

# Mayor rises from the volcanic ash

**THE Mayor of Solihull found another way back home, after volcanic ash threatened to leave him stranded in France.**

Last week, Councillor Norman Davies travelled out to the borough's twin town of Cholet—to take part in an international festival.

But as the party were getting ready to leave, they heard that ash clouds were once again closing airports.

So, Solihull's First Citizen decided to hitch a lift back with the local firemen and musicians, who had also been visiting the town.

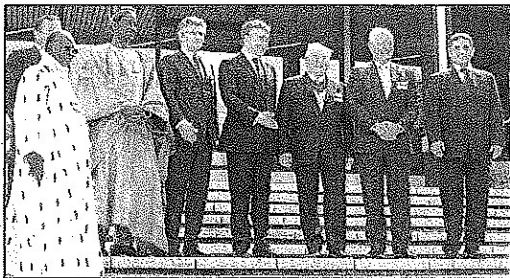
"Soul Matters, one of the groups with Solihull Music Service, had travelled over with some firemen in their coach," explained Coun Davies.

"We had to decide whether we should risk going to the airport or whether we should go back in the coach.

"In the end we went for the coach. It was certainly the right decision, because as we were travelling back we heard that our plane had been cancelled, and we would have been stuck."

Coun Davies said that he wanted to see closer ties between Solihull and our European cousins.

He said local fire crews had led by example—having worked with Gallic teams during this year's rescue operation in Haiti.



■ Mayor of Solihull, Councillor Norman Davies, with international representatives in Cholet.

A couple of ideas from over the Channel are being incorporated into the new-look Solihull Fire Station, and the crews met some of their French counterparts last week.

Meanwhile, Soul Matters received a standing ovation at the festival—the group of 14 to 19-year-olds were asked to perform an encore.

"Twinning is about getting the community and young people involved," added Coun Davies.

"When I was a kid, I went on an exchange-trip to Germany, and I ended up knowing the language better than French, which I'd been studying for five-years."

## Donor session

THERE are two opportunities to donate blood next Thursday, May 27.

At Trinity United Reformed Church, in Etwall Road, Hall Green, you can donate from 2 to 4pm, and from 5 to 7.30pm, while at the Village Hall, St John's Close, Knowle, you can donate from 1.30pm to 3.30pm and 4.30pm to 7.30pm.

You can even book an appointment for either session on 0300 123 23 23.