

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Poacher's Pilgrimage

By Alastair McIntosh
£20
BIRLINN

THE ancient Celts tended to site temples or cells in such a way as to exploit the energies of the earth. Certain places held certain kinds of power, depending on underlying stone, vegetation, hills or water.

Some places were for healing or contemplation. Others may have had an uncanny atmosphere. The sky and unspoiled land provided a relationship between man and the cosmos that our modern society has allowed to wither.

Alastair McIntosh examines issues including spirituality, history, landscape and the Gaelic language, all in the context of a 12-day walk through the

“This is a book I've been waiting years to read”

landscapes of his childhood, from Rodel in the south of Harris to the Butt of Lewis. It is littered with artefacts of the distant past – stone circles, beehive huts, holy wells, temples, even today suffused with a spirit of place.

Using his knowledge of ecology, history and religion, McIntosh, a practising Quaker, explores what these places meant to our ancestors and what they may mean to us today.

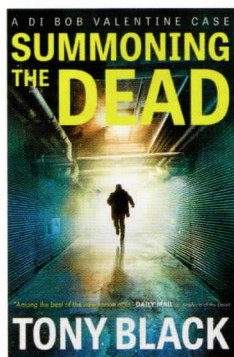
On a very different level, he uses the solitude of the landscapes to examine what he describes as an “immram or ioramm” – a kind of pilgrim voyage towards an ecology of the imagination.

A fascinating aspect was the recognition of nature as a divine mirror of the cycles and power of the universe; animals, lochs, trees, stones, the sun, moon and seasons as reflections of a sovereign God, by a man who spends a lot of time lecturing to soldiers and military commanders on the necessity for non-violence.

And how can you spend time in such places without wanting to know the meaning of it all? How can we correlate the grandeur and beauty of our world with the corruption of mankind?

This is a book I've been waiting years to read. I've learned so much from it and McIntosh has encouraged me to discover more, to make my own immram. More than that, he relates a joyful story, full of warmth, humour and passion, of how we can rediscover those things our Celtic ancestors found to be essential.

Cameron McNeish

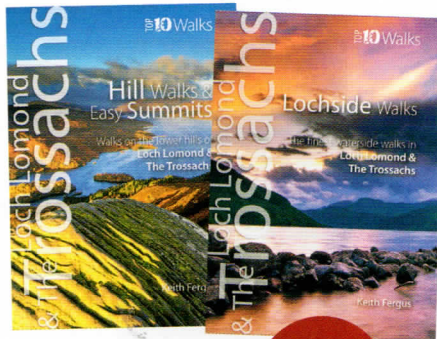


Summoning The Dead

By Tony Black
£7.99

BLACK AND WHITE

Another Ayrshire whodunit, which has DI Bob Valentine at the end of his tether. A cold case previously thought unsolvable is reopened, and Valentine finds himself drawn into a political conspiracy and one of Scotland's darkest secrets.



Hill Walks And Lochside Walks

By Keith Fergus
£5.99

NORTHERN EYE BOOKS

20 circular walks, with fascinating facts about places along the way. Both have detailed OS maps plus some of Keith's fine photography giving a wonderful indication of the landscape you can expect. For a chance to win a copy of each, go to www.scotsmagazine.com

WIN!