

Issue 38

Autumn 2006

The Northumbria Community Newsletter

CAIM

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

Roy Searle brings some reflections on where we're at: **A New Season**



Autumn mists and hedgerows bursting with berries are visible signs that the season is changing. Shirley and I are in a season of change too; our move to Ireland preceded by Jessica and Nick's wedding; Joshua finishing his degree; Francesca leaving for university - and the delight of becoming grandparents with the birth of Isaac to Ben and Judith! We're entering a new season, both for the family and in our work with the Community.

There is also a season of change in our emerging leadership network, with individuals and groups exploring new ways of serving the Community. Jeff has written a bit more about this in this issue. We have entered a new season in the life of the Community as more people journey with us, and we see some of the fruits of our seeking God develop and flourish.

Change is both welcoming and threatening. It can trigger faith and fear, anticipation and insecurity. Just like leaves falling from the trees, our securities can be blown away or shaken by the winds of change.

As a Community we have been formed on the margins of more established expressions of church, and it is in this marginal, liminal place that we've been able to explore and experiment.. And where we must continue! We have not 'arrived' but are on the journey, and from the margins can appreciate that it is easier to see new horizons - and to go beyond the familiar and well-established.

I heard Bill Clinton recently highlight the need for individuals, organisations and communities to live with constant change. Failure to do so can only lead to fossilisation. Those who survive, thrive, and contribute to society are those who are prepared to continually review, adapt and transform their structures and systems to respond to the new challenges and opportunities that the world presents.

This is a real issue for us as a Community. We seek to build on the foundations that have rooted us in our call to community, and grounded us in a way for living that is expressed in a new monastic spirituality - and to live out that Way for Living that communicates heart, home, hospitality and hope to those within and beyond the Community. We are called to challenge and subvert the norms of society where they are alien to God's kingdom values, and to contribute His ways for living in a culture fragmented, consumed and consuming, confused, and anaesthetised to many of life's greater realities.

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It is this *Way for Living*, our Rule of Life – *Availability and Vulnerability*, that informs and directs our embracing of change. A Way for Living that energises, informs, stretches, and challenges our life as Companions and Friends - which calls us to seek God, follow Christ, and carry His hope in our hearts to share with those whom He sends or leads us to. A Way of Life that also invites others to join the journey and participate....

I live with my own experience of Community, and I am thankful to God for the privilege of being called to such a vocation. For the rhythm and disciplines of our 'monastic' vocation that give us stability.

Yet there is also the need to *Build the New on Foundations of Old*. We're in a season of further seeking, of awakening our imaginations and discerning what God longs to be and do among us, that He may direct our ways.

My prayer and hope is that we will not allow neglect, familiarity, passivity or a consumerist attitude to affect our relationship to the call to Community. Rather, let us be participants, as Companions and Friends,

exploring this Way for Living. With courage, let's embrace the dynamism, creativity, the radical, progressive and prophetic, that will shape our calling and help us to explore and discover the fresh expressions of our Community life - alone and together. Enjoy the season ahead...

Roy Searle

Welcome.... to the Autumn edition of *Caim*. It's filled with news, views, and reviews, and is the first put together by the new editorial team of Jeff Sutherland and Ingrid Cumming.

We hope you'll find an interesting and thought-provoking mix of Community reflections - and that you'll want to use the enclosed feedback form to tell us what you think of it!

Here's my attempt to tie together some fairly disparate thoughts about General Chapter, and Community as 'network'

Marking a new Chapter.

One of the best things about Northumbria Community - probably the thing which shapes our character more than any other - is our diversity. We're all different. We all live in different places, different parts of the world even. My life is very different to yours. And yet our Rule for Living provides a scaffold which can give structure and support in each of our different situations.

And yet, that diversity also presents us with one of our greatest challenges too. How can we hope to hear and respond to the things God is doing and leading us into in Community, when we are so dispersed?

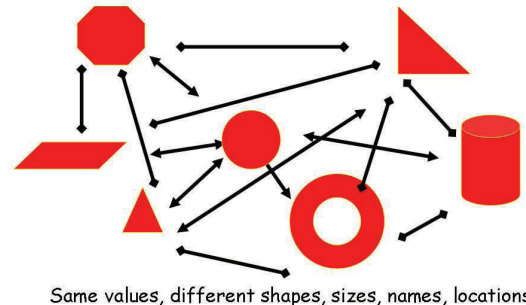
We've tried several different models over the years, most based around various incarnations of a 'Community Council'. More recently, this has evolved into General Chapter, which has become an important part of discerning the heart of God for us.

The General Chapter meeting is convened to consider a specific theme or subject. People who have particular expertise, experience or passion around that subject are specifically invited to come to Hetton for a weekend to bat it about! Whilst always invigorating and stimulating, one consistent challenge has been for us to receive and digest all that comes out of it, before it's time to move on to the next one - but that's another story!

Perhaps one of the most significant Chapter weekends was in September last year, when George Lings brought us his extremely perceptive and challenging reflections on the life of Community, and its place in the 'fresh expressions of church' phenomenon. Those reflections are available in printed form from the office, and also on DVD. I feel sure that they will continue to shape and challenge our thinking for some time to come. He brought some insightful comments about 'Community as Network', which I can't hope to do justice to in a few sentences here - if you've not done so already, then get hold of this stuff! Ellen in the office can help you. *(Continued on page 3)*

Those comments have informed the process of reforming the Leadership Structure of NC, which has taken on - actually, I should say 'is taking on', because this is a process we're still working through - the character of network. So we have new groups or teams that you will hear of: Overseers, Seniors, Provincials, Chapter.... these are genuine attempts to develop and utilise the relational nature of Community in seeking to lead us forward. We had a very stimulating General Chapter weekend in June considering this whole area.

In September we gathered to look at the subject of 'hubs'. George had highlighted the question: 'Who are the hubs?' He's asking about the people, and their places, that carry the 'DNA' of Community, and connect us together. We were challenged to visualise a hub not as we might expect, as the centre of a wheel with spokes neatly emanating from it, but rather in a much more scary and chaotic way, with interconnecting lines criss-crossing in a crazy way! And of course, hubs are not only 'people' but also Community Groups, the Prayer Guide, website, Caim.... the list goes on.



These questions (and our stumbling attempts to answer them!) are crucially important for us, as we each try to maintain and develop a sense of belonging and ownership in Community, without becoming 'institutional' as we grow in numbers. We're working on making these discussions and reflections available in a multitude of different ways - so we have DVDs of General Chapter, and we're planning to use the Forum to make these and other video items available online. There will be much more on these issues in future editions of Caim too - but don't just watch THIS space; ask Ellen about the other spaces you can be foraging about in too!

Jeff Sutheran

We asked Trev to write a few words about his (least) favourite subject....

FINANCE

OK let me say it up front - I don't like writing or talking about money or better the lack of it - I'm not sure why because it is so important to any family or group who belong together to have an accurate understanding of their financial position, so as to have a workable budget, to not overspend and to be committed to good stewardship. Perhaps it's an inbuilt aversion going back to my 'being a Church minister' days and the annual humiliation of 'having to leave the room' while my stipend and expenses were discussed, and then having to come back in and try to read the body language to see if the much needed increase had been approved. Perhaps it's an unconscious reaction to do with the early days of our Community when we seemed to be asking often for money for this or that project. Perhaps it's a residual misunderstanding on my part of what constitutes 'living by faith'. Whatever the reasons it is very real.

However, our current situation means I have to put personal foibles to one side and simply tell it like it is. Despite financial integrity, good stewardship and wise

management of monies and resources including the regular use of volunteer workers, the Accounts from April to September this year have shown an average loss of almost £2500 each month when comparing expenditure over income.

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We realize that our budget projection produced by estimating income and expenditure for the rest of the financial year is not an exact science, especially when our principal means of income is on a donation basis, but it is cause for concern. To quote from the recent Financial Report to the Trustees, 'Expenditure is - unfortunately - more predictable than income! (And) It is clear that we need to give some serious thought and prayer to the way forward, including the best way of presenting the need to the wider Community.'

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As you will appreciate from your own situations, costs are rising – for us at the Mother House; heating costs in particular have seen a huge increase with oil and elec-



tricity prices going through the roof. Such a large multi-roomed house is difficult to heat adequately and we are

of course now facing the autumn and winter months, where such costs are up at the same time as income during these leaner months are down.

But there are much bigger issues we have to wrestle with that were not a factor in earlier years – minimum wage, pensions, ever-increasing costs of running a growing organization and the implications of the current leadership transition highlighting many important gaps that need to be financed adequately.

This immediate situation has again given prominence to the much wider issue that we have mentioned many times before, namely: that the financial pressures are there principally because along with the growth and development of those wanting to draw from our life and resources, there has not been a corresponding growth in our regular support base, which has meant that the increasing emotional and financial burden has been at times quite debilitating.

The Community being the Community will always be exposed, always vulnerable, always taking risks. God has sustained us thus far and will continue to do so as we hold fast to the vision he has given. This includes anonymity, hiddenness, no direct advertising of the Nether Springs and a continuing commitment to the

open hospitality of pay what you can, if you can. Within the parameters of ethos and vision we do all we can to be good stewards and people of integrity always acting responsibly as far as legalities are concerned but always acknowledging the risk of faith we share together. As a Community we have been blessed with many people who have found home and have recognised that being part of a family brings real practical responsibilities.

From early September 2006 (following the Trustees meeting) it was agreed that we take the step of raising the suggested monthly donation for Companions for the very first time since its inception over 11 years ago.

We are so thankful and extremely grateful for those who do give regularly, and those who have given much needed one-off gifts

The figure was initially £20 per month and this has been maintained up to now. The new suggested donation will be £30 per month which is still less than £1 per day and less than you would pay for a chocolate bar and a newspaper or a sandwich and a drink. This of course will apply to all new Companions but there may be current Companions who wish to raise their monthly contribution in line with this. We do thank God that there are those Companions who give much more than this figure but unfortunately they are few compared with the many Companions who give substantially less or not at all.

We are so thankful and extremely grateful for those who do give regularly and those who have given much needed one-off gifts, but above all we still need more Companions to translate their 'Yes to Community' into regular giving month on month. Can you help?

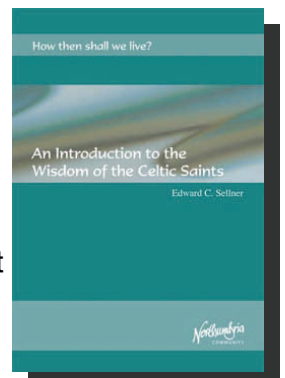
Trevor Miller

'New From Cloisters'.

INTRODUCTION TO THE WISDOM OF THE CELTIC SAINTS

This is a **new 'How then shall we live?' booklet**, made possible by the generosity of Ed Sellner, the author of 'Wisdom of the Celtic Saints'. As you may have seen in the last Caim, his book has recently been republished in a hardback edition - which means that his superb introduction is only to be found in an expensive book. So he has allowed the Community to publish it in this booklet form to make it more widely available. This is a masterly introduction to the lives of the Celtic Saints and to the way we should best approach them. They are placed in the context of their times and then we are given some vital keys for relating to their stories - especially seeing the portrayal of their lives as a living symbol or image of Christ. Recommended reading for anybody who wants to put Celtic spirituality in its proper context.

Ref Code HTWCS £4.00



Here are some reflections from some folk who came on 'holiday' to the Nether Springs and had a great time:

Family Holiday Week

For so many different reasons, this summer found Colin & I so spiritually thirsty, we barely recognised it, so emotionally exhausted, we slept walked through the day. However, with two girls at that 'awkward' stage we couldn't realistically plan for a relaxing break could we? As any parent knows, family holidays are anything but restful. You need the skills of a UN peace-keeping force to keep everyone happy with the activities you pack each day with and the bank balance of Bill Gates to sustain it. Everyone arrives home in need of family therapy or at least a week of sleep. So, you may well ask, how is going to the Northumbria family week any different?

This last Family Week was our third. We have never been disappointed. The thing is there's a restful inertia which takes over and seeps into your bones. Suddenly to stop is OK.

Yes, there's plenty of 'cool' places (according to our 13 year old) to explore. Beautiful sandy beaches, fabulous rock pools waiting to be examined, wonderful walks in spectacular and quiet countryside. Boat trips and water sports. It's all out there. However, as our 11 year old says the community embraces you like a big warm hug. There's a freedom to be vulnerable, real and honest. It doesn't matter how big your church is or what your strategies are for evangelism. No-one's particularly interested in the size of your salary, the car you drive or what you wear. There is an all accepting love which enables our shy children to blossom and us to find true rest.

It became a standing joke that quite often we'd pack up a lunch, with plans for a full day exploring, to find ourselves still sitting around the table at lunchtime, enjoying the fabulous home-made soup, bread and jams, our sandwiches languishing neglected in the bottom of the fridge for another day! And did our children need constant entertaining? Like every time before, they instantly hit it off with the other children and spent hours outside on the rope swings, exercising their imagination, re-designing the tree house and enjoying the freedom which is impossible thanks to busy roads at home.

For some reason, this particular week was extra special for us. Was it little Patrick's re-organisation of the herbal teas? Was it Rob's ready smile behind the beard, in spite of the blocked sink he regularly attacked? Was it the adventure into uncharted areas of Scotland to spot rare birds with our intrepid explorer Norman? All we know is that we have so many fond memories and we still reap the benefits of the progress we have made on our spiritual journey, both as a family and individually.

Thank you to everyone who prayed for the Family Week and thank you to the Northumbria Community for giving so much so that we could truly receive, physically, mentally and spiritually. We look forward to coming home, soon, once again into your doors.

Chris & Colin, Bethanne and Emma Cartwright



Sue, James, and Sarah had a fantastic week at Nether Springs in August, and it was just what we all needed. We had a real sense that God had brought just the right people together, some who we'd met before, and others who were new to us. The children all got on, and spent many happy hours playing in the gardens. Sue was able to relax, and enjoy getting to know

the adults better, and taking part in the rhythm of the monastic day. Conversations covered all sorts of issues, from really deep and meaningful ones, to very lighthearted ones. We also had a lot of fun playing Rummikub. None of us wanted to leave by the end of the week, but we did arrive home refreshed and invigorated, ready for the term ahead.

Thank you everyone on the house team for your warm hospitality, and thank you fellow house mates for making it such a good week for us!"

Sue, Sarah and James McWhinney

None of us wanted to leave by the end of the week, but we did arrive home refreshed, ready for the term ahead.

Last year we had two family holidays: a week in Wales and a week at Nether Springs. This wasn't the official 'family week', but because another family (the Fears) were also there, it had the family week feel about it and we enjoyed it much more than our "proper" holiday in Wales.

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So it did not take much to persuade us that family week was going to be our main holiday in 2006.

Family week is rapidly becoming an institution in our family calendar. We came back relaxed and happy.

From the moment we arrived with our children, Olivia (5 years) and Patrick (16 months), we knew it was going to be a good week. Firstly there was a bunk bed in our bedroom – our little girl couldn't have been more delighted. Secondly, Olivia had been asking for weeks if William, Sarah and Sam Fear would be at the Hall again. Not wishing to build up her hopes, we kept trying to dodge the question, but this didn't stop her asking. Well, who should walk through the door 5 minutes after us but the Fear family! Olivia was lost for words and we were both smiling at each other and thinking, "Thank you, God"! This was almost the last we saw of Olivia during daylight hours, as by the end of the first day all of the children, about 8 in total had made friends and were off to their favourite haunt: the tree house (just the stuff happy childhood holidays are made of).

Family week is different to other weeks at the Hall. In no sense is it a quiet week. Everywhere you look there are children playing, shouting and running about, and



once our Patrick found the Cloisters shelves, well, nothing was safe (sorry Brenda for any rearrangements). The atmosphere throughout the week was friendly, joyful and really relaxing. Being well taken care of by the house team allowed us to take time to get to know each other, sharing our stories and our lives. It was a small taste of the joy of community (we probably weren't together long enough to taste some of the harder realities!).

Family week is rapidly becoming an institution in our family calendar. We came back relaxed and happy. The kids are at home at the Hall and we have the opportunity to go to Office, read, pray and spend time with other community folk, all of which are a complete

treat to parents of two small children struggling to live out the Rule amidst the demands of family life. For two years now, these weeks have been an oasis in our lives and a wonderful time for our children. Our thanks go to the house team and we look forward to family week 2007!

Martin, Julia, Olivier and Patrick Timmins

...one comment that Andy made was that he felt that family week reminded him of when his own family got together for Christmas! When we returned home we had a feeling of being at peace. Thanks to all at Hetton Hall!

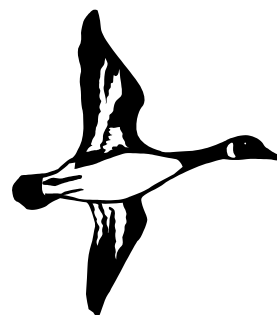
Kevin, Sue, Sarah-Jane, Sam and William Fear

Diane Sekuloff sent me this—just as I was watching them gather....

Migration time has come;
long Vs of geese honk their journeys south
through day and night.
Lake to lake, making milk runs through the
ancient paths,
o'er mountains, rivers, valleys long and
deep.
I hear wind whispers through their wings.

It thrills me Lord – your spirit blowing still –
to ruffle stagnant waters; unseat
unrighteous princes;
to comfort broken-hearted, and break the
hearts of hardened saints-to-be;
to blow away the wicked spirits labouring
in vain;
to bring a Kingdom far beyond our feeble
fathoming.

While we, through gifts of wine and bread,
remember we're but flesh
remind us, with our hearts and eyes,
to follow passage of the geese
towards celestial light,
where blows the wind
which brings us home..



A group of Community Companions have created a concept called 'Sacred Space' Here's a story:

Sacred Space @ 'Breakout' in Blackpool

With a packed car Norman and I arrived at our B&B in Blackpool on Thursday teatime. Norma (Wise) and Ann (Brown) had arrived before us and were already in the process of ferrying all our gear to the Winter Gardens. It wasn't long before we discovered that our space was very much larger than we had anticipated, so the evening was spent re-arranging our plans...

The space turned out to be not only larger - we even had the luxury of a 'private area' where we could park our bags - complete with fridge, kettle and a couple of chairs!

Our room was on a balcony, overlooking the ballroom - a very busy room used for rehearsals, worship, concert and Salsa dancing! This meant it was not quite the quiet place we planned! However, it was gratifying to see the effect God produced in that place. There were even a couple of girls who came in during the Saturday night concert who declared they loved the place - it was so peaceful

We were able to create a very private place, where people clearly were able to meet with God in a real way. Some people would come 'just looking around', others to 'try out' some of the stations. Yet others worked their way around everything, while some came simply and lay on the fur and cushions. One man in particular spoke to us about having had the most amazing experience of being sheltered by God.

Afterwards John Cooper, who had been our contact with the event, reported that he had heard nothing but praise for the Space.

Norma Charlton

I just wanted to write... what a blessing... how finding a rhythm to each day gives me stability and grounding... even when I have been rushed or tired, when I have stopped to say the office I have often felt refreshed.

The 'Living What We Teach' weeks give Companions an opportunity to explore aspects of the Community's spirituality and ethos, through teaching and practical involvement. Here's some reflections:

Living What We Teach

During a 10 year association with the community I've never ceased to be amazed at the dedication, patience, love & understanding of the "resident" house team at Hetton Hall. For me they are the "guardians" of a holy place; a holy space for reflection, recreation & renewal. Theirs is a special vocation, and in admiration I've often asked myself: "could I do that?". Up until 2005 the answer would always be a definite "no!", but during a wild and windy week in January of the same year, that "no" became "maybe." I'd signed up for "Living What We Teach" - a week in community exploring just some of the opportunities suggested by our Rule of Life.

There were numerous highlights - including the stimulating and thought provoking inputs of both Roy Searle & Trevor Miller. One quote in particular sticks with me: "Your life is shaped by the end you live for; you are made in the image of what you desire." Several walks and meditations later I'm no nearer an answer, but there's work to be done; the toilets need cleaning; furniture to be moved....

The "rhythm of the day" - daily offices in the chapel - what a privilege to lead. Then, after successfully completing a kitchen apprenticeship I'm introduced to the one and only Nether Springs Cook Book, the bible of culinary art which ensures that the miracle of the loaves and fishes was not just a "one off."

Outside the wind is howling; branches and whole trees are crashing down in the Gales. 3000 people made homeless in the Carlisle floods: yet throughout this there are numerous comings and goings at Hetton Hall: new friends, old friends & strangers, all met in the spirit and style of St Brigit; with love, joy, warmth, thanksgiving and humility.

Quiet time allows the reading of "The Tide That Sings" by Sister Agnes which turns out to be most appropriate to the subject of vocation and the earlier quote...."your life is shaped by the end you live for..."

Brenda leads a session of informal liturgical dance, & Simon, (bless him!) adds his own personal touch to a chapel compline, with an abundance of candles reminiscent of a Hanukkah celebration - the triumph of light over darkness!

Back home in Wales, & a few months later, whilst browsing through the latest edition of Caim, I'm "prompted" to ask if they can make use of a temporary house team volunteer sometime in the near future. The "Living What We Teach" week had provided a useful background to understanding the roles & responsibilities of house team members: I was to join that team, albeit in a short two week temporary capacity the following autumn. The subsequent fortnight was both rewarding and enlightening, and despite an embarrassing experience with the house fire alarm system, I'd like to think that I'd be asked again.
Shalom.....Rodney Webb

I, like so many people before me, fell in love with the Northumbria Community and what we stand for. I don't remember any kind of honeymoon period, I just knew it was for me 'warts and all'.

The week was not an easy one for me as there were lots of lessons for me to take on board. The first was being myself in the company of people who were new to me! My job for the week was to care for the chapel. I thought that was great until Rob informed me that part of my duties was to write prayer requests on bits of paper – at that point I went quite cold as I am profoundly dyslexic and could not perform the task. Second lesson coming up – Vulnerability – I plucked up courage and told Rob that I could not do this and explained why. I can't tell you what it took to be honest in this way but straight away he offered to undertake the task for me, for which I was very grateful.

Later the same day I was quiet before the Lord and experienced a vision in my mind of two companions walking along a road. They came to a small obstacle on the road – one companion skipped over it whilst the other stayed where he was. Almost straight away the first turned to see where his friend was, and he called out "I can't get over". Soon his friend was by his side, helping him over the obstacle. They were again on their way. Within a short time another obstacle

presented itself to them, and this time the two friends took the opposite role in the scenario, the one helping the other. They would not have been able to go on their journey without being vulnerable and available to each other.

And so the week went on like this with many lessons learned, and of course I am still learning. I did learn to say 'no I can't do it' and to be real to myself. In finishing I just want to say a big thank you to staff and friends who allowed me to make mistakes and grow in a safe environment. For myself it was truly a life changing week.
Terry Ansell.

The week was not an easy one for me as there were lots of lessons for me to take on board.

We finally managed to visit the Mother House in April, after many years when circumstances prevented it. We came for the Community Weekend and followed it up with "Living what we teach" in July. They were both wonderful experiences. The fun and laughter, space to be alone with God, and the teaching and discussion were a great blessing. Trevor and Roy's sessions really confirmed us in the journey we have been making for many years, and challenged us to take things further. Brenda's dance evening was very enjoyable, although we felt we must have frustrated her with all the giggles and jokes! In both April and July we had the privilege of visiting Lindisfarne and felt that Aidan, Cuthbert and the old Celtic saints were very near. At Nether Springs it was a joy to be ourselves among friends, although we had not met any of them before. The pattern of worship in the Chapel has inspired us to continue in everyday life. As a result, we felt it right to ask if we could become Companions, and it has been a real joy to be accepted. We look forward to coming "home" to the Mother House whenever we can.

Pauline and Maurice Johnson

EASTER WORKSHOP 2007

We do try to hold Easter Workshop on weekends away from the actual Easter weekend sometimes. And so it is next year; Easter Workshops will be held before and after Easter. Here are the dates and locations:

Saturday 31st March in Exeter, Devon

13th – 15th April in Wakefield, West Yorkshire

More details will be available in due course, but for now – just put the date in your diary!

There will of course be opportunity for the renewal of vows on Easter Sunday (8th April) on Holy Island.

Watch out for an inspiring article from Phil & Rosie Mader-Grayson on Page 11, about their answer to the frustration of being unable to gather with other Community folk over Easter. See if it inspires you to organise something of your own!

Anyone up for an adventure?

Northumbrian Week in Prague

Sunday 11th to Sunday 18th March, 2007



In the last couple of years some significant relationships and partnerships have emerged with Companions and Friends across Europe. One such partnership is that with IBTS (International Baptist Theological Seminary) in Prague. A few visits have already taken place, with Companions staying, sharing and speaking at the seminary, a community of believers drawn primarily from Eastern Europe who are exploring many of the questions that we face in Community.

We are welcoming four of the staff from the seminary to Nether Springs this Autumn, and we are delighted to announce the opportunity for many people to join us in Prague next year for a 'Northumbrian Week'. This will be a great opportunity for Companions and Friends to deepen the partnership and experience a sharing of hearts and minds in another culture. The week will consist of lectures, seminars and workshops with Roy, Trevor and others, together with input from the staff and students at IBTS. The pattern of each day will be built around the monastic rhythm with Offices, teaching and sharing, together with lots of time to relax and explore the delights of the beautiful city of Prague.

This is a great opportunity and we encourage you to join with us and the "Community" in Prague. Options and (per-person) costs for full-board accommodation in Hotel Jeneralka (part of the seminary complex) are:

- a) Sunday 11th to Sunday 18th- twin or double room £300 / single £350
- b) Sunday 11th to Friday 16th - twin or double room £300 / single £350
- c) Friday 16th to Sunday 18th - twin or double room £90 / single £110

Booked in advance there are some very cheap flights from several airports. It would be wonderful if folks from further afield (like USA?!) could join us.

Please respond ASAP and journey with us. Email:

jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org

or write to the office, marking your envelope 'Northumbrian Week in Prague'. See you in The Czech Republic!



What a great time we all had when we went to see:

Pete Askew in a dress!

What a sense of expectation as the service began



for the licensing of Rev Pete Askew, to the Archdeacons of Richmond. Pete has been called and chosen to serve in three distinct fields: as Chaplain at St Aidan's High School, Harrogate; Licensed Pioneer Minister for the Youth Cell

Network; and released by the Bishop of Ripon & Leeds to work with the Northumbria Community. As the Bishop and priests arrived at their places, there was no pomp and ceremony, just Jeff & Jill

Sutheran and Paul Brain leading us quietly into "We have come to seek you O God..." It was a wonderful, worshipful experience. Afterwards the Bishop seemed lost in quiet worship, until he said, "The simplicity & depth of worship opened hearts to God, it was very different. I've never been to a Licensing that started like this, I think we can look forward to an evening of very different worship."

Those of us from the Northumbria Community were delighted to be involved, it was a special privilege. I asked Pete how he felt about the evening: "I feel as though it really marked well, the beginning of the next stage of my ministry, and prayerfully sent me out into it. Having the Community lead worship was particularly special." May God bless him as we journey together.

Norma Wise

Here's an account of more European adventures!

Summer à Suvigny

Arriving at midnight with one other lady, a 12 year old and a 6 year old, accompanying me, to see a jungle ahead shining in my headlights – all else pitch black. That was the somewhat daunting start to our arrival at L'Abri à Suvigny this summer! With much hushed giggling and general hysteria at the ridiculous state we were in, we carried 6 year old Isobel to the house and battled with bedding and suitcases to get the main things needed for the night. Diane thought she would sleep on the new pine bed. As she sat on it, it broke! More giggles – and



she decided to have the mattress on the floor in the dining room. So our first night was dry and cosy - well, apart from the noisy cows, and the mysterious something that was trying to get into the bin in the small hours of the morning!

The next two days saw us unpacking the house from its dustcovers, generally sorting things out, and pulling out weeds to make it possible to move. So began a week of much fun, and quite a lot getting done, including the French farming neighbours taking pity on our jungle, and weeding, strimming, cutting, turning, baling and collecting 20 large cylindrical bales of hay from our land. Thanks to Diane's translation abilities, we were able to get to know them much better and build a good bond between us.

Andrew and Paul (from the UK), and Cathy and Brian (from the Dordogne) arrived to increase our numbers, and it was very special to renew our friendships of last year. The monastic rhythm continued throughout the time, giving balance and space for work, relaxation, prayer, conversations and quiet times.

Next day the Dutch contingent arrived from De Spil. We were very blessed by their presence, as well as them offering so much physical contribution to the labours of the project. Victor, Paul and Jorien, Loes, Ewald, and Peter were absolute stars in their enthusiasm, commitment and camaraderie! How we all experienced "God with us" while we shared with one another; whether during mealtimes, work times, Offices,

praying/listening together, or Compline after toasted marshmallows round the campfire!



We finished off some jobs and generally 'put the house to bed' again, before making our way home via Bethanie Ministries near Lisieux, where we

met Jan and Bill Gordon. We shared our stories, and they gave us very helpful advice on starting and running a Retreat Centre in France. They have 12 years experience in this, and Jan has lived and worked in France for over 40 years!

So, we returned to the UK with many jobs ticked off the list, but far more importantly, the knowledge that we are incredibly blessed and privileged to be a part of God's plans for His Kingdom, and that He is using ordinary people in extraordinary ways to minister to one another - in all the pain and turmoil of our lives and relationships - in order that His Kingdom comes, and His Will is done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Jane & Andrew & Sarah Perkins

'New From Cloisters'.

PRAYER BEADS

Rob Davies, a Community Companion who has lost his sight, has, with the help of his wife Catherine, created packs of prayer beads for sale by Cloisters. He recently had a serious heart attack and one of his vital lifelines through the difficult days was having his beads in his hands, holding the cross and using the individual beads as an aid to prayer. Many others have also found these a very helpful aid to prayer and we commend them for wider use.

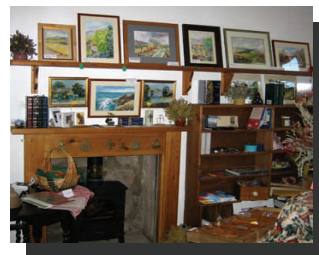
The pack contains suggestions as to how the beads might best be used, showing how each bead can be used to pray through the Midday Office.

**Ref Code
BEADS £5.00**



The **Cuddy Duck** in Wooler opened its doors to the public on Friday 25th August 2006, following a Northumbria Community blessing the night before led by Roy Searle and Trevor Miller.

Nearly 40 Community Companions and friends attended which was quite a squeeze as the shop is only 4 metres square! Jill Sutheran played her Northumbrian pipes to begin and end the blessing which was a wonderful way to begin trading. Thank you Jill - your music, as always, was fabulous and much appreciated. When we opened the following morning many people came. Items for sale include stained glass, silk paintings, jewellery, prints, photographs, posters, cards, soaps, honey, books, music, toys, embroidery, pottery, textile arts and many other things.



The shop looks really fantastic because Stacy Nagel, currently living and working at Hetton Hall, worked hard in 'dressing' it. The style is that of the sitting room of someone's home, rather than that of a conventional shop. Judy Hooper (Nancy's sister) and their friend, Linda Treitel, spent their two week holiday here working hard for The Cuddy Duck. They made all sorts of items to sell, and helped Stacy arrange the décor and stock, as well as making the food for the party after the blessing. They say they both had a wonderful time and wouldn't have missed it! Sheila Hay brought us 'duck' biscuits for our opening! Thank you Stacy, Judy, Linda and Sheila!

We are so thankful for the help and support given by so many others in the Northumbria Community, and realise that we couldn't have opened without it. However, in these early days of trading we would be so grateful of your continued prayers and support. The button necklaces in particular (made by Judy & Linda!) have been a real hit. If you are willing to send us any interesting and unusual buttons from your button box, they would be most appreciated. We have also sold many quality items which have been donated by Community friends, especially jewellery. If you have anything you think we might be able to sell please contact us initially by phone, 01668 211000 or email: thecuddyduck@btinternet.com. Thanks! And do please stop by, you will be most welcome.
Nancy & Jean - The Cuddy Duck, 10 High Street, Wooler, Northumberland, NE71 6BY

Alternative Easter Weekend, Bridge House, Oxfordshire

Iwonder how many Friends and Companions have looked at the Easter Workshop programme year after year and thought, like me, "Oh yeah, if only". Living south of the Tyne, the Humber, the Trent and even the Cam, makes getting to Nether Springs a real expedition at the best of times, but at Easter - no chance!

I have to admit to having felt a little "out of it" knowing that ALL those other companions and friends would be there, on the island together, renewing covenant whilst we would be stuck here, slaving away! However, once we realised that the balance was undoubtedly the other way - most friends and companions NOT able to go north - we decided to do something different; our Northumbria Community Alternative Easter Weekend is intended to be an informal opportunity for community folk and their friends to get together and share some of life's journey. We have "organised" two such weekends so far. We don't have a large planned programme, but rather Offices and meals with occasional activities keep us

occupied. Very much a 'come when you can, stay while you can and leave when you have to, but at least be connected.'

We usually open the house from Lunchtime on Good Friday until after Evening Office and a meal on Easter Monday. Each year we have arranged a special time for renewing covenant for those companions who were able to join us, and we have done this on the Easter Monday so that the pressure is taken off Easter day services for those who have to "work".

We could have grand plans for how to improve and expand the whole affair, but so far, just gathering folk who otherwise would not be connected to Community at Easter has been a real blessing.

We will be doing something next Easter, so anyone in travelling distance of Wallingford, who would like to join us and maybe offer some activity do let us know and we'll fit you in. We have a campsite so you could stay longer! We have two en-suite double rooms that would be available so book early. Above all let me encourage you to do, or even arrange, something in your area. We all understand the "alone/together" aspects of community life, but Easter, of all times, need not be an alone time.

Phil & Rosie Mader-Grayson



The newsy bit



Congratulations to Andy and Ange Foster on the birth of Daniel Hope - 16 weeks premature! Daniel is still in hospital in Newcastle but making good progress. Having weighed only 1lb 2oz at birth he is now over 7lbs.

Nick Haigh has been accepted for ministerial training in the Anglican Church, and the family will relocate to Oxford next year when he begins his training. No picture of him, as he's not so cute as these two.....(sorry Nick!)

Simon Airey and Faith Jones were married on 9th September at St Quiricus & Julietta Church, Tickenham.

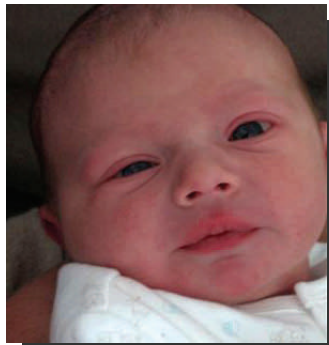
Peter Clark, friend of the Community, passed away on Sunday 11 June. There will be a memorial service for Peter, President of the Institute of Actuaries, at St Clement Danes, the Strand, London at 10.30am on 15th November.

Ian Pyle, husband of Community Companion Geraldine, died recently after a long illness.

Graham Addis, Community Companion and husband of Elizabeth, died in September.

We remember Lynda, Geraldine & Elizabeth in our prayers....

Congrats are also due to Ben & Jude Searle on the birth of baby **Isaac James**, born on 8th September in Ulster hospital. (He met his grandad when just 40 minutes old!)



Dates for the diary....

A Community Gathering

has been organised for **Saturday, 13th January, 2007** at **St. Oswald's Institute** in **Church Street, Durham** from 11 am to 4 pm. Further details will be available from Ellen in the office. Please do put this date in your diary and join with us in Durham if you can! See you there....

All At Sea

Sunday 26th August to Saturday 1st September, 2007

An opportunity to go sailing in 2007 with Roy Searle and some friends of the Community on *Seventh Wave*, a 49ft luxury ocean going yacht. The cost will be £455 per person, which includes food, accommodation and hire of wet weather gear. The boat will sail from Croabh Marina south of Oban around the Inner Hebrides, visiting Iona, Mull and Colonsay. A £75 deposit will be required to secure a place. For further details and information, please email Roy:
roy.searle@northumbriacommunity.org

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