

I spoke last year about expecting to organise a smaller number of events in 2012 than in the previous year, and being able to concentrate more on developing our ongoing and less high-profile work. We did have fewer big events but the year has actually been quite eventful in its own way, with some developments we hadn't foreseen at this time last year.

**ANC Centenary:** In January we held our annual ANC anniversary social and ceilidh, expecting there to be a little more interest than usual because this year it marked the ANC's centenary. However, the surge in interest reached the stage of threatening to overwhelm the capacity both of the STUC's premises and of our own catering arrangements, but ended up going fine, with a great night and a lot of new people promising to come back next time. We are much obliged as always to the STUC for their premises and to George Reid and his excellent band for the music.

The STUC took up the centenary year with huge enthusiasm. There were discussions with ACTSA Scotland from an early stage, leading to a strong emphasis on the anniversary when Congress met in Inverness. The front cover of the Congress programme was all about the centenary, and two articles inside by Annie White, our Trade Union Organiser, described the history of the struggle and outlined ACTSA Scotland's Book Appeal. Delegates and speakers were all asked to bring a book and a cash donation, and many did so (including Alex Salmond and Johann Lamont), and collections of books were handed in by local trade union organisations. Annie White was invited to address Congress and the STUC van transported the donated books to Glasgow for us.

The ANC itself was, of course, doing much to mark the anniversary in South Africa, and in January David Kenvyn attended their centenary conference on behalf of ACTSA U.K. and reported back to our own celebration. David was then back in South Africa in October for the ANC's international solidarity conference.

It was during this latter event that our ACTSA Scotland Chair Brian Filling, previously Chair of the Anti-Apartheid Movement Scottish Committee throughout its existence, was presented by President Zuma with the "Order of the Companions of O.R.Tambo", in silver, in recognition of "a life-time commitment and effective activity in mobilising international support for the national liberation and the reconstruction of our country, mainly in Great Britain and especially Scotland and other international forums". Brian was one of eight foreign nationals honoured that day, from eight countries on four continents, so ACTSA Scotland is deeply proud of this recognition for our Chair, and his record of support for the people of South Africa.

**Nelson Mandela International Day:** It was the STUC's interest in the ANC centenary which led to the most high profile of our events this year. The STUC approached the Scottish Government about marking the centenary in some way, perhaps using Nelson Mandela's birthday in July as a focus. In the course of discussions with Fiona Hyslop, External Affairs Cabinet Secretary, and her officials this became a plan to inaugurate the marking of the UN-declared Nelson Mandela International Day in Scotland, with the intention that this would become an annual event with the format varying from year to year.

The loading and sending off of our next container-load of books to Eastern Cape was agreed as one main event of the day, since the focus of Mandela Day is voluntary effort to make a difference, and much of that was certainly needed to move nine tonnes of books up two flights of steps at Hillhead Library. With a willing squad of some 50 volunteers the job was completed in two hours. High Commissioner Zola Skweyiya and First Minister Alex Salmond came to show support, which brought an STV news crew and some quite prominent coverage on their news bulletins. The container was formally sent off from George Square by the High Commissioner and Scottish Local Government Minister Derek Mackay, and Glasgow City Council then hosted a reception for the volunteers and other guests, where the Scottish Government funded musical contributions.

That morning there had been a seminar in Glasgow hosted by Fergus Ewing, Energy Minister, involving the High Commissioner, academics, a European Commission official and others to discuss co-operation on renewable energy projects, including possible European Union funding. The effects of this are potentially far-reaching. Discussions between the High Commissioner and Government officials continued at a dinner that evening.

In advance of the Day we had been able to arrange for a video message from Desmond Tutu, commending the aims of Mandela Day and welcoming both the book container and the Scottish Government's energy initiatives. This message got significant press coverage and is still prominently displayed on the Scottish Government's website.

The intention of all the parties involved is that Mandela Day will continue to be marked each year in Scotland, though the mechanisms for making this happen are not yet in place. The trick, as always, is to turn strong and widespread support in principle into practical action.

**Book Appeal:** With the (notable) exception of the Mandela Day send-off, and the eventual arrival of the previous container sent in November last year, the book appeal has been rather marking time since the start of the prolonged pause in regular large donations of books from Bookdonors in Selkirk. Books have continued to come from a variety of sources in smaller quantities, and sorting has continued in most weeks all through the year, but on a much smaller scale than had become usual. If supplies from Bookdonors resume, or alternative equivalent supplies are found, the operation can be rapidly scaled up again. At the South African end, both recent containers have been handled by Buffalo City Metropolitan Municipality, and the books distributed by them in collaboration with Amathole District Municipality.

Ten volunteer bar staff with Workers Beer Company at music festivals this summer raised about £1100 for the book appeal. The absence of Glastonbury this year reduced the proceeds but that should be back to normal for 2013. New sources of income to help cover the cost of containers would be very useful. We are grateful to all who have helped with sorting books, loading the container, staffing WBC bars, donating books or money, or in any other way. We are grateful particularly to Hillhead Library for their hospitality, and for making it possible for us now to store a full container-load at their premises so we no longer have the headache of having to find storage space for the completed boxes elsewhere.

**Mandela-Tambo Lecture consequences:** There has been no Mandela-Tambo Lecture this year, but there have been developments resulting from last year's lecture by Denis Goldberg. The lecture itself was transcribed and finally published this autumn and is available from ACTSA Scotland. City of Glasgow College, which hosted that lecture and printed the publication, invited Denis at the time to become their first "Global Scholar", and this distinction was presented to him this week at their annual awards ceremony in Glasgow Royal Concert Hall. He then spoke at an ACTSA public meeting, and visited Armadale Academy in West Lothian where a concert had been organised a few weeks earlier to raise funds for the Kronendal Music Academy, a project in Denis's home town of Hout Bay and dear to his heart. The concert had resulted from John MacKinnon's attendance at the 2011 Lecture where Denis had spoken of Kronendal, so it was wonderful that Denis was able to visit the school to meet some of the young people who had performed as well as the Head Teacher and education officials. We hope there may be further developments.

**Other activity:** Apart from the book appeal, the main ongoing public activity is the running of stalls all through the year. This year we had 19 stalls, two of which were for 9 days each and so taking up an appreciable proportion of the year, and involving a good number of volunteers. These stalls spread word of ACTSA and its activities (their original purpose) but also serve as an outlet for useful quantities of fairly-traded craft goods from Southern Africa – some obtained through fair-trade wholesalers and some directly from the producers. This is not a money-making operation but another expression of practical solidarity with community groups in Southern Africa.

The first tranche of the Edinburgh Festivals' special three year South African programme duly took place very successfully this year, with some outstanding performances. Brian Filling has been involved in some of the planning, and the programme will continue and grow in 2013 and 2014.

We have bought a set of the DVD history of the international anti-apartheid struggle "Have you heard from Johannesburg?", and have permission from Director Connie Field to use these as we see fit, so we would welcome requests to show the films at appropriate events across Scotland. Our Ayrshire ACTSA supporters group has used other films from time to time as a flexible resource for public events.

Other points worth mentioning are participation in the memorial event for Janey Buchan, providing contact names in the London area for Masimanyane Women's Support Centre, and the sending of £1400 proceeds from the 2011 Wild Coast Walk to each of the beneficiaries – a total of £7000.

As always, we are very grateful to all who have helped make this year's work possible.