

We have had fewer events and high visibility activities in 2009 but have nonetheless kept quite busy enough with less dramatic but still fairly intensive work, including following up some of last year's events.

**Book Appeal:** The Book Appeal continues to be the most constant and unrelenting piece of work, with up to a dozen volunteers sorting and packing each week at Hillhead Library and more who turn up when a big removal is required. Our basement workspace there was closed for two months early in the year, which reduced the level of activity a bit for some time beforehand as well, but work soon returned to full speed. With the constant supply of books from Bookdonors in Selkirk in particular and the efforts of the volunteers we are now ready to send another container-load as soon as South Africa's long Christmas/summer holiday season is over and Amathole District Municipality is ready to receive it. Our main bottleneck has still been the supply of empty boxes for packing, since Bookdonors have to be given back the boxes in which they supply books, and we are grateful to Smurfit in Uddingston for making a batch for us specially when we were particularly stuck. We obviously can't ask for that kind of favour too often and could do with a steady supply of boxes of a suitable size.

Our main source of funding for the van hires and the container shipping costs has again been the supply of volunteer bar-staff to concerts via the Workers Beer Company. There were no WBC events at all in Scotland this year, but we were able to send volunteers to Glastonbury, Latitude, Leeds and Reading and are grateful for all their efforts as well as those of our regular sorters and packers. It would be useful to increase financial donations a little to cover our costs more completely.

**Events:** There have been some events, of course. Our annual ANC anniversary social in January was again entertained by George Reid and colleagues in his ceilidh band, to all of whom we are very grateful. Our Burns Supper at the South African High Commission was this year a fundraiser for Community HEART, was very well attended as always, and brought in some £13,000.

In August we arranged a farewell visit to Scotland by Lindiwe Mabuza in her last few days as High Commissioner before returning home. A lunch was hosted by Edinburgh's Lord Provost and a wider reception in the evening by Glasgow's Lord Provost, where the level and breadth of attendance made clear the impression Lindiwe had made in Scotland during her time in office. She was presented with a special edition of Burns' poetry, and we organised also a book of photographs illustrating some of her links with Scotland.

One highlight event which had to be postponed into 2010 was the Mandela/Tambo lecture, for which speaker Abdul Minty became suddenly unavailable due to illness. As arrangements had all been agreed with Glasgow University as this year's host everything should be in place for when the lecture can be rescheduled. There had been an excellent response from the potential audience so we look forward to the event when a new date can be fixed.

Preliminary discussions have also started about the next lecture due in autumn 2010. Earlier in the year we published the text of the 2008 lecture, thanks to Glasgow Caledonian University which printed it for us. This has been well received and widely distributed both in print and electronically.

We have been involved also in more special events than usual in London this year, starting with a packed out and very moving memorial ceremony for Mike Terry in January, and continuing with several events to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of the Anti-Apartheid Movement. These included an exhibition at the Museum of London, a reception at 10, Downing Street, and a conference "Making Hope a Reality" on both the history of the AAM and present and future solidarity work with Southern Africa.

**Speakers and Stalls:** We provided speakers again to a variety of meetings, including a UNITE Women's Day celebration in Dundee, a pensioners' club in Dalry, Blairgowrie Guild, Dundee PCS and the school assembly at Moray Primary School in Grangemouth.

Stalls were taken to some of these, and also to political and trade union conferences, May Day rallies, local Fair Trade days in various parts of Scotland and two large Fair Trade events in Glasgow and Edinburgh. All of these combine distributing information about ACTSA with selling crafts from a range of Southern African countries which help to offset the costs of the stalls as well as making a small but practical contribution to the producer projects. There have been some expressions of interest by retailers

in wholesale purchases of items we import directly, but to date only one small outlet has actually ordered from us.

**Wild Coast Walk:** The Walk provisionally planned for September 2009 was postponed for 12 months at the request of prospective walkers, and is looking quite viable at present for the new date. Connections with the projects supported by the Walks have been maintained by correspondence, and also through the sending of the proceeds from the 2008 Walk. The total raised was £5,500, divided into five portions (including our own Book Appeal), and remittances to two of the organisations were augmented by shares in the generous legacy of a deceased ACTSA supporter. All the contributions have been generously acknowledged.

**Other Links:** As well as these Walk contributions we were pleased to put Masimanyane Women's Support Centre in direct touch with the Church of Scotland Guild to exchange information about their mutual interest in combating the trafficking of women. We asked Community HEART, which also has a longstanding link with Masimanyane, to send a third of the proceeds of our Mandela birthday card to Masimanyane, and the rest to equip the school library at Blythwood and to assist the Samaritan Care hospice in East London.

The funds raised in memory of our former vice-chair Colin Anderson, who died in 1999, were passed this year to the Liberation Archive at the University of Fort Hare to finance the maintenance of artefacts linked to the liberation struggle. We also have more books to send to the UFH library via our next container, and are in touch from time to time with the new Vice-Chancellor there. We assisted with arrangements for his proposed visit to Scotland this past summer, but the trip did not take place in the end.

Negotiations about the renewal of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum link between Glasgow City Council and Amathole District Municipality have been protracted, but the final application for renewed funding is due to be submitted about now.

Glasgow City Council has continued its support for Local Authority ACTSA, providing both the Convener and the secretariat, and is working on a programme of linking women councillors and local government officers in Southern Africa with U.K. councils.

ACTSA supporters attended a meeting arranged by the Scottish Women's Convention with Thabitha Khumalo, an old friend from Zimbabwe who is now an M.P. and junior Minister there, and another with women from D.R. Congo arranged by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

**Other Work:** The ACTSA Scotland website has been tidied up and can now be updated directly by Committee members. The Ayrshire ACTSA supporters group has continued to meet and to organise events. The Church of Scotland Guild has circulated material about Dignity! Period., we were represented at the Scotland-Zimbabwe Group Burns Supper again, circulated campaign points from the ACTSA London office over the arrests of activists in Zimbabwe from time to time, and put forward a resolution to the ACTSA U.K. AGM on the need for stronger U.K. support for the progressive elements of Zimbabwe's unity government. Our nominees from Scotland continue to contribute actively to the NEC.

The Scottish Committee has had featured topics for discussion at each meeting as discussed here last year, covering our work with churches and religious organisations, political developments in South Africa, and encouraging ACTSA activity in local areas, especially outwith the cities.

We continue to respond to a steady stream of enquiries, both about helping with specific projects like the Book Appeal and about wider Southern African issues.

I hope it is clear from this report that the smaller number of headline events this year has not meant we have been idle. We have got through a fair bit of work with a small core of activists and a large number of people who help out and support us in various ways. We are grateful to all of these, and believe our existence does make a small contribution.

John C. Nelson (Secretary)