

GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

Harvest 2009: FREE

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Good News for Norwich expands to also cover Norfolk

■ Tabloid ecumenical Christian newspaper **Good News for Norwich** has been rebranded as **Good News for Norwich & Norfolk** from this edition. It has a new look and is spreading its wings to cover a wider area of the county in response to readers who completed a recent online survey of the title.

Good News for Norwich has been published since 1992 to help provide an information service and resource to churches across greater Norwich as well as provide a means

for churches to reach every home in Norwich at Christmas.

The online survey of readers backed the current tabloid format and the publishing schedule of three times a year. But almost three quarters of respondents said they would like the paper to cover adjacent areas of Norfolk as well as greater Norwich.

Over 80% of survey respondents said that they read most of the stories in the paper and news and people stories are their favourite

parts of the publication, followed by event listings, feature articles and adverts.

Almost 90% of respondents said they think the paper informs and keeps the local Christian community up to date and 81% said it is a useful evangelistic tool, while 54% think it gets different churches working together and fosters a sense of unity. Some 68% of people are happy to distribute the paper within their church and 60% outside the church to friends, neighbours

and work colleagues.

If you are a church which does not currently receive copies of **Good News** and would like to arrange a time and place to collect receive free copies in future, please e-mail Peter Barnes at 113041.1117@talk-talk.net or on 01603 743786 and tell him where you are and how many copies you would like.

If you would like to tell us what you think of the new look, or have a story, e-mail editor Keith Morris at keith.morris@networknorwich.co.uk

■ in brief

Foodbank project moves forward

■ A church-backed crisis food bank project to offer emergency food parcels to needy families across Norwich has moved several steps forward, with a core team appointed, donations coming in and a name decided.

A small core team, led by Transforming Norwich development officer John Betts, has begun the work of setting up the Norwich Foodbank, linked to 40 similar projects through the Christian-based Trussell Trust organization.

An anonymous donation of £1000 has already been received to start the work and an open meeting was held on September 15.

Foodbanks provide three days of emergency food to individuals or families in real crisis, before the statutory authorities can get involved.

Food is collected from churches, schools and outside supermarkets when shoppers are asked to buy one item from a list. It is then gathered into a central warehouse and sorted for use. Food is allocated on a voucher scheme basis and collected from centres where clients are also offered advice from experts.

Following an open meeting in Norwich in May, addressed by Trussell Trust network manager Jeremy Ravn, a core team, from a number of different local churches, has been formed to move the project forward.

The project is being backed by Transforming Norwich and John Betts said:

"There has been a good response and enough interest locally to move it forward. In the present economic situation with a credit crunch in full flow, many people are now finding themselves in difficulties and looking for support.

"There is an opportunity being presented to the church to respond and to see if they want to get involved."

Jeremy Ravn helps support and co-ordinate up to 40 Foodbanks across the UK and between them they have fed over 24,000 people in the last year.

He said: "Recession means more people who would never have thought they'd need help are hitting a crisis, forcing them to go without food. The UK public is beginning to understand hidden hunger in the UK and, through the foodbank project, is responding to meet this growing need."

Contact John on 07906 197430 or on 2john@johnbetts.fsnet.co.uk

New staff needed for Good News paper

■ Earlier this year, Peter Barnes who for the past 17 years has chaired the production team and dealt with advertising and distribution of **Good News for Norwich**, indicated his desire to hand over these responsibilities after publication of the Harvest '09 edition.

We are now looking for one or two people to take on the Distribution and Advertising roles. If you would like to know more, please contact Peter in the first instance either by telephone (01603) 743786 or email 113041.1117@talktalk.net

Family on the road blazing gospel trail

By SANDIE SHIRLEY

When the Brights hit the tarmac on two wheels it is often a family affair. Greg with wife Julie and their two young boys blaze a gospel trail as members of the Norwich Christian Motorcyclists' Association (CMA).

The Norwich couple, who met as missionaries in Beijing more than 15 years ago, bought their first bike in China. It cost them every spare penny but birthed a new ice-breaking mission on their return to England that has touched hardened bikers and old ladies alike.

Since meeting and tying the knot, life has been chequered, challenging and exciting as the couple have stayed the twists and turns on the road of faith. "We have had a lot and we have had nothing; we had joy and we have sorrow," explains Greg.

"God's the God of the split second timing. He has been there for us in dangerous situations. He knows the details of our lives. We know he is real, cares and provides – even though it may be at the eleventh hour – giving us the word of our testimony," says Julie.

Travelling by faith has been the fuel to their gospel message which is not exclusively for bikers. "Our bikes have helped to make our message accessible, breaking the ice with all sorts of people," says Julie who replaced one biker's request for the Koran while he was in prison with a Biker's Bible – a New Testament with countless amazing stories from global bikers.

For Greg, his mission has even helped clinch a life-long dream for one elderly woman when she rode pillion on his Harley Davidson during a summer fete appearance. It provided a ride of a lifetime and the chance to distribute another Biker's Bible which CMA members are committed to placing into the hands of every UK biker.

The exploits on two wheels have often includ-



The motorcycling Bright family with their bikes.

ed sons Tommy and Joel, who ride in their father's side car. They have visited appropriate bike meets and runs, including the British Motorcyclists' Federation annual event in Peterborough and the Eastern Lights at Lowestoft.

"Together with other biker members, it has provided an atmosphere to anchor, grow and share their faith and also to see them walk in the works God has prepared for them," says Julie whose family are also members of the

Sidecar Federation.

The couple's union has been forged against the odds. They lived in different compounds on opposite corners of the sprawling city of Beijing, governed by Communist rule, when American-born Greg met his future English bride. They worked for the same mission organisation, teaching English to help empower the Chinese, but they came from different cultures. He was a divorcee and she was single, ■ continued on page two

GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

■ Good News for Norwich & Norfolk is published by Festival Norwich, 48 St Giles St, Norwich, NR2 1LP.

■ 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 and distribution: Peter Barnes (01603) 743786

■ Editor and design: Keith Morris

■ Writers: Peter Barnes, Kevin Gotts, Mike Wiltshire, Sandie Shirley.

■ Printed by Archant Print.

■ The majority of Norwich churches are solidly behind the aims of Festival Norwich which is to give every person in greater Norwich the opportunity to respond to the good news of Jesus Christ and to bring the message of Christ to bear on the social, cultural, educational, industrial and professional life of the city.

In order to facilitate the communication of these aims and to improve the exchange of information, the Festival board decided to publish a periodical newspaper to keep the Christian churches, organisations and associations informed.

Leaders and church members are invited to send information on forthcoming events and short articles (with relevant photographs) relating to the demonstration of the Gospel in social action, community care and evangelism generally.

This will not only encourage those Christians involved in similar activities but also inform leaders in other churches who are contemplating similar forms of outreach.

■ The deadline for material for the Christmas 2009 issue is Friday November 6.

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Family blaze a trail

■ continued from page one

but a divine call brought them together despite a 1,000 km separation, north of Korea, for much of their courtship when Greg took a teaching post in Changchun. Money was tight, danger and hardship were rife but they married in August 1994 during a fleeting return visit for the ceremony at City Church in Norwich, where Julie was a member.

They returned to Norwich 13 years ago but the transatlantic culture divide meant Greg – a teacher in the States – was unable to use his qualifications at English state schools.

A succession of jobs followed, including door-to-door sales for frozen food, until he became a course advisor and won the top award in East Anglia before the company folded and he lost his lucrative salary. Instead, Greg became a house husband, looking after two young sons while Julie retrained as a primary school teacher while she juggled an MA course and a language club business from home.

"It does not matter what you have or don't have in your life, it is what you do with Jesus that decides where you spend eternity," says Greg.

Norwich CMA meet monthly at the Racecourse Inn, Salhouse Road, Norwich from 6pm on the third Wednesday of the month. Enquiries to: 01603 495277.

We are all in the world's richest 1%

■ Christians are encouraged to be prudent, modest and not given to excess but we are equally commanded to be adventurers, forward thinking, entrepreneurial risk takers in faith. This can be a challenge when the media abounds with stories about the credit crunch and dire warnings of more budget cuts.

Fortunately we do not venture alone. Christ the Lord has specifically promised "never to leave us or forsake us", no matter how bad it gets or more surprisingly how bad we get at following him. He does however warn us against the vain imaginations "that can cause distress and even anxiety". Despite the gloom, real or imagined I remain confident that there is a divine plan and purpose and nothing escapes his compassionate gaze.

Consider for a moment. Every person living in Norfolk is part of the world's richest 1%. You are in the world's top 100. Richard Branson may have a few more bank accounts, foreign homes and the odd private jet but he is still in the same 1% as you and I. Compared with the hundreds of millions on this planet we are fabulously wealthy.

Consider again the life and variety of our faith community. A sign of its health and vibrancy is that our leaders are not satisfied



John Drake,
former chief
executive of
YMCA Norfolk

with current growth but want more. They are pioneers not settlers.

Recently churches in Norfolk received a visit from officers from HM Treasury wanting to understand how churches in Norfolk had turned their buildings into activity centres for the benefit of the whole of the community. The report makes interesting reading. However the men from the Treasury were even more stunned to discover that the Norwich faith based community was generating and investing over £60 million in capital new building programmes to serve the people of greater Norwich.

Recently Councillor Steve Morphew, Leader of Norwich City Council and I were asked to convene a dialogue between the City's planning department and at least six church leaders who all wanted to extend or build new

premises. The dialogue is on-going and the prospects for new growth are increasing.

In addition to the long established churches, Norwich also is enriched by at least four African worshipping communities, two Chinese churches, a Portuguese Christian community and the long established Greek Community, and more are emerging.

Only last month, 7,000 young people gathered at the Norfolk Showground to worship God and to work in the community for a week. The youngest member of the House of Commons, our newly elected MP Chloe Smith lent her support. Wally Webb from Radio Norfolk broadcast live from the site. Yet another solid reminder that each generation "is not be left without witness".

The leaders of the faith community across our City are diverse, different shapes, different sizes, colours and personalities. They are all beautifully different. They may have different understandings of what are God's priorities but they all share a common commitment to those they are called to serve. They know there are challenges ahead that will require divine guidance, courage and humility, but they are the ones called and chosen and therefore they will be equipped for the challenges of our times.

Susan set to make drama out of a crisis

By SANDIE SHIRLEY

Susan Rose is young, dynamic and brimming with confidence. She launched her Christian drama healing ministry for women 18 months ago in Norfolk after God took her from breaking to making point to remove the emotional baggage that was holding her back.

At nearly 25, she confesses to being unique, random and radical as well as a pioneer to release women's hearts. Through her Drama Healing Ministry she touches the deep issues of rejection, abuse and low-self esteem that affect thousands of women in today's church as she gives her inspiring testimony, drama and talks. "I want women to be warriors for God and reach their full potential. So often they are not all they can be because of past hurts," says Susan.

"I have not been to Bible School but I talk from the heart," says the woman who has appeared at dozens of conferences and women's meetings across Norfolk and spoken on national Christian radio.

"I have had the privilege of talking to hundreds of women. I am seeing tears and pain resurface after years or even decades. One woman in her sixties broke down, speaking about the pain from a divorce that she had carried for a long time. I have been likened to a wooden spoon – stirring up the hurts of unresolved issues to see them dealt with through the prayer team that are always on hand where I speak."



Susan Rose.

She encourages others "to remove their masks and be real" when she reveals her former self – a woman who enjoyed social drinking with friends and suffered broken relationships with men. The latter has meant pressing through disappointment, difficulty and rejection. It took four tough, lonely years of facing truth, heartache and embracing her own identity and spiritual potential for God to reinvent her life and use it for others.

"I think I am the most unlikely candidate imaginable for this but it is God's work and I am seeing the fruit of it," says Susan.

Fresh out of university with a drama degree, she struggled to make sense of her life and who she was after being consumed by the characters she played on stage. "I appeared confident but deep down I was insecure and quick to conform to the expectations of those around me. I did not know what I was worth in God's eyes, since it is difficult to receive his acceptance when you have been rejected."

"I applied for work with Christian drama groups, but found I was running before I could walk. The foundations of my life were broken and needed to be restored. Now I realize that I could never be used to help others unless I had experienced the things I went through," says Susan who bases her ministry on clay jars containing treasure (2 Cor 4: 6-7).

Years previously Susan admits she wanted to tread the boards and be famous. Today she has a different stance: "I can use my drama to touch many women through God since I have learnt to be confident in front of an audience, which is vital. There is light in women's eyes as the release of my testimony is like a key to unlock their hearts."

The work has escalated. From a few simple sketches performed at Dereham Baptist Church, Susan is looking to work with Pregnancy Crisis centres and enlarge her mission across the county and UK. For more information: email: suzerose@btinternet.com, www.dramahealingministry.co.uk.

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■ **MURAL MASTERPIECE:** group of Norwich youngsters had such a good time over the summer, that they spent the whole six weeks at their school – the Open Academy at Heartsease. The nine-strong group painted two giant murals at the Academy, with the help of Mik Richardson, a Norwich based graffiti muralist, as well as taking part in DJ, radio, gang culture and drug workshops, visiting the

Garage Theatre to write, rehearse and perform drama and leading a bingo session at a local old people's home. Organising the group of 12 to 15-year-old Open pupils was new YMCA Norfolk Right Direction key worker Dena Al-Nakeeb, who started work with the YMCA Norfolk Schools Team, along with three others, in June. She said: "During the school holidays, I deliver a programme that

encourages the young people to take part in positive activities which are designed to increase self-esteem, teamwork skills and respect for themselves and others." "The Right Direction Programme and the support of Dena has made me aspire to gain the qualifications to go to university and really make a difference to my future lifestyle," said 14-year-old Jonny Hartle.

Tim takes over as YMCA chief

Tim Sweeting has taken over the reins as the new YMCA Norfolk chief executive, following in the illustrious footsteps of John Drake, who retired from the post in July after 30 years of service.

Tim was formerly Development and Partnership Manager at West London YMCA. He also holds several national posts within the YMCA movement.

But Tim, aged 32, already knows and loves Norwich, as he is a history graduate of the University of East Anglia and it was where he began the journey of his Christian faith, a discovery that has changed the rest of his life.

He went from a carefree student who planned to work in a bank to someone determined to help young people who had not been given the opportunities in life that other people take for granted.

He began with a voluntary role looking after a house of six 16 and 17-year-olds with drug or mental health issues and, after "an interesting and eventful year", he forged his future career in the YMCA.

He was employed as a support worker at a 150-bedroom direct access hostel in Walthamstow, which he found "hugely rewarding", and after helping youngsters there, he moved to Ealing with his wife Anna, 30, to set



New YMCA Norfolk chief Tim Sweeting.

up ChristChurch, a Newfrontiers church which is run in the Piccadilly Theatre on Sundays and now attracts up to 600 young people.

He said: "I joined the YMCA as a support worker to help young people in pretty extreme circumstances. We deal with people that have been through things that would make you wince – things that we would never want our children to have to experience, including prostitution.

The 32-year-old, who enjoys playing a variety of sports including football, and has a two-year-old daughter called Sophia, plans to focus on making sure the accommodation offered is of the highest quality and increase the

quantity to meet the increasing demand they are currently experiencing because of the recession.

"We need somewhere else for people to move on to, like rented accommodation, so they can become more independent," he said. "We cook for them here and they have to share bathrooms and so on. But the problem is that there are more young people than there are places."

Tim said: "I am really excited by the opportunity to lead YMCA Norfolk forward and build on the great work John has done. I am passionate about delivering the highest quality outcomes for young people and I eagerly anticipate working with the trustees, staff and key stakeholders to achieve this in a way that retains YMCA distinctiveness.

"I am also looking forward to playing my part in the Christian community both in my work and personal life."

YMCA Norfolk chairman, David Ingham, said: "We are delighted to have appointed Tim from a very strong field of candidates. He has spent all of his working life with the YMCA movement.

"We're confident that he will work well with the existing team to strengthen and develop the Association of which we are so proud."

■ news in brief

Norfolk Christian website named as best in the UK

■ **Network Norwich & Norfolk** has been named the best regional church website in the UK in a prestigious new national web competition organized by Christian Aid and The Church Times.

The Surefish.co.uk 2009 Church Website of the Year Awards recognise the best local, regional and national church websites, as well as the best blog, youth website and most innovative site.

The Norfolk-based Christian community website beat off competition from The Dioceses of Manchester and Leicester to win the coveted title of Regional Church Website of the Year.

Website editor Keith Morris (right) collected the award in a ceremony hosted by Songs of Praise TV presenter Pam Rhodes at Christian Aid's London HQ with John Betts, development officer of Transforming Norwich, one of many partner organisations that the website works alongside.

The website was judged on its design, ease of use, navigation, images, content, engagement with visitors, use of technology and regularity of updates. Judges said of the Norfolk website: "It has original content, is useful to the community and is consistently updated with regular new content. It is a friendly, informative, interactive and well-structured site."

Keith, who edits the website, alongside web officer Helen Baldry, said: "It is great to get national recognition for our website as we are always looking to develop, innovate and move forward in our work trying to help all parts of the local Christian community connect and communicate both within its different parts and with the wider communities in which they operate.

"Our expansion to cover Norfolk as well as Norwich has obviously paid off and more and more people are visiting and contributing to the website every month," said Keith.

"However, we do not intend to rest on our laurels," he said. "We are always looking for new ways to help serve the local Christian community, such as our new e-ticketing facility and carrying more audio and video reports. We are always looking for new partners and are happy to talk to any Norfolk-based Christian groups who want us to help them communicate what they are doing more effectively."

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Inside and outside the Open Youth Venue and, right, project director Russ Dacre.



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Open venue fulfils a six-year dream

The cavernous former Barclays Bank building on Bank Plain in Norwich has been transformed into a mind-boggling series of fantastic facilities for young people to use with the assurance that it is a drug, alcohol and tobacco free zone.

A 1200-capacity concert venue, a night club with room for 440, the tallest climbing wall in Norfolk, a dance studio, media suite, café and health centre are all included.

All the facilities and contemporary design has been heavily influenced by a team of local young people to create a vibrant and welcoming space which cannot fail to be attractive to young people looking for something to do or somewhere to just hang out.

The project is one for the whole community and Graham and Russ Dacre are careful not to label it as a Christian one, but both have a strong altruistic faith which has motivated them to keep going over the past six years.

Project director Russ explains: "While I was working in Barbados in 2001, I felt a personal calling from God to come back to Norwich and set up an alternative to the drug and alcohol culture for young people. I then went on to do my youth work and ministry training and worked with a lot of young people in Norfolk."

"So providing the venue here, and getting it open, is a massive achievement personally for me and is fulfilling what I believe God has asked me to do."

The Open journey began back in 2003 when the former Barclays Bank building was bought by the Lind Trust and handed over to the Open Youth Trust. Since then the Trust has been involved in a number of youth-related

The pioneering, state-of-the-art £12m **Open Youth Venue** in Norwich city centre, is set to fully open its doors to young people this autumn; the result of six years of planning, dreaming and building by Christian entrepreneur **Graham Dacre**, his son **Russ** and the **Open Youth Trust** team. **Keith Morris** was given a sneak preview.

projects including the SOS Bus, which provides a mobile safe haven for young people in difficulties after a night out in Norwich.

In 2006, the Open Road motor project was launched, which has a workshop kitted out with the latest equipment to provide a professional training experience. More recently the H2O premier car wash and valet service was established to offer a certificated valet training course for young people.

Back in 2003, the Trust set up a youth forum to involve young people in the strategic development of the youth venue involving 42 young people aged between 13 and 25. A core of 15 to 20 are still involved and have been consulted on all aspects of the project, including appointing the architects and examining their plans.

The Open team is already working with a number of partners to provide services for young people including Connexions, the Princes Trust, the

Matthew Project, City College and Children's Services central area team.

Others including Norwich Youth for Christ, the Pregnancy Crisis Centre and the Primary Health Care Trust are also talking about partnerships and the Open team is looking for more groups to work with.

"We are a grassroots community project and would love to see churches involved in what we are doing," said Russ.

There is a phased opening of the facilities until the official launch on October 22. The main hall and night-club opened with a SNAP summer night-club party on August 28, followed by regular SNAP events every few weeks, and most of the other facilities will open during September in time for the new school term.

Rachael Murray is marketing and events manager at the venue: "This is a building of so much potential," she said. "And now we just want to see that realised through good partnerships with organisations that are already doing great work."

"We think that young people will discover that when they come in here to do one thing, they will see something else that inspires them to have a go at something they won't necessarily have thought about trying," said Rachael. "We want it to become a young and vibrant community for them to explore, where they can meet people who enjoy similar things and have a great time."

"It is a totally inspiring space," she said. "I think that the first year of Open will be about us putting our toe in the water to see how young people want it to develop, and in five years' time we will be where everyone wants it to be."

web link: www.open247.org.uk

NEWS

Norwich & Norfolk Christian job opportunities at www.networknorfolk.co.uk

500 enjoy family fun

■ Space hoppers, sack races and sizzling burgers were all part of a family fun day staged by Earlam Christian Centre in Norwich recently.

More than 500 local people turned up for the event, with the promise of free beef burgers for all – in the grounds of Earlam Christian Centre.

Sports and races featured among many outdoor activities at the popular annual family event.

"We want to show local people that church is a fun place to be and never boring," said Pastor Paddy Venner.

More than 23 nationalities are represented at the family church, located on the western side of Norwich. www.eccnorwich.org.uk



■ news in brief

New church is launched in city

■ **NORWICH:** A new church has been successfully launched with a Summer Sizzler fun day attended by around 300 people and a first Sunday service.

Queenshills Community Church in Costessey near Norwich was launched on the Bank Holiday, August 31, with a Summer Sizzler which turned out to just that, very hot.

Free vouchers for a barbecue and drinks were given out to visitors, and over 240 people attended the event. There was also a 60-strong team from QCC and the Taverham Evangelical Church, which has planted the new congregation.

TEC minister, Vic Ready, said: "The day started with prayer at 9am, at 10am young people from TEC's youth ministry Soaked went out into the community to encourage the local community to come along.

"By the start time of 12 noon, people were beginning to flood in and they mostly stayed until we had the dedication service at the end of the event. After a few songs from the QCC band and words from myself and Marie Hobbs, the prayer of dedication was given by David Weeks from the Assemblies of God Regional Leadership team."

To end, 500 balloons were released with the name of the church on them to finally launch the church.

The first Sunday service was held at the new Queenshills Primary School at Costessey

On Sunday September 6, attended by 35 people. It was led by Marie Hobbs whilst Vic Ready preached on 'Go into all the World'.

I would like to thank all the many people who have helped us with equipment, finances, advice, and prayerful support over the last year to encourage us to make this happen.

YMCA's £4m plan

■ **NORWICH:** YMCA Norfolk's Board has given the go-ahead to explore a £4m plan to redevelop the rear part of the current YMCA accommodation on St Giles Street in Norwich and build 40 self-contained flats for young homeless people.

The development would see part of the current buildings on the Bethel Street side demolished, leaving the frontage on St Giles intact. The new facility would provide move-on accommodation to help prepare young people for independent living.

"We are very excited by the potential to develop more supported accommodation for young people in Norwich," said YMCA Norfolk chief executive, Tim Sweeting.

"We are seeing an increase in the numbers requiring our services and we are committed to doing everything we can to help young people when they need it most. This housing will provide young people with crucial move-on accommodation from our Central YMCA facility and allow us to help a much great number of young people."

Each self-contained flat has a living room/bedroom, a kitchen and a bathroom. There will be shared communal facilities such as a lounge, and somewhere to provide training in life skills such as cooking and IT. The YMCA will also provide support staff who can give advice and guidance on work and training.

Dereham Street Pastors

■ **DEREHAM:** Street Pastors in Dereham, led by Lyn Milns, have gained much respect locally for their part in diffusing disturbances in the Toftwood area caused by a gang of youths stoning houses, impeding progress of vehicles to attack them and causing other forms of distress to residents.

"The strong local feeling led to over 200 residents overflowing a meeting with the council and Police," said Paul Rendell of Norfolk Street Pastors. "As a result the Street Pastors took in the area as a part of their patrols and were able to communicate with those youths involved and the area rapidly calmed down. Licensees have since been welcoming and enthusiastic."

Big plans for Forum event

By MIKE WILTSHIRE

Following the success of this year's Church Community Action Fair at the Forum in Norwich, an even larger city-wide event is planned for next June.

Outdoor music and drama at the Forum's amphitheatre, plus an even larger display in the whole of the Atrium - these are some of the attractions planned for 2010 by Transforming Norwich, a collaborative group that brings together churches, Christian charities and Christian groups across the city.

"Yes, next year's fair will be even bigger – we are looking for more partners to bring together to this united June event," says John Betts, development officer of Transforming Norwich.

Planners are hoping for a series of concerts at other city venues, plus a gala dinner for leaders in all walks of life across the county.

This year's first-ever Christian fair at the Forum brought together 16 groups with the united theme: 'What we do when it's not Sunday.'

Civic leaders and local government departments have long recognised the value of volunteer agencies and church groups. Transforming Norwich also aims to break down the barriers between churches and "help them on the ground with whatever they are doing," says chairman Rev Nicholas Vesey, vicar at St Luke's. Transforming Norwich is involved in many initiatives, including a city-church dialogue between faith leaders, government ministers and council leaders.

A new venture is the Norwich crisis food bank to bring food parcels to needy families. This project, launched at New Hope Church, is

linked with 40 other food banks through the UK's Christian-based Trussell Trust.

Bishop Stephen Lowe, Bishop of Urban Life and Faith, speaking at this year's Community Fair at the Forum, challenged Norfolk churches and Christian groups to grasp the increasing opportunities which the economic downturn has produced. With major cuts predicted in public expenditure, the help provided by the wide range of social action groups is becoming more vital than ever, he said.

The Lord Mayor of Norwich, Councillor Evelyn Collishaw, and her consort Vic Hopes, met the exhibitors at a civic reception. Displays were arranged by All Saints; All Hallows; YMCA Norfolk; the Salvation Army; Christian Aid; Pregnancy Crisis; Call to Prayer; the Christian Motor Cyclist Association; FGBMFI; NYFC; CAN; the Matthew Project; the Magdalen Group; Norfolk Street Pastors; NCRC; Network Norfolk and the HTB Marriage Course.

For details on how to partner with the 2010 Fair, contact John Betts on 01603 861181.

Couple are back

■ **NORWICH:** Missionary couple Simon and Melissa Snell and their children have returned to the UK from their 18-month placement working with vulnerable communities in Bolivia. Simon was with Christian relief and development organisation Food for the Hungry, working with rural businesses to help people get out of poverty. Melissa was working with a pregnancy crisis centre and running sex education and antenatal classes.



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FEATURE

UEA ■ Christian Union provides wide range of activities and even Norwich offers warm welcome



Whether you simply need help finding a church in **Norwich**, want to meet other Christians on campus, or are interested in becoming involved with campus-based ministries, the **UEA Christian Union** is there to help. International secretary **James Powell** reports.

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At school, I often thought that whoever was willing to give up a lunch time for a Bible study must have overbearing zealous parents. Understandably then, for me CU was rather a low priority.

Being one of only a small handful that left my school to go to a sixth form college for A Levels, I figured I would finally try a CU out. If initially because it helped fill the time between

looking forward to the start of term, and I am on the CU committee. For various reasons, my outlook on life has been changed over the last few years and CU has certainly played a major role. The founding purpose of the Christian Union is to support Christian students on campus. Personally, I have found them invaluable.

Most UEA students live at or near the university. We are around other students nearly all of the time. As a group who love Jesus Christ, we try and support each other in living for Him on campus. We desire to bring glory to God's name by living lives that demonstrate that we are saved by Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. We want to transform our university by telling others of the amazing message of His love and ultimately seeing people won for Christ at UEA.

Although as students we feel it is appropriate to pray together and find out more about God and the Bible's relevance to us on campus, the CU is not a church. We encourage members to find a church that they can attend regularly. The CU is affiliated with many of the churches in Norwich with different styles of teaching and worship. If you would like to find a church, we would love to help introduce you to someone you can go along with.

Listed, right, are details of some of the events and ministries the CU has planned for the year ahead. To find out more about UEA Christian Union, or how to support us, please check out our new website at www.ueacu.com or email us at ueacu@hotmail.co.uk.

lesson four and lesson five, although eventually I came to enjoy being involved. However, following taking a gap year by the time I arrived at UEA two years ago, I was rather apprehensive about getting involved with a CU again. I guess I was concerned what my only friends in Norwich at the time, the house mates I had met only a couple of days earlier, would think. Eventually, I concluded at very least there was no harm in meeting a few people outside of my University Village flat. Put simply, I have few regrets.

I can imagine you may be wondering why I am telling you this. Well two years on, I am about to start my third year, I am actually

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ts for University of East Anglia students elcome



Pictured left and below are UEA CU students enjoying a whole range of activities.

regular meetings

■ Main Meeting

The CU meets every Tuesday evening at 7:30pm in Congregation Hall for a time of prayer, praise and teaching. This is non-denominational and we welcome suggestions for new songs or more time for reflection. All are welcome, although we acknowledge this may not be the most appropriate event to bring any non Christian friends along to.

■ Action Groups

These are small groups that meet on campus at different times during week. The groups meet to follow a Bible Study programme, discuss and pray as relevant to each group. Each team is encouraged to have a mission focus and aims to carry out an outreach event or mission related activity each term.

■ World Café

The UEA CU supports Friends International (Norwich) at their meetings every Friday evening throughout term time. The World Café is designed to introduce international students to British culture as well as encouraging the sharing of their own. A Visa course is also run for those interested in an introduction to the Christian faith. Contact: Angela Leeding at angela.leeding@friendsinternational.org.uk

outreach events

■ CU Football

The CU is part of the Norwich Church Football League and has both a men's and women's team. Both teams hold regular practice session, play inter-church matches, and hold social events throughout the year. The CU is proud to say that the men's team won the Bishop's Cup Final last season.

■ International Cafe

The CU is aware that it has limited contact with the growing numbers of international students on campus. We hope to host a lunchtime event sometime soon to meet with international students and get to know them.

■ Mission Week

As a CU we look forward to holding a week of events each semester to make a special effort to share our faith with others. These include Lunch Bars, a free lunch with a talk and discussion. In the past there have also been evening events such as an Acoustic Evening.

autumn events

■ CU Cocktail Party

By annual tradition the CU organises a formal cocktail party at a respectable evening location in Norwich. This is primarily a way of meeting new students in a relaxed atmosphere and an event that friends can be invited along to. As a Christian witness all attendees are encouraged to conduct any drinking responsibly.

■ Houseparty

A weekend retreat to get to relax, socialise, as well as challenge one another's Christian growth. Entertainment has been known to include playing Jenga, Spoons, and watching Lion King! Exotic locations vary depending on availability, previously hosted in sunny Cromer and brilliant Great Yarmouth.

■ Church Meets

During the first few weeks of term we know it can be hard finding a church. Therefore we invite freshers to a BBQ where local church leaders give a minute's pitch about their church. On Sunday mornings we will meet freshers at the on campus café 'Zest' so they can go along to a church with students who regularly attend.

■ www.ueacu.com



Conference move

■ **DITCHINGHAM:** The Community of All Hallows (CAH) has agreed to transfer its Conference Centre at Ditchingham on the Norfolk/Suffolk border into the hands of the Christian Conference Trust (CCT) from November 1.

The Centre, formerly known as St. Gabriel's, is to be re-named "Belsey Bridge Conference Centre" as it lies adjacent to the Belsey Bridge road. All existing bookings will be honoured and

the staff will transfer with the Centre, ensuring continuity.

CCT is taking on the lease of Belsey Bridge for a minimal "hazelnut" rent and All Hallows is putting £100,000 into the initial launch programme and refurbishment. CCT have agreed to continuously improve and invest in the Centre over the period of their tenure, using resources generated from guest revenue.

The Christian Conference Trust already runs the centres of High Leigh, Hoddesdon and The Hayes. www.cct.org.uk

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Safe play is vital in Africa

Norwich Christian student Deborah Smith spent two weeks this summer helping to build a colourful new playground at a special needs school in Uganda.

Deborah, from Holy Trinity church in Norwich, spent the fortnight at a school in Jinja with a new charity called East African Playgrounds, whose vision is to give communities a playground and create a safe place for children to play.

"Charity founders Tom and Carla see play as vital in children's development, physically and socially," said Deborah.

"The kids out there were fantastic. They were so excited by

us being there and spending our time on building the colourful and exciting playground for them.

"The school we worked at also catered for special needs children, which is rare, and we incorporated play equipment that would benefit and stimulate them as well, which was exciting. To give these precious children something fun and purely for them was a privilege and I loved living in the school and making hopefully lifelong friendships with the people we met."

The long-term plan for the future of the charity, is to set up the play equipment so it generates electricity and pumps water when it is being used.

www.eastafricanplaygrounds.org



Deborah Smith gets some help building the playground in Jinja.

Chris was man of great faith

■ Tributes have been paid to workplace chaplaincy leader and Norwich Area United Reformed Church minister Chris Warner who died on May 21 from an asbestos-related illness aged 61.

Chris was team leader of Good Work (Norfolk and Waveney Industrial Mission), former Industrial Chaplain in Great Yarmouth and Director of Community Connections.

Since he took over at Good Work, around three years ago, he also served in a half-time capacity as a Strategic Team Leader with the Norwich Area United Reformed Churches.

Chris had formerly served with Salford Urban Mission and in South East Manchester and leaves his wife Kath and two sons Peter and Nick.

Barry Capon, Chair of the Good Work Board and Joint Church Meeting Convenor of the Norwich Area URC, paid tribute to his colleague:

"Chris was a man of great faith and of enormous energy and enthusiasm who delivered great improvements for many people by using his drive and encouragement to help, and even push, others to doing what was needed.

"We will all miss this significant member of our Christian community."

Paul Whittle, Moderator of the Eastern Synod of the URC said: "Chris was well known for his exciting and excited approach to ministry. He was a great innovator and often, and in many ways, challenged us all."



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"Inheriting a New Dawn"



Taking time to just listen



Sister Pamela and the community dog Matthew.

■ An oasis of peace and quiet in the very heart of the busy and noisy city of Norwich is offered by nuns at the Julian Shrine. KEVIN GOTTS reports.

■ Official figures have revealed that complaints about noise have increased fivefold since the 1980s with our ears getting an unprecedented battering from mobile phones, music systems, increasing traffic and noisy neighbours. Where is it possible to find some peace and quiet, before it takes a serious toll on your health and happiness? I asked a nun for some guidance.

Sister Pamela from the Anglican Community of All Hallows, runs All Hallows House, a busy guest house, alongside the world renowned Julian Shrine off Rouen Road in the heart of Norwich. "We offer an oasis for people to recharge their batteries, to be still and pray to hear what God is saying to them," she says.

All Hallows House normally accommodates 6 to 8 people from teenagers and beyond, offering bed and breakfast, an evening meal with areas to relax and a Chapel.

"We welcome people from all

denominations, businesses and those who are just seeking. They can choose their own programme, whether a quiet day from 10am till 4pm or up to a week. While they are here they can spend quiet time in the Julian Cell, garden, Chapel, house or their own bedroom," advises Sister Pamela.

"A guided retreat is available where I can lead them, pray with them and share passages of scripture," she says.

Guests comments include, "A real joy, an oasis of calm, prayer and welcome". And from a Canadian – "Thank you for a peaceful and powerful stay."

So how does Sister Pamela relax? "I have space with the Lord before the busy day, which I need in order to give to others. Occasionally I can take time out at the Convent."

Her underlying message to our busy world is: "We are human beings and not human doings. We need to take time to listen as our world is so full of noise. Then we will know that we are 'enfolded in God's love' as described by Julian of Norwich."

More information can be found by visiting www.friendsofjulian.org.uk

NEWSNorwich & Norfolk Christian job opportunities at www.networknorfolk.co.uk

7,000 youngsters celebrate their faith

By **KEITH MORRIS**

Newday, the well-known annual summer Christian youth festival organized by the New Frontiers group of churches, set up camp at the Royal Norfolk Showground near Norwich for five days in August. It is aimed at 12-19 year olds and attracted 7,000 young people (double the numbers from its launch five years ago), including visitors from Japan, Portugal, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, France, USA and the UAE.

They filled the vast Showground site and brought with them the largest Big Top tent I have seen in my life, as well as bumper cars, a climbing wall, skate park, cafes, chill-out zones and an obvious enthusiasm for both their faith and for putting it into practice.

Thousands of the youngsters took part in social action projects right across Norfolk during the day including running skate parks, free car washes, holiday clubs for senior citizens, kids holiday clubs, cafes, fun days, litter picking, fence painting and garden tidying. Their efforts have been widely recognized and welcomed by local MPs, councillors, Police and residents.

Religious belief, instead of being a hindrance, is instead the motivation for these young people, as Joel Virgo, from the Newday team, explains: "We want to give young people the opportunity to roll their sleeves up, get their hands dirty and really show something of the love of God in practical ways. That can involve all kinds of things; picking up litter, painting fences and clearing up neighbourhoods."

"Newday is very much in favour of 'rational enquiry' encouraging the young people to investigate the claims of Christianity for themselves, to engage first hand with what the Bible teaches and to think how faith makes sense for young people in 21st Britain," said Joel.

Morning seminar with topics such as "Pray Life a Gladiator!", "Jesus and Dating" and "Broken Britain Needs some Mending", provided plenty of food for thought.

And the enthusiasm shown for social action was also in evidence when thousands of the young people packed the Big Top in the early evening in a rock concert type atmosphere to dance along to lively worship songs amidst the flashing lights and then to hear from well-known youth preacher and Soul Survivor leader, Mike Pilavachi.

A larger than life figure, Mike spoke about the Holy Spirit and the revival which began with the Wesley brothers in Fetter Lane, London in 1739. Mike quoted John Wesley as writing:



Pictured at Newday is the main stage, some of the 7,000 young people and Mike Pilavachi.

"About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy and many fell to the ground."

Mike held his young audience spell-bound and when, at the end, he offered to pray for youngsters to receive the Holy Spirit, hundreds instantly filled the aisles. So many came forward that the large ministry teams were overwhelmed.

But despite a two-and-a-half hour session with Mike, the night had barely begun with the youngsters spilling out of the Big Top to fill the music and karaoke bars and cafes, non-alcoholic of course, or ride on the bumper cars or do a

spot of abseiling.

The evening was rounded off by a bouncing, jumping set from Christian hip-hop band 29th Chapter. Or at least I think it ended there, as I made my way home with the site still buzzing with activity and happy, excited, young people everywhere.

And the only Policeman I saw all evening was the one on stage praising the litter picking and fence painting from earlier in the day.

Definitely worth checking out if you are young enough, as they will all be back for the next two summers.

www.newday.xtn.org
www.thisislife.org.uk

news in brief

Centre faces financial crisis

■ **THETFORD:** A Thetford centre that has helped hundreds of women and young girls deal with pregnancy crisis, post-abortion stress and miscarriages, is now itself facing financial crisis.

Reflections - the long-held dream of its Christian founder who suffered an unplanned pregnancy as a teenager - is strapped for cash for the first time since opening eight years ago.

The Centre provides informed choices and specialist counselling for families within a 20-mile radius of Thetford and Bury St Edmunds in Suffolk.

Office manager Lucy Venn said: "We are reaching out to needy people and helping them make headway. We don't wear labels - we are not pro-life or pro-choice - but pro-woman."

In line with increased client volume, Reflections is also looking for prayer, counselling, administration and public relations support. There is an open invitation to visit the centre if people are interested. Contact: 01842 750075 or 0800 028 2228.

Graduates lead Norfolk church

■ **YARMOUTH:** The Salvation Army in Great Yarmouth is under new leadership with the appointment of a newly ordained couple who speak of God's calling to ministry at a young age.

Lieutenants Georgina and Rob Symons succeed Captain Nigel Byrne, who has been the local leader since 2004. It is the Symons' first appointment since graduating from The Salvation Army's theological college this summer. They were recently ordained and commissioned as ministers of religion, officers in The Salvation Army.

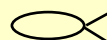
Rob, 33, says: "I was very happy at work as a training consultant in a bank... home, family and being part of The Salvation Army church in Oldham where I grew up. Gradually, after our 4-year-old daughter Naomi was born, something began to stir inside me. I felt there was more for me to do. I knew I had to serve the community."

Burnley-born Georgina, 30, sensed her destiny before her career as a district nurse even got started."

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African vision gets Frank in saddle

By SANDIE SHIRLEY

Seven years ago Frank Nantongwe left his native Malawi to start a new life in Norfolk, but his compassion for his homeland has never waned.

The data officer has turned visionary and pioneer for his beloved homeland. He has helped provide clean water, education and a bumper harvest as well as the first communal transport to save and empower 500 villagers from the poor farming community his grandfather grew up in.

With major backing from his church in Wymondham and the wider community, Frank has generated new enterprise and funding for Chapita, the peasant village he first visited as a boy when he was sent to help his grandfather.

"The transport scheme in particular has been revolutionary," says Frank, who believes he is privileged to speak about the plight of his kinsfolk who live in mud brick huts without electricity or running water.

He has seen both young and old (including residents at Ryrie Court and students at Eccles and Kirkley High Schools) catch the vision for the society that has no commercial enterprise and state welfare to offset the problems of drought and crop

failure. "I have visited schools, churches and women's groups in a bid to raise awareness and it never ceases to amaze me how important it is to them to do something to help," says Frank.

School children have financed the livestock scheme while selecting names for the goats they bought for the villagers. The Nantongwe family's church – Wymondham Hope Community – provided £1200 for fertiliser to promote the current harvest after the Malawi Government withdrew their aid package. There has also been provision for a much needed emergency fund.

Frank is seeing the practical out-working of the projects he highlights, but he is currently on a knife-edge, awaiting the Malawi Government's decision concerning a fertiliser subsidy for the next harvest which is key to the villagers' survival.

"Providing food for the village is a priority so the money that is generated will have to plug any financial shortfall before the investment and expansion of other projects," says Frank.

Five specially adapted bicycles are saving the lives of children, pregnant mothers and malaria victims by enabling mercy dashes to the nearest hospital nearly ten miles away. With an additional £500 investment from his church, the bicycles have been the



Two of the specially adapted bikes.

answer to an impossible three-hour walk along dusty tracks in soaring temperatures.

The successful pilot scheme took off after Frank saw the perfect

prototype modified to carry a passenger or heavy load. "A welder living near Chapita had developed the design for transporting his family. It met the criteria I had been

looking for after seeing a similar project in East Africa," he said. Within a year the welder was employed to modify the bicycles that are also hired out to provide a maintenance income.

They are available for the sick and pregnant women, since the maternal and infant mortality rate is high in Chapita. Traditional birth attendants normally deliver babies in the village but a hospital delivery is safer explains Frank.

The bicycles are also used to ease the workload of women who carry 20 and 30kg bags of maize on their heads. Now the 20-mile round trip to the mill, where the cereal is ground into flour, is undertaken by eager young cyclists.

Frank is heartened by the project's success, which inspired neighbouring villagers. Ideally, he is looking to add a further five bicycles.

Sponsors have also backed the growing livestock project. Fifteen months ago three goats, including a breeding pair, were bought for one village family. Now two new kids have helped kick-start the project. "Goats are disease-resistant and easy to look after, roaming free-range after the crops are harvested. They provide meat, milk and fertiliser," says Frank who would like to see each family own a pair of goats.

Contact: fnantongwe@hotmail.com

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Shocking tale of a Norwich teenager

■ Norwich author Maria Landon has released her second book which continues the shocking story of a young girl forced into prostitution on the streets of Norwich by her own father, and her painful journey to escape her horrific childhood and build a new life for herself and her sons.

Escaping Daddy, is the sequel to the best-selling Daddy's Little Earner. Maria's dad was a pimp, living in a world of thieves and street-walkers. Her mother, tiring of turning tricks for her husband, walked out, leaving the children in his chaotic, violent and sometimes cruel care.

By the age of nine, Maria's father was abusing her and getting a prostitute friend to dress her up in stockings and make-up. By the time she was 14 he was selling her on the streets of the red light district in Norwich.

At 15 she ran away to King's Cross with an older lover who turned out to be just another pimp. Furious at losing a nice little earner, her father involved the police and both he and the other man were jailed for living off Maria's immoral earnings. Only then could Maria escape her traumatic childhood and follow her dream of becoming a mother.

Escaping Daddy, tells Maria's story as she tries to rebuild her life. Determined to escape from her past and be the best wife and mother she could possibly be, Maria throws herself into her marriage.

But it is never that easy to escape from

such a traumatic start in life.

Maria tells the story of her marriage into the gypsy community and the emotional demons that rise up from her childhood to haunt her as she becomes the victim of violence once more. She leads the reader through her own personal and inspiring journey out of a nervous breakdown, through two marriages and on to becoming a personal development teacher, helping many others to overcome their past, and a strong, empowered single mother of two boys.

Maria said: "My healing journey has been an experience that has overwhelmed me many times and has evolved over many years. I am deeply passionate about personal development and growth. I truly believe that with the right help and support anybody can overcome childhood trauma and



Maria Landon.

the devastating effects that it can have in our adult lives.

"I find great inspiration from people who have been through awful experiences and have managed to come out the other side and lead happy rewarding lives. If sharing my experiences and the steps I took to heal myself inspires anyone to help themselves out of the pain, then I have achieved what I set out to do.

"It is not an easy road, but it has been the most rewarding of my life. I have had to learn to love, respect and forgive myself, I have had to learn to love, respect and forgive others but most importantly I have found myself. I am a very happy woman, I love being me.

"This second book focuses much more on my healing journey and although I still went through some very tough times, I hope to explain the steps I took to recover from my very painful childhood. Hopefully this book will help us to understand why people turn to self destructing habits, but more importantly some ideas of what we can all do to help and support each other.

Maria, who still lives in Norwich, worships at Proclaimers Church and is getting involved with the Christian Magdalene Project which works with prostitutes.

Escaping Daddy is published by Harper Collins, RRP £6.99, available from bookshops and supermarkets.
www.marialandon.co.uk

events in brief

Find out if soul gamble pays off

■ **NORWICH:** The theatre company that brought The Cross and the Switchblade, The Hiding Place and The Screwtape Letters to Norwich, is returning in October with their production of Faustus. Adapted by Richard Hasnig from Christopher Marlowe's classic script, this incredible play is being presented at the Norwich Playhouse as you've never seen it before.

The theme, based on the words of Jesus 'For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?' is played out when John Faustus is offered a deal; Whatever he desires can be his. All he has to give in exchange is his soul.

Faustus accepts the deal and enjoys his newfound power, wealth, celebrity, women and drugs. It all comes so easily but as his time runs out, Faustus knows he has made a mistake. Can he be saved or has he just lost the biggest gamble of his life? Find out by coming to The Norwich Playhouse at 7.30pm on October 28 and 29. Tickets priced £11 (£9 concessions) from Box Office 01603 598598.

David visits Norwich

■ American-born, Jerusalem-based journalist David Dolan will be coming to Norwich on Tuesday October 20 as part of a nationwide tour organised by Christian Friends of Israel. The meeting will be at 7.30pm at Norwich Central Baptist Church, Norwich NR3 3AP.

Having lived in Israel since 1980, Dolan has carefully researched and developed his answers with the eye of a journalist and the heart of a believer. He has reported for CBS Radio News since 1988, and is a frequent guest on many radio and television programs.

New history of Norwich churches is published

A new history of Nonconformist churches in Norwich has just been published with the sale proceeds going towards the building fund at Witard Road Baptist Church.

Who Do You Think You Are, is written by Norwich-based former Baptist minister, prison chaplain and professional musician Ted Doe.

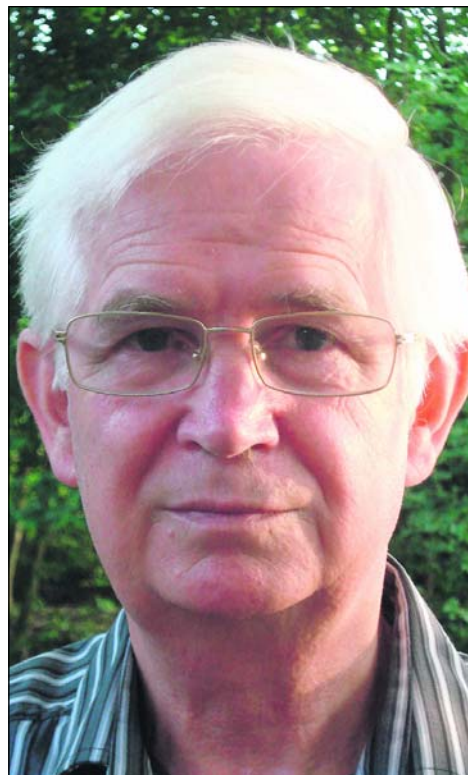
Written from a Baptist perspective, the book covers some general Baptist church history including the Anabaptists, the general Baptists and the particular Baptists. New Testament references, the Reformation and the rediscovery of the New Testament church in the 16th Century are also looked at.

The first appearance of Baptists in Norwich itself was in 1669 when the Bishop of Norwich reported an "illegal" group of about 30 Anabaptists, rumoured to be meeting somewhere in the city. In 1686, Thomas Grantham from Lincolnshire planted the first recognized Baptist church, St James' at White Friars.

Ted continues the history of Nonconformists in Norwich throughout the 17th and 18th centuries including Presbyterian, Independent, Quakers and latterly Methodist congregations alongside various types of Baptists.

Once legally recognized, Nonconformists started taking a leading role in political and social issues of the day, including the provision of education, firstly through Sunday School, and were behind the launch of a local weekly paper, which in 1870 became the Eastern Daily Press.

In the 1851 Census of Religion, greater



Norwich author Ted Doe.

Norwich counted 41 Anglican churches and 36 others within its boundaries.

In 1882, General William Booth visited Norwich and a Citadel soon opened. The

arrival of Pentecostal and Charismatic churches during the last century is also covered and there are entries on Congregationalists and Roman Catholics. The history includes references right up to 2008.

Author Ted Doe became a Christian following a relay of Billy Graham's Harringay Crusade in 1954. He spent 20 years as a professional cellist, first with the Welsh Guards, then with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and later as a freelance player in London. He then abandoned his musical career to spend nine years as a psychiatric nurse.

In the mid-1980s, after attending a theological seminary, he came to Norfolk as Pastor of Neatishead Baptist Church. From 1992 to 2003 he was employed as a cello teacher in local schools. During this time he was also a voluntary worker with the Prison Christian Fellowship, and since 2003 he has been an Assistant Chaplain in Norwich Prison.

Over the years Ted has been involved in the life of various Nonconformist and Anglican churches. For the past nine years he has been a member of Witard Road Baptist Church and is a local historian.

Although written from a Baptist viewpoint, this book should also be of interest to others outside that particular churchmanship.

Who Do You Think You Are, costs £5, and is available from various local churches as well as the Norwich Christian Resource Centre and its online shop at www.norwichchristian.co.uk
Review by Keith Morris

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network **norwich & norfolk**

An upto date list of events for the Norwich & Norfolk Christian community can be found at www.networknorfolk.co.uk

Rev Pat Atkinson at the new day centre in Mavelikara.



Adopt Indian granny

By SANDIE SHIRLEY

The life blood that surges through Rev Canon Pat Atkinson's veins is as rich and sure as ever. Despite hardship, sacrifice and a clash with death, there are tears of joy as yet another dream comes true for the poorest of the poor in India who she lost her heart to 20 years ago.

In Mavelikara, a picturesque rural backwater 3,500 miles from Calcutta, a native volunteer has nailed a sign over the front door of a building that nears completion. It reads: "Son Behold Your Mother." The words Jesus spoke to his disciple John as he hung on the cross, mindful of leaving his mother alone without care, have issued a practical response in this part of the Third World. A long needed Christian centre for elderly women - many abandoned grandmothers - opened this summer. It provides food, shelter and medical care - but most of all love.

The Vidiyal Trust - a charity registered both in India and the UK - is heralded as a life line for the women in their fifties and sixties who were close to starvation. The paddy fields that provided work all their lives were no longer viable after salt water contamination from the Tsunami disaster. With no hope and little food, they were left alone and wasting. Said one elderly recipient: "All of our lives it has been so hard but

now God has sent people to love us in the last days of our life."

The centre, which doubles as a children's home for up to 250 boys and girls, comes in the wake of the on-going generosity of Norwich Diocese church supporters who have fund raised and "adopted a granny" tens of thousands of miles away.

The new centre can provide day care for up to 25 elderly women with visiting support and meals for those who are too sick to attend. "The roof has just gone on, the tiling is being completed and the huge kitchen and dining room will supply food for adults and children," says Pat, also Chaplain at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital.

"It is a fulfilled dream but it is only the sponsors who have made it possible. Without money the dream would never have happened, so they are the heroes in all this," says Pat, who has seen lives transformed through regular, monthly financial commitments.

Pat Mother - as she is affectionately termed by hundreds of Indians - has been welcomed with open arms during her 35 visits. Her vision for the elderly came dur-

ing her initial call to the country's slums 19 years ago. She learnt that 500 old and destitute women rake through the city rubbish tips for scraps to survive and saw the plight of two unforgettable women.

"One walked two miles to the local hospital with a chest infection and headache to buy one antibiotic and one painkiller. Returning home with all the medicine she could afford, she divided the tablets into four so it would last longer," says Pat.

"Saari would spend hundreds of hours looking for discarded old combs to wash and sell for less than two pence each. It did not take much for me to buy her two boxes of combs to sell but I was questioned why I had bothered by the man who had watched her hardship for years. After replying that she was old and poor and I wanted to give her love, he promised to take care of her," says Pat.

"Love is the key," says the MBE recipient who has gone to extraordinary lengths to help the frail and ailing.

"I have a love hate relationship with India. I love the people but hate the poverty," says Pat who has seen her founding Trust prosper with four additional Indian churches as trustees and complete transparency as a charity.

www.vidiyaltrust.com

events in brief

Church celebrates

■ A growing Norwich church, which is in the middle of building a 250-seat hall, at a cost of £700k, is also celebrating its 50th anniversary with a weekend of events in September.

Work has started on a new 250-seat church hall for Witard Road Baptist Church in Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, to allow the growing fellowship to expand its activities and services.

The whole project will cost around £700k and the existing building will remain and be refurbished to be used for other outreach and community activities.

Meanwhile, the church will be celebrating its Golden Anniversary on September 26 and 27 with a cream tea with past ministers, a This is Your Life evening and an anniversary celebration.

On Saturday September 26, at 3pm, there is an Informal Cream Tea at Witard Road Baptist Church with the opportunity to meet and greet past ministers, friends and members. They are expecting to welcome Rev Arthur & Mrs Mary Herrington (1959-1961), Rev Malcolm & Mrs Joan Piper (1967-1972), Rev & Mrs Michael Lamb (who served during a period of interregnum), Rev Stephen & Mrs Kath Jackson (1982-1988), Rev David & Mrs Linda Parsons (1990-1997), together with a number of founder members and friends. Admission is free, but tickets are required in advance.

At 7pm there will be an Evening Buffet including 'This is Your Life WRBC' in the Marquee at The Oaklands Hotel - Tickets £11.50 available from the Church Office

At 10.30am on Sunday 27 September, the Anniversary Celebration Service will take place at WRBC with Rev Richard Lewis, EBA Regional Minister.

For more details contact the Church Office: 01603 701502 or office@witardroadbaptist.org.uk



TBWNN to play in Norwich

■ Popular Christian band, thebandwithaname (pictured above), will be performing at Norwich Cathedral on October 23 in an event organised by the Church of England Youth Task Force.

The band have performed in front of thousands of people across the world, and their energetic performances always push back the boundaries both spiritually and musically TBWNN translate their individual experience of a relationship with Jesus to this generation.

Danny Doran-Smith, Youth Task Force Member, said: "thebandwithaname are arguably the most requested Christian band in the UK right now, and we are excited to be able to bring them to Norwich Cathedral this year".

The band is playing at Norwich Cathedral. Doors open at 7pm, DJ from 7.30pm, TBWNN from 8pm, cost £10. You can buy your tickets online from: www.networknorwich.co.uk/shop

news in brief

New youth worker Paul

■ **NORWICH:** Paul Goode has been appointed as youth worker by Ipswich Road United Reformed Church in Norwich.

During the coming months he will be working to develop and sustain the youth and children's activities at the church. He will also be establishing links with local youth and children's groups and become involved with the local schools.

Paul has been involved in youth work for the last 10 years, having worked for Greenwich Youth for Christ, YMCA Norfolk, and working with churches on both a voluntary and paid basis. Paul has a passion for empowering young people to evangelise to their peers.

New leaders in Sheringham

■ **SHERINGHAM:** The Salvation Army in Sheringham are under the new leadership of Majors Ian and Isobel Robinson who have over 30 years' ministerial experience across the world.

The Scottish-born couple have led Salvation Army churches in California and Singapore and also managed a nursing home in Singapore. Ian has also served as a national leader for The Salvation Army across Singapore, Malaysia and Myanmar (formerly Burma).

The Robinsons succeed Majors Adrian and Beth Maddern, who have been leaders in Sheringham since May 2003, in mid August.

Prior to training for Christian ministry and becoming Salvation Army ministers, Ian worked in the airline business in airports in Glasgow, Heathrow and Los Angeles, and Isobel, 53, was a registered nurse.

Priesthood for ex-Canaries star

■ **NORWICH:** A former Norwich City, Manchester United and Northern Ireland football star is reportedly swapping his football kit for a cassock.

Midfielder Phil Mulryne, 31, is to begin training for the priesthood, it has been reported.

It is understood he has been invited to take holy orders by the Bishop of Down and Connor and that in seven years he could be ordained as a priest in the diocese.

His mother, Sally, confirmed her son's vocation to a Sunday newspaper, saying that it was a "big decision" for him but that he would be starting at the end of August.

Mulryne, who won 27 caps for Northern Ireland and scored three goals, joined City for £500,000 in March 1999 from Manchester United and made 178 appearances for the Canaries, scoring 20 goals.

Julian for the high jump

■ **CROMER:** Julian Bryant, Director of the Christian based organisation, The Matthew Project, took to the skies of Norfolk on July 25 to do a tandem skydive to help raise £3,000 for The Junction, the project's drug and alcohol centre based in Cromer.

Since opening in September 2007, The Junction has been making a difference to the lives of people and communities in North Norfolk affected by drug and alcohol misuse. The charity provides support through one-to-one sessions, home visits and assessments and referrals to other agencies.

The Junction was threatened with closure earlier this year due to financial difficulties. Further funding was secured but the charity still needs to raise £30,000 - £40,000 per year to keep it going. Julian, along with other workers and service users of The Matthew Project are doing the skydive to help raise this money.

By-election hustings in church

■ **NORWICH:** Transforming Norwich held a public hustings on the eve of the Norwich North by-election to give the candidates a last chance to sway the voters and the voters a chance to ask their questions from a faith perspective.

Around 60 people attended the meeting at Norwich Central Baptist Church, which was chaired by the Venerable Jan McFarlane, communications director for the Anglican Diocese.

Candidates present were: April Pond (Lib Dem), Craig Murray (Put an honest man into parliament), Rupert Read (Green), Chloe Smith (Conservative) and the Labour party was represented by MP for Lowestoft Bob Blizzard due to the absence of Norwich North candidate Chris Ostrowski due to illness.

Chloe Smith went on to win the election the following day.