

# CAIM

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



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

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*Pete Askew writes:*

## Getting underway!

It was last September when we first were able to communicate the good news that prayers had been answered and a new **Mother House for the Community had been found.**

Since then there's been much prayer and cycles of activity and waiting as we've worked through the design and planning processes that have been necessary to transform Acton Home Farm into the new 'Nether Springs'.



**This gift to us of a new Mother House is an amazing thing, but it will need our collective commitment as a community to make it a place of blessing for others. The potential is enormous as we open this new chapter of our Community's life**

Over the last few months we've been working closely with the Fergusons (the landowners) and the architects on developing the final plans. They have now been completed and a planning application has been submitted to the planning authorities. The application is for: change of

use; the addition of a glass-covered walkway around the 'cloister' – needed for dry passage between rooms; and a small additional 'new build' to provide a guest bedroom and complete the fourth side of the 'cloister'. We're hoping for permission by the beginning of September. Please pray for the planning process. The good news is that work on the rest of the buildings, the majority of the project, does not require planning permission and can begin sooner. In any building project such as this there is a lengthy process of naming hopes and aspirations and then working to make these a reality within the constraints of the available building space, technical possibilities, planning requirements, and budget. After nine months of working at this, with many challenges and changes, we're really happy with the end result and feel that it will help us



develop the things that God has placed on our hearts at Hetton Hall over the years, as we continue to explore through 'Availability and Vulnerability' the monastic disciplines of worship, work, study, solitude and community.

*Continued on pg 3*

*It seems there is interest in starting new **Community Groups** based in Yeovil, Ashford, Poynton and Edinburgh.*

If you are interested please contact  
norma.charlton@northumbriacommunity.org or tel. 0191 4878065

*Joanna Dobson writes of plans for a new Community Group in Retford too:*

We plan to meet on the second Friday evening of the month. We'll meet at 7pm, share a meal together, say Evening Prayer or Compline and get to know each other. If you would like to join us on July 9th, August 13th, September 10th etc please contact Paul & Sally on 01777 702873 or Joanna & Ian on 01777 248143.

### **Northern Ark: 'Freedom Bound'.**

For the second year we are taking part in this Christian family camp at Hollybush near Thirsk in Yorkshire. It runs from 15th - 20th August.

We will be looking at Ephesians, hopefully listening to God and each other, with worship led by our own Clare Hunt and Mike Clifford and purposeful and fun children's activities too.

Come and join us as we gather together to have fun and learn together, to build relationships, to encourage and to challenge and be open to God's leading. It would be great to see more NC folk there. Our camp in the north! [www.northernark.org.uk](http://www.northernark.org.uk) Contact Norma Charlton: 0191 4878065 [norma.charlton@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:norma.charlton@northumbriacommunity.org)

'Celtic Daily Prayer' has recently been published in German - and on 2nd October there is an event called 'Forum of Inspiration' being held in Limburg, in the region of Frankfurt Airport. More details from [jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org)

### **Welcome to the Summer edition of Caim!**

There is a strong sense of being in 'a new season' as a Community just now - an impression formed most notably of course by developments surrounding our new Mother House. But that's not the only thing 'bubbling up', and it's encouraging to hear the impressions which Roy has gleaned in encounters on his travels - see page 4.

It's all systems go now with our new Mother House, and Pete Askew will be continuing to keep us appraised and challenged in the coming months. Let's prayerfully consider the part we can play in bringing God's plan to life at Acton Home Farm!

Enjoy this edition of Caim. *Jeff & Ingrid*

*Please pass this on to any tea towels you know:*

Picture the scene... the drying racks above the Aga in the dining room at Nether Springs, festooned with the most dazzling display of assorted colourful socks you ever did see, belonging to a certain team member, infamous for her love of said items of clothing! Next to them, the most un-dazzling display of tired, sad and over-used tea towels, tea towels that never dazzle as they used to, no matter how high the temperature of the wash. They have been much-

appreciated over the years but the time for retirement is nigh! So... calling all tea towels of a geographical or cultural bent. If you show your true colours by displaying a picture of your hometown, a list of local dialect words from your area, if you



have a map of the county you come from, if you can teach us how to write the alphabet in Welsh, or how to say hello in the language of whichever country you come from... if you can help connect us to the Companions and Friends in our Community who live in the places you come from - so that we show a dazzling display of US-ness on the drying racks at Nether Springs... then come! We don't dislike bog-standard tea towels, but we're looking to proudly exhibit our family connections!

Ask someone to package you up and send you to Nether Springs (address on the back page) c/o The Tea Towel Team.

(Seriously, folks - we'd love to have some new tea towels that reflect the whereabouts of our Community and since tea towels don't often have the opportunity to read Caim ... it's up to you!)



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 or put 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.

*Cont'd from pg 1*



We're now looking forward to making a building project into a home. In order to do this, however, we

do need some financial help. The bulk of the building costs have either been generously covered by the Fergusons or will be absorbed into our rent, but this doesn't allow for the glass-covered walkway round the 'cloister', or for Community essentials such as a new Chapel, Poustina, shelving for the library, and developing the prayer garden and courtyard.

We also need to make things like new curtains, and will need some new furniture along the way too.

Interestingly, but maybe not surprisingly, the Aga at Hetton Hall has become a symbol of hospitality and welcome as well as being a well-used oven and warming/gathering place. Many people have passionately expressed "Aga do" (lame British 1980s pop reference), rather than "Aga don't", and want to have something similar at Acton - probably a more economical electric 'Everhot', but they're not cheap and we'd need to find the cash to get one. Please pray about helping financially with these things as we work together to establish our new Mother House. Send donations to Hetton Hall, payable to 'Northumbria Community Trust', marked for the attention of Andy Foster (new Mother House fund), and don't forget to gift-aid if you're able/willing to do this. Many, many, thanks for gifts already received.

Thanks also for patience. We don't yet have open access to the site of the new Mother House, so please continue to respect the Fergusons privacy and resist the temptation to go and have a quick peek. As the next six months unfold there will be opportunities to visit, pray and work there.

Over the next few weeks, now that we have finalised building plans, we'll be putting together a work schedule and asking for folk to come and help us with the preparations for the move. This will involve some work

on the land at Acton as well as other jobs around Hetton and Acton. There will also be days of prayer for leaving Hetton and preparing the way for our arrival at Acton. In the last edition of Caim we offered some pointers for prayer. Please continue to pray for the transition to our new 'Nether Springs'.

Give thanks to God:

- For the provision of Hetton Hall, and the gift that it has been.
- For the provision of this new location for our Community's Mother House as we build the new on the foundations of old.
- For the good and developing relationships with local churches and people.
- That every step of the way has seen some resounding confirmations.
- For the work of the architects.

Ask God's hand to be over:

- The leaving of Hetton Hall, that we may leave it with thanksgiving and with peace.
- The move to Acton, that we may know more fully his purposes for us in that place as we follow our vocation and seek God, depending on him for his leading, provision and protection.
- All that is involved in the practical preparations of the buildings at Acton, especially the planning process.
- Inspiration for the creative planning of the land as we seek to develop sacred spaces for solitude and community.
- The provision of all that is needed to create a new home: time, talents, skilled workers, those able to volunteer to 'muck in'....

Hold before God our desire:

- To respond to the challenges with faith, and to trust that our new location will be a place that will deepen our call to Community, both monastically and missionally.

Now that the planning application has been submitted I'll be blogging publicly on the Community website about the developments at Acton with some pictures and updates, as well as details about prayer days and work weeks/weekends. If you'd like to contact me about the new Mother House please e-mail me:

[pete.askew@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:pete.askew@northumbriacommunity.org)

*Pete Askew*

### **Thank You Bryony!**



After nine years of working with our finances as Finance Assistant Bryony has decided it's time to move on, and make her part-time work for HospiceCare - North Northumberland full-time. We thank her for all the work that she's done for the Community over the years, and for the care she's taken in passing on the finance hut, and all that is in it, to Andy Foster who has now taken on the responsibilities for looking after our finances. Thank you Bryony, and bless you in your new role with the Hospice.

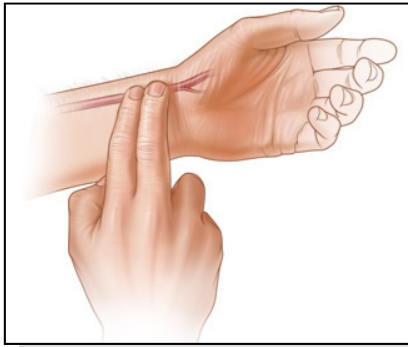


*Roy Searle writes:*

## **Feeling the Pulse**

**Among the many tasks of leadership, particularly in my role as an Overseer, is that of trying to define reality and feeling the pulse of the Community.**

I intentionally began a period of fairly extensive travel just before Easter, and two months later had travelled over 12,000 miles visiting people and places from as far afield as the Czech Republic and Ireland. In that period I was able to meet many Companions and Friends - not



here in Northumberland, but on their home ground. I am left with several impressions upon my heart and mind:

- There is an air of optimism among those

whom I met; an enthusiasm and buoyancy about where the Community is at, the prospects we are facing, and the changes that are taking place.

- I sense a deep and real appreciation of the gift of togetherness, of being connected. This is an issue to which we clearly need to give some further thought, as we grow and develop across many nations.
- We are seeing a remarkable emergence of "Other Houses" of prayer, hospitality, creativity and monastic and missional expressions – not just across Britain, but also in other parts of Europe and North America.
- There are increasing numbers of younger people connecting with the Community.
- I witness a deepening awareness that for many Companions and Friends, the Community is their "church", their spiritual home.
- There is a real sense that the life which God has gifted to us, carries life and hope to many people both within and beyond the walls of the church.
- I see a deepening commitment to our "way for living" as a serious and radical call of God upon our lives, that will lead to both renunciation and renewal.
- With the emergence of a third generation of Community folk there is a greater emphasis on the

outworking of our monastic calling missionally; how does the call of God upon our lives influence, shape and impact the world in which we live? Herein lies

**I returned from my travels encouraged and heartened by what I've seen, heard and experienced.**

the important aspect of hope that we carry as followers of Christ.

- There is a connectedness between our exiled spirituality and the issues that our changing contemporary society faces.
- There is real opportunity in the changes we are facing - not only in relocating of our Mother House, but in so many areas of the Community's life.
- There is a strong desire that we equip and resource the Community in order to help and encourage one another to embrace this call of God upon our lives.
- We continue to be humbled and amazed at the continuing discovery of people and places who have been helped by the Community's presence and influence.
- There are significant relationships being formed with new Companions and Friends across Europe, and God is clearly establishing an expression of Community life in Holland.
- To hear stories of how the Office has been translated into a number of Eastern European languages is both humbling and exciting.
- The realisation that it is out of brokenness, rarely strength and never power that the beauty of God and his purposes are made known among us.
- The joy of seeing succeeding 'generations' coming to life through the Community's story; and the responsibility on those of us who belong to the founding generation to bless those who will take the Community forward in the future. We must become stepping stones, not stumbling blocks, to the new people, initiatives and issues that God is bringing among us. I returned from my travels encouraged and heartened at what I've seen, heard and experienced. May the goodness, grace and generosity of God continue to direct our ways in all the challenges and opportunities of the coming months.

*Roy Searle*

*An extract from an encouraging email we received in the office recently:*

I've just arrived home from an incredible day with Roy Searle at Chipping Campden Baptist Church. What a wonderful challenging day! It has come as a great inspiration to understand that we need to spend quiet personal time in our 'cell'. I need to be still and listen. I feel so blessed and a part of a family I do not yet know. It's so wonderful.

*A report of a great event at Nether Springs:*

**Summer sun, blue skies, the spectacular coastline, and gentle rolling countryside of Northumberland provided the setting for a Leadership School held at Nether Springs recently**



A full school drew men and women ministering as church leaders in the Netherlands, America, Ireland and Britain. Observing the rhythm of the monastic day, the participants received input from Roy Searle on issues of leadership, spiritual formation, and how to nurture our relationship with God, ourselves, and others. They also spent time in personal reflection and prayer, sharing with one another in small groups and engaging in open discussion forums.

Each day there was opportunity to explore the area, with notable trips to the Farne Islands, with their amazing bird life and seal colonies, walking the Pilgrim's Way across the sands to Holy Island, and venturing up to Cuthbert's Cave. An evening ceilidh, leisurely meals, watching the World Cup and opportunities for massage and reflexology with Jean - as well as relaxing in the company of other Community folk - provided time to 'journey' together outside of the formal sessions.

One attendee described her time at the school as "a wonderful week. This is an absolute must for all in ministry!" Another Leadership School is being held from Monday 18th to Saturday, 23rd October, 2010 and there are some places available. Contact the office for further details.

*David Pott reflects on moving*

### **A Few Long Miles South**

North v South is such a powerful concept for us here in the UK. It evokes strong feelings. Whether we actually live in the North or the South I suspect that most people associated with the Northumbria Community would lean to the North in terms of our heart feelings – after all 'North' is in our name. Then there is the Meditation for Day 10 with that powerful contrast:

*Hear this, you lands of the South  
who hold many in captivity  
by your empty words  
and well-worn myths,  
who neglect to see justice  
for the poor, the widow,  
the fatherless.*

*Look to the North -  
for lo your Redeemer comes,  
clothed in the poverty of the few  
who dare to speak His name,  
without vanity,  
in a whisper,  
lest the earth should tremble  
Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord.*

It's a sorry story for the South and big on the North isn't it? Yes, North is the home of our hero saints Aidan, Cuthbert and Oswald and we think of our Mother House at Hetton Hall in North Northumberland!

And soon we'll be moving south - should we say it in a whisper? It's only 25 miles or so but they are feeling like l-o-n-g miles. It's so much closer to the city. We'll not be able to climb a hill and see the Upper Springs.

But it's happened before. That southwards push. It was at the heart of the Northumbrian mission after all. Aidan sending out Chad, Cedd and the others - where? To the south. So perhaps for us too today this move is about mission and about repositioning to bring those redemptive blessings of the North a little more readily to the South. Sure, we'll still be looking to the North, but we know too that we must turn our heads - and hearts too - and look also to the South.

For Jesus too, the hill country of Galilee in the north was home, but the time came when he had to "steadfastly set his face to Jerusalem" and travel that hard road southwards.

Perhaps we should add this corporate stanza to our Expressions of Faith during the coming months...

*Lord you have always blessed  
our home in the North,  
And now although you call us  
South,  
today we believe.*



*Ken Humphrey writes:*

## NOT JUST ANOTHER TRIP TO PRAGUE

### **What is it that has nurtured such a strong commonality between the International Baptist Training Seminary on the outskirts of much vaunted Prague and the Northumbria Community?**

Community members have, of course, travelled there annually for some years, and Josh Searle studied there. Yet, as we listened to Dr. Parusch Parushev, the Academic Dean, welcome us there in March his heart poured out a fulsome recognition that the divine is honing the same heart there as that which is being wrought in the Community. It is a compelling bond which is being formed.

**The common marks of poverty are the absences of hope, self esteem and opportunity, and... those are endured from one end of Europe to the other**

Fewer of us went this time than usual. En route, Jean Watson, Roy Searle and I experienced rich Dutch hospitality at the home of Floor and Ada in Arnhem. It was intriguing to hear how the essence of the Community is being explored in Holland among increasing numbers of people. A sizeable interest group is gathering in both Arnhem and Amsterdam, and a Community house is being established in the Jordaan area of the city. With Floor joining us we discovered as we drove through Germany to the Czech Republic that some of those who have a fair idea about how to find and point to the Kingdom of God do not necessarily have the same gift regarding which turns to make on the Autobahn. I shall not name names!

The last part of our journey was dark and beautiful through Bohemia. Snow higher than our car lay either side of the road. A welcome higher than our tiredness awaited us in the car park at the seminary.

Joined by Joshua, Roy's youngest son, who had flown in from Trinity College, Dublin, we began another luxurious dialogue with the Seminary students and staff. It is fascinating to experience the complex weave of differing cultures (mostly Eastern European) that the Seminary enables. As we talk we learn that many of the students come from places beset by particular religious and cultural conflicts of interest and it is good to explore faith-full approaches to working in these situations. Several students simmer with energy to get their churches out of defensive, maintenance mode, and engaged with the people 'outside'. As time goes on, we explore together the common root of the gospel in the Seminary, which we in Community and the Anabaptist tradition share.

A number of students are involved each week in work amongst homeless men and women who dwell in the centre of Prague. They invited us to go along. It was utterly humbling to see the students pour un-patronising compassion upon the homeless men and women, all of whom seemed to be in deep and complicated need. Every homeless person was known by name to the students. (I presume Jesus knows each of them by name also). A minestrone of Russian, Czech, Italian, German, and British, along with lots of gesticulating, allowed for vibrant, broken conversations between the students and their friends on the street. Compassion expressed with such respect, honouring and teach-ability is strangely beautiful and invigorating to watch in action. Availability is what I sense we witnessed, and in the most demanding of contexts for both parties. Applied Theology!

I found myself challenged, and somewhat confused when trying to grapple with the issues around Christian responses to poverty with these students. Many of them, for instance, would live in contexts of such socio-economic limitation that even the poorest in Western Europe have, generally, a better lot in life. We worked our way to an understanding that the common marks of poverty are the absences of hope, self esteem and opportunity, and recognised that those are endured from one end of Europe to the other.

Delivering the Celtic Fire presentation to the Seminary was an extra challenge, with so few Community hands on deck, but I understand that it was customarily well received (I'd legged-it home by then).

It is very likely that the relationship between The



Community and the Seminary will continue and deepen. The seminary is bang in the centre of Europe, really. It is a small

college, yet it is as the centre of a web, with touching points spread throughout the vast spaces and intricate diversity of the continent. It is housed in buildings which, in previous eras housed the Nazi controllers of Prague and more recently, the State Secret Police during the Soviet era. Ironical, then, that it should be a safe space for the melding of cultural and socio-economic difference. We have much to learn in that place.

Many students return to their homelands with Celtic Daily Prayer and the Community Rule, and with memories of people from another unknown, but strangely engaging place called Northumbria which connected with their hearts. This year, as in other years, we Companions of the Community returned with a greater love for that place, and with deeper wonder and questions about the meaning and possibilities of the Gospel as it murmurs and seeks to grow in places we can only imagine. *Ken Humphrey*



Phil Sage sends us news from

## Cloisters

We are pleased to bring you news of some new products from Cloisters, the Community's trading arm.



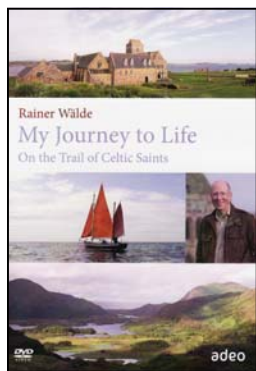
### Pocket Office £2.50

A Northumbrian Daily Office for your pocket or wallet. This set has three business-sized cards for Morning, Midday and Evening Prayer.



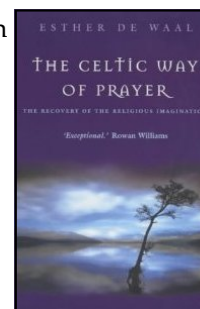
### My Journey to Life (DVD) £16.99

This exciting new DVD by Rainer Wälde looks at the trail of the Celtic Saints from Dublin to Lindisfarne, including stops at Iona and our very own Northumbria Community! It has recently received the Gold Award for 'Best Documentary: Ethics and Religion' at the World Media Festival.



## New summer reading!

There are a range of new books now on the Cloisters website which have been recommended or reviewed by Community folk. Authors include Abbot Christopher Jamieson (Worth Abbey), Shane Claibourne, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove and Rob Bell with titles including Velvet Elvis, The Shaping of Things To Come, The Celtic Way of Prayer and Finding Sanctuary. Take a look under 'New Products' to see more.



## Irishes Gebetbuch (adeo Verlag)

Some of the Daily Offices and other prayers have been published for the first time in German in a small volume that includes material from the Iona Community and other sources. Please contact us for more information.

At Cloisters you will also find the whole range of Community music, teaching Audio CDs, books, booklets, cards and gifts. You're certain to find something for holiday reading this summer!

To order, visit the Cloisters website at [www.cloistersonline.com](http://www.cloistersonline.com) or contact Brenda directly at: Cloisters, Hetton Hall, Chatton, Northumberland, NE66 5SD +44 (0)1289 388235 [cloisters@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:cloisters@northumbriacommunity.org)

# Prophetic Voices:

The Contemporary Witness of Anabaptists, Celts and the New Monastic Movements

Date: 17 September 2010

Time: 10.00 am - 4.00 pm

Cost: £30, inc. lunch and refreshments; £15 for full-time students (any institution) and the unwaged

#### Speakers:

Stuart Murray Williams  
(The Anabaptist Network)  
and Roy Searle  
(The Northumbria Community)

To book your place contact Terry Wright: [anaceltic@aol.com](mailto:anaceltic@aol.com)



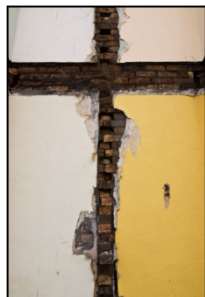
## Midlands Regional Gathering - A Coracle Season.

In the grounds of Mount Saint Bernard's Abbey you will find The Little Community of John & Mary and the hearts of folk who have journeyed with Northumbria Community for many years. We were delighted to be welcomed by Kevin, Ellen, Anthony and Carey Grimley for this day in June and more than a few of us travelled from beyond the Mercia Kingdom to be there! We were moved and encouraged as Ellen and Anthony shared the story of the formation of their home and of Monos ([www.monos.org.uk](http://www.monos.org.uk)). It was a gentle day together, allowing space for the Gentle work of God. Some paddled in coracles, some recounted the 'coracle voyages' of the heart and together we etched our names on pieces of lead to be fastened to a cross that will rightly remain in their chapel. It seemed apt to place a cross that will remind us of the day, like those seafaring saints who upon making land planted a cross in the ground, a symbol that Christ had indeed brought them to a safe-haven. *Sarah Pillar*



*Marg Hardcastle reflects on*  
**TWO CROSSES**

I want to share two images of crosses that are particularly special to me – one of which you may recognise, as it is one of the doors on the Chapel of the



Incarnation in the grounds of Nether Springs; the other one you won't be familiar with – if the camera panned out you would see that it is the remains of a row of

terrace houses, part-way through demolition, in the city of Stoke-on-Trent.

These two images – the 'Celtic cross' and the 'urban cross' – visually communicate not only my understanding of the meaning and message of the cross but also something of how I try to work out the 'how then shall we live?' question of our Community.

I wonder which image you find most appealing – which one you would want to frame and hang on your wall? The 'urban cross' was taken for me by my friend Richard, a keen amateur photographer who was driving through Stoke one summer day last year and immediately saw the cross in the scene of decay. He printed out a copy and framed it for me – it hangs on our kitchen wall. It speaks to me of what the cross is about – the obvious themes would be of regeneration, redemption, renewal from decay – but it is more than that. The cross is right there in amongst the decay, the failure, the mess of life. The life that is not yet regenerated and renewed – yes there is hope of a better tomorrow... but the cross is present where life is messy and ugly, the cross is hidden, yet very present; if you saw the whole picture, if I drove you down that street, you would see that it is not very pretty (unlike the Celtic cross which is in a very beautiful location). But the cross is where Jesus is, and anyone who's spent any time with me will know that I am convinced that Jesus is right in amongst the mess and decay of urban life – the vitality and vibrancy of it too – for it is not all bad news. And it's where Jesus is because Jesus is about good news and hope and transformation and new possibilities and bringing life out of death and decay! And you can stand in a wood and tell that to the trees, or shout it to the sheep in the valley, or sing it as you make your pilgrim journey... or come and whisper it amongst the streets in the city as a rumour of hope and a suggestion of joy... and then show people what it looks like and give them an experience of the shalom in the kingdom of heaven – in small and tangible ways. Here it is, and there it is, look, come and see.

I recently used both these images in a presentation on Celtic Christian spirituality for a group of Methodists in the city. I started by using images and sound to transport them

*Duncan & Lesley MacLean report on a*  
**Northumbria Community Week at Lee Abbey**  
May 10th – 14th

This was a week that had been in the planning for some time – an opportunity to enmesh something of the life and ethos of our community with that of the Lee Abbey community and to work together on a House Party. There were Companions and friends of our community, friends of Lee Abbey, and many who had come to find out more about 'Northumbrian Spirituality for life today' – the week's theme. Teaching sessions led by Roy; seminars from Duncan and Lesley; workshops from Tina Jefferies, and Peter and Elizabeth Webb all contributed to a full programme. Storytelling, liturgy writing, the use of silence, liturgical dance, and 'How shall we sing the Lord's song today?' complemented creative workshops led by Lee Abbey community members. A 'joint' ceilidh evening and the sharing of the story of Cuthbert through 'Celtic Fire' provided evenings of celebration, fun and sharing. The offices provided a framework and rhythm for the day, and these were led by various companions and friends.

Opportunity for walks, pilgrimage, sport and other leisure activities filled the afternoons and all enjoyed the blessing of a week of wonderful weather.

The week culminated in a Communion service on the Thursday night for guests and the Lee Abbey Community. The Cloisters shop was well supported, and significantly there were many guests wanting more information about our Community.

The week was a wonderful opportunity for us to extend our relationship with Lee Abbey; an exciting engagement with many potential new friends of our Community; and a meeting place for Companions and Friends from around the country. An indication of how well it was received by Lee Abbey was the booking of another 'Northumbria Community' week next year. Put the date in your diary – May 9th – 13th 2011.

*Duncan & Lesley MacLean*

**The appointment of an 'Economos'**

In issue 49 of Caim circulated July 2009 we began to look for someone to take on the role of 'Economos'. Historically, in monasticism, the Economos was the business manager, the keeper of the purse. For us this now means someone to work closely with the Overseers, Trustees, and Seniors leadership team: advising them on finance matters, managing the Community's finance systems, getting involved in fundraising issues, and communicating to Companions the concept of ownership and family responsibility in matters of finance. We're delighted to announce that Andy Foster has taken on this developing role. Andy, with his wife Ange and son Daniel, was part of the team at Nether Springs from 2005 to 2008. Prior to coming to Northumberland Andy was the Finance Director for a successful business that he co-founded. With his experience, and commitment to the ethos of the Community, we're delighted that he's taken on this role at such a key time in the life of the Community.

*Cont'd on pg 9*



*Sarah Pillar experienced what it was like*

## **'On the Other Side of Silence'**

Having eaten more richly 'together' than if we had spoken, our first silent meal ends and Northumbria Community folk gather to consider the programme for the next few days. Someone asks 'Where is this Common Room for the session before vespers?' None of us know. Then as the Sisters gather, an inconspicuous door opens and we are beckoned into private communal rooms within the cloister set aside for the shared lives of the Sisters of the Order of the Holy Paraclete.



Such was the welcome for five days in March as we entered the rhythm of Whitby Priory, to serve by leading an in-house retreat. Yet we too were served, through intentional openness and an encouragement to keep on journeying, as companions in Northumbria Community (NC) and also with the Sisters (OHP). Here are reflections and experiences from both communities:

'On the face of it, we could not have been more disparate, an Anglican, habited, celibate community of women vowed for life, with a common purse and living in community – and a dispersed, ecumenical community of men and women, married and single, held together by a belief in new monasticism expressed in their commitment to 'availability and vulnerability', renewed annually at Easter.' 'Different we may be but we found many common ideals and were encouraged by each others' faith, enthusiasm and experience, convinced that we have much to offer each other as we journey on and face so many challenges.' OHP

'I continue to be struck how brave the OHP are - embracing the changes we brought and being fully committed - irrespective of their ages and infirmities.' ' - it was special, life changing in a very gentle and subtle way which is still evolving into I'm not quite sure what.' NC

'The giving of the Choir Stalls to us for Lauds, Vespers, Compline and the Eucharist was so generous of them. Allowing us to be part of their recreation time in their Claustal room and sharing really special things from their hearts was quite intimate and special too. The humour and laughter that was shared will always stay with me.' NC

'It was so wonderful that they were willing to share their knowledge, hopes, experiences and feelings so openly, which was and still is a great encouragement to us. Even the silent mealtimes, which felt awkward at first, became an experience of peace, calm and serenity which we still miss. Exploring our Christian journey together, having so much in common, and learning the history and make up of each community was a valued experience.' NC



'Like everyone else, I couldn't fail to be touched by the life those sisters lead, and having lived in the Mother House, one understands some of the realities (not on public display), the time and grace required to grow in love and acceptance of each other.' NC

'May our communities together form the rainbow arch of covenant love for our world' OHP

*Sarah Pillar*

### ***Cont'd from pg 8***

in their imaginations to the chapel for Morning Prayer and then shared with them some of the foundational thinking behind the Community, the stories of the Celtic saints and what being part of the Community means to me. I had just about finished putting together the presentation when I realised that all the images I had included were a million miles away from what they would see on leaving the building, or as they went out and about the next day. What would this say to them, I wondered, would they go away thinking "well that looks a nice place for a holiday"... would it lessen the relevance? So I decided to end with the Aidan liturgy but accompany the words with images familiar to local people.

As well as being a Community Companion I am part of Urban Expression, the urban church planting agency which the Northumbria Community has recently partnered with to deliver the Crucible course. It might seem a strange

combination if your only experience of Community is through rural retreat... but it makes a lot of sense to me. If it makes some sense to you too, and you think God might be beckoning you towards the delights of urban living – we are seeking new additions to our Urban Expression team in Stoke – people to come and live and 'be' – in that incarnational way of 'Jesus moving into the neighbourhood'. Email (marghardcastle@aol.com) and I can send you a copy of our short presentation on urban mission in Stoke, or give me a call if you'd like to chat about it. I'd love to hear from you. *Marg Hardcastle*

***If I open my eyes to the world around me...I feel pain and brokenness, I see suffering and injustice...***



*Norm Cumming sent us some*

## Easter Snapshots

As Easter 2010 approached, the monastic team prepared for an historic occasion – the very last Easter Workshop to be held at Hetton Hall. Cupboards were ransacked, meals were prepared in advance and packed into our bulging freezers.

But the weather conditions were giving us the jitters. After the hardest winter for many years, a few days before Easter all roads to Hetton Hall were flooded! But happily that all changed in the nick of time and on Maundy Thursday we were able to welcome the many Companions and Friends who had travelled from near and far to be with us.

Our theme – “Who do you think you are? Where do you think you’re going?” – helped us to review our journey as a Community to this point and to look forward to some of the big changes and developments that are taking shape as we move into the next chapter of our story.



It was good to revisit sacred places of significance to us. We shared Communion together in the deep ancient stillness of Old Bewick Church;

made our customary pilgrimage to Cuthbert’s Cave as we marked the Stations of the Cross; walked to the Pin Well high in the hills above Wooler, reflecting on the story of the man born blind, whom Jesus healed; reflecting too on our own blindness and need of the Saviour’s touch. At this beautiful place many who had made the journey quietly received an anointing with oil.

Of course no Easter Workshop in Northumberland would be complete without the traditional visit to Holy Island on Resurrection Sunday



to sing God’s high praises, to give thanks to the Risen Lord and to renew our Community vows of Availability and Vulnerability. This year we gathered in Sanctuary Close just behind the old Priory ruins to declare our solemn and joyful “Yes” to God. And as we did so, we were reminded of our call to risky living, as Marty enacted the voyage of Brendan in dance.

The Community’s story and the Easter story were interwoven throughout the weekend as we moved through each day’s focus – a “Telling Place”, a “Thin Place”, a



“Touching Place” and finally a “Transforming Place”. There was time to meet old friends and to make new ones; time to celebrate; time to reflect; time to be alone and time to be together; time for children with Mums and Dads to join in special activities exploring some of the themes of the weekend. It was good to be together again – and for some this was mingled with a sense of sadness, knowing that this would be their final visit to Nether Springs at Hetton Hall.

Here are a few comments from those who attended:

- *The presence of the Spirit was tangible in many of the activities, especially at Old Bewick on the Thursday evening*
- *We all enjoyed our walk up to Cuthbert’s cave - the kids particularly liked carrying the cross, and it was lovely to see everyone*
- *Probably the best thing was meeting some new folk, and getting to know others better*
- *The highlight for me was the renewal of vows on Holy Island*
- *Multiple things stand out, but especially: Communion at Old Bewick and the walk to Cuthbert’s Cave*
- *My only wish is that we were able to get up for more of the weekend!*
- *We enjoyed our first experience of Workshop. It was great to talk to some we knew, and start to get to know a few we didn’t*
- *Easter Workshop this year was fresh, creative, relational, well organised with good content, varied programme and relaxed.*

*Sarah Kinch reports on*

## A Community Gathering in Bristol and Bath

Recently we held a Community Gathering in the Bristol area. The weekend Gathering gave us opportunity to explore the Community and its ethos in a variety of ways. We were grateful for the leading of Pete, Norman and Ingrid throughout the weekend. On Friday night we sang Evening Prayer, followed by a bring and share meal. On Saturday our afternoon workshops of dance, music and storytelling led into the evening presentation of Celtic Fire. Between those of us who attended we covered the whole spectrum of relationships with the Community – from those who had

never heard of the Community and came out of curiosity, to those who are Companions. There were folk from the Community Groups in the Cotswolds, the Forest of Dean and Bristol and Bath and we heard of the possibility of two other groups starting in the Somerset area.

We were enriched by each others presence and participation and the legacy of the weekend is still unfolding. Connections have been made with, and between, Community Groups, a group has got together locally to learn to dance the Liturgy and there is a trip being organised for next year to the Mother House.



*John Davis writes about a book he's enjoyed:*

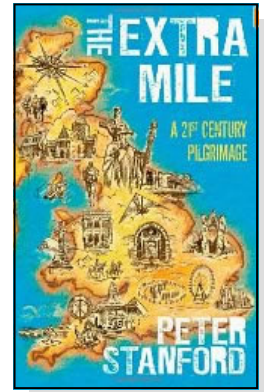
## THE EXTRA MILE – A 21ST CENTURY PILGRIMAGE - PETER STANFORD

(published by Continuum ISBN 978 0 8264 3404 3)

Peter Stanford acknowledges that he is not a "non-religious seeker"; neither am I. In Celtic Daily Prayer are the words: "There are some common tasks that we all engage in: looking for signposts to tell us where we are; trying to make sense of what we have already experienced along the way; and seeking to know what lies ahead and at journeys end. Life, in short, is a pilgrimage".

Would this author's experiences at various UK religious sites (Christian and otherwise) encourage me on my pilgrimage in times when institutional religion is waning - whilst a spiritual hunger among all ages is increasing? My brow furrowed at the words: "the logic of most faiths is that, in everyday life, the sacred is always just beyond our reach". As someone imbued with Celtic Christianity, I would rather affirm the sacred within everyday things! My concern eased as he relates his experiences and meetings at Stonehenge, Bardsey Island, the Derbyshire Wells, Walsingham, Holywell, Iona, Lindisfarne and Glastonbury; among people carrying their hopes and fears, joys and sorrows.

Pilgrimage might be something that we do, maybe with mixed motives, but the very act of pilgrimage does something to us. Be encouraged to read this book; the author's own experience is caught in the words (quoted from RS Thomas), "I think that maybe I will be a little surer of being a little nearer. That's all. Eternity is in the understanding that that little is more than enough." *John Davis*



### *Cathy & Brian Wheatcroft sent some personal reflections of* **Easter at L'Abri à Suvigny**

It has been a real privilege for Brian and I to have been part of the development of L'Abri Suvigny from the beginning when there was not even running water but still plenty of fun and friendship.

This year we decided, at last, that the time was right to become Companions in the Northumbria Community and were delighted to find Andrew and Jane are our mentors. Our first Easter weekend with the community was therefore a special time with them, and began with foot washing on Thursday evening after our journey north from the Dordogne.

On Good Friday a group of us, from the local area as well as those staying, clambered up a ladder into the hayloft of the barn which will be the chapel. There, in a spectacular



storm with rain and hail beating on the roof, we watched the film *The Passion*!

The next day we set off under dark clouds, spurred on by Jane's optimism, to follow a walk she had planned for us around Mortain following 'The Way of the Cross' and starting at

the imposing Abbaye Blanche. The town, perched on a spectacular gorge, was the site of a bitter and decisive tank battle in 1945 which left it in ruins until it was rebuilt later. We followed the trail which ended on a hill at the tiny

chapel of St Michel where the people of Mortain were locked in by the occupying forces, expecting to be burned alive. An American army unit rescued them at great cost, which made this a particularly poignant place to remember the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.

After an entertaining and competitive egg hunt, Easter Sunday

found us renewing our vows at a monument to St Columbanus who landed on the beach behind us over 1500 years ago. We had a picnic 'al VERY fresco' then made our way to Mont St Michel where we watched the bands of pilgrims crossing the treacherous route across the sandy bay where the tide can come in 'faster than a galloping horse!' It put us in mind of the people making a similar journey at Holy Island and we felt the significance of being 'alone but together' in community with other Christians.

Our warm thanks go to Andrew and Jane for their hospitality which makes Suvigny such a joy to visit, where the 'ordinary is extraordinary.'

*Brian & Catherine Wheatcroft*



The next retreat at Suvigny will be 'Invitation to Solitude and Silence' from the 26th to 29th July. For details of this and the other summer plans, please visit [www.northumbriacommunityinfrance.net](http://www.northumbriacommunityinfrance.net)





## The back page

Send your news items and updates for inclusion to  
[caim@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:caim@northumbriacommunity.org)

### New Companions

On 22nd May, in Otley, the Leeds & York, Bradford and Lower Wharfedale Community Groups met together for "A Pause for Contemplation and Creativity" inspired by Anne Morrow Lindbergh's book "A Gift from the Sea". A relaxing, creative and encouraging day was enjoyed in glorious weather as we loosely followed the rhythm of the day. The day concluded with the liturgy of welcome to Linda Davis as a new Companion.



Mark Havers and Jill Drury were welcomed as Companions within the Community during the Easter Workshop in Northumberland this year.

### Another North Northumberland North Sea celebration

Charlotte Wykes joined us on retreat at Nether Springs a week or so after Easter Workshop and folk were able to celebrate with her in her baptism just off Holy Island.



### A Celebration

Netta tells us "Christine Gibbs (daughter of Mike and Netta) and her much-loved Chris Ingram got engaged on 2nd May 2010".

### Community Gatherings

Some dates of upcoming Community Gatherings, for your diary. More details available from Ellen in the Office:

25th Sept - Herefordshire  
 2nd Oct - Germany  
 27th November - Shillingford, Oxfordshire  
 15th Jan 2011 - Lancashire

### Closing a chapter

Part of the story of our Community is held in the ebb and flow of our Community Groups and Anne Methold told us of the final meeting of the Surrey and Hampshire Borders Group meeting which took place on 26th May. "The group has always been small but what with various comings and goings this year, it was no longer viable as a group ... but the last gathering was a happy evening. We presented Sue Taylor, who led us, with the gift of a Henri Nouwen book with our thanks for all her work on our behalf ... and we each took home a pot plant - so that she doesn't have to take them with her all the way up to her new home in Durham!"  
 Praise the Lord for three very happy and supportive years together and for email so that we can all keep in touch so easily in the years ahead."



### Next Generation

Diane Sekuloff writes: from Canada "My first grandchild, Matthew Lee was born on his daddy's birthday, May 9th - 8 lb, 22 inches - as I left the hospital tonight there was a wild goose perched on top calling out!"



### Back in Bracing Butlins



A Community Team led worship at Spring Harvest in Skegness again this year, after a few years when we were not taking part... it felt right to go back.

The team was carefully hand-picked to complement the venue they'd be working in: Crazy Horse.

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