

Tell them we love them...

Marion Toy

17/5/1935 - 4/4/2025



I first met Marion at a Northumbria family group meeting of the Iona Community in about 2009. Given the nature of The Iona community, it was natural that Marion wanted to become a member. First of all, she loved Iona and went on holidays up there when she was working as a social worker. It was on Iona that she met Dick.

Marion was an active member of the Labour Party throughout her life and she and Dick visited the Soviet Union more than once and spent time with folk living there. She actively supported people here who were seeking asylum and citizenship and offered whatever support she could to them. Marion felt deeply that poverty and social justice were more important than ever and joining the Iona community meant that she was with like-minded people.

After completing the new members programme with Dick and spending a week living at Camus on Isle of Mull alongside the folk who were joining that year Marion committed to being a member of the Iona community in 1993 in a hallowing service at the Iona Abbey. Ruth Harvey who is now the leader of the Iona community was one of that group.

Marion had a lovely singing voice and so enjoyed being part of a choir in her local church and also at the services at Iona Abbey when she and Dick regularly participated in the annual Community week on Iona. Marion was the one who drove them everywhere and when they last went to Iona and they stayed in the Columba Hotel where it was easier for Marion to care for Dick. Until a few years ago she had driven them up to Glasgow for the Annual general meetings and to Liverpool or York or wherever the regional gatherings were held each year.

Once when I was visiting her at home there were paintings all over the living room as she prepared to participate in an exhibition of the East Durham Artists' Network. Marion painted in oils, acrylics and pastels and Jac of EDAN told me that she was a founder member of East Durham Artists' Network that was created in 2005 by a group of MA arts graduates from Sunderland University. She was a stalwart exhibiting member in EDAN's early days, and remained a committed member until infirmity forced her to stop painting and driving about three years ago. Marion regularly produced oil paintings for shows mainly landscapes, but Jac a fellow member of EDAN, particularly remembers her enthusiasm for the work she made for their exhibition associated with the first return of the Lindisfarne Gospels to Durham. He said she also contributed fully as a volunteer in EDAN - doing her stint as an exhibition invigilator, turning up, often with Dick in tow to special talks, activities and opening events. His view is that she didn't just paint, she was interested in the subject matter of her art and how it related to life.

Marion loved exhibiting her oil painted landscapes which reflected her love of landscape, trees and the coast. Marion was a woman of talent, principle and belief – and lived her life accordingly.

Tribute from Kate Potts