

Christ Church and People

40p



March 2020

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Christ Church



and People

Please get your contributions for the April magazine to us by 15th March

Cover Picture

Alexandra Street

The magazine costs 40p per issue or £4 for a full year

March 2020

Sun	1	9:15 am 6:00 pm	Communion; Jn 9:1-41 “The blind man who could see” Lent course 1
Mon	2	9:30 am 12:30 pm	Toddler group Trekks at Christ Church First School
Tue	3	10:00 am 12:30 pm	Coffee before midweek service; service at 10:30 Pursuit Club
Wed	4	9:00 am 3:30 pm 7:30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Lent course 1 Lent course 1
Thu	5	10:30 am 1:20 pm	Open prayer time in church Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	6	10:00 am 2:00 pm	Bible study group World Day of Prayer service
Sat	7	8:30 am 7:00 pm	Prayer meeting followed by breakfast Arthur and Phil’s Quiz night
Sun	8	9:15 am 6:00 pm	Morning Prayer; John 10:1-21 “The Shepherd and his flock” Lent course 2
Mon	9	9:30 am 12:30 pm 7:30 pm	Toddler group Trekks at Christ Church First School Standing committee
Tue	10	10:00 am 12:30 pm 3:00 pm	Coffee before midweek service; service at 10:30 Pursuit Club Autumn House
Wed	11	9:00 am 3:30 pm 7:30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Lent course 2 Lent course 2
Thu	12	10:30 am 11:00 am 1:20 pm	Open prayer time in church St Mary’s Home Communion Christ Church Academy assembly

Fri	13	10:00 am	Bible study group
Sat	14		
Sun	15	9:15 am 6:00 pm	Communion; John 10:22-42 “Unbelief and belief” Lent course 3
Mon	16	9:30 am 12:30 pm	Toddler group Trekks at Christ Church First School
Tue	17	10:00 am 12:30 pm	Coffee before midweek service; service at 10:30 Pursuit Club
Wed	18	9:00 am 3:30 pm 7:30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Lent course 3 Lent course 3
Thu	19	10:30 am 1:20 pm	Open prayer time in church Christ Church Academy assembly
Fri	20	10:00 am	Bible study group
Sat	21	9:15 am	Vision morning meeting
Sun	22	9:15 am 6:00 pm	All age service; John 11:1-44 “I am the resurrection and the life” Lent course 4
Mon	23	9:30 am 12:30 pm 7:30 pm	Toddler group Trekks at Christ Church First School PCC meeting
Tue	24	10:00 am 12:30 pm	Coffee before midweek service; service at 10:30 Pursuit Club
Wed	25	9:00 am 3:30 pm 7:30 pm	Christ Church First School assembly Lent course 4 Lent course 4
Thu	26	10:30 am 1:20 pm	Open prayer time in church Christ Church Academy assembly

Diary continued on next page

There will be a Fair Trade Goods stall after the service on March 22nd

March Diary overspill

Fri	27	10:00 am	Bible study group
Sat	28		
Sun	29	9:15 am 6:00 pm	Communion; John 11:45-57 “It’s better that one man die for the people” Lent course 5
Mon	30	9:30 am 12:30 pm	Toddler group Trekking at Christ Church First School
Tue	31	10:00 am 12:30 pm	Coffee before midweek service; service at 10:30 Pursuit Club

World Day of Prayer

Praying with Zimbabwe

Date - Friday 6th March

Venue - STONE SERVICE @ CHRIST CHURCH

TIME - 2PM

All are welcome.

Refreshments after the service Ann

Pandemic: trusting in the midst of fear

The board game ‘Pandemic’ (Z-Man Games 2007) is described in this way: ‘As skilled members of a disease-fighting team, you and the other players work together to keep the world safe from outbreaks and epidemics. Only through teamwork will you have a chance to find a cure’. It’s good to know that there is a possible cure as you play the game. The real world is fallen, so that sin and evil have tainted everything until: ‘the creation itself will be liberated from decay’ (Romans 8v21). Only then will there be a new heaven and earth free from decay.

(continued)

Pandemic: trusting in the midst of fear

In China it's a very anxious time. Hospital operations are being delayed. The borders are being closed. Air travel suspended. The initial small health crisis is growing quickly to become a pandemic. The outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) was first reported from Wuhan, China, on 31 December 2019. This new illness can affect your lungs and airways. But because it is new means we do not yet know for sure how it spreads. Similar viruses spread in cough droplets. We hope and pray for a vaccine to be developed, but we *'mourn with those who mourn'* (Romans 12v15), as the virus causes havoc, hardship and heartache.

How are we to respond?

To pray for those suffering that the Lord will show mercy and for the medical help to be effective, growing in sympathy for those who are sick or who mourn.

Cry to the Lord in prayer who alone can rescue: *'The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; he is their stronghold in the trouble'* (Psalm 37v39).

To send us to our Bibles as we see the limitations of this world and our lives, but the trustworthy words of God's promises.

Be thankful to the Lord knowing that our health is due to his mercy and our trials show our need of Christ: *'I can do all things through him who strengthens me'* (Philippians 4v13).

Put our trust in the Lord for our future: *'The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; he knows those who take refuge in him'* (Nahum 1v7).

To repent and turn in faith to Jesus who said: *'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'* (John 11v26).

This is why we follow Jesus the author of life. We invite you to join us and do the same.



Paul Kingman

A course helping you explore the world's bestseller.

The Bible is a big and complicated book to read and for many it can be difficult to know where to start. Maybe you've been part of a Bible study group and want to build your confidence so you can study the Bible on your own, or maybe you need help connecting together the bits you've been reading. The Bible Course is a great resource, whether you are familiar with the Bible or just starting out.

More details to follow, but here are some highlights of the course:

- The Bible Course helps you see how the books of the Bible are part of one big story. Using a unique storyline, The Bible Course will show you how key events, books and characters fit together.
- The video teaching, course guide and daily readings will help you grow in confidence as you read the Bible for yourself.
- It acts as a great follow-on resource for those who have done introductory courses like Alpha and Christianity Explored, but also enables those who are established Christians to develop their understanding for reading the Bible for all its worth.

Reviews

Well put together, straightforward to lead, & very engaging. The Bible Course is a fantastic resource to the Church, which I wholeheartedly recommend to you!

Tom Rothwell, Senior Pastor, New Life Church, New Milton

The Bible Course is a brilliant and accessible way to understand the full Bible story. A brilliant way to kick-start your journey. *Amy, Surrey*

Course book—this is essential and costs £5 from Paul.

There are 8 sessions, continuing on

Wed 4th March 7:30 pm

Then Sundays at 6 pm or Wednesdays at 7:30 pm

Archdeacon's Letter

Lent is a time for self-examination. The absence of flowers in church, the more sombre tone of hymns and liturgy, changes in the colour of vestments and altar frontals, our commitments to pray, fast and read the bible more diligently, all serve to create a space for thoughtful consideration of what our faith is calling forth from us in these present times. In what ways are we seeking to share the good news more deliberately, to join hands with others and roll up our sleeves for the good of our communities and to be good neighbours in order that as a nation we may discover a deeper mutuality and common cause?

This year on the First Sunday of Lent the set gospel reading is the story of the testing in the wilderness in Matthew chapter 4 verses 1-11. Reading it, I am struck by the fact that the passage opens and closes with two strong pointers that we might want to take as 'bookends' to frame our Lenten journeying. The first is the role of the Holy Spirit and the second is the ministry of angels.

In verse 1 Matthew writes that Jesus was "led up by the Spirit" into the wilderness, that is, 'up' into the Judean hills. The suggestion is that his wilderness encounter is not only to be testing and demanding but 'a time of the Spirit'. What we witness is the Spirit empowering Jesus to deepen and refine his sense of calling and mission just at the point where he faces very sharp challenges from the wiles of the devil. In the same way, as we seek to turn aside from the pressures of day to day life and the challenges we may face, through the grace and comfort of the Holy Spirit we can discover a space to think and ponder and wait upon God with renewed expectation and delight. Our Lenten reflections and activities are thus a time when the insight, encouragement, empowerment and comfort of the Spirit can touch us and refresh us deeply. It is a time when 'the still small voice' can speak to us – remembering that when God spoke to Elijah in this way (1 Kings 19 v.12), it was at a time for him of great vulnerability and deep discouragement. The Spirit overshadows us not only when we have the wind in our sails, but when life is at its most problematic. *(continued)*

Archdeacon's Letter

Paul encouraged the Christian community in Rome when he wrote that 'the Spirit intercedes (for the saints) with sighs too deep for words' (Romans 8 v.26). This is nowhere more so than in this time of seeking a closer walk with Christ in the wilderness, stress and distress of our lives.

On Ash Wednesday we are invited into the 'keeping of a holy Lent' and Lent is indeed given as a time for 'holiness', thus for the making-whole of relationships, situations, our communities and nation and our own selves before God. This emphasis comes out in the closing words of the passage, for when the devil left Jesus, 'angels came and ministered unto him'. The angels signify the wholeness or making-whole-ness of the wilderness journey. They remind us that something holy and whole-making is being undertaken and it will be blessed and honoured. My own instinct is that the angels were always there, ministering to our Lord – which is the strong impression gained in Mark's account of the testing. The fact that Matthew marks their impact as being at the end, may indicate that only at the end of the testing does their presence becomes apparent. It is often only when we look back that we see how we have been upheld. Either way, that angels ministered to Jesus as he was being prepared for what was to come, points us to the fact that our own preparations for the joy of Eastertide are likewise times when God's messengers and messages are pressing to wing their way into our hearts and lives. Ours is only that we should open our hearts! Lent is a time to receive the ministry of angels – some of whom may be nearer to us than we might suppose or have noticed.

I hope and pray that this season of Lent may indeed be a time for you and your communities of deepening wholeness through the power and refreshment of the Spirit and because of the ministry of angels.

Ven Julian Francis
Archdeacon of Walsall

Mission Prayer Diary	
	<i>CMS—Church Mission Society</i>
1st	Pray for the Jesus film to have a great effect in Enxet (Paraguay), even though it is in their second language Guarani
2nd	In Ukraine, Alison Giblett leads Genesis ministry training, which helps people grappling with addiction to receive God's healing, shed destructive habits and rely on God instead
3rd	Middle East partner N oversees 3 small house churches in a country with restrictive laws, asks for prayer for growth
4th	Pray for Philippines partners Kats and Kumar Aryal as they teach students from 20 Asian countries at a Business School
	<i>Mircea Pestean works with the Maranatha group of churches in Romania</i>
5th	For a good response to the revival/outreach in Bicaz at the beginning of February when 8 non Christians attended the meeting; for unity of the believers from the village; and for more people to get saved.
6th	For the church planting ministry in Lupoiaia where another church started to visit the gypsies leading to a split and confusion in the village. Please pray for God to intervene in this situation.
7th	The great need of funds for food parcels for the families who are hungry. Food is very expensive in Romania and regular employment for gypsies is hard to find.
8th	My wife Maria who is stressed and worried about preparations for our daughter Dina's wedding; and for Mihai her boyfriend.
	<i>Tear Fund works in many countries to support poor people and show God's love in practical ways.</i>
9th	Tearfund has distributed food supplies to 68,000 people in cyclone Ida damage areas, 50,000 have received chlorine tablets, soap, jerry cans and buckets

10th	The Igreja Mocambique church distributes supplies to cyclone-damaged villages; every Sunday a collection is taken and given to someone in need
11th	Malawi Tearfund partner Assemblies of God Care is training people to construct energy-saving stoves, helping to conserve wood stocks while cooking. Firewood now lasts 3 times as long as before
12th	A Tearfund partner has been going house-to-house in Yemen giving Mina Awareness training, helping to save lives in this war-torn country
	<i>Tim and Kate Lee helped to set up JigSaw Kids Ministries n Manila (Philippines). They are our CMS Link Missionaries</i>
13th	We thank you for all your prayers for Grace and the good news is that we have now found a wonderful online school, which has 'live' classes with teachers which suits Grace very much. Please pray that she will find friends and things to do outside of school hours
14th	Prayers continue to be needed for Jenu, the mum arrested for drugs especially for her children who are heart broken and miss her greatly with prayer and 'Jigsaw Life groups.
15th	My (Kate) teaching job is going well but I would value prayers that I can keep on top of a very heavy workload
16th	Remember in prayer also Jay Anne who still needs an ultra sound as her mother has not come back to Jigsaw, for Jestoni who still needs his lump to be checked and continue to pray for Alfred whose family is still trying to get funds for his operation, Jigsaw has given 5000 but more is needed.

	<i>Jonathan and Robinah Beesigomwe live in Gabarone, Botswana. Their organisation is “Bows and Arrows Ministry”, and they work with older schoolchildren and young adults.</i>
17th	A farming project has begun, multiplying seed of Safflower. Petals have been harvested for tea. Pray for this project as 2 Hectares of seed planting was lost in the drought, when the water pump failed (Farming for Life project)
18th	We now have a proper partnership with Scripture Union and need more space to start trainings. Things are moving really fast and we thank God
19th	Journey to Hope is a programme that is running in schools for 12-19 years old, helping children cope with family breakdowns and bad memories
20th	Pray for more committed volunteers, teachers and trainers to provide leadership to this movement that will help reach the 700,000 children with God’s Word by 2030.
	<i>Mission Aviation Fellowship fly medical personnel, supplies and missionaries to far-flung, often inaccessible settlements</i>
21st	MAF provides flights for Jago Nan, which hopes to open a boat school to educate the landless Manta (Water Gypsy) children in Bangladesh, who can’t attend normal school
22nd	MAF flies the staff of Action Against Hunger to remote areas, helping them provide low-cost loans to women in the villages
23rd	MAF partner Bhola’s Children runs a home and school on the remote Bhola island off Bangladesh, helping a large number of orphaned and disabled children
24th	Pray for MAF pilots and staff, who don’t just fly planes but have opportunities themselves to share the Gospel

	<i>The Bible Society's Bible-a-month club is delivering Bible resources in Jordan (population 10.5 million, estimated 3% Christians)</i>
25th	Pray for the 3 million refugees, mostly from Syria. Jordanian Christians welcome them with open and warm hearts. Bible Society is helping provide food and shelter
26th	Ask God to protect the BS staff and volunteers and bless their relationship with Jordanian churches
27th	Pray for all Christians in Jordan, that they will be a light in the darkness, displaying God's love in their communities
28th	Thank God for religious freedom in Jordan that allows Christians to meet for services and Bible studies, pray this will
	<i>Ralph and Dagmar Baron help to run the Murree Christian School in Northern Pakistan. They sent prayer requests</i>
29th	Please pray particularly for the 5 girls in our graduating class as they work towards A Levels and apply to universities in the UK, Canada, Australia and Korea. They are all trusting the Lord will lead them to places where they can continue to grow and become further equipped to serve Christ's purposes in and through their lives.
30th	Please pray that more qualified teachers will apply to work in the school
31st	In terms of praise and prayer, we are thankful that our student numbers have started to grow; children of national Christian full-time workers are increasingly joining our school.

Louise Kelly and I arrived at the Pilgrim Chapel at Stafford Hospital early evening. When we arrived, we had plenty of time to meet other members of the public, and other church goers, who had come along to sing carols, and to help spread the Christmas Message to the patients and staff of the hospital.

Approximately 35 carollers arrived, with their Christmas headwear and we were divided into two groups. We were allocated to sing on Floor 1 of the Hospital. We were welcomed by the hospital staff and patients alike, with smiles and kind words on every ward.

Some patients wanted to sing from the carol sheets which was nice, and one lady said she knew every verse...she said she had been an R.E. teacher for many years.

Most patients joined in with the singing, including their visitors. Some patients, who were very poorly, still managed to find a smile, waved, or moved their hands in time with the singing.

Amazing how rewarding and enjoyable the carolling event was, I would encourage you to go along and have a sing song next year. The Christmas message was very well received, and LOVE SHONE DOWN OVER STAFFORD HOSPITAL.

Thank-you to Dave Rowlands for introducing us to this lovely annual event.

Lynne Bakker-Collier



Arthur's Quiz Night

Saturday March 7th at 7pm in the centre.
Usual guessing games
Plants for sale

Walking with the Bishop

Dave "We'll park at Burston, walk down to Sandon and meet the walking party there."

Me "What time on Saturday?"

Dave "I expect we need to leave the house some time before 8 a.m."

Me "groan"

Yes I admit I wasn't too enthusiastic about going on the Mid Trent Churches walk on 8th February but it turned out to be a most enjoyable experience. We met up, at beautiful Sandon church, with the Bishop of Lichfield and 30 plus other walkers and started with a very short service of Bible reading and prayers. A point of interest the toilet at Sandon is also labelled the Necessarium!

Great swathes of snowdrops greeted us at Salt and in the church a host of paper doves swung from the ceiling.

Conversation flowed on the walk and we heard about the best courses for a PhD in theology (Amsterdam), the New Zealand grazing system and many other interesting snippets. We also saw the site of the Civil War battle at Hopton Heath and reflected on the evils of civil war. We rejoiced in sunshine and bird song and gambolling black lambs. Many stiles were climbed, much mud discovered and the site of a long closed railway line was noted.

Tiny Hopton church was once a humble barn and there we listened to the story of Jesus' birth in an equally humble stable.

Our last church before lunch was Burston (once a schoolroom) where we were well fed before we said our goodbyes to our fellow travellers and headed home, having completed the first quarter of a two day walk.

What a great way to spend a Saturday morning!

Enid

- Extracts from Jigsaw's latest newsletter, full version of newsletter is in the Mission Matters folder at church

Kate writes: We had a wonderful Christmas together as a family, with Rebekah flying out to be with us... Although we really missed our friends and family in the UK, God blessed us with all the traditions and trimmings thanks mostly to Rebekah who bought us a whole suitcase of Christmas goodies from the UK (The Christmas crackers never made it though, confiscated as a fire risk at Heathrow!)

The week after Christmas, Tim decided to take James and Grace for an overnight trip to Malacca, two hours from KL. Not long after arriving Tim was gripped with horrendous pain and at 2am in the morning ended up in A&E at the nearest hospital where eventually they discovered he had a perforated appendix! He was taken into surgery and what should have been an overnight trip took 4 days before he was discharged and able to come back to KL. Tim is now home and recovering well.

We thank you for all your prayers for Grace and the good news is that we have now found a wonderful online school, which has 'live' classes with teachers which suits Grace very much. Please pray that she will find friends and things to do outside of school hours. My teaching job is going well but I would value prayers that I can keep on top of a very heavy workload. James is doing very well and is really busy with football coaching at the refugee school , studying and volunteering at the church we go to. Rebekah is still enjoying university.

Also in the newsletter: Friends of Jigsaw UK are planning a mission trip from the UK to the Philippines for Easter this year. There will be 20 places available and it is hoped that all 16 supporting UK churches will be represented. Further details will follow soon.

17 **Subject: Prayers would be appreciated !!!**

Dear brothers and sisters,

Greetings from Romania. I pray and I hope that you are blessed by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and you serve Him faithfully. Like always when I am in needs I turn to you for the support I need for prayers.

This time I need prayers for myself and for my family and of course for the ministry too.

Please pray for:

1. My wife Maria. She need prayers as she is going through a stressful times. My daughter Dina is getting ready to get married and that look like is too much for my wife. She is stressed and worried about how we will manage all things we need to do to organize the wedding, about the place the new family will live etc.

2. Please pray for Dina and Mihai her boyfriend. They need to do a lot in the following months to refurbish an apartment in Zalau (my old apartment) they need to do the all stuff for the wedding for bride and groom. Please pray for wisdom and patience.

3. Please pray for myself and for my health to be good to can serve the Lord in the places He called me to serve.

Sometimes I feel drain out physically after the all things I went through last months. My mom situation, surgery, ministry and family.

4. Please pray for my family for protection and for God's grace to hold us on the right path to follow him with the entire family.

I need you also to pray for some ministry needs:

1. Please pray for the revival/outreach is running this week in Bicaz. Last night when we got the first evening of revival we got eight non Christians into our meeting. This is unbelievable after the break which happened 3 years ago before I went there to help them. Please pray for unity of the believers from the village and for people to get saved.

Prayer needed!

2. Please pray for the church planting ministry in Lupoiaia. There are some issues with the family who host our meetings. They are not Christians yet and there are some bad things have been done by the husband. His wife is mad and she is tempted to leave. Please pray for forgiveness and for God's mercy into that family.

Since me and Vasile Sav started the ministry there and we got some nice regular meetings there is another church who started to visit the gypsies. This doesn't help the ministry at all as the gypsies are split and confused. Please pray that God to get involved into the situation. We do not want to do the ministry to trouble that church but I am sure if me and Vasile will stop going that church will do the same. We are not into a competition but some guys from that church probably think we are. Of course there are some good news too. One of the families who come to church regularly did a big step in faith. They lived together for 11 years and they has 5 children but they were not legally married. Last Thursday they did the legally marriage for the simple reason that they want to follow Christ in baptism. The man's name is Vasile and his wife is Nadia. Please pray for them to follow the faith and to be not disturbed by those guy who just want to hunt their souls.

3. I need you to pray for some funds from somewhere (I don't know from where) for food parcels for the families who are hungry. Saturday I talked with a gypsy lady and she was crying because she said she did not has food to her children. I know her and I know she do not lie. The food is very expensive in Romania and the shops use anything to rise up the food prices. Now they has a good reason to do that because of the China situation. This things hit mostly the poor families. The gypsies because the don't has education usually cannot find a regular job. Summer time they are doing small day jobs for some income but over the Winter there is no such jobs for them.

All the extra funds I got from you brothers were spent to help those in needs and right now I am really tight.

I think this is all for the moment. Anyway I wrote you a lot. Sorry for that.

Mircea Pestean

Fairtrade Fortnight begins on 24th February continues till 8th March. As a Fairtrade registered church we support this event and are committed to using fair-trade coffee, tea and sugar for our refreshments. We are in the process of re-registering Christ Church and Oulton as fair-trade churches. (Cecilia first registered us in 2004.) You can also buy fairtrade food products at a local speciality food store!

The Traidcraft Spring/Summer catalogue is out now. The Real Easter Egg is on sale again. It's the 10th Anniversary and it's the only chocolate egg which includes a booklet telling the Easter story.

Fairtrade at Christ Church & Oulton in March

9th March a sale at the Parents & Toddlers Group

16th March Mini Farmers Market at Oulton Village Hall.

22nd March Fairtrade Stall at Christ Church – before/after the all age service

Usually after the Mini Farmers Market in March, Ruth sends a donation to Traidcraft's partner charity, Traidcraft Exchange. (In 2019, we gave £350.) This year Ruth will only be able to send a token donation to the charity, as we haven't made any profit.

Traidcraft Exchange has just launched a new campaign 'Our land, our rights'. The charity is calling for a new law to make UK companies investing in developing countries, act to protect the local people and their environment and hold them to account if they fail. For more details and case studies visit the web site. www.traidcraftexchange.org

Thank you for supporting the fair-trade stall at Christ Church. We will continue to stock your favourite products. Please have a look at the catalogue to see if there is anything you would like to order.

Sheila

The P.C.C. met on 22nd January 2020 and the following matters were reported:

- Rev Kingman expressed enormous thanks on behalf of the PCC to Helen Bowes and the team for all the hard work in organising and running the Advent Windows event.
- Rev Kingman reported that Christ Church and Oulton First schools were graded good in the recent SIAMS inspection (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) and Christ Church Academy was graded Excellent in a very thorough inspection.
- Rev Kingman expressed thanks on behalf of the PCC to Andy Stone for all the work he has done towards our appeal against the council's proposed Christ Church Car Park charges for evenings and Sundays. Andy Stone reported that letters have been sent. Mr Stone is in the process of drafting a further letter detailing what has been discovered through the Freedom of Information Act.
- The large screen in church seems to be working well being used to display songs and support the talks
- Christ Church will be taking part in the Art Trail which is to run from 22/5/20- 26/6/20. Exhibits will be displayed in the foyer and corridor.

The next PCC meeting is on Monday 23rd March 2020.

Holiday Club 2020

Look out for details of the 2020 Holiday Club in church and on the website

Flygskam for Lent

Flygskam– pronounced “fleeg-skahm” is the feeling of shame that people now experience when they fly. This Lent, perhaps we should give up flying.

Skiing in Kitzbühel this Easter? Google will help you get there without climbing as high as the ski-lift. Just 14 hours 19 minutes from Stone, though the cost may be significant– anything from £150 to £1000 depending on your railcards, level of luxury and willingness to search the internet for many hours. You will be changing trains many times, so best to send your luggage on ahead.

Going to Mallorca? More challenging, but there are ferries from Portsmouth to Santander (23 hours 30 minutes each way, 3 sailings weekly) and Barcelona to Palma (7 hours 30 minutes each way, 19 sailings each week). Add in a few train journeys and your journey might take less than 60 hours. Google gave up on this one. The Portsmouth ferry won't accept foot passengers, you have to take a car, so journey cost is £662 for 2 people. If you can hitch a lift in a car on the Portsmouth ferry and then go as foot passengers from Barcelona, you might get the ferry costs down to £300 but then you will need train tickets, bound to be at least £100 each person. Again, best not to take luggage.

One might ask, “why is it so difficult to travel without flying?”. Go by plane and expedia will sort it out in a jiffy, often with ATOL protection– you can forget that with trains and ferries! Flights from Birmingham to Palma and a week in a hotel in Easter school holidays, just £471 each including taxes. Journey time 4 hours 50 minutes (changing in Munich).

Of course, true eco-warriors will say that trains and ferries are nearly as bad as planes, you should go by bicycle and sailing boat. Don't ask.

Dave Bell