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UK Community News

Tranquillity building on Skye

THANKS TO THE generosity of a long-standing friend of the Bahá'í community, Sandy Masson, and the efforts of Mike Smith, formerly of Skye but now living in Devon, our dreams of a permanent tranquillity building have now been realised.

At Naw Rá'z, 1993, the friends were invited to plant trees, as part of the International Peace Forest, in an area of woodland within a permaculture centre run by Sandy. The area was planted with cherry trees and became known as the Peace Garden. In 2001, following a series of tranquillity zones in various local venues, Sandy very kindly offered a site just beyond the Peace Garden for the Bahá'ís to build a permanent tranquillity zone building.



The tranquillity building (from www.manvell.org.uk/tz/)

One lovely warm Sunday at the end of May several members of the local community turned out to clear the ground for the building and were amazed at just how quickly this task was accomplished. The building is nine-sided and made of timber, all the parts having been carefully prefabricated by Mike, in Devon, and brought north on August 19.

As luck would have it (or maybe it's divine intervention) the weather this week has been absolutely the best this summer, perfect building weather, and no midges in the strong sunlight! A meeting was held to consult on a name for the building and the type of events that could be held there. We are very excited about this latest development as the woodland is a popular attraction for tourists and locals alike and as a means of proclamation we see it as very promising indeed.

Finally, our heartfelt thanks must go to the friends in our twin communities of Barnet and Kensington & Chelsea who have been very generous in their financial assistance for this exciting project and whose words of support and encouragement have touched all of us here on Skye.

[For more information, see also [The Scottish Bahá'í](#) and the [Áite SÁ-the Websites.](#)]

Kirklees friends contribute to Building Bridges in the Community

KHOSRO AND Christine Deihim gave a very beautiful Bahá'í contribution to the Mirfield Rotary Club Building Bridges in the Community meeting. Bahá'í, Christian, Jewish, and Muslim Faith Community representatives in Kirklees were the invited speakers for the evening. The Mayor and Mayoress of Kirklees and representatives from Kirklees Cultural Services and over 100 invited guests were present

There were readings from Bahá'í and 'Abdu'l-Bahá which were very appropriate given the troubled times we live in and few can have missed the significance of the Master's words:

Today, upon the earth, one sees the sad spectacle of cruel wars! Man slays his brother man for selfish gain, for this ignoble ambition hate has taken possession of his heart and more and more blood is shed! ('Abdu'l-Bahá: Paris Talks, pp. 99-101)

It was a very successful proclamation event and lots of Bahá'í leaflets were taken by those attending. Printed copies of the Bahá'í contribution were distributed among those present before the Bahá'í presentation began.

Bahá'í Youth addresses Central Scotland Racial Equality Council Conference in Grangemouth

ERIN KEENAN, a youth from the Bahá'í community of Fort William, spoke at the Racial Equality Council conference in Grangemouth. The keynote speakers for the event were Dr Doreen Lawrence (mother of Stephen Lawrence) and Michael Matheson, MSP. (See cover photograph.)

The theme for the Conference was "Being British – Integration or Assimilation." Erin gave a personal perspective on the subject and described the aims of the dance group she trains and choreographs called "Northern Lights". She also quoted from 'Abdu'l-Bahá and mentioned the Bahá'í Faith many times during her talk.

Her presentation was very warmly received and many people showed an interest in her dance group and the Bahá'í Faith.

As a follow up Northern Lights have been invited to perform at the Conference next year.

Northern Lights is a dance group that is based in the North West Highlands, with members from the Isle of Skye and Lochaber. In order for the group to meet and practise some members have to make a round trip of 200 miles. The trainer and choreographer of the group is Erin Keenan, a 17 year old Bahá'í youth from Fort William.



Northern Lights Dance Group. Erin is back row, 2nd from left.

Northern Lights is a theatrical dance group which is run on Bahá'í-principles and hopes to raise awareness of social problems. Where Northern Lights differs from other groups is that it includes Gaelic music and Highland culture wherever possible.

Northern Lights was accepted to take part in the Respect Initiative and was featured in its media launch on October 29 in Edinburgh.

Northern Lights also performed at the Arts Festival in Scarborough.

Walk of Faith in Nuneaton

WE HELD a "Walk of Faith" in Nuneaton on June 1 in response to the Prince of Wales's "Respect" initiative to foster better understanding between faiths. We walked to the local Mosque, Gurdwara, Hindu Centre and Christian church. The Bahá'ís have a tree in the park which we visited to start.

Don McLean asked on his Sunday Radio 2 programme, Good Morning Sunday, for details of events that were taking place over the Jubilee weekend, so I emailed in about the walk

thinking that he was going to just announce the events on the air. As it happens the events were put into a competition and we won. I nearly choked on me muesli when he announced, at 8.55 am, that I had won a CD of the Palace Proms.

We are hoping to hold the Walk of Faith as an annual event. The Sikhs were very supportive, we called into the Gurdwara and had samosas and tea.

John Neal

Ealing Community World Citizenship Project

ON JULY 5, 2002, Ealing Bahá'í Community held its fifth World Citizenship Project Prize-Giving Ceremony at Ealing Town Hall. More than 250 pupils, parents and teachers attended the ceremony where prizes were presented by Mr Roger Butler, General Inspector of Religious Education in Ealing. This year saw the largest number of participating schools so far: twelve schools from across the Borough took part – nine primary schools and three secondary. Five hundred and fifty entries were received consisting of posters, poems and essays on the themes of “Courtesy – Please and Thank-you” for the primary schools, and “World Peace” for the secondaries. The winners’ work was displayed at the ceremony and some of the prize-winning poems were read by the pupils.

Commemoration of the life and martyrdom of Tāḥīrih

THE KINGSTON upon Thames Bahá'í community held a special garden party for the celebration of the life of Tāḥīrih and her promotion in the cause of the emancipation of women on Sunday, September 15.



Some of the participants at the Kingston celebration.

The celebration began with the prayer for humanity read by Dianne Mahboubi and then a prayer/ poem by Tāḥīrih read by Mitra Mahboubi-Birch. This was followed by an inspiring, informative, and even funny in parts, half an hour talk by Zarin Hainsworth-Fedaie. She spoke about Tāḥīrih’s martyrdom and how she had prepared for her own death, bringing a freshly prepared white silk scarf with which she was strangled. Her body was then placed inside a well and covered with stones which was her own choice so as not to be desecrated afterwards. Perhaps the most poignant part was at the last moment before her death she is reported to have called out “You may kill me if you like, but you cannot stop the emancipation of women.”

Zarin emphasised the fact that Tāḥīrih had suffered persecution, having had her children removed from her because she was a follower of the Báb, and that at one stage Bahá'u'lláh had helped to have her freed, although she had never actually met with Him.

After the talk questions were answered by Zarin including “Why we as Bahá'ís educate girls if only one choice can be made between a girl and a boy child?”

Almost 40 people attended and at least half of those who attended were non-Bahá'í contacts and friends from places like The Kingston Racial Equality Council. There was a lady who supported the UN’s Iran Aid, an American lady who did not believe in God but in the principles of women’s equality and others. There were Russian, Armenian, Dutch American, Arab and English non-Bahá'ís, and some members of the local community. There was a Liberal Jewish gentleman who commented afterwards how much he had enjoyed the event. He said he understood for the first time why God had chosen that the Jew can only be Jewish if born to a Jewish mother. This was not quite what we had intended to convey but since he agreed with the Bahá'í principal of the education of girls if one had to choose because they are the first educators of children, we kept quiet about this notion.

Everyone who attended said afterwards how very much they had enjoyed it and the last hour was spent having tea and cakes and socialising.

I managed to give out a number of invitations to our next celebration for the Birth of Bahá'í 'u'lláh on November 17 in the Surbiton Library Hall with a pot luck international dinner.

Dianne Andrea Mahboubi
Secretary for the Kingston upon Thames Bahá'í community