

Contemplative Fire Post

August 2019 – no.37

Greenbelt 23rd – 26th August
Boughton House, Northants



Caroline Newton writes:

Six of us experienced the intense heat of the long August weekend in Contemplative Fire's marquee at Greenbelt. Fortunately we backed onto a lake, and with the rear wall down we found a breeze and a place of shade to sit and talk to festival goers who came to see what Contemplative Fire is all about. There were plenty of conversations to be had, and regularly three of us would be engaged in handing out our leaflets and perfumed prayer cards. The response was extremely positive – Contemplative Fire definitely seems to be offering something that people connect to. We gave out over 200 leaflets and cards to people who stopped by and 40 of these people left their details and said they would like to be sent more information.



We ran two services which featured in the main Greenbelt program - a 9am morning prayer session and an evening Wild Wonder time. At both of these we were able to demonstrate body prayer, meditative walking and a silent connection to the world around us.



The feeling from both us and the general festival goers was that Greenbelt is a natural home for Contemplative Fire, and we all felt encouraged to attend again next year.

For now though our focus is on linking these enquirers into our network. Details will be sent to each regional coordinator of people who have requested to know more in their area, and a focus of the upcoming Community Weekend is to resource us to accompany new people who wish to become Companions and Friends.



In addition to sharing about Contemplative Fire, we also each had an opportunity to experience the wide range of talks/music/food/friendship that Greenbelt offers. I think we all enjoyed it and came away richer for having been there!



Our Bishop Accompanier Anne Hollinghurst, visiting us

Annual Retreat, Parcevall Hall, 14th – 19th June Beautiful Attitudes

Ali Dorey and Jacky Stride led the retreat based on the Beatitudes, or “beautiful attitudes”. Each full day of the retreat we were offered two beatitudes, each in three forms from *The Nine Beats Meditation*, “*Unfurling*”, poems by Ian Adams, *Haiku Beatitudes*, and *Prayers of the Cosmos*, *Reflections on the original meanings of Jesus’s words* by Neil Douglas-Klotz, and invited to reflect on them. We also learned a very simple body prayer for each one and, for those who wanted more, a practice accompanied

each beatitude. So, for example, the first one was:



Day 1

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. LEAD US IN THE WAY OF TRUST.

Blessed are the poor
in spirit: in them shines the
dawn of the world

Tuned to the Source are those who live by breathing Unity; their “I can!” is included in God’s.

Think of one thing that you are grateful to have received. Write/draw it on the palm of one hand. On the other hand, write/draw one need or desire you have. Meditate on the question “how can I live in the way of trust?”



We also met in Threes each day, and on two afternoons there was an option to go “wild singing” with Ali, or write haiku or tenka inspired by the landscape around us, with Jacky. On a third afternoon, thankfully a sunny one, we enjoyed a contemplative walk together enjoying the glorious creation around us.



"I loved seeing the three different wordings of the Beatitudes and the thought of 'beautiful attitudes' had never occurred to me! I learned a lot. I was very moved by the vulnerable personal stories that were told to help us to understand what was being asked of us by the Christ."



"The whole experience is so nourishing and shows Contemplative Fire in all its glory. It helps me to sustain my rhythm of life when I am away from community."



"Seeing those curlews, whose call had been haunting me all week, was a wonderful culmination and I felt full of praise and gratitude."



"I felt invigorated to return to the demands that had piled up in my absence!"

"The 4-5 day retreat is a real supercharger for my journey."



"I loved it all. The mornings, the threes and the meditations in the morning and celebrations of the day in the evening."



Body Prayer Images were from www.belovedlife.org and <https://9beats.org> Ian Adams body prayers for the beatitudes are currently the theme of his daily email "Morning Bell" and are available for download from Proost for a very small sum.

Let Your God Love You

Be silent.
Be still.
Alone.
Empty
Before your God.
Say nothing.
Ask nothing.
Be silent.
Be still.
Let your God
Look upon you.
That is all.
God knows
And understands.
God loves you with
An enormous love,
Wanting only to
Look upon you
With Love.

Quiet.
Still.
Be.

Let your God
Love you.

*Edwina Gateley,
"There Was No Path So I Trod One"*

Reflections and memories on Parcevall Hall retreat one month later

(Written in haiku form as a tribute to Jacky's
wonderful session)

Peace spirit, rest soul
Silent thought prayer encircles
Discovering Way

Soft lighted dawn breaks
Wild flower path to moorland
Damp fallen petals

We paused that moment
Companions travelling Way
Singing our life song.

Liz Okey

My cinquain offered in conclusion of our session

Old friends
sitting around
so diverse, enjoying
each other's scintillatingly
gay verse

Françoise Pinteaux-Jones



Beatitudes

We attended to our hunger for justice.
We allowed ourselves to feel the weight of our
lament.
We acknowledged the endless clouds of our
own complicity;
our powerlessness hung in the air like an
overcast sky,
darkly looming with unspent rain.
Then, suddenly, a heavy drop fell -
and another,
and another;
others, others, others.
Was it my imagination, or
did the room breathe a sigh of relief
as we turned to consider mercy?
The rain fell,
watered our dry ground
and fragile love became our song once more.

Ali Dorey



Meeting of Trustees – 5th July

Francoise Pinteaux-Jones, Chair, writes:

The absence of our hard-working colleagues- Peter, Jack and Caroline- was keenly felt as we got down to a busy day's business, sharing hopes that Jack and Caroline would soon be on their way to recovery.

As our Community Weekend looms large, it got a good deal of attention and many decisions were taken. Our theme will be The Trellis and the Rose, as we wish to deepen our understanding of our structures in relation to the enrichment and outflowing of the grace we seek.

To help us work through this programme, we have enlisted the support of Sister Rosemary and Bishop Anne.

We will also be able to compare notes with Canada as their new figurehead (she declines the title of leader, after Anne Crosthwait's retirement) Jo-Anne Raynes will join us.

I am now focussing this report essentially on the issues which are relevant to our theme. I'll leave you to decide what is trellis and what is rose.

The preparations for our presence at Greenbelt are going full steam ahead, with materials being printed and equipment gathered and collected. We hope to attract new members and one short session of the Weekend programme is devoted to preparing volunteers to welcome enquirers and help them discern the way forward, with the aid of a couple of documents Hilary presented at the meeting.

The nature of membership, our ways of being, was further clarified, distinguishing three groups: Companions, Friends and Interested Persons – friends with a small f, some of them regular attenders but remaining local and uncommitted. Uncommitted in the sense that they have not completed any of the forms that we reviewed, again through Hilary's deft hand, in order to clarify the processes of membership.

The ways we mark Companionship have long been a matter of concern and a part of a paper

prepared by Jo Howard will also be sent to Companions ahead of the Weekend to feed into an open forum.

Without Companions' involvement in the direction taken by the Community and its development, there is no Community, hence the election and re-election of Trustees which is being minutely prepared, hence the presentation of accounts (available online see below), hence the opportunity for members to ask question and make proposals at the AGM.

The fact that we are an Acknowledged Religious Community provides some guidelines that Diane Rutter, our link person on that body, restated in a paper prior to reporting to us. She will represent us at the ARC conference along with Jeremy the week before we meet, and we hope they bring back some insights and inspiration helping us to answer the call to "share our charism".

Helen patiently reported on the progress made in the development of the website, which has resulted in it now being live! This has been a long drawn out effort and fervent thanks must go to Helen and her team for the doggedness with which they have pursued this project. Much effort has gone into getting it right and we should soon be sharing pictures, experiences, quotes, readings... do take a look! There is already one blog going.

Now the website has two ambitions: one is to enhance our community life and that is precious. The other is for others to "come and see" so make it beautiful and make it known.

I look forward to seeing you at the Community Weekend.



**Welcome to a new Companion with
Contemplative Fire**

A very warm welcome to Elizabeth
Carrington from Nottinghamshire.



Spiritual Accompaniment

Dear Companions

Within the Contemplative Fire Community are many gifts, talents and areas of expertise which enrich our life together. At the last meeting of the Trustees, we realised that within our community are a number of trained and practising Spiritual Directors, who, if they were willing, could be identified to Companions so that if a confidential, personal conversation were required, then there would be people within the CF family who could be approached.

This is all about caring for each other; and identifying the gift of, and training in spiritual accompaniment could be a working out of that care.

So, if you are a Spiritual Director, and would be willing to be identified as such to Companions, with a view to being someone who could be approached for a private conversation, if it would be helpful, could you let Tina, our administrator know? Thank you.

Jeremy Timm -on behalf of the Trustees

***Understanding Islam: the First
Steps - a day to help us begin to explore
what Muslims believe, a journey into
understanding Islam from its own
perspective – 22nd June, Sheffield***



Some Companions went to this day with Dr Chris Hewer, a Christian who comes from a background in Christian theology, education, Islamic studies and inter-faith studies, and has worked in the field of Christian-Muslim relations in Britain since 1986, including 6 years as Adviser on Inter-Faith Relations to the Bishop of Birmingham. See www.chrishewer.org for background material.



Exploring silence and nature

Retreat at Scargill House

From Mon 23 to Fri 27 September 2019 the Quiet Garden Movement will be leading the 'Exploring silence and nature' retreat at Scargill House in North Yorkshire.

The retreat will include space for individual reflection and silence, as well as group time where we will explore a variety of exercises and practices that nurture our relationship with silence and nature. It will be led by Matt Freer and Tina Jefferies, both experienced retreat facilitators and authors of our [Quiet25 course](#).



Here is the link to events listing:
http://www.livingspirit.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/events_july_sept19.pdf

With all good wishes, Petra Griffiths
 Coordinator -Living Spirituality Connections

Price for accommodation and full board is £265.00. First time visitors to Scargill House since it reopened qualify for a 20% discount (tick box in booking enquiry form) and bursaries are available.

Encountering Silence Podcast.....

The latest episode from the Encountering Silence Podcast speaks to Quiet Gardens Founder and Patron, Rev Philip Roderick.

“Silence is a weaving, it’s like a tapestry or a pattern of presence; it recalls me; but it’s not like a block, it’s more like a river, a flow, a patterning...silence is for me a resource, an aperture, a journey...” Philip Roderick

<http://encountering Silence.com/>

Our Newest Quiet Gardens



Example from the events listing:

30 September – 3 October Creative Pathways to Wholeness - A Painting & Prayer Retreat Led by Keith & Maggie Hitchman. Cheshire.

www.foxhillchester.co.uk **30 September – 3 October** Silence by the Sea. Dorset.

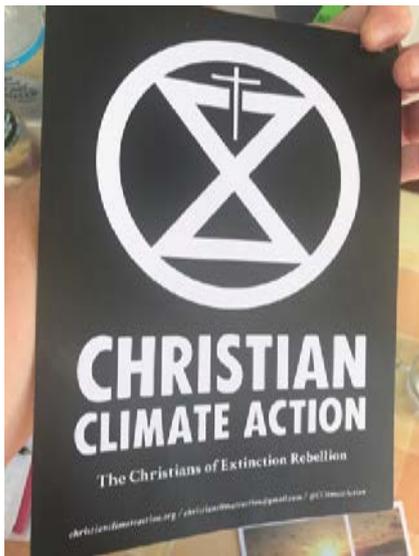
www.othonawestdorset.org.uk A mainly silent retreat to help you draw on the revitalised spirituality that is now emerging afresh from the mystical heart of the faith traditions. You should have an existing meditation practice of some kind and a desire to go deeper. Retreat leaders are Janet Lake, Jayne MacGregor and Richard Sloan, all inspired by the Wisdom Schools of Dr Cynthia Bourgeault. **ADVANCE NOTICES 25-27 October** GreenSpirit Annual Gathering. Reclaiming the Wild Soul. Main speaker Mary Reynolds Thompson. Holland House, Worcestershire.

<https://www.greenspirit.org.uk/annual-gathering-2019/>

Dear Companions and Friends,

Please see below an email from Companion Ali Dorey about a Faith Bridge. This is not a Contemplative Fire event, but we are aware that for some Companions this event touches at the heart of our rhythm of life and desire for Compassionate Action. As such we wish to highlight events which some Companions support, whilst also being aware that other Companions may not fully support this action. This diversity is the richness of our community.

Contemplative Fire Trustees.



Dear Companions and Friends,

During our time at the Greenbelt festival recently, several of us connected with the Extinction Rebellion group, concerned with taking urgent action to address the climate change situation. The photos show information about a non-violent protest they are wanting to organise called a "faith bridge" based in London from 7th October. They wondered whether any of us in Contemplative Fire would be up for being a prayerful presence there, and maybe leading some body prayers and/or simple prayerful chants, as well as engaging in meditation and prayer alongside people of other faith traditions in the faith bridge.

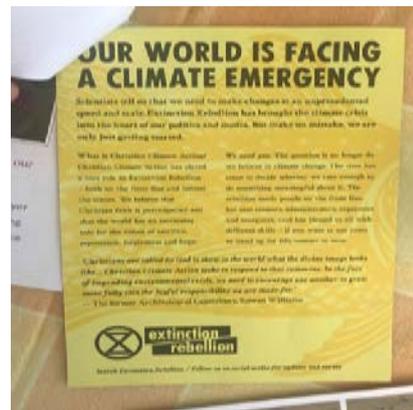
A few Contemplative Fire Companions have become actively involved in Extinction Rebellion (XR) over the past year or so, some of whom are already planning to go on this. So perhaps any others who want to speak out in this gentle and quiet way could coordinate to be there at the same time?

I am about to go off on my travels so won't be around, but if I were, I think I would probably be getting involved. The opportunity specifically to address the situation prayerfully in this way, standing alongside people from other faith traditions, when there's so much that divides us currently in our country, is deeply prophetic.

If you are interested in going, do connect with others on the public Facebook CF group and/or email Jane Johnston on janeljohnston@gmail.com. Thanks all.

May the earth be blessed as we respond 🙏

Yours, Ali Dorey



Caroline Newton has received an email from the Christian climate action group who are coordinating the faith bridge. They say that if anybody would like to be added to their What's App group, to get updates on the activity nearer the day, please email christianclimateaction@gmail.com and send your mobile number for them to add you.

