



March/April 2019

# CAMP HILL CORRESPONDENCE



**Encounter, by Mary Southard**

"I would love to live  
Like a river flows.  
Carried by the surprise  
Of its own unfolding."

**John O'Donohue**

## From the Editors

In this issue of Camphill Correspondence we bring our readers a set of contributions that raise important questions regarding the changes going on across the Camphill Movement that require a creative, spiritually informed response if Camphill communities are going to find their way into the future. The call to recognize the global situation facing the Camphill Movement resounds in this issue. Please read with interest as each of the contributors wrestles with various challenges facing Camphill communities, as these communities search creatively for the ways that lead the essentials of Camphill community life into the future.

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# Candlemas Day

By Henrie van Rooij

*A talk given by Henrie van Rooij, who lives and works in the Mount Camphill Community, on the occasion of Candlemas Day.*

Tomorrow it will be Candlemas day. For many years we at the Mount have had our own way to celebrate this festival. As preparation for the celebration I would like to try to share some of my thoughts about it.

Let's explain where the name 'Candlemas' comes from. Traditionally, the candles which were going to be used in church, were blessed every year, in a special service, on the 2nd of February. It is also the day which is called the Purification of Mary, and the Presentation in the Temple of the new baby Jesus. But these are not the things I want to talk about today

Often, at this time of the year, in the British region, we get cold but beautiful days. The ground is frozen and still. We are waiting for the Spring to come, but it is still Winter. It is on those quiet days, walking over the hard frozen ground, that I feel that the Earth is really content and at one with itself. I don't know how it is for you, but I feel that the Earth is, for a short space of time whole, and more itself than at any other time in the year. And when I say 'Earth', I mean just that. Not that space we can use for buildings, not that space we can use for gardens, crops or forestry. Not that surface we can walk on, and think we can use as we see fit. I mean the being of the soil, the being of the Earth itself. Tomorrow, when you go outside, stop for a moment, look down, and see if you can experience something of this too.

We can learn to understand this better when we look at the seasons we have in this part of the world. Think about Spring, when all the plants start growing again, sprouting up out of the ground and from seeds, or the new shoots out of the trees. When Summer comes, there will be lots of grass, wild flowers, the crops are growing in the garden. All we can think of then is keeping up with the lawn mowing, and weeding! And it is the soil, which holds the moisture, and nutrients, which gives out of its stores of life forces. It is a great outpouring, breathing out of life forces, together with the light and warmth of the Sun, that makes that possible. All those roots growing in the ground, and receiving all that goodness from the soil. When Autumn comes, the fruits and seeds are ripening, and it is harvest time; all that

growing starts to slow down. And then there is almost no growing at all during the Wintertime. For some months the soil can then recover. Instead of being attacked and used by all those plant roots, it all becomes quiet. The soil can have a rest, and with the help of the stars during those frosty nights, it can restore its own inner order.

We can learn to recognise how the Earth breathes out during the summer, breathes out all that wonderful plant life, and breathes in during the Winter, collecting new vitality for the Summer to come. And now, at this time of the year, that inbreathing is more or less completed. The Earth holds its breath for a short moment, and then the great outbreathing starts again. That is the moment we are marking at this time of the year.

As some of you know, the land here in the Mount has always been close to my heart, and I often think about ways in which we could look after it even better. It always starts with how we think about something.

While we were away in Australia during the Christmas holidays, I became very interested in the culture of the original inhabitants of Australia.

I never realised that people have lived in Australia for such a long time, at least 65,000 years. Although outwardly they looked like simple people, it is now more and more understood they were not simple at all. The Aboriginals spoke hundreds of different languages and were organised in many different tribes. Not only were they able to survive in the harsh climate for thousands of years, but they did so in ways which did not destroy their environment. There is so much we could learn from them. There are two aspects of their ancient culture which I would like to talk about today.

All the ancient peoples of Australia share the concept of the Dreaming. When they speak about Dream Time, they speak of a time before the world as we know it existed, and there was only the Dreaming. And then spiritual beings brought the world, all the mountains, oceans, rivers and deserts, plants, insects, animals and mankind and womankind, into being. And this Dream Time never stopped, and is forever going on in the background of daily existence.

This Dreaming and the Dream Time beings, are also connected to the world of the stars. When you have the privilege to gaze up at the stars in the Southern hemisphere, you can see more stars of the Milky Way than you can see here, in the Northern hemisphere. It is beautiful, and one can feel very small under that big sky, where millions and millions of stars are shining in their mysterious patterns. For the Aboriginals past, present and future are all happening and present at the same time. The present moment is just the bit we can see of the world. All the things, which we in Europe would say are in the past, for them they go on existing somehow, at the same moment when we are in the world now.

The Aboriginals know about places in their landscape where the Dreaming is especially strong. This can be a cave full of their paintings, a water hole, a tree or a special rock. It is because of the awareness of this Dreaming, which is everywhere, and especially in all those special places, that the Aboriginals feel a great responsibility to look after their land. Apart from many religious rituals and customs, they also feel it as part of their spiritual responsibility to look after their land. To keep it clean and healthy. And in return the land can look after them.

Every stone, tree, watercourse or cave, every plant or animal, has a special meaning. Because the Aboriginal people are intimately connected with their environment it was, and still is, a place for religion and art, as well as the place where you can find everything you need to stay alive, and thrive as a people.

It is now time to talk about the Songlines. This is one of the most astonishing things to discover about this ancient people. Because of their profound connection with their country, they have ways of singing about it. Instead of drawn maps they have an oral tradition, a tradition of singing their country, a portrait of the country: Songlines. This is a way of celebrating the meaning of the landscape in such a way that all those Songlines are connected up and covering the whole of Australia. Not only the nice places, but everywhere. In spite of the many different languages traditionally spoken in Australia, it was possible for the different clans to use each other's Songlines, because usually it was not just the words, but also the rhythms and intonations which described that landscape.

Imagine if there was a song here in the Mount describing the way from the front drive to St. Johns. The

singing would not only describe where everything was, landmarks and buildings, but also the history and spiritual meaning. I have tried to make up a Songline myself, just to find out how it might work.

*Oh when I enter the Front drive I come to the entrance. This is a very important place, because for many it is the first, and last place of their Mount Destiny. I walk along that drive, with the water mains in the ground, and the electric cables, and the lime trees which were planted 30 years ago, to make it look more beautiful. Then there is the place of the standing stones, which is the outdoor temple, compared with St Michael's Hall, which is the indoor temple. And the standing stones are reminding us of the four elements, fire earth, water and air, and also of the four evangelists. And the seven trees of the seven colours, tones and planets planted all around. This is a place of great Dreaming, because the monks had processions where now the stones are standing. They walked in a procession up a spiral path to the top of the small Mount which was there and which we then later took away. And that is why the Mount is called the Mount in the first place! There was a water well there which was lost in the digging. And wells are often connected with healing. And now there are the stones to mark this great Dreaming place, you can feel it when you stand still long enough. Sometimes I can feel how all the kind spirituality of the monks has left a goodness behind in the land, a goodness we could build on further, so that all being might feel well and thrive. On we go, past the orchards, where once there was a paddock, and there is Soltane House. Then the redwood trees, which are so powerful and beautiful every day of the year, even if we do not always see it because of our closed eyes and souls. And Soltane means the forest where Parsival grew up. And in the name Soltane is the word Sol, which means the Sun! And then at last with the Sports Hall on our right which was once the place where we looked after our cows, and milked them and had calves and everything, we come to that beautiful house of St. John, where many people can live together and work together and grow up. St John who was the Baptist and also the Evangelist. A very long time ago, many many songlines away. And here I put this song down back on the ground. But our consciousness will help the wellbeing and spirits of these places!*

I hope I am not confusing you too much with this, but you can see how one could learn to find the way with lines like this, full of history and meaning. In Australia

there are untold songlines like this, and many aboriginals were aware of the places and lands which were a thousand miles away.

Those Songlines are owned by the clans living in the different areas. And through these songs, filled with meaning and mythology, and through their caring for their areas, they “owned” these places. When they talked about their land, they did not mean to talk about their possession, or how much it was worth. They talked about their intimate knowledge of that place, and all the reasons for why they were looking after it, and keeping it in their consciousness. Possession and value, was not so important to them. What was meaningful was a moral ownership, the ownership of caring and being conscious for every detail of a place. Not because it would give you more profit, but because of all the other underlying meanings.

I have experienced one other “tribe” which had a similar attitude to their lands. They never possessed anything, because it is the Charity which does the possessing bit, but had full ownership and cared, and had an understanding of meanings, related to the stars, to past present and future. Can you guess which tribe that is? Well, that is Camphill. The care for the Earth and the animals and plants and forests was one of the holy

ideals of Camphill. All aspects of life, and the work on the land, the buildings, were all imbued with deeper meaning. I see all this is getting weaker now. Too busy with stuff which has nothing to do with Star-meaning, or Spirit-meaning, with Dreaming, with Dream Time. Never enough people to do all the work. I just hope that we can remember to think differently about our land, and remember the ways we used to think and work with the land, with our buildings and forests. That can help inform ways into the future which are truly healing and sustaining for all. I would like us to develop new ways in which those old inspirations can grow healthily into the future. It is the land, which patiently carries all our work, and impulses. And it will kindly support us when we think about it and act kindly towards it.

Tomorrow morning we go and pour the Earth candles: a ritual, close to the meaning of the Aboriginal Dreaming, a ritual which can be entered into one of our own meaning-filled Songlines. We are asking all those beings and spirits that are in the earth to feel acknowledged and honoured by us, and that we pledge to protect and honor each other.

I am aware that all I have said is my own understanding of things. There will be some errors, but please listen to what I am trying to say rather than my mistakes, so my words may be of some use to you. Thank you.

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# A Personal Impression of South Africa

By Michael Motz



The Camphill Movement Core Group met from 14 to 18 January 2019 in South Africa. It was a conscious gesture to meet in a region “less travelled”- discovering and acknowledging the work that is done by colleagues in the Camphill communities in South Africa and Botswana.

Personally, coming from central Europe, I was struck by the different culture. In Europe, I experience rather challenging times linked with a deviation to increasing nationalism and a pull towards individualism - often based on negativity and complaint. In South Africa, I was impressed by an atmosphere of positivity and engagement. Although this nation has many challenges linked with its arid climate (drought, fires etc.), poverty and its charged history, I experienced that people affirm “we can make this work and find a way”.

This impression also holds true for the Camphill places in this region: continuous financial, social and environmental challenges are met with a calm and positive attitude and with colleagues trusting that there are new ways forward. At Hermanus school and farm where a forest fire has just gone through the village and left all houses miraculously untouched, members of the communities go through a “Phoenix experience”, very much supported by the local community. Camphill Village West Coast with its dynamic and motivated management team faces with courage the present challenges linked with the aging population, for

example, and establishes an ever deeper symbiosis with the local community. A meeting with the whole village in the hall showed the enthusiasm and interest in Camphill that reigns in the place. At Camphill Botswana many efforts are made to train young adults with challenging needs so that they can find a worthy place in society; new ways to deal with autism spectrum disorder are actively sought and gather many supporters including government officials in Camphill.

These personal impressions of our most southern region completes my picture of Camphill, its challenges and strengths always aiming to offer possibilities for people in the different parts of the world to go a path of inclusive social and personal development. With the title “Camphill and the relationship to its environment – creative symbiosis” the upcoming Movement Group meeting will take place at Camphill TịnhTrúc Gia aka (The Peaceful Bamboo Family, Vietnam) from 13 to 17 May 2019. We would like to explore how the environment and Camphill influence each other and how this creates new possibilities and also aim to link our global movement more consciously to the impulses and qualities of the Camphill communities in the Eastern Region.

With a big warm thank you to James Sleigh and his team for hosting our visit to South Africa. **Written by Michael Motz, Fondation Perceval, Switzerland.**



# Meeting with the Core Group of the Movement Group

By Andreas Schuschke

I had the privilege to join Andreas Groth (guest - African region), Henrik Hammer (Northern region), Jan Goeschel (Council), James Sleight (African region), Michael Motz (Middle European region), Nortje van Deursen (Irish region) and Steven Clee (American region) for one of their sessions of their meeting in Camphill Village West Coast. It was a pleasure to meet everyone in person and discuss the continued collaboration of the Movement Group and the Preparers Group. I had the sense that there was good will and interest in strengthening our relationships.

Some important questions and observations for the Preparers Group were raised in the context of this meeting:

- What is an image that could guide us in our efforts at collaboration in the coming years? One image that came up in the course of our meeting was that of the Movement as one's "front space" and the inner Community as one's "back space." Both spaces belong to one and the same being. In terms of the Camphill Community as a whole, as the Movement takes a step so also does the inner Community.
- How can the inner community's presence be more accessible to the Movement? It was observed that the inner Community seems to have opened up a bit by regularly allowing interested non-members to join in local and regional activities and having an increased awareness of spiritual activity taking place outside of the inner Community context.
- Will the inner Community be present in the future in South Africa as the number of members has become quite small and the average age is fairly high? Conversations with inner community members on this question formed an important part of my visit.
- Is there a task for the inner Community to inwardly carry and understand the expansion of the Camphill Movement into Asia? Can the inner Community seek spiritual content from the Movement? What could it mean for the

inner Community to accompany the Movement on a spiritual level?

- Can we create more individual points of contact?
- Could a space be made in the meeting of the Movement Group in Vietnam in May to share from the inner Community work?

On a practical level, I reiterated the Preparers Group's open invitation for one or two Core Group members to join parts of our meetings and the idea to have a parallel meeting with the Core Group in January 2020 in order to share from the activity of the inner Community with the Movement Group. The Core Group explained that their January meeting is usually full because they have the task to prepare the summer meeting of the Movement Group. They raised the question whether it would be more valuable to have the Preparers join parts of the summer meeting when all the delegates of the Movement Group would be present. It seems likely that at least one Core Group member will be able to accept our invitation to join part of the next Preparers Group meeting in England in March.

# Devotion for Small Things

By Jonathan Flint

In the hills of Soquel, California, under the warm auspices of Paloma Hall, the Camphill Academy branch campus at Camphill Communities California held the Camphill Impulse Retreat I from January 25 – 27th, 2019. Five 2nd Year Academy students, several carrying coworkers and an employee (myself) were invited to join the retreat. The retreat looked back into the founding of and early life in the Camphill Movement. We were led on an immersive experience to see the world through the perspective of a small group of refugees, resettled in 1938 from Continental Europe, in a country where “the people were strangers; their way of living was not my way... I had a different background, different modes of existence, different thoughts.” The retreat introduced the first Goetheanum, the 1st Memorandum, the Foundation Stone Meditation, the Early Images and included a Bible Supper and Service. The retreat was held by five long-term Camphill coworkers and Academy faculty, in such a way to create a safe space for learning and openness among the participants. It is a testament to what is possible in Camphill, that in our small group, nine countries of origin were represented among the participants and faculty; our ages ranged from 21 – 70+; and we brought prior experience from living in at least ten distinct North American and international Camphill communities.

The retreat began on Friday evening, sitting together in a circle, with the Three Kings’ candles burning brightly on the center table, illuminating colorful strips of paper, each one representing an Early Image. To open, each participant shared their reasons for choosing community and why they chose Camphill, reasons which were often interwoven with an articulated or implicit story of another job, living situation, training or education program that had been tried, but didn’t work for them or feel like the right fit. This opening session presented the first spark of a theme, which developed for me throughout the retreat, as the image of a refugee – a person seeking a place to belong, the opportunity to pursue a personal future unbound by one’s

circumstances at birth but, still bound to fulfill a particular destiny. This image of the refugee is born out also in the following Early Image: “Every person has moments when [they] experience the glory of the Community and at the same time, [their] own imperfections, [their] shadow. We must not, as members, experience our own glory, but the shadow of the other. This is again an obstacle in the path of the spirit.”

Here, Karl Konig refers to the experience of the Lesser Guardian, further elucidated in *The Spirit of Camphill: Birth of a Movement* pg. 185: “A [person] may learn to face his own Lesser Guardian in the privacy of his own person, but to live in community in any real sense means to submit to an experience of one’s Lesser Guardian in the other, and to permit the other to experience [their] Lesser Guardian in oneself. Neither is easy. There is a long way to go before learning to love the other who shows one a truth about oneself and before gaining sufficient respect and tact to show the other a truth about themselves.”

The image of the refugee presents greater complexity than that of displacement from one’s physical or national circumstances at birth, whether due to sexual identity or expression, racial make-up, ethnic tradition, or cultural beliefs and practices, cognitive ability or physical disability. The image of the refugee is also the person dealing with a shadow of shame and despair looming over one’s personal future, their Lesser Guardian preventing the fulfillment of one’s destiny, whether due to poverty, joblessness, persecution, isolation, political instability, abuse, neglect, exploitation, violence, and micro-aggression. The appearance of Camphill as a safe harbor for each person in their biography and also finding in Camphill a thread connected to their destiny, came strongly from this first evening.

Moving into Saturday, we continued to pick an Early Image to read between each session. I happened upon the following: "If we consider our community as a shelter to creep into, the question of its justification in our troubled and changing times would arise." How should one reconcile this image with that of the lived experience shared by so many of Camphill as a safe harbor? I pondered the question, through the slide show of the first Goetheanum and a drawing exercise. We had lunch, and during the break period, I happened to step outside for a walk alongside the public road which runs along the western periphery of the community. At that point, I remembered that a woman had come into the main office a week or two before to lodge what she called a "customer complaint," namely that Camphill California "staff" should be picking up trash alongside the road by our properties. Considering how I could avoid this unpleasant experience again, I thought I would "show her" just how much litter there was (should she ever return), not just in front of any particular Camphill property, but alongside the road in general. So, while leaving on my walk, I took a 13-gallon drawstring trash bag from my trunk and a pair of gloves, and proceeded to pick up litter alongside the road, making a mental note of the small proportion of litter adjacent to Camphill California (over the course of an hour, I filled the 13-gallon bag from a ¾ mile stretch of the road, mostly beer bottles from up the road). Feeling pleased with myself as I turned back, a Lexus SUV approached and slowed down, the driver rolling down the window to talk to me. Imagine my surprise, as I encountered the same woman who had lodged a "customer complaint" weeks before! She recognized me and explained that she used to collect litter until recently and she had been concerned with the recent build-up of litter, and that it became a flashpoint for her

of "not being a good neighbor." I just smiled and said that I understood, no problem, and she went on her way.

Soon I returned to the retreat and went through a recitation and discussion of the Foundation Stone Meditation, before heading home, and returning for Bible Supper. During Bible Supper, it hit me: "If we consider our community as a shelter to creep into, the question of its justification in our troubled and changing times would arise." It's unlikely that Karl Konig intended this image to reflect on the Camphill Movement's responsibility for picking up litter along the roadsides of our communities, but the point felt salient. People in the wider community will be troubled by many issues, small and large, some of which we would rather "it be some else's problem." But, if our community attempts to shelter itself from change and the troubles of the wider community, it in fact will have the opposite of the intended effect, instead calling into question the very justification of the community. This experience also brought to mind another axiom from Karl Konig: "The devotion for the small things."

***Written by Jonathan Flint, Communications Committee Chair, Camphill Association of North America and Supported Living Program Manager and Licensed Administrator, Camphill Communities California.***

*This article represents the personal views of the author and does not represent the views of Camphill Communities California or the Camphill Association of North America.*

# Report: International Camphill Youth Conference

## July 26 - 29, 2018

Camphill Community Clanabogan

Written by Clara Burger



How can I carry the Camphill Flame into the future? - This was the question, fifty enthusiastic Camphillers of the young generation had on their mind, when meeting in Clanabogan for a weekend full of inspiration.

We are living in a world of constant changes. Every day we have to adjust. This does not only apply to us as individuals: the Community we call our home is part of a much wider community, the ever changing world. We, as individuals, need to find our voices and courage to lead our Communities through this changing world, into the future. To do so, we need to equip ourselves - which is how the initiative for the youth conference was born: How can I carry the Camphill flame into the future?

On Thursday the 26th of July, we started off with a performance of Clanabogan's Makaton choir and a warming up with "getting-to-know-each-other" activities!

To understand the need for the future we had to start with the past: Lighting the Candle, a talk given by Cherry How. The image of the candle flame connected to Camphill is rooted in an experience Karl König had in 1927 when he was just 25 years old, the average age at this conference!

"And then, the celebration began. Each child, holding in its hand an apple into which a small candle was fixed, had to walk along the spiral to light its own candle at the central candle on the hill." (Karl König)

So how can we carry the flame into the future? It starts with ourselves. "How Can I Carry the Camphill Flame Into the Future, I With My Strength and Inner Qualities": this talk was given by Dr. Maria van den Berg.

The first day finished with a social evening and bonfire!

Friday the 27th of July was the day of the present.

To understand how we would like to develop Camphill we first need to know how Camphill has developed. Martin Sturm guided us with his talk through the Developmental Path of the Community. We looked at the seven phases of spiritual development of people and organizations by Margarete van den Brink and the research work of Daniel McKanan for his coming book about Camphill and the future. It opened up an interesting discussion! What are our current challenges? What phase are we in? Looking at Camphill Clanabogan we are in a phase of transition. We are becoming more and more individualized. We have an increasing need for personal space and privacy, especially the younger generation.

Questions raised during the discussion groups:

- How to make Camphill better known?
- How to make it more attractive? (specially for young people to join?)
- How to have the freedom to stay true to our own and to the Camphill model / values?

How do we create Community? We need to strive towards an ideal that asks for daily practice. It asks for inner work: "Homemaking with Mindfulness". Veronika van Duin gave a talk which brought us back to the center, to our home. If the home is good, the Community is good. With her talk about Care, Concern

and Contemplation three important issues were raised:

- 1) How do we practice the values of the first memorandum of 1945 today? (Care)
- 2) How do we take up the leading thought on faithfulness? (Concern)
- 3) Are we awake to the appearance of Christ in the etheric. (Contemplation)

The day finished with Community presentations. It was wonderful to hear the inspiring stories of Esk Valley (a newly-found Camphill community, grown out of the struggles around Botton Village in the heart of the North Yorkshire Moors) and of The Alliance for Camphill (an association of individuals who campaign for the values of Camphill communities, committed to people with learning disabilities, the importance of intentional community life and social justice).



Saturday the 28th of July: The Future: Let's make Camphill Sexy again!

We should constantly develop and learn from the path taken. Can we reinvent our concept of leadership, management and our role in Society today? Can we consider the ever changing world around us, our needs and the demands that are addressed towards us from society?

The participants were asked to write down one phrase concerning the past or present or future of Camphill. I would like to mention a few:

Past:

- Real community life where everybody took part.
- Strong inner community connections

Present:

- Lack of communication (between generations)
- Losing sight of the foundations of Camphill
- Willingness and recognition that change is needed
- Give young people the opportunity. Empower them. Recognize their commitment to the future of Camphill.

Future:

- Training and education
- Development and transformation
- Empower authenticity. Adapt to the reality of young people in order to become authentic
- Camphill is waking up!

Our last evening was marked with the music of the "lamedogz" from Camphill Glencraig, who played for us throughout the night.

The four days were filled with inspiring conversations, yoga, good food, singing and lovely workshops (Eurhythmy, Art Therapy, Sustainability, Circus, Woodwork, The Spiritual Life and Graffiti).

I hope that the flame has not only warmed us, but that we can also spread it and carry it into the future. It was motivating to see young people passionate about Camphill. Let us remain an active youth group!

The organizers, Wiebke Lösken and I thank all who have contributed to make this event successful.

If you are interested in the minutes of the Youth Conference please contact:

[Youth.conference@camphillclanabogan.com](mailto:Youth.conference@camphillclanabogan.com)

# Report: Visit to the African Region

Written by Andreas Schuschke



**from L to R: Elma Young, Julio Laset, Geralyn Laset and Andreas Schuschke.**

There are currently four Camphill Places in the African region. Three of them are located in the Western Cape region of South Africa: Camphill School and Camphill Farm Community near Hermanus about 2 hours east of Cape Town and Camphill Village West Coast about 1 hour north of Cape Town. The fourth place, Camphill Community Trust Botswana, is located about 1 hour south of Gaborone, the capital of Botswana.

During my one-week visit I had the pleasure and the privilege to experience each of these Camphill places and speak to community members. Unfortunately, due to various circumstances outlined further below, I had limited opportunities to interact with students and adult friends with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in the communities.

As a member of the Preparers Group, the motivation for my trip was two-fold. Firstly, I wanted to get a first-hand experience of the current activity of those community members in Africa who carry the spiritual life of the Camphill Community with the aim of helping to foster closer connections between those spiritually active community members in the African region with those in other regions. Secondly, I wanted to meet with the Core Group of the Movement Group of Camphill on behalf of

the Preparers Group in order to continue the process of re-establishing closer personal relationships and collaboration between individuals representing the Camphill Movement and the Preparers Group.

The two communities near Hermanus are situated in a beautiful mountain valley by the Atlantic Ocean of the Western Cape. A few days before my arrival, on Friday, January 11, near disaster struck the two communities, when a wildfire raced into the valley. What I encountered upon my arrival was a group of people surveying the aftermath of the fire and expressing their joy at having been spared the worst. Except for losing a few smaller structures, all the other buildings remained intact, most of them showing barely any evidence of having been engulfed by flames. However, the landscape around the communities was damaged by the fire. Yet, as the fire was approaching, the cows were herded into one of the pastures with the sprinklers turned on. The fire passed through and none of the cows were hurt. Even some of the many gardens were spared. People were citing their recent spraying of the Three Kings Preparation and the guardianship of the communities' angels as having blessed and protected them.



**School building in Camphill Botswana**

Despite these events the two communities made the

decision to offer to host me. Unfortunately, the fire had prompted the evacuation of all students and friends in the two places, and they were not yet allowed to return during my stay. Therefore, I was unable to experience the communities with their fullness of life.

The situation in the two Camphill places near Hermanus has changed since the early beginnings of Camphill in South Africa. Camphill Community members from Europe brought and established a strong Camphill Community impulse. Some have died, left or aged out of active work. One of the reasons for the change in the communities lies in the fact that it has become more difficult to acquire visas for Europeans to stay in the country long-term. While the original impulse remains strong for now in the applied practices of curative education, social therapy and intentional community building, the deeper, spiritual aspects of Camphill have not been taken hold off by the South Africans, who have over time replaced most of the Europeans. The present staff members were described as wonderful, loving individuals who deeply care for the children and adult friends, but many of them have their own religious perspectives, which can lead to a lack of interest in or even resistance to the anthroposophical spiritual life of the Camphill Community.

The people that I spoke to expressed various ways of approaching these issues. At the Camphill School the community members who carry the Camphill Community-Anthroposophical life have managed to establish an all-inclusive way of celebrating the festivals by asking everyone, including office and maintenance staff, to actively participate in the preparation and celebration of every festival. This seems to have become a great success in that the entire community experiences a joyful anticipation of their festivals. Another approach has been to try and reinvigorate at least some sort of orientation training in Anthroposophical concepts. While there is no longer a full-time training in Curative Education or Social Therapy, the carrying Camphill Community members attempt to offer basic training sessions to all coworkers and staff and hold open study groups. Lastly, the carrying community members support the places inwardly. They are committed to the task of keeping the essentials of Camphill alive by helping Anthroposophy to permeate the community's activities, including having the Sunday Services. They

hold a study on Anthroposophy once a week, which is open to therapists and friends of Camphill, and conduct regular Class Members' work.

Another aspect that lives in the carrying community members is the awareness their location in the country of South Africa. There is a sense of the cultural realities, especially with regard to religious perspectives, that have to be taken into account for Camphill community building. While the developments in these communities are seen with concern by the carrying community members, a certain pragmatism and acceptance of the situation combined with a strong will to work creatively with the realities present today can be experienced.



**From L to R: Bill Chambers, Eastlynn Nelson-Tansley, Roswitha Groth, Renate Sleight (nee Konig)**

The landscape at Camphill Village West Coast presents a striking contrast to that of the two Camphills near Hermanus. Situated on a wide plain, with beautiful flowering trees and bushes rising out of the sandy earth and only some low foothills of the coastal mountains just visible on the horizon, I felt myself immersed in the archetypal picture of the African continent so often portrayed in the media. James Sleight, managing director of this beautiful Camphill village, had kindly organized my stay.

Apart from my conversations with the Core Group of the Movement Group and carrying community members, I had the pleasure of attending an evening community



**Blooming trees in Camphill Village West Coast, they were buzzing with bees**

gathering that had been organized to introduce the members of the Core Group to the rest of the community. This evening reminded me that our community members with intellectual and developmental disabilities are the heart and soul of the Camphill Movement. During this evening I encountered the same warmth and joy of life that I have encountered in other Camphill places across the globe.

My two meetings with Renate Sleight, Roswitha Groth, Eastlynne Nelson-Tansley, Bill Chambers and Ninja Geissler, were characterized by a serious and contemplative mood in their attempts to convey their view of how the Camphill Community impulse lives in the African region. The experience of the Camphill Community's spiritual presence having faded also resounded in these conversations. It was noted that the Camphill Community spirit has spread out into the region because a strong group of Anthroposophists moved out of Camphill in the past and established new Anthroposophical endeavors in and around Cape Town. Furthermore, it was shared how in the community the

Camphill impulse has become integrated with the local culture through the celebrating of the festivals and services in a way that includes the cultural aspects present in the Western Cape region of South Africa.

A final, but nonetheless important, thought-image that arose takes us back to the question of working with what lives in Africa. It was expressed that the African culture is heart-centered, with Nelson Mandela being the most prominent example of this. It was stated that the people of this culture are less likely to connect to the deeper Camphill Community impulse through traditional anthroposophical schooling, but rather through working with the heart forces that can present in a Camphill Community. In this context, Kaspar Hauser was mentioned as a possible inspiration for exploring the unfolding of Camphill Community activity through the heart.

Upon my arrival in Botswana I was met with yet another different landscape. The incredible summer heat, the rich, dark, red earth and the beautifully rounded, green hills full of red cliffs in the surroundings of the village made a deep and lasting impression on me. Camphill Community Trust Botswana offers two distinct programs: primary school education for 5 – 14 year olds; and for those who are 14 years and older there is a training for integrated living and working. Unfortunately, I was not aware that most learners go home on most weekends, when I made my travel arrangements. I also learned during my stay that all staff members are employed and about 20 staff members live on campus, while the other staff live in the nearby village of Otse. Therefore, I found the community largely deserted, when I visited on a weekend. Nevertheless, I was shown excellent hospitality by some of the resident staff members.

In my meetings I learned that Camphill Community members try to meet once a week to study anthroposophical content together and maintain the "golden thread" to the spiritual world. They shared with excitement that a group of staff members have become service holders and have taken up further training with the sacraments of the Christian Community, that is provided by a Christian Community priest who visits from Johannesburg four times a year. They noted with admiration that this priest has a

wonderful and accessible way of bringing anthroposophical concepts.

Regarding the carrying of the Camphill Community impulse, community members said that their main concern was how the substance of the community can express itself through the work in Camphill. There seemed to be an understanding that the more inner nature of community activity will have to evolve in Camphill Botswana in order to meet the cultural framework that is present there.

It was a great learning experience and an exercise in open-mindedness for me to encounter the African region of Camphill and some of its carrying Camphill Community

members. It is a real question as to how long the Camphill Community will still be present in its traditional forms on the African continent. On the other hand, what I experienced, and what individual people shared with me, has shown me that the presence of the Camphill Community substance and activity might go beyond its traditional expression, at least as far as the African region is concerned.

There is interest among the Camphill Community members that I spoke with to link more actively again with the other regions. For my part, I will do my best to advocate for this to be made possible, as the African region, like any other region, has much to offer to the Camphill Community worldwide, and vice versa.

## A Letter from Camphill Jøssåsen

Dear Camphillers, friends of Camphill and those of you who have never heard of Camphill,

We are writing to you from a small Norwegian Camphill village, called Jøssåsen. We believe it is a place which could suite many different people, whose are looking for a life different from the mainstream. Despite our strong Camphill ethos, beautiful nature, clean air, water, and earth, we still struggle to find enough coworkers who are willing to live in our community. We think it is because we are so little known. Therefore, with this letter we would like to send out a signal to the world and hope there will be some people who will tune in.

We believe there are Camphillers out there, to whom the impulse of Camphill has been precious for many years but their communities have been turned into institutions and they are now left without a place where this impulse can thrive.

We believe we have friends who had lived for shorter periods in Camphill and found those times transformative; maybe still longing for community life but who were carried away by life it's self.

Finally, we are quite sure there are many of you who never heard of Camphill before reading this letter and who are

now being a bit puzzled. To you we can tell that Jøssåsen is a place where people from many different countries have come to live and work together, to practice compassion, to develop, and to support each other. There is information about Camphill Communities and Jøssåsen on the internet what we recommend to read before contact us.

Interested? Please contact us!

Email: [office@jossasen.no](mailto:office@jossasen.no)

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More Information on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/jossasen/>



# In Memoriam: Brigitte Greuter

## Address to the funeral of Brigitte Greuter June 24, 1934 - October 15, 2018

As a butterfly frees itself from its pupation to fly into the distance, facing the light, you can see the threshold crossing of Brigitte Greuter. After a bad fall, it was soon made clear that she was on her way back to the world from which we are all born into earthly conditions. Rudolf Steiner once coined this change from the visible to the invisible side of existence:

“Origin from which we have gone out,  
Origin, which lives in all things,  
To you, you higher self, let us return.”

She was born in Gotha, Germany on June 24, 1934. Two younger brothers were later born. Her father was a lawyer. During the war, she first attended elementary school, then the Lyceum , which she continued in autumn 1945 in Wuppertal, where the family had moved. A year later, she moved to the newly opened Rudolf Steiner School, which she attended until the 12th grade.

Her career goal was to work with children . She first went to England in September 1952, then to Scotland for training as a curative educator. Karl König signed her graduation diploma in 1956. He got to know her as a person with a talent for education, in dealing with children and a sense of responsibility.

In 1957 she went to Stuttgart to complete her education as a gardener and photographer. In 1961 she started work in Camphill in South Africa. For her, that was the place where she felt completely in her element, working from flowing heart forces, always ready to act. She was a

housemother, teacher and therapist. She did everything with a lot of responsibility. She was gifted in crafts and creative in shaping festivals. She had a strong sense of beauty and always loving.

In 1965 a guest from Basel, Werner Greuter, came. He became one year later her husband. At Christmas 1957, they moved to Basel with a newborn son. However, part of her always felt homesick for South Africa. She often went back to help. In 2006 she went back to show her son the places where he had been born.

From 1970 on, she worked for eleven years at the Heilpädagogische Heim Perceval in St. Prex , in which she developed her love for the tasks of pedagogic, creative, domestic and maternal life. From Basel, where they later lived, she also helped out by working in a doctor's household with nursing duties and worked tirelessly for the bazaar and flea market at the Rudolf Steiner School.

After her husband's threshold crossing six years ago, her vitality began to decline. Life was not easy after the fall. But with the move to the nursing home, she became satisfied and found everything beautiful, especially when people visited her, her son, relatives, friends. Before her death, she connected with her friends in the Camphill community. She was ready for her departure into the eternal world , to go her own ways. Inwardly, she remains connected to us, in the soul depths, the heart forces and loving memories.

In the words of Antoine de St.Exupéry: “If you seek me, seek me in your heart. I have found there a place to stay, I am always with you.”

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The Dove Logo of the Camphill movement is a symbol of the pure, spiritual principle which underlies the physical human form. Uniting soon after conception with the hereditary body, it lives on unimpaired in each human individual. It is the aim of the Camphill movement to stand for this 'Image of the Human Being' as expounded in Rudolf Steiner's work, so that contemporary knowledge of the human being may be enflamed by the power of love. Camphill Correspondence tries to facilitate this work through free exchange within and beyond the Camphill movement. Therefore, the Staff of Mercury, the sign of communication which binds the parts of the organism into the whole, is combined with the Dove in the logo of Camphill Correspondence.