

THE ISSUE

The public are proud of the UK's history of providing sanctuary to people fleeing persecution, but are unaware of the contribution that refugees have made in shaping UK society.

FISH AND CHIPS



WHAT CAN I DO?

Read the book 'Bloody Foreigners' by Robert Winder to find examples of some of the contributions that refugees have made to the UK over the centuries.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Encourage your church, mosque or school to hold an event celebrating the contribution of refugees to the UK - or even to your community.

THE SOLUTION

Celebrate the enormous contribution that refugees have made to the UK.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Ask your local chip shop if they will support Refugee Week by displaying a poster or leaflet explaining how "fish and chips" was brought to the UK by refugees.

WITHOUT REFUGEES, CLASSIC 'BRITISH INSTITUTIONS' SUCH AS FISH AND CHIPS, MARKS AND SPENCER, AND THE MINI WOULD NOT EXIST.

For more information and advice on how to perform these actions visit: www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk

CITIZEN ACTION TOOLKIT 3: Celebrate contribution

Come on and celebrate!

There is so much to celebrate in our history of providing sanctuary to people fleeing persecution. We just need to know the stories of those refugees who have helped to build our country.

Read on to find out what you can do in your local area.

What will I find in this toolkit?

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10 WAYS FOR CITIZENS TO SAVE SANCTUARY



This toolkit is a supplement to the '10 Ways for Citizens to Save Sanctuary' booklet. You can download an electronic version or order copies of the full booklet at www.citizensforsanctuary.org.uk.

THE ISSUE

The public are proud of the UK's history of providing sanctuary to people fleeing persecution, but are unaware of the contribution that refugees have made in shaping UK society.

The Facts

- 65% of the public are proud of the UK's history as a place of sanctuary for people fleeing persecution.
- The UK is home to about 3% of the world's people seeking sanctuary (about 302,000 people).

Links

<http://www.independentasylumcommission.org.uk/files/Saving%20Sanctuary%20Opinion%20Poll.pdf>
<http://www.icar.org.uk/95/key-issues/the-history-of-resettlement-in-the-united-kingdom.html>
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/familyhistory/guide/migrantancestors/refugees.htm>

Proud of our 'proud tradition'

The phrase used more than any other to describe Britain's relationship with refugees is that we have a 'proud tradition' of providing sanctuary to people fleeing persecution.

The phrase is used by everyone from refugee organisations to government ministers, to the Daily Mail.

This ability to take pride in providing sanctuary to refugees in the past – be it Huguenots, Jews or Ugandan Asians – tends to be where agreement ends. Refugee organisations will go on to contrast the rhetoric of our 'proud tradition' with examples of the shoddy treatment of refugees today, while the Daily Mail will contrast our 'proud tradition' with the perceived exploitation of our generosity by 'bogus' refugees today. Government Ministers, meanwhile, are caught somewhere in the middle, trying to uphold and defend the system, while also attempting to convince the public that they are being sufficiently tough.

And what do the public think? The Independent Asylum Commission's Public Attitudes Research Project found that two-thirds of the public say they are proud of Britain's history of providing sanctuary to people fleeing persecution.

Interestingly though, the public are not so aware of the impact and positive contribution that refugees have made to UK society over the centuries. Many household names – including some classic British institutions and icons - would not exist if it wasn't for refugees. More about that to come in subsequent pages!

It is hardly surprising that the public are not very aware of the historical contribution that refugees have made, as its nature and extent are not often mentioned. It is even less surprising that the public are not aware of the positive contribution made by refugees today.

Why is this? Well, we are often quicker to see a threat to our culture or way of life than we are to recognise the achievements and contribution of newcomers. There is a fascinating headline from a tabloid newspaper: 'Refugees to flood Britain'. Sound familiar? It is from the Daily Mail. To be precise it is a headline from the Daily Mail in 1933 and referred to Jewish refugees from the Nazis. The very refugees who we now see as part of our 'proud tradition' of providing sanctuary!

THE SOLUTION

Celebrate
the enormous
contribution that
refugees have made
to the
UK.

The Facts

- The great British culinary tradition of fish and chips was first introduced into the UK by Jewish refugees in the 17th century.
- One of the founders of M&S, Michael Marks, was himself a refugee.
- The Mini is widely regarded as a classic British car, and yet it was designed by Sir Alec Issigonis, a Greek refugee from Turkey who found sanctuary in Britain.

Links

www.refugeeweek.org.uk

What do fish & chips, Marks & Sparks and the Mini have in common?

The solution is simple – and it is fun! We need to stop just talking about our proud tradition of sanctuary – we need to start celebrating it! So what is there to celebrate?

Begin on the high street. There was almost a national crisis a few years ago when it looked like Marks & Spencer was in trouble – and its resurgence has continued to hit the headlines. In 2009 the company will celebrate 125 years of trading, and much will be made of its origins as a penny bazaar. But it is also worth celebrating that Michael Marks, who founded Marks & Spencer, was born in Russia, lived in Poland, and arrived as Jewish refugee from the pogroms in the nineteenth century.

Then go out onto our roads. The Mini is widely regarded as a classic British car, and yet it was designed by Sir Alec Issigonis, a Greek refugee from Turkey who found sanctuary in Britain.

And finally, consider our culinary habits. The most British institution of them all, fish and chips, was brought to the UK by Jewish refugees from Portugal in the seventeenth century.

And these are just the stories we know. There are countless stories of other refugees throughout history who have shaped our society – and they are not all ancient history. The contributions made by recent refugees is more obvious within our communities – in the enrichment of our local economy, culture and the arts, music, sport and diverse new relationships.

Celebrate the 30,000 jobs that have been created in Leicester since the 1970s by Ugandan Asian refugees fleeing Idi Amin. Celebrate Adalet Garmiany from Iraq who creates public art in Hull and Jade Amoli Jackson from Uganda whose writing has been published in a Penguin anthology. Celebrate international music superstar Emmanuel Jal and the renowned Zeela choir of Liberian refugees from Sheffield. Celebrate Luol Deng the Sudanese refugee who grew up in London and is now a top basketball star in the USA. Celebrate Premiership footballer Fabrice Muamba whose fans chant: “Muamba, Oh-oh, Muamba, Oh-oh, He was a refugee, And now he’s quality!” Celebrate the refugees you know who enrich your community and the richness of those relationships.

As citizens we must seek out and celebrate not only the contribution of refugees of the past but also the refugees of today.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Read the book 'Bloody Foreigners' by Robert Winder to find examples of some of the contributions that refugees have made to the UK over the centuries.

The Facts

Reviews of 'Bloody Foreigners':

'splendidly researched and subtle history'
OBSERVER

'a topical, formidable and engaging book which will have - and deserves to have - many readers...a breath of fresh air' SUNDAY TIMES

'Robert Winder's totally absorbing and revelatory book could not be more timely (and) indispensable' DAILY MAIL

Links

www.amazon.co.uk/Bloody-Foreigners-Robert-Winder/dp/0349115664/ref=ed_oe_p/276-4302744-1682839

We all love a good story.

"Bloody foreigners! Who needs 'em? I'm Anglo Saxon and proud." We all know people who share this view, and sometimes it can be difficult to know what to say without resorting to name-calling and labeling.

If you ever want ammunition to challenge the argument that white Britons are ethnically pure, uncontaminated by intermingling with other races, and that the presence of other communities in Britain is a recent phenomenon, then you could do no better than to read Robert Winder's excellent book, 'Bloody Foreigners'.

Ok, the book is a big one, but that is because it is comprehensive, packed with information and stories, and is meticulously referenced. Do not be put off – read a chapter before bed each night and you will find yourself delighted and intrigued as the tale of Britain's history as a place of sanctuary unfolds.

From the pages of this book you can plunder examples of how refugees have shaped our past. When I read it I annoyed my nearest and dearest by endlessly regaling them with nuggets of what I had just read – this is just one of those books.

You also learn about the attitude of the people who have provided sanctuary through the ages, as well as the people who have benefited from it. There is a common theme: Britain offering sanctuary – often grudgingly and with trepidation - to desperate people with nowhere else to go, while taking pride in its role as a place of sanctuary for previous generations of refugees who have subsequently integrated and become part of British society. Sound familiar?

So read the book. It's full title is 'Bloody Foreigners – subtitle' by Robert Winder and it is published by Little Brown. You can borrow it from the library, buy it from all good bookstores, or order it from Amazon.

Get others to read it too – the history of migration to the UK is so important to keep to yourself! Lend others your copy, or encourage your bookclub or study group to make it a focus for discussion.

And if you share enough of the stories with your friends and colleagues, in the workplace or the pub, then they will almost certainly want to read the book too - either because they are interested, or just to shut you up!

WHAT CAN I DO?

Encourage your church, mosque or school to hold an event celebrating the contribution of refugees to the UK – or even to your community.

The Facts

How to put on an event:

- Think about the aims of your event. Why are you doing it? To raise awareness, to give a platform to talented artists or as a fundraiser?
- What kind of event do you want to organise – who is your target audience, where do you want to do it, who do you want involved?
- Plan your budget. It is easy to get carried away. Do you have some seed money that you can use, will you charge at your event. Use your networks! You will find that many of your friends are talented in different areas and may help you.

Further information

For more information on the Saving Sanctuary Exhibition, contact sanctuary@cof.org.uk.

Celebrate the local

Coming from all corners of the globe, refugees bring an eclectic mix of cultures that enrich our society and communities.

It is all very well to make statements like this that our aspirational – they express how we would like the world to be – but the real power comes from the lived experience that testifies to the truth of this for our community.

Lots of communities hold multicultural events to promote positive community relations, but what really builds positive public attitudes to people seeking sanctuary is encounter, understanding and functional relationships between refugees and settled communities.

So that's why we are encouraging you to persuade local community organisations – churches, schools, mosques or clubs that you are involved with – to host events that celebrate not only the contribution that refugees make or have made at a national level, but to celebrate and promote relationships within a local community or institution in a way that strengthens the bonds between people. There are many ways that this can be done. You could consider holding an event during Refugee Week.

Another might be to host the *Saving Sanctuary* photography exhibition at the institution. This striking exhibition juxtaposes the portraits and stories of people who have sought sanctuary in the UK with the portraits of British people who describe where they find sanctuary.

Or you could celebrate the relationships between people seeking sanctuary and the settled community within the organization – and indeed, encourage more of this in the future. So you could hold a ceremony to recognize the success of volunteer work by refugees and other members of the organization, or set up a Sanctuary Prize in your school to reward the best examples of refugee children and local children working together for the common good of their community. You could organize a culture-sharing event, where people bring food and perform music, dance or poetry from their own countries. Not forgetting of course, that British people should share the best of their culture too, so that it is truly an exchange.

Or if that all sounds too heavy, organise a Sanctuary Party for your friends, family and refugees you know. Dress up as your favourite famous refugee, and make sure that your food, music, drinks and activities have a refugee theme.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Ask your local chip shop if they will support Refugee Week by displaying a poster or leaflet explaining how “fish and chips” was brought to the UK by refugees.

The Facts

- Fish and chips were brought to east London by Jews expelled from Portugal in the 17th century.
- Last year over 250 million fish and chip shop meals were sold throughout the UK, proving that UK's fish and chip shops are still the nation's favorite hot take-away outlet.

Links

Fish and chips facts

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fish_and_chips

We all like a fish and chip supper.

Ever wonder if you are just preaching to the converted? You bang the drum for refugees and hold lots of lovely events but wish you could reach out beyond the ‘usual suspects’ to wider community? Read on to find a way you can do that, in a fun and imaginative way.

We have already established that fish and chips was introduced to Britain by refugees. Let’s get this straight – if it wasn’t for refugees, there would be no fish and chips in Britain, and we would still be dining on unbattered fish and boiled potatoes!

And fish and chips is a pretty democratic dish – enjoyed by rich and poor, young and old, North and South alike. So how can we get the message across that this wonderful, popular, British institution was actually the work of refugees?

We all know that fish and chips usually comes wrapped in newspaper. Even though these days the newspaper is normally fake, I still instinctively read it in case I get the snippet of a good story. I am sure that lots of other people do too.

Wouldn’t it be fantastic if fish and chip shops in your area were to wrap their fish and chips in specially-designed paper that explained the history of fish and chips and the link to refugees? This could be a unique and interesting feature for their wrappers year-round or at particular times of the year, Refugee Week for instance.

This also has the potential to work across the UK by targeting the national fish and chip restaurants, such as Harry Ramsden’s, and the suppliers of the wrappers.

Even if this is not possible in your area, you could quite easily ask all of the fish and chip shops in your town to display posters that explain to customers the link between what they are about to eat and the history of sanctuary in the UK.

Our crack team of designers and organizers at *CITIZENS for Sanctuary* is in the stage of developing the posters and the wrappers – and a step-by-step guide for approaching fish and chip shops. Please register your interest by emailing sanctuary@cof.org.uk.

Meanwhile, why not pop out and sample some of the fish and chip shops in your community. Go on – now you can tell yourself that it is research!

Resources

Title

Text

Please let us know how you get on with these actions. We will collate all of the results from across the country and add them to our website so we can see all the change we have accomplished.

If you need advice or support, please contact carina.crawford-rolt@cof.org.uk.

Good luck!