

Emmaus Bristol



The newsletter of Emmaus Bristol – Winter 2009

Sleeping in a van

Richard and Sara are a married couple who have been with the Community in Bristol since mid-September. Like many Companions, their route to Emmaus was the result of recession, family, financial and housing problems.

The couple were both employed with a local firm that went into liquidation and as a result of losing their jobs, mortgage arrears built up to a point where repossession became inevitable.

Homelessness for the couple, married for over six years, was a mixture of staying with friends, rented rooms and live-in accommodation when they both found work. Richard became a trainee bus driver and Sara a cleaner for a public house. Through circumstances over which they had no control, these options became fewer and fewer until they were forced to sleep in their van rather than at a local night shelter. After Sara had lost her job when the landlord moved to other premises, Richard became so depressed and worried about their 'No fixed abode' status and maintaining a good level of personal hygiene, that he gave up his bus driving work.

Richard says, 'These were really dark times for us, and I became clinically

depressed. I worried I wasn't providing for my wife and that for me made things seem twice as bad.'

He goes on to explain their struggle to find accommodation; 'We tried every avenue we could think of, but as a couple with no dependent children we were low priority for council housing. After that we looked into the YMCA and were offered hostel rooms, but after hearing bad things about the hostels I wasn't prepared to put my wife's welfare at any further risk and we had to sleep in the van.'

A meeting at the Job centre to start the signing on process proved to be a turning point for Richard and Sara when going through accommodation options yet again. Their interviewer mentioned Emmaus, and although he didn't know about the charity Richard called and was invited for a chat and something to eat at the Community.

Continued on page 2



Above: Richard and Sara have found some breathing space at Emmaus Bristol

Welcome from the Director



Welcome to this edition of the Newsletter. The current recession is having a number of effects including people needing our Community in difficult times. We are also finding more people looking for inexpensive furniture and household items as wallets are put under pressure. This helps our sales but means we need more donations so please join our 'Donate it. Don't dump it!' campaign and think of us first when you are disposing of things you no longer need.

We are so grateful for your support in so many ways. Thank you once again for your generosity and care.

Richard Pendlebury MBE

Donate it. Don't dump it!

The recession is biting here at Emmaus Bristol!

Donations to the workshop are down by 20%, so our latest 10,000 leaflet drop (with fridge magnet!) in North Bristol has focused on our need for good quality saleable furniture, with the strap line 'Donate it. Don't dump it!'

At the same time, the need for the second hand, low-cost goods we sell has never been greater, so if you are clearing out your cupboards or replacing your suite we'd love to hear from you! **Call us on 0117 954 0886**. A collection and delivery service is available.



Making links

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

As part of our commitment to serving those most in need, Companions and Staff have been doing three key things:

1) Endeavouring to become more self-sustaining and taking steps to become more ethical in our purchasing, by growing our own food on our allotment, sourcing food locally and buying Fair Trade products whenever possible.

2) We are also becoming more involved in the Worldwide Emmaus Movement. In October, four of us from Emmaus Bristol (including two Companions) attended the Emmaus Europe Regional Assembly in Brussels, which is the decision making body for the Region.

The first morning was spent in the European Parliament, listening to and debating with an MEP about Migration. (This is one of the main themes for action which was adopted by Emmaus International two years ago). We have a window of opportunity to express our feelings about legislation concerning Migration which is going through the European Parliament which will make it easier for Governments to return people to their place of origin without taking into account their safety and well-being. We have direct experience here at Emmaus Bristol of people in this situation, who are facing a forced return to a regime which is very likely to be harmful, even fatal, if they return.

3) We have also made links with various organisations around Bristol who have similar aims and have spent some time



looking at the issues surrounding Migration and Human Trafficking. Some of the most needy and oppressed people in our society at the moment fall into these categories. Often they have the most difficult problems to overcome and are eligible for the least amount of Government support.

Other highlights of the last few months have been:

- The first ever UK based Emmaus Work Camp, which gave us the chance to work together with people from inside and outside Emmaus (UK and the rest of Europe). We camped in the grounds of Emmaus Village Carlton in Bedfordshire and, over the course of a very enjoyable week, ran bric-a-brac stalls on 3 markets, laid a patio and did an enormous amount of gardening!
- The Emmaus UK National Assembly was held in Swanwick, Derbyshire at the beginning of September. 150 Companions and Staff from all the UK Communities gathered to share ideas, and plan for the future of the Movement in the UK. Emmaus Bristol Companions were a real credit to the Community, not only participating fully in the discussions but also winning the football!
- In October the official 60th Anniversary of the founding of the Emmaus Movement was celebrated in Paris by 600 representatives of Emmaus from all over the world.



Above: Winners of the Assembly football trophy and camping at the summer work camp at Emmaus Village Carlton



Continued from page 1

Richard wasn't very hopeful; 'We were told not to get our hopes up as generally Emmaus Bristol doesn't take couples but we felt we had nothing left to lose and it might open other doors for us, so along we went.'

Eventually Community Manager Dave Perry decided to offer a temporary place at Emmaus Bristol. Speaking of his relief, Richard says 'In our short time staying here we have been made to feel very welcome and fitted in perfectly with the Community. We enjoy our work and eventually I would like to become a staff member in any Emmaus Community so that I might help with some of the great work that goes on here.'

The couple are very impressed with Emmaus and say it is 'A fantastic approach to the issues of homelessness, giving a breathing space when most needed. The support encourages you to pursue goals and look forward to the future. We also feel frustrated that Emmaus is not better known in this country but hope that the organisation will grow both in its capacity to help the homeless and marginalised, and its public profile.'

Richard and Sara are certainly doing their part within Emmaus Bristol to make this wish a reality.

Pensioners' Christmas Lunch

Our Emmaus Bristol Pensioners' Christmas Lunch is becoming an annual event, and our Retail Manager Mike Poole is determined that this year's will be the best yet. A very successful Halloween Party at our local hostelry, The Barley Mow, raised £153.20 to help fund the event, which will take place on December 11th at Shaftesbury House.

Sad News

We recently saw the sad passing of Charlie Jordan and Daniel Schneeberger, two great characters in the Emmaus Worldwide Community. A moving tribute by Terry Waite to Charlie Jordan can be found at www.independent.co.uk. Charlie helped set up Emmaus Brighton and Emmaus Hastings & Rother. Daniel was Community Leader at Emmaus Rouen in France and a Councillor of Emmaus International. Both will be missed by us all.

Meatballs are so last year!

The Companions at Emmaus Bristol were given a rare treat this October as Italian Chef Antonio Carluccio paid a visit to the Community demonstrating his commitment to raising the awareness and profile of Emmaus.

Visiting Bristol as part of his book signing tour, Antonio was due to give a bit of a 'master class' to some Companions. Alas, he was recovering from a recent bout of bronchitis and was unable to do this, promising however to return at a later date. What he did was just as appreciated. He talked to Companions and Staff, showing a

great deal of empathy to the struggles faced and overcome by those within the Community.

Later, continuing his tour promoting new book, 'Simple Cooking', Antonio took two Companions, Chris and Ben along to Carluccio's Restaurant at Bristol's Cabot Circus Shopping Centre. There they assisted the super chef (who only calls himself a mere cook!) in preparing spinach balls with pasta in a courgette and parmesan sauce in front of well over 100 people. Even whilst promoting his new book, Antonio took the time to stress to his audience the importance



Above: World famous chef, Antonio Carluccio, dropped in for a visit to Emmaus Bristol

of Emmaus, the way this charity doesn't just hold out its hand for money, but earns it and gives any excess away to others in need.

A truly benevolent man, Antonio left Chris and Ben with some great memories and a signed copy of his new book. Emmaus Bristol awaits that master class with great anticipation.

Guides in boxes!

At the beginning of October, Emmaus Bristol was amazed and delighted to receive a cheque for £662 from the 2nd Filton (St Peter's) Guide Company, raised through their sponsored sleep-in-a-box at the end of September. This year being the Centenary of Girl Guiding in the UK, the group had been asked to support charities to change the world – and chose Emmaus as the homeless charity they would donate to. The guides were only allowed to take blankets with them and the evening started off with soup and rolls. They then played games in the dark on the campsite before retiring into their boxes for the night. In the morning before they went home it was bacon butties all round!



Above: Members of the 2nd Filton (St Peter's) Guide Company, raised money for Emmaus Bristol with a sponsored sleep-in-a-box

Emmaus experience

My name is Chris and I have been a Companion at Emmaus Bristol since April this year. As part of my support programme it was decided that furthering my knowledge and experience of Emmaus Communities would benefit my progress. So it was agreed that I would spend a couple of weeks at Emmaus Leeds in the role of acting Community Assistant (CA).

A CA is a Companion with a greater responsibility within the Community, who has additional duties to those of other Companions yet on the whole remains at the Companion level.

From Tuesday to Saturday I was working in the kitchen and tending their allotment, as I had in Bristol. When 'on call', I was responsible for ensuring the safety and security of both buildings and Companions until the following morning, with a member of staff always at the end of a telephone if needed.

I have to say that Emmaus Leeds was an excellent experience and my welcome from all at the Community was exemplary. The extra duties were no burden; no alarms went off and no Companions unruly, honestly!



Above: Chris broadening his experience at Emmaus Leeds

After two weeks, I was asked to stay for a further two. I accepted but when asked to remain further, I drew the line and returned to Bristol, where I am happiest. I would strongly recommend trying other Communities and responsibilities, since when helping others we also help ourselves. Huge thanks go to my Support Team here at Emmaus Bristol and all at Emmaus Leeds for the opportunity to grow within the organisation, grow within myself and make wonderful new friends.

We have a new website!

www.emmausbristol.org.uk

We can also send our newsletter by email. If you would prefer this, email info@emmausbristol.org.uk. And if you would like to be removed from our mailing lists, please phone, write or email.

Training & gaining

Learning new skills and developing existing ones is a great way to build confidence and help with future employment prospects too. The Government is currently making funding available through their Train to Gain initiative, and we are beginning three new courses this month, led by tutors from City of Bristol College. Two members of Staff will be taking the Level 3 in Management, our two Community Assistants will be taking the Level 2 Team Leading course, and five Companions will do an NVQ in Customer Service.

Not all the courses we do are quite so studious, though. In May, four Companions completed the RYA dinghy sailing Level 1 course in Bristol docks. This was made possible through the Companion Training Fund, which is managed by our umbrella organization, Emmaus UK – and a great time was had by all!



Above: Companions completed the RYA dinghy sailing Level 1 course



Above: Chris Heaton proudly wearing his Union Jack bow tie at the Paris Salon

Paris here we come

If it's June, then it must be Paris. Every year, Emmaus International organises a one day sale to raise money for international solidarity projects sponsored by the movement. Current campaigns involve such diverse issues as access to safe drinking water, migrants' rights and ethical finance. As always, the event was hard work and enormous fun, with the UK party setting up and running two big bric-a-brac stalls. No one who attends the Salon will forget the countdown to opening on the Sunday morning, when the doors to the exhibition hall are thrown open, and the bargain hunters of Paris pour in and run down the aisles in search of their favourite stall. Our stalls contributed some 8000 euros to the total of ½ million euros on the day, and afterwards there was the chance to socialise with Companions and staff from all over Europe.

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