

MACMILLAN CANCER INFORMATION SERVICE VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

Issue 18 - 2007

Welcome to our December Newsletter.

VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER

is

Christine Smith.

Congratulations



We would like to extend our thanks to all our volunteers for the work that you do

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Volunteering in Rwanda

VSO (Voluntary Service Overseas) is a charity, partly funded by the government's Department for International Development. They send out volunteers from a range of different disciplines – education, medicine, agriculture, special needs, business – to developing countries to work for 6 months to two years, living on a local salary. Volunteers can be any age up to 72, with a few years experience in their job (unless you're going over to teach English).

I was asked if I would go to Rwanda, where, after the genocide there aren't enough teachers. It helped that I spoke French, as that is the second language there (it is a former Belgian colony). I taught Biology at a girls' state school just outside the capital, Kigali. Girls don't tend to get a secondary education in Rwanda, so this school had a special energy and the girls were confident and vocal, unlike girls I met who studied in mixed schools in Rwanda.

The curriculum was very theoretical and the students were studying through a second language – English or French, plus students were often absent with sickness or inability to pay school fees, so it was a challenge to get everything done in time for exams. With other VSO teachers, I organised training days for teachers, particularly in practical skills, as local teachers may never have done practicals themselves.

The country was astoundingly beautiful: green hills of banana trees, red dusty tracks and small red-clay huts. The people were unused to seeing white people and used to shout out 'muzungu' (white person) when they saw you. It helped to speak a bit of Kinyarwanda to surprise them. We made some friends – local teachers, students, people who worked at the VSO offices – though compared to countries such as Uganda and Kenya, the people are quite reserved, maybe because of the genocide, and it is hard to make contact.

Each country and each placement gives a different experience, but for me the best things were the climate (around 25°C all year), the experience of living as a local in a developing country, fun transport – crowded minibuses, motorbike taxis, bicycle taxis (no health and safety laws there). The worst things were the mosquitoes, the lack of 'things to do' – few art galleries, cinemas, no TV; I read about two hundred books while I was there. The most unusual experience was dissecting a spitting cobra during one of my A level lessons.

If you are interested in VSO have a look on their website (<http://vso.org.uk/>) or go to one of their open day fairs. There is extensive support and training. I would recommend it to anyone, and at any age.

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Christmas Recipes circa 1930

My great Aunt was a “travelling chef” in the late 1920’s and 30’s. She was employed as a cook by a wealthy family in the Regents Park area of London and was “leant” out to friends to cook for their dinner parties. I am lucky enough to have inherited one of her cook books and thought I would share her Christmas pudding and ice cream recipe which I believe she cooked for the Harris family of Wimpole Street London about 1928. (I think we would now call the “ice cream” brandy butter).

Christmas Ice Cream.

Beat 4ozs of butter to a cream, add 3ozs of caster sugar beating all the time and then a small glassful of brandy still beating all the time. It will be like thick ice cream and is delicious served chilled with Xmas pudding. Lemon juice added instead of brandy for the tea total is equally nice.

Xmas Pudding (without eggs)

Take 3lbs of flour, 2½lbs of raisins

2½ lbs currents, 2½ lbs of suet, 2lbs of soft brown sugar, 1lb of breadcrumbs, ¼ lb candid peel, 1 nutmeg, 3teaspoonfuls of allspice, 8 tablespoonfuls of treacle, 3 pts of milk. Prepare fruit etc and mix all dry ingredients together in a large pan. Moisten with treacle and sufficient milk to make into a stiff dough. Grease the basin and put in mixture. Boil for 5-6 hours.

Christmas Social - The volunteer Christmas social is to take place on **THURSDAY 6th DECEMBER** from 12.00noon to 2.00pm at the PAH Social Club.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS



To Barbara O'Connor Nov 7th, Karen Carr Nov 12th, Kathleen Bell Nov 14th, Linda Whitchurch Nov 23rd, Katrina Mountford Nov 25th, Georgina Jeewan Nov 29th, Angeline Bhalerao Dec 6th, Christine Smith Dec 14th, Linda McNaughton Dec 18th, Joy Pocklington Jan 3rd. We hope you all have very enjoyable birthdays.

Welcome to our new volunteers to the service - Fiona Livens, Debbie Soar, Margaret Monti, Alan Powers, Katrina Mountford, Karen Carr, Sara Farrugia. We welcome them all to the team and look forward to working with them.

Farewells: we say goodbye to the following volunteers who have recently left the service Kirsty Allen, who has moved to Coventry, we wish her well. Clare Horgan who is undertaking a course of study, we thank Clare for her volunteer contribution and wish her well with her studies.

Proposed provisional volunteer training dates are as follows: February 12th & 13th or 13th & 14th
or March 4th & 5th or 5th & 6th

Would any new volunteers awaiting training or anyone who was unable to attend previously please contact **Sally on 01279 698673** to advise of preferred dates.

If you would like to submit an item for the newsletter please contact Julia Jennings-Hatt on 01279 698674

A big thank you to those volunteers who contributed to this issue.