

The LINK digital

March 2022



**The Parish Church of
St Michael Braintree
www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk**

EXCITING 'SMASH' PLANS

Dear Friends,

As I write this, I have the words of '10,000 Reasons' ringing in my ears. On Sunday evening at the All-Age-Tonight service a greater number of musicians played and what a joy it was to sing together.

Some of the words we sung were...

*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.*

In a way it does feel as if the 'sun is coming up' again and we can see light at the end of the Covid tunnel. Throughout the whole pandemic I have longed for singing more freely without restrictions and being united as God's people. Belting out worship songs in my kitchen does not compare to lifting our voices together as the family of God. Paul knew the importance of this communal act, in Ephesians 5 v 18-20 we read...*be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The unhindered singing of Christian songs and hymns can place spiritual truths deep within us and the lyrics can often be

retained for years to come even when horrendous trials and disease may hit. They can act as a comfort and reminder in every season.

Singing together also unites us, encourages us and builds us up as the body of Christ. As I considered the song, '10 000 Reasons' I decided to search on YouTube for it. I came across this wonderful version performed by Matt Redman, the Songwriter, and the 'All Souls' Orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall with many hundreds of worshippers.

Check it out here... [All Souls Orchestra ft. Matt Redman - 10,000 Reasons \(Prom Praise\) \[Official Video\] - YouTube](#)

God speaks to us powerfully through His Word, in many small contexts and when we are on our own. However, watching this YouTube video helped me to again reflect upon how large Christian events have been a source of immeasurable encouragement in my walk with the Lord. I believe that they have provided a small glimpse of heaven as huge numbers of believers worship God together. My diary this year will be filled with as many of these events as possible! As a family we will be heading off to 'Bible by the Beach' in Eastbourne. If you are interested in coming too then check out the website... <https://www.biblebythebeach.org/> or chat to us.

And for children...we have SMASH!! Exciting times ahead!!

Our **S**aint **M**ichael's **A**lternative **S**pring **H**oliday **C**lub is in the diary between the 11th and the 13th April 2022. Did you notice a difference? The second 'S' in SMASH stands for '**S**pring' instead of '**S**ummer'!

This year we will be back to hosting the children (rather than whole families) and we have made the decision to run the club

for three longer days (rather than five shorter ones). Each day the children will join us between 9.30am and 12.30pm. My hope and prayer is that greater numbers will feel able to commit to these sessions and hear the Good News of Jesus.

Subsequent family events and clubs will take place throughout 2022 – so look out for details of these too!

For each day of SMASH there will be much excitement, energy and enthusiasm! There will be daily Bible stories, drama sketches/puppets, Bible studies, crafts and games!

This year the title is 'Diary of a Disciple – Luke's Story' and is based upon a contemporary retelling of Luke's Gospel, written by Gemma Willis and illustrated by Emma Randall. A fantastic book! Its accessible style offers an introduction into the Bible for the next generation. During the three sessions we will be exploring and celebrating Jesus' life. So, the plan for the week is as follows...

Monday 11th April (Day 1) - Who is Jesus? Christmas – Luke 1: 1 – 56, 2: 1 – 40

Tuesday 12th April (Day 2) - What did Jesus say? Teachings and miracles – Luke 5: 1 – 32

Wednesday 13th April (Day 3) - What happened to Jesus? Easter – Luke 22: 1 – 24, 39 – 54, 63 – 71; 23: 1 – 5, 13 – 46, 50 – 56; 24: 1 – 31

We would really value your prayers as we continue to plan for SMASH and as people sign up. Please pray that this will be a life changing event for so many.

If anybody would like further information about getting involved
– I would love to hear from you. My e-mail address
is...rgrovesmith@stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

Wishing you every blessing,

Rachel Grove Smith

MISSION OF THE MONTH ACTS

The NGO Christian Action, All for Solidarity (ACTS) was born in 2002, but officially recognized on March 25, 2005. ACTS ministry is based in Burkina Faso, one of the poorest countries. ACTS was set up by Joanna Ilboudo with a vision to bring love and hope to the orphans and widows. Joanna has visited us at St Michaels Church at least on two separate occasions to share her vision and provide updates on how the ministry is supporting the orphans and the widows in the community.

We very much look forward to our Mission Sunday on Sun 13th March, where ACTS in Burkina Faso will be the focus, including an interview with Joanna and her son Israel, and talk by Joanna.

ACTS is a non-profit Christian association, which pursues the following mission and vision:

- To contribute to the development of mothers and children, particularly orphans and widows, through the testimony of love and hope, through integral development projects that restore dignity.
- Work in favour of all populations without distinction of religion, ethnicity, race and caste with the aim of contributing to the socio-economic development of orphans and widows, as well as other vulnerable children and women.

Services provided by ACTS include:

Community Health – supporting projects that promote community health



Formal Education – Through the Lycee Evangelique EZRA which is a high school.



Professional Training – Training programs for widows, destitute children, Christian writers, young entrepreneurs and church leaders. Includes sewing training for orphans and other girls.



Food Support – Distribution of food to widows and orphans, etc

Formation Leadership – Supporting church leaders and young entrepreneurs to enable them to develop leadership skills.

Edition & Publication – Through edition contacts, ACTS trains Christian writers.

Adapted from the ACTS website: www.actsbf.org – it is in French, but you can right clicked and selected “Translate to English”

A big thank you to Terry Clark, for his many years as our ACTS Burkina Faso church rep. Terry has recently stepped down from this role - if anyone is interested in taking up this role, please contact Nigel Adams.

A THUNDERSTORM - WEDNESDAY 4TH JULY 1838

As a consequence of this sudden storm, a coalmine in Silkstone Yorkshire was flooded.

Water flooded through the two shafts of the mine blocking the ways of escape. Tragically, miners died below. Among those who could not escape were 26 children, some as young as 7 years. The disaster shocked the nation. It took 2 years for the government to set up a commission to enquire into the accident and working conditions underground.

ANTHONY ASHLEY COOPER.

The man who was asked to head the commission and lead the investigation into working conditions below ground was the seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, who was later know as the 'Poor Man's Earl'.

Jeremy Paxman describes the inhumane conditions that children, girls and women suffered in the coalmines (1). Anthony Ashley Cooper met with fierce opposition from mine owners and MPs, so sadly Mines & Collieries Act of 1842 was not all that commission wished.

NO CHILDREN, GIRLS OR WOMEN.

The Act of 1842 prohibited boys, girls and women from working under ground. Later Anthony Ashley Cooper had a hand in the first of the factory acts which limited the hours children could work in factories to ten per day.

PRAISE INDEED!

Jeremy Paxman says of the 7th Earl of Shaftsbury that 'he was one of the greatest social reformers who ever lived' (2). Paxman goes on to ascribe his reforming zeal to 'deeply held Christian beliefs'. This comes from the pen of a man who is unafraid to pick out the weakness of politicians, industrialists and trade union leaders. Praise indeed! Maybe we need Christians like that today with such zeal! Perhaps Monday nights in Lent will help us in that direction.

(1) Jeremy Paxman. 'Black Gold' p55

(2) Op.cit. p.55.

Stephen Bailey

FARMING SEASON

At the time of writing this article the extraordinary sad news of Russia invading its close neighbour, Ukraine, has been announced. Whatever the outcome of this unwanted act of aggression there is sure to be untold pain and suffering and our prayers are with all those who are adversely affected by the conflict.



For this month's article, I will be looking at the agricultural industry in Ukraine. With a total area of 233,062sq miles compared to the UK of 93,628sq miles, Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe behind Russia. Agribusiness is the main growth driver of the Ukrainian economy. Ukraine has been known as the

breadbasket of Europe, accounting for about 25% of the world's most fertile black soil. Ukraine is the world's largest exporter of sunflower oil and one of the top exporters of grains. The core agricultural crops making Ukraine one of the world leaders are grains and forage crops, including wheat, corn, barley, sunflower, sugar beet, legumes, fruits and vegetables, tobacco, etc. Agribusiness holds a major role in the structure of the Ukrainian exports. As of end of 2019, agribusiness brought almost 40% of the country's foreign currency earnings.

Despite these impressive statistics, there is still huge potential, which remains untapped. To unlock its export potential Ukraine has been aiming at upgrading the country's infrastructure, which includes the sea ports, that are used for shipping agricultural products abroad. These ports include Mariupol, Beriansk and

Odessa. Agribusiness is a key economy sector in terms of investment, both domestic and foreign. According to the data by the State Statistic Service of Ukraine, during the period from 2014 to 2018, the amount of investment into the Ukrainian agribusiness grew trifold amounting to 11.2 billion USD being invested in food production.



A FIELD IN UKRAINE

Ukrainian agribusiness has been increasingly noticed by foreign investors not just because of its fertile soils and favourable location, but also Ukrainian agritech companies have been dramatically improving the traditional agricultural methods bringing efficiency to a new level. The use of drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) in farming is seen as one of the most promising innovations in the field. UAVs are able to provide crucial information in real-time, such data, collected long-term can be used for better dynamic understanding of every process. UAVs are equipped with special sensors providing for the detection of contaminated crop areas, targeted fertilization, spot spraying and irrigation. In as little as 3 hours a UAV is able to sow an area of 10 square kilometres. Other applications of UAVs include monitoring the workers, agricultural machinery and livestock, guarding fields, etc. UAVs

equipped with thermal imaging cameras allow for guarding and monitoring at night.

In summary Ukraine is a country that is blessed with its resources for agricultural production and its people recognise this and are now developing new infrastructure and agricultural technology to enhance and unlock its huge potential.

Finally we must stand with our Christian brothers and sisters in Russia and Ukraine and be reminded of the Bible verses in **James 4:1-2.**

1 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from the desires that battle within you?

2 You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God.

Adam Grove Smith

BE CAREFUL WHEN TAKING CREDIT!

“Shall the ax boast itself against him who chops with it? Or shall the saw exalt itself against him who saws with it? As if a rod could wield itself against those who lift it up, Or as if a staff could lift up, as if it were not wood!” (Isaiah 10:15)

One constant pitfall we must watch for is taking credit for something that God does in or through us, or using the gifts and callings of God for self-exaltation. In that light it may be easier to handle poverty, weakness, or insignificance, than wealth, ability, power or authority, since poverty and frailty are not normally things we boast about, and they cause us to recognize our need for God. Prosperity, gifting, and anointing, on the other hand can be powerful temptations, leading to pride, covetousness, and self-sufficiency.

Saul, who came from a humble background, was anointed king of Israel, yet his heart was revealed when the Lord exalted him, but he exulted in his own position, eventually coveting it so severely he became a fierce enemy of God. The Lord then removed His spirit from Saul and the true condition of the man became apparent to everyone.

Even the great Solomon whose gifting, anointing, and prosperity were unsurpassed in some ways, seems to have taken for granted his abilities and wealth, and, somehow, rationalizing his blatant disobedience to God's law, he fell into idolatry and brought disaster to the Kingdom of Israel. This seems amazing, given the fact that Solomon's most precious gift was his wisdom. (Those with this gift should take note).

Be careful how you handle the gifts and successes that God gives you! Enjoy His blessings as you serve in your family, business, or ministry – but never forget where it all comes from,

and to whom the glory belongs, cause if you do, He will be sure to remind you.

Supplied from "Worthy Brief" by Peter Schaad



**Women @ St Michael's
Saturday March 19th 2022.
Via Zoom or Phone
10.00-12.30 pm
Speaker: Liz Jackson:
"Go Big: Worshipping God"**

If you access Zoom maybe think about inviting someone who does not have access to Zoom to join you in your home (you could have coffee and refreshments together!)

If you would like to join us there is a sign-up sheet in Church.
or

You can message Jennifer Bailey via Facebook or text
07778563464

and I will send you the Link

Do join us – Liz is good to hear and there will be songs, prayer, breakout rooms and a break for coffee.

Jennifer Bailey

70 YEARS AGO – THE LIFE OF OUR CHURCH

*Excerpts from the Parish Magazine of St Michael's and St Paul's,
March 1952*

THE VICAR'S LETTER

My dear friends

This last month has been a sad one for us in the loss of our King, beloved and honoured by us all for his steadfast leadership in peace and war and also for the peace of heart evinced in daily life by one whose trust was in the Lord whose Word was daily read. As we honour his memory, let us pray steadfastly for his daughter our Queen, and for the Queen Mother Elizabeth in her loneliness.

These times are always a reminder to us that we should ourselves be prepared to give an answer to the Lord for our lives should He call us unexpectedly and suddenly into His presence. So often we live as though we had all eternity to start obeying God, coming to church but grudging the giving of any further time to God or to the study of His Word, and living with self as the centre of our existence. The season of Lent comes as a challenge to think out again our relationship with our Lord.

To this end we have a series of Bible Studies during Lent which will link up our knowledge of Prayer Book and Bible. This series of studies will be on Friday evenings at 8pm and will be under the general heading of "Your Bible and your Prayer Book". The subjects will be: -

Feb 29 th	The Biblical reason for our Prayer Book Worship
March 7 th	The Biblical reason for our saying the Creed
March 14 th	The Biblical reason for our using the 10 Commandments

March 21st The Biblical reason for the use of the Lord's Prayer
March 28th The Biblical reason for the reception of Baptism
April 4th The Biblical reason for our promise at Confirmation

During Holy Week we shall think of the Scriptural background of the Lord's Supper.

Yours very sincerely,

Peter James

MEMORIES OF BRAINTREE

The following email was received recently from Wellington, New Zealand:

Greetings,

I am writing to say thank you to all who have been involved in the production of Link magazine which I have been reading over the internet for a number of years. I am prompted to write by the "70 years ago" article which included a copy of a letter by Rev'd Peter James who officiated at our wedding 63 years ago come Easter.

In 1942 one of the wartime government agencies placed me in St Michael's school in New Street so that my mother could resume silk weaving at Warner's (parachutes?). School, Sunday School, Bible Class and Sunday School teacher followed, and Janet and I were both choristers for many years.

As the years go by the number of names I recognize in either Link or the notices gets smaller and I was sad to read of the passing of Ron Smith as Ron and I played together in South Street towards the end of the war. Many, many happy memories and I still hold St Michaels and its people dear in my heart and in my prayers.

Again---THANK YOU!!

Bob Hines

BELFRY BULLETIN

We have had an interesting time recently at St. Michael's and away from the tower. For me the standout occasion was the Quarter Peal we rang to celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's 70th anniversary of her Accession to the throne as 70 years ago I had rung for her Accession and Proclamation.

It is heartening that on Saturday 29th January we had a group of potential new ringers and taught them the basics of bell ringing and also took them to see the bells and explain what happens when the bells are being rung.

IT WOULD BE GREAT TO SEE YOU IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO LEARN TO RING.

Contact details are at the back of this magazine.

At 5pm on Sunday 6th February, along with 1,000's of bells word wide, we rang this Quarter Peal to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of Queen Elizabeth II's Accession to the Throne

1344 changes of Plain Bob Major in 50 minutes
1 Lin Ould, 2 Debbie Hill, 3 Jim Green, 4 Ian Cresshull,
5 Ellis Whitehouse, 6 David Learmonth,
7 Peter Smith, 8 Bradley Hill[c]

This was Debbie Hill's 250th Quarter Peal

The next day at practice, we were very pleased to welcome Richard Ould back to ringing following his knee operation. It was good to see you in the Tower, Richard.

Mum accompanied Rosie Gray, Clare's Daughter and Lin and Richard Ould's granddaughter, for a one to one bell handling lesson with Bradley and she is making such good progress that

on Sunday 13th February she tolled the treble up to the 10am service.

On our practice nights we are joined by ringers from other towers and on 14th February it was a pleasure to welcome John Connell. John was a St Michael's Guild ringer for many years and was a Guild Deputy Master, his visit brought back many happy and amusing memories. John taught Debbie and Bradley to ring.

We hosted a Northern District Advanced Practice on Saturday 19th February. Due to the Gale few attended so we each chose a method to ring which provide a very enjoyable and productive evening. Maybe we can do that again.

For the 10am service on 20th February as a birthday treat Lin conducted Plain Bob Minimus and that was a FIRST.

While Bradley was away snow boarding we took the opportunity to ring the following Quarter Peal. The foot note expresses our feeling.

Monday 21st February 2022 1260 changes Plain Bob Doubles in 40mins

*1 Simon Ward[c], 2 Debbie Hill[c], 3 Jim Green[c],
4 Peter Smith[c], 5 Ellis Whitehouse[c], 6 Lin Ould[c].*

*TO SHOW OUR APPRECIATION TO BRADLEY HILL FOR HIS
COMMITMENT TO THIS TOWER AND THESE BELLS*

Jointly conducted by all the band.

AWAY FROM THE TOWER

Ellis attended the 64th Nottingham University Guild of Bellringers Annual Dinner ringing at 3 Towers on dinner day and at the Guilds home tower for Sunday service.

Peter rang a QP at Kelvedon for the Queens Accession celebrations.

Bradley had an idea [look out], as we have not been able to have outings for a few years now how about ringing a Quarter Peal at all the Northern District towers. That sounds like fun we all said. So Bradley has organised 6 Saturday outings to ring 5 QP's at 5 different towers.

5th February Pentlow 5 bells, Belchamp St Paul 6, Ridgewell 6, Great Yeldham 6 and Toppesfield 8. Bradley rang in all 5 conducting 2, Debbie and Peter were in 4 Peter conducting 1 and Jodie rang in 3.

12th February Pebmarsh 6, Wickham St Paul 5, Gestingthorpe 6, Castle Heddingham anti-clockwise 6, Sible Heddingham 8. The QP at Castle Heddingham was 200th Quarter Peal that Debbie and Peter have rung together. Debbie, Bradley and Peter rang in all 5. Bradley conducting 3 Debbie and Peter 1 each.

19th February we were at Earls Colne 8, Great Tey 8, Colne Engain 6, Greenstead Green 6 and Stisted 6. Bradley conducting 2 and Peter rang in 5 with Debbie ringing in 4 and conducting 1.

A good idea Bradley a bit tiring but good fun!!

Peter Smith

A message from the editor

As we welcome Spring (perhaps my favourite season) with all its beauty and wonderful sight and sound, let me encourage you to wander out into the green and open spaces to gaze at the wonders of God's creation bringing forth new life – see the daffodils, bluebells, birds singing in the sky. Why not share pictures of Spring with our readers for next month's LINK magazine (send to: odupia00@yahoo.co.uk)

Below is a poem by Christina Rossetti

Spring

*Frost-locked all the winter,
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,
What shall make their sap ascend
That they may put forth shoots?
Tips of tender green,
Leaf, or blade, or sheath;
Telling of the hidden life
That breaks forth underneath,
Life nursed in its grave by Death.*

*Blows the thaw-wind pleasantly,
Drips the soaking rain,
By fits looks down the waking sun:
Young grass springs on the plain;
Young leaves clothe early hedgerow trees;
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,
Swollen with sap put forth their shoots;
Curled-headed ferns sprout in the lane;
Birds sing and pair again.*

*There is no time like Spring,
When life's alive in everything,
Before new nestlings sing,
Before cleft swallows speed their journey back
Along the trackless track –
God guides their wing,
He spreads their table that they nothing lack, –
Before the daisy grows a common flower
Before the sun has power
To scorch the world up in his noontide hour.*

*There is no time like Spring,
Like Spring that passes by;
There is no life like Spring-life born to die, –
Piercing the sod,
Clothing the uncouth clod,
Hatched in the nest,
Fledged on the windy bough,
Strong on the wing:
There is no time like Spring that passes by,
Now newly born, and now
Hastening to die.*

MARCH DIARY

www.stmichaelsbtree.co.uk

Our YouTube services can be accessed via the Worship tab on the St Michael's Church website (or through the "St Michael's – Worship on the Web" YouTube channel). The latest service is also available through "St Michael's by Phone" currently updated on a

Tuesday – just dial 01376 333565 (phone calls charged at the local rate). Both the online and phone versions of the service are available throughout the week

1 Tuesday

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

2 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point

3 Thursday

11:00am Coffee@Home on Zoom with Nigel & Jo Adams

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

6 Sunday

10:00am Church Family Worship

6.30pm Holy Communion

7 Monday

7:30pm Living Christianity (Zoom meeting)

7:30pm Bell Ringing

8 Tuesday

8:00pm First Priority prayer meeting on Zoom

9 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point

10 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

13 Sunday

8.00am Holy Communion

9:00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

10:00am Junior Church (3-14s)

10:00am Mission Sunday (focus on ACTS in Burkina Faso)

14 Monday

7:30pm Living Christianity (Zoom meeting)

7:30pm Bell Ringing

15 Tuesday

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

17 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

19 Saturday

10:00am – 12.30pm Women@St Michaels Saturday School
(Speaker: Liz Jackson)

20 Sunday

9:00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

10:00am Junior Church (3-14s)

10:00am Morning Worship: Stewardship: Honour the Lord
(Proverbs 3:1-12)

6.30pm All-Age Tonight: Prosper with a clear conscience

21 Monday

7:30pm Living Christianity (Zoom meeting)

7:30pm Bell Ringing

22 Tuesday

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

23 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point

24 Thursday (LINK SUBMISSION DUE)

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study

27 Sunday (MOTHERING SUNDAY)

8.00am Holy Communion

9:00am Next Plus Breakfast (14-18s)

10:00am Church Family Worship: Were not ten cleansed? (Luke 17:11-19)

28 Monday

7:30pm Living Christianity (Zoom meeting)

7:30pm Bell Ringing

29 Tuesday

8:00pm Zoom Bible Study, led by Cyril Bamforth

30 Wednesday

10.00am Meeting Point

31 Thursday

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study