

# GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

Spring 2018: FREE

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## Great Norfolk to Malta motorhome giveaway



■ Cromer couple, ordained ministers Ray and Ruth Scorey (pictured left) have embarked on an epic journey of faith driving across a wintry Europe to donate their prized motorhome to a Christian charity in Malta.

In November, the brave couple, who run Christian charity Norfolk Healing Rooms, set off on the five-week journey across Europe to give away the motorhome to their newly established sister charity, Malta Healing Rooms.

■ Full story - see page six.



## Archbishop to return to city

■ The Archbishop of Canterbury is set to visit the Diocese of Norwich for the first time since his enthronement to the role in February 2013.

The Most Rev Justin Welby will be visiting the Diocese of Norwich from Wednesday November 7 to Friday November 9, the Bishop of Norwich has announced.

Bishop Graham said: "I'm delighted that Archbishop Justin will be spending time in the Diocese in November. His first public appearance in the run-up to his enthronement as Archbishop of Canterbury took place here in Norwich in February 2013 and it will be a delight to welcome him back.

"Archbishop Justin knows Norfolk well, having spent a good deal of time here with members of his family and their friends during his childhood. His affection for Norfolk dates from those early days, and I know that he will be assured a warm welcome."

Pictured above is Archbishop Justin with Bishop Graham outside the Forum in Norwich during his visit in February 2013.

## Football league title hat-trick

■ Norwich Central Baptist Church have won the Norfolk Christian Football League title for the third year in a row, with two games to spare.

They secured the title with a 3-1 victory against Kings Athletic and are, so far, unbeaten.

NCBC will continue their quest for a league and Bishop's Cup double with a semi final against Soul Church at Britannia Barracks on Saturday March 13 while in the other semi-final, Heigham Park Rangers will take on St John's at Recreation Road.

Meanwhile Silver Road take on Stalham Baptist at Fountain Park and Gateway Vineyard take on Sprowston Radicals at Thorpe High School in the semi-finals of the Wroxham Road Shield on the same day.

The Bishop's Cup Final will take place at Norfolk FA's Football Development Centre in Bowthorpe on Saturday April 14 at 10.30am.

# Norwich surgeon's free operation plea

A Norwich orthopaedic surgeon is appealing for support after agreeing to operate for free on a young Tanzanian health care worker to restore the use of her legs and give her a brighter future. **Keith Morris reports.**

**J**ohn Nolan, a consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital and parishioner at St John's Cathedral in Norwich, was introduced to 23-year-old Adelaida during a recent visit to Tanzania by his uncle Francis who has been a Catholic missionary priest there for 50 years.

Francis has visited Norwich on a number of occasions and has celebrated Mass at St John's Cathedral in the city.

John said: "Adelaida was training as a health care assistant but is now unable to work or even walk very far as her hips have been badly damaged by Sickle Cell Disease. I want to help her because she wants to help others as a health care worker in Tanzania. I was struck by the amazing use they make of incredibly limited resources, when I visited the hospitals there last year. But there is no suitable option for surgery in Mwanza and I have offered to replace her hips for free, here in Norwich.

"I have spent 25 years replacing hips and

knees in Norwich, but Adelaida's life will potentially be transformed at least as much as any one of those patients if it goes well. She is struggling to walk far now and has little or no prospect for marriage in Africa as she is.

"The Norfolk and Norwich Hospital has agreed to allow me to carry out her surgery as a privately-funded patient towards the end of May, and some of our wonderful theatre staff, and two of my consultant colleagues, have offered to give up a Sunday morning in May, for no charge, to help me."

"Thanks to Fr Arockiya Seelan, a priest at St John's, we have already found a Catholic family who have agreed to host Adelaida for the entirety of her stay from April to August - which is wonderful news," he said.

Now John is appealing for support to pay for Adelaida's hospital costs, flight tickets and other expenses of being in the UK.

"The support I have received to date has been amazing, from the clergy at St John's to all sorts of strangers - it really does enhance one's faith in humanity to see such compassion and generosity. Quite wonderful really.

"I remain particularly grateful to the theatre nurses, anaesthetist, consultant haematologist and my surgical assistant who have so kindly offered to give up their Sunday morning at the end of May to make this possible."

If you would like to make a donation towards the costs, visit: <http://bit.ly/2BzNTV0> or email John at [jfnolan@enterprise.net](mailto:jfnolan@enterprise.net)

[www.missionariesofafrica.org.uk/east-africa](http://www.missionariesofafrica.org.uk/east-africa)



Tanzanian health care worker Adelaida who is coming to Norwich for an operation.



## GOOD NEWS

FOR NORWICH & NORFOLK

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# Dreaming of new beginnings at Easter

■ "With every sun comes a new day. A new beginning. A hope that things will be better today than they were yesterday."

This is the opening quote from the Dreamworks film 'The Croods'. They are spoken by Eep, who is not very happy with her life and dreams of 'new beginnings'. Her story is about how her world changed in an instant to something she never expected or imagined.

As I watched the film, the opening words really struck a chord with me. The words have stayed with me and what I hold onto now is that with every sun comes a new day. Things may not always be better, however there is always something brighter to be seen. I have been able to discover this by changing my perspective.

For me, Easter reinforces the truth that with every sun comes a new day. A time of change, of finding that brighter place. It is a time of year when the view around is changing. Spring is happening, colours change, new life is growing, flowers are breaking through and all of a sudden you notice things are so much

**Ruth Starkings is the Family Worker at Meadow Way Chapel in Hellesdon.**



lighter. As we experience the season of Easter, all that is going on around can lead to a change in perspective.

Maybe, thinking back to that very first Easter, people were overwhelmed by what had just happened. Their friend Jesus had been taken from them and killed. The one they thought would rescue them, the Messiah, was gone and I imagine that all hope had gone too.

However, just three days later, the view became so much brighter and hope returned - their lives changed in an instant. Jesus was not dead he was alive. The tomb was empty and the darkness and despair gave way to hope and joy. They turned around to a better view. A new beginning.

So, as we celebrate Easter we can stand in the hope of a new beginning. We may choose to remember what happened that first Easter and how, when the view seemed so dark, all of a sudden it became so much brighter and so much better. A new beginning that brought hope to everyone and still does bring hope today.

It gives us courage to turn from the empty tomb, to change our perspective and to look out on the view that is before us. To know that in Easter there is hope, there is newness and a better, brighter day. To stand in the victory, knowing that Jesus fought for us and won. His sacrificial love leading to the world changing in an instant, giving us hope for something we might never have expected or imagined.

# Charlie speaks at UN

A Youth Ambassador from YMCA Norfolk has addressed an international conference at the United Nations in New York.

Charlie Smith, who is a Mental Health Engagement Worker in Norwich, was invited to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum held in New York on January 30-31, as part of the World YMCA delegation, after she presented her work to an international Innovation Camp in Switzerland in October.

The Forum brought youth leaders from around the world to the United Nations HQ and gave them the opportunity to engage with government representatives, youth delegates, policymakers and other relevant stakeholders in civil society and the private sector.

"It was a scary but exciting experience being a World YMCA representative at such an important event," said Charlie. It was a privilege being asked to attend and to offer a youth voice at a conference that aims to increase youth participation.

"During the event I was able to make further connections with those who are involved with YMCAs across the world. I was also able to place the YMCA at the centre of conversations on youth resilience and what we could do to create further impact for young people in Europe.

"I was in the group looking into resilience and what being resilient actually meant and how it may affect young people in different ways.

"We also looked into the impor-



Charlie Smith who addressed the ECOSOC Youth Forum at the United Nations HQ in New York.

tance of technology in this market, but that it would need to be used effectively with the correct goals and aims.

"I was elected to address the forum about the aims and goals that we had come up with. This included: building science, technology and innovation into an infrastructure to improve literacy; building on 'train the trainers' to

encourage community based interventions such as volunteer innovation hubs; and building data from public/private partnerships and the community to leverage big data results."

The ECOSOC Youth Forum aims to provide a platform for young people to engage in a dialogue with UN Member States. Also to enable discussion of policy frame-

works and promote innovative, institutionalised approaches and initiatives for advancing the youth development agenda at national, regional and global levels. This is with a view to promoting solutions to the global challenge of strengthening resilience and sustainable development.

[www.un.org/ecosoc/en/events/2018/youth-forum](http://www.un.org/ecosoc/en/events/2018/youth-forum)



# Vicar of Baghdad faced kidnap and death threats

**Canon Andrew White**, a former doctor and well-known Middle East peace envoy, known as the “**Vicar of Baghdad**”, who has faced numerous kidnap and death threats, told a **Norwich** audience that it was “the love of God and love for people that drives me on.” **Mike Wiltshire** reports.

**D**espite a long battle with multiple sclerosis, a condition that affects his mobility and speech, Andrew White’s optimistic humour in the face of suffering has endeared him to audiences around the world.

He and co-workers have set up schools, clinics, food centres and homes in the Middle East for children and families who have fled persecution. Most of the support comes from the UK. “I never dreamed I would be doing this – but it’s an incredible gift from the Almighty,” he says.

Many of the people he supports are Assyrian Christians of Iraq who have fled to Jordan after murderous attacks by ISIS terrorists. The Assyrians from the Nineveh region are descended from one of the oldest civilisations in the world. He also points out that millions of Jews lived in Iraq over 2,600 years – “today there are only six left.”

To many Iraqis, Andrew White is affectionately known as Abuna (father) Andrew. Five years before the Iraq war he, along with Justin Welby – who later became Archbishop of Canterbury – re-opened the bomb-damaged St George’s Church, the only Anglican church in Iraq. Attendance grew rapidly to 6,500 people and Andrew was nicknamed “the Vicar of Baghdad”. It was “a wonderful church,” he says.

But as life in Iraq became more violent, Andrew frequently found himself with body guards and an armoured vehicle to make his parish rounds. Many of his congregation were martyred for their faith, and Andrew has faced numerous death threats. Eventually, he was asked to leave Iraq for security reasons. “Archbishop Justin said ‘you’re more useful to us alive than dead’.”

In an earlier life as a doctor, Andrew had trained in London at St Thomas’ Hospital, where he specialised in anaesthetics and was in charge of the cardiac arrest team. He loved his medical work. One evening, after a personal time of thanksgiving, he asked, “What next, Lord?” Surprisingly, he felt an immediate call to the Anglican ministry.

“So I went to ‘vicar factory’ in Cambridge,”



Canon Andrew White speaking in Norwich

says Andrew, with a smile. He also studied Judaism and Islam, and attended the Hebrew

University in Jerusalem. At 33, after various ministry appointments, he became the youngest

canon in the Church of England. While at Coventry Cathedral he was director of the International Centre for Reconciliation and was later appointed the Archbishop of Canterbury’s envoy to the Middle East.

Winner of more than 20 peace and inter-faith awards and author of seven books, he now leads ‘Canon Andrew White Ministries and Jerusalem Merit’. “Reconciliation work starts with relationship building,” says Andrew, who is trusted by many religious and political leaders in the Middle East. He has built unparalleled relationships with senior Sunni and Shia clerics and says “the vast majority of Muslims are our friends.”

He has negotiated in many hostage situations and has often faced kidnap and personal danger. Once, while trying to save a kidnapped Brazilian, he was held in a darkened room littered with victims’ chopped-off fingers and toes. “People ask me if I am afraid to be in danger zones, but doesn’t the Bible tell us that ‘perfect love casts out fear?’ ”

One of Andrew’s favourite quotes is “Don’t take care - take risks!” His Christian father told him at the age of three that Jesus loved him – and Andrew says he “has never doubted that truth.” He often tells audiences: “The love of Jesus is as real for you as it is for me.”

At one stage he wanted to visit Iraq, but Saddam Hussain’s government refused to let him in. Then, after praying about it, he was amazed to receive a fax message the next day from the office of Tariq Aziz, deputy prime minister and close advisor to president Hussain. It read: “He wants to see you in his office in Baghdad next Thursday at 5pm.”

“Miraculously, I got there, after a 16-hour drive from Amman in Jordan to Baghdad,” recalls Andrew. He met many of the ‘bad guys’ including the infamous sons of Saddam: Uday, the psychopathic playboy, and Qusay, the ruthless heir apparent. This was one dinner appointment he did not want to keep – and only went because the terrified messenger said with tears that he and his family would be killed if Andrew refused the invitation.

Andrew and his wife, Caroline, have two sons. The family live in Hampshire, but cannot follow Andrew on his many trips which have taken him recently to the Middle East, Switzerland, America and New Zealand.

A big man at six feet two inches tall with size 16 shoes, Andrew now often has to speak from a wheelchair and is undergoing stem cell treatment for MS, first developed at his clinic in Baghdad, which uses his body’s own stem cells – “It has completely transformed my life,” he says. “Well over 3,000 other patients have been treated with it, but I was the first.”

■ Canon Andrew White was speaking in Norwich at a series of inspirational meetings which were arranged by FGB, the Full Gospel Businessmen.

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## TimeNorfolk supports a record number

■ Norfolk pregnancy loss charity TimeNorfolk has reported supporting a record number of people in 2017.

A supporters event held at the Virgin Money Lounge in Norwich on February 22 heard Director Lesley Bradfield say: "In 2017 we received over 200 requests for help from people following pregnancy loss and we are the busiest that we have ever been."

"TimeNorfolk has been very well supported by our local community within Norfolk which is why we wanted to say thank-you to our supporters."

The evening also heard clients share their stories of loss and how they had been supported by TimeNorfolk. Victoria Waterfield shared her story of multiple miscarriages and her journey as a client before going on to become a trained volunteer with TimeNorfolk. Victoria is passionate about providing the kind of support to others which she received in her time of need.



Bishop Alan with the Diocese of East Anglia seminarians at the White House in Poringland.

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## Number of trainee priests in East Anglia hits 30-year record high

The Catholic **Diocese of East Anglia** has 12 men studying for the priesthood at seminaries across Europe, the highest number for 30 years and amongst the largest contingents from all the English and Welsh dioceses, despite being one of the smallest.

**W**ith five new students starting in seminaries across Europe in September, East Anglia now has a dozen men training for the priesthood, including six from Norfolk.

The trainee priests are studying in seminaries based in Italy, Spain and England.

Vocations Director Fr Patrick Cleary, said: "These days, it's common for applicants to approach the diocese in early middle life, having had some experience in the world of work, or indeed some experience of time spent in a

religious order.

"The average age of our seminarians is probably in the 30s rather than the 20s. Each one brings some particular experience to their vocation, which I'm sure will be beneficial to the diocese in the years ahead."

"This is an interesting diocese in terms of the variety of parishes. We have large city parishes, market town parishes and coastal parishes from King's Lynn to Felixstowe. We try to give the seminarians exposure to all of the various types of parishes during their years of preparation."

It takes between six to eight years to complete the process of study and preparation and be ordained as a priest.

The six Norfolk seminarians are Mark Ashwood, Anthony Asomugha and Deacon Andrew Eburne, all from St John's Cathedral in Norwich and studying at Allen Hall in Westminster, James Fernandez from St John's studying at Valladolid in Spain, Michael Brookes (Sacred Heart, Dereham) and Paul Spellman (Our Lady and St Joseph, Sheringham), both studying at the Beda College in Rome.



# Amazing offer from All Hallows Sisters

The **Community of All Hallows at Ditchingham** has made an amazing offer of its beautiful premises for just a “hazelnut rent” to use as a place of Christian community and service in a nationwide Dragon's Den style campaign.

It is asking interested groups: “To what purpose would you put a small cluster of houses, a chapel and beautiful grounds in the service of God and the Church?”

The Community of All Hallows at Ditchingham on the Norfolk/Suffolk border is making this generous offer to the Church because the Sisters are moving to become a dispersed Community and are in the fortunate position of being able to offer the site to a new user rather than sell it.

For over 150 years the Sisters have sustained a life of worship prayer and service on this site, reaching out to the vulnerable and marginalised. Now they want to see if there is a new group, organisation or set of individuals who can re-imagine the site for the 21st century.

How, the Sisters are asking, might this place become a resource to God's Church, a sign of the Kingdom, a place of Christian community and service? So the Sisters are launching a nationwide campaign to make as many people as possible aware of this offer.

The Sisters want to hear from anyone who would like to take on the site and use it in the service of the Church and the Kingdom of God.

Those with the very best ideas will then be invited to attend a Dragon's Den-style event where they will be asked to make a pitch for the Sisters to offer them the use of this site.

The Community of All Hallows Visitor, the Rt Rev Graham James, Bishop of Norwich, has been encouraging the Sisters to think creatively and imaginatively about their future. Sister Sheila, the Community Co-Leader said: “Our Community has been richly blessed by using this beautiful site over many years. Now we want to pass it on



so that others can serve God in this place.”

Bishop Graham has asked Canon Andy Bryant from Norwich Cathedral to support the Sisters through this time of change. Canon Andy said: “This is a wonderful opportunity and we look forward to hearing people's suggestions so that this site can continue to be a resource for the Kingdom of God both in East Anglia and beyond.

“The Community hopes to be able to offer the site for a hazelnut rent in return for the new occupier being responsible for the maintenance of the site. However the Community will be shaping the exact nature of the agreement in response to the particular need of the organisation chosen to take on the site.”

Over the years, the Community of All Hallows has been richly blessed in many ways and they have always wanted to share this with others. The former school run by the All Hallows Community is now the Belsey Bridge Conference Centre, run by the Christian Conference Trust. And part of the former convent buildings are now used by Emmaus Norfolk & Waveney, offering a home and meaningful work to homeless people. At the beginning of a new chapter for the Community, their wish is to continue to share the resource of this site with the wider Church.

For more information about the offer and the process involved please contact: Canon

Andy Bryant [canon.missionand-pastoral@cathedral.org.uk](mailto:canon.missionand-pastoral@cathedral.org.uk) 01603 218 331

For more information about the Community of All Hallows please contact Sr Sheila or Sr Elizabeth at [allhallowsconvent@btinternet.com](mailto:allhallowsconvent@btinternet.com) 01986 892749

**The splendid St Michel's House at All Hallows in Ditchingham.**

## YMCA opens new communities office

■ YMCA Norfolk has thrown open the doors of its new Communities Team office on Waldegrave Road in Bowthorpe for an open day.

The Communities Team is made up of the Families Team, Youth & Community Team, SOS project workers and On Track project workers. The open day, on February 13, was the first time that the whole team had met together.

Following a shared breakfast and team building, the doors of the offices were thrown open to the local community and professionals from Sure Start, Bowthorpe Church, and the Matthew Project as well as YMCA trustees, patrons and staff.

Communities Team Manager, Louise Hinchley, said: “We were really pleased with how much the local community in Bowthorpe supported the YMCA Norfolk Communities team open day. We have only just moved in, and we are really keen to build relationships with the local church and community.

“We are hoping to bring new opportunities for lots of young people and families both in the area and county-wide as we grow and develop our new team, and new office space.”

The offices at 7/8 Waldegrave Road, Norwich NR5 9AW, also has a training room that will be used to deliver Mental Health First Aid as well as other in-house training.

## International feast

■ The Norwich Integration Partnership, a partnership of three local charities, including Norwich Christian charity English+, working with refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants is hosting a sumptuous feast of international cuisine for up to 200 guests on Thursday, March 22 at Blackfriars Hall in Norwich. Tickets are £26.71, details on: [contact@norwichintegrationpartnership.org.uk](mailto:contact@norwichintegrationpartnership.org.uk)

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# The great Norfolk to Malta motorhome giveaway trek

**Cromer couple Ray and Ruth Scorey embarked on an epic journey of faith driving across a wintry Europe to donate their prized motorhome to a Christian charity in Malta. Jenny Seal reports.**

■ Ordained ministers Revs Ray and Ruth Scorey run the charity Norfolk Healing Rooms. They lead a team of caring volunteers who offer prayer for physical and emotional healing at events and public venues. Their mobile Healing Room is a regular sight at North Walsham's Vicarage Street car park, the East Runton Car Boot Sale and the Celebrate events in Norwich and King's Lynn.

Their original mobile Healing Room was a caravan. In 2013 it was upgraded when the Scoreys bought a modern motorhome to do the job. However, two years later a house move meant the motorhome had to be replaced.

Ruth Scorey explains: "When we moved into a third-story apartment in Cromer, we didn't have sufficient car-parking space for such a big vehicle. So in September 2016 we put the motorhome up for sale to fund the refurbishment of a second-hand Mercedes high-top van, a smaller vehicle that would fit into our car park.

"The Mercedes Sprinter was decked out and up and running by February 2017, but after five attempts to sell the motorhome, we realised that God had a different plan, as He often does!"

The couple spent weeks praying about what to do until Ray very clearly heard God say, "Give away the motorhome". When Ray asked God, "to whom?" the reply was, "to Malta."

Ruth said: "You might think it'd be easy to give away such a beautiful vehicle but we had to wait months while Healing Rooms Malta was set up by our fellow Healing Room regional directors. And even then Malta has many cars, small roads and a hefty import tax on large vehicles so they weren't keen on us trying to foist a motorhome on them!"

"When we received an invitation to take the motorhome to Latvia for a Healing Rooms conference in November, we were really champing at the bit. Finally, a couple of weeks before the Latvian conference, the Malta Healing Rooms caught the vision!"

On November 6, the couple set off on a five-week journey across Europe to give away the motorhome to their newly established sister charity, Malta Healing Rooms.

They travelled from Cromer to Harwich catching a ferry to Hook in Holland. They then drove to Kiel in Germany, taking the opportunity to sprinkle the ashes of Ray's mother on her brother's war grave and then on to the country's Travemünde to set sail to Latvia.

After a 27-hour crossing they arrived in Riga, Latvia for a four-day Healing Rooms Conference, before setting off to Malta.

The couple travelled to Lithuania, Poland - with a heart-aching visit to Auschwitz - the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Austria,



**Above, Revs Ray and Ruth Scorey from Cromer with their motorhome which they gave away after a five-week journey across Europe to Malta.**



**Left, the couple arrived in Latvia just in time for the annual candle-lighting ceremony of "The Eleventh Of The Eleventh", to commemorate Latvia's victory and freedom over the Soviets in 1918.**

At the Healing Rooms Conference the leaders had symbolically lit matches and placed them on a map of Europe, one on each country the Scoreys would travel to on the way to Malta. Ruth and Ray then planted a match and took communion in each country along the way, in a spiritual act of healing the land. And in Latvia and Venice they took part in annual candle-lighting ceremonies.

On Saturday, December 9, the couple arrived with much joy in Malta. Ray said: "How amazing to discover that the team in Malta had had a similar prophecy involving candles lighting each other across their land. God is switching on the lights in Europe!"

Ruth said: "Malta Healing Rooms is an amazing ministry, uniting non-denominational churches with charismatic Catholics, and we are very excited indeed to be working closely with them. Our prayer is that our gift to Malta will be seen as a charitable act that does not incur import tax."

Norfolk Healing Rooms is part of a growing international organisation, biblically based and run by a loving, encouraging team of Christians from a mix of churches. For a healing appointment, or if you wish to join the team, contact [norfolk@healingrooms.org.uk](mailto:norfolk@healingrooms.org.uk), leave a message on 07900 341287 or visit [www.norfolkhealingrooms.co.uk](http://www.norfolkhealingrooms.co.uk)

## Steve's

**A Norfolk man, who admits he is rubbish at DIY, has travelled 6,000 miles to help build a desperately needed floating school in Cambodia. Jenny Seal reports.**

**S**teve Gaskin, from Taverham, recently took time off from his Norfolk team building events company to complete his eighth overseas short-term mission, spending two weeks in Cambodia building a floating school for 240 children, despite describing himself as the 'World's Worst at DIY'.

Steve Gaskin, 61, runs Right Angle Events, with his wife Kate, daughter Lizzy and a close team of 10 other employees. Steve, who is a former Scotland Yard detective and trained secondary teacher, has repeatedly chosen to travel outside of his comfort zone to volunteer on a short-term mission project that serves an overseas community.

He has worked on projects in Latvia, at a children's orphanage in Bulgaria and, for the past two years, built a school in Uganda. In November, Steve travelled to Cambodia for two weeks with the charity Mission Direct to build a floating school.

Steve and a team of 11 other volunteers, who varied in age, profession, background and belief, were overseen by a building expert from America and three professional Vietnamese builders. Describing the site when they arrived, Steve said: "There was a load of rafters and bamboo poles and I looked at it and I said: "There is no way we are going to build a school in two weeks!"

The project was a partnership between Mission Direct, the local Galilee Church, which floats on an adjoining raft to the new school, and an education charity called Serve Cambodia. The school will serve a displaced community of Vietnamese people, who have few resources, no rights and face Government persecution for being Christians.

Steve said: "We walked into the most abject poverty I've ever seen and I've been exposed to different things here in the UK, Bulgaria, Latvia and recently Uganda. The raft was on the Mekong Delta and you really couldn't afford to fall into that, because all sorts of materials go in there untreated."

The working conditions posed some challenges. Steve said: "We got to the project at about 8 o'clock. By half past 11 it was just too hot to continue working."

"We had to bundle 180 of these bamboo logs to start off the foundation. It looks like fun sitting, working on the floating poles but they weren't bolted down so one false move and you'd be in the water, which you really, really don't want to be." He continues: "The roof only took us a couple of hours to put up - no health and safety whatsoever."

As Steve sits at the desk of his busy Taverham office he points out: "The thing is I'm the world's worst at DIY. Kate and I have this standing joke. She says: 'How come you can go 6,000 miles to do some DIY, but I ask you to paint the bedroom and you can't do it?'"

The trip did utilise some of the skills Steve, a member of Norwich Central Baptist Church and a black belt in taekwondo, considers more within his skillset. With another member of the team, a retired primary school teacher, he was able to lead a training course for the teachers of the new school. He also got to preach, lead Bible talks for children and young people and run martial arts activities.

"I've been equipped with skills to teach," he said, "and I've been equipped with skills to hopefully get the Gospel over, which to me is the only reason why



# floating school mission



**Pictured is Norfolk man Steve Gaskin out in Cambodia where he helped to build a floating school (below) and tell the children Bible stories (left).**



I do it, and I do get a fantastic sense of achievement through the Lord. I do believe strongly that the Lord has said to me, 'this is what I want you to do'."

In the afternoons, when it was too hot to work, the team visited communities and sites of interest. Some of their adventures included stepping through a disused minefield, visiting a Buddhist temple, seeing Cambodia's Killing Fields and buying litres of shampoo to treat lice in the hair of local children.

They also met and heard the story of Sokreaksa Himm, a victim of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge's brutal regime, who has written a book, 'The Tears of My Soul,' about his journey to forgiveness towards those who killed his family in front of his eyes. Sokreaksa now runs a Christian conference centre and school where the team led an evening youth event at which Steve was given the opportunity to lead martial arts, deliver a short talk and give the teenagers a keyring each, displaying their own fingerprint.

Despite Steve's initial doubts, the team were able to complete the build of the floating school in the allotted time. From its building site, it was towed back with the church, a couple of miles along the Siem Reap River where it will now

serve the community. Talking about seeing the school in situ for the first time, Steve said: "That was one of the most joyous occasions of my life."

In celebration, a short service was held in the school where the pastor dedicated the facility open for anyone, of any faith, at any time. Despite their extreme poverty the community then treated the team to what Steve describes as a 'sumptuous lunch'.

The school opened for its first term in January 2018. It welcomes 60 children in each of the two classrooms in the morning and then, following a lunch break, a further 60 children in each during the afternoon.

It cost £15,000 to build, which the team of volunteers raised as part of their costs. Steve said: "We were also able to do some teacher training and we left £5,500 to the school for wages and

ongoing costs. We paid off a debt for our driver and we also left some money for the church as well."

Steve raised his contribution from a variety of sources including support from Norwich Central Baptist Church. He said: "We raised £500 from one sale of muffins. That's really generous. And when you look at what that £500 can do for fellow Christians 6,000 miles away, it is quite awesome. That will pay for teachers for months and months. It will provide resources and most importantly, allow them to stand on their own two feet."

Steve is keen to return and has been asked by Serve Cambodia to go back for a month to raise the level of mathematics, English teaching and learning in one of its schools in addition to running a martial arts course and getting involved in the praise and worship. "If it wasn't for

Kate", Steve said, "I couldn't go on these missions. She looks after me, she prays for me and she keeps the company running."

With characteristic passion, Steve is enthusiastic about encouraging other people to give short term mission a try. He said: "It can sometimes be quite frightening going with people that you don't know, to a part of the world that you don't know, to do work that you don't know. But, what I would say is that, you get a huge amount of support. And you will come back with a really good sense of fulfilment."

He says, with a big smile: "I will continue to do mission abroad until such time as I'm too infirm."

If you are considering short term mission and would like to chat to Steve Gaskin about his experience, feel free to email him at [s.gaskin@rightangleevents.co.uk](mailto:s.gaskin@rightangleevents.co.uk)



Joy McCann with young members of the Vineyard church in Mwanza who were baptised in Lake Victoria in Tanzania, watched by some crocodiles and, below, at the day-care centre.



# Finding Joy with the crocodiles in Africa

Watching a crocodile glide past, after seeing five boys baptised in Lake Victoria, Tanzania, has been one of the most surreal moments of the last 18 months for Christian missionary, **Joy McCann**, from Norwich. Jenny Seal reports.

**S**ince May 2016, Joy (27) from New Costessey, has lived in Mwanza, a city on the shore of Lake Victoria in northern Tanzania. Joy volunteers with the Christian charity Tanzania Bridge of Hope. The NGO aims to lift the local community out of poverty and has recently

set up a day-care centre where Joy teaches children about God.

The journey to East Africa began in 2002 when Joy, who was just 11 years old, was diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ME. The illness confined her to bed for 13 years with exhaustion and light sensitivity. Throughout this extended period of ill health, and despite never having visited the continent, Joy was sustained by visions from God of a place in Africa where she would go when she was better.

In 2015, through a lot of prayer at her Norwich church, Gateway Vineyard, Joy was healed.

Making the most of her restored health, Joy jumped at the opportunity to visit Tanzania for three weeks. Just six weeks later, Joy moved to Mwanza as a long-term missionary.

Now, after 18 months, Joy is back in Norwich for a short break, taking time to rest as well as having a few medical checks after contracting some local illnesses in Africa. As she reflects on her life in Tanzania, she is particularly thankful for the recent delight of finding a new Vineyard

church in Mwanza.

She said: "I had a real yearning in my soul for a Vineyard church in Mwanza. I had been sent from Gateway Vineyard Church in Norwich and had really missed many of their teachings, values, deep prayer ministry and the 'come as you are' approach."

Through Facebook, Joy discovered plans to start a Vineyard church in her adopted city. She met up with the newly-trained indigenous church leader, Pastor Daniel, in Mwanza, and was immediately impressed. "There was something very different about him," she said. "There was light in his eyes, a new vision."

"It almost felt too good to be true," she continued. "I very quickly became involved in the church, Vineyard Mwanza. They had just started meeting in a little dusty cinema. I had goosebumps as we worshipped God with nothing other than our voices, hands clapping, and the Holy Spirit."

Joy tells of when a group of local boys, who live on the street, came to see what was going on in the normally ticket-only cinema. Joy said: "I heard them ask one another: 'Is it free?'" and, "Is this a church?" The boys became regular visitors to the church and very quickly started engaging, particularly in the worship. Then one Sunday, Joy was asked to teach the new church

about communion.

She said "I found a translator I knew, who took me to church on his motor-bike and it was an amazing time. Before we took communion I gave an opportunity for anyone who wanted to become Christians that day and seven boys came forward. I know five of them were from the street and two lived in the surrounding area.

"Pastor Daniel led them in a prayer and I just stood there in amazement as they so willingly gave their lives to Jesus and received communion with the church. I asked Daniel if we could soon arrange a baptism and also where we could do it. His reply was "Yes, of course, in two weeks, we'll do it in Lake Victoria."

"The baptism was one of the most precious days of my life. The boys were well taught on baptism and counselled beforehand, and we baptised five of them in the lake. The scenery was so Biblical. And, with us all singing the chorus 'I Have Decided to Follow Jesus' in Swahili and English on the shoreline, it was breath-taking.

"It was also quite humorous when those around me said, "Oh, look... is that a crocodile? We'd better move up the land now." I seemed to have far more urgency than the others to do so as I watched the nostrils floating close by!"

Now, while on her break in Norwich, Joy is equipping herself for these new ministry and evangelism opportunities in Tanzania. She is doing an online theology course, as well as leadership training and evangelism school sessions. She hopes when she returns to Tanzania to put more time into the new church and mission opportunities, as well as continuing her role in the day-care centre.

Joy said: "My role as missionary has been teaching the kids the word of God, and teaching them to pray and sing, as well as doing creative lessons. We have seen so many of the kids come to know about Jesus, and their parents often comment that they have noticed massive changes in their behaviour since they have been at the day-care. The kids come home wanting to pray with their brothers and sisters and teach them what they learned in the lessons at school."

She said: "The day-care is in massive need of funding in many areas and we ask you to pray with us for provision in all our areas of need. A big need is school transport so that we can take more kids from wider areas of Mwanza. Parents often ask if we can transport their kids yet. Since the new school year began in January, we have been able to receive 13 children but have overall capacity for 80-100. We have made it possible for donors to sponsor vulnerable and orphaned children to be schooled at our day-care when their parents aren't able to pay fees."

You can read more about Tanzania Bridge of Hope and how to sponsor a child at [www.tanzaniabridgeofhope.wordpress.com](http://www.tanzaniabridgeofhope.wordpress.com)

For more information you can email Joy on [joy.elizabeth2@icloud.com](mailto:joy.elizabeth2@icloud.com), or to support her work in Tanzania, you can donate via her blog: <http://joymccann.blogspot.com>

And if you would like to follow in her footsteps, there is an open invitation. "Volunteers are warmly welcome to come out," said Joy.





Norwich author  
John Piercy  
and his wife  
Krystyna.



## Book on forgiveness packs a punch

■ Norwich author John Piercy who, with his Polish wife Krystyna, has travelled over 105,000 miles in mercy ministries to help very old and disabled survivors of the Holocaust at Auschwitz, has written a very practical new book on the theme of forgiveness and reconciliation, called 'No Better Way.'

Written for people of faith – or none – the book draws on their experiences during 29 mercy missions to Hungary, each one a journey of around 3,600 miles. "Every one of these mercy missions was a miracle," says John.

As Christians, he and Krystyna felt led to do mission work in Hungary – and discovered "the incredible need" for medical supplies

among elderly war victims, especially those being helped by the Jewish Hospital in Budapest, founded in 1802. To assist in much-needed care, John and Krystyna set up the Norfolk-based Shalom Habakkuk Trust.

John, a former maths teacher and Krystyna, who speaks five languages, first met as trainee teachers at King's College, London. Their home today is at Stoke Holy Cross, Norwich.

John's seventh book is written with clarity and humour, and it shows how costly but life-changing forgiveness can be. The book packs a punch and includes true stories of the loss and pain that result from failing to practice forgiveness. It tackles tough subjects, such

as 'What if the person we forgive won't reciprocate?'

The book includes more than 40 black and white photos and is written in a way that invites readers to dip into the pages at any point and be reminded of the enormous importance of practicing forgiveness.

"Forgiveness is good for you," says John. "And so is reconciliation. I've written this book to encourage these attitudes which are crucial for positive and healthy living."

The 82-page book, 'No Better Way' is available for a £5 donation in support of the Shalom Habakkuk Trust.

For details, contact John Piercy on 07943 836530 or email [john\\_piercy@hotmail.com](mailto:john_piercy@hotmail.com)

By Mike Wiltshire

# Rohingya refugee clinic role

Norwich-based humanitarian and aid worker **Eldred Willey** has recently spent two weeks helping international relief organisation **Samaritan's Purse** set up an emergency diphtheria clinic in **Bangladesh** to serve **Rohingya** refugees. He reports on his experience.

**S**amaritan's Purse was responding to the tragic Rohingya crisis which, since last August, has seen some 650,000 refugees flooding across the border from Myanmar, fleeing ethnic cleansing. At least 6000 have died at the cruel hands of the Burmese army, and many of those who escaped arrived famished, with just the clothes on their backs.

In 1982, the government of Myanmar declared the Rohingya to be stateless non-citizens, and the United Nations have since described them as "the most persecuted minority in the world".

Most of the Rohingya refugees have settled in the huge Kutupalong



The Samaritan's Purse clinic in Bangladesh with charge nurse Kelly Sites monitoring a child.

camp, where half a million souls now jostle together in overcrowded and insanitary conditions. Black and orange plastic shacks with sparse, shallow latrines make a perfect breed-

ing ground for epidemics.

One of the first to strike was diphtheria – a serious bacterial disease affecting the mucous membranes of the nose and throat. The invading

microorganisms restrict breathing and sometimes drop down into the lungs where they cause inflammation. Before the clinic opened Kutupalong camp saw 2,500 people infected and

27 deaths. Three-quarters were under 15 years old.

For ten days we worked from dawn to dusk to create a top-quality medical facility right in the refugee camp. As there was no airlift during this period, we had to source all supplies in-country.

The nearest large city being five hours away, this was quite a challenge. Somehow the team scraped together oxygen tanks and airways, antibiotics and antihistamines, analgesics and tranquillisers, syringes and cannulas, gloves and gowns. It was a low-budget launch as staff begged, borrowed and persuaded people to part with the requisites.

The site team gave a morale boost to 100 Rohingya men by recruiting them as site labourers and setting them to work digging humanitarian-standard nine-foot latrines, hooking up a water bladder and pump, and connecting a generator.

With the clock ticking, staff created shelving out of tent boxes, and stripped wires with a pocket knife. Somehow the result outshone everything around in professional quality. Samaritans Purse is leading the way in bringing an effective medical response to a people in desperate need.

[www.samaritans-purse.org.uk](http://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk)

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## Eating out

# City centre cafe that is a rev

### a bite to eat

■ Helen says: "I enjoyed the Ploughman's Lunch, which came with a good selection of cheeses, ham, a granary roll with butter, coleslaw, pickles and salad, during my lunch-break with a friend. The food was delicious, fresh and was served quickly. On a Tuesday lunchtime, the cafe was busy but there were tables available. It was a pleasant space to sit and admire the medieval architecture and chat with my friend – who happens to be an architect! The opportunity to browse the Christian resources on offer in the bookshop next to the cafe area was a bonus and something you can't do anywhere else in Norwich. In a city that offers so many options for lunch, it was nice to choose an independent cafe like Revelation and know that I was supporting a unique ministry in the city."



Set in the chancel of a beautiful Norwich city centre medieval church, Revelation is much more than just a café and tea room as **Helen Baldry** found out.

**L**ocated on Redwell Street, the Revelation Café, tea room and Christian bookshop offers an oasis of peace amongst the hustle and bustle of the city.

The cafe offers delicious locally-sourced and homemade food at competitive prices, including vegetarian and some vegan choices.

Lunchtime options, including homemade soups, sandwiches with side salads, jacket potatoes, Paninis and specials of the day, are available Monday – Saturday 9.30am – 3.30pm.

If you fancy a little light reading while you eat, Revelation offers a range of resources such as Bibles, Christian titles and an extensive range of secondhand books.

The friendly staff are always pleased to cater for outside parties wishing to celebrate birthdays, weddings, confirmations and ordinations, either for lunch or suppers.

Manager Steve Foyster has been at the helm of Revelation, previously known as Norwich Christian Resource Centre, for ten years.

He said: "What we have here is a community. It is where people meet up, and are nourished – in mind, body and spirit. Every day it is wonderful to welcome old friends as well as new faces into the centre.

"I think we do give an exceptional level of customer service with an extensive knowledge that goes back years and years. It is an



extraordinary place."

The cafe hosts regular evening events such as book launches, quiz nights and Burns Night. Discussions on emotive topics – including mental health, recovery and grief – have been held, attracting a receptive and engaged audience.

Revelation is a nurturing and non-judgemental environment where people can express their thoughts and share their opinions and experiences.

The next special event at Revelation cafe is St George's Day evening on Monday 23 April. Please call 01603 766978 for further details.

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### on the menu

#### ■ Prices

◆ Spicy sweet potato and butternut squash soup served with a roll and butter £4.20

◆ Special: Vegetarian sausage cassoulet served with new potatoes £6.95

◆ Chicken & Bacon panini £5.25

◆ Jacket potato from £4.95

◆ Bread and butter pudding served with custard, ice cream or cream £2.95

◆ Jam sponge served with custard, ice cream or cream £2.95

◆ Ploughman's lunch (Cheese/Ham) served with roll and salad £5.95

◆ Homemade quiche served with new potatoes and salad (pictured) £5.95



#### ■ Location

Revelation Café and Tea Room  
St Michael at Plea Church  
Redwell Street  
Norwich, NR2 4SN

#### ■ Contacts

Tel: 01603 619731  
Email: [norwichcrc@btconnect.com](mailto:norwichcrc@btconnect.com)  
[www.revelation-norwich.co.uk](http://www.revelation-norwich.co.uk)

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## Year of double celebrations in Eaton



■ St Andrew's, Eaton – the only thatched church in Norwich – is this year celebrating two anniversaries, 675 years apart.

It is 700 years since the first minister, Geoffrey de Boton, was appointed to the medieval flint-built church in 1318.

The church in the heart of Eaton village, close to the River Yare, is also celebrating the 25th anniversary of the opening of its much-

admired hall church, one of the largest of its kind in Norwich. The light, airy building, opened in 1993, is used for most services and numerous musical events throughout the year.

Celebration art, craft and musical events, exhibitions, holiday club and social events will mark the year of double celebrations, along with a picnic and outdoor service on the bandstand in Eaton Park, with Bishop Graham

James. Party in the Park will take place on June 23, 12-4pm.

The parish of Eaton was well-established by the time of the Norman Conquest, and extensive details appear in the Domesday Book of 1086, commissioned by William the Conqueror who invaded England in 1066.

[www.standrewseaton.org.uk](http://www.standrewseaton.org.uk)

## 1000 hours of kindness



1000 Hours volunteers litter picking on Overstrand beach.

A Norwich church's revolution of kindness, called **1000 Hours**, has been making its mark across the city and county during the 40 days of Lent.

**G**ateway Vineyard Church hopes its members and supporters can rack up at least 1000 hours of voluntary work and acts of kindness towards other people during the six weeks of Lent.

Acts of kindness so far have included baking cakes and brownies for hairdressers and school pupils. Josie and Esther Baker gave

away an impressive 196 cakes to the pupils and parents of Cawston Primary School. Josie said: "We had so much fun giving away cakes. People were amazed that we weren't charging for them. It's was great to be able to tell them that we just wanted to bless them as God loves them."

Chocolates have been given out to stewards at Carrow Road, to bin men, care home workers and to the crew on a Ryanair flight from Alicante to Heathrow.

Church member, Sue Hatherly said: "You can't imagine the crew's response. The flight attendant's face lit up and she kept thanking me, saying they'd been up since 2am and this was just what they needed! I even got a thank-you from the captain."

1000 Hours volunteers have been

cleaning road signs in Thorpe Hamlet and preparing school snacks in Hellesdon.

Big Issue sellers and the homeless in Norwich have benefitted from a sandwich, a hot drink and a chat every Saturday and Sunday thanks to the Gateway Vineyard Soup Run team.

Bags and bags of litter have been picked up from Overstrand beach when 24 adults, 11 children, two babies and one dog got busy. Litter has also been picked up in Eaton, Thorpe Hamlet and off Plumstead Road.

A family fun day at the Trowse Sports Hall was also offered for free to local families.

Church pastor, Hannah Deal, said: "We are asking our church members to think about doing simple acts such as baking a cake for a

neighbour, giving your postman a bar of chocolate or cooking a meal for someone in need.

"Activities such as painting a fence for a community project, visiting residential homes to engage in activities with the residents, running a baby café in Thorpe St Andrew and several projects planned in conjunction with the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital to show appreciation for staff and also provide reminiscence packs for dementia patients and support for relatives of patients.

Hannah said: "We believe that simple acts of kindness will send ripples across our city and county. I cannot wait to begin and I hope that in big ways and small we will be able to show God's love and kindness to people."

Visit: [www.1000hours.co.uk](http://www.1000hours.co.uk)



# Anne's story is beyond belief

Anne Murrin's autobiographical book, 'Beyond Belief', is a tale of triumph over adversity for the retired business woman from Blofield who has defied pain, despair and destitution with God's help and guidance. **Jenny Seal reports.**

**A**nne's life has not been easy. In her 71 years the retired Norfolk entrepreneur has faced real difficulties, including TB as a teenager, bringing up three children alone and the threat of paralysis from a chronic back condition. However, when Anne recounts her life and business successes, it is a life-affirming story.

Published in October 2017, Anne began writing 'Beyond Belief' for her family as a record of her Broadland-based property management company. She soon realised that the story of her self-made enterprise couldn't be told without wider reflection on the factors that birthed and motivated it – her sustaining faith, her health problems, a failed marriage, a privileged childhood at a private school in a Staffordshire convent and her many close friendships.

"Because all my children live away," Anne said, "I don't think they were fully aware of everything that was involved and I thought it would be a good record to write the history of the business. I also thought it might provide inspiration and encouragement to future generations. As I got into it I thought more and more that I needed to explain why I had to run the business. And as it progressed, I realised more and more the power of God behind me."

Driven by high standards of customer service and a proactive attitude, the author established and ran her business, Heron Property Management (formerly Heron Homecare) for 20 years before selling it for a sizeable sum. At the time it wasn't customary for businesses to be run by women and Anne had to deal with some patriarchal attitudes. To add to this she was a single mother of three, after divorce from a difficult marriage.



Anne Murrin at her Blofield home with her new book *Beyond Belief*.

In her 30s, Anne had found herself with no prospects, and whilst bringing up her children on benefits, she took the courageous step to become a mature student and achieved a degree at the University of East Anglia. Just as life seemed to be back on track, and as her new business started to succeed, her father died while on holiday abroad.

Her painful and debilitating spinal condition that she began suffering from at age 15 began

worsening around this time, and a final diagnosis with the possibility of future paralysis, led to episodes of depression and the need for a wheelchair.

Incredibly, Anne tells the story of the ups and downs with humour, Godly wisdom, insight and, despite everything, optimism. As you read the book, the author becomes someone you would love to know.

Meeting Anne Murrin in her home, Heron House, named after her former business, is not a disappointment. On a cold winter's day her personality matches the bright sunlight streaming into her comfortable living room, through her large windows and glass doors. Anne, with her back carefully supported by cushions, talks about difficult subjects with a smile on her face and a chuckle punctuating her sentences.

It is this affability and positivity that seems to have opened up and allowed her to capitalise on many opportunities in her life. But in the darkest times when these have failed her, it has been her strong faith in God that has brought strength.

When Anne was 17 she got Tuberculosis and was ordered to bed rest for six

months in isolation. During this frustrating period she experienced a powerful faith encounter out of nowhere.

"God's most holy presence completely engulfed me," she writes. "It filled my being with such joy and feeling of closeness to Him – I was enraptured. It was a very real experience of His Mystical Being. I was on 'Cloud Nine'."

Despite later experiencing years of feeling anger towards God and distant from him, this episode remained a source of strength. Looking back, even in the hardest moments, she can see God's leading and nudging both in inexplicable answers to prayer and in ordinary but unexpected moments.

"I think, having an experience like that, you almost can't not believe," she said. "Even though I went through times when I thought, 'why is God allowing all this to happen?' I couldn't not believe because of that experience."

Although her belief was certain, Anne didn't get involved in church life until her mid-40s. "For years, I felt very much in the wilderness with my faith," she said. It wasn't until Anne came to a crisis point with her spinal condition that she found herself in a church seeking sanc-

tuary and was invited to the weekly prayer group which has become a big part of her life.

Now an involved member of St George's Catholic Church in Norwich and Our Lady Mother of God church in Thorpe St Andrew, Anne was also recently elected the Formation Minister for the Secular Franciscans in Norwich.

A grandmother to seven, Anne lives an active life despite the devastating prognoses and diagnoses she received 25 years ago for her back problems. With the help of remedial massage, complementary supplements and aqua therapy Anne's spinal condition has greatly improved and she can now walk unaided.

"I've had enormous healing," she said. "I was almost wheelchair-bound at one point and was told that I could become completely paralysed. You don't see too many complete miracles these days – but certainly I never ever dreamt I'd be doing all the things I'm doing now. Never dreamt at all! God was truly on my side."

■ *Beyond Belief: Through Trials to Triumph, The Miracle of a Broadland Business* by Anne Murrin. 249pp. Self-published in October 2017 through Witley Press. £9.95. Available from Amazon and other bookshops.

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