



## The journey of a building

*Below is a summary of the talk given by Mike Griffin, CEO of TWAM at the Commissioning and Dedication service for the Rugby Refurbishment Centre, held in the centre on Sunday 4th September 2022.*

“If I could sum up the journey of this building, it would have to be Psalm 118:23 which says:

***‘This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.’***

The journey started back in 2019 when none of us had heard of Covid and myself and the board of trustees spending a couple of weekends away praying over what the Lord wanted to do with Tools with a Mission. The key message was that he wanted us to double in size, to meet the demand in Africa. We discerned that to do so, we would have to open a second large refurbishment centre the size of our current site in Ipswich, Suffolk.

And we agreed we would do this in the 3rd quarter of 2022, ideally in Coventry, where we already had a busy small centre. So in 2021 in the middle of a pandemic we started to look and it was utterly demoralising. Rents in Coventry had doubled and were still rising fast and industrial units the size we wanted never even came on to the market, but were being snapped up by large companies. Most of these were European companies looking to open distribution centres in the UK to overcome the import delays caused by Brexit. Our project manager Bill Warburton, (who was a miracle himself, as he came and offered his considerable services to us, the very week I was starting to think about who would lead this huge project), spent days ringing around agents and getting nowhere.

In the end all I could conclude and say to everyone was, *“that when it was right the Lord would provide us with a building.”* But my goodness, it took some faith to hold on to that promise.

Then just before Christmas last year, I was preparing a presentation for our volunteers in Coventry and wanted a picture of an example industrial unit to show them. So I looked on Google Images and a picture came up of a building in Rugby. It looked about what we wanted, so I clicked to download the image, but seeing the condition of the building and frankly how depressing the building looked, I closed the window and went to look for a better example. Then the Lord said, *“Look at it again”*.



So I looked at it again and went to the agent's site. The building was amazing value so I thought it was probably an out of date advert, as there are many of those around. Again I looked at the pictures and my heart sunk. The building looked in terrible condition and I just said to the Lord, *"I want better than that for TWAM, surely that's not asking too much,"* and clicked away again.

But again the Lord said; *"look at it again and go and see it."* So, I looked and very bregudling sent a message to the agent asking to view it. There was no reply by the *next day and I felt relieved and vindicated. But the Lord again said "ring them up"*. So with a heavy heart I rang up, but I could only offer them one afternoon when I was free. Unfortunately, they too were free for only one afternoon and it happened to be the same one.

I then did a Gideon (In the Old Testament book of Judges 6:36-40 in the Bible) and put a fleece out to confirm whether or not this was me or the Lord. So, I said to God, if this is right then all the people who are coming with me to view the building have to independently say they believe this is the building for us. So Trevor, our Ipswich Manager, Ian our Coventry Manager and Nigel our Van Manager went to have a look.

And the building did not disappoint, it was in very poor condition, with paper hanging off the ceiling, holes in the walls and doors, fittings out of the ark and completely full of all sorts of paraphernalia (it was an auction house) and overall appeared to be a complete disaster. But one by one at different points of the tour, for me walking around the corner and seeing the vast area that has become our tool out area where containers are prepared. For Nigel it was walking up to the mezzanine, but by the end we all agreed this was our building and from that point on and even before I had contacted the agent we were all talking about 'when we move to Rugby.'

Negotiations with the landlord, Stepnell started but we weren't the only people who wanted this building and all we asked of them was that they replace the lighting. The rest we prepared to do ourselves, without really knowing how just a few people from a very small charity could achieve it. However, as the weeks rolled on Stepnell just started doing things, and the list of things just grew and grew and grew, from a new flat roof, to a new kitchen, to replastered walls and new doors, to complete redecoration, and it went on and on and on. And the amazing building you see today is down to Stepnell and we are very grateful.



We then had to fit it out and were approached by another charity called Collecteco, who offered us used commercial furniture from companies refurbishing their offices and all the office furniture, chairs, workbenches, cupboards and lockers all came from them. And most of it is a quality we could never afford.

The way Nigel came to us as our new Manager was a miracle in itself and he is so clearly the Lord's choice. Again when he rang me up to ask if the job was still available, as soon as I put the phone down the Lord said, *"that's your new manager."*

The same was true of our apprentice, Caleb, as soon as his application form came in, the Lord said, *"that's your new apprentice."* And our biggest challenge over these last few months has been to keep up with everything the Lord is doing.

And we have done all this through a pandemic and the building has opened exactly when we agreed it would back in 2019, and that can only be the Lord's amazing provision and the wonderful truth, that the Lord is bigger than Covid and equally as we enter another period of cost of living crisis, is also bigger than that. Something we have to cling on to, as a small charity taking on huge expenses at a time like this.

So that is the journey of this amazing building, and the Lord honouring his promise and when my heart sank at taking on such a rundown building, knowing that if we stepped out in faith, he would provide us with an amazing building.

So I will finish where I started:

***This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."***

Mike Griffin  
4th August 2022