



Covenanted together within the love of Christ we share a common heart for Northumbria and a commitment to wander for the love of Christ wherever the Father leads.



# CAIM

Issue no 35  
Winter 2005

The NORTHUMBRIA COMMUNITY Newsletter

## Community Gatherings

We recently had a Community Gathering in Hull, and over the course of 2006 we hope to organise a series of these meetings throughout Britain – and beyond! Jeff & Jill Sutheran are currently putting together a plan of 'where and when', so keep an eye on the website and future CAIMs for your local opportunity to be join one. One of these will be a meeting in the USA next summer....

The first of this series was held in Hull during October, and a good day was enjoyed by over 30 Community folk. What was really special was to see folk who have walked in Community for very many years, sharing the story with others for whom this day was their very first

experience of Community.

### Inside this issue:

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video excerpt!); and several other things which came up in discussion!

The conversation was rich, as several folk new to Community shared their story of encountering God, and found their own heart's experiences echoed by the likes of Paul, Norma Charlton and Brenda Grace – people who have travelled this road together for some time.

In the afternoon session, we got creative! We spent some time sharing story, hearing and learning some new Community songs and music, and writing a liturgy together - which we weaved into our worship time as it unfolded over the afternoon. Brenda taught the movements to 'Christ as a Light' - and it's always a joy to see young and old sharing together in this simple dance.

It was a good day, an enjoyable day. Just like any 'family' gathering there were times to be quiet, times to listen, times to share – and above all, times to laugh and enjoy being in the company of one another, and of God!

Watch out for a Community Gathering coming to your part of the world. Hope to see you there!

### For your diary:

A Community Gathering is planned at Bewdley Baptist Church on Saturday 25th February. If you live in the West Midlands area (or even further afield) you will be most welcome.

Further details from Dave and Wendy Ward ☎ 0161 442 7506 ✉ david.ward@northumbriacommunity.org.



The beautiful illustrations on pages 1, 2, 9 and 10 of this edition are © Mary Fleeson of the Lindisfarne Scriptorium f, taken from her book *Life Journey - A Call to Christ-centred Living*

# EASTER WORKSHOP 2006

## Renewing our Covenant – A call to a new monasticism



Our Annual Easter Workshop is to be held at the Nether Springs from Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April to Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2006 inclusive. We would encourage as many as possible to come and share with us for the whole or part of the overall programme, especially Easter Sunday on Holy Island. All aspects of the programme will be held in and around the Nether Springs unless otherwise stated. The theme for this year's Workshop and the culmination of this current year where we have been looking at the concept of being covenanted together in Community, is Renewing our Covenant – A call to A New Monasticism. Companions from near and far will be sharing their stories with us as we attempt to find the essence of what it means to live a new monasticism.

We are aware that as a networked Community we will never all be physically together at one time in one place – Gatherings like Easter Workshop are the nearest we get. We recognise the truth in Jean Vanier's words: 'The covenant of Community profound as it is, can never guarantee that a certain person will always stay physically close to another. It guarantees only that there will always be someone there; inspired by the same spirit.'

This is why these times of renewing the covenant relationship are times of symbolic value and significance. They are significant because there is a concentration of interest upon the past in its relationship to the present – a link historically, prophetically and spiritually to our foundations. The meaning and importance of our collective Memory and Story is highlighted as we recall and remember the covenant times of past years. These times are to be celebrated with thankfulness. They support us, re-energise us and encourage hope within us for our ongoing faith journey to see the kingdom extended in our hearts and in Northumbria and wherever the Father leads.

This year is particularly important because (as the theme indicates) it is an opportunity not only to renew our vows but also to renew our whole understanding of our vocation and our 'reason to be' as a Community called of God.

### Maundy Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> April

4.00pm Arrive  
6.00pm Evening Meal  
7.15pm Maundy Thursday Eucharist including Foot washing

### Good Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April

9.30am Morning Office  
10.30am A New Monasticism - Teaching and Sharing Stories  
12.00pm Midday Office  
12.10pm Quiet Hour  
1.00pm Lunch  
2.00pm Pilgrimage – Stations of the Cross Liturgy to Cuthbert's Cave  
6.00pm Shabbat meal  
7.15pm Evening Office  
8.00pm Informal Evening  
9.30pm Compline

### Easter Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> April

9.30am Morning Office  
10.30am A New Monasticism - Teaching and Sharing Stories  
12.00pm Midday Office  
12.10pm Quiet Hour  
1.00pm Lunch  
2.00pm Creative Workshops on aspects of Renewing our Covenant.  
4.00pm Free Time

6.00pm Dinner  
7.15pm Easter Eve Liturgy including worship, music, storytelling.  
11.45pm Easter Vigil

### Easter Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> April

9.30am Morning Office  
10.45am Morning Service with Communion at St.Mary's C of E, Holy Island  
12.00pm Midday prayer and Christ as a Light at St Aidan's statue followed by music and dance at the far end of the Priory and the renewal of our vows by saying Yes to Availability and Vulnerability. Then High Praises in the Chapel area of the Priory.  
*Lunch on the Island/or Nether Springs depending on tide times*  
6.00pm Dinner  
7.15pm Evening Office  
8.00pm Caedmon Evening—Bring your self, a song, a story, a sketch or anything else to make a contribution to this informal gathering. *To be held at the nearby hall at Hetton Steads.* Followed by Compline

### Easter Monday 17<sup>th</sup> April

8.00am Breakfast  
9.30am Morning Office  
10.00am General tidy up and depart before lunch.

As Easter Workshop is for all the family, it is hoped that there will be workshops for both children and young people during the Teaching sessions on both Friday and Saturday mornings.

# A strange thing happened on the way to Berwick!

Robin and Hetty Chapman, Community Companions from (currently) Manchester

It's really dangerous to pray for God to 'do anything he wants' Here's our example.

I suppose Hetty and I had always had the vague notion of moving up Northumberland way with some good friends of ours. To be honest, we would talk about it, have a glance on the net at house prices, laugh, and then forget about it again.

Then we started feeling a little too comfortable here in Manchester, and we started praying for God to 'lead us where he wants'. Just a general prayer, or so we thought.

So we were searching one day, and a house leapt out of the screen and hit us (not literally, you understand!). We couldn't let it go, our friends had a funny reaction as well. What should we do? We decided (with absolutely no prospect of any teaching post for me!) to just go and literally push a door, and see what happened.

So it was that we arrived in Berwick on Tweed, with our three young boys. If nothing else, we were going to have a nice weekend. Hetty took the two older boys in the car, and I pushed our youngest (Micah) in the pram so he went to sleep. I was walking through the town, praying - Why are we here? - mostly, and then the thought comes into my head - what if I was to meet someone from the Community now, in this 5 minutes as I walk through the town? So I walked on, completely missing the Tourist Information shop that I am looking for, en route. AS I turn back I received a tap on the shoulder - Andy Raine (for it was he!) turned and said - "I know you don't I?" Having met Andy once in Manchester this in itself was something of a miracle. So, a very strange occurrence.

We saw the house, which was fine. We then returned home, feeling a bit funny but safe (!) in the knowledge that even if God did want us to move then is only one high school in that part of Northumberland, and we'd have to wait for a job to come up. So that evening I looked on the teachers' jobs website. Nothing in Northumberland (Phew I cried!) and then the job appeared - just in the Scottish Borders, only 9 miles away in Eyemouth. Not just any job, but the perfect job for me - a pastoral post in a smaller school.

I was the only person to apply, my details matched perfectly, and imagine my surprise when they informed me that to deal with my pastoral caseload (only 125 students as opposed to 330 now) they only wanted me to teach 12 lessons a week (I currently do 19!). Since then they've informed me it's only 8! I stayed at Hetton prior to the interview (nearly winning the best dressed ever at Breakfast award) and people were great there praying for me that things would be clear in the interview, and they certainly were.

Subsequently we've 'achieved the following':

- Our house sold in two days
- Our current vicar knows the vicar of the church just opposite our new road, which will (hopefully!) be supportive of us and the kids – having visited I found a family with kids just the same ages as ours – who also know Lorna
- When finding a place for our oldest (Oscar 6½) at school, the place he had been half-offered over the phone had been taken, but a phone call from the head teacher to the admissions board resulted in them being allowed to break the class size rules to allow him in!

Ever feel like God has picked you up in one place and then set you down?

We've received so much help and support from the Community. Having posted this on the online forum we've had 62 replies! Offers of help, advice, prayers, and also other people's stories of how God has moved them from place to place. This has been a real encouragement and I would certainly recommend you give the forum a try!

We move just before Christmas, so if you are around in Berwick then please look us up – here is our address: 30 West End, Tweedmouth, Berwick-upon-Tweed TD15 2HE

Please contact the editors for a phone number (Dave and Wendy Ward)



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

When I read Norman's article for Caim, I commented that he hadn't said anything about what has happened since we moved here. His reply was that he thought he ought to leave something for me to write!

I'd like to start a little further back than three years though as my upbringing was different to Norm's in some key ways. I think of myself now as a 'cradle' Baptist. My parents were founder members of a Baptist Church in the early fifties, my father being Church Secretary for many years and my mother being Sunday School Superintendent and deacon. Our whole life revolved around church whether it was going three times on a Sunday or having various meetings at our house. I was very happy in this set-up, especially being the youngest (by a long way) of four children – church provided my social life.



I made an early commitment to Jesus during a Children's Crusade with Frank Farley around the age of six. However, when attending a Filey Holiday I heard Alan Redpath speak about 'unsaved believers' and felt the need to make a response then, this led to baptism at the age of fifteen. We had a thriving youth club by this time and many became Christians when a new minister arrived with a real heart for evangelism and nurturing of new Christians. We were all put into witness teams and accompanied lay preachers from the church to various services where we sang, gave a testimony or took part in some other way. This was an amazing training ground and it's interesting how many of us went on to leadership within churches.

During this time I met Norman and we eventually married. I was a civil servant and Norm started work with Acorn, the evangelistic musical duo. They were great times but hard learning times as well. Some friends were amazed to hear us discussing after a booking who was most in need of the money we'd been paid, whose bills were most pressing. We learnt a lot about depending on God and this learning continued at Chalford. Our experience at Chalford Tabernacle was the one we most equate with being at Nether Springs. We really experienced community and the bonds forged then in tears and laughter are still very strong today.

While I was at school I had no clear idea of what I wanted to do. I knew I didn't want to go to university, didn't want to teach, go into banking or nursing or be a secretary. After I left school my mother decided I wasn't going to hang around all day doing nothing and she got me an interview with the local DHSS. I started work two weeks after leaving school and spent four happy years doing clerical work of various kinds. When I returned to work after having two sons I started part time as a doctor's receptionist. The doctor insisted I learn to type and how to use a computer, thus doing me a great favour. I've been in various administrative roles since and still get great pleasure from that kind of work.

We spent six years in Chalford, three years in Shropshire and ten years in Windsor. My faith journey in this time was going in fits and starts. One difficulty had been pointed out some years before by a former minister who turned to me one day and said 'I know what your problem is, you don't think you're a sinner, do you?' I was most indignant, partly because I knew I was supposed to think I was a sinner, and partly because I didn't think so, after all a lot of people were a lot worse than me! I had felt drawn towards contemplative things for some years but it wasn't until I met members of the Community at a ministers wives' conference and heard Roy speak on 'Finding the cell in your home' that I started to take some action. I joined a Julian Group and found real benefit and peace in that. I was introduced to Taize music and I took part in a week of accompanied prayer. This was a real eye-opener, especially when the lady accompanying me said 'You must find it really hard in the Baptist church, being a contemplative'.

We first visited Nether Springs in 2001 when Norm was on sabbatical. As so many people say, it was like coming home. When we returned in the November, I remember sitting on the bench at the front of the house and saying to God 'I want to be here'. Some months later when we were exploring moving from Windsor I read about Roy's PA moving to Sweden and I wrote to him and said 'I could do that', I even enclosed my CV. Fortunately (!) the post had already been filled but I got a letter back asking Norm and I to meet with Roy in Shillingford, and he suggested we come up and talk to Trevor. We came in the July of 2002 expecting this meeting to be the first in a long series and that we would have to wait while a committee met to vote on whether we should be here or not. Instead after some conversations and soul-searching on our part it was agreed that we would move in three months time. We've learnt a lot through the Community and especially since being here.

*(Continued on page 5)*



(Continued from page 4)

Some of my favourite things (cue for a song!) are:

God loves me  
Nothing can separate me from God's love  
God doesn't want me to feel guilty all the time  
I can be kind to myself  
I'm not the worst person in the whole world  
I don't have to try to earn people's praise or dread their condemnation  
I am accepted and loved  
I can change – even if it's slowly  
Gardening is therapeutic!

So, despite my good intentions I've not written much about our time here at Hetton. We cannot believe that three years have passed so quickly. This is a place of tears and laughter, a place of welcome and farewell, but above all a safe place to learn, to grow and to be. We're here until God says something else.

## Stories Behind the Meditations for the Day of the Month by Andy Raine



### Day 28: Psalm 84

Every year, swallows nest in the porch of St Mary's Church on Holy Island, and this year we nearly had the same happen at St Hilda's too. They had a whole nest built high above the altar before we spotted it – I'd thought they were just checking out possibilities-Location...Location-style!

I left a window open, but a few days later returned to find the camp helpers had removed the nest before it could be lined and used. I felt so betrayed, especially when I read that swallows are now an endangered species. Surely we could have risked a bit of bird shit on the altar just to be in Psalm 84! By next year, the builders will have rearranged it all, anyway...

The Scots and Irish both claim the tune and the *Fisherfolk* recorded it with the words we know. It's a firm favourite at Community weddings, Regional Gatherings, and even found a place on the *Waymarks* CD. Everyone can join in with it because the tune feels familiar on first hearing. The recording on the *Ebb and Flow* cassette isn't polished or well produced, nor is it polite-sounding, like the *Fisherfolk's* version. The harmony is a bit ropery on verse 2, and John Skinner's lead vocal has a raw quality which adds to the overall effect. Someone said it sounded like *The Pogues*, so I then had to play John *The Pogues*, who he then recommended for weeks!

We didn't hesitate to include it in the meditations. It had already been danced at the third Easter workshop in 1982 as part of the production "God of David", as a window into the continuous open worship before the Ark of God in David's Tent. The four guys and six girls who were the worshippers choreographed it themselves. I'll never forget the moment when Tim Coulter as the young priest suddenly falls prostrate...longing and fainting; or the culmination when he draws in the hesitant repentant woman who the gatekeeper turned away.

So many wait for someone to put their hand on the latch and draw them into the presence of God. Outside the door, hundreds, millions are waiting, but, more importantly for me, one or two who it is mine to meet. I shall take my old, accustomed place. I'd rather be a doorkeeper, so I stand by the door.

# Thoughts From the Fourth Poustinia...

(AKA The Finance Hut or Bryony's Shed!!)

Our Community thrives on relationships, and I'm one of those strange people who has an enjoyable relationship with numbers! So it falls to me to count the money in and out and ring alarm bells when there isn't enough! I also have to help our Trustees keep the Charity Commissioners happy, and have recently prepared our first set of accounts as a Registered Charity. A summary of the operating income and expenses is shown below.

**A BIG THANK YOU to Companions and Friends whose regular giving has gone up so much since we asked for extra support a couple of years ago. One-Off Donations, however large or small, are also very welcome!**

**It's our Community – we all have a part to play in balancing the books!**

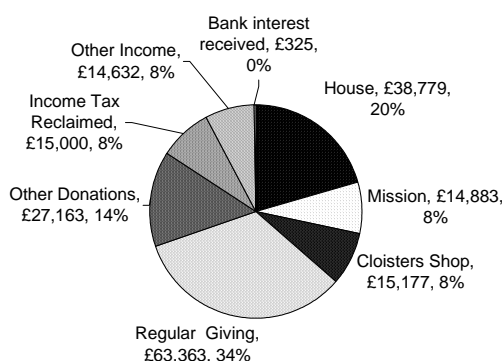


However careful we are, costs are increasing all the time. Wages in particular need to keep pace, though volunteers on the team help us to do far more than we could otherwise afford to. And we never want to move away from the principle that people can stay at the Nether Springs whatever they can afford to pay.

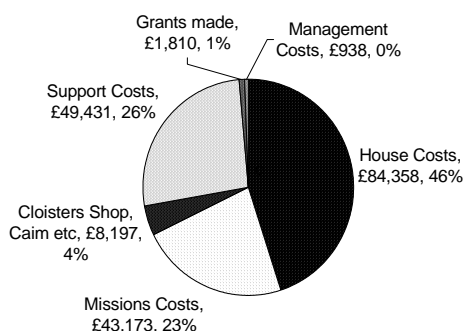
At present it costs £17,000 every month for the Community to function, of which £5,800 comes from regular gifts. It would be so good to see the regular giving keep growing!\* Your generosity means that we are going into the quiet winter period this year in a much less scary position than in the past. I've always believed that how we handle money is "God-stuff" – think how many times Jesus talked about it! I hope as a Community we will always honour Him in giving, receiving and spending.

\*(Standing Order forms are available from the office for new supporters, and perhaps some of the old faithfuls can afford a little more! If you're a UK tax-payer, give us a ring and I'll check whether you've signed a Gift Aid Declaration.)

## Operating Income



## Operating Expenses



Note: House, Mission and Support Costs include relevant salaries

## Northumbria Community Trust 1st April 2004-31st March 2005

### Operating Income

House	£38,779
Mission	£14,883
Cloisters Shop	£15,177
Regular Giving	£63,363
Other Donations	£27,163
Income Tax Reclaimed	£15,000
Other Income	£14,632
Bank interest received	£325

<b>Total Operating Income</b>	<b>£189,322</b>
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### Operating Expenses

House Costs	£84,358
Missions Costs	£43,173
Cloisters Shop, CAIM etc	£8,197
Support Costs	£49,431
Grants made	£1,810
Management Costs	£938

<b>Total Operating Expenses</b>	<b>£187,907</b>
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<b>Operating Surplus</b>	<b>£1,415</b>
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## Community Chapter Changes

As part of the ongoing life and growth of the Community and the developments related to the leadership and governance of the Community we have been exploring different ways of conducting Community Chapter weekends.

Having disbanded the former Community Council the Chapter now comprises of our Leadership team, Trustees and different, yet invited, number of Companions who gather at Nether Springs for a weekend to pray, explore and share on a particular issue relating to the Community's vocation and vision.

This year the Chapter has looked at issues of Transition, Governance and the Building Bridges of Hope Accompanier's Report. In December a great crowd will gather from many places to explore the issues relating to Other Houses and Foundations that are emerging and connecting with the Community.

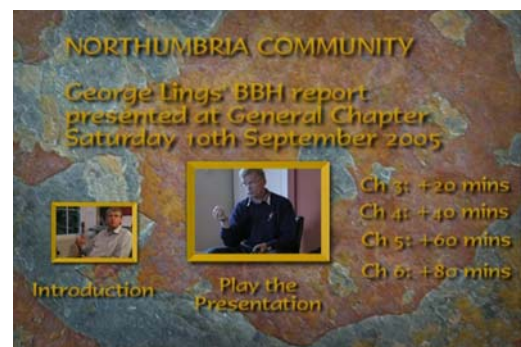
Next year the March Chapter is looking at the area of Trading. Topics for the rest of the year are yet to be agreed, but we hope to involve as many people from Community as we can at coming meetings. .

## Being 'covenanted'... by Jeff Sutheran

Throughout this year we are being encouraged to examine and reflect on the question: 'what does it mean for **me** to be covenanted together in the Northumbria Community?' The culmination of this reflection process will be the invitation to renew that covenant at Easter next year.

Over the course of the year we have produced a couple of new resources to help us in this process – and if you haven't got your copy, now's your chance!

The first: in February this year, we produced a CD - a copy of which was sent to all Companions at that time. It is a multi-format technological extravaganza, giving you the ability to listen to it in a conventional CD player, or to watch video on a computer – and even to print off various documents if that's the way you like to absorb information!



It contains messages and reflections from Trevor and Roy, to help us get the question into focus. Trevor's is a personal address delivered straight to camera, and Roy's is captured as we 'eavesdrop' on a conversation between him and Ingrid. They did know we were listening!

The second resource is a brand new DVD, which captures George Lings bringing his report commissioned by the 'Building Bridges of Hope' initiative – which looks at new expressions of church and examines how they relate to 21<sup>st</sup> Century society.

George has walked alongside us for two years now, and has recently reported on what he has found, and seen, over that period. It's a very perceptive and incisive report, which will serve us well for several years to come as we plot the way forward – and helps us to understand what it is we are covenanted within!

It's a valuable provocation in this process of re-evaluation. The presentation lasts almost two hours, and was filmed as he delivered his insights to a meeting of the General Chapter at Hetton Hall recently.

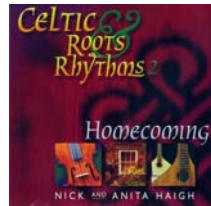
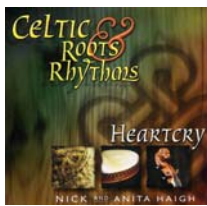
This DVD has now been sent out to all Companions. Anyone who wants a copy (or extra copy) of either of these disks can obtain them for the price of £5 each. Simply send a cheque to Ellen in the office, indicating which disk/s you would like to receive, and she'll do the rest.

You may also like to know that another DVD is about to be made available too – there's no stopping us once we learn how to do it! This one captures two teaching sessions which Roy and Trevor did recently on a 'Community Group Leaders' weekend.

Roy's session explores the nature of the changing society we live in, and then Trevor goes on to examine how NC – and a Community Group - helps us to live in that world! It will be sent to Group Leaders when it's ready, as it's likely to be a useful 'discussion-starter' in group meetings. If you'd like your own copy, it too is available from the office, at the same price. Running time is about 105 minutes.

# CLOISTERS NEWS

## Nick and Anita Haigh's CDs



ICC, the publishers of Nick and Anita Haigh's lovely 'Celtic Roots and Rhythms' music collections have reduced the price of the first two CDs in the series: 'Heartcry' and 'Homecoming'. A third CD in the series, 'Haven', will be published shortly, so that's one to watch out for. Meanwhile, the first two are excellent value at only £6.

**Heartcry CRCD £6.00**  
**Homecoming CHCD £6.00**

## Price reduction on music tapes

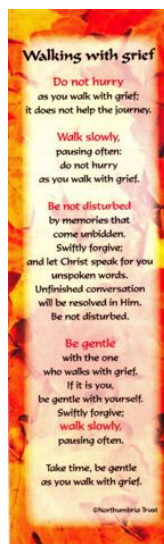
As more and more people now use CDs rather than tapes, Cloisters will not be producing any more tape material (all music and teaching material will henceforth be produced in CD format). To clear remaining stocks of music tapes, the prices are being reduced to £5.00 each (£4.50 for the CDP tape).

**Waymarks tape NCAT102 £5.00**  
**CDP tape NCAT101 £4.50**  
**Heartcry tape CRAT £5.00**  
**Homecoming tape CHAT £5.00**

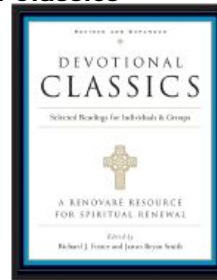
## Walking with Grief

Many bereaved folk have been greatly helped by the wonderful words of 'Walking with Grief', written by Andy Raine and printed in the 'Shadow of Death' section of Celtic Daily Prayer (page 230 of the latest printing, page 225 in previous printings). It is so simple - yet profound and practical. This is now available to send to people in this situation as either a laminated bookmark 197x65mm (in colour or black & white versions) or as a Pam French colour calligraphic print (A5 is the most appropriate size for this, but A4 and A3 versions are also available on request).

**Colour bookmark WWGC £0.85**  
**Black & white bookmark WWGB £0.85**  
**Pam French A5 A5PFWG £2.00**



## Devotional Classics



This is another Renovaré book, to go with Richard Foster's 'Streams of Living Water' and 'A Spiritual Formation Workbook'. It is a wonderful (paperback) collection of extracts from the greatest devotional writings down through the centuries, selected by Richard Foster and his Renovaré team and including ideas for meditating further on each selection.

**SFDC £12.00**

## Further information and ordering

All the above prices include packing and postage to UK addresses. For further information and ordering, contact Brenda (01289 388235 or [cloisters@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:cloisters@northumbriacommunity.org)).

## Is there anyone out there? asks Norman Cumming

A couple of CAIM's ago I wrote a short piece encouraging readers to send new liturgies, songs, poems etc to me. There has been a trickle of response, but I'm quite sure there is lots more treasure buried out there.

Perhaps this gentle reminder will result in a flood of post landing on my doormat over the next few weeks. At this stage there are no plans other than to collect and collate whatever is contributed and if appropriate to use some of the resources here at Nether Springs.

Thanks to those who have already responded. I am notoriously slow at sending individual acknowledgements, but I do appreciate you taking the trouble to send things to me.

Further contributions are welcome to: Norman Cumming, Nether Springs, Hetton Hall, Chatton, Alnwick, Northumberland. NE66 5SD or email to: [normgrid@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:normgrid@northumbriacommunity.org)





## MEMORIES OF A LOVELY MAN

by Ian Corsie



A number of Community folk will, like Joy and me, remember John Freeman with great affection - and be saddened to hear of his sudden death in November. John knew great pain in his life (he was terribly burned as a youngster and this scarred him physically and

emotionally; and the black dog of depression was a regular visitor) and he never married; but he poured himself out in great compassion for those around him finding his vocation as a true 'pastor' - not leading a church but as hospital chaplain in Colchester and as a key member of the parish pastoral team in Frinton ('Frolicsome Frinton' as John liked to call it), where he lived. He really cared for the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being of those around him. He also took on a selfless father-figure role for a deeply-troubled mentally-disabled youngster.

John took delight in both his natural surroundings and the history that shaped them; and was always drawn to the north country, which was one of the many reasons the Community appealed to him. He loved to walk the hills and beaches of Northumberland and Yorkshire, radiating his sense of wonder at it all; 'awesome' was one of his favourite descriptions. One can only imagine his expression of delight on arrival in the 'eternal city'!

John was found, by a worried neighbour, sitting in front of his TV with his supper on his lap - John had quietly entered his lasting peace. John, dear friend, we shall miss you.

## Kids in Community...

Easter workshop is for all Companions and Friends regardless of age, and to this end we are hoping to be able to put on a programme for children and young people alongside (and around the same themes) as the teaching at Easter Workshop on the Friday and Saturday mornings.

To do this we need some helpers who have a current CRB police check or are willing to organise their own before the event. Sorry if this sounds a bit "extra" but we can't be too careful with our children's safety.

If you are interested in helping please contact Wendy Ward (editor).



## Every day is a day unto itself

by Peter Hochstedler

I'm nearing the end of my three months at the Nether Springs as part of a gap year before going to university. I came to pray and to learn about prayer, and I'm so glad to have been here for this time, for the people and space I've known.

This was supposed to be an article about my experiences at the home of the Northumbria Community, but it turned into a poem because poetry better carries things impressed upon me. It is not exclusive to this time and context, and I don't think it's anything new. Only, it's my best shot at gathering a few wildflowers from a whole freaking meadow of truth.



every day is a day unto itself.  
every morning a new quell  
from the cup of mercy. the  
sun  
burns the glory of God  
and the flames of hell.  
mostly, it's cloudy.  
grey

skies over my grey soul.  
if there is a war in me, it is  
the war of calming seas.

i have had my faith  
crushed against rocks  
ground into grit and washed  
back into storming jaws.  
but let me be  
in this belly.

let me breathe.  
neither speech nor thought are prayer.  
breath is prayer  
every thankless breath profanity.  
this is old.

mostly, it's cloudy  
and a softer light guides  
your grey eyes  
and leaves you blind at night  
if you go outside  
and rain falls on your laughter  
and your sighs.  
every day is a cross unto itself;  
tomorrow will have its share of splinters  
but we weave our own crowns of thorn.

this is old.  
but even grey men dance  
beyond the stillness of a funeral bell.  
mercy makes old things new  
in the laughter of God  
and the dark of hell.

## RETREATS AT NETHER SPRINGS 2006

As you know a new programme for the next 12 months has recently been finalised and sent to you.



The primary purpose of the Nether Springs is to embrace in a residential community setting the monastic expression of heart, home and hospitality; and to provide a place and facility for those seeking 'time out' with the Lord from whatever background, stream or tradition, be they believer or seeker. A place of safety for retreat, refuge and reflection. In this it is a monastic school seeking to 'teach what

we live by living what we teach' so that the whole retreat programme is part of the life being lived each day so as to provide training in aspects of 'a new monasticism.'

As well as the regular Community Weekend's and Companion's week's of 'Living what we Teach', there are many new retreats in 2006. One highly recommended is taking place the last weekend of April, the 28<sup>th</sup> to the 30<sup>th</sup> and led by James Hawes now of Nottingham but formerly a much loved member of the monastery team along with his wife Sally. It is a retreat for men entitled 'On being a Man', and is an introduction to masculine spirituality. The retreat teaching will consider perceptions of maleness including the exploring of modern stereotypes. It will also reflect on the wisdom of our Celtic forbearers and the Desert Fathers. It will explore the questions – what does it mean to be male in the 21st century? What does male spirituality look like?

At the end of February and the beginning of August there is a led retreat entitled 'Living Alone Together'. This follows the Community's theme for the year of 'a call to a new monasticism'. It attempts to explore Bonhoeffer's concept of a new monasticism and his understanding of a 'Life Together'. We will explore how it might look through the lens of the Northumbria Community with a contemporary application.



In May, August and November we will have led retreats focussing on 'major lessons from minor characters' in the Bible. We will be looking respectively at the themes of spirituality in the books of Jonah and Ruth as well as the story of the disciples on the Emmaus Road journey as wisdom to live by today.

We would encourage Companions and Friends to take advantage of these retreats and many others throughout the programme, so that (in the context of our Mother House) they are helped to respond to the prayer of Hild 'Show me the right seat; find me

the fitting task; give me the willing heart' and find better understanding of what it means to be part of our Community as those Alone/Together.

## CLOISTERS by Ian Corsie

There may be some CAIM readers who are not aware of the background to the Community's trading company, Cloisters; so this is an opportunity to report how the company is getting on. It has now been operating in its present form for nearly 7 years and has an income of about £50,000 per year (less in years when the Community is not at Spring Harvest) of which about 45% comes from book sales and 40% from music - with the remainder from cards, prints, stained glass, etc.



The company is an entirely separate entity to the Community Trust, with its own Board chaired by Roy Searle plus Jeff Sutheran, Ian Corsie, Bob Ainsley and Lou Owen. The Administrator (the only paid employee) is, of course, Brenda Grace, who does such a wonderful job of the day-to-day running of the company (as well as a host of other things for the Community). As part of the job-sharing that goes on between Brenda, Bryony Stimpson (finance) and Ellen Niven (in the Community office) at the Hall, Ellen helps out in Cloisters, particularly when Brenda is away.

It is good to be able to report that the company has accumulated profit of over £8,000 over the past 6 financial years. That is after paying a proportion of the costs of running the Hall, making donations to the Community Trust and supplying the bookstall at the Hall at little more than cost so that the main part of profits made there can go directly to the Community. In addition the copyright of everything produced in the Community's name belongs to the Trust (rather than the trading company) so that any royalties (notably on Celtic Daily Prayer) are paid to the Trust. Since 1994, these amount to a total of £43,700.

Cloisters therefore continues to be a key part of the Community's 'basket making' activities, making relevant resources available, contributing to the Trust's finances and serving as an outlet for the creative skills within the Community.

Cloisters continues to seek new Community folk who would like to become involved in any way in its work. We wish to move ahead and adapt to changing circumstances, rather than, as is so easy, getting stuck in a rut. The Community's Chapter Meeting the first weekend in March will be looking at Cloisters and the Community's basket making activities. If you feel you have any contribution to make, do get in touch with Roy, Trevor, Jeff, Ian or Brenda.

## Happenings...a selection of news and details of future events from the pen of Roy Searle (or should it be the PC of Jean Watson, his PA?)

### **Brian McLaren Day**

One of the fascinating aspects of the Community's mission is our connecting with growing numbers of people and places from the Emerging Church or New Expressions of Church networks.

Many Companions and Friends of the Community have been influenced by the writings of Brian McLaren, whose excellent book, 'A Generous Orthodoxy' was reviewed in the last edition of CAIM.



Paul Wilson and the Galilee Network will be welcoming Brian to England next year and hosting a day with Brian at St Barnabas Church, Lindthorpe Road, Middlesbrough. Get the date Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May in your diary and we will have further details available on the website ASAP and in the next edition of CAIM. See you there.

### **Prague**

One of the things to have developed out of Roy Searle's Baptist Union Presidential Tour of European countries with three other Companions, Ed Pillar, Mel Rogers and Tom Duncanson back in April was the time they spent with friends at the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Prague.



The Rector, Keith Jones and his wife Denise have been connected with the Community for a number of years and it is with a sense of anticipation and excitement that we are currently exploring a partnership with the seminary. What this means nobody knows as yet but the meeting and sharing with kindred spirits and seeing the Community's life, spirituality, work and mission relate to growing numbers of believers across Europe, of which Prague is a key place, is fascinating!

Watch this space and pray for several people from the Community who will be visiting the seminary over the next few months.

### **USA**

Next year Roy Searle, together with Gayle-Anne Drury and Jeff & Jill Sutheran will be leading worship or speaking at the Renovaré Covenant Retreat 'Solitude and The Way of the Heart' on *July 16 - 20, 2006* at Snow Mountain Ranch in Colorado.

They will also be participating in a Community Gathering in Minneapolis on 8 & 9 July. Why not join them and other Community folk for the Minnesota event?

Further details will be posted on the website in future editions of CAIM.



### **Make Poverty History - Service of Thanksgiving and Recommitment, Saturday, 11<sup>th</sup> January, 2006**

Many people in the Community have been involved this year, not least Roy Searle, in the Make Poverty History campaign. Not a 'one-off' event the movement continues in its struggle and commitment to drop the debt, trade justice.

Join Roy and others from the Community at a "Service of Thanksgiving and Recommitment", on Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2006, at 11.00am, in Durham Cathedral. The preacher will be Dr George Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, who responded to the invitation by saying, *"This is something I am passionate about"*. The service is intended to bring together Christians of all traditions, from across the entire region, Tees to Tweed. All ages will be welcome to attend.



### **Irish Retreat-Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March, 2006**

An opportunity to take time out on retreat in Ballydugan, County Down. The beautiful cottages are set in peaceful surroundings – visit the website, [www.ballydugan.com](http://www.ballydugan.com).

The week will be hosted by Gordon & Margaret Joice with some input from Roy Searle. It will provide an opportunity for people to participate in the monastic day, pray, read, reflect, visit Saul, Downpatrick, including the St. Patrick Centre, Strangford Lough and take part in the St. Patrick's Day Prayer Walk and celebrate the Saint's Day at the Cathedral where Roy is preaching and there will also be a ceilidh one evening.

Full board accommodation will be £200 per person. For further details and information please contact Jean Watson [jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org) or telephone 01625 874493.





## Bits and Pieces

### **Wedding Bells**

Andrew Boston and Hazel Mullins are to be married in Manchester on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December. *May the saints and Saviour watch over them.*

### **Renovare Conference**

Join Roy Searle, Richard Foster and others at the Renovare National Conference next year in Winchester, 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> May. There will be further details available on the Community's and Renovare's website [www.renovare.info](http://www.renovare.info) and in the next edition of CAIM. Do plan to come.



Andi Bowsher, whom some of you will recall helped with the workshop last Easter on liturgy which resulted in the revamped recommitment service, published a book in the summer on prayer. It's called **"Praying the Pattern. The Lord's Prayer as framework for prayer and life"** and the clue as to what it's about is in the title! There's a lot in it about creative ways of prayer (bodies and arty stuff included) and even some liturgies based on the Lord's prayer -you may even notice some influence from the Northumbria Community at some points. Possibly one of the most provocative parts is the section on praying our lifestyles with rules of life. You can find out more by going to <http://abbeynous.schtuff.com>

and exploring a bit. There are even excerpts from the book.

Andii would also value your prayers for the move to Ryton near Newcastle in the late spring of 2006 when his wife is ordained.

### **Remembering**

Gail Wykes of Barwell died just after midnight on 21<sup>st</sup> November, following long battle with cancer. Our thoughts and prayers are with Joe and the family.

### **Intercessors**

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

### **Community Groups**

If you would like more information about these, or established Community Groups; please contact: Norma Charlton [norma.charlton@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:norma.charlton@northumbriacommunity.org) Tel: 0191 487 8065 ( if a member of her family answers, please ask them to write down your telephone (preferably landline) number), or via the Community office.

Francis Leonard, from the **Newton Aycliffe Group** retired from work recently, and we pray that he and Sheila will enjoy their retirement together. Please also pray for Francis' health. Ken Wise, our group leader will also be retiring officially, when on New Year's Eve he reaches the grand total of 65 years young. Norma and Ken are also looking forward to a quiet, easy, care-free life!!!

The **Peterborough Group** meet monthly in our homes for

a Bring and Share Supper and Evening Prayer. We enjoy a time of fellowship, with music and story telling and well just being there for each other through the happy times and the not so! We had rather a special time in October using home grown prayers and Brigid's liturgy to bless Nigel and Heather's new Home and then November a blessing was prayed for Anne before her pending hospital stay and operation. Just being there for each other is good as our journeys intertwine in our vulnerability and availability to God and each other.



We are exploring the idea of taking a party of young people [16-25 year olds] to Taizé next summer. We hope to link up with some of the Bishop of Hull's Pilgrimage or the past four years and with a group led by our friend John Pritchard, the Bishop of Jarrow. If you are interested as a participant or as a helper please contact the Community office asap.

### **Thanks!**

The editors would like to thank all those who have contributed to this edition of CAIM. We apologise to anyone whose contribution has been missed due to lack of space. Many of you have submitted some original and very moving poetry...we'd really like to do a 'creative' issue sometime, costs permitting.

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