

GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

Harvest 2012: FREE

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Help Norwich Foodbank feed 5,000 in a year

■ Norwich Foodbank will feed over 5,000 people in crisis during the next 12 months. In preparation they are urging churches, clubs, schools and workplaces to get involved in a large scale Harvest appeal.

Each month Norwich Foodbank provides three days of food to over 400 local people in crisis with demand continually increasing.

This equates to around 3.5 tonnes of food given out each month from the Foodbank's ten distribution centres around the city.

In order to prepare for the year ahead, in which the Christian charity forecasts it will feed over

5,000 people, they have launched a Harvest appeal, encouraging local churches, groups, workplaces and schools to collect food for those in the local community facing real difficulties.

Grant Habershon, Project Manager, said: "We have come to rely on Harvest collections to help stock up our warehouse so that we have enough food to give to local people in crisis throughout the year.

"Current economic conditions have seen the rising costs of food and fuel impacting scores of local people on the breadline and the collective effect of the recent changes to tax and benefits

will hit the bottom third of the population the hardest.

"Our care professional contacts fear things will get worse with the proposed changes from April 2013. To cope with the expected demand we need to stock up our warehouse this Harvest time."

The appeal is supported by a downloadable Harvest Pack with all the resources needed to help organise a collection available on the web at: www.norwichfoodbank.co.uk

e-mail: foodnorwichproject@hotmail.co.uk or ring 01603 251733.

Copeland Green in Norwich gig

■ **NORWICH:** Fast rising contemporary Christian music star Ian Copeland Green, who has worked with Madonna, Michael Jackson and Britney Spears, will be in Norwich on Saturday October 20.

Norwich Family Life Church host Ian Copeland Green, who has worked in the mainstream music industry for many years as a producer, arranger and engineer for many high profile names. A highly talented musician and song writer in his own right he also toured the world for five years with Bananarama.

Facing death after a serious illness in 2001, Ian felt the touch of God and made a miraculous recovery. Now, whilst Ian continues his music career, he is a committed Christian and long term member of Rhema Church in London which has enabled him to write and perform his own unique, radio friendly style of contemporary Christian music.

Tracks from his new album Believer, shortly to be released by Norfolk-based Spirit Music, have already made the Crossrhythms top ten.

Tickets for the October 20 event, sponsored by Spirit Music and at NFLC at 4 Mason Road, Norwich, NR6 6RF, are limited and at just £5 can be ordered online from

www.networknorwich.co.uk/shop

Bruno's diamond role in Queen's Jubilee

The mastermind behind national beacon celebrations to mark the Millennium, the Queen's Golden and recent Diamond Jubilee is Norfolk man of faith **Bruno Peek**. Kevin Gotts reports.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee weekend in June witnessed a spectacular finale as more than 4,200 beacons were lit throughout the UK and around the world. At around 10.30pm, after the BBC concert in front of Buckingham Palace, Norfolk man Bruno Peek, the Pageantmaster, handed Her Majesty the Jubilee Crystal Diamond which triggered the lighting of the National Beacon on The Mall. Millions of people watched on television.

Bruno, from Gorleston-on-Sea, has been responsible for a large number of the biggest celebrations of people coming together to commemorate unique national and international historic events.

For Bruno it started just over 30 years ago. While working as a welder he was asked to spearhead a local carnival and to set up a committee. With over 100 floats, a route which included Nelson's Column in Great Yarmouth and massive public support, he realised: "This is what I want to do."

Within two years he was working full-time and in 1992 he conceived and organised Beacon Europe where over 1,000 beacon signal fires were lit across the 12 countries of the European Community. The VE Day 50th Celebration in 1995 attracted over 1,500 street parties and events with over 2,000 beacons. The year 2000 included Trafalgar Night, Nelson Returns to England and the Millennium Beacon.

Very important to Bruno is that the events with beacons are held in association with local community events large and small, which has helped them raise funds for their own charities.

In the past, Bruno has led teams of up to 23 staff to co-ordinate the lighting of beacons to commemorate events such as the Queen's Golden Jubilee in 2002. There is considerable planning, persuading famous people and opinion formers, obtaining permissions and funding often through sponsorship. There are three types of beacon - Bonfire Beacons, Beacon



Pageantmaster Bruno Peek ready to pass the Queen a diamond made from crystal glass to trigger the lighting of the National Beacon on The Mall to mark the Diamond Jubilee. Pic PA

Braziers and Church Tower Beacons fuelled by gas. Back in 1588, chains of beacons on church towers provided the country's early warning system against the Spanish Armada invaders.

Bruno was born in King's Lynn to Polish parents, and then adopted by "loving Christian parents". Charity has been close to his heart and in 2009 he felt a call to sell his home to move to and work at a children's home in Kenya which he had supported for many years. On route, with few belongings, he was taken ill, and had to abandon the move and for the next year he lived with friends.

With the support of the church family at St Andrew's Parish Church in Gorleston, he began recuperating, not expecting to return to his former work. Then, within a two-week period, the Queen's Private Secretary followed by a representative from the Royal British Legion unexpectedly made contact and initiated meetings. Bruno reflects: "God has given me

great talents in bringing people together. He re-opened doors and this is what I am supposed to do. So I started again."

Working from an office at home with Spike Allibone, a Christian friend from Scotland, amazing things happened and pieces fell into place: "I had the element of peace, even concerns caused me no panic."

With two years of planning complete, Bruno stood on stage in his uniform on June 4, with the Queen, Sir Paul McCartney, Sir Elton John, Sir Tom Jones and Will.i.am.

Recognition of his work includes the CBE, MVO and Freeman of the City of London. He has also just been made a Lieutenant of The Royal Victorian Order by the Queen for his part in the Jubilee celebrations.

Looking forward, Bruno predicts: "There is still an appetite for people to come together in communities and be involved. Even when things are bad, people can get uplifted."



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GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

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

■ The deadline for material for the Christmas edition is Friday November 16. Distribution is from Friday December 7.

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Harvest time: a Norfolk farmer remembers

■ I was born before World War Two, a farmer's son, and vividly recall that during the war years – and just after – harvest-time was very labour-intensive. As a young lad, one of the harvesting jobs was to act as a "hold-gee" – which meant it was my task to ride on the horse that drew the wagon and shout "hold-gee" as the men loaded the shoves up from the stook, so that the workers didn't fall off when the wagon moved!

As I grew older and gained more experience, I was expected to do more difficult work, such as setting up the shoves into stooks so the rain would not spoil the grain. It also meant making the corn stack and then thatch it to keep the stack dry until we could thrash out the corn.

Of course, as the years rolled by, new farming technology brought rapid changes . . . from the binder and thrashing machine to the combine harvester.

In the early 1950s, my father bought a combine, a 4ft-cut 'Allis All-crop'. At that time, we did well to harvest 14 to 15 tons a day from seven to nine acres of corn. But today's combine harvesters have cutter bars of 36ft and can harvest more than that 60 ton an hour!

Later, when I became a farmer in my own



Colin King is a Norfolk farmer and Bible teacher.

right in the 1960s, I bought my own combine and, to help pay for it, I did contract work, combining corn for other farmers. At times it was a real blessing to reap the corn, especially in a good crop with the sun shining and everything going well.

But that wasn't always the case – you could

be hindered by mechanical break-downs, or the weather would be against you, thus frustrating every effort to bring in the harvest. It was always a big reward to get the harvest safely into the barn at a crucial time. To delay the gathering, once the corn was ready, was to risk losing everything we had worked all year to produce. Your very livelihood could be at risk.

Verses in the Bible speak of harvest time to reveal great spiritual truths. Jeremiah wrote: "The harvest is past, the summer has ended, and we are not saved." This is a powerful picture of people who have missed God's call on their lives. This means there is a definite time to seek God, for the Bible reminds us that today is the day of salvation. Once the harvest is lost, it is lost forever – a solemn thought.

No-one can say for sure what tomorrow will bring. God's grace is available now – not sometime in the distant future. We can claim Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour today, at this very moment. He will never turn us away. So why not pause now – and simply, from your heart, ask the Lord Jesus Christ to be your Saviour. It will be the greatest decision you ever make.

LA trip to Skid Row

To many, Los Angeles spells glitz, glamour and Hollywood but Sarah Johnston's mission trip earlier this year brought a largely hidden and forgotten area of poverty, hopelessness and violent gang culture to light. Sandie Shirley reports.

Sarah left the comfort of her home on the Norfolk and Suffolk border for a whirlwind of contrasting missions in LA and Mexico. From working with various charities in LA's Skid Row, to seeing dozens of Mexicans make a dramatic pledge of faith, she has returned with a fresh vision for outreach.

The pharmacy technician from Barningham joined a two-week mission trip as part of a ministry training course which began last September at the Christian Growth Centre in Chelmsford, Essex with M:power (empowering and equipping for ministry).

Recalling her trip she says: "Walking towards Skid Row, the first thing that hits you is the smell and the scale of the poverty with between 11,000 to 15,000 homeless people sitting amongst the rubbish in the gutter. Some are mentally ill; high on drugs or perfectly lucid and just two blocks away are the opulent banks and insurance companies."

There are countless charities helping within this vast community where AIDS, sex offenders, criminals and prostitutes also abound. During the fortnight, Sarah and her 24-strong team helped serve hundreds of meals and worked in the clothing store at the warehouse/church run by the Jonah Project.

The vision of a 20-year-old that turned an ex hospital into The Dream Centre also came into focus. The Centre has been helping to rescue



Sarah Johnston and Skid Row in LA (by Happy Mac).

and rehabilitate people from addictions, homelessness, abuse and human trafficking since it began in 1994, explains Sarah. The visionary behind this massive project started by setting-up a table and chair outside a church, intent on reaching out to the needs of the community. "Now The Dream Centre serves 40,000 people a month and receives one million pounds worth of food donations every month. It just goes to show what the power of one can do," says Sarah.

"We also met Ernest – a former boxer who lived on Skid Row for 14 years before he became a Christian. Today he runs the Dream Machine – a gym where youngsters can do their homework, workout and learn to box.

"Much of our work was getting alongside the Christians that run these projects, praying for their needs and helping to encourage them," says Sarah. "We also prayed for those living on Skid Row. A lot are there due to

broken relationships. Many are professional people who had made bad choices and lost everything. We sat with them and listened and then asked if we could pray for them and for me, this is what church is all about."

Part of her week in LA involved learning about the Homeboy Industries – bakeries and cafes launched by Father Gregory, a Jesuit priest, 25 years ago to help stem the violent gang culture. Father Gregory believed that nothing stops a bullet like a job and the successful Homeboy Industries employ and train adolescent gang members to bake bread, produce and serve first-class food and use silk screen printing to make saleable t-shirts and sweatshirts.

"The Homeboy Industries is a moving example of unconditional love and the importance of fighting despair. It reminds us that no life is less valuable than another," says Sarah. Today the scheme has grown with free mental health counselling, tattoo removal, legal services, job development and case management. The gang intervention programme has also been replicated worldwide.

A week at San Felipe in the desert region of Mexico marked the final leg of Sarah's trip. She arrived on the back of a month of prayer for the 'Paint the Town Red' evangelism mission with The Grand Commission Church in a town that was also noted for witchcraft and drugs.

"We prayed around the streets before making house-to-house calls with red balloons and praying with the help of an interpreter. People were so open-hearted and pleased to see us as we invited them to a fun day and prayed for their health and finances. Many wanted to know Jesus – including many back-slidden Christians – it was so simple and incredible but we were reaping what the church had sown in prayer before we arrived."

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THORNTONS CHOCOLATES

Young people need to hear the Gospel

New Director of Norwich Youth for Christ, Nick Blanch, believes that young people today are more open to the Gospel message than ever, they just need the opportunity to hear it – which is where NYFC come in. **Keith Morris** reports.

Nick was appointed to the role of Director in April, following the decision by former director, Mark Tuma, to leave at the end of March. In June, he was commissioned by the charity's Patron, the Bishop of Norwich, at St Andrew's Church in Eaton.

He applied for the role because of his passion for evangelism: "I feel strongly that there is a lot of social action stuff going on but not a lot of word stuff," said Nick. "Not a lot of people are talking about their faith and that is what is really distinctive about NYFC - it is totally independent and therefore can be really overt about what it says and does not have to step away from that," he said. We talked in the lounge area of the charity's homely top floor offices on St Giles St, where he is based along with a team of three youth workers, an administrator, several student interns and some of the 40 plus volunteers who are vital to the charity.

"The core mission is about evangelism – everything we do is about how do we communicate the message. I feel that that is really important because a lot of young people today do not have the foundations to build anything on. We need to say something otherwise they will not have the opportunity to explore it," said Nick, who was encouraged to apply for the role by a number of people.

"I think we are in a time when most young people have what is termed a memory loss because the Christian foundation is not there any more. Young people do not have any Christian traditions to stand on. That also means that the prejudices are not there either, so they are open and interested in exploring the Gospel message. They are happy to have those Christian conversations.

"We really need to be out there telling people who Jesus is. And we need people to get behind that vision so that we can get into schools and build more partnerships and be able to take some risks and meet young people who have never heard of Jesus, never been to church, but yet have an opportunity to hear the Gospel and respond to it."

Nick grew up in a non Christian family and at the age of 14 was invited to a Meadow Way Chapel summer camp. "I understood for the first time that God loved me for who I was and I felt called to be part of that family," he said. "I started going to church on a regular basis, but it was not plain sailing – I wanted to be a Christian who played by my own rules and it took a while for me to realise that Jesus wanted to be Lord over my whole life."

Nick got involved in youth work at Meadow Way and by the age of 24 started to think that maybe he could consider making a career out of it. The first step was a job at YMCA Norfolk as a pastoral care worker at Earlham High School.

"It was a brilliant job, just being available to



listen to young people and hear some of their struggles – I felt very privileged to be able to hear their stories and offer a little bit of advice," he explained. "I did that for five years while I studied Youth Work at Anglia Ruskin University and got my degree."

Nick then took on the role of schools work manager at the YMCA, overseeing the schools work and youth work training and National Citizens Service project. Meanwhile, on the personal front, he married Becca, a social worker with Norfolk Children's Services and moved to Oak Grove Chapel, where they both volunteer with the youth work. The couple now have three children, Faith 13, Nathan 11 and Joel 4.

Nick has identified a number of priorities for the future of NYFC, which works with 11 to 25-year-olds, and a core group of 14-19.

"In schools, we currently have concentrated projects in specific areas which gives a depth of discipleship. But if we want to reach young people across the city we need to do more schools work, assemblies, RE lessons but also have things that maybe tour around at Christmas and Easter to tell those stories in a relevant and accessible way.

"We have a really successful gospel choir with 70 young people engaged and are hitting a capacity issue. So I want to look to develop that and also some drama stuff," he said.

"I am very keen on partnerships. We do a drop-in for some YMCA hostel residents to talk about things, including faith. We would like to do more of that sort of thing and see word and social action come together," said Nick.

"We also want to be able to offer training and resources to churches that would like to do Christian youth work – being able to support youth workers in prayer for example."

Existing NYFC programmes include Youth Alpha and a Young Leaders course and Nick would like to see a monthly or termly event that draws young Christians together across the city.

NYFC has a broad range of inter-denominational support and relies upon regular donations from both individuals and churches to

support its work and keep it independent

"Funding is a challenge," says Nick. "It is about making sure that people know who we are and what we do, so that people feel they can give with confidence to us.

"We are a missional part of the church who can maybe fish in waters that other can't. I would love to see more people support what we do prayerfully, financially and thereby enable us to do so much more."

www.norwichyfc.co.uk

news in brief

Church training on domestic violence

■ **NORWICH:** Members of international anti-violence charity 'Restored', co-founded by a Norwich Christian, will be visiting the city in October to lead a stimulating and challenging workshop for local church leaders on domestic abuse.

Restored (which is being 'incubated' by Tearfund) is an international Christian Alliance committed to transform relationships and to end violence against women. Matthew Hutton is a Reader at St Stephen's Norwich and is one of the founding Trustees of the charity which was established two years ago.

Matthew said: "While we have a very small staff and limited resources, we are doing what we can both in this country and overseas, in particular working through the local Church."

Peter Grant and Natalie Collins of Restored will be coming to Norwich on Thursday October 18, from 10.30am, to present a two-hour seminar to Church leaders at St Stephen's in Norwich.

Peter and Natalie will talk about the problem of violence against women and will suggest a strong Christian response to domestic abuse, with the opportunity for questions and discussion.

Bishop of Lynn, Very Rev Jonathan Meyrick, said: "Do you think you could recognise a victim of domestic abuse? You might think it would be obvious, but this seminar will help you to see that this recognition is much more difficult than you realise. It will also demonstrate the extent and the reality of such abuse, and begin to help us think through what our part in helping might be."

Contact m.hutton@paston.co.uk or 01508 528388 to reserve a place. www.restoredrelationships.org

Charity Tour De France ride

■ **HORSFORD:** Norfolk Christian Matthew Newton, who runs a wealth management and financial planning practice, has just cycled over 250 miles from Calais to Reims, alongside former England cricket captain Michael Vaughan, to raise £2,293 for the St James Place charitable Foundation.

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Beach mission is back

■ **SHERINGHAM:** The BeachLife activity outreach in late August attracted over 140 children and young people on Sheringham sea-front.

Planning for the event started last autumn, following cancellation of the Scripture Union Beach Mission in Sheringham, which had been running for 100 years. BeachLife was organised by the churches in Sheringham, and run by an army of 40 volunteers, supported by Scripture Union.

The activities kicked off each day with the "Beach Special", where all ages came together at the cliff-top marquee on The Lees for music, games, drama and fun. The afternoons saw a "build a boat" challenge on the Sheringham boating lake, mini-Olympics at the High School and a tide fight on the beach. Rain and wind failed to deter the crowds from building defences against the incoming tide, but the youngsters were forced to retreat to the nearby Burlington Hotel when the winds became gale-force, leaving the leaders to save the marquee.

"BeachLife has been a huge success on two levels really," said organiser Pete Skivington. "Large numbers of children and young people have had loads of fun whilst finding out more about God, and feedback has been extremely positive, with many people asking when next year's BeachLife would be, so that they can plan their holidays in Sheringham. But on another level, we have developed the partnership that already existed between the churches in Sheringham, and intend to build on this for next year's BeachLife as well as in the coming years."

www.sheringhambeachlife.co.uk

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Churches offer free debt advice

Two Norwich churches are now offering free debt advice and counselling services after joining together with different national agencies.

With the current economic climate exposing the huge need for people in financial difficulties to have somewhere to go for help, a Norwich church has stepped into the arena by opening a centre offering help and advice for those who are already struggling. **Les Champion** reports.

King's Community Church has joined with Community Money Advice (CMA) and has been taking clients from early June this year. In that relatively short time, King's Money Advice (KMA) has been gathering clients at around one a week. It builds on the platform of nearly three and a half years' presence at the Norman Centre, Mile Cross, on Sunday mornings, and complements a variety of other activities designed to strengthen the heart of the Mile Cross community.

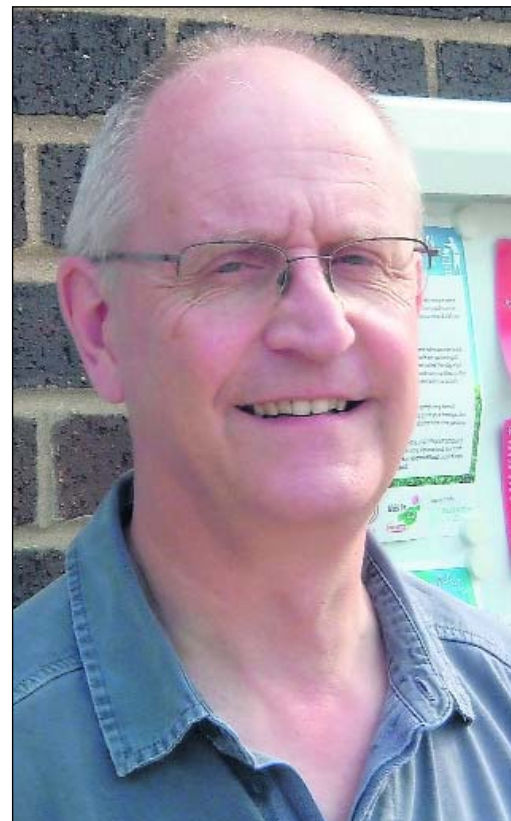
The free and impartial KMA service has been developed by Michael Lamb, a retired pricing manager who spent 36 years working for Aviva (Norwich Union). He leads a team of six advisors in the role of Centre Manager. This service is complemented by a money management course that King's Community Church has been running for over a year.

Mike began work at the start of this year making application for the various licences, permissions and affiliations that are necessary to set up a properly regulated and efficient debt advice service. In addition, he has been talking about his passion to others, seeking and enlisting volunteers who have a similar sense of calling.

He said: "The most important decision people can make is to recognise they have a problem and seek help. Many are simply not aware of what can be done to help them through their situation. Our aim is not just to get our clients clear of debt but to give them the skills to enable them to live debt-free in the future."

Once the team was established, training came next with the help and advice of Richard, an operations support manager at CMA and Barry, the manager of an established advice centre in St Ives, near Cambridge, and a certified trainer for CMA. Several day-long training sessions were held at the King's Centre, including software training.

There are many reasons debt can become



Mike Lamb from King's Money Advice.

unmanageable; losing a job, relationship breakdown, and long-term health issues. Many other causes come to light – easy credit, addiction, mental health, lack of planning and control, unexpected expenditure and so on. The list is endless and the emotions and practical consequences are far-reaching.

King's Money Advice sees clients from across the city. It has an office at King's Venue at the Norman Centre, Bignold Road, Mile Cross. It sees clients there and also at the King's Centre on King Street if that is more convenient. An appointment can be arranged by emailing moneyadvice@kings-norwich.com or by phoning 0800 970 9875

www.communitymoneyadvice.com

Christians Against Poverty in Norwich



Chris Murphy from CAP in Norwich.

■ Growing debt counselling charity Christians Against Poverty (CAP) has partnered with Surrey Chapel, Norwich to bring its in-depth service to the area.

Norwich is one of 22 places opening a centre this year – rare good news for the UK amid economic downturn – and the latest centre has joined an existing one in Aylsham, already helping people in Norfolk.

Norwich centre manager Chris Murphy said: "The Church has always been about offering hope and we're really pleased to be able to give a tried-and-tested route out of debt alongside other great free debt advice in the area like the Citizens Advice Bureau."

"There is a lot in the Bible about looking after the poorest. In our society, a lot of poverty is debt-related, so our congregation has been working hard to open a CAP centre to help get people back on track."

CAP offers people a uniquely in-depth, caring service to people with spiralling

personal debt. Every client is visited in their own home, the charity does all the negotiating with creditors and local volunteers offer support to each person face-to-face until the day they are debt free.

Chris added: "Debts can happen when a relationship breaks down, or someone loses their job, or through bereavement – so often when people are least able to cope with a financial headache. We're just so pleased to be able to partner the care of our church with the financial expertise of CAP's head office in Bradford."

The charity has 200 centres around the UK currently supporting £73m of secondary debts for its clients regardless of income, age, gender, background or faith. The free debt counselling has won a string of accolades including being described as "unsurpassed" by TV's Money Saving Expert Martin Lewis.

To find out more call 0800 328 0006 or visit www.capdebthelp.org

Christian physio's key Olympics role

By KEITH MORRIS

Norfolk Christian physiotherapist Collins Ogbeivor was right at the centre of the action in the Olympic Stadium during the two weeks of the London 2012 Olympics after he was offered a role as a volunteer physiotherapist on the official medical team.

His most memorable moment was meeting 100m gold medal winner Usain Bolt just minutes after he sprinted to the title. "Meeting Usain – the fastest man on earth – was a great privilege and honour. We were at the training pitch looking after the athletes and after Usain won the 100 metres he went back to the pitch to cool down. As he was walking along where I was, I said hello. He was polite and friendly and happy to have a photo with me."

"Volunteering at London 2012 was the most amazing experience," said Collins. "The commitment and dedication to attend the events was worth all the effort. The atmosphere was electrifying and full of positive energy. We all had team spirit, and everyone wanted to make the event successful. The athletics that we treated appreciated the physiotherapy service as they felt they were looked after and had fun. Thank God, I was part of this great moment in history."

Collins was formerly Head of Physiotherapy at All Hallows Hospital in Ditchingham where he worked with a wide range of day and residential patients to aid their recoveries. He is now employed by the Lincolnshire Intermediate Musculoskeletal Services as a specialist physiotherapist.

He is well qualified for his Olympic role, both as an experienced physiotherapist, but also because he has played similar roles in the first-ever Afro-Asian Games in Hyderabad in India in 2004 and also at the All Africa Games in 2003, when he was living in Nigeria.

To gain a place on the Games Maker team, Collins had to go through a rigorous interview and selection procedure along with 250,000 others.



Collins Ogbeivor with the fastest man on earth - Usain Bolt.

"It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to be part of history because of the significance of the Games," said Collins. "I am very honoured to have been chosen."

"I believe that the Olympics will leave a huge social legacy and I wanted to be a part of that and help inspire people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to take part. I also hope that it will benefit my work."

Collins was based at the main Olympic Stadium in Stratford and at the nearby Mayesbrook Park Arena and Newham Sports Complex.

Clair Westwood-Deamer, Chief Executive of All Hallows Healthcare Trust, said: "We are extremely proud of Collins for being invited to

be part of the expert team at the Olympic Games. I am sure his expertise was of great assistance in bringing about the smooth operation of the event for the athletes."

"The role is a recognition for his passion, enthusiasm and commitment to help make the Games happen."

Collins is part of the Redeemed Christian Church of God at Thorpe St Andrew in Norwich and he helps run a Christian prayer group.

"My Christian faith helps me in my work," said Collins.

"It helps me to have empathy and compassion for my patients and show them patience and kindness."

olympics news

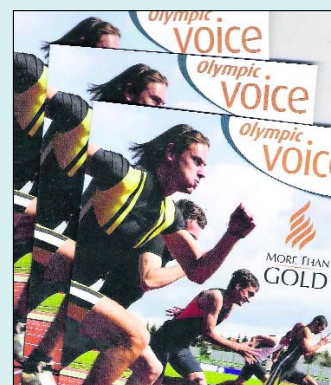
Norwich link for Games mag

■ **NORWICH:** The largest-ever print run of 55,000 copies of the free 'Voice' magazine, with true-life stories by Christian sportsmen, was edited in Norwich and distributed during the London 2012 Olympics.

"This is a record for 'Voice' which was also well-received by crowds in towns and cities during the Torch Relay," said the magazine editor, John Wright, a founder member of the FGB Men's Fellowship in the UK.

"We normally produce 15,000 copies, four times a year, so this Olympic issue is our biggest issue yet," said John, who is also a member of the Church of England's College of Evangelists.

Members of FGB also worked with a mobile 'trailer team' in many UK locations, as well as with church-based outreach programmes under the 'Going For Gold' project which co-ordinated a united programme for hundreds of groups and churches. Many of the thousands of the highly-praised Olympic volunteers were committed Christians.



Olympic evangelists

■ **BELSEY BRIDGE:** A team of over 100 evangelists from the USA and Canada travelled down to the London 2012 Olympics every day from their Norfolk base to witness about their faith.

The Belsey Bridge Conference Centre near Ditchingham in South Norfolk was the location for the Answers in Genesis Olympics outreach team who were on the streets in London during the Games with gospel literature and to be a witness to the Olympic fans.

The team, which flew in from New York, was headed up by Dr David and Diana Crandall who were undertaking their seventh trip to the Olympic Games.

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Christians join in Olymp

As the Olympic Torch passed through Norfolk in early July, the county's Christian community took its full part in the celebrations with prayer flashmobs, a prayer baton and several torch bearers involved. **Keith Morris reports.**

As the Olympic Torch entered Norfolk around midday on Wednesday July 4 it was preceded by a distinctive brightly coloured Praise Bus which travelled the breadth of the country, an hour ahead of the Olympic Torch Relay, playing worship music to onlookers as they lined the streets awaiting sight of the Olympic Flame.

When the Torch reached the Royal Estate at Sandringham, inspirational former Norwich Housing Services Manager Eddie Pleban, was handed the torch and he began and ended his section by walking, completing the stint in his wheelchair, pushed by wife Jeannie.

"I had all these people around me cheering me on and it was just such an honour. I can't express my feelings. For me it was a landmark in my recovery," said Eddie. "To think that a year ago I was literally hanging onto life not knowing whether I would walk or talk again. God has been my strength during the last year, always there in the darkest despair. I often think now about the footsteps in the sand story. I know now what it is like first hand to be carried and loved by Jesus. I also know that I am now walking beside him, albeit with sticks, and every so often I know that I can reach out and hold on to Him."

Norwich trainee solicitor and Christian, Sarah Goring, picked up the Torch in Aylsham around 5.30pm as an honour for her voluntary work with Kingscare in Norwich, Loose Change Theatre, the RNLI and Newday's community projects.

Sarah said: "Yesterday was totally amazing, such a fantastic atmosphere and an overwhelming experience. It was such an honour to be part of such a fantastic event and the crowds were brilliant, so many friendly people. It is a day I will never forget, I had the real feeling that I was running for justice and I hope that this experience will open doors for me in the future to be able to make a difference to people around the world."

Tom Ward, Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of East Anglia and a member of Norwich Central Baptist Church, carried the Torch as it entered Norwich around 6.15pm. Tom was representing the UEA and said: "Before I ran I said Hebrews 12 v1 seemed appropriate, and indeed there were a great many witnesses. I was very fortunate to be running on Esdelle Street so saw many friends from NCBC.

"It involved hours of sitting in a bus making friends with the other runners and then a sudden intense shock of noise and seeing friendly faces. God blessed us all with the weather and the atmosphere, and it was a humbling privilege to take part. Even more enjoyable were the many hundreds of people who wanted to be photographed holding the torch yesterday evening and early this morning. Old and young alike seem to take pleasure in it."

Around the same time UEA student Melissa Ilboudo from Burkina Faso, received the Torch. Melissa has worked for Christian Aid since arriving in the UK and raised £330,000 through triathlons, half-marathons and other initiatives - winning the British Council's International Student Award in 2010.

Melissa said: "There are no words to describe it, it was amazing! Norwich came out, we were really blessed with a good weather. It is real honour to be part of such an historical moment, which I will never forget. I had my moment to shine.

"I cannot stop praising God for such a blessing, it is indeed one moment in a lifetime, that I will never forget. I will lift the torch high as an ambassador



Olympic torchbearers, clockwise from top left, Melissa Ilboudo, Tom Ward, Eddie Pleban, Rev Simon Stokes and Susie Knights.

of Christ."

Blind Norwich church minister, Rev Simon Stokes was given the honour of carrying the Torch from City Hall, across Millennium Plain and into Chapelfield, for the difference he has made to the community through his church and non-church work.

Simon, who is now vicar of Sprowston with Beeston St Andrew, said: "I was overwhelmed, almost to the point of tears. I felt incredibly proud, privileged and humbled all at the same time. I felt so privileged to have had the opportunity and to have the work I've done recognised.

"I was running for everyone who I've ever worked with, encouraged, supported or been supported by."

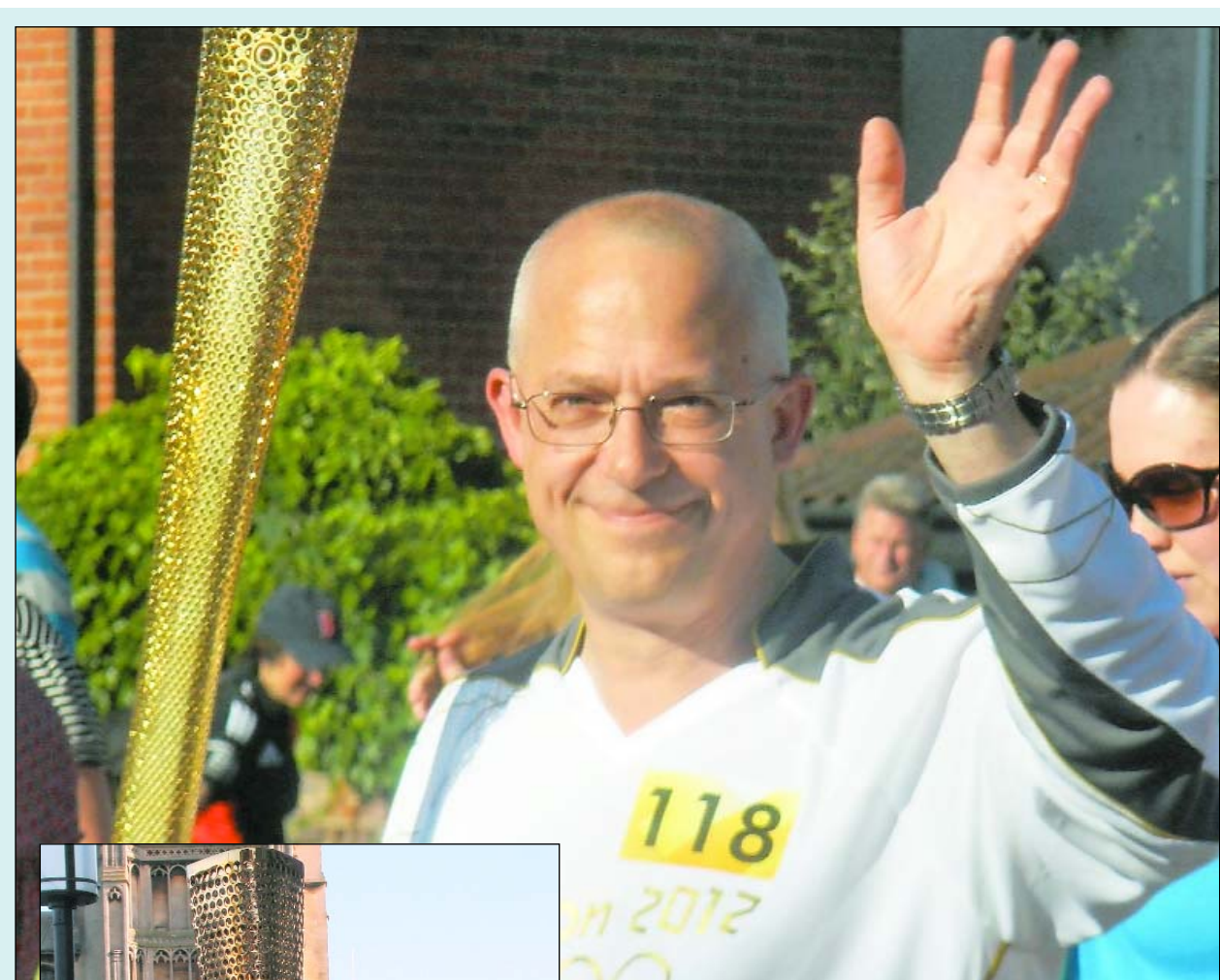
Taking up the Torch on Thursday morning, July 5, on Ketts Hill was YMCA Norfolk Fundraising and Communications Manager, Susie Knights, who was nominated for her commitment to raising funds for the YMCA in Norfolk and in particular for a £1m appeal, which has now been achieved, towards 40 move-on accommodation units on Bethel Street.

"It has been such a privilege and honour to be one of only 8,000 taking part in such an amazing event that brings the focus of the world to Norfolk. I am sure most, if not all, torch bearers are like me and can think of many others more worthy of carrying the flame, this is why Norfolk is so special and Britain is so Great. My experience today is that every step taken, every smile, wave and encouraging word embodies the Olympic values - respect, excellence and friendship," said Susie.

■ You can read the full stories behind all of these Olympic torch bearers on the Christian community website www.networknorfolk.co.uk



ic celebrations



A prayer baton (pictured left) which had been preceding the Torch's progress across the UK, arrived at the House of Prayer in Norwich around midday on Wednesday July 4, brought by a team from Peterborough churches and the World Prayer Centre. Around 40 Norfolk church leaders accepted the baton – which was literally filled with prayers from Peterborough – at a Unite meeting and then wrote prayers to be carried on July 5 to the next stage on the relay – Ipswich.

A prayer flashmob took over Hay Hill in Norwich city centre on Tuesday June 3 at 7.14pm exactly filling the area with worship songs and prayers for the nation and the Olympics.

Garden nets £18k

■ **NORWICH:** The Bishop of Norwich's Garden has had a record-breaking year helping local charities including Mother's Union, Edith Cavell Day Care, Paul Cattermole Trust and Age UK raise nearly £18,000 during 2012.

Each year, the Bishop of Norwich and Mrs James make their garden available to a variety of different local charities who apply to run an Open Garden event on Sunday afternoons, allowing people to enjoy the beautiful and ancient gardens in the shadow of Norwich Cathedral. Many charities serve delicious afternoon teas and run side shows to add to the fun.

The Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Rev Graham James said: "This was a very wet summer but many of our charity garden days were blessed with fine weather. We welcomed several thousand people to our garden. It's a pleasure to share it and to know that so many excellent local charities have raised so much money as a result".

During the autumn, the Bishop will be considering applications from charities to run an Open Garden in summer 2013. Any charities who wish to apply must do so by the end of September and are advised to contact the Revd Simon Ward, Bishop's Chaplain: 01603 614172 or bishops.chaplain@norwich.anglican.org

Making a difference on the city streets

■ Every weekend Norfolk Street Partnership (formerly Norfolk Street Pastors) street volunteers are out on the night-time streets of Norwich, Dereham, Great Yarmouth and Diss providing a helping hand to all those in need.



This is what people have said about our work in Norfolk:

"The street volunteers are doing a fantastic job."
General Sir Richard Dannatt, ex head of the **British Army**

"The street volunteers know what friendship is and that is what they are offering in some of the busiest places which are also some of the loneliest."
Bishop of Norwich, The Rt Rev Graham James

"The street volunteers really are 'the stars of the night'. It was a pleasure and a privilege to go out with them for an evening."
Charles Barratt, High Sheriff of Norfolk

"They are a inspiration to everyone."
Jemma, Norwich nightclubber

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David is a problem solver

If you run a religious community, a housing association, a social enterprise or a registered charity and you have a problem to solve, or changes that need to be made, more likely than not **David Patey** is a man who, like Bob the Builder, can help you fix it - yes he can. **Keith Morris** reports.

David was the man behind the scenes of the recent transformation of the activities of the Community of All Hallows at Ditchingham. When appointed business manager six years ago, David was tasked with safeguarding the Community's charitable activities for the future.

He oversaw a period of intense activity which included transferring the now rebranded Belsey Bridge Christian Conference Centre into the care of the Christian Conference Trust, establishing the new All Hallows Healthcare Trust, moving the Ditchingham Day Nursery over to the Benjamin Foundation and helping homeless charity Emmaus Norwich, breathe new life into buildings which were underused or empty.

Sister Sheila said: "The works of the Community are in good hands with the partners who have taken over from us. We continue to welcome pilgrims who seek retreat and refreshment in Ditchingham and Norwich. We appreciate the way David has helped us to make the big changes of the last six years."

Describing the changes, the Bishop of Norwich, the Rt Rev Graham James, said: "David has facilitated very creative changes for the Community of All Hallows. The imaginative use of extensive buildings in harmony with their original purposes has been achieved."

"The governance of the All Hallows Hospital has been reshaped. The Community itself still lives



David Patey outside All Hallows, Ditchingham.

the religious life and welcomes guests while sponsoring and encouraging new work in keeping with its original vision and purpose. This was only achieved because of the clarity and determination David brought to his work. The decisions were made by the Community itself but David helped to shape and inform the process."

In fact, David completed the task so well that he effectively made his own role redundant, hence his recent move into the world of consultancy under the title, Change and Progress.

The move has enabled David to offer his considerable experience and skills in consultancy, business management and project support to a wide range of charities, social enterprises and housing organizations, as well as religious communities.

Growing up in Norwich, a turning point for

David came in 1973 when he saw the musical Godspell in Bristol which led to him reading, and being gripped by, St Matthew's Gospel on which it was based. A degree in theology at Cambridge University followed.

Now, not many Cambridge graduates would choose David's next step - working as a British Rail guard - but he is one of those rare people who can stand right back from a situation and take a broad perspective on it - a skill which has been essential in his later career. "I felt that I needed wider life experience after public school and university," he explained.

David then entered the world of housing in London, collecting rents door-to-door in Kentish Town. He moved into specialist accommodation for overseas students, helping develop halls of residence with London universities as Chief

Executive of London Student Housing and then Development Director Commercial Housing at Shaftesbury Housing Group.

Then it was on to All Hallows in 2005, explained David: "The first objective of my job was to relieve the Reverend Mother of the responsibility for day-to-day management of a diverse portfolio of businesses. The second objective was to assist the sisters to think strategically about their work."

"This led to me being involved in finding suitable stewards to take on most of the works, and to make use of the surplus buildings on the Ditchingham site. When this was done last year my role was complete."

"I chose to move into consultancy, encouraged by colleagues, and have built up good links with religious communities in particular. Over time I have successfully helped a wide variety of clients, large and small, each of whom faced differing challenges in unique circumstances. In each case, my services were proactive, effective and I believe represented excellent value. The problem solving knowledge gained from these rewarding projects is invaluable as I move forward."

But David is not exactly short of things to do, as volunteering roles with YMCA Norfolk and the Magdalene Group show, as well as being a church warden at All Saints parish church Woodton, a parish councillor and voluntary regional organiser for HOST, which arranges hospitality for overseas students with hosts for a weekend or Christmas.

David describes himself as "multi-lingual in Christian terms, worshipping as an Anglican, working with several Catholic religious orders alongside previous involvement in ecumenical projects and with the Evangelical Alliance."

As if all that was not enough, David is currently vice-chair of the Executive Committee of the Association of Provincial Bursars.

You know what they say - if you want something done, find a busy man to do it - well David could well be that man.

■ Visit: www.davidpatey.org e-mail david@davidpatey.org or ring 01508 483838.

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Prof asks has science buried God?

■ OXFORD UNIVERSITY mathematics professor Dr John Lennox addressed over 2,000 teenagers at the Newday festival near Norwich on August 17 on the hot topic Has Science Buried God.

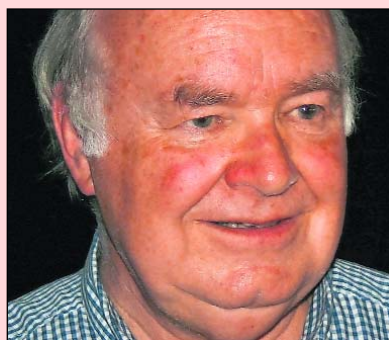
Fresh from the latest bout in his long-running series of high-profile debates with well-known new atheist and fellow Oxford professor Richard Dawkins, Prof Lennox (pictured right) accepts that science and mathematics cannot prove that God exists but does provide evidence beyond reasonable doubt.

"The new atheists want us to believe we are nothing but a random collection of molecules, the end product of a mindless process. This, if true, would undermine the very rationality we need to study science," said Prof Lennox. "If the brain were really the result of an unguided process, then there is no reason to believe in its capacity to tell us the truth."

"But my biggest reasons for believing in God are, on the objective side, the resurrection of Jesus and, on the subjective side, my own personal experience of him and what flows from trusting him day by day over the last 60 or so years."

Dawkins says that science leads to atheism while Lennox argues that science leads to God. All of the early scientists were Christians, such as Galileo and Isaac Newton and they were motivated by their own belief in a divine law-giver, said Lennox.

He quoted CS Lewis, who said: "These men became scientists because



they were looking for laws in nature because they believed in a divine law-giver."

"For me the beauty of the scientific laws only reinforces my faith in an intelligent, divine creative force at work," said Prof Lennox. "The more I understand science, the more I believe in God because of my wonder at the breadth, sophistication and integrity of his creation. Far from being at odds with science, the Christian faith actually makes perfect scientific sense."

He used the example of a few letters drawn on a sandy beach. "The instant response is to recognise the work of an intelligent agent. How much more likely, then, is an intelligent creator behind the human DNA, the colossal biological database that contains no fewer than 3.5 billion 'letters'?"

When asked how he approaches a debate with someone such as Prof

Dawkins, Lennox said: "With great trepidation and a lot of thinking." There is a lot of anger about religion motivating the new atheism of people such as Dawkins and formerly Christopher Hitchens, believes Prof Lennox.

"Some of it is a reaction to extremist things like the Twin Towers bombing and so on. Then they make an irrational deduction that this is fanatical religion and that grows on the edge of normal religion so we must get rid of it all. But they are beginning to back away a little bit from that naive approach in which they are shooting themselves in the foot."

One of them, Sam Harris, has pointed out, if we continue to put the Amish in the same camp as suicide bombers we are not going to do ourselves any good. But there is a lot of anger out there and it is catching the spirit of the age, which is why there is such a response."

When asked how he might convince the thousands of young people listening to him at the Norfolk Showground to consider the Christian faith, Prof Lennox said: "It is my part to present the evidence and I really do believe that God can open people's eyes and I leave the rest of it to Him."

"But do not give in to the false idea that you cannot be an intelligent person and still believe in the existence of God. It is atheism which is the real delusion."

Download Prof Lennox's talk at: <http://newdaygeneration.org/resources/contributors/1008>

Inspiring evening of beauty and belief

■ Business consultant and author, Julie Prentice's first beauty and belief extravaganza earlier this year was hailed as an unprecedented success. The dinner event at Bowthorpe's Brook Hotel in Norwich was a bumper treat of health, beauty and fashion geared to every woman.

"I wanted it to be a bridge to the church," says the woman who has spent over 20 years in the beauty industry before coming to faith in 2005.

Julie's Beauty and Belief event attracted over 80 women from all walks of life. It also included a resume of diet, exercise and rest while being spiritually attuned to

God to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

"I want to inspire people to look beyond themselves because life is full of possibilities," says Julie whose event included a publicity outlet for her Christian business friends, her book (On Earth as it is in Heaven) and 'Posh Frocks and Brides' which is part of the Storehouse Charity Shop run by her church, NFLC. Some of the event proceeds also went to the Norwich Foodbank.

Julie will be visiting new pastures with a trip to South Africa in September where she will be meeting up with new family members and hopes to share her Beauty and Belief format at her sister's



Julie Prentice
church.
Her next event on Thursday

October 18 at 6.30 pm at the Norwich Christian Resource Centre is based on the theme 'The Body is a Temple'. "We hope you will want to join us for an evening of inspiration beauty and passion. We want to inspire you to be the best you can be and endeavour to succeed," adds Julie who says: "Believing makes you beautiful." She also loves Christmas and is praying that God will give her something new, special and exciting to do with her ministry.

For more information email julie.jules2007@hotmail.co.uk and for more inspirations visit www.jewelsofheaven.blogspot.com
By Sandie Shirley

Innovative new service on drugs and alcohol

■ **NORFOLK:** An innovative new drug and alcohol treatment and recovery service is to be launched right across Norfolk next spring with the Christian-based Matthew Project as one of its key partners.

A five-year contract to run adult drug and alcohol services across Norfolk has been awarded to the Matthew Project, together with partner agencies Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust for services in the community, and RAPt (the Rehabilitation for Addicted Prisoners' Trust) who will work within prisons at Norwich, Wayland and The Bure.

These three agencies will work together as The Norfolk Recovery Partnership (NRP) to provide the fully integrated service for adults affected by drugs and alcohol from April 1, 2013.

It will be the first time services across the whole county have been provided by one partnership, in turn ensuring that people with drug and alcohol problems can access a fair, equitable and co-ordinated service, regardless of where they live.

Rosalie Weetman, chief executive of The Matthew Project, said: "This contract gives us the opportunity to work even more closely with our partners to create a truly joined-up, easily accessible service for adults. This will give service users a smoother journey through the system while allowing us to be more responsive to their individual needs."

The partnership will offer a menu of services which will include group work, talking therapies, non-structured activities, substitute prescribing and development of life skills. The partnership will also explore the option of running services from different locations to make them easier to access.

"This new service provides us with a fantastic opportunity to make a real difference to people with substance misuse problems," said Denise Grimes, service manager for Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust. "We have listened to feedback from services users and their families and have designed the service to be responsive and flexible as a result."

Shelagh Gurney, Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services at Norfolk County Council, said: "This partnership will build on the good work that has already been done in Norfolk to help people overcome substance misuse. Having one contract for the adult treatment system in Norfolk will make it easier for people affected by drug and alcohol misuse to receive the help they need and ensure that the same support is available to everyone."

People will be able to self-refer into the open access service through a new website, by dropping into a recovery café or calling a 24/7 helpline.

Sanctuary of beauty

By SANDIE SHIRLEY

When Emma Stevenson converted part of her South Norfolk home into a beauty sanctuary it was always going to be more than a place for massage and make-up.

Having done a variety of training courses with the Norwich Academy of Beauty, Emma also uses her business, inspired by the Biblical character, Esther, as a listening ear, a tool for prayer and a powerful lever for her faith.

Exclusively for women, the quiet, rural bolt hole with its own parking and large garden is a welcome beauty retreat that also helps those with illness and difficulties. Emma, from Hope Community Church Wymondham, shares the amazing testimony of her son's healing from a brain tumour to speak into the lives of those afflicted with a similar disease, various cancers and other problems. Such empathy has gone a long way to sowing seeds of faith in many that have stood on the side lines of belief but return time and again.

When Emma's son Thomas was just three years-old, his life hung in the balance and surgeons said an operation could kill him or leave him as a vegetable, recalls Emma. News of her son's condition sent her into shock. "It



Emma Stevenson.

was the worst day of my life - I felt physically sick."

Together with husband Chris, she scoured the country for a cure. Emma also mounted a publicity campaign and newspapers carried the story of the little boy with slurred speech, who was in excruciating pain, to encourage people to pray.

Family and friends prayed too and asked countless others to do the same including an American aunt and her church. Meanwhile, three surgeons tackled an

invasive 14-hour operation to remove most of Thomas' tumour while being careful not to damage his eye.

"Medics expected him to be in intensive care for six weeks but he came round immediately and soon joined the normal ward. He was hailed as a miracle boy," says Emma who has seen God continually heal the nerve damage in his face since the operation.

Today Emma's faith is as strong as ever. She has seen her son

snatched from death and has known God's hand on her own life when she was tempted to look at alternative paths to healing.

"There was a time when I did not want to go to church but preferred the gym but when my husband became a Christian I saw a real change in him. Soon afterwards I found a note in my son's pocket asking God to let me come to church." That handwritten note deeply touched Emma. She soon became a committed church member and six months of intensive counselling and prayer helped to heal the hurts and wounds that had built-up since childhood.

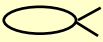
Nowadays, she asks God to bring clients to her door. "I have a thriving business with many regular customers. I see many who are vulnerable but I can listen to their stories, pray with them and bless them with free treatments that show that I love them because Jesus loves them," says Emma, who offers pamper parties, princess parties for teenagers, spray tanning, manicures, pedicures and facials.

"Esther from the Bible, was a beautiful young woman used by God to save a nation. I hope those who come here leave confident and with a skip in their step as their natural beauty is enhanced because God loves women and can use them today," she adds.

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E Anglia prayer hub is global

A barn in Mellis on the Suffolk and Norfolk border is becoming a dynamic worldwide prayer hub headquarters for women through The Deborah Company UK. Sandie Shirley reports.

Week day and evening prayer meetings and special, strategic days are encouraging women to battle in prayer for their families, children and country with fresh spiritual perspective and renewal.

With modern technology - through Skype - alliances across the nations are also being formed as a powerhouse of praying women come together through Ostler's Barn to hear God's heart beat and pray with revelation explains Julie Anderson.

Julie set-up The Deborah Company - a growing band of empowered women - in the UK, seven years ago, after a powerful supernatural mandate from God. Julie was with her American friend, prophetess and intercessor, Cindy Jacobs, in a hotel room in Barcelona, in 1999, just after Cindy received a visitation from the Angel Gabriel. It involved a vision of the two women on horseback riding across nations pursued by a mighty army of thousands of women following Christ.

Julie said: "I was awakened about 3am to find Cindy sitting cross-legged on her bed next to me looking startled but quite angelic. Her face was softened and gentle, and the room was filled with the most amazing sense of God's spirit. Cindy in a hushed voice explained it, saying: 'Gabriel was here.' "She was visibly moved as she

detailed what she had seen and heard. It was then I realised an answer had come to bring me victorious strategy and it was for more nations than the USA and UK," said Julie, who has since seen women from every continent released afresh through empowered prayer.

Julie, who was born in Norwich, regularly returns to the barn at Thrandeston Road from her London home for the all-important prayer schedules. To date, she has seen God muster a new breed of women with a soldier's strength and mother's heart. They come from all walks of life including politics, art, technology, medicine, media and education and are strategic in influencing the Kingdom of God here and now.

It's ironic that God should choose Mellis, in East Anglia, as part of the headquarters (with London and Leicester) she reasons. Centuries ago, Mother Julian from Norwich was recognised for her divine revelations ("All will be well. All manner of things with be well") while Boadicea was stationed here as the warring Queen of the Iceni tribe who led the revolt against occupying Roman forces.

Julie's work began in England in 1985 with husband Rod through prayer schools, biblical training schools and strategic gatherings. With the passage of time, she preached on the Biblical character, Deborah, and knew the importance

of Psalm 68:11 (The Lord gives the Word. And the women who tell the Good News are many) in preparation for her founding role.

The first UK 'Deborah' meeting was scheduled for July 7, 2005 in London but plans were disrupted by the terrorist bombings that day. Eighty women attended instead of 180 since transport and communications were hampered by immediate police safeguards. Undaunted, the meeting went ahead and a spirit of intercession was birthed in London as the first UK 'Deborahs' prayed for peace, calm and order.

"Deborah (in the Bible) must have been an incredible woman of faith in her day. She knew God's timing and nature to deliver His people from oppression and received God's wisdom and strategy to bring victory to her nation. I want to make a difference and I find myself joined with other like-minded women who care about the nation, the future, what picture and legacy we leave our children and what happens to the next generation," says Julie who is busy organising the next Deborah Company event in London on October 29.

For more information contact: julie.anderson@deborahcompany.co.uk or www.theprayerfoundation.org

The next Skype call is at 8pm on October 8, November 12 and December 10 at the same time) at skypeprayer@deborahcompany.org



Julie Anderson outside Ostler's Barn in Mellis.



Norwich Christian Resource Centre





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Chance to quiz Police candidates

■ Government ministers, judges, prison governors and, in October, the candidates for Norfolk's first Police and Crime Commissioner role, have all addressed the county's Ecumenical Criminal Justice Forum. Organiser Rev Simon Wilson reports.

■ The Norfolk Ecumenical Criminal Justice Forum brings together those involved or with an interest in criminal justice issues from public sector agencies, voluntary sector groups and those from faith-based organisations alongside chaplains.

Recent speakers have included Government ministers, judges, prison governors, senior officers from the police, probation and crown prosecution services, prison chaplains and groups working with offenders. Involvement in this group has been one of the most inspiring and exciting dimensions of my ministry.

Since it was created about three years ago, the forum has contributed greatly to relationship building and joined-up thinking between agencies and individuals. This includes the development of chaplaincy in Norwich courts; community chaplaincy and resettlement work in terms of supporting prisoners on release to reduce re-offending and increase rehabilitation into our communities; the growth of the street pastors initiative and the emergence of restorative approaches to justice - an area where Norfolk leads the way nationally. Several other counties have followed our model of the church offering hospitality and safe-space and enabling initiatives to emerge.

Faith groups have distinctive and relevant things to say regarding community cohesion and



not only reducing crime and anti-social behaviour but also helping ex-offenders re-integrate themselves into communities and learn new models of behaviour and lifestyles. We also care for victims and support all engaged with the criminal justice system in prayer and action.

The next meeting takes place on October 3, at 5.30pm at Granary Court, Norwich and will be an opportunity to meet candidates aspiring to be Norfolk's first elected Police and Crime Commissioner and hear first-hand about their policies for reducing crime and priorities for the police. It is also a chance for those attending to highlight their own concerns and suggestions and help shape the criminal justice agenda in Norfolk in the years to come.

■ The forum is chaired by Paddy Seligman, convened by Rev Simon Wilson (Social and Community Concerns Co-ordinator, Diocese of Norwich, County Ecumenical Officer and Chaplain to Norfolk Constabulary) and overseen by the Bishop of Lynn. If you are interested in attending, please contact simon.wilson@norwich.anglican.org



Scenes from Celebrate Norfolk 2012, clockwise from left: Chip Kendall, Catton Community Choir, Chris Duffett, the exhibition and the Rivers of Life Choir.



Celebrating faith in action across Norfolk

By KEITH MORRIS

Celebration of the Christian faith was the key theme of the fourth annual Celebrate Norwich and Norfolk festival from June 8-10 at the Forum in Norwich.

Hundreds of Christians were singing, dancing, acting, praying and talking about their faith for three days across the Forum and Millennium Plain in Norwich city centre.

A Christian social action and services exhibition filled the Forum inside and out with over 30 exhibitors both local and national including YMCA Norfolk, Matthew Project, Magdelene Group, Christian Concern, OMF and Christians Against Poverty.

Opening the event, former YMCA Norfolk chief executive, John Drake said: "We are gathered here to celebrate what God inspired and empowered men and women have achieved in this very city and county, not in past generations but in our own generation."

Outside, on Millennium Plain, despite some poor weather on the Friday, choirs, dance teams, theatre groups, bands and street artists entertained and engaged with hundreds of passers-by.

Celebrate project director, John Betts said: "The great thing about being in the Forum is being in the public arena and meeting people

who we would not otherwise meet and interacting with people in a way which has brought us out of our church buildings.

"It is inspiring, it is invigorating and it is touching real need. It is the place to be and there is a great opportunity for all of the Christian projects and groups to promote what they do so well."

President of the Baptist Union, Chris Duffett, who spent the weekend outside the Forum engaging with passers-by, said: "I have been meeting loads of different people and hearing about their hopes and aspirations for what they would like to achieve before they die. It has been quite humbling to just listen to hear people pour out their hearts."

On Saturday morning, United Christian Broadcasters held a breakfast in the Curve Auditorium to tell around 50 people about their vision for engaging with local churches and Christians with their radio, TV, online and printed services such as The Word for Today and www.lookingforgod.com

On the Sunday morning, cafe church at the Forum cafe was well attended with John Drake talking about social action and the legacy of some well known local Christian pioneers including Elizabeth Fry. There were also informal discussions about social action which sparked both encouragement and debate about the role of the church and individuals.

Celebrate 2013 date

■ The dates for the 2013 Celebrate Norwich and Norfolk exhibition and event will be Friday June 7 through to Sunday June 9.

On Saturday evening, up to 100 young people enjoyed the Celebrate Youth Event at NCBC with the Chip Kendall Band, Brokenfor, DJ Galactus Jack, ENYP Dance Off and Riding Lights Roughshod theatre.

On Sunday, around 150 people gathered for a Celebrate closing service at St Peter Mancroft. Rev Madeline Light, chair of Transforming Norwich, said: "We are one body of Christ with many different parts all working together. Celebrate has been a real opportunity to come out of our churches and engage with interesting questions put to us by passers-by."

Rev Janet Wyr said: "The heart of the city has been warmed by God's love this weekend. The city centre is a place where there is often darkness. It is a stormy place to be for many people and there are very few places that they can go to find unconditional love - and that is what they found here over this Celebrate weekend."

www.celebratenorfolk.co.uk

Mothers Union president set to speak in Norfolk

■ **NORWICH:** Mothers' Union Worldwide President Rosemary Kempson is set to visit branches in Norfolk this October plus two public appearances.

As well as private visits to branches in Fakenham, Swaffham and Pilgrim Benefice there will be two opportunities to hear the head of the international charity:

On Wednesday October 10, at 11am, Rosemary will be preaching at the Diocesan

Festival Service in Norwich Anglican Cathedral followed by coffee in the cloisters

There will also be a more intimate gathering on Thursday October 11, from 7.30 - 9.30 pm in the Forget-me not Café, St Michael at Plea, Queen Street, Norwich.

For the four million members in 83 countries, what Mothers' Union provides is a network through which they can serve Christ in their own community - through prayer, financial

support and actively working at the grassroots level in programmes that meet local needs.

They lobby local and national governments on issues affecting family life and campaign to challenge legislation that neglects the vulnerable and marginalised.

They are also represented at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

To attend one of these events, please email: munorwich@googlemail.com by October 1.

Hope house set to open

■ **HOPE INTO ACTION** - the charity which houses and provides support to the vulnerable, working in partnership with churches - is set to open its first house in Norwich, in conjunction with Norwich Central Baptist Church.

Hope into Action presented their vision and work to various churches and organisations at the House of Prayer in May this year.

Since then, following earlier negotiations, Norwich Central Baptist Church have decided that they want to deepen their commitment to Hebron Trust, and have agreed to use their Manse as move-on accommodation for women leaving Hebron House, but who still require some support. Chapel House will open in September, 2012, and will be managed by Hope into Action, who will provide a Support Worker.

A group of Mentors from Norwich Central Baptist Church will give practical and spiritual support to the residents. Training and support to Mentors at Chapel House will be provided by Hope into Action, and Hebron Trust

The opening of Chapel House has spearheaded the establishment of Hope into Action - Norwich, and it is hoped that this will be the first of many such partnerships in Norfolk. A project leader has been appointed to facilitate this process, as already one or two other churches have expressed a strong interest in working with Hope into Action to provide further houses in the area.

Office space is currently being sought to provide a base and a local contact point, and if you are a church who may be able to offer this, even on a temporary basis, please contact Hope into Action on 07919 683105 or 07920 127163 or email:

michele.curtis@hopeintoaction.org.uk

Prayer support is vital to this project forging ahead in Norfolk, so please do sign up to pray on a regular basis, details on the website.

If you would like to find out more about the work of Hope into Action, make a donation, or become involved in anyway, please go to: www.hopeintoaction.org.uk

YMCA NORFOLK

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Supported Lodgings Scheme

Do you have a heart for young people?
Do you have a spare room in your house?
Are you willing to support YMCA Norfolk in transforming young lives?

We are looking for fantastic people to help and equip young people to grow in confidence and gain the skills to take on their own tenancy and live an independent life.

You might be an owner occupier, council tenant or renting privately and are prepared to offer a temporary home to a young person across Norfolk.

For supporting young people in this amazing work, you will receive a weekly payment of approx £80 tax free, training and regular support from the YMCA Norfolk team.

If you would like to find out more please contact: Rachel Cogman: YMCA Norfolk Housing and Community Manager

Tel: 07912309815

rachelcogman@ymca-norfolk.org.uk

www.ymca-norfolk.org.uk

£4.4m YMCA project is now home for 40

Up to 40 homeless young people in Norwich have just moved into their own flats as part of YMCA Norfolk's new £4.4m development on Bethel Street in the city centre.

The MyPlace development of 40 self-contained flats was officially launched at a civic reception on Friday September 7.

In front of an audience of local authorities, civic leaders, YMCA Norfolk board members and president Sir Richard Dannatt, representatives from charitable trusts and funders, and the building and design team, staff and residents, chairman Richard Pennington paid tribute to former YMCA Norfolk chief executive John Drake. "John was the man with the dream full of hope and change the result of which is before you today," said Richard, "and it is tremendous."

Chief executive, Tim Sweeting, said: "The mission of the YMCA is to enable transformation in the lives of young people and MyPlace is a foundation to enables that transformation to take place.

"From a place of disadvantage the young people we work with can't think about employment and fulfillment for the future when they don't even have the basic safety and security that a home brings. There is not enough housing around to meet that basic need and it is in that context that MyPlace is here as part of a programme from YMCA Norfolk that has seen us increase the amount of housing supplied by 50% over the past three years, trying to deal with this very issue."

Two young residents also spoke of their experience. David Malcolm said: "The YMCA took me in and fulfilled everything that I could have asked for. Coming to MyPlace is absolutely brilliant and I would not give it up for anything. It is my stepping stone to becoming an adult and an independent man. It is good to know that the YMCA staff are only downstairs if I need anything but, as they keep telling us, it is up to us now."

Zoe Ward said: "I was in debt with a few companies and the YMCA helped sort all of



Pictured above, YMCA Norfolk chief executive Tim Sweeting receives the keys from David Betts of Lovell and, right, resident Zoe Ward in her new flat.

that out with a repayment plan. They provided all the support I needed from moving out from home and being homeless to getting me back on my feet and building up my independence."

Closing proceedings, YMCA Norfolk chaplain, Rev Janet Wyer, prayed: "May this place be a place of hope and transformation, a place of love where all darkness is banished by your light, all troubles are calmed by your peace, all

evil redeemed by your love and all pains comforted by your healing grace. May this MyPlace be for all who enter, the doorway to your kingdom of love and life eternal and may your blessing rest forever on all who call this place home."

The keys to MyPlace were handed over to the YMCA by Lovell senior site manager Dave Betts a few weeks earlier.

Community cafe is a stepping stone

■ **NORWICH:** A new community café has opened in Norwich city centre, the result of an innovative social enterprise partnership between YMCA Norfolk and local businesses, in which young homeless people have played a vital role.

The Stepping Stone Café opened its doors for the first time on September 4, and is based at Central Norwich YMCA opposite Norwich Bus Station. It will be open from 10am to 4pm, Monday to Saturday, serving hot and cold drinks, hot meals, paninis, jacket potatoes, sandwiches, daily specials and other light refreshments.

Over 20 young YMCA residents have been involved in various aspects of the decision-making behind the cafe project including: setting objectives, market research, designing the café style and culture, producing marketing materials and a café website.

Stan Hawkings, 19, who is living at the YMCA MyPlace development in Bethel Street and has NVQ levels 1 and 2 in catering, is working four days a week at the cafe as a chef.

He said: "It's a really big help because it's going to help me get a job in the future and I will be able to bring my skills back up to the standard they should be."

Alison Howard, Area Director Greater Norwich for YMCA Norfolk, said: "Many of the young people taking part in the Stepping Stones café project are at risk of being long term unemployed and come from supported housing.

"The project has got them excited about a future and the real working environment provides a place where clients can improve their employability skills, build relationships, gain experience, work as a team and develop important skills that underpin employment such as inter personal relationships and communication skills."

www.steppingstonescafe.co.uk



New FGB president helps lead house church

■ **FRETtenham:** Dr Barrie Lawrence has had a busy year, in February being elected the new president of Norwich chapter of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship and now leading a new church called "Liberty" in Frettenham, north of Norwich.

Barrie led a five-surgery practice with several dentists and hygienists and in 1984, he started a branch dental practice in Aylsham and opened a Christian bookshop there the same year.

Barrie is taking over the Norwich FGB president's role from Michael Wiltshire, who remains a vice-president and a national director for FGB in the UK, but who is stepping back a little due to health reasons.

The couple, whose six daughters live in five different countries, are now leading Liberty, a growing church that currently meets in their home twice every Sunday for lively and dynamic worship.

Wendy's career had been in nursing, and in 2006 she was managing the Sue Ryder Nursing Home in Little Walsingham. They had both been very active members of a church in Aylsham for around 25 years, and assumed they would continue there.

Early one September morning back in 2008,



Dr Barrie Lawrence.

shortly after he had retired, Barrie woke up having had a vivid dream. "I woke Wendy and told her about the dream. We felt the Lord would have us gather people, and especially welcome those who felt they had been marginalised by their church - those who felt they had a debt to the Lord and wanted to repay it through exercising their gifts and ministry but were unable because

they had not 'done the course' or 'passed the exams' or 'been ordained'."

In May 2011 Barrie and Wendy started meeting together in their sitting room - worshipping, praying, reading scriptures and breaking bread.

After a couple of weeks a few others joined them, and at one stage there were 29 people in their sitting room! During the first year 72 different people passed through their home in this way. Initially it was mainly older people, but younger people have now started coming, as well as more local people, and nearly always more men than women.

"We have 'open ministry', which means anyone can do whatever they feel called or led to do. However, we're not stupid and recognise our responsibility to God and the people who meet here, and would not remain silent if wrong teaching was given. The gifts of the Spirit are nearly always in operation, and people can teach, preach, pray for the sick - whatever they feel called to do.

"We will meet in our sitting room until it's full, and then move into a hall. We call ourselves 'Liberty - we're free!'"

They can be contacted on 01603 898289, or email - barrielawrence@btinternet.com.

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