

RE Centres Southern Regional Group

www.recentres.org.uk

Newsletter no. 21 Autumn 2007

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Letter from the Chair

Having just returned from Guildford and Wintershall from an excellent summer conference (see page 2), I am hurriedly trying to catch up on work before the summer holidays ... and six weeks' off!



Many thanks to all those who managed to squeeze two days out of their hectic work schedules to attend the conference; it was good to see so many of you and hear how things are going at your centres. I hope that the networking opportunities and the recharge of batteries potential meant that we all felt we had gained for the experience, as well as continuing our professional development.

Personally, I found *The Life of Christ* outdoor play enormously stimulating and moving – what RE possibilities! The production, in which Alison Hendy plays a major part, was so impressive – we were, however, very thankful that, on the day we attended, the torrential rains stayed away!

Due to our representation at the RE Council as part of the Federation of National and Regional RE Centres, we are looking to consolidate our position as a national body by contacting RE Centres further north. If anyone has any suggestions for possible new members, please contact Chris Boxley by email on boxley@talktalk.net

After five years' faithful and happy dedicated service as Treasurer, the Group sends a big thank you to Gill Hunt on her retirement. Gill also hosted a very successful conference in 2002 and over the years has contributed and participated in so many ways. I know that we wish her every success in the future, and hope that she will keep in contact with us (see page 2).

I look forward to seeing you in October at the meeting based from here in Winchester. I hope it will be a full and interesting day.

With best wishes

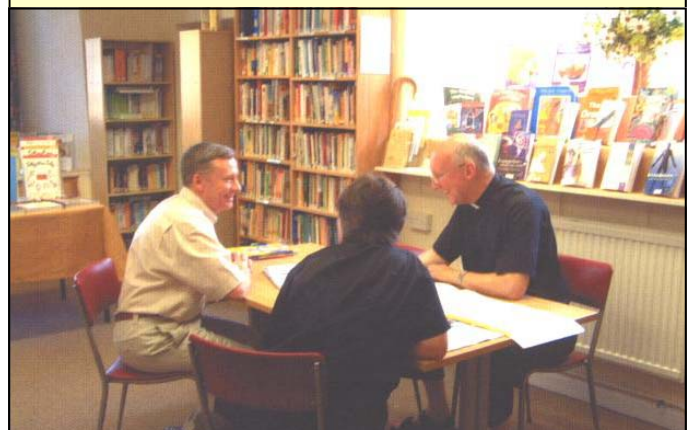
Lydia

Autumn Meeting Tuesday 30 October 10.30 am—3.30 pm



Hampshire County RE Centre & Winchester Diocesan Resource Centre

The day begins with coffee and a chance to explore the Hampshire County RE Centre, hosted by Lydia, followed by our business meeting to plan next summer's conference. We then transfer to the Cathedral Close and have the opportunity to look round and visit Winchester Cathedral, Cathedral shop and SPCK bookshop. Lunch is provided in Ian's Centre (more snooping) and we finish with a workshop on promoting our Centres—please bring your website details, samples of your brochures, newsletters, photos of displays etc (see page 4). Please let Ian know by Thursday 25 October if you would like to attend:
01962 624760 ian.knight@winchester.anglican.org



Wintershall *The Life of Christ*



The highlight of this year's conference was *The Life of Christ* performed by local people. Joseph (see right, with Mary and a donkey) was played by the husband of Alison Hendy who runs the Guildford Resources Centre. The play is presented in the grounds of Peter Hutley's home, Wintershall, near Bramley.

We began by watching the nativity scene as far as Jesus, aged 13 in the Temple. Then we—a crowd of thousands, including clergy, religious, people of different nationalities, some with crutches, some in wheelchairs and approximately 1200 schoolchildren—on the only fine day of the week, took up our chairs and cushions and made our way, via paths, grassy hills and bushes, to the shores of the sea of Galilee (one of the lakes on the estate).

Our group met up during the lunch break and were very grateful to Alison, amongst her duties of costuming this large cast, for providing us with a cafetiere of hot coffee.

This enabled us to return to the scenes unfolding by the Sea of Galilee until we moved on, becoming part of the crucifixion scene, witnessing the resurrection, and returning to Galilee for the appearances of the risen Christ. As we, the crowd, moved around the grounds, we really felt a part of those long-ago followers and could take on the meaning for us today.

Peter Hutley began this as a one-off, but it is still as lively and fresh nine years on. As I was less mobile this year, I should like to express my grateful appreciation to all colleagues, particularly Gillian, for your help in making my progress easier. Praise, too, for the buggy service provided by Alison's friends.

A prayer tent was in evidence during the day, the Gideons were giving away copies of the New Testament and Traidcraft items were available.

This event is certainly an experience, providing something for everyone to take away.

Heather Collins
Slough & District RS Centre

A Message from Gill

Stepping down after the 24th Annual Conference, I would like to thank you all for my gift of candles and holders. The Conference included a visit to Wintershall to watch and become a part of *The Life of Christ*; it was wonderful and even included sunshine.

I will think of you all whenever I light the candles and I do wish you all every good luck with your work in your Centres and many more happy Conferences.

Gillian Hunt
Banbury RE Centre




THE EDUCATION SHOW
28 FEBRUARY - 1 MARCH 2008 • NEC BIRMINGHAM

www.education-show.com

Thursday 28 February 2008 9.30am - 5 pm

Friday 29 February 2008 9.30am - 5 pm

Saturday 1 March 2008 9.30am - 4 pm



Ron Upton, St Albans Diocesan Education Centre, recommends a visit to the Education Show where exhibitors include the Festival Shop (books and artefacts), Articles of Faith and all the main educational publishers such as Heinemann and Evans. It is easily accessible from the M42.

News from Member Centres

Leicester Multicultural Centre

We welcome this new centre which is run by Mary Bryceland.

The Multicultural, RE & Curriculum Resource Centre at Quorn Hall is part of School Improvement and Performance Service of Leicestershire County Council's Children and Young People's Service. It is a teachers' resource centre concentrating on Multicultural and Religious Education but increasingly also now holds materials related to the Citizenship curriculum. The service is also available to other educational practitioners, faith and community groups and other interested parties. The service offers boxes of faith and cultural artefacts for either loan or purchase as well as a wide range of books, videos and other resources for loan only.

Suffolk Christian Resource Library

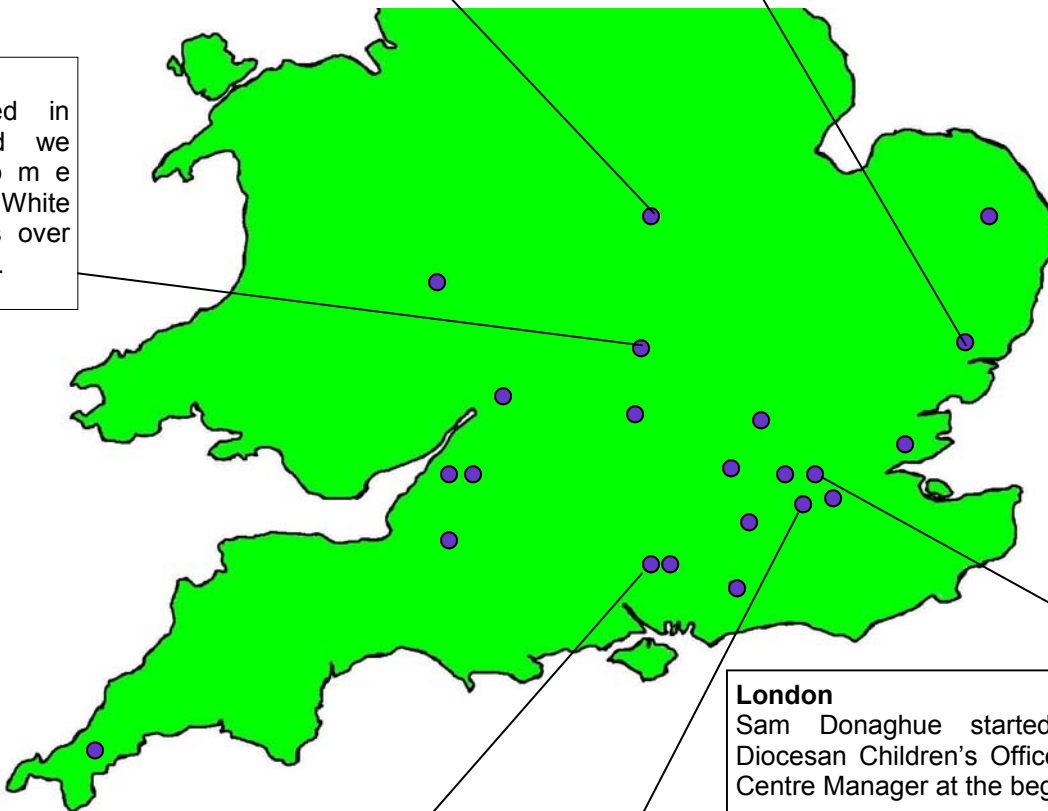
moves to the Cathedral in Bury St Edmunds where it will be joined with the library from the convent at Hengrove Hall, to produce a substantial theological library. They hope to open in November.

Shirley's Revelations Bookshop closed last Christmas and she is now in charge of reception at the Diocesan Office and sells candles, communion wine, wafers, cards, Bibles, prayer books etc.



Banbury

Gill retired in June and we welcome Joanne White who takes over the Centre.



London

Sam Donaghue started as the new Diocesan Children's Officer and Resource Centre Manager at the beginning of July.

Winchester

Ian's Centre, together with the rest of the Winchester Diocesan Office, moves to Old Alresford Place in January. OAP (as it is generally known—not to be confused with any senior citizens) is situated about nine miles to the east of Winchester and was the home of Mary Sumner, founder of the Mothers' Union. The Resource Centre will be situated in the basement.



Take the opportunity to visit the Centre for the Autumn October meeting before it all gets packed into boxes.

Croydon

Fauzia's Centre has to relocate by summer 2008 and is having difficulty finding somewhere suitable. It is going through a difficult time not only needing to find a new location but also to replace funding withdrawn by the Diocese of Southwark. There is the sad possibility of the closure of CRERC (an invaluable multi-faith resource centre) if a new site and funding cannot be found.



Bath & Wells Education Resource Centre

Getting the word out

You might remember that I wrote a piece in the last newsletter about our Centre's 25th anniversary celebration on 1 May. Following on from that, we're sending a bookmark to every parishioner in the Diocese as a small gift from us to remind them of the service we offer. We're using the distribution network of the Diocesan Newspaper to do this and bundles of bookmarks will go out in September with the October paper to the various pick-up points where volunteers from individual parishes will collect papers and bookmarks for their own church. The bookmarks will then, we hope, appear in the pews on Sunday. An email will go out to clergy beforehand forewarning them and asking them to draw attention to the bookmarks at some point during the service.

It will be interesting to see how effective this is as a profile raiser. Perhaps I'll be able to report back in the spring Newsletter that user numbers have rocketed. Let's hope so.

Sue Bloomfield

**Our Newsletter now does free gifts—
your very own bookmark is enclosed!**

Marketing our Centres

I adapted the following notes from an article I saw for owners of Bed & Breakfast Guest Houses, but many of the principles apply just as much to those of us running resource centres. Have a think about what you do already, what you would like to do and come to our Autumn Meeting (see page 1) to share ideas.

Who are your main target markets? What do they want? What do you offer? What competition is there? What will trigger people's interest? What is your budget? How will you spend it?

Divide your target markets into sectors e.g. 60% parishes, 40% schools. Think of your clients as real people with real needs. This will help with brochure and website content. Be clear about what you offer. "What's in it for me?" thinks the client.

The design of brochures and websites is important, but content is more so. Try to see the client's point of view. Photographs must be good—crop them to make them clearer. Add appropriate props (or people!) to the view of your centre (or whatever) to bring photos alive. See how other websites are presented.

Don't assume that everyone wants a bargain. Sometimes people prefer to pay more and get exactly what they want, rather than make do with something cheap.

Get your message out loud and clear!

Ian Knight

Slough & District RS Centre



Visit by Bishop Alan of Buckingham

As part of Bishop Alan's official visit to the Burnham and Slough Anglican deanery, he included time at the Religious Studies Centre.

The Bishop was accompanied by Andrew Gear, the Parish Development Officer and Jo Saunders, Deanery Lay Chair. They were welcomed at the Centre by members of the trustees and advisory committee and the Slough Interfaith Group, represented by members of Art Beyond Belief.

Following an introduction from the Revd Mervyn Eden, chair of the committee, Mrs Jo Osborne, resources officer, and the Revd Alan Bignell, treasurer, the Bishop's party showed great interest in the wealth of books and resources and particularly in Jo's display of artefacts representing a variety of faiths.

Bishop Alan said that as he visited schools, he noticed the increasing use of interactive whiteboards and enquired how the Centre might respond to resourcing the needs of teachers using them. Jo will be interested to hear from anyone with ideas on this subject.

The Bishop also noted that the Centre's resources are also used by groups and individuals other than schools. Mervyn thanked the Bishop and his party for spending time at the Centre, acknowledging that we should all benefit from the exchange of ideas.

Jo Osborne

