

Thinking Globally Acting Locally

“O people of God! Do not busy yourselves in your own concerns; let your thoughts be fixed upon that which will rehabilitate the fortunes of mankind and sanctify the hearts and souls of men....Let your vision be world-embracing, rather than confined to your own self.”

~ Bahá'u'lláh



'The South Wales cluster has been making marked progress in recent months with at least one declaration and two new core activities established in every cycle...'

...page 2

Thirty-nine friends were blessed with the bounty of attending a weekend school on the Art of Consultation... presented by Dr Wendi Momen...'

...page 3

'I felt that I had to show a genuine interest in them coming from a feeling of love, because I was in the presence of souls created by our Perfect, Loving Creator...'

...page 5

'Religious Education was the hot topic last month for Year 6 pupils in Monmouthshire as they went to four special RE days...'

...page 8

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In this issue:

Message from the Council for Wales	2
Message from Auxiliary Board member	3
Huququ'llah~The Right of God	3
To Serve Humanity – Wales Summer School	4
Meaningful and distinctive conversations	5/6
Peace Education	6
The Writings in Welsh	6
Naw-Ruz Celebrations	7
The Art of Consultation in Builth Wells	7
Monmouthshire RE days	8/9
Photos of Ridván Celebrations	9
Treasurer's report and a story	10
Naw-Ruz Greetings	11
Notifications/Contact details	11
Bahá'í Books	12

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Message from the Bahá'í Council for Wales

The Council sends its love to all the friends throughout Wales.

The Council is currently working with the Auxiliary Board members and Training Institute co-ordinators on a programme of visits to the Mid, West and North clusters. Rather than just a one-off visit, we are looking to provide continued support, with members of the institutions visiting individually and together, and likewise meeting the friends individually in their homes, in groups, or at cluster reflection meetings.

As well as consulting on the next steps in each cluster, we are looking at what on-going support the institutions can provide and also the possibilities for visiting teams of Bahá'ís supporting specific initiatives.

The South Wales cluster has been making marked progress in recent months, with at least 1 declaration and 2 new core activities established in every cycle over the last year. This issue includes an article by Viv Bartlett, showing the beautiful simplicity of using the 2-week expansion phase to develop more meaningful connections with friends, such that hearts are touched.

Finally, we must draw your attention to the exciting plans for Summer Schools, announced in the National Spiritual Assembly's letter of 8 April. More details about this year's Welsh Summer School are on page 4.

With Loving greetings,

The Bahá'í Council for Wales

"Settle all things, both great and small, by consultation. Without prior consultation, take no important step in your own personal affairs. Concern yourselves with one another. Help along one another's projects and plans. Grieve over one another. Let none in the whole country go in need. Befriend one another until ye become as a single body, one and all."

—`Abdu'l-Bahá, from a Tablet – translated from the Persian

Deadline for contributions to the Autumn issue of Undod is

20th October 2014

Please send your community and cluster news, reports, stories and photographs to: fleurmiss@icloud.com or alternatively call to have a chat with Fleur about ideas for an article on **01495 221894** or post to: **'Undod' 40 Meadow road, Pontllanfraith, Blackwood. NP122AG**

One Common Vision

by Auxiliary Board member, Rachel Murray

In February 2014, there was an Institutional Meeting called by the National Spiritual Assembly of the UK, where they joined with the Counsellor, Auxiliary Board members, Regional Councils, the Training Institute Board, the UK Area Coordinators, the Pioneer Commit-tee and the Statistics Officers to study, consult and cre-ate one common vision.

Inspired by the 5 December 2013 letter from the Universal House of Justice, the focus of the weekend was to learn how all these Institutions could collaborate together to fulfil the goals of the current Five Year Plan.

“During the second half of the Five Year Plan, the society-building power of the Faith must be re-leased within thousands of clusters where pro-grammes of growth need to be initiated, reinforced, or extended. The challenge for Bahá’í institutions and their agencies will be to furnish the means to accompany all those who cherish a pure and ear-nest desire for a better world, whatever their degree of involvement in the process of spiritual education so far, and help them translate that desire into the practical steps that day by day and week by week accrete to build vibrant, flourishing communities.”

In Wales, the three Institutions (Auxiliary Board, the Training Institute and the Council for Wales) have so far formed “trio” teams to focus on North, Mid and West Wales clusters. These teams are made up as follows:
Mid Wales: Omid Behi, Amy Behi and Sima Hedges;
North Wales: Rachel Murray, Amy Behi and Louise Doughty;
West Wales: Rachel Murray, Tim Melville and Azar Melville.

In the remaining two years of the plan, the goal for the whole of Wales is to increase intensity so that a dis-tinct rhythm of expansion and consolidation can be established in three-month cycles of growth. At the same time, the Training Institute is to become more embed-ded as an education system for children, junior youth and adults to train and rise up to serve their communi-ties.

The trios will visit each cluster regularly, to under-stand their reality and assist with planning and reflection so that the process of learning can be accelerated. In this way, it will be possible to build on the progress al-ready made and develop strategies to raise capacity and work in a focused way to advance the frontiers of learning in Wales.

Huqúqu’Iláh ~ The Right of God

“As regards the Huqúq which hath been explicitly prescribed in the Book: This is intended for the benefit and pros-perity of the individuals themselves and is conducive to their happiness and constancy. Otherwise the one true God hath been and will always be self-sufficient in all things.”

(`Abdu’l Baha, Compilation Huqúqu’Iláh, Text 64)



Love and Deed

“Huqúqu’Iláh, or the Right of God, is a law of the Baha’i Faith. It has a practical and a spiritual purpose ,as `Abdu’l-Baha explains in the text above, since it was devised to lead mankind to prosperity and to further man’s happiness and constancy. It reminds us that God is our most important companion in life and that He therefore has a right to a portion of that which we earn. The Law of Huqúqu’Iláh lodges on the principle of co-operation, reciprocal help and exchange. It is a law of love and of deed.”

(Devised for the Board of Trustees of Huqúqu’Iláh in Europe 2000. Education Unit for Junior Youth)

For further information – kath.delpak@talktalk.net / 01446 771053

To Serve Humanity

Welsh Summer School

Welsh Bahá'í Summer School 2014 • Thursday 21 August – Monday 25 August
Llangrannog Urdd Centre

The last two years' Summer Schools have been a tremendous success. In particular, the exceptional spirit of love, unity and fellowship has brought admiring, indeed envious, comments from friends living in other regions.

Last year, half the attendees at the school came from Wales, including one third of the Welsh Bahá'í community and 10% who were friends of the Faith. No wonder the Schools have helped so much to foster a sense of identity among the Welsh Bahá'ís.

For this year's school, the format is changing. You will no doubt have heard the exciting reports of the International Youth Conferences, and may have seen the video highlights, available at <http://news.bahai.org/community-news/toserve/>

The National Spiritual Assembly has decided to give us all the chance to experience a taste of the inspiration and enthusiasm generated, and for the morning programme at the Summer School we will participate in workshops from the conference. The afternoon will offer short courses in four areas of community building.

In addition, the venue is in glorious Welsh countryside, offers fantastic facilities, great food and Visit Wales 4-star accommodation. What more could you want? More details are available on the website, which is also the sole means of registration:
www.bahaievents.org.uk/wp/wales-summer-school/

Open To All

As with the Youth Conferences, the focus of the school is how we serve the societies in which we live – indeed, how we can transform our societies, and ourselves. The school is

open to anyone who wants to be part of this conversation, just as the gift of Bahá'u'lláh's Revelation is offered to all the world:

“The summons and the message which We gave were never intended to reach or to benefit one land or one people only... The whole earth is illuminated with the resplendent glory of God's Revelation... Behold how the generality of mankind hath been endued with the capacity to hearken unto God's most exalted Word.”

Previous schools have offered a warm and inclusive atmosphere, and every effort will be made to build on this strength so that this year all will feel most welcome, just as 'Abdu'l-Bahá would wish.

The School is an opportunity for all of us to capture a vision of the society-building power of the Faith.

The Council hopes that the Bahá'ís in Wales will find imaginative ways to reach out to those neighbours and friends who may be attracted by this vision.

To assist in this, the brochure for the Summer School has been designed very much as something that any of us could happily give to one of our friends, using clear and inclusive language. It has been distributed via NEWS and posted on the Undod Facebook page. Copies are available from the School Registrar.

For further details about the school, please contact the **School Registrar, Tracey Roberts-Jones**, Tel. **07915 567443**, email: walesbahai2014@gmail.com

Bill Jenkins



Meaningful And Distinctive Conversations

Focused on the theme of 'entering into meaningful and distinctive conversations with local residents' at our last cluster reflection meeting, I set about making my plan to do so. A list of neighbours to visit was drawn up and also family members who had strayed out of contact over the years. By the grace of Bahá'u'lláh and calling on Rita's help (which we were asked to do at the reflection meeting) I managed to meet most of the souls on the list during the expansion phase.

The more difficult part of my plan was to overcome feelings of apprehension to actually knock on the doors of neighbours, not knowing what would be the reception. In our area just turning up on the doorstep is rarely done. However, I relied upon the power we are promised that is released from faithful souls, such as my wife, Rita, who pass from this world into the Divine Realm. Although several were surprised to me standing on their doorstep, nonetheless they welcomed me in and went out of their way to make me feel comfortable.

Of course I had worked out different reasons to visit these souls, but all were sincere and genuine reasons. For instance, one couple had invited me to their home several times – so, for the first time, I went. They had attended Rita's Bahá'í funeral so it was natural to ask how they felt about it. They replied that they had never experienced anything like it in their lives as, groping for words to explain it, they stated it was more like a 'happy, uplifting occasion'. Another, because of ill health, was not able to attend my wife's funeral so I visited them offering a copy of the funeral service. In a chance meeting on the street another neighbour told me she suffers from depression, so after sympathising I said I would say prayers for her.

All in all 21 souls, mostly married couples, were engaged in 'meaningful and distinctive conversations'. But this phrase is just words on a page unless some thought is given as to what they mean. To me it does not mean that I have to immediately tell them about some aspect of the Faith. No, rather, I felt that I had to show a genuine interest in them coming from a feeling of love, because I was in the presence of souls created by our Perfect, Loving Creator. This then was to be a sacred meeting, supercharged with the fragrances of the Holy Spirit. With this feeling in the heart miraculous results occurred. Spiritual themes were entered into as part of normal conversation without a trace of feeling uncomfortable -life after death, progressive revelation, the Hidden Words, prayer, spiritual education of children and the like were some of the topics covered. Also, part of my plan was to go for walks and see what would happen. Surprisingly I had the opportunity to have meaningful conversations with an additional six souls.



One particular family with two children I determined to visit were fairly new neighbours. Noticing that the incessant rainy weather had kept most children indoors for several months, and therefore out of contact with other children, I hit upon the idea of inviting this family to visit my home when my daughter Leila was visiting with the three grandchildren. The whole family came and stayed for four hours. We had lunch together, and the children happily played while the adults got to know each other. The conversation naturally flowed into concern for children and spiritually related issues. At the end the adults were very happy that their children had a great time. They warmly received two Bahá'í books, were invited to a devotional meeting and they invited us to visit them at any time. Later, the father did attend his first devotional, meeting several neighbours also in attendance.

Now we are well into the consolidation phase of the cycle which requires thought on how to follow on these successes. The aim is to involve those who are ready, in at least one of the core activities, such as has been done with the father mentioned above. But in all cases, through prayer, consultation/meditation a next step must be identified and taken. I have worked out that it may not be a huge step but maybe something as simple as another visit – so I have...

Meaningful And Distinctive Conversations

continued ...

...embarked upon this. After a re-visit with my neighbour who said she gets depressed, I offered her a handwritten prayer – the one which asks God to 'refresh and gladden my spirit'. I felt a little awkward at the time as her mother was with her and I did not know how she would respond to my rather direct approach with her daughter. Calling upon Bahá'u'lláh to help me, and remembering Rita's loving approach, I explained a little about the prayer – especially the part about not dwelling 'on the unpleasant things of life'. Although I didn't know it, the terrible things that happen in the world really upset this neighbour, and she was glad that the prayer had a personal answer about how to handle it. Both mother and daughter became very interested and, while thanking me, enthusiastically said they would read the prayer.

The challenge now is to stay in contact with all these souls, praying to be guided as to what is the next little thing that can help them come closer to Bahá'u'lláh, and not to be hesitant in taking action. To help in this process I will continue to ask for Rita's assistance, as she so easily lifted every soul she met, leaving them with a good feeling about themselves and hope for the future.

Warmest love to all, Viv Bartlett

Peace Education

Our Interfaith group held a celebration day for the International day of Peace last September. This led me to link up with the Conwy Peace and Justice Group, who were planning an art exhibition in Llandudno this Easter, 19-24 April. I offered a peace lesson to local primary, secondary and tertiary schools and colleges in the area, based on principles of peace from 'The Promise of World Peace', and on Bahá'u'lláh's letters to the kings and rulers of the world. One primary school and Llandrillo college responded and I had a fabulous afternoon at St Tudno's school in Llandudno. The pupils' art work is now on show, taking up one wall of the exhibition hall in St John's Methodist church hall, Llandudno. The Assembly member for Conwy opened the exhibition and commented on the thought-provoking content. Next week I will be giving a talk introducing an organization called Peace Education Network, (of which I would like to see Bahá'ís as members), explaining how Baha'u'llah offered solutions to inadequate and ineffective leadership and war in His letters to the Kings and Rulers. I will use the pupils' art work to illustrate their response to principles of peace. Conwy Peace group intends to share its pilot Art of Peace exhibition process with other regions in Wales. A Peace Academy is being developed by the Welsh Assembly and Conwy Peace group have been asked to be on the committee. I hope to be involved with the education aspect of the Peace Academy in the future

By Penny Kemp

The Writings in Welsh

Gweddi Orfodol Fer

(i'w hadrodd unwaith bob dydd rhwng hanner dydd a machlud haul)

Tystiaf, O fy Nuw, mai Ti a'm creaiſt i'th adnabod a'th addoli. Tystiaf, y funud hon, i'm gwendid i ac i'th nerth Di, i'm tloidi i ac i'th gyfoeth Dithau. Nid oes Dduw arall ond Tydi, y cynorthwywr mewn cyfyngder, a'r hu-nangynhaliwr.
Bahá'u'lláh

Short Obligatory Prayer

(to be recited once a day between midday and sun-set)

I bear witness, O my God, that Thou hast created me to know Thee and to worship Thee. I testify, at this moment, to my powerlessness and to Thy might, to my poverty and to Thy wealth. There is none other God but Thee, the Help in Peril, the Self-Subsisting.

(Compilations, Baha'i Prayers,
Bahá'u'lláh, p. 3)

Naw-Ruz Celebrations



BUILTH WELLS

The Bahá'ís of Builth Wells had the privilege of sharing their Naw-Rúz celebration with our friends who come regularly to The Night Owl Cafe which we hold at the drop-in centre on Friday afternoons. This year the 21st fell on a Friday, which gave us the opportunity of sharing the event, with gifts of cards and flowers for the ladies and copies of the Seven Valleys for the gentlemen. We gave a brief explanation of the general significance of the equinox to different cultures and to Bahá'ís in particular. We then shared food, with a special cake to mark the occasion, and there was lots of joy and laughter. We are hoping that this will be the first of many such celebrations.

Cynthia Barlow



SWANSEA

In Swansea, the friends used Naw-Rúz as a chance to rally round the teaching efforts in one neighbourhood that has all four core activities running. The Local Spiritual Assembly hired a small hall but sought to capture the warm atmosphere the friends create in their own homes. Each member of the community contributed something to a simple programme, including a fantastic film combining footage from the recent youth conferences and other sources with video of the local children's class. (See YouTube at www.youtube.com/watch?v=3yiAseE2PrU). Ice-breaker games helped break down barriers and bring people together.

Six families came from a single neighbourhood, including seven friends of the Faith, and seventeen young people from the children's class and youth group, who were perfectly quiet throughout the devotional and film.

Bill Jenkins

THE ART OF CONSULTATION

Thirty-nine friends were blessed with the bounty of attending a weekend school in Builth Wells (see cover photo) on the Art of Consultation compiled and presented by Dr Wendi Momen. The course was comprised of a series of short talks, followed by workshops where the participants broke into small groups, which deepened on the principles of consultation and practised the skills and strategies needed for successful group and family consultation as well as individual self development. It is hoped that the friends who attended the course will feel empowered to share their experiences and the workshop materials in their own localities.

The success of the weekend was due in part to the efficient planning and organisation of the Builth community. This included registration, venue, excellent food and the help of all the participants who assisted when help was needed. Requests were made for this event to become the first of many within the cluster.

Cynthia Barlow

Monmouthshire R. E. Days A Hot Topic!

continued...

'The Bahá'í faith was really fun'

At each plenary session Gill asked the children to write on post-it notes their impressions from the day. Comments on the Bahá'í workshops head the paragraphs above but other general comments show how children felt about their experience that day:

'I have learnt that for the different beliefs there is only one God.' 'It doesn't matter what you look like or what you believe you should treat everyone the same.'

'Today I liked learning about RE. I found it really interesting and I know I have already learned a lot.'

'I really enjoyed learning that there was a religion called Bahá'í'

What did I learn? Children are so open to learning about the Bahá'í Faith and other faiths, as are the teachers. Common remarks from the teachers were 'Why have we not heard about the Bahá'í Faith before in schools?' and 'The virtues should be taught in all our schools!' One school took my contact details to arrange for me to come to their school. One Comprehensive school's head teacher commented on all the faith representatives '...they brought an energy and dynamism to spiritual learning that is much needed in our sometimes too secular world and a world where faith is seen to lead to war and violence rather than peace and harmony.'

And Gill was quoted in the Chepstow Beacon, 'This has been a wonderful opportunity for pupils and they have experienced how exciting and valuable it can be to learn about different beliefs and practices whilst enabling them to become better equipped to live in a mutually understanding and respectful society.'

It was and can be in a school near you!

By Sue Cave

RIDVAN Celebrations in Caerphilly, S. Wales



UPDATE!

On Tuesday 29 April, Natasha gave birth to a beautiful, healthy girl. She weighed in at 7lb. 1 oz. and her name is Aleena. Mum, baby and Dad are well and happy! 😊



Treasurer's Report

Ffynnon (Fountain/Spring)

by Louise Reynolds Doughty

This year's budget:

As you can imagine budgeting for a relatively small community with few local spiritual assemblies is not easy especially as we are hoping for growth. The largest single item of expenditure budgeted for is £1600 for printing and postage for Undod, and this is easy to forecast with some accuracy. The bulk of the rest is for core activities and meetings in the clusters. This is much more difficult to estimate because, for instance, a new junior youth group or children's class that necessitates the weekly hire of a hall could easily cost £1000 a year.

The budget of about £5000 that the Council for Wales submitted to the National Spiritual Assembly has been approved, which means that lack of a local fund should not be an obstacle to growth. However if activities can be self-sustaining this is better still.

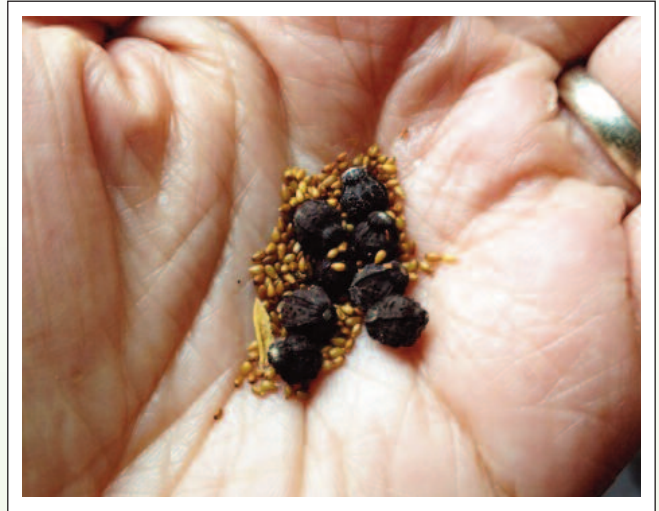
Expenditure so far:

After the first three months of the year just over £600 has been spent, with just under £500 for Undod printing and postage costs and the rest for the hire of a hall for a cluster reflection meeting.



"We must be like the fountain or spring that is continually emptying itself of all that it has and is continually being refilled from an invisible source. To be continually giving out for the good of our fellows undeterred by fear of poverty and reliant on the unfailing bounty of the Source of all wealth and all good – this is the secret of right living."

(The Guardian. Bahá'í News 13 (September 1926), p. 1)



A Story Of Great Hospitality And Flower Seeds

Bruce and Helen pioneered in Guyana for many years. They were once visiting a Bahá'í community in a rural area at a time when there were shortages of food in the country. They were received by a young Bahá'í couple who showed them great hospitality. Although they were poor and there was not much food in the house they willingly shared what they had with their guests.

Bruce and Helen were soon to go on holiday back to the UK and thought of bringing back a gift for these kind people, but Bruce was a bit worried what they might ask for, as some of their non-Bahá'í friends had asked for expensive items, such as a lawnmower or agricultural equipment. However he need not have worried. Although materially poor they were detached from material things. What they asked for was some flower seeds for the nine-pointed star in their garden so they could beautify it and make their home a Bahá'í Centre. "One more thing", they asked, "can you bring us a card with the Greatest Name on to put on our wall?"

At a Nineteen Day Feast in the UK they spoke about the couple in Guyana. The account of their generosity and their utter detachment greatly impressed those who heard their story. It gave them a real vision of the real values of life, and the effect was seen through the very generous contributions made to the Fund that evening.

Bahá'í Council for Wales

Council Secretary:
bcw@bahai.org.uk

Publication of photographs of children under 18 years of age

Under the terms of the Child Protection Act images of children may only be published if parental permission has been received. Permission may be implied by the sending of a photograph by a parent or legal guardian, otherwise it must be given in writing or by email from the child's parent or legal guardian when submitting the photograph/s to Undod's editorial team. Please continue to post or email photographs to Undod accompanied by the necessary permission.

Bahá'í Council for Wales

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<http://www.adobe.com/products/reader/>

Please email: fleurmiss@icloud.com

Undod will not be mailed out to the friends who receive an electronic copy.

Change of Address?

Please email: records@bahai.org.uk
Telephone: **020 7584 2566** (office hours)

Facebook



Join the 'Undod/Unity Baha'is in Wales' Facebook group to share and see more photos, suggest ideas, thoughts and articles.

This is a complementary way of keeping in touch with each other. Baha'is and friends from outside Wales are also members – and have photos, stories and thoughts to share!

The Feast of Jamal (Beauty) in Swansea, with Jim hosting for the first time was a great success. We stayed quite late sharing lots of laughter and news from Jon Joseph Butler and Ray Brocklesby on their Philippines connections.



NAW-RUZ Greetings

Dear friends, the following e-mail (and a photo of the Shrine of the Báb) was sent to the Welsh Assembly members;

Dear Assembly members,

The Bahá'í community of Wales wishes to send you greetings as we approach our New Year on 21st March. It will be celebrated in many different ways throughout the Principality, as well as across the whole of the globe.

With kindest regards,

Christine Abbas (on behalf of the Bahá'í community)

Responses

Dear Christine and the Bahá'í Community,

I hope this e-mail finds you well. I am e-mailing on behalf of the Assembly Member for Aberconwy, Mrs Janet Finch-Saunders AM / AC to thank you for your kind message. The Assembly Member would like to wish you and the Bahá'í Community all the best for your New Year celebrations on March 21st.

Kind regards,

Kelly Williams

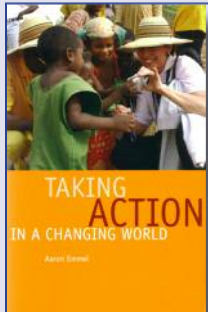
Caseworker & Administrator/Gweithiwr a Gweinyddydd
Thank you and enjoy your new year celebrations, Mike Hedges

Thank you. A very happy and prosperous New Year to the Baha'i community, Lindsay Whittle

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Bahá'í Books UK

TAKING ACTION



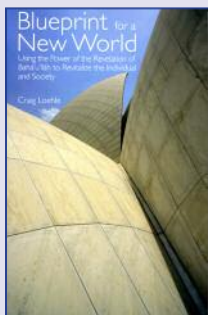
TAKING ACTION IN A CHANGING WORLD

by *Aaron Emmel*

This is a book about social action. It's for people who want to leave the world a better place than they found it. In particular, it's about ways to promote prosperity and justice. It has a dual focus: the ideals found in the teachings of the Bahá'í Faith and how these relate to the real world and its challenges; and what people are doing with these ideals right now in social and economic development projects around the world.

SOFT COVER
208 pages

£9.95
ISBN: 978-0-85398-500-6



BLUEPRINT FOR A NEW WORLD

Using the Power of the Revelation of Bahá'u'lláh to Revitalize the Individual and Society
by *Craig Loehle*

Craig Loehle explores the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh, and examines the role Bahá'ís play as inventors in the development of the new social and economic systems that will form the pattern for a peaceful, united and just future society.

SOFT COVER
192 pages

£9.95
ISBN: 978-0-85398-514-3



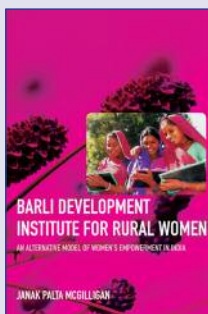
FIRESIDES

by *Catherine Samimi*

Shoghi Effendi called firesides the 'most effective method' of teaching. But what exactly is a fireside? And how can we make our firesides the channels through which people come to know and love Bahá'u'lláh and become members of His Faith? Here is some practical, down-to-earth and often humorous advice from one who's been there - both before and after becoming a Bahá'í.

SOFT COVER
230 pages

£6.95
ISBN: 978-0-85398-433-7



BARLI DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE FOR RURAL WOMEN

by *Janak Palta McGilligan*

This Bahá'í-inspired project empowers young rural and tribal women in India for the betterment of their communities. This book is not only an analysis of the Barli Institute's work over the 25 years of its existence – it is an inspiring account of an effective and practical approach to empowering the powerless.

SOFT COVER
200 pages

£14.95
ISBN: 978-0-85398-558-7

Order from: www.bahaibooks.org.uk or your local book agent