



Ann Owens Centre regular Pat Novis is happy to be behind the wheel again.

## Heartache turns to happiness after mindless vandalism

By John Lawrence and Janet Maitland

**When staff at Age Concern's Ann Owens Centre returned to work in Oak Lane after the August Bank Holiday weekend, they were horrified to find windows smashed and steering wheels ripped out of three of their four minibuses, leaving them facing a repair bill of £5,000.**

So began a difficult week for staff as they frantically searched for other vehicles to bring people to the centre and attempted to continue their vital work giving elderly and isolated people a social lifeline.

### Helping hands

But the actions of the vandals were no match for the spirit within the local community. Within days, several companies had offered their vehicles on loan while Paul Ralhan from mobile repairs company Glasstec, and Peter Guinchard, who runs Trucks from UK in Stanmore, volunteered their repair services for free and got the Age Concern minibuses back on the road.

Development manager Lisa Dubow thanked everyone for their generosity in helping the charity get its crucial service up and running again so quickly. "It was a hard week but we're so grateful to everyone who helped," she said. "We couldn't have afforded to repair the minibuses ourselves."

### Effect on elderly folk

And her message to the criminals who broke in and did the damage? "We'd like to make them aware what our services mean to people. We bring dozens of people to the centre every day to see their friends and enjoy activities. Without the minibuses, they'd

be stuck at home and they might not see anyone for days on end. For some, it's all they have."

The police told *THE ARCHER* that the vandals forced the doors of the minibuses and broke the windows before removing the steering wheels and leaving them on the drivers' seats. They believe they may have been attempting to steal the vehicles.

### Information needed

Sergeant Andy Matthews, of the Safer Neighbourhood Team, said: "It is a shame that mindless criminals do things like this at all, let alone when it concerns the property of a good-natured charitable organisation. We do really need anyone with information to come forward and help the investigation."

If anyone has any information, please call 0300 123 1212 and quote the crime reference number 2420326/09, or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

## Reaching out to the housebound

**RSVP is one of the largest volunteer groups in the borough. Here, Barbara Davis from RSVP explains what it does and how you can get involved.**

As the name implies, the housebound are one of the most difficult groups of people to reach. There are many people behind closed doors who could join any project if only they knew about it.

Keeping in Touch is a telephone-befriending scheme. We find you a suitable volunteer who will ring you regularly for a "gossip" session. There is no charge for this.

### Read for pleasure, knit for the world

Our telecommunication Book Club is also free. The books come in large/small print, hard/paperback and on CD. They are delivered to your home and, approximately every four weeks at a pre-arranged time for one hour, we discuss our read. Should opinions dry up there is always something to talk about, whether it be TV, grandchildren, gardening or the weather.

For more details on Keeping in Touch and the Book Club, call the RSVP office on 020 8445 2780. Incidentally, Barnet runs an excellent Home Library Service for those who cannot get out. Call Claire on 020 8359 3901.

Finally, home knitting is the fastest growing pastime around. The phrase "Knit for England" has been extended to "The World" as our finished items get sent worldwide to provide comfort where needed. Wool is delivered to you and the finished product collected, another chance for a gossip. For details, contact Mandy Francis on 07880 971051.



Kridon Panteli. Photo by Costas Christdoulou.

## Nostalgia on film

**Illustrator and photographer Kridon Panteli was runner up in this year's annual photographic awards at Lauderdale House, Highgate.**

He submitted an image called "A Day At The Aerodrome" (right) bringing back memories of a time gone by, with a mother and two sons dressed in typical 1950s clothing, one of the boys holding a toy biplane.

Kridon, of Chandos Road, has a new project called "Artists, Artisans and Athletes", a series of images of local people and their work, and he is looking for interesting faces and professions to capture on film. He can be contacted via his website, [www.panteli.net](http://www.panteli.net)



Kridon's commended photo A Day At The Aerodrome

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[sarah@bobathlondon.co.uk](mailto:sarah@bobathlondon.co.uk) or  
020 8442 2275

### BOBATH CENTRE FOR CHILDREN WITH CEREBRAL PALSY

### Charity Christmas CD

Help us spread a little 'Comfort & Joy' this Christmas, and raise funds for children with cerebral palsy and your community group.

If you are holding a Christmas fete or carol concert, please contact Kevin on:

[kevin@bobathlondon.co.uk](mailto:kevin@bobathlondon.co.uk) or  
020 8442 2275



[www.bobath.org.uk](http://www.bobath.org.uk)

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