

GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

Christmas 2009: FREE

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Rock of ages

■ Norwich Cathedral literally rocked and shook to the sound of popular Christian rock group thebandwithnname on October 23 as 600 jumping and dancing fans packed into the church for a memorable event. In what was surely a unique

occasion in the 900 years of the ancient building, TBWNN opened their full-on set with Queen's We Will Rock You, to set the stage for a high-energy performance which carried the crowd with them all the way. Lead singer ChipK, sporting

a striking bleach white Mohican haircut and sharp white jacket, urged the crowd "everyone go crazy" and they did not disappoint. Old and young alike seemed to know every word of the band which aims to "translate

their individual experience of a relationship with Jesus to this generation". As Chip put it: "This is an awesome party in the house of God." Picture by Kevin Gotts.

■ in brief

Emptiness of the X-Factor lifestyle

■ A singer who found fame in an X-Factor-style TV talent show was almost driven to suicide by the emptiness of a celebrity lifestyle, a Norwich audience was recently told.

Liam Moore, who idolised the performer Phil Collins, later became a star in his own right after appearing on the TV talent show, Stars in their Eyes, a forerunner to the X-Factor.

Liam's dream came true when he was asked to perform in London before his idol, Phil Collins, who later endorsed him as his 'number one tribute act'.



But as Liam found fame on international music tours, he discovered that money could not fill his inner emptiness. "Achievement and money didn't satisfy. Relationships broke down, and cocaine and alcohol didn't fill the emptiness inside me. Although I'd found fame, I also sank into the depths of depression," he said.

In desperation, he phoned a Christian friend, who led him to faith in Jesus Christ. This brought lasting changing for Liam, as today, 11 years later, his recent national music project involves choirs of 6,500 children in Merseyside who have helped him launch a new CD called You're the Voice.

This inspiring CD brings a message of hope and encourages Christians to boldly counter ungodly trends, injustice, peer pressures and gang culture among the young.

This venture is a big turnaround for Liam, who had a rough early life, growing up in areas of Merseyside that have been associated with gun crime.

He was expelled from school at 14, later working on market stalls in Liverpool, but dreaming of success as a singer. Today, he says: "Many people are looking for a voice, but in the wrong places. They don't yet know the love of God and his amazing grace."

By Mike Wiltshire

Claim your free book

■ A free book, which explains the real meaning of Christmas, is being offered to every reader of *Good News for Norwich*.

What's the Point of Christmas? is written by popular author and speaker J John.

Why are people still celebrating the birth of a baby born over 2000 years ago in the Middle East?

If you would like an answer to this and other questions about the

Christian faith then, with no strings attached, send an 11cm x 16cm large letter rate SAE to: Good News for Norwich, 4 Linden Road, New Costessey, Norwich, NR5 OBE.



Schoolgirl sold on streets of Norwich

By SANDIE SHIRLEY

Maria Landon's childhood innocence was stolen forever when her father, who was a pimp, forced her to become a prostitute in the Norwich red light district when she was still a schoolgirl, aged 14.

The harrowing accounts of vice and violence, and her long fight for freedom, have been read by thousands worldwide and have made 43 year-old Maria a best-selling international author. Now the single mother and grandmother has closed the chapters of her past to be an inspiration for others thanks to faith in God.

Maria's dad lived in a world of thieves and street-walkers. Her mother, tiring of turning tricks for her husband, walked out, leaving the children in his chaotic, violent and sometimes cruel care.

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

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

The book *Escaping Daddy*, tells Maria's story as she tried to rebuild her life and is the sequel to the best-selling *Daddy's Little Earner*.

Determined to escape from her past, and be the best wife and mother she could possibly be,



Norwich author Maria Landon.

Maria threw herself into her marriage. But it is never that easy to escape from such a traumatic start in life.

Maria tells the story of her marriage into the gypsy community and the emotional demons that rise up from her childhood to haunt her as she becomes the victim of violence once more.

The book leads the reader through Maria's own personal and inspiring journey out of a nervous breakdown and through two marriages. She then became a personal development teacher, helping many others to

overcome their pasts, and was also to be a strong, empowered single mother of two boys.

A gifted communicator, life coach and aspiring degree student, Maria is now an advocate for justice and a pioneer for growth through adversity. Her mission has come with heartbreak, tears and years of counselling. "I have had to learn to love, respect and forgive myself. I have had to learn to love, respect and forgive others but most importantly I have found myself," she said.

"I have been on my healing journey for 16 years and I know the value of positive thinking but it was only when I got in touch with Jesus that I could finally leave the past behind. I cried and cried but they were healing tears. Now it's as though it happened to someone else as the barriers are coming down and I am learning to trust.

"I do not understand why some things happen but there are never any last chances. I am deeply passionate about personal development and growth, believing that with the right help and support people can overcome childhood trauma and its devastating effects," said Maria, who still lives in Norwich and worships at Proclaimers Church.

"I find great inspiration from people who have been through awful experiences and have managed to come out the other side and lead happy rewarding lives. If sharing my experiences and the steps I took to heal myself inspires anyone to help themselves out of the pain, then I have achieved what I set out to do. It is not an easy road, but it has been the most rewarding of my life."

Last Christmas Maria walked into a Norwich

■ continued on page two

GOOD NEWS

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Schoolgirl was sold

■ continued from page one

church after being invited by a friend.
 "I wasn't sure at first," she said, "but as soon as I stepped inside, I just felt I belonged. The way people spoke about God, that he was part of their life, the most important part, deeply touched me. I knew I wanted Jesus in my life, so I asked him to come in, there and then.
 "I didn't need any prompting or persuasion. It just seemed the most natural thing for me. I felt like I had come home and was filled with an indescribable joy. At last, I had found a loving father who loved me for just being me. It didn't matter what I had done or what had been done to me.
 "For the first time in my life I felt clean. All the tricks, all the clients, all the disgusting thing which had been done to me were washed away. It was like I was a new person."
www.marialandon.co.uk

No-one is beyond the power of grace

■ Spending the last 16 years in Norwich Prison has been an enormous privilege for me. In December, I retire from my post of Chaplain at HMP Norwich where I have had the wonderful opportunity to draw alongside people from many different walks of life who have been committed to prison for whatever reason.



**Terry Baxter,
Chaplain
HMP Norwich**

In Luke's gospel we read, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor, He has sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are bruised."

In my work as a Chaplain, I have for many years been able to offer a listening ear to many prisoners who have experienced difficulties in their individual lives. There are numerous reasons why it is necessary for people to spend

time in prison following some criminal or unlawful activity. It may be because of drug or alcohol abuse or an act of violence.

But in my opinion no-one is too bad to be saved or is beyond the power of God's grace.

The encounter between Jesus and that greedy tax collector, Zacchaeus, is a prime example. When Zacchaeus pays back with

interest the money he has cheated people out of, Jesus said to him: "Today salvation has come to this house."

However, many of the problems and worries that accompany those who are sent to prison are often to do with the breakdown of relationships at an individual level. Most problems that we have in life will indeed stem from a difficulty in relationships and Christian workers and chaplains do need to apply the ministry of compassion in their day-to-day dealings with people.

The important thing is that one day each of us will have to answer to a Higher Power. The essence of the Christian faith is that those who repent of their wrongdoing and entrust themselves to Jesus Christ will receive God's compassion and forgiveness and not His judgment.

Back from dead after lethal attack

By SANDIE SHIRLEY

Ian McCormack was clinically dead for 15 minutes, experiencing both hell and heaven before he came back to life after being stung by five poisonous box jellyfish.

His unforgettable glimpse of eternity came in the aftermath of horrific suffering. His muscles went into spasm and his body shook uncontrollably as poison from the deadliest creature known to man had felt like "thousands of electricity volts".

"I was pronounced dead, but I was alive, except outside of my physical form since we are built for eternity," said Ian. He believes he was snatched from the jaws of hell as he meditated on the Lord's Prayer and was rescued by the 'Shepherd of men's souls'. The heartfelt prayer, taught by his mother as a child at bedtime, changed and saved his life, he told a 90-strong audience at an event staged by Wymondham Hope Community Church.

Ian was deep-sea diving in Mauritius with native fishermen when his destiny hung in the balance, 26 years ago. While being rushed to hospital by ambulance, his life, right from being a young boy, flashed before him. He was a gambler, who slept around and an atheist that believed in Charles Darwin.

"Suddenly I saw my mother. She was on her knees praying at midday in her home in New Zealand. I had no idea, until later, that at that precise time she saw my face and heard the voice of God say: 'Your eldest son Ian is nearly dead. Pray for him now.'"

During the remarkable experience, Ian



Ian McCormack: jellyfish attack

recalled her words: "No matter how many things you have done wrong you can cry out to God and He will hear you." He tried in vain to remember the Lord's Prayer but the words supernaturally appeared as he was challenged to forgive those who had hurt him. "With surrender and humility came incredible peace," says Ian. "I was changed forever and

the presence of God has never left me.

"Comfort, peace and extraordinary joy came as waves of unconditional love and acceptance hit me. The love I had for my family was just a thimbleful in comparison. There was no fear of judgment, my sins were forgiven and forgotten, causing me to cry for the first time since I was 14.

"I saw the form of a man who was radiant and dazzling white - the light of the universe was shining out of his face. I felt the innocence of a small child returning; I felt holy. There was also a new earth - a crystal clear river, rolling hills and trees that I had never seen before," says Ian.

The experience was life-changing for the former church singer who had been christened and confirmed. Sorrow and loneliness was removed and his broken heart was mended. He read the whole Bible in six weeks and was commissioned to share the amazing account with worldwide audiences to show the invincible mercy and grace of a loving Father God.

Twenty six years later he still bears the whip marks when his skin was blistered by the jellyfish attacks but his renewed heart has convinced him to become a church pastor. "We cannot clean ourselves up for salvation - we need God," says Ian who initially found himself in hell, he firmly believes.

"I could feel the evil; it was all around me but I had given my life to the Shepherd of men's souls when I prayed from the heart and it could not touch me. I felt like a speck of dust being drawn up into a radiant light and delivered out of the kingdom of darkness."

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Bishop spent 11 years in prison

■ A Norwich-based former Bishop, who spent 11 years in prison, as well as a spell in the Army in a tank regiment, has decided to finally hang up his dog collar.

At the age of 77, retired bishop Malcolm Menin (pictured right), who has befriended many people in prison, has "decided to call it a day."

Malcolm felt the call of God to assist with chaplaincy work among the 'lifers' in Norwich Prison – as part of his wider responsibilities in the community.

The son of an Anglican minister, he first felt called to the church at the age of 15, but at 21 he had become a Cavalry officer, "happily charging around Salisbury Plain in a tank," while serving with the 4th Hussars Regiment.

At Oxford University, Malcolm rowed for his college and graduated with first class honours. He met, Jennifer, his wife-to-be, at a parish dance: they fell in love and he sold his precious camera equipment to buy Jennifer an engagement ring.



Today, after 51 years together, they have four grown-up children and nine grandchildren.

One of Malcolm's greatest experiences in the Christian ministry began – of all places – in the bath when he felt called to provide leadership for a struggling Victorian church in Norwich. Eventually, Malcolm and his wife

Jennifer, served the church – St Mary Magdalene's – for 24 years.

In 1986, Malcolm was ordained Bishop of Knaresborough in Yorkshire, where among other activities, he regularly visited local prisons.

"I've found many friendships with prisoners – some have been murderers and sex offenders. But most have been ordinary, nice human beings with a particular problem or issue. Many have been abused and damaged in some way."

Malcolm corresponds with prisoners and will miss his visits to the 'lifers'. "My one theme has always been to show the love of God – he loves us always, however we fail or sin."

Malcolm also praises the prison staff - "the younger ones are doing a very valuable job as they relate to prisoners in a creative way. Women officers in a men's prison also make a special contribution."

By Mike Wiltshire

Marriage to the King Conman was never going to be easy

■ Being married to the so-called King of the Conmen, was never going to be easy for Norfolk girl Val Hartman. But her personal courage and an unshakeable faith in God, saw love win through in the end.

When Val married her husband, Doug, after he left prison, it heralded the greatest challenge of her life. Three months after tying the knot, a betting docket fell out of his pocket. "I did not realise what it was," said Val, now aged 82, who met her late husband during a prison visit with the YMCA.

Doug became a trickster and gambling addict who later tried to take the roof from over her head to pay his debts. Val, speaking at a Norwich Christian Motorcyclists' Association event, saw him become an ardent spokesman for God after 20 years of lies, disappearances and prison sentences.

"I still hear from many people who Doug has influenced since his life changed. There were many wonderful things that would not have happened if we had not got together," says Val, who often accompanied her husband as he spoke to thousands of prison inmates across the UK.

She first met Doug at Blundeston Prison, Suffolk. Her visits continued and on his release the relationship blossomed and turned to marriage.

But Doug returned to crime when he lost his job because of his prison record. With a depreciating bank account he gambled to earn some easy money. The jobs continued to come and go and he resorted to fraud to cover the debts and spent time in open and enclosed prisons. To avoid the shame he moved away from home.

"At Christmas Doug could be missing. Many times I wondered if I could continue with the upheaval. I would have lost my house if I had not eventually divorced him. He would have stopped at nothing – gambling had become an addiction. My love was always there but the trust had gone," she says.

While reading the Bible in jail, Doug was convicted of the terrible crimes he had committed. He fell on his knees, asking God for forgiveness, and thereafter told prisoners, visitors and warders about the Saviour who wiped his slate clean.

After his release, the couple renewed their wedding vows during a simple ceremony four years after their divorce. (Doug's story – King of the Conmen – was published by Lion in 1995)

By Sandie Shirley



Lisa was heroine of machete attack

By SANDIE SHIRLEY

Thirteen years ago a horrifying ordeal with a machete wielding attacker changed the course of Lisa Potts' life.

The former nursery school teacher sustained terrible injuries while shielding her pupils during a teddy bear's picnic activity. It thrust her into the media spotlight overnight making her a national heroine who won 19 awards, including the George Medal for bravery.

It took three operations and endless physiotherapy to regain the use of her hands, relearning everything from doing up shoelaces to fastening buttons, she told a packed Wymondham audience earlier this year at an event hosted by the town's Hope Community Church.

"God prepared me for the attack on that summer's day in Wolverhampton. I had a growing faith and was at the peak of fitness," said Lisa. "He took me off the path I was on and placed me on another."

Lisa has made the on-going pages of her life a turning point for herself and others. She has continued to raise the bar when helping youngsters - a vocation that began when she was a 14-year-old Sunday school teacher.

Having done a family counselling course, she set-up a children's charity in 2001 to bring hope, purpose and potential to youngsters aged seven to eleven.

To date, Believe to Achieve (B2A) has helped 1,500 children and their families in Wolverhampton and Lisa was



Lisa Potts: attack changed her life.

honoured by its university last year for her work.

"It has been important to return to the Blakenhall and All Saints area where the attack took place to bring a new positive impact. The charity is not about me, although I am a trustee and involved with fund-raising and counselling, but about children believing in themselves," she says.

B2A works with pupils at five primary schools to help reinforce self-esteem and family values through

parenting courses, mentoring and creativity with art, dance, drama and music. One-to-one counselling for bullying, peer pressure, truancy or relationship difficulties is removing the barriers to learning while training for peer supporters is empowering youngsters to become role models.

Head teachers say B2A is uniting the community, improving attendance and SATs results while creating a happy learning environment with motivated, enthusiastic pupils.



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**People ■ Bishop Graham reveals his
Family's life -**

It was a terrible day – one that the **Bishop of Norwich, Graham James** and his wife **Julie** will never be able to forget – a day when their lives changed forever. It was the day in February 1984 that their beloved six-month old daughter **Victoria** suddenly died.

Victoria's life was cut tragically short at the family's then Hertfordshire home – an unexplained victim of cot death. "She died one afternoon when Julie had her in a pram and brought her home from friends," said Bishop Graham. "I was working in London at the time. It was traumatic and unexplained in the way that many cot deaths are. "Julie had been with some friends and had come back to our house with Victoria in the pram. She left it at the back door, went in and came back to get her out. Being a nurse and trained midwife, she knew more or less instantly that she had died."

At the time of Victoria's death, Bishop Graham was working in London and he only found out about it when he was met by someone at the station. "I won't forget it," he said. "The thing that was difficult was that by the time I got home her body had been removed from the house and was in the mortuary.

"You felt there was this living child at home in the morning and by the time you got home she had already gone. "It was very strange to come home and discover your daughter had died and her body had already been removed. There was a real sense of loss about that. "I did go and see her in the mortuary but at the time there was less account taken of a father's feelings than a mother's in all of that. Victoria's death was something Julie

managed on her own with neighbours and friends nearby. I wasn't part of it."

In trying to come to terms with the tragedy, the bishop and his wife, a staff nurse at Priscilla Bacon Lodge, have talked about Victoria with other people in similar situations and even helped form a support group where they used to live.

Bishop Graham touched briefly on the tragedy when, as guest speaker at the 42nd annual Service of Remembrance at Horsham St Faith Crematorium in September, he told those who had come to remember lost loved ones how nothing that was said at the time of death could help ease the pain of grief.

"One of the things is that bereaved parents can be of real support to each other," he said.

In the wake of Victoria's death the couple were "remarkably well supported" by family, friends, neighbours, and the church community.

But while most of it was welcomed some well-meaning offers of support caused unintended distress at a difficult time.

"Our assumption is that our children will be healthy nowadays. Sometimes there are tragic accidents, but you don't



expect any unexplained deaths whereas a century or so ago it was more common. People frequently don't know what to say," said Bishop Graham.

"The usual language doesn't work. There were two things that got on my nerves - the assumption that because you're a Christian you don't feel grief. But of course you do. It's a human emotion. This is your child that's died.

"The other thing that's irritating is when people say you can have another child. Dominic was born a couple of years later and of course we already had a child in Victoria's older sister Rebecca, but having another child doesn't replace the one who's died.

Ride of courage from Chris

■ A broken shoulder, collarbone and ribs were not enough to put off former-Norwich motorcyclist Chris Morley, who made a remarkable come-back from injury this season to win Oulton Park's prestigious allcomers motorcycle race.

Pitting his wits and skill against 40 tough competitors, he took the 100mph corners, to lap a quarter of the field and win by nine seconds.

The ride of courage was a rapid turnaround for the forty year-old Christian, who broke his shoulder, collarbone and ribs at the first race meeting of the year at Tonfanau, Wales. "Tested, I kept the faith and pushed through," says Chris, who grew up in Cringleford near Norwich.

The former British championship competitor and youngest rider in Suzuki GB's factory race team was side-lined by serious injuries for 17 years before returning to the circuit

last year.

"I was impatient to do well and had a number of big accidents that cut short my racing career when I fractured three spinal vertebrae in one crash and four in another," said Chris.

He switched from racing bikes to managing business trade associations in London but ten years ago he grappled with a serious, progressive illness that was not cured by conventional means.

"Someone suggested I ask God to come into my life and heal me; I was willing to try anything and as soon as I did I made an instant recovery and now God is restoring those lost racing years," said Chris, who currently rides a Yamaha Formula 400 and is backed by www.propa.com.

His father, a Grand Prix competitor who travelled the world, influenced his career. "I inherited dad's love of bikes.

At 16, I scabbled enough money together for a road bike but my family believed I would be safer on the track than the road so they helped me get started. It is a lot easier when you have someone steering you who has been there and done it. I was winning regional championships within a year and running at the front in national championships within two years.

"While I believe God is certainly with me when I race, I know I am not assured of instant perspiration-free success. When I corner at 100mph with my knee scraping the ground, I do not think I cannot be hurt but my faith helps me with the negative consequences of fear, which should not be confused with recklessness. In the insular world of bike racing I am seen as credible and people are interested in my belief."

By Sandie Shirley



grief over tragic death of baby daughter **changing day**



Bishop Graham James and, left, daughter Victoria.

"Each human being is unique and you can't replace them. To suggest you can simply have another child is not a comforting thing to say at all."

It is by remembering Victoria that the family has been able to carry on with their own lives, knowing she is not only part of their past, but present and future too.

"Rebecca herself was very young at the time but we talked about it with her and when Dominic was born he realised

he had an older sister who had died. "Victoria that way has always been part of the family," said Bishop Graham.

■ Article courtesy of the EDP



Chris Morley competes on his Yamaha Formula 400.

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Football team rises from ashes of arson attack



The Heartsease Churches Under 14 team.

■ A Norwich church football team has risen from the ashes of a devastating arson attack in June when it lost all its equipment, to now form a new club with three teams, all playing in the local Christian Football League.

In June, an arson attack completely gutted The Kabin community centre next to the Heartsease Towers in Norwich, destroying £700 of equipment from Witard Road Baptist Church FC, who won the Norfolk Christian Football League title last season.

Witard Road FC manager, Mike Culwick, said: "We lost all our equipment, including two sets of goals, three sets of nets, training bibs, all our footballs, my line marker and line marking materials and training cones. We also lost a respect pack, pumps, first aid stuff and cans of spray line markers."

But Mike, local football coach Nick Lewis

and Rev Nick Collinson from Heartsease Lane Methodist, were determined that they would not be beaten and vowed to form a new club and start again.

Mike said: "The football club started ten years ago and it is our intention to build on a firm foundation not made up of medals and silverware but on friendships, relationships and do our part to bring together the community which makes up the Heartsease. We do not see this fire as a tragedy but as an opportunity to see how good will overcome evil."

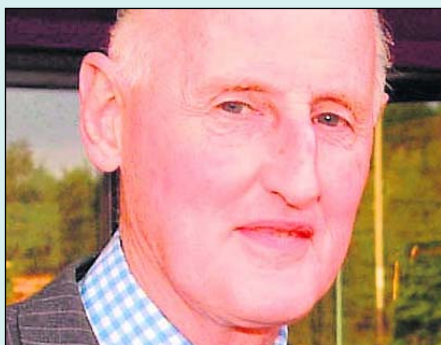
"Nick Collinson was very keen for his church to become involved with this venture for young people on the estate and surrounding area. So, Witard Road is no more and Heartsease Churches FC has arisen from the ashes and began the new season with the adult team and an Under 12

and Under 14 teams playing in the Norfolk Christian Football League."

Support came from all quarters and the team now have three new sets of goals (one of which they have lent to a Sheringham Under 12 team), a new line marker, lots of footballs, training equipment, training bibs and a fireproof container to store everything.

Mike said: "A big thank you to Open Academy who sponsored the adults, The Frying Machine on Furze Road who sponsors the youth teams and Norwich City Council and City Care for supplying equipment, and the School Wear shop for training bibs and footballs. We look forward to again being with young people and giving them a chance to enjoy the game with the challenge of the gospel."

By Keith Morris



John Wright.

John offers help to old adversary

■ A former county council leader said he was "flabbergasted" after a Norfolk Christian he once helped put behind bars, contacted him to offer support in his fight against cancer.

The Derby Evening Telegraph recently reported on how former Derbyshire council leader David Bookbinder was a key witness in a 246-day trial that ended with Norfolk-based John Wright spending three months in jail for fraud over a failed theme park business back in 1992. The longest-ever 17-month trial is listed in the Guinness Book of Records.

Derbyshire Council had been partners in the venture but when Labour got control under David Bookbinder they became hostile partners. They delayed planning permission for two-and-a-half years, for which they were found guilty of breach of contract in the High Court. This was a major factor in the collapse of the theme park due to higher building costs.

Mr Wright, an Anglican evangelist who lives near Norwich, recently travelled to Derby to talk to Mr Bookbinder about a glyconutrient remedy from fresh, ripe, fruit and vegetables which he believes helps the immune system to fight disease including cancer.

Mr Bookbinder said: "From his point of view, he was an innocent man and was in prison because of me. His intention was to help me – he wanted to help the person he believes was responsible for ruining his reputation. I found it astonishing."

Despite his past dealings with Mr Bookbinder, Mr Wright said he was filled with a great love for him when they met and they embraced each other. He held no grudges towards Mr Bookbinder.

John said: "The Bible teaches us not to hold grudges, and I have no ill feeling towards David. I have seen God overcome cancer and I wanted to contact him because I believed I could help."

By Keith Morris

Mum's faith beats family tragedy

By SANDIE SHIRLEY



Hannah and Sophie Bassi.

Hannah Bassi's tender gaze rests on her daughter, but it belies a tragic irony. Seven times her hopes of providing a younger sibling for Sophie have been dashed after three miscarriages and the loss of four babies who were still-born or died just hours after birth.

Together with her husband, she has known the terrible heartache of burying four tiny white coffins after losing Grace, Benjamin, Rebecca and Luke during the last six years.

The losses have been part of life's harrowing challenges that have included childhood sexual abuse, abortion and two near clashes with death during childbirth and a horrific car accident.

"Despite everything I feel more freedom than ever before from guilt, hurt, shame and pain because there is a God who delivers us out of the pit. His hands are not too short to help. The deepest hurt and ache, he can heal," says Hannah who tells her story to help others, having bravely faced suffering.

Hannah, 39, said she lost her last baby, Luke, in August 2008: "I always wanted to add to my family but each time, at the back of my mind, I thought successive attempts might result in death. I tried not to think like that during my last pregnancy but Luke also died. I held him in my

arms and felt my whole world had fallen apart; I looked at him and sobbed but I had God's assurance that everything would work together for good and looked towards him for the way ahead."

Hannah's life began changing ten years ago when she visited the Norwich Family Life Church. "During the singing there was a calm and peace, my legs shook and my hands were clammy," she said.

"The minister asked if people wanted to receive Jesus into their heart and I was almost running to the front and knelt before the altar – I wanted more of this Jesus and was flooded with his love."

Until then her knowledge of God came during a strict, Catholic school education that her parents paid for her in the Far East.

"It was run by laws and not love. One of the nuns would hurl a blackboard rubber at me when I could not answer the maths questions," she says.

During those formative years Hannah also struggled with recurring sexual abuse from a trusted friend of the family – it remained a dark, hidden secret for years.

She met her husband, Vince, while he was a project manager on business in Kuwait, setting

up the country's postal system and she was an international first-class flight attendant. Hannah later lived in New York and continued flying across the globe, until she moved to the UK as Vince's wife.

On a dark winter's night last February she was involved in a terrible car accident. Hannah escaped from the mangled wreckage after firemen used cutting equipment. "I knew God was with me as I prayed Psalm 91 – he who dwells in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the almighty because he is my refuge and my fortress, my God in him will I trust."

She was able to discard her supporting neck brace following a miracle healing for a broken sternum after a friend's prayer. It baffled doctors. "I should have worn the brace for six months instead of a matter of weeks," she said. "After three months the x-rays showed no evidence of a break. The unbelieving surgeon asked to take another x-ray – a year after the accident there should have been at least a hairline crack."

When Hannah talks about life's heartache, and divine healing, many women are moved to tears as it strikes a chord with their own lives. "God is opening doors to tell my story to help others and to be a listening ear," says Hannah.

NEWS

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Jimmy Cricket: entertainer.

Come 'ere - there's more

By **JAMES HASTINGS**

Funnyman Jimmy Cricket's famous catchphrase has more meaning than meets the eye.

'Come 'ere - there's more' was copied by youngsters and politicians alike. But today, for Jimmy, it could equally be an invitation to find out more about life.

Once the jokes are over, you need more than just 'a laugh' for true happiness. Jimmy has found that long-lasting joy comes through following Jesus.

And Jimmy's success is also due to the values of his faith. Early on in his career, he refused to tell blue gags - and became one of Britain's top stars.

As a young comic, Jimmy felt pressure to spice up his act to get bookings in working men's clubs.

But one night he decided to keep his jokes clean and ended up with a standing ovation.

Jimmy explains: "When I was starting out, my humour was more risqué. I wasn't very rude or vulgar, just a bit lavatorial with a few unsavoury words.

"It makes me cringe when I think of it now. But I soon realised it wasn't me so I dropped that side of my routine.

"I went on stage in a club after a guy who was swearing and cursing. The audience loved my silly clean jokes. They clapped and cheered and I

knew I'd found my niche."

Jimmy left his native Northern Ireland when he was just 16 to become a Butlins Red Coat.

He cut his comedy teeth on end-of-pier variety shows and men's clubs, describing it as "an amazing apprenticeship." His unique brand of gentle but hilarious slapstick and gags soon saw him topping the bill at seaside resorts like Blackpool.

That led to guest spots on TV shows such as The Good Old Days and The Royal Variety Show, as well as his own long-running series. In fact, Jimmy gave leading impressionist Rory Bremner his first big break.

"I took pride in the fact that when I came on TV, parents knew they could leave their kids watching alone because I wouldn't swear or tell a dirty joke. That trust means a lot to me. I love hearing kids giggle and you can do that without being crude."

Throughout his career, Jimmy says God was in and out of his spotlight. He went long periods without practising his faith, until he put Jesus centre stage.

"Over the years, I never stopped believing," he smiles. "I was helped by the good example of other Christians and reading about them. I came back to God, and, one by one, so did my children.

"My wife, May, was the last, but now we go to church together and it's wonderful. God is back at the centre of my life."

Article courtesy of Good News

Professor's walk of faith

■ Eminent scientist and author, Professor Roy Peacock, who was once a convinced atheist, told a Norwich audience how he came to believe in God.

As an expert in thermodynamics, Roy Peacock (pictured right) is an advisor to many governments and leading companies.

Speaking at the Norwich FGBMFI at the Maid's Head Hotel, he told how, in his early years in research, he came across annoying Christians who were holding 'mission' meetings in the village where he lived, near Cambridge. Roy disliked them, but realised they showed qualities that he lacked.

After a week of trying to prove that God did not exist, Roy lay awake at 2am when suddenly he heard an inner voice "which I knew was



God" - and within hours, Roy was a convinced believer.

"I realised that not only was God real, but he showered me with the most amazing sense of peace and fulfillment - he gave to me a joy inexpressible, if I can put it that way."

Today, he is still a scientist who also finds time for a global ministry in Bible-based teaching, seeing lives changed and healed.

He has spoken on every continent of the world. His Christian books include the best-selling, Foolish to be Wise, and A Brief History of Eternity, in response to Professor Stephen Hawking's famous book, A Brief History of Time.

By **Mike Wiltshire**

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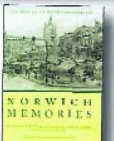
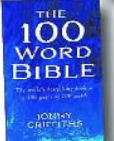
In this unique presentation of the best selling book of all time, local author Jonny Griffiths has paraphrased each of the one hundred books of the Bible in exactly one hundred words.

With Love Papa by Bear Grylls

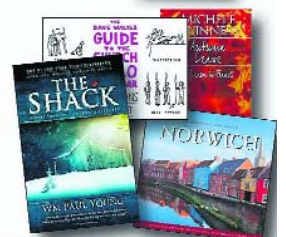
This book is a collection of original, wise and endearing sentiments by Christian TV personality Bear Grylls addressed to his two sons.

Norwich Memories collected by the Norwich Living History Group

Reflections of the people of Norwich on childhood, working life and living in the city.



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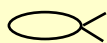
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YMCA NORFOLK

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Supported Lodgings Scheme

We are looking for households who are sympathetic to the aims and purposes of YMCA Norfolk, these can be owner occupied, council tenancy or privately rented properties. You must be prepared to offer a temporary home to a young person.

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

If you would like to find out more, please contact **Beccy Sheriteh, YMCA Norfolk, Supported Lodging Support/Development Worker on 07766 112611 alternatively email: beccysheriteh@ymca-norfolk.org.uk**

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Chelsea Evans: helping hand from YMCA.

YMCA rescues Chelsea from Norwich streets

Earlier this year, Chelsea Evans, 19, spent three "horrible" nights living rough on the streets of Norwich with her then boyfriend, before being taken in at the YMCA's £2.9m Norwich Central in All Saints Green.

The youngster from Lakenham, who left school at 15, found herself homeless in January this year and, with nowhere else to turn to, resorted to sleeping rough outside the back of the Iceland store in the city centre.

Chelsea's stay on the streets might have been longer had it not been for the intervention of the team at Norwich's YMCA, which has been instrumental in helping the teen get her life back on track.

Chelsea decided to tell her story – not only to warn others about the perils of life on the street, but to give others in a similar position hope that there is help out there.

"I met my boyfriend and was living at home at the time," she said. "He was homeless and had been for ages. We went to stay at my nan's, but she couldn't put us up anymore and we then stayed at my mum's for a few nights, but she couldn't have us because we were arguing."

Chelsea, originally from Lakenham, made the decision to leave home.

"We were sofa surfing with friends, but couldn't stay there any longer," said the former Hewett School pupil, who then sought help from Norwich City Council.

But Chelsea, who had part-time work as a cleaner at Notre Dame High School, said that they were told not much could be done for

A Norwich teenager has told the Norwich Evening News of her horror living on the streets and how she has been saved from a life of homelessness by YMCA Norfolk, which has since helped her turn her life around, as Peter Walsh reports.

them as they had intentionally made themselves homeless and because at 19 and 20 years old respectively they were not considered "vulnerable".

"We then went to stay behind Iceland for a few nights," she said. "We stayed behind there for three nights. It was really cold. Every noise I heard I was really jumpy. It was really frightening; really scary. Every night we went back there our sleeping bags had been thrown in the bins."

Chelsea said the couple went to the soup kitchen run by the Salvation Army at 10pm every night to get some much-needed food as they prepared for another long night in the cold and wintery conditions.

"It was sleeting and slushy," said Chelsea who, after three nights on the street, approached the council again before being thrown a lifeline by YMCA at the All Saints Green site, which opened in January.

It serves the accommodation needs of 16 to 25 year olds, both male and female, from across the county and has 34 en-suite bedrooms and support facilities,

including a restaurant, communal lounges, and a fitness area.

"They got us in here," she said. "It's been really good; they've helped me sort out all my problems. They've taken me on and helped me with everything. It's not just a room; they've been doing a lot of other stuff and I'm going back to college to do my GCSEs and they're helping me with that. Hopefully I should be getting my own flat. It's something I never imagined when I was on the streets."

Chelsea, who said she would like to work with children with Down's Syndrome, added: "I feel sorry for people on the streets now – I wouldn't want to be in that situation again," she said. "I feel I would be ready to go out and be by myself. I would recommend the YMCA to anyone."

Tim Sweeting, chief executive officer of YMCA Norfolk, said he hoped Chelsea's story would serve as a warning to other youngsters.

"Chelsea's story shows how easy it is for young people to become homeless and the great risks that exist for them when they do," he said.

"The YMCA plays a vital role, in partnership with other agencies, by responding in times of crisis such as this. Housing is the most obvious element of this response, but our mission is wider than this. We aim to bring hope and transformation through empowering young people like Chelsea to make positive choices for their future."

www.ymca-norfolk.org.uk
 Article and picture courtesy of www.eveningnews24.co.uk



YMCA NORFOLK

Night Stop Plus Scheme

A new scheme to provide emergency short-term accommodation to homeless young people launched by YMCA Norfolk.

The Nightstop Plus scheme aims to provide up to three nights' emergency accommodation in volunteers' homes for young people between the ages of 16 and 24.

The priority group is 16 to 17 year olds who have nowhere to go. They may have fallen out with their parents for one reason or another.

Nightstop Plus is an immediate solution for a short-term problem and aims to prevent the youngsters from getting sucked into the institutional homeless system. It also offers a breathing space for young people who often have immediate needs.

YMCA Norfolk are looking for volunteers in your area, therefore, if you wish to be part of a unique team of YMCA Norfolk volunteers, or you want to find out more about Nightstop Plus, please contact Mark Ash on 07894 935778 alternatively email: markash@ymca-norfolk.org.uk

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