

# Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association

Registered Charity Number: 1155620

## Annual Report from April 2015 to April 2016



## Presented at the ORFA AGM on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2016 6pm at the Eagle and Child in Broad Street Oxford

Cover picture from the Westgate Cultural Meridian panels by Adam Dant  
[www.westgateoxford.co.uk](http://www.westgateoxford.co.uk)

### Information about ORFA:

**Patrons:** Sir Iain Chalmers, Mahmoud Hawari, Karma Nabulsi, Sir Stephen Sedley, Avi Shlaim and Yasmin Sidhwa.

**Trustees:** Barbara Dziala (Treasurer), Tony Richardson (Chair), Joe Carter.

**Meetings:** Monthly – every third Tuesday of the month 6.00 pm to 7.30pm at Oxford Town Hall. Subgroups work together on projects.

**Contact:** Via the website, e mail

**Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association has been working since 2003, and became a registered charity on 4th February 2014.**

**Thank you** to **all** our friends and contacts in Palestine who continue to support our friendship link and show us immense hospitality when we visit. And a huge thank you **to all** the many individuals and groups in Oxford who helped in so many ways to ensure that our work continues.

A big thank you, also, to our patron the Rt Rev John Pritchard (Bishop of Oxford), who has now retired, for all his support for Palestinians.



## **ORFA Photo Exhibition June 2015**     *Report by Tony Richardson.*

On 17th-20th June 2015 ORFA mounted an exhibition of its work in the Town Hall, Oxford. This was part of the 'Palestine Unlocked' Festival, which was opened by the Mayor of Oxford Rae Humberstone, and closed by the Palestinian Delegate to the UK Manuel Hassassian.

The exhibition was opened by the Sheriff Saj Malik. It consisted of walls showing visits to Ramallah organised us, visits by Palestinians to us, trade union and political activities, meetings with respective Mayors, and the Apartheid Wall. The exhibition was well attended and well received.

*The Sheriff of Oxford Saj Malik opening the exhibition:*



## **Palestine Unlocked - ORFA supported Ashtar Theatre, Palestine performances of 48 Minutes for Palestine and also Gaza Monologues at Pegasus Theatre – June 2015**

ORFA was pleased to be asked by Palestine Unlocked to support the Ashtar performances at the Pegasus Theatre Oxford. ORFA members made a strong contribution through providing the props for 48 Minutes (including searching for suitable small rocks on a building site with a hard hat on!), organising the printing and some additional local distribution of publicity, utilising networks to build attendance. In addition we worked to try and find additional performance spaces for 48 Minutes. We made a link with a Hounslow friendship group who had contact with Ashtar and they also performed in Hounslow.

The play 48 Minutes for Palestine is a collaboration between theatre maker Mojisola Adebayo and was created by Ashtar theatre, Palestine with an original score by composer Rami Washaha. The play was performed by Edward Muallem and Riham Isaac who were also two of the key creators. 48 Minutes was followed by Gaza Monologues a powerful

drama created by Ashtar Theatre and written by 14-16 year olds living in Gaza during the 2008/9 bombings. The Pegasus Youth Theatre with director Yasmin Sidhwa and a group of wonderful young actors, once again, created a deeply moving theatre piece exploring the human cost of the attack.

There were two performances. The afternoon was well attended and the evening performance was a sell-out! Both pieces were extremely well received and included a moving Q and A with the actors and directors..

### **Trade Union Trip to Palestine, July 2015** *Report by Tony Richardson (from ORFA website)*

In July a Trade Union Group went with the Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association (ORFA) to Palestine. The group contained 2 probation officers, one nurse, and two car workers. Our two main aims were to visit a hospital, and a courtroom. As well as meet trade unions, and visit the sites of Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank. On our first day we toured the old city part of Jerusalem, and visited both the Al Aqsa Mosque, and the Holy Sepulchre Church. We then moved to Ramallah. On our first morning in Ramallah we visited the Women's Centre in Al Amari Refugee Camp, and met some of the women who came to Oxford last summer. In the afternoon we went to Hebron, by public bus, where we met the leader of the post office union, and toured the old market, and visited the Ibrahimi Mosque. Every year the settlers are taking more control over this area, and the Palestinians are slowly being ethnically cleansed. What started off as the settlers 'right' to go to the mosque has meant Palestinians have lost the right to open their shops, and walk many of the streets. Throughout the journey both ways you can see the settlements developing all over the area. On the TV news was yet another village being knocked down.

On the Wednesday we met the Independent Unions leadership, after we had made a visit to the DWRC, (which deals with union rights). The Independent Union Federation described their many struggles, particularly that of the Public Sector Union, that after a series of strikes, had their leadership imprisoned, and is now closed down, all this by Palestinian Presidential Decree. They are looking for international recognition as a Federation, and condemnation of the banning of a union. We then had a very nice and welcome meal in a home in Al Amari. Our next day was very busy. We started with an official tour of the main Hospital Complex in Ramallah. This is a public hospital, and has been greatly increased in size and doing much of the training on the West Bank. It was a privilege to be shown round as special guests, and fulfilled one of the principal aims of our visit. We then had a formal meeting with the Mayor of Ramallah, Musa Hadid, and we brought him the greetings of the Sheriff of Oxford. He was very friendly, and wanted to expand the relationship with Oxford. In the afternoon we went to Bethlehem, and were taken on a tour by our long-time friend, and union activist, Hanan. We saw the Church of the Nativity, and had good views of the Apartheid Wall, and the settlements surrounding the City. On Friday we went to Nablus, where we were taken around the Old City and into the Turkish Baths by Abed and his daughter, the photographer who came to Oxford with the NUJ in the Palestine Unlocked Festival.

The Saturday was taken up with meeting the Women's Officer of the PGFTU, in Ramallah, and also the leadership of the GUPW Federation, who are also looking for International recognition, and are in talks with the PGFTU about merging. We also met members of the Fide Party leadership. Sunday was a rest day, and we went with our longtime friend, Mohamed, to Arura Village, to have a picnic under the Olive Trees, what a treat, high in the mountains overlooking valleys of more olive trees. On the way we visited the new Palestinian City Of Rawabi. Also on the way we went through the unmanned checkpoint at Atara. This was similar to our trip to Nablus -- many checkpoints look out of use, but in both of these visits we were told that in the previous week they had been in operation, in other

words you never know. In reality at a demonstration a few days after our passing through Atara a young Palestinian was shot dead by an army sniper. On our final morning we were taken by a lawyer (working for Defence of Children International) to the courts at Ofer military Camp near Ramallah. We visited both a court remanding older prisoners, and a youth court. Again this fulfilled one of our main aims and was a privilege, though difficult to witness Palestinians at the sharp end of military occupation. Afterwards we had a free afternoon, and walked around Ramallah before getting our plane back to the UK. We had achieved both our main aims, and much more besides, particularly meeting the women of the camp, Refa, Elham, Nadia and other old friends.

## **Film showing and meeting organised by Oxford PSC and ORFA**

### **Film: Breaking the generations: Palestinian prisoners and medical rights.**

A documentary co-directed and –produced by William Parry and Caroline Rooney. ‘The film is a topical human rights documentary that explores how Israel’s widespread and systematic use of arrest and detention is a key tool of Israel’s military occupation. It explores what the consequences are for the health of Palestinian prisoners, who face widespread, institutionalised medical negligence inside Israeli prisons. It further raises the question of a complicity of the international community in this ongoing state of affairs. The film features interviews with Palestinian prisoners and their families and with leading humanitarian physicians and lawyers.’

The meeting was well attended, followed by an informative discussion with William Parry, the filmmaker. A collection for Addameer (Prisoners Rights Organisation) raised £70.00

## **Fundraising:**

We have raised sufficient funds to begin considering future projects. This is mainly through individuals donations to our work. Fundraising for projects needs to be ongoing. Our charitable status means that we can claim gift aid on donations as appropriate. Our treasurer has successfully completed our first Gift Aid claim. Our treasurer has also set up a Local Giving account and when contributions are made through this account (see website) gift aid is managed by them. One member has completed a marathon for ORFA again this year.

## **Current/Ongoing Work:**

Participation in the Palestine Unlocked Festival, which is taking place in Oxford during May 2016. ORFA is particularly involved with organising a meeting on a subject of human rights and prisoners.

A delegation to Palestine (self-funded) of local people is in a process of being arranged for October 2016. A fundraiser is planned for November 2016.

## ORFA Accounts Financial Report

Financial period start: 02 April 2015

Financial period end: 01 April 2016

### Income and expenditure

Income: £852.09

Spending: £102.00

DATE		intern et	chequ e	CREDI T	DEBIT	BALANC E
22/04/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		32.45		1351.35
07/05/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		51.05		1402.4
13/05/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		3.55		1405.95
20/05/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		28.9		1434.85
18/06/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		17.45		1452.3
24/06/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		3.55		1455.85
01/07/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		3.55		1459.4
15/07/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		4.6		1464
29/07/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		93.9		1557.9
20/08/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		29.53		1587.43
23/09/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		4.65		1592.08
25/09/2015	donation from Trade Union		x	20		1612.08
14/10/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		4.65		1616.73
04/11/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		2.36		1619.09
05/11/2015	Localgiving annual membership	x			72	1547.09
18/11/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		4.65		1551.74
27/11/2015	Palestine Twinning Network Membership		x		30	1521.74
16/12/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		4.65		1526.39
23/12/2015	Donation through localgiving	x		2.37		1528.76
13/01/2016	Donation through localgiving	x		4.65		1533.41

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03/02/2016	Donation through localgiving	x		1.19		1534.6
10/02/2016	Donation through localgiving	x		1.19		1535.79
23/06/2016	Donation through localgiving	x		4.65		1540.44
16/03/2016	Donation through localgiving	x		19.75		1560.19
23/03/2016	Donation from Tony Richardson		x	100		1660.19
23/03/2016	Donation through localgiving	x		9.13		1669.32
30/03/2016	Gift Aid Payment from HMRC Charities	x		399.67		2068.99

Main points:

1. Most donations are now through the Local Giving (gift aid automatically processed) £332.42
2. Gift Aid Payment from our donations declarations received from HMRC £399.67
3. There have been individual donations in kind e.g. stage props and the leaflets for Ashtar Theatre. These donations are not included in the accounts but they will be claimed against Gift Aid later in the year and will be described in the next year's financial report.
4. Charity Commission Annual Return 2016 will be submitted in September 2016 for the financial year shown here.

### **Agenda for AGM 19<sup>th</sup> July 2016 6pm Eagle and Child, Broad Street, Oxford.**

1. Annual Report
2. Financial Report (Treasurer and Trustees)
3. Distribution of Annual report and website updating
4. Current work
5. Ideas future plans and fundraising.

### **Appendix to ORFA Annual Report 2016**

#### **Through the Charity Commission ORFA charity is classified as:**

- Working in the area of education and training, arts/culture/heritage, human rights/religious or racial harmony or diversity.
- Working with the general public/mankind.

ORFA's Charitable Objects are copied below as adopted: (CONSTITUTION ADOPTED 18 OCT 2011 AS AMENDED ON 19/11/2013)

TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS (AS SET OUT IN THE UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND SUBSEQUENT UNITED NATIONS CONVENTIONS AND DECLARATIONS) BY ALL OR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING MEANS:

- RAISING AWARENESS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMANITARIAN ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE ISRAELI - PALESTINIAN CONFLICT IN GENERAL;
- RESEARCHING AND MONITORING ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND INFRINGEMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW;
- EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS LAW;

- PROMOTING PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE OBSERVANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW;
  - WORKING TO ELIMINATE ABUSES OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND INFRINGEMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW;
  - WORKING TO OBTAIN AND PROMOTE REDRESS FOR THE VICTIMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND THEIR FAMILIES AND INFRINGEMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW.
  - PROVIDING SUPPORT TO AND RELIEVING NEED AMONG THE VICTIMS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND INFRINGEMENTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW AND THEIR FAMILIES.
2. TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN THE UK AND PALESTINE, IN PARTICULAR IN RAMALLAH AND ITS ENVIRONS BY ALL OR ANY OF THE FOLLOWING MEANS:
- TO PROVIDE EXTRA-CURRICULAR EDUCATION TO IMPROVE THE EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS OF THE LOCAL PEOPLE, INHABITANTS AND REFUGEES;
  - TO FOCUS ON IMPROVING THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THOSE IN NEED, ESPECIALLY THE YOUTH AND REFUGEES.
  - TO ASSIST IN PROVIDING DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY EDUCATIONAL TEACHING MATERIAL, BOOKS AND TOOLS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE EDUCATION OR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE YOUTH AND REFUGEES.
  - TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY BASED EDUCATION THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY BASED PROJECTS AND RESOURCES.
  - TO HELP THE COMMUNITY BUILD SUSTAINABLE AND LOCALLY MANAGED EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES.
  - TO BRING PEOPLE FROM THE COMMUNITY BASED PROJECTS TO OXFORD TO FURTHER THEIR EDUCATION IN A WAY THAT IMPROVES THEIR SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES AT HOME AND ABROAD.
  - TO PRESENT MATERIAL IN VARIOUS FORMS TO EDUCATE PEOPLE IN OXFORD ABOUT THE CULTURE AND ORDINARY LIVES OF THE PEOPLE OF RAMALLAH.
  - TO SEND GROUPS AND DELEGATIONS FROM OXFORD TO PALESTINE AND IN PARTICULAR TO RAMALLAH AND ITS ENVIRONS TO IMPROVE THEIR AWARENESS AND TO BUILD COMMUNITY BASED / INDIVIDUAL CONTACTS BETWEEN OXFORD AND RAMALLAH.

