

# IONA

## Ecumenical work camp in 1962

Paper thin. That is how the veil is described that separates the invisible world from the visible on the isle of Iona. I really found that true during my stay for one month in July 1962 together with thirty more young people from all over the world, Iceland, Malaysia, United States etc. I was 22 years old at that time. The work camp was arranged by the World Council of Churches and our mission was to repair and paint the parish church and the manse. David Stiven was the minister and his wife made wonderful scones for us.

Most of us lived in tents in the school yard and some lived inside the school building. After working hours we had plenty of time to explore the island. We even slept outside near the west coast beach one night. The evening abbey services of the Iona Community became very important for us and at the end of the month we were involved in programs both in the cathedral and in the parish church. We were informed about the Community by George MacLeod and we met young scottish people from the Iona Community camps. We also took part in the activities for the local people in the Village Hall and we enjoyed boat trips to Staffa and Isle of Erraid.

The memories from Iona have lived in my heart since then. I have a picture of the abbey front glass window hanging on my wall all the time, telling my wife and my sons that some time I would return to Iona. When retired I had the opportunity go go back to Iona for one week in 2006, now staying in the Abbot's House at the Abbey Centre. It was marvellous. Almost everything was the same in the island, time standing still for 44 years.

In Sweden the Iona Community tradition with the new Wild Goose songs is very appreciated and various groups of people go to Iona to experience both sides of the thin veil. Preliminary I intend to visit Iona again in spring-time 2011 together with some other Swedish friends.

July, 2010

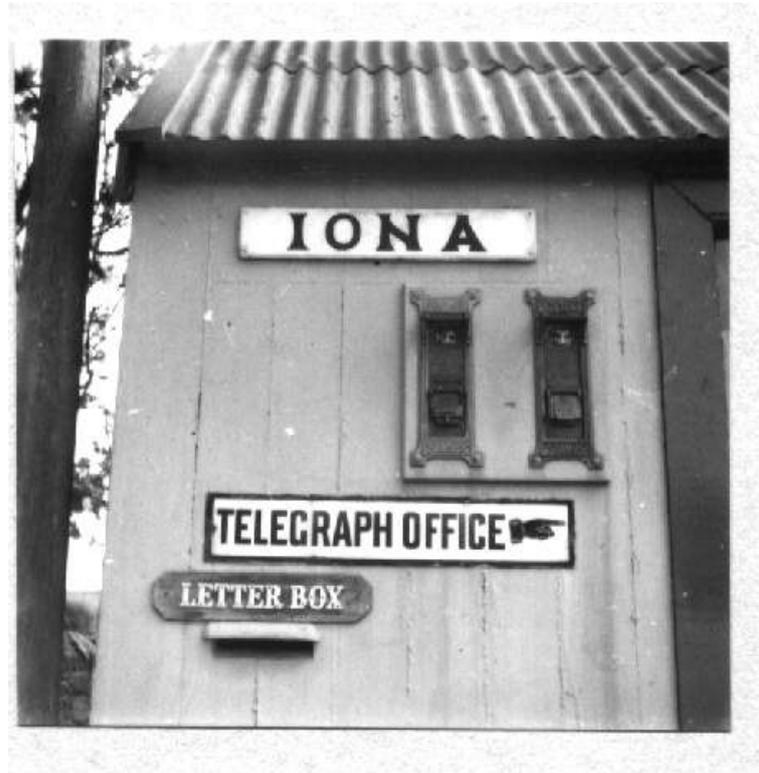
Göran Malmsten

Ph.D. in physics, Enköping, Sweden



George MacLeod informing work campers. My neck  close to the camera. July 1962.

Note: The wall behind the back of Dr. MacLeod. Buildings were still to be restored after the time for this photo.



1962



Iona July 1962 outside the school. Work camp (World Council of Churches). Göran from Sweden sitting in the front to the very right.



1962. Göran working on the manse



1962. Going to the evening service