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SCRIPTURE UNION  
Ireland

NEWS FROM SCRIPTURE UNION IRELAND

# Inspire

"YOUR WORD IS A LAMP TO MY FEET"  
PSALM 119:105

*Lasting  
Memories*

with Mum Karen Shaw

“  
**the fun way**  
to learn about God”

with

**youthalpha.**  
IRELAND

**ADVENTURE**  
for Schools

at Ovoca Manor Retreat & Adventure Centre

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Welcome!

**W**orking with the churches, parishes and schools, we create opportunities for children, young people and their families to discover and follow Jesus, grow as leaders and influence our world.

We are delighted to bring to you Scripture Union's new magazine, Inspire. You will find it packed full of stories of the wonderful work God is doing in the lives of so many young people and families. We pray that you will be encouraged as we have been and so get involved in any way you can. Please continue to pray for God to do even greater things through the ministry of Scripture Union. It is with a great sense of expectation that we look forward to all that God has in store!

*"Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son."*  
John 14:12-13

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We would also be very grateful if you felt able to distribute copies of this magazine amongst your congregation, friends and family - for additional copies please also email [info@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:info@scriptureunion.ie)

# DEEP WATER:

LUKE 5:1-11

## MESSAGE FROM GENERAL DIRECTOR

**In Luke Chapter 5 we read the passage of the ‘Calling of the First Disciples’ by Jesus. This has become a very central passage of Scripture for us over the past year.**

We have spent time reflecting and praying about the many opportunities and doors the Lord has opened for us and we feel we are being directed to take some new and courageous steps into ‘deeper water’ as we seek to continuously tell ‘the Great Story of Jesus’ to more and more children and young people.

There is a very interesting progression in these verses as Jesus calls these ordinary fishermen to become his followers. The disciples are busy doing the routine or maintenance task as fishermen of washing their nets (v3). At the request of Jesus they put their boats out a little from the shore, still in familiar and comfortable territory (v4). But then something more radical happens, Jesus tells them to ‘put out into the deep’. They suddenly move from the routine, the familiar

to the totally unfamiliar and uncharted water that is deep and dangerous! Simon’s response is very understandable. However, despite an initial protest he submits to the authority of Jesus and says, ‘If you say so, I will let down the nets!’ The results were

“**courageous steps into the ‘deeper water’**”

beyond their imagining, nets breaking, calling for assistance and boats almost sinking with the size of this catch of fish from those deep waters! Jesus then turns the whole experience into an object lesson in discipleship and communicates a new reality, a mission reality. No longer will they catch fish but men and in abundance!

Over the past year we have asking the question, ‘Where is this ‘deep water’ Jesus is calling us in Scripture Union to move into?’ Also, if Jesus calls us into new unfamiliar and uncharted territory we must heed His call as the first disciples did on that large freshwater lake in Galilee.

About twenty years ago at a major gathering of Scripture Union movements in Deb Bron

Holland, the then Bible Ministry Coordinator, Danilo Gay in a prophetic statement challenged the worldwide movements to 'break out of our comfortable circles' and said: 'We are often so much inside the circle of our own sub-culture that we have become ignorant of our own culture, the one around us', and, 'As a Bible based movement we are called to practice what we preach; could our study of Scripture lead us to new kinds of involvement?'

Quite amazingly, God has been giving us more and more opportunities for 'new kinds of involvement' enabling us to reach out to the culture around us. We have seen a growing number of Authentic Youth retreats in schools of a broad patronage as well

“ God has been giving us more and more opportunities for 'new kinds of involvement' enabling us to reach out to the culture around us ”

as an amazing response to our new mid-week Adventure Retreats for schools at Ovoca Manor, including schools from the Jesuit and Loreto networks; Youth Alpha has developed in schools and parishes with the support and indeed involvement of local clergy and a major development has been the collaboration with both the Catholic Diocesan Office for Evangelisation and Ecumenism and Church of Ireland Youth Department through the It's Your Move programme which will be piloted in over 10 parishes in 2013 and potentially the entire Diocese of Dublin.

In this Spring Newsletter you will read lots more of how God is calling us into 'deep water' to share His Good News and how more and more young people are experiencing a life transforming encounter with the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

I so greatly value, appreciate and welcome all your support and partnership in this ministry.

*Jim Donnan*

General Director



## UPDATE: HOLIDAY CAMPS AND CLUBS

**S**cripture Union Ireland is privileged to provide a unique holiday experience for thousands of children, young people and families each year. Every Scripture Union camp and club has the same aim of sharing the good news of Jesus in the relaxed atmosphere of a fun activity holiday.

They are all led by volunteers who are committed Christians of all denominations and have a passion for sharing their faith. Together, we work hard at helping campers to discover a personal God through engagement with the Scriptures, a God who deeply loves them and wants to be part of every aspect of their lives.

This year, Scripture Union has hosted camps and clubs in Cork, Clare, Wicklow,

Cavan, Monaghan and Donegal. Ovoca Manor, Scripture Union's Retreat and Adventure Centre, has hosted over 30 schools for weekend Adventure Clubs as well as Parenting Weekends, Family Weeks, a Canvas Camp and Easter and Summer camps for children and teenagers. Further afield, July saw a group of 13-17 year olds take to the water for the 2nd Summer Swell Surf Camp in Lahinch, Co Clare.

“ helping campers  
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As well as our residential camps, hundreds of children and teenagers were welcomed to week-long non-residential cross-community clubs in Monaghan, Cavan and Donegal. The theme of these Summer clubs was the Olympics, with the material named On Your Marks! The talks were based on the Gospel of Mark and the young people discovered and began to experience what it is like to be



a member of the team that has Jesus as the leader. These clubs welcomed anywhere from fifty to three hundred participants.

2012 was the 116th birthday of Scripture Union's two-week CSSM (Children's Special Service Mission) Summer mission in Greystones. The mission goes back to the very origin of the Scripture Union movement when, in 1867, founder Josiah Spears went on holiday to Llandudno in North Wales and spontaneously held a children's meeting on the beach. He drew the text 'God is Love' in the sand, invited children to decorate it and then told them a Bible story. From this small beginning the Scripture Union movement has spread to over 130 countries worldwide. Every year since 1896 Scripture Union volunteers in Ireland have faithfully followed in his footsteps to share the good news of Jesus with children, young people and their families on Greystones beach. Welcoming both locals and holiday-makers alike, CSSM provides two weeks of fun and action-packed activities including games, songs, stories and events for friends and families.

It is our prayer that all our holidays, clubs and missions should be life-changing experiences and we are delighted to share with you some stories from our campers and volunteers.

“ It is our prayer that all our holidays, clubs and missions should be life-changing experiences ”



# INTERVIEW: COMMUNITY IN CAMPS



GARETH HUGHES

**I**n October we caught up with Gareth Hughes who has attended many Scripture Union camps at Ovoca Manor

since first coming on a weekend Adventure Club with his school. He shared some of his experiences with us:

**Q: Tell us a bit about yourself...**

My name's Gareth, I'm 16, I live in Avoca and I go to East Glendalough and I'm in Transition Year, 4th year.

**Q: Were you involved with church at all before coming on SU camps at Ovoca Manor?**

I would go to church at Christmas, just once a year.

**Q: How did you come to be involved in camps?**

I started coming on Adventure Club weekends through my national school – Damien, the Adventure Club leader would come into school and invite us. And then my Mum looked into it and she saw that there were more camps happening at Ovoca Manor. So I started going on 10-12's, 13-15's and RAW. I did the Canvas Camp too – that was really good!

“ I started realising that everyone was here because of God and I said to mum, ‘I think I should start going to church’ ”





**Q: Tell us about your experience on camps...**

Well, the first time I came with school it was all about the fun and I didn't really take in all the religious side of things until I started going to the other camps. Then I started realising that everyone was here because of God and I said to Mum, 'I think I should start going to church'. It was the talks and the songs, I remember. I think it was on the 13-

“ It feels so homely, you just feel so welcome, part of a community. I've made loads of good friends on camps. ”

15's camp that I decided 'I'm going to start reading the Bible, start praying and going to church'. So every Sunday my Mum brought me to church but by the end of the year, I'd have stopped going. But coming back to Ovoca Manor every Summer was like a push to keep me going back again.

About a year ago I started going to a local church and I've been going ever since. When you're at Ovoca Manor, you know you should be going to church and you want to go. It feels so homely, you just feel so welcome, part of a community. I've made loads of good friends on camps.

**Q: What have been the favourite activities you have done on camp?**

The senior assault course and the rope swing on the junior assault course. Especially when it rains and there's water underneath to fall in to!

# VOLUNTEERING - BE A PART OF IT!

**Scripture Union's camps programme relies entirely on the 100's of dedicated volunteer leaders.**

There are many aspects to running a camp from planning and administration, catering, leading worship, running activities through to teaching and leading small group sessions. As such, there is no set profile for a volunteer leader and we welcome all from students and young adults through to parents and grandparents, all united by a desire to serve and share their faith. Despite the huge amount of work that is undoubtedly involved, many leaders return year after year

having discovered the enormous blessing of seeing God at work in the lives of children, young people and families and of the friendships made.

As well as leaders of individual camps, Scripture Union runs a Summer Internship programme that gives a small group of young people the opportunity to serve across a variety of camps and non-residential Summer clubs whilst focusing on developing their individual gifts and abilities. This year, we were delighted to welcome 4 interns and here are just some of their reflections:

**Will**



"My favourite moments mostly involved talking to the kids. They would ask advice, have questions about the Bible or even just need someone to talk to. Also a huge part of it is bonding with the different teams at each

of the activities. There is no way to describe all of the banter between the team members."

**Will Johnson, aged 17**

**Rachel**



"I'd say the highlight for me was getting to join new teams and meet new people. In joining new teams I got to try so many new things and get involved in different ways. You learn so much about yourself, how to work with other people, how to work with children and about your relationship with God."

**Rachel Mullen, aged 19**



**Alex**



“The past two months have been the experience of a lifetime. I got opportunities to lead worship, give talks and learn how to work with children. It was great getting to use different gifts and abilities God

has given me. It was also an amazing time to grow in my understanding and relationship with God. We had the opportunity to work with lots of different teams, where I learned that we can all be different people but when we're brought together for one common purpose such as God, we can all gel and work well together. The internship was such a positive experience and I would recommend it to anyone who wants to grow in relationship with God, learn about themselves and make new friends.”

**Alex Jocher**, aged 17



**Alice**

“I found it a really amazing and challenging experience which made me go out of my comfort zone. I was really worried about doing things such as talks but I realised I was able to do things I didn't think I would be able to do. Some of my highlights include getting to meet and work with so many amazing people and getting to teach children about God and seeing their faith grow even in such a short space of time. It was such an amazing experience and I would highly recommend it.”

**Alice Heamden**, aged 19



Karen and Cormac with (left to right) Robert, Connor, Daniel and Lauren *December 2009*

**I**n September we had the chance to catch up with Karen Shaw, wife to Cormac and mother to Michael, Connor, Lauren, Robert and Daniel and a regular guest and volunteer on Scripture Union's parenting weekends at Ovoca Manor. She told us something of what the parenting camps have meant to her and her family:

"I first heard of Ovoca Manor when a friend of mine, Sheryl McElwee, was cooking for the 2001 Mother and Daughter parenting weekend and she asked me to help. I knew it would be good fun because she is a great cook with a huge heart for sharing Jesus with others. I was really moved that the organisers would give up their time to volunteer all weekend to give parents a chance to connect with their children in a special way.

My daughter Lauren and I came to the Mother and Daughter weekend two years in a row, when she was 11 and 12 years old.

We both have great memories from those weekends. I remember one of the leaders saying that the idea was to 'catch them' before they got to that stage when they don't want to talk anymore. It may have helped with Lauren. We never experienced 'the wall going up'. Communication stayed open throughout her teen years. It's not that we never had differences, but we were able to keep the lines of communication open. We could always talk and work through the differences. I think it helped that we experienced time alone together, to listen to each other, and came to value such times. We still try to set time aside every now and then to spend alone together.

One of the activities on our Mother and Daughter weekend was to separate into groups, mums in one and daughters in another. We were asked to write on a piece of paper four things that we love about the other. The lists were stuck to the wall, and we had to try to find our own daughter's list, and they had to find their own mum's. Lauren's list has become one of my most

valuable possessions. One thing that she wrote was, 'My mother will try anything.' Until that weekend that was just not the truth about me. I tended to avoid discomfort as much as possible. But, that weekend I decided to re-invent myself and have a go at everything (as I'd recently turned 40, and felt it was time for a change!) I was terrified of heights, but decided to do the zip-line! I

“ At the age of 12  
Rob died unexpectedly.  
I have such peace  
knowing that I will  
be with him again, in  
God's Kingdom. ”

have done it a few times since and it has become easier. I was delighted that my daughter witnessed the change.

Lauren wrote another thing about me that has influenced the parenting of all my children since. She wrote, 'My mother always tells me the truth.' To know that my child valued my telling her the truth, and had confidence (whether well-placed or not!) that I always did tell her the truth was, and continues to be, a real challenge to me. If I lie about other things, then how can my children know for certain that I am speaking the truth when I tell them what Jesus has done in my life?

Our third child, Robert was 11 when I tried to sign us up for the Mother and Son weekend. The weekend had booked up quickly and we didn't get a place. We were very disappointed! On the Friday morning of the weekend away I was at my Bible study. My



**Karen and Daniel** Sept 2012, *Mother & Son Weekend*

friend Marianne Johnson had been planning to go with her son, but at the last minute he decided to go to a rugby match instead. Marianne asked if we could be ready to go in their place, if there wasn't a waiting list. She phoned the organiser after our Bible study. At 5.00 pm we got the go-ahead. We were both delighted! We grabbed a bag, hopped in the car and headed down to Wicklow. We had a brilliant, unexpected time away together.

It happened to be the weekend just before Rob's birthday. I really felt that our being there was a gift from God. Lisa Boyd was there with her son Stephen. She asked if Rob and I would like to join her, and a few others, to go off fishing. Rob's face lit up when she asked so I said, 'Sure, Rob, whatever you want to do.' Rob's response surprised me. He said, 'But Mom, you promised we could go for a hike together.' I was shocked and flattered that he would choose a hike with his mother over fishing with the lads. As we walked, I remember clearly that he said, 'You know Mom, this is the best birthday present ever'. I always wondered if he was just buttering me up, or if he meant it. I suppose he must have enjoyed it because after that he started hill-walking with me. I had been hill-walking for some time, but he never

*continued* →

## PARENTING CAMPS 2012



“ As we walked, I remember clearly that he said, ‘You know Mom, this is the best birthday present ever’ ”

showed any interest before. We had many good hill-walking sessions which afforded great opportunities for conversation. We covered a lot of ground, physically and conversationally, on those walks.

Nearly four years ago, at the age of twelve-and-a-half, Rob died unexpectedly. I have such peace knowing that I will be with him again, in God’s Kingdom. I know where he stood spiritually because he told me during those long walks. We talked about his dreams, his worries, his hopes and his faith. Rob had a very clear picture of who he was in God’s eyes and of what his destiny was. He knew God loved him; he knew his parents loved him; he knew that things can

be rocky at times... and he also knew that God can bring people back to Himself.

I have no doubt that the Mother and Son weekend away had been specially arranged for us as a special gift from the Lord. It provided some of my best memories of Rob and I’ll never forget it.

Since my first stint helping to cook for a Mother and Daughter weekend eleven years ago, I have cooked on one Mother and Son weekend, and three more Mother and Daughter weekends. My daughter and her friend, Alison, have helped with two of the Mother and Daughter weekends that I was cooking for. I am thrilled to be able to be a part of a team that makes it possible for others to have this special time with their kids. Serving others, as I have been served,

“ It provided some of my best memories of Rob and I’ll never forget it. ”

## CAMPS TEAM CHANGES

In September, Rachel Browne, Scripture Union's Camps and Missions Executive Manager, embarked with her husband Noel on a one year career break to serve the Lord overseas. Rachel said, "We are so excited to have been called on this great adventure where I will be teaching 3 Irish children and Noel will be doing youth work (which is what he does here with the Irish Youth Justice Service)."

Rachel's role has been divided into two part-time positions whilst she is away and we are delighted to welcome Rebecca (Becca) Carroll and Lucy McIlhenny as Rachel's replacements. Becca is herself a veteran leader of Scripture Union camps and is looking forward to recruiting, training and supporting Camp leaders and volunteers. Lucy moved to Ireland with her husband in May to join the work at Ovoca Manor. While continuing to spend some time instructing activities and supporting the work at the Manor, Lucy has taken on the role of promotions and church representative coordinator for SU camps and missions. Lucy will be focusing on building links with churches in Ireland and would be delighted to visit you to let you and your church know more about the work of Scripture Union and how we can support you.

**If your church is interested in finding out more, please contact Lucy on:**  
[lucy.mcilhenny@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:lucy.mcilhenny@scriptureunion.ie)

**For information on volunteering please contact Becca on:**  
[rebecca.carroll@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:rebecca.carroll@scriptureunion.ie)



is a great way of sharing God's love and graciousness.

I just think it's so important for our children to have time set aside just for them. I recommend these weekends to all parents, wherever they may be coming from spiritually. They won't regret it!"

“ **Serving others, as I have been served, is a great way of sharing God's love and graciousness.** ”

Scripture Union runs 4 Parenting Weekends through the year for children aged 9-13 years old and their parents: Father and Son, Father and Daughter, Mother and Son, Mother and Daughter.

For more information and to book visit [www.scriptureunion.ie](http://www.scriptureunion.ie)



**O**voca Manor is Scripture Union's Retreat and Adventure Centre located just outside Avoca in Co Wicklow.

As well as providing the venue for a wide range of Scripture Union holiday camps for children, young people and families, both the Manor House and Densmore Lodge are available to hire for residential use with groups able to enjoy the stunning grounds and facilities as well as take advantage of the range of on-site and off-site activities available. More recently, with the appointment of Steve McIlhenny as Activities Programme Manager, we have been able to focus on expanding our midweek work with schools. Nathan Norris, the Manager of Ovoca Manor, tells us more of what's been going on ....

**DEVELOPMENTS CONTINUE**

The exciting developments continue at Ovoca Manor with more facilities and activities now available. We are so grateful to God for the provision of a donation to help fund a new climbing wall and high ropes course. Not only can you climb the 10m high wall and abseil back down it, you can also enjoy a leap from a deliberately wobbly pole to catch a trapeze bar. No need to worry if you miss, you'll be attached to a rope! The new course also allows us to take our crate stacking activity to a new level, with now 4 people climbing and stacking crates at the

“ Not only can you climb the 10m high wall and abseil back down it, you can also enjoy a leap from a deliberately wobbly pole to catch a trapeze bar. ”



Densmore Flat







same time. All this plus a 'high all aboard' and a Jacob's ladder - you'll have to book in to find out what they are all about!

After all the excitement and exertion on the climbing wall you'll need a place to chill out and relax – our new coffee bar should do the trick. Located in the old tuck shop this self-service coffee



bar is the perfect place to relax chat and share stories and experiences of your day at the Manor. This room also connects to the dining room as well as to the adjoining lounge through a new door and has proved itself to be a real asset to groups using the Manor House.

If you're looking for a quieter and more solitary kind of retreat you'll be pleased to hear that the flat in Densmore Lodge has been refurbished with precisely this in mind. Available midweek during school term time it is the perfect place to get away from it all, enjoy the stunning surroundings and the many walks from the door. Whilst fully equipped for up to 6 people, it is priced



per person per night to make sure it is accessible to those looking for a place to get away on their own.

We have also introduced free Wifi access to both Densmore Lodge and the Manor House. Groups can now enjoy free internet access during their stay enabling guests to keep in touch as well as access online resources for talks and presentations.





# ADVENTURE FOR SCHOOLS

**We are extremely excited about the growth and development of our midweek work with schools.**

In October 2011 the team at Ovoca Manor successfully piloted a new adventure retreat programme with Gonzaga College. The retreat programme included a mix of interactive talks, reflective exercises and faith-based outdoor activities linked to relevant Scripture exploration. As our new Activities and Programme Manager, Steve, says, “Outdoor activities are a fantastic tool which can be used in different ways to guide and lead young people to learn more about

“ Outdoor activities are a fantastic tool which can be used in different ways to guide and lead young people to learn more about themselves, others and God. ”

themselves, others and God. The challenges and experiences open up conversations and discussions which allow the young people to explore relevant and important questions in a safe and unthreatening environment.” Both he and his wife Lucy have a wealth of experience in Christian residential work and outdoor activity instruction and have a passion for sharing God’s love with young people. Steve has been working closely with Scripture Union’s “Authentic Youth” team to develop the Adventure Retreat programme and by the end of the year will have welcomed nearly 500 Adventure Retreat participants to the Manor.

As well as our growing Adventure Retreats programme, we continue to specialise in providing team-building days or simply a few hours of fun-packed adventure in a healthy and supportive environment.

For further information about Adventure Retreat days or overnight stays, team-building days or school tours, visit our website on [www.ovocamanor.ie](http://www.ovocamanor.ie) or contact the Ovoca Manor office on 0402 35369 or email [ovocamanor@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:ovocamanor@scriptureunion.ie)



**REFLECTIONS OF ADVENTURE  
RETREAT PARTICIPANTS:**

*"God is always there for you but you still  
have to make the leap of faith"*

*"Not all Christians are angry!"*

*"God will always be there for me"*





## BILLY'S DREAM COMES TRUE!

We are delighted to officially welcome Billy Redmond to the team. Billy was with us as part of the TUS scheme from September 2011 to August 2012. His dedication and passion for grounds work are evident to all who visit us and we are thrilled to now be employing Billy on a part-time basis. Commenting on his new role, Billy said, "I have to say, it's brilliant. It was a dream come true. It's so good to see the place really coming into shape." TUS representative Dermot Byrne has described Billy's appointment as a testament to both the success of the scheme and the benefits to both the individuals and organisations involved. He added, "We wish Billy well for the future and look forward to a continuing successful relationship with all at Ovoca Manor".



## WELCOME TO GERARD AND DEIRDRE!

At the start of November we welcomed Gerard Carolan to the team as the new Facilities Manager at Ovoca Manor. Ger currently lives in Greystones with his wife Deirdre and daughter Céileadh. His background is as an electrician and he has lots of experience in the building trade having run his own company. Both Ger and Deirdre are excited about contributing to the ministry of the Manor. Please pray for them as they make their move to Avoca.

## NEW BEGINNINGS

At the end of August, after more than 8 years with Scripture Union, we said goodbye to Damien and Jeannine Parle and family as they left to take up a new role with YWAM in Rostrevor. A farewell BBQ held at Ovoca Manor attended by many friends, colleagues, volunteers and campers from the recent RAW camp led by Damien and Jeannine. Jim Donnan, General Director of SU paid tribute to Damien's passion for



both sharing the good news of Jesus with young people and living out his faith by helping the local community. Combining these passions, Damien and Jeannine set up Scripture Union's RAW camp for older teenagers. RAW stands for Real Authentic Warriors and the camp's vision is to encourage young people to live out their faith with courage and integrity. As well as teaching, worship and a whole host of crazy activities, campers get involved with work in the local community. Over the years, they have been found wading for rubbish along the banks of the river, getting their hands dirty planting flowerbeds along the public footpaths, and arming themselves with all sorts of tools to clear up the gardens for local people. Here are just some of the comments that campers have made:

"Everything about RAW is just awesome and makes you want to come back"

"The minute I turned 16 I wanted to be at RAW. Three words I would use to describe RAW are energetic, powerful and inspiring"

We thank Damien and Jeannine for their vision in bringing RAW to this point and praise God for the impact it has had on the faith and lives of so many young people



“ Three words I would use to describe RAW are energetic, powerful & inspiring ”

so far. We ask you to join us in praying for them as they settle into their new lives and seek to reach out to the youth of Rostrevor. RAW will be run by new leaders Susie Keane and Paul Keegan together with many of the existing team of dedicated leaders.

**Want to keep in touch with everything that's going on at Ovoca Manor?**

**Visit our Facebook page or visit [www.ovocamanor.ie](http://www.ovocamanor.ie)**



# THE ALL NEW SU INTERNSHIP YEAR



**I**n September 2012 we were delighted to launch the new Scripture Union Internship Year.

The programme has been developed to include a broad spectrum of experience across different Scripture Union ministries as well as a tailored leadership programme. Over the 9 month period, interns will now not only gain experience of running retreats in schools with the Authentic Youth team, they will also live in community at Ovoca Manor Retreat and Adventure Centre. At Ovoca Manor they will assist with outdoor activity provision and the growing programme of activity based retreats as well as be involved with the day-to-day running of the centre. Scripture Union have partnered with Innovista, the Christian charity dedicated to coaching, mentoring and developing young Christian leaders, in order to provide the interns with a tailored leadership programme and on-going mentoring.

This September, we were delighted to welcome Rob Lee, Sabrina Harty and Valerie Julius as our new Scripture Union interns and here they share with us a bit about themselves and their experiences so far:

## VALERIE

***Tell me a bit about yourself and how you came to be here?***

My name is Valerie, I'm 17. I've just finished school. I love God and people and animal print and basket ball. When I didn't get into the college course I wanted to do, I felt God put it on my heart to do youth work for the year. After I looked into the SU Internship Year I felt it would be a good fit and I'm really glad to be here. I really just felt God's hand over me in getting a place in the programme.

***What are you looking forward to most?***

I'm really looking forward to getting stuck into all the retreats. I'm looking forward to sharing with them how real God is for me and that they can know He does exist and He does love them.

***What have you done so far?***

So far I have done rock climbing for the first time. I've done a lot of practical stuff, which was fun! I have done one school retreat which was quite nerve-racking and I'm just looking forward to the rest of them.



Sabrina, Rob & Valerie  
September 2012

### ***How can people best be praying for you?***

I think people can best pray for me in doing the outdoor work... It's not something that I'm used to... And just that God shows me the person that he wants me to be this year and that I can develop into that person over the year.

“ I'm looking forward to sharing with them how real God is for me and that they can know He does exist and He does love them. ”

## SABRINA

### ***Tell me a bit about yourself and how you came to be here?***

I'm Brina, I'm 20 and I'm from Kilkenny. I grew up going to camps here so I know

Ovoca Manor well and the people at Authentic Youth. I had a few friends who have done the internship with Authentic Youth and they loved it so I've wanted to do an internship with Scripture Union ever since. This is the first year I've had the opportunity to come and do it so I'm here!

### ***What are you looking forward to most?***

I'm really looking forward to getting into all the retreats and getting my talk done.

### ***What have you done so far?***

So far we've moved in, we've written our talks, we've practised them. We've done some work around the Manor, we've done one Manor retreat and one school retreat. We've just been getting to know everyone and settling in.

### ***How can people best be praying for you?***

I would really, really love prayer for my public speaking.

“ I want to put God before everything so this was a good way to put Him before college and my life. ”

## ROB

***Tell me a bit about yourself and how you came to be here?***

I'm 18, I've just finished school, I've deferred a place in IADT to do model making and digital effects so I'll be starting that next year. My reasoning for doing the SU Internship Year was that I want to put God before everything so this was a good way to put Him before college and my life. Jesus said 'if you try to hold on to your life you'll lose it but if you let go then you'll gain it' so I thought that kind of applied. Anytime I've tried to do something for myself it's just turned out ok, but anytime I've done something for God it's been really great so I thought it would be a good idea to do it.

***What are you looking forward to most?***

I love being outside and doing the activities so I really want to do a lot of the activities. I'm really excited to start doing the games that bring in a Bible verse or a chapter, they teach the kids a lesson about the Bible in a practical way so that they can enjoy it.

***What have you done so far?***

We've done one retreat at a school - that was good fun! They all seemed to be fairly positive about it which was surprising for me because I thought they'd hate us telling them about God ... And we did a retreat here at Ovoca Manor where we did some games with the 4th years. We've also helped doing the zip-line, we went climbing one day, doing lots of stuff like that, preparing for retreats and doing training.

***How can people best be praying for you?***

I suppose that God would speak through me because I'm going to be doing talks in schools. I don't know how it's going to go, I haven't done a huge amount of public speaking so I'm hoping and praying that God would use me to say what he wants to say and that it wouldn't be of my own merit, that God would just use me as a tool. Also for the confidence to get up there and do that and to not be afraid to tell what I believe.

“ Anytime I've tried to do something for myself it's just turned out ok, but anytime I've done something for God it's been really great ”

For information on the Scripture Union Gap Year including application details contact [steve.mcilhenny@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:steve.mcilhenny@scriptureunion.ie)



## AUTHENTIC YOUTH

**Scripture Union's Authentic Youth retreat team has been running multi-media, faith engaging day retreats in schools since September 2005.**

It is always a hard task to speak out against what society teaches young people they should be doing, thinking and believing. Yet we thank God for opening the doors to schools and giving us the opportunity to speak truth about faith and God to over 3,000 young people across 28-32 schools every year.

Sean Mallon is Chaplain in Mount Anville Senior School in Goatstown and has been welcoming the Authentic Youth team into his school since 2005. He says, "I first heard about Authentic Youth at a Chaplains' conference around 8 years ago. I was having problems finding a retreat team who

“ I was having problems finding a retreat team who could accommodate over 100 students at a day retreat... without hesitation he told me it wouldn't be a problem. ”

could accommodate over 100 students at a day retreat (the maximum for most was 50 students). A representative from Authentic Youth was handing out information and I had a nice chat with him... without hesitation he told me it wouldn't be a problem. From that day on I have never looked back... The greatest thing Scripture Union has done for my students is to share with them the love and message of Jesus Christ. What has impressed me most (and has impressed my students) is the way in which modern

“ The greatest thing Scripture Union has done for my students is to share with them the love and message of Jesus Christ. ”

and cool music and images etc are used to show Christ's message in a way that's relevant to today's society and how each of the students is encouraged to take that message and continue to live by it in their everyday lives.”

Authentic Youth have welcomed 12 Gap Year Interns to the team since 2005, each of whom have made a lasting impact on the lives of young people in Ireland. This year, the SU Internship Year has been relaunched to include experience of life and work at Ovoca Manor as well as with the Authentic Youth team.

For more information on Authentic Youth school retreats visit [www.scriptureunion.ie](http://www.scriptureunion.ie) or email [jude.barry@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:jude.barry@scriptureunion.ie)

# YOUTH ALPHA



“THE FUN WAY TO THINK ABOUT GOD”

**Y**outh Alpha is a course in basic Christianity that is being used by groups all around the world to help young people explore the character and claims of Jesus.

Over 8 – 10 weeks the course looks at topics from ‘Who is Jesus?’ and ‘Why did Jesus die?’ to ‘How and why should I read the Bible?’ The course is supported across the denominations in Ireland with Bishop Donal McKeown, National Chairman of Diocesan Youth Directors saying, “It reinforces an awareness that all Christians share core beliefs about who we are and what God wishes for our life and our world.”

Youth Alpha was identified as an ideal way to follow on from our Authentic Youth Day Retreats in secondary schools. Maintaining the important elements from the original Alpha Course of food, a talk and small group discussions the material was adapted to fit the school context. Jonny Somerville, previously part of Scripture Union’s Authentic Youth school retreat team, piloted the course in early 2011 with great

success and in July 2011 Alpha Ireland and Catholic Youth Care joined Scripture Union in appointing Jonny as a full time Youth Alpha Coordinator. Jonny explained, “Students appreciate the fresh approach to exploring the Christian faith, being able to be honest and have opinions without being reprimanded.”

“ It reinforces an awareness that all Christians share core beliefs about who we are and what God wishes for our life and our world. ”

**Bishop Donal McKeown**

National Chairman of Diocesan Youth Directors

Today, Jonny is running the Youth Alpha Course in around 10 schools per week amongst 4-6th class students. The vision is to work together with local youth workers

**Here are some of the comments that students have made on completing the Youth Alpha course:**

“There was no stress, no pressure”

“It’s interesting, not boring like I used to think before”

“I did not know the Holy Spirit before”

“It’s a fun way to think about God”

“I now think of Him more as a close, caring friend rather than a scary powerful source that can punish you”

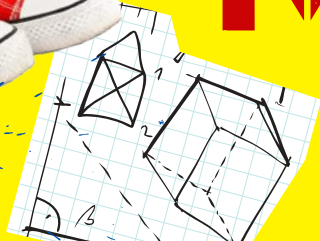
using the Youth Alpha Course as a tool to evangelise in local schools and as a means to form youth ministry in churches and parishes where it doesn’t exist. It is exactly this model that is being followed in Tullamore with a team of 5 including Father Patrick Donnelly and Presbyterian minister William Hayes who are running the course in 2 schools. As Father Patrick explains, “We do it during school time. We meet during Religion time, we do all the work, bring the team in so the school is not troubled at all. We’re not depending on the teachers and we’re not treating it like an academic subject which teachers could be tempted in doing. With Alpha that would be the wrong way to go.” Youth Alpha has provided an ideal tool with which to engage with the older students, “Before we ran Youth Alpha we would have put a lot of work into the 6th class in primary school, the confirmation year. We would go into the school two or three times, we would bring them to the parish, we have retreats and different things. Then we would follow that in first and second year and that would have been it really. Now with Youth Alpha over the last two years we have something that’s great for the 5th and 6th

years too. The whole model of Alpha using the film clips, the discussion, the boards, and different things, we’ve learned from that and used it in different ways throughout the parish, so it’s a great learning tool.”

“ Students appreciate the fresh approach to exploring the Christian faith, being able to be honest and have opinions without being reprimanded. ”

For more information on running the Youth Alpha course email Jonny at [jonny@youthalpha.ie](mailto:jonny@youthalpha.ie)

# IT'S YOUR MOVE



## GETS ON THE MOVE

**The Scripture Union publication *It's Your Move* is an interactive, ecumenical Scripture-based resource of 4 lessons designed for use by schools and parishes to help 6th year primary students as they prepare for the daunting move to secondary schools.**

Originally published in the UK in 2001, *It's Your Move* has been used by over a million children establishing itself as a valuable resource in helping prepare and reassure students for what lies ahead, all in the context of their importance in God's eyes.

For the past two years SU primary schools co-ordinator Grace Deegan has been working with schools and parishes to pilot and adapt the resource for the Irish market. Thursday October 4th saw the culmination of all this work and the launch at All Hallows College of the Irish publication of *It's Your Move*. Attended by many of those involved in its development as well as teachers, parish workers and representatives of different church denominations, the evening was one of great celebration. Grace expressed her

excitement to be introducing the resource and said, "I hope that many young people will benefit from this resource as they make the transition into secondary school, and that the many people who explore using it are encouraged in the knowledge that they are a vital support in young people's lives."

Speakers included Jim Donnan, General Director of Scripture Union; Niall Brennan, Principal of St Cremins National School Multyfarnham and Fr. Kieran Mc Dermott, Episcopal Vicar for Evangelisation and Ecumenism, Archdiocese of Dublin. Jim Donnan opened the launch by reminding guests of the origins of Scripture Union in 1867 and founder Josiah Spears' passion for communicating the love of God in a

“ On behalf of the Diocese of Dublin we welcome this initiative ... we believe it to be a blessing and a gift of the Holy Spirit to us ”



**GREAT  
RESOURCE**  
for your  
school or  
parish

**A Faith based Transition Resource  
for students  
moving to secondary school.**

relevant, interactive and relationship based way. He shared his belief that It's Your Move develops this model of ministry in the face of what Archbishop Diarmuid Martin described as western societies, "growing loss of the sense of God and the sacred".

Guest speaker Niall Brennan spoke of some of the issues his pupils have faced in making the transition in the past, the success of the pilot programmes run in his school and his delight in now having a resource that encourages pupils to talk about their fears, to know that they are not alone, and to know that God is with them. In closing he said, "I'd like to wish Grace and Scripture Union every success in rolling out what I believe to be a very valuable resource to schools the length and breadth of the country".

In his address Fr. Kieran Mc Dermott described the need for the church to create opportunities and tools for our young people to open Scripture and shared his belief that It's Your Move ticks a lot of boxes in this respect. "It's Your Move seeks to address the loss of a personal loving God and helps young people to realise the life-transforming reality that God is love." In conclusion, he stated, "On behalf of the Diocese of Dublin

we welcome this initiative ... we believe it to be a blessing and a gift of the Holy Spirit to us".

**“ It's Your Move seeks to address the loss of a personal loving God and helps young people to realise the life-transforming reality that God is love ”**

**To help teachers, parish workers and volunteers make the most of the resource, the It's Your Move book is supported by training provided by Scripture Union. For a copy of the book and for details of the training, please contact Grace Deegan.**

**Email: [grace.deegan@scriptureunion.ie](mailto:grace.deegan@scriptureunion.ie)  
Tel: +353 867760699**

## ARCHBISHOP VISITS OVOCA MANOR

**The staff of Scripture Union welcomed Archbishop Diarmuid Martin to Ovoca Manor on November 15th.**

Along with other local and national clergy as well as delegates from other Christian organisations, Archbishop Martin heard about the work of Scripture Union and enjoyed a tour of the facilities. During the tour visitors were treated to a demonstration of our new high ropes course – none could be persuaded to have a go themselves! Archbishop Martin later gave an address in which he spoke of the need for youth to evangelise their peers, the importance of reading the Bible and the need for reflection and contemplation in today's 'noise-filled' world. He said, "Young people in a confused world are constantly thinking, 'Where do I root my meaning in my life? Where do I find hope? Where do I find purpose?' You can find the answer in the Scriptures but first of all they have to meet the type of people who witness in their lives what Jesus means to them and are able to talk about it ... in a way that is convincing, authentic and coherent. That to me is the first way we will touch the hearts of young people."



Jim Donnan *Scripture Union General Director*, Nathan Norris *Ovoca Manor Centre Manager*, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin, and Basil Good *Scripture Vice Chair of SU Trustees*.

## BOOKSHOPS

In December 2011 the last of Scripture Union's bookshops was sublet and Scripture Union officially exited the retail market.

The bookshops continue to be operated independently and provide a great Christian resource selling a large range of Bibles, books, gifts, music and cards. Contact details are as follows:

**Dublin:** Footprints Bookshop, 43 Talbot Street, Dublin 1. Tel: 01 836 3764

**Dun Laoghaire:** Footprints Bookshop, 87 Lower George's Street, Dun Laoghaire, Co Dublin. Tel: 01 663 8773

**Cork:** Footprints Bookshop, Bachelor's Quay, Unit 2a, Northgate House, Cork. Tel: 021 427 8369

## NEW SU WEBSITE

**If you haven't already visited it, make sure you look up the new Scripture Union website!**

With a fresh new look and accessible layout, you'll find lots of information, photos and regularly updated news on all Scripture Union ministries. The site includes a new improved Camps booking system and provides various ways to keep in touch including links to our various Facebook pages as well as the opportunity to subscribe to our e-newsletter and prayer diary. Why not also make time to explore Word Live (Scripture Union's online Daily Bible Devotional) or access Lightlive and Schoolslive, packed full of resources for Sunday school teachers, Religion teachers and chaplains. So do pay us a visit online and subscribe to our e-newsletter to keep in touch with all that's going on!

# FINANCE UPDATE

*Figures based on audited accounts from 2011*

**As well as relying on its operations, the generous contributions of supporters are a vital part of Scripture Union's income.**

General operating donations and legacies to the Trust declined by 9% in 2011 to €70,488. Breaking this down, donations fell by 29% from €70,249 to €49,934. Legacies increased significantly to €14,666 going some way to make up for this shortfall however income from legacies is unpredictable.

Scripture Union continues to be the beneficiary of contributions from a number of third party bodies. Generous support has been received in assisting the remuneration of certain members of staff and in addition to the general giving noted above €40,000 was received and released to fund these specific salary costs.

2011 saw the completion of a substantial extension and renovation of Ovoca Manor, our Retreat and Adventure Centre in Avoca, Co Wicklow. This redevelopment had a total capitalised cost of €1,605,270. Ovoca Manor is a significant pillar in the work of Scripture Union and we are extremely grateful to and thank God for the individual donors who have underpinned the financial requirements of this project. The majority of the project costs have now been funded by these generous contributions. A loan of €159,829 was required to complete the project and that continues to be repaid. The operations of the centre were significantly

impacted by the redevelopment of the complex and Ovoca Manor returned a loss of €12,852 in 2011.

Scripture Union exited its retailing activities during 2011. The bookshops had recorded a loss in recent years and are now all leased to independent operators. A loss of €65,393 was incurred in 2011 relating to the negative trading position during the year prior to their leasing as well as the disposal of stock assets.

The expanding Youth and Schools and Camps work continues to provide Scripture Union with many opportunities for sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ. These activities, however, are generally run at a financial cost to Scripture Union. Overall the Youth and School's ministry operated at a deficit of €29,523 in 2011. The deficit from the Camps and Youth Mission activities was €25,283 in 2011.

The overall position in 2011 was a deficit of €179,668. The elimination of retail activities will improve this situation in 2012. Regular giving to fund on-going work is a key focus now that the cost of the redevelopment of the Manor has been substantially covered. We thank God for His continued provision to the work of Scripture Union.

**If you would like to support the ministry of Scripture Union, you can make a donation via our website at [www.scriptureunion.ie](http://www.scriptureunion.ie) or use the response card in the centre of this magazine.**



# OVOCA MANOR

Christian Retreat and Adventure Centre

## Providing:

- Accommodation for groups of 1 to 130
- Conference facilities
- 21 acres of grounds including river walks, forest trails, numerous adventure areas & Sports Hall
- Caravan and camping facilities
- Instructed adventure activities
- Youth and schools programmes
- Scripture Union Camps



## www.ovocamanor.ie

Ovoca Manor, Avoca, Co Wicklow Tel: 0402 35369  
ovocamanor@scriptureunion.ie

