

*St. Michael on  
Greenhill, Lichfield -  
a history*

Part 3. St. Michael's in the nineteenth  
and twentieth centuries (1800-1945)

Chris Baker

St. Michael on Greenhill - a history; Part 3. St. Michael's in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (1800-1945)

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## **The author**

Chris Baker was born and brought up in the parish of Pensnett, in the Black Country, and attended Bromley County Primary School and Brierley Hill Grammar School. He then studied Engineering at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge, from where he gained his MA and PhD. After spending some time working for British Rail in Derby, he moved back into academia – firstly to the University of Nottingham, and then to the University of Birmingham, where he taught fluid mechanics to several generations of Civil Engineering students. His research interests are in the fields of wind engineering, environmental fluid mechanics and railway aerodynamics. He is a Fellow of the Institution of Civil Engineers, Institution of Highways and Transport, the Higher Education Academy and the Royal Meteorological Society. He retired in December 2017 but continues to work on various aspects of railway aerodynamics as Emeritus Professor of Environmental Fluid Mechanics at the University of Birmingham. He is also an Anglican clergyman attached to the parish of St. Michael-on-Greenhill in Lichfield.

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## **Preface to Parts 1 to4**

The word "church" of course primarily refers to a gathered body of Christian believers. Nonetheless in popular usage it has come to refer to the building in which such a body of believers meet. And some such places have very long histories of their own. One such is the church of St. Michael on Greenhill in Lichfield. This is a very ancient worship site and has probably been the focus of some type of ritual activity for the last 1500 years. The church itself is less ancient, first appearing in the historical record in the twelfth century but it has an interesting story to tell. Here we tell that story in four parts – the first from the Romans to the Reformation; the second from the Reformation to the end of the eighteenth century; the third for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries up to 1945; and the fourth tells the stories of some of those buried in the church's large graveyard.

Obviously, a history of this type uses material from a wide range of sources. The approach taken here is to try to make the text as readable as possible, by not including detailed references, but using web links to specific sources and details of the more general sources that have been used have been put in the bibliography that is given at the end of each part.

# Chapter 1. The development of Greenhill

The Snape map of 1781, shown in Part 2, showed that the area around St. Michael's was essentially rural at that stage. The next detailed map to appear was that of the Tithe Apportionment in 1847, an extract from which is shown in Figure 1. The full map can be viewed online at the [Staffordshire Past Track web site](#). The map is oriented so that the vertical is slightly west of north. The situation has changed significantly between the times of the two maps, with many more houses and commercial properties in the Greenhill area, stretching up Rotten Row on both sides and filling the Deans Croft area to the west of the church. Housing was also much denser along Church St. and the Lichfield Union Workhouse has come into existence. The full map shows the rest of the parish, to the south and the east was still very rural. The area around Cherry Orchard was divided into small plots, which were market gardens - the area was one of the main food suppliers to the city.

It will be seen that the Workhouse was significant in the life of the parish. This was opened in 1840 bringing together the poor law provision of all the parishes in the Lichfield and Rugeley area, including an earlier one in Greenhill. It still stands of course as part of the Samuel Johnson hospital. The workhouse had its own chaplain who conducted baptisms, but these were included in the St. Michael's register, and those who died were buried in the churchyard.

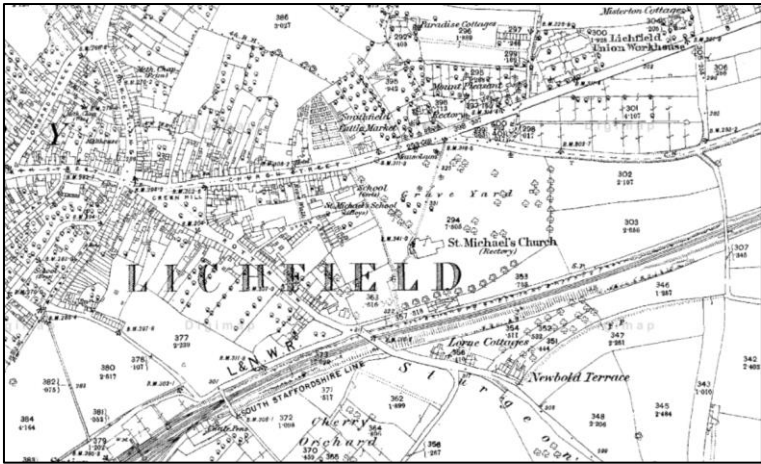
The Ordnance Survey map of 1882 (Figure 2) again shows significant change, the major one being the appearance of the South Staffordshire Railway line between Burton and Walsall, that cut through fields south of the churchyard. There can be seen to be further housing developments

around Greenhill and Gresley Row, and also along Trent Valley Road. St. Michael's School is now shown, and the Rectory, in Mount Pleasant, can also be seen.

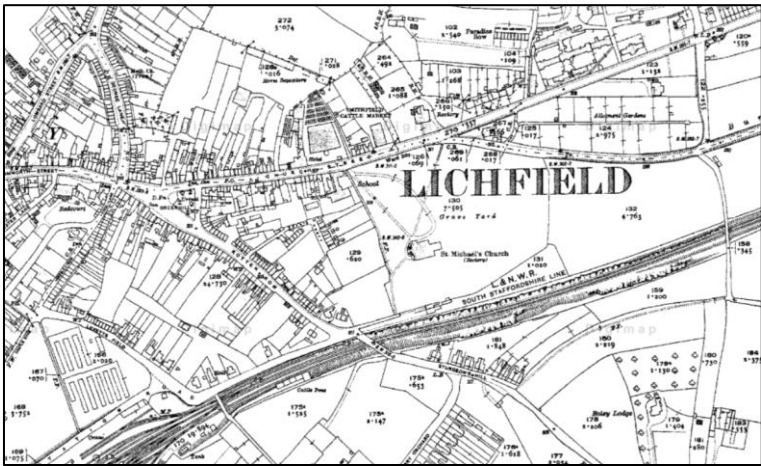
The 1820 Ordnance Survey map shown in Figure 3 shows yet more urbanisation with a filling in of housing along Trent Valley Road and Burton Old Road, and the first houses along the south side of Cherry Orchard. This trend was of course to continue throughout the period considered here.



**Figure 1. The 1847 Tithe Map**



**Figure 2. The 1882 Ordnance Survey Map**



**Figure 3. The 1920 Ordnance Survey Map**

## **Chapter 2. The shrinking parish**

The huge early extent of St. Michael's parish has been described in Part 2. It stretched from Hammerwich in the west to Haselour and Statfold in the east. Many of these townships became parishes in their own right in the nineteenth century, and we consider them here. There were several reasons for these developments. On the one hand some of the areas had rapidly developing populations and really required a place of worship nearer than St. Michael's. On the other hand, money was a significant issue. Thus, before considering the development of new parishes, it is worth considering how St. Michael's was financed in the early years of the nineteenth century.

St. Michael's income came from a number of sources at that time. The living was worth around £300 for the salary of the clergy, which was financed from a variety of sources including Queen Anne's Bounty and tithe payments to the Vicar of St. Mary's. In addition, money for other church purposes came from the Cathedral prebends; from rents of lands and houses that the church had acquired over the centuries; from pew rents - payments of individuals for the reserved use of specific pews; and from the church levy or church rate. The income from the prebends had a long and disputed history, but in the early 1800s came from ten of the prebends, with over half coming from the prebends of Freeford, Statfold and Weeford, which were those that held most land within the parish. The tithes on produce were paid either to the prebendaries or to the Vicar of St. Mary's, so the payments from the prebends was effectively a recycling of tithe money. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, St. Michael's was also collecting rent from leases on a large number of properties. To rationalize this, the St. Michael's Lands Trust was formed in 1811. The long leases were bought out and replaced by annual tenancies. Presumably



this gave a more secure income, but at the cost of a considerable long-term debt. The area of contention with some of the townships were the church levies or rates, which seem to have become increasingly resented as payments for which they perceived no benefit themselves. The situation changed gradually over the century, with the stipend of the clergy being met by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners after about 1840, using the income from the rents that replaced tithes in the 1836 Tithes Commutation Act. By mid-century the income for other church purposes came from land and house rents and pew rents, although church rates or levies were occasionally raised to pay for major church improvements. By the end of the century, the income from land and house rents had fallen and the majority of income was from the offertory and from fees for funerals etc.

In 1832, while acknowledging St. Michael's as the parish church and Hammerwich as a chapel of ease, the chapelwarden and inhabitants of Hammerwich imposed conditions on the payment of a levy, including a demand for an allowance for the repair of their own chapel (Figure 4). Matters came to a head in 1842 when they refused to pay any further church rates to St. Michael's. In the decade that followed it was apparently recognized as a parish in its own right by the ecclesiastical authorities and part of the areas was incorporated within the new parish of Ogle Hay in 1854, and the rest formed into its own parish in 1860. These bare facts indicate some very severe disagreement between the wardens of St. Michael's and Hammerwich.



**Figure 4. [Hammerwich church](#)**



**Figure 5. [Christ Church Burntwood](#)**

In 1818, Dean Woodhouse opened a subscription for building and endowing a church to serve Burntwood, Edial, and Woodhouses with the reasoning that the inhabitants of those parts were so far from the parish church of St. Michael's that they rarely went there and were '*exposed to become a prey to the wildest and lowest of the sectaries*'. These were probably Methodists. Christ Church Burntwood was consecrated in 1820, with a Perpetual Curate nominated by the vicar of St. Mary's, Lichfield, with the curacy held with that of Hammerwich from 1831 (Figure 5). It became the practice to hold the Sunday services alternately in the morning and the afternoon at each church. In 1845 the Burntwood area became a separate parish.

Haselour was claimed by St. Michael's until 1832, but in that year, there were proposals from the residents for it to become extra-parochial - again the issue being primarily the levying of the church rate. [A drawing from 1828 in the William Salt library](#) shows that the eighteenth-century ruinous chapel at Haselour had been rebuilt, and it is possible that the parishioners there wished to spend the money on their own chapel rather than send it to St. Michael's. After expensive litigation between the owners of the manor and the churchwardens of St. Michael's, judgement was given in favour of the former and the hamlet passed out of St. Michael's parish. A modern

picture of Haselour chapel is shown in Figure 6 below - the building is currently incorporated into Haselour Hall.



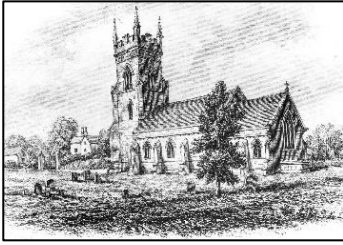
**Figure 6. [Haselour chapel](#)**



**Figure 7. [St. John's Wall](#)**

Whilst a graveyard was recorded at Aldershawe as early as the mid-thirteenth century, the general burial place for the inhabitants of the hamlet of Wall was at St. Michael's. By the 1730s some parishioners, notably from Pipehill, were baptized and buried at Hammerwich chapel. To meet the needs of the inhabitants of the areas, St. John's church was built at Wall (Figure 7) in 1843 on land given by John Mott of Wall House and 1845 a new parish was formed out of St. Michael's for Wall and the part of Pipehill outside the city of Lichfield.

Christ Church in Leomansley (Figure 8) was consecrated in 1847 to cater for the growing number of inhabitants in the south west of the city of Lichfield and in the Pipe Hill area and endowed as a Perpetual Curacy. In 1848 a parish covering much of the west side of the city and including Leomansley, Lower Sandford Street, and Sandfields, was formed out of St. Michael's and St. Chad's parishes with the bishop as patron.



**Figure 8. [Christ Church](#)  
[Leomansley](#)**



**Figure 9. [Statfold chapel](#)**

[An 1838 drawing in the William Salt library](#) shows the chapel at Statfold in a poorly maintained state and it would appear that worship there had ceased by the start of the nineteenth century. By the time of the Tithe Map in 1848, Statfold was a separate parish, although the population was tiny. It eventually became part of the Benefice of Clifton Campville. The church of St. Matthew shown in Figure 9 has some late Norman aspects and it serves as a mortuary chapel for the Wolferstan family of Statfold Hall, in whose grounds it stands.

Thus, by the mid-nineteenth century, the parish was much reduced in size from its original state and comprised the area around Greenhill and St John's to the east and south of Lichfield, together with the townships of Streethay, Fulfen and Fisherwick. Fisherwick was eventually transferred to Whittington parish in 1967. Fulfen, together with the extra-parochial area of Freeford to the south, was split between St. Michael's and Whittington parishes in 1983.

## Chapter 3. Destruction and restoration

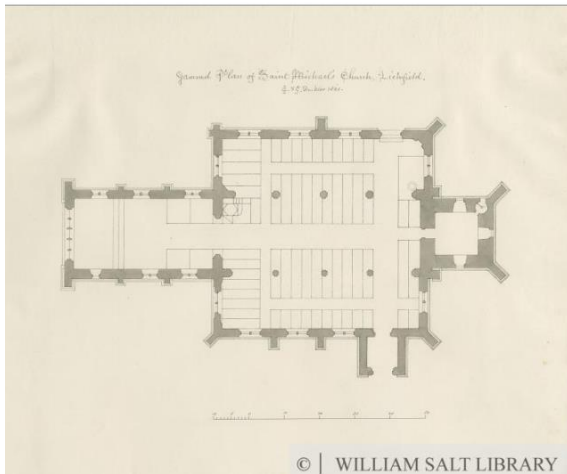
The 1833 view of the church from the north shown in the water colour of Figure 10 shows the high line of the chancel and the clerestory windows described in Part 2. The original roof line of the chancel before it was raised can also be discerned. Now a number of drawings exist in the William Salt library of the outside and the inside of the church in the mid-nineteenth century that are of some historical interest. Figure 11 shows the 1833 view from the south again shows the high chancel and clerestory together with the south aisle with a door into church. This is framed by an amazingly rural view of Sturgeon's Hill. An 1841 plan of the church in Figure 12 shows that there is a much greater density of pews than at present, with some box pews in the chancel. The reading desk and pulpit were in the south east corner of the nave. The line drawing in Figure 13 shows the interior of the church in 1841 with the box pews and three decker pulpit.



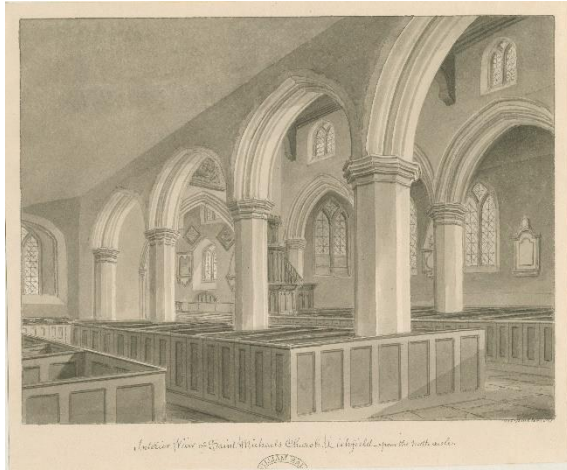
**Figure 10. The church in 1833**  
(Watercolour held in St. Michael's church)



**Figure 11. The church from the south in 1833**  
(William Salt library, used with permission)



**Figure 12. Plan of the church interior in 1841**  
(William Salt library, used with permission)



**Figure 13. Interior of the church in 1841**  
(William Salt library, used with permission)

By 1841 however, it was clear that major work was needed on the church. Part of the reason for this seems to have been the lack of care to maintenance given by the Dean and Chapter who were felt to have some responsibility as many of their endowments were within the parish. A request to them for support however seems to have had little effect and an appeal was launched to finance the rebuilding. The architect Thomas Johnson from St. John's Lodge was retained and drew up a list of urgent repairs. However, Johnson also persuaded the Vestry to go much further and restore the church to the Early English style. In this the Vestry were much influenced by the banker Richard Greene, a churchwarden and also the secretary of the Lichfield Society for the Encouragement of Ecclesiastical Architecture, founded in 1841, which seems to have viewed the early English gothic style as the only acceptable style for churches.

The work that was carried out by a local builder, Mr. J Johnson from Wade Street, was extensive, and to allow this

to take place the church was closed from Easter 1842 to July 1843, with the congregation worshipping in the chapel of St. John's Hospital. The roof of the centre aisle was completely replaced, and the roofs of the side aisles extensively repaired. The gallery was taken down and the organ placed in the chancel. The south door was closed and replaced by a window, and a new north porch was added. Structurally unnecessary buttresses were added to the south aisle. The Donegal mausoleum and the vestry room were replaced by a stokehold over which a clergy vestry was built with doors into the chancel and the south aisle; an organ loft was built over the vestry.

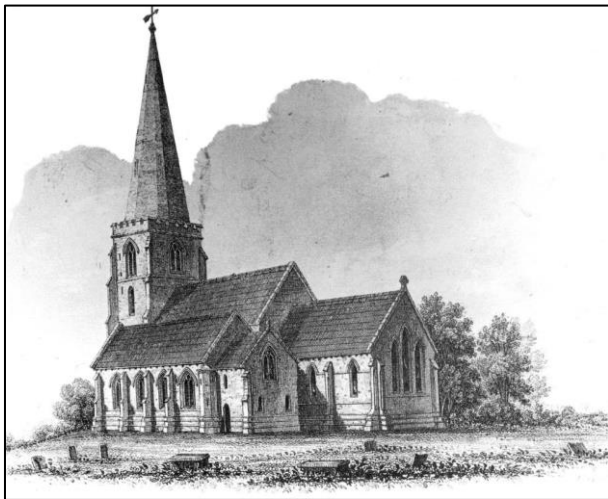
But that was not the end of the matter, and the next part of the church in line for restoration to the Early English style was the chancel and further work was carried out to the design of Sydney Smirke. This part of the work amounted, in the author's view, to large scale church vandalism, in the search to make the church conform to a theoretical ideal. The chancel was lowered, with the upper row of windows removed, the walls plastered and a fanned ceiling built (Figure 14). The side windows became single lancets and the east window was turned into a three-light window, presumably removing much medieval glass. The finished product is shown in Figure 15.

An interesting illustration of the passions aroused by church architecture at the time can be found in a letter from Richard Greene, the churchwarden and banker mentioned above, to William Salt where he writes that Intends to remove the chancel clerestory, *'a hideous and unnecessary aftergrowth... so substantial a deformity'*. Such were the tastes of some of that time, odd as they might seem to us.





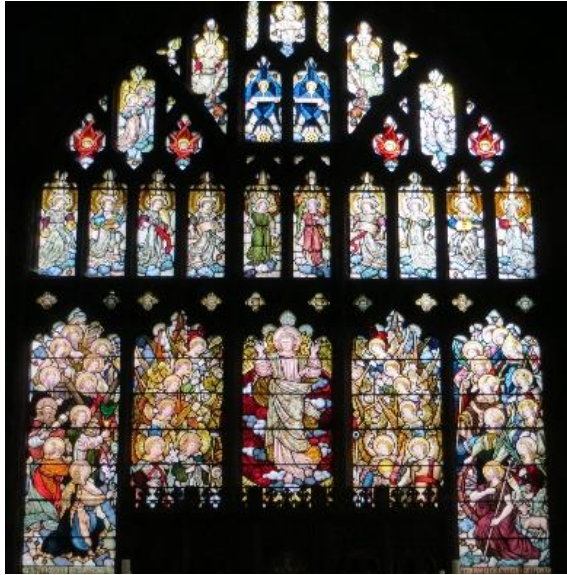
**Figure 14. The chancel after the rebuilding of 1845.**  
(William Salt library, used with permission)



**Figure 15. The church after the rebuilding of 1845**

The next few decades saw relatively little work on the church fabric, the only major addition being a stone pulpit in 1870. However, the Rectory in Mount Pleasant was built in 1858. By the late 1880s however the deficiencies of the 1840s restoration were becoming clear and the plaster in the chancel was in very poor condition, and there were structural issues with the tower. After an appeal, major work was carried out in the early 1890s to the design of the architect O. Scott. Cracks in the Tower were repaired, the lancet window at the west end was reopened, gas lighting installed, and extensive work was carried out on the chancel. The latter was largely funded by the then Rector, the Rev. Cyril Hubbard. The plaster was taken off to reveal the stonework and the ceiling was replaced with an oak roof. The lancet windows at the east end were replaced by a new three light window, but it was not until 1897 that a new stained-glass window (depicting the Ascension) could be afforded (Figure 16). Altar rails were installed, and the vestry rebuilt in 1893, and in 1899 the current clergy desks and choir stalls were added in the chancel, bringing it into almost its current form (although the reredos was to be added later) (Figure 17).

During the restoration of the 1890s a credence niche was created in the wall for the communion vessels, to the right of the altar. It was decorated with tiles found in a vault to the north of the altar that was entered by stairs beneath it – these tiles can still be seen (Figure 18).



**Figure 16. The Ascension window  
(Photo by Maureen Brand)**



**Figure 17. The chancel  
and the Ascension  
window  
(Photo by Maureen  
Brand)**



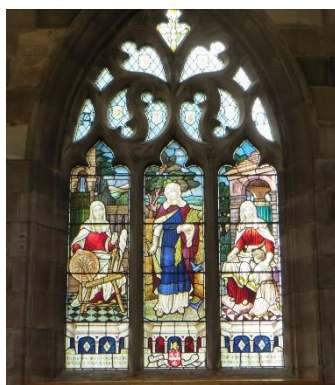
**Figure 18. The  
communion niche.  
(Photo by Maureen  
Brand)**

The repairs and additions continued over the first half of the twentieth century. In 1906 repairs were again carried out to the tower after it was damaged in a storm; candles were placed on the altar for the first time in 1914, and their significance was carefully explained to the congregation. The Resurrection window was dedicated in 1915 (Figure 19), and the “Motherhood” window in 1930 (Figure 20). The war memorial was dedicated in 1921 (Figure 21). The stone pulpit was replaced by a wooden one decorated with angels and archangels in 1926 (Figure 22); a similarly angelic reredos was installed in the same year (Figure 23).

Externally a new choir vestry was dedicated in 1923, and land for the Parish Hall on St Michael’s Rd. was purchased in 1944, together with a field for extending the churchyard.



**Figure 19. The Resurrection window  
(Photo by Maureen Brand)**



**Figure 20. The Motherhood window  
(Photo by Maureen Brand)**



**Figure 21 The War Memorial**  
**(Photo by Maureen Brand)**



**Figure 22. The wooden pulpit**  
**(Photo by Maureen Brand)**



**Figure 23. The altar and reredos**  
**(Photo by Maureen Brand)**

## **Chapter 4. Worship and mission**

The 1851 religious census gives us our first definite glimpse of the nature of the worship at St. Michael's with morning and evening services recorded, with 150 attending the former and 270 the latter, with 85 children at both. However, it is not till Preacher's Books started to be compiled in the late 1860s that the nature of these services can be described in more detail. In 1868 there were morning and afternoon services (with sermons) - up to the start of June, with an evening service during the summer. At least two of the three services would have been morning and evening prayer. Holy Communion was celebrated at the morning service monthly and on major festivals. There were around 30 to 40 communicants. In 1869, gaslighting was installed, and evening services were held more regularly after that. There are some indications in the Preacher's books that the afternoon services were thereafter used to meet a variety of different needs - confirmation classes, baptisms and so on. By the mid-1870s there were two or three early morning communions each month and at festivals, generally with a small number of communicants. During this period, there were collections for various missionary organisations for example the Church Missionary Society, the United Benefit Societies, the Melanesian Mission, the Bible Society, SPCK, as well as for more local needs such as the church extension. Special services were held for a range of events - the Queen's Accession (as specified in the Book of Common Prayer), services for the blessing of seed time, and services at Whitsun where the Mayor and Corporation and Bower Committee were present. In the early 1880s Wednesday evening services began to be held.

It is instructive at this point to look at the services for Holy Week and Easter that were held in St. Michael's in 1882.

Palm Sunday	Morning	Holy Communion with 15 communicants
	Afternoon	Sermon on Philippians 2.8
	Evening	Sermon on John 15.13-14
Monday	Unspecified	Address "Christ suffered and died as a sacrifice for sins."
Tuesday	Unspecified	Address "Christ suffered and died to make atonement."
Wednesday	Unspecified	Address "Christ suffered and died as an example."
	Evening	Sermon on St Mark 14. 71-77
Thursday	Unspecified	Address "Christ suffered and died to enable us to live a holy life."
Good Friday	7.00	Sermon on Romans 4.25
	9.00	Sermon on St Matthew 26.39
	Morning	Sermon on Isaiah 53.3
	Afternoon	Sermon on Two words from the cross
	Evening	Sermon on the last words
Saturday	Unspecified	Address "Christ suffered and died that we might have life eternal."
Easter Day	8.00	Holy Communion with 43 communicants
	9.30	Holy Communion with 17 communicants.
	Morning	Sermon on Isaiah 38.16 and Holy Communion with 49 communicants
	Afternoon	Sermon on Colossians 3.3 and baptism of five children
	Evening	Sermon on 1 Corinthians 15.14
Monday	Unspecified	Baptism of four adults
Wednesday	Evening	Sermon on Romans 5.2-21

The remarkable thing about this schedule is that all the sermons and addresses were given by one person - the Rector, James Sergeantson. The adult baptisms were in preparation for a Confirmation service at the cathedral sometime in the week after Low Sunday when 25 males and 35 females were presented by him for confirmation. This was a large number for the time, but Segeantson and his successors continued to present around 30 to 40 candidates per year for confirmation until the turn of the century.

The Parish magazines begin in the late 1880s and a number survive from 1889 to 1992. These reveal that on a Sunday there were four or five services – a weekly Holy Communion at 8.00am; Mattins at 10.45; a monthly Holy Communion at 12.00; an afternoon service at 3.00, that on various Sundays of the month included a Children's service, baptisms, or churchings; and Evensong at 6.30. There were also services on Wednesday evenings at 7.30

in church, and on Tuesday evenings at 7.30 in St. John's St., and in Streethay. It is not clear where the latter were held – presumably in hired rooms. Sunday Schools were held in the School at 9.30 and 2.30, and also in St John's St. and occasionally Streethay at 2.30. There were a number of regular Monday meetings – a Clothing Club at the School from 12.00 to 1.00, three Mothers meetings at the Rectory, City Mill, and Birmingham Road Barracks at 2.00, and a Band of Hope Meeting (a young person's temperance society) at 6.00 in the School. On Saints' days there was a service of Mattins at 9.00. This service pattern seems to have remained broadly in place throughout the first half of the twentieth century, augmented by extra services at festivals (such as 7.00 am communion services).

From when they become available in detail in the early years of the nineteenth century, the church accounts reveal that the primary expenditure is related to worship in one form or another. The churchwardens accounts for 1890 show a total income of £204 with £70 from St. Michael's Trust, £52 from the offertory and £45 from burial and other fees; and an expenditure of £165 with £37 being spent on the organist and choir, £51 on the Sexton's wages; £25 on the heating and cleaning; and £18 on "*making a new carriage road to the church door*". There were special collections for charities such as "Waifs and Strays", CMS, the clothing club etc. of £32 in total. A little later, a magazine extract of 1898 also contains an abstract of the church accounts for that year. Of the total expenditure of £202 around £70 was spent on the organist, organ blower's and singer's salaries, music and the choir trip to Llandudno. £90 was spent on the Sexton's salary and running expenses including heating and lighting. Around £52 was donated to various charities and



the rest, around £72, was spent on maintenance and repair of the building. By 1926 the total income had risen to £319.

## Chapter 5. Registers and Rectors

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of major population growth. In 1811 the total population of St. Michael's parish was 2310, with 987 in Greenhill and the surrounding rural area, 766 in Burntwood and Hammerwich and the rest in the outlying townships. By 1871, the population of St. Michael's parish within the city (comprising Greenhill and the newly urbanised St. John's area) was 2320. By 1896 this figure was 3086. The parish registers for the entire 19<sup>th</sup> century have been transcribed by the author and others and put into [spreadsheet format](#), a statistical analysis of which enables a detailed picture of the parish to be drawn. It is not appropriate to present the details of the analysis in a book such as this, but there are some points that are of general interest.

Firstly, it is instructive to look at the general social make-up of the parish in the nineteenth century. The baptismal registers contain brief descriptions of the occupation of the one who brings the child for baptism, usually the father. In total there are 6885 baptisms recorded. The number of families represented will be significantly less than this of course. But for these baptisms 2100 give an occupation as "Labourer" and around 650 are economically inactive (most often "Single Women" in the Workhouse or "Spinsters"). Thus around 2750 are at the lowest levels of the society of nineteenth century Lichfield. At the other end of the scale, there are around 35 baptisms of children of those who might be described as "Professional" – bankers, solicitors, architects etc. - 29 from the ecclesiastical establishment; and 40 who describe themselves as "Gentlemen". In between there is a wide range of trades and occupations present of differing levels of skill, from low skilled gardeners and bricklayers to the highly skilled clockmakers, cordwainers and coach builders. Basically, it seems that St. Michael's in the

nineteenth century was a church for the workers and middle-class artisans and tradesmen of the parish – and certainly it attracted few at the higher end of the social scale to bring their children for baptism.

The basic statistics from the baptismal register for the period between 1813 and 1905 show that there were around 70 baptisms a year across the period, with that figure remaining relatively stable. The expected rise in baptism numbers due to population growth thus seems to have been balanced by the number of baptisms taking place in the new chapels of the outlying townships and Christchurch (Chapter 2), and also no doubt by an increase in the number of baptisms in non-conformist churches. The number of illegitimate children baptised is around 5 to 10% of the whole.

The number of marriages per year rises from around 10 per year in the late eighteenth century to a peak of something over 40 marriages per year between 1811 and 1830, before falling to around 15 to 20 per year at the end of the century. The marriage register also provides an indication of the level of literacy amongst those getting married through a consideration of who did or did not sign their own name. Very broadly, up to the middle of the nineteenth century, there were around a third of marriages where neither couple could sign their name, a third of marriages where one of them could (most often the groom) and around a third where both signed. After that time, the proportion of weddings where both signed increased rapidly, no doubt due to the establishment of the National Schools in the area. By the start of the twentieth century both partners almost always signed.

The number of burials per year increased through the century, from around 70 per year to over a hundred per year, reflecting the increase in population. Breaking down the burials by age group reveals a large infant mortality

rate which decreases somewhat over the century, with those for the 0 to 10 age group decreasing from 36% of all burials to 25%. This same trend of reducing mortality is shown in the 11 to 20 and 21 to 30 age groups. The number of burials then increases with age, with a peak in the 71 to 80 age range, with a sharp fall off for the oldest age ranges. The percentage of female burials against age range rises from around 50% for the lowest age range, then increases to around 55% for the 11 to 20 and 21 to 30 age ranges, reflecting deaths during childbirth. There is a trough at just over 40% in the 51 to 60 age range as male mortality peaks, with a rise to around 60% in the highest age ranges, which simply reflects the greater longevity of women if they survive infancy and childbirth.

For the Workhouse burials the number of burials per year is between 10 and 20 – a significant proportion of the whole. The burials by age show the same form as for the general population, although the child mortality rate remains at around 35% throughout the century rather than falling.

The baptismal and burial registers also allow the residence of the parents of the baptized child and those who have died to be identified, at least in broad terms. For baptisms, the largest contributing area is Greenhill, with the St. John's the second largest. The situation is reversed for burials, perhaps indicating a rather younger population in the Greenhill area. The Workhouse baptisms and burials begin in the 1831 to 1850 period, as the Workhouse opened in 1840. In general, the number of Workhouse baptisms decrease with time, while the number of Workhouse burials increase markedly, until in the period from 1891 to 1905 they are the single biggest number of burials. Both baptisms and burials increase over the century in Streethay, reflecting the growth of railway-based activities there, whilst the figures for the

nearby rural area of Freeford / Fulfen remain small and constant.

The township baptisms and burials show a major fall after the chapels in the respective area are opened – 1820 for Burntwood, 1845 for Wall and 1848 for Leamonsley. The baptism figures fall more dramatically than the funeral figures, suggesting that a number of township residents wished to be buried in family graves at St. Michael's. There were significant cross boundary baptisms of parishioners from St. Mary's and St. Chad's parish, presumably because of family or other historical connections. The number of burials for St. Mary's parish was however very large, due to the fact that there was no graveyard there. This imposed a considerable load on the clergy at St. Michael's (as will be seen below), In 1886 the Vicar of St. Mary's agreed to conduct the funerals of his parishioners in St. Michael's churchyard, but he stressed that by ancient custom it was the duty of St. Michael's clergy to do this. A somewhat grudging agreement it would seem. From 1888 an annual collection was taken at St. Mary's for the upkeep of the churchyard. Both these developments probably reflect a grievance extending over several decades that St. Michael's clergy were providing unpaid services to St. Mary's parish. There were also a significant number of baptisms and burials from the towns and villages surrounding the city, but also from further afield – in particular from Birmingham and London – probably because of historic or family connections.

Finally the registers reveal the existence of some interesting groups of people in the population for whom a more in-depth study might be appropriate – the soldiers from the Militia Barracks in the Sandford Street area; the canal workers and boatmen on the Lichfield and Hathersage Canal and the wharfs in the St. John's area; a huge community of coachmakers, coachmen, horsemen etc. connected with the coach routes through the city, and,

in the second half of the century the railway workers on the London North Western Railway through Trent Valley and the South Staffordshire Railway through Lichfield City.

The records also give some detail of the work of the Perpetual Curates and Rectors of the parish. The first of the nineteenth century Perpetual Curates was Edward Remington, the third of the Remington family to hold the post, from 1805 to 1832 (table 1). In 1825 he took on John Louis Petit as a curate, who is best remembered for his later artistic and architectural endeavours, and he served at St. Michael's for three years, officiating at baptisms, weddings and funerals and also no doubt the main Sunday services. He left in 1828 to take up a post in Essex. The next Curate was Thomas Gnosall Parr, who held that post at St. Michael's from 1828 to Remington's death in 1831. He was then appointed Perpetual Curate, a post he held for 37 years before becoming the first Rector in 1867, two weeks before his death. Parr was followed by just four further Rectors up to 1945 - James Sergeantson (1868-1886), Cyril Hubberd (1886-1893), Otho Steele (1893-1913) and Percival Howard (1913 to 1946). The statistics of baptisms, marriages and funerals carried out by these clergy is shown in Table 1, using information from the baptism, marriage and burial registers for the period from 1813 to 1905. The number of baptisms, marriages and funerals conducted by the clergy was eye-watering, the largest number being the 3168 funerals conducted by the Thomas Parr. Whilst they were assisted by a string of curates, they still seem to have carried most of the load themselves.

This chapter has concentrated on the overall statistics obtained from the registers. However, these statistics of course are made up of many thousand individual entries. Most of these are of individuals who made little mark on history, but some are memorable for their actions or their

lives. We will consider some of them, including the three Rectors who are buried in the churchyard, in more detail in Part 4.

		Baptisms	Funerals	Marriages
Edward S Remington	1813-1831	915	916	686
Thomas Gnosall Parr	1831-1868	1866	3168	780
James Serjeantson	1869-1886	1223	1289	215
Cyril Hubbard	1886-1893	360	364	66
Otho Steele	1893-1905	797	659	201
	1906-1913		269	
Percival Howard	1913-1946		1379	

**Table 1 Perpetual Curates and Rectors**

## Bibliography for Parts 1 to 4

Much of the basic information found on this site has been taken from three sources - two volumes of the Victoria County History and the early nineteenth century work of Thomas Harwood. All are available on line.

- [A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 3](#) By G C Baugh, W L Cowie, J C Dickinson, Duggan A P, A K B Evans, R H Evans, Una C Hannam, P Heath, D A Johnson, Hilda Johnstone, Ann J Kettle, J L Kirby, R Mansfield and A Saltman/ Edited by M W Greenslade and R B Pugh. Victoria County History - Staffordshire.
- [A History of the County of Stafford: Volume 14, Lichfield](#) Edited by M W Greenslade. A detailed thematic account of the city of Lichfield and outlying townships, including Burntwood. Victoria County History - Staffordshire.
- Thomas Harwood (1806) [“The History and Antiquities of the Church and City of Lichfield:: Containing Its Ancient and Present State, Civil and Ecclesiastical; Collected from Various Public Records, and Other Authentic Evidences”](#)

In addition, much use has been made of the UK census collection and material relating to St. Michael’s at Staffordshire Records Office

- [UK Census collection](#)
- [Records of St. Michael’s Church, Staffordshire Records Office](#)

The short church history of Carpenter has also been used.

- Carpenter Rev. (1947) “St. Michael’s Church, Lichfield. A short history”, revised by J. Baker (1982)

Place name evidence was taken from the work of Horovitz.



- Horowitz D (2005) “The Place Names of Staffordshire”, published by D Horovitz, Berwood

Extensive information on the burials in the churchyard (from the registers and monumental inscription surveys, can be found on the author’s web site at <https://profchrisbaker.com/lichfield-st-michael-church-and-parish-new/the-churchyard-at-st-michaels-lichfield-registers-and-records/>

A number of sources were used that are not available on the web. These include the following.

- Basset S (1981) “Medieval Lichfield: A topographical Review”, Transactions of the South Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society, XXII, 93-121
- Basset S (1992) “Church and diocese in the West Midlands; the transition from British to Anglo-Saxon control”, Pastoral Care Before the Parish p. 13-40
- James T (1998) “The development of the parish of St. Michael-on-Greenhll over 1500 years”, St. Michael’s Papers; number 1, St. Michael’s PCC
- James T (1999) “St. Michael’s dedication, associations and imagery”, St. Michael’s Papers; number 2, St. Michael’s PCC

Finally, for those interested in the celebrations of the ritual year, the following book by Ronald Hutton is a good read.

- Hutton R (1996) “The Stations of the Sun – a History of the Ritual Year in Britain”, Oxford University Press