

# Four Days on IONA!

After breakfast on our first day, twenty of us hiked to the North Beach of the Island. Kinlay Francis, a 6'7" Viking descendant with a foot long red beard led the way. Our walk began in sunshine on a narrow Scottish Island road flanked by old stone walls, occasional sheep and small cottages with vibrant gardens. The bright green pastures surrounded everything, and the blue Sea surrounded that. The sunshine quickly gave way to a North wind that brought colder temps and rain. Just as sleet was acknowledged it turned to snow, and before we knew it, the weather cleared and a rainbow appeared! This magical cycle happened twice on our morning adventure, and the keen advice of wearing layers was verified. Beyond the final green pasture, the white sands of the North Beach displayed a clear aqua blue Caribbean like sea. But this was the frigid North Atlantic. Everyone was beyond excited to walk onto the beautiful sandy beach, but something else was calling me off to our left; what low tide had exposed — the sea worn cliff-rocks draped in kelp and tidal pools that were home to multi-colored stones. As Kinlay warned me to mind where I was as the tide comes in quickly — I knew a grand adventure awaited. But little did I know just how grand of an adventure it would quickly become.

Let's back up for a moment. The weekend before I headed out on my first pilgrimage I arrived late to a large circle of people and sat in my chair. I was asked the question others had answered. Share one thing you can say you are carrying from this weekend. Or something like that. Digging to honesty, my Soul said,

*"This entire weekend I kept feeling something I had never felt before — like I was walking around and crying on the inside — inner tears. Like tributaries of warm water flowing in my body and into my heart. And the first vessel to sail into this safe Harbor is me. It is something new, it is on a cellular level — micro and macro? This must be what JOY feels like."*

Then I caught up with what I said. "This must be what Joy feels like!" OMG yes. My Soul spoke up and for the first time showed me what JOY really is. This experience brought a knowing. JOY includes just about everything: Love, Grace, Warmth, Grief/Pain and Peace too! And Lordy — it was flowing through my veins! I remembered and just knew (which becomes a common daily thing), this is the Universe/Creation preparing my body to be receptive on my first Pilgrimage across the ocean to where my ancestors are from. It was a very very BIG deal, but it felt totally normal. Later I saw/felt/understood this for what it is in all of us, the Christ Waters flowing, the Christ Consciousness.

The other arrival that weekend was a thought that stuck in my head and was not going anywhere soon, "*What will you bring back in the Heart of your Hand*". So I wrote about bridging across the ocean to my ancestors, a bridging that my Dad would soon do at his passing from this world. I was intrigued by the "Heart of my Hand" I had never heard that idea or phrase before? And I knew I was bring back something in that "Heart of my Hand". So I turned my curiosity into poetry that inquired without answers.

On the mainland of Scotland the night before we traversed chartered buses and ferries across to the Isle of Iona, of course I had a dream message, really a voice arrive in the dark hours of morning. At this point most, if not all of my dreams for almost a year were not the usual elaborate stories — they were quick to the point simple messages from a Divine voice of other beings or my Higher Self. My message that night,

*"On the Island of Iona you will Root out 88."*

I knew when I woke "two things that were infinite" would be revealed, discovered, experienced... I have since run into a few people who received the same message and had similar numinous things transpire in life/past-life.

Back to that first IONA adventure. I was alone out of site navigating shore rocks and tidal pools, and something felt purposeful and right. I felt at home on a foreign cold North Atlantic Island I had never been too. The sites and smells lit my senses. I looked back and realized I had gone a long way, time had transpired — then remembering Kinlay's wise advice: "Mind where you are, the tide comes in quickly." There was one more tidal

pool to navigate. Ah, I could place my hand on this large 24ft long smooth dark stone coming out of the island and pivot myself over this last tidal pool...

As soon as I placed my hand on the large stone I went blind! As in for the first time in my life during waking moments my sight went black! My only sight left was a feeling kind, and it/I went into the large stone, which was larger than I thought, then into the whole island as if it was a being, and then into the Earth! Sounds harsh and dramatic, yet strangely it was a rather peaceful welcoming of sorts. I started coming back out, a layer at a time, until eventually my sight slowly came back. I can remember how absolutely wonderful my hand felt on that stone. And the only thing I knew to say was, "Hello!" which seemed so simple for such a big moment, but at least it was authentic. It was like a warm magnetism, my hand was not going anywhere! I eventually pulled out my cell phone and took a picture of my hand meeting with this Island stone. My legs could no longer hold the precarious position I was in, and I gave thanks as I finally pivoted over that tidal pool and stood on the edge of the ocean. I remember being grateful I was conscious enough to take in this moment, instead of quickly moving on and ignoring what I cannot explain. Something beautiful and very important, on a life scale just happened! Seemed like a being to being experience! Yes, me and a large stone, an Island and the Earth itself had a powerful energetic encounter, like a homecoming!

The Island Jeweler visited us and let us know that if we find any stones while on IONA, she would be glad to make a necklace or other jewelery with them. The only thing thicker than her red hair and Scottish wool sweater was her Scottish accent. She spoke so fast, all your focus still left you short on what exactly she said. But there was enough to get by. She was a long time resident of the Isle of IONA and I sensed a wisdom about her. So I got brave and vulnerable and told her about my highly unusual experience/encounter with the large Stone on the North shore. With great energy she explained...

*"These are the oldest rocks in the world. You were bringing connection to them and also your ancestors." (Wait, I just came from the oldest stones in the world — Appalachian Mountains.) "Same— same Robert! Oh, it is the Dragon Robert! Yes! You not only bridged ancestors, you bridged land! IONA is the head of the Dragon, it goes under, it humps up in your Appalachian Mountains, goes back under and the head is in Alaska. Your mountains are the oldest in the world, this island and these stones are the same oldest in the world. Billion+ years old, so old they have no fossils, because life did not exist yet. Yes, these lands were once connected!"*

I spent the afternoon in the warm sun room of the St. Columba Inn gazing across the bay to the old volcanic mountain on the Isle of Mull. Thoughts wandered as I wrote. Lordy, I am still sitting on the same rocks as back home, and I am looking at a much younger inactive volcano island only millions of years old. That volcano did not create this Isle of IONA, but it created all the land I am looking at and part of Scotland beyond it. Good grief, that volcano probably created some of the land my ancestors lived on — Yet as a descendant, I sitting am on a piece of my homelands rock that are more than a billion years older than my ancestors land! There is a paradox here somewhere! Normally you would look out from this sun-room at this 43 million year old volcano and everything it created such a long long time ago — and simply think about how old it is. But I was sitting with exactly the opposite perspective, and had traveled so far by plane, train, bus, and ferry to bridge ancestors and something ancient — but I was, in a sense, still at home?

On a day, which remained sunny with a Southern breeze, we adventured up Duni, the highest hilltop where Brigid's Well was. I had a injured toe that folks advised I place into the healing waters of the well. It was mind boggling to see a small 6x12ft pond just shy of the mountain top. Where did it flow from and how did it get here? At the waters edge was a dramatic steep drop down to the green pastures and the blue Atlantic Ocean. Although I got my toe into the healing waters, something told me that was not the purpose of this mountain top for me. Everyone left, and I wandered around the precipice. Then I saw it calling my name, just above Bridget's Well there was an indentation in the hilltop facing the Sun. My body fit perfectly with my legs hanging out. Cradled slightly vertical by the Earth, and warmed by the Sun — I could not help but fall asleep to the whipping island breezes and magnificent view. Like a bird might sometimes feel like sleeping in a nest at the top of the

tallest tree on a sunny breezy day. This was not just a Divine Sun kissed nap just above Brigid's Well on the precipice of IONA — it was a laying in the navel of the Earth and being held. And maybe the umbilical chord of my being was reconnected to the Earth.

I must back up again. I also had a dream voice the night before I flew across the ocean.

*“Lay down in the Nunary ruins, beside the flower at night.”*

Well, just about everyone that had been to IONA had advised me to spend time at the Nunary ruins. The day we made it to the island I had a keen eye as we lugged our suitcase up the hillside past the old Nunary, to the St Columba Inn. To my surprise there were no flowers in the beautiful stone ruins of the nunnery. Only rectangular plots of deep green grass. Then I saw it, a lone last clump with two daffodil blooms in middle of one of the grassy squares of the stone ruins!!

It was going to happen. Yes, I was going to purposely lay down near graves by some flowers in the middle of the night, because a voice told me too. Now, none of the wise women told me to do this late at night, it was my dream voice which advised that. So I set my alarm, and at midnight I rose with purpose. Wearing my insulating layers, I entered the cold night alone. As I walked down the tiny road guarded by low stone walls and lit by a half moon, the occasional sound of geese broke the silence. Clouds wisped by — and I was reminded how cold it was, just above freezing. But I was prepared, my mind was focused and clear, and my body was calm and had layers to protect it. As I wandered down toward the Nunary ruins, there was no sign of life — it was just me and the Island. Reaching my destination I contemplated, “Am I absolutely sure of the best/right spot to lay down here on the Earth? I cannot believe I am following a voice. Finally reaching the lone Daffodils and laying down, I felt reassured.

I snuggled up as close as I could to those daffodils without crushing them. I immediately started seeing all these wiggles of light that I wrote off as my eyes adjusting, yet at the same time, allowing the possibility that this was the Spirits of the place dancing in the night like they always do. (I now realize that swirling light was realms merging, was a portal) Surrounded by a few graves, I settled my gaze on the half Moon, as the clouds wisped by at good speed. At some point I became confused at sources of light. (to be clear I was not under any influence of drugs or alcohol) There was another source of light. The Moon was over here on the right, but other large sources of light were definitely dominating the sky to the left and slightly behind me! I just accepted it and continued to wait for something big to happen...

Then bam! As if plugged into an electrical outlet, my head was pinned to the ground as this magnetism cycled from the sky somewhere above me and through to the Earth and back! I felt like I was wearing an invisible electro-magnetic helmet, my temples were tingling with this charge of energy, and I could feel the coming and going cycling through and around my head! There was a weight to this encounter! And it went on and on and on, for many many minutes. It felt like maybe 15 or 20 minutes? It was not something you could ignore. There is no ignoring your senses when you get slapped with an energetic 2x4 that magnetically pins you to the ground. At some point I realized it had faded and ended. Two hours had passed and although I had not had a “spirit” visit me or something like that, I recognized I was getting cold and it was time to go to bed. Like many things and experiences — it simply took a good long while for things to unfold.

At breakfast the next morning I sat across from Kinlay who exclaimed reading an App on his phone, “Sorry no one was up for the show last night. At half past midnight the Aurora Borealis put on a show!” His words startled me awake. “Kinlay, I think I saw the Aurora Borealis last night! I was up in the middle of the night at the Nunary!” As Kinlay looked at me in shock, I recognized the others at the table were surprised that I basically laid in a graveyard in the middle of the night by myself. Kinlay explained, “Approximately a week after the Solar flare we had an Aurora Borealis event, and this App tracks it for us.” He asked if I took a picture. No, because I did not know what I was looking at. But I did get a picture of the Moon. We looked at the picture I took, and sure enough to the left of the moon was a small hint of the lights of the Aurora Borealis!

It was not until months later, that I realized I had been at the center of a highly charged infinity between the Sun and the Earth. Over a year later I find myself resonating with so many teachers paying attention to Solar Flares and considering them to be shifting consciousness. I knew that I had begun changing on a cellular level before going to IONA, so now I am not surprised that changes have continued in my body. A natural receptivity of my vessel that I did not make happen — I just allowed. I thought about my friend, scientist Paul Mills who recently wrote a book on the “Spiritual lives of Scientist”. I could see that in some way my spiritual experience here was measurable. Having a near death experience years ago, I know that we measure (judge) too much here as humans, and we project onto the world we come from. Also that LOVE is basically the only thing that we can take with us between worlds — that connecting LOVE at the center of the infinity symbol. LOVE is what makes things sustainable. Well, I had just had an experience of being the center of the Infinity, cycling Light energy between the Earth and the Sun that was hugely felt! There was information there, energy there, and it was all Love. I have had other experiences of being charge by creation since this one, and thankfully they were not being struck by lightning.

So, of course, the third day I had another LIFE gift from the Isle. It was quite a small group I signed up for walking the short distance to Martyrs Bay where Kinlay and Phillip led a talk. This small beach was just down from the tiny IONA Habor, but was the original landing beach for the Island. I was already starting to feel the on coming symptoms of full-on Covid19. But you only live once (or so I thought) and the sun warmed us. After the talk Kinlay invited everyone to put their toes into the ocean, and I think I was the only taker. There was no question, I had come all this way! I was absolutely walking into that Cold Atlantic Ocean — and I rolled my pants up above my knees. It was so clear and so cold, yet it felt good to be adventuring again, like it did at home walking the clear salty marsh waters of the Carolinas or the cool mountain creeks. Then I saw it... A green stone! The Scottish red-headed Jeweler of the Island had shared that if we go way down to the South End at Columba Bay — we may find a Green Iona Stone there. It was created from the green veins of the famous white IONA Marble that was quarried there on the South end a long time ago. The Abby had a gorgeous oversized IONA Marble alter. Yes, I found a Green IONA Stone and she was a beauty! And yet I found it on the East side of the Island, at Martyrs Bay?

On the way up the hill to St Columba Inn, I was feeling rough and stopped by the IONA Historical Society. A little stone building where the Island Jeweler “Wendy” worked part time. I came in out of the cold and with the energy I had left, handed her the stone hiding my excitement, except for a small twinkle. “Ah you found an Iona Stone!” Then her eyes got focused and fixed on the stone and she turned her gaze on me. Examining me up and down, she then asked, “Where did you find this stone?” Just down the hill at Martyrs Bay in the water”, I replied. Well to my surprise, her eyes could open further. “This stone found you! And it is not a Green Iona Stone.” What? “It is an Green Iona Infinity Stone!” And to her surprise, I laughed remembering my dream voice about retrieving infinity from IONA! I told her about the voice the night before coming over to IONA. And she repeated, “This stone found you! Look here closely, see the clear crystal quartz coming through and peaking out in several places! There is a crystal inside this stone, and that makes it a Green Iona Infinity Stone.” Green Iona Stones are only found on the South end near Columba Bay. Once in a Blue Moon someone finds a Green IONA Infinity Stone.

Flash forward from April to this Summer, as I was walking around Kanuga Lake, it hit me... Another thought/ voice I could not get rid of, that was not going anywhere until something was satisfied, remembered or reconnected. Which has been happening a lot lately. *“I was drawn to the Isle of IONA, to Martyrs Bay, and into the sea on that day. The stone called me when I was ready, I take it back with me as life unfolds, and before life ends I go back to the Isle of IONA and throw the stone, returning it back to its shores — Again.”*

Then flash forward to this Fall. A new client Terra, who is an Art Therapist & Energy Arts Healer has a session with me so I can better understand her work before I design her logo and website. (FYI, all my Logo design work has entered this very dialed in Intuitive aligned with Nature/Creation, where Symbols reflected in nature or other are recognized as inspiration at just the right time). My dial as a co-creator — at some point got turned way up. In our session we ended up talking about IONA, and she asked me about my Green Stone Necklace

that she noticed around my neck. I told her the story, but being protective I finished by saying, "Maybe it has something to do with ancestors".

Terra interrupted me, "Can I offer something Robert?" Absolutely! "You have been going to IONA for a long time, as in many many many lifetimes. The stone calls you when you are ready. You find each other, and you bring it back with you as your life potential unfolds. Then you bring it back to IONA and throw it back into the ocean from the shores you know. Ahh, in fact, you lived there, you were old Celtic, a Druid keeper of the knowledge. This has been happening for a long long time." Wow! Was nice to get affirmation of a secret thought I had carried with me.

Upon arrival home I was greeted by a intriguing message from a friend. "Robert do you remember meeting the healer named 'Forrest' about a year ago with others? You do not realize it, but he has been working with you ever since. Part of your bridging, is you bridging healing for this land and land's ancestors. We must meet up soon on a mountain top by Dupont Forest. A week later I found myself on a mountain top getting reacquainted with Forrest. As he read my energy and suggested we walk out on the stone face of the mountain. "Walk barefoot Robert until you come to a spot that calls to you, and just be there. I walked around, and rather quickly in a few steps I came to such a spot. As soon as I stopped, a vision, clear as day took over! I was in the flickering flames of a large fire looking through them and down at several Native American's encircling me. But there was one that saw me, and our eyes were locked — we connected! It was very clear I was having a "real-time" vision of her and she was having a "real-time" vision of me — in the same moment — yet many 100s or 1,000+ years apart! No time — it was live! We simply both knew we were looking at each other — I felt her and she felt me. Then my legs got tired and I had to move around. When I stopped, the same exact vision and Native American woman came back. Later I understood they were being given a vision in the fire of the white man that would be coming. But she wanted to go beyond that, and alone was also having a vision of me, a descendant that would bring peace & love — honoring them and this land. She was in her power — conscious enough to see beyond the vision of destruction they were witnessing in the flames. She was the one calling me, and I her — as my ancestors had called me to IONA Scotland. A healer and close friend I recently shared this with, declared... "Robert are you not getting that you are the Native American woman — that is you in a past life. You calling you!" As I vibrated and resonated, I could feel that truth, oh that is me! Realizing she was in her power enough to see her Soul in another LifeTime beyond the initial vision of future destruction — a bridging that gave her peace and healing. "I am you seeing me" just jumped across centuries in a moment of no-time.

Needless to say, it was actually more than an experience of four days or one lifetime. And I am grateful that with these IONA moments I shared, I was receptive and conscious enough to receive the gifts given, with no agenda and a receptive heart. Embracing, unfolding, expanding — a turning towards myself, a returning home. With great Gratitude & Love, one day I shall return to the magical Isle of IONA, stand on the shore removing my necklace, and throw my stone across thresholds.

I am forever a fan of Pilgrimages and IONA.

— Robert "Living Tree Bridge" Haden

**Heart of my Hand**, – Robert Haden '22  
*With courage & vulnerability of being receptive,  
the outdoors came in & the indoors came out.  
Tributaries of warm Inner tears flowed,  
birthing a safe harbor of Joy.*

*A Creature of Creation discovering infiniti,  
anchored to the Earth & tethered to the Stars,  
dying to know, what the ancestors knew...  
What he held in the Heart of his hands?*