



# Annual Report 2013



Restore, St George's Community Hub, Great Hampton Row, Newtown, Birmingham, B19 3JG.  
Phone: 0121 236 0069 E-mail: [info@restore-uk.org](mailto:info@restore-uk.org)  
Website: [www.restore-uk.org](http://www.restore-uk.org) Charity Number 243931

## Report of the Chair of the Management Committee

The past 12 months have continued to be challenging times for the work of Restore, and I am pleased to be able to report that our dedicated full-time staff and the wonderful team of befrienders and supporters have all risen to the challenge in a truly commendable way.

The overall picture of those people coming to this country seeking protection from persecution and the needs of those granted refugee status is a rapidly changing mosaic. There have been new service providers of accommodation (G4S in the West Midlands); legal aid to redress injustice and maladministration has been curtailed; funding to caring agencies has reduced; and refugees find themselves joining the end of a long queue of citizens who are themselves struggling to make ends meet and to find work.

Yet the overall mission for Restore remains unchanged – to give support and friendship to some of the most vulnerable people who arrive in our country, often traumatised by dreadful experiences, to be met by bewilderingly complex and intimidating administrative regulations that have been deliberately designed to deter them from entering the UK. The pitiful escapees from war and oppression overseas then meet head-on the reality of five years of economic depression at home. Restore has remained resolute, and now has a deserved reputation as one of the most experienced and active organisations in Birmingham offering hope. This is why demands on us continue to increase. Referrals to Restore are up 64% over the past three years.

All countries need migration policies to limit economic migration across the world. Yet it bears repeating that the work of Restore has nothing to do with the economic migrants who want to travel in large numbers to this country. The work of Restore is about those people driven from their own countries in fear for their lives. Desperate people.

Many in this country choose to look the other way when disaster strikes distant lands, but those arriving here who are destitute and friendless bring home to us all the tragedies playing out elsewhere. Sadly, the reaction to the arrival of asylum seekers can be resentment and anger. In the past year we have witnessed this lack of understanding being fuelled by inaccurate and mischievous reporting in the media, strident prejudice and xenophobia rearing its ugly head beneath the mask of respectability and 'patriotism', and worst of all, politicians exploiting fear to achieve electoral advantage.

This is the culture surrounding us on all sides. In Restore we uphold the great Christian tradition of being counter-culture, of standing-up for the stranger amongst us, of showing compassion and love rather than hatred and rejection. And despite daunting challenges from all directions, Restore has remained strong. We have unashamedly turned to people of goodwill and people of faith across this City to ask for their support, and our prayers have been answered, sometimes in unexpected ways. So it is that after relying on reserves to keep our heads above water through the recession, we can now see our finances beginning to recover. We are not complacent, but fundraising has had some successes, and we intend to maintain the effort to secure our future.

Yet this good fortune has coincided with an increased workload. We are having to look at how we can ensure that Restore's work remains focused on our core tasks in the face of unprecedented demands. These pressures can also see our staff torn by difficult choices that lie beyond our remit. This is why Restore's Management Committee is looking very carefully at how we might support our staff, finding innovative ways of giving them greater practical help with our clients and helping them work through the difficult ethical dilemmas.

The pages of this report are testament to the good work of Restore. I am privileged to be associated with such a fine organisation, and on behalf of all the people who benefit from true charity in so many ways, for the countless acts of selfless service by all who are active in Restore, I offer my sincere thanks.

Philip Rogerson

## Report of the Project Coordinator

Restore's network is a growing and very diverse community. The narrowing aspect of its scope is that it continues to be a project focusing on refugees and asylum seekers, i.e. those who have fled persecution and are seeking sanctuary in the UK. The countries represented are extensive - families from 27 countries participated in our holiday activities last year. People arrive with different languages, cultures and backgrounds but there are some commonalities: a sense of loss, feelings of fear and uncertainty, and experience of isolation. Restore's mission remains that of offering welcome and support.

Illness or death of a family member back home is often made particularly difficult for an asylum seeker or refugee as they are unable to return to their home country. So it was that a Cameroonian refugee organised a gathering of remembrance for her mother. A friend from her community commented: "I have been to wakes where there have been many more people but I have never been to a wake with such diversity." His words rang true - we were young and old, white and black, affluent and destitute, singing hymns and dancing to drums - all there to uphold our bereaved refugee friend. Such experiences, even when mournful, are a part of the richness and blessing of Restore's life.

2013 had its operational challenges. Staff and Management Committee knew that we could not again draw on financial reserves as had been necessitated the previous year. Fundraising was therefore a priority to ensure sustainability of the project. I am relieved that the end-of-year accounts for 2013 confirm successes in funding applications and remarkable generosity on the part of individuals. Restore benefited hugely through a legacy and significant donation from a mother's estate. We were also supported through standing orders, an 'African Praise' concert fundraiser and those who sought sponsorship for Restore, including a 6 months pregnant mother who participated in a 'Fun Run'! Funders are named on the last page of the report. We are grateful to them and to churches and individuals who have contributed to the project and enabled its work to continue.

Another feature of last year was the unprecedented number of referrals - 179 individuals - to Restore (the annual average used to be around 100). On one level it is heartening that other agencies recognise the value of Restore's work in fostering inclusion, well-being and integration. On another level it is problematic as we do not have sufficient capacity to respond to the vast need and there are shrinking resources in our sector.

Restore facilitated 4 training courses last year, attended by 68 people, to raise awareness and recruit volunteers. Our core work of Befriending, Social Activities and Equipping Refugees for Work is covered in the pages that follow. We also engage in networking and advocacy to seek to improve the experience of refugees and asylum seekers in the UK. It is good to be able to signpost to other local faith-based projects offering hospitality and provisions. Our support of destitute clients is largely through the Hope Projects and nationally, in lobbying on issues, through NACCOM (No Accommodation Network). Restore is represented in the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership (bringing together Home Office, G4S and Local Authorities), Churches' Refugee Network, Migrant Health Forum, Celebrating Sanctuary Birmingham and the movement of City of Sanctuary.

Funding from St Peter's Saltley Trust has enabled us to commission the design of a new website and promotional film about Restore. We hope that they will inform and inspire more people to become involved in this valuable work of 'welcome'. Many thanks to all those who are already involved!

Shari Brown

International Carol Service



## **Befriending in 2013**

**179 referrals of new clients (145 in 2012)**

**33 new matches made in 2013**

**82 ongoing matches at the end of December 2013**

**“You can’t always make it better but you can make a difference.”** This is a quote from an experienced befriender who was talking about her role to a group of potential new befrienders at a training session in 2013. It sums up befriending. We cannot wipe away the fear, trauma and pain refugees and those seeking sanctuary experienced in their home countries and rarely can we influence Home Office decisions that will shape their futures. However, we can provide a listening ear; consistent and caring contact; opportunities to develop conversational English skills; and our desire to understand and walk alongside refugees and asylum seekers on their journey in Birmingham.

A new befriender describes her experience: **“I really enjoy my role as a befriender. Though I had attended the training sessions beforehand, I still wondered what it would be like in practice. However, from the start, I felt that she was welcoming me as much as I was welcoming her and I always look forward to seeing her. We meet up for tea and chats, have gone together to college and Birmingham Voluntary Service Council for information, have visited the new library and Cannon Hill Park and shared in some of the Restore women’s activities; really just doing the sort of things that friends do together. We’ve laughed and cried together and I feel very privileged to share part of her life.”**

Befriending enables us to recognise and celebrate progress: **“I enjoy meeting with my befriender and seeing the positive progress he has made in becoming a British citizen and overcoming barriers he has been faced with in the past.”**

Befriending is an eye-opening experience for many volunteers: **“Befriending keeps my feet firmly on the ground as I see the reality of life before me. I can acknowledge what it is like for refugees to live with uncertainty and lack of permanence while around them others take for granted their own situations.”**

**“What a difficult thing it is being an asylum seeker. Watching how she copes and her spirit is an inspiration to me. Her friendship is one of my daily blessings!”**

In our training we state that there is no prototype because every befriending relationship is unique. We also say that the person you befriend may not become your next best friend. Befriending is a support service and many matches last between 6 and 12 months and then the refugee or asylum seeker moves on because they have built up their own network of support and befriending is no longer needed. However, there are other befriending relationships that continue for years and change with the needs of the befriender. There is a depth and mutuality in these longer term relationships expressed by befrienders as follows: **“I think she appreciates the fact that she can call me when she needs to talk. She is now a real friend concerned for me too!”**

**“She is concerned for my well-being and prays for me. I don’t know how much she has benefited from me, but I have benefited from her. Even though she might be very weak and vulnerable in the eyes of the world, she is ministering to me. In this way she reflects true kingdom values, the meek shall inherit the earth.”**

It is our team of committed volunteers who make our befriending service possible, accompanying people through the rough and the smooth. Another befriender wrote: **“It is a privilege to share in the highs and lows of a newcomer to our country.”**

**To all our befrienders we say: Thank you for making a difference.**

## Social Activities for Men in 2013

31 men's activities – 75 men attended at least one event  
(27 activities attended by 85 men in 2012)

Following an initial one-to-one meeting with the Befriending Coordinator, social activities are often the first service that Restore can offer to refugee and asylum seeking men. Group events provide vital social interaction and opportunities to engage in a range of activities. This combats boredom, social isolation and can help those struggling with depression. Men often comment that being with others who understand their situation and struggles is helpful.

Always open to new possibilities, in 2013 we tried bowling, courtesy of discounted tickets. The guys enjoyed developing a new skill and the competitiveness of the sport. It is a great event for the dreary winter months when outdoor activities are not practicable. In the summer months one highlight was our trip out of the inner city and into Sutton Park. One of our volunteers guided us round the Park, which has a diameter of 4 miles, so we didn't get lost in the vast expanse of countryside. As we wandered through woodlands and alongside ponds we saw wild ponies, rabbits and were followed by a herd of cows. It provided a relaxing environment in which to chat and enjoy being together. We rounded off with delicious ice-creams. There were day trips to Stratford-upon-Avon and Coventry Transport Museum and the year ended with a Christmas Party for men and women hosted by St John's Church, Harborne, featuring party games and puddings. It can be summed up in one word: hilarity!



How do men's activities help those who attend regularly? **"As an asylum seeker, isolation is a major issue for me. Restore helped me by inviting me to trips. The trips are really fun! I love concerts, plays, museums, historical places and being in nature. Meeting new people from diverse cultures provides opportunities to make new friends and exchange views about our problems and the way to cope with them. It also helped me to improve my language skills and discover more about British culture and literature. The friendly environment, having fun, meeting up with new people and learning more, brings me hope and keeps me active and away from depression. Finding Restore was a blessing for me and I don't feel lonely anymore!"** (Written by an asylum seeker who attended 19 events in 2013)

We are delighted that more volunteers were involved in 2013, which meant there were additional opportunities for interaction and support and for informal help with conversational English.

Restore's Befriending Coordinator comments: **"For some, activities offer respite from their day-to-day problems. For others it's a safe place to 'off-load'. For me, the crux is seeing men building friendships and supporting one another as these are bridges to wholeness, community and integration."**

## Social Activities for Women in 2013

25 women's activities - 68 women attended at least one event  
(38 attended for the first time in 2013)

Activities for lone women started 5 years ago and they continue to be a vital way of bringing women together to socialise, have fun together and provide a break from the uncertainties of everyday life. One woman who started regularly attending last summer commented: **"Women's activities help to relieve me from day to day stress and over-thinking ... the trips make me feel good not lonely. Ladies love each other and we have a good time together."** The activities are a great way to build community and a sense of belonging in the group and it is a joy to see women befriending and encouraging each other. The activities are also an opportunity to see new parts of the city and to learn about different aspects of local history. A regular attendee commented: **"It is very motivating. I learn different things each time we meet. I enjoy learning about local history."**

The outings in 2013 included museum visits to Sarehole Mill and Blakesley Hall, trips to the Public Art Gallery in West Bromwich, the Nature Centre, swimming and circle dancing, and Christmas and Easter lunches hosted by volunteers in Solihull. In February, 10 women and two volunteers attended a showcase lunchtime concert at Birmingham Conservatoire and saw a range of performances including an opera recital. One woman remarked: **"This is great therapy, it is calming my soul."** During coffee time afterwards the women commented that they had never seen such great performances nor had they listened to an opera recital before. In November we visited Cadbury World, where the group had a great time tasting chocolate and learning about the history of Bournville. A woman who had recently arrived in the UK declared: **"This has been the best day I have ever had, thank you so much!"**

As a special Christmas treat we took a train to the historic town of Stratford-Upon-Avon. We watched a spectacular 3D colourful lightshow, which brought Shakespeare's Birthplace to life and included performances of some of the most dramatic scenes from Shakespeare's best loved plays. We then finished with a candle-lit tour of Shakespeare's Birthplace and learnt about some Elizabethan Christmas traditions. One of the women commented: **"Today all the trip from Birmingham to Stratford and back was wonderful & exciting. My favourite part of today's activity was listening to the life story of Shakespeare and his family. The lightshow was hilarious and I enjoyed it so much."**



Outside Sarehole Mill



Blakesley Hall Gardens

## Activities for Families

247 people attended at least one activity

In 2013 we organised 8 activities for families across the main school holidays of the year and we had the highest ever number of attendees with 92 adults and 155 children from 27 countries coming to at least one activity. One parent commented: **“We are very pleased about what Restore has done for everybody. We have been for five years with them. So please continue for the future. Thank you so much for your kindness.”**

The first activity of the year was Restore’s family party, the event to which many families with little ones look forward every year! It was again generously hosted by St John’s Church, Harborne, and there was lots of food, party games and an ever so popular performance by Wolly the Clown! In the Easter break we took families to the Think Tank to spend a day exploring the various interactive zones on the human body, cars and steam engines and even robots! The favourite part of the day for many was the 360° domed Planetarium, which showed a fun film about exploring space.

In May we took some families with older children back to Beaudesert Park near Cannock Chase for a day of outdoor activities, such as rope assault courses and going out on the lake in coracles (small boats). We are grateful to members of the Iona Community West Midlands family group and Lichfield Hope Group for supporting this much loved trip.



'A Squash and a Squeeze' story exhibition



Playing at Dudley Zoo

Our summer holiday activities started off with a Fun Day in the sunshine kindly supported by Solihull Churches Asylum Seekers’ Support Group at Olton Friary. We then took some families with younger children to a story exhibition on Julia Donaldson’s children’s books, which was followed by cartoon drawing lessons. In mid-August we visited Snibston Discovery Museum near Leicester to explore the exhibitions on the history of the mining community, and ventured outside to the play areas, nature reserve and walking trails. The last summer activity was to Dudley Zoo, where families enjoyed seeing penguins and monkeys up close and having a picnic lunch in the grounds of Dudley Castle. One mother commented: **“It was a lovely time ... Me and my kids enjoyed a lot. My favourite moment was watching a giraffe being fed and seeing a big tiger in his house.”**

Our autumn activity was a trip to Cadbury World where kids had fun being creative with chocolate and learning about the Cadbury family. This was preceded by a session of craft activities at Selly Oak Methodist Church.

## Equipping Refugees for Work 2013

57 participants attended at least one session

Equipping Refugees for Work was piloted in 2012 to provide an interactive training and mentoring service to help refugees become more job-ready. Refugees who attended the final training session in 2012 encouraged Restore to run the course again so that others could benefit.

2012 had been a steep learning curve for staff and volunteers, so 2013 was a year of consolidation, honing the materials we had created and using the knowledge we had gained to benefit a new group of participants.

A significant change in 2013, due to a lifting of funding constraints, was the ability to include asylum seekers as participants. Whilst under current legislation asylum seekers are not permitted to do paid employment, we feel the training is an investment, which will benefit them for when they are granted refugee status and are then expected to find work.

A key element of the training is the interactive small group activities. These enable participants to voice their experience and struggles and promote mutual learning. We are very grateful to the volunteers who facilitate these small groups and to those who have mentored refugees between the sessions.



Topics included CVs, the benefits of volunteering, job application forms, covering letters, interview skills and practise interviews, employment contracts and job clubs.

One participant wrote about how Equipping Refugees for Work had helped him: **“Coming to ‘Equipping Refugees for Work’ over the past twelve months was indeed an eye opener for me. It really helped me learn how the work environment is here in the UK compared to my home country. I learned how to write a CV and a covering letter and how to prepare for an interview. We have been given handouts during each session of the project, which I always read to refresh my memory about what I have learnt so far and try to put it into practice. For refugees and asylum seekers, this is the kind of project that will really make a difference in our future lives here in the UK. I am therefore very grateful to Restore and all the team including the wonderful volunteers who made the project a success. I will always be grateful for the support and help they have given to each one of us during these past twelve months. May Restore continue to provide these kinds of projects to us. God bless you all!”**

In 2014 we will embark on another Equipping Refugees for Work training programme in partnership with the British Red Cross, with funding from the Big Lottery Fund.

## BIRMINGHAM CHURCHES TOGETHER

### RESTORE

#### DETAILED STATEMENT FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

#### FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2013

	General Fund £	Restricted Funding £	Total £	2012 Total £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
Grants other	46,670	42,269	<b>88,939</b>	43,435
Donations - Individuals	29,920	-	<b>29,920</b>	12,325
Donations - Churches	10,520	8,344	<b>18,864</b>	23,673
Fundraising	1,370	-	<b>1,370</b>	1,498
Bank Interest	107	-	<b>107</b>	130
Other	2,868	-	<b>2,868</b>	3,116
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	91,455	50,613	<b>142,068</b>	84,177
 <b>EXPENDITURE</b>				
Befriending Scheme	-	53,750	<b>53,750</b>	52,370
Resource & Publicity	-	-	-	798
Training	-	484	<b>484</b>	432
Co-ordinator	-	32,173	<b>32,173</b>	32,209
Administration	5,461	-	<b>5,461</b>	5,391
Office Expenses	11,395	-	<b>11,395</b>	11,287
Accountancy Charges	400	-	<b>400</b>	400
Programme Activities	9,921	-	<b>9,921</b>	8,855
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
	27,177	86,407	<b>113,584</b>	111,742
Net Incoming Resources	64,278	(35,794)	<b>28,484</b>	(27,565)
Transfers between funds	(43,328)	43,328	-	-
Fund Balance at 1 January 2013	56,063	12,500	<b>68,563</b>	96,128
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Fund Balance at 31 December 2013	<b>77,013</b>	<b>20,034</b>	<b>97,047</b>	<b>68,563</b>

This statement is for information only and does not form part of the Statutory Financial Statements.

## Funding in 2013

### Grants were greatly appreciated from the following charitable trusts:

Alfred Haines Trust  
Allen Lane Foundation  
Barrow Cadbury Trust  
BBC Children in Need  
Bernard Piggott Trust  
Bournville Charitable Trust  
Bryant Trust  
CB + HH Taylor 1984 Trust  
Cole Charitable Trust  
Tudor Trust (carried over from the previous year)  
Friends Hall Farm Street Trust  
Garfield Weston Foundation  
George Henry Collins Charity  
Grimmitt Trust  
Jill Franklin Trust  
J Paul Getty Jnr Trust  
Lloyds TSB Foundation  
Richard Kilcuppe's Charity  
Riverside Trust  
SC & ME Morland's Trust  
South Birmingham Friends Institute Trust  
St Peter's Saltley Trust, and  
William A Cadbury Trust.

### Management Committee, Staff and Trustees in 2013

Chair of Management Committee	Philip Rogerson
Secretary	Sarah Dixon
Treasurer	Natalie Chong
Representative at BCT Coordinating Group	Anne Holding
Other Management Committee Members	Elizabeth Corrie, Andy Jolly, Boaz Atwine, Charles Worth, Sue Morgan, Josephine Houghton, Mauricio Silva and Mohinder Kaur
Project Coordinator	Shari Brown
Befriending Coordinator	Jeremy Thompson
Befriending Support Worker	Jessica Poyner
Administrative Assistant	Geraldine Hunt
Trustees of Birmingham Churches Together	
The Roman Catholic Archbishop	Most Revd Bernard Longley
The Anglican Bishop	Rt Revd David Urquhart
The Free Churches Moderator	Major Samuel Edgar
Chair of BCT Coordinating Group	Barrie Smith
Trustee	Nan Haigh
Trustee	Philip Rogerson
Trustee	Bill Anderson (retired 2013)
Trustee	Margaret Walsh (appointed 2013)
Treasurer	Michael Hastilow