



Happy Easter to all our readers

**The Pilsdon at Malling
Community**

Easter 2012

A look into the crystal ball

Looking forward over this year and next, our vision is to improve the accommodation for all those who live here at Pilsdon at Malling. The first step is to provide some alternative accommodation so that we can completely renovate the Grade II listed cottages, which are in urgent need of improvement. The new accommodation will eventually mean that we have more space for those we aim to help, and for volunteers and community members.

A pre-estimate has given us an insight into the likely commitments and has confirmed that continued ad-hoc repairs to the cottages are not really sustainable nor cost-effective. Raising the funds that we will need and managing the project are both huge endeavours and so we are appealing to all friends and supporters to help us in this. Do you have any fundraising expertise? Could you offer some hours over the next few months to help us to identify sources of funding and submit applications to them? Would you be able to help us with fundraising ideas, even on a small scale? Is there anyone who could assist us with the initial management of the project?

We are very grateful for all the support we receive from friends and neighbours, both locally and further afield. If you felt able to donate towards this project, please mention that your gift is specifically for this purpose so that it can be allocated accordingly. We will keep you updated with our progress through the Newsletter and on the website.



We have begun a furniture restoration project. One of our Guests (see page 6) has expertise in this field and has done a wonderful job restoring furniture that he has found around Pilsdon. We have some pieces to sell (see our website for details), and if you have furniture that you would like restored, do get in touch with us (see back page).

The week after Easter, Mary and Peter Barnett make their final move to Wales for their retirement. Following a bone marrow transplant in early December, Mary has recovered well and is gaining in strength daily. She will continue to receive treatment and frequent monitoring for about five years but is well on the way to returning to full health. Pilsdon at Malling will host a celebration for Peter and Mary's retirement on Saturday 16 June, beginning at midday with a Eucharist in the Barn Chapel, followed by a buffet lunch in the gardens (or marquee if it rains). Many will receive an invitation but inevitably there will be those who have known Peter and Mary over the years whose contact details we don't have. If you would like to join us on this special day please contact us to let us know (details on back page).

An appropriate time of year ...

The last couple of months have seen much tidying up, pruning, planting of seeds, preparation of the greenhouses and vegetable gardens, all in waiting for the new season's planting. A couple of people have redecorated the main hallway and upstairs corridor of the Cloisters building and we have just completed the pre-



Easter spring clean. Now a trip to the recycling centre is imminent. The expected new lambs have been born and the magnolias are in full bloom. Spring is here.

It seems very appropriate that Lent and Easter fall at this time of year. Of course in the southern hemisphere and in countries close to the equator the seasons are different so the relationship between Lent and Easter and the seasons is not the same for them. Here the transformation that takes place in nature as we move from winter to spring really resonates with the Lenten journey that culminates in the joy and new life of Easter. We see the natural world transformed before our eyes as the dead wood and (apparently) barren ground bursts forth in new growth, beautiful blossoms and green shoots. Lent is a time of taking stock, of pruning back and clearing out the accumulated dead wood of our lives so that we can open

ourselves fully to an encounter with the Risen Lord and his transforming grace, allowing our own green shoots of renewed faith to grow and blossom.

This is also a time of change. At Pilsdon we are fairly used to change as people move on to fresh places and experiences and new people arrive. As you will read elsewhere, Kerri, our long-term volunteer from Alaska, is leaving us in April. She will spend some time with family in the USA before returning to the UK to take up a place at the Hilfield Friary Community in Dorset. Kerri has given a great deal to Pilsdon at Malling and been a great strength to us. She will be much missed by everyone.

We wish everyone a happy and blessed Easter. May the joy of the Resurrection be transforming and fill you with new life.

Pam Rink

An American at Pilsdon

The toilet flushing next to my room wakes me up. Since the tank is mounted on the other side of my bedroom wall, it's pretty loud.

Someone stomps down the stairs. I hear the cat flap in the kitchen door swinging which, more than likely, means someone opened the kitchen door, not that a cat came through. And all this before 7:00 am... For nearly two years, most of my days started like this.

I really had no idea what to expect when I came to Pilsdon in April 2010. In fact, I had no expectations whatsoever. I'd never lived in community but then I'd never lived in a country other than my own either. Sailing off into the unknown so to speak. My friends and family were all in admiration of my desire to follow a calling to a place I'd never been before and where I knew no one. Some even said they wished they could do the same. Secretly, I believe they wondered about my sanity. Well, at least a little. It's not like I'm some starry-eyed, fresh-faced youth – heavens; I'll be 53 years old this year.

I'll be honest; the first 14 months were tough. Cultural differences tended to cause embarrassment and frustration. Despite the fact that American and British people share a similar language (the joke being that by the time I left Pilsdon I should be able to speak English), what's normal and taken for granted in one country is not the same in another. Also, I struggled with finding my place, my role, in the community. I wasn't a guest nor was I a community member. I wasn't a parent or a child so that must make me the big sis-

ter; a role that seemed a good fit for me.

I know that my time here has been occasionally trying for community members as well. My forthrightness (a deeply American trait although I seem to have inherited a double portion) more than once caused discomfort between myself and community members. Despite this, we have worked to overlook and forgive; successfully, I'm happy to say. After all; each one of us responded to a call to come here and be of service. When I wasn't being a pain in the neck, I learned how to make bread from the finest recipe on the planet; cook for anywhere from 10 to 25 people; interact with people with hugely different upbringings than my own; prune fruit trees, soft fruits and roses; demolish and build interior walls; install loft blankets; paint and plaster; lead prayer services in the chapel; and sell excess furniture and goods on eBay.

The calling to come to Pilsdon was more than a call to live in community and help others; it has also become part of my faith journey. A journey where my faith broadened and deepened, most likely as a result of the struggles I have had. There have been questions that I have wrestled with that in the end brought me closer to God. Books have come my way that have changed my life - those by John O'Donohue and Richard Rohr in particular. I have shed fears and old pains and bit by bit forgiven myself. I've learned to listen, both to God and to those around me. It took until June of last year for me to realise that God brought me here to serve - to be a pair of hands and feet – and to be



reactive, not proactive. And most recently, after a week with a group helping to tidy up the Othona community, I have learned how to be present; something that never came easy for someone who always lived in the "what could be" instead of the "right now." I felt led to St. Michael and All Angels church in Offham where I became a member of the PCC and felt a very strong calling to become a lay reader; a calling supported by the community members and local clergy. And the barn chapel; what a blessing ... I've become quite spoiled with four prayer services a day and two Eucharist services a week!

Now it's 2012. Only one guest has been here longer than I as well as two community members. I now know the drill for the lead-up and follow through for Christmas and Easter. I know what's in the freezers. Cherry and Cleo (the two cats living in the cottages) know where to look for me when they want feeding. George

the dog can never contain his enthusiasm when I tell him we're going for a walk. All the fruiting trees and plants are pruned and ready for the new season. Everything feels like a well worn pair of comfortable shoes. And now it's time to leave. My two-year work visa expires less than two weeks after Easter and I'll be headed back to America. My next chapter seems to be a move to the Hilfield community in Dorset where I hope to join them in June.

Despite the struggles and frustrations, I never once felt that I should leave. God called and I answered, travelling thousands of miles to relocate to south east England from Alaska. And by staying the course, the rewards have more than offset the challenges, whether from within or without the community. Pilsdon offers healing and growth for us all. May God's face continually shine upon and bless this holy place.

Kerri Canepa

The guest slot (or the guests' lot)

On the 24th January dusk was upon me and I had just come from London after being discharged from court on the agreement that I went straight to the Pilsdon at Malling Community to find a purpose in my life instead of drinking myself into oblivion. I did indeed keep my promise. I arrived and was in great spirits and knew I wanted my life back, just knowing there was a chapel made me feel as if God himself had brought me here. Now I know this is true. As soon as I walked in and sat down in the scriptorium I felt a feeling of real inner peace and contentment. I had a great cup of tea, and felt not like a stranger but a friend. This was the best day of my life for a long time.

Next day I awoke full of hope and joy. After breakfast I went into the chapel for morning prayer. It felt great, no stress, no pressure, just pure worship to the Lord himself who gave me strength through the day, and assured me of success in my heart. I began in the garden and spent around two weeks doing and learning the

crops of the earth and it was great. One day, as I was wandering around the greenhouse, I saw numerous pieces of furniture. I have always had a passion for furniture. I love wood, the grain intrigues me. This was old furniture and needed restoration. I was the man for the job, I asked if I could get cracking on restoring this old and beautiful furniture and the reply was yes, so I did. I had a workshop, a man's paradise, full of tools, all perfect for the jobs ahead. To this day, every day I work in this great workshop, I feel happy that the Lord gave me life, that's the greatest gift of all. The furniture I repair and renew is a gift, I believe the Lord put it in my hands. Bookshelves, chairs, tables, desks, anything I can get my hands on, I restore, and I get a real privilege and contentment from doing this. So the whole motto of this story is God found me, rescued me, placed me in a spiritual place and made me feel alive again, and I worship him every day, which I feel is a pleasure. Thank you Lord.

Paul Wendt



I've been at Pilsdon for 18 months, following a "Break Down" after an accident at work. I am "High Functioning" Autistic. I enjoy being out of London, where I used to live. I find the country far less stressful, and friendlier.

I used to run a garden maintenance business in London, and above all I had a farming career. So I find I can apply my skills here, and I am able to make a valuable contribution.

I feed the chickens, and help with domestic chores. I also do some farm work including sawing logs, carting them and making bonfires, burning the general and gardening rubbish.

I find it very spiritually uplifting. We do prayers several times a day, and there is a Benedictine Sisters Abbey where I also go to prayers regularly. I've settled in well, and I'm enjoying it.

Tim Loder

Community

We live amongst each other
in ones, twos
sometimes more
We live lives of greater or lesser happiness
but always falling short;
joy seems just out of reach
We are a broken people
We cannot escape it
it is a condition of our humanness
Our brokenness lies around us like shards of glass
In the colors of our sorrows and despairs
In many shapes and sizes;
tiny half-moons like fingernail parings
jagged pieces of shattered
storefront windows
and everything in
between
Our shards fall around us randomly, without pattern
We stand wounded and bloodied from this brokenness
But in this place
This holy place
We take up these pieces and create something beautiful
For what is a mosaic but hundreds, thousands of shards?
In all colors
In all shapes and sizes
Formed into a wondrous whole
We cannot mend our brokenness on our own
But we can choose to fit our pieces with pieces from others

And in so doing
Find a wholeness that brings us closer to each other

and to God

Kerri Canepa

*...This is for Pilsdon at Malling,
10 May 2010, 19 days after my arrival*

Reflection on "Community"

While I sat quietly praying during the 10 May midday service, I thought about the brokenness of all people. Then an image of a fragment of a mosaic came into my mind – one with randomly shaped, colored pieces forming a section of a larger pattern. Then I realized that by choosing to live in community, we could fit all our broken bits and pieces together to form something much stronger and more beautiful than if we tried to do it by ourselves. Living apart from each other – which is also living apart from God – is like standing in the middle of a heap of broken glass with only a mostly empty and dried-up bottle of glue. We cannot mend ourselves, but we can find wholeness in a life spent together with others – if we dare to listen and love and trust one another.

Pilsdon can do this and has. Not everyone who stays awhile will be willing or able to add to the mosaic but many have and continue to do so. The pattern grows and changes but it is always beautiful.

O Lord, our great artist and inspiration, thank you for this holy place of Pilsdon. Help us to continue to see the beauty in a life shared together – even when someone drops our work and we have to start all over again.

The Pilsdon at Malling Community is looking for new Community Members to be part of its life. We are an ecumenical Christian community with an Anglican foundation, seeking to live a sustainable lifestyle on six acres of land. We aim for a spirit of inclusiveness and acceptance in the hospitality we offer to those recovering from a life crisis, and to wayfarers. We seek a life balanced by a mix of prayer, manual work and recreation. A sense of vocation to Christian community living and service is essential, as is a physical and emotional robustness. Email us at pilsdon@pilsdonatmalling.org.uk

Future events

April

Tuesday 3	7.30pm	Stations of the Cross at St Mary's, West Malling
Thursday 5	7.30pm	Symbolic Passover meal with Eucharist, Stripping of the Altar and Vigil until midnight, in the Barn Chapel, with West Malling
Friday 6	11.00am	CTiM Walk of Witness. Refreshments at Pilsdon
Saturday 7	7.30pm	Service of Light, Easter Vigil & Renewal of Baptism Vows. Barn Chapel, with West Malling & East Malling

June

Friday 8	9.00am	Indian Bazaar, Barn Chapel
Saturday 9	9.00am	Indian Bazaar Open garden; lunch and cream teas
Sunday 10	9.00am	Indian Bazaar Open garden; lunch and cream teas
Monday 11	9.00am	Indian Bazaar
Saturday 16	12noon	Retirement celebration for Peter & Mary Barnett

July

Saturday 14		Vigo Singers' Concert, Barn Chapel (time to be confirmed)
Saturday 28	10.00am	Trustees meet

September

Saturday 8	10.00am	Friends of Kent Churches Bike & Stride Heritage Weekend;
	evening	Concert—to be confirmed
Sunday 9	10.00am	Heritage Weekend



The Pilsdon at Malling Community

27 Water Lane, West Malling, Kent ME19 6HH
Tel 01732 870279/01732 870434

www.pilsdonatmalling.org.uk email: **pilsdon@pilsdonatmalling.org.uk**

In an attempt to save money—and the environment—we try to send newsletters by email to as many readers as possible. If you have email and do not already receive a digital copy of the newsletter, please drop a line to pilsdon@pilsdonatmalling.org.uk

Pilsdon at Malling Community is a charitable company limited by guarantee
Company No. 6218667 Reg Charity No 1123682