

TRIBUTE



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# A memorial to a man who worked for peace

The family of a Norwich vicar who died in Bethlehem are planning a living memorial to his work. They hope to bring two students from a Bethlehem refugee camp to study in Norwich, continuing the work of the Rev Canon Dr John Aves, vicar of St Giles.

John died in Bethlehem in January 2004, a fortnight before he was due to return home from a three-month sabbatical promoting peace in Palestine.

He was just 52 when he died from a heart attack, and had planned to raise more money to help the Palestinian refugees he had been living alongside.

The £60,000 memorial project is being run by John's widow Anne and the couple's sons, Ben and Edmund, and is also backed by the Bishop of Norwich, who called John "one of our finest priests", plus several local churches and organisations.

Two youngsters from the Dheisheh Refugee Camp in Bethlehem will be funded through a three-year degree at the University of East Anglia - probably in its renowned development studies department. Norwich students

A unique and fitting memorial to a Norwich vicar who died working with refugees in Bethlehem is being created by his wife. **ROWAN MANTELL** reports.

should also get the chance to visit the refugee camp.

Anne, who is acting head of business and computing at Norwich City College, visited the Bethlehem camp with Ben and Edmund earlier this year.

She said: "Our ideas were enthusiastically embraced by them. They share the view that education is a way of giving hope and also the means by which fundamentalism will be rejected by the young people."

John had been working with a Quaker organisation dedicated to finding a peaceful solution to the enmity between Palestine and Israel.

In his final letter home, written from Bethlehem the day before he died, John said he was "returning with hope", and spoke of finding Christ not just in the holy places "but

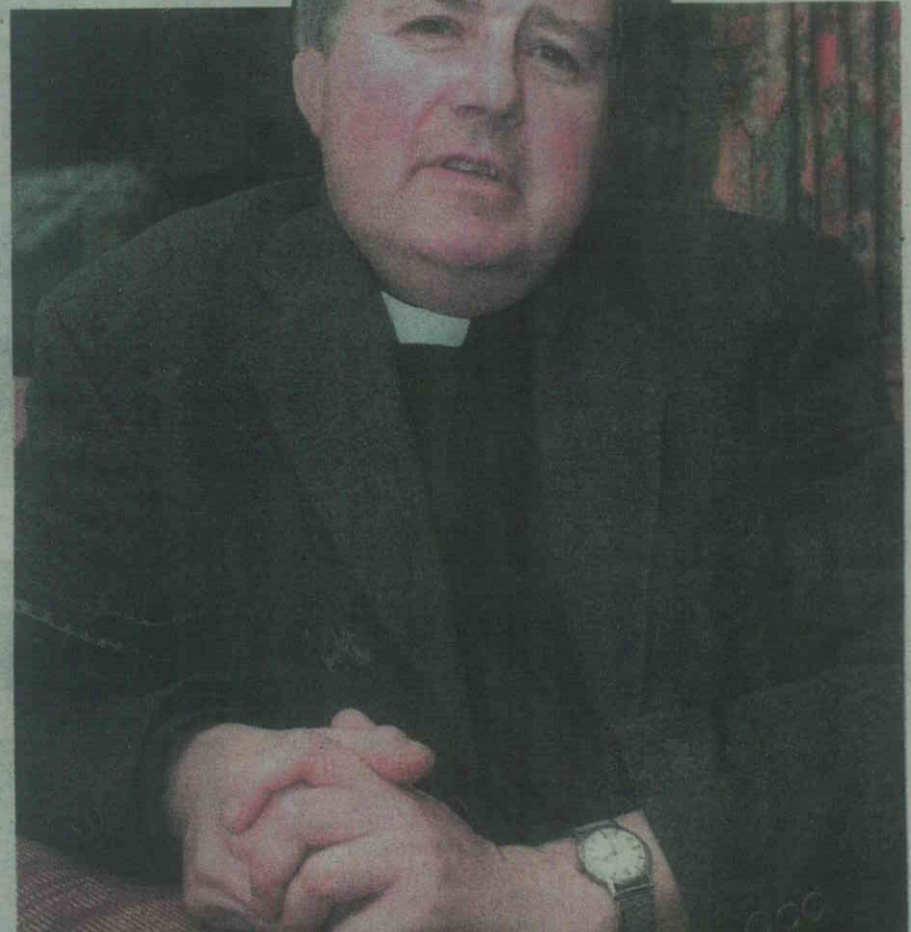
also in the countless stories of courage and dignity".

Anne, Ben and Edmund will be giving a talk about the project and their visit to the Dheisheh Camp on Friday June 8, at 7pm at the Colney Wood Burial Park just outside Norwich.

Other speakers include Palestinian asylum seeker Hashim Hassan, who found sanctuary in Norwich with his family, and John Drake of Norwich YMCA who will tell guests about the YMCA's work in Palestine.

Entry is free but there will be a retiring collection in aid of the memorial project. Places can be reserved by calling 01603 773539.

→ To find out more or support the memorial project, contact Anne Aves on [AAVES@ccn.ac.uk](mailto:AAVES@ccn.ac.uk)



Memorial fund: John Aves died in Bethlehem in January 2004, shortly before he was due to return home. Now his family are setting up a memorial fund to continue the good work he was involved in while out in Palestine.

## Asylum seeker's new life in the city



Hashim Hassan arrived in Norwich as an asylum seeker after fleeing from the West Bank in Palestine.

"The situation there was very bad," he said. "I was going to be killed."

He escaped the militia with his wife and one of their four children, four years ago.

Since then he has built a new life in Norwich, where he now works as a car park attendant.

His other three children were able to flee to Norwich later and, as well as supporting the family, Hashim has just begun a computing course.

As a child in occupied Palestine he was forced to leave school aged just seven, but has always longed to study and is delighted that the Aves family want to continue John's work with refugees - particularly

because the memorial project will help young Palestinians gain university degrees.

Hashim, pictured, has taught himself English and two weeks ago realised his dream of going back to school - on a computing course.

Eventually, he hopes to work in information technology. He has already taught himself English. He said: "Coming to Norwich to learn will be very good for the students because the people here are so nice. I didn't have the opportunity to study but they will be able to be whatever they like."

The two refugee students brought here in memory of John Aves will also become temporary members of Norwich's tiny Palestinian community. About 10 families live here, several of them

originally asylum seekers.

There are also already a few Palestinian students in the city.

