

Chris Edmondson & Emma Ineson Eds
Celebrating Community
God's Gift for Today's World

ISBN 9780 2325 2659 2

DLT, 2006, £10.95

Celebrating Community is a reflection on 60 years of the Lee Abbey Community. The book draws on the experience of all strands of the Movement, whose common calling "to communicate Christ through relationships" is expressed according to their different contexts: Lee Abbey Devon, the Youth Camps, and Lee Abbey Friends started in the 1940's, the International Students' Club London in 1964, the Household Communities in 1988, and the Beacon Youth Centre in 2004. Over 5,000 people of varied age, race, life circumstances, cultural and church backgrounds have been community members.

Interestingly, the founders' original vision for Lee Abbey did not include intentional community. However the first members soon recognised the reality and began working through its implications! The book reflects that on-going process. It is a compilation of contributions from thirteen people who are or were part of the Lee Abbey movement, with chapters exploring community in relation to hospitality, environment, worship, healing, diversity, conflict, leadership, young people, and mission.

The introduction quotes a church leader in Seattle: "In our current cultural crisis, the most powerful demonstration of the reality of the gospel is a community embodying the way, the truth and the life of Jesus." What follows is a stimulating and thoughtful reflection on the Lee Abbey movement's experience of community, illuminated by the wider Christian tradition. In addition to Jack Winslow's influence on both SSF and Lee Abbey I found other intriguing similarities. Some fruit of Lee Abbey's experience could well illuminate our path, both in SSF and more widely, as we continue to try to live Christian community.

Sue CSF
formerly a Lee Abbey chaplain