

Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association

Registered Charity Number: 1155620

Annual Report from April 2016 to March 2017



ORFA AGM Tuesday 20th June 2017 6pm Town Hall St Aldates Oxford

Cover picture from the Westgate Cultural Meridian panels by Adam Dant
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 Schofield (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 big thank you **to all** the many individuals and groups in Oxford who help in so many ways to ensure that our work continues.



ORFA organised a meeting on the subject of Human Rights and Palestinian Prisoners as part of the Palestine Unlocked events.

Human Rights for Palestinian Prisoners (with special reference to children in custody) with Sir Stephen Sedley QC and William Parry 23rd May at 7pm

For this meeting we were kindly offered the use of the Investcorp Building, The Middle East Centre, St Anthony's College. Palestine Unlocked supported the meeting.

The meeting was informative and well attended and we raised over £300 from a collection and this was donated to Addameer during the October visit to Palestine.

Our speakers were:

Sir Stephen Sedley - co-author of the report 'Children in Military Custody' (2012), written by a delegation of independent British lawyers on the treatment of Palestinian children under Israeli military law, which was discussed January 2016, in parliament.

William Parry - journalist/documentary film maker. His recent film *Breaking the generations: Palestinian Prisoners and medical rights*. The film, which is about Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails and explores Israel's widespread and systematic use of arrest and detention of Palestinians, was shown and William was able to answer questions.

An Oxford Ramallah Friendship Association visitor who attended a juvenile court in the West Bank shared her observations. Thank you to Omar Shweiki for chairing the meeting.

ORFA Palestine Trip October 2016

Tony Richardson (This is an edited version of report on ORFA website).

There were nine on this trip, five old hands and four first-timers. We were mainly based in Ramallah but we started our first day, in Jerusalem.

We met the Vice-Consul, Laurie Hunter at 10am. We outlined the purpose of our twinning trip, and emphasised that groups such as ours needed a specifically designated officer to deal with any problems we encountered. She indicated that she was willing to play that role. The discussion was friendly, but she stressed that there were no funds available for small projects, and that visa problems were dealt with in Amman.

We then toured around the Old City, Via Dolorosa etc. It was noticeable that there were more Israeli flags flying on Jewish properties in the Muslim Quarter. Earlier we looked at the properties in Sheikh Jarrah, which Palestinians were being cleansed from, and again it is noticeable how the area is slowly being Judaized.

We then went to Ramallah, by bus. This was our base for the remainder of the trip. On the Saturday we went to Al-Amari Camp, and joined a coach of the staff at the Womens Centre, together with women who had come to Oxford, for a day out, paid by ORFA and the Oxford visitors.

We first went to a religious site in the desert, which the Israelis will not allow the Palestinians to develop. Then we went to the River Jordan, a Christian baptismal site, completely controlled by the Israelis, including a checkpoint.

At the end of the day we went to Jericho, and took a cable car up to the restaurant near the monastery in the cliffs. There we had a meal, with the most wonderful view, and wound this up with a coffee in a house of a friend of one of the women, on a hill overlooking Jericho.



On the Sunday we went into Ramallah, and around the Sakhakini Cultural Centre, which was one of the sites of the Qualandia International Art Festival (<http://www.qalandiyainternational.org/about>). Over the next few days we would visit several of the sites of this major art event, centering on return, the sea, and the land and cultivation.

We finished our day by having a meal in the house of one of the women from the centre. This was a wonderful Palestinian meal, as were others we were to have.

We started the Monday with a talk in the FIDA offices re the political situation. This was followed by a talk in the afternoon, at the Palestinian Medical Relief Society offices, by Mustafa Barghouti, which was of great help, particularly for those of our group who have never been before. The growth of settlements, the destruction of trees and houses, has worsened every time we go. We then returned to the centre for the “Sites of Return” section of the festival.

Early Tuesday morning we set off for Bethlehem, where our first port of call was the Palestine Museum of Natural History (<https://www.palestinenature.org/>). There the Director, Mazin Qumsiyeh, gave us a talk about trying to preserve the fauna and flora of Palestine, and its history. This was a wonderful talk, which could not be separated from the politics of occupation. His gardens include the use of fish in tanks that provide the nutrients for plants - aquaponics - and much other interesting work.

We found throughout this trip innovative work on sustainable agriculture, in this museum, in art exhibits, in the women's centre in Bethlehem etc.

We were hosted to a lovely meal at the Arab Women's Union guest house in Beit Sahour, then visited sights in Bethlehem, and returned to Ramallah.

The next day we were given a tour around the new Palestinian Museum at Birzeit (<http://www.palmuseum.org>) by its Director Mahmoud Hawari. This is completely new and Mahmoud outlined its plans including touring exhibitions on embroidery, on Gaza History etc. This promises to be a major weapon in the Palestinian struggle. As Mahmoud says, the building (shortlisted for an international award) shows "we are here to stay".

This visit was followed by a trip to the Democracy & Workers Rights Centre, which campaigns on workers' rights. In the evening some of our group went to the Fida Youth International Camp, for a show on Palestinian culture.

On Thursday we went for a talk at Addameer (<http://www.addameer.org>), the prisoners' rights organisation which campaigns for prisoners in Israeli jails, and in Palestinian jails. The authorities are hostile, because of the work they do highlighting the injustices; 98% are found guilty by Israeli military courts, including children, and PA courts are clearly political. Their workers regularly get imprisoned, and recently one was beaten up. We all felt they do great, necessary work.

In the evening we went to the Child Centre in Al Amari camp, where we were given a lovely singing and Dabke dance display, and some more food.

Friday was a trip to see the new city, Rawabi, which was quite surreal, and then to a picnic in the olive terraces of Arura village. After this we had a talk with a couple of women of the village regards linking with Faringdon in Oxfordshire.

On the Saturday we were given a tour around the camp, including the self-financing disabled centre. We understood that there is no longer any UN funding for such activities, in fact UNWRA funding is declining all round. Another meal and exchange of gifts at the Women's Centre followed.

The main group left for the airport on Sunday. The rest of us did separate things, before we left, including visiting Nablus, Bethlehem and Taybeh (brewery and ancient village).

Two of us had a meeting with the Executive of the Independent Federation of Trade Unions, where we learnt that they had achieved a new Social Security Law, and its financial backing by the Government. The Trade Union struggles continue.

Fundraising:

We have raised some funds and can begin considering future projects. A big thank you and well done to Mark who ran another marathon, in Bilbao, and fundraised for ORFA. Other fundraising this year was 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, is in the process of completing our first Gift Aid claim. We have an established Local Giving account and when contributions are made through this account (see website) gift aid is managed by them.

Current/Ongoing Work:

Through the successful visit we were able to identify two projects with our Palestinian partners:

Attendance: (self funded) at Twinning Conference in Palestine

Visit by Mazin Qumsiyeh October /November 2017.

Dubke Dance visit to oxford June/July 2018.

ORFA Accounts Financial Report

Financial period start: 02 April 2016

Financial period end: 01 April 2017

Income and expenditure

Carried forward: £2068.99

Income: £3434.83

Spending: £1757.00

Total (balance): £3746.82

Main points:

1. Most donations are now through the Local Giving (gift aid automatically processed) £2549.83
2. Donations were received by ORFA to specifically support the visit of the speakers during Palestine Unlocked. Festival and ORFA also contributed
3. Gift Aid Payment from our donations declarations is being processed and will be sent by the end of July to HMRC.
4. Charity Commission Annual Return 2016 will be submitted at end of July 2017 for the financial year shown here.

DATE		internet	cash	cheque	CREDIT	DEBIT	BALANCE
13/04/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			65.35		2134.34
20/04/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			7.12		2141.46
11/05/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			572.66		2714.12
18/05/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			4.65		2718.77
20/05/2016	donation from Pauline Simmonds			x	100		2818.77
02/06/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			65.8		2884.57
09/06/2016	Donation from individual donor			x	100		2984.57
15/06/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			4.65		2989.22
13/07/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			4.65		2993.87
19/07/2016	ORFA donation to Palestine Unlocked Festival 2016			x		750	2243.87
19/07/2016	ORFA donation to Palestine Unlocked Festival 2016			x		100	2143.87
20/07/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			7.36		2151.23
22/07/2016	Collective donation at AGM	x			65		2216.23
17/08/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			4.65		2220.88
24/08/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			1.19		2222.07
14/09/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			5.84		2227.91
05/10/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			18.6		2246.51
12/10/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			32.75		2279.26
19/10/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			56.06		2335.32
26/10/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			56.04		2391.36
27/10/2016	Cheque to J. Carter to support Women's Centre volunteers trip			x		800	1591.36
02/11/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			271.31		1862.67
07/11/2016	Localgiving annual membership	x				72	1790.67
09/11/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			30.85		1821.52
16/11/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			188.92		2010.44
23/11/2016	Donation through localgiving	x			42.57		2053.01
25/11/2016	Donation from Oxford & District Trade Union Council No. 1 account			x	20		2073.01
30/11/2016	Donation through localgiving				147.36		2220.37
08/12/2016	Donation through localgiving				282.86		2503.23

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14/12/2016	Donation through localgiving				48.03		2551.26
21/12/2016	Tony & Jenny's Wedding donations (£560) + Ruth Stavris (£40)		x	x	600		3151.26
21/12/2016	Donation through localgiving				93.27		3244.53
05/01/2017	Donation through localgiving	x			19.4		3263.93
18/01/2017	Donation through localgiving	x			140.45		3404.38
01/02/2017	Donation through localgiving	x			19.4		3423.78
08/02/2017	Donation through localgiving	x			67.59		3491.37
15/02/2017	Palestine Twinning Network Memberhip	x				30	3461.37
15/02/2017	Donation through localgiving	x			130.45		3591.82
01/03/2017	Donation through localgiving	x			19.4		3611.22
08/03/2017	Donation through localgiving				20.15		3631.37
15/03/2017	Donation through localgiving				111.05		3742.42
29/03/2017	Fee copy of bank statements					5	3737.42
29/03/2017	Donation through localgiving				9.4		3746.82

Agenda for AGM 20 June 2017 6pm

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

Appendix to ORFA Annual Report 2017

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.

