

1400 years later
Columba
returns to
Iona

by Joanna Sciortino



Denis Nowlan from Ireland, who played Columba, outside Iona Abbey

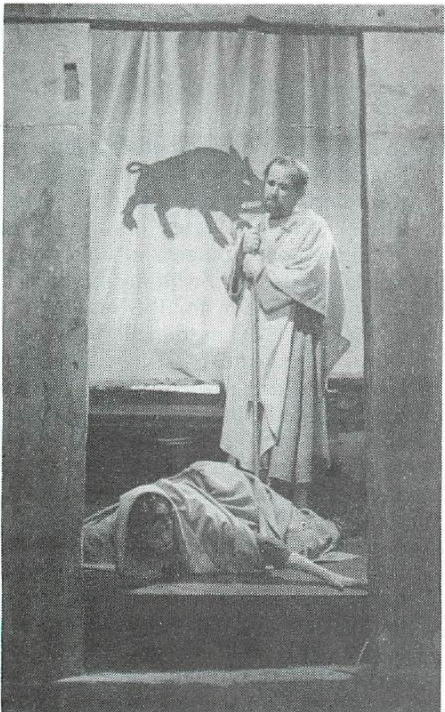
FIFTY-EIGHT performances in three months in 36 different places—from Arundel to Iona—and the Adamnan Players are better acquainted with Britain; with the glories of the scenery and the hazards of the roads, but most of all with our fellow Britons. We have been presenting the play *Columba*, about the saint who brought Christianity to Scotland in the sixth century.

Everywhere, we became the property of the local community. We were taken into the homes of people of every background, from a Bishop to redundant Corby steelworkers.

Audiences ranged from Oxford students to enclosed nuns to (very) lively schoolchildren in East London. In the space of five days we performed in a United Reformed Church in Hoylake, an Anglican Church in Wakefield and a Roman Catholic Church in York. Most of the invitations came from people who had seen, read about, or just heard about the play during earlier tours. One such was a probation officer who heard a radio broadcast about *Columba* last year, came to see it in Harlesden this April, brought her vicar to see it in Oxford in May, and had her church in Corby full for a performance in July.

Venues varied from the magnificent St Alban's Abbey to a public bar in North London, with the Guinness sign flickering dimly in the background. Most romantic of

Bishop Mungo brings tragic news to King Aidan's queen. A scene from the play.



all was an Elizabethan barn in Powys where the shadows danced around the ancient beams, the sound of pheasants and cuckoos punctuated the songs, and bats swooped over the actors' heads as the night wore on.

But whatever the surroundings, the message of the play was the same. The *Powys County Times* called it 'a frightening parallel with our own society', and went on, 'The hopeful note is that in the Dark Ages that followed the collapse of Roman civilisation, Ireland became the repository of faith.'

After each performance many people just shook our hands, too moved to speak. Others told us what it had meant. 'I have taken time off university to think and find out what God has to do with my life,' said one. 'I came to Iona as a tourist for one day and wandered into the Abbey to see your play. I just want you to know how important it has been for me. I don't think it was by chance.' 'God has given me a last chance to get out of my mess,' said another. After seeing the play and talking to one of the company she decided to let God have control in her life.

Only an island

A teacher from a school where we performed wrote that the play had helped her through a particularly difficult time and sent a cheque for £50. This was typical of how money came. Despite every economy, our costs were heavy, and with three weeks of the tour to go we needed £3,000 to pay all the bills. We prayed regularly and worried sometimes—and through the generosity of many people the sum we need has dropped to £300.

And what of the company—not a little weary after three months on the road, facing more crises and difficulties than we could

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ever have imagined possible? Perhaps our feelings are best expressed in a poem written during our four days on Iona—the island which became the centre of Columba's work.

Only an island—
All green and white
And pink and gold and sea-washed light,
Framed by the changeless and ever-
changing heaven,
Never the same,
But always breath-taking,
The light of heaven.

Only an island—
And yet God gave an ocean of love,
A tide of healing,
A sunburst of hope
In the clear, cool, sweet, swirling air.

No one said it would be like this,
—I had no idea.
And yet He had promised it
If we were faithful.
Only an island—maybe—

Yet as our boat reached its shore
—Our storm-tossed, tempest-battered,
weary, wondering, plucky, little boat—
We little dreamt
That we would be setting our feet
On God's mainland.

An island—
A New World—
A place from which to set out on life's
journey
With new heart.

Learning from nature's library

Chief John Snow, of the Stoney Indians of Alberta, spoke last week to the Assembly for Moral Re-Armament at Caux, Switzerland. Here we print parts of his speech:

THE RELIGION of the North American Indian is a belief in the Great Spirit, the Creator.

When an Indian child is born, the elders tell the parents, 'The child is lent to you by the Creator. The child is not your own. So take care of him. Bring him up right. Teach him about the Great Spirit. Teach him to be kind, generous, brave, courageous.' If the

child lives in sorrow or suffering, it is possible that the Great Spirit will take him back. When the child grows up to manhood and to middle age, he is the same person the Great Spirit lent to us. And he may grow up to be an elder among us.

In our language we call the earth 'Mother Earth'. We are fed from Mother Earth, we are kept alive by her and depend on her. We are part of Mother Earth, and she is part of us.

The forest is beautiful because of its diversity. There are all kinds of flowers.

LIBRARY contd on p2

LIBRARY contd from p1

There are tall trees and small shrubs—straight trees, crooked trees, leaning trees, young trees and old trees. There are trees of all colours. When the storms come and the strong winds blow, it is not against one lonely tree but against many trees. The trees stand together. The forest is beautiful because it grows in harmony with nature and according to the plan of the Great Creator.

In addition to the books that we read in the libraries, we should also read in nature's library. Mankind can be like a beautiful forest of people if we grow according to the plan of the Creator.

A Cheyenne Indian chief spoke about the land in North America, referring to the Great Spirit, or God the Creator, as 'The Great Mystery'.

He said, 'Long ago the Great Mystery caused this land to be, and made the Indians to live in this land. Well has the Indian fulfilled the intent of the Great Mystery for him.

'Once only Indians lived in this country. Then came strangers from across the Great Water. No land had they. We gave them of our land. No food had they. We gave them of our food.

'The strangers have become many and they fill all the country. They dig gold in my mountains. They build houses of the trees of my forest. They build cities of my stones and rocks. They make fine garments of the hides and wool of the animals that eat my grass.

'In the heart of the Great Mystery it was meant that my friend from across the Great Water should come to my land, that I should bid him welcome, that all men should sit down with me and share my food.

'There have been two roads—the white man's road and the Indian's road. Neither traveller has known the road of the other.

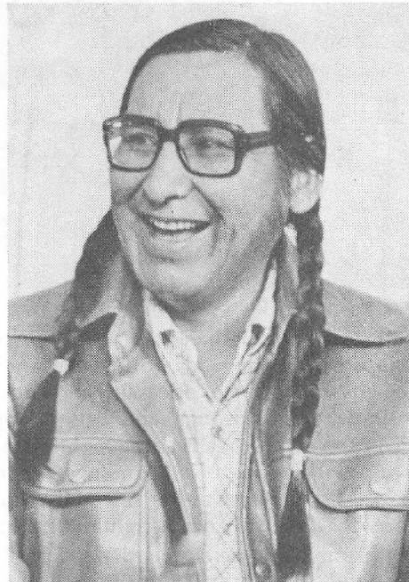
'But when I think quietly, I know that it is in the mind of the Great Mystery that white men and Indians who fought each other should now be one people. There are birds of many colours, but they are all birds. There are horses of many colours, yet they are all horses. So cattle, so all living things, animals, flowers, trees, so men.'

Open house on the hill

TIRLEY GARTH, the MRA centre in Cheshire, is known to thousands of people, especially men who work in the industries of North West England. At weekend conferences healing has come to deep racial and class divisions, and people of all backgrounds have gone back with fresh purpose and hope to their jobs.

Last month several thousand came for another reason—to admire the rhododendrons and azaleas that are a feature of the house's 40 acres of lawn, orchard and woodland.

Many wanted to know more about the



Chief John Snow

I stand before you as a spokesman of my people, the original people of North America. I represent a struggling people. We struggle to retain our rights, our heritage, our moral values and spiritual beliefs. We are poor in material things but rich in spiritual things.

"Where there is no vision the people perish." Where there is no vision a nation dies. I see a great world vision here at Caux. I can read it on your faces and in your eyes. I see new hope here.

John Snow Jr, who was last year student president of his high school:

Our culture was almost lost at one time—my people were punished for speaking our language in school. If a European in Canada lost his identity, he could come back to Europe and relearn the language, the songs, the music. But once an Indian culture is lost, that is the end.

With God's strength and guidance, I would like to help my people to retain their culture. More than ever there is a need for the young generation to reconsider conflicts of hatred among nations. We are the leaders of tomorrow.

work of Tirley Garth. A thousand came inside the house to showings of the audiovisual, *House on the Hill*, which tells the story. Many stayed behind after the showings to ask questions and buy books.

These 'Open Days' were arranged by the recently-formed 'Friends of Tirley Garth', which already has several hundred members in Britain and overseas. Groups of Friends came from as far as Birmingham, Yorkshire and the Lake District. Others have come throughout the year to help with keeping the grounds in peak condition—only one professional gardener is employed in the gardens.

For information on the 'Friends of Tirley Garth', please write to the Secretary, Mrs TF Imeson, 3 Roseway, Rossett, Clwyd U12 0LF.

INDEPENDENT STATE



by Elisabeth Måsen
Sweden

I WAS NOT ALIVE when Moral Re-Armament started. This fellowship of people all around our globe, bringing God's guidance and absolute moral standards into their lives and their situations, is my heritage.

A voice took shape

by Dr Konrad von Orelli
Switzerland

AFTER 47 YEARS of daily listening to the inner voice, what conclusions can be drawn by a man with violent, often contradictory passions and a lively, not always helpful imagination?

1. Listening brings a certain calm and order into the heart of a turbulent person. Peace and inward steadiness, rather than constant ups and downs, are needed to be able to take responsibility.

Martyrdom no more

AT THE AGE OF 14 MONTHS, I have been told, I was put on my mother's bed and saw her holding another baby. I screamed and was removed, and refused to look at her for a week after that. I grew up with an insane jealousy of my brothers and a demand for a special relationship with my mother which she never gave in to. This resulted in my being known as her 'difficult daughter'.

She died when my two elder brothers and I were just grown up and our youngest brother aged nine. I decided that, as the only girl, I must take her place in the family. It was disastrous; no one can ever step into another's shoes.

One day after I was married and had sons of my own, I overheard my youngest brother say to my husband: "There's no use trying to help her; she loves being a sainted martyr." I felt that life and circumstances had forced me into this position, even if his comment was not the whole truth. I believed in an Old Testament God and saw myself as having to

Ten years ago I was trying to think out whether I should work with MRA on a full-time basis. At that time a friend asked me a question. He knew how easily I rely on other people for support and encouragement, and he wanted to make sure my decision was between me and God alone. What would I do, he asked me, if all my friends who were doing this work were to turn their backs on the task God has called us to in the world? Would my decision still hold?

I thought carefully. In the end I decided that MRA was meant to be my education, my profession and my lifestyle. I gave my life to God on the basis that I want never to turn back.

I knew that, from that moment on, I would need to be available to go anywhere, at any time, as God prompted me. My life would not be my own. Sometimes I would be in the limelight and sometimes behind the scenes. Through it all, my task would be to live alongside and serve all kinds of

people who, in their professions and jobs, sought to bring God's guiding spirit.

I continually learn about how to do this. In New Zealand a friend and I used to visit a Member of Parliament from time to time. One day she asked us what we thought she should say on an issue they were debating. We felt we did not have enough knowledge to give advice. But we suggested we might be quiet and listen in our hearts for what God wanted. She shut the door and switched off the phones. There, in the middle of that busy parliament building, God gave her clear thoughts on what stand to take. She also had some thoughts about what to do about needs of her children.

We realised that our task is not to have all the answers to the world's problems, but to help each person find an independent touch with God, so that he or she can turn at any time to the source of infinite wisdom.

Sometimes I worry about my future. I fear that I am not 'suited' to this kind of work. I

fear about the world situation and wonder whether we are fast and effective enough. Yet on all these issues I am learning that, though I need to care, the concern is God's.

It fascinates me to realise that what happens next in this work depends on me as much as anyone else. To be called to shape the future is a personal gift to me from God, and I must choose whether I take it or leave it. It is a gift newly given every time I stop to seek from God the next step to take, the next person to meet, and what to say or do for them. This is the mystique of MRA—the thing you cannot explain to an enquirer because he needs to find it for himself.

Of course I need to work with others—it is our teamwork that makes us effective. But that must not be a dependence on others. God can give me an idea that changes the course of my own life, someone else's, or even the way my country is going. It is breathtaking—but true. And it is a privilege and a joy to be part of it.

2. In time there comes a co-ordinating, guiding power in our lives, a passion to meet the spiritual and material needs of our fellow men. False passions tear a person apart and often lead to his being manipulated.

3. In this time of quiet sometimes many thoughts come, sometimes few, sometimes none. That is normal. Waiting itself helps us. We are taken out of ourselves. 'Take me out of myself and make me entirely Yours', Brother Klaus used to pray.

4. I discover a new reality. First there was a voice that told me that I needed to put certain things right in my life. Then the voice

took shape. I discovered a being. It became a friend who criticises, comforts and strengthens. Later I realised that it was this friend whom others called Jesus.

5. I found my own personality. Many of us emulate idols—perhaps from magazines, films or novels. At the same time we ask, 'Who am I? How do I find myself? Who should I be?' For a long time I wanted to be like someone else. I created a hell of frustration for myself and my family until I realised I must become the person whom I do not yet see, whom God wants to make of me. It became exciting to go on the voyage of discovery of listening and obeying.

6. Many people feel their lives have no meaning. They try to fill the void with sport, activity, success or with more and more friends. More and tastier fare is constantly needed to satisfy the appetite, even leading to self-destruction through drugs.

Through listening I found the peace of a purposeful and exciting life. With people who have a purpose—a purpose they are constantly refining—we can be at ease. There is a sense of true community.

Because this way of living produces an inner peace and a strength of personality, it creates people who can deal with difficult people and difficult situations. And these are the kind of people our times need.

accept my situation with Christian resignation. But I remember the times when the safety-catch slipped and there were explosions.

Recently I read: 'The moment life begins, the sense of direction awakens... The child is born with an immense potential... He is also born with an inner instrument which enables him to distinguish between good and evil.* I know this is true, having watched it in my own sons. But it is only recently, as I face the latter years of my life, that it has become a reality to me.

I have found it most fascinating to look back and know that things that have affected my life both for good and for ill were consciously or unconsciously my own choice, a reflection of my real character and not the fault of someone else or of circumstances. When I accept this and am honest with myself, with God and with those whom He wants me to share my discoveries, I can be free of burdens and habits that have cramped the full use of this 'immense potential'. MS

*'Freewoman' by Claire Evans, Becket Publications, from Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ, £2.25 postage paid.

BOOK BROWSE

'THIS BOOK has made me think about unemployment. As one step, I have decided to save money each week to help provide work for a needy person. We "haves" need to share voluntarily with the "have-nots".'

The wife of a senior trade union official in Melbourne was saying what a study of Kenneth Belden's book, *Meeting Moral Re-Armament*, had meant to her.

She is one of 30 Melbourne housewives who have been meeting regularly for the past six months to study the book and consider how they can live relevantly to the issues their country and the world is facing—such as world poverty and the energy crisis.

'Meeting Moral Re-Armament' by K'D Belden, paperback £1.65, hardback library edition £5.10, both postage paid.

'THE ADVOCATE', the Catholic paper of Victoria, Australia, in a review of *Listen to the Children* by Annejet Campbell—a selection of stories written by parents and children about working things out in the family—said, 'The stories prove again that people often learn best through their mistakes if they are humble enough to admit them.'

The reviewer quotes extensively from the book, describing it as 'radiating God's joy in His creation'.

'Listen to the children' compiled by Annejet Campbell, paperback £1.85, hardback £5.45, postage paid.

DOES the Sermon on the Mount say anything for men of the modern world? 'Most decidedly,' says Paul Petrocokino in *The New Man for the New World*. His study guide of Matthew, chapters 5-7, in the New Testament makes it clear that the committed application of Jesus' teaching can solve confusion and despair.

Paul Petrocokino points out that many modern scholars believe that the Sermon on the Mount 'was not so much a report of one isolated speech but rather the heart of Jesus' teaching', and has much to say to those who seek radical change in conditions around them.

'The New Man for the New World' by Paul Petrocokino, pamphlet 30p, with postage 47p; ten copies £2.40, with postage and packing £3.26.

These books are published by Grosvenor Books, 54 Lyford Road, London SW18 3JJ.

'I know many old people who are happy because they have a big enough aim.'

Teenage on old age

by Anna Katharina Fankhauser
aged 15

Abridged from 'Sonne ins Leben', a German and Swiss publication for elderly people.

At what age do you think people are old?

At 70, but also younger people who have experienced a lot.

Do you enjoy their company?

I enjoy being with some, but not with others. I like older people who talk of their experiences, but don't say, 'You must do things the way I do'. We never learn anything by copying others. We want to experiment and we need to learn about things for ourselves.

Are there older teachers at your school?

Yes. They make us learn things from textbooks. But the younger teachers pass on their knowledge in discussion. We learn together. I think they learn as much as we do by this method.

Have you ever thought that one day you will be old yourself?

I sometimes wonder what it will be like. You don't know what may happen between

now and then. But I'm not afraid of getting old. I just don't want to live out my last days in a corner somewhere. I want to live with and for others. I want to live in such a way that when I can no longer go to people they will want to come to me.

What makes people want to go to talk to someone?

You go to see people who give you an answer based on their experience. If you have questions about the world, or if you can't cope with life, you go to people who say, 'Read this part of the Bible', or, 'Read a certain book', or, 'Pray', or, 'Take some time on your own in silence to think about your problem.'

Sometimes I'm sad that old people don't take us seriously. They don't give us a chance to speak when we want to help with someone who has problems.

What do your friends say about old people?

Some of my friends complain about them and say, 'They accuse us of being too noisy, or say we should give them our seat in the bus,' or they say that old people are too 'clingy'. They want us for themselves. That is because so many of them are lonely. Some say, 'I'd rather die than get old.' I'm glad that I know many old people who are not 'clingy' but are happy because they have a big enough aim.

Film positive, no negative

by Joan Dolphin

SOME OF MY FRIENDS are puzzled. Why does a retired teacher like myself spend several days a week doing an office job for no salary?

When I finished teaching, the pressure of the next day's work was lifted. It was such a relief to be able to do things in the morning which I had always had to do in the evening.

There were plenty of things to do—older people to help, interesting hobbies and holidays to enjoy. But there were also the pains of getting older and the loneliness. And the news which one hears every day—broken homes, unstable children, terrorism. One can feel helpless.

Why not use my time to do something effective? This is what I felt when I was invited to have a part in making MRA films available to schools, colleges, and other groups. It was a chance to pass on the values

I know work. Behind the despairing headlines, things are going on quietly—men and women are taking on the costly task of creating new attitudes and unselfish aims—and these films tell their story.

I have always liked a challenge. I remember one pupil who used to put her fingers in her ears when I played her a classical record. I had to find out how to pass on a love and understanding of all kinds of music to all sorts of pupils.

To good account

It was a challenge to work as an amateur amongst film technicians and to learn their techniques. What do you do in such a situation when you've spent your life teaching others? It has not always been easy. But my work with films has taught me to develop the negative feeling into a positive thought. And what a relief—I need never worry about my feelings again now that I know they can be turned to good account.

It has helped me find the care for people, all over this country and the world, that the preparation and despatching of films demands.

Antidote to poison

by Rosalie Procter

THE COACH WAS HEADING across France, full of tourists. Every now and then the guide would pick up the microphone and tell us about the passing countryside and towns.

But as the coach reached Alsace-Lorraine, his tone changed and a steady stream of anti-German talk began.

At the Swiss village which was our destination we alighted, and new passengers got on the coach for the return journey. Soon, we knew, the same slow poison would be pouring down to them from the loudspeakers.

We prayed for God's guidance. One of our group decided to try and talk to him.

It seemed impossible to catch him. Then, for a moment or two, he was alone on the hotel steps. My companion went to him. Thanking him for all his help on the trip, she then said that she was concerned about his attitude to the Germans. 'After all,' she went on, 'how are the young people going to build a better Europe if we keep open the wounds of past wars?' He was furious. He shouted at her, but she held her ground.

Then suddenly he changed his tone. 'You don't understand,' he exclaimed. 'I'm Jewish and 15 of my relations died in the gas ovens.'

For a few moments longer they talked. Then he was off.

Ten days later, we were on our way back in the coach with the same guide. As it approached Alsace-Lorraine we waited to hear what he would say. All through that area of battles old and new, the information that came through the loudspeakers was factual and without emotion. When we arrived at our destination we thanked him warmly.

Of course, we do not know whether his new style was solely for our benefit or whether it resulted from a change of heart. But we believe God may have used our decision to try and bring healing to make a tiny contribution to the unity of Europe.

Come for a cuppa

TWELVE MONTHS AGO I moved into an old people's home—79 residents, all in bed-sitting rooms.

Since then more than half the women residents, as well as 99 others have come into my room, some several times, for a 'cuppa', a meal, a record session or a Bible study.

In October I organised a 'book browse' to give my fellow residents a chance to buy the books of MRA which have done so much to give me faith. \$160 worth were bought.

Opportunities for service, I have learnt, are not limited by the size of one's home.

Kathleen Shepherdson, Australia