



Argyll & The Isles

News and Views from Around the Diocese
Summer 2008 – No. 89

FROM THE BISHOP

In the photograph below, I have been 'caught' amid the beautiful flowers of a street in Spello, a town not far from Assisi, where I was leading a pilgrimage, back in May.



In only a matter of days, Elspeth and I will be at the Lambeth Conference. We are both looking forward to it. Michael Porteus, an experienced and insightful priest in our Diocese, describes a Bishop's role as "...the focus of the Church's solidarity,

not only inter—parochial, inter— diocesan, inter—Anglican, but also with the world, particularly that which the Diocese embraces”.

So, the programme of the Conference gives bishops the wonderful opportunity to deepen our understanding of our role in each of these areas, including Inter-faith and Climate change challenges. What about life-style and being a Bishop? How do we adapt our own personal lives to the demands of the task? So, the issues of Anglican polity and the international fascination (if not obsession) with human sexuality are, in my view, only one small part of why we are being invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury to be together. Elspeth and I thank you and the whole Diocese for your support of us as we take part on this, once in a life-time, experience.

The forth-coming Lambeth Conference has stimulated me into thinking and praying about what I, as your Bishop, hold to be primary in being in Anglican. The following remarks are not meant to be definitive but to stimulate your thinking and praying and perhaps, even, bring about a response from you. To begin with, what is 'my Gospel'? The point about the Gospels is that we work with them in order to develop our own Gospel. So here it is...at least for the moment!

“The dying and rising of Christ which I see in others whom I love in the looking, awakens me to the Christ within – rising from the place where I may discover the Spirit of God, both in the images of his presence and his absence.

This sentence, of course, I constantly develop and change.

So, on that basis, there are, for me, five principles of what it is to be an Anglican.

1. We are given a means to be sustained in living the Christ-like life: namely The Word of God and all the Sacraments of the Church. The Word of God is not only within the sacred treasury of the Holy Scriptures, but also in the writings, sayings, art and prophetic excitement of the Fathers of the Early Church, the Holy Mystics and Saints of Church History, the Music and Art of our different Christian Cultures. The wealth of the Sacramental life of the Church is, of course based on Baptism and the Eucharist. However, these introductions and initiations into the 'Holy' – the 'Presence' of God – open us to seeing that there are infinite sacramental moments and resources in our daily living::‘finding Go in all things’.
2. Our conviction is articulated through a fulsome participation of a local Christian Community, where we, as Anglicans can offer ourselves to God sacrificially and so be that Christ in the communities in which we live and work. This will involve an understand of and a commitment to the Liturgical Life of the local Church which reflects the development of worship in the Province to which we belong. The Christian community to which we belong reflects the Apostolic witness and authority of the Diocesan Bishop to the centrality of Christ. Being an Anglican involves collaborating with that authority.
3. In order to follow Christ, my responsibility as an Anglican is to be open constantly to education and training that enables us to work with others in the Christ-like life. This

means a thorough commitment to study and learning using the resources which are so rich within and beyond our Anglican communion. This development is based on a deeply held and cherished freedom to live and challenge prophetically local structures, including those of the Church itself. This challenge is based on the desire to point towards the Light of Christ and not to promote alternative and self-absorbed power bases.

4. Anglican's using these gifts with generosity and enthusiasm are called to serve sacrificially in and beyond the realms of safety and security by being faithful to the Anglican desire to be inviting and expansive to others no matter who they are.

One of the main challenges facing this Diocese over the next few months is Mission and Ministry in what is known as the West Highland region: from Portnacrois through Glencoe to Kinlochleven. There are six congregations in the region. The cultural diversity is marked and, with the retirement of Peter Rice as rector back in May of this year, representatives of each charge have been meeting regularly to discern the best way forward to become clear about the role of a new stipendiary Priest (Rector) for the Region. We will be advertising for the post relatively soon. Please keep your eyes open for the adverts in Church newspapers, our Scottish Episcopal websites and, of course, my monthly Newsletter. Readers may be aware of someone who may be interested to applying.

Both the College at Cumbrae and Bishop's House on Iona continue to attract groups and individuals from many parts of the world. There are undoubted challenges that face Island Retreats Limited, which has financial and management responsibility for each of these resources. What makes them even more acute challenges is that decisions made with regard to their work and development affect the life of the whole Diocese. In a small Diocese, with limited resources, we have it seems to me, begun to address effectively many of the difficulties that have arisen over the years.

Some in bigger Diocese in the Scottish Episcopal Church question the appropriateness of providing so much financial support to ministry in this Diocese when there seems to be little sign of growth. Not surprisingly, I feel as your Bishop defensive about such thinking. On

the Outer Hebrides, on islands like Eigg, small congregations find themselves deeply involved in their communities and districts. Growth in this Diocese cannot be measured principally on numbers. In towns such as Fort William and Dunoon, I find myself with lay people who are reading widely, developing a discipline of prayer that goes largely unrecognised. Nevertheless, we do have a challenge to address growth. As I have said in many of our charges, when presiding at the Eucharist: if, over a two year period each member of this Diocese were to befriend someone in your district and bring them into your Church community, exciting possibilities for our future will rise to the surface. , Something of the vision of what it is to be an Anglican, which I have tried to describe may begin to be realised anew.

One of the important introductions of this past year has been the 'birth' of our new Diocesan Website... (www.argyllandtheisles.org.uk) What is so important is that the information about each of our charges is up to date and as attractive as possible. What has been reassuring is the way in which many have used it and kept Hazel Morris, who manages the site up to date.

On June 7th 2009, we will be holding a St Columba festival in St John's Cathedral Oban. We are, obviously, at the early stages of planning. However, we are fortunate indeed to have Bishop Richard Holloway as the preacher. We would like to involve music and musicians, as well as have liturgical involvement from across the Diocese. Please put the date in your diaries and watch for more information in the Bishop's newsletter.

Recently, St Johns Cathedral, Oban featured in the radio 4 programme 'Sunday Worship', broadcast nationally.(*see article from The Cathedral*) The programme which used people from across the denominations in Oban, caught the atmosphere of our Celtic history and the challenges of that spirituality. Donald Davidson, the priest from St Paul's Kinlochleven, held a service which involved an unknown grave behind the town. This was featured on local television. So it's good to know that our charges are working on keeping their and the Diocesan profile in front of the media.

Back in April, I recorded from the radio a performance of James Macmillan's 3rd Symphony, a new composition, inspired by the Japanese Roman Catholic novelist: Shusaku Endo. This story with the title – 'Silence' - tells

of the heart-rending attempts of a Jesuit priest to find his colleague who had gone missing, only to be trapped himself and forced to betray his Catholic faith. The novel raises huge questions about courage and the reality that we are all prone to the betrayal of Christ, a betrayal that Christ does not judge but accepts as part of the journey of faith. A challenging read, which I can thoroughly recommend.

The Diocese and its charges are in my prayers every day during the Eucharist.

+*Martin, Argyll and The Isles*

ARE WE WILLING OR MUST WE BE PUSHED?

The proverbial Irish rustic, when asked for directions by a passing motorist, replies that if that's where he was going, he wouldn't be starting from here. He can't contemplate being anywhere but where he is. On the other hand, if you'd knocked at my parents' door and asked my father how to get to Skye, he'd have reeled off all the road numbers and intermediate places you should look for, no doubt adding where you might like to stay and what you mustn't miss. Here's your route, on you go!

Where we're headed as the Scottish Episcopal Church, and here particularly in the North West Highlands, is the subject of an encouraging debate – encouraging because it is the measure of how we value our Church and are determined to secure her future. I suggest that the two extremes above exemplify the range of our reactions to today's challenges: most of us are somewhere in between.

Let me come clean! For the great majority of congregations in our Diocese, I see no alternative to some form of what we in Scotland call "Local Collaborative Ministry" (LCM): elsewhere it is commonly called "Total Ministry". Some congregations have had the courage not only to consider it, but to embrace it. Some have looked at it and hesitated. A very few might like to think it's something for others and not for them; such congregations are likely to be found in a more urban setting. These last may not have perceived the warning shot fired by our Diocesan Profile which we drew up for the last Episcopal election, which listed the Stipendiary Parochial Clergy that remain as responsible for the supervision of the Congregations without Stipendiary Clergy in the surrounding area of the Diocese: in other words, part-time at home. That pattern has proved to be a dream rather than a reality. And the number of

Clergy has since fallen again. It is imperative that we examine why we have failed to become what we told our Bishop that we'd be.

Most of us, I fear, habitually don't manage to change our ways until it is forced on us. (Will we stop wasting our money on roads and using our cars unnecessarily, until we can't afford the petrol, or there is no petrol to buy?) As our Clergy retire, or move on, people expect them to be replaced. Until recently, that expectation was able to be fulfilled. But the number of Clergy available, and the resources to support them, are both contracting. These are realities which we may have been slow to recognise at the local level, but the Diocese has been unable to ignore them, as the Diocesan Profile, and our Bishop's vision of appointing a Diocesan or Inter-diocesan officer as a Ministry Supervisor or Advisor, makes clear.

Equally clear, is the fact that this will change the nature of the relation of Clergy to their Congregations, and vice-versa. If the survival of our Congregations is increasingly dependent on the development of LCM, the "professional" Clergy will have to be appointed to training and supervisory posts, while the traditional role of the Parish priest is devolved to the local level, as is already the case of course in LCM Congregations. The radical solution would be to suspend all appointments of the Incumbency kind, and (as I heard discussed under our previous Bishop) confine all future appointments to Diocesan rather than Parochial status. A less brutal approach might find readier acceptance, with the resources used to build up a Diocesan Staff of trainers and supervisors, so that the whole Diocese is covered by an adequate number of viable areas for such Ministries. Meanwhile the Congregations that had not yet matured into LCM status would have resources available at hand to assist them, once they recognised the need.

I confess myself to be only an occasional observer of life in LCM Congregations. However, what I have seen raises some questions in my mind. How "collaborative" are they in fact? I hope members of such Congregations will rise up and tell me I'm wrong! But I suspect that the relationship between LCM Priests and People is still overly affected by the hangover of attitudes bred in traditional Parishes, even where there is a part-time Non-Stipendiary Priest. And how is it that LCM Congregations that raise Candidates for training, tend to offer a single individual, rather than a team? A serious problem raised by the long history of Clericalisation in the Church, is the resultant dependency culture prevalent throughout most

“Main Line” Denominations. If a truly collaborative culture is to be engendered in a Congregation, would not a collaborative clerical Ministry aid and exemplify it? Perhaps such a situation is developing in St Moluag’s, Lewis, where three Readers have emerged as a team. If LCM could raise a truly collaborative team of Clergy, what an example they could be to the rest of the Clergy! – who (I am sad to conclude) are the least collaborative element in the Church.

What we call LCM is commonly traced back to Roland Allen, who in the 19th century witnessed the use of Evangelists in Africa to spread the Gospel and build up Congregations, which would then receive the occasional visits of itinerant Clergy travelling over wide areas. This provoked him to ask the question: “Missionary Methods, St Paul’s or Ours?” The Acts of the Apostles tells how St Paul would begin Preaching in the Jewish Synagogue: almost inevitably, huge conflict would ensue, and St Paul would then lead out what would become a breakaway Christian Congregation on the familiar Synagogue model. That model provided for a board of Elders (Greek “Presbyters”) for its leadership, and that is the origin of our Office of Presbyter or Priest: see the contemporary Service for the “Ordination of Presbyters, (Commonly Called Priests)” How, after the death of the Apostles, the board of Presbyters evolved into the pattern of Presbyters led by a Bishop, is a question of intense debate, to which we may never get a definitive conclusion. When St Paul bade the Elders of Ephesus farewell in Miletus, Acts says he also called them Overseers (Greek “Episcopi”), and so it seems that the term had not yet become a title, whereas it did in the course of time.

But that is not our concern here. What Roland Allen has pointed us to, that is significant for us on the context of LCM, is the collegiate collaborative nature of the Christian Presbyterate = Priesthood in its origin. A collaborate, collegiate Priesthood under LCM would take us back to our roots. It might also teach the “professional” Clergy to be less individualistic and more co-operative in their Ministry. Indeed, if the Stipendiary Clergy in future are to become increasingly Trainers and Supervisors of Ministry, responsible for a number of Congregations in an area of the Diocese, they will of necessity have to work as a team, sharing insights from developments within their own areas, perhaps offering specialist expertise within each other’s areas. And that would mean close co-operation with the Bishop. Could we not say that they would be sharing Oversight (Greek “Episcopo”) with the Bishop? So the wheel would

have come full circle. Presbyters working together in a team led by the Bishop.

But we are in danger of dreaming! The pattern of Oversight described in our Diocesan Profile proved to be a dream, as we have seen. We cannot devise a blueprint for the future. The pattern must evolve according to our responses to real situations. It would be unrealistic to assume developments will proceed at the same pace in every place: indeed it would be disastrous for a common pattern of development to be demanded from each Congregation. (Hence the need for Overseers to share experiences.) People only become responsible if they are trusted to grow at their own pace and make their own contribution to the shared enterprise. Immense patience will be required in leaders, Diocesan and local. There will be growing pains. But the reward of growing pains is growth!

Reverend Canon Michael Porteus, Isle of Skye

TECHNOPHOBIA NO MORE?

This piece is really complementary to the presentation I made at the Diocesan pre-Synod day, and I should state at the outset that I am sad that I’m writing it for a print publication – but more of that anon. My talk was based on the premise that we can no longer afford to do all our communication by the old means, and that just as we no longer expect the mail to arrive by horse-drawn cart or the Dean to ride a horse around the diocese – or even that the Dean should wear the gaiters associated with such a pursuit.

So what am I suggesting? As I pointed out at the Synod, I am no-one’s idea of a geek; I was an English teacher and now I write, among other things, poetry. And that’s actually where I’m going to start, like any number of TV dramas, in the middle. Because it was my realisation that although I was no longer teaching I wanted to keep my writing skills honed and preferably to have an audience (teachers love an audience) that drove me to start writing a personal online column: a blog.

This year’s General Synod is to have a lunchtime meeting about the use of blogging as an outreach tool, so that three years after I first raised the notion at Synod I feel positively mainstream. A blog is the easiest way to share ideas, poems, prayers, opinions, news ... on the internet. Using platforms which are freely available online, you choose your layout, colour scheme and level of complexity desired, and half an hour later you can be writing and publishing your first post. You can choose

whether or not to allow comments, and whether you will moderate these comments before publication. You can add photos, or link to other websites for further information. And it's instant, so everything on your blog can be up to date. You don't need an expert, for you already possess the necessary expertise.

For this, I use a free platform called Blogger. You can find it here: <https://www.blogger.com/start> But let's be more basic. Perhaps you simply want to be in speedy contact with someone, and you need to write it down rather than use the phone. So you send an email. This is probably what most people do with their computer, and once you get used to exchanging mails the idea of having to wait for the post to arrive seems absurd. Remember, there used to be several postal deliveries in a day – now there's only one, and first-class mail seems as erratic as any other. And unlike a phone call, email does not require the recipient to be present at the end of the line, and you will have time to think before you hit "send" – so communication is efficient but careful. That's the theory anyway!

Some mail applications allow for chat – an online form of instant messaging, where you can correspond in real time with someone who is online at the same time as yourself. This is extremely useful for short exchanges, checking facts, asking questions, arranging a time for something, and is increasingly being used in busy offices where the volume of mail hampers efficient in-house communication. There are several stand-alone chat services available if your mail set-up doesn't provide this, but Gmail is one which does. (<https://www.google.com/accounts/ManageAccount>)

An application with wonderful possibilities is Internet Telephony – Voice Over Internet Protocol. The one I use is Skype, which you can download absolutely free here:

<http://www.skype.com/intl/en-gb/>

With Skype on your computer and a microphone and headphone you can use your computer to talk to anyone else who has Skype absolutely free. It costs you nothing other than your normal broadband fees, and it doesn't matter where they are – so if you have a friend in New Zealand you can blather away to your heart's content without thinking about the cost. You can also call landlines anywhere for the price of a local call, and there is a conference call facility. If you have a webcam, your caller can see you – no more phone calls taken straight from the bath!

One very rapid way of keeping in touch – and one which might revolutionise the diary-access of the Bishop and other clergy – is Twitter. Never mind the silly name; this is an application which allows you to post a short sentence about what you're doing which can then be read by anyone who chooses to "follow" you. Similarly, you can keep track of anyone you want – especially useful when your family is far-flung, as you can post to it from a mobile phone. Check it out at <http://twitter.com/> To finish, I'd like to return to the question of the printed magazine. My vision was this: the magazine would be prepared and laid out as usual on a computer in Oban. (Of course, it could equally well be prepared in Delaware – it makes no difference) It is then mailed in PDF form (Portable Document Format) to a designated person in each parish, as well as to everyone already on the diocesan emailing list. This person takes it on herself to print as many copies as are needed for those in her own congregation who do not have access to a computer – and they pay her for the paper and ink used. This would cut out the cost of commercial printing and postage, and should also be seen as an act of ministry within congregations. Much wealthier dioceses than our own, who have far more people in more compact areas, are adopting this means of communication, and it seems reasonable to me that we should be leading the way here.

None of the above is rocket science. Many reading this will know far more about the technology than I do. If we have the will to demand a broadband connection in every part of our diocese, then all that is required is that will – the will to advance.

Christine McIntosh, Dunoon

ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL, OBAN

On Sunday 13th April you may have heard Sunday Worship on Radio 4, the live broadcast came from Dunollie Church in Oban and addresses were given by the Rev'd Dugald Cameron (Church of Scotland) and our own Provost and Dean, the Very Rev'd Norman MacCallum.

Norman talked about how one day last year he was clearing out one of the cupboards in the Cathedral undercroft when he came across what he thought was a large mirror, but completely covered in dust. Cleaning off some of the grime he discovered a beautiful stained glass window by W. and J. J. Keir of Glasgow, depicting the arrival of St Columba on the island of Iona, with the Paps of Jura in the background. No one had any idea that it was there

and it is believed to have come from the building across the road from the cathedral, which is now a Scottish Hydro shop but was originally St Columba's Church.

Throughout Lent our Vestry and co-opted 'visitors' carried out a very successful Stewardship Campaign, encouraging Church members to review their contribution to the life of the Cathedral by volunteering for various rotas and also by reviewing their financial giving. The campaign began with a service of commitment and ended with a service of thanksgiving. I'm very pleased to report that the various rotas are now looking very healthy!

As in previous years, we were invited to a series of 'Lent Lunches' on Fridays in Lent, these were hosted by Elspeth Shaw and donations were in aid of the Bishop's Lent Appeal, which as you know, was to support our companion Diocese of Zanzibar in the Province of Tanzania.

The Cathedral's support of various charities throughout the year has recently included very profitable Marie Curie Daffodil Tea and Christian Aid coffee afternoons, these are always well attended as there is guaranteed to be a mouth watering array of sandwiches and home baking on offer. We are so lucky in Oban that members of all the denominations come together to support each other's events.

To help raise funds for the Pre-Lambeth Hospitality appeal, Norman and Barbara held 'Lambeth Lunches' at the Rectory these were followed by discussions on topics, which will be on the agenda at the Lambeth Conference. These informal sessions proved very popular and we looked at subjects such as hermeneutics, ecumenism and mission.

Together with our regular lunch and speakers meetings, the Mothers' Union has been serving coffees to visitors to the Cathedral on Thursday mornings, with donations being in aid of the Pre-Lambeth hospitality appeal. The MU will shortly be breaking for the summer but intends, once again, to run a 'Baby Changing Tent' at the Argyllshire Gathering at the end of August. This proved to be very successful last year, so if you are in Oban for the games, do come and look us up!

On 10th May, Lindsay Campbell, our very experienced verger of almost 20 years led a fun and informative Sacristan's Workshop where the participants learnt about the handling and preparation of the sacred vessels, vestments, linen and texts used for worship. This was followed by a number of 'challenges' including preparing for a Eucharist after an arson attack!

Music in the Cathedral

On March 8th the newly discovered St Columba window was backlit and given pride of place in the Narthex for Oban Bach Choir and Orchestra's performance of 'St Columba of Iona', composed by our very own Norman Nicholson and written by the late Iain Crichton Smith. This cantata was composed 10 years ago in celebration of the 1400th Anniversary of the death of St Columba.

The performance was repeated the following day in St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral, Glasgow.

Oban's Festival of Music and Dance happens every year over the first weekend of May. The town is full of hopeful performers competing in busy venues all over the town. As usual the Cathedral was used during the Friday and Saturday as a venue for piano competitions, for which it is particularly suitable.

Looking ahead:

Preparations are now underway for our Bazaar on July 26th, together with the usual stalls, teas will be served and I can highly recommend them!

On 14th June the Cathedral will be the venue for the Scottish Recorder Orchestra who will be performing in aid of Oban Hospice.

During July we are looking forward to welcoming our visiting Bishops prior to the Lambeth Conference and also during the first week of August the cathedral hall will be used for a MacMillan Charity Shop.

Looking further ahead, Angela Brownridge will give a piano recital on Friday 26th September at 7.30pm

Jane Elliott, Oban

ST MARGARET'S, WHITING BAY, ISLE OF ARRAN

"Travelling Together"

Others in our Diocese and beyond may be interested to hear a little about our experience on the road to Local Collaborative Ministry. St Margaret's has not arrived at the "destination" yet (and, of course, there is as yet no clear definition in the Scottish Episcopal Church of what that "destination" – LCM in the final sense – might be), but I think we have established a footing on the path.

In all this, our history has been very important. We are not the remnant of a once much larger regular Incumbency, as many now small congregations

must be. The down side of this is that we are relatively few in number, as we have always been, and have no financial resources beyond the Sunday collection and what we can raise from coffee mornings, etc. These parameters are unlikely to change very much. But, as will be seen, there has been, paradoxically, a considerable “upside” For one thing, we hardly ever hear the cry of: “But we have always done it his way...” to prevent change. Anglican worship was not traditional on Arran, and was only intermittent until 1966, when the Revd Charles Wood retired from Eyemouth and set up a private chapel in his own house in Whiting Bay. Upon his death in 1983, the chapel was carried on by his widow Elsie with the help of visiting clergy. Although she kept the leadership of the church very much in her own hands until about 1990, the congregation was always closely involved, and felt tight-knit. After that date, Elsie took steps to regularise the position of the congregation with the election of a Lay Elector, Lay Representative and Treasurer, etc., so that by her death in 1993, it was properly represented and recognised as a Diocesan charge. In her will, she left the house to provide funds for the continuance of the church, and this enabled the purchase of the building which was dedicated in 1995 as St Margaret of Scotland. The conversion of the building, a former Free Church which had been used as a holiday house, was carried out by the congregation themselves working together.

Never having been in a position to have a stipendiary priest on the island, we have had considerable experience, following Elsie’s example, of running ourselves with the aid of visiting priests. We have, however, had a period of relief from this situation, and it advanced our understanding and our consciousness of belonging together. From his providential arrival on the island in 1997 to his death in July 2004, we benefited from the ministry of a quite exceptional retired priest, Father Hu Gallagher. He was firmly rooted in the traditions of the Church, no modernising “trendy”, but not least among his many wonderful gifts was the ability to encourage the laity to play a fuller part in the church’s worship. The laity had taken part in the readings since Elsie Wood’s day, but now they became involved in the Intercessions and in administering the Chalice. Father Hu also sometimes liked to encourage guided discussion among the congregation in place of a sermon. This sometimes became quite lively! In these ways, he helped to set us further on the path to collaborative ministry (although in some ways, aspects of it had long been a part of our church life). Since his

death, encouraged by his example, we have taken the running and the worship of the church further into our own hands. His ministry was certainly a milestone on our journey. But our whole history has been steering us in a collaborative direction.

We had our first visit from the Local Collaborative Ministry Officer, Dr Anne Tomlinson, in October 2006. As a result of discussions that took place then, we endeavoured to expand our “prayer tree” list used by our intercessors to cover as many cases of need for prayers in our island community as possible. The list is regularly updated. Members of our congregation also took the initiative in starting an ecumenical Taizé group, which has prospered, and now meets every month for worship in St Margaret’s. A second visit by Anne Tomlinson together with our Bishop in July 2007 saw a lively debate during which those present engaged with local social issues, such as the affordable housing crisis, and lack of activities for the island’s youth. The latter problem is currently being addressed by an ecumenical group, and it is hoped that the Episcopalian contribution will be significant.



*Reverend Anne Tomlinson,
Provincial LCM Officer*

During Lent, we usually replace our Sunday sermons with discussion sessions, and this year these have been based on the York Course on the Lord’s Prayer. Again, a lively response is often forthcoming.

Since 2004, we have not had a resident priest, but we have regularly celebrated the Eucharist by Extension, led first of all by our Reader, who has now gone to New Zealand, and latterly also by two lay members of the congregation. The elements have been regularly consecrated for us by visiting priests. The future looks bright for us particularly with the recent arrival on the island of a non-stipendiary priest, who has been celebrating regularly for us.

As I have already indicated, we cannot expect to expand substantially in numbers, given the situation of the predominantly Church of Scotland Isle of Arran. However, we hope to continue our role in other respects, especially in the thriving local

ecumenical life, where we already supply two of the three elected officers of Arran Churches Together.

How far we have come may perhaps be seen from the anecdote about our Low Sunday service recounted in our congregation's regular news contribution in this issue.

Of course, St Margaret's experience is peculiar to Arran. In a sense, we have set out on the road to LCM because we have had to, we are making the best of what we have. Other congregations who want to try this road will have different starting points, different histories, and face different situations, but I hope they will all come to feel same the joy and satisfaction we have felt in making the best of what they have. God really does help those who help themselves.

Above all, if we have any lesson to pass on to others, it is this: our experience has taught us that flexibility and readiness to adapt, tolerance of difference, and above all loving friendship are essential to collaborative success. The rest follows naturally, and could take many forms.

John Roberts, Isle of Arran

ST KIARAN'S, CAMPBELTOWN

The changes required in the wording of our Constitution were duly approved at the beginning of the year. This, together with other changes to our formal notepaper and public advertisements, now brings us into line with the new Charity regulations. For the first quarter of the year, Andrew, our priest, led us through Paul's Epistle to the Romans. While we all found this study quite difficult to absorb, helpful information sheets were made available to make the concepts covered by Paul more accessible. In monthly congregational discussion, the subjects covered have included - ways in which we might engage with the local community and recalling some of the ways in which we had noted success over the last year, the negative effect long sermons can have on young children, the value of reading Old Testament books such as Proverbs (for its pithy wisdom) and Esther (for its great storyline), as well as the helpfulness of the New Testament epistles, such as 1st Peter. More recently we have discussed the difficulties in talking about our faith and comparing that with the difficulties also experienced by some of the great figures from the Old Testament e.g. Elijah. We have noted how some sections of the community may still

experience rejection e.g. Jehovah's Witnesses. We considered how previously clearly defined rules pertaining to the church are now blurred. Interaction with and increasing knowledge of other cultures and religions have given us a fresh understanding of belief and a respect for difference.

In late January a new Vestry was elected in time to meet with the Bishop in order to discuss how ministry would operate after Easter, when Andrew would resign his responsibilities. The Bishop's visit also coincided with our Annual Review led by Anne Tomlinson, the Provincial Officer for Local Collaborative Ministry. It was decided that the church would be led by a Ministry Team of three lay persons - Frances Arthur, Judith MacRae and David McEwan, with the Bishop having oversight of the Team and the congregation. Anne led us through a useful training session on the role of Vestries and her report was issued soon afterwards.

The World Day of Prayer took place in early March, but, as with most ecumenical events of this nature, e.g. Bible Society, Christian Aid, numbers attending are dropping and this leaves room for thought on how to proceed in the future with this type of work.

On Good Friday, Chris Dwyer, accompanied by Angela McEwan, sang Gounod's setting of "Ave Maria" within the context of our devotional service. On Easter Day, Andrew celebrated his final Eucharist with us for the time being. He will be taking a break of 6 months, in order to give both himself a rest, and also to let the Ministry Team establish itself. 35 people attended church for the occasion and a report of his ministry at St Kieran's is contained elsewhere in this magazine.

Since Easter, the Team has sustained weekly services, ably supported by Canon Keith Pagan, who consecrates the Sacrament for us, thereby enabling us to continue as a sacramental church. In addition, Keith has been a frequent supporter of the congregation on Cumbrae, where he is an honorary Canon. The Vestry has met and conducted its business successfully. It has heard a demonstration of an Allen digital organ in situ, and it is giving consideration to its possible purchase. In April, how Local Collaborative Ministry (LCM) operates at St Kieran's was of particular interest to one visitor from Lincolnshire, where services are only fortnightly. One advantage of LCM, as a way of being "church", is that it helps keep churches open, every Sunday!

Pentecost Sunday was particularly memorable. The congregation of 18 included several returning

visitors, and that lifted our spirits. Chris Dwyer performed an original composition, "Pentecost Prayer", written for St Kieran's, by Angela McEwan. The congregation sang a new setting of the Kyrie and Agnus Dei in Gaelic, while the Peace and the responses to Intercession, Form 1 were also conducted in Gaelic.

Towards the end of May, members from St Kieran's participated in a Coffee Morning in aid of the Nepalese Children's Trust. The sum of nearly £600 was raised for this worthwhile cause, and Pam Francis, the organiser and member at St Kieran's, was gratified with the excellent response.

On the last Sunday in May, the congregation was pleased to welcome Ann Boulton's son and granddaughter to the service, as well as Catriona Beel and her mother from Lochgilphead. Catriona has been asked by the Bishop to produce a display about Local Collaborative Ministry (LCM) for the General Synod. St Kieran's was identified as a church which practises LCM. Photographs were taken and interviews conducted and Catriona left with a fuller idea of how things worked in this type of Ministry.

The following day, the whole Ministry Team was invited to the local Ministers' Fraternal and a very useful exchange of information took place. The other churches represented were the Church of Scotland and the Full Gospel Church. LCM was one topic of conversation, another was a ground breaking experiment in co-operation between the Church of Scotland, the Episcopal Church, the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church, in Glasgow, some years ago. We also heard about the various Churches of Scotland abroad and of how they operated and catered for ex-pats. All in all, this was an excellent learning opportunity which was greatly enjoyed.

David O McEwan (Lay Chaplain), Campbeltown

ST COLUMBA'S, ISLE o f MULL



With our trilogy of papers on proposed reforms in the Scottish Episcopal Church nothing much has been heard of or said about Saint Columba's, Gruline, for some months. That does not mean that little has happened there, *au contraire* (as Dell boy would say!). Perhaps the most significant activity to affect the church has been the pollarding of a row of mature sycamore trees that stand on the road-side, churchyard boundary. Many of these were over eighty feet high and only thirty or so feet from the church building. A survey was carried out to ascertain their structural integrity (to see if they were hollow) – they appeared quite to be quite sound. Nevertheless the decision was taken to reduce their height and to remove a smaller one that stood at the gate-side. A local contractor was employed for this difficult work and soon the top branches were reduced to a large pile of logs. As news of our project spread across the island, so vehicles and trailers appeared from every corner to take away the timber, for firewood, or whatever. We were left with an enormous pile of twigs and small branches which may form the basis of an humungous bonfire at some time in the future (early November seems a possibility!). A difficult job, well done. Our church is now safe from crashing timbers for the foreseeable future! (See photograph)

The winter schedule of services came to an end on Palm Sunday with the first locum priest of the summer season. We were delighted to welcome back The Rev'd Robin Excell from the Diocese of Saint Edmundsbury and Ipswich and his wife Heather. It is, perhaps, interesting to report that, apart from two visits by Bishop Martin in February, there had been no priest led Sunday worship in our church since the middle of September, yet we had a service every Sunday, and on Christmas Day. We have, certainly for the winter months, become an autonomous, lay led church. As well as being a little scary, this gave our tiny church a feeling akin, perhaps, to early communities, communities that had to rely on their own ministry and management until the next Apostle or church Father passed by that way. Maybe we are a model for other small, isolated congregations. For the last five years we have been under the pastoral care of Revd Peter Rice but it has been long apparent that he could not possibly, with the best will in the world, effectively maintain the cure-of-souls of Episcopalians on Mull, bearing in mind the enormous area of his responsibility and the huge distances involved. As you will know, Peter relinquished his responsibilities on Ascension Day. He came to Mull for a valedictory celebration of the Holy Mysteries in April and we were able to meet with

him and Fiona, for the last time, pastorally, over a light buffet luncheon at Gruline House, by kind invitation of James and Nicola. Peter was presented with a picture of Mull, an area that loves and where he and his bride spent their honeymoon. We all wish Peter and Fiona every happiness in their future ministries. However, we offer one word of helpful advice – if you decide to offer yourself as pastor to another community, it might be sensible to select one with somewhat less land (and sea!) area.

We were saddened in January by the death of Hester Scott. She, with her husband David, had been stalwart members of our congregation for many, many years. More recently she had moved to Skye to be near her daughter. *May she rest in peace ✠ and rise in glory.*

Significant sales of a guide book about Mull, written by Rosalind Jones, have resulted in the coffers of our Zanzibar account being well filled. A parallel, visitors' guide book to Oban, sponsored by members of the cathedral congregation, has also provided monies for our linked diocese. Details of a visit to Zanzibar by Bishop Douglas and Pat Cameron may be seen on our church's web site, together with some photographs taken by Pat, and others from a visit by Arthur Anderson. These can all be found at:

www.grulinechurch.org.uk

Our web site continues to grow. Please pay it a visit. You will find reports, sermons (many of which can be listened to), schedules of services, who's who, details of special events (as appropriate), links to other parts of the diocese and other useful information. Please let us have your comments.

Finally, we offer a huge thank-you to Hazel who, as well as giving us guidance on our web site, has spent many hours hemming and embroidering a new fair linen cloth for our altar.

David Fuller, Isle of Mull

ST ANDREWS, FORT WILLIAM

Friday 29th February was a historic day for our congregation as it was the official opening and blessing of our new church hall. There was a short ecumenical Service of Praise and Thanksgiving in the church which was immediately followed by the blessing of the hall by Bishop Martin. The Rector thanked all those who helped in the building and the fundraising of the hall. In turn he was thanked by Mrs Webb for all his personal efforts in getting the hall built. A cake was then cut by the Rector and

Mrs Margaret Roady representing the congregation [her great grandfather was responsible for the building of St. Andrew's Church]. There was a magnificent spread of food which was enjoyed by the local churches and invited guests.

Once again during Holy Week St. Andrew's hosted ecumenical lunchtime reflections on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday which were well received. The Easter services were well attended. On Easter Monday the Rector officiated at a wedding in St Finan's RC Church Glenfinnan. This was the second wedding he has taken there this year and has another one booked there in December. Pentecost saw the usual ecumenical Walk of Witness which started at the Salvation Army for a change, moved on to St. Mary's RC Church then to Duncansburgh/MacIntosh Parish church and finally ending at St. Andrew's. As always our ladies did a marvellous job catering for the assembled congregation.

The ladies have also been busy with baking as we have had three baking stalls in the lych gate. This is to raise funds for much needed roof repairs as, once again, St. Andrew's is being referred to as St. Sieves. This summer has again seen us selling soup with a roll, teas and coffees, this time for the much needed roof fund. It has been said that with all our fundraising the congregation are not so much the flock as the fleeced!

On a more spiritual level we expect to see some welcome additions. For the first time in some years we are starting a Sunday School as from August. We have identified some teachers and more importantly some children to begin this new venture. The Bishop will be pleased to note that Confirmation classes had already been arranged to commence in the autumn.

It would seem that as well as being busy this summer we have some exciting adventures ahead of us for the autumn.

Reverend Alexander Guinness, Fort William

THE STONES OF THE DEAD

The Diocese of Argyll and The Isles is an area known as the cradle of Christianity because of the monks who were sent out from Columbas' Iona to teach the Gospel to Scotland and beyond. It is also steeped in the political and royal history of Scotland.

Iona is the ancient burial place of Scottish Kings. There are believed to be 48 Scottish Kings, 8 Norwegian and 4 Irish Kings buried there starting with Kenneth MacAlpine, the first King of Scotland

in 893 and including the real King MacBeth! The kings wished to be buried on Iona since they believed that the ancient sanctity of the soil (with so many saints buried there) would dissolve their sins.

It is believed that the coffins of the Scottish kings were taken to Iona from the mainland at Kilninver just south of Oban. If you take the main road south from Oban towards Campbeltown and then take the turning towards Seil Island onto the B844, just after the junction look about 25 yards across Loch Feochan and at low water you will see a large mound of loose stones. These are known locally as the Stones of the Dead and it is believed that this is where the coffins of the ancient kings were loaded onto the boat that would take them on their final journey to the blessed isle of Iona.

The boat that came to get the coffin would have been in ballast and the mound of stones will be that ballast which was unloaded before the coffin came onboard. It is incredible to think that these stones which we see today are a direct link to the kings who ruled this land over 1400 years ago.



The Stones of the Dead

The boats would then have sailed if the weather was kind round the Ross of Mull, past the Torran rocks and into the South eastern entrance of the Sound of Iona. If the weather was rough the fleet would have sailed up towards Oban, through the Sound of Mull and along the west coast of Mull before entering the Sound of Iona from the West. The coffin would have been received at Martyrs Bay and then processed up the Street of the Dead to Reilig Odhrain, Orans Cemetery.



Orans Chapel, Iona

Many of the crosses on Iona were destroyed during the reformation and there is little to be seen in Orans Cemetery of where the kings were buried. However we can still see the stones at Kilninver and imagine the little fleet of ships bearing away the coffin of the King to his final resting place and on the wind hear the Gaelic laments played and sung as the rowers pulled away out of the loch. and along the west coast of Mull before entering the Sound of Iona from the West. The coffin would have been received at Martyrs Bay and then processed up the Street of the Dead to Reilig Odhrain, Orans Cemetery.

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Jean Ainsley, Oban

BACK TO UPPSALA



The first visit had turned out to be a state occasion-to deliver a greeting to those gathered for the opening session of the Church of Sweden's Synod. Given our way of doing synods, I had had to be convinced that it was worthwhile going that far for so short a time, but in the event, it was to be an expansion of horizons to be able to grasp a bigger picture. And I had the good fortune to have indicated that I am concerned as to how parishes are helped, to make church interiors more user-friendly particularly for small congregations. The upshot was that I spent the next morning with two Swedish

diocesan officials talking over their way of organising congregations and the churches that they used. Afterwards, I was shown round three churches, each with a different set of functions. There was no “one-size-fits-all” about them. It was helpful to have time to talk and share, and think, as I was made aware of the communities that they served.

However, a number of years ago, I had made assumptions during a visit to Bavaria. Forever afterwards, I will remember my sons asking quietly if I was having one of my Bavarian moments – because my host never got us anywhere near a restaurant, etc at lunchtime, I assured folk that in Bavaria they did not do lunch. On the next visit I discovered that some do a three hour one! So it was important to go back and learn more, simply to check out what I had seen. This gave me the opportunity to find out more about the Porvoo Agreement that moves us in an ecumenical relationship with the Nordic Folk – and episcopally led Churches.

A miniscule advert in the Church Times announced a conference for Anglican clergy to find out about the theology, churchmanship and parish life in the Church of Sweden as well as an introduction to the other Nordic churches. This looked like it. Being a pilgrimage person, rather than a retreat person, I also took the chance to extend the time in Uppsala beyond the confines of the conference to be part of the worship in the cathedral, meet with people and have space to think. One of the highlights was to meet up with Goran, who is in charge of helping small congregations, which had the brilliant beginning of “How small is small?” “Five, six, seven...” This was an introduction to how we can perhaps help lay folk to raise themselves up, and not make them feel guilty. Ragnar spoke of the need to live with difference. And there was at least one small world experience, meeting the priest of the Swedish church in London at a service in Uppsala cathedral, when he spoke of taking a memorial service for the late Macleod of MacLeod. But how do I manage to share this experience with those at home?

*Reverend Canon Roy Ferguson Flatt,
Lochgilphead*

ST JOHN’S, BALLACHULISH

REPORT ON LOCH CRERAN TO LOCH LEVEN WALK

On Saturday, 26th April, 32 hardy souls assembled at the Forestry Commission’s car park at Elleric, ready to embark on the rigorous seven mile trek across the hills to Loch Leven. The party were following in the footsteps of the parishioners of Appin who, many years ago, would regularly make the same journey to St John’s Episcopal Church, Ballachulish.



This Walk was a partnership event, jointly organised by the Friends of St John’s and the Forestry Commission, as part of the former’s ongoing campaign to raise funds to restore the church and site. Walkers came from Inverness-shire, the Central Belt and from all over Argyll. A holidaying couple from Belgium also joined the party.

A member of St John’s Cathedral Choir, Oban, Irene Main, completed the Walk for the second time in a week! Alisdair Campbell, a Server at St Andrew’s, Fort William, with MacInnes connections to Glencoe/Ballachulish and who has recorded every gravestone inscription, many elaborately decorated on slate from the local quarry, in the old Cemetery, was thrilled to be taking part to walk in his forefathers’ steps (but not so when it came to the river crossing!). St Bride’s, Onich was represented by John Lee and St John’s by former Head Forester and extremely fit septuagenarian, John Bousted. The Rev’d Peter Rice’s wife Fiona and Elspeth wife of Bishop Martin were welcome participants.

Despite torrential rain at the start, the weather forecast was to prove reliable and the party were to enjoy lunch at the top of the ‘Bealach’. From here you see Glen Duror and the path to Tigh Seamus a’Ghlinne (house of James of the Glen) – the two Friends (organisers of the Walk) being direct descendants of this brave and unfortunate man. Every year, on the second Sunday in November, Psalm 35 was sung in Gaelic in St John’s – the same Psalm that James Stewart recited on the

gallows at Ballachulish Ferry. This is a custom, that it is hoped to revive.

In the distance, the snow-covered summit of Beinn Neamh (1344m, the mountain near to heaven) and the formidable peaks of Glen Coe with the iconic Sgur na Ciche (Pap of Glencoe) by now a guide and featured on the Walk Poster along with the church beside Loch Liobhan advertising the event. Few people are unaware of the Massacre in this Highland Glen and the Clan buried on Eilean Munda (St Munda's Isle), now within a few miles of seeing. In St John's churchyard are buried, amongst others, Donald MacDonald, a native of Glencoe and, according to his obituary, paternally in direct line with the survivors of February, 1692. nearby, Sergeant-Major John MacDonald, MBE, MC, DCM and his son Major Alistair Stewart MacDonald, MM, "one of the three", who during World War II escaped from the Germans and evaded re-capture by speaking in their native language, Gaelic.

Under blue skies and bathed in glorious sunshine, the walkers moved downhill along the Aibhne (River) Laroch – in former times a boundary (to the east, the lands of the MacDonalds and to the west, Stewarts) into Baile a'Chaolais, (the village of the narrows), famous for its slate. Piper John MacCallum piped them back into the grounds of 'The Episcopal Mother Church', hence the reason it was situated out with the village. Here "new" Friends were able to see the Appine Chalice, which was used to give the local clansmen (Stewart, MacDonald, MacInnes, MacColl, MacIntyre, maclaren et al) their Viaticum before the Battle of Culloden, where over 70% of Jacobite troops were Episcopalian.

While the church stands on Stewart land, the MacInnes surname predominated in the area. Look upon the gravestones on Eilean Munda and St John's burial ground to see the prevalence of MacInnes graves. It is for this reason, that Friends of St John's hope to invite Clan MacInnes on 19th July 2009 during the Highland Homecoming celebrations to a Gaelic Service and Historiacle talk. Members of the congregation provided well-earned refreshments. The Forestry Commission's Evaluations reported very positive remarks and Friends were pleased that the Walk had generated so much goodwill. Everyone agreed that the venture had been enjoyable, as well as productive, raising as it did over £800 for the Restoration Appeal of this important Highland church and Jacobite Site.

HISTORICAL NOTE:

On 8th July 1770 over 400 people were confirmed by Robert Forbes, Bishop of Ross, outside the Storehouse, given to the congregation some hundred years before the present church was built by John Stewart, laird of Ballachulish House. A member of a loyal Jacobite family. During the Penal laws it was against the law for more than four people to meet together for worship. People in the past met secretly in the woods and caves with lookouts posted to warn them of approaching soldiers from An Gearasdan (fort William).

www.forestry.gov.uk/scotland

www.st-johns-church-ballachulish.com

www.argyllandtheisles.org.uk/balachulish

Friends of St John's, Ballachulish

THE YOUTH OF ARGYLL & THE ISLES

At first glance, there do not seem to be many young people involved in the life of the Scottish Episcopal Church in Argyll and The Isles. However, when you start to look, they are involved in church life throughout the Diocese. In our rural population, the social life of young people is integrated with that of the older generation. Within church life it seems to be similar with a number of young people joining in with bible discussion groups, outings and other events. A few congregations are fortunate enough to have regular attendance by young people and these run Sunday Schools or equivalent and some young people serve on a regular basis. Several charges have disabled young people in their number and it is great to see the others looking after them. One particular young person is being taught to play hymns, accompany Anglican chant and learn voluntaries so the full range of services can continue in the absence of the usual organist. Another senior pupil has been used to promote the use of Gaelic. One young person corresponds with the Ugandan girl who this Diocese is helping to educate by sponsorship through the Provincial Overseas Committee.

Other churches are delighted to welcome the occasional young visitor and make a point of chatting to them over a cup of tea. Several congregations have "Welcome Packs" with colouring in sheets and help with the Liturgy. Young people are often asked to help by uplifting and/or bringing forward the offering and helping to extinguish the candles.

Some congregations are associated with local schools and are able to mix with young people in their own environment, albeit on an occasional

basis. One charge holds Christmas and Easter Services for children which are attended by people of all denominations from throughout the community. Others encourage the local school children to supply live music using both the church organ and instruments taught in school.

Since young people do not generally enter church buildings on Sundays, within the Diocese, a number of ecumenical groups are being set up to take the church to the youth. These tend not to be “preachy” but to let the young people experience the Gospel at their own rate whilst enjoying a variety of activities. In the Oban area, H₂O (Hope to Oban) has touched the lives of almost all the young people attending the High School over the last four years and through them people of all ages. Further north, The Two Lochs Project is just at the stage of appointing a Christian Youth Worker while, on Arran, the Arran Youth Federation, now a registered company, aims to set up a “Drop in Centre”.



A previous Youth Pilgrimage to Colonsay

Over the last four years, we have held pilgrimages for the young people of the Diocese. Led by Bishop Martin, we have visited the isles of Cumbrae, Raasay and Colonsay and a number of young people join the pilgrimage to Ensay each year. We have also held a day-long youth festival. A number of young people from the Diocese attend the Provincial Youth Camp each year while some of the “not so young” are leaders or trainee leaders. Those attending these events have come from all over the Diocese and it is a privilege to help them to discover themselves and their faith.

Young people are not just the future of the church, they are the church now. We should be encouraging them by example or in a more “hands on” fashion whilst also taking the time to learn from them.

Susan Pollard (Diocesan Youth Officer), Oban

ST MARGARET’S, WHITING BAY

“A WELL OILED MACHINE”?

No, the above heading does not refer to the fact that since the last issue, there has been relatively little out of the ordinary to report from St Margaret’s. I’ll come to the explanation later. For the moment, a brief résumé of what has been happening. The ecumenical Sunday service on January 20th anticipated in our last contribution was a great and inspiring success, and I hope will become a regular fixture. Our Annual Church Meeting the week after was attended by Father Roy Ferguson Flatt, our “stipendiary oversight”, and it was good to be able to welcome him, and enjoy a congregational meal with him at the local Chinese restaurant on the Saturday evening. We seem to be a convivial lot, and an even greater number dined with Bishop Martin on his visit of the 19th – 20th April (this time at a new restaurant in Whiting Bay). Our Holy Week services this year were taken by Father Paul Fletcher, with some innovative musical additions. We are most grateful to him, and also to visiting clergy who have celebrated for us on one or more occasions (Fr. Paul has a regular slot in our monthly schedule). The more familiar visitors were: Bishop Martin, Father Roy, Father Adrian Fallows, and, once a month, our old friend Father Hector Soga. But we also enjoyed the ministrations of two new friends who were visiting Arran: the Revd. Michael Hardy from Holmfirth in Wakefield Diocese, Yorkshire, came with his wife Catherine, and celebrated for us at our Wednesday Eucharist on 30th April, and Canon Stuart Matthews from Workop, on holiday with his wife Margaret, both celebrated and preached for us on 11th May. We were delighted to meet them all, and extend our thanks. Two very welcome lay visitors were our old friends from Westminster, Irene Carter and Olive Whitcombe. It was lovely to see them again, and this year they were in time for us to mark Olive’s 90th birthday with a cake. Now to explain the heading. On Low Sunday, 30th March, we had a visiting priest, Father Hector, all ready to celebrate at 11.00 am. However, that weekend the clocks went forward, and things did not go according to plan (though it was not as bad as on an Easter Sunday many years ago, when I was in charge of our recorded music – Easter is not the best date to mess with the clocks!) What happened on Low Sunday is best told in the words of a local Church of Scotland minister who was on holiday that week, and had decided to come to us so as not to cramp the style of his deputisers:

“Thinking I could slip in quietly at the back”, he wrote in his church magazine, “I arrived at Whiting Bay shortly before 11 a.m., just as the service should have been about to commence, only to discover that those responsible for picking up the visiting priest over from Dollar to conduct worship, had forgotten to put the alarm clock forward the hour to British Summertime.

Once a mobile phone call had confirmed that this was indeed the problem, without the slightest hesitation, like a well oiled machine, the members of the congregation of only half a dozen or so stepped into action. By consensus hymns were selected, someone was appointed presenter (the music system for the day was also with the visiting priest), someone agreed to read the lessons and someone else to lead the liturgy, conduct the service and dispense Communion [this of course was one of our Lay Leaders used to dispensing the Reserved Sacrament, not quite as off-the-cuff as it sounds! JR.]

A delightful, reverent, fulfilling service followed giving for me new meaning to the much used quote from Scripture about Christian fellowship in worship, “Where two or three are gathered together”.

Here was a small congregation without a regular minister for several years, used to ensuring worship continued week in week out, in the absence of visiting clergy, due to them either being unobtainable, or who through the vagaries of our weather, often couldn't make it across the water.”

So it was not a disaster, and we are very grateful to the Minister concerned for his kind words, which I am sure he will not mind my quoting. The episode gives us heart as we continue on the road described in my other article.

John Roberts, Isle of Arran

THE REV'D ANDREW WILLIAMSON

On Easter Sunday, at St Kieran's, Campbeltown, the congregation marked the retirement of Andrew and Gwynath Williamson from active service in the church, by giving them a presentation of several gifts - a specially commissioned painting of a view of Campbeltown from Askomil Walk, a handsome carriage clock and book tokens.



Retirement of The Reverend Andrew Williamson

The church was seated to capacity for the special service and in the presentation speech, mention was made of the outstanding contribution which Andrew had made to the life of the congregation.

Andrew and Gwynath have been with the congregation through seminal events in its recent history – in particular, its involvement with Mission 21 and the establishment of Local Collaborative Ministry (LCM), whereby, members of the congregation learn to take responsibility for leading services themselves. In addition, Andrew established the sharing of the Peace as part of worship and also the westwards celebrations of the Eucharist.

Both Andrew and Gwynath brought different church traditions to the life of St Kieran's, Gwynath coming from a Methodist background, Andrew coming from both a Church of England and a Baptist background. All these traditions have enriched what has happened in St Kieran's over the last 11 years. In addition, Andrew came with a training in science. As a pharmacist he brought an analytical approach to church services and bible study in a way that only a scientist can bring. This too was of immense value, when discussing some of the harder aspects of the faith.

Andrew has decided that it is now time to relinquish his responsibilities at St Kieran's. He can look back on the last 11 years as ones of great progress and achievement, as more and more people have become involved in the ministry of the church in all sorts of ways. His approach has been that of the gentle touch, exerting just enough pressure to initiate new ways of thinking, but relaxing sufficiently, to let it happen, without him being seen to be in a dominant role.

Supporting Andrew, has been Gwynath, herself a formidable theologian. Anyone who has listened to

addresses, intercessions or discussion in which Gwynath has been involved, has come to appreciate the depth of her understanding and her insight into the faith, so we appreciate what she has done for St Kieran's very much too as a member of the Ministry Team and the Vestry.

At the close of the service, the congregation gathered over tea and cake to wish Andrew and Gwynath well on their retirement.

David McEwan, Campbeltown

THE PILGRIMAGE TO ENSAY

Each year, weather permitting, we make a pilgrimage to the Island of Ensay which is off Leverburgh in the South of Harris, to hold a service in the lovely little Chapel which was built there by two of St. Columba's monks. The Bishop requests that the Guardian of Ensay Chris Merlin, together with Christ Church Harris, make the arrangements for this outing which is usually on the nearest Saturday to St. Columba's day. This has to coincide with the Bishops annual visit but it is never certain that we will be able to actually get there, as it is very much according to the weather on the day which involves wind direction and tide heights.

This year because of his many commitments caused by the visit of the Bishops from various parts of the Globe and the imminent Lambeth Conference it had to be held much earlier and so it was arranged to be in May instead of June. Guardian Chris Merlin, arranged for three boats of varying sizes to take everyone over and our Minister made copious lists of the people who would be able to go and this was no easy task this year as the boats were very small and we were limited to numbers. Then came the agonising run up the week before watching every available weather forecast enjoying lovely weather that week hoping and praying it would last. Then came the day and the weather was absolutely perfect.

Bishop Martin Shaw and his wife Elspeth arrived the night before and were whisked off to stay with David and Mary Clegg in their lovely Castle, Sonya Davidson and Ginny Crawford arrived from Uist and we all met at 10.30am the following day on Leverburgh Pier. The trip across the water was perfect although the landing was a bit precarious for those of us who are not as young as we used to be, fortunately in our congregation we are gifted with a handful of large, and fit young men who helped us across rocks on to the sandy beach.

The beaches, the large areas of machair covered with flowers the sky and sea were all just wonderful, the Terns swooped low to try to chase away the invaders but decided we weren't worth the attack, Sonja Davidson who is great supporter of Ensay chapel had brought Ginny along and she spent all her spare time painting her wonderful little water colours and we were all so happy. We made our way to the Chapel which is situated on a small rise above the beach and were absolutely delighted to discover how much painstaking work had been done since we were last there, Chris and his wife Annick together with one or two volunteers had repaired, and cleaned this lovely little place and the entrance door was completely restored whilst still retaining the little mouse carved on it by Thompson the original Yorkshire craftsman.



Ensay Chapel, is a most spiritual place and as Bishop Martin remarked the previous Saints were all around us, the service was wonderful, we were reminded how the strength of prayer can work miracles, that vast riches weren't necessary to help others but that we should reach for humility following the example of the Lord Jesus, and to emphasise his point he washed the feet of our Ministers Father-in-law whose name is Peter. We sang beautiful hymns accompanied by two professional musicians playing the recorder and a small double bass, there were about thirty people present and they all sang their hearts out.

After the service we went out into the sunshine and took photographs, and then each person did his own thing after sharing a picnic near to the beach. People who had never been before, one or two members of other denominations who shared communion with us, the small children and all the people who had worked so hard to keep this lovely spiritual place alive were filled with goodwill and happiness.

We were all invited to go back to David and Mary Clegg's, who were hosts to the Bishop and his wife, to share a buffet supper with them. Mary had stayed behind to make this, a hot buffet, a wonderful meal for all and the perfect end to a perfect day in an exquisite setting.

We live in a beautiful place and we thank God for it but may we always remember the words of the Bishop and pray constantly for those who are so much less fortunate than us in the disaster regions in the rest of the world.

Dorothy Moorhouse, Harris.

LISTENING DAY

The SEC's Sexuality Listening Day Conference in Stirling, sponsored by the College of Bishops and organised by Alison Clark and Tony Coxon, was a sell out in terms of numbers attending, as some 60 people crammed into the space in the Baptist Church on the first day of Spring temperatures in Scotland. Five out of the seven serving bishops (Bishop Martin among them) of the SEC were present, along with Bishop Michael Hare-Duke (one-time Bishop of St Andrew's, Dunkeld and Dunblane).

Most of the day's work was conducted in small groups, but before this the conference was addressed by The Bishop of Meath and Kildare, the Most Rev Dr Richard Clarke, who reminded us that the Anglican church is a method of being Christian rather than *doing*, that Scripture is a conversation in progress, a conversation that is not always completed, and that neither end of the spectrum on human sexuality is axiomatically stupid or unfaithful when it comes to Scripture. He pointed out that the use of so-called "Flying bishops" calls into question the nature of Episcopacy and pointed to our participation in the Porvoo Communion, where we are aware of huge differences and yet remain in fellowship and in full communion. He asked us to consider how much unity we actually need: could we live with different levels of acceptance?

Of course, for many present none of this was new. They had heard it said over the years, and they had said things like this themselves. But what *was* important at this point was the context in which such ideas were being expressed, in a sizeable group of bishops, clergy and laity, male and female, gay and straight, liberal and conservative.

Then we divided in to the groups in which we would listen to witnesses, in the same manner as

some of us had already experienced in Argyll's Listening Day in the autumn. The groups were larger than on that day, with the bishops scattered through the groups, participating on equal terms with everyone else.

Each witness spoke of their own experience in the church and in society, and after a short period for reflection each member of the group spoke briefly of how this testimony had made them feel and of anything they had learned from it. Everyone had a chance to speak, and the ethos tended to be supportive, gentle and respectful of people's positions.

Perhaps this gentleness was the overriding impression of the day. Certainly there were those present who had expected fireworks, dissent, raised voices. And there were moments when it was apparent that people felt uneasy. For one thing, it seemed unfortunate that the Bishop of Meath and Kildare could not stay beyond lunchtime, and therefore was not participating in the whole process. It was noted that the only two people to address the entire conference other than for basic housekeeping were straight, male bishops. It was clear that most of the speakers came from what, for want of a better word, might be termed the liberal wing of the church – and that the conservatives felt that their side of the question was not being addressed. As one speaker put it, the fact that we're all agreeable doesn't mean that we all agree. However, others felt that the non-inclusive voice of the church had been heard for two thousand years and that it was time for a change.

But people *were* agreeable, falling over themselves to remain so. The model of silent listening gives everyone a chance to ponder what they hear, without the desperation to have their own point of view heard. At least one witness felt humbled by the effect of her witnessing, and many of the participants were moved by the stories they heard – and not just from the witnesses. This is a way of being church that can bring people together, and should perhaps be seen as providing a starting point for a much deeper engagement than has till now been possible.

This article appears, with revisions, in the June edition of *Inspires*.

Christine McIntosh, Dunoon

GENERAL SYNOD

If it is to be regularly held in Edinburgh then it must move to a modern conference facility with proper (comfortable!) seating, good acoustics and an excellent PA system; the Synod Eucharist must be held in the cathedral; the agenda must contain more motions for proper debate and the supporting papers must be published early enough to allow time for reasoned arguments to be prepared. Synod has become too much a place for the presentation of reports and their adoption – reports that are already published in the blue book! Thought must be given to a full debate on the future and associated costs of synodical government for our church.

David Fuller, Mull

A FRESHERS VIEW OF GENERAL SYNOD 2008

At the Thursday morning meeting to welcome the “newbies” to General Synod we were handed a questionnaire and the first question asked what were our expectations of General Synod? And to be honest, I hadn’t really thought about it. Was I looking forward most to meeting new people at a Provincial level? Was I anticipating learning more about the general running of the SEC? Was I hoping to be a fair and good representative from our Diocese? I soon realised the answer was all of the above.

I also realised that I was expecting a certain amount of tedious debate about things I knew nothing of and that a lot of the discussion would be “over the head” of a lay person from A+I. How wrong I was! I found the occasion to be most interesting and on the whole I followed the in and outs of the debates with ease.....although I was amused by how some folk could get so caught up in the minutiae of things.

There were debates on more proposed changes to canonical law, on how the SEC should be involved in the drafting of the proposed Anglican Covenant, on church membership and whether a rural commission should be set up.....to name but a few.

There were also presentations from the various boards and their pendant committees. On the whole I found these to be most informative and on occasions very entertaining. At last I think I finally understand where they all “fit in” and as the A+I representative on the Provincial Overseas Committee, that does help ☺

So now that I’ve survived and enjoyed my first General Synod, I can say that I’m looking forward

to repeating the experience next year. Especially as I met up with old friends and got the chance to make new ones.

Catriona Beel, Lochgilphead

A LETTER FROM THE REVEREND ANNE TOMLINSON

March 9th 2008

Dear people of the Diocese of Argyll and The Isles I see from the Editorial of the most recent edition of *Argyll and The Isles News and Views* solicits ‘letters’ from its readers for inclusion in future editions – so here is one such. This seems one good way of conveying my thanks to you all for the most generous Waterstones’ Book Token which you kindly gave me at the Synod dinner earlier this week. This was most unexpected – and also most welcome. As a publisher’s daughter, I have hard-wired into my DNA the propensity for book-buying on a huge scale, and your kind gift will certainly allow me to indulge that vice! Thank you for your generosity, your thoughtfulness and for the love which it symbolises.

I have really valued working in your Diocese during my tenure of the Provincial Local Collaborative Ministry Officer’s post. My very earliest ‘tour of duty’ upon starting work in September 2002 was a wonderful week spent with you all, culminating in an Emmaus Road Day for Lay Readers and Leaders in the Diocesan centre, a very good way to begin the journey of discovery that I have been walking ever since. Your experiences and wisdom have helped shape the job every since that first visit, and I thank you for all you have taught me and the wider Province by your willingness to share openly and honestly the highs and lows of sacramental life in this incredibly beautiful and geographically challenging Diocese.

It feels fitting that my final visit to you involved conducting an Appreciative Inquiry exercise (see report elsewhere) in which all present at the pre-Synod Day named – and gave thanks for – the values which make the Diocese of Argyll and The Isles what it is. I thank God for these gifts and for the Diocese. Be assured that I will keep you in my prayers as you continue to listen and respond to God’s calling for you individually, as congregations and as a Diocese. I ask that you likewise would hold Local Collaborative Ministry in prayer as the Church comes to a min in June at General Synod about the future mission strategy of The Scottish Episcopal Church.

With my warmest thanks and fond love,
And in the love of God,

Anne Tomlinson

SERMON

Second Sunday of Easter Year A

It is said that if you ask a person to describe what you see in front of you now (a coffee jar with some coloured water in it) some will say that it is a jar half full of water. And others will describe it as a jar that is half empty of water.

What follows, it is argued, is that you can work out whether you are naturally pessimistic because you regard the jar as being half empty, or naturally optimistic because you see a jar that is half full.

So what are you? A half full person? A half empty person? Or maybe it depends on what else is going on around you?

Personally I think all this is a little simplistic - but you get the sense of the idea.

Young children are generally abundantly optimistic. But life as we know can be a struggle and many teenagers seem to go through a period of negativity and pessimism about themselves and the world around them. One of the things that Careers Scotland, the organisation I work for, strives to do is to give young people on the cusp of adulthood, the chance to take a risk, a tricky thing to do these days because of all the health and safety requirements. Perhaps more accurately it's about giving young people the chance to assess and manage risk; and in doing so find out more about themselves the possibilities that are worth going out on a limb (literally!) and reaching out for.

For several years now Careers Scotland has been working with an organisation called Stramash who use outdoor activities to motivate and inspire children and young people. And together we have developed a Youth Leadership Challenge. A big bit of this integrated learning experience involves taking 25 sixteen year olds to the Island of Coll for 6 days. During that time they get involved in a challenge that sees them doing pretty scary (but safe) things 24 hours a day right across the island.

At the end of the week there is laughter, tears, companionship and stillness. At the point of stillness and after all the lessons of life and work have been noted and recorded we play a song by

Ronan Keating called "I hope you Dance". Keating is a Christian, and the song can be enjoyed on a number of levels including a spiritual one. The chorus goes like this:

I hope you still feel small when you stand beside the ocean

*Whenever one door closes I hope one more opens
Promise me that you'll give faith a fighting chance*

And when you get the choice to sit out or dance

I hope you dance, I hope you dance.

There's a copy of the song on a CD at the back of the church which you are welcome to take away.

In the gospel reading this morning, sitting out, was the option first chosen by Thomas. What Thomas says is "Jesus us dead and gone, and that's the end of the matter" and he doesn't want to think about it any more – an understandable response to a traumatic experience. But that is not where today's gospel stops. Thomas isn't allowed to get away with avoidance, with pretending that none of it happened.

Thomas is usually regarded as a pessimist who would probably see a glass half empty, but he is also full of tremendous courage and it's that combination which in my mind makes him one of the most human and beguiling of the disciples. Thomas is also the silent disciple – it is only in John's gospel that we hear his voice, and on several occasions. In John, chapter 11, verse 16, when Jesus is determined to go to Judea again to help Lazarus despite the threats against him, Thomas alone opposed the other disciples who sought to dissuade him and protested "let us also go so that we may die with him"

And then on the eve of the Passion Thomas put the question to Jesus "Lord we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" And Jesus answers with the familiar words "I am the way, and the truth and the life".

And in the gospel reading this morning we hear of Thomas, cold and crippled with grief – unable to accept Peter's plea that Jesus is in fact alive. "I don't believe it" he says– "I just don't believe it. You are seeing what you want to see. Jesus is dead. I saw him die. The sooner you accept that he is dead the better" Peter pleads with him again "Thomas I saw himself, and he was as real as you are". Thomas colder than ever replies "unless I see the

nail marks in his hands and put my hand in his side, I will not believe it.

A week later Thomas is sharing a meal with the disciples who are locked in a room for fear of reprisal and Jesus stands amongst them and prophetically invites Thomas to touch his wounds "Stretch out your finger here, and look at my hands; stretch out your hand and put it into my side" Thomas replies with the greatest confession of faith "My Lord and my God". And Jesus says to him "Thomas you have believed because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and who have believed."

Thomas was a man who struggled against his doubts, but he was ready to abandon them totally when he could. He doubted in order to become sure, and when he did become sure his surrender to hope was complete.

So on this Low Sunday, when there is inevitably an anti-climax after the heady events of Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Day, let us suspend any vestiges of our disbelief, our doubt and let us give faith a fighting chance and when we get the choice to sit out or dance, let us hope we dance.

Amen

Frances Arthur, St Kieran's, Campbeltown



Tony Coxon and Phil Hawkins leave Islay to live in Cardiff.

Thank you to them both for what they have given to this Diocese and beyond, particularly in Christian Education and Communication.

+Martin

A POEM

EUCCHARIST
(Corpus Christi)

Given God, nought withheld,
A universe bestowed.
In awe and wonder I beheld
Creation's vast abode.

Humble babe, flesh enrobed,
Eternity in time.
In perfect love my soul was probed,
Oh Mystery sublime.

Dying Christ, all was given
Along Your human road:
Your life, kenosis, and Your heaven
In Blood that freely flowed.

Risen Lord, "It was finished!"
Yet timelessness withstood.
Love's redemption undiminished -
And Trinity still trod.

Holy God, You come again
Through Church that You have wed.
O'er universe and hearts You reign -
Yet come, Great God, as Bread...

Given God, that I may share
Through "Givenness" divine,
That Bread and love and pain and care -
And make Your Mission mine.

Lydia Maria Goymer

NEXT MAGAZINE

As well as any article you may wish to include in the next magazine, please write a letter about your response to any feature in this magazine or event in and beyond the Diocese.

For the next magazine, please send in your contributions by Friday 31st October.

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