

Refugee Tales

comes to Hertford

On Friday 6 July this year pilgrims will be arriving in St Albans with their packs and walking boots, excited and a little anxious as they prepare to embark on a five day walk to Westminster. Refugee Tales is subtitled 'A Walk in Solidarity with Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Detainees'. This will be the fourth walk telling stories of those seeking asylum in the UK who have found themselves indefinitely detained under immigration rules. The UK is the only country in Europe that detains people indefinitely. The purpose of the project is to end that policy.

The previous walks have started in Dover, Canterbury and Runnymede. This year the walkers will start from St Albans and walk to Hertford. The walk then continues to Chingford and through Walthamstow to Stoke Newington arriving in Westminster on the afternoon of Wednesday 11 July. The walk will pass through towns of great historical importance, beautiful countryside including Epping Forest and East London with its own long history of migration.

The walkers will stay overnight in church or village halls and every evening invite the community to come and hear stories of those who have experienced detention and life as a refugee or asylum seeker. These tales are very powerful and are an effective way to explain the real consequences of the policy of indefinite detention. The Tales are told in two ways either people tell their own tales directly or the subject whose tale is told collaborates with an established writer. Two volumes of Refugee Tales have been published by Comma Books. The model for the walk and evenings is Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, where experience is shared through the telling of stories. A Host leads the event and music always provides a moving outlet for an often-emotional experience.

Refugee Tales is rooted in the work of the charity Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group

which through a network of befrienders, supports people in immigration detention at Gatwick airport.



The Refugee Tales project was initiated four years by a group of volunteer visitors. Around seven hundred men are held at Gatwick at any one time while their immigration status is considered. The detainees' experience and trauma is not widely known and members of the group decided to take the detainees stories out to communities. They do not march or shout but taking direct experience and burning injustice hope that hearts and minds will be changed. The project is not attempting to stop legitimate removal; detention is sometimes necessary. However indefinite detention is inhumane, inefficient and expensive.

Refugee Tales is delighted to be coming to Hertford on **Saturday 7th July** and will be holding a **free community event at 7.30pm at All Saints Church**. Please come along to hear the tales and enjoy the music by local folk group Na-Mara .

All are welcome to join the walk for a day or more and come to the free evening events.

There is more information on the website: <http://refugeetales.org/>