



Anna and Chris Hembury

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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.

Dear friends,

The majority of our work as CMS mission partners in Hull has been working either for or alongside Hull YFC. Chris led the team for 18 years and it has been a safe setting in which to pioneer most of the mission “itches” that we felt compelled to “scratch” in service of the gospel for our neighbourhood, including the Breakfast Club, community meal, Orts, Matt’s House and Circuit Breaker. This year marks 30 years of Hull YFC’s work in the Boulevard area of Hull.



Wednesday night youth club – still going strong

Garden

In 1994, Hull YFC’s trustees took the courageous decision to move away from its mainstay of supporting churches in their youth work and youth events, to establish a radical incarnational ministry on the Boulevard, a particularly deprived part of the city. A small team of four, sharing one minimum-wage salary, did the essential groundwork for everything else that followed – building relationships with children and young people, wrestling with what new monasticism might look like here, trying to get embattled churches to engage with the local community differently, sharing the good news that each person here was loved and had a place in Jesus’ resurrection story.

In many ways we have simply been doing the same thing (without having to share our salary!). Those that started this before us did the really hard bit. With the ground prepared, we have been able to plant and propagate and provide a trellis for stuff to be supported as it grows. Thirty years on (27 for us), we can see what has flourished as well as what never took or had to be uprooted in its time. We give thanks for countless breakfasts, youth clubs, trips out, camps, doorstep chats, cuppas and community meals. For the steady growing of connection that has allowed people to find themselves in community with each other. For bravely reimagining church and spiritual formation and faith expressed in living differently. For the young people over the years who found a faith and a love they could live within, and who can confidently share that with others. One of those people is Nicky, who pretty much grew up in this garden. Nicky is now part of the leadership team at camp, supporting young people in their development, sense of self and faith formation. She wrote this for Hull YFC’s celebrations:

Nicky’s bit

I first came to Breakfast Club when I was four years old, 24 long years ago. I went through Breakfast Club, Anchors, Zone 3, youth club, Tuesday meals, church on Sundays, Frontier Camp, Greenbelt and countless

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



coffee trips to rant through my teenage years. Hull YFC have supported me and my family in every aspect of life, helping to make sure we always had community and friendship.

Looking back, the things that helped mould me and I remember most vividly are not the big things so much as the small daily experiences like learning to read at Breakfast Club, picking out the best stickers for my chart and trying to eat a doughnut off a fishing line at Zone 3. I remember people-watching in Starbucks, talking about the dramatics of being a teenage girl. I remember being cheered on when I was the only girl playing football at youth club and wiping off the mud when the van got stuck in the mud at Greenbelt. I remember

discovering faith with people around me who were honest, patient and kind in helping me to understand and grow. Hull YFC's impact reaches far further than those small experiences and teaches you skills and confidence you hold onto forever.

Give thanks with us for God's faithfulness through the many past years of ministry. Pray for God's continued love and leading in Nicky's life now, and for fruit in the future partnership between CMS and Hull YFC.

Back to school

I've (Chris) never been that confident when it comes to education. God has taught me that I often sell myself short, it's all doable and that with absolutely everything, there is always a bigger picture. A driving licence, a black belt, a diploma in youth ministries – all of these have been achieved while on my faith journey. You get to a place in life where you relax, content that you've done all the studying you need in order to get by, then God blindsides you with a glimpse of the bigger picture. And so it was with me, woken out of my academic slumber by a flyer through the door (a government-funded diploma in gym instructing and personal training). Unfortunately (but really fortunately) for me, Anna had come across it first. She was able to see the bigger picture, whereas I see: do not pass go, proceed straight to jail. It's that traumatic, at that point I was even doubting whether Jesus still loved me.

So I dragged myself through another school year with reluctance, resistance and ranting. Thankfully, with Anna's constant reassurance, I got the thing done.

I have been running Circuit Breaker (let's not get overloaded) for just over two years now with a regular group of men. We train, followed by breakfast and conversation: anything from January transfers to Jesus, what we're doing/not doing to how we're coping/not coping. This diploma makes this venture feel more legit and hopefully helps to access funding. Give thanks for the certification and a recent £400 donation for some equipment, a day out for breakfast with the lads and a portion towards renting the hall space where we train.

Shalom,

Anna & Chris



Photos from top to bottom: A young Nicky (left) at one of the Breakfast Club beach trips back in the day; did it! Chris with his diploma; breakfast at the coast with the boys (well-earned!)



Going further with Church Mission Society

Jesus never gives up. Neither should we. We live in a fractured, hurting world. It can be tempting to give up: on hope, on people, on the idea that things can ever change. Yet, Jesus invites us to follow him on a journey to the edges. Find out more at churchmissionsociety.org/jesus-never-gives-up

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