

Glenthorne

Guest House and Conference Centre



Easedale Road
Grasmere
Ambleside
Cumbria
LA22 9QH

Telephone / Fax: 015394 35389
email: info@glenthorne.org
WEB: www.glenthorne.org

WELCOME PROJECT REPORT 2015

Hospitality to asylum seekers and refugees

2015 was another fruitful year for Glenthorne's **Welcome Project**. The project is an initiative started by Glenthorne trustees to provide short respite holidays to groups of asylum seekers, refugees and those made destitute when their asylum claim fails. Over the eight years it has been running we have developed links with faith and community groups supporting asylum seekers in the urban areas across the north of England. In 2015, seventy one men, women and children, predominately Muslim and Christian, from eighteen countries stayed at Glenthorne over 5 weekends and one mid week break. Each group is accompanied by a befriender. Our Friend in Residence, Terry Winterton, volunteers and Glenthorne staff act as hosts. This report gives the details of the activities during 2015, the project finances and feedback from the beneficiaries.



Purpose and Benefits of the Project

During 2015 there was much in the news about refugees leaving Syria to escape conflict. We were also made aware of vast numbers of people trying to enter the European Union from many other countries and those hoping to enter Britain at Calais. What happens to them if they are successful and get to the UK?

For most it is the beginning of a long, stressful and isolating period as they start and progress through the asylum claim process; recently we hosted a couple who waited for 9 years before they gained refugee status. Depression and other issues severely affecting well being are common. Social isolation and radicalisation are also strong concerns. The situation becomes desperate when an asylum claim fails and the claimant is left with no state support, barred by law from working and contributing to society, yet unable to return home for fear of persecution or death.

Through the Welcome Project we provide a short break from this situation. We give welcome, support and perhaps above all, human goodwill, in a relaxing and hospitable environment with our other guests.



During the weekends when Welcome Project guests stay with us, we make the most of Glenthorne's beautiful and peaceful Lakeland surroundings; going for walks, trips in the boats on the lakes and strolling round the nearby towns and villages.

Our Welcome Project guests share friendly company with Glenthorne visitors, staff and different faiths, families and nationalities, promoting relaxed social integration and understanding.

The Project also extends practical and moral support to the staff working in asylum seeker support agencies – often over-strained in trying to meet the practical and psychological needs of people in destitution.

2015 Welcome Project Facts and Figures

Five groups and one family came to Glenthorne between May and October 2015:

Asylum Link Merseyside (ALM)
Bradford Immigration and Asylum Seekers Network (BIASAN)
St Augustines Centre - Halifax
Doncaster Conversation Club
Leeds Women Asylum Seekers Together (Wast) & Solace
Refugee Action York (RAY) (Family)

Total number of guests	71
Adult asylum seeker/refugee guests:	49
Children/young people as guests (infant to 16 years):	17
Accompanying befrienders	5

Countries of origin of asylum seeker/refugee guests:

Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia, Zimbabwe, Syria, Pakistan/Kashmir, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, Gambia, Benin, Rwanda, Yemen, Albania, Mongolia & Cuba.

Costs:

Full board accommodation at Glenthorne and staff cost.

Support for travel costs for guests to get to Glenthorne (train fares, vehicle hire and fuel)

Pocket money given to guests (£10 per adult, £5 per child)

Hire of South Lakes community minibus for duration of each visit

Sundry items e.g. boat trips on the Lakes

Balance of fund 30/11/15	£12,819.14
--------------------------	------------

Total project cost in 2015	£10,095.66
----------------------------	------------

Total income to Project, grants, donations since 30/11/14	£7,398.87
---	-----------

Balance of fund 30/11/15	£10,122.35
--------------------------	------------

Total cost per guest in 2015	£142.19 (£148.01 in 2014)
------------------------------	---------------------------

Appraisal

It has been another successful, worthwhile and rewarding year running the project. The number of guests was nearly 25% higher than last year because of larger group numbers and an extra family visit on compassionate grounds. Our cost per guest was lower again this year, due to some group organisations, (or a supporting Quaker Meeting) paying their own travel expenses.

We have made links with two more new groups during the year; Doncaster Conversation Club, who stayed with us in August and Bradford Sanctuary, who will be staying with us in May 2016. The weekends are normally offered to groups within a reasonable travelling distance from Glenthorne for practical reasons of time and expense.

Our financial support has continued with donations from many individuals, Quaker Meetings and grants from several trusts nationally.

We are planning 5 more weekends in 2016 and an additional 4 day midweek break in August.



Groups generally arrive by train, car or minibus early on Friday evening in time for dinner at 7.00pm with the other guests. They mingle in the lounge after dinner, settling in, often playing games and just chatting or reading. On Saturday, after breakfast and Meeting for Worship together, we have driven in the South Lakes community minibus to Ambleside and taken a boat trip, stopping off at Bowness for a browse in the shops or a walk up to a local viewing point. Then back on the boat, stopping to explore at Brockholes visitor centre on the way, to arrive back at Glenthorne in time for afternoon tea and sometimes for a swim in the lake. There is free time until dinner and then afterwards with other guests, perhaps around communal jigsaw puzzles or games. We have also enjoyed evenings in the Sybil Taylor room playing table tennis or an impromptu entertainments session with singing or sharing good things. No two groups are the same. On Sunday mornings we have explored locally, walking up towards Easedale Tarn and Helm Crag or spent time walking at Tarn Hows, a local beauty spot near Hawkshead. It is then time for a packed lunch, good wishes and goodbyes.

What did our guests say?

It helped me not to stress, to not think. It felt like home here, we were treated the same as other people; there was no difference. Thanks to all of you for giving us this beautiful weekend!

It was really helpful socially and mentally: it made me forget my immigration madness for a while.

I felt I was in Britain for the first time. After five years experience here it is the first and best journey I have made. It has helped my depression and my daughter loved the open spaces, the mountains, greenery and playing.

It has been very helpful for me. My mind has been stress free and it has made me forget about my problems for a few days.



I felt happy when I saw the hills. All my stress evaporated and it made me a new person (reborn). I would like to say thank you very much.

Brilliant, thoroughly enjoyable and a life changing experience.

I loved the weekend. It was the best time I've had in ten years! I found peace and quiet which is very strange for me. I can't remember the previous time I felt like this. Personally I feel renewed, energised, like a big weight has been lifted off my shoulders. After nine years dealing with stress, depression, post traumatic stress disorder, this weekend is just what I needed to re-encounter hope and faith in the future.

On behalf of the whole team I say thanks. We are very pleased and grateful for this kind act of bringing love, peace and hope for people coming from different cultures.

