



## Quaker Voluntary Action (QVA) work & worship retreat 8-15 April 2008

14 people took part in the event, some for 3 days, others for longer. A good team was quickly formed and a huge amount of work was done during this very full week. At the beginning it rained a lot, but that helped to soften the ground! During the week there was plenty of plenty of sunshine and some beautiful starlit evenings which were spent singing round a big fire in the garden.

The graveyard was cleared of weeds and brush and almost all the bamboo roots were dug up by Christine. Four other huge, dead bushes were dug out by Gela with the help of Jasmine. Gela created lively sculptures of animals with these roots.

Franco acted as a specialist in pruning the olive trees and (with the help of Mike and others) he cleared the whole length of the wall alongside the road and around the ramp up to the car park. Mary fed the fire which was burning almost continuously to burn leaves and branches. She also created a very colourful woven picture (see right) reflecting the spirit of the retreat, which we have kept at the Centre.



Chris, who paid the cost of the materials used, cleared the entrance area and laid further white gravel there (Mike, Dennis and Franco were apparently supposed to replace water piping and a drain in the garden). Chris also offered us money for lovely flagstones to make a terrace outside the meeting room (after a major effort to remove old bushes by Melvin and Joannah) and Jacqueline then offered us a table and chairs there with a parasol – a 'garden room', and she surrounded the terrace with thyme which envelops you in scent when you walk over it.

Under Jasmine's supervision, various people did wonders with the catering, and we were very well fed.

After the meetings for worship, Jasmine led retreat sessions each morning and afternoon. These set a tone of harmony and unity of relationships throughout the whole group, expressed in the energy and enthusiasm of the working sessions, and in a wonderful atmosphere.

The Centre and all its members want to say thank you to Jasmine, to QVA and to all those who took part in this successful week.

Congénies, 6 June 2008