



CHRISTIAN OPTIONS IN PETERBOROUGH SCHOOLS

Spring Newsletter 2017



"Letton Hall enabled me to unite with God and meet some inspiring people who have helped me grow and develop my faith. I can't wait for the next one!"

Millie Herring



"I just wanted you to know how much we appreciate all your hard work and that you are making a kingdom difference."

Daniel Beckett, Youth Pastor & Baptist Youth Specialist



WEB www.crops.org.uk

EMAIL hello@crops.org.uk

PHONE 01733 352701

POSTAL 68A Westgate, Peterborough, PE1 1RG

@cropsuk

CROPSUK

crops.uk

CROPS is a Charity Incorporated Organisation, Registered No. 1157651





Matt Wild's Update CROPS Director

Preparation for the autumn term began in earnest in the last few weeks of the summer school holidays. Coming back from vacation it was straight into pulling together another outdoor **Point in the Park** for young people across Peterborough at Ferry Meadows, along with our annual supporters event the **CROPS Garden Party** – held this year in the grounds of Peterborough Cathedral. There was definitely a running theme to both of these special

events, yes you've guessed it: rain! Thank you to all those brave souls who came out to encourage and support us. The Garden Party turned out very wet indeed but we still had a great afternoon – hearing testimonies from those who have served with CROPS in the last year, welcoming and praying for those leaving and joining. Please book Sun 10 September 2017 into your diary now for our next one – (being held at Bretton Baptist Church, Peterborough).

The shape of our team has been quite different this academic year and Nathanael our sole gap year student has had no shortage of things to fill his time, (and handled it all most expertly!). A big thanks to Esther Wild, (my wife) who in the run up to Letton Houseparty gave lots of admin support in different ways in the office. We also welcome **Jo Darters** and **Shelagh Beatty** who are giving CROPS a day, and a morning a week respectively, as volunteers to help in the office.

New Year's Eve Celebration – Introducing Chris Wild

Some of you will have been with us on New Year's Eve at **Peterborough Cathedral** where we shared not only about the launch of our mentoring in



schools project across Peterborough schools, but brought up 'on stage' **Chris Wild**, our new staff member to be introduced and hear more about our plans.

Chris joins the CROPS team from January as 'Schools worker & Mentoring Lead' bringing with him considerable experience in working with young people, especially mentoring in a secondary schools context. We are still fundraising for year 2 and onwards for this project. We'd love to increase our base of monthly committed givers to support this. Please do contact the office if you are interested in finding out more.

To all our supporters, friends and volunteers who continue to pray, encourage, serve, and give sacrificially through finances and time, thank you for being part of CROPS.

Yours in Christ

Matt Wild

Team Updates



Sheila Bucknell CROPS Administrator

I can't quite believe another year has gone by and so much has happened during this time. Firstly my knee gave out on me in February and I had it replaced in March, this took quite a while to recover from and then I had a severe chest infection in August which resulted in my losing my voice for 3 months! However I am now back in the fold at CROPS and getting into the swing of things.

My work in school has resumed and I am delighted to be involved at OBA with mentoring young people with life difficulties. I feel this is such a good use of my time as the young people and I share some great time together. This is such a worthwhile cause and with our new Mentoring Coordinator joining us in January, Chris Wild, hopefully many of you who are reading this might feel encouraged to contact him and possibly become volunteers.

Nathanael Grenfell Gap Year Student

Wow this term has flown by! It's been a busy but highly enjoyable time. I've thoroughly enjoyed all the different activities that I've been a part of with CROPS; from Park Up and Hot Chocolate Club during the week, to helping run the Point on a Saturday night; it's been an amazing experience! The highlight this term probably has to be Letton Hall. Coming back as a leader was such a privilege and it was a great time away with 64 awesome young people; having fun and seeing God work in big ways in the lives of so many young people. I've learned a lot this term and like to think I've overcome some challenges; from developing my confidence in public speaking, to planning for Letton Hall, and perhaps the most challenging task of all: learning how much milk Matt has in his tea!



Other Events

'PG Workshop' for Parents and Youth leaders

CROPS took the lead in bringing to Peterborough a two-hour workshop that focused on 'Phones, Filters and digital Dangers' - protecting children and young people from the dangers of exposure to pornography.

This special evening was supported by **Kingsgate Church, Urban Saints Eastern Region, Hope Revolution, and the Diocese of Peterborough.** Under the banner of **Hope Revolution Peterborough**, the evening was put on to equip parents and those who work with children and young people to

protect as well as better prepare them for life in the digital world.

We saw approximately 90 people attend this highly informative and educational workshop that was delivered by the team from The Naked Truth, a project of **Visible Ministries** based in Manchester. Project founder **Ian Henderson** (formerly of the Message Trust), and **Bethany MacDonald** (who grew up in Peterborough) led the presentation that brought together current research on the impact of pornography plus practical wisdom and advice to equip parents and youth leaders. The evening gave appropriate guidance in helping children and young people be aware and avoid pitfalls that the Internet represents with this issue. Parents and leaders who attended were able to sign up to receive access a digital resource pack produced by Naked Truth.



The Point

A new term; a new round of amazing guest speakers! The Point (our monthly youth gathering for those aged 11 - 18) has been an absolute blast this term. It's been a wonderful mix of powerful encounters with God and the usual fun and silliness associated with 'crowd maker' type group games!

Back in September we had **Daniel Beckett** as the guest speaker to kick off the academic year with a fantastic talk on identity. Daniel challenged the young people to live in the identity that Christ offers, to be consistent, whether online, or at school or with friends and secure in who God has made us to be.

Jason Royce joined us in October for a very special and different Point. Jason led us in a reflective retelling of the



story of Jesus calming the storm. As he led those present to really picture the scenes in this story, to imagine it as if we were there ourselves we had moments to listen to what God was speaking to each one of us during this time.

At the November Point, **Phil Timson** shared with us a message of hope as he talked about reaching out to others and being evangelists in the everyday.

Lastly but certainly not least, we were joined in December by **Ben Wilson** who shared a part of his testimony as he spoke to us about second chances and how God always forgives us when we truly repent.

What is really special about The Point is the many young people for whom this is not just a 'fun night out' but a community that they feel part of, an expression of church where they feel they belong and can grow with others their own age - irrespective of what church they do or don't go to. It's not intended as a replacement of anything local churches are doing, furthermore we love the partnership we have with local church youth leaders who come and are part of delivering The Point - who see this as an extension of their youth ministry and a wonderful display of unity across churches.



Letton Hall Houseparty - October 2016

By Nathanael Grenfell

Letton Hall Houseparties always provide a memorable week and an incredible experience; this October was no exception!

It was an absolute delight to have as our guest speaker **Chad Chadwick**, Diocesan Youth Missioner for Peterborough Diocese, with us for the week. Chad delivered engaging and biblically rooted talks over four main sessions on what it means to follow God 'Into the Wild' as we go on an adventure with Jesus in life.

He took us through some of the lesser known parts of the Bible (such as the book of Philemon) and some more obscure stories about the growing church in the book of Acts to explore themes like grace, repentance, discipleship and God's heart for us. Chad made his talks interactive and involving, with a strong emphasis on us responding rather than him just talking. After the session on the burning of the scrolls in Acts – we made paper scrolls and wrote on them things we wanted God to get rid of in our lives. Later that evening during the programmed bonfire we all had a moment where we collectively prayed and had a very symbolic moment of throwing our scrolls onto the bonfire. It truly was an amazing four sessions that young people and leaders alike really got a lot from.



Soul Stretch (the morning devotional time) once again provided us with a reflective start to each day, keeping the focus on God. We were looking at 'where we've been,' 'where we are,' and 'where we are going.' Over the three mornings we reflected on how God can use our past and the things we perceive to be weaknesses for His glory and for His purpose; we looked at who we are now in Christ; and then were thinking about our future with God. The final exercise we led was the young people writing themselves a letter to about what God

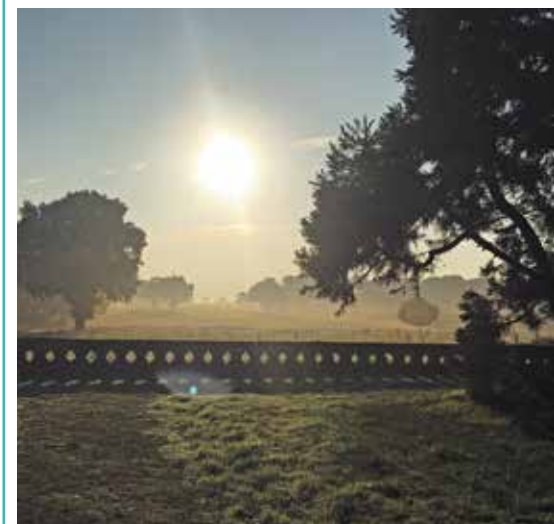
had done in their lives that week – which was then sealed for us to post back to them a few months after Letton!

This October we had six different seminars, each one running twice across two days. Our seminars included looking at Spiritual Warfare, Surviving School, Sustaining Spiritual Growth, looking at



“Going to Letton gave me the privilege of meeting loads of people on fire for God, and gave a greater insight into God's amazing plan for my life.”

Isaac Bankart





“Watching the young people grow in relationship with God and each other and being a part of such a wonderful team of leaders has really blessed me and deepened my faith. I cannot wait for the next one.”

Tanya Brown, Lifechurch

the Church, being a Christian and Social media, and an open discussion for girls. Seminars provided a great space for young people to have open discussions and to learn from one another rather than just the speaker or leaders.

Letton Time (free time on the Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons) as always was a great way to relax and just have fun within the busy schedule of Letton; whether that be through playing on the Wii, taking part in outside sport or simply catching up with friends. Go-Karting provided a good chance for young people and leaders alike to let out their fast and furious side with some really great young drivers! On the Wednesday we ran several workshops that were an absolute

blast including baking, constructing with Keva blocks, making pocket crosses, drama, spontaneous worship and even a fascinating lecture on the wonderful world of Newts (c/o of Chad!!)

As is tradition, our last dinner is always a Themed Dinner. This year we had a ‘P’ Party where everyone had to dress up as something beginning with the letter ‘P.’ It was great to see so much thought and creativity go into these costumes, seeing everything from palm trees and planes, to pandas and princesses. The Talent Show as always, made a memorable final night as both leaders and young people demonstrated their extraordinary talent. From musical performances to comedy sketches (with a few in-between!), and even a lip sync battle to finish it off; it certainly was a night filled with laughter and fun.

We want to say a massive thank you to every young person that came; for all



the leaders who helped make it happen and to our amazing cooks, **Richard and Fran Morrison** who prepared such delicious food for us all. Thank you God for making Letton what it is; for all the fun we had but also that the focus is always on you. Thank you for all the memories we can take away, the new friendships made and for all the accelerated growth to help us become more like Jesus in our lives.



“Each evening at Letton we run a different entertaining activity. The first night Lettoners had the choice between participating in a Quiz Night or playing the Letton classic; Mafia. On the Tuesday night we had our Bonfire. It was a great time to respond to Chad’s talk by throwing our scrolls of the things that get in the way of us connecting with God. Following on from that it was a fun night of lively songs, hot chocolate and time spend by the roaring fire.”

Primary Schools Work

By Rachel Jessup Associate Primary Schools Worker

“Does God have a Dad and if so what is his name?” “Where was Zerubbabel born?” “Who published the first Bible?” “Why is so much of the Bible set in Israel?” are some of the brilliant questions asked by the Yr6 William Law class I visited this week. We had just finished an OT Mini series overview of the storyline of the Old Testament of the Bible (from Walk Through The Bible Ministries) and so now there was an extra lesson opportunity for any Bible questions they might want to ask. I can't always answer all of them but I can usually help the children to know where to look for the answers themselves. I have led 3x lots of these 'OT Mini' lessons this term at **Discovery Primary** (Walton) and **William Law** (2x different classes). Almost 20 separate lessons!

Watch out for more OT Mini series being taught across the city as **Richard Kean** finishes his training in the New Year and is able to offer these excellent lessons to resource even more schools... We'd love more Churches to lead these so get in touch if you are interested in getting involved.

In the last few weeks we've also delivered a few assemblies. Carlos (my puppet Toucan) came with me to visit Key Stage 1 at **William Law Primary School**, where we found out why the birds of the air have no worries and how they trust their heavenly Father who cares for each one

of them (although he was rather put out to hear that God cares for each one of us even more!!!) We tried walking round balancing bean bags on our shoulders and discovered that life is a lot easier if we can learn to give our burdens/worries to God to deal with (great idea Matt).

I took Nathanael to do his first assembly at **Farcet Primary School** in November. We discovered it was Internet Safety week and as we like to rise to a challenge decided to link it in with a Bible story! In the end the children helped us to act out a video game version of the story of King David and his three mighty warriors (not worriers!). The soldiers went down to get water from the wells outside Bethlehem while the Philistines were there just because they had heard David say he wanted some. David refused to drink any because they had taken unnecessary risks just for a drink of water and we chatted to the children about what kind of actions are brave and when taking a risk is just silly. We linked this in with some of the Internet safety teaching they had had during the week and God's promise to give us wisdom when we ask for it (James 1:5). It followed on well from the story of David and Goliath earlier in the year and Nathanael played a confused Philistine guard very well as the children tried disguise, stealth and fighting modes to try to get past him to get the water...



Nathanael's next presentation role was mid-December when he joined me at **Heltwate Special School** to present an assembly (use primary photo here if space) about why Jesus came at Christmas. We had a pass-the-parcel which various children unwrapped to discover something more about Jesus who was more than a wise teacher, someone who cared for the poor or even a powerful miracle worker. Deep down Jesus came because of his love and because God is love. The final box was full of heart shaped post-its for each person to take home. They were to help us to remember why Jesus came to us to be God with us or to give away to share God's love with those around us this Christmas. We played Brenton Brown's song 'Your Love is Amazing' and invited the children to listen, sing or dance as they felt they wanted to. As usual the dance floor was full, my hand was taken for a dance and we had a wonderful time together – I love music and songs at Heltwate, the joy just bubbles up.



Secondary Schools Work

Stanground Academy

We were thrilled to be able to participate in a 'well-being' day for Year 8 at Stanground Academy in October, delivering 6 sessions of Breathe across the day. Grace Lewis-Donaldson (local youth worker at Lifechurch, Peterborough) accompanied Matt to help lead the sessions. Whilst it was a long day delivering back-to-back sessions of Breathe, it was clear that students engaged with the activities, reflections and questions that the stations pose. One student commented on how he was most struck by the Jesus station and where to place the clay Jesus figure within the wooden town blocks. He had placed him in the jail as he felt that this tied closely with his arrest and eventual death on the cross. Another student in the afternoon session shared with us how he felt the audio reflections that guide the activities really helped him to feel calm, un-stressed and deal with his anger. It is also so great to hear positive feedback like this from students doing Breathe.

Ormiston Bushfield Academy

We retain our commitment to turn up and run 'Hot Chocolate Club' - come rain or shine, knowing that this lunchtime club is highly valued by our regular attendees. As we sit waiting in the room ready to start and hear the bell go, we really do hear their feet charging down the corridor to get in first! This is part of the 'just being there makes a difference' value so dear to us at CROPS. The team showing up means that young people open up, share what is going on in their lives, and we can offer that welcome and bit of advice that perhaps they may not get that day. **Sheila's** mentoring sessions, as you will have read in her update, picked up again in October. It is so brilliant to have her back supporting many students. She is a valued visitor in school as this quote suggests.

"We are so very lucky to have Sheila come to the Academy. She provides our students with emotional support when they need it and provides the students with 1:1 attention in order for them to be able to talk about how they are feeling."

Ormiston Bushfield Academy



The King's (the Cathedral) School

Matt led a whole school assembly (approx. 1000 pupils plus staff) in October on the theme of 'reliability'. He used a clip from the film 'Back to The Future' (the bit where Marty has to trust the Doc whilst the DeLorean car hurtles towards them!). Off the back of this Matt shared how God is faithful and remains with us even when we face our greatest fears. He is right there with us.

We also had two opportunities to lead morning 'Prayer and Praise' - with smaller groups of students (20-30 at a time). The first being November 11th Armistice Day where we used a clip from the film 'War Horse' and thought about how humans, like the horses in the film, were not made for war and how tragic it was that many lost their lives. We led quiet moments for those there to

be thankful for the sacrifices made by others in past wars to gain the freedoms we enjoy today.

Our next visit was in the run up to Christmas, taking a closer look at the Nativity - and whether we were getting the full picture. We used a short film called 'Jesus: truth or fairytale?' that challenged the students to think afresh about the Christmas story. Both these morning 'Prayer and Praise' sessions were very well attended - standing room only!

Undergirding these more 'presentational' moments are our weekly 'Park Up' lunchtime drop in club - where anything from 15-25 students of very different backgrounds attend to chat about school, life, friendships and questions of faith over games of Uno, board games etc.

John Fisher Catholic High School

As part of a special 'Focus day' at St John Fisher Catholic High School where visiting speaker John Pridmore (ex-gang member who turned to Christ) had shared his testimony about growing up within the London gang culture and his conversion to Christ. During the afternoon CROPS delivered 'Breathe' for 30 students in Years 9 and 10 to facilitate them to reflect personally on the themes of the day and assess where they felt they were at in terms of a relationship with God.

Secondary Schools Work *continued...*

The Peterborough School

We have visited The Peterborough School Chapel services this term taking two services with the lower and upper senior school, but also leading two Chapel services with children in KS1 (infants) and KS2 (juniors) in the Preparatory school. With the prep chapel services Matt led the whole service and the theme was 'The Lord's Prayer' using a clip from the children's film 'Ants' and linking the Bible verse 'cast all your cares unto the Lord for He cares for you'. This involved the beanbag challenge game (mentioned in Rachel's write up), hilarious fun seeing the children hurling hand-sized beanbags down the middle of the Chapel!

For seniors chapel Matt spoke about decisions and 'leaps of faith' using a clip from the film 'Superman: Man of Steel' and talked about how whilst we may not be able to plan with certainty for our future, that as Jeremiah showed, God does and this offers reassurance that someone somewhere is keeping an eye on things and making sure that if we choose to put our trust in him, that in the end we'll be all right.

Peterborough Regional College

As well as turning up weekly on a Tuesday lunchtime to meet with small

numbers of students who bring a range of deep and challenging theological questions, we have also had different opportunities this term at PRC. In October as part of the college's 'Emotional Well-Being' day we came in to run 'Breathe'. The forgiveness 'shredder' station really stood out as a popular and meaningful station for a number of the students, who voiced the need to let go of many negative things in their lives. Also nearer to Christmas – in our role as volunteer chaplains, we assisted the main Chaplain Steph Pedlar with 'College Carols', a Christmas service held in college open to all students and staff. Matt took the message slot using a story that had been in the news about someone discovering a rare Picasso drawing worth over 12 million pounds – to ask whether we too might discover something truly life changing by reflecting on the Christmas story and where we stand on the question of 'Jesus: truth or fairytale?' Around 40 students and staff gathered to take part in singing carols and hearing readings at this with other students sat round tables on the fringes of what was happening. Pray that many would begin a journey of discovering the truth found in Jesus.

Nene Park Academy

This last term we have been able to visit NPA to lead a week of assemblies and to deliver two separate days of Breathe. This saw us visit one day for the Year 8 boys, and another day with the Year 9 girls as part of the school's programme of collapsed timetable days.

Our week of assemblies this term was a fun-filled look at the theme of 'What does it mean to just be you?' We used two clips from the film 'Kung Fu Panda 3' in this assembly, and then went on to illustrate from the New Testament how for the Apostle Paul, and many Christians, what makes you 'you' is the unique way you have been made by God, and the unique gifts you have been given. We finished by sharing how by using these gifts and seeing what they are for, even when it is hard, that we can start to see who we really are.

In moments like these we realize the privilege we have to use scripture in this contemporary way, to illustrate a message that on some level can apply to all. Pray that young people and staff in our assemblies would see the power and relevance of what the Bible has to say to everyone today.

