

# CAIM U i f!Opsui vnscjb!Dpnnvojuz!Ofxtnfuufs



Issue No 11  
Winter 1999

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

## What mean these stones? Rediscovering the treasures of Celtic spirituality.

Jeff Sutherland of North Sunderland

### The tide is in: Celtic resurgence

A casual glimpse at the bookshelves and music selection currently on offer in almost any Christian bookshop reveals the flood of books and music surfing on the high tide of interest in things "Celtic" – a label which can mean all sorts of different things depending on what product it is being used to sell! In the newsagent recently, I noticed a home decorating magazine which had devoted its main feature to "Celtic design", and which included a free gift of a knotwork stencil! "Celtic" is indeed big business at present. We need to be careful how we embrace this in the Church. The characteristics of what has become known as "Celtic spirituality" cannot simply be donned like a warm sweater on a winters' day – to be discarded later when the weather improves. Celtic spirituality – and worship in a "Celtic" style – is not about the style of the songs we sing, or the instruments we use to accompany them. It is not about a particular sound or style in our worship. But rather, it is worship which springs from a particular attitude to life, and a way of seeing God – and his involvement in his world – which constitutes a "Celtic" approach to worship.

In Joshua chapter 4, after God had enabled the people to cross the Jordan by stemming the waters, he instructed the twelve tribes to each carry a stone from the dry riverbed, and set them down together on the far bank. When, in future generations, the children would ask: "What mean these stones?", then the story would be told of God's dealings with his people at that time; it would make sense of where they now stood on their journey of faith. And so it is for many who now look back to the period from the fifth to the seventh century in Celtic Britain, and see the light of Christ burning more brightly than perhaps any period since. As we discover some of the stories of God's dealing with his people at that time; as we learn something of their understanding of God and his world, then we can begin to absorb some of the treasures of that spirituality, of that "way of see-

ing God". And then we will give expression to the things we are learning, in our worship – and it won't be dependent upon us using traditional melodies played on traditional instruments!

### The coracle is on the sea: the journey of discovery

In our own journey, it is important to understand "where we have come from" and the influences which have impacted us, in order to understand where we are now. And so it is, as we look at the way in which these Celtic Christians expressed their faith. There were three main influences which forged the essence of Celtic spirituality.

The first was *the Desert Fathers of Egypt and Persia*, who had established "monasticism" in their response to enormous cultural change and secularisation, in the third and fourth centuries. They held to the view that to seek God for his own sake was "the one thing necessary", to know him and to serve him with a whole heart. Their teachings were carried, largely in the form of wise and witty sayings and stories, across trade routes to reach the British Isles.

The second major influence was the predominant *Druidic religion* of their day, which placed great emphasis on love and forgiveness, and taught that those who were merciful in this life would have eternal life. Rather than rejecting their "old" religion, the Celts absorbed many of its ideas and attitudes, and acknowledged God in them. Thus the Celts built traditions which were very different to the rest of Christendom, concerning for example, the role of women, or of poets, songwriters and artists.

The third formative influence was the *teaching of Pelagius*, a man who became a Christian in southern England at the time of the Roman occupation. He was repulsed by the gross inequalities of wealth in society, and by the lavish grandeur of Roman Christianity. He taught believers to regard Jesus as an intimate friend and brother, and although he was

condemned as a heretic by the Roman authorities, his morality and devotion to the person of Christ expressed the very essence of Celtic faith in Jesus. These primary influences forged many of the distinctives of the Celtic tradition:

### The tide is out: carrying the message.

The Celts knew no sacred / secular divide. For them, the whole of life was under the orb of God's care. As a result they did not reject what we might call "secular" culture, but redeemed it: "this is life as it is, let's see God in it". They were a passionate people, strong in family and community, for whom beliefs and lifestyle were completely inseparable. They were rooted in the ordinariness of life, and learned to see God in the everyday things. For example, they used prayers and liturgies as they tended their animals, worked the land, or covered the fire at night. The Celts loved in particular John's gospel. Theirs was a listening tradition, seeking God in the cell of one's own heart, and knowing one's own weaknesses. Their lifestyle was a journey, not only of outward observance, but an inward journey of seeking God in the cell of the heart. Theirs was a spirituality which was not locked in the church. They lived as "church without walls", and were a pilgrim people, preferring simple buildings which could be left behind, to the grand architecture of the Roman tradition. The faith of the Celtic Christians was expressed with great diversity. No single body prescribed how worship must be expressed. Each community of faith had their own expression of their life in God. (What songs, liturgies and art would God have us create in our own church, to express what he has called us to be and to do?) Their faith was a very "down to earth" and accessible faith. That love of John's gospel in particular taught them that "the

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## What mean these stones?

(continued from page 1)

word became flesh and dwelt among us" – therefore the whole of life is touched by the glory of God. This is why the Celtic tradi-

tion teaches us to see God in everything – in the beauty of creation, in conversation with a friend, in the smile of a child, or in the fear of our neighbour. Home was “a thin place” between heaven and earth. The Celts were ordered yet spontaneous, and loved to use an office, or liturgy, in their worship, but these liturgies were born out of and rooted in the reality of life. Celtic Christian faith was ruthlessly Trinitarian. All liturgies would begin with the sign of the cross. This acknowledged the reality of spiritual warfare, and invoked the protection of the Trinity, but also acknowledged that faith is, of the essence, about relationship.

The Celtic tradition attached great importance to the practise of confession. Many of the sayings of the Desert Fathers spoke out the forgiveness of God, and encouraged believers to “watch their heart”, as they were set free from the things which kept them bound.

Every monastery would maintain a fire, which was kept burning continually as a sign of God's presence. Use of symbols and icons played a significant part in their worship, which was creative and imaginative, and because theirs was an oral tradition, they understood the importance, and impact, of story and its telling. Drawing from their Druidic heritage, the Celts ordained men and women as bards, to tell the story in poetry, prose, song and art. Celtic spirituality expressed a great love for the natural created order. This was not (as it is for us) because they saw it as something once neglected which had to be nursed in intensive care to sustain its life, but because every part of life was under God's care. The Celts saw the divine spirit of God in every living and created thing.

### How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?: some ideas/resources.

The most important, relevant and “authentic” resources for worship drawing from the Celtic tradition are those which will rise up from within the Church itself. Celtic prayers and liturgies were rooted in the reality of life for today, and therefore the challenge for each church is to give expression to the particular vocation which God has placed upon it. There is, of course, lots of material which we can use, or model our own material on.

The importance of symbolism for the Celts has already been mentioned. Innovative an imaginative use of symbols can help us to release our worship to God, and see our faith in a more holistic way. It's important to remember that we do not worship the symbols – they have no value in themselves – but that they point us towards God, perhaps in a new way. Some examples:

- Small tea light candles offer lots of imagery pertaining to the light of Christ – especially if they are handled by or given to individuals.

- We often use a “prayer net”, which is a large, ragged piece of fishing net, to which people are invited to tie a scrap of ribbon or material as they offer prayers of intercession. The net travels with us, and as the number of ribbons grows, it reminds us of our journey, of God's faithfulness, and of the communion of saints.

- The story of the memory stones in Joshua 4 can be used as we encourage people to bring (or accept) a stone, and remember a specific instance of God's intervention in their life. We sometimes bring those stones to a collective point, where we build a small cairn to remind us of how God has led his people on the journey of faith. Or we might ask folk to carry the stone away as a personal reminder of a God encounter.

### Songs and hymns

- Look for songs and hymns which focus on God as our hope, our shelter, the One at the centre of our lives. There are many traditional hymns which carry wonderful words, such as Be Thou My Vision, Lord Of All Hopefulness, When I Survey, or Lord For The Years. The Northumbria Community has arranged some of these hymns with new tunes and instrumentation. If any readers wish to have further information on specific areas touched on in this article then they can write to the Mission Office at Nether Springs.



## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Winter edition of CAIM the newsletter of the Northumbria Community.

This is the last issue of CAIM this year, decade, century, millennium? It is a strange sensation as the reality of the passage of time is really heightened in our minds, especially with all the hype going on about the millennium. Some words from a poet named Rainer Maria Rilke were passed on to me recently which sum up well the thoughts of many at the heart of our Community as we reflect back on a year filled with such deep paradox. We have endured the intense pain of continuing broken relationships and its consequences, which at times has almost paralysed us. We have also enjoyed a deepening maturity in so many areas of Community life, which has enabled us not only to put our own house in order but also to rediscover the centrality of our vocation and vision in such a way that we can look to the future with a great deal of hope.

These are the words we can begin to reflect on and internalise as our own.

*Have patience with everything unresolved in your heart and try to love the questions themselves as if they were locked rooms or books in a very foreign tongue. Do not search for answers, which could not be given to you now, because you would not be able to live them. And the point is, to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.*

This is ‘ethos building’ teaching at its best, and we would do well to incorporate its heart into any New Year resolutions we may make for the immediate future.

On another note it would be good to meet up with many Companions and Friends at Bradford on January 8th and share together with thanksgiving, that future and hope given to us by God. To all Companions and Friends in our dispersed Community, we wish a blessed Christmas time and a new year filled with hope, as we continue our journey alone and together.



### BOOK AMNESTY

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## The Present

What a beautiful package! Look, each side of the box is different! This side is white, pure white. I've never seen a lovelier young woman than the one sketched on the white paper. She is so innocent, so fragile, yet strong - but with a trace of sadness about her face. Her features are Jewish, I think. Turn the box around. There, that side is deep blue, midnight blue, and the picture of the Shepherds and their sheep, such a peaceful scene. But I wonder why this side is so dark. Nothing but darkness. Tell you what, put it on the bottom so it doesn't show; rest the package on that side, yes, that's better. Now, isn't this side striking? I don't think I've ever seen a more gorgeous shade of purple. It's well, regal, especially with those three men on camels in the design. They are almost like Kings. I wonder where they came from, where they're going. This gets more interesting all the time. O but look at this pure gold side. Those are angels, aren't they? This is by far the richest side of the whole package. But what a contrast this red is? And you know, I never did like red, especially that shade, darkly rich like blood. I wonder why whoever wrapped this package, whoever designed it, made one side that awful colour. Tell you what, turn it away, turn the box so that terrible red is on the bottom and the dark side is at the back. There, that's much better; now the red doesn't show and the black side's turned away from view. White, blue, gold, purple. I just enjoy sitting here looking at the beautiful package. ***Aren't you going to open it?*** Why, is there something inside?

## INTERCESSORS

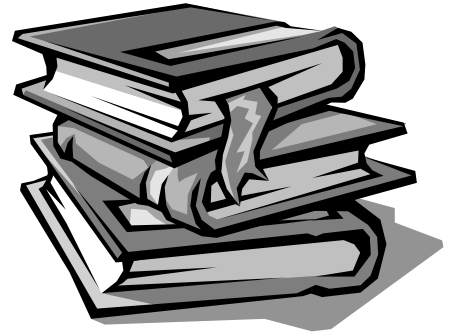
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## Book Review !

Andy Raine of Holy Island.

**VIRTUOUS MAGIC** – women saints and their meanings' Sara Maitland and Wendy Mulford. Mowbray 1998, paperback £12.99/hardback £19.99. ISBN: 0-264-67386-7

Don't let the horrendous cover with a very wooden painting from the National Gallery put you off. The written portraits of the saints are intelligent, accessible and human, and are given to us in stories, history and poetry. Both writers are searching, probing, and full of insights, with their different and complementary perspectives. The women saints chosen are an interesting mix and include Clare of Assisi, Etheldreda, Ita, Brigid and Hild, Teresa of Avila and Mary of Egypt. Also Dorothy Day, Lady Godiva, Martha of Bethany and Jean Donavon and the Maryknoll nuns working with her in El Salvador who were raped and murdered. Often the left hand page has poetry or narrative which is inferior and experimental. The right hand pages then supplies the factual data to set the story in its context. It is a book you pick up and open, then keep on reading, then want to re-read. Hurry out and order it at your local bookstore or library! But don't expect a collection of patronising portraits to keep those women in their place. It isn't like that, and could hardly have been with either of these writers. Wendy Mulford may be better known to many of you as Wendy Bevan, married to Noel, and both Community Companions. Wendy found the book a fascinating project to research and write for. The end result is appropriately a fascinating and substantial paperback, intelligent and hard-hitting, rather than a dry book for academics.



Ian Corsie of Allerdean

Work is now proceeding apace with the detail of combining Celtic Daily Prayer and Celtic Night Prayer into the new 'Celtic Daily Prayer Book' for publication by HarperCollins in October 2000. There will be two years worth of daily readings in the new book (broadly the same as in the existing books but with some replacement material); and a new 'Celtic Daily Prayer Book Readings' will be published at the same time with a further year's worth of readings (most of which, though not all, come from the old Filofax series of monthly readings). It is not too late to let Ian Corsie have any comments on the existing books and material that you would like to have taken into account in the revision work.

Thanks to those who responded to the request for creative writing, artwork, photography, etc. inspired by visits to Nether Springs. There is not as yet enough to warrant any collection of such material, but do let Ian Corsie have anything you have - or feel inspired to produce in the future.

## Annual Retreat

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

## The Way of the Desert

Phyl Blockley of Ossett

You are the Rock  
Unchanging, when sand blows  
Grating upon the surface of the earth.  
You are the Well,  
The peace within the cell of the hearts core.  
Where the hermit dwells  
In desert places.  
You are the Spring  
Refreshing travellers  
As they wonder with wounded feet,  
Following the way of wisdom  
Where the arid soul is renewed  
Finding God's pure Truth,  
In the Silence.



## St. Cuthbert's Church, North Sunderland

Nancy Hammond of Wooler who owns both the Church and the Shop she writes about.

There was an interesting brain storming session in September when David and Pam Pott, Jeff and Jill Sutheran, Roy and Shirley Searle and I met at St. Cuthbert's. David had been reading David Adam's book *On Eagles' Wings* about Chad and his schooling on Lindisfarne. After walking the area around Seahouses, Bamburgh and North Sunderland, David wrote a short paper about setting up the church as an education centre for school groups. Children would come and take part in some of the things that Chad would have done like Psalm learning, rhythmic chanting, lettering on wax tablets, learning to calculate tides, making nets, etc. A pilgrimage along the coast would also be possible. David sums up "it would be a fascinating job for a qualified teacher who has an enthusiasm for the topic. Perhaps such a person is already out there in the community. Someone with the spirit of St. Aidan would of course be ideal!"

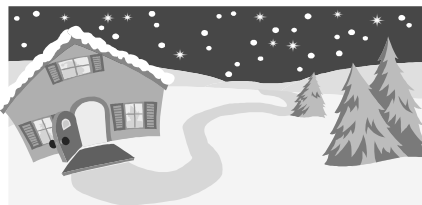
We have recently spoken to various people from Business Link about David's idea. All of them have felt it was a plan that would attract funding from a variety of sources. Watch this space!

### Shop in Wooler High St.

The shop has a tenant of over 25 years, Nancy Foster. She has often said to me and to others that she is not sure how much longer she will want to continue. I have spoken to her recently about the possibility of the Community taking over the shop but retaining her wonderful paintings of local scenes. I suggested that if this happened we would like her to work some of the time as well, if she wanted to do so. We will probably discuss it again in the new year. However, if this should take place, we will need someone who could manage the shop and its mainly volunteer workforce. Is there anyone out there who is interested?

## CEILIDH IN WOOLER

Come and join us in Wooler on  
Wednesday evening 19<sup>th</sup> January  
for a Storytelling Ceilidh.  
Details: 01289 388477



## How Then Shall We Live?

Roy Searle of Wooler

Throughout the autumn, the leaders, Community Council and those who live in and around or who work at the Nether Springs have been looking at the implications of how we live out our vocation with particular reference to the Nether Springs, the Mother House of the Community. Seeking to build on the foundations laid by our Founders, to learn from our mistakes and continue to be flexible as we journey in both pioneering and developing, we are currently addressing and implementing some radical changes. This is being done to alleviate some of the pressures and strain on people which ultimately damages relationships. It is a process of helping people to find their right seat. To quote from the Rule: *Know yourself, and you will find your right seat. I have prepared a place for you, says the Lord, that is for you, and only you, to fill. First of all, come to My table, and ask that you might serve, looking even for the lowest tasks. When the work of service is done then you may look for your own place at table. But do not seek the most important place in case it is reserved for someone else. The place I have appointed is where you will be happiest.* Finding appropriate structures and ways of being and doing that serve and encourage people in their embracing God's call upon their lives. Shunning institutionalism which controls and traditionalism that binds, we are continually seeking to implement the Rule of Life that God has called us to, which encourages us to be *freeing each other for the love of God .... valuing each person.*

This means finding new structures that devolve power and responsibility to the Many and not just the Few. Living in such a way that individuals are not overwhelmed and consumed by carrying too much, so that plans can be better implemented, communications improved and the life of the Community deepened as we journey alone and together. Listening, learning, repenting, recognising our dependency upon God, being prepared to change, valuing collective wisdom and the insight of others have all to be components in the way ahead. Closing the Nether Springs for much of January will give us some much-needed time to reflect, train and implement some of the changes. As part of this process we are changing some of the ways we "staff" the Nether Springs as well as administering the finances, communications, mission teams, storytelling, Cloisters etc. We are looking to God to send the peo-

ple of his choice to work with us, mindful of the Day 31 Meditation in Celtic Daily Prayer which speaks of: *A completely new work which would never have been possible if we had not been uprooted completely in every way, and if in that uprooting we had not decided to pray for God's solution and leading every step of the path as it wound through unknown territory. We also prayed that if it grew, God would send us the workers of His choice, rather than our trying to advertise or get people to help us . . . so not to advertise, but simply to pray that God will send those of His choice, and keep others away, is a different way of doing things. We don't say everyone ought to work this way, we simply say we feel we were led by God to do this as a demonstration that He is able to bring the people to a place, even a tiny out of the way place, and only to bring the ones He wants to have there for His purposes.*

If you feel a sense of call to respond to any of the opportunities at the Nether Springs do let us know. We would also really appreciate more Community Companions and Friends giving us some voluntary help at the Hall for a week or more. We are also looking for people to help in lots of other areas of the Community's work which can be done at a distance, away from the Nether Springs. A good example of this is that we are in real need of someone to compile and edit the Community Prayer Guide. Help and advice will be given for the next issue and there is no shortage of material that is offered for inclusion. It does need however to be someone with a computer and email facilities. The printing and distribution of the Guide can be handled from Nether Springs if appropriate. Interested? Want to know more? Do contact Roy at Nether Springs asap. Similarly, we are open to others working on Caim. Write to Trevor with thoughts and suggestions and offers of help. There are many other areas where help is needed. These include:- the development of Celtic Fire, the sales and marketing of Cloisters products, book keeping, and help with audio typing and database input. There are also needs around fundraising and for secretarial assistance with The Telling Place Storytellers. Do pray with us and for us during this important time. Thank you in anticipation.

## The Christian Heritage of

### Northumbria Project

Mark and Mary Fleeson of Holy Island

The Christian Heritage of Northumbria Project will celebrate the pivotal role played by the Christian church over the last two millennia and look forward to the next two thousand years. The project ranges from Redcar and Cleveland in the south to Northumberland in the north. It includes some of the best examples of church architecture from simple non-conformist chapels in Teesdale to the splendour which is Durham Cathedral.

The project aims to put the emphasis back on this rich Christian Heritage throughout the millennium year by facilitating the regular opening of churches, producing publicity for thematic trails, training churches in a number of skill areas, and providing help and support wherever possible. Of course this is not possible without the help of churches and their congregations. We have already contacted over eight hundred churches in the region inviting them to be a part of the project and have had replies from nearly a hundred, so we are set to move forward to the next stage. Over the next couple of months we will produce a number of workshops specifically designed with churches in mind. These workshops will take the form of a taster day which will produce a comprehensive overview of the skills required, followed by a number of specialist days to build upon skills already acquired. The workshops will include training on welcome skills, presentation and design, story telling and researching your church's history. These workshops will be free to any churches signed up with the scheme.

The project is open to all places of Christian worship regardless of denomination, we only ask that the church can be open to visitors on a regular basis with someone in attendance. If you think your church will fit the requirements of the project and would benefit from being involved in one of the most exciting events of the millennium please contact the project co-ordinators: Mark and Mary Fleeson, Burning Light, Farne House, Marygate, Holy Island TD15 2SJ (Tel 01289 389 269) e-mail: [enquiry@burninglight.co.uk](mailto:enquiry@burninglight.co.uk) or visit our web site <http://www.christian-heritage-northumbria.org.uk> This is a good opportunity for many of us to celebrate our heritage in a unique way.

*They will call Him, Immanuel,  
which means 'God with us.'*

## Reflecting on a Tapestry of Reflections

Cathy Turton of Thormanby

This summer, I've been blessed by the July commentaries in Night Prayer, entitled 'Tapestry'. They are reflections of 31 individuals on the Rule. I've identified with their struggles, developed understanding from their insights and been inspired by their teaching. 'Alone/Together' has taken on real meaning. I'm very grateful to those who contributed. By adding a reflection of my own, maybe more Caim readers will write, to add their contribution to our working out of the Rule in our lives.

**Warning:** It's hard to express something deeply personal without sounding arrogant or trite. I've certainly been the former. I offer this now in a spirit of humility.

### Pride before a fall!

It's my intention to read through the Rule monthly, on the date which I made my first commitment. Often this is a depressing exercise realising how far short I fall as a disciple of Jesus. However, this year I genuinely believed I was making good progress. I had enormous struggles with Vulnerability, especially in the context of my job, but was working this through. Availability had always been my uphill struggle but I felt I was really giving more quality time to others.

**Availability.** Out of the blue came an impossible challenge. I really couldn't believe God was asking me to take on the time consuming task of Methodist local preaching. How could I commit four years to study, find time for exams, and what about the wonderful new availability to others I was demonstrating at weekends? After months of attempting to ignore this Call, I realised with terrible shame that the Rule on Availability was not just for others but primarily to God. Had I not understood the basics of Morning Office? *'We seek the Lord our God... with all our heart, soul, mind, strength.'* How and when had this degenerated into lip service? I had to believe that God would enable me to do what I considered impossible – find the time and develop the ability. Isn't this trust what we express in Evening prayer's profession of faith and the declaration of the faith at Midday prayer? Now convinced I had a genuine Call, I began the formal process of applying to begin training.

**Vulnerability.** This process includes two 'interviews' with Ministers and consultation amongst Church members. Whilst many gave positive support, there was also criticism. Had I really considered the time commitment? Well, yes, I had

struggled with this for months! The Covenant prayer (Meditation Day 5) took on real meaning. 'Put me to suffering, let me be laid aside for you'. How humbling to have to listen to people's concerns and to know so many people have discussed my suitability. I think I'd just come to terms with accepting rejection when the decision to accept me for training was made. (This is a small scale affair compared to the ordeal of those rejected for Ordination, their pain can scarcely be imagined.)

So what have I learned?

**Humility** – not to think I've made it!

**The joy of time 'in the cell'.** The imagery of Lindisfarne's 'tide out, tide in' has always appealed to me but I'd prioritised the tide out – action and people matter most.

(I thought I could justify this e.g. November 8<sup>th</sup> Night Prayer: Anthony de Mello's 'Spirituality practised in the state of activity is incomparably superior to that practised in the state of withdrawal.') However, take note of December 21<sup>st</sup> (Daily Prayer) 'Be prepared to give God time just because God matters.' Studying for local preaching forces me to spend time reading the Bible and other spiritual works. My lack of confidence in this role forces me to spend more time in prayer. I am enjoying this 'cell time' (but still struggle to build that time into daily life.) I've bought a painting showing the tide cutting off Cuthbert's Island from Lindisfarne's coast to remind me to prioritise 'cell time' or 'tide in time'.

**The joy of mission.** Experiencing the Call so overwhelmed me, I've shared it with family, friends and work colleagues with whom I would not readily share matters of faith.

**To trust God.** Knowing in theory God's way for us is best, why do I take so long to trust God in practice?

## Journeying with the Northumbria Community

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

**T H A N K S G I V I N G**  
As we move from an old to a new millennium there is a profound sense of thankfulness to God for His continued financial provision. It is still, (more often than not) very scary but recognising our dependency upon Him we are grateful for all those who have stood with us in prayer and those who have given, often sacrificially, to enable the Community to live, develop and grow. You have made a difference. **Thank you so much!**

**P o s t-M o d e r n i s t  
H y m n s ( o r H e r s ? )**  
I surrender some.  
There may be sprinkles of blessings.  
Fill my spoon, Lord.  
Oh how I like Jesus.  
He's quite a bit to me.  
Take my wife and let me be.  
Just as I pretend to be.  
O when the saints go sneaking in.  
Sit up! Sit up for Jesus.  
A comfy mattress is our God.  
O for a couple of tongues to sing.  
Amazing grace, how interesting the sound.  
Pillow of ages, fluffed for me.  
All hail the influence of Jesus' name.  
When peace like a trickle.  
What an acquaintance we have in Jesus.  
Blessed hunch, is Jesus ours?  
Above average is thy faithfulness.

**R E S E A R C H :**  
**C a n y o u h e l p ?**  
Roy is engaged in an ongoing Community Research project entitled '*The Emergence of Christian Communities during periods of Social Change*'. It would be much appreciated if you could respond to the following questions, on one or two sides maximum of A4.  
1. Name  
2. Relationship with the Community: Companion, Friend, Interested  
3 When did you first come into contact with the Community?  
4. What was it that drew you to the Community?  
5. What do you understand the vocation and vision of the Community to be?  
6. Why have you remained in relationship with the Community?  
7. What does the Community mean to you?  
8. How has the Community helped / hindered your life and faith

## Available for Mission?

Roy Searle of Wooler

Together with a number of happenings yet to be confirmed the Community teams will be out on the road again next year. We are encouraging Companions and Friends to make themselves available to serve on the teams and be a part of the Community's mission as we visit various people and places. Let us know if you are available or would like to know more about what's happening and how you can be involved. We sometimes need folk to come with us, join us, and others to stay and pray at home. Keep an eye on this column in Caim to see what is happening and where. Things are liable to change, other happenings will occur, so do get in touch. Listed below are only some of the happenings where we are looking for people to be more involved:

**February 5** Celtic Fire at Hexham.

**March 7-9** Gathering of Christian Storytellers, Sion Community, Essex

**11-12** Heartland in Bradford. Workshops and Worship in Bradford.

**18-20** Celtic Fire plus workshops and a

celebration of Cuthbert's Day on the Monday evening in the Doncaster area.

**25** Workshop for Christian Dance Fellowship of Britain, Spenny-moor.

**April 1-2** Workshops and Gathering at the Crossroads, Thirsk, North Yorkshire.

**19-22** Teams to the Forth, Edinburgh and the Humber, Hull.

**19-28** Spring Harvest. Minehead.

**23** Easter Sunday, Holy Island.

**29** There's Life in the Roots Conference, Oxford.

**May 17** Medway Towns Conference/Celebration.

**19-21** Gloucester Church weekend

**June 6-10** Scottish Tour of Celtic Fire

**15-17** Imagine Tomorrow Conference:

Manchester and Cheshire.

**23-25** Glastonbury Festival

**July 3-6** Retreat at Redhill, Stratford

**7-9** Beyond the Border Festival, St Donat's, S. Wales

## News from The Telling Place

Robin Noad of Hetton

As we approach the end of the year Geoff, Angela, Roy, Robin & Karen are giving thanks for a varied and successful twelve months. We've been running workshops, planning events and most importantly meeting and encouraging lots of folk to 'tell God's story' up and down the country.

One of the many highlights of the year was the tour with our Biblical Storytelling friend Dennis Dewey from America – who some of you got to 'experience'! It's been great to meet/work with Community folk at some of the events and we hope that this continues in the coming year too! As we look forward to 2000, we hope to see you at the following events which are a selection from the many events we are involved with as a Community! Please pray for us!

**January 10-13** International Preachers' Conference in Canterbury.

**January 18-20** Storytelling Forum, at the Nether Springs, Hetton Hall.

**April 28 – May 1** Baptist Assembly at Plymouth.

**May 15-21** Storytelling School – North, at the Nether Springs, Hetton Hall.

**June 10** Pentecost 2000, at Cheltenham.

**June 23** JC 2000, at the Royal Albert Hall.

**July 7-9** Quest Festival, at Newton Abbot.

**July 11-14** Salisbury Clergy Conference, at Swanwick.

**August 2-5** Storytelling Festival Gathering, Atlanta, Georgia USA

**Aug 25-28** Greenbelt Festival, at Cheltenham

**September 1-3** Cape Clear Festival, Ireland. East Anglian Storytelling Workshop. Dates to be confirmed.

**Sept 29 – Oct 1** Gathering for Christian Storytellers - North

**October 9-15** Storytelling School - South, Sion Community, Essex

For further dates and/or information please contact – The Telling Place at Nether Springs on 01298 388477

or email: [thetellingplace@bigfoot.com](mailto:thetellingplace@bigfoot.com)

## Community Groups

If you would like more information about Community Groups; please contact:

**Norma Charlton** at 84, Kells Lane, Low Fell, Gateshead NE9 5XY.

## Celtic Daily Prayer on CD

The Daily Office of the Northumbria Community (said and sung) is available from Cloisters at the Nether Springs.

Other CD's available are *Multistorey* by Endgame featuring Dave and Sarah Hay and *Caim* by Heather Innes. Contact the Nether Springs for details.

## BEWARE OF THE ABBOT

Hugh Barnett



*If I'd known that we wouldn't get any pocket money, I wouldn't have joined!*

## DUNCRAIG RETREATHOUSE IONA

Gordon Joice of Sedbergh

Duncraig is a Retreat house on the island of Iona, which has been run for the past four years by Jenny McLellan, a Companion of our Community. The house is owned by The Iona Cornerstone Foundation (ICF), and has both a British Board of Directors and an involvement with an American Board of Trustees. The exact relationship between the two bodies is a little unclear. In early August of this year, the British Board decided to close the house in October, and terminate Jenny's employment from November. The Board pointed to a difficult financial situation as the reason for the closure. At this time a few of us wrote to the British Board, with an idea of setting up a body - to be known as Friends of Duncraig (or something similar) - for the purpose of raising funds to secure the future of the house. We were also keen to ensure that Jenny was treated fairly. We began by writing to many people who had visited Duncraig, informing them of the Board's proposal, and of our ideas. We were overwhelmed by the support that we received - more than half of the people wrote back saying that they wanted to be involved as Friends! We then set in motion moves to set up this body legally and secure charitable status, and this is underway at present. Whilst these events were taking place, a donation was made to ICF, which relieved the immediate financial difficulty. This, together

## Letters from a Soul Friend

Amund Karner of Aberdeen

Dear J,  
How did the journey back go? I hope the children were not too tired by the time you got them home. It was quite a journey for them, so I'm glad the car is big enough. I've been thinking about what we shared during our walk together and there is one thing I want to come back on from our discussion. You said that you tend to use your gut feeling to determine if things are right or not. I understand that approach and agree that using your intuition, your feeling, is very good as a starting point for a making your decision. However, there is one aspect to this that I have heard about that may help you. It is the principle of considering the direction you are facing. How does this work? Let me try to explain simply - there are two ways to be facing; either towards God or away from Him. If you are facing God, moving towards Him, the 'good' Spirit will come as a light breeze and gently blow you towards your destination, God. The enemy of your progress will appear as a wind contrary and try to blow you off course, anywhere, everywhere except towards God. However if you are facing away from God, the enemy will blow you wherever you want, without any problems, and will blow

## EASTER WORK - SHOP

The annual Easter Workshop in 2000 is to be held over the Palm Sunday weekend, April 14-16. This is to help people who are unable to join in the Easter Workshop because of commitments to their local Church on Easter weekend itself. We are exploring the possibility of holding the event at Wycliffe, near Barnard Castle in County Durham, but this is yet to be confirmed. Please note that we will still be holding our annual Easter Sunday celebration on Holy Island. Keep the workshop dates free and the necessary details will be given in the next issue of Caim in early Spring.

## NEWS FROM CLOISTERS

Ian Corsie of Allerdale

It is good to be able to report that the trading company is now making a real contribution to the finances of the Community (after a long period when the opposite was the case). This has been greatly helped by the Community CD which has now sold 640 copies, more than covering its costs, and all sales are now generating good profit. The company is still small (£15,000 turnover in 8 months) but, because the overheads are very low, it can trade profitably and there is a good platform to build further business in publications, music and crafts. The company's ability to be an effective mail order operation has been greatly enhanced by the arrival of the credit card facility, which is now up and running after some delays (apologies to those who sent in credit card orders in the interim and we had to ask you to pay by cheque after all). Also, we have now rationalised the postage and packing supplements on the order forms and all the catalogue prices for mail order include packing and postage so there is no longer an additional charge (unless you are outside UK). The audiotope version of the Celtic Daily Prayer should be available in January at a mail order price of £9.00. If you wish to order a copy in advance, let the Cloisters office know (the contact details are the same as for the Community Office). We have experienced some computer software problems that have prevented the publication of the printed music of Celtic Daily Prayer; our apologies to those who have been waiting for this - it is worth getting this right so that we have the ability to publish and print our own music in the future.

Don't forget the **Cloisters 2000 calendar** is available at £3.00 (now including p&p).

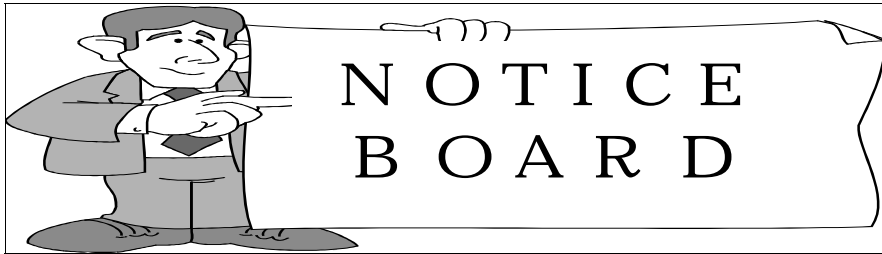
## PUBLICATIONS UPDATE

## 'A Future and a Hope' Community Gathering in Bradford

Once again there is to be a Community Gathering at Bradford early in the New Year. We invite you to come to St Christopher's C of E, Holmewood, Bradford on **Saturday 8th January 2000.**

Our theme will be 'A Future and a Hope' and will include news updates, celebration through worship and workshops led by various Companions of the Community. The day will begin at 11:00am and end at approx. 4:00pm. Bring a packed lunch.

*It will be good to see you there!*



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

Praise God for the developments in Northern Ireland and continue to pray for the people in the province and throughout Ireland who are working for long term peace and justice in the land.

We give thanks that for **Bill Whitfield** of Wooler has made good progress following some serious health scares. Give thanks for the all clear and for Bill's quick recovery from the effects of his recent radiotherapy treatment.

Pray for **Lesley Killen** of Barnsley, miraculously unhurt apart from a few bruises after a serious car crash in which her car was a write off after overturning several times. She was returning home in bad weather after attending the December Council meeting at the Nether Springs. Pray for her in the aftermath of it all and for her new Job which she starts in mid January.

Pray for **Pam Pott** of Fountain Gate, London as she suffers from recurring back trouble which is severe just now.

Congratulations are in order for **Jonny & Carey Miller** of Hetton, on the birth of **Lauren Sarah** who weighed in at 6lbs 11oz on the 27th September 1999, a little sister for Connor.

**Natasha Rumientseva** returned to St Petersburg at the end of September rather than seek an extension to her visa. She felt that although her time in England was short, it was very useful in building up new contacts and connections with those who are interested in the work with the Christian Institute in St Petersburg, where she is the

Librarian. She wishes to express grateful thanks to all who have supported her. If you wish to contribute to a special fund set up for her support then contact the Finance Office at the Nether Springs.

**Ruth Matthews** (nee Miller) of Hetton Law having worked with the Community for almost 5 years, most recently in the Community Office has moved to a new job with Albury Care based in Berwick. We wish her well.

**David and Moira Archer** of Wooler are also moving on to pastures new. In January David takes up his new appointment as Pastoral Worker with Schools Outreach based in Amble. They hope to move from Wooler to the Alnwick area in the summer. The Nether Springs will miss them but we wish them well in this next stage of their journey in God. Pray for David and Moira and for their two boys Jonny and Steve in all the changes.

**Robin and Kay Old** from Nottingham have moved to Milfield, near Wooler and hope to help out at the Nether Springs from time to time.

Several folk have asked about the possibilities of linking up with Companions and Friends in their area. We will use the next issue of Caim to publish names of folk who would be willing to coordinate such meetings. In the meantime here are two for starters: If you would like to get together and meet Community folk in the areas of Redhill, Surrey or Hertfordshire then contact:

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION! THIS NEEDS ACTION!

Our database was originally a list of names and addresses written on the back of an old Cornflakes box, and whilst the number of names and addresses has evolved and grown over the years, the technology hasn't kept up! We are very excited to report that in January we will have a brand new computerised database programme, built to meet our needs exactly. There is a saying in computer parlance, which goes something like: "rubbish in, rubbish out..." and so we want to take this great opportunity to get our information right. Enclosed inside Caim is a form, which will enable us to enter you onto the new database. In order to make sure that you are included, PLEASE take a couple of minutes to complete the form and send it back to Ellen in the office. The task of getting the new system into use is such a big one, that the only way to be sure that you are on the new list is to return the form. It only takes a few minutes, and we've even set up a freepost return address (UK only) to make it as easy as possible (but remember that if you do put a stamp on, then that saves us money...) Do it soon!

**Jonathan and Jan Sambrook**, 4, Garlands Rd, Redhill, Surrey. RH1 6NT. 01737 774295.

**Andy Cowley**, 160 Pinner Road, Oxhey Herts. WD1 4EW Tel: 01923 441155.

Do pray for Andy and his family as he moves from pastoring a church, to working fulltime with SCORE, a Christian organisation working in

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