

Glenthorne

Guest House and Conference Centre



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WELCOME PROJECT REPORT 2020

Hospitality to asylum seekers and refugees

The Welcome Project provides short respite holidays to groups of asylum seekers and refugees from the urban distribution centres throughout the mid and north of England. This report gives the details of the project's activities during 2020 and the project finances.



(Photo: Glenthorne with Helm Crag behind)

What an extraordinary time we have lived through! You will not be surprised to learn that Glenthorne was either closed in a lock down or restricted in operation throughout the whole of 2020 and despite our best efforts we were not able to offer any weekends to asylum seekers and refugees. Even when we *were* open, all the areas from which we invite groups were under Covid restrictions

against travel and social gathering.

To try to continue the project with the imposed limit of a maximum of 6 people allowed to gather, we changed our approach and decided that we could offer family groups of up to 6 to come for a weekend. We organised 5 separate family groups from Lancaster, Doncaster and Blackburn to visit in November but sadly those areas all moved into a higher tier of Covid restrictions and we had to cancel those as well! The families were asylum seekers from Myanmar, Nigera and Afghanistan.

We did have one success, a weekend for vulnerable young adult refugees with reasonable English competence, to introduce them to the Romantic poet William Wordsworth and the Lake District. This consisted of a series of 3 online virtual visits with the Bradford and Leeds Children's Society and the Wordsworth Trust. Educational and learning staff from both organisations put in a lot of preparation, planning and input before and during the sessions: Ruth Chuck, Finn McKay and Ella Montgomery-Smith from the Children's Society, Jeff Cowton, Tom Langridge and Sue Allen (as the poetry writer/compiler) from The Wordsworth Trust. There were 13 young adult refugees involved from Eritrea, Kurdistan, Egypt and DR Congo.

The 3 sessions were each of 1½ hours long on 28 May, 10 June, 18 June 2020. Sue Allen compiled a poem of all memories at the end of each session.

The first session involved an introduction to Glenthorne and a virtual walk by photo and video of the area around Grasmere lake and up to the peak of Loughrigg. Stopping to identify and name some native plants and animals and other features of note.



(Photo: Grasmere with Loughrigg behind)

On a Sunny Day

On a sunny day the people sit
On a beach, in the park
The weather so lovely
Paddling in the sea
The amazing waterfalls
Trees so green
A bullfinch eating all the buds
On the plum tree
The moon is always there
Counting the stars
Crescent moon over Helm Crag

*(Poem with Lina, Sahala, Sara, Sifa, Tsyion and Radwa
Also Finn, Jeff, Laura, Lindiwe, Ruth & Terry)*

The second session focused on a tour of Dove Cottage and the surroundings enjoyed by Wordsworth and his family.



(Photo: Dove Cottage)

Who lives there now?

There is a fire
Cold floors, open fires
A newspaper room
Analog heating system
Somewhere to visit
Cold and hail
A little girl catching hailstones
A British summer!
The surroundings
Stones on the ground, slate.
The views of the village
It's fantastic and very green
Friendly neighbours
I want to live in this house

(Poem with Alpha, Bereket, Farman, Gibrilla, Mohammed, Moussa, Nasouadin, Negatsi, Radwa, Rebaka, Sohila, Tsyion Also Finn, Jeff, Lindiwe, Matthew, Ruth, Shreena and Terry.)

The third session was based in the Gallery and the reading room in the Wordsworth Museum.



Quills in the Reading Room

*Really happy,
Giving us special time in our
lives.
A poem. Seeing the
manuscripts,
Seeing Dorothy write!
She writes everything in the
book
Shopping lists and things she's
seen.
Old paper, hand-made
Paper from old clothes
Ink from oak trees
Pens from swans and geese
Birds from Leeds,
at Grasmere, in Norfolk.
A poem is never finished*

(Poem with Ahmad, Farman, Gibrilla, Mohammed, Rebaka, Sara, Sifa, Tsyion Also Finn, Jeff, Lindiwe, Ruth and Ella.)

Project Finances

Balance of fund 30/11/19	£18,516
Total project cost in 2020 (Mini bus invoice from 2019)	£ 217
Total income to Project, grants, donations since 30/11/18	£10,935
Balance of fund 30/11/20	£29,235

Purpose and Benefits of the 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. The scope is sometimes to include those who have volunteered or carried out relief work with refugees and asylum seekers. We have developed links with faith and community groups supporting asylum seekers in the urban areas across the mid and north of England.

The Welcome Project has run every year since the pilot project in 2008. Over that time, 762 men, women and children refugees, asylum seekers and befrienders from 57 countries have benefited from a respite break at Glenthorne.

Countries of Origin of asylum Seeker/refugee guests:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Burma, Cameroon, China, Cuba, DR Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, India, Ingushetia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kenya, Kurdistan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nigeria, North Korea, Namibia, Pakistan, Philippines, Peru, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Togo, Uganda, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Future.

I am writing this report in July 2021 because Glenthorne has been closed for much of the year and I have been on furlough. We re-opened on 17 May 2021 operating under the national Covid guidelines and had to cancel most of our planned Welcome Project weekends for 2021. We are planning to run another weekend (a real one this time) with the Bradford and Leeds Children's Society and the Wordsworth Trust in September and we are offering individual breaks to asylum seeker families who do not need accompaniment, when we have space during the rest of the year.

It has been a difficult time for most people and especially for asylum seeker and refugees. The project is more important than ever and has only been able to operate because of the generous donations from individuals, Quaker Meetings and charitable trusts. (These donations are placed in a reserve fund for the exclusive expenditure on future Welcome Project activities).

We are planning to resume the long running Welcome Project weekends in 2022 and may also continue to offer individual family breaks if this proves successful this year.

I am writing this with the endorsement of the trustees and end with a very large thank you from us all at Glenthorne and one of the many responses to a Welcome Project visit:

*The Welcome Project restores our faith in human kindness
and reminds us that there are people who care.*

Thank you for everything.

We will always remember.

Terry Winterton
Friend in Residence
Glenthorne