



RE Centres Southern Regional Group

www.recentres.org.uk

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Having just returned from Wells and Glastonbury from an excellent summer conference (more in this issue), I am hurriedly trying to catch up on work before the summer holidays ... and six weeks off! Many thanks to Sue Bloomfield for organising the conference so ably, and to all those who managed to squeeze two days out of their hectic work schedules to attend - it was good to see so many of you.



A number of changes to members' centres are coming up. I met Karen Woodhouse at the **BFSS National RE Centre** recently who is in the sad position of disposing of all their resources by the end of July. I wished her and Lynne Broadbent all the best for the future. Joanna Bailey is retiring from **All Saints Resource Centre**, Bristol. The **Suffolk Christian Resource Library** is moving to Bury St Edmunds whilst Shirley Nicholls will stay in Ipswich to run the Revelations Bookshop. Mary Hawes (**London Diocese Resource Centre**) takes up her new post as National Children's Adviser for the Church of England. More about Joanna, Shirley and Mary can be found on page 4.

Chris Boxley retired from teaching at the end of the summer term, but will continue to run the **Midhurst & Petworth RS Centre**. Chris hopes to remain in contact and to be one of our representatives on the RE Council. Sue Bloomfield and I will also be joining him at the next meeting of the RE Council in November.

Our thanks again to those who continue their work to support the Group - to Sue Bloomfield (membership and subscriptions), Gillian Hunt (accounts), Ian Knight (newsletters) and Heather Collins (minutes of business meetings). Their efficiency and generosity with their time makes my job as chair a straightforward one.

I look forward to seeing you in November at the meeting in Abingdon. It sounds as if it will be a full and interesting day, as always.

With best wishes

Lydia

NOVEMBER MEETING

Wednesday 8 November
10.30 am—3.30 pm
Godly Play Room, Abingdon



**A talk on Persona
Dolls
with Carolyn Wright**
(Gloucester Diocesan RE
Resource Centre)

**Latest news on the
new National RE
Centre
with John Gay**
(Culham Institute)



**Plus:
Report on the RE Council meeting
Another chance to visit
the Godly Play Room
Christmas Resources
Bookstall**

Coffee, lunch and tea provided

Please let Ian know by Wednesday 1
November if you would like to come.

Banbury Area RE Centre

It is now about a year since we first heard of the Community Development Fund Grants. It was worth a try to see if we could get Government funding for the work we have been doing, so with some excitement (and trepidation) our Appeals Officer sent off for the application forms. It's the first time I have been involved in costing our work but with very helpful guidelines we put together a bid (somewhat modest in retrospect) and were delighted to hear in February this year that we were successful. Our work is monitored by quarterly returns but I do recommend anyone wanting to start some inter-faith or community development work to have a go for it. I understand grants will be available again this year and successful recipients from the last round are encouraged to apply again. The address is Community Development Foundation Faith Communities Capacity Building Fund The Michael Young Centre Purbeck Road, Cambridge CB2 2HN Tel: 01223 400341



Our plans are well under way for a new series of inter-faith discussion evenings during the Autumn and Spring and a celebration evening at the end of One World Week. It's lovely to know that funds are there to cover our work.

One other piece of good news I should like to share with others is that following an order placed with Hodder Murray I was invoiced for the full amount (previously we had enjoyed 50% discount). A phone call put me in touch with the rep for the area and after a very fruitful conversation I received delivery of a super parcel of books all aimed at delivering RE in school: it was an area I was desperate to resource. Needless to say the invoice said "gratis". I love that word!

Thanks to Sue Bloomfield for arranging for publishers to be at Wells RE Centre. I made contact with several publishers and received a visit from the Evans rep - one free book and a good discount. That's what I like!

Gillian Hunt



Bridget Down (left) at the start of the labyrinth

Wednesday 5th

The group met initially at The Old Deanery in Wells and after a warm welcome from Maureen Bollard, Acting Director of Education, we were shown around the Resource Centre by Sue Bloomfield. It was an opportunity to see how things are done in other RE Centres.

We were then treated to an excellent display and variety of resources from various publishers and producers of RE material, which stimulated a great deal of interest. Some material was very familiar but much was new and exciting. It was an opportunity to make contact with representatives and producers and see the latest publications. The freebies were very welcome!

After lunch, Jackie Waters-Dewhurst, Schools Adviser, led a session entitled *What do RE teachers want from your Centre?* As an ex-teacher, Jackie put the case for the teacher, conveying an idea of what life is like in a primary school. Teachers have many commitments and are required to teach a subject for which they have very little training and about which they may know very little. We were asked to allocate various words and phrases to the appropriate faith. Personally, I discovered I knew rather less than I thought!

www.christianmarketplace.org.uk

Website tip from Shirley - An invaluable resource, with the latest and up and coming resources, plus news of publishers, bookshops, reps etc.



Station three of the labyrinth



Saying cheese in the Chapter House



In the herb garden at Glastonbury Abbey

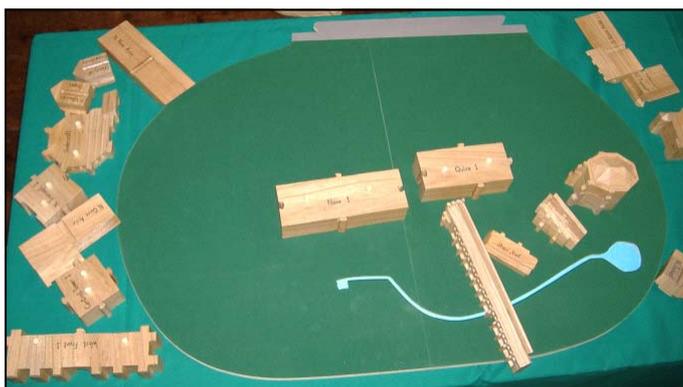
**23rd Annual Conference
5th - 6th July 2006**

Bridget Down, Young Adult Adviser, led the last item of the day. Bridget had devised a labyrinth in ten stages summarising the events of the Old Testament for her work with young people who had very little basic biblical knowledge. We were given time to follow the various stages of a journey beginning with Abraham and his family setting off for the promised land. It ended with God's people settling there and the prophets foretelling the coming of the Messiah.

Finally we made our way to the Ammerdown Centre which is in a beautiful setting with excellent accommodation. Unfortunately the constant rain prevented enjoyment of the lovely surroundings.

An excellent evening meal was followed by the Business Meeting. Possible arrangements for both the 25th Annual Conference (with suggested venues such as Hong Kong and Canada!) and the Autumn Day Conference this year were discussed.

Group members had brought with them various resources from their centres to display. From Gloucester, Jenny and I brought the *Pause for Reflection* pack and *Values for Life* scheme for teaching RE at KS 1 and 2, together with details of a recent course for using Persona Dolls.



Wells Cathedral in building blocks

Thursday 6th

After breakfast on the second day the party visited Wells Cathedral with a tour by the Education Officer from the point of view of primary school children. The very unusual scissor arches, the amazing carvings both inside and outside, the wonderful altar cloths, various artefacts and the famous Wells Clock were admired with great appreciation.

Finally the party visited Glastonbury Abbey, one of the oldest religious foundations in Britain, where at last the sun shone gloriously. There we were shown around by Susan Strong, Education Officer, who provided many interesting facts and figures and included a visit to the Abbot's kitchen and herb garden.

After lunch came thanks and farewells, and an opportunity to explore Glastonbury itself, walk up to the Tor (I don't think anyone actually did this!), see more of the Abbey and return home after an enjoyable, interesting and busy two days.

Sue Hitchings
Gloucester Diocesan RE Resource Centre



A demonstration model of the Wells Astronomical Clock

Shirley's ride to Wells

By chance this year my annual leave coincided with the Conference dates, so the family decided to travel together, me being dropped off at Wells, the others touring around Bristol and then all heading on to South Wales at the end of the Conference.

Up at 4am, away from home by 5.30am (having finally got the younger adults into the car), arrived at the M25 before scheduled time – things were really looking good. The first hold up was at the Dartford Crossing, but, hey ho, it only took us 20 minutes to get through the queues, so we were soon back on track. Pleasant driving, not too hot, not too busy – we'll be in Wells by 11am, no problem! Just a couple of exits to go and it would have been the turn off to the M3 (our chosen Multimap route) then we came to a grinding halt. We sat there for about 10 minutes, people were wandering about on the central crash barrier, three fire engines went tearing past followed by several ambulances and police cars. Then about an hour later it went quiet on the other carriageway. What an eerie sound – nothing. A rescue helicopter circled overhead. This did not look too good. Finally there was an announcement on the



radio to tell us there had been a huge accident. A container lorry was blocking all three lanes and the road wouldn't be open until the next day. What to do for food, what about the loo? Tempers aren't going to remain in holiday spirit very long, are they?

Another hour passed, another announcement – the end of the queue was going to be turned round and diverted the wrong way up the carriageway. How on earth were they going to turn this lot round? Yet another hour later the hard shoulder had been cleared ahead of us and traffic was trickling through – we now hoped we were nearer the front of the queue because the peripheral roads were all blocked. Finally after four hours we began to move slowly ahead. It appeared the crash involved six to eight cars as well. My husband was all uptight because I was going to be late for the Conference. I was driving and had decided long ago that I would get there just as soon as I could and so I was pretty chilled out about the whole deal. After 10 hours on the road I finally walked in to the Old Deanery at 3.30pm. It was well worth the trip. The support and friendship gained over the years in sharing resources and ideas with the others in the Group is not to be found anywhere else. Our Resource Centres all seem to be at different stages, yet we all so often have the same or similar resources to show and share. We always manage to be provided with wonderful accommodation and this summer was exceptional. Our Centres are so diverse, yet at all the Conferences I have attended I have always found whatever we have done or wherever we have visited to be invaluable and useful at some stage of my library career.

I bid you farewell as I move on to pastures new, and wish all in the Group a healthy, happy and fruitful time ahead in your ministry – I shall miss you all.

Shirley Nicholls

Revelations & Suffolk Christian Resource Library

So long, farewell, au revoir, auf wiedersehen!



Congratulations to Mary Hawes (London Diocese Resource Centre) on her appointment as National Children's Officer for the Church of England from September. Running the Resource Centre formed part of Mary's work as Children's Work Adviser for the Diocese of London. In her new role she will be aiming to share good practice on how local churches can develop their work with

under 11s. After training as a teacher, Mary worked as an editor for Scripture Union, before moving to Rochester Cathedral to work as Education & Visits Officer. Mary also serves as a non-stipendiary priest at St Leonard's Church, Streatham.

A huge **thank you** to Mary, Joanna and Shirley for all their contributions to the Group in the past - for hosting conferences, supporting our meetings, being at the other end of the phone with help and advice and to Shirley for her work as Chair. We shall miss you all and send our very best wishes for the future. A warm welcome awaits you should you have the chance to visit any of our centres or come to any of the Group's meetings.

Joanna Bailey (below left) retires this summer from All Saints Resource Centre, Bristol after 15 years of building up the collection and seeing the Diocesan Board of Education join it at the All Saints Centre which many of us visited in 2003 (all that space!) Joanna moves to Oxford for her retirement.



Until now Shirley Nicholls (above right) has juggled with running both the Suffolk Christian Resource Library and the Revelations Bookshop. Her entry in my card index had been carefully annotated to the effect that it was best to try the shop phone number in the morning and the Resource Library in the afternoon. But now with the move of the Resource Library to Bury St Edmunds Shirley will be concentrating on the Bookshop and sadly, leaving our Group.