



Norwich duo return after working with Australia megachurch

Church couple back from life Down Under

A Norwich couple who crossed the world to attend a Bible college in Australia and join the pastoral team at megachurch Hillsong have returned to Norfolk after 12 years to “cheer on the local church”. **Keith Morris** reports.

Steve and Rachel Mawston, well known across the Norfolk Christian community, have returned to the county after 12 years working with the well-known Hillsong church in Australia, first in Sydney and then in Brisbane.

Steve was a former schools manager with YMCA Norfolk and leader at what was Mount Zion church in Norwich and Rachel, a trained physiotherapist and worship leader at Zion, is the daughter of the former church leaders, Trevor and Joyce Pimlott.

The couple met at a summer youth camp run by Mount Zion at the age of 12, at which Steve, who was living in the North East at the time, became a Christian. They met on and off at the summer camps over a number of years and 25 years ago they got married.

They both had roles in helping to lead Zion and, with a passion to see the local church flourish and grow and “a deep sense of the call of God on their lives”, they headed off to Australia 16 years ago to attend the Hillsong International Leadership College where friend Jon Norman had earlier gone.

Rachel said: “The college offered theological training but was also very practical and its aim was to equip people to take a church of maybe 200 to a size of something that could really impact a city and even a nation.”

Steve said: “We both left successful jobs in Norfolk, I was working for the YMCA Norfolk schools programme for ten years and loved it, Rachel was a physiotherapist.

“After about six weeks in Sydney we were invited to join the Hillsong church team - one of the



Steve and Rachel Mawston have returned to their roots in Norfolk to “cheer on the local church”.

biggest churches in the world. They told us that 10,000 people walked through the front doors of the church every year and our job was to find them, connect with them and disciple them. It was a huge challenge and church on another level to that which we had ever seen before.”

When Hillsong was invited to take over a flagship pentecostal church in Brisbane, Steve and Rachel were asked by leader Brian Houston to play a key part in the transition and to help build the Hillsong culture at the new congregation, which they have been doing very successfully over the past decade.

The rapidly-growing church's

strapline was ‘championing the local church’. “It is not just about making their own church bigger,” said Rachel. “We found that as the Brisbane church started to grow, so did the other churches in the city. We would meet with other local pastors and they would come to events and we would encourage them and go to their events. It became like a mushroom effect – a catalyst for growth. That is what we really grabbed hold of. It is about building the church as a whole.”

The couple have two girls Melody aged 18 and Mercy (13), who were both born in England, and extended families in Norfolk and the North East.

“The older we have got the harder it has been to not be with family, parents and friends back in England,” said Rachel and when they attended a funeral of a church member in Brisbane the thought hit them “do we want to be buried in Australia”.

The couple felt God was speaking to them through the Bible and words of prophecy about returning back home. One involved a picture of a chess game and when Steve's dad died last year, the couple flew into Newcastle airport for the funeral. Right behind the passport control was a huge billboard with a chess board with the slogan ‘now it's your move’.

■ Story continues on page four



New Gospel choir for city

A new community gospel choir has started up in Norwich under the leadership of Megan Rawling, who has a passion for using music to start friendships and build a community. **Helen Baldry** reports.

■ Megan was baptised at the age of ten, and is part of a large family where faith was part of life. They always went to church as a family and there were lots of discussions around the dinner table. Megan said: “My mum taught me to continuously question things; I ended up finding an authentic faith and formed a faith that is solid.”

Megan has been choral director at St Thomas Church in Norwich for the past two years, focusing on the parish choir and a community gospel choir. She has moved on from this role to focus on the Norwich Community Gospel Choir and is enthusiastic about the potential impact this new venture will have.

The tagline of the choir is ‘Building community, Sharing faith, Making music’ and Megan believes these things are important in that order.

Surprisingly, music is not the primary aim in the formation of the choir. Instead it is the natural conversations people have and the friendships they build up – these are the things that make people's hearts sing, says Megan. “The most important thing about it is when people who don't know Jesus sing about him, they get to know him.”

Megan has seen people come to faith through joining a choir. She said: “The most stunning thing about it is you don't have to force it. You create an environment where these conversations happen perfectly naturally.”

Megan studied International Development at UEA, not to pursue a particular career path but to follow an interest. She said: “I wanted to understand why the world is in the state it's in. I wanted to explore issues around poverty.”

While at university, she conducted a rock gospel choir and something clicked for her.

■ Story continues on page two.

GOOD NEWS

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■ Website: www.networknorfolk.co.uk

■ Editorial (01508) 488318. e-mail stories to keith.morris@networknorwich.co.uk or send copy to Pear Tree Farmhouse, Wymondham Road, Wrenningham, Norwich NR16 1AT.

■ Advertising: Helen Baldry (01603) 926120

■ Distribution: Val Dodsworth (01603) 946294

■ Editor and designer: Keith Morris

■ Regular writers: Mike Wiltshire, Sandie Shirley, Helen Baldry, Kevin Gotts, Jenny Seal, Tony Rothe

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Making space for the important things

■ "I've been having a bit of a clear-out recently. I didn't mean to. Although I'd been saying to myself that I really should tidy up my work-room to avoid incurring injury as I navigated my way through it, I'd done nothing about it.

On the day in question, I'd only intended to file a few papers and, perhaps, move a couple of larger objects off the floor. But what actually happened was that I removed pretty much all the contents of the room into the next-door space, and completely re-arranged the furniture.

I have to say – even for an interior designer who, frankly, should have known better – this has been an absolute transformation. Once my son's bedroom, it's been used mostly as my work-room for making soft furnishings but, increasingly over the past few years, I've needed dedicated space to write. Until earlier this week, that space was the end of my sewing table, me squeezed in almost as an after-thought albeit with a nice view of the garden.

It all set me thinking, as these things often do. So much is bandied around these days –

Jane Clamp is an author, interior designer and musician based in West Norfolk.



especially on social media – about 'purpose'. A few years ago, it might have been expressed as 'destiny' and there were many songs sung in churches along those lines. I can get quite exhausted trying to be purposeful about everything.

Quite honestly, sometimes the only intentional thing I want to do is put my feet up and have a sneaky mid-afternoon nap. But there is a great deal of wisdom in knowing what our purpose is.

Some of us have a life-call that's been there for as long as we can remember but, in my experience, a sense of purpose can undergo natural development as we age. Not all the little boys who want to be firemen or train drivers when they are five actually go on to become one.

Sometimes our future hopes and plans are thwarted: an unexpected pregnancy, a job offer in another direction, an illness, a chance to study. Sometimes we just plain change our minds and opt to do something completely different. But, even when we might have got it all wrong, we can often look back and see a common thread which points to why we're on the planet at this particular time.

Because I know that at heart I'm a writer, I want to make space for that in my life and in my home. A sense of purpose will do that. It focuses our minds and hearts on what is truly important. Every day, there's the call of a hundred different things on my time; but, sitting here at my newly positioned desk I have made space for what's important and it feels very good indeed.



Volunteers working on the new One80 community project on the Larkman estate in Norwich.

Church sets up community hub

A Norwich church has embarked upon a community project on the Larkman estate and has plans to use its new building for youth work, focusing on music and drama. **Helen Baldry reports.**

One80 is a community project from Potter's House, a local Norwich church and registered charity.

Basil Choudhry from the church said, "We've been based in Norwich since 1984 and have

seen many lives completely transformed, but for many years we've wanted a permanent home for our youth and community activities."

In June this year, the church bought what used to be called the Fourways Community Centre from Norwich City Council.

Basil said, "As soon as we saw the building we thought it would be the perfect home for our outreach and youth activities. It's in the heart of the Larkman estate, where there are hundreds of young people crying out for opportunities to get involved."

The church has named the building 'the One80', and it is intended to be a hub for church members and the local community. Basil explains, "The name

comes from the 180° change in direction that we want to help people experience. In particular we want to help young people to expand their horizons through music and drama, within a Christian context."

A team from the church spent a month refurbishing the building, including the outside area and the main hall. They have started holding weekly Christian music events and as the renovations are completed, One80 will host additional activities including parent and toddler mornings and youth groups. Basil said, "Our intention is to build out a hub for outreach, including a fully functional music production studio, weights training room and pool room."

www.one80.uk

New Gospel choir for city

■ Story continues from page one She said, "I loved it! I knew that this is what I wanted to do when I graduated."

Megan trained with Exeter YMCA, running training courses in prisons. It was at this point that Megan considered using music to help vulnerable people. She knew she would struggle to make a living without musical credentials, so she gained her Grade 8 in singing and a diploma in Choral Direction.

Back in Norwich, the positive ethos she found at St Thomas Church helped her consolidate her plans for a Norwich-wide community gospel choir. She said: "Nowhere else would have widened my gaze in the way this place has. I used to think 'I want to run a choir' but I have learnt that relationships are central to this endeavour; the team is vital, as is letting God take the reins. I have learnt about doing things as excellently as you can without making excellence the point."

Once the choir becomes established, Megan plans to hold gigs in order to get exposure for the choir, and also do some social action, such as singing in hospitals and community centres in order to bless people.

Rehearsals for the choir are open to adults of any ability and are on Tuesday and Wednesday nights at 7.30pm and will start from September 11 and 12. Sessions cost £6 each, but concessions are available for those who may need them.

The joy of a choir is that it doesn't focus on the individual but on making an amazing sound collectively. Megan passionately believes that everyone can sing and also offers 1-to-1 singing lessons.

Megan is on hello@ncgc.org.uk www.ncgc.org.uk



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Norwich actor takes centre stage in Martin Luther play

Actor **Freddy Goymer** has returned to his hometown of Norwich to take on the title role in a play about the life of **Martin Luther** at the **Norwich Playhouse**. Before the show he talked with **Jenny Seal** about his love of acting and what he hoped would resonate with the audience.

Professional actor Freddy Goymer stands out from the crowd – mainly due to his height (he stands tall at 6'4") and his big smile. For the past six years, the 27-year old has toured the country and beyond, acting with the Christian performing arts company, Saltmine.

In Saltmine's latest production 'Legacy: The Story of Martin Luther' Freddy plays the lead for the first time, deftly assuming the character of the 16th century German reformer Martin Luther (not to be confused with his namesake the 20th century civil rights activist Martin Luther King).

During the summer the theatre company toured the play around the country finishing with a week at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in August. In June they came to the Norwich Playhouse with Freddy playing to a home crowd of around 200 people.

Performing in front of his family and friends isn't a prospect he relishes. "I hate it", he says, laughing before quickly correcting himself. "No that's a bit strong. It makes me more nervous because I really value and care about my friends' and family's opinions. They will tell me what they think!"

Freddy was born in Norwich and grew up attending Notre Dame High School, leaving to study Ancient History at the University of Reading. He joined the Saltmine Theatre Company intern programme in 2012 before taking it on as a full-time job. He describes acting as "a lifelong dream," inspired by going to see the West End production of The Lion King when he was ten.

"Acting is the one time when you can talk and no one interrupts!" he jokes. "No, I love telling a story," he says. "And I love seeing what stories do to people – whether it makes them laugh or cry. People can walk away from the theatre feeling so much happier or joyful than when they walked in or thinking about their life in a slightly different way. That, for me, is why I want to do acting."

Freddy now lives in the West Midlands, where Saltmine Trust is based, with his wife Beth, who is also from Norwich. What he appreciates most about working with Saltmine is "the culture of encouragement" in a profession that can often be egotistic.



Since joining the Saltmine Theatre Company, he has been part of productions that have told the story of historical figures including George Williams, the founder of the YMCA and John Newton who wrote the hymn Amazing Grace as well as a reimagining of John's Gospel and Christmas productions of Sleeping Beauty and The Nutcracker.

In 'Legacy: The Story of Martin Luther' the cast of five actors tell the story through a quick-fire series of impressively choreographed scenes. The dizzying pace of the play reflects the massive societal change that the actions and beliefs of the German theologian brought to the 16th century.

"It changed the face of history," Freddy says. "It's such a meaty story, there is so much in it and so significant in history. For us, as a Christian theatre company, it's a classic story to tell."

The play began as a shorter piece performed in churches last year to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Luther's 'Ninety-Five Theses', a text which sparked the Reformation. The script was then revised and expanded into a two-act production to give time to explore Luther's character and spiritual journey in more depth.

The play opens with Martin Luther on his deathbed and then spans his life in a series of flashbacks. It shows him as a young lecturer realising that the Bible says salvation is granted through faith in Jesus, and not through buying forgiveness as had become the practice of the Catholic Church. It shows him stubbornly and bravely defending this belief, and his subsequent ex-communication and outlawing. The play also pays tribute to Luther's pursuit of translating the Bible into German, enabling it to be read first-hand by ordinary men and women.

Freddy, who is on stage for most of the production, brings real humanity to the title role. He plays Luther as sullen and socially awkward but with flashes of humour, prone to suffering periods of self-doubt and mental anguish, but also able to produce great confidence and courage when publically standing up for his beliefs despite the danger to his own life.

This mix of courage and vulnerability is what appeals most to Freddy in Martin Luther's story. "I wanted to show that he is quite vulnerable in many ways," he says. "Luther does suffer with depression and mental health. A lot of our heroes of faith actually seem quite strong,

but in some ways he was a very weak person. God used him even through his weakness. Seeing what God did with Martin Luther will hopefully resonate with the audience."

The message of God enabling us in our weakness is one that Freddy has internalised in his own acting. "The acting world is quite a competitive world – 'you are not good enough', 'you don't look right', there is a rejection culture and a lot of nos. That can be quite hard. You have to have a solid foundation of who you are and why you are doing what you are doing. If it's because you want to be famous or be liked, I think that can crumble away quite quickly."

"For me in my faith, I know that I'm doing it because God's called me to do it and also because I can tell stories that are on His heart. And actually if I'm rubbish but I'm impacting people, then that doesn't really matter. I can be doing the worst acting job ever but if God is pleased then God's pleased." He quickly adds: "But I want to do my best... hopefully I won't be rubbish tonight!"

That June evening the audience at the Norwich Playhouse gave Freddy and his fellow cast members a justified standing ovation.

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Couple back from Australia

■ Story continued from page one.

They decided to move back to England. While the couple were away, close friend Jon Norman had returned to Norwich, from helping to lead a Hillsong church in Cape Town, to take on the leadership of what was the Mount Zion church, renamed as Soul Church.

Rachel said: "We have seen Jon grow up and Steve has mentored him from the time he was the cheeky young whippersnapper we grew up with. Jon is just a stand-out leader, he thinks differently and we are very drawn to Jon and Chantelle. Jon is unique, he is very caring and pastoral, very evangelistic. He just connects with people and draws them in. So we want to help release him to do what he is called to do."

Steve and Rachel will be spending around half of their time working with the team at Soul Church and half of it travelling around the country working with other churches in a coaching/mentoring type role.

Steve said: "We aim to help encourage churches and their leadership, help them communicate and to grow. We call it ECG and believe that growth is a heart issue – if the heart is healthy then we believe the body will grow."

"We aim to look at why churches are not growing and remove any obstacles, help cheer the pastors on and pass on some of the things we have learnt over 16 years in Australia. We want to work together as a couple to do this – which we think is quite unique."

As in Brisbane, the couple believe that large growing churches can be a catalyst for other local congregations and church unity is important to them: "Our heart is to really connect with people across Norwich, and not just at Soul, but wherever there are open doors," said Steve. "We are here to cheer on the local church."

Soul Church, along with Proclaimers in Norwich, is part of the Hillsong Family. There are also a number of Hillsong churches in the UK in London, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Birmingham, Surrey and Oxford for example.

"Hillsong would not be growing so fast across the world if the grace of God was not on it," said Steve. "Brian and Bobbie Houston are exceptional leaders – apostolic really. Brian is a pioneer not just in the church but in the use of TV, in praise and worship. They are now stepping out in most of the continents around the world and seeing growth in places where people say 'it won't work there'. There is also a really strong healthy culture of unity, of putting God first and not settling for second best."

The couple say they will probably miss the consistently good weather in Australia but will not miss the deadly snakes, spiders and aggressive magpies.

Daughter Mercy has come with the couple to Norfolk, but Melody is carrying on a proud family tradition by taking a Bible college course in Australia which she will stay on to finish.

Going back to Sedley and Mildred who first started the Mount Zion church over 50 years ago, almost 60 members of the extended Pimlott family are now serving God in churches in Norfolk and across the world including in Australia, America and London.

www.steveandrachel.org

Chaplains help Norfolk Police to build bridges

After a career as a chartered accountant, **Richard Whall** took early retirement 16 years ago and a new role as a chaplain with **Norfolk Police**. **Sandie Shirley** reports.

Richard swapped his senior financial job for a voluntary, unpaid position, intent on building a bridge between community, police and the church and helping police officers cope with the complex rigours of the job.

For the past 16 years, as lead chaplain, he has supported and been alongside police staff and officers who are often at the sharp end of daunting and sometimes dangerous work.

"You only have to look at the daily newspapers or television to see the police in action. But in addition to the well-documented dangers associated with violent crime, police officers come into contact with situations, almost on a daily basis, that the general public would be unlikely to come across in a life-time," says Richard.

Over the years, he has helped produce a new and evolving role for the Norfolk chaplaincy in a bid to meet the diverse and changing needs of the modern police force.

"The job has changed and God has changed me in the job, increasing my compassion and understanding of people's diversity," says Richard.

He is part of a ten-strong, multi-faith police chaplaincy and is currently recruiting four more members. The team is fully vetted and security cleared. It is made up of lay and ordained people from all the main Christian denominations and a Jewish Rabbi (with additional access to senior members of other faiths as required).

The chaplaincy extends across the county to support police on the front line as well as organising special events such as the Emergency Services Carol Service at Norwich Cathedral. Where appropriate, it can advise the police on faith matters and has a presence on police welfare and staff support committees.

Chaplains may be in the busy arena - accompanying officers either on the beat, with members of roads policing, or in the offices, control room or other specialist areas – but they also undertake pastoral care and prayer or sometimes simply make the tea.

"It is challenging and I like the atmosphere – you never know



Richard Whall, lead chaplain with Norfolk Police.

what the day is going to bring," says Richard.

"The police are like one big family and I like to think that we are part of it," he continues.

"But it takes time for people to feel comfortable in opening up with a friend, and that, in the end, is what chaplaincy is about. Trust can only be built by being alongside people wherever they are and being a familiar face. It is a privilege to earn their trust and respect, allowing them to open up about personal matters and operational challenges," says Richard.

He draws on his previous experience in the workplace. "It has helped me understand people and the world they operate in. I have a wide experience of financial and employment issues having been made redundant and managed staff," says the man who has also been a lay preacher, involved with Street Pastors and served on the YMCA board.

"Policing has always been a difficult, demanding and often stressful occupation, dealing with people at their most troublesome or vulnerable. But recent high-profile press coverage relating to terrorism, child and domestic abuse, trafficking, modern day slavery and drug county lines, for example, has meant that policing is under

more scrutiny than ever and its nature is changing."

Whatever the challenges, the uniform does not give immunity to personal feelings for the officers involved. Whatever the need, chaplains can provide a word of encouragement, listening ear, practical support or just a chat about anything from work, family, relationships, holidays or football, explains Richard.

"The chaplaincy is there for all officers and staff irrespective of rank or position – those of faith and no faith – but we are certainly not there to evangelise – at least not with words. If faith is brought up we will talk about it but faith is not necessarily what we do, but it is why we do it."

Although a regular church goer since his teens, Richard came to a full understanding of faith in 1993. His son joined a church holiday club and continued attending a church youth club afterwards. Before long he wanted the family to join him and the youth group at Spring Harvest, a Christian residential festival.

"I hated it at first although everyone was very nice to me," recalls Richard. "It was raining hard most of the time and the first evening there were about 3,000 people in the main tent and many were jumping up and down and waving their

arms around. I couldn't relate to it at all! Until then I had been going to a fairly traditional Methodist church over the years, mainly to keep my wife Gill happy."

"But three days later, during one of the sessions, everything clicked into place; it was as if all the pieces of an old building model were broken down and reassembled into something new. For the first time Jesus Christ and Christianity made sense as the truth of the gospel impacted my heart and changed the course of my life," said Richard.

"Chaplaincy is based on confidentiality and trust. It is a calling from God and I believe it is where the church needs to be. It is about people and relationships and valuing the individual. It is a privileged position – part of the organization, but not of it."

"It sees policing from beyond the uniform, flashing lights and sirens. Without doubt, the men and women in the force are hardworking, conscientious and highly professional. They put themselves in harm's way to protect us, yet society often seems to take them for granted – until they need them. I would encourage Christians and their churches everywhere to continue to uphold the members of the police and all emergency services, in prayer, as they carry out their duties."

Adventure to transform lives

A year ago, the small staff team at a rehabilitation centre in Norwich decided that on top of their day jobs they would raise money to create a bursary for women who had no other means of entering their programme. Since then the team has raised £15,200 and the challenge has taken two on a cross country adventure reliant only on their wits and the public's generosity. **Jenny Seal reports.**



Hebron hitchhikers, left Claire Pretty and right Emma Pawsey with Hebron graduate Kirsty Arnold.

Hebron Trust in Norwich is one of just five female-only residential drug and alcohol rehab centres in the whole country. Motivated by a Christian ethos, this 10-bed centre has been supporting women to transform their lives for 31 years. But recently, with local authority funding harder to access, it has been increasingly difficult for women who critically need the service to enter the programme.

Emma Pawsey, the Manager of Hebron Trust, said: "Every year it gets harder and harder to keep the funding coming. It gets cut every year, so as a staff team we have decided to do a lot of fundraising ourselves – to fundraise for a bursary to change a woman's life, to come into Hebron."

In their own time the staff team have been working hard organising an array of fundraising activities including Christmas fayres, jumble sales, cake sales and selling friendship bracelets. About six months ago, the team dreamt up a fundraising challenge that would involve travelling from Hebron in Norwich to the village of Hebron in West Wales.

On July 2, Admin Support Worker Claire Pretty and Emma Pawsey set off on the Hebron to Hebron Challenge. With no money whatsoever, they had to travel by any means or mode of transport necessary the 350 miles across the country.

Emma said: "We were on buses, tractors, cars, taxis, Tesco delivery

vans. It was tough because we didn't know what was going to happen next but the British public are amazing. People are amazing. We never had a bad experience. And everybody that gave us a lift then handed us money."

She continued: "We were in tears daily because we were so moved by people's generosity. When we tell the story behind the women's lives who come into Hebron, people just give."

Claire agrees: "The highlight was meeting so many wonderful people and the generosity of the general public."

A graduate of Hebron as well as a staff member, Claire said: "I learnt that I could do anything if I put my mind to it. Being in recovery myself it's great to not have that fear any more. I now have the confidence and self-esteem and self-worth to be able to do these things. And to be able to raise money for a charity that basically saved my life."

Supporters donated accommodation and meals and the pair even managed to promote their cause by blogging a radio interview on BBC Hereford and Worcester. They achieved their target reaching the village of Hebron on Friday, July 6 and raising a total of £9,600 to add to the £5,600 already raised by other staff initiatives.

At an event held at the Virgin

Money Lounge on August 8 to celebrate the success of the challenge, one recent graduate of Hebron shared her experience of the charity. Kirsty Arnold (29), who completed the six-

month drug rehabilitation programme in April, arrived at Hebron House in what she says describes as "maybe a couple of use ups away from dying".

She said: "I was broken. I didn't even know who I was. I wanted to die but I didn't want to die. I couldn't really speak properly. I didn't even know why I was there. I couldn't even walk up the stairs when I got there."

"I slowly came out of it. They've taught me how to think again, to trust again, they gave me a secure place to open up. The staff treat you as an individual and not like a drug addict. Whether you are laughing or crying the staff will help you. I've also taught time management and money management. Also I learnt boundaries and how to say no."

"I've had just over nine months clean," she says. "And do you know it's been the best nine months of my life. Hebron saved my life and I'll be eternally grateful."

Kirsty realises that she was privileged to be able to access the help. She says: "The only trouble is I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for my family, because I couldn't get funding. It would have taken a minimum of five months, and then there would only have been a 50/50 chance of getting into rehab. I couldn't have done it in the community. I just couldn't. I needed to be taken away. I'm thankful that my parents had the savings to put me through Hebron."

The staff team continue to fundraise so that more women can access the support they need to recover from drug and alcohol addiction. On Saturday, October 6 they are hosting a Jumble Sale at Norwich Central Baptist Church.

If you would like to give to Hebron visit: <https://chuffed.org/project/hebron2hebron-challenge> or www.hebrontrust.org.uk

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Small fundraiser has a big heart

Since April, 11-year old **Ashton Holmes** from **Taverham** has invested his time, energy and passion into raising over £650 for the international Christian charity **Mercy Ships** after watching a video about their life-changing work during a holiday in Skegness. **Jenny Seal** reports.

In July, the CE Junior School in Taverham, north-west of Norwich, held its annual Leavers prize-giving. Towards the end of the service the school's headteacher, Mr Stanley, announced that this year they were introducing a special award to recognise the achievement of one of the Year 6 students. The medal, inscribed with 'Taverham Junior School Fundraiser 2018', was awarded to Ashton Holmes recognising his efforts raising over £650 for the charity Mercy Ships.

Ashton, a smart, polite, 11-year old boy who plays clarinet and likes riding his bike, said: "I was really, really happy that they gave me that award."

Ashton and his family, who go to Together Loving Christ Church in Drayton, went to Butlin's in Skegness during the Easter holidays. The holiday camp was playing host to Spring Harvest, a five-day holiday with Christian teaching and worship. Ashton was drawn to a video at an exhibition stand promoting the work of Mercy Ships.

Mercy Ships is a Christian charity which takes a world-class, 80-bed hospital on a ship to developing countries in sub-Saharan Africa. The ship is staffed by volunteer surgeons and nurses from around the world who bring free, first world healthcare to people suffering from diseases and conditions which result from abject poverty.

"I was looking at this video and I was really interested in it," said Ashton. "What I found really sad was that there was a girl just one year older than me and her legs were just completely the opposite way. She couldn't walk. She just had to sit down all day. And they [Mercy Ships] actually fixed it. How do they do that?"

Ashton's mum Sabrina recalls: "We would literally lose him for an hour to two hours each day, because he was there at the stand talking with a member of the Mercy Ships' team."

Ashton continues: "Some people had legs that were backwards, their knees were going the opposite way; some had big tumours on their face. Mercy Ships gives free surgery. They get everyone in a big queue and give free surgery to make everyone feel a lot better. The people can't afford it, but Mercy Ships give them the treatment that they need."

"I was quite amazed at what they could do, so I thought why not help them? I said to the people on the stand that I'd do a fundraiser for them at my school and they were really happy about that."

True to his word, when he got back to school, Ashton spoke about his fundraising ideas to his Deputy Headteacher who gave him the go ahead. Sabrina said: "It literally went from there."

Mercy Ships provided Ashton with a box of 500 charity wristbands to sell plus a PowerPoint presentation. Mr Henman, the Deputy Headteacher, and Ashton used the PowerPoint to lead a school assembly about the hospital ship. Sabrina said: "Ashton didn't really want to do it but he did it." Ashton adds:



"To 400 people! I was a bit stuttery at the start but it was fine."

Clearly with a head for figures, Ashton can recount almost to the last penny how he raised the money. He said: "Just from selling my wristbands I got £264. I sold them for 50p each. I started off with 500 bands and now I've got 37."

Ashton gave up his lunch break for three weeks to sell the wristbands in the School Library supported by his friends, Hugh, Molly and Chloe and the Librarian Mrs Miller.

"I also did a Penny Wars," he explains. "Each class in my school had a jar and from Monday to Friday they had to fill the jar with as many coins as they could to raise the most money. One class raised £13.87 with just silver and coppers. I counted it that day as well at school and had about £150 in total. It took me about two hours!" The winning class received a box of biscuits which a friend from church had donated.

He also sold unwanted items donated by family and during the School's Leavers' Barbecue Ashton had a stand selling wristbands and running games such as 'Balance 20p on the Lemon' and 'Guess How Many Gems are in the Jar'. Many of the children simply donated their 10p tickets to his stand at the end of the event.

Together Loving Christ Church also donated £200 and plan to invite someone from Mercy Ships to attend a presentation service. "It really shows how generous people are and how kind they are," Ashton says, his face lighting up.

His mum Sabrina has clearly been a big support throughout, but Ashton has gone far

beyond what she expected. She said: "I just can't believe that he's actually done it. I really can't. I'm quite astounded by what he's done really. I'm so proud of him. We thought maybe he'd get about £50 or £100."

To date Ashton has raised £661.68 for Mercy Ships.

If you would like to contribute to his fundraising efforts please contact Ashton's mum, Sabrina Holmes by email at dragonflysh.77@gmail.com

In Brief

Archbishop of Canterbury's visit

■ The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev Justin Welby is visiting the Diocese of Norwich for three days in November.

He will start his visit on November 7 by joining an ecumenical act of worship at the Catholic St John's Cathedral in Norwich. Everyone is welcome to attend the event which will start at 12noon.

At 5.30pm the Archbishop will attend Evensong at Norwich Anglican Cathedral followed by an evening of exploration into the subject of reconciliation.

From B

Brazilian missionaries **Paulo** and **Cláudia Mussi** moved from Portugal to North **Norwich** in March, and have quickly got involved in plans to create a new community hub for people living in the Mousehold area. **Jenny Seal** reports.

Paulo and Cláudia Mussi moved to Norwich in March from Lisbon, Portugal, to live as long-term missionaries in the city. Leaving two of their grown-up children, their home of ten years and a successful ministry wasn't easy but they felt drawn to work with Portuguese-speaking people living in England.

Originally from Anápolis in Brazil, the compelling couple, who are full of fun, enthusiastic and multi-skilled, have quickly become an asset to Norwich Central Baptist Church (NCBC), which they work alongside. On arrival the couple moved into the Manse of what was formerly Silver Road Baptist Church on Mousehold Avenue, putting them right at the centre of NCBC's new community project.

The members of Silver Road Baptist Church last year took the difficult decision to close their church, as the upkeep and ongoing responsibility was proving too much for the aging congregation. Norwich Central Baptist Church, based on the other side of Anglia Square, applied to the Baptist Union to take responsibility for the building and they were given it as a resource to serve the local community. In June they changed the name of the building to Mousehold Hub.

Mousehold Hub, just a few minutes' walk from both Mousehold Infant and Nursery School and George White Junior School, is in an ideal location to be used as a community facility. Members of Norwich Central Baptist Church had already been leading a Messy Church there, as well as going into the schools with an Open the Book team, a lunch club and a junior football team. Now they have the exciting opportunity to develop these activities and offer more.

Paulo and Cláudia are an integral part of the team that is now planning how to do that. Paulo said: "We are looking at the possibilities we have to serve this neighbourhood in the best way – not with only something we want to give, but with something they need or they tell us that they need."

In order to find out what that is and to complement existing activities in the area Paulo and other members of the planning team have been attending local events, talking to community leaders and going around key places with a survey to get people's opinions. So far there have been around 75 responses.

Paulo said: "All the answers that we had said 'yes, we want you here, we want something we can use, a place where we can stay and spend a few hours for a cup of tea, a cake or just to chat.'"

"We have some issues here," Paulo said referring to survey responses that point to the prevalence of drugs in the area. "They are big issues that are not so easy to solve. But we can be part of the community to try to give something that helps."

He continues: "The neighbourhood is a multi-cultural place so we have people from different nations and different backgrounds and cultures and languages too. It is very good to walk on the streets here and to hear people talking. When we are looking at the possibility of Mousehold Hub and we are

Brazil to Norwich with love



Brazilian missionaries Paulo and Cláudia Mussi outside the new Mousehold Hub in Norwich.

thinking English classes could be a good thing to serve the community."

Cláudia, who is a naturally talkative person, spoke little English when she arrived in Norwich and her biggest challenge was the fear of saying the wrong thing. Since arriving she has invested a lot of energy into learning the language going to thrice weekly English lessons facilitated by English Plus and Workers' Educational Association in different parts of the city.

Paulo said: "It's very exciting to see how much she is learning and all the effort she is putting in at home, and outside breaking that fear to make mistakes. She is speaking freely and this is very good. She will be very good very soon."

Many respondents of the survey also noted a lack of activities for young people in the area. In August, Norwich Youth for Christ moved into the top floor of Mousehold Hub using it as their office with plans to open an alternative educa-

tion unit working with young people who have struggled in local secondary schools.

In Portugal Paulo and Cláudia were part of their local Youth for Christ organisation. Paulo said: "There is the possibility that we can work with them for the youth of this neighbourhood. We are open to this and we are praying for this. It's a good possibility."

"In such a short time we are committed and involved in so many things," Paulo laughs. Within NCBC he has preached, supported a Bible Society course, joined the leadership team and Cláudia has helped with children's work. Together they have worked on Messy Church at Mousehold Hub and Paulo has joined the Silver Road football team. They also hosted an evening of Portuguese food and football when Spain played Portugal in the World Cup.

Cláudia says: "Sometimes we observe that there are so many areas that Paulo and me can

work at this moment. There are so many opportunities for us." Paulo agrees: "We are trying to step-by-step find our place in the church and not lose our focus on the Portuguese-speaking people."

Their plan is to develop a congregation of Portuguese speaking people that will be part of NCBC. It is estimated that there are around 1,000 Portuguese-speaking people in Norwich but, with no defined community, meeting people has been slower than expected. The couple have started a group that gathers in their home. On the first week, two ladies from Brazil, classmates of Cláudia's from language lessons, came along.

"I got very happy with this," said Paulo. "Because we had nothing and now we have two people. It's a start."

He continues: "I cannot just walk through the streets knocking on the doors saying: 'Hello, do you speak Portuguese? We would like to start a

church here, come on let's go." It's not my way. So I pray 'please bring these people to us, we want to be here for them, we want to be part of their lives.'"

They saw one answer to this prayer when a man named Antonio spontaneously came along to NCBC's Sunday evening service. He had moved from Portugal just three days before. Paulo says excitedly: "When our pastor Mark Fairweather-Tall called me to meet Antonio I looked at his face and I thought 'from Portugal!'. He didn't speak, Mark didn't speak, but I just thought 'Portugal' and started talking to him in Portuguese. That was a good situation."

"We are sure that the time to be here is this time. Things like this fill our hearts with hope that the things will be good."

■ If you would like to find out more, you can contact Paulo at: paulomussi@hotmail.com

GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

Needs a Distribution Co-ordinator

The role involves helping the long-established Christian newspaper reach as many readers as possible, four times a year, by maintaining the current well-established distribution network which ensures that nearly 7,000 copies of each paper promptly reach churches, bookshop and libraries across greater Norwich and surrounding parts of Norfolk.

The quarterly distribution involves collecting the papers from the printers in Thorpe St Andrew, sorting and delivering to a dozen area contacts for further distribution.

Currently each edition takes three to four of hours of planning and communication from home, mainly via email; then around a day collecting and distributing.

Knowledge of the city and the Christian community would be helpful.

You are also invited to attend quarterly editorial meetings with the Good News team.

You need to be reasonably fit to lift the 10kg bundles and have your own transport. We can pay mileage if required, as the role is a voluntary one.

If you share our vision and would like to apply or find out more, please contact editor Keith Morris on 01508 488318 or email keith.morris@networknorwich.co.uk



Ben Bell outside St Stephen's Church in Norwich.

Doodling is art therapy

Norwich artist **Ben Bell** is launching a new group in the old Norwich and Norfolk Hospital chapel encouraging people from the surrounding area to doodle and use art as a way of expressing themselves. **Jenny Seal** reports.

In 2016, St Stephen's Church in Norwich's city centre was asked to run the redundant chapel that had once served the old Norwich and Norfolk Hospital. The Chapel has a long history as a place of hope for people at critical times in their lives. St Stephen's is now turning it into a place of community for people living in the surrounding Fellowes Plain housing development and beyond.

As well as a twice-weekly parent and toddler group, an evening of board games, a community choir and film club, The Chapel is also a place where people can discover new ways to express themselves through art. In September this will be

boosted by the launch of a therapeutic art group, Create, led by artist and mental health professional Ben Bell.

Ben (38) has a degree in Fine Art and additional training in Art Therapy. He is an active member of Norwich's art scene participating in solo and group exhibitions with his own spontaneous form of abstract art painted in acrylics. Ben is also a member of St Stephen's Church and works on a mental health team in Great Yarmouth.

Having run a similar therapeutic art group for Norwich MIND, Ben has seen its value and is excited about the prospect of leading the group at The Chapel. "The idea is to encourage people to express themselves creatively through art, through different styles and techniques," he said. "I find that the more people come the more relaxed they get. Then they usually find it therapeutic and calming."

One of the ways Ben likes to start a group off is by doodling. "The idea behind that," Ben explains, "is that not everyone is confident with art so something like doodling and drawing their names helps people loosen up a bit. It's a good way to start. Most people doodle so it's an encouragement to do art in a non-threatening way. It's also often unconscious or

spontaneous so it's interesting to see what comes out."

The group will also offer participants the chance to experiment with abstract art, collage, still life, poetry and other techniques. "There is like a loose structure," Ben said. "But from previous experience, things just kind of happen. Some people like to do their own thing, some people prefer to have a bit of a task to do and a bit of conversation and you can help them to do something. Some people are more confident so can enlarge the scale and do something a bit more adventurous."

Ben was encouraged to start the new group by Rev Dr Alex Irving, the Curate of St Stephen's, who has been developing The Chapel as a community resource. Alex said: "Create is an important part of what we are trying to do in The Chapel. We are running groups and events to serve the local community and provide a space for people to belong."

The Chapel can also be booked by community groups separate from the Church.

The Create group will meet on alternative Mondays at 2pm-4pm starting on September 24 and is open to anyone. To find out more contact Alex on alex.irving@ststephensnorwich.org.

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From postmistress to church pastor

In 1995, **Tracey Day**, a **Thetford** postmistress, unexpectedly decided to move to Manchester to train to become a church minister. Now, 23 years later, she has returned to the Mid Norfolk town as the pastor of the **Church of the Nazarene**, eager to serve the community. **Jenny Seal** reports.

Earlier this year Rev Tracey Day was welcomed into the role of Pastor at Thetford's Church of the Nazarene. "There was a sense of coming home," she says about the appointment.

Originally from Great Yarmouth, Tracey first moved to Thetford in 1987 with her husband and three young children. She lived in the town for eight years and worked in a post office within a local shop and newsagent's on Admiral's Way.

Soon after they arrived in Thetford, the family started going to the Church of the Nazarene. "I'd like to say I came for deeply spiritual reasons, but I lived just up that slope there," she says smiling and pointing out the church door to a residential estate. "We had three children, aged three and under, and no car. Now I say it was part of God's plan and he clearly knew what he was going to do. But it did have something to do with it being 30 seconds outside my back door!"

The Thetford Church of the Nazarene was built by a British and American 'Work and Witness' team about 40 years ago on the intersection between two housing estates. In the 1980s it had a thriving congregation; popular with US families stationed at the air bases in Lakenheath and Mildenhall.

Tracey started leading the children's work at the church and would occasionally preach. Her



New Thetford church pastor Tracey Day.

husband David, who she met at High School, had introduced her to the Christian faith when they started going out. It was at Great Yarmouth Baptist Church that she first got the opportunity to preach at just 18 years old.

However, it wasn't until Tracey was 33 and voted by the Thetford church to represent them at the Annual Assembly of churches in the District, that she first had the idea of becoming a Minister.

Tracey recalls: "Somebody was preaching and I felt God call me. So I went to the front telling them all the reasons why I couldn't go to theological college – mainly our house wasn't worth what we paid for it and my husband had just been made redundant.

"When I got back from the weekend, I said to my husband: 'how do you feel about moving to Manchester?' (because that's where the college is). And he said: 'Well I might as well be unemployed in Manchester as unemployed in Norfolk.'"

"And to this day I am convinced," Tracey continues still

with a sense of wonder, "that actually he was made redundant in the January, because I was elected just after that to be a delegate to the assembly. Because in all honesty I don't know if I'd have had the faith to move with three children and him in a really good job and to give it all up to move half-way up the country. But I did – he moved with me, we moved to college, he got a job once he was there and I trained."

Tracey graduated from the Nazarene Theological College in 1999 and became a pastor in Bolton for eight years and then led a church in North Wales for nine years.

In 2017, Tracey and David made the decision to come back to Thetford.

Moving further from their grandchildren was a hard decision, and the congregation within the Thetford Church had dwindled, but Tracey is excited about the potential to work with the congregation to breathe new life into what they do and to serve the local community.

"Our congregation is small, but they are willing - they try new things and they are more than happy to get involved," she says with admiration.

Together they have embarked on a relaunch of the church and its activities. The church, which already runs a Family Café, Messy Church and weekly social group, plans to start a parent and toddler group in the autumn, along with a new craft club and a Christianity Explored course. There will also be a relaunch of the youth café that uses the premises and the décor in their community hall has been updated.

On the last Saturday in July, the church held a free Community Fun Day to promote new and ongoing activities. As people eat burgers, chat, do crafts and play on inflatables Tracey draws a crowd by sticking her head in the stocks and encouraging children to throw wet sponges in her face.

It is clear this pastor is up for anything – which may be just what this church is looking for.

www.thetfordnazarene.co.uk

Double success for YMCA Norfolk in youth awards

■ YMCA Norfolk has been named as a finalist in the national Youth Matters Awards in the YMCA of the Year category and in the Best Family Work Project of the Year category.

Over 10,000 public votes were cast to find the finalists who will find out the results at the Awards which take place in London on Friday November 2.

The prestigious YMCA of the Year Award recognises the "hard work and unfaltering dedication" to improving lives in the local community and YMCA Norfolk are nominated alongside YMCA Burton and YMCA East Surrey.

Meanwhile, YMCA Norfolk's work with families going through difficult times has been recognised with a nomination for YMCA Family Work Project of the year. Staff provide a large range of services to match the varied needs of local families, including mediation for when communication has broken down between family members. Although their main focus is always the safety of children involved, they work with whole families to tackle everything from employment, mental health and substance abuse.

Reacting to news of the success, YMCA Norfolk Business Development Director, Jason Beattie, said: "I am delighted that the hard work of our staff and volunteers and their dedication to young people and families in Norfolk is being recognised at a national level. I would like to thank all those local people who took the time to vote for us."

In addition, volunteer Jamie Copping was a semi-finalist in the volunteer of the Year category.

A former YMCA resident in Great Yarmouth, Jamie is about to become a fully qualified archery instructor thanks to YMCA's work with outdoor adventure company Ascend Adventure. He also volunteers with the YMCA garden project, visited Kenya with a group from Norfolk and represented it at a national conference in July.

In the past year 2,047 local people have been supported by YMCA Norfolk, including the homeless and children at risk of being taken into care.

Screwtape Letters

■ Together Loving Christ is delighted to be welcoming Searchlight Theatre Company back to Drayton Hall to performance an adaptation of C.S. Lewis' The Screwtape Letters on October 4 at 7.15pm.

For tickets (£10) ring 07778 065639 or email kiera@tlnorwich.church

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Adventures in a lifetime of trusting God

Norfolk debut author, Pat Eastwell, recounts a story of sitting next to an angel on a bus during a trip to Canada, in her book 'The Trustworthy God', as just one instance of where following God has taken her. Jenny Seal reports.

■ In her 87-page book 'The Trustworthy God,' self-published in February this year, Pat reflects on a lifetime of promptings from God and where these have led her.

After considering a question posed at a conference, Pat realised that she had "learned so much over the course of a lifetime that she could write a book" - and so she did. 'The Trustworthy God'

comprises 22 pithy chapters that focus on facets of God's character and Christian living.

"After 59 years as a Christian, I wanted to share my experiences with others, to encourage and strengthen them too," said Pat.

Pat is from a Pentecostal conservative church tradition and uses the King James Version in her extensive Biblical references. She considers her gifts to be discernment and prophecy, and this ability to hear from God has led her to some curious places. She recalls booking a spontaneous trip to Pioneer, Canada where she was able to anoint areas of spiritual significance and believes she met an angel on a bus during a breakdown.

Other promptings have resulted in her being quietly healed from a gluten intolerance on a plane to Corfu, blessing strangers at a petrol

station at just the right time and leading people to follow Jesus.

Some of her views may differ to those held by other Christian traditions, but her resolute desire to follow God's leading presents a challenge to any reader.

Before Pat retired, she was a Relative Carer Advocate. She is a keen gardener with an allotment and has developed a love of writing about God. She has already finished her second book, a volume of poems and is working on two more.

'The Trustworthy God' is available to buy direct from Pat Eastwell by emailing

lambswhofollow82@gmail.com to arrange payment of £7.50 + £1.26 p&p per book ordered. Pat is willing to give free talks where there is an opportunity to sell her book.

Jane bares soul over baby loss



In the UK one in four women suffer a miscarriage* but the loss is rarely voiced and the grief is surrounded by a lonely silence. After four miscarriages, writer, **Jane Clamp**, has bared her heart and soul to tell her story of loss, grief, and eventual peace, in a bid to help other sufferers. **Sandie Shirley** reports.

Jane, who writes for BBC Radio Norfolk and Premier Radio, lost her babies while trying for a second child 20 years ago. Her heart-felt account: Too Soon – a Mother's Journey Through Miscarriage – a 30-day devotional was published on August 16 by SPCK. It offers hope and comfort with honest and helpful insights to chart a way through the darkness.

Jane went on to have a second child and that was the end of her miscarriages but she recognises that many women never have the baby they want due to recurrent problems and others may even suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

She says: "It was when we started to try to have another baby that our problems began and I had four miscarriages that needed medical help. They were a hideous three years; there were no happy times amid the darkness. There was no moment that I could switch off, it was all I could think about. At the time all my friends looked as though they were growing their families easily – it was unbearable."

Jane, who is also an interior designer and musician, took the decisive and plucky step to write about her experiences after speaking to the charity, Loved, which supports those affected by miscarriage and is initiated by Care (Christian Action Research and Education).

"It was as if God commissioned me to write the book when I heard his unmistakable voice tell me that I could help resource the ministry. It was the first time I thought about writing about my experiences," says Jane, although she had written songs while trying to make sense of the issues.

"The book touches every aspect of miscarriage because, although each woman's experience is different, the issues, questions and worries are the same. The book includes the physical, relational, and emotional fall-out as well as the issues of faith in bite size chapters so it is not a heavy read."

As Jane shares her story she has been able to leave the big questions of faith unanswered and has made peace with God and peace with herself. "As a Christian, I have reached a place of



Author Jane Clamp.

acceptance. It is as though I can look God in the eye and say: 'These are the facts but I choose to say it is well with my soul.'"

She says: "I know God permits things but some of the things he permits I don't understand. My own reason for miscarrying was a hormone imbalance and God could have healed me from that. But although some of the issues remain unanswerable, God gives us peace beyond our understanding even when questions fill the air."

"The pain is still there but it is not infected; it is a clean wound but it still bleeds. And just because you do not meet your child does not mean it's not real," says Jane.

"I hope you can give the book to someone who is not a Christian because it contains information and anecdotes from my story and every chapter has a response," adds Jane who blogs for Network Norwich & Norfolk and the Association of

Christian Writers.

Counsellor, speaker and writer, Jennifer Rees Larcombe has written the book's foreword which includes: "I don't believe anyone can understand the pain of a miscarriage until they have had one themselves. If it is followed by several more it becomes unbearable, yet so often there is no-one you can trust to share the depths of how you feel. That is why this book is so powerful. Jane understands exactly through her own personal experience."

* www.tommys.org

■ **Too Soon – A Mother's Journey through Miscarriage** (a 30-day devotional) is available from SPCK (ISBN 978-0-281-08028-1), price: £9.99.

■ **TimeNorfolk – The Pregnancy Loss Charity** provides free, confidential help and support to anyone who has experienced pregnancy loss through miscarriage, termination or stillbirth. Helpline: 01603 927487

Buy direct from the author



'The Trustworthy God'

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PENNIES
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Obtainable from Jarrolds, online at www.amazon.co.uk or signed copies direct from the author (£10, free p&p) at barrie@barrielawrence.com

Pennies from Heaven - how to get them and use them

■ “Money, Money, Money”, a popular song by Swedish pop legends Abba, is back on the air-waves with hit film ‘Mamma Mia! Here We Go Again’ and Norfolk author, blogger and storyteller Dr Barrie Lawrence addresses the subject in his new book Pennies from Heaven.

The Abba lyrics tell of working hard, never having enough money, and dreams of living in a rich person’s world, all themes Barrie covers in his new book Pennies from Heaven – How To Get Them and What To Do With Them.

Straightaway Barrie says: “We all need it” and goes on to state, “We cannot separate finances from the rest of our life”. This new book tackles austerity, giving, spending, borrowing, saving and prospering from a Christian perspective, illustrated by candid stories from his own life adventure and practical aspects gained from studying and practicing Biblical truths.

Readers will need to be prepared for Barrie’s challenges with heartbreak, wealth, financial devastation, time, relationships and “I would never have dreamed of the wonderful surprises that lay in store for me.”

“We were created for success. We were intended to be healthy. We were given the destiny of prosperity. Prosper the Biblical way, from the inside out,” says Barrie.

He has cultivated an attitude of gratitude and fulfilment. He warns “if you chase after wealth you will end up a disappointed person”, but chase (seek) after God and “you will know a joy that gives strength during life’s darkest hours, and which will bring satisfaction in this life, way beyond anything that you ever thought possible.”

Barrie gives examples of others who live out Biblical prosperity, both receiving and giving generously. Barrie and his wife Wendy describe giving “as an expression of love and gratitude and give because of relationship” – with God, themselves, others known to them or not known such as the hungry and oppressed.

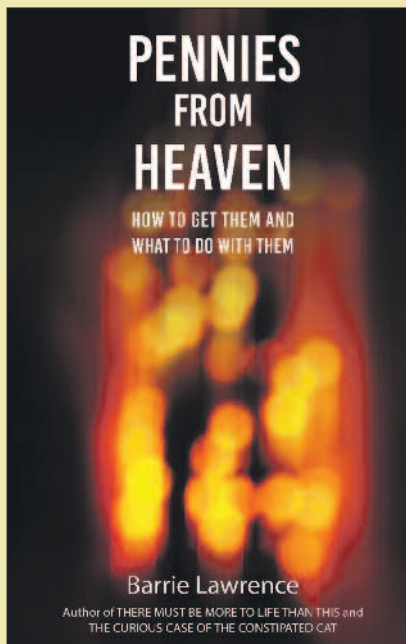
The penultimate chapter is entitled “Be Happy!” Joy and fulfilment are gained through giving generously and making it a lifestyle.

“Giving time, giving attention, listening to people, giving friendship, and giving money. And if we give as God gives, and as Jesus taught, we will be blessed...and will have happiness and joy of a quality previously unknown.”

This book is something of a departure from his five earlier titles, in that it is more serious, but does include brief stories from his dental career. The style, empathy and honesty and practical wisdom should appeal to his growing following of loyal readers. Overall this book makes for a worthwhile and reflective read on a subject which affects every one of us.

Available from Jarrolds, www.amazon.co.uk or signed copies direct from the author (£10, free p&p) at barrie@barrielawrence.com.

■ Review by Kevin Gotts



Author Barrie Lawrence.

Sarah provides a lifeline to many

After a serious illness, Sarah Hobday’s doctor issued a dire health warning – she would only regain 65 percent of her energy. But after a year of rest, journaling and prayer, Sarah had the direction and enthusiasm for a new beginning. She trained as a counsellor – providing a lifeline to many on the brink of despair – and opened her own practice at King’s Lynn this summer. Sandie Shirley reports.

Sitting with someone for an hour a week can be life-changing. They can turn their lives around when hope sparks in their eyes through revelation,” says Sarah.

“I love to see people who were hopeless, lost and overwhelmed see new opportunities and no longer need counselling because they have got the job, made the move, or experienced the breakthrough they needed.”

Sarah’s counselling career came after struggling with isolation and helplessness during ME/CFS when she was forced to give up her job as a nursery nurse. “When I wrestled with ME I was so tired I could not pick up the telephone and speak to someone and I longed for someone to sit with me and listen.

“As a nursery nurse, I would get alongside struggling children to help them find solutions, now I am doing something similar with adults which I love and see as a privilege.”

Sarah’s training at the London School of Theology and Waverley Abbey College in Surrey included a practical placement in Norwich. Three years on she is ready to receive clients at the King’s Lynn Innovation Centre and pass on her knowledge to organisations and other counsellors in the county.



Counsellor Sarah Hobday.

“During my time at the London School of Theology I learnt a lot of sound doctrine and background to spirituality – invaluable for understanding the struggles that are peculiar to Christians. But although I

am a Christian counsellor, I want to be able to offer excellent care and provision to everyone.”

Sarah continues to volunteer as a counsellor one day a week for a charity in Norwich which

welcomes clients referred by charities and organisations, as well as self-referrals. Clients may be facing relationship issues, crisis situations, anxiety and depression or seeking reconciliation for past decisions explains Sarah.

Other clients may be homeless, unemployed or disenfranchised and feel their lives are over as they struggle with identity, addiction and mental health issues.

“When someone is unemployed, long-term, there is enormous pressure on them to apply for around 24 jobs a week which is a huge burden especially if they failed at school or have dyslexia. Often the job of a counsellor is to sign post clients to other agencies as well as, or instead of, providing counselling support,” says Sarah. “I might be the first person to have heard that person’s story and therefore the first person to identify patterns or issues which may be impacting the client’s ability to move forward.”

“In King’s Lynn there are a number of charities and organisations providing frontline support for those with mental health issues which indicates the need for support, and I’m excited to be a part of the community.”

Sarah has a diploma of higher education (DipHE) in integrative counselling and is continuing her studies to become a supervisor and tutor. Contact Sarah at King’s Lynn Innovation Centre, Innovation Drive, PE30 5BY, email: sarah.hobdaycounselling@gmail.com tel: 07565 768163

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Beachlife participants on Sheringham beach and, below, a family tide fight. Pictures by Gareth Gabriel <http://filmmand.photo>

Life on the beach

YMCA Annual Celebration Ball

SPROWSTON MANOR HOTEL
FRIDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2018
7 FOR 7.30PM

3 COURSE DINNER
DANCING TO WAPSCALLIONS
CARRIAGES AT MIDNIGHT

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YMCA NORFOLK

YMCA

A family tide fight, sand modelling and junk boat making were some of the fun activities on offer at the popular **BeachLife** youth activity outreach put on by Sheringham churches at the end of August. **Tony Rothe** reports.

This was the seventh successive summer that BeachLife has taken place, and each year the event has built on the success of the previous years with well over 200 children and young people taking part.

A joint venture by the churches in Sheringham, it is aimed at engaging with local youngsters as well as holiday-makers. Despite wet weather on one of the days, all the events took place as planned, and there was a good deal of sunshine during the week. This year, for the first time, there was a pop-up café offering free teas and coffees to parents of the children who were attending.

Peter Skivington, one of the organisers, said: "There are nearly 60 volunteers on the team, and it's great to see how so many different people from the town's churches work together as a great team to share the Christian message with the youngsters in the glorious setting of the clifftops and beach in Sheringham." The activities each day

included the "Beach Special", where all ages came together at the cliff-top marquee on The Leas for music, games, drama and fun, and to introduce the day's theme, which this year was Mega-Makers, based on Scripture Union holiday club material. The gunge tank returned this year, with at least one leader getting covered in slime each day.

The mornings also included the "Going Deeper" sessions where the children and young people split into age-groups to explore that day's theme in more depth before breaking for lunch.

The afternoons comprised a family tide fight, sand modelling, junk boat making and racing, beach games and giant inflatables. The week was rounded off with a family picnic on the Friday. Evening

activities for young people included the return of the popular "Sheropoly" trail around the town and swimming at the local Splash pool.

Peter said: "We've had a fabulous week, with the opportunity to impact over 200 young lives with the message that Jesus loves them and cares about them. That has to be worth celebrating."

Next year's outreach is expected to run from Tuesday August 27 to Friday August 30, 2019. But Sheringham youngsters will not have to wait until next summer to continue the fun, as the team are already planning for a Light Party at the end of October, and another "BeachLife Extra" Fun Day during the February half term.

Visit www.sheringham-beachlife.co.uk

