

"If my people..."

The story (so far) of Chipping Campden Baptist Church and Cornerstone Churches

Edited by David Hudson-Wood



*"If my people, who are called
by my name, will humble
themselves and pray and seek my
face and turn from their wicked
ways, then I will hear from
heaven and will forgive their sin
and will heal their land."*

2 Chronicles chapter 7 verse 14



Vision

To proclaim Jesus Christ to people today

To make disciples

To build God's church and see revival

To plant new churches

To reach the nations

Team Leader: Rev Philip Deller 01386 840720

Director of Children's Ministry: Paul Crouch 01608 650766



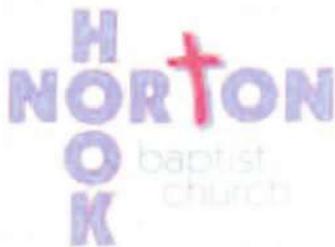
Senior minister: Rev Philip Deller 01386 840720

Minister: Rev Edward Ibberson 01386 849152



Minister: Rev Daniel Pulham

01608 664876



Minister: Rev John Taylor 01608 642564



Minister: Rev Neil Dunlop

01789 772615

Acknowledgements:

The editor would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this book in any way and also to those who have contributed photographs, especially Betty Stocker, Kate Barry and Josiah Robinson. Thanks also to the *Cotswold Journal* and *Gloucestershire Echo*.

“If my people...”

This book has very little to do with a church in terms of a building. Rather it is all about people – people who have belonged to a particular group of churches over the centuries and are united by their Christian faith.

The book mentions many significant people who have been prominent in the history of Chipping Campden Baptist Church (CCBC) and Cornerstone Churches, but there are many more people not mentioned who have played equally valuable roles in the lives of the churches.

As you read this book you will discover that CCBC nearly closed down on several occasions (in fact, it did close briefly at one point) but the prayers and devotion of various groups of believers kept the church open and have allowed the various modern-day Cornerstone Churches to become such a prominent part of the local communities in Chipping Campden, Shipston-on-Stour, Bidford-on-Avon and Hook Norton.

In reading this book you will find out about a variety of colourful ministers in CCBC’s history such as Elisha Smith, Ritchie Irvine, Philip Lewis and Howard Jones. More than a dozen current members of the various Cornerstone Churches have also written their stories about how God has changed their lives.

But there is one person who is central to the whole story who has not contributed an article and of whom we have no photograph. His name is Jesus.

If you want to read his story, then we suggest you read another book which for centuries has been the best-selling book in the world. That book is the Bible.

FIRST walked into Chipping Campden Baptist Church as an eight-year-old way back in 1974 when I attended the wedding of my uncle and auntie, Charles and Lesley Archer.

The next time I attended CCBC was in January 1991, after David Arthey, who was a regular preacher at my family's home church in Ashton-under-Hill, had told my mother that things were starting to happen at Campden and they had a lively young minister (Howard Jones) and a lot of young people.

When I walked into CCBC that second time, a really friendly-looking guy called Geoff Woodward walked up to me and said it was nice to see me. I immediately felt at home.

Geoff is sadly no longer with us, having died at a tragically young age, but, like many now departed members of the church, his memory lives on.

When I originally had the idea of writing a book about the story of CCBC and Cornerstone Churches I wanted to do it mainly because I thought what had happened to the church during the past 25 years or so was such a remarkable story.

Less than 30 years ago the church was on the brink of closure with just a handful of mainly elderly members remaining but they prayed and prayed for young people to come in and that's what gradually happened.

When I joined the church, Howard had been pastor for about three years and, like so many members of the congregation, I thought he was the most wonderful and inspiring pastor. I loved his preaching, I loved the way he had helped to rejuvenate worship in the church and I loved his eccentricities.

When Howard announced that he felt called to move on in 1995, I don't think I was alone in wondering what on earth we were going to do without him as the church had grown and blossomed so much while he was pastor.

But, as you will read in this book, Howard told the church members not to look back but to look forward and that God had a new person for the church.

After a year-long interregnum, that new pastor turned out to be Philip Deller.

Philip, too, has been a wonderful inspiration to me and to many, many members of our congregation. Although he was not quite 30 when he came to Campden, Philip has shown incredible maturity and wisdom in dealing with often very difficult and tragic situations.

Personally speaking, Philip has helped me through some very difficult years.

Each week I am incredibly inspired by Philip's preaching and his passion to see God move in our country and bring about the revival that so many of us long for.

Philip's vision to completely renovate the



church went through with no opposition; his vision to introduce Alpha has been a huge success, with around 30 courses completed so far; and the church's vision to plant new churches has also seen two new churches at Shipston-on-Stour and Bidford-on-Avon, both with congregations of around 100.

So where are we now? Well, the statistics show that the church congregation has grown from that handful of around a dozen faithful members back in 1980 to a combined Cornerstone congregation of around 400 people at three churches on a typical Sunday morning.

Of course, Hook Norton Baptist Church is also now also a valued part of Cornerstone.

It's an amazing turnaround of fortunes by any stretch of the imagination and hopefully much of this book will tell the story of these amazing past three decades and what God has done in our churches.

But rather than just provide a potted history of the churches, I wanted to brighten the pages up with articles and photographs about different aspects of church life (e.g. children's and young people's work, drama, Alpha, sport, special events etc).

I also wanted to intersperse the pages with certain people's testimonies about how God has completely changed their lives. It would have been nice to have included everyone's story but that might have made the book rather long!

Having said all this, I did not just want to concentrate solely on what has happened in recent years. I think it is extremely important not to forget those who have gone before us.

Allan Warmington, a long-time Campden resident, actually spent countless hours researching the history of Campden and Blockley Baptist churches several years ago and produced a very informative publication which covered the history of the two churches up to 1872. Allan sadly died

last year before being able to complete his work, so I took it on and have spent some very interesting hours going through the church minute books for the last 120 years, though I don't think I have been able to bring the history of the church alive in a way that Allan somehow managed to do. It was almost as if he was an eye-witness reporter in some of his accounts of the church's great pastors like Elisha Smith, W Ritchie Irvine and Philip Lewis, who witnessed mini-revivals during their ministries in Campden.

So I have a great debt of gratitude to Allan for all his work, and to his family for allowing me access to his files.

When I was discussing a title for this book with Philip and Alan Boorman, we banded about a few ideas. I liked the title: "What can happen when a small church prays" as the story of our church over the centuries is one of a recurring theme of God's people praying for revival and those prayers being answered at various times, none more so than today.

But I was outvoted as my title was felt to be rather long!

Alan then suggested we should simply call the book "If My People...".

For those of you who attend Chipping Campden Baptist Church in particular you will have noticed that every week, without fail, the one and only Bible verse that appears on the church news sheet is from 2 Chronicles 7 v 14: "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

I used to wonder sometimes why we didn't have different Bible verses on the Contact sheet but I have come to realise that we are blessed with a church leadership that is passionate about seeing God bring about revival to the Cotswolds and to our land, and this verse is perhaps the one verse in the Bible in which God specifically promises that he will heal our land (i.e. send revival) if we, His people, obey His commands.

I hope you enjoy reading this book. I have enjoyed researching and writing it and finding out things about the church and various members that I didn't know before. I would like to thank everybody who has contributed to the book in whatever way.

I would like to dedicate the book to four men in particular: David Arthey, who was kind of responsible for me coming to Campden in the first place and who has been such a faithful servant to the church for 47 years; Geoff Woodward, for making me initially feel so welcome at CCBC; the late John Hudson, the most kind, generous and loving man I have ever known; and finally my co-author Allan Warmington for helping to inspire me to continue the work that he started.

Our story

David and Jenny Arthey

JENNY and I first attended Chipping Campden Baptist Church on the last Sunday of 1961. There were a small number of elderly people meeting in the schoolroom on that occasion. The church remained like that for almost 30 years.

Attendance increased and decreased during that period – there were increases to about 30 at times but mostly attendance was about 15 in the morning and sometimes as low as 6 in the evening.

Two things were significant during that time:

1. A midweek homegroup was started with 75% of the church attending regularly. I wish we had this proportion of the church attending the homegroups today! Midweek prayer and Bible study was the powerhouse of the church and we prayed for young people to join the church.

2. Being a church without a minister for most of the time, we had a moderator – the Rev John Taylor from Burford. He was a wise and godly man who advised us to merge with Blockley Baptist Church and Paxford Baptist Church, which we did. This meant that when Blockley and Paxford churches were closed and sold, the proceeds were held by the Baptist Union for Campden's use.

We could not use the capital from the sales to support a minister but we could use the interest so, together with a grant from the Home Mission Fund, we were able to seek a full-time minister.

For the last few years we had welcomed students from Regents Park College to preach and one of these was Howard Jones. Without going through the normal procedures to appoint a minister, CCBC asked the area superintendent if Howard Jones would consider the position.

Howard, who had said he wanted an inner city church, felt God calling him to Campden. He became the minister. God had provided exactly what Campden needed at that time.

He was often an eccentric preacher (on one occasion he climbed a tall pair of steps and took his trousers off to make a point!).

He was also a great musician. God began to build His church. He answered the prayers of the homegroup and brought young people in, so much so that we had to change our prayers to ask for more mature Christians to nurture them. Howard was ideal for the needs of the work in Chipping Campden. But then God called him to move on.

The interregnum lasted about 12 months and God was clearly leading us



David and Jenny Arthey: Faithful servants of CCBC for more than 47 years.

on. The leadership interviewed prospective ministers but graciously and unanimously said "no" – until Philip came along.

We unanimously knew that this was the man that God wanted to continue the work He was doing at CCBC. And he was as keen to come to Campden as we were to have him.

So, 12 years ago, we welcomed Philip, Hermey and Caris to CCBC; and what a great 12 years of blessing they have been to us.

As soon as Philip saw the sanctuary he had a vision of what God wanted him to do with it. What you see around you today is the fulfilment of that vision, and God provided the funds.

But it's not just the structural changes that have taken place; it is what God has done so wonderfully to His people through the faithfulness of His servant.

1. Top of the list, the countless number of people who have found Jesus as their Saviour.

2. The regular services of baptism and the spontaneous baptisms that also take place at these services.

3. The success of Alpha, now run twice a year and always with people coming to know Jesus.

4. The anointed preaching and teaching of God's Word.

5. The unquestionable growth in spiritual understanding in God's people and the building of ever-deeper relationships with Him.

6. The unmistakable presence of the Holy Spirit whenever we come together to worship.

7. The real sense of love amongst God's people, which is so often recognised by all newcomers.

8. The planting of two new churches, both with congregations of around 100 worshippers.

9. The support for those called to be trained for the ministry.

10. The support for those from the church working in overseas missions.

How I sometimes wish that that handful of faithful and prayerful people of 30-40 years ago could see what God has done. Perhaps they can.

Perhaps they are within that cloud of witnesses that the writer of Hebrews tells us about, and if they are, then they are rejoicing with us today.

We give God the glory for all this but we also recognise the faithfulness of God's servant through whom He has been able to work so effectively.

Who knows what God has for us in the future? What we do know, and has been proved over the last 12 years, it will be beyond our wildest dreams.

The early story of the protestant dissenters and 'non-conformity' in Chipping Campden

BAPTISTS form one of the major streams within the Christian church with around 37 million baptised believers worldwide.

But it all began in very different and difficult circumstances. It was in the 16th Century that several groups such as the Congregationalists, Presbyterians and the English Baptists first formed. They were all known as "non-conformists" because of their refusal to conform to be members of the Church of England.

During the previous century, new translations of the Bible made it possible for more people to read the Bible for themselves. Groups such as the early Baptists tried to find their roots in the New Testament rather than the traditions that had been added through many centuries. This didn't exactly make them too popular with the existing church authorities and many were forced to flee abroad.

Indeed, the first recorded Baptist church was formed in 1609 by a group of English refugees in Amsterdam. These men and women, led by John Smith and Thomas Helwys, had formed an independent church in 1606 in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. They had fled to Holland to avoid persecution because they refused to attend their parish churches.

By 1620 the practice of "baptising" believers (fully immersing in water) had become a distinctive hallmark of Baptist churches. They believed it was much more in line with the baptism practised in the earliest Christian churches. Needless to say, this was another radical break with tradition and only added to the hostility from the established church.

"Non-conformity" began in Chipping Campden in 1662. This was the year that the Act of Uniformity was passed.

This law required all the clergy of the Church of England to accept the newly-published Book of Common Prayer for use in all public worship. To fail to agree would mean the end of a clergyman's ministry.

Daring to break with the established church, towering over the town as it does, was a dangerous and risky business. It was only in 1689 that a new law, The Act of Toleration, gave "dissenters"

the express right to meet and worship. Even then, it forbade them to become involved in national or local government. Nor were they allowed to graduate from English universities – thus excluding them from the professions.

We do not know where the first "Protestant dissenters" met in Campden (in all probability they met in secret in private homes). In a census of 1676 there were known to be only 15 non-conformists in the town (out of a population of 790).

In 1672 King Charles II began granting indulgences to licensed groups of dissenters to meet in prescribed places. Several applications were made concerning Campden, one of them for "the house of Samuel Horsman of Cambdon of Gloucestershire" to be used as a Congregational meeting place, which appears to have been successful.

Another important name of the late 17th Century was Mr William Davison – "a warm and useful preacher" – who was

We do not know where the first 'protestant dissenters' met in Campden

about this time a pastor of a congregation at Campden.

Having earlier been ejected from his living at Notgrove under the Act of Uniformity, Davison went to live at Tewkesbury, but he was thought to have come to Campden about the time of the 1689 Act of Toleration. In 1690 he was receiving £26 a year for his services. Davison died on Christmas Day 1711.

In 1715, Samuel Knight, a Dissenting Preacher of Chipping Campden, took the Oath of Allegiance and the Abjuration Oath before the Quarter Sessions at Gloucester which was required to be taken by all dissenting ministers.

Then in 1724, a certificate was presented to the Bishop of Gloucester:

"That some of His Majesty's Protestant dissenting subjects do intend to hold a meeting for the worship of God in a new house built for that purpose in the parish of Chipping Campden, which they desire may be registered in the Bishop's Court, according to an Act of Parliament of William and Mary."

We know that there were 38 members

in 1724 and that this "New House" was used almost continuously thereafter – first by this group of "dissenters" and, subsequently, by the Baptists in Campden until 1872 when the present chapel was built.

Samuel Knight appears to have died some time before 1729 and a new minister, Rev Peter Peyton, took over at Campden from 1729 to 1732, when he seems to have died. From the few indications we have of his short stay in Campden, Peter Peyton seems to have been an exceptional man. He bequeathed 99 Books of Divinity to the church for the use of his successors and these remained in the church library and were referred to in all the trust deeds for at least 120 years after his departure. During his time at Campden the church's membership grew from 38 to 55, with more than half coming from surrounding villages.

Between the end of Peter Peyton's pastorate and about 1770 the names of five other Campden pastors are known.

They included a Mr Oldsworth (or possibly Houldsworth) during the 1730s, Mr Job Barrett from 1738 to about 1757, Mr Liscomb Mauliber from 1757 to 1761, a Mr Alliot from 1761 and David Davis from 1765. Dates are not entirely reliable and references are few.

The 18th Century record is incomplete and there seems to have been periods when no resident minister was present and membership necessarily diminished. For example, when Mr Stretch took over there were only 18 members and only 13 when Mr Davis took pastoral charge.

Only around a third of members actually lived in Campden, with others coming from surrounding villages such as Blockley, Paxford, Honeybourne, Willersey, Weston-sub-Edge and Shipston-on-Stour.

It is unlikely that all the services were held in Campden. Rather there would have been subsidiary meeting places in some of these villages, probably in the houses of church members. But there must have been a lot of journeying on foot or on horseback from long distances, on the part of both pastors and congregations.

What the precise denomination of the Campden church was at that time is unclear and it may have changed over

the course of the 18th Century. The few contemporary references to the church which originate in Campden generally refer to it as a Presbyterian church, as did the original certificate licensing its meeting house for worship.

What can be said is that, almost certainly, it was not a Baptist church.

There are no references in pastors' papers to baptisms, but only to persons admitted.

The trust deeds all speak of "the congregation of Protestant dissenters" and of "the Protestant dissenting minister for the time being".

The great Baptist minister, Rev Elisha Smith, whom we are about to meet, implies in several places that they were not of his denomination.

He writes in his Church Book of "the former society" that existed before he came. He writes a short obituary note about Francis Day, who died aged 71 in 1804, calling him "the last of the old congregation of Independents" and says "he was buried at the churchyard where the old dissenters lay".

However, it cannot be denied that worship by non-conformists has been virtually continuous in Campden since the third quarter of the 17th Century – over 300 years – and that it has been on more or less the same site for well over 270 years. Whether it has always been worship in the Baptist tradition is perhaps less important.

From the late 1760s until 1782 there are no records of the Campden

dissenting church or its minister. It appears that the church may have been in a very low state and without a minister for a good deal of the time after 1765. This was all soon to change, however.

In 1783, new trust deeds for the property of the Campden dissenting church were signed.

And just before this – on October 8th, 1782, there occurred an unprecedented event: the baptism of five people by immersion at Pye Mill, near Paxford.

These two events herald the earliest activities in Campden of Elisha Smith, perhaps the greatest figure of our story and a man generally recognised to have been evangelically one of the most influential non-conformist ministers this locality has had.

Elisha Smith – perhaps the greatest figure in our story

ELISHA Smith had grown up in the village of Paulespurt in Northamptonshire. The village school he attended there was run by a Mr Edmund Carey.

Carey's son William, a pupil at the same school, went on to spend much of his life as a trail-blazing missionary in Calcutta, India, later founding the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS).

In 1778 the 23-year-old Elisha entered the Baptist academy at Bristol – the foremost theological college for Particular Baptists of the time – and became one of the growing number of well-educated Baptist ministers in the Midlands and West of England at the end of the 18th Century.

Two years later Elisha visited Shipston-on-Stour and Campden "on a visit"; it is not clear under what circumstances, though it is thought he came to serve in a lay capacity "for a few weeks of practical experience".

He found the congregation "very low – not 80 hearers in either of the places" and says he spent a somewhat discouraging six weeks there, though "the hearers increased in both".

However, after being invited back by both congregations, he returned to Shipston at the end of his four-year course and in June 1782 he formed the people into a church and was ordained the following month.

The church at Shipston was, he says, one "professing belief of the duty of believers' baptism, but admitting other true Christians into their communion".

For the next 10 years Elisha seems to have looked after congregations at both Campden and Shipston, travelling about on horseback and using lodgings at both places. No doubt in Campden he began preaching in Samuel Knight's old meeting house.

In 1785, in Blockley Parish Church, he married a Blockley girl, Martha Peyton, granddaughter of Samuel Knight, builder of the Campden meeting house. They lived in Blockley for 34 years, the whole of their married life.

It seems that Elisha gave up the care of Shipston within a few years of his marriage, in 1792 or 1793.

For most of his married life Elisha ran the village stores from his home premises in Blockley, the site of the current day stores.

In November 1785 a small Baptist congregation at Campden seems to have been formally established when there were "only five communicants and about 30 hearers".

In January 1788 Elisha was formally invited by the then seven members to become minister at Campden.

Elisha seems to have been typical of the best kind of 18th Century pastor, loyal to his small flock over many years, a wise and patient leader, and an evangelical Christian. Baptists at this time are said not to have entered much into affairs outside the church and this seems to have been true of Elisha, who put all his energies into the care of his flock and the advancement of the church in the area.

Elisha also held services at his house in Blockley until, in 1792, with the aid of

a few individuals, he built a small chapel for public worship in the village.

Even then, he felt he faced an uphill task. He wrote in his diary:

"We opened the meeting house on 30th May last. What success the Gospel may have I know not: Sometimes I fear the spirit of the world is advancing and religion is low. The enemies of the Gospel have been violent this year. I do not see much of the increase of religion among my people at Campden. It is a day of small things."

Elisha worked patiently in building up the church in Campden but growth in the early years was relatively small.

However, during the course of Elisha's 40-year ministry in Campden there are records of 72 baptisms.

Although there are no precise records of total church membership during Elisha's ministry, it is clear that the churches at both Campden and Blockley grew substantially.

Elisha Smith died in 1819 in his mid-60s. Content as he was to stay and look after his limited flock in Blockley and Campden, he seems nevertheless not only to have been a devout and successful pastor but a lovable and much-loved man.

Dr John Mann, son of a pastor of the Independent church at Moreton-in-Marsh, recollected: "The fervour of old Elisha was aided by the deep bass of his oracular voice, and the weight of his judgment, which was much respected by my father as that of a good man, speaking with some of the authority of the ancient prophets. Old Elisha was one of a type of Dissenting minister that has

now almost disappeared. In my mind's eye I can still see him in his brown wig, in his frock coat, and with his pipe in his mouth – from which, indeed, it was rarely absent. He was so affable that he shook hands with nearly everyone to whom he spoke."

The foundation of the present Baptist chapel in Campden was laid by Elisha Smith's grandson, Elisha Smith Robinson.

The continued – and today thriving – existence of Chipping Campden Baptist Church may be said to be due to Elisha

as much as to later ministers.

It can be said that without his ministry in this place, there would be no Baptist cause in Campden, with the unique contribution it has made, not only to its members, but also to the town, over the succeeding two centuries.

A period of fluctuating fortunes

AFTER Elisha Smith's death, the fortunes of the churches at Campden and Blockley were very different.

Blockley enjoyed a sustained period of revival whereas Campden's fortunes fluctuated substantially.

Rev George Jayne was pastor at Campden from 1821 to 1828 and during this time the congregation increased substantially.

Several ministers came and went and although records for long periods throughout the 19th Century are rather sparse, it appears that the church underwent a period of decline, at one point in the 1850s remaining almost four years without a minister with membership falling to 25 or less.

In 1856 Rev C Spiller arrived and laboured with considerable success until

1858, when he died after a short illness.

He was succeeded as pastor by Mr J W Webb who remained until 1863 when he resigned. His pastorate also saw a continued increase and at least 14 new members were received into membership after baptism.

In 1864 Mr R A Shadick, a young student from Spurgeon's College in London, was invited to become pastor at Campden and during his first year eight people were received into church membership. What happened after that we simply do not know. Mr Shadick seems to have left but there is no note as to the circumstances. The church probably underwent a further period without a minister and suffered more financial problems and loss of members.

The Church Minute Book reports a church meeting held on May 26th, 1867, called by the remaining deacon (apparently under the direction of the

Oxfordshire Association) "to consider what should be done for the future prosperity of the Baptist interest at Campden".

Rev S Hodges of Stow-on-the-Wold was elected to chair the meeting and, after some discussion, it was moved and seconded that "the church be dissolved".

A show of hands was taken and the motion was carried by seven votes to four. The chairman thereupon "pronounced the Church to be dissolved".

So, almost at a stroke, after 200 years of witness of the Protestant dissenting church in Campden, nearly 150 years of it in the same meeting house; and less than 50 years after the death of the man who had brought the Baptist faith to the town, the church had, it seemed, been brought to the end of its life. So many had laboured in the town and district over so many years. Had all their hard work, then, been brought to nought?

Revival under a colourful new pastor – Rev W Ritchie Irvine

FIFTEEN months later, on September 5th, 1868, there appeared a long report in the *Evesham Journal*, of which the following is an extract:

"On Tuesday evening last a very interesting meeting in connection with the reopening of the Baptist Chapel took place in the Town Hall, which was tastefully decorated for the occasion. The Baptist Church has been for some time reduced to a very low state and for a short time the chapel was closed. It was then reopened for worship on the Lord's Day in the evening only. This service was for some months conducted chiefly by brethren belonging to the church at Blockley. The Rev W Ritchie Irvine of Ascot and Leafield was then invited to take charge of the station. He entered upon it the first Sunday in July and the results have been very pleasing. The Chapel, which had been almost desert-

ed, is now well filled, especially in the evening. Mr Irvine's ministry has awakened considerable attention and, judging from the numbers which attend every Sunday evening, some extraordinary steps will have to be taken to provide seats. It was under the above encouraging circumstances that it was resolved to hold a public meeting in connection with the revival of Christian effort in the place. The use of the Town Hall having been granted, a large number of persons met for tea, which was well supplied by friends in the congregation. About 180 sat down and many others would have willingly joined them had there been room. In the evening a public meeting was held."

Rev W Ritchie Irvine, a Scotsman, was one of the most active ministers the Campden Baptists have ever had. Curiously, he is a rather elusive figure as not a single word was written into the Church Book during his ministry of over 10 years.

Mr Irvine, an insurance agent, seems to have come to Campden in the course of his lay occupation and agreed to carry on the old Baptist tradition earning his livelihood outside the ministry while acting as pastor.

If it were not for his fortuitous arrival, the cause of non-conformity in Campden could well have been lost, for the church could not pay the stipend of a full-time minister.

In spite of the wording of the *Journal* article of 1868, it was some time before the church was officially re-established as a church, rather than as a mission station.

It was not until January 1871 that, at a meeting of the Oxfordshire Association, the secretary reported a strong desire in Campden for the formation of a church.

It was therefore at that meeting "resolved unanimously that the proposal to form a Baptist church at Campden is hereby approved, and that the friends about to unite in church fellowship be

assured of the earnest desire of the committee for their prosperity and peace."

Some of Mr Irvine's more long-standing achievements were material ones. For example, the musical life of the church benefited and in August 1869 a special service was held to mark the opening of a new harmonium.

Although hymns had certainly featured in the life of the church since the time of Elisha Smith, it seems hitherto to have been lacking this aid to worship.

But the greatest material achievement of Mr Irvine's ministry and a permanent memorial to his faith was the construction of a new chapel, together with schoolrooms and manse in place of the old chapel yard with its cottages, gardens and orchard.

That this fairly imposing series of buildings should have been constructed just four years after his arrival in Campden – and only five years after the church had been closed through lack of support – is a tribute to the energy and faith of Mr Irvine.

According to the *Campden Herald* in June 1872: "...the tender of Messrs Chambers and Sharp for the sum of £800, being the lowest which was sent into the trustees, is accepted, and they have commenced pulling down the old houses. The materials of the old chapel and three houses on the ground became the property of the contractors and are to a considerable extent available for the new erections."

As the memorial plaque to Rev W Ritchie Irvine that used to stand in the chapel says, it was during his pastorate that the chapel, schoolroom and manse were "built and paid for".

How the church was able to prosper to this extent must be a matter of some wonder. Few records remain of the decision, the way the main funds were raised, or the debates that ensued.

Elisha Smith Robinson, grandson of Elisha Smith, laid the foundation stone on June 19th, 1872, during a day of celebration that included a public tea meeting in the Town Hall.

In the evening the last service was held in the "small and ancient building" that had been the chapel for so long. The building seems to have proceeded quickly and the opening ceremony for the new chapel took place on November 16th in the same year.

The minister's house was probably completed and occupied some time later. The new manse no doubt filled a great need in the church.

Thereafter the members could offer accommodation as part of the minister's stipend, rather than the pastor having to

"The greatest material achievement of Mr Irvine's ministry and a permanent memorial to his faith was the construction of a new chapel, schoolrooms and manse."

find his own dwelling. It is not known where most ministers had lived up until then.

Mr Irvine's ministry seems to have coincided with the state of a period of growing confidence and determination by non-conformists, in Campden as elsewhere, as they began to assert their rights over the power of the Established church and other entrenched interests. The period also marked their enthusiastic entry into political debate.

Mr Irvine got involved in some wide social and political issues, such as the disestablishment of the Church of England, debated with intensity in the town.

In January 1876, a crowded and stormy Liberation Society meeting was held at

the Town Hall with the title "Rationalism, Ritualism, Romanism".

The meeting was to have taken the form of a lecture by Mr G Hastings. However, in spite of conciliatory efforts by moderates on both sides, it rapidly degenerated into a howling match. The *Evesham Journal* reported that one stage Rev Irvine and the Anglican curate Rev Tatlock facing each other, one standing on the table, the other on a chair, each demanding the other withdraw certain allegations; an egg allegedly thrown at the chairman, Mr R B Belcher of Blockley, and an attempt physically to depose him; accusations of lies and insults; cheers for the National Church and for the Queen, and counter cheers for "Brummagem" (the speaker); and a full hour of uproar, during which supporters of the Church sang 'Rule Britannia' and no business could be conducted.

As one may imagine, some aspects of Mr Irvine's ministry may not have been to the taste of all its members.

But this was a period of strong Baptist revival – as well as the political involvement that almost inevitably accompanied it.

It must have been an exciting time in Campden. Sadly, however, it was brought to an end in October 1878 with the sudden death of Rev Irvine, aged 59.

Mr Irvine's funeral was well attended and blinds were generally drawn in the town.

Ritchie Irvine's name is clearly one that deserves to be remembered by the Baptists of Campden. To his efforts they owe the present chapel and its manse and, possibly, the very survival of the Baptist cause in the town.

Mr Irvine's death was a loss that seems to have left the church somewhat bereft. With a number of previously active members leaving the church or the area, the church was described in 1879 as "a few sheep lacking a shepherd".

A pessimistic interlude – the church in agricultural depression

THE remaining sheep were without a shepherd for about a year after Mr Irvine's death.

With the renewed help of Mr R B Belcher they were then put in touch with Mr John Taylor, a student from Pastor's College in Stoke Newington, who "preached with a view" for four Sundays in the summer of 1879, and was then invited to the pastorate for one year – an invitation he took up in October the same year.

Mr Taylor was asked to stay on and, in fact, stayed for five-and-a-half years. For a young man to have to succeed a minister as active, popular and well known as W Ritchie Irvine was an enormous task. Moreover, Mr Taylor's ministry took place during a very difficult period, coinciding with the onset of the great agricultural depression that brought much distress to the town.

He seems to have been dogged by financial concerns; by an impression on his part of lack of support from all but a few members; and by some decline in

general support for the church.

Nevertheless, there were a number of baptisms in the first six months of his ministry, and six new members were admitted, making a total membership in 1880 of 27, rising to 31 by 1884.

This period also witnessed a time of increasing drunkenness and of the promotion of the Temperance movement in Campden. Already in 1877 the Band of Hope had been formed at the Baptist Church and the Campden Wonder Lodge of the Independent Order of Good Templars held regular meetings in the

Baptist Schoolroom. In March 1879, for example, the *Evesham Journal* reported a public meeting and programme of songs there by the Good Templars, said to have been crowded to excess. A similar meeting is reported the following year, with solos recitations, sacred songs by the choir and addresses by members. The Good Templars Lodge, however, had difficulties with the Baptist Church, both in keeping to the restrictions required on its activities, and in particular in being able to pay the charges made for heating and lighting.

The finances of the church seem to have occupied much of the Pastor's attention, and as he was reported as saying: "The proportion of the Pastor's stipend received from pew rents and collection boxes is very low compared with the indications made when he was invited here. What does come in comes from a very few, and it is necessary to make repeated calls on those few."

Nevertheless, at this time the church

seems to have had an encouragingly strong Sunday School with 95 scholars and 11 teachers in 1884. Large Sunday School treats were held every year, usually in the orchard of Berrington Mill, and on one occasion the scholars, emulating the Church of England Sunday School, paraded through the town to the Mill carrying banners. The school had a lending library which was well used, books taken home by the children and also read by their parents.

However, Mr Taylor expressed notes of pessimism about "a dissenting church with a great Church of England influence around us" and made representations to the Education Authority about what is mysteriously called "undue influence by another Sunday School in the town drawing scholars away from the Baptist Sunday School."

It was probably inevitable then that on January 4th, 1885, the rather pessimistic Mr Taylor should speak to his congregation at evening service in the following

words: "I wish the members of the little church here, and its seat holders, to know that I now resign the ministry here... I am thankful to the few who help me in the work here, but they are far from being enough to properly work a dependent nonconformist chapel and school."

Mr Taylor left the church at the end of March 1885. Not only had he come away from the large and enthusiastic churches of Dr Spurgeon's London, taken up his ministry in this quiet country town and sustained it during a most difficult period in the church's history, but by his entries in the Church Book he also provided us with insights into the very real problems and concerns of a minister trying to lead a church in Campden's situation. The problems of gaining support is mentioned by several of his predecessors but none gives such a clear glimpse as he does of the difficulties felt by the pastor of such a small, impoverished church such as Campden then was.

Revival under Rev Philip Lewis

IN May 1885, a church meeting was held at which a proposal was "carried with perfect unanimity (every member voting)", that a hearty invitation be made to Rev Philip Lewis to become pastor.

He would have a house and a salary of £50 per annum guaranteed for the first year, and an assurance that the church would do its utmost to increase the amount.

Mr Lewis had already spent two Sundays and the intervening week in Campden and had gained high appreciation. Indeed the report to the Oxford Association written just after this meeting states categorically that "the cause would revive if he did accept".

Mr Lewis was a Welshman who had spent 19 years as a pastor in industrial Yorkshire.

He did not accept the invitation immediately, but came again to preach, and then considered the matter with his wife and held discussions with the Association and the newly-formed Baptist Union.

He then sent a letter to "The Church of Christ at Chipping Campden" which is worth quoting as it shows some of the character of Mr Lewis. After expressing his appreciation of the members' confidence he continued:

"After serving 20 years in the busiest parts of Yorkshire, I feel I am not well fitted by habit and taste to settle down to work in a town so quiet and Conservative as Campden.

"In the matter of salary, we believe you will do your best and of you we can expect no more. Yet as I have been used to receive from £100 or £130 per annum and some help besides, we do feel what you offer is, as Rev T H Booth says, 'manifestly inadequate to our support'.

"Now, if we were to decide this matter on the grounds of our natural inclination and of salary we should be obliged to say 'no' to your invitation. But we have considered your invitation under the Cross of Our Lord and have the 'unanimous and hearty wish' of a warm-hearted though weak church. We are therefore compelled to set aside lower considerations and as constrained by the spirit of Christ and the hope of serving Him amongst you, to say 'Yes'. We must be

"A revival of the Baptist cause in Campden was on the way with renewed enthusiasm among the congregation."

of one mind and one heart with the Lord! And we must work together heartily and devotedly, striving to revive the Christian ideal of character, and of the church. Then we shall be blessed."

Mr Lewis began his ministry in July the same year and his recognition services were held in September. By this time big increases were reported in the evening congregations and funds were being raised for new hymn books for visitors and scholars. Two months later 100

Bibles were bought for the Sunday School, money was being collected for the clothing club and several new members – mainly people new to the town were received. A revival of the Baptist cause in Campden was on the way.

The main manifestation of this revival was in the renewed enthusiasm among the congregation.

Major well-attended celebrations included the tea meetings, held two or three times a year, and the Harvest meeting.

Funds were raised in 1887 to buy a new harmonium, opened by Mr F Schreiber at a ceremony at Harvest Thanksgiving that year. A series of lectures by visiting speakers began in 1886.

There were three main aspects to Mr Lewis' ministry in these early years: evangelism, efforts to relieve the continuing distress in the town, and action on a wider political front.

The results of evangelism are to be seen in the increasing numbers of baptisms and acceptances into membership from the late 1880s; in the opening in March 1891 of a Mission Room in the old Quaker Meeting House at Broad Campden, with well-filled evening services; and in the Sunday School activities.

The church's work to alleviate the distress caused by the depression increased and the Pastor took the lead in forming a relief fund for the poor. In 1888 coal and bread were distributed to the needy.

Another aspect of social work was in the temperance meetings held occasionally in the Town Hall and elsewhere under the leadership of Rev Lewis.

Like Rev Irvine 15 years previously,

Rev Lewis' attitude to social issues was also exemplified by activities in a wider field.

In December 1886, he spoke at a meeting held to consider setting up a workings men's club in the town and he was elected on to the committee appointed to establish it.

The following year he spoke strongly for the establishment of a reading room for working people as an appropriate way of celebrating Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

Indeed, an experiment was started at the end of 1891 to open the Baptist schoolroom to men over 14 for two evenings a week for reading, writing, quiet games and conversation.

Like other local Baptist ministers, Mr Lewis became active politically and got strongly involved in Liberal politics and for a time was secretary of the Liberal Association.

Throughout the history of the Baptist Church in Campden, the overwhelming influence of the pastor on the strength of the Baptist cause, and the way that cause was manifested, is evident. An energetic, caring and evangelistic minister can add much to the life of the church.

This notable ministry of Rev Philip Lewis was closed, apparently unexpectedly, early in 1892 after he had accepted an invitation from the Baptist Church at Romsey, Hants.

He preached his farewell sermon on March 27th. The precise circumstances that led to his departure are not known.

Mr Lewis's successor was Rev G H Harris, who came to the church from Guernsey to take up the pastorate two or three months later.

During the new minister's first year a well attended evangelical mission was held and following this a number of new members were baptised into the church.

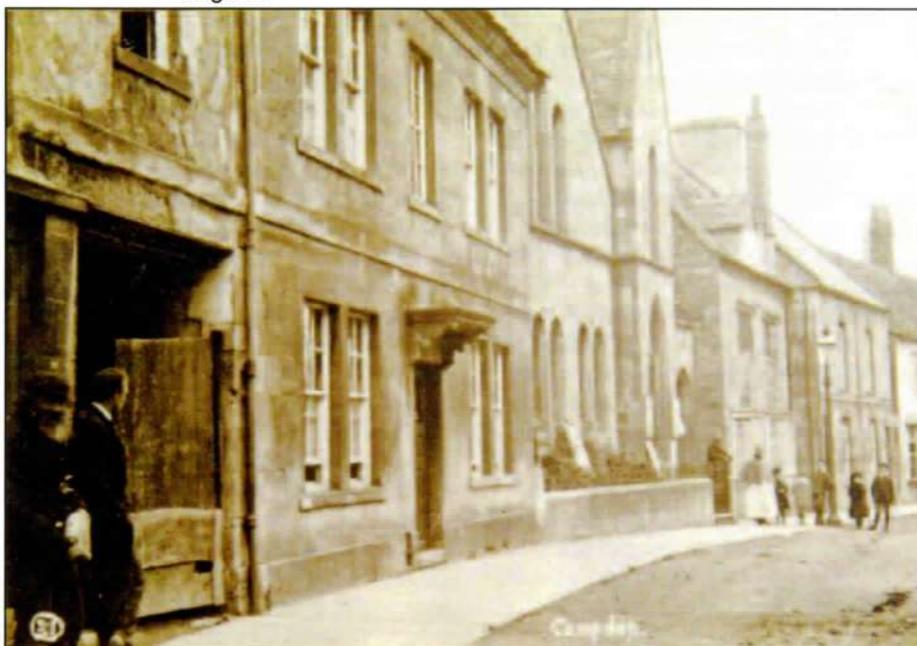
The church's debts seem to have been reduced and in 1893 funds were raised to make renovations to the church. New gas lights and heating stoves were installed, matting placed in the aisles and the platform carpeted.

The church seems to have continued to prosper and the harvest services of 1894 are reported to have been "the most successful of their kind ever held in the chapel".

However, the minister seems to have been dogged by ill health and some of the work is said to have been affected by this.

It seems, for example, that the Broad Campden mission station was closed. In April 1895, following a severe attack of influenza, Mr Harris gave notice of his intention to resign the pastorate in order to take a long rest before seeking another church. He left for Eastbourne at the end of the following month.

It was known that Rev Lewis's heart



The pastor with children pictured outside the Baptist Church in the early part of the 20th Century.

was still warm towards Campden and, on the departure of Mr Harris, an informal approach was made to Rev Lewis assuring him that there was a general wish for his return and asking him if he would allow his name to be put forward for the vacant ministry.

Mr Lewis replied that any "hearty and unanimous invitation from his dear old friends should have his most respectful, earnest and prayerful consideration".

In fact, the church did unanimously resolve to invite him to return to the pastorate. He visited the church to preach on July 21st and at the evening service he publicly announced his acceptance of the invitation, which he took up in October 1895.

His welcome took place after a crowded harvest thanksgiving and consisted of a tea meeting attended by over 100 people, including many visiting ministers and friends from neighbouring churches.

Signs of improvement soon became evident. In May 1896 the Broad Campden mission station was renovated and reopened with a large public meeting.

About the same time it was decided to extend the Sunday School building at Campden so as to provide four extra classrooms, at a cost of £277, and to install a central heating apparatus, at a further cost of £48, to replace the seven stoves with which the buildings had previously been heated.

This was done and the new work was opened at a public meeting in November 1896, at which time memorial plaques to Rev Elisha Smith and Rev Spiller were moved from the graveyard to the church and some other plaques placed in the schoolroom.

So Mr Lewis's ministry continued as before with regular festivals like church anniversaries, annual mission services,

harvest thanksgiving celebrations, Sunday School anniversaries and treats and occasional lectures by visiting speakers.

A special evangelistic mission was held in January 1897 and, at the request of the church, a temperance mission was run two years later, as a result of which a Band of Hope was again formed, with 100 members.

In May 1899, the Oxfordshire Association held its annual meetings at Campden, the first time this had happened for many years.

In 1906, 120 scholars and friends attended a New Year's treat held in the School and classrooms.

In July 1907 a large summer gathering was held to celebrate the 244th anniversary of the Baptist Church and the 22nd anniversary of the pastor's settlement in Campden, along with the 40th anniversary of his ministry.

At this time the church was reopened after extensive repairs had been carried out to the building.

In 1909 Rev Lewis expressed his intention to resign the pastorate on the grounds of his age, being in his 72nd year.

As Rev R C Morgan says in his short history of the church, his ministry was "rich in its results and had a lasting effect in Campden."

He was presented with a solid silver tea and coffee service made by W Bailey of the Guild of Handicrafts at a cost of £22, paid for by a large number of friends in the church and town.

Mr Lewis was made a life deacon of the church and later became a JP. He stayed in Campden and died aged 89.

He had continued to take a keen interest in the church where he frequently chaired meetings and committees. Indeed, he was asked to resume the

pastorate once again for a short period during the First World War when the church was without a pastor.

It was resolved that Rev John Evans be invited to come to preach with a view to the pastorate and in April that year Mr Evans was asked to take pastoral oversight of the church. His annual salary was to be £73 – including the manse about £90.

In his letter of acceptance, Rev Evans said: "Believing that there is useful work for the Master in your midst, I consider your invitation as the call of Christ and give my ministry in this part of his vineyard."

Rev Evans entered the pastorate in July 1909 and in September that year his Recognition Service was held, followed by a tea in the schoolroom and a public meeting. In September 1909 it was resolved that the pastor be asked to order two-and-a-half tons of coke for the furnace in preparation for the winter.

The following month, the pastor started week-evening services at the Broad Campden branch.

During the next few years, a number of special services were held at Campden, in addition to the more traditional ones. These included 'Bunyan Sunday' in November 1909 when the pastor gave addresses on the life and writings of John Bunyan with offerings going towards a memorial window of John Bunyan in Westminster Abbey.

In April 1911 a special service was held in celebration of the tercentenary of the Authorised version of the English Bible (1611). The pastor preached in the morning on "Our indebtedness to the

English Bible" and in the evening on "The Story of the English Bible".

Another 'themed' service occurred in 1913 when 'Livingstone Centenary' services were held at the church.

At this time, 'pulpit exchanges' were quite frequent, when the pastor would preach at another church in the Cotswolds and that church's pastor would come to Campden.

In July 1912, the Baptist Union Caravan Mission visited Campden for two weeks, holding daily services in the Lower High Street.

The outbreak of War in 1914 and the effects it had on the life of the church is given hardly any mention in the church minute book. The only item that is recorded is that in 1915 a parcel of goods from the Campden United Sewing Meeting was sent to Baptist House to be sent to soldiers on the front.

In May 1916, Rev Evans announced that he had received an invitation from a church in Nottinghamshire to become its pastor. At an evening service in June he told the church that he had completed exactly seven years in Campden and these years had left him with many precious memories which he would never forget. He preached his farewell sermon on September 24th.

After Rev Evans's departure, ex-Pastor Philip Lewis was appointed superintendent and pastor in charge until another was able to take up the work of the pastor. The church went six months without a full-time pastor.

In March 1917 Rev C H Robinson from Northampton became pastor. However, he resigned in July 1919 and preached

his farewell sermon in September. He and his wife were said to be 'highly beloved' and left Campden with the good wishes of many in the town and the congregation.

A note in the church minute book points out that Rev Robinson had exchanged pulpits with Rev Charles Hobbs in August 1919 with a view to Rev Hobbs taking up the pastorate at Campden.

After being invited to become the church's new pastor that September, Rev Hobbs began his ministry in Campden in October 1919 and was formally welcomed to the town with a public meeting.

However, Rev Hobbs' pastorate was to be one of the shortest on record. In February 1921 he announced his intention to leave Campden, having received an invitation from Bourton-on-the-Water Baptist Church to resume the pastorate there. He planned to leave Campden soon after Easter.

Rev Philip Lewis expressed his sadness at Rev Hobbs' resignation so soon after coming to Campden.

However, before leaving the pastorate, Rev Hobbs had spoken to Rev Robert Braithwaite from Eynsham, Oxfordshire, about the pastorate at Campden.

Rev Braithwaite was invited to preach and was unanimously invited to become the new pastor, taking up his position in June 1921.

On Sunday, December 6th, 1921, an oak chair and a tray of individual communion cups were dedicated as a memorial to the men who had laid down their lives in the War, and as a thanksgiving for those who had safely returned.

Growth during the inter-war period

WITH Pastor Braithwaite leading the church, by 1924 the communion roll stood at 39, there were 30 Sunday School scholars and five teachers.

The Band of Hope was also thriving with 106 on the roll with an average attendance of 60. In 1925 it was resolved that it be renamed the Campden Baptist Band of Hope.

The church's Sisterhood was established in 1924 following a request for use of the schoolroom for a women's meeting every Thursday afternoon.

After discussion by the church meeting it was resolved "The use of the room be granted on the condition the meeting be on distinctly spiritual lines and seen as a branch of the church".

Later in the year "universal pleasure" was expressed at the success that Mrs Badham, the leader, was making with

the Sisterhood.

On June 4th, 1924, the church celebrated the pastor's anniversary with worship followed by a public meeting.

At a church meeting held on August 6th, 1924, the Pastor offered to present the church with a pipe organ which was then at Chipping Norton Baptist Church. The offer was accepted with thanks.

In 1925, after nine baptisms and six transfers from other churches, the communion roll had risen to 51. It was reported that the newly-formed Young People's Society was meeting a long-felt want in the church.

In December 1925, the pastor said he planned to retire the following September after five-and-a-half years and was thanked for his "splendid" work.

By this time attendance at the afternoon Sunday School had increased to 42 scholars and the Sisterhood had a weekly attendance of 40.

With the retirement of Rev Braithwaite, several ministers visited with a view and

it was eventually unanimously agreed in November 1926 to invite Rev F A Jackson to become pastor, which he accepted the following month.

In accepting the invitation, Rev Jackson said: "I believe there is an opportunity for sound and enduring work. My prayer is that we may prove to be an enrichment to every man and woman and boy and girl who shall be associated with us. We have a great God and Saviour, a great Gospel and a great work."

In 1928, the secretary, Mr How reported "a very happy year under Rev Jackson with services well attended, especially in the evenings" and by 1929 membership had risen to 63.

On January 28th, 1929, the minister suffered a great bereavement in the death of Mrs Jackson.

There was controversy during the Christmas of 1929 over a proposal to hold a Sunday School nativity entitled "The Shepherd's Children".

The church meeting heard of fears by a

few that the play contained Roman Catholic doctrine and the play was read for the judgment of the church on this matter.

A vote was taken as to whether the play should be given and, with the exception of four dissentients, it was agreed that it be given but it was resolved "that the deacons and teachers meet to delete from the play any word or phrase that could possibly give offence".

Among the names submitted for baptism at that time were Alice Benfield, Ethel Benfield and Jessie Benfield.

By 1931 the Young People's Fellowship had a membership of 64 with an average attendance of 50. In 1932 the envelope system of collection was adopted.

After almost 10 years of ministry in Campden, in September 1936 Rev Jackson did not offer himself for re-election. Church members spoke of "the high esteem in which Mr Jackson is held, his many-sided activities, his fine presentation of the truth and his friendly thought for all."

Mr Jackson was one of the founders of Toc H in the town and did a great work on behalf of the unemployed.

"No words," it would be said, "would express how much he would be missed in Campden."

A public meeting in the town hall marked his departure, at which presentations were made, and speeches expressing the town's appreciation of his services.

In December 1937 it was agreed to invite Rev O P J Smith to the pastorate and he remained until 1945.

Mr Smith was a man of fine character and rich experience, who rendered invaluable service to the church during his ministry.

At this time, as well as the morning and evening services, Wednesday evening services were also held at the church.

The outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 had an impact on the activities of Chipping Campden Baptist Church, as it did on everywhere else.

In 1939 the school hall was requisitioned by the Army who undertook to "black out" the church, which saved the church a considerable sum of money.

It was reported that "very good" meetings for evacuee children under 14 were held under the leadership of Mrs O P J Smith and the pastor reported how good it was to see a good number of soldiers in the morning services.

In 1940 it was proposed that, in the case of an emergency, a skeleton committee consisting of the deacons be formed to protect the church premises.

It was also agreed that a list of all the men and women from the church serving with the forces be tabulated and kept up to date and exhibited in the church and regularly mentioned by name in prayers. Mr Joe Warrington was asked to enscribe the names.

In 1942 Rev Smith spoke of the importance of the prayer meeting and asked for greater support.

At the end of the war in 1945 a special service of thanksgiving was held at the church.

Declining membership and the prospect of the church closing

In December 1945 it was agreed to ask Rev S G Dudley to the pastorate for a five-year term, which he accepted.

Mr Dudley was formerly of the Baptist Church, Barnstable, and later a chaplain in Her Majesty's forces.

By 1946 church membership stood at 59, with 17 members from outside Campden.

In February 1948, Miss G M How intimated to the church that she would be leaving Campden the following month. She had been a member of the church for 24 years and during that period had served on the diaconate, as church secretary, Sunday School superintendent and president of the Sisterhood.

Presentations were made to Miss How by the various organisations in the church and, in response, she presented a piano to the church in memory of her mother and brother, who had also been members of the church for many years.

This year also marked the passing of Mr William Stokes, who had served the church as deacon for many years and in September 1949 the church suffered another grievous loss with the passing of Mr Thomas Heritage who had been a deacon and treasurer for many years.

By 1950, it was reported that the church was facing difficulties and a vote was held amongst church members on



Wendy Hardiman's (nee Lockyer) Sunday School Certificate of Merit dating from 1959.

whether Rev Dudley should continue as pastor. They voted 17-7 in favour of him staying and he remained until 1955.

In 1952, Rev Dudley reported that a four-day mission held in Stow had been "most unsatisfactory" with very little preparation and no atmosphere created to form the basis for a mission. There was very little difference in attendance at Sunday services and he was not in favour of holding a similar event in Campden. At this time church member-

ship stood at 41.

The church was given encouragements from visiting preachers, including Rev J Rollinson who said there was particularly in our country churches a spirit of defeatism, people were hostile to any profession of Christianity and indifferent to public worship. He believed, however, that the religious programme on the wireless was having a quiet but profound effect on the people.

He added: "We must not worry too much, we must be of good cheer. We are a small community in a larger community composing approximately 12 million Baptists throughout the world - it is possible a revival might take place at any moment."

By 1953, deaths and families moving away from the area had led to declining membership with an average morning congregation of just 17 and 15 in the evening. There was also a decline in the Sunday School from 18 to 6. No anniversary service was held that year due to the small number of children.

On a brighter note, however, a women's rally had proved a great success with the church filled to capacity.

On May 27th, 1955, a special church meeting was called to discuss the smallness of congregations and the very low church offerings.

"The deacons were very worried regarding the future of the church and they were doubtful of appointing a new

Happy memories of a time when life was so different

Wendy Hardiman (nee Lockyer) has memories going back further than anyone at Chipping Campden Baptist Church today. Wendy was born in 1947 to Ernie and Dilys Lockyer and was taken to church from a very young age. Here she recalls some of her early memories of Sunday School more than half a century ago and of the church in a very different era.



THE Schoolroom, as it was called back in the 1940s and 50s, was quite dark and cold.

It had very ancient heating boilers and in the winter we had to put extra electric fires on. There were dark blue curtains at the frosted windows. The lower half of the walls were dark stained wooden panels and the walls were cream.

There were bookshelves at the back of the room and some sliding doors which had medals and cups locked in them.

There were several rows of chairs getting smaller in size for the little ones at the front.

There was a piano which we all tried to play Chopsticks on when nobody was

about.

There was a lovely picture of Jesus on the wall holding a small child in his arms and other children around him, and there was a framed Roll of Honour in blue and gold on the wall with all our names on it.

At the front was a teacher's desk so it was very much like school.

We learnt to sing Psalms and to recite them and every week learnt part of the scriptures and every year we had scripture exams, just like school.

Sunday School in the earlier years was held in the afternoon as the minister would take it and had to be free for morning and evening services, although this system did change, so my brother Clive and myself would go to Sunday School, then to the evening service with

our parents, Ernie and Dilys Lockyer, and afterwards Dad would treat us to a packet of crisps and pop from the Red Lion on the way home.

We also visited other churches for services with children. We went to the Methodist Church which was opposite the Catholic Church and now is a private house, and we went to Mickleton Methodist.

The first minister I can remember was Rev Morgan – not a big man but a very passionate Welsh Baptist. He had a wife and daughter Clarice. Clarice was one of the most attractive women I have seen but sadly she must have had polio or some problem when she was young as she walked with a caliper on one leg.

Clarice was a music teacher at



A harvest festival display of yesteryear.

Moreton-in-Marsh Secondary Modern School and taught us there and took us for music lessons at Sunday School and formed a Church Choir.

Rev Morgan was quite strict with us and I remember getting told off for wearing trousers to church. It was not the thing to do then.

He was a good preacher, very passionate and used to wave his arms around a lot. I remember my Mum and Alice holding their breath during one service as they had put vases of flowers on the pulpit and they were in danger of being knocked flying.

Dad also had a chuckle one evening as Rev Morgan was preaching about a drought and he opened his arms upwards and said: "Water, we need water from Heaven" and it was pouring with rain outside.

I remember Rev Morgan being taken ill and he died at the Manse but I do not know what happened to his wife and Clarice as they moved away, possibly back to Wales.

Mr Dudley I do not remember if he was a Reverend or not, but he took Sunday School and arranged outings to the sea-side.

Ron Clarke was a lay preacher. A big man with a booming voice, he helped to run the church and took us for Sunday School. He loved singing and also had a choir at church.

We had to learn verses from the Bible off by heart and stand in front of the congregation and recite them. This put me off speaking in public ever again.

Ron was good fun and he took us on trips to Dudley Zoo and Weston-super-Mare which I enjoyed very much.

We had Christmas parties in the schoolroom, all decorated and trestle tables laid out with jelly and ice-cream, sausage rolls and fairy cakes. We played games of pass the parcel, musical chairs and blind man's buff – there was no such thing as a disco, somebody had to play the piano.

Rev Newton I cannot remember him having a lot to do with the Sunday School. I was at Sunday School until I was about 14 years old and then went to church with Mum and Dad in the evening. Rev Newton married me in 1968 at the church to my husband Michael. Rev Newton was in touch with my parents until 2002 when he last wrote to Dad after my Mum died. We have heard nothing from him since.

Christmas was lovely at church. We had a tree and the end of the pews were lit with real candles. The Carol Service was always well attended, even when there were only a few church members – the same at Easter and the harvest festival.

Harvest festival was my favourite time. My Dad and other men used to lay the trestle tables slanting from the pulpit down to the floor and we used to arrange all the fruit and vegetables on them and a bread sheaf baked by a local baker in the middle. It smelt wonderful, all the

mixture of the fruits and the bread.

Outside used to be an old gas street lamp and a sheaf of wheat or corn was wrapped around the lamp so everybody knew it was Harvest festival.

Later in the week there was a Harvest supper and the food was auctioned off or given to the needy as food parcels.

There was some fund-raising: The ladies occasionally had jumble sales and I remember summer fetes being held in the Manse garden. The garden stretched right up to the house then with a long lawn and there were tall fir trees separating the lawn from the cemetery.

Sunday School was occasionally held on the lawn as well.

We had strawberry cream teas sometimes on the lawn or at Mr Reg Smith's house which was in Back Ends. He was a local market gardener and grew all the strawberries down Station Road.

Mrs Payne from Catbrook was the organist. She walked with a limp and wore big hats. She was always sat very upright when playing the organ. At the back of the organ sat Charlie Benfield, Alice's husband, who used to pump the bellows of the organ by hand every service until an electric pump was installed.

There was a Christmas Fair held in the Town Hall for many years to raise funds and I remember it was my job to make sweets to sell. Most of the stalls were full of handmade goods and were very popular.

Upstairs above the schoolroom one of the rooms was used for Toc H meetings and at Christmas we were not able to have Sunday School as the room was used by the Post Office for sorting the extra post.

• Wendy's parents, Ernie and Dilys Lockyer, are sadly no longer with us but Wendy is still a regular attender at the church.



The old church organ which Charlie Benfield used to pump.

pastor to take the place of Mr Dudley," reported the church meeting book. It was felt that unless more support was forthcoming the church would have to close down. The deacons met with the area superintendent on three occasions and had communicated with all the people who might be interested in accepting the pastorate but without success.

A possible link-up with Shipston was suggested and a meeting between the deacons of the two churches was held but not considered possible.

It was decided that, to avoid getting further into debt, the church should close at the end of the year.

"It is hoped that a possible link-up with the Wesleyan Chapel in Campden will be considered in the near future," reported the meeting book.

However, a further meeting was held in May 1956, addressed by Rev H Taylor, who stated that the attendance of 14 was much better than had been antici-

pated and he felt there was a happy spirit within the church. A meeting was called to consider the appointment of Rev R C Morgan from Leafield, Oxford.

In July 1956, Mr Morgan wrote: "I am deeply touched that the invitation is unanimous and I feel that there is a divine leading for both myself and the church. I can assure the church at Chipping Campden that I shall give it my very best both in the pulpit and, above all, in pastoral work."

Rev Morgan commenced his ministry on September 2nd, 1956.

At the church meeting held on April 30th, 1957, Mr F Hirst, secretary, gave a review of the year's work, stating that the church had received a new lease of life under the new ministry. Congregations and finances had improved.

During 1958, a new venture was made – a series of services entitled "Spotlight Sunday" were held during the winter months. The pastor preached on a cho-

sen, or given subject and at the close of the services an adjournment was made to the schoolroom for a social hour and opportunities were given for questions and discussion on the subject preached.

At the church meeting in March 1959, the Rev Morgan was re-invited to the pastorate without time limit.

In 1962 Chipping Campden Baptist Church celebrated its tercentenary.

There is an air of mystery about the history of the church between 1962 and 1966 due to the indecipherable handwriting of the church secretary in the minute books, but it seems Rev Morgan departed during this period, leaving the church without a minister for a period of time.

One thing we do know is that among the lay preachers during this period was Denis Akehurst from Stratford who came to preach on May 10th, 1964. Denis passed away in March 2007 but the Akehurst family now play a most valuable role in the life of CCBC.

Link-up with Shipston is agreed following a lengthy interregnum

In March 1966 the church meeting agreed that the manse should be sold and a more suitable property purchased for the minister.

At this same meeting, Mr R Smith announced that, after 35 years as treasurer, he felt he could no longer offer his services in this position.

A proposal to establish a 'group ministry' in the Cotswolds was discussed but it was felt that there was room for a full-time minister in Campden and efforts would continue to effect this.

In May 1966, the deacons of Campden, Blockley and Shipston Baptist churches met to discuss the future of the three churches as Sister Eileen was leaving Blockley and Rev Jarvis was leaving Shipston. It was suggested that Campden manse should be renovated and not sold and that the sale of Blockley manse should be used to help finance this. A new minister at Campden would ultimately be responsible for all three churches.

It was agreed that the renovations to the Campden manse should begin immediately and an anonymous gift of £1,000 had been made to the church for this purpose.

Mr Stokes said that a letter should be sent to the donor and he was sure that it was evidence of God's influence in the midst of the church.

Mr Smith seconded the resolution that the church accepts this "wonderful gift",

adding that whenever the church was in a tight spot, something of this nature occurred.

In October 1966, the church meeting voted to invite Rev J Colwill Newton to the pastorate and in November that year he accepted the invitation to become pastor of Campden and Shipston churches. Blockley remained separate for the time being. It was agreed that Campden and Shipston should remain two separate entities but that Rev Newton should divide his time between preaching at the two churches.

At the church AGM in January 1967, David Arthey, in his secretary's report, reflected on how much the church had to thank God for in the past year.

He said: "Whilst the church has been through times of difficulty and disappointment, it has never really looked back during its interregnum, but certainly the forward pace was quickened from the time the anonymous gift was made."

David's report also paid tribute to Mr R Smith who had served the church for so many years and who, as well as playing a leading part in the life of the church, did many important things for which he received little credit.

Rev Newton arrived in Campden in February 1967 and one of his first actions was to call for the re-establishment of a Sunday School, with Mr Robertson elected the first Superintendent of the Sunday School.

It was also agreed that a midweek meeting should be started and that a

missionary council be formed.

1967 also saw the arrival of Miss Win Judd from Acocks Green Baptist Church, who agreed to work the BMS birthday scheme in the church.

January 1968 saw the transfer into membership of Douglas and Marjery Bell, previously of Winchcombe, and Mr Bell agreed to become church treasurer following the resignation of Mr Robertson who wished to concentrate on youth work. At this time there were 56 children on the Sunday School register, with an average attendance of around 30.

The Sisterhood, which actively supported the missionary work of Miss Helen Brackenbury in Papua New Guinea, was running very successfully and had 31 members at this time.

Despite the Sunday School's healthy position earlier in the year, Mr Robertson was to soon move away from Campden and Mr Bell and Mrs Jenny Arthey took over but on their first Sunday in November 1968 only three children were present, as a lot of families were under the impression the Sunday School was not continuing. However, they visited several homes that week in an effort to dispel the idea and hoped the Sunday School would be built up again. But by 1969 the average attendance had declined to just 10 children.

In his report to the church AGM of 1969, secretary David Arthey said he felt little progress had been made during the past 12 months and called on the church for better things in future. Whilst he felt

My story

James Keitley

How God has taken a true Campden man full circle

I was born in Chipping Campden in 1967. Growing up in this small town was such a privilege.

There were none of the dangers young people face today with the freedom to go out even as a youngster with your friends and play.

As I learnt at the secondary school my interest was elsewhere. My parents ran the local food takeaway business. From the age of 12 I did various part-time jobs.

I knew at an early age when I left school I could work with my parents. So I left school at 15 with not the greatest of qualifications but I had got a job.

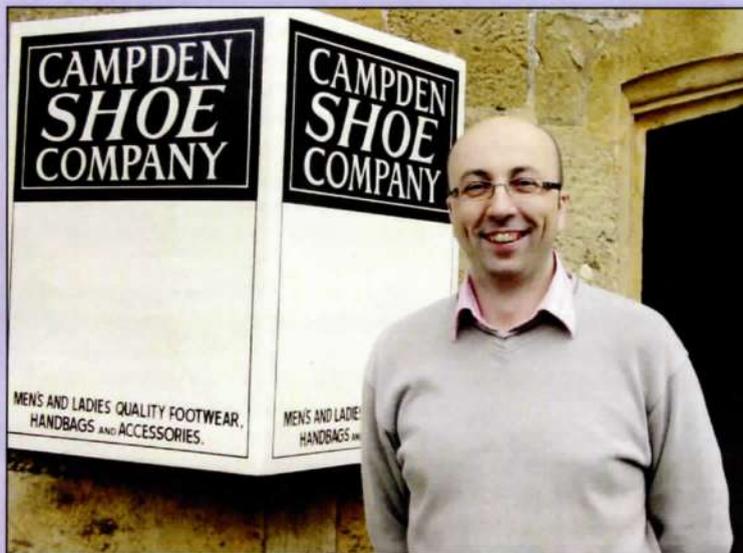
I worked with my parents for almost nine years until I was nearly 24. Intermingled with my work I took on the pleasure of many a teenager and frequented any public house possible. Many a night I returned home having consumed far too much alcohol, collapsed into bed and awoke to start work at seven in the morning.

This was my life – work all day, play all night. What I didn't realise was that, in hindsight, I was searching for some sort of friendship or relationship. In my childhood I was a shy child who sometimes stuttered through lack of confidence. I grew up in a 'secure' family unit but not always aware of an open affectionate family. So I would go to a pub, meet people, socialise, then after a few months move on.

This 'circle of life' continued relentlessly until the Christmas of 1989. I met a Christian couple called Christine and Phil Hindle. They worked with the young people at Campden Baptist Church and would also socialise in local pubs. One evening I met them in my usual state of mind and we chatted. They invited me to church! Well! Perhaps foolishly I agreed to join them the first Sunday in the New Year of 1990. I sat there amazed and felt 'at home'. So I continued to attend. I also went to the young people's group after the evening service usually held in Phil and Christine's house.

I also still worked for my parents, even though I had discovered something that seemed to fulfil what I was craving. That acceptance, that security, that relationship. So week in, week out I went to church for over three months. Then in April 1990 as Easter approached something changed. Good Friday, April 13th, there was to be a service at 10am. Now as I worked in the mornings I made a decision to start early so I could be at this service.

Just before 10am I shuffled in and sat at the back, out of the way. Then Karen Dawe (now Mrs Pete Lloyd) sat next to me followed swiftly by Karen Drew (now Mrs Ian Purcell). Typical! No peace! Then our Pastor, Howard, started the service and we sang the hymn, 'There is a green hill far away.' One verse in and all of a sudden I was starting to cry. But how embarrassing because I had got women next to me! But as I continued to cry non-stop for the whole



Sole trader: James Keitley proudly stands at the door of the Campden Shoe Company, also known as Jimmy's Shoos.

40-minute service how thankful for the two Karens because like all good women they had loads of tissues!

As the service drew to a close people went into the back room for coffee but I remained a quivering wreck! But thankfully the late John Hudson came to me and through talking I realised that Jesus had died for me and from that day I was born again.

However, don't think it all became easy, far from it. I spent the summer tormented, fighting to grapple with what had happened. I didn't understand. I went away in September for an unusual holiday (that's another story!) and left armed with books to read from my lovely pastor. One book though I couldn't put down: 'The case against Christ'. From what I can remember the writer was trying to dismiss Christianity only to be converted!

Anyhow, I came home to face a new chapter in my life. Several things happened over a short period of time where on November 10th, 1990, I took the decision to partake in believer's baptism. Fully immersed under water I still remember to this day, albeit a split second, I saw a brilliant light shining on me which I struggle to describe.

I still continued to work with my parents but found it increasingly hard. My heart was elsewhere. The following Easter (1991) I went to Spring Harvest in Minehead and again, after several bizarre situations, felt called to youth work and in September 1991 commenced part-time at Cheltenham Youth for Christ, Monday to Thursday. Then I still worked on Friday and Saturday with my parents. This continued through to the winter of 1993. My parents business closed as they retired, I left Youth for Christ and around March time started to work for Campden Baptist Church doing numerous tasks. At the time I was waiting to have an operation on my back which took place in

June.

Following recuperation, my friend from Youth for Christ invited me to a summer youth camp in Okehampton. It was there I met Alison in August 1993. I moved to Bristol in March 1994, unemployed but preparing to get married in the July.

Alison and I bought a house in Bristol, we worked, joined a church and settled down. June 1998 two gorgeous young babies were born, Jessica and Emily! Then, again, after numerous events, as a family we set up home near to Chipping Campden in January 2002.

September 2004 was an exciting time where I opened my own shoe shop, having been given clearly a vision from God back in June to set this up. Then sadly in December 2005 Alison and I made the painful decision to separate.

In July 2006 I moved out from the family home which was painful at the time. Then Summer of 2007 bought a great moment when Dawn (from the flower shop next door) entered my life. As I write this in January 2008 my business continues to grow and my relationship with Dawn blossoms (if you excuse the pun). We are now engaged and Jessica and Emily (and me!) love her lots.

So from humble beginnings being born and growing up in the town, so much has happened. I've gone full circle and love my life so much. In all of the past 18 years God has been at the centre even in the difficult times. He has held my hand, he has carried me and he has let me walk alone but at the end of the day has always and will always be the one I love the most. He has saved me and given me a new life. The friendship/relationship I craved has become real. May whoever reads this be encouraged to go on an adventurous journey with God and discover a new life, which may have its ups and downs and yet is full of countless blessings!

his report was depressing, he hoped he would be able to give a more encouraging one next year.

Rev Newton left the church in 1970.

In his report to the AGM of 1971, David Arthey said the year had been a difficult one for the church.

But he felt that "the problems should now be behind us and we should look to the future for God's support and guidance as to the ministry."

He said there was a work to be done in Campden and we could do it if we did not lose faith.

Mrs Jenny Arthey reported on the Tewkesbury Crusade and said she felt it was a chance for revival in the Cotswolds. She hoped the church would support it.

Miss Judd, the pulpit secretary, reported that she had found 74 speakers over the past year!

In June 1971, an extraordinary meeting of Chipping Campden, Blockley and Paxford group of churches was held to consider Mr C Bristow for the ministry of the churches.

Complete satisfaction was expressed with the services conducted by Mr Bristow the previous Sunday but there was more concern about whether he would consider this group for his future ministry.

"One member wondered if he was not too good for this group and whether we might be unfair in asking him to come," reported the church minute book, but a unanimous decision was made to invite Mr Bristow to the ministry here. He duly accepted and his induction and ordination service took place on September 4th, 1971. At his first church meeting that month, Rev Bristow asked the church to consider several points, including a visitation scheme, as he wished every home in Campden, Blockley and Paxford to be visited and invited to church by means of a letter.

At the AGM of March 1972 secretary

David Arthey said how blessed the church was and that everything indicated the work of the Lord being done in Campden.

The meeting heard that Miss Judd had had an easier year and had only had to find 31 preachers. She asked for reports on both good and bad speakers.

At the AGM of January 1973, David Arthey reported on a year of great progress and paid tribute to the example set by the minister and his wife.

It was agreed that a Covenanters group should be formed with a Bible study on a Sunday and a midweek meeting for other activities. Mrs Bristow was in charge of the thriving girl covenanters and she reported an exciting year with several girls becoming Christians, taking part in services and restarting the CU at school. Unfortunately the boys' covenanters group folded in 1975.

In June 1974 the church agreed to ask Rev Bristow, who had completed three years' probationary period, to continue his ministry. Mr Bristow agreed but he wished to see greater support on Sunday evenings and at the midweek services.

It was agreed at this time to produce a church newsletter, something that had been tried before, with an initial run of 250 copies. Another new initiative was that services should be taped.

In 1975 Mr Bell stepped down as treasurer after seven years as he was moving away from the district. He was replaced by Miss Judd.

Rev Bristow moved to Cirencester in the Spring of 1976.

That July, the church unanimously agreed to invite Mr David Langton and his fiancée Rosemary, who also had the gift of preaching, to the pastorate of Campden, Blockley and Paxford.

Mr Langton's induction service was held on September 25th, 1976, the week after his ordination service.

Reporting to his first AGM in January 1977, Rev Langton said the church was,

and always had been, dependent on the Home Mission Fund, but this situation could not continue for much longer. The survival of the church meant reaching other people for the Lord. The church had a problem of dispersed membership. He asked everyone to think and pray earnestly about evangelism.

The Sunday School had fallen back but the pastor was helping to establish a new Youth Fellowship. It was agreed to organise a rota of stewards to welcome folk at the church door. It was also agreed that at the evening services choruses should be sung before 6.30pm, for a trial period, and if liked by the church, would become a permanent thing.

Plans were in hand for a children's mission led by children's evangelist Stephen English, which was held in the late summer of 1978. By 1978 numbers attending church meetings were down, with just nine members at the May meeting, at which the treasurer, Mark Robinson, reported on the church's "serious" financial position. In March 1979, the church agreed to start tithing its income.

At this time, with low numbers, evening services were held in the schoolroom.

In October 1979, a long discussion took place at the church meeting regarding the fall off in church attendance. "It was said that the warmth and friendliness of the church was no longer noticeable," reads the minute book.

Various reasons were suspected by church members but it was said that the church must put itself right before it could expect others to return. It was agreed to hold a prayer meeting about the situation.

The new decade saw church secretary David Arthey reporting to the January 1980 AGM, not for the first time, on a disappointing year. "We must wait upon the Lord for his leading in the future," he said.

Rev Langton and his wife left the pastorate at the end of February 1980.

Eight years without a pastor...and renewed fears of church closure

THE church decided to postpone appointing a new pastor until the finances were more favourable. Miss Judd stressed that the funds were too low at present.

It was generally felt that the spiritual blessings felt over the past weeks was to be stressed and the church wanted this to continue. Therefore it would be better to continue with lay preachers such as Mr Wheatcroft.

In 1980 church membership stood at 29 with around 13 active members and it was felt that membership needed to be at about 40 to warrant a pastor.

That year the church agreed that Mr and Mrs Don and Edna Wheatcroft could move into the manse rent-free, and repair and decorate it and perform pastoral duties without receiving any financial aid from the church.

Mr Ernie Lockyer was thanked for the lecture he had made and presented to the church.

There were just 11 people present at the 1981 AGM but Dr Arthey gave a positive secretary's report. He said numbers had increased, new people had met with us and there had also been the return of some who had not attended for some time.

"The success, however, is not to be measured only by numbers but by the love and fellowship amongst the congregation," said Dr Arthey.

"This means spiritual progression. And for the future, the church is to look to the



Chipping Campden Baptist Church's congregation in 1984. Back row (left to right): Tim Arthey, Pete Twilley, Alice Benfield, Babs Robinson, Win Judd, Gwen Turner, Phil Arthey, Doris Tarplett, Graham Robinson, Bette Hall, Les Hall. Front row: David Arthey, Jenny Arthey, Olive Bennett, Edna Wheatcroft, Amy Bennett, Don Wheatcroft, Dilys Lockyer, Ernie Lockyer.

Lord for greater success, and not to look back at the problems, and of the financial difficulties, but to trust the Lord and to know that He is with us in the time ahead."

In February 1981 it was reported that the Willersey Fellowship wished to join the fellowship at Campden for services.

Helen Brackenbury was received into membership of the church in April 1983.

That month the question of lady deacons serving at the communion table was raised. They said they would be willing to serve if there were not enough male deacons but "it was felt it was far better to see the gentlemen on the table".

At the AGM of 1984, chaired by secretary David Arthey, he said it had been an extremely encouraging year. There had been a growth in numbers attending evening services and each week the gospel is preached.

An extraordinary meeting was held in March 1984 to discuss the amalgamation of Blockley and Campden fellowships, as the Blockley congregation had been worshipping at Campden for some time and Blockley numbers were insufficient to keep the church open. The amalgamation would include Paxford, too. The Elisha Smith Institute in Blockley was also to be sold. This would mean the funds from all the churches being held jointly.

At the 1985 AGM, Dr Arthey reported

that it had been a year of change. Some members, including Mr and Mrs Wheatcroft, had left, while others, such as Paul and Fiona Bee (who had moved into the manse) had joined.

The fellowship had gained young people and a youth group had been commenced – mainly because of the Billy Graham and Dick Saunders Crusades – which had been a great joy. "This time last year we were still praying," he said.

Mr Wheatcroft had been a good pulpit secretary, preserving the quality of the preaching, through soundly converted Christians. This was absolutely vital.

Mr Bee was elected as a deacon and also took on the role of pulpit secretary.

"If the gospel was not preached then the preacher perhaps would not be invited," records the church minute book.

In September 1985, Mick and Jackie Stringer arrived in Campden as Mick had gained a job at the research station. They had previously been members of a large church in Hertfordshire and when Mick arrived in Campden he gave David Arthey a call to ask him if there was a lively church in the area.

David replied: "We're quite lively but we're not very large!"

"What an understatement," recalls Mick. "The church had about 14 active members at the time!"

David gave another rallying call to the fellowship at the 1986 church AGM, which saw the election of Mick onto the diaconate.

In his secretary's report, David said it had not been quite as encouraging as previous years. The holiday club had been "superb" and there were new members in the fellowship but "perhaps we are not progressing quite as well as we should be".

"It appears that the fellowship is at a low ebb and lacking in dedication and becoming complacent." He referred to Paul and Silas in prison and how they sang praises to God. "We too must be right with God and then He will bless us. Each one should be involved and make the fellowship a priority.

"When the Israelites crossed the Red Sea, God parted the water, and God too has done much for the fellowship. Our prayers have been answered and the Gospel preached every week."

With numbers at evening services so low, at the church meeting in September 1986, one member proposed that the evening services be suspended from November to March and the morning services be longer.

However, Dr Arthey was opposed to this and stated this could possibly be the first step towards closure of the church and that he for one would possibly be tempted to worship elsewhere. He stressed that the church must be kept open, if only for a few.

The meeting agreed that a rota of members to lead services be drawn up when it was too far for visiting preachers to come in bad weather.

Pete Lloyd and a series of unfortunate events!

ARRIVED at Chipping Campden Baptist Church in October 1985 having just left teacher training college.

I went there having tried Stratford for a few weeks, but I had been told that CCBC was praying for young people, which I was at the time.

I found about 20 people in the morning congregation and that did not consist of many young people, but there was a young people's home group each Wednesday at Mick and Jackie Stringer's house which was always great fun.

There was no minister at the time and had not been for a few years. Many of the services were led by a teacher called Paul Bee. He and his wife, Fiona, were living in the Manse at the time and doing a grand job.

What kept me going, instead of the larger Stratford church, was that there was a real vibrancy and expectation rather than hope that the church would grow.

The welcome was also very genuine and not just on the first week you came. People were very glad you were there.

The music was all supplied by Jenny Arthey who also led the singing as few of us could. She always asked anyone new if they played an instrument. Years later, one Sunday Julian Lloyd Webber came to a service; I often thought how funny it would have been if he had arrived in those early days and Jenny had asked him if he played an instrument.

Howard arrived in 1988 and the thing about his services was you never knew what he would say or do next. He once put a ladder up in the middle of the service to nail his sins to the cross, it was quite high and I was about seven or eight rows back and ready to catch him.

I was a deacon for a few years and used to get called on to serve communion quite often, which I usually made a mess of. Once I was leading it and managed to drop the glass of wine down my trousers when I asked everyone to drink it. On one occasion I also managed to contrive to eat the bread twice. I can still see Alan and Pam Boorman's shoulders shaking as they tried to pray, having seen what had happened.



Pete and Karen Lloyd.

There were some wonderful elderly people in the church at that time. Alice Benfield was always someone who could make you feel 10 feet tall having said one sentence to you.

We also had a rota to collect a lady who was in a wheelchair. She used to make me laugh as I pushed her to church as she began signalling when we had to turn on the pavement and often she would deliberately signal the wrong way. To get this lady into the church we had to put two planks down on the steps and wheel her up. Now I have always had a problem coming into rooms late, particularly on one occasion when I knew a group of visiting young people were leading the service. Being single, I was always hopeful. On this occasion, as it was an evening service it was in the back room. I was late pushing the wheelchair and a little flustered because I knew people would turn round when the door opened. Unfortunately it was all too much for me and when I reached round the door for the planks, I seemed to get stuck. Fortunately the door closed behind me but everyone heard the clatter

as I got my feet caught in them and went headfirst into the poor lady in the wheelchair. When I opened the door everybody was looking at me and sadly my cream-coloured jumper was covered in moss stains where I had fallen. Not cool!

Evening services could have just a handful in those early days. In fact I remember taking one evening service with five people there — all called Arthey. Overall the church when it began to grow was really exciting as each week you knew someone new would walk through the door. For Phil Arthey and myself, who were young, single and desperate, this was particularly exciting.

But you could feel God moving in the church and individuals week by week. It was a privilege to be there at that time.

• **Editor's Note:** After his years as a 'singleton', Pete eventually found true love at CCBC in the form of Karen Dawe. They married in April 1993 in Devon with a wedding celebration at CCBC. They left CCBC at the end of 2001 to move to Rutland. They have two children, John and Naomi. Anyone who ever met Pete will never forget him!

It's Blockley and Paxford to the rescue as Howard Jones arrives

BLOCKLEY and Paxford churches were sold in 1986, realising over £70,000 and it was possible for the interest on this sum to be used to fund a new pastor.

At this time church membership stood at 26 with Sunday morning attendances sometimes up to 50 people with around 15 in the evenings. There was no Sunday School but Adventurers met each week. The Sisterhood, consisting of around 12 ladies, met on Tuesdays, and there were two midweek groups who met for prayer and Bible study.

Mick and Jackie Stringer often remember sitting with a small group around a gas heater while Jenny Arthey played the piano. They also recall how the elderly ladies at this time – particularly Alice Benfield, Win Judd and Dlis Lockyer – were an inspiration to the congregation.

"Paul and Fiona Bee did sterling work for the church, particularly with the holiday club," they say.

In August 1987 church members agreed that a full-time rather than part-time pastor should be appointed. Mrs Jenny Arthey stressed that this needed to be a great step of faith and this is what they had heard during the sermons of the previous two weeks.

One member, who shall remain nameless, doubted whether a pastor would be able to cope with the frustrations and also the slow growth. Another asked whether lessons could be learned from the appointment of previous ministers.

By the following month, one name was clearly in the mind of the church leadership and its members for the pastorate – Howard Jones, a student from Regents Park College, Oxford.

Howard had captured the imagination of the old ladies and Alice Benfield declared she was "sure he is the man for us".

Mick Stringer said there was an awareness by the fellowship for a minister and that Mr Jones had triggered this off. He proposed that the fellowship invite Howard as full-time minister and the vote was unanimously in favour.

A weekly coffee morning co-ordinated by Jenny Arthey was set up in October 1987 and this was soon attracting upwards of 20 people with contacts being made with those outside church.

Howard and his wife, Iona, moved into the manse in June 1988 and Howard's induction service took place on August



Rev Howard Jones with his daughter Charis, after arriving at Campden.

6th, 1988, two weeks after his ordination in Slough.

As well as being a dynamic preacher, Howard was a multi-talented musician and as well as reviving the worship in church services, he also led other initiatives such as carol singing around Campden and church members' singing at the Victorian evening.

Mick and Jackie Stringer provide a colourful description of Howard's ministry:

"Howard was a one-off extrovert, a gifted musician, wacky dresser and unconventional in everything he did, but he had the gift of blending old and young, conventional and charismatic.

"He also struck up a good relationship with Peter Millam at the Anglican church.

"We remember one sermon he gave balanced on the top of a step ladder – all

the congregation were convinced he would not keep his balance – but he did!"

In November 1989, new members included Phil and Christine Hindle and the Hudson family – John, Ronnie, Kelly and Zoe.

At the church AGM of 1990, the pastor said he had been at the church for 19 months and the Lord had done so much, with more activities. He added that the church needed to have more local vision and more praise and worship.

"The Lord wants to take us deeper with prayer and make us a healing community," he added.

The newly-formed Sunday School was reported to be going well, though there were just five regular attenders, and the youth group, which met at Phil and Christine Hindle's house, was also going well with 12 regular attenders. By the

The day the lady from The Times paid our church a visit

Shortly before Howard left us in 1995, we invited Ruth Gledhill, religious correspondent of The Times, to attend a morning service at Campden as part of her weekly 'At Your Service' column in her newspaper. She described the church building at the time as "an unremarkable building in the heart of a remarkably pretty town". If only she could return to the church to see how it has been transformed internally today. Rather ironically, Howard chose for his sermon that morning the subject of speaking in tongues, which, as Ms Gledhill accepted, was considered by St Paul as the least of the gifts of the spirit and is a subject that often causes confusion and controversy. But in her report, reproduced below, Ms Gledhill gave us a pretty favourable and fair review.

In Chipping Campden, Ruth Gledhill attends a charismatic Baptist church

AT YOUR SERVICE



WHEN a minister can not only save a near-empty church from closure, filling it with young couples, teenagers and children, but can also persuade these same middle-England churchgoers to rock to gospel songs and "speak in tongues", it suggests there might be hope for Christianity in Britain yet.

About 15 years ago, Chipping Campden Baptist church, an unremarkable building in the heart of a remarkably pretty town, was on the brink of closure. A handful of older members, however, refused to accept the inevitable, and prayed almost continuously for the church to be saved. Gradually, young families moved into the area and began attending church, and Howard Jones, a student at Regent's College, Oxford, began to preach and lead services there.

Two neighbouring chapels at Blockley and Paxford closed and were sold. The money was given to Chipping Campden, which enabled the congregation to invite Mr Jones to become their full-time minister. The church is now one of Britain's fastest-growing Baptist chapels.

I arrived early but the only pew left was at the back, where I sat with the few others aged 35 or more. "We are here to praise God, worship him and give our hearts to him afresh," said Mr Jones, a lively minister in his mid-thirties, who was formerly a member of a Christian rock band. His simultaneous fluency with the guitar, sermon and liturgy made him seem at times the ecclesiastical equivalent of a one-man band, although others did take turns to



The Rev Howard Jones: an ecclesiastical one-man band

lead parts of the service, in particular the prayers.

"Lord, it is not because of our wisdom or wonderful way of living that we are here," said Mr Jones. "It is not because we are specially good. It is because you loved us and gave us your son. Lord, you have loved us. You still do love us with such a passion."

We sang "happy birthday" to three members of the congregation, including the minister's wife Iona, before Mr Jones introduced us to the song: "You are love, you are life, you are Lord of everything." We prayed for the five church members on missionary projects in England and abroad, for the Government, for peace in Northern Ireland and for the game of football.

After communion, when he broke a large loaf of bread into small pieces for us to share, Mr Jones preached on St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, when the apostle said it was preferable to

speak five intelligible words to instruct others than 10,000 words "in tongue". Speaking in tongues, technically known as *glossolalia*, is considered the least of the "gifts of the spirit" listed by Paul in Corinthians, which also include preaching, healing and wisdom. But there was still a place for it, Mr Jones said. The purpose of this gift was to allow "the spirit to pray while the mind lies fallow... when we speak in tongues the spirit is speaking with God direct, bypassing the mind."

He held up a £5 note — a basket had been passed round to raise funds for him to buy a manse when he moves soon to his next church in Birmingham. Such gifts should be accepted, he said, as should that of speaking in tongues: "Like Paul, I would like every one of you to be able to do this." After the service we could go for coffee, leave, or go up to the front and receive the gift of speaking in tongues.

I have heard *glossolalia* in other charismatic churches. It comes across as a kind of incoherent, high-pitched babbling noise. Deciding that it would be preferable to engage my mind before attempting to talk to God, that my life was overflowing with gifts already, and that in any case it was difficult enough to make sense in English, I babbled a few incoherent excuses and left.

Chipping Campden Baptist Church, Market Place, Chipping Campden, Gloucestershire. 01386 840720

PASTOR: The Rev Howard Jones

SERMON: Gifted interpretation of some of St Paul's less comprehensible statements. ★★★★★

ARCHITECTURE: Built in 1872, an artless protestation of plainness against the well-managed beauty of the town. Small building with gallery, easily filled by the congregation of 80-plus. ★★

MUSIC: One traditional hymn, then some lively Christian worship songs. ★★★

LITURGY: Words for communion celebration taken direct from Corinthians; otherwise service ad-libbed around structure of songs, prayers, with the sermon at the end. ★

AFTER-SERVICE CARE: All who wanted to receive the "gift of the spirit" and start speaking in tongues were invited to be prayed over. Others could partake of tea or coffee. ★★★

SPIRITUAL HIGH: My spirit refused obdurately to receive the proffered gift of tongues. ★

TED BATH



Chipping Campden Baptist Church's congregation in April 1995.

following year this had grown to 20, with a maximum attendance of 27.

In March 1990, the church made the decision to embark on a major building project to provide a new kitchen and other facilities, including improved Sunday School rooms, costing around £80,000. Although ways of fundraising had been suggested, several members felt the church should "pray the money in". Len Cooper was the project co-ordinator.

Among the new members received by the church later in 1990 were Carole Martin, Esther Newman, Gary Robinson – who had recently married Melanie Spray in the church – and Greg Ellis. In September 1991, Greg commenced a three-year training course at Moorlands Bible College.

A church Christmas party and cabaret was held in 1990, along with other special services including a candlelit service.

With a weekly income of around £300, Carole Martin proposed that the church should start tithing its income and this was agreed by members.

New members in 1991 included Sally Hancock (now Workman), Geoff Woodward, Chris Hands and James Keitley, who was to join British Youth for Christ in Cheltenham for a year.

In March 1991 the church voted in favour of joining the Evangelical Alliance.

At a minister's question time in July 1991, much appreciation was expressed for the job Howard was doing.

Howard said he felt his particular gifts of ministry lay in preaching, teaching, music and evangelism.

The conclusion was that the church

was certainly moving forward in Christ and that it was the members' joint responsibility to see that it continued to do so.

The new building was officially opened on March 15th, 1992, and Doris Tarplett was asked to cut the tape.

In his secretary's report to the AGM of March 1992, David Arthey spoke of the valuable and talented young people in the church who were such a joy to fellowship with.

The pastor had a hard job keeping everyone happy and we were greatly blessed to have him. He said we shouldn't grumble and complain when God was doing so much in our midst.

Howard spoke of the spiritual temperature which was so apparent to outsiders.

In view of the hard work, love and care of Howard for his flock, David Arthey recommended that the pastor's stipend should be increased over and above the Home Mission Fund's recommended minimum, and members voted unanimously in favour of this.

1992 saw the arrival of Alan, Pam, Pete and Kerry Boorman at CCBC and it was not long before Pam and Alan in particular were playing a very active part in church life.

After 30 years as church secretary, David Arthey retired from the position at the 1993 AGM and was succeeded by Alan Boorman, who held the position until 2008.

In a letter to the Baptist Union, Alan said: "You may like to write to him (David) to acknowledge the major role he has played over this long period, giving undiminished loyalty to God and the

church during times of real struggle which have laid the foundations for the tremendous blessing which we are enjoying in Chipping Campden today."

In 1993, Daniel Pulham took over the running of the older young people's group from Phil and Christine Hindle and the group soon became known as the 1:22. It was later run by Steve and Verity Booker and in October 1999 the young people's group became known as C4C.

In January 1994, a 10-day mission



called 'The Way Today', led by the evangelist Ian Knox, took place in Campden and the surrounding villages.

Among around 75 events there were 'The Little Breakfast', Draycott Centenary Party, marriage affirmation and buffet supper, a teachers' service, Songs of Praise, sports evening, men's breakfast and Indian evening. Among those who became Christians during The Way Today were Betty Stocker and Kate Barry's mother Maureen Wright.

The life-changing day I walked into the church

FOR those of you who don't know me I live in Campden with my husband Jim.

I was brought up by my parents on my grandfather's farm. It was an idyllic childhood and although I was an only child I always had lots of cousins to play with.

From a small child I was brought up to go to church on Sunday mornings and Sunday school Sunday afternoons when we visited my paternal grandmother.

When I got into my teens I asserted my independence and decided it was a waste of time. A few years later I met Jim and we were married. We were true C of E churchgoers. C of E standing for Christmas and Easter!

Five years later Lucy arrived and when she was about three, I decided she should be brought up 'properly' and that involved church on Sundays. After all – all 'nice' people went to church!! – but, it was just a ritual. Something one did or was expected to do on a Sunday.

Unfortunately I'd find my mind wandering, admiring the latest fashions, or even worse, silently criticising them, thinking about lunch in the oven, the weather, or other children's behaviour. My mind was everywhere except where it should have been. Consequently I'd come out of church empty – feeling nothing, so eventually when Lucy was in her teens I stopped going except for high days and holidays.

Just before Christmas 1993 certain things happened that caused me to take stock of my life. At this point I did what hundreds of other people seem to do when they hit a rough patch which is pray to God. It's sad that so often the only time God is given a thought is when a person is upset or wanting help.

I prayed and prayed for help one particular night and God gave me such a wonderful feeling of peace I just knew everything would be alright and sort itself out.

In January and February 1994 The Way Today team were due in Campden. This was a Christian outreach and for two weeks a mixture of events were arranged open to everyone. I'd received a programme of events through the letterbox. I studied it very carefully, thought it sounded interesting, thought I might go and then promptly forgot all about it until what happened to be the last Sunday I found the leaflet and saw I had a choice of CCBC in the morning or St James at night. Now I'd always been brought up in the C of E but I plumped for the unknown. I knew absolutely nothing about Baptists or their style of worship so it really was a big step into the



unknown.

A lot of people were going in and they appeared OK. I went in. Now this was before the church had its facelift. The room was half its existing size and had wooden pews and a large organ in the corner. But wow! what an eyeopener. The natives were friendly! Someone actually smiled and spoke to me as I went in and shook my hand. I sat down, had a look around and saw lots of young people, which was a novelty to say the least. People weren't sitting all holy and reverent looking, but were smiling and talking to each other – it was lovely. At this point I took another look around and spied drums and a guitar. By this time I almost had mental indigestion and that was before the service started!!

The service started and we had a hymn. Another surprise. The words were projected onto a screen easily visible to all. Very impressive. There was foot tapping and clapping – it was zippy with no sombre music. I was in my element. My brain thought it was in heaven already. I couldn't see anyone in robes who might be the vicar but there was a very enthusiastic young man who played guitar and cello. This man then started to lead the service and I realised it must be the pastor – just in ordinary clothes like the rest of the men.

I loved the service. I'd never been where prayers were spontaneous and you could talk to Jesus naturally. Not printed words from a book but saying words from the heart.

The leader of The Way Today team was Ian Knox. He gave the sermon and the most wonderful thing happened. I found out Jesus loved ME. ME. The person who always seemed to get it wrong, the one with all those terrible faults, the

one who had ignored Jesus until I wanted something. And better still he would forgive me my sins and I could have a fresh start. No-one had ever told me I could have a one to one relationship with him. I know it sounds silly but it's true.

Anyway I asked Jesus into my life which was another mind-blowing experience. It really was my day. I felt so happy I was on cloud nine. He's made such a difference to my life. He's always there for me – anytime of the day or night and if anyone reading this has never asked Jesus into their life I can thoroughly recommend it. It's totally free – doesn't cost a penny and the rewards surpass all expectations. It doesn't matter whether you're 3, 33 or 103 or how bad you've been, you can ask Jesus into YOUR life and he will welcome you with open arms.

As soon as I asked Jesus into my life it made such a difference – lighting up the darkness all around giving a feeling of security and chasing away the fears.

I then started attending CCBC regularly. Everyone was very friendly and one particular lady always made a point of speaking to me. Her name was Alice Benfield and with her friend Vera Forster she used to sit in the back pew so she could speak to everyone as they went by. She was a very gracious lady. As time went by my mother, Dulcie Robbins, had also started to come with me to the services. It was then Alice asked Mum if she'd like to go to her ladies Bible study group which she held on a Tuesday afternoon. This Mum did and really enjoyed the time with the other ladies.

There had been one or two baptisms in the church and the congregation was asked 'have you been baptised and if not why not'. I found this quite a challenge. I'd been christened as a baby when godparents and parents had made vows for me but I liked the idea of making a declaration of my faith to Jesus BUT I didn't fancy doing it in front of everyone.

Eventually I decided that if Jesus could die on the cross for ME and carry all my sins, the very least I could do for him was to show Him how much I love Him. If Jesus had been baptised then why shouldn't I? So on April 30th, 2000, I was baptised with my family around me – both relatives and church family. Jesus filled me with His holy spirit and it really was a memorable day. Anything Jesus wants to do with my life is alright by me.

Finally I'd like to thank everyone at CCBC for their love friendship and fellowship. It's made coming to CCBC wonderful.

September 1994 saw the death of one of the congregation's eldest and most faithful members, Doris Tarplett, who had previously been a committed member of Blockley chapel for many years.

Paying tribute to her shortly after her death, David Arthey said it was hard to know whether she was the treasurer, secretary or Sunday School teacher as she seemed to do all these things and more.

"It was due to Doris's wise decision at the painful time of having to close Blockley chapel that we at Campden were able to first take on Howard and have the church that we have today," said David.

In 1994 Howard announced that he planned to move from Campden to become pastor of Olton Baptist Church, Birmingham.

In his last report to the AGM in 1995 Howard said the Lord had done so much for us all over the last six-and-a-half years.

"You've been a brilliant church to work with and you've given me quite as much as I've given you," he said.

But Howard urged the church not to look back but to look forward to getting a new pastor.

"God has the right person," he said. "He is moving me on and will provide for you. Don't make comparisons with me.

"Whoever your new pastor is, accept him or her for who they are and get behind their leadership. God is always doing a new thing."

Howard's last Sunday was on Easter Sunday 1995, after which we held a fellowship lunch and afternoon service of celebration.

When Howard left the church, the old ladies' Tuesday home group paid tribute to him in the church magazine, summing up the feelings of many of the congregation by describing him as "The pastor who stole our hearts".

Howard was a great character and not afraid to do anything outrageous to make an impact or to get his message across.

This was epitomised by the time on Red Nose Day when he dressed up as Superman to take his daughter to playgroup and raise money for Comic Relief. His exploits also gained him an appearance in one of the local newspapers.



The wait was finally over... and Philip arrived with a vision for revival in the Cotswolds

FOLLOWING the departure of Rev Howard Jones to Olton Baptist Church, Birmingham, in 1995, CCBC had a year-long interregnum while the search for a new pastor took place.

By faith, the leadership believed that if God was moving Howard on, he was preparing someone else to take over in Chipping Campden.

When the church leadership was seeking potential candidates, one man in particular caught their eye, a young associate pastor at Leigh Road Baptist Church, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, called Philip Deller.

In November 1995, Pam and Alan Boorman went on a "scouting" mission to Leigh, with Philip's knowledge – and they were mightily impressed by what they saw.

At Philip's induction service, Alan recalled meeting Philip, Hermey and Caris after the morning service at Leigh and immediately feeling at one with them as a family.

Alan recalled: "A couple of weeks later we, the deacons, had a lovely weekend with Philip, Hermey and Caris. There was a real sense of harmony and a certain sense of excitement and expectation and after a few days of committing to the Lord in prayer, we had no hesitation to ask Philip to return after Christmas to preach to the entire church."

Following Philip's visit, In January 1996 the church voted unanimously to call Philip to become its next pastor.

Philip's story of how he came to Campden makes for slightly different reading!

After three-and-a-half very happy years at Leigh-on-Sea he sensed that it was time to move on and in September 1995 he asked to be put on the ministers' "moving list".

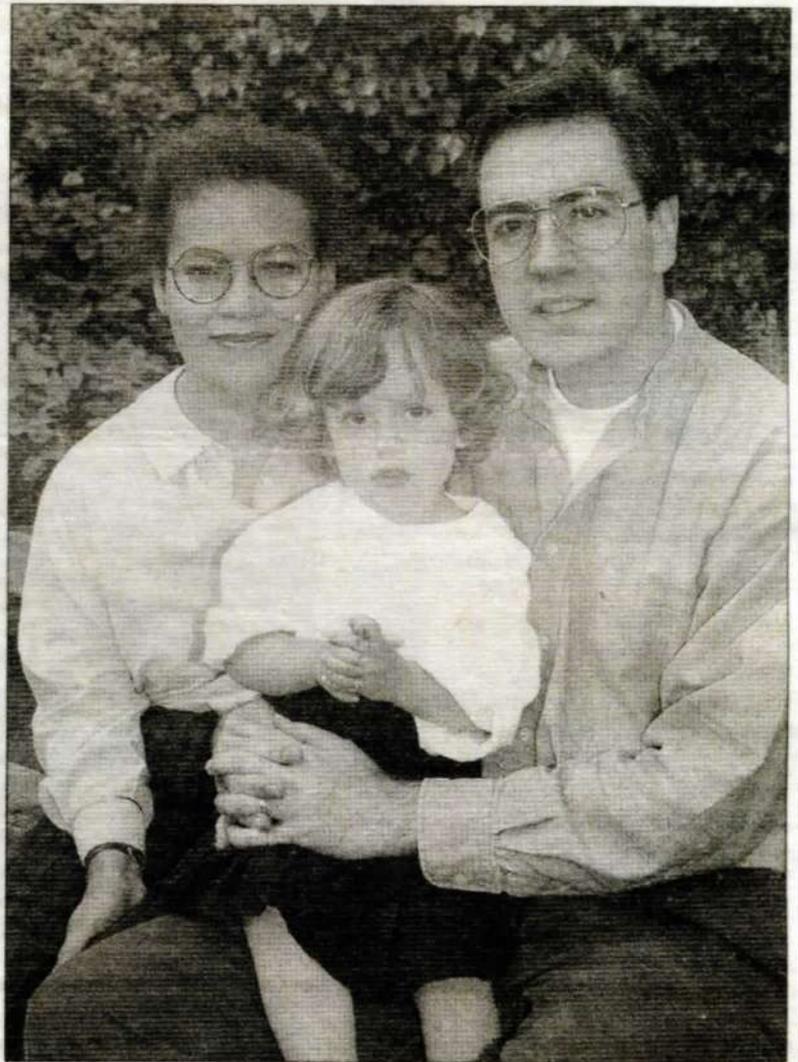
"In return I got a list of churches that were looking for a new minister," recalls Philip.

"Hermey and I took that list away and wrote down a third, a second and a kind of 'star choice'.



Area superintendent Rev Geoffrey Reynolds conducts the induction service.

Welcome for Manse family



● **The Rev Philip Deller with his wife Hermey and daughter Caris (2) at their home in Chipping Campden CSSR795V96**

SO MANY attended the induction of Chipping Campden's new Baptist pastor on Saturday that the small Victorian church in the High Street was unable to accommodate them all.

The service was relayed by television to the church hall, which was also crowded.

"It made the day even more exciting," said the Rev Philip Deller.

Among those watching the service was Mr Deller's wife, Hermey, and two-year-old daughter Caris.

Before being appointed to Campden, Mr Deller (29) served in Leigh-on-Sea in Essex.

He also carried out missionary work in Brazil for many years.

When the Deller family moved into the Manse in Back Ends last month, they discovered that their new home had been completely refurbished by parishioners.

"It really felt like we were coming to a home and not just a house," said the pastor. "And cupboards were full of goodies!"

"We are very grateful to those who worked so hard on the manse – and its gardens."

Following Saturday's service there was a parish welcome for the pastor and his family in St Catharine's School hall.

We both wrote down Chipping Campden as top choice. It seemed it just bounced off the page, like it was in bold print compared to the others.

"I said: Where is Chipping Campden? and we looked it up. It was in the Cotswolds! Wasn't that wonderful?"

Philip was immediately attracted to CCBC by its profile and its vision for the future. He asked for his name to be sent to Chipping Campden and two days later he received a phone call from Alan Boorman and, following that, Alan and Pam came on their "spying mission" to Leigh Road.

Being a city boy at heart, Philip admitted it was a bit of a culture shock to move to the countryside and face the prospect of falling into hedgerows on the way back from home group, due to a lack of street lighting.

"I quite like having Pizza Hut round the corner — Chipping Campden is somewhat rural," he said. "But we know it is God's place for us."

Right from the start of his ministry, it was clear to everyone in the church that Philip's greatest passion was to see revival break out in the Cotswolds and throughout the UK.

When he was interviewed by the leadership, Philip had one overriding question for them: "Are you praying for revival in the Cotswolds?"

Daniel Pulham said "yes" and Philip said he would take the job if the church members wanted him.

Leading the prayers at his induction service, Philip said: "We bring our prayers for revival of the church of Christ in this land, for an awakening of the people of this land to the reality of God's love, his grace, his mercy, but also to his judgement that we may see God move in a mighty way by his spirit that the people of God hunger and thirst that there may be mercy and there may be grace for this nation."

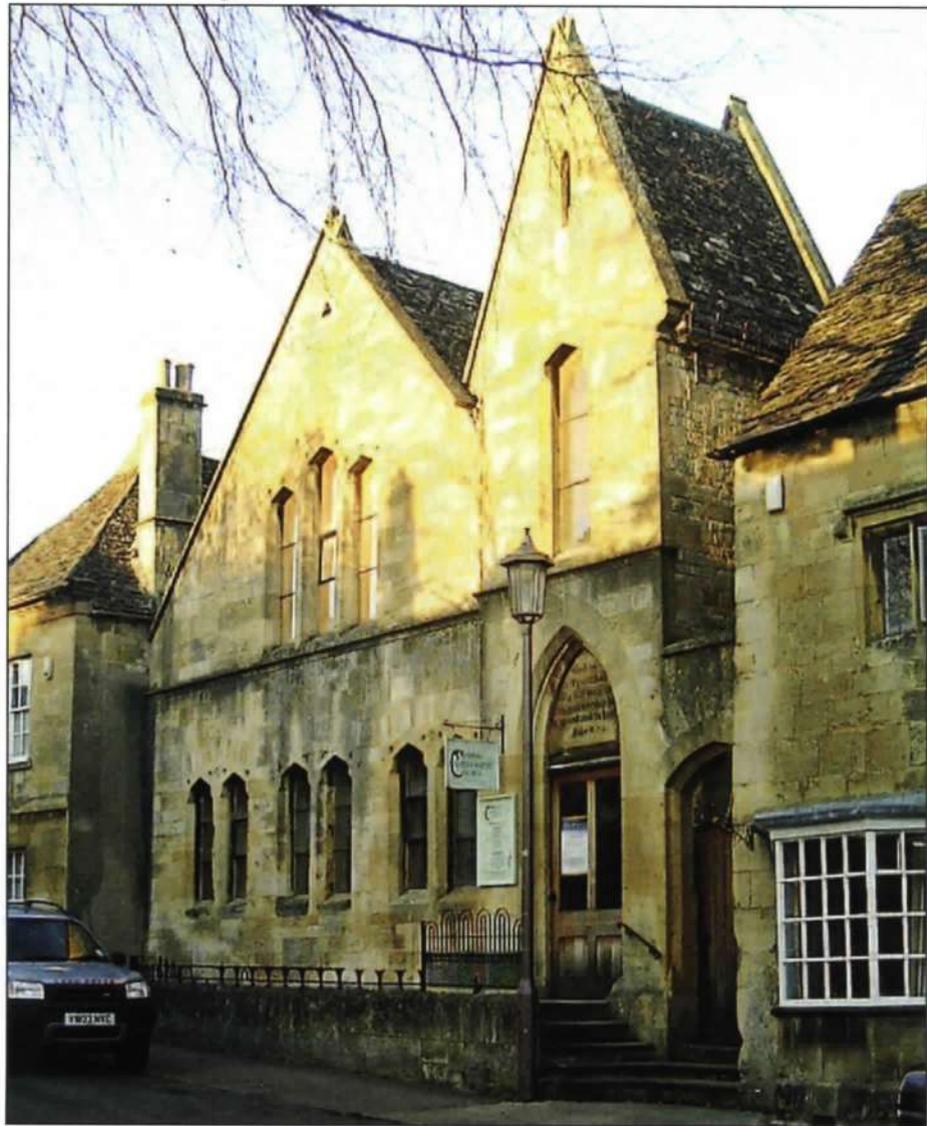
When Philip arrived his vision wasn't just for revival but for the church building to be totally transformed and brought up to date.

This involved taking out the old wooden pews and replacing them with comfortable chairs, and also removing the church organ, changes that were passed by church members without any hint of opposition.

In September 1996 the whole church was invited to take part in its first-ever Alpha course, with over 60 doing so.

In September 1997 Philip shared a vision that God was calling the church at Campden to plant a church in Shipston. With over 30 people travelling to worship at CCBC from Shipston, there was a need for a new church in the town.

Mark and Pam Robinson had previously received a word that they should worship where they lived and this confirmed their word and they were greatly excited



Chipping Campden Baptist Church as it is today.

about it.

Stour Valley Baptist Church was launched in February 1999 under the leadership of student minister Daniel Pulham – the first time Shipston had had a full-time Baptist minister since the 1960s.

In September 2001 Stow Baptist Church covenanted to join Cornerstone Churches, although in 2004 Stow felt no longer able to covenant with us but links continued between leaders.

Hook Norton Baptist Church joined Cornerstone Churches in 2003.

By 2003, Chipping Campden Baptist Church was 80% full again and in the autumn of that year Philip shared with the Bidford home group the vision to plant a church in Bidford, a large village which at the time had no vibrant evangelical witness.

In February 2004, members of all four Cornerstone Churches voted unanimously to invite Paul Crouch to fill the new post of Director of Children's Ministry.

At the 2004 AGM Alan Boorman, in his secretary's report, noted that a recent survey had shown that total church membership across Britain had fallen below 6 million (down by one million or

15%) in the last 15 years. Here at Campden and Shipston in that same 15 years, God had built our membership by 300%.

Alan also reported how Bob Dunnet had shared, during a recent evening service, a picture of the Cotswolds as a hard, rocky place, but he saw a stream of water flowing out of Chipping Campden Baptist Church to other places.

He prayed that no boulders may block it, that the waters may continue to flow, becoming ever more pure, that others may drink from them.

In May 2004, the church voted unanimously to invite Neil Dunlop to become assistant minister with a view to leading the Bidford church plant, due to be launched in September 2005. Neil was ordained in September 2004 at Harvington Baptist Church.

Bidford-on-Avon Baptist Church was launched at the Crawford Hall in September 2005 with around 90 people attending from the word go.

In May 2007, Edward Ibberson accepted a call from CCBC to serve as its second minister, arriving at the church in September of that year.

Alice Benfield – a wonderful servant to the church and backbone of the Sisterhood

ALICE Benfield, more than perhaps anyone else in the church's history, witnessed its ups and downs but lived to see the start of a revival for which she and fellow church members had been praying for so long.

Alice was born in Campden in 1915. Her father was a shepherd and they lived at Shepherd's Close. At six months old the family moved to Twine Cottages at the back of the Baptist Church.

At four years old Alice went to St Catharine's RC School but all the family belonged to the Baptist Church which was very close to their house.

She was baptised at CCBC on March 30th, 1930, and received into church membership on April 6th the same year.

The church was the centre of things in those days. The Girl Guides, of which Alice was a member, met in the Church Hall and every evening there were activities going on, such as classes for making basket-work, Christian endeavour and Band of Hope.

There were also social evenings which were widely attended, as there was no radio or television in those days.

Alice is recorded as saying: "Entertainment was made by ourselves with plays and poetry readings. The very brave ones sang solos and there was all sorts of homemade fun.

"They were good days - no keeping up with the Joneses. Everyone was universally poor but we all had good Christian homes."

Alice left school at 14 and worked for a family as a general help looking after two young children and then for another family. She married Charles Benfield on Easter Monday, March 29th 1937, at CCBC.

It was a cold day with snow on the ground. Charlie worked at Pyments builders and the men from the firm waited outside the church and when Alice and Charlie came out they were pelted with snowballs, which was not appreciated! There was no confetti for Alice.

Alice and Charlie had four children, Susan, John, Margaret and Ruth, who were all dedicated at the Baptist Church, and they were to have 10 grandchildren.



The Sisterhood pictured in the 1990s: Back (left to right): Win Judd, Alice Benfield. Front: Dilys Lockyer, Sanna Merriman, Vera Forster.

Charlie sadly died in 1971 after they had been married for 38 years. The lovely flower stand that sits in the church was made by Ernie Lockyer in memory of Charlie.

Alice was a tremendous servant of the church. She served as a deacon for 25 years and as church treasurer for many years. She also led the Sisterhood Bible study group on Tuesday afternoons.

During her life Alice witnessed many ups and downs of life at Chipping Campden Baptist Church.

In an interview in the early 1990s, Alice recalled the situation around the early 1980s when uncertainty hung over the future of the church.

"We were at a very low ebb," she said. "Our minister had just gone and one Sunday evening there were just four of us in the church.

"We couldn't have a service so we just spent the time in prayer and asking the Lord to send in some young people and that's what happened."

Then Howard came and the church started to grow even more.

"It's marvellous to see your prayers answered in your lifetime and it's really

marvellous to see the church so full of young people and to see and hear the praise of the Lord every Sunday," she added.

Philip Deller loves to tell the story of when he arrived at Campden and had a vision to completely refurbish the church, which would involve removing the pews and the organ.

He wanted to be sure that the church was behind him and he was particularly sensitive to the feelings of the older members, so he went to see Alice.

"She was sitting in her window, like she always did, with her door open," recalls Philip.

"As I stepped over the threshold, Alice said: 'I know why you've come. You want to take out the pews and the organ.'

'Yes,' I said, and started to explain why. 'It's our fault,' Alice said. 'We prayed for revival. I just didn't think it would come with drums. I promise you, no one will oppose you.'

"I left Alice's house so grateful to God, thinking 'God, you can do anything in a church like this.'"

Alice died in October 1997. Her ashes are buried in the Baptist Churchyard.

Rebel without a cause is now rebel with a cause

We love quizzes at CCBC, so to find out more about the 'main man' – Cornerstone Churches' team leader Rev Philip Deller – we fired 12 probing questions at him.

1. Where were you born and raised?

I was born in Grimsby in 1966 but was raised in Brazil as my parents were missionaries with the Baptist Missionary Society.

2. What sort of childhood did you have? Did you go through a rebellious stage?

My mother says I rejected Christianity at an early age – four!! But certainly by my early teens I had rebelled and gone my own way. During the days of the punk scene I had dyed hair, chains and all!! I was your typical angry young man – a rebel without a cause.

3. How and when did you become a Christian?

I became a Christian just before my 19th birthday. After a summer of travelling after my failed A levels I calmed down and decided if I was going to reject Christianity for good, I would do so on the basis of knowledge and not indifference. One night as I was returning from the pub (but not drunk) I heard a voice. It said: "What about me?". I knew instantly who it was and what he meant. It was Jesus and he meant – all these excuses of why you cannot believe – what about me, you have not looked at me. I was not converted on the spot, that came several months later as I worked through my pride etc. Eventually I asked Jesus into my life with a prayer "Jesus if you are there come into my life" as if I was doing God a big favour. Nothing happened. After several days of frustration I knelt by my bed and prayed again. "Lord I give you my life thank you for giving yours for me. Whatever you want me to do I will do wherever you want me to go I will go, but please come into my life." He did and has never left.

4. What impact did your new-found faith have on your life?

I felt that I should be baptised immediately and within months was feeling a call to be a preacher and was given opportunities in little village chapels. On one such occasion two people received Jesus as saviour – that was my calling. To bring people to birth in Christ. That was and still remains my passion.

5. When did you know you wanted to serve God? Did you always think you would become a pastor?

The call to ministry came later. My Dad's advice was "avoid it as long as possible – because if it is not of God it is a terrible place to be. It didn't go away but got stronger. As a way of testing this out I took a year out serving two churches in the East End of London as part of the "Time For God" scheme.

6. How and when did you meet Hermey?

I met Hermey in London while I was on the "Time for God" scheme. Hermey had moved to London to work and share in the life of a church she had done a summer evangelism with Youth for Christ. We were in the same church, same youth and church work, same house. We fell in love. Longer version of story is available from Hermey or myself personally.

7. Tell us about Caris and her health problems as a baby.



Philip, Caris and Hermey.

Caris was born in 1994 when we were in Leigh Road Baptist Church, Essex. Yes Caris is an Essex girl! Caris was born with a hole in her heart. Following much prayer and two operations at the Brompton Hospital in London Caris was healed.

8. Under what circumstances did you find yourselves coming to the Cotswolds? Did you ever expect to come and live and work in such a rural area?

We were looking to move from Essex and asked to see the list of all the churches looking for ministers. Out of a list of about 70 church profiles, Hermey and I independently felt that Chipping Campden's profile jumped out at us. Where was Chipping Campden? We had no idea – we looked at a map. We felt very clearly that CCBC was the church for us. We came and visited and the Lord gave me a vision of the building as it is now. This was before I had even been called. We came with a vision for Revival in the Cotswolds.

9. What do you love most about your job and CCBC? I love CCBC and I love seeing people come to know Jesus.

10. What's the hardest part of your job?

Not seeing more.

11. Would you change anything about your life now?

More sunshine!!

12. What is your biggest wish in life?

To live through a revival or be around when Jesus comes back.

£100,000 project which brought the church into the 21st Century

IN 1997, a major refurbishment project saw the capacity of Chipping Campden Baptist Church almost doubled.

The £100,000 project, spearheaded by CCBC member Clive Johnson, saw the removal of the old wooden pews and the organ, together with the knocking down of the wall that had divided the church sanctuary and the schoolroom.

Philip had a vision to effectively 'turn the church around' with the congregation, seated in more than 200 comfortable chairs, facing the platform in a different direction.

After the major construction work was completed, the church was carpeted and decorated to the highest of standards.

Another major investment that has been worth its weight in gold has been the introduction of the projector and big screen.

This has not only made it possible to project song words onto the big screen but has also allowed for the playing of videos and DVDs and powerpoint presentations, along with the showing of big screen events such as World Cup football matches.

For the five months that the refurbishment project was being carried out, the church met in St Catharine's School for morning services.



The church sanctuary as it was before the refurbishment and, below, in the process of being gutted.



The removal of the dividing wall was a major part of the project.



Chris Hands did much of the work on installing the central heating system.



The new-look church pictured shortly after the refurbishment project was completed.

Church to mark new look

By Bill Charlton

A BAPTIST Church built in the Cotswolds 125 years ago which was "growing so fast it had to expand", is to stage a special service of rededication on Saturday to mark a £100,000 refurbishment project.

An "everyone is welcome" invitation is being extended by the Rev Philip Deller, 31-year-old pastor at Chipping Campden Baptist Church, who took over in May.

"We are amazed at the transformation," he said. "People won't recognise the place...although it has still kept its character and welcoming feel."

He added: "It gives us much more scope. It allows us to seat our rapidly growing congregation, but it's also made it a more inviting and a more multi-purpose, practical and accessible building."

"We are hoping to be relevant to the community and the generation we are trying to reach. We want to change people's perception of church and the building is just a physical example of that."

The church was built in 1872 and constructed in such a way as to "blend in with the High Street scene".

Old wooden pews have been removed to be replaced by comfortable chairs and the church sanctuary has been increased to almost double the seating capacity through knocking down an internal wall.

The church, which at one time admitted it was struggling to stay open due to its dwindling congregation, can now seat 250. It was packed on the first Sunday it re-opened after being closed for five months.

While the work was being carried out, Sunday services were held at St Catharine's



● Rev Philip Deller is pictured with the new baptistry at Chipping Campden's recently refurbished Baptist Church CSMW 989h

Roman Catholic Primary School in the town.

A new audio-visual system has been installed as part of the new-look and a new baptistry has been built, while the interior of the church has been redecorated.

Little has changed to the exterior, although a ramp has been introduced at the front of the church to give access to pushchairs and wheelchairs.

Mr Deller acknowledged that "the lively worship" has been a contributing factor to the growing popularity of the church - led by a music group that includes guitars, drums, saxophones and electric piano.

"If people's idea of church is hard pews, unsingable hymns and boring services, we are not like that at all," he said.

Although the congregation has grown in the past decade from 30 to well over 150, Mr Deller said he sees this as "only the beginning of a major revival of Christianity in the Cotswolds", which he hoped would involve the 'planting' of new churches.

"Our vision is not just to see our church full, but to see a real Christian revival in the Cotswolds."

The building work has been financed by a combination of grants from various bodies (£48,000), inter-

est-free loans from church members (£43,000) and a 'gift day' which brought in £15,000.

Members have helped with the building work and Mr Deller said he thanks "everyone who has been involved and supported the project."

● The service of rededication will be at 2pm on Saturday, followed by tea.

On Saturday, September 13, the general public is being invited to "drop in and see the changes" for themselves during an open day between 11am - 4pm, which will coincide with an exhibition of church history.

The project gained a considerable amount of coverage in the local newspapers.

'Moving to CCBC is one of the best things we've done'

Alan and Pam Boorman have been an integral part of the life of Chipping Campden Baptist Church during the past 16 years. Alan was church secretary for 15 years until he stepped down in April 2008, and Pam is an ever-present help. David Hudson-Wood chatted to them about their lives and how they came to CCBC.

It was a visit to Campden's Victorian Evening in 1991 that led Alan and Pam Boorman to Chipping Campden Baptist Church.

Pam says: "We were living in Cheltenham at the time and saw an advert for the Victorian Evening which we came to and we were invited into the church for coffee and carols afterwards and that was it.

"We've never looked back. We've been every Sunday since!"

If you have ever met Pam you will probably realise that she hails from Liverpool, having been brought up in a Christian family.

Alan spent most of his life in Sutton Coldfield and became a Christian through Crusaders.

The couple met each other in Sutton through a church youth group when Pam was training as a PE teacher.

Alan worked in sales and marketing for an international coffee company for 35 years while Pam gave up teaching to bring up their two children Pete, now 37, and Kerry, 34.

After finding CCBC, the Boormans moved to Dumbleton where their house, The Wicket House, has a prime view overlooking the lovely village cricket ground.

Pete and his wife Helen also live in Dumbleton with their three children, as does Kerry (a drama practitioner), while Pete (former goalkeeper for Cornerstone United) is a mainstay of the village cricket club.

The Boormans say it was a bit of a shock to the system coming to Campden from a large 800-seater church in Sutton.

Alan says: "The building at the time was a total contrast to what we had been used to. But despite that there was an overriding sense of God's presence there."

"Apart from Alice and her group, it was a young church," says Pam. "We came into the church in our mid-40s and somebody said 'we have been praying for



Alan and Pam Boorman.

middle-aged people to come in'. I was so offended!"

"The leadership was also young and that was what attracted us.

"Howard was very vibrant and unpredictable. You never quite knew what you were coming to each Sunday with Howard."

It was not long after the Boormans joined CCBC that Alan was invited to become church secretary, taking over from David Arthey, and there is no doubt the church made the right choice as he did the job in a hugely professional way for 15 years, which actually epitomises everything Alan does in his life.

Alan says: "Through that time it has been awesome to experience God at work in such fantastic ways.

"It really has been a delight to work with Philip and to have been part of such a united leadership team.

"There's a real love for each other within the leadership. We have a lot of fun as well."

Pam, too, plays a key role in the life of the church. She seems to always be there helping out and is a valued member of the care team.

We also have Pam and Alan to thank for helping to bring Philip to CCBC as they embarked on the "spying mission" to Leigh-on-Sea to check out the young Deller, an event which is mentioned elsewhere in this book.

"We knew he was the right man right away," says Pam.

Overall, the Boormans have absolutely no regrets at all about leaving a large church for a small, seemingly insignificant church in the Cotswolds which they have seen flourish so much.

"It's been one of the best things that's ever happened to us," they say.

I was an unbeliever led to God by university friends

EWARD was born in Sheffield in 1972 and lived there until he was 18.

"It was a good, stable upbringing in a loving family but faith did not figure at all apart from the Christmas carol concert," he recalls.

"I went to university in Newcastle and in my second year I met some Christians who believed in the gospel and who lived out their faith.

"We had a lot of long conversations and arguments about the validity of Christianity and the role of the church and its views. I was certain Christianity was outdated, a vestige of history.

"As I had a science background I was certain rationalism, reason and logic had disproved and discredited the need for superstitious faith. However, as I began to think more about the claims of Christianity and, in particular, the validity of Jesus, I became less convinced of my own arguments, especially the death and resurrection.

"I was invited to attend a Christian Union houseparty one weekend; I agreed to go primarily to refute my friends.

"They'd said I wouldn't know if Christianity was true unless I tried it, and so I thought that if I went along then I could say I'd tried it and found it wanting. I must state that I hated the experience of being with 120 Christian students and felt very out of place and in no mood to embrace faith.

"However, all I can say is that the Lord encountered me and changed my heart and beliefs; mainly as the realisation of the factual truth of the resurrection dawned on me and the final intellectual arguments I had were answered. I knew that Jesus was my Saviour and Lord and I wanted to follow Him. He transformed my beliefs.

"Being born again was a remarkable experience. I felt such a joy and overwhelming sense of hope and being loved by the Father. From the outset of my Christian journey which began on November 10th, 1991, I wanted to know what I believed and why, learning about the content of my faith and a passion for the Scriptures.



Rev Edward Ibberson.

"I read the Bible completely through in about three months. I also had a strong passion to see others find faith. Within a week of becoming a Christian I was leading an exploring Christianity meeting for other students.

"My focus in life changed, and I realised that I no longer wanted to pursue a career in academic science but rather use my life for His purposes.

"I'm so grateful for my Christian friends who witnessed faithfully and gave good account of their belief, and especially for God who gave me a fresh start and new life."

Edward took a gap year in Zimbabwe in 1993/94 and it was during this time that he began to have a call to ministry.

He then spent two years as a youth worker at Leigh Road Baptist Church, Essex, working alongside Philip Deller and then trained for three years at Spurgeon's College in London.

The next eight years were spent as minister of Friar Lane and Braunstone Baptist Church in Leicester, a church of about 80 members.

"I found that God is able to work dramatically even in an impoverished area," he says. "I learned about my own gifts and ministry."

After seven years at Braunstone, Edward was due to go on a three-month

sabbatical in October 2006 and was pondering his future ministry. A week before the sabbatical began he received an email from Philip, who he hadn't spoken to for a couple of years, indicating there was a possibility of a new ministry and role at CCBC, and would he consider it.

He recalls: "I visited Chipping Campden at the beginning of October 2006 and chatted things through, as well as catching up with Phil. During my three months of sabbatical leave I prayed and sought the Lord, and felt it right to proceed in exploring with the leadership, and eventually the congregation, at CCBC.

"Over the course of five months it became clear that the Lord was calling me to move from Leicester and serve here. I accepted the call to serve as a minister at CCBC at the end of May 2007 and moved in September.

"It was a bitter sweet time; leaving a church I'd served for eight years having thoroughly enjoyed my time there, alongside embarking on a new ministry in a new location."

It was initially intended that Edward's work at Campden would be primarily with young people but that role has rapidly grown and developed to also include preaching, outreach and mission.

Asked about his main ambition, Edward says: "It's to see many many more come to faith and love Jesus. CCBC has seen God at work and substantial growth, but it's a drop in the ocean."

Despite there being massive socio-economic differences between Leicester and Campden, Edward says: "There are, however, strong similarities in terms of what it means to be human, a longing for acceptance, forgiveness, purpose and meaning."

On a personal front, Edward says his hobbies include enjoying a good book, a tasty meal, an engaging film and a range of music – not necessarily all at once!

"I'm not overly athletic but I'm happy to have a go at most things," he says.

"It seems I like to do things on or around water, be it frozen or liquid; mainly skiing, scuba diving, sailing and swimming. I'm self-taught on the guitar and making gradual progress in learning to play the piano. I also enjoy travelling."

How CCBC's 'commuters' from Shipston returned home to form a new church

CHIPPING Campden Baptist Church's growth during the closing years of the 21st Century is recorded elsewhere in this book, but events in Campden led to some equally exciting events in Shipston-on-Stour.

God and circumstances shaped the next move. Situated in the heart of a prime Cotswold high street, there was no option for further modification to the Campden building. There was also a very real feeling amongst the leadership that the church wasn't being called to simply grow bigger, but to plant churches in the local area that would help bring renewal elsewhere too.

Shipston lies some 10 miles east of Campden. Even a cursory look at the church's demographics showed the largest number of Campden's regular 'spiritual commuters' were coming from Shipston.

Although Shipston already had three churches (Methodist, Anglican and Catholic) there had been a Baptist Church in the town till the early 1970s. This 'history' made our relationship with the other churches much easier – we were viewed as making a 'return' as opposed to an 'invasion'! It also continues to humble us; We have been, gone and come back. They have stayed the course.



A joint Cornerstone celebration at Stour Valley Baptist Church.

Plans to plant involved a very careful consideration of what relationship the churches at Campden and Shipston would have. There was a very strong desire to continue being in relationship – and, at least initially, to share leadership, membership and finance.

By the time Stour Valley Baptist Church was planted in February of 1999 we numbered 12 children and 38 adults. Meeting, as we were, in the community lounge of the town's High School, this made us feel, from the start, quite full

and inspired a degree of confidence that this was going to 'work'.

That confidence was also reinforced by the fact that Daniel Pulham was able to be our student minister. Daniel had been a deacon at CCBC and many were well used to his preaching and wider ministry. It gave the church a very real sense of continuity and provided a consistency in the teaching and worship.

Although not meeting in an actual church building, we have continued, over nine years now, to 'do' church in a very traditional way. Our services, now in the main hall of the school, begin with a short time of all-age worship and are usually sung worship and sermon centric.

The great advantage of the school site is that we have great rooms and space for our Junior Church, which now numbers up to 45 children. We have also hired the local youth club on the school site for our young people's Sunday group of up to 24 12- to 16-year-olds.

Being without a building has presented far more challenges in terms of our mid-week work. We have been somewhat limited in what we can do and have been forced to be very creative in how we do what we do. Invariably that involves far more work!

Our midweek life has, of necessity, been based in people's homes with some 90 people regularly in small groups ranging from our men's group (Men Behaving Godly) our women's groups (Soul Sisters) and various discipleship study book courses.



SVBC's Junior Church has grown from 12 children in 1999 to up to 45 today.



Stour Valley Baptist Church's congregation pictured at the church's 5th anniversary in 2004.

A great deal of work has been put into forging an ecumenical Youth Project here in Shipston, with the four churches jointly employing a full-time youth worker. It is apparently rare for four denominations to work in this way. But we have seen great fruits in terms of links with schools and young people we have no other contact with.

Matt Brown, our current youth worker, has established a powerful ministry and reputation amongst both young people and those who work with them in the area.

Throughout our nine years, our pastor has been supported by a part-time pastoral worker, a post held initially by Kelly Smith (nee Hudson-Wood) and now by

Janet Brown. Kelly's ministry was absolutely key to supporting the church whilst Daniel was at college midweek during his period of training.

Janet's subsequent ministry has meant we have expanded our pastoral care to specifically reach out to single parents (our 'Spring' group) and the elderly in Shipston (our 'Caleb' project'). We now run two services a month for those living in Shipston's sheltered housing.

One key differential that has made us very distinct to Campden's experience has been the fact that the majority of SVBC's congregation comes from Shipston itself or villages very local to it.

This has meant there has been a very real desire to be part of the immediate local community. So it has been very heartening when the school, for instance, asked Daniel to speak at the packed thanksgiving service for the life of its headmaster who died suddenly two years ago.

It has been equally heartening to be part of Shipston's Victorian Evening and, in 2007, for the first time, to celebrate Easter Sunday in the town square with the other churches in Shipston.

Another way in which we have sought to be creative in engaging with our local community has been our To Love and To Serve project. Launched in 2006 out of a desire to unconditionally show care



Amy being baptised in June 2007 by Daniel and Janet. Two people came forward to be baptised on that day.

to our town, we have undertaken major redecoration of the sports club and youth centre, made presentations of hampers to the police, schools and fire brigade and have more such exciting plans for 2008.

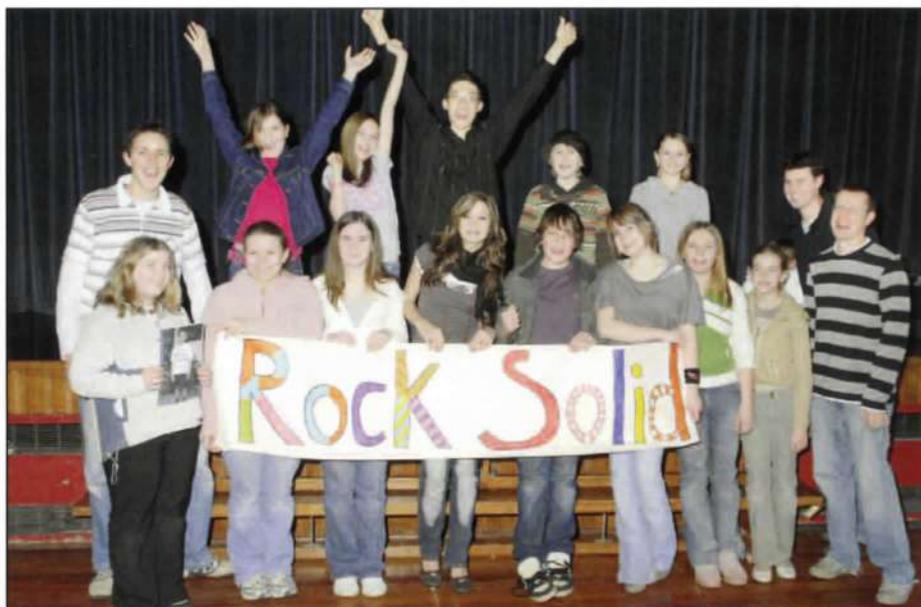
We have grown from a church of 38 adults and 12 children to one of 45 children, 24 young people and an adult congregation of over 100 – though we are rarely all there every Sunday! What is particularly thrilling is the number who have been baptised. So far 27 people have gone through the waters of baptism – which represents 27 lives changed and continuing to change.

Change happens in different ways too. For the past two years we have run a leadership training programme and so far some 30 people have been enrolled on the course. One of our founding members, Mike Tydeman, completed his ministerial training and now leads Bloxham Baptist Church in Oxfordshire.

We have forged a very real link with missionaries overseas. Helping Burmese pastors to attend the Baptist World Alliance Congress in Birmingham in 2005 has led to an ongoing relationship with people of faith in that suffering nation. One of our current members, Jackie Case, has spent several years working with YWAM in Brazil. 2008 will see a group of us accompanying some of our young people to help run a week-long children's holiday camp in partnership with Ecce Homo in Romania.

Mission is not just something we do in other countries. SVBC has run very fruitful Alpha courses and innovated with a pre-Alpha course called 'Reality' for those simply wanting to explore the very question of 'faith'. In Judith Faulkner and Fran Wilson, we have two locally-based missionaries in fellowship with us. Indeed, 'The Mill' has regularly been a valuable venue for us. We have linked with 'Urban Expression' Church Planters in Wapping and are also exploring linking with church planters in Bristol.

We have forged a vibrant and deepening ecumenical life in the town. Fruit and growth can be measured in other ways too. Having been generously supported by 'seed funding' from Chipping



Members of the Rock Solid youth group with some of their leaders, including Shipston joint churches youth worker Matt Brown (right).

Campden and the Baptist Union Home Mission Fund, for the past three years we have financially broken even. Indeed, we have, for 2008, just set our largest budget yet. People's generosity is surely a sign of what God is doing in them and a sign of what they see God doing in and through the church as a whole.

We have grown too in our appreciation that our God is not limited by buildings. Sunday by Sunday we create a worship space in what is essentially a school hall that has seen better days. But time and time again we have seen God move in that place – not least last summer when a baptism service for two people ended up being a baptismal service for four.

All this would not be possible were it not for the initial vision and generosity of our brothers and sisters at Chipping Campden. Indeed, all this would not have been possible were it not for the commitment to support one another, expressed through our covenant relationship as 'Cornerstone' churches. This has been powerfully expressed in our jointly funding, together with Bidford and Hook Norton, a Director of Children's Ministry – and we continue to enjoy the professional ministry and support from Paul

Crouch that we could never have afforded on our own

The future? Well, although our 'traditional' model has proved to be a very helpful model of church to reach our rural population, we are currently exploring who we are not reaching. In particular we are beginning to experiment with doing church a little differently on some Sundays and the possibility of doing it in very different ways at other points in the week. We feel called to be a church with many doors – and not one that people walk away from if our Sunday morning 'door' doesn't open to a room they feel comfortable in. So, amongst other things, look out for news of 'Messy Church' in 2008.

A bigger vision continues to be a mid-week home for us as a church. In truth, the school site provides us with space to use and grow into that vast numbers of churches would give their right arm for – and at very reasonable cost. But mid-week life has been limited. There is, ultimately, a limit to what you can do when you have, for instance, limited storage and flexible space to work in and from. Your prayers continue to be appreciated

But we are keenly aware that whatever 'work' we have done is but a reflection of the real fight going on in the heavenly realms. There have been many times when we have been acutely aware, as a new church, that we are in a spiritual fight. Ground taken has had to be fought for in prayer. Human mistakes have, we are sure, been readily exploited by forces that battle against us and the Gospel we preach. There have been very real costs and casualties over the past eight years and great heartache – as well as the elation seeing people come to faith and grow in faith.

But He that is in us has, time and time again, proved himself to be greater than he that is in the world. We rejoice at that truth and look forward with eager expectation for what He will continue to do in and through us at SVBC and in Cornerstone as a whole over the next 10 years.



Junior Church members with one of the pictures they made to give to the hospital and old people's home as part of the 'To Love and To Serve' initiative.

The most exciting ride of my life...but at a cost

I first arrived at CCBC in 1990 as something of an Anglican refugee, gasping for the fellowship of a spirit-filled local Cotswold Church and the friendship of Christians my own age. I found both.

I had come to faith at boarding school in the mid 1980s and had had a further experience of God whilst at University. Both had a profound impact upon me and had given me a conviction that one day I would be in full-time ministry.

These days I laugh at what God neglected to tell me at the time. He never mentioned meeting in a school hall. He let me believe I would be an Anglican vicar type presiding over a hearty Anglican church with a spire. (Note to self – always ask questions. Never assume...!)

After some two years at CCBC I felt things were coming to a head. I needed to get some clarity in my spirit. I was worshipping in a Baptist Church and working in Social Services in Cheltenham. If the vision I had was God-given and ever to come to pass, then something had to change.

I took six months out of paid employment to travel around India and during that time once again encountered God. I returned with a very real sense that I should be seeking ministerial recognition through the Baptist Church – and that I should be baptised.

My return saw me invited to lead various groups within the church and the opportunity to preach.

But it also saw Howard Jones leave for a new ministry elsewhere. You can just about make me out in the church photo of that time cowering beneath the screen on the left-hand side. Howard's leaving had not been in my reckoning. I



delayed my approach for ministerial recognition. This afforded me the opportunity to serve as a Deacon at CCBC and to help fill Howard's vacated pulpit during our interregnum. It proved to be well worth the wait.

Phil Deller more than filled H's shoes and we began a very fruitful ministry together, amongst other things, pioneering Alpha at CCBC. These days it seems such a staple in church life – it seems odd to think of church without it, but in those early days we had no guarantee it would still be running several times a year some 10 years later. As it turns out, going away to college proved to be short lived as I was 'back' within 18 months on mission placement leading the newly-planted SVBC every Sunday. On reflection it was, humanly speaking, utter madness to

commit to doing this on top of a full-time degree course.

The degree eventually became a Certificate in Theology – a common pastoral qualification – and, with God's help, I gained a 'Merit'. But, woven into the big scheme of things, was a very God ordained purpose and plan. I accepted the call to full-time ministry in Shipston and began in September 2000.

I have always had a creative leaning in my spirit and character and planting a church just about from scratch has tapped into that desire and God-given ability to innovate and invent.

Twenty-seven people have been baptised at SVBC over our first nine years. That is a real privilege and a real joy. Phenomenal really – what a God we have!!! What gives me even more joy, given the

mobility in contemporary church life, is that no fewer than 23 of those people still regularly worship with us today.

On the sober side, I had no idea 10 years ago what it would cost. Only ministers know what ministry costs. You share people's pain as well as their joy. Your position obliges you not to reveal the truth about circumstances or events, so inevitably you are judged and blamed for things that were not your fault. It can be crushing. I have found myself to be very vulnerable – and to appreciate the loyalty of genuine friends all the more.

Above all I have grown to appreciate the loyalty and faithfulness of my God.

To my amazement I have had the wonder of a whole new encounter with him over the past six months. I had known that my soul was tired but God has refreshed me beyond all I asked for.

I have had a fresh revelation that my sole treasure is Christ in me, the hope of glory. That has been both humbling and liberating. One can feel great pressure to be something or to do something as a pastor.

Actually, I have felt God take off my shoulders responsibility he had never placed there. All He calls me to do is to take that hope into situations and lives; To minister out of that hope; To pray out of that hope. No need to rustle up a human resource, for he has already put that hope, that greatest of resources within me.

Although I became the church's full-time minister in 2000, it is very much a team effort. Although spiritually speaking the past nine years have been the most exciting ride of my life, when I look back and think what we have done over the past eight years, humanly speaking, it exhausts me just thinking about it!

What happened when we ‘stepped out of the boat’

ON the occasion of the 10th anniversary of Cornerstone

Churches I (Mark) have been asked to give a potted history of my long association with Chipping Campden Baptist Church and Cornerstone Churches.

My first recollection of Chipping Campden Baptist Church (CCBC) was in the 1960s when Win Judd, a deacon who lived in the village of Ilmington, used to give me a lift to the Sunday morning service and also to the mid-week prayer meeting. The pastor at the time was Rev Newton. I remember feeling very much at home there even though the number of people in the congregation was small.

I stopped going to CCBC just after Rev Newton left but returned again with my wife Pam in the early 1970s when Rev Chris Bristow was pastor. During that time the church saw significant growth. Pam was involved in Junior Church (Sunday School as it was known it then) and I helped Roger Harlock run the Church Youth Club. I was also a deacon.

Rev David Langton followed on from Rev Bristow and it was during that time that I took over from Douglas Bell as treasurer.

Whilst Rev Langton was pastor a prophecy in the form of a vision was given. The vision showed some steps leading up to a church and out of the church door started to flow a trickle of water which ran down the steps. The water became a stream and the stream a river which watered the surrounding land. The vision/prophecy was clearly about God's outpouring of his Holy Spirit and the refreshing and revival of the surrounding area.

At the time it was thought that the prophecy was about CCBC's sister church at Blockley which was on a hill, had steps leading up to it and was showing definite signs of growth.

It was not to be because as we know Blockley Church closed and the building was sold. However, the proceeds of the sale enabled CCBC to call Rev Howard



Pam and Mark Robinson.

Jones to the pastorate in 1988, which as we know began the revival of CCBC.

It was during the time of David Langton that my parents (Babs & Graham) joined CCBC. They stayed part of the church through the lean times that were to come in the 1980s and were among the faithful remnant who prayed earnestly that God would revive CCBC. We know that God heard their prayers and answered in a remarkable way. I am very pleased that my parents lived to see that revival and be part of the church plant into Shipston during 1999.

When Rev Langton left CCBC in 1980 Pam, myself and family moved to an Assemblies of God church in Leamington

During 1995/6 Pam and I felt God was "stirring our nest" and thought that perhaps He was calling us into "full-time" work with perhaps WEC. We spent some time at WEC seeking God's guidance with the help of WEC councillors and the message we got was to "get involved in the church where you live". This was strange because we were involved heavily in our church (Pam was Sunday School Superintendent and I was a deacon and treasurer). However it was not "where we lived". The door for moving to Leamington was definitely closed and so we started searching to see if we should move to one of the churches in Shipston where we lived. Our search did not come up with the answer.

One Sunday morning in our church in Leamington a visiting preacher (Michael), who was seated at the front of the church, walked over to us and said "God has given me a word for you...can we talk after the service?" It was a very nervous couple who entered the vestry to hear what Michael had to say. The word he had for us was "...that we were to wait no longer but pull up our tent pegs and go! " You may think that such a definite Word from someone whom we respected and we knew had an ear for what God was saying, would have settled things. But not so, because where were we to go?

The following Sunday there was a special event on at CCBC and we were invited to attend. We

were more than happy to have an excuse to go to CCBC because by that time Rev Phil Deller was pastor and we were encouraged by his ministry and what was happening at CCBC.

One of the criteria when we had been seeking another church was that it would have a youth work facility for Esther (by that time the boys were able to make their own choices as to which church they were part of) so that she could continue to be nurtured in her faith and grow in the Lord. We knew from my parents that CCBC at that time did not have a youth work operational.

During that meeting it was announced that a youth work "Youthquake" was about to start. Wow! This ticked one of our very important boxes, but CCBC was not "where we lived". Having got our attention, we decided that we would attend CCBC more frequently to try and hear what God was saying. It was not long after that Phil announced that the leadership team were seeking God's guidance about planting a new church in Shipston – where we were living at the time! Praise God he had confirmed his call and so in the autumn of 1996 we "got out of the boat", left our spiritual home at Leamington and joined CCBC. We were very happy to be part of God's call and the SVBC church plant in 1999.

To God be the glory.

Five years of attending Cornerstone Churches well and truly changed our lives

In March 1999, Jenny and I were welcomed as members into Chipping Campden Baptist Church.

At the time, I was managing a branch of HSBC Bank in North Warwickshire.

Five years later, at a service in CCBC on May 8th, 2004, I was ordained as a Baptist minister having left the Bank, trained at Spurgeon's College and accepted a call to the pastorate at Bloxham Baptist Church.

Five years of attending Cornerstone Churches well and truly changed our lives. We had been Christians for years, both of us having grown up in Christian families, but God certainly took us on an adventurous journey when we decided to attend CCBC just before the launch of Stour Valley Baptist Church.

A combination of worship, prayer and encouragement within a Christ-centred church is incredibly potent.

God was encouraging us, not always very gently, to surrender everything in our lives to Him and, on the evening of 27 June 1999, my wife and I were baptised at Chipping Campden Baptist Church. I was baptised wearing an HSBC Bank T-shirt.

I spent many hours at work and many more thinking about work when I wasn't actually there and I wanted to illustrate my desire to baptise my career and bring my whole life into a place of submission to Christ.

Soon after my baptism, I was surprised when my appetite for my work in the bank began to weaken and a new desire grew within me of wanting to be able to teach God's word and see Christ formed in people. This was not in our plans!

My career with the bank was going well and I enjoyed my job, but I have always believed in the importance of doing in life what we are passionate about.

Jenny and I committed ourselves to praying together once a week about our future. God spoke through a number of people in CCBC and SVBC during those months of praying for God's leading to be made clear and in September 2001 I



Jenny and Mike Tydeman.

resigned from my position of business banking manager with HSBC and started training for Baptist ministry.

My training was church-based and my placement was at Stow-on-the-Wold Baptist Church, which had also become part of Cornerstone Churches.

God's provision for us during this time was very evident and seen in the faithfulness, love and generosity of our Cornerstone Church family.

And now we are well into our fourth year at Bloxham Baptist Church. The probationary studies have been completed and by the time you read this I will

have received my 'handshake' at the Baptist Assembly.

We have had plenty of encouragements: new Christians, baptisms and a growing church that has necessitated us leaving our church building and meeting in the local secondary school's new Assembly Hall on a Sunday morning. But I have a huge amount yet to learn, and a longing to know God better and see Him do incredible things through us all.

Let's continue to learn obedience and know that every day Jesus is sending us, just as His Father sent Him.

Close the home group? No, we want to plant a new church in Bidford!

*The story of Bidford Baptist Church is, in its own way, as amazing as the story of Chipping Campden Baptist Church. Here **David Hudson-Wood** chats to **Mark Foster**, who was there from the beginning and has witnessed the whole adventure.*

THE Bidford home group had started in Spring 2001 but after going through fluctuating fortunes, it was make or break time for the group in April 2003.

Mark Foster, who was heading up the home group at the time, said that they had gone through various ups and downs in terms of numbers and commitment, with regular attendance down to just four or five people.

So it was that a rather dejected Mark had determined that he would go to the home group that night and lay his thoughts on the line that the home group should close.

However, Philip happened to ring Mark that evening to say he was visiting various home groups each week to see how they were doing and he wanted to visit Bidford's that evening. As it happened, around a dozen people turned up to Darren and Pam Hudson's house for a 'crunch' meeting that April evening.

"We shared basically that we felt that things hadn't been going so well and we felt that the house group should close," recalls Mark.

"But Philip said something to the effect that Bidford was the right place to plant a church — that needed a lot of commitment.

Unbeknown to anyone at Bidford, Paul Wareing had shared with Philip way back in 1999 when Stour Valley Baptist Church was planted, that he felt Bidford was the right place to plant the next Cornerstone church.

Mark recalls how Paul's wife, Joanna, prayed that night in 2003 that the Lord would bring new people into the group to revitalise it and build numbers.

"We felt we'd got six or seven people together for a house group and how Lord are we going to form a new church?"

"But pretty quickly new committed peo-



Mark Foster.

ple started to attend the Bidford house group and gradually we thought that this was something that might happen."

Such was the growth of the house group that it was split into two.

"That was quite a turning point, that evening. It was only the start and was the first time the words 'church plant' had been mentioned.

"It's funny how things work out. Sometimes when you feel at your most disillusioned God steps in and says 'I'm going to do a new thing'."

The next major step was Neil arriving at Campden in September 2004 with a view to heading up the Bidford church plant, which was launched in September 2005.

Since being launched with around 40 people, Bidford Baptist Church has grown to having regular Sunday morning congregations of over 100 people.

Looking back on its first two years or so, Mark says: "We've almost doubled in size and we've had a lot of people attend

who have stuck with us and get really involved in the church. As a new church there are no traditions and no set ways of doing things.

"People who had previously fallen away have also grown and we have also seen new Christians on the Alpha courses."

Asked about Bidford Baptist Church's major strength, Mark says: "I would say unity is our major strength. We also have some very mature Christians who have come into the church and been prepared to get involved in whatever needed to be done."

Since being planted, Bidford Baptist Church has embarked on a whole series of activities and events, some of which are similar to the other Cornerstone churches but some which make it unique.

These include a toddler group, ladies coffee morning, three home groups, Alpha, a discipleship course, Christmas parties, barn dances and a men's 'pub group' which it is hoped will lead to the launch of 'God in the Pub' sessions.

Having established itself as a church since being planted in September 2005 and seen steady growth, Mark feels the church now needs to give more thought to outreach and community-based activities rather than looking inside.

"When you are a new church you've got to be careful not to do everything," he adds.

As for the man at the helm, Mark says of Neil: "Ever since he started it's been obvious he was the right man for the job because of his strengths. I would say his main strengths are pastoral. In the early days that was very important.

"He also relates to people very well and is very down to earth and he can relate to elderly people and young people alike.

"As a minister he has flourished in the last two years."



Bidford Baptist Church members at the first service in September 2005.

'I had a strong feeling that what Bidford needed was a Baptist Church'

HELEN and I moved to Bidford in 2001. We found it very difficult to settle and difficult, in particular, to find a church where we felt at home.

We spent various periods of months attending a number of different churches in the area but found that we just could not settle.

During this period I had a strong feeling that what Bidford needed was a Baptist Church and Helen and I often spoke about the potential there was in Bidford for starting a new church and what a benefit it could be for the community.

At about this time a community group carried out a survey in the area to

by Iain Willis

assist in future planning applications etc, The B50 Survey. I committed my ideas to paper and filled in the survey extolling the need for a Baptist Church in the village.

By this time Helen and I had decided that we should become members at another church. not because we really felt it was the right place for us but because we just had to settle somewhere.

The minister came to see us to discuss membership and we were rather taken aback when he concluded the meeting by saying that he would be happy to have us at Stratford but that he



felt we should try to get to know Christians in the village because "Things are beginning to happen in village communities"!

The next day Helen came home from the village Mother & Toddler group

where she had met Lisa who was excited about a house group she had been to in the village and how Chipping Campden Baptist Church was talking about planting a church in Bidford.

The following Sunday I went to Chipping Campden in the evening and instantly realised that we had found our church.

We went to the Bidford house group the following Wednesday.

We were the second couple that God had sent along after the meeting with Phil Deller where the vision to plant the church was first shared.

The pattern was then a steady stream of new people every week.

Bidford Baptist Church in pictures



The Bidford Bistro – September 2005



Left: Mimi being baptised by Neil and Jenny Phillips at Dunnington Church in 2005.



Below: The Cornerstone Theatre Company performing at the Bidford Christmas Lights switch-on 2007.

Bidford Baptist Church in pictures



The BABC worship group in action at the Christmas lights switch-on.

HOPE 08

Hope 08 is a national ecumenical vision to bring blessing to our cities, towns and villages.

Whilst we are doing some things in the community under the Hope 08 banner we are really just using the HOPE 08 banner as an expression of things we had planned to do anyway. The call to move out into the community came from Phil Deller's sermon at our second anniversary service encouraging us to go out and take the land that God had set aside for us.

What have we done so far:

Lifestyle courses – four-week taster courses in cake decorating, digital photography and art & crafts. These were incredibly successful with 20 plus new people coming and taking part and asking lots of questions. There will be more courses in the future.

Bidford School Project – we have spent two Saturdays digging a vegetable garden, laying a cross country track and varnishing picnic tables. This was a great time for the church and has improved our profile and standing in the community. We hope that it will allow us to do more with and for the school in due course.



Above: BABC volunteers putting their backs into it at the Bidford School project: Rod Perkins, John Speight, Steven Warnok, Gordon Ballingall and Jane Pirson.

Why giving karate the chop led Neil to a new life and Bidford's gain

*Neil Dunlop, Cornerstone Churches' youngest minister, likes to make people laugh. Here he talks to **David Hudson-Wood** about how he came to faith, his passion for Bidford and the 'miraculous' baby he and his wife, Vickie, have recently had.*

NEIL Dunlop is a true "son of the Bear", a Warwickshire lad through and through. He was born and bred in Henley-in-Arden and educated at Henley High School.

Neil, aged 30, became a Christian at the age of 14. He recalls: "My mother became a Christian when I was really young and we started going to church."

When he was 11 Neil was given the choice of continuing to go to church or going to karate lessons on a Sunday morning.

"I decided to become the next Bruce Lee but about three years after that I started to feel that something was missing. My mum invited me back to the church and they were having a mission from the local Bible college and after playing rugby and football with these students, I thought 'not all Christians are wimps'. That day it was as if the preacher was preaching directly to me and I went forward and made a commitment.

"Shortly after that I felt a strong urge to serve God full-time."

After leaving school Neil took a year out and then became a youth worker for a few years to gain experience before becoming student minister at Harvington Baptist Church while training in theology at Bristol Baptist College.

He married Vickie, who is 27, in 2002. But things have not always been a bed of roses for Neil and Vickie.

In April 2003 Vickie was diagnosed with stage 4 Hodgkin's Lymphoma and they were told that she probably wouldn't live, and if she did they would never be able to have children.

But in the summer of 2007 Vickie miraculously fell pregnant.

Asked about why he thinks God put them through such a trying time, Neil says: "I don't think God makes these things happen. It's just living in a broken and fractured world that these things happen. But I believe God can use these difficult times. Someone in the neighbouring village of Harvington did actually become a Christian as a result of this."

Neil explains how he came to join the leadership of Cornerstone Churches and ultimately pastor of Bidford Baptist Church. "I was looking for a church and Eddie Couchman, a minister who had known me since I was 17, heard there was going to be a church plant from Campden to Bidford, and went and spoke to Philip about me."

Neil met with Philip and the church leadership team, then the Bidford home group and the church membership voted him in as a new minister, a role he took up in September 2004.

Anyone who has seen Neil preach will know that he has a rather unique style, and he makes great use of humour in his sermons to keep everyone listening.



Dig that goatee beard: Neil Dunlop in his Sunday best.

This was evidenced in Easter 2006 when the "sermon" at Bidford's Easter morning service was a very professionally-produced DVD called "The Church" that was basically a spoof of "The Office" TV programme, in which Neil spent 30 minutes taking the mickey out of himself.

However, amid all the humour, the DVD ended with a very powerful message that would have challenged church members and visitors alike.

Asked about his jokey, sometimes irreverent preaching style, Neil says: "I think you just have to be genuine to how God made you. I do think humour breaks down so many barriers and I can't be anything else but be me."

Neil has been pastor of Bidford Baptist Church for over two years now. Asked how he feels things have gone so far, he says: "Really well. We've seen the church grow and also people grow in their faith and we've become a prominent part of the community."

Looking to the future, I asked Neil how he saw Bidford. "A field ripe for harvesting — a place loved by God." Behind all the jokes, Neil is deadly serious about serving God.

I was a workaholic then God gave me six weeks' rest to discover Him

I GREW up in Kitchener-Waterloo, a city west of Toronto in Canada. I moved to Bristol, England, when I was 15 with my parents.

Despite going to church with Scouts and my grandmother, I didn't really have a Christian upbringing.

I certainly had no appreciation as to what it meant to be a Christian or why it was such a good thing. To me it always seemed very ceremonial and dry. I was sure I could spend my time better playing baseball.

Neither of my parents are Christians, despite the beliefs of their parents. In fact, my late paternal grandfather was a Presbyterian minister.

The problem was my father had been to church so much he felt he had gone to church enough for his children. My mother on the other hand came from a family where religion had torn it apart. Her parents came from Protestant and Catholic families and when they wanted to get married they had no choice but to elope. For many years neither spoke to their families – all because of religion.

I didn't really think much about the Lord until I was at university in Bristol where I became good friends with a Christian.

He was incredibly open about his faith, always talking about it to anyone who cared to listen. The thing that stuck with me the most was that he was almost always happy; he seemed to be in a relationship with someone who was real and caring.



I remember at the time thinking that I wanted part of that, but I never did anything about it.

It was a few years later when I moved to Bidford-on-Avon before I gave any more thought to Christianity. I became good friends with my neighbours, one of whom is Neil Dunlop, who is the minister of Bidford Baptist Church.

I'd talked to Neil a few times about his faith and, as with my friend from university, I found that he too was in a relationship with someone real.

I work as a software engineer for a telecoms/utilities company based in Leamington Spa.

By chance, I was working at home one Thursday when

Neil popped round and asked if I'd like to attend an Alpha course with him. I wasn't too keen at first but when he pointed out that there would be free food I was in!

I continued to go as the weeks went on and began to understand that asking Jesus into my life was not as scary, or such a huge leap of faith that I thought that it was.

So I decided I had nothing to lose and everything to gain and I gave my life over to Jesus.

Strangely, four days later I started experiencing irregularities in my heart rhythm. It later turned out to be an arrhythmia, but it had meant that I had to take six weeks off work.

I believe the Lord did it to

me because he knew me and realised that if he didn't stop me I would soon forget about him.

Before those six weeks I had been a workaholic, working ridiculous amounts of overtime and working at home even afterwards. By spending six weeks at home I was able to read the Bible and start to understand what it truly was to be a Christian.

Being home also meant that I had no excuse not to go on the Holy Spirit day as part of the Alpha course.

After the talks, an opportunity was given to have a prayer said for you to have the Spirit come upon you.

I did and it was the most peaceful, tranquil and amazing feeling I have ever had!

When I returned to my seat I had an urge to read the Bible. I did so and found myself guided to read Psalm 113.

When I read verse 5, which starts "Who is like our Lord" it was so loud and clear, I realised that God was saying my name! (Michael is from the Hebrew meaning "who is like our Lord").

All doubts I had and all the silly questions I once had simply disappeared.

I have been a Christian for over a year now and I have never regretted it.

I am now a part of an amazing fellowship of people at Bidford Baptist Church who simply welcome me because I have recognised the Lord, just as they have.

They have given me the opportunity to play guitar and bass and now I'm even hosting an Alpha course in my own home!



A JAM service taking place at Hook Norton Baptist Church, led by Paul Crouch.

We can gain much more by working together

Hook Norton Baptist Church became part of Cornerstone Churches in 2003. Here Rev John Taylor gives a brief history of his church and describes how it has greatly benefited from establishing links with the other Cornerstone churches.

A BAPTIST church congregation was established in Hook Norton in the year 1640-41, meeting in local fields, barns and houses.

Its first church building was built in 1718 and then rebuilt in 1787 and which continues to be the place of gathering and worship for the Baptist Church in the village today.

Side galleries were probably added in Victorian times and a church hall was also built in 1873.

A new hall extension was opened in 2004, which has provided improved access and added new kitchen facilities, toilets and an upper meeting room.

In former years the Baptist congregation in Hook Norton was instrumental in the planting of Baptist churches in a number of local villages and market towns.

Hook Norton was also involved in the formation of one of the earliest Associations with Warwick and Alcester.

With the re-organisation of Baptist Union Associations and the forming of the Southern Counties Baptist Association in our area, local congrega-

tions were encouraged to form and participate in "clusters". The purpose of these clusters was to encourage fellowship and support amongst local churches. Our local cluster failed to operate in any meaningful way, so we began to search for an alternative.

Pastor John Taylor began by meeting with the leaders of Cornerstone Churches for fellowship, worship and prayer.

Encouraged by what he experienced and observed amongst this group and at Cornerstone celebrations, John sought to encourage the leaders and members of Hook Norton to consider becoming part of Cornerstone Churches. This led to Hook Norton first covenanting with Cornerstone in 2003.

As a small village church, our experience of Cornerstone Churches has been, and continues to be, positive, meaningful and encouraging.

The celebration services are always inspiring and uplifting and the fellowship warm and enriching.

We greatly appreciate the opportunity to share in the Cornerstone Churches weekends away and the ministry of Rob and Marion White at these events.

The sharing of resources through the Vision Fund has been very practical and helpful.

In particular, the appointment of Paul Crouch as Director of Children's Ministry is of great benefit to the ongoing work amongst children in our community.

This has resulted in the setting up and running of a weekly after-school club (JAM – Jesus and Me) in partnership with Paul and the local Anglican church, St Peter's.

Together we also have a monthly JAM Family Service, shared between the two churches and led by Paul.

The village school has also benefited greatly by the appointment of Nellie Crouch, Paul's wife, as deputy head.

Co-operation with St Peter's and partnership with Cornerstone not only reminds us that we are part of something much more extensive than the local congregation, but also helps us to function more effectively as the body of Christ.

Much more is gained by working, sharing and fellowshiping together than remaining in isolation.

We are thankful as a small church for the opportunity to continue to be a part of Cornerstone Churches.

‘It’s hard work but we’re praying for a breakthrough’

by David Hudson-Wood

HOOK Norton Baptist Church’s minister John Taylor has had a diverse journey of faith that has eventually led him to the Cotswolds.

John was born and raised in Yardley, Birmingham, living on a council estate. He never went to church or Sunday School as a young child.

However, it was his love of music that indirectly led him to church.

He joined his school brass band and choir and in 1962 he was among a trio of brass band members who were invited to play at a social event at the Baptist Church in Stechford on a Saturday evening.

He recalls: “This was part of the Stechford Guild Programme, a series of events to promote friendship amongst members of the Anglican, Methodist and Baptist churches in Stechford.

“This was my first visit to the church hall – all very new and strange to me.

“We played our musical item and during the evening I recognised one of the teenagers present as a member of another school band who also played the tenor horn. She introduced herself and during our conversation Katherine Turner invited me to come to the church service the next morning, which I did and enjoyed.

“It was similar to our school morning assemblies. The people at the church were very friendly and welcoming and so I began to attend services each week.”

John also began taking a close interest in RE lessons at school.

“During a prayer time at an evening service in 1964, I took a step of faith and commitment and asked the Lord Jesus Christ to forgive my sin and come into my life as my Saviour.

“The Lord graciously heard my prayer and gave me an immediate peace and assurance of sins forgiven and new life begun.”

John was soon baptised and welcomed into church membership.

John left school at 15 and started work



as an apprentice at BSA Motorcycles at Small Heath. However, he was made redundant in 1971, along with about 2,000 other workers at the plant.

John married Jane in 1972 and then began a 25-year stint of work with the London City Mission.

During this time he worked with two Baptist churches in London – Ilford High Road and Bonneville – Clapham Park Baptist. He superintended a mission centre in Croydon for four years and for the final nine years he was chaplain to the City of London Police and the London Theatre People.

“The latter few years of ministry in London coincided with an increasing development of pastoral gifts and a desire to work with, lead and pastor a Baptist church,” he says.

“There was a growing sense of God’s calling and leading in this area.

“We were seeking the Lord concerning future ministry after London and Hook Norton Baptist Church placed an advert in a Christian publication.”

John was one of 25 applicants and was among six shortlisted for the post.

After being twice invited to preach with a view, he was called in the summer of 1997, completing a two-year theological diploma at Regent’s Park College, Oxford, in 2000.

The church is actually one of the oldest

Baptist churches in England but in the 1980s it had nearly closed down. However, a team from Banbury Baptist Church came over to revive the work and in 1986 a minister was appointed.

John has served at Hook Norton for over 10 years and he freely admits the job can be a bit of a struggle, with a membership of only around 25 and a regular congregation of about 30 adults and six young people.

“It’s hard work to get a breakthrough,” he says. “I’ve only baptised two people in 10 years.”

“But it’s always been a church of 30 to 40 members, 50 at the most.”

However, there are positive signs. The Baptist church works closely with the village’s Anglican church with regular joint services.

And in the past six months John says four of their young people have professed faith.

The church has also developed a good relationship with the village

“It’s a friendly village,” says John. “It’s a good mix of local families who go back generations and we get a lot of professional people who move in because housing is quite expensive.

“Living in a village, everyone knows everyone. To come to church and make a decision, everyone knows about it.

“Although the surroundings from London are very different, people’s needs are very similar.”

The church hall is used as a day centre and by groups such as the Rainbows, Rangers, WI, and weavers and spinners.

Asked what his desire for Hook Norton Baptist Church in the future is, John says: “We need more Christian workers and worshippers in order to meet the opportunities and challenges of the church’s mission in Hook Norton.

“The harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few. I want to see people come to personal faith in Jesus Christ and to be disciplined.”

Although John is doing sterling work in Hook Norton, to see the real breakthrough that he and many church members have been praying for in the village he says: “It’s going to have to be a real work of God.”

Through our grief, we have come closer to God

IN October 1999, Alan and I were invited onto an Alpha course, to find out more about Christianity and Jesus.

We were then able to make an informed decision to ask Jesus into our hearts and lives and to start a living relationship with Him, and through Jesus, come to understand that God is our heavenly Father who loves each and every one of us unconditionally.

God is able to do this, because Jesus took the blame for everything that we have done wrong in our lives and our sins were nailed with him on the cross. Because we asked Jesus to come into our lives and asked his forgiveness for not acknowledging him and not living in a 'right' way, we now have access to everything that God wants to teach us and the certainty that we will share eternity with Him.

In 2000, both our sons, James first and then Tom, made their own commitments to following Jesus, as they saw how our personalities were changing and that we were becoming 'nicer people'.

We were all baptised in that year – again our own decisions and in obedience to Jesus who said "go and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. And be sure of this; I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28, 19-20)



Jackie, James and Alan Slough.

For the next four years our lives were uneventful, the boys did well at school and we lived a normal, if not busy, life. We each grew in our faith in different ways and we were all involved with different aspects of church membership. Life was good.

On Friday 30th January, 2004, life stopped being so good. Tom took his own life, aged 16, by hanging himself in his bedroom. I found him, Alan tried to save him, but it was too late. No one had any idea of how he felt, but we are blessed that he was able to tell us through different things that he wrote – he was a very gifted and articulate writer – why he did what he did. It does not make it right, but it helps us to understand.

The one thing that we are certain of is that we shall see him again one day. His faith was very real to him and he was confident of sharing it with his

friends, and knew that God loved him no matter what.

Through our grief, we have come to a closer understanding of God's amazing love and grace. We have been carried by the love and prayers of many people and the support of our church, Chipping Campden Baptist Church, and over four years on we still miss Tom terribly, but you learn to carry on and take the bad days with the good.

We believe that our tea room in Stow-on-the-Wold is where God wants us to be and how He wants us to serve Him – I never wanted anything like this before I became a Christian, but God put it firmly on my heart. It has taken seven years, the death of our youngest son and a lot of soul searching and seeking for us both to realise that this is God's plan for us.

What Tom did was wrong. We wish with all our hearts that we could turn the clock back and



Tom Slough.

have him here with us now, but we can't. What happened, happened, and it happened to us – a Christian family. Giving your life to Jesus won't stop heartache or difficulties in your lives, but his love and peace will help you to overcome all things. If you don't already have a personal relationship with Jesus why not take some time to find out more? Maybe through Alpha courses which are run all over the country.

We welcome the opportunity to talk about our experiences on our journey so far, either to individuals or to groups of people by arrangement.

We know that Chipping Campden Baptist Church is where God wants us to be, where He led us to and it is an amazing privilege to be part of a church that continually seeks God's will, not our human will, for His church and for all the people in the surrounding community.

Jesus

Why do I feel the way I feel
When my heart cries out to you?
Why do the tears begin to fall
When I know you love me too?

Why do I feel so humbled
When I think of all you've done?
You took away my guilt and shame
When you died, God's only son.

When desperate in the garden
You cried to God above

"Take this cup away from me"
You showed such amazing love.

In obedience to your father
You said "Your will be done",
What lessons you have taught us
That's where my heart was won.
You took my sin upon that cross
You did it all for me
My debt to you is priceless –
You suffered to set me free

So I would come to know you
And learn of God's perfect grace

And know the promise of eternity
Meeting You face to face.

Until that time you have my life
To do with as you choose
To mould me, break me, make me whole
And in your love, renewed

That's why I feel the way I feel
When my heart cries out your name
My gratitude is so immense
My life cannot be the same

© Jackie Slough 1st April 2004

‘We could be the last chance the kids have’

Gary and Melanie Robinson were married at Chipping Campden Baptist Church in August 1990 and virtually ever since then have been involved in children’s work, acting as CCBC’s Junior Church co-ordinators for the past 13 years or so. David Hudson-Wood spent an evening chatting to Gary and Melanie about their involvement in the church and, particularly, in its children’s ministry.

If you want to thank someone for bringing Gary and Melanie Robinson to Chipping Campden Baptist Church – and helping to give us such a brilliant Junior Church – you could thank the late Doris Tarplett.

Doris, a lovely, faithful Christian lady from Blockley and a stalwart of Blockley Baptist Church for many years, moved to CCBC after Blockley chapel was sold off in the 1980s.

But what Doris probably never realised at the time was that a poster she put up in her window in Blockley back in 1988 caught the attention of a young lady who lived in the village called Melanie Spray.

Melanie recalls: "I decided that when I came back from college I would find a church that would help me grow as a Christian so when I saw a poster up in Doris Tarplett’s window in Blockley for a Christmas carol service I thought I would go along. When I walked in I thought ‘yes, this is where I belong’ and that was it."

Melanie had met Gary, who hails from Durham, when they were at college together in Newcastle.

"God told us to come and live in Campden, which seemed a bit of a pipe dream at the time considering house prices," said Gary.

Melanie’s first memories of Campden were of Howard holding his first service on the day she joined the church and it being ‘full of Artheys’.

"It was smaller," she said. "What was different was that it was still at the stage of everybody owning it. Everybody was involved."

Gary recalls: "Everybody had to be on at least one rota. But it was the same atmosphere as today in a lot of ways – very much a family church, open to the spirit but not ‘wacky’ at all.



"The services were still ‘half and half’ – formal and modern – but they started to change and adapt to the needs of a growing congregation."

Gary adds: "Everybody knew everybody in the church very well and there was a great sense of community."

Melanie had been involved in children’s work ever since they started attending CCBC and before they had their two sons, Josiah, now aged 16, and Toby, 14.

Gary says: "There was only a handful of kids in the church at that stage but we had several from outside the church which was nice. As the younger children grew older Mick Pyment took over and did a fantastic job with them and then we had an influx of younger ones again."

With more children coming into the church Gary says there was a desperate need for leaders and that’s when he became involved.

One of the things that made Gary consider being a junior church leader was something a work colleague, who had taught junior church since she was 14,

had once said to him.

"She said ‘I’m the last chance they’ve got physically and spiritually’ and it kind of hit home that I’m maybe the last chance the kids have."

Gary says he finds it "amazing" to see the young people worshipping God.

"I know it’s just an outward sign and what’s going on inside their minds is more important but it’s very difficult to hold your hands up in the air in public and praise God if it’s not real."

One incident Gary and Melanie remember vividly is when on one of the campovers they decided to hold a prayer time in a field, despite everybody being freezing cold. On the face of it, it didn’t seem to be a great success but at a later date Melanie asked one of the children "What does the presence of God feel like?"

She replied: "It was like in the campover when we were praying in that field."

Gary and Melanie describe Paul Crouch as an "amazing answer to prayer". More about him on page 52.

The morning our children appeared on national TV

IN February 1994, youngsters from our Junior Church had their 15 minutes of fame when they appeared on Channel 4's *The Big Breakfast*.

The Junior Church produced their own take on the cult children's TV show and called it *The Little Breakfast*.

Mark Bartlett took off presenter Chris Evans, calling himself "Good Eavens" while Juliet Smith mimicked Gaby Roslin by playing Gobby Dazzlin'.

The pair introduced a series of wacky clips put together by Junior Church members and their leaders.

A Meet the Family slot featured church pastor Howard Jones and his family, while roving reporter Tim Stringer ventured around Chipping Campden.

There were also jokey news features and advertisements and young interviewer Katie Pymment talked to Chris Hands about his charity work.

The Big Breakfast's producers were so impressed with the effort



Little Breakfast stars Juliet Smith (left), Mark Bartlett and Katie Pymment.

that they decided to show a five-minute montage of the clips on the show to an audience of millions.

Chris Evans described the video as 'fantastic'.

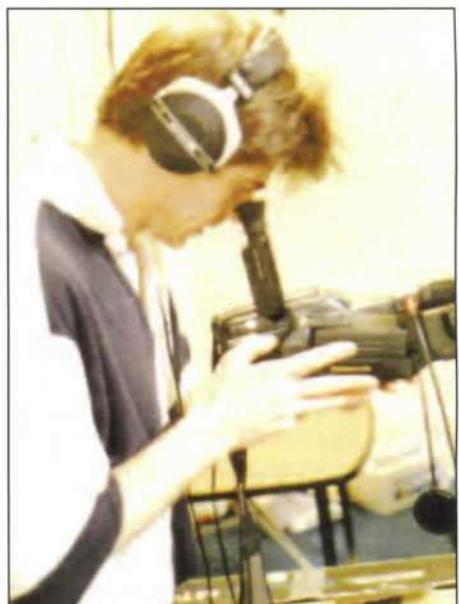
The workshop was part of the Way Today outreach held in Campden.



Chris Evans: "Fantastic"



Rev Howard Jones with Zig and Zag.



Cameraman Pete Barry.



The Donut Man entertains a packed audience of children and parents at Chipping Campden Baptist Church in 1999.

The church is jam-packed as the Donut Man makes Frankie's dream come true

BACK in September 1999, four-year-old Frankie Wood was responsible for bringing an award-winning American children's evangelist called the Donut Man to Chipping Campden for his first-ever concert in England.

Frankie used to spend hours and hours watching a variety of Donut Man music and drama videos. This prompted her mum, Zoe, to surf the internet and find the Donut Man's website.

Zoe then emailed him to ask whether he ever came over to England to do concerts. He replied that he was coming to Scotland in the summer.

"I asked him if he could come down to the Cotswolds and do a concert at our church and he agreed," said Zoe.

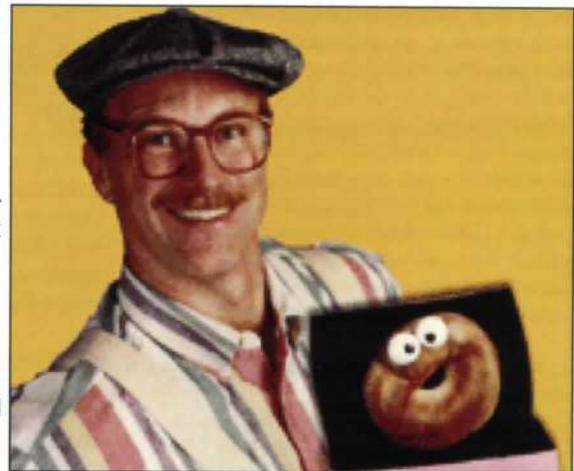
So the Donut Man (aka Rob Evans) came to Chipping Campden Baptist Church and performed a terrific concert in front of a packed house of children and their parents.

The Donut Man's simple message was that everyone's heart is like a ring donut – there's a hole in the middle of it that needs filling with Jesus.

After the concert everyone was treated to a ring donut.

"It was a fantastic concert and everyone seemed to really enjoy it," said Zoe at the time.

Two years after the Campden concert, the Donut Man came back to England for a full-blown tour which included another packed-out concert at Shipston High School. The tour



The Donut Man Rob Evans with Duncan Donut.

schedule was arranged by Zoe and Helen Boorman and also included a concert at Edward Ibberson's former church in Leicester.

God was very clever in bringing us to the Cotswolds

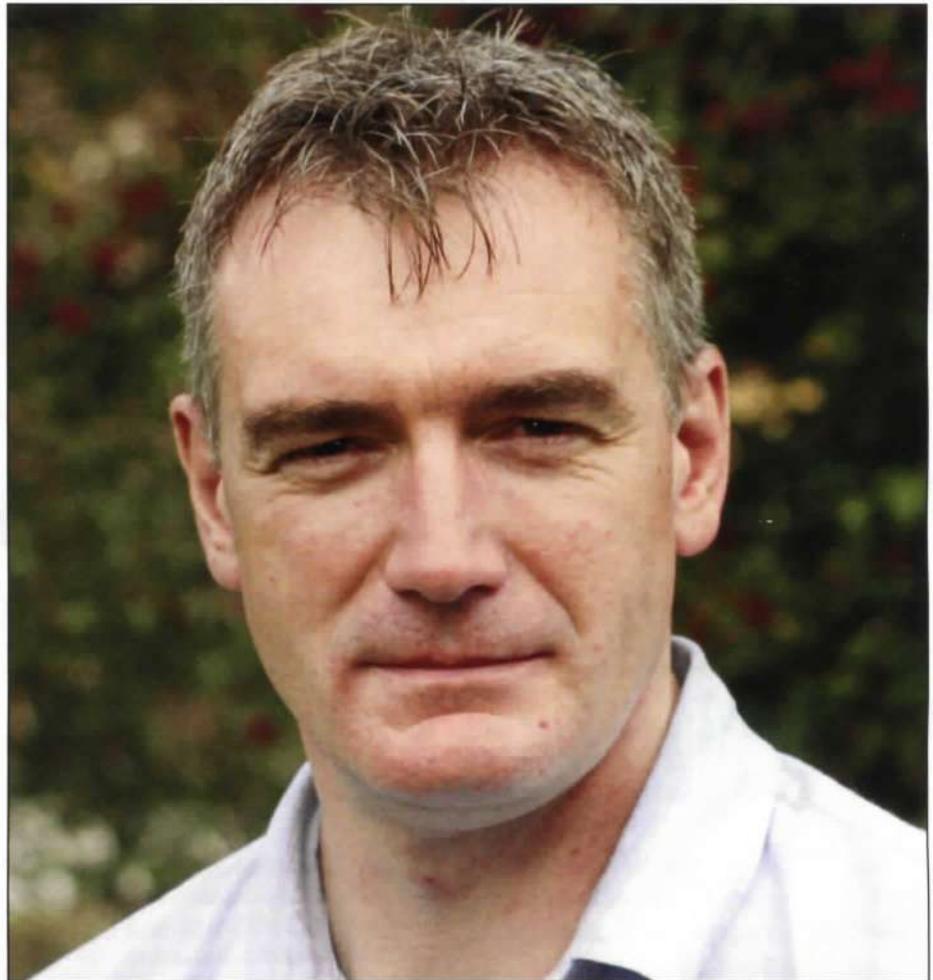
Paul Crouch joined Cornerstone Churches as Director of Children's Ministry in September 2004 and has since done a fantastic job working with children among our four churches as well as having a wider ministry in the Cotswolds. Here we put Paul under the spotlight asking him 10 questions to find out more about his life and work.

1. How long have you worked in children's ministry and how has your ministry developed over the years?

As is so often the case, I was invited to get involved in some children's work in my church in Sevenoaks when we, as a church, were able to employ a full-time children's pastor. There were new and exciting initiatives taking place in my church and the children's pastor needed helpers to join him in running some of these events. One thing led to another and it wasn't long before I was leading midweek clubs and doing some of the teaching. That was back in the mid-1980s and I was employed as a tele-sales worker selling advertising space in trade magazines in Tonbridge where I had grown up. The children's pastor and his wife were invited along with another couple to lead the 5s to 7s work at Spring Harvest and he asked me to join the team, which I did. Meanwhile, I had left my job as a not-very-good salesman to train as a primary school teacher. I qualified in 1988 and, having got married that summer, Nellie and I started full-time teaching in south London. We began to develop our teaching skills whilst still being involved as volunteers on camps and holiday clubs etc but there came a point after five years of teaching where I was spending more time thinking about and working on my church-based children's work than on my teaching preparation! I knew I had to do something about it. So I took advice from some Christian friends and the church leaders and ended up leaving teaching and going to Moorlands College for two years. So I have been involved in Christian children's work for about 23 years, full-time for about 15 years!

2. What circumstances brought you to the Cotswolds?

God was very clever in bringing us to the Cotswolds! For a time, Nellie and I had been looking at and considering a move to Canada where Nellie's sister lives. I had looked into jobs and the mechanics of emigrating and had even set up meetings with some pastors in Toronto to look at ministry opportunities there. But it was not to be! One afternoon I was looking to



see if there were any other children's ministry jobs around when I stumbled across the Cornerstone job. I sent off my CV and things went from there. God obviously was working out his plans in ways that I was not expecting.

3. How have you developed your work among children in the area?

When I came to work for Cornerstone there was some great and well established work with children already happening. I did not want to come to join the team here and dictate what should or should not be happening but at the same time there were, and probably still are, gaps that needed to be covered, particularly in our work with children outside the

church, so I made it a priority to try to engage with the children where they were most of the day – in schools. So I established contact with willing schools and now visit nine primary schools, regularly leading assemblies and taking lessons. Within the children's work in church we have established and added to midweek clubs and weekend events such as quarterly breakfasts for our children; holiday clubs in three out of the four churches. All-age services are now a regular monthly event in some of our churches with one church working with the Anglican church to provide these together. With regard to events that engage our leaders and help train them, we now take a small team to the

Children's Ministry Conference each January, we have established regular training of our JC leaders, I along with others have established Cotswold Kidznet, a group of children's workers who meet to support each other but also can resource children's work across the Cotswolds on a different scale, having had a day with Doug Horley and a training day in Cirencester.

Cornerstone are looking to develop the links with Romania and to help lead a camp with Romanian children where I shall be leading the teaching and activity programme.

We have also been fortunate to have two students, Marcus and Gareth, with us this year as part of their degree course relating to children's work. We have also 'beefed up' our child protection policy and our monitoring and recruitment of leaders in an effort to be rather more 'professional' in the care of our children.

4. What does a typical week involve?

A typical week involves assemblies, meetings with either Junior Church leaders or deacons, preparation for upcoming events, maybe all-age services or 'one-off' events, midweek clubs, monitoring and supporting our Future Builders students, meetings with other ministers, prayer and preparation, maybe peer mentoring two other children's workers with whom I am involved, liaising with schools or other agencies. And as you can imagine, things don't just happen, they take preparation!

5. How many children are you in regular contact with altogether?

I am in regular contact with approximately 1,700 children aged 5-11 years old in primary schools, I have contact with about 125 children aged 0-11 years old at Junior Churches and regular events. Within the Holiday Club setting we have contact with approximately 200 children. After-school/midweek clubs mean we have contact with approximately 55 children and campover and other 'occasional' events means contact with approximately another 40 'unchurched' children.

6. Apart from your work within the Cornerstone churches and local primary schools, what special events are you involved in running?

Regarding work outside Cornerstone, here are a few highlights:

Spring Harvest – I lead all-age worship for approximately 1,000 parents and children each evening for a week of Spring Harvest, prepare and deliver seminars on all-age worship and also others areas of children's work. I am also on the Event Leadership Team where I oversee all the children's and all-age work on site where I liaise with the Spring Harvest Executive in helping the event run smoothly.

Stow Primary School - I visit Stow Primary School on a monthly basis to lead assemblies and occasional lessons. As a result of this relationship I was

asked to lead the school's Christmas assembly at Stow Baptist Church and to host their visit there to look at baptism.

Stow Baptist Church - I have recently met with SBC and had discussions regarding my future involvement in their outreach to children in the town. We are currently exploring possible links and opportunities between the church and the school.

Cotswold Kidznet Training – There are



Paul in action.

currently a group of Cotswold-wide children's workers who meet together for prayer and support. We're planning a further day of training for children's workers in and around the Cotswolds later this year.

Children Matter – I am part of the Children Matter national initiative which seeks to promote excellence in children's work in the UK.

Currently I am in discussion with others to look at and attempt to develop a more hands-on and grassroots approach to training of children's workers on a national and regional level. As part of my involvement with Children Matter I attended a UK Network Forum in March to meet with other children's workers with a national input to look at a variety of pertinent issues.

Lecturing – Having visited Birmingham Christian College to deliver a lecture in November on Counselling Children and Salvation, I have been asked to help with the lecture programme and to input into the Future Builders course that Gareth and Marcus are a part of.

Peer Mentoring – In addition to working with Gareth and Marcus I am also involved in the mentoring of two other children's workers in the South and West and meet with them periodically to help them in their development as children's workers.

CD Recording – I have recently produced a CD of all-age songs in a variety

of styles. Another one is in the pipeline for next year.

7. Do you find your job rewarding or are you too tired to answer this question?

I do find my job very rewarding. But yes I am tired at times and it is difficult keeping family life and work life together but also separate.

Time is a constant pressure and working for four churches brings unique difficulties BUT it is still extremely encouraging to know that this is where God wants me for now and the only reason it doesn't always work out how it should is because I try to do things in my own strength rather than relying on him!

8. Seriously, what is the most rewarding part of your job?

There are primarily two rewarding parts to my job which are most satisfying. Firstly seeing children respond to Jesus in whatever way, maybe just learning to love him more, maybe wanting to live for him or maybe giving their life to him or maybe even deciding to keep coming to something we host because it is better than they thought it was going to be! And secondly, seeing leaders realising that they can do this working with children thing and growing in confidence and the skills they need to serve Jesus better.

9. Have there been any instances in the past four years – something a child or parent has said perhaps – when you have felt that God has put you in the Cotswolds for a purpose?

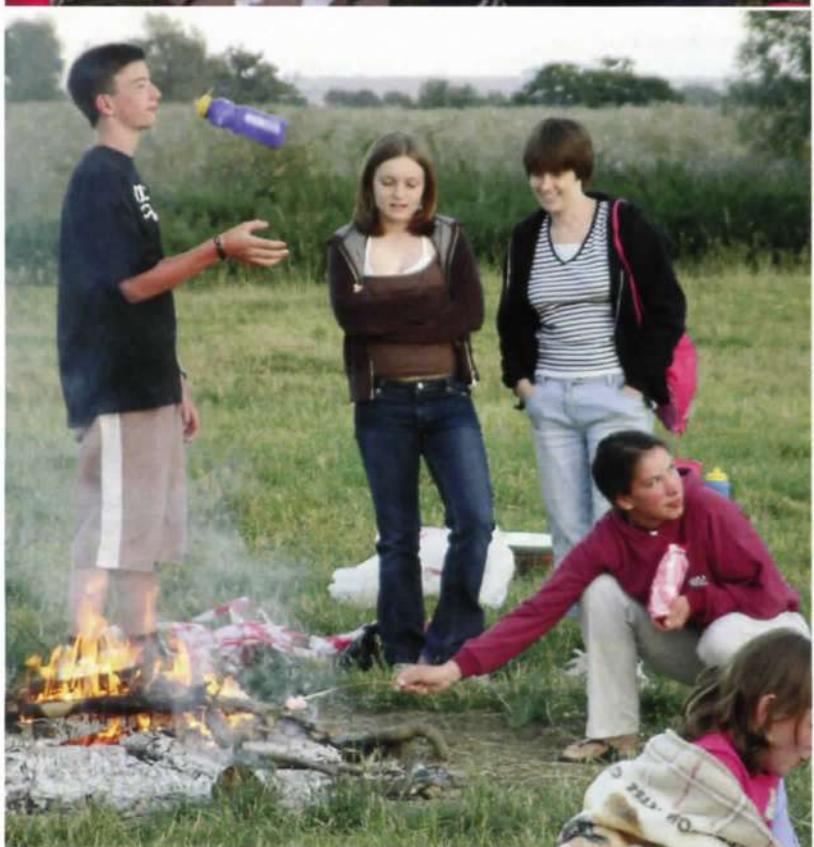
There have been numerous ones and simply a general feeling and affirmation that this is where I should be. Sure, there are times when I doubt it and find fulfilling the role extremely hard and then wonder if they or I are hearing God right but when I stop and think back the whole process was so obviously directed by God, my job, Nellie's job, the children's initial reluctance but eventual realization that they love it here and also seeing opportunities open up in many areas. God is so obviously in it!

10. How do you see your ministry developing in the future?

Regarding my ministry in the future. I am totally committed to children's work and the leaders who work with them. I don't see children's work as part of a progression into other work, say with adults, and I feel that God has gifted me with many skills specific to children's work. Whether though I will always be the 'doer' of children's work, I don't know.

Maybe I will move into a more advisory/training role in a para-church organization, maybe not, maybe God will call us into another situation, here or abroad or maybe I will stay in church-based children's work until they carry me off! All I know is that I am doing what God wants at the moment and I rely on him as to what the next step is, where and when that may, or may not be!!

Cornerstone Campover 2005



Saints & Sausages



YOUTHQUAKE

YOUTHQUAKE was the name given to CCBC's teenagers' group which ran for several years in the mid-1990s.

We had a great time with this group, none more so when we staged two barnstorming productions of a wild west show entitled "Who Shot The Sheriff".

The show was written and directed by David Hudson-

Wood and involved the cast in roles ranging from TV news crews covering the murder to the six murder suspects themselves.

At the end of the evening the audience became "The People's Jury" and was invited by Johnny Justice (Steve Titterton) to vote on who they thought did the deadly deed.

The two shows raised more than £600 for the church building fund, Tear Fund and Youthquake funds.



Some of the stars of *Who Shot the Sheriff*? Tim Stringer (left), Andrew Stringer, Rachel Davies, Esther Robinson and Jon Graham.

So who did it this time?

By ANDREA CALVESBERT

MURDER mystery fans are in for a treat this weekend when Chipping Campden Baptist Church's teenagers group Youthquake returns to the stage.

In November, the group performed the premiere of *Who Shot the Sheriff?*, a murder mystery evening with a wild west theme.

The show proved an instant hit, with the audience revelling in the chance to act as The People's Jury and guess which of the six suspects shot the poor sheriff, before the real murderer was revealed.

The evening raised £400 for the

Christian charity Tear Fund and there was an immediate call for a repeat.

So, on Saturday at 7.30pm, the newly-refurbished baptist church will once again be transformed into the Paradise Saloon, Timber Falls. To add a twist to the evening, the ending has been changed so the murderer may not be the same as before.

The production is suitable for anyone over 10. Tickets, £3 for adults and £2 for OAPs and students, include refreshments and are available from Kelly or David Hudson-Wood on 01608 661822 or on the door. Proceeds will this time be shared between the church's building fund and the Youthquake activity fund.



Andy Foster leads members of Youthquake in a sing-a-long.

Dyke House weekend

ANOTHER highlight for Youthquake was when we spent a weekend away at Dyke House, near Ledbury, with a group of teenagers from Stratford Christian Fellowship, led by Lou and Ian Slaughter.

The weekend proved spiritually significant for teenagers from both churches and it's great to hear that several of the teenagers are now in full-time Christian ministry.

Young people on fire and with a passion for Jesus

CELL Group has its roots back in 1962 when Denis and Grace Akehurst started a Crusader group in the lounge of their house in Stratford-upon-Avon.

The group soon outgrew the lounge and, after several changes of venue, moved to Bridgetown School in Stratford.

For a while it attracted well over 100 children and young people across an age range of five to 18 years.

The group was forced to close for a few years during the 1980s. But, under Denis and Grace's influence, it was subsequently resurrected as part of the children's work at Stratford Baptist Church, initially for eight to 11-year-olds.

A group for 11 to 14-year-olds was added in 1997, run by Edmund and Brenda Akehurst in their home.

When Edmund and Brenda moved to another church, the six young people in the group at the time decided that they wanted the group to continue meeting. Thus the group began in its current form. As the six grew up, the age group gradually evolved into a 14 to 18 age group.

By the time the six young people were around 15 years old the group was achieving little more than providing entertainment for the teenagers on Friday evenings.

Discussing this with a fellow Crusader leader, Edmund and Brenda were encouraged to introduce the cell concept to the group.

This would involve encouraging the young people to take responsibility for running the group themselves.

It was with scepticism that this advice was taken, but the result left no doubt that God was instrumental in the change. The meetings were run under the four Ws principle of Welcome, Worship, Word and Witness.

Each week the group would take it in turns to be responsible for leading each of these elements of the meeting.

They were also encouraged to keep in touch and encourage each other between meetings.

God really blessed the group over this period and each of the members experienced real spiritual growth such that in their first year after leaving school one



Who said teenagers were grumpy and boring? Brenda and Edmund Akehurst take it in their stride during the weekly invasion of their living room by "Cell" group members. Photo by Jos Robinson.

was preaching regularly in local churches in the vicinity of his university, one became president of her University Christian Union, another regularly led worship each week for a large student congregation in a local church and one went on a YWAM discipleship programme for a year before going on to university where he played a leading role in his college Christian Union.

During their last year in the cell group God started to add to their number, so that when the six left for university there was no question of the group coming to an end.

By this time, Edmund and Brenda had been worshipping at Chipping Campden Baptist Church for some years and the group gradually developed to the point where it consisted mostly of young people from Cornerstone Churches.

So in 2007 it became formally part of the young people's work of Cornerstone.

The group is still run along cell group lines and currently has around 20 young people who meet regularly on Friday evenings.

Its aim is to see young people meet with the living Jesus, to develop a personal relationship with him, and live their lives in serving him.

It is our desire to see the young people actively take their place in serving the

wider life of their church.

Friday evenings provide an opportunity for them to meet together socially, to worship Jesus, learn together, and to encourage and pray for each other.

This helps equip the young people to take Jesus with them in their everyday lives and introduce him to their friends.

Four times a year we hold a Saturday evening meeting called Send the Fire which is an opportunity to invite friends to join us.

At our last Send the Fire in January 2008 we had about 70 young people meet together.

Send the Fire is a time for raw, passionate worship led by our own worship band, to share what God is doing in our lives, and receive inspirational and challenging teaching.

These meetings are a time for both encouraging and equipping those who already know Jesus, but we have also found it to be a time when God challenges those who do not know him. Several young people have already come to know Jesus at Send the Fire meetings.

God is continually evolving the group, but we continue to pray that our focus will always be to see young people on fire for Jesus and to serve him.

Edmund Akehurst

Fun-filled weekends have proved such an inspiration

WEEKENDS away have been an important part of the life of Cornerstone Churches for the past 10 years and have grown in popularity to the extent that they are now always fully booked.

The first weekend away took place in October 1998 when 45 adults and 12 children (including six babies) set off for Kings Park Conference & Sports Centre in Northampton.

Owned by the Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs, the centre is run on a Christian ethos.

Norman Moss spoke at that first weekend away and Shane Rootes ensured the children had a good time too.

By April 2000, SVBC was well established and Cornerstone Churches Weekend was born. Our guest speaker was Rev Mike Nicholls. For the children, the Donut Man, who had previously performed a hugely successful concert at CCBC, returned to England especially for the Saturday of the Cornerstone Weekend...well, OK, Spring Harvest and a few other gigs too!

We were delighted to welcome friends from Stow Baptist Church and Rev Rob and Marion White to our third weekend in October 2001.



Mike and Di Parnell enjoying lunch with Iain and Helen Willis.



Children having fun during the 2003 weekend away.

Prior to becoming the minister of Poynton Baptist Church, Rob had headed up Youth for Christ in Britain. Both he and Marion still remain much in demand and are regular speakers at Spring Harvest. James and Rachel were also

a great hit with our "Vision Kids".

2004 saw us move to holding the weekend away in May on an annual basis.

Rob and Marion returned by popular demand and the children were introduced to

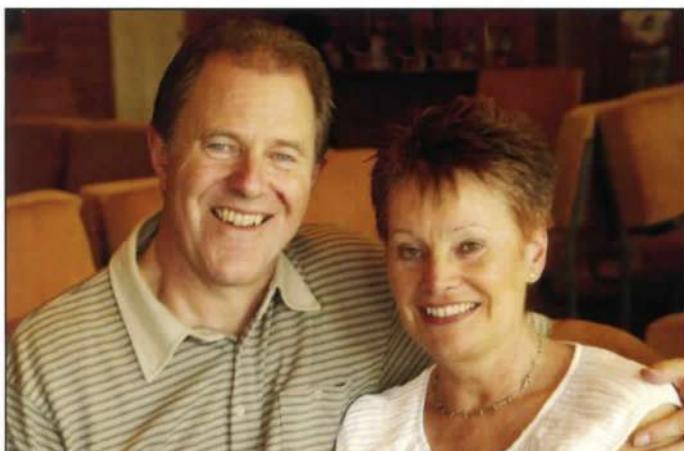


Hermey and Caris doing their Abba impersonation.

someone new – Paul Crouch made such an impression that we gave him a job! Six months later he started as Director of Children's Ministry across the Cornerstone Churches.

Kings Park has 100 beds but somehow we accommodated 114 people with a bit of help from the local Travel Lodge.

By now the kids group had



Rob and Marion White.



The sun always (OK, usually) shines on the Cornerstone Churches Weekend Away.



The main meeting room.

grown to 31 children and Matt Brown came along to put on an exciting programme for nine young people.

The hunt for a larger venue led us to the Pioneer Centre at Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire. Also owned by NAYC, it used to be the national HQ for Youth for Christ and was being extended with three new bedroom wings, a new dining room and super new meeting facilities.

This became our weekend home from May 2005 when 175 of us turned up to hear Rob and Marion and share in worship and ministry again.

In 2006 and 2007, more than 200 adults and children made the weekend a sell-out, helped by the fact that since 2003 children have been able to go free. CCBC secretary Alan Boorman, who has been responsible for much of the organisation of the weekends away over the years, said:

"They have proved to be significant events in the life of the churches. They are great fun and the kids have a wonderful time."

Alan's wife, Pam, said: "I think having time for each other has been a big thing and to get to know people from across the churches in a relaxed environment."

Apart from the excellent teaching for adults, the great worship and the leisure time, one of the highlights of the weekends away has always been the Saturday evening entertainment.

Over the years there have been various cabaret evenings and in recent years the Cornerstone Theatre Company has performed. In 2007, there was the unforgettable "Saturday Night Takeaway" which featured Hervey "Am I Bovvered?" Deller in a brilliant cameo performance.



Fun and games for the adults as well.



Making the most of the free time on Saturday afternoon.

Two valuable lessons from some bread and sardines...

AS I start to write my testimony, I feel it is not an exciting one and people are not going to be in awe by the massive change around in my life.

Prior to my wonderful experience of accepting Christ, I'd perceived myself as being a fairly decent person. Perhaps I'd come off the rails from time to time but I have never been an abuser of drugs, or drink, or women.

Here is my declaration to everybody and the world, how I came about seeking and searching to know more about Christianity and how it has changed my life.

As a child my mother took me to Sunday School. I remember enjoying it and learning about many parables from the Bible. I started to get an appreciation of the wonderful things Jesus had done for everybody.

Unfortunately, about the age of seven I moved away from the church and didn't attend Sunday School again. However, I remember throughout the rest of my childhood and my teens kneeling by my bed and praying. Looking back now, this is a sign to me that I always had a faith and a love for Jesus.

Unfortunately in my late teens and early twenties I didn't have time for Jesus and all that I believed in as a child had disappeared. I believe the reason this happened was because everything seemed to be going so well for me:

I'd purchased my first house very young, I'd become a regular to the Cheltenham social scene, I'd got myself a good job and I gained the respect and admiration from my peers for my rugby ability and my confident character...and as I was riding on this crest of a wave, where was I going to find time for Jesus?

I was brought back down to earth with a big bang when at Christmas 2000 my father died. The man I admired most was no longer in my life. I felt I wanted to search for Jesus again.

Unfortunately I didn't get that opportunity until January 2002. I took the decision to come to Chipping Campden Baptist Church with my girlfriend Sharon (who was then my fiancée and is now my wife).

I was a little apprehensive and didn't know what to expect. I told Sharon I couldn't, and wouldn't, sing and I'd sit at the back behind some big bloke waiting for the service to end. But to my surprise, the first service I attended really moved me. My childhood started to flood back and I was looking forward to coming the following week. It wasn't long before CCBC became my spiritual home and extended family.

Even though I was enjoying the morning services and I'd started reading the Bible, one thing still concerned me – as a 25-year-old I was worried that it was not the thing to be seen doing going to church on a Sunday morning. So I was a little concerned as to how my friends would react to my new Christian faith. Many of my friends I play rugby with and I slowly started to drop hints to them that I was seeking



David and Sharon Taylor-Black.

Christ. Eventually they all found out and, yeah, I got some friendly 'banta', in the fashion of singing 'come and praise' songs during training. But it just made me stronger.

On one occasion I was playing rugby and travelling home on the coach. The captain called me down to the front of the coach and said he had an award for me, and I'm thinking I had a good game they've probably got a polo-shirt for me as the man of the match. However, it turns out that they give me a loaf of bread and a tin of sardines! This joke taught me two lessons: 1. My non-Christian friends do know something about the Bible and 2. My friends have accepted my beliefs and are as much my friends now as they ever have been.

Before I'd fully given myself to Christ, there were obviously questions I needed answers to, but like most things there is not always a definite answer. I'd like to tell you about an experience that answered my question of: How is Jesus my Saviour?

Most would automatically say 'well He died for us on the cross', and that's true, but it wasn't until the second evening of the Alpha course that really brought home to me what Jesus took with Him on that cross....My Sins. On that night I remember Philip (pastor of CCBC) saying: "Imagine if you do not repent and all your sins were put onto a video tape".

My first thought was "I wonder how many hours my tape would run for?" My second thought was I would be so embarrassed and ashamed if someone were to see this tape." But, as we all know, someone does see that tape....Our Father. In our time of reckoning we will be judged by God, but through my belief in the Christian faith and my love for Jesus, I can take comfort in knowing my sins have been forgiven by My Lord and Saviour Jesus. And from this all I can say is; who would not want to worship and love God who put His only Son to die a barbaric death for me?

Then I was baptised. Then what happened? Well, I was still an accountant. And within the office I was working in I had

managed to alienate myself from almost everyone – because of my 'bull in a china shop' way of evangelism.

Do not overestimate what you can do in one year but also do not underestimate what God can do in five years.

Back then it wasn't enough for me to remain an accountant. Although the pay was good and I'll never get paid that much (ever again) my life had moved in a different direction.

I was seeking something new and there was a Godly conviction in my heart that I wasn't fulfilling what God wanted me to do.

While reading a book called *A passion for Jesus* I prayed a prayer that was about to change my life. Simply it was: Lord if you are calling me in to Christian ministry, you need to open the door. And Lord I will preach on John 12, the story of Mary anointing Jesus at Bethany. And a few days later Phil asked me if I would preach in his absence whilst he was away on holiday. Following a sleepless Saturday night, I preached, and although I'll win no awards for the sermon I believed that this was what God was calling me to do.

Not just to be an evangelist, possibly a missionary or a pastor so that I could also disciple and lead people into the Way of Jesus Christ. It wasn't clear at first in what direction God was leading us.

But I have a confession to make – somehow I forgot to tell Sharon my wife that I believed God was calling us into ministry. Initially Sharon wasn't overly impressed on being a minister's wife – in fact, she wasn't going to be a minister's wife.

But God is good and we prayed and talked our way through it with the support of loved ones. And today Sharon stands at my side as my strongest support [and she is looking forward to making tuna and cucumber sandwiches].

But (seriously) what is amazing is how God changed her heart [and I hope I am making it clear that this is all about God and His transforming power – not just in my life but in Sharon's also]. So then – as we discussed ministry with Phil – he supported us and so we began to push doors: Leadership, Church meeting, Ministerial Recognition Committee, Spurgeon's.

My call was continually being confirmed throughout the process, but it is not fully recognised until a church calls you to be its pastor (and only then after three years' probation). Now that was OK because up until last year we felt we would be coming back here in some capacity.

One thing Sharon and I learnt is that God's ways are not our ways.

And so it is after at first saying no to the prospect of going North – we accepted a call to fulfil the role of an assistant pastor at Stockton Baptist Tabernacle. And as I thank Him for the past I thank Him for the future – because my future confidence is this... 'He who began a good work in (me) will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus'

And all that is left for me to say is thank everyone at CCBC (et al) for your love, prayers and support throughout the years.

Precept – getting deeper into the Word of God

Precept Bible study courses run at CCBC on Friday mornings and at the Mill, nr Shipston, on Tuesday evenings. Course leader **Rochelle Preston** explains what it is all about.



Rochelle Preston.



Some of the members of the Friday morning Precept class.

THE Precept Bible Study class that runs from Chipping Campden Baptist Church is a group which has been meeting on Fridays for the last four years to study God's Word in an inductive manner.

We accept and acknowledge the veracity of God's Word and use it as a plumb line by which to measure all else.

Jesus said: "Sanctify them in truth; Your word is truth." John 17:17.

So what is inductive Bible study? This means that we use the Bible as our primary source of study so when we want

to understand something in the Bible we read the Bible to tell us the answers.

God is gracious to teach us; it is so wonderful to get to know the God of the Word by knowing the Word of God (repeating someone else's quote).

Wonder of wonder that He would use men moved by the Holy Spirit to pen this Word for us so that we, His creatures could know our great creator and saviour and His marvellous ways.

Not only this, but He gives us the indwelling spirit of truth who teaches us all things. It means we don't have to be confused by man's opinion as they so

often differ and which one would we agree with?

I have to say that using the precept materials I have learned how to study my Bible for myself and I did not have to go to college to do it and I did not need to be an academic, just a very ordinary person wanting to know my God and His ways.

Praise God, He has revealed truth to me line upon line, precept upon precept and, because I have seen it for myself, in the Word, I can stand rock solid knowing what God says and God's word is truth. Praise Him.

What some of the course members say about Precept

Win Hands: "I come because I want to learn more about the scriptures – that's the only reason."

Grace Akehurst: "It's the company and friendship for one thing and to learn deeper the Christian message."

Jill Walmsley: "It's given me more faith. It's made me think about my actions and

about how I should live."

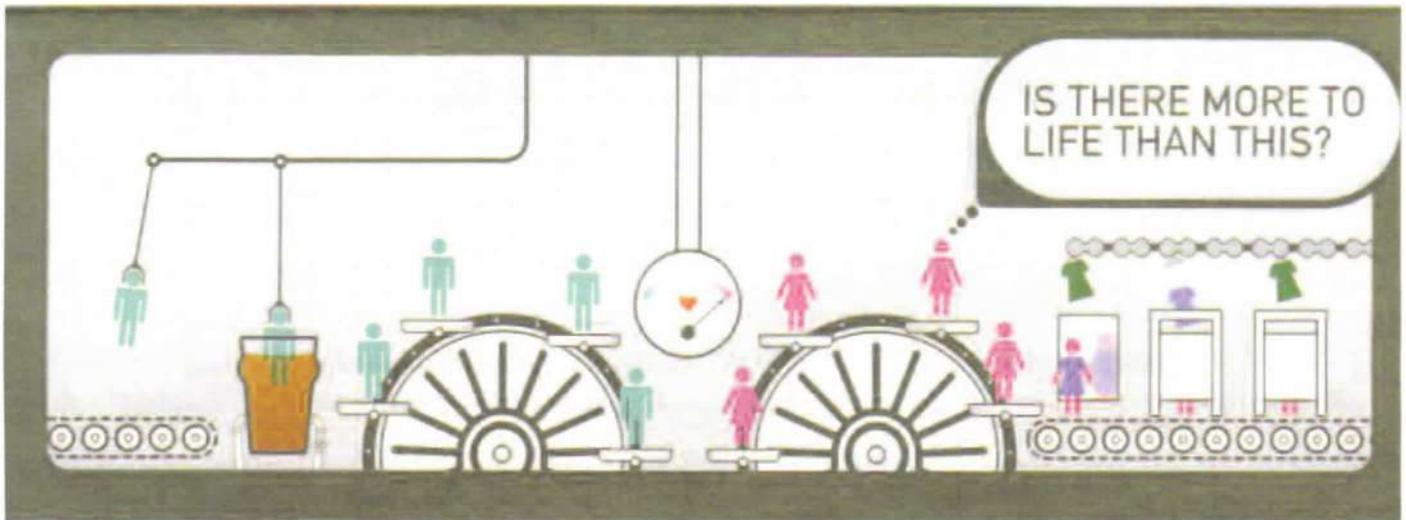
Joy Drew: "I like the Bible study. I've been a Christian 10 years and never really felt I ever really knew the Bible terribly well."

Val Leedham: "I've done every course since the first one in September 2003. "It's just fantastic. It's amazing the way

the Bible fits together. It's God's Word. It's important to be grounded in the Word."

Bill Harvey: "I like the method in a way because I have a background in the Bible. It causes you to rethink at times what you believe."

"It doesn't allow you to be fuzzy in what you think."



THE ALPHA COURSE
 explore the meaning of life alpha.org



Why Alpha's so great

THE Alpha Course has been running for over 26 years. It began at Holy Trinity Brompton in central London, in the late 1970s, initially as a means of presenting the basic principles of the Christian faith to new Christians in a relaxed and informal setting.

By 1990, when former barrister Nicky Gumbel took over the course, Alpha was a central feature of the church's life. It was while leading his second Alpha course that Nicky realised how this simple course could also appeal to non-churchgoers and he adapted the course to give it the kind of feel that would suit this group.

The Alpha course spread during the 1990s, initially in the UK and then internationally, as more churches and groups found it a helpful way to answer questions about the Christian faith in an informal setting. There are now over 33,500 courses worldwide in 163 countries and it is supported by all the major denominations.

Here at CCBC we have run Alpha courses since September 1996. Initially the whole congregation was invited and about 70 people did the course. Even on that first course people came to faith and folk from the church could see what they would be inviting their friends to.

This culture of invitation has enabled us to run consecutive courses (2 per year plus follow-up courses) for the past 11 years. It has been our main tool for evangelism as people have brought their friends along and we have had many come to faith in Christ as a result. Alpha has also been used to great effect in both our planted churches, Stour Valley Baptist Church and Bidford on Avon Baptist Church.

There are 10 evening sessions covering topics such as, Who is Jesus? Why did he

die? How can I be sure about my faith? Prayer, the Bible, Evil, guidance etc. we also have a Saturday "Holy Spirit Day" which takes place midway through the course. This is often a crucial day when people encounter God in a powerful way. The evening begins with a meal, which is usually prepared by our Home Groups. We

then have a talk on one of the "Questions of Life". This is followed by coffee and biscuits and group discussions.

I believe the Alpha Course carries an anointing from God and we will keep doing them as long as people keep inviting their friends and God keeps changing them.

Philip Deller

Zena's Alpha experience

This is the story of how Alpha helped me to find Christ.

Growing up as a fairly normal girl, I always believed there was something or someone with me, guiding me, looking after me, helping me to make the right decisions. But whilst I had this kind of faith, I'm not sure I realised what or who this person really was.

Anyway moving on several years, I married at the age of 20 and it was important to me to get married in church, making my vows in a place that I felt actually meant something. I took my marriage vows very seriously and it was very painful when I got divorced about 10 years later.

So there I was at the age of 30, with two very young children. So I managed on my own for the next 12 years or so, until about four years ago when I moved here, to Chipping Campden. My Mum had been a Christian for some years and she invited me and my daughter to go an Alpha course at CCBC. Actually, it was my daughter who decided that we should go, she was doing A-level in ethics and sociology at the time. After the first week I couldn't wait to get back and it wasn't just because the food was so good. I couldn't wait to ask more questions about Jesus and everything that he had done and why

and how he had changed people's lives and was still doing so today. About half-way through the 10-week course, on the Holy Spirit day, I was overwhelmed with the realisation that I didn't have to walk this path on my own, anymore. I realised I needed Jesus in my life and amongst a lot of tears of joy, I asked him to come into and be the very focus of my life. My daughter thought this was all a bit strange and didn't really understand why I had received this calling, to live my life with him at the centre.

I know now that I was responding to the Holy Spirit. Gradually I understood why Jesus had died on the cross for me, so that I could be forgiven and have a real relationship with God, through Jesus.

Since then I have prayed regularly to be filled with the Holy Spirit and the differences this has made in my very ordinary life are extraordinary. There are many gifts that he bestows on us every day. Anyone who knows me will agree that I have not suddenly become perfect overnight. But knowing Jesus and by His grace, my life has truly been changed. I have a very different outlook now, a sense of how much He loves us and that He wants us to have a living relationship with him.

Zena Drew

My story

Carole Graves

'Alpha has been the best thing I have ever done'

I was two years ago that my life completely changed after what can only be described as an 'out of this world' experience.

Up until then, I wasn't concerned with religion, having grown up in a non-Christian family. RE lessons at school passed by in a blur. I turned my back on the notion that God existed and labelled Christianity as a religion to suppress and control society. Going to church, I believed, was for lonely or weird people. Of course, I attended a church for weddings, christenings and funerals, but the sermons I listened to and the hymns I sang meant very little.

Over the years I found myself slipping off the rails. Failed relationships and careers contracted a deep emptiness within me which I would fill by making sure I was constantly busy. Towards the end of 2005 things began the change.

During the Christmas holidays I was invited to a friend's party and ended up meeting my Christian friend Sian. It wasn't long before we started to talk about Christianity and that was when I broke down and explained that I had hit rock bottom. Sian suggested I read Rick Warren's book *The Purpose Driven Life* — a 40-day spiritual journey which helped to change my life.

Suddenly my father-in-law was taken ill and sadly died in February 2006. It was at his funeral that I began to understand the sermon I was hearing. Driving back, I had an 'out of this world experience'. I was overcome with a deep aching in the pit of my stomach and an urge to wail out loud. I sobbed and sobbed.

Then I felt a deep wave of love, forgiveness and warmth was over me and I began to laugh out loud. From that moment on I just knew I had opened the door to Jesus and the emptiness I felt before was now full of love for God. It was an amazing awakening.

The next step was clear. I felt a real need to know more about the Christian faith and Jesus.

I spoke to Kath and Paul Sillence who were both Christians in Honeybourne.

I quickly learned that they were members of Chipping Campden Baptist Church. Kath told me about the Alpha course — a 10-week course which explores Christianity and teaches you what the religion means — and that a course was shortly commencing in March, the day after I was coming home from a holiday abroad. Gods timing couldn't have been more apt. It was arranged that Kath would kindly take me along to the Alpha course as her guest.



Since that first day at Alpha I haven't looked back.

Attending the Alpha course has been the best thing I have ever done in my life and it wasn't just the lovingly prepared and delicious food that kept me coming back or Philip's witty jokes.

Alpha has given me the answers to the many questions I have often pondered over and was a lynchpin in giving me a true understanding of the Christian faith.

Through the Alpha course and After Alpha course I have been privileged to meet such a wonderful fellowship of people who have welcomed me with open arms and shown such love, kindness, compassion and friendship.

Following on from Alpha, I could not wait to be baptised on July 2nd 2006. The baptism for me was the final step I needed in declaring my belief, love and commitment in following and serving Jesus Christ. The baptism has truly allowed me to shed my past which was filled with guilt and shame and to start afresh.

My heart which had an empty void is now filled with deep joy and love.

Each day I am amazed at how the Lord is working through me, softening, remoulding me and using me in my everyday life for his work and ultimately for his glory.

My husband, family and friends have noticed that my anger has diminished and that there is an inner strength and calmness about me.

I am now a member of Chipping Campden Baptist Church and I have

made some amazing friends there. the church is not what people expect — it isn't dark, cold and stuffy, instead it's very modern, warm and friendly.

With my faith in God growing, one morning back in April 2007 I was sitting at my office desk working from home and felt the sense that I was not fully utilising my gifts and missing the general contact with people.

I spoke to God out loud and asked him what he really wanted me to do. Within a blink of an eye God answered me and said 'You know what I want you to do, you saw a job vacancy last week and I want you to contact them'.

I knew immediately what God meant and it was a volunteer job through Age Concern, taking care of elderly people's feet. I did not hesitate and rang Age Concern straight away and learnt that they had a short training course commencing the following week. I booked myself onto it and have since not looked back.

I never thought of a career in foot care so it just shows how God knows best! I now plan to explore further courses in foot care where I can combine both the volunteer work and a paid career.

I know that it's not just about cutting toe nails, but it is showing love and compassion to others through our Saviour, Lord Jesus Christ, and that's what's truly rewarding and awesome!

A deep sense of purpose now fills my life and a peace in my heart that I have not known before. It's absolutely amazing.

I have tried many different careers over the years, which have always left me feeling empty, frustrated and not truly satisfying my soul.

The past year in my life has been amazing and I do feel I've been saved. For years I've thought to myself that there's got to be more to life and I've finally found it. Becoming a Christian has set me free.

Looking back, my life had changed a lot. I used to be an angry person but now I'm much happier and patient and I'm full of joy for everyday life.

My family have also commented on how much happier I am and noticed a spring in my step.

With this spring in my step, I cannot hide my new found enthusiasm and energy for the Lord.

It bubbles over like a fountain and I find myself at every opportunity telling others of my testimony, faith and love for Jesus, hoping they too will come to know him and be set free from the sufferings and find a deep eternal joy like I now have.



What can happen when a wife prays for her husband

Kath's story...

I was born and brought up in Lancashire. My father was a psychiatric nurse my mother a geriatric nurse and I had two sisters and a brother.

For most of my life I have had an association with the church. I attended church and Sunday School every week, I was christened as a baby, confirmed as a teenager, and if anyone had asked me if I was a Christian I would have answered "yes".

Only when I started to attend Chipping Campden Baptist Church did I realise that, in fact, I was not.

Mick and I met at agricultural college in Lancashire. I worked there as a cook, Mick was a student; he delights in telling everyone the only way to get extra food was to befriend the cooks! I would like to think there was more to it than that.

We had only known each other a couple of months when we got engaged and then married the week after Mick left college – I was 19, he was 20!

After recently re-reading my initial testimony from 12 years ago, what really came out of it was that it was a time of hope, of a realisation, acknowledgement and awakening of my love for the Lord and, above all, trust.

I was desperate to give him my life. I

wanted more and more and I desired it for everyone, especially my family, who, I have to say, were very supportive of me but no way was it anything they wanted to be involved in.

As I look back now, I realise this was a period when I was putting down some secure foundations, when my roots were really establishing themselves. Again that word trust comes to the fore. One thing I never tired of doing was praying to the Lord for Mick. We prayed relentlessly for him in our homegroup. I used to pray that his heart would be softened, his eyes would be opened and that one day he would accept Christ as his Lord and Saviour.

Mick was incredibly busy at this time often working an 18-hour day farming, and also taking a very painful decision to sell the cows and land because it wasn't financially viable.

Again as a homegroup we prayed that the planners would allow us to develop the old farm buildings.

I have lost count of the number of Alpha courses I asked Mick to attend. Finally, after sensing that the Lord wanted me to move forward in my life with him and stop "treading water", I spoke to Phil Deller and told him Mick would be attending the next Alpha course.

I spoke to Mick and told him I had put his name down and that he would be going.

Mick's story...

I was born into a Christian farming family in South Warwickshire. The best two things that happened to me were meeting and marrying Kath and going on Alpha and meeting the Lord.

I always classed myself as a Christian and was quite happy to be around Christians but had a sore backside from sitting on the fence. I went on the Alpha course and had an awakening and a few weeks into it gave my life to the Lord.

Following "After Alpha", I was baptised on Easter Day 2005; my old life was washed away and a new person emerged from under the water. I felt as if I had the Ready Brek glow, wandering around with a big grin on my face, knowing my new-found friend, Jesus, was now accompanying me.

Since then I regularly take friends to Alpha hoping they can find what we have in our walk with God.

To date our youngest daughter has been baptised and we continue to pray for the rest of our family.

The comment that Diana, Princess of Wales made in her famous interview, when she stated there were three people in her marriage, is also true of our marriage, but one of these three is Jesus Christ who always wants the best for us!

The dramatic night when Geoff saved us "In the Nick of Time"

by David Hudson-Wood

In recent years drama has become an accepted part of church life with the formation of the Cornerstone Theatre Company under the inspiration of the wonderful Darren Hudson.

But back in 1994 there was no such thing as a church drama group.

However, with a number of talented thespians amongst our ranks and several others willing to have a go, Kelly and I decided it would be great fun to form the Chipping Campden Baptist Church Players and put on a murder mystery play.

We had great fun writing the play during a nine-hour flight to Florida. We basically had a list of people who had said they were interested in taking part and we simply wrote the play around the characters we had.

Kelly would write one scene while I would work on the next. I'm sure that's not how Shakespeare wrote his plays.

The play had absolutely no Christian content — we wanted it to appeal to a non-Christian audience and show them that we were just normal people who enjoyed having a good time.

We decided to put the play on at St George's Hall, Blockley, over two nights and, after a lot of rehearsing, we were ready to go.

The shows went off brilliantly and I have many fond memories of the whole experience.

Favourite moments included watching Daniel Pulham playing opposite Esther Newman and Cory Lowde playing the lead male romantic role opposite Sally Hancock (now Workman), who decided



The cast of "In the Nick of Time", including Geoff Woodward (back row third from right)

to put on a very convincing Scottish accent.

My own stage wife was Megan Hodges, though she is now Megan Archer as my cousin Will saw her for the first time at the play and obviously decided he would steal her away from me, despite her on-stage lisp.

Then there was Kate Barry and Richard Butler, who played a pair of crooks. Kate put on this very strong Cockney accent and many people had no idea it was her playing the part.

Arnold Jonins, who had never done anything like it in his life before, gave a showstopping performance as Arnie the butler and at one point he came on stage dressed as Elvis Presley and had the audience in stitches.

But the undoubted highlight was on the second night when we were about

to break into a country and western dance routine.

Tim Mills, our assistant stage manager, accidentally knocked the plug out of the socket.

Just as a state of panic was about to take over, Geoff Woodward started telling this brilliant joke on a western theme and everybody in the audience thought it was part of the show.

When Geoff sadly died a few years later, more than one person mentioned in his funeral tributes the night he saved the show "In the Nick of Time".

That will be my one abiding memory of Geoff, as well as the fact that he was the first person to come up to me the first time I walked into Chipping Campden Baptist Church.

He shook my hand and welcomed me and I immediately felt at home.



Hoedown: The cast of In the Nick of Time let their hair down and, right, Daniel and Esther take centre stage.



The Cornerstone Theatre Company – a dramatic story

THE Cornerstone Theatre Company (CTC for short) was set up in February 2007, shortly after the second of two very successful Christmas productions.

Back in 2004, Darren Hudson, a member of Bidford-on-Avon Baptist Church (BABC) and former member of Chipping Campden Baptist Church (CCBC), decided to fulfil a long-held ambition to write a Christmas play – *A Teenager's Tale*.

Set in Bethlehem, it told the story of an innkeeper, his teenage children and some local shepherds and the effect of Jesus' birth in their stable. As a former Junior Church leader, Darren managed to attract an enthusiastic cast of 10 young people and he recruited a friend, Helen Willis, to direct the production with him, and an experienced musician, Mark Foster, to compose a closing rock anthem.

Most of the young people had little previous experience of acting but they were enthusiastic and committed and, after weeks of rehearsing, the big night arrived on Sunday, December 12th, at CCBC. Despite limited stage and lighting resources, the audience was highly appreciative and the 40-minute play was an outstanding success.

That first production taught us many things but perhaps the most poignant was the fact that drama could bring out previously unrecognised gifts in the young people and that this could increase their self-confidence in general.

It took two years before Darren wrote a second Christmas production. The 2006 production, *Christmas Take Two*, was a



The cast of the 2004 production *A Teenager's Tale*.

more ambitious project, involving adults as well as young people, with a cast of 18 from three Cornerstone churches.

The production was actually two plays in one, with the first set in Bethlehem at the time of Jesus' birth and the second set in modern-day England. The plays showed how God could influence two similar families in very different eras.

Darren's request for additional help led to the creation of a highly impressive set and more elaborate costumes, and professional lights and sound equipment were used. There were actually two performances, the first at CCBC on December 10th and the second at a packed Crawford Memorial Hall (home of

BABC) on December 17th.

Both performances were received enthusiastically. There were a number of cameo performances, some amusing musical numbers, and a rousing closing song composed once again by Mark Foster. The production lasted over 1½ hours and was uniformly acclaimed.

At the post-production party in January the suggestion of creating a Cornerstone drama group was widely supported. The first meeting took place on February 26th, 2007. After several weeks a name was finally adopted – Cornerstone Theatre Company (CTC).

From the outset, CTC has been open to members of all of the Cornerstone churches. It has sought to use the medium of drama to communicate Biblical teaching and, in so doing, the talents and gifts of adults and young people have been utilised and developed.

In its first year the aim was to support the quarterly Sunday evening Cornerstone Celebrations (where the four churches meet together at each church in rotation), with the performing of two sketches at each of these events. These were received with enthusiasm and had the added benefit of encouraging young people to attend the events.

CTC had the privilege of being invited to provide the Saturday evening's entertainment at the Cornerstone Churches' Weekend Away in May 2007. This chal-



Young members of CTC performing a sketch at Bidford Baptist Church.



Members of the Cornerstone Theatre Company performing at the 2007 Bidford Christmas lights switch-on.

-lenging task was grasped wholeheartedly and significant preparation resulted in the first-ever Cornerstone Saturday Night Takeaway.

The event combined a number of old game-shows with guest interruptions by CTC actors who came on stage through a specially-designed front door. The CTC young people prepared a dance routine to an S Club 7 pop song, which formed the Generation Game-style challenge for two married couples from the audience.

The whole evening was filmed live and

projected onto a screen and a comedy DVD filmed prior to the weekend, featuring Hermey Deller's memorable Catherine Tate impression, brought the house down. Children and adults alike were enthralled.

In late 2007 CTC performed three sketches in the open-air on the back of a lorry at the Bidford-on-Avon Christmas Lights Switch-On. This Sunday evening event attracted several hundred of the local residents and is a useful opportunity to present Christian truths to non-

churchgoers.

The Cornerstone Theatre Company has become an established and well-received group in the Cornerstone Churches. We look forward to continuing our support of the Cornerstone Celebrations and would like to do further Christmas productions. We are open to new opportunities to perform and will pursue our goal of presenting God's Word in exciting and innovative ways.



CTC's legendary trio in action: Rod Perkins, Perce Pirson and Helen Willis.



Mark Foster, who composed the closing songs for the first two Christmas productions.

Worship should be at the centre of everything we do

WORSHIP is fundamental to the life of a church and over the years, this has certainly been evident at CCBC.

In 1988 Howard Jones became minister of CCBC and was an asset to the church particularly using his musical gifts, playing guitar/bass guitar, cello and piano (not at the same time!).

Howard led worship playing his guitar with Jenny Arthey or Kelly Hudson playing the piano.

A worship group was then set up by Howard which included Pete Barry on drums, Kate Barry on saxophone, Jenny/Kelly on piano and Esther Newman on guitar.

From that time the group developed with other members taking part – Sally Hancock, Richard Butler, Dinah Lowe, Zoe Hudson and Geoff Woodward.

When Howard left the church in 1995 the worship group was led in turn by Kelly, Sally and Esther, and later on by Andy Foster.

The arrival of the Graham family, James and Suzanne Leedham, and James Salmon added a different dimension to the group with the addition of woodwind, brass and strings.

Also at the time Richard and Linda Holder took part in leading worship along with Jon Graham and Mark Foster.

The worship group has since increased in size with a variety of instruments and singers currently led by Ali Akehurst, Paul Crouch, Alan Slough, Matt Brown, Sally Hancock and Edward Ibberson.

We also have an up-and-coming youth band who have recently taken part in services led by Josh Crouch.

Over the years there have been many people involved in the worship group, too many to mention!

Bidford, Stour Valley and Hook Norton churches all have their own worship groups too and get together to perform at special occasions such as the church weekend away.

As a group of churches we have been truly blessed by all members of the worship group, past and present, using their gifts and their own style of worship to the glory of God.

This has enabled everyone, no matter what age, to meet with God in a special way.

Esther Newman



One of Chipping Campden Baptist Church's worship groups in action.



Members of Stour Valley Baptist Church's worship team.



Mark Foster on guitar leading Bidford Baptist Church's worship group.

'Our home group has blessed us so much'

Pete and Kate Barry are among the longest-standing members of CCBC and have been hosting a home group for 20 years. Here Pete tells their story and focuses on the vital part the home group has played in their spiritual lives

FOR those of you who don't know us, Kate and I can be seen most Sundays playing up front with the worship group.

Kate plays the saxophone and I play the drums. We have seen a great many changes and much spiritual growth since first coming to Chipping Campden Baptist Church in 1987 when the congregation seldom numbered more than 20. Back then there was no minister and services were led by members of the congregation.

Kate had moved to Evesham in 1986 to work as a photographer for the *Evesham Journal* and shortly after, on one of her photographic assignments, met Geoff Carr who invited her to Chipping Campden Baptist Church, where he was a member.

Kate had just become a Christian after going to Banbury Baptist Church and was looking for a local church. She also ended up playing in a 1920s style band called 'Ain't misbehavin' with Geoff for a couple of years. Geoff and his wife Paddy now attend St James's Church as they feel they have a real ministry there.

I joined the church shortly after Kate and we were married in July 1988 – the first wedding at CCBC for nearly a decade and, coincidentally, the day that the new full-time minister Howard Jones, his wife Iona and their daughter Charis were moving their belongings into the Manse.

Howard soon encouraged more regular Bible study groups and we were asked to lead one in our home in Evesham. Kate was also church treasurer at this time and became involved in raising the finances for the first major piece of church renovation to build a new kitchen and toilets. The existing dingy kitchen and adjacent toilet were straight out of a Dickens novel and would be frowned upon to say the least by today's planning regulators!

It was also Howard who encouraged a livelier style of worship and to everyone's trepidation introduced the drum kit for the first time! I learned to play very quietly and also became music group leader for a year or so, organising the practices.

Our Bible study group started when we lived in Evesham and has always been



Pete and Kate (right) with Linda, Carole and Esther, some of the current members of the Badsey home group.

something of a melting pot with people coming and going. In fact over the years we have seen many different faces and seen people move on to work abroad or to get married and move to other areas.

It would be impossible to mention everyone by name but among the founding members of the group were David and Jenny Arthey (who now host their own group in Willersey) and David's mum Zillah. Chris Hands was also a regular between trips to Romania.

In 1989 we had our first daughter Beth and she made frequent appearances at the meetings. We moved to Badsey in 1991 a year before our son William was born and the group moved with us becoming the 'Badsey Group'.

Megan was born a few years later and having three children just made us aware of the difficulties parents have in both being able to attend so occasionally we rotate the venue making it easier for them to attend.

The Bible study groups became especially helpful when Howard and his family moved to Olton and the church was again without a regular pastor for a year until Philip was appointed. Thankfully he has also been a great believer in home groups and encouraged us by visiting each one.

Our philosophy for the group has always been to build an atmosphere where everyone feels welcome and relaxed so we can share our concerns, our hopes and fears and encourage each other to live the life that God wants us to, using His word as our guide. Trust is the key word.

We usually start with a chat and a drink and as things settle down we begin to think about things we should pray about, whether they are items for thanksgiving or

things we want to ask God to help us with.

We usually try to use the prepared questions, which are related to the previous Sunday morning's sermon, as the backbone of what we do but on many occasions we go a little maverick and stray off into a variety of fascinating side alleys! The amazing thing is that we always find that we have covered everything we should have done albeit by a more circuitous route.

Oh! And, yes, we do have fun. A big part of the home groups is to hold social events, when appropriate, to try and include a wider group of family and friends. Occasionally we used to have joint evenings with the Bidford group where Mark Foster gave us trips down the river on his boat and George Workman would organise games.

As with anything in life our Bible study group has seen its ups and downs and, during the latter, the temptation has been to throw in the towel and close the group.

However, we have seen so many blessings over the last 20 years and I can honestly say that we have had some of the best sharing times with friends of any in our church experience. It is a great opportunity to meet and get to know people at a much deeper level (it's impossible to speak to everyone on Sunday morning) and has been invaluable in helping us to still feel close to the church, especially since the congregation has tripled in size.

We have seen many prayers answered and, with hindsight in difficult times, seen God's hand on us. We would whole-heartedly recommend anyone who is not a member to find one of the many groups available and become a regular.



Cornerstone
Men's Breakfast

Cornerstone Men's Breakfast – it's not just bacon & eggs



by Alan Bartliff

AT the end of 2005, Philip Deller invited a group of us to hear Richard Meryon of Christian Viewpoint for Men discuss their work in organising Men's Breakfast Group meetings in the United Kingdom.

Some weeks later, I discussed my idea for a Men's Breakfast project with Philip. We hit on the name of Cornerstone Men's breakfast.

It was obvious from the very beginning that we needed to sponsor this project. My board decided that this was something that Meylan Management Ltd would be happy to provide for.

The first meeting of Cornerstone Men's Breakfast came some months later at Chipping Campden Baptist Church and we invited Richard Meryon to speak.

We have a clear objective in this project. Not necessarily as other breakfasts do, to educate their own church members, but in our case it is to spread the

net wider and invite friends and colleagues to the breakfasts who probably go to no place of worship at all. Our objective is to "Win Men for Jesus Christ".

We very soon outgrew the facility at Chipping Campden and discovered an ideal venue at the banqueting suite of the Dormy House Hotel, near Broadway, which provides an excellent full English breakfast service.

Since then, this work has grown considerably in that we now average a Breakfast attendance of 100-plus and have a registration/contact list in excess of 250.

We cover a catchment area of over a 40-mile radius with six ticket agents from various denominations. We advertise in local shops, post offices, libraries and churches.

We hold four Saturday morning full English breakfasts a year which include a speaker, usually from the sports or business sectors, most with a proven

track record and all who share the Christian faith. The presentations are always relevant, pertinent, stimulating and challenging, but delivered with sensitivity and good humour.

Our other outdoor events, all strictly male-orientated, each present a first-class networking opportunity at a well-organised day out.

Our own website www.cornerstone-mensbreakfast.org.uk supports these events and goes a long way to explain our objectives and facilities.

At the time of writing, we are currently involved in recruiting for our first Alpha course for Cornerstone Men's Breakfast. We are also in the process of creating a sampler DVD of our events to add to our overall publicity programme.

At this time, approximately 37-40% of our attendees do not attend a place of worship or have any church contact whatsoever. Their support, together with our immediate colleagues, is vital to the overall success of this project.



Ladies who lunch – and listen to great speakers



by Rosemary Dutton

FOLLOWING on from the success of the Cornerstone Men's Breakfasts, a few ladies met to discuss the possibility of holding some Ladies' Lunch events.

The first of these took place on Saturday, November 25th, 2006, when we welcomed Fiona Castle, the widow of the popular and well-loved entertainer Roy Castle.

The church had been transformed from its normal appearance to that of a restaurant and 80 ladies sat down to a delicious lunch served by men from the church, immaculately dressed in black tie and aprons.

Fiona Castle brought an honest and challenging message, focusing on her desire earlier in her life to be the perfect woman, wife, mother and home-maker, as portrayed in all branches of the media. This she had striven to be; from the outside all appeared perfect but she knew inside she was falling apart. In desperation one day she prayed that God, if he were there, would come to her aid. Within minutes the phone rang and her acquaintance, sensing that Fiona needed help, invited her round for coffee.

Fiona poured out all her troubles and her friend, who she knew to be a Christian, was able to point her to Jesus. Fiona gladly accepted him into her life.

Gone now was the need to strive for perfection and its consequent worry of failure and in its place has come the deepest sense of peace which has remained with her and influenced her life ever since.



The next lunch was planned for March 3rd, 2007, when Jennifer Rees Larcombe was the guest speaker. Once again a capacity gathering of 90 ladies heard the message of how God can, and does, change shattered and broken lives. Jen spoke of her privileged background, of her marriage and family life but tragedy struck when she was smitten with a viral infection which changed the course of her life.

She became totally dependent upon others for care and was confined to a wheelchair for eight years. She did, however, continue with her speaking engagements and one day a newly-committed Christian lady felt compelled to pray with Jen, which she did with fear and trepidation. Jen was miraculously and totally healed, but it was not all plain sailing. Her marriage failed and she was eventually divorced. Arising from her experiences she has set up a counselling service entitled "Beauty from Ashes" supporting others suffering from trauma of all kinds.

On September 29th, 2007, we were privileged to meet Anne Atkins, well known as a writer, agony aunt, panelist and commentator on moral and ethical issues from a Christian perspective.

Anne chose to be interviewed and Zena Drew conducted this with grace and professionalism.

In answer to questions posed, Anne spoke of her life and Christian experience, of her husband – a vicar – and her five children, of her writing work and involvement with the BBC's "Thought for the Day".

Her busy life necessitated a certain

amount of "juggling" but she was grateful to be able to work from home.

Anne expressed her firmly held views in a forthright manner, maintaining that parents were the best judges of how their children should be raised, and deplored some Government intervention in these matters.

It is hoped that these lunches will become a regular feature in the church's outreach programme and will give the opportunity for ladies to hear personal experiences from a number of different speakers.

Our Spring lunch on March 8th, 2008, saw a visit from Emily Owen, a gifted young lady who at the age of 16 was diagnosed with non-malignant brain tumours, the removal of which resulted in a total loss of hearing.

Emily spoke movingly of the medical procedures and her fear of all that these involved, of how she learned to "sign" and lip-read with the help of her devoted Christian family.

She told us of her sporting interests, of her musical gifts and her desire to study English at university.

She recalled her last attendances before surgery at concerts, at Shakespeare productions and the precious last few words heard from her family.

Throughout her talk Emily testified to the importance of her faith in coming to terms with her disability and expressed the desire that Jesus should be the centre of her life. She was an inspiration and showed no self-pity nor bitterness but a wonderful sense of humour and courageous spirit as she faced the future.

We all slummed it for a weekend...and survived!

*In October 2007, a group of 17 teenagers from Cornerstone Churches spent a weekend living in a self-created slum in the centre of Chipping Campden as part of the nationwide Slum Survivor project. As well as raising awareness of the poverty that slum dwellers around the world endure, the young people also raised over £1,000 for charities working with the poor. Here, one of the slum dwellers, **Emelye Fisk** (pictured below left), gives her account of the weekend.*



The slum dwellers after discovering their roof had been "blown off".

On the weekend of the October 26th-28th, 2007, the young people of Cornerstone Churches took part in a event called Slum Survivor.

The plan was to build our own slum in the middle of Chipping Campden Square and live in it for the weekend.

As well as this we were only allowed to eat basic rations of rice and lentils for our meals and only allowed to wear one set of clothes for the whole weekend.

Of course we were allowed to wash with cold water...but most of us – actually it was probably all of us – decided we would rather be warm and smelly then cold and clean.

And we would all take part in challenges to win "Slum rupees".

All this to help spread awareness of the billions of people who have to live in slums all over the world.

Coming from different churches, many of us didn't know each other. So the leaders decided to split us up and put us in our "families " with people we didn't know.

Our first task was to build the slum all together. It took a while but once all the wood, nails, tarpaulin and, of course, gaffer tape was in place, we stood back



Edward reading out the day's menu: lentils and rice (or rice and lentils).

to admire our work. As Cornerstone Cell group was coming to have their session at the slum we decided to make food so we could eat before they came. Well this didn't go quite to plan as we were cooking on old BBQs, and heating freezing cold water and cooking rice and lentils took longer than we first hoped.

Already most of us, who hadn't eaten since lunch, were hungry. Little did we know that we were going to have to share our dinner with the Cell group members, because it wasn't cooked until they arrived at 8pm!

After sharing our dinner we all joined in with cell group and worshipped in the Square. It was awesome.

The night was not fantastic. The slum had a few visitors at early hours. Some lovely chappy was quite intrigued as to what we were doing. But, as you can imagine, at 3am the last thing you want is someone on their phone trying to film us all waking up as he pretended to interview us. Once he had gone the leaders got out to make sure he wasn't going to visit us again.

They had only had about five hours sleep, some had less, so we all felt quite sorry for them.

Saturday morning, we were tired and smelly and all of us wanted food.

As you can imagine we weren't too happy when we realised we were having rice and lentils again. But it did make us realise that we were lucky. I mean, we had only had two meals of rice and we wanted something different already.

After breakfast we went off to play football with a newspaper ball to win rupees.

My family team won, so we were all quite chuffed walking back to the slum with rupees in our hands. Our happiness didn't last long when we discovered that it had been destroyed by Hurricane Edward, Hurricane Mel and Hurricane Tom. We no longer felt sorry for them for last night's lack of sleep.

We had had a rough night, with not much sleep, so we were tired and some quite moody. So our home being knocked down almost broke our hearts. All that work, on the floor in a pile. We had to rebuild it and us young people all decided to make the leaders' side smaller as revenge for knocking it down. That cheered us up quite a bit!

It really did make us realise that things like this happen to so many people, their homes being destroyed and them having nothing left. Nothing at all.

During the day, in our families we took part in more challenges. A lot of people stopped by and asked us what we were doing, and many seemed really interested and we raised a lot of money for Soul Action and Tearfund.

Later on in the day we got to spend our rupees on apples. Tom Harris hadn't eaten much all weekend and when he got his apple his face actually lit up. The smallest thing like that opens your eyes to how people who haven't eaten properly for most of their life would react if you gave them something as simple as an



Edward made sure none of the rice and lentils were wasted.

apple.

Saturday night brought more troubles but lucky for us brave Edward sorted that out without any of us waking up at all. By the morning we were tired and needed a good wash, but we had had such a great time, not all of us wanted to go home.

We began to pack up our slum and people left for their churches. We all learnt so much that weekend about how lucky we really are and how much we take for granted how we can just grab a bag of crisps out of the cupboard or how we can jump in a nice warm shower if we need a wash. We'd made some really good friends from different churches too.

Practically everyone said how "we have that hope at the end of the weekend – they don't, they live in these conditions for their whole lives."



Weekend in the slum for poverty campaign

YOUNGSTERS are to spend a weekend living in a self-created slum in Chipping Campden's town car park as part of a campaign to highlight the misery of millions of people worldwide who live in poverty.

Up to 20 youngsters from local churches will be building shelters out of pallets and tarpaulins as part of the national project, called Slum Survivor.

They will be living in the shelters from Friday to Sunday, October 28, coping with all weathers and existing on rice and lentils.

The project is being organised jointly by St James's Church Youth Project, Shipston Churches Youth Project and Chipping Campden Baptist Church, whose new min-

BY ANITA DESHMUKH
anita.deshmukh@midlands.newsquest.co.uk

ister Rev Edward Ibberson, aged 35, will be taking part.

Matt Brown, Shipston churches youth worker, who is helping to organise the project, said: "Slum Survivor is a national initiative by the charity Soul Action. So many in our world live in such difficult conditions and situations and we wanted to get involved in doing something about it.

"By building and living in a temporary slum for the weekend we hope to be able to raise awareness in the town, and beyond, of the plight of so many.

"We are very grateful for the support of Chipping Campden Town Trust in allowing us to run this event in such a high-profile place. We are also thrilled by the response and support of the local police and by so many residents."

Participants in Slum Survivor will be sponsored, with the money raised going to the work of Tearfund and Soul Action partner projects throughout the world.

Sarah Parker, youth worker at St James's Church, said: "The challenges will help us understand what a billion people across the world face every single day. The idea is that for a short time we choose to make real the reality of the world's poor and, in doing so, raise awareness and money."

The Slum Survivor initiative received considerable coverage in local newspapers and on the radio.

God has given us so much

CHIPPING Campden Baptist Church has for many years been characterised by a generosity of faithful and sacrificial giving – a key feature of the church which is a tribute to the members and worshipers who faithfully support the work that God has blessed and continues to bless in his grace.

Overseen through the tenure of several treasurers, they include Alice Benfield, a long-standing treasurer, and Kate Barry, who took responsibility for the role from March 1991 and saw the transition from a Home Mission supported church to a financially self-sufficient church ready for the next generation of growth and ministry.

Kate passed the baton to Geoff Dutton in November 1996 who inspired substantial growth in giving during the church refurbishment which commenced in 1998.

Geoff had the great ability and unique gifting to communicate faith for finance and was a real gift to the church during this time.

He had the privilege of seeing the building work fully paid for in little over two years and lead the church in its giving over this formative period of church transformation.

Geoff was a very gifted financier with a lifetime of experience in the City and we were saddened to hear that he was diagnosed with cancer early in 2001 – always a fighter and playing his beloved golf to the end, Geoff passed away in August 2001 and is still sorely missed in his untimely death.

Following an interim period when the



Geoff Dutton: A real gift to the church.

deacons shared the responsibility for the financial management, Malcolm Hayes was appointed to the calling in late 2001 and remains in that role to date – it has been a delight to see a continued increase in giving over that period and the financing of the two church plants, details of which are covered elsewhere in this book.

It has been a tremendous blessing and privilege to see both Stour Valley and Bidford financially independent by 2007 and to plan for the next phase of God's anointing in gaining territory for Him.

CCBC giving in 1987 was a total of £4,671. In 2007 it was £139,631 and this

in 2007 was just for CCBC. If you were to add SVBC and Bidford it would be over £250,000.

We were privileged to see Edward Ibberson join the ministry team in September 2007 and although this involved additional expenditure, the Church again rallied to the need and produced a small surplus for the year which was a terrific answer to prayer in what was starting to become a difficult economic environment.

The Cornerstone weekend away held annually in early summer has been a tremendous blessing to all the churches as they meet together for a weekend of ministry, prayer and worship.

It has been a real blessing to be able as a group of churches to take all the children free of charge and therefore enable all the families to participate in this time of fellowship and renewal.

We remain a church committed to the vision of God with a declared objective never having to limit the ministry by restrictions in finance – so far we have seen the miracle of giving through the generosity of the members and every financial need for the outworking of the Vision has always been fully met and even exceeded.

We thank God on a daily basis for his faithful and consistent provision as we seek his direction – long may we see God work in this way as we trust Him for our finances across all of the Cornerstone churches.



Kate Barry.



Malcolm Hayes.

Malcolm Hayes

In the news...In the news...

Fair play to our pastor

Picture: Rob Lacey 982297/13A



No praying for a good result: The Rev Phil Deller takes a pew for the match

Football in church

Football-mad worshippers will enjoy the gospel according to Saint Glenn when they tune into England's World Cup games in their church.

The congregation at Chipping Campden Baptist Church will watch the matches with Romania and Colombia on a giant screen.

They hope to cheer Glenn Hoddle's boys all the way to the final on July 12, when they will hold a special service leading up to the match.

They are inviting friends and neighbours in to watch the action.

The pastor the Rev Philip Deller hopes the idea will help promote the church and swell the congregation.

Mr Deller, a Grimsby Town supporter, said: "We have the equipment because we use it for hymns, so we thought we'd use it."

"It's a way of introducing friends to the church and having a good time. Instead of going to the pub, why not watch it in church. It's got a bigger screen. There is not going to be any preaching or praying for a good result."

The church has its own football team and Mr Deller plays in defence.

Cory Lowde, from Bourton-on-the-Water, is captain of the team and a Southampton fan. The congregation will not be asking for divine intervention in the result.

"I don't think God has much interest in the outcome, only in fair play," he said. "Christians are normal people who enjoy football like anyone else."

England take on Romania on Monday June 22 and Colombia on Friday June 26.

■ Violence in Marseille, p6

Ace service

WHEN Shipston's new Stour Valley Baptist Church wanted to announce its first service, members hit on an uplifting way to attract worshippers.

They launched 100 helium balloons from the town's High Street last Saturday with tags detailing the first service the following day.

The tactic seemed to work as organisers were delighted with attendance at last Sunday's service at Stour Valley



▲ Rev Philip Deller prepares to release the balloons. W116/6A

Community School.

Church pastor, the Rev Philip Deller, said: "We had between 75 and 80 people which filled the room at the school. It was very encouraging and

there were a lot of new faces so we are really pleased."

The new church is an offshoot of the rapidly-growing Chipping Campden Baptist Church and was set up because

of the large numbers of people from the Shipston area travelling to services in Campden. Shipston's Baptist church closed 30 years ago.

CS

THE JOURNAL, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 1996

Meet the first new minister for 40 years

SHIPSTON now has its first Baptist minister for almost 40 years after the recent induction of town resident Daniel Pulham.

Mr Pulham, aged 33, has been working with the town's Stour Valley Baptist Church for several months while he completed his training in Oxford, but is now a full-time minister.

More than 200 people attended a special service earlier this month at Stour Valley School, where the church meets each Sunday morning, to welcome Moreton-born Mr Pulham and followed it up with a buffet tea and barn dance.

The former Baptist Church in the town closed down in the 1960s, and many people



▲ Welcome aboard: Rev Daniel Pulham, of the Stour Valley Baptist Church, Shipston. X1248/13

have since travelled to Chipping Campden Baptist Church to worship there. Sixteen months ago, Campden

Baptists decided to plant a new church in Shipston and 50 church members from the Shipston area came

over to start the church, which regularly attracts more than 80 people to Sunday services.



'Exciting times' as new minister arrives

A FAST-growing Baptist church in the North Cotswolds has welcomed a new minister to strengthen its leadership team.

Rev Edward Ibberson, aged 35, has just arrived at Chipping Campden after spending eight years in inner city Leicester.

"It's very different here. It's very pretty and the area is

much more well resourced," said Edward, who will have responsibility for youth matters, among other things.

Chipping Campden Baptist Church has grown considerably in recent years, which has led to it establishing sister churches in Shipston and Bidford.

Campden's senior minister, Rev Philip Deller, said: "We

are so excited about Edward coming alongside us in the ministry here. He joins Chipping Campden Baptist Church at an exciting time."

▲ The new minister at Chipping Campden Baptist Church Edward Ibberson (left) with senior minister Philip Deller. 42oct07044a. Picture by PAUL JACKSON.

Reaching the nations

GOD COMMANDED US TO (Matthew 28: 16-20)

Every Christian is called to mission

We are all called – the only question is, where to?

EMIL Brunner (Swiss Theologian 1889-1966 once said: "The Church exists by mission as fire exists by burning. Without mission there really is no Church."

Cristina and I have always had hearts beating for mission overseas and our desire is to see all of the local churches practically involved in the wider world. Before setting out to Kosova in 2000 we began to develop links with a Christian organisation in Romania called Ecce Homo.

This gave the opportunity for people from CCBC to 'go' and 'do' mission. This had a very positive impact upon them and they returned with a different perspective.

Following the initial visit a strong link was established, which has developed and grown.

Cristina and I then went out to Kosova with BMS World Mission to work amongst the Kosova Albanians.

We returned from Kosova in 2002 and since then both Cristina and myself have sought to promote the Reaching the Nations (RtN) part in the church's vision.

We continue to have strong developing links with Ecce Homo and a number of mission workers who are placed overseas. But our heart's desire is to see more people involved in RtN.

We sense God is opening up exciting new opportunities for people, not only to pray and give in relation to mission, but also to go and hope that many will respond to the call.

Chris Hands



Chris and Cristina Hands with their daughter Renee.



Ecce Homo: serving poor and disadvantaged children in Cluj, Romania.

Tim & Rosi Deller in Brazil

TIM and Rosi Deller, CCBC's link missionaries, are working in Dourados, Brazil, with Baptist World Mission.

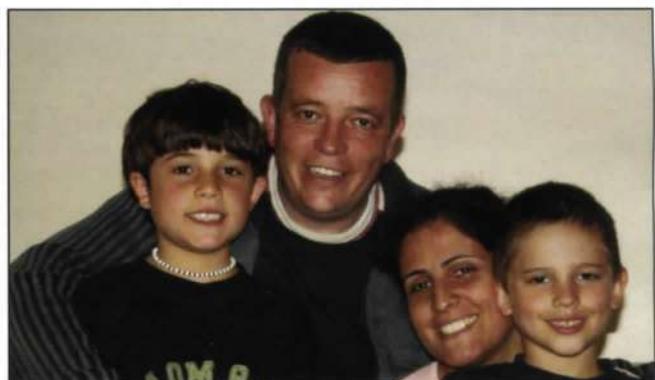
Tim teaches in a theological college training pastors, and pastors a church plant. Rosi works as a social worker, heading up social projects within the church.

They have two sons, Rodrigo, who is at university, and Richard, who is at school.



The other Deller family.

Greg & Teresa Ellis in Turkey



What God can do with a dirty rotten sinner...

I was raised a Roman Catholic in Cheltenham and from age 16 I stopped going to church and set out on life's long road.

I had a passion for food and my career as a chef started at the Greenway Hotel in Cheltenham. This led me through Dedham in Constable country and to the heart of London and the famous Claridge's Hotel.

Though we worked very hard and long hours we "played" hard too, with the usual vices of money, sex, power, drink and drugs. It was a godless life but on one level I was enjoying it.

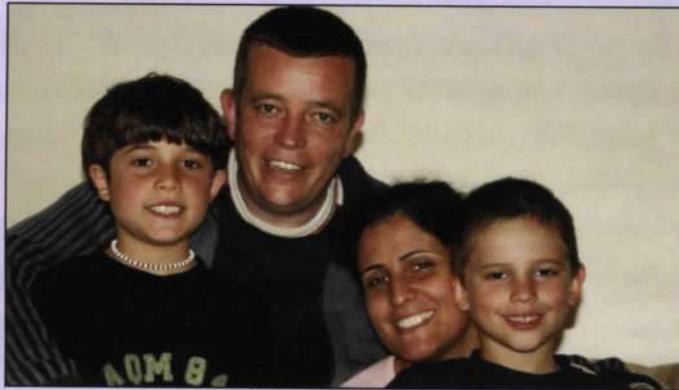
I was out one night with the lads, doing the usual bars and clubs and we passed a Catholic Church by Covent Garden. I nipped in to pray. I just wanted to tell God I still believed in Him and that I was sorry that I hadn't been to his house for years but it wasn't where I was at. Shortly after that I received a phone call and was offered a job at Charingworth Manor, just outside Chipping Campden.

It was there that I met Kelly, one of the 30 or so folk who attended CCBC at that time. She started to chat about God and the Bible. I wasn't uncomfortable chatting about God as I believed in Him and, after all was said and done, I was a Roman Catholic!

In my attempt to change the subject from God to other things on my agenda, I would first read the book of Revelation thinking that nobody understands that book so I thought I'd be able to sound good and things on the God-front would dry up, so to speak. I was given a Bible when I was christened and it had come on all my travels though I had never read it.

I started to read Revelation in the old King James version. It took me a couple of weeks to read and, to be honest, most of it went over my head but at the end of the book it had an account of the end of the world, judgement, heaven and hell and all that kind of stuff.

There is a list of people in there, a list of folk who are the sort of people who are going to go to hell and I was among those listed! The kind of peo-



Greg and Teresa with Zach and Josh.

ple who are sexually immoral, people who practise magic arts, astrology and tarot cards and all that kind of thing and it also says, all liars! There were others but for me what really impressed on me was that I was among those who were hell-bound. No words will ever do justice for my feeling of fear and shock as this wasn't a case of the ones who lied the least or those who were not so bad but that 'all' who lied went to hell. I found myself stuck literally to my bed sweating and crying out to God. The weight of that conviction all of a sudden left me - it was like something was pulled out of me and I was at peace.

Just after that, a guy by the name of Gary Monday came for a week's work experience with us and he was a Christian. I told him about my experience and he gently pointed me to other scriptures and I began to read and learn about God from the Bible. He also went to CCBC for a mid-week prayer meeting and came back to tell me that the people there knew Jesus and loved Him, and that if I started to attend then I also would learn about and know Jesus.

The following Sunday I went to CCBC for the first time and before I set off I prayed: "God I don't want to go to church for anybody there and I don't want to go to the Baptist Church if you are really in the Catholic Church. Help me and lead me to where I should go." God answered my prayer. Now I go to church because somebody is there and His name is Jesus, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

I arrived for the baptism of a

lady called Margaret who got baptised and who said she'd gone to church all her life but she didn't know Jesus. I felt a closeness to her and her testimony. Karen Purcell also got baptised that same day! After the baptisms Howard asked for anybody who would like to know Jesus to come and speak to him so I did and got invited round for tea one Monday afternoon.

That Sunday night, I got my brother to come with me to the evening service and asked him to dress up smart and I'd dress down and so we'd see who the people spoke to. You guessed it - they spoke to my brother!! Pete Lloyd, also not the sharpest dresser, and I had the first of many a good chat. The following day I told Howard what I had done and he apologised for the church and said he would bring it to the attention of the congregation the following week which he did! It was his attitude that really impressed me and the response of the congregation. They were truly sorry and I was humbled by their penitence. That Monday afternoon Howard gave me the booklet *Journey into Life* and I read it. It explained how we had all sinned (basically we are all in that group of the kind of people mentioned in Revelation) and nobody could stand rightly before God in and of themselves. We weren't judged according to one another, like the top 50% get in.

We were judged against a holy God and His standard and none of us get in except through Jesus Christ who had accepted the punishment for

our sin on the cross.

He made me right before God, he cleansed me, he forgave me, he accepted me as one of His and He presents me to His Father holy and righteous. All these folk at CCBC had accepted His work on the cross for their lives also and over time, I found out they weren't perfect but, like me, had come to Him to make them right with God.

I had become a member of a group of people who, like me, needed to be right with God and who were trying to let God reach others through them. I met Carole Martin, who is one of the most welcoming and lovely people I've ever met. I listened to David Arthey preach and wondered if I was saved. He is a man of God and I thank God for his leadership in CCBC. Pete and Kate Barry gave me hope that I wasn't about to become a nerd and that real people can be Christians.

Dear old Win Judd encouraged me as a new believer, along with Alice, Babs, Zilla, and those godly older saints who suffered my first attempts at preaching. Phil and Christine Hindle, who had a squeaky clean youth group, suddenly turned into a dirty rotten one with my arrival and that of Chris Hands, James Keitley, Ed Wells, Geoff Woodward and Farmer John. The latter had come to an evening service where he was asked by Pam Robinson if he knew the Lord to which he replied: "No, I came with Greg!"

In fact, at that time lots of people started to become Christians with the help of people like Esther Newman, Pete Lloyd, Steve Booker and the Booker girls, the Stringers and the Hudsons.

My own journey has led me to Bible College, to marrying Teresa and starting a family and going to Turkey to tell others about this amazing God who has worked through these ordinary folk who have blessed me and supported me, encouraged me, built me up and sent me.

To God be the glory, great things he has done, so loved He the world that he gave us all His Son.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” (Matthew chapter 28 verse 19)

Baptism: a simple way of obeying Jesus’s commands

*Jesus commanded us to be baptised and, during the past 10 years, the various Cornerstone Churches have witnessed more than 150 baptisms. They are always exciting occasions and give the person being baptised the chance to publicly declare their faith in Jesus and, often, to give a testimony of their journey of faith and how they came to be baptised. Here, **Les Morton**, one of many who have passed through the waters of baptism, shares the testimony he gave at his baptism in 2006.*

AS you can perhaps tell from my accent – I don’t come from round here! But I am very happy to be here, standing in front of you all, giving this testimony.

My Christian life began back in Scotland. My father, a true Christian, was elder of the Kirk, and I and my two brothers were given what was then, and sadly is much rarer today, a good Christian education, complete with Sunday School and Bible Class.

I must have been about nine years of age when won a Bible as a prize for reciting in order the books of the New Testament – I’m not sure I could still do that, these days I have trouble finding my keys!

However, at the age of 12, I exercised my right to be independent and turned away from the church and Jesus.

The reason I touch back on these childhood recollections is not just out of nostalgia, but I have found, in now accepting the Lord as my Saviour, that the truths I learned in those early years were constant and true. You could say that the message was being broadcast but I was not tuned in.

I was born in Ayr, on Scotland’s west Coast – famous for Robert Burns (with whom I share a birth date as well as a birth town) and also famous – for those of us who enjoy such things – for some of the best golf in Scotland!

I had a thoroughly normal family life in Scotland, with Mum, Dad and two younger brothers, Eric and Douglas.

I didn’t excel at school, I didn’t work hard enough, but my two early loves of playing the guitar and taking radios to pieces stood me in good stead in later life! I have always been passionate about music, but it didn’t give me a career, but my love of electronics (and



Les Morton being baptised in September 2006.

several ruined radios later) did – and led me to a career in computers, which is what brought me and my family “over the border” to Nottingham in 1988.

Sadly in 2000, my son Stephen was killed in a car accident – he died two days after his 18th birthday.

At that time my marriage also broke down, and although I had friends- and family who helped me through these times, the one friend, the Lord, who could have given me most help, was not yet in my life.

My life had, though, taken another turning, and when I met Rosanne in 2002, my life changed, I really felt that someone was looking after me!

Rosanne introduced me to Chipping Campden Baptist Church, and brought me to an evening service with her, but unfortunately I was still not yet ready, I was not yet “tuned in” to the message that was being sent to me.

Last March, Mick Hutchings invited me to the Alpha course, and out of a mixture of reasons, one of which was, I admit

sheer curiosity, I came along. The message that “There has to be more to life than this” intrigued and interested me. The final part of my journey had begun.

Over the coming weeks, I found the message increasingly compelling and the company of the other Alpha travellers was stimulating as, under Philip’s guidance and support, we explored, discussed and learned.

I remember particularly the metaphor of the Holman Hunt painting, and that Jesus knocks on the door, but the door has to be opened from the inside, the time has to be right, you have to “tune in” to the message..

The turning point for me, as for others, was the Holy Spirit day. I really felt the Holy Spirit at work in all of us that day.

So I have, in a few short weeks, come from a place where I was unsure of what, if anything, I believed in, to the point where I can now stand in front of you all, and confirm my faith in the Lord and confirm that I accept Jesus as my Saviour.

Teeing off for fun and friendship on the fairway



by Rosemary Dutton

THE game of golf has played an increasing part in the social life of the church over recent years.

The Cornerstone Golf Society was established in the year 2000 and an annual golf day has been enjoyed at Brailes Golf Club by an average of 24 people, mostly men but a few more ladies have been welcomed in recent years. Entrants to the event have been drawn into teams of three or four players who compete for team and individual prizes, plus "nearest the pin" and "the longest drive".

Players of all standards and ages have participated, coming from all the Cornerstone churches, as well as visitors from outside the various fellowships.

Naturally the competitive spirit runs high and the individual trophy, in the form of a wooden tray carved by Ieuan Edwards from Stour Valley in memory of Geoffrey Dutton, the Cornerstone Golf Society's founder member, has been won by Steve Berryman, Mark Waterhouse, Pete Boorman, Tony Moore and twice by James Berryman.

Each golf day concludes with a meal, giving opportunity for conversation and post-mortems, followed by the prize-giving. At the 2007 event we had the pleasure of welcoming Bryan Hewett, who is the golf representative of Christians in Sport for the Midlands region. Bryan spoke briefly about his association with Christians in Sport, not only on the golfing scene, and mentioning opportunities



Geoffrey Dutton, founder of the Cornerstone Golf Society.



Rosemary Dutton, Kevin Plank and Chris Smith at the first Cornerstone Golf Day.



Left: Phil Deller, David Roscoe and Mark Waterhouse prepare to have "A good walk spoiled"

to participate in the various forthcoming events.

The popularity of the sport has attracted several of the church's pastors to become avid, if sometimes frustrated, exponents of the game. The Rev Philip

Deller, CCBC's pastor, has attended every time, and we have also welcomed Rev Mike Tydeman (now at Bloxham Baptist Church) and Rev David Taylor-Black in the days before his ordination.

Cotswold Connexions Cup and Golf Alpha



Chris Hands.

Cotswold Connexions Cup

THE competition started in September 2003 with 16 people.

Then in 2004 it was in May and has been yearly since then. We are just about to have the sixth event and it now attracts 24 people from varying backgrounds.

My desire is to use sport to introduce men to the Christian faith and over the years we have

sought to have fun and, through the Christians attending, be open about our beliefs.

Last year we had a time where there was an opportunity for people to hear someone's testimony and we hope to clearly include the gospel message every time we hold the event.

Golf Alpha

PRECEDING the Oct 2007 Alpha Course we had an event up at

Broadway Golf Club, which included a golf clinic with the pro, 18 holes of golf followed by a meal down in the church with a pre-Alpha talk.

My hope is that we will continue to seek ways to use our sporting interests to reach people with the gospel.

There were a few men there that day who would not normally walk into a church.

Chris Hands

From a motley crew of occasional footballers to a team playing in 'La Liga'

David Hudson-Wood charts the rise and rise of Cornerstone United Football Club

It seems like an age ago (it was probably about 13 years) that a few of us blokes at Chipping Campden Baptist Church thought it would fun to form a football team.

Only a handful of us had actually played the game much but a friendly away match was arranged against a church team from Exeter.

It turned into a fantastic day out, all the wives and girlfriends came along to support (and ended up shopping) and, quite miraculously, we actually managed to win the match, despite having a real motley crew of players.

I'll never forget the late Geoff Woodward playing in his cloth cap.

It was such a memorable occasion that, as editor of the church magazine at the time, I decided to devote an entire four-page pull-out special to the game.

In the years that followed, we started to play more regularly, with Cory Lowde the driving force behind the team as chief organiser.

Our best players in those days before injuries took their toll were Chris Hands, Mark Waterhouse and goalkeeper Pete Boorman.

The arrival of Simon and Kevin Plank also increased our strength considerably.

Friendly games were arranged mainly against other churches but we also entered the National Churches Cup for a couple of years and had great fun travelling to places as far away as Derby, Wales and Loughborough. I would rather not remember Loughborough because their Christian Union thrashed us 9-0 on the rainiest day in history.

After Cory moved away, the church team sadly folded for a few years but at the start of 2006 I was instrumental in reviving it to play a couple of friendlies against Holy Trinity Church, Tewkesbury.

It was during one of those matches that while we were huddled together at



How it all began: The CCBC team that won its first-ever game in Exeter: Back row (left to right): Clive Johnson, John England, Chris Hands, Pete Dean, Pete Boorman. Front row: David Hudson-Wood, Arnold Jonins, Geoff Woodward, Cory Lowde, Gary Robinson.

half-time, Pete Berryman, who had been watching from the sidelines, came on the pitch and gave us an impromptu pep talk. Several of our players had no idea who he was and assumed he was with the opposition.

It was then that we were told about the Cotswold Churches League, mainly involving churches from the Cheltenham area, which was looking for new churches to join it. At the time I was a bit doubtful whether we would be able to muster up enough interest among church members to put out a team on a semi-regular basis but I was told it would only be about seven or eight games a season.

Anyway, my cousin, George Workman, was keen for us to enter the league and, before I knew it, he was organising the team and we had an inspirational new manager – Pete Berryman!

As it has turned out, we now play around 20 games on Saturday mornings between September and March in the league ("La Liga") and the league cup.

The 2007/8 season saw Cornerstone start rather shakily but it is no co-incidence that as soon as I was dropped from the team, results rapidly improved, so much so that after Christmas we were almost unbeatable.

We finished a very commendable third in the league, out of a total of nine teams, and also made it through to the

final of the League Cup Trophy final in which we beat New Life Diamonds 1-0, a game watched by about 100 spectators, most of them Cornerstone supporters.

What has been brilliant is that about half of our team come from outside the Cornerstone churches – most of them non-Christians – and, although the games are pretty competitive, there is very little bad language and hardly any fouling.

Members of the current team from the various Cornerstone churches include our star man Steve Berryman, his brother James, goalkeeper Henry Salmon and his brother James ("Tinner"), Matt Brown, Ali Akehurst and, of course, George "ever present" Workman.

Top scorers this season have been Kenny Graves, who scored the cup final winner, and Andrew Collier. They are a fantastic bunch of guys to play with and we are privileged to have Pete as our manager.

I have often wondered how the present-day Cornerstone Utd would have fared against the team of 10 years ago. We shall never know.

Looking ahead a few years, I know we have a number of young teenagers who are football fanatics so hopefully us oldies can hold the fort until they are 16 and able to play for Cornerstone United and run the opposition ragged.



Cornerstone United's triumphant cup-winning team: Back row (left to right): Simon Bumphrey, Tim Mills (assistant manager), Mark Brayford, George Workman, James Berryman, Pete Berryman (manager), Steve Berryman, Paul Collier, Warren Edmunds. Front row: Mark Thomas, Ali Akehurst, James Salmon, Matt Brown, Ricky Mills, Henry Salmon, Nick Jordan, Kenny Graves, Andrew Collier, Martin Sidebottom. Other squad members not pictured: Tom Archer, Mark Davies, David Hudson-Wood, John Paul Lawrence, Paul Murray, Steve Perkins, Mark Waterhouse, Jon Wheatcroft.



The team of the future: Cornerstone United's junior side. Back row (left to right): Milo Fisk, Anthony Raybaud, James Waterhouse, Harvey Appleton, Kyle White. Front row: Hugh Buttrick, Toby Robinson, Chip Appleton.

Do they play cricket in heaven?



Chipping Campden Baptist Church's formidable cricket team pictured during its heyday in the 1990s. Back row (left to right): Mike Stringer, Pete Dean, Pete Lloyd, Alan Boorman, Ron Deane, Greg Ellis, Chris Hands. Front row: Richard Wood, Andrew Stringer, Pete Boorman, David Hudson-Wood.

B EING an absolute cricket fanatic, it was not long after I joined CCBC in the early 1990s that I felt it was only right that we should form our own cricket team following the formation of CCBC's football team.

The reasons for this were partly to encourage a bit of "male bonding", partly to act as an outreach to non-Christian opponents and partly to give a number of very useful cricketers within the church the chance to show off their skills.

Most notable among these were Pete Boorman, my brother Richard Wood, Pete Lloyd and Chris Hands.

But we also possessed a number of other half-decent cricketers such as Mike Stringer, Greg Ellis, Ron Deane, Alan Boorman, James Leedham and, our current pastor himself, Philip Deller.

Over the years various cricket matches

by David Hudson-Wood

have been arranged against other churches, one or two club sides, and for several years we had regular fixtures against Campden Research Association.

I'll never forget Pete Boorman hitting 30-odd runs off one over to win a match against the RA.

One of the best matches we ever played was against my own village team, Ashton-under-Hill, a few years ago.

We were cruising to victory and only needed 2 runs to win off the last over. I was batting but was out off the first ball of the over. Simon Plank was due in next but he decided he should give someone else who wasn't really a cricketer a bat (I won't name him!). So this guy came out to bat and kept swinging and missing and I was getting more and more angry with Planky for not batting himself because I was so determined we should win. Anyway, we eventually scrambled a single and the game ended in a tie!

As you grow older you start to wonder about the meaning of life. Now I'm not afraid of dying as I know I'm going to heaven and my place there is secure.

I've got this picture of heaven and all the wonderful things there will be there for us to enjoy.

But one question has been bugging me for quite a while now — do they play cricket in heaven?

I've asked lots of people whether they think the great game is played in paradise and no one can give me a straight answer.

So the other day I had a brainwave. I decided to go onto the internet and onto the "Ask Jeeves" website.

I typed in: "Do they play cricket in heaven?"

Jeeves replied: "Do you want the good news or the bad news?"

I said: "I'll have the good news first."

Jeeves said: "Yes, they do play cricket in heaven."

"So what's the bad news?" I asked.

Jeeves said: "You're in next!"

Cornerstone Churches: Past, present and future

by Philip Deller

MY thanks go to David Hudson-Wood for the hard work he has done in putting together this booklet to mark 10 years of Cornerstone Churches.

It is great to look back and give thanks to the Lord for his faithfulness, it is great to rejoice in what He is doing today, but more than this, we look forward with expectancy and trust that He will do more, more than we can ask or imagine as we seek to serve Him in our generation.

I remember sitting in my study sometime in 1997 chatting with a colleague from Bible College days, the Rev Rick Oldland.

During our conversation he challenged me with the question.

"Where will CCBC be in 10 years time?"

I replied that I believed we would be fulfilling the Vision God had given us. I remember saying to him that I believed we would be more than one congregation by then.

His next question was "How would these congregations be held together?"

"By a shared vision, shared resources and shared leadership," I replied.

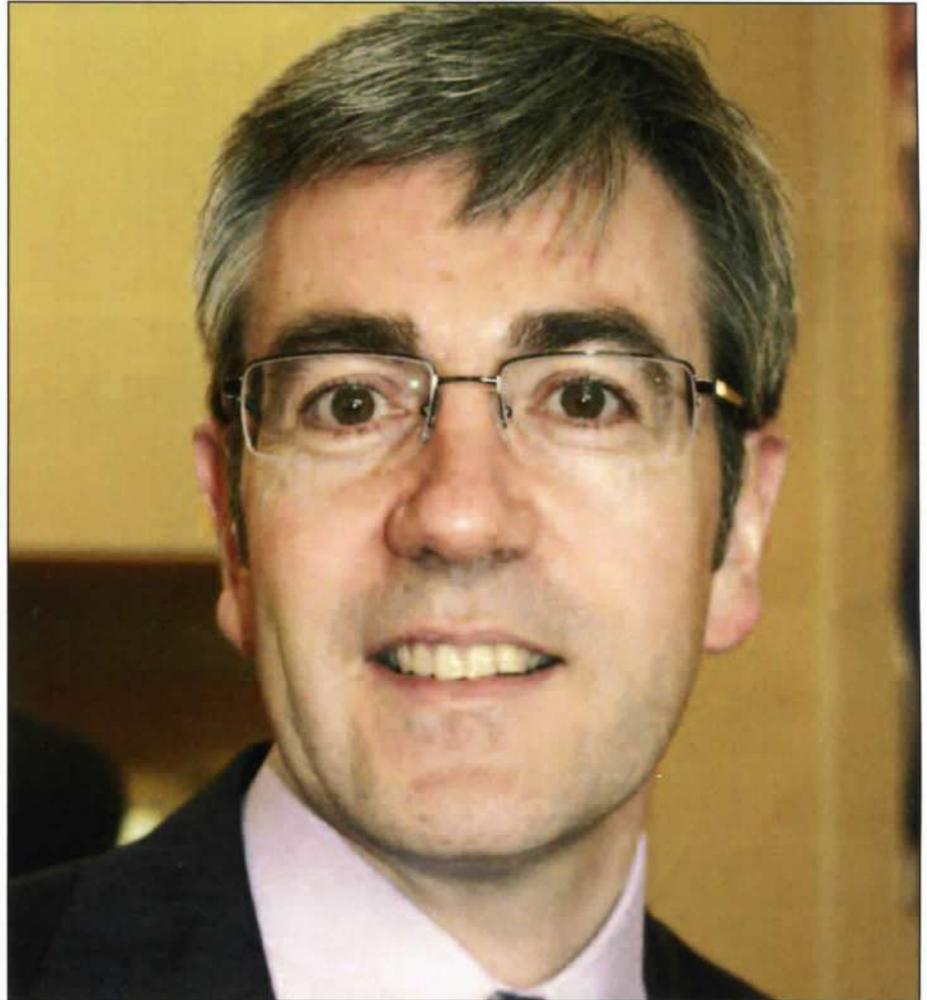
"How about a name to gather under?"

As we looked out of the window at the stones which formed the corner of the houses around, a name emerged – "Cornerstone Churches" – based on Jesus as the foundation.

1 Peter 2 v 4 -10:

"As you come to Him, the living Stone – rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to Him – you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For in Scripture it says: 'See, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone, and the one who trusts in Him will never be put to shame.'

Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do



not believe, 'The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone and, a stone that causes men to stumble and a rock that makes them fall.'

They stumble because they disobey the message – which is also what they were destined for.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy."

So it was that Cornerstone Churches was launched in 1998 in faith.

This year, 2008, we celebrate 10 years of Cornerstone Churches and the Vision remains.

This vision is expressed individually in Chipping Campden Baptist Church, Stour Valley Baptist Church, Hook Norton Baptist Church and Bidford on Avon Baptist Church.

We each have our own identity and local mission but together we seek to encourage one another in our common vision:

- To proclaim Jesus Christ to people today
- To make disciples
- To build God's church and see revival
- To plant new churches
- To reach the nations

I guess the same question needs to be asked again – Where will Cornerstone Churches be in another 10 years?

Fulfilling the vision.
Let's go for it!

