



# vital link

The Newsletter for Through the Roof



**Holiday in a Heatwave**



**Job Opportunity**



**Retreats and Holidays in 2019**



**Bringing Life**



## This Holiday "Has Woken a Passion in Me"

Holidaymaker Sarah Jeal shares her life-changing experience of our Center Parcs holidays...

I've been going to Centre Parcs with Through the Roof since they began running holidays there 3 years ago, and I love it! Going on these holidays has woken a passion in me to stand in the gap for disabled people, and particularly to help Christian holidays and events become fully accessible.

Each June a group of people, some disabled, and others not, go to Nottingham Center Parcs, staying in two lodges for a great time of individual and group activities (my favourite is archery), fellowship, and a daily time of seeking God.

At mealtimes everyone plays their part in some way – a few prepare the meal, while others lay the table or wash-up, someone gives thanks, and then we all eat. Often everyone from the two different lodges comes together for dinner. It's quite cramped to get all of us round the table, but we can go outside if the weather's nice. On the last night we go to one of the restaurants on site.

These holidays are a real blessing to me because it's the only holiday I go on, and it's great to fellowship with other disabled and not-disabled people who love the Lord. It's also a place where I can grow my God-given gifts, so it has really impacted my life.

I love our Time With God sessions, having sung worship, talks, prayers and activities to help us get closer to God. I love being part of the team that prepares these, hearing from God before we go on the holiday, and how He links it all together during the week.

Each year we look at a different topic and a Bible verse. We put the Bible verse on the wall so that we are able to remember it. Last year we talked about Grace and how we need to ask God to be present in everything we do. We used the Bible verse Philippians 4v13 which talks of us being able to do everything God wants us to through His strength within us. This year we focused on God being with us here on earth as well as in heaven using Matthew 6v10. I contributed by doing one of the talks out of a series of four.

This holiday is a big group of friends going away together where everyone's gifts and talents are valued, so everyone is making a contribution to the smooth running of the week. God is always there with us in everything we do, guiding, protecting and loving us.

**This holiday is a big group of friends going away together where everyone's gifts and talents are valued**

I would recommend it to anyone who wants to contribute by using the gifts and talents God has given them. Until we get there we don't know who will be doing the same activities as you but I am already praying for and looking forward to next year's Center Parcs holiday! You can find out more details about the dates for next year's breaks later on in this newsletter.



# Job Opportunity with TTR

Do you want to see God’s kingdom advancing in an inclusive way? Do you enjoy bringing people with shared values together for a common purpose? Are you looking for a challenging yet fulfilling part-time job? You might want to consider applying for our new Roofbreaker Co-ordinator role...

We are very grateful that The Joseph Rank Trust have awarded us a three-year grant to increase the coverage of our Roofbreaker project. We aim to build on our support to UK churches in their inclusion of disabled people by establishing 20 Roofbreaker Networks as the platform to motivate 400 Roofbreakers (Disability Ambassadors) who will enable 4,000 disabled people to participate fully in church life.

We now want to recruit a committed Christian with a heart for disabled people, who is a good people manager with vision. The successful candidate will:

- Initiate and facilitate Network meetings in new geographical areas
- Support and encourage local volunteer Network Co-ordinators



Visit [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org) and start your journey towards promoting Roofbreakers

- Promote the Roofbreaker concept and encourage new people to join the Roofbreaker family
- Oversee the administration of Roofbreaker events
- All for the purposes of furthering God’s kingdom amongst disabled people and their families.

Find out more at [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org)

## Contact Details

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## Our Vision

*‘... is all people enjoying life together, mutually giving and receiving, as God intended’*

## Our Mission

*‘... is transforming lives through Jesus with disabled people’*

*Through the Roof Charitable Trust Ltd is a UK Registered Company number 04201510 with offices at Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ. It is also a Registered Charity Number 1087788.*

*Quotes are sometimes edited for clarity and length*

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# Prayer Support

Every week an email of vital prayer needs from across the charity gets sent to over 200 persistent prayer supporters. If you are one of them, you are an essential part of the work as God leads us, protects us, saves our situations and multiplies our efforts – thank you. If you aren’t yet involved, please consider joining our 207-strong team of faithful pray-ers. One prayer email recipient said, “It is so encouraging to read of how prayers are being answered, and to give thanks to God for involving us in this way”. Please get in touch if you can bless the work in this way.

## Time Out With God

By **Jenny Edwards M.B.E**

This year a small group of us went to High Leigh conference centre for our weekend spending time with God, and looking at the theme ‘I am a child of God’. With lots of laughter and chatter mixed in, we had some lovely fellowship together, and many people saw answers to prayer as we sought to pray with each other and seek God’s will for our lives. We even had Ollie, an assistance dog, to pat and accompany us on this journey. Ollie saw that nothing that was dropped on the floor stayed there long, much to the delight of us all.



**Time out for a photo**

This year we had just one night’s stay, but shall be spending two nights next year at High Leigh, and we would love you to join us in 2019, on August Bank Holiday (**23rd – 25th August**), for another special weekend of ‘Time Out With God’. Find the details of all of our holidays and retreats later in this newsletter.

# 'Holiday in a Heat Wave' - Treloar's 2018

By Margaret Bale, Holiday Co-Ordinator

The prayer is usually for good weather and no rain on DCF holidays. But coming at the end of a month of unbroken sunshine and unprecedented heat, we were emailing people at the last minute to say "please bring an electric fan if you have one"! It was a good problem to have though, and our fifth holiday at Treloar's made excellent use of the outdoors.

This year the new activity was canoeing, and I have to confess to some nervousness when completing the risk assessment as I could not imagine how this would work for many of our guests. But I need not have worried: two canoes rafted together with strong wooden bars for stability ensured that no-one fell in and everyone enjoyed paddling down the river in the beautiful Hampshire countryside. Meanwhile, another group had a great session of archery, so everyone was

satisfied. Other activities included bowling, the ever-popular swimming, pub lunch, and a visit to Bird World which included an 'Animal Encounter' with lots of



Creatures great and small at the animal encounter



Accessible fun on the river



Book now to join us next year!

furry creatures.

It was good to see new youngsters on this year's holiday, and to watch them develop in confidence and maturity. There was plenty of opportunity for spiritual growth, with the 'Jen Slot' each afternoon and a worship meeting each evening. One young guest said "I feel I have grown spiritually this week" and "the holiday was a great chance to learn more about God the easy way".

Although Treloar's is an activity holiday, the programme is carefully designed to combine excitement with relaxation so that all needs are met. As one regular guest said: "this holiday remains a highlight of my year... it really did do me the world of good - thank you so much".

The dates for next year's holiday are all listed later in the newsletter - if you would like to come do get in touch. Bookings are now being taken.

## A Week of Refreshment in 2019

Brunel Manor near Torquay is a lovely Manor House, built for renowned engineer, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, in the lovely countryside surrounding the bay at Babbacombe. This Christian Conference centre is totally adapted for those with a disability, and we have used the facilities many times over the years for holidays and retreats. The Refreshment week is a relaxing week where time is given for God to speak to us, and for us to enjoy each other's company, learn from one another, pray together and laugh together. All afternoons are free time for resting or exploring the nearby attractions of Devon.

The retreat starts on Monday 15th April in the afternoon and finishes Friday 19th am. Jenny Edwards and Ros Bayes will lead us in exploring God's love, grace and mercy, spending time sharing and praying together. It's a lovely week of fun, fellowship and laughter, and we would love you to join us.

Please contact the office on **01372 749955** for further information and pricing. We're looking forward to seeing you there!

# Drawing Attention to God

By Dr Mike Townsend, Chair of Trustees

I went to a special promenade concert on Bank Holiday Monday. The Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra was joined by the 'Resound' disabled ensemble. The conductor, James Rose, has cerebral palsy and uses a head mounted baton. My friend, who is a blind oboe player, said she could hear his head movements.

I was a treble choir boy soloist, but my talent as a teenager was running. Do you remember the London Paralympics? If they'd been around when I was young, I would have held some world records. When I preached at the Radio Four Sunday morning Paralympic service in 2012, the producer told me about the programme he had made for the Saturday evening, all about 'dwarf hurling!' I didn't quite know what to say, but listened. It sounded like a lot of fun. The participants being 'thrown' bubbled over with the excitement. There were comments about exploitation. But the dwarfs (their own preferred terminology in the programme) said "why shouldn't we enjoy ourselves?"

This all came back to me on Sunday when the BBC headlines stated that some venues, including one near where I live in Leicester, were being sued by the participants for canceling their 'Dwarf Wrestling' events. "We have as much right to make a living as non-disabled people!" one declared.

I asked myself the question, "what is the difference between dwarf wrestling, wheelchair basketball, and my own other sport, blind jujitsu?" Each activity has a very different history and goal, but in all of them, people are (hopefully!) enjoying themselves, entertaining others, and drawing attention to the skills and reality of disabled people.

People, though they enjoyed the music, will remember the conductor with cerebral palsy using a head baton. When I take services and preach, I know that folk remember what I say because they talk to me about the message. Hopefully, this is because God has inspired what I do. But I am in no doubt that my blindness and my guide dog stand out and grab people's attention. Jesus told the parable of the talents, and I will use any talent or disability to stand out, and to share the love of Jesus. I currently help lead a church – a colleague, out of the blue, said to me the other day, "I don't think of you as a disabled person".

Our disabilities should not be our main feature. But, if disability helps, then let's use it!

"To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I



Mike, before speaking at the BBC Paralympic Service

might save some." (1 Corinthians 9.22).

"The man who had received the five talents brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents. See, I have gained five more.'

His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness.'" (Matthew 25.20-21).

Enjoy using your talents for Jesus!

# Sharing a Story of Hope

We're excited to share the stories and vision of many friends of Through the Roof in the Vital Link – this issue, we're hearing from Matt, who tells us about the work he does, sharing hope, as a minister in Bromley.

My name's Matt Lloyd. I'm married to Ruth, and our daughter, Grace, has just had her first birthday. We are part of the family at Christ Church Bromley and are very grateful for the way our Heavenly Father provides for us one day at a time.

5 ½ years ago I lay in hospital after an unusual spinal abscess damaged my central nervous system and left me using a wheelchair; since then it's certainly been a physical, emotional and spiritual journey for me and my loved ones and friends. Through it all though, the Lord keeps teaching us about the reality of following Jesus and how that often combines sorrow and suffering with hope and joy; weakness is often God's way.

Although I take opportunities to share this story of hope in disability, the main focus of my regular work is being on the staff of Christ Church Bromley; I'm ordained in the Church of England and am involved in regular preaching and pastoral ministry. The church family here have been used wonderfully by the Lord to help our family adjust to life and ministry with the challenges of a disability.

**That doesn't always look glamorous on a day-to-day basis... But God has been at work**

I'm especially set aside to help and encourage the church family in our evangelism, sharing the good news of the gospel of Jesus. Our aim and longing is that each member of the church family would have joy and confidence in Christ so that we're eager to live distinctive lives and to take opportunities to speak of Him, being bold and wise in doing so.

That doesn't always look glamorous on a day-to-day basis. It involves admin, meetings, prayer and training. But God has been at work. Bit by bit the Lord is growing us and people are hearing the gospel. Jesus taught the parable of the seed in Mark 4 to prepare us for mixed results and that's what we're seeing. But we're longing for great fruit in some!

Please pray for a good rhythm of life for us as a young family and that God's Spirit would be at work for salvation in Bromley.

A friend and I put thoughts and resources about disability at [www.inhisp.net](http://www.inhisp.net) and I can be contacted via [matt.lloyd@christchurchbromley.org](mailto:matt.lloyd@christchurchbromley.org)



**Matt & Family**

# Turn a Mess into a Message

The Brunel Refreshment Week by Jenny Edwards M.B.E.

I often spend some time just browsing through my old Bibles and reading the notes or interesting snippets I have within them. Not only do they serve a reminder of the situation I was in at the time of writing them, but they jog into action even more thoughts for the present.

Today I found a message that says 'only God can turn a mess into a message and a test into a testimony'. How true that is! Have you ever experienced a situation where you think to yourself "wow what a mess I am in!", then later finding you can use that particular situation to help someone else or discover a new truth about God. Almost every time this happens something positive comes out of the mess.

Recently, the day before the activity holiday at Treloar College, my wheelchair batteries died! Not a good situation to be in before an active and busy week. The company I deal with for my chair were very good and arranged for me to borrow some batteries from another chair, but I had to go to their workshop to collect them, and I had to take my manual chair to transfer to while the batteries were being moved. I got to the workshop having had help getting my manual chair into my car, my batteries were changed very quickly, and the mechanic helped me to load the manual chair back into the car! I then drove straight to the holiday.

I was late arriving (everyone else got there before me) but my car was emptied for me and my manual chair was taken inside. I hoped I wouldn't need to use it during the week. However, on the first day a gentleman had a fall and from that moment on he used my manual chair for the whole week! God knew we were going to need the chair, and



Jen in her repaired chair at Treloar

used my failing batteries and the 'mess' I was obviously in to bring about a testimony to His goodness and amazing grace.

God will sort out your mess to become a message, and the test you are going through to become a testimony – what an amazing God we have.

## Speaking Out

In recent weeks TTR staff and volunteers have been invited to represent the charity and speak to a wide range of groups – varying from students at a Christian Union conference, to senior pastors from a London-wide church network. We've also been on the Premier radio breakfast show to talk about church inclusion, and to a Gospel Concert to talk about Wheels for the World.

Through each of these God-given opportunities we were able to share the message of God's love for disabled

people. Would your church or group welcome a visit from one of the team? Please do get in touch. Alternatively, could you take a step of faith and seek the opportunity to approach a local group and present your personal experience of disability and/or Through the Roof? We can support you by providing leaflets, donation forms and a powerpoint presentation or DVD – whatever you need.

# Retreats and Holidays in 2019

We heard from one new holidaymaker, Julie, who hasn't been on holiday for 8 years because she couldn't get the support she needed. Our amazing team of volunteers at Babbacombe were able to give her a memorable break, and she told us 'I've loved all of it'.

Booking is now open for next year's retreats and holidays! Owing to popular demand, we're hoping to secure a second holiday at Center Parcs, probably in September – full details to follow. Please be aware that places on all the breaks get filled rapidly, so if you are interested in joining us, do get in touch as soon as possible.



Brochures of 2019 are available now

## HOLIDAYS

<b>Center Parcs (Nottingham)</b> 4 nights	10 – 14 June	£425
<b>Treloar's (Activity holiday – Hampshire)</b> 5 night	29 July – 3 August	£570
<b>Brunel Manor (Coastal holiday – Devon)</b> 7 nights	16 – 23 September	£775

## RETREATS

<b>Refreshment week (Brunel Manor, Torquay)</b> 4 nights	15 - 19 April	£333
<b>Time out with God (High Leigh, Hoddesden)</b> 2 nights	23 – 25 August	£200

For the holidays please contact: [Margaret@throughtheroof.org](mailto:Margaret@throughtheroof.org) and for the retreats contact: [Jenny@throughtheroof.org](mailto:Jenny@throughtheroof.org), or phone the office on **01372 749955** to request an application form.



Friends old and new on our accessible holidays

## Out and About This Summer

Through the Roof had a busy summer, getting out there at some of the conferences and festivals to make our work known. The response has been encouraging, with many new people signing up as Roofbreakers, or volunteering on our overseas mission trips and holidays.

Over the August bank holiday weekend, we were at ONE Event in Lincoln, talking about our work to those who visited our stand in the Expo. Ros once again enjoyed going and joining in the accessible worship organised by Livability.

For the fourth year in a row, we had the privilege of being invited to UCCF Forum, to talk to this year's university CU leaders about the mission field on their doorstep in the presence of 280,000 disabled students in our UK universities. It was great to see the enthusiasm and commitment of the students who attended this session, and to hear them expressing God's heart for seeing everyone included and accepted as equals in the Kingdom of God.

We were at the Methodist Conference at Nottingham University. It was good to speak to so many Methodist ministers, and to see those in charge of circuits and districts take multiple copies of our literature to distribute among the churches in their care. Ros was glad to be joined by Tarnia, one of our Roofbreakers. When describing the role of a Roofbreaker, Tarnia explained that she avoided phrases like "disability champion" or "disability advocate", preferring to explain Roofbreaking as being an accessibility champion. She reasoned that we all have accessibility needs of some sort, whether or not we class ourselves as having a disability or additional needs. It may be a natural introversion, or being unfamiliar with church practice, and we need to be aware of all of these needs in our work.

If you're a Roofbreaker, and you'd like to be part of our future conference, exhibitions, or speaking work, please do get in touch. We'd love to have you along.

# Bringing Life to Families in Kenya

## Wheels for the World, Elburgon 2018

57% of mothers in Kenya have been pressured to kill their disabled child (according to a report by Disability Rights International) so our Wheels team were literally helping families to overcome death on their recent trip to rural Kenya.

In a society that doesn't want disabled people there are horrific stories of family members who tell the mother to put acid in their child's food to end their life.

Through our team and your support we were able to help people like 32 year old Irene, who contracted polio when she was 4, was abandoned by her mother and brought up in an orphanage. She has a 6 year old daughter and fosters two more children with some



Irene in her carefully fitted chair

help from friends. She said she was inspired by her experiences to help other children get a better start in life. She had to be carried to the centre but proudly left in a wheelchair. As a result of her polio she had severe weakness of her right side and some weakness in her left arm, but was able to self-propel herself slowly. Fortunately, we were able to supply a fitted cushion, which will



Irene being carried in to the distribution

help with her spine discomfort, and a chair with desk arms to help her work from home and support the family she cares for.

The team also helped Josephine, who had polio at the age of 12, and is now 50. Following a three hour journey to the distribution, she rose from her seat, and turning over and pushing with her arms, struggled up onto her callipers; then with one crutch she lumbered across the dusty road to the site. Though her callipers helped to keep her knees straight, her walking was laboured.

Unlike most children with a disability in Kenya, she attended school. She had later married and had children, but was soon left to bring them up on her own. She needed the callipers to manoeuvre herself into the wheelchair, but once seated, she was able to propel the chair without much pain or effort. She was very pleased with the wheelchair, as it will help her run her tailoring business, and support her family.

In total 187 disabled people were registered, and we distributed 117 wheelchairs, 4 buggies, 60 crutches, 2 walking frames, and 166 bibles.

Thank you for your support – it makes all this life-changing work possible. Please consider donating (at [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org)) to support future trips, or take a look at the opportunities to volunteer below.

## Opportunities to Change Lives

### Wheels for the World

If you would like to know how you could also be involved, please contact [Shaun@throughtheroof.org](mailto:Shaun@throughtheroof.org). Besides experienced therapists to fit wheelchairs, and techies to adjust them, we need people with administration, photographic, and pastoral skills. Get in touch, and join us on one of these trips...

**Kenya (Eldoret/Kimililli):** – 6th – 16th February 2019

**Uganda (Sudanese refugee camp on the northern border):** 5th – 15th June 2019

**Tanzania (Mwanza):** 1st – 11th October 2019

### Churches Inc.

We would like volunteers who are Bible teachers and have of experience of working with people with all kinds of disabilities to apply for our Churches Inc. teams. Please also contact Shaun to find out more.

**Kosovo:** 2nd – 12th April 2019

**Ukraine (Ternopil):** 6th – 16th August 2019

**Tanzania (Mwanza):** 1st – 11th October 2019



# Your Gift Makes a Difference



Help spread  
God's  
love and  
acceptance  
to disabled  
people  
around the  
world.

Guests treasure the atmosphere on love and acceptance our teams create on our holidays and retreats

**You could help Through the Roof to bring a message of inclusion that changes the lives of whole families.**

Visit [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org)  
to find out more about our other life-changing work.

**Please return this form to:**

Through the Roof, Alpha House, Alpha Place,  
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01372 749955 [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org)



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- Tick here to receive our Vital Link newsletter by email
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## Gift Aid

Gift Aid enables us to make your gift go further without any additional cost to you.

I would like Through the Roof to treat as Gift Aid donations\* all qualifying gifts of money made:

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Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.

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It is not possible for me to Gift Aid my donations.

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