

Journeying On

The Glorious Twelfth, the 12th of August, is the start of the grouse shooting season, when the first grouse shot on the bleak moors of northern England are rushed down to fashionable West End

restaurants in London.

By contrast, I tend to think of August as being the closed season of the Church when things go very quiet before the new season begins in September.

The "last season" came to a climactic end with my Father's funeral and Sr Margaret Anne's leaving on St James's

Day.

I would like to take this opportunity, once again, to say how grateful Sharon and I are for the love and support many gave us after my father died.

A number of people both from within our congregations and beyond remarked how uplifting and affirming they felt the funeral service to be. One volunteer from Sobell House wrote to say it was one of those significant moments in his Christian journey as the Christian message of resurrection hope resounded throughout the service.

Sister Margaret Anne's leaving reminded us that we are all on this journey. We greet and say farewell to all manner of people along the way. Some of these will make more

impact upon us than others. Yet as we look back over the years we can be thankful for those whose good influence has made us who we are today.

At the moment we are in the throes of the hectic preparations for moving into the new Rectory at the beginning of September. We are trying to be sensible about the things we need to keep and other things that can "be let go".

It is not always easy to let go - in death, in our relationships, or of our possessions. Yet for the

Christian, there is that underlying reality of the love and presence of God in our lives. I take solace from verses in Psalm 73 which speak of God's abiding presence:

I am continually with you; you hold my right hand. You guide me with your counsel, and

afterward you will receive me with honour. Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire other than you.

As we take a rest during August and look forward to the autumn, may we be open to the new experiences and new relationships which will continue to enrich our lives.

With my best wishes,



Chronicle

Ministry of Healing

*A monthly service on the first Tuesday of the month,
alternating between St James and Sr Francis Churches*

Healing Services:

Tuesday 3rd August 7.30 pm

St James Church

Tuesday 7th Sept 7.30 pm

St Francis Church

The ministry of healing is available at St James' Church every Sunday during the 10 o'clock service. Please go to St Luke's Chapel after you have received Communion where members of the Healing Team will be available to listen and to pray in complete confidence.



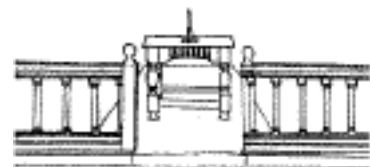
Altar Rails

When I was a child I had an accident requiring a couple of stitches just beneath my eye. I was so thrilled the other day when I looked in the mirror – the scar has totally disappeared. Must be that new skin cream. Of course I was a little dismayed to find I'd developed a new mark half way down my cheek!

It's funny how things change as we age, isn't it? Things I used to be able to do without even thinking about, like running downhill, are now getting increasingly difficult. When I'm out walking and get to a stile sometimes I have to lift my foot with my hands to get it over. And those days of leaping a five bar gate are well behind me.

Getting down to kneel to pray is still fine – it's the getting up again afterwards that I have trouble with. Which is why I'm so glad we have rails at our altar; not just to lean on when I'm waiting to receive Communion, but to help me get up afterwards.

We can thank Archbishop Laud (1573-1645) for having altar rails. After the Restoration, altar tables were removed from the middle of the chancel and replaced against the East wall of the church. Many of the old chancel screens that separated the whole of the chancel from the rest of the church had been removed or destroyed and this left the altar table 'open' to everyone and everything – including dogs. Altar rails therefore, helped to protect the sanctuary from dogs and keep it a special area accessible only to clergy and servers.



Christians on Fire!

During a recent ecumenical gathering, a secretary rushed in shouting, "The building is on fire!"

The Methodists gathered in the corner and prayed.

The Baptists cried, "Where is the water?"

The Anglicans formed a procession and marched out.

The Quakers quietly praised God for the blessings that fire brings.

The Lutherans posted a notice on the door declaring the fire was evil.

The Roman Catholics passed the plate to cover the damage.

The Jews posted symbols on the door hoping the fire would pass over.

The Congregationalists shouted, "Every man for himself!"

The Fundamentalists proclaimed, "It's the vengeance of God!"

The Charismatics praised God for another falling of the Holy Spirit.

The Christian Scientists concluded that, actually, there was no fire.

The Presbyterians appointed a chairperson who was to appoint a committee to look into the matter and submit a written report.

The secretary grabbed the fire extinguisher and put the fire out.



OSWALD

A KING WITH FAITH, COURAGE AND HUMILITY

Many Christians have indulged in fantasies from time to time about doing something spectacular for God, which would be remembered for centuries afterwards. Oswald, who lived from 605 to 642AD, was in a position to do so. He was a King, but in those times such a title exposed him to danger as well as power. His father Aethelfrith was a great warrior who laid the foundations of the great kingdom of Northumbria. But Aethelfrith was killed by a rival, and Oswald was only twelve years old when he was driven into exile with his elder sister and two younger brothers. For their own safety, all were taken to Irish territory in the West of Scotland.

The three brothers were educated by the Christian monks on Iona. Meanwhile, warfare raged in Northumbria, and in due course the time came for Oswald to make a difficult decision. Should he remain in safety, or return to claim his kingdom? In 632 his older brother led an expedition there to sue for peace, but instead he was put to the sword. It was a time of broken dreams and bitter grief for the young Oswald, who must have spent many hours in prayer before he decided to risk his life by following his brother south.

In his famous book, *The Ecclesiastical History of England*, Bede tells us that Oswald prepared to meet his enemies Cadwallon and Penda in battle on a December night at a place which is now called Heavenfield. His small army was likely to be outnumbered and victory seemed impossible. But that night, Oswald had a vision of St Columba, the founder of Iona. Columba prophesied that Oswald would be king, and reminded him of God's words to Joshua at the river Jordan, "Be strong, and of good courage.....for you will be the leader of these people as they occupy this land."

Before battle commenced, Oswald made a rough cross from two young trees and held it upright until soldiers were able to fill in the hole around it. Then he led his army in a prayer that God would bring victory and deliverance to his people. He also promised that if they survived, he would send for missionaries from Iona to bring the Christian faith to Northumbria.

Oswald's subsequent victory has become part of the region's folklore, commemorated by the name of that battlefield and the more permanent cross which now stands at Heavenfield. Many leaders would have regarded such a triumph as the high point of their career, advanced to the royal palace and quickly forgotten their promise to God. But Oswald

remained faithful, and in due course St Aidan arrived in the new kingdom and made Lindisfarne the centre of his ministry.

Now it was time for Oswald to reveal a quality less frequently associated with kings, but even more vital to the spread of God's work. That quality was humility. As the sponsor and protector of Aidan, he could easily have imposed his own agenda on this new mission. Such a test came early, when Aidan declined Oswald's offer of resources at court in Bamburgh castle, and chose the remoter location of Lindisfarne. Not only did Oswald accept the monk's decision gracefully; he continued to spend many uncomfortable weeks on the road acting as Aidan's interpreter. His willingness to lay aside his kingly privileges and play second fiddle to a spiritual leader ensured that the Gospel spread quickly through the new kingdom and transformed many lives.

Within a few years, dark times returned to Northumbria. Oswald was slain in battle and his brother Oswin succeeded to the throne. Penda continued to wreak havoc with his marauding raids; on one famous occasion, Aidan watched him attack the royal fortress as he prayed on the Farne Islands, and it is written that his intercessions caused the wind to change direction and beat back the flames from the castle gates. But through it all, the light of Christianity continued to flourish and grow. Aidan is rightly remembered as the missionary who brought the good news to Northumbria, but he could not have succeeded without Oswald, the man who was brave enough to claim an earthly kingdom, yet obedient enough to play a humbler role in advancing a heavenly one.

Prayer from the liturgy for St Oswald's day (August 5th), written by the Northumbria Community:

"I place into your hands, Lord,
the choices that I face.
Guard me from choosing
the way perilous
of which the end is heart-pain
and the secret tear.

May I feel your presence
at the heart of my desire,
and so know it is for
Your desire for me.
Thus shall I prosper,
thus see that my purpose
is from You,
thus have power to do the good
which endures."

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Rosanne interviews Phyl McLaren

When Phyl came to Cowley as a 19-year-old bride, the world was at war with Germany. She began married life in her home in Bailey Road with her beloved George and life was hard. The streets were blacked out at night, food, clothes and many household items were rationed and the young couple just about managed to furnish one room upstairs and one down. They set about saving for the rest of the things they needed to make a comfortable home. George was working on munitions at the Pressed Steel factory (he was a skilled pattern maker before and after the war), and having joined the Cowley Home Guard was often on night duty manning the legendary big anti-aircraft gun, installed at The Marsh. And, oh yes it was fired in anger on a number of occasions. Does Phyl complain about those difficult days? No she does not nor does she grumble about life as a widowed pensioner as she is now. Several times during our chat she commented, "I've been very lucky...well I still am".

Her early life was spent in the village of Chiselhampton, where as the eldest daughter in a family of six children, she was expected to help with many of the household

chores and with caring for and bringing up her brother and four younger sisters. Her father died whilst there were still three little ones at home and she learnt all too quickly that life could be a struggle. She attended Stadhampton village school until she was eleven and moved onto secondary school in Great Halsey. Her favourite lesson was needlework, a skill she developed first at home, later as the mother of two little girls and then as a contributor to Cowley Mothers Union stalls at church summer fetes and Christmas bazaars.

At fourteen she left school and went into service as a kitchen maid for Lady Peers at "the big house". It was at a friend's wedding a few years later that she met a charismatic Scotsman, George, who had left his native country and made his way to Cowley to seek work and lodgings. As I mentioned before he found work at Pressed Steel and he lodged with Margaret Jeffries' mother-in-law. Phyl and George began courting, their favourite date being an evening at the Regal cinema in Cowley Road. George would wait outside to meet Phyl off her bus and then (she admitted a trifle bashfully) they would make for seats in the back row.

Thirty-five years of happy marriage ensued and first daughter Ruth, then baby Jean were born. Phyl began to join in activities in the neighbourhood. "We hear you're good at embroidery, how would you like to embroider some pillow cases for the bazaar?" she was asked when she took her two girls to Young Wives Club at St Lukes. So began a long association with the Mothers Union, where she went on to take the role of enrolling member (leader) of the Cowley branch for nine years. Still an active member she greatly values the long-standing friendships she has made through M.U. When George died in 1975 she received much loving care from her family, but also from her fellow members, Connie Uren in particular, who helped her through the early days of her bereavement.

As a regular member of St Luke's congregation she helped with church flowers, made endless cups of tea and coffee and so on, and resented the move gradual, though it was, to St James Church about fifteen years ago. She laughs about it now because she is very happy with all that St James has to offer her. With a host of friends, including the regulars

at the Friday bingo club, she considers herself a lucky person. Her daughters are now parents and grandparents and that of course makes Phyl a great grandmother – five times over and very proud she is of them all.

On looking back over the years she recalls with affection the many children for whom she has been a regular baby-sitter. She also enjoys talking about the drama productions within the parish in which she has taken part – son-et-lumières, pantomimes and pageants. On a personal note I recalled the relief I experienced when she took part in the V.E. day + 50 show, which I produced, because for once in her life she remembered all her lines!!

How would you describe yourself as a small child?

Just an ordinary little girl, quite shy, not very good at school lessons, except needlework.

Has God been part of your life since childhood?

Definitely. We started going to church when I was about five – church on Sunday morning, Sunday school in the afternoon and often church again at night. Quite a lot, but I did like going.

What disappoints you or upsets you about life today?

Well, I don't think people go to church like they used to. They find so much more to

do on a Sunday. I wish the younger generation knew more about God. And more care could be given to older people; many of them are very lonely. Their families should be more caring like mine.

What do you consider to be the best part of modern life?

I think I am one of the lucky ones. I can pick my phone up if ever I need help and my family are there for me straight away.

If you could change something in a spectacular way what would it be?

Oh, I'd like to see a better, kinder world with peace all over.

How do you spend your leisure time?

I read my Bible every day. I read a couple of light books a week. I watch telly, especially soaps. "Emmerdale" is my favourite. Oh and I read the "Oxford Mail" right through every day. And a good chat with friends.

What makes you laugh?

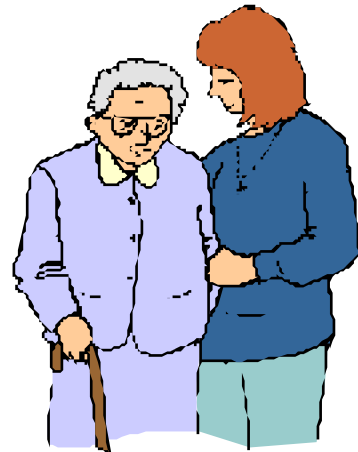
The funny things people say. I don't think the TV is as funny as it used to be.

Do you have a hero or heroine, past or present?

My brother. He would do anything for me. Harold and I are very close, I phone him every week and we often meet for coffee together in Cowley Centre.

Do you have any plans or ambitions for the future?

I hope I keep well and continue to enjoy life as much as I do now.



THANK YOU

I would like to say a very warm thank you to all at St James and St Francis - particularly to Stephen, Mark, Gwen and Norah - and all of you who have enabled me to have such a happy and blessed curacy at Cowley over the last three years. It has been a wonderfully rich experience.

Thank you also for the most generous gift of the Common Worship President's Altar book for celebrating the Eucharist. It has beautiful inscription and is a wonderful resource. And thank you for the enormously generous cheque of £315. I shall miss you all and will continue to keep you in my thoughts and prayers.

Sr. Margaret Anne

In Praise of the MU

I have been a member of the Mother's Union for 44 years and was very active when I lived in Wigan both at branch and diocesan level. When we moved Oxford there was not a branch at the church I attended and I became a Diocesan member still maintaining my interest. I began to attend St James Church four years ago and this year I decided to go to the Mothers' Union meeting - how glad I am I did so. I was made very welcome and it was good to recapture the friendship and fellowship so typical of the Mothers' Union meeting.

The Mother's Union is a wonderful organisation. Mary Sumner, the wife of a young clergyman, saw the need for a meeting in 1876 when she called the women of the village where they lived to her home and the association was formed. The beliefs are as they were then - an association built on prayer and family life.

In our Mothers' Union prayer we pray, "May we know your presence and peace in our homes, fill them with your love and use them to your glory."

Life has greatly altered since 1876 and the Mothers' Union has moved with the times.

All women are welcome and in the last few years men have been invited to join. The movement is worldwide and we in Oxford are linked with the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria.

On June 13th we met in church to pray for our link branch and our own branch. It was a rich and moving time. After the prayer time thirteen of us enjoyed strawberries and cream and shortbread - delicious. Why don't you come and join us at our meetings? - the third Monday of the month at 2:30pm in the Hut. We'd make you most welcome and I'm sure you'd enjoy the varied topics. If there is sufficient interest, perhaps we could have some evening meetings.

Mary Sharpe

mothers
union



Christian care for
families worldwide

RIDE AND STRIDE – SEPTEMBER 11TH



This year the sponsored bike ride will take place on Saturday 11th September. We have taken part in these events for a number of years now and raised hundreds of pounds towards parish funds. If you possibly can, do take part either as a participant, a sponsor or a greeter at St Francis or St James' churches. Sponsor forms are in church.



As usual, Stephen will be riding again this year and you will be able to find his sponsor form at the back of both churches.

Phone me if you want further information - 453257.

Many thanks,

Rosanne

ON THE MOVE



Sharon, Stephen and their family will be moving into the new Rectory on Thursday September 2nd. After four years of planning the day is getting near!

The new extension which was started at the beginning of April, consists of a dining room, kitchen, and utility room on the ground floor.

Upstairs there are two new dormer bedrooms, and a second bathroom.

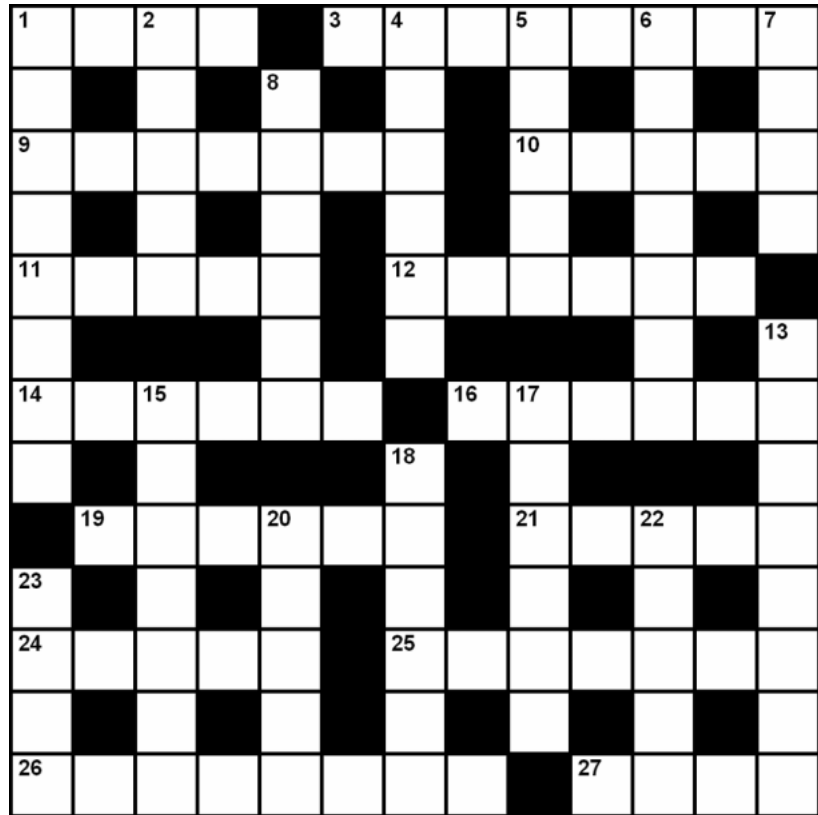
In the attic is a small bedroom with its own fire escape - a window overlooking the church yard to jump out of!

The present Rectory will be demolished within days of being vacated so that work on the Parish Centre and Curate's House can begin without delay. All being well these will be completed by March 11th.

July's Solution

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August's Crossword



CLUES

Across

- 1 Move something toward you (4)
- 3 Ancient Iranian language (8)
- 9 One of the seven original deacons (7)
- 10 Son of Abraham (5)
- 11 A precious stone in the breast-plate of the high priest (5)
- 12 Jacob dreamed that angels were ascending and descending on it (6)
- 14 A king dedicated to God, instructed by his mother (6)
- 16 Petition (6)
- 19 Highly polished rock (6)
- 21 Adorns (5)
- 24 Ascent (5)
- 25 He slew James, and imprisoned Peter (7)
- 26 A stone set up by Samuel after a defeat of the Philistines (8)
- 27 The sediment of wine from

fermentation and aging (4)

Down

- 1 A lofty peak (8)
- 2 A province in the south-west of Asia Minor visited by Paul (5)
- 4 A military fortress (6)
- 5 One of three equal parts (5)
- 6 Imagination (7)
- 7 Connects the head to the body (4)
- 8 This remained dry although the ground around was wet with dew (6)
- 13 Sin (8)
- 15 Descendants of a son of Lot (7)
- 17 Recompense (6)
- 18 Elders of Israel forming part of the Sanhedrin (6)
- 20 The written word of God (5)
- 22 Fruit of a tree (5)
- 23 The area that may be ploughed by a yoke of oxen in a day (4)

Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist (<i>exc 2nd Sunday</i>)
	All Age Eucharist (<i>2nd Sunday</i>)
1.00 pm	Cowley Asian Christian Fellowship

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

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 James</i>
	8.00 pm	St Francis Discussion Group – <i>4 Long Close</i>
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</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 James</i>
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Friday Club – <i>alt Fridays at 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; Mark has Monday off. 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.

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