



Bahá'í Council for Scotland

DEAR FRIENDS,

Warmest love and greetings from the Bahá'í Council for Scotland.

Another lively, exciting and happy summer school was held in Aberdeen at the end of July around the theme of Peace. One of the many activities on this theme was an interfaith prayer evening. In the course of the evening, members of several major faiths either spoke or read from their Holy Scriptures about Peace. This was followed by a very interesting play about colours of the rainbow. The speakers who represented the major world faiths performed the play which showed the unity of vision and purpose between the faiths. The children, junior youth and youth had their own exciting programme, and with many interesting late night discussion sessions.

Earlier in the summer many youngsters from the islands of Lewis and Harris were treated to a camp organised by the islands' Bahá'í club for children and youth with funding from the local council and the Bahá'í Council for Scotland. This has now become an established community event and a marvellous service to the local children, for some of whom it is the only opportunity for a summer holiday.

At the end of June the Council had its first ever offshore meeting on the beautiful Isle of Lewis, off the west coast of Scotland. This provided a wonderful opportunity to meet with a strong and committed island community, consult on some of the issues pertinent to these steadfast friends who have special bounties and challenges of living on these special islands. This brief island odyssey was greatly enhanced the following day when the Council met and consulted with the friends on the splendid island of Skye.

The Council is delighted to know that all the Scottish island communities have provisional plans for celebration of the Islands Jubilee in July/August 2003; visitors would be welcome throughout the year. If you would like more information about the Jubilee plans please contact Sandi Humphrey, the travel teaching co-ordinator, at sandi@solas.freeserve.co.uk.

By now most areas in Scotland have had their first cluster meeting and some are planning their second gathering. This is an exciting development in the community and many are using innovative means to enrich the cluster meeting and make it an inspiring experience for everyone present. This can be done through the use of the arts, music, drama and involvement of the children, youth and the wider community. A wonderful opportunity for experimentation, with diverse and creative outcomes.

On the external affairs front, the *Letter to World Religious Leaders*, has been presented to several religious leaders and has received positive response from every one of them. The Council representatives met with the Moderator of the Church of Scotland in his office at the General Assembly in Edinburgh. During the 40-minute long meeting, the moderator

began to read from the statement and at one stage in the discussion he began to quote from it. He also asked many deep and substantial questions about the Faith. Similarly the Primus of the Episcopalian Church (equivalent of the Anglican Church in England) received the statement very cordially and spoke with feeling about the importance of developing a deeper inter-religious dialogue.

The Council continues its consultation on the three core activities, and how they can become open to all, and as such, “portals for entry by troops”. In particular the Council is grateful to the Training Institute for Scotland for planning and organising regular training sessions for the sequence of courses and especially for the involvement of a greater number of youths and adults in recent training courses.

With warmest love,
Bahá'í Council for Scotland

The 18th Bahá'íland Gathering

THE BAHÁ'ÍLAND Gathering in Aberdeen was an opportunity for old friends and new to meet and share the unique spirit generated at these events. We heard stories from around the world, including such countries as Bangladesh, Gambia, Samoa and Ireland; there was a great mix of formal sessions, leisure activities, entertainment and informal group discussions.

Highlights included the way in which the school reached out to the wider community through an excellent interfaith night, which involved guests from other faiths sharing their perspectives on peace, and a visit to a nursing home which was part of a service project. Other groups who were using the venue were befriended by the youth and left with a good impression of the Bahá'í community.

Another feature of the school was the very high quality of the sessions. It was the year of the PowerPoint presentation! The talks included the Esslemont memorial lecture about healing, a presentation about the “Summons of the Lord of Hosts”, and an account from a youth who had returned from a year of service. As always there are too many to mention all by name. Graham Walker, who presented a digest of this year's conference on the “Science of Morality”, gave one of the most thought provoking and challenging sessions. Such was the interest generated that Graham had to schedule extra time to answer questions. Youth and children far outnumbered adults at the school and their behaviour was exemplary. They showed a degree of consideration and maturity which will become the benchmark for future events of this kind. There was evidence of a real evolution of social and interpersonal skills which will be a great asset for future community building.

Aberdeen managed to miss the worst of the torrential rain which swamped the rest of the UK during that week and the few cloudy days there were did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm of the friends who look forward to returning next year.

