



# Touching Place Touching Place

Issue No. 14, May 2008

Keeping Christian Communities in touch.

**W**elcome back to the latest edition of *Touching Place*. It seems that summer is here at last. The gardens are beginning to bloom and everything is so green after all the rain of the past few weeks. Our vegetable garden is looking promising after an early start with many crops under glass and our new Easter lambs are thriving.

This year is the 50th anniversary of the Pilsdon Communities so our focus this time is on Pilsdon, how it came about and where it is today.

Please continue to send us news and information about your communities and the events you have planned. If you would like your community to be the focus of a future edition please send us a short article of around 600 - 700 words. Our email and postal addresses are below.

Donations to cover the cost of producing this newsletter are welcome. Please make cheques payable to 'Pilsdon at Malling' and write 'Touching Place' on the back. If you are a UK tax payer we can reclaim the tax paid on any donations made under the Gift Aid scheme if you send your name and address with your donation, stating that you wish it to be Gift Aided.

*Roberta and Pam, editors.*

## Community Focus

### The Pilsdon Communities in Dorset & Kent

In October 1958 the Revd Percy and Gaynor Smith bought Pilsdon Manor near Bridport in Dorset with the dream of building a community based on the principles of Little Gidding, a 17th century community in Huntingdonshire and the home of Nicholas Ferrar, his mother, sister, brother and their families. Nicholas' vision was to live, work and worship in a small community and serve all who came to it. The household soon numbered thirty or more of all ages, some stayed, some moved on only to be replaced by more who were in need of refreshment in body, mind or spirit.

Percy and Gaynor's dream has come to much more than fruition. For 50 years the Pilsdon communities have been offering refuge to people in crisis from all walks of life: rich

and poor, young and old. Some are seeking a respite from the stresses of their everyday lives, others are working through depression, alcoholism, addiction, divorce or bereavement. Wayfarers, seeking a rest on their journey are also welcome at our door. To all we offer friendship and hospitality as well as traditional Christian charity.

In 2004 the Benedictine Community of nuns at St Mary's Abbey, West Malling in Kent invited the Revd Peter Barnett, then Warden of Pilsdon in Dorset, to set up a similar community on the site of the former Cistercian Monastery in the grounds of the Abbey. And so, in September 2004, the Pilsdon at Malling Community opened its doors.

Pilsdon is a working community and everyone staying with us, according to their ability, works. They either help with the daily household chores, preparing food for the community or helping to maintain the buildings, gardens and farm.

Although the size of the community fluctuates, there are generally about 20-25 people at Pilsdon at Malling at any one time. Eight of these are Community Members (two part-time) and their families all of whom take responsibility for running the place on a voluntary basis for between one and ten years. We usually have 11-12 Guests who may stay for just a few weeks or up to several years. Wayfarers are also accommodated for one to three nights. We have volunteers and visitors who come on a daily basis. Many visitors are drawn back following one of our events, such as the Open Gardens Weekend in June or the Craft Fair in August.

Both Pilsdons aim to provide a therapeutic environment of communal living, manual work, recreation, creative opportunities, worship and pastoral care. Our life is inspired by a modern and liberated monasticism with families. Our worship and spirituality is at heart Anglican but people of any faith or none, and of any race or culture are made welcome.

Pilsdon at Malling and Pilsdon in Dorset, though set in completely different environments - Pilsdon Manor is in the heart of the countryside, far from anywhere, Pilsdon at Malling is in the centre of the small town of West Malling - are both peaceful, calm and reflective places of warmth and friendship providing mental and emotional separation from the pressures of everyday life. Here people are helped to be healed, rebuild their lives and look forward to a brighter future.

Both communities continue to thrive, grow and evolve under the guardianship of the Revd Jonathan Herbert in Dorset and the Revd Peter Barnett in Kent.

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# Events



## Ashram Community Week on Iona Saturday to Friday, 9-15 August "Christian Community in the 21st Century"

is a family holiday week in the Abbey Centre on Iona led by the Ashram Community with John and Grace Vincent and Eurig Scandrett. Members of other Communities and searchers are most welcome. An Iona Community week offers an experience of life in community, in which Residents and Volunteer staff work and worship together with Guests, forming a complex, creative community.

**Details and Documentation from Ashram Community Office or Iona. Please email**  
ashramcommunity@hotmail.com

**greenbelt**\_festival®

## Christian Ecology Link

### Friday to Monday, 22-25 August Greenbelt

If you've ever been to the Greenbelt festival before you'll already been looking forward to it. CEL is booking a stall as usual. Are you planning to go, and would you be able to spend a couple of hours on the stall sometime during the four days? It's a good way of meeting other CEL members. If you are interested, please let me know, without any commitment at all at this stage. **Please email Paul**

**Bodenham** paul@christian-ecology.org.uk

## The Guy Chester Centre



### Saturday 17 May

10am – 4pm Suggested donation: £25

#### Quiet Day - Finding God in Nature's Rhythms

A day reflecting on God waiting to be found in the changing seasons of nature and life, using the grounds and gardens of the estate led by Peggy Heron, a regular visitor to the Centre.

### Saturday 14 June

10am-4pm Suggested donation: £25

#### Quiet Day – Stop! In the name of God

This is part of a series of events happening up and down the country as people stop their usual activities and seek God at different time and places.. A quiet day suitable for beginners and regulars led by Morfa Jones of the Centre Team

**For more information on any of these events, or the work of the Guy Chester Centre please contact a member of the team here in the Programme Office on 020 8883 8204, email**  
admin@chestercentre.org.uk **or take a look at our website** www.chestercentre.org.uk

## A reminder about environment Sunday

Environment Sunday is Sunday 8th June.

Plan an event or article now and get it in your parish magazine!!!

A Rocha material for Environment Sunday -

<http://en.arocha.org/ukconsunday/index11.html>

\* Invite a naturalist from your local natural history society to lead a walk - flowers - snails- birds-

\* See past activities of the SAGE

group at Oxford.

[www.sageoxford.org.uk/envsun.htm](http://www.sageoxford.org.uk/envsun.htm)



## Silence in the City

a series of contemplative talks on silent prayer and contemplative living in the modern world

### Saturday 7 June

10am-4pm Suggested donation: £20

#### The Silence of Tenderness

Led by Jean Vanier, founder of the L'arche Communities.

Refreshments provided, but please bring a packed lunch.

### Saturday 25 October

10am-4pm Suggested donation £20

#### Thomas Merton and the camera as a tool for contemplation

Led by Esther de Waal

Refreshments provided, but please bring a packed lunch.

All events are Westminster Cathedral Hall, Ambrosden Avenue, London SW1

**For more details and to book please visit**

[www.silenceinthecity.org.uk/](http://www.silenceinthecity.org.uk/) **or email**

[info@silenceinthecity.org.uk](mailto:info@silenceinthecity.org.uk)

## ABBHEY HOUSE GLASTONBURY DIOCESE OF BATH AND WELLS RETREAT HOUSE

## Abbey House, Glastonbury

### Quiet Days

A chance for you to set aside some space to be with God.

### Friday 9 May

Led by Preb. Stephen Lynas

### Monday 14 July

Led by Revd. Jane Eastell

### Monday 22 September

Revd. Joan Rowe

### Thursday 9 October

#### Hear Our Silence

Led by John and Judith Skinner

# Events cont'd.

## Friday 10 October

Led by Revd. Robin Lodge

## Monday 24 November

Led by Revd. Robin Lodge

All days run from: 10am-4pm

Fees: £17.00 with coffee, lunch and tea and cake,  
£8.50 with coffee and tea and cake

**For further information or for longer retreats please contact** [info@abbeyhouse.org](mailto:info@abbeyhouse.org) **or write to** Abbey House, Chilkwell Street, Glastonbury, Somerset, BA6 8DH **or phone** 01458 831112 **or visit** [www.abbeyhouse.org](http://www.abbeyhouse.org)



### Accommodation Offered – Vauxhall

#### *A still place in the heart of London*

**St. Peter's Community, Vauxhall** is an urban, contemplative, mixed lay Christian community in the vibrant and inclusive North Lambeth Parish. We have 4 rooms available in this continuously-forming community of people living out a simple rule of life in work, shared prayer and discovery.

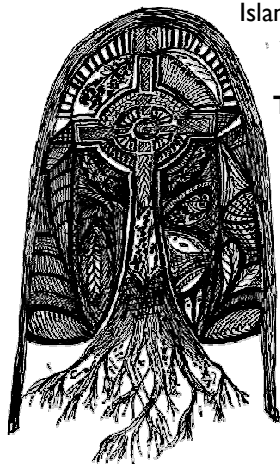
**For more information, contact: Revd. Alison Kennedy** 020 7820 9445 **or email** [alison\\_m\\_kennedy@hotmail.com](mailto:alison_m_kennedy@hotmail.com)

### Thinking about a retreat?

Retreats with the Community of Aidan and St Hilda  
The Community of Aidan and Hilda conducts retreats, workshops and seminars throughout the UK as well as internationally and in its main retreat house, The Open Gate on the Holy Island of Lindisfarne.

**Our Aim** is, to allow people to reconnect with God, especially through scripture, creation and Celtic Christian spirituality. Apart from residential retreats, the Community also organises short one day events, which may be based on Holy Island or at one of our regional centres.

**Going on retreat** can mean many different things to different people. There are retreats that are highly contemplative, possibly even silent, but there are also many which deal with different approaches to Christian life and prayer, and others that involve activities such as painting and nature study alongside a traditional spiritual element. The Community of Aidan and Hilda offers a range of retreats across this spectrum. Residential retreats on Holy Island can fill up quickly, so it is a good idea to apply earlier rather than later!



**To book a retreat based on Holy Island, please write a letter or email to the warden/s of the Open Gate.** You do *not* usually have to be a member of the Community to go on one of our retreats: The Warden, The Open Gate, Marygate, Holy Island, Berwick-upon-Tweed, TD15 2SD **or email** [opengate@aidanandhilda.demon.co.uk](mailto:opengate@aidanandhilda.demon.co.uk) **or phone** 01289-389222



## The Othona Community

### Friday to Sunday 6-8 June

Training Weekend for the Helpers Team  
Working rates apply (Half normal rates)

The success of the Othona Community has always depended on the generous volunteering of its members. Might you be willing to join our helpers' team for a week in the summer? If so, this is your opportunity to learn more about the helpers' team and to discover which role you are suited for! The mysteries of tasks such as organising chapel rotas, compiling duty lists, facilitating entertainment, and hosting community time (weekly warden) will be revealed to you! You will also learn more about our community buildings and grounds and may even be allowed to set off the fire alarm!

### Thursday to Sunday 3-6 July

Pilgrimage Weekend

Lunch: £6

The 2008 ecumenical pilgrimage to the chapel of St Peter-on-the-Wall, Bradwell, will take place on Saturday 5th July. The theme of this year's pilgrimage is water. There will be opportunities to view presentations from a number of water and ecological organisations. You will also be able to participate in a renewal of baptism service on the beach. The Pilgrimage weekend offers a great opportunity to greet visitors to the chapel - Christians from Essex, London and further afield - and for the Community to show hospitality and make new friends. Working rates will apply to those who join the helpers' team for the day on Saturday 5th July. If you want to have lunch at Othona this must be booked in advance via the Othona Bradwell office. **For more information on the pilgrimage see** [www.bradwellchapel.org](http://www.bradwellchapel.org)

### Sunday to Saturday 27 July-2 August

*God on the Edge: Exploring Chaplaincy in Challenging Situations*

During the week chaplains working in different areas in our society will talk about what brought them into chaplaincy and why they continue with work which is often demanding and personally costly.

Our speakers will lead discussions and workshops focusing on the following questions:

- " Who is this **God on the Edge** and what does the chaplaincy model have to teach us all about prayer and about caring for one another?
- " How do chaplains relate to institutional churches and do they feel understood by their church congregations?
- " How do chaplains explain their work to others and how do they pray?
- " What theological ideas have chaplains found helpful to them in their work and what can the rest of the church/world learn from the chaplaincy model?
- " How do chaplains work with those of different faiths and none?
- " How can we learn how to minister to each other and

## Events cont'd.

what is our responsibility to those around us?

**For more information on these or other events please visit** <http://www.bos.othona.org> **or email** [bradwell@othona.org](mailto:bradwell@othona.org) **or write to** The Othona Community, East Hall Farm, East End Road, Bradwell-on-Sea, Southminster, Essex, CM0 7PN **or phone** 01621 776564



### The Friars, Aylesford

**Saturday 21 June**  
Salvation Army Band Concert  
7pm-9.30pm

Piazza

**Saturday 22 June**  
Summer Fayre

11am - 4.30pm, Mass 5pm

Mediaeval Extravaganza with Robin Hood and his Merry Men, family entertainment and Craft Fair

**Friday - Sunday 27-29 June**  
Potters' Fayre

**For more information on these events or for other events please visit** [www.thefriars.org.uk](http://www.thefriars.org.uk) **or email** [enquiry@thefriars.org.uk](mailto:enquiry@thefriars.org.uk) **or write to** The Friars, Aylesford, Kent, ME20 7BX **or phone** 01622 717272

### Boarbank Hall, Cumbria

**19-25 July**

Thinking Faith

Fees: £225 Students £185

A week for younger Catholics – a mixture of talks and discussion, shared and private prayer, and holiday.

*An opportunity for Catholics aged 35 and under:*

- \* To make like-minded friends
- \* To enjoy a holiday together in beautiful surroundings
- \* To think seriously about their faith
- \* To pray and reflect
- \* to share some of the life of a religious community

*A series of talks and discussions on subjects including:*

- \* Science and ethics
- \* Faith and society



- \* Religion, film and literature
- \* The New Testament
- Trips and other activities in beautiful surroundings:*
- \* Two full afternoon expeditions
- \* Free time each day
- \* Films and socialising in the evenings

*Prayer and liturgy:*

- \* Daily Mass
- \* Morning, Evening and Night Prayer from the Prayer of the Church
- \* Opportunities for quiet reflection

### September

#### Thinking Scripture

A week for anyone interested in exploring the Gospel from a Catholic perspective - a mixture of talks and discussion, shared and private prayer, and holiday.

**For application forms or further information, please contact:** Sr Margaret Atkins, Boarbank Hall, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 7NH **or email** [margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk](mailto:margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk) **or visit** [www.boarbankhall.org.uk/](http://www.boarbankhall.org.uk/)

## Places

### Ferrar House Little Gidding, near Huntingdon

For personal retreats or group events

Set in beautiful Cambridgeshire countryside, this retreat house offers warm hospitality to all visitors, whether you need some space on your own or a venue for a group event.

Ferrar House is next door to Little Gidding Church, which was restored by Nicholas Ferrar in the 1620s. The place has a fascinating history, with connections with George Herbert and T.S. Eliot.

Facilities include a comfortable lounge / meeting room for up to 30 people.

Delicious homemade meals.

Come for the day or a longer visit.

**For further details please contact** Tony and Judith Hodgson **on** 01832 293383 **or write to** Ferrar House, Little Gidding, Huntingdon, PE28 5RJ **or email** [info@ferrarhouse.co.uk](mailto:info@ferrarhouse.co.uk) **or visit** [www.ferrarhouse.co.uk](http://www.ferrarhouse.co.uk)