

# Juniper Hill

The Newsletter of Gomde Scotland - Hardmuir Woodland Hermitage

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Summer 2009

With the blessing of our Teachers, a lot has been achieved in the UK during the summer, with exciting and wonderful developments at Lindholme Hall in England, and at the Gomde Hermitage, Scotland. Thank you for all your help and good wishes.

If all goes well, next year we hope to build some wooden retreat huts at the hermitage, for you to use for practice. This year, in April, the new wooden shrine hall or Lhakhang arrived. We levelled the ground, built a concrete foundation and put it up with help from workers from the Czech Republic.



Still it needed several coats of paint, the interior varnishing, gutters, gardens and a bathroom to be built. Dharma friends came to help. People made meditation cushions, gave furniture, advice and chant books. We are really grateful for everyone's support, especially our neighbours, who were as always very kind.

Finally there it stood, in all its splendour and it was commonly agreed upon that it really added a special quality to the woodland. Then spontaneously, Lama Thupten, a very nice monk from Samye Ling, visited and made many auspiciousness prayers.

Everyone got plenty of exercise down in the woods. We were advised that the lake needed to be cleared to avoid it silting up with weed. Next year we will get vegetarian fish to eat them up! A huge amount of strimming was done to clear the pretty, but invasive rosebay willow herb. The juniper gardens were also cleared.



A Kora is being made around the retreat land by cutting paths through the gorse and bracken. The meadows were mowed with the community tractor, and many trees, especially the fruit trees, needed to be pruned.

It was a fruitful year, with bumper crops of cherries, apples, rowan, hazelnuts and plums. The peaceful, protected atmosphere and huge variety of broadleaf trees, fruits and berries is leading to a noticeable increase in biodiversity, attracting deer, badgers, butterflies, brilliant blue dragonflies, birds and squirrels. It is nice to think the daily incense and Sang offerings helped.

Phakchok Rinpoche suggested that he give teachings over a live video link. On the first day 12 people fitted into the little teaching tent, but the next day 30 people came and we moved to a bigger room. People had lots of questions and enjoyed the teachings. The neighbours played the bagpipes for Rinpoche and he showed us his lovely wee son. It really felt like Rinpoche was in the room with us and was a great success.

On the auspicious date of the Birth of the Buddha, and on other auspicious days, we celebrated in the new Lhakhang with elaborate Trinley Nyingpo Tsok (Guru Rinpoche Feast offerings) People came together to practice the Dharma from Denmark, London, Edinburgh, Luxembourg and Ireland, joined by local people and neighbours. It was a wonderful time, filled with practice, good food, flowers and joy.



Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche is delighted with the developments and wishes to visit in 2010. When Kyabje Trulshik Rinpoche saw a picture of the new Lhakhang he said, "that is a very good place to do retreats". We are all very happy that the Teachers are pleased and that the Dharma is flourishing. May it support the Sangha and also bring immense and universal benefit for all sentient beings.

