

# CAIM THE NORTHUMBRIA COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER



Issue No 9  
Summer 1999

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

## What kind of Community?

This article is an abridged version of a talk given by David Archer at Easter Workshop this year.

What would a Christian Community look like which was based on John's gospel alone? As part of the Community research team exploring the 'Rediscovery of the Johannine Tradition for the Contemporary Age', I was asked to look at this intriguing question. Among many, four distinctives stand out.

### A Christ centred Community

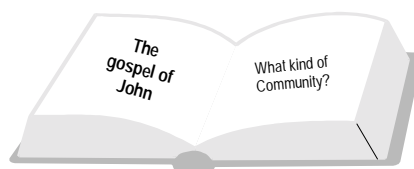
Obvious? Yes, but this needs to be said because the focus of Christian Communities can drift. Other things, important in themselves, eg vision, buildings, points of doctrine, leaders etc. can all detract from the heart, and the heart is Jesus. Right from the start this gospel presents Jesus in your face. We are to believe in HIM, not as a one off act but as a continuing relationship. The present tense of John 3:16 encourages us to go on believing; to enjoy a continuing relationship with Jesus who is both fully human and fully Divine. The one who gets tired and thirsty, who weeps and is troubled about the future is also the Word made flesh, the pre-existent Son of God through whom all things were made, who was with the Father before appearing in flesh. This relationship is based on personal knowledge but it is a knowledge rooted in truth. Who Jesus is matters! At this year's Brit Awards the "Album of the year" was won by the group 'Manic Street Preachers. Its title 'This is my truth tell me yours.' This is a sign of the age in which we live where the only absolute allowed is that there are no absolutes. Something may be true for you but not necessarily for me. Jesus is only part of the picture, one item in a pick and mix world, on a par with everything else. In such a world the gospel of John is not necessarily popular as it is full of absolutes. As our morning Office puts it 'To whom shall we go.....we have believed and have come to know that you (Jesus) are the Holy One of God; no-one else! God definitively and uniquely revealed himself in Jesus. He is the Way, the Truth, the Life. In John it's not what is true for me need not be true for you but Truth period.

So while it's good to be together at this time, to deepen our relationships as a Community and to value our distinctives

and to renew our commitment to the Rule, our primary focus has to be on Jesus, renewing our commitment to Him, nurturing devotion to Him, learning afresh what it means to lean on his breast and hear God's heartbeat.

### A Relational Community

Community by definition cannot be individualistic. Yes, Jesus related to people



as individuals but as they believed and began to follow, they became part of His Community. The slogan is true that 'Christians do it together' because who they are and what they do is rooted in the nature of God. John's Gospel presents a very relational God – One whose very nature is interpersonal relationships between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Jesus majors on his relationship with the Father, which is the source of life for him, and promises the gift of the Holy Spirit, another like Him, who would take his place and come alongside as Helper. So for each believer, relationship to Jesus means knowing the Father and being indwelt by His Spirit. This will express itself, according to John, not only in what we believe but in how we behave. A true Community of Jesus' disciples will have the hallmark of love for one another. Love and unity will be signs to a watching world of the truth of what we say about Jesus.

Robert Fisk wrote that 'we cry for the Kosovan Albanians, perhaps we even love them, but we will not die for them'. John thankfully demonstrates that the sort of love Jesus is talking about is a sacrificial, life-laying down sort of love, finding fullest expression in his willingness to die for those he loves. It is love expressed in servanthood, and far from being cosy, this 'loving one another' is as Jesus showed, being available and vulnerable, a willingness to wash another's feet, even the feet of those who will deny

and betray us.

Relationships are foundational to the Northumbria Community – people before work, function, role. It is a hard and painful commitment to love one another because coming face to face with others necessitates coming face to face with self. This is what Jean Vanier meant when he talked about Community being 'a terrible place.' This is where the importance of the cell is seen. Being alone as well as together, as alone before God we work through issues and relationships that can then be addressed together. Even this carries no guarantee of success, as the experience of this Community over this last year shows. We have known the pain and heartache of broken relationships and shattered unity. However, the Easter story reminds us that although such love can be rejected it can also be rebuilt, so that through our struggles and failures we can continue to aspire always to 'do it together' in love and unity.

### A Missionary Community

John's gospel clearly states that these discoveries about Jesus are too good to keep to ourselves. Jesus is for the world! God so loved the world – the cosmos – the whole created order and Jesus is the light of the world, the Saviour of the world. God is a 'sending' God. The Father sends the Son; the Son sends the Holy Spirit who sends the disciples into the world to reflect the light of Jesus. The disciples are sent to continue the words and works of Jesus in the world and are commissioned for this task. Not escaping from the world but continuing the way of doing mission modelled by Jesus. This means doing and saying what the Father gives us to do and say. All of which flows out of the Father/Son relationship. So our mission as a Community is rooted in hearts first seeking after God so that mission flows from the monastery, where people leaning on Jesus

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What kind of Community?

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breast hear God's heartbeat for the world and then seek to share it.

### A Cross centred Community

John warns us that in the world there is an enemy who is out to cause trouble and schism. The very opposition levelled at Jesus will be levelled at those who follow Jesus and who are indwelt with his life. As

## Through the noisy city flow 's a silent river

**Jonathan and Lynda Roe of Hull**

For the last 4 years we have been going on pilgrimages which included an element of escape. They helped us get away from our urban life in Hull and into the more peaceful surroundings of the countryside. There is an almost audible sigh of relief in our soul whenever we put the tower blocks of North Hull behind us and head off along the winding River Hull towards Beverley, Lastingham, Goodmanham or Whitby. The symbolic leaving of the city in order to find God can fool us into thinking that God isn't in the city; that he is the God of the trees, rivers and hills, but not of the parks, factories and housing estates.

Last year we built a poustinia (a prayer hut) in our backyard by knocking together our coalhouse and outside loo. We were partly inspired to do this by Catherine Doherty's idea of the 'poustinia in the market place' meaning the finding of God in the desert of the urban landscape. We asked Liz Culling (Rector of leafy, rural, idyllic Cherry Burton) to come and give the poustinia a good old Celtic blessing. We squeezed into the poustinia and stood in silence for a few moments. After prayer Liz remarked that she couldn't believe how quiet it was in this urban poustinia. Being a good country girl she fully expected our urban desert hut to be filled with the sounds of sirens, police helicopters and the omnipresent rumble of traffic. But in reality most urban settings, at night at least, are much quieter than rural ones. Later that year after a typically hard day of communicating with a group of stiff-necked pilgrims I decided not to sleep with the rest of the group in Lastingham parish hall. I chose instead to sleep outside on the soft grass in the garden. I had a really difficult time sleeping: it was like trying to sleep in a rural version of Piccadilly Circus. Bats squeaked incessantly, furry little things sniffed their way round and round me, owl's hooted and trees creaked.

We learned that if God can only be found in total silence then he can never be found because true audible silence is almost an impossibility. Both the city and the country are noisy places. We learned that God speaks through the sounds of both settings, and if we want to find silence then we have to find it within ourselves.

With these thoughts in mind we were inspired to develop an urban pilgrimage for our city - a route that could be followed through the middle of Hull which allowed people to find God in the middle of a city. We arranged for the inaugural pilgrimage to coincide with the celebrations going on in Hull all this year to mark the granting of

a royal charter to the city in 1299. In early May, 20 pilgrims aged between 2 and 80 gathered on ASDA's car park to pilgrimage along the River Hull to that most sacred of shrines, Hull pier. We stopped on 3 occasions to meditate and pray taking as our theme 'through the noisy city flows a silent river'. We developed this idea by seeing the city as our lives and the river as the constantly flowing silence of the Holy Spirit within us. We read three liturgies developed by local people along the themes of our home life, our work life, and our interior life. We prayed for each other and for our city and sang God's praises in the warm spring sunshine. It was a wonderful day. People saw their city in a new light and some managed to find that interior peace that they only usually find on



country walks!

Maybe you would like to develop an urban pilgrimage route where you live. If you feel that learning from our experience may be of help to you then please feel free to get in touch.

Write to:- Jonathan and Lynda Roe, 8 Victoria Square, Ella St, Hull HU5 3AL

### Journeying with the Northumbria Community

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

## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Summer edition of CAIM the newsletter of the Northumbria Community. It's hard to believe that we are already half way through the last year of the 20th century. This current edition of our newsletter once again reflects the many and varied aspects of our Community's life and mission that we have been and are planning to be involved in. It never ceases to amaze us that God has taken such a diverse, struggling group of very ordinary people with nothing to offer but Availability and Vulnerability, and because of their deep desire to seek after God and be obedient to Him, has used them to bless so many lives. Why is this? It doesn't really matter but perhaps it's because we are pioneering a new way to live that has mirrored the heart's desire of many, sick of materialism and consumerism, for a different way to express the gospel. We are certainly counter culture in that we do not depend on the hope of results, of success, of achieving. We have faced the fact that our work may appear to be apparently worthless to many but this has helped us to be able to concentrate not on the results but on the value, the rightness, the truth of the work itself to which God has called us. We also value the relationships of those we work with. It's a wonderful thing not to have to prove anything or have anything to live up to or be driven by the expectations of others. It is enough to be where God wants us to be, doing what he wants us to do. The greatest good is the knowledge that you have allowed yourself, in the obedience of faith, to be used by God's love; not serving a fiction or a cause but simply following Jesus as Lord through the way of life he has called us to express as a geographically dispersed Community, united in heart, alone yet together. It is still very important to reflect through the pages of our newsletter the fact that we are so diverse, so widely dispersed. So please send in your articles, news snippets, experiences of God, prayer requests etc. They don't have to be anything other than reflecting who you are, where you are, for we have seen that it is in such obedience and simplicity that blessing is forthcoming.



**Community is the process of becoming united through a common experience of a core vision.** Jean Vanier.

a Community we need to be aware of the reality of that dimension but also to realise that Jesus has overcome the world ruled by the enemy Satan. For Jesus the Cross was clearly the place where the decisive victory was won and paradoxically the supreme revelation of the Fathers glory. It was the place where the work Jesus was sent to do by the Father was fulfilled. The cry on the cross 'it is finished' was not a despairing 'the games up' cry but one of victorious achievement. It has been accomplished, I've done it.

Out of death Jesus brings life, eternal life. The theme of Life is very prominent in John's gospel. Through the cross Jesus brings fullness of life. He is the light of life, the bread of life, the water of life. As we are true to Jesus and the work of his Spirit in and through us then our life as a Community will enable people to be more fully alive. Our words, activities, and relationships will be carriers of life and so we will be a Community of hope.

### Community Gatherings

We held a number of Community Gatherings this year and the trend continues as other such occasions are planned for the coming months. They are proving invaluable days for the wider Community to participate in the daily Office and other liturgies, learn more about the Community, meet new friends, renew relationships, pray, listen, learn and be creative. The next one is in York at St. Bede's Pastoral centre on Saturday July 1st from 10.30 - 4.30 to which everyone is welcome.



### Community Groups

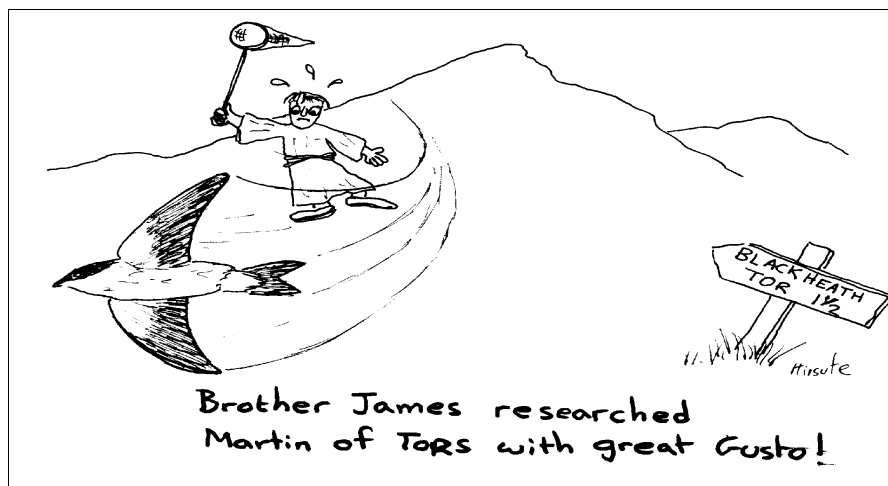
If you would like to be part of a Group in your area or would consider, (with help) starting or hosting a group or simply require more information about Community Groups; please contact Norma Charlton at 84 Kells Lane, Low Fell, Gateshead NE9 5XY. Or Tel: 0191 4878065

### The Best Easter Workshop – Ever!?

It may well be that the report for next year's workshop will be entitled the Best Easter Workshop – ever – 2, and so on for years to come. Be that as it may there is little doubt that the blessing of God was upon us in abundance as scores of Community Companions and Friends shared in a workshop programme with many highlights. The Nether Springs was bursting at the seams and many folks stayed with friends close by and came into Nether Springs each day. The atmosphere was filled with love and laughter as old friendships were renewed and new friendships made. A frequent comment made was the blessing of being able to put faces to names that had previously only been known through the Prayer Guide. As to the programme itself space does not allow an adequate appraisal of all that was shared over the four day period but among the highlights were the silent expressions of vulnerability and love in the washing of one another's feet at the Maundy Thursday Eucharist. The powerful teaching of David Archer that stretched the mind and touched the heart in equal measure.

The incredible amount of work put in by Andy Raine and his team working with the children, and producing for them a wonderful teaching resource on the whole of John's Gospel. The absolute hilarity as Milly the goat hitched a lift with Norma Wise on the way to the Cuthbert's Cave car park, and promptly sat on the gear stick making it impossible to travel more than 10 mph. With all the liturgies and the Cross in the car no-one could begin without them and yet, the sense of God as we walked the Stations of the Cross to the Cave that Good Friday was very real. Laughter and tears intermingling in hearts united through the Cross.

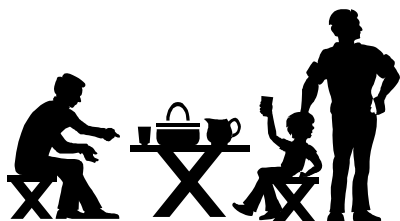
The Easter vigil which began late evening with the reading of chapters 13 to 21 of John's gospel and the never to be forgotten singing of 'Led like a lamb to the slaughter' around a bonfire in the prayer garden, with the joyous refrain of 'He's alive, He's alive, He is risen, Hallelujah' piercing the silence of the first moments of Easter day. The one hundred and sixty five people (along with the many unable to be present) who said their Yes to Jesus through embracing again the way of life of Availability and Vulnerability. The very real sense of God in the Priory and at Aidan's statue when quite spontaneously the folk from the Northern Cross pilgrimage joined with us in dancing and singing 'Christ as a light'. The dancing of Iona's 'Here I stand' on the high heugh overlooking Cuthbert's Isle and the baptism's in the freezing sea which warmed many hearts. Then what can be said about the concert, ceilidh and fun night at our own St Cuthbert's Church at North Sunderland? It was a fitting way to round off a memorable time of togetherness as once again laughter abounded as we relaxed together and enjoyed an amazing range of poetry, storytelling, dancing, would be comedians and magicians, with the highlight being the rendition of the Bee's Gee's 'Tragedy' by our own boy band being fit for an appearance on 'Stars in their Eyes.' The lowpoint being another rendition of 'Tragedy' by an older motley crew with scurrilous and scandalous lyrics aimed at the editor of this newsletter. In reflecting on our time together it's so hard to capture in mere words the unity and love so evident among us. Yes, it may well have been, the Best Easter Workshop – Ever, 1. That is, until next year when you can decide for yourself!



## Musings from the Garden

Roy Searle

I am one of those who count themselves very blessed to have a garden. I rejoice and delight in its beauty at this time of the year. What appeared barren and unfruitful in the dark winter months is now a profusion of life, growth and colour. The hard work of preparation, digging over, weeding, sowing and planting has now given rise to fruitfulness and profusion which has brought much encouragement and joy. Now is a season of tending, discerning and taking appropriate action, of learning to distinguish between that which is good and that which is detrimental to the garden, like the bindweed that if left threatens to choke the life out of other plants. It's a time to be reactive and responsive to what is already happening rather than being proactive and trying to determine outcomes. Sitting in the garden the other day with family and friends, enjoying the delights of a summer evening barbecue, I reflected on the mission of the Community and saw the



parallels with the above analogy. Many of the things that we have prayed for, worked hard at, toiled over, longed and hoped for, are now beginning to be realised. Of course the continued pioneering that is part of who we are will mean that we are called at times to be proactive but what we are now seeing is the fruit of our life and prayer as a Community and the realisation of those things that God revealed would happen. Our response is therefore, according to our Rule of Life, to be available for participation in mission of various kinds according to the calling and initiatives of the Spirit. Consequently we are privileged to see, share and rejoice in the diversity of the Spirit's work in the life of the Community, in both its life and mission. Individuals, together with groups and teams from the Community are carrying the torch of the gospel in all kinds of places and expressions where the Father has led. Of particular encouragement to us all is the way in which we are seeing the transition from the few to the many. We are now handing down the story God has given us, to a new generation of people, who weren't part of the Community's early days but who have nevertheless been called by God to share in the same vocation and journey with us. I write this within hours of our re-

vamped Community Council's first weekend together, which was a huge encouragement. Men and women whom the Lord has drawn together are now seeking to be actively involved in sharing the responsibilities allied to our vocation and vision. For example, people overseeing or helping with the Community Groups and Gatherings, regional developments, prayer and intercession, Cloisters trading, mission, trust legalities and financial matters, publishing, soul friends, retreats, research etc. The sense of being Community together, and the value of collective wisdom and consensus is an important component in the Community's ongoing journey, committed to the Lord, to one another and our calling. The pressures to survive financially, to maintain our ethos and be faithful to the vision God has laid on our hearts remain but a right sense of being both alone and together in Community is being deepened. The need to keep telling the story and living the life God has called us to embrace is foundational to the life and mission of the Community. This is what keeps us true to our vocation and builds on the foundation laid through the Community's founders and early pioneers. Inevitably, (though it still comes as a huge surprise to us) the influence of the Community has grown considerably in recent years and as we engage with culture in numerous ways, that growth and influence will continue beyond our means or desire to control its outcome. That is in God's hands alone. What is imperative however is that those of us who are called to this Way of Life, to the embracing of a new monasticism, retain the story, keep telling it and living the life. Pray God that what Bede said of Aidan's Community may be true of us, that they lived as they taught. That as we face the many challenges and opportunities which comes with the Community developing and growing, together with the growth of work and mission initiatives, we may be guarded against the temptations of such things as popularity, novelty and necessity and instead be characterised by integrity.

The next few months see a number of happenings that will demand much prayer, preparation, time and energy. Do pray for those who will be out wandering, leading, performing and presenting at various places in Wales, Ireland, France, as well as Arts Festivals in Cheltenham, Edinburgh, Cornwall, Bath, Cambridge and throughout Northumbria, particularly the events on Lindisfarne, in the Tyne Valley, Glendale and Tyneside. We con-

tinue to work with churches of all backgrounds, size and traditions, but are increasingly moving beyond the walls of the church into other settings, sharing with both believers and unbelievers alike. Involvement with people engaged in the arts, education and the media has provided many challenges and opportunities for which we covet wisdom and discernment. Pray for those of us who have decisions to make in these areas, that they may be in keeping with our calling.

The relationship with Bible Society continues to be a significant and fruitful partnership that has brought many encouragement's and is consistent with the way God has been leading us as a Community over many years.

Celtic Fire is developing and being taken on the road throughout this year and into the new millennium. We are currently exploring the possibilities of a Cathedral Tour with Celtic Fire in the future. One of the prophecies we were given some years ago about Cathedrals is coming to realisation. We have been invited to share in six Cathedrals next year and be prayer supporters and advocates for Adrian Snell's requiem 'The Cry' which will tour Cathedrals throughout Britain and possibly Europe in the autumn and winter of 2000/1.

We are also intrigued and delighted by the growth in interest in the Community by friends in Canada and America. It has been a joy to welcome folk from across the Atlantic at Nether Springs and plans are in hand for a Community team from Northumbria to go to Canada and America next autumn. Watch this space!

The monk is not defined by his task, his usefulness; in a certain sense he is supposed to be useless, because his mission is not to do this or that job but to be a man of God.

**Thomas Merton**

## News from the Telling Place

Robin Noad

First of all Karen, Robin, Geoff, Angela and Roy would like to thank everyone who has been praying for us and showing practical support, help and hospitality – especially during the recent Dennis Dewey tour. We greatly appreciate it and YOU! The initiative seeks to work on a relational basis and it's really great when we meet up with fellow community members when we're 'on the road'. Please continue to pray for us as we enter a busy summer period. Dennis was a delightful guy as well as a superb performer and inspiring teacher. We had very positive feedback wherever we went and we were all delighted at how the tour went. It was great that when we came to say "farewell", we knew that he would also be with us at Greenbelt to build on what has already been started on the tour.

You should find enclosed with this CAIM a copy of our Storytelling leaflet – if you would like more to give to any friends who you know would be interested in the initiative, do let us know. Our newsletter, which gives information on what we are up to, is also enclosed! It contains information on other (secular) storytelling events – which we would encourage anyone to attend. In doing this you can experience for yourselves the range and diversity of a storytelling festival. One of our major events is another storytelling tent at Greenbelt. We have already been in contact with those of you who will be working with us in the tent. However we would encourage anyone else who is attending the festival to join us for Office (morning and evening) or any of the other workshops, storyswaps, seminars etc on offer over the weekend. Hope to see you there!

### Recommended Reading

"Hebridean Altars" by Alistair MacLean, one of the source texts used in compiling some of the notes and Office meditations in 'Celtic Daily Prayer' has now been re-issued as a paperback by Hodder & Stoughton. The book has long been out of print, and much sought after by those who have found helpful excerpts and quotations from it in books by Martin Reith, David Adam and in our own publications. At only £4.99 it is well worth having a personal copy to dip into. The ISBN: if you want to order it is 0 340 73557 0

## Community Formation

The process of change from Members, Companions and Friends to a two fold and different understanding of what it means to be a Companion or Friend of the Northumbria Community is still going on. Literally scores of letters have still to be acknowledged and answered together with putting in place a simple, practical, yet flexible process of what it means to be journeying with the Community. It is not always right simply to presume and so it would be of enormous help if those who were in the old categories of members and companions (and have not yet done so), could notify Ellen Niven in the Community Office if they do not wish to continue as Companions. If we don't hear from you we will automatically transfer your name to the new Companions list.

### FINANCE

We are so grateful to all who support the Community financially in often costly, sacrificial ways. In seeking to be obedient to God and maintaining our commitment to risky living our budget is huge. Everything possible is being done to exercise wise and responsible stewardship but it remains true that we need a substantial increase in regular and if possible covenanted giving to continue the work God has called us to do. If you can help in any way please contact the Finance Office at the Nether Springs. Please join us in praying for a Jubilee where all debts are cleared and generosity is paramount.

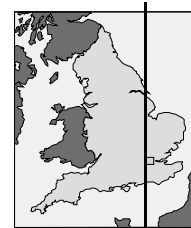
### Annual Retreat

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

## Meridian Millennium Way Pilgrimage

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

As the new millennium dawns, the meridian line (the line running at zero longitude from the North to the South Poles) is becoming a central focus of celebrations, particularly where it passes through Greenwich, from where time is measured. The MMWP is seeking to establish a new 260 mile signed



walking route along the Meridian Line from Cleethorpes to Peacehaven. The aim is for the route to also form a modern day "pilgrimage" for walkers to help

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

The MMWP, 58 Geoffrey Road, London, SE4 1NT. Tel 0181 692 8271 or email [jerry.whitehead@virgin.net](mailto:jerry.whitehead@virgin.net)

### Significant places on the Celtic Arc

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

## CLOISTERS

### New Daily Office CD

Ian Corsie.

The big news for Cloisters is that the new Daily Office CD, entitled 'Celtic Daily Prayer from the Northumbria Community', is complete and will be available for distribution through Cloisters at the beginning of July. This has proved an exciting project: Jeff and Jill Sutheran and their team of musicians, singers and speakers have been able to benefit from the professionalism of Chris Norton, a very experienced producer of Christian music CDs. The result is a very high-quality recording of music and liturgies that will be an important personal and corporate worship resource; and not just for Community members, but also for a much wider audience. The CD starts with 14 tracks of the musical versions of the prayers in the Daily Offices, then there are complete spoken versions of Morning, Midday and Evening Prayer and finally all 7 versions of Compline, with a musical background to them as an aid to personal evening worship. It all comes to 75 minutes worth of listening, which will be extremely good value at the introductory mail order price of £10 (£11.50 including p&p); it will be sold into trade outlets at a recommended retail price of £12.99 and the cover has been designed with this general trade sale in mind. It will be a good way of explaining the Community to friends who ask about it. Use the enclosed order form to order your copies. And please promote it widely so that this product also becomes a very useful source of funds for the Community. If you feel you could place a free sample to good effect then contact Ian Corsie on 01289 387257. Before you ask, it will not be available in an audio tape version for the moment, but this will follow on later. The printed music of the first 14 tracks will also be made available soon. You will notice that the enclosed order form also includes a space to order the new Daily Office cards. These provide Morning, Midday and Evening Prayer on a single A4 card folded into 3 so it will slip into a pocket or handbag. They come in packs of 10 for £3.50 and are mainly intended as a group resource (but can of course also be useful for individual use). Nancy Hammond has been very busy these last few weeks displaying and selling Cloisters cards at the Christian Resources Exhibition and other conferences. Profits from all these activities (and the cost of the items sold is kept very low because Nancy produces most of the cards herself) go into Community funds.



The True 'Poustinik' is drawn from his 'cell' with compassion and love for fellow Humanity !!

### Could this be you ?

Roy Searle

We need folk who would be willing to explore the idea of helping with the Community's publications. There are a number of writing projects being undertaken at present and further work is anticipated both on 'in house' publications and also with commercial publishers. If you would like to be considered, have ideas, can write, proof read, design, draw, audio type and can work from home please contact Cloisters at Nether Springs.

As the Community teams go out on mission we are always seeking to involve more Companions and Friends. In trying to discern appropriate teams, if you are open to being a part of such ventures do please drop us a line at the Mission Office at Nether Springs.

### Are you receiving me ?

Jeff Sutheran

In the last few weeks, the telephone system at the Nether Springs has been replaced. The new system is modern with lots more features than the old one – the most important being that it works reliably! Our intention is to have the phone answered by a living, breathing person at any time between 10 and 4, Monday to Friday. The number for the Community Office is the same – 01289 388235 – and this number is being used as the main contact for all the various offices, including Mission and Cloisters. The exception to this is Storytellers – although they share the same general office as Ellen and Ruth, they have a separate line on 01289 388477. We also have a dedicated fax facility on 01289 388510, which is available even outside office hours. For the growing numbers of us taking to cyberspace, you can email the Community at northumbriacommunity@bigfoot.com the Storytellers are at thetellingplace@bigfoot.com and Cloisters at act1@bigfoot.com. If you have email, be sure to let Ellen and Ruth know. It's good to talk....!

### Representatives

Roy Searle

There are a number of conferences being organised this year for Christian communities that we have been invited to attend. If you are a Companion or Friend of the Community and would like to know more about the following and the possibility of representing us at these events please write to the Community Office asap.

Friday 30th July - Sunday 1st August

**Focus for the Future.** Association of Christian Communities/Networks Gathering in Selly Oak, Birmingham. Speakers include Therese Vanier of L'Arche.

Saturday 21st - Saturday 28th August

**European Christian Communities Conference** on Iona. This will be a great opportunity to meet and share with folk from other communities in Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Romania, Ukraine, Croatia, Lithuania and other countries in eastern and central Europe.

Monday 18th - Wednesday 20th October

**Millennium Forum on Evangelisation** at Sion Catholic Community in Brentwood, Essex. This will draw together a number of Catholic and Protestant communities across Britain, Ireland and the rest of Europe for the three days.

### INTERCESSORS

To know more about how you can be part of this vital ministry phone Norma Wise of Newton Aycliffe on 01325 312930.

### BOOK AMNESTY

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

## Upper Springs

Andy Raine of Holy Island writes

When I first came to the island in 1976 I was very concerned that there was nothing conspicuously Christian to be found here and no provision to make contact with anyone able to 'wash feet' of seekers, pilgrims and visitors. How things have changed! St Mary's is increasingly friendly towards the average tourist with daily prayers to slide in amongst but also a board to pin requests to and helpful display boards, icons and also Kate Tristram's excellent pamphlets.

St Aidan's is partly redecorated, carpeted and open each day from 10am when we do Morning Office. People pop in to pray, and often read about 'The House that John Built, the Lindisfarne Gospels or 'the Brendan' story! St Cuthbert's URC is nearly all re-developed as a pilgrim centre with display, suggested routes for prayer walks and Trade craft stall. Marygate House is still a fully staffed small conference house catering in the main for retreat groups, and educational parties.

Mark & Mary Fleeson (from our Community) at Farne house in the main street have Burning Light bookshop selling music, books, crafts, puppets and art materials. Ray Simpson accommodates some visitors on retreat at Starbank cottage which he now calls 'Lindisfarne Retreat' Recently he had friends buy North View guesthouse for use as a retreat centre.

All of this is exciting, though a little overwhelming for the Island folk at times. By the time you count up all the staff, their families, retired staff or clergy and those about to arrive we would outnumber those employed in fishing and farming combined! The whole population here is only 160.

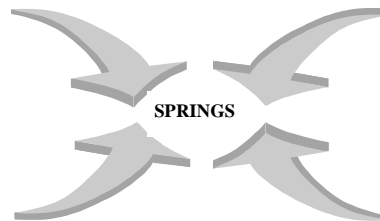
Anna and I are kept busy not only with our kids but with groups and individuals visiting the Island. In between times I write and have been busy with final corrections on manuscripts for Anna's booklet 'To each their Anamchara' which we worked on with Amund Karner of Aberdeen. I have also worked on the Motivational Gifts material which Mo Jowett of Harrogate was helping me to get finished. Two weeks after our family returned home from staying with Mike & Mo to complete the writing Mo had a brain haemorrhage and another bleed two weeks later which was fatal. Anna and I were asked to dance "Here I stand, looking out to sea" at Mo's funeral and now new seats are to be set in her memory on either side of the ruined chapel on the top of the Heugh, the real high place of the Island, overlooking the Priory, St Cuthbert's Island, the mainland and out to sea.

We trust that we will know the right times to journey from the Island in order to participate in mission and other activities and when to be here, as part of the praying presence on Holy Island.

## SPRINGS SUMMER CAMP 1999

Andy Raine

Hard up, but in need of a holiday? The Springs Summer camp for 1999 is to be held from Friday July 30th to Saturday August 7th at St.Mary's Centre, Wy-cliffe, Co.Durham, near Barnard Castle.



This time last year we were invited to join the Springs week in Barnard Castle and also use it as a base to make the trip from there to Heavenfield for the St Oswald's day pilgrimage. Springs is a Christian group of people who gather to experience God in their lives. The whole week is relaxed and flexible, with a holiday feel so that there's lots of fun and time to enjoy the surrounding area. Food for the week will be provided but if you have special dietary needs it may be best to bring that food with you. There is limited accommodation but plenty of space for caravans and tents. There are various activities from prayer, arts and crafts, to washing up. The pub is within walking distance and various day-trips are possible by car. This year we hope that more Northumbria Community folk will come along for all or part of the time. The week is open to all and no set charge is made although donations large and small would be gratefully accepted. For further information please contact either Andy & Anna Raine on 01289 389351 or Kevin & Oonagh Atkinson on 0191 832679.

**I t's not with many  
thoughts or words that  
he hears us but in the  
silence of our longing.**

**Teresa of Avila**

## POETS CORNER

Anne Cope of Leeds shares some thought written during a recent visit to Nether Springs.

### My Creator God

The voices of birds  
The bleating of sheep  
The murmur of cattle  
Sing their song of praise to You  
Creator God.

The creeping mist  
The pattering rain  
The warmth of sun  
Sing their song of praise to You  
Creator God.

Fragrance of wild garlic  
Whispering of leaves  
Jewel splash of bluebell  
Sing their song of praise to You  
Creator God.

Distant hillside  
Winding lane  
Deep stillness  
Sing their song of praise to You  
Creator God.

And if I should fail to praise You,  
My Creator God,  
The very stones of gravel  
Crunching under my feet  
Would cry out!

Let everything,  
Every thing

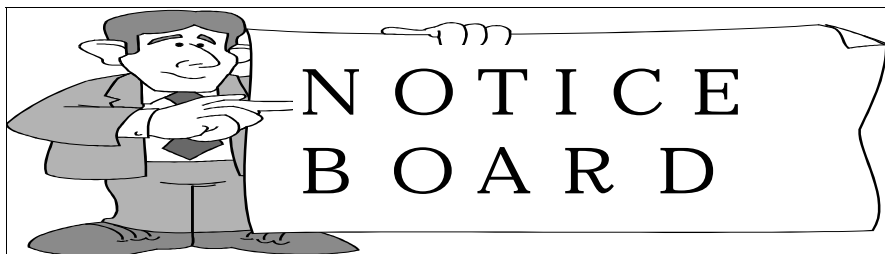
### Beware of the Abbot

Hugh Barnett



"Now you chaps, this is what  
we've trained for, so get in  
there....and **PRAY!**"





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

*As usual the news snippets in this current newsletter reflect the reality of both joy and sorrow, blessings and burdens all intermingling, making life what it is.*

The Community is saddened to report the death of **John Peet** of Stratford in early May after a courageous fight against cancer. Our thoughts continue to be with Jacqui and the immediate family at this sad time.

It is hoped by the time you read this that **Natasha Roumientseva** of St Petersburg (who spent almost 12 months with us in 1996) will have arrived at Nether Springs to live and work for a further period of up to 6 months with the residential Community at Nether Springs. We are looking forward to her coming very much and no doubt many of you will take the opportunity to renew contact with her.

We have also welcomed for the summer months **Ariane Bruc** from Marseilles. Ariane will also live and work at the Nether Springs as part of the residential Community for the next 3 months. It is good to have both Natasha and Ariane with us as it reflects our continuing commitment as a Community to Europe.

Congratulations are in order to **Jacqui Triggs** of Milton Keynes who is to marry Bob Green on September 25th this year. She will then become the Rev Green, with the Bible, in the Church.

Congratulations are also in order to **Rob Brown** of Hetton and **Joanna Winston** of Coventry who have also announced their engagement. This blossoming of romance from an already strong friendship has been the cause of great joy for many. They too are getting married on September 25th this year. Some of us could do with a touch of omnipresence so as to attend both weddings!

Again congratulations to **Heather Innes** who is to marry Alan Ponting in Blairgowrie on June 8th and to **Ruth Miller** from our Community Office who is to marry Paul Matthews on August 14th in Chirside. May the saints and the Saviour watch over them all.

**James Hawes** and **Sally Buckley** of Hetton Hall were married at the Nether Springs during a never to be forgotten day of celebration and

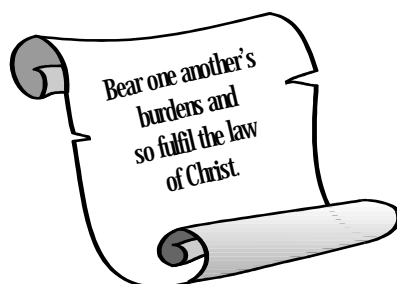
togetherness on the last Saturday in May. Over 200 people enjoyed a very creative and distinctly different day, in which all our emotions were exercised to the limit. Laughter and tears, awe and ordinariness, wonder and worship all intermingled throughout the day, which culminated in a powerful and deeply moving ceremony in a specially erected Marquee. It has been truly amazing how this wedding has touched so many lives so deeply in relation to the Community and its ethos.

Congratulations to **Neil and Jo Ruckman** of Barnet, on the birth of their son Benedict Joss. He weighed in on April 1st at 7lb 7oz.

While we rejoice with those who rejoice we also weep with **Martin and Julia Timmins** of Leeds who are grieving the loss of their new born baby daughter Joey.

**Andy Colledge** of Leeds who spent two months at the Nether Springs earlier this year, is hoping to return for a longer period in the very near future. He will live and work at the Nether Springs with a special emphasis on maintenance of the Fabric and care of the Gardens and Grounds as well as helping on the Nether Springs team.

We are grateful to God that **John Skinner** has successfully come through major heart bypass surgery in these last weeks. Although the operation has gone well, the need for post op healing and stress free convalescence is something we ask the whole Community to pray about, especially in the light of John's diabetes. Indeed, we ask you to please pray for the whole family at this time.



## DAY CONFERENCE The Gospel of John and Community

On **Thursday July 1st** the Community is holding a study day conference at **Newcastle University** on the theme of John's Gospel and Community. The aim of the day is to look at what a community built on Johannine spirituality would look like. It is part of the ongoing research project that the Community has been undertaking with Bible Society. Together with the Society we have been looking at ways to communicate the Bible in our changing and transient contemporary culture. Anne Dyer, who has been working for the past year on the research project, together with the help of other Community researchers has organised the day conference to which all are welcome. Dr. Stephen Barton, a senior lecturer in New Testament studies from Durham University, who has written 'The Spirituality of the Gospels' and 'An Invitation to the Bible' and who shares a love and appreciation of the Johannine tradition is our guest speaker for the day. There will also be workshops on different themes in John's gospel: Community of Discovery, of the Spirit, of Christ and the Cross, of Trinitarian Koinonia, of Symbol and Imagery; Community valuing personal knowledge, Community seeing themselves as the children of God. Do join us if you can. You would be very welcome. For further information on the day that runs from 10.00 am - 4.00pm contact the Community Office asap.

## MAILING LIST REVIEW

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

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