

## APRIL 2018 NEWS FROM SEI



The student Worship Group rostered for this particular weekend led us in a memorable act of *Forest Church* worship in the grounds of the monastery – in teeming rain! Amazingly (given the conditions) this service was deeply valued by all who took part; we were indeed ‘washed thoroughly’ as befitted Lent!



**Meet the Ambassadors 5:** Jenny Floether, Lay Reader, St Mark’s, Portobello, Diocese of Edinburgh introduces herself: ‘Having spent most of my life as an art practitioner working mainly with glass, I underwent a gradual change of direction when the faith that had hitherto provided life’s backdrop became more and more its centre and focus. After studying for a theology degree, I became a Lay Reader in Portugal in the Church of England Diocese in Europe. On returning to Edinburgh with my husband in 2015, I was licensed as a Lay Reader in the SEC at St Mark’s in Portobello.

What I enjoy most about being in the thick of things in a local church is that you experience what it means to be community. You encounter Christian faith in real-life situations and witness the effect of the ‘lived gospel’ on people’s lives and well-being. This experience brings home to me again and again that committed engagement with the content and meaning of the faith is vital for formation, pastoring, discipleship and mission.

I am currently working towards the Common Awards Graduate Diploma in Theology, Ministry and Mission at the Scottish Episcopal Institute, which is proving both enjoyable and challenging. It has also given me some insight into the excellent teaching it offers. Because I believe passionately in the place of learning for the whole life of the church, I am keen to promote the work of the Institute as it goes forward in its provision of a firm foundation for those entering ministry’.

**SEI Training Fund.** SEI is deeply grateful to the Diocese of Aberdeen and Orkney, Bishop Anne and the Provost of St Andrews Cathedral, Aberdeen for allocating the offering taken at the Service of Consecration on 1 March to the Fund, and to the Diocese of St Andrews, Dunkeld and Dunblane for making the Fund a beneficiary of its 2018 Lent Appeal. In anticipation of the cheques, our huge thanks for both these very generous acts.

**Residential Weekend 4** took place in St Mary’s Kinnoull in the middle of March. The Rt Revd Dr Bob Gillies led the students expertly in several hours of teaching about the ministries of healing and deliverance.



On the Sunday, Final Year ordinand and Chapter Convenor Andy Philip (right, above) thanked chef Geoff for his splendid cooking as the latter prepares to retire. Mealtimes in the Refectory are a valued part of the weekends: a time to relax and share both food and conversation.



**Students abroad.** Susan Henderson, second year URC ordinand studying at SEI, currently on a six-week placement in India, writes: 'No matter how many books you read, how much research you do, or how many stories you hear, nothing prepares you for the sights, sounds and smells of India. Watching on TV a motor scooter piled high with sacks of rice, or the parents with 3 children weaving in and out of traffic becomes a reality when you are in a car and it is happening all around you with horns constantly blaring. Or the reality of the barefoot women begging at the traffic lights for money for food, or the young men and boys selling their wares to the hot travellers on the buses; all this will remain with me.'



So far we have spent most days in the classroom here at the Henry Martyn Institute (HMI) in Hyderabad, but have also spent a week in Chennai with the Church of South India, learning from lecturers about the challenges and opportunities interfaith dialogue and the many poor face. This classroom learning has been interspersed with visits to local tourist spots, shopping, and to Community Development Centres where women from the Hindu and Muslim faiths meet to learn about health issues and skills to enable them to become economically empowered and to raise their self-esteem. Once the women have learned their skills of mehendi or tailoring, they are able to contribute to the household income. Men receive workshop training to help them gain skills in motor mechanics and electrics, and HMI is also starting discussions on gender equality with men in the communities they support.

Throughout this last week we have had exposure visits to many faith communities. At every place we have visited we have been shown wonderful hospitality. The learning from our visits to other faiths have shown us where our similarities are, and through this we have all grown in confidence. It has been an honour to be amongst the staff and students here at HMI, participating with them in daily interfaith devotions in a beautifully created devotional space which allows peace and silence amidst the noisy background of a bustling city, and celebrating Holi, the festival of colour, a festival to meet with others, play and laugh, forget and forgive, and to repair broken relationships'.



**Conforti staff training.** Twelve Tutors and Associate Tutors were joined by Ken Farrimond, Blended Learning Officer, Ministry Division (far left) and Heather Walton, Professor of Theology and Creative Practice, University of Glasgow, for the annual SEI staff residential at the Conforti Institute, Coatbridge in March.

Dr Farrimond introduced us most skilfully to 'Big Blue Button', an online teaching system which facilitates real-time sharing of audio, video, slides and comment which we hope to roll out later this term. He also guided us through online marking, moderating and plagiarism-checking with humour and graciousness; all came away feeling more confident in their usage of Moodle. Professor Walton gave a fascinating paper on the challenge of life-writing in the context of theological education, and then gently edged us into trying out the skill.

SEI is extremely grateful to the academics, lay and ordained, who give of their time and expertise so generously to teach our candidates. Dr Farrimond remarked on leaving that 'you have a remarkably talented and high quality staff team'. We would concur with that observation and thank each of them deeply for what they offer.

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**SEI Journal Spring 2018.** <https://www.scotland.anglican.org/who-we-are/vocation-and-ministry/sei/sei-journal/>

**May edition of the Newsletter.** The Revd Richard Tiplady, Director of Mixed Mode Training, will outline where plans have reached as regards this new pathway of training in our church. Exciting times!