

# WARNING!

These actions could seriously affect the world you live in.

Lent! When I hear the word, I must admit that I picture a world before colour TV. Lent makes me think of a world lived in black and white, a world without laughter, or fun. I think of Lent as a time of mourning, laughter frowned upon, and thoughts of pleasure abandoned. Don't eat that chocolate. Give up pop, crisps, coffee, chips, Xbox, facebook, video, sherry, my favourite pint – the list is endless of things to give up just to show that God frowns on those who wear a smile.

I have a friend who gives up things that he doesn't actually do. One year I tried that. "I'm giving up going on Mediterranean cruises." But that doesn't satisfy. Another year I thought, I am giving up, giving up things for Lent. But that didn't sit well either because I really do believe that in our lives we need to grow, learn to follow Jesus, to become all that God intended us to be. Paul speaks of that in his letter to the Ephesians:

God can do anything, you know—far more than you could ever imagine or guess or request in your wildest dreams! He does it not by pushing us around but by working within us, his Spirit deeply and gently within us.

Glory to God in the church!  
Glory to God in the Messiah, in Jesus!  
Glory down all the generations!  
Glory through all millennia! Oh, yes!  
(The Message, Ephesians 3:20, 21)

I think that's the spirit of what Lent is contained in the idea of you and I allowing God to change us from the inside out.

British song writer GRAHAM KENDRICK has been writing Christian music for more than thirty years. His lyrics are full of wonderful biblical truth and are sung in churches all over the world. I'm sure you will know some of his songs, perhaps the best known is Shine Jesus Shine.

Listen to these Kendrick lyrics: Go do something beautiful, In the name of Jesus, Do something beautiful, Go do something Jesus would, Do something beautiful, Do something beautiful. Maybe it's time to transform the image of Lent. Perhaps it's time to say that Lent is the time when we think seriously about how we live our lives for Jesus and find 40 ways of doing beautiful things all through this season.

Church House Publishing has a Lent Course called "Love Life, Live Lent," which encourages participants to "Be generous to yourself, your neighbours and the world" by looking for a way to show your love for God and your neighbours through doing something beautiful. These acts of beauty range from making someone laugh, to spending some time in silence, lighting a candle for someone, or writing to someone and thanking them.

So this year, I'm going to try it. Instead of giving things up, I'm going to try to be inspired to do something generous – to give something of myself. If you'd like to try it too, just beware the booklet comes with a warning: "These actions could seriously affect you and the world you live in.

Howard

# Chronicle

Cowley Team Ministry

March 2011

# Editor's Letter

Dear Readers

Welcome back to Diana Pope and her lovely, lively gardening articles. Diana has had a difficult winter due to ill-health and bereavement so I am delighted that she feels up to the task of coercing us back into our gardens now that spring is here.

Talking of gardens Joan Coleman is currently coaxing us into planting seeds and nurturing plants ready for the parish plant sale. This will be held in the Church Centre on Saturday, 14th May 2011. It is a great money spinner for parish funds as well as giving us all a chance to buy items for our summer gardens.

Shrove Tuesday – Pancake Day! Each year we try to include pancake recipes which are a little bit different. I have to admit I have not tried them out yet but they do sound good. The blueberry one is a good way of bumping up our vitamin C intake so I think it is well worth a try.

As promised we have been delving into the archives to find interesting articles to add another dimension to your monthly magazine. The one we are including this month was printed in the Cowley Chronicle in February 1960 and explains why many of us still refer to the parish rectory as Benson Cottage. I also find it most interesting to note that

before Father Benson the parish had no incumbent clergy and relied on Christ Church College to provide someone to officiate for services. I must look into how Rev Georgie Moore fits into that pattern.

When the next Chronicle is issued we shall be looking forward to the Royal Wedding so to make the April issue a little bit “matrimonial” we are asking married readers if they would mind lending us a copy of their wedding photo. We would like to run a “Guess Who?” article/quiz if we get enough, and will print the answers in the May Chronicle. So come on, don't be shy, have your wedding picture printed for all to see. By the way, I bet Frank's and my photo will have you all guessing!

Are you doing anything special on the Royal Wedding Day such as a wedding breakfast or a house party? Or are you just going to enjoy an extra long May Bank Holiday weekend? Or even just oo-ing and aah-ing at the gorgeous flowers in the Abbey, the magnificent dresses and the pageantry? Do let us know. Prince William is our future king and the way we celebrate his wedding could make May's Chronicle a vintage keepsake.

God bless

Rosanne

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## S N O W D R O P   W E E K E N D S

This year St James' snowdrop weekends were the most successful they have ever been, both in the number of visitors and the money raised for church funds. Over 70 people (above and beyond parishioners) came from far and wide to see our lovely spring flowers and enjoy the hospitality and ambience of our parish church. We had visitors from right across the county and as far away as Manchester. The visitor from Australia had not travelled specifically to see us but thought it was a lucky chance to be in the

neighbourhood.

One lovely young couple called in and told me that St James' had been the place where their marriage had been blessed. They walked hand-in-hand along the aisle and made the occasion a “Valentine” moment. We also welcomed a young, homeless man who lives in a shed. He was so grateful for his hot cup of coffee and piece of homemade cake. I invited him to come again.

The cakes were wonderful. A big thank you is due to all those who donated them. By the way,

I did notice that the one made by the rector vanished like snow in June! Many thanks, too, to all the welcomers. They do make the church feel so friendly that some of our visitors return year after year declaring that they could not miss our snowdrop weekends.

And the flowers themselves, lit by bright spring sunshine did us proud.

The donations, augmented by the sale of cards and brochures reached over £90. The whole project was so rewarding, so again many thanks to everyone involved.

## NEWS FROM ST FRANCIS SCHOOL – FEBRUARY 2011

The first two months of the year have been very busy at St Francis School. The everyday activities have continued but many special events have also taken place.

Twenty Year 6 children went on a week's residential trip to Kilvrough Manor in South Wales. Despite the cold weather they still had a go at climbing, abseiling, caving, canoeing and team work challenges.

The older children have been on a riverside walk along The Thames. One class visited the Living Rainforest near Newbury. They saw amazing animals including a dwarf crocodile and a carpet python.

The Year 3 and 4 children had

a trip to the history of science museum as part of their space topic. They particularly enjoyed the treasure hunt to find rockets and the chance to make their own sundial.

In early March there will be a whole school science week with lots of investigations and experiments taking place. The week will conclude with a day of workshops and shows lead by Science Oxford.

The roofing repairs and playground apparatus resurfacing projects are complete. The children are delighted to be able to use the climbing equipment again. There have been successful and enjoyable workshops for the

younger children and their families.

The School Council won joint first prize in the Oxfordshire Anti-bullying Project competition. The theme was Taking Action Together and the school council put together a booklet outlining the different activities that took place in the anti-bullying week in November. They have won £100 to spend on future anti-bullying projects and activities.

Key Stage 2 pupils have taken part in several sports events including tag rugby, netball and athletics. As well as being successful they enjoyed taking part and cheering each other on.

**Sarah Lacey**

## Mothers' Union News



It is not widely known that the Mothers' Union each year runs campaigns on modern issues about which they are seriously concerned. The present campaign is entitled "Bye Buy Childhood" which, the more you think about it, is a very clever statement. It springs from the problem of advertisers, marketing promotions and the like exploiting children as consumers. The literature circulating within the campaign states "We believe children should be valued as children, not consumers". It goes on to talk about how marketers target children's natural inexperience in order to reach the household purse. It concludes that this then puts pressure on them and their families to negative effect. There is more about this campaign on the website [www.byebuychildhood.org](http://www.byebuychildhood.org) if you want to know more.

Our worldwide theme for 2011 is "faithful relationships". We focus on this in many of our meetings. At a conference held in Diocesan Church house last month we discussed the many examples of faithful relationships in the Bible as well as in our daily lives – deep and lasting friendship, life-long care of our children, relationship with our church, loving and faithful marriage and, most of

all our relationship with God. It does well to try counting up on our fingers those that we can name personally. It feels very much like counting our blessings.

Our branch meeting for March on Monday, 21st will be a quiet, reflective afternoon for Lent. It will be led by one of our clergy team. Each year it focuses on a special theme and, though a very peaceful and thoughtful afternoon, we do look forward to this particular session.

Again this year we are preparing to send off a gift of money from our branch to support the "Make a Mother's Day" scheme. I reported on this last year but will remind readers that we seek to send, anonymously, a gift to a mother in a third world country who is struggling to support a home and family. More news about this next month.

As ever we are delighted to welcome visitors to our meetings with no pressure to commit to becoming a member. However, it is surprising how many people do decide to join us after several visits to our meetings.

# FRIENDS OF ST JAMES' AND ST FRANCIS' CHURCHES

In the last year Cowley Parish finances have taken a significant dent as the PCC has had to spend monies on major repair work to our historic churches. These larger expenditures prompted the PCC to consider new avenues for raising funds for the church buildings themselves, rather than for the general day-to-day work of the Parish. Countless people who do not regularly come to church, and who consequently do not make regular donations to the Parish, are still very interested in seeing the church buildings maintained: local residents who love the buildings, people who have been married in the churches, people who used to attend but have now moved away, and others. These groups of people are, quite understandably, not interested in making regular Sunday donations, since they are not regular worshippers; but they do have an interest in seeing the fabric of the church maintained.

In many parishes across the UK, churches have set up fund-raising networks to reach out to exactly these people who care about the upkeep of the church buildings but who are not always regular worshippers. These networks are called 'Friends groups'. Cowley PCC has now authorized the establishment of a Friends Organization for St James' and St Francis' Churches. Could you

be involved in setting up this exciting organization?

## **What is a 'Friends Group'?**

A Friends Group is a charity, with its own constitution, president, secretary, treasurer and members, which exists to raise funds for the maintenance of local church buildings. It is independent of the PCC, and raises money for the PCC to spend exclusively on church buildings, fabric, and upkeep.

## **Why do we want a 'Friends Group' in Cowley?**

The two church buildings, St James' and St Francis', are expensive to maintain. We need to establish a regular round of fund-raising activities that are overseen by an autonomous organization within the Parish. The PCC needs to concentrate its attention on its main job, which is overseeing the day-to-day life of the church in Cowley.

## **What does a 'Friends Group' do?**

The possibilities are endless, but usually a 'Friends Group' will run a number of fund-raising activities during the year. It will manage its own budget, arrange its own events, plan its own schedule - it is totally autonomous of the Parish's existing structure. But all the money it raises is required to be spent on the maintenance and upkeep of the two churches.

## **Who is in a 'Friends Group'?**

Anyone who wants to be!

## **What about existing fund-raising activities?**

Existing fund-raising will continue as normal. The 'Friends Group' is for new fund-raising opportunities among groups and individuals who are not already involved in church life.

## **Does the church have any oversight of what the 'Friends' do?**

Several of the members of the Friends Group organizing committee are required to be regular worshippers, and the Rector is automatically on the Friends' organizing committee.

## **What sort of people are needed?**

At this stage, we are looking for people who are interested in setting up a Friends Group for Cowley, that is, interested in forming the initial executive committee. Could you help launch the Friends of St James' and St Francis' Churches?

If you think you might be able to help setting up the initial committee for the Cowley Friends organization, please talk to Joan Coleman (St James) or Patrick Gilday (St Francis), who will be able to give you further information

**Patrick Gilday**

# The Origins of Cowley

## Part Ten : Temple Cowley

Last month I hinted at how the third settlement in our area came into being. I am sure that most of our readers know that Temple Cowley got its name from the priory of the Knights Templar. However, like me, I think you would be interested to learn a little more about how and why they set up an establishment here.

First of all we had better learn something of their movement. In about 1110AD the holy places in Palestine, and in particular Jerusalem itself, were under attack from the Saracen hordes sweeping across the Middle East. Kings and noblemen in Europe were affronted by this news and quite quickly gathered Christian armies to make the long trek from their homelands to drive out the invaders. These expeditions, of course, became known as the Crusades. On the long journeys to the East the troops were prone to ambushes and robberies amongst the forest and mountains of Europe by poor, hungry, destitute peasants. Also in cities they might be tricked into handing over money or goods to ruthless men who were out for what they could get.

In France a band of noblemen, amongst them Godfrey de Saint-Omer, began the order of the Knights Templar who swore to protect the Crusaders as they journeyed to save the Holy Temple of Solomon and its surroundings. The movement, formed in 1119 AD lasted until the early fourteenth century. It soon spread across the Channel and many Templar establishments were set up in England.

At this particular period in history rich people who wanted to buy salvation for their souls would donate huge sums of money, treasure and, most valuable of all, land to holy causes or religious establishments. Some built churches, monasteries or priories. I mentioned in my former article the Empress Matilda had been given a large tract of land by her father as part of her dowry. That land was between Shotover Hill and Hockmore Street in Cowley. The Knights Templar needed funds to

pay for their protection trips to the Holy Land and became great fund raisers. Matilda was persuaded to donate some of her land to save her soul in 1139 AD and the preceptory of the Knights Templar was built. Land, of course, yielded valuable taxes.

The preceptory covered the land from Salegate Lane, along Holloway down to the Oxford Road. Taking a turn up Temple Road it would then form a neat square. Just nearby, where the library is now sited was their stewpond where fish, mainly carp, would be kept for non-meat days, such as Fridays and throughout Lent. Hardly anything of the preceptory remains though many of the lovely old walls in the area bear evidence of ancient stone hauled from the quarries of Headington and used for building. The old yew trees which grow on the corner of Salegate Lane and Temple Road speak of ancient consecrated ground.

The Templars were monks as well as knights. Their uniform included a white cloak worn over their armour with scarlet crosses emblazoned on each side of the cloak as it fell across the arms. They were sworn to poverty and chastity of course, but things did not always work out that way.

However what of the village of Temple Cowley? Small cottages would soon have begun to nestle close to the outer walls of the preceptory, where peasants who worked the Templars' land, helped to run the day-to-day business of the establishment and generally support these new and very powerful landlords to set up their homes. Another area of Cowley which the Templars acquired was the big field called the Westbury. This stretched from the parish church across to the boundaries of Littlemore. This again was cultivated by the peasants of Cowley to help feed and provision the Knights Templar on their expeditions to the Holy Land.

So how long did these new landlords stay in Cowley? And what happened to the Empress Matilda? More next month.

# Dates for your diary

## MARCH:

7th March	2 pm	Ark-T Centre – reminiscence session about living and working in Cowley
9th March	7.30 pm	St James' Church – Ash Wednesday Service in fellowship with St Francis, John Bunyan and the Asian Christian congregations
12th March	10 am – 3 pm	St James' Church – quiet day for Lent. Prayers and meditations followed by Eucharist.
13th March	After Sunday Service	St James' Church Centre – Fairtrade Big Brew during coffee time.
15th March	12.30 pm	St James' Church Centre – portraits to be taken by photographer from "I, Cowley" project of Cowley residents.
15th March	8.00 pm	Cowley Local History Society, United Reformed Church, Temple Road. Illustrated talk by Brian Lowe on Stranger Aspects of Oxford History
18th March	7.30 pm	St Francis' Church – Celebration Service for 80th anniversary
19th March	10.30 am	St Francis' Church – Church Open Day coffee morning for 80th anniversary
25th March	7 – 8 pm	Park behind Matalan – reception and projection of images of Cowley on to Hockmore Tower as part of "I, Cowley" project.
27th March	12.30 pm	St James' Church Centre – PCC Annual General Meeting (see notes in Chronicle)

## APRIL:

18th April		Palm Sunday: Special services in both churches with possible attendance of a live donkey!
21st April	7.30 pm	Maundy supper at St James Church Centre
22nd April		Good Friday
23rd April		Easter Eve – St James' Church (no time yet announced), Confirmation Service. Bishop Bill Down will confirm candidates. Party in Church Centre to follow
24th April		Easter Day
29th April		The Royal Wedding (an extra Bank Holiday)

## MAY:

4th May	7.30 – 9.30 pm	Safeguarding Training – for all Parish personnel who are involved with children and young people within the life of the Parish.
6TH May	7.00 pm	St James' Church Centre Family evening of quiz and puddings run by Mothers' Union
14th May	10.30 onwards	St James' Church Centre, Annual Plant Sale
16th – 21st May		Christian Aid Week

# Gardening

What a funny winter this year!

I have been ill for much of it, and we had lots of snow in December which rather finished off the idea of putting the garden to bed in 2010 for the rest of you. Now the calendar is calling us to start preparing for Spring! However, don't do it yet – there is still plenty of time for foul weather. In fact some mornings it seems as if it has returned. There are plenty of dead stems in my garden which now need cutting down. They have ceased to look pretty, but still should not be cut too far down. They still are protecting the young shoots and affording homes to some insects. Did you ever think that you would garden for the well-being of creepy crawlies?

I have already cut my clematis jackmanii down (it usually gets cut down much later) Wow! I found a little energy on a sunny day, and did it on the same day that I attacked the clematis tangutica (mid February). As I write this, I have managed to clear the grass, so that all that tangled mess can go out to the recycling next week. It took me 3 days at my new pace. Before Christmas, while I was cosy and warm inside, the grass was so funny in the snow – four paw marks and a tummy drag across the grass. Alan was persuaded to dig a path so that the cat could reach her favourite soil area. Well, would you like to get your belly cold and wet on your way to relieve yourself? (The visiting cat has got longer legs!)

Back to gardening! Potatoes should/could be put in a cool light place to chit. Not in a frosty area, but just stood up in discarded egg boxes with most of the eyes facing upwards. I tried this last year and grew the chitted potatoes in bags of soil. It certainly made 'digging' them up easy, but I hadn't chosen good varieties for the trial. If I repeat it this year, I will use named varieties, not just cheap ones from a cheap shop.

Have you tried growing tomatoes upside down? My daughter gave me the bags last year. Hmm. I bought some balcony tomato seeds, then when they were large enough, I carefully planted one in the base of the bag and turned it upside down. Great! Then I hung it up - it was very heavy, and I snapped the stem! I might try again. Or I might not! I might just use the bags for busy lizzies, and hang them upright.

Broad beans can be sown now, but, if I can manage to sow them, I will also give them some protection in case it snows. My catalogue suggests planting summer savory as a companion plant to help deter blackfly. Does anyone find that this helps? Spring onions grown near carrots do deter carrot fly, if you can remember to sow them and knock them sometimes to release the onion smell.

I will get to the "Tidy garden" bit one day. But first of all my priorities have to be: "find enough energy", "make a meal", "feed the cat", "give the readers of the Chronicle the benefit of my wisdom!" Some hope!

Spring is coming. The flowers say so!

**Diana Pope**

## LETTER FROM JOYCE TITCHELL

I would like to thank all our friends at St Francis and St James for so generously giving to fill Children's Christmas Boxes and for funds to send them - we sent 100 boxes. As you are aware by now these boxes are probably the only presents the children have ever received.

Thank you again.

**Joyce Titchell**

## COWLEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Tuesday, 15th March 2011

commencing at 8.00 pm

Stranger Aspects of Oxford History

An illustrated talk by Brian Lowe

At United Reformed Church, Temple Road, Cowley

Membership fee £15 (OAP £13)

Visitors welcome £3 per meeting

# Rosanne Interviews Lorna Hind

Last summer Frank and I took a short break to a part of the British Isles that we had never visited before, namely Northern Ireland. It was beautiful and we fell in love with the whole area. So it was a real delight to tell Lorna this when we met recently because she grew up there. Despite having lived in England longer than in her home country she still feels very much a daughter of the Emerald Isles. Co-incidentally the place that really caught my imagination was the Giant's Causeway on the north-eastern coast and that is barely five miles from Lorna's home. You can see, I am sure, that we got off to a very good start.

Her parents were farmers of a mixed arable farm. They are now retired but when they sold the farm they kept a corner of one of their fields and on it built the home where they now live. Lorna told me it is in the middle of nowhere, a perfect place for her and husband, Philip, to take their three young daughters for holidays. Meeting up with their Irish cousins they have the run of the countryside and wonderful beaches to explore as well as catching up with granny and grand-dad. There are chickens to feed, eggs to collect and dogs to take for walks – idyllic. No wonder they make the journey to what Lorna calls “home” two or three times a year.

The farm is situated five miles from Coleraine. Lorna was a real country child. Her mother was a health visitor so before starting school she was cared for by her granny with her father nearby on the farm. School came as rather a shock at the age of five because she began her education in a very large primary school in Coleraine, a very small pupil amongst about

five hundred others. It was not a very happy time for the first two years. She told me that her teachers were really strict even cutting across their young pupils knuckles with a wooden ruler by way of a punishment. Luckily for Lorna, at the age of seven all was to change when she moved into the class of a wonderful teacher named Miss Mansfield. Though quite strict she had a great way of making lessons fun and always tried to understand what was best for individual children. Lorna flourished. Maths till then had been a problem for her but Miss Mansfield had the knack of putting that right. She also encouraged her in the subjects she loved best – reading, writing stories and art.

At eleven, having passed her 11+ exams, Lorna moved on to an all-girls grammar school where she did very well. She was lucky enough to encounter more gifted teachers and even found herself enjoying maths along with Latin, French and history (her favourite). Together with English, French and history became the subjects she studied for A levels.

At eighteen she gained a place at St Andrew's University in Scotland where she read English and French. She described St Andrew's as quite a unique university with a quiet separateness about it, rather cut off from the busy world. No doubt that is why it was the one chosen for Prince William. For Lorna the time she spent there was “a lovely experience”. Because she studied French her course required her to spend a year in France. She stayed in Amiens spending quite a lot of time teaching English conversation to a lively bunch of fourteen-year-olds. I thought that might be

something of a challenge but she said she had played games with them, used videos and used plenty of visual material and found it fun. Having graduated she decided to do a post-grad course in publishing at Oxford Brookes and so came to live in our area. Living in Hall she got to know a number of young people including her future husband, Philip, who was studying for a nursing degree at the time. She told me a delightful story about how they first met.

One of the students in the hall of residence one evening had been making toast, burnt it and so set off the fire alarm. Everyone had to evacuate the building much to Lorna's annoyance as she had been deep into her studies and did not want to be disturbed. So it was a very grumpy young lady standing out on the drive who was approached by Phil who lived several floors above. He came over to speak and once they had been allowed back into the building he asked her the number of her room. Not sure that she wanted to be bothered with him she gave him the wrong number! Even after realising he had been given the brush off Phil searched the building till he found her. His perseverance paid off and they began going out together. I realised that for him it must have been love at first sight entrapped as he was by her lovely dark Irish eyes.

Having gained her publishing qualifications she applied for a job at Blackwells Publishing, then situated in the Cowley Road. She transferred with them when they moved to Osney Mead and worked there for twelve years. In the meantime Phil was continuing with his studies and setting out

on a nursing career. His father is a clergyman so in the same year that Phil graduated he and Lorna were married in his dad's tiny Sussex village church.

Their first married home was in Temple Cowley where they lived for about three years. They bought their house in Annesley Road just as the twentieth century was drawing to a close. Lorna recalled that they celebrated the dawning of the new millennium stripping wallpaper as the fireworks were lighting up their TV screen. Now settled into their new home it was time to start a family. Twin girls, Isabella and Martha were born in 2002 and another daughter Eloise, came along two years later.

When the time was right Lorna returned to work at Blackwells on a part-time basis. Phil, by this time, had changed direction in his career and had begun working for the Oxford Diocese at Church House in Hinksey. Lorna is grateful that he is a "hands-on" dad as three small daughters and a working life made great demands on her time, and they still do. She has now returned to a full-time career in publishing at Oxford University Press. She edits primary school books for the overseas market especially for children learning English as a foreign language.

She is one of those quiet, unassuming people who simply gets on with things. She makes a valuable contribution to St James' junior church and anyone who has heard her read one of the lessons in church cannot fail to be enchanted by her soft Irish brogue.

**How would you describe yourself as a young child?**

Very happy – we had a lot of freedom in the country, my sister and I – I read lots of books, I would fly about the place on my bike. I was quite shy, quite different from my sister who was outgoing and confident.

**Have you a never-to-be-forgotten childhood memory?**

The one thing I do remember was that every summer we went to my mum's family in County Tyrone on a remote farm. I really remember my great-aunt, Katie, who lived on another farm with four unmarried brothers and sisters. She had an upper kitchen and a lower kitchen and the whole place sparkled. Once when we were sitting in the lower kitchen I saw a mouse. I told mummy and she said "Sh, Auntie Katie would not like it". So she did not know but I watched it scuttle across the floor and back again.

**Has there been anyone in your life who had a strong influence?**

Miss Mansfield, my teacher, when I was about seven or eight. She was wonderful, very fair but not a pushover. She was kind and brought out the best in me.

**Has your faith been with you since you were young?**

I cannot really remember a time when I did not have a faith in God though at time I have felt closer to him than others. My parents are very strong Christians so we went to church as children and Sunday school too.

**Do you have a treasured possession?**

I have done quite a lot of work on my family tree, so my collection of photographs and certificates of former family members in

the temperance movement. I have got letters of a great-great grandfather who emigrated to America describing his struggles to farm the land out there – all very precious.

**What is your opinion on present-day society?**

I think so much bad news is beamed into our sitting rooms but scratch the surface and you find a lot of good things in the world. People help neighbours and do things without expecting recognition.

**If you could change something spectacular in the world what would it be?**

I'd like to give every child the same chance in life from birth – access to good education, good health and freedom.

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

I have been very fortunate in my life so far. I have not had to face tough times but when the girls were tiny that was a very happy time.

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

I still read a lot, I visit the library regularly. I love going to the theatre, I go to Stratford at least once a year. I enjoy rummaging around the family tree, going to the Public Records Offices in Belfast and Dublin when we are over there. We ride our bikes or walk with the girls especially down to Iffley, to Florence Park and across to Shotover.

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

I think I am looking forward to the girls growing up (but not too quickly) having conversations with them and enjoying them.

# SAINT OF THE MONTH St Cuthbert

Cuthbert was a Scottish boy, born around 630 AD in the Lothians. His parents were Christians and probably worked on the land owned by the monks of Melrose Abbey. As a young child he loved sports and games, loved fun and was described as a noisy child who took delight in merriment. As he grew up he helped his parents to tend their sheep.

Whilst looking after his flock one night on the banks of the river Lauder he saw, in a vision, St Aidan of Lindisfarne transported into heaven. It was a life-changing moment. The following morning he presented himself to the prior of Melrose declaring his desire to become a monk. The holy gentleman recognised a true servant of God immediately. Cuthbert became a very disciplined and enthusiastic monk. He observed all the rules in particular abstaining from intoxicating drink. In order to build up and sustain his bodily strength, though was careful to eat healthily and well.

He was transferred from Melrose to a new monastery in Ripon along with a large band of other

monks. Their devotions and worship were true to the Celtic traditions and when they objected to the imposition of the rites of the Roman church they were packed off back to Scotland. At Melrose Cuthbert was elevated to the position of prior. He became a travelling monk, journeying through the hills in the area teaching and preaching as he went. On his travels he learnt to love the wildlife of Scotland even to the point where wild otters would trust him and play at his feet.

There is a delightful storey of how one evening far from habitation, he and his companion found themselves with nothing to eat for supper. Cuthbert believed that God would provide for them. Suddenly an eagle rose up from a nearby river clutching a salmon in its talons. The boy ran forward and the eagle dropped its catch. On receiving the fish Cuthbert insisted that they cut the fish in half keeping half for themselves and returning half to the river-bank for the bird.

Later in his life he transferred to Lindisfarne where, through patience and good humour he persuaded the brotherhood there to follow the Celtic traditions of Christianity rather than adhere slavishly to the edicts of Rome. It is said that he was so devoted to his life of prayer that he would often spend three or four whole nights without sleep in order to pray.

After twelve years he sought further solitude and was given permission to retire to one of the Farne Islands. There the monks built him a cell with a surrounding wall so high that he could only see the sky. He cultivated a little garden to feed himself and kept the birds off his barley by preaching the gospel to them!

A lot of persuasion brought him back to Lindisfarne, where today there stands a statue of him. He became a devoted and much-loved leader of the priory. However two months before he died he felt himself called back to his little cell on Farne Island. On his deathbed he lifted his eyes to heaven joyful in the knowledge that he was going home. His special day is commemorated on 20th March.



*"He's running on behalf of the Government"*

# REPORT OF COWLEY PCC MEETING, 16TH FEBRUARY 2011

The following were discussed:

1. The Vision and Purpose of the Church. The five purposes were discussed – Worship; Fellowship; Discipleship; Ministry; Mission.
2. Friends of the Parish of Cowley: The draft constitution for the Friends of the Parish of Cowley was discussed. It was noted that there would be an article on this in the March edition of the Cowley Chronicle, and no further action could be taken until people interested in setting up the Friends of the Parish of Cowley came forward.
3. The draft accounts for 2010 were discussed agreed for inspection. The final accounts would be available for the next PCC meeting on the 15th March 2011, and would be presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Parochial Church Council on Sunday, 27th March 2011.
4. The draft accounts for 2011 were discussed. It was appreciated that, although the accounts looked healthy, there would be a lot of expenditure on the church buildings during the year and there would need to be fund raising to cover most of this. In addition, there was discussion on the Mission, the annual amount the Parish gave to charities, and it was agreed that the policy for this needed to be discussed in both congregations and raised at the Annual General Meeting.
5. The PCC reviewed the position regarding the work needed at both St James' and St Francis' Churches.

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## ***ST FRANCIS' 80TH ANNIVERSARY***

Our beloved church of St Francis of Assisi in the Parish of Cowley was consecrated in the service of God on 18th March 1931. Through generations of priests and congregations it has stood as a concrete testimony to the faith of God's people in Cowley, and a witness to the will of God that all people in Cowley should hear and respond to the good news of Our Lord Jesus Christ. On 18th March of this year, St Francis Church turns eighty! To celebrate we shall be holding a special Eucharist for the 80th Anniversary

Representatives from every other St Francis' church in England have been invited to join us for the service, and every former priest of Cowley whom we could trace has been invited to participate, too. We've invited everyone from Cowley Deanery - everyone wants to join in! During the service, the congregation of St Francis will rededicate ourselves to God's service in Cowley, rejoice in the faithfulness of past worshippers, and pray for God's provision for us in the future. Afterwards, there will be a bring-and-share supper and a chance for old friends to catch up.

Everybody is welcome - young, old, St James, St Francis, both or neither - please come and join us on Friday, 18th March at 7.30pm for this very important milestone in the life of the Parish - it promises to be a wonderful occasion.

**Patrick Gilday**



## NOTABLE DATES IN MARCH

On March 5th 1936 the Spitfire made its maiden flight over Southampton. It went on to play a significant part in the Battle of Britain in 1940.

The song "Puppet on a String" was released on 10th March 1967. It was the song that Sandie Shaw sang to win the Eurovision Song Contest for England.

The newly completed New English Bible first went on sale on 16th March 1970. It sold a million copies on its first day.

March 25th was officially New Year's Day in England from the 12th century until the calendar changed in 1752. Only then did it change to 1st January.

In 1912 the Oxford and Cambridge Boat Race had to be re-run on 28th March because during the first race both boats sank!

On March 31st in 1889 the Eiffel Tower in Paris was completed after taking 2 years, 2 months and 2 days to build. It stands 986 feet tall and was named after Gustave Eiffel who designed it.

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

The Annual General Meeting of the Parochial Church Council will be held in St James' Church Centre on Sunday, 27th March, at 12.30 pm. It is important for all who can to come along to this meeting when the main business of the parish takes place. Reports are given on the finances, the "health" of the parish and its buildings and from the various groups connected to our churches. If that all sounds rather dull be assured that in former years the AGMs have been lively occasions.

It has become a tradition to serve a light lunch at the meeting and this year the PCC has decided to donate all the money collected to Christian Aid. For £3 they are serving soup, rolls, fruit and coffee. Do, please come along, enjoy the lunch and learn how our parish is doing.

### SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

Wednesday 4 May, 7.30-9.30 pm at the Church Centre

For all Parish personnel who are involved at any time with children and young people within the life of the parish, please make a note of this date and keep it free.

Stephen Barber, the Diocese of Oxford Safeguarding Children Adviser, will lead this training on policy and practice in child protection and safeguarding. It is very important that we are all up to date on the issues and guidance.

Lesley Williams, Parish Safeguarding Officer, will register names in early April. The session will be open to the Deanery.

## A BIT OF ROUGH

The ring slipped on my finger  
I'd promised to be true  
But how to keep this lovely man?  
So much to learn I knew

A career girl up until this day  
I'd never learned to cook.  
Mum's kitchen was her temple  
So I'd better search a book.

Perhaps a chat with mum-in-law  
Would reveal his fav'rite treat  
With pad and pen in hand I asked  
"What does he like to eat?"

"Oh, simple meals", she told me,  
"And a good, strong cup of tea  
And serve it with a bit of rough,  
It always works for me".

"A bit of rough?" I pondered  
As we snuggled down in bed.  
"Oh, yes, that's nice", he murmured  
Then turned his sleepy head.

At last I got the recipe.  
It turned out to be a cake.  
It's crumbly, fruity, crusty  
And the simplest one to bake.

We don't go much on Valentines  
And such romantic stuff  
So to show him that I love him  
I'll make a bit of rough.  
The years have come and gone for us  
Some easy, some quite tough.  
I know the method, now, by heart,  
For his fav'rite bit of rough.

**Rosanne Butler**

## Lent and Easter Services at St Francis

12 March – Lent Quiet Day	10 am to 3 pm in St James Church
18 March – 80th Anniversary Celebration of St Francis Church	7:00 pm – A parish wide celebration
3 April – Mothering Sunday	10:30 am – We celebrate motherhood
17 April – Palm Sunday	10:30 am – Palm crosses and Eucharist
21 April – Maundy Thursday	7:00 pm – St James Church Centre Sharing in the last supper
	8:30 pm – St James Church, candlelight, Prayer and the Garden of Gethsemane.
22 April – Good Friday	2:00 pm – Adoration of the Cross
23 April – Holy Saturday - Easter Eve	7:00 pm – Easter Vigil, Confirmation and Holy Communion – St James Church
24 April - Easter!	10:30 am – Sung Eucharist and celebration “The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed!”

## Lent and Easter Services at St James

9 March – Ash Wednesday	7:00 pm – Imposition of Ashes and Holy Communion
12 March – Lent Quiet Day	10 am to 3 pm in St James Church
3 April – Mothering Sunday -	10:00 am – We celebrate motherhood
17 April – Palm Sunday - 10:00 am –	Palm crosses and Eucharist
21 April – Maundy Thursday	
7:00 pm – St James Church Centre	Sharing in the last supper
8:30 pm – St James Church, candlelight, Prayer and the Garden of Gethsemane.	
22 April – Good Friday	12 til 3 pm – An exploration of the cross and the last seven words of Christ.
23 April – Holy Saturday - Easter Eve	7:00 pm – Easter Vigil, Confirmation and Holy Communion
24 April – Easter!	10:00 am – Sung Eucharist and celebration “The Lord is risen. He is risen indeed!”

# VOLUNTARY HELP

When I retired I knew I was going to have time on my hands. I spoke to my friend Netta who was at that time secretary at St. James' School in Cowley. I asked her if any voluntary help was needed at the School with regard to the reading programme and the answer was a definite 'Yes'.

How the School has changed from the first time I had visited it some 35 years before. Both my sons had attended the School when Basil Foster was Headmaster. Now there are approximately 450 pupils from many different cultural backgrounds.

I visit the School on a Wednesday morning and really enjoy meeting the children who are aged 5/6 years. It is very rewarding when at the start of their year they are struggling with their reading and each week you can see an improvement. We have a lot of fun and they tell me about their families and sometimes little secrets. It is a lovely way to spend a morning and I thoroughly recommend it to anyone who has a few hours to spare.

**Christine Woodman**

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## A Rich Inheritance for you this lent

Throughout Lent be a part of our weekly Bible study

"A Rich Inheritance: Jesus' legacy of love." Join one of our home groups and discover how faith changed the world and our lives today. You are invited to draw closer to God through his word in one of our home groups.

Monday	10:15 am	Una Dean	Fern Hill Road
Tuesday	2:30 pm	Connie Uren	St James Church Centre
Tuesday	2:30 pm	Mollie Oliver	St Francis Church
Tuesday	7:30 pm	Tony Beetham	St James Church Centre
Thursday	10:00 am	Rosanne Butler	St James Church Centre
Thursday	7:30 pm	Mark Oxbrow	13 Annesley Road

For more information contact the Parish Office 01865 747 680.

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## Recent history of St James' Church Bells taken from plaques in the Tower

'The Bells in this Tower were recast and a Treble added in 1949 as part of the parish war memorial to those who fell in the war of 1939 - 1945.'

'The Oxford Diocesan Guild of Church Bell Ringers on Thursday December 8th 1949 in 2 hours 57 minutes rang A Peal of GRANDSIRE DOUBLES 5040 Changes. Conducted by Lawrence Busby. This was the first peal on the bells.'

'The Bells of this church were rung on 1st January 2000 to mark the start of The New Millennium. Bells were rung and services were held in churches throughout the country on this day.'

With so many Towers in Oxford ringing out across the city (and I'm not denying they are quite wonderful) it would be very easy for Cowley residents to feel overshadowed by the Dreaming Spires but I hope you agree we can justifiably hold our heads up high in being very proud of our

own bells at St. James and must Thank previous generations for their care. Of course St. James' Bells have rung out for many years prior to the recasting in 1949 as our resident historian, Rosanne, has told us in many a tale.

It is now our turn to take over the custodianship and care of St James' Bells. Unfortunately everything comes at a cost. Like our cars the bells require regular specialist inspection which in itself is very costly. At the last inspection it was reported one of the bells would need quite major work which would be very expensive. Jonathan, our Tower Captain, is currently reviewing the situation as the bell in its current state could last for another two or three years or could indeed go tomorrow but however long it lasts it is something that we all need to bear in mind to ensure our Bells continue to ring out on a Sunday morning.

# RECIPES

## Pancakes with Blueberries

12 ozs plain flour  
3 teaspoons baking powder  
1 tablespoon soft brown sugar  
1lightly beaten egg  
15 fluid ozs milk  
1 oz melted butter  
8 ozs fresh hulled blueberries  
4 tablespoons vegetable oil  
A pinch of grated nutmeg

Sift flour, sugar and baking powder into a large mixing bowl. In a smaller mixing bowl beat together the egg, milk and butter, whisking until light and frothy. Stir in the dry ingredients and beat until batter is smooth. Stir in the blueberries and nutmeg.

Brush a heavy based frying pan with oil and heat until hot.

Drop 4 to 5 spoonfuls of batter into the pan. Cook for about one minute until the edges of the pancake begin to brown. Flip it over and cook the other side.

The pancakes can be kept warm in the oven if they are interleaved with greaseproof paper. Sprinkle with brown sugar and serve.

## Pancakes with brie topping

12 ozs plain flour  
3 teaspoons baking powder  
1 lightly beaten egg  
15 fluid ozs milk  
1 oz melted butter  
4 tablespoons vegetable oil

### Topping:

8 ozs brie cheese  
¼ cup of béchamel (or creamy white) sauce  
Black pepper  
Grated nutmeg  
Tablespoon brandy  
2 ozs Parmesan cheese

Make up the cheese topping by cutting off and discarding the rind from the brie. Press the cheese through a wire strainer with a wooden spoon into a medium-sized mixing bowl. Beat in the sauce, pepper, nutmeg and brandy.

Make up the batter and cook the pancakes as described in former recipe.

Preheat the grill and spread out the pancakes on the grill-pan. Spread the topping over the pancakes and sprinkle with the Parmesan.

Grill for 3-4 minutes until cheese is bubbly and golden. Serve immediately on warm plates.

## USED POSTAGE STAMPS

Many of you will know that there is a jar for used postage stamps at the back of St James' Church. These are collected by the Oxfordshire Association for the Blind for fundraising.

Please do collect your used stamps and put them in the jar – this is such a good cause.

## SMILE

A librarian was woken by his bedside telephone ringing in the small hours of the morning. He looked at his watch. It was 3 am. "What time does the library open?" came the voice of an old lady at the other end

"Nine in the morning, madam", replied the librarian with some annoyance.

"Oh dear, not till then?" she responded

"Why would you want to get into the library any earlier?" he asked.

"Oh no, I don't want to get in," she said rather pitifully, "I want to get out".

## CAT POEM

How can we cope, where can we go?  
When our favourite places are covered in snow.  
Under the shed or branches of trees  
Where those fluttering feathered things hover  
and tease.  
Our tender paws tingle, our fur's damp and flat  
Why does she think we can cope with all that.  
She says "go and play chase or do what cats do,  
Get out and catch mice and show some life do"  
If it weren't for the feast at the end of our trip  
We'd probably ignore her and go back to sleep  
My sister's a wimp, she says don't upset her  
Remember our beginnings, we're lucky to get her.  
Oh! Bright stuff, wet and white stuff, however  
you came  
Please change our garden to be just the same,  
As it is when we play there every other day.  
When we chase leaves and stalk some pals down  
our way.  
We see them now in windows with room all  
aglow  
While we're up to our tails in this abominable  
snow.  
C'mon sis, make paw tracks and pamper her  
whim  
If we stand here and shiver, she might let us in.  
I can't see her barefoot and catching a mouse  
We've done it all year with never a grouse.  
Hunch up your shoulders and let out a sneeze  
We won't scratch the new couch  
Let Us In Pleeeeeeeeeese!!

**Pat Sansom**

## THE PARISH ARCHIVES

This is just a brief up-date on how Frank Butler and May Morgan have been getting on tracing, filing and logging some of the wonderful material which is coming to light. So far they have found some Cowley Chronicles going back as far as 1922 and Links from 1982. There are also some fascinating brochures, cuttings, etc including the articles about St Francis Church which we are delighted to print this month to celebrate the 80th anniversary. Some of the material will make great reading in forthcoming Chronicles so watch out for it.

## THE THOUGHTS OF A 90 YEAR OLD

1. Life isn't fair, but it is still good.
2. When in doubt, just take the next small step.
3. Life is too short to waste time hating anyone.
4. Your job won't take care of you when you are sick [quit and travel the world]. Your friends and parents will. Stay in touch.
5. Pay off your credit cards every month.
6. You don't have to win every argument. Agree to disagree
7. Cry with someone. It's more healing than crying alone.
8. It's OK to get angry with God. He can take it.
9. Save for retirement starting with your first pay cheque.
10. When it comes to chocolate, resistance is futile.
11. Make peace with your past so it won't screw up the present.
12. It is OK to let your children see you cry.
13. Don't compare your life to others. You have no idea what their journey is all about.
14. If a relationship has to be a secret, you should not be in it.

More to come!!

## ST FRANCIS NEWS

We are at last drawing the threads of our thinking on forward planning together, and it is now a case for "Action This Day", as Mr Churchill used to say.

Our special Anniversary Day on Friday, March 18th will be marked by an extended Communion Service followed by a bring and share supper, and we hope that our congregations will support this by their presence and by contributions of food and drink. The service will commence at 7.30 pm to give people who are working the opportunity to attend. If you have difficulty with transport and need a lift, please let us know in advance. A number of previous St Francis clergy and friends are hoping to join us, and we trust that it will be a happy and memorable occasion. All are welcome!

Our various maintenance needs are being addressed, and will be sorted very soon.

On Saturday, 19th March we shall have an open day at St Francis along with a Coffee Morning. There will be displays of relevant memorabilia on the History of the Church, and people are invited to bring any of their own photos along, and share their memories with us. We are grateful to all who have worked so hard over the years to keep our church flourishing and vibrant. Quite a few are sadly no longer with us, but we shall not forget them.

Joan Coleman, our dedicated

Treasurer, has been working hard behind the scenes to keep our finances steady and solvent. She informs us that the giving at St Francis has remained steady in spite of the recession. As we all face a year that is full of uncertainties, we pray that God will bless our church and all who worship there.

**John Shreeve**

## ANCIENT AND MODERN

Quite a lot has been made of the 400th anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible in the media recently. It was standard reading in all our churches and influenced our writers and thinkers from Shakespeare onwards. When I was growing up in the Church of England there were no other modern versions. Yet there was a yearning, particularly amongst young people, for something that was a bit more contemporary that would make some of the more difficult passages plainer and easier to understand.

Then along came a man called J B Phillips. He was only an ordinary clergyman, not an international bible scholar of repute. However, he had a good grounding in classical languages (Greek and Latin) both at school and at Cambridge University. He found that the young teenagers in his church were struggling to make sense of St Paul's Letters in the New Testament. So there and then, he decided to make his own

translation of them. Working entirely on his own, and fitting it in between his other parish duties, he set to work. Now the original versions of the New Testament were written in Greek, but it was not the pure Classical Greek of the Ancient World. It was the language that was spoken in the streets and market places at the time of the early church and the disciples. A sort of slang version of the pure Greek. Yet as JB worked away at it in his own study, he felt the presence of the Holy Spirit very much with him. What is more, he felt that the New Testament Greek was entirely right for the people and incidents it was describing. To put it in his own words – "It had a real ring of truth about it". Well, he finally completed his work, and it was published under the title "Letters to the Young Churches". Much to his surprise it received international praise and acclaim, and was much in demand. He went on to translate the Acts of the Apostles and also the Gospels, and in a more general book, compared the thinking of the early church with our own today. In other writings he speaks a great deal of good sense about our faith in today's world. He is not afraid to tackle head on the destructive criticism of the unbelievers and atheists, and come up with sensible and viable answers. In spite of much illness and many difficulties in his life, he kept the faith. A man of honour, a man of God.

**John Shreeve**

# NOW IT IS TO BE BENSON COTTAGE

## Cowley Chronicle 1960

**W**HY is the restored cottage next to St. James' Church, and known until now as the Vicarage Cottage, to be retained Benson Cottage?

The Rev. R. M. Benson, a young man of 26 and a learned and brilliant scholar, became Vicar of Cowley in December, 1850.

The College of Christ Church had appointed the Vicar of Cowley for generations; he had always been a student of Christ Church who continued to live in the college and rode over on Sundays to take services.

Benson astounded everyone by coming to live in the village; he lived alone in a little cottage at the top of Rymer's Lane. The cottage was demolished at the time of the building of Florence Park Estate.

The Parish of Cowley was large in area, including the land as far as Magdalen Bridge, but there were only 600 inhabitants and they were nearly all very poor.

For nine years Benson stayed in his cottage, preaching twice a Sunday (which was a matter of comment at the time), visiting, praying and reading.

He lived a very strict life, and he sought to bring all his parishioners to the same whole-hearted devotion to God.

In 1858 Benson conducted the first retreat held in the Church of England in modern times. (A retreat is when people keep a few days quietly in prayer and thinking.) So Benson showed a way for deepening the Christian faith which has assisted hundreds of thousands since.

In 1859, leaving a curate in the old village, Benson moved to the bottom end of the parish, near Magdalen Bridge, where a large new population was rapidly developing and where he had just built the Iron Church. Some years later that area was formed into the new parish, Cowley St. John.

Benson gathered round him a group of men who became the first monks in the Church of England since the 16th Century.

Their official title was the Society of St. John the Evangelist, but they were soon nicknamed the Cowley Fathers and through them the name of Cow-

ley became known in Africa, India, America and Japan.

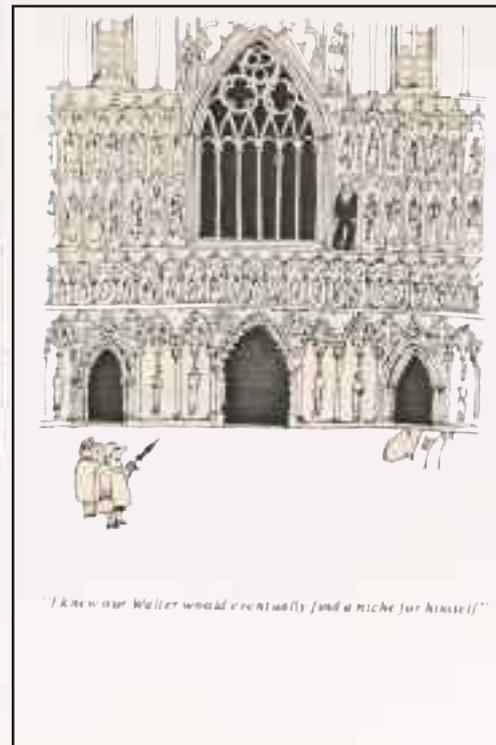
Long before the first motor car was made, the Christian Gospel had been exported to the far corners of the world by men from the Cowley Community.

Retreats, a religious order of monks, tremendous missionary work: in these ways Fr. Benson has exerted and is still exerting a tremendous influence on the Church.

The seeds of his later work were germinating and growing during his nine years living in the cottage in the village of Cowley, praying, reading, fasting, thinking and ministering faithfully to his 600 parishioners.

It is a funny thing that another cottage near to the old church can be called by his name, so that Benson may continue to be a word often used in Cowley, and not only by the inhabitants of the Benson Road area.

Saints are not just a matter of pictures or stained glass windows, and the life of Fr. Benson is a challenge to those who now live in Cowley to commit themselves wholeheartedly to the service of God.



*"I knew our Walter would eventually find a niche for himself!"*

## St. Francis, Cowley

*From The Reverend Bernard T. Croft*

THE BEAMS in St. Francis, Cowley, mentioned in Canon Whye's article (*ODM March*), painted with scenes from the life of the patron saint, came in useful as visual aids when I was preaching there to military as well as civilian congregations during the war. More than one soldier, after parade service stayed behind to take a closer look and to ask me more about them. One man I remember admitted that he had never been inside a church before. As for the projector room upstairs, in what was then only a church-hall, when the peace-time depot turned into a busy reception and training centre (and the Slade-Camp sprang up at the foot of Shotover nearby), I moved into that upper room to live, taking my main meals (and baths) in the Barracks.



My main object in writing this is to pay tribute to the work done at St. Francis and the parish generally around that time by Church Army Sisters, Sister Moore, C.A., with me at St. Francis, took charge of much of the civilian work of visiting, etc., when I was busy with the chaplaincy work. She was, of course, especially useful with the women and children. We both managed to lead outings of children, usually on Saturdays, as my photographs show: one of a ramble up Shotover (note the gas-masks on the tree) and one at, I think, Horspath. Some of these youngsters were evacuees, but some of the 'locals' may recognise themselves, as they were around 1940. We also managed to have Scout camps at Wood-Eaton and Nuneham Courtenay. Many who returned to London and Kent later will have happy memories of St. Francis.

**Bernard T. Croft**  
3B Minster Court  
York

# Early Days at St Francis, Cowley

by Alec Whye

THE ORIGINS of St Francis, Cowley, lay deep in the personality of the Reverend M.H. Beauchamp, who became Vicar of Cowley in November 1928, where I joined him as Curate in January 1929. He had a great devotion to St Francis of Assisi, deepened by visits to Assisi itself and by reading books about him, notably Sabatier's well-known biography and that of G.K. Chesterton. So when he became Vicar of Cowley, he saw the opportunity for the fulfilment of his dream, that Oxford, once one of the great Franciscan centres in England, should have an Anglican church dedicated to St Francis. There was at that time a great need for a place of worship and social occasions in what was called the 'Bullington Estate', then being built. It was at some considerable distance from any place of worship, and although in the parish of Cowley, it was at least 1½ miles from the only Church of England church in the parish at that time, St James' Church in Church Street (now Beauchamp Lane). This new estate was completely cut off from the rest of Cowley by the golf course on one side of Hollow Way and by Cowley Barracks on the other, and there were only a few houses in Horsepath Road.

Things soon got moving, and by February 1929 Mr T. Lawrence Dale, the architect (afterwards famous – or infamous – for his project of the 'Christ Church Mall') came to the Vicarage to consult with Father Beauchamp about a possible church, hall and priest's house for the Bullington Estate, dedicated to St Francis. Mr Dale's interesting and exciting plans for the project arrived on July 1st. It was clear that the full plan could not be implemented for many years, but that we could go ahead with a



St Francis, Cowley.

Church Hall, convertible to a church at weekends, with a screened sanctuary for weekday services and for prayer and meditation.

One afternoon in August 1929 Father Beauchamp called a meeting on the site on which St Francis was to be built, which had been given to the parish two months earlier by Sir William Morris, as he then was. Appropriately the first words to be uttered were the Lord's Prayer. Very few people turned up, others looked on from over the hedge, and some shouted 'We want a school, not a church!' (Actually, the hall was offered to the LEA for use as a school during the week, but the offer was turned down.)

During the rest of 1929 and 1930 appeals were being sent out all over the country for the £3,000 which was the final estimate for St Francis, plans for which were approved on 15th March 1930, and the contract with Messrs Kingerlee signed on 9th August. Every batch of appeals was placed on the altar of the parish church and blessed before being sent out. By the end of November £2,700 had come in. About 100 people had turned up on August 16th for the cutting of the first turf, the youngest being little Margaret Sowden aged 2½, now Mrs Stanley Jackson, mother of four children!

The Foundation Stone – still to be seen near the front entrance – was laid

by Sir William Morris on 11th September 1930 in the presence of the Bishop of Oxford, Dr T.B. Strong, the Deputy Mayor of Oxford, and over 700 people.

Work went ahead very rapidly during the winter of 1930-31, and a Management Committee was formed and Deputy Churchwardens appointed. On New Year's Day 1931 Father Beauchamp rang the bell in the little bell-turret for the first time; as a surprise we had his initials M.H.B. engraved on the bell. Both bell and turret are no longer there, the turret having been declared unsafe a few years later; it is my hope that the Golden Jubilee will be an opportunity to restore them.

A novel feature of St Francis was the decoration of the beams by a teacher at the Oxford School of Arts and Crafts, Mr L. Davenport, depicting scenes from the life of St Francis, including the elaborate decoration of one of them to represent his 'Hymn of Creation'.

Another interesting feature was a marble slab from the catacombs at Rome, received through the kindness of Dr Darwell Stone, Principal of Pusey House, from a Miss Wilshere of Welwyn, Herts, which linked us with the 'Underground' church of the early Christian centuries. This was let into the centre of the altar.

The Press made much of the fact that provision was made for a cinema projector to be installed at some future time in the projector room over the entrance, though this has never been possible – but 'Cinema Church' sounded good, better than the claim by an anonymous letter to the Oxford Mail, criticising the whole scheme and saying that in years to come St Francis would be known as 'Beauchamp's Folly.'

The Dedication of St Francis by the Bishop of Oxford took place on Wednesday March 18th, 1931. We were slightly nonplussed when the Bishop gave out his text: 'The Most High dwelleth not in

temples made with hands' (Acts 7.48), but we recovered in time to see the point of what he was saying!

On the following day the hall was open for inspection, and hundreds of people, including many subscribers from North Oxford and elsewhere, came to see Oxford's latest place of worship. On the Friday Bishop Shaw, Archdeacon of Oxford, preached at a Service of Thanksgiving, and on the first Sunday, 22nd March, there was Holy Communion at 7 and 8, and Sung Eucharist at 10.15.

St Francis is now a permanent church, a small church hall having been built at its rear. It has had ten priests-in-charge during its 50 years, and, like the other churches in the parish, is now served by a Team Vicar.

*St Francis in Wartime*, by Bernard Croft, a former Priest-in-charge, appeared in the ODM December 1977.

A.G. Whye was Curate of Cowley (1929-1939) and Vicar (1939-1959).

# Sunday Services

## ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Sung Eucharist

Every fourth Sunday: *Church at the Centre*

Every third Sunday: *Sunday Lunch*

## ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am Parish Eucharist

# Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	8.15 am 2.30 pm	Morning Prayer – St James Parish Mothers' Union – St James (3rd Mon)
Tuesday	8.15 am 10.00 am 12.00 pm 12.30 pm 2.30 pm	Morning Prayer – St James Seashells Toddler Group : St James Eucharist – St James Tuesday Lunch Club – St James Friends of St Francis – St Francis (2nd & 4th Tues)
Wednesday	8.15 am 9.15 am	Morning Prayer – St James Morning Prayer – St Francis
Thursday	8.15 am 7.30 pm	Morning Prayer – St James Healing Service (1st Thurs) St James/St Francis (alternate months)
Friday	8.15 am 5.30 pm	Morning Prayer – St James Evening Prayer – St James

# Home Groups

Leader	Time / Venue
Una Dean	Alternate Monday mornings at 10:15am in Una's home
Connie Uren:	Alternate Tuesday afternoons at 2:30pm in St James Church Centre Lounge
Friends of St Francis: (John Streeve/Moll Oliver)	Tuesday alternate afternoons at 1:30pm in St Francis Church
Tony Beetham	Alternate Tuesday evenings at 7:30pm in St James Church Centre Lounge
Patrick Gilday:	Alternate Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm in St Francis Church upper room
Rosanne Butler	Alternate Thursday mornings at 10:30am in St James Church Centre Lounge
Mark Oxbrow	Alternate Thursday evenings at 7:30pm in Mark's home

The Parish of Cowley office in St James Church Centre is open

Thursday 12.45 pm to 4.30 pm  
Friday 9.00 am to 1.15 pm  
and by appointment.

Parish Secretary:

**Elaine Ulett**

Ministry Team Telephone:

01865 747 680

parishofcowley@hotmail.co.uk

Team Rector

**Revd Howard Thornton**

Cowley Rectory

11 Beauchamp Lane

Oxford OX4 3LF

Howard has Friday as his day off.

Team Vicar

**Revd Susannah Reide**

27 Don Bosco Close

Oxford OX4 2LD

Susannah has Monday as her day off.

Associate Priest

**Revd Richard Chand**

richard@cowleyteamministry.co.uk

Non-Stipendiary Ministers

**Revd Canon Mark Oxbrow**

13 Annesley Road

Oxford, OX4 4JH

Tel: 01865 461953

markoxbrow@aol.com

**Revd Amanda Bloor**

Diocesan Church House

North Hinksey

Oxford OX2 0NB

Tel: 01865 208 221

parishofcowley@hotmail.co.uk

Churchwardens:

**David Stanley** Tel: 776602

**Norah Shallow** Tel: 765199

Deputy Wardens:

**Margaret Martin** Tel: 718532

**John Shreeve**

Hall Bookings

**Pat Sansom** Tel: 778516