

# Glenthorne

## Guest House and Conference Centre



Easedale Road  
Grasmere  
Cumbria  
LA22 9QH

Telephone / Fax: 015394 35389  
email: [info@glenthorne.org](mailto:info@glenthorne.org)  
WEB: [www.glenthorne.org](http://www.glenthorne.org)

### WELCOME PROJECT REPORT 2021

#### **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 purpose and benefits, the activities during 2021 and the project finances.



*(The beginning of the Bradford and Leeds Children's Society visit at the Wordsworth's Trust site)*

## **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. We sometimes extend the scope 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, seven hundred and seventy nine men, women and children refugees, asylum seekers and befrienders from fifty seven countries have benefited from a respite break at Glenthorne. The benefits include social integration, relief from stress, depression and anxiety caused by displacement, trauma and isolation, restoring faith in humanity, hope for the future and goodwill towards others.

*Thank you to all the people who allowed this project to happen. Thank you very, very much*

## **Facts and figures for 2021**

Weekend (2 nights) June	Doncaster Conversation Club family.
Mid-week (3 nights) August	Lancaster City of Sanctuary family.
Weekend (2 nights) September	Bradford & Leeds Children's Society & Wordsworth Trust

Number of guests:

Adult asylum seekers/refugees	11
Children asylum seekers/refugees (infant to 16 years)	4
Accompanying befrienders & volunteers	2
Total number of guests this year	<b>17</b>

## **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.

## **Project costs and finances**

The costs involved include full board accommodation at Glenthorne and staff cost.

Support for travel cost to and from Glenthorne.

Spending money and sundry items for boat trips and bus fares.

Hire of South Lakes Community mini bus.

(The cost of activities and transport to Glenthorne for the Bradford and Leeds Children's Society visit was funded by the Wordsworth Trust are not included here).

Balance of fund 30/11/20	£29,235
Total project cost in 2021	3,336
Total income to Project, grants, donations since 30/11/20	£ 8,623
Balance of fund 30/11/20	£34,522

Average cost of stay per person for a 2 day break	£171.08
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## This years activities

As you will be aware 2021 was another very unusual and difficult year for everyone because of the Covid pandemic. Glenthorne was closed until late May and social restrictions were in place for the rest of the year. Everyone was acutely aware of the dangers of close social interaction and we had to cancel most of our planned Welcome Project activities.

However, we were able to offer two families a two and three day break at Glenthorne with all costs paid including travel and local activities, bus, walking and boat trips.

We had one family of 6 who fled from Afghanistan in fear of their lives. They now live in Lancaster and came for 3 nights mid-week in June. They did not want to have their details or photos shown for fear of being traced.

The other family of 5 were from Iran They now live in Doncaster, and came for 2 nights in August. They are pictured below.



One member of the family wrote to us afterwards:

*Well, I'm Negin. I'm 19 and I'm an asylum seeker living in the UK with my family for about 2 years. I need to say that how grateful and thankful I am.*

*After a long time, I went on a short holiday with my beloved family.*

*We needed this...*

*I don't even know who actually did all those things to us, which was so worthy and lovely for us. All I can say is a big thank you in this text on behalf of my family.*

*I think the best way to repay you is that I do the same thing as you did to us to someone else on day to spread the love which is the main thing.*

We also held a very significant weekend event in September. The intention was to create a time of social integration, enjoyment and learning for vulnerable young refugee adults from the Bradford and Leeds Children's Society. Glenthorne, the Wordsworth Trust in Grasmere, and students from Cumbria University came together for a weekend in September to create a deeply meaningful experience for every one of those involved.

The time had been carefully planned over the previous months. Participants from Bradford and Leeds Children's Society stayed at Glenthorne (we originally offered 14 spaces to the Children's Society but social distancing restrictions and 2 last minute Covid infections reduced this to 6!) and the events were managed by the Wordsworth Trust who also engaged a creative artist, Alex Jakob-Whitworth. She helped to involve everyone in activities to give a lived experience of encounter with the world of William and Dorothy Wordsworth and the Lake District.

On Friday there was a guided tour of Dove Cottage and garden (the home of William Wordsworth, his wife Mary and his sister Dorothy). We were treated to readings from Dorothy Wordsworth's journal in surroundings that were restored to exactly as they had been at the time she had written.

This was followed by a session led by Jeff Cowton, the museum curator, who led us all in an experience of writing with goose feather quills and ink made in the manner of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There was a chance to read and see some of Wordsworth's letters as well as the handwritten development of some of his poems.

By the time we had finished the day and had dinner together, everyone had relaxed and started to bond. There was deep honest sharing of what had been life giving for us. It was an emotional time.

*It's so incredible being here, meeting all of you... thank you so much for making this happen.  
The donations and the thinking of us... That was the nice thing*

The next day after breakfast, we were led by Alex to engage more deeply with Dorothy Wordsworth's life in the cottage and surroundings and instructed in how to create 3D collages of our experiences within the enclosure of a shoe box!

We were then led into the hills for a picnic and to engage with the beauty of the lakes and mountains, with more readings from Dorothy's journal and instructions to gather inspiration for our shoebox creations later in the day.

We all spent the rest of the afternoon in the education centre creating!

You can see the amazing shoe box creations in the picture below. These are all now on permanent exhibition in the Dorothy Wordsworth Gallery at Dove Cottage Museum.



After dinner and another evening of deep personal sharing and breakfast together on Sunday we walked together up into Easedale with a quick dip in the waterfall pool on the way towards the tarn.



On the return journey we walked through the arboretum at Lancrigg, a favorite spot for the Wordsworth's. Of course, we were treated to some readings and poems that were brought to life in these settings. As Alex sat on the stone that marked a favorite spot of the Wordsworth's she remarked that it was only the veil of time that separated us from them in this place.



We finished the weekend with a packed lunch at Dove cottage and the young refugees were transformed when they dressed in period costumes: each of them addressed us all and told us how much this weekend had meant to them. We were astonished at how the costumes had given them such self-assurance and a new emboldened personality. Wow!



(photo taken in front of Dove Cottage)

### **The Future.**

As I write this towards the end of January 2022, the social restrictions due to the pandemic are being lifted. This year we expect to offer 5 Welcome Project weekends, a 2 longer mid-week breaks and to be able to offer some individual family breaks as well.

The Glenthorne Trustees and staff are fully committed to this project. We are very aware that there will be an increasing need for what we can offer. Forced migration of peoples across the world because of climate change, conflict and competition for land, and resources will escalate and many more will seek refuge on our islands.

A very big thank you from all of us at Glenthorne for your support for us and this project. We can only do this because of you.

This comment from one of the helpers in the group pictured above. perhaps catches some more of the benefits:

*It was an incredible joy and pleasure to be amongst such an open and enthused and remarkable group and I know we have all made memories that will last for a very long time and hopefully make a great difference to many lives.*

In the words of the young adult refugees this year:

*It's hard to explain what's inside, what I feel now. I am so very happy and grateful to be here with you ... It's been incredible, I don't want to say goodbye ...*

Terry Winterton  
Friend in Residence. Glenthorne