

CAIM

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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.

The times they are a changing

Roy Searle of Wooler

I am still of an age and outlook to be able to appreciate Oscar Wilde's sentiments that if you tire of London you tire of life. Many opportunities have come over the years to visit the capital and my recent visit at the end of September provided me with an opportunity to walk from Lambeth around Westminster, over the new Millennium Bridge and along the South Bank, on a beautiful, warm autumnal evening.

Over recent years I have witnessed the changing landscape of London. Where once stood proudly Shell House dominating the landscape, it now appears shabby and dated, looking pale in comparison against the more creative, innovative and altogether more appropriate buildings for a new age. Some things remain the same and will forever be 'London'; the River Thames, the Houses of Parliament, Trafalgar Square, St. Paul's, the Tower Bridge and the unmistakable chimes that boom out over the city from Big Ben. Some new developments like the London Eye, the MI 5 building, the many new waterfront developments, have taken their place alongside the established landmarks and have added to the landscape and contributed to London, its life, work and community.

Though there are aspects of London to which I am neither blind nor comfortable with, there are features of its life that I love – its cosmopolitan feel, multi-racial dimension, its life, vitality, buzz and the blend of ancient and modern. Sitting in a restaur-

ant later that evening I thought about the similarities between my London observations and the experience of Community during this period of change and transition, as we are moving from second to third generation. The landscape, not of the heart but of its expression is changing. Holding on to that which remains essential to our *raison d'être* – our reason to be, that which is our calling, vocation and vision yet passing those core values and ethos on to succeeding generations to shape, express and live the life, alone and together in Community is an important feature in this present chapter in the life of the Community. Guarding what we have is essential but without our governing its life and growth; this remains a continuing task.

Building the new on foundations of old - foundations given by God that root us in our calling and which have inspired and informed us as a Community. Covenant relationships, seeking after God, continuing to explore a new monasticism, embracing *Availability and Vulnerability* as *A Way for Living*, the freedom not to own or control but rather to give away that which God has given. We do so as a Community, geographically dispersed, rich (if not financially!) in diversity, contending for relationship not reputation, community not institution, movements not monuments, taking risks and not being prescribed, consciously creative, rooted yet proactive, aware of as-

piration and perspiration, joy and pain.

As with change and development, we're still highly experimental. Like the London landscape, we too have known successes and failures and in the process of building Community lives have been helped, given hope but also hurt and wounded. As we celebrate 10 years of the Mother House, the Nether Springs at Hetton Hall, it is an occasion to look back on the unfolding story of God's grace and goodness and to give thanks, that despite our frailties and the mistakes and the adventures undertaken, there is much to give thanks to God for, to learn from and to build upon, as we journey into the future. Sometimes, like London, Community can be a sad place, a testing place, a place of pain as it too can be a place of life, hope, impact and adventure. Above all it's a beautiful place. So for the place and the people, you and I, and all who've come, for those who've gone and all those who will come following the Way who will shape and change the landscape of Community and walk with us into the future, we give thanks. Thanking Him for all that is past; we will trust Him for all that is to come.

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The Naked Branch - Stripped,.....and Resting

Following on from the last issue of CAIM here is part 2 of the personal reflection by Clare Redhead of Brisbane

A very influential woman in my life, one I have come to know a little bit over time and who is my heroine in this act of discovering the True Self; in the act of reversing that which the world does to you and instead intentionally open one's self up to vulnerability, is Mary of Magdala. There is always much suspicion about Mary's character and possible occupations of her past. There is much one can meditate on in regards to the way in which the world exposed her as a "unreputable" character. Whatever her history she became a welcomed companion of Christ and in his company intentionally exposed herself in one of the most venerable acts imaginable in the society and culture of her time. She

stripped herself of her veil and let her hair hang about her face publicly in the presence of a man, an unacceptable act for Jewish women at the time. In doing so she also participated in one of the most passionate and beautiful acts I can imagine. She poured perfumed oil on his feet and wept resting at the feet of her Lord, wiping them with her hair. Not only this but Christ responded to her vulnerability by lovingly accepting the offering that she gave despite the chastisement and questioning of it's nature by Simon with whom Jesus was dining, 'Leave her alone', said Jesus, 'why are you bothering her? She has done a beautiful thing to me'... **She did what she could.** She

poured perfume on my body beforehand to prepare for my burial. I tell you the truth, wherever the gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told in memory of her.'

My challenge has been to work out what all this means in the context of who I am and where my resting place is, especially back in the 'normality' of suburban life. Life is really difficult. I see it even amongst many of us who have incredibly blessed lives. I have just been through a time where one of my housemates seriously considered committing suicide in the same week that my other housemate was in the process of breaking up with her partner. It doesn't

make any sense! All I know is one of the things that has gotten us through all of this, is the knowledge and trust in the Gethsemane to Easter of Christ and the permission and trust to be vulnerable and exposed amongst each other, a consciousness we pledged ourselves to when we first established this house, along with some very other conscious choices of "how then shall we live", including a sacred space that is our chapel used for silence and offices. Those of us when we are only working part-time use other days of the week to loosely and other times not so loosely live out the monastic day. Already since I have been home I have

been led to people and places that live out and will begin to live out God's will through using some of the things I have learnt and uncovered. May I also ask for your prayers for the Kingaroy region, about three hours west of Brisbane, for there God's Spirit is moving and the ethos and history of all that we are a part of will greatly influence this land, for this I am certain (Also home to Peter Hall, Community Companion and many people and connections I have, including the Cherbourg Aboriginal Community). There is nothing new under the sun, and in that there is great wisdom if one is care-full and watchful of the context into which it is adopted, rather than used to simply replace. This my prayer for my life and my country.

Searching for and discovering that place where I can completely strip myself naked, with all my scars to be seen and yet, like Mary in complete vulnerability, be in the most safest of places, a strong place, lies one of the greatest challenges of life. Challenging because it is paradoxical and opposes the way in which the world demands us to be strong. As my friend and colleague, Amy-Joan, who I met while working for Iona, says, it is a "topsy turvy" faith and I completely agree with her for it is only in that scarred, broken, exposed state that we can find our true place of rest - that place which continually renews us to re-enter fully into life and self, like Jacob returning to Be-

Fragrance

Steve Hewitt of Hetton Hall writes: Aileen was on retreat at the Nether Springs and wanted to do some 'pottering'. At my suggestion she made some raspberry jam in the kitchen. When it was done I commented that the fragrance was like nectar. After thinking about this for a little while, Aileen shared a very helpful reflection. She said that when she was in the kitchen she couldn't smell the jam herself as her senses were saturated. However, when she came back into the kitchen a little later, it was then that she noticed the lovely smell too. This she said was exactly what Nether Springs was like. When you're here in the centre all the time, you don't always notice the fragrance, but when you come in from the outside it is like nectar. A great encouragement to those who live and work at the Nether Springs especially those on the Monastery Team who provide the context (often mundane and relentless), the welcome, the rhythm of everyday ordinariness that enables others to find the fragrance.

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Madame Jeanne Guyon

The Telling Place At Greenbelt 2002

Wendy Ward of Manchester

Once upon a time The Telling Place, was blessed and rich, and visitors flocked from all over the Kingdom to see its beauty, and experience its magic. Alas, hard times came and where there had once been riches, scrimp and save was the order of the day. And the people that had come when all was well, didn't seek it out believing the blessing to have gone, (or maybe they just couldn't find it).

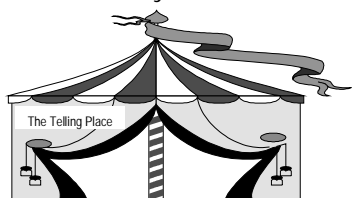
However, those that did, and opened their eyes to the future rather than looking back to the "glorious olden days" found an acorn of great worth.... The magic was still there in the stories that were told, by experienced and new tellers alike. The smaller venue meant that previously unheard tellers, plucked up their courage to tell – and they were very good.

Ashley Ramsden captivated the audience with his tales from many places and traditions, as did Susan Walters and Hazel Bradley in the sessions they hosted. In addition to this there was space to develop telling skills, along with the opportunity to use them.

Of course the programme included the Northumbrian Office, and this was popular as ever. When the programme allowed space to chill out visitors enjoyed the simple and effective design of the venue, which gave people who dared to engage, the opportunity to consider life and faith from a different perspective, opening up the imagination to a different dimension.

The Telling Place was different this year – different and good. So thank you to all who contributed in bringing it together in a much shorter space of time, and with less financial resources than previously.

Cathy Turton is now co-ordinating volunteers to help with Community Teams for events and projects. If you'd like to be involved with teams for the future please contact her to let her know your interest and availability. E mail her on; cathy.turton@northumbriacommunity.org or perhaps you'd like to offer to sponsor a volunteer to participate in future events, even if you don't feel you can be there yourself.



Help! How do I do that? An experience of creativity

Cathy Turton of Seaton Sluice

Asked to organise the 'Journey of Life' as a prayer experience for a Church week-end, I went to the Nether Springs and collected a piece of cloth (about the size of a double quilt cover) adorned with circular markings. My response of 'what do I do with that?' was met with an enthusiastic 'it's brilliant, such a blessing'. I left hopeful but not very confident, after all, I had one night to get it sorted using only resources immediately to hand. However, by the end of that night I shared the enthusiasm, and certainly the blessing extended beyond me.

Thanks to a lack of furniture I currently have a large space where I spread out the cloth. 'Right, Lord, tell me what to do!' was my prayer. As ideas came into my mind, I was reminded of people who had provided the materials I now used. As a house warming present I'd been given a David Adam book which seemed the ideal starting point - his 'Before Prayer prayer'. I stepped onto the cloth and walked the path until I found my way blocked - that reminded me of the exercise we used at Spring Harvest, of treating stones as representing burdens, so I added a pile of stones and at the next block, a bowl of water to abandon the stone i.e. give the burden to God. (Living by the beach I have a handy collection of stones!) It was amazing how placing the stone in the water altered the stone's appearance, making the burden seem insignificant once handed into God's care.

Now I focused on God's promises - and at the next block made a feature of the rainbow. At a recent Church service, ribbons had been given out as reminders that we all share God's rainbow promise even though we may only glimpse a part of it. I'd found this a powerful experience so added a pile of ribbons (yes, amazingly I had some in the house!) for the prayer walker to collect one at that stage of the journey. That focused me on pilgrimage so in the centre of the maze of a pile of shells (from the beach!) - the ancient symbol of pilgrimage, invited each to collect one as a commitment to continuing with God. The moving out of the journey I decided should be straight out, claiming God's peace, using the blessing from Morning Office. (When this was actually used at the Church week-end, others felt steps should be retraced.) I was amazed that four hours had passed in this planning. My longest decision concerned music - should there be any or silence? Back to the sea - a friend had given me a tape of sea sounds and this was ideal - not intrusive but covering any incidental noises. I also added scented oils in burners to cover any distracting smells.

I later received instructions that should have come with the cloth. I'm glad they didn't, I'd have missed out on a 'brilliant, what a blessing' experience alone and later, together.

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, particularly looking at how our Rule of Availability and Vulnerability is applied to the unique circumstances of each of our lives. 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 available from the Community Office.

BEWARE OF THE ABBOT

Hugh Barnett



'There's no business like show

Walking Ancient Paths

(from the Nether Springs Finance Office....!)
Bryony Stimpson of Hetton Hall Cottages

Around the dinner table at Hetton Hall people often enquire about the routes that have brought people to the Community. My own answer is bound up with explorations in Christian Pilgrimage. Attracted by an ad in a Christian magazine that asked: "do you like walking and worshipping in out-of-the-way places?" I signed up for a holiday with Pilgrim Adventure and soon found myself helping to run pilgrimage walking holidays with the Bristol-based group. On a trip to Scotland we visited sites associated with Maelrhuba and other Celtic Saints, finishing on Iona, and I realised I needed to fill a gap in my knowledge of church history!



My reading began with Ray Simpson's "Celtic Spirituality", which made a passing reference to the Northumbria Community. As I was living in Northumberland (Cramlington), I determined to find these people (and see if they had two heads!). I should add that I was in process of parting company with the Salvation Army after 13 years of ministry – a difficult and painful time, but one in which I was looking for new ways to explore and express my faith. Nether Springs became a place of healing and renewal for me as I grew in relationship with the Community.

Fruitful opportunities with pilgrimage groups continued - I have been privileged to walk Cuthbert's Way (Melrose to Lindisfarne) and explore Northumbrian sites and the Christian Heritage of Galloway and Whithorn. Earlier this year we went to the West coast of Ireland and visited the evocative monastery remains on Skellig Michael. Groups vary, of course, but we have invariably been enriched by the special fellowship that develops as people journey, talk, prepare meals, eat, laugh and of course pray together. Worship amidst the beauties of nature and in sacred

Seek my face and not my hand MATTERS OF FINANCE

Enclosed in this issue of CAIM is the pie chart representation of the income and expenditure for this past financial year which ended on September 30th. We have in fact just about broken even but there have been some scary moments recently in this important area of finance. This has prompted us to highlight some of these difficulties because they will be ongoing and to ask for your continued prayerful and practical support of the life and work of the Community.

Among the recent difficulties have been the major setback of not being able to benefit from Gift Aid donations made by those staying at the Nether Springs.

This was the decision following an otherwise very successful review by the Inland Revenue. We have appealed against this decision but have just heard that the appeal has been unsuccessful. This has meant that we have had to pay back nearly £3000 as well as losing the substantial income this would have brought in the future. Another problem has arisen from the transfer of The Telling Place office to Manchester and while we are convinced of the rightness of this move it has meant that monies for renting office space, heating and lighting, use of facilities etc. are no longer available to the general purse. Moreover the major cutbacks in the Telling Place budget for this past year and yet further cutbacks in the year ahead mean that serious decisions have to be made affecting people and mission in this area. Further the anticipated income from the setting up of a USA Trust has not materialised because the process has hit many snags and brought to light many complexities exacerbated by the September 11th atrocities. Add to this some unexpected capital expenditure and you will see just how scary it has been. There is nothing romantic about living by faith.

However it has to be said that we are extremely grateful to God for all who give to the family purse of the Community. As you can see on the enclosure, the growth and development of the Community has meant a hugely increased budget. Unfortunately the huge numerical growth has not seen a corresponding growth in giving. Indeed it is a matter of some concern that many who have said Yes to Availability and Vulnerability do not contribute financially to the Community which we believe is an important part of belonging and ownership. The recommended monthly giving figure of £20 for each Companion has not been increased since its inception more than 5 years ago. While it is true that some may not be able to afford this it is also true that all can afford something that confirms their commitment to stand together in availability and vulnerability.

We are absolutely and totally committed to the principle which was spoken into the Community some years ago now of 'Seek My face and not My hand' and we will do everything within our power to effect good stewardship and to simplify things whenever we can. This is a constant process of awareness, always being reviewed. We are also blessed by the commitment to financial integrity and the understanding of our ethos by those who are responsible for the day to day financial management namely Freda and Bryony.

We are also grateful to God for those who work for the Community as volunteers (some full-time) and this helps enormously but you will appreciate that most of those who live and work for the Community need to be paid a living wage. This is the biggest item of expenditure by far and the different needs of a constantly changing core Team brings its own pressure.

We believe we are entering an important and exciting era of the Community's life, a period of re-evaluation, transition, expansion which is why we need to bring this important matter to the attention of the wider Community. Along with the prayerful and practical support needed for the process of retreat and reflection to be undertaken by Roy and Trevor throughout December and January to go ahead, (explained elsewhere in this issue) we are also aware that the lean winter months will soon be upon us in relation to projected income at the Nether Springs. It is of course much easier to take hands off if there isn't the constant anxiety over whether we are able to pay the bills and the necessary decisions which require a hands on presence.

Please be prayerful about this, and practical—buy our products from Cloisters for Christmas, consider a more regular pattern of giving to further the vision and vocation of the Community. It is our Community, alone and together we will bless this work of God.



ATLANTIC CROSSOVER

Two accounts highlighting our ever deepening links with America
David and Margene Vessel of Minneapolis reflect on a trip to England and Ireland - Jeff and Jill Sutherland of North Sunderland write a letter from America



The past few years David and I have had the opportunity to visit Northumberland many times – a land that we **both** love. However, this past spring we entered into a whole new experience. We journeyed with the Community to Northern Ireland. Below you will find David's reflections on this life-changing trip.

As we made our final preparations for our trip to England, we found out that some of the Community were going to Northern Ireland. I asked Margene if that was a sign that we were to go also. Margene shot off an email to Roy and by the time we landed in London Shirley called to confirm our intent. I didn't quite know what we were getting ourselves into but I couldn't pass up the chance to get a guided tour of such a storied place.

I knew the trip was going to be something special when both Brenda Grace and my bride were showered, clothed and breakfasted before seven AM. I must add that they were both quite chipper. We rode with Brenda as she weaved her way from Hutton to Wooler where we met Joy Corsie and Roy at the Searle residence. We packed our bags into the green VW people carrier and I laughed to myself as I climbed into my first 'coracle.'

Analogies of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales kept reverberating through my mind as we wound our way westward across Scotland picking up Bob Ainsley, and Margaret and Gordon Joice at Ben and Judith Searle's lovely home. The team was finalized after a terrific ferry ride when we collected Nick Haigh at the airport in Belfast. Roy was quite concerned that our denominational traditions might pose a problem for our host should they become public. He had nothing to worry about since neither Margene nor I had any inclination towards martyrdom.

The first night was electric. It typified our experiences starting with an example of overwhelming Irish hospitality, sharing the idea of a community without walls, and ended with each member of the Community team joining a small group from the church in an intensely honest and moving time of prayer.

The next few days changed our lives forever. Ken and Clare, Rosie, Trevor and Judith, Pam French and Stephen Adams gave riveting testimonies that deepened our understanding of the complexity of the problems that the people of Northern Ireland face. Yet each of them personified the

solution to the unrest in their determination, their courage, and their compassion. Each provided an example of availability and vulnerability that utterly humbled me. My fears and obstacles seem, even now, trivial. I came to Ireland hoping to see some new parts of God's great creation and ended up discovering how much more of myself I had to give. I came to share the Rule and found that they taught the true meaning to me.

Letter from America

It certainly didn't qualify as a 'giant leap for mankind', but as I made my way down those few small steps, I emerged into a lunar landscape such as I'd never even been able to imagine.

We'd driven on late into the night, into the absolute pitch blackness, heading for a pencilled cross, scrawled onto the wide-open, featureless map. This was the location of Monument Valley, and we'd been assured

it was a place not *we immediately saw the similarities in the journey God* to be missed. So at about 1 in the morning, we calculated that we were somewhere near that cross, and so pulled our motorhome off the desert road to clamber into bed. The kids had already been there for the last 200 miles or so, and we'd seen two vehicles in that time.

So when I awoke and looked at my watch in the half-light of the curtained bedroom, I thought that I'd try to get outside to explore, without disturbing the others. I opened the door, and closed my eyes as the scorching sun hit my face. I walked down those two steps, and slowly opened my eyes. The assault on my senses was tangible. I was in the most surreal situation – alone in the middle of a desert wilderness, in the heat of an early morning, surrounded by the most enormous red rock monoliths, rising starkly out of a flat plain every mile or so, and reaching a thousand feet or so into the sky. It was the land of a thousand cowboy movies, and I was here, right here. The others were quickly called, and came outside to marvel too....

That sense of almost disbelief – am I really doing this – was to become a companion over the coming days and weeks. We were in the USA as a family in the summer, for a total of almost five weeks,

and were to stand in some of the most staggering places on earth – Grand Canyon, Bryce Canyon, the Rocky Mountains....

The trip began following an invitation from Renovare, a very influential movement in the States committed to deepening spiritual life. The Community had worked with Richard Foster at Spring Harvest, and we immediately saw the similarities in the journey God was leading us on. Richard was keen to strengthen the links and relationship between the Community and Renovare, and so invited us to be part of their 'Board retreat'. It was a privilege to spend almost a week with such open and generous people, and to share something of our own story. We led worship, brought some of our songs and liturgies, and were so well received and affirmed, it was just very powerful. Then, the day after the retreat ended, we climbed to the top of a 14000 ft mountain with some of those guys! (Can you hear my accent?)

Wanting to make the most of this wonderful opportunity, we decided to take the whole family and turn it into an epic tour! After Renovare, we headed off in this enormous beast of a motorhome to drive several thousand miles, seeing as much as we could. We spent some considerable time with our dear friends Robin and Karen Noad, and how special it was to see them in their 'new' surroundings in Oklahoma. And then we went on to spend time with Community Friends and Companions in New England. We saw some amazing sights, yes – but they pale when compared to the kindness and hospitality we received from some wonderful friends. The gift of Community....

There is a sense in which the Community's life in America is being fanned into flames just now. The website is generating lots of enquiries from the USA, and we need to consider very carefully just how we respond to what God is growing there. We are fortunate in having relationships with a few folk in America – some of which go back a very long way – who can help us to respond in a measured and careful way, being sure to hold before us the importance of relationship and ethos. Please pray as we explore what it is God wants to grow there.

NEWS FROM CLOISTERS

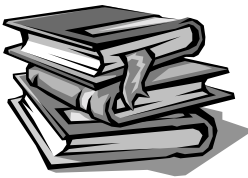
Ian Corsie of Allerdean

Celtic Daily Readings

Do you feel you are becoming over-familiar with the daily readings in *Celtic Daily Prayer* - perhaps because you have used them over a long period? Then don't forget that a third year of readings from the Community is available in *Celtic Daily Readings*; it stands well on its own and will make a good gift book too. The readings are about, or drawn from, authors as diverse as Charles de Foucauld, Columbanus, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Anthony of Egypt and Madeleine L'Engle. And it includes the Jesse Tree readings for December. The mail order price is £11.

Storytelling books

Two very helpful and strongly recommended books for anybody



thinking about taking up storytelling are now available from Cloisters: Ruth Sawyer's classic (1942) book *The Way of the Storyteller*, which includes 11 of her best-loved stories, at £10.50; and Sandra Pollerman's very practical *Stories, Stories, Everywhere* at £8.

Spirituality books

Another two newly available books (particularly helpful if you are considering going on retreat) are *Soul Making: the Desert Way of Spirituality* by Alan Jones, at £11.75; and *A Tree Full of Angels* by Macrina Wiederkehr, at £8.50.

To order from Cloisters, ring 01289 388235 or email cloisters@northumbriacommunity.org

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.

Building the new on foundations of old

Trevor Miller and Roy Searle

Following the recent gathering of the Community Council and Trustees in September there was a unanimous endorsement of the proposal by Roy and Trevor that as Community Leaders they take some quality time away from the multifaceted tasks of Community oversight to retreat, think, pray, reflect, write and be able to dialogue together about the many important issues affecting the way forward as a Community.

Our Hild Liturgy expresses it well. *Show me the right seat, find me the fitting task, give me the willing heart*. Both Roy and Trevor are convinced that they are in the right seat and they certainly have a willing heart but the growth and expansion of the Community has brought with it a huge growth in responsibilities that make them often question whether or not they are always doing the fitting task. This of course has consequences for the wider Community as no-one can be in two places at once. The many things we would like to do, the many people and places we would like to visit are all subject to the constraints and limitations imposed by the urgent and the necessary. We are all gifted with the same amount of time as each other but the important question is how do we best use that time.

We are certainly convinced of the need to simplify. Growth and development brings a constant struggle and tension between that which is foundational and that which is needed to accommodate the growth. We are not wanting to perpetuate a system or maintain an organisation for its own sake. We want to know in the midst of such growth how these inevitable aspects of growth can facilitate the life God has called us to embrace, explore and express. We are more than ever aware of our uniqueness as a Community—we must strive at all costs to maintain that uniqueness and not allow the development and growth of the Community to take away the very thing that draws people to us. We want to build the new on foundations of old and never lose the heart of our calling to seek God through the embracing and understanding of a new monastic spirituality that informs and inspires our living in the real world as it is through 'a faith that is active and contagious and a prayer that is quiet and contemplative'.

These and many related issues are to be the focus for Roy and Trevor through December and January as they lay aside other responsibilities and concentrate on a period of prayerful retreat and reflection. This review of who we are and what we are about will effect matters of roles and responsibilities, transition of leadership, delegation of tasks, training and deployment for the wider Community.

As you can imagine the prayerful support of the wider Community would be appreciated during this important time, not only for Roy and Trevor but for those who will have the added responsibilities that come with the decision to release them for this time. We are grateful for the positive encouragement to take this step that we have received from the Community Council and Trustees and we believe that it will have far reaching implications for the ongoing vision and vocation of the Northumbria Community.

**Show me the right seat;
Find me the fitting task;
Give me the willing heart**

Home from Home

Ed and Sarah Pillar of Evesham reflect on a recent family holiday at Nether Springs

"We've going to stay at Trevor's house" Zoe informed her friend. "Trevor lives in Northumbria." To our children, Zoe aged 6 and Isaac aged 3, Nether Springs is Trevor's house. For us all it has become a home from home; a sacred place; a safe place; somewhere we can take a family holiday to relax and unwind from the busyness of life and be blessed by the simplicity and beauty of the rhythm that is Nether Springs.

Last year, when we came for the first time as a family we were a little apprehensive as to how Zoe and Isaac would settle into community life. Yet, no sooner had the car door opened than Isaac took the hand of Robin and tripped lightly into the house as if this was his home.

This year they were made equally welcome and quickly remembered the way back to our room in the 'big strong tower'. For Zoe, the Prayer Garden became 'The Secret Garden', often ransacked for flowers for the table. The vegetable patch became a mud bath,and thanks to Anne, Isaac discovered how the hose worked!

Each day we joined others in the chapel for prayers. Both Zoe and Isaac are familiar with the Office, having heard us singing it, or hearing the tape in the car. Isaac joined in the singing (!) and Zoe followed the words in the book. 'I like evening prayers best Mummy, they have candles!'

Nether Springs is so much about the joy of

meeting up with old friends and making new ones. Trevor and Freda, Joanna and 'Hairy' Rob, (ask Isaac to explain!), Steve and Sheena, Liesl and Anne, Martin and Bekah, and little Norma and her wonderful cooking. We treasure our 'kitchen' memories: drinking good wine and single malt whiskey – (aah! the Laphroaig); long chats and a seeming endless line of jokes around the Aga; and seemingly endless washing up. Bliss indeed!

We revisited Holy Island; trekked to St. Cuthbert's Cave; made our way to Old Melrose – sites increasingly dear to us as we have discovered that monks from Evesham Abbey came up north in 1078 to help refound and rebuild the ancient monastic communities destroyed by the Vikings.

So without designing for it, we found a family holiday 'rhythm' for our days: friends and coffee; boat trips and walks; prayers and gardening (of sorts); broken churches visited and the hope of rebuilding broken altars in Northumbria and in Evesham. This pattern stayed with us on our journey home as we wandered back home via Durham, Hartlepool, Whitby, Lastingham and York, following the Evesham monks' pilgrim route in reverse. For us an 'ancient pathway' is reopened and we hope to travel it many times together.

Autumn Storytelling School

"The Telling Place" are holding an Autumn Storytelling School, led by Angela Knowles. It runs from Monday 11th to Sunday 17th November 2002, and is to be held at Sion Community, Brentwood, Essex. The School covers: Biblical storytelling, traditional stories and folktales, personal story, adapting written stories/learning skills, approaches for different audiences, developing voice and physical presence, storytelling etiquette, starting a Storycircle. The cost of the School is £330.00, which includes full board accommodation plus all tuition and work materials. Further information from David Ward at The Telling Place office: Tel: 0161-227 0377 or email: thetellingplace@bigfoot.com

An Epic Adventure

David Ward of Manchester

Imagine text-telling Mark's Gospel in mainstream theatres. Imagine challenging the *status quo*. Imagine bringing sacred stories to the table of the arts world and beyond. Imagine, imagine, imagine the possibilities!!!

In the week 27 to 31 January 2003 this dream and vision will move into the realm of the real world. *The Telling Place* will tell Mark's Gospel in theatres in London, Manchester and the Bristol area. These will be the premieres, and from these shows we need to have raised enough profile and support to take this tour to a national level, covering the length and breadth of the country.

Is this fantasy? Is it pie in the sky? Erm..... NO! We already have the tellers, the musicians, the set designer and the technical crew. Rehearsals are under way, but to make it more of a reality we need your support.

This is a real *stepping out in faith* venture. We need you to be praying: theatres have all kinds of prejudices to overcome... financially, we only have a third of our needed budget...will people

November Thanksgiving Day

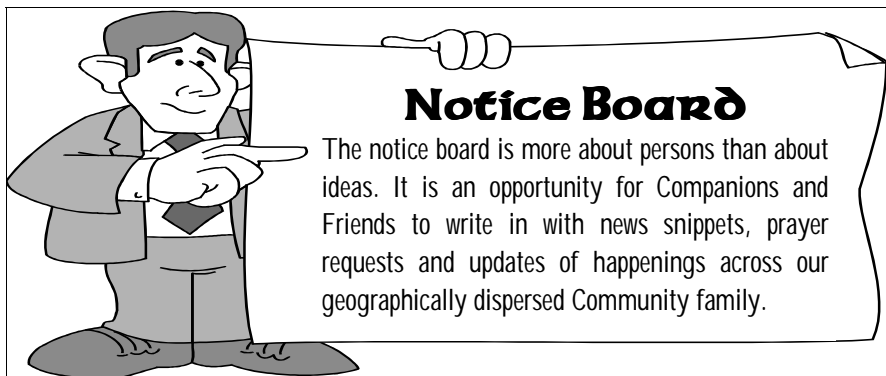
On Saturday November 2nd we are to celebrate together 10 years of the Nether Springs at Hetton Hall, being the Mother House of our Community.

The celebration will be planned around the monastic rhythm of the day and begin with Morning Office in the Chapel at 9.30am. During the day there will be times alone for space, prayer and reflection and also times together for worship and workshop activities which will include the development of a history book. If you have short stories, poems, songs, and especially photographs to donate to this then please bring them (or send them if you can't make it yourself) as the book will be kept in the library for all to enjoy in days to come.

Lunch will be provided and the day will end with a liturgical celebration of worship in story and song and people will be able to begin their journey home at around 5.30pm.

The accommodation at the Nether Springs has long been full to bursting but we hope to see you for the Saturday as a day visitor.

X i p l j t j u l u i b u l z p v t f f l @!
X f l t f f l ! u i f l M p s e l p v s ! H p e !



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, prayer requests and updates of happenings across our geographically dispersed Community family.

Congratulations

To **Jenny Crisp** of Heaton and Mark Lallemand who were married on 21 July at St Thomas' Newcastle. May the saints and the Saviour watch over them.

To **Mark and Mary Fleeson** of Holy Island on the birth of a baby girl Aurian May. She weighed in at 7lb 12oz on August 24th.

To **James and Sally Hawes** of Nottingham who are very pleased to announce the birth of their first child, a baby boy Cadan who weighed in at 7lb 8oz on September 18th.

To **Jessica Searle** who graduated from Cambridge University, Fitzwilliam College, in June with a 2:1 in Theology and Religious Studies. She is currently working as Education Officer at the Arts Theatre in Cambridge before starting teacher training [probably] next year. Thank you to all those who were praying for her during her recent serious appendicitis. She is well on the mend.



Dave and Sarah Hay of Tow Law are pleased to announce the safe arrival on 1st September of: Anthony Paul (who will be 5 in December) and Thomas Kelvin (who will be 2 in November) Mother and children doing well; father knackered!

Diane Sekuloff of Canada asks for our prayers as her doctors think she may have a brain tumor - she is to have a CT scan to be sure on October 16th. Diane writes *'Please pray that whatever is going on will correct itself by then, and they will find nothing on the scan - well not exactly nothing - I'd like to have a brain in there - but you know - nothing unusual.'*

ing - I'd like to have a brain in there - but you know - nothing unusual.'

Alun Brookfield of Swindon has been offered and has accepted the position of Parish Development Adviser on stewardship and evangelism, plus Priest in Charge of the benefice of Abercraf in the Swansea Valley (Diocese of Swansea and Brecon), starting on 1 January 2003. So from 1 January 2003, Alun and Mary's new address will be: The Vicarage, Abercraf, SWANSEA SA9 1TJ. Telephone: 01639 730640 It's only half an hour from The Seeking Place - just the other side of the mountain!

Andy Colledge of Leeds has all but fully recovered from a very nasty fall from a roof in August. He has coordinated the work for the Monastery Team to produce a new look Columba lounge at Nether Springs. Come and see!

Martin and Bekah Neil of Hetton Law are travelling to the USA, Quiaia and Cambodia over the months of October and November. An itinerary is available for prayer on request from the Community Office.

Simon Airey formerly of Bath Abbey is returning to live and work at the Nether Springs in early November and staying until next Easter.

Leisl Richter from Melbourne, Australia is hoping to stay on at the Nether Springs a little longer as part of the Monastery Team.

Norman and Ingrid Cumming begin a year out from pastoral Ministry as part of the Monastery Team at Nether Springs from early November.

Lorna Fisher from Berwick has made a most welcome return for a fresh stint on the Monastery Team.

Brenda Grace of Holburn has flown to

America once again on a travelling holiday throughout October. She will meet up with many of our Community Companions in the States. Please pray for her as she journeys across the States.

Anne Wadey has moved from London to work in Oxford and needs our prayers in the midst of huge changes—new job, new home in Didcot, new place of work, new beginnings.

All change too as Hetton Estates has been sold by Lord Vinson to the adjacent Lilburn Towers estates. Substantial negotiations have been completed securing tenure of Hetton Hall and its cottages for a further 5 year fixed term with many improvements to the Leases.

Programme Changes for Nether Springs

Please note the following programme changes to accommodate the time of retreat and reflection for Roy and Trevor reported elsewhere in this issue.

November 8-10 Be still and Know

November 25-28 Quiet Waters

January 6-9 My Soul finds rest in God alone

January 10-12 He Restores my Soul

January 13-16 Private Retreat

January 17-19 Community Group leaders

Community Group leaders, in-



Cancellation of Bradford Day in January

We have recently been informed that our booking for Bradford Cathedral on January 4th 2003 has had to be cancelled as this is the date that has been chosen for the inauguration of the new Bishop of Bradford. We have decided therefore to cancel the Community Gathering that was planned for that day.

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