

# *The Father Ignatius Memorial Trust*

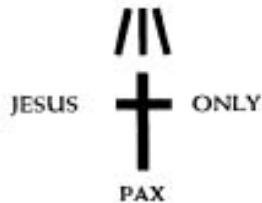
## **NEWSLETTER**

NO. 48 SPRING 2020



The ecumenical **Father Ignatius Memorial Trust** was established in 1967 and organises an annual Pilgrimage to Llanthony & Capel-y-ffin. The Trust has in its care the statue of Our Lady at Capel-y-ffin Monastery as well as the ruins of the adjacent Abbey Church, and the nearby Wayside Calvary. The Monastery was founded in 1870 by Fr Ignatius OSB (Joseph Leycester Lyne 1837-1908), first restorer of monastic life for men in the Church of England and popular mission preacher. Fr Ignatius' body is buried within the Abbey Church; further information about him can be found on the Trust website: [www.fatherignatius.org.uk](http://www.fatherignatius.org.uk)

Y GWIR YN ERBYN Y BŶD



Charity Commissioners'  
Registration No. 253225

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## Contents

- 1 COVER PHOTO: THE LADYE ALTAR
- 3 LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN  
Caroline Woollard
- 4 THE LADYE ALTAR: A NOTE
- 5 ADDITIONS TO THE LLANTHONY STORY:  
JOHN JONES (BROTHER ETHELRED)  
Hugh Allen
- 8 REV WILLIAM SHOULTS  
Donald Kerr
- 11 PHOTO: FR IGNATIUS AFTER ORDINATION
- 12 PILGRIMAGE 2020  
Details of Programme  
(now planned for 2021)

## Update on the Work of the Trust

WELCOME TO THE 2020 Fr Ignatius Memorial Trust Newsletter; we very much hope you will enjoy reading it and learning more about the work of the Trust. The work of the Trust continues. Although the Abbey Church is now sadly unsafe for public access due to irremediable instability of the higher north, east and south walls, the Trust has completed repairs to the lower west wall, outside which the annual Pilgrimage ends. In addition, the railings around the Wayside Calvary have been completely refurbished.

# *From the Chairman...*

Ascension Day 2020

Welcome to the 2020 edition of the Father Ignatius Memorial Trust newsletter.

## **Cancellation of 2020 Father Ignatius Memorial Trust Pilgrimage**

As I write, we remain in lockdown because of Covid19 and are living in unprecedented times. Reluctantly, we have decided that this year's Pilgrimage cannot now go ahead and it has therefore been cancelled.

We are especially disappointed as the Reverend Ben Rabjohns, Vicar of Penrhiwceiber, Cynon Valley, South Wales had kindly agreed to be our guest preacher at Evensong in St Mary's, Capel-y-ffin, while our Trustee, the Reverend Jeremy Dowding, who has returned to live near Abergavenny after retiring from the parish of Thorpe-le-Soken in Essex, was to have preached at the Eucharist in St David's Church at Llanthony. However, we hope that these arrangements can hold for next year's pilgrimage.

This year's pilgrimage was due to have taken place on August 22nd, and although our pilgrimage cannot take place physically, we are hoping that our supporters will join us in making a 'spiritual pilgrimage' to Llanthony and Capel-y-ffin on that day. Further details and suggested prayers will be sent nearer the time to all on our mailing list.

As one Trustee moves back to the area, another moves away. The Reverend Mark Soady, who had been Vicar of Abergavenny for the last eight years, was appointed Rector of the parishes of Tarleton & Rufford, in Lancashire, and left in March. We send Fr Mark

all our good wishes for his new appointment, and offer him our grateful thanks for his past service to the Trust.

Much has been written about Fr Ignatius and his time in the Llanthony Valley but there is more to learn—with surprising links between religious communities being unearthed from time to time, including these between South Wales and Devon.

The Franciscan Servants of Jesus and Mary were a small community of Anglican nuns at Posbury, a remote upland hamlet near Crediton in Devon. Its ethos was quite different from that of Fr Ignatius' foundation, but there were a couple of interesting links. The foundress, Mother Teresa (Grace Emily Costin, 1888-1979), was in her youth deeply affected by Ignatius's preaching, although it was some years later that she and a small group of companions made their first provisional commitment to the religious life.

In the meantime, she was for a while in charge of the children's home established by Fr Bernard Walke at St Hilary, near Penzance (she had also been a pioneering policewoman—the first female officer 'on the beat' in Oxford). While at St Hilary she and a colleague had a vision of the Mother of God reminiscent in some ways of the final 'Llanthony Apparition' seen by Fr Ignatius and others on 15 September 1880. They were on their way to say their night prayers in church when they saw 'a great glow of light' in which they were able quite clearly to see each other's faces and the surrounding fields and hedges, and 'a gigantic figure, veiled and crowned in

## ...the Chairman continues

a dazzling, perfectly still light'. Unlike the momentary Llanthony apparition, the figure remained visible during the ten minutes they stood watching, and was still there when they went on their way, treasuring (though not speaking about) the sight they had witnessed.

Before moving to Posbury in 1942 the sisters lived for a while at Whitwell on the Isle of Wight, and it was here that Mother Teresa's successor, Mother Hilary, first got to know the community as a local teenager. In old age she remembered having been sent on an errand to a certain Miss Dew in Ventnor. This was of course the former Mother Tudfil of Llanthony, who was evidently a somewhat awe-inspiring individual.

Mother Hilary died early last year at the age of 92, since when the com-

munity has been reduced to one sister. The work of the Fr Ignatius Memorial Trust, and the future organisation of the pilgrimage, is made possible through the support of readers of the Trust Newsletter—it is much appreciated, and all donations are very gratefully received.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. In the meantime, please do keep up to date with the news by visiting our website [www.fatherignatius.org.uk](http://www.fatherignatius.org.uk) and our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/fatherignatius/>

With best wishes,  
and prayers that you all keep safe.

**Caroline Woollard**  
Chairman

## The Ladye Altar

### *A Note on the Cover photograph*

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THE 'Ladye Altar' stood in a railed enclosure in the north-west corner of the abbey church, between the west wall and the choir screen/organ gallery (just visible to the right of the altar). Visiting priests were allowed to celebrate at the high altar if they were celibate; married clergy had to make do with this altar in the unenclosed portion of the church.

The elaborate display of flowers and candles suggests that the photograph had been taken at a special festival, although it may in fact have been kept like this all the time. Note the angelic candle-holders, now in the Abergavenny Museum (one of them on permanent display), and the crown suspended above the statue of the Blessed Virgin.

This may be the same one mentioned in Ignatius's description of the temporary chapel in the west cloister, a true-to-life feature in his novella *Brother Placidus* and why he became a Monk.

When the monastery became a dependency of Caldey, the Ladye Altar and some of its appointments were moved into one of the downstairs rooms of the main building. When a priest was in residence Mass was said there rather than in the chilly and rapidly deteriorating Abbey Church. Eventually during Eric Gill's occupancy a new and rather simpler chapel was fashioned in the upper floor of the north cloister, which remained in occasional use until quite recently.

## *Some More Additions to The Llanthony Story:* **Brother Ethelred (John Jones) Hugh Allen**

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**A**MONG THE FIRST CROP of novices to be admitted at New Llanthony was John Jones, whose entry in the Professions Register is as follows:

BROTHER ETHEL[D]RED O.S.B.

OF THE MERCY OF GOD

JOHN JONES aged 19; 18th of Sepr 1870. Came as a Postulant first on St Ignatius' Day 1871; entered Aug 14th 1871. Professed as Postulant 26 of August 1871; as Novice 7 of September 1871. Left the Monastery during my absence in May 1872 thinking a pimple on his breast was a Cancer. After a course of deceit & pride, he returned to his Monastery Sepr 6th 1872 to say he would not pay his vows; he was excommunicated the same afternoon & the Curse pronounced against him.

The first of the dates given here was his nineteenth birthday; he had been born (and baptised) on that day in 1851 and would celebrate his twenty-first less than a fortnight after the events described in the last part of the entry. This was significant. According to his friend Brother Cuthbert (John Spence) he stood to inherit £9000 on coming of age, and 'would not pay his vows' at Llanthony until he had settled unspecified business elsewhere. I think we can assume that he wanted to put his inheritance out of Ignatius's reach, and would probably have had to wait

until it was actually in his possession before doing so. Cuthbert's account suggests that he did want to return and renew his vows for a further year or more, but Ignatius wouldn't accept his attempts to answer 'Yes, but...' when asking him whether he intended to do so and despatched him with the proverbial flea in his ear.

John Jones was born in Ewyas Harold in the Golden Valley, where his parents ran the village shop. It is still in the same building, Church House, from which address during his unauthorised absence he sent a message to Brother Cuthbert c/o Farmer Jenkins, who acted as a link (doubtless unofficial, in this instance) between the community and the outside world. After the death of his father in 1868 he had been entrusted to the care of an unnamed chemist in Abergavenny, and it was from there that he had run away to the monastery.

He and Cuthbert used to fantasise about the 'purer and higher' version of monastic life they would erect on the 'ruins' of Ignatius's experiment, and in his message to Cuthbert he outlined his plans for living as an 'anchoretical friar', telling his friend that he was having 'a nice cell built in a quiet spot' in the locality, complete with private

chapel. If this sounds like a youthful pipe-dream we now know that it was eventually realised, at least so far as its quiet situation and private chapel were concerned.

The last we hear of ex-Brother Ethelred in Cuthbert/John Spence's narrative is of a letter he wrote the following year – by which time Cuthbert had also left the monastery – reporting that Ignatius had been trying to get 'the priest here' (i.e. Ewyas Harold) to influence him to return to the cloister. The priest in question was William Robert Lawrence, Vicar of the parish from 1866 to 1874 and a graduate of Durham University, which suggests he played a part in what happened next. In October 1873 – a year after his departure from Llanthony and a few weeks after his 22nd birthday – Jones

matriculated at Bishop Hatfield Hall, Durham. After obtaining his BA and LTh he was ordained by the Bishop of Lichfield, in whose diocese he served his first curacy; he then returned to his home territory as Vicar of Garway, his only incumbency (1877-82).

Over the next forty years he served a number of short-term curacies and chaplaincies in different parts of this country and overseas, but one gets the impression that these were sidelines to the main focus of his life, the holy hideaway on a remote hillside in his former parish of Garway which he named The Chantry.

He seems to have acquired this property (today known as Chantry Cottage) quite early on and may indeed have built it; the lancet windows on its western gable and



The Chantry, Garway Hill today, showing the chapel extension. (photo © holidaycottages.co.uk)

ecclesiastical-looking front door (the latter removed by a former owner) would certainly have been installed in his time. Local tradition maintains that the house was once a chapel, although this may go back no further than Jones's occupation: he would certainly have maintained a chapel in the house.

In or around 1911 he built a new and larger house adjacent to the existing one; this became The Chantry, and its older neighbour was renamed Chantry Cottage. The newer house is distinguished by the small Gothic-windowed appendage at its eastern end, a tiny chapel opening off the main living room.

'John Jones' was such an unexceptional name that when I was working on that part of the Llanthony story research into his later career seemed unlikely to bear fruit. However, last autumn I discovered this entry in the monastery Visitors' book, preserved with other Ignatian relics at Prinknash Abbey:

June 10th [1909]: *Fr John Jones, Garway Hill* and little effort was required to identify this as the same John Jones who had spent not quite a year in the establishment four decades earlier. It was then eight months since Fr Ignatius's death—was it the first time he had been back?

Jones died in a Falmouth nursing home on 23 March 1926. In his will he left The Chantry to the President of the Monmouth branch of the English Church Union as a rest home for impoverished clergy (preference being given to those who were members of the Guild of All Souls; he was nothing if not definite in his churchmanship), together with an endowment of £2000 for its upkeep. Although in a setting of unrivalled beauty, it was too remote to be practicable for those without independent means of transport. By 1930 it had been disposed of and the name and funds transferred to a new house in Monmouth, with accommodation for up to a dozen visitors. At first it was used for retreats and kindred activities, then as a retirement home for elderly clergy. One resident was Fr John Windle, early doyen of our Trustees, who died there in 1975. This third incarnation of The Chantry was closed in 1984 and the sale proceeds combined with other funds left by Fr Jones. "The Charities of the Reverend John Jones for the Clergy" are today a welcome support for needy clergy in his native Border country—some years ago I was myself grateful for a modest travel grant from this source, although I had no idea at the time that I was benefitting from the generosity of a former Llanthony novice.

# *The Rev William Arderne Shoults: Curate, Scholar, Collector (Part 2)*

Donald Kerr

In last year's Newsletter we printed the first part of Dr Donald Kerr's article on the Reverend William Arderne Shoults, an early collaborator of Fr Ignatius' and part-time chaplain to his community of nuns at Feltham. Here we offer the concluding part. . .

**S**HOUTS'S INVOLVEMENT with the Feltham convent is attested in the reminiscences of one of the sisters, Dame Paulina Bridges, who recounts how he was there one day before the convent opened on St Peter's Day, 29 June 1868.<sup>1</sup> The house was empty, and he was there to help the Prioress, Mother Hilda, no doubt providing muscle in moving things about. A procession was planned by Ignatius for the grand opening, and Shoults was asked to carry the Blessed Sacrament. According to Bridges, from that day onwards, 'Father Scholts' was 'the non-resident chaplain'. She also maintained that he was 'a constant friend of the community'.<sup>2</sup> He obviously made a lasting impression. In his library there is volume one of the Rev Henry Anstey's

<sup>1</sup> Cited in 'References (sic) To Fr W. A. Scholts from the Transcript of the Document: Memoirs of Dame Paulina Bridges OSB'. Correspondence with Sister Clare, the Abbey, Curzon Park, Chester, August 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in 'References (sic) To Fr W. A. Scholts from the Transcript of the Document: Memoirs of Dame Paulina Bridges OSB'. Correspondence with Sister Clare, the Abbey, Curzon Park, Chester, August 2018.

*Munimenta Academica; Or, Documents Illustrative of Academical Life and Studies at Oxford* (1868). There is an inscription within that reads:

The Revd. W.A. Shoults. MA.  
With the respectful love of  
his grateful and affectionate  
spiritual children. The Mother  
& Sisters of Convent, Feltham.  
Christmass 1874.

Between leaving Bunhill Row in late 1869 and the beginning of his Shoreditch curacy in December 1873<sup>3</sup> Shoults was without official church employment. When the census was taken in April 1871 he was listed as a "visitor" (a long-term lodger, or just a temporary guest?) at the house of Frances Lack at 3 Hargrave Road, Upper Holloway.<sup>4</sup> Mrs Lack was a widow whose spinster sister Ann Easley ('Sister Winifred') put up money, either £1000 or £2000, for the purchase of the Llanthony site,<sup>5</sup> and had succeeded Gertrude

<sup>3</sup> 'The Church in the Metropolis', Daily News, 13 Dec 1873; also Morning Post, 20 Dec 1873.

<sup>4</sup> See 1871 Census Islington, St John: RG 10 275: 39, p.13.

<sup>5</sup> There is a sum discrepancy. Although the notes by Mrs Ann Winifred Caton on her great aunt Ann Easley (Winifred; 1822-1908) mention £2000 gifted towards the Llanthony site, Hugh Allen's thoughts are that it was £1000 only. Apparently the whole family at Hargrave Park was fascinated by Ignatius. See <https://btsarnia.org/2017/09/28/father-ignatius-of-llanthony/>, the NLA p.108 reference, and Allen, p. 210.



Robins as Prioress of the female branch of the Third Order in 1868. During this interval (and beyond, although it's not clear to what extent he was able to combine his part-time chaplaincy there with full-time parish work) he was regular in his visits to the convent, as well as making less frequent trips to Llanthony to provide sacramental cover for the male community.

This has only come to light with the discovery that he and the otherwise anonymous 'Father Cyril', mentioned for his visits in the early 1870s by the Baroness de Bertouch, were one and the same. That resident professed monks should be given new names to mark their new status is fair enough, but Ignatius also loved to bestow honorary monastic status (with appropriate 'names in religion') on his outside followers. Shoults was one of these exotically-named outsiders; others in this period included the Reverends Douglas Boutflower ('Fr Bernard') and H.D. Nihill ('Fr Basil'), Digby Dolben ('Bro Dominic'),<sup>6</sup> and of course 'Sister Winifred'. Shoults's appellation is confirmed by records in a published history of the community of Benedictine nuns at Curzon

<sup>6</sup> Correspondence with Hugh Allen, 16 August 2018, and reference to his book *New Llanthony Abbey. Father Ignatius's Monastery at Capel-y-ffin*. [Devon]: Peterscourt Press, 2016, especially pp 63-69. Also, correspondence with Sisters Clare and Paula, the Abbey, Curzon Park, Chester, 17 August 2018. Reference to the 'Memoirs of Dame Paulina Bridges' [Elizabeth Mary Bridges], 25 January 1866 to 24 July 1936.

Park, Chester, the lineal descendants of the Feltham 'remainers' (or 'rebels'), and by chance, the second volume of Anstey's *Munimenta Academica* (1868), which carries the exact wording of volume one except for the mention of 'Father Cyril'. It reads:

The Revd. Father Cyril MA.  
With the respectful love of  
his grateful and affectionate  
spiritual children. The Mother &  
Sisters of Benedictine Convent,  
Feltham. Christmass 1874.<sup>7</sup>

Shoults's first recorded visit to Llanthony was at Christmas 1870, when he was due to celebrate the midnight Mass in the temporary west cloister chapel. It was almost his last. According to the Baroness de Bertouch, there was much preparation by the resident monks towards his arrival: decorating the chapel and making ready a warm welcome to 'Father Cyril', who faced an eleven-mile walk from the railway station at Llanfihangel Crucorney. Unfortunately the weather was terrible. Snow lay on the mountains, and it was very cold. As night fell, and with no appearance of 'Father Cyril', the notion of not having Mass at midnight became real. The doors were closed and locked; a Vigil was kept, and prayers were offered for the belated traveller. However, about 11.30, Shoults (Cyril) appeared—cold and tired. He then related his own story, which to the Baroness was not only 'weird

<sup>7</sup> The Rev. Henry Anstey, *Munimenta Academica*; or, *Documents Illustrative of Academical Life and Studies at Oxford*. London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1868. Shoults Collection Eb 1868 U



and wonderful', but verged on the miraculous.<sup>8</sup>

Apparently, he had left London and arrived at Hereford, where he visited the Cathedral, especially the shrine of St Thomas Cantelupe [Cantilupe], 'Father of Modern Charity', to whom he felt a very special devotion. This few hours' delay caused the problem. After arriving at the station, and unaware of the worsening conditions, he pressed on, even though locals issued warnings of not to continue. This 'plucky Priest' walked on, and with more snow falling, lost his way, veering off the track onto open hills and past perilous cliffs. Acknowledging his 'foolhardiness'

<sup>8</sup> Baroness Beatrice de Bertouch, *The Life of Father Ignatius, O.S.B.: The Monk of Llanthony*. London: Methuen and Co., 1904, pp. 454-457.

he even considered retracing his steps. With on-coming tiredness, exposure to the elements and freezing conditions, he not only gave himself up for lost, but prayed to God 'commending his spirit to the Merciful'.<sup>9</sup> At that precise moment, a figure of a man stood behind him, surrounded by a bright light. Shoults believed that the man was St Thomas, whose shrine he had visited that day. The figure then beckoned Shoults to follow him, retracing his steps taken until after a time, and guided by 'supernatural light', Shoults found himself at the door of the Benedictine Abbey of St Mary and St. Dunstan. Baroness de Bertouch claimed the story was all true, and not fantastic, and vouchsafed Father Cyril's word: 'it is the solemn testimony of a man whose reputation certainly lies above the level of an idle or malicious fable-monger.'<sup>10</sup>

The next visit of which we have a record was on the Octave of the Assumption, 22 August 1872, when Shoults was back at Llanthony to bless the foundation stone of the new monastery church. As the first

<sup>9</sup> De Bertouch, p.456.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p.457. Losing one's way to New Llanthony Abbey was not unusual. See Allen, p. 126. Even in modern times, eschewing horse and dogcart, and opting for a car, the narrow, winding road to the somewhat desolate spot is treacherous.

Llanthony 'Pilgrimage', it established an important precedent for future years.<sup>11</sup> The account in the Church Herald reported that Ignatius played the organ, the service was delivered partly in Latin with portions taken from the Book of Common Prayer, presumably in English, and that 'the officiating Priest' was dressed in surplice and 'a most gorgeous cope.'<sup>12</sup>

The last mention we have of his visits to Llanthony was in the summer of 1874, at which time he was well established in his curacy at St Michael's. This included the life profession of Brother Dunstan (Thomas Bray) on 4th August, which was attended by a visiting journalist:

'The service began with a chant and Latin prayers. The oratory is some eight or nine feet square, the altar blazing with candles, gold tinsel, and highly coloured images of saints and angels. The service was conducted by Father Ignatius and another personage, not a monk, but wearing long black hair, a full beard and moustache, and spectacles. Both were arrayed in gorgeous vestments, which were from time to time changed for others. Now equally resplendent, now black and lowly.'<sup>13</sup> The 'other

personage' was of course Shoults, immediately recognisable from his only extant photographic likeness. \*\*

Aided by the Ian Willison Foundation Book History Award, my task was to travel to England from New Zealand (Dunedin) and research library and institutional archives on the life and book-collecting activities of the Rev. William Arderne Shoults (1839-1887). This involved examining archives at St John's College, Cambridge; the British Library; the British Museum; Lambeth Palace Library Archives; the London Metropolitan Archives; contextualising Shoults's life in his birthplace (Southwark) and parish churches; comparing and contrasting book collectors and ecclesiastical book collections; and gathering information on Shoults's contemporaries, including Father Ignatius.<sup>14</sup>

*Donald Kerr, Dunedin, New Zealand  
February 2019*



Fr Ignatius after his ordination to the priesthood

<sup>11</sup> Anson, *Building up the Waste Places*, p. 104.

<sup>12</sup> Cited in Allen, p. 162, and the *York Herald*, 5 June 1878, p. 5.

<sup>13</sup> 'A Visit to Llanthony Monastery' in Reynolds Newspaper, 16 August 1874, from *The Weekly Mail*,

August 1874.

<sup>14</sup> I am particularly grateful to Hugh Allen and Dr Peter Davies, who facilitated my visit to Llanthony in October 2018. It was a much enjoyed occasion.

# PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMME

## Saturday 22nd August 2020

### PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENTS:

#### DETAILS TO BE CONFIRMED

PLEASE SEE WEBSITE

[www.fatherignatius.co.uk](http://www.fatherignatius.co.uk)

**11.30AM**  
Sung Eucharist at **St David's Church, Llanthony.**

**1.30PM**  
Assemble outside St David's Church for Pilgrimage Walk. Stout footwear is essential and weather-proof clothing recommended.

**3.30PM**  
Evensong at **St Mary's Church, Capel-y-Ffin.** Followed by a Procession to the ruins of Fr Ignatius' Abbey Church with 'station' at the **Wayside Calvary** and prayers at the **Statue of Our Lady of Llanthony.**

CAR PARKING is available in the official car park at Llanthony Priory for the Eucharist at S. David's, and in the afternoon at Capel-y-Ffin.

After the Eucharist, pilgrims are invited to BRING & SHARE LUNCH in the car park area next to the car park at Llanthony (a wet weather alternative is available).

At the end of the afternoon service, tea and coffee are served at a modest charge on the Mary lawn, courtesy of Mr & Mrs Knill and others.

#### Please note:

Next year's pilgrimage will take place on Saturday, August 21st, 2021.

[To be confirmed]

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## *Have you got your copy yet?!*

*New Llanthony Abbey: Father Ignatius's Monastery  
at Capel-y-Ffin by Hugh Allen*

HUGH ALLEN'S STUDY of Fr Ignatius's community and the subsequent history of his monastery is available from selected bookshops at £18.50 per copy, or direct from the publisher at £20 post free (orders to Peterscourt Press, 9 Park Close, Tiverton, Devon EX16 6AX; cheques payable to R.W.H. Allen). It may also be ordered online from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

### Comments from some reviewers:

Forensically researched, meticulously referenced and fluently written, a winning combination that makes it as enjoyable as it is useful (Serenhedd James, Church Times)

A fascinating compendium of information about a bizarre and ambiguous monastic experiment (Geoffrey Rowell, Anglo-Catholic History Society Newsletter)

Indispensable for Trust members, and anyone with a close interest in the monastery, and in 'the oldest Marian pilgrimage in the post-Reformation Anglican Church' (Martin Williams, Father Ignatius Memorial Trust Newsletter)