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Annie Donahue, Associate Professor in Library & Media Services travels to the UK

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Iona, of all the sacred places in Scotland, is an enduring symbol of Christianity. St Columba arrived on the island with twelve companions in AD 563 and founded a monastery that was to become the heart of the Scottish Church during its early years. One of the most important monasteries in early medieval Europe, it was a renowned center of learning and artistic excellence with extensive international contact (Official Souvenir Guide of the Abbey).

A second purpose for this summer's adventure was to explore the Celtic connections on the Isle of Iona in Scotland as I continue to develop an inquiry course tentatively entitled Celtic Crosses and Illuminated Manuscripts. In summer 2010, I vacationed in Ireland visiting Trinity College to see the Book of Kells, and then spent some time ambling throughout the northeastern countryside in pursuit of early Celtic Christian sites. The Isle of Iona’s connection to St. Columba and the Book of Kells made the site particularly exciting and relevant. I am grateful for the support from CIE and although I only had two full days on the island, I toured the Abbey and its environs, experiencing the peaceful contentedness of community that continues to permeate the island hundreds of years after the original monastic community was founded.