



# CAIM

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

CAIM is the Celtic word meaning 'encompassment' or 'encircling'

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*Trevor Miller*

## Embracing a daily rhythm

### the Process of Change at the Mother House

Life at the Mother House is just that – life. It is a way for living that is costly and demanding because it is a calling from God for some to live on behalf of and in service to the wider Community.



However, it has to be acknowledged that 95% of our Companions cannot live the way the folk at the Mother House can. We cannot and must not divorce the Mother House and its daily life from the Community it represents. What the Mother House provides is an example, an icon of the principles needed for a new monastic spirituality to be real and authentic. These principles can then be adapted to each unique set of circumstances our Companions have to deal with out there.

The daily 'monastic' rhythm is a major part of that life – expressing God's gift of day and night, ebb and flow, rhythm and rest. It begins when you wake up and ends when you go to sleep because we are talking about vocational expression. It's holistic and sacramental, as being 'almost monastic in nature' the Mother House of our Community adopts a rhythm that provides a framework that incorporates working with heart, mind and hands.

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However, the daily rhythm is effective only if it is understood correctly i.e. it is only as good as the sum of its parts. A healthy balance requires a commitment to all components – work, prayer, hospitality, solitude etc. If this is out of balance it can become life draining rather than life giving. This has often been the situation in relation to the Mother House in recent

times in that we have not been able to consistently provide a programme resulting in repeated House closures, disappointed guests and lost revenue.

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## Easter Workshop

In 2009 the main gathering of Community will be at **Evesham**, where we have been invited to share in the 1300<sup>th</sup> celebration of the founding of Evesham Abbey.

We will gather on Maundy Thursday and disperse on Easter Sunday.

Do come and join us for all or part of the workshop, hear more of the story and take part in various expressions, including pilgrimage, sharing, praying and eating together as we explore the themes of Journey and Hospitality.

Programme and other details will be available from the office in the New Year. Accommodation is being offered by local folk.

There will also be a gathering on **Holy Island** after the morning service at St Mary's. Meet at St Aidan's statue for 'Christ as a Light'.



If you are planning an Easter gathering elsewhere please let Ingrid Cumming know via the office, so that we can spread the news!

## Keeping in touch...

If you change your address, phone number or email, please remember to let Ellen know at the office. Our ability to keep in touch with you is only as effective as the information in our database - which Ellen keeps as shiny as a new pin. Please help her to maintain only useful information!

## Welcome to the Winter edition of Caim!

There was a compelling conversation amongst Companions during the open forum at the excellent 'Covenanted Together' retreat held recently at Nether Springs. It came to light that some Companions and Friends would be interested in meeting together not just in geographical Community groups but also in particular 'interest groups' eg music, education, health care, writing, trading etc.

We've asked Roy to put together something which we can use to 'gather information' from us all to explore this idea - so watch out for it in the next Caim!

We all have passions and interests, which up till now we probably haven't found a way to share with others in Community. Well, soon we hope there'll be a way!

Enjoy this edition of Caim - and have a wonderful and restorative Christmas season. May you know the nearness of Christ who came..

*Jeff & Ingrid*

## How then shall we trade...

**We have begun a major review process of Cloisters, our trading company. There are several factors which have come together to prompt the review:**

We are mindful of the need to produce more resources for the Community; and Ian Corsie is stepping down in the summer of 2009 as the overseeing Director of Cloisters. We are profoundly grateful to God for Ian and the work he has done over several years in Cloisters. The review aims to be far-reaching and comprehensive, and will entail revisiting the very purpose of our trading activities - as well as looking again at product, and markets. We're asking: *'What is it that the Community really expects of its trading company?'*

We're involving a number of Community Companions and Friends in the process and we'll be spending a couple of days together as part of the review process at the beginning of February. We would value your prayers - as well as your comments, insights, ideas and inspiration - as we explore ways forward for developing the trading arm of the Community.

With the Community's limited resources, financial vulnerability and the current and foreseeable uncertain economic climate, the Community's trading needs to play a significant role in both resourcing and equipping us in our vocation but also help put funds into the Community's purse to pay for ongoing work and future development. If you'd like to help us in this important review process, please drop us a line by email to [ian.corsie@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:ian.corsie@northumbriacommunity.org) or [roy.searle@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:roy.searle@northumbriacommunity.org)



### *Continued from Page 1*

This has largely been due to a prolonged period of staff illness and shortage, with the accumulated weariness and stress often resulting in the day not working as we would like.

We also acknowledged that an overly rigid structure did little to enable 'life beyond Hetton Hall' for the resident team. With no ability to plan time off beyond one week at a time this was also a cause of weariness.

These things have been a cause of distress for all concerned and one of the principle reasons for taking action by introducing some important changes. For instance, it was felt necessary to revisit our understanding of the Mother House itself and redefine our understanding of the purpose of the 'monastic' daily rhythm. Also to clarify the roles and responsibilities of all involved in the life and work of the Mother House.

This required a restating of the purpose of our Mother House and the following description gave clarity. *The Northumbria Community's Mother House is a resident 'new monastic' centre that offers home, chapel, workshop, school and facilities for retreat as a sign and representation of the monastic and missional values of the Community.*

**...it was felt necessary to revisit our understanding of the Mother House itself and redefine our understanding of the purpose of the 'monastic' daily rhythm.**

The calling on each of us as Companions in Community is to live out the Rule of Availability and Vulnerability in the particular context in which we find ourselves. All are seeking God, and knowing self, so as to learn how to better live with others and to serve the world of our influence whether that is great or small. However, it is a calling for some to live and work at our Mother House on behalf of and in service to the wider Community. This wider group is known as the Mother House Team and includes 'teams within the Team' of Administration, Finance, Cloisters and Mission.

Also within the Mother House team, is a group specifically called to provide heart, home and hospitality through the day-to-day activities and expressions of the daily 'monastic' rhythm as it relates to the weekly programme in welcoming others to share its life. This is known as the Monastic Team. These two groups together provide the life and work of the Mother House.

We have introduced a new weekly gathering of all who live/work from the Mother House, known as the Mother House Chapter, meeting each Monday. This is primarily focused on information sharing, and is separate from the necessary Monastic Team planning.

Although our Mother House is not a monastery as such, we do want to reflect a 'new monastic' spirituality as a central part of our ethos in expressing 'a new way for living'. The monastic day provides a liturgical structure for the benefit of those who come to us and need anchor

**We have to be careful that we don't put what we do so out of kilter with the rest of the Community's aspirations that it becomes an unreachable ideal**

points for stability and inner security. Put simply, the monastic day structure is in place so we can offer the hospitality of our 'Reason to be' and live out our Rule of Availability and Vulnerability a day at a time. The name given to the daily schedule of a religious community is *Horarium* (Latin = the hours). It says 'this schedule for here; for the peculiarities of monastic expression in this place'.

As a networked dispersed Community we have to keep in mind that the structure of the monastic day at the Mother House is *exactly and only* that = the structure of the monastic day at the Mother House. It is a helpful outline for the resident community and for those needing to find the right sort of balance for their time on retreat, but it doesn't fit everyone. Many of our Companions have to juggle 'work/church/family' commitments around which they have to find a balance that works for them in the unique and varied situations they live with each day. As Andy Raine has suggested a more inclusive outline for us all would be 'working, sleeping, praying, questioning.'

We have to be careful that we don't put what we do so out of kilter with the rest of the Community's aspirations that it becomes an unreachable ideal or - worse - perpetuates the 'rarefied monastery' myth that it is only the Mother House teams who are the elite chosen few, *really* living the life. Many have to work a stressful eight hours or more each day sometimes six days a week. So twenty minutes twice a day of spiritual reading and prayer is about all (if that) many of our Companions can manage amidst the demands and expectations of life today. To accomplish even this requires real discipline and commitment. It should not be any different for the Mother House Team.

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### *Continued from Page 3*

This is why we emphasise ordinariness and an earthed humanity. We mustn't idealise the Community and make it what it is not. Nor demand a structure peculiar to the Mother House. If we do this, people will project a fantasy, live in a fiction of their own imagination which can only result in the inevitable rejection and disillusion that comes from false expectations.

So to help alleviate the recent problems we introduced a new daily schedule that has proved to be a very positive experience for all concerned. For example, we have brought forward Morning Office to 9:15am and put back Midday Office to 12:30pm thus extending the morning work period which no longer feels so stop/start. We have brought forward Evening Office to 5.30pm and this has meant a much more relaxed evening meal along with improved evening options and the ability to plan ahead. So simple things like visiting the cinema or a local Community Group, being involved in creative activities or just being free to do whatever, all become options.

Already many have commented on much needed refreshment, providing greater integration and balance for the whole Mother House.

There is a greater understanding that these are guidelines around the fixed times for Office and Meals. An acknowledgement that work may happen outside of the

work periods just as prayer happens outside of the Office times. The guidelines will be constantly interrupted by needs such as shopping, transporting guests to and from Berwick, retreat and training days, as well as the unexpected happenings.



To end where we began, the Mother House is an icon, a sign of 'a new way for living' that is both contemplative and active. It is a physical representation of a Community of the

heart, living a Rule of life a day at a time in expressing its core values. This is expressed by being inclusive to all, so that providing a safe place and a genuine theological ecumenism that allows for doubt, messiness and struggle while still belonging is a huge part of Northumbria Community. The Mother House reflects 'a new monastic spirituality' not for its own sake but to provide a framework to channel the disciplines in order for us to seek God along with those who join us on the journey at any given time. So that wherever we are as Companions in Community, to live in the day in which we find ourselves provides the means of inner restoration and recreation of life so that 'every day can be a fresh beginning'.

*Trevor Miller*

### *A date for your diary:*

#### **Northumbrian Week in Prague - Sunday 15th to Sunday 22nd March, 2009**

Building on the success of previous 'Northumbrian' weeks in Prague - and deepening our partnership with the seminary community there - we are returning next year, Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2009.

This is another great opportunity for anyone to join us and share with Eastern European believers in the beautiful city of Prague. The week, from Monday to Friday, will consist of lectures, seminars and workshops, together with input from and sharing with the staff and students. You don't have to be an academic to enjoy the experience!

The Saturday and Sunday will give more time to relax and explore the beautiful city of Prague and participate in the Sarka Valley church service at the seminary on Sunday morning.

The pattern of each day will be built around the monastic rhythm of our offices, teaching and sharing together - with lots of time to relax and explore the delights of the city.

We'd love you to be part of this event! Do join us. It promises to be a really good time.

The cost for 7 nights half board accommodation; breakfast and lunch, in Hotel Jeneralka, (which is part of the seminary complex) is £305 per person for a standard twin or double room, and £410 per person for a single room (£330 or £425 respectively for the deluxe option)

If booked in advance there are some very cheap flights from most UK and European airports and it will be wonderful if folks from further afield, like the States, could join us.

Please respond ASAP. We look forward to you being with us. Please email [jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:jean.watson@northumbriacommunity.org) or write to her at the office address, marking your envelope 'Northumbrian Week in Prague'. Cheque deposit of £50 per person to be paid by 31<sup>st</sup> January, 2009. Full payment will be required by 1<sup>st</sup> March, 2009





*We asked Andy Raine to tell us the stories of some of the Daily Meditations. This is what he wrote about Day 14...*

## The Field



I wrote this song based on three scriptures: Judges 1: 14-15  
Numbers 24:1-10 Psalm 126: 3-4

I had in mind our understanding that the 'upper springs' referred to Holy Island, and the 'Nether Springs' to a slightly-lower-down-the-map location here in north-Northumberland. The field that God had given us and was calling us to give ourselves to was the dark, often unpromising desert land of Northumbria.

I also remembered the account of the Mary sisters in their community in Darmstadt, Germany. A city bypass was planned that would go through

the middle of their 'Canaan' property, destroying the peace and quiet of its retreat centre. No alternative route would be considered. At that point the sisters marched with little flags around their property declaring '*the bypass shall not stand, the bypass shall not stand...*'

As I wrote the words for The Field, I had in mind that little song they sang, and could picture their film of the eventual outcome - where the bypass does a huge loop around their Canaan-land rather than tearing through its centre.

The tune I wrote was original, but in the style of the Darmstadt songs. We've been singing it over the land for many years and increasingly seen Northumberland looked to for a lead by people from other places, rather than experiencing it as a bleak and unresponsive area distant from its famous past.

Brian & Dolores Leighton and their children in New Hampshire sang us their version of The Field, set to a more strident tune, using the 'every curse becomes a blessing' verse as a chorus. It reminds us that we need

not experience defeat, and that even bad stuff hurled against us can be turned to good. Often the devil has no wisdom, because he overplays his hand. *Andy Raine*

**Every curse becomes a blessing  
to the people of God's choosing.  
He who spoke it shall perform it.  
He shall bring on us the blessing,  
though the enemy may fight.  
My Jesus has done all things  
right.**

**In the dry and desert places  
Jesus is our souls' oasis.  
He will give us of His plenty,  
fill the vessels once so empty,  
pour His waters on the ground,  
living waters gushing round.  
See the land so black and barren;  
God will make a watered garden:  
fruitfulness where once  
was parchedness,  
light to break into the darkness,  
upper springs  
and nether springs  
in the field  
that Father's given.**

**Satan tries, but cannot block it,  
powers of Hell could never stop it.  
Darkness flees as light is given.  
God establishes His heaven  
in our hearts, and in this place  
shows the radiance of His face.**

*Ian Corsie has alerted us to this helpful resource:*

## A Daily Lectionary

If you are thirsty for deeper Scripture reading and are casting round for a suitable framework to take you more or less right through the Bible, we can point you in the direction of a recommended website:

<http://www.genesis.net.nz/sunday/lectionary/commentary/>

This has been compiled by David Guthrie of the Genesis Foundation in New Zealand. There are 2 OT and 2 NT readings per day (so you could do a pair in the morning and a pair in the evening if you wished) and there is a carefully thought-out scheme for the selection and order of readings - you can read the broad rationale here:

<http://www.genesis.net.nz/sunday/lectionary/>

A key feature of this lectionary is that there is a daily commentary providing a thoughtful link between the passages chosen for the day. The 'year' starts on 3 Nov and it would be sensible to begin there whatever your starting date. Within a year you would have read most of the Bible.

This is an experimental 'work-in-progress' effort by David Guthrie and he is looking for active feedback from users. If you do get engaged with it, please let the Community have feedback comments too.

*We asked some folk to write a few words about the 'Family Life is Holy Ground' retreat recently... here's what the Pillars, Revills and Cummings wrote:*

## Family Life is Holy Ground

Over twenty years ago this was an early statement of the founders of the Northumbria Community. For many people who are committed to their local church it can feel as if family life ends up being last in the list of priorities! So in October half-term a week specifically for families was held at Nether Springs, giving an opportunity to explore what this statement might mean for us today.



It was a time which included saying the office in Chapel, all-age sessions exploring the themes of prayer, the Bible and values through talking and activities. For one

session the parents met with Andy Raine (one of the founders) to talk through 'family life' further. During this

**Everyone's voice was valued and we sensed God's wisdom in the straightforward answers of the young as well as the not-so-young**

time the children were able to make bread which was later shared as part of the Eucharist over the evening meal.

There were also sessions including a walk to Cuthbert's Cave, drumming and felt-making. Each evening there was a story-time, usually with a song for joining in. There was a bonfire with a liturgy of light and a final party to which others in the area were invited as an expression of hospitality.



So what did we learn through all this? There was a gaining in confidence to try new things and experiment with how we celebrated festivals and used liturgy. Questions were raised such as 'What can we learn from Jewish traditions?'; 'How can we nurture faith in our children?'; 'How can we make what is so important to us more

accessible to our children?'

*"We returned home with a strong intention to develop the liturgical dimension to our family prayers."*

*"Action packed, fun for all the family!"*

*"I learnt that God is in all things."*

*"We returned home with a renewed vision for making the life of the home a place where values are strongly held and communicated, where we do not abrogate our responsibility as parents for our children's spiritual development by delegating this to the local church."*

*"I enjoyed all the activities, like when we went to Cuthbert's Cave – that was well fun!"*

*"All the children were simply allowed to be themselves, which worked really well for us."*

*"We listened to each other's struggles and were moved by tales of pain and brokenness. We drank tea, we ate together and we shared communion around one of the evening meals"*

Probably the most heart warming moment was in the time of thanksgiving during Eucharist, when everyone said one thing they were thankful to God for; a little boy of four said "Thank you for my family and for making me, me".

*And here are a few words from Louise Vaughan:*

After visiting Nether Springs for the first time in October 2007, I decided it would be an ideal place to bring my son, now aged 10. I booked our places on the 'Family Life Is Holy Ground' week.

As well as being with the other families, it was great to meet people calling in at Nether Springs who would stay for a coffee and a chat, or for a meal. On the Saturday evening we had a party (the children having done lots of baking, with the help of Ru, in preparation) with lots of visiting guests making the dining room full to capacity. And it was there I had a much appreciated glass of wine!

While we were in Northumbria we also had the pleasure of meeting people who up until then I'd known only through the community forum.



Paul Lucas recently led a day's retreat for a group of Methodist Ministers, and we asked him to tell us about it. He seemed rather keen for me to point out that the number '61' on his cap does NOT refer to his age... obviously that's a sore point then, Paul?

## A day with the Peterborough Preachers



This was a day planned well ahead of time, or at least put in the diary early - but then, as ever, there's a bit of a flurry of getting it all together in the week, days, and hours before, to make it happen. An early start from Hull on a drizzly Saturday dawn, with boxes of wood, stones and fabrics, CDP, amp, guitar, laptop sat-nav and a rendezvous of 9.30am at the latest. Never trust a sat-nav - I was there by 8.30, without speeding!

Thirty or so people turned up for the day, from the Peterborough Methodist Circuit, and a few from the local Northumbria Community Group. We sang some worship songs leading to morning office, then heard a few folks' stories of their faith journeys, alone and together, and took the opportunity to take twenty minutes time out - not in a solitary 'poustinia' experience, but more of a collective quietness. The room was large enough to do this easily.

Midday office followed by soup and packed lunches and then for the creative workshop.

Using the theme 'Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer', people did creative things with the odd selection of materials and later made a collective display - each having opportunity to share what their 'thing' was about. One chap made a prayer bracelet from string and wool, a lady talked about how she saw a piece of wood which looked like a cloud and expressed her situation of being a cloud that absorbed the pain for others, a true mercy heart. The picture shows one piece expressing something of being between a rock and a hard place and was accompanied by the statement 'His blood flows to the hardest place'



Clearly, people had many things to express and it is often the painful side of life which they most need to let out. The creative workshop seems to offer that opportunity - but also for some, to experience inner renewal, letting go of the old to make way for the new. A worthy thought for advent. It was a good day, enjoyed by those who took part and a welcome opportunity for me to get out of the usual 'ministry' box! Box? I don't know what on earth you could possibly mean! *Paul Lucas*

## Sing to the Lord a New Song

**It may have been cold outside** but there was a warm welcome for the nineteen community companions and friends who met at Holy Trinity, Kimberley on a frosty day in November to sing and play music. It was a day of fun, of experimentation and surprising results, but just what was it that led Clare Hunt to invite us to Nottingham? Over lunch she explained something to me of her journey towards this very special day.

Clare's purpose in getting us together was threefold. First was the desire for community folk to experience the sheer joyous creativity of making music together. With a selection of instruments, a good balance of male and female singers and the help of our composers, we were able to work on, and make 'work in progress' recordings, of new settings of three of our meditations, three parts of evening office, a new version of Psalm 139 and a song sent to us, with love and encouragement, by Bill Hockey from Seekers Church in the USA. To contrast with the vocal work, our instrumentalists brought to life two beautiful compositions by Rob Davies.

*See page 11 for a picture (the only space we had left!)*

Clare is also concerned that as a community we should provide a safe and supportive place for fledgling lyricists and tune writers to experiment, be heard and be resourced. The day was intended not just as a gathering of musicians but also as a gathering of music itself. To let others hear a new composition requires a willingness to be vulnerable and unless we provide a forum for this work to be done it is very hard for new music makers to test out and develop their gift.

Clare's other aim in bringing us together is to encourage more of the community's talented songwriters and musicians who want to send their work out into the world. Music has been part of the community's journey from the beginning and without new songs and settings we could risk giving the impression that we have ceased to grow and develop. Music resources those within community but it is also part of our mission, a way of reaching some who might not respond to other forms of communication.

'The time for singing has come' but where are the songs for this stage of the journey? We found some of them that day and we were blessed by the encounter. As Clare's original advert put it... 'more music please!' *Judith Maskery*

*Bryony Stimpson helps manage the Community's finances, from the wooden hut in the back yard:*

## Teach us, O Lord, to Number Our Days...

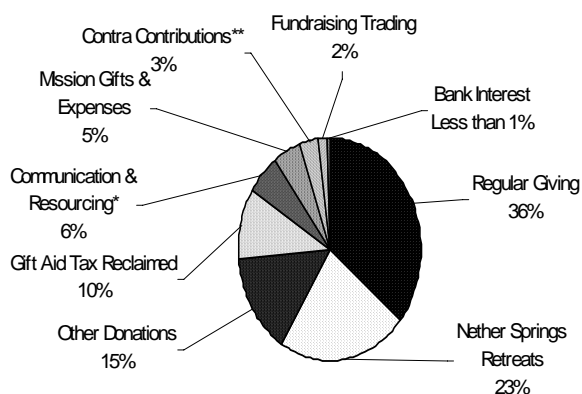
My days are FULL of numbers, but there wouldn't be any numbers, or, more importantly, any money in the bank, without your ongoing support – so once again a huge **THANK YOU!**

As the years pass, I find that more and more of the names that appear month by month on our bank statement, or on cheques in the post and donations box, bring to mind faces, circumstances and conversations snatched over a meal at Hetton. This makes the routine chores of book-keeping seem almost relational! Times are uncertain for us all in this economic climate, and we understand that sometimes people have to cut back, but appreciate it greatly when others can share an increased income with the Community. We also owe a great debt to those who voluntarily give time and ability to both Monastery and Mission.

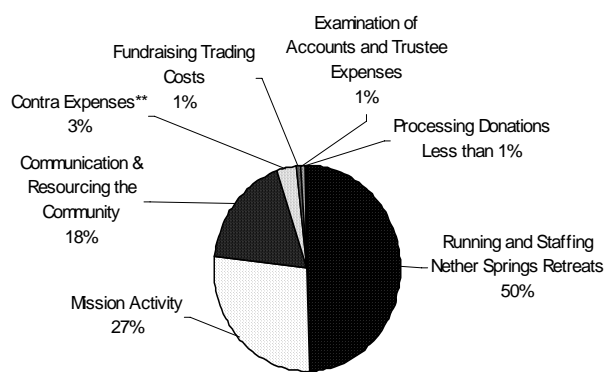
For the first time in 2007 we were awarded a grant from the Baptist Home Mission Fund, in particular in recognition of the ministry Roy and others have taking the Community's Ethos and Way for Living beyond the doors of the Mother House. This has been promised for a second year at least.

During 2007/8 we kept to our budget, and were left with slightly more at the end than we started with - but still little more than a month's running costs in the bank. There was good news in the 2008 Budget: the government undertook to make up the shortfall in Gift-Aid claimable by charities, which would have been caused by the drop in the basic rate of tax. That all seems such a long time ago now, but has saved us a loss of £2-3,000 per year. We received £14,000 Gift Aid Tax in 2007/8.

**Northumbria Community Trust Income 2006/7**



**How we spent the money...**



### Northumbria Community Trust Income 2007/8

Regular Giving	84,189
Nether Springs Retreats	52,467
Other Donations	34,343
Gift Aid Tax Reclaimed	24,204
Communication & Resourcing*	13,154
Mission Gifts & Expenses	11,738
Contra Contributions**	7,601
Fundraising Trading	3,747
Bank Interest	977
<b>Total</b>	<b>£232,421</b>

### And How we spent it....

Running and Staffing Nether Springs Retreats	111,899
Mission Activity	62,155
Communication & Resourcing the Community	40,057
Contra Expenses**	7,601
Fundraising Trading Costs	1,624
Examination of Accounts and Trustee Expenses	2,299
Processing Donations	468
<b>Total</b>	<b>226,104</b>

\* Sale of resources, Mailing Donations and Royalties from our Publications

\*\* Mostly Staff contributions for accommodation

For those of you who like to know what's what, here's a summary of our 2006/7 accounts. The detailed version as required by law now gets posted on the Charity Commission Website: [www.charity-commission.gov.uk](http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk)

If you have any questions, or want to discuss giving to the community, you can leave a message with the Office or e-mail me on [finance@northumbriacommunity.org](mailto:finance@northumbriacommunity.org). Also, we can now receive credit card donations via the Cloisters secure website – link from the "Contact Us" page of the Community Website!  
Bryony.



*On the 12th of September, the St Albans Community group had a day together at Bridge House. We asked Teddie Sawyer to tell us about it.*

**Simeon Stylites withdrew from society, fifteen hundred years ago, and went to the desert. To avoid being disturbed by onlookers and unwanted visitors he took to living on the top of a pillar.**

His self imposed exile guaranteed that he would be surrounded by onlookers, disciples and well-wishers for the rest of his life. Was he a monk or an ascetic saint and sage? If we are unsure of what to learn from him today we can at least say that he has set a standard of comparison for any us who even begin to consider rationing our creature comforts.

After making the commitment to companionship with the Northumbria Community last year Elizabeth and I felt that we should have something to learn from participating in a local Community Group, and so it was that we made pilgrimage to St. Albans to join Mike and Netta Gibbs and Amanda and Neil and Hazel.

As the months have rolled by, we only managed to get to two meetings. Each one entails a sixty mile return journey and sometimes is more than we have stamina for after a long working day. So! The suggestion of a day away together as a group? What an excellent way of spending some time together pondering upon the meaning and purpose of journeying together.

A new community house was proposed for the venue: Bridge House, Shillingford-on-Thames. Scary! A fabled

part of the country known to us only as a land of Range Rovers and green wellies.

The day came, and we made it safely through mysterious villages. And, 'God bless us', all of our little party arrived from directions various within twenty minutes. Yes!



It was just where the directions said it was, a short way down the little private tree shaded lane, just before the river bridge. Now, I gazed about me and wondered what rigours and rites of induction and passage lay ahead of us on this, our first day together as a group. What had Netta and Mike planned for us? As I stood on the driveway by the 2CV I looked anxiously over at a tiny poushtinia perched in a tree. Would I find myself devoted to half a day's contemplation within an oversized nesting box?

Thank you Simeon for your towering example. We will have stoical days to come, but this day was altogether much gentler.

Imagine a day on a tiny farm with hot soup and coffee served at tables in a tiny old-fashioned conservatory, and prayer offices held in a wooden shed-chapel so well insulated against the cold that our candles' heat hung in the air. Oh! Was it too comfortable and sinful to have gentle hospitality and interaction, green fields and squelchy mud to play in, cows and keen eyed sheep dogs to gaze at, ducks and waddling geese and the trundling river to watch? Would I go back and spend a weekend of camping exile down the bottom-end of Rosemary and Philip's field? Try me! *Teddie Sawyer*

## **'The Journey' cast in bronze and sited in Durham city centre.**



Fenwick Lawson's original (wooden) sculpture stands in St Mary's Church, Holy Island, and was inspired by the story of the monks' escape from Lindisfarne in 875AD through fear of Viking invasion. The monks undertook an epic journey across Northumbria, carrying the coffin of Saint Cuthbert, and eventually arrived in Durham where they settled in 995AD. Durham Cathedral was built to house the body of St Cuthbert and a shrine to the saint.

The sculptor intends the piece to be seen not merely as a religious icon, but also as a symbol of community, of people supporting each other and working together. It was unveiled by The Princess Royal on 26th September 2008.

*Thanks to Dana Delap for sending us the picture!*

## A JOURNEY WITH CUTHBERT

**A chance to explore the story of Cuthbert** and make a guided pilgrimage along Cuthbert's Way next year (1-8 May 2009). It will be based on two centres, firstly at Melrose and then at Hetton Hall. (Ability to walk about 15 miles a day is essential.) The cost is £320 including board and lodging, packed lunches, transportation at start and finish points, knowledgeable guides and beautiful scenery. This is not an ordinary walking holiday, but an opportunity to make an inner

journey whilst walking the outer journey. Please contact the office for further details and a booking form. We do have several bookings, and remaining places will fill up fast, so act quickly!



*Roy Searle wrote these few words about*  
**A few significant moments...**



**It was really good to meet Brian MacLaren at an event organised by Colin Symes in Edinburgh last week.**

Four of the Seniors team went together up to Edinburgh where, as well as hearing Brian share about spiritual formation and the liturgy of

worship, there was an opportunity for some individual conversation with him - which was really good.

He is such a nice guy, a very able theologian whose warm personality and kindred spirit made us very much at home with one another.

So much of his heart, passion and engagement with the gospel, church and culture is working off the same paradigm as ourselves. We were able to offer him an open invitation for him to come and spend some time with us, which he seemed keen to respond to, and we hope with him and others to explore the possibilities of doing some work on a spiritual formation.

For those who are not familiar with Brian's writing and influence, we can wholeheartedly commend any of his books - some of which are available direct from Cloisters.

Having been familiar with his material for many years, it was really good to have met him face to face.

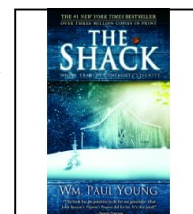
*Here's a recommendation from Cathy Turton:*

### **The Shack**

by William P. Young

ISBN 9780964729230

Publishers: Windblown Media, USA



**A big seller in the States, available here from Christian bookshops and online.**

#### **Why read it?**

It will affirm and challenge your understanding of God.

#### **What's it about?**

Father of four, Mack Philips, receives a written invitation to spend a weekend with God at a log cabin – the Shack. As readers, we witness the weekend as together Mack and the three Persons of the Trinity share food, conversation, worship and relationship.

#### **Tell me more:**

Personally I struggled with the opening chapters which are full of Americanisms; but persevere – you'll be gripped by chapter three!

Website: [www.TheShackBook.com](http://www.TheShackBook.com)

*Cathy Turton*

## **'Other Houses' Gathering**

The emergence of 'Other Houses' is an exciting development within the Community – and next year we will be exploring further the development and implications of these initiatives for the Community and its work.

In January, several people involved in these 'Other Houses' are meeting at Bridge House, Shillingford to share, pray and discern ways forward. Watch for news in the next edition of Caim!

*Friend in Community Colin Patterson (he's in the centre of the picture over there) is an Anglican priest who works for the London Mennonite Trust as Assistant Director of Bridge Builders. We asked him to tell us about his work there:*

## Building (Metaphorical) Bridges

**Imagine a large old house with guest rooms, a cheery kitchen, and hosts who are used to welcoming visitors. It has a big garden where there's a prayer hut, a library of Christian books, a chapel, and an office run by patient saints.**

**There's a mail-order book-selling service, devoted to titles with particular themes.** And it's in..... Highgate, London. I've been describing the London Mennonite Centre (LMC). And now perhaps you're reaching for your dictionary, or Googling, to find out what a Mennonite is. Visit [www.menno.org.uk](http://www.menno.org.uk) or do the old-fashioned thing and read on.

Mennonite Christians are spread all over the world but are probably best known in the United States. As far as I know, there are not many card-carrying Mennonites in the UK. That's because the missionaries who founded the LMC in the 1950's weren't looking to set up yet another denomination. Instead, they wanted to share certain ways of thinking and acting with UK Christians in general. (Again, sounds like Northumbria Community?) The Centre exists to promote radical discipleship, and in particular the historic Mennonite commitment to loving one's enemies, whatever. Important watchwords are peace, justice, service, community, simplicity and reconciliation.



Isn't it interesting how God puts you in touch with the right people at the right time? Fifteen years ago, when I needed my heart warmed, someone arranged for me to visit Nether Springs. I began a scary new journey of

availability and vulnerability. I found a ministry helping people to discover their gifts and use them for the kingdom of God. Then I found myself stumped to know what to do if those people fell out with one another. Someone said, "You need the Mennonites." I discovered that the LMC was running training courses as part of their "Bridge Builders" programme, and I signed up. An important moment. I realised that I couldn't be a peacemaker if I hid inside my

shell whenever I saw confrontation coming. It set me on a journey that led to embracing my father in a special way just before he died, and touching my heavenly Father in a new way.



And now I'm the northern field worker for Bridge Builders. With three staff members and a nationwide

network of associates, we aim to bring about a transformation in the way churches handle conflict. Let's face it – Christians haven't got a brilliant reputation for dealing well with disagreement. It's a fact that very few ministers of my generation were given any training in handling conflict while they were at college. I'm glad to have a hand in offering it to them now.

As Christians, when we get into dispute with one another, we're often embarrassed and try to sweep it under the carpet. Surely prayer should be able to sort it out? Somehow, asking for help seems like an admission of failure. Actually, I think it's a sign of maturity. When we're at the end of our own resources, we need to admit it. The more things are getting tense, the more we need to think in terms of carrying one another's burdens. That's why Bridge Builders also offers a church mediation service. We've helped to repair broken relationships in leadership teams, between ministers and lay leaders, and within divided congregations. My only regret is that often it's left very late before anyone thinks of inviting in an impartial third party. I'm convinced that most of the cases that result in church splits or court action would never have got so acrimonious if some form of mediation had been tried early enough.

When I tell fellow-Christians that I work in "conflict transformation", they quite often say, "That sounds really important – but I don't know how you can do it." They guess, rightly, that sometimes I'm walking into a minefield. It would be easy to get disheartened or crushed. But peace-making is in one sense just like evangelism. Only God can transform people's hearts, yet he chooses to do it through the intervention of weak and fearful human beings. And although I often feel up against a brick wall, it's amazing what the Spirit can do to nudge people into pulling the wall down.

I'd be glad if you would support the work of Bridge Builders by your prayers. Contact [colin.patterson@menno.org.uk](mailto:colin.patterson@menno.org.uk) if you'd like to know more. And if you want to support us by regular giving, it would help us to be sure of continuing this ministry. *Colin Patterson*



*A picture of the group who gathered for a musical day in Notts recently. The story is on pg 7, but we couldn't fit this there!*



### The Cuddy Duck

[www.thecuddyduck.co.uk](http://www.thecuddyduck.co.uk)

The Cuddy Duck shop will close on December 20th - but you can still buy online! We would greatly value your prayers as we discern the way forward for The Cuddy Duck.



## The newsy bit



*We bring sad news of the passing of two Community friends*

### David Senior

David was bought up in a Christian family worshipping at the Salvation Army.

He first met his wife Mary whilst working in Zambia at the hospital where she was a ward sister. They were married in 1968 and together they have lived and worked in South Africa and the Shetland Islands as well as various towns in England, where they gave devoted service through the Salvation Army.

They first heard of Northumbria Community through the website and attended a retreat at Hetton in the spring of 2000, the same year that David retired. This was the start of a growing relationship and they became companions in 2006.

In January 2007 David was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease. He was peacefully 'Promoted to Glory' on the night of Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> November 2008.

**Sam Embleton** died in the early hours of Monday 1st December after a long battle with cancer. She visited Hetton Hall many times over the years, her final visit being at Easter Workshop this year. She was determined to take part in the Stations of the Cross and did so, reading part of the liturgy and even carrying the cross for a little way. She not only completed the walk to Cuthbert's Cave but battled on to reach the cairn overlooking the coast. She will be remembered for that determination, along with her lovely deep blues/jazz voice and an indomitable spirit. She made several friends, whom she never met, in the Community Forum, and they grieve for her at this time. She would sign off all her posts there with the same phrase: 'Bright Blessings'. And to you, Sam.



**Joanna Hay** has become engaged to **Ian Dobson**. But we don't have a photo! We send congratulations nonetheless...

**Sue Hall** has become engaged to **Mike Heimbecker** from Canada.



**Trevor and Freda Miller** have a sixth grandchild, **Murray Arran Miller** born to Jonny and Carolyn on 18th October.

**Anne and John Burton** are happy to be grandparents again, **Emma Lucy** was born to their daughter in Australia on 5th November.



There have been several changes on the monastic team recently. **Andy, Ange and Daniel Foster** have left the team and are living in Middleton (north of Belford). There were three arrivals in October all for a period of six months: **Annelies Barth** (from Holland), and **Gayle and Shelby Evers** (from Texas).

**Pete and Catherine Askew** and **Andy Raine** are flying out to the States at the end of December for a meeting with Shane Claiborne. 'Bondservant' are working with Shane and the New Monastic Network in the States, to publish a Daily Office. We have been asked to advise, contribute and help with the publication.

The library at Hetton Hall received expert loving attention this summer, and is now much more user friendly. Please would you check your bookshelves in case a stray is loitering there – recognisable by the little label at the base of the spine which has an alpha-numeric code. Thank you!

There is to be a **Community Gathering at Wye** in Kent on Saturday February 28th. Further details will be available via the website and the office in the new year, but for now - add it to your diary!

Welcome to new Community Companions  
**Roger and Caroline Taylor**

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