



Refugee Tales

**Visiting.
Listening.
Sharing.**

Voices for Change

Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group
Annual Review 2018



Registered Charity No. 1124328

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**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

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Our Patrons

Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group



The work of the GDWG requires much empathy, experience and patience in assisting those whose lives have been shattered by appalling circumstances. Unconditional friendship offers hope to those who have already suffered so much and are in such difficult situations. For those who have often been deeply traumatised, who may have lost all trust and witnessed systemic failings, GDWG shines out as a beacon of hope in a troubled world.

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC

The Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group is the acceptable face of our society demonstrating compassion and humanity to asylum seekers and refugees who are in desperate need of help and advice. I commend the work GDWG does. I belong to many charitable organisations but the work you all put in restores my faith in our civilised values. You are top on my list. Please keep up the good work.

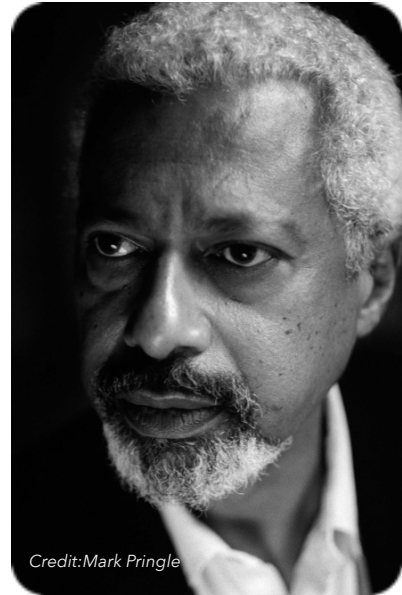
**Lord Navnit Dholakia PC,OBE,DL,
Deputy Leader, Liberal Democrats.**



Refugee Tales

The group is doing good work and offering humane and sympathetic support to detainees struggling against callous rules. The cheer and goodwill you provide in the events and the walks you organise and participate in goes a long way to engaging them in a wonderful conviviality which I know they appreciate.

Abdulrazak Gurnah



Refugee Tales tells it like it is, and in this telling, via the heard voice, the shared story, what seems hopelessly fixed become transformed into the hope of something better, the demand for something better, and the genuine possibility of making things better.

Ali Smith

The Year in Review

218 people in detention received visits in 2018.

They were visited **1139 times**.

People in detention had contact with their visitors **1506 times** between visits.

908 students heard a talk from GDWG.

We saw **479 people** at our initial appraisal meetings.

1216 mobile top-ups were given out.

We helped **12 families** to visit relatives in detention.

697 packs of clothes were given out.

Over **2,400 copies** of the Refugee Tales anthologies were sold in 2018

We carried out casework for **224 people**.

We helped 1,142 people in detention.

"In detention Salim is visited by someone from a visitor group. In a rare aside, Salim notes, 'Without them I would have killed myself. They took me from dark to light!'"

p.89 The Soldier's Tale as told to Neel Mukherjee, Refugee Tales Volume 2

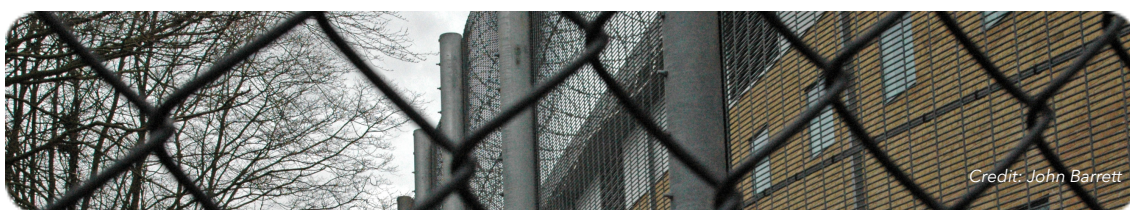
" There are detainees from Sudan, from Congo, from Nigeria. People who had lost their children and were half mad with grief, young people who had seen their parents die before them. You lie in bed at night and hear sighs and muffled sobs, you imagine their stories roaming the corridors of that place. You've never been anywhere so sad. "

p.50 The Witness' Tale, as told to Alex Preston, Refugee Tales Volume 2

Our Work in Detention: Case Studies

When we first contacted A he was anxious and held in isolation in detention after attempting suicide. A's health grew considerably worse over the following weeks and he went on hunger strike. Our referral to an external agency enabled a doctor to visit him and write a report. During this time many members of staff supported him over the phone and one went to see him. When A was feeling hopeless and his mental health was poor, he told immigration officials he wanted to return to his country of origin. He was not making this decision rationally, and the next day he changed his mind but his flight was booked. We could not reach him in the days leading up to it and his phone was removed the day before. At the eleventh hour, the medical report deeming A medically unfit to fly was ready and it was used to stop the flight. Duncan Lewis Public Law team took on A's case, submitted a Judicial Review, and the flight was cancelled. A told staff "every time you people call me I feel a little bit of brightness".

**"every time
you people
call me I feel
a little bit of
brightness"**



Credit: John Barrett

Jim has been visiting C for 4 months at Brook House. They discuss many things, one being Jim's Irish heritage. In the lead up for St Patrick's Day, C tells Jim that he has a present for him that he needs to pick up from reception. The package is collected. It is so much bigger than Jim expected. It is an Irish flag painted on a big canvas and two t-shirts; one with an Irish flag and another with a clover. Lucky Jim!

Our Work outside Detention: Case Studies

“The walking project is my family”

R was detained in Tinsley House for over 4 months. When he was released the GDWG volunteer who had been visiting him asked if he would like to join the Walk with Us Project. R first joined a walk in 2016 and has been a regular walker with the group ever since. He told us that when he is not with the group he has difficulty sleeping and has little interest in food. R describes how he feels when he joins the walks “The walks and my friends make me feel good. I like to eat and I sleep. The walking project is my family. I like to join everyone and I have fun time.” The Walk with Us Project meets every 6 weeks for walks in Sussex, Surrey, Kent and London. The walks open up a walking community united in their support for people with lived experience of detention.

T’s partner, A, was 7 months pregnant when we met him. She did not have any contact with her family and had no friends in the area where she lived. She had 2 children and was very worried about the birth of her child as she did not want to be alone and did not have childcare for her children. She feared having to leave them sleeping at night to give birth in the hospital. We referred her to a voluntary birth companion. The doula visited A and support is now in place for her.

“...she did not want to be alone”



Credit: Sarah Hickson



Credit: John Barrett

In 2018, Walk with Us was featured on the Radio 4 'Ramblings' programme with journalist Clare Balding interviewing walkers and those with lived experience of detention. This photo is of walkers on Reigate Hill.

Refugee Tales

We first visited Andrew Mitchell MP in Westminster to introduce the Refugee Tales project and discuss the need for legislative change, namely the introduction of a time limit for immigration detention.

Andrew Mitchell was keen to visit a detention centre first hand and he met a man in detention who had a visitor from GDWG. Andrew Mitchell heard direct testimony of life in detention and how the lack of a time limit

had a negative impact on psychological wellbeing. Following the visit Andrew Mitchell wrote for Conservative Home: *"To be detained with no release date is itself tantamount to torture. The imposition of a time limit of, say, 28 days to enable deportation to take place when it must would begin to put right a wrong that stains our democracy".*

**"To be
detained
with no
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We had 42 meetings with MPs in 2018

67 parliamentarians signed our pledge



Nima Taleghani reads from 'Refugee Tales: Volume 2' for #28for28

The five day Refugee Tales July walk in 2018 was from St Albans to Westminster with readings of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights along the way and lunchtime talks on the issue of indefinite detention. The finale of the walk was held at The British Library in partnership with the Royal Society of Literature. The tales of those detained and those who work with them were featured in a 28 day online calendar on the website www.28for28.org and we thank Comma Press and all the writers and actors who took part including Niamh Cusack, Patience Agbabi, Jeremy Irons, Shobu Kapoor, Maxine Peake and Christopher Eccleston.

'28 Tales for 28 Days' reached 3.7 million people

Chair's Report

When I wrote my first report as Chair of GDWG last year I thought what an interesting year we had had on many fronts. Little did I know how much more interesting and eventful this year would be.

We, the Board of Trustees, took the opportunity to restructure the organisation on the departure of James Wilson, our previous Director, in December 2018. All organisations evolve over time and have to adapt to external and internal changes. We grasped the opportunity to look at how we deliver our service. It seemed clear that, from the little acorn which was the start of Refugee Tales, had grown a very strong tree. With the vacancy for Director what better way forward was there to amalgamate the posts of Manager of Refugee Tales and Director of GDWG, thus ensuring total integration?

In this way the "old" GDWG ethos (the caring and befriending of our fellow human beings in Detention) and the "new" Refugee Tales ethos (including outreach to parliamentarians to try to effect the introduction of time limited detention) merged seamlessly. What unites both those strands of GDWG are the themes of welcome and hospitality delivered by committed people. We did not need to look far for the perfect fit for this new post, Anna Pincus, who had been with us for over 12 years. Anna understands our organisation to its core. Moreover she places our friends in detention at the forefront of our every decision. We are very fortunate that she has agreed to take the new post on as it is complex, varied and, due to often painful situations, hard on the heart.

However our staff is there to work alongside her. We have Daniel and Karris excellent in post as Advocacy Coordinators. We have Katie, Jean and Mary, for all things parliamentary and more. We have Marygold keeping the administration running smoothly. As if this were not sufficient, we have Volunteers helping in the office, Volunteers helping with Refugee Tales and we have our cohort of visitor Volunteers who are the backbone of the organisation. You are ALL our eyes, ears, arms and legs and above all, hearts. Thank you!

My final thank you goes to my fellow trustees without whom we would not be the well run charity you know us to be. They too are Volunteers. GDWG would be much diminished without their expertise and commitment.

I feel very privileged to be Chair of GDWG and look forward to the many exciting developments which our staff are engineering. As I wrote last year, and with a twist on the words of Confucius, we DO live in interesting times.

Marie Dewson



“I feel very privileged to be chair of GDWG and look forward to many exciting developments”

Director's Report

Thank you for welcoming me as Director of GDWG. The voices for change celebrated in this Annual Review start in the visits room where miraculous connections, in spite of the context, are affirming and transformative.

Thank you to our visitors who change lives through the simple but radical act of visiting and befriending. Voices for change continue in conversations on our monthly walks where the walking community creates immense possibilities and in Refugee Tales where experiences are shared and written and become tools for our parliamentary work building cross-party support for an end to indefinite immigration detention. Thank you to all the people with lived experience of detention who have shared their stories and who inspire us in every visit and every step of the way. Thank you to everyone whose voices join our call for an end to indefinite detention for all.

2018 was a challenging year for everyone working in our sector with increasing homelessness and destitution experienced after detention and poor access to justice for those detained. The numbers in this report bear witness to the hard work and determination of our office team to make a difference. It is a privilege to work alongside Daniel, Jean, Karris, Katie, Mary and Marygold, with our committed trustees, and inspiring volunteer team. And when we asked our wider supporters to respond to our call for funds for our '28 Tales for 28 Days' website and video project in 2018, our crowdfunder support exceeded expectations.

We feel there is an appetite for the message of hope from the visits room to Refugee Tales. The final tale of 28for28 was read in the Palace of Westminster; our voices for change were taken to the heart of parliament. In 2018, GDWG and Refugee Tales events took place in Edinburgh, Belfast, in the USA, in Milan, and we gave over 60 talks on the work of GDWG and Refugee Tales throughout the year. Thanks to Refugee Tales, the voices of experts by experience were heard on the 'Today' programme on Boxing Day (thank you, guest editor Kamila Shamsie).

The change that our volunteers create through their visits and the respect that they embody is the unique and precious foundation of GDWG and Refugee Tales. From the visits comes Refugee Tales, creating a space for the hospitality of story to change attitudes. Making our voices strong and true is a privilege as we enter the 25th year of GDWG making change.

Anna Pincus



“The change that our volunteers create through their visits and the respect that they embody is the unique and precious foundation of the GDWG and Refugee Tales”

Treasurer's Report

GDWG grew in 2018, with a wider range of funding sources and higher expenditure on its charitable activities than in 2017. We ran a planned deficit and had solid reserves at year end.

GDWG reported a deficit of £28,684 in 2018, with income of £253,142 and costs of £281,826. This compares to a deficit of £12,440 in 2017.

The £16k difference between the results in 2018 and 2017 consists of a £36k increase in income (mainly relating to donations and Refugee Tales book sales) and a £52k increase in costs, including a £31k increase in pay costs, £12k expenditure on '28 Tales for 28 Days' (matched by donation income), and a £5k increase in phone top-ups for detainees. Pay cost increases were mainly because of increases in staff hours, increases in responsibilities and the full year effect of prior year joiners.

Following the same strategy as the previous year, in view of the level of reserves at the previous year end Trustees continued to operate charitable activities at a cost higher than income.

The Charity's free reserves (unrestricted funds) were £92,273 at 31 December 2018 (2017 £121,408). Cash at year end was £142k, compared to £151k at the end of 2017. Creditors increased to £47k (2017 £26k), mainly as a result of higher deferred income balances.

**Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31st December**

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total	Total
	2018	2018	2018	2017
	£	£	£	£
Income from:				
Donations and legacies	57,824	185,018	242,842	216,305
Other trading activities	9,705	-	9,705	-
Investment income	595	-	595	587
Other income	-	-	-	505
Total	68,124	185,018	253,142	217,397
Expenditure on:				
Refugee Tales Books	2,881	-	2,881	3,204
Charitable activities:				
Refugee Tales	2,515	19,628	22,143	26,345
Other awareness raising events	4,723	11,972	16,695	3,150
Relief to immigrants and refugees	87,923	152,184	240,107	197,138
Total	98,042	183,784	281,826	229,837
Net income/ (expenditure)	(29,918)	1,234	(28,684)	(12,440)
Movements between funds	783	(783)	-	-
Total funds brought forward	121,408	7,009	128,417	140,857
Total funds carried forward	92,273	7,460	99,733	128,417

Balance Sheet as at 31 December

	2018		2017	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets:				
Tangible assets		3,052		2,421
Current assets:				
Debtors	1,299		492	
Cash at bank and in hand	142,093		151,181	
	<u>143,392</u>		<u>151,673</u>	
Creditors falling due within one year	(46,711)		(25,677)	
Net current assets		96,681		125,996
Net assets		<u>99,733</u>		<u>128,417</u>
Income funds:				
Restricted funds		7,460		7,009
Unrestricted funds		92,273		121,408
Fund balances at end of year		<u>99,733</u>		<u>128,417</u>



George Fitzsimons

Our Thanks

We are grateful for the support of:

Recent Funders

The AB Charitable Trust

Anna Seddon

Anthony Wilson

Austrian Catholic Centre

Awards for All

Arts Council

Bernadette Trust

Boltini Trust

Bromley Trust

Cassie Oakman

Crawley Borough Council

Diocese of Arundel and Brighton
Migrant Fund

Dorothy Sheridan

Eleanor Rathbone Charitable Trust

Garden Court Chambers Special Fund

Greg Clough, IP Squared Ltd

The Henry Smith Charity

The Hillcote Trust

Jo Holden Charitable Trust

Infant Jesus Sisters

Lloyds Bank Foundation for England
and Wales

The Longley Trust

The National Lottery Community Fund

Rayne Foundation

Sam and Bella Sebba Charitable Trust

Souter Charitable Trust

PCC of St John the Apostle &
Evangelist, Watford

Sussex Community Foundation

The Tudor Trust

Three Oaks Trust

University of Kent

Westgate Solicitors

GDWG Patrons

Lord Dholakia PC, OBE, DL

Baroness Helena Kennedy QC

Refugee Tales Patrons

Ali Smith

Abdulrazak Gurnah

Our Friends and Colleagues

	Helen Bamber Foundation
Association of Visitors to Immigration Detainees	Immigration Law Practitioners Association
Bail for Immigration Detainees	Jesuit Refugee Service
The Bar Council	Kamila Shamsie
Bhatt Murphy Solicitors	Lawrence Lupin solicitors
British Library	Leigh Day Solicitors
British Red Cross	Liberty
Chris Orange	Lewes Organisation in Support of Refugees and Asylum Seekers
Comma Press	Literature Works
Crawley Community and Voluntary Service	Lorraine Roberts
Crawley URC	Medical Justice
David Herd	Middlebury College
Deighton Pierce Glynn Solicitors	Morton Hall Visitors Group
Detention Action	Music in Detention
Detention Forum	New Writing North
Doughty Street Chambers	Niamh Cusack
Duncan Lewis Solicitors	Patsy Hickman
Gareth Evans	Public Law Project
Glasgow Refugee Asylum and Migration Network	Ra Page
Hamilton College	Refugee Council
	Rene Cassin

Ricardo Vilela at Sagitta
Media
Richard Place Dobson
Royal Society of Literature
Samphire
Samaritans (Reigate branch)
Sarah Hickson
Scottish Detainee Visitors
Shami Chakrabarti
SOAS Detainee Support
SUNY Geneseo
Toru (interactive)

University of Law
University of Kent
Verne Visitors Group
Women for Refugee Women
Writer's Centre Norwich
Yarl's Wood Befrienders

Our thanks to all individuals and institutions who have donated money, clothing and other items to us.

Our volunteers, who do so much more for GDWG and Refugee Tales than we could ever ask.



Join us on **5 May 2020** for our AGM recognising 25 years of GDWG friendship and support for people affected by immigration detention. Save the date!



Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group
Refugee Tales
The Orchard
1-2 Gleneagles Court
Brighton Road
Crawley
West Sussex

www.28for28.org • www.gdwg.org.uk • www.refugeetales.org

Designed by Eli Barrott

