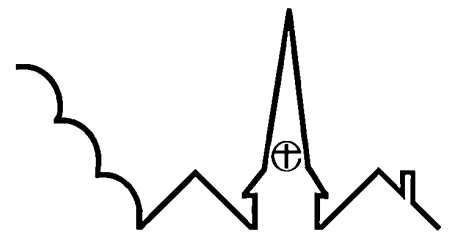


**March 2021**

**50p**

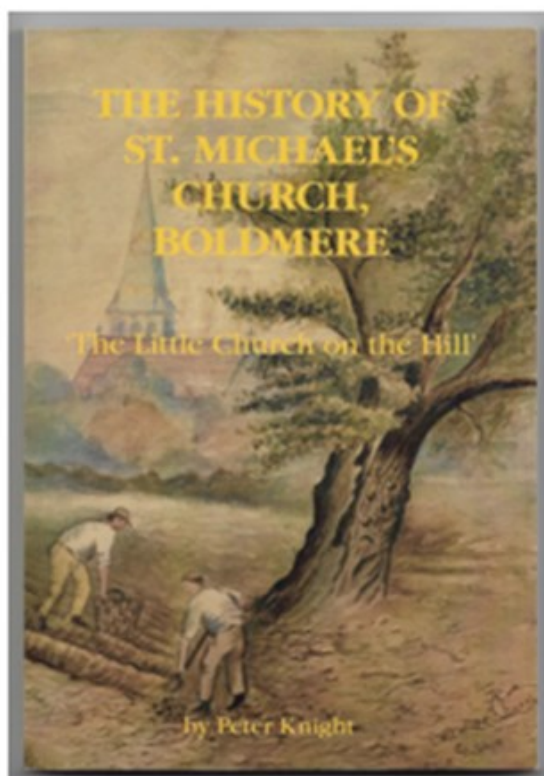


St Michael's Boldmere

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The book is available at a cost of £20 and all proceeds go to St Michael's Church.



## OPENING COMMENTS



### **Fragile and Hopeful**

We used to ask ourselves 'What are you giving up for Lent?' Now I'm hearing from colleagues and our Bishop, 'don't give up something for Lent, we've had to give up so much in this last year'. Instead receive more, receive more of God's love, of God's grace, of God's forgiveness. These are the words we heard from Bishop David in the Diocesan Ash Wednesday service. Over 20 people from St Michael's joined in with this service.

Ash Wednesday was yet another reminder to me of how much we have lost. Due to Covid 19 restrictions we had to forgo the service when I was able to make the sign of the cross on each person's head with the ash from a burnt palm cross from the previous year. There is something intensely tangible in that contact between thumb and forehead. A physical reminder of our humanity, our fragility as skin touches skin through the medium of the Cross. In our fragility, our knowledge of our mortality, we focus down to the Cross which is that profound symbol of all God's love, grace and forgiveness. It is one of those moments as a priest that I particularly value. And this year I lost it, I had to give it up. We found other ways to engage with Ash Wednesday, but I still missed it.

How much we have given up this last year. I could list so many things, but you will know what you have had to give up, some by choice, some by regulation, some by circumstance. It's come at a cost, it's taken its toll, and many are struggling to keep going, to keep hoping. We are fragile, but on this Ash Wednesday, I would also want to say we are hopeful. Fragile and Hopeful. Hopeful because the Cross speaks of death, and also love and ultimately to hope as we anticipate the empty tomb and the resurrection of Easter.

I know there have been times when I and we have been feeling very fragile. And that's fine, because it is part of what it is to be human. It's in our nature.

And it's also in our nature to be hopeful. We need hope to keep us going. We need hope to cling to. We need hope to keep leading us into life. 1 Peter v 3 speaks of the Living Hope we have in Jesus. It's the only bit of Greek New Testament I can remember off by heart. Eis elpida sozan.

Be fragile, be hopeful. Receive more of God's love, grace and forgiveness.

Rev'd Gary Birchall  
Ash Wednesday 2021

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## March Prayer Page

This month my inspiration for the prayer page comes from being out and about (please note during my exercise routine – walking and shopping) and also from things I have been sent through the wonders of WhatsApp. I hope you enjoy them and they are of use to you, for time of quiet reflection and prayer. I do feel that we continue to need times of quiet and stillness during this time.

I saw this prayer outside Boldmere Methodist Church and felt that it was appropriate for us all.



### Psalm 23 (Covid 19 version)



The Lord is my companion  
in social isolation. I am  
never alone. He gives me  
rest in the comfort of my own home.

He leads me along familiar pathways as I take my daily exercise, and restores my peace.

He leads me forwards day by day through this strange existence, even though death and sadness are all around me.

I am not afraid because he is with me. He holds my hand and steadies my anxious thoughts.

He reminds me that it's one day at a time. I am well fed in spite of all the turmoil. I am blessed in an abundance of ways.

Surely he will be with me. Surely his love, patience and peace will surround me through this time of uncertainty and far beyond; I am with him and he is with me, always, to the end of time.

This next one was sent over the internet:



Never regret a day in your life:  
Good days give happiness,  
Bad days give experience,  
Worst days give lessons  
And best days give memories.



This last one was sent to me by a friend through WhatsApp. I posted it on the St Michael's WhatsApp group, but felt that I would share it further.

Not everything is locked down!

Remember:

Sunrise is not locked down  
Fresh air is not locked down  
Family time is not locked down  
Friendship is not locked down  
Creativity is not locked down  
Prayers are not locked down.

Hobbies are not locked down  
Hopes and dreams are not locked down  
Kindness is not locked down  
Learning is not locked down  
Conversation is not locked down  
Imagination is not locked down  
Sunsets are not locked down  
Hope is not locked down.

Cherish what you have  
Stay at home and make the most of your time  
May you be safe  
May you be happy  
May you be well  
Amen.



### **Aide-mémoire**

Thirty days has September,  
April, June and November.  
Unless a leap year is its fate,  
February has twenty-eight  
but all the rest have three days more,  
excepting January,  
which had six thousand,  
one hundred and eighty four.

*Brian Bilston*

## Christingle Service: December 9<sup>th</sup> 2020



On a cold, wet Sunday afternoon in December 31 people gathered together at the Church Hall, in socially distanced bubbles to make Christingles and to hold a Christingle Service. There were 18 adults and 13 children.

There were eight family bubbles and everything that they needed had been placed on their table. It was lovely to be able to join together, having spent many weeks on Zoom and Facebook. There were Christmas biscuits and drinks to collect as everyone arrived and we had Christmas music playing, to bring a festive atmosphere.

We began the service by making Christingle cards; these were to be sent to members of the congregation who hadn't been able to attend church during these difficult times. Michelle Johnson led this session. She created a large card for us to follow. A beautiful bright card that made us more excited about making our own Christingles.



Then we began the service. As ever we were unable to sing, but this did not stop us having an enjoyable time.



The service began with the lighting of the main candle that was decorated with holly and greenery. There were prayers with responses, so that everyone could all take part.

The talk, led by Elaine Riley included the making of the Christingle during this. We thought about the meaning of all the symbols of the Christingles – the orange was the world, the sweets were the fruits and blessings we are given. The red ribbon, the love that God has for the world and the fact that his Son, Jesus, gave his life for us. The red reminds us of the blood he spilt.







The lit candle reminds us that God sent his Son into the world to be the light of the world – not a light to shine on the world from heaven, but a light to shine from the earth itself – so Jesus was born in Bethlehem, God’s Son becoming a human being like us, to bring God’s light to a

world in darkness.



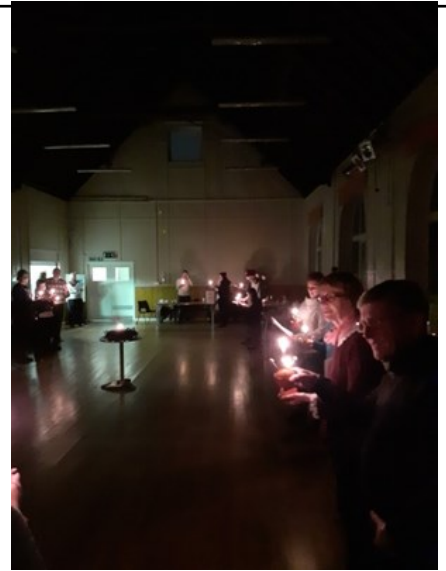
Once the Christingles were complete we lit them using the main candle. Once the families’ candles were lit they stood in front of their table, so that we had a socially distanced circle.

Once we had lit the Christingles and created our circle, we turned out the lights. The light of the Christingles shone in the darkness, reminding us that Jesus is the Light of the World. It made the room feel very special and very Christmassy. As we stood together we ended the service with a prayer.



**Lord Jesus,  
Light of the World,  
as I hold this Christingle  
and think about your great love for me,  
help me to take this light out into the  
world and to share your love with others,  
especially those who need it most.  
Amen.**

All too soon the Christingle service was over. The families returned to their tables and collected all their belongings, not forgetting their Christingles. Then they left, with the story of the Christingle still ringing in their ears. A lovely afternoon was had by all.



Many thanks to Michelle Johnson and Liz Claybrook for their help in preparing the church hall, the Christingle activities – including the Christingles, the food and drinks and everything else that was needed. Thank you too to all the families who came to take part, it was lovely to see you all. Thank you too to Rev Gary and Rev Simon for being a part of the afternoon.

Written by Elaine Riley.

*Note from the Editor: Elaine sent me this article in plenty of time to appear in the January magazine. Unfortunately I missed it! Apologies to everyone but I know you will enjoy it anyway. I did!*

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## **He Who Would Valiant Be**

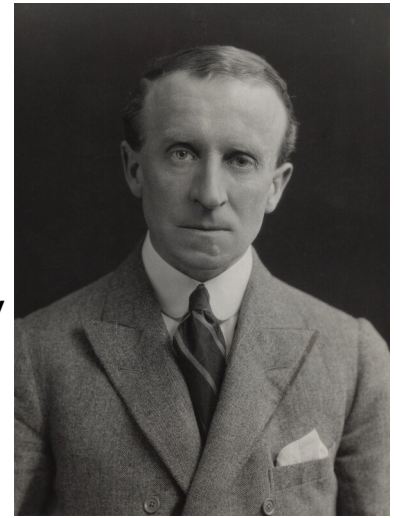
He who would valiant be  
'gainst all disaster,  
let him in constancy  
follow the Master.  
There's no discouragement  
shall make him once relent  
his first avowed intent  
to be a pilgrim.

Who so beset him round  
with dismal stories  
do but themselves confound  
his strength the more is.  
No foes shall stay his might;  
though he with giants fight,  
he will make good his right  
to be a pilgrim.

Since, Lord, thou dost defend  
us with thy Spirit,  
We know we at the end,  
shall life inherit.  
Then fancies flee away!  
I'll fear not what men say,  
I'll labour night and day  
to be a pilgrim.

John Bunyan

"To Be a Pilgrim" (also commonly known as He who would Valiant be) is the only hymn John Bunyan is credited with writing, and is indelibly associated with him. It first appeared in Part 2 of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, written in 1684. The hymn recalls the words of Hebrews 11:13: "...and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."



The words were modified extensively by Percy Dearmer for the 1906 *The English Hymnal*.<sup>[1]</sup> At the same time it was given a new tune by British composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, who used a melody taken from the traditional song "Our Captain Cried All Hands" which he collected in the hamlet of Monk's Gate in West Sussex – hence the name of "Monks Gate" by which the melody is referred to in hymn books.<sup>[2]</sup>

The hymn has also been sung to the melody "Moab" (John Roberts, 1870) and "St Dunstons" (Charles W. Douglas, 1917).

For a time, Bunyan's original version was not commonly sung in churches, perhaps because of the references to "hobgoblin" and "foul fiend." However, one commentator has said: "Bunyan's burly song strikes a new and welcome note in our Hymnal. The quaint sincerity of the words stirs us out of our easy going dull Christianity to the thrill of great adventure."<sup>[3]</sup> Recent hymn books have tended to return to the original, for example, the Church of England's *Common Praise* and the Church of Scotland's *Church Hymnary* 4th Edition (*Hymns of Glory, Songs of Praise*).

### PAWS FOR THOUGHT

If corn oil is made from corn, vegetable oil from vegetables, what is baby oil made from?



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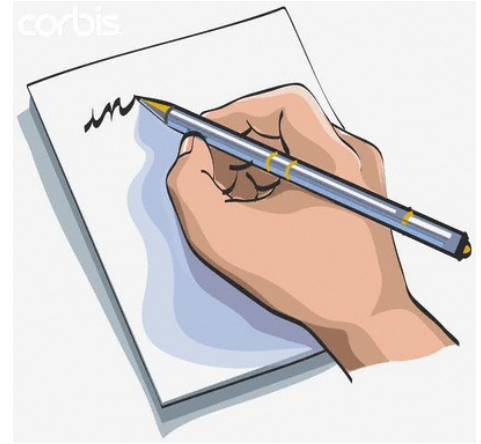
Also needed are fruit juice, tinned fruit, tinned rice pudding or tinned custard. These items often run low.

Stocks at the moment of biscuits, baked beans and pasta are fairly good.



<https://astonnechells.foodbank.org.uk/>

## READERS' LETTERS



***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*

*The concluding lines of Grantland Rice's famous poem about American football:*

“When the One Great Scorer comes to mark  
against your name  
He writes not that you won or lost, but how you  
played the game”

*Submitted by Mike Belman*

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## Ten years a Reader



Where does time go? Recently on the church face book Rob Rolfe celebrated his first year as a licensed Reader and we also remembered Richard Hornsby who had been a Reader too.

It made me think about my own licensing and was amazed when I realised it was ten years ago. Where has that time gone? So way back in January 2011 I was licensed at Birmingham Cathedral. And what an amazing ten years it has been.

I have been fortunate in preaching at services at St Michael's along with leading services and also delivering courses. Also in those ten years I have preached at a variety of Churches in Boldmere – The URC, Boldmere Methodist Church, Chester Road Baptist Church, St Columba's and The Vineyard. Each church and congregation has helped me in what I do today.

I love what I do and hope that you enjoy what I do too. Thank you for all the support that you have given me and the positive comments that you give. Here's to the next ten years, I wonder what it will hold?

Elaine Riley

**My super power is holding on to  
junk for years and then  
throwing it away just before I  
need it.**





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## Glam Rock Night: the new going out is staying at home



When is going out staying in? The answer is a Glam Rock evening by DJ Rev Gary. And what an evening it was. The music took Ian and I back to our teens, the music we grew up with. We even managed to don a wig or two for the evening.

DJ Rev Gary went into his vast and eclectic array of music and we heard hits by Slade, Alice Cooper, T Rex, Roxy Music and one or two that we had forgotten about.



Do you remember Fox? Do you remember Alex Harvey? Well you should have been there to enjoy an evening of nostalgia.



DJ Rev Gary has said that there will be more of these evenings... so keep your eyes peeled and watch on the church face book page and on email. Perhaps we will see you there. I wonder how you will come dressed for the next one?

Written by Elaine Riley

## **An Englishman's View of Australia!**

The following has been written by the late Douglas Adams of "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" fame.

"Australia is a very confusing place, taking up a large amount of the bottom half of the planet. It is recognisable from orbit because of many unusual features, including what at first looks like an enormous bite taken out of its southern edge; a wall of sheer cliffs which plunge into the sea. Geologists assure us that this is simply an accident of geomorphology, but they still call it the "Great Australian Bight", proving that not only are they covering up a more frightening theory but they can't spell either.

The first of the confusing things about Australia is the status of the place. Where other landmasses and sovereign lands are classified as continent, island or country, Australia is considered all three. Typically, it is unique in this.

**The second confusing thing about Australia is the animals. They can be divided into three categories: Poisonous, Odd, and Sheep. It is true that of the 10 most poisonous arachnids on the planet, Australia has 9 of them. Actually, it would be more accurate to say that of the 9 most poisonous arachnids, Australia has all of them.**

Any visitors should be careful to check inside boots (before putting them on), under toilet seats (before sitting down) and generally everywhere else. **A stick is very useful for this task.**

**The last confusing thing about Australia is the inhabitants.**

A short history: Sometime around 40,000 years ago some people arrived in boats from the north. They ate all the available food, and a lot of them died. The ones who survived learned respect for the balance of nature, man's proper place in the scheme of things, and spiders. They settled in and spent a lot of the intervening time making up strange stories. **They also discovered a stick that kept coming back.**

Then, around 200 years ago, Europeans arrived in boats from the north. **More accurately, European convicts were sent, with a few deranged people in charge. They tried to plant their crops in autumn (failing to take account of the reversal of the seasons), ate all their food, and a lot of them died.**

About then the sheep arrived, and have been treasured ever since. It is interesting to note here that the Europeans always consider themselves vastly superior to any other race they encounter, since they can lie, cheat, steal and litigate (marks of a civilised culture they say), whereas all the Aborigines can do is happily survive being left in the middle of a vast red-hot desert - **equipped with a stick.**

Eventually, the new lot of people stopped being Europeans on 'extended holiday' and became Australians. The changes are subtle, but deep, caused by the mind-stretching expanses of nothingness and eerie quiet, where a person can sit perfectly still and look deep inside themselves to the core of their essence, their reasons for being, and the necessity of checking inside their boots every morning for fatal surprises. They also picked up the most finely tuned sense of irony in the world, and the Aboriginal gift for making up stories. Be warned.

There is also the matter of the beaches. Australian beaches are simply the nicest and best in the world, although anyone actually venturing into the sea will have to contend with sharks, stinging jellyfish, stonefish (a fish which sits on the bottom of the sea, pretends to be a rock and has venomous barbs sticking out of its back that will kill just from the pain) and surfboarders. **However, watching a beach sunset is worth the risk.**

**As a result of all this hardship, dirt, thirst and wombats, you would expect Australians to be a sour lot. Instead, they are genial, jolly, cheerful and always willing to share a kind word with a stranger. Faced with insurmountable odds and impossible problems, they smile disarmingly and look for a stick. Major engineering feats have been performed with sheets of corrugated iron, string and mud.**

Alone of all the races on earth, they seem to be free from the 'Grass is greener on the other side of the fence' syndrome, and roundly proclaim that Australia is, in fact, the other side of that fence. They call the land "Oz" or "Godzone" (a verbal contraction of "God's Own Country"). The irritating thing about this is... they may be right.

## **TIPS TO SURVIVING AUSTRALIA**

**Don't ever put your hand down a hole for any reason - WHATSOEVER.**

**The beer is stronger than you think, regardless of how strong you think it is.**

**Always carry a stick.**

**Air-conditioning is imperative.**

**Do not attempt to use Australian slang unless you are a trained linguist and extremely good in a fist fight.**

**Wear thick socks.**

**Take good maps. Stopping to ask directions only works when there are people nearby**

**If you leave the urban areas, carry several litres of water with you at all times, or you will die. And don't forget a stick.**

**Even in the most embellished stories told by Australians, there is always a core of truth that it is unwise to ignore.**

## **HOW TO IDENTIFY AUSTRALIANS**

They pronounce Melbourne as "Mel-bin".

They think it makes perfect sense to decorate highways with large fibreglass bananas, prawns and sheep.

They think "Woolloomooloo" is a perfectly reasonable name for a place, that "Wagga Wagga" can be abbreviated to "Wagga", but "Woy Woy" can't be called "Woy".

Their hamburgers will contain beetroot. Apparently it's a must-have.

How else do you get a stain on your shirt?

They don't think it's summer until the steering wheel is too hot to handle.

They believe that all train timetables are works of fiction.

**And they all carry a stick.**

## What are you doing during Lockdown3?

Whilst I am writing this we are at the beginning of Lockdown3. Feels very much like “the same old same old”. Yes we are told there is a light at the end of the tunnel, we have the vaccines being rolled out and people are being immunised, which is wonderful. But we also hear the Government and the Chief Medical Officers telling us that we are at a pivotal moment that we still have to be so careful. So I ask “what have you been doing during Lockdown3?”

Have you taken up new hobbies? Have you learnt a new language or musical instrument? What have you done to keep yourself occupied? I know that some of you will be working from home, but what in your other time have you done?



I have been knitting for charities, doing “good old” jigsaws, reading and walking a lot. Also I have been writing articles for the Church magazine.



So I wondered if we could have a pool of ideas of what could keep us all going through “February and beyond”. Have you been doing things that you can share with us all – things that we might enjoy too?

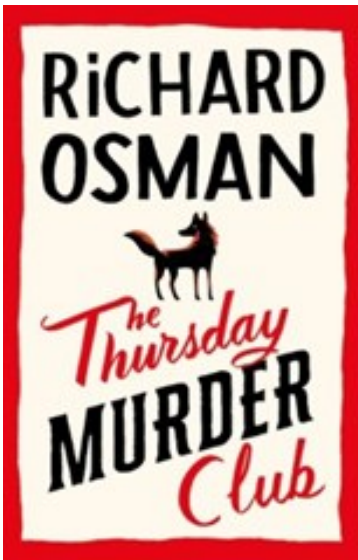
- Have you a book recommendation?
- Have you a film recommendation or a TV recommendation?
- Have you cooked a new meal that we might like to try? Can you post your recipe?
- Have you baked something new?
- Have you a knitting pattern you could share?
- How about writing an article for the magazine?
- Is there a walk through Sutton Park that you would recommend?

February and beyond – what can you help us all do to pass the time in a different way?

Written by: Elaine Riley

## Lockdown3 recommendations and beyond.

No sooner had I asked that, than I began to get recommendations for things we should be reading during this time. So here goes:



### **The Thursday Murder Club written by Richard Osman.**

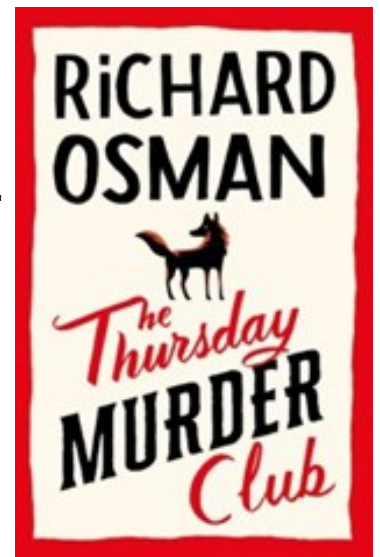
A bit of recommended reading.....The Thursday Murder Club by Richard Osman.....well it was top of the bestselling fiction list for weeks. I would categorise it as a very English whodunit...the book cover has various quotes from other authors "Such a beacon of pleasure" "So smart and funny. Deplorably good" and I would agree!!!!!! A lovely bit of escapism in these challenging times... so draw up your favourite arm chair, make a strong cuppa and enjoy.

### **Recommended by Hilary Harrison.**

Last year there was a new 6 week BBC programme called 'Between the Covers' hosted by Sara Cox, with a group of 4 writers and celebrities who discussed new books and their own favourite 'reads'. One of the celebrities was Richard Osman whose first book, '**The Thursday Murder Club**' was published last year.

From his description it sounded a good read so I bought it and would really recommend it for a light but, for me, a 'laugh-out-loud' detective story. The characters were delightfully described and very 'real' and I think we have probably met most of them in our everyday life. I loved the way the chapters were put together, with one particular, extremely funny, character almost being the narrator. It was probably my favourite read of last year and I was sad to finish it. He finished his 2<sup>nd</sup> book during lockdown 1, so I really look forward to that.

### **Recommended by Angela Grudzinski.**

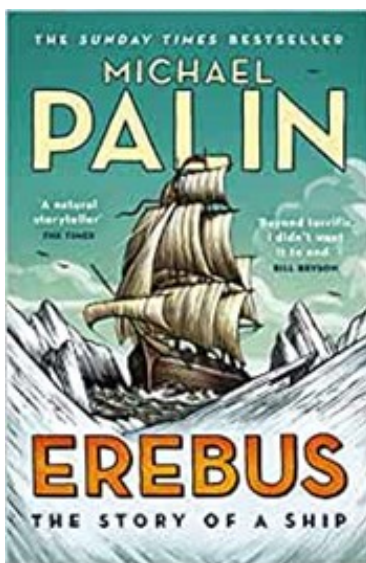
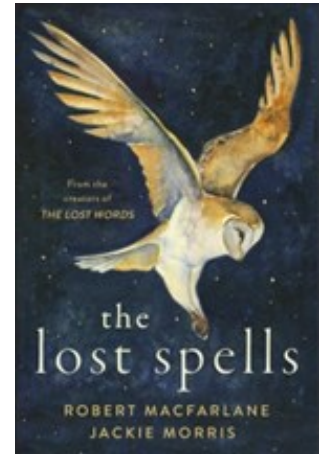




Two totally different books to have in your library are '**The Lost Words**' and '**The Lost Spells**' by Jackie Morris and Robert MacFarlane. These are beautiful books, the text by Robert and the beautiful illustrations by Jackie. For those who love nature, they are captivating. There is also

a CD with some of the poems put to music which is also worth listening to.

**Recommended by Angela Grudzinski.**



My recommendation is: **EREBUS the story of a ship by Michael Palin.**

This is the story of HMS Erebus and includes two great voyages of exploration, first to the Antarctic captained by James Ross, an explorer of some renown and then to the Arctic seeking the North West Passage, captained by another explorer of note, Sir John Franklin. She was lost on that voyage, but found recently together with a lot of artefacts. The account is well written by Michael Palin and is a good read.

**Recommended by Eric Hudson.**

**Now an internet recommendation:**

Last May, in the first lockdown, two friends told me about the **Hay Festival online**. I looked at the talks available, registered and signed up for 6 over the 10 day festival, including Jon Sopel and Jackie Morris, in an hour of watching her produce one of her exquisite paintings.

In the autumn I was notified that there would be a Hay Festival Digital Winter Weekend at the end of November so signed up for 6 more talks including Robert MacFarlane in conversation with Jackie Morris, Susie Dent in conversation with Stephen Fry (who rarely paused for breath) and Benjamin Zephaniah.



**All the talks in the digital festival were free but I then realised that if I sign up to the Hay Festival for a fee of £10, I could watch all the talks, both from this year and in previous years whenever I wanted.**

There are a huge number of interesting talks to enjoy and while away a few hours and possibly encourage the purchase of a book or two!  
**Recommended by Angela Grudzinski.**



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## Signs of spring



We woke to snow again this morning but what remains fascinating to me, is the hardiness of plants that happily flower at this time of year through, what to us, is quite intense cold and biting east winds.

In our garden the Hamamelis greets us in January with the dainty yellow flowers. At Winterbourne there are two or three mature specimens of different colours, which are lovely at this time of year, surrounded by beds of hellebore orientalis in varying shades.

Also flowering is the Correa Rosea, Marian's Marvel, commonly known as the Australian Fuchsia, which happily flowers throughout the winter. In pots they like ericaceous compost and full light but some shading from direct sun when it becomes really warm.



Like last winter, the Coronilla is flowering and, placed by the back door, gives off scent as we go outside.

This morning I noticed that the winter-flowering iris are just beginning to show themselves and their resilience to the intense cold

in their delicate but exquisite beauty, to remind us that spring is on its way. There are 2 different groups of these iris: the rhizomatous *Iris unguicularis*, flowering from October to March and the bulbous *Iris reticulata* group, flowering in late winter and early spring. *Iris unguicularis*, often known as the Algerian Iris, was originally introduced into the UK from Algeria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, by bulb collector and botanist Dean Herbert.

It is native to Greece, southern Turkey, Western Syria, Tunisia and Algeria and grows wild throughout the Mediterranean. The simple form is mid blue but one of the vigorous types is a plant collected in Algeria in 1937 by a Mary Barnard, but not registered under her name until 1962. The flowers of this Iris 'Mary Barnard' are quite small but an intense, rich purple. They normally start flowering in November and may continue until April. They are very hardy and produce clumps which are happiest in south or west-facing borders, preferably against a wall. They work well as a cut flower if cut in bud, gently opening in the



warmth of the house. Mature clumps provide a good hiding place for snails which are inclined to chew through unopened buds so reducing the leaf length in October and removing any debris and snails! is one way to reduce this problem. Clumps should be divided periodically, preferably in early spring to avoid frost damage

and young pieces of the plant replanted so that the rhizome is at the soil surface and the roots placed downwards. Watering the new plants is required to establish a good, new root system.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> group of winter-flowering iris is the reticulate group which originate from the high mountain areas of Turkey, the Caucasus mountains and parts of the Middle East, where they are buried in snow all winter. Unlike iris unguicularis which flowers through the winter cold, Iris reticulate flowers as the snow melts and temperatures begin to rise. The name reticulate refers to the papery coat which surrounds the bulb and has a mesh network. Irises generally have three outer petals called 'falls' and three inner petals called 'standards' and the flowers of reticulate can be yellow, blue or purple. They grow well in alpine pots in rich compost with plenty of drainage. All irises hate being sat in wet compost or soil so if in a pot, they can be covered with a sheet of glass until signs of growth are seen in January. They need splitting every 2 or 3 years, around the end of June, as the bulblets tend to crowd each other out and can take a few years to reach a flowering stage. When planting, it is tempting to plant the bulbs close together to ensure a good show, but planting a few cm apart avoids the bulbs from competing for moisture and allows each one to bulk up.

To ensure their numbers, extra bulbs should be planted in the autumn as not all bulbs will survive. There are a number of popular cultivars including 'Harmony', 'George', 'Pixie', 'Katharine's Gold' and 'Sunshine', each one with different qualities, colours and markings.

Whichever variety of iris you choose, they will reward at this early part of the year before the garden is beginning to wake up into the full flush of spring.



In a recent article by Roy Lancaster, he celebrated the trees and flowers of February, many of which he has seen growing in their natural habitat around the world. Whilst I know I am unlikely ever to do this, he suggests places in this country where we can admire and enjoy mass planting of some of these flowers, shrubs and trees. Many of these are National Trust gardens which, hopefully, we may be able to enjoy in the future. I now have an increasing list of places to visit when we can eventually get out and about. In the meantime we will continue to enjoy what is in our own environment, enjoying the sight



of snowdrops and bulbs popping up in people's gardens; watching the buds on the camellias move steadily towards flowering and noticing the changing structure of trees. Also a great treat for us has been the now-regular visits of a pair of jays who drop in for a feast of peanuts close to the house. Spending a few minutes

watching what nature has to offer for free gives a time of pure pleasure.

**Angela Grudzinski**

# Groups & Organisations

## MONDAY

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

## WEDNESDAY

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

## THURSDAY

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

## FRIDAY

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

## CHURCHYARD TALES

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

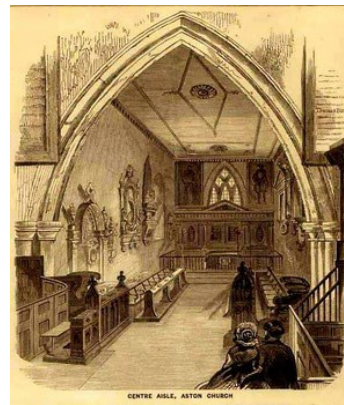
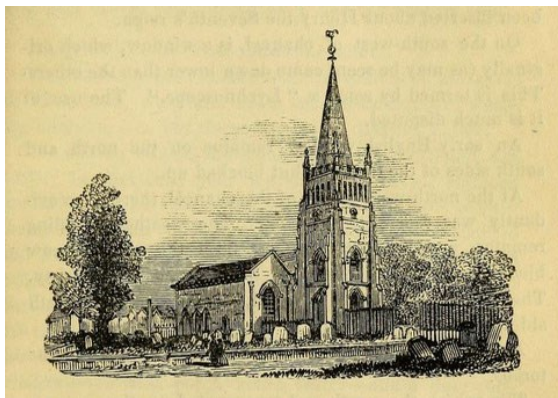
Here is one of its stories.....

**William Joseph GREATREX (1865 – 1916)** – aged 51 years

**Mary Ann GREATREX (1864 – 1950)** – aged 85 years

**William Joseph GREATREX** was born in Aston in the Spring of 1865. He was the eldest son of Joseph (a Hairdresser) and Mary Ann. William was brother to Agnes Ann (b:1868), Herbert John (b:1870) Irene Emily (b:1871), Mary (b:1874) and George Frederick (b:1876).

Both of William's parents had been born in Sutton Coldfield, and keeping local in 1871 the family lived in Bodwin Cottage, Victoria Road Aston Manor within the parish of St Peter and St Paul's Church.



Joseph, William's father had his hairdressing business on Union Street, Birmingham but on 25<sup>th</sup> January 1878 he purchased the premises known as the 'Burlington Haircutting Rooms' situated at Burlington Passage, New Street and adjoining the Midland Hotel, with the intention of conducting a first-class Ladies and Gentleman's Hairdressers.

**BURLINGTON HAIRCUTTING ROOMS,  
BURLINGTON PASSAGE, NEW STREET, BIRMINGHAM,  
Adjoining the Midland Hotel.**  
**J**OSEPH GREATREX, formerly of Union Street, begs most respectfully to announce to his former Patrons, also to the Customers of Mr. John Macrae, that he has PURCHASED the BUSINESS from that Gentleman, and intends conducting it as a first-class Ladies' and Gentlemen's Trade.  
First-class Workmanship, with scrupulous Cleanliness. Soliciting your kind patronage and recommendation.  
Burlington Passage, January 25, 1878. c1761

By 1881 the family had moved to fashionable Moseley, living at 36 Highgate Lane, and William, now aged 16 had begun his career in hairdressing.



Moseley Village

**Mary Ann VOILES** was born in Aston in 1864, the eldest daughter of Thomas (a Chain Maker) and Mary Ann, and was the eldest of their children. Mary Ann was sister to Jane (b:1865) and twins Lizzie and Harry (b: 1869). The family, at that time, living on William Street, Aston Manor.

Mary Ann and the family had moved to 131 Park Road, Aston Manor by the 1880's, and in 1881 is recorded as being a Gold and Silver Chain Maker like her father and brother.

William and Mary Ann met over the following years and a wedding was arranged for late 1885. But 1885 was to deal the family an almighty blow with the untimely death of William's father Joseph (aged just 48). On Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March 1885, Joseph left his salon for lunch at the nearby Benson's Refreshment Rooms on Union Passage and ordered stewed beefsteak. Having paid for his lunch the waitress dropped his change. He had just taken a mouthful of the food, bent down to pick up the change and choked on a large piece of beef.



William and Mary Ann married at St Peter and St Paul's Church Aston on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1885.

They were to have four children Maude Mary (b:1886), Ivy Eveline (b:1888), Dorothy Winifred (b:1895) and Gwendoline Voiles (b:1899). William and Mary Ann moved to 13 Roland Road, Handsworth where they were living in 1891. Mary Ann was to remain close to her family as at the same time they moved to 19 Roland Road just 3 doors down.

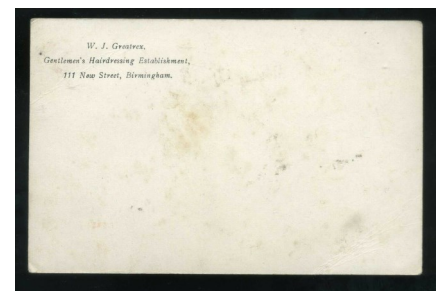


13 ————— 19

The family moved again to 169 Bevington Road, Aston Manor by 1901 but were quickly to relocate to Elvaston, Station Road, Wylde Green into the parish of St Michael's Church.

The business now named W.J Greatrex began to expand, and they opened other premises on New Street, Colmore Row and Cannon Street.

In 1908 William was appointed Master of the Guild of Hairdressers, a post he retained until 1911, and was President of the Birmingham Hairdressers' Academy for 8 years.



*The W.J. Greatrex salon at 111 New Street*



William formed close links with St Michael's Church and was Church Warden here between 1909 – 1913 and from 1915 until 1916 and was in post at his death on 9<sup>th</sup> September 1916. William was buried at St Michael's Church.

Mary Ann lived on in Boldmere until her death at the end of February 1950 aged 85, and was buried with William.

Following William's death, the business continued to flourish as high-class hairdressers, opening several other premises as late as the 1960's.



*Peter Knight*

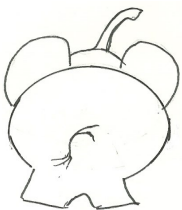


Visit our website at [www.stmichaels.org.uk](http://www.stmichaels.org.uk)

# Church Hall Lettings

For bookings ring:

Church Administrator 0121 373 0207



Tailing Off....

We are all glad to hear that our curate, Simon Cocks, has recovered from Covid and asthma and has been able to return to work.

We're all looking forward to spring and better news and brighter times.

My husband, Graham, has chosen his favourite hymn for this month, 'He Who Would Valiant Be'. He also chose it for our wedding!

Editor

Magazine articles please for the

**APRIL**

magazine to:

[jenningspenny@aol.com](mailto:jenningspenny@aol.com)

**By 10th March 2021**

## WHO'S WHO AT ST MICHAEL'S

<p><b>Vicar:</b> Rev. Gary Birchall          Tel: 354 4501          Email: garybirchall1@gmail.com          (off Tuesdays)</p>	<p>209 Station Road          Sutton Coldfield          B73 5EL</p>
<p><b>Curate: Simon Cocks</b>          Email: simon@wildgoose.me.uk</p>	
<p><b>Churchwardens:</b>          Pete Swaine          Tel: 07846 401334          Email: peter@swaine.plus.com</p>	<p>Jude Leonard          Tel: 0121 373 0012          Email: judinator1@hotmail.com</p>
<p><b>Readers:</b>          Elaine Riley                      Tel: 354 4157          Gary Connell                      07963 510623</p>	
<p><b>Lay Pastoral Ministers:</b>          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><b>Stewardship Secretary</b>          Edwina Connell</p>	<p>Tel:        07717 239904          Email:    edwinaconnell@yahoo.co.uk</p>
<p><b>Church Administrator</b>          Liz Claybrook          Tel: 373 0207          Email:          stmichaelschurchboldmere@gmail.com,           Mon, Wed &amp; Fri 9.30-2.30pm</p>	<p>Church Office          St Michael's Church          Church Road, Boldmere          Sutton Coldfield          B73 5RX</p>

# St Martin's Nursing Home



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

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

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

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

51 Vesey Road Sutton Coldfield West Midlands B73 5NR 0121 321 1789  
email [enquiries@st.martins-nursinghome.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@st.martins-nursinghome.co.uk)  
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