

The Co-operative Party
Exeter & Devon Branch Newsletter

Secretary: Saxon Spence
Tel: 01392 271785

1 Lancaster Close, Exeter, EX2 5SW.
e-mail: smspence@phonecoop-coop

Issue 4

February, 2012

Branch News:

We are delighted to be hosting Devon's Fairtrade visitors who this year are Sher and Roshan Gazi from North Pakistan. These are some brief details of Sher's background and it will be very interesting to listen to his and his wife's experience of the benefits of Fairtrade:

"Sher Ghazi, General Manager, Mountain Fruits (Pvt.) Ltd, Pakistan

Sher Ghazi, CEO of Mountain Fruits Ltd, will be visiting Devon during Fairtrade Fortnight 2012 to share his experiences of Fairtrade and how it works for fruit and nut growing communities in Pakistan. Sher Ghazi was born in the town of Hunza in the Karakoram Mountains of Northern Pakistan. After graduating in food technology he joined the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) in 1990 as a Project Forester, later becoming a Project Agriculturist. AKRSP is a charitable foundation which works to improve the livelihoods of people living in the higher areas of the Karakoram Mountains in the north of Pakistan. As an orchard owner and fruit grower himself, Sher wanted to find a way to improve the livelihoods of poor farming communities in the mountains. He decided to research the potential for the production and marketing of high quality dried apricots and other fruits to take advantage of the abundant fruit grown in the area. AKRSP accepted Sher's proposal to train farmers in the production of high quality fruit for processing, which in turn led to the establishment of the Mountain Fruits Company."

Exeter & Devon Co-operative Party
Fairtrade Fortnight
Sher and Roshan Ghazi
of Mountain Fruits, North Pakistan
Fairtrade Apricot Producers

7.45 pm, MONDAY, 28th February
Exeter Labour Hall, 26B Clifton Hill, Exeter.

Followed by Fairtrade refreshments
7.00 – Branch AGM

Members of the branch enjoyed a very interesting and informative weekend school at Brunel Manor in January which focussed on the international importance of co-operatives: **3 billion people throughout the world secure their livelihood through co-operatives and 75% of Fairtrade goods are produced by co-operatives.** We learned about the part co-operatives could play in regenerating this country's economy, the contribution the Co-operative Group was making to celebrate this significant year, and what we could do politically.

All those attending were asked what their contribution would be using the extra 24 hours' available to us in leap year. One result is that Saxon Spence and Richard Westlake, Labour and Co-operative county councillors, are asking Devon County Council to use the opportunities of this year to support young people and Devon's hard-pressed communities. Devon Labour Group's proposal is:

“That Devon County council welcomes the opportunities offered by this year's UN International Year of Co-operatives to encourage the development of co-operatives which:

- **Respond to social change, are resilient to the economic crisis and are serious, successful businesses;**
- **Solve problems by creating jobs in all sectors putting sustainability before risks and profits;**
- **Provide person-centred solutions owned by their members;**

as part of its programme to help young people find employment and stimulate the economy in hard pressed areas of Devon.”

The Group is also asking the County council to use an extra £250,000 from reserves to back this initiative, support apprenticeships and programmes for NEETS (young people not in employment, education or training).

Please ask your local county councillor to support these co-operative proposals.

Membership Subscriptions are now due

If you do not pay by direct debit, the annual fee is now £20 and for unwaged members £12 payable at our next meeting, or to Paul Bull, Membership Secretary, Ted Duley, Treasurer, or by post to Saxon Spence, 1 Lancaster Place, Exeter, EX2 5SW,

If you pay by direct debt you will receive your membership card for 2012 by post. This is the easiest way to renew your membership and I can let you have the necessary form..
The unwaged rate, however, is only payable locally.