



at Glenstal boarding school.

Glenstal monks go underground

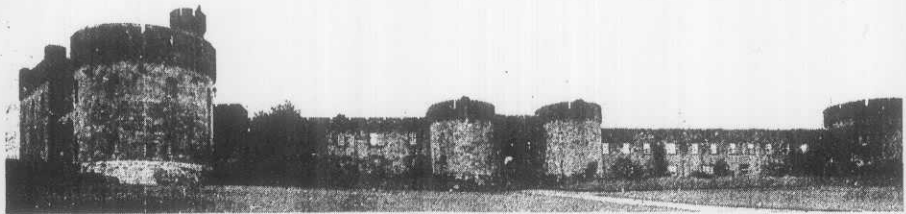
WHILE THE IMPRESSIVE Gregorian Chant has echoed for nearly 60 years from the Abbey at Glenstal, an even more ancient liturgy is about to be revived there.

Work has started on the provi-

sion of an underground Byzantine Chapel—underneath the present church—where some of the devotion and colour of ancient Constantinople will be re-enacted.

"It will be part of our work for

ecumenism," said one of its promoters, Brother Anthony. The monks are not sure yet when the chapel will be completed but it is expected to be opened this summer.



Glenstal Castle, home of the Benedictine monks for 60 years.

Abbey's low-key diamond jubilee

By PATRICIA FEEHILY
THIS YEAR sees the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Benedictine Abbey at Glenstal. But there won't be any big celebrations. Like the golden jubilee, this event too will pass relatively unnoticed.

The Abbot of six years, Fr. Celestine Cullen, prefers to keep a low profile. He doesn't attend civic functions himself and has no intention of holding a public celebration.

"But a monastery," Fr. Cullen insists, "must always be a place where people can come easily."

Focal point

Like the monasteries of mediaeval Ireland, it has become the focal point of the local community, a place where "Men of the road," as Fr. Cullen calls them, come for a meal and a clean-up before hitting the road again, and where people from a wide area come to meditate and pray.

It is also rural east Limerick's biggest employer. Over 30 local people are employed on the farm, at craft work and as cleaners and housekeepers.

Despite the "low profile" of the monks, the occasional glimpses of shadowy figures flitting down long corridors, the remarkable stillness and the imposing edifices of the former seat of the Barrington family, Glenstal has become a by-word for hospitality.

You sense it everywhere from the moment you see the sign at reception telling you to lift the telephone if there's nobody there, to when Brother Michael arrives with steaming hot coffee and cakes in one of what appears to be a variety of hospitality rooms.

A monastery in the 20th century could bear little resemblance in numbers anyway to a monastery of the tenth century when maybe a thousand monks would be praying together, but unlike most other communities, Glenstal is growing.

There are over 40 monks at present at Glenstal and another group in its sister house in Nigeria.

The Abbot refuses to comment on the reason for Glenstal's increase. Any comment, he says, couldn't be a reflection on other Communities.

Founder

But among the 40 there is only



The Abbot of Glenstal, Dom Celestine Cullen, with the last survivor of the Abbey's founding fathers 60 years ago, Belgian-born, Fr. Athanasius.

one of the Belgian founding fathers left in Glenstal today—Fr. Athanasius, who celebrated the 60th anniversary of his ordination just before Christmas, when another monk, Fr. Placid, celebrated his golden jubilee.

Fr. Athanasius still mans the reception at the monastery and retains his strong Belgian accent.

Glenstal, of course, has become famous throughout the country for its boys' boarding school, which the Abbot vows will continue despite the fact that educational policies have in recent years sounded the death knell of many famous boarding establishments.

Accusations of elitism and sexism are met head on by the Abbot.

Certainly fees are high, he says, but Glenstal is by no means the most expensive school in the country. It has 200 boarders. Attempts were made in recent years, some of them by the Abbot himself, to open up a day school

Not only that but Brother Timothy has taken several sporting organisations under his wing and gives them all the help he can.

Fr. Celestine has renovated some old houses on the estate and handed them over to the scouts and the girl guides whose members can now enjoy the splendour of the woods and lakes of Glenstal.

The attempts of the monks to alleviate the hardships of travelling people are now focussed mainly on looking after vagabond men. "Those men of the road" are looked after by Fr. Kevin.

These are men who travel the roads alone. They come to Glenstal just for a good meal, one or maybe two nights in a real bed, a general clean-up and then they are gone again. "There must be about 300 of them," says the Abbot. "They are all running from something. We never try to change their lifestyle. You could say we refit them."

But despite the role that the monastery plays in the community, Fr. Celestine returns always to what he terms, "the underlying ideal of Benedictine life." It is essentially a place of prayer and worship. The monks follow the age-old ceremonies of the Order, and the solemn liturgy and prayer of the Church sung in choir is often witnessed by big congregations at Sunday Mass. And the Retreat facilities at the Abbey are widely availed of.

Another long-standing monastic tradition also goes on—the art of craft-work. Brother Ciaran has become a noted woodturner, and his products are now being marketed and sold in the US by Kilkenny Design Workshops.

Caherdavin

Fr. Henry, a metalworker, has just completed a job at Caherdavin Church.

It is now 24 years since the first ecumenical conference was held in Glenstal. Since then the annual event has become world famous and has attracted scholars from Europe and the U.S.

"But progress in ecumenism," Abbot Celestine admits, "is slow."

In late spring and early summer the proliferous rhododendrons bloom along the winding avenue to the monastery. There is birdsong everywhere. The "men of the road" are coming in greater numbers. People from North Tipperary and East Limerick come on retreat. The doors of the monastery are always open.



John Allen (left), accountant, and George Fleming, School of Professional Studies, at the Livewire announcement.

LOOKING FOR LOCAL BUSINESS LIVEWIRES

By LEADER REPORTER

A NEW SCHEME being pioneered in the Mid-West region by a unique partnership between private and state agencies, geared to get young people to work for themselves as "livewire" entrepreneurs, was launched by the Minister for Industry, Commerce and Energy, Mr. Michael Noonan, this week.

Sponsored by Irish Shell and Shannon Development, the pilot scheme features a special business advisory service for all participants in addition to total prize money of £4,000 for the award winners.

The "live-wire" scheme is intended to encourage young people aged between 18 and 25 who are living in the Mid-West region to create their own businesses in the manufacturing or service sectors.

Mr. Noonan said he was confident that the partnership between public and private interests would prove to be a "very fruitful one" and would in time be extended by Shell, in association with other agencies, to other parts of the country.

Real goals

"This scheme offers real goals and awards for those young people who are prepared to come up with viable business plans," said Mr. Noonan.

"It pledges on-going support and advice from not only the organisers but a team of expert advisers on a one-to-one basis," he said.

Mr. T. A. Callanan, executive director, Shannon Development, said that in joining with Irish Shell to pioneer the very worthwhile "Live-wire" programme, his company saw it as offering consider-

scheme, said Mr. Callanan, was the submission of viable business plans by entrants which should get out detailed courses of action to make the proposed enterprise prosper, taking account of all the commercial and other circumstances.

Mr. John Wittington, managing director, Irish Shell, welcomed the fact that the project is a joint enterprise between private and public sectors, and added that he and every expectation that they would complement each other's strengths.

He stressed the value of the role of advisors in the "live-wire" programme, and said that for many young people sound advice from experienced business people with knowledge of the local business scene was as crucial to success as raising the necessary capital.

Valuable cash awards sponsored by Irish Shell and other awards are being presented for the most outstanding business proposals received. A £3,000 award will be given to the entry deemed to be the most outstanding overall and £1,000 to the best community enterprise business proposal.

Sponsoring

In addition the accountancy firm of Craig Gardner is sponsoring an accountancy advice award consisting of 12 consultancy days for the recipient, and the advertising firm of Momentum Advertising is sponsoring a similar award in the marketing consultancy area.

Shannon Development will give a 12 months rent moratorium on a company factory or workspace unit for the most outstanding small industry or industrial service business proposal.

The "live-wire" concept of helping young people to create their own work was originally developed in Scotland by Shell UK in



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