

What is Emmaus?

Founded 60 years ago this year, in Paris, by a French Resistance priest called Abbé Pierre, Emmaus works with those who find themselves homeless or marginalised.

Today the Emmaus Movement numbers more than 300 secular, working communities across the world, under the umbrella of Emmaus International, offering home, support, companionship and hope to its residents. Most communities earn their living by operating recycling and re-use businesses, collecting items that others are discarding, refurbishing them and reselling to the public.

Emmaus is a valuable, innovative addition to the network of provision for those who are homeless as it offers a return to a working environment whilst living in a supportive community setting. Whilst communities need both financial and material support to establish themselves, the

aim is always to achieve financial self sufficiency within a set timeframe.

Emmaus in the UK

The first community in the UK was Emmaus Cambridge, founded in 1992, it now has 29 Companions [residents] and specialises in working with those who have alcohol or illicit drug addictions. Communities are free of alcohol and drugs, all Companions 'sign off' from primary benefits and work 40 hours per week in the Community business. In return they are given good quality accommodation, all meals, clothes, support and a weekly allowance. As of today [May '09] the UK has 19 member Communities and many more groups working towards establishing Emmaus in their area.

Emmaus in the USA

At present the USA has one member Community, 'H.O.M.E', in Orland, Maine, established in 1970, and a newer fledgling



Above: Emmaus Cambridge was the first Community to open in the UK

community, White Oak, in Jacksonville, North Carolina. White Oak have applied for trial membership status of EI. Other than these 2 projects Emmaus has not had the opportunity to establish itself widely in the USA.

The Pathfinder Project

The Pathfinder proposal is setting out to raise the profile of the existing Emmaus work in the States, allow an exchange of ideas and information between existing projects and Emmaus and then to inspire and enthuse people to encourage them to support the existing work and to continue networking and provide potential for further growth.

We have approached dozens of Rotary clubs and organisations working with the homeless communities, along the route, to ask them if we might have the opportunity to talk with them during the 3 month period of the trip. We are still working on building the itinerary so if you have not yet heard from us, you are on the Eastern Seaboard of the US and you would like to be involved, or have more information, please speak to Paul or Jane Bain via the contacts on the back page.



Above: Members of the Emmaus Cambridge Community enjoy a bracing seaside walk

Existing Work in the USA

Emmaus H.O.M.E. Maine

Founded in 1970 the H.O.M.E. community was originally a craft cooperative. It now consists of the craft shop; several night shelters; health clinic; soup kitchen; food bank; teaching centre; sawmill and shingle mill and housing construction team to name but a few.

'H.O.M.E.' is a member of Emmaus International.



White Oak Community

The White oak community is a new, fledgling project, founded in 2007, and based near Maysville in North Carolina. It has applied to Emmaus International for trial member status and is being mentored by Emmaus Cambridge in the UK.

For the first 3 weeks of the Pathfinder trip we will be staying with White Oak to help them establish a coffee shop/information point in Jacksonville in order to raise awareness and provide some income.



Above: Tim Ames and Emily Anderson from White Oak

Left: The White Oak Community

“It’s the self-respect, the dignity that’s so important; you feel as though you’ve been put back together again.”

An Emmaus Companion

How it all began

The first Emmaus Community was founded in Paris in 1949 by Abbé Pierre, a Catholic priest, who was horrified at the number of homeless people on the streets of Paris.

One night, a man called Georges was brought to Abbé Pierre. Georges had been released after a 20 year prison sentence. Rejected by his family, homeless and despairing, he tried to commit suicide in the Seine.

Abbé Pierre did not offer Georges sympathy. Instead he asked for his help. 'If you are really determined to kill yourself, I can't stop you. But before you do, think of the homeless mothers who come to me in tears because of the conditions in which their children have to live. If I am to help them, I can't do it on my own.'

Abbé Pierre, helped by Georges and others, began to build temporary homes for those in need, first in his own garden, then

wherever land could be bought or scrounged.

When they ran out of money, these first Companions refused to allow Abbé Pierre to appeal for money. Instead they became 'rag pickers', collecting things that people no longer wanted and selling them on.

And so the fundamental Emmaus ethos of rebuilding self-esteem and dignity through working together to help others in greater need was developed.



Above: Abbé Pierre (3rd from left) with members of Emmaus Coventry & Warwickshire in October 1996



'Whatever else he might have given me – money, home, somewhere to work – I'd have still tried to kill myself. What I was missing, and what he offered, was something to live for.'

Georges

All the contact details you might need...

Emmaus Cambridge, UK

Paul and Jane Bain
www.emmauscambidge.org
support@emmauscambidge.org
janebain1957@hotmail.com
Tel: 00 44 [0]1223 863657
Fax: 00 44 [0]1223 862676
Paul mobile: 07776147187
Jane mobile: 07768555968

Emmaus UK

www.emmaus.org.uk
contact@emmaus.org.uk
Tel: 00 44 [0]1223 576103
Fax: 00 44 [0]1223 576203

Emmaus International

www.emmaus-international.org
contact@emmaus-international.org

White Oak in NC

Penny Ames
2425 Belgrade-Swansboro Rd.
MAYSVILLE, NC28555
emmauswhiteoak@gmail.com

'H.O.M.E.' Community, ME

P.O. Box 10, ORLAND, ME04472
info@homecoop.net