



Keswick and District Fair Trade Campaign



Newsletter No.10 November 2006

We need you – more than ever! Fairtrade changes lives – so far 5 million of them in 58 countries worldwide! We all *know* that. Some of us have seen it for ourselves in Choche (see **Ethiopia Report** over). Our ambition is to change even more – for the better – simply by shopping. So we are asking all our members, that is *everyone* who receives this Newsletter, to ask for **Fairtrade, wherever we are, wherever we go**. That means in workplaces, shops, coffee bars, restaurants, hotels and guest houses, campsites, fast food outlets, and churches (see box). Wherever we find it, let's praise it. Wherever we don't, let's ask for it – and express the wish that *next* time we call (if there is a *next* time!), it will be on the menu, on the shelves, on the breakfast table, in the bedrooms, at the back of the church – in short everywhere! So please be active **demanders** of **Fairtrade**. Only by being so will we spread Fairtrade to the benefit of more poor communities, and grow those 5 millions into many more, not through charity, just by shopping - fairly. **Make Fairtrade Your Habit!**

More members please! We are now about 250 members. Why do we need more? If we have more members we can reach even more people. We shall also have more funds for spreading the message further. And we shall have more 'weight'. So we are asking you to do two things, one now, one in 4 month's time. First, when you have finished with this **Newsletter** and **Fair Comment** give it to a friend and suggest that they become a member. Second, come to a special **Bring a Friend** celebration at Theatre by the Lake in next **Fairtrade Fortnight** (26th February to 11th March). Exact date to be firmed up: more on this after Christmas.

Christmas and after We're not leafletting this year but we are advertising. Please – again – do all you can to shop **Fairtrade** this Christmas. We shall have another stall at the **Victorian Fayre** on 3rd December. If you would like to be involved, contact Wendy Sougnez, on 78221. In the New Year there will be more coffee mornings at Theatre by the Lake, dates yet to be firmed up. On 11th December we shall hold a special event at Theatre by the Lake: **Celebrate! And Taste the Coffee**. This is for guest house and coffee shop owners to encourage more to take up **Fairtrade**. There we shall launch **Edition 10** of the **Directory**.

The Committee We now meet fortnightly for 2 hours on Tuesday evenings. We have had three new members join us recently, but there is always room for more. If you are interested in joining us, ring Jo Alberti, on 79199.

Fairtrade in Keswick's Churches Our plans over the next three years include making *every* church in and around Keswick a **Fairtrade Church**, officially recognised by the Fairtrade Foundation. We have many already: **Southey Street Methodists, King's Church, the Catholic Church, Thornthwaite, Braithwaite, Grange, Newlands and Borrowdale**. We know others are committed to it, though don't yet have Fairtrade Foundation accreditation. If you attend a church which doesn't do it, please do your bit to convert it, and when you have, encourage them to go for the award. To get the award, all that is needed is for the appropriate council or church meeting to agree to: (i) use **Fairtrade** tea and coffee for all meetings for which the church has responsibility; (ii) move forward on using other **Fairtrade** products, such as sugar, biscuits and fruit; (iii) promote **Fairtrade** during **Fairtrade Fortnight**, and through other activities whenever possible.

Charitable Status We have started the process of applying for Charitable Status again. We failed at our last attempt in 2004. At an Extraordinary General Meeting on 29th September we changed a key part of our constitution to make the wording more 'charitable', having taken advice from Oxfam. Charitable Status will help us in many ways, including increasing our income.

Keswick Agricultural Show Our stand at the Show attracts more people every year. Is it that they just come for the free cuppa and a sit down? We don't think so. It really is **Fairtrade** which brings most of them in – and this year they gave us over £400 in donations!

News from around Cumbria Cumbria Fair Trade Network, of which we are a founder member, continues to work closely with the County Council. With their Design Studio we have recently produced an exhibition to be used in libraries and other public places around the county. **Grange** and **Egremont** were recently declared **Fairtrade Towns**, making 10 in Cumbria. Kirkby Lonsdale, Barrow and Gosforth are ready to apply. There is now an **Allerdale Fairtrade Directory**.

And, finally, we have a new logo (top left) Why? Because we want a symbol – a brand – to 'mark' both elements of what we do: a) to promote **Fairtrade** products; b) to campaign for greater fairness for poor producers. It has been designed by one of our members. We think it is both a clever and attractive 'bean'. We hope you like it. Would **Starbucks**, too, we wonder? (See **Trade Justice Lobbying** report attached.)

Ethiopia October 2006

The group of 5 visitors to the village of Choche in Ethiopia, Joe Human, Elspeth Sherwen, Lesley Lamb, Allan Sharman and Jacqui Jewell, have now returned after a very successful visit.

This second visit was facilitated by Dessalegn Jena, Deputy Manager of the Oromia Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union (OCFCU). The aim was to develop the link through friendship with the village community, the seeds of which were sown on the previous visit in January this year. The group was welcomed by Dessalegn Jena at the OCFCU offices. Here Joe Human, one of the earlier visitors, met old friends.

After a day in Addis Ababa settling into Ethiopia, two vehicles drove the group, together with Dessalegn and Nekemte Melaku, our interpreter, 300km through small towns, villages and beautiful countryside, to Jimma where we would be based for four nights, 50 km from Choche.

The 3 day programme was packed with visits, meetings, interviews and a variety of encounters which were to be incredibly rich and rewarding for all members of the team.

There was a meeting with members of the Coffee Cooperative at their office in Choche where Joe outlined the purpose of the proposed link between Choche and Keswick. There were several visits to the school where there was a riotous welcome from hundreds of children and their teachers. A huge effort was made by the staff to ensure that as much as possible of the school life was available for the group to experience, including an opportunity to sit in on classes, interview teachers and students, and discuss issues with the Director and Deputy Director.

An important member of the community in Choche, as in Keswick, is the mayor. As a paid district employee at the head of the elected village council he proved to be extremely helpful and willing to arrange things. He also showed a depth of confidence in the group's intentions which he demonstrated by discussing plans for the village with the help of other members of the community.

There were visits to typical farming families in the village which gave a vivid picture of the material poverty of life in Choche and the problems which they face from day to day. It was at one such encounter that Workineh Heldaje, a coffee farmer, responded to a query about his livelihood by saying: 'Fairtrade has definitely helped our community. It has helped the school and it has improved our water supplies. It has also made a big difference to the price we get for our coffee with the guaranteed payment.' He went on: 'We've had had many foreign visitors here. But the only ones who have really helped us were those from Oxfam America who promised to do something about the price of coffee. And they did.' And then he added what to us was the most powerful comment of our week. 'We don't want your money. We

simply want you to buy our coffee at a better [fair] price so we can be independent.' The message could not be clearer: fairness pleas, not charity.

Earlier we had listened to Tadesse Alemu, another farmer, who said this. 'We started selling into the Fairtrade market two years ago after our income almost completely collapsed. Now we have more food and medicines, and our children go to school. We understand that Fairtrade is very important to the community and you should do more to get people to buy Fairtrade to help improve our lives. Whatever you do, please keep any promises you make.'

So it's clear from this response, even before any evaluation has been done, that an important priority for the group is to reflect on any promises made and ensure they are fulfilled.

Another important objective of the visit was to achieve a greater understanding of the different processes which are used in the preparation of the coffee beans before they are ready for transportation to Addis Ababa. A group of farmers walked and talked us through the various stages beginning with the picking of the coffee cherry and ending with the drying and bagging of the beans.

During all these encounters there were welcomes, handshakes, hospitality, including the very special coffee making ceremony, conversations and introductions to many of the residents of Choche. A contact list has been compiled for the future.

The 'icing on the cake' came on the last day when we were invited to take a walk to 'the birth place of coffee'. This was located on a hill just outside the village surrounded by coffee bushes looking out over the surrounding amazingly fertile countryside. An unforgettable moment.

First thoughts about intentions from hereon are:

- To review regularly progress regarding any promises made.
- To support children at Braithwaite School to exchange letters with Choche children.
- To exchange a newsletter every 3-6 months between Keswick Fair Trade Campaign and community of Choche.

These three commitments will help to underline the objectives of the campaign for Trade Justice upon which the coffee farmers of Choche and Ethiopia are so dependent.

Allan Sharman

31.10.06

If you would like to contribute to the Ethiopia Fund which we are now building up, please contact Jo Alberti, on 79199. The fund will be used to further the link, including schools work here and exchange visits with people from Choche.