

# Planting Papers

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The magazine of the '1.3.6.  
Group' for the network of  
Baptist Church Planters  
(formerly BACUP)



## **Planting Papers Issue no. 9**

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## Editorial

### *Goodbye and Hello !*

As we say 'goodbye' to the 1.3.6. Group, we say 'hello' to something new that God is doing. This final issue of the 'Planting Papers' brings with it the news that the Baptist Union Mission Department has just this year established a new Church Planting Strategy Task Group. Superceding the 1.3.6. Group, the new Task Force will aim to continue to encourage and support Baptist churches involved in mission through church planting and to envision other Baptist churches that could be church planting.

Derek Tidball has commented that the 1.3.6. Group (formerly BACUP), "has exercised a formative influence on the denomination's thinking". In this respect this church planting network, which was formed in 1990, has achieved its aim. Church Planting is now not only on the agenda, not only is it part of the National Mission Strategy, but across the denomination there is wider experience and deeper understanding of this mission method.

Now however, something more is needed to develop the denominations thinking and experience at this time. The new Church Planting Strategy Task Group will be able to fulfil a much wider and deeper role than 1.3.6. was able to achieve.

Two aspects of this last 'Planting Papers' mailing point to signs of greater maturity concerning church planting.

Firstly, the 'Digging Deeper' Consultation in July this year will provide a great opportunity to explore some key issues in depth, drawing on the collective experience of those present. A leaflet and booking form are enclosed.

Secondly, this issue gives a taste of the most recent research on the subject of church planting. Last year, Rev John Roberts sent questionnaires to a range of church planting situations in the Southern Baptist Association and in part of the Berkshire Association. With John's permission, 'Planting Papers' has reproduced one of the resulting case studies and also the conclusions he drew from his research.

This year, Rev John Allan, minister of Redcar Baptist Church, has completed his research into 55 church plants in the north of England. The B.U. Mission Department is hoping to publish the research in a booklet later in the year.

These are exciting times. The Spirit of God is prompting churches across

our land to take his lead and establish new churches in order to help reach a new generation. However, this last issue of 'Planting Papers' also sounds a warning note: the challenge and cost involved in church planting is high, it cannot be engaged in lightly.

Let us pray that as the new Church Planting Strategy Task Group takes up its role, our denomination as a whole may face the challenges and take up the opportunities presented by the experience of church planting.

*Colin Cartwright, Editor and Student Minister of Congleton Baptist Church, Cheshire*

# The Human Cost of New Churches

*by Brian Radcliffe*

“How does your garden grow?” is a question heard across District and Association meetings. Area Superintendents, ministerial students and deacons echo the call as church planting is promoted to a position high on the agenda. We are ‘preparing the ground’ of our local mission ‘field’ for the ‘strawberry runners’ to ‘take root’. Given time we shall see the ‘fruit’. A certain parable of Jesus assumes great importance as we lean on the spade, scratch our heads and intone, “The answer lies in the soil”.

Not surprisingly, such horticultural language is somewhat impersonal. To my knowledge, the strawberry along with the turnip and the oak tree, feels no pain, tension or cost. Neither does it bounce with exuberance and pleasure. I would suggest that other language may more vividly portray the human experience of starting a new church. The New Zealand Baptist Union encourages us to paint a different picture. In the pamphlet, ‘The Life Cycle of Reproducing Churches’ (Bruce Patrick, Home Mission Director) we are introduced to the seven major phases of a new church’s development: conception, pre-natal, birth, infancy, adolescence, maturity, reproduction.

As a mother church we have lived through the first four phases with our offspring, and are now exploring the teenage years.

What has been the cost of childbearing ?

Ask a mother what it costs her to have a baby and to nurture that child. The range of replies will be extensive. There is the physical cost of the discomfort, nausea during the earlier months of pregnancy, the real pain of childbirth itself and the ongoing legacy of stretch marks and pelvic shifts, not to mention hair loss and piles!

There is the loss of freedom as the child’s needs take priority over social life and possibly career. This may lead to a sense of loss of identity and self worth and to the pressure to fulfil a host of expectations which are never fully compatible. The arrival of a first child imposes upon the previously exclusive relationship of husband and wife as both now share themselves with another. Add to all this the cost financially and the total becomes not insignificant.

As a mother church we too have experienced the cost, particularly in three areas:

## 1. Limiting our Freedom

It is a major exercise to start a new church. It draws on resources of finance and time, of mental, emotional and spiritual energy from both the church and its staff. Basic infrastructures (leadership teams, rotas, administrative and

financial organisation) are doubled soon after conception. The prayer and envisioning life of the church is concentrated on uncharted territory with all its unexpected occurrences.

For a large church with a surplus of gifted leaders and workers this may have little effect. For us, with a membership of a little over 100 and a leadership team operating on 75 % capacity, it necessitated some limiting of focus. We would successfully accomplish only one major project at a time.

Having agreed at the church meeting that the new church was to have top priority, we discovered that the resulting, albeit temporary, sacrifice of other visions was not easily accepted. The sidelining of potentially exciting projects was seen as the beginning of a spiritual decline. Such projects were, of course, always highly 'spiritual' areas: healing ministry, our prayer groups, our worship life.

Our already weak ecumenical involvement was further curtailed. The non-appearance of church leaders at house groups and some services was criticised. The quality of the preaching ministry was questioned. And naturally, in the melee of activity, there were times when the signs of last minute preparation were more than apparent.

Most significant however has been the effect of this prioritisation on the 25 % of today's church family who have joined 'mother' since the conception of the new church. How does one relate to a step child? A few have rejected the church, claiming that it is not part of God's design. Some have cherished and nurtured the vision. Most however have found it difficult to identify closely with their offspring. In their enthusiasm for the seeds of other opportunities there have been times of tension. To encourage a sense of vision and also to prioritise, in order to prevent diversion from the primary task, has been a difficult skill to learn. Like most mothers we have had our off days when frustration has given rise to criticism and anger.

## **2. Drifting Relationships**

The birth of a baby severely restricts a couple's social life, both with each other and with their friends. The child is dependent on the parents and needs time and attention, demands which are not necessarily made at routine hours. It is very easy to lose touch, to hesitate in the little words, actions and gestures which cement a relationship. Before long the words "I never realised you'd...." are heard. "We're not as close as we used to be" becomes "I don't feel cared for".

We experienced a sudden spate of complaints about our pastoral care. There was a review both of overall principles and the effectiveness of our structures. Some felt that baby was receiving more than its fair share of specialist attention. Others said we had simply ceased to care about each other. Baby meanwhile tottered along, learning its way in the world and picking up

more than its fair share of bruises, each one of which needed care.

As the new church began to meet on a Sunday, monthly, twice monthly, then finally weekly, the sense of separation has grown. Some have been forced to make a choice between two sets of relationships. Members of the mother church have been sensitive to the spaces apparent in church services.

Daughter often finds herself turning for reassurance that mother is still there. Resolutions are minuted to confirm that we are underwriting the project. It will be a while yet before we all feel totally secure in the new relationships.

### **3. Fatigue**

The area of church life in which we have paid the greatest price is that of leadership. Whilst it is true that any major project exerts a cost in terms of workload, time and commitment, we have experienced something which has exceeded reasonable expectations. Whilst many up and down the country have suffered the stress of under-employment, marital crises, illness and the occasional personality clash, we have sensed a focus of such circumstances on key individuals. Birth has been surrounded by such a variety of other crises that the result has been sheer fatigue, physical, mental and spiritual. Some have left leadership positions, some have left the church. Replacements have not been swift in stepping forward.

As you can tell our experience has been one of some discomfort and even pain. We still bear the stretch marks and will for some time. A healthy diet and prescribed rest means we are beginning to recover. We still feel a strong sense of responsibility to the new church but there is now a measure of freedom to explore new visions. Revitalised housegroups are drawing the church family closer again but we're not ready just yet for any long term commitment.

Does it sound as if I'm against church planting? Do you sense a warning? I hope not. Just this last week our daughter church go married! A part-time minister was welcomed, a student at Spurgeon's College. Personally I felt a great sense of pride as 135 people stood as representatives of the church family throughout the town and county and endorsed this relationship. There was a satisfaction in looking back over two and a half years and reviewing the life that has come to be.

I have no reservations, even if I do have some regrets. Next time we'll be wiser, and more generous. There will be a next time. I believe church planting is a vital tool in evangelism, maybe one of the more effective means of motivating the local church.

BUT.... having babies is not as easy as shelling peas.

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*Rev Brian Radcliffe is Associate Minister of Macclesfield Baptist Church*

# A Challenge to the Associations

*by John Claydon*

We've heard about it! We've talked about it! Some are doing it! But how are Associations to respond to the challenge of Church Planting? It is not enough for associations to sit back and hope the keen will get on with it. If we are to be serious about reaching the nation for Christ, about establishing a Christian presence that is relevant and where people are - then associations must face their responsibility in terms of encouraging, promoting, facilitating and even actually doing Church Planting.

## **Moving In the Midlands.**

Six congregations have been planted since 1990. This, coupled with the comments of a number of people, have brought before us the importance of Church Planting and the need for the Association to think strategically about it. This was particularly highlighted at -

- ★ An Association Consultation on the Decade of Evangelism held in April 1991 which challenged the Association to further thinking, especially in terms of research, defining targets, and developing a strategy.
- ★ An Association Consultation on Church Planting in February 1992 which sought to draw people of experience and vision together to begin to discern the ways in which an association might move forward in this area.

From the Church Planting Consultation, issues relating to education, vision, training, personnel, resources and research were raised as being those of importance for developing and implementing a strategy for Church Planting. For the immediate future, the Association set itself to-

- ★ Establish a "Church Planting Group" to guide the Association in thinking strategically about Church Planting. This group is responsible to the Association's Executive Committee.
- ★ The Church Planting Group to meet with the Association's Executive Committee as soon as it is possible.
- ★ Initiate research into the area.

★ Feed comments from the consultation about the role of a missionary in regard to church planting into future discussions about staffing in the Association.

★ Set some basic policy goals-

To discover where churches have a presence in places where there is no apparent Baptist witness (ie, housegroups).

Discover the vision that is already there amongst the churches.

Establish the criteria for formulating an Association wide policy.

Seek ways of stimulating further vision and action.

Seek ways of releasing resources.

Whilst we have not been able to take action in all these areas, we have begun to follow some of them through. In particular I was able to take time to do some research into the area. Bearing in mind the association spread from South Humberside to Peterborough and from the east coast to Derbyshire this have given a broad backdrop for further investigation. In particular this gave-

★ A geographical background, including demographic features and population and housing projections in each county.

★ An indication of those towns and villages where there is no Baptist witness.

★ An overview of church statistics - looking at their geographical location, when there were founded, and recent signs of growth.

We have also established an Association Church Planting Group who have been charged with the responsibility to think strategically and report to the Association's Executive.

## **Raising The Profile**

We believe it to be essential that Church Planting is thoroughly established on people's formal and informal agendas and we have made that a priority in our thinking. To do this we have decided to-

★ Encourage prayer about Church Planting through various county prayer calenders.

★ Produce a booklet giving short accounts of plants in a way that will stimulate people and help them to be aware of possibilities for themselves.

★ Hold a Church Planting Conference to inform, instruct, widen horizons, challenge and stimulate. This was held on Saturday 29 January 1994 and considered questions like, "Why Plant Churches?", "Where Are

They Being Planted?” and “How Is It Being Done?” Speakers included Stephen Ibbotson, Harry Weatherley and Graham Licence.

- ★ Give presentations about Church Planting in various Association / County meetings.
- ★ Focus on particular areas, conducting further research into particular locations, encouraging people in a “potential planting situation” to prayerfully consider ways in which God may be leading.
- ★ Encourage churches involved in church planting to network together, so as to encourage, advise and help each other.
- ★ To continue to encourage and challenge churches about Church Planting, and to monitor developments in our Association. To encourage local churches to take initiatives, to help identify and release personnel to help in preparatory work and to consider other ways in which initiatives can be taken.

We recognise that this is just a start. We see the immediate major issue as being to raise the profile of Church Planting in people’s minds. Moving on from this will lead us as an Association developing workable and faith-stretching strategies for Church Planting. We shall have to consider other issues of setting goals, training, relationships with other churches / denominations / groups. The start has been made. We look to God to guide us forward in the work of His Kingdom.

*Rev John Claydon is Action in Mission Co-ordinator of the East Midlands Baptist Association*

# From the Sharp End

**A Case Study - drawn from John Robert's research**

## STUBBINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

Established:	9 June 1985
Leadership:	Rev D Lamb
Meeting at:	Village Hall
No of members:	45
No of attenders:	90
Sunday Services:	Morning and Evening
Hymn/Song Books:	Songs of Fellowship. OHP
Bible Version:	NIV
Music:	Guitars, Key board, Violin

Following a big housing development 12 years ago, Rev George Lindo had a vision for the area.

The church is situated on a private estate - different from Fareham in that it is an expanding village whereas Fareham is very much an established town.

It all began when George Lindo and David Taylor shared the vision they had for the area with the church at Fareham. Stubbington is a mother/daughter plant. The leadership came from Fareham, with three families who lived in the area. David Taylor, an elder at Fareham headed up the work. The original group numbered twenty four in all.

Before the church started meeting, there was some work undertaken by way of visitation, coupled with a search for a hall. The Village Hall became available and it is still the venue. It is in poor state of repair, although there are plans to try and improve the condition of the building.

As to the blessings of being without a permanent building, there is not a lot of expense. The hall is hired at the rate of #3.00 per hour. It is a very adequate Hall, adequate for their needs. However, the disadvantages include having to set the hall out every Sunday morning before the service can be held.

The work remained under the wing of Fareham until 1988. Gradually they felt the need to take more and more responsibility to support themselves. In May 1990 the church separated, Fareham gave a gift of a considerable amount of money to be used for the ministry. The church continued to grow steadily,

through evangelism and people moving into the area. It has not plateaued. They have lost some people who have moved away - it is a naval area, and therefore has something of a mobile population. The church lost about ten of the original group by reason of their employment.

When considering how people came to be a part of the church, all four suggested by the questionnaire apply: The pioneer group, transfer from elsewhere, lapsed Christians who have been restored and conversion growth.

The original age range was between 30s' and 60s'. Now there have some unchurched children and 60 young people.

The activities run by the church are as follows:

Sunday Services both Morning and Evening.

Sunday School of 25 - 30 children (members children)

Crusader Groups meet: Monday evening - 11 - 16's 20 in number

7 - 11's 25 in number.

The Unicorn Club meets on Tuesdays - 18 in number

There are three Housegroups. Two morning meetings  
(Meeting alternate weeks):

A Bible Study and prayer group for ladies

A group designed for evangelistic outreach

Mother and Toddlers Group.

There are no casualties among the original pioneer group.

The style of worship is designated: Relaxed Baptist/Charismatic. It does not differ from the mother church. In other respects the church is developing in a different way to the mother church.

The fellowship is seeking to reach out to everybody and anybody. A strategy for evangelism has been devised for the months leading up to the opening of the new church. This began at the end of August when a visitation of the area was carried out with a questionnaire and using the "Down your street" method.

Mothers & Toddlers is seen as a bridge building exercise. There is also to be one evangelistic thrust a month from each of the various groups in the church. Each group will take a different month as it responsibility.

Having called a full time Minister, the Church is under the leadership of the Rev D Lamb with David Taylor, an Elder. It is financially self-supporting.

The strong points in the plant were:

The commitment shown by the people who came. It was real and strong.

Everybody shared the vision for the area.

The group knew what they wanted and were concerned to see it happen.

They were prepared to follow the leading which God gave and were open to discover and then implement such a leading.

As to the mistakes - it is difficult to see at this distance from the beginning. Certainly the irregularity of ministry, from different people up front every week, made identification with the Fellowship difficult.

The key lessons are suggested as:

Being able to keep short accounts with each other.

Communication is essential - with explanations of the thinking behind decisions that were taken.

Congregational rather than church meetings were held, so everybody could be included in what was going on.

A foundation Course is important - people coming to the church can see what the church was about, and what is expected of them.

It was the purpose of the Church from the outset to get into the Community and to find ways of reaching people. Several children's missions were held each concluding with a special meeting for parents at the end. There has been no drift from the original purpose, it still remains church policy.

The church does not envisage planting at the present time.

The church has been constituted in its own right. It is a member of both the Southern Baptist Association and the Baptist Union. There is no Home Mission support.

The Association has been very helpful. The Association Secretary has helped and encouraged in every way. The church will be in receipt of a grant from the Southern Baptist Association "New Churches Appeal" - to help with the payment of the new building. On the 29th of January this year, the church celebrated the opening and dedication of its new building which can seat between 100 and 150 people.

The mother church has recovered - and gone on to further planting since the separation.

# **Church Planting Interviews in the Southern and Berkshire Associations - Looking Back!**

*by John Roberts*

It is impossible to legislate for Church Planting. Information from various planting situations can be helpful, encouraging, but each one is different. Church Plants are very individual both in procedure and character.

## **Beginnings and Launches**

They are individual as to their beginnings. They can begin through the vision of just one individual, such as at Wilton, or that of the Church at Fareham which has resulted in plants at both Stubbington and North Fareham. In some instances the Association, seeing the need in a particular area, takes the lead along with local Churches, such as at Locks Heath.

They are also individual in the way in which they get started. Who would have thought that the vision of one man, an elder in a Reformed Church in Salisbury, would have resulted in planting a Church that would become part of Baptist life, as happened at Wilton. The North Fareham plant was the result of a wider policy on the part of the church at Fareham, which they hope will result in two more plants in that area before 1997. At Locks Heath the Association placed a minister in the area, using a United Reformed Church which was very much in decline, as the starting point. Another church plant as a direct result of a church seeking to meet a need was Thatcham, Newbury Baptist Church being the mother Church in that instance. Horndean Baptist Church was the result of a vision by a group of individuals, members at Waterlooville Baptist Church who lived in the Horndean area and had a burden for the immediate locality where they were living.

If the initiatives were different, so too were the ways by which the work actually began in a public way. Horndean confess to simply moving into the area with very little background preparation. In Wilton, a redundant Town hall had been purchased with much hard work to prepare it for use, along with prayer, and other preparatory work over a period of nine months, then they began their worship services one Sunday setting out thirty places to find they were all taken! At Canford Heath the story is again different. Two attempts

were made before that work commenced. The first got no further than the talking stage. Later the idea was revived as a proposal to a Church Meeting in April 1991 and after much preparation the work commenced in January 1992. It began with all the resources of a fully established church behind it. The work at Kings Way Andover, the vision of two families began under very difficult circumstances, the Estate being a London overspill Estate, all the problems of the inner city were to be found, and with no help from outside as far as the town itself was concerned, it began in a private home for a period of six months and then moved into a Community Centre where they were also provided with office space. As John Bolton said they are very vulnerable but believe they are where the Lord wants them to be and they are pressing on with the work. In contrast to that, some churches found it easy to become established and growth in every way has been experienced - such as at Locks Heath, Thatcham and Amesbury.

## **Buildings**

Some Churches have proceeded to establish themselves in their own premises, as at Thatcham and Locks Heath. Stubbington are now in the midst of a building programme hoping to have the Church open before Christmas 1993. Amesbury are going ahead with their building plans, with their sights set on the Summer of 1994 for completion. Dibden are also progressing in that direction since receiving planning permission earlier in the summer. Some churches have no intention of erecting buildings or even becoming separate Fellowships from the mother church. This is usually part of the mother church's policy such as at Talbot Community Church, Parkstone, and Canford Heath, where there is no site available anyway. This is true also of North Fareham, where the policy of the Church in Fareham is to plant Fellowships which remain part of the mother church.

## **Resurrections**

In two instances, the projects were not entirely a new work in their own areas. At Horton Heath an old Baptist Fellowship was very much in decline and the building very dangerous and not safe to use. The plant there is of the "Resurrection" variety, having moved out of the old church building into the local Community hall. The other is again very different. It is the Church at Basingstoke. There is a long history of Baptist witness in the town which came to an end in 1970. The church having developed along charismatic lines, left the Baptist fold and purchased the church and the manse. In 1981 work began to restore a Baptist witness in the town, which has resulted in a flourishing work, helped financially by the money from the sale of the previous buildings and with practical help and support from the Berkshire Association. This church has gone on to plant a Fellowship in North Basingstoke and are hopeful of seeing that work develop in the future.

## Useful Advice

Some very useful advice has come from the various churches which should be helpful to others who are seeking to embark on such work. This is recorded in the various reports of the churches. Although careful preparation is seen to be essential before any public work begins, in some cases, where that work emerged quickly and with little background preparation, they seem to have been able to get off the ground and become established. One word of warning that comes, however, is that it is vital to state from the outset the denominational direction the plant intends to take. One or two churches which failed to do this have encountered problems later, though happily these problems were resolved.

## Reading and Study

Except in one or two cases, Fareham in particular, very little reading or study seems to have been done by way of preparation. John Bolton confessed to a little study at College but particularly to the use of the book by Shenk and Stutzman: "Creating Communities of the Kingdom" and to the challenge issued in its introduction (page 12):

1. Should everyone in your community have the opportunity to say "yes" to Jesus?
2. Has everyone in your community been introduced to Jesus with sufficient clarity and attractiveness that he or she can say "yes" to Him?
3. Is your congregation making sure that everyone in your community is having the opportunity to say "yes" to Jesus?
4. Is your congregation helping to share the gospel with at least some other communities including some of the 16,000 groups of people around the world who have never heard the gospel?

## Prayer and God's Grace

Two words figured in the interviews. One was prayer. So vital at every state of church plant development both before and after the work commences.

The other was 'grace'. This came up as an objection to the use of the word 'success' - question 26. How do you measure 'success'? Humanly speaking very few of the churches visited could be regarded as successful! What about Kings Way, at Andover? A difficult, if not a struggling situation in some ways, yet they believe they are where the Lord wants them to be and are getting on with the work.

What about Twyford in the Berkshire Association? A Church that has problems, which could lead to a very serious situation for the Church. Happily since the interview, decisions have been taken, that may well help that church forward into the future and enable it to become established.

The question does give the impression that church plants, having got off the ground, are successful. Experience seems to suggest otherwise. The word was also objected to in another way. The work of any church is 'by the grace of God'. By grace the work begins, God gives the vision, reveals the need, provides the way forward, He sustains the work as it begins to unfold and develop. Success could imply glory to man and his efforts - grace speaks of giving the glory to God, to whom alone it is due. That God is at work in each of these new areas, is evident from the way each one has progressed. Every one is different. There is variety. God is the God of variety. There is no stereotype but we can rejoice in what God is doing and pray that His work will become even more evident in the unreached areas of our Associations, as this century draws to a close.

## **An Ongoing Story**

On the human level one other thing comes through these reports and that is the important role played by the Area Superintendent and Association officers in giving their time and interest to encourage and support the work. Only one church claimed they had not had such support and then in the next breath said, "but we have not sought it"!

How different can you be! Yet each report is a record of God's activity, through his people whom he has called and equipped for the purpose of establishing churches in those parts of the Southern Area where as yet no witness to the gospel exists. There are many more plants, not all could be visited! Many more are clearly needed. We can only pray that God will give the vision to others and raise up those who will get involved as these churches and people have done, that this will be an ongoing story, and the glory will be given to God and to him alone.

*Rev John Roberts is minister of New Milton Baptist Church, Hampshire*

## From the Editors

### Why 1.3.6. ?

1.3.6. in itself implies a growing sequence of numbers appropriate for the multiplication of churches. But the real significance is found in 1 Corinthians 3:6. Paul writes: **“I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth”** (RSV).

Thus the title ‘1.3.6.’ serves to remind us that, despite all our human efforts and diligence, we are still totally dependent on God himself for success in church planting.

### 1.3.6. Executive:

- Gerry Barlow (Dibden Purlieu, Hants.)
- Jon Bush (Herne Bay, Kent)
- Colin Cartwright (Congleton, Cheshire)
- Steve Hill (Isle of Dogs, London)
- Steve Ibbotson (Moortown, Leeds)
- Geoff Reynolds (Southern Area Superintendent)
- Derek Tidball (B.U. Secretary for Mission)
- Eric Westwood (Northern Area Missioner)

**Planting Papers** is the magazine of the '1.3.6. Group' - the network of Baptist Church Planters (formerly BACUP). 1.3.6. aims to promote all aspects of Church Planting within the Baptist Union and beyond, based on 1 Corinthians 3:6. All contributors, in sympathy with this aim, have full freedom of expression, and views cannot be said to necessarily represent those of the 1.3.6. executive or editors.

**Planting Papers - Editors:**

Colin Cartwright

Steve Hill