

The Father Ignatius Memorial Trust

NEWSLETTER

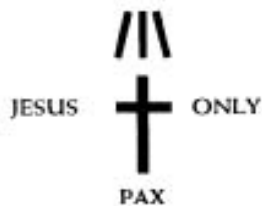
No. 49 SPRING 2021



• Llanthony Community & visitors,
c. 1898, at Capel-y Ffin

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

Y GWIR YN ERBYN Y BŶD



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Registration No. 253225

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Hugh Allen
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Consultant: Philip Chatfield

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Update on the Work of the Trust

WELCOME TO THE 2021 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 2021

WELCOME TO THIS EDITION of the Father Ignatius Memorial Trust newsletter, which I write in the hope that you have all kept safe and well during the past year.

As we cautiously emerge from over twelve months of lockdowns and restrictions, the good news is that, with the reductions in cases and the success of the vaccines, we are once again able to hold the annual pilgrimage in August. However, it will be a pilgrimage with a difference caused, not by the pandemic, but by a collapse in the road from Llanthony to Capel-y-Ffin, not far from the latter, which means it is impassable. While that wouldn't cause a problem for the walkers from Llanthony, the road detour would take an appreciable length of time for those of us who travel by car.

So the Mass this year will take place at St Mary's Church, Hay-on-Wye, by kind permission of Fr Ignatius Memorial Trustee the Revd Richard Williams, Vicar of Hay. A large and distinguished church, St Mary's houses the icon of Our Lady of Llanthony, a copy of which is in St Mary's Church, Capel-y-Ffin. Fr Richard will preside at the Mass, which will start as usual at 11.30am, while the preacher will be fellow trustee Fr Jeremy Dowding. The bring-and-share lunch will be held in the grounds of the church.

Then, instead of the pilgrimage walk, we will drive to Capel-y-Ffin over the Gospel Pass—the highest road pass in Wales. Starting from Hay, the narrow road climbs steeply to a height of 1,801 ft above sea level, squeezing between the mountains of Twmpa to the west and Hay Bluff to the east, before dropping down into the valley to the south on its way to Llanthony. While a single track road over much of its length, there are numerous passing places. The more intrepid of us could drive part of the way and walk the rest—hopefully there will be people to give them a lift back to their cars later!

Why Gospel Pass? There are two theories: the first that St Paul was brought to Wales through the pass by the daughter of Caradog to preach the Gospel to her people there (Paul, having met Caradog, also known as Caractacus, in Rome); and the second that in 1188 Baldwin and Gerald passed through preaching for the Third Crusade.

We will gather at St Mary's, Capel-y-Ffin for Evening Prayer at 3.30pm, which this year will be held in the grounds of the church, rather than its small but perfectly formed interior. The service will be led by Fr Philip Wyn Davies while the preacher will be Fr Ben Rabjohns, Vicar of the parish of Penrhiwceiber, Matthewstown & Ynysboeth, who had agreed to preach for last year's

...the Chairman continues

service—we are grateful that he is able to join us this year.

After Evening Prayer, we will process to the Monastery and the statue of Our Lady of Llanthony, via the Calvary, now much more visible since the removal of overhanging branches, before tea and cake on the lawn, by kind permission of Andrew and Sue Knill.

While the annual pilgrimage is the major event in the Trust's activities, we are also much involved in creating and maintaining an archive of information on the life and times of Fr Ignatius and we have just acquired a collection of 25 rare tracts by or about him. These are bound in four volumes, and

include titles such as *Fair Play For Brother Ignatius*—a Letter to the Lord Bishop of London; *A Course of Four Sermons Preached at Brighton by Father Ignatius O.S.B.*; *Llanthony Tracts No. 1: Why Are You Not A Monk?* and *Ignatius: A Sermon at Westminster Town Hall—The Queen's Jubilee*. We hope to include extracts from these volumes in future newsletters.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter and look forward to perhaps seeing you in August. In the meantime, please do keep up to date with the news by logging on to our website www.fatherignatius.org.uk or our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/fatherignatius

Caroline Woollard
Chairman

Llanthony Community, c.1898

A Note on the Cover photograph

Fr Ignatius is seated towards the left, Lessie (born 15 January 1893), son of Brother David, at his knee (compare cover photo of the 2015 Newsletter, taken some nine years later). In Llanthony usage different styles of habit were worn by professed monks, novices, postulants and “monastery boys”. The young man to the left of the statue wearing “elephant ears” (fully professed) habit is Fr Iltud (A.C. Cobb), who took his final vows in March 1898 and was ordained priest alongside Ignatius on 27 July. In postulant's habit holding the small dog is a young man we may assume to be Brother Asaph, received as a postulant on 29 July and clothed as a novice on 10 September,

thus dating the picture fairly precisely to August or early September of that year. The community at that time was completed by three novices, Brothers Gildas (Griffin) who stayed until June 1899, Dyfrig (Lawson) and Cadoc (Matthews), both of whom left in September 1898; perhaps this was taken after the departure of the first of these two but before that of the second. The boys on the left can't be identified, although we know the names of some of them from that era; neither can the two visiting clergymen or the little boy on the right—the Visitors' Book has a lengthy gap between 1895 and 1901. The large dog in the foreground is Bruno, a St Bernard belonging to the house.

Father Ignatius & the Society of the Holy Cross

Hugh Allen

LAST YEAR the Society of the Holy Cross (Societas Sanctae Crucis, or SSC) celebrated the bicentenary of the birth of its principal founder, the Reverend Charles Fuge Lowder (1820-1880).

The Society was founded in 1855 in the wake of the Anglo-Catholic revival, its objects being “to defend and strengthen the spiritual life of the clergy, to defend the faith of the Church, and to carry on and aid Mission work both at home and abroad”. It is still a significant presence in the Anglican Church, and several of our clerical trustees are members.

Joseph Leicester Lyne was enrolled as a Probationer in 1860, the year of his ordination as a deacon; as such he would never be eligible for promotion to full membership. His vicar in Plymouth, G.R. Prynne, wasn’t enrolled until 1865, so it must have been someone else who encouraged him to join—perhaps one of his former fellow-students from Glenalmond, as the Society was quite well represented in parts of Scotland. The fact that he had identified with it at the very beginning of his



ministry would have been a strong recommendation to Fr Lowder when offering him a curacy at the St George’s Mission after the breakdown of his health in Plymouth and subsequent convalescence in Belgium.

Ignatius, as he renamed himself when after just six months he left the East End for the Suffolk village of Claydon and (as he himself put it) ‘became a Benedictine’, never conformed to conventional Anglo-Catholic expectations, even

if at the time these were still in process of formation. With his individualistic temperament he would always prefer to go his own way and be captain of his own ship, so it's not surprising to find that in the 1876/77 membership roll he is the only one of the dozen or so scattered SSC members in South East Wales not listed as belonging to the Llandaff branch.

He had, however, had some contact with the Society not long before. Among its senior members was the Rector of Preston, near Sandwich, Henry Lascelles Jenner, who had been consecrated Bishop in 1866 for the New Zealand diocese of Dunedin, but whose prospective flock had refused to receive him on account of his reputation for extreme Ritualism. At some point in 1872 (or perhaps earlier, if subsequent developments took their time to unfold) it was suggested – presumably by Ignatius himself – that Bishop Jenner might ordain him to the priesthood. Jenner put this proposal to the Canon Law Committee of SSC, which not surprisingly refused to give it their approval.

Two letters in Ignatius' hand are preserved among the SSC archives at Pusey House, dated respectively 8 February and 18 April 1873. The first acknowledges receipt of the decision, but argues that in declaring

his desired ordination “irregular” according to contemporary Roman Catholic canon law the Committee were failing to take account of the abnormality of the Church of England's refusal to recognise monastic life, especially in the light of early councils of the undivided Church having laid upon bishops the duty of supporting and making proper provision for it.

The second letter is a brief and informal note to “My dear Brother” (identity unstated), thanking him for his “kind letter” of 12 March and asking him “for Jesus' sake [to] try & say a word in [his] defence” when the Committee met again. We may regret that this had no effect, although perhaps it was better for Bishop Jenner's continuing peaceful occupation of his Kentish benefice (he died there in 1898) that it didn't.

Also at Pusey House are typescript copies of the correspondence between Ignatius and Fr Mackonochie from October 1863 mentioned on pp 24ff of my book, together with an appeal from the former to the Society for financial and moral support for his nascent brotherhood dated 13 August—the date of the “farewell service” at Claydon before his departure for a stay of a month or more in Scotland. This letter was read at a meeting of members in London in mid September and

prompted an exchange between one of its number (the Revd W.H. Lyall, one of the founders) and the Revd J.B. Turnock of St Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich (not a member of SSC, but evidently sympathetic to its aims), asking for a local view of Ignatius and his enterprise. Turnock's reply was detailed and fair, and although he took pains to distinguish between any notoriety

attaching to Ignatius himself and that occasioned by Rector Dru-ry's ill-advised ritual excesses he couldn't help wondering whether the founder of "English OSB" was "quite the man to head a movement [requiring] for its successful conduct much wisdom and tact". By the time of Ignatius's American adventure in 1890/91 his membership of SSC had lapsed.

NEW PLAQUE AT CAPEL Y FFIN COMPLETED BY PHILIP CHATFIELD



Sculptor Philip Chatfield was commissioned to make the new plaque at the entrance to the Abbey Church. It reads: *This ruined church stands as the memorial to Father Ignatius of Jesus [Joseph Leicester Lyne, 1837 - 1908]. The memorial is maintained, through voluntary donations, in memory of Father Ignatius and those who lived and worshipped here as members of the Church of England monastic community, whose foundation was his life's work. If completed, this building would have been a replica of the mediaeval Priory church at nearby Llanthony. The cost of erecting and maintaining it and the adjacent monastery ("New Llanthony Abbey") was subscribed by the many spiritual children he acquired as an evangelist for "Jesus Only". Fr Ignatius is buried in the enclosed space in front of the altar.*

See also some late news from Philip on page 12.

Memories of 'Sister Ewens'

Hugh Allen

The late Ray Davies (1925-1996) was born and brought up in Abergavenny. His family belonged to the Salvation Army, and in his youth he regularly took part in its 'open airs'. Last autumn the local Chronicle featured extracts from his reminiscences, including these memories of Ignatius' Salvationist niece (her surname was misprinted as 'Ewing', which I have corrected; I have also abbreviated the account in places).

IN THE EARLY PART of WW2, two elderly sisters came to Abergavenny from their home in Brighton. The older and leader [actually the younger, Irene] was a Salvationist. She wore Army uniform, of quality material and cut, constantly. I never saw her out of uniform. They had money and took residence in one of the best parts of the town. The younger sister [the elder, Hilda] was not a Salvationist and did not attend Army services regularly but 'Sister' Ewens as she liked to be called attended all services and 'open airs' and spoke aristocratically at the latter to the puzzlement of both the public and her comrades.

She was a person of a distinctive and eccentric character whose descent upon the local corps was not quite taken as a heavenly visitation. Her gentle but insistent manner and touch of superiority, which was unfeigned but nonetheless felt to be condescending, was a burden not comfortably borne by the native comrades. I think they sensed that she was making a bid for control. She



probably wondered why fate had landed her among such outlandish people. But she was generous and she was indulged although made fun of behind her back, particularly by the younger bandsmen.

She presented herself – and why doubt her word since he too was an eccentric and they could be seen as a family pair? – as the niece of the

famous 19th century Father Ignatius who established his Anglo-Catholic order of brothers at 'New Llanthony Abbey'.

One of Ignatius's 'feats' or true visions was the recapitulation of the Biblical 'burning bush' at a spot near the abbey. Sister Ewens decided to revive her uncle's cause célèbre by an annual pilgrimage to the small, railed wayside cross which had been built at the side of the narrow valley path. In this pilgrimage the Salvation Army band was to be the major participant.

There were perhaps two or three of these occasions, presumably the anniversary of the 'miracle', before the Ewens sisters returned to their South Coast home. They were odd occasions indeed. The very idea of a Salvation Army band leading a pilgrim procession to a place of dubious vision by the founder of an exquisite Anglo-Catholic cult, given the Army founder's deep aversion to 'exaggeration' ('I can smell and exaggerator a mile off,' he is reported to have said in unconscious self parody) is in itself a curiosity. But the execution of the day was even more curious.

Having arrived by hired bus at Llanthony and dismounted in a farmer's field rented for the Sunday afternoon by Sister Ewens, the band assembled. We marched out of the field on to the valley road and played a martial hymn tune far removed in

style and sentiment from monkish chants. We headed for the wayside cross preceded by an ancient surviving brother of the order ['Brother David', who died in January 1941?] who carried and swung a censer. Here was ecumenism of a high kind surely, and endurance too because the combination of gradient and incense caught in the rising dust tested stamina. We pushed chokingly onward to the wayside cross and gathered around it for a short service of commemoration, conducted jointly by Sister Ewens and the aged monk, a probably unique amalgam of Anglo-Catholic and Salvation Army components.

Perhaps it was momentous for the two leaders; for young bandmen it was as funny as anything we had ever known. We marched back to the field, headed by the 'swinging' brother and Sister Ewens, trying to play on a bumpy decline but losing notes and footing in equal measure. In the field a town caterer provided teas. By then the field held many visitors drawn to the event more than [as much as?] by spectacle as by religion. What a strange business! At this distance I can hardly believe it happened, but it fitted in well as a mid-twentieth century addendum to a period in that place memorialised by religious, artistic and characterful strangeness.

Printed by kind permission of the Abergavenny Chronicle and the family of Ray Davies

The Calvary at Capel y Ffin

Newly restored



The Wayside Calvary, at which prayers are offered during the Pilgrimage procession, is now more visible in the landscape following the removal of overhanging branches

The
Inscription
reads:
Peace
to the
Wayfarer
Through
The Blood
Of Jesus





The 'Nieces' brought to life in Ray Davies' Memoir on pp. 7-8 were responsible for the creation of the Calvary



PILGRIMAGE PROGRAMME

Saturday 22nd August 2021

11.30AM

Sung Eucharist at **St Mary's Church, Hay-on-Wye [n.b. not at Llanthony]** followed by a BRING & SHARE lunch in the church grounds. There is a municipal car park at Hay

1.30PM ONWARDS

Drive to Capel-y-Ffin, with option of walking from the Gospel Pass? (A small car park is available). Stout footwear is essential and weather-proof clothing recommended if walking.

3.30PM

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

CAR PARKING is available for the Evensong at S. Mary's, and for the afternoon programme at Capel-y-Ffin.



At the end of the afternoon service, tea and cake are served at a modest charge on the Monastery lawn, courtesy of Mr & Mrs Knill and helpers.

Please note:

Next year's pilgrimage will take place on Saturday, August 20th, 2022.

[To be confirmed]

PLEASE SEE WEBSITE
www.fatherignatius.org.uk

Unable to travel this year?

THE VIRTUAL PILGRIMAGE & SERVICE prepared to replace the cancelled 2020 Events is on YouTube at: <https://bit.ly/3eIbPZs>

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' community and the subsequent history of his monastery is available from selected bookshops at £18.50 per copy. Also online from www.amazon.co.uk

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

LATE NEWS...

... FROM PHILIP CHATFIELD

I have been asked to design and carve the memorial to the late Catherine Rachel John, daughter of Donald Attwater. She was born in 1926 and died seven years ago in Lostwithiel, Cornwall. She wrote a book on the Saints of Cornwall. Father Ignatius preached his first public sermon at the nearby parish church of St Samson at Golant. Donald Attwater was a resident of Capel y ffin.*

*We plan to return to Donald Attwater in 2022