



Bahá'í Journal UK

Journal of the Bahá'í Community of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
May 2001 / 158BE

National Spiritual Assembly

National Spiritual Assembly

The Guardian's Resting Place

The National Spiritual Assembly would like to remind the friends that new security arrangements are in operation to protect the Guardian's Resting Place against any further intrusions by thieves or vandals:

- the gates to the enclosure around the monument are locked at 5 p.m. each day, (when the Custodians complete their day's work);
- when the gates are locked the alarm system is switched on;
- anyone entering the enclosure at this time will trigger the alarm;
- the alarm alerts the security company who monitor the Bahá'í part of the Cemetery.

The Guardian's Resting Place is open for prayer and meditation between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. each day. Please do not enter the enclosure outside these hours. If you wish to visit the Guardian's Resting Place outside these hours, while the cemetery is still open, you are most welcome to pray there, but please remain outside the enclosure while you do so.

Unfortunately, one of the friends entered the alarmed section after 6pm and set the alarm off. Every time this happens a cost is incurred and various people are put to inconvenience by having to go to the Guardian's Resting Place to check and reset the alarm. We feel sure that you will understand why this is so important.

Happy Naw Rúz!

Contents Page

Regular Features

- Bahá'í World Centre
- National Assembly
- Regional Councils
- BOREA
- International Travel
- Teaching & Pioneering
- Travel Teaching and Homefront Pioneering and Advice for travellers
- Youth Space
- International News
- Letters
- UK Community News

Highlights

- Social Transformation
- Island Hopping
- Beyond Words
- UK Community History
- How I became a Bahá'í

Archives Index

The Office of External Affairs

Guided by the external affairs strategy communicated to National Spiritual Assemblies in 1994, the community's capacity in the fields of diplomatic and public information likewise expanded at an astonishing rate, placing the Bahá'í community in a dynamic relationship with the United Nations, governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the media. The strategy focused activities at international and national levels on two key objectives: to influence the processes towards world peace, and to defend the Faith.

[Universal House of Justice, message to the Bahá'ís of the World, Ridván 157]

Since the establishment of the Office of External Affairs at 27 Rutland Gate in October 1998, our external affairs work has developed at a breathtaking pace. The All Party Parlia-mentary Friends of the Bahá'ís has been established with the approval of the House of Justice, a friendly working relationship with the Foreign & Commonwealth Office has been nurtured, and we have made our contribution to defending our beleaguered brethren in Iran. In January a well-attended seminar in the House of Com-mons launched our major new initiative, the Institute for Social Cohesion, as a forum for action research and for discourse on the question: What makes a society cohesive? The OEA has also been working with other non-governmental organizations to encourage the government to fulfil its promise to ratify the treaty that will establish the Interna-tional Criminal Court, as well as engaging in a wide range of interfaith organizations.

This and other vital external affairs tasks need resources – people and money. The National Assembly has assigned a generous budget for OEA, but we

Board of Trustees of Huqúqu'lláh for the Republic of Ireland and the

cannot commit funds to projects unless the friends understand the importance of ensuring that we are able to do what the House of Justice wants us to do in this vital field of service.

United Kingdom

Mrs Erica Leith: Secretary, Dr Ramin Khadem, Mrs Val McGinley, Dr Wendi Momen, and Mr Hadi Rahmani

What is a Disability?

We have already told the Friends that the Disability Dis-crimination Act will come fully into effect in October 2004. All the premises where Bahá'í activities take place will need to comply with the Act. As there seems to be some confusion about what constitutes a "disability" within the meaning of the Act we would like to make this clear: A person who has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to- day activities.

Long-term means it has lasted at least 12 months, or where the total period for which it lasts is likely to be at least 12 months or that it is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.

The broad categories where a person might be considered to have a disability are:

- mobility
- manual dexterity
- physical coordination
- continence
- ability to lift, carry or otherwise move everyday objects
- speech, hearing or eyesight
- memory or ability to concentrate, learn or understand
- perception of the risk of physical danger

The National Assembly hopes this information will help the Friends in meeting their responsibilities under this important legislation.

*Hints for giving presentations to disabled readers are available on the web:
www.rnib.org.uk/digital/hints.htm, www.w3.org/WAI/, and www.cast.org/bobby/ [no longer available 20020722] (Ed)*

BSL Signers Wanted

Dearly loved friends,

The National Spiritual Assembly would very much like to know if there are Bahá'ís in the United Kingdom who are fluent in BSL who could make themselves available for signing at national and regional conferences, at residential schools and at other events. We are aware that signers usually work in teams.

We would also be interested to know whether there are any Bahá'ís in the United Kingdom who presently require this service or a similar service and how it can best be provided. Please do write to the National Assembly With loving greetings,

Wendi Momen Dr Wendi Momen, Assistant Secretary

National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the UK

"Ending Violence in the Family"

"Ending Violence in the Family" is the title of a statement recently released by the National Spiritual Assembly on behalf of the Bahá'í Community of the United Kingdom. The Friends may find it something to share with local journalists, contacts, or appropriate organisations. To obtain a copy please contact the Bahá'í Information Office (SAE always appreciated).

It can also be downloaded from the national Website at www.bahai.org.uk/dp/.

BIO Webspace URL

The Webspace of the Bahá'í Informa-tion Office, which hosts a number of sites of interest and use to both Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, is being more closely integrated into the main site of the National Spiritual Assembly at www.bahai.org.uk.

The existing home page will be maintained in parallel with the new one on the NSA site, as many people have that URL and it also appears on a number of current documents. However home links from the various BIO sites will now lead back to the new page. If you are a regular visitor to the BIO Webspace you might like to bookmark it. The direct URL, avoiding the

Representatives

Mrs Joan Estall (Republic of Ireland), Mr Andrew Goodwin (Scotland), Mrs Patricia Jamshidi (Northern Ireland), Mrs Azar Melville (Wales), Mrs Rosie Villiers-Stuart (North of England, and Mr Farzin Yourtchi (England).

For contact details, please communicate with the [National Office](#), tel.: 020 7584 2566.

"Bahá'í Future" Website

When we announced that the Millennium Website, one of several sites maintained by the Bahá'í Information Office, had served its time and would be decommissioned, a number of you contacted us.

You asked whether, even though we were now past the turn-of-the-Christian-millennium which gave the site its focus, a way could be found to make it over and keep the useful parts of the site available. We are happy to say this has been done and the key elements form a new "Bahá'í Future" website which can be visited at: www.iol.ie/~isp/future/

Bahá'í Information Office

Third Floor, Bridge House,
97-191 High Street,
Tonbridge, Kent TN 1DP
Tel: 01732 369694, Fax: 01732 369733
E-mail: bio@bahai.org.uk

Guidance on Travel to Middle-Eastern Countries

May we remind the friends that the Universal House of Justice has instructed that any believer planning to travel to a Middle-eastern, North African, or any other Muslim country (whether for business or holiday), must contact the National Office well in advance for guidance. They should ask to speak to either Hilary Freeman or Angela Tidswell in the Office of the Secretary.

This is a very serious matter, involving the protection of the Faith and the personal safety of the believers. We urge all the friends to comply with these instructions.

To: All Community School Trustee Local Spiritual Assemblies

Dearly loved friends,

As a result of the boundary changes, some Community Schools may lose their current Trustee Local Spiritual Assembly.

If this is about to happen, it will be necessary to identify and appoint (through the Children Bahá'í Education Service) a new Trustee Assembly from among those Assemblies within or adjacent to the school's catchment area. This is the usual practice, as outlined in the 'Guide-lines for Schools' approved and circulated by the National Assembly.

If there is no Local Assembly remaining within or adjacent to the school's catchment area, or there is no Local Assembly strong enough to serve in this capacity, then the direct responsibility for the Community School, with all that this entails, reverts to the Children's Bahá'í Education Service, as the national agency appointed by the National Assembly to hold overall supervision of formal Bahá'í education for children and junior youth in the United Kingdom.

If you have any queries, please do contact the Children's Bahá'í Education Service at: mitali@mpeckham.freeserve.co.uk

With loving greetings,

Wendi Momen

Tranquillity Zones: Information and Guidance

A number of communities have found Tranquillity Zones a useful activity both for the benefit of the Friends and as part of our outreach into the wider community. The National Spiritual Assembly is preparing a detailed guide on the subject but as an interim measure a basic sheet of points for the

information and guidance of those thinking of holding Tranquillity Zone gatherings has been prepared. It is available in electronic form (as attached *.PDF file) by e-mail from: resources@bahai.org.uk and in a printed copy by writing to: The National Spiritual Assembly, 27 Rutland Gate, London SW7 1PD

National Teaching Committee

Understanding Teaching

The National Teaching Committee is embarking on an ambitious and exciting project, inspired, in part, by the work of the NTC of the US and encouraged by the NSA of the UK. Following a lengthy deepening process and much consultation with the NSA, a research proposal has been approved by the NSA.

The Project involves a major piece of research, which will examine the three essential aspects of teaching, namely, proclamation, expansion and consolidation and the extent to which these are successfully integrated into the teaching work in the UK Bahá'í community. If we can learn more about what promotes and hinders success in teaching then we become more effective in reaching receptive audiences, in enabling seekers to embrace the Cause and improving our retention rates. Indeed, one of the most dramatic findings from the US research was that if the retention rate of new believers had been

most dramatic findings from the US research was that if the retention rate of new believers had been increased from less than 50% to 80% (the average rate for some Christian denominations) then instead of the current 70,000 believers in the US, there would be 260,000.

We can all play our part to hasten the process of Entry by Troops. The NTC needs your help to complete this important research project.

We need:

- Experts in research design and methodology
- Field workers to conduct research
- Individuals with skills in database & statistical computer packages
- Individuals who can undertake literature research
- Students in Bahá'í societies who could set up "focus groups" made up of fellow non Bahá'í students

Some funds are available to help with this work so please don't let economic considerations alone deter you from offering to help. If you can help then contact the NTC for more information. E-mail: ntc-uk@mail.com