

Yeldall newsletter

A Christian response to Addiction

September 2011



Tom has a go at the golf game

Sunshine and Showers for Yeldall Open Day

Several hundred people enjoyed a pleasurable afternoon at our annual Open Day in July. A sharp shower had people diving for cover as they tucked into their lunchtime Hog Roast, but this was soon followed by warm sunshine.

There was also fun to be had viewing the puppets and the birds of prey as well as taking part in the games and browsing the various stalls. Then, people moved into the marquee for praise, worship and testimony (see inside pages) before enjoying Strawberry Teas to the sound of some live country-style music.



Resident, Gerwyn, joins in the fun

Andy Partington to be Yeldall's new Director

In 1981, as Yeldall's co-founder, Joanie Yoder recalled: "A new couple joined our staff, Dave and Sue Partington, with their boys, David and Andrew. It wasn't long until Bill [Joanie's husband, who was soon to be diagnosed with terminal cancer] recognised that, sometime in Yeldall's bright future, Dave would be the next Director..."

Nearly thirty years on, as Ken Wiltshire approached retirement, we began to pray about who would succeed him - someone who understood the Yeldall ethos and Christian distinctiveness but was ready to take it forward into the 21st century.

Over in South America, David Partington's son, Andrew and his wife, Mickey, were seeking God for their future. Andy explains:

"Although a heart for addicts has been part of my make-up for as long as I can remember, I had seldom given serious thought to working in a drug rehab.



"After I finished my studies at London Bible College (now the London School of Theology) and then gained a PhD, we spent a couple of years with YWAM, before I returned to the London School of Theology for three years as a staff member, the last two as their Director of Training. From there, in 2006, we were called to pastor an English-speaking church in Bolivia.

"It was during this time whilst working at a home for street teenagers there that my love and vision for such transformational communities came flooding back. This led us to explore setting up a drug rehab in Bolivia but, as our plans developed, I sensed God saying that the call was for the UK, not Bolivia."

continued overleaf

Yeldall's New Director *(cont'd from p.1)*

When Andy hesitantly approached Ken to ask about any possible future opportunities for work at Yeldall, Ken had an immediate sense that God was at work and that this was the man who would be his successor.

The Board of Trustees agreed that Andy should be appointed as External Relations Manager and, in that role, he launched the Good Samaritan Bursary Fund, which has now helped several men access both the main Yeldall Manor Programme and the Lodge Resettlement Programme. Over the past 16 months, as he took on other management responsibilities, it became apparent that he was indeed the man for the job and, in July, the Trustees were pleased to appoint him as Director Designate.

Andy will now work alongside Ken for six months, taking over officially in April 2012.

Ken writes, "I am so pleased to be able to retire next year with the confidence that God's man, Andy Partington, will continue the invaluable work of Yeldall Manor. Andy is a man wise beyond his years, who has a real heart and understanding of the work of Yeldall. He is a man of God, but also a man of the people; it has been so encouraging to see Andy develop good relationships with residents, staff and supporters alike. Please pray for Andy as he gradually takes over the leadership of Yeldall and I would ask you to give him the same support and encouragement that you have given me over so many years."



Andy, Mickey and family

The Good



Keith shares his testimony at Open Day

Keith Mc, former Yeldall resident, shared his story at Open Day: "I was brought up in a nice middle class area, reasonably well off - quite a good upbringing really. But I was never shown much love or affection, my parents were always working, arguing and drinking in the evenings. I was just lost, really. I didn't feel like I belonged anywhere; I didn't feel like anyone loved me. I just felt really bad about life. The only way I could gain any feeling of goodness was when I discovered alcohol at the age of 11. Mum and dad were out at work so I just helped myself to the drinks cabinet.

"Surprisingly, I did really well at school and got a good job with the Ministry of Defence. But all this time, my drinking and my drug-taking were escalating.

"As time went on, I wanted more and more money because my drinking and drug taking were getting worse. I earned good money, but the more I got, the more it just fuelled my addiction. I was a mess. I didn't care about anybody. The only person I cared about was me and where my next fix was coming from. The only time I stopped drinking over those twenty years was when I was in prison for twelve months. I lost jobs, partners, my children...

"Life just got worse and worse. Eventually, I was in no fit state to work. With my income gone, I became homeless. I spent two years on the streets of Leicester or in squats.

"I never had any sort of Christian upbringing at all. I did believe there was a God but that was all. I just thought Christians wore socks and sandals and hats

Who changes lives

and sang songs, and it just didn't really appeal to me. But, while I was on the streets, there was a Christian team who came round feeding the homeless. I liked them and I started thinking that maybe this there was something in this Christian thing after all...

"One morning, I was in a squat, needles and bottles all around me, it had been raining heavily and there was a broken window. And through this broken window came a shaft of light and I felt that God was speaking to me. I audibly heard Him say, "You've got to follow this light, you've got to follow me, and you've got pick up your mat and walk."

"The very next day, I went down to the Alcohol Advice Centre and told them I needed help – not detox but rehab, a Christian rehab. It took many months and a lot of struggling, but I finally got to Yeldall Manor in December 2009.

Also sharing his testimony was Yeldall's Chef, Craig Messeder, marking ten years as a staff member.

He said, "I was using heroin for 22 years. I'd tried to stop many times on my own but I'd bump into peers a few days or weeks later and I'd be bang at it again. I look back on those years as a complete waste of life really.

"I heard about this place, and thought I'd give it a go. I arrived in 1998 and I was able to address my issues – things from the past that had led to me using – and take responsibility for that and change my wrong thinking on things. I'd like to thank all the staff team, but particularly my counsellor, Noel, for guiding me and helping me through different issues, and also Christine Wiltshire, who ran the kitchen at the time.

"I also want to thank my dad and Ann, who prayed for me for many years while I was using - their prayers were answered - I want to honour and thank them for all that support. I want to thank all the people who pray for Yeldall; it really does make a difference.

"I completed the programme and went back to brick-laying, but just over a year later I was invited to apply for the job of Assistant Cook. I got the job, gained an NVQ 2 and 3 and went on to get the job of Chef.

"I came here and I hated it. I walked through the door here and I thought, "They're all freaks, they're all being nice to me." I found it unnerving - I wasn't used to being shown love or friendship.

"Now, when I walk through these doors it's like coming home – it's just fantastic, Yeldall Manor. I'd encourage the lads on the programme now to get alongside each other, to big each other up, to listen to what the staff say and to love Jesus, because He will guide you all the way and He will see you through the other side – there is a better life, trust me."



Keith (centre) with friends - former volunteer, Charles, and ex-resident, the late Dave Ryan

"I've got a passion for getting alongside the residents and helping them. I've been given a second chance in life and so have they. Although I have to have authority over them as a staff member, I also try to get alongside them and get to know them, get to see the real person beneath whatever they might have done in life.

"From my time on the Programme, eight of my peers have died. The only way to beat addiction is through prayer and through the Lord. I'm just really passionate about that."



Back at work: Craig serving the Strawberry Teas

Chissock Woodcraft launch a new 'branch' to their business

Steve Hedger heads up the Chissock Woodcraft furniture project at Yeldall Manor and reports on the latest developments:

We have recently completed the atrium over the Coach House courtyard and our new barn. Although there is still some way to go before the interiors are finished, they are both watertight and in use. The atrium is proving a very useful area, while the barn houses our new recycling business - "Chissock Woodsave".



The project is led by Lwanga (who's been working with us for over a year) and Mamadou, who's on a placement from the University of Reading. Also working at Woodsave are Lee, a former Yeldall resident, who's been employed by us for four years; Bernard, a volunteer from Reading; Gerwyn, a Yeldall resident undertaking a voluntary placement and, from September, Leon, who will have just completed the Yeldall Programme.

Chissock Woodsave collects waste timber and wood shavings from local companies. Good quality timber is used to make furniture or is resold, medium grade timber is used for kindling wood, and all other wood waste is shredded and used to make briquettes. We have also installed a biomass boiler that is fuelled by wood waste, meaning that we have become self-sufficient in heating and hot water. We get real pleasure out of knowing that every scrap of wood is used in a positive way. By recycling, we prevent a lot of wood waste from ending up in local landfill sites.

Despite the current financial crisis, since we first arrived at the Coach House in 2006, God has shown us that He will provide both the work and materials we need. The grant to renovate our buildings and to buy the machinery has only gone to prove that His provision is there despite the circumstances.



Lee with the briquette machine

With funding for training becoming ever more difficult to obtain, we hope to use the profits generated by Woodsave to fund the training at Chissock Woodcraft and to pay for more of our guys to take NVQs in Furniture Design and Making or Furniture Renovation and Repair.

The briquette mini-logs give a highly efficient burn (approx. 30% more efficient than logs) and leave little ash. They are ideal for wood burners, barbecues and chimineas. Until the end of September, trial bags are available free of charge. If you are interested in buying briquettes, kindling wood or logs, or if you have any waste timber for collection, please call us on 0118 324 0078 or see www.chissockwoodsav.co.uk for more information.

How you can help Yeldall Manor

If you can drive a minibus and are free on Wednesday afternoons, we might appreciate your help once a month taking our residents and a staff member to the Leisure Centre.



To support us in prayer, please tick the box on the response form to receive our monthly Prayer Diary. We also hold a Prayer Meeting on the first Monday of each month at 8pm.

Join us in praise and worship at our Celebration service on 30th September or a short Carol Service on 9th December (both start 7.30pm).

We always need mugs, tinned food plus old jewellery, inkjet cartridges and mobile phones for recycling.

For Christmas (!), we will want stocking presents for the residents of stationery, toiletries, small items of clothing etc.



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