

# Argyll & The Isles



## News and Views from around the Diocese

Number 87 - Autumn 2007

### St Margaret's, Whiting Bay

Our little church on Arran has really been quite busy since my last entry, and not just with our usual influx of summer visitors, whom we were delighted to welcome as ever.

I should mention first of all the imminent departure for New Zealand of our Reader, Dr Tony Martin. It would be impossible to quantify what Tony has done for St Margaret's over the years, and we are going to miss him sadly, not only as a man with great intellectual and spiritual gifts, an outstanding preacher, and the senior and most experienced of our lay leaders, but also, above all, as a friend. We did our best to express our feelings at a special, and rather early, Harvest Supper in Whiting Bay village hall at the end of August. That occasion, with its special mixture of fun and sadness, was attended not only by the members of St Margaret's congregation, but by many others from the island and beyond, some of them clergy, some members of other Christian churches, some merely Tony's friends of other faiths or none. We wish him 'God speed' and every blessing in New Zealand, where he will be near his daughters. And we look forward to his promised visits to us back in the Old Country before too long.

A different sadness was occasioned by the passing of two benefactors of St Margaret's, Alan and Pat de Maid, who died within weeks of each other earlier this year. A memorial service was held at the beginning of September in Whiting Bay Parish Church, which they had faithfully attended on their frequent visits to Arran. Their connection with St Margaret's was an important one though, since our church building (a former Free Church) had for many years been their holiday home, and Alan, an estate agent of some importance in Kent, allowed the church to acquire it on the most generous terms when the need arose.

We were one of the stations on the Diocesan tour by St Peter's Episcopal Choir from Delaware in June, and, St Margaret's being too small to host them on its own, their visit became an ecumenical event. Their concert took place in Whiting Bay Parish Church, and the ladies of that congregation joined with Janis Gallagher and others from ours to

put on a buffet for them. They were accommodated overnight by members of all the island's churches. An atmosphere of great goodwill and friendship was apparent, and it is to be hoped a few more lasting relationships may result.

July saw a visit by Anne Tomlinson for our LCM review, accompanied by Bishop Martin and Elspeth on their second visit to us this summer (they also came in May). The whole weekend went well, with a party of nineteen folk dining together at Whiting Bay's excellent Chinese restaurant on the Saturday evening, and a most lively and, I hope, productive review session. The Vestry will have much to mull over.

In my last article I mentioned the Taizé initiative that had arisen following a previous visit by Anne Tomlinson. I am delighted to report that this has been going well. The meetings are held in St Margaret's, whose intimate, domestic rather than grand ecclesiastical, scale and atmosphere suit them well, but the worship is ecumenical in every other respect, and entirely lay led (though some clergy attend). As local musical talent comes to the surface, the singing is less and less dependent on recorded accompaniment, and the invaluable meditative silences have grown longer at the express wish of the worshippers. The initiative was mentioned in the September issue of *Inspires*, and is due to be covered in an article in the *Church Times* soon.

I cannot finish without once more thanking our visiting clergy, who do so much to enable us to keep going. Thanks are due in particular to Father Hector Soga, who visits us month by month to celebrate the Eucharist, and whose excellent, inspiring sermons are so very much appreciated, but we are also grateful to Fathers Paul Fletcher and Adrian Fallows (as well as to Bishop Martin, of course!) We are so fortunate in our friends.

(See picture below)

John Roberts



Members of St Margaret's with +Martin, Elspeth and Revd Anne Tomlinson

[Back to Argyll Index Page](#)

[Back to AT187online.htm](#)