

## ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Without doubt, it has been the busiest year of our very active campaign. Our **Fourth Annual Report** explains.

### Ethiopia

Our campaign has moved up a step significantly, following our second visit to **Ethiopia** to start a friendship link with the village of **Choche**, the legendary 'birthplace of coffee'. Three of us had visited **Choche** in January 2006, and in October five more went. We spent three days there at the height of the harvest, so the place was humming. Though they were very busy, we were able to meet coffee farmers in their homes, visit the school and the coffee processing plant, and walk to the very birthplace of coffee itself – a lovely hill with panoramas of the lush coffee growing country of **Kaffa**. (See picture below.) At the end of our stay we concluded with an informal agreement to start our link by staying in touch with one another through letters and reports of our activities. Though not part of our discussions with the people in Choche, we decided to make a donation to the school to enable it to buy text books to ease their desperate shortage. **Nekemte Melaku** and **Dessalegn Jena**, our key contacts in the **Oromia Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union**, facilitated this after we left.



Since returning, we have used stories, testimonies and photos we gathered to give talks, presentations, school assemblies and lessons. We have addressed about 2700 people on 40 different occasions, and written numerous articles and other materials, which will have been read by many thousands more. Inspired by the **Choche** visit, Lesley Lamb's project, '**Spilling the Beans**,' working with children in other local primary schools, is now underway. It has been funded by **Cumbria Community Foundation**.

We feel, therefore, that our investment of time and energy has been abundantly fruitful. In both a general and a specific way the experience has also informed our **Trade Justice** work: specifically on the **Starbucks** issue (blocking trade-marking of

Ethiopian coffees in USA – still not resolved in spite of **Starbucks'** promises); and generally in increasing our understanding of the weak position of small farmers in global markets.

We are now building an **Ethiopia Fund** to enable the link to develop long term. Appropriately this has been boosted by the sales of **Fairtrade** organic Ethiopian **Yirgacheffe** coffee at many events.

### Events

The main reason we put on events is to **provide information** and **raise awareness** of **Fairtrade**, so that more people buy ever more **Fairtrade** products. Events also enable us to **celebrate** with our **members**, to **recruit new members**, and to **raise funds**. We have had an exceptional number of events this year, none of which would have been successful without hard work from the committee and many members who are 'on call' to help run them.

The **Strawberry Tea in Borrowdale**, 11<sup>th</sup> June, raised £1000 for our funds. Our stand at **Keswick Agricultural Show**, 28<sup>th</sup> August, again attracted large numbers, who in return for our hospitality gave us over £400 in donations. We were present at the **Hospice at Home** fundraising event, 28<sup>th</sup> October, but were very pleased that they have taken over the serving of **Fairtrade** refreshments from us. We were blown by the violent winds into the Skiddaw for the **Victorian Fayre**, 3<sup>rd</sup> December, but along with 400 other carollers were blessed with a dry evening at the **Christmas Eve Carol Singing** in the Market Place. In between these two we drank many varieties of **Fairtrade** coffee and displayed dozens more at **Celebrate! And Taste the Coffee** at Theatre by the Lake, 11<sup>th</sup> December. There we launched Edition 10 of the **Directory**, listing 54 guest houses and hotels, and 23 cafés and restaurants serving **Fairtrade** teas and coffees; 14 shops selling **Fairtrade** and **fairly traded** goods; 38 community organisations and businesses supporting **Fairtrade**, including eight validated **Fairtrade Churches**. The **Directory**, which was sponsored by **Wise Speke**, was our first publication to display our new **logo** (see top left).

In the New Year we provided support to student activists who organised an outstanding **Fairtrade Schools Conference** at **Cockermouth School**, on

18<sup>th</sup> January, which was attended by members of schools councils from 13 West Cumbrian Secondary Schools. **Keswick School**, where there is now a campaign group, was one.

In **Fairtrade Fortnight** 26<sup>th</sup> February – 11<sup>th</sup> March (*'Change today: Choose Fairtrade'*) we had five 'happenings'. **1.** The **'Café Marathon'** encouraged our members to up their caffeine intake by visiting as many of local cafés as possible to drink a cup of **Fairtrade** tea or coffee or fruit-juice.



**2.** On 6<sup>th</sup> March **Samuel Magona** coffee farmer and chairman of the Busamaga Growers Co-operative in SE Uganda, and an inspiring witness to the importance of **Fairtrade**, spoke to 30 invited guests at a **Cumbrian Breakfast** hosted by **Gary and Donna MacRae** at the **Wild Strawberry**.

**3.** Later, after a flying visit to **Braithwaite Primary School**, **Sam** spoke at a **Members and Friends Coffee Morning**, at Theatre by the Lake.

**4.** Throughout the **Fortnight** members of our committee visited **local businesses** to ask them to provide **Fairtrade** teas and coffees for their staff if they are not already doing so.

**5.** Finally, on 10<sup>th</sup> March, **George Alagiah**, in his capacity as **Patron** of the **Fairtrade Foundation**, spoke at an informal reception at the Skiddaw Hotel to a small group of members, and owners and managers of some of the larger hotels in and around Keswick.



At St. John's on 4<sup>th</sup> April, **The Fitzwilliam String Quartet** played Haydn's **Seven Last Words from the Cross** in a moving candle-lit concert. The proceeds were generously donated to our funds, for which we were very grateful.

## Committee Work

We now meet fortnightly. We have seven new committee members. We have spent much time planning for the next three years and now have a **strategic framework** for all our activities, with more committee and some non-committee members taking **coordination** and **leadership** roles.

## Media and Publicity

We continue to get a great deal of coverage, including regular articles in the **Reminder** and **Lake District Herald**; and now a bi-monthly article in **KesMail**. We had two slots on **Radio Cumbria** in Fairtrade Fortnight. We have launched a new **leaflet**. We keep in touch with our members (of which we now have 270) through three **News-**

**letters** a year, for which we have received a second grant from **Cumbria Community Foundation**. We continue to change our displays regularly at **Theatre by the Lake**, where we have the use of a very prominent notice board. We have received a **Neighbourhood Forum Grant** to erect a slate sign in **Hope Park** to declare, a little belatedly since it we received the award in 2005, **Keswick as a Fairtrade Town**. Our **website** is being rebuilt. We have produced a very useful campaigning **postcard**. On one side is a photograph of the **Fairtrade** classrooms in **Choche**; and on reverse the powerful words of **Workineh Heldaje**, Choche Coffee Farmer: *'We don't want your money. We simply want you to buy our coffee at a fair price so we can be independent.'*

## Charitable Status

Having changed our constitution at an **EGM** on 29<sup>th</sup> September, to make it specifically 'charitable' in letter as well as in spirit, we have been disappointed by the failure of our second application for Charitable Status. The grounds for refusal seem to be based on a misunderstanding about **Fairtrade**. This we find odd considering that the **Fairtrade Foundation** has charitable status, and was set up by agencies who also promote **Fairtrade** and which are themselves charitable, including **Oxfam** and **Christian Aid**. Having taken advice, we are asking for a review.

## Cumbria Fair Trade Network

We continue to be an active member of **Cumbria Fair Trade Network** to which we contribute funds, time and people. We have three members of our own committee also on the **Network Steering Committee**, which meets every two months, and we attend twice yearly **Open Meetings**.

## Trade Justice

The lobbying group continues to meet once a month. We keep up-to-date as far as possible on current issues, such as the drawing up of **Economic Partnership Agreements** between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries; the EU is using the agreements to put pressure on these poor countries to liberalise their trade. We have made contact with **Sajjad Karim**, MEP for the North West and he has been helpful and encourages us to feel we are making some small impact on the complex world of international trade.

Many of you will have heard **Prosperity Raymond** from **Haiti** speak on 12<sup>th</sup> March about the dire situation in his country. On the advice of Prosperity, we are lobbying **Hilary Benn**, through our ever helpful MP, **Tony Cunningham**, on the crucial question of **debt relief** for **Haiti**.

*Please bring this Report with you to the AGM, Crosthwaite Parish Room, on 4<sup>th</sup> June. Thank you.*