

Mrs Mod's Blog

9/6/16

A big sighthe assembly is over and now a little time for relaxation – a very little time!

The assembly finished on Friday. Dancing in the quad on return from the 'clapping out' was a bit of fun and then a buffet for retired moderators, their spouses and some of the main players at the assembly in the flat just finished off the week nicely.

On the Saturday (28th) am we went up to the assembly buildings to enjoy a bacon roll with those helping to clear up. We weren't much practical help but we tried to give them moral support.

In the evening we were dinner guests of the **Islamic Finance Council** at the National Museum of Scotland. We had a very beautiful meal and a chance to meet some of the Islamic community. I had very interesting discussions with the wife of one of our hosts, a teacher from Glasgow! - Education, education, education!!

An evening tour of some of the exhibits in the museum and then up on the roof to get a spectacular view of Edinburgh on a beautiful, if somewhat chilly, evening.

No preaching this Sunday so we enjoyed worshipping at St. Andrews and St. Georges West from a pew and had a quiet day on Monday.

On Tuesday morning we attended the **Crossreach Awards Service** in the assembly hall. It was great to watch all these employees and volunteers being rewarded for their hard work and success. These people do a tremendous job in often very challenging situations for very little monetary reward. They deserve our support and our appreciation for everything they do. An inspirational morning.

In the evening we hosted a supper for a couple of Kenyan Assembly delegates to plan out the trip to Kenya in February.....I don't know if we can pack in everything they want to show us as well as those places we'd like visit, e.g. Turi a school for orphaned children which Cramond Kirk has a partnership.

Up with the lark on Wednesday to catch a flight to Brussels in order to pick up our daughter Lindsey and the 2 grandchildren and then to fly with them to Rome for a Family wedding in Tuscany. Both grandchildren were excellent on the plane. The weather in Italy was a little disappointing but the wedding was beautiful and such fun. 2 year old Caterina loved the Jazz music and was dancing along to it.

Flew from Pisa to Belfast on Sunday evening (5th) and checked into Jury's Inn. This is directly opposite the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Assembly building. Couldn't have been handier for their assembly that started the following day.

We were made so welcome by the assembly delegates and it was interesting to see an assembly from a different perspective. In many respects their assembly is very similar to ours with many of the processes being much the same as were many of the topics discussed.



We were present to see the new Moderator, Frank Sellar being installed and we were all very impressed by his address to the assembly. His theme for the assembly was **'A Community of Global Concern'** and he based his address on the first chapter of Jonah.

"The new Moderator said that unlike the reluctant Jonah, the Church is called to act with compassion, in particular, as a "A community of global concern, learning from and sharing with our brothers and sisters in the world church, while recognising with them those issues of concern for our stewardship of the world's resources where together we must challenge injustice, poverty and oppression in Jesus' name,"

See the news website of the Presbyterian church in Ireland 6/6/16 at

<https://www.presbyterianireland.org/News/?m=6>

Reconciliation is a very important issue as many people still have unresolved issues from the troubles. Two very moving speeches were given, one by an elder whose policeman husband had been killed and no one ever brought to justice and another from a minister who had served 3 consecutive prison sentences for



paramilitary activity before realising the error of his ways and turning to Christ. We do not have issues like these to deal with in our assembly.

Sadly because of the Church of Scotland's position on same sex marriage they voted yet again not to send their moderator to our assembly next year.

I thoroughly enjoyed meeting with some of the foreign and

ecumenical delegates, some of whom we had met at our assembly and I look forward to meeting some of them again when we attend the Welsh and URC assemblies in July. It really does give you the feeling that you are part of something much bigger, a sense of the whole church throughout the world.



The six of us from Scotland, Ian and Donna Gilmour, Marjorie and Anthony Vennelle and Russell and I took a day out of the Assembly to visit Corymeela, a retreat centre near the Giant's Causeway which specialises in reconciliation.

We met with some of the paid staff and some of the volunteers to find out more about the centre before joining them all for lunch. You can't be near the Giant's Causeway and not visit it can you? So we spent the afternoon there before returning for dinner.



Ian and Russell attended most of the assembly sessions while some of us visited places of interest in Belfast. The Titanic exhibition is worth a visit and a trip around Belfast city on the tourist bus gives you a flavour of the whole city not just the touristy town centre. The 80foot high peace walls and gates are still there and the gates are still shut every evening. Some of the murals are beautifully crafted though some of the messages are dark!