

# Bahá'í Journal UK

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National Committees and Departments 

## Office of Public Information

### Channel 4 News focuses on Mother Temple of Indian Sub-Continent

ON JULY 31 viewers of the Channel 4 television news 7 pm programme – one of the main network television news presentations in the United Kingdom – were given plenty of chance to see the Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi.

For a period of several days the 55-minute programme was giving over half its coverage to issues in India, and for this night's broadcast veteran British TV presenter Jon Snow made his introduction and linking contributions standing in front of the floodlit temple.

The House of Worship was most impressive and seen in various ways as the camera returned to Mr Snow speaking briefly between news stories. In his contributions he referred frequently to the Bahá'í House of Worship (pronouncing the name of the Faith correctly) as well as to the "Lotus Temple", mentioned briefly something of its construction, described the Bahá'í Faith as "one of the youngest in the world" where "everyone is welcome", said of the temple that "some four million people visit each year – that's more even than the Taj Mahal" and that "you don't see many Channel 4 News backdrops like this one!"



*Interior of "The Lotus of Bahá", featured on Channel 4 News.*

The result was an excellent piece of national television publicity for the Faith seen throughout the United Kingdom and further afield.

### Community Cohesion Statement

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United Kingdom has issued a new statement on the subject of "Community Cohesion" in response to a government consultation document on the subject.

It has been placed at the National Assembly's website and is also available on request from the Office of Public Information, Third Floor, Bridge House, 97-101 High Street, Tonbridge, Kent, TN9 1DR, or electronically as a PDF file from [opi@bahai.org.uk](mailto:opi@bahai.org.uk).

## Travel Teaching and Homefront Pioneering Service

*"The movement of pioneers and travelling teachers from one place to another is an indispensable feature of the Bahá'í community."* (Universal House of Justice, Letter of January 10, 2002)

## **Great offer and great opportunity for pioneers.**

IF YOUR COMMUNITY is a goal area and needs pioneers, please consider the following offer:

Single parent, mother, with one-year-old child, seeks accommodation especially in exchange for work (eg housekeeping, mother's help). She is a young Bahá'í lady from Iraq, in her late twenties who is able to work in this country. She can teach English as a foreign language and translate Arabic. She is willing to be a domestic help (cooking, cleaning and light care duties) and has completed the Ruhi Book 1 training course. She is willing to be part of a Bahá'í community and has experience of pioneering abroad. She has also worked as a homework tutor in term time.

### **Offer for pioneer in N.E. Wales**

We are in urgent need of Homefront Pioneers in this part of Wales. Please see below a great offer of accommodation in a goal area, to a potential pioneer:

"I'm seeking a woman to assist in the development of the ABW and generally, to promote the advancement of women etc. I have a pleasant, airy apartment to offer. A recently completed dormer-style loft conversion with lovely views over the Clwydian hillside. It has its own fully-equipped bathroom too.

To learn more, please contact: Alicia Bancroft-Lloyd at [alicia@bancroft-lloyd.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:alicia@bancroft-lloyd.freeserve.co.uk)

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## **Committee for International Pioneering and Travel Teaching**

### **Thinking about going pioneering or travel teaching is challenging and exciting, and CIPTT aims to guide you through the process ...**

DO YOU FIND that at this time of the year you become a bit more introspective, a feeling of reassessing where things stand? Maybe most people in this part of the world do so and perhaps get a bit down at the prospect of the deepening gloom and deteriorating weather.

However, as Bahá'ís, we are doubly blessed at this time of the year as in October and November the two holy birthdays occur to both lift us up and focus us on what is important in life. As we contemplate the privileged gift we possess of having recognised the twin Manifestations for this day, we become aware of the enormous debt we owe to the brave souls of the Heroic Age of the Faith, many of whom laid down their lives so that the life enhancing Word of God might gather pace like a tidal wave and roll out across the globe, bringing peace and tranquillity to humanity.

From the Concourse on High they call out to us to arise and catch the wave before it moves on and leaves us stranded in its wake.

At the Unit Conventions in October, take a little time out to consult on sending out pioneers and travel teachers overseas from your Area or pledging deputisation funding for others to do so and send us details of how your Area is proposing to "ride the wave" of the Covenant.

After all, we are entering what the travel agents call the "low season" so travel and accommodation costs are starting to come down significantly and local populations are less focused on material gain and more available to respond to the life of the spirit.

To help you prepare, take a look at our brand new website. If you haven't got a computer, try your local library, a neighbour, an evening class, friends of friends, etc to get access (many opportunities for indirect teaching!). The CIPTT website is at the Internet address: [www.bahai.org.uk/pioneers](http://www.bahai.org.uk/pioneers) To log on, the user name you need and the password is available from CIPTT. These codes are confidential to the UK Bahá'í community, should not be made available for others to use and especially should not be distributed via the Internet, even to other Bahá'ís.

Thinking about going pioneering or travel teaching is challenging and exciting, and CIPTT aims to guide you through the process. From the Concourse on High they call out to us to arise and catch the wave before it moves on and leaves us stranded in its wake.

aims to guide you through the process from the first spark of your enthusiasm right through to leaving home, and indeed we keep in touch with pioneers out in the field as well. We have masses of information on our files but we simply have no means of sharing everything with you through the paper mediums available, but with the website there is much greater scope for that.

Whether you are new to pioneering or travel teaching or an experienced veteran, the CIPTT site has something for everyone, including information about the current Philip Hainsworth Campaign. We also have details of top priority European goals for the friends from the UK, an important letter from the Universal House of Justice about international pioneering, listings of all the areas of the world that have been prioritised by the World Centre as needing assistance, information about many countries and regions, situations vacant abroad, summer/winter schools and teaching projects, SED projects, articles and stories about pioneering and travel teaching, news bites, and more...

You'll just have to visit the site and see for yourself!

Don't forget the Philip Hainsworth Campaign Five Year Plan Goals of Category One countries in Europe:

Bosnia & Herzegovina; Corsica; Croatia; Cyprus (Southern); Faeroe Islands; Macedonia; Malta; Slovenia; Yugoslavia (Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Vojvodina).

**CIPTT**  
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## Year of Service Desk

### Wildfire Dance Theatre

THERE COMES a time in your life when you're spinning upside-down through the air in front of a few hundred complete strangers and you ask yourself, "What is this all for?"

Well, let me take you back exactly one year when a young seventeen year old version of myself, fresh out of high school, departed for his year of service. I signed up for the Wildfire Dance

Theatre, an international travelling group who taught the Faith through the medium of dance and drama. The project, based in Ontario, Canada, was made up of Bahá'ís from Scotland, England, Germany, USA and Canada. I spent the next nine months of my life travelling through the East Coast of Canada through Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and finally ending in Newfoundland.



Why did I choose this avenue of service? Ever since I can remember, I

*Wildfire Dance Theatre. The author is kneeling front-row right.*

always wanted to do a year of service. It seems very natural to take a year out between high school and university, and seeing my older peers leaving as wide-eyed children and returning older, wiser and with all manner of strange and exotic haircuts filled me with excitement. I investigated a lot of different projects, but Wildfire seemed like the most fun to me. I've always been a natural actor (and self confessed extrovert). I love performing and being in front of a crowd, and what better way to do this than in service of my Faith? As Bahá'u'lláh teaches us, "*Such a service is, indeed, the prince of all goodly deeds...*" (Gleanings CLVII)

Wildfire operates in a very similar way to Diversity Dance Theatre in Europe. We would travel to a different community roughly each week and were hosted by the local Bahá'ís. During our stay we would perform between one and three shows a day at high schools, elementary schools, colleges or homes for the elderly. We would then invite those who expressed an interest to performances which were open to all members of the public and firesides. With audiences ranging from nine to nine hundred and shows six days a week our message would reach at least a few thousand a week. The performance was always very well received and appreciated by the audience. We received a large amount of media coverage including numerous newspaper articles, television and radio interviews, which were always positive. However, the greatest service we achieved was that we were for many their first contact with the Bahá'ís, and were able to generate huge interest in the Faith.

Throughout my time with Wildfire we had many amazing performances and experiences and I met hundreds of incredible people both Bahá'í and non-Bahá'í. However, the one memory that is always dominant in my mind is one performance in North Bay, Ontario. There were nine hundred people watching, the largest audience we ever had. Out of the nine hundred, only three were Bahá'í. So, for eight hundred and ninety-seven of the viewers, we were more than likely the first time they had ever heard of the Bahá'í Faith. In one hour we taught eight hundred and ninety-seven people! And that was only one show of one day.

Back to my opening sentence, what was it all for? Well, first and foremost, I got to live a dream. I was completely immersed in a Bahá'í environment for almost a year, got to make new friends and teach the Faith everyday. Sure, there were a lot of hardships, but they helped me to grow up and mature, hopefully becoming a better person in the process. My time away has also inspired confidence within me, confidence both in myself and in the knowledge that whatever I do, where ever I got the power of the Word of Bahá'u'lláh will always have a positive impact on the people around me, and that I must strive to the best of my abilities to teach them.

Remember, this is only the beginning.

Matthew Morrissey

**Year of Service Desk**

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