



A TRIBUTE

THE ABBOT'S TALE

STEPPING INTO THE DARK

- ▶ I was first registered visually impaired way back in June 2017, within 3 days I lost my driving licence and my career, on the third day I boarded a train from where we were living in Leicestershire with no idea where I was going and without letting anyone, not even my wife know where I was going, in truth I didn't know where I was going, all I had on my mind was running away.
- ▶ I got off that train in York and for 3 weeks I drank myself silly not telling anyone where I was. After those 3 weeks a friend found me and took me home, to this day he will not tell me how he did that.
- ▶ For the next 13yrs I refused to discuss what was happening, stumbling from job to job as my sight grew worse, trying to hide it, memorising things I couldn't read, pretending to read books and newspapers, avoiding unfamiliar places as much as I could, refusing to allow anyone to talk about "blindness" .



AS TIME WENT ON

- ▶ This situation continued up until the year 2000, all those close to me worried sick but at the same time beginning to lose patience, I knew this situation could not go on. I approached Guide Dogs in secret, not even telling my wife Denise, for fear that I would not have the courage to go through with it.
- ▶ During this period I was involved with what were to become the beginnings of the formation of the Northumbria Community. a new monastic community based around the Celtic tradition , a way of being that has remained with me all these years.
- ▶ Imagine my delight then when after a long process I was eventually matched with my first guide dog "Abbot". The idea of me, a Celtic Christian who was so against anyone knowing about my blindness, being matched with Abbot, being led by an abbot, this seemed to me like real God given confirmation that I was doing the right thing.



AS TIME WENT ON

- ▶ Abbot changed my life forever, this was the most transformative experience of my life.
- ▶ Abbot healed my blindness, he did not take it away, he simply made it no longer matter, it was no longer a stigma, he taught me to embrace it.
- ▶ I owe him my life.
- ▶ He passed away on this day in 2015.

