

# Bahá'í Journal UK

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UK Community News 

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### Bahá'í Appointed Development Worker for the Scottish Interfaith Council

The Scottish Inter Faith Council, which has been in existence since 1999, was recently given funding by the Scottish Executive to appoint a full-time Development Officer and a part-time administrative assistant to help further the work of inter faith in Scotland.

On September 30, 2002, Maureen Sier, a Bahá'í recently returned from four years in the South Pacific, will begin her work as the Development Worker for the Scottish Inter Faith Council. This is a two year fully funded post – what could be more thrilling for a Bahá'í than to work for religious tolerance and understanding at a national level – and get paid for the privilege?

For the most part, Scotland enjoys a successful tradition of inter faith dialogue and related activities. Maintaining and developing understanding and harmonious relations between the many faith groups is a key factor in ensuring peace and progress for all citizens. Maureen's many talents and skills will make a positive impact in this area to be sure. Who knows, perhaps a long standing, thorny issue, particular to Glasgow, might be "tackled" successfully in the near future! Either way, we look forward to supporting Maureen in her endeavours for the Scottish Interfaith Council.



*Maureen Sier, newly appointed Development Worker for the Scottish Inter-Faith Council*

### Witney Carnival

APPROXIMATELY 30 people stopped by a special stall set up by several Bahá'ís in the West Oxfordshire area at Witney's annual carnival on July 13. Drawing from the information about the 'Respect Campaign' in the June 2002 issue of the Bahá'í Journal, the theme of the stall was on the campaign – a multifaith project encouraging volunteer service between those of different backgrounds and traditions.

While





brochures on both the campaign and the Bahá'í Faith were made available, the big draw to the stall was an interfaith quiz. We asked interested passers by to try and guess which religious symbols matched with which faiths, based on a colourful display of the symbols next to the stall. Guessing six out of nine symbols would win the player a free soft drink. We offered a “cheat sheet” to those trying out the competition, which had a paragraph of information (with web site references) on a total of nine different religions, including, of course, the Bahá'í Faith.



This approach was a low key, but successful way to introduce the Faith (and other religions) in a non-threatening way. We were grateful for a perfect, warm day on the weather front and for the donation of a large gazebo, which gave the stall a very professional look. The display materials were also subsequently used at an interfaith event in the East Midlands.

Anyone interested in the materials used for this event is welcome to contact Ms Zarrin Caldwell at [zcaldwell@onetel.net.uk](mailto:zcaldwell@onetel.net.uk).

### Having friends' new approach

HAVERING BAHÁ'ÍS decided to adopt a new approach at their local show over the August bank holiday. They had brief messages in very large letters on the front of their display, so that they could be read from a distance, with further details on the back of the display for anyone who was attracted to come closer. The picture shows the front of the display. The three panels are about the Terraces on Mount Carmel, the Lotus Temple, and the 150th anniversary of Táhírih's martyrdom.



### Friends attend Queen's Garden Party at Sandringham

JULY 18 was one of those rare balmy, sunny evenings of a British summer and a perfect setting for the Queen's garden party at Sandringham House in Norfolk.

Among the 4000 specially invited guests were five Bahá'ís from Norfolk, one of whom was almost introduced to the Queen in her walkabout among the assembled guests, but the lady next to her got the privilege instead.

All the guests had been chosen by the Lord Lieutenant's office earlier in the year from an even longer list to represent a cross section of the people of Norfolk, with an emphasis on those who had given service and support to the wider community in some capacity.

The local paper dubbed it a gathering of the “unsung heroes” of Norfolk! It was very pleasing that there was a degree of official recognition of the Faith by the very fact of our invitation to such an event.

The event was unique: nothing on this scale had been held at Sandringham for over 50 years. Sandringham is the private residence of the Queen, and is not state owned, and the occasion was therefore a personal gift of the Queen to those present as part of her jubilee celebrations.

Needless to say it was an opportunity to gently network on behalf of the Faith with at least some of the guests and there was a real feeling of intimacy despite the numbers involved.

## Stratford Junior Youth Study Ruhi Book Two

From July 27 to August 2, a group of 11 keen junior youth studied Book 2 of the Ruhi Institute. It was one of the first of its kind for junior youth in this country; and where better for it to be held than in the Tahzib's household, just outside Stratford. The brave facilitator was Sam Taylor and, being a qualified teacher, knew how to keep us crazy kids under control. He also had some help from two willing youth, Samha and Heidi.

The first unit was about the "Joy of Teaching" and its purpose was to help us understand that the joy of teaching does not come from the results but from sharing the Word of God with others.

The next part of the course was focused on deepening themes including "The life of Bahá'u'lláh" and "The Covenant of God". Part of the exercises was to produce a speech on one of the themes, for use to deepen new believers. This gave us a perfect opportunity to practice our acting skills in a number of role-plays. For us, this was the most enjoyable part of the week, because it was just so hilariously funny and one of the few times of the week where we could act plain stupid without getting told off!

The final unit of the book was all about introducing some of the themes that we looked at in Unit 2 into a conversation. We discussed which themes would be suitable in different subjects of conversation and tried to develop this skill so it would come naturally.

As well as studying the Ruhi Book, we did lots of socialising by playing things like full contact rugby and table tennis. Also, throughout the week, the group prepared to host the Stratford Community's feast of Kamál. We did the whole feast using the things we had learned from the Ruhi book, and it turned out to be a great success!

One of the main purposes of doing Ruhi Book 2 is that when Entry By Troops happens, there will be enough trained people to be able to deepen all the newly enrolled believers. We both agree that we feel much more confident to deepen a new believer now than we did before, simply because we ourselves are a lot more deepened.

The Study Circle week was one of the most enjoyable weeks we had all year. We would truly recommend it to anyone who is sitting reading this now, thinking "Maybe I should attend a Study Circle." Our answer to that would be to contact your local facilitator as soon as possible and do one. Not only are they great fun, but you also learn a whole lot. The importance of Study Circles is summed up in the sentence below:

*"Study Circles, reinforced by extension courses and special campaigns, have shown their ability to lend structure to the process of spiritual education at the grass roots."* Universal House of Justice.

Howard and Faizi Freemantle

