



UK Community News

Unprecedented media coverage in the Channel Islands

OUR WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE in Haifa has changed our lives forever. The publicity we were able to obtain has certainly raised the status of the Faith in both Jersey and Guernsey. Here, in Jersey, where we are three adults and a ten-year-old, the two press articles with pictures made a great impact.

The Jersey Evening Post is read in most households and though the pre-visit article was small, we had an hour-long interview followed by a two-thirds of a page spread on our return! Suddenly we were no longer members of some obscure religion. Our friends, acquaintances, fellow bus-travellers and, in some cases, perfect strangers took great interest in the blaze of second-hand fame.

Can you imagine, then, the effect of two interviews on Channel Television? Again, there was merely a brief pre-visit spot but, on our return, a small crew came to Mary's flat and did an interview for part of a feature follow-up. Before we went, the interviewer, during a telephone conversation, picked up on the seemingly high proportion of Channel Island Bahá'ís that were going. He naturally had asked some questions about the faith and seized the opportunity of exploiting this one fact in order to put over the message. "I must have an Island link!" he declared.

Eventually some downloaded pictures, including a wonderful one of the friends ascending the Terraces, enhanced the finished product. It was introduced by two newsreaders and discussed by the interviewer. Of course, we would have wished some of the unused parts of the interview to be used. We are not easily satisfied. But this was the first TV broadcast by the Jersey Bahá'ís and was seen in all the Channel Islands.

For some obscure reason, Radio Jersey, in spite of being badgered before and after the visit, seemed oblivious of a lost opportunity. The company are usually more cooperative. However, our dear Guernsey Friends will be telling you about their success. We would like to take this chance to thank them for including in their press-coverage a photograph of the full Channel Island group, taken with the Princess of Samoa.

Many opportunities to speak about the Faith are occurring every day. Even on the day of writing, I went into a shop and was immediately recognised! Questions followed. Marlene has received many interesting responses. Our invited and advertised fireside, in Marlene's flat, yielded eight attendees. A record! And we were asked to arrange a further follow-up.



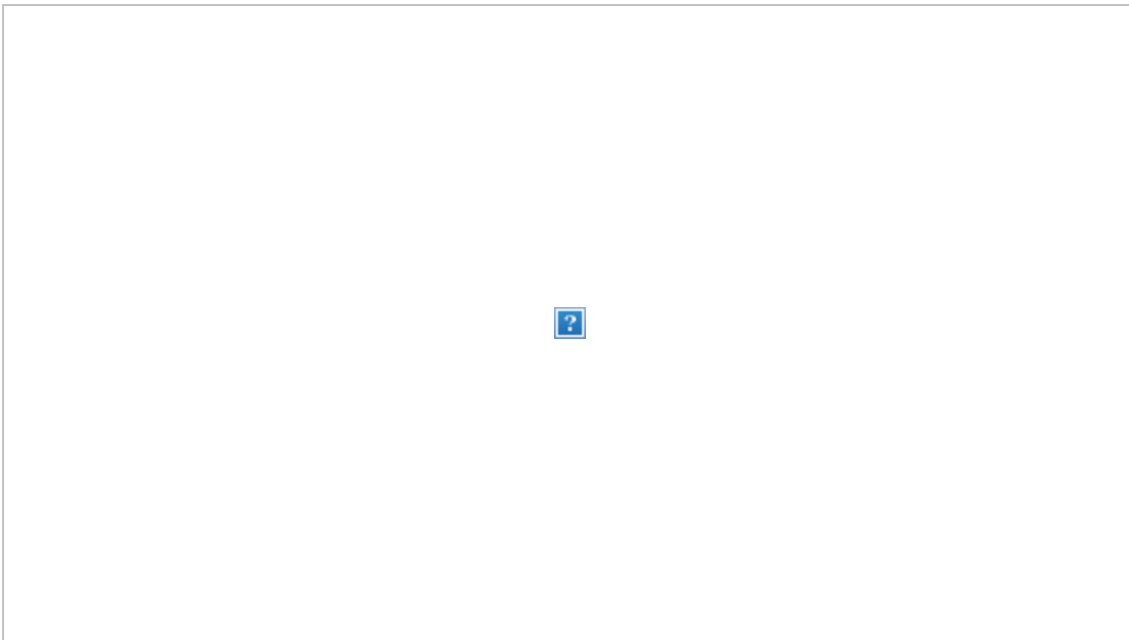
Marlene Morris and Mary Connell at the Terraces

Young Catherine Morris was given gifts from Haifa. One of these was a set of oils – frankincense, myrrh and spikenard. She attends a Roman Catholic School and she took the oils to show her class-teacher. The frankincense and myrrh were of obvious interest. Questions were asked and both her class-teacher and another member of staff commented on “mummy’s picture” in the paper. Marlene teaches in a Roman Catholic School. She left the large picture book about the Terraces in her staff-room for colleagues to see and then donated it to the school library.

All this sounds very positive and encouraging, but now the real work begins. A chance conversation with a young man in a coffee shop yielded a request for me to give a talk in his school. He happened to be Head of Religious Studies in our newest secondary school! Is this the time to make a fresh assault on all the secondary schools in the Island? How can we create initiatives in other fields? We have this amazing opportunity to use our participation in the glory days on Carmel to further the Great Cause of Bahá’u’lláh. Our dear Beryl de Gruchy, now unable to take a more physical part in our work, is our powerhouse of prayer. She was with us, in our hearts, in every moment of our stay and we are indebted to her for her prayerful support, both then and on our return.

We are a small group. We welcome every Bahá’í visitor we can get. Please let us know if you are visiting Jersey. If you would like to host a fireside, give a public meeting, sing, dance or simply share a cup of tea with us... Please let us know by calling the Travel Teaching Service. The gift of your time, however brief it may be, will be a gift to Bahá’u’lláh.

Chester friends launch Tranquillity Zone Project



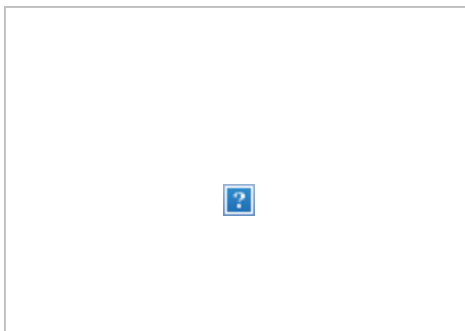
Members of the Bahá’í community of Chester, Hannah Goharriz, Parvin Adab, Anne Maund and Tina Symes with Councillor Reggie Jones at the launch of the Tranquillity Zones Project.

CHESTER BAHÁ’ÍS plan to carry out a survey in the city on attitudes towards stress and spirituality as a prelude to the introduction of Tranquillity Zones. The project has received backing from the former Lord Mayor, Councillor Reggie Jones, who was particularly keen for members of his constituency to get the opportunity to take part.

Children plan the future

THE DAY CHOSEN by the Bahá’í Council for England for the friends in the north to meet and consult about the Five Year Plan was June 3rd. While the adults were busy, the children learned about the institution of the Mashriqu’l Adhkár and constructed a beautiful House of Worship with a school and a hospital, all surrounded by gardens.

Carol Spenser



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