

# Emmaus Bristol



The newsletter of Emmaus Bristol – Spring 2010

## MILLION POUND MOMENTS!

We're about to reach £1m in sales! It's great – but there's so much more to Emmaus than the money...

## Emmaus in Bosnia

**Chris, one of our Companions from Emmaus Bristol, recently went on a visit to Emmaus Bosnia**

Our first visit was to Duje, near Tuzla, where up to 450 Companions live, including homeless, physically or mentally disabled, elderly and other marginalised people. The range of facilities are truly amazing considering the resources they have to work with. Health care is comprehensive, with a team consisting of two doctors, medical technicians, physiotherapists, social workers and associated support. Other treatments offered include art and writing therapy, arts and craft manufacture, as well as work helping in the diverse mini-industries that help keep the facility supported. Underneath one of the

accommodation blocks the basement was undergoing renovation to make space for the cultivation of mushrooms! Also on site was a cheese factory making seven different types of cheese for sale to local wholesalers and a large area of land was being cultivated for crop production, including several huge glasshouses and polytunnels.

In the evening we met some victims of human trafficking who were being accommodated in a safe house whilst they undergo rehabilitation, education or preparation for appearing as witnesses in

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### Welcome from the Director



**Sometime in March/April this year we will have sold £1 million pounds worth of donated furniture, a significant milestone and one we are rightly proud of. Behind this statistic however is something far more valuable – the lives of our Companions. Every day we are reminded that whilst money is necessary, people are priceless and Emmaus exists because we firmly believe this to be true. All of us at Emmaus Bristol are continually learning what it means to serve others which is our primary purpose and we do a lot of this between us. Our Community is involved in all sorts of solidarity – much of it involving sharing what we have learned with new groups and Communities, and this involves all of us.**

**As supporters you are not just making donations of money and household goods – you are making an investment in those lives we all touch and we thank you so much for this.**

**Thank you again for continuing to make all this possible. Roll on the next million and all those we will serve in the future!**

**Richard Pendlebury MBE**



Above: Up to 450 Companions live at Emmaus in Duje, Bosnia

# What are we here for?

**Dave Perry, Community Manager, brings us up to date on what the Staff and Companions are up to at Emmaus Bristol.**

We are close to receiving our One Millionth Pound in sales income. It reminds us that we always have to balance the need to 'pay our way' with our stated objective to 'serve first those most in need'.

What is the point of Emmaus Bristol? Some would say to provide a place to stay for 'homeless people'. Actually, this is not what we are here for. Our goals are much wider. We are here to make a positive difference to our world, particularly in fighting poverty and injustice, through our own hard work, and using the many skills and talents of those who live in our Community, the Companions, who, as it happens, usually have a history of homelessness and have often not had the best start in life but do want to make a difference in whatever way they can.

What does this mean in practice? It means helping those in need, both close to home and further afield:

- our neighbours requiring a few pieces of furniture and local pensioners who deserve a good Christmas lunch and celebration
- those Emmaus Groups and Communities around the UK who need a little help in times of trouble from a stable and established Community – we have recently supported Emmaus



**Above: Dave Perry accepts a cheque for £100 raised by the 1st Burrington and Wrington Scouts Group, who visited the Community in January.**

Preston, Coventry, South Lambeth and Leeds in providing various levels of practical support, and are currently supporting 2 new Emmaus Groups working to open Communities in their towns

- there is also the International Solidarity work we want to help with; a Companion recently spent a week in Bosnia helping the local Emmaus Community (see Chris's article), others have raised awareness and money for the Water Project in Benin, Africa.

As soon as someone moves into our Community they are no longer homeless; they have a permanent home shared with others from diverse backgrounds but learning and sharing a common purpose. For me those are the "Million Pounds" of value. Sometimes it is easy to see: the service in Bosnia, the help given to another, short-staffed Community by a Companion "on loan", carrying wardrobes up and down awkward stairs every day, keeping our Community clean, serving customers with a smile, feeding us so well. Less visible, but the real heart of Emmaus, is the Companion taking a cup of tea to another Companion who is not well, to make sure he is OK; the Companions who welcome visitors into their home by meeting them at the station and making sure they are comfortable and want for nothing; those who are so concerned about another Companion who is struggling or in trouble that they go out of their way to support them and advocate for them in whatever way they can.

The small things are difficult to see sometimes, but they are what makes Emmaus different. I have a "Million Pound Moment" every day, when I see Companions living their life in their Community for others. It is a privilege and pleasure to be the Community Leader of Emmaus Bristol.

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trafficking prosecutions. Everything they do has to be monitored for their own safety; it is not unheard of for them to have to leave the safe house at very short notice after their location has been discovered.

The next day we learnt about expansion plans – a new kitchen and outbuildings are planned and the land around the Emmaus office in Srebrenica is to be turned over to the cultivation of crops. We also travelled to some higher ground to view the outlying mountainous areas, where the history of recent and past years was explained to give us a picture of why the services of Emmaus are so badly needed in this area. The population of Srebrenica was cut by two thirds by the events of 1995 and their consequences.

This trip was a fascinating insight into a country only recently ravaged by war. We were moved by the humanity, commitment and passion of the people we met, who dearly love their country and are struggling to make a difference according to a founding principle of Emmaus; to serve first those who suffer the most.

Chris hopes to return to Bosnia later in the year to help with their summer camp.

**A longer version of this article appears on our website at [www.emmausbristol.org.uk](http://www.emmausbristol.org.uk)**

## No flowers, please!



**Have you ever thought of leaving a legacy to Emmaus Bristol?**

**Over the years, we have been the recipients of a number of legacies. Their benefits are fourfold. They have been put to good use such as funding education for Companions or acquiring much-needed equipment for our work. They are a living tribute to the deceased person. And a legacy can reduce the rate of Inheritance Tax! If you are a tax-payer, your legacy is enhanced by 28p in the £ provided you sign a Gift Aid Declaration.**

**You might want to consider including Emmaus Bristol in your will and help us to help those we serve.**

# Out in the cold

**Weather conditions expected only once every three years. This was what Companions, Staff and a Volunteer of Emmaus Bristol faced in November when they joined some 40 others at St. Stephens Church, Soundwell for a night out sleeping rough to raise awareness of the homeless, Emmaus and the Bristol Soup Run charity.**

The sleepout was the brainchild of Emmaus Bristol Volunteer Shirley. Participants were only allowed a sleeping bag, plastic, cardboard and whatever warm clothing they could carry to survive the cold, wet night in the church grounds. Wanting it to be as

realistic as possible Shirley organised a mock soup run and the rough sleepers enjoyed some welcome hot food and drink before trying to get some sleep.

Due to the weather the greater part of the crowd slept indoors with the



**Above: Braving minus zero temperatures to raise awareness of homelessness**

## Maintenance John

**Without John (affectionately known as Maintenance John) Emmaus Bristol would be an altogether shabbier place! He writes:**

I'm a lift engineer by trade and can turn my hand to most practical jobs – painting, decorating, plumbing, electrical. I left the engineering due to health issues. I miss the work – but not being out on building sites in all weathers!

Looking back, I've had a problem with alcohol for most of my adult life, without ever admitting it. The drink gradually took over my life and contributed to the break-up of my marriage, but it wasn't until I nearly got run over by a bus after a day of continuous drinking that I accepted that I needed help and went to see a doctor. It took a while, but I ended up spending five months in rehab in Bristol and then, when I

came out of treatment, in a dry house, looking for voluntary work. I found a job with the Sisters of the Church in St Pauls – which I love! – and at the City Farm in St Werberghs, and then someone suggested that I contact Emmaus for my other free days. I sent in my CV, had an interview and haven't looked back since. I've installed and repaired taps, showers and toilets, mended a leaking roof and decorated a couple of the offices - and I also help out in the electrical department when they are short-handed.

I think Emmaus is an absolutely wonderful organisation. I'd never heard of it before I came, but I've discovered that the work it does is amazing and helps lots of people. It's great to be able to use my skills to help in the business and in the Community. And with my own past experience, I'm more than willing to talk to any Companion who thinks they may have a drink or drug problem, if they think it might help. I've been there and I know what it's like.

church doors wide open and these people found it to be just as cold as outside. Emmaus is proud to say most of our numbers were able to complete the night with varying degrees of (dis)comfort as planned, whether under trees, on wet grass behind a wall and even in the recesses of the church wall!

Waking up the next morning saw many a bleary eye and creased face but spirits were high and all thought the experience very worthwhile. Several Companions and Nigel our House Manager went to St. Stephens the following Sunday to help Community Leader Dave Perry promote Emmaus, and were warmly congratulated by the congregation for their part in the sleep-out. Indeed it turns out that many of the participants that Friday night (the 13th incidentally!) only fully appreciated what it might be like to sleep rough when they went to bed the following evening; warm, snug and back in their own beds!

Well done Shirley and all who 'had a go' that evening. Success can be summed up by the news that the Bishop of Bristol would like to join in the next time!



**Above: Maintenance John**

### Volunteer Drivers needed

**It would help us enormously to have a volunteer driver on a regular basis. This could be as little as one day a week. Normal driving licence required to drive a 3 ½ tonnes box van. A chance for someone to make a difference to people's lives. Please ring 0117 954 0886 and ask to speak to Chris Heaton, the Operations Manager.**



# From Bristol to Cameroon

Companion George could be described as 'well-travelled'. Born in Rumania, he has subsequently lived in a number of countries and continents, acquiring a variety of skills ranging from living on the street to being a soldier, working in Security and speaking 7 languages! But George is a man with a plan. He wants to help others just as he has been helped himself. In true Emmaus spirit!

'I've now been at Emmaus Bristol for 10 months. I am pleased to have been given an opportunity to use my skills and to have space to figure out for myself what I want to do. Liz in the support team has guided me in my search and I am going to Cameroon!! I'll be working with Association Sportive de l'Estuaire

de Douala as a volunteer to begin with, and I hope I can become a fully-fledged member of staff.'

George then explains what the job is going to be. 'I'll be living in a house with 25 boys aged from 10 to 17 or 18 and be one of two mentors. These children come from low income families or were living on the street. I know what it's like. I was there when I was 7... I know I can help them to become a person of their own. Even if your parents are not around, you can learn to know yourself and open the doors to a good future. I can help the boys believe in this. I'll take care of their safety; protect them from exploitation or slavery or any other bad situation. Sport, education, work, are key players

in learning not to be demoralised by one's own circumstances. I will do my best in Cameroon because I want to make mine what Abbé Pierre said: *There is no peace and no fullness of joy except in giving first place to serving first those who are most forgotten and those who suffer most.*

'God gave me the courage to go and do this. My mother was a strong Christian and instilled these values in me. She taught me courage and endurance. I strongly believe in Justice, Equality and Fraternity for all. I owe a lot to Liz and to the Association Sportive de l'Estuaire de Douala because they have made it possible for me to use my skills for others for the greater good.'



## Support Emmaus Bristol

### I would like:

- More information on Emmaus Bristol
- To give a donation

### By cheque/CAF

I enclose a cheque/voucher for £ \_\_\_\_\_  
*(please make cheque/voucher payable to Emmaus Bristol)*

### By standing order

To the manager \_\_\_\_\_  
Branch address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Account no. \_\_\_\_\_ Sort code \_\_\_\_\_

Please pay Emmaus Bristol the sum of \_\_\_\_\_ (figures)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (amount in words)

At Triodos Bank, Brunel House, 11 The Promenade, Clifton BS8 3NN  
(Sort code 16-58-10; Account no. 02448600)

Starting on  /  /

Monthly  Quarterly  Half yearly  Annually

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Home address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Gift Aid Declaration

Please complete if you are a Tax Payer (excluding CAF donations)  
I want the charity to treat this donation and all future donations until further notice as Gift Aid donations.

Title \_\_\_\_\_ First Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Surname \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Notes:

1. You must pay an amount of income tax and/or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax that the charity reclaims on your donations in the tax year.
2. You can cancel this declaration at any time by notifying us.
3. If in future your circumstances change and you no longer pay tax on your income or capital gains equal to the tax that the charity reclaims, you can cancel your declaration.
4. If you pay tax at the higher rate you can claim further tax relief in your Self-Assessment tax return.
5. If you are unsure whether your donations qualify for Gift Aid tax relief please contact us or ask your local tax office for leaflet IR113 Gift Aid. Please notify us if you change your name or address.

### Please return this form to:

**Emmaus Bristol, Freepost (SWB 1549) Bristol BS2 0BR**