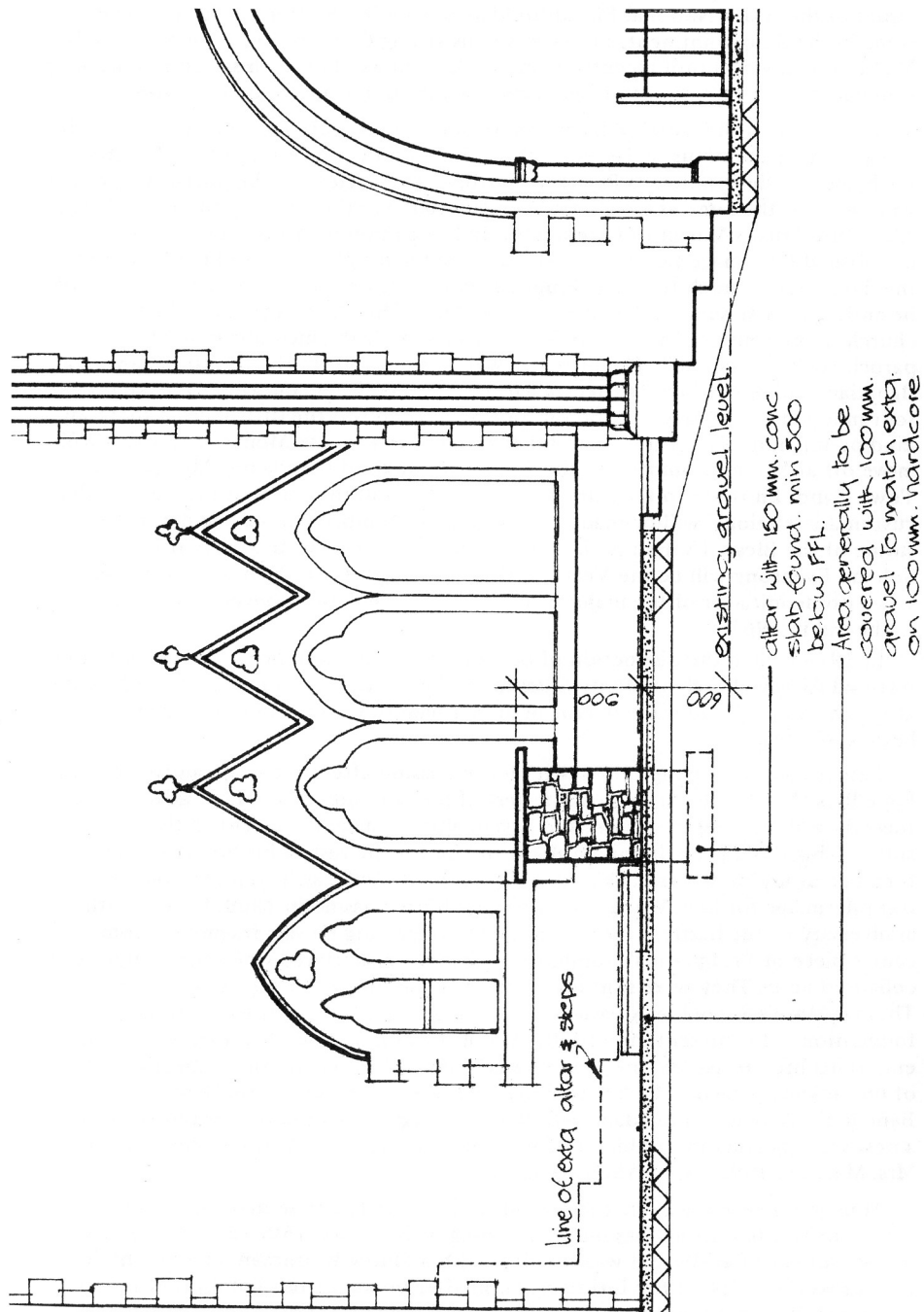
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NEWSLETTER No. 7 1979

Trustees:

The Reverend F. H. Mountney, M.A.
Father Brocard Sewell, Order of Carmelites
The Reverend Hugh Allen (Master of Ceremonies)
Douglas Lyne, M.A. (Archivist)
Wilfred Davies (Secretary)

The Monastery
Capel-y-ffin
Abergavenny
Gwent NP7 7NP



1980 is the 1500th anniversary of the birth of St. Benedict of Nursia. Religious and political bodies, including the Holy See and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, have announced plans to mark the occasion by a reaffirmation of the Benedictine concept of PAX: Peace at its deepest level and meaning.

This was the message of the Dean of Canterbury, the Very Revd. Victor de Waal, in his sermon at Capel-y-ffin on the occasion of the 1978 pilgrimage in memory of Father Ignatius. Taking as his text, from Exodus 19, 'The Lord called unto him out of the mountain', he described St. Benedict's idea of obedience as, in its modern guise, an urgent and attentive act of 'listening' for the true vibrations of God's word and will. At first there may seem to be some confusion in what we hear; but if we

follow the example of those who have dedicated themselves to the task of making clear their 'hearing', we may then succeed in cleansing our 'Doors of Perception'. Among those who have outstandingly achieved this are St. Benedict and his modern disciple Ignatius of Llanthony.

Among those present at last year's pilgrimage, on August 19, were two monks from Prinknash Abbey, near Gloucester, Dom Fabian Binyon and Dom Sylvester Houedard, who had come to discuss with the Trustees the possibility of returning to us the choir-stalls (including Fr. Ignatius's stall) which were originally in Capel-y-ffin monastery church. We are most grateful for this kindly offer, and are endeavouring to find some suitable means of housing them.



Father Ignatius O.S.B.
The Monk of Llanthony

Interest in the personal links between Abbot Ignatius and Abbot Aelred

Carlyle, the founder of the Prinknash community, seems to be intensifying. In this connection I have received an inquiry from Dom Rene Kollar, a monk and scholar of St. Vincent's Arch-Abbey, Latrobe, Pennsylvania, USA, who is preparing a doctoral thesis on Aelred Carlyle, much of whose story can only be understood in counterpoint to Fr. Ignatius. He would welcome information from any source; as I would myself.

Also needed is information about the relationship between Fr. Ignatius and the Tractarian divine the Reverend Edward Bouverie Pusey. The Revd. Peter Cobb, of Pusey House, Oxford, who is writing a new biography of Dr. Pusey, would welcome such information, and would be particularly glad to hear of any correspondence or other documentation bearing on this matter, which may be sent to him or to myself. It appears that Pusey and Ignatius were still on terms of intimacy in 1882 (the year of Pusey's death), but so far only one letter from these later years has been traced.

As Archivist to the Trust I would be most interested to hear from anyone who has 'Ignatiana' of any kind, or related material, in their possession: especially if they are prepared to dispose of it by way of gift or sale. The acquisition and preservation of such material is one of the Trust's principal commitments, and is regarded by the Trustees as a serious duty.

There was, of course, an immense 'dispersion of matter' at the time of Ignatius's death, and again at the time of the purchase of the Monastery by Eric Gill in 1924. More recently the extensive collection of Ignatius's adoptive grand-daughter Mrs. Yorke (Josephine Mary Leycester Lyne) has disappeared. It was purchased after her death in 1967 by a bookseller from Hay-on-Wye, and sold by him to an unknown buyer, since when it has not been heard of. I should be very glad to hear of any clues to its present whereabouts.

We continue to receive characteristic reminders of the originality and flair of the Founder of Llanthony Tertia. From Mr. Donald Halliday, an authority on things Benedictine who enjoys a long and close association with Belmont Abbey, we have recently received an item 'of the last rarity': a copy of *The Benedictine Calendar for 1881*, for the use of the monks and nuns of Llanthony Abbey, and Slapton Priory, Devon. In lighter vein, we have received from Brother Simon Bowery, of Prinknash Abbey, a domestic fork, bearing in Gothic characters the word 'Pax', which was once part of the refectorial equipment of the monastery at Capel-y-ffin.

The past year has seen turning-points in two of the great causes which formed a leitmotif throughout the whole of Joseph Leycester Lyne's career: Zionism and Welsh Nationalism. In 1978 was celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of the foundation of the state of Israel; and in March this year there was the Referendum on Welsh devolution, the holding of which at least demonstrated that no one any longer disputes the essential Welshness of the Principality. I believe that these two events show once again Ignatius's remarkable capacity for 'listening', in the sense given to that word by the Dean of Canterbury. And a passage in Desmond Stewart's recent biography of Theodore Herzl, the Founding Father of Israel, reminds us of Ignatius's participation in Herzl's campaign in England in 1897. Mr. Stewart quotes Herzl as saying, concerning a mass meeting of 10,000 people addressed by him in London's East End: 'Very picturesque among my supporters was ... Father Ignatius. In his black pleated monastic habit, with his medieval evangelist's pulpit gestures, his beautiful clear profile, his splendid speech, he was a joy to listen to and to look at.' In recognition of all this Mr. Edward A. Kanter, who has already assisted the Trust by a restoration of our fine large framed portrait in oils of Fr. Ignatius, is co-ordinating a campaign to make Ignatius's work for Zionism better known to present-day British Jewry. (Information relating to this may be sent to Mr. Kanter at 1 The Postern, Barbican, City of London EC2.)

On the Devolution result Dewi-Honddu (the title conferred on Fr. Ignatius as a Druid of the Welsh National Eisteddfodd at Brecon in 1889) might have shown some initial disappointment. But even so, his strong Celtic roots in the Anglo-Welsh Marches of Gwent (until recently Monmouthshire) would have inspired a continuing ecumenical determination to forge together what is best in the two cultures.

The theme of this year's Pilgrimage, on Saturday August 18, will be in line with the general celebrations of 1979/1980 for the 1500th anniversary of St. Benedict's birth, and his designation as Patron of Europe. The pattern of the pilgrimage, which will be much the same as usual, has been evolved over the years by the Revd. Hugh Allen (the Trust's Master of Ceremonies) in association with the more recently-established Pilgrimage Committee, whose preliminary planning, and hard work on the day, does so much to make things go smoothly, wet or fine. This year there will be an English-rite sung eucharist (a Votive Mass of St. Benedict) in St. David's church, Llanthony, at 11 a.m., by kind permission of the incumbent and the parochial church council. The preacher will be the Revd. F. H. Mountney, a veteran 'Ignatian' and one of our Trustees. Pilgrims will then be encouraged to make the four-mile journey to Capel-y-ffin on foot, to assemble at the little church there, by kind permission of the rural dean, for the procession to The Monastery, which will move off at 3 p.m. promptly, to the strains of our good friends the Abergavenny Town Band. En route to the ruined abbey church and the tomb of Fr. Ignatius the customary 'stations' will be made at the wayside Memorial Calvary and at the statue of the Blessed Virgin in the monastery forecourt. The preacher at the Solemn Evensong will be the Very Revd. Horace Dammers, Dean of Bristol, who was a prime initiator of the major international Benedictine convention at Coventry Cathedral in 1967.

In 1974 he had the distinction of being the first Anglican priest to preach in the restored Abbey church at Monte Cassino on the occasion of the huge Peace Meeting at which some 15,000 war veterans of all nationalities commemorated the Cassino battles of 1944.

Father Ignatius attempted to visit Monte Cassino after his private audience with Pope Pius IX in 1866. Armed with letters of introduction from Mr. Gladstone, he was taken ill on Cassino station, and was unable to make the ascent to the abbey. This was a keen disappointment to him for the rest of his life. It was therefore a great joy to me, as his kinsman, to have been able, as it were, to complete this pilgrimage for him. When I returned to Monte Cassino in 1969, for the 25th anniversary of the battle, I took with me the remaining mosaic fragments from the centre-piece of Fr. Ignatius's tomb, which had been shattered when the church roof collapsed on it. They were skilfully assembled and boxed for me by the boys of St. Thomas More's School in Norwich — the place of Fr. Ignatius's early monastic foundation — for presentation to the Abbot, Dom Ildefonso Rea, then nearing the end of his life: he assured me that he was most glad to receive this remembrance of one acknowledged to be 'an honoured member of the great family of St. Benedict'. (A year ago the damaged tiles on Fr. Ignatius's tomb were replaced by a new set — bearing the emblems of the four Evangelists — designed and made by Mrs. Margaret Roberts, of Abergavenny.)

Thus was a personal cycle completed for me. The last time that I had seen the Abbey of Monte Cassino was on the morning of February 15th 1944, when as a private soldier of artillery, I was standing with a fellow Welshman on a mountain top across the valley of the Liri river. Soon after breakfast our bombers began to come over in mighty waves, and we were wondering where such a vast armada might be bound when we saw the first bombs pounding down on the 'Mother of

Monasteries'; and so it continued for the next five hours. Short of bombing Jerusalem or the Vatican City it is doubtful if any act could have been more futile or barbarous than the senseless holocaust caused by three hundred Allied bombers at Monte Cassino. At the time its desecration seemed total and irreversible. But so too at times has the destruction of the priory of Llanthony and the collapse of the abbey church at Capel-y-ffin. But the imprint of history's true visionaries is not so easily obliterated. Monte Cassino was rebuilt and reconsecrated in 1964, and at the same time the Pope declared St. Benedict 'Patron of Europe'. The celebrations for the eighth centenary of Llanthony Priory in 1975 also reminded us of a certain indestructibility and continuity.

More modestly, on the tenth day of July 1967, the Father Ignatius Memorial Trust came into being for the remembrance of a man who, for all his human shortcomings, was without doubt an exemplar of holy intention. As the Revd. Francis Kilvert described him in his famous Diary: 'A gentle man, of simple manners — a very fine head and brow, a saintly face, and entirely possessed by his one ideal.'

Ignatius was a pioneer. If his 'failure' was the will of God, he would not have had it otherwise: nor his 'success' either.

DOUGLAS LYNE
ARCHIVIST

FATHER JOHN WINDLE MEMORIAL APPEAL

Our friends will know that, ever since the Trust began its work, we have been concerned with the vital matter of preserving the fabric of the ruined church here, enclosing as it does the tomb of Father Ignatius OSB through whose single-minded devotion Llanthony Monastery became an important feature of Victorian religious life for some forty years. It is essential that the structure should be made safe for public entry in perpetuity. We have taken professional advice on the matter from several sources and find that this can be achieved only by getting the whole masonry structure pointed, inside and out, and the interior cavities of the walls treated and filled with liquid cement. This will involve extensive scaffolding and high labour costs. However, it is the only way that we can ensure against further masonry collapse from time to time due to winter frost and thaw damage. As an integral part of this project we are planning to replace the dilapidated tiled floor of the church and install a proper stone altar. The total cost of these works will be £24,000 and we have set ourselves the target of reaching this figure by August 1980.

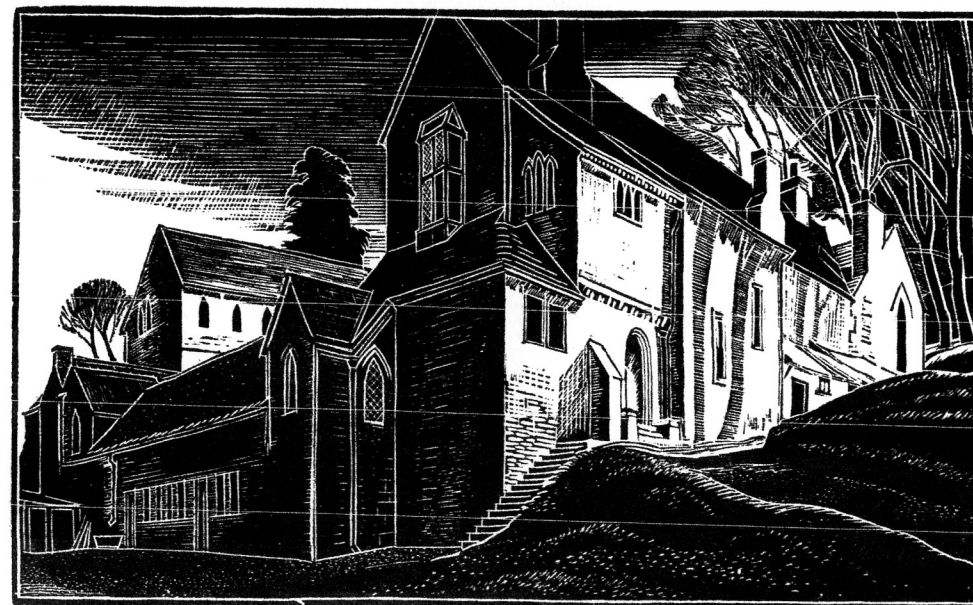
These works are being undertaken as a memorial to the Revd. John Windle who, until his death in 1975, was our senior trustee. Father Windle had a close and long-standing association with Capel-y-ffin and the memory of Father Ignatius; it is almost entirely the result of his persevering devotion that the tradition of the annual pilgrimage was kept alive. For many years he organised a public pilgrimage which, because of the dangerous state of the church, was centred on the meadow below the Monastery; at one such gathering over forty years ago, the Wayside Calvary was dedicated as a memorial to Father Ignatius. Later, he continued to make the pilgrimage on his own and every year in spite of increasing infirmity he would be here (usually having ridden thirty miles from home on his moped!) early in the day on 30th August to pray at Father Ignatius's grave. Towards the

end of his life the temporary repair of the church made this a less perilous procedure and it was a joy to him to be able to take part in pilgrimage services in the church itself. There could surely be no more fitting memorial to him now than to do all we can to make the church structure completely safe and dignify it with an altar in its lovely setting among the Black Mountains.

When our work is complete, we would hope to encourage the use of the church by groups wanting to use it for services at various times of the year in addition to its use for the annual pilgrimage. Capel-y-ffin is in the Brecon Beacons National Park and many young people come here for outdoor activities like camping, hill-walking and pony-trekking. Groups from churches in the local urban areas and farther afield often come here for a day out or longer and we have already had several enquiries about celebrating the Eucharist here. This is already a very welcome development and clergy of any of the main denominations can use the church in this way, by arrangement with the Trust Secretary. From now on we will hope that such groups will come more frequently and we look to all our friends to give it wide publicity. To help us to raise the sum we need, we appeal again to all those who have helped us in the past; to all friends and former parishioners of Father John Windle and to all visitors, past, present and future to The Monastery and Church of Our Lady and St. David at Capel-y-ffin. We shall also be sending out an appeal to a number of charitable organisations who may be able to help us to achieve our aim.

An architect's drawing of a section of the interior of the proposed work will be found on the reverse of this appeal. We hope you will agree that a project of this kind will considerably enhance the Abbey Church of Father Ignatius and ensure that it will remain always as a place of continuing worship.

(Sgd) HUGH ALLEN
for the Trustees



The Monastery, Capel-Y-Ffin

Wood Engraving by Edgar Holloway