



## MEP NEWSLETTER – MAY 2022

*Welcome to the MEP newsletter – a place for everyone to share news and information.*

### Come to our Annual Meeting!



On 20 June we will be holding our Annual General Meeting (AGM). This replaces the normal English lessons and Sewing Group on that day. Join us to let us know what you think about MEP and what you would like MEP to do more of, followed by refreshments and a social event, with music and entertainment. All students and teachers are invited to attend. The meeting starts at 11.15 and the social event will run until about 3.30.

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### Thank you to the Cooks!

Every week at Exeter Street Hall the cooking team produce a wonderful and nutritious meal for us all. Thank you to Kate, Anna, Julie, Hilary, Wendy and Sue.



If you would like to volunteer to help with cooking as well, speak to someone in the kitchen next time you are there.

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### A Great New Information Resource from VIE

Voices in Exile has put together an online notice board called Padlet, where you can find out about where to get support and useful information, including legal and money advice, foodbanks, English classes and many other great resources Here are the links:

<https://padlet.com/VoicesinExile/usefulinfo>  
[Useful information \(padlet.com\)](https://padlet.com/VoicesinExile/usefulinfo)

### Spring is here...

Did you know that MEP has an allotment (vegetable garden)? It is a beautiful peaceful space, filled with birdsong, located near Hollingbury Park in Brighton.



Everyone is welcome to join in with gardening and sharing the produce.

Spring is a busy time, with lots of preparation for the growing season and **strawberries** soon to harvest.

Last year we grew tomatoes, beans, chard, coriander, plums, spinach, potatoes, chilli, courgettes and aubergine.



If you would like to visit the allotment, collect some vegetables, and find out about what you could do there, contact **Will** on WhatsApp, on 07965 756126. There will be regular gardening days on **Thursday mornings** through Summer and **picnics** when the weather is nice.

## Alison meets the Archbishop

On Saturday 5 March All Saints Church in Hove hosted a special event to celebrate International Women's Day. Members of the Network of International Women held stalls selling handicrafts made by some of the women and displayed photographs of many of the activities run by the network including Ecotherapy, Healthy Living, Cookery and Art classes. A huge patchwork made of individual pieces, created by dozens of members commemorating their



home countries, was strung above the stalls.

A special guest at the event was the Archbishop of Canterbury (the head of the Church of England) who had chosen to visit All Saints as it plays a

particular role in welcoming refugees and offering them hospitality. Twice a month the church opens its doors and women from the network share donated clothes, play table tennis, offer tea and cakes and friendship to the visiting refugees.

The chaplain to the Archbishop stopped at the stall I was on, asked me about some of these activities and then returned with the Archbishop and introduced me to him. The Archbishop later went on to describe the church and our involvement as "utterly diverse, immensely hospitable and giving to people in need".

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## Sewing Group News



We had a great start to the year, with three new volunteers, and several donations of sewing machines and fabrics. Our students have completed a range of lovely new projects, ranging from purses and bags, to trousers and tops, and now we all have fabulous hand-made name badges, thanks to new volunteer Susan.

## Huda writes about Easter

I am fasting for 50 days. I don't eat meat, eggs, sweet food or milk or cheese. I eat fruit, vegetables, oil, fish and lentils. I drink tea, water and juice.

I prepare Arabic food – chicken and potatoes and rice. I prepare ma'amul and cake at home. I cook eggs and I colour them. I buy baklava and chocolate eggs.

On 17 April, all children carry candles in church. Syrian Easter is on 24 April. We visit my neighbour from Sudan. I give my neighbour sweets and chocolate eggs.

I am happy at Easter.

## I come from

*A Poem by Menna*

I come from a big flat with my family in Egypt,

With a balcony for drying clothes.

I come from playing chase with my little sister and playing cards all the time with my friends.

I come from eating rice, chicken, meat, pasta with sauce, and fruit.

My favourite food is prawns because they are delicious.

At school I chatted with my friends and ate nice cheese sandwiches.

I come from drawing beautiful flowers and colouring them in.

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## Music For Connection in Stanmer Park

Ellie tells us about a fun day out



On Thursday 10 March, a group of us from MEP took part in a **Music for Connection** workshop in Stanmer Park.



Bella Emerson and Bethan Prosser led us on a walking tour and as we strolled through the trees and gardens, we were encouraged to listen to the sounds around us as well as create some of our own.

We didn't know what to expect and initially I think we were all a bit nervous, but it turned out to be a fantastic experience for everyone. We closed our eyes to listen to the birds singing - we heard the gentle chatter of people near us, the wind in the trees, a plane overhead. We made paper cones to

focus in on specific sounds like the rattle of a seed pod or the ripples of the water on the pond. We collected sticks to create our own percussion ensemble, taking it in turns to conduct our new troupe! It was a lot of fun whilst being a calm, peaceful and quite meditative session.



A lot of us in the group had never been to Stanmer Park so it was great to find out that we can take the bus there and it's free for everyone. We finished with lunch at the Open Market on London Road and all left keen to do it again!

**Thank you very much to Music for Connection for a wonderful day out.**

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Congratulations to **Huda** who as Henna artist in residence at Atelier by the Sea will be doing Henna tattoos and teaching a class on Sudanese wedding Henna from 6-8 May. More information on this website: <https://atelierbrighton.co.uk/pages/henna-artist-in-residence-supported-by-bee-hive>



## **Samira's day out at Funplex**

On 16 January, my friend organised a party for her son at Funplex and she invited me and my son Mahan. Mahan is nearly nine years old. We were celebrating the third birthday of her son, Liam. Another friend of mine, Azita, also came with her son who is the same age as Mahan. Liam's grandparents also came and some English friends. There were seven adults and eight children.



The children loved Funplex. They played Hide and Seek (my son's favourite game), they played on the slides and on the climbing frames. They also enjoyed getting the sort of tattoos that wash off. Funplex provides food for the children (chicken nuggets, fish and chips, pasta and ice cream). My friend and I sat on the chairs and talked, drank coffee and ate sandwiches which my friend had made. My friend and I played on the slides too and made the children laugh. We stayed from 2pm until 6pm. Liam's mum paid for the booking. I paid for extra drinks for my son.

It was a great outing and I recommend it to other parents. Funplex is on Auckland Drive and we went on the number 48 bus.

Samira's son Mahan at Funplex

## **My Life in the UK**

*By Riba*

I wake up at 8 o'clock every morning. I have a shower and I go to the kitchen where I sometimes fry eggs and tomatoes in butter for breakfast. After breakfast I drink some coffee with a dash of milk. I look at my schedule to see if I have appointments. I get dressed and start my day, maybe going to the Job Centre, which I do fortnightly, or the GP whom I usually see once a month.

I come back to my home where I have lunch, sometimes chicken fried with salt, garlic, paprika, chillies, onions, chopped tomatoes, celery, carrots, aubergine and lemon, accompanied by boiled rice. I don't eat dinner. When I eat my lunch I like to watch Netflix, maybe a movie like "Wanted" or a drama about life in England about 50 years ago. I like the way the women dressed then and the way that they chose their men and married them. I watched many of these films during covid lockdown.

In the evening I read a Farsi story book. I really like the story about the life of a maid of Cleopatra, the queen of Ancient Egypt, because it feels so authentic. Ancient Egyptian monarchs often married their siblings and Queen Cleopatra was no exception because she married her disabled brother. He tried to take power away from her so she had his throat cut! She was a ruthless woman. She was very interested in snakes and eventually killed herself with one.

When I first arrived in the UK about seven years ago I felt fit and healthy and I loved going swimming. At first I was in Brighton but was later moved to Liverpool where I stayed for about seven months. There I shared a house with people from many different parts of the world. Some were English, others were African, Sri Lankan, Pakistani, Iranian, Algerian and Albanian. We would go walking together, some of us to church and English classes. Whilst there I volunteered at a foodbank. I still keep in touch with my friends from Liverpool and I enjoyed my time there.

*We hope you have enjoyed reading this newsletter. If you have ideas for future editions, or would like to write something, please contact Susan, at the Sewing Group.*