

**A Journey of Reconciliation
Healing the wounds of the Past Building the Future**

"The only way to bring reconciliation is to face the pain of history with courage, and then to change." He went on to say, *"We have begun that process of change and this reconciliation initiative is one more step on that journey."*

A quote from the leader of Liverpool City Council, at the October 2004, Civic ceremony hosted by the Maritime Museum on the dockside in Liverpool. Representatives of the Benin Government attended this significant event where they were handed a finished 'Reconciliation Sculpture'.

In 1999 President Kerekou, aware that the issue of the Atlantic Slave trade still divided his country and had a lasting legacy in the African Diaspora. At an event attended by representatives of various African States, from African Americans and from Liverpool UK, he apologised for the role that some of his people had played in selling slaves to the slave traders. At that occasion Lord Alton of Liverpool presented a copy of the apology from Liverpool City Council for the major role the city played in financing the ships that had plied the trade. This led to a commitment to work together to tackle the legacy of slavery still in society today and build relations for education and reconciliation for the future between the countries concerned.

On 9th December 1999, as its final act of the Millennium, Liverpool City Council unanimously passed a motion apologising for the city's role in the Slave Trade linked to a

commitment to policies that would end racism and work to create a community where all were equally valued.

"Liverpool City Council expresses its shame and remorse for the city's role in this trade in human misery. The City Council makes an unreserved apology for Liverpool's involvement in the slave trade and its continued effects on the city's Black Communities. The City Council hereby commits itself to work closely with all Liverpool's communities and partners and with the peoples of those countries which have carried the burden of the slave trade."



Liverpool Delegation, Benin and USA representatives: Centre, Tee Turner of the Richmond slave trail commission, centre left, Simon Pierre Adovelende, Executive Director of the Beninese Agency for Reconciliation, right, Stephen Broadbent (sculptor); right, Luc-M.C. Gnacadja, the Beninese Minister of the Environment, Housing and Urbanism.

In August 2005 a delegation of twelve from Liverpool including representatives from Hope in the Cities (HiC) UK and Richmond USA, were formally invited by the government of the Republic of Benin to take part in the fourth Gospel and Roots Festival and Conference, established in Benin in 2002, organised by the Reconciliation and Economic

development ministry. The overall theme for the 2005 conference was the cultural connections between Africa and Brazil. Themes for 2006 will be the cultural connections between Africa, Haiti and Cuba.

The delegation represented different aspects of the triangular initiative. The trip was to establish relationships and gather information that would enable different initiatives to get off the ground. such as:

- Historical understanding
- Partnership with educational institutions
- Dialogue / Conflict resolution
- Reconciliation
- Healing
- Promotion of Cultural Heritage
- Socio-economic development

The delegation also took a message from the leader of Liverpool City Council, The Richmond slave trail commission and Professor Lord Alton a patron of the Reconciliation triangle project. These messages were read publicly at the official unveiling of the 'Reconciliation Sculpture' one of the main highlights during the visit.



Centre, Sarah Blackstock (curator National Museums Liverpool); right, Stephen Broadbent (sculptor); left, Daniel (translator).

Stephen Broadbent, the sculptor, and fellow artist, Faith Bebbington, along with pupils from six of Liverpool's inner city schools finished the final four metre high sculpture, which incorporate new low-relief scenes on the four flat sides relating to the slave trade between Liverpool, Benin and the Americas. The sculptures were then cast in bronze and shipped to Benin and Richmond.

"It is hoped that this sculpture will be a physical and symbolic manifestation of a process that brings together in an expression of repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation - the descendants of those who profited from the evil trade and the descendants of those who were forcibly transported".



Centre, Stephen Broadbent (sculptor); right, (translator) Virgil Ouendo

Lawrence Fearon

Tribute to Barrie Brazier



Our friend Barrie Brazier, who was one of the first people to introduce the concept of dialogue into St Anns in Nottingham, died recently. He referred to dialogue as the "quiet revolution" which opened up new possibilities for each participant.

The Nottingham Evening Post of November 18 under the headline "He was special" reported on tributes paid to Barrie Brazier of the Nottingham & Notts Racial Equality

He was one of the pioneers of "Holding Hands Around St Anns"*¹. They write: 'he was not afraid to speak out against gangs and gun-culture and urged calm in the wake of the murder of Danielle Beccan. His son Stephen said: "He was self-sacrificing and just did what he had to do, particularly after the Danielle Beccan murder when he went out on the streets making sure everything was calm.

'He loved the community of St Anns. Even though many people had tossed them aside, he saw something special there. He would say that from a little seed a tree will grow, and I hope we can carry on where he left off.'

Hanife Majid, a youth outreach worker for the Renewal Trust, worked alongside Mr Brazier setting up a football team in St. Anns. 'It was Barrie's idea to set up a football team as it was something the young people told him they wanted', he said. 'He was a sincere guy and if he said he was going to do something, he'd do it. It meant a lot of people of all ages in the community had so much time for him as he would never let anyone down. 'He would work with anyone in the community – male,

female, black, white, Asian – and was a good role model for everyone.

Afzal Sadiq, chief executive of Notts Racial Equality Council, said 'He led on issues of social cohesion, and worked to build trust in the community. One way of doing this was by getting members of the community together: 'He wanted them to send a positive message out of communities which had been given bad press for drug and gun-crime.' He just got on with it and made an impact on people's lives. He turned people's dreams into reality. He wasn't scared of challenging oppression and discrimination. He fought hard to challenge issues.'

Regional News

Nottingham

A second HOLDING HANDS AROUND ST ANNS UNITY DAY took place on June 25. Over six hundred local people spent the day visiting community facilities in the area. These included Islamic Centre, Nottingham, St Anns Community Orchard, Pakistan Centre, Sycamore Millennium Centre, St Anns Play centre and Stonebridge City Farm. Minibuses were provided to take participants around the various centres.

The programme ended up at the Robin Hood Chase Neighbourhood Centre where activities had been arranged to positively celebrate the diverse cultures within St Anns. On display was brilliant artwork from local schools that had entered the Holding Hands art competition.

As a climax, everyone was encouraged to form a large circle and hold hands in a clear expression of unity. Saturday 17 June 2006 has been set as the date for next year unity day.

This Unity Day grew out of three Hope in the Cities dialogues at the Chase Neighbourhood centre.

Richard Hawthorne

¹ *see Regional News - Nottingham

Voices of peace, reconciliation and hope – A new radio project

Radio Fiza is a community radio station run from Karimia Institute, and Asian Women's project in Nottingham. The radio station provides entertainment mainly for the Muslims and the South East Asians living in Nottingham. A new exciting series of programmes are planned which will highlight the work of Initiatives of Change. These programmes will tell stories of some amazing reconciliation that have taken place in South Africa, Lebanon and Bosnia. There will be stories, which will give hope and encouragement, also will build trust and remove cynicism. The

programmes will also feature interviews with people involved at the frontline bringing about change in themselves and others.

This is an exciting project that is led by Mary Lean and Elizabeth Tooms from Initiatives of Change. It is hoped that once a series of such programmes are ready they could be on air on other community radios all over the country.

If anyone out there is enthused and wants to help, please contact Mary Lean or Dr Musharraf on: bmccnottingham@hotmail.com

Dr Musharraf Hussain

Down Memory Lane

The Changing Face of Broadwater Farm

It's in the nature of our modern societies to criticise things, to expose weaknesses and flaws, demand improvement and investment. It is good sometimes when the media reflects on the progress that is made, both nationally and locally, like some recent press reports on Broadwater Farm.

A friend and I started visiting The Broadwater Farm estate twenty years ago soon after the riots made the estate notorious. This housing estate in Tottenham is the home to a large ethnic mix of nearly four thousand people and thirty-nine different nationalities, has been through some drastic changes. When we started visiting residents were mainly white and African-Caribbean. After our introductory meeting with Dolly Kiffen, then the unofficial leader of the community, she told a young aide of hers to escort us to the bus stop in Lordship Lane. She must have felt our uneasiness.

Dolly had already started to build up trust and friendship between the white and black residents. Her method was to organise some of her teenage sons friends, mainly from Caribbean families like her own, to deliver meals cooked in her own kitchen to elderly residents for a small fee. The delivery

boys were very firmly instructed to bring back the exact amount of payment for each meal. This enterprise soon overflowed into the community, with more kitchens and other helpers.

Betty Rainbow and I were offered to do anything we could to help rebuild the community drawing from our experiences with Initiatives of Change (then MRA) with whom we'd both been for a number of years. Also, of course to offer friendship and support to those already working on the ground.

Overtime we came to know many on the estate including May, Faye, Elveta and Clasford who organised the boys clubs and others. Twenty years on, things are still at work for the community. Faye sadly passed away a few years ago and Dolly retired home to Jamaica. Her health is failing but she is still involved in community projects. May runs the annual Gospel Concert for the estate and the surrounding areas that raise funds for the sickle cell society. Clasford has trained no less than twenty-five young professional footballers, including his own son and continues with a new enthusiastic generation of young boys.

The main changes I see on the estate today are great structural improvements to all the buildings, the large community centre, the new health centre, the enterprise centre, the various play areas and communal gardens and in progress a new centre for children. Above all, what is impressive is the residents' determination to lay at rest the old stigma of the riots and to build up community relations and a real feeling of family. The women of Broadwater Farm have also come together to form an organisation to address issues affecting women on the estate and surrounding areas. This is called The Broadwater Women's Forum with women from the different cultural backgrounds, religion and age.

There is still a transient population and the estate is an arrival point for many immigrants and refugees, therefore this growing sense of being all one family is of key importance. As everywhere there are still many needs for a growing responsibility in all ethnic groups, more language lessons for newer arrivals and maximising the facilities for the young people. This would continue to build on a neighbourhood that is proud of its achievements and will continue to build on this.

Mary Mann

Afghan Fundraising Evening

The Ruth Hayman Trust is an educational Charity supporting adults (many of them refugees) who have settled in Britain but whose first language is not English

Ruth Hayman Trust was established to commemorate Ruth Hayman. Ruth was born in South Africa. She lived and worked as a lawyer until she was forced to leave. She was a human rights activist, as a result of her activities she was banned from South Africa so she came to live in Britain. After her arrival to the UK Ruth became one of the founding members of the National Association for Teaching English and other Community Languages to Adults. This was established in 1969.

I was lucky and privileged enough to be asked to become a trusting member of the Ruth Hayman Trust about a year and a half ago. This was a very big honour for me and I always wanted to do something to show my

commitment and appreciation to this worthwhile cause.

As most of my experience is in fundraising, I thought I would organise a Fundraising event for the Trust. I decided that the theme for the event should be Afghanistan. This is because I am from Afghanistan and I have some knowledge about the country, that I thought some people may find interesting. Also I have been told in the past that I am good at cooking, particularly Afghan food. I thought this, a good opportunity to make some Afghan food, raise awareness about my wonderful but troubled country as well as to raise some money for many refugees who come to England with much education but have no recognised certificates to practice their skills. I know that many Afghans are included in this situation so it became obvious that I should do this event.

After several meetings at head office we decided on the itinerary for the evening. We invited Christina Lamb, the author of 'the Sewing Circle of Heart' to come and make a speech, as she had been to Afghanistan recently and has good knowledge of the people and Culture. We also invited some Afghan amateur musicians who are friends of the family to come and play music. We had a raffle draw; the gifts were some Afghan jewellery and clothing. We had a quiz to test people's knowledge about Afghanistan and warm up the atmosphere so that people start talking to each other at their tables. We showed some slides of the breath taking Afghan scenery.

The evening went very well, we had one hundred and twenty guests. Some friends who could not attend made generous donations also. We raised in excess of three thousand five hundred pounds. This money is to be used for Refugees who have talent and experience but no money to obtain recognised educational certificates.

The trust received a great number of good feedbacks from people who attended the event and luckily people really enjoyed my cooking.

I am very lucky to have been involved in this event and lucky still that I could count on my colleagues, friends and family to help me in organising this evening.

Shabibi Shah

Huddersfield

Reflections

Today, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic Britain is seeking new ways to bring about social cohesion among disparate communities.

Hope in the Cities has been working for many years to connect communities for reconciliation and justice, and the effort of this work is becoming evident in areas of London, Nottingham and Liverpool.

Reconciliation is God's vision for bridging the gaps between people – Gaps that rob people of their values and respect, and deny them the opportunities to fulfil their purpose in life.

Over the past eighteen months I have been involved in the planning of 'The Heart and Soul of Europe' conference, the 'Liverpool Reconciliation Triangle' programme and its link to Benin, West Africa; and more closely the Hope in the Cities Dialogue and Facilitation training programme.

Each of these situations has its desired outcome, the need for reconciliation and justice, and each highlights the crucial role that dialogue plays in breaking through the impasse where parties are often in conflict.

HiC dialogues offer strategies that appeal to our innate tendency to forgive one another and to live in harmony. I am more convinced than ever that where we are able to remove the tendency to blame the other and to look at, "*not who is wrong but what is wrong*"; then we will have begun the process towards a more cohesive community/society. It begins here with me.

Denzil Nurse

We take this opportunity to wish you a wonderful Christmas and peace and good health in the coming year. May we work together to help create trust, justice and genuine care in communities across this land and beyond.

Diary Dates

◇ Caux 2006: 6 July – 17 August 2006

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HiC is a programme of Initiatives of Change, which is an international network of people of diverse faiths and backgrounds, working for reconciliation and justice, beginning with change in their own lives