

# For the benefit of non-members

William Temple famously said that the church is the only society on earth that exists for the benefit of non-members. Of course his point was overstated. The church exists to bring glory to God, and God is glorified when members of the church find love and healing and forgiveness and purpose in their worship and life together. But though Temple's point is overstated, it cannot be ignored. The church is a place where the world should encounter God, and a vehicle through which God reaches out to the world. It is an ark of salvation in a sea of the drowning; an oasis of life in a desert of despair; a hospital for the cure of those who have no hope.

I wonder in what sense our churches of St Francis and St James can exist for the benefit of non-members? Part of the answer to that question must relate to what they find when they come to us, for Sunday services, for weddings, baptisms and funerals. For whatever reason, and sometimes it is pretty obscure, people who are not regular church-goers do sometimes come to church. I hope when they come they find a welcome. But they would find that in a local social club. More profoundly, I hope that they find people marked by a deep quality of love. Someone once said that evil is fascinating in

theory, but dull in reality, while good is dull in theory and fascinating in reality. The casual visitor will return if she finds in our community that we have the love of God for her and for one another, both in our worship and prayers and in how we treat one another. "No-one has seen God", writes St John, "But if we love one another God dwells in us."

But another part of the answer to the question of how our churches can exist for the benefit of non-members must also relate to how we reach out to them. We cannot simply sit and wait for people to come to church. We must be looking for, praying through, thinking about, new ways of reaching out into the Cowley community. We must be prepared to regard as negotiable anything, except the gospel, that prevents people from joining us in the worship of God. Alpha is a part of that reaching out, but only part. So too is missionary giving and prayer for our world. We must also be thinking about new ways of making contact with those non-members for whose benefit the church exists. May God give us the desire, the courage, and the resources to do so.

Michael

# Chronicle

# A Message from Stephen and Sharon

It seems so long ago since our farewell service at St James in July. Since we said goodbye, we have been working hard getting our new home ready as well as moving out of Cowley Rectory. We shall never forget the five days we spent decorating four bedrooms when the temperature was in the 90's! Sharon has never seen me stripped to the waist for so long!

Our leaving service was so incredibly moving. The outpouring of love and friendship was all too evident and the cheque which you gave us was quite overwhelming. We haven't quite decided what to buy with it, though high up on the list is some new crockery (to replace that given to us on our wedding day 24½ years ago) or perhaps a new television which will enable us to enjoy Fiona Bruce in her true glory and not sporting a green face caused by the tube going! I would also like to buy myself a Home Communion set.



We are all looking forward to seeing many of you again at my Institution at St Mark's Cold Ash on September 6<sup>th</sup>. I have warned the folk here that there will be a large Cowley invasion! Thank you once again for the love and friendship you have shared with us over the years. These are the memories we shall treasure for the rest of our lives.

Stephen and Sharon

## A place to call our own!



Many thanks to all who contribute used stamps for collection in church. You have helped the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind to achieve the purchase of the lodge on the grounds of the former Rivermead

hospital. Further development continues to enable this resource centre to provide services. Please continue to do your bit! For further information ring 01865 725595.

### Church Centre Garden

As autumn approaches it is time to prepare the garden for spring and summer next year. Would you like to be involved? We welcome monetary donations for bulbs, offers of plants from your own gardens, practical work on site and design suggestions! A working party will meet at 10 am on 16 and/or 23 September. If you can come on either date, please sign up on the lists at the back of the Church. Contact Catherine Gawne-Cain (Tel: 718643) or Gwen (451417)

## Gardening Offered

I am currently studying National Certificate in Horticulture Level 2 and have some time available to take



on more gardening clients. If you have a garden or know of someone

who needs help (especially elderly people or those with young children), please contact me. My transport is by bike, but I am prepared to cycle out of the city.

**Susie: 0790 600 7602**

# Ministry of Healing

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

## Healing Service:

Tuesday 5th September 7.00 pm

St James 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.



## From the registers

### Marriages:

19th August James Steven  
Crook and Sandra Louise  
Boyce.

### Baptisms on 20th August:

Lola Mai Creed  
Kai and Kaden Foster

### Funerals:

4th Mrs Mary Sheila Beattie  
17th Mr King  
21st Margaret Ann Beal

## Matthew and Me

(Matthew 9:9-13)

21 September is the day on  
which the Church remembers St  
Matthew.

Here I am,  
As I am,  
As I have been,  
Known.

And you see and you call,  
Understanding all the tangles  
And the turmoil,  
Up to speed with all the de-  
tails,

Still you call  
Me  
To wholeness.

Lifted by your word  
I will obey,  
I will follow you  
Along the Kingdom path  
To another rising.

Daphne Kitching

# Ride or Stride

Saturday 9th September

Susie and Beth are participating in this year's sponsored **Ride or Stride**, with proceeds divided between Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust and our Church. Please do sponsor them.

Contact Rosanne Butler (453257) if you can help welcome riders and striders to the church on the day.





# Rosanne interviews Brian and Barbara Brown

Each time I interview someone for The Chronicle the encounter has a unique feel to it. Not surprising I suppose because each person has his or her own unique persona but what made this particular interview very different was the fact that it needed two instalments to complete and that wasn't because I was talking to two people! No, the main reason was that Brian and Barbara had an appointment with the person who was buying their house in order to finalise details before their move.

You see, we were not just saying 'goodbye' to the Hartley family last month but also the Browns who have been active members of our parish for a few years now. With them, though, it's not a case of 'farewell, adieu, auf wiedersehen, goodbye', but rather 'see you later, Alligator' since they do not propose to ride off into the sunset as The End flashes across the screen. Instead they are already booking a coach and hotel for next year's

'Cowley Jolly' to the West Country, a fact which I know will please many of my readers.

I suppose I should have interviewed Brian and Barbara sooner rather than later but as their two children, Jane and Darren, to say nothing of the grandchildren, live locally and as they are determined to stay in touch with our two churches I hope you will find their story worth reading.

Before they met they led very different lives. Brian was the last-but-one child in a family of six. They lived in Watlington where he went to school until he was fifteen. He says he wasn't very good at lessons but I suspect it was because he couldn't wait to leave school and start his apprenticeship in the building industry. He began by learning carpentry and went on to become a skilled painter and decorator. At eighteen he was called up to do National Service in the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry. He did his initial

training at Cowley Barracks and was then posted to Cyprus where, at that time, there were hostilities between the Greek and Turkish factions.

Barbara, meanwhile, was born in Blewbury, the eldest of three girls. She describes her childhood as very happy, and said that she will be grateful all her life to her wonderful mother who took in laundry to pay the fees so that Barbara could attend a private school from the age of five. The good education she received enabled her to pass her 11+ exam and gain a place at Wallingford Grammar School. Here she developed her love of sport ('sport mad' she describes herself) and became best friends with Anne Packer, Britain's successful Olympic athlete. The two girls played, and shone, at all the team games and especially athletics. At fourteen Barbara gained and held for years, the junior county long jump record. Lessons? Well ... you did those in between the excitement of all that sport! At sixteen she left school

and started work at Barclay's Bank. She was later transferred to a branch in Watlington and it was there, at seventeen, that she was introduced to a dashing young man. He had just been demobbed from the army and rode around town on a bright yellow racing bike. Barbara was smitten. Love blossomed and in St Leonards church, Watlington, at the tender age of nineteen, she married her dashing Brian.

The Browns are great at keeping in touch with those people who have helped them along the way, so it's no surprise to learn that Joan, the girl who introduced them, is still a close friend as is a lady named Vida whom Barbara met at A C Neilsons where she worked after her marriage. However, they are both convinced that the biggest debt of gratitude goes to the husband of one of her cousins. He had bought a piece of land in the tiny hamlet of Upperton with planning permission to build two houses. He offered them one site on which to park a caravan while they built their own house there. They simply went halves on the £700 cost of the land. It was a hectic time for the young couple as their first baby,

Jane was born and only 22 months later their son Darren arrived. Then, needing more space, when Darren was only ten weeks old, they moved to Charlton-on-Otmoor where they lived for just two years. After a further move to Oakley their friend Vida persuaded them to buy a guesthouse in the Iffley Road and that's what brought them to our area. Brian decided to give up his building career and help to run the guesthouse. Jane and Darren were both pupils of mine at Donnington School and were both talented athletes like their Mum. It was at that time that Barbara joined Oxford City Athletics Club along with her children and travelled as a member of the veterans team all over Britain and abroad. Her parents were a great support helping them to run the business.

The running of the guesthouse took up 27 years of their lives together and one day they decided it had become too much for them. 'Let's give it up and retire', they decided, so they did and bought a house in Lytton Road. Soon after they heard about Alpha. Enter more long-term friends from Barbara's days in athletics. This couple had

moved from Northumberland down to Oxfordshire bringing with them a new-found faith in God. They had experienced an Alpha course and wanted to share it so they suggested that Brian and his friend Gordon should find a course locally. Visiting a family grave in St James' churchyard one day, they bumped into Gwen Ranklin, asked about Alpha and, as Barbara says, 'the rest is history'. So overwhelmed were they with the impact of the meetings that once the course was over it didn't take much persuasion on Vernon's part for them to start a home-group in Lytton Road. It has been running ever since, for over eight years and they were proud to tell me that according to Fr Stephen, has been the longest continuous home-group at St James'.

While all this was happening, they became increasingly drawn to the idea of a holiday home near the sea. At first it was a caravan, then a bungalow at Highcliffe in Dorset. After a while a decision was made to buy a house with a bigger garden and more living space. And now, after much heart-searching they are re-locating (as the saying goes nowadays). What, I wondered, would they do

to fill their retirement days? Barbara intends to return to bell-ringing—she's already part of the congregation at their local church. Brian is looking forward to long walks with his dog, cultivating his extensive garden and decorating the house room by room. 'It'll be a bit like painting the Forth Road Bridge if I know Barbara', he joked. Well, why wouldn't he know her after 44 happy years of marriage?

We wish them well and look forward to meeting up with them from time to time to hear how living near the sea suits them.

How would you describe yourselves as children?

**Brian:** My Dad was so strict so we weren't allowed to be naughty.

**Barbara:** A tomboy. I was into everything. I liked going to stay with aunts and uncles and also spent lots of time with Granny. I was naughty, I used to go scrumping.

Has God been part of your lives since you were children?

**Brian:** Yes, although not when I was in the army. As a boy I liked going to Church and Sunday School, especially collecting the coloured stamps we got for attending.

**Barbara:** Yes, when I was young I was in the choir and learnt to ring the bells, and I loved my Sunday School teachers. I kept in touch with them until they died. But it was Alpha that really brought us back to God.

In the modern world what disappoints you or makes you angry?

**Brian:** Swearing—I cannot tolerate it.

**Barbara:** Ditto, but bad manners upset me too. All due to lack of family life, I'm afraid.

What is positive about life today?

**Both:** Opportunities for young people to travel.

What is your most treasured possession?

**Both:** Photos of our children and grandchildren while they were growing up.

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

**Brian:** Our Dad because he was everything I wanted to be.

**Barbara:** My Granny. I loved her and spent hours and hours with her.

How do you like to spend

your leisure time?

**Brian:** Gardening, watching my koi carp and walking the dog.

**Barbara:** The same, but doing it with Brian.

What makes you laugh?

**Barbara** (about Brian): Anything makes Brian laugh—he usually laughs out loud.

**Brian** (about Barbara): Barbara finds it very funny trying to make Gordon understand what she's saying (he's so deaf!)

Do you have ambitions and plans for the future?

**Both:** Still in good health and together enjoying life in Highcliffe.

**Barbara wanted me to include an addendum:**

**'I feel a real presence of God in my garden at Highcliffe. When Vernon and Jenny came down to visit Vernon blessed it and that has made it very special.'**





## Sunday Services

### ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist (exc 2nd Sunday) All Age Eucharist (2nd Sunday)

### ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am	Parish Eucharist [Family Eucharist - 2nd Sunday of the month]
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## Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Group – <i>St Francis</i>
	2.30 pm	Parish Mothers' Union - <i>St James (3rd Mon)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Seashells
	10.00 am	Toddler Service - <i>St Francis</i>
	12.00 pm	Eucharist - <i>St James</i>
	12.30 pm	Tuesday Lunch Club- <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Friends of St Francis - <i>St Francis (2nd &amp; 4th)</i>
5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>	
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Tea Break - <i>St Francis (1st Wed)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	11.00 am	St Francis Prayer Group
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Eucharist - <i>St Francis</i>
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Saturday	9.15 am	Morning Prayer & Breakfast - <i>St Francis</i>

### Day Off

Lorne and Michael can be contacted in the evenings and at weekends. Beth can be contacted during the day as well.

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Vacant

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If you have material or ideas for the Chronicle please contact Philip Hind (Tel: 427523)