



Touching Place Touching Place

Issue No. 19 September 2009

Keeping Christian Communities in touch.

Welcome to edition 19 of *Touching Place*. Pilsdon has had a good summer. Our vegetable garden is bursting with wonderful produce, we've enjoyed masses of strawberries and blackberries, we've made mountains of plum jam and bottled plums and now the apples are ready.

On 12 and 13 September Pilsdon will be welcoming visitors for the national Heritage Weekend including an evening of classical music on the Saturday at 7.30pm in aid of the Malling Lions. On October 10 there will be a Charity Gala Concert in our Barn Chapel in aid of Spadework Nursery and Pilsdon.

Please keep your letters and email coming - we welcome all contributions.

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. Please send your name and address with your donation, stating that you wish it to be Gift Aided.

Roberta and Pam, editors.

Community Focus

Craig Lodge Community, Argyll, Scotland

Craig Lodge Community is a group of people who have decided to walk the path of holiness together in response to Our Lady's invitation at Medjugorje - to be her heart in the world.

In 1983 a family from the Highlands of Scotland visited Medjugorje in Bosnia. They went because they had heard that Mary, the Virgin Mother of God, was appearing to a group of children. Their visit affected their lives in many ways. On their return they decided to turn their guest house into a house of prayer - a retreat centre. Craig Lodge Family House of Prayer began to take shape. Very soon a group of young people inspired by the messages of Our Lady Queen of Peace formed a community at Craig Lodge. Over the next 10 years several young people came and devoted a year to living out Our Lady's call to holiness through prayer, fasting and service. Today, Craig Lodge Community is made up of families as well as single people. The same desire unites us: to journey along the road to holiness together by listening to Our Lady and doing our best to put her messages into practice.

We live in, or near, Craig Lodge Family House of Prayer where we minister to those who come to stay with us. We organise retreats and often pray with our guests. Much of our time is also taken up cooking, washing dishes and making visitors feel at home - binding up wounds and

healing the broken-hearted.

Single people joining the community live together in Craig Lodge House of Prayer. They commit for one year to live a life of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Young people are especially welcome to come and experience living community. We run a programme of youth retreats including a festival in the summer.

Our daily prayer - the most important part of our community life - includes prayer of the church, rosary, adoration, reading of scripture and daily Mass or Eucharistic service. We also praise the Lord in our charismatic prayer group.

The families who live in their own houses pray with their families at home but also meet often to pray with the



whole community. We also have a children's prayer group.

During the war in Bosnia the suffering of refugees in or near Medjugorje could not be ignored. Craig Lodge Community

responded by collecting and delivering aid to Medjugorje. This was intended to be a one-off delivery but the scale of the suffering and the level of response to our appeal at home gave rise to further deliveries. Before long an overseas aid charity, Scottish International Relief (SIR), was set up. The community is continually blessed by the privilege of being able to reach out to the poorest of the poor around the world through helping in the work of SIR. Recently the growth of the Mary's Meals campaign, a work placed under the patronage of Our Lady, has brought even more blessings to us all.

Craig Lodge Community is now poised to take a new step, establishing an outreach community in Medjugorje itself where they will work in a café/information point to share the good news about Mary's Meals. There is a sense of homecoming about this move as we return to the place where it all began. Praise God!

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Events



Guy Chester Centre, Muswell Hill Quiet Day – Prayer in Everyday Life

Saturday September 26th

10am – 4pm

Donations accepted - Suggested cost £25

God is with us every minute of the day – not just on Sundays. Come and explore how you might develop your prayer life as a deepening friendship with God, which is available to us throughout the busiest of days.

Leader: Carol Foster, a London commuter for many years, who knows how difficult it can be to fit prayer into your life while trying to juggle a busy home and work schedule. Carol is a regular visitor to the Centre and a prayer companion on the Week of Accompanied Prayer and assistant editor of the College of Preachers' journal.

Toolbox for Life & Church:

Managing staff teams

Saturday September 26th

10am – 4pm

£60

Acquire new skills in motivation, communication and organisation to feel more confident about managing a team, planning workloads and overseeing performance. Ideal for ministers, senior lay leaders and those managing staff teams within a church context

Leader: Ann Marie Wilson is a psychologist and training consultant who has spent many years helping individuals, teams and organisations. She is a member of St Barnabas Church, Finchley and sits on the boards of Medair, Interhealth Worldwide and People in Aid.

Toolbox for Life & Church:

Listening well - communication skills for all aspects of life

Friday October 2nd

10am – 4pm

£50 10% discount for groups of 3 or more

Develop your listening skills so you can really 'hear' what is being said. Help other people more effectively and learn to take care of yourself too.

A stand alone day or as part of a series with Saturday October 3rd.

Leader: Liz Gamble is a self-employed counsellor, tutor and trainer, working in private practice and for a number of charitable organisations. She has a Diploma in psychodynamic counselling and an MSc in therapeutic counselling from an integrative perspective. She is now studying Christian spirituality at Sarum College in Salisbury and is particularly interested in the interface between counselling and pastoral care, which informs her work at the Guy Chester Centre.

Toolbox for Life & Church:

Communication skills for pastoral care

Saturday October 3rd

10am – 4pm

£50 10% discount for groups of 3 or more

Develop your listening skills in a wider context including setting up and training pastoral teams within your church community.

A stand alone day or as part of a series with Friday October 2nd.

Leader: Liz Gamble

For more information on these events, or the work of the Guy Chester Centre please contact them on

Wales in September !

There are still 2-3 places left on this *Pilgrim Adventure* trip to the Tywi valley on 7-12 Sept

Pilgrim Adventure is a small, non-profit-making, ecumenical organisation which takes groups of about 4-12 people on holiday in an informal Christian ambience to the more off- the-beaten-track parts of Britain and Ireland.

Its origins lie in Celtic spirituality.

We share the journey - share the meal.
We seek for God at the edges - and find Him
at our Centre

Phone 01834 844212 for further details.

For immediate info go to
www.pilgrim-adventure.org.uk



Events cont'd.



020 8883 8204,
email
admin@chestercentre.org.uk

Christian Ecology Link | Two different CEL events explore the theme of transition. A day conference in Ottery St Mary, Devon has a packed day of well-known speakers and workshops. A weekend away in Scarborough, North Yorkshire gives space to explore how our faith connects with ideas of transition.

Event 1: Transition Towns Getting Involved

Saturday 7 November 2009

11am to 5pm.

(CEL's Annual Members' Meeting takes place at 10am, same venue, same day.)

CEL national day conference with talks from Tim Gorringer, Ben Brangwyn, Martyn Goss and Sarah Drew and workshops led by Sustainable Ottery. At Ottery St Mary Parish Church, Ottery St Mary, Devon. A bus will run from Honiton railway station

to Ottery St Mary church and back to Honiton at the end of the day.

£15 (£10 if booked a month before) lunch included.

Booking form and more information at
www.christian-ecology.org.uk/conf2009.htm

Event 2: On the Verge of Chaos: Transitional Living in a Time of Collapse

12-14 February, 2010.

CEL weekend away with talks from Rev Sam Norton and CEL members involved in transition towns. At Green Gables, Scarborough, North Yorkshire.

£120 (£104 early bird price if booked before 31 October).

Booking form and more information at
www.christian-ecology.org.uk/scarborough-2010.htm

Living Gladly: Women of Faith and Today's World

23 -25 October

A weekend looking at the teachings of St Clare, Hildegard of Bingen and Julian of Norwich with Sister

Helen Julian CSF. The weekend will include a recreation of the life of Julian of Norwich by Polly March in St Francis Chapel.

Sister Helen Julian joined CSF in 1985 and has lived as a sister in Somerset and London. She has written 3 books for BRF and contributes regularly to *New Daylight*. Polly March is an experienced professional actress and director, known and respected for her work within the Christian arts.

Jesus, Climate and Earth: Inclusive Discipleship

13 - 15 November

Re-visit, from the Hilfield perspective, our context in which people have brought the earth to a state that may be terminal. We investigate the ancient Jewish ethos of human connections with land and food security, we look at Jesus' own relationship with the earth and look at the work at Hilfield and surrounding areas. The weekend will be led by Dr Edward Echlin, an eco-theologian and Honorary Research Fellow at Trinity and All Saints, Leeds and at Sarum, Salisbury.

For more information on both weekends email
hilfieldproject@franciscans.org.uk

The Friary of St Francis, Hilfield, Dorchester DT2 7BE (tel. 01300 341741) The suggested donation for either weekend is £85-100 per person for full board.
www.hilfieldproject@franciscans.org.uk



The Abbey
Sutton Courtenay

Spiritual Experience

with John Osborn

Thursday 15 October

7.30 - 9.30pm

Suggested donation £5 -£10

John will introduce some accounts of spiritual experiences, both contemporary and from earlier times, using some poetry and music as well as narrative. He will then briefly discuss the relationship of such experiences to mysticism, inviting the audience to share their own experiences - and together consider their wider significance for us in life.

John is a retired Anglican priest, a member of the Abbey Council and a former Chair of the Alister Hardy Society, which supports the Religious Experience Research Centre at the University of Wales, Lampeter. He has himself studied Religious/Spiritual Experience at Lampeter, but the evening aims to be participatory rather than academic.

Email admin@theabbey.uk.com or telephone 01235 847401 between 9.30 am and 2.00 pm.

New Publications



ASHRAM - RADICAL CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

I have been on the receiving end of John Vincent's many writings since the 1970s, when the Ashram Communities experiment began and the Urban Theology Unit in Sheffield was guiding the priorities of my ministry (and many others) as a curate in the inner city of Wolverhampton.

John has a great skill of compiling and editing the fruits of consultations, meetings and conferences and his latest production "A Lifestyle of Sharing" is a compilation of the experiences of the "Ashram Communities" from the late 1960s to the present. The Ashram Community was fundamentally a means of enabling people who wanted to express a radical Christian Discipleship, but could not find the means of doing that in the usual church contexts. From the early years the Ashrams were ecumenical, but with John's Methodist credentials and contacts (he became President of the Methodist Conference during this period) the majority of participants were from a Methodist background.

These Ashram Communities never became very large, but gave small groups opportunity to explore theology and its practical implications in gathered events, residential communities, and street projects. The working out of a radical biblical theology into the issues of daily living and how to be Jesus' disciples today both in our individual lifestyle but more particularly in a communal lifestyle is the main thrust of this book and of Ashram Community living. (St Mark's Gospel, which John regards as a manual for discipleship, is a primary source - "In Mark: Gospel of Action, Discipleship and Gospel Practice clearly go together" - p.39)

For those of us that live in residential, vowed or intentional communities, often in rural or suburban settings, there is much we can learn from this urban Christian experiment in community life. It is important for us to be reminded of the practical implications and priorities of radical discipleship. We must not underestimate the prophetic role our community living has for today's western society as we seek more sustainable, greener and simpler lifestyles. Every Community and Retreat House ought to have this book on their shelves.

A Lifestyle of Sharing by John Vincent.
Ashram Press, 178 Abbeyfield Road, Sheffield S4 7AY.
ISBN: 978-0-9559073-1-9 £10.00



Follow Me:

A History of Christian Intentionality

Follow Me tells the story of the development of a global religion. It shows in a straight forward manner how the faith of Jesus' henchmen grew deeper and how the first religious communities were established.

Ivan J. Kauffman presents "... a history of all the movements which over the past two millennia have sought to follow Christ with complete intentionality."

You can find further information on this title at the following address:

<http://www.lutterworth.com/lp/titles/followme.htm>

Places



St Oswald's Pastoral Centre is a small complex of buildings set in the beautiful surroundings of the North Yorkshire Moors, between the villages of Sleights and Aislaby, near Whitby. The Centre is run by the Anglican Order of the Holy Paraclete and several Sisters live at the Centre. The purpose of the Centre is to offer private and conducted retreats, as well as quiet times for rest or study. The Sisters welcome small groups or individuals and are available if anyone needs a listening ear.

Large gardens and natural woodland offer beautiful views and create the perfect setting for walking, painting or just relaxing. Facilities at the Centre include a Chapel, three Common Rooms, a well stocked library and an art/craft room. Main meals are home-cooked. Guests also have the use of kitchens for making hot drinks and snacks. The bedrooms are heated and have hot and cold water. There are ten single and three twin rooms in the Centre which comprises: the main house, Hillside Cottage and Cuthbert Lodge. Self-catering accommodation is also available.

As a Registered Charity, the Centre does not ask for a set fee to cover the cost of a stay at St. Oswald's but invites donations to support the work. British taxpayers are invited to use Gift Aid for their donations.



St Oswald's Pastoral Centre,
Sleights, near Whitby, North
Yorkshire; Tel: 01947 810496

www.stoswaldspastoralcentre.co.uk