

ANNUAL REPORT 2018 ETHIOPIAN HERITAGE TRUST (UK)

I am pleased to report that the Ethiopian Heritage Trust (UK) made excellent progress through the year from 1 January to 31 December 2018.

STATUS AND TRUSTEES

1. We are a charity, but we are not recognised by the Charity Commission because they refuse any application for recognition from a charity whose income is less than £5,000 per year.
2. Now that our income has passed that figure we will be applying for recognition by the Charity Commission.
3. We are, as most of you will know, recognised for Gift Aid by HMRC.

THE BOARD

1. At the beginning of the year the Trustees were Peter McCann, Michael Sargent, Dr. Negusse Tewoldemedhin, Dr. Yonas Ghebremichael Woldeselassie and Patricia Sargent. During the year Patricia Sargent resigned, and Christopher Sargent was co-opted as an Additional Trustee in accordance with the Constitution Article 8 paragraph 5. His tenure of office lasted to 31 December 2018.
2. As laid down in the Constitution the Board met 4 times.
3. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Board for all their time and effort. It is most definitely as a team effort that we have made such progress during the year.

MEMBERSHIP AND DONATIONS

1. We ended the year with 114 current members and donors, which is less than the target which we set ourselves – 200 members. In particular we need to make more effort to recruit Ethiopians living in the UK – as of the end of the year we had only 13 members from Ethiopia.
2. On the plus side we spread our net wide; we have members living in 15 different countries, representing 12 different nationalities.
3. Though our membership is not as great as we would wish, the Trust's members and donors are generous. An income for the year of £11,000 (when £7,000 was the target) is very impressive.
4. Amongst our members we can list the just departed Ethiopian Ambassador, HE Dr. Hailemichael Aberra and the Deputy Head of Mission, Mr. Ababi Demissie, Sir Eldryd Parry Founder of the Tropical Health and Education Trust and Professor Myles Wickstead and Sir Robin Christopher both formerly British Ambassador in Ethiopia. Jeremy Lefroy MP and the Prime Minister's Business Envoy to Ethiopia joined on 5 January.
5. As promised in our literature, we continue our record of having spent no funds at all in the UK on administration, with the sole exception of a bank charge of £15 every time we send funds to Ethiopia.

FINANCE

1. Our sincere thanks go to Pete McCann, who, despite a very full life, successfully managed our finances and our membership data base – a great deal more work than you might think. And for the second year running our auditor inspected and certified our books without question.

Very unfortunately for us for personal reasons Pete has just resigned as Trustee, and we will sorely miss his input.

2. Bureaucracy does take more time than you would think. The Compliance Department of Lloyds ran the microscope over us comprising 7 letters, 4 telephone conversations and three Trustees having to go to a Lloyds Branch for the certification of documents.

3. Gift Aid, managed kindly by Christopher Sargent, brought us a very welcome £1,426. I should add that he also kindly carried out the thankless task of producing minutes of our Trustee Meetings and Annual General Meeting.

ADMINISTRATION AND COMMUNICATION

1. We made good progress in the year with the basics needed for a charity.

2. We secured an email address earlier in the year -

ethiopianheritagetrustuk@gmail.com - though so far it is scarcely used.

3. We established our website – www.ethiopianheritagetrustuk.org

4. We have our own letterhead.

5. We have our own leaflet, which I hope you all have seen.

6. Though technically it should be reported on next year I would like to mention that we also have a Greetings card printed (it was printed on 9 January). I mention it because I hope that some of you will buy some cards today. As always everything you pay will go to the Trust. The printing costs have already been defrayed by an anonymous donor.

7. I must apologise for the error we made earlier in the year regarding confidentiality of personal data. Apart from apologising I can report that we have since employed the services of a professional data protection consultancy firm ISACC (Information Security Audit Control Commission) who reviewed our data protection policy and made recommendations; these are all being implemented.

ETHIOPIAN HERITAGE TRUST IN ETHIOPIA

1. Relations remained excellent throughout the year, and the Board would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board of the Ethiopian Heritage Trust for the constructive dialogue in which we have engaged.

2. Our thanks go particularly to Lik Kahinat Abayneh and Dr. Agdew Redie respectively President and Vice President of the Board.

3. We are also very grateful to the General Manager of the Trust, Mesobework Ketawe and to the Head of Communication and Public Relation, Emebet Teferra for their prompt reply to correspondence and for their continually helpful attitude.

4. And we recognise the strength of the commitment of the Board and staff of the Ethiopian Heritage Trust over the last year to overcome their many obstacles and build new foundations for the future.
5. Those of us on the Board who have never been to Ethiopia and those who did so a long time ago would like at the same time to record our gratitude to Dr. Negusse Tewoldemedhin and Dr. Yonas Ghebremichael Woldeselassie for saving us from too many mistakes about current Ethiopian society and life and for their translation of key documents.
6. We were very fortunate that Dr. Negusse Tewoldemedhin was able to spend around a month in Ethiopia in the spring of the year, and spent considerable time in discussions with the Trust there. He will report a little later in the meeting; we are very grateful to him for all he did during his journey.
7. During the past year the Trust in Ethiopia faced an existential threat. Salaries were 6 months overdue and morale, understandably, was at a very low ebb. Obviously, helping to solve this problem was the main target for our funds, and I am pleased to say that with this support and with the Trust's own efforts in Addis Ababa the arrears have all been paid off.
8. At the same time I think it has been very helpful to our colleagues in Addis Ababa to know that they were not alone in their task.
9. Unfortunately the claims by a church next to the Park for part of the Park and a claim originating from within Oromiya Region for half of the Park still remain. And, as a result the Trust was unable, as the previous year, to harvest and sell eucalyptus trees. The Trust in Ethiopia continues maximum effort to refute these claims.
10. Apart from the payment of overdue salaries, £2,500 of the funds we collected went to support the Trust's tree planting programme in the Entoto Natural Park.
11. The planting operation took place in July and August, the best months for tree planting. This year 7,943 trees were planted, with the help of more than 400 volunteers (with at least 1 from the British Embassy) and the support of 14 organisations, which included several banks, the Sheraton Addis, Nile Insurance, Moha Soft Drinks and Afro European Engineers.
12. Seven different species were planted:
- | | | |
|---------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Grar | Acacia abyssinica | Abyssinian Acacia |
| Wanza | Cordia Africana | Sometimes called African Teak |
| Yehabesha Tid | Juniperus procera | African or East African Juniper |
| Weyra | Olea Africana | African Olive |
| Tikur Inchit | Prunus Africana | African Cherry |
| Zigba | Podocarpus gracilior | East African Yellowwood. |

MEMORIAL GROVES AND GIFTS OF TREES

1. The past year saw the initiation of two schemes whereby anyone interested can have a grove of trees planted in memory of someone loved, or trees planted as a gift for a friend. The second of these schemes needs final adjustment before operating efficiently.
2. Both ideas were suggested by Ms. Fatemeh Ahmadi; we are very grateful to her.
3. Four Memorial Groves of trees have been commissioned and 26 Trees as Gifts (at £5 each) have been paid for. Planting will take place in July/August.
4. In this context I might add that the Trust has made contact with the Woodland

Trust and we hope to learn from their experience.

VOLUNTARY HELP

1. I would like thank, on behalf of the Board, those people who have generously given voluntary assistance to the Trust:

Helping setting up website and running it- Masoud Ahanchian.

Designing the Trust's leaflet – Kosar Movahedi.

Production of membership cards – Teri Sargent.

Preparing the Trust's leaflet and greetings card for printing - John Goodwin

Help with website and greetings card – Jonathan Darwell-Smith.

Inspecting and certifying the accounts – John Bowthorpe.

Suggesting and helping with setting up the Memorial Grove and Tree Gift Schemes – Fatemeh Ahmadi.

Advice on data protection – Reza Alavi

Recruitment - Yared and Saba Teklemedhin

Support throughout the year – Patsy Sargent.

2. All offers of voluntary support are very welcome!

And I close with a Greek saying “A society grows great when old people plant trees whose shade they will never see.”

Michael Sargent
Honorary Chairperson

2.2.19