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the magazine of the iona community

coracle

Annual Report
Issue



Work and worship, Prayer and politics, Sacred and secular ...

The Iona Community is:

- An ecumenical community of men and women from different walks of life and different traditions in the Christian church
- Committed to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to following where that leads, even into the unknown
- Engaged together, and with people of goodwill across the world, in acting, reflecting and praying for justice, peace and the integrity of creation
- Convinced that the inclusive community we seek must be embodied in the community we practise

So we share a common discipline of:

- Daily prayer and bible study
- Mutual accountability for our use of time and money
- Spending time together
- Action for justice and peace

And are, together with our staff, responsible for:

- Our islands residential centres of Iona Abbey, the MacLeod Centre on Iona, and Camas Adventure Centre on the Ross of Mull. And in Glasgow
- The administration of the Community
- Our work with young people
- Our publishing house, Wild Goose Publications
- Our association in the revitalising of worship with the Wild Goose Resource Group

The Iona Community was founded in Glasgow in 1938 by George MacLeod, minister, visionary and prophetic witness for peace, in the context of the poverty and despair of the Depression. Its original task of rebuilding the monastic ruins of Iona Abbey became a sign of hopeful rebuilding of community in Scotland and beyond. Today, we are almost 250 Members, mostly in Britain, and 1500 Associate Members, with 1400 Friends worldwide. Together and apart, 'we follow the light we have, and pray for more light.'

Coracle is the quarterly magazine of the Iona Community. Views expressed in it are not necessarily the policy of the Iona Community, but the Community seeks the exchange of thoughts and ideas as a basis for finding common ground.

Letters are welcome, but may be edited because of space restrictions. For **advertising** or **photography** specifications, please contact the editor. **Unsolicited material** is welcome (by e-mail or on disk) but cannot always be included.

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formatting by	Neil Paynter
printed by	City Print, Glasgow
paper	Crusade (90gsm text)/ (135gsm cover)

THE MOVEMENT IS A WORK OF FAITH.

It will continue just so long as God requires it.

from the holy city: Sorting out daftnesses which are daft from God's daftnesses

Ian M Fraser

At ninety-one, Ian Fraser is the oldest Member of the Iona Community. A great part of his life's work has been about encouraging and equipping the ministry of the whole people of God. Here, Ian reflects on that ministry – and on the mystery of responding to God's call.

God has the right to ask daft things of people and expect them to respond. For God is God.

I have seen it high in the Italian mountains where a centre, mainly for youth, was being built in about as awkward a place to reach as you could think of. Tullio Vinay was there alone. The money had run out at that point. Work had stopped. Tullio held out his arms to us and said, 'How heavy are empty hands!' He had gone there because he was told to. There was no guarantee that he had done the right thing. I still receive in the post the annual programme of that flourishing centre.

George MacLeod was disturbed at a way of living which threw people out of employment and had so little justice in it. He looked for political and economic redress.

So he went to the isle of Iona, which in Columba's time was relatively easily accessed compared with central Scotland because the sea was a highway. But Iona had by then become a tiny spot on the fringes of Europe, not easily reached. He gathered a team of craftsmen and probationer ministers to rehabilitate the ruined outbuildings of the Abbey.

The Second World War was one of many stumbling blocks. He was once found in tears in the Abbey because the whole project seemed to be a wild goose chase. He went to Iona because he was told to. The Iona Community is now a force in the World Church.

The genealogy of Matthew, which gives the build-up through history to the coming of Jesus Christ, starts with Abraham. He was not picked on by God because he was righteous. He was picked on because God fingered him. He became righteous and an example for succeeding generations because he responded. Responded to what? To the command: 'Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.' Any long-distance lorry driver would think a company off its head which gave the order: 'Start off and keep going. I'll tell you when you reach the place.'

Wives of patriarchs in early Bible stories had difficulty bringing forth children. Abraham's wife, Sarah, was no exception. A child by her maidservant turned out to be no substitute. Sarah, when past childbearing age, conceived and gave birth to Isaac. When the lad was grown what did God do? Something inconceivably daft. God had promised that Abraham would be father of a great nation in whom all families of the earth would be blessed. The thin line of promise depended on lineage through Isaac – and God asked Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son! It did not add up. But Abraham obeyed. Sarah would have torn his hair out and shut Isaac away had she known. But clearly he did not tell her. A ram caught in a thicket saved the situation.

In later history, God's beloved Son, on whom the exodus for humanity

from every form of slavery depended (Luke 9:31), would be put to death. That made no sense – until the resurrection took place and that death was seen to be fruitful for all life. Abraham's obedience was a sign of hope.

How difficult it is at times to sort out daftnesses which are daft and God's daftnesses which are creative and have saving power.

Yet, while there are great saints who get prominence, who undertake actions which forward God's Kingdom of justice and peace, the biblical understanding includes people who are not prominent. All kinds of people respond to God, following callings which may seem humdrum, unimportant. The idea of vocation became limited in the Middle Ages. The word came to be used solely for the call to the religious (monastic) life. But the New Testament understanding embraces all those who respond to God. In 1 Corinthians 11:26, Paul makes this clear: *'Consider your own calling, brothers and sisters; not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world – things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, so that no one might boast in the presence of God.'* Vocation is a call to availability. The availability is to do whatever is wanted, whatever one's job – for me it meant breaking away from the usual parish assignment, to work with labouring gangs in industry. For those of us who are ordained, the calling is simply to availability, not to a particular status. We all have to do whatever is wanted by God.

My Uncle Bill was a carter. He carted stones for roads and barley for the local distillery. When people spoke about him they inevitably described him as 'far ben', i.e. specially close to God. Was my vocation in ordained ministry any more important than that of my carter uncle?

The bright young lass in the Dunfermline fish shop at which we were customers, when we served Rosyth, took the chance, when there was no queue, to say to me, 'It must be great to have a job like yours – doing good all day, every day.' I replied, 'Your cheerful service all day and every day to people who come into this shop may count for more than anything I ever did in my life.' She was mystified and, at the same time, a bit encouraged.

People respond to God in all types of work which brings life safely forward from one day to another, often without knowing that they are making a response through their working life. In the book of Ecclesiasticus, in chapters 37 and 39, there is appreciation of the contribution of good advisors and medical doctors and scholars. In Chapter 38, the writer focuses on jobs which seem less important. Who is it who maintain the fabric of the world, day after day? He highlights the work of the ploughman, the blacksmith, the potter. But are they responding to God by doing their work well? The writer answers: 'Their daily work is their prayer.'

Those of us who are ordained have particular and important gifts to bring, but we must not exaggerate their importance. The ministry or priesthood which accompanies that of Jesus Christ's High Priesthood is committed to the whole people of God. It is their response which is decisive. ●

From 'Acorns & Archangels: Resources for Ordinary Time', Ruth Burgess, Wild Goose Publications, 2009

Ian M Fraser has been a pastor-labourer in heavy industry, a parish minister, Warden of Scottish Churches House, an Executive Secretary of the World Council of Churches, and Dean and Head of the Department of Mission at Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham. He is the author of nineteen books, including 'Strange Fire', 'The Way Ahead: Grown-up Christians', 'Living a Countersign: From Iona to Basic Christian Communities' and 'Reinventing Theology', which is used as a standard theological sourcebook around the world www.ionabooks.com Throughout his life Ian has travelled the globe, alone and with his wife, Margaret, visiting basic Christian communities.

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Iain Whyte

Homeless World Cup, Melbourne 2008: Changing lives and raising signs

Community Member Iain Whyte and his wife, Isabel, have been involved with the Homeless World Cup for a number of years. The Homeless World Cup is an annual, international football tournament, uniting teams of people who are homeless and excluded to take a once in a lifetime opportunity to represent their country and change their lives forever. It has triggered and supports grassroots football projects in over 60 nations, working with over 25,000 homeless and excluded people throughout the year. The first tournament took place in Graz in 2003. Six years on, 56 nations were united for Melbourne 2008 – which included the first Women's Cup.

'I remember you!' Big Adam, with even fewer teeth in his grin than last year, gave me a bear hug at the Homeless World Cup in Melbourne in December. Adam was the Australian goalkeeper in Copenhagen last year, but because he injured his leg in the first game, missed out for the rest of the tournament. He had already been on a knife-edge and his depression resulted in time spent in a Danish hospital. 'My life's much better now,' he told me. 'Still got problems, but I'm getting there.' Adam is running discos, and goes into schools, giving talks to the kids about drugs. 'They listen to me because I've been there,' he said.

Melbourne was the venue for the sixth year of the Homeless World Cup, with 56 countries taking part. All teams are gender-mixed in theory but are predominantly male. This year, for the first time, 8 teams competed for the Women's Cup – from Africa, South America, Australia and Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia. Andy Hook, the Director of Football, offered myself and Mick Pender, the former Ireland

manager, as volunteer coaches to any team that requested help. He also indicated that Isabel, my wife, would be available to offer counselling and pastoral support for those on the women's teams. For young women away from their home culture in teams mainly managed by men, there was the advantage of having on hand someone who had African experience and could be their granny! In the end Isabel became attached to the Uganda team and I was asked to help the women of Zambia and Cameroon.

The real goal of the Homeless World Cup is to change lives. Research indicates that 80% of the players return home with new confidence and some acquire incentives to find jobs, housing, or come off drugs. Most players are drawn from social and community projects, and there is an obligation to give something back to these and motivate other young people. Three years' involvement with the organisation has helped me to get to know some remarkable folk who do just that.

Samuel 'The General' Mandaba was a gang leader and drug dealer in an area around Harare in Zimbabwe. Tawanda Karasa, who has managed the Zimbabwe team for several years, saw Samuel's potential and encouraged him to train as a football coach. 'The General' was amazed to find anyone prepared to trust him but he agreed. He is now a key figure in the organisation, and was appointed the national coach for under-16s. Last year he started a correspondence course in theology. Tragic but understandable information that reached the team in Australia have led them all to seek asylum there. But when Zimbabwe changes, as it must, Samuel will be one who will fulfil the potential that makes him, in the words of a leading Zimbabwean churchman to me, 'the real hope of the future for our country'.

David Duke joked to me that he was patenting his 2-1 formation and expert ball-holding which resulted in Scotland winning this 4-a-side tournament in



Copenhagen last year. David was a gifted footballer in his youth, but his life only five years ago was in chaos through drink. He heard about trials in Glasgow for the Homeless World Cup in 2005. After David played for Scotland that year, he managed the team for three years, taking them to the semi-finals in Melbourne. He is highly competitive but generous in spirit and admitted to me that he was quite pleased that someone else won the tournament this year. (Afghanistan, whose country has little else to celebrate at home, beat Russia 7-6 in the final.) David has been a youth coach at Falkirk FC and works in the *Big Issue* office. He offered help to our Zambia team but they won the Women's Cup without his help (or probably mine!) and he slipped me a Scottish jersey on the last night to give to Edinasha, one of the most courageous of our players.

The tournament is very much a festival of meeting, sharing and friendship. Richard Brown, the England manager, was highly amused when he learnt that one of the Zambian players, Carol, was nicknamed 'England', and that I was going to have to shout 'Come on, England!' all through the matches. I told him that it would cost him an England jersey and he willingly obliged, instructing all the team to sign it and me to take a photo of a delighted wee African girl in the midst of his team. It is easy for the less able to miss out. We had a wonderful goalkeeper in Christabel, which meant that our Manager, James Chibuye, needed a lot of persuasion to give Grace,

the assistant keeper, even a few minutes on the pitch. Grace took it very well and joined in the training as enthusiastically as ever. I was delighted that a word to the Australian coach produced a brilliant gold goalkeeping jersey for her on the QT!

Mel Young, the founder of the Homeless World Cup, insists that everyone is a winner by taking part. Every player gets a medal and every team a trophy. But if you don't win a game it takes the shine off: The Cameroon women's team arrived late. In the first game they lost 16-0 to Paraguay. I told Ian McGill, the referee from Edinburgh, that I thought three months coaching was needed. 'No Iain,' he said. 'Six months.'

Cameroon had the advantage of an enthusiastic goalkeeper in Marcelline, but were short of skills in defence, midfield and attack – and the next game went equally badly. The final game was against Australia. I prayed for a miracle. O ye of little faith! Marcelline was heroic, and a decent Australian side was kept at bay for most of the half. Incredibly, a Cameroon player let the ball hit her and it bounced into the opposition net. Incredulous, I took a photo of the halftime scoreboard: certainly it would not last. But despite an Australian penalty, Cameroon somehow scored again and held out for victory. Hugs all round from the African teams and from me!

The Cameroon team might not have had the football skills but they gave a good enough dramatic account of their project

and won the 5,000 Euro prize put up by a sponsor. Their organisation ASAFE (Association for Support to Women Entrepreneurs) for several years has done a steady job of training young people in traditional ways for income generation. Last year their dynamic Director, Gisele Yitamben, obtained industrial sponsorship to send two village women to India to train as 'barefoot engineers'. On their return they fitted donated solar panels to provide light and to heat water in the village. The village has now saved a goodly sum on paraffin and a little piece of the ozone layer has been preserved. They plan to expand this, using the 'each one, teach one' principle.

Of course it would be too easy to forget the downside of the Homeless World Cup. Isabel was very concerned for the continuing medical care, when they returned home, of some of those who were injured during the competition: one of the Ugandans was in a wheelchair for several days. Several teams were decimated by the loss of those with maybe less reason than the Zimbabweans to flee the camp. And many others had problems that were not a mile from those of Adam the Australian the previous year. Competition can lead to less friendly encounters and referees had to be very hard on violence. The amazing thing is that it all comes together. And thanks to a lot of donors, including some generous members of the Iona Community, it helps to let a few folk throughout the world follow their dreams. ●

Iain Whyte is a Member of ACTSA (Action for Southern Africa) and Treasurer of the Britain/Zimbabwe Society.

www3.homelessworldcup.org



Hope, Respect, Equality, Peace: The Bellahouston Graffiti Project

Laura McAleese, interviewed by Neil Paynter



The Iona Community Youth Department and the students of Bellahouston Academy in Glasgow have been working together on an innovative graffiti project. The pilot of the graffiti project was a mural on a wall of Bellahouston Academy. The main project will be graffitiing over a bridge that runs through the community. The graffiti project, in a way, is all about bridges – bridges between students, bridges between young people and the community, bridges across cultural and religious divides ... Coracle spoke with Iona Community youth worker Laura McAleese about the project.

Neil: OK, Laura, so what is the Bellahouston Graffiti Project?

Laura: Basically, it's an art project that's going to be used to build confidence and self-esteem in young people. It's going to be part of an overall community project where we'll be hopefully getting the local people involved. It's in partnership with the Eco Committee within the school, and one of the major projects we're doing is this bridge project. With work in conjunction with the local police, we'll hopefully do a lot of workshops surrounding the kind of issues that young people face in the area, and then use art to break down the barriers and get them to design the bridge. So it's giving something positive back to the community. There's been some negative press recently around Bellahouston

Academy and just the way that pupils have been going to and from school, and resident people have been complaining. With the negative press, it's to show that there are those who want to make a difference in their community ... A lot of kids you see graffitiing in a negative way, whereas this is showing it in a positive way and getting them to contribute to something that's going to be given back to their community.

Neil: How did the whole connection with Bellahouston Academy start?

Laura: Bellahouston Academy have been going up to Iona, taking schools up there, for over 20 years. When they've been going up to Iona on their schools' weeks, I've been acting as programme worker, and coming up with workshops and activities for them to do throughout the week. And it's good to have a partnership



with the Abbey department, because I've been able to pilot a lot of things out in Bellahouston, like the labyrinth and different workshops, that I maybe haven't tried in other schools ... For years Bellahouston has had a really good relationship with the Iona Community.

But this is an even bigger project. I'm hoping that if the graffiti project works in this school, I'm going to try to get other schools involved: Try and get schools from maybe different backgrounds, maybe get a non-denominational school and a Catholic school and try and break down barriers there. Because, obviously, there's still a lot of discrimination surrounding different schools. So if you get them to work together on a project, such as a graffiti project, then it would be quite good.

Neil: That sounds like a brilliant idea. Get people talking ... So, describe the graffiti art that the young people have been working on. What have they been painting, thinking about?

At the moment we've been looking at issues that young people face; and the things that we came up with, particularly in Bellahouston because it's such a multicultural school, are things like racism, discrimination, bullying, sectarianism, underage drinking, drugs, gang fighting and all those kind of issues.

What we did last week was, we've given them all out disposable cameras to take pictures of positive things and negative things in their area, and we want to look at ways in which we can break down those things and try

to maybe get a positive message put on the bridge.

The bridge is a safety issue for young people going to the school, because a lot of gang fighting, graffiti, vandalism happens on this bridge.

When we did the pilot project on the wall of the school we put on positive things, like the Glasgow School of Sport, which Bellahouston is very famous for. Then they've got words like 'Peace', 'Respect'. And different pictures of different pupils in the school. On the bridge we want to use that same sort of idea but making it bigger. The bridge is massive and there are 30 students involved.

Neil: From the photos I saw of the pilot project, it looks like a little corner of the world has been transformed. I'm wondering how the young people who worked on it, how they themselves were transformed. Did you notice changes in people, as they worked together as a team and with you?

Laura: It definitely built confidence. A few of the people that we involved in the pilot project – they were coming along themselves, not coming along with a friend. A few of the people in the bridge group can be disruptive in classes, so I think it's quite a good way of channelling their energy elsewhere. Instead of being constantly thrown out of class and getting into trouble every day, it channels this negative energy into something positive.

Neil: Can you remember anything, when you were working on the pilot, that someone did that maybe they

had never done before or tried?

Laura: Well, the pupils made everything from scratch. The stencils and everything were all made by the pupils ... They were all saying how much they enjoyed the project, how it was something completely different to what they had done before. They were really proud of their achievements ...

FUNDING

The Iona Community Youth Department is seeking funding and donations to help continue this good, engaged, grassroots work. Approximately £1000 is needed to purchase materials mainly: spray paint, protective clothing, plywood to practise graffiti on; also, at the end of the project, the Youth Department would like to take the young people on a small trip to celebrate. If you are interested in supporting this project, please contact the Iona Community Youth Department: Iona Community, 4th Floor, Savoy House, Glasgow G2 3DH, 0141-332-6343. The young people and Youth Department are planning to do some bagging at a local Tesco's supermarket to help raise funds. ●

At the end of my interview with Laura, I went back to my work in the Wild Goose Publications office. Before getting down to work, I glanced at the BBC News website: There was another story about the UK government giving failed banks millions of pounds of taxpayers' money. It made me think: I thought about failed bank CEOs bagging obscene pensions, while young people bagged groceries at Tesco's. (Ed.)

Other Iona Community youth workers who have helped with the Bellahouston Graffiti Project are Pam Breen and Jo Love.



Winners of the 2008 Coracle Poetry Contest: on the theme of Peace

SHOES FOR PEACE (1ST PRIZE)

I want three hundred and sixty-five pairs of shoes.
Not to own,
but to walk in for a day.

Seventy-two would be Chinese,
sixty-two Indian,
seven from Mexico,
only one from Cameroon.

A third would be made for men,
slightly fewer for women,
and slightly more for children,
but a quarter of the shoes would be bare feet.

Twelve would be used for leisure,
thirty would spend less time on the streets
than on the pedals of a car,
and three would rest on a wheelchair.

Ninety-eight would sport logos,
some stitched by children.
Nearly half would be made from cattle,
and seventeen from old car tyres.

Four would be army boots,
and thirty-six sandals.
Twenty would never walk on a paved road,
and five, bought on impulse, would never walk at all.

One would tread the streets of New York,
four would holiday at a Disney destination,
and one would be found floating
as floodwaters descend in Bangladesh.

I want three hundred and sixty-five pairs of shoes
to walk in for a day,
or maybe just one,
not my own,
but to wear
as I step out for peace.

Alan Kimmitt

TRY-OUT (2ND PRIZE)

He grew up in a town where red and blue mattered
more than rain and power cuts. Had a try-out,
once, for his best mate's Sunday juniors team.
Laughed off the pitch five minutes later,
dragged bootlaces through puddles, launched his ball
into the duck pond. Moorhens
scattered, bits of duckweed fountained, wet air.

Saturdays were shiftless, snicket gates
and washing lines flapping like flags. Smoking
by dockyard walls, sneering at the here-we-goes.
Lock-outs, dole queue, Jobcentre; then the army.
Blue in a garish glare of sky;

red in fountaining sand, stink of scorched metal.
But they were kindly hands that wrenched him
out of wreckage, blotted the blood and grit
of his coughing on a chequered *keffiyeh*.

Medals, discharge, amputations later
and he's back in that desert, painting
18-yard boxes on bomb-parched ground.
Hot brown children try and catch him out,
dribble footballs
between the real leg and the plastic one.
Indoors, their fathers draw from hookahs
and talk of re-planting the fields.

Andy Humphrey

BONES (3RD PRIZE)

*I once heard a talk about peace in which it was said
that the Greek word Irini, translated as peace, was used
by doctors to describe when a broken bone had
healed. I don't know if this is actually the case but it's a
rich train of thought ...*

Irini,
the healing of bones.
Reaching across the fractured divide.
Closing the distance,
as shards of sense and reason
gradually regroup.

Every union is fragile
unless cemented with better history,
firmed with finer intent.

Every union needs this.
The reluctant pressure,
that forges future strength from past hurt,
knitting pain in patterns of hope.

So splint us,
splint our fractured lives.
Recast old arguments,
with reminders that living bones can mend.

And these bones can live,
of course,
these bones can live.

David McNeish

AN ECUMENICAL ACCOMPANIER IN EAST JERUSALEM (RUNNER-UP)

'I'm sorry
I cannot offer you coffee
My house has just been demolished.'

We stand together
Family and supporter

Accompanied and Accompanier
The bulldozer drives away
The soldiers depart, laughing and joking

Leaving a pile of rubble
A storehouse of shattered memories
Here and there remembered objects –
The black T-shirt
The embroidered cushion
The Barbara Streisand CD

'They gave us ten minutes
Ten minutes to retrieve what we treasure most
The toys, the photographs, the keepsakes
We shall rebuild the house – *inshallah*
But some things we can never replace.'

'And why?
What did we do to harm them?
Why does the world allow them to hurt us so?
We do not hate the Israeli people
We do not understand them
All we want is peace – but peace with justice.'

I cannot answer their questions
I can do nothing but stand with them
Hold them
Weep with them

We stand together
Family and supporter
Accompanied and Accompanier

'I'm sorry
I cannot offer you coffee
My house has just been demolished.'

The Arab peoples are well-known for their hospitality: it is impossible to visit a Palestinian home without being invited to have coffee or mint tea, and it is impolite to refuse. The sentence which forms the opening of this piece was actually said to two of my colleagues in the Jerusalem team minutes after they had stood with the family, watching as the bulldozer demolished their house with most of their possessions still inside. When I visited the site the next day, I saw in the rubble the T-shirt, cushion and CD referred to.

Elizabeth Burroughs

SWORDS INTO PLOUGHSHARES (SECOND RUNNER-UP)

World War Two

Black as a swastika night
grey as the shadow of Hitler
steel as the barbed-wire defence
stone as wartime streets
pearl as the spread of a parachute
white as the funeral lily.

'Let us go to the mountains of Yahweh, that he may teach us his ways.'

Serbia

The last vat is half full of dough,
soft, living but dwindling dough.
Its poignant smell mixes with smoke.
'They will hammer their swords into ploughshares.'

Kosovo

The ground weeps and wails as she spits out a boot,
a child's head scarf, an arm bone, a wristwatch that still ticks.
Swords into ploughshares, swords into sickles.

Israel/Palestine

You heard that explosion, the night the sky fell in.
You felt the earth shatter, metal bend, plastic melt.
Your world imploded; the sky fell in your lap.
Swords into sickles, helmets into harrows.

South America

Amidst tears and grief, she sang to God,
talked to her children and the ducks,
watched dead children bubble by.
Swords into ploughshares, barriers into boats.

Iraq

Black hawk over Iraq.
It hangs in the air like a dead scream.
Rifles into railways, mines into muck spreaders.

Voice from Rwanda

I find that I have a different approach to war, when I am here.
I am aware that the Interahamwe are not too far away and
I am relatively happy that the Rwandan army are between me
and them!
*Bombs into baskets, tanks into tureens,
terrorism into tractors.*

'Let us go to the mountains of Yahweh, that he may teach us his ways.' (Isaiah 2:3)

Judy Dinnen

Alan Kimmitt is an Associate of the Iona Community who lives in Stirling with his wife, Margaret, and three children. He is currently training to be a Church of Scotland minister and working part-time as an IT manager.

Andy Humphrey lives in York, working as a research chemist and moonlighting as a poet and organiser of literary events when time and inspiration allow. He has been a Friend of the Iona Community since the late 1990s.

David McNeish works for the Citizens Advice Bureau. He lives in South Queensferry with the wife of his youth, three children and two guitars.

Elizabeth Burroughs has recently returned from a second term in Israel-Palestine as an Ecumenical Accompanier. She is a retired GP, who now works part-time as a hospice doctor, and is also a Methodist Local Preacher. She lives in Cornwall.

Judy Dinnen has worn many hats – wife, teacher, mother, social worker, and now Priest and grandmother, too. She is an Associate of the Iona Community, and lives in Herefordshire. The quote from Rwanda is from her daughter, who worked and studied there.

The judges of the Coracle Poetry Contest were Robert Davidson (Founder of Sandstone Press), Kathy Galloway, Neil Paynter and Jan Sutch Pickard. Prizes are books from Wild Goose Publications (www.ionabooks.com) and Sandstone Press (www.sandstonepress.com). Coracle wishes to thank everyone who entered the contest. There were about 100 pieces entered. There were many beautiful and powerful poems, and at one point in the judging the shortlist was about 15 poems long! Thank you so much for your writing and support.

'God welcomes all, strangers and friends ...' The Iona Community's Annual Report, 2008

A WORLDWIDE MOVEMENT ROOTED IN LOCAL REALITIES

In work and worship
GOD IS WITH US

Gathered and scattered
GOD IS WITH US

Now and always,
GOD IS WITH US

The daily Act of Prayer of the Iona Community prays for its members 'gathered and scattered' and this is a constant reminder that the Community is both a worldwide movement – with members and groups everywhere from Malawi to Michigan, from Cumbria to Cuba and from Perth, Scotland to Perth, Australia – and a movement rooted in local realities. The Community is where the members are, scattered yet gathered by the strength and inspiration of its Rule, its prayer life, its local member and associate groups and its local church and community involvements.

The Community was born as a practical response to the needs of a community struggling with the challenges of poverty and

unemployment (Govan), during the Depression. Ever since that time in the 1930s, the commitment to economic justice and the inclusion of the poorest and most vulnerable in society has been central to the Community's life and work. In the past, this commitment was expressed through church extension, service in countries of the global south and youth programmes on islands and mainland. More recently, it has found expression through anti-poverty campaigning, working with young offenders, asylum seekers and vulnerable young people at Camas, the Community's outdoor centre on the isle of Mull. As Britain, along with the rest of the world, seems to be moving deeper into economic recession, it is all the more important to maintain this commitment. In 2008, the Community was by no means exempt from these challenges and had a difficult year financially. This led to some staffing cutbacks, cuts in the proposed 2009 budget and an appeal to its constituency, magnificently answered.

THE IONA COMMUNITY'S JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMITMENT

The Community's Justice and Peace Commitment commits members to prayer and action for justice, peace and the integrity of creation; members continue to be active both locally and nationally in anti-poverty campaigns, in particular through our association with Christian Aid and with Church Action on Poverty. The Community's two-year engagement with the theme of Place has led to the decision to include mutual accountability for energy and resource use as well as money as part of its Rule. Given the long association of Community members in Israel/Palestine, most recently through the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme of the World Council of Churches (EAPPI), much activity has been focussed on the critical situation in Gaza. This has given a timely aspect to the Community's forthcoming two-year programme emphasis on peacemaking at every level.



In 2008, Plenary meetings in Glasgow and Iona and five regional plenaries began to engage with the new focus on Peace, and in particular with Glory to God and Peace on Earth, the thematic areas for the forthcoming World Council of Churches International Ecumenical Peace Convocation to be held in Kingston, Jamaica in 2011.

Peace is one of those words that needs to be reclaimed. For too long it has been narrowed down to ... a kind of bland, dove-filled harmony.

Perhaps the rounded 'Shalom' is closer: strong, robust well-being, where justice is an integral part without which there can be no peace.

Helen Steven, a member of the Iona Community, from an article in Coracle

MEMBERSHIP

In 2008, seven new members were hallowed into full membership at Community Week in August, including a second Dutch member, and there are 22 people on the current New Members' Programme. Their denominational affiliation is: Church of Scotland/United Reformed/Dutch Reformed, Anglican/Scottish Episcopalian, Methodist, Salvation Army, Baptist and Independent.

Full membership currently stands at 270, Associate membership at around 1800. In addition to at least 30 Associate/Iona groups in the UK, there are also now groups in Ireland, the Netherlands (5), Switzerland, Germany (5), Sweden (3), Cuba, the United States and

Canada, and a group is in the process of forming in Malawi. The Community retains strong links with Wellspring, its sister community in Australia.

Yes, friends, you are now among the people I count on.

When my imagination fails me and I wonder how we can make the world a bit more just and peaceful,

I hold on to the hope that next time we meet we'll eat together and pray and get bold together, and know

God is with us, Friend and Lover of all.

Reinhild Traitler, an Iona Community member and activist in Zurich

THE GROWING HOPE APPEAL

The Community's Growing Hope Appeal has continued and has enabled the Community to develop its Welcome Centre on Iona, which incorporates the Community's shop. This work has greatly improved the space and layout in the shop and given improved and additional office space; the welcome/reception area will allow for better interpretation of the Community's concerns and work on Iona, and beyond.

God, giver of peace, grow hope within and around us.

Kate McIlhagga, a member of the Iona Community

MAINLAND WORK:

Youth Development

The number of workshops provided to schools by the Youth

Team has increased. The team have worked with the High School of Glasgow, Glasgow Academy, Castlehead High School, Stewarton Academy, and Govan High School has recently contacted the team. Work on Bellahouston Academy's innovative graffiti project was reported in Glasgow newspapers, and fundraising is continuing to carry this project through to its final stage. Youth Festival on Iona was a success and the Youth Team are looking to develop Youth Clubs' Week further. Work in Polmont Young Offenders Institute, in partnership with the Chaplaincy, continues on a regular basis. The Youth Team provided a workshop at Youthlink's Annual National Youth Work Conference which was well received.

The Jacob Project, which offers young offenders and ex-offenders positive alternatives to re-offending, has had its first full year, including a very successful briefing event at the Scottish Parliament. All the young men on it have done well and none has re-offended. We are grateful to the Church of Scotland Parish Development Fund which has supported Jacob; however, this kind of work is costly and it is facing funding difficulties. However, the Youth Department has received indication that Project Scotland is still willing to support the project, by funding up to six Jacob Project Candidates. Funds are still required to cover core costs of befrienders, a throughcare worker and administration.



Significant work has been done with the Community's Youth Associates which has resulted in several of them applying for full membership of the Community.

'I went to Cuba after only having been a Youth Associate for a matter of months. I expected to come back full of Cuban stories about the people we'd met and all that we'd seen, and while this is true, my over-riding feeling now is that I want to be more involved with the Iona Community. It was such a privilege to travel with the group – a snapshot of our wider community coming together to share with each other and with the people we met.'

Jo Marshall, an Iona Community Youth Associate

'I never had much self-esteem before; I wasn't very confident; I was quite quiet. All that has changed. I'm now confident enough to stand up in front of people and talk. I do peer support, drama facilitation, outreach work, among other things.'

A Jacob Project volunteer

Wild Goose Publications

Wild Goose published the following titles in 2008: *We Walk His Way: Shorter Songs for Worship* (book and CD) by John L. Bell, *Thinking Out Loud: Collected Scripts from Thought for the Day* by John L. Bell, *Christ of the Celts: The Healing of Creation* by J. Philip Newell, *Bare Feet and Buttercups: Resources for Ordinary Time* by Ruth Burgess, *Between High and Low Water: Sojourner Songs* by Jan Sutch Pickard, *The Tenderness of Conscience* by Allan Boesak, *Where*

Are the Altars? by Joy Mead, *Joseph of Arimathea* by James Harpur, *Going Home Another Way: Daily Readings and Resources for Christmastide* by Neil Paynter, *The New Testament in Scots* (Matthew, Mark, John) translated by William Laughton Lorimer, read by Tom Fleming (CDs), and new editions of *Living a Countersign: From Iona to Basic Christian Communities* by Ian M. Fraser and *Bridging the Gap: Has the Church Failed the Poor?* by John Harvey. There has been growing interest in *Living the Questions* (faith explorations for progressive Christians) for which Wild Goose Publications is the UK distributor. Web sales, and overseas editions and distribution have held up well, and the website has been updated. The major and innovative project of digitisation is continuing.

*For the word of God in scripture,
For the word of God among us,
For the word of God within us,
THANKS BE TO GOD*

*Responses from Iona Abbey
Worship Book, Wild Goose
Publications, www.ionabooks.com*

Coracle

The Community's magazine *Coracle* has maintained a high standard of editorial and content from across the Community's life and work, and beyond.

An exciting new development is the introduction of a monthly Iona Community e-bulletin, which will allow much more interactivity and immediacy.

The latest issue of Coracle is great!

Thank you so much. It's so good to see a well thought-out magazine with so much substance ...

A Coracle reader

Thanks for the e-bulletin! It's brilliant and is a really nice way to keep the 'Iona diaspora' connected.

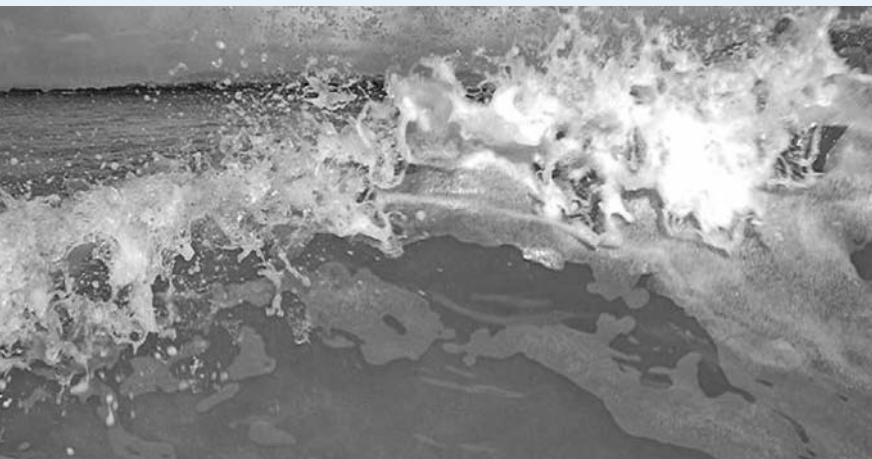
An Iona Community e-bulletin reader

The Wild Goose Resource Group

In addition to the monthly Holy City workshop and worship evening in Glasgow, the Community's team of worship and reflection resource workers has offered weekend programmes for those interested in holding their own Holy City event in their own city, and, in conjunction with Strathclyde University Chaplaincy, for those running or interested in *Living the Questions* (faith explorations for progressive Christians). Holy City continues to offer this course in Glasgow. John Bell continues to be in great demand for music and worship consultancy across the world.

At Greenbelt, the Christian Arts Festival, a successful new venture in partnership saw the Wild Goose Resource Group and the Youth Team, along with Members, join forces with Church Action on Poverty and Fischy Music in a larger venue under the title of Northern Lights, to offer a full programme of hospitality, workshops, worship, talks and music.

Appreciation for the work of John Bell and the Wild Goose Resource Group:



You bring a fresh vision of Jesus, and the Bible comes to life through your vivid imagination.

Ontario, Canada

Our congregation was greatly blessed with your visit – and for me, it kind of felt like a revival ... or one of those glimpses of the kingdom.

Michigan

ISLANDS WORK:

The Abbey and the MacLeod Centre

The usual busy season on Iona was greatly enabled by a strong and committed staff team, who coped with the usual challenges with characteristic grace and competence. Occupancy rates were 90% in the Abbey and 70% in the MacLeod Centre, which was encouraging given a 13% drop in visitors to the island overall. The introduction of two winter quiet weeks during Advent has been a great success, and both were full, with waiting lists. Because guests overwhelmingly state the importance to them of community-building with people of many backgrounds, nationalities and religious traditions, the new programme has an emphasis on this. The common life is still a vision and aspiration for many in a dangerously fragmented world. The Community's international Volunteer Programme reinforces the value of what George MacLeod called the 'demanding common task' which alone builds community. The Community is grateful to its volunteers and staff.

Upkeep and maintenance of the

Community's properties on Iona is an ongoing challenge, given the extremes of damp and wind. A coherent and coordinated maintenance plan for the buildings on Iona has now been drawn up following an extensive survey.

Time spent on Iona is often a life-changing experience. Our guests leave after a week with a new perspective on life and on how they wish to live.

For our volunteer staff, this experience builds week after week, so by the time they come to move on after eight weeks or more, they have found a new direction, a new passion in their lives. Two conversations stick in my mind; both happened on the jetty on the last day of the season. Both with volunteers, who tearfully told me how their experience with us had changed their lives – how it was the most important of their lives; one volunteer was 23 years old, the other was 70.

Malcolm King, Iona Abbey Warden

Camas

Camas is the Community's outdoor education centre on Mull, with an emphasis on environmental sustainability, community-building and adventure activity. It serves primarily though not exclusively a youth constituency, especially appropriate for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. With an excellent team of staff and volunteers, the various youth weeks were very successful and the garden flourished. In order to make the

resources of Camas more widely available, four adult weeks, with environmental and creative (storytelling and traditional music) themes, were introduced at the start and end of the season and this is being further developed in 2009, including a week for people interested in learning about what it means to live Off Grid, Off Oil.

Things that guests learned at Camas:

'You can live happily without a television, straighteners and a PC.'

'How to build a raft – how to get on with other people.'

'You need to help people.'

'To ask for help and to rely on others.'

'I learned that I can go without drugs for a week.'

'I'm a lot braver than I thought I was.'

'Appreciation for dry socks.'

'To love and respect nature – appreciate it and use it resourcefully.'

'To be more appreciative of what I have.'

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The Abbey and MacLeod Centre, Isle of Iona, Argyll PA76 6SN. tel 0161 700404. email: ionacomm@iona.org.uk

The Camas Centre, Bunnassan, Isle of Mull, Argyll PA67 6DX. tel 01681 700367. e-mail: ionacomm@iona.org.uk

Wild Goose Publications, 4th Floor, Savoy House, 140 Sauchiehall St, Glasgow G2 3DH. tel: 0141 332 6292/fax: 0141 332 1090. e-mail: admin@ionabooks.com website: www.ionabooks.com



LETTER FROM THE LEADER, KATHY GALLOWAY

'The common life is still a vision and aspiration for many in a dangerously fragmented world.' These words come from the Islands Work section of this Annual Report, but they can serve equally as a description of the life, activities and witness of the whole Iona Community.

They speak of a voluntary membership movement, drawn from a rich diversity of nationality, background and religious tradition, meeting in small groups across the world to seek and practise a common life of mutual accountability and support, linked into local communities and churches, committed to action for justice, peace and the environment at every level, sustained by prayer, hospitality and celebration. It is this movement that has 'grown hope' in the successful renovation work at Camas, our outdoor centre on Mull, and now in our Welcome Centre and Shop on Iona, and which, I am sure, will go on to complete the upgrading of staff accommodation there. It is from this grassroots movement that the impetus, inspiration and imagination arises which shapes direction and policy for the Community.

Turning policy into practice is the demanding common task of our organisational and operational committees and staff, and in a difficult year financially, they have risen to it magnificently, offering welcome and hospitality, challenge and connection to thousands of guests and day visitors in our islands centres and enabling new possibilities and fresh outreach through our youth work, publications and resource work on the mainland. They too hold to the vision and aspiration of the common life in a dangerously fragmented world, not only in what they do but in the grace and energy with which they do it.

As I come to the end of my seven-year term as Leader, and prepare to hand over with confidence to Peter Macdonald, I know that great challenges of sustainability face the Community – in finance, in maintaining three lively centres, in living lightly on the earth, in continuing to work for justice and peace for the most vulnerable and marginalised communities, in caring for one another – and these can only be done in the context of the Common life. I am grateful for the expertise, experience and careful planning of staff, members and supporters, and even more for the knowledge that these things remain rooted in '*a chaos of uncalculating love*' (George MacLeod). ●

LETTER FROM THE CONVENER, CAROLYN SMYTH

Sacred and secular, work and worship, prayer and politics ... familiar combinations to all readers of this annual report (and, if not, welcome to a challenging way of life!). A far cry from Council's agenda? Far from it, as a look at any of our Minutes will demonstrate!

At the AGM, members agreed to change the 'Money Rule', to 'Sharing and accounting for the use of our resources, including money'. Whilst rightly widening our individual accountability from finance alone, we continue to recognise that our use of money is as sacred as everything else. Council is

similarly accountable to members (as well as other bodies) and we must always be aware of the idol-making potential of money or the need for it. However, there has been a tendency for Council to leave the engagement with financial matters to its Resource and Evaluation sub-committee. This flies in the face of our holistic approach so, as agreed at the same AGM, this year we have been working on how to effectively re-integrate the R&E agenda into Council.

After much hard work and the difficulties of getting together, the Theological Issues Working Group, comprising participants across the Community's denominational and geographical breadth, produced a draft 'Revised Act of Prayer' which was circulated to all members with a descriptive paper. The variety of responses received reflected some diversity and, whilst these were mainly positive, they were all taken into account as further revisions were made, before Council agreed its inclusion in this year's Members' Book.

Council has also overseen the recent leadership election process and looks forward to welcoming Peter Macdonald into the role of Leader in a few months' time. Peter brings a wide knowledge of Council and its committees and indeed will need to change his shoes from those of the current Convener of the Programme Committee!

Finally, to the Council itself – members and staff members, Committee Conveners and those without a specific office whose voice is equally essential – our meetings remain a demanding common task, a key meeting place of organisation and movement: your time, imagination, and faithfulness are of untold worth to the whole Community – thank you. ●



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Iona Community is affiliated to the following organisations:

- Action of Churches Together in Scotland
- Action for Southern Africa (ACTSA)
- Church Action on Poverty
- Churches Together in Britain and Ireland
- Churches Together in England
- CYTUN (Churches Together in Wales)
- Corrymeela Community
- Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance
- Edinburgh Peace & Justice Centre
- Glasgow Council for Voluntary Service
- International Fellowship of Reconciliation
- Israeli Committee Against House Demolition
- Jubilee Scotland
- Lesbian and Gay Christian Movement
- Network for Civil Society Link
- Network for Peace
- Positive Action In Housing
- Poverty Alliance
- Sabeel Liberation Theology Centre
- Scottish CND
- Scottish Churches Housing Agency
- Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations
- Scottish Education and Action for Development
- Scottish Malawi Network
- Scottish Palestinian Forum
- Scottish Refugee Council
- United Nations Association – UK
- World Development Movement

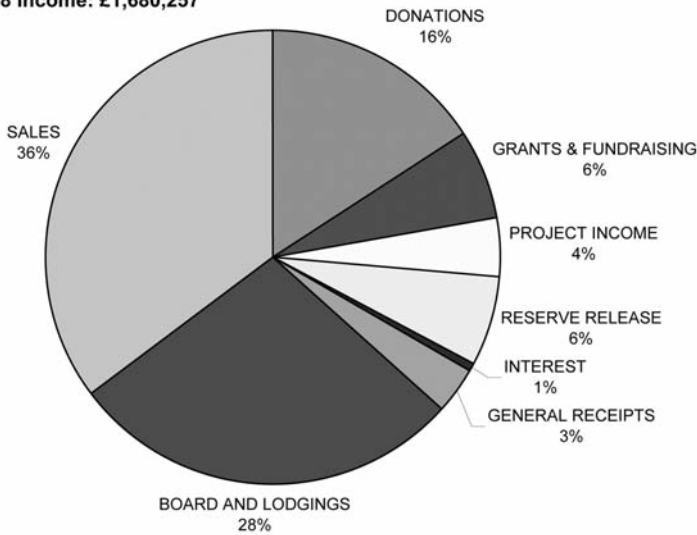
The Iona Community gratefully acknowledges support from the following bodies:

- Argyll and Bute Council
- Ash Yeo Trust
- Church of Scotland Parish Development Fund
- Drummond Trust
- Dunvegan Foundation of the Clan MacLeod Society, USA
- Myers Foundation
- New World Foundation
- Polden Puckham Trust
- Project Scotland
- Rank Foundation
- Scottish Executive Education Department

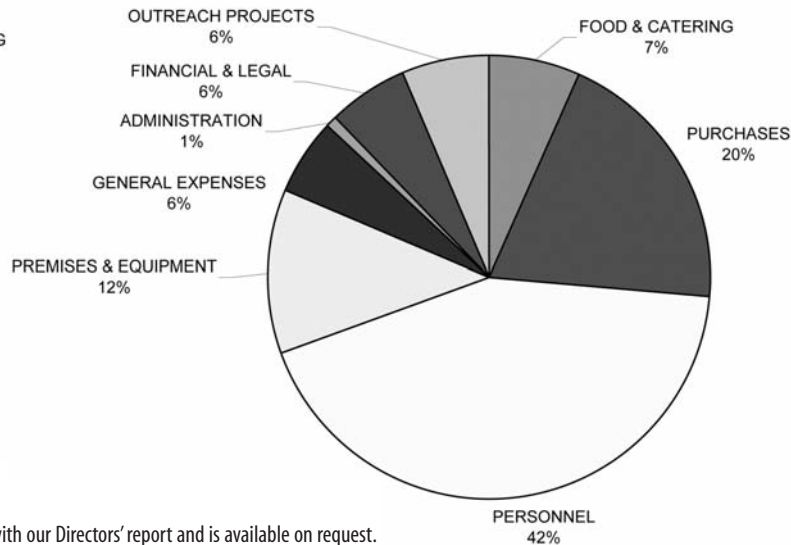
The Iona Community gratefully acknowledges legacies from the estates of the following individuals:

- Margaret Joan Durrant
- Mary C Purdon
- John Hardie Wilson
- Mary Elizabeth Yeo

2008 Income: £1,680,257



2008 Expenditure: £1,670,781



Income and expenditure for 2008

A full set of accounts to the year ending 31st December 2008 is presented along with our Directors' report and is available on request.



God welcomes all

Words: John L. Bell.
Music: South African traditional.

Energetically

God wel - comes all, stran - gers and friends;
God's love is strong and it ne - ver ends.

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of two systems of music. The first system contains the first two lines of the song, and the second system contains the next two lines. Each system has a treble and bass staff. The lyrics are placed below the notes. The tempo/mood is indicated as 'Energetically'.

God welcomes all,
strangers and friends;
God's love is strong
and it never ends.

Music: South African traditional © copyright control;
transcribed by John L. Bell at the Sunrise Hospice, Themba, South Africa
Words © 2008 WGRG, Iona Community, Glasgow G2 3DH, Scotland.
From 'We Will Walk His Way: Shorter Songs for Worship', John L. Bell,
Wild Goose Publications, 2008 www.ionabooks.com



God in the other Helen Steven

Helen Steven's work for peace has taken her to NATO headquarters in Brussels, to many international conferences, to demonstrations at Faslane naval base, and occasionally to prison. In 2004, she and her partner, Ellen, received the Gandhi International Peace Award ...

Personally, I derive much comfort and inspiration in the idea of a God who is 'closer than breathing', the very ground of our being. This shifts the entire focus of the divine away from distant inaccessibility, to an immediate immanent presence within every one of us, constantly present and constantly loving. Thus, not only is God the very essence and core of my own being, there is also 'that of God' in every person I meet. The Nepalese greeting *Namaste*, usually coupled with a folding of the hands and a bow, means 'The God within me greets the God within you.' There is a direct connection between a belief in this kind of God and the respect that forms the whole basis of non-violence. If every one of us embodies an aspect of the truth of God, the divine, the very essence of humanity, then this must immediately affect how we treat that person. This was at the heart of Gandhi's teaching. If we kill or use violence against another human being, then we are doing violence to the truth of God within them.

Even enemies, those with whom we profoundly disagree, have this element of the divine, and it becomes our task to seek that out in order to be able to move forward in mutual respect. Non-violent action is based on the assumption that by one's own actions, by confronting people openly and lovingly in a new and creative way, one can reach this deep inner core of the divine, appeal to the very highest nature within a person and so effect change. And of course the change may need to happen within oneself. This is why part of non-violence training teaches one to look one's opponent in the eye, thus encountering the window on the soul, meeting as human to human and saying, 'You cannot ignore my humanity, just as I respect yours.' And of course this is also one of the reasons why secret police wear visors and dark glasses, precisely to avoid such a deeply challenging contact.

At the start of the Options for Defence week on Iona, during which military generals, military experts and peace campaigners gathered for a conference, we all assembled in the Chapter House of the Abbey. It was a distinctly stiff beginning, suspicion in the air and each side eyeing the other with proverbial hackles raised. To begin the introductions and attempt to ease the atmosphere, I said that we all sincerely believed that we were working for peace, but simply differed over the methods. The

relief was almost palpable as shoulders came down, people relaxed into their seats and began to look each other in the eye.

I remember an occasion at the peace camp at Greenham Common. We had been blockading a gate for several hours, when a decision was made to open the gates forcibly from the inside by driving at them with a large truck. The gates were being forced open slowly and women were being crushed under the gate as it swung. Those of us lined up on the outside, hemmed in by a solid row of police, felt totally helpless and at a loss as to what to do. Eventually we decided to stand up and speak to the police officer directly in front of each one of us. I was opposite a very young man, and, as I was angry and distressed, I said, rather unkindly, 'Do you like doing this kind of thing?' To my consternation his eyes filled with tears and he said, 'I am hating every minute of it and I wish I was anywhere else.'

Of course there are times when it seems impossible to discern that of God in the other; times when all appeals fail and attempts to make peace can lead to suffering and even death. Yet unbelievably, in some of the most extreme situations, there are amazing stories of how the deep humanity of another has been touched and a seemingly horrific situation transformed. ●

An extract from 'No Extraordinary Power: Prayer, Stillness and Activism', Quaker Books, Helen Steven, 2005 © Helen Steven www.quaker.org.uk

Helen Steven is a Member of the Iona Community.



Meet the Resident Group on Iona

THE TEAM ON IONA

Hilary Blake: Programme Coordinator

I arrived on Iona in January with my husband, Ian, to spend three years here. My previous job was with Christian Aid in Oxford, working with churches and volunteers in the Thames Valley area. I love knitting and am trying to learn to spin. On Iona, I'm looking forward to lots of beautiful walks and hoping not to miss church bell-ringing too much.

Genevieve Curran: Hospitality Support Worker

I came in April 2008 with a place in the shop as a vollie, but somehow ended up on the domestic side of things and I have yet to escape. This year I'm the Domestic Team Support Worker, providing bits of my highly acclaimed and sought after talent as a cruise line magician's assistant in the kitchen as well as housekeeping. Watch as I make my pinny disappear before your very eyes!

Carol Dougall: Bookings Secretary

Hello, I'm Carol from Cleethorpes. I came up in 1988 to work for three years in the front office. What time is it?

Sue Edwards: Mac Housekeeper

On New Year's Eve I was in Lincoln following a car with the number plate X6 OBAN, and then spotted a restaurant sign displaying 'International Fine Dining', but it was only illuminating the 'iona' of 'International'. After these signs, I thought I should either see my psychiatrist – or view the Community's vacancies page.

Elizabeth Fletcher: Abbey Housekeeper

I'm from Glasgow but have spent most of the last three years living in Wales, where I was at university. I love nothing more than curling up in the evening with a strong cup of tea and a

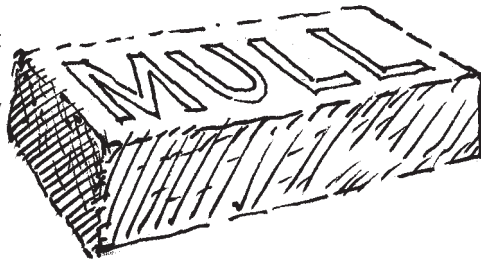
good book or film.

Linda Godfrey: Admin Team – Finance

Waking up to the sound of waves crashing on the shore, and the wind blasting my face on the walk up to the Abbey each morning are two of the delights of working in the finance office. I'm looking forward to the opportunities and challenges of the coming year in the Admin Team. As I enter my second season, I'm still finding new places to explore on Iona, either bouncing over waves in my kayak or walking through mud and heather.

Brik Halcrow: Admin Team Leader

I am in my sixteenth and final year of working for the Community and still find it all as fascinating as ever. I come from deepest Devon but have lived in Bunnessan on Mull for



the past twenty-seven years. I love Mull and enjoy people, books and walking and have recently joined the New Members' Programme.

Michelle Harris: Shop Manager

The idea of working with the Iona Community has been with me for many years. I finally made it to Iona for seven weeks as a volunteer in March 2008, and found that it was much more than I imagined. It's great to be with the Community now for an extended period. I come from Australia, have worked in a butcher shop, on a square-rig ship and lived in Thailand for a year. I like to experience new things and I believe in the importance of faith, community, peace and justice.

Anja Jardine: Abbey Cook

I live on Iona and love being back in the Abbey kitchen. When I'm

not cooking you'll see me at the beach, with my daughter, Freya, taking photographs, or going sailing with boat *Freya* and my husband, Mark.

Dalcie Jespersen: Wardens' Admin Support

Hi – chocolate, tea, lots of outdoors, music, good company, purposeful living! In short: American-born, trained as a teacher in Manchester, taught in Dublin, studied in Denmark. Have one very high-spirited daughter studying medicine in Denmark.

Malcolm King: Abbey Warden

After early attempts to become a bass guitarist in a successful prog rock band, I sought refuge as a Church of England vicar. After a number of unremarkable years, I now find immense fulfilment working on Iona. I am delighted to be a slight worry to my children, am convinced that 'The Flaming Lips' played the best gig I've ever seen (though Neil Young came close recently), and I've a soft spot for possums.

Shuggie Mailey: Maintenance Team Leader

I have been working on Iona for more than two years now. I live on Mull in a house I have built myself, which I share with my wife, four children, a dog and a pony, and I think I have one of the best commutes in Britain. I get great satisfaction from working with vollies – all sorts of people – and no two days are alike.

Catherine Martindale: Reception Administrator

I arrived on Iona last June, from leafy Sussex, to be the Front Office Administrator. I am now looking forward to the role of Reception Administrator at the new Welcome Centre. I came to the Community with a background in information and advice services, mainly around carers/disability issues. Like most of my colleagues, I like chocolate and drinking tea, preferably at the same time, but

and the Camas team on Mull, 2009



really I'm not that fussy.

Francess McIntyre: Mac Cook

Back again for my second year in the Mac kitchen ... Great! (Last year was hard work, fun, rewarding and humbling.) At present no fixed abode – my boys spread out across the country, from Aberdeen to Lincoln. If you're an early bird, please come and find me in the Mac kitchen – bring some coffee with you please!

Ian Miller: Gardener/Programme Support Worker

As a former professional computer geek, I'm exchanging keyboards for cultivation. I'm looking forward to getting my hands dirty as Gardener/Programme Support Worker. I enjoy photography, good ale and fresh air. I'm here with my wife, Hilary.

Paul Nowak: Assistant Bookings Secretary

Hi, I'm one of the few people on the team who's actually from Scotland. So far I have survived a year on the island and I'm still smiling. I expect to consume an industrial quantity of tea this year (to my dentist's distress) and request that if you pop into the office you bring chocolate (preferably of the Divine Orange variety).

Chris Redhead: Admin Team/Staffing

I am in the second year of my second three-year stint in the Resident Group. Between the two, I worked for the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh. It's not like Iona! When I leave this time I will go back to my house in Devon and be a proper granny-round-the-corner (some might say round-the-bend).

Jamie Schmeling: Deputy Warden

Well, I'm a familiar face and I've left a familiar Glasgow base to relocate to a familiar place where I

can test my laugh in a wider space. So this wee wild goose leaves the WGRG nest to ride the wind and waves of Iona next. Please send Strawberry Fruittella.

Alison Stewart: Sacristan

I have come to Iona to work as Sacristan until November. In the summer of 1995 I worked as a vollie on the housekeeping team in the Mac, and my life has never been quite the same since. My background is in teaching and administration, but I am exploring a vocation to ordained ministry and I am looking forward greatly to all the opportunities that working in this amazing place will bring my way.

Laura Stone: Musician

Before Iona, I was trained as a teacher (maths and English) and then worked in mental health, with music as a strong hobby. I love being able to do music ministry full-time here, and I hope eventually to make a career of it. I also enjoy reading, crafts, dancing, cats, hugs, sunrises, road trips, choirs.

Caroline Worrall: Hospitality Team Leader

Hi, I'm Caroline from Merseyside. I have just joined the Hospitality Team and am based in the Hospitality office just off the Cloisters. I am looking forward to a busy season filled with new experiences and song.

Jenny Wright: Assistant Shop Manager

I am still the quiet member of the Resident Group and in the second year of a three-year contract. I come from

Lancashire and am very proud of my children and grandchildren, and enjoy receiving news from them.

THE TEAM AT CAMAS

Tim Sparks: Camas Resident Staff Team

I am currently in my third season at Camas. Likes: food, ale, sunshine, snow, hills, birds, trees, music, honesty, maps. Dislikes: out of tune guitars, liver, RSI, RnB, cinnamon, fakery. In my spare time I like: computer games, books, constructing wooden items, burning things, running a business, playing gigs, making websites, making albums, making a mess, learning Swedish.

Dot Stewart: Camas Coordinator

I arrived to work at Camas just for six months in 2003 – and this will be the year I finally leave! In the meantime I'll continue enjoying being near/on/in the sea, drinking coffee, dancing in the kitchen, making new friends, writing lists, pushing wheelbarrows and learning more about myself and others (and God, and the environment). I hope to enjoy at least some of those things in my next adventure too ...

Emily Wilkins: Camas Resident Staff Team

I'm returning for my second season at Camas, and very glad to be coming out of hibernation, having left city life behind for a place where I can sit on the rocks watching the waves with my morning cup of (redbush) tea. Looking forward to spending time with lots of different people, and getting out and about exploring the islands. I achieved last year's ambition of seeing eagles (several times over) so this time I'm hoping for whales!



A SONG OF CAMAS

Had I the gift of language
like a bard
I would sing a song of Camus.
Of that work week, once,
as the year turned the clocks
and darkened skies
along the track.
When candles flickering
in the evening quiet
made firelight kind,
reflections thoughtful
in the warming glow.
A group of friends – so recently
unknown to one another –
and a friendly dog.
What more could one desire?
And yet there's more to sing –
a jar of marigolds gives praise
upon the table, with food,
miraculously good,
grown with love
in beds that sleep, sung
by the ever-murmuring sea:
Tomatoes,
removed from drifts of chilly rain.
Small, fallen apples
tasting of the sun ...
Nights bright with stars
reflect a moonlight pathway
through the waves.
The daytime gift of rainbows:
stopping work
to marvel for a moment
face upturned –
these things are small, too fragile
for the stuff of ballads.
But had I just the necessary gift,
I'd sing a song of Camus.

*Anna Mayne, a Camas work week
guest and a volunteer on Iona*

FROM A 'WORLD SPACE' SERVICE IN IONA ABBEY, 2008

Leader: The Iona Community is an
ecumenical Christian community.
Living and working on Iona on
behalf of the Community are a
diverse group of people. We come
from many different backgrounds,
churches and communities:

Voices of volunteers:

My name is Ines.
I come from an atheist
background. I was brought up to
mistrust religion, but found my
faith in God as a young adult.
For me worship is a platform to
encounter God.

My name is Tom.
I come from a Quaker background.
I was brought up to be peaceful
and thoughtful. For me worship is
a time to reflect and find peace.

My name is Elisabeth.
I come from an Episcopalian
background. I was brought up to
love and trust God. For me
worship is an extension of my
relationship with God.

My name is Junko.
I come from a mixture of a
Buddhist and Shinto background. I
was brought up not to forget
thankfulness to anything, anytime.
For me worship is to express my
thankfulness for everything,
especially for nature. Nature is God
for me.

My name is Carole.
I was brought up as a Roman

Catholic, and the liturgies,
spirituality and music of that
tradition are still important to me,
though my search for God has also
led me to explore more earth-based
practices such as druidry. For me,
worship is an opportunity to re-
orient my inner compass towards
God.

My name is Pip.
I come from an Anglican
background. I was brought up in a
formal, traditional Church of
England church, but now worship in
a charismatic, non-denominational
community church. For me, worship
is connecting with my Eternal Lover,
Father and Mother, rejoicing and
losing myself in the Creator's Great
Love.

Leader: In the conventions of our
society, labels are always being
placed on us. Sometimes we let
them define us. But they don't need
to. In this place, all are welcome ...
We are a living, breathing
community of Christ. We bring our
unique gifts and offer them.

Bible reading: Ephesians 4:11–16

If you are interested in volunteering with the Iona
Community, or in coming to stay as a guest on Iona or
at Camas, go to www.iona.org.uk, or call 0141-332-
6343/01681-700-404

'Coming to Iona one day changed my whole life.' A volunteer on Iona

Photo below of the 2009 team on Iona: Back row (left to
right): Catherine, Hilary, Laura, Caroline, Fran, Elizabeth
Middle row (left to right): Chris, Alison, Ian, Brik, Linda,
Paul, Shuggie, Carol, Michelle, Gen, Jenny
Front row (left to right): Anja with Freya, Malcolm

Camas team: Left to right: Dot, Tim, Emily



A touching place: news and letters

Coracle welcomes letters relating to contents of the magazine. Contact details on p.1

BE A GUEST OF THE IONA COMMUNITY IN 2009

There is space in the Abbey and at the MacLeod Centre, especially during weeks in September and October, and space at Camas on various weeks. **See page 23 of this Coracle for details ...**

THE NEW LEADER OF THE IONA COMMUNITY

In February it was announced that Rev. Peter Macdonald, currently minister of St George's West Church in Edinburgh, would be the new Leader of the Iona Community. Peter will be taking over from Rev. Kathy Galloway when she finishes her 7-year term at the end July. Congratulations, Peter.

THE NEW IONA COMMUNITY E-BULLETIN LAUNCHED – AND HOW TO RECEIVE IT EACH MONTH

The *Iona Community e-bulletin* was launched in January. The e-bulletin is a companion to *Coracle*, and like *Coracle* focuses on issues at the heart of the Iona Community: prayer and politics, justice and peace and the integrity of creation, hospitality and welcome, healing, the renewal of worship, the rebuilding of community ... To find out how to receive the e-bulletin each month, and to see past editions, go to the link below:

**[http://www.iona.org.uk/
EBulletin.php](http://www.iona.org.uk/EBulletin.php)**

January and February issues of the e-bulletin included reflections by Kathy Galloway, Peter Millar, David Rhodes and many others, news from Associates, Friends and Members – in Japan, Malawi, Germany, Switzerland, America ... campaigns; reflections on the Word by Jan Sutch Pickard and John Vincent; music; book reviews – and much more.

reviews

The Church at the Centre of the City,

edited by Paul Ballard, Epworth 2008, www.scm-canterburypress.co.uk/epworth.asp

During Community Week on Iona in October, Martin Shaw, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles within the Scottish Episcopal Church, led a session on the future of the church. (David Lunan, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland and a former Community member, had led a corresponding session at the summer Community Week.) With passion and insight from his own experience, Martin Shaw suggested that the church as we know it, in its present denominational and institutional form, is slowly dying, and he pointed to the resulting challenge – to nurture and encourage signs of hope, new life and transformation. This is a familiar scenario for most of us; and John Harvey's article in a recent edition of *Coracle*, exploring the concept of 'emerging church', sought to carry the discussion in this area forward within the Community.

Against this background this new book is a very stimulating read. Within the field of urban mission, attention tends to concentrate on the priority and needs of areas of urban deprivation, often to be found on the periphery of towns and cities, with an occasional nod in the direction of the suburbs, acknowledging that there, too, people have spiritual and emotional needs and the churches are under pressure. But the particular character and problems of city-centre ministry are too often neglected; and it is this gap that, under Paul Ballard's skilled editorship, *The Church at the Centre of the City* seeks to fill by helping 're-invigorate the churches' witness and service' with an emphasis on 'creative and prophetic living'.

I have to declare something of an interest both on account of my own long-standing dabbling in this field (indeed my election as Leader of the Iona Community in 1995 rescued me from the virtual obligation to produce a book after a period of sabbatical study!) and as an editorial adviser. And, as a former member of St George's West, Edinburgh, where my own commitment to creative urban ministry was forged, I particularly appreciated the chapter by Peter Macdonald, himself of course a Community member, about how the congregation, in the heart of the west end of Edinburgh city centre, has adapted to the changing situation there and addressed and responded to the challenges to witness and mission through, among other things, refurbishing the building, initiating imaginative new programmes to reach out to office workers and others, developing the work of the Olive Tree Café, providing space for a range of voluntary organisations and a shop selling Palestinian goods (and an Iona Community shop in the weeks before Christmas 2008!), and collaborating very effectively each year with the Edinburgh Festival 'Fringe'. Like several other contributors, he reflects on the fundamental tension within almost every city-centre church between the congregation who gather on Sundays, but live and are involved in other activities all over the city, and the needs and challenges of the city centre itself and the various 'flows' of people who come and go there – for example, shop and office workers; shoppers; those who come to the city centre, especially in the evenings, for leisure purposes; local residents; homeless people.

Inevitably there is a degree of inconsistency in the quality and style of the various contributions to this book. But the subject matter is comprehensive, there is a diversity of perspective and subject matter and, as well as a wealth of reflective insight – sociological and theological – there are

many practical examples to consider, coming from different urban settings in England, Scotland and Wales. I particularly liked also the chapters entitled 'Towards a Missiology for the City Centre', 'Spirituality for the City Centre', and 'City Centre Culture and the Churches' – the last of these, focussing on Liverpool, asserting convincingly that 'faithfulness in the city is a theological imperative that needs visible and embodied commitment'. I warmly commend this helpful and hopeful book to everyone who is interested in the renewal and future of the church.

Norman Shanks, retired Church of Scotland minister; Member and a former Leader of the Iona Community

Streetwide Worldwide: Where People Power Begins,

by **Tony Gibson**, Jon Carpenter Publishing, 2008 (Alder House, Market Street, Charlbury OX7 3PH

Phone and fax 01608-811-969) ISBN 978 1 906067 03 8

I read this book during the week after Barack Obama's election, and in the intervals between an abortive twenty-four hour attempt to get to and from Iona (prevented by 'adverse weather conditions!'). It was a good context in which to read it, as I hope will become clear.

The book is an autobiographical account of why and how Tony Gibson has played what has been described as 'a pivotal role', in the UK and in many other parts of the world, in grassroots community development, and in the regeneration 'of some of the nation's most neglected and run-down neighbourhoods' (from the Foreword by Lord Richard Best, former Director of the Joseph Rowntree Foundation). He cut his community organising teeth as a student activist during the London Blitz in the Second World War, organising Pacifists Service Units – and then with Friends Ambulance Units in Italy, and in China after the war. Tony took these skills on into peacetime work with and for the BBC, especially in educational broadcasting – a large central section of the book details his innovative work enabling teachers and pupils to move from 'chalk and talk' to 'learning by doing', often in very challenging inner-city contexts.

The bits I found most stimulating were where he describes the methods he developed, through organisations he set up like the Neighbourhood Initiatives Foundation, and his 'Planning for Real' packs, to give local people the tools and the confidence to envision, and then to make, the changes they wanted in their own localities, while at the same time often being able to bring officialdom on board. Chapter headings like 'Making a Go of It', 'Confrontations', 'Seeing and Doing', 'D.I.Y.', 'Street Cred', and 'Us and Them', hopefully give you a flavour of what he's about.

He reminded me of Barack Obama, who also began his working life as a community organiser, where he learnt the skills that enabled him to move into top level politics, where hopefully he can effect even greater changes. Tony Gibson also connects with the Iona Community – he worked with Lex Miller, an early Deputy Leader and the moving force behind the Community's Economic Discipline; and he speaks highly in the book of George MacLeod and his genius in getting grassroots workers and ministers together as the movement gathered pace after the war.

It's a fast-moving read; Tony writes as if he is talking to you personally; and many's the time I had to lay it down on the seat beside me, in the boat or on the bus, and let his experience, and his enthusiasm, challenge my own experience, and my own continuing involvement, in this sort of 'people power'. And the whole time I was reading it, MacLeod's famous phrase kept coming back to me – 'a demanding common task alone can build community'.

John Harvey, Member and a former Leader of the Iona Community

Tony Gibson is an Associate member of the Iona Community.

A TRIBUTE TO TOM GRAHAM by Rev. Fred Booth

On Thursday, December 11th it was John Harvey's, Ruth Burgess's and my privilege to conduct Tom Graham's funeral service. Newcastle's West Road Crematorium was packed to standing room only to bid farewell to the vigorous and loveable sixty-three-year-old who had died on St Andrew's Day and who we could scarcely believe had gone.

I first met Tom on Iona in the summer of 1968. From different parts of Scotland and for different reasons we had converged on the island as new members; he the spirited adventurer from Glasgow, already familiar with Iona's lore and soul; me a tentative novice from Kincardineshire, drawn by the concern and compassion of Community veteran Cameron Wallace, as he crouched under the keels of Port Glasgow-built ships to listen to riveters and platers as their industrial chaplain.

Tom's handshake, then as always, was firm and warm, his smile easy, his grin impish, his grimace telling, his chortle infectious, his opinions emphatic, his voice resonant in speech and song, his ceilidh fiddling boisterous, his robustness on the bumpy football pitch single-minded and deadly!

Tom was already a legend in Iona's high seasons. Having devoured every detail of the island's Celtic origins and critically appraised its history and mythology, Tom's know-how would spill over as he met yet another group of tourists off the *King George*; then walking backwards in his kilt, he would inform and no doubt overawe as well as delight them with his insights, anecdotes, enthusiasm, appearance and sense of balance! For many a year Tom's slim volume *Iona Abbey – a short guide*, illustrated by Grant Hicks, was the bible for thousands of day-trippers and pilgrims alike.

We all guessed back then that Tom would go places. While the rest of

us whitewashed Dunsmeorach, creosoted the youth camp and dug ditches, Tom, when not guiding, or conspiring with the irrepressible Joyce Campbell to create long remembered mayhem for the youngsters who crammed into the village camp, was meticulously cataloguing the Abbey library before heading for Rome to research in the Vatican Library towards his Doctorate.

Then came marriage to Moira, the births of Alasdair and Euan, and the thirty-nine-year academic traverse of the librarianship mountain peaks of Glasgow, Aberdeen, Hull, York and Newcastle universities whose rarefied atmospheres never deflected him from the ground-level priorities of family and friendships, nor from his commitment to the Community's Family Groups which he valued so much, nor from his convenership of the Publishing Committee just as the Wild Geese gathered to take flight to try 'to touch the hearts of all'. And having got 'tore in' to school rugby and been goalie for his university, Tom loved shouting the odds from touchline and terracing with the boys; also, hiking and biking in God's grandeur, and exercising his ample lungs in the choruses of Scottish Opera, the Edinburgh Festival and the Hexham Abbey Festival Chorus. And as Christ's man throughout all this, he took upon himself Christ's restlessness; and when the chips came down, His calming and courage.

And early last year, down they came with neither rhyme nor reason. But in those precarious and final months Tom got on with what his head and heart urged him to: planning for his library's future, participating in its diverse activities, and doing the much loved family things, including a nostalgic rail journey from Fort William to Mallaig to celebrate his passion for steam trains.

Tucked into my pocket as Ellen and I drove south for the funeral

were lines by Philip Larkin, distinguished poet as well as Tom's senior colleague at Hull. I'd be reading them just before John's tribute and Ruth's prayer, and they took me back to those early Iona days when certain impressions were etched into my mind to linger on. One of these was Tom's deep stillness as we sat in the Abbey. Here was that teeming furrowed forehead tuning itself to the Eternal, this liveliest of intellects contemplating infinite greatness and goodness and being available to them.

Tom's disciplined stillness remains for me a defining memory of this scholar and friend, whose ongoing quest for ultimate meaning kept taking him to wherever timeworn stone or modern brick sustained the mystery of a Presence which moved even the sceptical Larkin to take off his bicycle clips and hat as he entered yet another empty sanctuary and concede:

*A serious house on serious earth it is,
in whose blent air all our
compulsions meet,
are recognised, and robed
as destinies.
And that much never
can be obsolete,
since someone will forever
be surprising
a hunger in himself
to be more serious,
and gravitating with it
to this ground,
which, he once heard, was proper
to grow wise in ...*

Tom Graham grew wise in many places but perhaps mostly in those formative summers within that Abbey, whose ancient stones embraced him with a belonging we all long for.

Within and beyond the Community many will miss Tom Graham but will forever be glad they knew him. And may this gratitude of ours for their loved one continue to comfort and encourage Moira, Alasdair and Euan, his sister, Eleanor, and brother, John ... Goodbye, Tom. Journey on. And thank you.

A Blessing, Tom

A blessing, Tom.
A blessing for your coming and going.
A blessing for your life and loving.
A blessing for your journey home.

You left us so quickly,
we scarce had time to say goodbye.
We are missing you,
your honesty, your laughter,
your stories ...
your pride in your family,
your justice and your joy.

We are grateful for your life shared
with us:
for your kindness,
your integrity and your wonder,
for your strong love.

Go well, Tom Graham.
Go and talk with the saints
and play with the little ones.
Go and join the game of heaven.
Go and swap stories with God.

A blessing, Tom.
A blessing on your coming and going.
A blessing on your life and loving.

A blessing,
on your journey home

Ruth Burgess



From Wild Goose Publications

NEW AND UPCOMING BOOKS

Acorns & Archangels: Resources for Ordinary Time, Ruth Burgess

Acorns & Archangels is a collection of resources – prayers, stories, responses, songs, poems, reflections and meditations – for the late summer and autumn period of Ordinary Time, written by Iona Community Members, Associates, Friends and others, covering the weeks from the Feast of the Transfiguration to All Hallows' Eve. It is a companion resource book to Bare Feet and Buttercups: Resources for Ordinary Time (Trinity Sunday to the Feast of the Transfiguration).

£14.99 (plus post+packaging)

Down to Earth, Neil Paynter, illustrations by Iain Campbell

Neil Paynter has been a farm labourer, a fruit picker, a security guard (reluctantly), a bookseller, a hospital cleaner, a stand-up comedian, a musician, a teacher and an editor. The stories in this book come out of his experience of working in homeless shelters in North America and Britain, as a nurse's aide with the elderly and as a mental health worker. A book about searching for, and finding, Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit in down-to-earth places. 'If we think about what is happening in our world at this present time, this book's publication is timely. It allows us to look again at our true humanity, and to reflect on those qualities of the spirit which enable human beings to survive through all the odds. And not only to survive, but to live with the ability to dance in the storm.' (Peter Millar, from the Foreword)

£12.99 (plus post+packaging)

Through Wood, Alison Swinfen

This collection of prayers and poems has its roots in the Gaelic alphabet and in the tradition of understanding Christ as the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, as the Tree of Life. It is woven together by the author with the history, qualities and lore of wood as used in Scotland, and across Europe, mindful that most of us, today, are as dislocated from wood as we are from the land. Our furniture comes flat-packed, self-assembled, with such unpoetic names as chip board and MDF, signs indeed of the technological, bureaucratic, consumer individualism that tears at our social and cultural fabric, and pretends that there is life without history, and without such time and resonant old names as are given us through wood. Alison Swinfen is a Professor of Languages and Intercultural Studies, and Associate Dean, Faculty of Education, at the University of Glasgow. She is a member of the Iona Community. £10.99 (plus post+packaging)

TO ORDER: 0141-332-6292

admin@ionabooks.com/www.ionabooks.com

The upcoming Yorkshire Members, Associates and Friends Gathering

Saturday, 6th June

at the Quiet Garden, Westfield Farm, Sheriff Hutton, York

We will be welcoming Stephanie Cooper, who will lead the morning session with a presentation about her work with Christian Aid. The afternoon session will take the form of a Big Sing. This is an open invitation to all to come and enjoy the garden and share worship and fellowship. A more detailed programme, map and travel directions will be sent out about six weeks beforehand. If interested please send a SAE to Claire Dalby, 7 South Terr, Sowerby, Thirsk, N. Yorks, YO7 1RH

Be a guest of the Iona Community in 2009

COME STAY AT THE ABBEY OR THE MACLEOD CENTRE IN SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER

Both the Abbey and the Mac have vacancies on all weeks throughout September and October. Most of the weeks could take a small group, and the 3-night break in both centres, 13-16 October, could take groups in either centre. Individuals, couples and families also welcome.

Abbey.Bookings@iona.org.uk

Tel: 01681-700-404

COME STAY AT CAMAS

There are still individual spaces available in May:

9th-15th May: Off Grid, Off Oil, with Raymond Young

16th-22nd May: Reading the Big Book, with Kathy Galloway

There are still spaces available for group bookings:

30th May-5th June

11th-17th July

September: 5th-11th, and 19th-25th

Please contact Carol Dougall:

camas.bookings@iona.org.uk, 01681-700-404

for further details

Become a Friend or an Associate of the Iona Community and receive Coracle four times a year and the new Iona Community e-bulletin monthly!

For details on becoming a Friend or an Associate of the Iona Community, email Lynn Harper-Baldwin, Membership Secretary: Lynn@iona.org.uk, or go to www.iona.org.uk

The upcoming North West Regional Iona Community Gathering

Saturday, 6th June,

Salvation Army Hall,

**572 Oldham Road, Failsworth, Manchester, near
Junction 22, M60**

'Saints Alive: Columban Irish Traditions – what do they mean for us?'

Warren Bardsley will help us focus on Adomnán's 'Law of the Innocents', and how it could find parallel personal and political expressions for us now (as well as in the Middle East).

10am drinks and registration, for 10:30 start. Closing worship at 3pm, led by Rev. Keith Argyle. Shared feast at 1pm. Creche available: please contact Muriel Snell by 23rd May: 0161-684-3015

Donations to the Iona Community and towards the cost of the day will be welcomed. For further details contact John Munn: 01925-824-485

PRAYER AND ACTION: DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

'So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.' James 2:17

By far the world's deadliest war in the last decade has been fought in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Short bulletins about the fighting have appeared on our news from time to time over the 10 years since the conflict began, yet few of us will have grasped the scale of atrocity and human suffering that has been taking place there.

Five million – yes 5,000,000 – people have died in this one country in one decade as a direct result of the civil war, either killed in the fighting or dying of the resultant disease and starvation. About 300,000 civilians who have been displaced by fighting in the last few months are right now without sufficient food, water, medical supplies or shelter. More than 10,000 cases of cholera have been reported in North Kivu province alone.

Sexual violence has been used as a weapon of war on a massive scale. Hundreds of thousands of women have been gang-raped by fighters from all sides in the conflict. The physical injuries and trauma these women have suffered are devastating. The UN estimated that 45,000 women were raped in the small province of South Kivu in 2005. Multiply that figure across the whole country and the 10 years of war and something of the scale of this horror starts to dawn.

Another ceasefire is now in place and peace talks have begun, but tensions remain very high in the east of the country. Hundreds of thousands of people are still living in makeshift camps after fleeing their homes. Many are too frightened to go to their fields to collect food. Amnesty International estimates that at least 11,000 child soldiers are still with armed groups or missing despite a government programme to release and re-integrate them into civilian life.

The International Criminal Court has been investigating war crimes and crimes against humanity in the Democratic Republic of Congo since 2004. General Laurent Nkunda, the former leader of a key anti-government group responsible for many war crimes, including systematic rape, murder of civilians and the use of child soldiers, was finally arrested in January 2009, by the Rwandan Government which had previously supported him.

Despite the world's largest UN peacekeeping force being present, the international community has so far failed to prevent carnage in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Nor is it currently succeeding in providing sufficient humanitarian aid to those who are suffering so desperately. Food convoys are still regularly looted and humanitarian workers harassed by the fighters. Much more help is urgently needed, and a much higher priority to long-term peacemaking and immediate humanitarian aid must be afforded by the rest of the world.

Pray ...

- For all the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo, especially for those who have been raped, abused, mutilated or injured in the fighting and those who have lost loved ones.
- That the ceasefire will be kept and peace talks find a lasting resolution to the conflict.
- For the release and rehabilitation of all children who have been forced to fight.
- For wisdom in the responses of all organs of the international

community, including the United Nations and the International Criminal Court, and for appropriate action by the UK and other governments.

Action suggestions

1. Find out more from the Amnesty International website: www.amnesty.org.uk/drc
2. Amnesty UK has recently received a letter from the Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, and the Defence Secretary, John Hutton, stating that they are working to increase the capacity and capability of the UN's peacekeeping mission MONUC. Write to both ministers at the House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA, urging them to do all in their power to facilitate the effective deployment of extra peacekeepers as a matter of great urgency.
3. Send appeal letters to the President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, in support of Amnesty International's campaigns, calling for:
 - (a) The immediate protection of human rights defender Justine Masika Bihamba and her family, who have been attacked and sexually assaulted: www.amnesty.org.uk/actions_details.asp?ActionID=534
 - (b) Humane treatment for Colonel Paul Ndokayi, an army officer, who has been tortured, imprisoned and denied medical treatment for his injuries: www.amnesty.org.uk/actions_details.asp?ActionID=365
4. Make a donation to Amnesty to support their extensive human rights work in the Democratic Republic of Congo (www.amnesty.org.uk), Amnesty International UK, The Human Rights Action Centre, 17-25 New Inn Yard, London, EC2A 3EA.

Helen Boothroyd is an Associate member of the Iona Community and co-author of 'Holy Ground: Liturgies and Worship Resources for an Engaged Spirituality' (Wild Goose Publications) www.ionabooks.com

The Growing Hope Appeal ... Stop Press. Second Phase Complete!

The first phase of the Growing Hope Appeal was the renovation of Camas, the Iona Community's Adventure Centre on Mull, which was completed within budget and on time; the second phase was the development of the Welcome Centre on Iona ... Member Margaret Stewart celebrates the completion of this second phase of the Growing Hope Appeal and announces the third phase.

The building work on the Iona Community Welcome Centre (aka Shop, aka the old Coffee House) was completed in mid-March and the centre is ready for the new season! Thanks to all who have contributed to the Growing Hope Appeal, and to the Iona staff for their hard work in fitting out the building.

The big white house opposite the Columba Hotel figures as the third and final phase of the Growing Hope Appeal.

Dunsmeorach was built as a family home for owners of the Columba Hotel in the '30s. Sold to the Iona Community, it became home to the MacLeod family when they were in summer residence on Iona. It then became first a home for Abbey wardens and their families, and subsequently Resident Group staff accommodation. In the '80s a small outbuilding at the rear was modified to provide extra space but according to its occupants has always been poky, cold and damp.

It is now necessary to renovate the accommodation in the house, demolishing the outbuilding and adding a rear extension, returning it all to acceptable condition. There are not yet final plans or costings but now that the work to convert the shop building is complete and the cost covered we are ready to embark on this phase.

Bright, imaginative, innovative ideas for raising funds are invited. All suggestions to the Growing Hope Appeal fundraising group through Margaret Stewart, Graham Boyle or Malcolm May. Watch this space.

Prayer of the Iona Community

O God, who gave to your servant Columba the gifts of courage, faith and cheerfulness, and sent people forth from Iona to carry the word of your gospel to every creature: grant, we pray, a like spirit to your church, even at this present time. Further in all things the purpose of our community, that hidden things may be revealed to us, and new ways found to touch the hearts of all. May we preserve with each other sincere charity and peace, and, if it be your will, grant that this place of your abiding be continued still to be a sanctuary and a light. Through Jesus Christ. Amen



The Growing Hope Appeal logo

'LOVE, HOPE' © David Coleman



O Eternal Chancellor of love

A prayer from the Holy City worship event 'Grant Street', which looked at the demand of discipleship that is 'giving'.

Behind the facts and figures,
you wait,
watching the business
and the busy-ness of the earth.

You see clearly
how our compulsive desires
overwhelm our best intentions;
how we sell out the best that is in us
and pay lip service to your will.

We presume
that all we have is by automatic right,
that all we have is due to our own industry.

We collaborate, unconsciously,
in building and sustaining a society
that enslaves the spirit,
that impoverishes human bodies,
that displaces being with having.

O Eternal Chancellor of love,
through centuries of accumulating interest,
our multiple accounts have gone into arrears;
our outstanding loans remain toxic;
our borrowings in months and pounds
have been unwisely and selfishly spent,
when they should have been credited
to the statement sheet
of the world
and all people,
and not just the few.

May we, with you,
re-audit our assets of time and money,
and recalculate our budgets
so that they become redeeming, redistributive and just.
May deep gratitude
replace our unthinking expenditure;
and may deeper compassion
more regularly repay the excessive capital of your love.
We pray this in Jesus' name.
Amen

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Holy City is an ecumenical adult event, with workshops and worship, in Glasgow city centre, enabled by the Wild Goose Resource Group and an assortment of citizens. Holy City is a time and place for certainty and doubt, praising and questioning God, an occasion to rediscover the value of conversation and debate, to savour silence and scripture, to celebrate song and symbol. Holy City focuses on realities of choice, lifestyle, culture, politics, personal agendas and the relevance of faith in urban life in the contemporary world. Holy City: sub WAYS, the 2008-09 programme, concerns itself with the journey of discipleship, taking one aspect each month, pulling it apart in workshops and then putting it all together again in liturgy.



**'Let the children come to me,
and do not hinder them;
for to such belongs
the Kingdom of God.**

**Truly, I say to you,
whoever does not receive
the Kingdom of God like a child
shall not enter it.'**

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