

# **The LINK** digital

## **November 2022**



**The Parish Church of  
St Michael Braintree  
[www.stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk](http://www.stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk)**

## **"WE WILL REMEMBER THEM"**

Dear Friends,

November is a month when our thoughts turn to **Remembrance Sunday** and the importance of remembering times of war with gratitude, sadness and hope. This year, Remembrance Sunday will have a particular poignancy, with full-scale war in Europe for the first time in many decades, as Ukraine seeks to stand up against the might of Russia.

As we prepare for our acts of remembrance, I believe we should do so with **gratitude**. Gratitude for the courage and sacrifices made by so many – for those who gave their lives, so that we can enjoy the freedoms we now have. But gratitude also to God ... for his deliverance of our nation in times of war.

Yet we remember with **sadness** ... sadness for the many who died, suffered permanent injuries (physical and/or mental) or were bereaved. War inevitably brings suffering and brutality.

And we remember with **hope** – a sure and certain hope that one day God will "*make wars cease to the end of the earth*" (Psalm 46:9)

This year, on **Remembrance Sunday (13<sup>th</sup> November)**, we are delighted to welcome back **Brigadier Ian Dobbie** as our speaker, both at the 10am service and at the 3pm Civic Service. I hope you will be able to join us for one or both of those services, as we reflect and remember ...

*They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old;  
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.  
At the going down of the sun and in the morning  
We will remember them.*

Wishing you every blessing,

Nigel



## MISSION OF THE MONTH

### OPEN DOORS

Open Doors is an international ministry serving persecuted Christians and churches worldwide. Open Doors supplies Bibles, leadership training, literacy programmes, livelihood support and advocacy services. They also mobilise the church in the UK and Ireland to serve Christians living under religious persecution.

St Michael's Church has been supporting the work of Open Doors for a number of years and rightly so – for it is our duty and calling, as a community of Christians, to support and encourage one another in Christ. A prominent feature of Open Doors is the publication of World Watch List\* – ranking the list of the world top 50 countries where Christians face the most extreme persecution. I have read with horror and sadness as Nigeria, the country of my parents' birth, has climbed up the ranking (ranked 7th – World Watch List 2022) due to the relentless attack from Boko Haram and other Islamic organisations. May I encourage you to continue to pray for Nigeria and other countries listed on the List.

If you subscribe or are on the Open Doors mailing list, you would have received a postcard which asks members to invite their local Member of Parliament (MP) to the Open Doors World Watch List taking place in January 2023. May I also encourage you to take this opportunity to invite the Rt. Hon. James Cleverly MP, our local Member of Parliament and Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs.

It is of sad news that Open Doors announced the death of its founder Brother Andrew at the age of 94 (September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022). We join with the other Christian communities to express our condolence and tremendous gratitude for his legacy – he had worked tirelessly to raise the plight of persecuted Christians

around the world. Read about the story of Brother Andrew, God's Smuggler <https://oduk.azurewebsites.net/about/our-history/brother-andrew/>

To find out more about Open Doors, please visit <https://www.opendoorsuk.org/> or speak to me.

\*I have a couple of copies left if anyone would like a copy.

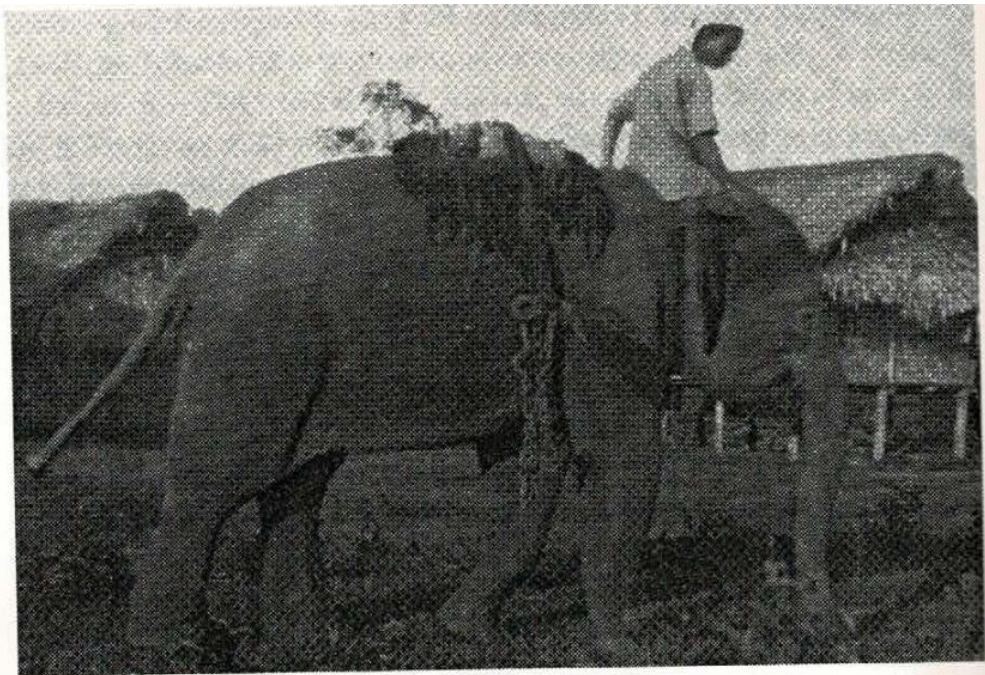
*Ade Odupitan - St Michael's rep for Open Doors*

## **A COSTLY CALLING**

### **A glimpse into the lives of Jo's grandparents, pioneer missionaries in Burma**

I remember growing up with my mother telling us many stories about her childhood in Burma (Myanmar) including being born in the jungle, having a close encounter with a rabid dog and fond memories of 'Maggie' the elephant, the local means of transport!

It was only as I grew older that I realised the significance of it. Granny and Grandpa, my mother's parents, (Canon & Mrs A T Houghton) had been amongst the first BCMS (Bible Churchman's Missionary Society, now Crosslinks) missionaries into Burma, a couple of years after BCMS started 100 years ago.



Maggie, the BCMS elephant, who played an important part in evacuating missionaries in 1942

My grandmother was only 20 years old and heavily pregnant when they first arrived in Burma in November 1924. To reach their new home in Mohnyin the only route was a tumbledown suspension bridge consisting of one or two planks, 40 foot above the stream. There was no handrail, tipped at alarming angles

and Granny's foot went through a wooden hole on her way across! You would not want this to happen to anyone, not least someone heavily pregnant!

When they got to Mohnyin, the place where they were going to live was grimy, covered in smoke, full of cobwebs, there was a hole in the walls and there were chickens in what was meant to be the bathroom! Needless to say, they moved in and even began Sunday services on their veranda, attended by some 20 people.

They worked amongst the Kachins, translated savages. They were animist in religion and their lives were dominated by spirits known as 'nats'. My grandparents brought the gospel to this people who lived in Burma's remote northern hills.

In 1927 my grandfather gave considerable attention to village evangelism. He travelled with ponies who carried his tent, suitcase, camp bed and table, magic lantern, kerosene oil and provisions. That same year there were the first Kachin baptisms. Ma Yaw, who had renounced both opium and strong drink, said that he was free from the 'nats' and trusted in the cross of Christ.

My grandfather was clearly very brave – my mum recalls a time when there was a King Cobra trying to climb the stairs and Grandpa chopped his head off with a spade! He also suffered greatly when he cracked his coccyx and was bedridden for 3 months – this did not stop him though as he carried on leading services from his bed!

My mum also recalls that when war broke out, they had to suddenly leave Burma at 2am. Mum, who was 13 at the time, had a very high temperature with malaria and she remembers being put in the bullock cart with the luggage. When they reached the



suspension bridge she had to go on a bike with the doctor and then back into a bullock cart to the station and then by boat to England.

My mother also clearly remembers my grandfather being asked to go back to Northern Burma to be Bishop there, but because of the war, women and children were not allowed to return. Grandpa said goodbye to Granny for 5 years and left her with their 6 children!

Having spent 15 years in Burma with many a hair-raising moment what was about to happen to him on his return journey must have been the most frightening of them all. In March 1941, somewhere south of Iceland in the Atlantic, at 11am, the ship they were on was hit by 2 German bombs - one of my grandfather's greatest underlying dreads throughout his life was shipwreck. The first bomb killed a number of people including 2 children from one family and the second bomb blew the captain from one side of the bridge to the other without serious effect. Faced with the imminent possibility of drowning, however, my grandfather experienced a wonderful peace from God that immediately seemed to pour into his soul.

He showed considerable bravery - he ended up in a lifeboat with the most severely injured, to whom, he ministered with prayer and encouragement. Great waves meant all were in danger of being washed overboard.

A Norwegian ship picked up the distress signals before the radio mast had been destroyed - my grandfather prayed that the ship would rescue them first as some in his lifeboat wouldn't survive unless their injuries were treated soon. God wonderfully answered their prayer and they were rescued at 4.30pm. Later that day he led a service of thanksgiving.



My mum remembers him sending a telegram to my grandmother saying – “all safe, lost everything except my bishop’s clothes.” He was then to find out that they could not afford for him to be a bishop after all! Mum recalls that my grandfather lost 3 stone in weight and slept for 3 days!

Even though my grandfather was not to return to Burma as a bishop, he became General Secretary of BCMS and Chairman of the Keswick Convention both for many years – but to me he was my very humble and gentle grandfather who with my grandmother were a wonderful Christian example to me.



THE HOUGHTON FAMILY TAKEN IN EALING IN 1946

*Jo Adams*

## **"HE GIVES HIS BELOVED SLEEP" (Psalm 127:2)**

He was so fast asleep that it took the angel sometime to rouse him. We read of the Apostle Peter enjoying a good night's sleep. Acts 12 tells us he had been arrested, locked under guard in a cell, waiting for execution on the next day. But he was so sound asleep that God's angel, who came to rescue him, had a real job to arouse him. He was sleeping like a child despite the threat of the coming morning.

### **THE STUDENTS**

The students long for a good night's sleep because they face those final exams in the morning.

### **IN THE FAMILY**

Why won't those two members of my family speak to me anymore? What's gone wrong? For years we were good friends? What have I done wrong? At 2am in the morning, sleep has fled this good lady and she's going over again and again this family unhappiness.

### **BRINGING WORK HOME**

Invoices have been sent, but no payment has been received. Tomorrow, whilst no payment has come, there will still be bills the firm has to meet. These issues are getting more and more and 3am seems to be the time to think about them!

### **A GIFT OF GOD**

Sleep is a gift of God – even for worried student, the sad member of the family and the agitated manager. Perhaps the

student, the lady and the businessman should ask God for that gift of sleep.

## GIVEN TO THE BELOVED

God loves all, but we may have made ourselves strangers to God and even his enemies, so blocking off his gift of sleep. The remedy is to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. Coming in repentance and trust to Jesus Christ who died for us means that are welcomed by our heavenly Father. It follows that we are heirs to all the gifts he wishes to give us – including sleep.

## TALKING TO YOURSELF

The student might say to herself, 'My future is in my heavenly Father's hand. He has a job or an activity for me despite what the next few days might bring. Pleasing him in whatever career I enter, I intend to bring him glory'.

'Why don't they speak to me anymore? What have I done?' God's way to a good night's rest maybe by way of an apology, and repentance. If the apology doesn't work, then perhaps I need to see this as one of God's trials and I will use the sleepless times as a time from God to pray for my estranged family.

## DAILY BREAD

Is the firm on the financial rocks? What's the point of tossing and turning about under the duvet? Why not say to yourself, 'My Father has promised sleep to his beloved and his Son has taught me to pray for my daily bread.'

Maybe five minutes down stairs in the dressing gown and asking God for these two gifts may be the way to a good night's sleep, having read all of Psalm 127.

TOO BLAND?

OK, it may sound too simplistic. But why not give it a try?

*Stephen Bailey*

## FARMING SEASON

As the winter months begin the whole world seems to be entering evermore turbulent times. We have a new leader, Rishi Sunak, who as the youngest prime minister for 200 years, definitely has his work cut out. In November the United Nations Climate Change Conference, or COP 27, is taking place in Egypt with the purpose of ending the use of fossil fuels and persuading governments to take actionable measures to prevent the global rise of temperatures above 1.5 degrees, however this is already starting to look like an unreachable goal! The Russia-Ukraine war shows no signs of de-escalating and recently Russia have reimposed a prohibition on Ukraine exporting grain from its Black Sea ports which could lead to more tightening of world food supply chains. The sudden stop of natural gas supplies from Russia earlier in the year caused a shock in the energy markets, which we are still suffering from, and it looks like higher energy and fuel prices are something we are going to have to live with into the future. And if this wasn't all enough bad news, inflation is riding about 10% with interest rates almost certain to go up, and the UK's debt is already dangerously high leaving little room for the government to ease the burden.

All these things will affect us as individuals and they will certainly affect the farming industry over time, but in the short term it's business as usual and arable farmers continue to keep working as normal. We work on a yearly cycle and when planting the crops for this years harvest a lot of these problems weren't even on the cards so who knows what will happen by next years harvest? However the lack of certainty is meaning that farmers are starting to look more closely at how they can change their businesses to adapt into the new economic environment. The main issues being increased energy and fuel costs and the marked increase in the cost of artificial fertilizer.

There is nothing new in many of the answers to some of these problems, but in the past they have just not been economically viable. These include solar panel and battery technology to produce and store, if necessary, energy on farm and growing biomass crops. These crops have the potential to convert biomass into bioethanol or into renewable natural gas, both of which could be used on farm to power machinery, however the capital cost of the digesters required makes this kind of investment currently unlikely. Solar technology is now looking the most viable option and this is ideally suited to being located on farm roofs. The biggest problem facing farmers this season will be the increased cost of artificial fertilizer and although I have previously talked about the virtues of farm yard manure there is no where near enough of this available to be a replacement.



The big problem with artificial fertilizer is that it principally relies on fossil fuel, that is natural gas, for its production. The ammonia, an essential constituent, is produced from atmospheric nitrogen and

natural gas, which supplies the hydrogen in the process. Ammonia has many uses but its main use is in fertilizers. When applied to the soil as a salt solution or anhydrously it helps provide increased yields in most arable crops. There are alternatives to this process. Firstly green hydrogen can be used

instead of natural gas with the electrolysis of water powered with renewable energy, however the vast amounts of energy required currently make this unviable. Secondly research has been made into crops which can fix their own nitrogen such as legumes like peas and beans and genetically modifying crops like wheat to do the same, so in theory a wheat plant could then produce its own nitrogen fertilizer. This idea has yet to provide any promising results. At the moment there are no economic alternatives to artificial fertilizers produced with natural gas, so if we are to continue producing at current yields and feeding the world, we will have no option but to pay the price! This is the main reason supply costs are going up increasing the price of everyone's food shopping bill!

I wouldn't blame anyone if they had decided to try and tackle this problem directly with a view to start growing, or grow more, fruit and vegetables themselves. I am a great believer in this approach, and it is not only rewarding and fun, but home grown should taste better too with no added chemicals! This week I have been busy preparing a veg patch for next year. It is a good sheltered but open, south facing site and the weeds and stones have been removed and some well rotted farm yard manure forked into the top. Over the winter, I am hoping the worms will do their job of mixing this soil improver throughout the topsoil in time for spring when we plan to start planting potatoes, carrots, onions and more.

Finally I would like to wish the new prime minister, Mr Sunak, well in this new job and pray as a nation we can be inspired to trust and obey the Lord and be reminded of Deuteronomy 28:12 (NIV):

*"The Lord will open the heavens, the storehouse of his bounty, to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of*



*your hands. You will lend to many nations but will borrow from none."*

*Adam Grove Smith*

## PERFECT PEACE

***"You will keep in perfect peace  
those whose minds are steadfast,  
because they trust in you." (Isaiah 26:3)***

The captain of a submarine was once asked, "How did the terrible storm last night affect you?" The officer looked at him in surprise and exclaimed, "Storm? We didn't even know there was one!"

There is an area beneath the surface of the ocean known to sailors as the "cushion of the sea". In this place, although the ocean may be raging terribly above, the waters here are never stirred.

I think you know where I'm going with this. There is a place, a wonderful place, we can go to find refuge during the frightening storms raging above us -- a place where we don't feel a thing -- no fear, no worry for tomorrow.

Let's get down there today. Let's enter into that perfect peace the Lord intends for everyone who trusts in Him.

***Supplied by Peter Schaad from "The Worthy Brief"***

## COFFEE@ST MICHAEL'S



The next Coffee@StMichael's is *Thursdays 1<sup>st</sup> Dec, 10am-12noon*

Everyone is very welcome.

*Jo Adams*

## **OASIS@ST MICHAEL'S**



**You are warmly invited to**

### **Oasis@StMichael's**

**An informal Bereavement Support Group**

**Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November & 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2022**

**2pm until 3.30pm in St Michael's Church House (Small Hall),**

**St Michael's Lane, CM7 1EY**

**If you would like to know more, please contact:**

**Jo Adams, Derek Chapman, Margaret Kinniburgh or Margaret St  
John-Coleman**

## **MEN@ST MICHAEL'S**

You would be most welcome to join us for any of our events this term:

### **Men's Breakfast at Yummy's**

Sat 12<sup>th</sup> Nov, 8am – Roger Cooke will be speaking

Tickets: £10 each, available from Richard, Roger, Nigel or David  
(please speak if you would like to come, but cost is an issue and  
we can make an arrangement)

### **Men's Christmas Cracker**

Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Dec, 9.30am-12.30pm

We will be looking at John chapter 1 and what it teaches us  
about why Jesus came to earth

We will be giving more information about each event

## BELFRY BULLETIN

With last month's Bulletin devoted to our ringing for the late Queen Elizabeth and the accession of Prince Charles to King Charles III we have to go back to the end of August to resume the report of activities in the tower.

On Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> August a visiting band made up of ringers from Essex and Suffolk rang a Quarter Peal of Cambridge Surprise Royal a notable feature of this was that 87 years old Diana Pipe was one of the ringers and this was her 2<sup>nd</sup> QP of the day!

Our practice nights were well attended with enjoyable ringing and a wide range of methods being rung and good progress being made. Rosie is ringing rounds and call changes on up to 10 bells. Lin has consolidated Stedman Doubles and is getting to grips with touches of Cambridge surprise minor. Ellis is confident with a plain course of Cambridge Surprise Minor and ready for a QP of Stedman Doubles, hopefully soon.

On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> October we had the pleasure of ringing for the wedding of Adam Vale and Louise Taylor with our congratulations

1 Clare Gray, 2 Lin Ould, 3 Debbie Hill,  
4 Peter Smith, 5 Simon Ward, 6 Bradley Hill[c]

Rang 400 changes of Plain Bob Minor

A week later we had another wedding to ring for, after a party the night before. With many congratulations to Lin and Richard Ould on their Golden Wedding, we rang an excellent Quarter Peal in celebration:- 1264 changes of Plain Bob Major in 45mins

1 Clare Gray, 2 Laura Childs, 3 Jim Green, 4 Ellis Whitehouse,

5 Debbie Hill, 6 Peter Smith, 7 Tom Childs, 8 David Childs[c].

## AWAY FROM THE TOWER

Here again we have to go back a couple of months.

Peter has rung 4 Quarters with the Golden Oldies 1 each of Norwich Surprise Minor, Lincolnshire Surprise Major, Beverley Surprise Minor and Yorkshire Surprise Major.

With the University of Bristol society Jodie has rung 3 Quarters :- 1 of Plain bob Doubles ; her 1<sup>st</sup> of Treble Bob and the 3<sup>rd</sup> which was of Plain Bob Minor which was her 1<sup>st</sup> blows in the method.

Peter rang QP's of Plain Bob Major at Kelvedon and at Great Bardfield rang Grandsire doubles both for the late Queen and 1 for a Baptism at Finchingfield of 5 Doubles Methods.

In an effort to complete the Quarter Peals in Northern District Towers Debbie, Bradley and Peter rang Grandsire Triples at Halstead, just Great Dunmow to go now.

Debbie and Bradley have been ringing methods on handbells and have scored 2 Quarter Peals. The one of Plain Bob Minor was Bradleys 1<sup>st</sup> as conductor on Handbells and the Plain Bob Major Quarter was Debbie and Bradleys 1<sup>st</sup> in method on handbells.

Whilst the Hill Landscaping team were in Bristol Debbie, Jodie and Bradley rang a QP at the Cathedral of Plain Bob Triples, Jodie's 1<sup>st</sup> inside of Triple's. The next day, after a hard days gardening, they rang a quarter of Plain Bob Minor

*Peter Smith*



## COFFEE CHAT WITH ROGER COOKE



Third Monday coffee and conversation

I shall be in the Quadrant cafe on **21st November** at **10.30am** so if you'd like to join me you'd be very welcome!

Looking forward to seeing you.

*Roger Cooke*

**NOVEMBER DIARY**  
[www.stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk](http://www.stmichaelsbtrees.co.uk)

Our YouTube services can be accessed through the “St Michael’s – Worship on the Web” YouTube channel and are generally updated during the week after the Sunday service

**1 Tuesday**

1:15pm Tiddywinks

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

**2 Wednesday**

10.00am Meeting Point

**3 Thursday**

10:00am Coffee@St Michael’s – in church

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

**6 Sunday**

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

10:00am Church Family Worship (with Baptisms)

6:30pm Holy Communion

**7 Monday**

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

**8 Tuesday**

1:15pm Tiddywinks

8.00pm First Priority Prayer Meeting

**9 Wednesday**

10.00am Meeting Point

## **10 Thursday**

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

## **12 Saturday**

8:00am Men's Breakfast at Yummy's

## **13 Sunday**

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

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

10:00am Morning Worship - Remembrance Sunday (Brigadier Ian Dobbie)

3:00Pm Civic Service - Brigadier Ian Dobbie

## **14 Monday**

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

## **15 Tuesday**

1:15pm Tiddywinks

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

## **16 Wednesday**

10.00am Meeting Point

## **17 Thursday**

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

## **20 Sunday**

8:00am Holy Communion

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

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

10:00am Holy Communion

6:30pm All-Age Tonight

## **21 Monday**

10:30am Coffee Chat with Roger Cooke @Quadrant

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

7:30pm Bell Ringing

## **22 Tuesday**

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

## **23 Wednesday**

10.00am Meeting Point

## **24 Thursday**

2.00pm Oasis@StMichael's – an informal Bereavement Support Group (Small Hall in Church House)

7:30pm Rose Hill Bible Study @Rose Hill

## **27 Sunday**

8:00am Holy Communion

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

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

10:00am Morning Worship

## **28 Monday (LINK SUBMISSION DUE)**

7:30pm Bell Ringing

7:30pm White Horse Tavern (Church House)

## **29 Tuesday**

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