

CAIM

Issue no 15 Winter 2000

The Northumbria Community newsletter

Welcome to the Winter edition of CAIM, the newsletter of the Northumbria Community. CAIM is the Celtic word meaning encompassment or encircling. This newsletter goes out to all those who are within our circle of Community Companions and Friends.

A Divine Paradox

Notes written by Roger Green of Bedlington during the recent Men's Pilgrimage to Iona.

So much within Christian thinking is not contained in concrete absolutes but in apparently contradicting opposites, such opposites as prayer/action, contemplation/compassionate involvement, worship/witness, monastery/mission, solitude/service. Such is the conflict that faces many of us in our attempts to live out Kingdom Life. Being alone with Christ in the silence; and being together with Christ in the midst of a needy world. Some of us may be called to one side of this paradox rather than the other, but we all need to be able to contain both sides within ourselves. I love being on Iona again after 30 years. I love its wild beauty, its almost palpable spirituality, the challenge it brings to adventure with Christ following the examples of its early Celtic inhabitants. However, I could never stay here for any long period of time. I miss the challenge of the streets, and the people of the streets. I miss the real goodness that lies deep within the hearts of the downtrodden people of Ashington and Southeast Northumberland, a goodness which often lies as deep as the coal faces at which they once worked, and is still equally difficult to mine. But they are God's children, to be loved and served. I miss the friends and companions in the church to which I belong, who most of the time infuriate me with their narrow interpretations of worship and witness, some of them having such nar-

row views because their experiences have been limited. But they too are equally God's Children, to be loved and served.

I remember my own call to contemplation, which came two years ago. It has been a difficult part of my journey, totally unexpected, and I am still wearing my "L plates". I have been reading Catherine Doherty's "Poustinia" and seeing for the first time the difference between the hermit and the poustinik. My real leanings are much more to the latter than the former. She writes: "It is difficult to simply relate this man and other poustiniks that I came to know through my lifetime, with what is called a "hermit". There was some kind of difference. The poustinik seemed to be more available. There was a gracious hospitality about him, as if he were never disturbed by anyone who came to visit him. On the contrary, his was a welcoming face. His eyes seemed to sparkle with joy at receiving a guest. He seemed to be a listening person. A person with few words, but his listening was deep, and there was a feeling that he understood...." "He was available in other ways. If someone from the village was in need (for instance, if a farmer needed his hay in before the rain), he rushed over to the poustinik and asked his help. The poustinik immediately dropped everything and

went with the farmer. He was always available."

My poustinia is situated in the attic extension of the bungalow the Lord provided for Margaret and I. The room is also my office, and the room where I do most of my counselling. Originally I wanted to build a hut in the little copse at the corner of our garden; the Lord said "No! For you prayer and work must be one. No separation. Your only escape from the tensions of the world into which I have placed you, is to escape into the safety of My arms".

Even before this, when we were seeking to move nearer to our beloved Northumbria Community's Mother House, the Lord said "No, I want you to remain in the area to which I have sent you, you still have a task to fulfil for Me there". As we sought to obey that calling, so God began to reveal His purposes, which are wider and greater, and more fulfilling that we could ever have imagined.

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filling that we could ever have imagined.

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A Divine Paradox

ined. My present concern for our Community is that in the midst of some attempts to seek an **expression** of what we are, we will love the **reality** of what we have been called to; that in the glory of our *togetherness* (and it can be glorious) we will lose the necessity for our *separateness* (which is often more costly than glorious).

Availability and *Vulnerability* can never be easy options; but they are the basis of our ethos. They will not allow us to escape from the demands of society, but rather force us into a deeper involvement. Fresh attempts to present our Jesus to His people! Fresh attempts to transform *our churches* into *His Church*. Fresh efforts to set aside our own agendas for the creation of His Kingdom. Yes, I want to "rebuild the ancient ruins", but my ruins are not those of wood and stone (although I have spent many years doing just that!). They are the ruins of lives broken and shattered by the pressures of life, the anxieties of unemployment, the tensions of living in discordant families – all that human sinfulness causes of misery and suffering. We all need our times of pilgrimage, of retreat, of re-creation; our times of togetherness when we can "build one another up"; our times of sharing our common experience of the relevance of Jesus in our lives. Having "come together in Jesus' name" we must go out into the world in His name also. He will be just as really present with us then as He has been on Iona, and perhaps (just perhaps) even more so!

Looking for a Summer Break with a difference?

Ian and Joy Corsie of Allerdale

"The Jian Hua Foundation" is a Hong Kong based agency which places Christian professionals in strategic work in China. They are seeking volunteer healthcare personnel of all fields for a short-term programme of seminars and consultations with township and village doctors on the edge of the Tibetan plateau in July 2001. This builds on relationships established in two counties of Qinghai province in China over the past two years. Volunteers would need to go for at least 2 weeks of the 4 week programme running from 2 to 27 July, and would need to fund their own travel to and from the provincial capital Xining. For more details contact Ian Corsie on 01289 387257 or iancorsie@bigfoot.com

Feed the world....

If you own a computer and have access to the Internet, you can help feed the world this Christmas time. Quite clever of the UN to do this. Go to the Hunger Site at the UN. All you do is click a button and somewhere in the world a hungry person gets a meal to eat, at no cost to you. The food is paid for by corporate sponsors (who gain advertising in the process because you see their logo). All you do is go to the site and click on the donate food button. It takes a few moments. However, you're only allowed one donation so pass the word.

<http://www.thehungersite.com>
<http://www.egiving.com>

Just visiting these web sites pays for food, water or other resources, and it will cost you nothing more than a couple of mouse clicks. Both these sites are financed through commercial sponsorship.

Church and the over 50's

Community Companion and Methodist Minister Elizabeth Mackey is doing some research for her MA on why people over 50 begin, resume or cease church attendance. If you have fitted this description in the last five years and would be willing to answer a few questions about it, please contact her direct at 30 Elmfield Road, Birkby, Huddersfield HD2 2XH, phone 01484 20866 or e-mail mackeyfe@aol.com

Community Group Leaders Gathering

A weekend has been set aside for a coming together of all actual and potential Community Group leaders at the Nether Springs. The dates are **19 – 21 January 2001**. This is an important gathering and we would encourage all group leaders to try to attend or send a representative instead. Better still – leader and representative. We will be then be able to catch up on news, share ideas and insights for the future development of such groups around the UK and beyond.

If you would like more information about Community Groups; please contact: **Norma Charlton** at 84, Kells Lane, Low Fell, Gateshead NE9 5XY.

An apt description of the Northumbria Community

'Dynamic and erratic, spontaneous and radical, audacious and immature, committed if not altogether coherent, ecumenically open and often experimental, visible here and there, now and then but unsettled institutionally. Almost monastic in nature, but most of all enacting a fearful hope for society'

Homecoming, 3500 miles from home – A Personal Journey

Katherine Whittaker of New Jersey reflects on her recent time at Nether Springs and the Winter Lanterns Weekend at Ford Castle in November

My first visit to England. My first trip overseas. My first spiritual retreat in a monastic setting. My first homecoming at Hetton Hall. I was not even sure why I had come to Nether Springs. All I knew was that I had left the United States and would be out of the country for 10 days. My journey took me straight to the heart of the Northumbria Community, and straight to the heart of God.

It was through Biblical storytelling in the United States that I became aware of the Northumbria Community. In August of 1999, I discovered the existence of a group in America called the Network of Biblical Storytellers just two weeks before their annual gathering. I managed to get to the event and there made the acquaintance of Geoff Boston and others who had come from England for the gathering. I was wrestling with how to get the church out of the Church, and was intrigued by the Telling Place – its philosophy and innovative approach to relationship building.

In the midst of much camaraderie – alone yet together – I began to experience some of the ethos of the Community. There was something palpably different about these Telling Place people – something authentic, open and truly genuine. I could understand how early converts felt when they met first century Christians – there was something different that attracted them. At first I assumed it was because my friends here on the veranda were from England, and that accounted for the difference. But as I spoke with Geoff, I came to know it as the rule of Availability and Vulnerability. This wasn't just an abstract idea taken from Jesus and His disciples, this was their way of life. It was embodied by the Community.

The next day I attended the Telling Place workshop which confirmed every good thing. It resonated on



so many levels. On the last day of the gathering, as everyone was preparing to depart, Geoff met me in the bookstore and presented me with a gift of the

Northumbria Community CD of their daily Office. He explained its contemplative nature and we parted exchanging God's blessings for the coming journey.

As soon as I got into the rental car, I put the CD in the player and headed out the driveway. I had no idea how profoundly my journey would be blessed by this simple gift or how deeply it would touch me. Though most of these prayers were unfamiliar to me, it perfectly reflected the contents of my heart. The CD quickly became a cherished part of my daily life. It began to knit me into the fabric of the Community.

When the information package for the Winter Lanterns weekend first arrived, I thought there was no possible way for me to come to England, so I set it all aside. Yet a small voice kept whispering: "Go. This is important." I decided to have a few quiet days with the Community at Nether Springs before the gathering. On the flight from Brussels to Edinburgh I was sitting directly under the wing and I experienced a real sense of being "In the shadow of (His) wings." It certainly foreshadowed much of the week ahead. I arrived at the House just after everyone had sat down for dinner, and Rob welcomed me with one of his characteristic large-hearted embraces. It helped greatly to ease the feeling of awkwardness that I was trying to quell. It was a lovely dinner served with affectionate, good-natured mirth – especially after I had inadvertently eaten Brenda's pudding thinking that one had been set out for me even though I had previously declined. I had not expected such joy and laughter within a *monastic* community.

I could not contain my tears during evening office. To be in the midst of these good people – not "strangers" as I had supposed them to be – who were actually living what I had begun to find so meaningful, was quite overwhelming. This was not just some nice music or pretty words that

was basically irrelevant to their everyday lives. It was the human voice and spirit raised to praise God and bless one another as part of everyday existence. No sacred/secular split here. I was flooded with so many feelings: gratitude, amazement that all this was real, a growing expectancy of God, true joy in singing with my brothers and sisters, a profound sense of connectedness where I had expected isolation and awkwardness, shalom. I became aware of the tapestry being woven all around us – and through us. Each distinct thread being intertwined according to its own pattern yet bound to one another in beautiful, unified whole.



Over the next several days Kay led me on retreat with sensitivity and loving care. Time to seek God rather than avoid Him by keeping busy. Finally quieted, I was more able to hear God speak quietly using simple things: a prayer in the chapel of the incarnation, chickens, Cuthbert's cave, silence, coal fires, Rembrandt's picture of a younger son's homecoming, muck by a stream, a cup of tea offered in kindness. In the past I had rebelled against structure, yet I found the monastic rhythm freeing. Time alone with God, time together with others. Time for study and time for prayer. Time for work and time for creativity. Laughter and tears. I started to regain my balance. Availability. Vulnerability. Becoming comfortable with the questions. Paradox as a way into truth.

Joining in the rhythm of the Community gave me an entirely different perspective on so many things. It seemed as though I had been there for ages rather than a mere 48 hours when we made lanterns on Wednesday evening for the coming event at Ford Castle. By the time the great Thanksgiving feast was being prepared on the Thursday, I felt like one of the hosts rather than one of the guests. In fact, attending midday prayer donned with silly hats seemed the most natural thing in the world to do. God didn't really

Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs...?

An old farmer went to the city one weekend and attended a large church. He came home and his wife asked him how it was. "Well," said the farmer, "It was good. They did something different, however. They sang praise choruses instead of hymns." "Praise choruses," said his wife, "What are those?" "Oh, they're okay. They're sort of like hymns, only different," said the farmer. "What's the difference?" asked his wife.

The farmer said, "Well, it's like this - if I were to say to you: 'Martha, the cows are in the corn,' that would be a hymn. If, on the other hand, I were to say to you: 'Martha, Martha, Martha, Oh, Martha, MARTHA, MARTHA, the cows, the big cows, the brown cows, the black cows, the white cows, the black and white cows, the COWS, COWS, COWS are in the corn, are in the corn, are in the corn, are in the corn, the CORN, CORN, CORN.' "Then, if I were to repeat the whole thing two or three times, well that would be a praise chorus."

Coincidentally, the same week a young businessman from the city who normally attended a church with contemporary-style worship was in the old farmer's town on business and visited the farmer's small church. He came home and his wife asked him how it was. "Well," said the young man, "It was good. They did something different, however. They sang hymns instead of regular songs."

"Hymns," said his wife, "What are those?" "Oh, they're okay. They're sort of like regular songs, only different," said the young man. "What's the difference?" asked his wife. The young man said, "Well, it's like this - if I were to say to you, 'Martha, the cows are in the corn,' that would be a regular song. If, on the other hand, I were to say to you:

'Oh Martha, dear Martha, hear thou my cry,
Inclinest thine ear to the words of my mouth.
Turn thou thy whole wondrous ear by and by
To the righteous, inimitable, glorious truth.

'For the way of the animals, who can explain?
There in their heads is no shadow of sense,
Hearkenest they in God's sun or his rain
Unless from the mild, tempting corn they are fenced.

'Yea, those cows in glad bovine, rebellious delight,
Have broke free their shackles, their warm pens eschewed.
Then, goaded by minions of darkness and night,
They all my mild Chilliwack sweet corn have chewed.

'So look to that bright shining day by and by,
Where all foul corruption's of earth are reborn.
Where no vicious animal makes my soul cry,
And I no longer see those foul cows in the corn.'

Then, if I were to do only verses one, three and four, and do a key change in the last verse, to be sung only by the women, well, that would be a hymn."



Winter's Poem

Andrew Fry

Sail boats `n' rough water,
Robin, Carrion, Crow,
Driftwood `n' tide,
Driftwood `n' tide,
These are the things of Winter.

Sand bang `n' scavenge,
Driftwood `n' tide,
Driftwood `n' tide.
Of distant Summer,
And Noah's great rainbow,
These are the things of Winter.

Spirit, Gale, and empty Prom,
Forecast `n' blow,
Forecast `n' blow,
Around All Hallows,
When fallen colour,
Poppies remember,
You Virgin snow,
You Virgin snow,
Then carol and dance,
carol and dance,
Whilst wrapping your paper,
wrapping your paper,
For a Child is born to us,
a Son is given to us,
Oh berries red, `n' holly green
beside our firelight,
Warm and Welcoming light,
Now these are the things of Winter

Journeying with the Northumbria Community

A booklet with the above title is available on request from the Community Office. It is designed to provide introductory information 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.

And His Mercy was Gentle as Silence

Trevor Miller reflects on the recent Men's pilgrimage to Iona

The journey to Iona began for different people from different parts of Scotland and England and one from Ireland, all scheduled to meet at Oban to get the first ferry to Craignure on Mull. Then across Mull by local bus to Fionnphort and then the second ferry to Iona itself. The group of 21 men were very diverse, some young, others not so young, from many denominations and none, all wrestling with aspects of life and faith, some with major choices to make vocationally, others struggling with health issues, but remarkably united in heart and giving a physical, tangible expression to the meaning of being alone yet together.

After the first day of long travel, we arrived at our destination of Bishop's House on Iona in time for a most welcome evening meal. The practicalities of room allocation over we spent an informal evening catching up with friends old and new.

Next morning having arrived the night before when it was dark we awoke to the magnificent and majestic beauty and quite awe inspiring scenery that surrounds the Island of Iona.

Each morning we observed the discipline of silence, right through breakfast up to Morning Office. This was a powerful symbol of our desire for these few days to simply be; to be there for God and for self as well as for others. To be still and know God.

It was a quite deliberate policy not to have a full agenda but to connect with one another heart to heart. Thus the sharing with one another of our personal stories was scheduled as an ice breaker for the first hour of the first full day at Bishop's House. However, such is the power of story that this 'informal sharing' lasted not only the whole morning until lunch but the whole evening until past midnight. There was a real sense of connectedness as both joys and sorrows, hopes and heartaches, dreams and disappointments were shared. There was a gradual realisation that despite our differing circumstances and the huge diversity of experience, our individual stories were beginning to merge as one. The thread linking our lives was the common embracing of our Rule of Life – Availability and Vulnerability, even though this was worked out in very different contexts. These were stories of awakening to a deeper awareness of personhood and humanity; to a greater trust in God even though we were all living in the paradox of being purposefully lost, deliberately uncertain and resolutely confused. Our hope was in God alone.

We shared daily Eucharist in the lovely St Columba's Chapel which is part of Bishop's House and an Episcopal Church. We also shared our own daily Office from the new Celtic Daily Prayer, hot off the press!

The next day Wednesday, is traditionally a day of pilgrimage on Iona. So following an 8:00am Eucharist, and breakfast in silence, we saw the group disperse to various points around the island for prayer and pilgrimage. Some went to the White Strand where the monks had been martyred centuries before. We were reminded of the words *'Here I stand looking out to sea.. where a thousand souls have prayed and a thousand lives were laid on the*



The White Strand on Iona

sand... And I say a prayer that the Wild Goose will come to me'

Others went to the Abbey and to St Oran's Chapel, a wonderfully 'thin place' between earth and heaven. Yet others prayed the Bridget blessing at Duncraig, at the Nunnery and at the new Roman Catholic Prayer house.

A large group walked to Columba's bay, returning in pouring icy rain driven by very strong winds. The only day of really bad weather. This did not detract from the journey, nor from the real sense of God in our midst. Embracing one another in a circle – we shared prayer for Ireland, Iona and Northumbria and in our minds and hearts we committed ourselves to the God of Columba, asking that we too would make a difference to our generation. We sang *'Be Thou my vision'*, shared an Irish Litany written by David Pott and said a very meaningful Columba's blessing to one another *'See that you be at peace among yourselves my children and love one another. Follow the example of good men of old, and God will comfort you and help you, both in this world and in the world which is to come'*.

That evening after Office another God moment occurred as we sang and worshipped together for over an hour led by Jeff Sutherland and accompanied only by the Bodhran. The words of one familiar song *'Drop Thy still dews of quietness, till all our striving cease; take from our souls the strain and stress, and let our ordered lives confess the beauty of Thy peace'* became a very real experience in our hearts.

As the evening progressed the informal sharing over Highland malt whisky and good wines made it even worth missing the last ever episode of Inspector Morse.

A very helpful discussion took place on the Thursday morning about what holds us together as a geographically dispersed Community. The answer came through again and again that it was the genius of our Rule as a flexible interpretative framework which could be adapted to any situation or set of circumstances and the concept of being alone yet together. After a relaxed afternoon the evening was spent in informal sharing of what the

few days had meant and in spending quality time praying for one another. After breakfast at 6:15am on Friday morning we set back on our journey home. For many it was a journey from Iona to Lindisfarne, which Aidan had undertaken in very different style some centuries before. It was a reminder that we too wanted to journey wherever the Father leads; to be in the place of His appointment and to pass on the baton of this living tradition God has placed on our hearts as a Community. As we sailed from Craignure to Oban in glorious weather we sang and shared Morning Office on the open deck of the ferry. It was another God moment, quite powerful, especially with the magnificent setting of rugged beauty and the calmness of the sea all around us.

As we said our goodbyes, all agreed that our few days together had been at one level undemanding but it had also been very challenging. It had been a time of rest and refreshment but also a reminder of our primary calling – to seek God for Himself. To live Availability and Vulnerability as alone and together we embrace again the truth to 'Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God'.

Celtic Daily Prayer

Do you have your copy of the new Celtic Daily Prayer? We would encourage you to purchase your own copy from Cloisters mail order at the Nether Springs. It is a combined edition of the old Celtic Daily and Night Prayer extensively revised with much new material. Produced in a quality hard cover that gives it a long life, it is well worth getting your own copy even if you already have the old books. You will not be disappointed. Price £19.99 inc P+P in UK from Cloisters. Tel: 01289 388235 or E Mail cloisters@bigfoot.com

Home is Where the Alfa isn't

Jonathan Roe of Hull

When I was asked to write something about our move to the Bransholme Estate on the fringes of the known world (Hull), I tried to write about our motives, reasons, choices and so on, but found it very difficult to express at the current time. Maybe I will at some future date. For now I'd like to retell a story that happened to us recently.

Hull is famed for being bottom of every league table going, the Sun newspaper is currently delighting in telling the country that we are the thickest people around. But there is one league table in which we come top – car crime.

But is this such a bad thing?

Let me illustrate the point. After spending a late summer afternoon and evening building a fence around the front of our house, and having enjoyed the company of a 7 year old neighbour called Emily all that time, I was about to go to bed with a sense of pride in my carpentry. Being a boy I decided to peek out of my front door just one last time to marvel at my creation.

Something in the near distance caught my eye. Bright orange flames, twenty feet high were shooting up from the rear end of an Alfa Romeo at the end of our square.

Now there are a couple of things you should know about late 1960's council estate design. Firstly the assumption was made that the sort of people that would live here were not the sort who would run cars. Secondly, that even if someone did run a car they would never need to have it within view because no one would dream of tampering with someone else's car. Consequently there is no parking near our house – it's sort of round the corner a couple of times – unless you are one of the lucky two residents who can park in the gap at the entrance to our square and watch your car all night.

I'm sure by now that you've spotted the deliberate mistake. Alfa Romeo – as if! What you may not realise is that my next door neighbour, Andy, buys ageing Alfas by the bucket load and serves his community by getting them an MOT, selling them at cost to locals and even fixing them when they go wrong. I was mug enough to buy one myself. So you can guess what flashed through my mind once it had been diverted from the fence. Is that my Alfa? I dashed to the scene of the crime to be confronted with the sight of two of Andy's cars fully ablaze in near silence. One was obviously gone. The other was just alight.

Andy was having a quiet night in, in front of the TV. Alfa owners like Andy are faintly nuts. He wanted to get into the car that was less ablaze than the other to drive it away



from the obviously lost car. By now a small group of neighbours had gathered around, and we all persuaded Andy that it was probably best to drop the idea of driving a burning car around the block.

I'm not used to this sort of thing. Lynda and I had only lived here for about two weeks when this happened – and my reaction was not that of the locals. Sure there was plenty of sympathy, a little anger, a modicum of revulsion. But generally this sort of thing happens, so what, big deal. The fire service (4 minutes response time) and the police (25 minutes response time) tended to have the same approach.

I was struck by the fact that this was the first time that I had seen the local "community" all at once. With the carcinogenic stench of melting car seats in our nostrils, and the flickering light from two doomed cars illuminating our faces I began to calm down and tune in to what people were talking about. It wasn't the cars, or youth crime, or vendetta, or the state of society that was the main topic of conversation. Two women were calmly arranging to meet for coffee the next day. Someone was congratulating me on the completion of my fence. Two more women were talking about some impromptu children's work they both wanted to organise on the green. Then we all listened to one woman tell a lengthy story of two house fires she had survived. I couldn't quite take this in. It was like being sat around the campfire. All we needed was some booze, a guitar and a penny whistle and we'd be away.

Maybe that's it. We should do this more often. We could probably chat the National Lottery into giving us a grant to buy old bangers and torch them on street corners as a way of building community spirit.

I learned a lot about my neighbours that night. Especially how little material things matter. Of course everyone does the lottery, but only to get filthy rich and have an *acceptable* reason for not working. No one is particularly interested in owning lots of things. After all things get lost, or stolen, or burned, or moth eaten or rusty. And if you want to live round here don't own a car that's worth very much – you'll only end up worrying about it.

I also learned a lot about my friend Andy that night. He calmly told the police what they wanted to know, filled out his insurance forms, got another Alfa. There's no point in worrying about stuff. Life is too short – and stuff isn't that important. It's people that are important.

Pilgrim Adventure

Bryony Stimpson of Cramlington

Pilgrimage reaches those parts other holidays can only dream about. Since 1987, through the Pilgrim Adventure Journey Programme, we have shared the challenge and excitement of pilgrimage with people of all ages and walks of life. Travelling 'off the beaten track' through remote Ireland and Britain, many of our pilgrimages have been inspired by the early Celtic saints who wandered 'for the love of Christ' throughout these British Isles. Although



maintaining a link with pilgrims across the ages, our pilgrimages are first and foremost 'journeys for today'. Expect to be refreshed and renewed, to discover new meaning and new direction, to return home better equipped to take on the stresses and strains of everyday life! The average size of each pilgrim group is fourteen. Travelling off the beaten track, pilgrims should be prepared physically (clothes, pills etc) and spiritually! Sea crossings can be rough and terrain occasionally demanding. Our pace, however, is always relaxed, with plenty of time to simply look at the view and soak up the atmosphere, so you don't need to be super fit! With the exception of some of our 'island hopping' adventures, we walk each day, covering between 6 and 10 miles.

As pilgrims journeying together we stop where appropriate for prayer and reflection. We also share the practical tasks of general meal preparation and washing up - often times for forging new friendships! Journey price is kept to a minimum, and reflects the cost of running the programme without profit. All journeys are led by two Pilgrim Adventure guides.

Destinations during 2001 include;
The island of St Kilda (Outer Hebrides).

'A journey to the far west'.

27th June – 5th July.

The Holy island of Lindisfarne.

5th – 16th July.

Iona, 'A jewel in the Atlantic'.

8th – 18th August.

BEWARE OF THE ABBOT

Hugh Barnett



Cold spell or not...hot water bottles are out!

Book Review

Amund Karner of Aberdeen

'Colonies of Heaven. Celtic Models for Today's Church', by Ian Bradley. DLT

A fine book by one of the most prolific and helpful authors on Celtic spirituality writing today. This book examines six important themes that were evident in the early Christianity of the British Isles. They are monasticism, the emphasis on blessing and cursing, the link between penance and pastoral care, authentic worship, the communion of saints and pilgrimage, which the author describes as the 'single most important and distinctive theme' of Celtic spirituality. In each of these sections the author explores the reality of the subject matter as it really was and then discusses helpfully the relevance of such emphases for today's church. A book well worth reading, I certainly found that it challenged my thinking about how previous models of church could be adapted today. As the cover blurb says 'Building 'Colonies of Heaven' ie. communities of prayer, artistic and creative activity, hospitality and team ministry, would revitalise our churches with a new spiritual and social role in an increasingly secular and fragmented society.'

Community Reminders

Cathy Turton of Normanby

Earlier this month one of the most prolific modern hymnwriters died – the Methodist minister F Pratt Green. Whenever I sing his hymn 'God is here!', I'm reminded of the Northumbria Community. What do you think? Are there other hymns and spiritual songs that express Community ethos for you?

Extract from 'God is here!'

*God is here! As we His people
Meet to offer praise and prayer,
May we find in fuller measure
What it is in Christ we share.
Here, as in the world around us,
All our varied skills and arts
Wait the coming of His Spirit
Into open minds and hearts.*

*Here the servants of the Servant
Seek in worship to explore
What it means in daily living
To believe and to adore.*

*Lord of all, of Church and Kingdom
In an age of change and doubt,
Keep us faithful to the Gospel,
Help us work Your purpose out.
Here in this day's dedication,
All we have to give, receive.
We, who cannot live without You,
We adore You! We believe.*

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 enclosed with this CAIM or available from the Community Office.

Is the Jar Full?

Here is a little story from a Methodist notice board that may help us prioritise our time

One day, an expert in time management was speaking to a group of business students and, to drive home a point, used an illustration those students will never forget. As he stood in front of the group of high-powered overachievers he said "Okay, time for a quiz" and he pulled out a one-gallon, wide-mouthed jar and set it on the table in front of him.

He also produced about a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them, one at a time, into the jar.

When the jar was filled to the top and no more rocks would fit inside, he asked, "Is the jar full?"



Everyone in the class yelled, "Yes." The time management expert reached under the table and pulled out a bucket of gravel. He dumped some gravel in and shook the jar causing pieces to work themselves down into the spaces between the big rocks. He then asked the group once more, "Is the jar full?"

By this time the class was onto him, "Probably not," one of them answered.

"Good!" he replied. He reached under the table and brought out a bucket of sand. He started dumping sand into the jar and it went into all of the spaces left between the rocks and the gravel. Once more he asked the question, "Is this jar full?"

"No!" the class shouted. Once again he said, "Good." Then he grabbed a pitcher of water and began to pour it in until the jar was filled to the brim. Then he looked at the class and asked, "What is the point of this illustration?" One eager beaver raised his hand and said, "The point is, no matter how full your schedule is, if you really try hard you can always fit some more things in it!" "No," the speaker replied, "that's not the point."

"The truth this illustration teaches us is: If you don't put the big rocks in first, you'll never get them in at all." What are the big rocks in your life? Time with God, time with your loved ones, nurturing your faith, your education, your dreams, a worthy cause, teaching or mentoring others?

Remember to put those BIG ROCKS in first or you'll never get them in at all. So tonight or in the morning, when you are reflecting on this short story, ask yourself this question: What are the 'big rocks' in my life? Then put those in your jar first.



Notice Board

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

We are so glad to report that **Justin and Joy Dunne** of Wakefield are now the proud parents of a son Jacob born on 6 October 2000. Also that **Martin and Helen Frost** of Amble are the proud parents of a daughter Abigail born on 6 December 2000. Congratulations to both families.

After almost 3 years on the House Team at Nether Springs **James and Sally Hawes** are moving to Nottingham at the end of January. Sally is taking up a post as a Physiotherapist and James is hoping to train in aspects of Counselling. They will be a huge miss but we wish them well on this next stage of their journey. May the peace of the Lord Christ go with you.

Bill and Louise Whitfield of Wooler who are currently 'down under' write: "Dear Friends and all who read CAIM, We send Christmas greetings to you and all who receive the newsletter. We are enjoying a 'hippie' life-style in Australia, travelling around in a camper van. We will be thinking of you during our Christmas Day barbecue by the ocean!! Much love and every blessing for Christmas and the New Year.

Jonny Miller is moving from Hetton to Coventry early in the New Year. He is looking to use his extensive training as a volunteer with the Citizen's Advice Bureau in a full time capacity.

Miriam Sayer of Tasmania who many of you know and love from her time at the Nether Springs is very ill and has recently finished a course of radio therapy. She writes 'I'm aware of so many people's prayers for me, and know that it is making a positive difference'. Please continue to hold Miriam in your heart before the Lord as she moves into suitable accommodation with support services close by the Cancer Clinic in Hobart. As we pray that all her needs will be met at this difficult time, could you be the answer to your own prayer? See the enclosed leaflet for details of how this can happen. What was one of our Community leaders (not Trevor) doing clubbing in Inverness?... how

does it relate to a Jean Darnell prophecy about walking the ancient paths...read about this and similar ventures into night-clubs, wine bars and café culture and how they relate to the mission of the Community in the next edition of CAIM.

In November Trevor and Roy had a very helpful and mutually encouraging meeting at the Nether Springs with **Norman Shanks**, the Leader of the Iona Community. We very much look forward to developing this relationship.

January Bradford Day Cancelled

The proposed gathering in Bradford in early January has been cancelled. We hope that this will not be too much of a disappointment to those who were already planning to attend. However, plans are underway for the Community to be celebrating Columba's day on Pentecost weekend at Bradford Cathedral on Saturday 2nd June. We are hosting and leading two day conferences with our friends from the Anabaptist Network on the 2nd and 9th June under the theme of *Voices from the Margins*. We hope to see one another at these events. Further details of which will be in the next edition of CAIM.

New Programme for Nether Springs

The new programme containing information on all retreats at Nether Springs for the next 12 months is enclosed with this CAIM to those of you who are Companions. There are a number of changes in the overlapping period from the previously published programme. *Please check carefully.* We have tried to provide a full and balanced programme of retreats that will not only give those discovering us for the first time an opportunity to learn about us but will also provide opportunities for quiet reflection as well as teaching on a wide range of subjects covering many aspects of the life and work of our diverse and dispersed Community which will interest all Companions and Friends.

Please note that the **Easter Workshop** dates have been brought forward one week to the weekend of Palm Sunday the *6th – 8th April 2001* at Nether Springs. Please book early to avoid disappointment. There will be a led retreat over **Easter Weekend** itself *13th - 15th April* at Nether Springs which will centre on quiet reflection and liturgical worship but will also include our annual gathering on Holy Island for Easter Sunday. Further details will be given in the next CAIM.

If you do not have a current programme or would like further copies then please write in to the Community Office with details.

Pilgrimage 2001

Details of pilgrimages organised by the Community will be published in the next edition of CAIM; it is envisaged that we will be journeying in and from Northumbria and to Ireland, Bardsey and the Hebrides in the coming year. If you are interested please contact us at the Community Office.



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