



Hanwell Friends of Sabastiya

هانول أصدقاء سبسطية "حفصة"

In this issue: News from Sabastiya, a write-up of our Oranges Zoom, upcoming events and a charming e-visit to Sabastiya on YouTube

HAFSA Spring Bulletin



Spring in Sabastiya

We wish all our Muslim friends Ramadan Mubarak

A Word from the Chair

The month of Ramadan started on April 12th and, as in previous years, HAFSA will be providing food parcels to disadvantaged families. Covid has meant that

many have lost their jobs and more parcels are needed this year. We have included meat as the price has gone through the roof and many have not been able to afford it. Please see below more details about this project and how you can donate to this effort.

On April 6th the Mayor of Sabastiya was assaulted by settlers whilst trying to protect a young boy from being abducted. He is ok, but Israeli settlers have intensified their presence at the archaeological sites of Sabastiya. They come accompanied by the Israeli army who close the roads to villagers and shoot tear gas, sound bombs and rubber bullets. There is a fear that a new illegal Israeli settlement will soon be established there.

Sabastiya lost one of its last remaining Christian citizens, Sami Dababneh, who died at the age of 55 due to Covid.



Sami was buried in the cemetery of his fathers and grandfathers in front of the church of the beheading of John the Baptist, which was built according to the text of the Bible in the eighth century BC at the time of King Omari.

The British-Palestinian filmmaker, Farah Nabulsi's short film '[The Present](#)' won the award for Best Short Film 2021 on Saturday, 10th of April at the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA). The film tells the story of Yousef (played by Saleh Bakri) taking his young daughter to buy a wedding anniversary gift for his wife in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. You can watch it on Netflix. Highly recommended!

The Britain Palestine Friendship and Twinning Network held its annual conference on Zoom on March 6th 2021. Cathie Bjarnason represented HAFSA and gave a short talk. [Click here](#) to download the BPFTN illustrated report of their event.

With the restrictions easing, we hope to have more stalls and events. Please see under the Events section for further details including our next Zoom which promises to be very stimulating. Register soon as places are filling up fast.

And finally, **don't miss the charming Sabastiya video** at the end of this Bulletin.

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**Donate for Ramadan Food Parcels and
Eid Gifts for children and special needs
adults**

Ramadan Food Parcels Appeal

HAFSA - Hanwell Friends of Sabastiya in Palestine



This Ramadan, we want to provide enough food for the most vulnerable to eat during Iftar (opening fast) and Suhoor (pre-dawn meal) throughout the holy month of Ramadan.

No one should go hungry, and especially not during the blessed month of Ramadan. We need your support to provide food to a small community in Palestine, all living under the weight of military occupation.

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit hard everywhere in the world but has mostly doubled the amount of people suffering from acute poverty in countries like Palestine.

Each food parcel generally contains rice, meat, oil, lentils, and flour and costs at around £33 per food parcel. In addition, we try to make sure that all the produce is sourced locally to help locals.

Use your privilege to help the underprivileged by donating directly to HAFSA account

You can also donate your Sadaqa and Zakat and we will ensure that it is distributed accordingly.

Donate by bank:
Account No: 65449004
Sort code: 08-92-99

Donate by cheque:
HAFSA Treasurer
5 Rockford Ave,
Perivale, UB6 8AH

Donate via
website:
www.hafsa.org.uk

We thank you all for the support to HAFSA through your memberships and generous donations.

Will you renew your HAFSA membership for 2021?

Thank you to all who have renewed their membership for 2021. If you have not done so yet, please see below how to pay. It only costs £10!

- **bank transfer** Co-op Bank : Acc no:65449004 Sort code: 08 92 99 (our preferred mode)
- **online** by clicking [here!](#) (by card or PayPal)
- **cheque** payable to HAFSA and sent to our HAFSA Treasurer: Deborah Conolly, 5 Rockford Avenue, Perivale, UB6 8AH

- **and** if you are able, we would be very happy if you would set up a **standing order** with your bank to our account.

With sincere thanks
Stay safe and keep well

HAFSA Committee

Oranges - from then until now

A report on our Zoom event by Maria Roe

The evening began with an update on the **HAFSA Orange Tree project** by Abu Yasser. Sabastiya is the first West Bank village to plant the Yaffa orange trees in farms, streets, schools, cafes etc.



The trees (which are all of the traditional Palestinian Shamouti variety) are growing well and already in bloom. Families and children have ‘adopted’ trees close to their homes and are taking care of them. Orange trees have always been an important symbol of Palestinian culture and were once even considered to be featured on the Palestinian flag. Prior to the Nakba of 1948, Palestine exported 5 million boxes of Yaffa oranges worldwide.

Developed by Palestinian farmers, Yaffa orange trees come with lots of advantages - they need very little care, are resistant to insects, attract honeybees and, of course, produce delicious, sweet oranges!

Mou’ness, a part-time farmer and veterinary student, talked about **farming in Sabastiya** and his organic farm where he grows orange and olive trees, plus a variety of vegetables in a greenhouse. He is also a bee-keeper and the bees are attracted to the orange trees which give their honey a distinctive flavour. Mou’ness explained that farming is seen as a part-time job by most young people who can earn more working in towns or in Israel, so farming is seen as

supplementary to that income. However, village farms help people to be self-sufficient in terms of food and, most importantly, guard the land against annexation. Some farmers now have sheep, and the village produces its own yoghurt and cheese which can be sold to other villages.

Elizabeth Scott from the Northampton Al-Bireh (Palestine) Friendship Association (NABPFA) talked about a [**new gardening blog available in both English and Arabic**](#), a project created by volunteers of NABPFA. It enables gardeners from the UK and Palestine to share ideas and is also a way of linking people and increasing awareness about the struggles faced by Palestinians. [Elizabeth](#) is keen to hear from anyone who would be interested in posting on the blog.

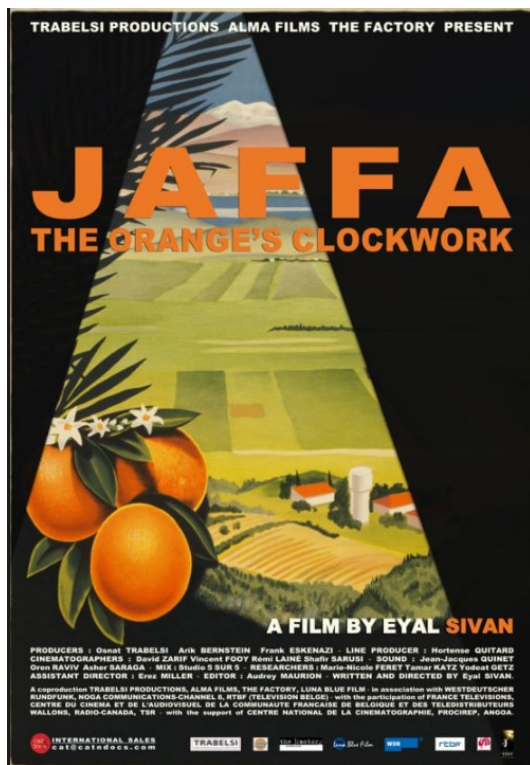
Mou'ness confirmed that the seeds used on his organic farm were of Palestinian origin. Abu Yasser spoke about the importance of lemons in Palestinian cooking and how every family has at least one lemon tree in their garden.

We discussed how we might help farmers to stay on their land. Abu Yasser was clear that the focus needs to be on what the farms need rather than the farmers. Greenhouses, fencing, and water are expensive. Although Sabastiya is better off in term of water resources than other villages, thanks to natural springs, in summer there can be shortages and water tanks have to be bought.

This raised the importance of ***developing a grey water recycling system in Sabastiya***. Qabiyah village near Ramallah is now re-cycling 60% of its water. Abu Yasser informed us that there is a project afoot, by a German company, to start a grey water system which will support 7 villages including Sabastiya.

The remainder of the evening focused on discussing the documentary film [**Jaffa, the Orange's Clockwork by Eyal Sivan**](#), which we highly recommend.

There was an overwhelming feeling within the group of anger and sadness at how the orange groves were stolen by Israel and at the Palestinians' expulsion from their towns and villages. The film reflected well how older people, be they Muslim, Christian or Jew, could recall how life used to be, how well people worked together before the creation of the Zionist state. Religion was not an issue - often people didn't even know the religion of their co-workers



as it would have been considered impolite to enquire.

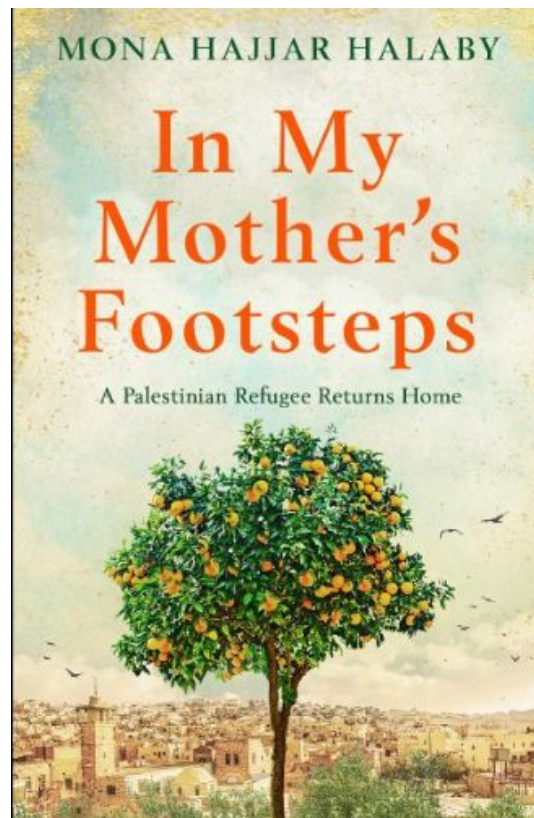
They were united by the commonalities they shared, rather than dwelling on the differences in their religious beliefs. The group agreed that ***Re-claiming the Jaffa*** was a very appropriate title for our HAFSA orange project.

EVENTS - DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

HAFSA Zoom - Thursday 29 April 7.30pm - In conversation with Mona Hajjar Halaby

Mona will present her soon to be published book: **"In My Mother's Footsteps. A Palestinian Refugee Returns Home"** [to register please click here](#)

"In My Mother's Footsteps" is a moving and heart-rending journey of a daughter discovering her roots and recovering her mother's beloved past. It's also an intimate and tender account of daily life for Palestinians as never seen before. For fans of *The Bookseller of Kabul* and *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*.



Brentford Market Sunday 9th May 11-2pm, Market Place TW8 8AH in front of the old Magistrates Court



We will have our usual HAFSA stall at this lively market and you can buy our cards (suitable for all occasion as they are blank inside) , the traditional black and white, pure cotton, keffiyehs made in Hebron, Monika's best-selling masks, Zaytoun produce, bric a brac, and much more! You can also purchase these by phoning **Cathie on: 07875 470183** or **Marjorie for Zaytoun: 07960 804650**

Garage Sale - Sunday 4th July, 5 Cardiff Road W7 This fund-raising event follows on from the great success of last year's event - more details to come

Summer Hafleh (Party) - Sunday August 1st We hope to gather again this year by the river in Brentford. More details nearer the date

Hanwell Carnival - Saturday 21st August, Elthorne Park, Hanwell We will have our usual stall from 12 noon

Last but not least

Take a look at the video from a series on YouTube called **Teta's Kitchen** which takes you to Sabastiya for 20 minutes, showing the splendour of Sabastiya, its olive oil, and how to cook Musakhan with Umm Mohamad and Umm Yasser.



PS *Teta* is an affectionate way of saying *grandmother* in Arabic.

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