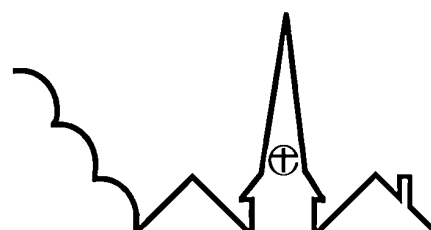


Steeple & People

September 2020

50p



St Michael's Boldmere

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With regret we have been forced to cancel this year's event which would have been a celebration of 100 years.

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OPENING COMMENTS

New Beginning

Well we're two thirds into 2020 and in my mind the year is really yet to begin. I'm feeling in a state of suspended animation. Not knowing what is best in these unsettling times of the Covid19 pandemic.

The world has changed and every one of our lives has changed with it. The normal everyday

expectations are now tempered with social

distancing, restricted access and social limitations imposed to keep us safe.



Maybe you, like me, feel uncomfortable, frustrated and impatient with the situation we have now lived with for seven months and unfortunately will carry on living with for the foreseeable future, until such a time an effective vaccine is developed.

It really struck me a few weeks ago, queuing at traffic lights and seeing a single decker bus pass through the lights carrying passengers who were wearing face masks and looking straight ahead. It looked to all intents and purposes like a scene out of one of those disaster movies. My thoughts were of total disbelief and an alien feeling of detachment came over me. "Surely, this isn't happening", but it was. The lights changed to green and I carried on. A bit like what we are all doing at the moment; carrying on to the best of our abilities but not naturally or with any real happiness for the general situation. It feels like trying to live with one arm tied behind your back, do-able but not nice and not without pain.

The repercussions of lockdown, furlough and restrictions both here and globally are now being felt. The economic situation is concerning, with many facing uncertain times ahead and the reality of recession now hitting home to many of us. It's a situation the younger generation have no experience of, but many of us can remember harder times in the past with spiralling inflation and the three day week to name but two.

Living through tough times and seeing the light at the end of the tunnel and better days ahead do help to support and inspire us in darker days, all things come to pass.

So, the question is, can we make the rest of this year more amenable, more joyous, more engaging and encouraging. Well, I think we all need a new beginning this Autumn, an injection of hope and happiness in these difficult times. I believe that we need more than a few days away from it, more than a few purchases on line or a half price meal out. I believe we need true hope in our lives, the hope that transcends the physical, the materialist, a hope that encompasses our spirit, our soul. Something that uplifts downbeat hearts, relieves depression of the mind, a hope that acts as a foundation pile supporting all we are and do, our very wellbeing.

Jesus came to give us just that hope, He came to save you and me, He suffered to save you and me and He died to save you and me, crucified on a cross He gave His all for us all. We need to respond by fully accepting that hope gifted from the cross. We need to look straight ahead, wearing our face masks if required and focus on the light at the end of the tunnel, in the knowledge that all things come to pass. It's the greatest of hope, a wonderful God given gift to carry in the soul each day, no matter what we come up against and no matter what hard times are around the corner.

So join me, accept the gift of hope, invite Jesus into your life and find a friend to walk with in your new beginning this Autumn.

Yours in Christ,
Gary Connell
Reader
St Michael's Church

September Prayer Page

Another prayer page, another month and still we do not know how life will be, how it will change, as we continue to live with the Covid 19 virus. But one thing that we can continue to do is pray. We can pray alone, pray with family and friends and pray with our church and the wider Christian community. I hope that you will find the following prayers helpful at this time.



Hope after difficulties.

Loving Father,
We thank you for your
guidance during these past
difficult months,

For leading us through a time when the future seemed dark and the present uncertain.

Whenever we have needed you,
You have been there.

We thank you for the support you have given when we have felt
downhearted,

The courage to keep on believing when we have been tempted to
doubt,

The strength to persevere despite adversity.

Whenever we have needed you,
You have been there.

Loving Father, may all we have experienced renew our trust in you
continuing purpose for us.

May it give us food for faith in times of difficulty yet to come.

May it inspire us to serve you, just as you have served us.

Whenever we have needed you,
You have been there.



Lead us forward, we pray,
and help us to continue in the path you set before us,
Secure in the assurance that, whatever we face,
Your grace will be sufficient for us.
Whenever we have needed you,
You have been there.
Thanks be to God
Amen.

Prayer by Nick Fawcett.

September is the time when many people go back to work and children return to school after the summer holidays. This is not a normal year and many children have not been to school since March, although we do not know for certain schools will be open. So for some of our children this September will prove a difficult one as they return to their new norm. So we pray for all our children.

Loving Father,
We pray that you will watch over and walk beside all children
as they return to school this September.
Be with them in their moments of worry and concern.
Be with teachers and all staff within the schools,
creating environments that are safe.
Let all schools be a place of safety and of learning,
so that the children will be able to enjoy their time there.
Be with parents as they take their children to school,
Let them know that school is a safe place for their children to be in.
We ask all this in in the name of Jesus Christ.
Amen.

September is also the month that the Feast day of St Michael falls in. St Michael's day is 29th September. Here is a short prayer to St Michael the Archangel.

Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our protection against the malice and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the Heavenly host, by the power of God, thrust into hell, Satan and all evil spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.



Compiled by Elaine Riley.

Dust if you Must

Dust if you must, but wouldn't it be better
To paint a picture, write a letter, bake a cake or plant a seed
Ponder the difference between 'want' and 'need'

Dust if you must but there's not much time
With rivers to swim and mountains to climb,
Music to hear and books to read
Friends to cherish – a life to lead

Dust if you must but the world's out there,
The sun in your eyes, the wind in your hair,
a flurry of snow, a shower of rain
This day will not come round again

Dust if you must but bear in mind
Old age will come and it's not kind, and when you go as go you must
You yourself will make more dust

There's much talk about children attending school. Here's how a 'Facebooker' thinks children required to wear masks might work in a Primary School from a teacher's point of view: (submitted by Sue Smart).

'Please don't snap Billy's mask in his face.

Your mask is not a necklace, bracelet, or any other form of jewellery.

You should not be using your mask as a catapult. Please put it back on your face.

Your mask should be on your face, not on the back of your head

Why is your mask soaking wet? You just came back from the bathroom? And you put it back on your face after you dropped it?

Please take the mask off your eyes and watch where you're walking. I don't care if you have X-ray vision.

Please take the mask off your pencil and stop twirling it.

What do you mean you tried to eat your lunch through your mask?

Please don't share your mask or swap masks. I don't care if you like Ingrid's mask better than yours.

I'm sorry, but your mask is not school appropriate.

We're not comparing our masks to other children's masks... everyone's mask is unique and special.

You're not a pirate, please take your mask off your eye.

Try to get the gum off as much as you can.

I'm sorry you tripped, but that's what happens when you put your feet inside the elastic of your mask.

No, your mask doesn't make it hard to get your work done.

Why is there a shoe print on your mask?

No, you cannot eat the snow through your mask.

Who's making that noise?

READERS LETTERS

Thank you for the magazine starting with Elaine's introduction through to Angela's wonderful 'botanic bouquet'

It has such a range of articles; some making me really smile, imagining Andrew in full cowboy gear walking down Western road and then reading Azaria's heart-rending letter that made me cry.

There is so much variety in it; perhaps a readers letter page sometimes could give the feedback it deserves.

God bless. Trudy x

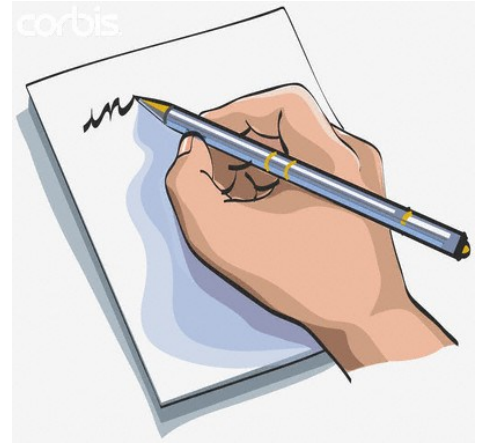
From the Editor:

This letter from Trudy Walsh, which came recently, was so nice to receive and gave us this new idea of a readers' letters page where our subscribers can send in ideas and comments. Thank you Trudy.

*You can send them to my email address: **jenningspenny@aol.com** until I get a new 'magazine address'.*

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Penny Jennings



PAWS FOR THOUGHT

Why is it called a cargo when it goes by ship, and a shipment when it goes by road?



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It couldn't be done

Somebody said it couldn't be done
But he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't" but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so 'till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
on his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed "Oh, you'll never do that,
At least no-one has ever done it"
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat
And the first thing we knew, he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit, *
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done
There are thousands to prophesy failure
There are thousands to point out to you, one by one,
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it,
Just start to sing as you tackle the thing
That cannot be done, and you'll do it

This was written by Edgar Guest who was born in Birmingham, England, in 1881. He moved to Detroit at the age of ten, later became a US citizen and eventually editor of the Chicago Tribune where he was known as the People's Poet.

He was also Poet Laureat of Michigan. He died in 1959

- Another word for "quiddit" is quibble

Submitted by Mike Belman

Reverend Cath's leaving afternoon tea

On Sunday 9th August, a very hot and sunny afternoon, more than 55 members of St Michael's congregation gathered on the grass on the north side of St Michael's church to say goodbye and good luck to Reverend Cath Walker, Eli and Reuben.



picnics at a safe distance from one another.

The afternoon began with speeches and presentations. Reverend Gary spoke and so did Pete Swain and Jude Leonard presented Reverend Cath with a beautiful Rhododendron. Her main gift was a cheque from the family of St Michael's. Once the speeches were completed the fun part of the afternoon began. The children went and played, Cody even brought an archery set with him – footballs were found and the laughing and squealing of children filled the air.

The adults were able to move about – socially distanced of course – to talk and say good bye to Reverend Cath. It is a shame that numbers had to be limited, but it didn't stop everyone who was there enjoying themselves. One of the lovely things about the afternoon was catching up with people we had not seen for many weeks.





We wish Reverend Cath all the very best in her new ministry in Mottram, Broadbottom and Hattersley East. We hope that Cath, Eli and Reuben enjoy their new lives, that they will settle in quickly and

make new friends and their new lives will soon be filled with happiness.

Written by Elaine Riley.

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Marrow cake/courgette cake

Ingredients

- 1 large egg
- 200g of caster sugar
- 100g of melted butter
- 1/2 tsp of vanilla extract
- 300g of courgette/marrow, coarsely grated
- 300g of self-raising flour
- 75g of finely chopped nuts
- 1tsp of cinnamon
- 1tsp of baking powder



Recipe

1. Grease a 2lb loaf tin, and pre-heat the oven to 180C/gas mark 4.
2. In one bowl, mix together all the first lot of ingredients (the wet ones – eggs, butter, courgettes & vanilla, plus the sugar) and in another bigger bowl, mix together the second lot of ingredients (the dry ones – flour, nuts, cinnamon, baking powder).
3. Gradually stir the wet mixture into the dry until it forms a wet dough. Pour into the greased loaf tin and place in the pre-heated oven for about an hour – until golden brown on top and cooked throughout (check with a skewer if necessary).
4. Allow to cool in the tin.

Editors note:

As many people will know, I don't make cakes! However, I tried this one and it's turned out really well and got the 'thumbs-up' from Mr Editor.

Service of Welcome for Simon Cocks

On the hottest day of the year, June 25th, a group of ten people met outside St Michael's church. With social distancing still in place we gathered, put on gloves and prepared ourselves for the short service to welcome Simon Cocks as Assistant Curate.

It felt quite strange being with so many people at one time, even with social distancing in place, because up until then the largest number I had been with was another three.

Reverend Gary recorded the service and this was shown during the Sunday morning service on June 28th.



Normally Simon would have been welcomed during the church service, but of course these are not normal times.

Once suitably gloved up and talked through how the service would proceed, we began. Reverend Gary welcomed Simon, then Reverend Cath spoke the words of commitment, and Simon was presented with some symbols of his ministry among us.

Pete Swaine presented a Bible, Elaine Riley a prayer book; Jeannette Nichols presented water from the River Jordan, Rob Rolfe the Paschal candle and Jude Leonard the church keys. At the end of the presentations Simon responded.

In conclusion Reverend Gary gave a blessing and then in true St Michael's style there was clapping and cheering.





It may not be our usual way of welcoming, but I am sure we will make up for it when we get back to the new normal, whatever the new normal will be.

We wish Simon all the very best as he starts his new ministry here with us at St Michael's and we welcome his wife Cathy and their family.

Written by: Elaine Riley.



The First Tree

by Lenore Hetrick

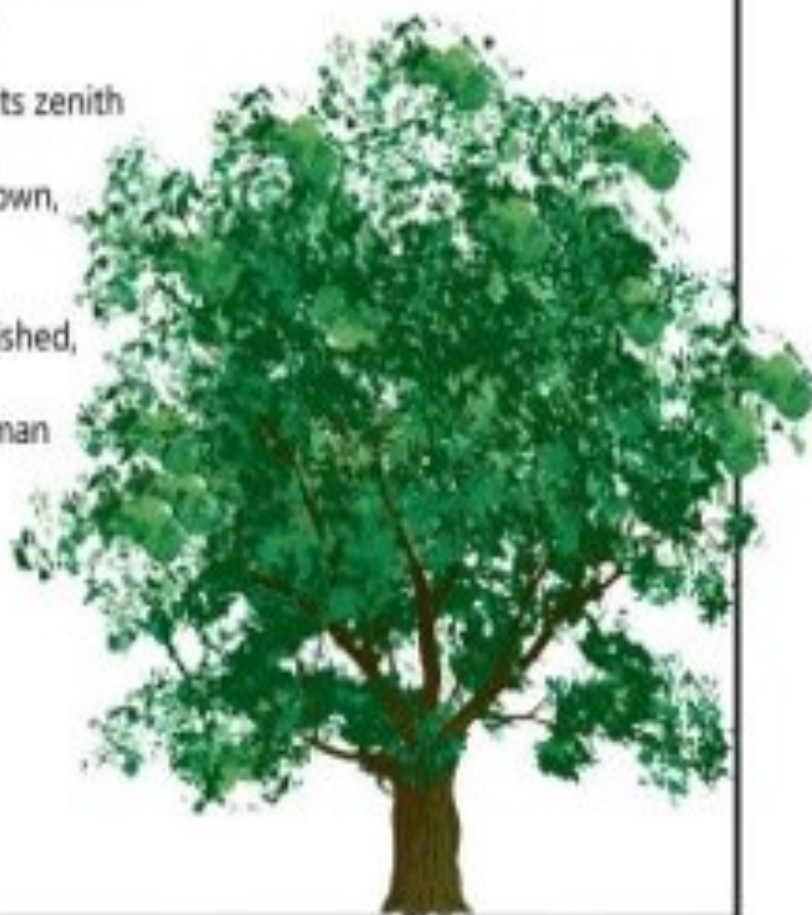
Nature looked across the seas
She had newly made.
"Now," said Nature, "Life must have
A place of cooling shade.

"All my creatures shall have rest
From the sun's high tide.
Underneath a leafy bough
Shall my creatures hide."

So out from the deep black earth
Rose a mighty tree.
The hill wind sang a song of welcome.
"Greetings!" roared the sea.

When the sun had reached its zenith
In the tree's cool shade
All the creatures lay them down,
And they were not afraid.

Ever since the tree has flourished,
Mighty – and yet kind!
Nowhere else can beast or man
Sweeter solace find.



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The Last Bee

After the last bee
had buzzed its last buzz,

the birds and the butterflies
did what they could.

But soon the fields lay bare,
few flowers were left,

nature was broken,
and the planet bereft.

Christian Milston

MIRACULOUS STAIRCASE



This is the miraculous staircase of Saint Joseph at Loretto Chapel in Santa Fé, New Mexico, U.S.A., which, after 134 years since it was built in 1878, still confounds architects, engineers, and master craftsmen in the physics of its construction and remains inexplicable in view of its baffling design considerations. The unusual helix shaped spiral staircase has two complete 360° turns, stands 20 feet high up to the choir loft and has no newel post (centre pole) to

support it as most circular stairways have. Its entire weight rests solely on its base and against the choir loft - a mystery that defies all laws of gravity. It should have crashed to the floor the moment anyone stepped on it, and yet it is still in use daily, as it has been, for over a hundred years. The risers of the 33 steps are all of the same height.

Made of an apparently extinct wood species, it was constructed with only square wooden pegs without glue or nails.

At the time it was built, the stairway had no banisters. These were added 10 years later in 1888 by Phillip A. Hesch.

The quiet of trees

One of the opportunities of our enforced time at home during the spring and early summer of this strange year, has been the time and peacefulness to watch and hear nature in a very different way. As a result of the reduction in air and road traffic, our world became a quieter place so that we could really 'hear' the world around us and 'watch' the insects, birds and our little field mouse in their activity.



However, with the increasing move towards some sort of normality has come the inevitable loss of that quiet. So it was with great pleasure that last week my sister and I arranged to meet at Bluebell Arboretum near Ashby. Apart from a nursery which offers a wide range of interesting, unusual and specialist trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants, the arboretum is a very quiet place where you can really enjoy the beauty of trees within a lovely environment. At 9 acres, it is not too large to get round and the trees are still relatively young, in tree terms, having only been in their present site for just over 20 years.



The trees are labelled, often with detailed information about their natural location and origin.

They are sufficiently well spaced to be able to stand back and enjoy each tree in its own beauty, for its shape, leaf arrangement and colour, along with the flowers and berries.

Despite the wet weather of recent days, the wellies were not required and the mown grass paths kept us on the easy path. There are no fancy tearooms at the arboretum so it's a 'sit in the car and eat your sandwich sort of place' but how can you beat looking at a vista of trees, particularly one with honey-coloured bark that is gently peeling to reveal the beauty underneath. There may have been a total of ten people visiting during the day, who, like us, were enjoying the peace and stillness of being surrounded by trees.



The two trees in the arboretum which interest and fascinate me the most are the birches with their incredibly beautiful bark and the liquidambars or sweetgums which have maple-like leaves that turn the most amazing colours in autumn.



One shrub which stood out for us, was the Calycanthus which was in flower. A medium to large shrub, about 10' when full grown, it has large shiny leaves and beautiful maroon flowers. Native to the south eastern states of the US, it was first introduced to the UK in 1726. It thrives best in sun or dappled shade in moist, fertile soil, the leaves turning yellow in autumn before falling. A more recent introduction is Sinocalycanthus Hartlage Wine which has flowers that are 3" across.



The nursery at Bluebell has a wide selection of trees and shrubs and a plant I was hoping to find was readily available. Kirengeshoma palmata or Japanese Waxflower or Waxbells, is a rhizomatous perennial in the hydrangea family, which forms a clump with a spread of 2-3', the flower spikes reaching 3'. It has palmate, mid green leaves and the trumpet-shaped yellow flower buds are held on thin, dark stems. The golden yellow flowers open into a whirl of 5 petals in mid to late summer. The plant particularly likes dappled shade and moist but well-drained soil. If you visit the National Trust house and gardens at Dunham Massey in Cheshire you can see a large area of this interesting plant in their garden border.

We plan to visit again next month to see the trees as they take on their autumn colours. After an early summer of heat and sun, it is to be hoped that the colours will be worth waiting for.

If you enjoy the beauty of trees, Bluebell Arboretum gives the opportunity to appreciate them in a peaceful and enriching environment.

Angela Grudzinski

The Book of Hopes

For those who have not heard it, could I recommend a short moment to listen to Michael Morpurgo's 'A Song of Gladness' which was written for The Book of Hopes, for children during lockdown and can be found on the The King's School, Canterbury website.



<https://www.kings-school.co.uk/news/a-song-of-gladness-by-michael-morpurgo/>

The Book of Hopes: Words and Pictures to Comfort, Inspire and Entertain is currently a free digital book edited by Katherine Rundell. It is a collection of short stories, poems essays and pictures from children's authors.

Angela Grudzinski



Groups & Organisations

MONDAY

Cubs	6.45	Scout HQ
Choir	7.00	South Aisle
Contact	Angela Grudzinski	373 1899

WEDNESDAY

Luncheon Club	12.30pm	Church Hall
Contact	Ruth Yates	354 4248
Rainbows	5.00 – 6.00	Church Hall
Brownies	6.15 – 7.30	Church Hall
Contact	Liz Claybrook	07906 958532
Email	liz.claybrook@yahoo.co.uk	
Guides	7.00 - 8.30	Church Hall
Contact	Hayley Bryer	07876 361952
Email	hayleydench@hotmail.co.uk	
Bellringers	7.45	Church Tower
Contact	Dave Reeves	354 6264
The Guild	See 'What's On' Page	
Contact	Angela Grudzinski – Chair	373 1899

THURSDAY

Little Lights	9.45	South Aisle
Knit & Natter	2.00—4.00	Church Hall
Contact	Ruth Murray	608 3599
Scouts	7.30	Scout HQ

FRIDAY

Flower Guild	Friday Mornings	Church
Contact	Chris Reeves	354 6264
Beavers	6.15	Scout HQ
For Beavers, Cubs and Scouts		
Contact	Bob Moore	07930 543747
Email	moorera@blueyonder.co.uk	

CHURCHYARD TALES

The Churchyard has been in the history of this Parish for over 150 years, and has become the final resting place to generations.

Here is one of its stories.....

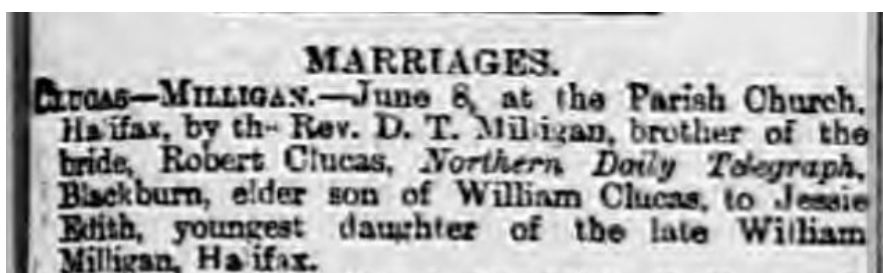
Robert CLUCAS (1862 – 1905) – aged 43 years

Robert Clucas was born in Halifax, Yorkshire in 1862, the son of William, a Master Draper, and Mary Ann, and was the third of their 5 children.

Robert was educated in Halifax and by 1881, the family were living in Milton Place, Halifax, and Robert had begun his lifelong career in Journalism by becoming a Compositor Reporter on the Halifax Guardian



Robert continued his climb through the ranks of Journalism, and having met Jessie Edith Milligan, born in Halifax in 1864, the daughter of William (a decorator) and Mary, they married at Halifax Parish Church on 11th June 1887.



Robert was soon on the move. By 1891 he had accepted the position of Chief Reporter on the Northern Daily Telegraph, based in Blackburn, and he and Jessie moved to London Road, Blackburn, where in 1891 their daughter Hilda Mary was born.



Robert possessed a wide knowledge of sports and pastimes, and soon found this a great advantage when in 1891, the Birmingham Daily Argus came to call, and he was engaged on their staff.

Robert, Jessie and Hilda moved to Ringford, a house on Chester Road where in 1893 a son William Stanhope was born, followed in 1900 by Kenneth Leslie, and Marjorie Jessie in 1904.

It had been in 1896, that Robert's sporting knowledge really came to the fore. He was specifically engaged to launch a new sporting innovation, the 'Sports Argus'. The first edition was published on Saturday 6th February 1897.



The Sports Argus published on a Saturday, gave full details, scores and reports on many Midland sporting events.

Robert was the first editor and held the editorial chair with distinction. From its inception in 1897 Robert was able to pilot this new venture through a sea of trouble, and over the course of the following few months, bring the paper into a haven of popularity, which was to continue for many years.

Over and above his zeal in his editorial duties, Robert contributed a series of cycling articles to the Birmingham Gazette and Express under the guise of 'Rambler' which was loved by thousands of cyclists.

Affectionately known as 'The Pink' the 'Sports Argus' was extremely popular, as it was available shortly after the 3pm Saturday football matches ended.

The Sports Argus' was to run until 2006. The final edition was issued on 13th May 2006, and its demise was partly due to the fact that fewer and fewer football matches were played at 3pm on Saturday.



The last edition and more modern-day issues show an example of the paper's popularity.

In February 1905, Robert suffered a sudden bout of ill health and despite seeking the help of a specialist his condition did not improve. He was advised to give up work and take a month's rest before venturing on a holiday on the west coast. His situation was not to improve and the holiday was cancelled on two occasions. His condition worsened, and he finally succumbed on Saturday 21st April 1905 aged just 43. Robert was buried at St Michael's on 26th April 1905 and his funeral was attended by family and journalistic colleagues. The service was conducted by Reverend Riland Bedford.

Robert was buried in the centre of open grassland to the south of the church. The grave is no longer marked.



His wife Jessie continued to live on Chester Road where she took in boarders, as was recorded in the 1911 census.

Jessie subsequently moved to Richmond, Yorkshire and died at Thirley Cottage, Ivelet, Gunnerside, Richmond on 7th October 1957 aged 93.

Peter Knight

The best prayer is to rest in the goodness of God
knowing that goodness can reach right down
to our lowest depths of need.

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Tailing Off....

Hello,

Unfortunately it wasn't possible to print the magazine this time but hopefully the October issue will be available in that format. In the new year subscribers will have the option of having a printed copy or receiving the magazine by email (full colour!). The cost of either version will remain at £5 for the year.

Please could I have any articles and other contributions for the October issue early in September please as I am hoping to have a few days away during the month.

The Editor

Magazine articles please for the

SEPTEMBER

magazine to:

jenningspenny@aol.com

By 10th July 2020

WHO'S WHO AT ST MICHAEL'S

<p>Vicar: Rev. Gary Birchall Tel: 354 4501 Email: revgary@stmichaels.org.uk (off Tuesdays)</p>	<p>209 Station Road Sutton Coldfield B73 5EL</p>
<p>Curate: Simon Cocks Email: simon@wildgoose.me.uk</p>	
<p>Churchwardens: Pete Swaine Tel: 07846 401334 Email: peter@swaine.plus.com</p>	<p>Jude Leonard Tel: 0121 373 0012 Email: judinator1@hotmail.com</p>
<p>Readers: Elaine Riley Tel: 354 4157 Gary Connell 07963 510623</p>	
<p>Lay Pastoral Ministers: Val Bryon 07886 397945 Liz Carr 354 3769 Kevin Hunt 313 2376 Margaret Smoldon 355 4226 Trudy Walsh 355 4128</p>	<p>Peter Edmonds 354 3200 Lin Benson 373 1227 Edwina Connell 682 9119 Fran Lumley 354 5490 Mick Walsh 355 4128 Helen Menniss 07814 911129</p>
<p>Stewardship Secretary Edwina Connell</p>	<p>Tel: 07717 239904 Email: edwinaconnell@yahoo.co.uk</p>
<p>Church Administrator Liz Claybrook Tel: 373 0207 Email: liz.claybrook@stmichaels.org.uk Mon, Wed & Fri 9.30 -2.30pm</p>	<p>Church Office St Michael's Church Church Road, Boldmere Sutton Coldfield B73 5RX</p>

St Martin's Nursing Home



St Martin's is a family run nursing home managed by brother and sister David Underhill (Home Manager) and Lorraine Holt (Nurse Manager). We provide modern facilities for twenty four residents in a comfortable and caring environment. Our small size means individual attention and a homely atmosphere.

Accommodation consists of 24 spacious single bedrooms, all with en-suite facilities, HD television and free Wi-Fi.

We offer a range of enjoyable activities to stimulate cognitive awareness. This includes animal visits, music recitals, puzzles, outings, hobbies and visiting entertainers.

Our professional training is rigorous and our C.Q.C. rating is good. We welcome enquiries and visits should you seek quality nursing care with family values.

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