



Issue No 7
Winter 1998

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

Companions on the Road

Trevor Miller

In the past two weeks I received a letter from a lady, a Methodist minister, who is undoubtedly on the journey with us as a Community. She understands who we are and what we are about because like so many before her, the discovery of the Nether Springs with its ethos and spirituality has not so much given her something new, it has given her a language that makes sense of, and gives coherence to, her journey of faith. I recognised this in her and made the comment that her grasp of things almost made me think of her as a member of Community already. This is what she wrote, *"I have been doing a lot of thinking and praying since returning from Nether Springs. I don't think I'm altogether happy with your comment that you would regard me as a member of the Community already - I feel it somehow diminishes the commitment of those who have already said 'Yes' to the Rule. I would prefer to be regarded as a postulant for the time being. I know that I will say 'Yes' eventually but, just as I needed a time of being engaged before I made my marriage vows - and a time of being an ordinand before I was ordained - I need preparation time before I make this commitment."*

Unbeknown to this wise lady, she was confirming in me, that which I had been wrestling with for some months. The need to simplify, with integrity, the whole process of joining and journeying with the Northumbria Community. Over the years (and never anticipating such growth) we have tried different ways to cover the different categories of people who were journeying with us. We are currently using the three categories of Members, Companions and Friends. The thinking behind this was to enable us to accommodate individuals, churches, interested observers et al, into the scheme of things. It hasn't worked, simple as that. The chief reason was that it caused confusion, and made people choose between categories that really had little practical difference in their outworking. This applied to Members and Companions in particular, and was compounded by the fact that people were joining at many different times during the year but told that renewal of Membership was at Easter time. This resulted in real administrative difficulties as some people's year prior to renewal was only a few weeks whereas others were many months. Another difficulty resulted from those who had been members of the Community prior to the introduction of these three categories. Did they have to renew and when?

All this has forced us to rethink this important

issue. We want to value and affirm those who have been on the journey with us for a long time but also to simplify the joining and journeying process so that all (new and old) will understand the terms we use and what they mean, right across the board. This means a further change but one we sincerely hope will be the means not only of better communication but which reflects our commitment to a new monasticism as a way for living through our Rule of Availability and Vulnerability.

What we are going to do is simply drop the category of Member and use the two remaining categories of Companions and Friends for all those who are associated with our Community. The term Member has always carried difficulties, especially when it was associated with financial giving to the Community. It seemed like a club membership subscription, which is not what we are about. Having said that we really do have to grasp the nettle of the financial contributions of those who feel a vocational call to walk the journey of faith following the Rule and Life of our Community. Ownership and belonging brings with it the responsibility of regular contributions



to the common purse of the Community family.

Although we are not a religious order as such, we do take our vows of Availability and Vulnerability very seriously and want as a dispersed Community to follow a lifestyle of Alone/Together in a way that mutually blesses and encourages one another on the journey. This is what we mean when we use the term 'Companion' as the principal description of one who is making the journey with us. A companion is a person who associates with another, who assists, shares the lifestyle of, and travels with another. The root meaning of the word is from the Latin which literally means 'one who eats bread with another.' So for us, it's not being a Companion of the Community but rather being a Companion with others on the journey of faith with the Rule of Availability and Vulnerability uniting our hearts so that we are Alone/Together. *"We are pilgrims on a journey, and companions on the road; we are here to help each other*

walk the mile and bear the load."

So all who are on the journey having said 'Yes' to our Rule are Companions with us, whatever stage of the journey they are on. In this we recognise that in the new monasticism we are all novices for life. So to be a Companion is simply to say 'Yes, I'm on the journey with you.' This is in keeping with the invitation of Jesus to 'Follow me' to 'Come and see.' It is an attitude of heart, a willingness to embrace the Rule as an exterior framework for their inward journey.

The other category is being a Friend of the Community. This means any associate or acquaintance who thinks positively about us and supports the work we seek to do. These are people who want to keep in touch, pray for us and be on our mailing list but who as yet have not been drawn to a commitment to the Rule.

Every present Member, Companion and Friend will be contacted early in the New Year explaining the implications of these changes. The major implication is that every person who now asks about joining and journeying with the Northumbria Community will be told the following.

There will be a period as a postulant (a candidate for admission into a religious order) of between three to six months. During this time the person will be encouraged to:

- Attend a Community weekend which looks at the Rule, our Way for Living.
- Spend time reflecting on their vocational call and testing its validity.
- Embark on a course of recommended reading related to our spirituality and ethos.

If after this period they feel it right to become a Companion they will be encouraged to contribute to the family purse with the suggested minimum donation of £20 per month preferably by Direct Debit and if appropriate as a covenant. For most this suggested minimum donation will be affordable, for many they can (and do) give much more. For some others they may not be able to afford even that amount. This is where the concept of subscription is misleading because no-one must feel that they can't be a Companion simply because they can't afford the contribution to the family purse. Simply pay what you can because all of us can afford something that says, 'I'm part of this, I belong, I want to contribute.'

Each Companion will also be encouraged to

- make an spiritual renewal of their vows at Easter workshop each year preferably being present on Holy Island on Easter Sunday.
- arrange an Annual Retreat at the Nether Springs for spiritual direction.
- try to attend a Community Group in their area.

Community Groups

As the Community continues to grow and develop, the value of Community groups cannot be underestimated. Founded on the principle of being a safe place for believer and seeker alike, they provide the opportunity for companions, friends and the merely curious to meet together.

Four areas are given regular attention.

1] The pursuit of the inward journey and the deeper life with God. 2] Support on the journey as we realise we are Alone/Together with others. 3] A realistic expression of intercession. 4] Discovering ways of living as church without walls in ordinariness. Frequently we are asked by folk for information on groups in their area and increasingly we have to inform them that a group has not yet been established within their locality. However as we look at the growing numbers of Community folk scattered around Britain and abroad it appears that the possibilities of forming new groups within the regions exists. What is required are people who would be prepared to co-ordinate the groups which usually meet monthly, not necessarily in the co-ordinator's home. This would involve inviting folk who have expressed interest and who are Community folk in the area. Information re. names and addresses would be made available through the Community Office. The office would also keep Community Group co-ordinators informed of issues, developments and matters for prayer and sharing at the group meetings. A very important weekend is being held on February 12-14, 1999 to which all existing Community Groups should send one of their members, if not their co-ordinator. Potential co-ordinators together with those who would like to see a group start in their area are very welcome and are encouraged to come on this weekend.

Travelling by Train to Nether Springs:

Please note that given advance purchase and avoiding peak travel times it is possible to get to Berwick upon Tweed, our nearest train station at very reasonable rates eg. From London Kings Cross it is £29.50 return. Always ask for any bargains or offers when applying.

Listening to God

Amund Karner from Aberdeen begins a series of thoughts in letter form on Listening to God.

Dear Judith,

Thank you for the chat at the Nether Springs this summer. It was good to get to know yet another of the people journeying with the Community. I have been haunted by your question as to how to get to know God; and how we can find the time to spend in prayer. It is a question that we have all come across several times in our life, and one that is very individual in its answering.

It seems to me that in trying to find a time to be with God *as well as* all the other things that are happening in our lives, we are in danger of putting a false emphasis in place. We need to remind ourselves that God is already there in our lives, at work in the ordinary and the everyday - as Jacob said, 'surely God was in this place and I knew it not'. So where is God in our daily life? Is He there at all? I know that I do not feel particularly aware of God as I am in a business meeting with a client, or am explaining to my boss why this project is not yet ready. Yet surely God is for us, with us in ALL that we do. So where is He I hear you ask? He is in the small things of life, in the midst of all that we are doing on a day to day basis, often moving unseen to most of us.

*The world is full of the glory of God,
those who see take off their shoes,
the rest sit and eat blackberries.*

So if the question is not necessarily how to meet God in our lives, but how to become aware of him, which tools are there for us? We can look back over the day and look for the times that stand out for some reason, we can look for the movement of the emotions in our lives. I find this one quite challenging, and I feel that others have more easy access to their feelings. So I see that there is a need for a change, and a change is taking place as I spend time looking for the evidence of God in my daily life, and then giving thanks for what I have seen. (I know that there is probably a lot more to be found, but I cannot achieve a complete and full awareness now, it is only a growing awareness that I can achieve, but I do feel that I am getting better at it already.) So I will be able to love God more and more each day. I'll write you more about how to listen soon.

Love Amund.

BOOK AMNESTY

As we have many library books from 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 return them please.

The following poem was written by Julie Watson of Middlesborough following the retreat 'How then shall we live.' It captures something of the heart of who we are and what we are about as a Community.

Pilgrim God, Pilgrim People

Pilgrim God, lead us on
As the world we know crumbles into chaos
We cannot return to the security of what was
For the maps no longer show the way
Enable us to move forward into uncertain future
Liberate us to be more real and fully human
Empty us of the desire to be in control and the fear to risk all
Fill us with the light of freedom and hope
Be close on winter nights of darkness, fear and pain
Strengthen us on summer days when life is an exciting adventure
Comfort us during the in between times of confusion and change
Empower us with wisdom to live on the edge
Walk with us into new opportunities
God of your pilgrim people, lead us home.

Ireland, O Ireland

The weekend of November 6-8 at the Nether Springs was a 'never to be forgotten' experience by all who were privileged to be part of what was billed in our programme as an Irish Weekend. It was that and more as Community companions Ken and Claire Humphrey with their baby son Danny, travelled from their home in Belfast to lead us in a weekend of laughter and tears, information and inspiration on the historical, religious and political perspectives on the whole Irish question. Ken and Claire enabled us to grasp a far greater understanding of the ethnic, Protestant and Catholic divide, as they opened up their hearts to us. It was a clear example of our Community Rule of Availability and Vulnerability in action. Over the weekend we had traditional Irish meals including well known Irish liquid refreshments. On the Saturday we had practical group workshops that enabled us to see through different eyes the perspectives of the main players in the game. The never to be forgotten Eucharist rounded off the weekend, as Jeff and Jill Sutherland sang the haunting and challenging 'Ireland O Ireland'. We all lit candles formed in the shape of Ireland, North and South, as we prayed for peace and unity to flourish in this significant land. Pray for Ken and Claire and little Danny as they continue as Protestants to live and work largely among Catholics in the heart of Belfast.

A journey to St Petersburg Brenda Grace

Freda and I stayed in St Petersburg in September at the time that the rouble devalued significantly – great for us 'foreigners' you might think, but no, all people were hit by the fact that there were no roubles to be found at any of the Exchanges. We had to borrow off Natasha until later in the week when at last we could change our money.

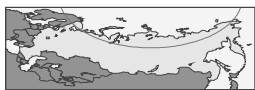
Advert

*Come to St Petersburg
Where you are guaranteed a warm
welcome from Natasha and friends
You will be
Overfed
Walked too fast
Taken to the Ballet where they only sing
opera
Bitten by mosquitoes
Learn to jump puddles
And how to cross the road in a death-
defying way
Not to be missed
An adventure of a lifetime.*

The advert speaks for itself. Natasha can teach the whole world about hospitality – insisting on taking us home across St Petersburg every night on the tram, and then usually walking home herself. We were overfed – Natasha can be very persuasive! You also don't want to waste food when there is so little anyway.

We found Natasha in good health, positive in the midst of a very bad political and economic climate, she says, "I am much better off than most people here, I can feel the prayers being prayed for me." "You have raised my spirits by being here." "You (the Community) help me, I thank you for all this help."

My lasting impressions of Russia, apart from the poems – streets full of 4 – 5 storey terraced houses, behind every single window a family is living, if you have two rooms, you usually let the spare one to another family. – A very different way to live!



Rus-

sia
In

Rus-

sia the streets are full of holes,
it's dangerous to walk,
it damages our souls.

The weather is harsh
and oh so unkind,
too much pain damages my mind.
The people live congested
but their lives are apart,
the desolation drains my heart.
Its OK for some,
it may have some merit.
But the grey and the drab
are killing my spirit.

Russian Life

I saw him on the tram,
It was so late and dark.
To me it was his hands
that stood out,
the contrast.

He looked tired, in a weary
but hard-working way.
His kit-bag was worn,
dusty and old.
It said a lot.
Told of years
- spoke of the land.

His face looked kind
Not worn down
But strong and gentle.
So were his hands.
They stood out,
with the contrast
of what they carried.

He looked patient.
How long had he travelled?
Where had he been?
The dust was wrong for a miner,
he must have worked the land.

It was Sunday.
Was it his day to tend the garden?
Setting the seeds,
nurturing the plants,
finally gathering in the crop.

He looked a family man.
It was in his stance,
the way he sat, his hands.

The bunch of blue cornflowers
grasped so gently.
A last minute thought for his wife?
Irregular stems,
bright blooms
glowing in the dust.
Some drooping broken.
How far has he travelled?
Gently carrying his flowers,
His tiredness
The dust.
The hope,
the promise.

I saw him on the tram,
it was so late and dark.
To me it was his hands
that stood out, the contrast,
the tiny bunch of bright blue
flowers.

Overseas Missionary Support Scheme

Natasha is short of about £60.00 per month to live on and we would like to thank those who give to the Overseas Missionary Support Scheme [OMSS] which enables us to send help to her. This scheme is run separate to the Trust's accounts. If you would like to help support Natasha, please contact Freda or Brenda.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Winter edition of CAIM. This is the last issue of the Northumbria Community newsletter for 1998 as the next issue is Spring 1999. As I write the memory of a quite wonderful Thanksgiving evening where 40 people gathered at the Nether Springs on November 26, still lingers. Karen Noad, born and raised in Oklahoma and now a much valued member of the resident Community family, treated us to the gastronomical niceties of American cuisine (with a little help from her friends.) We were reminded that Thanksgiving came out of a harvest in the midst of much adversity; hope following great calamity. In this past year the Community has also experienced these extremes, and we give thanks for God's grace and goodness that sustained us and brought us through real grief. We have known the depths of bewilderment and sadness when founders and friends left us. We have known the heights of blessing and joy as the fruit of relationship and growth has given us a valued partnership with the Bible Society working with the Open Book project through Storytelling. We have seen God's Spirit at work in amazing ways through our mission especially at Greenbelt and more recently at Beverley Minster. In between has been the ordinariness and everyday routine that gives us life and keeps us anchored. We have been able to return to foundational principles, understanding a little better in the process our reason to be. All these things will be shared with the wider Community in this and future issues of CAIM. We have quoted elsewhere those marvellous words of De Chardin that have often meant life to us this past year, that 'the future belongs to those who have hope.' A big, big thank you to all who journey with us whose help and encouragement this year in the midst of much pain has brought real hope for the future. We face it alone and yet together knowing that with God for us, with us and in us, the best is yet to be! May I wish you all a very joyful Christmas and a New Year bright with hope as Alone/ Together we walk into all the unknowns of 1999.



Psalm warfare at Glastonbury

A report from Andy Raine

Each year a team from the Community goes down to Pilton in Somerset to support Anne Goode and her daughter Viv. We do so because their next door neighbour, a man called Michael Eavis has the endearing habit of each year inviting half a million people to come and stay for a few days for a noisy party on his farm. This party is known as the "Glastonbury Festival", and campers and trailers alike pay handsomely for the privilege of being there! This year cash point machines on site meant that folk could queue to ensure that they parted with even more than the money they brought with them - which is just as well because the other new feature was that of gangs with baseball bats accosting sleeping campers in their tents and demanding money.

The teams we take stay with Anne, sleep in real beds, eat regular meals and have hot baths. We pray, dance and do intercession, at Anne's house, at the huge white cross in 'God's field' overlooking the festival, and on the festival site itself - at all hours of the day & night. Usually, this is quite reactive, responding to developments as they arise on-site or through what we are shown in intercession.

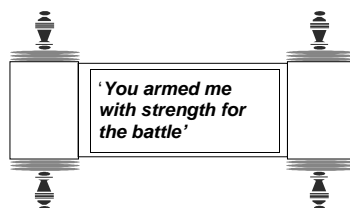
This year we were shown before setting out that we were to be pro-active, and take the offensive against Satan by actually 'dancing the Psalms.' I thought it would be interesting to work on a few dances to the Psalms, but God wasn't meaning for us to get off that easily...!!

Yes, he wanted us to dance the Psalms - all 150 of them! So I began hunting out contemporary recordings that would not sound out of place at Glastonbury or Pilton. Robbie McLellan replaced an obscure fuse in the unreachable depths of our very clever boombox which does everything but fry eggs. The next five days I worked night & day to get the Psalms copied onto tape in the correct order. Where no suitable recordings could be found we dubbed live voices over appropriate instrumentals, and so we ended up with 167 tracks, 16 sides of C90 tape, 12 hours of music. This year's team was made up of Chris Johnson, Ferg Matthews, Jill Whitehead and me, (Andy). We needed to do 4 blocks of 45 minutes uninterrupted Psalm-dancing each day with only an hour to prepare or rehearse for each block. Most days there was a communion service at the Cross and preparations for that also had to be taken into account.

The regional Lydia fellowship intercessors had decided to pray for rain to discourage the Festival goers, but the continual rain and mud made our life more difficult, too - almost all of our 45 minute blocks featured a thorough drenching. We lived, moved and had our being in those Psalms, and the intensity was exhausting but also

refreshing. As we danced, there was a round-the-clock prayer-chain supporting us from their own homes also using the Psalms as their weaponry.

Several found it an unusual experience, and the Psalms will never be quite the same again. Probably in consequence,



this year was surprisingly peaceful. Rob (the hairy) Brown came with us too as a fierce night watchman, but there were few intruders. We danced two blocks on the Festival site itself, both in the so-called Sacred Space. One of these was by a stream, next to a charmingly carved dragon in a field which had been reserved for camping. The children understandably enjoy climbing all over it. We danced Psalm 115 there:

'The idols of the heathen...the works of men's foolish hands, they have eyes but they see not, neither is there any breath in their mouth!'

Our dancing was 'a spectacle' before people and also angels' but we sometimes had a visible audience. We certainly felt a spectacle that day by the Dragon Field. In one dance we were to follow Chris's lead and join in whatever he did. It was drizzling on, and we were on a slope in very slippery mud, dancing in waterproofs and heavy boots. As we followed his lead shaking one leg after the other in the air, the people looking on cheered and wondered if we'd make it to the end of that Psalm without falling over. We wondered, too! The one time it didn't rain we were indoors dancing a block of Psalms at Pilton Church. The first Pilton pop-festival included a procession through that church led by a carnival dragon continuing to the site of the present festival on Worthy Farm. Later, the Pilton event took on the title of Glastonbury Festival - although it is not held in Glastonbury at all. (Years ago Glastonbury was home to one of 3 perpetual choirs chanting the Psalms round the clock, year in year out.)

This year some of us returned a month later to spend time in Glastonbury itself. The team consisted of 3 families. Ferg and Beckie Matthews, along with Amy, Joseph and Isaac; Andy and Anna Raine along with Joel, and Paul and Helen Shogren, along with Casey, Dylan, Jerome and 2 week old Sophia. We worked as a preparatory team for the 'Hearts on Fire' Christian festival in Glastonbury, and camped in the Methodist hall with one classroom for each family! We proved it was possible, but very diffi-

cult, to work with that proportion of children to adults in a performing team. There were 3 themes which we all participated in, but with each family carrying responsibility for one theme - Pilgrimage, all-age worship through the Psalms, and Patrick's Breastplate prayer. We did a beautiful open-air worship in the town centre, and it felt surprisingly normal to all of us - a sort of Psalms without walls! We climbed the Tor for our breastplate prayer experience, conspicuous in black cassocks and carrying props and small children and had worthwhile conversations with those we met. But with intrigued crowds of onlookers and fierce winds on the summit we were embarrassingly defeated by power failure. We 'walked' a piece or two, but the rechargeable batteries on the tape machine had suddenly developed a memory-problem. The final day saw the pilgrim theme as the Shogren family proceeded slowly down the street with children and belongings in a wheelbarrow - they were Australian pilgrims who had come to Glastonbury in search of St Patrick's breastplate. They talk to everyone they meet, and continue until they find the Matthew family dancing Psalms together in the gateway of a church in the High Street. They join in prayer and praise through the Psalms and continue together to the foot of the street where the Raines are already presenting dances and explain that the Breastplate they seek is a prayer of protection and celebration. All 3 families then join in a series of dances in which they participate in that famous prayer. We left the streets reluctantly to perform in the park, then join in a march for Jesus. The kids were great, we found it all demanding, and at times embarrassing, frustrating or humiliating - but we sure learnt a lot!

Anamchara Soul Friends

The series of Led Retreats held at the Nether Springs on the subject of Anamchara - Soul Friends have proven to be very helpful to many. Led by Anna Raine with help from husband Andy and Amund Karner, they have been at times over booked. The following weekend dates on this subject are set for 1999:

March 12-14 - Listening to God

July 9-11 - Making Changes

Aug 20-22 - Availability/Vulnerability.

Why not make sure of your place by booking now for these important weekends at the Nether Springs.

The Chronicles of St Boswald

Professor Snodric of the Ancient University of Chilton continues his remarkable insights from The chronicles of King Boswald, King of all Northumbria (except the bits ruled by King Oswald)

Chapter Two.

In chapter One we read of the inspiringly insipid adventures of St Antony. As every novice knows, St Antony was not responsible for the forming of the monastic movement or its subsequent spread across Europe. No Life of this particular Antony was written and he consequently can bear no responsibility for the subsequent misadventures of Martin.

Long after Antony had passed on to that great timeshare in the sky, Martin came onto the scene. He is, in historical terms, a character of little significance, not even casting a short shadow over events in Gaul. And yet Martin is not without interest to students of the Incapability Brown principle of history.

Nothing is recorded of his early good deeds for the simple reason that there were none. At the age of 15 fearing (quite wrongly) that Martin might get religion, his father made him join the foreign legion. As a legionnaire Martin tried to do as little work as possible. He soon discovered that if he took the cowl he could claim to be fasting or mortifying himself whenever it was his turn to stand guard or do the washing up. So convincing was this turn to heaven that Martin thereafter became known as St Martin the Skiver. Somewhat put out at the derisory nature of this nomenclature, St Martin prowled the countryside looking for a good deed to be done. He mounted his bicycle, left the camp and looked for people to help. Alas things did not go as he hoped. On a cold January day, just as he was heading for home, he noticed a poorly clad beggar warming himself by a compost heap. Filled with joy that at last his time had come, St Martin leapt off his bicycle, tore off the beggars cloak and gave him a swift kicking. Having admonished the beggar to get on his bike and get a real job, St Martin donned the beggars cloak (having become rather cold himself after all that exercise) and cycled back to camp. So impressed were the legionnaires at this exemplary display of works of mercy that they immediately revoked his former title and henceforth addressed him as Martin St Tour de France.

After leaving the legion, Martin St T de F toured the countryside on his bicycle, overtaking as Elijah did, chariots and horsemen alike. Every where he went Martin St T de F would take his famous Good News For Everyone (except beggars) and made loads of converts who were tired of simply being Gauls and wanted to become Monkish Gauls (or Goulash Monks?) instead. He further became known as St Martin Tour De France, the bicycling Apostle of all Gaul. A little known local bicycle race was to be named after him in

years to come. But what to do about this instant revival?

As he was cycling down a leafy lane one summer Martin St T de F spied an elderly peasant perusing a book. Never one to miss an opportunity to spread the good news he challenged the old man to give all he owned to the poor (namely Martin St



T de F). The old peasant, being of moderate means, was loathe to part with the readies and consequently Martin was forced to teach him the merits of humility and generosity. Having gently worked over the peasant, Martin blessed him, and took his book into safekeeping. This was to prove to be the turning point in Martin's life.

This was no ordinary book. It was a life of St Anthony the Great written by St Athanasius the Goodie Goodie. It movingly tells of St Anthony's life and works and made a profound impression on Martin St T de F. Realising that his attitude towards beggars was quite unacceptable he determined to move to an area without beggars lest he fall once again into temptation. Flinging himself on his bike Martin flung the book back at the peasant (thereby saving the man from having to pay a hefty library fine) and set off to Brittany.

At this stage (unlike now) Brittany was full of people wearing funny hats and eating crepes (a sort of pancake tasting of flour). As soon as they heard that he was coming, the good citizens of Marmiteade and Marmoset (deadly rivals in life and love) flocked to Martin St T de F, demanding that he either eat one of their crepes or found a monastery. Looking at the crepes he decided to found a monastery rather than chance the local delicacy. He invited the citizens of each village to formulate a strategic plan, identify their spiritual priorities and then put in a tender showing how they would give value for money if the monastery was sited in their village. The vile citizens of Marmiteade (merchants and robbers to a man) said that they would use their ill gotten gains to build a cathedral to rival any in all Gaul. The good burgers of Marmoset (poor but polite) said that they were experiencing cashflow problems at present but could keep Martin St T de F up to his waist in Breton beer. Persuaded of the spiritual merits of such poverty, Martin chose Marmoset and selected a site on the hillside. He built a hut and got on with living the monkish life except on Saturday nights when he would champion the village in the weekly Marmiteade -v- Marmoset charity drinking competition. Martin argued, cogently,

that if he (Martin) did not drink most of the beer then it would be left in situ to form a grave source of temptation to the nasty villagers of Marmiteade and thus no money would be raised for worthy causes. So each week Martin St T de F would appear in the lists on behalf of the meek Marmosets. Each week the baddies would try to drink him under the table and fail in the attempt. And so saintly had Martin become that however much he drank he never had to get up in the middle of the night and never had a hangover. No wonder the locals were impressed.

Martin became a Bishop at the age of 35 when he ticked the wrong box on his racing coupon. Instead of collecting at 35-1 he collected a bishopric, matching mitres and a long crook (traditionally used for clearing the streets of beggars but now redeemed as a good symbol).

The story continues in the next issue of CAIM.

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 current programme.

Cloisters Update

Jeff Sutherland

We're in the middle of a busy time for Cloisters. Not only is there the extra activity that Christmas brings, but as well as that we've moved – again! This brings with it the difficulties of setting up new procedures and systems, to make sure that orders are handled quickly and efficiently.

After the birth of baby Connor, Carey Miller is back at the centre of things in Cloisters, and is doing a brilliant job making sure that folk actually receive what they've ordered!

In many ways it's been a frustrating year for Cloisters – two moves and many distractions – but in the midst of the frustration, there is a real sense of anticipation. It's exciting to see, even in some small way, Cloisters becoming the outlet for some of the creativity of the Community, and to make plans for its development. More of the Community's prayers, liturgies and songs are being brought into the card designs, there are plans to have music recorded and published early in the new year, and much work is going into the preparation of a range of short booklets, and more ambitious writing projects. The exciting thing is that all this work is coming out of an expression of who we are in Community, and is expressing it in a way which helps us to put bread on the table.

We've retained our address since the move – it's PO Box 1, Wooler, Northumberland NE71 6YY.

We don't have a phone which is permanently manned, but you can leave a message in the Community Office on 01289 388235 if you'd like to receive a catalogue.

Do you need to send anyone a New Year card? What about this one from the New Year Liturgy in Celtic Night Prayer

Bonfire at Beverley

Roy Searle

Those who were at Beverley Minster on November 21st witnessed a remarkable fulfilment of prophecy. The significance of Cathedrals, Abbeys and Minsters has remained close to our hearts following a time of intercession and then a prophecy received back in 1993 about seeing bonfires in such settings.

Our plans and preparations had been dogged by many things and did not auger well for the presentation of Celtic Fire. Several folk were getting cold feet and some were questioning the wisdom of our going. Yet we were going because we seek always to be obedient to the Spirit's leading, and God had told us to go.

As it happened, the evening was to witness a clear vindication of our decision and our determination to continue despite difficulties saw God's promise realised. It was suggested we put out some 50 -75 leaflets in the seats for the audience. Everyone was blown away when at 7.00 p.m. half an hour before the performance, people started to arrive in droves. We presented Celtic Fire to a full Minster audience of over 400 folk. We had prayed that God would send the people of his choice and he did, in abundance, from churches and the general public. The people at the Minster were astonished, as we were by the response. Fraggie, an artist, and one of our Celtic Fire team, had made a quite amazing bonfire prop. Standing at the back of the Minster, with all the house lights down and looking down the aisles full of people, the bonfire could be seen burning bright. This was it, the fulfilment of prophecy, a fire had been lit, not only on the stage but in the hearts of many.

Liz Culling, a Community companion and a priest near Beverley was involved in our going to the Minster. She writes:- "Just what is it?" was a question I was asked frequently in the weeks running up to November 21st. My reply ran something like this: "Well, it's a presentation telling the story of the Celtic saints using music and song, story and mime as well as dance." I hoped my enthusiasm for the Celtic saints would convey itself and encourage people to come. In the event there was a much larger crowd than anyone anticipated and an atmosphere of expectation. It was after all Beverley Minster and St. John of Beverley was a Celtic saint and still has his supporters! It was an experience of worship to enter into the lives of some of the Celts and their world. The framework was the life of St Aidan, the background the British Isles and the foreground the issues still facing people today. It was so good to see again how relevant to the present are the lives of our Christian ancestors. As we passed a lighted candle along the rows of seats and prayed for Ireland, it

was evident that many were moved.

The other striking thing about Celtic Fire was the richness of expression available to us. Through movement and dance so many of the words were given a fuller expression. Colour and light enhanced music and speech. Old hymns and new songs sat comfortably together. Through it all there was a sense of the communion of the saints down the centuries and a desire to glorify God through his people today.'

January 9th 1999 An important Community Gathering in Bradford

A Community Gathering will be held at St Christopher's C of E, in Holme-wood, Bradford, on Saturday 9th January 1999. The theme will be that of **'Companions on the Journey.'** and included in the day will be some teaching, a news update, and workshops as well as the opportunity for prayer and sharing together. The day will begin at **11:00am** and finish at **6:00pm**. The last hour of the day will be a presentation combining the fruit of the workshops held earlier in the afternoon.

Please bring a packed lunch. Tea and Coffee will be provided. If you require a map with directions to the Church then please send a sae to the Community Office at Nether Springs. Teams may also be taking part in local church worship services on Sunday 10th. If you would like to be involved in this in any way, then please let us know asap.

Those who are travelling north on Sunday 10th may like to note that we plan to do a house blessing at the new home of Dave and Sarah Hay in Tow Law, Co Durham on the way back from Bradford.

We hope to see many Companions and Friends of our Community on this important day. Please try to be there if at all possible!

Easter Workshop 1999

Easter Workshop will be held at the Nether Springs beginning on Maundy Thursday 1st April and ending on Easter Sunday 4th April 1999. Full details will be included in the next issue of CAIM.

COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Roy Searle, Trevor Miller

In recent months the Trustees, Council and Leaders of the Community have been evaluating the purpose and role of the Community Council. Set up in 1995 the idea of the Council was to help take some of the load from the Leaders of the Community, who were involved in a multiplicity of diverse activities. It was inaugurated in the light of the Community's experience of moving from the Founders to the Few to the Many. The early enthusiasm and commitment of the first Council did not however realise its intentions for a variety of reasons, not least the problems of the distance members had to travel to attend the monthly Council meetings and the costs involved. Various adjustments have taken place since then, but now, following this year's evaluation, several major reforms are proposed. In the new chapter of the Council the following guidelines will be adhered to:

- The Community Council, drawn from those journeying with the Community exists to serve the vocation and vision of the Northumbria Community.
- Its members, working in association with the Leaders and Trustees seek to carry the responsibilities for the ongoing development of the Community.
- It serves as an advisory, supportive, prayerful group of people who act as a sounding board to the leaders, contributing a collective wisdom and suggesting possible ways forward for the Community.
- The Council will hopefully represent the wider Community. The Northumbria Community being dispersed in its make up, now draws companions and friends from many different areas. It is hoped that the reformed council will include folk from the various regions throughout Britain, i.e. Northumbria, Mercia, Cumbria, Midlands, Scotland, Wales, Anglia, South West, London and the South East.

We are planning to invite people to serve on the Council for two year periods.

- The Council would meet quarterly at the Nether Springs over a weekend, with meetings starting on Saturday mornings and the time together concluding with lunch on Sunday. There would be opportunity for sharing; in prayer and discussion, updates and planning, together with reflection and development work. The weekend would also provide time for the council, together with Leaders and Trustees to spend time together informally. It would be envisaged that the meetings would provide a greater opportunity for what's happening in the regions to be made more widely known and as appropriate, such information

would be passed onto to the wider Community through the channels of Caim, Community Groups and Regional Gatherings.

- Members of the Council would be encouraged to be available to Community

companions and friends in their area, together with others who might like contact with someone from the Community in their area. They would in effect become ambassadors and advocates of the Northumbria Community in their regions. As situations occur between Council meetings that require consultation, the Leaders would keep Council members informed.

- The current Council members will stay on in the interests of continuity and new members would be invited by them and the Leaders to join the Council for a two year period beginning at Easter next year.

If, after prayerful thought, you would like to be considered for the Council or have a suggestion as to who may be considered, would you please write to us by the end of December.

Supporting One Another

Roy Searle

Just an idea! The thought of Community folk using one another's skills and abilities arose with a recent incident. One of our Community companions who is in business was commenting on his need of an accountant. Another Community companion who is an accountant is trying to set up on his own, and in order to further his and his wife's sense of vocation, he needs business. Can they not at least explore the idea of employing one another? Got the idea? Think it through and let us know your thoughts on the idea of how we might implement it and see some mutual benefit throughout the Community.



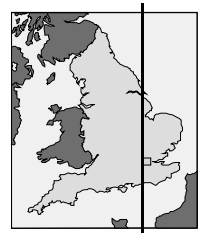
As a dispersed Community with groups and activities happening all over the UK and beyond we need to reflect this in the pages of CAIM. We can only do this if you send in the material. So let me again encourage all Community Companions and Friends to submit possible articles, news snippets, questions for clarification and relevant book reviews for future issues. As this is OUR Newsletter the breadth and sweep of its content depends entirely on what is received from the wider Community for possible publication.

'The future belongs to those who

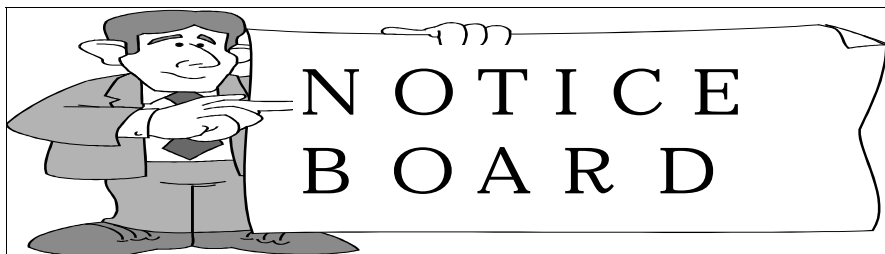
Meridian Millennium Way Pilgrimage

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 Fundraising 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



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

Congratulations are in order for **Andy and Anna Raine** of Holy Island on the birth of their daughter **Martha**, a sister for Joel. She was born on 17th September weighing 6lbs 14oz.

Congratulations also to **Dominic and Helen De Saulles** of Hetton on the birth of their son **Matthew John**, a brother to Lizzie. He weighed in at 7lb 8oz on 31st October. The De Saulles family are moving back to Cardiff in mid December having spent the past 9 months at the Nether Springs advising on financial matters and helping us put our financial house in order. They will be a huge miss and we wish them well in the future.

Ian and Joy Corsie have now moved north and have settled into their new home. Their address is 'The Shieling, Allerdean Greens, Berwick on Tweed, TD15 2TB.

Rob Brown (now not so hairy Rob) of Nether Springs celebrated his 40th birthday on November 25th.

James Barber has begun work as a temporary assistant vergier at Bath Abbey where **Simon Airey** is on the clergy staff. It will be a full time job for Simon just keeping an eye on him.

Congratulations to **Maria Woodhouse** of Blackburn who was married to Phil at the end of October. May the Saints and the Saviour watch over them. Also to **Sue Berry** of Blackburn on her engagement to Mark.

We would ask the Community to keep in their prayers those who have either recently been bereaved or are still coming to terms with grief and loss of loved ones. These include **Sandra Sayer** of Newton Aycliffe, **Joan Parker** of Bradford, **James Hawes** of Hetton Hall and **Roddy and Berni Geoghegan** of Athy in Ireland.

Andy Colledge of Leeds is coming to work at the Nether Springs for two months from mid-January to mid-March 1999. We want to thank our friends at Moortown Baptist Church for making this possible. We already have a long list of jobs ready for him to do.

Visitors to the Nether Springs have been delighted with the new additions to the resident Community. Namely **Milly** the nanny goat and seven hens rescued from a battery farm.

Prayer Partners

Roy Searle

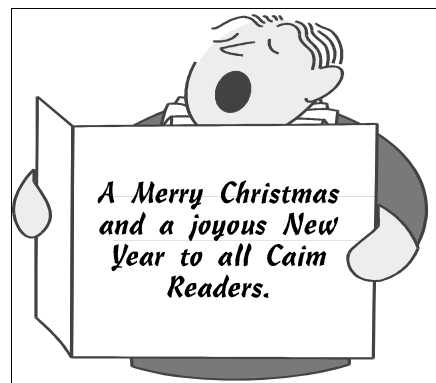
Part of belonging to the Northumbria Community is embracing a commitment to prayer and intercession. In order to clarify and help folk to discern their 'right seat' in relation to prayer, the following may be helpful as to how we can all be involved in praying for the Community.

INTERCESSION. We have Community intercessors who intercede, alone and together. The focus of their intercession and prayers is on waiting on God. These are times of listening, waiting and discerning. It is a specific and demanding calling. If you would like to know more about this area of the Community's life please contact Norma Wise at 22 Finchale Road, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham, DL5 5HT. Tel:-01325 312930.

PETITION. Every week we receive several requests for prayer for individuals and situations. These will be prayed for in the chapel at Nether Springs, put in the Prayer Book and where appropriate we will put the requests around some or all of the Community Prayer Chain. We need more people who would be prepared to be on the Prayer Chain, receiving requests, praying and passing the requests on to others.

SUPPORT. As individuals and community teams are out on mission most weeks they would appreciate some prayer covering. We need more prayer supporters who will be part of the team by praying for particular people, places, events and situations as they arise. eg. for Celtic Fire at Beverley, three Prayer Supporters were rung prior to the event, who prayed for the team, holding them before God for the event and who were later informed of what happened after the weekend.

Do prayerfully consider your response to the above and write to the Nether Springs to tell us which area of prayer you are willing to be involved in. For those who responded to the last call to prayer in the Prayer Guide, we only need your response if you feel the need to change categories.



Working at the Nether Springs

We want to encourage all Community Companions to consider taking the opportunity of working at the Nether Springs for a week at a time throughout the year. Starting on a Monday evening through to the following Sunday afternoon. Full board and lodging, hard work and good fun. As we can't take more than one or two additional helpers at any given time, it will be on a first come, first served basis. All applications addressed to Freda Miller at the Nether Springs please.

'Endgame Live'

Endgame is the name of the band put together by Community companions Dave and Sarah Hay. They have just released their first 6 track CD entitled "**Multistorey**." and it is available now for a mere £6.99!

Copies can be obtained via Hetton Hall or mail order from Dave Hay on: **01388 730381**. For gig details or any other information contact us direct or see local details.

Email: endgame@btinternet.com

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