



# AfB Christmas Newsletter



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# The Botton Community

## A Perspective from Brendan

The Botton Village of my experience as an occasional co-working volunteer from 1975 onwards (with periodic long gaps due to my career) is very different from the Botton that is now. And for me it's not just because of the departure from Botton or loss of my peers and friends, Dave Dixon, Nikky Rayside, Rev Peter Roth, the Bamfords and the Van Vliets together with some villagers most notably, but because I believe the old 'spirit' of the community has changed, dramatically.

When Peter Roth invited Nicole (who I met in Camphill Aigues Vertes) and myself to join Vivian and others to set up Larchfield we decided reluctantly not to follow community life but pursue an independent life and our own ambitions in the world outside Camphill. But we still valued access to Botton and the unique perspective that it gave us. When we took our children for Christening and did occasional house sitting and social visits or (in my case) help in the garden, it was always however as outsiders dipping into community life. But we always came away after a week or a few days or so with a sense of uplift that I could only put down to an experience of tapping into something really special - a blessed encounter with people living selfless lives, dedicated to the well-being of the community (with all the travails and joys that entailed) rather than just to themselves or their families.

The advent of 'new look' CVT, the departure from co-working as the primary mechanic for community engagement, and the perhaps over-zealous imposition of a regime ostensibly intended to reflect new or anticipated legislative frameworks has imposed additional administrative burdens on the old Botton Way of Life which have rendered it non-sustainable. This for me is deeply regretted because, while it may well have dragged Botton into the 'modern' world' has entailed a genuine *loss* of community - irrespective of how this is interpreted - or by whom.

When, in trying to understand the mission of 'new look' CVT I asked at the recent AGM what they meant by 'community'. CVT gave the following scripted answer:

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*“Like so many other Camphill charities in England we are seeking to express our ‘Camphillness’ in a contemporary context.*

*The way we approach community is increasingly person centred - mirroring our approach to the way we aim to support our people. While communities are no longer co worker based there is still a strong sense of community for those we support and for those who also work there.*

*Having a strong sense of community, of belonging and having friends being involved in decision making are important for everyone’s well being whatever their abilities and it remains central to our approach.”*

Benevolently ignoring the somewhat tautological nature of this response and my understanding that few if any of the current CVT management and Board of Trustees have any direct personal experience of co-working or actual living within a traditional Camphill Community, of ‘Camphillness’, it is fairly clear where CVT stand, or think that they do. The phrase ‘person centred’ (fashionable of course in health and education generally) is the key concept here.

If you look instead at the differing interpretations of community by Camphill Scotland and the Camphill Communities of Northern Ireland. In both cases, and certainly in Camphill elsewhere, there remains the endeavour to further a concept of ‘wholeness’ in life within community living, and that means a resolute stated commitment to a life premised on principles forged by Koenig, Roth, Weiss and others after Steiner. In short this means: living together in households; biodynamic land management and production, access to meaningful work and the pursuit of a strong cultural life influenced by the anthroposophical year, as well as access to eurythmy, worship, Waldorf teaching and an educational programme for all. But perhaps this extract from Camphill in Norway best expresses the visionary praxis of the Camphill ethos.

*‘Camphill Village Foundation’s (CLS) purpose is to create inclusive working and living communities based on Rudolf Steiner’s three-tier community image, and in doctor Karl König’s efforts to accomplish this. In the villages one strives to live for the social constitution. CLS is nationwide and operates six villages in Norway; three in Trøndelag, one in western Norway and two in eastern Norway. The villages have a community where people with different needs for assistance live side by side with coworkers. Art and culture weave into all sides of life, and rural life is characterized by ecological awareness. During the working hours, everyone is employed with the*

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*village's many tasks; crafts, agriculture, cooking and household. Everyone has tasks that cover real needs, and everyone does their work according to their own abilities and opportunities. The preschool is a two-year offer for young people. Some villages also offer day trips in the workshops. Camphill villages also accept young people who want a year as volunteers, or to be employees for a long time.*

This is of course a far cry from the wall to wall TV, fast food and petroleum driven lifestyle of the 'person centred' resource hungry 'real' world that is inimical to the ethos of Camphill that causes so many problems for everyone everywhere - and destroys the very environment we depend upon for our survival.

Which brings me finally to AfB and EVCC. The achievement of Neil Davidson and his colleagues at AfB who without personal gain of any kind, have been able to prevent the expulsion from Botton of so many of those who helped build the Village, those who made it what it is, has been nothing short of incredible. They have enabled those resilient committed former Botton Co-Workers to establish another take on the Botton Story which will guarantee for (hopefully) many years to come, the sustainability of the original Camphill spirit and the community life which enshrines it in Danby Dale. And who knows one day the old Botton might be resurrected when post the social media revolution, the value of 'community' is realised by all. All for all and not just for one.

As holding chair of AfB, succeeding Neil, I have respected the agreement not to campaign against the negative changes wrought by CVT. It means however that AfB have not been able to do much else than perform administrative actions as we await mediation to conclude.

We however are not the future. That is now all down to Esk Valley Camphill Community.

It is my hope therefore that our wonderful supporters and generous funders will continue their support for the original Camphill Spirit that is being carried on in Danby Dale by the EVCC and supported by the Avalon Trust. We wish for the Shared Lives experiment, a scheme inspired by and ultimately rooted in the old Camphill ideal, to be successful and become ultimately a model for change in the rest of Botton, the other CVT villages and elsewhere - and an example to all, everywhere.

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And in this we are of course more than willing to even assist CVT in their stated wish to encourage the roll out of Shared Lives and help ensure the preservation of an ethos that one day may make Botton Village become again a sustainable community.

My wishes to all for a wonderful Christmas and New Year to come.

Brendan



## Mediation Update.

The process towards the establishment of the regulated Avalon Shared Lives Scheme in Botton has continued. There is no doubt that Avalon have committed a very great deal, and undoubtedly much more in terms of the time this has taken, than they ever envisaged in Spring 2016. They have had two members of staff continuously heavily engaged in the processes, with additional personnel involved in assessments, too. North Yorkshire County Council (along with other commissioning Councils, though to a far lesser extent as I understand things) have had detailed oversight and involvement arising from the very fact that they are the commissioning body. There have been regular meetings between the charity, Avalon and NYCC. Many of us (on all sides) have been frustrated by the time all of this has taken.

At the time of writing there is hope that the first two houses will transition to the new Shared Lives Scheme before the end of December. Practicalities are being addressed, and there is a genuine will to see a start. Steps are also in hand to bring the court proceedings to a mutually agreed end just as soon as all is resolved. The proceedings are currently adjourned until 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018. That date provides a good focus, if not a guarantee.

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## Thanks to Rev Michael Hazelton

Rev Michael Hazelton has left the green dales and the Danby flocks to enjoy the different kinds of flocks that London offers. A staunch member and supporter of AfB from the outset he, and our Vicarage meetings, will be much missed. Below is a piece written by Jonathan about his invaluable support for the EVCC initiative. Good luck with the future Michael.

‘The Esk Valley Camphill Community has much to thank Michael for. When we were not yet a naughty twinkle in Botton’s eye, he was helping out at our Village Store once a week, during which time he built strong relationships with many of us. When the confrontation between our community and its governing body flared up, Michael was not shy about speaking out as his conscience and Christian beliefs prompted him. And as our new community has begun to emerge from the husk of the old, Michael has offered it a tangible, concrete opportunity to develop in the form of glebe land at the Vicarage where we have established a small garden.



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During this time, Michael's concern for and connection to this rather quirky and cloistered corner of his parish has also led to our community coming together with local congregations to worship and celebrate the Christian festivals, most memorably on Palm Sunday and at Epiphany and Whitsun. These joyful occasions have also helped us to develop stronger links to a wider community in which we are now seeking to find our place.

Throughout this country, we citizens find ourselves evermore at odds with, oppressed by or just plain frustrated with the giant institutions (public and private) that dominate our lives. Their size, complexity and aura of authority often cow us into a silent acceptance of things that, deep down, we know just ain't right. The position of churches and their ministers in these situations is an awkward one, particularly for the dear old C-of-E. But a minister like Michael, through word and deed, makes it clear that the established Church is not the same thing as the church of the Establishment, but is just one part of a radical global movement (Christianity, folks!). Above all else, we'd like to thank him for that.'

Jonathan Reid

## Esk Valley Camphill Community Update

Advent: a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of a wonderful event. This has special meaning for us this year as we enter the final phase of transition to Avalon as the social care provider for our houses and become Shared Lives households. So as well as the usual preparations of advent tide, some houses are packing to move and all are eagerly awaiting the transfer that has been so long in coming.

We started our advent celebrations with a joyful fair at the Moorland Waldorf Initiative, the parent, teacher and community supported continuation of Waldorf education in Danby dale that has followed the closure of Botton Village Steiner School. There was a lovely atmosphere in the Village College as many people visited to enjoy the café, craft stalls, children's activities and singing. People's generosity with their time, skills and money resulted in the raising of an amazing £1528 for this new initiative.

The first advent Sunday saw members of the school and Esk Valley communities gathered in the Botton Church to witness the children walking the advent spiral. This is always a special start to advent and this year seemed even more so. We sit in silence in the dark around a spiral of fir carefully laid out on the floor with a tall candle lit at its centre, a symbol of life amidst the dead of

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winter. A special story is told to introduce us to the magic of advent and birth of Christ, then to the accompaniment of gentle lyre and piano playing and the singing of carols, each child in turn takes a candle in an apple into the centre of that spiral and lights it, then returns, placing the candle in an apple along the path at a place of her choosing. The lights brighten the path for those who come after. Each child walks alone, at his own pace, in her own way.

This is a celebration of quiet confidence, of carrying light in darkness, of sharing that light with others. It is very moving, not only to watch your own children, but to watch how they are in the community of their peers. How does each child approach the candle at the centre of the spiral? Are his footsteps halting or rapid? Does she stop along the way to consider each crystal and shining stone in the path before placing her candle near the way out of the spiral, or does she set it down right away and hurry on without looking back? Being a witness to this journey can be a touching experience, and adults and children alike carry away from the festival the feelings and meaning they found within it.

In the evening, adult community members were inspired by a talk given by Jonathan Reid that centred on the Raphael painting of Madonna and child that encouraged us to look more closely at the painting and all that is contained within it, drawing inspiration from it for the current time. The second advent weekend sees the community holding the first AGM of the EVCC Association, a time for members to come together, reflect on the year that has been and look ahead to the next and to renew their commitment to the association and all it stands for. We'll also enjoy the company of our Christian Community priest, Siobhan Porter, who will give a talk on Saturday evening followed by the service of the Act of Consecration of Man in the church on Sunday morning.



Many of us are involved in rehearsals for the Shepherd's Play, one of the three Oberufer plays performed around the world in Waldorf and Camphill settings, amongst others. This play tells

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the story of the proclamation of the birth of Jesus to the Shepherds in the fields. Performances are taking place on the 21st & 22nd of December, so do come and enjoy them if you can.

During the holy nights between Christmas and Epiphany, amongst the moves that will be taking place and the initial transfer of houses to Avalon, the community will also take time to revisit its guiding vision and look ahead to the future, developing plans to grow our community once again into more than just the houses in which we live. We have a good foundation with the Vicarage garden that has provided us and the local community, via our health shop, with wonderful vegetables and salads this year. The garden is expanding, with a new area already prepared and mulched for the winter so that come spring it is full of life and vitality for the plants that will grow and bear fruit for us.

The Danby Health shop continues to thrive, providing work to community members and income. The community has also now, out of the pooled and saved wages of its members as well as donations from wonderful supporters, been able to buy the building that houses the shop, giving us our first major asset.



Remember Summer !!

EVCC's next big step will be to find and acquire our own buildings and land so that we can develop workshops again for the community to provide meaningful work for our members and to continue to sustain itself.

Kathryn Von Stein

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## Happy Christmas Cards

The front cover of the newsletter includes one of three sets of wonderful Christmas Cards being sold by EVCC as part of their fund raising. The other two designs are below:

If you have already bought and sent yours then its not too late to get some for next year. They can be ordered online at <https://eskvalleycamphill.org/craft-room-shop/> or via:

The Craft Room at Esk Valley Camphill  
Camphill Shared Lives Communities Ltd  
United Kingdom  
Email: [craft-room@eskvalleycamphill.org](mailto:craft-room@eskvalleycamphill.org)

If you don't need or want Christmas cards but are otherwise doing online shopping, then please please do sign up with Easyfundraising to raise funds for us at the same time as you buy online, at no additional cost. You can do this at the following link:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/camphillsharedlives/>



Camphill Shared Lives Communities Ltd

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## Dedications

### Michael Rogers

Michael was a keen Botton Buddy and we shared his wedding pictures with you in the last edition. Jackie has penned the following tribute:

‘When I first met Michael, maybe fifteen years or more ago now, he did not strike me as a typical anthroposophist and as I studied with him in various groups over these years, he struck me as someone who was a genuinely independent thinker, who had taken on working with anthroposophy in the scientific spirit that Rudolf Steiner intended and who knew how to be inspired by his own conscience.

The aspects in which Michael interested himself were many and varied, but I was interested that he committed himself to finding out more about the 'anthrotech' research and what that would mean for how one lived in the present time. We were both members of what we called our Threefold Social Order Group in Botton, and I like the idea that Michael may next be finding his way back to the members of this group who have since crossed the threshold.

He was certainly keen to understand the world in which he found himself living, and did all he could, for example, to understand thoroughly the issue of the European Union, instead of allowing himself to adopt unthinkingly the stance prescribed by mainstream liberal values. One of my treasured memories is of the weekend that he and Anne and I shared in Sheffield where we discussed with Terry Boardman and the Sheffield group, the history and ethos of the E U. This was before the referendum was due to happen.

Michael's approach was not just academic but practical and grounded. It was wonderful to see how he took his part in the Mystery Drama, and how it suited his character. And then when he became ill, his response was very revealing of his essential being: the stoicism and cultivation of calm, the quiet determination and patience, the modesty and lack of melodrama, taking each day at a time, keeping hope but tempering that with a true appreciation of the context of his illness. The honesty of his communication meant his friends and family could more easily support him and Anne. I continue to appreciate his being and to be inspired by him.

Jackie Fearnley

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## Pamela Franks

Any visitor to Danby in recent years would doubtless see Pam and her beloved West Highland Terrier, Tory. Out in all weathers, at dawn and dusk, Pam and Tory took several daily walks in the village. If Danby was a house, Pam and Tory were ‘part of the furniture.’

A fiercely independent and highly intelligent lady, Pam retired to Danby from London. She was a punctual, efficient, organized, tenacious lady with moral principles. We were delighted when, on hearing of the difficulties faced by the residents (Villagers and Co-workers) in Botton, Pam decided it was a cause worth fighting for. With a strong sense of justice and a force to be reckoned with, we were glad she was on our side!

In Pam’s typical style, she was vociferous in the AfB campaign. Some of you may be aware of what she did for the cause; many of you may not know. We’d like to share below with you all some examples of Pam’s efforts, all of which she did in her late eighties, in her quest for justice for Botton.

She was a superb linguist and writer and sent numerous handwritten letters to various newspapers, the local MP (Robert Goodwill), Prime Minister David Cameron, and HRH Prince Charles. To raise funds for AfB she independently sold gifts on her individual stall at an event in Danby Village Hall and participated in the popular pub quiz in support of AfB in The Duke, Danby. Despite the cold, wet and windy conditions, she determinedly attended the Botton Vigil at Danby Beacon staying on until the end in a heart-warming display of solidarity. In spite of sight and hearing difficulties, Pam attended a host of meetings, presentations (a favourite was The History of Chocolate), and even a folk/celtic-inspired concert. Her aim was to show support and loyalty to the Co-workers and Villagers. Regardless of the prize, Pam purchased raffle tickets and sent several personal donations to AfB.

None of the above were undertaken by Pam for personal gain or glorification, she merely wanted to help.

In admiration and with love for a very special lady. We’ll miss you Pam. From all your friends in Danby and Botton.



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## Christmas Picture Quiz

Below are some pictures from before. Can anyone tell us the names of all the participants and the event photographed if appropriate. And there is a picture of a much missed local service that was unique in the British Isles in so many ways. There's a **prize** of bubbly from me to each of the first two people who gets 80% or more of the answers right.

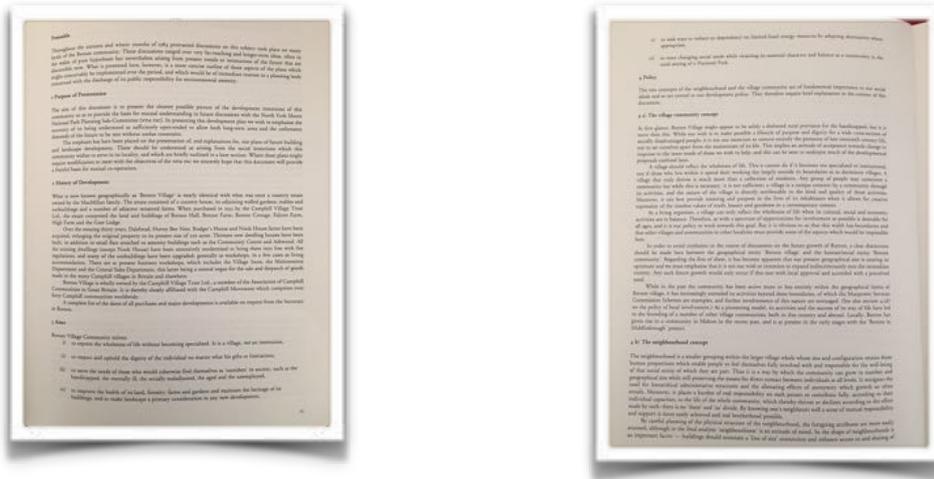


1. Who is driving the tractor? 2. And what kind of tractor? 3. And who is helping?
4. Who is saying goodbye to who and when? 5. Who are the lovely couple below. 5. What are they eating?
6. Was this...a fish and chip shop? 7. Where was it? 8 When did it open? 9. When did it close?



Answers to the editor: [quayle644@gmail.com](mailto:quayle644@gmail.com)

# Botton in the National Park



Above are two of the most relevant pages of the 1997 Botton development plan for the National Park with which Botton has a close relationship for many years. The Park are in the process of reviewing their policies and this may well affect how it deals with future developments in the village and the landscape.

On this website you will also find a detailed submission by the 90 family members of Botton Village Residents to the North York Moors National Park for their 2017 Planning Policy Review, prepared by Duncan Cameron on behalf of the BVFG group.

# The continuing adventures of Neil & Denise Davidson



Neil and Denise are still in Armenia, building a peace garden among other adventures. See if you can spot the dog among the students of the United World College. Maybe 2018 will see their welcome return after an amazing job, as always well done.



**Happy Christmas to all our wonderful donors and supporters. AfB and EVCC would not have been possible without you. And Botton without our resilient co-workers would be completely lost.**

