

From the curate

A few years ago my wife and I founded a charity, Across Country: a place of adventure and stillness to be more fully ourselves, with others, the world and with God. Our latest project ran from Friday 11<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> September, once more we took a group of people from St Augustine's, in Halifax to Scargill House in the Dales.

Many of our group were seeking asylum, all had faced danger and persecution. One young man escaped from Syria with all his friends shot dead by soldiers. Another escaped being killed in Sudan – his skin was too black for the Arabic government.

Having faced huge danger they now come up against vast obstacles; even filling in our permission forms means not only writing in a new language, but with a new alphabet. And yet, over the course of the weekend, walking,



abseiling, cooking eating and singing together, their cautious reserve seems to melt, we see more smiles and playfulness, we find ways to communicate with action and gesture and their humanity begins to be restored.



Through adventure senses are awakened, fears are faced, some trauma is re-lived. Together we support and listen. Some trust is allowed back into abused hearts.



Relaxing together inside, the safety of home base. Stories and self-expressive creative activities reveal deeper selves.



We lit fires for cooking and for warmth. Faces bent close as the tiniest pieces of wood are added and the flames blown into life. A shared experience of kindling life, and then enjoying its heat. Staring into flames together doesn't need words.

Sleeping out under the stars, in touch with creation. Seeing the same sky and stars as loved ones in home nations. Exposed, but safe with each other.

Crossing the river to pray together. To express our thanks, joy and wonder. To ask God why? To pray for loved ones living and lost.



For more information, talk to Simon C or Sam and look at the website:  
[www.acrosscountry.org.uk](http://www.acrosscountry.org.uk)