



This month's circle tale is from Hazelwood House in Devon, England from PeerSpirit's Circle Practicum October 4-9, 2002. Our thanks to all who participated!

## **Circle Tale #35, October 2002 Circle Practicum in Devon, England**

We were pleased to have thirteen participants from four countries (United Kingdom, Netherlands, Denmark and Greece) ranging in age from late 20's to late 50's.

Several things made this practicum unique:

- \* The average age of participants was mid-30's, considerably younger than we usually work with in a practicum. And we were four men and nine women.
- \* It was PeerSpirit's first practicum outside of North America and came as a request from people we had trained in circle work in From the Four Directions.
- \* There was a high level of circle experience in the group, particularly with the use of guardian.

One of the great, ongoing privileges for PeerSpirit is to work with folks who come to us for deeper training in the use of circle. We often say it would be hard to do the work we do and not remain optimistic, for we meet so many people trying to make a difference in their homes, communities and places of work. This practicum was definitely inspirational.

Many of the young people at this practicum came to us for training as a result of the work they are already doing in calling From the Four Direction's Circles the past two years. Their circles have been going on long enough that they are beginning to encounter the inevitable challenges of shadow and projection. While the confidentiality of the circle prevents us from elaborating further, we do want to share that the group itself created such a strong container of trust that they were able to hold steady while several people worked through some strong shadow issues. They really modeled -- we live in circle to learn circle.

One of the teachings that we offer up over and over again is, "When things get rocky in the circle, lean more deeply into the form. The tendency is to bolt. To the best of your ability hold steady with the three practices of circle." The diversity of age, sex and nationality only served to strengthen this circle's ability to lean in.

One of the elements of PeerSpirit circling that this circle modeled particularly well was the use of guardian. Participants volunteered to be guardian from the very first session and when we worked through some challenging conversations it was not Ann or Christina that were holding the guardian bells. The bells were rung with clear intention to have us pause, breathe deeply and bring our most centered selves to the moment at hand.

The last time Christina and Ann taught at Hazelwood House in southwest England was in December 2000 for the first From the Four Directions practicum. It was inspirational to see how the work of circle has been seeded into Europe as a result of that event. The conviction of young people to gather with other life-affirming leaders and make a difference in the world is hopeful in a world teetering on the brink of so much aggression.

*If you have a tale to tell, contact the PeerSpirit office and we'll help you share it.*

*For more information on many applications of circle, visit our web site at [www.peerspirit.com](http://www.peerspirit.com) and subscribe to our monthly Circle Tale newsletter using the subscription mechanism at the top right of the page. Your e-mail address will **not** be shared or used by anyone other than PeerSpirit, and you can unsubscribe yourself at any time.*