

CAIM The Northumbria Community Newsletter

Issue No 8
Spring 1999

CAIM is the Celtic word meaning encompassment or encircling. This newsletter goes out to all those who are within our circle; our Community Companions and Friends, plus those who have asked to be placed on our mailing list.

WHY DANCE? – Reflections on a journey

Anne and Derek Marr of Newcastle, write movingly and powerfully on their experience of dance.

Gerard Hughes in his book 'Oh God, Why?' writes about prayer as a 'centring' or 'focus' of our whole being on God - feelings, emotions, imagination, fears, each event and circumstance - nothing is beyond the boundary within which God's presence can be discovered. God is both limitless and inextricably woven with our own being. To be still and to focus all your being into the present moment, to be fully present in that moment, is to free the space God needs within you to 'speak' with you. We do not 'come' to God in prayer, or 'invite' him in - for God, the Lord of all creation, is already there. We simply need to divert our attention from the clutter in our minds and be fully open to God's healing, changing presence.

Sometimes things feel too dark or fearful to bear; it is easier to blank them out, anaesthetise the pain, distract ourselves from the situation, and feel resentful that God has abandoned us. Yet if we are willing to enter fully into the present moment, instead of avoiding it, we will find that God is there. Jesus' whole life and ministry was a pointing to God's presence. "Do not be afraid - I am with you" are some of the most frequent verses in the Bible.

Sometimes everything is fine and we don't need God. Scripture leaves us unmoved and unchanged for we have not taken the words into our own present moments and heard God speaking to us there. Often it takes misfortune or pain to remind us of our need for God. But in the turmoil of noise, within our desperation we fail to hear the 'still small voice' of Emmanuel, God-with-us.

'You have turned my lamentation into dancing: You have put off my sackcloth and girded me with joy.'

So says the psalmist (Psalm 30:11). Here is witness to the God who brings change into his people's lives. God's healing presence is revealed amidst the pain and sorrow. The Lord of the dance invites us to step onto the dance floor of creation, to discover our potential, to lay down our self pity and to feel the liberating breath of change as he teaches us new steps.

How often with a heavy heart, - burdened and wearied, anxious and distracted by too many commitments, - do we turn up, half reluctantly, for rehearsals? Always, someone

can't arrive until later, someone needs to leave early and someone can't get there at all. The group is invariably a random selection of the whole. There is never enough time to rehearse to the standard we desire, nor is there time to pray and reflect adequately on what we are doing. What a bleak picture - yet a fair reflection of how life is!

We get involved in the building of a dance, working to a vision that is emerging. We learn new moves and how to hold a shape before it flows on into another expression. Skills are limited and our efforts may reduce us to helpless laughter. (God's at work already - our feelings of dejection are finding a lighter side). We work on.

Then may come the moment - often fleeting, at times sustained, when there is a profound change. The world seems to stay still - dancers and observers together are caught up in an energy which is not of their making. An energy which is intensely unifying yet uniquely from within each person present. The moment when you know the dance is inspired - it 'works' - it has its own integrity - a dimension which does not depend on skills and perfection (sometimes quite the opposite) but simply on a willing heart to respond to the God of creation within. A dimension which emerges from the touching place Christ makes with each of us. At that moment, the dancer is totally focussed on the shape and movement being created - every joint and muscle, nerve and fragment of energy is concentrated on 'being' that created moment. There is no self-consciousness, no awareness of skill, for the dancer is liberated, caught up in the divine dance - the dance of the Creator creating. This partnership is prayer at its most intense - a discovery of being physically, mentally, spiritually, wholly in God, totally engaged in the present moment.

Such moments are not common in rehearsal and may only be felt by one or two dancers; for them a personal barrier has broken down, maybe painfully, and the dance has become a touching place of change. On those rarer occasions, when the dance unites all who are engaged, including those who observe, then the effect is powerful. Sometimes we call it the 'tingle factor'. Sometimes we say nothing, the

silence speaks. We have come to value these moments, like a reassuring old teddy bear, for this is the signal that God can touch people through this dance. If we offer the dance to the best of our ability, as our prayer with and on behalf of others, then they too will be within touching distance.

Margaret Stevens, who taught the St Michael's dancers at Coventry Cathedral writes, "It is costly to dance in church - or anywhere else for that matter. You are vulnerable because in your movements you are revealing yourself in a way that you can hide in speech, writing, painting or music. I think it is this vulnerability which touches people quite deeply, both those who see the dance and those who take part in it. And this willingness to be vulnerable is what begins to change you"

When we are asked to offer dance in worship, we can only do so by offering our inadequacy and vulnerability. It is our experience that God's quiet touch reaches people more effectively through vulnerability than through skill. I recall a service in which two women danced a simple healing song. One was young, graceful, gifted and visibly moved by the words. The other was middle aged and disabled; it was the first time she had ever danced and she shadowed the younger woman. To witness the joy in her face and through her whole body was the most challenging experience - there was not a dry eye in the church. Nor was there need for words in the ensuing silence which enfolded us all. Prayer was complete.

"I can't understand how it is that dance touches people's hearts so. And in a way I do not want to understand it because I believe there should always be some mystery. And people cry when they are touched by it. They are so involved. Let it remain a mystery."

Such moments mark the points of change in our spiritual journeys - when our darkness discovers the sun, when our mask is laid aside, when our feet are freed from the mud, when our pain finds a peaceful place to rest and our moment of vulnerability becomes our liberation. New life is birthed.

'You have turned my lamentation into dancing: You have put off my sackcloth and girded me with joy.'

A visit to old Altars

Amund Karner of Aberdeen writes

How can you begin to describe the beauty of the Orkney Isles? Places where mankind was working on sundials at the same time as the Egyptians were making piles of lego blocks into simple pyramid shapes. The Orkney islands have history going back as far as this, and there is still much to see of it all today. You can get really close to the old stones and still feel the atmosphere of the place, as it must have been then.

There are stone circles in several places, the Ring of Brodgar being the most famous, but there are many other stones still standing from the ancient times. Indeed legend has it that the Stone o' Quoybune goes down to the loch to drink on New Year's morn. Unfortunately the other stones are not as active as this one, so they are just standing stones. For those of you who don't believe me, shame on you - and I have a replica of such a standing stone (I know it is a real standing stone for it has feet 'to stand on!').

There are two old church sites which struck me in particular. They reminded me of the stonework in the beehive cells, found in Ireland. These buildings were made in the same way, with the same type of stone, used to make an altar to God. The churches were small, not much larger than the chapel at the Nether Springs, but the feeling of history was there. The first I went to was the Brough of Birsay, which was across a tidal walkway. This place was of great significance at the time of Magnus, Earl of Orkney. It was the seat of the Bishop for many years, and was where in approx. 101 AD that Magnus was first brought after his death. It reminded me of Holy Island, with the walk across and the monument to a faith over 1000 years old, still there. The other place was the Brough of Deerness, more off the tourist track, but still worth the walk to get there. This was a monastic settlement but only the church has been excavated and rebuilt, although you can still see the outline of the houses. This settlement on the end of a peninsula was once connected to the rest of the island. Now you have to go down to the sea and back up again, about 100 feet in order to get to the settlement, because time and sea have eroded away the connection. However, it is still something really special to be there and to be able to say Office in a place which has a history of prayer going back over 800 years.

I was left with the question, 'Is what I was doing part of what we mean in the Community by raising up the broken altars and walking again the sacred paths? Is it sim-

ply to visit and pray at the old sites or is it something more? What do you think? It would be good to hear through the pages of CAIM what this phrase means to other folk in the Community.

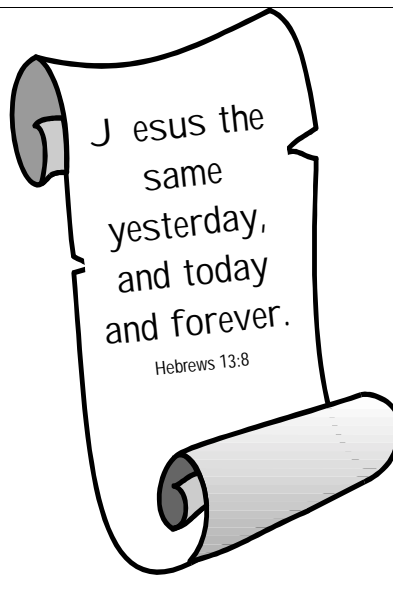
New Recording

Jeff Sutheran

For some time now we have wanted to see a new recording of our Daily Office, in order to respond to the many requests we receive for such material either individually or following our Community Team visiting and/or leading worship. We



want to make available to folk something of lasting value, which they can purchase from the Nether Springs or from Cloisters. Well, the good news is, it's actually happening! As this edition of CAIM goes to press, we are putting the plans in place and the new recording should be available very soon. The CD will contain Morning, Midday and Evening Office, both spoken and sung, along with the seven Orders of Compline from Celtic Night Prayer.



EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Spring edition of CAIM. Let me remind readers that it is simply a newsletter, nothing more. An in house publication specifically addressed to Companions and Friends and those folk beginning to take an interest in the vision and vocation of the Northumbria Community. Its main purpose is to respond to a much expressed need for better communications in a dispersed Community. It follows that it is not primarily a spiritual journal, although as our front page article testifies, material will be included that challenges the soul. Nor is it a theological tract, so that the sinister suspicions of one reader about the number of times the name of Jesus is used in CAIM (or not used in his case) is totally missing the point! Yes, there will be articles, references and updates relating to our life, vision and vocation and therefore will often allude to the Desert/Celtic spirituality that continues to inspire and inform us, but only because this is expressive of that which undergirds our life being lived. The fact that Jesus is Lord of every aspect of our Community and that He is the Way to God, the Truth about God and the Life in God is simply taken as read. CAIM is the principal means of communicating information, happenings and news updates to a Community widely dispersed geographically. We have no other comparable vehicle that is able to keep the wider Community informed about important issues and developments which effect all who have embraced our Way for Living. A good example of this has been the commitment to putting our house in order and tackling the sensitive but hugely important areas of Community Formation and Finance. Early responses have been very favourable as many of you have recognised afresh that to seriously embrace a Way for Living, effects every aspect of our lives including the financial implications. We need a much stronger support base as our present dire financial situation is extremely stressful and simply can't continue on and on. In relation to Formation we want to strongly encourage those who wish to continue as Companions to let us know that this is the case, without exception. Only then will we have an accurate understanding of who is with us on the journey God has called us to walk Alone/Together. Better communication is a two way dynamic. So let us hear from you so we can better reflect what is happening right across the Community family.



Journey of life

An occasional series of articles adapted from Bible Readings notes by Bob & Chris Ainsley of Derby

Often we think that our journey doesn't seem to be progressing very quickly! We started with good intentions, but someone turned the lights out, our path seemed to be more wiggly, more hilly, stonier than anyone else's. In fact, it would seem that many of our Christian friends have now arrived at a river and have boarded a pleasure boat. They seem to be having a good time anyway. What's left for me? Surely not *that* damp old rowing boat in the weeds? If He is truly our heart's desire, then we can never be satisfied until we stop struggling and humbly take the road which is signposted for us. If our desire is to know the Heart of God so as to pray for our friends and neighbours, then we must be prepared to go the way which will soften our hearts, to have His compassion and weep with His tears. When our road seems rough and steep, hidden in mists or darkness, and we become tired, weary and downcast, then let us stop for a rest by the wayside and remember our journey so far. For we have actually travelled further than we first thought. Our travelling began not with our decision to move closer to God, but His love which does not treat our sins as we deserve – with the Cross. The process of being made new can often follow a path of pain. How do we pray when it hurts? How do we bless the Lord along with the hosts of heaven? Sometimes we need to widen our vision, away from ourselves, for as soon as we put ourselves in the centre of the world our vision becomes dangerously narrowed. We get so wrapped up in today's difficulties that we choose to forget the very fact of our great salvation and we start seeking after so called solutions rather than the Father's heart. *Jesus, you are changing me, as I let You reign supreme within my heart.* One thing we can be sure of - When God starts something, He will finish it properly. He does not begin a work in us and then go off elsewhere to start on someone else. He doesn't put us on His operating table, and then leave us in mid-operation. Yes, it might feel like that sometimes, but it is not what is actually happening. *The Lord will fulfil His purpose for me*



Your Word is a lamp
to my feet and a light
for my path.

Psalms 119:105

The Chronicles of St Boswald

Professor Snodric of the Ancient University of Chatton concludes his remarkable insights.

In the wild north far beyond the Watford Gap lies the ancient kingdom of Northumbria. Of course, nobody goes to Northumbria except by accident or, once they have been, they never go back again. The reason is very simple; Northumbria is bleaker than anywhere else in the world (except Scotland). In the north the sun hardly shines at all and, all in all, it's a desperate place. Little surprise then that the Celtic monks felt at home.

On the fringe of the known world lay Whitby, where there was a monastery. Near to this monastery lived a man called Cavemon. The Vegetable Bede reports that Cavemon had sung in the church choir with such a sweet, angelic voice that hardened drinkers would contemplate a life of sobriety and accountants felt moved to honesty. Alas the onset of puberty brought hairs to Cavemon's chest and a squeak to his voice. He thence descended into gruffness and was expelled from the choir for shouting "the Vikings are coming" at inappropriate moments during church services.

In later years, Cavemon was fond of visiting Whitby Abbey. He would don a habit and generally loll about the place as if he was entitled to be there. However he always made sure that he left at the end of the meal before it was time to do the washing up. At the end of the meal, the monks had an odd custom of passing a harp to one another as a psalm was being sung. Whoever could not remember the words whilst holding the harp was obliged to wash out the porridge vat (a grisly task).

One evening Cavemon slipped from the table as usual, and retired to a stable hoping to have a crafty smoke and a sip of the Abbot's best mead. Suddenly he was confronted by an angelic impresario who asked him to sing. Unsure as to what was required, Cavemon launched into a rousing chorus of that well known Celtic hymn "My old man's a dustman". The visitor gasped and went to find the abbot, who realised that Cavemon was that rare spiritual beast - a modest tenor and quickly signed him up on a contract with lots of small print. And so it was that Cavemon's ministry flourished. Whenever the Vikings were expected, local visitors could hire Cavemon. The Vikings would beach their ships, expecting looting and generally anti-social behaviour, but what they got

was a full orchestra and that angelic voice. One stanza of "oh your tiny hand is frozen" and even the toughest beserker would be stopped in his tracks; remember his dear mother, and sob his heart out. Alas the Chronicles of King Boswald do not record how good Cavemon really was. Suffice it to say that on the day that he minted his last golden note, the melody started to fade from the Celtic church. The beat however went on.

Community Weekends at Nether Springs

All those interested in the Northumbria Community – exploring its life, ethos, vision and vocation - should come to a Community Weekend. These are held most months throughout the year at the Nether Springs, providing an opportunity to experience being together, share in our history, and explore the Way of Life – Availability and Vulnerability – embraced by our dispersed Community. Details of all these weekends and other Retreats (including booking forms) are available in our current programme which is available from the Community Office. Please send an SAE (A5) if you require a copy.

Beware of the Abbot

Hugh Bar-



"I'll have you know my penance's are a sight worse than yours!"

CELTIS IN THE CLASSROOM

Vicki Michael of Sherburn writes

Only three years into the noble profession of teaching; wading through league tables, wrestling with changing curriculum's and meeting children damaged beyond my comprehension, one question continually plagues me; 'How do I bring who I am and who I believe in, into the lives of the 150 + children I cross paths with each day?'

In the past year Our Father has used the Community to release the answers into the heart of my classroom. I am learning to marry the sacred and the secular. The journey began in training. It was never enough to teach pupils English. They need empathy, sympathy and the healing love of Christ.

The solution began with a story at Greenbelt 98. I can't even remember who told it but she told how her sister had put her body between the teller and her Father's fists. A story belongs to the teller, it springs from the soul and can not be contradicted. I pondered this in my heart for a long time.

At Christmas I invited the children to tell their own stories. Stacey wept as she showed us a ring which belonged to a grandmother who would never spend another Christmas with her family. Simon smashed a mug as he reinacted his divorced parent's annual row which he dreads every year. Nobody got 'saved' that day, although some children talked about their own journeys with God. It was real! Their stories released something in all of us. I await His new initiatives in this coming year.

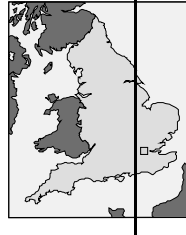
Significant places on the Celtic Arc

It would be extremely helpful if any Community Companions or Friends who plan to holiday this Summer in places associated with the Celtic Arc, could collect brochures, information and photographs of their visit and perhaps send a copy of them to the Community Office. We could then compile a dossier for general use to the Community in the future. All such information would be gratefully received. We are thinking in particular of Ireland, Wales, the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland, Cornwall as well as France, Spain, Italy and SW Turkey.

Meridian Millennium Way Pilgrimage

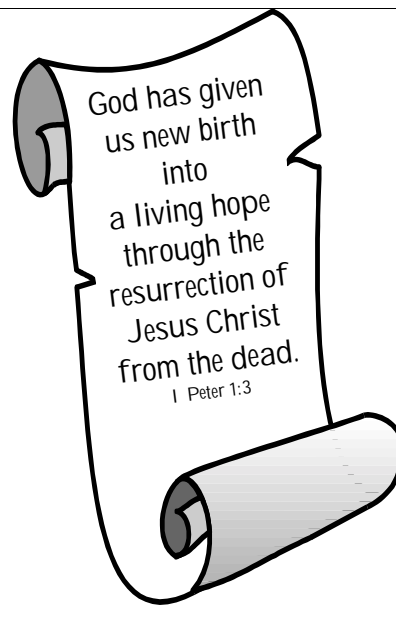
We are pleased to endorse this important pilgrimage initiated by David Pott of the Fountain Gate Community, London with whom we have strong links.

As the new millennium dawns, the meridian line (the line running at zero longitude from the North to the South Poles) is becoming a central focus of celebrations, particularly where it passes through Greenwich, from where time is measured. The MMWP is seeking to establish a new 260 mile signed walking route along the Meridian Line from Cleethorpes to Peacehaven. The aim is for the route to also form a modern day "pilgrimage" for walkers to



help prepare body, mind and spirit for the millennium. An unusual feature for walkers will be crossing and recrossing the meridian line over 200 times. The project will give strong emphasis to the other nations which lie on the Meridian line - France, Spain, and the African nations of Algeria, Mali, Burkina Faso, Togo and Ghana. It will also work closely with schools, churches and community groups to both plan the route and also engage in Fundraising activities for the African Meridian line nations. If you would like to get involved or receive information please write to:-

The MMWP, 58 Geoffrey Road, London, SE4 1NT. Tel 0181 692 8271 or email jerry.whitehead@virgin.net



CLOISTERS New Developments

Ian Corsie

There are a number of changes afoot in the Community's trading organisation. From April, Roy will be the Community leader overseeing this work, which will be headed up by Ian Corsie (following his recent arrival, together with Joy, to live near Ancroft) and Nancy Hammond, assisted by Carey Miller. Ian brings his experience of running a small publishing company (Pitkin Guides, publishers of the Community's 'Celtic Saints') and the change releases Jeff Sutherland to concentrate much more on developing the Community's music and on his more centralised administrative responsibilities. To integrate the company even more closely with the life of the Community, the offices of both are co-located in Hetton Hall with (at present) the same telephone and fax numbers. The mail order business (Cloisters) will be developed and enlarged, with a credit card payment facility and a wider range of product. Northumbria Music, under Jeff, will produce Community music on CD and in sheet form for sale through Cloisters; and Northumbria Publishing, under Ian, will develop booklets of Community material for sale through Cloisters as well as working with major publishers to project what the Community has to say to a much wider marketplace. There is a particular need for experienced typographical designers, editors and proof-readers to assist Ian: If you are able to help, please contact him on 01289 387257 or at ian-corsie@bigfoot.com. And if you have really good photography related to the Community, its activities and the local Northumberland area, and are willing to make it available for publication use without charge, please also let Ian know.

Anamchara Soul Friends

The series of Led Retreats held at the Nether Springs under the general title of Anamchara - Soul Friends, have proven to be very helpful to many. Led by Anna Raine with help from husband Andy and Amund Karner, they have been at times over booked. The next two weekend dates on this subject are: **July 9-11 - Making Changes** **Aug 20-22 - Availability/Vulnerability**. Why not make sure of your place by booking now for these important weekends at the Nether Springs.

The Meditations of an Incompetent Goose

Helen Mace, an Episcopalian Priest and Community Companion. She divides her time between Yorkshire and Charlottesville, Virginia.

If it was good for St. Cuthbert, would it also serve for me? I refer to meditating in the company of eider ducks; and also waist deep in the North Sea. I am in Virginia, closer to the Appalachians than the Atlantic; but we do have a pond and for the last twenty springs two geese have returned to nest beside it. The bottom half of the pond is soft mud of small spiritual content; but the geese are co-operative. They know their names, Cnuc for the gander, Nepe the goose, and they know that there is an inexhaustible supply of corn on the porch.

Half in self-mockery I wondered if they might develop into soul friends. Then their eggs hatched and Nicki came into my life. He was the smallest of their clutch, a gosling whose feet hadn't developed properly when he was hatched. After that each morning (well most of them) I sat near the other geese with my Bible open and Nicki hobbled, tumbled and later, ran round my feet and ignored his siblings.

The geese taught me what the Psalmist knew; that God is both masculine and feminine. *"Under the shadow of thy wing I will sing thy praises"* can only be spoken to a female bird. I would watch as Nepe raised her wing, and the little goslings gathered under it and with loud and happy cheeps declared their contentment and so sang her praises. I also observed Cnuc' watchfulness. He stood like a warrior, vigilant; alert for any threat that walked or flew; and with a different alarm call for each. *"He who watches over you will not sleep.. The Lord himself watches over you, the Lord himself is your shade."* (Ps 121) Had a Psalmist watched a pair of geese and learned from them something of God's vigilant care? There is more to learn too.

The wise old gander's care co-exists with a sense of security. He is a creature of God's hand. Despite his vigilance there is no fear in his demeanour. He stands in a world he feels is good.

Unfortunately as my opinion of Cnuc increased, his of me diminished. "She has charge of a gosling so presumably she is some sort of goose, and clearly a very incompetent one. There she is sitting with her eyes shut when there is a Broadwinged Hawk within sight." He honked till my eyed opened.

When Nicki swam off and got lost, Cnuc found him and pointed like a hunting dog until I had disentangled the peeping ball of fluff from the briar patch. When Nicki walked too far away from me Cnuc saw,

walked to the far side of him and gently herded him back, not towards the other goslings but to me! I pondered the goodness of God in delegating responsibility to us even when we have shown incompetence.

So the geese taught me a little of their wisdom and eventually trusted me enough to leave their family in my charge whilst they took time off together, swimming, bathing, diving; rejoicing in all the qualities of water their goslings had scarcely discovered yet.

That was on our last morning together. It was clear by now that Nicki had psychological problems. He did not know he was a goose and he probably thought he was an Episcopalian priest (like me). This would not do! We organised residential group therapy for him, taking him to the local Wild Life Hospital where he was placed with a number of other foundlings who slowly learnt from each other the nature of goosedness. Last Fall (Autumn) he was taken to a new pond and a fully goose life.

As for me; I know the experience enriched me. Some of what I learned I can translate into words; although much of it I cannot. The possibilities of a change in pace to more natural rhythms and of temperament into an inner security, these have simply to be lived out. And in my heart there is a slightly greater understanding of the spirituality known to St. Cuthbert: quietness under open skies, in the company God sends.

Working at the Nether Springs

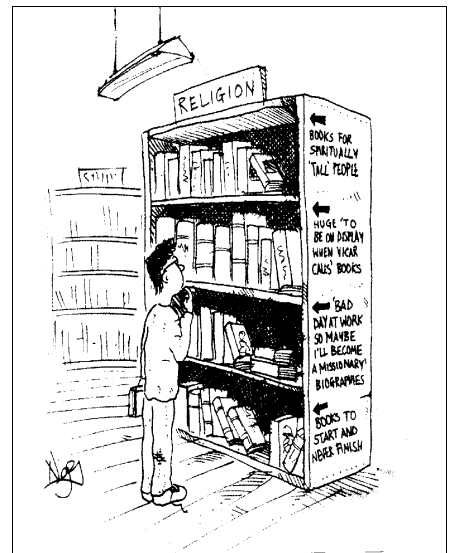
We want to encourage all Community Companions to consider taking the opportunity of working at the Nether Springs for a week at a time throughout the year. Starting on a Monday evening through to the following Sunday afternoon. Full board and lodging, hard work and good fun. As we can't take more than one or two additional helpers at any given time, it will be on a first come, first served basis. All applications addressed to Freda Miller at the Nether Springs please.

BOOK REVIEW

Lorna Fisher

One of the books currently being talked about at Nether Springs as a 'must' read is a novel entitled **'Desert Ascent'** – or a brief history of Eternity' by Simon Parke.

The author, an Anglican Priest in London, has written for Spitting Image and is also a speaker at Greenbelt. It comes as no surprise then to find that the Bishop of Hull describes the book as an 'original,' and the author as a 'wordsmith with the wit of Clive James and the insight of Henri Nouwen.' What a combination! It is indeed a very challenging book as to 'How then shall we live? It forces us to re-examine priorities and to look again at how the preoccupations of the mind and the weaknesses of the soul can distort our understanding of God's love and grace. He does this with superb cynicism and deep understanding of the human heart. It is so easy to identify with some of the leading characters. Ted the Yes, who can't bring himself to say 'No' to anything and thus causes great havoc in relationships. Peter the Fool, who tells the story and is anything but a fool. He is filled with rye wisdom learned in the desert. Carol, whose story is the main thrust of the book. Very thought provoking and it leaves you with the desire to re-read it again in order to glean from its undoubted wisdom.



BOOK AMNESTY

As we have many library books particularly from the reference section at Nether Springs currently unreturned, would it be possible for you to check whether or not you have overlooked any such books, and if so could you please return them. We would be very grateful.

DIARY DATES

The following are some of the important events the Community will be involved in this year.

Breaking down the walls,

healing the wounds
Friday 19th March, 12.00 – 2.00. With a Buffet lunch provided. To be held in the Library of the Religious Studies Dept. Armstrong Building, Newcastle University. An opportunity to hear Dr David Porter of ECONI talk about developments and in the Northern Ireland Peace Process. Organised by the Community in association with Newcastle University. A free-will offering will be taken for the work of ECONI.

Community Gatherings

LITCHFIELD. Saturday 8th May 11.00am until 4.00 pm at Lichfield Cathedral.

LONDON. Saturday 12th June 11am – 4.00pm. at Fountain Gate Community, 58, Geoffrey Road, Brockley, London. SE4 1NT Tel. Dave, Pam or Louise on 0181 6928271.

YORK. Saturday 3rd July 11am - 4.00pm. St Bede's Centre Tel. Gayle or Sian. 01904 610466

NEW COUNCIL
Community Council and Trustees Meetings at Nether Springs.
Sat 5th - Sun 6th June.

Greenbelt Arts Festival,

CHELTENHAM
Thurs 29th July – Sun 1st August
The Community will have a large team and a significant input at this year's Festival. We will be involved with the music, worship, prayer, storytelling, and need Community folk to join us. If you would like to be a part of things, please let us know asap.

Imagining Tomorrow

CAMBRIDGE. This conference will be held at Queens' College.
Mon 13th – Wed 15th September.

Vocation and Vision
Mon. 11th – Sat 16th October.
[more details of this Tour in the next edition of CAIM.]

Walking Cuthbert's Way

Cathy Turton of Thormanby, reports on her experience of this led retreat at Nether Springs.

Preparation.

Cuthbert? Not one of my favourite saints. I'd always regarded him harshly. Accepting the Bishopric, then deserting it for the Fame islands; preferring a ministry with animals to people; having a resting place in a grand Cathedral. No, Cuthbert was not my idea of a saintly role model. Nevertheless I read Bede's accounts of Cuthbert's life, and the more user-friendly versions from Robert Van de Weyers 'Celtic Fire'. In this book I discovered that we had one thing in common, when I read that Cuthbert defends the restless sleeper He writes about himself that "Nobody can annoy me by waking me up, on the contrary I am pleased because, by driving away sleep, he enables me to do something useful." Amen to that! Perhaps Cuthbert could become the patron saint of early risers. A thought dedicated to Lorna, Rob, James and fellow visitors to Hetton Hall who meet before dawn by the Aga.

The Journey.

As the train passed Durham, where Cuthbert's body and relics are laid and then later passed Lindisfarne, the place dearest to his heart, I looked forward to learning from this man for whom I thus far had scant respect. Does anyone else panic on approaching Berwick? I begin to wonder, 'What am I doing here?' but the warmth of the chauffeur's greeting and later of those already at Hetton Hall soon dispel my apprehension.

The Weekend.

So many memories. The wonderful scenery through the Borders, as we followed

the river Tweed, which was new territory for me. Midday prayer at Melrose Abbey. Roy tactfully reminding us the Lord's prayer ends at 'deliver us from evil', in order to save us the embarrassment of showing a lack of familiarity with Midday Office. On the (few) occasions I do participate in Midday office I am transported back to Melrose. Warm fellowship on the walk. Everyone helping each other. Quality time with God. Primroses everywhere, so that the sight of primroses will always now remind me of this time alone/together. Getting soaked at Cuthbert's Cave, using the Cuthbert liturgy from Celtic Night Prayer. Where were the others to warm us up? Getting soaked (again) next morning on Lindisfarne, while sharing Morning Office with Andy and the community there. Then there was the time together at Berwick station as GNER let us down. More fellowship and fun as we devised ways to while away the time.

Reflection.

'Walking Cuthbert's way' was a humbling and heartening experience. Thank you to all who organised it and shared it with me.

P.S. As I passed Durham on the way home, I repented of my dislike for Cuthbert. Jealousy? Arrogance? Intolerance? Yes, I acknowledged them too!

Opportunities for Pilgrimage

Ervin Dörschler

As reported in the Winter 1998 edition of CAIM, there are many opportunities for Pilgrimage with the Northumbria Community in the coming months. We still have places on all the Pilgrimages, but if you wish to book for "The Saint's Way" in Wales or the Western Isles, your response will obviously need to be prompt as the closing date for these is 1st of April.

Here is a full list of the Pilgrimages on offer:

The Saint's Way	North Wales	May 15 th - 22 nd	£250
Western Isles	Scotland	May 29 th - June 7 th	£350
St Brendan's Way	Dingle - Ireland	July 3 rd - 11 th	£300
Footsteps of St. Patrick	N.Ireland	July 24 th - 31 st	£300
The Shannon River	Southern Ireland	Aug 28 th - Sept 4 th	£250
St Cuthbert's Way	Northumberland	Sept 11 th - 18 th	£300

There is also the opportunity to stay at **Arfeuilles in France** - August 7th to 14th. This will not be a led pilgrimage, but an opportunity to spend time in the heart of France.

We also have our regular pilgrimages:

- 1) **Heavenfield** on the 6th of August - St. Oswald's day (Just turn up around 10.30 am with a packed lunch.)
- 2) **St Aidan's Day** (31st of August) Pilgrimage to **Holy Island** leaving the Nether Springs at 10 am (Come prepared to walk the Pilgrims Way and bring a packed lunch.)

For further details or bookings, please contact the Community Office
Tel: 01289 388235

Listening to God

Amund Karner of Aberdeen continues his thoughts in letter form on the subject of listening to God.

Dear Judith,

As you know listening to God is difficult for all of us. In my own experience I have found that if I am doing a mundane job, like washing the dishes, I can be aware of God and do pray. However, if I am busy with my mind it becomes much harder. One helpful thing that I discovered a couple of years ago was getting into the rhythm of saying a very short prayer often. This, I found, was something I could do while standing in a queue, or while waiting at a traffic light, or something similar. It was amazing how often there are moments like this where you can do this kind of praying, but what is stranger still, is that the prayer now starts to rise up by itself as I am in places where I can pray like this. It is a very good way of praying, and quite adaptable. Another thing that works for me is the discipline of the daily Office. The Midday Office was designed to be easily memorable, and could be said in the time it takes for a kettle to boil. Yes, short as it is, even the taking of 2 minutes out to spend time with God is recognised as valid. Just sitting still for a few moments, and taking the phone off the hook is something I'm sure will be allowed, even in the busiest of offices. I also find it helpful to take time to review the day, simply allowing things to spring to mind, whether they be good or bad. It may be the big row I had with the boss or even something as small as the smile from the seller of the Big Issue on the street. These incidents are ones that I can be aware of and that I can give thanks for - or at least offer back to God. Then I look at one in particular, perhaps at the emotions that were being stirred. In these incidents I try to discern the direction to which I was being drawn or led, seeking to understand what God was doing in that incident? There are no 'wrong' choices, as God is trying to show you something in each and every incident of the day. Each will reveal a further facet of his activity towards you. Look for the direction that you are being drawn, or are you being dragged by circumstances into a course of action that you don't want to follow? Try to distinguish the times when you are being driven and the ones you are being drawn. Wisdom says that God will draw you willingly into new things, whereas the enemy will seek to drive you away from the real good that you could be doing. Hope this helps,

Love Amund.

Easter Workshop Programme At the Nether Springs

Thursday 1st April - Sunday 4th April 1999

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the Word of Life." I John 1:1

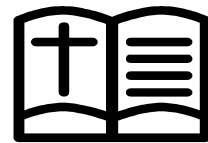
Maundy Thursday

- 4.00 Arrivals
- 6.00 Buffet meal
- 7.15 Eucharist and Foot-washing
- 9.30 Compline



Good Friday

- 8.00 Breakfast
- 9.30 Morning office
- 10.30 Teaching/workshop. [children and adults]
- 12.00 Midday office
- 1.00 Lunch
- 2.30 Stations of the Cross pilgrimage to Cuthbert's Cave
- 6.00 Shabbat meal
- 7.15 Evening office
- 9.30 Compline



Holy Saturday

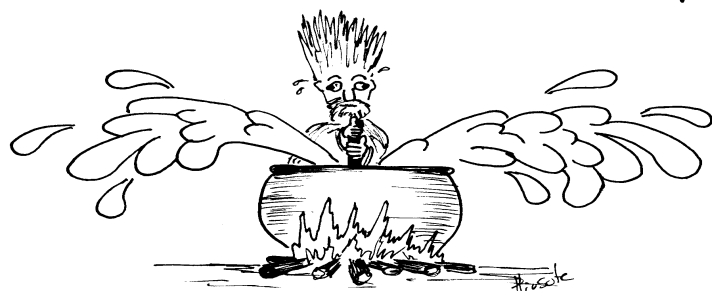
- 8.00 Breakfast
- 9.30 Morning office
- 10.30 Teaching/Workshops [children and adults]
- 12.00 Midday office
- 1.00 Lunch
- 3.00 Free time
- 6.00 Meal
- 7.15 Evening office
- 9.30 Easter Vigil - Telling the story - John's gospel
- 11.30 Midnight Eucharist

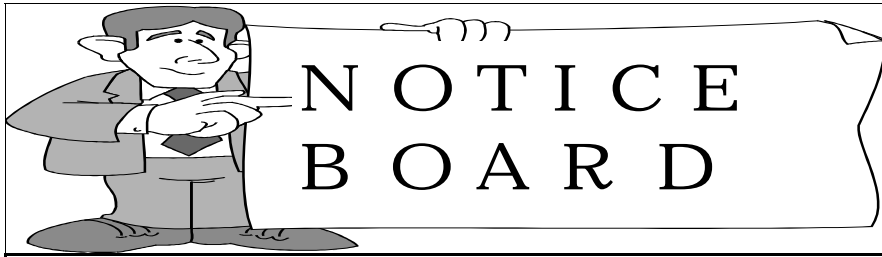
Easter Sunday

- 10.00 Holy Island. [Safe crossing 8.49 a.m. - 4.00 p.m.]
- 10.30 Easter Day Worship at St. Mary's, Holy Island
- 12.00 Midday office at St. Aidan's statue, followed by prayer and dance in Priory.
- 1.00 Lunch at village hall.
- 2.00 Renewal of Yes to Community Vows on Cuthbert's Isle
- 5.00 Tea at Nether Springs
- 7.00 Ceilidh at North Sunderland*

We look forward to seeing many of you for part or for the whole of Easter Workshop. Accommodation at Nether Springs is limited and is on a first come first served basis. The teaching sessions and the work-

Moses shouldn't have used his rod to stir the soup !!.





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

Heidi Dörschler of Buckfastleigh has recently gained her degree in Physical Theatre. She has also announced her engagement to Jonno Smith and plans to marry in the Autumn.

James Hawes of Hetton and **Sally Buckley** who has recently become part of the resident Community at Nether Springs were engaged over the Christmas holidays and plan to marry at Doddington on May 29th this year, with a reception at Nether Springs. They will live at 4 Hetton Hall Cottages.

Bill and Theo Clementson of Newton Aycliffe became proud grandparents just before Christmas when their daughter Nicola gave birth to Yeva Esther who weighed in at 7lbs 9oz.

Norma Charlton of Gateshead has become the person responsible for co-ordinating the Community Groups. This important area of Community development is to be given a high priority and it is hoped that many Companions and Friends now feeling somewhat isolated will be linked up in the near future.

Andy Colledge of Leeds has astounded everyone at the Nether Springs with his all round skills in building and decorating. His ongoing placement courtesy of our friends at Moortown Baptist Church has yielded much fruit as any recent visitor to Nether Springs will have appreciated.

Miriam Sayer from Tasmania has recently undergone surgery for breast cancer. Although early indications are good, and she is in good heart, she needs our prayers and good wishes. Why not write to her at L'Arche, 40 Pirie Crescent, Newtown, Tasmania 7008.

We would also ask the Community to continue to pray for **John and Jacqui Peet** of Stratford as John battles against cancer.

As many of you know **Roy Searle** has been dogged with back trouble for some time. Pray that following the extensive tests at Dunfermline Hospital in March, greater understanding of the appropriate ongoing treatment will be forthcoming.

Please continue to pray for 2 year old Isaac Matthews who is suffering badly with epilepsy. Pray too for his parents **Ferg and Becky**, for strength and courage.

Congratulations to **Jonathan and Jan Sambrooke** on the birth of their baby daughter Catriona Rose, who weighed in at 7lb 15oz on March 1st, St David's Day.

The Community is sad to report that **Mo Jowett** of Harrogate has died aged 47. This followed a recent brain haemorrhage. Mo had recently worked with Andy Raine on the Motivations material. Pray for Mike, her husband and their children, Sarah and Dan.

'Beyond the Barricades' dance ministry, which for many years was one of the main vehicles for the ministry of **Anne and Derek Marr** of Newcastle is now being led by **Kevin and Oonagh Atkinson** of Hebburn. They can be contacted on 01914 832679. Kevin and Oonagh can also give you information about Springs Family Holiday Week at Wycliffe, near Barnard Castle in August 1999.

MAILING LIST REVIEW

We now send CAIM to 1300 people, all of whom have taken the initiative over the years to ask to be placed on our mailing list. We realise that it is a fact of life that for many an initial interest is not maintained, largely because of commitments to other aspects of the Lord's work. If you are in this category it would greatly help us in so many ways, if you asked to be taken off the mailing list. A note or a phone call to the Community Office would suffice.

Annual Retreat

We want to encourage all our Community Companions and Friends to build into their lives an Annual private retreat at the Nether Springs. This would be a time of reflection, of quiet and waiting upon God with individual direction. Many of you already do this and know its benefits and blessing. Also to participate in one of the many Led Retreats we are running in the coming months, details of which are in the current programme.

Celtic Spirituality for today

What is Celtic Christianity? How do we differentiate between that which is twee romanticism and that which is authentic and real? How can we truly apply the principles of this spirituality to life in the 21st century? If these are questions you would like answered then why not book into the led retreat at the Nether Springs on the weekend of June 11-13 1999. This retreat is entitled ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS and will be led by Liz Culling, an Anglican Priest from Cherry Burton, near Beverley. Liz, a former lecturer at St John's College, Durham, has a deep interest in Celtic Christianity and is the author of the excellent Grove Booklet 'What is Celtic Christianity? The weekend retreat begins with Dinner on the Friday Evening at 6:00pm and ends following Lunch on Sunday. The cost is £60 for the whole weekend, full board. Further details of this and many other retreats are in our current programme available from the Community Office at Nether Springs.

STORYTELLING TOUR

Geoff Boston

Dennis Dewey, a Biblical Storyteller from the USA is to tour parts of the UK from the 12th -23rd May 1999. As well as many performance venues, he will be holding workshops in Gateshead, Oxford and London. For details ring Karen at Open Book Storytellers 01289 388477 or E-Mail thetellingplace@bigfoot.com

THE TELLING PLACE at Easter Workshop

As part of the Community's Easter Workshop this year, we shall be holding an Easter Vigil on the Saturday evening. This will comprise of the telling of John's Gospel in story, leading into a celebration of Eucharist and the lighting of a beacon at midnight.

If you are going to be present at the Easter Workshop and would like to take part in the telling of John's gospel, then please contact the Storyteller's Office at the Nether Springs for details on 01289 388477

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