

Newsletter No.13 November 2007

When we were in Ethiopia last year Workineh Heldaje, Choche coffee farmer, asked us what we would do as a result of our visit. *'What will be your fruitfulness?'* he said, rather poetically. We hope that this Newsletter will give some idea of the 'fruitfulness' of the last five months.

For new members, whom we welcome, we start by telling you that we produce a Newsletter three times a year. Each one comes out with **Fair Comment** from the **Fairtrade Foundation**, your Winter 2007 copy of which is enclosed. This **Fair Comment** features Conrad James, Fairtrade banana farmer in St. Lucia, whom two Keswick students (see opposite) visited in August just after Hurricane Dean had devastated his farm.

Theatre by the Lake continues to give invaluable support to Fairtrade. Not only do they serve Fairtrade coffee and tea in their café, and have given us permanent notice board space to put across the Fairtrade message, but in the summer holidays they did even more! To coincide with *Around the World in 80 Days* they devised an *'Around the World the Fairtrade Way Treasure Hunt'*. With the help of Phileas Fogg, the main character in the show, children travelled across the world, hunting Fairtrade treasure contained in eleven Fairtrade cotton bags around the Theatre building. The children learned through this process how Fairtrade changes lives. Completed entries went into a draw, and the winner, Rebecca Wells, who attends Cockermonth School, received a hamper of Fairtrade goods and two tickets to attend a performance at the Theatre. Working with Theatre staff on this project was immensely satisfying.

The **Lonsdale Alhambra** showed **Black Gold** at the end of August for those who had not been able to see it at the Theatre in June

Talking about Fairtrade: Throughout the last five months, Allan Sharman and Elspeth Sherwen have continued to give talks and presentations to a wide variety of audiences. These have included primary school children, Rotary International District Meetings, Mothers' Union, W.I. and other Fair Trade / Fairtrade Groups in the county. In the last 20 months we have talked to well over 5000 people on more than 100 occasions. Following Allan's return to Choche, this October, the presentations have been updated to provide information on the current impact that Fairtrade has on this coffee growing community. (See Allan's piece below: **Making the Link Happen**.) Bookings are being taken well into 2008, so please contact Allan or Elspeth to check their availability to talk to your group or association. Details are here:

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Since Fairtrade Fortnight the committee has met regularly for breakfast at the **Wild Strawberry**, whenever there has been a particular item which merits relaxed discussion. In September we invited Sarah Kitching and Emily Webzell, from Keswick School, to join us for breakfast, with their teachers Alan Nanson and Sue Penrice, to talk about their visit to St Lucia. They had won this as first prize in a national design competition, organised by **PrintIt** and the **Fairtrade Foundation**. The report they gave us of their visit was moving and informative. It is vitally important, of course, that young people both absorb and communicate the message of Fairtrade. We were, therefore, delighted to welcome another Keswick School student, John Hawarth, to another of our breakfasts. John's engagement with issues such as Fairtrade and climate change is inspiring.

At the beginning of October we held another **Extraordinary General Meeting** in response to advice from the Charity Commission. We trust that this time they will reconsider their former decision to reject our application for **Charitable Status**.



Wednesday 21st November saw our first **Fairtrade Wine Tasting** event, hosted by Paul Briers of the Wine Rack, Keswick. The Wine Rack promotes its range of Fairtrade wines as 'Wines that Make a Difference', from which Paul chose a selection of five different wines for people to try. Members of the committee were on hand to talk about campaign issues, as well as sampling the wines alongside interested customers! It was good to share with Paul in his enthusiasm to promote a different Fairtrade product, at what proved to be a very 'fruitful' evening!

We will definitely be present at the **Christmas Fayre** on 2nd December. Do come to our stall opposite the Skiddaw. We are appreciative of all the support we receive from you at events like this. The campaign is made up of the efforts of everyone involved. Thank you!

Taste the Coffee: From Tuesday, 27th November to Thursday 6th December you and all your friends and neighbours are invited to a TEN DAY coffee tasting event! We have been generously loaned the empty half the property belonging to the Cumberland Building Society in Station Street in which to hold this. Please call in for a coffee: we shall have a very wide variety to choose from. Buy cards, Yirgacheffe coffee and raffle tickets for our Fairtrade Christmas hampers. And view pictures from our most recent visit to Ethiopia.

Making the Link Happen

Just back with the latest news on the lives of producers in the southwest region of Ethiopia are Allan Sharman and Joe Human, who have seen and heard for themselves what a difference there has been in the lives of the people in Choche since their visit one year ago. We spent some time talking to one of them, Mulugeta Ababa who, with his wife and six children, farms coffee and maize on one and half hectares. All except the youngest child help on the farm after school and during the holidays, in an attempt to maximize the return from the small crop on which they depend for the year's income. Mulugeta reminded us of the benefits that have been generated by the cooperative which enable him to sell his coffee into the Fairtrade market. There is extra income for the family, extra classrooms at the school, potable water from the protected spring and the start of a new health post just outside the village. When the coffee price collapsed catastrophically in 2001/02 this family had to sell their three cows to survive.

Joe's son, Richard, a professional photographer was on an assignment to record the lives of farmers in the Oromia region. Richard's generosity will enable the campaign to use his material to promote Fairtrade. Raising awareness, by bringing alive the story of the injustices associated with the world coffee trade, is a vital part of our campaign through schools, societies, clubs, churches and other campaigning groups. There will also be an exhibition of Richard's photographs, entitled **After Black Gold**, at Theatre by the Lake from 9th to 29th April 2008.



Moknon Acuoke (L), and Abreya Ibrahim (R), Chair and Vice Chair of Choche Coffee Farmers' Cooperative. Like us, they are volunteers. Unlike us, they also have farms to run. During the coffee season they can be up all night to make sure that the previous day's harvest is fully processed.



But here's the most exciting news. Many of you know that the committee is working hard to cement our friendship with this community by inviting people from Choche to come to Keswick. Joe and Allan had further discussions about who would come, and how to arrange this, with the staff at the Oromia Coffee Farmers' Co-operative Union in Addis Ababa. If all goes well this could now take place in 2008. The opportunity to welcome two or three people from Choche who could present a personal view of life in their community would be invaluable for our Fair Trade campaign.

Allan Sharman

New businesses: We continue to 'expand' the Fairtrade market in and around Keswick. This expansion will be shown in our next **Directory**, to be published in the New Year, and on our newly made **website**, which is about to be launched. Recently, **Keswick Cottages**, a self-

catering letting agency based in Braithwaite, switched the tea and coffee in all 53 of their properties to Fairtrade.

Trade Justice

We have watched, with disappointment occasionally peppered by hope, as the **Doha Round** at the **World Trade Organisation**, which is intended to produce changes to trade rules to the benefit of developing countries, received an apparent new lease of life. The negotiations are still limping along: the Chairmen of the two most important committees express – diplomatically – anger and despair. The debates are complicated by the fact that India and Brazil are becoming seen as a growing threat to the dominance of the rich countries in the trading system. But the biggest threat to the rich nations of the North is China, a new member of the WTO, and the US in particular sees that country as a dangerous rival.

Our lobbying has been mainly focused on the **Economic Partnership Agreements** which are currently being drawn up between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. These are all small and mostly poor or very poor countries. Peter Mandelson, the EU commissioner for trade matters, says that he is willing to allow agricultural exports from the ACP countries to continue to enter Europe without paying tariffs (taxes). But he is insisting that the ACP countries allow free entry for European manufactured goods. The African countries are asking that they be given a transition period when they would gradually allow in European goods without tariffs, in order to protect their own growing industries. The EU is demanding a short transition period except for very sensitive products in very exceptional circumstances. The ACP countries have far fewer resources to devote to the necessary consultations and need more time to come to any agreement with the EU. At present many of them are refusing to yield to the pressure being put on them and they are seeking ways of allowing for more time. Please take the time if you have internet access, to go to this website and click on **'Act Now'**: <http://www.pressureworks.org/>.

The new **International Coffee Agreement** (ICA) has now been drawn up. Some of the points which are included have been seen by Oxfam as victories for Trade Justice lobbying. However, Oxfam has pointed out that the Agreement expressed *intention* on matters vital to small farmers, but that it is *implementation* of the objectives that counts and will need to be monitored.

We are still in touch with **Prosperity Raymond** from **Haiti** who spoke in Keswick in Christian Aid Week, and we are working with Christian Aid in lobbying to try to ensure that the debt cancellation which Haiti desperately needs, is conducted as fairly and as swiftly as possible.

Looking forward to Christmas and beyond:

We shall be in the **Market Square** giving out **Fairtrade chocolate** to carol singers on **Christmas Eve**.

We shall start planning for the next **Fairtrade Fortnight**, **25th February – 9th March, 2008**, in the **New Year**, and will keep you informed. The next **Newsletter** with **Fair Comment** will be sent to you in late February.