

Many of our supporters will remember with affection the Reverend Peter Price, Vicar of Llanfihangel Crucorney, Cwmyoy, Llanthony and Oldcastle. It was through his kind interest and help that for so many years we have been able to hold our morning Eucharist service at the Church of St. David, Llanthony, on Pilgrimage Day. He recently left the district for St. Helena in the South Atlantic where he will continue his ministry. Many will wish to join us in sending him and his family our warm good wishes for a happy stay in this remote outpost of Empire days. This is also a good opportunity to extend a warm welcome to his successor at Llanfihangel Crucorney, the Revd. Thomas Dunn, whom we shall look forward to meeting on Pilgrimage Day at Llanthony this year.

ANOTHER SYMPOSIUM

Mr. Michael Yates of Llwynderw Hotel, Abergewysyn near Builth, has very kindly renewed his invitation for a day of talks on Fr. Ignatius and related subjects in October this year. Would anyone interested in attending please write to Fr. S.G. Luff, Our Lady's Church, College View, Llandovery, Dyfed SA20 0BD.

ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO CAPEL-Y-FFIN - 1988

This will be held on **SATURDAY, 27th AUGUST**

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|--------------|---|
| 11.30 a.m. | The Holy Eucharist at St. David's Church, Llanthony. |
| 12.00 midday | Roman Catholic Mass in the private chapel at The Monastery, Capel-y-ffin. |
| 2.30 p.m. | Procession leaves Capel-y-ffin Church for The Monastery where the address at Solemn Evening Prayer will be given by Dr. Patrick Nuttgens. |

Please note that this is the week-end of the Late Summer Bank Holiday. Car parking arrangements will be as usual in the field at Chapel Farm by kind permission of Mr. & Mrs. Lloyd. Visitors are especially asked to avoid parking their vehicles at The Monastery, please, to avoid congestion there.

Please join us for the pilgrimage if you possibly can.

WILFRED DAVIES
Hon Secretary for the Trustees.

Craswall Priory, on the East side of the Black Mountains, was one of three foundations established in this country by the French Order of Grandmont in the 13th century. A programme of restoration work is in progress arranged by the Craswall Grandmontine Society and a celebration of the 8th centenary of the canonisation of St. Stephen of Muret, Founder of the Grandmontines, is planned during the month of June next year. It is hoped that this will include a Mass at Craswall, a choral evensong at Abbey Dore and an exhibition in Hereford Cathedral. Further details can be obtained from the Hon. Secretary. Craswall Grandmontine Society, Archaeology Unit, Town Hall, St. Owen Street, Hereford.

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NEWSLETTER NO. 16 - JUNE 1988

A JOURNEY TO CLAYDON, NORWICH AND LALEHAM by Fr. Stanley Luff

In the course of 1987 I made two journeys to trace the steps of Father Ignatius. I found it more difficult than I had hoped, for Ignatius is only one lifetime distant. I was glad I had attempted - though not, I think, completed, the pilgrimage. Further research and a pooling of information from interested people could make a really attractive 'Ignatius Route' a future possibility.

Not one of the three Lives of Father Ignatius gives a word-picture of Claydon, where he formed his first monastic community. I had imagined a Suffolk village in flat country, with church, vicarage, school and the 'vicar's barn', where Ignatius said he preached, all around a green. Claydon

Elm Hill, Norwich - The scene of the second attempt by Fr. Ignatius to found a community in 1863.



is now a dormitory suburb of Ipswich with industry visible across the fields, though its main street with its crooked inn and shops may be little altered. What does surprise one is that the church and the old vicarage are nearly a mile away up a steep hill, and survey a pastoral landscape. The church has in fact been out of use for years, the new vicarage is down the hill, and churchgoers are expected to make their way to Barham, the next village. Claydon Church is at present benefiting from a grant and a restoration scheme that will make it available for occasional worship.

Readers will remember that the enterprising Mr. Drury, Vicar of Claydon in 1862, having read Ignatius's manifesto on monasticism in the Church of England, invited him to Claydon with the offer of a wing of the vicarage for his community and the use of the mediaeval parish church, enlarged and decorated by Mr. Drury to his own tastes and in some measure by his own hands, for monastic offices. In return the brothers were to enhance parish worship and teach in the school. The Vicar made this a temporary offer, but this was perhaps just caution. Ignatius's preaching and his 'Catholic' worship drew the crowds and doubled the number of communicants and put Claydon on the map, but it also attracted hostility from allegedly organised 'Protestant' mobs of the 'No Popery' type still memorable from the fearful Gordon Riots of Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge*, and also from solid Low Church Suffolk farmers. Worship was disrupted, attacks were made on the vicarage and even, Ignatius believed, on his life. I had pictured these troubles breaking out spontaneously on the village green, but in fact they must have

been premeditated, involving an expedition up the steep hill and onto the vicar's sweeping lawns. Access to a Diary kept at that time makes it perfectly clear that this was the case.

The church with its splendid tower is cruciform, and appears oddly so, because Mr. Drury built great transepts which at a distance one takes for nave and chancel. At the time of my visit workmen had stripped the interior so that it was not easy to visualise the setting of over a century ago, but I was able to admire, mildly, the traceried pulpit attributed to Mr. Drury's own skilled hand. I was also spared the Henry Moore Madonna now removed to the present parish church at Barham. At the bottom of the lane a residential close is named after Mr. Drury and in the churchyard railings surround his grave, close to the private entrance to the vicarage garden.

Claydon Vicarage must be one of the grandest in the country. It is now partly residence and partly offices and the proprietor very willingly showed me round. He had read Arthur Calder-Marshall's life of Ignatius - 'The Enthusiast' - and had, I felt, been somewhat bemused by it. He was hardly in a position to inherit traditions about Ignatius. The house had obviously been restored and altered, probably in the Victorian period, between wars, and again recently, but there are old beams to indicate that it is to an extent a very old house. I would imagine the wing nearer the road to be the part appointed to the community. The only word for the gardens is parkland. By the private door to the churchyard is a walled garden with a sort of pretty gazebo reputedly built by Mr. Drury from fragments of an old church. One can imagine that between excitements the young community should have had a pleasant time.

The Vicar was absent but was in any case a newcomer and I found no one with useful records of old times. No one for instance recalls a Vicarage Barn, which in the Baroness de Bertouch's book is where Ignatius gave lectures after his licence to preach had been withdrawn by the Bishop. In spite of this the contemporary diary to which I have alluded speaks consistently of Ignatius giving his address in the school, which might be the small red brick building

just inside the Vicarage gate.

One feels that as a family man Mr. Drury was embarrassed by the harassment 'Father Blazer' brought to his church and home. His safety clause came in useful and Ignatius apparently negotiated for a fish market building in Ipswich. It was the house in Elm Hill, Norwich, near the Cathedral, that was to welcome his community in 1863. Elm Hill today is noted as the most picturesque mediaeval street in the city, and the monastery it leads to is the great friary of the Blackfriars, where today you would not go for Mass or a sermon, but for an exhibition, a social function, or a quick lunch in its beautiful brick-vaulted undercroft. Should you find an excuse to go through the former Dominican cloisters to the Art School, you might be shown studios in a building they also call 'the monastery', which turns out to be the church Ignatius built in the garden behind his Elm Hill Priory. Today the premises he acquired in Elm Hill appear to be a Tudor or Elizabethan building under three gables, with an old door giving access to a yard, and eighteenth century windows. What the Baroness calls 'a weird rambling old mansion, comprising about forty rooms' has become two shops and a dwelling, with a factory extension round the corner.

The present occupiers cannot be ignorant of the former historic use of their premises, since there is now an Ignatius plaque on the wall, but they lacked any further knowledge. I had difficulty believing that the church-like building at the back (the Art School studios) was built by Ignatius. One would have supposed its building and opening to have occasioned such satisfaction to him that it would have found notable attention in the pages he almost dictated to the Baroness de Bertouch. References are there, but hard to detect.

I am inclined to trust the Baroness's 30th of January 1863 for the arrival at Norwich, rather than Attwater's '64, because Ignatius seems to have been dictating from some kind of dated record. Attwater also implies that they immediately adapted three rooms on the ground floor as a chapel. The Baroness describes the first chapel as an 'upper room'. This is no mere pious figure of speech, for she adds that it held only

sixty at a squash and the overflow found room on the staircase. I am not trying to fuss over a mere detail. At Capel yffin there is still the crucifix that was the altar cross in the upstairs chapel. It was there that Father Moultrie saw the Christ-figure on that cross incline its head towards Ignatius during the singing of the Creed (Ignatius was at the organ with his back to the altar) at the words '*crucifixus etiam pro nobis*'.

Eventually the 'three-room' chapel replaced the upper room, and for structural reasons no doubt it was downstairs. I think it must have been in the factory extension round the corner.

There is no obvious reference to any function in the large church now clearly visible from the car park by Blackfriars. Arthur Calder-Marshall seems to have found out something in pursuing Ignatius's financial embarrassments towards the end of 1864, asserting that he was heavily in debt due to the purchase of adjoining property and the building of a 'church in the garden' at an estimated cost of £2,000. The reference in Ignatius's account (via the Baroness) does not turn up till years later after he had left Norwich. In 1876 he returned in wrath to reclaim the property when it was advertised for sale for secular use. The advert is described as including 'the large new chapel'. Ignatius, carrying the Reserved Eucharist, forced an entry and resumed monastic worship, till he in turn was forcibly ejected by the police. In addition, this narrative does read more easily if the chapel in question was this surviving building down Elias de Hague's Lane. Perhaps Ignatius had so little time to use his new church that it did not hold happy memories for him. Its value now is that it is one of the few things to be seen at Elm Hill that remind us of the Priory of St. Mary and St. Dunstan. I must add that Ignatius's persuasion that his house was part of the old Dominican property seems to me unlikely.

Internal revolution and financial problems brought about the collapse of the Norwich Priory in 1866, with a corresponding spiritual breakdown for Ignatius. With his recovery (a great story in itself) came a fresh monastic community. While still feeling his way towards a foundation in the Vale of Llanthony, Ignatius contented

himself with a three year lease of a 'small and uncomely red brick house' at Laleham in Middlesex, by the Thames. Caught between river and reservoirs, Laleham remains largely unspoilt. I first visited the ancient church, to see if any pamphlets there referred to Ignatius. Disappointed, I began to enquire of local people. I was immediately shown 'The Laleham Commonplace Book' with an account of Father Ignatius, not entirely accurate, and introduced to a venerable student of local history, Mr. Oswald Adamson, who took me straight to the house, half a mile along the road to Feltham. The 'Commonplace Book' said the house is now called Priory Cottage. I think this is inaccurate. It is called the Priory - an adjunct at the back is Priory Cottage, possibly the 'shelter for waifs and wayfarers'. There is also a building that could have been the coach house adapted as chapel. The owner has never heard of Father Ignatius. The gardens are extensive. These were invaded by a mob to break up a statue of the Blessed Virgin.

One must not dismiss the three years at Laleham as a mere hiatus. The community rose to eight and Ignatius allowed two solemn professions. By 1904 he had permitted only seven, a measure of prudence with which he is seldom credited. Proximity to London not only allowed him to step up his preaching engagements but also to found a Mission House in Hunter Street, Brunswick Square, staffed by 'third order' sisters. When one of Abbess Lydia Sellon's sisters of mercy at Plymouth felt called to monastic life Ignatius clothed her in the habit at Laleham Priory and acquired the old manor farm at nearby Feltham for a Benedictine convent. His weeks were now divided between these three bases, perhaps not all to the good.

There is no mention of the Laleham monks attending the local church. For some weeks in 1867 they enjoyed the priestly ministry of a Roman Catholic Bavarian priest, Father Lohrum, a sufficiently original character to be happy saying Mass for Anglican monks and to ignore an 'inquisitorial descent' arranged by Cardinal Manning. The illicit intercommunion caused him no scruples, but giving the chalice did, so that fell to Ignatius as an Anglican deacon. The Baro-

ness records, no doubt correctly, that Father Lohrum said Mass daily at the High Altar, a simple fact that Arthur Calder-Marshall, by a neat transposition, turns into a daily High Mass! So far nothing has been traced in the Westminster archdiocesan archives that refers either to Father Ignatius or to Father Lohrum.

Another visitor was the famous Dr. Lee of Lambeth who was projecting a scheme for the reunion of the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches, by means of his Order of Corporate Reunion. He was the first to see, at Laleham, the 'pale, handsome, melancholy' Phantom Monk, who allegedly followed the community to Llanthony, where he was spotted on and off for years - as the Baroness puts it, 'the riddle of a derelict spirit'. That was a clever phrase indeed, for this seems to be an isolated case of a ghost without an antecedent.

I went on to Feltham with high hopes, for the Middlesex volume of Pevsner's *Buildings of England* noted the manor farm there along with a few other old houses. Feltham turned out to be one of the ugliest instances of tasteless suburban development. In the end I was told that the former Priory had been destroyed for the development of a new garage. The local history society representative had never heard of Father Ignatius. The nuns at Feltham divided under Father Ignatius's direction, which was probably too autocratic, but both branches are represented today by communities at Malling Abbey, Kent (Anglican) and Talacre Abbey, North Wales (Catholic).

In Brother Cuthbert's (John Spence's) unpublished account of his novitiate he describes how he was sent to Feltham on his way to Llanthony. The house was 'ruinous looking', with a large neglected garden. From there too, a year later, he was dismissed. Father Ignatius set out at midnight to accompany him to the station. Finding a group of 'fuddled' night watchmen guarding a manhole, the Father tipped one a shilling to carry Spence's case. They parted. Then Ignatius ran back and embraced and blessed him. Memorable manhole; possibly still there!

The foundation stone of Llanthony Abbey at Capel-y-ffin was laid on St. Patrick's Day, March 17th, 1870, weeks before the expiry of the lease at Laleham.

The property had been acquired the previous autumn and Father Philip and Brother Serene were already there, almost camping out. The rest of the community followed them in two parties in July.

Drawing of the Monastery by Eric Gill (1934)



RESTORATION WORK AT CAPEL-Y-FFIN - A CHALLENGE

When the Father Ignatius Memorial Trust was formed twenty-one years ago, the Abbey Church at The Monastery, Capel-y-ffin had been totally neglected since the death of its founder in 1908. The roof became dangerous and was removed in the 1920s. Various sections of wall collapsed during the following years due to the ravages of hard winters. By 1962, the church interior was piled high with fallen masonry; waist-high weeds infested the chancel floor; the tiled surface of Fr. Ignatius's tomb had been smashed by falling stones. Many a visiting pilgrim who had known the church at the turn of the century must have been saddened and dismayed by the desolate scene and wondered why nobody seemed to care any more about this holy place which had seen such devotion and public interest when Fr. Ignatius was alive.

Early in the 1960s work began on clearing the church of rubble. This was done with the help of local Scouts and Guides and voluntary groups of young people working in the Brecon Beacons National Park. The tomb was re-tiled complete with new symbols designed by a local young craftswoman. The tomb and side chapel arches were enclosed with protective iron railings made by a skilled local blacksmith. The steps to the sanctuary were restored; the chancel floor was relaid with clean chippings. Later still, a

masonry altar was installed in memory of Fr. John Windle of Welsh Newton, one of our early trustees, and this has been used on several occasions by visiting groups for celebrations of the Eucharist. Large saplings that had seeded into the tops of the walls were removed and the tops of the walls were concreted to prevent further water getting in. Despite these works however there were further wall section collapses during thaws following hard winter conditions. These were repaired as they occurred but the condition of the upper walls of the church has remained a constant nagging anxiety. Despite representations to the Welsh Office and other agencies we have never succeeded in raising the very large sum of money which would be needed to attract a grant to stabilise the church walls and keep the structure safe for public access in perpetuity.

Shortly before Christmas in 1987, a further wall collapse occurred, bring down several tons of masonry into the church from the south wall (see photograph). The structure is now quite dangerous due to the possibility of further similar incidents so we have had to close the church to the public and put up warning notices. Possible remedial action will either be to get a professional assessment of a project to stabilise the walls by fluid cement injection or to reduce the walls to a safe height. If the latter, then the work should be carried out sympathetically, and

The latest wall collapse - December 1987



would retain as many of the lower significant architectural features as could be conserved. An application has therefore been submitted through the local authority to the Brecon Beacons National Park Planning Committee for onward transmission to CADW, the Welsh Historic Monuments branch of the Welsh Office for approval of such work to be put in hand. However, the Trust Fund is far too slender for such a major project. Our capital assets are a little more than £1,500. A recent estimate of the possible costs indicates that we shall certainly have to find £10,000, allowing for unforeseen contingencies.

The Trust now faces the formidable task of raising this very large sum of money at a time when other charities are also competing for public support for so many worthy causes. The Abbey Church at Capel-y-ffin, together with The Monastery and chapel form a perfect period piece. Set on a hillside in the Black Mountains, it is an important shrine in the religious history of our country visited by thousands of visitors and pilgrims each year. We must, we feel, make every effort to ensure that it is conserved for future generations. Will you please help us? Donations can be made by filling in the enclosed subscription form which will not only help us to reach our target figure but will ensure that you receive a copy of our annual newsletter in future.