

All-Embracing Humanity

In December I wrote about the row that marred the appointment of Rowan Williams as Archbishop of Canterbury. Something similar, but even more heated, has now erupted over the nomination of Jeffrey John as the new Bishop of Reading. This month's issue of *The Door* has a full report of the debate.

As with Rowan Williams, the argument revolves on the issue of homosexuality. It's easy to see the debate in terms of two opposing parties in the Church: conservatives and liberals. But I think that many of us sit somewhere between the two. Quite a number of people have said to me recently that they're not sure what they think about homosexuality; perhaps we should treat each case on its own merits. And Rowan Williams has urged us to stop arguing and get on with the work of mission.

But we can't just ignore this issue; if we don't have the debate and make up our own minds, the issues will be left to fester. But more importantly, the issue of homosexuality is becoming a bit like a litmus test, showing up how different parts of the Church see themselves relating to the world,

how they see their *mission*. The debate centres on where we get our truth from. Do we get it only from a particular way of reading the Bible, or perhaps Church tradition, or do we also bring human experience and reason into the question? My own feeling is that the human angle is played down too often by the Church, with the result that it alienates those it seeks to embrace. This is certainly true at the moment:

there has been a sea-change in the public attitude towards homosexuality over the past 50 years, to the extent that the press coverage of the Jeffrey John debate is wholly united in expressing

bemusement that the Church takes it so seriously.

People do not take a Church seriously that seeks to lay down rules apparently for the sake of it, denying them of their humanity into the bargain. But they will take seriously a Church that shows them how to find the ultimate fulfilment of their lives, through discovering the all-embracing humanity of Jesus Christ.

Mark



Chronicle

Healing Services

St James Church

Wednesday 16th July

7.30 pm

St Francis Church

Tuesday 8th July

7.00 pm

Anyone who would like prayers for themselves, or for others, or who would like to join us in praying for God's healing work is welcome.



15 July St Swithun

- saint for a rainy day

St Swithun is apparently the saint to blame for rainy summers. It is said that if it rains on his special day, 15 July, it will then rain for forty days after that.

It all began when he was made Bishop of Winchester in 852 by King Ethelwulf of Wessex. It was an important posting: Winchester was the capital of Wessex, and during the 10 years Swithun was there, Wessex became the most important kingdom of England. During his life, instead of washing out people's summer holidays, and damping down their spirits, Swithun seems to have done a lot of good. He was famous for his charitable gifts and for his energy in getting churches built. When he was dying in 862, he asked that he be buried in the cemetery of the Old Minster, just outside the west door.

If he has been left there in peace, who knows how many rainy summers the English may have been spared over the last 1000 years. But, no, it was decided to move Swithun. By now, the 960s, Winchester had become the first monastic cathedral chapter in England, and the newly installed monks wanted Swithun in the cathedral with them. So finally, on 15 July 971, his bones were dug up and Swithun was translated in to the cathedral.

That same day many people claimed to have had miraculous cures. Certainly everyone got wet, for the heavens opened. The unusually heavy rain that day, and on the days following, was attributed to the power of St Swithun.

Swithun was moved again in 1093, into the new Winchester cathedral. His shrine was a popular place of pilgrimage throughout the middle ages. The shrine was destroyed during the Reformation, and restored in 1962. There are 58 ancient dedications to Swithun in England.

Sundays @ Six at St James

The first Sunday of the month at 6 o'clock

July 6th *Waiting on the Word*

August no service

September 7th *Evening Praise*

October 5th *Iona Worship*

November 2nd *Annual Memorial Service (4.00 pm)*



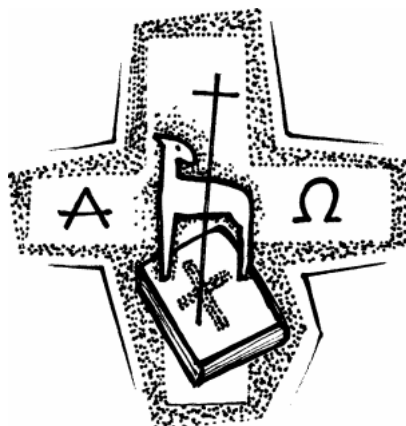
Morning Prayer

& Breakfast

St Francis Church
Saturday Mornings

9.15 am

all welcome



Volunteer Reading Help

Volunteer Reading Help is a voluntary organisation which recruits, trains and supports volunteers who visit a local primary school twice a week and work for half an hour each with three children who have difficulties with their reading.

A Volunteer Reading Helper with five years' experience has written this article about her work.

I have worked with a variety of children, all of them from seven to nine years old. Some just needed someone to give them confidence to bring out the reading they already had, and help them see that it was more important to have a go than worry about being right; some really needed assistance with grasping the basics, and others could read relatively well but needed help with comprehension. There have been several who simply needed a quiet place, a non-threatening oasis, to talk, to have fun, and yes, to read a bit with a friendly **adult who wasn't their teacher or parent, because home life was complicated and school life a struggle.**

Most of the children I've worked with have improved. Their reading has come on in leaps and bounds; they can actually remember what they've read so that they can make an educated guess as to what might happen next. Just as importantly, although reading has remained a struggle for some, they have found the self-confidence and vocabulary skills to teach me a game or describe something in exhaustive detail. That hour a week can really pay dividends!

At the end of last half-term the mother of a child I'd worked with since September spoke to me. Her son had pointed me out as 'the

lady who helps me read'. She told me how much her son enjoyed our sessions, that now he was reading at home, not just books, but cereal packets, taking great delight in deconstructing the longer complicated words. He didn't always get them right - but he had a go because he had the confidence to try. She told me that he'd never wanted to read at home and that she'd just left it alone because it caused too much upset even to broach the subject. This explained the absence of any parental input in his reading record. It wasn't due to a lack of interest or support, as had fleetingly crossed my mind, but a reflection of her son's difficulties and her inability to find a way in to help him. She was so pleased with her son's progress and thanked me for helping him.

I took away several things from this - affirmation that VRH does work, and a reminder not to judge parents too harshly without knowing the facts. I could see the trickle-down effect of helping a child to gain confidence to read - not only was he happier, his mother had one less thing to worry about. Most children just need a gentle push, (sometimes verging on a shove!), a bit of oomph if you like, to start them reading, to enable them to enjoy it and, with luck and encouragement, to ultimately leap into new worlds that expand their horizons and spark their imagination.

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a Volunteer Reading Helper, please contact Hilary Burr at VRH, 36 Windmill Road, Oxford OX3 713X; telephone 0845 4500329 and email: vrh.oxfordshire@cb-tiscali.co.uk. Training courses are held locally, and all expenses are paid.





Rosanne interviews Dave Stanley

When I recall the charismatic and talented teachers I was lucky enough to call colleagues, in my 36+ years in education, I don't know why it surprises me how extensive is the influence of such people on their pupils, but it does. I am thinking now of one such teacher of geography whom I have never met, whose influence on this month's interviewee was deep and long lasting.

Dave has for some time now been a sidesperson at St James', handing out *The Link*, greeting folk at the door etc. but he's not the kind of person to bounce up to you saying, 'Hi, I'm Dave!' so let me introduce him to you.

As a small boy of seven he was taken by his mother to live in Devon and he speaks with affection of happy days spent on the beach at Budleigh Salterton, playing with his elder sister. By the time he was ten he was attending boarding school as a weekly border. Later he was sent to Kaley College in Tavistock, where periods away from home extended to full school terms – not a happy time for him. He became isolated and independent. He describes himself as not particularly academic nor sporty. He got by in his English lessons and quite liked hockey BUT through his geography he developed a love of the world

and its peoples, which has shaped the rest of his life.

After leaving school with no clear idea about his future he went into banking – not really a career for him though. Then he tried engineering – another mistake. Next came a degree course at North Staffordshire Polytechnical College. With a degree in information technology under his belt he found a post with the Oxfordshire regional Health Community programme and so arrived in our area. Throughout this period of his life he became a solitary person. He joined a Christian walking club and with friends would take long hill walks but he was also a lone walker who learned to love the Peak District, the Pennine Way and the coast-to-coast journey across the North of England as described by Braithwaite. He enjoyed the single life, which left him free to travel.

His adventures have taken him to some wonderful places and provided a wealth of experiences. He has trekked all around New Zealand, learned to sea-dive off Fiji, visited the five great National parks and the Grand Canyon in America and experienced the beauty of the Great Barrier Reef in Australia. He did voluntary work in Africa and helped to build a Christian refuge in Turkey. In India he met Tsering a Tibetan girl and

found himself returning there time and time again. He had met the girl he wanted to marry and (incredibly) with whom he was prepared to settle down.

During his early days in Oxford he became "handyman" at St Clements church and from there he took three trips to Bosnia, driving vanloads of aid to the homeless orphans and war-stricken refugees. He modestly describes the cold and unmade roads as more dangerous than the risk of being shot at but---! During all his journeys around the world he has slept in some strange places but has never been without a bed. He has complete faith in God who, he says 'works it all out'.

Twenty years ago he set up his own property maintenance business using his experiences in building methods and the use of tools. He also happens to be one of those 'gold dust' people - an extremely competent plumber. He works from home enjoying the independence this affords. His great joy at the moment is introducing Tsering and his stepdaughter Tenzin to the English way of life and language. He showed me a photo he had taken of them on a fairground roundabout. A new experience for them both. But then Dave knows all about changing one's lifestyle in the name of love, doesn't

he?

Was there a particular person who had a strong influence on your early life?

My mother, a very loving mother, she loves me dearly, still does. My geography master at school had a strong male influence in my life.

Can you remember an incident in childhood which held special significance for you?

The shock of boarding school. At the age of 16 my faith became very real and I needed a spiritual side to life. I came to confirmation at that age.

What sort of child were you?

Shy, introverted, learnt to be self-contained and keep a low profile.

Has your faith been with you since childhood or did you find it later in life?

It became real at 16, but I am still struggling to reach a stronger relationship with God today.

Which period of your adult life has given you most satisfaction?

I did really enjoy travelling- a wonderful freedom. Now I have the opportunity to have a family, that's wonderful too. Both different sides of me.

Are there any aspects of modern life which you dislike?

We have narrow sheltered attitudes in this country. In other places people's attitudes are more open and we could learn from them.

What's best about life today?

Automation, communication. Labour intensive activities are made so much easier.

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

Gardening, I grow flowers and I love natural gardens. Cycling, photography and the big outdoors.

What makes you laugh?

TV programmes such as "Some Mothers do 'ave 'em", "Fawlty Towers". I find "Mr Bean" funny. Also miscommunication with the family learning English.

If you had a magic wand what would you change?

I'd have a better memory. It would make life easier, especially social interaction.

If you were not doing what you do now what would be the alternative?

Travelling around the world.

What do you hope to be doing in ten years time?

I'm not particularly ambitious business wise so – enjoying a happy family life and walking closer to God.

Dave asked me to add that he was pleased to be interviewed as he feels it's " nice that people can learn where I'm coming from" especially as he has to push himself to be sociable.



Independence Day 4 July



If you like fireworks and parades, flag-waving and barbeques, go to America this month, as it celebrates Independence

Day.

It all began way back on 4 July, 1776, in Philadelphia. On that day the 'Congress' decided to formally adopt the Declaration of Independence. The actual signing of the Declaration was not completed until August, but the Fourth of July holiday became the official anniversary of U.S. independence, and nowadays is celebrated in all states and territories of the United States.

The holiday was first observed in Philadelphia on July 8, 1776, at which time the Declaration of Independence was read aloud, city bells rang and bands played. It was not declared a legal holiday, however, until 1941!

This year the Fourth will be celebrated as usual, with many public parades and pageants, private family picnics and outings, patriotic speeches, and organized firing of guns and cannons and displays of fireworks. Early last century "safe and sane" restrictions on the general use of fireworks were brought in - with the aim of ensuring that most Americans would survive the day.

Churn to Oxford Pilgrimage

Mon 21st - Wed 23rd July



Calling all young people! Would you like to join us on our next pilgrimage? We will walk, sleep on hall floors, have simple meals, spend time together - and have a good time!! The cost is £25 and if you would like to know more or want to come, please speak to Fr John.

It should also be possible for anyone who would like to come with us, but who can't manage the whole 3 days, to join up with us for a day or a part of a day - if you'd like to do this, speak to Fr John.

ST JAMES PATRONAL FESTIVAL

Friday 25th July 7.00 pm

PATRONAL EUCHARIST

Preacher: The Revd Elaine Bardwell,
Area Dean of Cowley
*followed by the **last ever** Party
in Rectory Garden*



THANK YOU

I'd like to say a heartfelt thank you to everyone who made my first celebration



of the Eucharist such a wonderful occasion. Before my ordination the previous Sunday, the Bishop had told us

all to go into the service feeling that we were being held up by all the many people who'd brought us to this point; all the many people who'd given up their time for us over the past year and the years before, and all those who'd given up their time to come and support us at the ordination service itself.

I also felt this at my first Eucharist. Many people took part in all sorts of ways in the service and the party afterwards, and although I couldn't mention you by name at the time, I'd like to say a big thank you now.

Mark

The 7 Ups

Who says the Bible isn't relevant to everyday life? What about....

1. Wake Up !!

Decide to have a good day, and for a good reason:

"This is the day the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Psalm 118:24

2. Dress Up !!

The best way to dress up is to put on a smile - and mean it. It's an instant, inexpensive way to improve your looks.

"The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7

3. Shut Up!!

Learn to listen to other people. God gave us two ears and one mouth, so He must have meant for us to do twice as much listening as talking.

"He who guards his lips guards his soul." Proverbs 13:3

4. Stand Up!!

... for what you believe in. Stand for something or you may fall for anything.

"Let us not be weary in doing good; for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good..." Galatians 6:9-10

5. Look Up !!

... to the Lord.

"I can do everything through Christ who strengthens me". Philippians 4:13

6. Reach Up !!

... for something higher.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will direct your path." Proverbs 3:5-6

7. Lift Up !!

... your Prayers.

"Do not worry about anything; instead PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING." Philippians 4:6

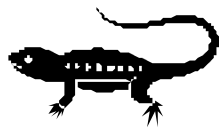
LOOK OUT FOR LIZARDS!

Common or viviparous lizards, *Lacerta vivipara*, give birth this month (July). Adults range between 10 and 16 cm long, and vary in colour between brown, red and green. Their three to ten offspring are small (4 cm), dark brown replicas.

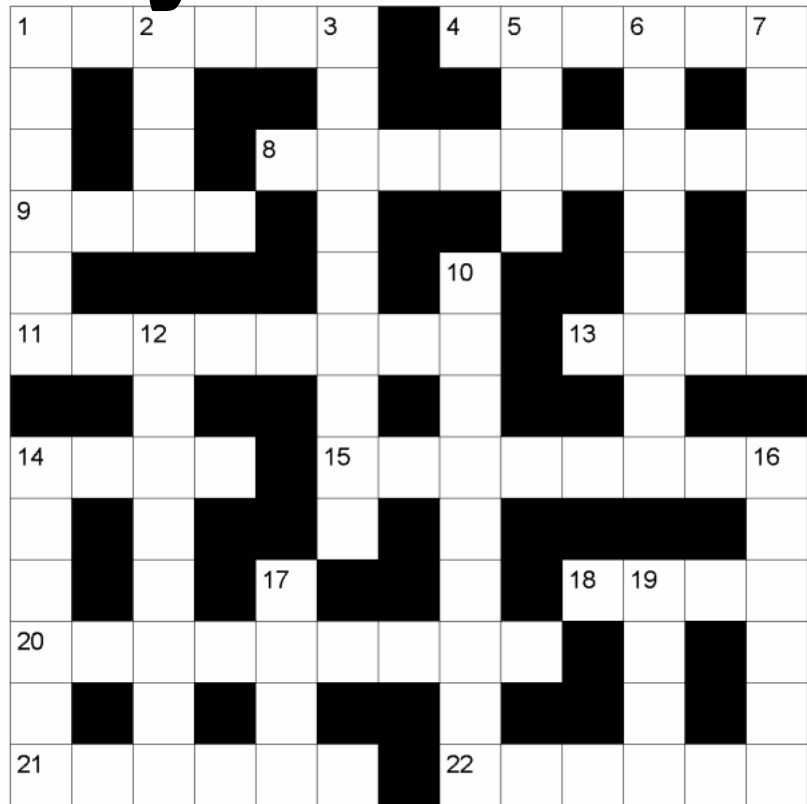
The common lizard is unique in that its young are fully developed inside the mother before being born in a membranous sac which they burst open immediately after birth - a process called ovoviviparity. (Other reptiles either lay eggs or give birth to live young.)

For your best chance of seeing adults and young, take an early morning walk (the midday sun can be too hot for them) on heath or moor.

Listen carefully for an energetic rustle just ahead of your footsteps. If you hear a scurrying, sit quietly downwind of the area. Hopefully you'll soon see the lizard creep back to resume its basking spot!



July's Crossword



Across

1. Cylinder of wax, enclosing wick, to give light (6)
4. To make oneself inconspicuous (6)
8. People charged to perform spiritual functions (9)
9. Father (Aramaic) (4)
11. To introduce a new bishop (8)
13. Male pig, as served, cooked at Christmas (4)
14. Seen by three wise men (4)
15. To go before (8)
18. Biblical person saved in an arc (4)
20. Finance officer of a parish (9)
21. A person or thing's essential qualities (6)
22. What made up Christ's crown at his crucifixion (6)

Down

1. Assistant clergy person (6)
2. Devoid of sensation (4)
3. Of a bishop (9)
5. To abstain from food (4)
6. Story about an incident (8)
7. Feast of Christ's resurrection (6)
10. A witness account (9)
12. Part of a church building (8)
14. Officer who takes care of church property (6)
16. Repeated sound waves (6)
17. Computers aim to be friendly to this person (4)
19. Cricket break (4)

June's Solution



Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist (<i>exc 2nd Sunday</i>) Family Service (<i>2nd Sunday</i>)
11.15 am	Sung Eucharist (<i>2nd Sunday</i>)
6.00 pm	Evening Service [<i>1st Sunday of the month</i>]

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

8.00 am	Holy Eucharist
10.30 am	Parish Eucharist [<i>Family Eucharist -</i> <i>2nd Sunday of the month</i>]

Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	8.00 pm	St Francis Discussion Group – <i>4 Long Close</i>
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	9.30 am	Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i>
	10.10 am	Mothers and Toddlers – <i>St Francis</i>
	12.00 pm	St James Prayer Group – <i>13 Clive Road</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	9.30 am	Eucharist - followed by coffee – <i>St James</i>
	11.00 am	St Francis Prayer Group
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	7.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i>
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St Francis</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Friday Club – <i>alt Fridays at St Francis</i>
Saturday	9.15 am	Morning Prayer & Breakfast – <i>St Francis</i>

Arrangements for Baptisms, Banns of Marriage, Weddings, Confessions and Home Communion can be made with any of the clergy.

Days Off

Stephen has Friday off; Fr John and Mark have Mondays. Except in emergency, please try and respect these days of rest. Sr Margaret Anne works within the parish on Tuesdays, Thursdays and on alternate Sundays.

Parish Directory

TEAM RECTOR:

The Revd Stephen Hartley,
Cowley Rectory,
Beauchamp Lane
Tel: 747680
Email: stephen.hartley
@btinternet.com

TEAM VICAR:

Fr John Tomlinson,
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TEAM CURATES:

The Revd Dr Mark Harris
24 Beauchamp Lane
Tel: 775098

Email: mark.harris@rlac.uk

The Revd Sr Margaret Anne
All Saints Convent
St Mary's Road
Tel: 249127

LICENSED LAY MINISTER:

Eric Uren
Tel: 770696

CHURCHWARDENS:

Gwen Ranklin
Tel: 451417
Norah Shallow
Tel: 765199

DEPUTY WARDENS:

Rosanne Butler
Tel: 453257
Helen Doling
Tel: 779626

HALL BOOKINGS

OFFICER:
773620

weekdays only