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UK Community News

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Jubilee Celebrations in Guernsey

FRIENDS OF THE GUERNSEY Community came from Chester, Milton-under Wychwood (Oxon), Abingdon (Oxon), London, Bedford, Launceston (Cornwall) and Manchester to help celebrate the anniversary.

On Thursday, October 16, there was a Nineteen Day Feast at the home of Pauline Senior and Adele Stevens-Cox, pioneers to Guernsey since 1971. In the Guernsey community the Nineteen Day Feasts are necessarily usually small affairs because this is a small community with some sick and aging members who sometimes find it difficult to attend. However on the October 16, the house was full. What a happy Feast!



Pauline Senior presenting flowers to the Lieutenant Governor's wife, Lady Foley.

The Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly, the Hon Barney Leith and his wife Erica were at the celebrations. On Friday Barney was invited to take the morning assembly at the grammar school in front of nearly 1000 pupils and teachers. He spoke about friendship and gave the example of his family's arrival in Shetland and how their furniture was taken there on the final leg by neighbours who did not yet know them but showed true friendship. After the Assembly, Barney spoke to two religious education classes. Mr Paul Montague, the RE teacher, was extremely pleased with his visitor and invited him to come back to the school another day.

Friday evening was spent in the local pub – a table of fifteen Bahá'ís eating food and drinking several bottles of sparkling water is not a normal sight. There was much talk and laughter.

On Saturday an inter-Faith meeting was held in the local parish hall. Several other religions were present and readings or prayers were read or chanted from their faiths. The theme was "Love and Compassion". The evening ended with a circle dance performed by a local group.

After the programme was finished there was time to get to know each other over a cup of tea. October 19 was the Holy Day. The community celebrated the Birth of the Báb at the community hall. New friends joined us in a programme of readings and music. Moojan Momen spoke about the Báb. This was followed by a lovely supper and was a very happy evening.

Monday was a very busy day. Barney went along to Radio Guernsey in the morning to be interviewed. He was on air for about 20 minutes. Wendi Momen went to the Ladies' College, a girls' school. She spoke to two classes of 14-16 year olds.

In the early evening a reception with His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor Sir John Foley and his wife Lady Foley was held at an hotel. They arrived with Sir John's aide-de-

Foley, and his wife, Lady Foley, was held at an hotel. Lady Foley was presented with a posy of flowers by Pauline Senior.

Afterwards they were shown the small exhibition. Guests included two members of the States (the Guernsey Government), the President of Soroptimist International, Guernsey; a Buddhist leader and his wife; a local journalist; the headmaster of the Grammar School; a local Constable of the Parish of St Peter Port. Interestingly Lady Foley remembered that her daughter had been at the same school in Cambridge as Sedrat Momen for a short time many years ago. She had been very impressed by this lovely little boy. Later the Bahá'ís dined together in the same hotel to celebrate the 50th anniversary. At the end of the meal an anniversary cake with candles was brought in.

Tuesday, October 21, was another busy day. Just time to eat breakfast and then off to visit the Bailiff's Chambers (the Bailiff is the most important person in Guernsey – head of the Royal Court and head of the Government). The Bailiff was out of the island and so the Deputy Bailiff, Mr Chris Rowland accepted the book from Mr Barney Leith, accompanied by Mrs Edna Sweet, a real islander and our Secretary, and Adele Stevens-Cox. He was very welcoming and asked many questions. He presented Barney with a Guernsey Millennium Tapestry Book.

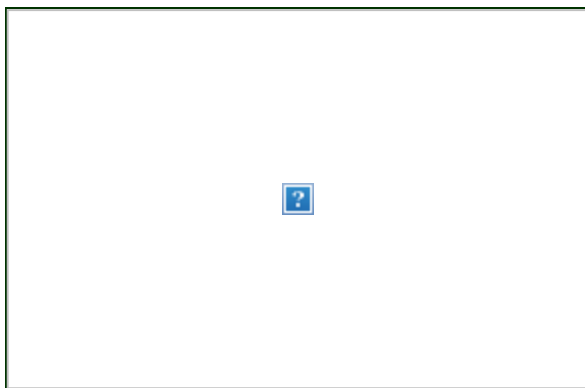
At 2.30 pm the members of the Faith plus a representative of the Men of the Trees (still its title in Guernsey) and the representative of the Constables of the Parish, Mr Le Poidevin, gathered in Cambridge Park to plant two trees to mark the jubilee of the founding of the Faith in the islands. Each person present was asked to put a shovel full of earth around the trees. Afterwards they went together to the Cotils Christian Centre for tea and buns.

That was not all. In the evening a public meeting was held in a hotel. This had been a busy weekend; this had been a successful weekend and the Bahá'í Community of Guernsey is very grateful to those who attended and helped.

Above all it was a very happy time.

Adele Stevens-Cox

Leeds Mental Health Arts Festival



[Helen with two of the Tranquillity Zone participants](#)

ON OCTOBER 20, 2003, members of the Leeds and Wakefield Bahá'í communities took part in the Mind Odyssey Leeds Mental Health Arts Festival, organised by Leeds Mental Health NHS Trust.

The Mind Odyssey Project is an exploration of the benefits the arts can bring to good mental health. Odyssey brings together organisations from within the voluntary sector, the local authority and the NHS, people who have used or worked in mental health services, artists and

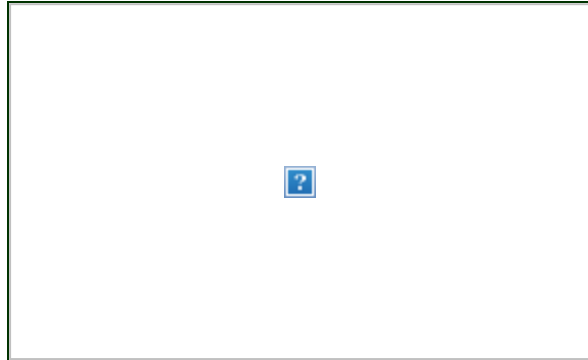
performers. It aims to show the benefits of artistic expression and to explore how creativity can contribute to a better understanding of mental health issues. Launched in December 2001, the initiative culminated in a week-long celebration in Leeds of Art, Music, Drama and Poetry from June 8 to 15, 2002. This year the theme of the Festival was “Diversity” and events took place across the city from October 18 to 25.

Leeds and Wakefield Bahá'ís contributed to the Festival via some wonderful Tranquillity Zones, facilitated by Helen and Ian Thompson and a Multi-Cultural Evening, which took place at Leeds Irish Centre on the evening of October 20.

The Tranquillity Zones were powerful and uplifting, true havens of peace, beauty and tranquillity. Helen and Ian, with beautiful music, candles, flowers, voile, the smell of roses and uplifting quotations from the writings of poets, musicians, painters, which had been a part of this

and uplifting quotations from the writings, create an atmosphere which is truly out of this world! Tranquillity Zones were attended by members of the public, staff and patients/clients.

The Multi-Cultural Evening was a wonderful celebration of world music. It was a veritable feast of music from around the world! Leeds is truly blessed with such diverse musical talent! Musicians performing included amazing Indian classical musicians from the Leeds College of Music, an accomplished Iranian santour player, a wonderful church-based black gospel choir, a fabulous Irish group and the Leeds Bahá'ís (Jean-Claude, Helen and Pedro).



Helen and Ian, Fred, Jean-Claude, Helen and Pedro at the Multi-Cultural Evening

Jean-Claude, (from Congo), began by playing a traditional piece on the balafon (African glockenspiel) and singing in his native Lale. He was then joined by Pedro (from Portugal and currently on his year of service in Leeds) and they sang from the Hidden Words in Spanish, while Pedro played the guitar. Jean-Claude was then joined by his wife Helen (who works as a Clinical Psychologist with Leeds Mental Health and who helped organise the event, along with her boss Fred), on guitar and they both sang a song in French and Lingala, which Jean-Claude composed, about the life of Bahá'u'lláh. Jean-Claude, Helen and Pedro then sang a version of "Remover of Difficulties" in English.

The evening was entertaining, uplifting and inspiring! It was a wonderful example of the power of music to act as a "ladder for the soul" and a true demonstration of the power of unity in Diversity. It was a truly joyful occasion! We wish you could have been there to enjoy it with us!

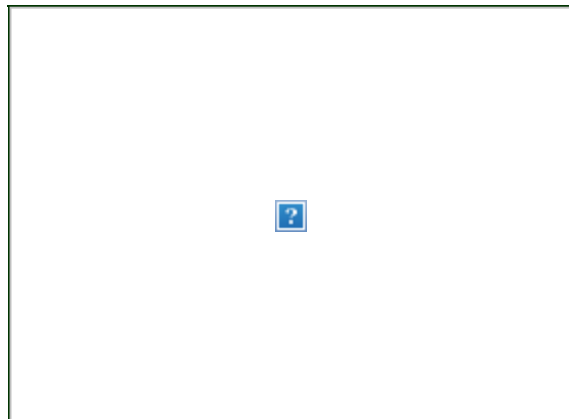
Helen Williams

Leeds University Teaching

THANKS TO Pedro Amorim, who is currently on his year of service from Portugal, Leeds University Bahá'í Society has been able to hold regular exhibitions about the Faith, in the foyer of the Student Union. Leeds University is a large and busy centre of learning, with tens of thousands of students, including international students from all over the world, attending. The Student Union is a very busy building, meaning that hundreds of students have now

seen the Bahá'í exhibition in passing, if not, actually picked up one of the many leaflets on offer, or spoken with one of the Bahá'ís present about the Faith.

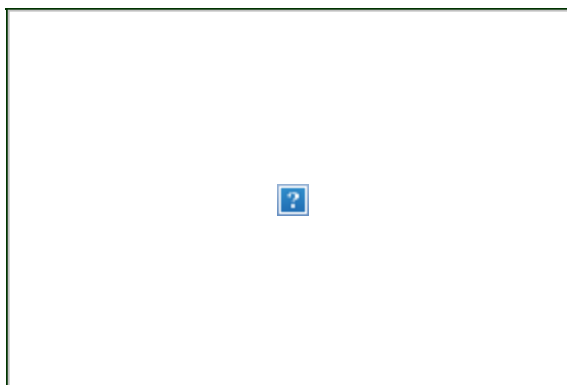
Helen Williams



Helen, Pedro and Georgia at the November 19 exhibition

THIS was one of the best things I have ever been involved in. Of all the Bahá'í things I have done, none has surpassed the spiritual, social and intellectual effect this has had on me.

Having already finished Book 3, I joined the campaign at the start of Book 4. On arrival at the house I was just taken aback by the buzz and the atmosphere. Everyone was just on a higher plane. Everywhere you looked were smiles, laughter, jokes, hugs, kind words, songs and just an intense sense of love and fellowship.



Some of the youth at the Intensive Teaching Campaign

The walls were covered with the most attractive artwork. You had people singing and composing and the most incredibly moving poetry was being written.

At first I felt very much like the outsider and just didn't feel like I could reach their dizzy heights, but it would be just minutes before this hungry, Hackney house would swallow me up and assimilate me. For me the defining features of the campaign were the effects it had on me socially, spiritually and intellectually.

On a social level I had the opportunity to get to know so many wonderful Bahá'ís on a deeper level. Many of the participants stayed in the house together and those of us who didn't would arrive at about 9 am every morning and only leave around midnight. We'd even spend weekends together taking the non-Londoners sightseeing or to the Guardian's Resting Place. It seemed we just couldn't get enough of each other. It's not everyday you get to spend weeks and weeks eating, sleeping, laughing, crying, praying and studying with all your friends and I will never forget it.

Its spiritual effects are the most difficult to describe. All I know is that the entire world is completely new to me. It's like an entirely new creation. I just feel attracted to everyone I meet, I have a fresh appreciation for the arts, music and all things beautiful. I genuinely feel love for all people. It's now become so difficult to speak to anyone without mentioning the Faith or the name of Bahá'u'lláh. Wherever I look all I see is this avalanche of teaching opportunities. My prayers are so much more intense and what I pray for most is the triumph of this glorious, healing cause.

On an intellectual level so many questions have been answered. So many of the things which I often thought were too complicated and distant from me, became so tangible and simple. I feel that my capacity to read, meditate and act on guidance from institutions has been immensely increased. I also feel so strengthened and deepened in obedience and certitude. In short, I feel fearless, alive and content.

During the campaign we took part in several service activities. We hosted some of the local feasts on behalf of Hackney, we held several firesides where once people came virtually off the street, we spent time in the local park and sang and played with some local children and also put on performances at a local community hall with some non-Bahá'í children and parents. Some of the parents even asked us to come back and asked for the words to some of the Bahá'í songs.

From my understanding the Hackney community was also greatly re-invigorated by the presence of the campaign in their community. In my humble opinion, this is it. This is the way to harness and focus the energy and vigour of the youth of this country and everyone else. I would be very pleased to see this as a regular event on our calendar.

Charles Isabiry

Karine Torr, attended the opening of the Shiraz Mirza Community centre in Kingston on November 10, 2003. The Centre was a gift to the faith communities by Mr Shiraz Mirza, the outgoing mayor of Kingston and will be used for interfaith events such as marriages, meetings and other celebrations. The opening ceremony was performed by the mayor of London, Ken Livingstone.

Dianne Mahboubi



Dianne Mahboubi (left) and Karine Torr with Mr Shiraz Mirza at the opening of the interfaith community centre.

Training Institute and Youth Committee raise resources

THE TRAINING Institute for England, in collaboration with the Bahá'í Youth Committee for England worked together this summer with the vision of taking a sizeable group of believers through the full sequence of courses with the purpose of raising the numbers of human resources in England.

With generous help from local communities, groups of friends gathered in Manchester, Liverpool, and Hackney to participate in the training institute courses, and an enthusiastic group of 12 participants completed the entire sequence. This magical experience that has taken place throughout England this summer has left footprints in the history of the growth of the Faith. Opposite, on page 28, is an experience from the campaign in Hackney.

For more coverage of the campaign please see the Living Nation magazine.

For information on youth activities please sign up to the youth committee mailing list on: byce@bahai.org.uk

Bahá'í Council for England Residential Schools 2004

DEAR FRIENDS,

Please find below the dates for residential schools in England for 2004.

Pre-registration details from: RSEregistration@hotmail.com

- East Anglia Spring School April 9-12
- Ampleforth Summer School July 17-23
- Sidcot Summer School August 7-14

“...Should the friends desire to take the lead in informing the world, they should start by educating themselves and understand what

Year of Service candidate

A FANTASTIC “Year Of Service” opportunity is available in Central Manchester, UK to serve with a Bahá'í community of some 100 years history. This community reflects the vibrant university city both in its numbers and diversity of cultures. Over the course of the past couple of years we have been blessed with the service of a number of YOS volunteers and many essential projects have been established during this time. We are always looking for YOS candidates to continue with this vital service role. Applications can be made for at least six months service and the accommodation is provided free of charge at the Bahá'í Centre.

The candidate should be able to accomplish a necessary service for the needs of the community by adhering to a framework of duties. In addition, we encourage a sense of flexibility so that personal goals / projects can be attained through individual initiative and creative personal responses.

For further details contact : Manchester Bahá'í Centre, 0161 224 6490 manchester@bci.org, Secretary, Miss Sara Talai, stalai@mblc.co.uk

South Wales women's retreat

THERE WERE seventeen participants at the Ninth South Wales Women's Retreat, organised under the auspices of the Association of Bahá'í Women. This time was a little different, not just in the venue but in the fact it was organised in conjunction with two lovely non-Bahá'í ladies. The programme was varied and included growth of the individual, building relationships, colourful women, hypnotherapy, and laughter/humour therapy.

There were wonderful walks to the cliffs, moonlit walks on the beach and trips to hear the wonderful chanting in the

educating themselves and understand what the troubles and problems really are which baffle the minds of men. It is in these Summer Schools that this training should be provided for the friends.” (Lights of Guidance: Section 1894, p.559)

This year’s Residential Schools have been booked in familiar and well-loved surroundings, beginning with the East Anglia School during the Easter break (which is returning to the Quaker School in Saffron Walden) peaceful Ampleforth Abbey, and the Quaker Boarding School near Sidcot. Get these dates into your new diaries and clear them with your Line Managers now and look forward to some wonderful experiences.

Information on topics and speakers will be released as it becomes available – in the meantime contact: RSEregistration@hotmail.com to register your interest.

monastery.

Everyone enjoyed themselves and I have already had an enquiry from one of the non-Bahá’í ladies to come again with her sister. The magic ingredient to these events is to not go with the intention of non-Bahá’ís being taught the Faith in a formal way – but to be touched by lots of warmth and extended friendship and of course our genuine love from one soul to another.

Every weekend has at least 15 reserves and is so overbooked it makes you wonder if this could be a monthly or bi-monthly event. Most of the enquiries are from non-Bahá’í women who are desperate for some respite from this world – they come once and then bring more friends and family, again and again.

The next weekend is on March 12-14, 2004 at the Maerdy Cottages, Llandeilo – there are only 20 places so book early to avoid disappointment.

Tracey Roberts-Jones

