

Newsletter No.12 July 2007

We are a little late with our June Newsletter, awaiting delivery of **Fair Comment** (enclosed). We hope you enjoy the round-up. We start with **events**:

Fair Trade Fortnight in late February and early March brought us the immense privilege of a visit from **Sam Magona**, a coffee farmer from Mbale in eastern Uganda who has been chairman of his local growers' co-operative since 1982. Sam joined members of the campaign and invited guests for breakfast at the **Wild Strawberry**.



Later the same morning he came to **Theatre by the Lake** (left) to speak to a wider audience. He assured us that Fairtrade has brought significant improvements in health and education to his communities.

At the end of the Fortnight, **George Alagiah** gave generously of his time and his eloquence at a reception of local hoteliers and café-owners at the **Skiddaw Hotel**. The passionate conviction of both Sam and George encouraged us to intensify our efforts to ensure that everyone in this town and its surrounding villages make the choice to buy Fairtrade. Sam was generous in his praise of our efforts: a good example was apparent during the fortnight when cafés which serve Fairtrade were encouraged by Bob Bryden to tempt the unconvinced to stop and drink their excellent beverages.

The World Can't Wait was the message of our demonstration in Keswick on 2nd June, when we were joined by those who had been active in the **Make Poverty History** campaign to remind the G8 of the promises they had made two years ago to the poorer countries. We held a third **Strawberry Tea** in the lovely grounds of Malcolm and Judith Stonestreet's house in Grange on 10th June. The sun shone, the **Segretta Stompers Jazz Band** entertained us and drew in passers-by, and we made £800, thanks to the donation of the strawberries and the gifts of the draw and the generosity of all who came. This money will be well used in our campaigning.

Our fourth **AGM** was on 4th June, attended by 60 people. After the business we heard an inspirational talk by **Dr. Nick Maurice**, on linking, which is covered later.

Many of you were among the 200 people who came to **Theatre by the Lake** on 22nd June to see the film **Black Gold**. It was shown as a means of raising awareness of the impact of the global coffee market on producers' lives. The film reveals how coffee – the

second most valuable commodity in the world – is traded in a way which deprives coffee producers of all but the smallest payment for their work. The film focussed on the effects of this trading system on Ethiopian farmers, whose poverty stricken lives were contrasted with the cappuccino life style of Westerners, as typified by **Starbucks**. (More on Starbucks last column over the page.) While the multinational coffee roasters reap huge profits coffee farmers and their families suffer great injustice for the sake of our daily caffeine dose. Star of the film is **Tadesse Meskela**, friend of our campaign, who tours the globe tirelessly in search of a better price for his farmers' coffee. (See **Choche – Keswick Link**.)

After the film the audience took part in a debate led by Jo Alberti, Chair of our Campaign. The questions raised and the comments made demonstrated the impact the film had on them. Rachael Swift said, *'I think it's done me the world of good to see the background to the Fairtrade movement. Many people, myself included, are simply unaware of what is happening to the producers in developing countries.'* Another member of the Campaign, Elspeth Sherwen, said, *'Many in the audience seemed quite stunned by the film, and the depth and passion of the questions showed all too well how the film had affected them. Having been in Ethiopia myself, it felt like being back there sharing the plight of the farmers.'*

Right: A 'still' from Black Gold, showing teams of Ethiopian women workers inspecting every single coffee bean which is exported. Their pay is 25p a day for an 8 hour shift.



If you missed **Black Gold** at the Theatre it will be shown later in the year (date to be announced) at the **Alhambra Cinema** in Keswick. So, make an occasion of it: take the family to see it and witness the injustice that all Fair Trade Campaign members are seeking to address.

Future events: We shall be at the **Keswick Show** on 27th August. If you can help on our stand, please contact Jo Alberti, 79199, Johannaalberti@aol.com. At Rawnsley Hall, 7.30, 5th October **Paul Valentin**, Christian Aid's International Director, will speak on the **Impact of Climate Change on the World's Poorest Peoples**, at a meeting organised by **Keswick Fair World Alliance**.

Choche – Keswick Link

Our efforts to develop the Link between our campaign and wider community of Keswick with the village of

Choche in Ethiopia are progressing steadily. Since our last newsletter in February, we have had contact with our friends in the **Oromia Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union**, of which **Tadesse Meskela** is the General Manager, in Addis Ababa, who are facilitating our communication with Choche. **Dessalegn Jena**, the Deputy General Manager, is giving us much encouragement to press on with our efforts to establish the Link and has offered to help us in any way he can. Three of us will re-visit Choche in October to develop further friendships with the community and ask representatives of the people if they would like to come to Keswick next year to tell us about their lives. This will be helpful both in cementing our friendship and solidarity with the people of Choche and in our campaign to raise awareness of the value of Fairtrade to the livelihoods of coffee producers throughout Ethiopia. We saw the power of personal witness when **Sam Magona** was with us in Fairtrade Fortnight and talked about the lives of Ugandan coffee farmers.



At our **AGM** Nick Maurice (pictured at our **Wild Strawberry Breakfast**) gave us many insights to help us as we develop our Link, by sharing the benefit of his 25 years' experience involvement with the **Marlborough – Gunjur Link** (in The Gambia) and through **UK One World Linking Association**, of which he is the Director and we are a member.

Trade Justice

Black Gold vividly reminded us that the livelihoods of producers in the South are held to ransom by those with the power to control markets. Recently a powerful group has emerged from the **World Trade Organisation**: the US, the EU, Brazil and India - **The G4**. Recent meetings of the G4 were meant to lead to an agreement which would then be approved by the 150 nations of the WTO. No such agreement emerged, so it seems certain that the **Doha Round** of talks in the WTO, intended to produce changes in trade rules to the benefit of developing countries, has finally collapsed. The bad news is that the rules which favour the rich will not change. The good news is that developing countries were not forced into agreements which would not benefit them, but would have been claimed to be 'development friendly'.

Meanwhile we continue to lobby the EU through **Tony Cunningham, MP**, and **Sajjad Karim, MEP**. We are concerned that the **Economic Partnership Agreements** between the **ACP** (African, Caribbean and Pacific) **Group** (if you saw **Black Gold**, the representative of that group at Cancun was very angry indeed!) and the EU are not forced through without a full recognition of the needs of the ACP countries.

We are pressing for full representation of the interests of **small coffee farmers** in the new draft of the **International Coffee Agreement**.

Our link with **Prosperity Raymond** from **Haiti** led us into a successful lobby to halt the release by the **Swiss Government** of funds held in a Swiss bank account to

the ex-Haitian dictator, **Jean-Claude Duvalier**, rather than to the Haitian Government. Haiti is in the complex process of debt cancellation, and we have pressed the **British Government** to use its influence to ensure immediate **debt cancellation** for Haiti without conditions.

We reported last time that **Starbucks** had removed their opposition to the **Ethiopian Government's** attempts to trademark three high quality Ethiopian coffees in USA: **Harar**, **Sidamo** and **Yirgacheffe** (the last of which we sell). But, in fact, it took until June for Starbucks to sign an agreement with the Ethiopian Government to recognise their **'intellectual property rights'** (IPs) to their own coffees. The issue of IPs is now a significant matter in world trade, with many multinational companies securing, or trying to secure, IPs of the resources of developing countries. But Starbucks was defeated by the power of global campaigning, led by **Oxfam America**, which resulted in 96,000 emails, faxes, phone calls and letters to Starbucks' HQ in Seattle.

To take action on making trade fairer for poor countries see enclosed card from Oxfam: **RIPPED OFF**



**25 years fighting
poverty through
trade**

In 1979 **Traidcraft** was set up as a Christian response to poverty. Traidcraft is in two sections.

Traidcraft's first section is **Traidcraft plc** – a trading company. This buys goods and materials at fair prices from poor small producers in more than 30 countries – so helping these people to build better lives through trade. Some of these goods – Traidcraft coffee, biscuits and tea for example – are widely available from large retail outlets and supermarkets. However, many more types of fairly traded products are sold through Traidcraft **'Fair Traders'**, of whom there are many, each selling relatively small amounts from their stalls – frequently in churches.

In Keswick **Oxfam** sells a range of Traidcraft products and **Southey Street Methodist Church** is a Traidcraft **'Fair Trader'**, selling a selected range of Traidcraft goods from the church stall, currently on the **1st** and **3rd** **Sundays** of the month and at **coffee mornings**. The Traidcraft catalogue lists a wide range of goods but the church does not routinely stock many jewellery, fashion and household items. However, these can be ordered and delivered quickly. For more details contact Ian Boyd on 75006.

Traidcraft Exchange (the second section of Traidcraft) is a charity that works with poor people to help them win their fair share of world trade whilst still running a good business and without exploiting people. This work consists largely of providing practical support which makes a real difference, such as information, training, and design advice.

Traidcraft also runs a series of **'Meet the People Tours'** (www.traidcraft-tours.com) which are holidays that provide opportunities to meet the people behind the products. Traidcraft was one of the founders of the **Fairtrade Foundation**. You can find out more about Traidcraft from their website: www.traidcraft.co.uk.

Next Newsletter with Autumn Fair Comment, November 2007.