



The Post Card project comes to fruition at last!

Susie Barker and Harley Evans are top photographers in the world of high fashion and advertising.

Susie told us: 'We wanted to get positive images of homeless people. Every fashion house picture is touched up. We thought it would be an interesting project to see what could be done here. Harley is so brilliant at bringing out people's natural qualities. So much photography of people on the streets is what you might call 'gritty realism', but there's so much more to people than that. Homeless people do have happy times. In any case, a real-life working model has to keep going and looking good even if they are exhausted or sad.'

Steppin' Stone model Victor

Harley added: Studio lights and all the set-up immediately transform things. In this project homeless people have the capability of looking like a model or achieving anything they want to. Street photography catching people unawares, perhaps without their permission. Here everyone is looking straight at the camera in an open way, giving permission for the shot to be taken, saying 'This is me!' Professional models often have a lot of airs and graces. I wish everyone could be as courteous to us as the people at Steppin' Stone.

Streetwise Opera continues:

The Streetwise Opera project continues with weekly sessions on Saturday afternoons, the spring term culminating in a folksong concert in March.



Rowan plays for the Steppin' Stone choir to sing

Streetwise is fronted by Matt Peacocke, who said 'we're running 350 workshops a year in eight centres in London, Luton and Oxford. This is the first one where local musicians have been trained to run the workshops for Streetwise. There's been really good feedback here. We are working up to regular workshops as an ongoing thing.' *Continued on next page*

Steppin' Stone is short of money, as our Director writes inside. This is a plea for small acts of fund-raising, which can add up to substantial sums when put together.

Please think whether you could help by

- Having a bring and buy coffee morning
- Carrying out some sponsored activity
- Putting on a concert or similar event

The Porch's administrative resources are limited at the moment, but we can email you a pro forma poster and leaflets are available for you to collect from Steppin' Stone by arrangement. Contact details:

Porch office: 01865 728545

emails: info@thporch.fsbusiness.co.uk
victoria@morthome.demon.co.uk

Streetwise Opera continued from page 1:

Student Matthew Venner is a Lay Clerk in New College choir. With fellow-student Stefan Schrijnem he has been running the Streetwise workshops at Steppin' Stone. Rowan Fenner was one of the principle participants in the Brittan concert at Christmas. At the folk concert she performed solos and duets with Matthew.

Asked what inspired her to get involved with Streetwise she replied 'As a professional musician I feel you can't go through life thinking only about yourself and your own performance career. I want to take it into an area where people don't necessarily have access. I think it would be really bad to say goodbye to everyone when the first concert was over and never see them again. The environment in Oxford has been really supportive. Homelessness groups are small enough here, and more stable than London, where the homeless population is too transient.'



An appreciative audience at the folksong concert

As well as the two-hour Saturday workshops, those who want to can have individual singing lessons. As with our Art Project, some extraordinary talent is being uncovered in Steppin' Stone. Watch this space!



Hair Dressing

Nutrition and Mental Health.

Recent research has confirmed what we have come to believe: that nutrition is closely linked to mental health.



COOKING

Member Laurence writes:

For the past twenty years I have been seriously ill with schizophrenia. On a number of occasions I have been divorced from reality and had delusions of grandeur. Before I came to Steppin Stones I felt isolated and in great need of meeting new people.

I have been coming to Steppin Stones for nearly two and a half years, the Centre has changed my life and I really enjoy the food I eat. I have been eating a lot of vegetables and recently we have had fresh fish, which is good for the brain. It is cooked brilliantly by our chefs, Colin and Lorraine. The fact I have been eating like this has made my mind more lucid and I enjoy the conversations I have with people.

Water is vital for human life, occasionally there is a jar of water which people can help themselves to, however, I believe there should always be a jar of water every day at the Centre. Water is cleansing and gets away any infections which people may have. It would be nice to have yoghurts for pudding. I buy yoghurts for myself and find them a source of energy.

I would like to finish by saying it has been good coming to Steppin Stones, the food is great and I have met many nice people. I am sure in the coming years I shall continue coming to Steppin Stones and participating in their activities and meeting interesting people. Thank you.

The Director writes:

Since Christmas we have had some Staff changes. Victoria and Shirley left our employment at the end of January. We shall miss all the hard work that they did for the Steppin' Stone centre. It is not quite goodbye to Victoria, I am grateful to her for staying on the management committee and helping us as a volunteer with odd jobs such as carrying on as Editor of the Newsletter. A job that is superbly carried out and which saves me the task !

Shirley, who ran our two successful art exhibitions, has decided to spend more time with her young grandson. Sean will be taking over responsibility for art, creative writing and walks/outings. Bruce continues to look after our sporting activities and music. Our Saturday StreetWise musicals have been great fun with fine performances by members at the concert on 27th March

Since February we have been one member of staff short which has added stress to our running operations so thank you to members for their patience and to the casual workers Penny, Geraldine, Lindsey, Martine and Anna and to the volunteers for their extra support.

On the first of Aril we welcomed Jane to our team who will be responsible for computers and our life-skills activities.

In talking about our newsletter it prompts me to say that we welcome short comments or articles from our readers and supporters. On a financial front we just about broke even for our year ended on 31st March 04, mainly due to the generosity of an anonymous donor who made a very sizeable contribution. However looking at our budget for the forthcoming year we have that inevitable hole – the Treasurer tells me around £80 thousand pounds, so please help us as you can.

The following prayer by Michel Quoist has come into my mind lately:

“Lord you have made a mistake in your calculations
There is a big mistake somewhere
The hours are too short
The days are too short
Our lives are too short
You who are beyond time Lord
You smile to see us fighting it
You give each one time to do what you want her/him to do
For time is a gift that you give us
But a gift that does not keep”

Use your time WISELY - come chat to the members of Stepping Stone – become a much needed volunteer
Happy Easter

Ian



Counselling at Steppin' Stone, Project Worker Penny Marsh writes:

Our counselling project is being run in conjunction with the Night Shelter. The Night Shelter hasn't got room, so their people come here – many are members anyway. There are group sessions and single appointments. The service is once a week for perhaps six weeks or so, but people don't always turn up every week, so it's possible to fit others in.

One person has completed an agreed set of counselling and feels better, more confident, able to tackle life and is now looking for work as a result. It's great to be able to offer counselling when the need is so great.

Making a donation

Yes, I would like to make a donation...

£10 £25 £50 £100 other £

Name (please print) _____

Address

Postcode _____
—

Giving long term support ...

I would like to become a Friend of the Porch and make a regular donation of at least £25 a year

✓ box £5 £10 £25 other £ _____

Monthly/quarterly/annually*

*Please delete as necessary

Increase the value of your gift.....

If you are a UK tax payer we can reclaim the tax paid on your donation, making every £1 you give worth 28p more. If you pay income or capital gains tax please complete the declaration:

Return to:

The Porch, All Saints Convent, St Mary's Road,
Oxford OX4 1RU

Banker's order form

Name (please print) _____

Address _____

_____ Postcode _____

Please pay the Porch

£ _____ monthly/quarterly/annually*

Starting on (date) _____ until further notice

And debit my account

Signature _____

To: The Manager _____ Bank

Address: _____

Complete if you are a UK tax payer:

I declare my intention that tax be recovered under the Gift Aid scheme on all donations I make to the Porch. I understand that I need to inform The Porch if for any reason I cease to pay enough income or capital gains tax in each tax year to cover the amount of tax that the Porch will reclaim on my giving

Signed _____

Date _____

Coming up:

The Sponsored Walk will have taken place by the time you read this, but it's not too late to send some sponsorship money!

The Postcard Set will be available shortly, price £4 for a set of 10 cards, obtainable from the Porch, All Saints Convent, St Mary's Road, Oxford OX4 1RU. If ordering by post, please enclose a cheque made payable to the Porch and a stamped address A5 envelope.

**Don't forget the website:
www.theporch.org.uk**

The Porch is a registered charity no 1089612. It is supported by Oxford City Council and the Government's SRB programme

