



Charity no. 1121690

Keswick and District Fair Trade Campaign



Fairtrade Changes Lives

ANNUAL REPORT 2009

It seems hard to believe that the **Fairtrade Towns Movement** is still less than 10 years old. **Garstang** was officially declared the world's first **Fairtrade Town** on 1st November, 2001, and **Keswick** came in, just over three years later, on 11th January 2005, at number **80**. (There are now **435** in UK, and globally **676** in 18 countries.) However, as we mark 4½ years as a **Fairtrade Town**, and 6 years as a **campaign**, we can say that while we are still young in years, we are certainly approaching maturity in experience. Perhaps this helps to explain why, amongst other things, the benefits of our 'wisdom' have been sought by dozens of groups all over the country; why we have just been involved in a major study of the **European Fairtrade Towns Movement**; and why, too, in February this year, we felt the need to give up a whole day to review our progress and ways of working. This report highlights our **activities**, but begins with the bigger picture.

Facts, figures and trends

Estimated UK sales of **Fairtrade** products in 2008 were **£712.6m**, up over **43%** on 2007. Well over **4,500** products in this country now carry the **FAIRTRADE Mark**. The largest category is **bananas**, followed by **coffee**, **cotton** (the fastest growing category) and **tea**. Seven in 10 households now purchase **Fairtrade** goods, including an extra **1.3m** more households in 2008. There are over **460** producer organisations selling to the UK and by the end of October 2008 there were **872** certified producer groups in the global **Fairtrade** system, representing more than **7.5** million farmers, their families, and workers in **59** countries.

While there has been a worry – naturally – that **Fairtrade** sales would be hit by the recession, evidence from a major global survey of people's attitudes to **Fairtrade** this year, suggests otherwise. Locally our impressions bear this out.

Events, events, but not quite so many ...

This year we have had fewer events than the previous year, to everyone's relief. Following last year's well attended **AGM** on 4th June, at which our Ethiopian friends talked about Choche (see more under Ethiopia section), the first major event was the annual **Strawberry Tea in Borrowdale** on 8th June. Again the weather was lovely, the **Segretta Stompers** as soothing as ever, and the strawberries and cream just as scrumptious. The whole occasion made special for us all by the presence of **Mekonnen**, **Raya** and **Nekemte**. We raised a record **£1361**, 50% more than the previous year.

Two weeks later, we helped to host 28 **Fairtrade** fruit farmers from 8 Latin American and African countries who are the part owners of **AgroFair**. With them were **AgroFair** workers from their London and Dutch HQs. While here they visited **Gavin** and **Laura Fearon** at **Hollows Farm** in Borrowdale, and three **supermarkets** in West Cumbria; and celebrated

with **Cumbrian campaigners** and the **Mayor** and **Mayoress** at a party at **Keswick School**.

In late June we played the **Snakes and Ladders of International Trade** at **Crosthwaite Parish Fete**; but had to accept once again the cancellation the **Agricultural Show** in late August because of a waterlogged field. However, we were delighted to have a stall at Keswick's first **Food Fair**, in November and another at the **Christmas Fair**, in December. We had a lovely little Christmas party with **Emma** and **Terry** at **Temporary Measure**.

For **Fairtrade Fortnight** local activities centred on **Go Bananas**, the national awareness raising 'party' promoted by the **Fairtrade Foundation**, in which we encouraged many local organisations to take part. The outcome was impressive. When we tallied the results at a small event at the **Theatre** on 10th March, we recorded **15** group entries which, between them, ate **894** Fairtrade bananas in a 24 hour period 6th / 7th March, contributing to the national total of **470,001!** They included **205** people attending **Words by the Water**, **160 Keswick Scouts and Guides** on a camp at St John's in the Vale, **99** pupils at **St Herbert's School**, **57** pupils at each of **Bassenthwaite** and **Braithwaite Primary Schools**, and **38** at **Threlkeld Primary School**. Others included people who attended an all day banana-cake tea party at **Northside** in Grange; members of the **Catholic Church**, customers shopping at **Booths**, and the **Coop**, and guests staying at **Allerdale House** and **Grange Country Guest House**.

On the record

From late summer, into autumn and over the winter the revision of our **Directory** (Edition 11) consumed more time than we ever intended. And after many delays it was finally launched in March by **Margaret Purkiss**, our **Patron**. It lists almost **90** local **guest houses**, **hotels**, **B & Bs** and **hostels** providing **Fairtrade** tea and coffee for their guests, very many

exclusively; **60 self-catering properties** where **Fairtrade** tea and coffee is supplied for holiday makers. Furthermore **50 local coffee** and **tea shops, restaurants, takeaways, pubs** and **bars** were listed as serving **Fairtrade** drinks of one kind or another to their customers, and **18 shops** selling, between them, a vast range of **Fairtrade** and fairly traded products. By the time of publication it was – of course – already out of date. For this reason it will be our last hard copy. From now on everything will be on our new **website**, part funded by a grant from **Neighbourhood Forum**, which should be completed soon by **Keswick Computer Services**.

Talks, talks and more talks ...

There has been no end to our schedule of talks, given mostly by Allan Sharman, Elspeth Sherwen and Joe Human. In the year to the end of April, we had given **70** to over **2000** people, including many to schools in Cumbria, where the greatest growth in **Fairtrade** activities is now taking place.

Seeking publicity

We have continued to generate regular articles in the local press, with coverage in two out of every three weeks in the **Keswick Reminder**, **Lake District Herald** and other Cumbrian newspapers. We continue to have an article every other month in **KesMail**, and we offer twice yearly articles to the editors of **local parish magazines** (though they do not always use them). April's **Cumbria Life** featured our campaign in an excellent article. For the first time we have placed **adverts** in the winter, spring and summer programmes at **Theatre by the Lake**.

Ethiopia: keeping the friendship going

In May and June we had the great pleasure of hosting **Mekonen Aweke** and **Raya Abakoyas**, Chair and Vice-Chair of **Choche Coffee Farmers' Cooperative**, accompanied by **Nekemte Melaku**, Export Coordinator for the **Oromia Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union**, who acted as translator.

Our two weeks with them were packed: putting and croquet; launching on the Lake; seeing the **Queen** in Whitehaven; and having many meals together. **Roger** and **Margaret Purkiss**, Mayor and Mayoress, welcomed them at a reception in the **Town Hall**. We took them to **Gordon** and **Alison Wilson's** farm at Caldbeck; to **Honister Slate Mine**; to **Braithwaite Primary School**; to **Buttermere**; and to the **Pencil Museum**. We have already mentioned their attendance at the **AGM** and **Strawberry Tea**.

Perhaps the highlight of the visit for them was a day at **Taylor's of Harrogate**, where they met the coffee team, tasted ('cupped') coffees from all over the world, and were shown round the processing facility.

Everywhere we went people welcomed them as friends. And all who met them were in some way touched and enriched. We count ourselves most fortunate to have them as friends. And we were very

grateful to our members who contributed to the costs of the visit.

In **November** Jo Alberti and Joe Human returned to Choche, with photographer, Richard Human. Our purpose was to review with Mekonen and Raya the value of their visit to Keswick, to talk about future developments in the link and to find out about the impact of ever rising **food prices** on households. Richard continued his photo-documentation project, the outcome of which will be a second **photo-exhibition** at **Theatre by the Lake** this summer.

You, our members

Our membership is vital to our overall effectiveness as a campaign, through attendance and help at our events, and for funds through annual **subscriptions**. We have had a major push to get lapsed members back into the campaign, and the numbers are now nearly **300** again.

Ways of working

In February we undertook a major **review** of our campaign, focussing most closely on our ways of working. We were assisted by one of our members, **Gopal Rao**, an organisational consultant from Oxford.

The importance of networking

We continue to contribute to, and benefit from, active participation in **Cumbria Fair Trade Network**, an alliance of **20 Fairtrade** communities. Three members of our own committee are on the **Steering Committee**: Elspeth Sherwen, Chair, Joe Human, Coordinator, and Jo Alberti, covering Trade Justice.

Trade Justice matters

Our name is **Keswick and District Fair Trade Campaign** (two words). We both promote **Fairtrade** (one word) *and* campaign on the often complex issues of international trade rules and practices, seeking to make them fairer to poorer producers in developing countries, i.e. **fair trade** (two words). A small but committed group of **Trade Justice** campaigners continues to meet monthly to keep up to date on what is happening in the world of international trade, and related areas. Amongst the issues we have covered this year have been the following: **Commercial Tax Evasion**; **Haiti**; **Economic Partnership Agreements**; the still limping **Doha Round** of the **World Trade Organisation**; the impact of the **global financial crisis** on the world's poorest peoples; and **Vulture Funds** which are run by **private equity companies** and **hedge funds** managers, which seek to make vast profits by buying up the debts of heavily indebted poor countries at a cheap price, then subsequently trying to recover the full amount from them through litigation. Vulture fund companies are quite secretive, and are often based in tax havens. Through lobbying we were able to get the **Companies Bill** tightened so that private companies have to provide a higher level of **accountability** and **transparency**: an important concession.

Joe Human, June 2009