



A Brief History of Scargill

Establishing a Christian Community

In 1959, a group of Anglicans from Manchester (led by Rev H Frankham) and the Bishop of Bradford, the Rt Rev Donald Coggan, inspired by [Lee Abbey in Devon](#), set out to find a suitable property to base a similar community in the North. Scargill Estate was bought with money from thousands of donors across the country.

A Christian community was established with the aim of renewing the church through the offering of hospitality, teaching and recreation. Work soon began on a new chapel, designed by George Pace of York, which opened in 1961. Dormitory blocks and lounges were quickly added, and for almost 50 years, Scargill House was a popular draw for Christians across Britain, welcoming up to 100,000 people.

Closure and an appeal

In July 2008, after running for some time at a deficit, Scargill House closed and the community disbanded. In response to the news, there were over 200 comments on a Church Times blog post, and 'save Scargill' pages appeared on Facebook. The Save Scargill Action Group was set up with the hope of finding an alternative to the sale or raising money to buy the house.

The first supporters' meeting in Skipton was told that £85,000 had already been pledged, but despite their efforts, Scargill House was put on the market for £2.5 million amid fears it could fall into the hands of commercial developers.

The action group joined forces with representatives of Lee Abbey and Bradford Diocese to form a steering group chaired by Bishop John Finney. After a wonderful donation of over £300,000, a loan from Lee Abbey Movement and evidence of God's providential timing, they negotiated the purchase of the house (below the asking price) and later handed everything over to the newly formed Scargill Movement Trust, chaired by the Bishop of Bolton, the Rt Rev Chris Edmondson, a former warden of Lee Abbey and a Scargill partner for more than 25 years.

Resurrection

Scargill Movement took on the adventure of re-opening Scargill House and re-establishing a Christian community to offer a Godly hospitality to all who come through Scargill's doors. Phil and Diane Stone were invited to form and lead this new Scargill community. In 2010, the new community began, having at its heart the vision of 'lives shared- lives transformed' with Jesus at the centre. To nurture this heart, a rule of life was developed (called the Pathway) and a daily rhythm of prayer established. The Community were greatly encouraged by Adrian and Bridget Plass joining them for the first couple of years. They

have been wonderful ambassadors for the Scargill adventure. A new programme was put together offering holidays, retreats, and programmed events involving different invited speakers. The first major event was Summerfest, a unique all-age summer holiday with a festival vibe, which continues each year. Scargill has become a popular venue for church weekends away where the community offer a comprehensive 'package' which includes the teaching, worship and different activities. Over the last fifteen years, Scargill has welcomed approximately 50,000 visitors. Its reputation has grown as a place of renewal, welcome and acceptance and in particular a place of hope for those in church leadership. One of the characteristics of the resurrected Scargill has been joy, where we take laughter seriously.

Since the resurrection, Scargill has flourished financially, with over £5m having been spent on the buildings and the Lee Abbey loan and other loans having been repaid. Work on the buildings has been carried out in numerous phases, and there are plans for future major phases of work. The yearly donations are over £200k, which shows how committed people are to the vision, aims and ethos of Scargill.

Over the last 15 years, there have been over 200 community members from all over the world, staying for varying lengths of time, and a growing number of working friends (volunteers) and Companions who follow the Scargill Pathway wherever they are living.

Scargill continues to be on an adventure and has become a place of hope and renewal for individuals and the church in the North of England and beyond.