

GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

Spring 2020: FREE

Inside

Literacy plea: 2
Debt counselling: 4
Freedom bid: 5
A real life-saver: 6
Community cafe: 9



A team from Gateway Vineyard ready to clear rubbish from Mousehold Heath.



Project aims to combat loneliness

A national initiative to address social isolation and loneliness has launched in Norfolk and is looking for churches and Christian agencies to work with it to address the issue.

■ Charity Linking Lives UK, which has already established projects in over 30 towns and villages across the country, has identified Norfolk as one where older people are particularly at risk of social isolation and loneliness due to various factors including health, age, marital status and household size.

The charity, founded in 2016, focuses on reducing social isolation and loneliness among older people through befriending programmes in partnership with local churches and Christian organisations.

Linking Lives UK has successfully secured funding for an initial period of three years to develop befriending projects in Norfolk where there is both demand and little existing provision.

The project will involve research in the early stages to ensure that the work is co-ordinated with current activities and groups in the region. There are also plans to explore opportunities for inter-generational models of practice which can then be used in other areas.

A Regional Development Worker has been appointed to establish the charity's model of partnership within Norfolk. Angela Caley, a West Norfolk resident, took up the post in February.

■ Story continues on page eight



Angela Caley.

Church starts Lent kindness revolution

Schools, hospitals and care homes are just some of the many parts of the community set to benefit from a Norwich church's 1000 Hours "revolution of kindness" initiative during Lent. **Keith Morris reports.**

For the third year in a row, Gateway Vineyard in Norwich and Beccles is aiming to clock up thousands of hours of acts of kindness, from church members, school pupils and anyone else who wants to join in.

Project co-ordinator, Marc Lillystone said: "There is a real drive today for people to be kind to each other. For us, we see this as what we are called to do by Jesus who said to

love one another and be kind to each other.

"We want to have an impact in our community across Norfolk and also now North Suffolk. We can do that with simple things such as smiling, leaving thank-you notes, handing out chocolates as well as some bigger projects as well.

"This year we are doing a project with Norfolk and Suffolk Mental Health Trust – because they do an amazing job and we just want to thank them. As part of that we are trying to write personal notes for 2,000 people to say we appreciate what you do.

"The number of hours is not important, what we really want to see is more people getting involved and doing different things and the ripples of it, as we know that kindness is infectious in a good way."

Some 700 pupils from four Norfolk and Suffolk primary schools have joined the initiative this year.

Marc said: "The focus for 1000 Hours in schools is to do acts of kindness at school, at home, in the community and ninja kindness – secret acts where no one knows it was you. We give each child a kindness passport they can fill out with details of the acts of kindness they complete."

Kinsale Infant School in Hellesdon, Worlingham CEVC Primary School in Suffolk, Trowse Primary School and Coltishall Primary School are all taking part.

Acts of kindness

■ Free haircuts for children were added to the usual free clothes and equipment for young families which Gateway Vineyard's Growkids project offers every week in Norwich.

■ A group of 30 adults and children from the church descended on Mousehold Heath in Norwich on

March 7 to clear many bags of rubbish from the local beauty spot.

■ Bin men in Beccles and Marlingford received thank-you notes and bars of chocolate from grateful householders who are members of Gateway Vineyard church.

■ A free afternoon tea was served to delighted residents at The Cedars sheltered housing complex off Newmarket Road in Norwich on February 29 by adults and children from Gateway. Volunteers prepared and served the tea of sandwiches, cakes, scones, tea and coffee to around 15 grateful residents.

■ Making muffins for people living rough on the streets of Norwich was how four-year-old Hope decided to join in the 1000 Hours "revolution of kindness" project from Gateway Vineyard.

Asked why she did it, Hope said: "Because they must be cold and I think they would like muffins."

www.1000hours.co.uk



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GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

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Jesus has the final word on the cross

■ I wonder if you know someone who always has to have the final word? In any argument, they are the ones who fire off the comment to close down further discussion – made all the more effective if it's accompanied by a flouncing from the room and a slamming of the door.

This Easter time, my thoughts have been turning to the final words of Jesus on the cross: "It is finished."

Throughout the three years of His public ministry, Jesus pointed ahead to the day we would come to know as Good Friday. Around Him pressed the crowds, in the constant search for a better life: one that included physical wholeness and peace of mind. He prayed for them and sight was restored, deaf ears could hear, and limbs regained function. Those that were healed went away rejoicing that their today was transformed and their tomorrow would be a brighter one.

Day by day, Jesus demonstrated that earth's limitations would not have the final word. Those of us living with illness and difficult diagnosis still need to hear this today. His entire ministry challenged the messages of the world: you're

An Easter reflection by Norfolk author Jane Clamp



stuck with your problems, your body is bound to fail at some point, the slate cannot be wiped clean. One particular story (we can read it in Matthew 8) illustrates the point well. When a leper came to Jesus one day, he said, "Lord, if you are willing you can make me clean." Note, he didn't say "if you are able". Jesus' track record had proved that time and again. But the leper was perhaps asking, "Would you do it for me? Even me?" The answer was an unequivocal yes and he received his healing.

But there was much more to come.

Not only did Jesus overcome sickness and disease, He would go on to banish the most final of final words: death. Only the bereaved know the absolute desolation and devastation that follows the loss of a loved one. It's a sense of terminality that no other experience can match.

Surely no one comes back from the dead – and if they say they have, we struggle to accept their story. Nevertheless, on the third day, following His death on the cross, Jesus rose again. The leap from life to death and back again was no problem for the Son of God.

Death had tried to have the last word but had been decisively over-ruled.

The God who had broken from heaven to visit this earth had smashed through the gates of hell to save it.

On the cross, Jesus declared the words that closed the discussion on death once and for all: "It is finished!" and we can respond in this rallying cry: Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

Abi makes Indonesia book project fund plea

A former Norwich charity worker has launched a crowd-funding campaign to help fund a project to produce a desperately-needed series of new books for early readers in Indonesia. **Keith Morris** reports.

Abi Patience, who is a part of Gateway Vineyard church in Norwich, has been living in the Indonesian capital Jakarta for the last seven years with her husband and two young children, working on community development projects with the urban poor.

Abi said: "We work alongside Indonesian Christians who have a heart for the poor too, supporting existing social work organisations that deliver community development and education projects.

"For over ten years our 'I love reading' programme has been training and equipping teachers across the country teaching children how to read.

"Now we are writing a brand new series of books called 'Reading is an Adventure' - the first that we know of in Indonesia.

"These early readers are perfect for kids who have just



Abi Patience with an existing Indonesian early reading book.

learnt to read and need practice. Stories about the minor adventures of normal life for Indonesian children draw children in to experience the magic of reading as they progress through four levels towards fluency.

"One new book costs around £25 to edit, £150 to illustrate and

£700 to print 1000 copies. In order to print the first three titles we need to find around £2,600, so we have started a crowdfunding page to try to raise the cash.

"All profits from sales are reinvested into the programme, so by printing and selling just three new books we will be able

to kick-start production of many more brand new books from a growing network of local authors," said Abi.

You can find the crowdfunding page here and Abi asks you to consider a donation and maybe share the link with your family and friends.

Visit: <https://bit.ly/32TGUS6>

Deputy Lieutenant role an honour says Matthew

Lady Dannatt, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Norfolk, has appointed **Rev Matthew Hutton** as one of eleven new Deputy Lieutenants. **Eldred Willey** reports.

Each county has a Lord-Lieutenant who is Her Majesty's representative and he/she has a number of deputies (in the case of Norfolk, now 49) to support the Lord-Lieutenant in general within the county.

"It was a huge surprise," said Matthew, who was appointed in February, "and an enormous honour, as I look forward to finding out what it will involve."

Matthew was born in Norwich and grew up on the family farm at Langley, which he now manages with his wife Annie. He was brought up to go to church, but it was not until his first term at Oxford University that he heard a clear explanation of the Gospel at a series of mission addresses and made a profession of faith. Looking back now after nearly 50 years, however, he says "I hadn't understood about repentance and I gradually fell away."

Matthew now says that he came to faith in January 1979, at the age of 25, three months before he qualified as a solicitor: "I was brought back by the Holy Spirit, Who convicted me that I was on the wrong side of God; and that as well as asking God to forgive me I had to go to three people to ask for their forgiveness, which was tough but unavoidable."

He then found that he was walking on air and joined St Helen's Church Bishopsgate, in the City of London, where Dick Lucas was vicar and an extraordinary preacher and teacher of the Bible, which started, for Matthew, a life-long passion for the Scriptures.

Over the following 33 years or so Matthew pursued a varied career, first as a solicitor specialising in taxation, and then set up his own practice as a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Taxation giving advice to accountants and solicitors on behalf of their own clients, lecturing and writing books.

He had become a Lay Reader in the Church of England in 1992 and loved engaging with preaching and teaching the Bible.

It was a so-called immersion trip



Rev Matthew Hutton, now a Deputy Lieutenant of Norfolk.

with Tearfund to Cambodia in April 2008, including a three-night stay with an HIV+ family in the slums of Phnom Penh, which dramatically challenged his social conscience.

"I discovered that God had given me a heart as well as a head," he said, "a concern for the people on the margins." As Annie put it, "Matthew has discovered poverty."

He got involved with the setting up of Restored, as one of the founder trustees of this Christian charity spear-headed by Peter Grant (with whom he had gone to Cambodia) and Mandy Marshall, which is committed to the ending of violence against women (VAW) and the transformation of relationships. Matthew remains deeply challenged by the extent of VAW in our own country, let alone around the world, and longs to see it eradicated.

"In 2010 my wife sent me to theological college," he continues. "She didn't want me saying on my deathbed that I wished I had studied theology as an academic discipline." Matthew chose to study at St Mellitus College in London, travelling up to London on

Mondays during term-time, following a five year part-time BA degree course. However, during years two and three a calling to ordained ministry gradually developed and year four saw him switch tracks to becoming an ordinand. Ordained in July 2014, Matthew served a four-year curacy with Rev Canon Madeline Light at St Stephen's Church in Norwich.

A placement at HMP Norwich chaplaincy in January 2018 led him to becoming a mentor for ex-offenders with Community Chaplaincy Norfolk (CCN), a Christian charity supporting ex-offenders as they seek to rebuild their lives after coming out of prison and since July 2019 he has been chair of trustees.

"Over the last five years I have been increasingly touched by the infinite enormity of the love of God," he says. "That sense gives you a love for other people, and especially for those on the margins, like those in and coming out of prison."

Addressing the issue of homelessness is another of Matthew's concerns. He belongs to the St Martins Housing

Advisory Group and is a member of the Greater Norwich and Breckland Homelessness Prevention Forum.

In 2018/19 he served as Chaplain to High Sheriff Charles Watt (who in setting up the New Life project shares Matthew's passion for helping ex-offenders). As chaplain, Matthew was involved in developing awareness in the county of the Diocese of Norwich's Bright Map web-based initiative pioneered by Gordon Darley and encouraging the posting of a variety of church and other groups on Bright Map to promote community.

First Annie and then Matthew felt themselves called to St Barnabas Church in the Heigham area of Norwich in the autumn of 2018. As Site and Service Pastor of St Barnabas (within the Mitre Benefice), Matthew now finds himself serving in one of the more deprived areas of the city, "where there is a huge variety of social issues," he says.

"So I say to God, with both this and the CCN work, 'I feel completely out of my depth, so You have to equip me to do this.'"



Memory.

Holt charity feeds one million in Malawi

■ The North Norfolk charity Aid Africa, based in Holt, has been working in the remote rural areas of southern Malawi for the last 15 years and, in that time, has provided the basis for over a million meals.

Lynda and Dave Mills, who live in Fakenham, run Aid Africa from their charity shop in Holt. Lynda says: "Dave and I have been working amongst the vulnerable communities for 15 years now, spending up to six months of each year feeding the hungry, restoring safe water, providing education, and so much more.

"We were amazed when we realised that, since 2005, Aid Africa has provided the basis for over a million meals, brought clean water to thousands, empowered hundreds of kids with secondary education, built dozens of houses for the vulnerable and saved untold numbers of babies with our goats' milk.

"Good news is refreshing! Thanks to our supporters and friends, we've also built infrastructure—community centres, bridges, new water lines, and provided training in conservation farming, reforestation, animal husbandry, and lots of other subjects directly relevant to those we serve."

Lynda recounts the story of Memory, a 12-year-old girl desperate for a uniform as she'd been turned away from school without one. Her father had died several years before and her mother had gone to Mozambique three months earlier to try to find food for the family, but had not returned. Memory was in the care of her 15-year-old brother who roasted and sold little bags of peanuts to support them both.

Lynda says: "We provided a uniform, and the one-off fee she needed so she was able to return to school. We also gave her a blanket, some food, and repaired their roof before the rains came. Just one little girl, but so typical of the challenges faced by the people of Malawi.

"We're celebrating 15 years, but if we're to continue we need more help, either by volunteering in the Holt Charity Shop for a few hours a week, or with donations. A £10 Standing Order will provide maize for 150 meals each month!"

Donations can be made by calling at the shop, at 7 Shirehall Plain in Holt, or via the website, www.aid-africa.com/donations, or via PayPal using email: info@aid-africa.com

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International singing star in Hethersett

■ International singer Jonathan Veira will be performing at Hethersett Methodist Church, as part of his "Jonathan Veira – Songs and Tales Tour" on Saturday May 23.

Accompanying himself on the piano, Jonathan's repertoire includes ballads, blues, hymns and gospel. His rapport with the audience, as he chats about his life and faith, ensures that his anecdotal story-telling is suitable for people of all generations.

Recently praised in *The Independent* for his brilliant performance, Jonathan Veira is no stranger to venues that hold thousands of people, but he now performs his solo show in far more intimate settings.

When asked why he is putting aside his international singing for a while and doing his Songs and Tales show, Jonathan says: "I'm energised by doing these shows because of the closeness and interaction with the audience – I love entertaining people.

"It's wonderful to be able to incorporate the wide variety of music that I love to perform and I love having the freedom to make people laugh out loud! I have had so many funny experiences in my life – none of them planned. We all need to laugh more and I believe that the fantastic music and together with the joyful laughter make my show unique."

Organiser Juliet Harwood, said: "We would love the evening to impact the lives of all who experience it – to put a holy smile on the faces and in the hearts of all, as they find out that Jesus truly has come to give life in all its fullness."

"It is rare these days to find someone who can sing beautifully, entertain and make people of all ages laugh, and possibly even cry. To communicate in a family friendly way, without using bad language, as Jonathan Veira does is remarkable."

Event details

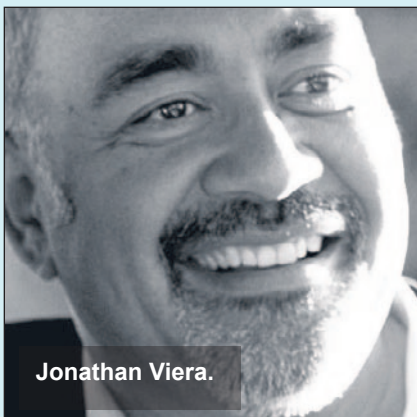
Saturday May 23, 7pm.

Hethersett Methodist Church, 32 Great Melton Rd, Hethersett, Norwich NR9 3AB

Tickets: £8. from Juliet Harwood

Tel: 01603 810237 or e-mail:

juliet.harwood@btinternet.com



Jonathan Veira.



Julia Morrish, leader of the Surrey Chapel CAP project.

Julia is new leader of debt counselling charity

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) has appointed Julia Morrish to lead its Norwich team, which is based at Surrey Chapel in Botolph Street. CAP is a charity which helps people to escape overwhelming personal debts. Eldred Willey reports.

Julia takes over from John Graver who, after four-and-a-half years leading the Surrey Chapel team, is moving to Burnley to open a new CAP centre there. During his time in Norwich, John saw almost 300 clients, and helped 100 of them to become debt-free.

Julia was previously a teaching assistant at Brundall School, but felt called by God to be doing something different. She handed in her notice and worked for four years as a volunteer befriender with CAP, meeting regularly with indebted families and accompanying them to appointments.

"I loved the fact that I saw clients' lives being transformed," she said. "I felt God wanted me to train as a debt coach, so I went to Bradford, and did a two-week course there at CAP headquarters."

Julia tells the story of one couple in Norwich with two little boys, who were in huge debt. The mother was isolated, anxious and suicidal. CAP supported the family as it went through bankruptcy; now it is back in control and has even managed to have a holiday abroad.

The father became a Christian first, then the mother. The couple got married and were baptised. They are now both CAP benders.

"The clients totally relate to them," said Julia, "because they have been through it themselves. The mother's life is jam-packed now, and from being turned in on herself, she goes over to people and makes them welcome."

"We always offer to pray for people,"

explained Julia, "and only two people didn't want it. Clients often see God in answered prayer. We would only talk about God if people are open, but when they are, we say that God loves them and cares for them."

CAP tends to deal with the most vulnerable people, who often suffer from mental ill-health. "They are normally receiving lots of letters and calls about their debt – even visits from bailiffs," she said.

"When we are in our homes we take for granted the fact that they are warm and safe. The houses I go into are cold, and have no food – literally no food in the fridge or in cupboards. The families are frightened and have lost their dignity and self-worth. They are often taking medication for anxiety or depression."

Most of these families have fallen into debt through unstable income, relationship breakdown, mental ill health or zero-hour contracts, which are becoming much more common in the UK. Hardly any of the clients have a debt crisis as a result of reckless spending on credit cards.

On first visiting a family, Julia collects all the relevant paperwork and sends it off to CAP headquarters. The financial experts there put together a budget and a plan for getting out of debt, then negotiate with the creditors, allowing a justifiable amount for the family to spend on essentials like food.

The family then makes payments to CAP, which it dispenses among these creditors. If the family can get out of debt in three years, a repayment model is followed; if longer CAP advises the insolvency route.

When there is no food in the house, CAP can do a one-off food shop. It will also top-up gas and electricity if the house is cold.

"Surrey Chapel has been so supportive of CAP," said Julia. "Lots of clients come to the church. We have a lunch club for clients on Tuesdays – a place where they can come and belong. People start to look outwards, and they realise there are other people going through the same things as themselves."

Some CAP families go along to Messy Church or holiday clubs at Surrey Chapel. There is also a Job Club linked to the church, which gives advice to people seeking to return to employment.

"It makes a huge difference being a Christian organisation," said Julia. You see people as God sees them: really valued. You want to show them His kindness and compassion. You realise that this is not what God intended for them."

Julia invites members of the wider community to pray for the work, and if they are interested in becoming benders, to get in touch on 0800 328 0006.

CAP was founded 23 years ago by John Kirkby, who himself went through a debt crisis which led to the break-up of his marriage and the loss of his home. There are now 392 CAP centres across the UK.

CAP advises that if you know things are out of control with debt, and you're stressed, missing meals or sleep, to please ring 0800 328 0006.

■ Find out more about CAP at www.capuk.org

Norwich couple aim to bring freedom to the city streets

A former drug addict and his wife are serving on the streets of Norwich, helping other addicts to find freedom. **Eldred Willey** reports.

was very much into getting stoned every day, remembers Steve Maylam. "I was using cocaine, weed, ecstasy – getting plastered all the time. "It started when I was 13. Mum and Dad had split up when I was very young, and I used to wonder a lot about life, and ask a lot of questions.

"For me drugs were about escapism. But they only made me superficial and selfish. I would go to raves and take pills, and the rest of the week I was like Neanderthal Man. It was just a cycle of getting high and I had no real purpose in life.

"One night I had a dream that I met Jesus. I couldn't see Him clearly, but there was light flowing out of Him, and I woke up with tears of joy and could sense His love.

"Then I met Rachel."

She takes up the story.

"I grew up in the Philippines," she said. "I loved Jesus and used to be Catholic. But a lot of my friends were not living their faith or finding real freedom.

"I wanted to see England, and I came here in 2003. I saw that life here was very chaotic. I went to the Catholic Cathedral, but my background was more charismatic and I couldn't connect in my spirit. So I started clubbing with my friends. But God spoke to me and I knew I shouldn't be there."

Steve and Rachel met at work and started living together. Three years later Rachel felt she needed to go to church.

"I went to Norwich Family Life Church one Sunday," she said, "and I felt I belonged. My heart was pumping, and I got prayed over."

"She was radiating when she came back," remembers Steve. "I was stoned at the time, but I knew she had changed.

"It challenged me, because there was light in her and darkness in me. I said that she had to choose God or me."

Rachel said: "There's no comparison."

In spite of initially rejecting the change in Rachel, Steve got to the point of realising he wanted what Rachel had.

"I said to God: 'You need to show me you are real' and He did in so many different ways. I read the Bible almost cover to cover and although didn't fully understand, believed it to be true.

"One day Rachel came in and said we



Steve and Rachel Maylam at the Light House in Fishergate

needed to get married. I was like 'no' – I'd seen that already in my parents."

She won him over, however, and he realised that in the Philippines he had to get baptised before he was allowed to marry.

"We were sprinkled on the head," remembers Steve, "but as soon as I said 'I turn from sin and give my life to Jesus' it was like a dam exploded inside of me. I was filled with the Holy Spirit. I felt everything break off. I stopped using drugs, smoking and watching pornography. I felt free."

"I was being changed too," picks up Rachel. "My character was being refined. I was finding freedom from selfishness and stubbornness. I realised I had to die to my pride."

"We've learned not to be so concerned about finances and material things," adds Steve, "not to worry what people think and dying to the fear of man."

The couple got involved in a ministry in the Philippines which runs feeding programmes. It gave them an opportunity to go into prisons and to help drug addicts.

Back in Norwich in 2018, they became Trustees of the Light House in Fishergate, where they help teach in discipleship schools and organise the use of the church building.

After serving in a number of churches

in Norwich, they have joined a movement called The Last Reformation, where they have found an opportunity to use their gifts as a couple. The movement has revealed to them a fresh understanding of the Gospel, and of the biblical response to it.

"We felt God was calling us to walk alongside others," said Steve, "helping them to find maturity as they came to rely on Jesus, His word and Spirit.

"Over the years God has been preparing us, but in the last three years, we've seen much more fruit. With simple obedience and faith in Jesus, we've seen many repentant, baptised and filled with the Holy Spirit, healed and demons cast out."

They have found a growing response as they approach people on the streets of Norwich, and break the ice by asking simple questions.

"People can tell the spirit you are coming in," said Steve. "When they realise you love them, and care for their soul, they are open to having a conversation. But we do also sometimes face rejection too."

"We look for people who are really ready," joined in Rachel, "People of peace."

You can contact Steve and Rachel on leadbythelord@hotmail.co.uk

Jonathan Veira Songs and Tales Tour

Saturday 23rd May at 7pm

Hethersett Methodist Church

Tickets: £8

Contact 01603 810237 or Juliet.harwood@btinternet.com

"Jonathan shares his faith in a natural, non-threatening way, concentrating on the centrality of God in his life."



ballads,
blues,
hymns
& gospel



Children at the Catton FISH club in Norwich.

Holiday club offers fun, food and friendship

Around 20 children from the Catton area of Norwich had a delightful time at a recent FISH (Food and Fun in School Holidays) club organised by Oak Grove Community Church. Eldred Willey reports.

■ “We’re so grateful to have the connection with Norwich foodbank which makes this possible,” said Oak Grove’s pastor Darren Woodward. “It’s a great way of providing links with other organisations as well.”

The church has merged FISH with its Kidz Klub, and is partnering with foodbank to reach out to families in the local community. “I want to make sure that we are getting the people who really need it,” said Oak Grove youth leader Becca Savory.

As she cuts baking potatoes in the kitchen, Becca explains how the connection with Norwich foodbank’s Project Manager Hannah Worsley is achieving results.

“Hannah refers people who come to foodbank for vouchers,” she said. “We decided to hold our local foodbank on Tuesday evenings.

When people come to collect their parcels we put on a simple meal and encourage families with kids to come to our FISH club the next morning.

“Hannah provides ideas for activities, and she will raid the shelves at foodbank if I need something. Sometimes I do crumble, and foodbank provides the flour.”

The club also has a pop-up library provided by Norfolk County Council with health and wellbeing funding.

Research shows that children who read have a greater life expectancy, as reading widens horizons, raises expectations and improves self-awareness.

“We are inspiring the kids with their careers,” said Becca, “showing them what is out there in the world of work. Recently the police came in and did a crime scene investigation, taking people’s fingerprints.”

Foodbank has also organised trips to White House Farm and Castle Museum. “The farm is quite an exclusive thing,” said Becca. “When the kids go back to school it raises their self-esteem to be able to say they did something interesting in the holidays.”

The club has done evaluations on its impact. “One girl was really shy at first,” said Becca. “She never came out of her shell. Her Nan fed back that she could really see a difference

happening. The girl was becoming more confident and making a new set of friends.”

From the beginning of the Catton FISH club there has been a Bible element. “We have had some good conversations with parents after they heard the Bible verse,” reported Becca. “It opens up opportunities without being too heavy.”

“One mum came up to me and said: ‘Does this apply to me?’ We use a child’s language, which is easier for parents to pick up if they don’t understand church language.”

Because local companies recognise the name of foodbank, they are more than willing to support the club. Tesco has provided smoothies, and also 30 packed lunches for outings.

“Partnership has become a big thing,” said Becca. “You all start working together, rather than duplicating.”

Last summer Norwich foodbank worked with churches, charities and businesses to deliver eight FISH clubs across Norwich, with over 400 children attending at least once.

It was the sixth summer that the FISH Clubs had run, with growing numbers each year. In 2019 the joint effort amounted to 33 sessions and over 1,270 meals served, providing extra support to families who struggle when schools break up and free school meals end.

Life-sav

Living in a modest semi in the Hellesdon area of Norwich, **Elaine Tattersall** is no less than a life-saver according to the two young refugees for whom she provides a home – and a whole lot more – as part of YMCA Norfolk’s vital Supported Lodgings scheme. **Keith Morris** reports.

Abdu was just 14 when he left his home in Africa, where his family faced persecution. In his pocket he had as much money as the family could scrape together to pay the people traffickers who promised to get him to the UK.

He spent the next two years of his young life on the hazardous journey, first travelling thousands of miles across North Africa, and then literally taking his life in his hands to board a totally inadequate boat to cross the Mediterranean Sea.

“I sold my soul to get on the boat,” said Abdu. “The crossing was really difficult. We had problems and finally a big Red Cross ship rescued us half-way across and took us to Italy.”

Travelling with a friend who wanted to get to the UK, Abdu ended up in the notorious Jungle camp at Calais for many months. “It was really, really difficult and I was afraid all the time,” recalled Abdu. “Every day I would try to get to the UK in a lorry and every day they would find you and take you back. Finally, one day, I managed to get across.”

He was discovered in the lorry at Dover and taken first to a children’s camp for a few weeks and then sent to Great Yarmouth where he did not know anybody and he found it really difficult to settle.

YMCA support worker Emmanuel Kouadria managed to find Abdu a place to stay in Norwich, which is when he first met Elaine and his situation started to look a whole lot brighter.

Elaine, a semi-retired Tai Chi teacher, has been providing a home for dozens of young people like Abdu over the past 11 years or so. After her eldest son left home and she had a spare bedroom, she saw an advert for the Supported Lodgings scheme and has not looked back ever since.

Elaine currently provides her two young lodgers with their own rooms (which they have to look after themselves) and shared kitchen and bathroom facilities. Also the personal support, alongside their YMCA key worker, that is necessary for them to recover from the situation which found them there in the first place and then to begin to look forward.

“They are all troubled teenagers who, for one reason or another, have been made homeless,” she said. “They might have fallen out with their family, sometimes there is abuse and a couple of young girls got pregnant and did not have the support of their family.”

Then there are young lads like Abdu and Hassan, refugees who have had to fight against the odds to even be there.

“It is about giving them their own space and allowing them to find their feet with education or a job or whatever,” said Elaine. “I am here as a support, but not to do everything for them. There are always up and downs but I do not try to mother them.”

“They have to cook and clean up after themselves, do their own washing and shopping. I provide a basic breakfast and they have a fridge and freezer which they share.

“They can come into my lounge and love watching Netflix, but it is my personal space so if I want to use it, I ask them to respect my privacy as well,” she said

The vast majority have stayed with Elaine for at least 18 months, and two years is the usual limit of the agreement with the YMCA, but this can be extended until the young person is found a suitable placement within YMCA services or external providers.

“It is about them learning to live independently. I am there

er for vulnerable youngsters

Elaine and Abdu share a coffee.



Can you help

■ If you have a spare room in your home and would be prepared to open it up to a homeless young person, you could receive up to £120 a week. The YMCA is looking for people to join its Supported Lodgings team across Norfolk. Training and regular on-going support is always provided. If you would like to find out more please contact the team at: community.housing@ymcanorfolk.org or on 01603 662455

to offer support and to answer questions and prop them up if necessary or get help from Emmanuel. He will try to find them a placement somewhere in education or getting qualifications for employment," said Elaine.

Elaine receives £98 per week for each lodger and she welcomes the extra cash.

"Sharing your own house with people who are total strangers when they first come to you, is not for everybody," she said. "You have to be tolerant and don't think you can fix people. They have got to come to things in their own time.

"When they move in they sign an agreement with the YMCA and myself and there are a list of rules, but we do tend to work it out as we go along. I don't allow smoking or drinking in the house and they have to be in by 11pm or let me know what they are doing or if they are staying out with a friend.

"The best thing about the role is when you see people who are ready to move on, they have either healed relationships or they have grown in some way or are just in a better place," said Elaine.

"As long as we have respect for each other and they learn to grow and start to make a better life for themselves that is

my job done."

Emmanuel helped Abdu find a place at City College studying English and Maths. He also goes to the gym, plays football at the UEA and goes to an acting group at the Theatre Royal. He is also involved with New Routes, an organisation which helps integrate refugees and asylum seekers into the Norfolk community.

"When I came here I had a lot of issues in my mind and I was seeing the doctor every week, but now I am fine and am happy and my situation in my mind has gone away," said Abdu.

"I am so happy to be here, anytime I need help Elaine is there. It feels like my real family and I call Elaine Mum, because she has taught me to cook and how to live a more healthy lifestyle."

Abdu has some acting experience in his own country and dreams of becoming an actor here. "I want to improve my English and find a career – I am really working hard on it," he said.

"I wish there was a lot more people like Elaine as without people like her and the YMCA my life would be nothing," he admitted. "Family is not just about blood. It is about who loves you and who you love back."

A new life in Norwich for Syrian refugee

■ Hassan is originally from Syria. He initially came to the UK aged 16 to study but then had to seek asylum due to the difficult situation back home.

He has been living with Elaine for two years and after passing A Levels in Biology, Chemistry and Maths at A level, he is now studying Bio-Medicine at UEA and is hoping to do a post-graduate health care course of some sort or get into research.

"Coming here to Elaine's saved my life really because I had nowhere to go," said Hassan. "When I came to Norwich I only had one friend but he couldn't really have me for long. I have been here for two years and it has been great. Even if I did have any concerns I know that I can talk about them any time and be listened to.

"I cook for myself and clean my own room and so on. The best recipe Elaine taught me was a bean and minced Quorn chilli. She is like my mother now and Abdu is like my brother.

"The service the YMCA provides is really helpful for a lot of young people. A lot of people I know who are supported by the YMCA would have had completely different lives without their support.

"I don't know where I would be within the support of Elaine and the YMCA – I don't really want to think about it – but I am really grateful of that support."

■ Some details have been changed to protect the young refugees.

Do you have a heart for young people?



Why not become a Supported Lodgings or Nightstop host!

If you are willing to provide a young person in need with a room in your home and support them on their journey, we would love to hear from you.

YMCA Norfolk is looking for hosts for vulnerable young people and has both paid and volunteer opportunities, from just one night or up to two years.

You won't be alone in this, YMCA Norfolk will help by providing training and ongoing support.

To find out more please contact our friendly Supported Lodgings team:

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SUPPORT & ADVICE

ACCOMMODATION

FAMILY WORK

HEALTH & WELLBEING

TRAINING & EDUCATION

Project aims to combat loneliness

■ Story continued from page one

She said: "The issues of loneliness and social isolation are so prolific within this county. People are becoming more aware of the negative effects that being alone can have on individuals mentally, physically and spiritually.

"With a growing awareness often comes a desire to respond to the need, but knowing how exactly to help can be a challenge. That's where Linking Lives comes in – we provide the tried-and-tested framework for starting a new project, with support and training from members of the team. We literally link the lives of those needing companionship with those wanting to provide it.

"I am excited about the potential for this sort of community development as all the components already exist - there is such an impact that can be made by connecting people together. Churches can, and in many cases already do, really make a difference in Norfolk!"

If your church is interested in starting a Linking Lives project, you can visit <https://linkinglives.uk> for more information, or alternatively contact Angela Caley at norfolk@linkinglives.uk.



Angela Caley.

Vision to find families for vulnerable children grows

In 2012, a young couple from Norwich sold their possessions and moved to Thailand with Care for Children to launch a new project with the Thai government to find families for vulnerable children living in orphanages. **Helen Baldry** reports.

Almost eight years later, Thomas and Rachel Abbott have returned to Norfolk, now with three young children of their own, and an even bigger vision for the work.

Thomas and Rachel's goal was to set up a project with the government of Thailand to move children out of orphanages and into local families. They started with a pilot project in Chiang Mai, which saw 50 children placed into families within three years.

In 2015, the project expanded nationally, and now all 29 government orphanages have been trained by Care for Children, with most of them now running local foster care programmes. Thomas said: "The development has been remarkable. One little boy said to me, 'even if you offered me one million Baht (Thai currency), I wouldn't leave my family and go back to the orphanage'.

"The orphanage wasn't an intentionally abusive place, and the staff did their best, but it was so clear to everyone, and especially that boy, that families are infinitely better for children. And it's no surprise when you remember that God designed the family to care for children! We're just working



Thomas and Rachel Abbott packing up in Vietnam to return to Norwich.

with governments to make sure they have a welfare system in place that honours God's design."

The project was a success, with all but one of the nine office staff being Thai nationals. The couple felt they should move on to the next challenge so they led a newly established team in Vietnam to start a similar project for Care for Children in Hanoi. Rachel said, "Vietnam is a poorer country than Thailand, and that was clear from the beginning, so there were some aspects that were more challenging. But we loved the 'old quarter' market in Hanoi, and we would often go to Hoan Kiem lake as a family on the weekend. We loved the food, especially the local speciality 'pho ga' (chicken noodle soup)."

Now back in Norfolk, Rachel and Thomas are enjoying reconnecting with family and friends. Rachel said: "It's been seven months and it still feels like we're transitioning. There is definitely a mental re-adjustment needed. And a physical one too – we haven't had to live through a long winter like this for a while!"

Returning to the

UK, the Abbotts are now a family of five. Rachel fell pregnant within a few months of arriving in Thailand. Theo was born in 2013, Barnabas in 2015 and Lovella in 2018. She had been working full-time as a midwife in Norfolk, but gave up her career to move to Thailand, and quickly had to adjust to becoming a full-time mum.

She said: "It was certainly hard at times without family and long-term friends nearby, which is your natural support network when in your home country. It took effort to make new friends, but they were often in the same situation as us, especially other expats, so we learnt how to support each other. There were many positives though, especially watching our children flourish in a culture that is different to your passport country."

Becoming parents affected Thomas and Rachel's outlook on their work in Thailand. Thomas recalls a moment soon after Theo was born when the significance of their work touched him as he observed some of the boys at the Chiang Mai orphanage play football.

"When one of the youngest boys ran past me, in that moment, I couldn't help but see Theo in him – my own precious son! Not only did it break my heart to think of Theo in an orphanage without Rachel and me to love him and be parents to him, but I suddenly realised: that's how God sees us! When we dash past Him, He sees in us His own precious son Jesus. It was like I suddenly had a shared understanding of our Heavenly Father's heart for His children that we read about so clearly in the

Bible." It was a powerful lesson to learn, and allowed Thomas to see and feel the significance of the mission he was called to in a much deeper and holistic way – both for the children who need families, but also for the nations that Care for Children has been called to serve.

With the Vietnam project up and running in capable hands, Thomas and Rachel have come back to join Care for Children's international project support office in Norwich to oversee all country projects, as well as developments into new countries. The charity is launching a project in Cambodia this year.

Thomas said: "We have a very exciting new global vision and mission to reach the nations, and I believe caring for vulnerable children in families uniquely reflects God's heart, so we'd love to share more about this with churches in Norfolk, and how they can partner with us."

The church in the UK has a long and rich history of supporting mission work overseas. Care for Children wants to channel the support for orphan care ministries into placing children into families, rather than keeping them in orphanages. There is the opportunity for churches, families and individuals to become 'Family Champions' with Care for Children to help them achieve this mission.

You can learn more about Care for Children or the Abbotts by writing to: thomas@careforchildren.com.

To become a Family Champion, please go to: www.careforchildren.com/familychampions

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Norwich church opens community cafe

A Norwich church has opened a community cafe to serve the Mousehold area of the city with good food, a warm welcome and a place to feel at home.

The Cafe @The Hub, is run by Norwich Central Baptist Church within Mousehold Hub, located close to Silver Road in the north of the city.

The cafe opened four months ago and is part of the church's wider vision of developing a vibrant community hub. The building is used for a variety of groups, including a growing Portuguese-speaking church, the Norwich Community Gospel Choir, Messy church and English Plus. The top floor of Mousehold Hub is home to local Christian charity Norwich Youth for Christ.

Cafe manager Julie John said: "Our ethos is very much 'come as you are', whether it's a good day or a bad day, whether people want to come and chat or sit quietly on their own, we want them to feel very welcome here. The principle of the cafe is that we serve good food at reasonable prices. It's important to people in our local community that the food and drinks for sale here are affordable."



Pictured left, The Cafe @The Hub and, above, baked potato with cheese and salad.



Review by Helen Baldry

■ **The Cafe @The Hub** is light, spacious and easily accessible. It is evident that this is a church-run cafe; as you enter, vinyl wall art displays the verse 'Taste and see that the Lord is good' and there are screens inside advertising some of the community activities that run at the Hub. There is a homely, down-to-earth feel; tables are surrounded by brightly coloured chairs and customers can help themselves to free squash and water.

While I was there, a dad came in after the school drop-off to order a coffee and do some work on his laptop, making the most of the free wifi available. An elderly gentleman from the housing complex nearby came and sat at the 'chatter & natter' table, a designated space for people who would welcome conversation. On the day of my visit, Andy and Rachel, who are members at NCBC, were on hand to chat with visitors to the cafe. A young mother then came in with her toddler, who made a beeline for the children's area, which is well stocked with toys.

Lots of touches give the Cafe at the Hub a friendly feel, such as the bookshelves for people to browse and borrow something to read, as well as a couple of shelves dedicated to board games. Julie said, "We want people to feel welcome to stay as long as they want – whether they pop in for a takeaway coffee, or want a comfortable place they can while away a couple of hours

without feeling pressure to leave once they've finished their food or drink."

Prices are reasonable, with a latte at £1.50, paninis and jacket potatoes at £2.95. The prices are affordable but there is no compromise on quality. Emily, who is employed as cook, makes all the cakes on the premises and there is a constantly changing 'soup of the day' offer and a 'coffee and cake' offer for just £2. Gluten free and dairy-free options are available and Emily is proud that the kitchen has been awarded a five-star food hygiene rating.

The cafe is part of Norwich City Council's Business Merit Scheme and is listed as being breastfeeding friendly as well as having disabled access. There are also plans for the Cafe to become a 'dementia aware' premises.

■ www.mouseholdhub.org

■ Open Thursday and Friday 9am – 3pm and Saturday 9am – 1pm.

■ **Examples from the Menu**

- Filled jacket potato £2.50
- Panini £2.95
- Soup of the Day with roll and butter £2.90
- Sandwiches £2.50
- Sausage, bacon or egg bap £2.50
- Cakes from £1.20
- American or Latte coffee £1.50
- Tea 80p

Cafe @ The Hub

Selection of cakes, drinks, sandwiches, light lunches & breakfast baps

Vegan and gluten-free options

Serving good food at reasonable prices

Mousehold Hub, 22 Mousehold Ave, Norwich NR3 4RS

Thurs & Fri 9am - 3pm

Saturday 9am - 1pm

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ncbc
NORWICH CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Broadland man's mission for p

Simon Rous is on a mission to transform the political landscape and in December he stood in the General Election as a candidate for a new political party he founded, based on the values of integrity, fairness and kindness. **Jenny Seal** reports.

A Christian from Spixworth, Simon (63) is asking people to join him as he scales up a transformative movement. In December's General Election his name was on the ballot paper for his home constituency of Broadland. He was standing as a candidate for The Universal Good Party, a political party founded by himself and his friend Philip Durban.

The belief that politics can be better is the basis for the new political party which aims to bring a societal sea-change re-engendering community and kindness.

During the campaign, he participated in two hustings and canvassed on the streets and at farmers' markets. Although he lost his deposit in a contest won decisively by Conservative Jerome Mayhew, Simon, who attends St Thomas Norwich, did persuade 363 constituents to vote for him.

Acknowledging mixed feelings in the results, he said, "When I spoke with people in the street I felt what I was offering was very well received. But then actually translating people being in agreement to actually investing their vote is a whole other ball game. I was strangely encouraged to get my 363 votes but at the same time disappointed because I believe there is such a dissatisfaction with the political system that actually if now is not a time for some significant change then when is?"

The manifesto of The Universal Good

Party is ambitious and wide-ranging, starting with the environment and a range of sustainable policies enabling us to "become great ancestors". It talks about Government being "light" and cultivating "the spirit of serving". Christian principles influence the manifesto, but the party is explicitly open to all.

Simon, an accountant with previous church leadership experience, has been dissatisfied with the political landscape for many years. He would often spoil his ballot paper because he couldn't commit with any conscience to the main parties. The desire to form a new party bubbled for a while, but in the 2015 and 2017 elections caring for his elderly father was his priority.

In 2019, with an election brewing, Simon decided he would test the water, by seeing whether he could "get his ducks in a row" in time to take part. He wrote a constitution, found a Nominating Officer, registered The Universal Good Party with the Electoral Commission and wrote the party's manifesto. By the time the election was called, he was ready to stand.

Reflecting on the process, Simon said: "It was a privilege to stand. The fact that in this country we can say I believe this, and then ask others to join us is amazing."

One of The Universal Good Party's central policies is the re-introduction of National Service, compulsory for those aged under 26 but open to all. Based not



on military service but community service. Simon describes it as: "A National

Service that re-engenders the idea of serving; that is a proper training bed for

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High-flying couple make Norfolk

A Norfolk couple are leading a national charity which offers healing for people with unhealthy ways of thinking about themselves and their relationships – all of which can result in unhelpful behaviour patterns. Eldred Willey reports.

■ David and Christine West have an unusual story about how they came to be living in Stalham, in east Norfolk.

They were thinking of moving house, and David had decoration on his mind. He was teaching a seminar in Folkestone and happened to say: "No husband would paint his house with green and yellow stripes without first telling his wife."

It seemed a harmless enough illustration, especially coming from someone who had never heard of the Canaries.

At the end of the seminar, a man came up to him and asked: "Have you ever considered moving to Norfolk?"

The answer of course was 'no'.

Norfolk was not much on the radar of the couple, who grew up in Kent. They both trained to be teachers, studying in colleges a few miles from each other without having yet met.

For Christine, college was a massive achievement. Having failed her 11+ she was determined to prove everyone wrong, and qualified as a teacher of Religious Studies, ending up teaching at a Grammar School for girls.

It was not that she was that religious to begin with. Her parents, like many others in their generation, had sent her to Sunday school, and her Dad sang in the church choir in his early years. But it didn't really take, and by the time she finished primary school she had stopped going to church.

It was only later that someone would pray for her, and she would have an experience in a Baptist church which prepared her for her future work in inner healing.

Meanwhile David was heading into what became a hugely varied and successful commercial career. It started with a year as leader of his college's student union, after which he made a bold job application which took him into the world of Human Resources.

David progressed through the Central Electricity Generating Board, then a company which was one of the world's largest distributors of computer products, and ended up as DHL's Human Resources Director, responsible for the learning and development of

37,000 staff.

It was at this point, that David says he decided he wanted to "get out of bed in the morning to make a difference rather than just make money."

David took a side-step into the charity world, becoming Chief Executive Officer of Computers for Africa. Businesses loved the charity because it was a way for them to pass on their old computers without the expense of having to wipe them. Schools loved the charity because it fitted neatly into the curriculum and was a way of getting ready-made links with schools in Africa.

And of course the Africans were hugely grateful to have free computers. Towards the end they even got 40-foot adapted containers, which functioned as ready-made computer classrooms.

"I thoroughly enjoyed it," said David, who led the programme for over 7 years.

The big change happened for Christine and David in 2008, when they went along to a meeting in Sevenoaks to hear Dawna da Silva, a speaker from Bethel Church in California. She was talking about the inner healing programme which she had co-created, and which she called 'Sozo' – a Greek word which means 'saved, healed and delivered'.

"Wow, this is amazing," was the first reaction from Christine.

Political change

Simon Rous: a different kind of politics.

equips young people for life." He continues, "Young people will come out of it with a desire for community and family that ultimately will infuse the whole of society."

Another standout policy is to scrap all existing taxes and replace it with one transactional tax applied throughout the supply chain. As an accountant, he believes the current system is too complicated and open to misuse by those able to pay. "I'm looking for a system that is fair, so if you are a very wealthy person or company that spends a lot then it should not be possible to hide your income. It is not uncomplicated," he admits, "but in my mind, it must be easier than a full page of different taxes that can be avoided."

A final emphasis is to try to re-orientate people away from thinking about their "rights" but instead focus on their "responsibilities, at an individual, family, communal, corporate and national level.

"If we ensure that our responsibilities are fulfilled then everyone's 'rights' will be secured as a consequence. The final outcome of either approach should be broadly similar, but by placing the emphasis on others rather

than on ourselves a positive shift in our social relationships will occur," said Simon.

Quietly spoken, Simon is both humble and self-confident. He said: "I'm convinced that we could have a much better candidate. We could have a much better party leader than me! But if I can get the ball rolling and things develop and change, I'd be happy to say 'go for it!'.

"Obviously, I'd love to be Prime Minister! But if I'm just a link or a conscience-pricker then perhaps I should be satisfied."

As he seeks to discern the way forward for The Universal Good Party, he is encouraging others to come alongside him.

"I want to consult with interested people on where to go from here, in a sense to find out whether this is something from God's heart. If what I've started isn't viable then it's not serving any good by carrying on. But if God is in it then never mind the practicalities, get on with it."

To read more about The Universal Good Party and its policies visit its website at:

www.theuniversalgoodparty.com.

To register an interest in joining Simon you can email him at: welcome@theuniversalgoodparty.com.

youth that fills some of the gaps in our education system and

a home of inner healing



David and Christine West.

"It's what clears the landing strip for personal freedom and wholeness.

David and Christine have just finished recording the first video training sessions in British English, which has updated Sozo with a decade of learning, and made it more accessible to a UK audience.

"Some of it is just about language," said David. "If you told someone to 'check yourself at the door' a lot of British people would wonder what you were on about."

People who are interested in helping with the ministry will be trained in a local church and will be accountable to the leaders of that church.

"Leaders love Sozo because it can bring breakthrough in areas where people have struggled for years," said David. "Our role is simply to make sure that those helping them are competent."

Information about the updated video course, and about live training, can be found at: www.bethelsozo.org.uk

ship of Bethel Sozo UK.

"Sozo is a way of getting at root issues, of changing patterns of behaviour and getting rid of unhealthy ways of doing things," said Christine "It is non-directive, which means that no-one gives you advice or instruction."

"Usually forgiveness is the gateway to healing," she said.

"I loved the way in which stuff was being dealt with so quickly," she said. "I know some people need longer-term counselling, but with Sozo issues were getting sorted in an hour and a half."

The couple responded enthusiastically to the message they were hearing, and before long found themselves on the leader-

Project helps Phyllis tell her life story

■ Phyllis Wrench - a Rackheath Land Girl - is the subject of the latest Life Story biography produced by the team behind the Network Norfolk website.

Phyllis' Life Story, written by Jenny Seal, includes details of her life growing up near Norwich, war-time adventures, farming anecdotes - and even the day she saw an angel.

"I can't say I've had a bad life really. Bit tight for money at times, but we got there. On the whole, I class myself as one of the luckiest people alive," says Phyllis in the book.

Her daughter, Amanda Buck, said: "We are ever so grateful to Jenny and the Life Stories team because there is no way we'd have been able to get mum's book written without you. You've done a brilliant job."

Publisher, Keith Morris, said: "We specialise in writing stories that have a faith element at their core but we are more than happy to write anyone's life story in around 7,000 words with plenty of pictures. The end result is a lovely professionally produced 40-page book for under £1000 and there are 20 copies included in the price.

"We can also write a short history of organi-

sations, charities, ministries, churches or businesses on the same basis, if you have a story you want to celebrate or record for posterity. Or maybe a series of short stories or profiles of some of the people you have been able to work with and help move forward," said Keith.

For more details email web@networknorwich.co.uk or visit www.lifestories.org.uk



Phyllis Wrench with her Life Story book.

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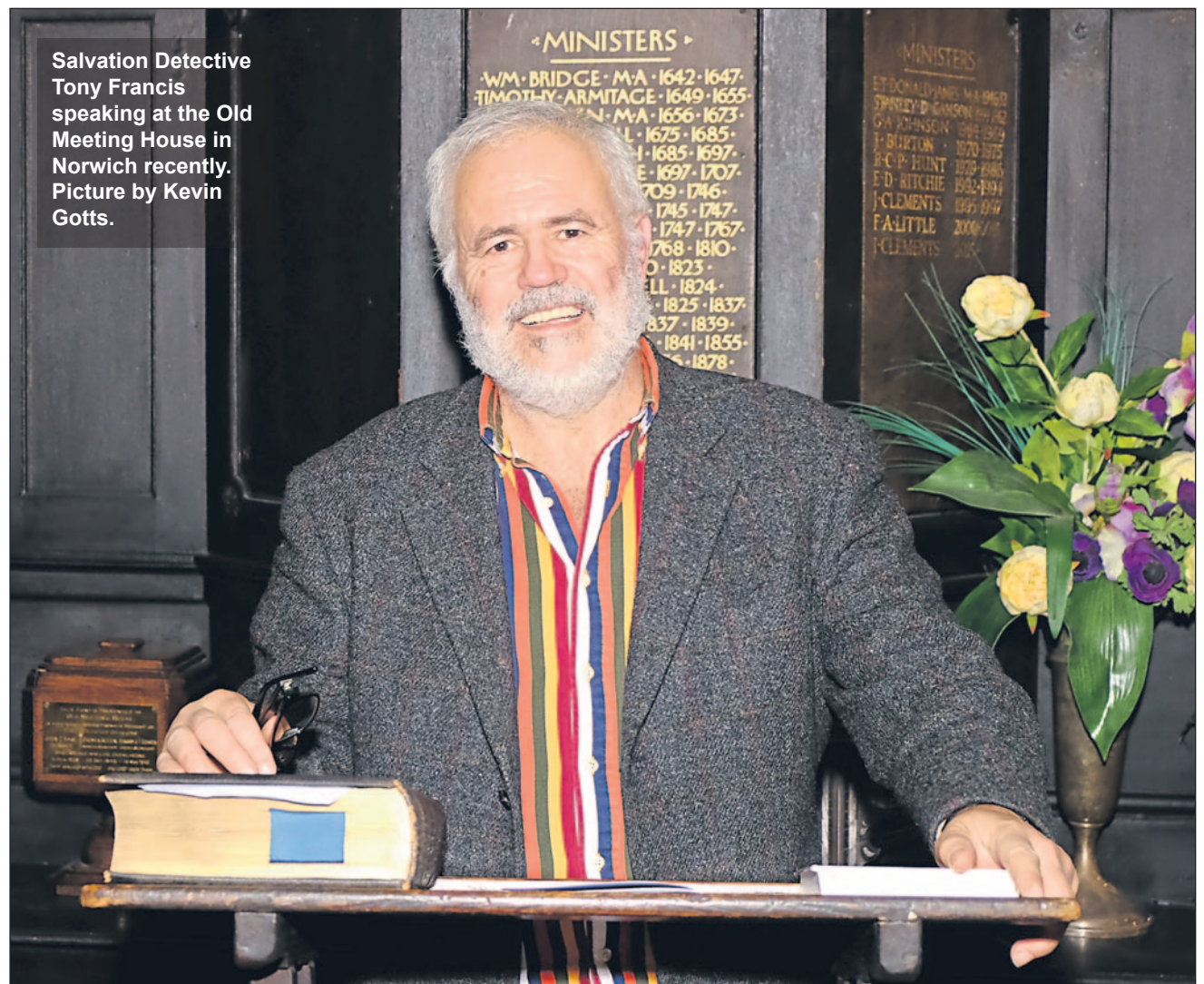
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Detective unravels Mayflower adventure

Former police sergeant and now “Salvation Detective” **Tony Francis** spoke to a Norwich audience recently of how he has used his sleuthing skills to unravel the spiritual heritage of the USA, 400 years after the Mayflower crossed the Atlantic on its historic voyage. **Kevin Gotts** reports.



Salvation Detective Tony Francis speaking at the Old Meeting House in Norwich recently. Picture by Kevin Gotts.

In September, it is exactly 400 years since the Mayflower crossed the Atlantic from England to America packed with pilgrims (many from East Anglia) looking for a new life with religious freedom.

Following retirement from an exciting police career, former serious crime investigator and detective sergeant Tony found himself working for museum services guarding and researching high value artefacts.

During the quieter times on the museum galleries he dedicated himself to prayer and unwittingly gained a thirst to investigate the hidden spiritual messages behind the antiquities under his charge.

A series of natural and supernatural God-given clues, ironically, led him back to his home town of Harwich in Essex where, he claims: “I unravelled the origin of the spiritual heritage of American, and arguably, the Western World, with scripturally-backed evidence of God’s holy portal from which He anointed the leaders of both the Jamestown Expedition and the Mayflower Pilgrim Fathers adventure.”

Speaking at The Old Meeting House, Norwich, in January, Tony spoke about his tough and painful upbringing, told anecdotal tales from an entirely adventurous police career, and enthusiastically articulated the main characters connected with the famous Mayflower vessel.

“The ship and the captain are inseparable, yet it has been the ship, Mayflower, which has been the focus of the origins of American civilisation. Master Christopher Jones of Harwich, a middle-aged merchant man, and much underestimated, guided this tiny, old and weather-beaten ship and its passengers, where many of greater stature had failed. Jones was selected over the more qualified Captain John Smith (of Pocohontas fame) who had experience and military prowess from his previous visits.”

Initially two ships set off. The Speedwell leaked so badly she had to be abandoned after sailing just 300 miles. They returned to Plymouth.

This did not deter Jones; he took on many extra passengers and set off once more without an escort and his ill-equipped cargo ship rammed full of landlubbers. Jones had no experience of passengers and these were despised religious dissidents - many out of

exile in The Netherlands. The largest percentage of known passengers came from Norfolk.

The odds were against him. A ship’s master took a precedence over all other leadership - Jones knew his responsibility. He was a man of social standing and conscience, having held civil office in his home of Harwich. He also knew that his faith beliefs would be different to those of his passengers.

The anticipated 21-day crossing turned to 66. Jones maintained confidence, discipline and the sea-worthiness of the battered ship. So bad were storms that sail could often not be used.

“It is incredible that out of this hazardous trip, a foundational document to the American Constitution emerged. An ‘agreement’ was drafted - these were people of ‘Covenant’ values, drawn from the Bible. Consequently, the famous Mayflower Compact - a radical document of equality - was drafted. It is, in some ways, a remarkable tribute to Jones, who did not even sign the Compact,” said Tony.

“Jones went beyond his contract with these passengers. He was to deliver a cargo to a continent. He could have dumped them on a sandbar. What he did was secure their passage and their passing. He assisted with finding a settlement. He led expeditions to secure the right place to settle. He supplied a secure retreat for them in the Mayflower as they foraged for sustenance, fighting the Indians, hunger, wildlife and the appalling weather.

It is said by climatologists that this winter was ‘a little ice age’. He could have expelled them from his ship or simply left them. Instead he actively assisted them.”

Fatigued by the trip, Jones died nine months after his return - an indication of his dedication beyond the normal call to duty of a moderate merchant seaman of no notoriety.

Tony concluded: “As we approach the 400th anniversary of this ‘amateur’ expedition from tyranny, at the root of American heritage in September, it is time to recognise Master Christopher Jones of the Harwich Mayflower for his heroic leadership.”

For more information about Tony’s research and his Christian Heritage experiences visit www.gatewaysofzion.com

Horstead Centre
residential stays & activity days

THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Norwich

Horstead Centre Manager

- **Job Description:** Centre Manager
- **Applications close:** 12 midnight, Friday 27 March 2020
- **Interview date:** 2 April 2020
- **To start:** Monday 1 June 2020 (or later to comply with notice periods)
- **Location:** The Horstead Centre, Norfolk
- This is a permanent appointment subject to 6 months successful probation.

The Horstead Centre is dedicated to providing young people with educational, personal, social and spiritual development through its programmes of residential and day outdoor activities. Part of the Diocese of Norwich, we are seeking to appoint a new Centre Manager to build on our successful 50-year track record.

Our successful applicant will have a sustained background of success in working with young people, schools and faith groups with strength in administration, management and pastoral care and will be a practising Christian.

The remuneration will be competitive reflecting the continuing success of the Centre and its staff.

The Horstead Centre Trust operates a Safer Recruiting Procedure for all appointments. Any offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory medical clearance and DBS checks at the appropriate level and where necessary documentary evidence showing entitlement to work in the UK.

The post requires two referees.

- Please contact josie.barnett@horsteadcentre.org.uk for an application pack including a detailed job description, person specification and application form. www.horsteadcentre.org.uk