

THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND

# Newsletter

No. 59—Christmas 2019

## and Annual Reports of the congregations of The Christian Community in Great Britain 2018-2019

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### LETTER FROM THE LENKER

The event towards which we have been working for the last few years was finally fulfilled with the consecration of the new church in Stroud. The financial hurdles that we faced last year were solved through loans from friendly organisations and individuals—there is more on this elsewhere in this report. Paying back these loans has also started, and here I would like to take the opportunity to point out that everything we do in the way of development—whether that be the larger scale projects such as building a new church, or supporting priests in training—is made possible through legacies both large and small. The congregations are able to support the running costs of the regional administration and pay a share towards the international movement; this does not allow for future development. We are very grateful for

a number of legacies that came to us in the last year, which have enabled us to continue with the building project with confidence.

The last year has seen a number of changes in the priests' circle. Paul Newton was asked to take up a sending to the USA. Peter Holman came to Edinburgh after his years in South Africa. Carmel Iveson retired from her sending as a congregational priest in November, this year. We are currently supporting one priest in training, who is currently in the preparation course for Ordination in the spring of next year. We are also preparing an event in summer 2020 with Rev Jonah Evans of the North American Seminary in Toronto. Jonah will work with us on the theme *Priesthood of All Believers*. Please speak with your congregational priest or with me if you are interested in attending this event, which will take place in Forest Row from 23rd-26th July. *Tom Ravetz*

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### THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, AND THE CONSECRATION OF THE NEW CHURCH IN STROUD OCTOBER 18TH-20TH, 2019

*What follows are a number of impressions and recollections from the weekend, contributed by both visitors and members of the Stroud community.*

*Many thanks to all those who have contributed!*

THE CONFERENCE OPENED with a talk by Tom Ravetz about where worlds meet, in which he described the working of the hi-

erachies in relation to the substances used in the consecration of churches. Christward Kroener, representing the leadership, then spoke on the theme of how the individual in our times will be able to recognize the Christ.

On Saturday Carmel Iveson held the last Act of Consecration in the old chapel. This was very fitting as she is shortly to retire.

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<https://wp.me/p5ZKqL-a6>

Roger Druitt gave a short address after which the space was decommissioned by scraping the walls of the church in a symbolic gesture. Aaron Mirkin referred to the priests who had helped to bring this building into being, and also included those who have died: Michael Tapp, Peter Allen, as helpers from the other side. This was followed by Erhard Keller, who spoke on the Feeding of the Five Thousand.

In the afternoon there were several creative activities for members to enjoy and the evening saw the Stroud congregation performance of *The Rock* by T. S. Eliot.

On Sunday morning the new church was consecrated and the first Act of Consecration of Man was celebrated in the new space.

Let us give the last word to a member from Ireland: "We note that the gift from Finland was a set of crystal candle holders. Our gift is this candle snuffer. These gifts reflect what happens in the Act of Consecration of Man. The candles are lit and then put out again, so that we can take the light received into the world." Those present at the conference were graced in witnessing the working of the Spirit in the consecration of the new church in Stroud.

**WHAT CAME TO MIND** a number of times during the inauguration of the new chapel was the phrase from The Act Of Consecration: 'Their sheltering power ray forth to us'—the stream of people who were active in the Stroud congregation, and who have now crossed the threshold. And then it was also possible to experience the stream coming from the future, into this new vessel.

What also struck me strongly over the weekend was the interplay between the centre and the periphery, between point and circle: the concentration listening to a talk, some music, The Act of Consecration, the piece by T. S. Eliot, and then expanding into the times in between activities, meeting folks, exchanging reflections, delving into memories right away from the theme of the weekend, or simply sharing a meal together.

**BEING A MILLENNIAL** in the busy and overwhelming 21st Century, where old social and cultural communities are disintegrating at lightning speed, I feel an urge to discover, or if need be build, the "new community". Do we need to move "off-grid" and found our own eco-village socialist utopia in the mountains? Or is the anarchic and murky subculture of Berlin and London "where it is really at"? Or perhaps the movements of racial, gender, and sexual liberation are the communities truly freeing the human being from the shackles of the old and building a space for the free individual to develop. Maybe it is the cosmopolitan, international, humanistic world of modern science, so unshakeably grounded in the sense-perceptible world and free of human bias! For me, they all certainly can have something to offer, they ask the pertinent questions regarding our relationship with life today, and challenge us to develop new faculties and let go of the old. Yet they all are one sided, they all have to deny aspects of human to create their communities. Be it a lack of acceptance of the advancement and evolution of the material and technological world, or be it a total neglect of the spiritual one.

At the weekend conference surrounding the opening of the new Church in Stroud, I for the first time realised that the newness I have been looking for out in the world, was always there in the 5 valleys of Stroud, in the "sleepy" little Cotswolds. A (perhaps not so outward) youthfulness and lust for life, with good food, buzzing activity, and lots of hugs. Underlying this, a soulful and warm connection between the people there with a modern and open acceptance of everyone. And then pierced by a determined and spirit filled search for the truth and for the new! Such a sense of being able to express my joys in life, share my difficulties, and join hands in search of something greater. On the train back home I felt a great sense of sadness that it was all over. I only hope that other young people can see how nourishing and wholesome something as "old fashioned" as a church can be!

*While the furious storm whirls all around  
I will create a hushed space in the heart of myself  
Where abundance can spring  
From the littlest seed.*

**IN THINKING ABOUT** the remarkable opening of Stroud's new Christian Community Church I have two strong impressions from the talks given by the Priests.

The first concerns what was said by Tom Ravetz in which he commented on the birth of the seven billionth child—a statistical truth to get to the actual child?—and felt we should celebrate the child and the fact that so many people wanted to come to this planet. Implicit is the fact that we cannot and should not follow the eugenics line, and that each soul born has a divine spark and is a deeply respected human being. And anyway, we are now celebrating a larger church for more people!

The next was Christward Kroener, representing the international leadership from Berlin, who spoke about the individual and the community and pointed out that community only came about through the individual, and that in The Bible it is Peter who is asked to build a church—a community—with all his flaws in his particular character.

Those who have Camphill connections will remember Rev Peter Roth and his emphasis on the individual building the community and all the challenges that entails, as well as the joys and benefits!

I hope the new church reflects that individual and community element, and as someone over the weekend remarked, it was like being

part of a crystal, especially when you heard that the building has an 'honest structure' through the form of cross lamination, where the load is shared equally, rather than just a frame artificially filled in, with no overall load bearing qualities.

**POISED BETWEEN GRAVITY AND LEVITY** (from the structural engineer)

The shock at the scraping of the walls in the old chapel, like thorns in the body; then the understanding that it was needed.

Twelve priests in white, pale pink and light green, circling their hearts in unison to "The Spirit of God enlighten us."

Many encounters, human to human, feeling European, and feeling too a cosmic world citizen.

Ethereal sounds, angelic sounds, together with hand bells, lyres, flute, violin, piano, assorted instruments—the harmony of the spheres...

Star anise—first helpings—second helpings; even a lunch box to take away with us—going the extra mile. Smooth organisation, the weight of hard work and effort behind the whole weekend.

The builder, the drain and foundation specialist, shown gratitude and properly thanked—together with the architect, consultants, all who were involved in the church's design and realisation.

Form, movement, the wisdom of the hierarchies. The flame in each heart. We are the church, as much as the beautiful new building.

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## ANNUAL REPORTS

### ABERDEEN

In many ways, this has been a serendipitous year for us here in Aberdeen. It was with much sadness that we said goodbye to our priest, Luke Barr and his wife, Thora, last Summer. We looked forward with anticipation to his thoughtful sermons, and his input to the Poetry Group; one of his own innovations. However, after a few weeks' hiatus, our new priest, Willem Boonstoppel appeared in

our midst, along with his wife, Lucienne, and I have to say that from the beginning, it was as if they had always been there as a part of the Community. There seemed to be no period of "newness" at all; they threw themselves into our daily life with enthusiasm. They took to us and we took to them. They are very much a team, which is pleasant for everybody. In addition, Lucienne is doing the priest-training at the seminary in Hamburg,

and it was with great happiness that we all celebrated along with her in June, when she received the news of her acceptance into the final year. If all goes well, we all look forward to an ordination in March, 2020. So, a warm welcome to both of them, and we sincerely hope they will be very happy in Aberdeen.

Last September, in the space where, after the Service, we gather for coffee and cake, we first heard the biographies of Willem and Lucienne. This space is usually a time for a talk and discussion. The subjects of late have been far-reaching and thought provoking; some examples being; "The Healing Working of the Night", "Death Seen from the Earth", "Death Seen from the Spiritual World", "The Four Natural Realms" (Stone, Plant, Animal, Man), We have explored the various Epistles throughout the year, studied the four parts of the Act of Consecration, and also examined the Seven Sacraments. For the coming period, we shall look more closely at the Creed and hear various 'Spiritual Biographies'.

We have a close connection with the Edinburgh congregation, and we were very happy to receive the support of three of their priests, who came up in turns for the Sunday services during the holidays. On the occasional times when, owing to unusual circumstances, there is no Priest, we continue to hold our congregation-led Sunday celebrations. We aim to keep these quite simple, but nevertheless, they can be extremely rewarding experiences, as we often find.

Last year, in November, there was the usual gathering for an evening of Remembrance of the Dead, which is always a moving experience. As an innovation, we had a Christmas Breakfast after the early morning Service and before the daytime Service, on Christmas day. There was an evening Service, with an end-of-year sermon at 7.30pm on 31 December, followed by a New Year Party. In January, inspired by the Roman god with two faces, Janus, we attempted to look back over the Old Year, and anticipate the year to come. This year, we intend to follow this plan. We shall also look more closely at the meaning of Membership.

We have reinstated the early morning Service on Wednesdays at 7 am, and once a month, there is a service in the German language on Saturday. On Thursdays, there is either a service in Newton Dee or in Cairnlee Camphill. Once a month, the Priest visits the Forres Community, a small but faithful group, located approximately 78 miles from Aberdeen. A baptism and a funeral have been held in Findhorn Community. A real novelty recently was the first Act of Consecration of Man celebrated in May on the Isle of Mull, and there is hope for more activity there, in the near future. Other regular happenings are the Seedlings—a weekly parent and child play group held in the community room, started in the time of Luke and Thora, and still going, a Craft group, a weekly evening Bible Study group, a monthly gathering on Working with the Dead, and a regular Festival meeting. We strive to have various exhibitions of art by members and friends of the congregation in our hall and community room. *Maureen Ramsay (Correspondent)*

## CANTERBURY

This past year has been one of comings and goings and change for the Canterbury congregation. Due to Monika's ill-health, the priests from Forest Row have not been able to visit us as often as they had hoped and have done in the past. Although since Easter we have had fewer services, a new initiative has sprung up with an impulse to reach out to the local community through artistic, social and therapeutic activities. So far we have had a Family Fair, a music afternoon, massage therapy, and a book club has started. We are looking forward to our Advent and Christmas Services. *Ann Beardon*

## DEVON

Devon may be one of the smaller UK congregations with a resident priest, yet it has an living kernel of committed, active members. During the past year we have attracted three new members under the age of 45, which helps to bring 'fresh blood' and offset the larger group of people of pensionable age.

One of them brings sewing skills with her, enabling us to replace two further sets of servers' vestments, whilst the other is learning to serve and the third joining the musicians.

During most weeks of the year we are able to hold two services per week, including on many a Wednesday, followed by a gospel study. Two new families joined the Service for the Children, which increased its number by four. This year we were pleased to have two girls confirmed at the Confirmation service in May. The Retreat had been together with the Stroud Confirmands on Iona.

We were happy to be the hosts for the National Priests' Synod in February, making use of our chapel as well as the large community room, which had been freshly lazured in golden yellow by a group of volunteers from the congregation; this was painted with plant colours from the laboratory at the Goetheanum.

Other events organised within our community life have included talks with slides on Raphael's *Disputa*, on the Comte de St Germain with a newly painted portrait of him by Raphaela Cooper, on the contrasting themes in Mozart's mature operas, a biography of Franz Schubert and also some very fruitful discussions on the possible changes of 'Thee' and 'Thou' to 'You' in our Sacraments. Probably the most ambitious event of all took nearly a year to prepare. This was a performance of Coleridge's 'Rime of the Ancient Mariner' by seven eurythmists, a speaker and a musician, drawn mainly from our congregation. Neil Franklin gave an inspiring talk on the poet and his poem that set the mood for the performance, which was very well received by a large enthusiastic audience.

On October 13th we held a memorial service for Tissy Pilkington who had died some weeks before in Portugal. She had felt strong links to our community over many years and was honoured by a full chapel and a very moving eulogy.

On Midsummer's Day we were sad to hear of the death of Bettie Edwards who had been a loyal member of the local Christian Com-

munity for many decades. She died in a Plymouth Hospital aged 88. In the 1970s she was a founder of the Hapstead Camphill Community here in Devon. The chapel was full to bursting for her funeral as dozens of friends and villagers came to honour a person who was very much loved and revered for all that she had selflessly given to so many people over her long life.

On a more worldly level, our finances remain quite stable and we live well within our limited budget, although we are always looking for new ways to expand our income to make up for the contributions of those who have died.

We have decided to offer two new ways with regard to our *guestrooms*:

In addition to individual stays *Weekly Retreats* can be held with a theme in the mornings, outings to Dartmoor and the Coast during the day, individual conversations with the priest on request, concerts in Dartington and a Close of Day in the chapel in the evening. The programme can be shaped by the participants.

We can also provide a *service for* anyone wishing to walk the *Two Moors Way* with transport to the beginning of the route and pick up at the end of each day in conjunction with a stay in one of our guest-rooms. Please contact us for details.

Every year that passes, we remain grateful for the valiant work of our priest, Sabine Haus, our beautiful building and all that flourishes in our community in so many different ways.

*Christopher Cooper (Correspondent)*

## EDINBURGH

Re-reading the report from last year I am reminded of the expression 'don't count your chickens etc;' With the arrival of Peter from South Africa, Bill coming in, Karen and Michael in the wings and Paul well into his stride it was all systems go...

Until...the congregation was informed of a request from Berlin that due to the shortage of priests in the USA would Paul accept a sending there. I think it is safe to divulge that

the congregation had mixed feelings about this to say the least! However, of course, there were compelling reasons for him to go, both priestly and personal. He did have time, however, to arrange the first celebration (as far as we know) of the Act of Consecration on Mull in the form of a memorial service for Nicolas Rochette of the Anthro-Tech community and a baptism service for the child of a couple living near Bunessan, also on Mull. Willem Boonstoppel from Aberdeen celebrated The Act of Consecration and will now take on to see what can happen there in the future. Peter continues Edinburgh's connection with Loch Arthur.

Paul's send off was a joyous occasion, the place was packed with well wishers. He turned down the gift of a kilt (being related to the Robertson clan) and instead opted for giving the donated money back to the congregation for a new bell and gong. The gong is used to encourage folk to take their seats for a talk and we had not realised that its (admittedly unmelodic) tone had driven him up the wall for the last six years....

We are now forging ahead with plans for the new chapel, community space and priest's accommodation. The congregations will shortly be receiving the lovely brochure prepared by our hardworking architect Johannes Sleundrecht. We are currently raising donations for the planning process. The building process will be financed through the sale of Fountain House. There is a strong team from the congregation working with Peter and a local architectural technician, David Sinclair, and led by Bruce Bennet who has many years of experience working on development projects. Tom Ravetz is also monitoring the developments closely. *Anne Byrne*

### FOREST ROW

In 2018, we bade a fond farewell to Willem Boonstoppel and his wife Lucienne van Berghenegouwen who after 2 years with us, moved up to Aberdeen. Luke Barr joined the team in Forest Row.

Highlights from the year have been the Three Kings play, a singing play full of atmos-

phere which took us out into the New Year; the Holy Week approach to Easter where we had daily talks coupled with short Eurythmy performances, centred on the last seven sayings from the cross, the themed weekend on Ancient Greek culture and its significant contribution to Christianity (July), the Michaelmas fete, where we decorated the church and opened our doors to the village with live music, stalls selling home-made crafts, storytelling, games, face-painting and more! We had a full and lively venue for the three hours that we opened to the public for the afternoon. We held a Dying Awareness Day with talks by the priest, coroners officers, undertakers, and a Grave Talk café, which was well attended and gave us information about what we need to know in the event of a death.

We have also a vibrant Little Ones Gathering for families with children aged 1-6; and we are piloting a 'Saturday Club' for families with children of all ages with games, craft activities, stories and singing as of November.

Unfortunately, Monika Knight has been on long-term sick leave since before Easter, so we are rather short of priest power. Pearl Goodwin has been helping valiantly with talks and sermons, which are much appreciated by the congregation. *Luke Barr*

### CAMPBILL MOURNE GRANGE

Mourne Grange Village is a little oasis situated in the Kingdom of Mourne in County Down, halfway between Belfast and Dublin. Nestled comfortably in a central area of the Village, our Chapel continues to be a focal point in the Community where The Act of Consecration of Man is held fortnightly by Rev. Ben van Lieshout, alternating between Saturdays and Sundays. The services are regularly well attended by most of the community. It is enthusiastically supported by servers, musicians, flower arrangers and someone ironing the vestments. Currently there is no children's service celebrated as they have grown up and there are no children in the wings waiting to join at present.

The Chapel is also used for Gospel study on Wednesdays which continues to be as popular as ever and takes place once a week. Its importance to the adults with learning disability is clearly visible when they come home afterwards or speak animatedly in Bible Evening about the passage in the Bible they have discussed.

On Saturdays the Chapel hosts the "Reading for the Dead" which is well supported.

Very much appreciated are the talks Ben gives regularly in connection to the festivals, most recently about "Michael and the human heart". Since they have been moved from the evening to the afternoon attendance has grown. We do not underestimate the richness, warmth, comfort, stability, strength and so much more that ripples from the presence of the Christian Community in our midst. We are inordinately lucky.

On March 1st and 2nd, Mournie Grange hosted the annual spring conference of the Christian Community in Ireland titled "Learning to live with those who have died". It was well attended and provided much food for thought and space to talk about this deeply felt subject. Not least it was also an opportunity to meet others with similar questions. During an afternoon gathering in the chapel the sun which had been very lazy up until then suddenly shone through the stained-glass windows created by Johannes Steuck onto the altar picture, producing extraordinary colours very rarely seen. Many felt this was like a blessing.

Surrounding our Chapel like a sickle moon is a burial ground where several former inhabitants of the village are buried and some relatives of former villagers. One can walk around the chapel and see flowers growing in celebration next to headstones and feel that they are close by. Last year we said goodbye to Christopher Jones, a founding member of Mournie Grange and a staunch supporter of The Christian Community. We also bade farewell to Annemarie Konig also a keen supporter who together with her husband Christoph founded Mournie Grange in 1971. Her death marked the end of an era

for the community. Her funeral, like Christopher's, was a celebration of life. After the funeral in the chapel we could walk a few metres to the grave site accompanied by singing and thankfulness for the lives of two exceptional people.

Also taking place this summer were two Memorial Services, for Bisbeth Whatling, connected to someone in the Community who died in Derby in April. In July our new, young gardener John Blaney aged thirty-two, was killed in a car crash returning from a funeral. He was a great communicator and took time to get to know all who came his way and very much liked. His death was a shock to us all. A Memorial Service was held for him too.

In November we will join Ben in the Chapel to remember those who have died for an evening service with music and singing heading towards the close of the year.

*Christina Ehrhardt*

## STOURBRIDGE

Snapshots—some individual contributions

"Water, water everywhere but not a drop to drink"; we have had much work in the past six months investigating leaks and damp walls but gradually things are looking up and several areas of damp have been remedied so now we could re-decorate the community room and all looks very good there—and of course there was enough water in the taps to provide tea and coffee for all the other much happier events in the life of the congregation.

We have a rich feast of events in Stourbridge in addition to being fortunate in having The Act of Consecration three times a week, as well as many children's activities. One recent event which stands out for me was a Harp Concert. When I walked into the church I could hardly believe my eyes: there were nine harps standing there, of all types and sizes, from full sized concert-hall harps to child-friendly ones—a rare sight!

We were treated to a number of delightful items by Helen Barley, some together with one of her pupils. She then invited an-

yone in the audience, including children, to come and have a go! Some of us duly went and sat down at our chosen harp and were shown which strings to pluck and when. Singing went with several of the pieces; one which I particularly enjoyed was 'The Skye Boat Song', where we all played our allotted strings when indicated and could also sing along to the chorus. A most delightful and unusual way to spend a Sunday afternoon!

I guess it has been the talks and events in the community that deepen my knowledge and understanding of the spirit within the Christian Community and so well carried by our two wonderful priests.

When I consider this past year in Stourbridge, the image that keeps coming to mind is of a group of parents, school age children and smaller children sitting on the front row of the church at the Family Service. This is a relatively new initiative for The Christian Community here and feels really heartening—to know that our priests are making it possible for this to happen. When I serve at these services, I'm warmed to hear the gentle breathing of little children on their mum's

laps as they listen to Siobhan telling a story that is appropriate for them. It feels important to be welcoming all ages to the church and filling it with life.

Every Sunday it's the same—a suitably heated church, the altar dressed in the appropriate festival colours, trimmed candles, fresh flowers, servers in ironed vestments, one, or even two priests—always the same, but prepared by—by—by? Behind this beautifully ordered and worthy preparation are those who clean, arrange, iron, prepare, contribute financially—all those who give of their time, their money, their effort to ensure that, every Sunday, we can 'Worthily fulfil...

### RINGWOOD

Tom Ravetz visits Ringwood roughly every two months. There is a dedicated band of children who attend the Children's Service and stay for a short religion lesson. The Act of Consecration of Man is well-attended by people from Ringwood and further afield. There is a talk or conversation session following this.

*Tom Ravetz*

### LARRY LEIGHTON

**MAY 16TH, 1948 – OCTOBER 3RD, 2019**

Larry was born on May 16, 1948, in Birmingham to German Jewish parents, Eric and Gretel Lichtenstein. They had met in England after both of them separately fled Nazi Germany. They married and Larry was the firstborn of two children. His sister Judy is five years younger. They had a Jewish upbringing. As a young child he visited Germany with his parents when they went back to thank the people who had helped them escape. His father, whose suffering at the hands of the Nazis affected his health until his death, died when Larry was eleven years old. Larry had had a happy childhood, but his father's



death was a traumatic event for him. His mother told him that he was now the man of the family.

Larry was an intelligent boy and did well at school.

At the time his schooling ended Larry identified strongly with his Jewishness, a Zionist, an idealist. He gained a grant to go to Israel. When he arrived there, and experienced the reality of what Zionism meant for the Palestinians, his ideals were shattered. He also

turned away from Judaism.

Larry went on to study English at the University of East Anglia and after graduation taught Maths in a London comprehensive school.



In November 1971 Larry left England for Africa on his way to India—hitchhiking all the way. This amazing journey saw him spending time first in Morocco—there in Fez he discovered leather work—then into Algeria. Next came Tunisia and Libya. Time was spent then in Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia and a very brief one day stay in Somalia.

Finally Larry arrived for a six month stay in Kenya, marked by a drought and being chased by a crocodile!

Larry's travels took him next through Tanzania, Zaire, Botswana and then into South Africa—and in all these places he lived like a local in and with the indigenous people

It was in South Africa that Larry learnt leather craft, and here too that he also met anthroposophy, being part of a vibrant study group of more than twenty idealistic, enthusiastic, seeking young people. For these individuals it was as if they had been waiting all their lives for this moment. They all have stayed involved in anthroposophy until this day.

Next he went to Swaziland where he stayed for six and half years. Larry taught English and did leather work in Swaziland, and this is where he met a young woman, Olive, who would become his wife. They had a traditional, tribal wedding. Their son Lucky and daughter Mbali were born here.

In 1979, when Larry was 31, the family journeyed overland by car to England. It was an exciting journey—beginning with the car breaking down in Tanzania!

In England the family moved to Paradise House where Larry worked in the bakery, the orchard and the garden, with Olive in the weavery. The children attended Wynstones School.

After the marriage ended there followed a number of difficult and unsettled years for Larry. During this time he had a workshop at Ruskin Mill where he did his leather work—making and selling what he produced. Larry also taught the Ruskin Mill students—he was the first craft master at Ruskin Mill, and he also became a member of the Guild of Master Craftsmen.

Also during these years he went back to South Africa teaching in township schools spending some time too teaching in Nant-y-Cum Steiner school in Wales.

People who knew Larry in these years remember the wonderful birthday parties he organised for Mbali and the winter evenings when he invited families around to see slides of his travels.

Larry completed the Biography Group course, offering biography workshops.

Larry also took part in the orientation course for the priesthood, and the Mental Health Seminar.

In The Christian Community in Stroud Larry was part of the first finance group, and of the festivals group, as well as becoming a server. During a difficult time in his own life the Community Support group first formed around him.

Larry joined the Community Forum, and was a very active co-ordinator, helping to organise national conferences for The Christian Community for several years.

In 1998 Larry met Juliette at a christening and a new positive phase of his life began. They married in 2002, but not before The Golden Fleece was founded, an ethical Fair Trade initiative to import craft goods from Morocco.

Larry made regular trips to Morocco in these years and also organised group trips there, meeting the craftspeople, trying out a craft, walking in the Atlas mountains and staying in the villages with the local people.

In 2014 Larry was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease—later more correctly diagnosed as PSP—Progressive Supranuclear Palsy—a rare progressive condition.

Despite this Larry still travelled—amongst other places to his beloved Morocco—meeting the craftspeople and buying their products for his shop.

The bringing together of the three Abrahamic streams was very important for Larry, and he was very instrumental in establishing the Spirit of Peace meetings in the Stroud church.

Larry is remembered as a warm, gregarious personality, non-judgemental, enabling others, a kind and a faithful friend. He never took sides—never condemned—never put people down. Larry loved to meet people and he could listen and also he could talk (a lot!). Larry had a dreadful sense of time—often late—usually because of getting very engrossed in an encounter/conversation with someone.



Often he would say, 'We'll catch up!' on meeting someone he hadn't seen in a while, but already late for something else and having to hurry on. He was always catching up, running behind, but there was always the feeling of meeting him, even in a fleeting encounter. Young people loved Larry—responding to his openness and interest in them.

The stars were very important to Larry, and he was part of the astrophysics study group on the stars for many years. He also loved nature and the garden became more and more important to him as his illness progressed.

As his condition deteriorated a wonderful group of people came forward to support Larry and Juliette. Study groups met at their flat as well as day to day support, and due to this Larry was able to be at home until the end, in the middle of the coming and go-

ing of a seemingly endless stream of friends.

And how wonderful it was that in his last year he managed once more to visit Morocco and see all the craftspeople with whom he had built up a relationship and to order more goods. Then in June, after a big fundraising effort, came the trip to the clinic in India for treatment—a country Larry had always wanted to visit.

Larry accepted his illness with courage and dignity. He did not feel sorry for himself but was determined to live life as fully as he could. Those who stood around him and supported him and Juliette didn't just give their support but received something also. Whether it was a deeper insight into the nature of what it is to be human or a deepening of their own therapeutic work—or an appreciation of what we can do to help and support each other.

A Michaelic soul Larry carried a truly ideal impulse of this time: a real interest in the other person and a wish to truly encounter and understand them—to find the brother in the other.

Larry's life journey continues on the other side of the threshold, in that realm for which he had such an intense interest while here on earth—the starry heavens!

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## HIKING TOWARDS THE HUNDREDTH BIRTHDAY AND CARRYING THE WHITSUN FIRE ALONG!

We are looking forward to the 100th birthday of The Christian Community. To celebrate this birthday we started the Whitsunfire-bookwalk. The idea is simple: Carrying a book from one congregation to the next though the whole of Europe. We had a test-walk in 2017 and started 2018 in the Netherlands. Meanwhile the book has passed through 102

congregations. In June 2020 it will cross the Atlantic from Bergen/Norway to Aberdeen in Scotland. Each congregation is invited to transport the book to the next congregation. The final destination in 2020 will be Zurich/Switzerland. These are the dates and sections in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Ireland and England (sections 113 to 133)

- 113..... Aberdeen–Edinburgh, Sunday, June 14,–Thursday, June 18  
 114.....Edinburgh–Loch Arthur, Friday, June 19–Sunday, June 21  
 115.....Loch Arthur–Holywood, Monday, June 22–Wednesday, June 24  
 116.....Holywood–Clanabogan Community, Thursday, June 25–Saturday, June 27  
 117.....Clanabogan Community–Mourne Grange, Sunday, June 28–Tuesday, June 30  
 118.....Mourne Grange–Dunshane, Wednesday, July 1–Saturday, July 4  
 119.....Dunshane–Dewsborough, East Clare, Sunday, July 5–Wednesday, July 8  
 120.....Dewsborough, East Clare–Kyle, Thursday, July 9–Saturday, July 11  
 121.....Kyle–Duffcarrig, Sunday, July 12–Tuesday, July 14  
 122.....Duffcarrig–Botton Village, Wednesday, July 15–Tuesday, July 21  
 123.....Botton Village–Malton/Yorks, Wednesday, July 22,–Thursday, July 23  
 124.....Malton/Yorks–Malin House, Ilkeston, Sunday, July 26–Wednesday, July 29  
 125.....Malin House, Ilkeston–Stourbridge, Thursday, July 30–Saturday, August 1  
 126.....Stourbridge–Stroud, Sunday, August 2–Tuesday, August 4  
 127.....Stroud–Bristol, Thursday, August 6,–Friday, August 7  
 128.....Bristol–Devon, Sunday, August 9–Wednesday, August 12  
 129.....Devon–The Sheiling, Ringwood, Thursday, August 13–Sunday, August 16  
 130.....The Sheiling, Ringwood–London, Tuesday, August 18–Saturday, August 22  
 131.....London–Forest Row, Sunday, August 23–Tuesday, August 25  
 132.....Forest Row–Canterbury, Wednesday, August 26–Friday, August 28  
 133.....Canterbury–Chatou, Sunday, August 30,–Friday, September 4

In 2021 the book will travel from Zurich through the middle of Germany. We do not know yet where it will go in 2022 to celebrate the 100th birthday...

Everybody who likes travelling and who is interested in meeting people within our congregations, or everybody who is engaged with our central ideas of Christianity, might join us. Those, however, who would not wish to walk or cycle can contribute to local congregations by providing much needed accommodation.

Participants are asked to be aware of when the book is actually coming to them, and where the next destination will be. It would be much appreciated if you were to get in touch with your forerunner in time to organize the takeover.

At the end of each section, we would ask you to approach your successors in order to keep this project on time. If you like to partake you can get up to date details about the Whitsun-fire walk planning, either through the website or via the congregations. Should a section of the walk not yet be planned, you could use the opportunity to take the initiative to complete the planning of this section of the walk yourself. We would leave room for creativity and welcome individual planning within the walk.

The maps of the sections in 2018, 2019, 2020 as well as dates are also available on our internet site [www.whitsunfire-walk.org](http://www.whitsunfire-walk.org)

Happy walking and kind regards!

*Sebastian Schütze, Basel (Switzerland)*

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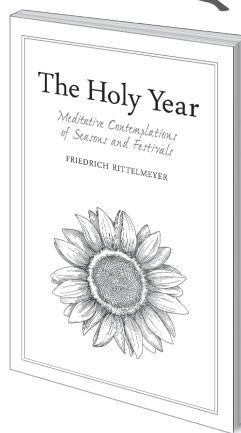
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