

CAIM

Issue no 24 Spring 2003

The Northumbria Community Newsletter

Welcome to the Spring edition of CAIM, the newsletter of the Northumbria Community. CAIM is the Celtic word meaning encompassment or encircling. This newsletter goes out to all those who are within our circle of Community Companions and Friends.

GOD SPEAKS - a week in Northern Ireland

Paul Lucas of Gateshead

In my experience, waiting for God to speak usually involves going somewhere, (albeit only to the armchair) with the expectation of hearing the 'word' – only to find that the 'word' is not said, or at any rate not heard, until sometime after you are no longer actively listening, you've left the chair or the cell or the place, and then you hear...with... well – hindsight! God makes moulds and breaks them; and just when you thought you'd got the system sussed...it changes! That's much how it was for me during a week in Northern Ireland in January with a Community team to give prayer support and look around to see what's doing: it was strewn with signs of God's undercurrent, and the idea of being in the flow of His movement became increasingly apparent.

I left Tyneside latish on the Friday evening with a sense of personal spiritual fog; then after a night at Nether Springs, I saw the sunrise before going on to Roy's with Brenda Grace, Gordon and Margaret Joice – a crisp and brilliant day; the 'fog' was lifting. We met up with Jean Watson, Les and Margaret Fletcher along the way and saw the sundown over Belfast just before we docked. Irish hospitality as championed by Roy's friend Stephen Adams was a wonder to behold: he gave us a wonderful reception and a great meal – and later at Cranfield, accommodation too! **God speaks through the open door.**

I actually had two other hosts in Belfast, one for accommodation and one for Sunday lunch; both were doctors and both were called Ronnie (yes, that's right, the two Ronnies!), and their families of course. We all went to worship at one of the three several-hundred-strong services at CFC (Christian Fellowship Church). Wow, talk about culture shock! Roy did his usual bit and though there was nothing I hadn't already heard several times before, yet somehow it still sounded fresh. *If we do the walk He'll do the talk!*

On to Cranfield (by the sea) where Fathom Cottage was our home for the week –

again courtesy of Stephen. A dream years ago had me walking on a beach and finding a stone with a cross in it. I had already found a few over the years, but going out on the beach for a late night breath of air, a perfectly formed cross-stone virtually leapt up from the pebbles. As if that wasn't enough, a prayer session just before Christmas showed me a lighthouse out at sea; and lo and behold there it was! **God speaks in personal affirmations of time and place.**

Kilkeel is a small town between the sea and the mountains of Mourne near the border with Eire. Rosie and Trevor (not a couple) are the instigators of 'The Bridge', a youth project in what was previously a pub owned by a chap called Eamon who came to Christ in the process of selling the pub to them. I couldn't do the whole story justice, suffice it to say that these two 'got out of the boat and walked on the water!' **God speaks in the actions of others.**

This is a staunchly Protestant/Loyalist town where the kerbstones bear red, white and blue paint and there's a profusion of union flags, and yet at the invitation of the local youth a rock band from Rostrevor, a Catholic town, came to play at one of the early gigs. The sectarian divide runs deep; but hope rests with the new generation to break the chains of those traditions. It was a real inspiration to meet these folk and when Trevor shared some of the more wacky things happening (such as the chap who turned up saying he'd bought an old mine-sweeper with a view to creating a 'Pirates for Peace' offshore radio station around the trouble spots of the world, starting with Northern Ireland) I found myself the bearer of confirming visions, having previously encountered Bridge and Lighthouse and Radio Station already. 'Broadcast' seemed later to be a significant word. **God speaks across the waves of sea and sky.**

Monday was a day of house and beach,

with a visit in the evening to Rostrevor Centre for prayer for Ireland. It's an ecumenical centre which felt a bit 'Catholic charismatic' from an earlier era, but it was good and the Holy Spirit was recognisably there. **God speaks in the shared expression of prayer.**

We woke the next day to find the water had been cut off. God's sense of humour for me as I'd decided to abstain from all but liquids on that day – just as well we were going to visit the Bridge Project! We looked around with Trevor and he showed us the architect's model of how it will be, with its bridge over the river (that Rosie had seen in a dream and the architect didn't know about). What's already there is good – the Spice Tree Cafe and Drop-in Centre. Amazing stuff. On from there to the Silent Valley reservoir/country park: a significant place in the landscape with a particularly special aspect; a serenity and strength about it. Rosie seems to have acquired a cafe there as a Bridge extension, and there are plans for a retreat house too. We went out to walk and pray and just to 'be' there. The water from the reservoir would reach many homes in Belfast; so too, we hoped, would our prayers. **God speaks through a sense of place.**

The day seemed to have had a theme of water; and that little reminder of its importance when we were briefly without it only served to emphasise the plenty we are used to having. In the evening Trevor

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The Celtic Arc

Ian Corsie of Allerdean

I don't know about you, but the idea of the 'Celtic Arc' (from Turkey to Ireland) often seems to me a rather nebulous concept and it was a joy therefore when I recently stumbled across the following intriguing story, bringing the link to vivid life, whilst reading *From the Holy Mountain*. (This is a highly-recommended book by William Dalrymple describing his travels nearly 10 years ago from Mount Athos in Greece to the Egypt of the Desert Fathers, via Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and Israel, investigating the fate of the Christians of the Eastern churches – Eastern Orthodox, Syriac, Armenian, Maronite, Coptic, etc – all under threat from the political, military and religious storms raging around them.)

The story concerns the origins of the style of Celtic art which astonishes us from the 'carpet pages' before each gospel in the Lindisfarne Gospels – and of which the earliest example is the Book of Durrow, dating probably from the last years of the 6th century, arguably the first figurative paintings in British art. What might have been the spark which ignited this blaze of new-style book illumination among monks familiar only with the geometric whorls and trumpet spirals of pagan Celtic art? According to a Danish art historian, Carl Nordenfalk, who was browsing in a library in Florence 35 years ago, it could have been the sight of a copy of the *Diatessaron*, a very early and very unusual gospel harmony (the four gospels united into a single life of Christ).

The *Diatessaron* was composed in the early 2nd century and was, apparently, the standard New Testament text used by the Church of Antioch until copies of the original gospels became more widely available. It then slipped out of common use, came to be seen as a heretical text and, eventually, manuscripts were destroyed – except, that is, for a few kept in the libraries of remote monasteries. It was a copy of one of these that Carl Nordenfalk stumbled across in the Florentian library. What seemed remarkable to him was not the difference in styles between the 2nd-century eastern artwork and the 6th/7th-century Celtic versions (you would hardly expect them to be the same!), but the fact that the poses of the symbols, the angles at which they are drawn and the attitudes that they strike are identical to each other – and also totally

different to anything else seen in Christian iconography.

But how did this copy of a banned text come to be residing in a library in Florence? The story is that, in the mid 16th century Stephanos, the Catholicos of the Armenian church, travelled to Rome to try and persuade the Pope to support the liberation of the oppressed churches of the Orient at a time when the Armenians were being squeezed between a resurgent Persian Empire in the east and the Ottoman empire in the west. Knowing that the Pope had a special interest in the history of Scripture, he had a copy made of one of these rare surviving manuscripts in the monasteries of the Tur Abdin in eastern Turkey (not that far from the now-very-topical border between Turkey and Iraq) to take as a gift. However, his embassy was a fiasco and he never saw the Pope – but the gift did get as far as the Vatican secretariat, and eventually found its way to Florence.

This still leaves a piece of this fascinating jig-saw missing: how did the Celtic monks come to see a copy of the *Diatessaron* (assuming that this was indeed how they came across this very different figurative style)? Dalrymple tells the story as follows: 'In his *History*, the Venerable Bede records that one winter night at the very end of the 7th century, a Frankish galley on its way back from the Holy Land was wrecked off the coast of Iona; a storm had blown the ship round the north coast of Scotland until it came to rest, as fate would have it, on the shores below the island's abbey church. Bede records that on board the vessel was a Gaulish nobleman named Arculph, who dictated a description of the holy places of the Levant to Adamnan, Iona's abbot.' Could a copy of the *Diatessaron* have been among the books in Arculph's baggage?

Dalrymple concludes: 'Somehow, perhaps in the baggage of a shipwrecked Frankish nobleman, a set of pictures probably originally drawn in a monastery in eastern Turkey came to form the seed from which sprung the first figurative paintings ever drawn in the British Isles. It is a considerable cultural debt, and one that is little known, and certainly unrepaired.' Fascinating!

**Because we will protect ourselves from ourselves
to the point of destroying ourselves
- Lord have mercy**

R.S.Thomas

An Epic Telling

Neil Ruckman of Barnet

I write this having just about recovered from an intense period of rehearsal and tour of the epic storytelling production of Mark's Gospel for the Telling Place. Thank you for all your prayers, they were certainly answered. The three performances have proved beyond doubt that the concept of an epic storytelling with a number of tellers and musicians works well. There is plenty of work to do to improve on this pilot but I think it is fair to say that many people were quite moved by what they experienced. We have had Christians and non-Christians say that it is the best thing they have ever seen and professional storytellers comment on the quality of the performances. Those of you who were at the Manchester performance will have experienced the fantastic creative energy which can come from an audience and group of tellers in total empathy as the story unfolds. We expected Manchester to be the hardest performance as the audience contained the highest number of non-Christians. It just shows how wrong you can be when God's creative spirit is in control. Please now pray for the vision and funding to be there to enable a much more extensive tour later this year.

BEWARE OF THE ABBOT

Hugh Barnett



**'Easter cake is easy—just put it in the oven
and in three days it'll rise again'**

From the Community Mission Office

Community Training Weekends

Friday, 21st to Sunday, 23rd March, 2003, sees the first in a series of training weekends for all who are interested and available to be part of the Community teams that are now going out and travelling throughout Britain. The purpose of these weekends provides people with the opportunity to hear, learn and explore why we do what we do, where, when and how. It looks at our 'raison d'être' as a Community and seeks to be very practical in imparting, envisioning and equipping the teams as they go out as bearers of hope, carrying the torch of the Gospel. If you would like to participate in one of these weekends, drop us a line at the Mission Office, as it will help in the planning of future weekends.

Community Teams On The Road

Our Rule speaks of the call 'To be available for participation in MISSION' of various kinds. Listed below are some of the happenings and events at which Community teams will be involved. There may be the opportunity to be a part of one of the teams. Being available for the Community teams does not mean looking for 'gifted musicians, storytellers, teachers, intercessors, carers' etc, but a willingness to offer help, sometimes just being prepared to be at the place, to take the lowliest task, carry the bags, wash the dishes, be available to people as we offer heart, home, hospitality and hope to those whom the Lord brings across our paths.

Happening and Events:

11th to 14th April, 2003 - Northern Ireland weekend,
22nd to 27th April - Easter People at Scarborough - leading worship and workshop.
2nd to 5th May - Baptist Assembly, Cardiff - leading worship, and workshops.
6th to 9th May - leading worship at Church Leaders Conference, Lee Abbey, Devon.
9th to 11th May - leading church weekend in Leicestershire, looking at 'Church without walls'.
10th to 18th May - Community Team to

Wye, Kent - workshops, worship, pilgrimage and reaching out and sharing with people across church and secular boundaries.

20th to 22nd June - Newbury Church Weekend, Berkshire,

26th to 27th July - leading worship at the Independent Methodists Conference, Durham.

28th July to 1st August - Bishop of Hull's Youth Pilgrimage, Northumberland.

9th to 16th August - Northern Light Camp at Scarborough, leading worship and workshops and overseeing Sacred Space prayer room.

22nd to 26th August - Greenbelt Arts Festival - hospitality tent, music, storytelling, art etc.

Greenbelt 2003

When? August 22nd-25th

Where? *Cheltenham Racecourse.*

Theme? 'Diving for Pearls'.

Price? On site: £75; discounts available for early purchase or group ticket. More Greenbelt details? Website: www.greenbelt.org.uk

What are we doing at Greenbelt?

We plan to host a hospitality tent amidst the Campers where we will pray the Daily Offices, and offer drinks and company, play music and tell stories.

How can I be involved?

- Come and be part of the team and the Festival experience.
 - Buy a Greenbelt ticket, camp, and spend time at the Community hospitality tent.
 - Offer some financial support by sponsoring someone else to go. (Any donations to the Finance office please)
- Prayer support: Pray for the festival and our participation.

If you are available and would like to be considered for inclusion on the teams, or if you are interested in knowing more about Greenbelt or in getting a group ticket then please contact Cathy Turton, c/o Mission Office, Nether Springs, Hetton Hall, Chatton, NE66 5SD or email cathy.turton@northumbriacommunity.org

Journeying with the Northumbria Community

A substantially revised booklet with the above title is available on request from the Community Office. It is designed to provide introductory information 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.

God Speaks

(continued from front page)

came round with Eamon, a great bloke – well I would say that, as he liked my songs! No really, he will be a witness to God in his life from now till kingdom come. Every blessing on you Eamon! **God speaks through the changing of minds and lives.**

Wednesday saw the sunrise at breakfast, Morning Office, and then to the Patrick Centre at Downpatrick. I've never encountered the touch of the Spirit in the likes of a themed visitor centre before, but here there were times when it seemed the only appropriate place to be was on my knees. It's a powerful exhibition, and well worth a visit. There were singalongs on the way home. It had been a bright and happy day but it was tainted with great sadness when we got back to find a message for Jean about the tragic death of Stephen Oake – her friend, church member and former work colleague. It was just too much really. **O God, speak through this tragedy.**

The rhythm of the offices, which I normally find so difficult in isolation (and Brenda's general chivvying which we all found so... er...essential), got us to all the right places at the right times. We travelled that evening to the church at Saul, St Patrick's first established altar in Ireland, to meet up with Roy. We were welcomed by a couple of parishioners in a small church hall with a roaring log and coal fire, something of a contrast to CFC! Patrick seemed to be the theme for the day, though fire was somehow significant – talk about heart-warming, Roy nearly scorched his backside! We all shared with the folk something of what Community means to each of us. We were made to feel very welcome by a very ecumenical bunch of people. In the conversations that followed, my impression was that the churches are at the forefront of mutual acceptance and co-operation (though doubtless not all of them); that political solutions are really very secondary to the true will of the people; and that the evil undercurrent which attempts to fan the fires of hatred and anger in Northern Irish society will cease only when a thirst for peace, runs deeper than pride. **God speaks in the common experience.**

When God moves the hearts of people in Northern Ireland, where things have been so bad for so long, the whole world will see the difference. Let our continuing prayer be that through the willing heart and the changing mind, the values of Christ's love will become the cornerstone of a new era. **Without love, we have nothing at all that is worthy of Your name, O Lord.**

Community Gatherings - Ireland and Humber

Compiled by Jean Watson, Gayle-Anne Drury and Cathy Turton from the Mission Office

Northumbria Community in Northern Ireland Friday 11th to Monday 14th April, 2003

The significance of Ireland in relation to the Community's past cannot be underestimated. From our earliest beginnings through to the present day, Ireland has continued to inform, inspire and be a focus for us. Following what have been some very important journeys in recent years and building on the growing friendships and contacts with the people in Ireland, we are returning with a Community team this April. The cost of the weekend will be approximately £125. Anyone who is interested would need to either join the rest of the team at Stranraer for those going over on the ferry or, if you prefer, you could arrange your own flight and meet up with the rest of the team in Belfast. It is hoped to arrange some transport from Nether Springs to Stranraer, but folk would need to find accommodation for Thursday night, 10th April, ready for an early start the next morning.

Rough Itinerary:

Friday morning - ferry from Stranraer to Belfast

Friday afternoon - travel to Downpatrick.

Saturday 12th - Community Gathering at Saul 11 am to 4pm.

Sunday morning - leading the services at Saul and Downpatrick Cathedral.

Sunday afternoon - visit The Bridge Cross Community Project in Kilkeel or visit The Patrick Centre.

Monday - visit Morningside Community Project in the Lower Ormeau, Belfast.

Monday afternoon - return journey home by ferry.

Why don't you come and join us as part of the team? The team will include some of our musicians, a storyteller, intercessors and others, people for whom it's just important to be supportive of what God is calling us to be and do in Ireland - come and explore and be part of the weekend. For further information and/or if you would like to be part of the team that journeys to Ireland, please contact Gayle-Anne, c/o Mission Team Office, Northumbria Community, Hetton Hall, Chatton, NE66 5SD, or send her an email: gayle-anne.drury@northumbriacommunity.org ASAP.

Community Gathering in Bransholme, Hull, Saturday, 12th April.

Continuing to walk the ancient paths and deepen our commitment to the city and the urban scene, we continue to pray for and support Jonathan and Lynda Roe and friends on the Bransholme Estate in Hull. On Saturday, 12th April, we want to encourage as many people as possible to join with the folks at Bransholme for a Community gathering to share, learn, pray, bless and be blessed.

Jonathan writes... *England is moving south and as a result many northern towns and cities are facing unprecedented population decline, empty housing and questions about long term sustainability. The church is predominately middle class and is moving south as well - what does this mean for the future of the faith in the north? Attempting to live community in this context brings its own set of difficulties and challenges. Churches cannot continue doing what they've been doing for years without success. Communities are asking questions about what it means to be a community. How do we live and struggle together? How does our faith experience of community inform our neighbourhood communities and vice versa? Is there a future for Christianity in northern towns? It's a big agenda, but one we would like you to come and talk and pray with us about at a community day at St John's Bransholme. The day will aim to celebrate what we are as a community of believers and then to pray and reflect upon what it means to be Christians in places like this. I guess some of you may feel that the urban context isn't relevant to you - but we would like you to come and share your experience of living community - that is a very relevant experience and one which we would love you to share.*

If you are planning to go or would like further details please contact Jonathan or Lynda

Tel: 01482 831905 or email: johnty@roe.karoo.co.uk

How to get to St John's Bransholme, Wawne Road, Hull (opposite the "Swallow pub")

1. From A63 turn N before the Humber Bridge signposted Beverley and Cottingham (A164).
2. Travel for approx 6 miles until reach a right turn onto the A1079 signposted Hull.
3. Travel towards Hull for about 4 miles. At major roundabout follow signs to Bransholme/Kingswood/Wawne.
4. Travel straight ahead at the next roundabout.
5. Travel straight ahead at second roundabout.
6. Pass a big ASDA on your left. At the next big roundabout follow sign to Sutton.
7. You will shortly see the church on you left behind some Scots Pines - it's quite hidden.

A detailed map is available from the Community Office on application.

Iraq - Reflections and a Call to Prayer

Roy Searle of Wooler

It was my birthday and I had wanted to go on the Anti-War March in London but for a number of reasons it didn't work out. Instead I got up and walked around Humbledon Hill, a place which itself has witnessed a considerable amount of bloodshed in various wars and conflicts in its history. Whilst walking I found myself praying for the people and situation relating to Iraq, which is very complex, and demands more than 'armchair sound bite experts' to pontificate, simplify and expound upon with varying arrays of perception, prejudice and concern allied to the posturing of politicians as they wrestle agonisingly with a situation so serious as to pose a major threat to the world.

In the afternoon Shirley and I enjoyed again the sheer beauty of this part of Northumbria made more resplendent by the blue skies, sun shining and the crisp ice hardened ground under our feet as we ventured out over Wooler Common and into the hills and valleys of the Cheviots. Such a contrast from the harsh, barren wilderness scenes depicted daily on our television screens from Iraq.

God is clearly shaking the nations and my fear is that we in the West have hardly begun to question or discern anything of God's purposes in such a profound and far-reaching shaking. As Diane Sekuloff, one of our Companions from Canada wrote to me recently... *Hebrew's comes to mind - where God says "Once again, I will shake the world, that those things which cannot be shaken will stand." Systems, churches, institutions, economics, worldviews; all seem to be being shaken thoroughly these days.*

The situation with Iraq has exercised a good deal of my thoughts and prayers and one that has caused me more than ever to heed the Scripture to pray for our leaders and Tony Blair in particular. The issue gained momentum when a good friend

of ours alerted me to a situation affecting an asylum seeker whom he had just spent the afternoon with. It brought home to me yet again the trauma, complexity and heartache of the situation in Iraq and how peoples lives are affected by the situation: 'Mustafa' [not his real name] is a Kurd from the Northern region of Iraq who fled from his homeland last year and who is seeking asylum status in Britain. He is 37 years old, a Moslem and is in grave danger of his life were he to be deported back to his homeland. He has lost family, friends and his work as a hairdresser and through his activity promoting human rights in Iraq is a wanted man. He grieves the loss of friends and family who were gassed with chemical weapons under Saddam's regime in Northern Iraq.

I'm awed by the privilege of being a 'guide' to him in this way. Thank you so much for your prayers

He had asked if he could see someone who would help him to become a Christian. He knows that this will not help his asylum status and the consequences of his conversion are enormous.

He is at the end of the legal process, has experienced a whole catalogue of misrepresentations by bureaucracy and the authorities and as a consequence of changing legislation is now homeless and living without any income on the floor of a house somewhere in the North of England.

My friend prayed for him, embraced him as a brother and is helping to stand bail and find suitable legal support to present his case again before the various court authorities. He will continue to see 'Mustafa' in the coming weeks and stand with him as best he can. As you'll appreciate, 'Mustafa' is struggling and suffers from post-traumatic stress and bouts of depression.

I was able to alert our Community Intercessors and Prayer Partners to the situation and with some help from Neil Crosbie at United Bible Society we were able to send Mustafa a Bible in Arabic and some Christian material in his native mother tongue, together with the Scriptures in his Sorani language.

I have just heard from my friend who is seeing Mustafa on a regular basis. He writes...*Last week I was able to give 'Mustafa' the Scriptures in Arabic. He put the book to his lips and touched his head with it. It was very moving. We have started to read together whenever we meet. I have given him the tapes as well. He's delighted to read the Scriptures in Arabic, and it's very interesting comparing notes as he does so...I'm awed by the privilege of being a 'guide' to him in this way.*

Thank you so much for your prayers for him and for me.

Do remember 'Mustafa' in your prayers and continue to pray for all those who are in authority who have complex decisions to make that will affect the lives of many. Pray for their wisdom and for compassion to continue to be the characteristic of believers in this country as we seek to reach out "to Christ who comes in the guise of a stranger". Continue to pray for 'Mustafa' - that his situation, and that of many like him - will be resolved with mercy and generosity of heart.

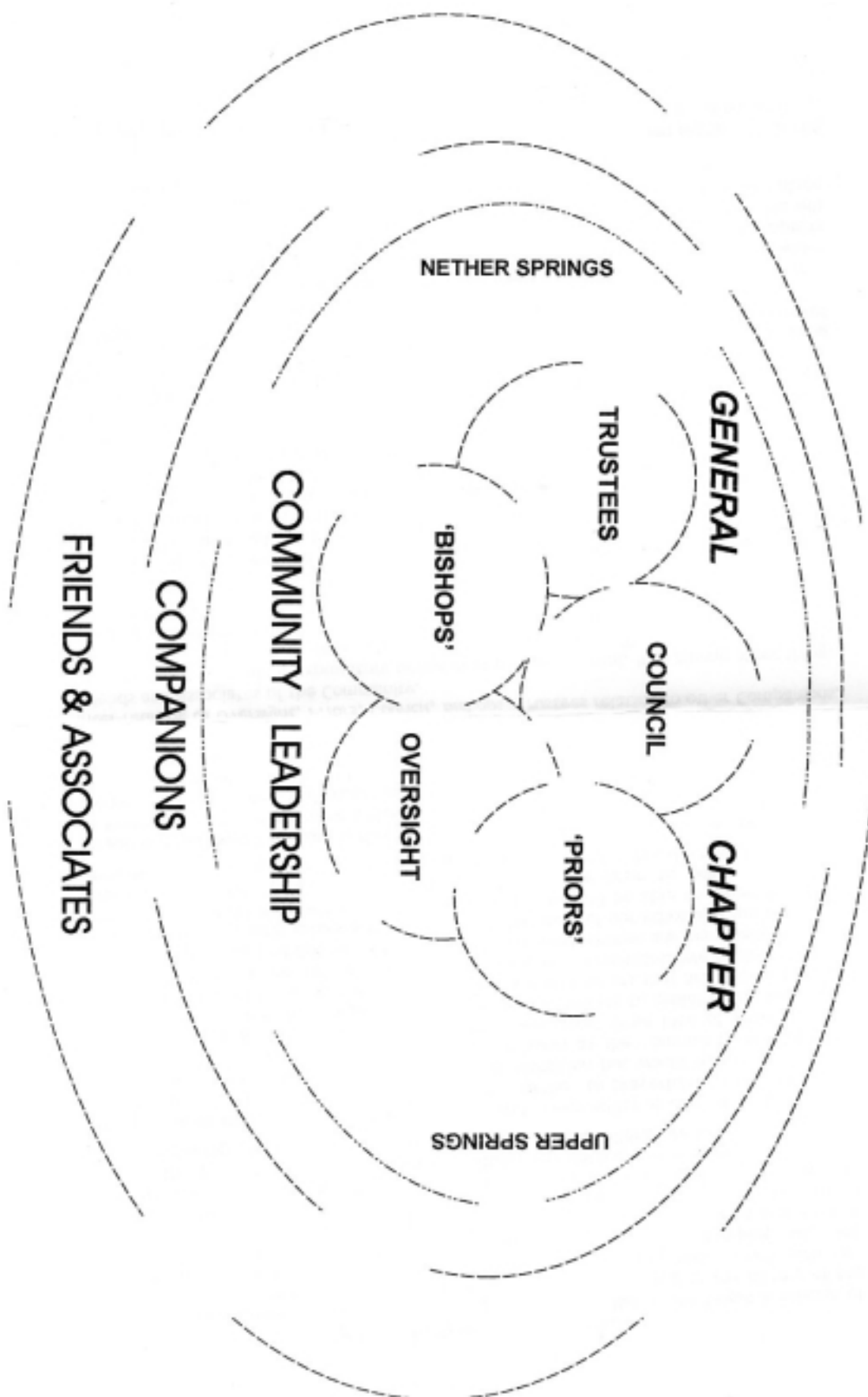
Footnote:

If you or anyone you know may be able to help Mustafa in his need of a refuge, a safe place that he could call 'home' whilst representation is made on his behalf for asylum status please contact me at the Community Office or by email:

roy.searle@northumbriacommunity.org.

You may wish to send a gift towards helping 'Mustafa' by sending it to the Community Finance Office at Nether Springs marked 'Refuge'. Thank you

BUILDING THE NEW ON FOUNDATIONS OF OLD



Building the New on Foundations of Old Leadership Transition - An Update

The Community Council met at the Nether Springs in early March and began a process of change which one long term member described as 'the most radical thing in the history of the Northumbria Community'. After a depth of questioning for clarification, much dialogue, discussion and debate the Council unanimously endorsed the new leadership proposals. (See diagram opposite) In this it was recognised that this was only the beginning of a process that will take time. We are still exploring, still pioneering 'a new monasticism' as we seek an infrastructure that expresses the vision and vocation of our Community. It is 'a way to express the Way'. In this process the prayer from our Hild liturgy has been and is ever before us - 'Lord, show me the right seat, find me the fitting task; give me the willing heart'.

You will recall that as reported in the Winter 2002 issue of CAIM Roy Searle and Trevor Miller as current Leaders of the Community were encouraged to take time out together to prayerfully reflect on a way forward that would take us through a period of transition but would also remain true to our commitment to sustain *monastery* and support *mission* as the Community develops and grows. The diagram on page 6 gives some idea of what the new leadership structure of the Community will look like.

In seeking to explain the transition of leadership we want to stress that the terms used are **metaphors** that are helpful to us 'in house' in explaining the differences in the roles and responsibilities. We could have used terms like Rag, Tag and Bobtail but we feel that the ones chosen are marginally better in portraying the monastic values and disciplines at the heart of our ethos and spirituality. As many of the details have yet to be fully worked out, we will be better able to report in greater detail in the next CAIM which is due in mid-June. We hope to begin this process immediately following Easter which being late April effectively means the beginning of May.

As you will see from the diagram, this is radical change. Among other things it

- a] Moves Roy Searle and Trevor Miller from a Chief Executive/Senior Management Model to Overseers of the Community's vision and vocation.
- b] Involves deploying *Priors* and *Bishops* with real responsibility to come alongside and to carry real leadership responsibilities in both *Monastery* and *Mission*.
- c] Establishes a wider Community Leadership comprising a *General Chapter* involving an inter-relating of *Over-sight, Priors, Council, Bishops, Trustees* all relating to other Companions, Friends and Associates of the Community.
- d] Begins an open ended, exploratory period that is experimental. It is among other things, a move from hierarchy to networking; control to ownership. The gaps in each of the groupings in the diagram are very important indicating openness, freedom of movement and a networking that is inter-relational and multi-functional.

Implications include the following:

- 1] In serving the Community Roy and Trevor in moving to a greater overseeing role, i.e. imparting, teaching, guarding, envisioning, mentoring etc will be freed from many of the managerial tasks. In serving the Community Freda Miller will also share in an overseeing role in relevant areas alongside Trevor and Shirley Searle will continue to support Roy in his apostolic role.
- 2] In serving the Community the *Priors* will be responsible for the overseeing and practical running of all aspects of the *Monastery*. The new *Priors* are to be Rob and Joanna Brown; Norman and Ingrid Cumming.
- 3] In serving the Community the *Bishops* will be responsible for the overseeing and practical running of all aspects of *Mission*. The new *Bishops* will be Jeff and Jill Sutheran; Martin and Rebekah Neil; David and Wendy Ward.
- 4] In serving the Community the *Trustees* will be responsible for ensuring and maintaining the legal and financial requirements of running the Community Trust. The exact make-up of the *Trustees* is yet to be decided.
- 5] In serving the Community the *Council* will move from its current advisory, supportive role to a more proactive team responsible (alone and together) for some key aspects of wider Community life. This will involve initiating, coordinating and developing these key aspects of our vision and vocation. eg Groups and Gatherings; Upper Springs; Cloisters; Urban and Rural issues etc. This will inevitably mean a revamping and streamlining of the present *Council* which will take place over the next 12 months. The exact make-up of the *Council* is yet to be decided.

All the above together will comprise the *General Chapter* being the combined leadership of the Community. Please pray for wisdom, discernment and clarity during the ongoing transition.

'Lord, show me the right seat, find me the fitting task; give me the willing heart'.

What mean these stones?

Geoff Boston of Stockton

A few years ago a popular Christian book was written entitled "What Happens when Women Pray?" It may well be true that women do find it easier to pray than men so when a few years ago some of us men went on pilgrimage to Iona, learning to break down the male reluctance to pray together became a lot easier on that

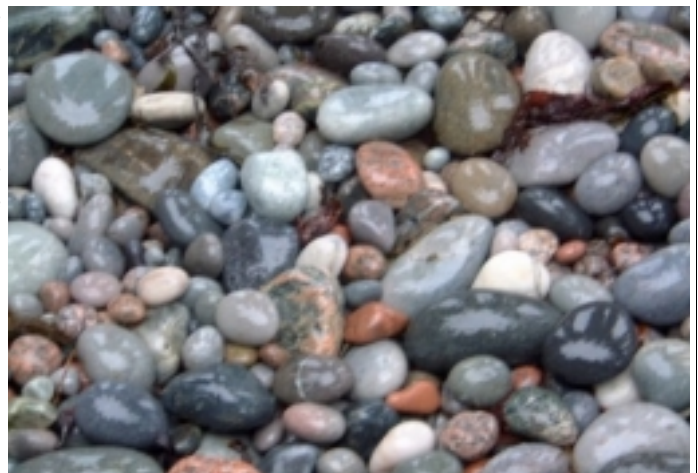


remote island. We walked to Columba's Bay on a very wet afternoon and once at the beach our thoughts soon turned to Ireland and the continuing struggle for peace and reconciliation. It is amazing how a historical place and the associated story of Columba's landing provide poignant focuses for us now many years later. We decided to pray as can be seen by the "holy huddle" picture (left). Cold and wet became irrelevant in the process of our devotions and intercession.

We were aware that this, for each one of us, was a special time of prayer and when we opened our eyes I noticed something unusual in the wet pebbles at our feet. If you look carefully at the picture of the stones below you can see it too. Each one seems to have the same pattern on it. This seemed very intriguing at first, then we realised what we were

seeing. It was our own reflection of the circle of men slightly distorted by the shape of each wet pebble.

This special time of prayer became quite unique when it was remarked that even the stones wanted to cry out our prayers that day. Then we remembered what was said in Luke's gospel at Jesus' triumphal entrance into Jerusalem when the Pharisees asked Him to tell His disciples to stop shouting, He said, "If they keep quiet, these stones will start shouting".



(For those who may be interested copies of these photos are available from Geoff Boston through the Community Office)

BOOK REVIEW Amund Karner of Aberdeen reviews

The Solace of Fierce Landscapes, Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality,
Belden C Lane, Oxford University Press, 1998.

This is a book which gives an excellent explanation of what the 'desert' is about and how it works. The author, Belden Lane, obviously knows that writings of the desert fathers and mothers well, but it is not just a head knowledge that he possesses, he draws on his own understanding, mixing reflections from the past with his own experience with the Desert Fathers today. His knowledge of the desert writers is solid and he draws from other writers, ancient and contemporary, to illustrate his writing. Antoine de Saint Exupery wrote about the 'desert' while serving as a pilot on airmail aircraft. His experiences are woven in, together with many others to show that the writer has heard so much from the 'desert' and been affected by the 'desert'. He talks of how the landscape informs and affects the theology of the people who live there, which is a link that makes sense to me as an inner journey issue but I cannot always articulate it or explain how.

Most of my familiar writers on the Desert Experience are found in this book, skilfully and honestly woven together to make a good read, but it is also a read that engages the heart. To read this book is to recognise one who has travelled the desert and been affected by it. I would recommend this book for anyone seeking to understand more of the 'desert', what she is about, what she wants to form in you, through an awareness of one person's experience of transformation.

The book is special order from Cloisters, or it can be obtained from Amazon.com.

Community Group Leaders Weekend

Richard and Rosie Oliver of Leeds

On the weekend of 17th - 19th January 2003 the annual gathering of representatives and leaders of our Community groups throughout the UK was a very encouraging time for those able to attend. The following groups were represented:

Ayr - Dave Wilson (emerging community group); **Bradford** - Joan Parker and Sue McWhinney; **Cambridge** - Sue Hoather and Ruth Barling; **Holy Island/ Wooler** - Sheila Hay; **Lothian** - Rob Holden; **Newton Aycliffe** - Ken and Norma Wise; **Sedbergh** - Gordon and Margaret Joice, and Margaret Fletcher; **Tyneside** - Norma Charlton; **Wakefield** ('Urban Space' and emerging community group) - Ben Brown; **York/Leeds** - Richard and Rosie Oliver, and Peter Argyle.

It was really good to share with everyone about happenings in their Community groups, and how relationships are growing locally through being vulnerable to one another, sharing of our lives, happy times and sad times together. It was (as always) an encouragement to hear everyone's own story. Norma Charlton, the Groups co-ordinator was a wonderful encourager, a gentle facilitator who also ensured that we remained on track during our discussions! We shared experiences of ideas which had gone well over the past year, those which we might have done differently, within the context of the 'Achsah' principles for groups, and the Rule of Availability and Intentional Vulnerability which we seek to follow.



Groups co-ordinator Norma Charlton in full flight

On the Saturday we visited Old Bewick and said the Hild Liturgy together - it was wonderful to be in this 'thin' place. Andy, Anna, Joel and Martha Raine also joined us for this. It was also great to be able to relax with each other, during the Caedmon Evening on the Saturday, when we shared song, poetry, music, story together over wine and nibbles. Norman and Ingrid from the Monastery team also joined us and shared some songs. One of the most special moments of the weekend was when Norma Charlton anointed us all with the Oil of Gladness on the Sunday morning, and sent us on our way home with joy in our hearts. Some comments on the weekend are given below:

Sue McWhinney (Bradford) Thank you for all your input at the weekend. It was an excellent weekend, where my vision for the Community, and the great variety of ways in which Community Groups can function, was refreshed. Also the importance of waiting for God to bring along the people of His choosing, and not to worry about numbers. I saw again the value of group members coming up to Nether Springs, to see the life and ethos of the Northumbria Community at work, and to test their calling. It helps to clarify how and why a Community Group is not just another fellowship group from church, or an alternative to church. I also knew that God has confirmed to me that there is a role for me in the life of the Community, and that you don't have to be very artistic, musical or creative, to be able to contribute something!

Ruth Barling (Cambridge) The weekend was very special in meeting other people and getting to know each other better. Sharing stories and ideas was special. I particularly felt the group exercise in looking at ideas for groups very helpful. The liturgy in Old Berwick church was special as was meeting people with such different roads in to the Community but so clearly on the same journey.

Rob Holden (Lothian) It was good to meet, hear the stories, share the Office, have the same discussions...again.

Ken Wise (Newton Aycliffe) It was a good weekend, well presented - the folks who turned up really jelled and the discussion groups were very encouraging.

Peter Argyle (Leeds) Thanks for the fellowship and the teaching and the opportunity to open my mind in order to journey together - helping me to accept my monsters and continue to walk the life.

Joan Parker (Bradford) Have made new friends, heard encouraging stories, grasped a little more what Community is! (and groups) - learned we have much to give and much to receive from each other, - I'm sure we all gleaned lots of new ideas.

Annual Retreat

All Community Companions and Friends are encouraged 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 available from the Community Office.



VOLUNTEERS AT NETHER SPRINGS

We are currently exploring the idea of Companions sharing in the life of the Mother House as part of the Monastery Team as volunteer workers for a short period. This would not only be of practical help to those who carry the load week by week but it would also give valuable awareness and insight into the day to dayness of the life, work and spirituality of the Mother House. It would also be an opportunity within the monastic day rhythm to use the library, research our ethos, offer hospitality, tend the grounds, share stories etc. All of which would be helpful in future days when speaking to others about the Community. Ideally this period of voluntary work would be for a minimum of one week—from Monday to the following Sunday. Anything less than this would minimise the opportunity to connect with the rhythm not only of the day but of the week. A longer period of two to three weeks is also possible although you will appreciate that we can only accommodate one or two such volunteers at any given time. You will receive full board and lodging in return for your work. If you are interested in this then could you write to or e-mail the Community office with available dates from the beginning of May onwards. More than one date would be helpful. We will then get back to you as soon as possible.

EASTER WORKSHOP 2003

A FOREST FULL OF JUNIPERS - The Wisdom of the Fool.

Andy Raine of Holy Island

Our Annual Easter Workshop is to be held at the Nether Springs from Thursday 17th April to Monday 21st April, 2003 inclusive. We would encourage as many as possible to come and share with us for the whole or part of the overall programme, especially Easter Sunday on Holy Island. All aspects of the programme will be held at the Nether Springs unless otherwise stated. The intriguing theme for this year's Workshop is: A FOREST FULL OF JUNIPERS - The Wisdom of the Fool. Brother Juniper was one of the early followers of St Francis of Assisi. When some of the brothers became too important and overly well-respected it worried Juniper immensely. He had the reputation of being a fool, but the crazy things he said and did not only made everyone shake their heads but also made them realise that his memorable madneses were actually calling people to a sense of wonder and simplicity and trust in God. It was a call to love recklessly; a call to the foolishness that dares to explore and that sees God everywhere. Francis was heard to exclaim, 'I wish that I had a forest of such Junipers!' This sense of dependency on God; the call to foolishness and simplicity, of not taking ourselves too seriously is what we will explore together over Easter Weekend.

Maundy Thursday 17th April

- 4.00pm Arrive
- 5.00pm Liturgy of the Passover including seder feast and storytelling
- 8.00pm Maundy Thursday Liturgy including Foot washing

Good Friday 18th April

- 9.30am Morning Office
- 10.30am All together Session including children – *'Juniper, friend of Francis, fool of God'*.
- 12.noon Midday Office
- 12.10pm Children's programme during Quiet Hour
- 1.00pm Lunch
- 2.00pm Pilgrimage - Stations of the Cross Liturgy to Cuthbert's Cave
- 6.00pm Shabbat meal
- 7.15pm Evening Office
- 8.00pm Informal Evening
- 9.30pm Compline

Easter Saturday 19th April

- 9.30am Morning Office
- 10.30am Creative Workshops including a) Music from the margins b) Silence and Solitude
c) Children's workshop and hopefully others on the themes of conservation and Voices from the Margins.
- 12.noon Midday Office
- 12.10pm Children's programme during Quiet Hour
- 1.00pm Lunch
- 2.00pm Free Afternoon (optional dance learning/preparation for Sunday)
- 6.00pm Dinner
- 7.15pm Evening Office
- 10.00pm Worship, music, storytelling, liturgy leading into Easter Vigil

Easter Sunday 20th April

- 9.30am Morning Office
- 10.45am Morning Service with Communion at St.Mary's C of E, Holy Island
- 12.noon Midday prayer and Christ as a Light at St Aidan's statue followed by music and dance at the far end of the Priory and the renewal of our vows by saying Yes to Availability and Vulnerability. Then High Praises in the Chapel area of the Priory. The meditation for day 15 in our Celtic Daily Prayer talks of a legend about Satan's battle-axe being struck from his hand by God, and says that this piece of folk-lore concerning God's victory has inspired those who lived on or visited the Island to keep the powers of darkness firmly underfoot. Easter Sunday is the one day we particularly come to the Island for this purpose and together bring the high praises of God into the Priory, contesting against anything that would seek to dishonour God, and there firmly declaring the Lord ship of Jesus.
- 2.00pm-ish Picnic Lunch on the North Shore (Bring your own). If the weather is dreadful we have hired the village hall on the Island for lunch. *Please note that the tide closes late afternoon, officially 4 pm.*
- 6.00pm Dinner
- 7.15pm Evening Office
- 8.00pm Caedmon Evening—Bring your self, a song, a story, a sketch or anything else to make a contribution to this informal gathering.
- 9.30pm Compline

Easter Monday 21st April

- 8.00am Breakfast
- 9.30am Morning Office
- 10.00am General tidy up and depart before lunch



**Christ is Risen,
Hallelujah!**

Seeking God - a sabbatical journey to Hetton and beyond

Stephen Hewitt who is now priest in charge of St Patrick's High Spen and St Barnabas Rowlands Gill in the Anglican Diocese of Durham reflects on over a year at the Nether Springs

"Do you seek him with all your heart...?" These words from the morning office took hold of me ever since I first began to use them. Seeking God is surely the ultimate ambition. So easy to say, but a longing that exceeds even attempts at Everest to achieve. For many people more sensible than I such aspirations are worked out in the realm of work and church. But being nothing if not ambitious, a voice within me says, 'Go for gold, don't be content with second best'. 'Make a break and see if you can achieve your aim'. It was this more than anything that brought Sheena and I to the Nether Springs for a 14 month sabbatical.



Steve

In fact the sabbatical didn't truly begin in September 2001 when we arrived. It started at least 2 years before. Anglican clergy are entitled to a 3 month sabbatical every 7 years or so, and it was this that sparked the early thoughts of an extended break. So, how did we find ourselves at Hetton Hall? In fact, Sheena and I first discovered the Northumbria Community only about 18 months before the move, at Spring Harvest in Minehead. It was a short honeymoon! We had no intention of going to Spring Harvest at the time, we had planned to go to Paris, and had saved the money needed. But clearly God had other plans! The Paris trip didn't work out, and some friends asked us (out of the blue) if we would like to fill 2 spare beds in their Minehead chalet.

The week at Minehead had a transforming effect. Unknown to us, Richard Foster was teaching that week, and we drank in his seminars. But who should be there also but the Community, and quickly we realised that they had been on the same journey as us over many years. They were speaking the same language as us. We resolved to find out more.

It's strange how the Lord works out these things. Sheena was born in Berwick, and

Northumberland has always been dear to her heart. We could so easily have contacted the Community many years before, but only now was the time right. As it turned out, before we got to Minehead Sheena had already booked a retreat in the Midlands led by Roy Searle, and we therefore had a second opportunity to meet the Community. We had also planned to go to Greenbelt that year and who should we meet again but the Community in the Telling Place. When God speaks three times like this you are obliged to listen.

There were many other rich experiences during this time. Though I continued to work as a Church of England vicar in Warwick, in effect the sabbatical had begun. Amongst other things, a visit to Iona Abbey was an profound experience, and during a demanding period in the parish we both discovered great strength and nurture from the offices and readings of Celtic Daily Prayer. I even converted the garden shed into a poustinia. This preliminary time was an essential preparation for what was to follow.

Moving to the Nether Springs was not an easy task. Eventually I decided to resign my job and we began to prepare for the move. This took a good deal of planning, especially as we had no clear idea where we were going to live. Sheena spent first half of 2001 reviewing and packing just about all we possessed. Most of this stuff remained packed up at the Vicarage when we left, and it only went into store for the last few months.

So began the great adventure. We moved into Cedd and Chad, two rooms in the Mother House, and quickly they became home for us. We never really missed the stuff we had left behind.

We had little idea what we were coming to, but if we did, it certainly wasn't how it was! So, what was it like? Community life was, well, fun, joy, laughter, frustration, pain and anger all in one, and above all sharing the journey with many others who were at one and the same time saints and sinners like yourself. In Community, you are soon confronted with yourself (and your 'monsters'), and when you live closely with others you cannot long hide behind the masks we all normally wear.

But for us, this was principally a time of refreshing, renewing and refocusing. In particular I valued the opportunity to live the rhythm of the day; to wrestle with

contemplative prayer (and hopefully to grow a little); to have the opportunity to learn spiritual direction 'on the job' and to share the journey with several fellow ministers and leaders. The offices and the quiet hour gave a pattern to the day, and books and conversations fed the mind and soul.

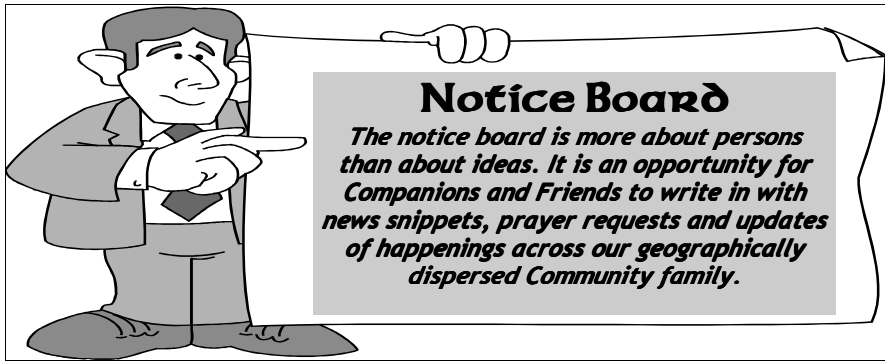
But it wasn't (in a conventional sense) the lush pasture you or I all yearn for! As some one said early on, Nether Springs does have a tendency to take you apart! Seeking God essentially became a succession of freezing poustinias and early morning walks singing praises to the Kyloe hills, lived out in the everyday round of cooking and cleaning and fulfilling all the many monastic tasks. Beyond this, it was truly good just to be at the Nether Springs, and like many others we found it home from the beginning. It was a great privilege to enjoy the beauty and peace of the place, to work alongside and meet so many others on the same path, and to explore the Celtic heritage and history of the area.



Sheena

Seeking God is seeking the infinite reality. Not an easy process. Normally progress in the spiritual life means discovering more and more what a hopeless old sinner you really are! But at the same time it's a walk of a profound sense of intimacy with a God who cares, catching glimpses of His glory in unexpected ways, and knowing when times are hard that He will never let you down. It's a walk of faith and we take it with Jesus, cared for by a loving Father, sustained by the Spirit, heading for a heavenly home that will be so much richer than we could ever think or imagine.

I can't pretend it was an easy year, but I believe truly that it was God's will and provision for us. We thank God for this opportunity. We had many memorable experiences and made many excellent friends. These will remain with us as we continue to seek God in our life and work in High Spen and Rowlands Gill.



Natasha Roumientseva has recently moved to a new flat in the centre of St Petersburg. Her new home telephone number is: 112-07-56. She is currently working with Kenneth Rundell in both the office and the library of the "Agora" centre on Fontanka in the heart of the city. Natasha writes that "the 'Agora' community hosts lectures and seminars about Christian tradition, modern culture, and other world religions. It is well-known in the city and many people attend the lectures. I still cooperate with my friends from the Russian Christian Institute for Humanities also in St. Petersburg. The libraries of the 'Agora' centre and the Christian Institute come into the Association of the Christian Libraries of Saint-Petersburg, and therefore have a great influence on the people here."

Congratulations to **Nick and Anita Haigh** of Chichester on the birth of their first child Erin Hope Clare, weighing in at 7 lbs 15 oz on 22 January 2003.

Also to **David and Pam Pott** of Brackley, on the birth of their fifth grandchild Myla-Star Pott who was born to Zoe and Joel on January 4th. She weighed in at 6lb 12oz.

Angela Knowles of Hetton is moving to Edinburgh after Easter.

Sue Hall of Dundee is spending 3 months of her furlough (from serving with Wycliffe in Senegal) working with the Monastery Team at Nether Springs until the end of May.

Iona Retreat

"The renewal of the church will come from a new type of monasticism ..."

We are to hold a retreat on the Isle of Iona from Saturday 1st to Thursday 6th November 2003. It will be an opportunity to explore what a re-imagined church might look like if it took seriously Bonhoeffer's challenge and sought to implement a new monastic spirituality. Staying at Bishop's House this will be a relaxing time away to pray, share, explore, and wander round the islands. An opportunity to be alone and together. We have experienced great times there in the past, why not be part of this coming Iona Retreat? Places are very limited i.e. 20, so please if you would like to be considered for a place please let us know asap. Approximate cost, including travel from Nether Springs, is £180.

Duncraig, Iona

Jeff Sutheran of North Sunderland

'Duncraig' is a quiet retreat house on the Isle of Iona. Community Companions Gordon Joice and Jeff Sutheran are members of the trustees body, and the house is staffed by Jenny McLellan, another Community Companion, who has been the warden there for several years.

There is an urgent need of a volunteer assistant to work with Jenny at Duncraig for this season, which runs from now through to the end of October. The assistant will have their own private accommodation and will receive £50 per week. If you or anyone you know might be able to respond to this real need to help Jenny and support Duncraig, in welcoming guests and visitors and helping to ensure the continuing ministry of Duncraig on Iona, contact Jeff Sutheran on 01665 721849 or Gordon Joice on 01539 620830 or by e-mail on the following addresses.

jeff.sutheran@northumbriacommunity.org
gordon@joice18.freemove.co.uk

Transcribing!

Needed - people to help with Transcribing!! We are seeking to make more resources available for Community Companions and Friends. We hope to provide transcripts of teaching and worship material that is shared by Roy, Trevor and others at the Nether Springs and elsewhere. We need people who would be willing to listen to tapes and who could transcribe the spoken word into a Word document. If you can help please contact Jean Watson at the Community Office or by email: jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org

Are you online?

You may already have received an invitation to receive CAIM, the Prayer Guide and other periodicals we send out to you, by email. Several hundred folk now do just that, and it offers us the opportunity to make substantial savings in distributing material this way. If you haven't yet done so, and you would like to receive emailed versions, please send an email message to office@northumbriacommunity.org This will enable us to ensure that we have your email address stored correctly, and then we'll send you electronic documents in future!

American Connections

America has always had a place within our heart and history. From our earliest days, Andy Raine's journeys across to the States helped to found friendships with people who have become close Companions of the Community. In the last couple of years, not least through our friendship with Richard Foster and Renovare, together with many Americans making pilgrimages over to Britain, the links with the States have grown and deepened. We now have a Northumbria Community Trust (USA), which has been established to help Community Companions and Friends in the States to support the life and work of the Community. We are wanting to encourage and foster relationships between companions in the States and to help us in this, Nancy Bergstrom from Waunakee in Wisconsin is going to coordinate an American Community Newsletter, a summary of which will find its way onto the pages of CAIM in future editions. If you have news and things to share why not write to Nancy at Applecross House, 315 Fairview Circle, Waunakee, WI 535972732 email: Nancy.bergstrom@northumbriacommunity.org

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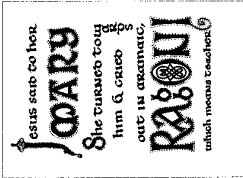
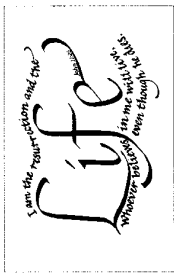
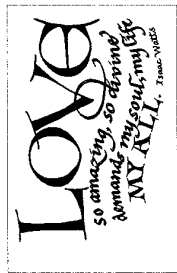
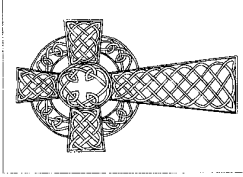
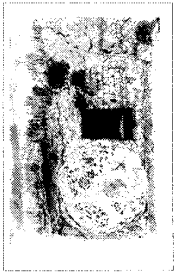
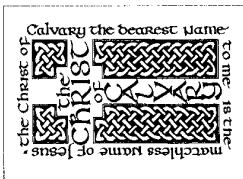
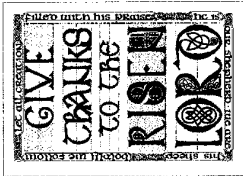
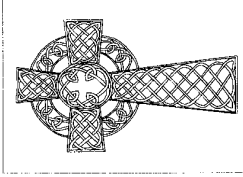
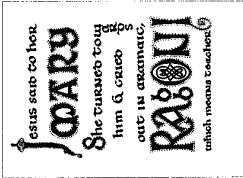
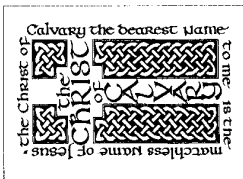

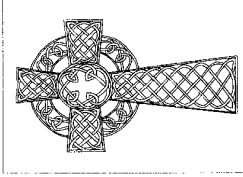
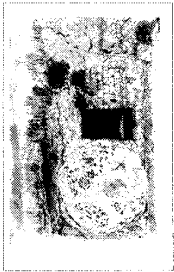
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10 cards of one design £4.00 Ref: EP + design code

Designs also available as Notelets pack of 10 £2.75 Ref: NP+ code

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Northumbria
 COMMUNITY

Northumbria Community

Renewal of Vows Liturgy for Easter Sunday 2003

+ In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES

Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.
Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways.

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

Praise to You, Lord God of all Creation
You gave me life
You gave me love
You gave me Yourself
Help me this day and every day
To give my life
To give my love
To give the whole of myself to You,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

READINGS

Psalm 27:1-4,8,13-14 Judges 1:14-15 Matthew 5:1-16

CONFESSION OF FAITH

I call all heaven to witness today
that I have put on Christ.
I choose no other Lord
than the Maker of Heaven and earth.
This day I walk with Him
and He will walk with me.
I fasten close to me this day
that same Jesus
who came to us as flesh and blood
and was himself baptized in the Jordan river.
He died upon a cross to rescue me,
broke free from death, its conqueror.
He left us, to return the more certainly.
All these truths and their power
I fasten close to me this day.
Resisting my own selfishness and sin,
refusing to live as a slave to riches,
pleasure or reputation,
rejecting Satan and all his lies,
I call on heaven to witness today

that I have put on Christ.

COVENANT

Covenanted together within the love of Christ,
we share a common vision to see the kingdom of God
extended in Northumbria,
and to carry the torch of the gospel
wherever the Father leads.

RENEWAL OF VOWS

In the love of God our Father,
in the grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ,
in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

As we journey Alone/Together
We say Yes to Availability
We say Yes to Vulnerability
and commit ourselves to the Way for Living
as taught us in our Rule.
Lord, have mercy upon us.

Alone in God
we will find
ourselves together
and know the gift
of Community.

+ In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.