



# Branching Out

[www.themustardtree.com/branchingout.html](http://www.themustardtree.com/branchingout.html)

The Newsletter of the Mustard Tree Community Church, Longwell Green Spring 2010

## Sleeping rough



**D**espite four layers and two sleeping bags, the thin cardboard and tarpaulin that separated me from the flagstones couldn't keep out the cold (4°C). And the tarpaulin over our heads, which I later realised had a hole, didn't keep out the rain.

It was the Crisis Centre Ministries' annual sponsored sleep out, designed to raise awareness and compassion for the homeless. The cold, the rain, the noise and the stone floor ensured we all got very little sleep. So I was glad to have hot tea and a bacon butty early the next morning. Talking to a man who had actually been homeless, I realised our experience had not quite been the real thing.

Apparently, it is not the rain, or the cold, or the lack of consistent sleep that is the worst thing about really sleeping rough. It is losing one's security. You never know when

somebody might kick you, or urinate on you, or steal your cardboard.

My experience taught me that little things make a big difference (like an extra blanket, or warm soup, or a sheet of plastic without holes in it!). And that the work of the Crisis Centre Ministries is a lifeline for some. It offers food and friendship in its café. But it also aims to equip people with practical life skills and job finding skills, as well as getting them into supported housing.

It seems that Dawn Gribbin had realised a similar thing. She was the secret millionaire who spent a week undercover with the Crisis Centre Ministries and chose to give tens of thousands of pounds towards their work. The gift is timely for them as they are in the process of renovating the Queen Vic pub in Stapleton Road, which will be able to seat 80 people for food, and provide a safe space to offer advice and counselling.

## Madagascar Concert

'Vibrant performance, tribal dress, inspiring, uplifting, creative and professional.'

May 4th, United Church, Bath Road. 7.30 pm.





A remarkable and imaginative array of art with the ambition of raising funds for the Chapel Row Gallery, Bath, BA1 1HN. Please drop in and view the free exhibition for the future for children and adults.



Further details please contact: h

# Mustard Tree: winds of change



**“Choose hope and anything is possible,” said Christopher Reeve. Every year we try to offer hope in practical ways. This year we have three chances in June to do just that.**

June 5th is ‘National Family Week’ and South Gloucestershire is hosting a Family Fair in Coronation Park, Cadbury Heath. Please meet us there as the churches are coming together to host a bouncy castle, free car-wash, and a café for rest and refreshment.

June 12th will be the day for

**The Mustard Tree Community Church** has been in Longwell Green since it began in 1991. We asked **Pete Miles, who has been one of the leaders for the last 18 years** what it is all about?

## What kind of church is it?

A church is a group of people who have faith in God and are committed to following the person and teaching of Jesus Christ. We are linked with many other like-minded churches across Bristol.

## Where do you meet?

That’s a good question because we are in the process of moving from Longwell Green Primary School. We will be meeting at the Mustard Tree during April and May, but are currently exploring different venues. It’s the people, not the building in which they meet, that really matters.

## Do you have a minister or priest?

No, although most of the people who have served as leaders have completed leadership courses for church work. We have always had a leadership team from within the church. Some of the leaders are employed by the church

and some have other jobs or responsibilities and work for the church in their spare time.

## What does a church week look like?

Well, there are activities going on every day. Groups for young people on Saturdays, Coffeetots meets on Tuesday mornings and Golden Blend on Thursdays. Footprints use the Tree on the other three days in the week. We also meet in small groups in people’s homes for mutual support, Bible study and prayer.

## What about the future?

Our vision is to serve God and work out our faith in Longwell Green. So in addition to our weekly activities we work in the local schools doing assemblies and supporting work with the underprivileged in other parts of Bristol. But times of change sometimes bring new opportunities. So we will be praying and listening to God so that we don’t miss any new direction he may want to take us.

## Can anyone come?

Yes, certainly. Jesus welcomed all people to come and learn from him what life was all about. We welcome all who want to come and join us on this journey to know and serve God.



f paintings, fusing a passion for art  
Compassion, will be exhibited at  
N from June 25-30 from 10 - 6pm.  
bition which is painting a brighter  
round the world!

elen@partnerincompassion.org



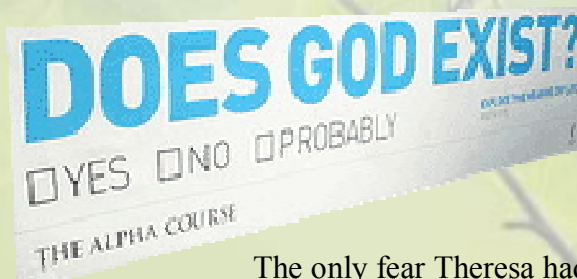
# ALPHA: my experience

**“I was surprised at how comfortable I felt with everyone, and how lovely they all were,” said Theresa reflecting on the Alpha course she attended in November.**

Brought up attending a Catholic church, Theresa already had a faith but had not been part of a church for many years. Recently she felt she wanted to “do something about her faith,” and remembered how her friends had attended Alpha and enjoyed it twenty years ago!

So she went to one run by the Mustard Tree Church. “Alpha made me think a lot more about things,” Theresa remarked. The course aims to be a supportive environment, where people can explore the Christian faith. It seeks to answer questions like, ‘How can we know God exists?’, ‘Why did Jesus die?’, or ‘Can we trust the Bible?’, or even ‘Does God heal today?’, or ‘Does God guide?’ And it does this both by offering historical evidence, and personal stories from others within the group.

For Theresa, she found the course helped her faith to grow. Partly just being with others who held a faith, but also hearing people’s stories, their questions, and as a group talking through the answers. “What I had found was that being alone with one’s faith can lead to it becoming quite stagnant, so for me, joining with others was encouraging.”



The only fear Theresa had before attending was that she might have to talk in front of lots of people. But as the course was only 9 people, her fears were unfounded.

Although the Alpha course has now finished, the group are still meeting. Theresa is unsure of the next step, but being part of a group is a good place to explore what that next step might be. As Theresa has found in the rush and routine of modern-day lives, “It is easy to become apathetic about faith if we are not part of something bigger.”

*in our villages, towns & cities*

gardening, litter picking, and giving gifts to residents of Newton house and Alfred Lovell homes. If you are aware of people with practical needs, please contact us: Tel. 07868 707 913 or e-mail: johnmark@themustardtree.com. June 13th will be a celebration service (10.30), free BBQ (12.30) and fun sports afternoon. Last year many visitors came, filling SBL school. You would be welcome to come along at any time that day.

We all need hope. And hope can grow in anybody, who is offered something worth believing in and chooses to receive it.





# Slumdog Millionaire

lifetime, living in a temporary shelter, eating a limited diet and facing tough choices.

orange between four of us! But never has an orange tasted so good."

Perhaps the biggest challenge was what they were NOT allowed: No mobiles, no mp3 players, no snacks, no hair straighteners and no make-up.

Most surprisingly, Ben found the highlight of his experience was NOT having his mobile. "You are cut off from the rest of the world. No mobile, internet or TV. You can live entirely in the now and you don't end up worrying about Monday!"

But Erin, our youth worker, said, "Although it was quite exciting to start with, after a day the novelty wears off and you feel hungry and cold."

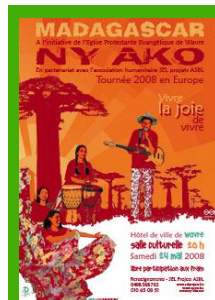
**A**s I write this an estimated 1 billion people are living in a slum. That is nearly 1 in every 6 people in the world.

The British blockbuster, Slumdog Millionaire, told the story of a young man who grew up in a slum in Mumbai, India. He went on to win India's version of 'Who wants to be a millionaire'. Everybody wanted to know how he could have won this, because in real life, escape from slums is nearly impossible.

But the experience of living in a slum, for even 36 hours, can be quite powerful. Slum survivor is a simulation designed to help connect young people with the lives of some of the world's poorest, by spending a few days the way a billion spend a

So the young people at the Mustard Tree 'slummed it' on March 19-21. They began by building a slum in the Mustard Tree, using cardboard boxes, string and tape. No heating was allowed throughout the weekend.

The second challenge was to only get 2 meals a day of rice and lentils! In order to survive, they had to earn 'slum rupees' by making things to sell, or washing cars. Ben said, "We worked hard to get rupees to buy one



**NY AKO** -The singing and dancing group from Madagascar of are coming to UCLG again on May 4th. Dressed in tribal dress, playing Malagasy instruments, they have inspired audiences across Europe with their joyful and creative performances. The concert is free, and Malagasy crafts are sold during the interval. For more information contact: 07868 707 913.

## Coffeetots

**Tuesday 9.30-11.30am**

under 3s  
parent & toddler  
group

contact: Gina 932 5035



## Golden Blend

**Thursday 10.30-12**

coffee and chat

contact: Stephanie 932 5876



## footprints

Pre-school Playgroup

**Mon/Wed 9.15-1.10pm**

**Fri 9.15-11.45am**

Fun learning  
environment for  
3&4 year olds.

contact: 987 3395



## The Mustard Tree Community Church

[www.themustardtree.com](http://www.themustardtree.com)

**Sunday 10.30am**

The Mustard Tree, Watsons Road  
Join us for lively worship and  
relevant Bible teaching for all ages.

We are part of the Christian Church of Longwell Green, the Evangelical Alliance, and the Bristol Celebration Churches Network.