

## VICAR'S LETTER

### *The view from the study.*

It was a tremendous pleasure to help lead our candidates through confirmation preparation, and a massive disappointment to miss the confirmation due to Covid! We started way back in November, delayed a week by the inconvenient occupation of our car park. Along the way we were disrupted briefly by Covid (with a couple of sessions having to go online) and at the time of the confirmation we were watching in horror as Russia pursued its invasion of Ukraine.

We now look ahead towards Easter, with the situation in Europe still in crisis as I write. In retrospect, one image during the confirmation course really stands out for me. We were watching a clip of a magnificent Easter vigil service in Moscow, with huge crowds making their way through the streets, culminating with the proclamation of the risen Christ as they flooded through the immense doors of an imposing Basilica. For a few seconds the face of Vladimir Putin was picked out from the congregation, smiling as he joined in the proclamation of the light of Christ shining in the darkness. How could someone share in such a declaration of the risen light of Christ, then later go on to bring such horrific darkness to Ukraine?

We may feel powerless in the face of such aggression and the profound suffering we have been witnessing, but we can be sure of one thing: aggression never brings about anything of lasting value. And surely this is why the way of Christ is the complete opposite of aggression. His is the way of sacrifice, of giving, of love. He uses powerlessness to disarm power, hope to overcome fear, peace to challenge hate, light to confront darkness.

As we come to celebrate Easter, let us with all sincerity join in the proclamation of the Resurrection – not only in our worship, but also in our lives. May we use our lack of power to stand up to aggression; may we become bearers of hope through the compassion we show to those suffering in Ukraine and elsewhere; may we stand firm in our faith in Christ, in the face of any fear; and may we be agents of peace wherever we find ourselves, bringing light into the darkness of the world. Tiny points of light may seem insignificant, but consider how far that light may travel, and how widely it might spread.

Look into the darkness of the empty tomb this Easter, and remember that Christ our light is risen, victorious over evil. Then remember also - we have received that light to share with the world.

*Every blessing, Neil.*

## **Confirmation.**

Although I couldn't be there, I am told that the confirmation service was a splendid and joyful occasion. Bishop Jill enjoyed meeting all our candidates and was made very welcome by the home team. The candidates acquitted themselves admirably and were a credit to themselves, their families, the school and our wider community.

I need to thank Bishop Jill, along with Anthony Cowell, on churchwarden duty, and my wife, Susan, who took over my role. Thanks also to Jayne Woollam (trainee licensed lay minister), Ben our organist and the many who helped behind the scenes.

My thanks go also to all those who assisted me during the course. With safeguarding requirements to be met, it was vital that other adults were present with me for the sessions, even online, and I was never without at least 2 or 3 others to support the course each week. At the risk of omitting someone, those to be thanked include: Debbie Carr, Sheena Cartmell, James Cowell, Nellie Cowell, James Eccleston, Sarah Jones, Debi Rusling, Matt Smith, Maureen & Laurence Wood, and Jayne Woollam.

The candidates represented 16 families from our community and comprised 18 children and 2 adults. The names of those confirmed are recorded in the 'parish registers' section, but I would also like to make reference to Harrison, who was a valued member of the group but was unable to be there for the service due to illness. I hope Harrison will be able to attend a confirmation service very soon.

Some of those confirmed have been part of the Church family at St Michael's for many years, others are linked mainly through the school. A large number were from our current Year 6 while others are already in High School. Regardless, they all worked well together and provided for some lively and unpredictable moments during the course! It was a privilege to be able to help lead all our candidates (children and adults) to the point where they were ready to affirm their commitment to follow Christ. Please pray for them all as they move on in their faith commitment.

*Thank you, Neil.*

## **The war in Ukraine: a faith view from Moscow.**

*The following message appeared in March on the website of the Diocese in Europe (part of the Church of England). The words are by Rev Canon Malcolm Rogers, Chaplain of St Andrew's Moscow.*

St Andrew's Anglican Church in Moscow is situated only ten minutes' walk from the Kremlin, the physical and geographical centre of power. The Ministries of Education, Culture and Defence are near neighbours. We are in the centre of power and yet we are powerless. Today, as many of our dear friends have left Russia, and as we nervously wonder whether or when we should leave, we are even more conscious of our powerlessness.

Conflict was predicted and we were helpless, unable to do anything to prevent it. Now that 'special military operations', as they are called here, have begun, there is nothing that we can do to stop them. But it is precisely our powerlessness which means that there are things that we can do. We are gospel people, who serve a crucified but risen Lord. We are the 'nobodies' of 1 Corinthians 1, and it is our very powerlessness and insignificance and foolishness that can also be our strength, if it is handed to God.

First of all, we are simply here. We are a community of very messed up people, but as

we gather together to hear the Word of God and to receive bread and wine, a community of Russians and foreigners gathered together, centred on and receiving from Jesus Christ, our simple presence can be a witness of what the world can be like, of the future kingdom.

Secondly, in our powerlessness, we can worship and pray. We pray for peace. That is far more than just praying for the absence of war. We praise God for the coming Kingdom, for the hope he has given us. I am struck that in both Mary's song and Zechariah's song we praise God for what we hope will happen, as if it already has happened; and we cry out for God, as we pray and long for the coming of God's Kingdom. We pray for the time when there will be no more 'fake news', lies, betrayals or violence, and no more fear and death. And it is our very powerlessness which opens to us our dependence on God and on him doing wonderful works.

Thirdly, we can still speak truth. There are some things that we cannot say in Moscow, but we can still preach Jesus Christ crucified and risen and reigning. We can call people to repentance and offer people hope. In my 30 plus years of ministry, I have never known a time and a place when people are more hungering for God.

And fourthly we can love and serve our neighbour. We read the news and feel powerless. Most of us are in no position to solve world problems or to bring peace. The job advert when I applied to come to Moscow said that the person appointed could make a difference for world peace. On those grounds I have been a spectacular failure! But we can make a difference where we are, and love the actual physical neighbours who God has given us. For some, the neighbours are Ukrainian refugees.

Yesterday, I heard from the woman who I ran our college Christian Union with. Since leaving university, she has been working with Polish Christians, witnessing, and serving mainly among addicts and street women. She wrote of how her team met a family of homeless Ukrainian refugees and they are now living in her flat.

There are many stories like that. Our neighbours at St Andrew's in Moscow are different. They are the young Russian crushed by what has been done in his name; the mother sick with anxiety for her son who has been sent to Ukraine, the foreign student unsure whether to leave or how to leave, the person who has been named on the wrong sort of list, the older person who fears a return to the isolation and economic depression of the 80s.

In our hubris we think that we are somebodies who can save the world - and we end up paralysed. But it is when we realise our powerlessness, that in the world's eyes we are 'nobodies', that we can begin to see the neighbour who God has given us and learn to serve them

**Pray for us, for courage and wisdom and perseverance in faith and love. And we will pray for you.**

***Revd Canon Malcolm Rogers,***

*Chaplain of St Andrews, Moscow,*

*The Archbishop of Canterbury's Representative to the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia*

*Area Dean of Russia and Ukraine*

*Seen at: <https://europe.anglican.org/>*

*Also available at:*

[www.lichfield.anglican.org/news/serving-in-our-powerlessness.php](http://www.lichfield.anglican.org/news/serving-in-our-powerlessness.php)

### **A Reminder about Giving.**

The current economic situation is bringing anxiety to many in our community. This is not the time to ask people to give more, when budgets are often stretched to the limit.

However, St Michael's is subject to the same financial pressures, especially when you consider the painfully large increase in the cost of gas and electricity. This is why it helps the church council if you give regularly by standing order, if you possibly can. We greatly appreciate all the generous giving of regular worshippers, visitors and other kind benefactors, however and whenever it is offered, but you will appreciate that a reliable monthly income is a tremendous benefit to the church.

Your giving is not just about keeping the roof secure and the lights on. It is about ensuring the Christian faith continues to be proclaimed in our community and anyone can find a place of peace and encouragement within our building and amongst the fellowship of the Christian community: and not only here in Grimsargh, but throughout the Diocese of Blackburn and our ancient County of Lancashire.

If you have not yet done so, and feel able to give by standing order, please consider this. Using the following details, you can set up a standing order with your bank:

**Name:** Grimsargh Parochial Church Council  
**Sort code:** 77-26-03  
**Account #:** 00017133  
**Reference:** Your name

*Please also make use of **Gift Aid** if you are eligible.* Speak with the vicar if you would like to know more about this.

### **First Aid**

As a small church community, we do not have our own cohort of trained first aiders. However, it would be helpful to know of people amongst the congregation who hold current first aid qualifications – some may, for example, be trained in the workplace, or through another organisation you they are working with.

If you hold an up-to-date qualification and are happy to be called upon to assist if needed during services or activities at church, please could you let me know? If we are severely lacking in suitably qualified people, it may be time to arrange some first aid training for willing volunteers.

Ideally, please contact me via email or drop me a note.

*Many thanks, Neil.*

### **'Holding Crosses'**

These are small crosses, made of olive wood in the Holy Land, designed to hold in the palm of your hand as an aid to prayer and contemplation. A supply is available at church for a requested minimum donation of £5 per cross (in aid of church funds.)

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## **Your Magazine**

If you wish to contribute items for the magazine, please send them to Bernard Mackley or Nellie Cowell. Anyone willing to help with the distribution of the magazine, please speak to Nellie.

Subscriptions for the year (£6) are due this month.

## **FAF News – Parish Meal, Ferraris, Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, 12 Noon.**

Don't forget to sign the list at the back of church, if you would like to attend the Parish Meal at Ferraris on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> April, £15.00 for two courses. We will be meeting at 12 noon and the meal will be served at 12.30pm. Please bring payment with you on the day. If you require a lift, please indicate this on the list itself or let myself, Jayne, or Nellie know, and we will ensure that transport is available.

There will be a raffle on the day; we are appealing for **raffle prizes**. If you have any donations of raffle prizes, please could you let **Nellie** have them asap.

## **Garden Party, Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1pm**

### **Appeal for Plants**

Thinking ahead to the Garden Party this year, we will, of course, be appealing for donations for stalls and ideas for new stalls. Eileen and Jean have organised the plant stall for many years now, but this year they are appealing for more donations of plants for their stall. If you could kindly consider planting a few extra plants or perhaps splitting some of your existing plants this year, they would be very grateful. Please let Eileen or Jean know, if you can help.

## **Easter Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> April, Open Church, 11am-3pm**

Following the 10am service on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April, we are holding an Easter Day, "Open Church". Church will remain open from 11am until 3pm and we hope that you will take the opportunity to come and look at the beautiful Easter flower displays and enjoy a cup of coffee. There will be quizzes for the children, as well as an Easter Treasure Hunt.

Come and enjoy a cup of coffee and a delicious piece of homemade cake. What a joyous way to celebrate Easter Day!

If you are able to bake for the Open Church, please let Nellie or any FAF member know asap. Thank you

## **In memory of Maureen Threlfall**

Barwbara and family are most grateful for all the loving support they have been given since their beloved Maureen died. Many thanks to all who came to the service on March 9<sup>th</sup>. We feel that Maureen would have approved.

## **Food Bank**

Thanks to all who have supported the food bank over the past few weeks. Apart from pasta, the Salvation Army is in need of all other items. Our next delivery of items to the Salvation Army will be Monday 11<sup>th</sup> April.

## It's all Greek to me! (cont)

Μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά, Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος  
οὐλομένην, ἣ μυρί' Ἀχαιοῖς ἄλγε' ἔθηκε,

**S**ING, Goddess, the wrath of Achilles Pelēides,  
The ruinous anger that woes on the Danaans brought  
Unnumber'd, and strong souls many of heroes sent  
To Hades, and made their bodies a prey for the dogs,  
A feast for the birds, while the purpose of Zeus was fulfill'd  
Ev'n from the hour when the two first parted in strife,  
Atrides, the King of men, and noble Achilles.

These are the first two of the 16000 lines of the Iliad, the epic poem by “Homer”, of whom more in a later article. According to an essay on Homer by J Griffen, Balliol College, Oxford, the Iliad is “the first work of Western literature” which if true, makes these the first two lines in our literature. And gripping they are, as is the rest of the paragraph. I defy anyone not to be drawn into the story they foretell.

Let me try to explain the Greek lines. The first word transposed into English sound is Maynin, Anger. That is followed by a formulaic device whereby the poet invokes the Muse of Poetry, a sort of minor goddess (the third word Thea) to sing about the Anger. And “sing” incidentally is appropriate because poetry derived from song, and was delivered in this metred verse, of which more in a later article. Whose Anger? That of Achilles, son of Peleus, his name put at the end of the line, in place of equal emphasis with the Anger. And what of this anger? Was it just a childish pet? Well it may have started that way as we shall see, but it certainly did so not end up, because it was, first word of the second line, “Oulomenayn”, which means, destructive. And it brought woes to the Achaians (or Danaans in the translation or Greeks as we know them), ie to Achilles’ own side in the war against Troy! So just to spell it out again, the three vital words are all, brilliantly, put by the poet in place of strongest emphasis, at the first and last of line 1, and first place, line 2, followed by a pause. Thus it is that the theme that dominates the epic is thrust under our noses by the very first line.

On the first Sunday in Lent Neil spoke to us about anger; this particular anger led on to war, death and personal tragedy, not least to the angry man himself, Achilles. More to follow.

Mark

## MOTHERS' UNION

As I write this article the war continues in Ukraine so I felt strongly that a prayer should be at the beginning, but praying that by the time you read this things may have changed for the good.

## **A prayer for Ukraine**

Heavenly Father, hear our prayers for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine. Lord we ask for peace for those who need peace, reconciliation for those who need reconciliation and comfort for all who don't know what tomorrow will bring.

Lord may your Kingdom come, and Your will be done.

Lord God, we ask for you to be with all – especially children who are suffering as the crisis in Ukraine deteriorates.

Lord for those who are anxious and fearful.

For those who are bereaved, injured or who have lost their lives.

And for those who have lost loved ones.

Lord, we ask that decisions makers hear Your voice. Parents protecting their families – deciding whether to stay or leave. Church leaders as they support and comfort people.

And Lord we ask for wise actions from global leaders - who have the power not only to start wars, but to stop them too.

And Father God we cry out for an end to this crisis. For mercy, peace, and truth – because You are light, hope, power, and love. Amen.

## **AGM at the Plough with Fish and Chips!**

On March 16th 25 ladies met to enjoy time together, a fish & chips lunch and to hear the Mothers Union Annual Report from Nellie.

**Re-arranged Service of Enrolment**—due to unforeseen circumstances the service has had to be rearranged to a later date. Committee members will let all involved know when the date has been decided. It will also be announced at the church services.

**Next meeting** April 20th 7.30 John Baron—the Benefits of Reflexology

## **Food for thought**

The new Blackburn Diocesan President Gill Ireland asks us to

**‘Make a difference ! Inspire someone today’**

She asks that we will be guided by the verse ‘Do everything in the name of Jesus’. We may feel we have done our bit but there is always more to do and new ways to do things. May we be open to making a difference to those we meet, in our families, our friends and our community. Amen!

**And finally ....have you got your pen yet to celebrate!**



## **QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE 2022**



**£2.00**

**All proceeds to ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH GRIMSARGH**

Available in church

**10 c**

## SCHOOL REPORT

Our Christian Value for this half-term is **SERVICE**. The children were initially posed the question: How do you use your talents to serve God?

We discussed that we all have talents that we can use to serve others. During whole school worship, a selection of children from each class shared their talents. The talents included singing, being organised, enjoying sport, listening carefully and making people laugh. Each class has a 'Talent Tub' in their reflection area. The children are being encouraged to think about their talents, jot them down and reflect on how they use them to serve God.

We gathered in St Michael's Church for Ash Wednesday. Reverend Neil took the lead in the service and we started with the children singing, 'Here I am to worship.' They sang beautifully and joined in with the actions too! Some of our year 6 pupils read from the Bible. They spoke with confidence. We sang, 'He'll be there,' reminding us that where ever we are and however we feel, God is with us. Reverend Neil talked about why we call the day after Shrove Tuesday, Ash Wednesday. He reminded us about some Christians going to church to have an ash cross drawn onto their forehead to remind them of the time Jesus spent in the wilderness.

On Sunday 13th March 2022, The Rt Reverend Dr Jill Duff, Bishop of Lancaster, visited St Michael's Church, to confirm eighteen candidates who are either past or present pupils. We are delighted to announce that Jack A, Zach A, George B, William E, George G, Emma J, Flynn K, George R, Joe R and Eva W from Year 6 were confirmed on Sunday. The confirmation candidates are willing to serve God. They took the decision to confirm their faith in Him.

On Thursday 3rd March, we celebrated the globally anticipated 'World Book Day!' Children and staff were invited to come dressed up as their favourite book character and it was fantastic to see how much effort everyone had put in to their costumes. The theme was 'You are a reader!' and so it was all about encouraging everyone to read for pleasure. All of the classes took part in lots of different reading-themed activities, including the teacher quiz, bookmark making, blindfold book-choosing and the BBC live lesson with special guests, award-winning author, Frank Cottrell-Boyce, and illustrator, Dapo Adeola. Each class also had a different teacher reading their class novel in 'TRIC' (Teacher Reading in Class) for that day.

We have continued to enter all sporting competitions in the school calendar. These have included a team of year 3/4 children participating in the Mini Skills event and a team of year 5/6 children competing in the Swimming Gala, in which our team won both the medley relay and freestyle relay. All our individual swimmers made the finals of their events. Unsurprisingly, this resulted in a convincing win overall for our team as Division 3 winners. Our girls' football team have also played further matches, as have our tag rugby team. In addition, a team of year 5 and 6 children took penalties during half-time of the Preston North End V Bournemouth Championship football match.

We were overwhelmed by the generosity of our parents/ carers in donating items for the families in the Ukraine. These were collected and transported to Poland for those

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families who have had no choice but to flee their country. Mrs Coupe organised this on behalf of our school community.

We are very much looking forward to the next PTFA event which is the Easter Bingo- this event will take place on the 29<sup>th</sup> March at 6pm. We have been amazed with the support of all the local businesses that have donated prizes to support this event- thank you!

In the past few weeks our reception children enjoyed a local walk, our year 3 children had an informative visit to The Grimsargh Wetlands and visited the Science and Industry museum in Manchester, our year 6 children spent time with Reverend Neil at St Michael's Church learning about the Eucharist as well as enjoying a morning at Williamson Park, year 2 had a fantastic day at Brockholes Nature Reserve focusing on habitats and mini-beasts and year 5 have attended the Philharmonic Hall in Liverpool.

To support our parents/ carers in ensuring their child understands the need for safe internet access and appropriate use, we have organised a FREE Online Safety session which will be delivered by Lancashire Adult Learning via an online platform. This will take place on Monday 21st March, 4-5:30pm.

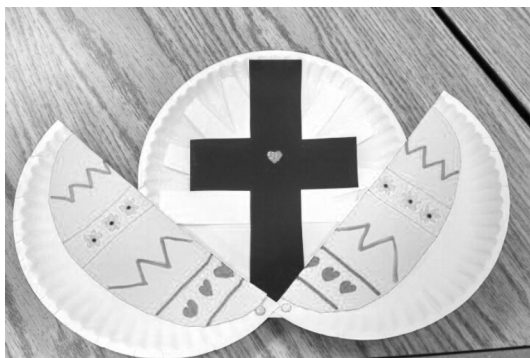
Search '**grimsarghstmichaels**' on Instagram and '**Grimsargh St Michael's C of E Primary School**' on Facebook to have a snapshot of some of the things our children have been doing.

On behalf of our school staff, I wish everyone within our Grimsargh community well and hope you all continue to support each other and stay safe.

Kind Regards  
Mr Stuart Booth  
eadteacher

## Easter

Have a go at this lovely Easter Cross craft.



**You will need:** 2 Paper plates  
Black paper  
Yellow paper  
2 split pins

Scissors, glue, colouring pens and items to decorate the egg.

**How to do it:**

- Cut out strips from the yellow paper for the rays of light and glue to a paper plate.
- Cut out a cross from the black paper and glue it over the light.
- Draw and decorate an Easter egg and glue it to the 2<sup>nd</sup> plate.
- Cut the plate down the middle.
- Use the split pins to attach the 2 halves to the first plate so that it slides open.

## CHURCH COLLECTIONS

February	17th	£261.00	March	3rd	£84.99	
February	20th	£184.50	March	6th	£403.00	
February	24th	£72.00	March	13th	£142.00	
February	27th	£185.50	March	13th	£142.00	
			March	13th	£117.86	Confirmation

## FLOWER ROTA

April	3rd	No Flowers
April	10th	In Lent
April	17th	B. & M. Mackley + N. Cowell
April	24th	Vacant

## SIDESPERSONS, READERS AND COFFEE ROTAS

### 8.30am                      10.00am      Communion Readers      Coffee Assistant

April 3rd	R Buckley	B Mackley Vicar
April 10th	K Thompson	J Woollam Vicar
April 17th	N Maudsley	Reader(s) J Eccles Vicar
April 24th	James Cowell	S Cowell Vicar

## FRIDAY MORNING COFFEE ROTA

	Duty	Duty	Welcome & Circulate
April 1st	Jean	Christine	Janet
April 8th	Kate	Maureen	Linda/Ros
April 15th	NO COFFEE MORNING		
April 22nd	Nellie	Helen	Janet
April 29th	Kate	Christine	Linda/Ros

### **Holy Baptism                      Jesus said "Let the children come unto me"**

March 6th                      Barnaby Scott Parkinson

### **Funeral                                      Jesus said "I am the Resurrection and the Life"**

March 9th                      Maureen Threlfall, 90

March 11th                      Evelyn May Hayhurst, 89

### **Confirmation:**

*'Defend, O Lord, these your servants with your heavenly grace, that they may continue yours for ever, and daily increase in your Holy Spirit more and more until they come to your everlasting kingdom. Amen.'*

### **March 13<sup>th</sup>, by the Bishop of Lancaster:**

Jack Ashmore, Zach Atkinson, George Bell, Ellie Bird, Sophie Eccles, Thomas Eccles, William Eccleston, George Giddins, Emma Jacob, Flynn Knowles, Eva Mitton, Thomas Mitton, Charlotte Perkins, David Rae, Daniel Rae, George Rae, Joe Rowland, Eva Whittaker, Ben Woloszczuk.

## ST MICHAEL'S DIARY DATES FOR APRIL

- 1st** 9:30 - 11.30am Coffee Morning in Grimsargh Club  
12 noon Lent Lunch, Christ Church Hall
- 3rd** **5th Sunday of Lent** Passiontide begins  
8.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)  
10.00am Morning Worship  
12 noon Baptism
- 7th** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- 8th** 9:30 - 11.30am Coffee Morning in Grimsargh Club  
12 noon Lent Lunch, St Wilfrid's Parish Room
- 10th** **Palm Sunday**  
8.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)  
10.00am Holy Communion  
6.00pm Ecumenical service, Alston Lane
- 14th** **Maundy Thursday**  
11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)  
6.00pm Quiet Service (Prayers and reflections for Maundy Thursday)
- 15th** **Good Friday**  
11.00am Family Worship  
2.00pm Veneration of the Cross (an hour of prayer and reflection)
- 16th** **Easter Eve**  
8.00pm Easter Vigil with lighting of the Paschal Candle
- 17th** **Easter Day**  
8.30am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)  
10.00am Holy Communion
- 20th** 7.30pm MU Andy Baron – "The benefits of Reflexology"
- 21st** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- 22nd** 9:30 - 11.30am Coffee Morning in Grimsargh Club
- 24th** **2nd Sunday of Easter**  
8.30am NO Service  
10.00am Holy Communion
- 28th** 11.00am Holy Communion (Book of Common Prayer)
- 29th** 9:30 - 11.30am Coffee Morning in Grimsargh Club

*Please note there is **no dedicated 'Family Service' this month**, but a time of Family Worship is planned for Good Friday morning.*

*Also please note that from the beginning of April we are reinstating **Morning Worship at 10am on the first Sunday of the month.***

**DEADLINE for the May magazine 15<sup>th</sup> April .  
Articles to be sent to Mrs Cowell and/or B Mackley**