

Compton Durville An Up-date

It was in 1962 that CSF sisters first came to live in the small Somerset hamlet of Compton Durville. Then, nursing was the main work; now it is hospitality. The buildings happily have proved flexible as needs have changed, and so have the sisters!



Compton now offers residential accommodation for groups and individuals, for retreat, rest, holiday, or study. There are also several rooms which can be used by groups and individuals for the day. All of these guests are welcome to join the sisters in chapel for the regular round of services, as are local friends. The gardens and the surrounding countryside are an attraction for many, as is the quiet sacrament chapel.

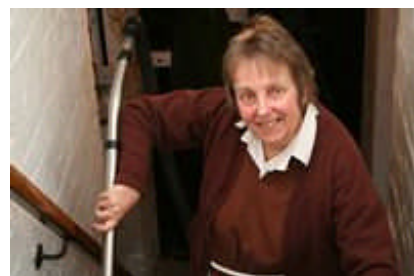
Guests who want a bit more independence can stay in the hermitage, or in the Dower Cottage, both only a few minutes walk from the Convent. These are self-catering, and offer the possibility of being entirely self-contained.



Spiritual direction is an important part of the ministry of the house, and is a particular ministry of Sue and of Phyllis, both of whom also offer Individually Guided Retreats. Until recently Sue co-ordinated the Southwest Spiritual Directors' Network, and she teaches on the Diocesan Spirituality Course alongside her responsibilities as Guardian. Phyllis, along with her work as house bursar and as gardener, visits a local old people's home each week.

Helen Julian, as Minister Provincial, and Beverley as Novice Guardian, are often away from the house. Helen Julian is also a writer, mainly for the Bible Reading Fellowship. Beverley is mentor to a small Franciscan women's community in Korea, and spent a month with them earlier this year. Hilary also has provincial responsibilities as Gift Aid secretary, dealing with Gift Aid for both sisters and brothers in this province.

All of these sisters also share in some of the regular round of necessary work - cooking, shopping, cleaning - which keeps the house ticking over.



Other members of the house are primarily involved in the day to day work of the house - Jannafer keeps the shop in order, shares in the cooking, and does much of the laundry. Liz is Guest Sister, dealing with bookings and keeping the diary up to date - a crucial task in a complicated house. Jennie was also very much involved in guest ministry before her death in April, a loss to which the house is still adjusting.

Outside engagements - preaching, speaking, leading quiet days or retreats, participating in parish missions, or leading Holy Week - take sisters away from time to time, as of course does time for their own retreat or holiday. Although there are seven sisters resident, on any particular day there may be only two or three around.

This makes the help of working guests and Sojourners, who spend between a week and six months living, working and worshipping with the community, very valuable. Along with new members of the community, who spend the first part of their novitiate here, they bring a fresh perspective and new energy, and hopefully gain insight into a different way of living, and a sense of the Franciscan way. **f**