

# Food for Thought

In Psalm 126, appointed for the principal service of Harvest Thanksgiving this year, the Psalmist expresses the belief that God, who has provided help in the past for the ancient Hebrews, can be counted on to restore their fortunes now; so that again it will be said: 'Then they said among the nations, ' the Lord has done great things for them!' And we have indeed been much blessed by God: in the creation of the world, in the father's gift of his son to draw us back through his own suffering love to the promise of life everlasting, and in the bestowal of the Holy Spirit to guarantee the life of the church on earth and its sacramental ministry.

For all the sinfulness and unhappiness of an imperfect, fall in world, we can be particularly conscious of the blessings of our inheritance in the Christian West. We live freely in mostly wealthy countries and have evolved through faith and reason largely benign, stable forms of government, a richer, inspiring culture and systems of help for the poor and sick. Quite clearly we are the envy of much of the world.

With freedom comes responsibility; with prosperity,

duty. We need to cooperate in God's work among us and not to take for granted the comforts and opportunities we enjoy. Recently the West has received in terrible ways a wake-up call. Materialism and recklessly self indulgent life choices have weakened our corporate identity and reduced our ability to nurture our children in Christian civilization.



Harvest is a time the taking stock and giving. We can be grateful for much in our parish, not least our newest priest, Beth. As well as giving for the relief of poverty, let us also give in prayer and commitment to spreading the Word. Let us show confidence in God, in the belief that those of other religions and none will then know that Christ is the world to us.

With every good wish

**Lorne.**

# Chronicle

# At the sign of the fish

By John Shreeve

It is wonderful the way in which archaeological finds over the last few decades, have borne out the facts given to us in the Bible.

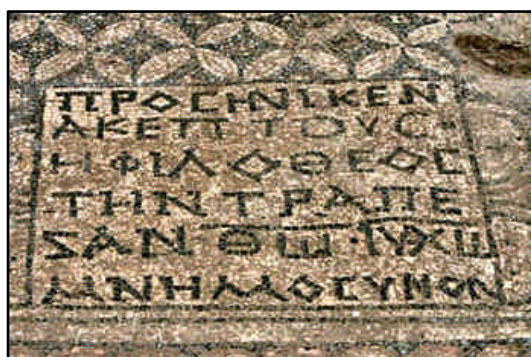
We know from our New Testament that the earliest Christians met and worshipped in private houses and shared their assets. That became more necessary with the final break with the Jewish faith, and persecution by Jews and Romans alike.



Under such circumstances the sign of the fish was the signal to the Christians of a safe house. Owing to the frailty of many of the houses it is rare indeed to find any early remains of such places. All the more exciting then to make a surprise discovery of a third century house of all places inside an Israeli prison complex. Yet this was what happened at Megiddo, a place on the border of what used to be Samaria. The authorities had the sense to call in the State archaeologists right away so that the remains could be properly excavated. A mosaic floor was revealed underneath the rock, soil and asphalt, and a spokeswoman for the authority called the discovery 'one of the most important finds for the history of early Christianity'.

Archaeologists were reluctant to describe the ruins as a church, because the term was not used during that period. But they said that its inspired dedication to community figures and specific mention of the God, Jesus Christ were proof that it was the building was used in Christian worship.

The simple design of the building suggests that it predates Christianity's legalisation. The most important evidence comes from the inscription formed in the mosaics. Along the edge of the largest mosaic featuring at its centre in the early Christian symbol of two fishes, reads roughly- *“Gaianos, also called Porphyrio, having sought honour with his own money, has made this mosaic. Brouti has carried out the work.”*



A further inscription recalls by name four women from the community. The third inscription is the most valuable—it reads *“The God loving Aketous has offered this table to the God Jesus Christ in memorial”*. I find this all really exciting proof of early Christian life and worship. Not just a pile of old stones, but details of real people with a fervent commitment to Jesus Christ and the determination to do something about it. I like the symbols of the fish, and was

delighted to see it used again in the West Country town on a stone of memorial which read churches together made of this, as a memorial to the first millennium of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have come full circle.

**Healing Service: Thursday 5th October 7.00 pm at St Francis Church**

**Harvest Festival : 15th October**



## Beth's Ordination



Cowley Parish was out in strength to share in Beth's ordination as priest at the moving early evening service, with the sun shining in on the choir through the west door and creating wonderful stained glass reflections high in the tower.

The cathedral was of course packed and we were all scattered so had different views of the proceedings to later report to each other. There were TV screens at strategic positions so we could see close-ups of significant moments. An extra special element for us—and for Beth—was that Michael was the designated deacon to read the Gospel, declare the Peace and send us forth at the end. Richard Chand, who grew up with us, was another of those priested and John Gawne-Cain represented the parish in the ceremony.

Colin Fletcher, Bishop of Dorchester, officiated in his usual relaxed and friendly way and shook multiple hands as we left. Outside, around the edge of Tom Quad, there were happy gatherings of families, friends and parishioners around the excited new priests. **Lesley Williams**

**Beth writes:** I would like to thank the parish for their support at my ordination to the priesthood on Sunday the 24th. The beautiful cathedral service was especially nice for me because my own husband served as the deacon! The solemnity of the occasion was balanced nicely by seeing so many warm and familiar Cowley faces in the congregation. Yours prayers and presence were greatly appreciated. Thank you as well for the generous gift presented at my first celebration of the Eucharist. My family and I have enjoyed getting to know you all this past year and look forward to being part of the excitement of the next year in the parish!

### From the registers

#### Weddings

2 September Lee Gillett and Kelly Wakeham

16 September Rodney Ulett and Julia Howard

23 September Gareth Cook and Nicola Farmer

**Renewal of wedding vows** (40th anniversary) on 12 September, Violet and Griffin Grimwood

#### Funerals

1 September Mina Richards

15 September Elizabeth Glead

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#### Interregnum Update:

The PCC is in the process of drafting the parish profile which will soon be on display in both churches. Please take the time to read the profile to ensure that it reflects the parish as you know it! Any comments should be given to a member of the PCC.

"God of our past, keep alive the history we cherish, God of our present, give us courage and wisdom for each day, God of our future, lead us into new truth, new service."  
Amen



# Rosanne interviews Zena and Maurice

While it's important to say 'good bye' and 'thank you' to friends leaving our church families it is also a pleasure to welcome new ones.

Maurice and Zena fall into that category even though Zena is a local girl by birth (well, Headington anyway). She has returned to her roots and brought her partner, Maurice, with her. They returned from Carterton to Oxford just over a year ago to be nearer to her daughter and three grand-daughters. The couple live in a charming bungalow in Three Fields, just off the Slade and although not married to each other, both have experienced the loss and loneliness of widowhood and the peace, love and security of spending one's vintage years with someone new.

Zena grew up in Headington and looks back with affection on happy days at Margaret Road School. She enjoyed practical subjects such as domestic science and won trophies for her success in the high jump on sports days. She has always enjoyed helping people, even doing the obligatory chores allotted to her at home so she rejected the idea of office training on leaving school, settling instead for a job serving in Webbers, one of Oxford's big department stores. She

was expected to be a stay-at-home teenager but at fifteen she met a young lad at a fair in Headington. He wanted to take her dancing at the Holyoak Hall. When her mother heard of this, her answer was an emphatic 'no!'. However, they kept in touch even when World War 2 intervened and he (Rodney) went off to work in the mines as Bevan boy. Zena finally became Mrs Johnson at All Saints Church, Lime Walk in 1948 and so began a long and happy married life. She and Rodney made their home in Cowley where their daughter, Valerie, was born. A heart problem leading to a triple by-pass operation sadly led to her husband's death. Married to him for forty six years, Zena was devastated.

Maurice hales from further afield, from Ashford in Kent. One of a family of four boys, he had a pretty tough childhood, due mainly to the fact that he lost his Dad when he was only three. His mother got no compensation even though it was as a result of gassing during World War I that his father had died. You see, he hung on with failing health until 1926, and the War Office deemed it 'too late' to give the family any help. With four young sons to bring up, his mother worked long hours to make ends

meet, yet still found time to clean the silver and brass in their local church. The whole family were regular churchgoers. Maurice, incredibly, worked as a paper-boy from the age of six to help his Mum, and when he was big enough, worked in the newsagent's shop too. He kept this up until he was fourteen when he left school just as World War 2 began. He recalls that his last couple of terms at school were pretty chaotic due to the whole business of evacuation, teachers being taken into military service and the general disruption caused by war. He joined the fire service first as a station messenger boy, and then, once he was issued with his uniform, as a junior fireman. Coincidentally, he was sent down in the Kentish mines as a Bevan boy, but developed a serious cough, lost weight and only lasted underground for six months when, after a medical, he was returned to the fire service.

His mother decided to evacuate with his youngest brother and found a job at University College in Oxford. Maurice joined her. Incidentally, his Mum remained as a college servant beginning as a cleaner and progressing to become the dons' housekeeper until she was

ninety! During the war the fire service in Oxford had a dance band and Maurice was their singer. Then he was 'discovered' by another local band—the Astra Dance Band—who enlisted him to sing for them. The leader of the band had a daughter, Hazel, who caught young Maurice's eye. After a romantic courtship on the band circuit around Oxford, the couple were married in 1947. They began their married life in Cowley where they lived happily together for forty-eight years, bringing up their two sons.

When the war ended Maurice worked with the local tyre firm Steveco and after all these years, still works in tyres, though now is in business with one of his sons. After his wife died he found consolation in his grandchildren and great-grandchildren but became very lonely and depressed. It was early in 1996 that Zena's daughter, working at the time in the John Radcliffe maternity department, struck up a friendship with one of her 'new mums'. The lady was Maurice's grand-daughter-in-law. These two ladies talked together about their respective mum and grandad and how lonely each of them seemed. A blind lunch date was arranged at 'The Vine' (now 'The Turnpike') at Yarnton, with the ladies and their husbands acting as hosts.

There was magic in the air that day, and the attraction between Maurice and Zena

was instant. The latter told me that as she shook his hand as they were formally introduced, she felt a warm glow flow through her. They went on to meet regularly, holidayed in Cornwall, and by the end of the year, she had moved into his home in Carterton. They have talked about marriage, but Zena has not been in the best of health for a while and Maurice has been more concerned about caring for her than arranging a wedding. They moved to Cowley to be near her daughter, and chose St James as 'their' church, partly because Valerie and her daughters were baptised there. Zena's husband is buried in the churchyard.

Both Maurice and Zena remarked on the warm welcome they have received at the church. It seems to me that some people spend their whole lives looking for love and yet they have found it twice. God has certainly blessed them!

### **How would you describe yourselves as children?**

Z: Very timid, shy. I loved my pets. I had to help in the house. I had good parents.

M: A bit of a tearaway! I was no angel. We boys had to make our own amusement.

### **Have you any childhood memories you'd like to share?**

Z: I remember having to go under the kitchen table during an air raid and hearing the sound of the bombers going over. They

had their own special sound, didn't they?

M: At the bottom of the garden we had rhubarb and blackberries and we used to scrump apples. Before mum got home we used to cook up all this fruit and eat it—imagine her saucepans!

### **Has God been part of your lives since you were young?**

Z: Oh yes, I think so. I went to Sunday School in Lime Walk, I really enjoyed it. There was a dressmaker, Miss Webb, who made us new coats for Easter. I always went to church in my best hat.

M: I suppose he must have been. Mum brought us up to be God-fearing.

### **Is there any aspect of life today that disappoints you?**

Z: People don't have feelings for each other like they used to. There's not much neighbourliness about now.

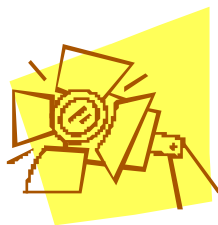
M: One of the things we were taught was to look after our parents. Now youngsters expect parents to look after them. And there are so many jobs about.

### **So what is good about life today?**

Z: The convenience of having a car.

M: I don't think that so-called improvement is better—some 'progress' is not real progress. The best thing is that we can all travel more.

## SPOTLIGHT ON... St Francis Tea Break



One day at St Francis, we were thinking of outreach, and ways in which we could meet the needs of the community around us. As we thought about our modern lives, it seemed to us that many people today suffer from pressures and stress in one form or another. If we could provide a window of opportunity for them to break away from that for a short while and chill out as the modern idiom says, we would be doing something useful. So in the words of an ancient Chinese elder we will take tea and talk of absurdities.

And so the idea of our tea break was born. It has always been a fairly low key affair, we haven't the available human resources for its to be otherwise. We meet on the first Wednesday of every month, summer and winter in St Francis Church Hall from 2:30 p.m. to approximately 4:30 p.m..

All of the sandwiches, cakes and biscuits are provided by our helpers-most of them homemade. We often bring little gifts to form the basis of a raffle, which provide an extra interest.

It was always intended that this should be a drop-in event and there will be no charge—all are welcome.

We have been agreeably surprised at how this function has stood the test of time, and people keep coming and enjoying themselves. You could be one of those people too!

**John Shreeve**

## Charity News

Because the general fund of the parish is having difficulty in raising the parish share to the diocese we are, regrettably, unable to support any charities this year.

Members of St Francis Church have collected pennies—and other donations—since 1997. We have sent a total to date of £1,709.45 to a rehabilitation centre in Cameroon. The money goes direct to those in charge and they have full responsibility spending it.

If you would like to support this project by saving your old pennies, please have a word with Thelma, Tel. 771567 who will show you the letters and photographs from the mission.




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## Roseanne Interviews...

**Do you have a treasured possession?**

Z: Maurice and a teddy that's 80 years old that belonged to my first husband!  
M: Zena!

through my teens. He let me ride his Heria Red Hunter motorbike which was his prized possession.

**How do you like to spend your leisure time?**

Z & M: Visiting garden centres, watching old cow boy films on TV, visiting friends. Maurice enjoys cooking, Zena likes a good book.

**What makes you laugh?**

Z: "Some Mothers Do 'Ave Em"  
M: Mrs Bucket, "The Darling Buds of May" and a good joke

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

Z: My dad, I was very close to him.  
M: My section leader in the fire brigade. He fathered me

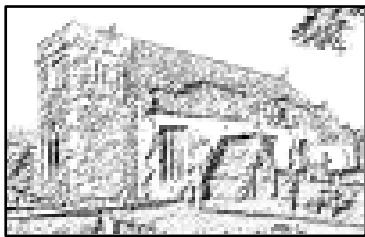
**What plans do you have for the future?**

Z & M: To go along as we are together, hopefully in good health.

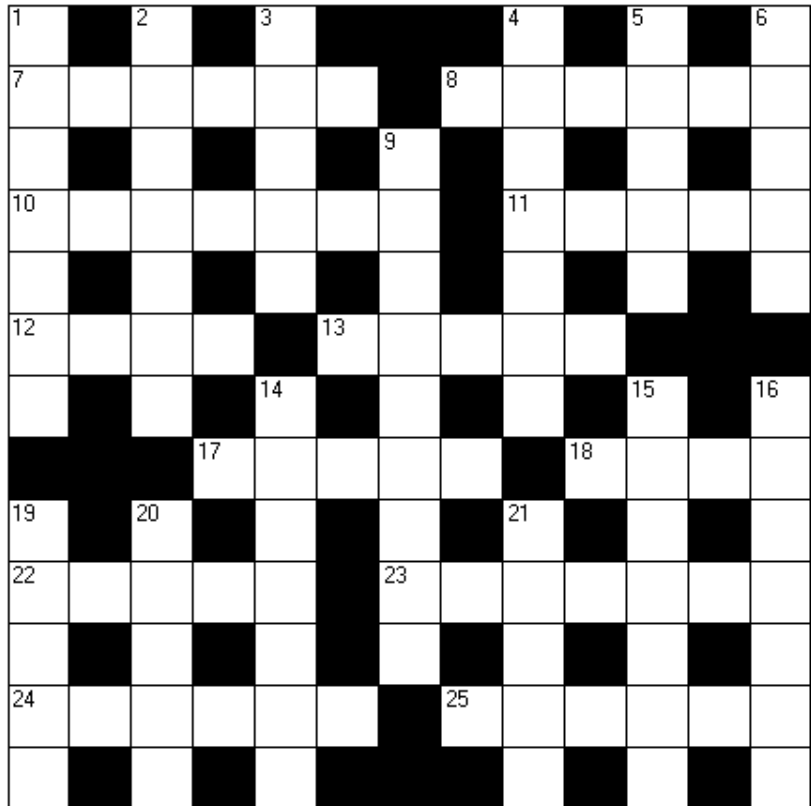
## At the top of the hill

He stands at the brow of the hill  
 He has seen cows and sheep pass by  
 Driven by the sheepdog "Skye"  
 Looked at the farm, seen the pigs in their sty  
 He has smiled on many a bride with  
 Ashy groom at her side  
 After a year or more they wheel a pram  
 Into her door  
 Years later now old and grey she was  
 Saying goodbye to her love  
 Prayers were said to Him above.  
 Who is the Gent who stands so proud at  
 The brow of the hill?  
 It is St James Church  
 If it is God's will He will welcome all  
 For another 900 years.

**Gwen Fancutt**



# October's Crossword



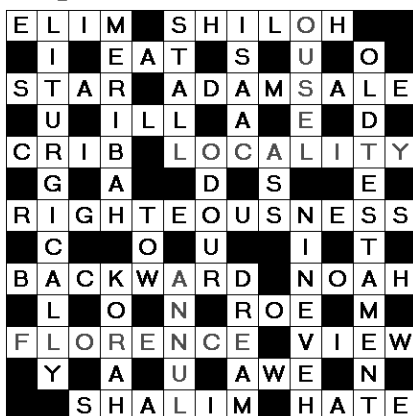
### Across

- 7 ..a crop \_\_\_\_\_ to those for whom it is farmed (Heb 6.7) (6)
- 8 One of the crops put in a storage jar in Ezekiel ch. 4 (6)
- 10 Tribe living in the Lebanon mountains in Judges ch. 3 (7)
- 11 Where a cloak was left with Carpus in 2 Timothy ch. 4 (5)
- 12 Trigonometrical ratio (4)
- 13 Capital of Egypt (5)
- 17 Apart from feet and hands, all that was found of Jezebel in 2 Kings ch. 9 (5)
- 18 Third son of Jacob and Leah in genesis ch. 29 (4)
- 22 Such a man brings trouble on himself, says Proverbs ch. 11 (5)
- 23 Loud noise heard on the morning of the third day in Exodus ch. 19 (7)
- 24 ..the broad waters become \_\_\_\_\_ (Job 37.10) (6)
- 25 Valley in Numbers ch. 13 named because of a cluster of grapes (6)

### Down

- 1 Wife of a duke (7)
- 2 A king delights in a wise one, according to Proverbs ch. 14 (7)
- 3 ..don't reduce the \_\_\_\_\_ (Ex 5.8) (5)
- 4 Illustration (7)
- 5 Fluid in which Aaron dipped his finger in Leviticus ch. 9 (5)
- 6 Store in hiding (5)
- 9 Paul describes himself as one in Romans ch. 11 (9)
- 14 ..a man \_\_\_\_\_ to work in gold (2 Chr 2.7) (7)
- 15 Declared by the holy ones in Daniel ch. 4 (7)
- 16 Biscuit filled with dried fruit (3, 4)
- 19 Jeer, like the wicked in Psalm 73 (5)
- 20 Former British royal house (5)
- 21 Holed money container in Haggai ch. 1 (5)

## September's Solution



## 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 <i>[Family Eucharist – 2nd Sunday of the month]</i>
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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)