

# CAIM u i f!Opsui vnscsjb!Dpnnvojuz!Ofx tnfuufs

Issue No 12  
Spring 2000

**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.



## Living as they Preached

Andy Raine of Holy Island reflects on why the interest, influence and impact of Celtic Spirituality continues



Why now, as we have entered a new century and millennium, has there been such a continuing interest in Celtic spirituality, music, communities and theology? One of the main reasons is that Celtic art, artifacts, and music, etc. have an appeal which is intricate and sophisticated, yet still give an overall impression of freshness and simplicity and a deep sense of roots, history and connectedness. These have been marketed by people who not only enjoy their artistry but who also recognise their appeal. The product sells and so is marketed further, re-invented, re-packaged, hyped and re-hyped, but still sells. This seems to be true, right across the board. Commercially, Celtic is IN. People who then discover they enjoy Celtic art or music or jewelry, or whatever, develop an interest in Celtic culture in general (There is nothing extraordinary about this – it is as predictable as lovers of Van Gogh's paintings enjoying the Don McLean song 'Vincent', or people who bought the album 'American Pie' being intrigued by the song Vincent and looking out for Van Gogh prints!

So, the interest in things Celtic is initially fed by a commercially motivated marketing fad. The climate in which this is happening is particular and timely. It is post-modern, post-rationalist and open at last to treat numinous experiences seriously. People are far more likely to ask 'Are you serious?' or 'Is this significant?' than 'Is this true?' Growing numbers of individuals feel a resonance with the Celtic culture they are exposed to and appreciate its rich artistry, depth of significance and rootedness. They are hungry for meaning. Most of these people belong to the generations that are totally unchurched. They see Christianity as a charming but unfortunate relic from previous generations – it is usually something they have continuously dismissed as embarrassing and irrelevant without ever having examined it. A surprise awaits them, for when they examine traditional Celtic writing, arts, customs and belief, they find the

most attractive and accessible elements almost invariably belong to Celtic Christianity – and it makes sense! They find a celebratory faith with a profound respect for all people and all of creation. They find a belief in numinous and supernatural experiences and a sense of the imminent presence of God. They find a quiet understanding of the reality of the communion of saints, an acknowledgement of the insidious subtlety of manifest evil, an absolute faith in the redeeming power of the cross and a determination to acknowledge God in every detail of daily life. They see lives that glow with faith and humorous honesty. What they read



or hear about becomes more and more fascinating. They are drawn to the Christ acknowledged in the Celtic golden age, who can also be seen in the scriptures that the monks spent so long learning and copying and illuminating. But they see little in today's churches which reflects the characteristics of the faith of the Celtic Christians and their long-ago converts. They turn instead to the old stones, prayers and poetry as reliable sources of spiritual nurture.

A similar trend can be observed amongst Christians. Their initial interest in things Celtic may be triggered by a jewelry design, a book, an album cover, a piece of music or whatever, but as they explore a little and for the first time encounter a glimpse of authentic Celtic Christianity of a previous era it astounds them. Here is a Christianity which is alive, Bible-based, rooted in the local indigenous culture, is life-affirming, vital, contagious, comfortable with the miraculous, respectful towards the whole church, but builds in

small units and invests in the lives of individuals. The Celtic church had no concept of congregations or parishes. (Accountability was relational not geographical.) Instead the faith spread through families, tribes and monastic settlements. The missionaries prayed, sang psalms and told stories, and lived exactly as they preached. Looking back at it as we do, it is refreshing to notice that the Celtic branches of the church were remarkably free both of anti-semitism and of the neurotic heresies of Augustine which have so dogged the thinking of so many otherwise Christian people. The Celtic believer acknowledged God in every activity of the day, welcomed Christ in the person of every guest, and prayed for the Spirit's wisdom to lighten their heart and add graciousness to their speech.

Little wonder that many Christians today turn to the 'Celtic' period for an example of how the gospel can be lived. Especially poignant are the glimpses of contrasts between those long-ago Roman and Celtic branches of the church evident in the controversy surrounding the Synod of Whitby or the clash between Augustine of Kent and the Welsh monks.

We are repeatedly reminded that the famous Celtic double monasteries (of men and women) were invariably ruled by a Woman; that Celtic bishops typically lived quietly as part of monastic communities under the rule of an abbot; and that the serious minded Christian would give account of their soul to an anamchara who was probably a lay-person or monastic rather than a priest. The Celtic monks

(continued on page 2)

## Living as they Preached

(continued from page 1)

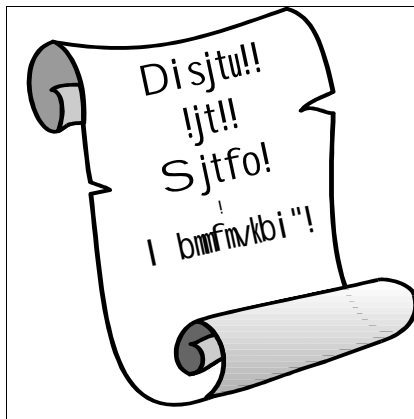
demonstrably drove out occultic druidic practices, but first won over many of the druids who were the spiritual leaders of the people and replaced their shrines with al-

tars to the true and living God. They 'baptised' whatever in local culture was compatible with true discipleship.

In our day there is a profound need for proper study of 'Celtic' Christianity. The Christian press and music trade are busily exploiting the Celtic boom as busily as the occultists and purveyors of witchcraft. We need intelligent and informed appraisal of how things really were. We need to refute attempts to justify contemporary bugbears by anachronistically attaching them to Celtic history. (The Celtic saints were not concerned with *ecology*, for instance, they merely lived in harmony with their surroundings as they happened to be at the time. Arguably Cuthbert or Kevin or Columba would give more attention to evangelism than rainforests were they our contemporaries!)

Nor should we assume that all would be well if we could turn the clock back and live centuries ago. What suited a bygone culture may not be appropriate for our own – its practices may need adapting or incorporating or even discarding. Nor can we avoid approaching each aspect from the dubious perspective of 20<sup>th</sup> century eye-glasses. Of *course* we don't see things truly. We see it all rose-tinted, or misunderstand its context entirely. With these caveats, there remain many lessons to be learnt, insights to be gained and fresh challenges to bring about much-needed change. Our iconoclastic age (the 'new age' of a total paradigm shift away from the rational to the experimental, of which the New Age movement is only a symptom and a tangential fragment, not its cause!) may share many values with the cultures in which Celtic Christianity took root and thrived. Contemporary culture has a horror of hierarchy and remote power structures, and a respect for much of what the Celtic saints embodied.

A shared interest in Celtic customs gives us, as Christians, unparalleled opportunity for dialogue of all kinds. God willing, the people we meet in the course of this dialogue will find that we have a lot in common with the monastics of the past – our love of Christ, quiet and strong, which embodies a determination to live exactly as we preach.



### The Gift of Silence

Chris Raynor of Sale

The story goes that a person in the spring of '96 visited Northumbria Community, and came away with a gift of a little puppy by the name of 'Silence'. The meaning of this name, it was thought, was that the person was told in no uncertain terms to remain silent, not to speak, not to communicate, to keep opinions to oneself and to stay mainly away from Community, until lessons in humility had been learnt. It was considered a rebuke. The puppy, it was thought, was always there to remind the person of these lessons taught. As a consequence the little puppy was not loved by its new owner. It became, in fact, more and more disliked as time went on. It was neglected, badly treated, not looked after at all and finally forgotten by the owner. About 18 months on, (by which time the once small puppy had grown, totally unnoticed by its owner, into a beautiful fully grown dog) the person was reading Celtic Night Prayer readings for December and then understood the true meaning of Silence . . . It was a Beautiful Thing! The owner suddenly noticed the dog and suddenly loved it, more than could ever have been imagined. Glorious Treasures were radiating more and more from the animal. The dog owner had been receiving glorious soakings of Celtic Spirituality, but now it was radiating from this beautiful dog too! There was growing an increasingly intimate relationship with the precious gift. They say a dog is man's best friend; 'Silence' is certainly one of mine, next to Christ Himself. Ecclesiastes 3 v.11 says: He has made everything beautiful in its time.

### EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Spring 2000 edition of CAIM, the newsletter of the Northumbria Community.

We hope that the news and features in this issue will not only provide information for us but



also be an inspiration to us, as we realise our togetherness in heart as a dispersed Community, through the events, prayer pointers and thoughts outlined. The majority of our Community find themselves more alone than together and so these words of Henri Nouwen from a newspaper interview will be very apt for those who journey with us. He writes "Alone or by myself. Everybody is alone in the world. Nobody feels exactly as we feel, thinks exactly as we think, or acts as we act. Our alone-ness is the other side of our unique-ness. The question is whether we allow our alone-ness to become a deep loneliness or an opportunity of being-our-selves. Loneliness is painful, while being-our-selves gives peace. Loneliness causes us to cling desperately to others. Those who can be by themselves can value the uniqueness of others and so can enable fellowship. It is a lifelong task to let our alone-ness grow into a being-(by) ourselves. It demands a conscious choice as to who I will spend time with, what I will do, how I will pray and when I will ask for advice. Wise choices help us to be by ourselves so that our heart can both give and receive more love".

Wise words for our continuing

! Gbjui ljt!opu!cfjoh!tvsf!  
x i fsf!zpv!bsf!hpjoh!  
!cvu!hpjoh!bozxbz/  
!B!kpvsofz!xjui pvu!nbqt!!

Frederick Beuchner

## Poustinias in Borneo

Adrian Smith of Gateshead

In a recent visit to Sarawak (Borneo) we stayed with our friend Maggie Raja and her husband Peterus, and we had a quite amazing time. Back in 1996 when Maggie was last in the UK she spent a short retreat at the Nether Springs. I think Bill and Louise were leading the retreat. At one point when Maggie was talking to them, Roy put his head round the door and not knowing anything about her said to her "The poor of the earth will rejoice at the table you set before the King." Maggie says this has proved to be one of the strongest confirmations she has ever had of the visions God has given her personally. Both Maggie and Peterus are currently engaged in projects directly helping the Penan people who are only now making the transition from nomadic hunting and gathering to subsistence farming. They are probably the most vulnerable tribe in Sarawak. On our visit we literally had a communal "feast" at Maggie and Peterus' home with a number of Penans. Their current house is in a small town called Marudi, the last place on the Barram River before the interior. They are having a house built in the heart of the interior in a village called Long Lellang which they see being used as a place of prayer, training and outreach. We went to their partly completed house which is at the junction of two rivers just outside the village and surrounded by hills and rain forest. It was one of the most beautiful places we visited. They intend to build some poustinias amongst the trees. I think her short visit to the Nether Springs not only encouraged her but obviously made a lasting impression!



## WANTED Northumbrian Images

Can anyone help? We are looking for people who are able and willing to donate good quality framed pictures in all sizes relating to the Ancient Kingdom of Northumbria for use in the rooms at the Nether Springs. Of special value would be those places connected with the lives of Celtic saints who have impacted Northumbrian spirituality . i.e. Ireland, Wales, Iona, Whitby, Whithorn, Lastingham, Lichfield, Lindisfarne, Bamburgh, Bradwell, Heavenfield, Melrose, Tours etc.

## Jottings on the Journey

Roy Searle of Wooler

At the time of writing we are experiencing a busy "season of travel" as individuals, teams and Community Groups are out on the road. This article is written in Essex at the **Storytellers** Gathering we are running at Sion Community for a host of people who are now involved in the initiative we are directing in association with Bible Society. The ethos of the Community continues to shape the developing network of storytellers being drawn together from many diverse backgrounds and traditions. As they journey with us a growing sense of being Community is emerging. It has been very heartening to work with folk from different cultures and see how the story God has written on the hearts of the Community finds resonance and meaning to these people.

**Celtic Fire** features predominantly in our mission as we continue to tell the stories of the Celtic saints. Hexham Abbey witnessed the telling of the lives of Oswald and Wilfred. Cuthbert's story will be shared on his saints day on March 20<sup>th</sup> in Doncaster and preparations are underway for the Scottish Tour which takes in Dunfermline, Edinburgh and East Kilbride. This will be from 8<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> June.

**Invitations and opportunities** to share in a variety of settings come in huge numbers and we value the Community's prayers for discernment and wisdom in responding. What has been incredibly exciting to witness over recent months has been the release of **creativity** as Companions and Friends have discovered individually and corporately the giftedness of God which has found expression in all kinds of ways.

We have also been clearly led to 'go down into the city and look for the kingdom in the streets'. This is part of our ethos, calling and vision and in the next edition of Caim we will share something of the experiences and journeys to Hull, Bradford, Doncaster and Belfast, where in each case there are growing signs of the realisation of 'church without walls'. We are also, principally through storytelling, dance and music, participating in a number of **church based and secular** festivals. The Telling Place, a venue created by and shared with Bible Society will be found at several such festivals eg. Pentecost 2000 at Cheltenham 10<sup>th</sup> June, Quest New Age Festival in Devon 7<sup>th</sup> -9<sup>th</sup> July, Glastonbury 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> June and 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> July, Greenbelt Arts Festival 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> August. Increasingly there are opportunities to speak and share something of the life and spirituality of the Community in many places. We continue to serve a number of churches of all denominations, go to colleges, schools and conferences and share something of the fruit of the Community's journey. A particular encouragement has come from the growing number of **new folk** who have been involved in mission. Some of the Community Groups are also involving themselves in our work in Bradford. The Kingdom on the Streets weekend in Bradford had both the local and the York Group very involved.

It is also imperative that we respond to the call of God to **wander** and several folk have stories to tell of moving out in obedience to the Spirit's prompting. Ireland, Wales, Scotland, France and Cornwall are places where we have and will be this year as people from the Community wander for the love of God and pray, often at the broken altars.

On a number of occasions over the last couple of years we have been sharing ministry and mission with other groups and organisations. This has been an enriching and encouraging development as we have learnt from and partnered others in the work of the gospel. Notably, our **partnership** with our good friends from Bible Society continues to grow and develop on a number of fronts as we seek together to engage with and share God's story across the church and cultural boundaries. Other partnerships include our work with Seeds Theatre Company, Café Credo Storytellers, local churches and an exciting link with the Anabaptist Network. The joint conference in Oxford at the end of April is completely sold out and the response from people from our respective communities and others from outside our networks has caused us to think about how we might respond further to this encouraging development.

Plans are underway for Community folk to **cross the waters** to America, Canada and Australasia. Brenda Grace and Andy Raine will be flying out to Australia for the International Christian Dance Fellowship Conference in early July. Writing, composing, storytelling, training and choreographing are the principle tasks undertaken by those engaged in mission at this time. Whether it be to a big event or simply to meet and talk with a stranger on the road we are called to **carry the light of the gospel wherever the Father leads**, having (as Aidan decreed), **a heart for the poor and a desire to live generously**.

We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all  
our exploring will be to arrive where we started and  
know the place for the first time.

*T.S.Elliot*

## So what does the Council actually do?

Anne Wadley of London

And a very good question too, as it was one we were asking ourselves as we assembled at the Nether Springs for the first weekend of March. Perhaps strangely, as we were meeting together for the fourth time since we were first invited last June to consider our availability to be part of the reformed Community Council. But as ever, we are on a journey for which there is no map, and, as Trevor is so fond of saying, "constant change is here to stay".

So let's get out of the way what Council is not! It is not elected or democratic, and it has no executive function. Unlike the Trustees it does not have legally defined responsibilities. What we are learning in the midst of change is how to discern and protect what is crucial and which must therefore be held constant. We explore the question "how then shall we live?" and what that means to the Northumbria Community of today. So we travel to the Nether Springs every three months or so from Scotland, Wales, the south-east and many points in-between to represent the wider dispersed Community. Some of us have been very much alone in that time, with no local community activity with which to become involved, others are part of very active Community groups or have had local events to attend. Some are intensely involved in local churches, but for others this is an area of pain or struggle. There are singles and couples, those with young children with concerns over health and others with anxiety provoking teenagers. At this last meeting someone was facing redundancy, others facing almost intolerable stress within work situations and someone else was looking forward to the increase in income retirement represented over unemployment. What we share is a heart for seeking God through a way of life governed by the Rule of Availability and Vulnerability.

A pattern for our meeting together has evolved over this last year. Togetherness is expressed at the very beginning on the Saturday morning as we each share important news and events from our lives. As we close each Sunday we spend the time between Midday Office and lunch in prayer for each other and for the issues that have arisen during the course of the weekend. Thus we return to being Alone from the ultimate expression of being Together, sharing our heart concerns before God.

Roy and Trevor left us to our own devices for our second session as they met separately with the Trustees, and we immediately abandoned the given agenda for that which concerned us most – how we could

best serve and support both the leaders of the Community and the Community itself. But with that synchronicity that so often marks the work of the Spirit, Roy and Trevor had already planned to raise the very same issue for later in the day! This was a discussion which we later shared with Roy and Trevor themselves. We reflected that in the past there had been times when we have strayed from the Rule, even at the core of the Community. However, once again even in the midst of all the activity of the running of the Nether Springs, the Story Telling, Cloisters, and academic initiatives, the foundational ethos of the Community has re-emerged with an emphasis on relationships rather than activities, both within the Community and with others – individuals and organisations.

One of the key roles for the Council is to guard the heretical imperative by having the confidence to ask the awkward questions about the life of the Community and its future development. We also honoured Roy and Trevor as they responded to us with Vulnerability in inviting us to exercise that function. One of the immediate outcomes of this was to review how some previous mistakes had come about and how we could learn from them. While we are not a decision-making body, we are available to reflect, pray and give counsel when major decisions have to be made.

If this all sounds very heavy – then yes, at times it was serious, but also lightened with frequent laughter (and an evening trip to the cinema for some). The other main topic for the weekend was to review the plans for Easter workshop – more on that elsewhere in Caim. Next time it's to be the importance of places to the Community and how we continue to express our commitment to contacts we have made on the "Celtic Arc".

Those of you who have ever tried to 'explain' the Community to family or friends will know how difficult that can be. I have experienced the same frustration trying to communicate on paper the sense of privilege, excitement, commitment and oneness of purpose (even when we disagreed or misunderstood each other) that we shared together.

## POET'S CORNER

### On Cuthbert's Island

Anne Cope of Leeds

Rising gently  
From the glutinous sea-mud  
and glistening mussel-beds  
Ledges of ancient rock firm my steps  
As I journey towards the Cross.

Someone is already seated there;  
We remain silent,  
Alone in each other's company  
Encircled by hallowed stone  
Distanced from mainland busy-ness  
By desert peace of sea and sand.

Here, at the foot of the Cross,  
Anchored to earth  
on the thresh-hold of heaven,  
Creation is alive  
With the heartbeat of the Creator.

And as my senses are refreshed  
By this banquet of His giving  
My being comes to rest  
In the Caim of His presence.



### Cuthbert's Cave

Did they really lay your body here  
As they fled from the ravaged Isle?  
Did your presence hallow this ancient stone  
As your brothers sought rest for a while?

Did the setting sun gently warm this rock  
Below the windswept caim?  
Did these pillars of stone shield your monks  
from view  
As the overhang sheltered them then?

As the Island sank behind the hill  
And a journey of faith lay ahead,  
Did those travellers find refuge here?  
Did this hard rock yield for a bed?

Weaving my thread in the garment of prayer  
Which has covered this place through the ages,  
The legends are dimmed by the certain faith  
That their God, my God, never changes.

## KEEP ASKING THE QUESTION

Jonathan Roe of Hull

At a recent Community Council Meeting I asked some questions around the issue of "How then shall we live?" Then, as now, these issues of lifestyle and community were pertinent to my journey, so my questions were coming from a real desire to know what people thought about such issues as money, environment, political involvement and so on. A range of answers came my way, with the consensus opinion being "We're not here to tell each other how to live, but to assist one another to live the questions in whatever direction God leads." In other words, it is the asking of questions that is important, not the finding of answers. Now clearly, in certain circumstances, that is not enough, even rubbish! You would be surprised if you rang the Community Office and asked the question, "What time should I arrive for lunch?" To be told, "It's the asking of questions that is important, not the finding of answers." So we need to begin to ask the question, which questions should we expect answers to? Confused? So was I, so I turned to the Bible for help (actually it took a bout of flu for this to happen). I decided to read the Gospel of Matthew and note down every instance where Jesus asked a question, to try and find out what kinds of questions Jesus expected the disciples to find an answer to. I anticipated finding 5 or 6 questions – I found 84! I was amazed by the number of questions Jesus asked. One after the other! I was astounded by the way he asked questions often out of sheer exasperation. "Have you never read?" (4 times) "How long shall I put up with you?" "Are you still so dull?" Was Jesus really saying this, "Are you still so thick?" This wasn't the all tolerant, ever-patient Jesus I thought was in the Bible. At times he seems to come close to being downright insulting (See 13:52, 15:16). What would an Ofsted inspection have made of this teaching? I had to reassess my understanding of how Jesus spoke with people. When asked questions he often answered the question with another question – how infuriating – but how true to our present situation. How many times have we come to God in prayer and asked a big question only to find not an answer but a question in return. So when we reflect on this it becomes clear that God asks questions of us because he knows that he has already planted the answers within our own hearts and minds. We need to look more within. Jesus often gave straight answers, but more often he saw his role as the One who asked the questions in order to provoke thought in his hearers. "Which is easier to say?" 9:6 "Who do you say that I am?" 16:15 "What do you think?" 21:20 "Which is greater?" 23:17 "Who is the faithful and wise servant?" 24:45 He must have expected people to try and figure it out for themselves. So by the time my study ended I was really comforted. Firstly I was comforted by the fact that it's good to question, to provoke thought – but be wary of questioning God because he's really good at questioning back. Secondly, I was comforted by the fact that Jesus' expectation is that we can work our way through to the answers. Finally, I was comforted by the fact that it's OK to get totally exasperated, even with God (27:46?). Let's keep asking the question "How then shall we live?" not just for the sake of asking, but in the hope that together we will find some answers.



## Spring Harvest at Minehead

Help needed. Are you going to Spring Harvest at Minehead?

The Community Team is leading worship at 'weeks' 2 and 3, but Cloisters will be there for all three 'weeks' from April 14th - 28th. The stand will be open from 12 noon until 12 midnight every day. Help is needed not only for staffing throughout that period, but also for putting up the stand on 14 April. If you can help please let us know asap.

We can be contacted on  
01289 388235 or by email:  
cloisters@bigfoot.com

## Annual Retreat

Bm! Dpnnvojuz! Dpnqbojpot! boe!  
Gsjfoet! bsf! fodpvsbhfe! up! cvjme!  
joup! ui fjs! njwft! bo! Boovbm! qsjwbuff!  
sfusfbu! bu! ui f! Ofuifs! Tqsjoht!/  
Uijt! xpvme! cf! b! ujnrf! pg!  
sfgmdujpo! pg! rvjfu! boe! xbjujoh!  
vqpo! Hpe! xjui! joejwjevbm!  
ejsfdujpo! bt! sfrvjsfe! Nboz! pg!  
zpv! bmsfbez! ep! ui jt! boe! opx! jut!  
cf ofgjut! boe! cmfttjoh!!!

## BEWARE OF THE ABBOT

Hugh Barnett



How many sugars do you go without?

## Journeying with the Northumbria Community

A booklet with the above title is available on request from the Community Office. It is designed for those wishing to explore what it will mean in actual practice to become a Companion or Friend of the Northumbria Community. A brief outline of the background and formation of the Community, as well as its vocation and vision is followed by an explanation of the process required of those considering journeying with the Community.

## Jubilee 2000 Lifeline Walk

A walk of reconciliation down the Meridian line is to begin across the Holderness peninsula on Thursday June 15th and then continue south from Cleethorpes on June 16th. The team will reach Greenwich on July 4th and will finish at Peacehaven on July 12th. The initiative will continue on down the line through the meridian nations in the late summer and autumn. The Walk is linked to the campaign to relieve Third World debt and has the support of the Jubilee 2000 Coalition. We are currently seeking appropriate participants and those who can help with accommodation along the way. Also to make contact with schools close to the line. If you are interested or can help then please contact David Pott on 0208 694 2220 or E-mail fountaingate@nsm.co.uk



## Book Review !

Andy Raine of Holy Island reviews:-

### 'BEHIND THE GLITTERING MASK' –

Mark Rutland

paperback £8.00

ISBN 0-89283-938-4 1996

Servant Publications.



This is a fictional dialogue between Lucifer and the Archangel Michael on the subject of the seven deadly sins. It is full of insights about the face of the sins themselves, with vivid insights into various episodes in scripture as well as horrifying glimpses into the mind behind the glittering mask of Lucifer. 'In three simple words lies the essence of Envy: "How dare they?" Envy is the longing for another not to have. Envy is more about depriving than gaining.' 'Activity is not the opposite of sloth; purposefulness is' 'Greed is more than having things. It is having things.'

'My shock and disgust at seeing Lucifer's fires in my own eyes will drive me into the arms of God only if I am properly horrified'

My own amazed reaction was to the simplicity of the satanic strategy – that we each must see ourselves as gods: "We need not look up. We must look into ourselves if we would be free." These plausible words are applauded by Lucifer. It's a very interesting read. It is sometimes distracting to see the author contorting to see the subtleties behind issues he has apparently held strong assumptions about. Not only is communism the creation of Lucifer, but 'even a robust capitalism' can sometimes have its drawbacks. He seems to dislike feminism a fair bit, and is not very kind to Charles Darwin: but mostly the author seems not to intrude. It's an easy read, and quite hard to put down.

## 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.

## How then shall we live?

### Annual Easter Workshop details

Easter workshop this year is to be based at the Nether Springs over the Palm Sunday weekend. The dates are from Friday 14th April to Sunday 16th April. This is to give an opportunity to those people who find it difficult to be released from Church responsibilities over the actual Easter weekend to be part of the annual gathering of Community Companions and Friends at Easter time. Accommodation at the Nether Springs is limited and will be on a first come first served basis, so book early and avoid disappointment. Subsidised costs are £40 per person full board for the whole weekend. Children under 12 free.

The theme for this year's workshop is 'How then shall we live?' which is an ongoing question in all of our lives. There will be a children's programme running simultaneously on the same theme. Helpers for the children's programme are needed. If you are able to help with this important aspect of Easter workshop then please contact Andy Raine on 01289 389351.

Under the general theme of "How then shall we live?" we will reflect on the journey thus far, mapping where we have been and the lessons we have learned. This will be helped by visiting significant places together around the Nether Springs as well as reflecting on other places of significance to us further afield. Still asking the question "How then shall we live?" we will then resolve to be true to our calling and our ethos as we continue our journey into the future alone yet together.

#### Programme

##### Friday 14th April

6.00pm Shabbat meal  
7.15pm Evening office  
8.00pm Informal Music and Storytelling  
Outlining the experiences behind the stories which became our songs and liturgies.  
9.30pm Compline

##### Saturday 15th April

8.00am Breakfast  
9.30am Morning office  
10.30am Input and interaction on Foundations at Old Bewick  
12.00 Midday office  
1.00pm Lunch at the Nether Springs  
2.30pm Creative Response Workshop at North Sunderland  
5.30pm Bar B Q meal on Bamburgh beach  
7.15pm Evening office  
7.45pm Ceilidh and Fun night

##### Sunday 16th April

9.30am Morning office  
10.30am Outdoor Eucharist at Yeavering and Kirknewton  
Using symbolism, prayer, liturgy and music as we make our response to "How then shall we live?"  
1.00pm Lunch at the Nether Springs



Please note that over the Easter Weekend there is a led retreat at the Nether Springs from Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd April entitled "The Passion of His love." Included in this retreat will be our annual visit to Holy Island on Easter Sunday. Details from the Community Office.

### Storytelling Team ADMINISTRATOR urgently required.

Working within the Mother House of the Community and its ethos, the Storytelling Initiative require a full time Administrator. Salaried, 5 days per week with the possibility of rented accommodation near to the Nether Springs. The position is secured until at least December 2000.

Experience required: Written and verbal communication including email. Word and Access competency an advantage. Duties in-

## The Choice

It might sound strange to say that joy is the result of our choices. We often imagine that some people are luckier than others and that their joy or sorrow depends on the circumstances of their life — over



which they have no control. However, we do have a choice, not so much in regard to the circumstances of our life, but in regard to the way we respond to these circumstances. Two people can be the victims of the same accident. For the one, it becomes the source of resentment; for the other, the source of gratitude. The external circumstances are the same, but the choice of response is completely different. Some people become bitter as they grow old. Others grow old joyfully. That does not mean that the life of those who become bitter was harder than the life of those who become joyful. It means that different choices were made, inner choices, choices of the heart.

It is important to become aware that at every moment of our life we have an opportunity to choose joy. Life has many sides to it. There are always sorrowful and joyful sides to the reality we live. And so we always have a choice to live the moment as a cause for resentment or as a cause for joy. It is in the choice that our true freedom lies, and that freedom is, in the final analysis, the freedom to love. It might be a good idea to ask ourselves how we develop our capacity to choose for joy. Maybe we could spend a moment at the end of each day and decide to remember that day — whatever may have happened — as a day to be grateful for. In so doing we increase our heart's capacity to choose for joy. And as our hearts, become more joyful, we will become, without any special effort, a source of joy for others. Just as sadness begets sadness, so joy begets joy.

## Community Group News

Rob and Louise Holden write about the West Lothian Group.

The West Lothian Community Group has been meeting more or less regularly in our home since April 1998. It came about as a number of friends of ours became interested in the Community and in particular the Rule. They found, as we had, that it gave form and language to a developing awareness they had of what living a Christian life actually means. This awareness was sometimes at odds with their usual church culture and didn't 'fit'.

We therefore asked if someone from Nether Springs could come up and meet with a group of vaguely interested people to help us find out more. This, in fact, happened on a couple of occasions and we are grateful to Roy Searle, Rob Packham and Bill and Louise Whitfield for the time they spent with us.

Over the last eighteen months or so we have been trying to get to grips with the Rule and most of us have had the opportunity to visit the Nether springs at some stage. We still feel very much in our infancy as a group but would welcome anyone who wants to make the trek to Easter Breich to be with us. For those of you who don't know where Easter Breich is (which will probably comprise 99% of the readership of Caim) it is a farm which has been converted into housing outside Livingston, slightly less than halfway from Edinburgh to Glasgow. We usually meet on the first Monday of the month. If you need directions or transport, or just want to find out more, give us a ring on 01506 873030 and we will see what we can do.



Alun Brookfield writes about the Swindon Group.

The consensus of opinion within the Swindon group was that when the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month (we always meet on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month) fell on a Saturday, we would have a retreat. The month of January this year was one of those occasions. We met for our half day retreat at St Mary's Church, Old Town in Swindon. The group gathered for a packed lunch before hand and we started at one o'clock. The leaders of the retreat were Revd Judith Carpenter and

Sister Denise of Withywood in Bristol. We began with a lovely stilling exercise led by Sister Denise where we focussed on the light of Christ, moving through our bodies to fill our lives with light. We then said a New Year liturgy and were led in prayer by Judith. Judith

also came round the group and anointed us all with oil, which for me was a very moving experience. The oil smelt lovely too. The following two hours were spent in a creative session with paints, glue and lots of magazines to cut up. The theme was to be a reflection of our lives in the previous year. There were lots of different ideas and everyone seemed to really enjoy the time to think and either be still or create a piece of art. After cups of tea, we all came together again as a group and used our art and thoughts as our offering to God. We were all very impressed and thankful for the gifts that were shared. Judith then led us in our Eucharist, which was simple and lovely - sharing in God's gift together was very special. As our next trip to the Nether Springs will be themed as 'Soul friends' we had a short discussion with people offering their thoughts and experiences of spiritual direction. We broke at about six o'clock after a wonderful afternoon of friendship and fellowship.



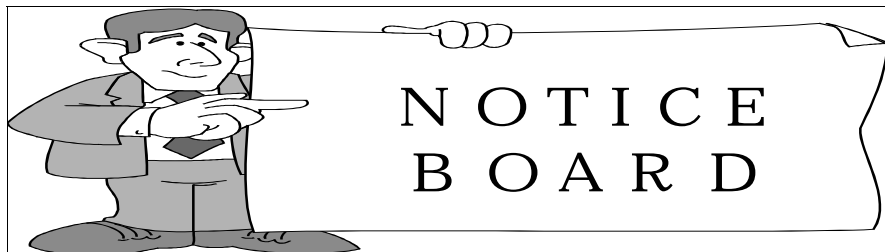
## Community Groups

If you would like more information about Community Groups; please contact:

**Norma Charlton**

at 84, Kells Lane, Low Fell,  
Gateshead NE9 5XY.

Tel: 0191 4878065



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.

**Robin and Karen Noad** have had to relinquish their responsibilities with the Story telling initiative based at the Nether Springs. They have returned to Oklahoma in very difficult family circumstances. Please pray for them as they seek to discern the unfolding of God's plan and the way ahead for their involvement with their nephew Anthony (10) and their niece Alissa (14), which will mean for them taking out legal guardianship and living in the USA. For the next 6 to 12 months.

**Trevor and Freda Miller** of Hetton Hall are to use their forthcoming Sabbatical break to revisit parts of the Celtic Arc for pilgrimage and reflection. During May and early June their journey will include Lindisfarne to Whitby and Lastingham. Then on to Bradwell across to Tours and Poitiers in France. Then back to England, on to Whithorn and across to Ireland.

**Andy Colledge** of Leeds will complete his year at the Nether Springs in mid July. Recent visitors to the Mother House will not fail to notice the quite incredible difference in the general fabric and decoration that he has largely been responsible for initiating. Notably the upgrade to the kitchen. It is hoped that Andy will maintain a regular involvement in this important area of the Mother House.

**Roger Green** of Bedlington has produced a booklet on behalf of the Tyneside Community Group of which he is a member. The booklet is entitled 'The New Book of Kells' and the contents are the fruit of an evening together of celebrating their creativity as individuals. Items include poetry, articles, linocuts as well as a recipe and a crossword. Copies are available at a donation price of £2.00 from the group. Write to **Norma Charlton** at 84, Kells Lane, Low Fell, Gateshead NE9 5XY. Tel: 0191 4878065

**David Ward** of Rhyl and **Jackie Urwin** of

Widopen have recently joined the Community Council.

The revised combined edition of Celtic Daily Prayer and Celtic Night Prayer is now with HarperCollins who will be publishing it in a quality leather bound edition as Celtic Daily Prayerbook. We are very excited about this because it incorporates a great deal of new material as well as an extensive revision. We are indebted to many Community Companions for this, principally **Ian Corsie** of Allerdale and **Andy Raine** of Holy Island.

An audio Cassette version of the recent CD 'A Northumbrian Office' is now available from Cloisters.

The Community has a large team at **Spring Harvest** in Minehead, leading the worship, storytelling, dancing for the two weeks over Easter 18<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> April. and also staffing a Cloisters resources and exhibition stand for the full three weeks.

**The Miracle Maker**, the film, which we have been praying for as a Community, is released this month in cinemas nationwide. It is a visually stunning animation portraying the life of Jesus, as seen through the eyes of Jairus' daughter. Do plan to see the film and encourage others to do likewise. The enclosed leaflet gives more details.

#### Greenhouse Wanted

Anyone got an unwanted Greenhouse? We would love for you to donate it for use in the gardens at the Nether Springs. Dismantling and collection will be done for you. Please contact the Community Office on 01289 388235.

## What's on at Nether Springs

Included in this edition of the newsletter is the new Programme which outlines all the scheduled happenings for the next twelve months at the Nether Springs, the Mother House of our Community. There is much information included in the programme all of which has been updated. This means that the Programme itself can be a valuable aid to those who wish to know more about us. If you wish to hand on programmes in this way, then please write to the Community Office and extra copies can be sent to you. There are many brand new led retreats as well as those which have proved consistently popular in expressing who we are and what we are about as a Community in our vocation and vision. For some led retreats we have invited Community Companions and Friends outside of the Nether Springs to lead them. These may be of particular interest to you and are recommended. They include the following:-

Principles of Intercession, June 30 to July 2 led by Norma Wise of Newton Aycliffe. Creativity workshops led respectively by Fraggie and Vicki Michael of Sherburn on July 31st to August 3rd and David and Pam Pott of Brockley in February 2001. Don Bridge of Marske-on-Sea will lead a retreat on the significance of Holy Places from September 11th to 14th and Liz Culling of Cherry Burton will lead a retreat on Celtic Spirituality from November 13th to 16th. For those who would value a weekend retreat that is not too demanding will be interested in the regular 'He restores my soul' weekends. A similar midweek retreat is entitled 'Quiet Waters'. An explanation of the different aspects of each retreat and what is involved is given in the current programme.

## INTERCESSORS

Jg!zpv!xjti!up!lop!npsf!bcpvu!  
ip!zpv!dbo!cf!qbsu!pg!uijt!wjubn!  
njojtusz!lqmbtf!ufnfqipof!;

**Opsnb!Xjtf!!**

pg!Ofxupo!Bzdriaggf!!  
po;!12436!423:41!

© Caim is the official Newsletter of the Northumbria Community.  
The Northumbria Community Trust Ltd IPS no 28305R an exempt Charity Reg in England & Wales

**Nether Springs, Hetton Hall, Chatton, Northumberland, NE66 5SD**  
**Tel: 01289 388235 Fax: 01289 388510 E-mail: northumbriacommunity@bigfoot.com**

EDITOR:  
Trevor Miller

DESIGN &  
LAYOUT  
Naff Produc-

