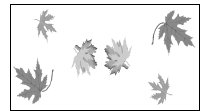


# CAIM The Northumbria Community Newsletter



Issue No 6  
Autumn 1998

CAIM is the Celtic word meaning encompassment or encircling. This newsletter goes out to all those who are within our circle; our members, companions, friends, plus those who have asked to be placed on our mailing list.

## Plans to give you a future and a hope

Trevor Miller

The concept of 'Constant change is here to stay' has always been a phrase with some meaning to the Northumbria Community as it has been willing to pioneer new paths and plough new furrows in obedience to what was believed to be God given directives. However, it has taken on even greater significance in the past few months as major changes, many of which have come unwarranted and uninvited, have in turn forced a major rethink in the life, vocation and vision of the Community. In God's goodness this has given rise to new levels of hope for the future.

Borne out of the pain of broken relationships which caught us totally by surprise has been the challenge and discipline of looking seriously and honestly at ourselves. There has been the gradual realisation that what was needed was a return to simplicity without being simplistic, and central to this re-evaluation has been that marvellously reassuring passage from *Jeremiah 29:11-13*.



Among the early results and perhaps the most far reaching change is the realisation that we are not called as a Community to the ownership of land, buildings and property which has been a major emphasis of late. We freely acknowledge that in the right

hands these projects can be and are of huge significance to the Kingdom but recent events and complex issues surrounding the two main areas of recent involvement ie Houses of Prayer in Selcuk, Turkey and An Caladh on the Isle of Harris have confirmed to us that the emphasis on ownership is no longer the pathway of God's choosing for us, in the way that it may be for others. This has involved a major change of direction and has required deep humility, repentance and courage to face the issues. We were greatly helped in this as those whose wisdom has been formative in the life of our Community, wrote to us in the midst of great turmoil and advised us strongly to see what was happening around us as "a real chance for the Community to shed its size and manifold operations involving money, land and buildings" and return to the simplicity of the gospel.

As reported in earlier editions of CAIM the Turkey project is no longer part of the Northumbria Community but is now being overseen in its entirety by the Sonset Trust which was given over by the Community to their new Trustees and leaders for this express purpose. (The situation with An Caladh is reported elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Our own commitment to the Celtic Arc vision remains strong but with a whole new perspective that we believe enables us to return to the original vision as seen in Isaiah 58. To quote from last November's CAIM "We have known from the very beginnings of what has become the Northumbria Community that we were called to '*rebuild the ancient ruins and...raise up the age old foundations...to walk again the sacred paths*'. In recent years we have identified this with what we have called the Celtic Arc stretching from Ireland to Turkey following the

well worn paths of the missionary expansion of the Irish Celtic church right across Europe. We believe that many of these sacred paths and places need to be continually revisited as part of our pilgrimage and restored as places of prayer in obedient response to the vocation God has laid on our hearts". We still say a big Amen to this but with a major difference. We now feel there is no need to own land and property but to have this fivefold objective.

**People** To make and maintain relationships with those people God brings us into contact with. Relationships before projects.

**Places** To visit those sacred places associated with the people. Places that already exist.

**Pilgrimages** To make regular pilgrimages to those places.

**Prayer** To pray in those places we believe are significant.

**Peregrinati** Wandering for the love of God.

The rebuilding for us as a Community is very much an inner rebuilding of the heart rather than a literal, physical thing. We continue to be committed to discovering, praying and collating those sacred places and supporting the relationships that God wishes us to concentrate upon.

So then Europe remains an important part of our mission but only a part. Europe is not our home. Our home is Northumbria. Ebb and flow, going out but always returning home. We are not called to establish replica Houses of Prayer based on Nether Springs but to build relationships, engage in prayer, visiting places through pilgrimage and peregrinati as the Father leads us, establishing links with those who carry a similar vision. "*You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart*" *Jeremiah 29:13*.

## WALKER MISSION

Norma Charlton

Innocently I accepted Roy's invitation one wet Friday night in February to meet him in Walker on the east side of Newcastle. The Community had been asked to help with a Mission which was being organised by the churches in Walker. After checking with Norman where Walker actually was, and discovering that people on the streets of Walker had no idea of the whereabouts of the churches, I got to the meeting in time to hear Roy reeling off an impressive statement of what we could offer. I also learnt that among the others who would be involved in the Mission were four Franciscans, Catholic priests from Birmingham, London and Minehead, together with a Dominican priest from Newcastle whom I knew slightly. I found myself agreeing to

'co-ordinate the Community's input', which turned out to be a euphemism for 'organise the events/school visits/outreach/services which no-one else was arranging, and find people willing and able to do them'.

Quite early on I was shocked by the number of things to which the initials N.C. had been attached, even more so when it was jokingly pointed out that N.C. stands for Norma Charlton as well as Northumbria Community. From the office at Nether Springs emerged a list of people around Newcastle plus some from further afield who were known to be interested in some involvement in the mission. Since then everyone on the list who responded in any way has had ample opportunity to be tested in the areas of Availability and Vulnerability as combinations of circumstances, timing and illness meant that we were often stretched beyond our limits, to the point of being forced to trust God's grace and gifting, stepping out in faith and obedience to do things we would not normally have attempted. I have realised new skills, especially in the realm of emotional and spiritual blackmail, cajoling reluctant or over busy people to commit themselves to more than they could comfortably cope with, or to try themselves out in new roles and responsibilities. I am really grateful for the response of Community members and friends, without whom the mission in Walker would have been severely limited.

Intercessory prayer gave us a picture of a floor covered in all sorts of shoes, from a pair of big strong boots to delicate pale pink ballet shoes, with the sense of 'make sure you wear the shoes that fit'. At first this was a sobering thought until we realised that you only find the shoes which fit by trying them on. Many of us tried on shoes which we would not normally have chosen. For me this involved the privilege of dancing in three services, together with the challenge of

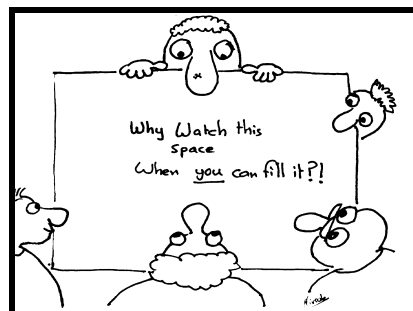
teaching dance in the primary schools for 4 days, and the wonder of seeing 11 year old lads unselfconsciously dancing; "Here I am, Lord, I've come to do your will".



For me that song became the theme of the mission, as so many responded in that way; Linda, Dorothy and Lillian 'flat sitting' for hours; Bryony and Jenny's adaptability in the schools; Fraggie who had no idea what he was letting himself in for when he said "yes I'm free that week" (even more so when he came back with Vicki for the second week when he did have an idea). Then there was Paul who only gradually realised how much he had agreed to do and faithfully served in so many ways, from meeting with the Civic Centre Planning department to organising and playing the music for the Taize night, establishing a wonderful dove of peace/ Taize cross on the riverside and running the 'Fun night', not to mention lifting furniture over to the Community flat to make it more comfortable. Dave and Sarah Hay who patiently served where and when they could, and were still smiling when a total of only 11 people attended their Youth Concert; and Claire-Louise who serenely juggled babies and beautiful dancing. Norma Wise supported us in prayer and in person, while Ken took a step back into his own roots and worked on the dove of peace for Walker. Thanks to Geoff Boston, his son Andrew and daughter Jenny who came up from Stockton at short notice to play for two major events. Also to Alice, Roy, Ervin, Jeff and Jill, Andy, Anne and Derek who gave helpful input, provided support, reassurance and fresh suggestions. Altogether we were involved in 24 events including an out-reach day, telling stories and teaching dance in eight primary schools, painting a mural and making the dove. This was achieved with the help of 30 Community members, plus 6 children or friends of members, plus 4 evangelists from Ghana who joined us for half of the Community day hotfoot from their mission in North Gosforth. We learnt much, served the churches, built relationships, and began a commitment that will extend us further.

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Autumn edition of CAIM which we hope will be both informative and encouraging. In this issue we will be highlighting the truth that the phrase long associated with our Community of 'Constant change is here to stay' is no trite statement but a serious part of the reality of living with Availability and Vulnerability. Someone recently sent me one of those little glossy message cards which stated that 'Our greatest ability is our availability'. This may or may not be true but I can add some lesser but nonetheless important abilities which will be reflected in the pages of this current newsletter. The ability to laugh at ourselves and at our sacred cows which is the domain of Professor Snodric. (See p5) The ability to admit mistakes; to say that we were wrong and then be willing to start again. The ability to continue in risk taking faith despite many setbacks and disappointments. The ability to recognise the preciousness of open, honest relationships that may well bring situations where we may have to agree to differ but will never agree to divide. These and many more abilities pervade the life of our Community. One ability we all have is the ability to contribute items to this newsletter. As a dispersed Community with groups and activities happening all over the UK and beyond we need to reflect this in the pages of CAIM. We can only do this if you send in the material. So let me again encourage all Community Members, Companions and Friends to submit possible articles, news snippets, questions for clarification and relevant book reviews for future issues. As this is OUR Newsletter the breadth and sweep of its content depends entirely on what is received from the wider Community for publication.



## Isle of Harris

In October 1997, following a visit by Roy Searle to the Isle of Harris, the Community was offered An Caladh, (a house on Harris, near Tarbert) as a gift. As we understood it, the only condition was that we would help realise its vision of being a House of Prayer. In the excitement of this unusual happening we believed it must be right and because it was a gift we felt morally obligated to commit ourselves to clearing the remaining mortgage (as it was then) of £4,600 once the Episcopalian Church had finalised their purchase of part of the land. The £10,000 figure requested through a previous CAIM was to cover the outstanding mortgage and give us sufficient funds to carry out much needed renovation work. Months passed with many unforeseen legal difficulties arising due to previous legal incompetency, which not only meant inaccurate boundary lines, but some of the land on which the house stood not actually belonging to the present owner. Throughout this year we have not only rented the house but planned for its future as previous editions of CAIM will testify. However, during subsequent negotiations it came to light that in fact there had been a major misunderstanding and we were now being asked to pay an amount of money totalling £17,000 plus legal fees. It was felt that we could no longer proceed in these terms. It seemed a further confirmation that we had made a mistake and that the concerns expressed by some members of Community over proceeding with the ownership of 'land, buildings and property' was justified. We have withdrawn from the situation we believe with integrity, and have paid all that is required of us and more for the time spent renting the house. We want to assure people who have a heart for Harris that this does not mean that our commitment to the Western Isles has ceased. Far from it! We will continue to build relationships with the very special people we have come to know. We will continue to go to Harris as pilgrims to pray in what remains for us a very significant place. We want to apologise for any inconvenience or distress this may have caused to anyone and thank all members and friends who have contributed in the building of relationships. We know that in the days to come we will see a continued commitment by many in our Community to developing friendships already made; to pray for the 'restoration of the broken altars' of the Western Isles, with an increasing desire to visit as pilgrims to fulfil these purposes.

## Visit Cloisters at the Christian Resources Exhibition

Cloisters have a stand at the Christian Resources Exhibition to be held at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham on November 11-14, 1998. Meet up at Stand 631. Roy will also be lecturing during this

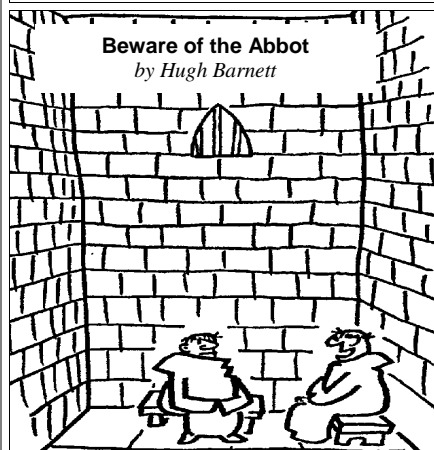
## 'Springs' at Heavenfield

Andy Raine

This year the Heavenfield camp didn't happen as a separate event. Instead we joined the 'Springs' group, a regional (mainly Catholic) charismatic prayer community who held a holiday week camping at St Mary's, Wycliffe near Barnard Castle. Quite a number from 'Springs' joined us at Heavenfield for the St Oswalds Day pilgrimage and enjoyed it very much. It was good to see familiar faces from the Community interspersed with many who had never visited Heavenfield before.

Back at Wycliffe, the wet and windy weather played havoc with the tents, but the marquees and buildings provided shelter, and there was lots of interesting things to join in with if you wanted - an excellent ceilidh, lots of arts and crafts, a professional storyteller called Beulah, songwriting workshops and meditation through watercolour painting. Prayer times, drinks and meals were on an all muck in basis and seemed to happen continuously. A good time (other than hay fever) was had by all. Talks were good and challenging - but, like all activities, optional. Kids were everywhere but well catered for, and always got to eat first. Next year's dates are:

**31 July - 7 August 1999** probably at Wycliffe again, with the St Oswald Day pilgrimage on **Thursday 5 August 1999** at Heavenfield. For more details ring Kev and Oonagh on 0191 4200526 or Andy & Anna on 01289 389351. It would be good to see more folk from the Community involved next year.



I know it's Autumn but let's go stark staring mad and sing a carol!

## GLASTONBURY FESTIVAL

A full report on this year's festival at Glastonbury will be included in the

## UPPER SPRINGS

Andy Raine

All 3 churches on Holy Island now open most days, and display material appropriate for pilgrims and visitors. St Cuthbert's URC has a new side porch and entrance, with pews removed for greater flexibility. St Mary's C of E seems to be becoming a regular place of worship for some Community folk in the area. St Aidan's RC has a new priest in charge, Father Ned Wilkinson based in Seahouses. Morning Prayer is said each day at 10am. The bookstore continues rather than develops, and is clearly now only a supplement to Mark & Mary Fleeson's shop at Farne House. They sell music, books, resources for dance and drama, calligraphy etc. They are openly Christian but non-threatening, being the place of welcome we had always envisaged. Many visitors pop in especially when the tide is up and everyone else is closed. There is a growing pool of resourceful and creative people here on the Island with individuals or teams increasingly going from here or resourcing events on the Island; - springs to water the dry land!

## Pilgrimages in 1999

The Community are arranging various pilgrimages around significant places in the UK in 1999. It would be good to see many members, companions and friends at these important events. Advance notice is given so that you can check the dates in your diary and plan to be at one or more of them. The following are definite dates for 1999.

**Cornwall.** Sat. 20th - Sat. 27th February

**Wales.** Sat. 15th - Sat. 22nd May.

**Dingle/Skelligs.** Sat. 3rd - Sun. 11th July.

We are also planning to arrange two further pilgrimages next year. One is to be a pilgrimage to Ireland following in the footsteps of St. Patrick. The other is a pilgrimage to the Western Isles of Scotland, including Iona and Harris. The dates of these pilgrimages have yet to be arranged. Further details will be included in a separate brochure which will be available from the Community Office from November 1st 1998.

We are also arranging Community Gatherings at weekends in different regions around the country. These will include a day conference on the Saturday and a short pilgrimage to places of significance in the particular areas we are gathering on the Sunday. Details are included in the new programme now available from the Community Office.



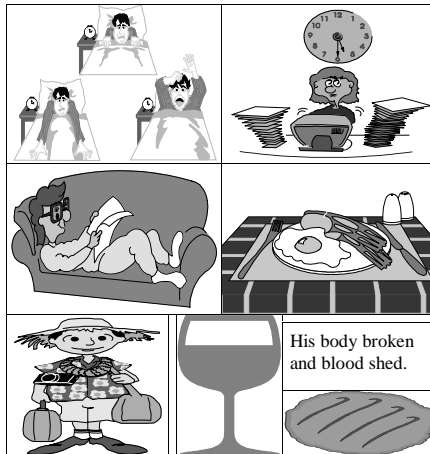
## Programme and practicalities at the Nether Springs

The new programme for the Nether Springs is now available, giving details of the weekday and weekend retreats until the end of September 1999. In order to help maintain the rhythm of the monastic day and give the Community in residence at the Nether Springs an opportunity to get their breath back between retreats, we have a very simple system in place. Each weekday retreat begins on Monday with Dinner at 6:00pm and ends on Thursday afternoon. Each weekend retreat begins on Friday with Dinner at 6:00pm and ends early Sunday afternoon. The only exception to this is normally the last week of the month which leads into the Saturday and Sunday closure where the retreat is Monday to Friday. This arrangement gives the necessary time in between retreats to do the turnover of the house in terms of general cleaning, washing sheets, changing around rooms, as well as a much needed breather. Community Members, Companions and Friends who arrive by train can help enormously in this simply by planning to arrive after 4:00pm on the day of arrival. This allows the monastic day to be uninterrupted without the 32 mile trip to Berwick and back encroaching on the time given over to rest. The following is the flexible outline of the monastic day to be followed at the Nether Springs in the coming months. Although there is nothing new, there is a more defined and hopefully a life giving structure that will free those who have enormous daily pressures to cope with, to have time for God, for others, and for themselves.

8:00am to 9:00am Self Service Breakfast  
 9:30am Morning Office  
 10:00am Work period  
 12:00noon Midday Office followed by Prayer and Sacred reading.  
 1:00pm Lunch  
 2:00pm Creativity and recreation.  
 4:00pm Work period  
 6:00pm Dinner  
 7:15pm Evening Office  
 7:45pm Relaxation reading, reflection.  
 9:30pm Compline  
 11:00pm House in Quiet.

All who live in and around the Nether Springs including the many folk associated with Mission and

administration as well as the 'house team' will use this flexible outline whenever possible as a scaffold to help them build into their lives a rhythm that includes all the pillars of the monastic day. Prayer, study, hospitality, manual work etc. all in the context of a simple lifestyle. This will also apply to our many visitors and guests who can simply fit into the daily rhythm at any given time. This greater definition is not to be seen as legalistic but as a serious attempt to actually build into the day, space for God, for ourselves and for others.



## TRADING UPDATE . Cloisters Ltd.

Jeff Sutherland/Nancy Hammond

Pick a card - any card, lots of cards and gifts! - and get involved in the growth of Cloisters. Cloisters Ltd. is the 'new' name for our Trading Company which is working hard to develop some of the things which we think we do well. Cloisters is the channel for expressing the creativity which is flowing through our Community. Where possible we will market and distribute the fruit of that creativity. Presently the main strand of the business is the greeting cards and other items designed and made by Nancy Hammond and Carey Miller. Cloisters also distributes the beautiful stained glassware made by Joan Boston and the honey and wax products from the apiaries kept by Shirley Searle. In the near future more of the Community's music will become available in recorded and printed formats. Also publication of some books and stories will soon be underway. So watch this space! The business is growing and we are currently finding even more outlets, as well as developing new designs. If you don't have a full catalogue let us know and we'll send you the latest one. An order form for Christmas cards and the 1999 calendars is included with this issue of CAIM. This is a practical way to support our Community and the Community members who work for Cloisters. Our workplace is moving soon, so the most reliable way to contact us is to write to: **Cloisters Ltd. PO Box 1, Wooler, Northumberland NE71 6YY. Tel/Fax 01668 282210.** We want Cloisters to enable us to express who we are as Community and not just something we do. We're excited at the possibilities and want to see Cloisters grow. So the next time you're sending a card or gift, have a look at the Cloisters catalogue first!

## Annual Retreat

We want to encourage all our Members, Companions and Friends to build into their lives an Annual private retreat at the Nether Springs. This would be a time of reflection, of quiet and waiting upon God with individual direction. Many of you already do this and know its benefits and blessing. Also to participate in one of the many Led Retreats we are running in the coming months, details of which are in the current programme.



# The Chronicles of St Boswald

We are very privileged to include this moving piece by Professor Snodric who holds the eminent chair of professor of fictional history at the Ancient University of Chatton.

Chapter One. The Spiritually Uplifting and also (more suprisingly) utterly true tale of KING BOSWALD, the Saintly King of all Northumbria (except the bits ruled by St Oswald).

The race, as they say, is to the swift. However much we would like to feel that the meagre will inherit the earth, it is usually the well endowed saintly ones who got to feature in biographies, hagiographies and the tabloid press. But what of those overlooked ones? The tortoises of the kingdom? The ones who were in the right place at the wrong time or those who were both temporally and geographically accurate but were simply dullards and therefore unable to take the benefits of the fame, fortune and glorious martyrdom's presented by an open heaven.

For instance, who has written the untold tale of the Great Welsh Revival of 1903 that did not happen because Ifor Roberts missed his train due to oversleeping after a night on the beer?

We have literally volumes of worthy and uplifting sayings from the Desert Fathers featuring St Anthony the Great and other hesychastic luminaries. But what of St Anthony the Unwashed who was in the desert a full fifty years before the St A the G? Why are his ipissima verba (or even his very words) not rescued for posterity? Why are publishers not able to bring out yet another excitingly titled tome called "Even More Desert Fathers greatest hits- rescued from the vaults vol. 1?" The answer, dear reader, is simple.

St Anthony the Unwashed before he became saintly, was a common or garden instant oasis whirlpool salesman. He was, it is sad to relate, the ancient equivalent of a seller of utterly ineffective but very expensive double glazing. Across the Graeco-Roman world, Antony the Whirl (as he was known) was at large selling his dubious wares to unsuspecting punters who did not really need a desert-experience-oasis whirlpool in their rather small 3ft 6in backgardens. Then one day, Antony the Fabulously Rich (as he was also known),



had a novel experience - he told the truth. He explained to a customer that the whirlpool was more gurgle than whirl and that, anyway, it was likely to be of little use in a 6th floor condominium with poor access to the acquaduct.

To his amazement the customer refused to believe him; reckoning that Antony the Golden Whirl (etc) was trying to put him off and that nobody could have got as rich as Antony if he (Antony) was selling rubbish. Everywhere Antony the Rotten Liar (etc) went he found that people would not listen to the truth and much to his dismay, his sales went up and up.

Finally, in a fit of conscience, Antony turned his back on the world. He changed his name by deedpoll, threw away his last bathplug and sought to retire from the world.



As he went he took no thought for the morrow and consequently forgot his hipflask. Racing back to remedy his error he paused only to sell a pillar to a local mug known as Simon the Stylish [it was admittedly a five star pillar with all mod cons] before setting off into the desert sunset once again.

St Anthony the Pilgrim (etc) continued until he came to a little mountain where he discovered that his feet were a bit sore. Taking this as a sign from above, he built a little hut where he grew miniature vegetables which he was able to wash and sell to St Michael the Grocer. From the proceeds of these, he was able to purchase a bigger mountain on which he built six hotels, three villas and a very reputable timeshare apartment complete with croquet lawn. Incorporating himself as St Anthony's Great Religious Breaks Limited, Antony was able to cater for the chariot loads of visitors who came to experience the full rigours of monastic life in a setting of five star luxury [thus proving, incidentally, that man can live by cake alone but is likely to suffer from terrible indigestion]. So profound was his conversion that he only took six baths a week and became known

throughout the known world (and elsewhere) as St Anthony the Unwashed. Thus it was that when St Anthony the Great came into the desert he found that St Antony's Great Religious Breaks Limited had turned the whole area into an enterprise zone and scheduled it for redevelopment. Somewhat put out, St Anthony asked St Antony if he was really being true to his vocation. St Antony the Unreliable's response was swift. In the space of five minutes he sold St Anthony two pillars; a cave, three vegetable plots and a one way ticket to the next desert with Virgin Camels.

Many years later, when the Arian controversy was at its height, Bishop Athanasius approached St Anthony the Great and asked to write the definitive history of the monastic movement [provisionally entitled 'Wish you were here']. He did not get off to a good start. His question "Pillars. A great gimmick. But why" received only a frosty stare in reply. Athanasius fared no better with his questions about the origins of St A the G's horticultural leanings. In fact, it was touch and go whether the good Bishop was going to land the writing deal at all. It was only after Athanasius had promised to make no mention of pillars, mass agriculture, caves, whirlpools and the threat to the green belt that St Anthony the Great agreed to co-operate in the writing of the book that became the ancient world's bestseller "St Anthony: the true story".

As for St Anthony the Unreliable Golden Whirl, what became of him? You will be pleased to learn that St Anthony lived to a rich old age and when, at last, he passed away he was mourned at length by his accountant.

In the next issue of CAIM we will present Chapter two of the Chronicles of King Boswald, King of all Northumbria (except the bits ruled by King Oswald). This chapter will be about Martin St Tour de France, the bicycling apostle of all Gaul (except when he had a puncture).

## INTERCESSORS

It would be good to see more people involved in the area of intercession. If you feel God is calling you to be a part of this vital area of our life then please contact the Community Office for further details.

## A journey through the Psalms

Meditations adapted from Bible notes written by  
Bob & Chris Ainsley of Derby.

**Psalms 84:5** Blessed are those who have set  
their hearts on pilgrimage.

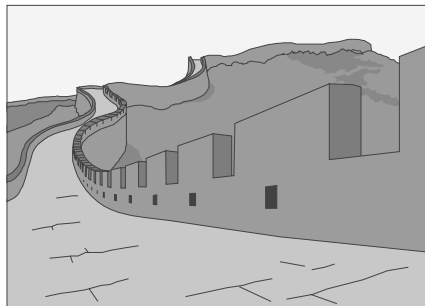
Many people identify with the concept of journey and pilgrimage as a metaphor describing the spiritual life. This concept is nowhere better portrayed than in the book of Psalms, as the full range of human emotions: joy, pain, overflowing praise, anguish, trust, despair, bitterness, and thankfulness intermingle in the journey of life. The psalms give us permission to tell God we trust Him but also to express our pain. 'How long? Why? When?' are frequent cries. How often do we encounter these desperate but real feelings in our hymnbooks and contemporary worship songs? It is allowed to cry out if the cry comes from our heart. And this is where our journey must start, with a heart-cry, a longing for a movement closer to His courts, to the place where our life may begin to flow out from the very Heart of God Himself. We cannot begin pilgrimage without this deep desire to seek God's face and heart, not primarily for what new blessing He can give us, but for who He is.

So we kneel and start out tentatively on our journey. The road will very likely take us through dark and dry valleys. You can't easily see out of a valley, let alone where it might be going next. But if our very being, soul, flesh and heart is truly longing for the courts of the Lord, then we can take our first steps knowing that the path we have chosen is going in the right direction.

**Read Psalm 19:7-14**

Jean Vanier talks of how we must 'befriend time'. Not to be impatient and want to arrive before we have even begun. One of the characteristics of our society is that we expect instant response to our demands. We press a button and expect delivery - Now! But God loves us too much to allow those whose hearts are steadfast to take short cuts. It is doubtful whether Moses, growing up in a palace, had it in his plans to be a humble shepherd in the desert. But where was it that God spoke to him? The preparation times involved between God's call on our lives and what the world, and sometimes the church, classes as Useful Activity, can feel interminable. What counts in these times, when our feet are getting tired and when everyone else seems to be passing us purposefully in the fast lane, is where our thoughts are set. Are we content to keep searching for the Heart of God? How do we fill our minds in the daily round. Complaint or contemplation?

**Read Psalm 55:1-8, 16-18, 22**



Another hazard on the journey is entering dark tunnels. Journeying through the dark can sometimes take on nightmare proportions. We know God is there, really. We've told dozens of others so, after all. So what has gone wrong? Why should it be that soon after we set our hearts towards the Throne room the King appears to take a holiday? Could it possibly be something to do with trust? Have we any idea yet what love the Father has lavished on us that He should answer our heart's cry. "But as for me, I trust in You" (Ps 55:23b)

**Read Psalm 27**

My heart says of you, 'Seek His face!' Your face, Lord, I will seek. Our age is not just one of the *instant*. It is also one of *experience*. We want it now and we want to feel it now! Many songs of the Church today reflect this, 'I want', 'Come now', 'Hold me' ... We must constantly ask ourselves whether we seek His face or His hands. Is the one thing we ask to behold the beauty of the Lord, and so reflect it to others, or are we primarily after something else? Do we seek the giver, not the gift?

So take heart, wait for the Lord! Even though His idea of time may be very different to ours and therefore extremely frustrating at times, we will see his goodness in the land of the living. We don't have to wait for heaven! There will be many more lessons in trust before we can confidently claim that we will not fear even though an army besieges. But isn't trust something to do with the greatness of our God? Once we start earnestly desiring Him, our journey takes us to those places which show us that our concept of God has just been too small.

*"God cannot be grasped by the mind. If He could be grasped, He would not be God."*  
Evagrius.

**"Community is the process  
of becoming united through  
the common experience of  
a core vision"** Jean Vanier

## A Journey to Remember Beverley to Lasteringham

Phyl Blockley

At the tomb of St John of Beverley, we met at the start of the 55 mile walk to Lasteringham. Our prayer was to say yes to all the spiritual possibilities of the pilgrimage as carrying only our basic needs we sought to leave behind the ballast of the daily routine. One necessity carried by the leader of the pilgrimage, Jonathan Roe and his wife Lynda was their baby son, Oliver, who was angelic and joined in the Daily Office by saying Amen. On the first part of the walk to Bainton we rested from the hot sun and had our picnic lunch in the shady hedgerow where we also said Midday Office. We ran out of water, and prayed that the Lord our Shepherd would not only guide us but provide for us at the next village and he did! We stayed at the local Methodist Church in Bainton where we were warmly welcomed, offered hot baths and provided with a feast. Not even the hard church hall floor nor the snores of our fellow pilgrims could keep us from 'crashing out' that night. Next day we set off from Bainton to Fimber. The meditation for the day was 'God stirs the air' so Lynda flew her kite in the wind and we were inspired to dance as the wind in the woods seemed to be a symphony of praise to God. At Fimber we prayed for the local farmers busy in the harvest. Clare the Vicar's wife had her own copy of Celtic Daily Prayer and so was immediately at one with us. The next stage was from Fimber to Norton and on the journey we collected wood, stone and other materials to make a collage that evening. Fraggie and Vicki led us in the making of 'Journey of the soul' which we left in the Anglican church at Norton whose people had been so hospitable. The next stage was from Norton to Pickering and we were very tired. We sang songs to keep our spirits up and shared our stories with one another. 'Beware of the Bull' notices obstructed our way and we had to retrace our steps but we reached Pickering weary but content. The local Anglo Catholic priest showed us the medieval paintings in his church of kings and saints who held fast to their faith in darkest times. The last stage of the pilgrimage was from Pickering to Lasteringham, some 9 miles. After communion, we set out through the sunlit lanes, looking forward to reaching our goal, which included a pub meal! We reached Sinnington where we rested and shared midday Office. We saw the very stones that marked the 'preaching place' where Cedd and Chad first shared the gospel story to the people of the Wolds. We arrived at Lasteringham and worshipped in the crypt church where Cedd and Chad had founded a monastery in the 7th century. The pilgrimage was a journey to remember; a reminder of the wider journey of faith that we all walk alone yet together..

## Storytellers - The Story so far

**Roy Searle**

A major development in the mission of the Community has been the partnership between the Bible Society and the Community. Out of that relationship has come our involvement with the Bible Society's Open Book Project. This major initiative, which is expected to last well into the new millennium, involves *Churches Together*, and is aimed at taking God's story back into the public domain, by *opening the Book to the people and the people to the Book*. It operates in four significant areas, all of which shape culture both in the present and the future; the arts, media, politics and education. Our particular involvement is in the arts with storytelling and it is from *The Telling Place*, our storytellers office at Nether Springs, that Geoff Boston, Angela Knowles, Rob Brown [not Rob the hairy!], Robin and Karen Noad, supported by Roy are directing and co-ordinating the initiative. This is a Community venture and involves many members, companions and friends.

Building relationally with individuals, churches and other community groups, together with professional and apprentice storytellers, the Community hopes to serve and encourage a Christian storytelling community across Britain. The ethos of the Community being foundational to the way the initiative is being developed, our storytellers have begun the process which over the next few years will see the creation and serving of a Christian storytellers network across Britain / building relationships and providing workshops for storytellers, professionals and apprentices / empowering individuals, churches and communities with the realisation of their own and God's story / research and development on narrative, looking at how stories shape and influence individuals and society / listening and learning from one another through forums which bring together storytellers, theologians, educationalists etc. / summer schools / festivals / resources of stories and storytellers / supporting projects in schools, colleges, community centres, prisons, hospitals etc. / working with churches and secular organisations / storytelling tours / networking / performing at Greenbelt, Spring Harvest, Easter People and other festivals, events / writing / providing opportunities for retreat, reflection for storytellers and other artists at the Nether Springs / raising awareness of the value of storytelling yet trying to avoid popularism and the novelty factor / taking the Bible, the Open Book, back into the heart of the public domain and seeing how God's story can become the peoples' story. Launched in April of this year our storytellers were very involved in the recent Greenbelt Arts Festival. It was an exhausting and demanding five days which saw hundreds of people participating in our *Telling Place*

storytelling tent run by the team and fifteen other Community members. It was also a great joy to be supported by at least another 40 Community folk who were at the festival, including our own musicians who were leading some of the worship on site.

**Susie Minto**, a Community member from Manchester, and new to storytelling



reflects on how *The Telling Place* tent was the place to be at Greenbelt 98!

"They came - old and young, and they kept on coming, often alone, looking for a calm oasis amidst the busy marketplace. Others came in groups, spurred on by friends who had already discovered this place of rest, relaxation and unhindered release of imagination. Strangers freely consented to remove their shoes in order to walk on the carpeted inner tent which framed the storytelling events. They did so with a kind of reverence, for somehow, the apparently ordinary-looking marquee - from the outside at least - gained the atmosphere of a sacred sanctuary as one crossed the threshold. Truly, it had a compelling character, created especially by the ring of colourful saris which were suspended above and draped over a simple open, square-shaped, wooden framework, but the place was unquestioningly sealed by the power and presence of God. I had little idea about what storytelling really was, yet four story-filled days later, I not only understood it but felt it, deep within. Something connected with my story and my need for story. I had and have a sense of expectation that I witnessed an awakening, even a birthing, on several levels - in me, among those who came to lead and facilitate, and those who came to participate and listen.

Stories are essential to relationship and perhaps the omission of stories as part of the experience of society is another sign of the way in which relationships have broken down on so many levels. The 'listening to' opportunities began to release deep-seated, if not hidden, powers of imagination and creative energy in many people. You could actually see the light dawning on people's faces as they embraced the opportunity to let their imaginations run riot in the storytelling workshops. You could tell by the way they lay, without any sense of threat or intimidation, on the colourful cushions spread over the carpet. Often they came only to reflect and did not expect to be in conversation. Strangers feeling at home, soon became friends. This was not just an activity tent but a place of community realised and expressed. I could see why and how we as the Northumbria Community could serve this initiative from

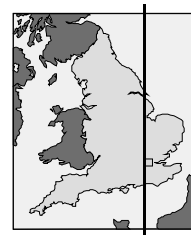
our own story. My hope is that the storytelling project will release many hidden talents and bring to birth a new longing for a tradition as old as creation. We should take great encouragement and believe firmly that God has his hand on this initiative as the following entries from the visitors/comments book at the tent bear witness: - "Fresh light, powerful pictures of God - thank you" - "So inspirational! It has opened my mind to so many possibilities for making truth accessible through stories." "Helping us to see God's face from a new angle."

"Excellent - a new way of looking at stories and stories behind the stories - we needed longer!" "I can't wait to try it out" "These tea time sessions were a success - right time, right interior decoration, right storyteller and right story. Please take the idea to churches around the country" "Excellent - encouraging - great fun" "Wonderfully Inspiring". If you want to know more about storytelling with the Community, please contact: The Telling Place, at Nether Springs. Tel: 01289 388477 or email - thetellingplace@bigfoot.com

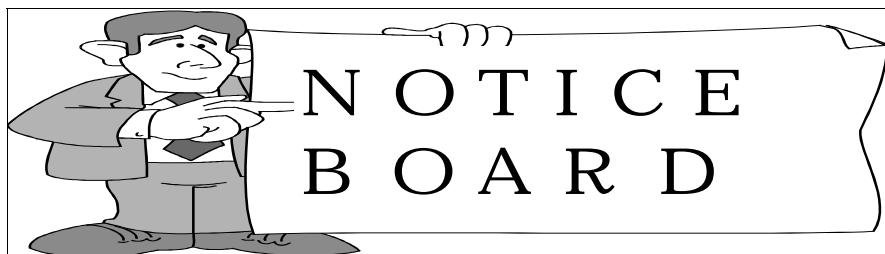
### Meridian Millennium Way Pilgrimage

We are pleased to endorse this important pilgrimage initiated by David Pott of the Fountain Gate Community, London with whom we have strong links.

As the new millennium dawns, the meridian line (the line running at zero longitude from the North to the South Poles) is becoming a central focus of celebrations, particularly where it passes through Greenwich, from where time is measured. The MMWP is seeking to establish a new 260 mile signed walking route along the Meridian Line from Cleethorpes to Peacehaven. The aim is for the route to also form a modern day "pilgrimage" for walkers to help prepare body, mind and spirit for the millennium. An unusual feature for walkers will be crossing and recrossing the meridian line over 200 times.



The project will give strong emphasis to the other nations which lie on the Meridian line - France, Spain, and the African nations of Algeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo and Ghana. It will also work closely with schools, churches and community groups to both plan the route and also engage in Fundraising activities for the African Meridian line nations. If you would like to get involved or receive information please write to: The MMWP, 58 Geoffrey Road, London, SE4 1NT. Tel 0181 692 8271 or email jerry.whitehead@virgin.net



The notice board is more about persons than about ideas. It is an opportunity for Community Members, Companions and Friends to write in to the Editor, with news snippets and updates of happenings across the Community family.

Congratulations to **Jonny & Carey Miller** of Hetton on the birth of their son **Connor** who was born on 3 August weighing in at 7lbs 9oz. Congratulations extend to the proud grandparents Trevor & Freda Miller and Ervin & Nancy Dörschler.

Congratulations are also in order for **Ruth Miller** who has recently become engaged to Paul Matthews.

**Jeff and Jill Sutherland** of Duns, hope to move very shortly to North Sunderland near Seahouses having purchased the old Manse of the former Methodist (URC) Church. The church itself has been purchased by **Nancy Hammond**. So watch this space for creative ideas for the future.

No sooner than globetrotter **Brenda Grace** arrives home from the States, she is off again to Russia. Brenda along with **Freda Miller** are going to St Petersburg to visit **Natasha Rumientseva**, a member of our Community, in September. Natasha is currently studying English at Summer School to a standard that will enable her to apply for a job as a translator. Pray for Natasha and her friends in the current climate of instability and unrest in Russia.

**Robin and Karen Noad** have settled in very well to their new role with the Open Book project. They are with us at Nether Springs for at least a full year and have moved into what was Barney's Cottage which has been transformed beyond belief. It is now "The Lodge, Hetton Hall", very posh!

**Lorna Fisher** of Berwick, a long time friend of the Community has joined the House Team at Nether Springs and is already proving a great help and blessing. If only she didn't know as many hymns and gospel songs!

**Norma Wise** of Newton Aycliffe who co-ordinates our Intercessors, has recently undergone major surgery, and has made remarkable initial progress. Pray for steady and continued improvement as she enters a convalescence period.

**Dave and Sarah Hay** of Jarrow, are hoping to move shortly to Tow Law in

County Durham. Sarah has started a new job teaching at a school in Chester-le-Street. Dave is also to work with schools in the Shildon area as a Family Support Co-ordinator.

We have recently had a double addition to our Trustees in the appointment of **Jacqui Urwin** (now hoping to live in Wideopen, near Newcastle) and **Pete Ross** of Moston, Manchester. Jacqui and Pete were formerly Trustees of the Sonset Trust which is now operating independently. They join the already existing Trustees: namely, **Bill Clementson** of Newton Aycliffe, **Sean Williams** of Bowden and **Gordon Joice** of Sedburgh.

After some months without researchers we are glad to report that **Anne Dyer** of Grimsby has now taken on the Johannine research project as its new coordinator.

The Community is saddened to report the death of **Rex Gardiner** of Sunderland on Aidan's day, August 31st. Rex and Elizabeth have been good friends of the Community from pre Hetton Hall days. Many will recall that Rex submitted a paper in the formative Internal Émigrés series at Old Bewick.

**Chris and Jackie Johnson** can be contacted at: Kamigo, Teacher's Apartment House, Room 103, 154-155 Goshon -agori, Kamigocho, Toyota City, Aichi Prefecture, 4718501, Japan.

**Marcia Colledge** of Leeds has recently returned from a trip to Australia. She was able to visit Community members **Jean Wilson** in Tokyo, and **Miriam Sayer** in Tasmania. Both Jean and Miriam would love to hear news and views from anyone. If you would like to keep in touch with them, then contact the Community office for their addresses.

## How then shall we live?

The recent closure of Cuthbert Cake and its failure (despite sterling efforts) to provide adequate funds has not diminished the desire to have a 'basket making' arm of the Community which will in actual day to day terms, put "food on the table and keep a roof above our heads". The intention right from the start has always been to put something in place that will help finance the vision and vocation of the Community without putting undue pressure on those many members who also have a financial commitment to a local church. We want to emphasise again that we are not in competition with the church because we are part of that same Church. Having said that, we do have to be realistic. The reality is that the Community has grown enormously and many more people are now looking to us for help and guidance, but there has been little corresponding growth in our support base. We are very grateful indeed to those of you who give regularly and often sacrificially but it still remains true that we are in real need of a substantial increase in regular (and where appropriate, covenanted) giving, in order for us to continue the work we believe God has given to us. As part of our current and ongoing re-evaluation we will be examining different ways of expanding our support base including an in depth look at what it actually means to be a Member, Companion or Friend. We would certainly welcome any ideas from those of you with some expertise in this area. We do not wish to burden anyone but we do wish to see a realistic grasp of these fundamental practicalities of finance extending to all those who believe that commitment to and association with the ethos and lifestyle of the Community is an important aspect of their lives. If you are able to help in any way please contact Freda Miller at the Nether Springs.

## BOOK AMNESTY

As we have many library books from Nether Springs currently unreturned, would it be possible for you to check whether or not you have overlooked any such books, and if so could you return them please.

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