

believe in barrow 2017 **REAL LIVES**



BELIEVEINBARROW 080817

8th August 2017

Embargo: Immediate release

News Release – Believe in Barrow festival set to bless the town in September

A series of unique special guests will be sharing their intriguing stories as part of a week-long celebration of the Christian faith in Barrow during September 2017.

Believe in Barrow 2017 'Real Lives' is a week of events taking place across Barrow from September 8th, with live music, real life stories, & good news, culminating in a weekend at The Forum.

The backbone of the week will be a series of 'Real Lives' evening events, taking place at venues like Barrow Raiders' Craven Park and The Forum, Barrow. Each night will see a different special guest sharing their unique story, with a 'Parkinson'-style format blending interview and live music. Each event will then end with a 'thought for the day' wrapping up some of the themes raised.

Background

The Believe in Barrow initiative began life as a five-day festival in May 2015, with a handful of churches coming together to run several events in a large marquee in Barrow Park, with special guests including the Archbishop of York. Building on the success of 2015's festival, over eighteen different churches have been working together to plan and host a wide range of special events for the town as part of 2017's sequel.

'Real Lives'

Rugby League star **Jamie Jones-Buchanan** will be first-up on Wednesday 13th September, with a special event at the Raiders' Bar, Craven Park. Jones-Buchanan is a crowd favourite and was recently in action for Leeds Rhinos against Barrow Raiders in their Challenge Cup match. He'll share stories from his life in the game, both on the pitch and as a broadcaster, as well as the place his faith has had through his career.

The following night, Thursday, mind-boggling illusionist **Todd Alexander** will entertain guests at St Mary's Centre on Walney. Alexander has previously performed on national TV and at the prestigious London Palladium, and will leave guests questioning what is real and what is only an illusion.

On Friday the events move to The Forum. Retired Police Chief Constable **Robin Oake's** life was turned upside-down when he received a phone call to say his son, PC Stephen Oake, had been tragically stabbed to death during an anti-terror raid in Manchester in 2003. He'll be sharing his moving story of grief and his own wrestling with the idea of forgiveness. Live music will come from up & coming Australian singer-songwriter **Liv Chapman**.

Saturday evening's special event at The Forum will see Team GB rower **Debbie Flood** unpack the highs and lows of life amongst the sporting elite, and what it's like to be on the medal podium at successive Olympic Games. Live music will come from comedian-guitarist **Paul Bell**, known for his trademark warmth & wit.

The week will then wrap up with a special Real Lives Celebration service on Sunday morning, with many churches choosing to cancel their normal services and meet altogether at The Forum. Former UVF member **David Hamilton** will share his remarkable story of how a life of violence and crime was turned around whilst serving a 12-year sentence for terrorism in the Maze Prison.

'Something for everyone'

As well as these main events, churches will also be hosting various local events for their different communities, with everything from a Yarn Bomb to a special Children's Party, as well as Community Barbecues, Big Breakfasts and Film nights. The full list of events can be accessed on the flyers or on www.believeinbarrow.com - and the idea is that they're all open to everyone.

Revd Robin Ham, 32, chair of the Believe in Barrow 2017 team said, "Everyone's really welcome. Whether or not you'd say you have a faith, we really hope everyone will find something for them during Real Lives. After all, everyone loves a good story - and there's going to be some really interesting stories shared during the week."

"Believe in Barrow arose out of the conviction that the Christianity is good news and should make a real difference in our lives. And so these stories touch on some very real issues for all of us: How can you forgive the unforgivable? What difference does God actually make in the face of tragedy? Is there more to life than success & reaching the pinnacle of your career? How does someone set on terror & hate get their life turned around?"

Details on how to get tickets for the different events are available at www.believeinbarrow.com, with tickets already on sale from The Forum for Friday, Saturday and Sunday's events. Tickets for the Jamie Jones Buchanan event are available from Craven Park from August 14th.

Ends

For further information as well as high resolution media images, please contact Robin Ham, Chair of the Believe in Barrow Planning Team, on 07828 333 106 or at robin@sbchurches.co.uk