

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

# CAIM

The NORTHUMBRIA COMMUNITY Newsletter

Issue no 37  
Summer 2006

## EASTER GLIMPSES...

### *Snapshots of Easter Workshop 2006*

Maundy Thursday – over fifty people gathered in the Chapel to celebrate Eucharist. Some faces very familiar, others here for their first Easter Workshop. Singing, praying, sharing the peace and finally washing feet – a time of laughter and tears.

Hetton Steads Village Hall – the scene of teaching from Pete Askew, Catherine Clasen and Roy Searle. Photos and word pictures of new monastic communities in the States: their similarities and their differences, hope for the future and a real sense of recognition of what God is doing in so many places.

Cuthbert's Cave – a beautiful, bright day. People taking turns to carry the cross. Different voices reading the Stations of the Cross. The cross being planted on the cairn above the cave; a severity to the wind, feeling very exposed in the raw conditions. All this helped in contemplating the sufferings of the Lord.



Hetton Hall's garden – with a new labyrinth walk, places to sit and words and images to ponder on the way. A chance to get a different perspective physically and spiritually. Folk working in the garden to create a new quiet area.

Easter Vigil – walking down to the Chapel in procession with the flaming torch outside; the lighting of the Paschal candle from the fire and then each one entering the dark Chapel lighting their own candle from the Paschal candle. We sat in silence waiting for Easter Day to arrive and greeted it with joy.



Holy Island – dancing 'Christ as a light' round Aidan's statue, praying for the island from the vantage point of the Heugh, saying our vows opposite Cuthbert's island and then witnessing James McWhinney's baptism in the North Sea!



Ceilidh – a time of much silliness and great laughter. Contributions from all ages ranging from the sublime to the ridiculous!

Overall – people talking, sharing, laughing together, praying together, working together. Old friendships renewed, new friendships formed. People in pain, people rejoicing. People spending time alone, people spending time together. A real sense of community.

## Children's workshop – creating the McMonastery™!

Whilst this might sound like someone's idea of hell, we had a lot of fun trying to fill a large brown paper bag with everything that one might need for a monastery-to-go. Split into an older and younger workshop, we spent time reflecting on what it means to be part of a 'new monasticism', reflecting the theme for the weekend. In particular we were interested in the key idea of the 'cell of your own heart', and that of 'mission.'

In practice this meant that we looked at the things which help us reflect on the fact that God goes with us on our journey. The large bag represented ourselves, so we encouraged pictures, drawings, names, even 'blobs' (ask the older group!). The driftwood cross helped us remember

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our construction of an Easter garden and what Jesus did for us. A memory stone helped us remember key moments and places where God has touched us. The encircling prayer and names of our friends and family helped us ask God to protect those near to us. Some prayer beads (representing people in our family) were a way of praying for our families. And then we put it all in the bag to take home – the portable monastery!



With brilliant help from Andy Simpson, Helen Rengert, Hetty Chapman, Lorna Fisher, and Ruth Barling we just about managed to get everything organised, from putting up the marquee, to switching on the fairy lights. A particular highlight for me

was the opportunity to talk more in depth to the older group about God's leading in life, and sending them to listen to what God had to say in the Poustinias.

Subsequently, this has led to us thinking about the possibility of a family retreat, with some led sessions for adults and young people alike, some time for fun, some worship together. We know, with our three under 7s, how difficult it can be to get to the hall. If this might ring your bell (in the Hetton sense!) then please feel free to contact me on the email address below.

Robin Chapman [robin.chapman@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:robin.chapman@yahoo.co.uk)

## Wandering... Prague

As I write this, sitting in a beautiful garden on the outskirts of Prague, with the sun beating down on a hot Spring afternoon, the prospect



Gayle-Anne, Jeff and Roy in Prague

of developing this 'partnership' with the International Baptist Theological Seminary (IBTS) seems a particularly attractive one....

But seriously: we are here on a flying visit, just 36 hours or so, to meet with Keith Jones, Rector of IBTS, and several members of faculty staff, to talk about what might be possible in partnering together. It has been born out of a God-inspired encounter, when Roy first came here in April last year as part of his 'European Tour' as President of the Baptist Union. That visit left a deep impression upon Keith and others at IBTS, and also upon Roy and those who travelled with him! Out of that encounter has flowed a desire to look for ways to learn from and encourage each other along the way.

We've had good discussions today, around both the meeting table and the meal table – it's fairly mind-blowing to meet, within the space of a few hours, many people from several European countries I



have barely even heard of, and who have first-hand experience of the reign and downfall of Communism – and we will say much more about in future editions of CAIM. But it seems that God has much to show us through IBTS, and that in turn we can help them to explore themes of community, story and journey....we're planning to deliver a short 'Northumbrian' module to next year's students, and to bring a few members of staff to visit the Nether Springs, as a starter.

It may not always be quite so sunny, warm and comfortable being here, but the developing friendship between us certainly feels that it has 'Heaven's kiss' upon it. Watch this space...

Jeff Sutheran

## Wandering...Easter in Sri Lanka

by Annie Candeland

A land of contrast and incongruity; beauty and pain, hardship and opulence, I experienced an amazing mix of moments at times jangling the senses.

I celebrated Easter in a tea factory hotel, almost 7000 feet up in Sri Lanka's hill country at Nuwara Elija. We had travelled over 45 km from Kandy and taken over five hours along at times, an unmade road and driving dangerously close to the edge of tea plantation covered slopes and hills of primeval pygmy trees. Lush vegetation, waterfalls and smiling, waving fruit sellers were part of the passing scenery.

Finally at 5.30 pm, I was sitting by the window of my hotel room, enjoying a wonderful view of tea-slopes and gardens, watching slight drifts of cloud and mist moving in towards evening. In this way, with my hand held cross for focus and a copy of the Call to Community words which I knew fellow companions and friends would be sharing in for the Easter

Celebration, I experienced my Easter moment with my God, away from traditional, familiar surroundings



that would usually mark the occasion. So, I was connected and a part of the whole; yet alone. I

found this a deeply moving and quietly joyful experience and one which embedded further meaning to the phrase 'alone and together'.

I also learnt more about vulnerability as part of a group but not 'belonging' to anyone; travelling in a country so other in culture, climate and religion with no known reference points. I felt at times in deep water with nothing to cling to.

This has been such a valuable experience and I thank God for its precious part in my shaping.

## Wandering...Spring Harvest, Skegness 2006

**One God!** by Kevin Fear

During the week before Easter, members of the Community, Nick and Anita Haigh, Jeff and Jill Sutheran, Janet Roberts and Martin Neil led evening worship in the 'alternative' celebrations at Spring Harvest, Skegness. The worship, prayers and reflections were deeply spiritual and moving. Throughout the week the Community team ministered to many people who were crying out to God in their need. The final evening was a beautiful shared experience, with those members of the 'congregation' who had taken part in the NC workshop, dancing, singing and drumming to 'When I turn my eyes to see' (Lift my eyes).

The theme for the week was One God, Creator, Universal, Human, and Sovereign. What follows are reflections of a number of Community members who journeyed together during the week.

Vital members of the "back-room" support team were Peter and Elizabeth Webb who hosted the Community Chalet and cooked for the team.

Here is Elizabeth's reflection.

*"Being a scattered Community as we are, the opportunities for living as a gathered Community even as a few members are rare. It works (and I felt it did on this occasion) because each Companion*

*is endeavouring to live by the same criteria, and each values the opportunity of getting to know others at a deeper level. Acceptance, respect, honour, love are the oil that greases the wheels of day to day living, - even that got a little thin waiting in line in the bathroom queue!*

*The highlight of our time together came when I was asked to anoint with oil and bless those who responded to the invitation during worship on the last evening. This is very new to me; I have only received it once myself, so I was a little hesitant about agreeing. I am so glad that I did take part in this way, as I found it to be a very moving and humbling experience."*

Diane Sekuloff, from British Columbia, Canada joined the team to help with story telling and for choreographing the telling of Bible readings.

*"This was my first visit to Spring Harvest and I was excited to be attending the event as part of the NC team. My excitement was somewhat dampened by the cold I came down with 2 days before we left Hetton. I was very grateful for the care we were given by Peter and Elizabeth Webb, and other team members who provided lemon sip, vitamin C, excellent meals, prayers and hugs all round. I reflected that I thought I'd come to make myself available, but ended up having to be vulnerable!*

*Most especially, it was a blessing to be together - together with the Community for this week, and over Easter weekend - after such a long time of alone - together. It was immersion in the richness of relationship with new and old friends, and those we touched through our worship at events. It was a reminder of what I had to offer others at home in my home community - and it was drinking from living water of all that is good, and lovely and pure and wholesome and true in life."*

Kevin and Susan Fear were at Spring Harvest with their children, Sarah, Sam and William. Kevin's reflection is below.

*"During the week we offered what help we could to the Worship Team which mainly consisted of helping set up and take down the stage before and after the worship. However, I was also asked by Brenda and Diane to perform a number of dances with them (not for any talent on my part but they thought it would be better to have a man perform the dances as well.) There were times when I felt very vulnerable*





*in doing this. I have realised that the root of my discomfort stemmed from not wanting to be seen to make mistakes.*

*Through the week we heard a number of guest speakers and one of them, Andy Flannagan, gave a wonderful reflection on Psalm 42. Through Andy's words I have a sense of God calling me on. I feel He wants to draw me away from the shallows and into deeper water. For that I need to remember that as long as I am available to Him, He will use me for His purposes, mistakes and all!"*

*Sue added, "Having been asked to be available for those in need of prayer and to anoint people with oil was such a privilege. I found God using me to comfort the broken hearted and discovered that in blessing others we too receive a blessing."*

**Jeff Sutheran writes:**

### **This Ward deserves an Award!**

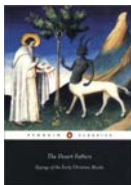
You may have noticed on the back page that Dave mentions (almost in the small print) that this is his last issue as editor of Caim.

I would like to thank him openly for the fantastic work he has done in developing the newsletter over recent years. It hasn't been easy for him – whilst graciously thanking contributors, he doesn't say that he has sometimes had to invent some creative ways of 'encouraging' folk to work to deadlines!

He has been a wonderful editor, with a heart to serve the Community without accolade – and on behalf of us all, I want to thank him (and Wendy, his wife, who has also been part of the editorial 'team') for all that they have done. Now, which poor soul is going to have responsibility for building on their good work....?

### **Book Review** by Amund Karner

*"The Desert Fathers: Sayings of the Early Christian monks", by Benedicta Ward, Penguin Classics, 0-140-44731-8.*



Those who have read any of Sr. Benedicta's collections of desert sayings will need no further recommendation, but for those who are unfamiliar with her, she has an understanding of the desert which is deep and personal. She is able to draw out the essence and make it reading accessible.

This collection of sayings complements her other collections, being a translation of part of the Verba Seniorum, and there is familiar material and new material.

This is a good starting point for anyone unfamiliar with the pithy sayings of the desert fathers.

## **Easter Workshop 2007 – please pray** by Wendy Ward

Please join us in praying for wisdom as we choose a theme for next year's workshops. Let me, or any of the leadership team know if you have any thoughts around this inspired by your prayers.

2007 Workshops will take place at more than one location (North Northumberland) on both the weekend before Easter 30 March – 1 April, and the weekend after Easter 13-15 April. Renewal of vows on Easter Sunday will take place of course, as a separate event at Holy Island and other locations as arranged locally.

Easter Workshops have been crucial in the development of our Community and the ways we express our life together. You may not realise that much of our wonderful liturgy, expressive dances and music was conceived and developed at Easter Workshops. Not from leaders but out of the day to day lives of Companions and Friends as they get on with living the life of Availability and Vulnerability and asking the questions "Who is it that you seek?" "How then shall we live?" and "How do we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

If we are not to become stale this creative aspect of our journey together must continue, so our heart and ethos is maintained and its expression diversified. Easter Workshops are probably the most important gathering for Companions and Friends to attend if you need to prioritise what you get to. For this reason book those weekends in your diary now so that when we are able to confirm locations you can make it to the most accessible for you.



***Covenanted together  
within the love of  
Christ we share a  
common heart for  
Northumbria and  
wherever the father  
leads***

## TEACHING FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS...the second in a series of three articles from the February 2006 Group Leaders' Weekend



We have been stressing the importance of waymarks; that as a Community we need to stop from time-to-time and take the opportunity to retrace our steps, and look for the

way-marks that tell us we are on course. As Jeremiah 6:16 'Ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is and walk in it'. Put simply, the waymarks are there precisely because that's what they are – way marks – markers along the way. So, allowing the waymarks to become the final destination instead of pointers along the way defeats the purpose. And, conversely, allowing the excitement of the new directions to dispense with the old waymarks altogether is equally foolish.

As a Community we have the liberty to explore, the freedom to experiment but always within sight of the God-given waymarks. When we ask, what are the waymarks? What is the essential value in what we do? Indeed why do we do what we do? The answer lies in our vocation – what has God said? What is God saying?

What we do know is that as Christians, followers of Jesus, we are all called to SEEK (Nether Springs, the tide coming in, going deeper within), and we are all called to SING (Upper Springs, the tide going out, making a difference where we are). That is, to seek God for Himself and to know our true self, on the one hand, and to '*sing the Lord's song*' where God has placed us, on the other. Embracing and encircling these two is the ongoing question of SHALL, how then shall we (as seekers and singers) live? How do we do it, where we are, who we are? How do we express our vocation, our heart, alone and together?

God's response has been and is to emphasise as 'The Message' translation of *Psalms 87.7*, '*All my springs are in you*'. One source of both Nether Springs and Upper Springs lived simultaneously in our hearts, as the roots and the fruit of the same plant, so that 'wherever the Father leads' and whatever 'the initiatives of the Spirit' we will both *live in* and *live out* the truth of our Day 14 Meditation.

*See the land so black and barren; God will make a watered garden; fruitfulness where once was parchedness, light to break into the darkness, upper springs and nether springs in the field that Father's given.*

This is why the original Acsah Principles are so vital and central. They capture the heart of all this.

In seeking God as the '*one thing necessary*' we:

- Embrace the reality of the inner life, deepening your own personal journey, an awareness of the contemplative 'now' of our lives, directed in the everyday by Availability and Vulnerability.

- Embrace the fact that we are alone yet not alone because we are together in that aloneness. Both enclosure and encounter are equally valid and necessary. Others are on the journey with us, companionship is real, and ways of support are actively pursued.

- Engage in listening prayer and intercession as a means of nourishing ourselves and others.

- Explore the concept of Church without walls. Giving access from all sides. Aware of the changing world views of Gospel and culture. Being ordinary, transparent, living unselfconsciously amongst those alienated by the Church or seemingly disinterested. Living the 3 central questions - always relevant, always timely because always life – expressed in exploration, discovery, journey as life lived, in paradox, mystery, and uncertainty.

Trevor Miller

## Thanks



After a remarkable year as President of the Baptist Union of Great Britain which came as a huge surprise but turned out to be a great delight, I return to relative normality post Presidency. A year of extensive travel: thirty thousand miles in the car, ten flights, over fifty rail journeys, two ferries and a sailing boat, sixteen countries, meeting many people, visiting many places and gaining unique insight and perspective on the Baptist denomination, together with the observed awareness of the Community's influence on so many people and places. It was quite a year some reflections of which you'll find on the Community's website Waymarks articles.

Once I've had time to reflect and pray further about the experience, I may write something about the adventure but the main purpose of my writing here in CAIM is to thank Companions and Friends and particularly those colleagues in the Community whom I work with for the support I received throughout my Presidency. To all who accompanied me, joined me, offered me hospitality, helped me to create space in the midst of all the responsibilities and travelling, for the words of encouragement and affirmation and the prayers, a huge 'thank you'. I thank God for being part of a Community whose vocation and vision continues to inform and enrich my life

Roy Searle

## IN:sight...getting to know the leaders and trustees of Community...

‘Moggy’ from North Sunderland writes:



They introduce me as their ‘second car’ you know, but actually I was their first. 1984 it was. I was only 15 years old then, and they weren’t even married. So we go back a long way.

They were hectic days, full

of rushing and deadlines, early starts and very late finishes....

I think there was a time when they were rather ambivalent about having me around. Once, as they were talking while we breezed along - it was if they had forgotten I was hearing every word - they were talking about ‘moving me on’, like I’d past my sell-by date. Maybe if they’d had time to think it through and organise it, they might have done so in those days....

Conversations these days are altogether different. They’re in a different place, I suppose. Then, he was living a crazy life, trying to hold it all together while working silly hours and with no time to enjoy the important things in life. I suppose it all seemed worthwhile, and certainly things went well for them for a long while. But then I remember those drives when they started to ask each other “what’s it all for?” and “what’s God saying?” and “how then shall we live?” And then eventually one day we were off! Leaving Teesside and all we’d ever known together, we were off on an adventure – a journey that’s still unfolding! A year in Iona, nearly two in the Scottish Borders, a multitude of jobs but no career any more. It was a wacky time, and I heard lots of their conversations about how this God of theirs had led them on, and provided for them all. It sounded like they were having fun; they were alive, for the first time in years. And then we ended up with this fantastic garage on the coast near Seahouses, and it seems that their part of the building is pretty good too....

And now I hear they are part of the ‘leadership team’ of this Community that seems to be ‘home’ for them. I’m not really sure what that means, because they never seem very clear about it themselves. Most of the time I think it amounts to just trying to live their ordinary life and make a contribution. He’s the action man, who likes to make his lists of things to be done while we’re driving along. He’s pretty technical I suppose, and can turn his hand to lots of things but is great at none of them. He needs to get out a bit more. She’s the feeler, picking up all the stuff that he just doesn’t get. Creative and talented, she’s great at lots of things. As deep as the ocean, but always doubting her own contribution. She needs to speak up a bit more.

It seems strange that these four little kids who sat here in kiddie-seats now sit behind the wheel, or are getting ready to do so. Constant change is here to stay. We build the new on foundations of old....

I’ve just had a re-fit. Some new panels, those rotten old joints replaced, and a nice new paint job. The ancient ruins have been restored. And so I don’t think there’s any danger of them ‘moving me on’ now. There’s symmetry between the life they’ve found in God, and the simple steadfastness of a Moggy. They’ve journeyed far enough now to see that the things which matter, the things which last, are the simple things. Things that have integrity, and character. Things that move slowly enough to be able to savour and enjoy what’s around. Things that, despite the lack of computer control and techno-wizardry that I hear him talk about, still go around corners faster and more upright than anything they’ve ever ridden in! And now I’m 37. Dependable, yes. But boring? Oh, please....

Moggy xx

(If you really don’t know who this is about, contact the editor!)

## SHIMMERINGS

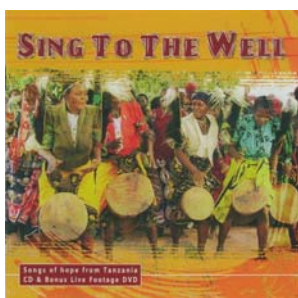
The heaving and sighing of trees;  
the urgent chattering of birds in spring;  
the ripples of wind blowing through meadow grasses;  
sunlight refracted through clouds  
as shadows race each other up the hillsides;  
the dancing of light and dark locking and unlocking  
in intertwined embrace across the skies;  
the shimmerings and pulsating of all creation,  
exultant exclamation affirming:  
‘Your presence is here!’

Martin Klopper  
in Nether Springs Prayer Garden Apr 06





## News from "Cloisters"



### **Sing to the Well.**

Many folk have already heard Martin and Bekah Neil's new CD of music from Tanzania and have been excited and challenged by it- and if you are not among them, you need to get hold of a copy. *Sing to the Well* is,

as Martin puts it, 'a musical glimpse of the sounds, songs and rhythms of a beautiful people, the Wagogo, whose lives are not stifled by their harsh realities, but a people who still have hope and a creative passion to sing, dance and give thanks to God.'

Martin and Bekah first visited these people in 2003 and were amazed at their generosity and hospitality in a time of uncertainty: 'Their total reliance on the land and its harvest brought a day to day existence that was intrinsically linked with their faith and hope in God.' Martin and Bekah were determined to return and do something to help - and this CD is the triumphant result, telling their story to a wider world, and encouraging their wonderful cultural music at a time when more Western styles are encroaching, enticing the youth to forget their heritage and traditions.

You get a lot for your money with this CD, because not only is the music and quality of recording absolutely first-class (amazing, given the conditions under which the recordings were made!), and accompanied by a 12 page booklet giving extensive information about the music, songs and instruments; but you also get a free DVD which takes you into the villages and homes, and shows you the music being made and provides a platform for Martin to talk about his passion for these people.

Martin and Bekah are making no money at all out of the sale of these CDs: all income is being sent to Mnase to directly support the building of wells in their village - hence the title 'Sing to the Well'. If you want to make a contribution to this work beyond the price of the CD/DVD, Cloisters can pass it on.

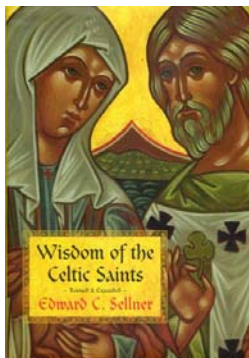
*Sing to the Well* is available from Cloisters at a mail order price of £15.00. If you want to play the DVD on a USA TV set, you need to specify that when ordering.

***Sing to the Well***  
**Ref Code VFTNCD003**  
**Mail order price £15.00**

Don't forget that there are two other CDs from Martin available from Cloisters:

**Fragile Warriors** (from the Maoris)  
**Ref Code VFTN001**  
**Mail order price £15.00**

**Carry me on** (from Hawaii)  
**Ref Code MMICD0308**  
**Mail order price £15.00**



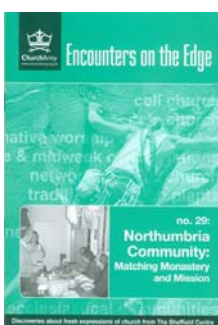
### **Wisdom of the Celtic Saints**

The original edition of this book by Ed Sellner was published in 1993 and has been a much used source of information about the Celtic Saints ever since. The author has now expanded the book to include a further 8 saints (making a total of 27), mainly from Scotland, Wales, Cornwall and Brittany;

and he has published the new edition himself in a handsome new hardback format which is now available from Cloisters at a mail order price of £20.00.

Apart from being a great source of information, the book contains an excellent Introduction to the early Celtic church and Celtic spirituality. In it, Ed Sellner also highlights the way that the stories of these saints are written to portray them as a living symbol, or image, of Christ; and points up the importance, in those times, of symbols and sacred numbers. All this greatly helps our understanding of these 'histories'. Finally the author enjoins us to 'listen with our heart' to what these saints have to say to us today.

***Wisdom of the Celtic Saints***  
**Ref Code WCS**  
**Mail order price £20.00**



### **Northumbria Community: Matching Monastery and Mission**

If you haven't read George Lings excellent booklet reviewing the Community from the perspective of an outsider exploring 'fresh expressions of church', then do get hold of a copy. George concludes: 'If the need today is for

deep people then here is the portal to inner attentiveness in following Jesus and the painful but liberating process of being transformed by Him.'

***Matching Monastery and Mission***  
**Ref Code EE/MMM**  
**Mail order price £4.50**

**Ian Corsie**

## STORIES BEHIND THE MEDITATIONS for the Day of the Month—Day 4 by Andy Raine

### Prayer of Abandonment to God

The story of Charles de Foucauld is a colourful one – the July readings in “Celtic Daily Readings” (Colman Cycle) charts some of it. The April readings (Finan Cycle) in “Celtic Daily Prayer” are also taken from his prayers, letters and writings.

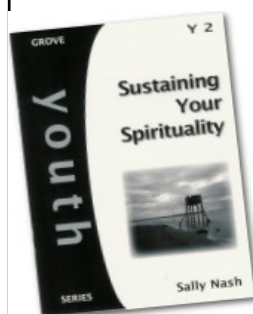
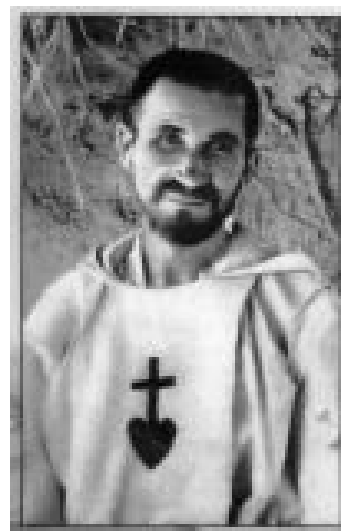
Years ago (1977-78) at a time of crisis, change and opportunity on Holy Island, Brother Roland Walls gave us several scripture passages to read and meditate on each day, and he also gave the “Prayer of Abandonment” to use.

Especially during Daily Office I have seen people experiencing all kind of difficult times struggle to face the challenge of surrender this prayer demands.

On a visit to prayer partners in New Malden and Surbiton, I remember Ally Presart-Collins picking up the prayer to read it.

After a pause she prayed,

“ Father, I abandon myself into Your hands.  
Do with me what You will,  
Whatever You do, I will thank you...  
*...maybe not straight away, but I promise I WILL thank You.*”



### Sustaining your Spirituality by Sally Nash

One of my passions is helping people to find a spirituality that sustains them. I have worked in the training and support of youth workers for over twenty years now and I have gradually discovered, over the years, how vital identifying a spirituality that sustains is. I've seen too many people get burnt out or give up and began to ask the question 'why'.

Asking that question led me to a research project with urban youth workers and, eventually, to writing this booklet which is based on that and the work that my husband Paul and I have done together in Youth for Christ, local church and the Centre for Youth Ministry.

Although it is part of the Grove Youth Series we have used the ideas and concepts in many different contexts from an inner city multi-cultural church to a youth workers retreat or in a pastoral encounter in a hospital.

I come from a traditional evangelical background and began to find that this approach to spirituality

wasn't enough on its own. I began to explore my Celtic roots and found a missing dimension, a sense of history and place that I could identify. I also resonated with the idea of a new monasticism and have particularly valued developing a rule and rhythm of life, what I talk about in the booklet as signposts and shelters based on the walk across to Holy Island.

I lost some of my guilt around how you should pray and can now happily believe that I encounter God just as significantly when I walk by the sea as I do in a time of intercession. I also trained as an Ignatian prayer guide and now draw on elements from that well too.

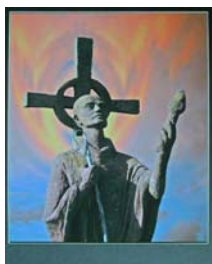
I now feel I have an integrated, holistic approach to life which is underpinned by a spirituality that has sustained me through my years in ministry and the joys and sorrows that go along with that and life generally.

Sally is a Community Friend, a member of the Birmingham Community Group and the Director of the Centre for Youth Ministry at St John's, Nottingham





## Wandering...Aidan in Tibet



No, he didn't make it by coracle.  
And it would have been a  
outstanding feat of peregrinati!  
But Aidan featured recently in a  
retreat held in a Tibetan town.

Joy and I were in China in April  
this year visiting projects and  
associates working for Jian Hua

Foundation (a Hong Kong based organisation which places Christian professionals in work in China), and one of the places we visited was a Tibetan town in Qinghai province where 8 associates (from UK, New Zealand, South Africa, Namibia and the Netherlands) are working on medical, agricultural and community development projects. This was not in Tibet 'proper' (i.e. what the Chinese call the 'Tibet Autonomous Region'), but up on the Tibetan plateau in the province to the north. There is quite a mix of people groups in Qinghai - Han Chinese, Mongols, Hui (Moslems), Tibetans and a number of others - but the town we stayed in for a week was a predominantly Tibetan town with a vast Tibetan Buddhist monastery in the middle of it.

The Jian Hua associates, and other Christians working in the town, had asked us to lead a day's retreat for them; and that was where Aidan came in. We felt that these folk living and working in this place were in effect, though they would not have known about him, walking in the footsteps of Aidan, bringing light to a dark place and hope to people trapped in superstition. So Aidan was one of the examples we used in helping them to look at their work in a wider historical context. Apart from sharing in some Community liturgies, we used one of the sections of the 'Just Worship: Celtic Prayer' DVD as a scene-setter for the day, with Mary Fleeson talking about 'binding and loosing' and Jill Sutheran's voice singing 'O God, and Jesu, and Spirit, the Three' in the background. It was powerful!

What really struck us was just how closely these fine people were actually living out the Community Rule. They had, for the most part, never heard about the Community, and would not think about what they were doing in these terms, but they were in fact an embodiment of 'Availability and Vulnerability'. Without really thinking about it, they were just 'doing' Community. They had all made very sacrificial life choices to leave comfortable

environments and promising careers to live (many of them, anyway) in some very tough places and work in very frustrating and difficult circumstances far from home. From what one hears, it is tempting to think that China is developing so fast that it is already a comfortable place to live, full of life's little luxuries. Although that may be true in some places, for the most part the reality is totally different - and that is especially true out in the poorer mountainous and desert areas to the west of the country. And even in those more affluent areas, the pollution, noise and constant building work make for a stressful lifestyle. Many of the associates also face very tough decisions when it comes to children's schooling: Chinese schools, home schooling, local international (i.e. English) schools or boarding schools are all hard choices.

Of course, there are many places round the world where Christians are working in very tough circumstances. China is just one of them. But the key thing with China is that here is an opportunity to make a difference in a country that, one way or another, is going to dominate our lives in this century. What sort of country is it going to be? China's peoples are, for the most part, wide open spiritually (it is easier by far to share your faith with a new acquaintance in China than it is at home) and Christians are welcome in China (though not as missionaries, and provided that they are very sensitive to the culture).

So we found it very humbling to be among these folk - very ordinary, but doing extraordinary things in a manner that seemed to chime in harmoniously with the ethos of the Community. And, for a day, we were able to connect the two neatly together - with Aidan's help!

Ian Corsie



## Wandering...Availability!!

Here is how by making ourselves available, our lives have been turned upside-down this Easter.

A long cherished dream had been that the Easter after we retired from the Baptist Ministry we would be at Nether Springs for the Easter Workshop. Consequently our plan had been to spend the previous week in Edinburgh, revisiting old haunts and renewing friendships from our ministry there in the early 1970s, and then on to Nether Springs.

However it seems that these were not God's plans. Firstly Roy asked us if we would look after the 'hospitality' chalet at Spring Harvest and provide food and care for the Northumbria Community team. Realizing that this was something we could do, and that we could make ourselves available over that period, we agreed. So our holiday in Edinburgh was forgotten, but we thoroughly enjoyed being with the team and found it to be an enriching and learning experience.

Then at the end of February, Peter was asked to be chaplain to a SAGA Fellowship tour going to Northern Greece staying near Thessalonica. Someone had withdrawn, so they were without a spiritual leader. As this began on Easter Monday from Gatwick, we had a difficult decision to make.

Prayerfully we considered what we should do. Eventually we realized that the needs of the group had



to come before our own desire to be with the Community. At a push we could have managed both, but that would have sapped our energies.

So we did not get to the Easter Workshop and to renew our vows on Holy Island. That will have to wait for another year. Instead we renewed them on Orthodox Easter Day, looking out across the sea where Paul would have sailed to arrive at Neapolis.

The fifteen people we were with enjoyed their time together, and quickly made friends. We used the Evening Office for prayers at the end of the day, and were able to introduce them to the Northumbria Community way of living.

It was thrilling to visit the archeological site of Philippi and the place of Lydia's baptism. I thought particularly about Lydia and the waymark she had set up for us to follow, and I praise and thank God for her example.

God's plans are so much more enriching than ours!

Elizabeth Webb

## Wandering...Ireland

Gordon and Margaret Joice have been very involved in the Community's praying for and journeying to Ireland and have played a significant role in the development of Ballydugan. In many respects they have paved the way for this new initiative and here Gordon writes about an exciting new development involving Roy and Shirley Searle:

### Ireland

September sees a new initiative embarked upon within the life of the Community as Roy and Shirley Searle move for a 'season' to Ireland. Building on the Community's early journeys and the many years that Roy and others have spent travelling to and around Ireland, Roy and Shirley are going to live at Ballydugan in County Down. Saul and Downpatrick, associated with St. Patrick, are key places of prayer, spirituality and mission.

This new venture involves exploring new expressions of church and community with others in Northern Ireland working with well established friends and some Companions of the Northumbria Community to listen, share and discern God's ways. Ballydugan, only two miles from Downpatrick, is a special place, a quiet place of seeking, retreat and reflection. The cottages at Ballydugan have been used by many folk who've participated in some of the Community's retreats, Easter Workshop and a Creative Arts week together with those who've used the cottages for their holidays (see [www.ballydugan.com](http://www.ballydugan.com)).

Roy and Shirley will be living at Letterfinlay House, near to the cottages, helping to develop Ballydugan, affording Roy the opportunity to write, to be alongside, serving and supporting believers and other initiatives in the area, together with welcoming and being available to Community folk and others who come to Ballydugan.

Roy continues to be very much a part of the leadership team and together with Trevor, as overseers, they will continue to be very involved in the exciting Community development and transition process. Roy and Shirley will be returning to Northumberland most months for leadership team meetings, some mission happenings together with Roy's ongoing speaking and consultancy work.

However, there is likely to be less of this work for Roy in this next season—the point is for him to concentrate on writing, and passing on the things that God is showing us in Community. It is possible, therefore, that there may be a downturn in the amount of income that this kind of work generates, and therefore we would like to encourage you to think about supporting this venture by giving specifically to cover this possibility. This will go towards the Community's paying Roy, together with the travelling and ministry at Ballydugan.

A new page will be created in the autumn on the Community's website where Roy will be writing regularly from Ireland about happenings over there

together with further details of some of the events that will take place at Ballydugan over the next year or so. Please make any cheques payable to 'Northumbria Community Trust' and send them to Bryony at the Community's Finance Office in an envelope marked 'Ballydugan'. If you are able to Gift Aid, please let Bryony know and the appropriate forms will be sent to you in due course.

Should you wish to discuss anything further about this exciting development, please contact Margaret or myself, by email, [gordon@joyce18.freemove.co.uk](mailto:gordon@joyce18.freemove.co.uk) or telephone 01539 620830, or write to The Flat, Ghyllas, Sedbergh, Cumbria, LA10 5LT.

Your prayers and support will be much appreciated.  
Gordon Joyce

## Wondering...Pam Pott

Today, I've got vertigo really bad.

### BUT...

Today I met an amazing man for lunch - a young man, married with 2 small children and a busy church life, whose wife has terminal cancer. He shone with some inner something that comes from a place of struggle and grief, yet hope that has grown out of a painful place of reality. I found him utterly inspiring and challenging - triumphant? - no. But learning through the facing of death about life and enjoying it to the full whilst you have it, of taking time, of being reckless in living. He was a joy to be with.

Today, I met a new person. On my way back home, walking up Tanner's Hill, I met a young woman with Frisby, Ben and Katie's dog who is being looked after by the Mizen family while Ben, Katie and family are away. This woman was a friend of Shari's looking after Frisby whilst Shari was away! We had a lovely chat. What fun to meet new people!

Today, as I walked down Manor Avenue, the blossom burst out specially for **me**; the green of the leaves was even fresher green just for **me**; a blackbird sang his beautiful "Isn't this an amazing day song" just for **me** (I could even hear the words!); the sky was so blue - who for? - **me!** the sun shone warm on **my** face. This is God's love-song to **me**.

Today, when I got home, my lovely husband made me a delicious cup of peppermint tea and took a few minutes to listen to me and I sat in the garden, in my bluebell garden, with another blackbird serenading me accompanied by the comforting tones of a backing group of 3 hens (who also rushed to greet me!), a Sudoku and a dog.....

and my cup runneth over.... I am filled with thankfulness.....I am bursting with gratitude.

Tomorrow, I may remember the pollution, the traffic, the noise, the struggles, missing that lot in Australia, BUT please don't remind me today!

Luv, Pam x

## Wondering...How blessed among all people

How blessed among all people is the one  
Whose flesh enfolds the living Word of God  
The Lord who shares her bloodstream and her warmth  
Part of her body, nurtured deep within.  
She hugs the one who dwells inside her womb  
Each movement and each rest she feels and knows  
And wonders that he is a different self.  
She'll meet him as a stranger when he's born.

And when she eats, she eats for him as well  
She sings, and feels him stirring there inside  
Their blood so close his heartbeat takes from hers  
The goodness needed to sustain his life.  
She breathes for him, and yet she still remains  
The selfsame person as when she was born:  
Not less, but more herself than she was then  
A girl, a woman, handmaid of the Lord.

How blessed among all people is the one  
Whose life enfolds the living word of God,  
Whose body holds the body of the Lord,  
Whose heart beats with the passion of His love,  
Whose every thought and movement bears His name,  
Whose errors find forgiveness at His breast,  
Who seeks the Lord wherever He may be -  
And finds him hidden in humanity

By Netta Gibb



Sculpture by Mardi Kearney





## Bits and Pieces

### From Pam and David Pott (proud grandparents!!)

We are delighted to announce the birth of Ethan Manny (Manuel) Pott who was born at home at 2am on May 7th. weighing in at 7lb 12oz.

It was a very wonderful home birth and everyone is very well, happy and relaxed. We hope you enjoy the photos of Ethan and of Joel, Zoe and proud big sister Myla who is very sweet

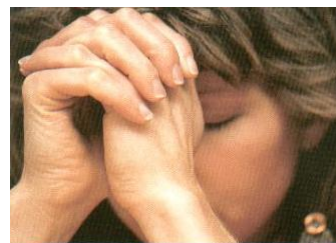


with him and has already changed her first nappy!



### Intercessors

If you wish to know more about how you can be part of this vital ministry, please telephone: **Norma Wise** of Newton Aycliffe on: 01325 312930.



### Thanks!

This will be the last issue of CAIM which I will be editing, and I'd like to thank all those who have faithfully submitted superb articles during the time I've had this responsibility. Love, Dave

**Issue 38 Autumn 2006.**  
The copy date for this edition is 14th August 2006.

### Community Groups

If you would like more information about these, or established Community Groups; please contact: Norma Charlton

norma.charlton@northumbriacommunity.org

Tel: 0191 487 8065 ( if a member of her family answers, please ask them to write down your telephone (preferably landline) number), or via the Community office.

### Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> September, 2006 – Quiet Waters Retreat

An opportunity to take time out on retreat in Ballydugan, County Down. The beautiful cottages are set in peaceful surroundings – please feel free to visit the website,



[www.ballydugan.com](http://www.ballydugan.com).

The week will be led by Roy Searle and provide an opportunity for people to participate in the monastic day, pray, read, reflect. Full board accommodation will be approx £175 per person. For further details and information please contact Jean Watson [jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org) or telephone 01625 874493.

Northern Light 13-19 August 2006 . Hollybush Farm . Thirsk . North Yorkshire

Dry bones dancing ...

A brave new church for a changing world

Northern Light Christian Holiday Camp,  
Hollybush Farm, Thirsk,  
13<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> August, 2006

Roy Searle will be leading the Bible Studies throughout the week and folk from Northumbria Community will be overseeing the Sacred Space venue sharing Office, etc.  
[www.northernlight.org.uk](http://www.northernlight.org.uk)

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**Editor:**  
**Dave Ward**

Jeff Sutheran will be taking over as editor from the next issue, so please send all future contributions to him. Thanks!