

SPRING 2011

ALM Newsletter

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REFUGEE WEEK - 19th to 25th June

Asylum Link passed its 10th Anniversary in April this year and to everyone who has been involved with us during that time, thank you very much and well done! We estimate that during those years as many as 28,000 people will have come through the centre: that's a lot of tea, coffee and friendship! To celebrate our achievements we are having a party, in the Caribbean Centre on Amberly Street, from 12 to 5 on Saturday the 25th of June.

However our celebrations will have a tinge of irony as we are currently facing an uphill struggle to raise funds for the immediate future. The high visitor numbers over the past 3 years have put increasing pressure on staff and volunteers to deliver services and as a result, not enough time has been spent on the backroom tasks of securing our finances. This has resulted in some short term measures to keep us afloat whilst longer term funding is sought.

One of these has been the suspension of our clothing service, diverting all clothing to recycling, which brings 60p/kg and generates up to £300 per week. Whilst realizing that in the short term this stops our service users from getting clothes they may need, if we do not take steps to address this now, in a few months time, there will be no way to give out clothes at all.

We have also begun to recycle books and are looking to trade 2nd hand items on Ebay or via monthly jumble sales at the centre. We will also close on a Friday, allowing staff and volunteers to concentrate on fundraising initiatives, report and bid writing.

Despite all the problems we are experiencing, the centre is extremely busy and we are still managing to put new ventures in place. Mike the Bike, our Tuesday mechanic, took some cyclists over to New Brighton where they travelled the sea wall before sitting down to a plate of Fish&Chips - it's a hungry business biking. This month saw our first hill walking visit to the Clwyds, with 15 people dodging the showers in North Wales. Everyone had a fantastic day and the pressure is on for the next trip. The allotment has begun to produce well and an enormous box of leeks was used recently to put fresh greens into the meal of the day as well as being given out to our clients. (well done Pete, Ron, Mara and Gerry for their consistent and continuing hard work.) Thank you all, Ewan



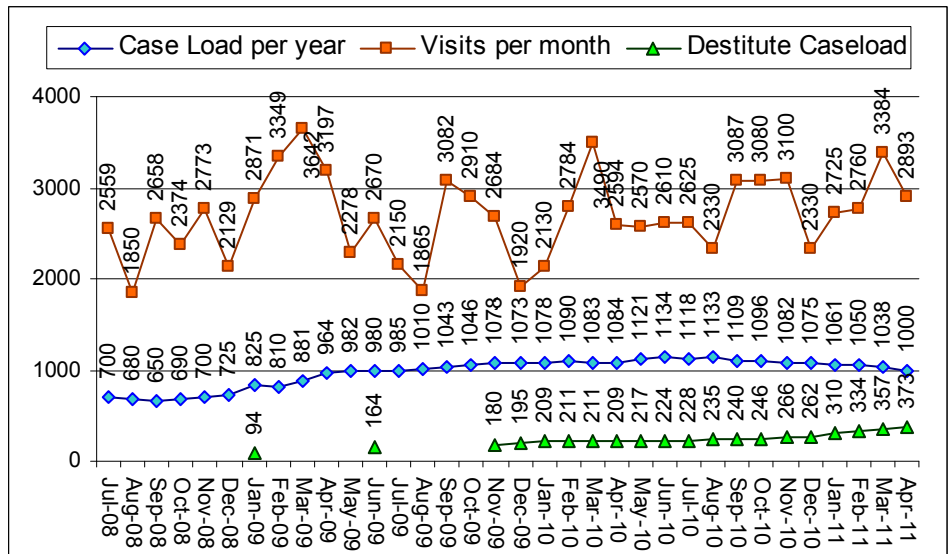
WITH THIS ISSUE:

Roundup

Refugee Week 2011

Hill Walking

Appeal



Refugee Week is fast approaching and so far we have 3 events planned:

Wednesday 22nd June, our annual trip to the Tam O'Shanter Urban Farm at Bidston Hill Out 9am Back 3pm—lunch provided.

Thursday 23rd June, a day in St Anne's Primary with Frank Cottrell Boyce (Author of The Unforgotten Coat) our cooks and our Roadshow (not open to the public)

Saturday 25th June A celebration at the Caribbean Centre, with food, music AND dancing. 12-5pm

St Anne's Centre, 7 Overbury Street, Liverpool, L7 3HJ
Phone: 0151 709 1713 Fax: 0151 709 1734 e-mail: info@asylumlink.org.uk
www.asylumlink.org.uk
- Offering practical support and friendship to refugees and asylum seekers -

A walk on the wild Welsh side

On Wednesday 11th May, fifteen of us set off in high spirits for Wales - a country (and a language) that some of us had never encountered before. Thank heavens for mobile phones. One car left later than the other vehicles and could be asked to go back and get the minibus petrol cap key.

But that was the only hiccup. We drove through rain wondering why the BBC forecast said 'sunny' but then emerged into good weather. The walk was 5 miles over Penycloddiau in the Clwyds, picnicking on the way, with wonderful views over the Vale of Clwyd to Snowdonia and the sea. People were thrilled with it - it meant a great deal to get out of the city and see more of Britain, and there was strong demand for another one soon, which we hope to meet. *Dave Bradley.*



What were you doing on 11th September 2001?

We at ALM were at a protest we had organized outside the then Refugee Action headquarters in Wavertree Road. About forty of us were protesting at the forced removal of asylum seekers whom we had got to know and help being removed en masse to Stoke on Trent, Hanley as I recall. Women who were attending local hospitals, children who were attending local schools, and most of the adult men in ESOL classes on Merseyside, were all to be bundled in with their bags into one big bus!. We stood outside the centre and blocked the exit to stop the bus moving out.

A number of police reinforcements came and began attempting to move the peaceful demo away. While we procrastinated a number of the police began talking on their mobiles and obviously began to lose interest in us. They were listening to what was happening in New York! The word spread and the mood of the demo changed. We had to step aside as the buses moved steadily towards us, but by this time everyone was engrossed in the events in New York.

I was recently thrilled and heartened at the tone and obvious wonderment of the student writer who described the atmosphere he and his fellow STAR students encountered when they came to the centre. The article appeared in the Big Issue North West, entitled **A Beacon of Hope**. Just some quotes. *Tony Edwards*

The population of Asylum Link is never the same in one instant, but one thing for sure is it is always busy. It is a pillar of support, and a beacon of hope for a whole community of people possibly living out some of the hardest lives in Liverpool. 'Going to Asylum Link is truly the highlight of my week. It teaches me so much about the world we live in, its splendor and its harsh realities....

The conversations I have take me to the deserts of Sudan, to the icy plains of Siberia, the jungles of the Congo, and through a four walled room in freezing Liverpool I travel the whole world.

