

UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Observing Covenants Keeps Us Safe

By Elder David P. Homer, United States
Area Seventy



Not long after arriving in the Salt Lake Valley, Heber C. Kimball, counselor to President Brigham Young, predicted, “There will be a great sifting time, and many will fall; for . . . there is a *test* . . . coming, and who will be able to stand?”¹

Elder David P. Homer

Although he spoke of a time long ago and a place far away, his words are instructive for us today. With the widening gap between the teachings of the Church and those of the world, how can we, as members of the Church, remain safe and meet the tests of our day?

The scriptures teach that in the ordinances of the priesthood “the power of godliness is manifest.”² Ordinances are powerful. I remember my baptism and the joy I felt as I joined the Church. But as powerful as that ordinance was, I have learned that the covenants associated with ordinances can sustain the power of godliness in our lives.

A covenant is a sacred agreement between God and His people. All the saving ordinances of the priesthood are accompanied by covenants. We make a covenant when we are baptized and renew that covenant each time we partake of the sacrament. Those who receive the Melchizedek Priesthood enter into the oath and covenant of the priesthood. And the temple endowment and sealing ordinance also include sacred covenants.

Keeping our covenants will help us avoid things we should not see or do. Likewise, our covenants help us do good

things, even when it is not convenient. Elder M. Russell Ballard taught this:

“Sometimes we are tempted to let our lives be governed more by convenience than by covenant. It is not always convenient to live gospel standards and stand up for truth and testify of the Restoration. It usually is not convenient to share the gospel with others. It isn’t always convenient to respond to a calling in the Church, especially one that stretches our abilities. Opportunities to serve others in meaningful ways, as we have covenanted to do, rarely come at convenient times. But there is no spiritual power in living by convenience. The power comes as we keep our covenants.”³

It was a covenant that strengthened King Josiah in his effort to rid his kingdom from the worship of idols.⁴ It was a covenant that inspired the struggling Saints in Winter Quarters to return to Iowa and collect those in the poor camps who were too destitute to follow. It was a covenant that gave my great-grandmother the strength she needed to meet the challenge of her day.⁵

Bertha Marie Hansen lived in Denmark in the early 1880s, where she met missionaries from the Church and received a witness of their message. After her

baptism she was disowned by her parents and, with a heavy heart, moved to Copenhagen, where she worked to save money to follow the prophet's call to emigrate to Utah.

After several years she was able to do so. With great anticipation she made her way to Utah, hoping to be reunited with friends. Instead, she found herself alone, not able to speak the language. It would have been easy to become disillusioned, but she did not. Instead, she held fast to her covenant to follow the prophet's call to gather and pressed forward. I will always be grateful she did, because she left our family a legacy of faith that blesses us to this day.

President Kimball was right. The widening gap between the teachings of the Church and those of the world is a test that can make it difficult for us, as members of the Church, to remain safe from the evils of our day. But Heavenly Father has not left us without help. He has given us ordinances and covenants which, when remembered, will keep us safe and help us meet the challenges that come our way. ■

NOTES

1. Heber C. Kimball, in Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (1945), 446.
2. Doctrine and Covenants 84:20.
3. M. Russell Ballard, "Like a Flame Unquenchable," *Ensign*, May 1999, 86.
4. See 2 Kings 22:1-13; 23:1-3; 2 Chronicles 34:1-2, 8, 14-21, 29-33.
5. See Dorothy Marie Young Folk, *The Young Family* (2000), 293.

Cabinet Minister and Mayor Attend Loughborough Ward WW1 Commemoration

By Warrick Kear

BY MICHAEL BEASLEY



Left to right: Juliet Ford, Nicky Morgan MP, Lady Mayoress, David Jones, Martin Cook, the Mayor, Judith Cook and Andrew Ford at the Loughborough congregation's WW1 commemoration event

The Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP and Education Secretary and Minister for Women and Equalities gave a reading at a World War One commemoration held in the Loughborough LDS chapel on Sunday evening the 2nd of November 2014.

Members of the Loughborough Ward and the Leicester area presented readings and musical items to the delight of the more than 350 who attended, including many, like the Mayor of Charnwood, Councillor Paul Day, who had never before been inside the building.

Particular highlights of the evening included introductory remarks by Major Adrian Iswariah, a member of the Loughborough Ward, currently

serving in the Royal Engineers, and a moving performance of "O Divine Redeemer" by three young women in the ward, accompanied on the harp. A memorable moment occurred when Jean Rourke told of her late husband's grandfather, who had been killed on the Somme in World War One. Her 14-year-old grandson Joshua, standing beside her, related his recent visit to that memorial in northern France, where he had found the name of J. Rourke, his great-great-grandfather, engraved on the walls of the monument.

As a result of some meticulous work by Kevin Lowe, the foyers and walls of the chapel were covered with illustrations documenting the lives and service

of over 100 Loughborough men who were involved in the conflicts of the war.

The local Royal British Legion marched in bearing their standards as the national anthem was sung and marched them out after a cornet sounded the Last Post. Other musical offerings included harp and oboe solos, a ladies octet, and the stake choir. The hymns were accompanied by a brass ensemble, which also played a special arrangement of “Bring Him Home”. The most rousing experience of the evening, apart from the singing of “Jerusalem” by the entire congregation, happened when three ward members led the congregation in the singing of popular songs from that era, which included “Pack

Up Your Troubles” and “Keep the Home Fires Burning.”

Before the evening commenced, the guests were taken on a tour of the building by local public affairs leaders, which included a family history demonstration. Following the commemorative concert, the local Mayor and Mrs Morgan MP were presented with gifts.

As a service to the community, the whole event engendered much good feeling towards the Church and helped to strengthen relations with the people of Loughborough. Most especially, those thousands of individuals who gave their lives to secure our present freedoms were honoured and remembered. ■

The Bradfords were a wealthy farming family, and when, at an early age, William suffered a long period of ill health, he developed a love of reading classic literature and the Bible, later joining an English Separatist church. He and other Separatists sailed to Amsterdam and later to Leiden, Holland, in order to escape religious persecution; but after becoming disenchanted with (in their own words) the “ungodly” Dutch way of life, they fled to London. Here they managed to finance their pilgrimage to the New World.

Once in the area now known as Massachusetts, William was elected governor, where he became a leading figure in the Plymouth Colony. He served thirty terms as governor and wrote the well-known journal *Of Plymouth Plantation*, which is considered to be the definitive record of the founding of the Pilgrim’s Plymouth Colony. He detailed their everyday lives between 1621 and 1646.¹

William Bradford is buried on Burial Hill in Plymouth, Massachusetts, and his gravestone reads: “Do not basely relinquish that which our fathers have with so great difficulty attained.”

The number of people surviving the voyage and the subsequent winter was small, but as William Bradford also said, “Out of small beginnings great things have been produced. One small candle may light other candles and its light is not diminished in doing so.”

Elder Bradford says, “I greatly treasure the opportunities to know of William Bradford and his followers’ sacrifices. Without them we would not have the great legacy manifest in the holiday of Thanksgiving and also his posterity in the United States today and

Elder Bradford holding a photo of his ancestor Governor William Bradford

Serving the Lord Where Ancestor Sailed on the *Mayflower*

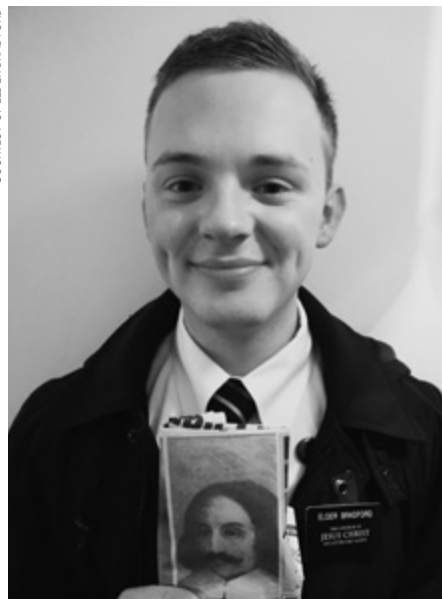
By Dorothy Martin

Elder Dalton Bradford has a good reason to be excited about serving a full-time mission in Plymouth with companion Elder Gull.

It was here on September 6th 1620 that his ancestor William Bradford, along with his wife Dorothy May and their three-year-old son, sailed on the merchant ship *Mayflower*. He along with a hundred and one others sailed to the New World.

William was born in Austerfield, Yorkshire, and was baptized on March 19th 1590 into the Church of England.

COURTESY OF ELDER BRADFORD



around the world. And as it says in Alma 37:7, ‘By very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls’. This in my humble opinion is the definitive legacy of William Bradford. Indeed, a true disciple of Christ.”

Plymouth began a countdown to the 400-year anniversary in 2020 by commemorating the sailing of the *Mayflower* in their ‘Illuminate’ celebration at ‘The Mayflower Steps’ on the Barbican, Plymouth. Elder Bradford has been a tremendous advocate for the Church, appearing on BBC Spotlight TV, ITV, and BBC Radio Devon and in the *Plymouth Morning News* and the *Plymouth Evening Herald*. In an extraordinary coincidence, Elder Bradford’s companion, Elder Gull, can also trace his ancestry back to Pilgrims aboard the *Mayflower* and has been a great support during this busy period.

Both have been able to draw parallels between the pilgrimage of their ancestors seeking refuge from religious persecutions and the pioneers in the early days (1847 onward) of the restored Church.

Elder Bradford, born in Norway but also having lived in France, the US, Germany, Singapore and Switzerland, said, “These were the thoughts that went through my mind as I represented both William Bradford and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at the commemorative event. This will remain with me forever.” ■

NOTES

1. See “William Bradford,” www.history.com/topic/william-bradford.

Temple Run by Bradford Young Men

By Brian Whitehead

As Elder Neil L. Andersen of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued a challenge to Latter-day Saint youth around the world to “help prepare as many names for the temple as baptisms you perform in the temple,” thousands of youth from more than 50 countries have accepted Elder Andersen’s challenge by adding their names to the ‘challenge counter’ at the Youth Temple Challenge website. Behind every number on that counter is a story. For young men in the Leeds Stake, their story is one of developing both spiritual and physical strength.

Inspired by this recent counsel, the Young Men presidency of the Bradford Ward in the Leeds Stake created a project to develop leadership qualities and perseverance in the youth and, more importantly, bring to life the spirit of Elijah.

It was decided to align the idea of the temple challenge with a temple run. Each young man was invited to research and find at least one family name to take to the temple. They would then put those names in a relay baton and run it from the Bradford chapel to the Preston temple—a distance of almost 70 miles—all in one day.

“When our Young Men president first put forward the idea of us running to the Preston temple as a youth project, we looked on the map at how far away the temple actually is, and most of us thought that it would be impossible, especially given the fitness levels of the youth at the time,” commented youth Jamie Walsh. “Nevertheless we started to train for it, to prepare both physically and spiritually for an event which turned out to be one we’d never forget.”

To prepare physically, the young men used quorum activities for training runs to gradually increase their endurance. They invited ward family history consultants to youth nights to share the resources available on FamilySearch.org to help find the name of a person in need of temple ordinances. Each young man left the activity with at least one name to take to the temple.

The temple run served as a good missionary tool as well.

The young men handed out missionary pass-along cards to those who asked them why they were running. Less-active members came out to drive support vehicles during the run. A non-member husband shared his



RANDALL BRADFORD

The statue of William Bradford at Plymouth, Mass.



The Bradford young men and leaders, with a distant view of the Preston temple behind

knowledge of the area to map out the route, and the bishop's nonmember friend followed to take pictures.

"How wonderful it was to see the way in which the temple run had reached out to so many people outside of the Young Men group itself," said Bradford Ward bishop Andrew Hillary. "These good people will also never forget their experience too."

On the day of the run, the group started at 6am. The young men ran in pairs so that they were never alone, and they ran legs of three miles each.

"Throughout the afternoon, the youth and adult teams had to dig deep, cover extra shifts due to injuries and drag out each energy-sapping mile," said Sister Stewart. "No one was left behind or left out of the running. With battered bodies and straining spirits, the Preston temple was eventually within sight through a break in a hedgerow."

Twelve and a half hours after the run started, the young men finished their journey. They gathered around the Preston temple president and jointly handed him the relay baton containing the names of those they would be baptized and

confirmed for in the morning.

"I am grateful to the boys for their sacrifice and efforts on behalf of these people," President Murray expressed in appreciation.

Jamie Walsh said, "It was an experience that none of us will ever forget, and it was definitely worth it. We gained so much from the experience, such as physical fitness, but also a strengthening of the bonds between us and also our ancestors whom we were able to be baptized for." ■

President Murray of the Preston temple receives the baton from the Bradford young men.



Cheshire Firemen Meet Macclesfield Youth

By Matt Evans

Firemen of the Cheshire Fire Department came to the Macclesfield Ward recently and attended the Aaronic Priesthood meetings which were hosted by the young men.

During the Aaronic Priesthood lesson time, the Macclesfield Ward young men shared their testimonies and each taught a principle of the gospel. The missionaries, who were also attending the class, then shared the experience of the First Vision and introduced the Book of Mormon.

After the lesson, the firemen were given a tour of the chapel and introduced to the priesthood, Relief Society and Primary classes. Each class gave a short introduction about who they were and what they had been discussing in their lessons.

A couple of the firemen, who had served in the area for over 20 years, commented that they had seen the Church building many times but had never known about the Church or what happens inside. Afterwards the firemen allowed each of the excited Primary children and youth to climb into the fire engine and shared information on the equipment they use. Before they left, each fireman received a copy of the Book of Mormon with a personal note signed by each young man.

The opportunity for inviting the firemen came from a prompting from the ward mission leader, Dan Rogers, who suggested to the young men that

they invite them to church after they had visited the fire station on a previous youth night.

It was a wonderful spiritual experience hearing young men bear testimony of the truthfulness of the gospel to such valuable members of the community. ■



BY MATT EVANS

The Cheshire Fire Department with the young men of the Macclesfield Ward

London Family History Centre

By Kay Watt

John Hales, now 88, has been a patron at the London Family History Centre for many years. His visits were initially to Exhibition Road, but now he comes to the National Archives at Kew, where the centre is housed. About a year ago, centre staff became aware that John had no electronic records, just the proverbial shoeboxes full of his research. He had no real way to share his findings with his children and grandchildren. Missionaries working in the centre knew they could help.

Sister Hildred Cobia was first to work with John. She reported, "When we began the project he brought a packet of documents and a beautiful handmade pedigree. He told me the names and then gently took from the pile of papers the documents and pictures that matched the person we were talking about. He had a story about every person." Twice a week, John rolled out his family. His research, most of it done before Internet resources were available, had traced the direct lines for his himself as

well as his late wife, Kathleen.

When Elder and Sister Cobia returned home, Elder and Sister Crumley took over. Sister Crumley scanned the pictures and certificates and attached them to the appropriate person in a commercial software program. Elder and Sister Crumley spent their evenings and weekends pouring over censuses, filling in brothers and sisters, spouses and children. John was delighted, but paid careful attention to localities and details. One session, he quickly pointed out, "No, this is not my family. That area is too far from where the family lived." Between his knowledge and the missionary help, John's family tree grew to over 1,200 names. The media attached included his large collection of birth, death and marriage certificates, along with pictures of family, cemeteries and parish churches, totaling 847 items, plus 800 links to website sources. His daughters have been given a flash drive containing the whole tree.

As the project progressed, Sister Crumley was inspired to ask John if he would like his family entered into Family Tree on the FamilySearch website. She then explained the sealing of families in the temple. As John began to understand this principle, although not a member, his love for those who came before grew, and he signed a permission letter to have these blessings performed for his ancestors.

The names were entered into Family Tree, and 776 eligible names were submitted to be shared with temples throughout the world. John continues to work with missionaries on his tree, and has attended two sacrament meetings. ■

John Hales at the London Family History Centre



ELDER AND SISTER COBIA

The Jests in Sierra Leone

By Nic Read

When Tony Jest and his wife from the Reading Ward decided to serve a service mission for the Church, nothing quite prepared them for the conditions of Sierra Leone.

When they arrived in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, they found that 95 percent of the million people living there were without mains water or electricity. Families were devastated by the effects of an eleven-year civil war and the low level of healthcare.

“Over 70 percent of Sierra Leoneans live on less than 60p per day,” Elder Jest said. “And yet they are among the happiest people you could hope to meet. They own little, but they share what they have.”

The Jests said they had no problem sharing the gospel with these humble people. People would stop them on the street asking for a Bible or Book of Mormon, and gospel conversations would encourage many questions and bring around crowds of listeners.

The Jests were later reassigned to Kenema, the country’s third largest city. Missionary work in Kenea was flourishing, increasing membership from 150 to 805 in only eighteen months.

“It was exciting to see men, women and teens stepping up,” said Elder Jest. “We helped them to teach, organise and run the congregations.”

But whilst the Church was flourishing, so was the deadly virus Ebola.

“Within a month, doctors and nurses were falling victim, their training and supplies woefully inadequate. Nobody understood the risks at first,”

Elder Jest said. “Friends would break into hospitals to liberate the patients, bringing them home just as they were most infectious and spreading the virus faster. It was tragic.”

Church headquarters monitored the situation, and in August the call came for 274 missionaries to evacuate Sierra Leone and nearby Liberia, reassigning them to other countries.

Not long after this evacuation, a local Church leader and doctor fell ill after treating a patient. The hospital prescribed for him flu medicine and sent him home. He died of Ebola within days. Authorities quarantined his home and evicted his wife and children, causing them to face the loss of not only a husband and father

but the loss of their home as well.

Due to the fear of spreading the virus, people were cautious about taking the family in, so the family had nowhere to go. The Jests were able to move the family into the rooms left empty by the departed missionaries.

The situation in Kenema only deteriorated. Hospitals were overwhelmed and shops began boarding up their windows. People stayed off the streets.

The Jests were called to move back to Freetown. “It wasn’t long before we were on a thirty-hour countdown to leave the country,” Elder Jest said. “A checkpoint scanned us for fever, and we boarded a flight to England.”

Two days later, all British Airways flights in and out of Sierra Leone were suspended, and within two weeks Kenema was under quarantine—no one allowed in or out except for food convoys.

The Jests are now continuing their mission in Birmingham while keeping in contact with the friends they made in Africa. ■



COURTESY OF ELDER AND SISTER JEST

Elder and Sister Jest

This Easter season, the Church will be releasing a video and website on March 29 that focus on the Resurrection of the Saviour and the importance His Atonement has in our lives. We invite all to *discover His sacrifice, embrace His teachings, and share His joy* by visiting HeLives.mormon.org. ■

40 Years Serving in Primary and Still Going Strong

By Janice Peers

On the 23rd November 2014, the Preston Stake president, President Michael Parkin, recognised Sister Elizabeth (Betty) Stainton's long service to Primary by a special presentation in the Carlisle Branch. Aunty Betty, as she is affectionately known by the children, past and present, joined the Church in 1960 and during her Church membership has served in Primary for over 40 years. Her longest continuous period of service in Primary is 13 years. At the age of 83, Betty is still lovingly teaching a CTR class in Primary.



Stake president Michael Parkin with Sister Betty Stainton, who has served for 40 years in Primary with the Carlisle children

During her time in Primary, Betty has kindly and effectively and with great love taught generations of children. Some of the children she taught are now grandparents themselves, and the effects of her good work continue throughout the generations.

Some of these children, now adults, have commented:

"I always knew Aunty Betty loved us all and was happy to be there with us."

"She never failed to make me smile or make me feel welcome at church or in her home. She is one in a million."

"She was always happy, like a ray of sunshine."

"She has always been a pillar of strength and a massive example of righteous living to all that she taught and nurtured in Primary."

"I'm 26 and will always call her Aunty Betty, as she has always cared for me and all the other children at church like she would her own family."

Sister Lyn Young, the present Primary president in Carlisle, said the following:

"She is resoundingly reliable, ever youthful, absolutely adored by the children and fun to be around. She helps the children

to feel loved in Primary, as the Saviour would do if He was here. She seems to know just the right way of handling these precious souls, instinctively balancing high expectations with the reality of how a child behaves."

Betty is a shining example to us all, and we all hope that she will be able to serve in Primary for many more years and to continue to bless the lives of our precious children with the teachings of the Saviour, so kindly and thoughtfully delivered. ■

Editor's Note

The editors, **Jason Watling and Debbie Twigger**, invite all news stories, articles and photographs to be sent to ukiensign@ldschurch.org. Stories should be in Microsoft Word, 350–500 words, with photographs in jpg format, around 3–4mb in size. Please submit stories for the News section as close to the event as possible.

The signed written permission of all participants in the photograph, as well as the photographer and author, is required for the Church to use the article.

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