

Newsletter No.14 May 2008

Having skipped a **Newsletter** in February in order to wait for the next, delayed, issue of **Fair Comment** (so that we could send the two together), we have just heard that it will not be out until next week. We can wait no longer because we must send you **AGM** papers and information on the **Strawberry Tea** (see **enclosures**).

The long gap since our last Newsletter (November) means we have a great deal to report. We begin with **Taste the Coffee**, which many of you visited last December. This 10 day 'coffee morning' was made possible only by the generosity of the **Cumberland Building Society**, who allowed us to use their empty property in Station Street. The aim was to serve everybody who came in with a cup of **Fairtrade** coffee (or tea, or hot chocolate) to show the wide range available locally. With 9 varieties



on offer many of our visitors tried more than one, before deciding which one suited them the best. In all we made over 400 cups and answered questions about the many

different products and blends and how **Fairtrade** has made a difference to the lives of the farmers who grow the beans. For local businesses there were free samples provided by the 4 wholesalers in our area who stock **Fairtrade: Caterite, Farrers, Four Seasons and The Fairground**. These were particularly useful for those in the process of switching their guest houses to **Fairtrade** drinks.

During **Fairtrade Fortnight** (25th February to 9th March) we hosted **Jose Peralta**, banana grower from the Dominican Republic. Here is Jose with **Ian Gardiner**, Booths' Fresh Fruit and Veg. Manager, **Jo Alberti**, and **bananas**, sold in Booths and grown by the farmers of **ASOBANU**, a small banana growers' association of which Jose is president.



Jose visited Keswick as part of a tour of Britain organised by the **Fairtrade Foundation**. He gave an inspiring talk on the impact of **Fairtrade** on **ASOBANU's** farmers and their communities to members of the campaign.

Another highlight of the **Fortnight** was the visit of **Harriet Lamb**. Harriet, who is **Director** of the

Fairtrade Foundation, spoke at **Words by the Water**, following the publication of her book, **Fighting the Banana Wars and other Fairtrade Battles**.

She is an inspiring speaker and passionate campaigner, from whom we benefitted no less than *three* times during the 17 hours she was in Keswick! These events included breakfast at the **Wild Strawberry**, and a **Reception** for Cumbrian **Fairtrade** campaigners at **The Skiddaw**, where she was welcomed by **Cllr.**



Roger Purkiss, the Mayor, and **Margaret Purkiss**, the Mayoress. The Mayor also attended the breakfast. (Picture shows Harriet at The Skiddaw.)



The second **Fairtrade Wine Tasting** did not bring in the numbers of the first, held last November, but **The Wine Rack** were well pleased, since they were able to introduce yet more customers to their range of high quality South African and Chilean **Fairtrade** wines. (**Keswick Coop** also sells an excellent range, and **Booths** are expanding theirs.)

Penny Dutton won the gruelling **Coffee Marathon** in **Fairtrade Fortnight**. She drank coffee in *all* 28 coffee shops and cafés which took part. That's a lot of caffeine! Penny's well-deserved prize was a selection of – yes – more **Fairtrade** coffees!



Since our last visit to Choche we have continued **Talking about Fairtrade** to groups all over Cumbria and beyond. **Allan Sharman** and **Elsbeth Sherwen** have done most of the talks – at a rate of over one a week – and on one occasion 4 on one day, to over 200 Year 8 and 9 students at **Cockermouth School Live Day**. If you belong to a group which would like a talk please contact Allan or Elspeth on:

allshar@hotmail.com 07944193482

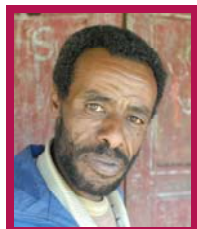
elsbethsherwen@btopenworld.com 07979756465

The highlight of April was *After Black Gold*, the photographic exhibition at **Theatre by the Lake**, which drew much interest and acclaim, and received excellent publicity. The photographs, taken last October in Ethiopia by **Richard Human**, record the lives of Ethiopian coffee farmers and their families, and the impact which **Fairtrade** is beginning to have on their communities. Over 60 people attended an opening night **Reception**, which brought together what we hope will be a growing partnership: the **wines**, supplied by the **Coop** and **The Wine Rack** were **Fairtrade**, and the **cheeses**, all **local**, were generously donated by the specialist cheese shop, **Fond Ewe**, in Packhorse Court. (The picture shows a child in Choche School in one of the new **Fairtrade** classrooms.)



Forthcoming events: We are now planning the visit to **Keswick** of our three friends [pictured below] from **Ethiopia**, who will be here from **29th May** to **11th June**.

Mekonen Aweke [L] and **Raya Abakoyas** [R]: **Chair** and **Vice-Chair** (respectively) of **Choche Coffee Farmers' Cooperative**. **Nekemte Melaku** [Centre] **Export Coordinator** of the **Oromia Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union**, in Addis, who will act as interpreter.



There will be two organised occasions when you will be able to meet them:

1. **AGM**, Wednesday **4th June** at **Crosthwaite Parish Room, 7.00 pm**. where, after the formal business, we shall serve snacks and show pictures of **Choche**.
2. **Strawberry Tea**, Sunday **8th June, 2.00 – 5.00**, where we shall be entertained by the **Segretta Stompers**, in the lovely grounds of **Malcolm** and **Judith Stonestreet's** home at **Northside** in **Grange**.

We do hope to see you at both. In addition to these two events, while our friends are here, we are planning many activities specifically *for* them, including a farm visit, and a small reception at the Town Hall.

Looking beyond their visit, we are supporting the **Fairtrade** fruit importing company, **AgroFair**, who, after their AGM in London in mid-June, will come on a three day excursion to Cumbria. From **19th** to **21st June** the party of 28 producers, from **Africa** and **Latin America**, and staff from **AgroFair's** London and Dutch offices will be based in Keswick, and from here will visit supermarkets which show a strong commitment to **Fairtrade**, and will also visit a local farm, take guided walks, and meet Cumbrian campaigners at a reception

and party at **Keswick School**. They have chosen to come to **Keswick** for one reason only: **Fairtrade!**

We shall share a stand at **Keswick Agricultural Show** on **Monday 25th August** with **SusKes**. Increasingly we are showing that **Fairtrade** is a part of the **climate-change / sustainability** agenda, and we are keen to work with like-minded groups in the common cause of the long-term security of humanity and our fragile planet.

Trade Justice: Current issues

At the **World Trade Organisation** (WTO), whose task is to regulate world trade, negotiations known as the **Doha Round** have been taking place for more than six years. The Declaration made at the start of this Round stated: "*a majority of WTO members are developing countries. We seek to place their needs and interests at the heart of the Work Programme adopted in this Declaration.*" It has proved extremely difficult to achieve this aim: there has been little willingness to compromise on the part of the developed world. The developing countries have formed alliances, and dug in their heels, pointing out that the EU and the US are not fully prepared to stop subsidising agricultural goods, but are insisting on the developing countries lowering their tariffs on industrial imports.

The other topic of acute concern to Trade Justice campaigners has been the **Economic Partnership Agreements** between the EU and the group of 79 **African, Caribbean and Pacific** countries (ACP). The need for such agreements arose from the challenge made in the WTO to long established agreements between the EU and the ACP which had offered a degree of protection for the exports – such as bananas and sugar – from the ACP countries, most of which were former European colonies. In December 2007 35 ACP countries bilaterally or sub-regionally signed agreements, although only the **Caribbean** countries (CARIFORUM) signed a full agreement. The agreements require trade liberalisation – the removal of tariffs - in return for continued entry for ACP goods into EU markets. There has been much criticism of the way these agreements have been pushed through under threat of the total removal of protection and diminishing levels of aid. The rushed deals removed the opportunity for appropriate expert or public scrutiny as well as debate of the content either in ACP countries or Europe.

The **Trade Justice Movement** (www.tjm.org) is calling for a revision of the existing agreements, in particular to avoid damaging regional integration, and for an effective review and monitoring process. The Movement stresses that for those countries which have not yet signed an agreement, a more development friendly approach must be taken by the EU. The Campaign's **Trade Justice Lobbying Group** continues to write letters to Ministers and an MEP about these concerns, and the connected issues of world food prices, and the liberalisation pressures on very poor countries – such as Haiti – by the World Bank.

Next Newsletter sometime in the Autumn!