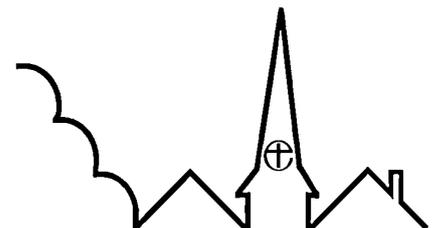


Steeple & People

November 2021

50p



St Michael's Boldmere

Services

NOVEMBER 2021

7th November

10.00am Holy Communion

6.00pm Evening Service

14th November- Remembrance Sunday

10.00am Remembrance Day Parade Service

6.00 pm Holy Communion

21st November

10.00am Holy Communion

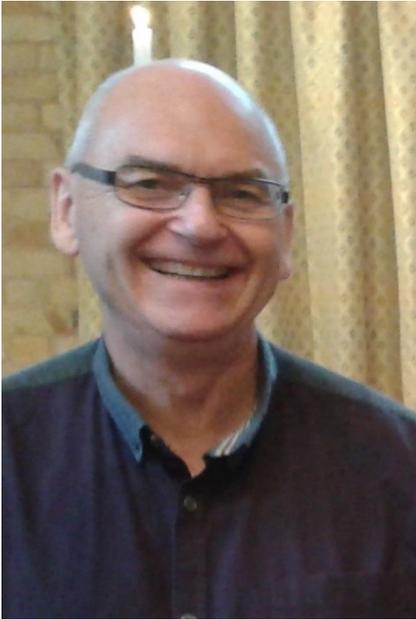
6.00 pm Breathe

28th November – Advent Sunday

10.00 am Holy Communion Everyone Together

6.00 pm Waiting for God

Plus Night Prayer on Zoom at 8.00pm most Sundays



OPENING COMMENTS

I have recently returned from a walking break in Dorset and on reflection I would like to offer these thoughts on what was an inspiring and interesting trip on many levels.

The walking break had been in the planning for several years inspired by a television series of walks presented by Tony Robinson, he of 'Baldrick-I have a cunning plan'" Black Adder fame. The walk was based on visiting many World War 2 coastal fortifications and facilities along the Dorset coastal path from Abbotsbury to the west of

Weymouth, including Portland Head and ending at Lulworth Cove to the east. The show is still available to view and the official title of the walk is The Dorset Front Line Walk; route plans can be downloaded if you feel inspired to have a go?

Initially, organised by my best friend, who was sadly diagnosed with terminal secondary liver cancer back in February. After a year long fight against a stage 4 tumour at the back of his throat which, although successfully treated with chemotherapy, had a bitter taste when he was told that secondary cancer had spread to his liver. A very sad and upsetting time for family and friends alike, but he continues to be positive and up for experiencing life to the full. Something that shouts aloud to all of us; that none of us knows the hour the ferryman calls and we shouldn't take life for granted, but instead enjoy and make the most of each and every day to the best of our ability. Paraphrasing Jesus's words, don't worry about tomorrow for today alone is enough to deal with.

Spurred on by this tragic news, the group of six friends decided to stop talking about it and actually do it, knowing that active time will eventually run out for our dear friend. So, the magnificent seven hired a house in Weymouth acting as a base camp and sanctuary for those who couldn't cope with hard coastal path walking.

Our first day began at Abbotsbury, a small village to the east of Weymouth and about 2 miles inland from the beginning of the walk which saw us ascend to St Catherine's chapel.



St Catherine's Chapel

popular in medieval England. As well as being martyred on a wheel, and so giving her name to a firework, St Catherine is connected with hill-tops because angels carried her body to Mount Sinai, where later a church and monastery were built in her honour. The chapel was not only a place of worship but a seamark for sailors and a post for a look-out who would blow a horn to tell the village's fishermen if he spotted a shoal of fish.

St Catherine was also the patron saint of maidens; girls would leave offerings to her in the chapel in the hope of finding a suitable husband. In a spine-prickling link across the centuries, such offerings are sometimes found in the chapel even today. *(Image shows St Catherine's Chapel and Chesil Beach/ Fleet Lagoon)*



Forming part of the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, the sweeping, shingle ridge, stretching for miles into the distance, is a sight to behold; in fact the view of Chesil Beach from the coast road above Abbotsbury has been voted as third best view by Country Life Magazine .

The pebbles on Chesil Beach are graded in size from potato-sized near Portland to pea-sized at Bridport and are made up of mainly flint and chert from the Cretaceous and Jurassic rocks, along with Bunter pebbles from Budleigh Salterton.

Set high on a hilltop overlooking Chesil Beach and the Isle of Portland, this barrel-vaulted 14th century chapel was built by the monks of the nearby Abbotsbury Abbey as a place of pilgrimage and retreat. Today the chapel still sits in splendid isolation. The dedication of the chapel to St Catherine of Alexandria is rare, but her cult was one of the most

It is believed that smugglers landing on the beach at night could judge their position along the coast simply by picking up a handful of shingle. Behind Chesil Beach lies a large saline lake known as the Fleet Lagoon, one of the few remaining undisturbed brackish lagoons left in the world. Standing by the side of these aged chapel walls, looking across to Chesil beach and the sea beyond, I could only reflect on God's amazing creation and man's painstaking efforts to worship him. Like the billions of pebbles that make up Chesil beach I felt small yet connected to God's plan.

Walking on across rolling hills we meet up with the coastal path which follows the amazing Chisel beach and Fleet lagoon. Stopping on the way at the Swannery there sits a prototype World War 2 bouncing bomb which was tested on the Fleet Lagoon. Barnes Wallace and the 617 squadron made a huge effort to play their part in winning the war and our thoughts are with those who gave the ultimate sacrifice in the battle for peace as we reflect on the many global conflicts today and the many lives lost.

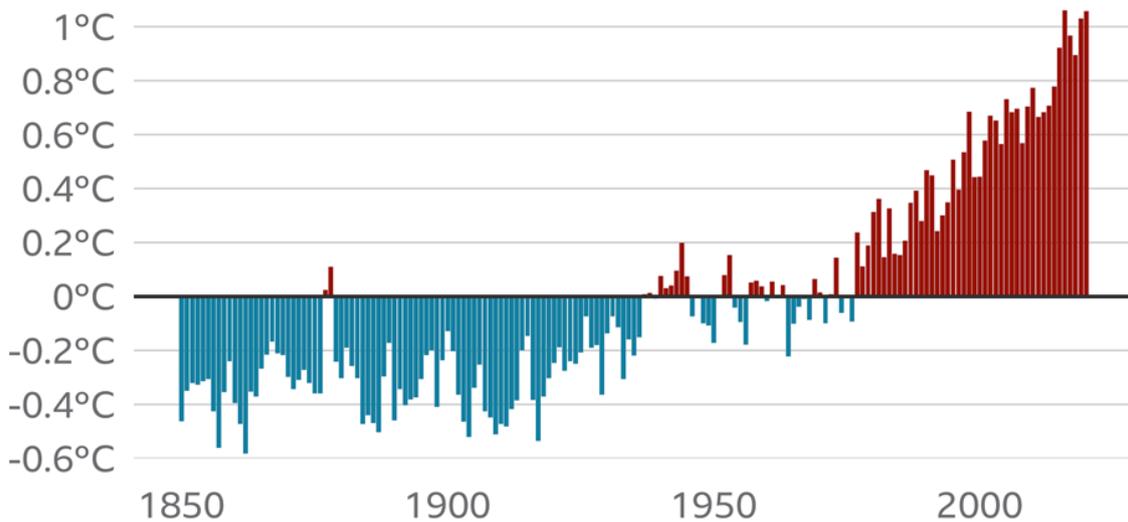
Walking at a pace that suits our fragile friend, I'm reminded that in our journey in faith we too need others to walk with us to support and encourage us along the way. Some of us become tired or require more frequent rest bites than others and we need to understand this in our discipleship and how we communicate our faith to others, never leaving anyone behind, struggling to catch up. Like Jesus we too need to have patience and not let our frustrations with others get the better of us.

The walk settled down into regular ascent and descent following the coast line framed by Chesil beach. Taking in the beautiful coast and sea-scapes we stopped at several World War 2 lookout fortifications, constructed from concrete and showing some signs of weather erosion. Humanity's building fingerprint on God's creation is wide and dense but if left to nature will disappear over millennium. However, humanity's continued effect on the earth's ecosystem is not so harmless. We are now seeing many demonstrations against the current lack of international action and this month sees The COP 26 UN Climate Change Conference, hosted by the UK in partnership with Italy, taking place in Glasgow. The world is warming because of fossil fuel emissions caused by humans.

Extreme weather events linked to climate change - including heatwaves, floods and forest fires - are intensifying. The past decade was the warmest on record, and governments agree urgent collective action is needed. If unabated humanity faces immense changes which will see our children's children's lifestyles change from all recognition to ours. This is not something any of us can abstain from, we need to act or otherwise we risk losing the home God gave us.

The world is getting warmer

Annual mean land and ocean temperature above or below average, 1850 to 2020



Note: Average calculated from 1951 to 1980 data

Source: University of California Berkeley

BBC

For this conference, 200 countries are being asked for their plans to cut emissions by 2030.

They all agreed in 2015 to make changes to keep global warming "well below" 2C above pre-industrial levels - and to try to aim for 1.5C - so that we avoid a climate catastrophe. This is what's known as the **Paris Agreement**, and it means countries have to keep making bigger emissions cuts until reaching net zero in 2050.

Looking over Chesil beach I prayed that we humans could come together and start to apply the 'eco handbrake' and choose a better way which protects God's creation and allows a better future for our children's children. I pray for the leaders present at Glasgow this month that they move together, pebble by pebble, building an immovable beach that will provide a safe lagoon for humanity's future.

Nearing the end of our 13 mile walk we enter the claggy mud of Fleet Lagoon, trudging together past oyster nets fanned out across the lagoon, and finally meet the road at Ferrybridge, connecting Portland Head to Weymouth. Our day was done and although very fatigued our friend had risen to the physical and mental challenge and completed the walk. Although this effort would put an end to his walking with us, he had won his battle to complete a day's walking. Sometimes our wishful thinking can get the better of us and we fail before we really start. My best mate never said he would walk the first day in full but with courage and determination, together with our support and understanding, he certainly did and I will always remember this when the going gets tough, and that one next step is all it takes to move forward, however hard it may seem.

The same can be said for our own efforts in the eco fight. The small things we can do, combined together, make a huge difference and only need a change of mindset, a little more effort and we can redress the global catastrophe facing us. Just like God piled one pebble at a time to form Chesil beach we too can make this world safe and sustainable for ourselves and future generations.



Join me in next issue for our walk from Weymouth to Lulworth Cove.

Gary Connell

Remembrance Prayer Page.



When you think of Remembrance Day – 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month – what springs to mind? Is it an image, is it a symbol, is it memories of family members or friends caught up in conflict? Is it the tales of courage and suffering as the wounded put back together their shattered lives?



“At the going down of the sun, we will remember them. ”

Gethsemane (1914-18)

The Garden called Gethsemane
In Picardy it was,
And there the people came to see
The English soldier pass.

We used to pass - we used to pass
Or halt, as it might be,
And ship our masks in case of gas
Beyond Gethsemane.

The Garden called Gethsemane,
It held a pretty lass,
But all the time she talked to me
I prayed my cup would pass.
The officer sat on the chair,
The men lay on the grass,
And all the time we halted there
I prayed my cup might pass.

It didn't pass – it didn't pass –
It didn't pass from me.
I drank it when we met the gas
Beyond Gethsemane.

Rudyard Kipling.



In Flanders fields the poppies blow

Between the crosses, row on row,
That mark our place; and in the sky
The larks, still bravely singing, fly
Scarce heard amid the guns below.



Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.

John McCrae

Out of the mud and filth of the trenches and battlefields of World War One came the red of the poppy - now our symbol of Remembrance. Who cannot be moved by the falling fluttering poppy petals at the Royal Albert Hall Remembrance service?

High Flight

Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of Earth
And danced the skies on laughter – silvered wings,
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds – and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of – wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov'ring there,
I've chased the shouting wind along, and fling
My eager craft through footless halls of air.....

Up, up the long delirious burning blue
I've topped the wind –swept heights with easy grace
Where never lark or even eagle flew –
And while with silent lifting mind I've trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.

John Magee.



I was there –

There in the trenches among the rats and lice,
struggling in the mud
as the machine guns spewed out their hail of bullets,
lying in agony beside the row of corpses,
all around me the bodies of friends,
limb torn from limb,
wounds gaping,
bodies shattered beyond recognition –
and my heart bled with them.

Yes, I was there,
the one who died on the cross to put an end to death and misery,
dying again, and again,
and if you think it broke your heart,
remember this: it broke mine too.
You can't change what's been,
but you can change what's yet to be,
and, believe me, you would if you'd seen what I had seen.

I was there,
and I'm begging you,
please,
please,
PLEASE,
Don't let it happen again.

Reflection: I was there Nick Fawcett.

“Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me”.

Out of all the pain and suffering that was endured there must come forgiveness and reconciliation.

Petals

Of crimson

Poppies fall, recalling past and present conflicts –

Poignant memories

Intertwined with innocent victims and casualties

Everyone, everywhere - in

Stillness and silence remembers them

Amen.

JUST REMEMBER.....

Written and compiled by Margaret Wilkinson and Elaine Riley.



PAWS FOR THOUGHT

So you're telling me that you drive a mile to the gym to walk a mile on the treadmill?



Visit to the Lake District 2021

During much of 2020 and 2021, opportunities to travel have been severely restricted by Covid-19. As restrictions began to ease, the thoughts of many people turned to holidays and for many, that meant holidays abroad. Not for us. There are so many beautiful places to visit in the UK that we are spoilt for choice. To start with, there are 15 National Parks in England, Scotland, and Wales, all of which are well worth a visit.



This year, Debbie and I, along with Brodie & Harley, our two Golden Retrievers, decided to visit the Lake District; not the South Lakes around Windermere and Coniston which are very popular and busy, but the Northern and Western Lakes. We booked a week in a self-catering, dog friendly cottage in the small village of Ullock, just outside the National Park and not far from Cockermouth.

This proved to be the perfect base from which to explore the much less popular and quieter lakes of Bassenthwaite, Thirlmere, Buttermere, Ullswater, Derwent Water, West Water and the dogs' favourite, Ennerdale Water. During the week, as we explored the areas around these lakes, we were struck not only by the beauty of the area but also the stillness and quietness. This truly was God's country.

The Lake District is also well-known for having some excellent breweries and beer, so visiting some of the local pubs was a must (for me at least)! One particularly memorable one was the Wasdale Head Inn, which is located at the head of the valley, and it is in this tranquil corner of the lake district where you will find England's highest mountain (Scafell Pike), it's deepest lake (Wast Water), the original world's biggest liar (Will Ritson) and England's smallest parish church (St. Olaf's).





Amongst the wonders of God's creation sits **the little church of St Olaf's** – the parish church of Wasdale Head. The site has been the base of the Christian Community here for over 1000 years – though much of the present building only dates from circa 1550. St Olaf's can quite accurately be described as a little stable, with pews, ancient beams, and a flagstone floor – a perfect place to worship God. Regular services take place on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of each month and also Easter and Christmas Day. There is seating for just 39 people. Sad features of the tiny churchyard are the graves of climbers

killed on the surrounding mountains.

On the final day of a wonderful week, we walked along the shore of Bassenthwaite Lake and chanced upon another very interesting church, St. Bega's, the oldest church in the Lake District. The building dates from about AD 950, though the site may be older. It was extensively restored in 1874.



For over a thousand years the Christian message has been spread from this place.

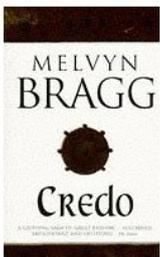
Until April 2020, the Church was used for Sunday services once a month, but to enable people still to visit and to use it for private prayer, no services are currently taking place. In the Church are Bibles in 28 languages to make overseas visitors feel at home. A well supported charity box helps support charities in developing countries.

The Church was visited by Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Carlyle. More recently it provided the setting for Melvyn Bragg's novel 'Credo'.*

St Bega's Church is the endpoint of a walk, 'St Bega's Way', a long-distance walk, developed and published by a parishioner.

God's beautiful world is to be found throughout the Lake District. We hope to visit some of the other 14 National Parks in the coming years. I wonder what is in store for us when we do, hopefully next year.

Pete Swaine



**Britain during the Dark Ages is the setting for the fascinating (fictional) story of Bega, a young Irish princess who became a saint, and her lifelong bond with Padric, prince of the north-western kingdom of Rheged. This dramatic, far-reaching tale brings to life a land of warring kings, Christians and pagans, and tribes divided by language and culture, illuminating a little-known yet critical period in British history. Editor*

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Friday 19th November 2021

Doors open 7 p.m. for a 7.30 p.m. start

Duke Street Church, Duke Street, Sutton Coldfield, B72 1RJ

COVID COMPLIANT MEASURES WILL BE IN PLACE

For further information and to book (£15)

contact José Currant

e-mail: josecurrant@gmail.com

Tel: 07941 330 172

Ten Thousand Reasons

Bless the Lord, O my soul
O my soul
Worship His holy name
Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name

The sun comes up, it's a new day dawning
It's time to sing Your song again
Whatever may pass, and whatever lies before me
Let me be singing when the evening comes

Bless the Lord, O my soul

You're rich in love, and You're slow to anger
Your name is great, and Your heart is kind
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing
Ten thousand reasons for my heart to find

Bless the Lord, O my soul

And on that day when my strength is failing
The end draws near and my time has come
Still my soul will sing Your praise unending
Ten thousand years and then forevermore

Bless the Lord, O my soul

I'll worship Your holy name

Jesus, I'll worship Your holy name
Lord, I'll worship Your holy name

Sing like never before
O my soul
I'll worship Your holy name
Jesus, I'll worship Your holy name
I'll worship Your holy name

10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord)" is a worship song co-written by the English Christian singer-songwriter **Matt Redman** and the Swedish songwriter **Jonas Myrin**. It was first recorded by Redman for his *10,000 Reasons* album. In 2013, the song won two Grammy Awards for "Best Contemporary Christian Music Song" and "Best Gospel/Contemporary Christian Music Performance".

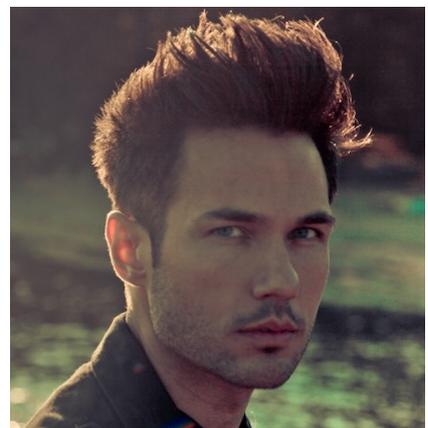


Matt Redman became a Christian at the age of 10 and attended the Anglican church of St Andrew's, Chorleywood, in Hertfordshire. It was there he learned to play guitar and at the age of 20 began leading worship services and released his first album. In 1993, he helped found Soul Survivor, a global Christian movement and yearly music festival aimed at youth, together with his pastor, Mike Pilavachi. From 1994 until 2002 he led worship services for Soul Survivor Church in Watford.

In 2002, after a sabbatical in America, he moved to Brighton and in 2008, together with his wife Beth and their three children, moved to Atlanta, Georgia. In August 2010, they all returned to the UK.

Jonas Myrin is a Swedish singer, songwriter and producer now based in Los Angeles, California. He studied in London and spent some time there and his solo career began in 2012 with the gold-certified song, "Day of the Battle" in Germany. Myrin also won two Grammy Awards for 10,000 Reasons which spent 16 weeks at the top spot on Christian Radio and remained No. 1 on the *Billboard* Christian Songs Chart for four months

Debbie Tye chose this song because, when I asked her for her favourite hymn, she said she had been singing it all day.



Refreshments

Mulled wine &
Mince pies



Homemade jams



Come to the

Tombola

Christmas Market

at

St Michael's Church

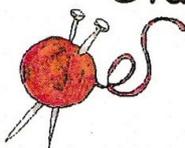
Saturday 4th December

3:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Toys



Craft
Stall



Carol Singing

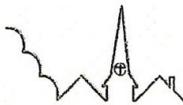


Christmas
Stalls



Meet Uncle Holly

Children's craft
activities



St Michael's Boldmere



Thanksgiving- Harvest Festival Sunday 26th September 2021



On Sunday 26th September St Michael's church was filled with an abundance of autumnal coloured flowers, and a congregation that was filled with Rainbows, Brownies, Guides, young families and people of a more senior age. It all looked so lovely.

We had come together for a service of thanksgiving and harvest festival. We have all been through a lot during this last 18 months, but this service reminded us that there was plenty to be thankful for too.

The service was led by Rev Gary, Tayesha David, Ben Underhill and Bethany Bryer. It was lovely to have younger members of the congregation lead the service. They did a really good job of it too.

We gave thanks that the Children's groups – South Aisle Saints and Flok had continued on line during lockdown; that Rainbows, Brownies and Guides had continued online. We also had a thanksgiving for the life of Caleb Hickling, with his parents, sponsors and family – along with his extended family, the family of St Michael's. We gave thanks for the children who had been baptised since lockdown had been lifted – the families were each given their Baptism cards- and we gave thanks for all those who had been married during this time. We also gave thanks for all those people who had worked during lockdown so that the church had continued to thrive. There was a lot to be thankful for.

During the service time was given for us to give our harvest gifts that



would be given to the Aston and Nechells food bank. Tayesha, Ben and Bethany, collected the harvest gifts and were assisted by the Brownies who placed them in front of the altar. The amount of donations given was



amazing; the front of church was covered with the gifts from the congregation.

One of the highlights of the morning was the reflections on being thankful by Tayesha, Ben and Bethany.

Tayesha David's reflection:

Thank you
Two little words
Eight little letters
Two words used so often
Two words so simple
But there is nothing simple about what remains unsaid

We give thanks to the Father
We give thanks to the Son
We give thanks to the Holy Spirit

But we give thanks not just for the good,
But for the bad as well,
So we can say thank you for many things.
Thank you for love,
Thank you for hate,
For Jesus taught us to love our enemies and forgive those who trespass against us.

Thank you for light,
Thank you for darkness,
For without darkness, the light cannot truly shine.

Thank you for friends,
Thank you for foes.
For who, who other than our foes will become our friends?

Thank you for the good times,
Thank you for the bad times,
For only in bad times, do people come together and work together and work together through it, creating the good times.

Thank you for happiness

Thank you for sadness

For it is only she. You are sad, you truly see how much people care, when they try resiliently to make you happy.

There is only one reward, your smile.

Thank you for everything we have.

Thank you for everything we don't.

Thank you dear Lord.

Ben Underhill's reflection:

When you express your thankfulness to others, it not only makes others feel great, but also makes you feel great and in doing so becoming a better person. In the short term saying thanks to people makes everyone feel great and by doing this, we are spreading joy where there has been none in these terrible times.

As well as all this Jesus believes in us to do the right thing and saying thanks every-day is the right thing to do even if it's just once; you are making the world a better place.

We have many things to thank God for, but I think the biggest thing He gave us was His son, Jesus. He brought Jesus to live with us on earth, knowing that eventually, Jesus would have to give himself as a sacrifice to save us from our sins.

So today, as we say thank you for all God's precious gifts, we should say a special Thank You for giving us His only son.

Dear Lord, Hear our Prayer

Have mercy on those who are poorer than ourselves and help us to realise how fortunate we are and not to take things for granted in our everyday lives. Amen

Bethany Bryer's reflection:

Today we are saying Thank You to God for all he has given and done for us.

To give thanks to God is one of the great commandments in the Bible.

- We often focus more on what He hasn't given to us, rather than what He blessed us with. Here are a few things that I thought of:
 - Food and a clean water supply which are scarce in some places
 - Homes that have been destroyed in other countries by natural disasters such as the volcano in La Palma
 - Family, friends and pets who love and support us through anything
 - School and employment which should be a right not a privilege
 - The NHS and others who care for us, while others have to pay for good health
 - The freedom to be ourselves which in some places is stolen or kept from people.

Thank you God for all your blessings and Your love.

The service was so enjoyable. It truly was a service of thanksgiving, and it made us all think about what we are thankful for.

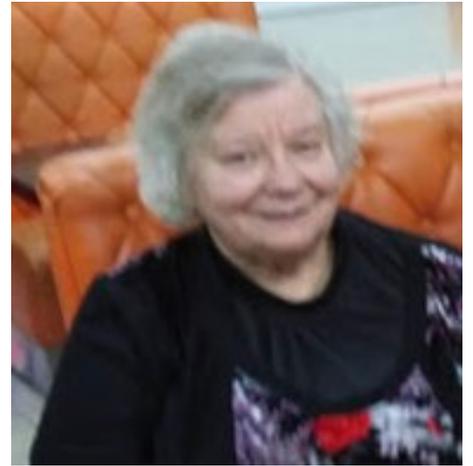
Thank you to Rev Gary, Tayesha, Ben and Bethany for all your hard work and bringing us such a wonderful service.

Written by Elaine Riley.



Dear friends and partners,

I apologise for missing the report last month. This was partly due to Covid-induced procrastination! The rest was the fact of going back to work at the school and other things that came up during the month, such as having the hot water pipes in the bathroom burst at 5:00 am producing a shower of hot water to fill the entire room and flood it to a depth of 4-5 inches! My neighbour called the emergency services for me, as I didn't know what to do. It took about 45 minutes for them to arrive and disconnect the hot water supply under the house as we couldn't get near the apartment control tap. All my towels, stored in an open shelf unit, were soaked and it took several days to wash them and dry them out as the heating system isn't on and it takes days to dry wet things indoors. When I went to use my washing machine I discovered it half full of dirty water with all my laundry swimming around – and the plug hanging in the water! I pulled it out and waited several days for it to dry and then I wore rubber soled shoes and very gingerly tried it out. There were no problems, PTL! The corridor outside was also affected by the water and now I may have to take up the lino and replace the sheet of hardboard underneath, as it's smelling very musty and I'm not sure it will clear up if I don't call someone in to do the work.



Another thing that has happened is that one of my students suggested that I might take in a rescue cat they had found. It's about a year old, female but recently spayed and vaccinated. I've been wanting to get another cat and hesitating about taking in a kitten as they take so much work to train. So this seemed a good idea and I agreed. She's a tortoiseshell cat and very friendly and affectionate. But the first night she peed in the middle of my bed! I wasn't best pleased! Especially as it is a brand new mattress! Since then I've been locking her in the bathroom overnight with food and water and her bed and a toilet tray, in the hopes that she would learn to use the right place! She has done that but unfortunately she does her business in the middle of the tiled floor! It appears that she has never been toilet trained and training an older cat is more difficult than training a kitten! She also wants far more attention than my previous Siamese cat so I've been constantly interrupted when I start doing something.

I'm keeping all doors closed except the one room where I sit with her in case she has another lapse! If it's not one thing, it's another!

Slavic has been doing work at the Samuel Children's Centre fixing various things in the yard and replacing the wooden walkway at the end of the yard, as well as fixing some of the fencing between us and neighbours. Last week he went to one of the villages where he has an outreach group and started repairing the floor. When he took up the floorboards to insulate, he discovered that the log foundations were completely rotten and had to be urgently replaced, so he has had to spend another week away from the city doing this work with the help of a local man who can do the heavy work involved. He had two people baptised a couple of weeks ago so he is very happy about this. We have agreed to include his Sunday School children in our annual Christmas gift program so that has added another 12 or so children to our list. This isn't a real problem as we have lost some others and our numbers in total are still less than previously. Our main difficulty this year is that it is the first year without substantial aid from Joseph's Coat organisation in WA Australia, so we don't have any more soft toys to put in our gifts and will have to buy them. They are rather expensive so it's a big addition to our annual costs.

Liza's camps went very well. She had two sessions for different age groups and for the first time she says she wasn't totally 'wiped out' by the time the children went home. She had good help in the kitchen and all the children had a wonderful time together. The work done on the building made things a lot easier for them all, so it was money well spent, even though it cost substantially more than we expected. The Newnham House project with young mums and their babies is continuing very well, and they have recently opened centres in several other small towns in our region, so they are happy to be able to extend their work. We continue to support them financially as they have a very limited possibility of raising funds for the work here. Some of you may recall Misha, who ran the men's rehab centre in the village near Khabarovsk. He is now living in that village again with his wife Natasha and they are running a church group in their home with a regular attendance of 12-15 people.

I am supporting this work as I see good results from Misha and those who have prayed for him over the years will be happy to learn of his stability now and his commitment to this outreach. The problems that existed in him previously have been overcome and he is in a better position now than I have ever seen him since I first met him in the 1990's.

The Samuel Children's Centre is now open again and working with some very needy families. They are still meeting only with one or two families at a time so reducing the interfamily contacts between families. Covid is still very active in our region and the highest incidence since the start of the pandemic was recently recorded. For obvious reasons my contact with workers and with children has been nonexistent or absolutely minimal except by phone or through Tatyana Matveevna. She herself is only meeting with a limited number of people as she is still undergoing regular treatment. She has found a one-room new-build apartment and made the full payment on it. The apartment won't be available till 2022 or 2023 but that isn't a problem as she has somewhere to live in the meantime. When she does get it she will have to spend time and money decorating it as it comes with bare walls, but that is what makes it affordable. Prices are rising faster than you can imagine and it's been difficult to find anything she could afford. Her apartment price rose by 75,000 roubles each month. As average earnings are around 20,000 per month that's a bit steep! Thank you for your prayers about this matter. [US\$1200] Thank you again for your continuing prayers and support for us. We are working together to give children and families a future and a hope!

God bless you abundantly.
Much love in Him,
C Joy McRae

Contact information: Aust: Ron Rudder, PO Box 295 Ferntree Gully, VIC 3156 rrudder@internode.on.net Canada: Merrilyn Culley, 12512 97 Ave Surrey, BC V3V 2E6 merrilyn@lifecenter.ca NZ: CBM, PO Box 8774 Symonds St Auckland 1150 info@cbm.org.nz UK: Pat Gill, 5 Fron Wnion Estate, Dolgellau, Gwynedd LL40 1SL patsigill@talktalk.net USA: Margie Runels, PO Box 39 Fort Rock OR 97735 mrunels71@gmail.com My Email: joymcrae42@yahoo.com [alternate joy@catchword.co,nz] Postal Address: Joy McRae Joy McRae PO Box 37 A/Я 37 Khabarovsk 680000 Хабаровск 680000 FAR EAST RUSSIA FAR EAST RUSS

Still with the spirit of Jim Carr

Tuesday 21st September 2021

Well Jim, the Mikes (Boldmere St. Michaels FC) are top of their league. A week ago they won 3-1 at home to Tividale. After a dreadful first half (they were losing 0-1) they came out for the second half a different team and were worthy winners putting them on 17 points from seven games, won 5 drawn 2



lost 0. It is so good watching a team who is top instead of a team that is floundering near the bottom. Tonight I watched the Mikes play Continental Star in the J W Hunt Cup. The Mikes ran out 8-0 winners. It is no exaggeration when I say it could have been 16-0.

Thursday 23rd September 2021

Your beloved Warwickshire County Cricket team won the County Championship with a victory over Lancashire.

Saturday 25th September 2021

Went to watch Boldmere St. Michaels FC in their FA Vase match against Shifnal Town. Once again the Mikes had a terrible first half and they went into the break 0-1.

The Mikes were much better in the second half and eventually the match ended 3-3 which meant a penalty shoot out that Boldmere won 3-2. The next round, which is the first round proper, is on the 23rd October against Radford which is located in Nottingham

Saturday 9th October 2021.

As at this morning the Mikes are still top of the League with a 1-1 draw at Whitchurch Alport last Saturday. I went to see them play at Church Road on Tuesday night against Redditch United in the Birmingham Senior Cup.

Redditch play their football in the Southern League (Step 3) so it was a good test for BSM (Step 5). The first half belonged to Redditch and they went in at the break leading by a single goal. Redditch looked sharper and had the better attacking options.

The Mikes came out in the second half all guns blazing and could have easily equalised. Redditch soaked up all the pressure and then just before the end came the sucker punch. Redditch scored and finished the match two nil winners. Today the Mikes play away at Lye Town. Lye could go top if they win.

This indeed happened, Lye and Boldmere St. Michaels swapped places. Boldmere were down to fourth.

Tuesday 19th October 2021.

The bad run of results continued, the Mikes lost 0-2 last Saturday against Worcester City. It was just like watching Birmingham. Enough said.

After many months we visited the church for a Sunday service. It was good to see friendly faces.

Graham Jennings (*pictured*)



My doctor said jogging would
add years to my life: he's right, I
feel ten years older!

PARISH REGISTERS

Thanksgiving for a Child

26th September Caleb Hickling

Interment of Ashes

17th September Elsie Millsum

23rd September Harold and Rosa Brough

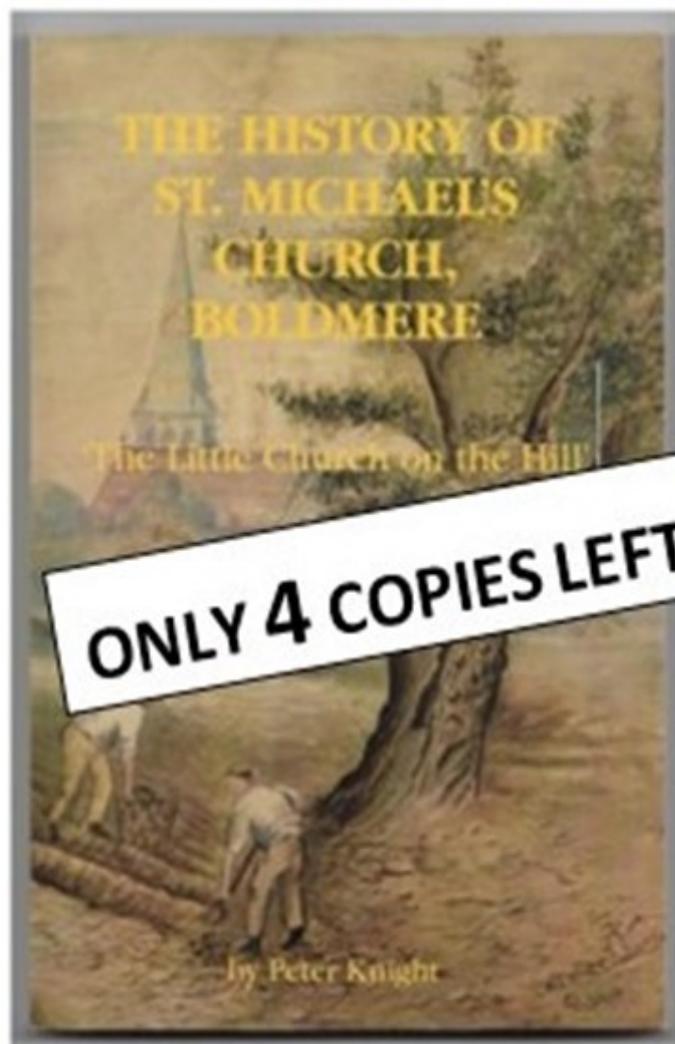
1st October Roger Day

17th October Christine Berry

The Computer Swallowed Grandma

The computer swallowed grandma, yes honestly it's true!
She pressed 'control' and 'enter' and disappeared from view.
It devoured her completely, the thought just makes me squirm,
She must have caught a virus or been eaten by a worm.
I've searched through the recycle bin and files of every kind,
I've even used the Internet but nothing did I find.
In desperation I asked Jeeves my searches to refine
The reply from him was negative, not a thing was found 'online'.
So, if inside your 'inbox' my Grandma you should see
Please 'Copy', 'Scan' and 'Paste' her
In an email back to me!

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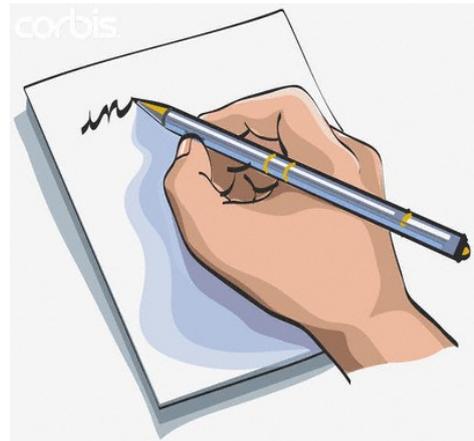
You can send letters to my email address:

jenningspenny@aol.com until I get a new

'magazine address'.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

The Editor



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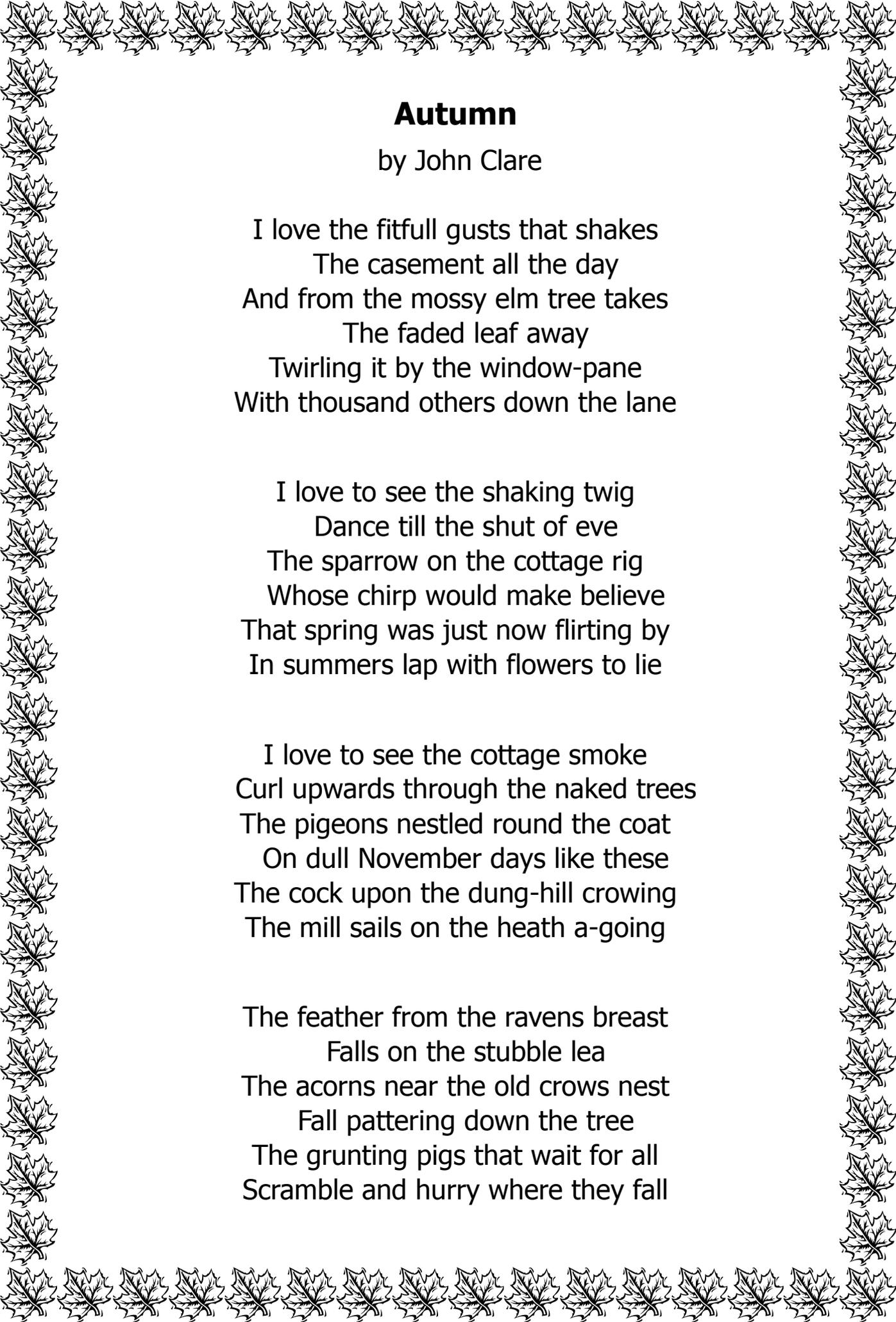
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Autumn

by John Clare

I love the fitfull gusts that shakes
The casement all the day
And from the mossy elm tree takes
The faded leaf away
Twirling it by the window-pane
With thousand others down the lane

I love to see the shaking twig
Dance till the shut of eve
The sparrow on the cottage rig
Whose chirp would make believe
That spring was just now flirting by
In summers lap with flowers to lie

I love to see the cottage smoke
Curl upwards through the naked trees
The pigeons nestled round the coat
On dull November days like these
The cock upon the dung-hill crowing
The mill sails on the heath a-going

The feather from the ravens breast
Falls on the stubble lea
The acorns near the old crows nest
Fall pattering down the tree
The grunting pigs that wait for all
Scramble and hurry where they fall

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CHURCHYARD TALES

This Church and churchyard have been part of the history of this Parish for over 160 years, and has become the final resting place/memorial to generations.

Among the war dead commemorated on the plaque (1939 – 1945) situated at the rear of the church are recorded the names of those local men of Boldmere who gave their lives in service of their country. Here is one of those stories.....

Kenneth Stanley HORTON (1921 – 1942) – aged 21 years. Ken was born in Birmingham on 15th June 1921, the youngest son of Beatrice and Albert HORTON (a jeweller – ring maker). Ken had older brothers Maurice Vernon (b: 1905) and Trevor Bernard (b: 1919). They lived at 324 Boldmere Road.



Ken grew up in Boldmere and like his family were regular church attendees at St Michael's Church where Ken, like brother Trevor, was a member of the church choir.

Ken was 18 years old when on 1st September 1939 Germany invaded Poland (Britain had made a pledge to stand by Poland).



Headline in The Star on 1st September 1939

Frantic government meetings took place on 2nd September 1939 and at 9am on 3rd September after an ultimatum was presented by the British Ambassador to Adolf Hitler in Berlin to respond. There had been 'no reply' a two hour wait and Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand declared war on Germany.



Ken's life had been that of a normal 18-year-old, growing up in Boldmere, but this changed everything.

It is unclear when he enlisted but enlist he did, as FX 82333 Kenneth Stanley HORTON. Ken would become an Air Fitter on HMS Avenger, part of a crew of 526.

From the Sun Shipbuilding and Dry Dock yards of Chester Pennsylvania, USA on the 27th November 1940, came the merchant ship Rio-Hudson.

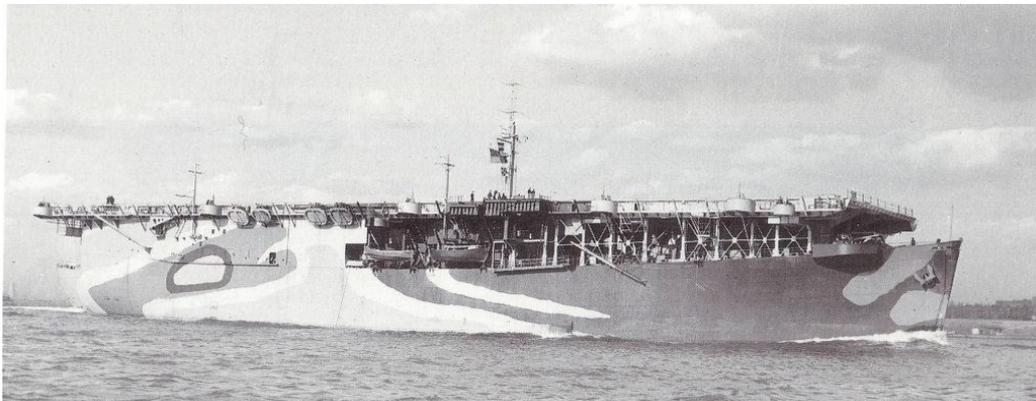


Rio-Hudson (furthest left) in the shipyards of the Sun Shipbuilding and Drydock Company.

The 'Rio' fleet of four ships was requisitioned by the US Military on 20th May 1941, while in the process of being fitted out, which was completed on 7th July 1941.

The Rio-Hudson was delivered to the US Navy on 31st July 1941 at the Bethlehem Steel Corporation shipyard, Staten Island, New York for conversion, transforming the Rio-Hudson to become a 'Long Island class Auxiliary Aircraft carrier.

This included the fitting of a lightweight wooden flight deck covering 70% of the ship's length, an enclosed hanger below and aircraft lift, as well as a small operational bridge.



The converted Rio-Hudson

The sea trials and training that followed this conversion were fraught with problems, mostly engine breakdowns, and happened on at least 4 separate occasions. After repairs, and in line with the 'lend and lease' agreement between the USA and Great Britain, the newly branded HMS AVENGER was commissioned into the Royal Navy on 2nd March 1942 and finally set sail for Scotland on 30th April 1942, joining a tanker convoy of ships travelling via Nova Scotia and Iceland arriving at Greenock on the Clyde on 11th May 1942.

It is unclear when the British crew of HMS Avenger boarded the ship; most likely the crew had travelled to New York joining the ship on 2nd March 1942, the day of commission into the Royal Navy.

Further re-fitting and training and the addition of Sea Hurricane aircraft, the ship was ready for its first voyage on active duty.

On 3rd September 1942 with a compliment of 12 Sea Hurricanes (6 stowed below deck) and 3 Swordfish aircraft, HMS Avenger set sail as an escort in a convoy of 39 merchant ships bound for Iceland. The sea journey was very rough and one Sea Hurricane was lost overboard. The convoy reached its destination on 5th September.



*HMS Avenger and 6 Sea Hurricanes and Air crew in the hanger and on the lift below deck
(both images September 1942)*

On 8th September 1942 HMS Avenger set sail to join PQ 18, a convoy sailing from Iceland and Scotland bound for Arkhangelsk, Soviet Union (Arkhangelsk = Archangel) as carrier support. Avenger was further hampered with engine trouble when water got into the engine, causing the ship to lay unresponsive for 3 hours off the coast of Iceland before getting under way again.

Joining the convoy, Avenger set about anti-submarine patrols engaging several U-Boats over the forthcoming days. A major engagement on 13th September saw 96 torpedoes fired from U-Boats at the convoy resulting in the loss of 8 merchant ships.



*A depth charge explosion next to HMS Ashanti, and the loss of a merchant ship as seen from the deck of HMS Avenger
(both images September 1942)*

On 16th September 1942 Avenger was relieved of duty by RAF based in Russia and joined a returning convoy arriving home on 17th October and was released from duties.

Returning to home soil, the Captain of HMS Avenger (Captain Colthurst) singled out Ken for congratulations on his excellent work and allowed him special leave. (Avenger would remain in dock at Greenock for a 9-day refit).

During his leave, Ken returned home to Boldmere. Here he spent time with his family and with his fiancé. He also found time to visit Reverend Cannon Brown at The Vicarage at St Michael's.

Ken recited the exciting stories of the convoy detail to Russia, his excitement of his 'finding a job' and his honour at doing such a worthwhile duty. Ken discussed plans for his forthcoming marriage to the girl he greatly loved and arrangements were put in place for the banns to be put up. Reverend Brown reported the experiences told by Ken in the Parish Magazine for November 1942. (Unfortunately, no copy exists within church records).

Returning to Greenock, Ken re-joined the Avenger crew. HMS Avenger was allocated to the escort force of the 49-ship slow convoy KMS1 which left Scotland on 22nd October 1942 bound for Algiers. On 26th October a second convoy left Scotland by a faster route to join the first convoy. These convoys conveyed the invasion force elements for Operation TORCH, the Allied landings in North Africa.



HMS Avenger en route to Algiers

Operation Torch was the Anglo-American invasion of French Morocco and Algeria during the North Africa campaign. It started on 8th and concluded on 16th November 1942. Commanded by General Dwight D. Eisenhower it involved 350 warships and 500 transports for 107,000 troops.

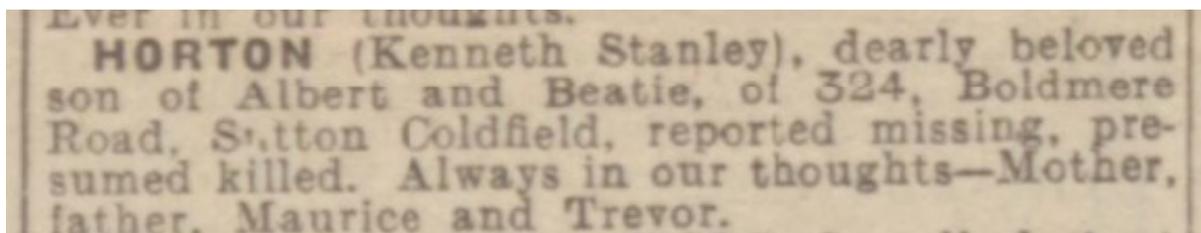
Between 8th – 10th November HMS Avenger flew 60 fighter missions and on 9th November survived a near miss from a torpedo. Between 10th – 12th November Avenger was laid up with engine problems, a problem that had thwarted her entire existence. On 12th November 1942 HMS Avenger headed for Gibraltar, arriving the next day.

After 2 days, HMS Avenger set sail as escort for a convoy of vessels returning to the UK. At 03:05 on the morning of 15th November 1942 HMS Avenger, just 45 miles off the coast of Cape Santa Maria, Portugal came under attack from German U-boat 155.

During the resulting attack HMS Avenger was struck by a single torpedo, which hit on the port side, causing the bomb magazine to explode and blow out the entire centre section. The ship sank within 2 minutes with the loss of her Captain, 66 other officers and 446 ratings. There were only 12 survivors.

In the Parish Magazine for January 1943, Reverend BROWN informed the parish of the loss of Ken HORTON.

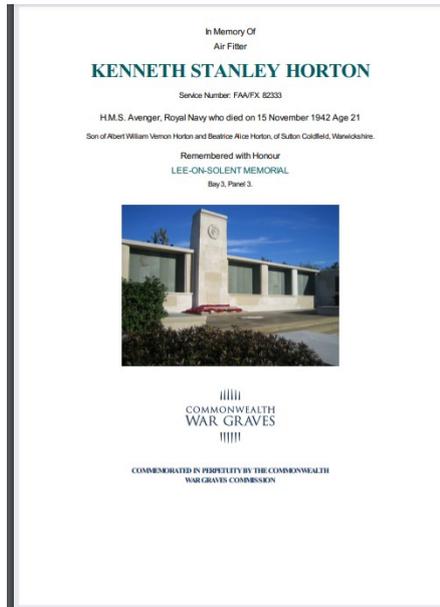
Ken had known of the dangerous engagement that was about to befall him. The vicar recorded he gripped hands with him before he left that day in October.



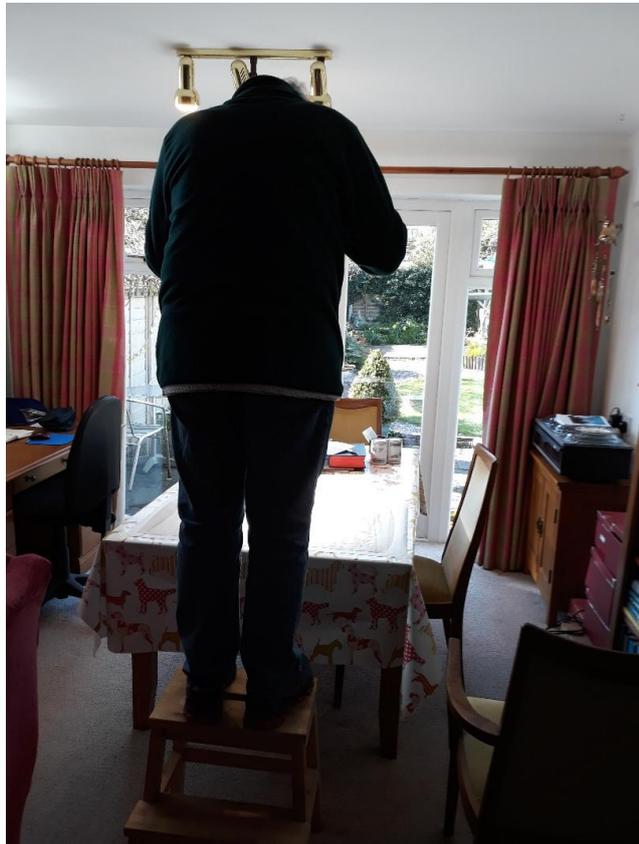
A service of Memorial was held at St Michael's Church for family and friends on 13th December 1942, which was also attended by his brothers Maurice and Trevor who were both on active service at the time.

The choir at St Michael's also came to pay their tribute to an old choir boy, in a 'beautiful and touching service', bringing comfort to those he held close.

Air Fitter Kenneth Stanley HORTON FAA/FX 82333 is remembered on Panel 3, Bay 3 at the Lee-on-Solent Memorial, Hampshire (the principal base of the Fleet Air Arm) and on the World War 2 memorial at St Michael's Church.



Peter Knight



Please send your captions or explanations for what is happening in this photo to me before 10th November for inclusion in next month's magazine.

I'll print the ones that make me laugh!

I'll also tell you what Graham was actually doing.

Groups & Organisations

MONDAY

The Guild	2.00-4pm	Church Hall
Contact	Angela Grudzinski	373 1899
Cubs	6.45	Scout HQ

WEDNESDAY

Luncheon Club	12.30pm	Church Hall
Contact	Ruth Yates	354 4248
Rainbows	5.00 – 6.00	Church Hall
Brownies	6.15 – 7.30	Church Hall
Contact	Liz Claybrook	07906 958532
Email	veseydc@yahoo.com	
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

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

FRIDAY

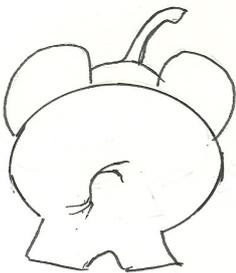
Flower Guild	Friday Mornings	Church
Contact	Chris Reeves	354 6264
Beavers	6.15	Scout HQ
For Beavers, Cubs and Scouts		
Contact	Bob Moore	07930 543747
Email	moorera@blueyonder.co.uk	

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Church Hall Lettings

For bookings ring:

Church Administrator 0121 373 0207



Tailing Off....

I can't believe it's almost time for the last issue of 2021. Please help to make our December / January magazine a bumper one.

Don't forget to visit the Christmas Fair on Saturday 4th December which is taking place in the church for the first time.

Editor

Magazine articles please for the

DECEMBER / JANUARY

magazine to:

jenningspenny@aol.com

By 10th October 2021

WHO'S WHO AT ST MICHAEL'S

<p>Vicar: Rev. Gary Birchall</p> <p>Tel: 354 4501 Email: garybirchall1@gmail.com (off Tuesdays)</p>	<p>209 Station Road Sutton Coldfield B73 5EL</p>
<p>Curate: Simon Cocks</p> <p>Email: simon@wildgoose.me.uk</p>	<p>Readers: Elaine Riley Tel: 354 4157 Gary Connell 07963 510623 Rob Rolfe rob.rolfe42@gmail.com</p>
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<p>Lay Pastoral Ministers:</p> <p>Val Bryon 07886 397945 Liz Carr 354 3769 Kevin Hunt 313 2376 Margaret Smoldon 355 4226 Trudy Walsh 355 4128</p>	<p>Peter Edmonds 354 3200 Lin Benson 373 1227 Edwina Connell 354 9061 Fran Lumley 354 5490 Mick Walsh 355 4128 Helen Menniss 07814 911129</p>
<p>Stewardship Secretary Edwina Connell</p>	<p>Tel: 07717 239904 Email: edwinaconnell@yahoo.co.uk</p>
<p>Church Administrator</p> <p>Liz Claybrook Tel: 373 0207 Email: stmichaelschurch- boldmere@gmail.com, Mon, Weds & Fri 9.30-2.30pm</p>	<p>Church Office St Michael's Church Church Road, Boldmere Sutton Coldfield B73 5RX</p>

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