



# CAIM

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

CAIM is the Celtic word meaning 'encompassment' or 'encircling'

## Spring is in the air!

Winter has given way to spring and all around us in the gardens and hedgerows, new life is bursting forth. Plants and shrubs planted in the bare ground in the autumn, having taken root over the winter, are now growing and providing colour and variety to the front gardens of Nether Springs.

The large walled garden, where our pigs have worked so hard in turning over the land, awaits the arrival this week of its polytunnels and the digging of trenches for the sowing and planting of fruit and vegetables and fruit trees in the orchard.

The ground has been well prepared, carefully tended by pigs and people, trotters and forks and is now ready for the sowing, planting, growing, reaping and producing that will put food on the Community's table and bless our Mother House and its guests.

**This is.. a season characterised by new beginnings.. which should cause us much rejoicing and thankfulness to God.**

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The emergence of new life and growth was in evidence within Nether Springs, at a recent Chapter weekend. The Community's leadership network, together with our Trustees, gathered to share about many happenings within the life of the Community. 'Spring is in the air' would be a good way to describe what is happening across the Community. We have almost ninety people in the Novitiate Process; Nether Springs is buzzing with people young and old, new faces and others returning; there are fresh initiatives and missional happenings across Europe, North America and Australasia; there is the prospect of a new Community CD; we're seeing new and creative ways of journeying together, and fresh ways of celebrating Easter Workshop; we're involved in re-writing Community resources; and the next generation is emerging to take the Community into the future.

This is indeed a season characterised by new beginnings, and one which should cause us much rejoicing and thankfulness to God.

One of the notable new developments is the 'official' recognition of two of our three Community Houses: Bridge House, Shillingford, Oxfordshire ([www.bridge-house.org.uk](http://www.bridge-house.org.uk)) and House of Azar, Herefordshire ([www.houseofazar.co.uk](http://www.houseofazar.co.uk)). Duncan & Lesley and Philip & Rosemary are pictured here. L'Abri a Suvigny, in Normandy, France, ([www.northumbriacommunityinfrance.net](http://www.northumbriacommunityinfrance.net)) will follow later this year

*Cont'd on pg 7*



## Words of encouragement, and names for your prayer-pot...

Having said Morning & Evening Prayer for many years from the Anglican Prayer Book, I swapped when I discovered Celtic Daily Prayer, and have enjoyed it thoroughly.

The Midday Office holds within it gems that I have known for many years. I pray that many will discover the beauty and appropriateness of our Prayer Book. With blessings, *Robert de Caen, Australia.*

While going through a crisis in my ministry I came across the Celtic Daily Prayer book and I haven't put it down since. God has used it to navigate me through troubled waters and to keep on deepening my relationship with Him. Time spent in the Daily Prayer book has become an integral part of my life and has been fundamentally used by God to draw me closer and closer to Himself.

I want to say a simple but deeply felt 'THANK YOU' for being there so God could use you to minister to me and through me to many others. It is my dream that I might one day have the joy of saying this in person but that is all in His hands. May you know the love and grace of God in all you are and do. God bless you all. *Bill*

I have been suffering from fibromyalgia. It is painful, isolating and can easily lead to despair. The format and resources of CDP have been a source of strength in what is, for me, a difficult time. The handful of scripture verses prescribed for each day's readings are... now just what I need and can cope with. I am discovering afresh how much can be contained in so little, if you give the attention and time they deserve. And in the other readings and meditations, I often come across words that speak to me.

I simply want to acknowledge what your contribution through CDP has meant to me. I would find it even more difficult to cope without it.

Thank you. *John*

### Welcome to the Spring edition of Caim!

All the seasons have their special poignancy, but there is something particularly energising about Spring. And to see the new life at our 'new' Mother House this week was lovely. We've been at Acton for a whole year now (so when does it stop being 'new?') and the front garden, with its garden rooms, is looking established. And this week work is underway to get the walled garden into shape, now that the pigs have turned it over for us!

Lots to be thankful for, and lots of reminders of God's promises and His faithfulness.

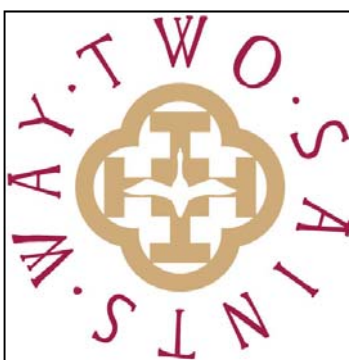
Enjoy this edition of Caim! *Jeff & Ingrid*

*News of two pilgrimages came to us separately. Then we noticed that they are culminating in the same area, on the same day...*

### Coventry Pilgrimage - 26th March to 1st April

The proposal for a pilgrimage arose from: Robin Trew's experience of leading diocesan pilgrimages on the Camino de Santiago; from the recognition of Coventry Cathedral as an international centre of pilgrimage by the worldwide Community of the Cross of Nails; from the experience of a local group associated with the Northumbria Community prayer walking along the River Sherbourne and parts of the Coventry Way; and from the inspiring story, told in Stephen Verney's 'Fire in Coventry', of the Cross of Nails 40-day pilgrimage around the Diocese before the consecration of Coventry's new Cathedral on 25th May 1962. There are many opportunities to join in. For more information go to [www.sherbourne.trust.net](http://www.sherbourne.trust.net)

### Staffordshire Pilgrimage - 25th March to 1st April: 'Forward to the Ancient Future'



Come and join the pilgrims on the inaugural journey along the new Two Saints Way pilgrimage route between Chester and Lichfield. There are also evening meetings where the pilgrims will share their stories and you can find out more about the Two Saints Way and the Community of St Chad. At 2:30pm on

Sunday 1 April at the end of the pilgrimage the first interpretation panel will be opened by the Bishop of Lichfield at St Chad's Well. For more information: [www.twosaintsaway.org.uk](http://www.twosaintsaway.org.uk)

### Prophetic Voices: the contemporary witness of Anabaptists, Celts and the new monastic movements

– a conference to be presented by Roy Searle and Stuart Murray Williams in Derbyshire on Tuesday 17 April and in Birmingham on Saturday 19 May. For further information visit [www.anabaptistnetwork.com](http://www.anabaptistnetwork.com) and click on 'upcoming events'.



*Ken & Claire Humphrey are part of the Community's leadership network, and we asked them to say a little about themselves:*

**We live in inner-city Belfast with our three children Danny (13), Sian (11) and Erin (8). Claire works as a Children's Services Manager with the children's charity Barnardo's, focussing upon improving the educational attainment of disadvantaged children.**

**Ken has a long history of directing a local faith-based community development initiative** with the twin aims of 'Social Justice and Reconciliation in the name of God'. In recent years he has tried to turn this experience to use as a Regional Training and Development Officer with the Churches Community Work Alliance, the purpose of which is to enable Christians to engage compassionately in areas in which social and economic difficulties prevail.

Claire and Ken have enjoyed a rapport with Northumbria Community for twenty years. We have always felt a deep resonance with the Community's emphases on 'church without walls', engaging on the margins, being with people 'where they are', and 'real-speaking'. We have felt at peace in a Christian context that challenges the posturing and positioning and pretence that prevails in many churches. We have enjoyed the emphasis of embrace rather than judgement, on inclusion rather than disqualification, of approval rather than side-lining. And have appreciated the rhythm of prayer and work and the call to the seeking of God in the cell of our hearts.

A couple of years ago we thought it timely to help provide a conversational space for those in and around Belfast who were keen to explore greater connection with Northumbria Community. Most had become familiar with Celtic Daily Prayer or the Community by referrals from friends.

If there was a common experience amongst those who gathered, it was that Northumbria Community seemed to address their spirituality in a new and deeply needed way. Some were disillusioned church-goers, some had abandoned church-going, and some were contented church-goers with spiritual thirst.

We agreed as a group to explore what journeying with the Community might mean and decided to go through the modules of the novitiate process as a group

We have just recently finished the Novitiate course, hosted in a large and generous home. We had sat for one night a month in a large circle and in small groups, wrestling with

Availability, Vulnerability, Hospitality and the Heretical Imperative. Conversation was vigorous, questions were tough, and agreement and search were common.

When the course ended, it was clear that those who had gathered journeyed together in a very meaningful way. The obvious question was: 'Well - what next?'

Some were reaching for an exchange of accountability, recognising that following this Rule required consistent companionship. Some had no church to find this in. Others could not find such accompaniment in the church they were in.

We went off for a weekend, at the beginning of February to a castle which over-looked the snow-capped Mountains of Mourne. We enjoyed great meals together, a daily rhythm of prayer and reflection, and great craic. We had discussions about what shape relating together around the Community and the Rule might take in the future.

Different people wanted different things, due, mostly, to the varied faith contexts and circumstances each experienced. All, nonetheless, wanted to stay connected to those with whom they had come to enjoy communication on the deep questions of how to walk well with God.

It was clear that a 'mixed economy' of gathering would emerge. Ken encouraged those gathered to think of what was happening in terms of a group walk on a beach. You know the kind of walk, where people arrive in a minibus, or cluster of cars, and then set off together for a walk along a lengthy strand. People join conversation for a while, then drop back to talk with others. Reflective types will want to walk alone for a while, then sidle-up to someone to tell of their insights. Some will take their shoes off and paddle as they walk, and so on. The beach can contain us all. We are united by our common walk amidst the same majesty, even if our paces differ and the cluster of others around us ebbs and flows.

Some will meet each week. These and all the others will gather each month. Some, or perhaps all of these will become 'Companions' or 'Friends' of the Community.

We are aware that there are still other people whom we haven't met who are interested in the Community, the Rule, New Monasticism, the Novitiate process, or to reach for a holistically applied journey with the mystical and beautiful Christ.

The way ahead isn't exactly clear (it may be hidden now!), but it's intriguing to find out who is going to draw alongside us on the beach! *Ken & Claire Humphrey*

## **NORTHumbria in the NORTHwest... ..Northwest United States, that is!**

Pacific North West, USA, Northumbria Community Day - Saturday 23rd June at Arnada Abbey, Vancouver, WA. Time: 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Donation: \$25.00

Following the lives of three Celtic saints, we will learn about Northumbria Community, as a way of life living The Way. Participants are requested to contribute to a potluck midday meal, and if you like, bring something of your own creativity (poem, writing, song, dance, art) to share in a ceilidh evening. To tell us you're coming email Catherine Davies: [kate@pilgrimpath.net](mailto:kate@pilgrimpath.net)

## Easter Workshop Update

### Conversing across the miles

The Easter Workshop has been a significant event in the life of the Northumbria Community when Companions and Friends have been able to gather in various locations to share stories and ideas, to study and reflect, and to be creative together. It is also recognised that not everyone is able to attend such gatherings. So how can we engage in conversation with each other and express our togetherness?



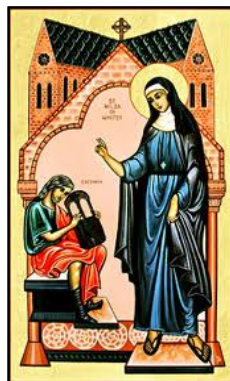
In the previous edition of Caim, we outlined a model for encouraging an on-going conversation within the Community across the miles.

Using the Christian calendar (Liturgical cycle) as a framework, we proposed using some of our existing liturgies as waymarks to guide our journey with a particular theme throughout the year in order to stimulate our thinking and to inform our living as Companions and Friends.

### Getting the Conversation started

To this end, a working group of us have started the conversation. We have reflected on the proposed model of an annual cycle of thinking, reflecting and sharing ideas about particular Community themes, values and principles. Suggestions, questions and constructive criticism have been aired and shared, and now begins the process of refining and trialling the model. The ultimate aim of all this conversation is that we may encounter more of Christ in one another and more effectively reflect Him to those among whom we live and work.

## Journeying Together with Hild



As mentioned in earlier editions of Caim, the year's theme explores what it means to be 'Together' as a diverse and dispersed Community. Various members of the working group have graciously offered their time to create resources based on the 'Follow the Example' liturgies from Celtic Daily Prayer. This Easter we will start to consider our common way for living by

using the Hild liturgy as a stimulus.

This resource includes activities that can be done individually or in a group, and are suitable for different ages and learning preferences. These are offered as starting points so please feel free to amend and adapt as appropriate.

We would encourage you to use this material and, if at all possible, to gather with other Companions and Friends over the Easter period, so that by intentionally journeying together, we express and strengthen the common heart and vision of our Community. For information about where and when Community gatherings are taking place, please check the website regularly. If you are planning a gathering of whatever size, please let us know so that we can post dates, locations and contact information on the website.

We would value hearing from you about how you used the resource, any ideas and creativity it may have inspired, and any constructive feedback on the activities themselves. It would be really encouraging if you were willing to write a brief summary for Caim too!

This resource will be made available by mid-March on the Community website and by email.

*Anita Haigh*

*On behalf of the Working Party*

*[anita.haigh@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:anita.haigh@northumbriacommunity.org)*

Did you know that there is opportunity to share an 'online Office' together each month?

On the first Saturday of every month, an online meeting room opens for us at 7.40pm (UK time) and at 8pm we share a liturgy together. You need to be registered with an account in the Forum in order to obtain the link to the meeting room. It's very easy, so you needn't be frightened off by the technology.

If you'd like to join in, put the dates in your diary, and explore the 'Online Office' thread in the forum to find out more.

If you have any items for prayer which you would like to have included in our Community Prayer Guide, then do please email it to [prayerguide@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:prayerguide@northumbriacommunity.org)

Remember that the Prayer Guide is published three times per year, and so we need to plan well in advance - send your item in good time, and the team will endeavour to include it appropriately!





*In the last issue of Caim we reported that Glen Graham had been welcomed as a Companion in Community. Around that time, Jean Watson had a conversation with him which she felt others might like to hear...*

**Glen has been a Christian for 26 years and a minister for the last fifteen. About four years ago, he woke up to the realisation that his prayer life was as dry as could be and that what he believed about God had become staid.** He felt he was almost 'going through the motions' rather than being passionate and he wanted to find a means of getting that passion back and to be able to practice a ministry that fitted him and not other people's expectations. He felt that he was too often trying to conform to other people's expectations but as a consequence his life was lacking in integrity and he found this debilitating.

As part of his seeking, he prayed and went to a meeting that Peter Webb was present at. Afterwards, Glen asked Peter to be his spiritual director and he agreed to do this. A couple of months later they met at 'Poustinia', Peter's home. Peter directed Glen to Northumbria Community's Daily Office and he agreed to give that a start. As a blind person, Glen learnt the Offices off by heart by singing along to the CD. (He was very moved at his Welcome Service as both the Confessions of Faith and Canticle were sung. These two in particular are very precious to him as he would sing them when doing the dishes.)

Glen took the Offices away and whilst he was on sabbatical Rob Davies gave him the Rule of Life in Braille and he found in there exactly the things he had been

trying to express and desired so much and so he began his journey towards the Novitiate Process. A year later he came on the Community Weekend and realised again that this was a living reality for him and immediately following that weekend he went to Scotland to see his grandmother who was seriously ill. Only hours after he left her, she died. His grandmother had been Northumbrian by birth and Glen realised that she had naturally reflected the Rule in her life, and he had learnt Availability and Vulnerability from her example.

Glen went through the Novitiate Process and found that every module was appropriate to something that was going on in his life and ministry. As he read through the modules, he found they were part of his DNA in every way: the language that was used, the principles of the Rule and the example of contemplation, story and hospitality. He was particularly drawn to the heretical imperative. Here was a framework to live out the Christian life without the dogmas, the stuff that keeps people out. He also reread the gospels and realised that in Jesus he lived out the Rule, that it underpinned the spirit of his ministry and he found himself falling in love with Jesus again.

Glen has a feeling of 'coming home' to a group of people who really are family, his local group and Northumbrians, sharing a quality of friendship and companionship that he as a blind person had never experienced before; even in church he had felt excluded. He had never before felt the fellowship of kindred minds and lives. He decided to take the step of becoming a Companion in this family, and is keenly waiting to know what is going to happen next.

*Lee Johnson writes of a* **LANCASHIRE GATHERING**



**A bright winter's day saw 21 Companions and Friends join together in Yealand Village Hall for another enjoyable gathering.**

Di and Vince Smith, together with Michael Connaughton, had put together an interesting and varied range of activities. Michael led the day, with music for worship from Vince, and Meryl & Peter Stowe (with his accordion!)

The theme for the day was 'Alone and Together' – we had readings, reflection, prayer time and craft activities. Marie Simmons inspired each of us to make a coracle, all materials carefully prepared beforehand in true 'Blue Peter' style. This really taxed the handicraft skills of some

of us (myself included!) as we grappled with felt, pipe cleaners, and needle and thread. We each made a solitary monk – all part of the day exploring our journey with God both 'individually' and as part of 'community'.

Food and drink, as usual, were an important part of the day as people from Cheshire, Manchester, Southport, Carlisle and Sedbergh enjoyed eating and chatting. It was great to have Norman and Ingrid Cumming join us from their new home in Barnoldswick (near Skipton). New faces appear at each gathering, which really does make it extra-special. If you haven't been before, do come along. Future gathering dates:

May 19th at St John's church, Yealand Conyers  
August 18th at St John's church, Yealand Conyers  
November 17th, venue to be decided.

All mini gatherings run from midday till 5pm-ish. Bring food to share. More info and directions from Diane Smith: dianesmith1@mac.com 01524 782341

*Malcolm Nicholas wrote to us:*

## Heart, Home and Hospitality Retreat

**Nether Springs, February 2012 - Some recollections and reflections**

What is Hospitality? Most of us found our thinking revolved around the question: 'How can we use our home?' This led naturally to some tentative suggestions: Hospitality is 'inviting people in'. Hospitality is 'creating a welcoming space'. Hospitality is 'offering a meal'. Some of our number were already engaged in forms of hospitality; others had ideas formulated and were eager to get underway. As the retreat progressed we would hear of some initiatives by Community Companions in the UK and France. But first there must be a standing back from the practicalities, for more fundamental matters must be addressed.

Hospitality does not begin with the home, but with the heart. It is not merely a calculation of available space, food or resources, but the generation of generous love, interest and acceptance. Hospitality is attitudinal – the work of the Spirit within. The practicalities are important, and in due time guidance was given as to how these might be considered, but these are not the starting point. Hospitality is not simply something we do, but something God does within us – a work of formation. This discovery led us into unexpected waters!

**Hospitality does not begin with the home, but with the heart. It is not merely a calculation... but the generation of generous love, interest and acceptance.**

God comes into his world seeking human hospitality. He will find it sadly lacking. There will be no room at the inn. There will be no safe home under Herod's rule in the land of his birth. Later the only hospitality on offer will be that of the cross. But before all this Gabriel comes to a young Jewess, and secures her unconditional 'Yes'. Here creativity bursts into life, and it begins with the hospitality of the womb! Here is a phrase laden with meaning; a veritable banquet for reflection.



in our homes and our guest-relationships.

As Mary became hospitable to God in her womb in order to reveal Christ in the world, so we too must become hospitable to God in order to reveal Christ

Among the best-known biblical homes of hospitality is that at Bethany (Luke 10.38-42). It was Martha who took the initiative and invited Jesus in – and Martha who moaned about all the work! Had she invited the itinerant preacher as



a matter of duty? Had she just assumed that Mary would share the work? How hard it must have been to receive from Jesus those words that hurt so deeply.

Martha saw the priorities in the practicalities. Mary found them in her heart, and Martha was invited to do the same. I think she learned the lesson – for as I ponder: where did Jesus find true hospitality? I find it is in this home at Bethany. Of all the places in the New Testament, this emerges as his 'place to be'.

This same account raises questions about the disciples. Did they accompany their master into the Bethany home? How did they feel when they saw Martha slaving in the kitchen? Did they offer to prepare the veg. or do the washing up? How would such an offer have been received, particularly given there was a woman sitting at Jesus' feet, apparently doing nothing at all? Guests, it seems, are likely to feel awkward and unable to respond, unless they understand the house norms.

The house norms at Nether Springs made it possible for several children to be with us during this half-term week. Hospitality was exemplified as the communion liturgy was



made child-friendly. That evening a special dessert treat emerged from the kitchen – Dirt cake served in a flower-pot, complete with hand-made paper flower

and red 'worms'! (The child in me procured a spare, and it was yummy.) But liturgy and food without heart would have left children cold. Hospitality flowed from the heart of each participant. Here was the acceptance, love and trust that gave home and affirmation to children and anxious parents alike.

Here we received too, as children's hearts opened to us in breakfast eagerness and bedtime hugs. Yes, we receive hospitality – and it is necessary that we should. In receiving the hospitality of others, we become vulnerable. No longer in control, no longer setting the house rules, the agenda, the timing or the menu. *Cont'd on pg 7*

*Cont'd from pg 6* If we wish to offer hospitality then we must enter that vulnerable place of instruction, just as the nurse learns when she becomes the patient or the teacher when he becomes the student. Moreover, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' we are taught. Yes, but we should not deny to others the blessing of being givers.

Our thoughts around the coming of God as a child brought another reflection. As children develop they first suppose they alone are the centre of all things. It is only after some months that an awareness of self and non-self begins to develop. And so the emerging question: How do I give hospitality to that which is non-self? How can I accept that which is all around me? How do I relate to my environment?



A moment of serendipity! During the intercessions at Morning Prayer the leader prayed for our planet ....., but I did not hear planet. Instead I heard 'We pray for our playmates: sky and earth; trees and ocean ....'

How wonderful! How

transforming! Looking out of the window I witnessed playmate wind come breezily to engage the arms of playmate trees, and dance. At coffee break I joined them, wind ruffling my hair affectionately; distant ocean waves bouncing back sun's rays in glistening delight. Perhaps we are taught too easily that these things are non-self. Hospitality might mean that we receive them to ourselves again, enabling us to join in their dance with child-like joy.

This self / non-self duo invites the question: How can I be hospitable to myself amid my non-self environment?

Much, I am sure, can be said – but this is the thought that came to me: Let us be willing to receive not only the critical feedback, but the positive affirmations too. Too often we take to heart the things we get wrong; the things we need to change. It is as though the only thing we see on our school report is 'Could do better'. This is not to invite a false pride or unworthy satisfaction. It is to acknowledge with gratitude the ways in which God enables and equips us, and to recognise that by his grace we each have much to offer. No exceptions. Our God of eternity has never made people on Friday afternoons with one eye on the clock, short-changing his creatures in the rush to get off for the weekend!

This time with God and with others exploring his purposes of hospitality has taken a systems man and placed his plans on the back burner. They may well be resurrected, but first there is heart work to be done. Inverted priorities were never going to be a good foundation.

Through many discussions in Community one phrase has been constant: 'God will send those he wants to come'. This is not easy for a systems man to hear, but it has been said too often to ignore.

Our return to our recently-acquired Norfolk home has brought our first house guest for a month's stay – a hairy Labrador/Retriever cross! So we are giving respite care to an elderly canine and some relief to parents of a young family. It seems to be the pressing need at this time. Perhaps there are things to be learned before we are trusted with humans! Perhaps we needed another playmate! Perhaps God's got a sense of humour! Probably it's all three! *Malcolm Nicholas, Norfolk*

*We'd love to hear your thoughts and comments on this subject, and on Malcolm's reflections. Email them to [caim@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:caim@northumbriacommunity.org)*

### *Cont'd from pg 1*

The stories behind the emergence of these houses will appear in subsequent editions of Caim, but their establishment is both exciting and significant. Following the dedication and recognition blessing at Nether Springs, I was seated next to some of our younger people in Community: Daniel and Katrin Sikinger, who are currently on the house team and have a heart to explore the establishing of a house of prayer and hospitality in their homeland, and Benjamin Bruggeman from Belgium who similarly carries a vision for a house in his country.

We first met Benjamin at IBTS in Prague some years ago. He is one of a number of young people from across Europe who are finding their vocation within the life of our Community, and who carry vision, energy, initiative and a commitment to our way for living that is finding expression in various cultures and contexts.

A Community team will, by the time Caim is published, be travelling to Prague for our annual week at IBTS, conducting and leading lectures, seminars and workshops. En route, the team will stay in Belgium with Benjamin and link up with some of our musicians, who are performing at four

secular music concerts with the Franconian harpist Andy Lang in Germany.

The monastic and missional finding life and expression throughout the Community: in hearts and homes; at Nether Springs, our Mother House; in other Community Houses; in Community Groups, Gatherings, and teams on the road, 'wherever the Father leads us'.

As Spring leads us through the Lenten period of self examination and reflection, we prepare to celebrate the greatest bursting forth of new life, the resurrection of Christ at Easter. As John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford and our Anglican Visitor says in his excellent "Living Easter Through The Year" book: 'Easter is the most astonishing day in the history of the world. But after a morning's celebration, it seems to be all over. We find ourselves moving on to less exalted matters. We have a Bank Holiday...'

His book reminds us that everything about our lives as believers is bathed in the glow of the resurrection - we really ought to enjoy living Easter through the year.

May the reality of the new life that dawned that first Easter illuminate our ordinary, everyday lives as we journey - alone and together - into the future. *Roy Searle*



## *We asked Sarah Berry to tell us about the recent* **Northumbria Retreat at Canterbury, Florida, USA**

### Our approach:

Standing in line at the airport with excited children talking of Mickey Mouse and Cinderella - and truth to tell, feeling a wee bit envious - not knowing quite what to expect from our own week of quiet while they happily anticipate each adventure...

### Our daily rhythm:

Each day - Awakened by birdsong and milky warm air... ended with compline and a lake glowing by moonlight...



The office - morning and evening in the beautiful and oh-so-quiet chapel by a lakeside garden. Our scripture readings and meditations

were themed around the Sermon on the Mount with the Beatitudes at the center. We were on a journey of 'go to your cell' plunging into the depths of poverty, grief, humility, working our way through hunger, purity and peace - only to arrive where we first began - exile - now able to embrace this as pilgrimage - a journey with Jesus at our side - a road He has not only walked before us but has also prepared - held together by Mercy.

Midday prayer in the gazebo in the woods - a walk around the lake, journeying through the prayer stations, sitting quietly or sketching on the terrace - down by the lake watching Mr. Turtle watching us...



Food glorious Food! Three times a day, we were treated to flavours, colours, and incredible variety and the important question each day was NOT one of the big Northumbrian three - Who is it that you seek? How then shall we live? or How do we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? But... What are we going to eat?! Such choice - so many places to look - the salad bar, the cookie, cake and pie table, the hot food place where artichokes appear in the

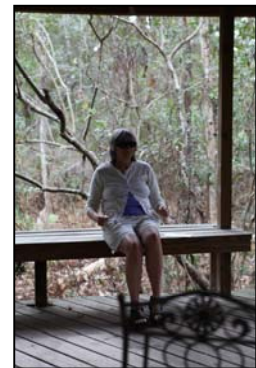
lasagna and asparagus in the scrambled eggs...and in every corner - yet, something else - ice cream!!

Hospitality - Canterbury took such good care of us and graciously moved out of the way - allowing us to rearrange

the



furniture, take over the chapel with our prayer stations, clutter up the living room with our art work, our notes and our books. We wanted a fire - it was there crackling merrily in the fireplace, with more wood at the ready. The rooms were spotless, light and airy - looking out on exotic trees and an ever changing landscape of wind on water, sun and shade and wildlife scurrying about - providing endless entertainment. And when did the housekeeping fairies perform their magic?! Our next big question became..."How can we go home?"...



And along the way we had fun! We were introduced to our artistic side by Pam - who showed us how art can become prayer - when words are not enough. We lived through the story of the man born blind and his healing - a gentle and humorous story led by Carla - we had our 'coracle' day to the beach and returned to the peace of Canterbury and an evening campfire where we listened to stories and songs and beautiful music - courtesy of Norma and Ben. Later in the week we took a closer look at the Northumbria Rule with Sarah and Margene (pictured right) and just how well the Sermon on the Mount is distilled and captured by the words Availability and Vulnerability. We loitered (with intent), we learned, we laughed... a lot. We became family.



We also became more comfortable with Paradox - with Pam providing a watercolor visual of two trees - the one looking very dead and leafless - the other looking very alive - festooned with lovely moss. However, the moss could be slowly killing this tree while the dead tree was not dead - just resting - vibrant life was going on beneath the ground - out of sight - preparing for an explosion of color in the spring. And here we were hidden away encountering the power and majesty of the 'Unseen Real' while just a few





miles away were the big attractions - promising so much and yet, as Carla reminded us - when all is said and done - the 'seen unreal'...

Later at the airport, standing amidst cranky children and tired parents, I know Canterbury has given us the true miracle.

Mind you, next time I am planning an extra day - to visit the 'World of Harry Potter' so I can get my own wand and marauder's map...*Sarah Berry*

## Sacred Space

Funny, Lord,  
for me to be here on this  
rather wild piece of ground  
hidden inside the city.

Only the muffled roar of traffic  
and fleeting glimpse of  
camouflaged rooftops  
tell me of things outside  
this rugged lakeside sanctuary.

The Cell in the City.

"Come in," it calls.  
"Step into the quiet  
and listen for a time.  
Leave your clanging,  
shouting day and  
join me in stillness.  
Wait for me here  
for I will find you—  
only to release you  
again to attend to your  
noisy, tumultuous life.

*But you will be changed."*

Katherine Moore  
Canterbury Retreat Center, Oviedo, Florida  
February 1, 2012

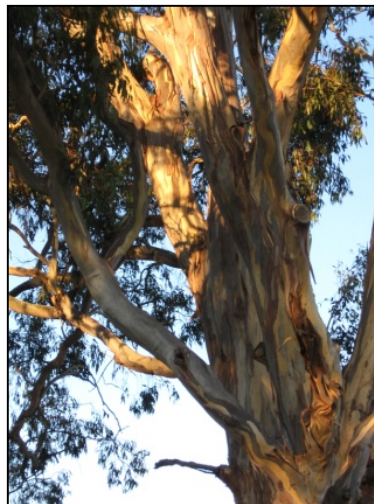


*Diane Sekuloff writes:*

## Wandering the Celtic Way, Down Under

During the past year, I had the privilege of taking time out to do some graduate studies in a far away land – Australia. It seemed all the more distant because my father was ill when I left Canada, and my son in a crisis, but the call of God, and the circumstances as they fell into place became so imperative, I felt I could do no other than to go, and see what God would show me.

I had long entertained the thought that the Christian Year had seemed very integrated with symbols of northern hemisphere origins, and wondered if I would find a different way of looking at the passing seasons through a different lense. What I discovered was a land filled with signs of God in keeping with the passing liturgical seasons, to which nobody was paying much attention at all!



I arrived just around the beginning of Lent – and noted the beginnings of rain had brought a preponderance of purple blossoms on the Tibouchina trees and other shrubs. The colour of repentance, and royalty, reminding us of the season of reorienting ourselves towards God when we have lost our way. The peeling bark of the

Eucalyptus trees, revealing the brilliantly coloured inner bark, spoke of our need to use this season to strip away any trappings of respectability that may mask the openness of our hearts from being examined and formed anew by God. The tree, like us, just shed that outer adorning in order to grow.

As Easter approached, the purple flowers gave way to red, and then to pink, then to white, and finally to a complete riot of colour. The air was filled with the fragrance of jasmine, azaleas, roses, camellias, orchids, banksias, bird of paradise, and more. Most striking however, was the crucifixion orchid, each floweret displaying a yellow cross on an orange base.

*Cont'd on pg10*



*Cont'd from pg9*

We moved on through the Easter season to Pentecost, marked by many yellow flowers, of which some late blooming wattle brought to mind the Aboriginal call to move out. It was the wattle which told them to move to the coast for a season. Does the Spirit not direct us to go into all the world, rather than gathering around the feet of our risen Saviour?

The long season of Trinity/Pentecost or ordinary time took us through the winter. While many flowers and trees retain their beauty through these seasons in Australia, it was interesting to note that the native flowers that began to be apparent in the spring were small. Far from the flashy European imports, these spoke of eking out existence and making the most of the small, seemingly insignificant places they might inhabit, to produce such fruit as God had ordained. God sees each one and finds them beautiful, whether they are seen and displayed, or live out their brief lives in relative obscurity. No single flower is insignificant in the scheme of the Creator's universe. Each is loved and cherished.



As we drew to the end of that season, the feasts of Corpus Christi, and Christ the King approached, and once again a show of purple marked the sign of the passion, and the royalty Jesus embodies in our midst and in the Kingdom. This time the purple that swept the cities was of the Jacaranda trees. As we moved towards the beginning of Advent, the ground was strewn with the purple blossoms – a royal carpet for a coming King.

Alas, I left just before the beginning of Advent, but not before I realised that Jesus isn't known by the bringing of light into the cold darkness down in Australia, but rather as the one whose bright glory is too much to gaze upon. He comes as living water in a dry and weary land, where there is no water. The Aborigines understood that. God came as water and breath to them, gave them life through these elements, and walked with them in the cool of the day, teaching them to care for creation. I found the culture was filled with reflections of the same God I have come to know.

We are united, not by celebrations carved in the stones of one culture or another. We are united by the One who came, to show us God, our Creator, our lover, and the One who continually speaks to us through all that is made, if we just have eyes to see and ears to hear.

*Diane Sekuloff*

## L'Abri à Suvigny



There is an **Easter Retreat** again this year: Easter Weekend 5th to 8th April – A time to reflect on the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus, and an opportunity to renew vows at the

shrine of St Columbanus. Suggested donation – 25 euro or pounds per person per day. Email [ncinfrance@gmail.com](mailto:ncinfrance@gmail.com)

The summer programme includes two work weeks centred around groups from the Netherlands but if you are only able to come on those dates, please make contact for further information.

**De Spil Retreat – 5th to 12th August** – The group will come with Victor to explore aspects of spirituality within the monastic day. A creative outdoor project will also be offered. For rates, contact De Spil at [victor@retraitecentrum.nl](mailto:victor@retraitecentrum.nl)

**Family Holiday Break – 12th to 19th August** – an opportunity for people from the Community and beyond to have a holiday enjoying the surroundings, within the monastic day. Suggested donation – 20 euro or pounds per person per day.

**De Spil Work Week – 19th to 26th August** – a week where Dutch friends are welcome to help with the renovations within the monastic rhythm to the day. For rates, contact De Spil at [victor@retraitecentrum.nl](mailto:victor@retraitecentrum.nl)

**Individual Retreat – 27th to 31st August** – time for individuals or couples to come and enjoy some quiet space for self and God within the monastic rhythm. Some direction can be given. For accommodation information and booking, contact Jane at



[ncinfrance@gmail.com](mailto:ncinfrance@gmail.com) Suggested donation 20 euro or pounds per person per day.

Jane and Andrew would be very grateful if one or two people would be willing to volunteer to help on the house team over the three weeks from 4-26 August. If you are interested email Jane on [ncinfrance@gmail.com](mailto:ncinfrance@gmail.com)

If this is the first you've heard about L'Abri à Suvigny then do have a look at the website:

[www.northumbriacommunityinfrance.net](http://www.northumbriacommunityinfrance.net)

*Jane & Andrew Perkins*





## *We asked Andy Raine to tell us the story behind the* **Meditation for DAY 24**

The words are from 'Hebridean Altars', by Alistair Maclean. It all happened in a bit of a rush, the 'Ebb and Flow' recording, and with hindsight I regretted the cheerful tune we used for 'Saviour and Friend'. Recently, I tried combining the words with the tune for 'Nearer, my God, to Thee', which sits a little happier, thus:

'Saviour and friend, how wonderful art Thou!  
Thou my companion upon the changeful way,  
the comforter of its weariness,  
my guide to the eternal town,  
the welcome at its gate, Saviour and friend.

'Here let the way appear, steps unto heaven,  
all that Thou sendest me in mercy given.  
Angels to beckon me  
nearer, my Lord, to Thee.  
Nearer, my Lord, to Thee, Saviour and Friend.'



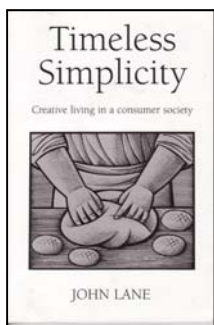
The theme that links both these meditations is Jesus as the welcome of the faithful. Maclean says 'we have no picture at all' of heaven, so we speak of doors, gates and other familiar things as dim shadows of the hope to come. Perhaps C.S.Lewis comes closest to describing how it may be in his final chapters of 'The Last Battle', where he suggests that all we have known and loved will not be lost, but re-experienced more deeply and truly in our farewell to the shadowlands. Think of those, especially in wartime, who have been separated from parent or lover and then journey to be reunited. Whatever the re-awakened memories, the adventures and experiences ahead, the only thing that matters is the face of the loved one, the 'Thou art there' – everything else is detail. A song from 'Carousel' puts it like this: "What's the use of wond'ring? ...anywhere he leads you you will walk, and any time he needs you, you'll go running there like mad."

".. only we know that Thou art there" – and all the rest is talk! *Andy Raine*

## **TOWARDS SIMPLICITY**

**Many years ago I read Richard Foster's 'Freedom of Simplicity' and was drawn to the notion of a simpler lifestyle.** More recently I have pondered this again, especially after hearing that simplicity can be seen as a new monastic version of the traditional monastic vow of poverty.

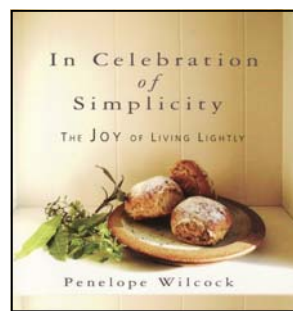
Last year I read a further two books on this theme which are extremely helpful. Both contain the seeds of Richard Foster's thinking that simplicity needs to be inward, outward and corporate. It is important that we cultivate inner simplicity or we simply become legalistic. Equally, it is essential that our inner simplicity leads to a change in our outer lives. The hope is that as more of us change our individual attitudes and practices, then the world around us will also change.



The first book, 'Timeless Simplicity' by John Lane, is subtitled Creative Living in a Consumer Society. The author takes as his background two related themes: that life in the 21st Century is not what it should be and secondly, the future of our home, the Earth. He looks at why we should adopt voluntary simplicity, sketches a brief history of it and discusses the obstacles. In the second half of the book he suggests how to lay the foundations, outlines the

gifts of adopting this lifestyle and offers some thoughts on how to simplify our hospitality. He concludes with an Indian prayer sent to him by a friend, "May the grace of God be with all people and make them lovers of justice, truth and simplicity."

'In Celebration of Simplicity' by Penelope Wilcock is based on personal experience and practice. She takes the idea of simplicity being as basic and essential as 'daily bread' and weaves her thinking and practical suggestions around the ingredients used in bread-making. For example, salt is essential to bread-making but ruins it if overdone. Under this heading she looks at restraint and how she discovered that if she exercised restraint in her buying and owning of things, she was able to be less driven by the need to earn money. She had more freedom to make choices. It is written and presented in a very readable form and I particularly appreciated all the quotations which run through every page.



Obviously this is a challenging subject and as with so much of life, each of us has to work out what it means for us in our own situation. If you'd like to explore this more fully there is a retreat on the topic at Nether Springs (14-17 May) and there are still places available. *Ingrid Cumming*



## The newsy bit



### New Companion

**Jill Lawson** - At a recent Marches Community Group meeting we were able to celebrate with Jill as she was welcomed into Companionship. Jill shared movingly about her journey

as a novice, and how important the Rule and rhythm of Community has become.

### Celebrations

**Catherine and Rob Davies** are renewing their marriage vows during the 10.30 Sunday 18th March service at Alnwick Baptist Church in Lisburn Street. They say "This will be two days after our 10th anniversary; we are very grateful to God as He has brought us through some tough times to a spacious place. Feel free to come along if you can." Coffee/tea and cake served after the service.

### Community Groups

**South Devon Community Group** has held a second group meeting which went very well. For anyone wishing to attend in future, the group meets on the third Sunday of each month. Contact the office to be put in touch.

### Community Gatherings

5th May: Shillingford Oxon

19th May: Exeter

Information available from the Office.

### Nether Springs

**Daniel and Katrin Sikinger** from Germany joined the house team in January and will stay until October.

There are still places available on the **Missional Leadership School - 4th– 7th June**. Designed for those in church leadership, this relaxed week will explore aspects of missional leadership with practical applications to leading churches and communities missionally. The school will provide an opportunity to study, share, pray and relax. Join Roy Searle and Craig Millward who will be leading the school. More details available from the office.

### Lee Abbey, Devon

In May, Duncan and Lesley MacLean and a Community team will be leading a week entitled 'A Call to a Radical Lifestyle'. It's an opportunity to explore what it means to live radical lifestyles embracing availability to God and one another, and vulnerability before God and one another. If you are interested in attending, you can find more information at: [www.leeabbey.org.uk](http://www.leeabbey.org.uk)

### Seeds

Chris Norris, Director of Seeds (Christian Creative Resource Service) has let us know about Artists' Days which Seeds is hosting during 2012. Seeds was involved in the joint discussions with the Bible Society over the Open Book project at the turn of the century, which was the stimulus for the establishment of The Telling Place at Nether Springs. For more information visit <http://www.seedscreative.org.uk/>

### Job opportunity

We have been asked by St Oswald's Hospice in Newcastle to make folk aware of their search for a part time chaplaincy assistant. If you are interested in this post please visit [www.stoswaldsuk.org](http://www.stoswaldsuk.org) and click on 'vacancies' or phone 0191 2469063. Closing date is 2nd April.



We can't resist it; Norm Cumming and Pete Askew are working on one of the new 'garden rooms' at the Mother House in this picture, which is waiting for your caption. Send it to [caim@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:caim@northumbriacommunity.org)

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