

Glenthorne

Guest House and Conference Centre



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WELCOME PROJECT REPORT 2023

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 2023 and the project finances, facts and figures

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 and made new 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, **nine hundred and twenty-three men, women and children refugees, asylum seekers and accompanying organisers from sixty four countries have benefited from a respite break at Glenthorne.** This year asylum seekers from six more countries have come for the first time: Botswana, Chad, Jordan, Palestine, Senegal and Turkey. The benefits of the project 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.



This year's activities

This year there have been asylum seekers and refugees from twenty-one different countries! Kuwait, Palestine, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Senegal, Gambia, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nigeria, Chad, Botswana, Peru, El Salvador, China and Turkey. As you can see, the majority were originally from the Middle East and Africa.

We have continued to build on our relationship with the Wordsworth Trust in Grasmere and hosted a weekend with them for Bradford and Leeds Childrens Society in February. The group walked to Dove Cottage for a tour of Wordsworth's House and the museum. Jeff Cowton, the curator and Victoria Mitchel, explored the theme of tourists visiting the Lake district 200 years ago. We also took the group on a boat trip on Windermere and a walk on the fells. The photo on the next page of this report is the group on the shore of Windermere at sunset.

Here is what one of the organisers said in their evaluation:

Refreshing to see how much the young people have taken on Wordsworth's philosophy 'Let nature be your teacher'. We have all enjoyed the mountains, the fresh air, the lakes and the sound of water in the river. It has been a tonic for us all but the young people have relished every moment from listening to the silence on the hills, to gazing at the stars (informed by Terry) to playing Rumikub in the lounge in the evening. We are all well rested and restored. We are all reminded of the healing that nature can achieve. We all 'came forth into the Light'.

One of the young asylum seekers on this weekend said that the best things were:

Knowing nature in depth, the messages and poetry of William Wordsworth about nature and the human heart will stick with me, and your people.

As well as groups from four of the twelve organisations that we have developed links with over the last few years, we also worked with two new ones: a group from Carlisle (Multi Cultural Cumbria) of mainly young men, very recent asylum seekers housed in spartan hotel accommodation, and an asylum couple from Morecombe Bay Poverty Group Commission, who were given an independent holiday of three days.

Some more of the comments from our asylum seekers throughout the year:

It is the best moments of my life.

I have discovered that regardless of all the hatred coming from others, there are good people who are kind and don't judge you based on features that are out of your control. I have peace and now I will try to remember that there are far more good people in the world.



This place was never in my dreams. Being in touch with nature and the peace this transmitted to me was indescribable.

I had lived in this country for too long but never been to a place like this. It feels so good to feel accepted by the people around you.

One of the best things was Sunday morning worship – and the discipline of silence ...

Facts and figures for 2023

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|---------------------|----------|---|
| Weekend (2 nights) | February | Bradford and Leeds Childrens Society & Wordsworth Trust |
| Weekend (2 nights) | April | Bury Eagles Wing- |
| Weekend (2 nights) | May | Carlisle MCC |
| Weekend (2 nights) | June | Sheffield Assist |
| Weekend (2 nights) | July | DARE - Blackburn |
| Mid-week (3 nights) | August | Morecombe Bay (Couple) |
| Weekend (2 nights) | October | Preston |

Number of guests:

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Adult asylum seekers/refugees | 52 |
| Children asylum seekers/refugees (infant to 16 years) | 1 |
| Accompanying befrienders & volunteers | 10 |
| Total number of guests this year | 73 |

Countries of Origin of asylum Seeker/refugee guests:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Botswana, Cameroon, Chad, China, Cuba, DR Congo, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Georgia, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, India, Ingushetia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Jordon, Kenya, Kazakhstan, Kurdistan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Lithuania, Mauritius, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nigeria, North Korea, Namibia, Palestine, Pakistan, Philippines, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, Tanzania, Togo, Turkey, 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 activities and transport to Glenthorne for the Bradford and Leeds Childrens Society group visit was funded by the Group organisers and the Wordsworth Trust and are not included here).

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| Balance of fund 5/12/22 | £29,234 |
| Total project cost in 2023 | 12,728 |
| Total income to Project, grants, donations since 5/12/2022 | 7,274 |
| Balance of fund 29/11/23 | £23,780 |

Average cost per person for a 2 day break

£176

It is difficult to explain and understand the effect that a short visit to Glenthorne can have. To give you some idea it seems best to let our guests tell you in their own words:

This is a little place in the earth that I forget everything and problems.

It helped me process my grief. I am returning strengthened and with a deeper sense of happiness. The troubled world is still there – but I am in balance in life- helped by the weekend.

We learn good things. Love and peace. May God bless you all.



Basically, it helped me to understand nature and most important how to be loved and respect individuals.

It was a wonderful experience and a hug from nature to my spirit. The beautiful landscape was a blessing for my eyes. I enjoyed the boat ride, climbing the two hills and the silence of the Quaker service. I loved seeing the happiness on the faces of the group.

After waiting for a long time for Home Office decision made me suffer depression but this trip just gave me hope to be stronger.

This has provided me with great confidence for myself and great hope with humanity.

My mind is refreshed after so many years of too many stresses. It has helped me to be patient when dealing with different people of different cultures and faiths.

I am very happy because I felt like I was in my own village in Kurdistan.

I have seen the untold joy of this myself.

Well done and God bless you all Glenthorne.



Thank you!

This is the tenth full year that I have been running this project for Glenthorne and what a huge privilege it continues to be. We go forward into 2024 with spaces for six weekends and a mid-week break. The first will be mid-week in February.

Our activities are underpinned by the commitment of our trustees and staff, and the generosity of the individuals who stay here, Quaker Meetings, and the trusts that donate to this project. Every group that comes expresses their great appreciation and thanks to the people who made their visit possible by giving money for the benefit of people they will never meet. It gives them hope and restores their faith in people.

From one young man:

I never been a place like here and people like here. How kind are them. I can be kind and everyone can be kind and worth become kind to us. I got a new goal for my life from this place.

Be nice to others and others gonna be nice to you.

Terry Winterton
Friend in Residence.
Glenthorne