

Community Report September 2011

I can hardly believe it but it is already time for our next Newsletter! It doesn't seem long ago that we celebrated Easter but now we can clearly feel autumn being here while walking through the community. When I wrote the last Newsletter I told you that Christoph and me were expecting another baby and our little daughter Sunna Lilian was born on the 30th of May in Lochend. She is a healthy and happy little girl who is so lucky to grow up in such a beautiful place surrounded by many loving people. So I really have to think hard to remember what else happened in this half year – it all seems a blur of happy smiles, sleepless nights and lots of laundry! But let's try:

Just a few days after her birth there was a picnic down at the garden workshop to celebrate Ascension. This year we didn't manage to climb on a hill like we sometimes do but nevertheless had a nice and sunny coming together. In the days between Ascension and Whitsun we had little gatherings in which different people gave us a glimpse of various religions – just something that inspired or interested them about a certain faith.

The middle of summer didn't mean lots of sunshine this year and our St John's celebration had to be in the hall. Still when I think back now I remember many sunny days, playing down at the Loch with the children or going for a day to the sea. It was always a joy to visit the garden, to pick strawberries, raspberries and beautiful flowers. It was holiday-time for many of us and it was – like often – a somehow less structured time with many visitors and BBQs. One group of people went with Beth McIntosh and Kerstin Nagel on holidays to the Borders and they had an exciting but also relaxing time together.

And for the third year in a row we celebrated a wedding in Loch Arthur! This time Maria and Marko got married in our hall and we spent a most beautiful day with many guests from near and far. The barn at Lochend Farm changed magically into a flower filled dancing hall and after a delicious meal including a spectacular spit-roast we danced into the night. It was wonderful to see how all these Danish and German visitors joined into the Ceilidh-dances.

Just a week after this we were privileged to see a beautiful play called "Butterfly in a breeze". Bob Clay wrote and directed it and he performed this moving piece together with Rachel Davis, Denis Chanarin, Saul Webster and Ruth and Dave Mitchel. The cast had worked long and hard and we invited many guests to see the two performances. The play was set in a Japanese town during the aftermath of a catastrophe and it raised 440 pounds for a Japanese charity working with children who are traumatized after the tsunami.

On the 6th of August we often remember the bomb falling on Hiroshima and celebrate the Transfiguration day. This year we set up an art exhibition in the hall under the theme of "Joy" and it was a beautiful display which showed us something about each other and again let so many people shine. Next to the exhibition there were also art-materials ready and whoever wanted could have a joyful and creative time painting, drawing, cutting and gluing. During August there were also some summer groups, where people could meet to go on walks, play football together or do some crafts.

We all here know so well that Community living is an exciting and beautiful way of life but also fragile and changing ever so often. So again there was a new change in our lives with Rachel Davis leaving this summer and returning to America because her Visa expired. Rachel had been living in

Loch Arthur for the last 4 ½ years, has been responsible for the bakery and in the last year also for Iona. She and her enthusiasm for Loch Arthur will be greatly missed.

But there was also a very happy event in the beginning of August: Bob and Fran oldest daughter Bridget and her husband Safraz became parents for the first time! We all are excited about the safe arrival of Layla and are looking forward to meet her soon on her first visit from London.

In September the blackberries ripened and the walled garden is now full of beautiful red apples. Through the whole summer there has been an abundance of vegetables and fruit from the garden and we spent many evenings freezing and jam-making. Now the larders are full and we just celebrated our harvest-meal on Michaelmas Day at the end of September. It was a lovely sunny day and really showed us all once more why we choose to live in Community. With the help of everybody we managed to create a special and relaxed evening and enjoyed a simple meal together. There was beautiful bread, wonderful honey, soup made out of vegetables from our garden and of course our cheese. Latter had been especially honoured at the British Cheese Awards a few weeks ago: this year Criffel won “Best Scottish Cheese” and our Farmhouse was awarded “Best Organic Cheese” in the UK. This is very special and our Creamery team is thrilled and very proud of this. But it wasn't only the food that made it a precious evening. We celebrated each other's company and also appreciated everyone's work and efforts in this past growing season.

After this day of looking back at the last year there was a very different and more out- and forward looking event just two days later: We had invited family members of people who live here in a supported tenancy to come and spend a day with us. It was a time of honest conversations and we shared some of our hopes and worries with each other. Of course there was also lots of food involved and there was lots of chatting, meeting each other again and making new connections.

Now the darker time of the year is arriving but also the time of sitting next to the warm stove, telling stories and singing. There are many plans for the next few months and the first ideas about the Christmas play are sparking and the children start to talk about building St Martin's lanterns...

And we all are looking forward to a new youngest Community member: Juliane and Saul are expecting their first baby just after Christmas! We couldn't wish for a more beautiful Christmas gift.

I wish you all an inspiring and happy autumn and Christmas time!

All the best to you all

Susanne Salthammer