



I enjoyed finding this picture of tranquillity and peace that probably was taken early one morning when a new day was dawning and the countryside is waking up. It reminded me of the well-known Psalm 23 . In that the psalmist talks about God's provision for each and every one. It says that the "Good Sheperd "cares for His flock by providing for their needs including their food and water, His protection at times of trouble and the promise of an eternal relationship in the presence of God.

It is a reasonable question to ask how does God make these provisions and does it apply today as much as it did yeas before the birth of Jesus. Well, the answer is that God still provides for all, especially the needy. In order to do this, He uses ordinary people who are willing to roll up their sleeves and to give their time in volunteering in caring for others without looking for a reward for themselves.

Church on the Bus it a great example of how voluntary work has a significant impact on the lives of many and is a way of sharing the promises that God makes in providing for those in our community that especially need His care and provision in their lives.

In this Newsletter we will look at some examples of the impact of volunteering and the commitment made by those who are active and freely give their time.

Without your work CotB would not function, so thank you for everything you do.

John Phillips

Towards the end of April this year a group of 10 shared a meal with John Phillips to acknowledge the time and effort he has put in to working with Church on the Bus over the past 12 years. We were also able to say goodbye and Thank You to John as he has now decided to step down from acting as a Trustee and as a volunteer with us.

During his time with Church on the Bus John has fulfilled numerous roles and given of his time and efforts in many different ways. We were able to acknowledge his work as a volunteer, a bus driver, fronting the work based in Matlock, liaising with partnership agencies, counselling guests, writing to guests spending some time in prison, playing his guitar to lead the carols at the Matlock Christmas dinner and being known by guests for having the ability to listen and respond to the issues that were important to them.



Added to this impressive list is his work as a Trustee and Chair of the committee. During this time a number of changes were made to how CotB worked including moving away from using the bus as well as strengthening ties with partnership agencies.

Within his work with CotB John has provided a balanced and calm approach to ensure that the core values of service and witness to Christian principles have been upheld. This consistency has resulted in guests understanding the reason for our work and responding by asking for prayer and wanting to know more about God's love.

It is fair to say that we will miss John's input to our work and his steady and objective analysis of situations. We would join to say Thank You to John for all that he has done and wish him well for future endeavours.

We will miss you.

Richard Croft

Richard Croft first heeded the call to serve with Church on the Bus at a prayer meeting in North Wingfield, a couple of years ago. At the time he was recovering from a very serious operation where he had nearly died. His desire was always to serve God and even though he was still in recovery and dealing with a number of health issues, he came along to COTB and quickly became a valued and caring volunteer. His desire was always to love, listen to and support our guests and prayerfully talk them through a variety of problems. His gift was his gentleness and his great sense of humour. And of course, his deep faith in God. Alongside this ministry he was Chaplain at Clay Cross Hospital and his gifts were appreciated greatly by those in Ohospital and their families.

Richard has had a long career in ministry. As a child he suffered a severe brain hemorrhage which left him with some disability. He was supported during this time by the local vicar who encouraged Richard in his faith. This experience was a major turning point in his life. He attended various crusades at Heaton Moor



and this gave him the conviction that he should go onto the mission field. He led various camps which sought to bring salvation to many young people.

He joined a Christian group called Crusaders. They led mission camps at Nefyn in Wales which is where he met Ruth and they went on to be married.

Eventually Richard and Ruth worked for C.M.S. and moved out to Tanzania where he learned Swahili so that he could communicate the gospel to the local people. He was very well loved there and kept in close contact with some of them after he came back to the U.K and up until the time of his death. When Richard returned to the U.K. in 1995-now with a family of three children, he began to work with the South American Missionary Society and travelled extensively during this time leading many people to accept Jesus as their own Lord and Saviour. Richard was always engaged with people. Recently he volunteered at warm space which met in the Barnabus Centre in Danesmoor and together with Yvonne Hayward they reached out to help and support many people in that area, conducting services, both in and outdoors on a Sunday and at other times. Richard was also a member of a home group at Tupton and latterly attended Church in the Peak at Matlock. His desire was always to love people and lead them to Jesus. His heart was always to bring love and comfort into people's lives.

He was such a kind and fun-loving man, despite his serious health issues, and is sadly missed at Church on the Bus by both the volunteers and the guests. One young man openly wept when he was told of Richard's passing, declaring, "But he was so kind and prayed for me!" It can certainly be said that his reception in Heaven would surely be marked with, "Well done! Good and Faithful servant!"

(Prepared by Diane Shimwell)

Rough Sleepers Action Group

When Alan Park first started Church on the Bus in 2004 his vision was to bring support, comfort and the Gospel to those in our community who were sleeping rough. He sought to establish contact with the homeless and to provide some food, a listening ear and care by prayer and interest to those who had largely been forgotten or who were seen as a nuisance in the town.

The remit of CotB has moved on since that time to continue to provide care and support for those who are vulnerable, isolated or find the demands of independent living a problem. The majority of our regular guests have some form of stability in their accommodation but a percentage remain homeless and are involved in "Rough sleeping". They do not all fit into the stereotype image of someone who has a sleeping bag and is found curled up in a multi storey car park or shop door.



At present the number of Rough Sleepers in Chesterfield, NEDDC and Bolsover varies between 12 and the low 30's. All are homeless and are often reduced to sleeping in cars, tents or sofa surfing as well as relying on a sleeping bag and somewhere dry to sleep. Until recently a number of different agencies sought to work with rough sleepers known to them but were limited in what they could do by the agencies remit and issues of

accessing resources. In order to develop a coordinated response to rough sleeping P3 has developed an interagency sharing programme with monthly, on line, meetings to share information and pool resources to meet the presenting needs. Individuals are referred to the meeting if they have recently become homeless or if their circumstances have changed or if they appear to be reluctant or not able to take the risk of changing their situation



The agencies “attending” the monthly meeting include P3 who chair the process, representative of the local authorities, Social Services and agencies specialising in the management of dependencies, Housing providers including Pathways, support worker in the field of domestic abuse, the police and probation and Ian Macleod representing Church on the Bus. It is worth noting that CotB is the only voluntary agency involved in the meetings. Ian is able to provide the perspective provided by guest attending our evenings and sharing concerns, over a cup of tea and a sandwich with our volunteers.

Support is provided by helping with accommodation, budgeting, signposting into relevant resources and encouragement to deal with both physical and mental health issues. AS you may expect it can often be a slow process but by working together using the range of resources available lives are being changed and individuals are finding stability in their lives and are moving to a more comfortable lifestyle.



If you want to find out more about the Rough Sleepers Action Group, please have a chat with Ian Macleod

Prayer Of Gratitude for Volunteers

Father, we offer our grateful thanks and praise for the volunteers of Church on the Bus that quietly yet faithfully offered their services for the wellbeing and support of others.



We ask Your special blessing on each one, knowing that they are the unsung heroes that receive little thanks for their valuable contribution and who are so often taken for granted by those that they freely serve.

Provide for the needs of each one, and protect them from those that might intentionally or unwittingly exploit their generous nature. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.



Financial Help: Regular or one-off donations can be made to our Co-op Bank Account:

The Church on the Bus. Sort Code: 08-92-99; Account: 65923339

We also have a Just Giving Page at www.justgiving.com/church-onthebus

Or you can use “Give As You Live” (www.giveasyoulive.com) which gives you access to many major retailers and high street stores. When you shop through this site your nominated charity receives a donation from the retailer, and you can nominate Church on the Bus if you wish.

Gifts in Kind: We distribute donated clothing and hygiene items (Gifts in Kind) when specifically asked by guests and we especially need small items for personal hygiene that can be easily carried, good trainers and walking boots, jeans and jogging bottoms, socks, thermal hats and gloves for winter, and new underwear. We can also use sleeping bags but not Duvet's.

Email churchonthebus@gmail.com ; Website: <https://www.churchonthebus.org.uk>