

CHESTER WORLD DEVELOPMENT FORUM

REPORT ON 2008-9 ACTIVITIES



Five of the six bi-monthly Forum meetings held last year included a presentation or talk by a speaker on a specific topic as well as the sharing of information "round the table". These talks included:

- ♦ Gill Miller on **China in Africa** (AGM May 2008)
- ♦ Sue Bownas, Diocesan Manager for CAFOD on her **visits to villages in Honduras and Nicaragua** (July 2008)
- ♦ Paul Tacon on his work with the Geneva-based **International Organisation for Migration** (November 2008)
- ♦ Jane Fisher of Friends of the Earth on the **Transition Town movement** in Chester (January 2009).

Our thanks go to all these speakers for their very informative contributions.

19 September 2008 was Heather Swainston's last day at Cheshire Development Education Centre prior to her maternity leave, so CWDF despatched a small delegation to CDEC, with a lovely bouquet to convey all our very good wishes. We were later delighted to hear of the safe arrival of Rachel Georgia on 3 November.

Throughout the year CWDF has benefited from closer collaboration with the Department of Geography and Development Studies at the University of Chester, and at our March 2009 meeting Gill Miller gave an illuminating account of the work and interests of that department and its staff and students.

We are delighted that individual groups who are members of CWDF are making increasing use of our mailings as a means of communicating with a wider audience and publicising their events. For our part, regular mailings and the Diary are supplemented by email notifications of upcoming events to a wider group of supporters. So, for example, we were able to circulate information on local demonstrations against the Gaza war.

CWDF made a significant contribution to **Chester Fairtrade Fortnight** 23 February - 8 March 2009 presenting the film "Great African Scandal" at the Grosvenor Museum. CWDF members organised other events in what proved to be the fullest programme yet celebrating Fairtrade Fortnight. It is not yet clear how much support the Fairtrade Steering Group will receive from the new Cheshire West and Chester Council so we must keep an active eye on this.



"Shared Interest" talk at Hoole URC, held during Fairtrade Fortnight

Thanks and congratulations are due to Heather Lannin for organising two music events at Alexander's Jazz Bar, with thanks also to Alexander's for their support:

- ♦ **One World Week "Growing Together"** (October 2008) raising £230 for the World Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals"
- ♦ **Make Poverty History night** (March 2009) raising £200 for St Mary's Children's Home in Sierra Leone, West Africa (now judged to be the poorest country in the world).

Heather has recently returned from a visit to Sierra Leone and we look forward to talk at a future Forum meeting.



Scenes from the Put People First march

CWDF aided Chester Jubilee Debt Campaign in organising a coach to London in support of the "Put People First" March on 28 March, in the lead-up to the London G20 world leaders' gathering.



So what of the coming year? The main focus will be the United Nations talks in Copenhagen in December 2009, which, we fervently hope, will lead to a replacement of the Kyoto Protocol of 1997 and provide an international deal to curb global warming. All the main NGOs working to eradicate world poverty have launched their own campaigns on Climate Change: nothing is of greater significance for the world's poor. Let us hope that the major NGO's will work together on these campaigns.

We shall keep CWDF members fully up to date about plans as the Copenhagen Conference approaches. We already have one date in the Diary, with author and campaigner Duncan Green giving a talk at the University of Chester on the evening of Wednesday 11 November.

Finally, a note about venues for our regular meetings. For many years we have been very grateful for CDEC's hospitality, and our gatherings there served to strengthen our links with CDEC. However, seating capacity was somewhat tight, so from January 2009 we tried Quaker Meeting House on an experimental basis. As you can see, capacity remains tight, so the search for our ideal, economic venue goes on!

Kath Stephenson
Bernard Payne
May 2009