

■ ANTHROPOSOLOGY WORLDWIDE

Great Britain: Iona Summer Camp 2016

Perceiving nature as ensouled

The Iona Summer School, which took place on the Isle of Mull in Scotland from 9 to 15 July, attracted 47 people from Europe and Korea. By looking at nature in different ways and using practical exercises they connected with the forces of nature and learned how one can begin to develop supersensible perception through one's own activity.



Practising perceptiveness on Big Hill, Iona

In the sixth century a boat carrying 13 occupants reached the southern coast of Iona, an island on the west coast of Scotland. Columba decided to stay. He founded a spiritual community. Apart from prayer and the hard work, which was necessary for daily survival, the monks devoted their time to the copying of precious manuscripts. This – or something like this – is what their life was like. Numerous stories have been woven around this saint. The Celtic-Christian impulse that has been carried into the world from this place is imbued with a strong heart-culture and a loving, ensouled relationship with nature and the cosmos.

Close to nature

In July 2016 forty-seven people from Romania, Switzerland, Germany, England, Scotland and Korea made their way to the Iona Summer Camp, which had its base camp on the Isle of Mull. This was no conference in the ordinary sense, but a meeting close to nature, made possible by a small, dedicated group of people who share a love for and interest in Iona. The encounter of generations, languages and

nationalities was part of the programme.

Renatus Derbidge, who is a research assistant in the Natural Science Section at the Goetheanum, was the main initiator of this event and sees the camp as part of a tradition to which the anthroposophical summer schools initiated by Daniel Dunlop (between 1923 and 1934) also belonged. Learning to understand that nature is ensouled and that we are surrounded by more subtle beings is for Derbidge one of the most urgent tasks of our time.

Like a mirror

The young enthusiastic and gifted team of organizers made sure that a rich and varied programme, which included eurythmy, speech and singing, filled our days from early till late. On three of the days we walked on Mull or Iona in small groups. Johannes Sloendregt used land art to help us see how nature around us is ensouled. With Katherine Buchanan we learned about Goethean nature observation. By practising systematically how to achieve supersensible perception Dirk Kruse's group became aware of the special

magic of Iona. Roland Playle created the space needed to reflect on our own experiences in and with the landscape and relate them to the questions that arise in our social environment. The artistic exercises, the training of our own perceptive faculties, the daily searching and open sharing in conversation groups as well as the fostering of a mutual heart culture all served to deepen our relationship with nature.

Iona is known as a place where the veil between the natural and the more subtle layers of the world is particularly permeable. It is therefore no wonder that the gentle sharing of experiences and perceptions we had in this anthroposophically trained group proved particularly fruitful. Several group members emphasized on looking back that the experiences they had there were among the strongest they ever had. One person said that every place was like a mirror that enabled one to see oneself differently and recognize and embrace previously unknown inner aspects of oneself. A challenging as well as enriching experience.

The joint reading of Walter Weber's moving story "The Druid of Iona. A Hibernian Initiation" ran like a red thread through these days and inspired us to try and relate our own inner experiences to the inner schooling, wisdom and working of the druids.

Devotion leads to vision

Having shared this week with others, I would summarize the experience for myself by saying that the opening of the heart, or the enhanced devotion and love for nature, leads to vision. It allows us to increasingly grasp the spiritual in the moment. Just as we are aware of being surrounded by air and water and know how important they are, we gain a growing inner awareness of the elementary and spiritual forces or beings that live and weave around us constantly. A searching movement, a tentative sharing and a new self-experience become possible.

The successful synthesis of art forms made it possible for us to discover that Goetheanism has the potential to penetrate to the very essence of things. Plans are afoot for another camp. | *Griet Hellinckx, Witten (DE)*

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