



In House

Thornbury Baptist Church

January/
February 2010

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Alpha

There will be a
new Alpha
course starting
in January.

Date to be con-
firmed.

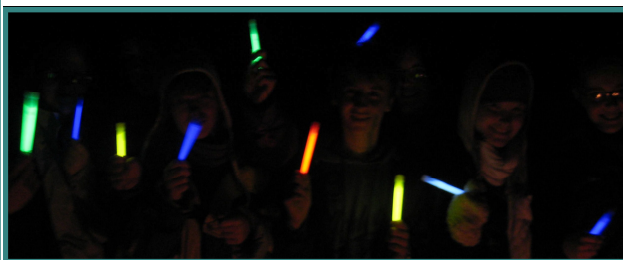
Slum Survivor

Between the 23rd and the 25th October 2009, twelve people from TBC - Helen, Bethan, Rhi, Sarah, Emma, Naomi, Will G, Will J, Millie, Jo, Natalie and I - took part in Slum Survivor.

Slum Survivor is a national event that stemmed from Soul Survivor. It involves lots of youth groups all over the country, and the point of it is it to raise awareness and funds for those who live in slums for a lifetime. Young people build and live in slums for a weekend, with

two meals of rice and lentils (and curry powder) a day, doing challenges to win luxuries. We could wear one pair of socks, one pair of trousers, a t shirt, a jumper, a coat, hat, gloves, scarf and shoes, along with a sleeping bag and a toothbrush. From winning challenges, which ranged from making a path, to making toys, to choosing whether to eat the green and blue smarties or the pink and orange ones based on a code, we could win luxuries, like a pillow, an extra jumper, an air mattress or a hairbrush.

We were supposed to sleep in the slums for two nights, but only five people ended up sleeping in one at all. The weather wasn't on our side (heavy rain and wind) for the best part of the weekend, and this meant that we all made a trip to the church youth block for the first night. On Saturday afternoon, we rebuilt the boys slum with most of the materials, to make sure it would survive the second night. Helen, Natalie, Emma and Will slept there on the second night, but the other five of us spent the second night at the church.



Everyone who went, even those who had to leave on the second day because of being ill, learnt loads from the experience. When we were talking about what had affected us the most on Sunday morning, we thought of all sorts of different things. Most of us felt tired, hungry and in need of a good wash, but something that had touched many hearts had been that simple things like light, the ability to read and the readiness of clean running water, are unavailable to so many people around the world. Even the fact that when it rained, we had a warm, weatherproof building to go to, which was so easy to use, made us realise they really do have to cope with life as it is through anything and everything- they don't have a choice.

We did a quiz on Saturday morning, and suddenly realised how little we knew about poverty. This ignorance was mentioned by a few people- one of us said it felt like everyone had wool over their eyes towards the issue, but for the twelve of us who took part in Slum Survivor 2009, the wool had been lifted, and we had an insight into how life was for so many people around the world..

Rozzie



Introducing

We are Charmaine and Bryan George.

Our story of finding each other, falling in love and getting married is of course a familiar one, what makes this special for us is our recognition of God's part in our story. An often used word in the media these days is journey, a celebrity is said for example to have undertaken a journey in progressing as a dancer, or in staying in the jungle. Our story also entails a journey, or rather journeys.

For me, Bryan it was to involve much soul searching and many lessons learned. Having grown up in sleepy little Thornbury I joined the RAF for a taste of adventure, and hopefully some exotic postings.

Throughout the eighties I worked at Oldbury power station, leaving at the end of 1992. It was during this time, about 1990 that I became a Christian. I had become weary of what I regarded as the superficial and somewhat shallow life I had been living, sure I had money in my pocket, and very few responsibilities but that in itself failed to satisfy me. I felt an inner voice which seemed to be urging me to respond, this became stronger week by week over a period of some months before I plucked up the courage to walk through the doors of Thornbury Baptist church.

The reception, I received was what impressed me, yes people were friendly, they talked about Jesus, their faith and answered my many questions. No one tried to press me to make any commitment, but gradually during this time I felt that I too was beginning to know this Jesus who they talked about. The more I learned, the more I wanted to know, so when it seemed right I asked Jesus into my life, this was of course an important step in developing my relationship with Jesus, for me to acknowledge him as Lord and to bring him into my life.

This in time brought about many changes for me, I felt that God wanted me to take a step of faith, to leave the security of my employment at the power station and to place my future in his hands, not an easy thing to do but I felt it was an important step in my walk with God. As a result of taking that rather frighteningly large step I have now been blessed to have worked in special schools for the past 16 years, difficult, but immensely fulfilling work.

An area of my life which did cause me so much soul searching over a long time was that of finding that someone special, from the vantage point of now being able to look back I can only apologise to all my friends who put up with my moaning about my single state. I had much to learn about faith, and patience. I often listened to a song by Wreckless Eric called Whole Wide World, it's first verse says "when I was a young boy Mama said to me, there's only one girl in the world for you and she probably lives in Tahiti". Well it wasn't Tahiti but Johannesburg and that's where Charmaine's story comes in.

My story is one of a broken marriage, personal hurt, heartbroken children and the loss of my home and finances. After this I felt a huge call to come to England, my Fathers birthplace for various reasons, mainly though because I felt that this is where God wanted me to be.



After my husband had left me for the second time I was left homeless and penniless with two children and a baby Granddaughter. I found myself living back with my parents, in all of this I held onto my faith, with the love of God to hold on to and comfort me.

I felt that God was prompting me to leave South Africa to start a new life in England. Much prayer went into all of this, not only mine, but that of family, friends and my church. During this time my parents had relocated to England, to Thornbury. My brother had also left for Holland to plant a church there. And so it was that I arrived here in Thornbury in July 2002.

It was extremely exciting to see how God provided so much for me, a lovely home to live in with Harvey and Isobel Burnham, a church to go to, great friends who were so kind and generous. This is where our stories converge, 6 weeks after arriving here I was introduced to Bryan at the church, we must have clicked with each other as we talked for 1 ½ hours that day. Things developed rather quickly from that point, we both felt that our developing love for each other was right, and after 3 weeks Bryan proposed to me, we married on the 20th September 2003.

In all of this we see God's hand, his plan and his love for us, after all how else can two people be brought together over thousands of miles at just the right time.

Bryan and Charmaine

Inside Out

Inside Out took its first steps in February 2007. Since then the group has developed in its own way, not to a prescribed agenda but aiming to build friendships. In fact, *Inside Out* has provided a very varied range of activities and has seen an ever increasing number enjoying the regular get-togethers. The programme has become a mix of indoor church based events (with visiting speakers or other activities, followed by a tea) and outside visits to places of interest. Over past months, interesting illustrated talks from a variety of speakers have included a series on Thornbury's history and travel experiences arising from visits, for example, to Kazakhstan and the canyons of North America. (See Page 3)

With the benefit of the church minibus the Group has been able to get out and about in the summer months with visits to places such as Westonbirt (for the autumn colours), the museum of Wales at St Fagans, the old railway station at Tintern and Cadbury Garden Centre. As a group we have also been able to arrange several private events, for example visits to Chavenage (a historic house near Tetbury) and the South Western Electricity Historical Society's private museum in Bristol, which included a talk on bygone domestic electrical appliances. For our September get-together, Roger and Hazel Staley kindly invited us to Kington farm where we were able to enjoy a games afternoon and the customary tea! Typical comments from those attending our gatherings include: "A very enjoyable afternoon; well-worth visiting, appreciated being able to play games on the lawn and a nice tea!"

Have YOU been missing out? Are you interested? Speak to Helen or Bev for more information and look out for details of our future programme, included in the bulletin. *Inside Out* is a relatively small group aiming to continue to encourage one another but even more hoping to welcome others. The group meets on the second Monday of every month and the high teas are a particular feature!

One umbrella, many spokes

In the summer of 2008 I attended New Wine (an annual Christian conference) for a week of teaching, worship and reflection. One talk was by Simon Guilleband about being a radical disciple; the talk changed my life. Simon is a missionary in Burundi, after a very interesting and inspiring talk about his work he finished with a challenge: what is God calling you to do? Where is your mission field and how much are you engaging in it rather than dabbling round the edges? Add in another talk that day where the focus was that Jesus didn't die for me to just dabble round the edge of what I am called to do, and I knew that my only response could be to 'stop dabbling' and dive fully into God's call.

And His call to me? To move away from sole allegiance to one organisation, and to step out in faith to be available to others; to help equip, enable and empower others to go on the mission-field short-term, and in so learn more about themselves and their walk with God, to serve others, and to gain a deeper and more personal understanding about some of the global issues that we are all involved in just through being alive. By the end of the week I had a website and 'umbrella title' for all that I do: World Mission Services (WMS). Since then I have been feeling my way forward with God as my guide, and having a very exciting journey along the way. The spokes on my umbrella include freelance work for Open Arms International (the Kenya-based link), CRED (Christian organisation through which I worked with Karen refugee kids in Thailand, and will visit Kenya in 2010), Soapbox Communications (Christian organisa-

tion with global partners, including Nepal), and I have also done bits for Eurovangelism and Weba. The trip to Thailand was thought-provoking with regard to the issue of the oppressed Karen people, and what our response should be during the



coming election year in Burma, and I am still processing and praying that one through. I also work with some schools and other agencies, help organise overseas trips, interview less-advantaged 18 – 25 year olds going overseas on a government-funded project, and I am involved in local mission work through a grant-making body that I administer. Not all of these spokes are active at any one time and it has been incredible to see how God settles some down as others are raised up so that the overall capacity is always manageable.

2010 brings another spoke to the WMS umbrella in the form of The 360 Trust. I am setting it up with Suzanne, a Cardiff-based social worker friend. It seeks to use short-term mission to take young people and adults out of their (generally negative) home environment and give them space to serve others, find value, worth and a good self perception, and start considering ways to make a positive contribution to their community, through lifestyle changes. Primarily for children in the care system, youth offenders and at-risk young people, it may later grow to include adult ex-offenders and recovering addicts. It's early days, and there is lots to work out, systems to set up, finance to find and conversations to have. The 360 Trust came out of a series of random events that can only be God, and after much prayer and affirmation from others. We are both excited about it, and I would love to chat to anyone who wants to know more, or be involved in anyway – prayer support, links etc. If you would like to hear more and meet Suzanne, come along to Blend on Saturday 30th Jan @ 2pm.

For those of you concerned that I haven't yet referred to my roles as wife to Tim and mum to Rozzie and Natalie: don't worry; they are very much at the front of my order of priority, and I always seek their blessing before embarking on any new venture. The journey since New Wine 2008 has been incredible. It has had the expected ups and downs, but it is a journey that I feel honoured to be walking, with Christ before, beside and behind me.

If, through reading this, you feel you would like to receive updates on the work that I am doing, and become a prayer partner, then please let me know. It is the circle of praying friends that has been one of my main supports, and is such a great blessing – could you join that circle? Finally, if God is calling you, and you aren't sure whether to say yes, my encouragement would be to go for it – it's the only proper option. Happy new year, and maybe see you at Blend.

Helen Harrison

Church Calendar : Jan 2010 to March 2010

JANUARY

Sunday 3rd

11am: Community All Age service (no meal)
Paul Ferguson: Worshipping a useless God
6.30pm: Service of dedication for the new year

Saturday 9th

7.30am: Men's breakfast @ TBC

Sunday 10th

9.15/11am: Lis Pearce: The Silver Thread
6.30pm: Mary Groves

Monday 11th

2.30pm: Inside Out : A Swiss afternoon

Friday 15th to Sunday 17th

Youth week-end away at Woodcroft, Chepstow.

Sunday 17th

9.15/11am: Paul Ferguson: The playground of the kingdom of heaven
6.30pm: David Lawrence

Sunday 24th

9.15/11am: Mike Levy: Open windows
4.15pm: Adult singing and dance workshop
6.30pm: Neil Mobbs

Wednesday 27th

8.00pm: Family Forum

Sunday 31st

9.15/11am: Tom and Edna Hamblin
6.30pm: Celebration: Tom and Edna Hamblin

FEBRUARY

Friday 5th

2.30pm: Daytime Alpha course starts

Sunday 7th

11am: Community service & Baptism & meal
Philip Jinadu
6.30pm: Lis Pearce

Monday 10th

2.30pm: Inside Out: Desert Island Discs

Saturday 13th

7.30am: Men's breakfast @ TBC

Sunday 14th

9.15am: All Age Service: Paul Ferguson: Seeds of the Kingdom
11.00: Paul Ferguson: Seeds of the Kingdom
6.30pm: Terry Wicks

Sunday 21st

9.15/11am: Lis Pearce: Stormy Weather
6.30pm: Service led by 18-30's group

Wednesday 24th

8pm: Welcome evening

Sunday 28th

9.15/11am: Paul Ferguson: Tomb Raider
6.30pm: Ian Taylor

MARCH

Sunday 7th

11am: Community service and meal
Paul Ferguson: Just one touch
6.30pm: Sally Heath

Monday 8th

2.30pm: Inside Out : A film afternoon

Saturday 13th

7.30am: Men's breakfast @ TBC

Sunday 14th Mothering Sunday

9.15/11am: Lis Pearce: Isn't this the carpenter?
6.30pm: Neil Mobbs

Sunday 21st

9.15/11am: David Lawrence: Travelling light
6.30pm: Tim Walsh



British Summer Time begins on 28th March. Clocks go forward 1 hour on Saturday night.

Sunday 28th Palm Sunday

9.15/11am: Paul Ferguson
6.30pm: Mary Groves

The Sunday group of children were asked to list the ten commandments in any order. The boy who answered said : 4,5, 6,10,9,1,2,3,8,7 !