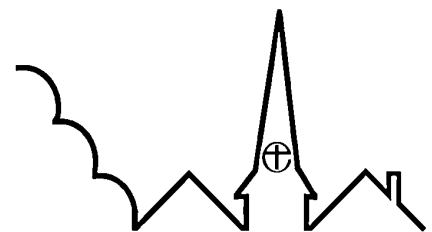




May 2022

50p



St Michael's Boldmere

Services

MAY 2022

1st May

10.00am Holy Communion

6.00 pm Evening Service

8th May

10.00am Holy Communion

3.30 pm Celebrate – Jesus at the Centre

6.00 pm Evening Service

15th May

10.00am Holy Communion

6.00 pm Evening Service

22nd May

10.00am Worship for all Parade Service

6.00 pm Holy Communion

29th May

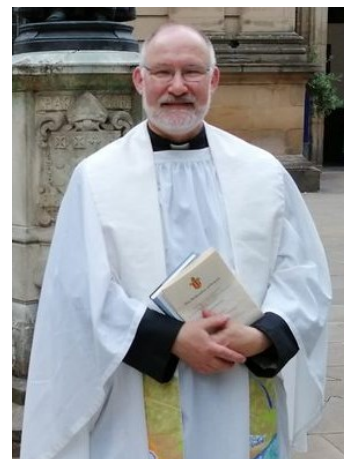
10.00am Holy Communion

6.00 pm Breathe

Plus Night Prayer on Zoom at 8.00pm most Sundays

Retreats

Before I was Ordained Deacon, I was hoping to go on retreat with my fellow Ordinands from Birmingham diocese, but then Covid-19 struck, as it has in so many different ways. I must confess that I was more than a little disappointed about this change. The whole of my life at that time felt like a torrent of change, at home, at work and in my curacy. Many of my colleagues had already been on retreats and had waxed lyrical about how good they had been. They had told me of their experiences in different venues with different retreat leaders. They had expounded the advantages of going on retreat. All they managed to do was make me more disappointed that the opportunity had been snatched away from me.



I did manage to have a retreat of sorts before my ordination as Priest. It was an odd affair, partially online via "Zoom", partially physical, as I had journeyed to Saint Michael's in Boldmere. This movement from home to church was extremely helpful, somehow that short distance made a lot of difference. There is something in journeying that changes my state of mind, some sort of separation happened. Perhaps that is why many people journey to their place of retreat, like the nuns and monks; thereby laying a foundation for many ways, such as the Two Saints way in Lichfield.

Another part of my time of retreat was to walk part of the Lichfield Two Saints way. The Two Saints Way is an exceedingly long route from Chester to Lichfield, and I certainly did not have the time to walk much of it. So, I was dropped off by my wife in a small village and walked a short part of the way ending at Lichfield cathedral. It felt odd walking on a path that was ancient and the views over Lichfield were stunning with the cathedral in view. I had time and space to contemplate. Time to enjoy nature and think about what I was letting myself in for. When I arrived in Lichfield my wife picked me up and took me for a nice coffee. There are many great ways in the UK, and many people have organised ways to walk them, if this sort of activity helps you, you may find it useful to visit the British Pilgrimage Trust. (<https://britishpilgrimage.org/routes/>)

This reminds me of a vicar I know, who shall remain anonymous. She used to go out on retreat, or at least that is what she claimed. This invariably involved leaving the parish and spending a day with one of the clergy that she trained with. They would spend a day walking round a garden centre or stately home, then end up in a tearoom for a slap-up cream tea. What she needed was a break from the everyday work, which was in a tough location, with all the issues that come from poverty and deprivation. She referred to these as "Re-Treats", which sums them up adequately.

I found it really interesting to see that Jesus kept going on retreat. I don't think that I had thought of his actions in that way before. He appears to have retreated from the crowds and the disciples on lots of occasions, and for many other reasons. I have put together a list of just a few that I have thought about,; this is by no means an extensive list, but gives a flavour of the reasons and ways in which Jesus handled retreats:

- 1 Retreat for Prayer** Luke 5:16
- 2 Work ahead** Luke 4:1-2; 4:14-15
- 3 After Work** Mark 6:30-32
- 4 Because of Grief** Matthew 14:9-13
- 5 Making big decisions** Luke 6:12-13
- 6 In Distress** Luke 22:39-46

I have recently been able to actually go on a physical retreat! It was part of the training that we have as part of the IME2 programme, which stands for Initial Ministerial Education Phase 2. This is what most people call Curacy; which is the phase as the Assistant Curate working with the Priest in charge, as training continues in a parish setting. The first phase of IME is usually in a college, with a supporting church placement.

The retreat was at Holland House (other retreat houses are available!) which is in a small village not too far from Worcester. This particular retreat was a guided retreat, led by a good friend of mine, Sally Nash. As this was my first real, in person retreat, I did not know what to expect. There was, on this occasion, quite a lot of content, which I found thought provoking. Others however found the content too much and wanted more space and time to think, pray and consider.

As I had no comparison, I really enjoyed the time that we spent. We looked at vulnerability and how we can be vulnerable and the ways in which we need to be careful with ourselves and others. We also thought about security, the flip side of vulnerability in some ways. Where are we secure, how do we find and hold on to security in faith and discipleship. Sally used a mixture of personal experience, images, and poetry to direct our thoughts. It was only a few weeks later that my world was turned upside down with all my security pulled from under me. Job, health, and family were rocked in one way or another. I was glad to have had the preparation of thinking about security and vulnerability; it is often in the crucible of life that we find that God has prepared a way.

I have actually booked my next retreat already. I am going back to Holland house, not to the house itself but the Lodge that is in the grounds. I have some thinking to do about what is next. I am some way through my curacy at St Michael's; I don't know what God has in store for me. Therefore, I need to start to consider and question in a way that will help guide me, and hopefully make the right choices. There are big decisions ahead!

What about you? Do you have a thirst for a retreat of some kind or another; have you a need to hive off to think and pray. Perhaps it would be for one of the reasons that Jesus had for seeking solitude and taking time and space to think and pray. There are many things that can help you; for example you could talk to others who have already tried retreats. Or look at the information about retreats. To assist, I have put details of the Retreat Association below. Or maybe all you need is a Re-Treat, to recharge, refuel and continue your journey.

The Retreat Association (<https://www.retreats.org.uk/>)

The British Pilgrimage Trust. (<https://britishpilgrimage.org/routes/>)

Rev'd Simon Cocks

May Prayer Page.

We are now in the month of May, a long way from the cold and dark months of winter. May is the fifth month of the year and the third of seven months to have 31 days. May is a month of spring, when the days are longer, and the weather is so much warmer.

The month was named after the Greek Goddess of Fertility, Maia. One famous Roman poet, Ovid, suggests that the name comes from the Latin word, "maiores" which means "elders".

May.



If I could stay up late no doubt
I'd catch the buds just bursting
out;

And up from every hidden root
Would jump a tiny slender shoot;
I wonder how seeds learn the way,
They always know the very day –
The pretty, happy first of May;
If I could stay up no doubt
I'd catch the buds just bursting out.

Anette Wynne.



This year on the 26th May it will be Ascension Day. We read in the Bible that Jesus Christ met several times with his disciples during the 40 days after his resurrection to instruct them on how to carry out his teachings. It is believed that on the 40th day he took them to the Mount of Olives, where they watched as he ascended to heaven.



Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Matthew 28: 16-20)

Oh Lord Jesus Christ, who after your resurrection from the dead did gloriously ascend into heaven, grant us the aid of your loving kindness, that according to your promise you may ever dwell with us on earth, and we with you in heaven, where with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, you live and reign one God for ever and ever. Amen.

From the Gelasian Sacramentary.



Crown him the Lord of life,
Who triumphed over the grave,
And rose victorious in the strife
For those he came to save.



His glories now we sing,
Who died, and rose on high,
Who died eternal life to bring,
And lives that death may die.

Lord Jesus Christ,
you were brought low, yet you have been lifted high.
You were the servant of all, yet you are above all and beyond all.
You were despised and rejected, yet your name is exalted above all names.

You were fully human, yet you are divine.
You were taken into heaven, yet you are here by our sides.
You are higher than our highest thought, greater than our minds can ever grasp.

So, with all your people in every age,
we bow before you and confess you as our risen Saviour,
the King of kings and Lord of lords, to the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

Nick Fawcett.



To Thee before Thy Passion
They sang their hymns of praise:
To Thee now high exalted
Our melody we raise



All glory, laud, and honour
To Thee, Redeemer King
To whom the lips of children
Made sweet Hosannas sing.

Ascension Day

We saw his light break through the cloud of glory
Whilst we were rooted still in time and place,
As earth became a part of heaven's story
And heaven opened to his human face.
We saw him go and yet we were not parted,
He took us with him to the heart of things,
The heart that broke for all the broken-hearted
Is whole and Heaven centred now, and sings;
Sings in the strength that rises out of weakness,
Sings through the clouds that veil him from our sight,
Whilst we ourselves become his clouds of witness
And sing the waning darkness into light;
His light in us, and ours in him concealed,
Which all creation waits to see revealed.

Sounding the seasons: Malcolm Guite.



Compiled by Elaine Riley

Happy Anniversary, Lunch Club!

St Michael's Lunch Club is 40 years old on the 18th May 2022 and we will be celebrating with a lunch out at the Fairlawns Hotel. The lunch club has given a lot of pleasure and support to many older folk over the years.



The concept of starting a lunch club in the parish was the idea of Canon Jack Pigott and his wife Iris. There was to be a lunch every Wednesday in the year except over Christmas, at the cost of 60 pence! It was open to people living locally and not only those who were members of St. Michael's church, and from the beginning transport was offered to those who couldn't make their own way to the church hall. Six teams of cooks and kitchen staff and six teams of drivers were appointed, and Mrs. Mary Horne was put in charge. Mary was a wonderful seamstress and she made sets of different coloured tablecloths and also little flower arrangements to be placed on each table. She and Mrs. Pigott set the menus for each week. The lunch took place in the "south aisle" of the church hall with about 30 attendees every Wednesday. There was no dishwasher at that time, so everything had to be washed and dried by hand!

From the beginning the lunch club has had a strong connection with the Church - grace is always said at the beginning of each meal, and for many years once a month there was a shortened communion service before lunch. Canon Pigott came down to lunch club most Wednesdays – he popped into the kitchen to speak to those on duty and then quickly had a word with those having lunch. He encouraged his curate to visit as well. During Lent, there was often a coffee morning or sale of work, before the lunch was served. At other times an "as new" sale was held which finished at 11.30 a.m. Then those items that were left were quickly bundled into black bags for dealers to collect, and the tables hurriedly laid for lunch.

The lunch club would not exist without our wonderful band of willing volunteers. Currently there are approximately 20 drivers and 20 cooking/kitchen staff – many of the volunteers have given very many years of loyal service. While the cooks are busy cooking delicious meals and kitchen staff are laying tables, the drivers are out collecting their passengers. The drivers are all very caring and thoughtful, and if at first a person doesn't answer the door, the driver will go back a second time, or even a third. The driver often arrives at the hall with an elderly lady or gentleman on each side, or perhaps a handbag on each arm! If there is no response from anyone that is due to be picked up I will phone that person in the evening, to see if he or she is safe. Usually it is just that that person has forgotten to tell us they had a hospital appointment, or some such.

For many years a three-course Christmas Lunch was prepared in the hall. After the meal there was entertainment by a local choir or school, followed by a visit from Father Christmas, with a small gift for each member, and the afternoon finished with a mince pie and a cup of tea. More recently we have been able to have this Christmas lunch at a local hotel, and to include all our cooks, kitchen staff and drivers. Also, there has been the occasional outing to a garden centre.



The lunch club not only provides a good lunch, it is also an opportunity to do some shopping. Our lunch club members can buy cards and preserves, and especially popular are the delicious cakes that Mrs Margaret Smoldon brings each week. As well as a lovely selection of cakes, Mrs Smoldon will take orders for a birthday cake or a particular favourite cake or jam.

Happy times are celebrated at the lunch club – golden wedding anniversaries, diamond wedding anniversaries, 80th birthdays, 90th birthdays – and we have had one gentleman who celebrated his 100th birthday with lunch club! He was Mr A.F. Barnes – listed in the telephone directory as A F Barnes, BSc! - but known to all of us affectionately as “Freddie”.



Two of our members enjoyed each other's company so much, having met at lunch club that they got married!



Strong friendships are formed at the lunch club. When we are closed in August the gentlemen who sit together on Wednesday go out for a meal at a local pub. Two of our gentlemen went on holiday together, and another two rang each other each night to say "goodnight". Others enjoy a game of Scrabble in each other's homes.

During Lockdown, when we were unable to meet, our pastoral team rang each member every Wednesday. This contact was much valued. As well as enjoying a pleasant chat, there were offers of help and offers to do shopping. Everyone still had a birthday card on their special day. When someone from lunch club dies, a donation is always sent from the lunch club to a charity of their choice.

Often, items are lost or mislaid at the lunch club – walking sticks, house keys or rings, or perhaps, money. Usually these items are found and returned quite quickly to their owner. But once, a rather distraught gentleman came down to the hall; his mother had lost her false teeth. That day, we had had chicken joints for lunch, so perhaps the teeth were among the scraps? Our cooks searched through the debris in the bins, but I don't know whether or not they found them!

The principles of the lunch club have remained the same over the 40 years. High standards are set and maintained, and good, tasty meals are served. The meals now cost £4 for a two course lunch, followed by tea/coffee and a chocolate. They are served by a very friendly and caring staff. 40 years ago the average age of those who came was 60 or 70 years old, but now it is people in their 80s and 90s.

Having joined the lunch club in 1983, as a volunteer, I took over the running of the lunch club in May 2008, taking over from Mary Horne's long tenure of 26 years.

I have very much enjoyed being at the lunch club and count it a pleasure and privilege to be with so many lovely people. I look forward to Wednesdays. Of course, the lunch club could not run without so many willing helpers, and we are so grateful to them. We are always happy to welcome new volunteers – if you can help with driving or in the kitchen, we would be so pleased to hear from you. Please phone Ruth on 0121 354 4248, or email yatesdp@gmail.com if you would like to help.

Ruth Yates

8th April 2022

(Pictures: (1) shows Mary Horne at the head of the table, (2) Margaret Smoldon on the left, (3) 'Freddie' with celebration cake for his 100th Birthday and (4) 'Freddie's' party table.

PARISH REGISTERS

Baptism

Aria Davis 26th March

Interment of Ashes

John Warren 22nd March

Easter Day Dawn Service

The Easter Dawn Service was unusually light this year due to Easter being late.

6am arrived and the fire was lit. About 26 people came to celebrate the dawning of the reality that Jesus is Risen!



The new Easter candle was lit and marked with the studs in a cross shape, representing the nails that held Christ on the cross.

We followed the lit candle into the darkened church and passed the light from one to another by

lighting our own candles.

There were readings about that first morning, the friends of Jesus visiting the tomb to find it open and Jesus' body no longer there!!



Then the lights were switched on and we made 'a joyful noise' with cheers and musical instruments to celebrate the fact that Jesus is risen from the dead.

At the end of the service we went to the font at the back of church and recommitted to our baptismal beliefs with the sign of the cross we drew in water (some from the river Jordan) on our foreheads.



After the service breakfast was enjoyed in the South Aisle – chocolate croissants, cereals and toast!

A good time was had by all on this joyful morning when we celebrate that 'Hallelujah, Christ is Risen!!'

Jan Peel

Still with the spirit of Jim Carr (We're at the business end of the season. I hate these football speak clichés)

Well Jim, two more Mikes' wins to report,. One away to Racing Club Warwick 2-4 and one at home to 3rd from bottom Haughmond 3-1. Haughmond played well defensively but were unable to penetrate (until late on) Boldmere's defence.

Apparently according to Alan Parsons, our president, before the latest match the Mikes were 10th from 16 in all the relevant leagues due to get promoted even though they stand 2nd in The Midland Premier League. I told you it was complicated. Mikes' points per game are now 2.1333. Keep up mathematicians, and by the way the attendance at the match against Haughmond was 186.



The game against Shifnal Town the following Tuesday ended in a 2-0 win for Boldmere, up to 2.161 pts per game. On Saturday 2nd April the Mikes hadn't got a game but surprise, surprise, Hanley the league leaders lost at Bewdley Town the bottom club, so the Mikes are six points behind Hanley with a game in hand; Boldmere are also due to play Hanley away on Easter Monday. Top place would guarantee that the Mikes got promoted. It's getting very interesting.

On Tuesday 5th April the Mikes played AFC Wulfrunians away. They are in 3rd place just below Boldmere and desperate for points to boost their own promotion hopes.

I must admit that when I saw that the game ended 1-1 my heart sank. It's surprising that when your team is challenging for honours one sees it as two points lost. Down to 2.125 points per game now 5 points behind Hanley and they have played the same amount of games. Four league games to go.

The Mikes had another good win at Castle Vale on 9th April where they beat local rivals, Romulus 3-0. Three league games to go 71 pts, 2nd Position now standing at 2.151 pts per game. Still five points behind Hanley Town and 11 points ahead of 3rd Position (Lichfield Town)

On Tuesday 12th April the Mikes lost to Sporting Khalsa in the Walsall Senior Cup Semi Final. Despite the match finishing 2-2, Boldmere, lost 3-5 on penalties. Losing is a new experience for Boldmere.

Well Jim, the Mikes got back to winning ways with a hard fought 1-0 win against AFC Wulfrunians. The Wulfs have taken a dip in form during the last few weeks. They were challenging for 2nd place. They had quite a small side out for this game and had only two shots on goal during the whole match.

Only two games to go. Boldmere cannot be caught being ten points ahead of Lichfield City. However they can still catch Hanley the league leaders, five points behind and six points available. Points per game now stands at 2.1764. The Easter Monday match is away against surprise, surprise, Hanley Town. I will let you know next month whether Boldmere St. Michaels FC get promoted

Graham Jennings.

PAWS FOR THOUGHT

100 years ago everyone owned a horse
and only the rich had cars.
Today everyone owns a car and only the
rich have horses.
Oh! How the stables have turned!



A trip back in time to childhood memories

Have you ever visited somewhere that you have remembered since childhood, somewhere that you have treasured and kept because it was so special? Have you then had the chance to revisit it years later and? More of that later.

I have always loved history. Ever since I can remember I have devoured anything and everything to do with history; books, television programmes, museums, country houses. I just love it. I love Kings and Queens and people's lives; the way they lived, the way they dressed, just about everything.

I can remember one year, when my family went on their annual summer break I spent my holiday money on a history book, which I still have today, some 50+ years later. I can remember spending the holiday engrossed in the book, spending hours reading, discovering, and learning. Oh, I loved that book.

Well just recently Ian and I and our friend Trudy decided to go away to the south coast of England, visiting Folkestone, Canterbury, Chatham, and Rochester.

The week of the trip just happened to be the week of the glorious weather we had at the end of March. We travelled down to Folkestone by coach; on arriving at the pickup point we were dressed for awful weather, but by the end of the trip, coats, hats, scarves, and gloves were assigned to the case. Our trip was to last five days, and we began outside McDonalds in Sutton; not the most glamorous place, but convenient. After a pickup in Solihull, we were off and after a forty-five-minute break at Cherwell Valley Services we headed for the dreaded M25, but we sailed round there with ease, and we arrived at our hotel in Folkestone an hour early.



We stayed at the Grand Burstin, overlooking the harbour. A pretty spot. We were even more pleased when we discovered our rooms had harbour views too. We were able to unpack and then have a walk around the harbour and begin to get our bearings.

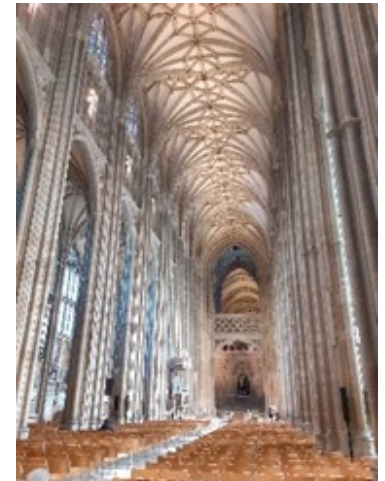
Day two of our trip was the highlight for the three of us – the visit to Canterbury. It was more exciting for me, as my elder sister had been to art college there when I was young and I had fond memories of the Cathedral, the blood of Thomas à Becket and was very excited to revisit.



The weather for the day was glorious and after a good breakfast we boarded the coach for the hour-long journey. We were dropped off at the bus station and made our way to the Cathedral. Once we had paid the entrance fee we walked into the grounds of the Cathedral and what an impressive building it is.



The building dates to the time of Augustine, who was sent by Pope Gregory in 597AD to England as a missionary. Augustine established his seat (or Cathedra) and monastery in Canterbury and became England's first Archbishop.



Going into the Cathedral I was sure that I would remember parts of it, especially the blood where Thomas à Becket had been murdered. No nothing, I did not remember any of it. I was so disappointed in myself, I had these cherished memories, although they weren't. As for the blood of Thomas in the Martyrdom – what blood? Nothing there, no blood, no staining nothing.!! What we think we remember and actually remember are two entirely different things. However, there was a very beautiful altar and sculpture, not here when I was here so long ago.

The Martyrdom commemorates the area where Archbishop Thomas à Becket was murdered in 1170. When after a long-lasting dispute, King Henry 2nd is said to have exclaimed "Who will rid me of this turbulent priest?" four knights set off for Canterbury and murdered Thomas in the place now called the Martyrdom.



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We walked round the Cathedral and also visited the Crypt. As the weather was so gorgeous, we sat in the Cathedral grounds and had our lunch. Gorgeous. Walking round the outside of the Cathedral we walked in the gardens and soaked up the atmosphere.



Back to the coach and back to Folkestone, ready for the next day. This time we journeyed to Chatham, again excited to visit, although I think we misunderstood where we were going. We had the historic boatyards in our heads, and of course we didn't go there.... Chatham bus station. So, the three of us jumped on a bus to the dockyards, but had very little

time, so after a coffee, back on the bus to find our coach. Then to Rochester, a town associated with Charles Dickens, as he stayed in Eastgate House. A very pretty place that was flat and so easy to walk around. We visited the castle and Rochester Cathedral, the second oldest Cathedral in England.



Back to the coach and back to Folkestone. Our third day on the trip was optional and so we decided to have time in Folkestone, and we were so glad that we did. Like any town it has its good bits and not so good bits. But walking up the hill into Folkestone was gorgeous; old quirky shops and coffee shops.

Then into the main town, thriving with many shops and a local market. After a coffee we ended up on the harbour side eating a cone of chips, with some of the best-behaved gulls I have ever seen. The weather again was glorious, sun shining and really rather warm. It was warm enough that some people were swimming in the sea – but not us I hasten to add.



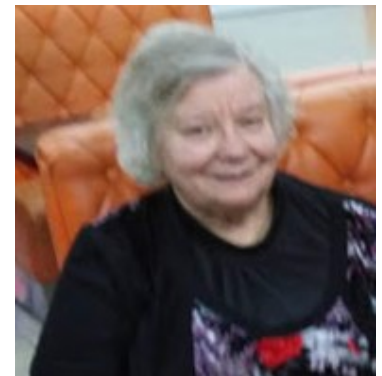
All too soon our five-day trip was over, and it was coach time to return to Sutton. We had a lovely time and visited places none of us had been to before. Even though I had been to Canterbury, and not remembered a thing, it was wonderful to go back. My childhood memories are intact and enhanced by 2022 memories, so, so much the better.

We live in a beautiful country and this sort of trip reminds you just how lucky we are that we are able to get out and enjoy it. Hope you get to do some travelling this year. Enjoy.

Written by Elaine Riley.

Report for March/April 2022 4th April 2022

Dear friends and prayer partners, Greetings again from the far north! At last there are clear signs of spring, even though we've had two significant snowfalls in the past two weeks. But most of the accumulated snow from the winter is thawing and we can again see the ground of the children's playground outside my apartment.



In 1990, my father died in May, then 5 weeks later my mother was murdered by an intruder, in the Philippines. I went back to the Philippines for a second funeral and spent about a month there. A few days after mum's funeral, there was a major earthquake there which cut off the main road to the north and caused many fatalities as well as enormous damage throughout the province. After all the stress of the two funerals and events surrounding this situation, Dianne and I had decided to go away for a brief holiday in the mountain regions about 150kms north of Hebron, the PCBM base where my parents lived till their last days.

We heard that the roads and bridges were destroyed but that people were getting through the long valley up into the mountains on foot, so we decided to go ahead with our plans. If they could walk, so could we! We found a way around the first destroyed bridge on the main road and set off.

With the river valley alongside there was often no alternative than to clamber over the resulting rubble. I was 48 at the time and it wasn't an easy trip! But it happened that at each of these major roadblocks, some other person, often an English speaker, would appear and offer to help us before going on and leaving us to continue our long journey again. It was over 50 kms through the destroyed valley and there were many villages where houses and vehicles with their inhabitants and passengers had been buried under the rubble of huge landslides of mud and stones.. Homes throughout the valley had been badly damaged or destroyed, especially those made of modern materials, whereas the traditional light timber and thatch buildings had survived much better.

There was no food or clean water available other than what each person carried with them. A military patrol reminded us that this was a region where there was danger of kidnapping for ransom by anti-government activists and our trip was not without its special dangers for us as opposed to the local people going to find their relatives.

It was a long trip that took us two days to complete with an overnight stop in a three walled house! [the front wall had collapsed!] The owners invited us in, gave us a couple of folding sunchairs to sleep in and shared their food with us. There were many things that happened and it would take too long to detail them all. But I felt a peculiar sense that this was a trip ordained of God and that there was some special lesson for me in what we were doing. But I had no idea what it was I was learning! We eventually came to the last obstacle where the road was completely covered with a vast scree slope and there was no hope of scrambling across the slope. We were pointed towards a track off the road some way back and mystified returned to that point. We found that there was a steep slope down the slippery side of a ravine and up the other side to the top of the pass. Some enterprising local children were making some money by carrying bags and helping people to get through. We heard of people who had fallen and broken their legs on the treacherous track. But there was no choice! It was ahead – or more than 50 kms back to where we had started! A small boy took my bag and I truly thought he would run away and I'd never see it again! But he stayed by my side all the way down and then up the other side for the more than two or three hours it took to negotiate the track.

He was clearly puzzled at my difficulties! He could have done it there and back in half an hour or so! But he stayed close and helped by putting my feet into safe places and pulling me or pushing as appropriate to my struggles. Eventually we crested the rise and saw in front of us a car park with cars and buses and tents full of provisions.

Government officials were even giving small packs of food and drink to each new arrival. I said to Dianne, 'I think I've died and gone to Heaven!' In a short time we were rested and the small boy paid a good sum for his services as he returned my backpack. We were able to continue the rest of our trip by bus and stayed in our destination for a week or so before returning to Manila by air, thanks to MAF! I returned eventually to Australia, sure that the Lord had taught me something very important. But I still had no idea what it was!

In 1993 just as I was about to depart for Russia, the Lord stopped me after a morning service in Melbourne and said, 'Now. About that trip in the Philippines!' He sat me down and explained to me in a few minutes what it all meant. He told me that my time in Russia was like that trip. It would be a long journey filled with dangers and many obstacles. The road would be uphill all the way, with many places where there seemed no way out. But just as someone had drawn alongside and helped at each such place on the trip, so there would be people He would send to me to be my helpers and to overcome the obstacles. He would be with me all the way and I would be protected from harm. He didn't explain the last bit with the ravine, but I clearly understood that the 'small boy' who carried my bag and stuck to me like a leech, was a picture of the Holy Spirit who would carry the load and help me with every step.

What the ravine is, I don't know! But I do know He never leaves me for one second! One of those helpers is a man who seems to have adopted me as a 'favourite aunty' or something, for no obvious reason. He has helped me for many years with all my travel needs and even organises my tickets and manages my frequent flyer miles! Right now he has suggested a way that might help us to obtain some of the funds we need to continue working. I'm waiting on his reply! Apparently, I cannot leave the country to go to Aus or NZ as I had thought might be possible. If I even decided to go to the UK it would have to be via Moscow, Sochi and then Istanbul!

It's the only available route, although there are some ways through China - but that is difficult as it's not user friendly for people with mobility issues! Consequently, I am unlikely to travel anywhere this year, despite what I said in my last report.

I am beginning to understand the pressures on Moses, who took his entire nation with all their children and livestock into the desert where there was no guaranteed supply of water or food of any kind! I've only got a group of 15-20 workers and the people we've been helping! In my own life I have many times seen God's miraculous provision for me and my family. I KNOW He provides! He's the God of the impossible! Watch this space! I'll try to keep you posted as He shows us His way through these difficulties! Thank you for your prayers! They are very much needed and appreciated! Jehovah Jireh!

Tatyana Matveevna is continuing her treatment and we are all praying and trusting God for her complete healing. We continue to support in various ways 9 small Family Groups that meet weekly in various places. We also support a group for disabled young people led by a former student from the University. She is now studying for a law degree in addition to her first qualification as an English language teacher and interpreter. This person is a leader in the city and her services have been significantly recognised by local authorities. They were given free use of a meeting space with access - but have to pay for the electricity. We cover this latter cost as her clients are all pensioners with little income!

Our support of mothers and babies continues through the Newham House project, where we again cover the costs of monthly service charges on the apartment. This is a rather large amount but it is also essential as running up a debt will eventually lead to losing the property! We are already facing acute shortages of things such as medications, printing paper and stationery supplies, various food products and so on. We need your prayers. Rising fuel costs and service charges are also affecting us. Thank you for your continuing prayers and support for our work. Believe me. It is very necessary.

God bless and keep you.
Yours in Him, C Joy McRae

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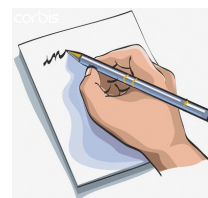
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READERS' LETTERS



Dear Penny,

Thank you for the April magazine, how can it be April again?

I particularly enjoy Angela's contribution, Churchyard Tales and this month's poem about plurals.

As you know I forward this on to my friend in New Zealand who then sends it on to another Sutton girl (?) in New Zealand. We are all 78 years young and went to Sutton High in the 1950's.

Even though I struggle with technology at times, this is the most wonderful way to stay in touch with our roots.

Best wishes to you and all your contributors.

Jackie (from Australia)

Crufts (10th – 13th March 2022)

Crufts is the world's greatest dog show! Organised by The Kennel Club, the show celebrates every aspect of the role that dogs play in our lives. Over 20,000 dogs, representing 222 pedigree breeds, competed for the world class title of Crufts Best in Show, and my two Golden Retrievers, Brodie and Harley, were there in the Gundog show ring on the Sunday, the final day of the show! We didn't win, but I was so proud just to be there with them and we thoroughly enjoyed the occasion.

Crufts in Numbers:

This year was the 118th year of Crufts.

There are 7 groups: Gundog, Pastoral, Hound, Utility, Terrier, Working and Toy.

1,843 was the number of dogs from overseas entered into the show this year.

Over 5,000 people volunteered at Crufts 2022, from stewards to breed experts in the Discover Dogs area.

Hundreds of crossbreeds take part in Crufts, through agility, flyball, obedience, heelwork to music, Scruffts and The Kennel Club Hero Dog Award competitions.

83 – The number of years the Best in Show prize has been awarded.

7 is the number of times a Cocker Spaniel has won Best in Show – more than any other breed.

38 was the total number of countries with dogs entered into Crufts this year.

All 20,000+ show dogs had to qualify for the right to be there.

Throughout the year, there are many dog shows but the only way to qualify for Crufts is to be placed first, second or third at one of the big Championship Shows, which are the highest level of dog show in the UK. There is usually a large entry for all of the Golden Retriever classes at these shows, so qualification is never easy. Shows are held throughout the year but due to Covid, many shows were cancelled last year, and this made qualification harder than usual. Our first opportunity to qualify wasn't until July 2021. However, both Brodie & Harley qualified for Crufts at only their third show of the year, the National Dog Show on 23rd September 2021. Such an exciting day!!

Gundog day at Crufts was on Sunday 13th March and was eagerly anticipated. However before that, we were invited to take part in 'Discover Dogs' on the Saturday afternoon. If you love dogs, but can't decide between a Labrador and a Lhasa Apso, then the 'Discover Dogs' area is the place to be. 'Discover Dogs' hosted over 200 breeds of pedigree dog for the general public to meet, talk to knowledgeable owners and breeders, gain first hand advice on grooming, training and whether the breed is right for them. We were with Brodie & Harley in the Golden Retriever section, and we spent a thoroughly enjoyable afternoon talking to many adults and children about the breed in general and our two dogs in particular. Both of them loved the fuss and attention!



The following day, Debbie and I woke very early and made our way to the NEC, arriving well before 8.00 am. The first class began at 8.30. We knew that our classes would not take place until late morning, but it was important for us to be there early in order to locate our ring and to settle the dogs in good time. Our breeder had travelled from North Wales the day before in order to support us, so we had plenty of time to chat with her and to prepare for our debut in the ring. "Don't be nervous. It is just another show, albeit a big one!" was the advice that I was given. Very good advice as it turned out.



Harley was in the ring first in the Undergraduate Dog class. There were 19 entries in his class and as I walked into the ring, I was conscious of the enormous size of the ring and the large number of people sat around the sides. However, remembering the advice that I had been given, I wasn't too nervous, and we took our place in the line of dogs around

the edge of the ring, all standing as Harley is in the photo.

The judge walks along the line, having a general first look at every dog. She then looks very closely at each dog individually, examining the bone structure and overall looks in accordance with the breed standard. She also looks closely at the movement of the dog across the ring. Harley stood and moved beautifully, and I was very proud of him. When the judge had looked at every individual dog, it was decision time, and she chose her top 5 dogs. Harley wasn't one of them, but he was the best looking dog in my eyes!

Immediately after Harley's class had finished, it was Brodie's turn in the Graduate Dog class. It was such a quick turnaround that I forgot to change my number and momentarily thought that I wasn't going to take part! Once again, there were 19 dogs in the ring and the judging process was exactly the same. Brodie wasn't placed but, just like Harley, he did everything that I asked and expected of him, and I was just as proud as I had been with Harley.



It is said that it is not the winning that matters, it is the taking part. That was certainly true for us at Crufts 2022. Since I started showing Brodie 4½ years ago, that was our ultimate goal and we have now achieved it. Soon, we will be participating in Championship Shows once more and the aim will be to qualify for Crufts 2023. However, we always take the best dogs' home with us, wherever they are placed!

Pete Swaine



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THE GUILD AT ST MICHAEL'S

The Guild has now moved its meetings to Monday afternoons
2pm-4pm in the Church Hall.

*Everyone welcome — Ladies & Gentlemen
(Small charge for visitors)*

Our Programme for the next three months will be:

- 9th May - I K Brunel in Birmingham - Graham Jennings
- 6th June - Celebration of the Queens Platinum Jubilee
- 4th July - Visit to Winterbourne House, Edgbaston

We Were There

Passion and Holy Week retreat at home

Following on from the success of previous Retreats at Home, it was decided that we would have another one this year during the Season of Lent.

Luke's account of the passion has been used, as this is the gospel for the lectionary this year. Ten passages were chosen that tell the story of the passion and the ten people taking part were asked to imagine that they were one of Jesus' disciples, one who is on the periphery, but who have entered Jerusalem and seen the excitement, someone who will have some understanding – BUT NOT the insider knowledge that the 12 apostles would be privy to. The disciples are not named, they are the eyes and ears of the reader, giving an insight to the events that happened in that passage. Every person taking part in the reflections wrote their own story, each is unique to that person, it is their take on the story.

To bring some continuity to the retreat, we used the same prayer at the beginning of each person's reflection.

Let us pray:

In his account of Jesus's passion, Luke takes us from Bethphage and Bethany to Jerusalem; from the Temple to the room upstairs; from the Mount of Olives to the High Priest's house; from Pilate to Herod; from Pilate to the place called the Skull; from the cross to the rock-hewn tomb. God of the Passion, open our hearts, our souls, our minds through the movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives as we travel another step of this journey with your Son Jesus today.

Amen.

Monday 4th April: Jerusalem– Luke 19: 28-47.
Rev Gary Birchall.



'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord'

'I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.'

Here we come, walking down the street, getting funniest looks from everyone we meet.

What's that we are shouting? Over and over again. 'Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!' That's a turn up for the books. I've rarely heard that said about

Jesus. He's been called all kinds of things. He's even talked about the kingdom of God. But for him to be called a King, that's so not Jesus. Servant. Shepherd. Mother Hen. Maybe. Blasphemer. Devil. Most certainly. But not king.

It must be because he's riding on that colt we picked up for him. He's even sitting on my cloak which I threw on the back of it. We've got quite carried away with ourselves. We always walked around Galilee. We walked all the way down to Jerusalem. This crowd are easily impressed it seems. Just put Jesus on a colt and they are falling all over him. Throwing their cloaks on the road in front of him. Brings a bit of excitement to their day.

I wonder how many of them have any real idea who he is. Certainly not a king in any conventional way of looking at things. I wonder what they are expecting of him.

This is a big moment. Descending into Jerusalem. Coming down from the villages of Bethphage and Bethany. All of us who have travelled down from Galilee to Jerusalem with Jesus. The ones of us who had not turned back. Or found better things to do. Or had got blasé about the miracles. Or found his teaching too challenging. Here we were and we've got into a real rhythm with the chant. 'Blessed is the King. Who comes in the name. The name of the Lord'

Why have we stopped? Ah. Some of those serious guys are up ahead. Pharisees. They are shouting at Jesus. "Stop that blasphemy that your disciples are shouting. Tell them to be silent."

And Jesus did his thing. Pausing for a moment. Holding the silence and the tension. What would he say? Never any bluster. Never careless with his words. 'I tell you if these were silent, the stones would shout out.' That's it Jesus. Just remind them again that they can't always get what they want. But it's put a bit of a dampener on the day.

He goes on to tell them that they have missed the opportunity for peace. He tells them the city will be destroyed. All because they did not recognise this visitation from God. We walk on. More sombre like now to the temple. It's magnificent and crowded. We go inside. What's he doing now. Turning over the tables. Goodness, his mood has changed.

'My house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers'

OK. This may not turn out as well as we had hoped for.

Tuesday 5th April: Questions and Answers– Luke 20: 1-26. Jane Newsome.



It's like my second home this place. I've spent my life in and out of this temple. Mostly because of my Daniel. He worked on this building for the whole of his life. Master builder he was, or that's what he used to call himself. And there was always work here. Always something to do. Bits needed mending. Bits added to. More

ambitious building to show off how great Herod is. Did I really say that?!

And I love listening to all those who come. They all have an opinion. All have something that they think we should all hear. And always - Questions, questions, questions. People trying to impress. How much they have read. How clever they are.

How well they understand the scriptures. Sometimes I think they make their argument as complicated as possible because they don't really understand themselves, or they don't really know what they believe.

But this one, he's different. I've seen him before. I remember him as a young lad, came up to Jerusalem from the countryside with his parents when he was about 12, I guess. They had come for Passover, and he had stayed behind in the Temple, unbeknown to his parents.

I remember his poor mum; she was frantic looking for him. And then there he was, cool as a cucumber, chatting with the elders. Asking them questions. Listening to their answers.

There was something about him then, young as he was. There was something really special about him. A confidence without being cocky. A politeness without being creepy. And so intelligent. He certainly knew his scriptures. He made quite an impression. I often wondered what had happened to him.

So, when I saw that he had come back to Jerusalem, well, I really wanted to hear him. Still that same look about him. But of course, he's older now. We all are. It was 20 years ago.

But he hasn't become pompous, he's not standoffish like lots of clever people are, those who know that they are clever, and that people want to hear them. It often goes to their heads. They are not easy to approach. But there's a kindness about him. It's as if he knows what our day to day lives are about. And he talks about ordinary things, things I can understand, and he makes you feel that those things are important.

I guess that's why the temple leaders don't like him. They are threatened by him.

He's different, and we don't like different, do we? And so, while he was talking to us all in the Temple Courtyard, they came to have a go at him didn't they. Asked what authority he had to be talking to the people in the Temple. The temple elders, all those clever men, some of them will remember him from when he was a lad debating with them, but they won't let on. He's not a promising young lad they can mould into one of their number. He's a troublemaker, filling the heads of the likes of me with dangerous thoughts, putting them in a difficult position with the Romans.

They have to be careful of course. Can't have anyone saying anything that could make the Romans sit up and listen. And they don't want to look fools themselves.

But he runs rings around them when they try to catch him out with their not so clever questions. It's as if he looks deep into their hearts when they talk to him, so that he knows their reasons for asking the questions. And what is even more dangerous for him: they know he knows. They scuttled away, looking both cross and embarrassed.

I had to laugh, although of course not in a way that anyone could see, but he's looking tired today. Dark circles under his eyes. And the stories he's telling today are quite sad. The story of that poor lad who got killed because his father sent him to collect the rent from his tenants in the vineyard. That's a sad story. I wonder what he's trying to tell us.

The thing is, for Daniel and me, the temple became the most important thing in our lives. It was what we talked about what fed us where our social life was. And where all the gossip was!

But maybe it became too important. Maybe we forgot why the place was built in the first place. Maybe we forgot what it was for. Maybe we forgot about God. But that's hard isn't it. There are some things it's too difficult to think about. Leave them to the scholars, that's their job. The thing is, this lad, this Jesus, he speaks to you, yes, it's as if he's speaking directly to you, as if it all **is** your business. And he said something today that really made me think. You see Daniel was forever bringing home bits of rock that he said would one day come in handy. We have a great pile of Temple rocks in our back yard. I used to joke that he was building his very own temple in our back yard. And today Jesus talked about the stone that the builder rejected. Well, I could show him a few of them!

Of course, I've heard that verse before, it's in our prayer book, but I've never really thought about it before. But today when Jesus said that verse: "*The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone*".

Well, I thought about all those bits of discarded rock, all the bits that didn't go to building this great big place. And I thought: There are lots of us who feel discarded, silly old widows like me who nobody really takes seriously any longer. People who don't have the right authority to speak what's on their minds. And it's to the likes of us that Jesus speaks.

Sometimes Daniel would rummage through that pile of discarded stones and pick one up and say: "That's just the one I need!" Maybe Jesus is just the person we need! But they are all ganging up against him. I've seen this sort of thing before. It's not going to end well for him. I looked into his eyes as the temple authorities sent more people to try and catch him out with their questions, and I saw a real sadness. There will be tough times ahead for him and maybe for the rest of us too I wonder what will become of him?

Wednesday 6th April: Final Answers— Luke 20: 27-47.
Andrew Menniss.



I haven't got a clue what's going on. I don't understand what's happening, and I'm not sure I understand who this Jesus is any more. It all seemed so simple to begin with, but now it's scary and complicated. There are so many questions, I've got so many questions, and I don't know where we can find the answers.

They're all at it. The scribes, the priests, the Pharisees; bombarding him with questions, stupid questions mainly. And now the Sadducees, with the most stupid question of the lot.

Jesus warned us all that things would hot up once we got to Jerusalem. He even said some strange things about being killed, but we can't believe that will happen, he's too good, and if it's true that he's who he says he is, then surely God won't let that happen. Jesus warned us alright, but he didn't warn us about the stupid questions.

Listen to this daft question that that those supposedly clever Sadducees put to him. They said "a man who had seven brothers married a woman.

He died and so the woman married the next brother, the same happened to him so, she married the next. This kept happening so in the end she had been married to all seven brothers". I don't know what she must have put in their dinner! Anyway, the Sadducees question is this; "in the resurrection who will be her husband?" What a stupid question, this maybe something you might make up a rude song about, but it's pretty unlikely to happen.

Anyway, Jesus soon put them right. "Your idea of the resurrection and heaven is too small. It's not like here on earth; with God everything will be sorted out and we'll all be like angels", I sort of understood that. Then he mentioned Abraham and Isaac and that seemed to shut them up. But of course, he didn't stop there, he went on about the Christ, and David, and the Psalms; but I really didn't understand that. There's so much I don't understand any more. It all seemed so simple and straightforward to start with, that's why I tagged along with him, because what he said seemed to make sense of my messy life.

I've got so much wrong and hurt so many people but when I listened to him, I could see there was a real me, a good me, trying to get out. All those stories he told, some worried me but most of them made me feel warm inside, especially the one about the runaway son who came back to his dad.

He told us we were forgiven everything. I have to admit that brought tears to my eyes. Then he taught us about love and then it all fell into place. Love God, love those around me, even love me! Wow, that was a revelation.

I just can't understand why some people get so cross with him, especially those in authority. In the end he told us to keep well away from them. Especially those scribes, those lawyers who keep asking those questions and then twisting everything he said and are so full of their own importance.

I just don't understand it anymore! So...I'm going to keep my head down and watch from the sidelines. Perhaps things will eventually become clear and at last I'll finally understand what's going on.

I feel frightened and fear for the worst but perhaps, just perhaps, what happens next will give me the final answer about who this Jesus really is and what his life will mean for us.

Until then all I can do is pray. He gave me the confidence to pray this, it's from Psalm 139.

Search me out, O God, and know my heart; try me and examine my thoughts. See if there is any way of wickedness in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Amen.

Compiled by Elaine Riley.

"To A Butterfly" (1801) by William Wordsworth

I've watched you now a full half-hour;
Self-poised upon that yellow flower
And, little Butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless!-not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!
This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my Sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us on the bough!
We'll talk of sunshine and of song,
And summer days, when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.
Stay near me-do not take thy flight!
A little longer stay in sight!
Much converse do I find in thee,
Historian of my infancy!
Float near me; do not yet depart!
Dead times revive in thee:
Thou bring'st, gay creature as thou art!
A solemn image to my heart,
My father's family!

In Christ Alone

In Christ alone my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My comforter, my all in all
Here in the love of Christ I stand

In Christ alone who took on flesh
Fullness of God in helpless babe
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
Till on that cross as Jesus died
The wrath of God was satisfied
For every sin on Him was laid
Here in the death of Christ I live

There in the ground His body lay
Light of the world by darkness slain
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me
For I am His and He is mine
Bought with the precious blood of Christ

No guilt in life, no fear in death
This is the power of Christ in me
From life's first cry to final breath
Jesus commands my destiny
No power of hell, no scheme of man
Can ever pluck me from His hand
Till He returns or calls me home
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand

Source: [LyricFind](#)

Songwriters: Keith Getty / Stuart Townend

In Christ Alone lyrics © Capitol CMG Publishing

"In Christ Alone" is a famous contemporary Christian hymn written by Keith Getty and Stuart Townend, both musicians of Christian worship music in the United Kingdom. This hymn has a strong Irish melody and is the first song they wrote together. Read the lyrics and the background story of this famous hymn below!

The Story Behind In Christ Alone



Songwriter Stuart Townend grew up as the youngest of four children in a Christian family in West Yorkshire, England, where his father was a vicar in the Church of England. The Townend family always enjoyed music, and young Stuart began to play the piano at the age of seven. Known and respected today by musicians and worship leaders throughout Britain and beyond, his involvement in Christian music dates back over 10 years.

During this time, Townend has used his talents to produce albums for British-based worship leaders as diverse as John Pantry, Keith Routledge, Sue Rinaldi, Vinesong and Praise Gathering. As an artist, he has made two solo albums: *Say the Word* and *Personal Worship*. But it is perhaps as a songwriter that Stuart has made his most enduring contribution to the contemporary worship movement.

Written in 2002, "In Christ Alone" was a collaborative effort between Townend and fellow songwriter (and now good friend) Keith Getty. "The song came about in an unusual way," Townend explains. "Keith and I met in the autumn of 2000 at a worship event, and we resolved to try to work together on some songs.



A few weeks later Keith sent some melody ideas, and the first one on the CD was a magnificent, haunting melody that I loved, and immediately started writing down some lyrical ideas on what I felt should be a timeless theme commensurate with the melody. So the theme of the life, death, resurrection of Christ, and the implications of that for us just began to tumble out, and when we got together later on to fine tune it, we felt we had encapsulated what we wanted to say."

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Groups & Organisations

MONDAY

The Guild	2.00 - 4pm 1st Monday of month	Church Hall
Contact	Angela Grudzinski	373 1899
Cubs	6.30 - 8pm	Scout HQ

WEDNESDAY

Luncheon Club	12.30pm	Church Hall
Contact	Ruth Yates	354 4248
Rainbows	5.00 – 6.00	Church Hall
	stmichaelsrainbows@yahoo.com	
Brownies	6.15 – 7.30	Church Hall
	stmichaels.brownies@yahoo.com	
Contact	Liz Claybrook	07906 958532
Guides	7.00 - 8.30pm	Church Hall
Contact	Hayley Bryer	07876 361952
Email	hayleydench@hotmail.co.uk	
Bellringers	7.00-8.00pm	Church Tower
Contact	Dave Reeves	354 6264

THURSDAY

Knit & Natter	2.00-4.00	Communithea
Contact	Ruth Murray	608 3599
Scouts	7.30 - 9pm	Scout HQ

FRIDAY

Flower Guild	Friday Mornings	Church
Contact	Chris Reeves	354 6264
Beavers	6.15-7.30	Scout HQ
For Beavers, Cubs and Scouts		
Contact	Bob Moore	07930 543747
Email	moorera@blueyonder.co.uk	

CHURCHYARD TALES

by Peter Knight

The Churchyard has been in the history of this Parish for over 160 years, and has become the final resting place to generations.

Here is one of its stories.....

William CARPENTER (1840 – 1902) – aged 62 years

Mary Ann CARPENTER (1844 – 1926) – aged 82 years

Ada PALMER nee CARPENTER **(1885 – 1924)** – aged 39 years

Albert CARPENTER (1873 – 1931) – aged 58 years

Emily Haskey CARPENTER (1879 – 1965) – aged 86 years

William CARPENTER was born in the village of Sherfield-on-Lodden, Hampshire and was the son of Ann and William (a Police Constable). William was brother to Mary and James (b: 1834), Ann (b: 1836) and George (b: 1846), and they lived on Farm Street, Sherfield-on-Loddon. The village of Sherfield-on-Loddon, is situated about 12 miles south of Reading and originally formed part of the estate of the Manor of Sherfield.



Longbridge Mill, Sherfield-on-Loddon St Leonard's Church Sherfield-on-Loddon

William's father, a Police Constable was one of the first officers of the newly formed Hampshire County Constabulary which formed in December 1839. The new Constabulary had just 91 Constables earning 18 shillings per week (£99 today) at a time when labourers were earning 8-9 shillings per week (£45 today).

By 1861, the family had located to Birmingham and lived on Howard Street situated on the edge of the Jewellery and Gun Quarters of Birmingham. William's father continued as a Police Constable having joined the Birmingham Town Police (*forerunner to Birmingham City Police and now West Midlands Police*)

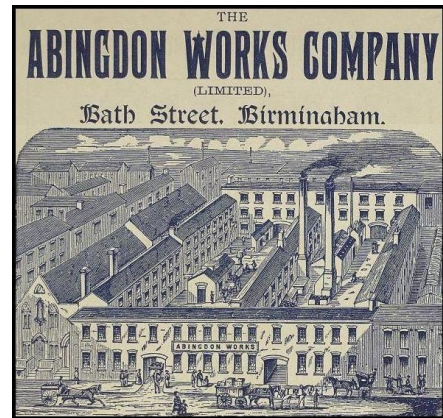


Mary Ann HASKEY was born in Aston in January 1844 the daughter of Mary Ann and William and was sister to Thomas (b: 1846), James (b: 1846) and Benjamin (b: 1849) and in 1851 the family lived at 3 Aston Road, Aston Manor. Mary's father William was a Journeyman. (*a qualified tradesman in his own right, who worked for someone else often on a day-by-day basis*).

By 1861 the family had moved to 7 Rocky Lane, Aston and had increased to include further siblings; Maria (b: 1852), Henry (b: 1854), George (b: 1857), Sarah Ann (b: 1859) and Emily (b: 1861). William met Mary and the couple married in Aston in April 1866. The couple moved to Clifford Street, Aston (now Lozells, and near to the Gun Quarter) and went on to have 8 children: William Henry (b&d: 1867 aged 5 months), James Edward (b: 1869), **Albert** (b: 1873), Walter (b: 1878), **Emily Haskey** (b: 1879), Arthur (b: 1882), **Ada** (b: 1884) and Wilfred (b: 1891).

With plenty of work available, William began working in the nearby Birmingham Gun Quarter.

By 1868 there were 578 gun firms in Birmingham, employing almost half of all those employed in this trade throughout the whole of England and Wales. These 'gun makers' did not usually manufacture the gun parts or even assemble them, with parts independently manufactured by specialist sub-contractors, and assembled by fabricators or setters-up, the 'makers' commissioned and marketed the complete guns.



Staff from one of the many gun makers of Birmingham

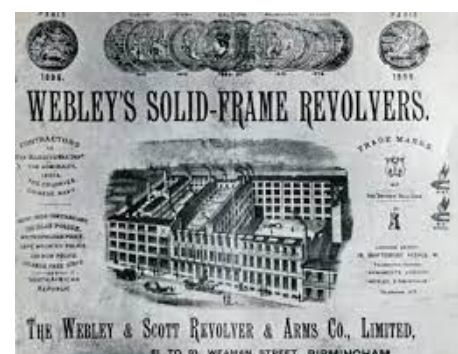
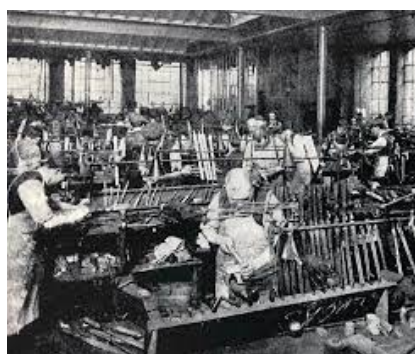
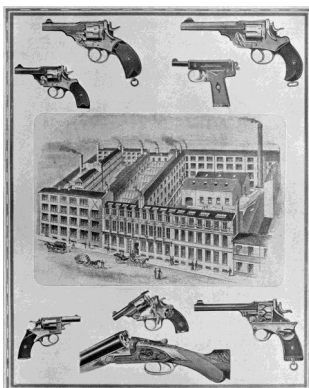
William spent his whole working life in the gun trade, becoming first a percussioner.

The percussion firing gun was the evolution from the flintlock firing system. Percussion weapons remained in general use until the 1860-70's when the British Army moved to the more accurate cartridge loading weapons.



Flintlock pistol (1547-1860) Percussion pistol (from c1800) Cartridge Pistol (from c1847)

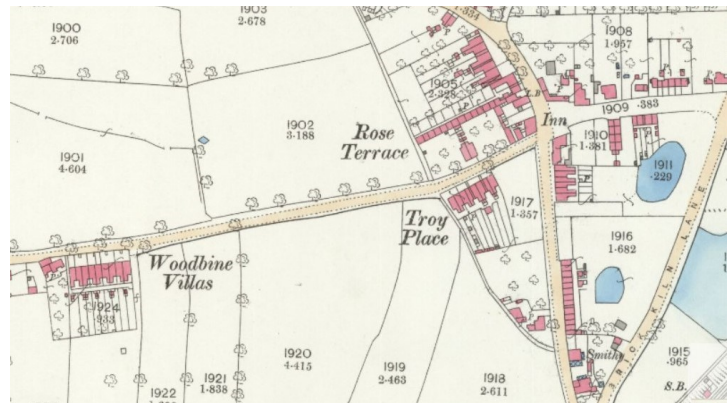
With the development of weaponry, William moved on to become Gun Furniture Filer, making the separate parts for the firearms.



With the growth of William and Mary's family, by 1881 they had moved to Trafalgar Road, Nechells (which ran parallel to Long Acre – the map below from about 1880 and a typical Nechells Street of the time)



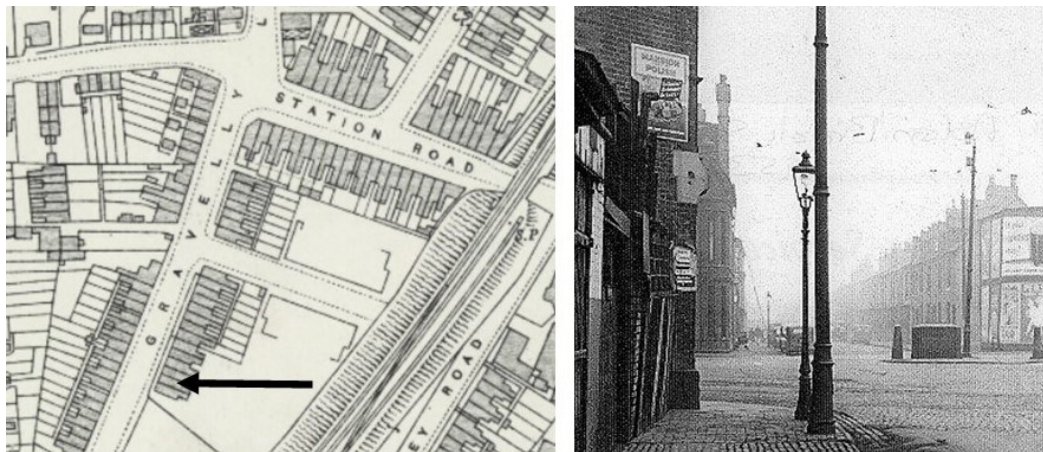
By the time of the census on 5th April 1891, the family were resident at 5 Woodbine Villas, Marsh Lane, Erdington. Woodbine Villas was a terrace of 9 houses situated a few hundred yards along Marsh Lane from its junction with Court Lane.



William and Mary's older sons had both become tradesmen; James had become a Tailor and Albert had followed his father into the Gun Trade and was also a Gun Furniture Filer.

By 1901 William and Mary had moved again and now lived at 3 Gravelly Lane, Erdington. Following on from the examples laid down by their older brothers, Emily had become a Dressmaker, Ada a Teacher and Wilfred joined James, becoming a Tailor in his brother's business of *J.E. CARPENTER Tailors*. Albert was now working for Webley's Gun Makers of Birmingham.

It was at 3 Gravelly Lane that on 13th July 1902 aged 62 years that **William** died. On 17th July 1902 following a service held at St Michael's Church he was buried in the churchyard.



Map showing 3 Gravelly Lane and photo taken c1950 with Station Road Erdington on the left and looking towards Aston.

Ada Carpenter, became a teacher employed by Warwick County Council Schools. She later married Frank Thomas PALMER in the summer of 1921 in Aston. Frank's father owed a Grocers shop in Market Harborough, Leicestershire and the couple moved there with Frank taking over the business. On 11th February 1924 aged just 39 years Ada died and was buried with her father.

Mary Ann, William's wife moved from Gravelly Lane to live with her daughter Emily at 'Glenray' 137 Slade Road, Roughly, Sutton Coldfield. She died there aged 82 years on 18th August 1926 and was buried with her husband.

Albert Carpenter, worked in the Gun Trade like his father. In 1900 he married Mary Green (b: 1873 in Nettlebed Oxfordshire) in Aston and they boarded at 133 Westfield Road, Kings Heath in the home of William Chamberlain a Piano Forte Tuner and his wife. Tragedy struck Albert in 1908 when aged just 35 Mary died. Albert moved back to live with his mother for a time but later met Nellie Shrimpton and they married in Birmingham in 1927. Albert and Nellie lived in Sparkbrook at 20 Oldfield Road. It was here on 25th October 1931 he died aged 58. He was also buried in the family grave.

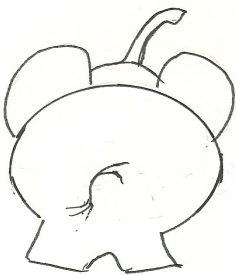
Emily Haskey Carpenter (her middle name was her mother's maiden name) never married and following the death of her mother in 1926 continued to live at 137 Slade Road, Roughly. Emily died on 6th September 1965 aged 86 and was laid to rest with the family at St Michael's churchyard. She left her estate of £3,717 (£76,700 today) to youngest brother Wilfred.

Visit our website at www.stmichaels.org.uk

Church Hall Lettings

For bookings ring:

Church Administrator 0121 373 0207



Tailing Off....

What a beautiful Easter Sunday. Our 2020 and 2021 celebration family lunches were cancelled due to Covid and it was really nice to have everyone together. An Easter Duck Hunt in the garden and plenty of good company and chocolate!

I'm coming to the end of my time as Editor of this magazine. This is my eighth year and it's time to move on.

If anyone feels that they'd like to take on the role - no experience necessary and it's very rewarding. I shall be on hand to help if needed and I will miss it! Penny

Magazine articles please for the

JUNE

magazine to:

jenningspenny@aol.com

By 10th May 2022

WHO'S WHO AT ST MICHAEL'S

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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.

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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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