GATHERED FOR GOD

1. You could have chosen better people who showed much less diversity, who would not compromise your gospel or question your integrity. Instead you picked a random harvest, whose pedigree was scarcely known, believing that, through these companions, the love of God could yet be shown.

Gathered for God, gathered for God, caught in the net cast by the Lord …

2. You could have chosen safer subjects and caused less upset and offence, or made innocuous pronouncements, which would not undermine pretence. But you decided to be different, to speak of money, tax and food, and how the privileged can be loveless, and how the poor show God is good.

Gathered for God, gathered for God, caught in the net cast by the Lord …

3. You could have honoured better singers than children shouting in the street. You could have sat with safer diners than those with whom you chose to eat. You could have kept a tighter circle and made far fewer foreign friends. Indeed, you could have done our bidding and used your means to serve our ends.

Gathered for God, gathered for God, caught in the net cast by the Lord …

4. But, Jesus, you came, contradicting how we believed God ought to be, and took our flesh for your own body to liberate humanity. For all you are and do and promise, we gladly worship and applaud, grateful that, in your net, you caught us, gathered for freedom and for God.

Gathered for God, gathered for God, caught in the net cast by the Lord.


Iona Community 75th Anniversary photo © David Coleman
Many Iona Community members and associates supported the Listening Point project running here in Machynlleth, which began following the abduction and murder of little April Jones on October 1st, 2012. Your prayers, donations and gifts meant so much, and enabled us to provide really good community support to this small town in the middle of Wales, where support resources are so scarce. I thought it might interest you to have an update on the project.

It has been an amazing time filled with tears, anger, and also laughter and love. Listening Point continues to offer unconditional love and support to whoever walks through the doors; it is becoming a project run by, and for, those within the community, whatever their need.

When April went missing, there was a knock on the door at 9.45pm from folk already out searching. From that moment on, life here would never be the same for me. I resisted the urge to go out into the night and scour the hills. As a visually impaired person with no night vision, and unable to walk far this, I thought, would not be the way in which I could help; I wept however because I wanted to be out there with the others. Then, along with everyone here in the community, I waited, and waited – each helicopter pass over the bungalow shaking the very core of my being; terror was engulfing us all; and it went on for weeks, then months.

In some ways I felt frozen, deskilled, unable to ‘do’ anything. Meeting a police welfare officer, who had at that point been working 12-hour days supporting the search teams, was another defining moment. There was no need for action within the community and this did not remain in my professional-practice bubble outside of that need. I felt driven to step forward. I had professional skills; I was also Director of Counselling for a small charity, the Churches Counselling Service in Wales, which could possibly host and assist any project set up to support the community. Strangely, God, and prayer, usually so much part of my life, seemed far away. If I had been consulted about working within another traumatised community I would have felt very differently: I would have stepped in as the outside professional. This, however, was more complex. I am a Christian, an Iona Community member, my husband, a retired church minister who sometimes takes services locally; my psychotherapeutic practice, however, has always been in secular settings. The careful boundaries created to keep me, and others, safe would need to be taken apart mindfuly, and with thought to the ethical principles I hold so dear.

As the weeks turned into months, and a trial approached, we realised that for the church to continue with its normal functions in the parish room we would need to find a new venue. Then a miracle happened: a small purpose-built centre became available on the Bryn-y-Gog estate, where April had lived. It had originally been a small shop, converted to offices some years previously by Powys County Council for a project that was now coming to an end. They offered it to us at a nominal rent. At first we were tentative about moving there; would it be too close to April’s family for them to feel comfortable? A message came back from the police family liaison teams that they would be glad for us to be there. Walking forward in faith, we moved in on the week before the trial of Mark Bridge started. Within the space of 24 hours it was transformed from an office into a beautiful drop-in centre. The council had left many items to use – fridge, kettle, printer and stationery, desks, chairs; volunteers and visitors again brought flowers, paintings and tablecloths. Rocking chairs appeared for the inner room.

Someone posted a note through the door anonymously yesterday with these words: ‘Thank you for being here. This is a sanctuary.’

We were up and running, and have not looked back. The centre is light, and often full of laughter, as people of all ages join in knitting, art and other activities; police visit alongside young mums and those who are elderly or infirm. Since opening our doors last December we have received 422 visits, 70 attended a ‘fun day’ for children on the estate. We have received 120 calls to the helpline and 14 clients have received counselling, not to mention the over 1000 hours put in by the team of volunteer listeners. There have been many tears, lots of anger and fear, but we are together and sharing the load.

The only unwelcome guests have been the press who have regularly made camp in the car park, but have not entered over the threshold. Outside our window is ‘April’s Bench’, donated by prisoners at Shrewsbury Prison, and with what has come to be known locally as ‘April’s Garden’ with all its pinkness.

Someone posted a note through the door anonymously yesterday with these words: ‘Thank you for being here. This is a sanctuary.’

Currently many of the volunteers are writing about their experiences; we eventually hope to create a resource for other communities who face similar tragic circumstances.

On September 26th, 2013 the town held its breath again as, at last, after all the waiting, the family of April were finally able to hold a funeral service for their beloved daughter. I acted as an usher at the church, and wept with the family over their loss. After the funeral, I went to the drop-in centre, where we all sat together in our grief and love for each other, and drank tea and shared the cake that someone had made and left for us.

Listening Point is now at a crossroads, moving towards becoming a community resource rather than a project, and of course the issue of finding funding again raises its head. I am taking a step back for a while, but handing on to a team of amazingly skilled and dedicated volunteers.

My view is that it will take a generation for the events here to be fully processed and for us to recover from the trauma, but I am very hopeful – the resilience, compassion and generosity of the people I find myself working with and living among amazes and astonds me aresh each day. •

For more information about Listening Point:
listeningpointmarch@gmail.com

This is an abridged version of an article that first appeared in Therapeutically, Winter 2013 and BKP Therapy Today, February 2014.

Susan Dale is a Counsellor and a member of the Iona Community.

A YEAR OF CELEBRATION

2013 was a year of celebration for the Iona Community – with events marking the 1450th anniversary of Columba’s arrival on Iona, the Community’s 75th anniversary, and the visit of Iona to the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins – such significant occasions.

The two main aims of the Pentecost event to commemorate the arrival of Columba were fulfilled. The first was to ensure that the occasion was planned and celebrated by the people of Iona. Islanders prepared and led the service of thanksgiving along with Gaelic songs, took the service of thanksgiving along with Gaelic songs, and were joined by hundreds of invited guests and visitors.

As we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the MacLeod Centre this year, we began planning for the future of our Centres. We will seek to ensure that the way we staff and run our Centres continues to honour the great legacy and privilege we have of being in this place.

I end this season optimistic about the future, grateful to the wonderful Resident Group team of 2013 for all their gifts and willingness to go the extra mile, and with confidence in the future.

The third development saw several young adults joining us on three separate occasions during the season. They came first with their youth groups, then returned for our open enrolment personal development course ‘Sustain Yourself’ and then again for the end-of-season ‘Garden Week’. It is so rewarding to see young people develop in confidence, and hoping to volunteer at Camas or on Iona next summer.

As always, it has been a privilege to welcome staff, young people and visitors down the track to one of the most beautiful spots in the world – we are looking forward to the 2014 season.

ACCESS TO OUR ISLAND CENTRES

The Iona Community has two restricted funds which can only be used to assist our work with people living in poverty in the UK. The Access Fund has been built up through donations from many people over many years, and is strictly for subsidising people staying at our Island Centres. The Alastair Cerar Fund was formed from a one-off donation in 2011 and has these purposes:

- to enable greater numbers of single poor people to access our Centres on Iona and Mull, or similar residential facilities as appropriate, by meeting travel and accommodation costs;
- to support social care and outreach initiatives in Glasgow;
- to encourage partnerships with other agencies working with the single poor in Glasgow and elsewhere.

In 2013 we utilised £11,643 of the Access Fund and spent an additional £26,171 of our General Funds offering subsidised stays on Iona and at Camas. The Alastair Cerar Fund was not used in 2013. This is a total of £37,814.

In 2012 the total subsidy was £45,115. Considerable support was
YOUTH RESOURCE WORKERS CHRISS LONG AND BEN RAW REPORT FROM GLASGOW

Our work in 2013 may look similar to that in previous years, but in 2013 we consciously tried to do things differently. For example, there was still work with schools, but we prioritised work that would create ongoing relationship rather than one-off workshops. Though we didn’t visit as many schools as in past years, we have initiated relationships with schools, with pupils and staff alike, that will result in more long-lasting outcomes.

For over twenty-five years now, groups from Bellahouston Academy have been coming to Iona for a week at the MacLeod Centre. It was fitting that the annual visit in May marked the start of the 25th anniversary celebrations of the Mac.

The Youth Festivals on Iona continue to develop. Young folk from the Community’s youth network, this year from Sweden and the U.S., were joined by young people who attend youth clubs and church youth groups in Glasgow. It was a special pleasure to welcome these guys and girls— we work with on winter evenings to summer weeks on Iona, and to see how much their contributions were appreciated by those from other countries. Yes, the workshops were great and of course we had fun playing games on the beach—but the best outcome is to see friendships blossom and develop; young people meet who otherwise would not, and in the process grow to value themselves and others.

Groups we work with year-round on the mainland were also guests at Camas, which really impacts on the lives of the young people who visit. As Camas Coordinator Jon Lloyd has reported, young folk who had gone to Camas, initially within the comfort of their own group, then individually signed up for other weeks—and were surprised by the awakening and discovering of passions, just waiting for the challenge and adventure of Camas to rouse and inspire them.

We continue to work with the Scottish Government in responding to sectarianism in Scotland, and we were able to gather 30 young people in Glasgow in October as part of this work. The participants from Glasgow and Dunoon, Edinburgh and Perth had been involved in parts of our summer programme and came together to explore the perception and reality of sectarianism in their lives.

What we have accomplished in 2013 might not be ‘new’, but it meets young people where they are and offers them opportunities to explore what gives life meaning to connect with others and to know they have worth.

THE WILD GOOSE RESOURCE GROUP REPORTS FROM GLASGOW

The Resource Group and members of the Wild Goose Collective led the singing at Govan Old Parish Church on St Columbia’s Day, at the service of thanksgiving and commitment celebrating the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Iona Community. Particularly apt was the new song by John Bell, ‘Gathered for Good’. This and one other of John’s new songs are included in the collection of the same name, by composers from our North American publisher, GIA.

For as long as the MacLeod Centre has been open, the Wild Goose Resource Group has worked in the areas of worship, music and social justice within the Community’s youth on Iona and throughout Britain and the wider world. So the Centre’s 25th anniversary was a kind of anniversary for us too: WGRG led a week on Iona in July—‘At the Doors of the Promised Land’—to celebrate some of the waymarks and discoveries of the last 25 years.

One of our evening liturgies was ‘Ps’; a multimedia, multi-sensory experience of the Book of Psalms, first created for the ‘Different Voices’ national music event in Edinburgh in March by Graeme Maule.

In September we were back at the MacLeod Centre to lead ‘Rough Guides for Curious Pilgrims’. The week’s programme drew on insights from our monthly Glasgow event, Holy City, where our 2012-2013 theme ‘Promising Land’ explored the journey of life as a pilgrimage encompassing social, political, ecological, economic and spiritual aspects of our travels.

The new season of Holy City began with a three-month theme from October to December: ‘Body—exploring and celebrating ways that flesh, bone, spirit, senses, head and heart are understood in historical and contemporary, biblical and church experience’.

Among her other adventures, Jo Love continued commitments to school-based locum assistance for a local Priority Area parish, chaplaincy with Greater Glasgow Girls’ Brigade, and as one of the writing team for Spill the Beans: ‘a lectionary-based resource with a Scottish flavour for Sunday schools, Junior churches and worship leaders’.

The Greenbelt Festival 2013 also celebrated an anniversary—40 years of witness to justice. WGRG were responsible for the main communion service, attended by 8,000+ people. We were reminded how far our musical repertoires have come by singing worship songs typical of each of the last four decades!

Our Northern Lights tent was shared by friends from Fishly Music, the Corrymeela Community, Church of England and, of course, the Iona Community.

On October 18th, John Bell received the 20th Community of Christ International Peace Award during the Peace Colloquy in Independence, Missouri, for his passionate promotion of justice and peacemaking through congregational song and worship. The October 18th-20th Colloquy, ‘Peace, Justice and Song’, focused on justice and peacemaking through worship and music and celebrated the launch of the hymnal Community of Christ Sings, which includes a dozen or more WGRG songs.

As well as completing three North American itineraries, John has been working throughout the UK, and in Sweden, Finland, Spain and Germany.

John and the team have been writing a new incarnation of A Wee Worship Book, and the Collective have recorded a CD of songs from the collection Enemy of Apathy.

PUBLISHING MANAGER OF WILD GOOSE PUBLICATIONS, SANDRA KRAMER, REPORTS FROM GLASGOW

During 2013 Wild Goose Publications continued its work of publishing books, e-books and downloads relating to the Iona Community’s view of the world and stance on issues of justice and peace.

Books published were Working with the Labyrinth, by Ruth Sewell, Jan Sellers & Di Williams; A Time to Mend, by Peter Miller; Go to the Ant, by Chilean Prance; Like Leaves to the Sun, by Neil Paynter; Love for the Future, by David Osborne; Saying Goodbye, by Ruth Burgess; and Hope Was Heard Singing, by Sally Foster-Fulton.

A number of new digital downloads on various subjects and for specific occasions were made available, including: Lenten & Easter Nudges, by Thom M. Shuman; Prayers and Readings for Valentine’s Day, by various contributors; A Six-Week Challenge to Care More for Creation, by various contributors; Not for the Faint-Hearted, by Kate McIlhagga; Dawn’s Ribbon of Glory, by Kate McIlhagga; Good Friday & Holy Saturday, by Jan Sutch Pickard; Stories for Holy Week, by Tom Gordon; Bell, Book and Candle; A Liturgy for St Columba’s Day, by Jan Sutch Pickard; Litany for the City, by Annie Heppenstall; Leaderless Eucharist, by Annie Heppenstall; The Prodigal Son Returns to Peckham, by Dave Broom; Unexpected Blessings, by Dave Broom; Prayers for Lightning Candles, by Ruth Burgess; A Communion Liturgy on the Theme of Transfiguration, by Thom M. Shuman; Resources for Services of Prayer for Healing, by Ruth Burgess and others; Ruth’s Harvest, by Tim Aldred; Remembering, by Glendon Macaulay; The Saints of God Are Down Our Street, by Ian M. Fraser; What are you Waiting For?, by Dave Broom; Advent Nudges, by Thom M. Shuman; In This Season of Waiting, by Pat Bennett; Waiting for Emmanuel, by Pat Bennett & John L Bell.

We continued to publish e-book versions of our books, both new and backlist titles, and during 2013 we...
Commitment. Its roots are firmly healing ministry of the Iona expanding group of dedicated than ever. However, we do seem to have a large and group of dedicated customers who appreciate having access to material that comes out of the Iona Community ethos. Long may we continue to produce these unique resources for them.

CORACLE, E-CORACLE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Community’s magazine, Coracle, is published quarterly. An online bulletin, e-Coracle, and social media such as Facebook and Twitter are also used to provide up-to-date news and topical views. Both Coracle and e-Coracle are circulated worldwide, keeping readers informed of the life and work of the Community, offering resources for reflection and worship and providing a platform for the sharing of provocative and diverse perspectives on global and local issues of social justice.

PRAYER CIRCLE COORDINATOR, POLLY BURNS, REPORTS

The Iona Prayer Circle is part of the healing ministry of the Iona Community. Its roots are firmly based in the beginnings of the Community, from when people first began to send in requests for prayers for healing to the fledgling Community in 1939. Prayers have continued ever since. These prayers are brought together during a simple service held on a Tuesday night in the Abbey. Intercession is made for people and places where there is need of healing of any sort. Prayer requests come from people visiting the island and from those further afield, contacting the Abbey by e-mail or letter. People and places needing longer-term prayer are placed on lists which are sent out to the many intercessors worldwide.

An important part of the Prayer Circle is the contact that is maintained through letter and e-mail with the Coordinator, often in response to the theme explored in the bi-monthly prayer letter.

The Prayer Circle has continued to explore the theme of a more earth-based spirituality. This included a week on Camas and e-mail with the Coordinator, often in response to the theme explored in the bi-monthly prayer letter.

Annual Report, 2013
monasticism stands for.’

Urging an alternative choice which acknowledges but is not confined by past conflict, he called for:

‘openness to the experiences and views of others, and willingness to interrogate our own preconceptions, to transcend the historical divisions and understand more about our neighbours and in doing so, ourselves.’

The President was joined by Culture Secretary Fiona Hyslop MSP representing the Scottish Government, in praising the Iona Community and its commitment to peacemaking and social justice.

The ecumenical service in the Abbey featured music and poetry by leading artists of the Scots and Irish Gaeltachts, including Flora MacNeil, Ciarán Carson and Aonghas MacNeacail. The singing of the late Seán Ó Riada’s famous male voice choir, Cór Cúil Aodha from County Cork, and the Scots Gaelic psalm singers ‘lining out’ in the Hebridean tradition were particularly powerful.

For the Iona Community and other groups based on Iona and in Argyll, the 1450th anniversary of Columba’s arrival and settlement on Iona has provided an opportunity to build closer links with each other and working relationships among the councils, organisations and agencies which are so vital to the wellbeing, prosperity and sense of community on Iona and Mull.

From an Irish perspective, the significance of Colmcille as a potentially unifying symbol has inspired and energised a range of initiatives, including a spectacular homecoming pageant in Derry/Londonderry. A 40-foot curragh sailed back from Iona to the city, carrying a specially created ‘Book of Iona’ from the island children.

And for the Iona Community, the President’s visit was one of the highlights of our own 75th anniversary, along with the Pentecost celebrations on Iona and memorable weekend at Govan Old Parish Church. We see it not in isolation, but in the wider political, cultural and religious contexts which continue to challenge and engage us all, wherever we live our lives. In words from the service on Iona that afternoon:

‘May Christ be to us as he was to Colmcille himself: a source of love and peace and unity. And may we see each other in that place where there is no longer Irish or Scottish, Gael or Planter, Protestant or Catholic, but one great company of one great good heart together.’

2013 FINANCIAL REPORT, FROM SUPPORT SERVICES MANAGER, ROBERT SWINFEN

Income from donations was largely the same in 2013 as in 2012. Publications income and Shop sales on Iona continued to perform well given the overall economic environment, with both delivering helpful surpluses. Bookings income at all the Islands Centres was more variable: Camas had a good year for income, the Abbey performed reasonably well as the last couple of years, but the MacLeod Centre had poor occupancy and income. Operational expenditure was lower on Iona than in previous years, so the low income at the MacLeod Centre did not have a bad effect on our overall position, and overall the General Fund had a useful increase during 2013 to £248,690. This remains below our target for a safe margin, however, so there is no room for complacency.

The Iona Community, Glasgow: Limited Company Reg No. SC003794, Scottish Charity No. SC003794. Registered office: 4th Floor, Savoy House, 140 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3DH, tel: 0141 332 6345, Fax: 0141 332 1090, admin@iona.org.uk, www.iona.org.uk

The Abbey and MacLeod Centre: Isle of Iona, Argyll, PA76 6SN. Tel: 01681 700404, ionacom @iona.org.uk

The Camas Centre: Ardfenaig, Bunessan, Isle of Mull, Argyll, PA67 6DY, Tel: 01681 700367, camas@iona.org.uk

Wild Goose Publications: 4th Floor, Savoy House, 140 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3DH, tel: 0141 332 6305, Fax: 0141 332 1090, admin@ionabooks.com, www.ionabooks.com

Wild Goose Resource Group: 4th Floor, Savoy House, 140 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, G2 3DH, tel: 0141 332 6305, Fax: 0141 332 1090, wgrg@iona.org.uk, www.wgrg.co.uk

Annual Report photos by David Coleman, and by Kelly Mull, Ben Raw, A. Murray. Photos © the individual photographers

Iona Community Income and Expenditure, 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund Name</th>
<th>Opening Balance</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Spending</th>
<th>Transfers</th>
<th>Closing Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access Fund</td>
<td>£242,910</td>
<td>£14,365</td>
<td>£11,643</td>
<td>£427,652</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camas Funds</td>
<td>7,063</td>
<td>2,632</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>8,173</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecumenical Training</td>
<td>4,246</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>4,107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finneor Mackie Fund</td>
<td>9,035</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>9,035</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athablab Cearn Fund</td>
<td>183,431</td>
<td>20,938</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>204,275</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danna Fhionra</td>
<td>33,971</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>3,163</td>
<td>31,759</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing Hope Assets</td>
<td>355,090</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>50,316</td>
<td>397,816</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry Fund</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>19,672</td>
<td>9,506</td>
<td>2,406</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates Common</td>
<td>8,671</td>
<td>2,521</td>
<td>2,830</td>
<td>2,772</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members Travel Fund</td>
<td>20,686</td>
<td>13,816</td>
<td>11,128</td>
<td>23,074</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Goose Resource Group</td>
<td>145,557</td>
<td>120,317</td>
<td>4,894</td>
<td>150,120</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restricted Funds Total</td>
<td>1,794,438</td>
<td>238,993</td>
<td>112,971</td>
<td>1,981,210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legacy Housing Fund</td>
<td>292,442</td>
<td>33,047</td>
<td>57,860</td>
<td>239,820</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dunnamara Trust</td>
<td>71,562</td>
<td>-10,184</td>
<td>13,036</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revao Ninn Blass</td>
<td>1,540,424</td>
<td>-21,708</td>
<td>1,519,216</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charity General Fund</td>
<td>173,713</td>
<td>1,226,017</td>
<td>1,368,161</td>
<td>217,121</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbey Shop</td>
<td>72,124</td>
<td>292,407</td>
<td>233,565</td>
<td>26,059</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrestricted Funds subtotal</td>
<td>2,082,286</td>
<td>1,552,371</td>
<td>1,811,724</td>
<td>89,250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iona Community Total</td>
<td>3,894,703</td>
<td>1,751,364</td>
<td>1,734,605</td>
<td>3,881,372</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Departmental Breakdown of General Fund Income & Expenditure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Income</th>
<th>Spending</th>
<th>Transfers</th>
<th>Result 2012</th>
<th>Result 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central Administration</td>
<td>238,246</td>
<td>313,989</td>
<td>97,498</td>
<td>60,181</td>
<td>60,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Group</td>
<td>94,450</td>
<td>222,200</td>
<td>89,250</td>
<td>-13,500</td>
<td>-13,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Team</td>
<td>80,123</td>
<td>65,999</td>
<td>-5,666</td>
<td>25,010</td>
<td>25,010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wild Goose Publications</td>
<td>1,073,272</td>
<td>150,757</td>
<td>10,394</td>
<td>-3,073</td>
<td>-3,073</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbey Centre</td>
<td>287,366</td>
<td>212,214</td>
<td>85,182</td>
<td>63,470</td>
<td>63,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moidart Centre</td>
<td>150,134</td>
<td>191,385</td>
<td>8,654</td>
<td>-3,539</td>
<td>-3,539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camas</td>
<td>59,250</td>
<td>81,723</td>
<td>-22,364</td>
<td>-25,111</td>
<td>-25,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islands Administration</td>
<td>33,342</td>
<td>136,873</td>
<td>-102,531</td>
<td>-137,441</td>
<td>-137,441</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total for the Year</td>
<td>1,226,017</td>
<td>1,366,161</td>
<td>185,720</td>
<td>43,355</td>
<td>-37,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer for Dunnamara</td>
<td>10,164</td>
<td>10,164</td>
<td></td>
<td>20,110</td>
<td>20,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Reported Result</td>
<td>1,226,017</td>
<td>1,366,161</td>
<td>195,013</td>
<td>53,769</td>
<td>-11,744</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Balance Sheet Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land &amp; Buildings</td>
<td>2,546,541</td>
<td>2,583,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment &amp; Furniture</td>
<td>46,297</td>
<td>52,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investments</td>
<td>367,050</td>
<td>103,202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stock</td>
<td>177,495</td>
<td>209,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debtors</td>
<td>921,747</td>
<td>921,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank &amp; Cash</td>
<td>856,801</td>
<td>938,055</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Liabilities</td>
<td>161,139</td>
<td>170,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Assets</td>
<td>3,881,375</td>
<td>3,895,270</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual Report, 2013
Sparks of the Light: news from members

Stuart MacQuarrie (Glasgow), who is Chaplain at Glasgow University, is being seconded by the university to run and manage the Religious Services Centre at the Community of the Resurrection. The approach by the Glasgow 2014 Organising Committee came as a result of the interfaith and inclusive approach the Glasgow University Chaplaincy follows. The vision is to provide opportunities for religious observance and pastoral support and to engage with local faith communities. The Commonwealth Games village and many of the venues are only twenty minutes away from Glasgow Cathedral, St Andrews Cathedral, Glasgow Central Mosque, Hindu Mandir Glasgow, Buddhist Vihar, a Jewish synagogue, Glasgow’s new gurdwara and other key centres of religion and places of worship.

Alison Swinfen (Phipps) (Glasgow): I work with refugees and asylum seekers and in intercultural relations. At present this work takes me all over the UK lecturing, running workshops and developing projects with academics, NGOs, the public sector, government and policy-makers as well as, most importantly, communities of migrants themselves. This work also involves media, writing and public advocacy in my role as Co-Convenor of Glasgow Refugee, Asylum and Migration Network.

As this is work which attracts considerable hostility at times, and is exposing, the dangers of fellow members, associates and friends are a vital lifeline. This is especially true for the accountability and personal support of my Family Group, where vulnerability and fear are held and heard, and humour is never far away. Without which …

Alison May (Glasgow): Since retiring to Milngavie seven years ago I’ve been kept busy with occasional grandchild-minding, plus regularly keeping an eye on my mother – now aged 105 and still living in her flat! – and with various church commitments, including our church’s twinning with a church in Malawi.

For the past four years I have been Secretary of the Milngavie Churches Christian Aid Committee, which brings together six local churches to run a house-to-house collection in Christian Aid Week. Each year we raise around £11,000 during the week, plus extra from Lenton lunches, collections at Christmas, and a stall at the local charity card sale.

Katye Owen (Glasgow): Lord, for the years your love has kept and guided, these thoughts are in my head as I awake at 6.38 this morning. Lord, what a morning! The sky is streaked with brilliant shades of orange and yellow and looking westwards the slender arc of a rainbow emerges from the grey cloud. This pale almost insignificant morning rainbow is even more surprising than the sun’s glorious reflections across the sky. What amazing gifts to receive on such a morning as this.

Prayer

God of all that lives and breathes and has its being, your glory reflects a goodness and a certainty at the heart of creation. Too often the days rush past and we fail to see the wonders each moment can bring. Too often we are selfabsorbed, motivated by doing rather than being. Today, as we tick off the boxes of achievement, open our eyes to one another. Help us to breathe into the silence our souls long and strive for. As the wild geese fly in formation towards their next resting-place may we allow ourselves the belief that we too can fly, carried by the wind of your Spirit to unexpected places beyond the horizons of our limited expectations.

Katye Owen

Iain and Isabel Whyte (Edinburgh): Iain has been a member of the Community for 47 years and Isabel will become a member in August. We are both retired for some years after ministry. Iain continues as one of the Chaplains to the Presidency of Edinburgh and Isabel has been involved in mediation issues in the Church. Both of us have been involved in the Homeless World Cup and Iain is on the Board of Street Soccer Scotland, the Scottish project to help rehabilitate folk through sport. We have strong interests in Africa and the Middle East. Both have been on the Committee of the Scottish Palestinian Forum, Iain is on the Scottish Executive of ACTSA (Action for Southern Africa). His research, writing and lecturing on slavery and abolition has led to involvement in anti-trafficking. We have felt supported by other members and associates in our concerns and involvement in justice and peace issues, and this mutual support continues to be a major strength of the Community.

Murdoch and Anne MacKenzie (Edinburgh): Having recently relocated to Edinburgh we invited member Peter Millar to bless our new flat on St. Nicholas’ Day, 6th December.

Neighbours and friends came bearing Santa’s gifts for our food bank: 106 tins of soup, 16 baked beans/spaghetti 32, peas/vegetables/tomatoes/sweet corn 11, fish 14, meat 12, fruit desserts 9, custard/rice/ambrosia 11, plus 1 lonely tin of haggis! It amounted to 23kgs of food which provided immediate help to a family and a single person, providing three nutritionally balanced meals for three days, according to the Food Bank Administrators. Only a drop in the ocean but then ‘every ocean is made up of many drops’.

Iona and Mull Family Group, from Jan Sutch Pickard: Green Energy Mull is the first community-owned hydroelectric generation scheme on the Isle of Mull. It is based up at Garmony, on the east coast, under the auspices of Mull and Iona Community Trust. When a share offer was issued this autumn, members of the Iona and Mull Family Group were interested in supporting this initiative, which has the potential to generate more than 900kWh of green energy each year (the equivalent of powering more than 200 homes) and reducing Mull’s carbon footprint. It will also bring social and environmental benefits to the island. The hope is that money invested by shareholders will enable start-up loans to be paid back sooner. Construction will start in spring 2014.

Shares are £50 each, but to be a voting member five shares are needed. We are not affluent, but several of us have clubbed together. We now have one vote between us, which will have to call a special Family Group meeting when the time comes to cast it! But more importantly we are supporting a scheme for local and renewable energy.

If other members of the Community would like to know more about Green Energy Mull (shareholding isn’t limited to local residents – there has been an impressive take-up here) then check www.garmonyhydro.info or contact enquiries@mict.co.uk

Liz Gibson (Mull): Mo Dhchaidh is my home, and the name of our new abode. Martin and I would like to welcome folk to Lochdorn, Isle of Mull, just 2.5 miles from Craignure on the road toward Iona. We have a 10-acre croft and in time we’ll be turning the old bye into simple but lovely accommodation. Meanwhile we have space in the house for guests. We don’t intend to operate conventional B&B. There are good ones around if that’s what you’re after. We do need money to pay the bills so donations will be much appreciated, especially if you are on your way to Iona and would otherwise be paying to stay elsewhere. There’s a late ferry on Friday nights so we’re ideally placed to come and go by ferry. And if you’re stranded by the weather we can help out at short notice. Wed like folk to come for Iona/Camas workweek-style holidays – a few days of physical labour (including four it in) in return for bed and board. Lots of bracken-clearing and digging to be done! We’re also keen to offer short breaks to folk who can’t do such labour and/or can’t afford to pay much or at all, so assistance in covering those costs would be good too.

I am still a Church of Scotland minister – not retired or left the church, rather ‘doing ministry differently’, Doing supply and locum work, and planning to use arts and crafts as a form of ministry. Borrowing the Wild Goose mantra that everyone can sing, including those who think they can’t, I am keen to help folk discover that everyone can do arts and crafts – it’s not just for children or those with special talents. If you’d be interested in trying your hand at something new, or honing your skills at something you already enjoy, then do get in touch. In ‘crowdfunding’ style you may like to buy handmade or other craft items. Eventually I’ll have a website. For now I have a blog: www.mothchaidh.wordpress.com It’s early but exciting days. Your prayers are and will be appreciated.

Ginny Graham (Arbroath): As a happily retired person I have quite a bit of ‘spare’ time. I’m one of the many volunteers at a food parcel project, which brings out my righteous indignation with central government. Currently I’m between adult literacy projects; ‘I’ve been helping with these for maybe 12 years I used to be a primary school teacher.’ For fun and exercise (and the thrill of wieldng power tools) I am part of the set-building team at a local theatre club. I am an active member of a political party – at the last election I had the strange experience of voting for myself! I subscribe to quite a few justice and peace campaigning organisations.

Brown Brian (Ayrshire): I am involved with, among other things, ENABLE, CND and Trident Ploughshares, Amnestiy International and Lifelines.

Two years ago I joined Lifelines and I support with a prisoner on death row now in the state of Texas. My pen-friend is very appreciative of my friendship and letters and I feel my life has been enriched by the friendship. Indeed when I was in hospital last February he sent me a get-well card – a total surprise to me. The friendship has entered a critical phase – last November he informed me that his final court of appeal has started. My Texas state court commissioner given a lot of help to deal with this and my pen-friend has thanked me for my encouragement. I keep on praying that he will be given a stay of execution and that Texas and other states that have done so won’t do so.

Pat Livingston (London): Composing music/sound to design member David Coleman slides of Noah’s Flood. Teach music 2.5 days in two schools in south London in areas of high deprivation – from ukulele to brass, iPad to film music. Setting up El Sistema-type project.

Paul Nicolson (London): In 2012 associate Paul Nicolson founded Taxpayers Against Poverty (TAP), www.taxpayersagainstpoverty.org.uk On 22nd March, TAP helped organise the ‘1000 Mothers March for Justice’ in Tottenham – to mark the anniversary of the imposition of the caps, cuts and Local Council tax on the already inadequate lowest incomes of the waged and unwaged. TAP marched for adequate incomes, secure affordable homes, and for freedom from hunger, cold and hopelessness. To achieve that we need to address the huge scales of unmanageable debts, evictions, Council Tax court costs and bailiff’s fees.

On 5th April, TAP took part in another protest, outside One Hyde Park, Knightsbridge in London: ‘Fight for Justice and Protest against the Bedroom Tax and Against the Real “Something for Nothing” Culture’.

On the first anniversary of the imposition of the Bedroom Tax, Unite Community and other London Groups concerned with poverty and injustice are calling people together to protest against this despicable tax outside One Hyde Park, Knightsbridge.

These flats are known as the wealthiest residences in the world. They have many empty bedrooms. The owners do nothing
to earn the vast annual increase in market value. That is the real ‘something for nothing’ culture.

The 85 Bats sell for billions, only a few are regularly lived in or pay any Council Tax. Most are registered in the name of mysterious companies based in offshore tax havens – one sold for £56 million and charges £2 a year rent … (from the TAP website).

Elaine and Michael Gisbourne (Lancaster): Michael Gisbourne, who is minister at St Paul’s Church, Scotforth, Lancaster, and Elaine Gisbourne, who works as an NHS physiotherapist and volunteers as a Street Pastor, recently wrote this powerful and very topical prayer for member Martyn Coe’s induction as Team Minister of South Lakes Group of United Reformed Churches:

We lament our society, where changes to welfare budgets and lack of employment opportunities cause real poverty in our own neighbourhoods.

We are disgraced by the need to have food banks; we are saddened by the lack of support for our young people and the paucity of care for some of our elderly.

Where those without homes are dying on our streets, and those who suffer from mental health disorders are marginalised in their own communities, we wonder where love lies.

On cold pavements, through sleepless nights, in the hunger and the fear God with us …

We grieve for our world, where wars separate families and force them from their homes; where floods wash away fertile soil and precious crops, and drought drains life away.

Where neighbour nations build walls and throw weapons, where places of worship and public transport systems are targets of terrorism, we wonder where love lies.

When uprooted and displaced, where home and family, in loss and in despair, God with us …

Lord of love and life, whose very being is rooted deep in the soul of all your beloved, may each of us be faithful in responding to your call: bringing hope to those who despair, bringing peace to those who know only conflict, bringing healing, sharing joy and being your love and life in the world.

God in us, God around us, God with us.

Amen

Margaret Hart (Cheshire): Margaret recently travelled to Haiti with Christian Aid, visiting Christian Aid partner organisations.

Margaret’s report/reflection from Haiti will be included in the summer Coracle. Thank you, Margaret (Ed.).

Maureen and Alan Wright (Exeter), from Maureen Wright: My husband Alan and I are retired teachers, who latterly provided working opportunities for adults with learning difficulties at an organic farm and craft faculty. We have been associates for several years and visit Iona as often as possible.

For some time now, a group of associate members have been meeting up in the southwest.

We have had three meetings now, with 11 people who come from Torquay, Dartmoor, Totnes and Exmouth.

We have been meeting in an ancient building, part of the Cathedral Close in Exeter, which is well-suited for our purpose, with a kitchen, a space to gather and share a light supper, and a further area where Rev. John Clapham, who is also an associate of the Iona Community (and who recently started up a counselling service for people on low incomes in Devon), sets up a reflective space, with icons and candles. John also provides us with a service sheet and we distribute the parts. We sing and create a special space together.

This August we met outside in the open air; inspired by this passage from John O’Donohue: ‘The Celtic Church grew among people who were not builders, who were not tempted to follow a tradition containing their gods in temples, but fell closer to them when they could feel the wind buffetting their faces and see the flash of white wings against the sky and smell the tangle of sun-warmed bank of trees. This is no modern fancy. That Irish monasticism saw value in such things is manifest in early records.’

With these thoughts in mind we met in a circle of ancient stones on Dartmoor. Sitting inside the circle on blankets and chairs, the 11 of us were invited to remember those who, long ago, created this sacred space, and in our own way we made the space sacred again, in the here and now. We were invited to pray for those in need close to us and in the wider world, and to sit in the silence and hold them in our hearts.

When worship was over, the group remained close together, as if held by invisible arms.

Slowly drifting back to our picnic spot, people talked of other times when they’d had to ‘re-enter the world’; a feeling many had experienced when leaving Iona. It did take as some time to return. Tea and scones helped.

If you are in the area and interested in joining our group, please contact us at alani@foster-murray.co.uk.

Elisabeth C. Miescher (Switzerland): Report on the ‘Another World is Possible’ vigil held January 21, 2011 during World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos.

For 25 years or more the WEF has brought together politicians, presidents of states and heads of global industries; protests against the WEF and alongside the gathering at Davos have been going on for many years; we (the protesters in Basel) used to go out on to the streets and walk in silence through the empty city, mourning the unfair treatment of poorer countries and the abuse of power.

We saw many things that were wrong.

Now instead, we remain inside church, and look out for ‘another world’:for positive stories and encouraging events from anywhere on our planet. We share stories of hope from around the world: Palestine, Switzerland … To be inspired and empowered by these stories is our answer to the WEF. We pray for all the women and men taking the long way to justice and peace and never giving up; we listen to music, share silence and light candles of hope.

In Psalm 82 God holds judgement in the midst of the gods: ‘How long will you judge unjustly? You do not help the poor or free the prisoners; you do not protect the needy ones. You are children of the Most High, but you shall die like mortals.’

Who are these gods today? Are they gathered in Davos, acting and judging unjustly?

Another world is possible

Marie-Helene Bingegli (Austria): Many years ago a group of us, led by the Rev. Peter Spink from the Anglican Christ Church, spent a week on Iona. The healing service in particular made a deep impression on me and made me take a fresh look at my priorities. I became an associate of the Iona Community in 1985.

Relatively recently an Iona Continental group was formed in Austria. On the 17th of every second month we meet in different parts of the country in someone’s home. This is rather nice as it finds increasingly difficult to visit Iona.

I am a former research biophysicist and international civil servant, now retired to a town near Vienna. I have a small house and garden, where I cultivate herbs and practise Sound Therapy. For some years I worked with mentally and physically handicapped children and young people – and learned a lot from them! My main concern are children suffering from neglect, abuse, poverty or abandonment, and I have therefore been supporting street children in Medellin, Colombia and the dedicated work of Concordia with street children in Romania and neighbouring countries; and am glad to be able to ensure at least the education of two children in a shantytown in Egypt.

Some friends of mine visit schools, and give talks and provide opportunities for direct contact with animals to try to raise awareness.

Prayer

I call on You; You, who created the inconceivable and infinite cosmos, because You also created our wonderful earth.

I want to thank You, but I am ashamed:

Your world has become brutalised and laid to waste, aspects distorted beyond recognition, animals degraded to mere ‘things’ and exploited, awe and reverence for life destroyed by greed, excess and stupidity.

You, who rooted me in Your creation, in this utterly beautiful planet Earth:

Teach me responsibility for what I do: eat, buy, claim for myself.

Teach me respect and reverence for life: my neighbour, animal or tree.

Let me be gentle with the people around me: with their fears and my own.

Help me to understand that we are all One: that each of us has been called by name. Called to become aware and accept personal responsibility for protecting and preserving our planet.

Will You show me the way? Help me?

Daily? Thank You. Amen

Marie-Helene Bingegli (abridged)

John Dillon (USA): I am very proud of four initiatives my congregation is pursuing at the moment: 1) We successfully took a motion to Presbytery to support an overture to the General Assembly to divest from all fossil fuel companies.

2) For the third year we received national certification as an Earthcare Congregation which consistently saves energy and resources. We are the only certified congregation in our presbytery and are trying to recruit others.

3) Monthly public movie and discussion nights on topics like immigration, bullying and gun violence.

4) Illinois’ law against carrying concealed weapons in public has recently been overturned. Even though the new law allows concealed carry in houses of worship(!) we have placed official ‘No weapons’ signs on all entrances to the building.

I find it hard to believe you have to ask people not to bring guns to church but that is life in the USA.

Thom Shuman (USA) continues to be engaged in transitional/interim ministry in Cincinnati, Ohio. In addition to his writing for Wild Goose (www.wildgoosebooks.com), he has self-published Dusty the Church Dog and Other Occasional Sightings of the Gospel. He and his wife, Bonnie, continue to work for better treatment and services for persons with disabilities. For some years he has been recently done an interview for CNN on their 20+ year struggle to find help for their son.

Heleen Weavers (Australia): My spirituality, sense of place, identity and ethos have all been heavily influenced by the Iona Community. Experience of Iona as a front office volunteer for 10 weeks in 2000 and contact with Community members who visit Australia have been a vital part of my Christian formation. I appreciate having recent direct contact with the Community as an associate member.

Making connections with others is a big part of the worshipping community here at Jesmond Park Uniting Church in Newcastle NSW. Internationally we are invited to ‘Cheap Cheesday’ where a meal and conversation is offered on a
One of my roles is Pastoral Care Team leader where, with the team, I have been given the special privilege of welcoming international students from the nearby University of Newcastle and from refugee families. At the end of our services we say ‘God bless you’ in the languages represented in the congregation. Here are the ‘God bless you’s’ we say to each other: Moro (Sudan): Lu koru tro ami ne Maori: Te aiki koe e tiaki Nepal: Parmeswar le rakhia runar Espanol: Que Dios te bendiga English: God bless you Dutch: God zegeneu Thai: Pra jao Sung Korn Kroong Samoan: Fa amania le Atua mo ae Tongan: Tapoaki ki mou tolu ehe OtuKe Tuvalu: Ke Fakamanuia Te Atua Pidgin (New Guinea): Bigpella blesssun yu Tagalog (Philippines): Pagpalain Ka Nang Diyos Hindi: Parmeshwar tumhe aashish de Bari (Sudan): Ti mata boroji ta Indonesia: Tuhan membarkati anda Mandarin: SungsDi Bauyou ni Arabic: Allah yabarakan Talkuba (Malawi): Chiuta waRumudiwakani Korean: Chuk bok hammmeda Amharic (Ethiopia): Egzibiyaghe Yimari Malayalam (India): Daiaav Ninqale Anughrakkatte Espanol: Que Dios te bendiga Hospitality is shown in many ways, and honouring different languages is one.

‘Tell about it’

Alison Swinfen, Pike Diamond and Chaz Doherty

‘Tena koe, Alison’ begins the e-mail, sent with a 13-hour time difference, at some inauspicious hour in the morning. A Maori friend is making some plans for ‘entertaining’ me during my extended stay in Aotearoa New Zealand. She is doing so with something of a twinkle in her eye and not a little mischief. ‘I’d like to take you one weekend to the Whirinaki forest. I’m just seeing if I can time it that my mate is home so I could maybe get some tā moko done and for you to meet the locals.’ The landscape of Paritick, Glasgow gave way to new names and I found myself needing to reach for a dictionary more than many but the ones I hear matter. They are the words which have kept this people alive, kept this bushman hunting and gathering, kept him turning to a fusion of graffiti art and tradition to paint murals with children in his school, kept him in negotiations with the Crown to have the Treaty of Waitangi upheld, kept him speaking the language of his ancestors and close to the spirits of hapū, āwi, of the whareaki, the gatherings of hui and tangi. I hear the place names of the Maori, the names of the places of this land, of Te Urewera, of Te Whakatāne, of Ngāpuhi, of Ngāpuna, of Whirinaki. I hear other place names too, and though my head is bowed in prayer, I feel my eyes on me in blessing and let the words he says cover my skin like moko. Is this reconciliation? Is this how it happens between us, as human beings. I cannot believe the privilege and honour, the unconditional hospitality of this moment. I certainly know that it is not as simple as saying words, even as a formal apology, such as those made by the Crown through the settlements. But I know that this is how perhaps we move from where we have been, to where we are not yet.

‘You have travelled and seen many things and many places,’ he says, after a pause and a little quiet and some movement, ‘and no one knows about us here in the forest, but you know and you can tell of us.’

In her ‘Instructions for living a life’ the poet Mary Oliver commands us to ‘Pay attention. Be astonished. Tell about it.’ For the queasy Pākehā of conscience, when it comes to Māori or any indigenous relations, ‘Telling about it’ comes with the knowledge of what has been taken and done with knowledge in the name of greed. The queasiness and caution are not mistaken, are visceral, and are important ways of knowing that we have betrayed and been betrayed, that we are breakers and broken.

Yet here I am, commissioned to ‘Tell about it’. And as the anthropologist Ruth Behar says: Anthropology is nothing if it does not break your heart.

As the road winds back through the forest, before my friend falls asleep in the sunshine after calling at Murupara for a necessary ice lolly, we speak quietly of these things. I share my discomfort at accounting for who I am. I tell of an odd feeling that it would be easier if there were settlers and colonists in my ancestry giving
I was born in Sheffield, UK, a product of the new welfare state, to teachers. The hills I loved were Carl Wark, Higger Tor and Stanage Edge, the rivers flowed through Water-cum-Jollidoodle. In my genealogy there are no settlers that I can find, nor in my family, just farmers, butchers, weavers and the legacies of a dislocating modernity in the north of England. Grandma and Grandpa Blackburn took in strangers – and new immigrants – from the Indian subcontinent to work the mills of Lancashire – and they took in refugees, escaping from the suppression of the Prague Spring, and helped them find an occupation. Grandma and Grandpa Marham taught me to feed chickens, pigs and sheep, before feeding the village. I grew up in the cauldron of rage which was Margaret Thatcher’s destruction of the hope in my city as she closed the mines, the steelworks and increased the rates of suicide in my school. I became a traveller – a Roma woman selling clothes pegs at my door when my mother was carrying me, still unborn, said I would. My father taught me the names of the hills, flowers, trees and birds. My mother taught me to bake and to listen in hard to words. Music made me laugh and learn. Politics took root. I have never been to Soweto but it shaped the inner landscape of my youthful soul. Languages opened me out, and anthropology worked giving structure to my thoughts, theatre, liturgy and poetry gave them form.

Offenburg, St Forchtre, Durham, Biberach, Clermont, Tuebingen, Hayingen, Horburg, Taizé, Balsall Heath.

I married Robert, and we took work in Scotland, in Glasgow – a city that was home from home. The hills became Beinn Sgritheall, Braichain Beinn A’ Ghlo. I dangle my feet in the cold waters of Glenn Tilt and I swim in Martyrs’ Bay on the isle of Iona. The university became my occupation and its books and teachings made me change my life, sent me back out into the world – a vessel for grief, a ‘vulnerable observer’, a witness with, of words, back to learn again the lessons of hospitality of my ancestors. I choked with shame at what has been done, by the Crown, through history, in my name.

Syria, Palestine, Gaza, South Africa, Malawi, Sudan, Ethiopia, Jamaica, Jordan, Egypt, Aboriginal Australia, indigenous Canada, Aotearoa New Zealand.

I read the Freedom Charter aloud from the Rivonia cell walls. Everywhere land, stone and a meshwork of love and anger. With the years and struggles comes the love of silence and solitude. I have crossed Tenggarong, climbed Mulanje, Skiddaw and Scafell Pike, worn out my shoes with walking and standing firm. I am English, Scottish, half Schweabin and Bled. I became poet, gardener, lover, foster mother, breadmaker, piper and a person who prays.

My friend Piki took me to Te Urewera. I listened to the forest through my shoes with walking and standing firm. I am English, Scottish, half Schweabin and Bled. I became poet, gardener, lover, foster mother, breadmaker, piper and a person who prays.

My friend Piki took me to Te Urewera. I listened to the forest through my shoes with walking and standing firm. I am English, Scottish, half Schweabin and Bled. I became poet, gardener, lover, foster mother, breadmaker, piper and a person who prays.

Túhoe may become my new word for hope.

I am Alison …

Alison Swinfin is Co-Convenor of Glasgow Refugees, Asylum and Migration Network (http://gramnet.wordpress.com) and a member of the Iona Community. She is the author of Through Wood: Prayers and Poems Resonating with the Forest, Wild Goose Publications, www.ionabooks.com

Photos by Alison Swinfin

Ruth Harvey

Borderlands and unions: on the Scottish Referendum – a letter to David Cameron

Ruth Harvey is a member of the Iona Community, living in Cumbria. She is a Scot married to an Englishman, and has relatives in Scotland, Ireland, England and Norway. With their help, she reflects on the implications of the referendum on Scottish independence by way of a letter to David Cameron, following his ‘Olympic Velodrome speech’ in February 2014...

Dear David Cameron,

I know of a couple who, when they decided to divorce, put their jointly owned dog in the middle of a field. They called to it from opposing corners. The dog, loyal to both, was forced into the centre of a shouting match.

When you made your speech at the Olympic Velodrome in February to people like me: a Scot living in England, I felt like that dog. You were shouting at me, pointing your finger, imploring me to take your side in what is becoming an increasingly bitter war of words across the border.

Whatever my views on the referendum debate, my overriding concern right now is that we could be behaving so much better than this.

I would welcome a dialogue based on the art of gracious conversation. This would mean that on both sides of the border there would be a willingness: a) to listen in order to understand, b) to ‘consider it possible that you might be mistaken’ (Quaker Faith and Practice), and c) to acknowledge that, whatever the outcome, we will all, post-referendum, need the grace and wisdom to deepen and strengthen our relationships.

These are the skills and gifts of many in our churches and our communities dedicated to peace, justice and reconciliation. Groups such as Place for Hope (www.placeforhope.org.uk), St Ethelburga’s (www.stethelburgas.org), Corrymeela (www.corrymeela.org) and the Iona Community (www.iona.org.uk) are just four examples. These communities and networks offer space for dialogue with the hallmarks of graciousness, respect, openness and courage: graciousness which builds on trust and truth-telling: respect which means I will listen first before speaking; openness which says I come with my passions and beliefs, but willing to be changed; and courage which says I will not shirk the hard truths and the courageous conversations. This kind of dialogue could take us to places of real, raw emotion which reach beyond our names, or the titles of our history books which you mentioned in your speech.

As I said, I am a Scot living in England, married to a proud Englishman. We have three English daughters who delight in their multiple belonging, a) to England, b) to the United Kingdom, c) to their individual passports, and d) to our Scot, an Englishman. Whatever my views on the referendum debate, my overriding concern right now is that we could be behaving so much better than this.

Neil, also in Glasgow, wrote: ‘I’ll be voting ‘Yes’ on September 18th mainly because I believe local control will give Scotland a better chance of doing things significantly differently. For more than 40 years voting in Scotland has been consistently and overwhelmingly left of centre. I don’t believe that a Scottish government, a local government, would accept the degree of privilege, elitist and male-dominated power base that we see dominating Westminster.

There is no nationalism behind my vote. ‘Union’, in the context of a United Kingdom, means little to me. I am much more interested in how we run things than what flag we fly or what passport we hold. And I believe that anybody who chooses to live here should have an equal say in how we run things.

As in any relationship, things change and people grow. If people grow too far apart then sometimes it’s best that they go their own ways. Often there is turmoil in the break-up but the end result is better for everybody. My hope is that independence for Scotland will lead to a more rounded and respectful
relationship with England.’ And my sister in Belfast said: ‘As an ex-pat Scot, I approach the 18th of September 2014 with a mixture of envy, excitement, anxiety, and an overwhelming sense that this referendum is really important, not just for Scots but for all of us living on these islands.

I live in Northern Ireland, a place where the question of identity, which tribe you belong to, dominates political life, overshadowing wider and more important issues of social justice and political inclusion. Despite fifteen years of self-rule, there are few signs that we have moved beyond tribal politics in this wee part of the world.

While the Scottish independence referendum is on the surface a vote about national identity, I hear Scots on both sides saying that they are motivated by issues of social justice and the possibility of creating a more inclusive and participative society, rather than by a need to assert unionist or nationalist sentiments. Whatever the outcome, after the referendum the Scottish people will have to get on with the real challenges for any society: how to reduce inequality, how to share power, and how to ensure that people with diverse views and diverse life experiences have a real stake in political life.

The stark contrast between the YouTube video of Rangers supporters expressing their views on independence and the Facebook comments of my middle-class friends and family only highlights one axis of diversity in a very diverse society. Whichever side wins, my anxiety is that a nationalist/unionist debate might become the dominant one in Scottish politics. Although its origins and axes would be very different to those in Northern Ireland, it could similarly lead to significant disengagement in and disillusionment about politics, and to dangerous ‘us and them’ divisions. It would push issues of social justice right off the map. It seems to me that the only way to avoid this will be grace in victory and grace in defeat, and a will to come together to reflect on what really matters. This will be the real challenge, whatever the outcome.

I know of a couple who, when they decided to divorce, put their jointly owned dog in the middle of a field. They called to it from opposing corners. The dog, loyal to both, was forced into the centre of a shouting match …

Duncan, my Irish brother-in-law who lives in Belfast, wrote: ‘Northern Ireland is not a good advert for nationalism or unionism. Differences in origins, power and organisation have generated a relationship of suspicion, hatred and violence which has come to dominate our public life for centuries. Religion and later national identity gave cover and reason for killing on an industrial scale, turning murder into a social obligation and psychopathy into heroism. Scotland and Presbyterianism, where I have my roots, made their own special contribution. Cultural priorities like straight speaking and sticking to principle were too often contorted into judgementalism and self-righteousness. Calvinist anti-Catholicism became a weapon to justify exclusion and discrimination. These are Scottish traits, and they are dangerous when they are triggered. Maybe the worst aspect is that both unionism and nationalism survive in the north of Ireland in bubbles of innocence and self-righteousness. Neither owns nor accepts responsibility for the hatred on the street. From the outside it seems obvious that both have been mechanisms to lay blame on others even for our actions. From within, the overriding concern is to justify and explain and deny responsibility. So I hope you will forgive me if I take a slightly cautious, even anxious, view of the current debate in Scotland. Not only is the constitution at stake, but our souls are too. If independence is a way to build more humanity, to create better relationships, to contribute to a world based on interdependence, stewardship and mutual service then who can stand in its way? If it makes us more distant, more suspicious and more chauvinistic, we must be on our guard. Exactly the same is true of the Union. As ever in politics, the questions are not clear-cut. This is not a choice between the good and the bad, but between different ways of organising ourselves for now. But whoever wins, constitutional questions are not the last, nor even the most important question. And I hope we can remember that as the temperature of bitterness and mutual recrimination rises, somebody wins and others lose.’

The vote on 18th September will be an important but ultimately transitory blip on the trajectory of a long-term relationship which is ours forever, whether we like the outcome of the referendum or not; whether we vote or not. My hope is that we will pass on to our children a hunger for honest, open dialogue to underpin any future political decision.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth Harvey

Ruth Harvey works for Place for Hope as a mediators/ facilitator, and is an Ecclesiastical Development Officer for Churches Together in Gambia (www.churchestogambia.co.uk).

Kenny Harvey works as an advice support worker for adults with learning difficulties and volunteers for Glasgow Central Citizens Advice Bureau. He lives in Govan.

Neil Harvey lives in Glasgow where he runs Wild Journeys (www.wildjourneys.co.uk).

Susie Morrow was born and brought up in Scotland, but has lived in Belfast for the last 25 years. She is a social worker, and a member of the Corrymela Community.

Duncan Morrow lives in Belfast and is married to Susie. He is a Lecturer in Politics in the University of Ulster and a longstanding member of the Corrymela Community. He is currently chair of the Scottish Government’s Advisory Group on Tackling Sectarianism.

Sarah Dinwoodie

A year at Bwindi Community Hospital

My husband Kieran and I have recently spent a year working as GPs in a fantastic place in Uganda – Bwindi Community Hospital. Through your love, prayers and even financial support, we felt held. Let me tell you a bit about my experience there.

It was a year spent as an integral part of the hospital family – where we made great friends. It was a journey through a very different healthcare system, one which shocked and challenged me; and yet, through the openness and encouragement of BCH, Kieran and I worked towards real improvements.

First, a little background. Uganda has some of the poorest healthcare indicators in the world, and one of the fastest-growing populations. Only $42 is spent on healthcare per capita (the UK figure is $3600 per capita) and in one of the great economic ironies, the poorer the people, the more they spend proportionately on healthcare. The government’s contribution is tiny (for example, providing just 6% of BCH’s annual income, though they collect more back in tax) and where money is promised, it often does not reach the right places. In the year we were in Uganda, salaries for government healthcare workers in our district were not given for almost six months. The one district hospital had just one doctor and did not function reliably.

Bwindi Community Hospital was originally a small missionary health centre, set up to reach the marginalised indigenous population, the Batwa. For reasons I have just mentioned, coupled with BCH’s good community outreach programme, it grew to become the district’s main functioning health service. Situated at the end of a long difficult dirt road, it is not the most obvious or convenient place for a hospital, but much of its funding comes casually from passing tourists who have travelled to see the world-famous mountain gorillas in that area.

Kieran and I had visited BCH in 2010 and fell in love with the place. As GPs we appreciated its emphasis on primary care and preventative medicine. We spent the subsequent two years in preparation for our work there, which paid off, as we felt able to achieve tasks agreed with the hospital. We grew in confidence professionally, through involvement in clinical work and management of various projects.

Another thing that had attracted us to BCH were the jovial people we met. Their upbeat attitude in the face of adversity continues to inspire me: something would go wrong but often people would just laugh it off (as a way of coping), instead of showing anger, or blaming someone or someone. The flip side of this, of course, was that sometimes problems could just be accepted, instead of being challenged or dealt with; yet overall, I appreciated and learnt from this more relaxed attitude to life. Relationships were of primary importance, so people would be kind first and foremost.

I was inspired by the individual staff too. Working in far-flung places would not generally offer much career progression (though BCH tried to counter this). Postgraduate qualifications such as General Practice or other specialties had to be self-funded, rather than being well-paid as they are in the UK. Often leaving families or better-paid job opportuni- ties with NGOs behind in the city. BCH staff were dedicated to serving the people in that very rural area, I think mainly because of their faith. Faith was talked about openly. At the daily morning services and in work, it felt greatly liberating to be able to publically acknowledge the reason for all we were doing. (Many of the staff also took a turn at preaching, and I learnt lots from them – but particularly by seeing their faith in action. Early on I also preached, using passages which spoke of being non-judgemental, to tackle prejudice against people who are homosexual.)

Staff had to be self-sufficient from early in their undergraduate years and had become great generalists. In the case of doctors, by the end of medical school everyone has to be able to perform Caesarean sections and other life-saving operations using little more than a blade and stitches. They are also adept at adapting at sensible diagnoses and management plans with few or no preceding investi- gations. Again, we learnt lots from them.

The major difference in caring for patients in Uganda compared to the UK – which I never got used to – is the
Trident – an extremely important reason to vote ‘Yes’ on 18th September

The Scottish Government’s White Paper Scotland’s Future proposes that the Constitution of an independent Scotland should include a clause which bans nuclear weapons. It further proposes that they should be removed within four years, i.e. by 2020. Why is this so important?

A BRIEF HISTORY OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

6th and 9th August 1945: the Americans dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ostensibly to end the war with Japan. In fact, the main purpose of the two bombs was to demonstrate the superior military power of the U.S., to influence negotiations with the Soviet Union in the prelude to the Cold War. They were also ‘live tests’ of the lethality of two different types of atomic weapons. Japan had made a formal approach to Moscow ‘that the emperor is desirous of peace’ on 13th May, two and a half months before the bombs were dropped.

In the four days following the attacks body counts revealed that the 12.5 kiloton uranium-235 bomb (a kiloton = 1000 tons of TNT) dropped on Hiroshima killed more than 130,000 people and destroyed two-thirds of the city, and the 22 kiloton plutonium bomb dropped on Nagasaki killed another 75,000 people. These are underestimates since many victims were completely vaporised by the heat and the blast. Fatal infections, disabling diseases and birth defects have continued to occur in the second and third generations of the survivors.

By the end of the 1950s five states – the U.S., the Soviet Union, France, China and the UK – all members of the UN Security Council, had developed and tested nuclear weapons. By the mid-1960s, India, Pakistan and Israel had joined the nuclear club. In 1968, prompted by the fears of the rest of the world, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty was signed to try to stop the spread to other countries. This treaty included a commitment by the nuclear powers to start disarming, a pledge which has been largely ignored ever since. In Oslo in March 2013, and in February 2014 in Mexico, 146 nations renewed demands for a ban on these weapons, but the ‘nuclear five’ boycotted both conferences.

TRIDENT

Britain’s strategic nuclear force is a submarine-launched ballistic missile system consisting of four Trident submarines. At any one time three of these submarines are operational. They are armed with a total of 42 missiles, which are U.S.-built and maintained. It is assumed that each submarine carries 14 missiles and 48 nuclear warheads of 100 kilotons, each of which can hit a different target within an accuracy of 120 metres over a range of 4000+ nautical miles. It should be noted that each Trident warhead is eight times more powerful than the bomb that destroyed Hiroshima and that a total of 144 are deployed, with 30 or 40 held in reserve. Each submarine is also equipped with four torpedo tubes and conventionally armed torpedoes.

LOCATION

The submarine fleet is based at H.M. Naval Base Clyde at Faslane on the Gare Loch, where their routine maintenance between patrols is carried out. A few miles away on Loch Long is the Royal Navy Armaments Depot at Coulport which stores and inspects the warheads and removes small numbers from the submarines to send them for ‘refurbishment’ to the Atomic Weapons Establishments in Berkshire, to Burghfield where they were assembled, and to Aldermaston where they were constructed. Several times a year convoys carrying 100 kiloton warheads travel between Coulport and Burghfield along main roads through major population areas. Accidents have occurred: Trident missiles can also be removed and stored but normally they remain on the submarines until they are returned for servicing to U.S. Navy’s Base at King’s Bay, Georgia.

It is widely accepted that it would be very difficult and extremely expensive for the Ministry of Defence to build a new Trident base anywhere in England. Scottish CND has published a detailed report, Trident: Next: Where to go, which looks at what will happen if Scotland votes ‘Yes’. In 1963 the Ministry of Defence shortlisted four potential sites for nuclear weapons in England and Wales. Each was rejected. Today the grounds for dismissing each are much stronger than they were in the 1960s. The report concludes that Scottish independence is likely to lead to Britain considering unilateral nuclear disarmament.

COST

The cost of maintaining the current submarine fleet is at least £2 billion per annum. The fleet was first deployed in December 1994, with an operational life of 30 years. In 2007, with the support of the Conservatives, the Labour government pushed through the controversial decision to renew the Trident system. The cost of replacement has been officially estimated at £25 billion but over its projected 30-year lifespan the total would be close to £100 billion. The final decision to go ahead with the replacement is not scheduled until 2016, after the next General Election, but in each of the last three years £1 billion has been spent upgrading the bomb-making facilities at Aldermaston. This does not include the cost of Project Hydrus, now under construction, which will provide a laboratory for the test explosion of warheads, in contravention of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Many more millions have been spent on research and design for the new submarine reactors.

CONTROL AND STRATEGIC PURPOSE

Trident is officially described as our ‘independent nuclear deterrent’, but how independent is it? Britain leases its nuclear missiles from the U.S. and relies on U.S. software and U.S. satellites for missile-targeting information. Our warheads are built at Aldermaston but two American companies, Lockheed Martin and Jacobs Engineering, own and operate a substantial part of that factory. This is all part of the ‘special relationship’ and Britain’s subordinate place within it.

Is deterrence the sole purpose of Trident? On 21st June last year President Obama published a Report on the Nuclear Employment Strategy of the United States. On page 5 it states: ‘The 2010 Nuclear Posture Review established the Administration’s goal to set conditions that would allow the United States to safely adopt a policy of making deterrence of nuclear attack the sole purpose of U.S. nuclear weapons. Although we cannot adopt such a policy today, the new guidance re-iterates the intention to work towards that goal over time.’

So under President Obama deterrence is not now and has not been the sole purpose of the U.S. nuclear arsenal. It follows by default then that an offensive first-strike nuclear war fighting capability is being pursued by our American allies. Is Trident linked in any way to that capability? We are not told, but clearly, with a target accuracy of 120 metres, our British warheads are eminently suitable for use as first-strike weapons.

If deterrence is the sole purpose of Trident its effectiveness must be questioned. The terrible atrocities...
A touching place: news and letters

COMMUNITIES OF RESISTANCE: A LETTER, from Claire Reddileman from Conscience: Taxes for Peace Not War

Hello, I’ve just been reading your magazine Concorde, and I think a lot of the Iona Community’s concerns are shared by members of Conscience: Taxes for Peace Not War. We are a small peace campaigning group, working for the right not to pay war, and campaigning to highlight non-military approaches to security. We post out our newsletter, Conscience Update, twice yearly. Our subscribers are predominantly in the UK, and take an interest in a range of issues, including peace and conflict prevention, environmental matters and human vision of conscience. Taxes for Peace Not War works for a world where taxes are used to nurture peace, not pay for war: Conscience: Taxes for Peace Not War, Archway Resource Centre, 11 Watlow Road, London, N19 8NJ, UK, www.conscienceonline.org.uk

Best wishes, Claire Reddileman

AT LEAST WE’VE GOT A STAR: A LETTER AND A POEM, from friend Martin Millerick

Perhaps it’s fitting that I’m sending you this on the day that we heard of Nelson Mandela’s death. On the subject of inspiration, I visited your community during the year and found it to be such a breath of fresh air! I come from the Irish RC end of the spectrum and the Iona Community’s open-minded and open-hearted embrace really took me by surprise. You can’t help but think that Christianity can and perhaps should be will hopefully make its way southwards over the course of time! This week, I put this poem together in solidarity with all who have suffered losses/pain over the course of 2013: that’s all of us of course. While it may not be theologically or historically correct, I hope it helps: It was a painful search as painful as the pain that propelled us out of the secure, the familiar, the confident, the certain into the unknown, the dark… We had read about this, of course, but that only happened to other people, in other places, at other times.

Gaëlag were recently running a crowdfunding campaign. It would be great if you could spare a few quid for them and/or pass on the information to your friends and family. I really can’t overestimate how special a place Gaëlag is and how much your support would be welcomed and valued: www.gaelaog.org

AN INVITATION FROM THE CUMBRIA FAMILY GROUP

Does the Scottish referendum offer an opportunity to explore a new vision for our peoples, communities and lands? What does it mean to be English, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish or British? How do these identities interrelate? Can we separately and together articulate a dream that acknowledges past mistakes, builds upon existing and new strengths, affirms the good, celebrates human flourishing and sees a unity with diversity?

The Iona Community has a distinct role in the debate about identity and belonging raised by the referendum. With Scottish roots and a membership across Scotland, England, Wales, Ireland and beyond, we are passionate about justice, peace and community. We resist a notion of identity that rejects the other. What role could the Iona Community have in the lead-up to the referendum? And afterwards, whatever the outcome? Because of our values, location and history we are in a position to offer a unique space for people to explore the questions of identity, belonging, difference and commonality with respect to the future of our peoples.

Could the Iona Community offer a series of roadshows in a few large cities that offered a distinct space and voice in the debate of identity and belonging?

Comments for the Cumbria Family Group to: coracle@iona.org.uk

REMEMBERING BRIAN GALLON, from member Anna Briggs

On September 15th, 2014 it will be 30 years since Brian Gallon, Prayer Circle Secretary, died in our flat in Iona Abbey after two and a half years of living with cancer. His children, Richard, Rowan and Robin, were only 16, 8 and 4 years old. Richard and Daniel were 17 and 15. (Daniel died 6 months after Brian in a road crash.)

This is a call for short pieces (between 250 and 1000 words) and photos from members, associates and friends giving their impressions of their encounters and friendship with Brian and what they gained from knowing him. I would particularly appreciate accounts of these experiences during his illness, but it is fine if you knew him before that time – please just include anything you think suitable: by July 1st, to briganna@hotmail.co.uk

I would like to be able to give Richard, Rowan and Brian’s stepson Nick copies of this book, especially so they can share it with their children, Euan and Callum Stuart, Beau Briggs Gallon and James Jeffrey, and any others who come along.

I am working on a wall hanging of Brian’s song ‘Will you join the circle?’, which I will offer as a poster for sale for a charity. The song was written for the Corrymeela Community in 1983.

WOOL AGAINST WEAPONS, from Wool Against Weapons

Between now and August 2014 we will be creating a 7-mile-long knitted peace scarf to stretch between Atomic Weapons Establishment sites at Aldermaston and Burghfield, Berkshire, where nuclear weapons are made. This is a part of larger campaign to put pressure on the government to ditch a planned £80bn spend on renewing the Trident Nuclear weapons programme.

Pick up your needles and crochet hooks and help us to protest in a pink, powerful and proactive way to say ‘No!’ to more investment in the UK: www.woolagainstweapons.co.uk

INVITATION TO CONTRIBUTE TO A BOOK ON PEACE AND RECONCILIATION, from Neil Paynter at Wild Goose Publications

In 2014 Wild Goose will be publishing a prayer book/collection of stories on
‘peace and reconciliation’. 2014 of course marks 100 years since the outbreak of the First World War: ‘the war to end all wars’; and the Iona Community’s theme/central concern for 2014 is peace and reconciliation.

We are looking for original prayers and stories (short, 500-800 words) on the theme of peace and reconciliation. The deadline for contributions is July 1st, 2014 to nell@ionabooks.com

‘PILGRIMAGE TOWARDS OUR UNDIVIDED LIFE’: A COURAGE & RENEWAL RETREAT, June 30th-July 3rd, 2014, led by Jean Richardson (Director of Kirkridge Retreat Centre), Shepherds Dene Retreat Centre, Northumbria

This unique retreat offers food for the soul in a safe and trusting environment. Using a small group model of formation, poetry, story and silence, participants are invited to rediscover the deep connection between role and soul in their lives. Given the gift of time and space participants hear their own inner wisdom, learn to create a community of mutual respect and how to reconnect professional identity and personal integrity.

When we reconnect who we are with what we do, we approach our lives and our work with renewed passion, commitment and integrity.

Within retreat we are invited to explore our own most profound questions at the heart of our many roles. Together we will create a quiet, focused and disciplined space – a circle of trust – in which the noise within and around us can be heard and we can begin to hear our own inner voice. Jean Richardson is prepared by the Center for Courage & Renewal and has led many Courage retreats in the U.S. and UK.

If you are interested in taking part in this journey of self-exploration, please contact the Iona Community’s Glasgow office: 0141-332-6343

CITY OF SANCTUARY WEEK NOW AN OPEN WEEK

The City of Sanctuary programme

that was set to begin 31 May at the Abbey has been cancelled and is now an Open Week. If you're interested in coming to this Open Week – or to any other week at the Abbey, Mac or Camas – please contact Carol at: abbey.bookings@iona.org.uk, www.iona.org.uk


Historian and Iona Community member Rosemary Power tells the story of Iona and its remarkable spiritual influence. She combines new translations of early Gaelic and medieval Latin prayers with original research to chart: the founding of the Columban church on Iona in 563AD; six centuries of monasticism; food, lifestyle, work and the pattern of daily prayer, architecture, the high crosses and early art; medieval Iona: the nunnery, women’s lives, and catering for pilgrims; post-Reformation Iona; the lives of the resident population and what visitors from the 17th century onwards experienced; the rebuilding of the Abbey … Or Rosemary Power is a historian specialising in Norse and Gaelic studies.

Member David Coleman’s photos feature in the book: www.canterburypress.co.uk

MEMBER PAT MACDONALD

Member Pat Macdonald died on February 14, 2014. A full tribute to Pat will appear in the summer Coracle.

For Pat, by Ruth Burgess

She was 99 years young, 99 years old.

And your words, O God, were often on her lips.

And your glory and wonder was deep in her soul.

All those years and days and she still told jokes, still asked questions.

Her sense of justice was strong and clear.

And she was full of stories, full of psalms and songs.

And she knew through all the light and dark through her prayers and pain through her courage and laughter through the last confusing days of her journey

she knew

that she belonged to you, God,

and that her family and friends loved her

and that she was going home.

– Ruth Burgess

Bread for the road

‘The Iona Community has changed and developed over the past 75 years. Yet we remain faithful to our founding vision convinced that the Good News is relevant for both people and planet, and we are saddened to witness in our day the stigmatisation of those in receipt of benefits, the indifference shown towards those living in poverty, the lack of opportunity for our young people, the growing inequality in our own country and around the world, and the blasphemy of the possession of nuclear weapons. Our experiment continues – because it must.’

– Leader Peter Macdonald, from the ‘Service of Thanksgiving and Commitment on the 75th Anniversary of the Founding of the Iona Community’, Govan Old Parish Church

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 holy will, grant that this place of your abiding be continued still to be a sanctuary and a light. Through Jesus Christ. Amen

Kathy Galloway

A peaceful land

What is being a nation? A talent springing in the heart. And love of country? Keeping house among a cloud of witnesses.

– Waldo Williams

When one hundred thousand people met to march from Glasgow Green, there were millions more walked with them, a cloud of witnesses unseen, from the past and from the future, and the cry on every hand, ‘Not in our name do you go to war, this must be a peaceful land.’

And how shall we teach our children love of country, pride of place?

Shall we say, we once were heroes, of a fiery, fighting race; and forget the stains of violence – people beaten, enslaved and banned? Or shall we now be peacemakers in a hospitable land?

From the Pentland to the Solway, from the Forth down to the Clyde, city streets and quiet places and the turning of the tide; shall we rise on wings of eagles soaring over wave and sand, never seeing beneath the surface to the scars upon the land.

We are armoured and defended like an empire dressed for war. But we face no threat or peril and we don’t know it’s for. ‘Take the missiles from the waters,’ it’s our dream and our demand.

Turn the weapons into ploughshares, give us back a peaceful land.

There’s a choice that lies before us.

How shall Scotland best be known?

For the glory of its history and its loneliness alone?

Or shall care for all earth’s people be the song for which we stand, and the flowering of our nation as a just and peaceful land.


Photo © David Coleman