

# West Waffle

September 2005

Issue 26

## Editor's notes.

### Shirley Stark

Hope you have all had a good summer and survived the grandchildren's visits! I wish I had their energy! Anyway the computer is still working after all the sticky fingers played their complicated games. I didn't do as well as my four year old twin granddaughters!

Next Waffle will be the Christmas(!) issue. Copy by end of November please.

## Regional Coordinator's Notes

### Bob Maggs

#### New Organisers

We are delighted to welcome the following new Organisers.

**Ann Norbury** is replacing Richard West as the Practice Manager at the Spence Group in Bishopston, Bristol and will take over the running of the RSVP Surgery Support Group

**Jill Gamlin** has agreed to become a Knitting Group Organiser (under Maureen Miners' guidance) in the Weston-super-Mare area

**Brian Hale** and his 16-strong **Failand Volunteer Drivers** scheme has joined RSVP, thanks to discussions with Vic Rawlings about the benefits – insurance and fellowship!

#### **Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Checks**

In most cases when CRB checks are required, we ask the receiving 'client' (eg school, health centre) to carry out the processing. In the not too distant future, RSVP will be in a position to handle the checks itself. If you have any situation where this might help, please let me know.

#### Funding

The Friends of RSVP West Region charity is up and running and has received its first donation, from Wessex Water. If you know of any possible sources of funds in your local area, PLEASE let me know.

Many thanks once again for your incredibly worthwhile efforts. Here's to a pleasant Autumn

## European Network of Older Volunteer Organisations (ENOV)

### Shirley Stark

For some years RSVP have been very involved in ENOV, led by Gordon Rattray. The objective is to provide an opportunity for understanding some innovative older volunteer activities in European Countries and determining if volunteer organisation in the UK can provide useful information and assistance to organisations in other European Countries working with older volunteer.

As it is the Year of the Volunteer, it has been decided to hold a conference/workshop at the Create Centre in Bristol on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> November. The objective is to provide an opportunity for representatives from European older volunteering organisations, particularly those from countries which have recently joined the European Union, to work with their counterparts from the UK to initiate and develop areas for better understanding and learn about the opportunities for older volunteers to benefit from and contribute to civil society. The conference will start at 14.30 on the 14<sup>th</sup> November and finish at 12.30 on the 15<sup>th</sup>.

We are hoping to receive delegates from Ireland, France, Czech Republic, Estonia, Spain, Italy and Germany. If you are interested in learning more and perhaps attending, please contact Shirley Stark on 0117 9293953. We shall certainly need help at the time.

## Knitting

### Maureen Milner

The Clevedon group has been knitting steadily over the summer, and are delighted to have found a new outlet for their products. Jo Stebbing, a local parishioner of Christ Church, Clevedon, is currently teaching English at an International school in Brasov, in Romania. On the same street as the school is an orphanage and a mother and baby unit, both of which are over the moon with the knitwear that has travelled direct to Jo by way of the church's evangelical transport company. Members of the Clevedon group met Jo on her home leave and enjoyed videos about her work and pictures of the kids in Clevedon-made jumpers.

In the meantime, Frances and Brian Piper, our CWUHA convoy associates in Bristol for the past couple of years, have become RSVP members and now knit with the Clevedon Group.

We are delighted to have a new organiser in Weston-super-Mare. Jill Gamlin is a parish assistant at St Johns, W-s-M, and joined RSVP

## Janet Atfield OBE

We were very sad to learn of the sudden death of Janet Atfield. Janet was there at the beginning of RSVP leading us with her inspiration and enthusiasm. She had a magical talent of getting people to volunteer for all sorts of things - you just didn't say "no" to Janet!!

In her youth she attended Redland High School and later Bristol University - she had some very amusing tales to tell about her time at the latter! Janet was always very happy to come back to Bristol and support us in our various events. Although she retired from RSVP at the end of 1999 she still continued her interest and work in volunteering. Janet will be greatly missed.

after the Big Knit broadcasts in March. Jill's parish work takes her to the homes of many older parishioners, and she saw the knitting group as possibly providing a new interest. With twenty knitters signed up, Weston is ready for the off!

So the West Region groups are continuing to proliferate – Shirley (who has nothing else to do!) is handling the City of Bristol; Jill Gamlin is in Weston, Jill Squier's group in Ruishden is growing steadily in the south of the area and Chris Biggs has agreed to be the central collection point in Wells. As for Maureen in Clevedon, her own group has just divided into Clevedon North and Clevedon South, as their present meeting room is not large enough to accommodate the membership. Who said knitting is a dying art?

### Bristol & Area Knitters

#### Shirley Stark

What a busy lot you are! I did enjoy meeting several of you during my "collection rally" recently. Sorry I couldn't spend more time chatting but I had persuaded a certain young man to be my navigator so couldn't keep him waiting too long, although he was very patient. Without him, I would still be pouring over the Bristol Map even now. I visited houses in Hengrove, Southmead, Pucklechurch, Horfield, Downend – just to name a few. I was very impressed with the quality of the knitting and the amount. There are going to be lot of children cuddling their Trauma Teds and premature babies snug in their tiny garments.

I am meeting with Maureen shortly to decide who will benefit the most from all your hard work. Will keep you advised. Looking forward to hearing from you when you have a nice lot to collect. 0117 9293953

### Having Fun in School

#### Patrick Williams

There are many RSVP volunteers working in schools around the country and a lot of those volunteers have written about their experiences. I thought I would add to those stories with one of my own, illustrating how one can be enticed into many unexpected areas of activity, which I'm sure is well known to many.

My current school life started a few years ago when I learned from Sheila Parsons, the then CSV Volunteer Manager in Swindon (title may not be quite accurate), that the Head of a local primary school was looking for people to help with a support group he was setting up to aid and support a primary school in a deprived area of Nairobi, the Prodigal (now Desai) Primary School, about which I have written previously. It wasn't long before I was 'volunteered' as Treasurer of the group, which was just a small part of the many activities and tasks that I got involved with. Then I was invited to become a governor of the school, which role will also be familiar to many, and after a year or two, learning the job, found myself chairing the group. This, I quickly found, was quite a different kettle of fish. The first thing was being handed a number of box files, which should have been a warning. But I was quite unprepared for the deluge of paper that soon started to descend on me and has continued, in growing volume, ever since, from the DfES, the Local Education Authority, Governor Support, Ofsted and others.

In the meantime, I thought I should share the experience that schools volunteers enjoy and get into the classroom. This is the best part of

the job, being involved with the children. Helping with reading is particularly rewarding and amongst other things helping with the science lesson is great fun, like using 'modrock' to create a plaster cast of the hand or build a figure based on a wire frame. When it comes to the painting of those figures is the time to take cover!

Extra curricular activities are a little different, such as manning the Bouncy Castle at the summer fair or playing Santa Claus at the Christmas Fair. The perspicacity of some of the kids is quite unbelievable, when there you are, dressed in costume, hiding behind a great white beard and the young rascals greet you with a nonchalant; 'Hello Mr Williams', and stroll on! Perhaps I've been there too long.

Recently took a couple of mini-busloads of children to RAF Lyneham to meet an English Electric Canberra belonging to 39 Photographic Squadron, flying down from Marham to meet the kids. This as part of an ongoing relationship between the squadron and the school whereby small groups of airmen visit the school from time to time to help in various ways, such as joining RSVP volunteers in planting trees and laying out a new memorial garden at the back of the school. They've also provided football kit for both the boy's and girl's teams. But, back to Lyneham, where the children were taken out onto the tarmac in successive groups to have a close look at the Canberra, which, by the way, was built more than forty years ago, originally as a bomber.

They were fascinated to see the nose of the aircraft, swung back to reveal the photographer's position; very remote, very cramped and extremely cold when flying at the aircraft's maximum operating height. Afterwards, during a question and answer session, we were informed by the flight commander that this ceiling was 55,000 feet, compared with the normal height at which most airliners fly, that is, 32,000 feet.

On the way in I had identified for the children a number of the aircraft that were parked on the tarmac, including a Bristol Bulldog, a small two-seater. During questions, one of our bright sparks jumped up and asked the flight commander if a Bulldog could fly as high as a Canberra. I think the F/C was a little taken

aback at this question from a young nine year old but quickly recovered to reply that it could only fly to 20,000 feet.

The Summer holiday brings a long break but soon after school re-starts I have agreed to accompany, with others, a group of children for a week's activities at an adventure camp on the south coast.

What have I done??

### Fit for a King - RSVP Arts & Craft Exhibition

#### Shirley Stark

The West Region had three winners in the recent judging of this event. Congratulations to Vic Rawlings for his matchstick caravan, M Walsh for his marquetry picture and Joan Hawkins for her tapestry.

The presentation of certificates took place on Sunday 18th September at the Olympia Hilton Hotel in London. Unfortunately the reception that had been planned for the 8th August at Hampton Court had to be cancelled due to the terrible events in London the day before.

#### Amusing Anagrams

ASTRONOMER - MOON STAR

PRESBYTERIAN – BEST IN PRAYER

DESPERATION – A ROPE ENDS IT

THE EYES – THEY SEE

THE MORSE CODE- HERE COME THE DOTS

SLOT MACHINES- CASH LOST IN ME

MOTHER-IN-LAW – WOMAN HITLER

A DECIMAL POINT – I'M A DOT IN PLACE