

# THE HOME FRONT

A NEWS BULLETIN

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No. 41.

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The Divine Springtime is come, O Most Exalted Pen, for the Festival of the All-Merciful is fast approaching. Bestir thyself, and magnify, before the entire creation, the name of God, and celebrate His praise, in such wise that all created things may be regenerated and made new. Speak, and hold not thy peace. The day star of blissfulness shineth above the horizon of Our name, the Blissful, inasmuch as the kingdom of the name of God hath been adorned with the ornament of the name of thy Lord, the Creator of the heavens. Arise before the nations of the earth, and arm thyself with the power of this Most Great Name, and be not of those who tarry.

From Baha'u'llah's Ridvan Tablet.

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Issued by the National Teaching Committee of the National  
Spiritual Assembly of the Baha'is of the British Isles.

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Dear friends,

Again we are about to meet for our Ridvan Feast - the Feast when we re-form our Local Spiritual Assemblies, and if possible elect the officers for the coming year.

How best can our Local Assemblies achieve the standard set for us by 'Abdu'l-Baha and, in his own words, "raise the Banner of Guidance and become the host of the Supreme Concourse."? Such is the unique responsibility of the Local Spiritual Assembly - a responsibility both precious and privileged in this the Formative Age of our Faith.

The first responsibility lies surely with those who elect the Local Spiritual Assembly, a requirement where the number of adult believers exceeds nine. This duty should be approached conscientiously and prayerfully, that our choice may fall on those members of the community who are best able to fulfil the exacting requirements of membership of a divine institution.

The second responsibility lies with the newly elected Assembly in the wise choice of its officers, the servants of the Assembly who will be asked to carry out the necessary tasks to enable the Assembly to function adequately and efficiently.

First, the Chairman who will lead the Assembly in its consultations, seeing that all have the opportunity to make their contribution, as well as contributing himself. He will be required to work closely with the Secretary in preparing Agendas for the meetings and in carrying out the decisions of the Assembly.



Secondly the Secretary, whose responsibilities can be numerous, but it is for the Assembly to direct, guide and help the Secretary, so that the work of the Assembly is carried out in harmony and unity.

At the Nineteen Day Feast, the Secretary acts as the mouthpiece of the Assembly, giving such reports as the Assembly shall direct. The Secretary is also responsible for all letters arising from Assembly meetings. This needs to be a person who is able to state clearly in speech and in writing the wishes of the Assembly. He or she may be called upon to send letters and reports to the National Assembly and its Committees, for is not the Secretary a vital link between the National Office and her Assembly, as well as between the Assembly and the local community? This role can be exacting, but it can also be exciting, giving ample opportunity of service to the Faith in the field of teaching as well as in the field of Baha'i administration.

Our greatest joy is to give of our talents in service to the Cause we love - it is for the Assembly to recognise and use those talents with wisdom and understanding.

NATIONAL TEACHING COMMITTEE

## SPECIAL GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLIES

### Secretaries, please take immediate action

The community must meet for the Ridvan elections after sunset on the 20th April or before sunset on 21st April. At no other time can these elections be held.

Where there are exactly nine adult Baha'is in the community, they hold a Ridvan meeting to declare that those nine believers constitute the Local Spiritual Assembly. The Assembly may then elect their Officers. If, however, only a quorum is present and the Assembly feels that the election would be better held at a later date when the whole Assembly is present, they may postpone the election until such meeting.

Where there are more than nine adult Baha'is, an election is held at the Ridvan meeting. Everyone should make a special effort to be present at this meeting because the election of a new Spiritual Assembly is one of the most important things that can happen in any town or city, and is a sacred moment. If it is quite impossible to attend the Ridvan meeting, one's vote should be sent by post to the Secretary. Baha'i elections are by secret ballot, so ballot papers sent by post should be placed first in a plain envelope with no indication made of the name of the sender either on the envelope or on the ballot paper, and that envelope should be sealed. The sealed envelope should then be placed in another envelope which is addressed to the Secretary, and this should have the name of the sender clearly written on the back and "BALLOT" in the left-hand corner on the front.

The ballot paper should be posted in time to reach the Secretary not later than the morning of the day on which the



election is to take place. (If two envelopes are not used this does not inviolate the vote).

The envelopes containing the postal ballots are not opened until the friends present at the Ridvan meeting have recorded their own votes, using the ballot papers they will have brought along to the meeting. The envelopes containing the postal votes are then opened and those votes are added to the other ballot papers.

Before the voting commences, tellers should be appointed by the friends present at the meeting, and they are responsible for collecting and counting the votes.

When the votes have been counted and the members of the new local Spiritual Assembly are known, they should each sign the statement sent by the National Spiritual Assembly confirming that they are the duly elected local Spiritual Assembly of that particular town, in a similar way to the "declaration" which is signed by the newly declared Assembly. This statement is then sent in duplication to the National Assembly for sealing, and the sealed copy is returned to the local Spiritual Assembly for safe keeping.

In relation to voting for oneself, the beloved Guardian has said:-

"This is entirely a matter of conscience; if the individual feels for some reason justified in voting for himself, he is free to do so."

(Principles of Baha'i Administration, p.59)

Each ballot paper must be filled in with exactly nine names of the members of the local community, - more or less than nine names invalidates the whole ballot paper.

Where there is a larger local community, the nine believers receiving the highest number of votes become the members of the local Spiritual Assembly; this is called a "plurality" vote as distinct from a "majority" vote. A "plurality" vote means that those with the highest numbers of votes are elected, irrespective of the number of people who voted. A "majority" vote means that the members elected must have been voted for by more than half of the electorate, and this form of voting is used when the Officers of the Assembly are elected.

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THE IMMEDIATE TASK

SEVEN DAYS TO GO !!

----- FIVE PLACES TO FILL !!

? WHO WILL ARISE TO SERVE ?

The last Gaps:-

	<u>Needs</u>	<u>Offers Confirmed</u>	<u>Gaps to Fill</u>
CHESTER	2	2	-
INVERNESS	2	1	1
YORK	3	1	2
PORTSMOUTH	2	-	2
BLACKPOOL	4	4	-
	13	8	5

Dear Friends,

There are, I am sure, a number of you who really have the desire to pioneer, but for one reason or another, feel you cannot actually take the step. Having been in this position myself, and now just about to move to a pioneer post, I feel I must tell you about my feelings at this stage; of the quite wonderful joy I am experiencing, now that the plunge has been taken.

To uproot oneself from one's native town (especially when this happens to be such a city as Edinburgh), to change one's job, and leave a much loved home and dearly loved friends - both within the Faith and without - is indeed not a step which can be taken lightly. On the whole, we humans are always rather frightened of changes. We like to cling to the dear familiar surroundings, and to tear ourselves from these and venture into the unknown, is sometimes more than we can bring ourselves to do. But, dear friends, as Baha'is, uprooting ourselves in order to further the success of our beloved Faith, we can go forward with confidence into the unknown. Worries and difficulties to overcome there may well be; things may not all be to our liking at first, but with Baha'u'llah at our side, what have we to fear? He is well aware of the problems we have to face.

Is this not the crux of the matter? Our lack of Faith in Baha'u'llah to secure for us work and a home? It certainly was this way with us. When, however, one reaches the point where all that matters is that a lamp, already lit by Baha'u'llah, somewhere, must not be allowed to flicker out, then, no matter at what cost, it is quite impossible to turn one's back any longer; to let the obstacles we think are holding us back, to do so any longer.



If pioneering is what Baha'u'llah wants any of us to do, then I am quite convinced that these difficulties, however insurmountable they may seem, can and will be removed for us, if we so desire.

What I want to convey to you is the great happiness which I now feel. This is a deep-seated feeling very difficult to describe. It's rather like floating on a great sea and being upheld by its wonderful buoyancy, in spite of the many problems and worries which sometimes ripple on the surface. I only wish each one of you could experience it. Believe me, it is well worth all the sacrifices to be made, and what has brought me most gladness is the feeling of being so much closer to Baha'u'llah than ever before. I can honestly say I have never felt such happiness.

If, after reading this, it has helped or encouraged any of you to come to a decision about pioneering, then my reason for writing this will have been accomplished.

Sheila M. S. Cooper.

(N.B. Sheila and Don Cooper have moved from Edinburgh to assure the Assembly of Aberdeen.)

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Teaching Tour by Hand of the Cause, John Ferraby

We have been specially privileged to have as a travel teacher this year our dear John Ferraby. His tour following Teaching Conference was particularly successful and we thought that the friends might like to know how varied were the occasions arranged for him.

He was in Winchester for their World Religion Day celebration, an event which Winchester Baha'is have made particularly successful in obtaining newspaper coverage, participation by leading members of other Faiths and local civic dignitaries. Mr. Ferraby was received by the Mayor of Winchester and saw the tree planted in commemoration of the Most Great Jubilee. A message of goodwill was sent by Mr. Peter Smithers, lately the Member of Parliament for Winchester and now Secretary-General of the Council of Europe.

Exeter and Torquay were the next towns to be visited and time was given for firesides for the friends as well as for contacts.

Mr. Ferraby crossed to Dublin, and again had fruitful and inspiring meetings with the friends and with their contacts. At one meeting he spoke especially to the Youth on "Science and Religion", and talked of the problems of teaching the Faith to young people, especially students, be they intellectual, agnostic, or otherwise.

At Bangor, again meetings with Baha'is and contacts, and also a special visit to Bangor Abbey, seat of ancient religious learning dating back to St. Columbanus. Mr. Ferraby spoke with the curate of the Church.



The visit to Belfast was unusual in that opportunity was taken to enable leading members of Society and well known international organisations to meet Mr. Ferraby socially at a "Fork Supper" in the home of Jane Villiers-Stuart, and a lunch the following day at the Grand Central Hotel. Before he left the city, Mr. Ferraby was received by the Lord Mayor at the City Hall. There was also opportunity for firesides both for Baha'is and their friends.

Reports from all communities spoke of the wonderful atmosphere generated by this visit of a Hand of the Cause, and expressed their deep gratitude for the privilege of entertaining such a guest.

### Other News

We have been thrilled at the increasing number of opportunities which are now being given to Baha'is to speak of the Faith to Sixth Formers at School. Owen Battrick has an annual date with the Senior boys at a school in Reading - Lois Gregory recently visited a school in Dartmouth and spoke to the whole school! John Long has written of a visit to Chorlton Grammar School for Boys where he addressed 50 of the Sixth Formers and afterwards presented a copy of "Baha'u'llah and the New Era" to the School Library.

Now, what about the girls; cannot we get them interested too? We would like to hear if there have been other similar occasions elsewhere.

News still comes in of tree planting ceremonies - the latest from Bournemouth when Alderman Deric Scott officiated, assisted by John Morley. Oxford presented their books to the City Library at a happy little ceremony on March 25th. They are also presenting three books by Shoghi Effendi to Balliol College where he was studying at the time of 'Abdu'l-Baha's passing.

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BAHA'I CALENDAR

<u>Holy Days</u>	21st April )	- Feast of Ridvan
	- 2nd May )	
	23rd May	- Declaration of the Bab
	29th May	- Ascension of Baha'u'llah
	9th June	- Martyrdom of the Bab

<u>Nineteen Day Feasts</u>	9th April	- Glory
	28th April	- Beauty
	17th May	- Grandeur
	5th June	- Light
	24th June	- Mercy

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British National Convention - 2nd and 3rd May  
 at The Borough Library Theatre,  
 Kensington, London, S.W.

Dedication of the Mother Temple of Europe in Frankfurt -  
 4th July, followed by a European Teaching Conference  
 on 5th and 6th July.

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Scottish Week-end School at Inverness - 4th/5th April  
 Lyme Park Week-end School - 22nd-24th May  
 Welsh Week-end School at Porthcawl - 13th/14th June  
Harlech Summer School - 4th-18th July  
Dalston Hall Summer School - 22nd Aug.- 4th Sep.

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