

Whitefield Times

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SHE WAS ON THE 'FRONTLINE' OF HISTORY

Christine was in her teens with a fledgling faith when she thought of serving God overseas. That idea would take her to the frontline of modern history.

'My church was mission-minded,' she recalled, 'and I used to pray about where I could go.' But over the years, the call dragged its feet: 'I'd almost come to the conclusion that God didn't want me to go'.

She felt guided towards Cyprus, but doubted it could be a genuine call. 'People don't get called to serve on a Mediterranean island,' Christine laughed, 'but I discovered Cyprus was a centre for Christian work in the region.' It became her launchpad to the Middle East.

After Bible college, Christine moved to Egypt in 1988 to study Arabic, and the opportunity came to work for a media

ministry. Later she served with a community development ministry under the Egyptian Church.

In 2011 Christine found herself amid the 'Arab Spring' uprisings. The British embassy closed. Some missionaries were evacuated. Local militia guarded the buildings. The whole event was on BBC news. 'We were all wondering what was going to happen,' she said.

Despite that unrest, she always felt accepted by the local people. 'Seeing the transformation in people's lives – both spiritual and economic – was the most exciting thing,' she said of her work.

It was hard to leave when the time came to retire in 2017. 'I left my heart in the Middle East,' Christine reflected.



Christine helps a colleague in her office (Christine asked us not to use her own full name)

She was able to buy a flat in Sussex, where she wanted to retire. This was made possible with help from the Whitefield Christian Trust and her church – along with the sale of a property. 'It ticked all my boxes,' she said.

'Fourteen months after I returned to the UK, I received the keys,' said Christine. 'Now I'm thoroughly enjoying living there.' 🏠

RIDING FREE INTO A NEW FUTURE

A pony ride through Lesotho – 'kingdom of the sky' – is like something out of a cowboy film. Trekkers guide you down vast canyons and creeks, towards stunning peaks and magical waterfalls.

This was routine for nurse and midwife Sue Merriman. She would arrive by Cessna plane – thanks to Mission Aviation Fellowship – and be met by someone with a horse!

'Up and down these huge mountains we'd go,' Sue recalled, 'I was glad for American style saddles, which gave you something to hold onto!' Sue would visit various team members who lived in scattered villages.

Brought up in Pembroke, West Wales, Sue trained in Cardiff for a midwifery career in



Lesotho mountain village

the 60s. She went on to well-paid work for a German drug company. Then one day Sue decided there was something more than the corporate medical world. 'I've had orders from a higher authority,' she told her boss.

Sue spent nearly 40 years in Africa. She went to a clinic in South Africa in 1971

to work as a nurse, then studied at Bible college from 1978-80. Sue served as matron of Kapsowar Hospital in Kenya – involved in nursing and midwifery for 14 years – and worked in Lesotho as a team leader for another 14 years.

Her epic work schedule came to an end. 'Two years before I was due to retire, I had no idea where I was going to live,' she said. 'I didn't have much funding to buy anything, really.'

A friend suggested she connect with Whitefield Christian Trust. By combining her resources with the Trust's, Sue acquired a two-bedroom house in her beloved Pembroke. 🏠

'ADVENTURE' COUPLE COME HOME



Christine and Roger Pook have found their ideal home in Sussex

An aid convoy to Romania was meant to be their 'one big adventure' before returning to normality. But Sussex couple Roger and Christine Pook ended up living and working in Eastern Europe.

That first trip in 1991 saw them using car and caravan as a 'comfort station' for a fleet of Transits. They returned several times to Romania with aid or to help a Baptist church to respond to crisis pregnancies.

Christine was a health visitor. Roger spoke French and Russian. They started prayer

ministry training with Ellel Ministries. The couple trained church members in counselling women, and the Romanian church gave generously to the work. 'Many babies were saved,' said the Pooks.

'In 1994 we were called to live and serve full-time in Eastern Europe,' the couple recalled. 'In January 1996 we set out for Hungary with a secondhand Jeep Cherokee and a well-laden caravan.'

They found themselves teaching across Central and Eastern Europe – and beyond Siberia! By 2003 they realised their calling



The Pooks have been working with teams across Europe

was permanent. Selling their Sussex home, they bought a small house near Ellel Ministries' Hungarian base. The Pooks set up ministry teams and trained teachers.

Approaching their 70s, the couple started to think about returning to the UK. But selling their Hungarian house wouldn't buy a property back home.

They see it as a 'miracle' that a friend and supporter in the UK wanted to buy their Hungarian house, and Whitefield Christian Trust offered to help with housing in England.

The Pooks found an ideal flat in their beloved Sussex. 'Finally at 74 – after 21 years in Hungary and a year of waiting – we were able to move into our new home,' they said.

They still teach in other countries. 'But thanks to Whitefield Christian Trust, we can now look forward to a peaceful time until we're called on to higher service.' 🏠

WHERE THERE'S A WILL...

...there is a way to help others. You can leave a lasting statement in your final farewell.

In fact, writing your will is one of the most important things you'll ever do. It's easier than you think, but it's essential to get some expert help with it.

Here's a few things to think about:

- see a solicitor, who will help you word your will correctly;
- protect your assets and help reduce the impact on loved ones;
- consider leaving a gift to the Whitefield Christian Trust.

You can make sure you don't leave a burden on the loved ones you leave behind. You can also make sure you leave a gift that will empower a charity like the Whitefield Christian Trust.

Legacies – big and small – are vital for charities like us. These gifts enable us to continue our important work. Help us to find housing for retiring Christian workers and missionaries.

Where there's a will, there's a way. Let's work together on it. 🏠

www.whitefieldchristiantrust.co.uk



Whitefield Christian Trust, Flat 6 Longmead Court, 29 Langstone Road, Havant, PO9 1RB

contact@whitefieldchristiantrust.co.uk www.whitefieldchristiantrust.co.uk

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Editorial Production Clive Price Media Design Chris Gander www.cgda.co.uk