

Refugee Tales

comes to Hertford

FREE EVENING EVENT Saturday 7 July at 1900: All Saints' Church

The Annual Walk 7-11 July goes from St Albans to Westminster this year. We are privileged to be the first stop on the journey.

Please show interest and solidarity by attending and inviting others. Indefinite Detention, for weeks, months or years needs attention given, and refugees deserve compassion.

Host – Bidisha

Poems – Hubert Moore

The Father's Tale – Roma Tearne

Tale spoken by former detainee

Music : Na-Mara

Welcome from Ali Smith, Patron of Refugee Tales

When asked if I'd be a patron to the project I said an immediate yes and a big thank-you for asking me. The most heartening work I did last year was the work I did with Refugee Tales, and the highpoint of my year was the night I came to Charing to meet and read with the walkers.

Late last year too I was in the audience at an event in London featuring the great writer and cultural visionary John Berger. Someone in the audience asked him what he thought we could do about the movement of people across the world and the reactions of countries to those who arrive in them seeking help and refuge. He sat and thought in silence for a moment or two. Then he began to talk about storytelling.

The telling of stories is an act of profound hospitality. It always has been; story is an ancient form of generosity, an ancient form that will tell us everything we need to know about the contemporary world. Story has always been a welcoming-in, is always one

way or another a hospitable meeting of the needs of others, and a porous art form where sympathy and empathy are only the beginning of things. The individual selves we all are meet and transform in the telling into something open and communal.

Imagine if every city, if every country, greeted refugees with signs which said in many languages the word welcome, and the words you are safe, like Vienna did last summer.

We will tell it like it is, and we will work towards the better imagined. Welcome to this year's Refugee Tales!

Ali Smith <http://refugeetales.org/>

Immigration detention centres are officially called Immigration Removal Centres, as their stated purpose is to hold people who the government intends to deport from the UK. Around half of people in immigration detention are asylum seekers, and many have family ties in the UK. Around 30,000 migrants are detained in the UK every year. There are, at present, ten detention Immigration Removal Centres in the UK. (This figure includes Short Term Holding Facilities.) Some are run by private security companies, others by the Prison Service. People in detention cannot leave and have very limited freedom of movement within the centres. Security levels are similar to prisons.

The UK is unique within Western Europe in that there is no maximum time limit on immigration detention. Whilst the maximum time limit for people to be detained in France is 45 days, in the UK detention is indefinite – people can be and are detained for months or even years. It costs, on average, more than £30,000 to detain someone for a year. More about immigration detention is available from AVID Detention.