



CAIM

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

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

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Easter Workshop: "Together - diverse and dispersed"

It might seem a tad early to be talking about Easter Workshop, a bit like Christmas cards in the shops by the end of August. But here's the thing: we're approaching it a little bit differently as we prepare for next year.



Throughout our history, Easter Workshop has been a gathering of the Community. It has had many different forms over the years, but it has always been a place of sharing, learning and teaching, and a time for Companions to renew vows of Availability and Vulnerability. This has been centred on a physical gathering in Northumberland, and every other year at a gathering in another part of Britain, (with our 'vows' still being renewed on Holy Island). These gatherings have then been shared with the rest of the Community in some limited way.

Over the last few years we have seen an increasing number of Community folk wanting to join in with Easter Workshop in various places all over the world. Not every one can make it to Northumberland - or even to Britain!

Last Easter we were very aware that the issues that we wanted to share with the whole Community were only accessible to the very small percentage that managed to get to Northumberland. We were left with two significant questions: as an expanding Community of people 'alone' and dispersed throughout the world, how can we better provide for the 'together' at such a key event in the yearly cycle of the Community's life? And how can we better share the teaching, thinking and listening coming out of our pondering the questions 'Who is it that you seek? How then shall we live? How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

So, we're going to try something new for this coming year. Instead of trying to pack everything into a few days around Easter, we'll spend a year, starting with this edition of Caim, to explore, as Community, a particular theme. This year we'll be looking at what it means to be 'Together' in a diverse and dispersed network. The idea is that through the Autumn, and up to the beginning of Lent, we'll be gathering and making available various resources to help stimulate the conversation about the theme. Easter will then be a time of sharing in gatherings of all sizes and in all places. This will include a renewal of vows by the dispersed Community gathered all over the world and on Holy Island. The time after Easter will be spent gathering stories from around the world and putting together thoughts and creativity that have emerged out of the theme.

We're delighted that Anita Haigh, a Companion in Community, has agreed to help in coordinating this process, and she will be working with Companions across the Community to take things forward - as we explore what it means to be a dispersed Community yet covenanted together within the love of Christ and sharing a common Way for Living. Look out for further details in the next edition of Caim and on the Community's website in the coming months. *Roy Searle*



As you will know, our Community has been running a business called Northumbria Community Trading Ltd (trading as Cloisters) since 1999. The purpose of the company was to generate some income for the Community and to provide a way of making resources available. Times have not been easy financially for the company over the last few years and despite trying to find ways of making the company viable for the longer term, we have now, with external advice, had to make the difficult and sad decision to cease trading in this way, as of 31st December 2011.

We give thanks for all the people who have contributed to the work of Cloisters throughout its life, especially to Ian Corsie who initiated and developed it as a business,

and particularly to Brenda Grace who has been running the Cloisters office for many years. Please hold Brenda in your thoughts and prayers as she approaches the end of her employment with the company.

The Community continues to be committed to making Community resources available to everyone who finds them helpful on their journey. By the end of November these will be available through the Community website and dispatched from Nether Springs by volunteers. Until then orders will be processed and dispatched as normal through the Cloisters website.

Please note that when Northumbria Community Trading Ltd ceases trading the running and financing of the Northumbria Community Trust will not be affected, as they are two completely separate legal and financial entities. Whilst the Community as a whole has never had much money, we're in good shape and are looking forward to finding new and different ways of providing resources in an ever-changing world of publishing and communications.

Retreats at Nether Springs

Could you take a few days out before the end of the year? If so, how about spending them at Nether Springs? Listed below are a few of the retreats on offer – if none of these is possible, check your programme or the website for details of the rest.

Change and transition – 7-12 November

Pete Askew and Roy Searle will be leading this School for those in leadership who are facing the challenges and opportunities of change. Included will be: how to strengthen relationships, facilitate creativity, foster innovation and promote growth and development, whilst still facing issues of conflict and building community.

Grief and loss – 2-4 December

A retreat which creates a space for people to journey with others who are seeking God in the midst of loss, to learn about contemporary insights into grief work, to share stories and to listen to God. Catherine Askew and Anne Wadey will be leading this time.

Treasures in darkness – 9-11 December

This retreat will explore the teachings of St John of the Cross giving a chance to reflect on the experience of the Dark Night of the Soul, when God seems to be absent from our lives, and discover the riches that God has to give us when we learn to walk by faith.

Please contact the office if you would like to book in!

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Caim!

I am fortunate to live close enough to the Mother House to be able to call in there relatively easily and regularly - but in the midst of a busy summer, suddenly many weeks had passed since my last visit. Arriving there recently, I was struck by how the feel has changed from a building site, to a 'new building', and now to 'home'. It looks great, it feels good, and some of the finishing touches (like a lawn instead of a rubble-heap!) are being applied. The new garden rooms look great!

The journey isn't always smooth or easy - the news about Cloisters reminds us of that - but there is a strong sense of God leading us on to new things, together. Enjoy this issue of Caim. *Jeff & Ingrid*

Dear Community,
Here I am having just received my copy of CDP and having read your fascinating website and something of your work, saying a simple, "thank you" for being there and producing these wonderful thoughts, prayers and resources for me to draw upon and share with others in Christ. God bless, David

Sarah Pillar looks back on

Stories from the future: a conversation in Whitby

How do you rate a conversation? Can you consider it a 'success'? Maybe not, that's too consumerist for my liking.

Surely it's not just about a job done, a mission accomplished. Might we not value it retrospectively as an encounter that enhances relationship, valuing a 'good' conversation as one that inspires us, raising intrigue and questions, inviting us to understand the other more. Using the language that is a metaphor for life, such 'goodness' within a conversation helps each other 'on the journey'. Indeed, it leaves us wanting to arrange another date in the diary and thinking about who else we might invite and share the inspiration with.

Like the turning autumn leaves, our communities, churches and neighbourhoods are changed by the waning of the Church's influence.

September's Whitby conference, a gathering of people from Northumbria Community (NC) and the Anabaptist Network (AN), sharing within the home of the Sisters of the Order of the Holy Paraclete (OHP), was one such conversation building upon a friendship of many years. The idea for this particular conversation came out of a day in May 2010 where members of the AN Steering Group and NC Seniors discovered our commonalities (the restlessness, the lightness, the hope rather than the despair, the voices from the margins, our values, our 'nakedness', etc) and valued our distinctives (the AN is a network; NC is a dispersed Community; creativity and imagination are central to NC; peace is central to the AN; the AN is Christocentric; NC is Trinitarian and more, and more ...). Intriguing? It certainly was and so came inspiration for a residential weekend within the hospitality of a more traditional monastic setting. Somewhere within that conversation came the phrase



'telling stories from the future.'

So, the chosen location of the place of Hild's monastery brought a historical resonance. She is remembered as one who sat with

significant others on the cusp of a major change as an indigenous expression of Christianity, here at the known 'ends of the earth' was brought into line with what we now reflect was Christendom. Bede narrates that this was not an occasion for a 'conversation' but rather a meeting with predetermined outcomes. Her story from the past helps inform us now, living in the twilight of Christendom. In our conference, we also ventured into the realms of stories from the future, dreaming and imagining how those 20, 30 years from now might be answering the questions that NC, the AN and indeed the OHP seek to live today: How shall we sing the Lord's song? How then shall we live? and primarily, Who is it that you seek?

Given that just over 60 people joined this conversation with its mixture of many voices, many debates over coffee and questions over shared meals, in this reflection you have about 1/60th of all that happened!

Sian Murray-Williams helpfully used the metaphor of a tree in transition amidst its changing seasons to help us process what we in the West might be losing as Christendom fades (those things we are glad to shed and those things we mourn the passing of). Like the turning autumn leaves, our communities, churches and neighbourhoods are changed by the waning of the Church's influence. We later returned



to Sian's imagery, recognising a season of winter, of outward dormancy yet inward strengthening and consolidation. Then onto the imagery of

spring, which brought us to consider that, whatever this new era might be named, there will be new life and we pondered what we might hope for.

Into this 'spring', Stuart Murray Williams gave us four provocative scenarios, each an analysis of what Europe might look like and how Christians might respond. Awakening us to a need to consider our doctrine, Edward Pillar reviewed the impact of the first proclamation of the Gospel as Resurrection and what that means for us now as we reckon with the challenge that our theology will determine how we act and how we live. We considered this first call before us to follow Jesus to life beyond death and life beyond our recent experience likened to exile. Edward's input became a reference point for much of the discussion throughout the weekend. *Cont'd on pg 4*

Paul Wilson writes: I am running a course in Teesside called '**North East Workshop**'. It meets monthly on a Saturday from 10.00 to 18.00, and is quite broad in its content, covering Bible interpretation, Old Testament history, Ethics, Apologetics, Doctrine, Eschatology, Church and Mission.

Details are at www.neworkshop.co.uk. The course began in 1983, and its theological flavour is Anabaptist.

Intentionally we had many voices, many different people presenting snapshots of their hopes and dreams. People like David Pott, sharing his passion that through pilgrimage people might walk into The Way. Like Sister Janet Elizabeth, honestly reflecting upon where her Community is now, with a determined hopefulness for the future. Juliet Kilpin brought results of her Facebook consultation and a challenge to trust the Gospel, for it will flourish between the cracks of a broken Christendom. We were taken to dreams for other parts of the world. Joshua Searle brought us some of the wisdom of Orthodox Christianity. Paul Wilson shared his pained concern for the future of Palestine. James Krabill of the Mennonite Mission Network connected us to a changing season for Christianity in the USA and the challenges of indigenous expressions of Christianity found in Africa. Mary Publicover reminded us that the story of the past and its retelling in the present and the future can bring

tangible hope. And the poetic 'Letter from Sophie', aged 1 now, but written as if she were 21, focussed our minds that we indeed need to choose wisely what it is we carry forward: those things that we can't leave behind.

Inspired and Prophetic, the Spirit's gift; it was a good conversation that called us to listen humbly to one another and to rejoice that we were hearing the voice of Christ for our present and future. It was a significant event and I would invite you to join us seeking Christ, following Him and learning Alone and Together as communities to sing the Lord's song in strange but beautiful lands.

Sarah Pillar

Adrian Smith writes:

Recently I took a couple of days prayer retreat with the Community and spent some of the time sitting on the dunes overlooking Alnmouth.

When I arrived the tide was just coming in. I often experience God speaking to me through landscape or my surroundings and here's the idea that came to me unexpectedly as I arrived.

At the top of one of the dunes is a large wooden cross, looking out from there you can see three very different kinds of "landscape" – firstly the land itself, mostly farmed, and the town of Alnmouth, secondly the sea, and thirdly the estuary of the River Aln – a large area of wetland behind the dunes.

In my "picture" the land spoke to me of the past – it's settled and developed, cultivated and fixed with boundaries, everything is owned and subject to vested interests, a safe place to be.

Secondly the sea spoke to me of the future – vast, limitless, unpredictable, not owned, untamed. In particular I was thinking about the future God has planned for his creation – new heavens and new earth. We have a few glimpses in Scripture of what's in store, it's going to be amazing but we don't have a lot of detail.

The third area, the estuary wetlands, spoke to me of the present – land "in-between" in constant transition, a relatively small area compared with the land and the sea, neither one nor the other yet part of both. The wetland is subject to the ebb and flow of the tide – full and empty – soaking or dry – it's a rich place if you know where to look and many creatures thrive there. It is a place of beauty and danger, not settled or rigidly laid out.

I felt the picture was telling me that we are called to occupy the wetlands - the "in-between" area of constant transition. The sea speaks of our destiny - the as yet unformed future of God's new creation. The land, the past, is where we are from, it seems to offer something secure with clear boundaries; a place we might wish to linger in or look back at nostalgically. In contrast the wetlands are at the mercy of the elements – the ebb and flow of the tide and the wind. In the wetlands we are living in the flow of what God is doing, sometimes getting swept along and soaked in his Spirit and at other times stuck in the mud. It is an unpredictable place to be yet full of power and potential and always carrying the reminder that the sea is (literally from where I was sitting) just around the corner – God's kingdom fully established on earth as in heaven.

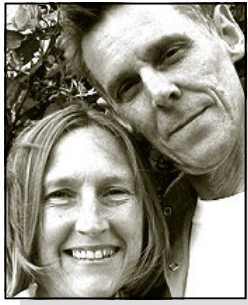
I'm still mulling over the picture and finding new angles to explore and pray into. I've just read the following from Tom Wright in his commentary on James 5: 13-20 that prayer is the "...place where heaven and earth overlap and where our own present time and God's future time overlap." When we pray we are occupying the in-between land.

Maybe like me you find it important to understand where you fit into the big picture, it really helps and motivates me, particularly when I'm feeling stuck in the mud!

Adrian Smith October 2011



Andy Raine reflects on the memory of a good man



Alan Andrews [1949-2011] died at home in Chester-le-Street on Tuesday 6th

September, and his funeral was on Thursday 15th. Alan and his wife Lynda belong to Mulberry House prophetic community, Gateshead.

Challenged with cancer, he still completed the cover-design and booklet for Anna Raine's CD, 'Ancient Paths'.

Others will remember Alan and former wife Penny from formative years of Northumbria Community. They had five children, now adults with their own children. Alan was a singer and musician – the distinctive solo voice for 'Christ as a light', (on the old Office tape) and 'Saranam'. He and John Skinner wrote 'Let Your tender mercies', and music for 'The Lord's song' and 'In returning'. 'Father, please be pleased to come and make Your home with us', was Alan's song, but his most memorable is 'The King' (see CDP Finan September 14th).

His crucial period of Community involvement was mid-80s, and Alan and Penny moved to Newton Aycliffe to be with Community, then stayed when others shifted further north. He designed the customised stationery for 'Nethersprings, the home of Northumbria Ministries' and

the Community's HEARTCRY journal was handwritten throughout in his scrawling capitals. Alan was a formative thinker and forerunner - in his studio at Brenda's house in Newton Aycliffe, John and he struggled to explore and discuss so many issues, wondering what would rush to fill the spiritual vacuum in Europe and exploring Bonhoeffer, Pasternak and others in search of language to articulate their visions of a 'secular monasticism'. Alan's block print, 'Internal Emigre', based on John's concerns about a post-Christian society, depicts Christ somehow as a universal man showing that suffering takes us into a different place.

When the Berlin wall came down Alan envisaged a mixed-media presentation event, where with the wall fallen and the icons of commercialism pushed aside, Rublev's icon 'The Saviour' appears, back-lit, as the panel of a large door which is opened so one at a time people may walk through Him, finding an ancient path to life. Alan was a fine dancer, with endless distinctive ways of moving. He and Lynda were in the team of eight dancers we took joining 60 other invited intercessors to pray at Stonehenge.

At his funeral celebration we wore the vibrant colours he loved and Alan's cardboard coffin was covered with bright banners of his calligraphy: 'Let Your tender mercies come unto us that we may live again', 'One new man' and 'Come away, My love'. *Andy Raine*



Anne Burton sent a tribute to a good woman:

Heather Fry died on 31st August.

There was a service to celebrate her life at Peterborough Cathedral on 8

September; the Cathedral was packed - real evidence of how so many hearts and lives have been touched by Heather's gentle and caring ministry. The presence of so many was a great and overwhelming support for Nigel, sons Joe and Josh, and her family. This photo was printed on the front of the service booklet and inside were these words that Heather had written herself:

"The cancer cells of this tumour may have shot into my brain the very day that it went to my neck. Even if chemo

had started the next day it would not have changed that. Nobody saw this coming - it is just something that the cells in my body have naturally done for whatever reason. However my body is 'fearfully and wonderfully made' (Psalm 139) and has been brilliant for serving my 51 years of life - I have enjoyed good health, with very little illness of any kind. I have given life to two amazing young men and am very satisfied. There are no answers as to why my cells should have gone 'sappy' and I do not want anyone angsty and wasting life and time over it. It is done. We cannot choose what happens to us - but we can choose our attitude. We may not have the strength on our own but God has infinite resource to give you that strength."

Written so close to her own death, her words are an inspiration to us all. We continue to hold Nigel, Joe, Josh, Doreen (Heather's mum) and Robert (Heather's brother) in prayer. *Anne Burton*

Christine Ainsley writes

Of Pots and Pebbles

I always thought I was the inventor of the prayer pot - except mine was known as the bran tub. Then we came across Community in 1994. We purchased a special container to mark the occasion and that now lives in our prayer room in North Sunderland, Seahouses.

I owe my invention to some dear friends who were in their eighties. I visited them one morning and was invited to share in their prayer time. They had a list of people in a prayer diary and faithfully worked their way through this day by day. I had always preferred to be 'spiritual' and wait for someone to be laid on my heart, but now I was challenged to see that I was praying only when I felt in the mood, and only for people I really liked. As I am the sort of person who would soon become discouraged by failure to use a prayer list as such, the bran tub was born. The first person who came out was a special friend!

Over the years I have done different things with the pot - here are some of them:

- Keep a note in my journal of who comes out
- Write to people (using pen, ink and a stamp, remember this?) Latterly e-mail or text
- Add a name called 'Someone New'
- On holiday remember to pack contents of pot and send postcards
- Carried people around 'on my heart' if I had a pocket in the right place. Retrieved people from the washing machine...
- Placed names in prominent places for the day
- This last year I renewed the contents of the pot by chopping up signatures on Christmas cards. Messy but much more personal.

I love pebbles and shells. The beach near Newcastle, County Down was paradise for me and I collected a wonderful selection of prayer stones. At present these are arranged on the floor in a way which is very meaningful to me but annoying for my husband Bob, who often trips over and scatters them on his way to opening the curtains.

At the turn of the year I was hearing of so many friends with heartbreaking problems, and watched my pile of pebbles representing people get bigger and bigger until the stones ran out. I was reminded of the song we often sing, 'I will hold your people in my heart'. No, I couldn't, my heart was not big enough or strong enough for such a weight. It was breaking. Time for reflection. The picture which came to me will only resonate with those of a Certain Age. Remember Crackerjack on TV? Children trying to keep hold of hold piles of stuff (including cabbages) with the inevitable result. Hold on to it all and the pile eventually collapses, gifts and junk alike. So I have to learn to release my friends to God, 'Heart of my own heart', our one place of safety, strength and renewal, mine and theirs.



All my longings lie open before you, O Lord: my sighing is not hidden from you. Psalm 38: 9

LANCASHIRE GATHERING

The Community gatherings near Carnforth, organised by Di and Vince Smith, go from strength to strength. On 20th August folk gathered in the attractive setting of St John's Church, Yealand, and enjoyed fellowship (and plenty of food!). Twenty people came from various places in the North (Cheshire, Southport, Manchester - with Julie and myself coming from Bolton). The ever-present Sedburgh group, with their long involvement in the Community, are always a great support and blessing.

After group sessions focusing on "Availability and Vulnerability" our worship was greatly enhanced by the music of Michael Connaughton and Vince on their guitars.

There clearly is good support for this Lancashire gathering which meets four times a year. The next date is arranged for Saturday, 19th November, at Yealand, near Carnforth. We start with the mid-day office and then all enjoy lunch together. Join us if you can. Di Smith (01524 782341 or dianesmith1@mac.com) will gladly give you more details. *Lee Johnson.*



Mary-Elizabeth Todd reflects on Expressions of faith:

*Lord, You have always given bread for the coming day;
and though I am poor, today I believe.*

*Lord, You have always given strength for the coming day;
and though I am weak, today I believe.*

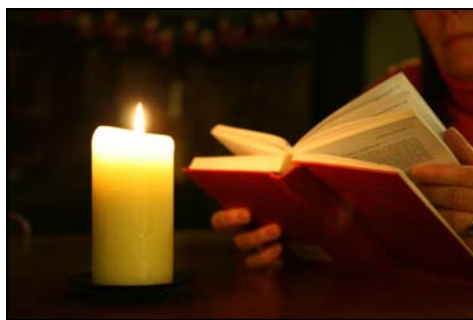
*Lord, You have always given peace for the coming day;
and though of anxious heart, today I believe.*

*Lord, You have always kept me safe in trials;
and now, tried as I am, today I believe.*

*Lord, You have always marked the road for the coming day;
and though it may be hidden, today I believe.*

*Lord, You have always lightened this darkness of mine;
and though the night is here, today I believe.*

*Lord, You have always spoken when the time was ripe;
and though You be silent now, today I believe.*



Years ago, I bought this book "Celtic Daily Prayer". I bought it because I love prayer, and I love my Celtic

roots. I liked the format of the this book. But I didn't use it every day.

Then in 2007, Ma came home from the hospital and she could no longer be left alone in the daytime or at night. It was before Christmas and my home felt like a prison. I could no longer go to my church to worship. I want to

say here that I grew to love that time, as difficult as it was at the time, caring for Ma. It was such a wonderful gift to my life. The blessings have run deep over the last several years. But in the beginning of it all I did not feel that way, I felt that I had lost so much. I turned to this Celtic Prayer book. The idea took root slowly over several weeks; if I could not go to worship with my church, I could pray for them. I picked up my calendar and decided to start after blessing my house with evening and morning prayers. I decided I would use nine candles. I wrote down about 50 names at first. On January 1, 2008, I chose for two months people I would pray for each day.

So it began. The most amazing thing happened when I read the lines out loud as an Expression of Faith every evening. I found myself being humbled by saying them. I found myself trusting more the path that I was on. I found that I had much to learn about faith. Each morning and each evening as I faced whatever would happen during those hours with Ma, I knew I was not alone in this and I was not in a prison as I at first presumed. I was actually freed to accept the blessings that were right in front of me.

I will continue to say those words for as long as I can. Sometimes when I read them, a part will hit me and I can feel the tears well up in my heart, and saying "I believe" brings me freedom.

I hope you will take time to read those seven lines out loud. Let their simplicity speak to you and let those words open up blessings for you.

Ever in Christ's Love, Mary Elizabeth Todd

News just in about the forthcoming Crucible course:

Crucible runs three intensive training weekends each year to equip Christians to follow Jesus on the margins.

Crucible is for Christians with courage and imagination, who suspect that:

- We need to operate as cross-cultural missionaries because we live in a cross-cultural mission context.
- We need to think creatively about incarnating the gospel and planting new kinds of churches in emerging and diverse cultures.
- We need to recover the biblical vision of shalom and reflect on how we live as followers of Jesus in light of this all-embracing vision.
- We need to pay particular attention to the margins, because we serve the God who frequently does new things there: on the margins of society among the poor and disenfranchised; at the margins of culture, where creative thinking explores new possibilities; on the margins of the familiar, the spaces all around us, neglected or ignored, but full of potential.

Further details available from jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org or
Crucible: 19 Gardner Road, London E13 8LN

Caroline Ramsey writes:

A conversation with Hild

She was a smallish woman, perhaps a little older than me - late fifties. She was square set, not beautiful but with rich, deep brown eyes. I was a little taken aback, and looked each way for an open door; after all I live on my own. She noticed and smiled. "Hello, Caroline" she said "I'm Hild, I've been getting to know you a little recently; it's good to meet at last"

Now I was really scratching my head. I'm a good ol' Protestant and don't hold with this praying to saints but I confess that recently I've wished that I could have a long chat with Hild of Whitby. I just thought that maybe she would be able to help me balance out the competing demands of my life. "What would you like to ask me, Caroline?" I paused, I knew exactly what I wanted to talk about but now I had the opportunity, I couldn't quite put it into words... "I don't know, Hild, I make such a mess of working in two worlds, the worlds of business and Christian service. You seemed to do something similar so well. How? How did you do it?"

I think that she looked genuinely shocked. "Do it well?! Oh no, I used to get so wound up about the visits from the bishops and lords. I was on my knees for days afterwards trying to regain my balance. After all," she went on, "I didn't exactly ask for the great and the good to come and see me. Why do you think that I wanted to join my sister in France? I wanted to get away from my old life at the Northumbrian court amongst royalty. I wanted to leave all the finery behind and instead it came and invaded my poverty; those lords, ladies and bishops all parading in front of me in their pomp." I looked at her and could see a tension in her face, almost as if she was living out the memory of trying to control anger and frustration. She continued "I'm not sure that I ever really forgave Aidan. You know that he persuaded me to stay in Northumbria?" I nodded as she went on, "He was such a wonderful man. Now, he really was a saint! He never seemed to want anything, but I don't think that Aidan had ever been rich and so he was content with having nothing and he was so generous, so wonderfully able to share whatever he did have. I wasn't like him."

I leant forward, looking at her. Those eyes that had been so beautiful were clouded now. There was regret and sadness in them. Her head was tipped forward; it almost seemed to me that she was ashamed to catch my eye. There was a long pause. It was my turn to encourage her, to give her permission to talk. "Was it very hard to give up your place in the royal family and all the attendant wealth?" I asked. Hild looked up and said, "Not at first. To begin with I was just thrilled at the opportunity to spend time with God. The chance to pray, study and be with others was more of a delight than all the feasts and parties at court. I particularly liked working with the younger nuns, encouraging them to try out new skills and learn to read and such-like.

I guess that I was quite good at it, for the authorities encouraged me to set up a new convent as Abbess quite quickly.

"No, to start with, I didn't regret the move at all. I think that two incidents started my struggle. The first was when my younger cousin, Eanfrith, came to visit me. I don't know if she did it deliberately but she was wearing my favourite gold brooch. I'd loved that brooch and giving it away had been a powerful symbol to me of my calling to the convent. It had been a moment of freedom when I had unclasped it and walked away. Yet there it was before me being paraded by a young woman. I was shocked by the effect it had on me. I had wanted to give it away, so why did I hanker after it again now, years later? What was its hold on me? I remember being livid with Eanfrith for wearing it - How selfish, how inconsiderate, how mean ..."

"Then a few months later, the Earl of Hexham visited Hartlepool, where I was Abbess. A few years before, there had been talk of a marriage between us. He was a good man and I suspect that we would have made a good team. We were both politically astute, both good with managing estates and people. He came to me for advice and we talked easily. There was sadness in his eyes when he told me that he could never talk to his wife like this. He was about to say something more, but stopped himself. I spent the next week imagining what he might have been intending to say."

She stopped again and I suspected that she was back in that room; wishing a millennium and more later, that he had continued. "So you see Caroline, I'm not much better than you in dealing with riches and service". She smiled at me, a smile that was infectious so that we shared a contented silence. "But you managed to keep going," I encouraged. "Yes," she said "it's wonderful what a good bit of gardening or calligraphy can do to take your mind off things. I don't think that any of my friends in the convent really knew. I think that I was able to hide from them what really, rather shamed me. But I did want someone to talk to, I wanted someone to understand. Maybe that was why I prayed so much. I guess that I thought Jesus, who left heaven for a carpenter's shed, would understand."

There was another silence between us that was broken by the thud of my book hitting the floor, Hild was gone and I jumped a little, stretched and looked at my watch, surprised at where the time had gone. Time for bed, I thought.



Rob & Catherine write of their

Pilgrim Path to Portland

We spent a month in Portland, Oregon from mid-July to Mid-August to attend the wedding of Catherine's son.

This is the second time one of her sons has married a young woman from that city and settled down as a 'registered alien', four years ago it was Kjell marrying Kim, now it was Pieter marrying Keven. Theirs was a very different wedding as they were married in a clearing in a forest 1800 feet up Mount Hood. While there, we took the opportunity to visit three different Christian communities.



The first one was the Evergreen Community. This is where Pieter and Keven first met. They are a missional community reaching out to young adults, in their 20s and 30s, half of whom are not committed Christians. In their own words "the overriding desire we had was to begin a community that would reach people we saw as being unreached by existing communities." Evergreen now have three congregations (totalling about 200) meeting up in different parts of Portland. The one we attended met in the Happy Labrador pub on Sunday mornings. There were around 40 adults and some children.



When we arrived we were offered a drink and sat down around the pub tables. The pastor, Bob Hyatt, started by explaining what Evergreen was all about, so that new visitors were

not confused. Then he spent a few minutes explaining the value of using the Psalms to reflect on modern life today and as short prayers.

People were encouraged to make comments about some verses and there was discussion around the tables. Bob had his say, and worked through the whole passage in this way, stopping for worship songs and prayer. During the session, people were getting up for cups of coffee or to look after children. Towards the end, we celebrated Holy Communion by getting up and helping ourselves to the bread, wine or fruit juice from a table and joining in a simple prayer. Around half the people there stayed on for lunch in the pub and further discussions. For more info, visit their web site at: <http://www.evergreenlife.org>

The next place was the Springwater Community in a very poor part of Portland. It is a new monastic community where members have bought houses near each other and are supporting one another in reaching out to the neighbourhood. A couple from Evergreen took us along to meet them all. We were invited to join some of them for their pot-luck supper, one Sunday evening. It was a simple meal of pasta, vegetables and chicken. A lady struggling with bringing up her children and coping with a drug addiction joined us at the table. Then a homeless man, who lives in one of the community member's garage, turned up and volunteered to wash the dishes after the meal. They were all interested in the Northumbria Community especially as they are a new community. Some of them were using our Celtic Daily Prayer Book without knowing it was written by members of the Northumbria Community. Catherine mentioned the Bridget liturgy and was asked to pray this blessing over them as they sat around the room. The web site of the Springwater Community is: <http://springwatercommunity.org/>

The third community we were invited to was not in Portland but over the border from Oregon to Vancouver in Washington State. The 'Abbey' in Vancouver is being developed by an Anglo Catholic group. They have a large house being converted into a worship area for sixty people. The floor above was made up into flatlets with a common room to house five young adults. The basement below would house their food bank and a flat for the homeless man who was going to look after it. This food bank will provide healthy food for people in need. David, the minister, explained that they call it an Abbey, rather than a church because they are a missional group, reaching out to the people who do not go to Church. The word Abbey does not have the connotations of church and makes it easier for non-Christians to get involved. <http://www.arnadaabbey.org>

We were delighted that Diane Sekuloff, from Vancouver, Canada was able to meet up with us. There were many other people and groups we would like to have met but we hope to get the chance in our next visit.

Rob and Catherine Davies



Norma Charlton writes of

An Australian Encounter - Divine Appointments

In May, when Norman and I were preparing to go to Australia, I sent emails to the two Friends of Northumbria Community (NC) who live in Perth, offering to meet up. Both responded positively, and on the first and last Sundays of our stay we enjoyed a good number of hours sharing our faith stories with Russel and his prayer partner, Rob.

They knew Lynette, the other NC Friend, and urged us to meet up with her and the people with whom she works – at Dayspring Centre for Christian Spirituality and Counselling. They also recommended a visit to New Norcia, the only Benedictine town in Australia (and possibly the world!)



The major part of our holiday was spent travelling round Western Australia in a campervan, which I loved - such a kaleidoscope of sights and experiences! On our way

back towards Perth we chose the route through New Norcia and spent 24 hours there, joining in the rhythm of their day, which began in the dark at 5.15 am. After mass at 7.30 the guestmaster invited us in for breakfast, and during the course of our conversation I mentioned that Bishop Ambrose was our RC Visitor for the Community - and learned that he too had been to New Norcia! (On our return home we were sad to learn that his illness had progressed and he died soon afterwards.)

By the very last day of our trip, we had spoken on the phone to Lynette and had left messages, but still hadn't managed to meet. We knew Dayspring was open on Tuesdays, so we decided to try and find it. After just one stop to ask directions, we came upon the Dayspring sign on a church building. A lady spotted us entering and came to greet us. As soon as she heard our accent she cried out: "Are you the Northumbrians?" and came running out to greet us, sit us down and in true NC style offered us a cup of tea.

She was Beth, the third and current director of Dayspring. After a short while in came Brian, the director she had succeeded, who just happened to be there helping out. They explained that they share the building with a church and, when the church wanted to extend, areas were created specifically for Dayspring.

I was fascinated to see how imaginatively the comparatively small space had been designed, to include a small outdoor labyrinth, chapel and meeting room. Currently Dayspring serves as a resource for people around the area who are seeking God in silent meditation and creative contemplation. They 'provide a quiet supportive space for a pilgrim's spiritual journeying' and offer a 'Vocational Graduate Diploma of Spiritual Direction'.



This year they are celebrating the 10th anniversary of Dayspring's own journey. Each year they run a retreat at... New Norcia - which Russel and Rob attend. Small world!

The final person to drop in was the first director and founder of Dayspring, Brian Stitt. He very quickly invited us for a meal before we flew off that evening and between them the two Brians arranged the meal, dropping off the campervan, and getting us to the airport!

Brian's wife Patricia greeted us with a quiet and generous hospitality and we spent a delightful evening in their company. During the course of the evening Brian shared with us how more than 10 years ago - feeling drawn to silence and solitude, which was considered odd by the rest of his church - he had heard a talk given by Martin Robinson, a Friend of NC and Director of 'Together In Mission', whose wife Lynda runs the Birmingham Community group.

After the talk, Brian, Martin and Lynda spent five hours in deep conversation over a meal. When Martin returned home he sent a copy of Roy Searle's recorded talks 'Desert Spirituality' and suddenly Brian had a language for what was happening in his own heart! Soon he was sharing this with others and Dayspring was born.

What an encouragement to learn of the influence of the Community in such a way! May God continue to take what we offer and weave it into his rich tapestry of life, to help people on the journey wherever they may be! And may we each respond to the inner voice that prompts us..... if I had given in to my reticence to contact Russel and Lynette I would never have met them, or heard the story... if Brian hadn't yielded to the prompting to talk to Martin... if Martin hadn't listened to Brian's heart and hadn't sent the tape... May we accept all the divine appointments God sets up for us... and rejoice! *Norma Charlton*

Cathy Hutcheon writes from Toronto:

On the first weekend of October a doughty band of Carrying Place people and friends got the early morning ferries across to Toronto

Island. We were going for a retreat day, and to celebrate and welcome as companions into the Northumbria Community, Christine Robertson and Deborah Vipperman.



When we touched down on the island, Duke Vipperman lit a lantern for Deborah and Christine to carry a fire to the church, St Andrew's by the Lake, where we gathered.



Christine had brought flowers for the occasion; obedience plant, for availability, a delicate, open Japanese anemone for vulnerability, and a perennial gypsophila called Baby's Breath in the UK (common in bridal bouquets) for Ruach, the Holy Spirit who enables us to keep these vows.

Christine and Deborah made their vows and there was a time of sharing. Cathy led in a reflection around the paradox that is 'alone and together', unwrapping something of what this might mean for us.

We fixed the day around the offices for the day. In addition folk shared art work, played music, sang, and went for walks around the Island.



Duke set up a tree and we wrote on fall

coloured leaves, some things we would like to see drop off our trees. By the afternoon the wind had abated and we had glorious sunshine.

After afternoon tea, Duke drew together a time of sharing about lessons from the little book (Scriptures) and the big book (creation). The fall leaves by now, from our simulated tree, were scattered on the ground, and Duke invited us to write on green leaves, things we'd like to see grow in time.



Our prayer is that Christine and Deborah will carry the fire of their passion for Christ in their day to day lives, as they work out their vows of availability and vulnerability, with the help of the Holy Spirit's breath.

Uncharted Waters

'Not all who wander are lost.' Tolkien

A weekend for those experiencing the uncharted waters of faith transition, and those who are open to journeying with people in the difficult places of faith.

**Has your faith undergone a shift-change?
Is church a box into which you no longer fit?**

Spend a weekend exploring these issues with like-minded people.

Facilitator: Roy Searle

Date: Friday 6th to Sunday 8th January, 2012

Venue: St Oswald's Pastoral Care Centre, Sleights, Whitby.

Suggested donation: £100

Contact details: Sister Helen OHP

St Oswald's Pastoral Care Centre, Woodlands Drive, Sleights, Whitby. North Yorks. YO21 1RY

Tel: 01947 810496

Email: ohpstos@globalnet.co.uk

www.stoswaldpastoralcentre.co.uk

Flodden 500

Flodden 500 - Sun 21st to Sun 28th July, 2013

As part of the programme to commemorate the Battle of Flodden, during the week 21st to 28th July 2013, the Community are going to be involved in a number of initiatives and programme activities - one of which is the organising of a reconciliation pilgrimage from various parts of Scotland and England, coming together for an act of worship and reconciliation at Flodden.

If you'd like to be involved in helping with the organisation of this pilgrimage, which will be open to the public, please contact Jean Watson:
jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org



The newsy bit



Geoff and Joan Boston are delighted to announce the safe arrival of our beautiful granddaughter Edith Joan Callaghan, daughter to Ruth and Ainsley. She was born at home, on Thursday 14th July at 5:09am weighing 8lbs5oz. All

is well and Frances loves her little sister!

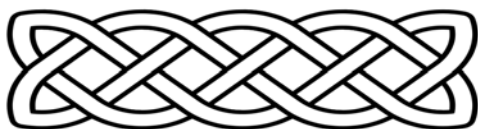
Pauline & Maurice Johnson celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on 30th July - by providing a buffet for the Derbyshire Group!



Two Friends from just north of Bristol, Stephanie Hall and Martin Green, finally tied the knot on May 7th and became Mr & Mrs Green!

The service was held at Chipping Sodbury Baptist Church and Roy spoke at the service on the theme 'No longer alone, but together'; We send best wishes and many congratulations to Martin & Steph!.

Deborah Vipperman and Christine Robertson were welcomed as Companions in Community, during a special trip to Toronto Island. Cathy Hutcheon has written about their day on page 11.



Community Groups

The Sedbergh group is to be incorporated into the **North West group** which is meeting quarterly and is coordinated by Di & Vince Smith dianesmith1@mac.com

People are looking to start groups in south & west **Wales** - contact rodney@bbmax.co.uk or sue.powell7@ntworld.com - and also in **Ayrshire**, and **Orpington** - contact the Community office.

The **Toronto** area now has 4 different groups

Next year's weekend at Nether Springs for existing and prospective **Community Group Leaders** will be **20 - 22 January**.

Jill Drury and Mark Havers would like to invite Companions and Friends to an informal Sunday Lunch in Durham on 6th November, the 4th December and 8th January (and if successful after these three, the first Sunday of the month every month!) starting at 1pm.

Our address is Browney House, Quarry House Lane, Durham DH1 4JA. We are 5 minutes walk from Neville's Cross in Durham City. Children are particularly welcome - we have a big garden suitable for football and a separate space for those who prefer the PS3!

If you would like to come, then just let us know. If you can give us at least 48 hours notice, that would be great. There will always be a vegetarian option and we are happy to do child friendly food too. Our phone number is 0191 3963019 and our e-mail address is druryhavers@hotmail.com

We look forward to seeing you!



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Nether Springs, Croft Cottage, Acton Home Farm, Felton, Morpeth, Northumberland NE65 9NU

Tel: 01670 787645 email: office@northumbriacommunity.org

Caim Editors: Jeff Sutheran & Ingrid Cumming

email: caim@northumbriacommunity.org