



Anna and Chris Hembury

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Contact details:
hemburys@gmail.com



Location: Britain



What we do: Sharing life with people on the margins and supporting them to connect with themselves, each other, the planet and God



Discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus with people unconnected to church

Dear friends,

Greetings from Hull, premiership city! On paper, that was never going to happen. Hull was completely disregarded, even during the last play-off match, but we did it! Our prayer for those we work with, who are similarly written off, is that God would flip that script and they might become Hull's pride.

Getaway

After more than two decades of taking children and young people to Frontier Camp – a gift of a camp and community for which we remain immensely grateful – as a team we felt it was time to try something homegrown again, that might be a better fit both for the needs of the children and for the way in which we work. So this summer we took 19 children and six young people to The Peak Centre in Edale, a lovely residential activity centre with deep Christian roots and ethos who really got what we were about and worked with us to plan what would suit our needs.

We were blessed with perfect weather, which meant the children could safely play and run feral about the site, which included woodland, little nooks and grassy lawns. Many of the children have not been far out of Hull, which is flat as a pancake, and consider the flyover across the train tracks a “hill”, so a climb up Ringing Roger near Kinder Scout was quite a feat! There was plenty of moaning and “I can’t do it!” and wanting to turn back from some, while others ran up ahead like mountain goats and regularly needed herding back to the group – but everyone was thrilled to make it to the top and almost stunned into silence at the amazing 360-degree view of hills, valleys and wide skies. There were a range of other activities – from abseiling off a viaduct, where children found courage they never thought they had, to pond dipping, where they found themselves happily absorbed for hours looking at frogs and newts and forgot to miss their mobile phones. Even the story/talk by different members of the team each evening happened outside in an area with a stone circle and a fire. It lent itself to the feel of the holiday, which was intentionally much more about getting away as a family than an up-front-led kids’ camp. I think we met the brief!

That said, the week was far from simply peaceful rural idyll! Many of the children we took are on the neurodivergent spectrum, and some would never get to go on other residential because of their behavioural responses to change of routine, social situations and being away from parents/carers. We had a massive



Ignore the naysayers! Hull did it!

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**With Jesus
With each other
To the edges**



reality check from the first day as to how much we were carrying as a small team of eight adults, without the considerable infrastructure and much larger team of an organised camp. There was plenty of “firefighting”, very little sleep, two children needing to be taken home a day early and one disco-incurred late-night hospital visit (thankfully no broken bones!). We have much to think through for next time, but much more to give thanks for. Pray with us that the message and memory verses about the children’s place in the family of God might be planted in their hearts and shape their understanding of themselves.

Fridays@

Nine months on from our move from Selby St Mission (Fridays@’s birthplace and home for 11 years) to the Orts space at the parish hall around the corner, we are just starting to feel less like we have found temporary shelter and more like we have found a new home. The transition time was important and healing for our little group who hold the space, as we continued to wrestle with why we felt we had to move, grieve what we had to let go of and embrace the unknown adventure we were embarking on in following the Spirit with courage and no guarantees. Slowly and naturally we reimagined what Fridays@ might look like in this new chapter. Slowly and naturally some of the people we wanted to do life and faith with, former regulars we used to hang out with at Selby St, found their way to the parish hall. Slowly and naturally we created a simple liturgy and rhythm to hold Christ at the centre of our time together.

We are buzzing with a kind of easy delight at where we have got to. We are still sad that we can’t simply be available and welcoming to whoever pops in off the street, having really taken on being interrupted (see Al Barrett and Ruth Harley’s book) as a core value. The parish hall door has to be locked for security reasons for the rest of the building, so people have to ring the bell and be let in. But meeting in this way, upstairs in the beautifully soft and colourful Orts space, has a kind of “upper room” feel to it. There’s an intentionality of gathering to be with each other and figure out together what following Jesus might mean and look like, in a way that is still outward facing to the world rather than a “holy huddle”. Our conversations are always real (thank God for Hull folk who just say it like it is!) and often deep. We are using the book *Practising The Way* by John Mark Comer to reflect on, we break bread together with a shared lunch and are planning a day trip together sometime in the coming months. Please pray for our plans to host a simple harvest service to which we hope to invite people from other areas of our work, such as Breakfast Club, Orts and Circuit Breaker.

Peace,

Anna & Chris



Photos from top to bottom: Godly play story; one of our brilliant young leaders; out in God’s creation; Fridays@ - navigating life with Jesus as our rudder



Discovering creative ways to share the hope of Jesus

We love to hear from other CMS partners sharing the hope of Jesus with people not yet connected to church. Read Andy Roberts’s reflection on his time with the charity ReVive in Brazil and hear his thoughts on how mission needs to keep creatively changing. And be challenged by a thought-provoking piece on the role of migration in mission. Read and learn more about creative mission at churchmissionsociety.org/bringhope

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