

Headley Voluntary Care Members are terrific in the rain!

This is the adjective chosen by the Chairman of Headley Voluntary Care, John Evans on surveying the scene at the charity's 'Summer Garden Party' on the evening of Thursday 12 July. It was held at Wodehouse, the beautiful home and garden of John and Wanda Rix, in Liphook Road, Headley.

For once the official weather forecasters were spot on. The rain ...the deluge...started at lunchtime, and the torrential downpour continued until midnight, thus engulfing the garden party throughout its duration. It was dull, soaking, and cold.

But were the stalwart members of HVC put off by the heaviest rainfall since Noah was a lad? Not in the least! A few hearty souls abandoned their cars at home, probably fearing they would never recover their vehicles from the field in which they were invited to park but shod in gum boots or Wellingtons or well polished shoes, or even a fine pair of what looked like red satin shoes worn by one lady, they strode up the drive with broad smiles and a determination to have a good time no matter what the heavens may throw down on them!

Those in their cars arrived peering through the gloom to take directions to the field car park. Getting there was easy; the grass was long and gave some uphill grip. Leaving the now muddy field at the end of the evening was different matter, and many a white knuckled driver could be seen sliding downhill back to the driveway. But all made it and no-one hit anything inappropriate...well not with any force, at any rate.

During the day members of the HVC committee, lead by John Evans and Tony Pull, had assembled a couple of emergency gazebos to fend off the rain ; and from these shelters came wine and hot dogs to warm chilled bodies. Conversation and laughter flowed nonstop and after a time people forgot the rain, and just thoroughly enjoyed each others' company.

Headley Voluntary Care has been running for many years, and provides a vital support for those in the community who have no vehicle of their own, or cannot afford public transport. Duty coordinators arrange for volunteer drivers to take people to their medical and other key appointments. No charge is applied, but donations are invited to help cover petrol costs. In the current year it is expected that over 450 journeys will be undertaken by HVC's volunteers, covering nearly 12,000 miles.

The annual garden party is just one event that helps to make the charity more like a social club where everyone knows each other, and friendships are formed. Other events such as the Spring and Autumn meetings, gatherings with guest speakers, are also run to enhance the friendliness of the group, and the weekly coffee mornings in the Church Centre on Thursday mornings are always well attended.

Anyone who has a car and an hour or two spare each week and would like to join our volunteers should simply call 01428-717389; those who can offer themselves as duty officers, would also be most welcome.

To demonstrate that our Dunkirk spirit is not lost, and to show that John and Wanda's garden really is a thing of great beauty., it was astonishing to note how many people left the shelter of the gazebos or the conservatory, to walk round the garden umbrellas aloft and shoes sinking into the sodden turf. But how many, I wonder, saw the little group of ducklings, recently hatched and cared for most diligently by John and Wanda? And guess what? The ducklings loved the rain!

Peter Marsh: 01428-712513: 07523-078370: marshpr1@aol.com