



Action for Botton

Spring Newsletter 2017 Part I

Edited by Dr Brendan Quayle
(Chair, Action for Botton)
The Vicarage, Danby.

Dear Supporters,

Introduction

As we enter Spring we still await the outcome of mediation and are honouring our commitment to the Co-Workers and other claimants in the High Court Action not to campaign against CVT during the mediation process. Like Spring it does all seem 'a long time coming' but we live in hope. An update on progress is provided below.

This issue of the AfB newsletter features the first two of four tributes to two of the most significant figures to have been involved in Botton and Camphill in the post-Roth era, Marta Frey, who I first met in Tourmaline in 1975 when I visited Mrs Koenig, and my dear friend and Camphill hero, Chas Bamford, whose untimely death was a deep shock to us all, but not un-related to events arising from regime change within Camphill Village Trust.





From the tributes you will recognise the life of the old Camphill, and the commitment of these two wonderful individuals to the founding principles of the Trust and the shared living and caring that it brought to pass within the lives of so many. which was its cornerstone. Some will say that this is in sharp contrast to what has come to pass. Others would say that the changes that took place were inevitable. Were they?



The spirit of Camphill in its original form thrives in Scotland, with the full support and encouragement of the legislature, as elsewhere around the world. And I have included in this edition a piece by Dave Mitchell of Loch Arthur which shows the old Camphill Way determinedly facing the challenges that lie ahead.



Here in England, history will judge whether the new CVT, whatever their stated reasons for changing the communities they manage, have made a terrible turning or not. I am personally in no doubt that they have. Is Botton a better place than it was twenty or even ten years ago? I don't think so. If you went there all those years ago you might even have been fortunate enough to see Marta or Chas in action, selflessly helping others and promoting the cultural life of the community and everything that went with it. Compare what it is like now with what it was like then. And if you were not there before, talk to those that remember.



The pictures on the left of bygone happy days are from former Co-Worker Keith Hobb's memoir of Botton and Camphill life: They depict Shared Lives, Shared Working and Laughing and the one below immortalises Shared Eating. Our thanks to Keith.



The Mediation and AfB

The discussions, negotiations and planning for the creation of a Shared Lives Scheme at 13 houses in Botton

AFB Supports

Shared Living

Shared Working

Shared Cultural Activities

In accordance with the

**Original Camphill
Philosophy**

are increasing in momentum, with more regular meetings of the Transition Group of CVT, Avalon, the Coworkers and parent Claimant in Botton, and more regular meetings of CVT, Avalon and NYCC. There is much still to do.

It is hoped that there will be an information-sharing meeting for families to be held in York in March. This would probably be arranged by Avalon, but in discussion also with CVT and NYCC who would also be in attendance. "

From the AfB perspective, as stated in the last newsletter, and taking account of the above, we will continue to support the Co-workers until they have largely achieved their goals of ensuring that within and around the precincts of the Camphill Village community of Botton a 'Whole Life' situation survives:

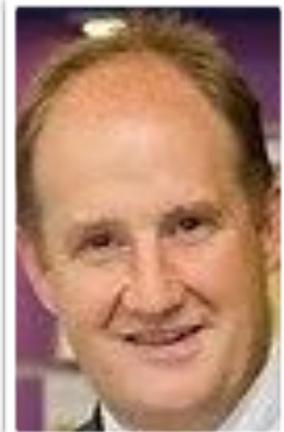
If this then becomes a reality once again, post mediation, none of it would have been possible without generous funding and support from our wonderful donors within the UK and from the worldwide Camphill movement and the local support from our remarkable Botton Buddies, together with the moral support for our beleaguered Co-Workers that came with it.

The Shared Lives proposal arising from the mediation process has already attracted widespread interest, among this has come support from the Member of Parliament for Thirsk and Malton, Kevin Hollinrake, who said in a recent debate on disability in the House of Commons:

*“On adult social care and learning disabilities, one of the most heartening examples of how to deliver them in a different way, rather than looking at them from a single viewpoint, is the Botton Village “shared lives” concept, where people look after each other—co-workers and people in need of care alike. **It is a fantastic and inspirational scheme.**”*

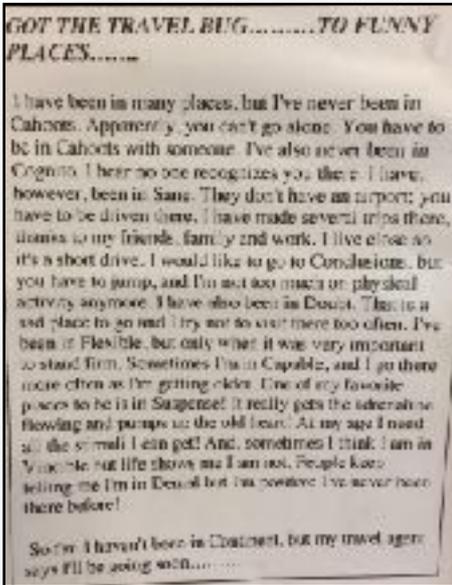
Many thanks Kevin.

AfB is still helping to meet the ongoing legal costs of the mediation processes and your continued support is still needed if we are to get to the end of the road with the Shared Lives scheme in place. We are almost there - but not quite - and still need as much help as we can get. Thank you again for your support and for maintaining your interest in this sadly long drawn out affair. If you



would like to donate please see the AFB website for details.

<http://www.actionforbotton.org>



Unless donors request that any sums of money not expended on the legal and mediation processes are returned to them (pro rata), any monies left over would be applied to the new Esk Valley Camphill Community, (see below) which is the new body formed by the remaining Co-Workers in connection with the Shared Lives scheme, and mentioned above.

I came across this memo in a cafe recently and was reminded by its tone of humorous pieces that appeared from time to time in the wonderful (late but not forgotten) Botton Mirror. All I can add to this, as someone who lives in Durham and has been lost in No Place and went looking for Hope in Pity Me, is that when the mediation is finally over we shall be in **Settlement**.

Fingers crossed!!

Esk Valley Camphill Community

By Jonathan Reid

It's all gone quiet, hasn't it? Where are the noisy radicals of 2015? The answer is we're still here (most of us) but we're trying to focus more on creating a future than bemoaning the past. In April 2015 a group of us – Co-Workers and villagers – founded the Botton Village Camphill Community Association in order to distinguish ourselves from CVT Botton. This was at the height of an open conflict, playing out in the media and the law courts, that is now drawing to a close. Negotiations are progressing towards a situation where some Botton households will leave the CVT operation and register with a local Shared Lives provider, the Avalon Group. All these properties are within the geographical skin of Botton Village and CVT Botton will remain a close neighbour with whom we hope to collaborate to our mutual advantage. As part of this process, we have felt it necessary to re-christen our community and its association. Why?

Firstly, we want to create and express Camphill community life in a different way from the CVT. Even



Song by W.B Yeats

I made my song a coat
Covered with embroideries
Out of old mythologies
From heel to throat.

But the fools caught it,
Wore it in the world's eyes
As though they'd wrought
it.

Song, let them take it,
For there's more enterprise
In walking naked.



the very best social care cannot help but operate in a way that tends to create a professional boundary between the care-giver and the cared-for. Camphill communities have always striven to establish a way of life in which community members, whether learning disabled or not, relate to each other primarily as fellow human beings and colleagues who encounter each other in multiple contexts – the workplace, the home, in cultural endeavour and celebration. The provision of high quality care is embedded into that multiplicity, but it does not define or encompass it. This is not being unprofessional, it is being non-professional, and we believe that our collaboration with the Avalon group will result in both a renewal of Camphill community values and high standards of care.

Secondly, we already have a presence where Danby Dale, at the back of which Botton sits, meets the Esk Valley that runs eastward to the coast at Whitby. There we are running a health shop, have established a small garden, and have three rented households with, as yet, only co-worker residents. This development has resulted on the one hand from the eviction of certain co-workers by the CVT from Botton, on the other from the warmth, support and welcome extended to us by our wider local community over the last three years. This has prompted us to 'lift up our eyes' and perceive that a meaningful future for our community must be one in which we shift our sense of locus from Botton's very insular, enclosed setting, to a more open one.

At the same time as we are exploring new possibilities, we are deliberately re-visiting the fundamental sources that inspired Camphill: the meditative reflections of its pioneers, the work of Rudolf Steiner, and the Christian message of the gospels. This year we will also be working with the Loch Arthur community who have kindly agreed to act as our sponsors as we work towards full membership of the Association of Camphill Communities (UK & Ireland).

It has been hard to let go of the name 'Botton'. It is of course a name with a reputation – one that can be traded and fundraised on - but we have recognised that to persist with the name is to risk an on-going competitive and conflicted situation with the CVT, which we do not want. Better to declare and acknowledge our differences and get on with life: they say good fences make good neighbours. It has also been one essential third of the rallying cry 'Action for Botton'. For many of us the name

is almost part of who we are, but it is a skin we have decided to slough and step out of, however raw and vulnerable it leaves us feeling. Materially we have very little going for us, humanly we are extremely fragile, spiritually we are cupping our hands around a candle in a storm. But we know we exist and we hope that, before long, others will be prepared to acknowledge our existence, too.

Jonathan

Select Committee Update

On Monday 16th January 2017 members from the BVFG (a group of parents of learning disabled persons from Botton Village (the Botton Village Family Group) supported by parents from other CVT communities and independent Camphill communities, provided testimony to an Informal Session before the Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into Social Care at Westminster.

Three MPs, one from each party on the Committee, including the Chair, attended and two further MPs who could not attend sent researchers.

Firstly, two parents of Learning Disabled Adults spoke about their own (real-life) personal stories and the journey they had been on in dealing with the prevailing Social Care system. Following this, we presented the study undertaken by the Danby Surgery into health outcomes at Botton Village with example figures showing the value afforded by the Vocational Volunteer Camphill Shared-living and Working model. MPs were particularly interested in the costs savings and positive outcomes. Aspects of the legal position were outlined, highlighting lack of accountability and frequent breaches of legislation.

The MPs were sympathetic and very interested in what we had to say, so much so that the session was extended. They wanted to hear our suggestions for improvement, based on our real-life experiences of the Care System.

We were asked to outline sensible measures to promote 'good' conduct and dissuade 'bad' conduct in both individuals and organisations throughout the entire sector.



BVFG Issues and Concerns

Commissioning (and the fact that this is where many of the problems start)

The lack of any proper Authority that is contactable by individuals and willing to provide immediate relief if things go wrong

The fact that the Learning Disabled and their families have very little power or influence

The need to ban staff gagging clauses (except for purely commercial reasons)

The desperate need for Central funding

The need for Care Charities' actions to be made more transparent and open to their members and beneficiaries

The need for proper staff vetting throughout the care sector, particularly at senior management level

We ended by explaining that there needs to be a fundamental re-think of how people can exercise their rights that are often proclaimed in theory but cannot be exercised in practice in the present care system. All evidence has been filmed and placed online on parliament's website.

Alliance for Camphill

The Alliance for Camphill has continued its dialogue with other Camphill bodies to examine opportunities for coordinating and combining our efforts in pursuit of common goals. It has applied for affiliate membership of the Association of Camphill Communities. It will be recalled that CVT is no longer a member of the Association of Camphill Communities.

The AfC is keen to contribute - perhaps by leading a themed workshop - to the Camphill Dialogue taking place in Scotland in May. AfC also plans to convene its own conference later this year, perhaps jointly with other Camphill partners, and its Steering Group will be meeting soon to plan for this.

The Alliance has now produced its manifesto, in which it has sought to say something meaningful and useful to a wide audience of people familiar and unfamiliar with Camphill.

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Tributes

Marta Frey 1925-2016

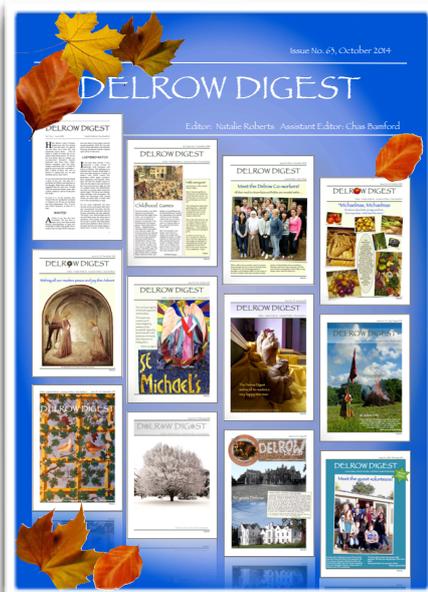


Marta first came to England at the invitation of Dr Koenig as a glass engraver and then to Botton in 1959 where she established the glass workshop and became a housemother; staying until her retirement. Her sister, visiting Botton, wrote of her that she “had a curiosity for and affinity with all things and beings in our natural and spiritual world. She exuded dignity, integrity and a child like innocence, all at the same time. Yet she was firmly grounded and confident in being herself. Her selflessness and helpfulness to others is legend. Some of us recall an episode when she was a student of little means at the Academy of Fine Arts. When leaving the Academy one evening she found that one of her fellow students didn’t have enough bus fare. She gave him all she had and quietly went on a 40 minute walk home. That’s typical Marta.”

In her final days Marta was perhaps blessed with not being able to witness the deterioration of all she believed in at the Botton she loved. But she knew of and was very saddened by the sudden departure and treatment of the Adams family with whom she lived at Hall South for many years.

Her spirit lives on though in Botton and a part of her amongst the plentiful birds and small creatures that the former biodynamic land use encouraged so richly and that she so loved to feed and watch.





Chas Bamford 1952 – 2016

Chas was born into a Staffordshire farm machinery manufacturing family and descended on his mother's side from Northumbrian sailors and musicians. At university in Birmingham he met Elisabeth Trehearne, who shared his interest in community and art, and they met Camphill for the first time in Stourbridge.

At the age of twenty-four, Chas and Elisabeth made the life-defining step of joining The Sheiling Community, Ringwood. Chas joined the Curative Education Seminar, working with children with special needs beginning a life-long engagement with Anthroposophy and later eurythmy studies in the Eurythmeum, Stuttgart.

In 1980 the Bamfords moved to Botton where Chas became a much loved housefather and a teacher remembered by his students for his lightness, kindness, humour, encouragement and exactness. Three boys were born to the family, Daniel, Francis and Chris who he enjoyed scrambling with along cliffs and climbing trees, and indulged with wild wet weather walks, wind surfing and mountain biking. He would draw huge Celtic labyrinths on sandy beaches for the family to run around and watch as the sea washed it all away.

At the Sheiling Chas taught first and second year students and in Botton the third and fourth years, often driving home from Botton to Ringwood on a Friday night to spend the weekend with the family and help run a Camphill household, with children or adults with special needs. Chas was the best washer-upper - outside of Switzerland - ever!

The Bamfords moved to Delrow in 2005. While there Chas enabled a young woman suffering from mental health difficulties to become the editor of the remarkable Delrow Digest. He helped lay out the publication beautifully, together creating a high-quality colourful monthly that was widely enjoyed, with joyful, reverential and sometimes gently anarchic content that attracted praise from around the world.

As a house coordinator he had great empathy and respect for the residents. They loved him and enjoyed his gentle teasing making them feel safe and gain confidence, empowering them to new experiences. He



movement, he had dignity, grace, speed, balance and precision and was a kind, encouraging, clear, and inspiring director ennobling social life through art, bringing colour, movement, beauty and grace to the world. His performance as Ariel in a performance of The Tempest was a joy to all that witnessed it.

Chas died suddenly and unexpectedly at home on December 9th. He was sixty-four. But he continues to inspire, living on in his creative work, in the heart of his family, friends and all who knew and loved him.



Loch Arthur, A Camphill Community

www.locharthur.org.uk



Loch Arthur, now in its 33rd Year, nestling under Lotus Hill in Galloway, South West Scotland, occupying 540 acres overlooking the beautiful loch which gives us our name, is a Camphill Community that is home to 75 people, 28 of whom have a supported tenancy and includes an ever growing population of 11 children. We live together in 10 households and we all take part in the vibrant working life of the Community. As in many of the rural Camphill Communities, a lot of our work has centred on and grown out of our land. We have a large garden work shop and our two farms comprise some 370 acres and look after approximately 150 head of cattle, including 30 milkers, 100 sheep, breeding sows and their offspring, with the odd goose and hen for good measure.



The bio-dynamic farming impulse has always been strong and is the breathing heart of our multi award winning creamery with its reputation for producing high quality multi-award winning artisan cheeses that became the basis for our beautiful new friendly Farm Shop and Café which opened in November 2012. This was a major step change for us as a Community, overnight transforming the whole basis of our social enterprise and engagement with the public and leading to the employment of an additional 18 full time equivalent workers from the locality, making the community a significant employer in the local economy.



Our trading activity has grown so much with the addition of the Farm shop that its turnover incredibly now exceeds the income we derive from offering care and support. In the first 6 months after opening we jumped from having 10 people employed to support our work to over 40 - thus becoming a major local employer. This is on top of what we already do and of course brings new joys as well as new challenges.

The farm shop is a truly wonderful place and is greatly appreciated by an ever growing number of customers. Standing at our gateway, it is a representation



of all that lives here in the community, as an outlet for our own products and other local and ethical producers, but also a visible symbol of our attitude to the importance and meaning of work and a working life. The Farm shop has become a real multi-faceted meeting place, for customers who come in droves for our high quality products, for our staff team made up of those who live in the Community, for those who come into work each day, and between all these groups.

At Loch Arthur we have always worked hard to cultivate good relationships with the wider community around us. This is the bed rock on which everything at Loch Arthur has been built, involving both the statutory authorities that fund and regulate us, but the general public of Dumfries and Galloway (and wider afield) who appreciate and support what we do.

This furthers and deepens the joy and riches in the other aspects of our life here, in our social and cultural life and within the authentic relationships that community life brings.

Many of the group that founded the Community, who have steered its growth and development are still very active in the Community. They have been joined by a number of younger couples who are all very committed to upholding the values and ethos of the Camphill ethos. They in turn have also produced a second wave of Loch Arthur Children making us a Community of all ages meeting needs from nursery education and forest school to end of life care.



Some of our older, more experienced co-workers are now looking to have a different relationship to the Community bringing with it issues of succession. At the same time a number of the people that we support are also getting older and also needing a different rhythm of life. Our principle aim is continue to meet all of these needs, maintain the working life that has always formed much of the identity of Loch Arthur.

As the demands of regulation and accountability grow in all areas of our activities, what is asked of each of us carrying the Community has also grown enormously, in particular how to sustain the Community both economically and humanly into the future, and how to continue to share our homes together while maintaining such a productive yet

demanding working life. These are challenges facing all the rural Camphill communities abiding by the Camphill ideal. As elsewhere we are working hard to find solutions - from doing less and making do with what we have developed so well so far, or exploring other ways of bringing in more people to help us carry on what we do.

Change is inevitable, but as long as we maintain the integrity of endeavour and purpose originally envisaged and our own uniqueness and local colour, it will be change that is positive and benefits both the community and the individuals that comprise it.

Dave Mitchell



Other Matters

AfB

The next AfB meeting will be held at the Vicarage on March 22nd at 1400 hrs.

CVT

CVT have a new chair, Brian Walsh, confirming the rumour that came to our ears back in October 16. Mr Walsh was made a trustee at the AGM of this organisation in November, which he was "unable to attend" but was otherwise well attended by anxious parents of CVT 'beneficiaries' and a full complement of CVT managerial and other staff, lawyer, advisers, auditors etc.

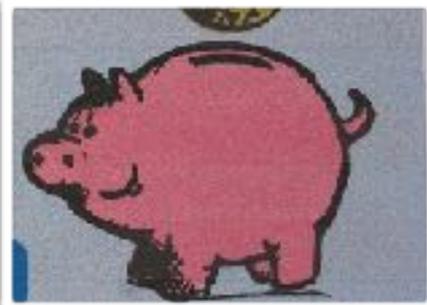
We know little about Mr Walsh as he does not have a Camphill background but an item about his most recent employees appeared in the Coventry Observer and we hope to be able to reproduce this in the second part of this newsletter. Meantime he has kindly written to a member of BVFG declining a request for a meeting at the present time, but hopes to be able to be 'hearing the views of the families of those we support' following completion of the mediation.





Chris Cook opened the AGM with a quotation from Steiner which from memory was about "death." There was a video and a shortened question and answer session. A full transcript of the meeting is available we understand from BVFG, and a contact can be supplied on request.

Votes were taken at the meeting endorsing existing and new non-Camphill trustees and on other matters. All motions were carried in the chairman's favour by an overwhelming majority of votes from persons not in attendance and some of which were on a "short proxy form" that we understand contained no names or resolutions and we have been advised had not not been made available to BVFG members unable to attend.



Those attending the meeting were openly invited to check the veracity of the completed short proxy form and other voting forms but circumstances at the end of the meeting made this difficult. AfB understands that the invitation to check these forms remains open and any CVT member who wishes to do so should contact the CVT offices and arrange a viewing. In deference to the stated and minuted wishes of the outgoing chair, interested CVT members are encouraged to do so.



Brrr.. District Heating

Botton can be cold in the winter as we know so CVT are emplacing a biomass based district heating system to the Centre Neighbourhood and (we understand) using pellets imported by energy guzzling transport from our Canadian brotherhood delivered to Botton by HGVs. Sounds good...but...



Do you think there's enough to keep us warm?

Botton has its own forests and many of us will have planted trees in them at various stages. Readers of this may have noticed the irony of the wood boilers previously installed to houses in Botton Village standing idle (or being removed) for want of volunteers willing to fill them with wood harvested from Bottons' own forests. We love the Canadians, their mounties and meese and their forests but maybe some of their celebrated sustainable home thinking could be applied here.

It is understood completion of the scheme is targeted prior to the end of March, before grant subsidies drop.

Planning consultants have been engaged to deal with the National Park issues.

Let's hope it all works without too much donated money and scrap dealers involved. Maybe CVT could sell the Botton Forests to the Canadians and swap a few fig leaves for maple leaves to cover up all the naughty bits. Views anyone?

And then we can all look forward to the start of the inaugural Esk Valley Moose hunting season.

Finally...on a lighter and more personal note:

The Herzog Walks



Some of you will know that one of my current strange life affirming activities is to undertake a series of Herzog Walks. These are signature themed walks, approx 50 miles or more, always from 'home' to a destination of some significance in my life and career, and I am gamely trying to fit at least two and parts of another per year. It is proposed that Walk 4 or 5 in the series will be from home to Botton, and if we are still needing to raise funds for the Botton Campaign or the EVCC then I will make an exception to my strict rule not to ask for sponsors for a leisure/fun/recreational/health giving activity. I would hope that others would join me, as has been happening with the walks so far.

They are named Herzog Walks after the great German film maker Werner Herzog, maker of 'Kaspar Hauser' and 'Aguirre Wrath of God' who famously walked for 21 straight days in winter from home (Munich) to Paris when he was in his thirties in order to prevent (by sympathetic magic) a dear friend and mentor from dying. He felt if he made the walk she would survive. He did and amazingly she also did - for another nine years or thereabouts.



My walks aren't intended to save anyone but they might help keep me going for a few more years. (Do I hear cries of 'shame' from some quarters). So far I have done from home to Cross Fell where, like St Paulinus before me, I exorcised a few demons when I got to the top one late Autumn afternoon. I am engaged in Walk 2 to Troon in Scotland and hope to be going round the Galloway and Ayrshire coasts with an overnight at Loch Arthur - if they

will have me. And in July I am doing Walk 3, The Lacale Way, from the Cashel graveyard of my father's mother in Loughinsland County Down through Downpatrick where we lived as teenagers and round the coast (and 'on and on to Coney Island') ultimately to Newcastle County Down This is also a trial run for a putative fund raising project for Camphill NI. Wish me luck with them all - and feel free to donate to AFB if you are not wholly underwhelmed by my curious vocation.

I leave you with an image taken from Windy Gyle in the Cheviot range showing the north border country and somewhere in there is the community of Loch Arthur maintaining to this day its integrity to the Camphill vision. One day I will, I hope be taking a panoramic view from Danby Moor of the Esk Valley in similar circumstances where once again the candle of Camphill has been rekindled and is burning brightly.

Brendan

