



'Vitarka' changes hands

From 1st October 2009, Dharmachari Bahiya took over as Schools and Education Coordinator at the Bristol Buddhist Centre.



In April 2007, I was fortunate to be appointed as Schools and Education Coordinator, following the Centre being awarded grant funding from the CDF (Community Development Foundation). At the end of this one year project, FWBO Bristol decided to continue supporting schools and educational work. This has been lively, interesting, rewarding and sometimes, challenging, work!

The time is now right to hand on this work. I'm very pleased that Bahiya, a long-standing Vitarka volunteer, has taken up this role. As well as being an experienced and engaging school visitor, Bahiya is a skilled public speaker, meditation teacher, enthusiastic Dharma practitioner, Granddad, fantastic story-teller...the list is endless, in delighting in his fine qualities! I wish you really well in your new role, Bahiya, and know from past experience that you'll do a great job. Thanks to all of you who have helped make the work of Vitarka vibrant and engaging in the past two and a half years. May Vitarka continue to flourish.

With best wishes and much appreciation,

Kamalamani



Bahiya (left) taking over from Kamalamani (right)

A big thank you...

To all the **schools, colleges and groups** who have invited us to work with them, to the very supportive schools **volunteers**: Bahiya, Henry, Karunavapi, Pam and Rachel, to the **team at the Bristol Buddhist Centre**, to the early **grant application writers**: Simhanada and Amaraketu, to the **Community Development Foundation** for the grant which has enabled us to develop a much more sustainable, long-lived project, and to **FWBO Bristol** for agreeing to continue to support this important work in the foreseeable future.

Vitarka Activities...

In the past two and a half years, Vitarka people:

- Introduced meditation and Buddhism to more than 2,500 children and young people in more than 23 primary and secondary schools in and around the Bristol area (and more than 100 of their teachers and support staff)
- Worked with: Brownies, Beavers and Scouts (I now know the difference between them!), a charity supporting housing for local women, a local community group learning about world religions, students enrolled on courses at Filton College and UWE
- Supported the project work of students working from GCSE to MA level, researching Buddhism and Buddhist groups, located from Australia to across the UK
- Developed a library and 'shrine box', based at the Bristol Buddhist Centre, for the loan use of local schools and community groups
- Made stronger links with Buddhists from other traditions and with people from across the faith groups in Bristol
- Supported Bristol City Council's 'Childrens' Interfaith' and 'Diverse Doors' days
- Facilitated workshops at South Gloucestershire SACRE 'Needless Greed' Day
- Provided educational resources for Social Services at Bristol City Council, Avon and Somerset Constabulary, Arnos Vale Cemetery and the Bristol branch of 'Connexions'
- Even featured in the CDF's publication, 'Faith Communities Pulling Together' see: <http://www.nemhdu.org.uk/silo/files/spirituality--faith-communities-pulling-together.pdf> [find us on page 65!]

Phew! Well done and thanks again, everyone.