

World record holder carries cross into Norwich



Arthur Blessitt, who has carried a 12ft wooden cross right around the world, visited Norwich on February 23 and 24 to walk through the city and speak at Proclaimers Church.

Arthur's historic and unprecedented 'crosswalk' began in 1969 and

has taken him on foot through wars, deserts, jungles, 307 countries, seven continents and 37,352 miles. The Guinness Book of World Records lists this as 'The World's Longest Walk': equivalent to 1.5 times around the earth.

Picture courtesy of EDP

in brief

Christians urged to join witness walk

Norwich Christians are being urged to support the Good Friday Walk of Witness through Norwich city centre on March 21 with volunteers needed to help carry the large wooden cross.

Last year's event (pictured below) saw the largest turnout for a number of years with over 220 people joining in, according to organizers, and they would like to get even more people this year.

The Walk, and United Service at Norwich Cathedral which follows, is organized by Transforming Norwich. Its chairman, John Betts, said: "Easter is a great opportunity to express our unity in Christ, centered as it is around the cross and resurrection. Last year saw a terrific turnout. It would be wonderful to build on that in this year's march and ecumenical service in our historic cathedral."

The procession of witness, with the large wooden cross, meets at Chapelfield Methodist Church at 4.45pm. Volunteers to carry the cross should contact Rev John Fenn on 01603 452086.

The Walk will leave at 5pm, escorted by the Norwich Citadel Salvation Army band. It will stop at Millennium Plain outside the Forum, for a short open-air celebration. The procession will arrive at Norwich's Anglican Cathedral at 6pm for a united service of worship.

The cathedral choir will sing, local church leaders will lead the prayers and read the scriptures.

The preacher will be Commissioner Betty Matear who, with husband John, is joint leader of The Salvation Army in the UK. She is also Free Churches Moderator.



Easter dawn

As dawn breaks on Easter Day, members and friends from churches that make up the Thorpe & Heartsease Christian Forum will celebrate Easter morning on St James' Hill overlooking the City of Norwich.

Everyone is invited to assemble at the car park at 5.15am on Sunday March 23 ready to join in the sunrise service which starts at 5.30am.

There are ample parking facilities on Britannia Road Car Park and further details about this event can be obtained from David Joscelyne (01603 433493).

City mega-church plans are revealed

By KEITH MORRIS

Plans will shortly be submitted for the newest and largest church ever to be built on the fringe of Norwich, in the grounds of the former David Rice Hospital site in the north of the city.

The £5m to £6m building will house the new Norwich Family Life Church (NFLC) formed from the merger of the former Mount Zion Church on Heartsease and the church previously worshipping at Drayton Hall.

Plans that had already been approved back in 2005 for a church of just over 2000sq m on the site, were renewed in February. Now new plans are nearing completion for a 3800sq m facility which, in addition to providing space for 1000 worshippers, will provide for a cafe, administration facilities, meeting rooms, classrooms, day care, mother and toddler groups amongst other community facilities for all age groups.

An exhibition of the latest proposals was undertaken in January with positive results and an archaeological dig and traffic and ecological assessments completed.

Les Brown, of Les Brown Associates who will be fronting the proposal on behalf of NFLC, said that as soon as the various consultant's reports have been received the application will be submitted. The design, which has



The front and back elevations of the new proposed Norwich Family Life Church.

been prepared by local architects Feilden & Mawson, provides a light, modern and contemporary facility which will be attractive to all age groups while respecting the existing landscape and levels of the site.

The design uses the site levels to ensure the lowest possible profile whilst at the same time providing a dramatic glazed frontage with views through the entrance of the building to the valley beyond.

NFLC pastor Trevor Pimlott said: "We are excited that this project is

positively moving forward and if the plans are approved we will have a magnificent new building to serve the church and the community on one of the most attractive sites in this part of the Norwich fringe.

"We are hoping to provide a large facility which will be of benefit to all the churches in the city and will be available to them. It will enable us to host some great speakers and well-known ministries to come and bless our city."

Graham Dacre, one of the church's

leaders and a member of the Lind Trust which is backing the new church, said: "I am delighted to be involved and it will be great to see the new church emerge in such a wonderful setting. My prayer is that it will provide well for NFLC and as a resource for the wider community."

Les Brown went on to say that the project currently has support in principle from the officers of Broadland District Council and if plans are approved building works could start later this year.

GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH

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 ■ 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 Harvest 2008 issue is Friday August 29.
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It all comes back to the resurrection

■ "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." (John 20:29)
 Jesus said these words to Thomas who would not believe that he was alive unless he saw Jesus in front of him and could put his fingers in the nail marks on his hands and touch Jesus' side. When Jesus meets Thomas he offers to oblige and then John records the verse above which has been an encouragement to Christians throughout the generations. Some 2000 years after the resurrection, those who know Jesus can say: "that means me, I believe."
 We are in a world of Thomases today and that can affect us. We can call into question what we believe. When we do, the place to come back to is always the resurrection, because our faith is based on historical fact.
 Jesus was raised by God after dying for the



Jason Griffiths, assistant pastor, Surrey Chapel

sins of the world, and those disciples who were with Thomas and Jesus knew it because they saw him, and couldn't keep it to themselves.
 Once the Holy Spirit had come upon them at Pentecost, everywhere they went they told people that Jesus was alive and what that meant. What Jesus had taught them clicked into place. It is the same for us today, the faith that they passed on has come down the

generations and will continue to be passed on, because it isn't a blind faith as today's Thomases assume; it is a faith that makes sense, that is thought through and that looks to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ as its foundation.
 The reason it makes sense is because of who Jesus is – the Son of God. The one by whom the world was made entered his creation to put it right. After he had done this, died in our place for our sin, God raised him from the dead and he is now exalted at the right hand of the Father in heaven.
 He wants people to know what he has done, so he commissioned his disciples to "go and make disciples of all nations" Matt 28:19. That commission still stands today. If we have met the risen Lord Jesus Christ we are told to go and make disciples. So will we pass the baton on to the next generation?

Go-ahead for Christian sponsored Academy

By KEITH MORRIS

Norwich's first academy school, backed by two Christian sponsors to the tune of £2m, has finally been given the green light by the government, after a consultation process and much public debate.
 The two sponsors, Christian businessman and philanthropist Graham Dacre, and the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Rev Graham James, have promised that the new Open Academy, which is set to replace Heartsease High in September, would be somewhere that local children would be "proud" to attend.
 Schools secretary Ed Balls and schools minister Andrew Adonis signed off the funding agreement for the academy on February 29, meaning it is all systems go. Because of the £2m put in by the sponsors, the new academy will attract £20m of extra government money.
 There was much public debate over the proposed Christian ethos of the academy, but the sponsors have promised that it will teach the Norfolk agreed religious education syllabus.
 Graham Dacre, who put up the majority of the £2m in sponsorship of the Heartsease academy and who was attacked publicly by opponents of the scheme, including Norwich North MP Dr Ian Gibson, said: "I am pleased the decision has now been made. I am expressly grateful for all the support received over recent months. At the same time, I am obviously saddened that the provision was so divisive."
 He added: "We are at the start of a journey and it has to be good news. Hope remains that, in due course, we have a school and successes we can all celebrate and that all concerns prove to have been unfounded."
 Bishop Graham said he was "delighted", adding: "This is a big investment for the people of Heartsease. I believe it will be an academy of which they will be proud."
 The academy will have space for 950 pupils aged 11-19 and will specialise in environmental science. It will open in the existing school in September and in a new building in September 2010, and could be the first of five or six across Norfolk.
 Lindsay Knight, the current Heartsease High head who will be the Open Academy principal when it opens in the existing buildings in September, said: "I am glad



Academy sponsors, top, the Bishop of Norwich, above, Graham Dacre.

the waiting is over. All pupils and staff have a place in the academy and one of my priorities in the coming weeks will be talking to different groups about the changes."
 Ms Knight will now step down from the headship to help to deliver the academy. An acting headteacher will be appointed for the summer term and if all goes to plan the academy will open in its new buildings in September.
 The government has offered a place on the governing body to Norwich City College principal Dick Palmer as part of the "partnership" with the institution.
www.norwich-academy.org

Grant boost for mystic

■ She is one of Norwich's most famous daughters and the first woman ever to write a book in the English language.
 Now information about the life and work of Julian of Norwich is to reach a wider audience, thanks to a lottery grant.
 The Friends of Julian of Norwich, which was formed to let people know about the medieval mystic and her shrine in the city, has been awarded £50,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to employ a learning project officer.
 The officer will work with pupils, students and people from all walks of life to explore Julian's heritage and work and how it relates to life today.
 Julian, who was born in 1342 and died around 1416, lived at the time of the Black Death and is considered to be one of the greatest English mystics.
 Aged 30, and at the point of death from a severe illness, the pain suddenly left her and she had a series of intense religious visions about God's love for mankind.
 Julian's visions prompted her to devote her life to God and she became an anchoress, a kind of religious hermit.

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Vineyard church marks decade of giving out food boxes

■ Norwich Vineyard church is celebrating ten years of providing boxes of food free to needy families across the city and county.

The Food Store project regularly supplies boxes packed with non-perishable food and other essentials items to a wide range of projects and families across Norwich and as far as Wymondham and Great Yarmouth.

Food Store was started by church members Ruth and Peter Warner back in 1997. As a health visitor, Ruth saw how some families were simply unable to feed themselves properly all the time.

The service started in an embryonic form when church family members brought food on an ad-hoc basis and other members took it to families they knew were in need.

Today there is a dedicated team, led by Austin Perkins which, every first Sunday in the month, line up a long row of tables in the hall at Thorpe St Andrews High School, where the church meets, and congregation members stack it high with tins, instant food and chocolates.

"We make sure the food is good quality and include plenty of treats for the children," said Austin. "Some of the families we help don't have a cooker so we try to include food that can be prepared with just a kettle."

Sometimes up to 20 boxes are packed up and then distributed via the health-visiting network and social services family intervention teams and through various Christian social action projects such as the YMCA, Pregnancy Crisis and the Magdalene Group.

Each box contains a label detailing where the gift has come from and reassuring the recipient that 'there are no strings attached'.

One of the regular contacts is Jenny Payne, a health visitor working for Thorpe Hamlet Sure Start. She said: "It's really good being able to give food directly to the families in desperate need. We can deliver to families with as many as ten children and we know that the children will get something good to eat."

As news of the service has grown, requests have started to come in from further afield across Norfolk.

Austin said: "Although as a fellowship, Vineyard gives very generously, we are unable to meet all the requests we get because the need is so great.

"If there are other churches who would like to join us in this ministry, we would love to hear from them. We are also happy to hear from new contacts who can place food boxes with families who really need them." Contact Austin on 01603 484585.



Austin Perkins, right, and Robert Warner with some of the Norwich Vineyard food boxes.

Celebration as street work grows

Norfolk Street Pastors is marking its first 12 months of befriending and helping those out late on the streets of Norwich with a celebration service on March 12.

It is also currently training up an additional 30 Street Pastors who are set to also take to the streets of Dereham, Heartsease and Lakenham in a huge expansion of the Christian project across the county.

It is just one year since Street Pastors began their work of befriending and supporting anyone on the streets of Norwich on Friday nights in need of kindness, care or a listening ear.

Just a few months later, at the invitation of the local Police, Street Pastors went out on Saturday nights as well.

Project co-ordinator Val Dodsworth said: "The variety of people that we have met and talked with, the interest that has been shown in our presence and the relationships that we have begun to build with those who regularly frequent the streets of Norwich's club land, all combine to convince us that the service our volunteers offer is both valued and necessary.

"On Christmas Eve we were able to convey an otherwise homeless man to a hostel which was available to him in Diss.

"On New Year's Eve Street Pastors spent several hours with a lonely and desperately unhappy man who was bent on getting drunk before throwing himself in the river.

"Often there is no feedback and we don't

know the result of our involvement, but Street Pastors are out there to help where and when they can, either in practical ways or by having time to be with people and offer care and compassion in the muddles of life," said Val.

Nearly 30 potential Street Pastors have recently started the four days of intensive training which they need to undergo before taking to the streets. As well as a new group to work in Norwich's clubland, there is also a group training to work amongst the young people of Dereham; eight volunteers who will be based in the Heartsease area and yet another group who are preparing to be a helpful and reassuring presence around the Lakenham area.

"There are no clubs there," said Val, "but there

are often groups of young people who don't know what to do with themselves and can end up wandering about and causing anxiety to others in these areas. So the hope is that Street Pastors will be able to bring care and friendship to the young people and reassurance to others who live in the vicinity."

On Wednesday, March 12 there will be a celebration evening at the Princes Street URC, Norwich, when the new Street Pastors will be commissioned for the work and those already serving will be rededicated.

The main speaker will be Street Pastors founder Rev Les Isaacs. There will also be refreshments provided at the event which starts at 7.30pm.

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Prayer changes things say team

By GAIL HALLEY

Call to Prayer in Norfolk is moving into a new phase after eight years of existence and to mark this, there will be a commissioning service on Wednesday April 2 at NCBC.

In autumn 2006, Call to Prayer came under the umbrella of Transforming Norwich which has encouraged its work and activity. A commissioning service was felt to be an important way of recognising the need for prayer in our community, and Call to Prayer's role in that.

Jane Holloway, National Prayer Director at the World Prayer Centre will be the speaker and her subject is 'Hope for the Nation'.

In June 2006, Jill Gower – who heads Call to Prayer – was co-opted onto the executive of Transforming Norwich, and John Betts, TN Chairman, believes this was of mutual benefit. "It meant wider recognition of Call to Prayer, while bringing a prayer ministry into the heart of Transforming Norwich," he said. It was, he felt, good for TN to be relating more directly with the intercessors.

For Jill Gower, the recognition of



Service speaker: Jane Holloway.

the ministry has been a great encouragement. "It enables us to fulfil our calling to encourage and facilitate prayer in the local church," she says.

Call to Prayer is now coordinating several projects:

- **Adopt A Week of Prayer:** was launched towards the end of 2007 to encourage churches to take one week in the year to focus on prayer and particularly to pray for their local communities. Revd Philip Young, Vicar of St Thomas' Earlham, said they had found their experience of Adopt a Week very positive. "Some people joined in prayer in a way they hadn't before, and they found the informality, and addressing God as their Father, very helpful," he said.
- **New Covenant Tabernacle:** is a life-size representation of the tabernacle given to Moses which reveals the fulfilment of Jesus and

His sacrifice, and is a powerful teaching aid. Lorie Lain-Rogers, who designed and made almost all the Tabernacle furniture, said: "The Tabernacle was created as a visual aid to Jill Gower's teaching, and it has hugely exceeded all our expectations. I have seen in context the sacrifice Jesus made for us, and it has opened up for me a totally new way of praying." www.newcovenanttabernacle.co.uk

■ **Redigging the Wells:** This is a group of people working together to research, prayer-walk and intercede for the city and its environs – along the lines pioneered by George Otis Jr of Transformations – with a view to tapping into our great spiritual heritage and effecting change in the spiritual climate today. Biddy Collyer, who heads up Pregnancy Crisis Norfolk and is one of the initiators of Redigging, says: "We have in Norwich a great heritage of prayer and caring for the poor and we want to do all we can to build on it in the present time." The next meeting is in April.

■ **Prayer School:** Call to Prayer runs regular prayer schools. They are also very happy to come to churches and organise prayer schools. Robbie Bain, who attends the school every month, and who

is part of the intercessory team for Prayer for the Nations, says, "Those of us who attend have been greatly impacted, and we would encourage anyone wanting to draw closer to God in prayer, also to pray with more authority and revelation, to get on board." The school currently meets on the first Saturday of the month, 10am-12 30pm at St George's Hall, Stoke/Poringland Rd, Stoke Holy Cross.

As Jill Gower says: "Prayer changes things and I'm sure we all want to see a spiritual climate change in our area and for the Kingdom of God to advance."

John Betts sums up the situation which he believes is partly due to Call to Prayer. "For the first time in decades it seems the church is uniting in prayer in a way that promises well for the future work and ministry of the churches and Christian organisations in Norwich."

All are very welcome to the Commissioning Service which will be held at 7.30pm on Wednesday April 2 at Norwich Central Baptist Church, Duke Street, Norwich.

For further information on Call to Prayer, contact Jill Gower on 01508 491770 or email jill@jill495.orangehome.co.uk



Street pastors are on the web

■ Norfolk Street Pastors has launched a new website to keep its supporters informed of its latest news and activities.

The site has been designed by Network Norwich communications officer Keith Morris, who is also a trustee of the charity. It aims to keep visitors up to date with the latest news, events and information from the organization which has recently

received its charitable status.

The site also contains details of how to become a Street Pastor or an intercessor or supporter of the project and even has a video of Street Pastors serenading Norwich nightclubbers on Christmas Eve.

For more information on the charity contact: Val Dodsworth, 01603 472753.

www.norfolkstreetpastors.co.uk

Norfolk pastors in Kenyan nightmare

By KEITH MORRIS

Two Norfolk pastors, who were caught up in the violence sweeping Kenya after the recent election, have told of their horrifying experiences and appealed for cash to help families who are now suffering hardship.

Michelle and Rod Smith, of Wellspring Church, Poringland, near Norwich, witnessed the violence in December and January while they were in the country with their Christian charity Healing Streams Kenya, visiting five grown-up children they have adopted.

Hundreds of people have been killed in the East African country since violence broke out there after claims of vote rigging in the presidential election on December 27.

Michelle and Rod had been in Kenya since December 3, staying in Kisumu, Kenya's third largest city and the scene of some of the worst violence to follow the disputed presidential election.

They had been visiting their five adoptive children and various orphanages and churches when the violence erupted.

"Kisumu, was one of places hit worst with the violence and we watched terrible scenes from our bedroom window and also from the vehicle as we drove to the airport," said Michelle.

"On the first day of the riots we heard shouts, screams and gunshots repeatedly for over 24 hours. We watched the sky fill with tear gas and the thick black smoke of burning tyres, which fortunately was blowing in the opposite direction to our home.

"Policemen were driving and running out of the gates with guns in hand, shooting towards looters. Many people were hurrying home with mattresses, fridges, furniture and large bags of other looted items, taken from the shops in the centre of town."

The couple were trapped in their house, along with their children, as the food supplies dwindled and the water supply was cut off at least every other day. Fortunately, three of their sons managed to go out and buy some bread, milk, sugar and other essentials.

"We can honestly say, that we knew God's peace beyond understanding and we drew together as a family each day and prayed, worshipped in song and gave thanks for our safety and provision," said Michelle.

By January 10, the couple's daughter, back in the UK, managed to secure two seats on a Kenya Airways flight back home. The couple said their tearful goodbyes to all but two of their



Michelle and Rod Smith of Poringland.

Picture by EDP

children who were allowed to accompany them on a police escorted journey to the airport.

"As we drove through Kisumu, our hearts sank," said Michelle. "Most of the shops in the town centre had been looted and completely destroyed by fire. Many concrete boulders lay in the road, these had been shop fronts and pathways. The streets were eerily quiet, not a soul in sight."

The vehicle that the children had escorted them to the airport in, was surrounded by a mob on the way home and they were lucky to escape from it without harm when somebody recognized them.

Michelle said: "Please help us to help the many innocent people whose lives have been turned upside down. Many, who survive on a daily basis purely buying and selling what little they can, have lost all means of earning a living. Our vision is to help them set up small

businesses again, becoming self-sufficient and able to provide for their families.

"Before this desperate situation, Kisumu's unemployment rate was 80%, now it is even greater as most hotels and businesses were torched by rioters. Those displaced may never be able to return home, we want to help them rebuild their lives again. With your help, we can do it.

"For as little as £80 we can set someone up with a market stall (most were burnt down). This will enable whole families to be self-sufficient again. We also have a young farmer who just needs £50 to buy seeds to sow on his small piece of land to support him and his new wife."

If you can help, ring Michelle and Rod Smith on 01508 494211 or e-mail: michelle-smith@tiscali.co.uk or donate to Healing Streams Kenya, UK charity number 1098030.

in brief

Church goes mobile

■ A Norwich church has celebrated its first anniversary of going public by launching a mobile text messaging service to keep its congregation informed of events and activities.

Gateway Vineyard church celebrated one year of meeting publicly at the Fishergate Centre in the city centre on Sunday January 20 and in that time its numbers have doubled.

Gateway Vineyard church was started by husband and wife team Craig and Hannah Deal in October 2005 as a plant from Norwich Vineyard, which meets in Thorpe St Andrew.

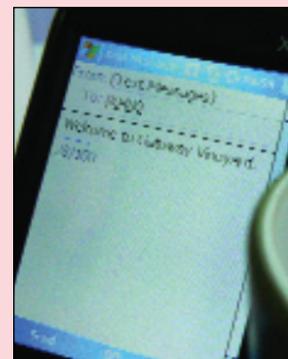
They launched the free text alert service to help those that attend, and possible visitors, keep right up to date with church activities. "We just want to give people the chance to plug in to what we are doing," said Hannah.

Craig said: "It has been a real adventure. To see the church grow over the last year has been encouraging. To see people discover Jesus has been fantastic."

"Vineyard churches throughout the world have always held the belief that church should be culturally relevant and in touch with local culture, most people talk to each other using text messaging so why shouldn't the Church?"

Set up café style, Gateway seeks to create a relaxed environment where anyone can come and meet with God, says Craig. With a free breakfast from 10am the service starts at 10.30am with contemporary worship followed by a short relevant talk and a chance to respond.

Get the free text by texting the word GATEWAY to 80480. Contact the church on 01603 439076 or info@gatewayvineyardnorwich.org.uk



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Pictured above are Simon and Melissa Snell with children
Charlotte and Matthew in Bolivia.

Norwich family in dream mission to Bolivia

■ South America

■ Norwich Christian couple Simon and Melissa Snell, and their two small children, flew to Bolivia in January to spend the next 18 months helping small businesses to get people out of poverty.

Both Simon and Melissa are familiar with Bolivia as this is where they met. They spent their gap year in Santa Cruz working with Youth With A Mission and were really excited about going back, this time as a family.

"It is wonderful to be back in Bolivia after over 10 years, they said. "We arrived in Sucre on Friday 25 January and moved into our rented house. Although it's furnished, we've been equipping the house with everything from washing machine to wooden spoons, and we have to haggle over the price for most things. It's pretty spacious and the garden is nice, but rather basic, and there have been roof leaks and some mould to deal with.

"The altitude here is Sucre is nearly 3000m, which means that we're getting pretty tired though.

"Sucre has well-tended green spaces and a beautiful central Plaza but few children's play areas. Traffic is chaotic."

Simon and Melissa have lived in Norwich since they got married 12 years ago and attended St Luke's Church, with their two young children Charlotte and Matthew. Simon is fulfilling a 20-year-old dream to work with small businesses in rural Bolivia.

In 1987, Simon went to Greenbelt where he heard American preacher Tony Campolo talking about a programme where students from his university went to Central America and worked with small businesses as a way of helping them find their own way

out of poverty. Simon then went on to do a degree in Business Studies with the hope of one day using his degree to support small businesses himself.

That opportunity has now arisen with Christian relief and development organisation Food for the Hungry (FHI) and Simon is to be a micro-enterprise assistant. The FHI Income Generation team supports approximately 2,000 families living in rural areas surrounding Sucre and Cochabamba who depend on subsistence agricultural and livestock activities as their primary source of livelihood.

The purpose of the role is to increase people's ability to generate income. It will involve market research, assisting with training farmer organizations in business management, micro-finance and marketing, helping develop business ideas for field workers and entrepreneurs and assisting rural entrepreneurs prepare successful business plans.

Simon says: "I'm very excited about this opportunity, as it will enable me to bring together experience and skills in business and project management and put them to good use in rural Bolivia."

Until recently, Melissa worked at Pregnancy Crisis-Norfolk delivering sex and relationships education in secondary schools. She will be doing similar work while in Bolivia as well as setting up home and looking after the children.

The family would welcome anyone who would like to support them in their work in South America either financially or as a prayer supporter. If you are interested please contact them on contact@snells.org.uk or see the latest news at: www.snells.org.uk

Overseas ■ Norfolk C

Peopl

In the first part of a series looking at the difference Norfolk Christians are making across the world by putting the Gospel into action, we look a pastor in Bolivia and a writer and lawyer in India.



■ India

Norwich-based Eastern Daily Press journalist Steve Downes and lawyer Ian Dyble, both members of Cromer Parish Church, have just returned from two weeks in India with the Christian Big Life Ministries. Steve reports here on a faith-stretching fortnight...

Christian life can be pretty demoralising at times in England. Maintaining current church attendance levels is like making water flow uphill: recruiting new believers sometimes seems beyond our wildest dreams.

If 43 people signed commitments cards after watching a Jesus film or 14 people were baptised together in a lake, we would be heralding revival and being hired by churches to host conferences.

But in the villages around Kolkata in north-east India, and in Pakistan and Nepal, these are everyday events for those working with Big Life Ministries.

My link with Big Life goes back to July 2007, when I was part of a Baptist Missionary Society summer mission team in Kolkata. I spent the best part of the fortnight working with Good News Children's Education Mission, delivering basic English and maths lessons to street children from this sprawling city.

It was a fulfilling and humbling time. But one afternoon with Big Life really touched my heart. The Big Life South Asia director Benjamin Francis took the 10 of us to a Hindu



Indian children being helped by Hope Community Trust.

Christians reach out right across the world by putting the Gospel into action

Life with a mission



Steve Downes, back left, and Ian Dyble during their Big Life trip to India

had been untouched by the gospel.

At each location we did simple Bible stories like the lost sheep and the lost son, shared testimonies and took part in games with the villagers. Local church planters and co-ordinators shared the gospel more directly, and everywhere we went we saw dozens of people commit their lives to Jesus.

The organisation has seen more than 600 churches planted in four years. The way the local people are being disciplined and followed up means that number is likely to at least double and probably treble by the end of 2008.

The principles are simple, but hugely effective. The Big Life workers are simply being true to the instructions of Jesus. And the harvest of souls is extraordinary.

We took part in kids games in one village, where the Jesus film was then shown, projected from an ancient projector onto a bed sheet strung between two trees. Despite the crackly transmission and numerous distractions, 43 people signed commitment cards and will be meticulously followed up by their own people.

We also saw a mass baptism in another village. Each of those going through the waters faces the possibility of ostracism from their communities and families for their decision to follow Christ.

Another string to the Big Life bow is medical camps. We saw two in Muslim villages, which allow entry to potentially more hostile territory. In one of the Muslim villages, I shared my testimony of God healing my unborn son of cystic fibrosis.

If I'd thought about it in advance, I would've run a mile. But the story was well received, and we were blown away by the sight of Muslim men, women and children praying to receive Christ, and accepting tracts and Bibles.

Everywhere we went, there was a hunger for the gospel. The good news was received as just that.

The contrast with Britain was stark. Here, we have so much and think we need so little. But in north-east India, life is not cluttered by so much money and belongings. The power of God is readily believed and acted upon.

It may be hard to believe in secular Britain, but when Jesus said "I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it", he was speaking an eternal truth.

For more information about Big Life Ministries, contact Steve Downes via yolsandsteve@tiscali.co.uk

www.biglifeministries.org

village called Bamungachi, where nobody had ever heard the gospel.

We presented the good news through sketches, testimony and a message and saw 45 people give their lives to Jesus. The location and the response made us feel as though we had been taken in a time machine back to the New Testament, when Jesus

sent out the apostles and Paul and Silas went from place to place proclaiming the good news.

When I returned to England, I couldn't put the experience behind me. So I recruited a friend, Ian Dyble, and headed back to Kolkata for two weeks with Big Life in January.

During a whirlwind two weeks, we visited 13 villages that

India trip was life-changing experience

India

Since Norwich church pastor Nicky Smith first went to India three years ago, she has married an Indian pastor, taken on responsibility for 30 churches, helped to build a children's home and school and is now offering students the opportunity to join a mission experience in the country.

Nicky has been senior pastor of Grace Christian Fellowship in Norwich for the past eight years. In 2005, Pastor Zion Samuel of Emmanuel Gospel Faith Ministries, in Andhra Pradesh, India, invited her to make a trip to teach at a pastor's conference.

While she was there, she visited some of Samuel's 30 churches, which are spread over an area the size of Great Britain. When Nicky returned home, the church decided to raise money for a Land Rover, to enable Samuel to visit his churches more easily.

When Nicky returned to India later on that year, Samuel asked her to marry him, which she did in February 2007.

Since then, Nicky and Samuel have bought five acres of land and through the Hope Community Trust (HCT), which is based in Mile Cross Lane, Norwich, and has already raised £35,000 towards a project to build Emmanuel Grace Children's Home and Public School.

The school currently has 55 children, with 28 children in the home, mostly orphans or those whose families cannot afford to feed and educate them.

Donations of books and school equipment have already been sent to the new school from educational institutes in Norfolk.

Nicky and Samuel are expecting the school to accommodate 150 children by next year. As the children are currently housed in temporary accommodation, they are appealing for another £8,000 to complete the school buildings and furnish it with necessary equipment and resources.

The couple are also establishing a Bible School to teach the local pastors. There are currently 25 pastors working in 18 areas, covering an area of approximately 450 miles. The pastors are extremely poor and have little access to training or further education. The villages are very rural and hard to reach by road and there is little or no health care readily available to these people.

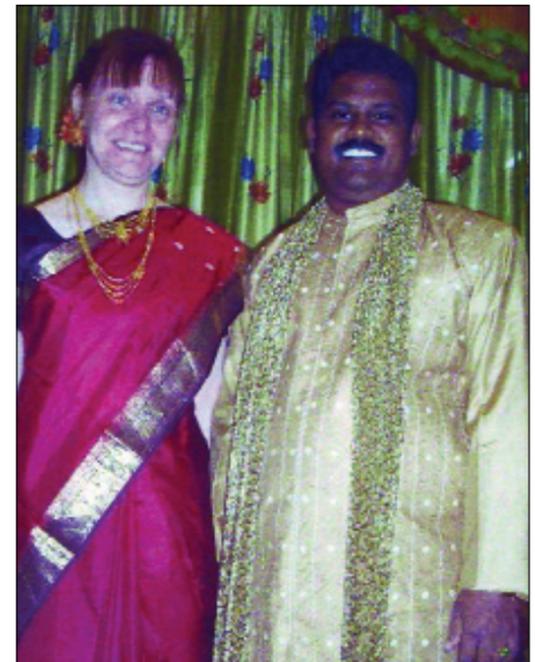
Linde Bousfield, who works at the HCT base in Norwich, said: "At present there is an open door to preach the Gospel in many villages where currently it has never been preached before. We are looking for people to come and minister in our pastors' conferences and Gospel crusades.

"There is a big need for people to come and help us preach the Gospel. We are also looking for people who want to come and spend some time with us in the ministry preaching in rural villages working with our Bible College to reach the lost in some remote areas, for either six weeks or three months.

"We do not know how long the door will be open but we do believe we must seize the opportunity before the door is closed." To donate to the school building project, please make cheques payable to Hope Community Trust and send to Serena Jones, Cross House, Mile Cross Lane, Norwich, NR6 6DS.

For further information about working with the charity e-mail nickyatbobbili@yahoo.co.uk or ring 07952 237461.

www.truthministriesint.co.uk



Norwich pastor Nicky Smith with her Indian husband Samuel.

Dream role for trio

By MIKE WILTSHIRE

This March sees the first Easter celebrations led by the new leadership team of the Salvation Army Citadel in Norwich.

Majors Denis and Olive Lomax are heading up a lively programme at the army's headquarters in St Giles Street, along with Captain Jonathan Wylie, who has also joined them on the new leadership team.

Jonathan, 27, who comes from Newry, Northern Ireland, has a business background in administration. His hobbies include abseiling and rock-climbing.

The new team's initiatives extend far beyond the worthy "stereotypes" of brass bands and helping the homeless.

For example, on Saturday, April 5 as part of the army's community events programme, they will host a fun-packed evening with the well-known comedy duo, Cannon and Ball (see right).

Then, on June 1, as part of the Citadel's lively "First Sunday" programme, they will welcome the well-known Christian author Adrian Plass at 6pm, along with TV producer Malcolm Flanagan.

For Denis and Olive Lomax, their Norwich posting is a dream come true, since in years gone by they had often visited Norfolk for holidays. Denis remembers sitting on Cromer pier and thinking that Norfolk would be a great place to work.

The couple have had successful postings in Newark, Liverpool, Carlisle and Scotland where they helped oversee 30 congregations. Many people do not know that the army is, first and foremost, a church, whose message is based on



New leaders at the Norwich Citadel: From the left: Majors Denis and Olive Lomax, with Captain Jonathan Wylie, right.

the Bible, says Denis.

Born in Merseyside, Denis first met Olive when she was already a committed Christian. She let Denis know that if he wanted to go on seeing her he would find her at the local citadel. In time, Denis came to a personal faith in Jesus Christ – and so began a lifetime of public service with Olive.

The couple have two children, Rebecca and Jonathan.

In Norwich, Denis and Olive have taken over from Majors Ray and Carelle Begley, who moved to the army's divisional headquarters in Newcastle last year.

Founded in 1865, the Salvation Army is now at work in 110 countries.

In Norwich, it has three "corps" (churches and centres). Activities include a Day Care Centre for the elderly and a Drop-in Centre for those who are homeless.

Comedy duo still rocking on

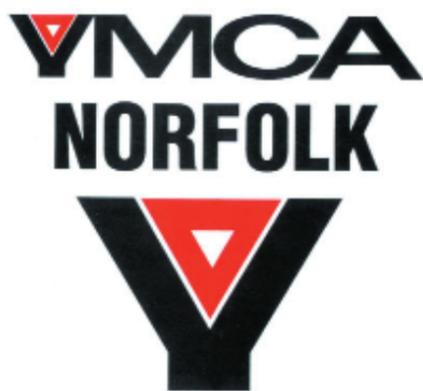
■ Comedy duo Tommy Cannon and Bobby Ball – one of the UK's most successful and enduring double acts – will be talking about their Christian faith and how it changed their lives when they visit The Salvation Army in Norwich on Saturday April 5, at 7pm.

In a career spanning more than 40 years, they have achieved a string of honours which puts them amongst the all-time 'greats' of show business, topping the bill at almost every theatre in the country.

Their own television series (1979-1992) regularly attracted television audiences of 15-18 million, and they still hold the record for the largest box office advance at the prestigious London Palladium. Tommy and Bobby have appeared at several Royal Variety command performances, and more recently in I'm a Celebrity, get Me Out of Here!

Bobby became a Christian after talking to theatre chaplain Max Wigley. He said: "I was walking on air. It was the biggest high I have ever had. Bigger than when we topped the bill at the Opera House in Blackpool for 10 weeks in front of 360,000 people, bigger than when we met the Queen. I knew God personally and everything pales into insignificance after that."

Tickets for the event are on sale at £6 and £4 (concessions) from The Salvation Army office, 34 St Giles Street, Norwich NR2 1LL (tel 01603 620747).



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Supported Lodging Scheme Have you got a spare room in your home?

Would you like to help and equip a young person to grow in confidence and gain the skill to take on their own tenancy and live an independent life?

We are looking for households who are sympathetic to the aims and purposes of YMCA Norfolk. This can be owner-occupied, council tenancy or privately rented and possibly bed & breakfast/guest house providers, who are prepared to offer a temporary home to a young person in the Norwich, South Norfolk, Broadland and Great Yarmouth areas.

In return you will receive a weekly payment of £81.05 (tax free under the government rent a room scheme), training and regular support from the YMCA staff Resettlement Team.

If you live in the Norwich, South Norfolk, Broadland or Great Yarmouth areas and would like to find out more, please contact:

For Norwich, South Norfolk and Broadland
Eddie Pleban, Head of Housing Services
Tel 01603 620269 ex 41
e-mail eddiepleban@ymca-norfolk.org.uk

For Great Yarmouth
Mary Gilbert on 07894 935775
e-mail marygilbert@ymca-norfolk.org.uk



Tributes paid to soldier of Christ

Well over 500 people attended a thanksgiving service to celebrate the life of Norwich broadcaster, writer and preacher John Breeze who was also the father figure of Oak Grove Chapel.

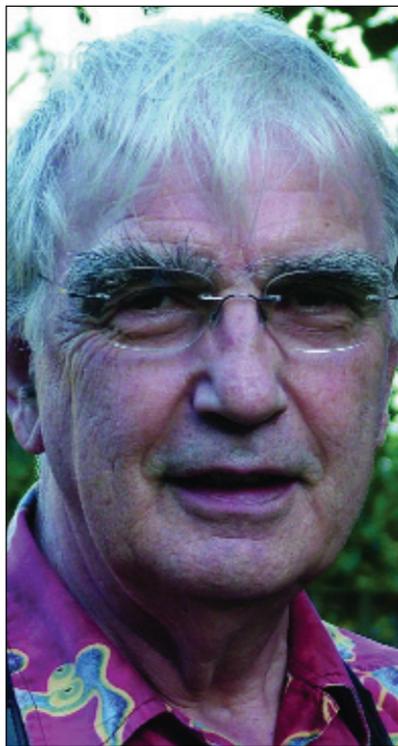
John, who was an elder of the church for many years, died peacefully in his sleep on December 26 while at his family's traditional Christmas gathering at Letton Hall in mid-Norfolk, aged 71.

John was a life-long member of Oak Grove. "He was a real local lad who did good," said church pastor Darren Woodward. "He was a leader, our finest teacher, a pastor and to many a brilliant friend whose heart of service has changed the lives of thousands.

"His ministry was not just confined to Oak Grove either, but regional and truly massive in its influence. We really appreciate the gift that God put amongst us. As a church we send our love to his wife Pearl and the rest of the family and we look to God to see the real legacy of this man called John, a real Catton Grover and Soldier of Christ.

John was a long-time contributor to Radio Norfolk's Thought for the Day slot and a mainstay writer for Good News for Norwich and, more recently, Network Norwich.

Good News editor Keith Morris said:



Father figure: John Breeze.

"We could always rely on John to come up with some great ideas for stories and he always knew what was going on in the Norwich Christian community. We will

miss both him and his writing."

Along with Pearl, John worked for many years with the Living Water Festival, Christian holiday company MasterSun and as volunteer guides at the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem, believed to be the place where Jesus was buried after His death on the cross and of course the place of His resurrection.

The thanksgiving service was hosted by Ian Savory and Darren Woodward and included the Catton Community choir, personal memories, thoughts and tributes from family, friends and colleagues, including Radio Norfolk, Good News for Norwich and Oak Grove Chapel, tracing the story of John's life, work and service supplemented by a presentation of pictures.

The final batch of tributes were from John's grandchildren and then daughters Joy and Alison who shared from John's recently written book entitled "Towards Tomorrow – Meditations for the New Year".

Finally Ian Savory, gave his tribute to John, heralding him as "a Secure Leader", "someone who embraced change as God's great adventure" and a real man of and for the community of Catton Grove.

Copies of John's book can be ordered from the Oak Grove Church Office at £2.50 incl (P&P).

Besom helps provide baby, kitchen and prisoner packs

■ The Christian Besom charity in Norwich has now been up and running for four years and its shiny white van with the thought-provoking logo of a broom (Besom) which 'sweeps away suffering' is becoming more familiar on the streets of the city.

Besom's main objective is to be a bridge which Christians can cross to enable them to give into their local communities – be it time, money, expertise or things. Besom strives for excellence and, for example, insists on items being of good quality.

Hilary Beach, leader of the Besom in Norwich, says she is thrilled by the way the Besom brings Christians together: "It's wonderful to see how serving together breaks down barriers of mistrust and makes us all aware of how we need to rely on God," she says.

Besom has three specific projects which churches or individuals can get involved in: the baby bath, the release rucksack and the kitchen pack.

A baby bath will be filled with all sorts of goodies (nappies, sleepsuit, toiletries, towel, talc) to help a new mum on the way when she comes home, perhaps to a flat which is fairly sparsely equipped. Hilary says, "Gifts are wonderful, but so are the time-givers. It's people's time which turns things into godly gifts."

Working with Move On East, Besom has supplied a number of backpacks for men coming out of prison; again, individuals contribute socks, toothpaste, shaving gear, supermarket voucher or whatever to the packs, and they have been much appreciated by men with very little, wanting to make a new start.

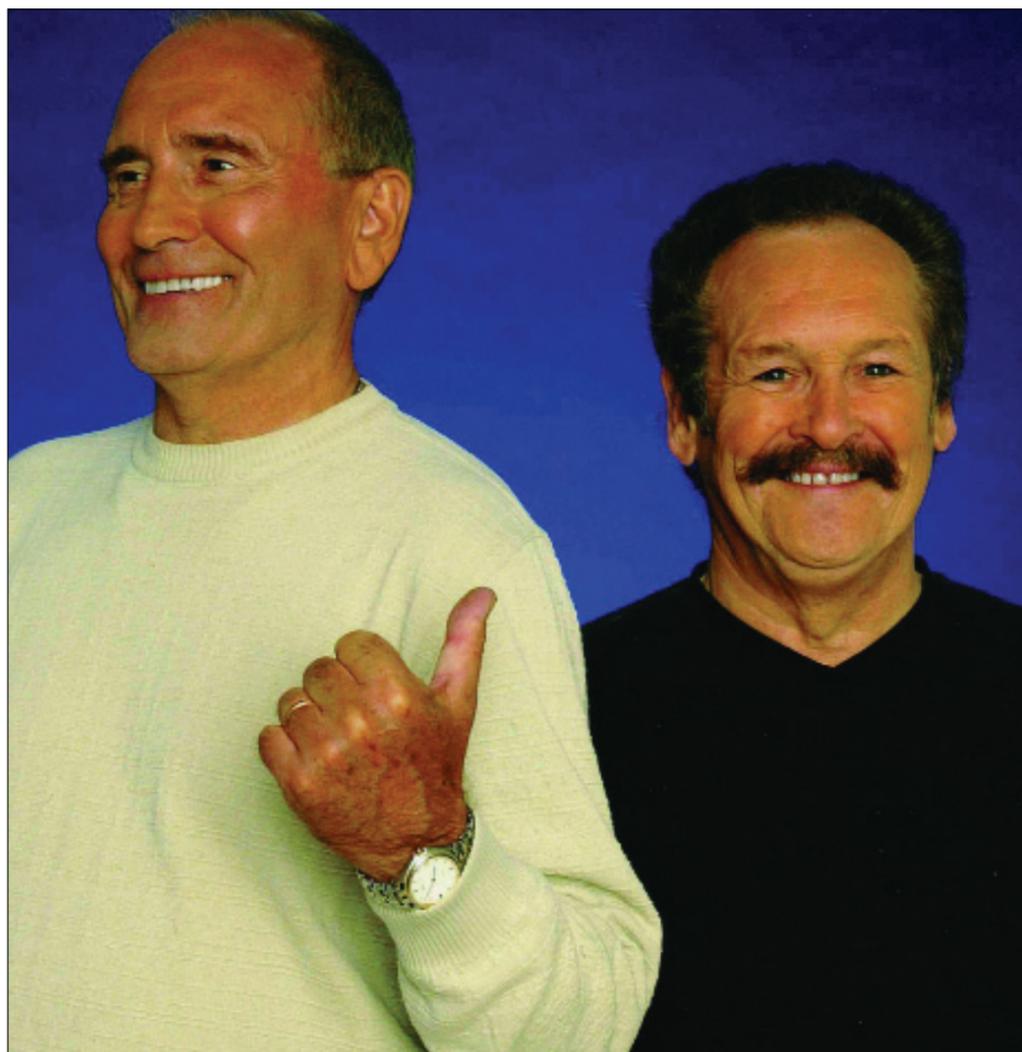
The new home pack is a washing-up bowl filled with anything and everything needed in the kitchen, and is a cheerful help to a young couple who are moving into a new home with very few possessions.

It was through his church, St Paul's Hellesdon, offering some kitchen packs, that Ray Hewitt first heard about Besom. It sparked his interest, and he's now part of the core team, giving generously of his time in various projects: "We had only just moved to St Paul's," says Ray, "and I thought this would be a great way to help people." He is now, amongst other things, Besom's resident curtain rail expert. He recently went to a national Besom meeting in London. "It was very inspiring and it was wonderful to see the enthusiastic involvement of so many young people," he says.

"The key to Besom," says Hilary, "is realising that we often don't understand what's going on, but God does. He puts people across our path to show us things we'd never been aware of. I'm sure we get far more out of it than ever we put in."

By Gail Halley

Come and share an evening with Cannon & Ball



SATURDAY 5TH APRIL 7.00PM

The Salvation Army

34 St Giles Street

Norwich



**TICKETS PRICED AT £6.00
& £4.00 CONCESSIONS**

AVAILABLE FROM

The Salvation Army Office: 01603 620747

Or Gibson Music, 5 St John Maddermarket
tel: 01603 663262

Bookshop rescue planned

Norwich church leaders are promising that the future of Christian literature in the city will be safe despite controversy and confusion following the closure of the SPCK Resource Centre at St Michael at Plea and the sacking of all its staff in early February.

The SPCK Resource Centre's five staff were all fired on February 5 via an e-mail from owners Mark and Phil Brewer from the Saint Stephen the Great Charitable Trust, which bought the 25-strong SPCK bookshop business in October 2006.

Norwich manager Jim Channell, who lost his job, said: "All the staff were fired by e-mail for not signing new employment contracts which were offered to them. It is very sad and a tremendous waste. I can't see that it has a future with the present owners."

"There is definitely a need for such a bookshop and resource centre in Norwich and we would like to see it continue."

The SPCK bookshop has remained closed for all but a couple of days since the sackings and reopened briefly under the name St Stephen The Great Bookshop. The Forget-Me-Not Café Centre, also situated at St Michael at Plea, has remained open for business throughout.

Great concern about the bookshop's future has been expressed by Norwich church leaders.

Rev Nicholas Vesey, vice chairman of Transforming Norwich, said: "I am extremely sad and concerned to hear of the closure. I am sad for the staff as they have provided great support for the area's Christian community for a number of years."

John Betts, chairman of Transforming Norwich said: "We are all concerned for the staff at SPCK and wish them well. We are also concerned about the potential loss of Christian

City bookstall raises smiles

■ After making more than 600 week-end 'appearances' in the heart of Norwich, a simple charity bookstall has not only become a local landmark, but has been called an "outpost of hope" for many a passer-by in the busy marketplace.

"It makes my day if someone with a long face visits our stall, but then goes away smiling," says Dr Alan Clifford, who leads the bookstall team from Norwich Reformed Church.

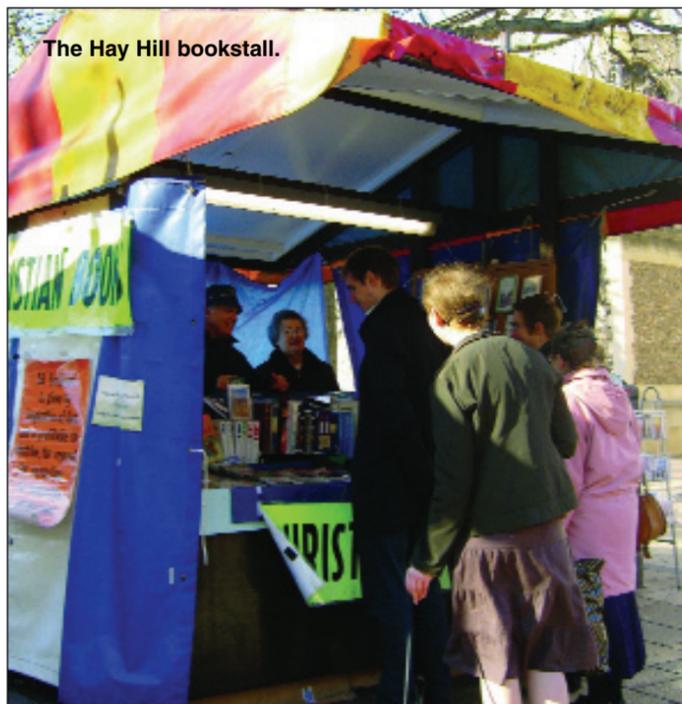
Come rain or shine, the bookstall on Hay Hill is open every Friday, except the first weekend of the month, when it opens on a Saturday.

"It's not a business – it is a ministry," says Dr Clifford, who especially welcomes overseas visitors and tourists in the summer months. The stall has books and Bibles in many languages, ranging from Russian to the Persian language, Farsi.

"We meet people of every faith – and none. People often share personal problems. We're always here to help and pray with them. We count it a great privilege," he adds.

literature in Norwich.

"On behalf of Transforming Norwich and others, I am personally leading an initiative to see that the long-term future of Christian



The Hay Hill bookstall.

The project was born more than 12 years ago when church member Rosemary Quinton was walking through the new Castle Mall – "I thought then that some sort of outlet for Christian books in the marketplace would be a great idea."

For Dr Clifford, 2008 is a jubilee year, since

literate in Norwich is secure. As soon as there is anything definite to report this will go on www.networknorwich.co.uk. In the meantime, we value the prayers of all concerned about

he became a committed Christian 50 years ago. He was then a young engineer at the Royal Aircraft Establishment at Farnborough, Hampshire, where Concorde was developed.

His journey to faith was not easy – "I completely rebelled in my mid-teens. I had a terrible temper."

But one day, after a family row, he talked with a young Christian friend who invited him to a Bible class. "Suddenly, those things I'd heard from the Bible began to make sense – and Jesus Christ became 'personal' to me."

Dr Clifford was ordained in 1969 and can now look back on nearly 40 years of church ministry. His church meets at Eaton Park Community Centre. But they love the city marketplace outreach – "no day is ever the same."

Today's venture would please the laymen founders of the Norwich City Mission, which in 1836 set out to "spread the knowledge of the gospel."

A mission worker, the late Bernard Colby, faithfully ran a city bookstall until 20 years ago. "You could say we are still 'flying the flag,'" says Dr Clifford.

By Mike Wiltshire

this situation."

Any parties with a specific interest or offers of help can contact John on 01603 861181 or at 2john@johnbetts.fsnet.co.uk

2008 Jubilee Programme

The Elim Church Presents

SATURDAY 12th APRIL

7.30pm

An Evening with
PAUL JONES

and

FIONA HENDLEY JONES

Paul's distinguished career includes being the award-winning lead singer of Manfred Mann, and the Blues Band. His collection of Gold discs includes one for the original Evita. Millions listen to him on Radio 2, Jazz FM etc.

His extensive stage credits range from the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company to West End and Broadway.

Fiona, an accomplished actress and singer, has worked in all areas of show business from her acclaimed TV series Widows to leading roles at the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company. She has starred in many West End productions.



**Tickets £5: Booking
Office 01603 621767**

SATURDAY 12th JULY

7.30pm

An Evening
with

JOHN PANTRY

John has been a tremendous encouragement to the Church for many years. He is a gifted song writer and musician, and has made many Christian albums. He also hosts Inspirational Breakfast Monday to Friday on Premier Radio.

He is an ordained minister of the Anglican Church.



During the evening an offering will be taken.

Jubilee Souvenir Brochure, with full details of Services, including Anniversary Day on Sunday 8th June, is available on request.

HEAR HOW FAITH IN GOD HAS CHANGED THEIR LIVES

Elim Pentecostal Church, Trory Street, NORWICH, NR2 2RH

Telephone: 01603 219038

Web site: www.elimchurchnorwich.org.uk

Norwich church celebrates 50th year

■ The Elim Pentecostal Church in Trory Street is marking its 50th year in Norwich and celebrations include singer Paul Jones, musician John Pantry and Elim General Superintendent John Glass.

The anniversary of this event will be held on Sunday June 8. The guest speaker for the morning Service will be John Glass, General Superintendent of the Elim Pentecostal Church.

The worship leader for the day will be Paul Riseley, who was the Assistant Pastor of the Norwich Elim Church a number of years ago.

The Church will also be holding special services throughout 2008. Award-winning lead singer of Manfred Mann, Paul Jones will be one of the guests. Paul and his wife Fiona, an accomplished actress and singer, will be sharing their faith on Saturday April 12.

Premier Radio's John Pantry will be in concert on Saturday July 12. Other guests, including Dr Tony Stone, will be speaking during the year. Tony, an international Bible Teacher, conference speaker and evangelist, conducted a number of crusades during the

early days of the Norwich Elim Church.

Pastor, Rev Gerry Turner, said: "The church is buzzing with excitement. The mid-week prayer meeting has more than doubled over the last year. Small prayer groups have been set up to also pray for this event.

"A new stage and a new sound system have been put in place for these Jubilee celebrations."

A full programme of events can be obtained from the Elim Church, Trory Street, Norwich or call (01603) 219038.

www.elimchurchnorwich.org.uk

in brief



Extension marks tin tabernacle's 120th

■ A Norfolk "tin tabernacle" has celebrated its 120th anniversary with a growing congregation and completion of a £90,000 church extension project.

Saxlingham Chapel is one of a very few remaining 'tin tabernacles' in Norfolk. The congregation is growing and at the Chapel's special 120th Anniversary celebrations in 2007 a building project was launched to raise funds in order to extend the existing facilities.

Ian Masson, one of the Chapel deacons, said: "We believe that God is calling us to embark on a journey of faith that affects not only our ministry here at the Chapel today, but also for the years to come.

"The £90,000 required, which has been entirely raised through gifts from the friends of the Chapel and other local churches, means that the facilities have now been modernised and extended to meet the needs of a growing church without changing the wonderful character of the original building."

To dedicate this new extension and to give thanks to God, a celebration weekend will be held at the Chapel on March 15 and 16. Guest speaker is Rev Roland Fidge who will lead a service of dedication on Saturday March 15 at 2.45pm. Sunday services on March 16 at 11am and 6.30pm. Everyone is invited.

For further details contact Ian Masson on 01603 457526 or at ianm@n-sc.co.uk

Books to feed minds

■ The ever popular annual Norwich Feed the Minds book fair is being held from Wednesday July 2 to Saturday July 5 at St Andrew's, Redwell Street.

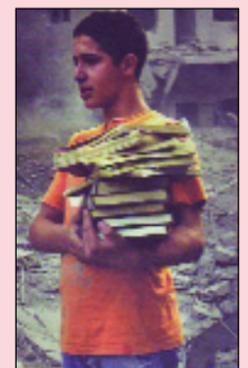
The 2007 book fair raised an amazing £1300 for projects in Sudan and a similar amount for projects in Egypt.

"But money raised was not the only measure of success for the book fair," said Norwich Feed the Minds chairperson, Waltraud Jarrold. "Ten boxes of books were also sorted and sent to the Overseas Book Service which responds to requests from Theological Colleges worldwide."

Thousands of books will be for sale and admission is free. The fair is open from 10 – 5pm each day except Saturday when it opens from 9 – 1pm finishing with a silent auction from 11am.

Help is needed on June 27 and from June 30 onwards to prepare for the event.

For more details about the Fair, donations of books and practical support ring Waltraud on 01603 454799 or email richardjarrold@tiscali.co.uk



Service to mark Rwanda genocide

■ Norwich-based Rwandan genocide survivor, Illuminée Nganemariya, is organising a special memorial service at Bowthorpe Church Centre to mark the 14th anniversary of the start of the Genocide. She is also offering to visit local churches to tell her story.

Fourteen years ago Rwanda's Hutu 'Power' extremists attempted to wipe their Tutsi compatriots from the face of the earth. Any moderate Hutus who stood in their way were also engulfed in this holocaust.

Friend murdered friend, slashing and cutting with machetes and spears. 'Lucky' victims paid for a quicker despatch, courtesy of a bullet to the head. In little more than three months, from April 6 to July 4, 1994, some 800,000 people were murdered.

Miracle in Kigali, the story of Norwich-based Rwandan Genocide survivor, Illuminée Nganemariya, was published by the Tagman Press last October.

Illuminée, her son Roger and co-writer Paul Dickson will be pleased to visit churches in Norfolk to speak about the book and Illuminée's experiences in the Genocide. They are very happy to talk as part of fundraising events for Africa, at special gatherings and during church services.

The Rwandan memorial service, to which all are welcome, takes place at Bowthorpe Church Centre, Bowthorpe Hall Road, Bowthorpe, Norwich NR6 9AA, on Saturday April 5, at 11.30am. Contact Paul Dickson on 01603 666011. www.tagmanpress.co.uk



Illuminée and Roger Nganemariya.



Pictured are members of Rosebery Road Methodist Church.

Church marks 100th birthday

A Norwich Methodist church is marking its centenary this year with a host of events including a festival of talents, street party, picnic and several concerts.

Rosebery Road Methodist Church, in New Catton, grew out of the highly successful Sun Lane Sunday School which started in 1818. The decision to build a chapel was taken in 1900 and after seven years of fund-raising the trustees were ready for the stonelaying on Thursday 12 March 1908. This led to the opening of the church on Thursday 15 October that year.

Minister Rev Dr Stephen Mosedale said: "The church is celebrating its centenary throughout 2008, and having always been a community-based church. Over 7000 postcards have been distributed during January to the homes within the neighbourhood inviting participation in the special events."

Ursula Franklin, the senior steward of the church has written a history which will be available from March.

Centenary Events

8th-9th March Festival of Talents

There will be a Festival of Talents with exhibits

of crafts, hobbies etc contributed by members of the church and those who use the premises during the week.

This weekend is also the anniversary of the Stone Laying when the Centenary Banner will be dedicated and the Centenary Book So Great a Cloud of Witnesses will be available.

12th April Quiz evening, 7pm, with sausage & chips

17th May Street Party, 3.30-6pm

29th June Picnic at Catton Park, 12.30pm, bring your own food

18th September Meadow Way Chapel Orchestra, 8pm

20th September Harvest Festival Tea, 5pm

11-12th October Anniversary Weekend: Service followed by lunch

22nd November Concert by Diadem Praise, 7.30pm

13-14th December Christmas Tree Festival

21st December Candlelit Carol Service, 6.30pm

Full details of these and the concerts, exhibitions and festivals, from Rev Mosedale at mosedale@btinternet.com on 01603 452198 or visit www.roseberyroad.org.uk

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network:norwich



An upto date list of events for the Norwich Christian community can now be found on the website

www.networknorwich.co.uk

Praise choir on song

■ Norwich Male Voice Praise Choir's 46th Melody of Praise takes place at Wroxham Road Methodist Church starting at 6.30pm on Saturday May 10. More details from David Stringer 01603 435369

■ Charity Concerts with the Meadow Way Orchestra at Meadow Way Chapel, Hellesdon take place on Friday April 18 at 8pm and Friday July 18 at 8pm. Further details and tickets from Cards 'N' Things 01603 485832 or at the door.

Second new YMCA planned



A drawing of the second proposed YMCA facility on Music House Lane.

Plans to build a second new YMCA accommodation facility in Norwich city centre have been given the green light by city planners.

In January, Norwich City Council planners unanimously backed the proposal for the building on Music House Lane, south of the city centre including 40 self-contained flats in a four-storey building.

Each flat will have its own bathroom and self-contained kitchen. There will also be training rooms, office and interview rooms and a single-storey communal lounge.

The plans form the second part of the reorganisation of the YMCA services in Norwich which will eventually replace the current 90-bed hostel in St Giles.

John Drake, YMCA chief executive officer, said: "We wanted a building with better amenities and this new building on Music House Lane will have single rooms and each person will have their own bathroom and self contained kitchen.

"We also want to equip people with the skills they need to go on and look after themselves. It's not just about taking

people off the streets. We want to keep them off the streets too. I think people realize we need to invest in the most vulnerable in our community," he said.

"We also realise the desperate need that young vulnerable girls have for accommodation, and in the 21st century we're glad we can offer somewhere for both young men and women."

The overall project is worth £8m and a large part of the money will be raised from selling the current hostel on St Giles as well as funds from the Greater Norwich Housing partnership, Broadland and South Norfolk Councils and the Housing Corporation.

The new facility could be open by Christmas 2009, said John.

The entire project consists of three phases. Work on the first phase of the project, an assessment centre and hostel containing 34 flats at All Saints' Green, is already well advanced.

The YMCA is working closely with City Hall on the third phase which aims to bring properties that are not currently available back into the housing stock.

Book celebrates 150 years

■ YMCA Norfolk has helped mark its 150 years of service across the county by launching a commemorative book detailing its fascinating history over the century and a half.

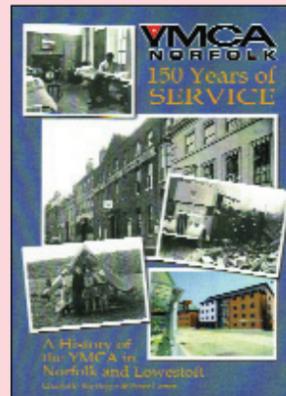
The 125-page book was written by YMCA Norfolk board member Peter Larter and local historian Charlotte Barringer and contains almost 100 original photographs.

In a foreword to *A History of the YMCA in Norfolk and Lowestoft*, Rt Rev Graham James, Bishop of Norwich, writes: "In its early days the YMCA offered classes in Greek and New Testament at 6am. Today it offers something rather different, but the outreach and compassion remain as strong and as vibrant as ever. The spirit of Christian service is alive in Norwich and Norfolk and the YMCA is a beacon in that adventure."

"Adventure is the word to describe so much of what this book contains. Adventurous activities for young people and adventure in relation to the expansion of its work, most notably in the last 25 years under chief executive John Drake."

John himself said: "The book is well worth reading. Charlotte's research reveals fascinating insights into the social networks and political intrigues that have been constant in Norwich and Norfolk since earliest times. It seems that some things never change and yet everything appears to be new. I was reminded that our founding forefathers would view today's insoluble problems as God-given opportunities to achieve great things for the care of the vulnerable and the wellbeing of the city and the county that they loved."

"Our hope is to place the History in schools where



the next generation of young people can use it as a study guide so that they will learn from the past in order to build for the future."

The history focuses on the extensive work in Norwich and right across Norfolk.

Norwich Young Men's Christian Association was founded in 1856 by a group of young men, largely Nonconformists, to help apprentices and shop workers and to improving the moral and religious life of the City.

Since then, it has helped generations of young men find their feet in providing accommodation, education and recreational activities. It helped

when Norwich was flooded in 1912 and provided vital support for thousands of soldiers during the two world wars.

It pioneered the Foyer concept, featured in a BBC documentary, was visited by Prince Charles and helped British soldiers in the Balkans

Some 150 years after it was created, YMCA Norfolk has now started building 34 purpose-built accommodation units at the Norwich Bus Station site and a second 40-unit development is planned.

It continues to work with dozens of asylum seekers and prisoners. It works in 34 schools across the county as well as providing an ever-expanding range of accommodation options for young homeless people in lodgings, Nightstop, hostels and self-contained units.

A few copies of *A History of the YMCA in Norfolk and Lowestoft* are available from: Susie Knights, YMCA Norfolk, The Street, Trowse, Norwich, NR14 8SP. A suggested donation of £5 would be welcome to cover printing and postage costs.

Earlham Christian Centre

a church where life is at work

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Sundays: 10:30am & 6:30pm

Check out our website for details of our Kids' Clubs

www.eccnorwich.org.uk

reach

teach

impact