



## From Norfolk to Northampton...via London

When we first moved to Moulton there were two things that I couldn't believe. Firstly, how many people from Moulton went on holiday to Cromer, and secondly the church's weekend away that year was going to be 5 minutes from my parent's house in Cromer! I think I qualify to call myself a Norfolk lass as I spent most of my childhood in Cromer. It was a wonderful place to grow up, but an even better place to escape to from London which is where I ended up at 18 doing my nurse training. To say London was a bit of a shock would be an understatement. To say nursing was easy was another! I kept British Telecom in business as every 8 weeks, when we changed wards, I would be on the phone to my parents saying "I'll never make a nurse!" But I did qualify and became a staff nurse on a care of the elderly ward and then a female surgery ward. 1991 was a busy year with romance starting on the snowy ski slopes, then goodbye to nursing with two months inter-railing round Europe followed by 8 weeks working with a Missionary in Sri Lanka. In the Autumn I started a Physiology Degree at Kings College in London. Thankfully absence made the heart grow fonder and the romance at the beginning of the year became marriage two years later! Following my degree I had the opportunity to do a PhD at Great Ormond Street Hospital. If you want to know what I researched for 3 years you will have to ask me... the only clue I will give is "Winnie the Pooh"! To bring London to a welcome close I spent one more year doing the Cornhill Bible Training Course before coming to Moulton with Neil where life really began!

So that's Norfolk to Northampton via London. But really that's only half the story. Woven through those 39 years (perhaps 40 by the time you read this!) was the influence of God in my life. I am so grateful to my dad and mum for the Christian home they brought me up in. From an early age I learnt about a God who loves me. But I also learnt that there was a problem. That God was perfect and I wasn't. The wrong things I did were like a barrier stopping me being friends with a holy God. I tried being 'gooder' but it never seemed to last. The fantastic news came when I learnt about a man who was good enough, perfect in fact, called Jesus. God sent Jesus to earth so he could swap places with me and die on a cross for all the wrong I'd done. Putting my trust in what Jesus did for me on the cross meant I could now be friends with God. I accepted these truths for myself and became a Christian. I'd grown up with all this, so it seemed second nature to me. But God is so amazing and through subsequent events in my life, God has confirmed to me without a shadow of doubt that He does exist, is completely trustworthy and the Bible is how we can find out more about Him. My nursing days showed me it was not enough for my parents to bring me up as a Christian. I had to decide whether I believed it for myself. So Sunday mornings the choice was - a nice long lie in or go to church. God helped me choose church. Sri Lanka showed me that when everything and everyone else fails and deserts you God doesn't. He is faithful and big enough to deal with our biggest problems - even falling out with the Missionary who you are working with and are completely dependant on. Marriage to Neil was a definite answer to prayer and had God stamped all over it. Moving to Moulton, well Neil and I had never heard of Moulton but we found it, we talked to Peter the Vicar and we went home to London! In London we found that one of our good friends was godfather to Peters' children and my father in law knew Peter as well. So God led us back to Moulton this time to stay and serve Him. At the very heart of Christianity is a personal relationship with Jesus. Four years later serving God as a MYF leader, it took one of the MYF members to remind me of this truth. In a nut shell she read her Bible every day and I didn't, even though I had tried so hard too. I didn't want to and couldn't carry on living a lie. I prayed "God will you help me for 3 days to read my Bible each morning" Two things happened. First I got up as usual the next morning but that morning I read my Bible yipeeeeeeee! Secondly my father-in-law heard about my prayer and volunteered to ring me at 6.45am every morning to get me out of bed (and still does 3 years later!). I can honestly say that reading my Bible every day has changed my relationship with God. It has become my lifeline to a living relationship with an amazing God. I couldn't live without those quiet moments reading the Bible and committing each day to God in prayer. I certainly couldn't do my current job as women's worker without it! So from Norfolk to Northampton via London with God in the driving seat.

Rachel Menon