



CAIM

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

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

It's not often the editor gets the privilege of the front page - but I'm so pleased to write this fantastic news on behalf of our Trustees:

Home - coming! Let's give thanks to God for His provision of a new location for our Community's Mother House.



The news that our lease at Hetton Hall would not be extended beyond November 2010 evoked some sadness, but also a sense that God was moving us on into a new season. The call went out to the Community to pray - and there has been a remarkable response as Companions and Friends committed to prayer, and subsequently shared their thoughts, insights and reflections with the Community's leaders. To everyone who has prayed - 'thank you!'

We are delighted to inform you that through the goodness of God and the generosity of a Christian couple who own an estate here in Northumberland, we will be relocating to a wonderful new home next summer.

There has been a remarkable response as Companions and Friends committed to prayer, and subsequently shared their thoughts, insights and reflections

There are a number of sensitive planning issues which need to be ironed out, which mean that we cannot reveal the exact location or go into fine detail at this stage. But we wanted to share this great news at the earliest opportunity, and assure

you that as soon as we are able, we will share the details with you. We do ask you to continue to pray into the situation, remembering these issues which need to be resolved.

We are able to share with you that the new location will not only provide the 'essentials' of a Mother House, but also give us considerable scope to initiate and develop lots of other possibilities. It is a new property, which has been built but not completed.



Continued on pg 3

Inside this issue:

Home-coming! 1

Cloisters News 4

A word of blessing 4

Andy Raine 5

Paul Lucas 6

Journey with Cuthbert 7

Brother Gregor 8

Greenbelt 8

Departing for Solitude 9

Northern Ark 10

An Alternative Blessing 10

Meditation Day 15 11

The back page 12

Some dates for your diary:

**A Northumbrian Week at Lee Abbey,
Devon,
Monday 10th to Friday 14th May, 2010.**



Lee Abbey is home to a Christian Community that hosts a Conference, Retreat and Holiday Centre, set in a spacious 280 acres of farm and woodland, overlooking

the dramatic North Devon coast near Lynton. Join us for a **Northumbrian Week** with talks and workshops and worship in the relaxed and beautiful surroundings of Lee Abbey hosted by a Community team led by Roy & Shirley Searle with Duncan & Lesley MacLean. For further information and booking please go to Lee Abbey website www.leeabbey.org.uk Prices from £220

This comment, added as a footnote to a longer email, was much appreciated (by Ingrid and me!):

And finally - Thank you so much for Caim! I read it more than once, as it helps me to feel connected to others in Community.

I especially enjoyed the stories from Easter workshop in the last edition, and felt God used the words of others to encourage me in my own situation - which I really needed at the time. So please keep it coming!

What do you think of Caim? Do let us know what helps you, or what you'd like to see more of - or even what's missing!

**Welcome to the Autumn edition of
Caim!**

The front page brings us really exciting news of our new 'home' for Community. The process of transition and change is often disorienting and even upsetting for some, but we are thankful that we are seeing some very clear 'marker posts' along the way. Even though the path may be uncertain or unclear at times, we give thanks to God for the way in which this new venture has come about - through relationship, common heart, and with integrity. We are thankful indeed, and look forward to seeing the next steps unfold. Watch this space - and a few others too! There will be much to share, and to challenge us, in the near future.

Enjoy this edition of Caim.

Jeff & Ingrid

A JOURNEY WITH CUTHBERT

A chance to explore the story of Cuthbert and make a guided pilgrimage along Cuthbert's Way next year (7-14 May 2010). It will be based on two centres, firstly at Melrose and then at Hetton Hall. Ability to walk about 15 miles a day is essential. The cost is £330 including board and lodging, packed lunches, transportation at start and finish points, knowledgeable guides and beautiful scenery.

This is not an ordinary walking holiday, but an opportunity to make an inner journey whilst walking the outer journey. Please contact the office for further details and a booking form. If you're undecided then see page 7!



We are Community....

Ingrid and I would like to issue an invitation to you; to send us an item for inclusion in Caim!

Caim is not furnished with material from professional writers, or people with extraordinary gifts. The most valuable, community-building and profound contributions are often the everyday reflections which spring out of the most ordinary lives and situations. Like yours, and ours. So we'd love to have you write something for inclusion in Caim. Send us your contributions to caim@northumbriacommunity.org

We prefer non-time-sensitive material (we once had a reflection based around Hull City's unexpected ascendance in the top six of the Premier League; by the time Caim was due out, they were fighting relegation!) and ideally we need a photograph or three to illustrate your story.

What about reviewing a book or film that's touched you, or caused you to reflect... Email us if you need any help...



Continued from page 1

Accommodation will be created around a cloistered courtyard and will all be at ground-floor level. We will be able to welcome people with limited mobility as well as wheelchair users. The courtyard, gardens and surrounding areas will need to be landscaped, and we hope to create a labyrinth, prayer walks, poustinias and a chapel, and to restore a ruined walled garden. All this lies within the grounds of the estate which is extensive, and incorporates woodland, a stretch of river frontage, and views out across the Northumbrian coastline.

It is a wonderful prospect, but for it to be realised will require our collective commitment - to pray, support, help, and give of our time, talents and money. The potential is enormous, and if we can face the challenges with faith, our new location will serve and deepen our call to Community both monastically and missionally.

As soon as we are able, we will spell out in more detail what this all means for us; not least how we can each play a full part in outworking this opportunity which God has given us.

The couple whose generosity has made this possible have been aware of the Community for many years. They became friends with Roy & Shirley Searle when they first moved to Wooler many years ago. There have been some significant encounters over the years, culminating with their approaching Roy to offer help. Conversations, correspondence, and a deepening of a very open and honest relationship have led to them offering a home for the Community's Mother House on their estate. They share our deep-rooted love for Northumbria - their collective family histories are rooted in the County and go back for hundreds of years.



There is major building work to be completed, as well as extensive work in the grounds, but we are aiming to take up residence on Aidan's Day, 31st August, 2010. The period between

Oswald's Day, August 5th and Aidan's Day will be a significant one as we make the move from Hetton Hall to our new home. The story of Oswald resonates with us in our experience in the provision of this new home. Here too was a man of faith who was able to provide the means and support to Aidan in his mission and in the establishing of the monastery, actions which led to

Northumbria becoming a beacon of light and hope from which the torch of the gospel was carried across Europe. May that story echo in the building of community, a repairing of the broken altars, and the development of a way for living that brings light and hope through the kingdom of God in Northumbria and wherever the Lord continues to lead us throughout the world.

Every step of the way in exploring and discovering this 'gift of God' has been touched by some resounding confirmations.

The Overseers, Seniors and Trustees visited the estate and the property together on Saturday afternoon, 5th September. Every one of us was overwhelmingly positive and very excited about the possibilities. We are unanimous in the belief that this is an offer we must accept. We are thankful for the provision of God and the generosity of this couple, and also that the process which has brought us to this point has been built on relational values of openness and candid honesty.

The significance of place cannot be underestimated. There was a strong sense through our Community prayers that our Mother House should remain in Northumberland, within reasonable reach of Holy Island. This new home roots us in the heart of Northumbria, and the extensive views from around the property remind us of the tradition we are rooted in. We will walk again the sacred paths.

We hope that you will be encouraged and excited to read this news - as we are to share it. These are heady, challenging yet adventure-filled days for us as a Community. Alone and together, we each have a responsibility to seek God and to live in responsiveness to His call upon our lives. We are all invited to be part of this new chapter in our life together.

As soon as we are able, we will spell out in more detail what this all means for us; not least how we can each play a full part in outworking this opportunity which God has given us.

For now, we simply share this wonderful news, and encourage you to give thanks to God for his provision - and to prayerfully ask Him to prepare you and us together for all that He desires to be and do among us.

L-R: Dave Hay, Sue Wrenn, Jeff Sutherland, Peter Stowe & Amund Karner.



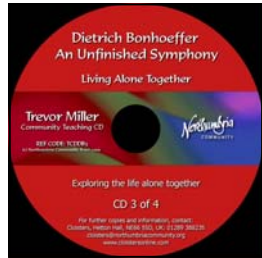
Trustees of Northumbria Community Trust

Ian Corsie has sent us some

CLOISTERS NEWS

There's lots of things happening with Cloisters, the Community's trading company, at the moment.

We are very anxious that everybody in the Community should feel a sense of ownership of our trading company, which is undergoing a transformation at present to create more resources and, in due course we hope, provide a significant income to the Community; it also seeks to reflect Community ethos into the business world. So what can you do to help?



PLEASE PRAY!

Firstly, please pray for Pete Askew, who is now the Chairman of the Board of Northumbria Community Trading Ltd: in addition to all the things happening in his and Catherine's lives at the moment, he has the responsibility for important Cloisters meetings on 26 September, and for all the action that will follow from it. Pray too for all the Board members, Duncan MacLean, Andy Foster, Mark Fleeson, Ian Corsie and Ingrid Cumming; for Tina Jefferies, who has just spent the summer months putting together a business plan proposal for Cloisters; for Phil and Dave Sage, who are putting in a lot of work to help Cloisters at the moment; and of course for Brenda, around whom there are so many unsettling changes.

NEW WEBSITE

Secondly, Cloisters now has a new-look website! Check it out at: www.cloistersonline.com. It looks different to the previous one - though you'll find it works in much the same way. We are deeply indebted to Ben Brown and Dave Sage who worked so hard to create it.

- Browse the site and make some purchases
- Tell others about the site and the resources available from the Community
- Consider putting a link to Cloisters website on the bottom of your emails

NEW RESOURCES

You'll find a Cloisters promotional flyer with this edition of Caim (if you receive Caim electronically, you will receive it by a separate email). It tells you about a range of new teaching materials now available on CD. These are important talks by Trevor Miller and Roy Searle. Most are recent – but one is a welcome return in CD format of the important 'Understanding the Desert' series of talks by Roy some years ago. There's a 10% off promotional offer on them available until the end of October.

Watch out for more of these in the coming months; and also for the availability of teaching material as MP3 downloads – we are getting closer to actually making this happen.

For good browsing, listening and reading –

THINK CLOISTERS!

This note dropped unexpectedly into my inbox recently, and I thought you might like to see it:

Dear Community,

I am simply writing to say thank you. I have been developing a deeper intimacy with Christ the past few months. One of the surprising consequences has been a growing interest in different forms of prayer. I borrowed a 'Book of Common Prayer' from a friend, but since I do not come from a church background that uses it, I was at a loss as to how to proceed. It was very confusing to me, and I wasn't even sure what some of the terms meant (eg canticle, vespers, etc). In searching the internet for some information on how to make sense of it, I stumbled upon your website. It has been a great blessing to follow your 'Pray the Office' link every day.

God is alive in your community. The more I read through different pages of your website the more blessed I am, simply by your presence and your quiet witness. I do not seek to join, or start a group or anything of the sort. I simply enjoy knowing you are there, and I am so pleased at what I have found in the Daily Office.

I am a missionary, so in some small way I understand the quiet anonymity that you value. I also rejoice in your community with each other, and wish I had that here. Anyway, thank you just for being there, and for making the daily prayers and meditations available to everyone who happens upon them. May God bless you and keep you.

Erika Browning

Andy Raine was involved in committing the words of the Rule to paper, back in the earliest days of Community. He has sent us these words, sharing some of his recent personal reflections:

Over the last few months I've been reflecting on our Rule, and recognising some areas where I feel we need to delve deeper, to understand what God entrusted to us at the time we put the Rule together.

Our aim had been to capture the heart, the life, the ethos of the Community, our brokenness, woundedness and willingness, our questionings and uncertainty and yet our sure hope. It would be no substitute for relating to some of the people in Community, but it might express in words our priorities and shared vision, for those who had not



much opportunity to spend time amongst us. It also would remind those of us who already belonged to this Community to consider what was really of importance, and call us back to first principles.

My quarrels are not with the Rule, but in three areas which I feel have not been unpacked to communicate what the words were meant to convey. Let me explain what I mean by giving

you an opposite example, where the Rule says a little and means a lot, but we seem largely to have grasped its intention: the Rule talks about establishing 'a rhythm of prayer'. We were careful not to specify the use of the Northumbrian Office (Celtic Daily Prayer) because some people might have opportunity to pray or even say an office with others who just don't use our daily prayer. Still, for most of us it is our office we turn to, and it holds before us the One Thing, the 'Who is it that you seek?'

1. INTERCESSION or LISTENING PRAYER

The Rule asks to be available to God and others through listening in prayer. This was never intended as a call to renewed contemplative time. Nor was it implying that we should be bringing God our shopping list of demands and situations He should sort out. It is assuming that we can set aside a time when we are open to listen. In God's Name we rebuke and silence every voice of the enemy. Then we similarly take authority over all our own thoughts, preconceived ideas, expectations and presumptions, every high thought of our own that could block what the Spirit wants to direct our attention to. In the subsequent quiet God begins to impress on us a person, place or situation that is on His heart at this time. The listening continues, rather than us rehearsing to God all we already know about the subject He has directed us to. Pursuing and subsequently unpacking whatever comes

We have... treated it as a specialised calling for the few, not as an experience for whoever makes time available to listen.

can have us understanding and supporting someone at just the time they need that, adjusting our own circumstances or receiving directives that lead to all kinds of initiatives or undertakings! We have failed to emphasise the value of this kind of discipline, and treated it as a specialised calling for the few, not as an experience for whoever makes time available to listen.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY and SOUL-FRIENDSHIP

The Rule talks about voluntary accountability. This was for two reasons. We wanted to make it clear that it was not implying some kind of pyramid system or chain of command where everybody was required to obey the Community leadership and be answerable for doing so. Also, at the time we drew up the Rule there were lots of people who were still recovering from bad experiences of the 'heavy shepherding' introduced in some of the new churches, so we were cautious in how this was worded. Some have seen the value of consulting a spiritual director, and recommended this for those with a strong call to prayer or sense of vocation. But the Celtic practise of finding a wise soulfriend to whom we can confess has rarely been modelled or recommended. Our accountability is in practise not only voluntary but haphazard or non-existent. At a time when church-as-congregation is no longer the prevailing context for most believers this is a worrying omission.

3. WORDS.. WORDS.. WORDS..

I'm so sick of words. We are in danger of becoming very wordy and bookish again. Years ago we took 23 guys from the Community away to Iona. As we proceeded sleepily one afternoon through a discussion about the Rule I looked across at Lisey Brown from Alnwick, and I think we recognised how irrelevant it had become. The Rule was just words, too many words - hard to engage with, and grasped only by our minds. I hurried home and prepared a 'Picture Rule' with photos, drawings, cartoons, and graphic text - memorable pages. It was no great work of art, but it was alive. Eventually someone pointed out that it was a copyright nightmare - images had been 'lifted' from all over - so we stopped making copies... Recently, we've been saying that should be urgently addressed again, with photos and drawings and graphics. How about it? Who would like to get involved with that task?

I've written enough - more words!
Hope this was helpful.

Andy Raine



Paul Lucas sent us some striking pictures, and a story to go with them:

Some eleven years ago three Anglican priests from Tyneside, all of whom I knew quite well, were tragically killed in a road accident on the A1 in Northumberland.

The whole community was stunned, not just the church folk, everyone. People asked the inevitable 'why' questions that we just cannot answer. The need for a reason and the anger towards God ran high – why ever would God allow it? Sorely tested by such times of trial some will turn to God in faith while others turn away in utter disbelief, and to some the 'Almighty' seems silently aloof. Yet, in the midst of the pain and anguish, the cross of Christ reveals the ageless truth that God himself has, as the saying goes, 'been there, done that and bought the T-shirt' and actually worn out the T-shirt completely!

One of these priests had got me started as a tree carver when, in a former occupation as a tree surgeon, I had dismantled a large dead elm in a Church Hall grounds. I'd said: 'Pity we couldn't make use of the timber somehow' to which he replied 'Well actually, as it happens....' One thing led to another and a chainsaw sculpture of a mother and child was the result. Clearly representational of Mary and the Christ child, some had said the piece spoke not only of birth and life's potential, but strangely also of death and premature loss, even more poignantly with the oncoming events.

I was captivated by the possibility of telling the gospel story through carved symbols and carved many a simple cross for customers and others from bits of tree trunk left from the day's work.



Recently, when the chance came to undertake a chainsaw carving as a minister rather than a tree surgeon I knew that sense of all things working together for the good.

On the off chance I rang the Hull Daily Mail and then Radio Humberside got wind, next came Look North, but the people who really made it worthwhile were the passers by who stopped to look. 'Hey mister, what you

doing?' gave the perfect opportunity to respond 'well it's the story of Jesus, the birth, the death and resurrection, in just three images'



Mary and child, the cross and the risen sun (son), and the flying dove of the Holy Spirit. The old lime tree that grew for years in the forecourt of a Methodist Church, far too close to a neighbouring building, eventually just had to go, but it gave me the chance to re-cycle the timber into a new landmark that tells something of the Gospel beyond the doors of the church, out on the street - in

this case the busy Holderness Road in Hull.

In these days of multimedia, sound bites and constantly moving images, all sorts of stuff passes as 'real art' but very little really communicates anything of intrinsic value. The old cliché 'beauty is in eye of the beholder' is absolutely true, but the motive behind the art is for me what really speaks the message. This Christian 'totem pole' story of Jesus reminds us that 'no graven image' should ever be admired or worshipped in itself, but should be a waymark, pointing to what is true and real and genuine, even to God. It may even be that vital talking point that reminds someone, that even out of death, God's love forever rises and returns to fill each and every open heart and soul.

The cross of Christ reveals the ageless truth that God himself has, as the saying goes, 'been there, done that...'

'God so loved the world' and still so loves us with all his heart, soul, mind and strength; He sent Jesus to say so, even unto death on a cross to prove that he meant it, then sent the Spirit to say so again. All we need to do is say 'yes, Lord, here am I, send me' - that others may also come to know the Lord our God.

Paul Lucas

Paul was part of the Community team at Greenbelt: Greenbelt is one of those love it and hate it events - I love the mix of stuff going on but I hate that I can't get to everything! I just can't make it to the things I want to get to without rushing around. The camping bit is a reminder for me that millions of the world's less privileged people live in far worse conditions than that all the time. The Greenbelt ethos is a good one and majors on justice and social responsibility, but I feel there is a theological shift happening. The Sunday worship both this year and last have somehow lost the 'adoration' element - plenty on issues of justice and repentance, but the celebration of God for God's sake alone, I could not find. Maybe next year Community should offer to do mainstage worship on the Sunday. *Paul Lucas*

We asked Bryony Stimpson to share something of a recent epic journey:

A(nother) Journey with Cuthbert...

In early May this year, a dozen folk made a pilgrimage on foot from Melrose in the Scottish Borders, where Cuthbert entered the



monastic life, all the way to the Holy Island of Lindisfarne where he served as Prior and later as Bishop.

Along the

way we shared the Community Offices, reflections on the stories of Cuthbert, glorious Northumbrian scenery and - not least - one another's lives. Here are a few pictures and thoughts to give you the flavour of the experience...



A brilliant week of pilgrimage superbly led with humour and wit by Bryony, Ben and Dave. Everyone gelled together very quickly- aided and abetted by the most wonderful hospitality and food at Gill Yellowlees' home. God's blessing was with us from the start and the wind was truly always on our backs all the way

from Melrose to Lindisfarne! **Karen**

Thank you. I haven't anything eloquent to say apart from the transformational experience that wonderful pilgrimage had and is still having on my life. That ethos of availability and vulnerability is enabling me to live with uncertainty in a way I've never been able to before, and right now it is a steep learning curve. Maybe all that climbing followed by such prayerful fellowship and fun started to break that shell! **Carole**



I have found it surprisingly difficult to re-engage with normal life, after our special week in Northumberland. After much thought, I think I have understood something of why the pilgrimage had such a profound effect on me. I will try to explain: it was the quality of Holy Spirit gentleness.

Each caring word, each act of kindness was like a feather falling. If there were just one or two feathers gently landing on you, you might hardly notice their effect, but a whole week's worth of feathers from a whole bunch of people adds up to quite a pile! A feather-bed of God's love to rest upon. **Jo**



Alone – together
We journey on our way
strangers – united in heart
gel very quickly,
the laughter flows
the silence enjoyed
the teasing endured.
As over hill and dale
lane and road
St. Cuthbert's way
we trod.

Down the Deere path
"Crunch, crunch" go our
feet,
We could be soldiers of
old
marching in time;
Some meander
some stride out
sharing deep within
our journey without.

Birds singing
cows mooing
donkeys braying
join in our prayers
hats flying
blown by the wind
into rivers and streams
to be rescued again.

Food prepared
scoffed, eaten,
chocolate shared
for afternoon strength
to finish the extra mile.

Time together,
time apart
time to share
each others heart.

Till at last
our journey's end
Lindisfarne -
God's Holy Isle -
a beautiful sight for all
(and not just the coffee
shop)

Time to be alone with God
and our thoughts,
six days rushed by.
We began as strangers
left as friends
and companions on the
way.
The pilgrimage will live
on
and deepen, deepen.
Change us all.
We will never be the same
– ever again.

Karen Garrett

Chris Sunderland is a Friend in Community. He is involved in founding a new community, Earth Abbey. Roy Searle met up with Chris recently and enjoyed a couple of hours dreaming dreams. With Chris' permission we bring this extract from an article written for Earth Abbey, on the influence of a monk who often gets overlooked...

The legacy of Darwin: Don't forget brother Gregor

About the same time that Darwin was publishing *The Origin of Species*, a little known monk was beaver away in a monastic garden growing peas.

Gregor Mendel gave us 'the gene' and illustrated the historical truth that science has more often proceeded from faith, than from opposition to it.

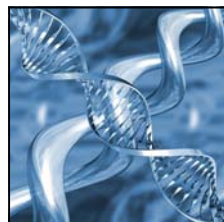
Johann Mendel was born into a poor farming family and grew to love the natural world. After entering an Augustinian monastery, and being given the name Gregor, he was sent to the University of Vienna to train as a teacher, but he did not impress. His teachers said that he lacked 'insight and requisite clarity of knowledge'. Returning to the monastery as a disgrace he consoled himself in the monastic garden doing experiments with peas and bees.

Over the course of several years he grew about 28,000 peas in his garden and carefully documented how their characteristics were inherited from one generation to another. He was the first to realise that the individual characteristics of plants were passed on like a 'packet' to the next generation and he called these packets, genes.

In 1865 brother Gregor delivered his results at a scientific meeting in Brunn, but the gathered scientists were not impressed. He then published it as an article, but no one paid any attention. The article was mentioned in other scientific writings only 3 times in the next 35 years. Gregor Mendel died with his work unknown. Finally - in the early twentieth century people began to take notice of his work. Almost every textbook of genetics now begins with the experiments of Gregor Mendel.

I wonder why we were so slow to recognise this great work? Was it because it was done outside of the institutions?

I wonder why today it attracts so much less attention than someone like Darwin?



One of the reasons that we may ignore Mendel in our thinking today is that we have developed a story about science as having arisen in opposition to faith. The truth is

rather more subtle. While the church as an institution occasionally opposed scientific progress, many of the first scientists were believers. Like brother Gregor. Historians of science suggest that the Christian faith promoted a perspective on the world and a spirit of enquiry that encouraged the advent of science.

As the world embarks on a new journey trying to address the environmental challenges we face, some of the discoveries we need today will come from outside the institutions and will be formed by people of a simple faith who seek to enquire about things as they are and things as they might be.

Incidentally, Darwin got genes hopelessly wrong. He developed a theory whereby parents' characteristics were sort-of blended together in their offspring.

We asked Andy Foster to tell us about the Community's trip to Greenbelt last month. And we berated him for not taking any photos...

The Community were invited to Greenbelt this year, and so a small team came together to lead a couple of worship sessions. The first session was in the Big Top quite early on Saturday morning, straight after Timmy Time kids animation - which my 3yr old Daniel much preferred. We based the sessions on morning and evening office, but added songs, dances, stories and other bits of liturgy as seemed appropriate.

There were all sorts of hap-hazard reunions happening between community folk over the weekend. Sometimes

we managed to say office together, and Ed & Sarah Pillar cooked a meal for everyone in their caravan. The rest of the time we ate festival food - lots of pizza and pasta - while taking care to avoid the fish curry stand.

We also had plenty of time to take in the festival. Daniel and I enjoyed the drumming and break dancing workshops. Back at home, every time I say '*Daniel's in the house*' he crashes to the floor and attempts to spin around on his head. We also enjoyed 'Athlete' who headlined the music festival.

Despite the 'festival overload' feeling, I had a great time and really got into festival mode over the weekend - but after five nights camping we were ready to go home!
Andy Foster (see pg6 for a reflection from Paul Lucas)

Sarah Berry, who lives in New York state, has spent several long periods at Hetton Hall with her husband Alan. She sent us some recent reflection:

In re-reading 'Poustinia' I came across this sentence: "One of the first steps toward solitude is departure..."

This brought to mind one of the many 'little large' experiences which happen over the course of time spent



at Nether Springs - moments which can be so easily overlooked but which turn out to be profound encounters with God. The experience I am

thinking of is the walk to chapel. The first bell warns; "get ready!" The second calls; "come now!" And although one's response varies from day to day - or even from prayer time to prayer time - there occurs a moment which remains constant: the moment of departure. This is a time when you cease whatever it is you are doing, and leave where ever you happen to be, and make your way to the chapel. It is the 'in between' time - you are neither here nor there - but rather in a process of putting aside the activity of the day and preparing yourself for a time of outer quiet and inner stillness. It is a time to unburden, to let go and leave behind distractions, plans, worries - even conversations. It is a time to walk in companionable silence with your house mates, when a smile or a nod is all that is needed to communicate, and no awkwardness hangs in the air. It is a time to prepare, to relax, to rest, to unwind.

**The first bell warns; "get ready!"
The second calls; "come now!"...
It is the 'in between' time...**

It took several 'spells' of being at the Hall and learning the rhythm before I came to fully appreciate this 'in between' time. On many occasions I would attempt to carry on conversations, to keep thinking about what



needed getting back to, or just be careless of the opportunity the little walk to chapel was offering. But more and more, the journey to the chapel became as

important as the time spent inside, and I began to give it my attention. Coming from the house I was often struck by the view framed by the gardens on either side - the gentle undulating hills which melt into more hills beyond, and the great expanse of sky in which



something interesting is always going on between the interplay of clouds and sun. It is a view which beckons and whispers and promises - 'come

further in, higher up'... something to further contemplate in the darkness and quiet of the enclosed chapel.

The other approach frequently taken was through the garden. This was more difficult, because it usually meant resisting the urge to pull 'just one more' weed. It took a mighty effort to lay down the trowel and relinquish my claim on this particular spot - knowing there was a good chance someone else would pick up where I had left off and finish the job before I had the chance to come back. This, too, was a difficult lesson to learn. But gradually, as I continued to heed the chapel bell and let go of the work at hand, I began to experience the peace that comes with relinquishing any claim on 'my patch'. I also began to experience greater joy in the work itself, as all connection to my ego and sense of worth was severed. The walk to the chapel taught me the first - being in the chapel taught me the second.

Now, I am away from the rhythm of the Hall which gently carries you

along. I have to fight against the continuous forward momentum of the world, to establish these little moments of departure. But they are there - if I am alert and paying attention. I may



not be heeding a bell to chapel, but I am being called to leave one thing and begin another, and this in itself offers an 'in between time' - a time to unburden, to relax, and to connect with God, who delights to show up very large in those little moments.

It may not be the same as walking to the chapel; however, I am discovering that the measure of peace and joy which these moments impart is exactly the same.

Sarah Berry

I asked Norma Charlton, Clare Hunt and Mike Clifford to tell us how Northern Ark had gone this year:

When I arrived at Northern Ark summer camp, I really didn't know what to expect.

I had been involved in a little of the planning so I knew the general ideas for the week, but that didn't really prepare me...

Firstly, I loved the creative elements - the chapel became a place where Sacred Space offered people exactly that - a sacred space. There was artwork all around and beautiful use of material and objects, etc to make it look holy, yet homely.

The week involved worship, teaching, art, dance, shared meals, ministry, foot-washing, tears, laughter and hugs - lots of hugs. But what I will remember most was the joy of seeing God at work. Many arrived world-weary, or church-weary, or both - but through the week people opened up, shared and allowed God to minister to them, often through the Christ-like acts of being cared for by others, both practically and prayerfully.

People were vulnerable, but through their vulnerability, in what was a safe space, changes took place. I felt that the experiences of ministry would not be of a 'quick-fix' style that would be forgotten within a few weeks, but that works God had begun would continue over time and be meaningful to people over a long period. That was certainly my own experience, anyway.

Would I recommend next year's Northern Ark to people? - I'll see you there!

Clare Hunt

For me the week at Northern Ark was a life-changing experience. I've been to many Christian camps, ranging from the 'Big Top' experiences to church weekends away, but nothing quite like this. To see people broken, healed, restored, vulnerable, fully engaged in worship and fully engaged with community was like a glimpse of heaven.

Mike Clifford

An Alternative Blessing for a Child.

Picture a beautiful but redundant church (now maintained by the Historic Churches Preservation Trust).

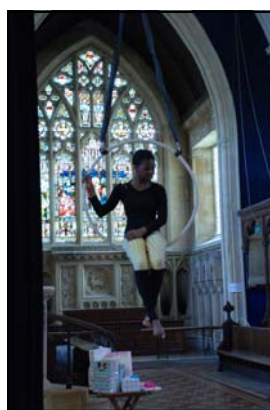
Inside, the stained glass windows are intact, as is the choir. The rest of St. Paul's Church has been adapted by the Bristol School of Circus Skills and Physical Theatre - otherwise known as Circomedia - as their practice space. Ropes and trapezes hang from the high vaulted roof, and hoops and mats hug the side walls.



It was here in April that our daughter Kate, who is a staff member of Circomedia, and her husband Andre brought their little daughter

Bethany Christina Hope for a simple act of Child Blessing.

Before their families and friends (most of whom had little church background) they gave thanks for Beth's life and promised to bring her up in the spirit of the Gospel.



Around 70 adults and children gathered to join with them to celebrate Beth's birth. The children enjoyed the bouncy castle hired for the afternoon, conversations flowed, and Kate's students demonstrated their skills. All fell silent as Peter, Beth's grandfather, conducted the simple ceremony, which included readings by friends chosen by the parents to take special interest in Beth's

development. Prayers were offered for Beth and her parents.

The many appreciative comments afterwards showed that the alternative and accessible service of Child Blessing had moved many. We pray that God's Spirit has touched hearts that afternoon.

Elizabeth Webb



We asked Andy Raine to tell us about the
MEDITATION FOR DAY 15

The year is 1976, the place Hendon in north London, where I am a student. "Where are you sending me?" I explode, angrily. Then in my head I hear an unexpected reply: "Holy Island." So I assume God is refusing to answer my question, and sending me on retreat instead. I knew that a friend-of-a-friend was warden at a retreat-house there, so maybe I'll get some answers...

So, the visit it's very different. Village life, walks, sea-scapes, then the sound of the bell as I kneel in an old stone church, the awkward reciting of psalms with a "definite pause" mid-sentence and the priest with his black batman cape.

Late that evening friend-of-a-friend Douglas unlocks the church, picks up compline sheets and heads back to the house, but leaves me there a while to linger on my own. I hear the firm shutting of the creaky door, and I am alone, but I don't feel alone. The 'empty' building is heavy with a presence so overwhelming. All sense of time vanishes. When I sing in tongues it seems resonant, clear and hauntingly beautiful. I try to dance, but can hardly stand. The floor pulls at my shoulders like a magnet, and I am held cruciform until I cannot tell where I stop and the ground begins. Long moments later I am able to sit up - someone else is nearby! I panic. The vicar in the black cape? and he'll think I'm desecrating his sanctuary... maybe he won't understand. This isn't exactly usual for me, either... it's something about this place. But it's Douglas who has returned, unheard.

He says that I was singing celtic melodies, and lying on the supposed site of Aidan's original altar. Celtic? Aidan? -

never heard of either! Will I go with him to the Priory? Why not?- I assume that's the name of someone's house, and happily cross the wall into the abbey ruins, wondering what the next step of this adventure will be. Suddenly I 'see' and 'hear' a ritual sacrifice and terrified screaming. I cannot take another step in that direction...

Back in the Marygate library, Douglas pulls a book by James Kennedy from the shelf, and reads to me: 'Legend says that when Satan raised his giant battle-axe against Heaven's gates..' You know the rest! And where are you sending me, Lord? Holy Island. So I am to be part of the presence and the conflict, another guardian of the peace in this place. To pray here is a privilege and a responsibility.

Many months later, during a difficult time at Marygate House with struggles over whether to take on another property, and the risks involved if we abolished fixed charges for our guests, and the word 'community' too threatening to be uttered, Brother Roland Walls was approached as a director and peace-maker. He gave us all scripture passages to read daily, along with the Prayer of Abandonment. The handwritten exercise-book into which I copied these was to become a primary source in compiling our Northumbrian Office years later. The scriptures were Psalm 27, Colossians 3: 12-17 and the Matthew passage about the unclean spirit ordered to leave.

Easter by Easter, day after day, year after year we celebrate the presence of God in this thin place, aligning our prayers with those of Aidan and his companions. Jesus commands resurrection life, and that way for living shuffles ahead. Our job is to unwrap the bandages, as the disciples did for Lazarus, and let go of what is emerging - at such a time as this. *Andy Raine*

We had this note from the Exeter Community Group :
Exeter Group Links Up With Toronto
Carrying Place



The Exeter Community Group which meets at Poustinia, the home of Elizabeth and Peter Webb were delighted to welcome Marion

Stephens from the Carrying Place in Canada to their meeting in April. Marion shared with the Exeter Group the history of the formation of the group in Toronto and her involvement with it. The name 'Carrying Place' comes from the culture of the First Nation People (North

American Indians). The Carrying Place was where they set down their canoes between lakes and rested. It was good to share experiences together over a meal and join together in the Evening Office and Compline.

Marion was staying the night at Poustinia on the way to visit relatives in Cornwall. She had an eventful 24 hours. After the Community Meeting she accompanied Peter and Elizabeth to Midnight Mint - the ecumenical late night meeting place offering hospitality to those going to night clubs in Exeter's city centre. The following morning she attended a breakfast arranged to raise money for Mercy Ships.

The visit gave Marion and the Exeter group a glimpse of the international nature of the Northumbria Community network. *Peter & Elizabeth Webb*

Prayer Guide

For those who are compiling our community Prayer Guide, it is really helpful to have requests and suggestions for prayer - for people, places and initiatives that are connected with the Community. Please send them to the Office and we will try to include them in the next edition, or email them to prayerguide@northumbriacommunity.org



The back page

Community Events

Paul Lucas asks for prayer for a community related event: the 'Monk's Trod' Pilgrimage from Guisbro to Whitby on the 26 and 27 September - there are a couple of places left, please let the office know if you are interested.

I'm sorry to say that we're short of photos to illustrate many of our news items this time... but even so, we bring you what we can:

News of companions and friends

Amy Noble and Kenny McClure were married on 22 August in Sheffield.

Nick Haigh was ordained in Chichester Cathedral on 27 June and is now at St Mary's Church, Eastbourne.



Andy & Jude Philip announced the arrival of baby **Cerys Ilona**, born 1st August weighing 9lb 5oz

Richard Oliver is due to be licensed as a Lay Reader in the Anglican Church on 5 October. He will be licensed to serve at St Matthew's C of E Church, Chapel Allerton, Leeds.

Diane Kutar gave birth on Thursday 17th Sept to **Christian Phiro Kutar**, 7lb 4 oz

Diane & Philip live in Burgess Hill, and are rejoicing in the safe arrival of their first child



Margene and David Vessel write:

Eva Marie was born on August 26th. We welcomed her to our family while at the hospital and we were able to take her home 2 days later. We pray for Brie, the birth mom, and thank her for the blessing she has given our family. Nicole, 6, adores her new living baby doll, and Ben, 4, gives a gentle kiss and then goes to play with his trucks.

Nether Springs

Ben and Ru Brown left in August after a year on the monastic team. They will be living in Leicester.



Trevor and Freda Miller have moved from Hetton Hall to Tweedmouth.

After many years living and working at Nether Springs, our Mother House, **Rob and Joanna Brown** are moving in October, to Newtown in Wales where they will live and work as part of a small house of prayer and hospitality.

Pete and Catherine Askew will be moving to Hetton Hall to work full-time for the Community, starting on 1 October. Pete will be 'Suffragan Overseer' working alongside Trevor and Roy. He will oversee and manage this season of transition in relation to a new Mother House but also in terms of making connections with other changes in the life of our community such as trading activities through Cloisters and the development of other Community houses. Catherine will be 'Priest in Residence' leading the liturgical life of the Mother House, promoting spiritual formation and implementing the programme of events. She will also act as Chaplain to the Mother House.

New Companion

Ali Mesher was welcomed into companionship in August at Nether Springs.

© CAIM is the official newsletter of the Northumbria Community.

Northumbria Community Trust, Registered Charity No: 1099503

Nether Springs, Hetton Hall, Chatton, Northumberland NE66 5SD

Tel or Fax: 01289 388235 email: office@northumbriacommunity.org

Caim Editors: Jeff Sutheran & Ingrid Cumming

email: caim@northumbriacommunity.org