

Gilbert Fryer
The Carrington Lollipop Man

Gilbert Fryer is the School Crossing Patrol you will find outside the Carrington Schools in Chapel Road. Three years ago he was enjoying his retirement from his job in the furniture trade. Then his grandchildren brought back a letter asking if anyone would like to be a Lollipop man outside their school. A bit reluctantly he said he would do it if they could not find anyone else. And he loves it.

He enjoys the children as they come fresh faced to school in the morning. They call him Gilly and give him a high fives. This started when one lad slapped the hand he was holding out to stop the traffic and the custom has grown so that he now even gets a five from babies in push chairs who have seen their brothers and sisters use the greeting. One young girl crossed a road in Wycombe and was most put out when the lollipop man did not respond to her five.

When a child confides that tomorrow she or he will have a birthday Gilbert tries to remember until the next day which child it was and sings Happy Birthday as they cross the road. Curiously, they do not recognise him when he is shopping in Budgens without his luminous coat, cap and lollipop. The parents have to point him out.

As Gilbert's wife Milly says, "No other school can boast better parents and children than Carrington."

The traffic past the schools has increased since the bumps were introduced in Straight Bit and there are more lorries. The vast majority of drivers are fine but there are some who think their being two minutes late is more important than a child's life and curse and shout when they are made to stop – especially if it is an adult that is crossing the road. The lollipop man's job is quite clear. It is to help everyone across the road outside a school not just the children.

Even parents can utterly disregard the safety of other people's children. One parent was so thoughtless in parking at the crossing point that Gilbert was moved to suggest that she "ought to know bloody better". The parent complained to one of the Head Teachers who, to her credit, said that if Mr Fryer had sworn at her she must have been doing something wrong and she was backing Mr Fryer. The tale has a happy ending. Ever the gentleman, Gilbert apologised to the lady for swearing at her and she apologised for her error and they are now good friends.

In three years time Gilbert will be 80 and will have to hang up his cap and lollipop. He will do it reluctantly and he has asked me to say what a great job it is. The money is not too exciting but the job satisfaction is worth at least an extra pound an hour. If you feel this is something you would like to do please ring Julie Tyrrell at Bucks County Council and talk to her about it on 01494 475384..

Tim Kendell

The following note came for Carrington Infant School
"We were pleased to present our wonderful 'Lollipop Man' 'Gilly' with Marks and Spencer vouchers as a big thank-you and Happy Christmas from the parents and pupils of the Carrington Schools for all his hard work."