

LARGE PRINT / Standard Print.**A Change of Time II**

THIS IS YOUR FESTIVAL SO MAKE IT HAPPEN!

A Change of Time II
UK National
Bahá'í Festival,
Scarborough,
1-3rd November 2002

THE VENUE IS DECIDED, the dates are set and the programme is brewing... So how exactly do we intend to entice you from your warm homes to a far-off, off-season English seaside town, in the cold month of November?

To be honest unless you are a bed and breakfast enthusiast why else would you choose to spend a November weekend in Scarborough?

Oh and by the way I did say November and not September which the editor would like to think I had said. The first of September being his wedding anniversary he thought he might try his luck by publishing the date on the front of the Journal in June; in the hope that we would all turn up to celebrate!

If a celebration is what you enjoy then join us for this year's Festival in Scarborough and give yourself a perfect excuse to allow that budding, secret enthusiasm for the bed and breakfast life style to blossom and shine.

ENVIRONMENT TO ENGAGE YOUR SENSES

This festival will be a celebration of the Faith in action, a showcase of artistic talent at the cutting edge, a space to meet friends and find new ones and an environment to engage your senses; infused by the spirit of the Faith.

It will be an opportunity to see what the growing UK community has been involved in through a display of our fantastic achievements. In this empowering environment we would like you and your friends to be enthused and encouraged by the plethora of activities we are involved in at all levels.

In reference to 'A Change of Time' last year's conference, "most people were calling it one of the best conferences ever held in the UK", with comments such as "*What a lot of talent we have in the community, but more important, what a lot of love*"^[1] and "*An exceptional conference. It was my first ever, and now I can't wait for next year!*"^[2]

A FESTIVAL FOR ALL

Our aim is to build on last year so to give you an idea of what spices we are adding to this year's melting pot of a weekend—and how they will flavour your experience—you need to follow me on a journey. Imagine an event to which you are proud to bring your friends. One that is open to all that not only welcomes but encourages the general public and those that are close to the faith to participate.

As you arrive on the Friday evening your flagging energy will be revitalised as the opening ceremony gets under way with a drumming troop called Zarb from Northern Ireland and a some stomach toning stand up comedy from Omid Djalili. For those that need to be pampered in a quieter setting you will have the choice of experiencing a truly authentic Persian Café decked from floor to ceiling in colour and pattern. To lift your spirits you will be served Persian tea and sweets while relaxing in style and comfort.

And this is only the beginning of a whole weekend's experience!

CHILDREN AT THE HEART OF IT ALL

After a hearty breakfast in your favourite B&B you will begin a day that not only allows you to breathe in the spirit of celebration but also creates spaces to breathe out.

As you enter you will be aware of the efforts to put children at the heart of your festival as you enjoy a soundtrack of songs and readings recorded at the Putney Thomas Breakwell School, alongside songs written for the Festival by several musicians.

An audio visual keynote presentation kicks off the Saturday morning with Fidelma Meehan and Beppe Robiati, a member of the National Spiritual Assembly of Italy; as they highlight the activities of the UK community in the context of Europe and beyond. To facilitate this insight a short film on the community will also be premiered; the first of three treats commissioned specially for the Festival.

Prayer and meditation sessions pepper the main programme as we put devotional meetings to the fore and engage you and your friends in creative expressions of the Word of God.

SURPRISE, SURPRISE

To allow you time and space to digest the programme you will be allowed to absorb some of the following surprises in your own time. Firstly, an installation promenade experience inspired by the Seven Valleys; designed to engage all the senses and bring you closer to the wayfarer within. Secondly, an Art Exhibition which this year will be a group show featuring the work of three artists. Thirdly, a well stocked book shop by the Bahá'í Publishing Trust that will provide for your every need. Fourthly, a chance to chat to different Bahá'í organisations and groups in relaxing surroundings as they put on a display of the grass roots work they are all involved in and finally... well... what more do you want?

“What a lot of talent we have in the community, but more important, what a lot of love!”

A choir maybe? Well we have that too, the popular Northamptonshire Choir that will be easing you into the afternoon with their beautiful voices.

During sessions and dramatic presentations, including the exciting message to the world's Religious leaders, a panel discussion on the topic of social cohesion, and a session with our National Spiritual Assembly, the children and junior youth will be busy with their own exciting programme that will run in parallel providing engaging workshops, performances and discussions.

Among the performances will be a dance group from Scotland 'Northern Lights', a show from the Thames Valley Thomas Breakwell School and a Music Festival organised by the youth.

SPECIAL HIDDEN WORDS PERFORMANCE

As Saturday evening approaches you will be looking forward to a theatrical performance inspired by the Hidden Words and yet more opportunity to spend time with friends as music carries you through the night or rather until we're unwillingly herded out of the venue.

BRING YOUR FRIENDS

An uplifting programme on Sunday morning will bring this festival to a conclusion, so don't spend too much time dwelling on the long drive home and enjoy the last morning of devotions, presentations and experiences.

Although our imaginary journey has ended, you now have a taste of this special feast we are choreographing for you. No black tie required just one request that you make the festival truly open to all by bringing your friends to enjoy the environment.

Last year, in the words of Keith Norton, the venue manager “There was a very happy atmosphere in the Complex throughout the weekend and on a personal level, it is always a pleasure for myself and my colleagues to work with you. We are much looking forward to welcoming you all back again next year”^[3]

SEE YOU THERE!

So make the most if this welcoming atmosphere and use this opportunity; as “The hour... for raising the call of Bahá'u'lláh is propitious. The hearts of your countrymen, prepared by bewilderment and suffering, are ready to respond to His message. You stand at the threshold of a new and glorious era in the evolution of His Faith in that land. The opportunities of the present hour are priceless and may never recur again. Time is pressing. The eyes of your fellow-workers in both Hemispheres are fixed upon you. Our beloved Master who showered, through His visit and His messages to you, so much love and encouragement and so many blessings, is watching over you from on high, ready to sustain your efforts and lead you on to victory.

Your true and grateful brother,

Shoghi

15 November 1947 (Teaching Conference) ¹²³

See you on the first of November. It's your festival so make it happen and allow the spirit of the Faith to permeate the venue and beyond.

Website: www.bahai.org.uk/festival2002/

- 1) Anonymous participant of "A Change of Time" UK National Bahá'í Conference 2001
- 2) Anonymous participant of "A Change of Time" UK National Bahá'í Conference 2001
- 3) Extract of a letter from Keith Norton, Spa Conference Manager 2001
- 4) Shoghi Effendi: Light of Divine Guidance Vol.1, Pages: 130-131

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