

THE PARISH MAGAZINE

March 2023

Come to me, all you
that are weary and
are carrying heavy
burdens, and I will
give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

**The United Benefice of
St Michael Lichfield, with St John, Wall**

£1

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LARGE COPIES of the
magazine are available
on request

Reflection

Finding rest

Matthew's Gospel is very appropriate for our Gospel readings in Lent this year because at the heart of the Gospel is an open invitation. It's an invitation to find rest.

To find rest is to find salvation; and in Matthew, the one who offers rest is Jesus. That's good news for people who feel exhausted, who feel that life is too much to bear. Here is Jesus' invitation:

'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light' (Matt 11.28-30).

All kinds of people in the Gospel story receive this invitation and find rest: so there's usually someone in the story we can identify with. There are ordinary Galilean fishermen, like Peter and Andrew, and James and John. There are lots of sick people, like the leper, the paralysed man, Peter's sick mother-in-law, and the Canaanite woman's daughter. There are also great crowds of hungry people—people hungry for food, and hungry for someone to lead them with wisdom and compassion.

But Matthew shows that, tragically, it's also possible to reject the invitation. There are, in fact, two ways, says Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. There's the 'narrow' way that leads to life, and there's the 'broad' way that leads to death. And the tragedy is that it's often the people with all the natural advantages of wealth, education, position in life, and even piety, who make the wrong choice. The Jesus of

Matthew does not pull his punches. That's why the Sermon on the Mount ends with a little parable with a simple contrast: between the wise man who builds his house on the rock and the foolish man who builds on the sand. And guess what happens when the storms of life come!

So what does Matthew set out as the way to life? What is the 'easy yoke' and the 'light burden' that leads to true peace ('rest')? First, there's a necessary letting go, a kind of dying. It's as if the channels which allow God's grace and power to flow have to be unblocked. That's what the Beatitudes are about: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted' (5.3-4). Then, second, there's active engagement in doing what God wants—as in the Lord's Prayer: 'Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven' (6.10).

There's an invitation to true, wholehearted humanity here. Above all, there's Matthew's unrivalled emphasis on the love commandment (22.34-40) and on what Jesus calls the 'weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith' (23.23). Here is the basis for learning to live a whole new way of life, not just at the personal level, but out in the community as well.

In Matthew's Gospel, we are given Jesus' teaching and example to follow. It's not a bed of roses. As the story progresses, opposition to Jesus increases and comes to a climax with his rejection and crucifixion. But that's not where the story ends. It ends instead with the resurrection. It is a wonderful message of hope.

So let's hear Jesus' invitation again: 'Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.' That's what makes Matthew's Gospel so right for our readings in Lent.

Stephen C. Barton (Rev.)

All are welcome at our

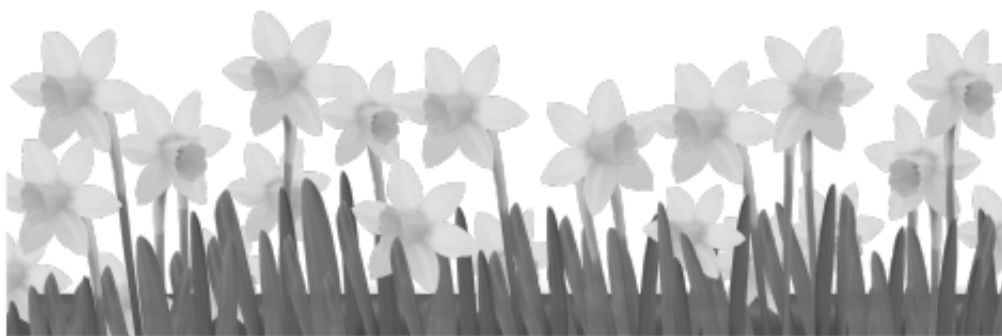
MOTHERING SUNDAY SERVICE

19th March 10am
@ St Michael's Church

A lively service for all ages

Children will be able to make a flower posey

Tea, coffee, squash and cake afterwards



Finding a Voice: Lent course

It's not too late to join the lent course. The session in March are on

1st March - Chasing the dream or fulfilling the calling

8th March - Pressing forward and breaking through

15th March - Poisonous words and profane responses

22nd March - Faith in our voice

Regular Services and Worship in the Benefice

Regular Services at St Michael's

Sundays

8:00am Holy Communion

10:00am Holy Communion

1st Sunday

10:00am Family Praise

Wednesdays

9.30am Holy Communion

Thursdays

9.30am Morning Prayer

Regular Services at St John's

Sundays

10am Holy Communion

Baptism @ 11.30am

Last Sunday of the month

Other Services at St Michael's

Sundays

1st Monday 10.00am

First Steps

2nd Sunday 4:30pm

Messy Church

3rd Sunday 6:00pm

Choral Evensong

Last Sunday 12:30pm

Holy Baptism

Music in the Benefice

St Michael's Church

Wednesdays

6.00pm Junior Choir Rehearsal

6:30pm Senior Choir Rehearsal
(except on the Weds before 1st Sunday)

Friday before 1st Sunday

7:30pm Music Group & Senior
Choir Rehearsal

Baptism Preparation

First Saturday 10:30am

at St Michael's

Bells Practice

Every Thurs 7:30pm, St Michael's

CHILDREN'S SERVICES & ACTIVITIES

Family Praise

Sunday

5th March

10am St Michael's



First Steps

Monday 13th March

10am—11.30am

Come and join us at our ...

MESSY CHURCH

for craft, story, song and food on

SUNDAY 12TH MARCH

4.30 – 5.45pm

in St Michael's Church

Ages 0-11 yrs. welcome



Deadlines!

For **April** Magazine: Deadline is

SUNDAY 12th March

Please send articles to David Shiel

AND the Parish Office

shielfamily@gmail.com

office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk

Pew Sheet:

every Thursday

7:30am

Contact

Parish Office



It's been nearly a year since I took over leading Messy Church from Ruth and I thought that now would be a good time give some feedback.

Ruth did a great job starting Messy Church up again after the pandemic, but even this time last year, we were still feeling our way through the end of restrictions, with people just beginning to feel a little more confident about joining in with activities again. We had a small, loyal group, but attendance was a bit inconsistent and planning for activities and catering felt precarious at times.

We now have around twenty families who enjoy Messy Church and generally 12-15 children come each month with their parents, carers or grandparent. It's been wonderful to see families coming to Church, the children running in, eager to join in with the activities and there is a lovely blossoming atmosphere within the adult group. Its also very heartening to see fathers coming to Church with their children. Each month our activities are planned around a theme, which have included the Old Testament figures, Noah and Jonah, Remembrance, the Nativity and Epiphany. We also held a "Light Party" after school on October 31st, which was much appreciated by many of the parents.

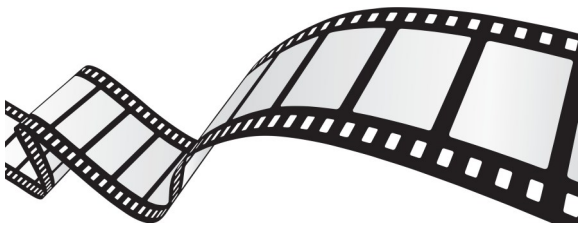
We have a small, but super team of dedicated helpers, who lead activity groups, mostly from our Church family, but it now includes two parents from the Messy Church congregation. The three ladies who cater for Messy Church teas are equally committed and very well organised. Teatime brings everyone together and is a great way to end each month's Messy Church - the December Christmas party tea was a truly joyous occasion.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all the helpers who are making Messy Church so successful. Obviously, we would love to welcome new volunteers, which would spread the load a little. I plan and prepare all the crafts and activities in advance and send out instructions, so if anyone is interested, they don't need to worry about

planning or it being a big commitment.

As we move forward we will need to further consider how we implement Messy Church principles, the practicalities of growth, the size of the building and the resourcing of activities and teas. However, this is such an exciting opportunity for us at St Michaels and a wonderful way to share our faith.

Alison Stevens



Film Club

at St Michael's Church

FREE ADMISSION AND REFRESHMENTS

Doors open at 2pm

Top Gun Maverick

(2022, 12A, 2h 10m Action/Drama)

After thirty years, Maverick is still pushing the envelope as a top naval aviator, but must confront ghosts of his past when he leads TOP GUN's elite graduates on a mission that demands the ultimate sacrifice from those chosen to fly it.

Mon 6th March 2.30pm start

**Tea/Coffee and Cake will be served
at the interval**

All welcome.

Save the Date: Next Film Club April 3rd



Following the by General Synod on the 9th February to issue prayers which would enable same-sex couples to come to church after a civil marriage or civil partnership to give thanks, dedicate their relationship to God and receive God's blessing, Bishop Michael writes:

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I welcome the decision made by General Synod today which followed hours of discussion and debate this week and several years of the Living in Love and Faith process.

At the same time, I recognise that this will be a sad and painful decision for many. They are in my prayers and I assure them that I and my brother and sister bishops stand ready to hear their concerns.

Synod's decision will mean in due course that ministers can pray with and bless LGBT+ people in permanent, faithful and loving relationships in Church of England churches. There will be no requirement on ministers to do this and we are committed to respecting our ministers' consciences and finding the best ways to support them in their ministry.

The proposals make no change to the Church of England's doctrine of Holy Matrimony. I recognise that this does not go far enough for many in the LGBT+ community and beyond, and that for others it goes too far.

I pray for patience and unity as the proposed Prayers of Love and Faith are refined and the new Pastoral Guidance is drawn up, and as we embark on this new journey together.

+Michael

ST MICHAEL'S CHURCHYARD PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

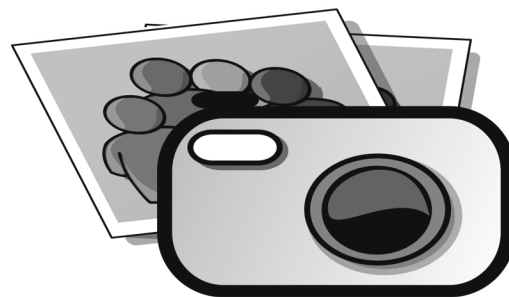
Theme: "Easter in St Michael's Churchyard"

To celebrate the Easter season and the spring beauty of our Churchyard we are inviting all who visit or pass through St Michael's Churchyard to submit their photos of the Churchyard in all its spring glory.

They will be judged by the Rector and local experts, in 3 age categories - primary school, secondary school and over 16, and there will be prizes for the winners! Submit your photos via email to stmichaellichfield@gmail.com **before Monday 17th April** with "PHOTOGRAPHY COMP" as the email subject, and let us know who the photographer is and which age category it should be judged in.

(If any people are present in photos they should not be identifiable)

The winners will be announced at our Family Praise service on Sunday 7th May at 10am and on facebook. Entries will be displayed on facebook and in Church so they can be enjoyed by everyone.



Revd Abbie Walsh

An environmental tip

The blister packs we have so many medicines in are two recyclable substances, plastic and aluminium which cannot be recycled in normal recycling.

However, Superdrug will recycle them if they have a pharmacy in store, so not Lichfield, but the Superdrug in Stafford definitely does. Maybe you know other Superdrug stores around which also have a pharmacy but it is certainly worth saving your empty medicine blister packs and recycling them when you can.

Chris Polhill



In January we held our AGM . The group has 33 members which includes one or two “indoor members” who are housebound. During the year we have welcomed speakers, held meditations, visited the National Memorial Arboretum and enjoyed a meal out. We have been pleased to welcome Abbie and are trying to help her with some of her plans for the church to engage with the wider community. A short service was led by June and Margaret with the theme being “take my heart and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee.”

At the February meeting we followed a Wave of Prayer service, led by Elizabeth and June during which we thought about M.U. groups world wide, all working to support marriage and family life in their communities. As our founder, Mary Sumner wrote “Let me touch as many lives as possible for Thee, whether through the word I speak, the prayer I breathe or the life I live”

We are looking forward to a lunch at “The Inkwell” at the end of the month. In March Lesley and Barbara will lead a meditation for Lady Day. Before that ,on 11th March we will be hosting a Lent lunch in church in aid of M.U. charities Our super soup-makers have promised their usual delicious selections and the bakers have chosen their cake recipes. Do Not Miss It.

Betty Lyne

BUILDING ON THE 'CAN DO'

Katy Newell-Jones challenges us to think about how we understand literacy.*

WHAT IS LITERACY? *It is more than just the skill of reading and writing. It includes the use of text, numbers and images. There are multiple forms of formal and non-formal literacy; each defined by the context, the language, background and intentions of those using it. Literacy skills, or literacies, are part of people's everyday lives and informing their identity and enhancing their ability to make sense of life, undertake tasks and communicate with others.*

When we talk of our own learning, whether it's a language or a skill, we may start by saying we 'can' or 'can't'. But we quickly move on to a more nuanced description, perhaps saying, 'I can order food but couldn't write a letter' or 'I can sew a button on but couldn't make a dress' or even 'I used to be able to wire a plug, but now I can't remember how to start.' Yet when we talk of communities and literacy, we are often quick to label a community or individuals as illiterate, assuming or implying (usually incorrectly) a complete lack of ability to read, write or manage numbers. We focus on what they *can't* do. They can't read our training manuals or health posters and we might assume that they need to be 'literate'. How useful is this assumption on our part?

What does it matter whether we understand the detail of what communities can and can't do in terms of literacy? Firstly, because if we know, then we can build on what they can already do, rather than starting from scratch. However, perhaps more importantly, we can support them in rediscovering hidden knowledge and skills, bringing with it a sense of pride, achievement and confidence in being able to apply those skills.

In Mozambique, female Baobab fruit collectors are working with others on sustainable resource management. The women recently

decided they wanted to move from signing with their thumbprint to writing their names. They felt inferior signing with their thumbs when the traders came to collect their goods. They didn't want to go to formal adult literacy classes, starting from scratch, learning or re-learning the alphabet. They felt they hadn't got time, didn't want to be treated as if they knew nothing, and were fearful of wasted efforts and repeated failure. They just wanted to be able to sign their own names and be respected. A tailored project was introduced by those involved and, within a few weeks, many of the women were writing their names and those of their families. Some were slowly forming each letter individually, checking as they went. Writing for them was brand new and needed immense concentration. The sense of achievement was immeasurable as they wrote their names for the first time. The celebrations were heartfelt. They had achieved their goal, they felt successful.

Others ran the letters together, writing cursively, despite being shown the letters separately. Where had this come from? These women who previously had said they couldn't read or write at all, would later explain that in their dim and distant past, they went to school briefly, learnt a bit but had not used it since. The sense of excitement and achievement of rediscovering forgotten skills was palpable. It was empowering and enhancing. Far more people than we might expect have hidden literacy skills, which can be rediscovered and brought into daily use. We can do this by identifying, and building on, what they can do and listening to the practical ways they would like to use literacy in their lives. This process can be empowering and builds self esteem as people see their enhanced literacies helping them meet their personal and community goals.

For some, writing their name was their goal and achieving it has brought a sense of pride, possibly greater than a certificate for passing an exam. For others, tasting success has led on to keeping records of the fruit they pick, or writing short stories to form a community library. Now they are noticing and understanding the health posters around

them and further developing their skills. For many women, their sense of self-worth has grown, they feel more able to speak out in their communities and their voices are more likely to be heard.

‘ADVISORS TO OURSELVES’ MU literacy circles become vehicles for change in Ethiopia....

*‘I never expected to read. I now want all my sisters to benefit from this.’ **Tabitha***

The Mothers’ Union literacy programme in Ethiopia and the Diocese of Gambella has enabled numerous MU members to become literate and then be trained as Lay Readers, so they can support their churches in a leadership role. ‘It was difficult when we started’ says Rebecca. ‘The good thing was we were all the same, in not being able to read. Now I can enjoy reading the bible. I can lead worship and the liturgy in church. I don’t feel shy at all and feel happy and proud to do it.’ Rebecca was delighted to have this opportunity, ‘Before it was just like a dream into my mind that I could read the bible and hymn book.’ New literacy skills have empowered her to explore leadership potential and become a Lay reader.

Many have learned to appreciate their mother tongue. It has made them proud of their ancestry and given them something they can pass on to their children. ‘Our eyes have been opened’ says Tabitha. ‘before, when we were illiterate, people would say that the Nuer language was nothing, “you should only learn English”. But when we can read our language, we can become advisors to ourselves.

(Article taken from MU Connected magazine: autumn 2022)

*Dr Katy Newell-Jones is a facilitator, trainer and researcher in learning and development. She has worked with a wide range of community based organisations in Africa and Asia and is interested in the interactions between literacy, voice, power and rights – particularly the role of literacy in community development in post-conflict and other challenging contexts.

St Michael's Mothers' Union
will be holding a

Lent Lunch

on Saturday 11 March 2023

from 12 noon – 2 pm

in St Michael's Church

Soup, bread, tea/coffee

Cakes for sale

Tickets Please add your name and number of tickets required to the list at the back of St Michael's church. Or call Elizabeth Allen 01543 304938

OPEN THE EYES OF MY HEART



The other day I was listening to the radio whilst cleaning the house and was stopped in my tracks by a short interview with Angela Harding, Printmaker and Illustrator. The inspiration for her work is the flora and fauna of the British countryside. Based in Rutland, in the East Midlands, her studio overlooks farmland, and this often forms the backdrop to her work. You may well be familiar with her prints and illustrations as they are reproduced on cards, tea towels, prints, notebooks – all sorts of everyday objects.

She spoke of the artistic and technical world of her work, but I was most struck by her attention to observing, absorbing and learning from her surroundings before reflecting aspects in her art. Taking time to really see and know the landscape was important in opening her eyes to the beauty of even the smallest detail. She is an artist of careful observation and representation, drawing the viewer into an appreciation of the beautiful contribution of each plant, flower, animal and natural feature of our surroundings.

Whilst listening to this wonderful artist speak of all that is revealed to her in and through her work, a song was circling around in my head: 'Open the eyes of my heart.' This song, of course, is based on the words we hear in Ephesians 1: 18-19:

'I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.'

As Christians we are called to allow the eyes of our hearts to be opened and enlightened, to receive all that God has to say to us and to come to a greater knowledge and understanding of his will. Let us be people who are open to the 'God of Surprises' who continues to speak to us in our day as he has throughout the generations.

Bishop Sarah, Anglican Bishop of Shrewsbury Published: 1st February 2023

A nurse's grave.

Perhaps the most well-known memorial in St. Michael's churchyard is that of John Brown, who sounded the trumpet at the "Charge of the Light Brigade" in 1854 during the Crimean war. But there is another grave in the churchyard of someone who was in Crimea during the war, but in a very different role – that of the nurse, Elizabeth Logan. Her gravestone can't be identified, although there are some illegible or damaged stones in the vicinity of where a survey in 1984 suggests it should be. At that time however the inscription was transcribed. It reads as follows.

Sacred to the memory of Elizabeth Logan who died February 28th 1878. Having acted with Miss Nightingale in the Crimea on her return she followed the profession of sick nurse for which she was eminently qualified by her skill and experience. A strong sense of duty and great kindness of heart. No one who witnessed her self-denying exertions in aid of suffering humanity could ever forget them. Well done good and faithful servant. Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things. Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

She was 66 when she died in 1878, and the burial register tells us she lived at Dam St. In the 1871 census she is recorded as a nurse, lodging with a greengrocer and his wife on Market Street. She there identifies herself as "Mrs", which suggests she was widowed before she went to Crimea. She gives her birthplace as Glasgow. In the records of Miss Nightingale's nurses, she is noted as coming from Edinburgh and having been recommended by "Dr Simpson and others and committee of Nursing home" and was "one of the very best nurses, returned on the Ottawa, July 1856". Florence Nightingale writes of her to her friend Lady Cranworth from the Barrack hospital at Scutari in early July 1856.

My probable last letter to you is merely to say that Elizabeth Logan, nurse, whom I have sent home by the Ottawa is, on the whole, the

one I consider the most respectable and sober, efficient, kind and good of all my nurses, the one I most hope not to lose sight of, the one I have the deepest regard for. She wishes for a private situation. If she comes to you for a character, I think you may be perfectly safe in recommending her. She is an excellent nurse.



Florence Nightingale

Praise indeed from one such as she. We read of her briefly again in August 1856 when she wrote to Nightingale saying her wages had not been settled (one presumes by the army), and in February 1857 when she wrote thanking her “for the Sultan’s gift and for her help in securing her present agreeable situation”. Would that we knew what the gift and her situation was!

The fact that she was (presumably) a widow before she went to the Crimea, that we know nothing of her husband and children are nowhere mentioned in the records, makes tracing further details of her life through registers and censuses very difficult. So the inscription on her headstone and the brief mentions above are all we know of her. And, as I said, I can’t even be certain I have identified the correct headstone, But the simple fact that she was buried in the churchyard is perhaps a necessary reminder that warfare is about much more than soldiers and military campaigns.

Chris Baker

THE CHILDREN’S SOCIETY

Hello to all home box holders. A reminder that our box opening month is March. Sonia and I will be happy to receive your boxes, cheques and donations quite soon. (Old pound coins are still accepted at the bank when I take in all the other cash)

I will be at the 8:00 Sunday services and Sonia will be at the 10:00 services. I am happy to collect your box from your home if you wish. (Phone number on the bottom of the box)



Maureen Duff

WALKING GROUP: DETAILS OF THE MARCH WALK

The parish walk at Tamworth on March 18th can be adjusted, depending upon weather conditions and personal wishes. We shall meet by 10.30am at the Ladybridge Beefeater Pub, Bonehill Rd, Tamworth [B78 3HE](#) , off the Jolly Sailor roundabout.

Initially we will cross Lady Meadow, Lady Bridge and enter the castle grounds via the [Aethelflaed Statue](#) to see the flowers and consider the history presented on history information boards. We next stop at [St. Editha's Church](#) in the centre. I am allocating half an hour there and you can either go for a coffee, discover the fine Norman Arches, new stained glass or join me in climbing the 102 steps in the church tower. This double helix spiral staircase is unusual in that it consists of 2 separate staircases, wrapped round each other, one accessed from outside and one from inside. More info [here](#). Andrew Else will open up the tower specially for us and will guide our visit. I am told the view from the top of the tower is superb, higher than Tamworth Castle. Bring your cameras. We shall then walk West along the River Thame so as to enter Broad Meadow, which is a nature reserve. I shall be looking for the [Snakes Head Fritillaria](#) which flowers in March-May. The cattle that roam the island in the Summer will not be there in March. I checked with the farmer. During my visit on 6th February I saw many Little Egret. One large one, that flew off in a clumsy heron like manner, could have been a Great White Egret. As it is an island, we will leave Broad Meadow the same way (no styles to climb) and walk over the bridge back to the Beafeater. Distance in good weather could be 3 miles, but we can reduce our distance in Broad Meadow to 1.5 miles. More like an amble than a walk, but it could be a great morning. I hope many of you will join me afterwards by having a drink, snack or [lunch at the Beafeater](#). Bring your sturdiest boots as the island may have mud. Click underlined links to learn more.

To save you getting left behind please email Angie using office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk to say you are coming.. Before leaving the Beafeater CarPark I will let the Beafeater know number of places required and car reg numbers in the Car Park, as we have been asked to register them.

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Please consider finding time on

Friday March 3rd

to attend one of two services to be held at

St Chad's Church at 10.30am and 7pm.

The service this year has been prepared by

the Christian Women of Taiwan

and its theme is

"I have heard about your faith",

which is based on Ephesians 1:15-19.

Christians all over the world will be holding

similar services on March 3rd.

As we know Taiwan has been caught in a superpower struggle for many years and is at present at risk of conflict. The people of Taiwan are very much in need of prayer. The service goes beyond praying for the people of that country though. It includes letters of encouragement for women who face suffering and injustice. Stories of faith will focus on issues that are shared by women and girls around the world and that challenge us to prayerful action.

Alison James

ST MICHAEL ON GREENHILL

**This churchyard is a shared place where many people
come for peace and reflection.**

**Our loved ones have been laid to rest here over hundreds of years.
Please do your best to keep this churchyard a special place for everyone.**

You are welcome to place flowers on graves but please remove them when they are over.

You may leave wreaths and other artificial arrangements **during the winter**, but please remove them when they are faded.

No balloons or portable items such as windmills, chimes or items of sentimental value should be left on a grave with the exception that such may be left during the period of one calendar month after interment.

Kerbstones, edgings, “gardens” planted around graves are not permitted and will be removed.

Trees or shrubs are not permitted.

From time to time the churchyard will be cleared of items that are not allowed; a notice giving warning of this will be displayed here and at appropriate locations in the Churchyard

We welcome walkers and their dogs but please keep them under control and do not allow them to foul the churchyard.

No plastic water bottles allowed in the churchyard. **Filled water bottles are available for you to use to water your flowers.** These are stored in a large container by the churchyard entrance gate. **Please return the empty water bottle to the container after use.**

If you prefer, you can bring your own bottle but please take it home with you after you have used it.

Thank you

Rector and Churchwardens, St Michael, Lichfield

SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCHYARD WORKING PARTY

We will be meeting on **Saturday March 25th** from 10am to 1p.m.

Our main tasks will be

Preparing the Herb Garden and Flower Beds for Spring.

Refreshments (Tea/Coffee/Cake) will be served

during our Mid-Morning Break

For more information please contact Ray Allen.

Email: lesley@existenz.org.uk Telephone: 01543 251654

St Michael's Church, Lichfield

CHURCHYARD NATURE DAY

"Consider the wildflowers, how they grow" – Luke 12: 27

Saturday 1st April

10am – 4pm



Talks by local wildlife experts

Herb walk and lichen walk



Outdoor children's activities

Find out about the Churchyard



working party



Hot and cold drinks provided

- bring a packed lunch

TRAVELS WITH MY FATHER PART 1 – NORTH VIETNAM (WITH APOLOGIES TO JACK AND MICHAEL WHITEHALL) BY TED GREEN

This should be called “Travels with my son” but why waste a good programme title! Some of you will know that I left for Singapore in mid-January to visit my elder son, Tim, for several weeks. The rest of the family has moved back to UK and he’s just finishing a teaching contract before re-joining them. His school had a very early half-term to allow full celebration of Chinese New Year and we decided to spend the 10 days in Vietnam and Cambodia. This part of the story covers North Vietnam and I’ll do South Vietnam and the temples area of Cambodia over the coming months.

This won’t be a travelogue, but rather some observations on different societies during a brief visit. Vietnam celebrates the lunar new year as Tet (you may remember the 1968 Tet Offensive during the Vietnam War in which the US won the battle and lost the worldwide PR campaign.) For the Chinese this is the year of the Rabbit, but in Vietnam it’s the year of the Cat. Both our guides (Selina in N Vietnam and Tori in the South) were Cats and very proud to be celebrating their year.

On driving from the airport to our hotel our first impression was that Hanoi is a city of Vespas and Honda 500cc motorbikes – there are 8 million people in the Hanoi area, a high proportion of them young, and they all seem to have one! They were everywhere, weaving in and out of the traffic, with sometimes as many as four on board. They made Rome look safe and yet we only saw one accident; somehow everyone seems to slot into place with lots of blaring horns, unlike Cambodia where a slightly less frantic situation is dealt with through patience and good manners. The area round our hotel seemed to be very run down and then we realised we were in the historic ‘old area’. Elsewhere there was lots of French architecture from the century long occupation and more modern buildings from the past 30 years, when

Vietnam has again been part of the world political and economic scene.

Our first port of call in Hanoi was the Mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh, who died in 1969. It's an enormous building with white-uniformed soldiers changing guard at regular intervals. It was clear that Selina revered Uncle Ho and I suspect that this attitude is more prevalent in the North than the South of the country. He certainly had a long life of revolution and spent many years in exile, yet he offered a peaceful solution of slow withdrawal to the French in 1945, which they rejected. This led to their final defeat and total withdrawal after Bien Dien Phu in 1954. Yet Ho wouldn't be satisfied until he had unified his country (South Vietnam existed from 1955-75) although he didn't live to see that happen. Beside the Mausoleum is the vast, yellow, French built, presidential residence, where Ho refused to live and visitors are shown the simple wooden house nearby where he spent much of his time.



The other political 'must' is the Hanoi Hilton where American pilots were held during the Vietnam War. Hoa Lo Prison was built by the French in the late 19th century to house Vietnamese political prisoners, but now only the gatehouse remains as a museum. The

French regime was brutal; many Vietnamese were tortured and executed (the guillotine is still there) and this is illustrated graphically. Unsurprisingly the section on US prisoners is different and suggests that the Vietnamese were as kind to them as US attacks on the N Vietnam economy allowed. There are lots of pictures of happy prisoners and many of returning Americans searching for reconciliation. Senator John McCain is featured with no mention that he couldn't raise his arms above his shoulders because of the beatings he'd received.

We were also most impressed by the 1,000-year-old Temple of Literature, where the Vietnamese developed their own blend of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism after a long period of Chinese dominance; an excellent Ethnology Museum (Vietnam has 54 tribes, although the Kinh are dominant); and a memorable Water Puppet Show. It's too complicated to explain, so put "Vietnamese Water Puppets Videos" into Google and watch spellbound. Particularly good is the one behind the scenes where you can see the puppeteers waist deep in water.



Our last port of call in N Vietnam was Ha Long (Descending Dragon) Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and designated as one of the 'New 7 Wonders of Nature'. The 600 square mile bay was once a 3,000-foot limestone mountain range that was eroded by the weather over 500 million years and flooded after the last Ice Age. This has left nearly 2,000 islands, four of them habitable, but most with vertical cliffs hundreds of feet high, topped by tropical forest, and many have cave systems caused by rainwater erosion. The bay is one of those places where you keep taking photos as yet another fantastically shaped island appears. Before Covid the area became something of a tourist trap with increasing pollution and several hundred cruise ships. Many of those ships are now laid up, but there is concern that things will get worse again as tourism increases. We were lucky as our 24-hour cruise was over the Tet weekend, when most Vietnamese return home for the celebration. Our ship was only half full and few others were



operating. Ha Long Bay is close to the Chinese border and we discovered that the BBC websites on our phones wouldn't work, and CNN and BBC TV channels were unavailable in our cabin, although English speaking French and German channels were OK.

On Tet New Year's Day it's traditional to give 'Lucky Money' in bright red envelopes. We each received two such presents, totalling 300,000 Vietnamese dong (about £10.50) and have to keep it for the year to ensure good luck. After that, mine will probably go into Trevor's collecting jar! Then it was off to Hanoi Airport for the second stage of our trip, to Ho Chi Min City. More on that next month.



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BOSCOBEL HOUSE --A pleasant day out in the Country and a trip into history!!

Now that the cold dark winter nights are fading into Spring evenings and the snowdrops and daffodils are poking their heads through the soil in our borders, our thoughts are thinking of interesting places to visit for a day out with family and friends.

As one of St Michael's Churchyard Working Party's activities in the coming months is centred around trees and the diversity of fauna and flora in our churchyard you might like to consider a visit to Boscobel House in Shropshire, only a short 23 mile drive from Lichfield and home to one of the most famous trees in England's history -- ***The Royal Oak!!***

Following the execution of King Charles 1st. in January 1649, King Charles II mounted an unsuccessful campaign to reclaim the throne from Oliver Cromwell's Parliamentarian forces: the King suffered a crushing defeat at the Battle of Worcester in September 1651 and was forced to flee into hiding to escape capture by Cromwell's forces, his initial destination was Boscobel House, the family home of the Giffards, a prominent Roman Catholic family at that time. Cromwell's soldiers set about conducting a thorough search of the house, to no avail, as the King had taken refuge in the surrounding countryside and hidden in the branches of a large Oak tree -- later known as "**The Royal Oak**", after which many of England's Pubs are named!!. On leaving his leafy hiding place The King sought refuge in some the many Priests' Holes at Boscobel House.

The site of ***The Royal Oak*** and a smaller oak tree, grown from one of

the original *Royal Oak's* 's acorns, is open to the public, as is the main house and it's gardens. An on-line commentary is available to help you enjoy this activity.

There are also many interesting activities for children e.g., Play and activity trails, a maze, and gardens suitable for old and young alike. After all this exciting exploration there is a delightful Café /restaurant in the house's converted stables, serving teas, coffee and snacks to refresh you before the journey home

For full details of Boscobel's opening times and attractions go to the English Heritage website at www.english-heritage.org.uk to assist you in planning your visit to this fascinating property.

Should you decide to visit Boscobel House please let me know your thoughts and impressions of its many attractions for future issues of our Parish magazine and to inform our many readers of a place to pass a summer's day later this year.

David S.
EDITOR



News from the Hawksworth Family in China:

January was a very busy month for us here in Chengdu. School restarted on January 2nd and staff and students were back for three weeks before we had another holiday of two weeks for Chinese New Year.

Now that China has reopened, people were making the most of it and traveling to see family and friends that they hadn't been able to see for the last four years.

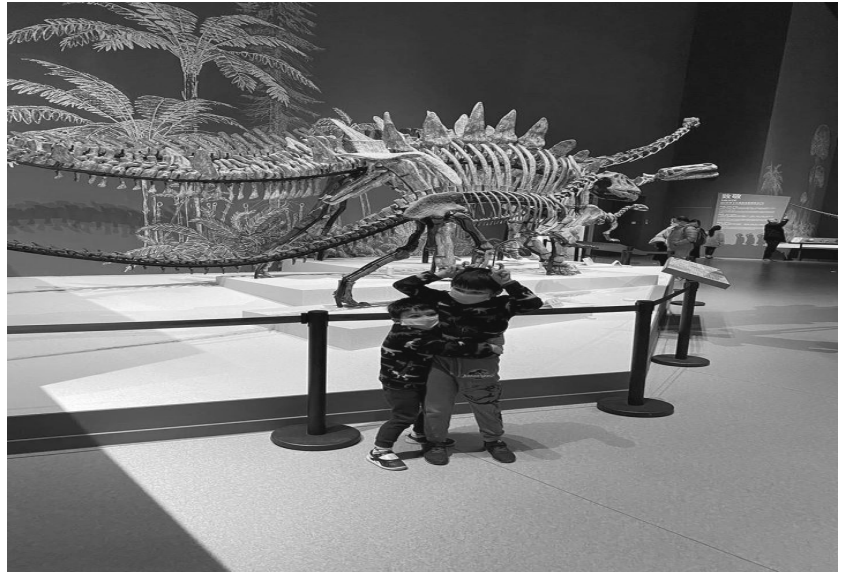


Everywhere was so busy. As the main holiday fell in the first week of our two week break, we decided not to venture too far from home. We celebrated the New Year with friends and lots of gifts were exchanged: oranges for wealth, meat for prosperity, noodles for longevity. The children were given Hongbao packets.

These are rectangular shaped red packets that contain money. The tradition is, grown-ups give fresh bank notes to younger people, to spread wealth.

During the second week, we did lots of sightseeing. Milo, myself and my friend Abby, went to see the pandas at Chengdu Panda Research Base. This was a very popular attraction and there were crowds of people when the gates opened at 7.30am. You have to go early as they are fed just after you arrive, and then they all fall asleep for the rest of the day! We didn't get to see the babies as the nurseries were closed, but we did see some adolescent pandas as well as the mature pandas. There were a lot of red pandas as well. They were much bigger than I thought, about the size of a corgi dog but with a much longer tail.

While we were at the Panda Base, Peter took the babies to see the Dinosaurs! It was an hour by train from Chengdu on the highspeed rail line. The Chengdu Natural History museum is home to some interesting exhibits, but the dinosaurs are the main



attraction. All of the skeletons on display were found in the Sichuan basin. They had a lovely time and couldn't wait to tell me all about it when they got back. Gabriel returned with a square block of porous rock that you had to soak in water. You then used some small tools to excavate the plastic dinosaur skeleton out of it. He loved it.



The following day we took taxis to Luodai, the home of the fake wall of China. It's a partial replica of the actual wall in Beijing. It crosses two hills and takes roughly an hour and a half to complete. When you get to the halfway point, you can opt to take a slide back

down to the start of the wall. The slide itself is a polished marble surface encased in thick glass. You have to wear special trousers to help you to slide, and rubber grip gloves to help you to stop. In some places the slide is almost vertical. It was so much fun to come down. If you carried on a little further, you had the option to take a rollercoaster to the top. Once at the top, you had wonderful views across the mountains on one side and on the other, you could see Chengdu city. If you were feeling brave enough, there was the option

to paraglide from the top of the mountain. We didn't do that this time. Instead, we took the toboggan back down to the halfway point. This was so much fun and corkscrewed alongside the wall, back to the halfway point. We then took the slide all the way down. It was a really fun day and we were all worn out by the time we got home!

On the Saturday before the end of the spring festival, we had lunch with friends at a Korean BBQ restaurant. The coals for the BBQ were walnut shells. The food was cooked for you at the table by your own chef. There was lots of seafood and meat as well as vegetables and rice. The food itself isn't spicy. You can make your own spice mixes and dipping sauces from a selection of ingredients at the side counter. This means everyone gets to choose how spicy or not to make their food. It was an enjoyable afternoon followed by trampolining. This was a lot of fun for both children and adults! They had a Velcro wall that you could jump from the trampoline and 'stick' yourself to the wall by wearing a Velcro suit! This was very entertaining.

The following day, Sunday, was the last day of the lantern festival! We met friends at the Jinsha museum. This site has historical significance as this was the place where 3000 years ago a civilization lived, and then for reasons no one is entirely certain, they all disappeared. There isn't a trace of writing, language or ethnic person left behind. The site was originally destined for development. When the groundwork started, they made the discovery of elephant tusks, pots, jewelry, and ebony trees. They were all buried under the mud. The ebony forest is so called because the trees are black from carbonization. The trees are thought to be between 3000 and 10,000 years old.

The civilization sacrificed elephants to their gods and kept the tusks but didn't appear to use them for anything. The largest tusk unearthed was 1.8 metres long and it appears that the elephants that were around then are not related to Asian or African elephants that we see today.

The site is still being excavated and the team seem to be finding new treasures almost daily. It was incredible to see. We did the tour of the dig site before it got dark, and then we went to see the lanterns!



The lanterns are made from bamboo structures with silk covers in different colours and patterns. It was beautiful and the children really enjoyed the evening.

We're now back in school, which is continuing to grow weekly with new students. The children really enjoy coming to school and it's lovely to see. We recently went on our first whole school trip to the Chengdu Museum. The children all had a quiz to complete so they moved from room to room quickly to complete this. The history of Chengdu was particularly interesting. All of the artifacts that feature in the collection were dug up when the museum was built! It's definitely worth a visit if you get the chance!

We're all well and the children continue to grow. Milo is starting to prepare for his GCSEs and will take his Mandarin exam before school finishes for the summer in June. We're coming back for all of July. We'll split our time between Lichfield and Bolton, where Pete's parents live. We plan to visit church whilst we're back, to see everyone! It's been a long three years!

Look after yourselves.

Much love as always – The Hawksworths

LICHFIELD

Mother of the Midlands

Following on from my article in Februarys magazine, I have



another videocassette tape, that I came across at a car boot sale some years ago it's about Lichfield Mother of the Midlands, does anyone out there know anything about this tape, the names on credits Roger Davies –Lee, Michael Foster, Mandy Yates, Glen Buglass, the Sealed knot, Mercury promotions, I did try the Lichfield Mercury at the time, they didn't know anything about it, this is some of the contents,

Lichfield began as a Saxon village the name Lichfield may be a corruption of Letocetum meaning grey wood or it may be a corruption of (Lece)Feld meaning a small stream (Lece)by the open land (Feld),

Chad

The Bishop of Mercia (roughly) the Midlands of England chose to make his seat at Lichfield, his Bishopric brought the ecclesiastically centre from Repton to Lichfield, he was also responsible for reconciling the church with the Kingdom of Mercia,

The first authentic record of Lichfield Occurs in Bede's history, where it is called Licidfelth as the place where St Chad fixed the Episcopal See" of the Mercians in 669,

In the very near future I hope to collaborate with the Rector Abbie and Dr Trevor James to show this film at St Michaels Church, watch this space.

Romulus Plimmer

PROVERBS PRAYERS

20.7 The righteous walk in integrity; happy are the children who follow them!

20.11 Even children make themselves known by their acts, by whether what they do is pure and right.

22.6 Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray.

30.3-5 I have not learned wisdom,
nor have I knowledge of the holy ones.
Who has ascended to heaven and come down?
Who has gathered the wind in the hollow of the hand?
Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment?
Who has established all the ends of the earth?
What is the person's name?
And what is the name of the person's child?
Surely you know!
Every word of God proves true;
he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.



Lord God, thank you for welcoming your believers into your family , through Jesus Christ. Send your Spirit to help us, your children, to do our best to walk along your path of integrity until the time when we can join you in heaven. As we study and learn from your words, spoken through Solomon and Agur, and by Jesus, we do our best to put these into practice and act in ways that are just and right.

Jesus, when we stray from your true path, may we feel your gentle loving hand on our shoulders as you guide us back towards God's eternal kingdom. We ask this in your name.

Angie King

MEMORIAL BOOK

Having the name of a loved one written in our Memorial Book is another way of remembering their life. The Book is kept in the case in the Prayer Corner and the pages are turned twice a week, so that names are visible through the glass on the date of their death. It costs £10 to insert a name.

Please complete this form and return it to

✉ Parish Office, St Michael's Church, Church Street, Lichfield, WS13 6ED

✉ office@stmichaelmaryjohn.org.uk

Name of Deceased (as you wish it to appear in the Memorial Book)

Date of Death:

Age at Death:

Name of Contact (in case of any problems or queries)

Telephone Number:

Please make cheques payable to 'PCC of St Michael and St Mary'

If you wish to pay by bank transfer the details are

Bank: Lloyds

Sort Code: 30 95 04

Account Number: 00114488

Please label your payment: **MEMBOOK** follow by your surname

From the Registers

Baptisms		
St John's	19th February	Thea Staunton

Weddings		

Funerals		
St Michael's	30th January	Marilyn Maguire
St Michael's	6th February	Dorothy Woszczlyo
St Michael's	7th February	Brenda Hill
St Michael's	13th February	Jennifer Stevens
St John's	16th February	Kenneth 'Allan' Law

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Contact the United Benefice Office on 01543 262211



Bible Readings

Sunday 5th March
2nd Sunday of Lent
[Purple]
Romans 4.1-5,13-17
John 3.1-17

Sunday 12th March
3rd Sunday of Lent
[Purple]
Exodus 17.1-7
John 4.5-42

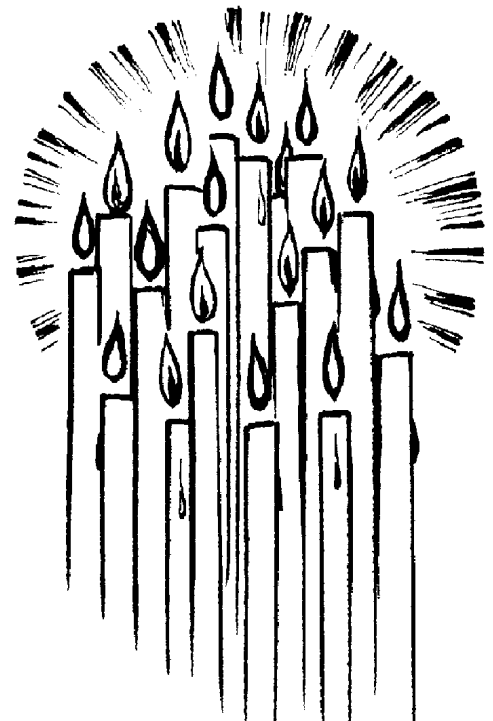
Sunday 19th March
Mothering Sunday
[Purple]
Colossians 3.12-17
John 19.25b-27

Sunday 19th March
Mothering Sunday
EVENSONG
[Purple]
Hosea 11.1-9
Luke 2.41-end

Sunday 26th March
5th Sunday of Lent
Passiontide
[Purple]
Romans 8.6-11
John 11.1-45

Sunday 2nd April
Palm Sunday
[Red]
Liturgy of the Palms
Matthew 21.1-11
Liturgy of the Passion
Philippians 2.5-11

Sunday 9th April
Easter Sunday
[Purple]
Acts 10.34-43
John 20.1-18



St Michael's Rota – March 2023

Sunday 08.00 am	5 March	12 March	19 March	26 March
Sidesperson	Brian Smith	Sandy Baker	Brian Smith	David Bull

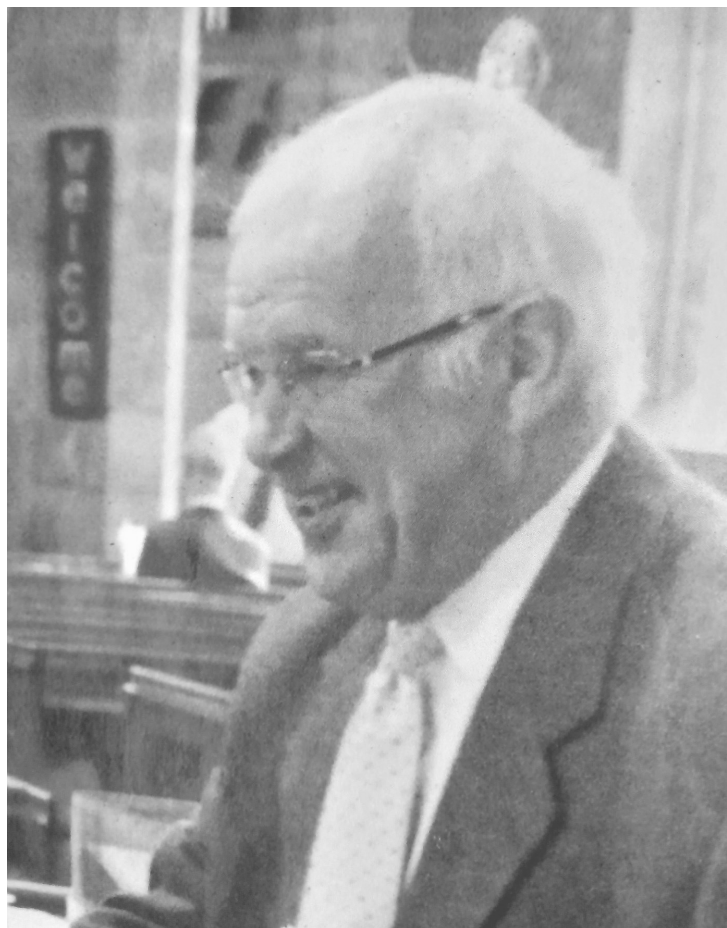
Sunday 10.00 am	5 March	12 March	19 March	26 March
	Family Praise		Mothering Sunday	
Sidespersons	Judy and Mike Godfrey	Viv and Stephen Oliver	Maureen Brand Enid Barry	Brenda Liptrot Ray Allen
Reader		Angela Burgess	Maureen Brand	Kay Martin
Servers		Kay Martin Elizabeth Salt	Kay Martin	Kay Martin Elizabeth Allen
Intercessor		Elizabeth Salt	Kay Martin	Brian Rostill
Coffee	Sonia Doidge Lesley Allen	Elizabeth Allen Trish Jones	Judy Godfrey Brenda Eley	June Frayn Betty Lyne
Healing				TBA

Sunday 6.00 pm	5 March	12 March	19 March	26 March
	No service	No service	Evensong	No service
Sidesperson			Margaret Frean	
Reader			Margaret Frean	

And Finally...

A belated tribute to a good friend

On the 10th.February 2021 I lost my Good Friend; fellow Mancunian and fellow Freemason; Dave Edge. Due to Covid regulations being strictly enforced at the time Dave's passing had to go virtually unmarked, other than by his



devoted family; Lynn, his wife of more than 50 years; his son Christopher, daughter, Catherine and his four grandchildren, Niamh, Fiona, Euan, and Alex,

His many friends mourned him in their own private ways and sent their own heartfelt messages of support to his family in the best way they were able.

Dave was a valued and regular member of the congregation here at St. Michaels and could be relied upon to lend his skilled hands to any problem which came along to disrupt the smooth-running of the church- be it fixing the heating on a cold Sunday morning; changing a Church porch light bulb to the more onerous task of rodding drains to free the numerous blockages which occurred following the installation of the new toilets in 2019!!

Even now two years on from Dave's passing there is little that Lynn,

and Lyn and I do that does not recall the many happy memories of past times spent with Dave. Lyn and I find that many of our social get-togethers help to bring happiness to all our lives, whether it is a trip out, a meal with mutual friends and/or a game of cards when our memories of Dave are never far from our conversation.

So there we are; Dave you remain close to all our hearts and always in our thoughts and prayers, greatly missed by all your family and friends. Year's Mind is passed but you are still missed by all of us here at St. Michaels. May your actions and kind heart be an example to us all and forever guide our actions in life.


David Shiel - EDITOR

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