

CAIM

Issue no 14 Autumn 2000

THE NORTHUMBRIA COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the Autumn edition of CAIM, the newsletter of the Northumbria Community. **CAIM** is the Celtic word meaning encompassment or encircling. This newsletter goes out to all those who are within our circle of Community Companions and Friends.

Living in the Mystery of the Big Picture

Trevor Miller of Hetton Hall

In July I travelled north from the Nether Springs to the Hermitage (formerly Community) of the Transfiguration at Roslin, near Edinburgh. It was a journey I had made many times before in order to see my spiritual director Brother John Halsey and his colleague Father Roland Walls, now 81 years young. Over a delicious lunch of raw garlic, blue stilton cheese and home-made bread, we talked about roots, tradition and foundations – about what is important and central, and what is peripheral. I mentioned again how grateful we were to God for Roslin as they had modelled a life that was foundational for the development of our own ethos and Rule.

As the conversation developed I discovered that in turn, they had been significantly influenced in their early days by Nunraw Abbey, a Cistercian monastery about 40 miles north of Nether Springs near Haddington. This was an amazing coincidence (or God incidence) because only the week previously Ken and Norma Wise had visited Nunraw and told me how significant they felt it was for the life of the Community. With John's encouragement Roland told the story of their beginnings, of a time when they thought they had made a big mistake in going to Roslin, a time when they really needed to hear from God, his answers, solutions, guidance and confirmation. So they went on a retreat to Nunraw for 3 days, with a hundred questions, huge expectations and a need to know details. On the first morning they were met very briefly by Abbot Columban. This is what he said, 'For the next 24 hours I want you to think about a wonderful truth – God loves you.' That was it, nothing more and he left them to it. They didn't see him again until the next morning, when he said, 'For the next 24 hours I want you to think about another wonderful truth – you can love God.' Again that was it, nothing more! He

left them and didn't return until the morning of the 3rd day, when he said to them, 'For the next 24 hours I want you to think about another wonderful truth, perhaps the hardest of all – love one another.' That was it. At the end of the day they left.

Roland and John explained the significance of this for them. It taught them to seek God, not his answers. To wait on God, not his solutions. They were to reflect, think, own these 'big picture' truths, rather than become preoccupied with details and minutiae. This was foundational to their lives, their calling as contemplatives. It is a lesson that can be readily applied to us all because we can be so caught up in dotting the 'i's and crossing the 't's of doctrinal statements, mission policy documents and even our own daily discipline, that we fail to lift our eyes to the bigger picture, to the mystery that is God. We don't always have to know. We don't always need to know. Sometimes we just need to trust, to worship, to wait, to be. The day to day specifics must be seen in the context of the overall purposes of God.

- God loves you
- You can love God
- Love one another

Abbot Columban made them realise that in these 3 truths lay both the foundation and the continuance of religious life. They apply collectively and individually. They are as relevant to the inner life of the hermit as they are to the collective life of a community. Alone or Together they are at the heart of the everyday life of every believer. This is living in the mystery of the big picture.

- To be able to rest in the fact that we are loved, truly loved by God. To be open and receptive to that

love in daily ordinariness.

- To realise afresh that we can return the favour. We can choose to love God in return, choose to seek him, to say yes to him, to wait before him when we don't understand the detail all around us.
- To resolve to love one another, the hardest of all, as a way for living.

As I travelled home that day I thought again about living in the mystery of the big picture. About Merton's words 'What you have to be is what you are.' About our task being to seek God, to know our true self, to be what we are, in order to love, and in this task I found myself comforted again by the all embracing truths of Teresa's Bookmark from our Midday Office:
Let nothing disturb thee
Nothing affright thee
All things are passing
God never changeth.
Patient endurance attaineth to all things
Who God possesseth in nothing is wanting
Alone God sufficeth.

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NEWS FROM CLOISTERS

Ian Corsie of Allerdean.

Celtic Daily Prayer.

The new combined, revised and expanded edition of the original Celtic Daily Prayer and Celtic Night Prayer, with lots of new material will be published on 20 November and the RRP will be £19.99. Cloisters will be making them available by mail order at £20.00, including p&p in UK

Although in the same format as the 'old' books it is a quality 850 page hardback publication, which should give a lifetime's wear. With many new liturgies and two years of daily readings, we would want to encourage all Companions and Friends to purchase their own copies but also to consider buying it as an ideal gift for family and friends. If you want to buy copies to give as Christmas presents, make sure you let us have your order in good time to send out on publication.

The 'old' **Celtic Daily Prayer** is now out of print; but Cloisters has bought up the remaining copies and can make them available at a bargain £5.00 per copy whilst stocks last. **Celtic Night Prayer** is no longer available (but of course all its contents will be in the new book).

Order both the old and the new books using the book and music order form enclosed with this CAIM. Don't forget the music edition of our Northumbrian



Office is now available at £5.00 per copy – and that the Celtic Daily Prayer CD also makes a very good gift as well as being a means of introducing others to Community worship. (mail order price £11.50)

Celtic Roots and Rhythms.

Many of you will by now have heard the superb new CD by Community Companions Nick and Anita Haigh. Cloisters has already sold over 80 copies of it: have you got yours yet? The price is £15.00, including p&p in the UK; again use the enclosed order form.

Recommended reading.

We have produced a list of books that have proved helpful and which remain valuable in the life of the Community.

These books will always be available by mail order from Cloisters. Again, the details are on the enclosed order form. This list will shortly be supplemented with a further recommended reading list of other titles which are well worth watching out for (we will provide publication and price details so you can obtain copies yourself – and will point out where titles are currently out of print, as some of them are). Watch out too for a separate Storytelling resources mail order catalogue which we will be working on shortly.



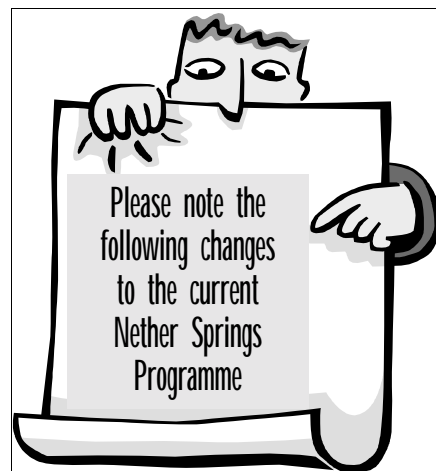
Christmas cards & 2001 Calendar.

There are 15 designs to choose from this year! You can buy packs of 10 each of one design; or 2 each of 5 designs (choice of 3 different mixed packs). The price per pack is £3.50, including p&p in UK, and full details are to be found on the Christmas card order form enclosed with this CAIM. (Apologies to all those who, like me, groan mightily at being invited to think of Christmas in September; but there are others who like to get organised early). And don't forget that a wide range of card designs and stained glass is always available by mail order: just ask for the full catalogue. A calendar for 2001 (giving all the Saint's days), will be available as usual at £3.50.

Cloisters trading performance.

Readers might be interested to know that in the first full financial year as the 'new' Cloisters (Apr 99 to Mar 00), the company sold £18,400 worth of stock and, after the costs of stock and overheads, (most of which were ploughed back into the Community Trust finances, as this is its purpose) we showed a modest profit of £400. In the first five months of this financial year (Apr to Aug) the turnover has already reached £14,800 (mainly thanks to really good sales at Spring Harvest and to the contributions from sales of the CDs – 'Celtic Daily Prayer' and 'Celtic Roots and Rhythms'); and we are looking to build on this substantially with more new products. So it is good to be

able to report that the trading company is making a strong contribution to the Community in both financial and practical ways: this is creative 'basket-making'! We are very grateful for Ellen Niven's untiring efforts in invoicing and despatching your orders away promptly; and to Bryony Stimpson, who comes in once a week to keep us (among many other things!) on the financial 'straight and narrow.'



The **Storytelling Forum** from the *15th to 18th January 2001* has been postponed and is now replaced by the 'Quiet Waters' retreat.

The date for the **Council and Trustees** weekend is to be *March 2nd - 4th 2001* replacing the retreat entitled 'He restores my soul.'

The **Community Group Leaders** weekend is to be *January 19th - 21st 2001* replacing the retreat entitled 'The heart alone with God.'

Easter Workshop dates have been brought forward one week to the weekend of the *6th - 8th April 2001*, replacing the Community Weekend. There will be a led retreat over **Easter Weekend** itself *13th - 15th April* which will centre on quiet reflection and liturgical worship.

A new programme will be ready before the end of this year.

F o r G o d s o l o v e d t h e C o s m o s

Jaquie Owen of Bristol shares reflections after walking in the grounds of the Nether Springs during the 'Creator, Creation, Creativity' retreat earlier this year

A walk in the wind and hail;
walking all wrapped up - slowly walking, eyes wide,
intent on finding, looking and seeing things with a renewed vision
Seeing things from nature, God's own creation
Seeing those things which have always been there, unseen,
lying there in wait of true Spring to break through,
or lying there, forgotten - a remnant of last fall, last summer ...
Leaves scattered damp and squashed on the earth,
below hedgerows, under trees - together on the ground
as their offspring bud in bright yellow-greens above,
nodding to them in love - on waving branches from above.
Dried and withered grasses seem to nod and say,
"Hello, stranger over there, what is it that brings you here?"
I don't know.
Their neighbours, the hay, have been cut down;
some lay neglected in the lane and on the verges, scattered, a forgotten remnant;
but then maybe not; insects might enjoy them or mice might like a treat;
birds may peck and use them for their loved one's warmth nearby.
Twigs lay scattered all around, a farmer has been busy, cutting the hedgerows,
and now they lay ready for all that wander near;
"Use me - I'm here," they say.
The sheep are in their fields, woolly and huddled together -
it's handy to have such warm coats and such warm company,
especially when the gales are so bitter.
Their wool is found everywhere, caught in hedges, soft and clinging,
Odd old teasels and other remnant of last year's season, I spy hidden here and there;
their seeds I've no doubt - are scattered ready to begin the life cycle again,
that is - if they were not already used to sustain another creature.
And pretty, perfect yellow flowers, primroses and daffodils,
and bluebells raise their heads and smile at me - beneath the twiggy sky above;
set beautifully amid a sea of lush and leafy green.
Stones of rough and ready nature I touch, rough as the bark in my other palm -
pebbles smooth (from some other refinery) not this time the sea.
I look up to the little slope in this wooded spot, and gaze upon an object -
though natural it is not - and yet it was created by human hand,
not God's, but through his Spirit, it was made from manmade waste -
recycled to make a glorious cross, the cross of Christ our Saviour -
that this 'waste' might remind us that Jesus' life was not.
"For God So Loved The Cosmos"



The Cross in the Nether Springs grounds made by James Hawes of Hetton Cottages from items of 'rubbish' and waste.

P e n g u i n s , C o k e , a n d G o d

Robin and Karen Noad of Oklahoma

There once was a little boy who wanted to meet God. He knew it was a long way to where God lived, so he packed his suitcase with chocolate Penguin biscuits and some cans of Coke, and started his journey. When he had travelled about a quarter of a mile, he met an old man who was sitting on a park bench just staring at some pigeons.

The boy sat down next to him and opened his suitcase. As he was about to take a drink of his coke, the boy noticed that the old man looked hungry, so he offered him a Penguin. The old man gratefully accepted it and smiled at him. His smile was so incredible that the boy wanted to see it again, so he offered him a Coke. Once again, the

old man smiled at him. The boy was delighted! They sat there all afternoon eating and smiling, but they never said a word. As it grew dark, the boy realised how tired he was and so he got up to leave, but before he had gone more than a few steps, he turned around, ran back to the old man, and gave him a hug. The old man gave him his biggest smile ever.

When the boy opened the door to his own house a short time later, his mother was surprised by the look of joy on his face. She asked him "What did you do today that made you so happy?" He replied, "I had lunch with God." But before his mother could respond, he added,

"You know what? He's got the most beautiful smile I've ever seen!"

Meanwhile, the old man, also radiant with joy, returned to his home. His son was stunned by the look of peace on his face and he asked, "Father, what did you do today that made you so happy?" He replied, "I ate Penguins in the park with God." But before his son responded, he added, "You know, he's much younger than I expected."

The story reminds us that we can too often underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around. People come into our lives

Covenanted together within the love of Christ we share a common vision to see the Kingdom of God extended in Northumbria and to carry the torch of the gospel wherever the Father leads us.

Roy Searle of Wooler writes about the Community and its Mission

The growth of the Community in the last few years has far exceeded our intentions or expectations. Allied to this is the major increase of activity flowing from the Community within the whole area of mission. The need for larger office space in the Stables wing of the Nether Springs, and more people coming on board with the Community teams, is symbolic of the flourishing of the Community's mission in the last year or so. The fruit of our prayer and the relationships that have been formed has seen the flowering of many initiatives.

As we have sought to embrace the call to be available for participation in mission of various kinds according to the calling and initiatives of the Spirit, so Companions and Friends have been engaged in all kinds of ventures. For some this has found expression in the home; as microcosms of the Community's call to prayer and hospitality are realised: for others it's outside the home; in their neighbourhoods, community events or work settings: for others it has involved making journeys, often to the forgotten or out of the way places to pray, to be and sometimes to do things.

The result is a fascinating kaleidoscope of happenings that bear the hallmarks of the Community's ethos, without any claim or need for the Community to own or control them.

It is as though the *fearful hope for society*,

Dynamic and erratic, spontaneous and radical, audacious and immature, committed if not altogether coherent. Ecumenically open and often experimental, visible here and there, now and then but unsettled institutionally. Almost monastic in nature, but most of all enacting a fearful hope for society.
William Stringfellow

which Stringfellow wrote about, is becoming a greater reality for many; making a difference (even in a small way) for God's kingdom. It is a Way for Living that brings an inward change of consciousness towards God, towards self, towards the church and the world in which we are called to live out our vocation.

Examples of this can be seen in the lives of the individual Community Companions as they, embracing the Rule of Availability and Intentional Vulnerability live out the story God has placed on their hearts and in

initiatives borne out of our journeying together:

The Tide is In... mission starts at home

HULL

Jonathan and Lynda Roe and their young son Oliver, who in response to the call of God have moved from their home near the centre of the city to the outlying Bransholme estate. It is one of the largest council housing estates in the country with all its attendant social, economic and spiritual problems and opportunities. Jonathan writes... *So we are now Council tenants as well as members of the Community Council! ... We are gradually acclimatising to a landscape of boarded up properties and prejudice. It's almost impossible to get anything insured if you live in HU7. I'm having great fun explaining our move to my workmates. They don't seem to get the vision of downward mobility. Ollie is running around outside as I write - he's made lots of new friends already. He doesn't seem to need to explain his spiritual motives for being here! I'm working part-time, three days a week, teaching. Lynda's work continues to grow. A bid to the Lottery that I wrote recently secured the funding for most of the project for the next three years. Her work amongst pre-term infants who are critically or terminally ill can now expand and develop. We pray every day for you and the Community. We are using Office with neighbours on a daily basis.*

As a Community we stand with them in prayer and support. Next year we will be sending folk to pray and plans are under-way to have a Community team on mission in Hull. Why? - Because it expresses the heart of God - because the vocation and vision of the Community is being expressed through two of our Companions who need our support - because this is clearly a calling and initiative of the Spirit - because Hull is within the geographical region of Northumbria, which while not being the exclusive domain of the Community's mission, is at

its heart. 2001 will see us sending teams to both the Forth and the Humber on mission. If you have a hunch that the Lord may be calling you to be part of these teams and initiatives please let us know at the Community Office.

In the meantime why not write to the Roe family at: 18 Harlech Close, North Bransholme, HULL HU7 6DB.

The Tide is Out... mission continues outside the home

TELLING PLACE STORYTELLING INITIATIVE

The Telling Place Storytelling Initiative is founded on the Community's vocation and vision. It was borne out of prayer and relationship. The fruit of which is now being seen in all kinds of church and secular settings throughout Britain. The movement that we have been privileged to serve is impacting many peoples lives and the church and cultural contexts where the Initiative has journeyed. As was written recently in a storytelling report...

Two and a half years on from the start of the Initiative we have moved through an experimental phase and aroused interest and changed peoples thinking and awareness of the power of telling God's story. Storytelling has been taken from tokenism to something substantial. It is not an arts side-show but a phenomenal vehicle to effect change in the consciousness of the individual, church and culture. Storytelling is not a peripheral novelty but a mainstream movement. It is not so much a tool but a significant means of effecting change and transformation individually and corporately.

... Storytelling and the ethos that surrounds it, is able to creatively and relationally re-connect people with God's Story, both in the church and more importantly in the public domain, e.g. it builds relationships and is a significant means to building community and effecting social change. It engages with the imagination and releases human potential while addressing major life-themes. It also knows no boundaries. It is a common language of humanity and is a bridge over which the church can easily travel into the culture. It has to be seen as more than a project - more a way of life.

Storytelling awakens people to cultural memories and portrays the Bible in a way that it is heard and received with mind and heart. Our current priorities, after two and a half years' innovation and experimentation, is to now adapt to the pre-

The renewal of the Church will come from a new type of Monasticism, which only has in common with the old an uncompromising allegiance to the Sermon on the Mount. It is high time people banded together to do this. **Bonhoeffer**

sent and potential growth of the Initiative and build appropriate foundations for the future.

'Building the New on Foundations of Old.'

(Continued on page 5)

As the Initiative is constantly moving and therefore not static, it has been a catalyst for some very exciting developments. One of those developments has been the Community's involvement with the **Greenbelt Arts Festival**. In partnership with Bible Society, (who have become good friends) we have journeyed together on mission which has taken us into the arts and education, including the creation of The Telling Place. The what? **The Telling Place** - a creative portal site for the imagination, a window for words, a haven to relax in, a fireside to gather round, a creative space to play in, a community to merge with, a treasure to discover, a chapel to worship in, a telling place! So much more than a festival venue, it is a place of encounter where the ethos and Way of Life, that is the outworking of our vocation, finds expression in all that is done on mission. For three years now we have had a Community team at the festival, which has drawn hundreds of people through the



doors of the tent, which has become a place of meeting with God for many folk. In discerning where to go and how to respond to the many invitations we receive, we are directed by our commitment to our ethos of church without walls and Kingdom in the Streets. Increasingly we are sharing with groups of people, who have been described as *unchurched* believers and unbelievers. We seek to learn from and serve those churches that share a commitment to these groups of people particularly, like the folks in

BRADFORD

As a result of intercession and friendships established with people and churches in the city over many years, Bradford has come to hold a special place in the Community's heart. It has been a joy to share and serve on several occasions with folks at the cathedral, on the Buttershaw estate and with our friends at St. Christopher's in Holmewood, where Gordon Dey, a Friend

of the Community is the parish priest. We have been privileged to be with the folks from St. Christopher's both working with them on their estate and also to have been away with them on their Parish weekend at Scarborough. Next year will see us return again with the congregation to the seaside for a weekend retreat.

Holding the conviction that God, who is Trinity, always works relationally we seek to do the same in our mission. The fruit of building relationships then finds expression in ways that truly build the kingdom. It also frees us from the tyranny of seeing people and situations in terms of project, function and pre determining ways.

These and so many other happenings reflect a Community, rooted in the monastic disciplines of the cell and the inward journey, yet moving out in mission, responding to God's call upon our lives in all kinds of ways. *Almost monastic in nature, but most off all enacting a fearful hope for society.* From the simple and profound to the risky, innovative and creative, we seek to be used by God to break new ground for his kingdom. How? - by seeking to live out the story God has laid upon our hearts in the ordinariness and every day experiences of life, by offering the shattered fragments of our own brokenness and weakness to be used by God in speaking a word of hope in a fractured and changing world. In the seeking and serving, responding reactively or proactively we may yet, by God's grace see more *beacons and bonfires* lit for the Kingdom and companionship afforded to other émigrés on the journey of faith.

.... pray that God will send those of his choice

As the mission of the Community continues to grow and develop we need to be praying and seeking God to draw the people he is calling to come and serve. Several years ago we were reminded of God's promise to supply all we needed in the midst of the tasks before us:

Don't be frightened by the size of the task. Be strong and courageous and get to work for the Lord my God is with you. He will not forsake you.

He will see to it that everything is finished correctly. 1 Chronicles

28:20

Remembering also the meditation of Day 31 in our Northumbrian Office:

Do pray with us and for us that the Lord will

We also prayed that if it grew, God would send us the workers of His choice, rather than our trying to advertise or get people to help us... So not to advertise but simply to pray that God will send those of his choice and keep others away, is a different way of doing things.

send those he wants to come to live and work among us at the Nether Springs from where so much of the mission of the Community is overseen and supported. And be vigilant in prayer for the flowering of these and other initiatives, that they may continue to be rooted in God and consistent with our calling.

If you want to know

- more about mission
- about exploring where the Lord may be calling you to serve
- how to be involved in the Community teams or the planned pilgrimages next year to Ireland, Bardsey and Cornwall or alternatively,
- if you would like to let us know about initiatives that you are involved in and would like us to pray for and (as appropriate support), do get in touch with us.

Contact us by email at:

northumbriacommunity@bigfoot.com

or write to the Community Office at Nether Springs.



A recent sermon by Roy Searle on New Map spirituality at the local Brethren Assembly is marked for content and technical merit....

I love to go a wandering...

Brief reflections by some of our Community Companions following recent travels

Brenda Grace writes: In July I went to Australia, via Singapore – hot, humid, exciting, vibrant and colourful – and great hospitality with Sharmani and Muni. The main reasons for going were to (a) attend the International Christian Dance conference – The Spirit Moves – in Mittagong and (2) visit Miriam in Tasmania, doing as many other things in between as possible. Things I immediately discovered, Australia covers about the same area as Europe so my grandiose plans for driving over much of it had to be scrapped, the sun shines in the North at midday not the South and Koalas are hard to find in the wild. Things I really wanted to do included visiting my friends David & Juliette in Sydney and to visit Lynn at St Joseph's House in Goulburn – had a great time meeting Annie, Julie & Kathy, teaching a standing up version of Christ as a light, and also meeting the folk at The Holy Transfiguration Monastery (see Andy's article). Getting to Alice Springs, and Uluru had to be left for another time. The dance conference went well, and I came away ready to dance anywhere (that's worn off!!!), with a word about travelling all around the world (I'm still very hopeful!), having made some new friends and with a video of Andy Raine and others doing the funniest parody of Swan Lake you'll ever see. My travels around Oz – (New South Wales, Victoria, S Australia and Tasmania) took me to some beautiful places: the Murray River, The Great Ocean Rd, the Mallee Valley, the Pink Lakes, Nathalia, Kiama, & Mulwala Lake to name but a few. I bumped into Celtic Saints in a window in the Cathedral in Goulburn, (not literally) and the 12 Apostles on the Great Ocean Rd. I did most of the tourist things, cuddling a wombat, feeding kangaroos & wallabies, stroking koalas & a little Tasmanian devil. I had two weeks staying at L'Arche with Miriam and travelling around Tassie in Bridie her little red car. She is very well, and praying about her future – to stay in Hobart or move near her family on the NW coast, to continue her studies or get work. For those who have forgotten, it was winter in Oz, and we had minus temps and snow, the warmth of the welcome making up for all that. Whilst I was over there they were running/walking/flying/swimming the Olympic torch round most of Oz, it kept arriving in places just after I left, but we caught up with each other in Tassie. A memorable occasion. Enabling me to get

all scriptural – Heb 12:1, all emotional, and to get my hands on a torch! (pictorial evidence is available.) Our unseen cloud of witnesses cheer us on louder and more heartfelt as we carry the torch of the gospel than thousands of folk did those who carried the Olympic torch. (My spiritual thought for the day.)

In July **Andy Raine** flew to Melbourne after the International Christian Dance Fellowship conference near Sydney and visited the monastery of Holy Transfiguration, at Breakwater. Four years ago Andy and Brother Graham Littleton had connected on Holy Island for a brief but significant period before the tide intervened, and out of that meeting came the invitation to visit and address the community and others they had invited for the occasion.

Andy, in listing some of his initial impressions mentions the

- Childlike quality of the community, their eagerness to share.
- Dedication to excellence evident in everything from printed material to conduct of liturgies or the buildings they've adapted or constructed from scratch, combining elegance of style and comfortable simplicity
- Overwhelming welcome and hospitality.
- Feeling of drinking this place in, its prayer, its beauty, its depth and intensity, especially in the oratory in the dark.

The Community has remained comparatively low-profile, and after well over 20 years of exploration and committed life together only agreed a couple of years ago on a written formulation of their Resolve (equivalent to a Rule or Way for Living.) Their formative influences include Orthodox and Baptist, and the Community includes celibates and marrieds. Some have taken permanent vows, others make provisional vows. Some are the Cloister, but the greater community are also much in evidence. Sketes are being developed also at a distance. The children raised in the thick of the Community's life are now young people and seem to be a close-knit group, very sane and normal. The Community is an enigma (because of its monasticism) to other networks of Christian community living, and to the traditional monastic communities in Australia, too. It is growing, rather than diminishing, attracting new vocations, and living its resolve.

Holy Transfiguration Monastery – RESOLVE

- Being perfectly assured of your salvation, with your whole life proclaim gratitude
- Reject nothing – consecrate everything
- Be the good of love, for God, for neighbours, for all creation
- Judge no-one, not even yourself
- Love beauty
- Maintain inner-silence in all things
- Show hospitality. Err only on the side of generosity
- Let your only experience of evil be in suffering, not its creation

In May and early June **Trevor and Freda Miller** were able to enjoy a six week break from Community oversight and embark on a series of journeys that would take them to many parts of the UK as well as across the English channel to France and later to both Northern and Southern Ireland.

After a week of crashing out at Hinderwell, near Whitby they began their pilgrimage to Tours in the Loire region of France, exploring the life and times of



St Martin of Tours, one of the pioneers of Western Monasticism and a huge influence on early British Christianity. A visit to the site of one of his most famous monasteries at Marmoutier just outside of Tours was a disappointment as access to the actual monastery was not available. This was more than compensated by a chance (more God's choice) visit to a small village called Candes St Martin where the two rivers Loire and Vienne meet. There they not only discovered the burial place of St Martin but a beautiful church housing a shrine to him. It was 'a thin place' and a real highlight of the trip.

Apart from a previously planned few days in Cranfield (the southern most tip of the North), Ireland was more peregrinati than pilgrimage (in that they did not know exactly where they would be going next). Staying in B&B and unsuccessfully trying to keep ahead of the incessant rain, they were able to visit and pray in many places of significance in the North and the South including Tara, Kells, Armagh, Omagh, Clonfert, and Scatterry Island, (a definite highlight) as well as spending a few days of much needed rest surrounded by the awe inspiring beauty of the Kerry-Dingle region of SW Ireland. Although very tiring physically, it was a time to be restored emotionally, to gain new perspective and spend quality time together. They are very grateful to the anonymous donator who made the trip possible.

Our feet are standing in your gates O Jerusalem

Gordon and Margaret Joice of Sedbergh

We had wondered what we should do to mark the fact that in 1999-2000 we would both reach 70. After much thought we decided that we would go to Israel. We had been in 1992 when we travelled with a guided tour, but this time, we would make our own arrangements. We had always wanted to return and this seemed to be the right time. Our trip took us from Manchester to Tel Aviv and from there to a Kibbutz hotel, named Ma'agaan, on the Southern shore of the "Sea of Galilee" (similar in size to Windermere). The Galilee region is quite beautiful, flowers and trees in profusion, and our accommodation had a balcony where we could sit and see the waters glistening in the sunshine. At night we could see the lights of Tiberias and other settlements around the lake reflected in the water, even those on the Golan Heights shone like pools of light in the darkness. Whilst staying here we went to Tiberias and saw the so-called "Jesus Boat" and the superb new museum they are building to house it. The boat which is approx. 2000 years old, was found when the water level dropped, much as it is now (over 3 metres below normal and a cause of great concern). About a mile or so from our kibbutz is where the Jordan leaves Galilee, and slightly downstream is Yardenit. Here a baptismal site has been constructed in the river, which is very popular, having a good restaurant (and the inevitable shop.) The temperature in the early evening was 25; very different to Lindisfarne when we left at Easter.

After 3 days we left Galilee and set off for Jerusalem. We were full of anticipation as we travelled up the Jericho road, round a final bend, and there, golden in the sunlight was Jerusalem. Our hotel, the Mount Zion, overlooked the Hinnom valley towards the Walls of the Old City, which was within walking distance. We were very emotional as we went through the city, reminding ourselves of the geography. Passing along the Via Dolorosa to the Temple Mount, amid the incessant noise and spice smells, we began to find our bearings. "Our feet are standing in your gates O Jerusalem".

One of the few things that we had wanted to do was to walk from Jerusalem to Bethany. A taxi took us to the top of the Mount of Olives and armed with a rudimentary map we set off along the modern road to Bethany which is 4km. After a while we arrived at an unsignposted crossroads. Fortunately we saw a sign for a nunnery, where Margaret rang the bell and was given further directions from an aged Italian speaking nun, realising that we were almost there. We later found out that had we continued to follow the other road it would have lead us (after petering out) into the desert! Quite a frightening thought! After finding Lazarus's tomb, the inevitable shop-keeper told us of a "quick way" back. This turned out to be part of what is thought to be the original track which was in use in the time of Jesus. We were so thrilled that we had found "an old path", even though we were stumbling along in the heat.

Walking down the Mt. of Olives we entered the Church of All nations, set in the Garden of Gethsemane. On our previous visit we had found this church, and had hoped to return. Visit-

Interview with God

Andy Cowley of Oxhey

I dreamed I had an interview with God. "Come in," God said. "I understand you would like to interview me?" "If you have the time," I replied. God smiled and said: "My time is eternity and is enough to do everything; so what questions do you have in mind to ask me?" "What surprises you most about mankind?" I asked. God answered: "That they get bored of being children, are in a rush to grow up, and then long to be children again. That they lose their health to make money and then lose their money to restore their health. That by thinking anxiously about the future, they forget the present, such that they live neither for the present nor the future. That they live as if they will never die, and they die as if they had never lived..."

God took my hands in his and we were silent for a time and then I asked. "As a parent, what are some of life's lessons you want your children to learn?" God replied with a smile: "To learn that they cannot make anyone love them. What they can do is to let themselves be loved."

What they can do is let themselves be loved

To learn that what is most valuable is not what they have in their lives, but who they have in their lives. To learn that it is not good to compare themselves to others. All will be judged individually on their own merits, not as a group on a comparison basis! To learn that a rich person is not the one who has the most, but is one who needs the least. To learn that it only takes a few seconds to open profound wounds in persons we love, and that it takes many years to heal them. To learn to forgive by practising forgiveness. To learn that there are persons who love them dearly, but simply do not know how to express or show their feelings. To learn that money can buy everything but happiness. To learn that two people can look at the same thing and see it totally different. To learn that a true friend is someone who knows everything about them and likes them anyway. To learn that it is not always enough that they be forgiven by others, but that they have to forgive themselves."

I sat there for a while enjoying the moment and then thanked Him for His time and for all that He has done for me and my family. And God replied, "Anytime. I'm here 24 hours a day. All you have to do is ask for me, and I will answer. Seek and you will find..."

BEWARE OF THE ABBOT

Hugh Barnett



Sin of pride or not, if you walk on my clean floor I'll do you....

Celtic Arc? Turkey to....?

Jean Wilson of Tokio, Japan

I was pondering the fact that I really do not fully understand or feel moved to share the vision of the Celtic Arc from Turkey to Ireland, and I realise its because I have lived in Japan for over 20 years. I have struggled to understand why God has called someone like me, who is so committed to the East, to belong to the Community. Then my eyes kept going to the word Turkey and I realised that for me, Turkey is not the end of the Celtic Arc but the end of the Silk Road. It was the final destination on the Silk Road trade route from the East. If you take the Celtic Arc to Turkey and keep going east along the Silk Road, you'll reach East China, and Japan. I then thought about why several Community members seem to have a similar passion for America as I have for the East, and if you go east from Britain to the States, there's only one more step--from the States to Japan--before you've encircled the world. Japan and the States are so closely tied; in fact there are probably more Japanese in Hawaii than Americans. I realised that what I was seeing was an obi around the world. (An obi is the thick sash wound around a kimono to keep it in place.) Maybe God intends the Community to become an obi around the globe -- encircling on a bigger scale than originally envisioned.



Notice Board

The notice board is more about persons than about ideas. It is an opportunity for Companions and Friends to write in with news snippets, articles, prayer requests and updates of happenings across our dispersed Community family.

Brenda Grace of Holborn is on the move again as she plans to make a short visit to **Ferg and Becky Matthews** and the children in Lyons in late September.

Congratulations to **Mark and Helen Lloyd** of Nottingham on the birth of their son Ewan, a brother for Catherine.

Roger Green of Bedlington has agreed to serve as a Trustee of the Northumbria Community Trust.

Sue Hall of Dundee is moving to Senegal in West Africa in early October to work with the Wycliffe Bible Translators. She will be seeking ways to help people express their devotion to God through culturally relevant liturgy, music and worship. Her new address is: S.I.L BP 2075, Dakar, Senegal, West Africa.

Brother Ronald SSF of Saltcoats who is known to many in the Community celebrated his 88th birthday at the Nether Springs in August.

Sara Bennett-Steele returned to Minnesota in early September having spent some weeks working at the Nether Springs on the House Team. She will be missed for her cheery disposition. Pray for her as she re-adjusts to life in the USA.

Joan Stewart formerly of Blyth has moved to Middleton near Wooler. She is helping to catalogue the books in the Nether Springs library.

Visitors to the Nether Springs will miss a familiar face as we have said a sad goodbye to **Milly** the goat who has settled well with other 'goatie' company at an urban farm in Byker.

INTERCESSORS

If you wish to know more about how you can be part of this vital ministry, please contact:- **Norma Wise** of 22 Finchale Road, Newton Aycliffe DL5 5HT or Tel: 01325 312930.

BOOK AMNESTY

As we have many library books particularly from the reference section at 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 please return them. We would be very grateful.



Annual Retreat

All Community Companions and Friends are encouraged 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 which is available from the Community Office.

Journeying with the Northumbria Community

A booklet with the above title is available on request from the Community Office. It is designed for those wishing to begin an exploration of what it will mean in actual practice to become a Companion or Friend of the Northumbria Community. A brief outline of the background and formation of the Community, as well as its vocation and vision is followed by a simple explanation of the process required of those who are considering journeying with the Community.

Tellings in the Turrets...

Susie Minto of Hetton Lodge

Do you fancy a pre-winter storytelling warm-up in the stunning surroundings of a castle?

The Telling Place (the partnership between the Northumbria Community and Bible Society) invites you to join them for 48 hours of exhilarating activity in Ford Castle, North Northumberland from 24-26 November 2000 entitled 'Winter Lanterns.'

Professional storytellers and musicians will share their skills with you – and you can join in, whether it's your first 'crack' or you are well-practised. We'll have children's and young people's choices as well. You'll hear tales from the Celtic tradition, sacred and Biblical stories, plus advent stories and an opportunity to learn new skills in a variety of workshops.

There'll be storytelling indoors and out, by the campfire and in the wood-panelled lounges, in the fields and down in the dungeons. Ceilidhs will bring the best of everything together in a family party atmosphere.

Full board is £90 and self-catering is £40 plus there is a licensed bar for both evenings. For full details on costs and travel, contact Susie Minto at The Telling Place, Hetton Hall, Chatton, Northumberland NE66 5SD. Telephone 01289 388477. Fax 01289 388510. Email thetellingplace@bigfoot.com

PS If you would like to be on The Telling Place mailing and get regular news of the initiative's progress and activities, contact us for our current information and a database form – it's a different mailing list from the one used by the general Community.

Community Groups

If you would like more information about Community Groups; please contact: **Norma Charlton** at 84, Kells Lane, Low Fell, Gateshead NE9 5XY. Tel: 01914878065

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Really Naff