

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

Newsletter

No. 40—Christmas 2014

LETTER FROM THE LENKER

The annual meeting in Edinburgh was a great success, as the reflections in this issue show. It gave another opportunity to notice what can happen when we come together from our different communities, which is not just to do with outer numbers. In our congregations we can experience that our individual destinies join together and we become a part of whole which is far greater than the sum of its parts. This is the sign that our angels are joining together and becoming a channel for the work of a higher angelic being. For moments during in the annual meeting, it was possible to have an inkling of what happens when a group of such beings comes together and becomes the vessel for a higher archangelic being, the being who is at work in all that we do in our Region.

Our age is the culmination of a gradual process through which human beings were thrown back ever more on their own resources and lost the immediate perception of the help and guidance of spiritual beings. Often, we think of this journey only from our own perspective, as if such a change had no effect on the angelic beings themselves. However, we can also imagine that these beings wait with longing for the new communities, in which human beings decide in freedom to create a vessel where they can be at work. This is one of the primary tasks of our community.

Summary of sale of Glenilla Road church and allocation of funds

As has been announced in previous newsletters, the church in north London was put on the market earlier this year. It was eventually sold for £2.5 million. The trustees of both trusts (The Christian Community in Great Britain and The Christian Community in London Ltd) mandated a group to decide jointly how this capital would best be used to further the development of our Community in Great Britain and Ireland. The following is an excerpt from a report by Christian Maclean.

Following several meetings between representatives of The Christian Community in London Trust and The Christian Community in Great Britain Trust following was agreed:

The net amount received for sale of the church site in Glenilla Road was £2,420,000.

The Christian Community in London is retaining £600,000 for essential renovations to the building and for additional chalet accommodation in the garden. This will enable it to better serve as a conference/meeting centre for The Christian Community as well as increasing income at other times to support its work. We hope that with time it will be possible to employ a professional manager for the bed and breakfast. The Trustees of The Christian Community in London hope that any profits from the bed and breakfast can come to the good of projects beyond the London borders

Additionally London agreed to make a gift of £100,000 for international work with 60% going to the Foundation The Christian Community (International) and 40% to the new Christian Community chapel being built in Colmar, France. The latter is a gesture to help internationally where it is urgently needed, just as we received help in funding the chapel in Canterbury from Holland and Switzerland.

The balance of £1,720,000 is being made as a gift to The Christian Community in Great Britain. This amount is earmarked as follows: £1,000,000 towards the new church in Stroud; £460,000 to replenish the internal funds from which it had borrowed in the last few years (Priest Retirement Support, Priest Training Fund, etc); and £260,000 for future needs (development grants, new priests' housing).

Tom Ravetz

REFLECTIONS OF EDINBURGH NATIONAL COMMUNITY MEETING 17–19 OCTOBER 2014

All those attending this year's Annual Community Meeting in Edinburgh were asked to contribute a personal response to the weekend. The following are as they were received, in no particular order, but they do seem to capture something of what was a successful and inspiring meeting.

It might have been simply that I paid more attention this year than usual, but it seems to me that something special took place during this meeting, so that I got the impression that the group gave a form to the inspiration we were carrying over the weekend. In the Open Session at the end, the contributions made by those who spoke were clearly focused on our subject and I felt the whole meeting's activities resounded during that session.

Jennifer Groves

AN AFTER-IMAGE

The whole weekend has now a dream-like quality. One of the "living dreams" that changes the dreamer; one of those dreams that returns time and again dur-

ing waking hours, escaping and then returning in fragments; fragments that cause one to TRY to recapture the whole dream.

There was a rainbow over our field this morning. I will never think of rainbows in the same old way. I will probably never enter one of our church buildings again without thinking of a rainbow.

I ate some bread for lunch yesterday—delicious and nourishing bread I had made myself. It dawned on me that I might never be able to think of bread or the juice of grapes again, without thinking of the vast difference between my own bread and the consecrated Bread and Wine of Holy Communion, and the thought that by thinking these thoughts I somehow change my own bread!

I ponder the time-span of our divine gifts of willing, feeling, and thinking, in a way that has never before occurred to me. I ponder the old traditions, and how they have been transformed by world events, and what chaos has ensued, and hope that true Christians might have sufficient power to pass through chaos until a new order is formed.

Hilary Groves

I had been seriously considering whether the effort and expense of attending the Annual Meetings of The Christian Community were still worthwhile for me. Through my increasing deafness I had missed so much of the content of the talks and discussions at the last few meetings; and, my ability to hear conversations and to understand instructions for artistic sessions was so limited that there was very little other than an acute sense of mortification and a stiff neck that I retained for ongoing contemplation after the meeting.

The Meeting in Edinburgh last weekend was outstanding in many ways, and one of the most blessed ways was the care taken by the organisers and speakers to minimise the problems of the hard-of-hearing group! Most people remembered to ensure that we were able to participate in everything!

So the Annual Meeting in Edinburgh was the first time in many years that I heard every word, and now, back at home, I am able to remember, and can reflect upon the meeting and take into myself, as my own, so much of what was new and inspiring. What a most wonderful weekend that was!

*(Name supplied but
the author wishes to remain anonymous)*

At the end of our Community Meeting I felt blessed. There was such a sense of openness and presence throughout.

I knew that we had come away without a definitive answer, or any answer in fact, to the Mystery of Transubstantiation.

Instead I encountered a group of human beings willing to openly share their

**'AT THIS STAGE OF
TRANSUBSTANTIATION'**

(At The Rowan Tree,
18 October, 11.50pm)

Och mon, och mon
Yer pooers spent.
Yer weys are bent
Hae ye nae kent
The strangers at your door?

Hae ye nae seen
That ony dream
Or dram, or spleen,
Wis meant tae mean
Ye wark upon yerself?

They times, they freens
They hurts, they scenes
An whit means
Tae be a buddie sel

An siller spent
Is as a tent
That wis the rent
For past transgressions

So try yer best
To tak some rest
Ye'll pass the test
Jist keep on tryin'

The Congregation
This hailie nation
Leaves off temptation*
Tae Hallelujah
Tae Hallelujah.

John Victor Roy

* Variant from 'Leaves of temptation'

Glossary:

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Freens</i> friends | <i>kent</i> understood |
| <i>buddie</i> human being | <i>siller</i> silver |
| <i>Sel</i> self | <i>weys</i> ways |
| <i>pooers</i> powers | |

experience and knowledge in grappling with this huge question.

The question remains but for me has gained a depth of aliveness. I go on and will go on living the question.

I will "love the questions themselves like locked rooms and like books that are written in a very foreign tongue. Do not seek answers, which cannot be given you because you would not be able to live them. And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps you will then gradually, without noticing it, live along some distant day into the answer." (Rainer Marie Rilke *Letters to a Young Poet*)

The sun shone, the rain rained and rained, the wind blew.

Thank you for coming to Edinburgh and sharing so deeply and openly and giving me such a sense of Christian Community.

*Mairi Freeden
Edinburgh*

The whole 'gathering of tribes' of The Christian Community was a wonderful and blessed event for me. Tom Ravetz took on the mantle of 'Philosophy of Freedom' to unveil to us the Transubstantiation of the Mass. Beautiful and real! His talk went on ringing all weekend, especially in the last summary together. Can we Play this Act together? Can we keep the world of creation that close? Can I remember that every moment I am in this sacred space of transformation? That is what I came away with.

Here is the poem that I read:

Travelling Carpenter

*Why do you live alone, Hermit,
with your door shut fast
against the silver-footed rain?*

*"I was a travelling carpenter once,
with tools upon my back,
when the soldiers seized me for my pain.*

*They drove me to hammering nails,
iron nails where never
a nail should be set.*

*So now I live alone
with my hammer hid,
for Love was the name of the One I met.*

*I had walked the hills to follow him,
we were hungry and thirsty then, he fed
us all with fish and bread.*

*Now I live alone
with the hammer
under my bed."*

*But have you not heard, Hermit,
of a stone that was rolled away
and an empty grave at the end?*

*That Love walks past on our road every day
as a Travelling Carpenter,
for those with hearts to mend?*

*And doors which were sealed fast
against the silver-footed rain
are opening now*

*As carpenters from every land
come out with their tools
to lend a hand.*

*Auriol de Smidt
Findhorn*

IYC POLONIA

6:30 am Monday morning. I can't contain my excitement any longer. What!?!...6:30am!...Monday! You're nuts! (well maybe...). This is no ordinary Monday morning though, it's Monday 4 August, the beginning of the best two weeks of the year (In my humble opinion). Two weeks of camping under the most beautiful blanket of stars and being lucky enough to call it your home (all be it for two weeks), meeting new, awesome people, doing insane amounts of singing, hiking through foreign lands, finding somewhere to sleep after a long days march, partaking in exciting workshops, singing and chatting the night away by the campfire, making lifelong friendships, eating gloriously tasty food, learning more about yourself and the people around you... I could go on for a while, so in short, it is the first day of IYC (International Youth Camp).

For those of you who have not heard of IYC before, it is a camp for young people between 16 and 25 years old, from all over the world. IYC takes place every summer on a beautiful field in a different country each time, and is organised and run by past participants. Every year there is a different theme which plays an integral role in camp life and leads to incredibly interesting evening activities and conversations. Past themes have included: "(In)dependency" (2013) and "Now is the time" (2012).

This year IYC took place on a stunning hill top above the Polish village of Wisła, surrounded with blueberry bushes, woods and superb views of the Polish-Czech border. With the Polish-Slovakian border merely 15 km away, the theme 'Crossing Borders' seemed very fitting.

As we arrived at the campsite we were met by a group of participants who had arrived previously and everyone started introducing themselves. There was a sense of excitement and anticipation in the air. I felt at home immediately! After setting up our tents and catching up with friends we played games to help learn each other's names, a tough feat as there were 85 names to be learnt some of which I had never heard before and others with near impossible pronunciation. However everyone tried to accomplish this as quickly as possible (after a few days it is just a little embarrassing to ask someone their name for the fifth time).

One of my favourite parts of IYC is 'The Hike'. It sounds rather daunting doesn't it? In reality it is super fun. A few days after arrival day, the camp gets split into smaller groups of about eight/nine participants and one staff member, and each group hikes their way to a second campsite over the course of two days. The groups are given a map of the area, food, water and other essentials, before saying goodbye to the rest and commencing their adventure over mountains, through little villages and across streams.

On the way we ate picnic lunches on mountain tops, helped out at a local carpenters, were lucky enough to meet Johan, an amazing man who at 80 something years old worked as a dentist, took care of his ill wife and still offered us a place to sleep in his home for the night! I must say I enjoyed every moment. There is also a competition involved between the hiking groups making it even more exciting... I would love to tell you about it, however some things are best kept as a surprise!

The days after the hike, on returning to our main campsite, are a bit of a blur in my mind, as time seems to whizz by and days morph into each other. Singing every morning and evening, making hammocks, flags and toilet paper boxes in workshops, sitting down for meals in our circle, running to the white marquee as the next thunderstorm begins to crawl its way over our hill and coming together for the close of day. These memories and more are set deep in my heart and I will take them with me throughout my life. Experiencing IYC is something which I will be always grateful for.

If you think you might be interested in coming to IYC in 2015, check out iyca-camp.com for more detailed information or head over to the IYC Facebook page (facebook.com/iycamp) for loads of camp photos, they will surely win you over! Also keep an eye out on Facebook for any announcements like next year's location, application opening dates, camp dates etc....it will all be posted on there as soon as it happens.

I can honestly say IYC will be an experience you will never forget!

Hope to see you there next year!

by Rebeca Lopez Walker

CHILDREN'S CAMP 2015

We are delighted that Camphill Oaklands Park have asked us to return and hold our annual Children's Camps there again next year. It will run from the 18–28 July 2015 and will be the sixth such camp run from the Stroud congregation in recent years. The camps are open to children aged 7–14 from all schools and backgrounds. Each year we

receive children from all over the UK as well as a few from Germany and Italy. The helper team is made up of Upper School and university students; mostly from a Waldorf background. The camp next year will be run by Rev. Aaron Mirkin and Johnny Back who also ran it in 2014 at Tregillis Farm in Cornwall. More information on our camps can be found on our web-site www.cc-camps.org We never turn a child away for lack of funds—fee reductions are always possible.

Aaron Mirkin

YOUTH CAMP 2015

Many of our youth helpers from previous children's camps have now asked to have a camp of their own. A small core group of our most experienced camp helpers—mostly now university students—have begun making plans for such a Youth Camp. It will take place from the 7–11 April (Easter holidays) at Camphill William Morris House in Stroud and is open to Youth aged 16–26 (with possible exceptions). William Morris House is a wonderful venue with all the facilities we require. The theme and content are still being worked on. Several ideas so far include: Clowning, Creative writing, Gender questions, The Justice system, Bio-dynamic agriculture, a practical project, etc. Such a camp naturally also includes lots of games, singing, artistic activity, discussion and plenty of social time.

For further details contact
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01453 299311

**STROUD DEVELOPMENT PLANS —
AN UP-DATE 15 NOVEMBER 2014**

As many are no doubt aware, the congregation in Stroud has been working consistently over many years now towards building a new church and community centre at the existing site at 73 Cainscross Road in Stroud. The need to expand our over-crowded facilities is visible daily. Much to our delight many new people have joined our community over the past years; amongst them many former Camphill co-workers; but also many others besides, and there is always something 'going on' in our humble premises. The existing buildings were built under the guidance of the late Rev. Michael Tapp for the handsome sum of £10,000 in 1968 and will have been a worthy home for our precious congregational life for exactly 46 years on the 1 December this year.

At every step along the way we have striven to work as inclusively and socially as possible in working towards a design that is intended not only to reflect and serve our local sacramental and congregational life, but also all the many other activities and initiatives that live in our surrounding Stroud community. These many 'outside' initiatives make regular use of our spaces for study groups, therapy, eurythmy, birthday parties, conferences, Parent and Child group, polling station, etc, etc. Our dedicated congregational New Development Group has worked closely with the priests, our architect Nicholas Pople, our regional Council of Management, and other professionals to come up with a design that is both functional and aesthetic and that will stand out as a welcoming landmark on Cainscross Road, which is a major arterial route through Stroud.

The new building will offer more-or less twice the floor area of the original and be built on two storeys—a lower ground level with direct access to our generous garden, and an upper ground level with direct access from the road. The property slopes steeply away from the road, which makes for a design and engineering challenge to make best use of the space between the road and the garden. A separate two-bedroom caretaker/priest's flat is included in the design, which opens up a large new mezzanine courtyard area to the west between the buildings, helping us to make the most of our previously overgrown and under-used west garden.

The total project budget stands at £3.1 million of which we have already gratefully been able to draw together £1.4 million from legacies, initial fund-raising and a portion of the sale of the Glenilla Road church property. The church in Glenilla Road served for many years as an important centre of our Christian Community work in the English-speaking world, and so it is with deepest gratitude that we receive a significant part of the fruits of the gifts and hard work that carried that centre for this new and adventurous project, which bears within it the potential for further expansion.

We are now doing all we can to raise the further funds required with brochures soon to be sent out to all members and friends in Great Britain and Ireland and hopefully beyond. We are also making approaches to local businesses, registered funding bodies, our building suppliers and individuals who may have an interest in supporting such a project. To this end we have set up a dedicated fund-raising bank account which already receives a steady stream

of donations. It is in the name of 'The Christian Community Fund-raising' and is with the Co-op with Sort Code 089299 and a/c no. 65700840. We have posted sketches, descriptions and artist's impressions of the project on our web-site at

stroud.thechristiancommunity.co.uk where one is also able to make an on-line donation using the BT-online button on the site home-page.

We would love to share the details of this project with other congregations in the region so please do consider inviting us to make a presentation some time in the coming year.

Best wishes,

Rev. Aaron Mirkin

on behalf of Rev. Carmel Iveson and the Stroud Development Building and Fund-raising Groups

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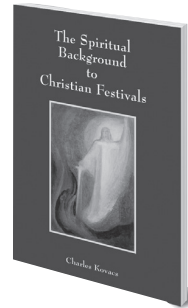


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