



CAIM

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

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

Roy Searle continues his series on the subject of Spiritual Formation:



'How then shall we live?' is not only a question that is foundational to our Community, but is one that humanity has wrestled with from its beginnings. Philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists, economists, politicians and theologians have wrestled with the issue, and the majority have come to the conclusion that **education** is a key to answering the question and resolving the issue of how we live with ourselves, with others, and with 'the world' - and how we relate to God, to Otherness.

But what education is employed? How we educate and inform our lives relates to the issue of spiritual formation that we are exploring in these articles.

In the Scriptures, the *heart* is the centre of the human self. We run from the inside. We have an inner life and it is in this *landscape of the heart* that we engage with spiritual formation, that process that God uses to transform, inform and educate our heart and determine who we are.

Spiritual formation has to do with educating our lives so that we become God-orientated. It is a primary means by which we enter into life with God and bring a proper and healthy perspective on how we relate to him, ourselves, others and the world. It is the process by which we move from obligation and law, to that of loving obedience where we move from trying to do what God requires, to that place where *our* desires are *his* desires. "*Love God and do whatever you want*". (St. Augustine)

I listened to a fascinating conversation recently on the radio about town planning and the contrast between post Second World War developments and those of today. The panel came to the conclusion that there was a major issue facing society - our inability to plan, encourage, and build communities was linked to an absence of any coherent set of values that would govern planning decisions.

So we are left in a consumer orientated culture, which builds large housing estates with no communal meeting places, shops are on retail parks, businesses on some other designated-but-detached area and there is little space for recreation except in a leisure centre - and sparse imagination when it comes to entertainment beyond that which is provided in a multiplex.

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As well as gathering on Holy Island on Easter Day for our annual 'Renewal of Vows', we have two Easter Workshop events happening, one each side of Easter, at opposite ends of the country. Norm Cumming has his finger on the pulse:

Easter Workshop 2007 – “The Alternative Story”

Join us in the south west of England before Easter or in the north after Easter for this year's Easter Workshop, exploring the theme: “The Alternative Story”.

Ivan Illich was once asked what is the most revolutionary way to change society – is it violent revolution or is it gradual reform? He replied: Neither. If you want to change, you need an alternative story.

In our Way For Living we have an alternative story. Easter Workshop gives us an annual opportunity to celebrate that story and to share new chapters which are being written. As we gather this year, we will particularly be wrestling with what it means to live Christianly in the public domain, turning the spotlight on one of our big three questions – How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? – and underlining that part of our Rule which calls us to live as Church Without Walls.

The workshop will include teaching, worship, creativity, sharing, praying and eating together. Above all it's a great opportunity simply to be community together – sharing one another's joys and sorrows as companions on the journey.

IN THE SOUTH WEST OF ENGLAND

EXETER: South Street Baptist Church, Exeter

Saturday 31st March

COST: Donation

BOOKING ENQUIRIES AND INFO:

Peter and Elizabeth Webb Tel: 01392 277775

Email: peterwebb.ssbcc@virgin.net

IN THE NORTH OF ENGLAND

HUDDERSFIELD: The Westwood Christian Centre, near Huddersfield.

Friday 13th – Sunday 15th April

ADVANCE BOOKING ESSENTIAL: It is vital to book if you are planning to attend this workshop, because places are limited by the size of the venue. This is essential even if you are sorting out your own accommodation or intending to join us as a day visitor.

COST: Suggested donation on application.

ACCOMMODATION: There is some accommodation available at the Westwood Christian Centre (details on application) or you can make your own arrangements.

BOOKING ENQUIRIES AND INFO:

Send SAE to:

Ru Telford-Brown

59 Upper Warrengate

Wakefield

WF1 4JZ

Or Tel: 01924 380197

Email: ru@urbanspace.org.uk

And whilst we're on the subject of getting together...

A series of Community Gatherings has been planned for 2007 - and beyond! Make sure you put the relevant dates in your diary! Here's the schedule:
2007

May 12th - Sedburgh (Cumbria, just off the M6)

Watch the website or contact Ellen in the office for further details of this next Gathering.

June 30th –

Little Gidding

(Cambs)

Sept. 22nd –

Birmingham

Dec 15th –

Ireland

2008

January 12th –

perhaps York?

March

(date tbc) - London



Welcome to the Spring edition of Caim!

There's a minor 'USA theme' to this issue, with contributions from across the pond. NC USA is growing, and a new Board is doing great work in getting the legal 'charitable trust' established on a good footing. Watch this space - but it's really great to have contributions from Alan Berry & Aggie Mitchkoski this issue.

We're beginning to feel that, as a new editorial team, we've 'got a handle' on the Caim process now (but that probably means we simply don't understand the problems...) We have greatly appreciated all those who took the time and trouble to respond to our 'survey questions' and told us what you liked and didn't like! We had 56 replies, and the overwhelming message was 'business as usual' - so more of the same it is then! Enjoy this issue.

We're about to cross your name off our database!

But please don't take it personally...it's the same for everyone. Every seven years or so, we ask you to fill in a new form, to confirm that you want to continue journeying in Community. This fulfils our legal obligations under Data Protection legislation in the UK - and also gives each of us an opportunity to reflect on whether we want to continue to be 'in touch' with Community.

More details next issue - don't do anything just yet - when you'll also receive the form to complete and return.

Martyn Beer and Sarah Kinch were amongst the folk gathered in Northumbria in February, for the Community Group Leaders weekend. We asked them to write a few words of reflection. Here's Martin's contribution...

The Community Group leaders weekend began with a slightly slippery drive from the A1 to Hetton Hall over the Northumbrian snow but Saturday's melt revealed the



promise of spring with drifts of snowdrops around the garden. The weekend brought together leaders and representatives from groups across the country, the Scottish border and the North Sea (Holland). It gave a chance to hear of the ebb and flow of the diverse

community groups and how they have increased and receded, started and ended, or simply carried on doing what they've been doing over the past 12 months. The common thread was of time spent together, generally featuring a part of the office, building relationships around the principles of availability and vulnerability. We were reminded of the Acsah principles and compared notes on how explicitly or implicitly they had been considered in our groups, Roy called us to live life more deeply, Norma Charlton gave us context and brought us together and Trevor led a final service of commission. On return my memories have distilled down to the encouragement that while disparate groups operate alone there is a deep and important togetherness that brings sustenance and direction; an illumination as to the life of community groups across the country and the joy of connecting, albeit briefly, with those journeying in various locations; the gracious hospitality offered by those at Hetton who looked after us so well and the beautiful commissioning service when together we were individually blessed and sent away to our groups. All in all a very refreshing time and many thanks to Norma Charlton for all her hard work for both the weekend and through the year in encouraging the Community Groups in their activity.

...and here are some words from Sarah:

For those of us who made the weekend the snow had given us a breathtaking addition to the stunning scenery as well as causing added adventure to our journeys. We represented many Community Groups and for this weekend our individual journeys brought the giftedness of ourselves and our Community groups to each other. Over the weekend we had opportunity to be alone and together. We had times as one large group and as groups of 2 - 5 people reflecting on things we had heard or putting into practice suggested ways of being together.

Roy led us on Saturday morning; his theme was that we are:

- Companions on a journey
- Partakers in a Monastic call.

I won't say too much here as the session will be available on DVD but what struck me was the challenge to go deeper in

relationship with each other and God in our Community Groups. There is no one way to do this, as a later group sharing and discussion revealed, we all experience and facilitate our groups differently, there is no set template, but there are ways we can explore what it means to be a Northumbrian Community Group travelling in our dispersed Community. Roy asked us to split into smaller groups to reflect on one of the following phrases -

1 Go into your cell and your cell will teach you everything.

2 Live openly among believers and non-believers.

Norma Charlton took up the two statements Roy had set us as an aid to experiencing a practice Saint Ignatius of Loyola used to help people discern what God might be saying to them personally through scripture. At one meeting you could offer up one of the statements, or a bible passage, for everyone to meditate on in the coming month and then the following month everyone has the opportunity to speak for 5 minutes, uninterrupted, on what they had got out of their reflections. People also had the chance to say pass if they feel uncomfortable sharing. Then you go round a second time sharing what had struck you in what had been disclosed, after that you might share in a general discussion. Within our small groups we had profound experiences as we shared and were listened to in a non-judgemental and silent way. We were moved at the intimacy of what was revealed, the precious experiences with which we were entrusted and the common ground we shared.



There is so much more that could be said of this weekend and each one of us has our own tale to tell, not forgetting the Celidh, a joyous celebration of our creative gifts' and our final act of worship in the form of the Blessing liturgy. Perhaps in the Liturgy lie the words with which to end. After bringing the threads of our individual lives together we prepared to take them into the world again knowing we were not the same as when we had come and that what we had brought had been valued and appreciated and had contributed to the rich tapestry of the weekend. There were prayers of blessing for each Community Group as individual candles were lit from a main candle representing the Christ light, as this was done we said -

"We welcome you, we honour you and pray God's blessing upon you. May the light of Christ illuminate your life and the lives of your loved ones."

May this be our refrain for each other in 2007, alone and together.

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It set me thinking about spiritual formation and the importance of the Community's values, its *Rule of Life*, and how it provides not only a framework for our own personal relationship with God and one another but also how it speaks of the values of God's kingdom to a culture and society in transition. God has provided us with a framework, *A Way for Living* that shapes, informs and provides coherence for our life, our Community and beyond. Something to build our lives upon in the chaos, uncertainty and transition that permeates contemporary culture. *Availability* and *Vulnerability*, our Rule of Life gives us principles and practises around which we order our lives. Everyone lives consciously or unconsciously by some rule or rules for their life. Values - whether from the church or cinema, scripture or the soaps - actually influence how we live our lives. Our call to intentionally embrace *Availability* and *Vulnerability* should inform our thinking, attitudes and actions. *The Rule* provides us with a framework for making the choices that inform our ordinary, everyday lives. It is a plan for living with one another in Community. It is the glue of our new monastic calling. It is the common denominator among us who journey with the Northumbria Community.

We are a diverse community with many differences, persuasions, commitments and responsibilities. In addition to being covenanted within the love of Christ, our Rule is what unites us in a common vocation. It is a unifying force that compels and inspires our journeying *Alone* and *Together*. Our Rule is a *Way for Living*, not a book of laws and regulations but life-giving, and with it comes the wisdom of revelation and insight given by our founders, together with the fruits of journeying over the last quarter of a century. *Availability* and *Vulnerability* are not meant to be empty sentiments but ways to live out the gospel as they are integrated into the experiences of our own lives. The practice and embracing of *them* is essential to living the life that God has called us to. We are not saying that all are called to this *Way of Life* but for those

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journeying in Companionship with the Northumbria Community it has to be a primary means of spiritual formation.

Everyone lives consciously or unconsciously by some rule or rules for their life. Values - whether from the church or cinema, scripture or the soaps - actually influence how we live our lives.

Any monastic vocation carries with it personal and community implications. Whilst our *Way for Living* directs us to be 'Alone' there is also the 'Together'. We have together said 'yes' to *Availability* and *Vulnerability* and it is this gift of community that has moved us from being strangers to becoming friends.

Our *Rule of Life* helps to educate our hearts and orientate them towards God. It is not the cosy, comfort of an armchair or the safe harbour from the rough world but is a radical and alternative lifestyle which carries the hallmarks of non-conformity, renewal, repentance, resistance and revolution.

We follow Christ and choose to intentionally live, embracing availability and vulnerability which will inevitably involve us in swimming against the tide of some accepted norms and values of Western culture.

Companions following a *Way to Live*, are disciples of He who is *The Way*. It's about finding a way of being a Christian in a changing culture. Hearing and responding to the call of God, not the clamour of consumerism; the calling to a life of communion with God as opposed to consuming and being consumed by those values that are alien to the Kingdom of God; hearing a call which is reflected in authenticity, integrity, transparency and simplicity. The Rule as an outworking of God's ways will help in the spiritual transformation of our hearts and lives, displacing those alien values, codes and influences that have previously formed and shaped us.

As the Rule of God is written on our hearts so we become orientated towards the One in whom we live and move and have our being. By embracing its inner disciplines, holy habits and *Way for Living* we become people who not only seek but love him with all our heart, mind, soul and strength and in the process actually learn something more about our humanity as God intends.

Finding our identity in Christ, belonging to a community of people who share a common heart and a common way for living, finding a Rule of Life that gives coherence and integration to our ordinary lives, we journey on.

Roy will continue this series in forthcoming issues!

We asked Ian Corsie to write something about

Basket-making the Cloisters way!

'From the time I came to this place in the desert, and built me a cell, and dwelt there, I do not remember eating bread that was not earned by the work of my own hands.'

This is one of the 'Sayings of the Desert Fathers' which informs the Community's attitude to its trading company Cloisters. The monks in the desert (we are talking about 3rd/4th-century Egypt here) found ways to earn money to 'put bread on the table' - often by making baskets for sale (hence the term 'basket-making').

The Northumbria Community has always been concerned to pay its way and, although it has always rightly been dependent upon the generous giving of its Companions and Friends, it has also sought to find ways to work out in practice the principle of 'basket-making'. In the early days of the establishment of the mother house at Hetton Hall, this took the form of manufacturing and marketing 'Cuthbert Cake' (caramel cake slices). Although well-intentioned, the venture was a failure; many important lessons were learned however.

After the closure of this first venture, a new company was set up, trading as 'Cloisters', in 1999. This was based around the sale of the Community's own resources and the creative talents of the people within the Community. It was given a flying start by the generosity of Nancy Hammond, who donated the business she ran from her home selling her own calligraphic designs.

The 'designs for cards' part of the business was quickly supplemented by print-based publishing (the most important product being the publication with HarperCollins of the red hardback edition of the revised, expanded and combined **Celtic Daily Prayer** book) and by the very successful music CD edition of **Celtic Daily Prayer** and of the **Waymarks** CD.

Cloisters products have been marketed



by a combination of mail-order and over-the-counter sales at the Hall itself and at Mission events (Spring Harvest being the most important of these, but all the small events, including Community Group meetings, play their part).

The business has sustained the payment of one full-time salary (Brenda Grace as the Cloisters Administrator) and has been able to make a substantial contribution to the finances of the Community in various ways:

- Creating products (mainly **Celtic Daily Prayer**) the royalties for which are paid into the Trust;
 - Selling as high a proportion as possible of home-grown products which produce good profit margins;
 - Keeping overheads down to the minimum;
 - Supplying the Hall bookstall at just over cost, so that the profit on the sales of these items goes directly into Trust funds.
- The Cloisters list has developed into five main areas:
- Books (by and about Community; Spirituality; Celtic church history and spirituality; Storytelling; and Renovare)
 - Music
 - Designs for cards, notelets and prints
 - Community resources (teaching CDs and tapes; 'How then shall we live?' booklets; etc)
 - Joan Boston's stained glass gifts

Website

The Cloisters list of products has been accessible on the Community's website for the past few years - but there has been no search facility and no means of online sales. To put this right, we are

in the process of building a new website incorporating both these vital tools to boost sales. By the time you read this, we hope to have the site up and running; if we are not actually there, it will be very shortly, so go on line, check it out, bookmark it, and keep coming back! The new site is at: www.cloistersonline.com

To make the system work, we are having to make some changes to the way Cloisters charges packing and posting. In the past we have built this charge into the catalogue price, but this will henceforth be an addition to the basic cost (based on product weight) - with free UK p&p for invoice value of £25 or more.

Special offers

To coincide with the launch of the new website we are making **Celtic Daily Prayer CD** and **Waymarks CD** available at a special reduced price of £10 for CDP and £11 for Waymarks. Why not make this an opportunity to go online, buy some copies to give away, and browse the whole site for other useful things to buy for yourself and as gifts.

New products

The key to a vibrant business of this sort is a flow of new products and this is the area we have struggled most with in the recent past. We have loads of ideas and possible resources; but they all need a lot of work to make them into saleable items - and there are only a few (busy) hands available to do this work. We need more help, especially in the form of people with professional design skills who would be able to



work (in InDesign ideally) either as a gift to Community or at a non-commercial fee. We also need writers and editors. So step forward and let us know if anybody reading this feels a tug at the sleeve!

Alan & Sarah Berry are amongst the key people helping to organise NC USA. We asked them to share a little of their story with us, and Alan has sent this:

During the 2000-2001 school year I was teaching secondary maths on the Dorset coast in southwest England on a Fulbright exchange.

My wife, Sarah, and I were interested in investigating places of retreat. She picked up a book in a second hand shop which profiled various Christian communities in Britain and the continent and she found herself particularly intrigued and attracted when reading about the Northumbria Community. Earlier that year during October half term holiday, we had vacationed in Northumberland and visited Holy Island - unaware of the existence of Hetton Hall a few short miles away.

Like so many others, we have come to consider the Northumbria Community as our spiritual home.

As we were leaving the north a particular scene stands out vividly in my memory. Sarah and I stood by Hadrian's Wall gazing northward on a miserable cold, wet, foggy and windy day and an inexplicable sense of "place" came alive within us both. We felt so strongly drawn to and connected with the history and landscape before us and it was so difficult to make ourselves get in the car and drive away! We were not able to go back to the north before returning to our home in Vermont, USA the next summer. Sarah first visited Hetton for a week the following February in 2002. We have both made several visits since, culminating in a five month stint on the house team during the early months of 2006 while I was on a teaching sabbatical. Sarah and I were both received as community companions a couple years back at a NCUSA event held in Keene, NH.

Like so many others, we have come to consider the NC as our spiritual home. In recent years we have begun to seriously question much of the practice and theology drilled into us by the particular churches we have been involved with. Over and again I would wonder what was wrong with me and why I no longer seemed to fit nicely into Christian circles. For me the NC has been a safe place to ask hard questions, explore, and experiment within the confines of an orthodox Trinitarian belief beyond which they and I will not go. My faith has been simplified in many ways and reduced to the "one thing" from Psalm 27 which we recite daily in both morning and evening prayer. "I know that I know Jesus and to Him I will cling, while holding loosely to all else" (a phrase I heard often in community teachings).

The daily rhythm of life lived and modeled by the resident Hetton Hall community and experienced by the guests who visit has been critically important to me. Rob Brown describes the daily office as an anchor and how right he is! I am currently living and teaching at a boarding school in New York State and the nature of my work can become all consuming while school is in session. (Mercifully, we have generous holiday breaks where I can sit at my desk and write for Caim!) In the midst of the hectic pace of life I find the short pauses for office to be life-giving for me. I manage to get in Morning Office daily while sitting with my coffee and toast and I find it a special blessing to recite Midday Office as I take a 5 minute loop walk around the back side of the campus – usually right after lunch. I have not yet managed to work Evening Prayer or Compline into my regular routine here thus far. But, I frequently find myself drawn to use the Evening Prayer liturgy when I rise early, it is still dark, and I am facing an especially difficult demanding day. During those pre-dawn moments reciting "my soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning" feels especially



appropriate. I commend to you the section titled "Expressions of Faith" – during times of heightened stress these words have particularly come alive to me and served as that Rob Brown "anchor"!

Another aspect of the Hetton rhythm is the time and space created for solitude and silence. It was such a gift to have these times structured into my daily routine for 5 months there in 2006. What you may not understand is that for the house team there are ENDLESS chores and projects that could easily demand everyone's attention all of the time – yet "getting stuff done" always takes second place to being still in God's presence. What a wonderful lesson to learn! Can I say that my way of life here in the US demonstrates that lesson? Not really! I have recently been challenged anew regarding the importance of silence and solitude in the December Finan readings in CDP which feature excerpts from "Poustinia" by Catherine de Hueck Doherty. I could use our prayers as I seek to give life and breadth to the contemplative within... "almost strangled but still alive, who craves quiet enjoyment of the Now,

I manage to get in Morning Office daily while sitting with my coffee and toast and I find it a special blessing to recite Midday Office as I take a 5 minute walk....usually right after lunch

and longs to touch the seamless garment of silence which makes whole" (Day 2 Meditation in Celtic Daily Prayer).

I would like to address a few thoughts specifically to North American readers. Sarah and I are members of a recently reorganised Board of Directors for Northumbria Community USA. All of us residing on this continent face serious and difficult challenges as we explore what it means to be connected with the NC. The distances to Hetton Hall and the distances between us here can be equally vast! For those of you, who like me, feel inexplicably drawn to this strange little group and the way of living it espouses, I have several specific suggestions:



- Seek God for time and money to go to Hetton Hall. Plan to spend a FULL WEEK (Monday through Sunday). Don't just

breeze in and out as a part of a bigger tour of England. Investigate airfares during off season times and you may find it much more affordable than you anticipated.

- MEMORIZE Midday Prayer so you can use it anyday/anywhere
- Obtain and read community produced resources. Begin with the "How Then Shall We Live" series and start with "The Heretical Imperative" by Trevor (then decide if you still want anything to do with NC!)
- Become an active contributing member of the "Forum" on the NC website.
- Get a web cam and investigate participating in the monthly on-line office.
- Plan to attend a NCUSA event sometime in the next two years. I hesitate to even mention this one because nothing is definitely in the works at this point and we don't want to raise expectations and then not deliver. Please be patient with us and pray for those of us who are on the board. We are all very busy people with our own struggles and questions about how to move forward here in North America!

May the peace of the Lord Christ go with us, may He guide us and protect us as we journey together.

Continuing with that 'USA' theme, here are two pieces that Aggie Mitchkoski sent from across the water.

St. Brigid spotted in USA

Last Fall, in one of our daily conversations, I mentioned to John Roberts that it was funny how I felt closer to people in England than to NC people here in the States (can I have a little cheese with that wine?) It wasn't long after that I received a letter from Sarah and Alan Berry, who also live in the Northeast, inviting me to join them in a house blessing for their new home base.



It was wonderful to meet again Cyndy Geraghty of Keene, NH. We had met at a NC gathering a few years before but had not really had the chance to chat and get to know each other then. Our two and a half hour drive together to Sarah and Alan's house and back more than made up for that. How wonderful to

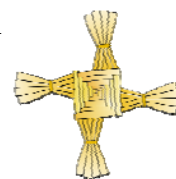
make that connection. Pleasant surprises abounded when we arrived as Nancy Hammond was there and Jeff Sutheran was to join us via videocam.

We said midday Office in Alan and Sarah's bright (and still decorated for Christmas) living room. Then the group of us began at the front door and began the house blessing from the Celtic Daily Prayer. When we got to the office, we contacted Jeff via Skype and he blessed that space. It was just a wonderful process of dedicating this space to God and blessing Alan and Sarah with all good things at the same time.

Then we were treated to a lovely meal, Hetton-style, with coronation chicken with baked potato (yum!), salad and a chocolate bread pudding. And, of course, a piping hot pot o' tea!

Now that we've found each other, we're hoping this is the first of many gatherings of people connected with NC and those interested in learning more about the community.

A pagan chieftain from the neighbourhood of Kildare was dying. Christians in his household sent for Brigid to talk to him about Christ. When she arrived the chieftain was raving. As it was impossible to instruct this delirious man, hopes for his conversion seemed doubtful. Brigid sat down at his bedside and began consoling him. As was customary, the dirt floor was strewn with rushes both for warmth and cleanliness. Brigid stooped down and started to weave them into a cross, fastening the points together. The sick man asked what she was doing. She began to explain the cross, and as she talked his delirium quieted and he questioned her with growing interest. Through her weaving, he converted and was baptized at the point of death. Since then the cross of rushes has been venerated in Ireland. Brigid's cross has long been thought to ward off fire and illness in houses where it is hung.



I really enjoyed spending some time with Vince and Di Smith at the Durham Gathering - and renewing our companionship as a result! I asked Vince if we could print some of his reflections from that day which I found on his blog, and he said yes!

I had an opportunity to actually sit and listen to someone and have no pressure to listen for acts, issues, etc. - a refreshing change from the usual work and work-style life that I seem to live. It is amazing how malleable we can be. Still after listening to Roy & Trevor, we were then asked to consider our thoughts.

Well. I did, and I pondered and considered how the following three things can be positive and negative in terms of influencing who I am and how I act: **Reviewing**, **Regretting** and **Rating**. I thought that *Reviewing* was looking back at what had happened, how I reacted, how I changed; *Regretting* wasn't only just thinking that I could have done that instead, or wouldn't it have been better to say that, but it was about what would have happened if I had chosen this rather than that. This was, no doubt influenced by the fact we were in Durham and surrounded by the University places. I was considering what might have been my life if I had got that SRC research grant for particle physics at Durham. And my bugbear - **Rating** - always looking at someone else and thinking "if only I could be as * as they are" (insert whatever as the *). My ratings are always me being lower than someone else.

Of course, all of these are good in the proper balance. I need to review and assess my past actions, thoughts so that they might change my future actions and thoughts. I might compare myself to others as having aspirational challenges, but 'regrets' is probably a good trigger word for the negative aspects of most of these. What is in the past is done and unchangeable - however, positively learning and changing from the past in the present is good. This led me to my fourth R - **Realisation** - being true, being content and knowing yourself - having a proper perspective. In this I can count on several benchmarks and people who will put me right.

PS We sat for a while in Durham Cathedral - great place - stunning building and so much peace.



*You may have seen Community Companion **David Pott** featured prominently in the media these past few weeks, as he has been leading the 'March of the Abolitionists' to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. This has been an issue which David has carried in his heart for many years, since God spoke to him very clearly about it. David writes:*

'In the autumn of 1997, I woke up one morning with the image of the snake on the pole from the book of Numbers in my mind. When I asked the Lord what it meant, the pole turned into the Greenwich



meridian line (zero longitude) and the snake into a path weaving along the line with people from different nations walking along it. I had led a number of reconciliation journeys before, but those few waking moments have led to many more miles of reconciliation journeys under the overall title of the 'Lifeline

Expedition'. The first major initiative was the Jubilee 2000 Lifeline Walk in England and during the course of that time walking with people from meridian line nations such as Mali, Togo, Ghana and also a slave descendent from Martinique, it became clear that the major reconciliation issue was that of the legacy of the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade."

The March of the Abolitionists is a 250 mile walk - in yolks and chains - from the port of Hull to Westminster, and represents the climax



of the epic seven-year Lifeline Expedition. Arriving in London on 24th March, the walkers joined thousands of other people on the 'Walk of Witness' when they were led by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to commemorate the Bicentenary of the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade.

There is more information on our website at:
<http://www.northumbriacommunity.org/Crossroads/crossroadsDavePamPott.htm>
or on David's own site:
<http://www.lifelineexpedition.co.uk/mota/>

We'll look forward to hearing some of David's reflections from the walk, and his own 'inner journey' too. But first we'll let him take his boots off and have a well-earned rest!

The financial realities of life are a constant companion on our journey of faith. We've asked Trevor Miller to keep us abreast of the ongoing financial situation:

Charles Dickens in his book *David Copperfield* puts into the mouth of Mr Micawber the supreme standard to which all financial statements aspire. 'Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen and six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery.'

If this is true then our ongoing trend of budget deficit will eventually result in misery, as despite careful stewardship and vigilant accounting, to date we have spent £4,523 more than our income. It is a cause for much

thanksgiving that more Companions have begun to give or have increased their giving. Although this is a positive trend it is unfortunately still the case that along with the growth and development of those wanting to draw from our life and resources as a Community, there is still a huge gap in terms of a corresponding growth in our regular support base. This means that although we are in a better position, we are still a long way off being financially viable.

Another positive note is that we have been given a gift from the Lyndhurst Trust specifically for improvements to fabric, which has met huge needs at the Nether Springs. Lots of new carpet, a new washing machine, oil-filled radiators, a new laser printer and computer monitor in the General Office have been bought, and there are

plans to re-gravel the drive. These one-off gifts are life giving!

Retreat income is holding up even though the House was closed for 5 weeks over Christmas/New Year and 2 weeks for carpet fitting. We do our best to keep costs down, but fuel prices have continued to rise, as must the paying of a living wage. Rents will increase by 5% later this year. As we have said before, there are also much bigger issues we have to wrestle with that were not a factor in earlier years – minimum wage, pensions, ever-increasing costs of running a growing organisation and the implications of the current leadership transition highlighting many important gaps that need to be financed adequately. Can you help us in this important area?

Ingrid Cumming so enjoyed re-reading this gem that she offered to write her own review of it:

A TREE FULL OF ANGELS

by MACRINA WIEDERKEHR

This book has been around the Community for many years. I first read it three years ago and found it so helpful that it has become a book to read again and again. The subtitle is 'Seeing the holy in the ordinary' and the first chapter sets the scene very well with a story of homecoming.

The third chapter is my particular favourite because it encourages me to focus on the small, everyday beauties of life – to be present in the moment. Abbot Jerome Kodell calls the book 'a personalised invitation to stop, look and listen for God in the here and now'.

After some chapters which encourage us to seek God through waiting and meditating on Scripture the book finishes with practical suggestions and examples of ways to listen to God: through Scripture, literature and correspondence.

This book is good for the weary soul – it becomes a friend with whom you wish to meet on a regular basis.

How Do We Sing the Lord's Song In a Strange Land?

Do we sing of mourning while others weep,
Of joy when others laugh?
Do we sing of journeys long and sweet;
Of struggles on the path?
Shall we sing our dance or dance our song
To beats of unheard drums,
Invite to sing and dance along
The strange and broken ones?
Let's sing of kings who dine with crowds of
knights and peasants both
Let's sing of bridegrooms seeking brides
With whom to pledge their troth.
Let's sing of sons who, far from home,
Take up co-suffering love
To wage a war 'gainst hidden foe
Laying down their lives too young.
Let's sing of journey's end, and feasts
And end of tears and pain,
Forgiving grace, majestic seats
And everlasting reign.
Let's sing in whispers, barely heard,
Or alleluias loud,
From faithful, hopeful hearts of love
For ours, an Easter God!

Diane Sekuloff

**Who is it that you
seek?**

At the end of June we will hold a Community Gathering in Little Gidding, Cambs, in Ferrar House—the home of Tony & Judith Hodgson. We asked Tony to tell us something about their journey, and about Little Gidding, to whet our appetite....

“...the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time.”

These words of T.S. Eliot from the last of his Four Quartets, entitled Little Gidding, rang in our ears as my wife Judith and I left Northumberland after five years at Berwick-upon-Tweed and three years of a very happy association with the Northumbria Community, to take up the post of joint wardens of Ferrar House, Little Gidding.

For over thirty years earlier we had been instrumental in setting up the second family community on that spot. For four years we had brought up our two small daughters, built up a round of prayer using the Taizé Office (Celtic Daily Prayer did not exist in those days!), welcomed visitors, volunteers and residents from all over the world and farmed our eight acres of land organically. At the end of those years we moved on in the - probably false - belief that it was not doing our children any good. How wrong we were in the long term is shown by the fact that Susanna, our elder daughter, went on to live in three different Community settings, and Jessica, with her husband and three children applied to re-start the family community here at Little Gidding – sadly this did not work out, which is why her elderly parents have taken on the job of nurturing the place back into life, primarily as a house of prayer and hospitality which will of course include a lot of availability and vulnerability.

After we left Little Gidding we handed on the baton to Robert Van der Weyer and under his leadership the community of Christ the Sower came into being and lasted for twenty years up until 1998.

Both these recent communities took as their model the original seventeenth century community founded by Nicholas Ferrar: as many people know, Little Gidding was the scene of an unusual social experiment in the seventeenth century. At a time when Roundheads and Cavaliers were attacking each other across Britain it provided an oasis of peace and sanity under the Royalist label in Cromwell's county, Huntingdonshire.



The community at Little Gidding survived for just thirty two years between the beginning of the reign of Charles 1st and the death of Cromwell. Its ordered existence, which included young families and elderly widows, attracted Puritan, poets, courtiers and the King himself who visited it at least three times.

Since its dissolution in 1657 it has been visited and celebrated in every generation and in 1936 the poet T.S. Eliot came as a pilgrim, writing his famous poem, Little Gidding, the last of the Four Quartets, at the height of the blitz in 1942.

All those who have come to this place have found a spot of unique beauty and tranquillity, the little church being the only physical reminder of its distinguished past. Despite being situated only two miles from the Great North Road and less than seventy miles from London the whole area has an unchanging quality that refreshes the soul.

The nineteenth century farmhouse, originally called Manor Farm and more recently renamed Ferrar House after the original founder of the community, Nicholas Ferrar, has again opened its doors for visitors



to come and stay as well as to relax for a day or an hour or two. Well appointed bedrooms, meeting rooms and dining room can comfortably accommodate overnight guests, day visitors and those who call in as pilgrims and visitors. We look forward to welcoming you on June 30th!

Anyone who would like to know more is welcome to come to visit, write to the Wardens, Ferrar House, Little Gidding, Huntindon, PE28 5RJ, ring 01832 293 383 or look at our website, www.ferrarhouse.co.uk

Prayer is not like practicing tennis alone where we hit one ball after another over the net. It is more like the game itself: the balls get delivered back into the court.

Tad Dunne SJ

Creative Arts Workshop

Ballydugan 12th to 18th August 2007

Come and join Roy and Shirley Searle, Nick & Anita and Erin Haigh at Ballydugan in Northern Ireland for a week of creativity. Using the pattern of the 'monastic' day we'll establish a creative space in which to imagine, write, pray, dance, sing, paint, eat & drink - sharing together as well as having opportunity to relax and explore this beautiful area of County Down and its association with Patrick. Join us for what promises to be an exciting and enriching week.

Accommodation is in the delightful and very comfortable cottages at Ballydugan. Visit the website: www.ballydugan.com

Cost for full board accommodation is £200 per person. For further details, contact jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org

Places are limited so please book early! Send a deposit of £50 per person (cheques made payable to Northumbria Community Trust) to: Jean Watson at the Community Office address.

Further details will be sent in due course but in the meantime, please do reserve a place! If booked early, there are good value flights available to Belfast City or Belfast International airports from most UK airports. Transport to and from the airport can be arranged from the airport or from the ferry port, Belfast Harbour.

Wanna see a Wallaby?

I know it's almost April 1st, but I promise you, this is NOT a wind-up!



Here's a picture of Wilma, who came on retreat at Hetton. She took up residence in the Prayer Garden. We looked forward to regular feeding (and photographic!) sessions.

Apparently a number of wallabies escaped from captivity in nearby Belford when their fence was blown down! We've told the RSPCA and the local Police, who are very laid-back about her escapades.. She has now moved on.

Czech in again next year...

A group of 27 Community folk travelled to Prague earlier this month, to join with the students at the International Baptist Theological Seminary for a 'Northumbrian Week'.



Keith Jones, Rector of IBTS had invited the Community to lead a week of lectures, activities and Community life in Prague as part of our ongoing and developing Partnership. Most of the students are from Eastern or Central European countries, and IBTS seeks to give them a 'broad-church' understanding of Christian expression. Many of the staff and students shared aspects of their stories with us - some of them harrowing, yet always inspiring. We learned together, shared stories together, ate, worshipped and had fun together—and by the end of the week it was clear to Keith that he wants to make it a regular feature of the IBTS 'academic' timetable. It really was a great time of fellowship, sharing and learning, and we saw another glimpse of what God is doing in building NC and IBTS together. So the Community will be back in Prague next March - and there are plenty of people who will tell you it's a trip not to be missed. We'll try to run a 'Czech your reflections' article soon. (Sorry for the gratuitous puns!)

Renewal of Vows

Each Easter season, we invite Community Companions to renew their 'Yes' to Community. Many of us will gather 'together' on Holy Island to do this, but many more will be in the 'alone' as we do this.

This year, we've decided to include the liturgy we will use at that time as an insert in Caim. We appreciate that not everyone will want to pray the words of commitment to following Christ in Community, but we thought it would be good to communicate those words of intention widely!

We'll be gathering on Holy Island on Easter Day, around Aidan's statue, at about 1215 - following the service in St. Mary's which begins at 1045. The tide is open from 0915 to 1730 that day.



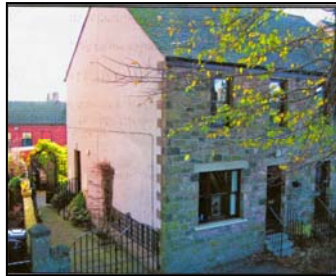
The newsy bit

We've kept our ear to the ground, and here's what we managed to pick up:

Richard Cumming, who was at Hetton for a year, has recently married Angie Game from North Carolina, where they are now living.

Some **Community folk in Honiton** are thinking of starting a group and Norma Charlton would like to hear from anyone in that area who would be interested. Email: norma.charlton@northumbriacommunity.org

Dave & Wendy Ward (and Susannah too!) have moved to Berwick this month. Wendy said "It has been a tumultuous journey as we have explored the possibility of moving to Northumberland over the last couple of years. But now it's happened!"



Meet Joshua, who has turned **Steve & Sheena Hewitt** into a couple of very proud grandparents!

Liisa Viitaniemi who was on the team at Hetton for five months recently made contact to let us know that she is now married to Rauno Seppanen. They met within a month of her return to Finland. As Liisa says 'Life has been rich and full of God's surprises!'

Paul Lucas is now a granddad! Daughter Josie had a little boy called Ronin, born on 5 February.

Watch out for the **Database Renewal Form** in the next issue of Caim!

Roy Searle recently celebrated his 50th birthday (and what's behind that look of surprise you're wearing?!) Marking it in style, he enjoyed a week which included some time alone in quiet reflection, as well as times in the company of lots of friends and family. A film night, walking in the mountains, visit to the ice cream parlour, Valentine's dinner, a monastery visit, a big party and the dedication of his grandson Isaac all featured in what was a memorable week. Doesn't do things by halves, does he?

We had an email from **Victoria Munsey** in Italy, and here's an extract: *"I'm still quite busy with my work with the Waldensian church,. Our Commission keeps busy with visiting some of the 59 churches in our district of Northern Italy and in designing and providing various training programmes, particularly those facilitating integration of our protestant brothers and sisters from Western Africa (mostly anglophones) who are joining our Waldensian congregations."*

Andy & Ange Foster sent these words about **Daniel**: "We are very thankful for the on-going prayer for Daniel's growth and well being. In the words of one of the long list of health professionals involved in his care he is 'a delightful little boy'! Daniel is now 12 lb 3 oz which is still tiny to many people but relatively gigantic to the 1lb 4oz at birth. Daniel is now smiling a great deal, grasping, holding and putting as much in his mouth as possible. He is now having his first tastes of solid foods, and is mostly breast fed, with one bottle of formula daily. He sleeps a fair amount at night and very little in the day. This week we had a family outing to midday prayer, this was Daniel's first time to Chapel – special!



Andy & Jude Philip in Linlithgow have taken safe delivery of Eilish Bethan, born on Wednesday 14th March weighing 8lbs 5oz. 'Eilish' is derived from names meaning 'noble' and 'God is my oath'. Nice! Many congrats to them, this is a special answer to many prayers.

Just space to squeeze in here two great recommendations: the book '**Utopian Dreams**' by **Tobias Jones** is creating a buzz about town, as is the film '**Into Great Silence**' - for those lucky enough to find a cinema showing it!

Do please send us your snippets of news and happenings for this page, just a sentence or two will do! Send it to caim@northumbriacommunity.org

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