



# THE Preshal People

Newsletter of The Preshal Trust

NEWSLETTER 4

Preshal – the Gaelic for "precious" – is a recognised Scottish charity, which seeks to tackle problems such as poverty, drug and alcohol addiction, low literacy and numeracy skills, depression and low self-esteem in Govan, one of the most deprived areas of Glasgow.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to this edition of "The Preshal People", the Preshal Trust's newsletter, which seeks to update you on the life and work of our Trust.

There is a lot of material in this newsletter, which we hope you will find interesting, informative and inspiring. May gives her overview of recent developments, we have profiles of two of our precious Preshal people, an exciting update on youth work, news of Sir Alex Ferguson's visit, a report on the Kintyre walk, details of future fundraising events, and much more.

As this newsletter only appears twice annually please visit our website ([www.preshaltrust.org.uk](http://www.preshaltrust.org.uk)) for more up-to-date information. Alternatively, readers are most welcome to visit us in Aboukir Street and see our work at first hand; if you are so minded please telephone 0141 445 3689 and together we'll arrange a suitable time for such a visit. Both individuals and groups are very welcome.

Finally, a huge thank you for those of our readers who support Preshal in so many ways. Without your help – praying for our work, volunteering, providing food, toiletries and clothes, and supporting us financially – we would not survive. An immense thank you on behalf of the needy folk of Govan!

Don Giles, Editor

## A REMINDER OF WHO WE ARE

The Preshal Trust is a recognised Scottish charity, which seeks to tackle problems such as poverty, drug and alcohol addiction, low literacy and numeracy skills, depression, loneliness and low self-esteem in Govan. The Trust's premises in Aboukir Street are open six days per week, including Sunday evening when the Preshal Fellowship meets.

In a planned and purposeful way there is, each day, a varied programme of activities aimed at tackling the problems listed above. However, it is worth stressing that Preshal adopts a holistic approach whereby we seek to cater for the whole person, including meeting individual physical, mental and – as a Christian rooted organisation – spiritual needs.

## UPDATE FROM MAY NICHOLSON



May told me that she continues to be busy with speaking engagements – not just in Scotland, but throughout the UK. All these speaking engagements involve May in sharing the good news of Jesus, as well

as updating friends on the life and work of the Trust. May usually takes Preshal people with her as they are living proof of how lives can be, and have been, turned around through the work of the Trust. Do pray for May – speaking engagements can be very exhausting, but she is happy to contemplate even more!

May has continued launching her new book (*"More Miracles from Mayhem"*) and was touched recently to hear of a needy man who had read her first book (*"Miracles from Mayhem"*) and in consequence had made a [Christian commitment. She rejoices that God continues to bless her story and the work of Preshal, which she considers is going well, with steady progress being maintained. (Editor: both books are available from Preshal at the address/telephone number already listed.)

May highlighted the Easter children's programme – a two week period when Preshal was overrun with children engaging in a host of different activities. This year there was an Easter bonnet and an Easter egg competition, which was judged by Big Tam from Rab C Nesbitt; great fun was had by all! As usual, our thanks go to the many churches which supplied eggs for the many youngsters who participated in the programme.

May mentioned that Preshal is planning to send 20 young people to visit Scaladale Outdoor Centre on Harris in July in order to participate in outward bound activities. This is very worthwhile for the youngsters in question but is proving to be expensive (£3,500). Anyone wishing to help fund or sponsor the venture should contact May direct.

May particularly wished to thank Sir Alex Ferguson. Sir Alex is a great supporter of the work of Preshal and he re-visited Aboukir Street in February this year; details of the visit are included elsewhere in this newsletter. As a Govan lad, Sir Alex's close interest in our work is much appreciated.

May also expressed her gratitude for the hard work of the team of staff and volunteers, who – as she put it – often go the extra mile for Preshal and its people. She included the trustees in her comments as they "are dedicated and give so freely of their time".

Finally May wished to thank all those individuals, churches and organisations contributing money to the work of Preshal. She mentioned to me that every £1 donated could feed 44 people – in fact provide their breakfast. Puzzled (and sceptical!), I asked how £1 could stretch so far. May responded that Preshal could obtain 4 loaves for £1 and, as each loaf contained 22 slices, the end result would be 88 slices of toast; at 2 slices per person that equated to 44 people being fed breakfast. How about that?



## GOVAN'S OWN SIR ALEX FERGUSON

Our President, the Duchess of Montrose, and our Chairman, Maclan Service, were at Preshal to greet Sir Alex Ferguson when he visited the Trust in February. The Preshal People were out in force and gave him a rousing welcome. Sir Alex spent time meeting as many people as possible and chatted freely with them.

Sir Alex then took his seat in the Preshal chair made by Michael, the son of John McLaughlin MBE, the Govan Chairman, and was updated on Preshal's progress since his last visit. Amusingly May was over zealous in her briefing and Sir Alex was heard to say, in his inimitable way, that his roll and sausage were getting cold!

Sir Alex then gave a very amusing and moving speech in which he stated he would do everything he could to help Preshal. He was very generous with his time and was happy to sign autograph after autograph. In fact he made it a very wonderful and special day, one which will live long in the Preshal memory.

May's comment was "Haste ye back. I promise you a HOT roll and sausage next time and maybe I'll even throw in a tattie scone."



## HOW YOU CAN HELP THE WORK OF THE PRESAL TRUST



Firstly, by supporting our work through prayer.



Secondly, by providing non-perishable groceries (tins, packets, chocolate), toiletries and clothing. This Christmas we would particularly welcome gifts for young people.



Thirdly, you can support our work financially. Donations should be sent to the Preshal Trust, at the Aboukir

Street address, listed in this newsletter. If you are able to, please complete the standing order and gift aid declaration at the back of this newsletter. You may also wish joining our "Preshal Partners" scheme – designed for individuals and organisations to donate £10 or more per month through our standing order scheme.

Finally, by volunteering to help and assist our work at Aboukir Street.



## PROFILE

### BRIAN



When I met Brian, one of our volunteers at Preshal, I had no idea that behind his friendly, relaxed and easy-going manner there was a very different story

waiting to come out. Apparently Brian had been very mixed up as a child, with low self-esteem, no friends and constantly in trouble through fighting and stealing. He hated school and experienced learning difficulties; only recently he has been diagnosed with dyslexia. Social work, psychiatric and children's panel involvement was writ large and, as he was out of control, he was given residential placements to improve his behaviour, and threatened with a List D school. He couldn't wait to get out of the classroom for good.

His first job was working, under-age, in a cash and carry and he subsequently took up driving for various outlets. He described himself as a workaholic, at times putting in more than one hundred hours a week. He found out early on that alcohol helped – freed him from the stress of long hours, gave him confidence and relaxed him so that he could relate to other folk and, when drunk, removed the reality of his life. However, he was fortunate to meet and marry a great lass and, with the birth of sons, he had so much going for him. He tried his hand at various business ventures, which for a while flourished: a garage, café, mobile phone shop, sandwich bar. But during this time his drinking started to accelerate and, dissatisfied with its reducing effect, he decided to give drugs a try too. He took speed for a couple of years and then graduated to cocaine – mixed with a hefty dose of alcohol. This took a toll of his business ventures but he

still managed to hold down work of one form or another.

The drug taking was carefully hidden from the family and so was the excessive drinking. Incredible bouts of work were offset by binges, when he absented himself, or was working away from home. A Jekyll and Hyde existence took place with Brian living, at times, reasonably normally while, at other times, plunging himself into drink and drugs and the other things he bitterly regrets. A chronic depression set in which was aggravated by the death of his mother, and he began to overdose regularly. Bizarrely, at the very point his career was looking up, with the offer of a great job with a construction company, he began suffering paranoia, hearing voices and imagining people were spying on him. The job fell through; he was too unwell, and his wife, an absolute brick but kept in the dark for so long, realised how bad things had become. She told him that one of them would have to leave home; she had no wish to see her husband kill himself.

A trip to Aberdeen followed, where he spent thousands of pounds on drink and drugs and, by now heavily in debt, he took the last of his cocaine, intending to finish life there and then. But God had other plans, and this proved the turning point in his life. He recovered sufficiently to return to Glasgow, deciding to contact Cocaine Anonymous; there he came into contact with the 12 step programme and a "Christian crank" who told him he needed God's help to wean him off drugs. Brian, a self-made man, wanted none of that – "I'll do it myself, I don't need outside help". But gradually God touched his life, removing the cravings and convincing Brian that he was loved and accepted – no matter what he had done. Commitment and baptism followed and now, Brian says, "Life is great!" He attends literacy and numeracy classes, goes regularly to church, loves meeting other people and sharing his faith and enjoys helping out at Preshal.

Brian still drives for a living, and to Aberdeen too. But it is a very different person behind the wheel these days!

## THE PRESHAL CARAVAN

Seven years ago, for £5,000, Preshal bought a caravan based at Saltcoats. Over the period since some 70-90 families, mostly with children, have visited the caravan annually; this is done very cheaply as food and toiletries are donated for this purpose. It is fair to say that it is unlikely any of these families would have seen the sea or the sand without this facility, and in this way it has proved to be a real and inexpensive lifeline to so many.

As the caravan needed a major refurbishment this year, which could have proved costly, it was decided – in the light of a gift of £10,000 – to seek a replacement for it. The gift, plus the sale proceeds from the existing caravan (close to what we paid seven years ago!), enabled us to buy a nearly new caravan with facilities we could only have dreamed of before. The replacement caravan is now in use and already we are inundated with requests to visit Saltcoats. Interestingly, as well as meeting a real need, the caravan provided our sewing class with a challenge – that of producing curtains and cushions appropriate for Preshal's latest asset. Well done Margaret and Cathy and the ladies working with you; a great job has been done!



## YOUTH UPDATE – INTRODUCING IAN DOCK



**Preshal's youth work continues to flourish and we are pleased to report that we now have appointed Ian Dock as our part-time Youth Development Officer with a remit to enhance and develop our work with the young people of Govan. May describes Ian, who is married with two children, as "the best youth worker in the whole of Scotland".**

Ian can relate to many of the issues the young people of Govan face today as he sprang from a housing scheme, dabbled in drugs and encountered the usual trials and tribulations of a youngster growing up in a deprived area. At the age of 19 Ian became a Christian and entrusted his future to God; this resulted in his involvement in youth work, and he has worked for Scripture Union and for local authorities in the central belt for some 20 years now. He admits that at times he has sought to turn his hand to other things but that God has had other ideas; He has given him a heart for young people and renewed Ian's passion for them.

From speaking to him it is clear that Ian is bubbling over with ideas, based on his 20 years of experience. What is Ian doing? Firstly, he is heading up our early intervention project. This links with primary schools in the area and builds up relationships with youngsters and their staff. Ian uses music as a vehicle to network with the young people in question and has plans to use games and arts and crafts to extend this work. To do this volunteers are required, and so any reader who is enthusiastic and energetic for children and young people's work, please contact Ian at the Trust. You too can play a part! Secondly, Ian is working to empower the young people that come to Preshal through involving them in drawing up and implementing a programme of activities as well as mounting fundraising initiatives. He is undertaking this through establishing a management group consisting of seven young people, and he is convinced that this responsibility will contribute to their growth and development as young people and citizens. Ian is also providing training and development for all the staff and volunteers involved in youth work, and any new volunteers will also be assisted in this way; we have lots of enthusiasm but Ian, through his wealth of experience, is giving us the expertise we need to undertake this vital work involving the next generation.

Ian is only contracted to us for 8 months and then our funding runs out. He is making a real difference already and we would be grateful, if you feel so inclined, for additional financial help so that this valuable work can continue and develop further.

## KINTYRE WAY CHARITY WALK

Betty McGillivray reports that eight hardy walkers completed the wonderful trek along the Kintyre Peninsula, setting off on 24th April and finishing the 87 mile route five days later, on April 29.

The walk was organised by Ian and Alice Glassey of Charitytrek and, although every one was tired by the time they trudged into Southend on the final day, a good time was had by all. The weather played its part – kind over the five days.



It is expected that over £5,000 will be raised for the Preshal Trust. Our gratitude goes to all those who participated (including two trustees, Betty and Will Storm, leading from the front as usual!) and to all the people who sponsored them.

Thank you!



## THERESA



Theresa loves attending Preshal and feels so much at home here, where she is accepted and

valued for who she is. In some way it is a refuge – from the problems, difficulties and tragedies she has experienced over the years.

She comes from a family of nine and, as her father died when she was two and her mother had to work long hours (she was also an alcoholic), she was brought up by her older brothers and sisters. At 13 she met the boyfriend who became the love of her life; a school romance that led to marriage at 18 and four children. She was happy as a housewife and mother until her husband began to drink heavily (alcoholism ran in his family) and his behaviour changed. He became violent, had affairs, started taking and dealing in drugs, and gradually experienced mental health problems. He developed a split personality coupled with severe depression and this resulted in her spending two horrendous years with him, until his eventual suicide on admission to hospital. She immediately moved away from the area they lived in and tried to start afresh; she isolated herself – focusing on the children.

Introduced to a young man whom she felt attracted to, she was tricked into taking heroin. He became her partner and her life gradually spiralled out of control as she became addicted; she wonders how her young children coped with feeding and dressing, while her passion was where the next fix would come from. A life of crime followed to secure money for drugs. Eventually the two of them were caught and, while she miraculously escaped a jail sentence, her partner was given twelve years. Theresa made another fresh start and got clean of drugs, though she admitted smuggling heroin into prison for her partner. Upon his release she succumbed to addiction once again but came to her senses and threw the partner out. Recovering, she suffered a setback when her daughter's boyfriend committed suicide in her presence. Drugs beckoned as a welcome release, and her life fell apart again. Theresa fed her habit through shoplifting and her weight fell to six stones; she was a shadow of her former self. Then came another tragic blow when a daughter was seriously injured in a car crash and died six weeks later, leaving a young child. With the compensation she received Theresa lost herself in European travel; not to see places – she rarely ventured out of the hotel room – but to inject and forget herself in an artificial world. While visiting Malta she was approached by a man who could see she was needy, and he spoke to her of the love of Jesus and how her life could be sorted out. He counselled her to seek out a May Nicholson when she returned to Glasgow.

At first she didn't take the advice but formed a new relationship with someone who helped her get off heroin. However, her new partner was savagely attacked (subsequently dying from his injuries) and at this point her grandson's other grandparents took steps to obtain custody of the boy. Theresa was determined to hold onto her grandson and went onto a course of methadone, which she is still on today but reduced from 140ml to 5ml. She retained custody and it is evident, observing the way she looks at the boy, she views him as a privilege and a great joy.

In January 2010, at a low point and remembering the advice (given eight years before) to seek out May, a "chance encounter" resulted in her attending Preshal and being introduced to May. And, as they say, the rest is history.....Theresa has really settled in, loves attending daily and considers all the Preshal folk down to earth; there are "no airs and graces", she says, and many folk have similar life stories to hers. Her grandchildren love it too. While she attended church occasionally before, she now has a firm faith and is found each Sunday evening at the Preshal Fellowship, which she adores. She thanks God for May ("she is like a mummy to me") and Preshal, and marvels at how her life has turned around. I asked her about the future and she responded "Down to 3ml in June and free in September.....perhaps I can then get a wee job, get my life fully together with my boy and Preshal". I felt so humbled!

## GOING FISHING

Alan has been making use of one of his interests and talents – that of fishing. He has been taking Preshal people, young and old (Jimmy at 80 has been the most senior to participate), in small groups to cast a line and see what happens. So far they have threatened the mackerel and pollock of Gourock and Greenock and the trout and pike of Lochwinnoch, but plan going further afield in due course. (I suspect fishing stocks will recover rather than diminish through Preshal's activities!)

Although the attendees are keen they have their moments of inexperience, as when three of them cast lines at the same time and managed to get them intertwined. The three, of course, thought that they had got a bite, a huge catch, only to be disappointed when they started hauling each other in!



## PLANNED FUNDRAISING EVENTS IN 2010

### THE ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT

**Date:** Thursday 16 September 2010

**Venue:** Buchanan Castle Golf Club, Drymen

Are you a golfer? Preshal is inviting teams to compete on the beautiful Buchanan Castle course.

The shotgun event commences at 2pm, with soup and sandwiches from 12 noon. Dinner will be provided at the end of the match, and the prizes will be presented by the Duchess of Montrose. A tombola will be available and an auction will also feature in the day's activities.

**Cost:** £480 per team of 4. For further information contact Betty McGillivray on 0141 956 5527 or elizabeth04@btinternet.com



### THE ANNUAL PRESHAL CHARITY WALK

**Date:** No date has been confirmed as yet; please keep checking our website for further update

**Venue:** Forth and Clyde Canal and Falkirk Wheel

This is an attractive venue for all the family. For the walker there is a reasonably undemanding level, 12 mile walk along the canal bank. For those less energetic, or with younger children, there is an engineering triumph, the Falkirk Wheel, to visit. This provides an opportunity to travel by boat from the Forth and Clyde Canal up 90' to join the Union Canal, returning again via the Wheel to the Forth and Clyde Canal – a great experience for all ages! Why not come?



## PRESHAL PARTNERS – MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The Preshal Trust relies on the help of caring people like you to maintain and develop our work. Without this support we would not be able to continue to offer help and support to over 400 individuals each year. As with many charities ensuring that we have sufficient funds each year is a huge task. However, through our "Preshal Partners – Making a Difference" scheme you can help us put our finances on a surer footing by donating on a regular basis.

Would you consider becoming a Preshal Trust Partner? We are looking for 150 individuals or organisations to donate £10.00 or more per month through our standing order scheme in 2009.

**Preshal Partners will receive 2 newsletters per annum, a free DVD and an invite to the annual open day.**

If you are already donating by standing order but wish to increase your giving, please complete a new form – it will replace your existing one.

If you are unable to join "Preshal Partners – Making a Difference" then you may wish to consider making a one-off donation. We are very grateful for any donation – however large or small!

If you are donating, please complete the form overleaf. If you are paying "income tax" then please read the guidance provided and also complete "The Gift Aid" section so that The Preshal Trust can reclaim tax on your giving. This will make your donation go even further at no extra cost to you.



PLEASE CUT HERE

## STANDING ORDER

*This cancels any other instruction in favour of The Preshal Trust*

### Your Bank Account Details:

Bank Name \_\_\_\_\_

Bank Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Account Name \_\_\_\_\_

Account Number \_\_\_\_\_ Sort Code \_\_\_\_\_

Please pay to The Preshal Trust, Bank Account: 21943600  
Sort Code: 83-91-37; Adam Bank: 238 West George Street, Glasgow, G2 4QY.

The sum of £ \_\_\_\_\_ (per month) commencing on \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ (date)

And continue thereafter on the same day of the month until further notice.

Your Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

## DONATIONS

Please find enclosed the sum of £ \_\_\_\_\_ payable to The Preshal Trust

### Your Details:

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First name \_\_\_\_\_ Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Tel No \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**GIFT AID** I am a UK taxpayer and authorise The Preshal Trust to treat all standing orders or donations as Gift Aid Donations, from the date of this declaration.

Your signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Please return to: The Preshal Trust, PO Box 7344, 8 Aboukir Street, Glasgow, G51 4QX

Tick if you do not wish to be included on our mailing list



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