



L'Arche Lambeth News

SPRING SUMMER EDITION 2007

L'Arche Lambeth
15 Norwood High Street
London SE27 9JU
020 8670 6714
Lambeth@larche.org.uk
www.larchelambeth.org.uk

Letting Go

There has been a lot of letting go in L'Arche Lambeth recently. With 4 deaths in 6 months, the decision to close the Mustard Seed, one of our Community houses, and changes in the Community's leadership, we are all having to let go of important aspects of our lives in L'Arche.

On Easter Day this year we found a way to symbolise this letting go by setting balloons free into the sky. Some balloons carried a photo of the 12 Community members who have died since we began, 30 years ago. Other balloons had names of people or situations which we wanted to give to God. One by one we let these balloons, carrying our friends, our memories, our prayers and our sadness go. Some floated free quickly and soared high into the London sky; some took time to get going; others found it even harder and got stuck in trees or wires. In the end though, all of

them made it.

This very tangible expression of our letting go reminded us both



of what is lost and what is gained when we are able to open our hands to set things free; just like the balloons, those we let go are gone, and will not be seen again. There is no return, no getting them back and no way of restoring the past. They are gone forever. This knowledge is desperately difficult to accept.

On the other hand, letting go

means handing something on. Each of the balloons had a story attached to it, and maybe someone else has now read about Primrose or Doris, Bernadette or Shirley. Letting go means opening our hands to receive something new; for the Community now it means welcoming new people, being open to new ways of supporting people with learning disabilities and of living Community. Letting go means giving someone or something their freedom; it means letting someone be free from unnecessary expectations, burdens from the past or unreasonable projections.

There has been so much for us to let go of in the last year, and there will undoubtedly be more in the future, but with open hands, we know also how much we have received, and how much is yet to be given.

Contents:

Letting go	1
Taizé	2
Website	3
Birthday news	3
All change	3
Retreat in Daily Life	3
Work opportunities	4
All about us	4
Contact us	4

L'Arche Lambeth 2007-2011

Every 4 or 5 years our Community undergoes a thorough review to assess what we do well and what needs to improve and to define our priorities. The process involves every Community member, as well as friends and partners in the local area.

After an intense week of meetings and consultations in March the 2007 review is now nearing its conclusion.

The review has provided detailed priorities for the future and says

that "Faith, friendship and communication are the vital themes of the Community review."

The process this year is especially important as the current Community Leader, Hugh Nelson, will be leaving L'Arche Lambeth in July.

As a result the Community is now searching for a new Community Leader. He or she will have the responsibility for leading the Community with the new priorities. Please keep the Community, and especially those charged with

finding a new Community Leader in your prayers.



Hugh Nelson

My Easter at Taizé

Last Monday Richard, Veronica, Louise, Paul, Kevin Danny and me came back from a week in Taizé! I wish I had managed some time to write this with all of them, but if it takes too long, this message will be through only next week!

I have to confess that I was a bit concerned about what this trip would be like.

Why? I heard I might have to queue for almost one hour to have food, that if it rained, we could have mud up to our knees and a whole lot of other scary things. But as soon as we got to Taizé, everything changed completely, head over heels! The food wasn't exactly like that from a posh restaurant (so what?) nor were the bathrooms very private, but it was a great chance to enjoy something really different from a mainstream life. It was



Danny and Paul in the queue for lunch

great to see so many people together, meeting each other and making new friends.

During the week we had discussion groups, meetings and workshops. Also we had a good time taking part in the jobs volunteering to serve food, clean, do the washing up, and enjoy very nice services at church with very nice songs (in lots of languages!).

And something that was really nice was to see the presence that L'Arche has all over the

world. Many people came to us, while we were sitting (on the floor!) having lunch, or supper, asking if we were from a L'Arche community. And those who didn't suspect that, got interested about L'Arche - you cannot imagine the number of people who followed us with signalong during the services! It was a wonderful scene (which repeated every day). Some got really, really touched by seeing us signing with Danny, Paul and Romek (a friend who joined the Lambeth group at the last minute!).

If you want to know more about Taizé, in general or about this specific trip, contact us or you could visit the Taize website at www.taize.fr. It's really worth a try!

Thank you!
Alan Seabra da Costa Reis



Me, Paul, Kevin and Romek in our discussion group with lots of Swedish, Finnish and German people

L'Arche Lambeth's new website

We are very excited to announce the launch of our new website.

You can visit it now at www.larchelambeth.org.uk.

Do go and have a look!

The website has been created by

'Webenable' - a company who specialise in accessible websites for people with learning

disabilities. As such, it is clear, interesting to look at and simple to use with all the information you could possibly want to know about all we do here in Lambeth.

www.larchelambeth.org.uk

Retreat in Daily Life

A community of our size would find it difficult to go away for a week's retreat so, instead, in March we invited prayer guides into our Community to guide us individually through a week of guided prayer.

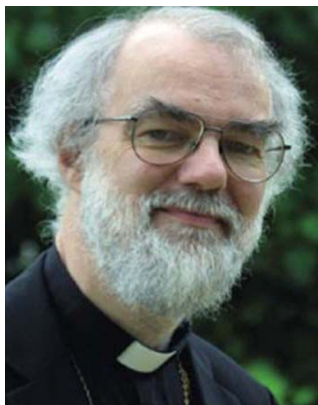
The week was fantastic - there was a tangible sense of God's presence within the Community as we went through the week together

and tried to get closer to God in our daily lives.

A huge thank you must go to the wonderful people who guided us during the week, giving of themselves and their time to enable us both as a Community and individually to move forward in our journeying with God - and to taste a nourishing slice of God's blessing and healing.

Summer Birthday celebrations for 30 years

On September 1st we are holding our official Birthday party to celebrate the 30th year as a Community in Lambeth. We will be inviting as many friends as possible to join us, and our guest of honour will be the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams. Put the date in your diary now and look out for more details coming soon.



Dr Rowan Williams

Goodbye and Welcome!

There have been a few changes in the Community recently. Before Easter we said Goodbye to Houses Coordinator Anne Marie Roszczyk and welcomed Jacek Drzewinski in her place. We have also welcomed Stuart Brown into his new role as House Leader at The Elmstone. Both Jacek and Stuart have gained much experience from being members of the Community for a long time, but they are both relishing the challenge their new positions have brought. Anne Marie has gone to take on the role as Community Leader in the L'Arche Community in Ipswich.

Another change taking place soon will be Hugh Nelson's departure in August. Hugh and his family will be leaving London so Hugh can begin his training in Oxford to be ordained into the Church of England. All change is hard.



Anthony Artiss, who is coming to live in The Dove

However God has proved his faithfulness in providing for us in the placements of Jacek and Stuart and we trust in Him to provide a new Community Leader in due course.

There are lots of changes that we can also look forward to.

We are all very excited to be awaiting the arrival of Anthony Artiss into the Community. Anthony is due to be coming sometime in June and will live at The Dove along with Jean, Carmel and Kevin. He will be supported by the Dove team who are also going to be joined by Antonio Estay. Look out for more news about Anthony in future newsletter!



L'Arche Lambeth
15 Norwood High Street
London SE27 9JU
020 8670 6714
Lambeth@larche.org.uk

Find out more at
www.larchelambeth.org.uk

If you are interested in becoming an assistant:
Contact Ellie Ware
assistants.lambeth@larche.org.uk
Phone: 020 8655 9622
Fax: 020 8670 0818

Come and get involved

We are always looking for people who are interested in living in Community with people with learning disabilities. If you are interested in finding out more about life in L'Arche Lambeth or about our current vacancies we would be very pleased to hear from you. Please contact Ellie Ware on the details given below.

We would also very much welcome any one who would like to offer any time to volunteer with us. We have a wide variety of opportunities requiring different skills and different time commitments. We look forward to hearing from you!

What is L'Arche?

L'Arche Lambeth is part of an International Federation of communities where people with and without learning disabilities live and work together. Communities offer support and home to learning disabled members and are places where the principles of welcome, respect and relationship are paramount.

L'Arche Lambeth is made up of 5 Community households, a number of people with learning disabilities living independently, 5 workshops and a network of local members, both with and without learning disabilities. We are an ecumenical Christian Community, and we welcome those of other faiths and of none. We are a busy urban Community that seeks to be integrated into our local area.

Our life is rooted in the simplicity of shared everyday activities and in the belief that every human being, regardless of ability, has a deep need for belonging, love, friendship, value, and the opportunity to have responsibilities according to their ability. We believe that the relationships we establish in shared Community life enrich us all.

The People with learning disabilities that make home with us are



welcomed for as long as they choose to live in L'Arche. Most live with assistants who commit themselves to Community life; sharing their everyday lives together. Life is rooted in the ordinary tasks of shared life; cooking, cleaning, prayer and having fun. Others live in their own accommodation with support from assistants as needed.

The Workshops offer the opportunity to do quality craft work, which is sold locally and nationally. We make candles, rugs and Stonework and grow plants in our Garden. For those who have chosen a quieter life, the Retirement group provides a way of living more gently. Increasingly we are supporting people in one to one projects.

Other Community members are friends to the houses, work as volunteers or take on specific tasks for the Community.