

SPRING 2020

IGNITE

SPARKING PASSION FOR THE GOSPEL
ACROSS THE UK

Photo by Mike Hall



FINDING JESUS ON THE HIGH SEAS

FROM DESPAIR TO HOPE,
SEAFARER'S LIFE IS TRANSFORMED



ALSO COUNTIES FAMILY DAY 2020 - CITY-WIDE MISSIONS
WHY I VOLUNTEER - A LOOK BACK AT TES

WELCOME TO IGNITE

2020 is a year of increasing commitment to proclamation evangelism. The partnership of evangelistic ministries and local churches under the banner 'Advance 2020' is aimed at encouraging the church in our nation to plan and create opportunities where direct Gospel preaching may reap where so much has been sown.

Whilst there is a greater focus on friendship evangelism in our nation, there is still the need for the essential element of preaching the Good News!

Counties remains committed to both of these elements, as necessary ingredients in bringing people into a relationship with Christ and seeing them grow as disciples. In Ignite, you will read of Dustin Mathews on page 16 who, through meeting Steve Loader on board a ship in Bristol, has grown as a disciple of Jesus. Neighbourhood Chaplains continues to connect with lost and lonely people, and it is great to see how one City Council is responding to this work.

Finally, Roger Chilvers, a Counties evangelist with long associations with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, reflects in our feature article on page 19, on why he believes in the importance of a continuing commitment to proclamation Gospel events in the life of the British Church.

May God bring fruit in our nation in 2020.

Martin Erwin,
CEO Counties



Counties exists to make Jesus known across the UK through our evangelists, exhibitions and resources, in biblically faithful and culturally relevant ways.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

PUPPET TWIST MAKES HIS TV DEBUT

A series of short children's shows, aimed at sharing the Gospel with children, are being aired on a national TV network.

Counties evangelist Paul Willmott, along with his puppet Twist, were invited to record 22 short episodes for the Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN).

Paul explained: *"I started a YouTube channel where Twist the puppet asks questions about God and faith. The aim is to help families to talk about faith at home. TBN got in touch with me to say they loved the content and the concept, and would I like to film a whole series at their studios? Of course, I jumped at the chance!"*

Paul re-wrote some of the scripts and then spent two days filming with the TV crew. The two-minute shows explore themes such as prayer, the Holy Spirit and God's grace.

Paul added:

"For me it was a childhood dream to be involved in making a TV show – this has the potential to reach millions of children with the Gospel."

You can watch the shows on Freeview channel 65 or Sky 582 on Wednesdays at 4.50pm and Saturday mornings until mid-May. Find out more about Paul's work: www.twistonline.co.uk



BE PART OF THE GANG

Do you need a resource to help young people find out more about Jesus following a school visit or concert? Then consider giving the new Faith Gang course a go!

It's been launched by Counties Greater Manchester evangelists Tim and Charissa Cooke and is aimed at young people who want to know more about the Christian faith.



Local churches or youth leaders can run the six-week course, covering the basics of Christianity, and encouraging them to make a decision for Jesus. Or young people can do the course themselves and watch a series of short online films.

Find out more: <https://makejesusknown.com/faith-gang>

REACH OUT TO YOUR NON-CHRISTIAN FRIENDS THIS SUMMER

Save the date for Counties next Family Day – Saturday 27 June!

The event promises to be even better than last year's successful Family Day and is aimed at a wider non-Christian audience with a Gospel element – so make sure you bring along friends and family.

To be held at the Tom Roberts Adventure Centre in Newent, Gloucestershire, the event will feature rolling workshops on issues such as families in the digital age and testimonies, as well as lots of fun activities including boating, archery and bouncy castles.

Overnight accommodation will also be offered. For more details contact Counties on **01373 823013** or email office@countiesuk.org



PIONEERING EVANGELISM FOR OVER 150 YEARS

The Evangelization Society (TES), which has supported hundreds of pioneering evangelism projects over the last century, formally closes this year and will be replaced by the new Counties Pioneer Fund. Ignite takes a look back at the grant-making body:

TES was formed in 1864 to serve the UK as a major evangelistic organisation seeking to see men, women and children brought into the Kingdom of God. Between 1870-2004 over 1400 people served as evangelists.

Amongst its founders were Lord Radstock and the renowned Scottish preacher, Brownlow North. TES had the personal support of the American evangelist and publisher D.L. Moody, and was able to support the launch of the Salvation Army (via William Booth) and the Church Army (via Wilson Carlisle).

One of the most significant leaders during the 1960s & 1970s was an ex-



naval Captain named Marshall Shallis. Ron Spillards became Director of Evangelism in 1990 and was subsequently National Director until June 2001.

During its ministry, TES served the church by providing evangelists and resources to help bring people to Christ

and make disciples. In 2004, with funds greatly reduced, the decision was made to begin to operate as a grant-making trust, supporting itinerant evangelists and those involved in evangelism, particularly of a pioneer nature.

In the years that followed, funds were 'boosted' by legacy income which meant that, from 2004-2019,

"We're excited at this development, as we can continue to support creative and innovative evangelistic UK projects. These grants will be for evangelists and those involved in evangelism, particularly of a pioneer nature, enabling and encouraging 'Making Jesus known across the UK!'"

In 2013, with funds once again reduced, Counties was asked to assist by taking over the administration of TES.

Jonathan Brooks-Martin, Counties Operations Manager, said: "Last year the trustees of TES investigated the most efficient way to manage the remaining funds, and after taking advice, it was agreed that TES should fully merge with Counties."

For more details, visit: www.countiesuk.org/about-us/the-evangelization-society

TES was able to provide £378,000 to evangelistic projects. During this time, 106 organisations have been supported, including itinerant evangelists, Christian ministries, youth work, prison ministries, children's ministries, media outreach, city-wide missions, and many, many more.



HOW TES FUNDS ARE HELPING TODAY



School children in South Wales will get to hear about the Bible, thanks in part to a grant from TES. A £1000 grant was given to help fund a **touring schools' Bible experience** in the area.



Counties evangelist Paul Willmott is launching a new **website** to host Christian resources for parents, teachers and children's workers. The website will feature his short videos with his puppet Twist and provide worksheets to help children understand the Christian faith. TES supported a grant of £1800 to fund the website design and hosting.



Youth for Christ Swadlincote has received funding to help its young members get one-to-one support from the charity Transforming Lives for Good (TLG). TES has given £450 towards the cost of an annual subscription to TLG and workbooks for the young people.



Church plant **Meare Community Church** has been given £1500 to buy a new PA system for its building. The church has been re-planted through Counties Planting Network and is being updated to welcome more people from its community.



TES HELPS SUPPORT ONE MAN'S NATIVITY

One man's mission to share the story of Jesus at Christmas - re-told by just himself through spoken word, drama and song – was a big hit.

Funded in part by a £300 TES grant, One Man's Nativity reached more than 1500 people in schools, shopping centres, churches and coffee shops in the Southampton area.

The man behind the idea, Neil Maddock, played the parts of Gabriel,

Zechariah, Joseph, Caesar, a Wise Man and all held together by a narrator character.

He said: "The money given by TES was used for purchasing some of the costume and props that helped make the performances visually interesting and engaging. Some of the money also went towards the travel expenses as I drove to each performance, covering many miles during the month.

"The money given enabled me to press on with creatively communicating the Christmas story in this way and allowed me to pursue excellence in what I believe God had asked me to do, rather than settle for a lower quality production. I trust that God will use the work that has been done, to bring people into a closer relationship with himself and that many people have been reminded of God's amazing gift to us at Christmas."

FORMER DRUG ADDICT FINDS FREEDOM THROUGH CHRIST

Ian Featherstone's life was completely transformed when he became a Christian. The father of one, who battled with drugs and alcohol problems for many years, was set free from his addictions when he came to faith and now, two years later, he is doing a Spurgeon's theological course and preaching in local churches.

Here, he explains to Ignite his remarkable story:

"I am one of six children and most of my childhood memories are of good times with my brothers and sisters and a loving Mum and Dad. I was very obsessive as a child, if I had an interest, I would put everything into it and would want to know everything about it. I started drinking from a very early age and at 13 I started smoking cannabis with my friends at school.

This soon became my obsession and I was getting stoned all day every day and drinking in the park with my friends at weekends. I honestly thought life was just for getting high and having fun. I soon became addicted.

My life at that time consisted of getting in debt, losing jobs, having health problems, running away to foreign countries to try and sort myself out. I was just stuck in addiction.

I began a constant battle with myself - trying to get better and relapsing. I tried so many different avenues to get well: Cognitive behavioural therapy; counselling; medication; exercise; 12 step meetings; I even tried running away to New Zealand, but the problem was that I took my problems with me.

In July 2017 I was funded to go to rehab and relocated to Bury St Edmunds. I put in so much effort and stayed clean and they even made me a senior peer. I really thought I had it this time and I had been set free but not long after moving, I relapsed again.

I can't describe the feelings of failure, shame and hopelessness that consumed my body. I really had nowhere else to turn. At around this time, God had been at work in my life. My key-worker in rehab was a Christian and I built a really solid relationship with him. He had something about him that I hadn't experienced before with a therapist and

I put 100 percent trust in him.

We arranged that when I left rehab, I would attend a course on Understanding Yourself at his local church in Halesworth. I went along and really enjoyed the course and I attended the church service on the Sunday, where I first heard about Victor Jack who was from another church.

I met with Victor and started attending the Alpha course with his son, Graham. As soon as I started to listen, I was fascinated at what I was hearing. I have always felt a deep emptiness inside and often wondered what was the point of life, but what I was hearing seemed to answer all those questions.

I realised that a lot of my twelve-step literature had come from Christianity and everything was pointing to God. I read a lot of evidence for Christ and I soon came to the conclusion that it had to be true - Jesus was the son of God.

When I relapsed, I knew that the only way to fill that void inside was to fill it with God and the Holy Spirit, otherwise I would continue to use drugs and perish. I read a verse from the Bible that made up my mind to become a Christian. Jesus said, 'Come to me all you who are weary



and burdened and I will give you rest'. I knew this was what I had been searching for. So, I committed my life to God in prayer with the support of others at the Westley Community Church.

Recently God has opened up some opportunities for me to serve Him and others. I have been able to help out on the local estate with people in need, I am also training to join a team which goes into Whitemoor Prison and I'm studying theology.

I love my new Christian family and I'm truly grateful to God that I have begun to experience freedom through Christ.

There is one verse in the Bible that sums up what has happened to me. 'When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun.' 2 Corinthians 5.17 (Living Bible)''

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE M4 TRAINING PROGRAMME'S FOUNDER

MEET ØIVIND AUGLAND - THE FOUNDER OF THE SUCCESSFUL EUROPEAN TRAINING PROGRAMME M4, WHICH COUNTIES HAS BROUGHT TO THE UK

Øivind grew up in Kristiansand, a city in the south of Norway, and became a Christian in an Evangelical Lutheran Free Church which was planted just 100 metres from his home. Later he became a pastor and church planter in that same church. Ignite meets him to find out more about M4 and how it can help churches in the UK.

When did your interest in church planting begin?

The church I came to faith in was a church plant. That denomination had



six church plants in a city of 100,000 people. It was a part of the DNA to plant churches and I got it. I was also at a church planting conference in Europe in 1991 and what I heard set me on fire for the task of winning people through planting new churches. I planted our first church when I was 24 years old, and newly married.

Can you explain how M4 started?

M4 came out of an inter-denominational environment among the churches in Norway that has been

growing over the last 30 years. We were church planting leaders from many denominations who together were asking the same questions: 'How can we train not only the church planter but the whole team? How can we create a training and coaching process, when they are actually planting a church?' These questions, in this environment, led to the development of M4.

How does M4 work?

M4 is a training process that helps the church planters and their team to move from where they are, to where God wants them to be (the vision God has put in the leader's heart). It is developed around the church planting ABC:

- **Assessment:** Finding the right planter and preparing them.
- **Basic training:** A process where all church planting teams come together in a learning community and work as a team to plan the future.
- **Coaching:** Ongoing follow up with the church planter and the team, with a skilled coach during the first three or four years of the planting process.

What does the name mean?

When we first developed M4 we said: 'Everybody can be a part of planting a new church, but not everybody is a church planter.' If everybody can be a part of a church plant, then we connect it to the Great Commission which is the responsibility for every Christian. We used the Great Commission in Matthew 28 as a framework for the training around M4.



**TOGETHER WE CAN
ACHIEVE MORE.
WE SENSE THIS IS
ALSO THE HEART
OF COUNTIES AND
FEEL PRIVILEGED
TO JOURNEY WITH
COUNTIES INTO THE
NEXT 10 YEARS OF
DEVELOPING M4 IN
THE UK AND EUROPE.**

-
- **Master:** "I have been given all power in heaven and earth."
 - **Mission:** "Go therefore..."
 - **Multiplication:** "Make disciples of all nations, teaching and baptising."
 - **Movement:** "I'm with you all the days to the end of the earth."
-

Why did you choose Counties to bring the programme to the UK?

M4 only moves to new nations through relationships and people asking us to serve together with them. M4 is a relationship-based network in Europe. We met with some of the leaders of Counties and they invited us to serve together. We want to build long term commitment to relationship and friendship.

Why should church leaders go through the M4 training programme?

M4 is not just for church leaders. M4 is designed to help church planters and their teams to develop in the start-up phase of the church planting process, the first three to four years of planting a new church. They will be guided through the challenges and difficulties that all church planters experience, helped by a coach to keep focused and reduce 'mission drift' and by a learning community to implement the right steps at the right time. It will help them to succeed in the church plant and God's Mission in the place He has called them. M4 addresses all the questions that are relevant for a church planter in planting a new church.

Can you share some stories of churches who have been transformed or flourished after their leaders went through the M4 training programme.

In the last eight years, around 400 churches have been through M4 in 14 different European nations from Russia to Spain, from Norway to Romania. Some now have 40 people, some are 150-strong, it depends on the culture and context. In Czechia, 38 new churches have been planted in the last six years after starting M4. Some of them are already reproducing new churches.



400
CHURCHES
IN
14
EUROPEAN
NATIONS

I BELIEVE WE ARE IN A PRE-CHRISTIAN TIME WHERE GOD IS SHAPING HIS CHURCH FOR A NEW TIME FOR EUROPE

How can this be replicated in the UK?

It all depends on leadership. We believe that the leadership in Counties has a vision for serving and helping local churches to become successful in their process of planting new churches. M4 is only a tool and the quality of the tool is always dependent on the leaders using the tool. We are confident that the leaders in Counties can replicate and start M4 in different regions of the UK and come alongside churches, leaders and ministries to see the Kingdom expanded through church planting in their local context. This is what we pray and hope for.

Do you see the UK Christian scene as similar to the rest of Europe?

I think some of the issues all churches are facing is the lack of believing in the power of the Gospel and practicing it. We need a renewal of understanding the Gospel and the courage to share it. This is the heart of Counties and I believe this organisation has a huge role to play in the future.

I believe that the UK is developing a missionary force that will, in the coming years, have a huge influence in Europe. You will send missionary and church planters all around Europe in a more extended way than you do today. In some European nations there are only 0.2 to 0.5 per cent evangelical Christians. The the UK is in a different position and I believe we are in a pre-Christian time where God is shaping His church for a new time for Europe.



GOD TRANSFORMS SAILOR'S LIFE

“JESUS HAS GIVEN ME MY LIFE
BACK AND SO MUCH MORE”

Seafarer Dustin Mathews has a lot to be thankful for – he met and married his wife Melissa last May, and earlier this year the couple celebrated the birth of their baby son Elijah.

But only a few years ago, Dustin's life had reached such a low point because of dire working conditions on-board the ship he was on.

Thanks to the prayers from his family, his life reached a turning point when he met Counties evangelist and sea chaplain Steve Loader at Bristol docks,

who, with the help of others, helped Dustin get his life back on track.

Dustin said: “The Lord has moved mountains in my life, I wouldn't be here today without Him. I thought I had lost everything and could see no way forward, but my life has now changed so much!”



Originally from Goa, India, Dustin moved to the UK when he was 25 to be closer to his Mum and sister who lived in London. He looked for a job for almost five months and was delighted when he was offered the role of Deck Officer on-board a Turkish cargo ship carrying empty containers travelling between Cardiff, Bristol and Belfast.

Dustin explained: "I grew up in India in a Catholic environment, but I wasn't the ideal Christian, living in sin and felt quite far away from God. When I moved to the UK, my mum took me to Holy Trinity Brompton Church in London and I fell on my knees, prayed and accepted Jesus as my Saviour.

"Not long after this I was offered the ship job, but this turned out to be my worst nightmare. From day one they never paid my salary - my employers said if I complained about my circumstances, they would sack me, and I would not get my sea time experience. They never sent me out on shore leave, I never got any money to call my family and I kept questioning why this was happening to me. But my faith in the Lord Jesus was strong and I kept going.

"I was living without any proper food or clean water and I felt like I was in a prison, but with no proper utilities.

I was malnourished, and I desperately wanted to leave the ship - but the captain said I would get a bad record if I left and wouldn't get a job in the UK. I kept praying for a miracle to happen and for things to change."

Unbeknown to Dustin, his Mum and her church family were all praying for him and for a breakthrough. Dustin continued: "Just as I was at the end of my patience, I met Counties evangelist and sea chaplain Steve Loader whilst the ship was docked in Avonmouth, near Bristol.

"I talked to Steve about my living conditions and how I was missing my home and family. He prayed with me and as he left, he said he would do his best to sort my situation out. Not long after this, the captain became aware of what was happening and locked me in my cabin, with a man outside the cabin keeping guard on me.

"I prayed to the Lord and asked for a sign of hope, as I was again at breaking point. Just at that moment I heard Steve was on his way with an inspector. He got me off the ship and managed to get all my wages owed to me. I am so grateful for Stephen and how God used him in my situation, he will be my friend for the rest of my life."

After leaving the cargo ship, Dustin moved to Portsmouth to train to be a First Officer and it was there he met his future Christian wife, Melissa. They got married last year and welcomed baby



Counties evangelist Steve Loader with Melissa and Dustin on their wedding day

Elijah in January.

"I could never have imagined when I was living on that ship in such awful conditions, that I would be living in a nice house, with a lovely wife and a beautiful baby son. I can't be any happier. Jesus has given me my life back and so much more," said Dustin.

Counties evangelist Steve Loader said: "When I first met Dustin he had not been paid for many months and his

working conditions were awful. With the help of others, I got him off his ship and he was paid all the wages that were owed to him. I remained in touch and was delighted to attend his wedding. It's wonderful to see that Dustin is born again and his life has drastically changed for the better! I told Dustin that God has been good to him, to which he replied: 'Yes, he certainly has!'"

**"THE LORD HAS MOVED
MOUNTAINS IN MY LIFE"**

TIME TO SPEAK OUT!

BY COUNTIES SENIOR EVANGELIST ROGER CHILVERS



'No greater privilege – No higher calling', must be the Church's and believer's response to our calling. What greater privilege could be imagined than meeting with God in worship knowing that Jesus promised, 'where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.' (Matthew 18:20 NLT)? And what higher calling could there be than inviting others to, **'Be reconciled to God', as 'we are Christ's ambassadors; God is making his appeal through us'** (2 Corinthians 5:20 NLT)? They are the supreme reasons why we are here.

It is, then, the absolute duty of the church to make its best and highest investment in time, money and manpower, to facilitate worship and evangelism.

When I was asked to write this article, it was to specifically to explore whether large-scale evangelistic events are still relevant. In doing that, we should firstly remember that the measure of evangelistic effectiveness is communication, not merely visible fruit. Evangelism takes place when the message is communicated. Sadly, it may even be insincere, as Paul implies in Philippians 1:18, *'in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice.'* (ESV)

However, it would be foolish to disregard the methods. We do want methods that honour Christ and produce fruit.

So, evangelism centres in the Gospel message itself. John Piper explains, *'Our mission isn't just to do good deeds but to proclaim. We can't witness effectively if we expect others to simply observe our lives and notice Jesus. They will only see Jesus in us when they hear about Jesus from us. There is no Gospel without words. No words – no Gospel.'* Peter reminds us, *'You [are] born again ... through the living and abiding word of God'* (1 Peter 1:23 ESV). Of course, friendship opens the door to the heart, so does music, but still the message

must be communicated. No one is converted through a chord progression, a moving melody or a brilliant riff. And no one comes to Christ by absorbing Him from Christians by osmosis!

In 2020 a wide range of evangelistic initiatives are planned across the UK. Advance 2020, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and many other evangelistic agencies, feel God has placed a renewed burden for evangelism on their heart for 2020. Whether large-scale or small, all are equally important.

So, 'Is the day of big-platform events past?' And if not, what are its benefits?' Significantly, in our culture, whether sport, entertainment, or music, no one suggests that large-scale events are ineffective – quite the opposite. So why might large-scale evangelism still be an effective approach?

Big event evangelism helps restore evangelism to the local church agenda.

Many churches are ambivalent about evangelism. They are fearful. Sadly, some are more concerned about sounding offensive than the lostness of the lost. The big event enables them to come out into the open culturally.

Big event evangelism helps to get the Gospel into the secular consciousness.

Most people outside the church have no understanding of the Gospel. Their prejudices are based upon false insights. The clear proclamation event often stimulates open discussion, not just about 'the church' but about the message preached.

In big event evangelism anonymity and involvement combine.

Some think secular man is looking for friendship to help him find truth. This is usually far from reality. Most are running from Him. Even in Paul's day, he pointed out that, *'there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God.'* (Romans 3:11 NIV). However, people are curious. For these, Tim Keller's words are relevant: *'Seekers often appreciate being able to come into a large gathering where they can initially remain anonymous and no pressure is placed upon them to join anything.'* Large scale events allow anonymity in a way that small groups cannot. Recently, Kevin Perry, the main training teacher for the very large Life Church said similarly,

'Churches don't really experience explosive growth until it is possible for people to come and be anonymous.'

Large scale events provide anonymity with space to think.

Big event evangelism opens the doors to significant evangelistic conversation.

When a wide area event takes place, media, publicity and advertising make it easy to invite and engage people in conversation. Even a simple, 'What is going on in that place?' is an open door for conversation!

Big event evangelism brings churches together.

When churches come together it is good for the church itself to recognise in practice that though we may not agree on everything, there is only one church of Jesus Christ. Additionally, it is good for the world to see that in the heart of the message there is a high degree of unity.



Big event evangelism brings a critical mass of newcomers into the church.

Giving appropriate care to one or two newcomers with little understanding is always a challenge. They often feel insecure and ignorant. But the large-scale event can bring together a group of those who have a similar experience, so they can explore without embarrassment what it means to be and grow as a Christian.

So, as we march into a period of evangelism across the UK, we can get involved without fear, knowing that whatever the size of the group the Gospel will be preached and for this we may rejoice. We must pray for our nation and the scores of evangelistic initiatives that are being taken and those whose task it is to preach, to the glory of God. And who knows what the eternal outcome will be by the end of the year? Believe it or not, the church is already growing in some parts of the

UK that have not seen growth since after the first world war. Let's pray that will be seen everywhere.



NEIGHBOURHOOD CHAPLAINS – IT’S NOT JUST DOOR TO DOOR!

COUNTIES’ POPULAR SCHEME, WHICH AIMS TO BRING THE LOVE OF JESUS TO THE LOST AND LONELY IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES, IS GAINING MOMENTUM IN TOWNS AND CITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

Neighbourhood Chaplains is working in co-operation with Herefordshire Council to offer support to local people who are referred from the council’s Community Brokers scheme.

Steve Sully from Challenge Community Church in Hereford said: “We were

approached by the Council, as they had identified loneliness as a major issue in the area. Our Neighbourhood Chaplains team were perfectly positioned to meet that need and the church is now receiving referrals regularly.

“For some it’s just a visit and a chat, for

others, it's help with filling in forms or getting shopping. All volunteers have freedom of expression of their faith, so long as conversations are focused on meeting the needs of the neighbour.

"We believe this significant breakthrough is the result of many months of prayer with church leaders getting together across the city to pray in unity for evangelism."

A listening table

The owner of a coffee shop in the Mumbles often found herself serving elderly people who would spend hours in her café as they had nowhere else to go. She approached a Neighbourhood Chaplains team and as a result a 'Listening Table' was set up, where a Neighbourhood Chaplain sits and talks over coffee once a week to those who feel lonely.

Counties associate evangelist Steve Treseder helps to run the local Neighbourhood Chaplains team. He said: "Many of the folk we have met are elderly and lonely. I met with one gentleman who is a full-time carer for his

wife, who has dementia, and who is struggling to cope. He also has memory difficulties and mobility problems. Another regular is a lady who is dropped off to the cafe by her family in the morning and is there all day, simply because she has nowhere else to go.

"We are still in the early stages with this, but we are becoming known and friendships are growing along with trust. It's an affluent area with a lot of professional people living here or retired, but we see a deep need in peoples' hearts for friendship, to know there is someone who cares."

Find out more about Neighbourhood Chaplains and how you can bring the scheme to your area: contact Jenny Rossiter, Neighbourhood Chaplains Coordinator, on **01373 823013** or email resources@countiesuk.org



WHY I VOLUNTEER WITH THE LIFE EXHIBITION

BY JOHN LOESCHER

Retired fleet manager John Loescher has been faithfully volunteering with Counties schools resource, the Life exhibition, for the last eight years – clocking up an impressive 35,000 miles whilst driving the resource around the country and visiting over 130 venues. Here he explains why he volunteers and what he likes about the popular exhibition:

Rachael and I were married in our early 20's, and set up home in Stratford-upon-Avon, where our son Neil was born. My career was in the Motor

Industry working for a large vehicle manufacturer, then moving into Fleet Management where I became responsible for managing a fleet of over 2,500 vehicles.

I thoroughly enjoyed my job but with it came pressures that prompted me to feel that I wanted to do something more worthwhile with my life, something that had eternal value. After much prayer and seeking God's will for our lives, at the age of 51, Rachael and I moved down to Somerset to open a Christian Bookshop. Just two years later I was made redundant and Rachael and I were able to work together in establishing the bookshop, which at the end of eight years, we handed over as a viable business to another couple. Praise the LORD, the shop is still serving the community in Minehead today, some 21 years on!



We moved to Trowbridge in 2010 to be near our son, his wife and their three children who had recently moved from London to live in Bradford-on-Avon. It was in July 2011 that I volunteered to assist in the setting up of the Life exhibition when it came to Trowbridge.

Whilst helping unload the lorry I offered myself to drive the lorry around the country and help set up the exhibition at each venue.

Martin Buckley, who at that time was the Life exhibition Coordinator asked me if I had seen the advert that had gone out, as they were currently advertising for such a person. I believe that this was not just a coincidence, but a God incidence!

I have now been helping with the Life exhibition for well over eight years. At each venue we go to, it thrills me to know that many hundreds of year 5 and 6 school children, together with their teachers, are being impacted by the message of Jesus being delivered in such a relevant way for today's generation.

In setting up I get to meet lots of people from different cultures, backgrounds and walks of life, who all have a story to tell and who are passionate about passing on the Good News to the next generation. It reminds me of a time nearly 50 years ago when Rachael and



I attended a Dick Saunders 'Way to Life' Crusade, realising probably for the first time that church is not just the people we meet with Sunday by Sunday, but it encompasses a vast group of people from all different backgrounds and cultures.

It is a privilege to have the opportunity to be part of the work of Counties in my retirement years. I heard a stirring and challenging sermon only just recently in which we were asked to consider how we spend our later years, or are we just coasting till the end of our days?

Kevin Baldwin, the Life exhibition Coordinator, commented: "John is a great asset to Counties, bringing his wealth of knowledge when transporting Life around the country. His patience is second to none, especially when trains are cancelled coming home from venues. I hope I have his energy when I am his age!"

JUST A MINUTE

WITH BEVERLEY BEDFORD

Counties North Devon evangelist has recently been appointed as Training Officer. Ignite meets Beverley to find out more.

Tell us about your new role:

As Counties Training Officer I oversee development and delivery of Counties training including One2lead, the Evangelist Training Programme, Neighbourhood Chaplains, TEAM and other ongoing projects. I took the role with an increasing sense of God's call to invest in the training of others, having experience in evangelism, mission, discipleship, church leadership and mentoring.

How did you become a Christian?

I became a Christian in my beloved Northern Ireland at the age of 20. I had returned home to attend my grandmother's funeral. The following day I had an encounter with an enthusiastic Christian who gave me a Gospel tract and invited me to a church meeting. I would never have attended, but that day I heard God speak directly to me, "Is there any word from the Lord?" I accepted the invitation with an increased desire to know more about this voice in my head. The preacher got up and looking at me directly and intently said, "Is there any word from the Lord? There is". God revealed himself to me in the person of His Son and filled my gaze with the wonder of His cross. I was totally captivated with the man of Calvary and that night fully surrendered to a relationship with Him and committed my life to follow and serve Him completely.



What aspects of ministry excite you?

I am passionate about mission and serving in community outreach. I am involved in recruiting, training and supporting volunteers through the Neighbourhood Chaplains initiative working as a practitioner and training leader. I also enjoy a preaching ministry as an itinerant evangelist. I particularly enjoy mentoring on a one to one basis and find this a fruitful way to encourage and challenge myself and others.

What's your favourite Bible verse?

This is so hard to answer, I have so many but on my top ten list is Titus 2 v 11-15. I have memorised it as a statement of belief. It reminds me that Grace redeems, restores and rewards because the best is yet to come.

What's your favourite worship song?

The 'Wonder of the Cross' by Vicky Beeching. *'May I never lose the wonder, the wonder of the cross. May I see it like the first time, standing as a sinner lost. Undone by mercy and left speechless, watching wide eyed at the cost. May I never lose the wonder, the wonder of the cross'*. How easily we forget the importance of the centrality of the cross in all we do and say. I never want to forget that Jesus paid it all and all to Him I owe.

What's it like being part of Counties?

I have always wanted to be part of a community that declare with confidence, grace, humility and determination the 'Good News' of the Gospel.

YOUR LOCAL EVANGELISTS

NORTH OF ENGLAND

Tim & Charissa Cooke
Julian & Ella Gutteridge
Martin & Angie Korchinsky
Lee & Lesley Marshland (ETP)
Matt & Nicola Rich
Rob & Sarah Watson
Phyllis Jenkins (Senior)

MIDLANDS

David & Lindsey Brown
Ivor & Angela Cooper
Tim & Katrina Cracknell
Craig & Georgie Dowling
Andy & Isobel Hodson
Paul & Vanessa Willmott
Roger & Hazel Chilvers (Seniors)
Ruby Powell (Senior)
Bob & Rita Telford (Seniors)

SOUTH EAST

Charles & Elizabeth Addoco
Shaun & Livi Almond (ETP)
Will & Lynne Andrews
Tim & Joy Ayrton
Mark & Amanda Bingham (ETP)
John Hardwick
Kim & Jo Hobbs
Tony & Ruth Hood
Colin & Linda Johnson
Caleb & Adanesh Mathewos
Andrew & Rachel Mugford
Tom & Madelene Bathgate (Seniors)

Lionel Clargo (Senior)
Ray & Carol Dadswell (Seniors)
Wendy Iliffe (Senior)
Victor Jack (Senior)
Andy & Miriam Jelfs (Seniors)
John & Jane Martin (Seniors)
Betty Saunders (Senior)
Gladys Whittern (Senior)

SOUTH WEST

Jacque & Tim Bodman (ETP)
Mike & Su Stange
David & Katie Symons
Steve Ellacott (AE)
Jean Campbell (Senior)

SOUTH CENTRAL

Jonathan & Heather Brain
Jamie Broadey (ETP)
Ian & Sally Carr
Gordon & Penny Curley
Steve & Dawn Laoder
Stephen & Jean Gillham (Seniors)
Hettie Hall (Senior)

WALES

Clive & Fiona Cornish
Paul & Laura Davies
Phil & Sheila Davies
Janet Hawking (AE)
Mike & Jan Thomas (AE)
Steve & Gwyn Treseder (AE)
Grace Anderson (Senior)

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MY DETAILS

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other

Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

Your details will be kept on our database and may be shared with a local Counties Evangelist, but with no other persons or organisations.

- Please remove me from your mailing list

MY GIFT

I would like to partner with Counties. Please find enclosed my/our gift of

£

(please make cheques payable to Counties)

To give online by debit or credit card visit countiesuk.org

Gift Aid

- This is a Gift-Aid donation (We will send you a gift-aid declaration, if you have not already completed one).
- I would like to set up a regular standing order.

Your feedback is always appreciated.

THANK YOU

AE – Associate Evangelist
ETP – Evangelists' Training Programme

Bring your family and friends to

COUNTIES FAMILY DAY

Saturday 27 June

At the Tom Roberts Adventure Centre
Newent, Gloucestershire, GL18 1HE

- Non-Christian friendly workshops on topical issues
- Family activities including boating, archery, pedal go-karts, face painting and bouncy castle
- Live music
- Children & Youth programme
- Camping available (small charge)
- Plus much more!



For more details contact
Counties on **01373 823013** or
email office@countiesuk.org

