

# Remembering

Here in England on the 11 November we will join millions all over the world in two minutes silence as we remember those who have died in war.

Let me say from the outset, I do not like war. War is evidence of our failure to live our lives in ways that are honouring to God. At the same time I know that sometimes war is inevitable. Sometimes war seems to be the only way to halt evil in the world. I am grateful to all those men and women from Britain, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, America and many other countries who gave themselves to the cause of World War II.

I recently watched “Band of Brothers”, which traces the lives of the members of the US Army’s 101st Airborne Division Easy Company who saw action in Europe during World War II. This 11 hour Steven Spielberg / Tom Hanks series has been acclaimed by some as the most realistic television war series ever produced. I was hooked from the first episode, although wished there was a series that traced the lives of British soldiers. It is ironic that in the midst of the noise, chaos and aggression of the battlefield, war provides a glimpse into what it is to stand as brothers and sisters and enjoy true fellowship, even when those we rely on most are being killed. In war young men and women give themselves to a cause that looks overwhelming and hopeless, and discover the source of real hope. When we find ourselves half a second away from death, we discover the gift of abundant life.

War and revolution are crucibles that transform individuals and nations. As a young man, Feodor Dostoevsky was arrested for being a part of the Petrashevsky Circle, liberal intellectuals critical of Tsar Nicholas I. On the 16th November 1849 Dostoevsky, along with three other members of

the Circle was sentenced to death by firing squad. They lingered in their cells for months hoping their appeal for leniency would be heard. A few days before Christmas they were forced to dress in white burial shrouds and led out of their cells into the freezing cold. To their horror an official read the sentence condemning them to death. A firing squad faced them. A clerk pronounced the words, “The wages of sin is death,” and held out a cross for each to kiss. They were tied to posts. As the drums rolled, and the firing squad raised their rifles to the ready, a horseman galloped up with a prearranged message from the tsar: he would mercifully commute their sentences to hard labour in Siberia.

Dostoevsky never recovered from the ordeal. The impact of being a second away from death never left him. Later that day in his cell he sang for joy of a life restored, a gift beyond all measure. He later wrote to his brother, “Never has there seethed in me such an abundant and healthy kind of spiritual life as now ... Now my life will change.”

Dostoevsky believed God had given him a second chance to fulfil his life. He read the New Testament with joy and enthusiasm during his confinement in Siberia. He learned many of the scriptures by heart and pondered every word. His daughter Aimee wrote years later, “All his works are saturated with it [quotes and ideas from the Bible], and it is this which gives them their power.”

100 years later another famous son of Russia, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, found faith in God through the writing of Feodor Dostoevsky. Dostoevsky’s writings led Solzhenitsyn to a conversion experience, also in a prison camp, and changed the course of his life and that of his nation. When asked what were the main causes of the

**Continued overleaf**

# Chronicle

Cowley Team Ministry

November 2011

# Editor's Letter

Dear Readers

By the time this reaches you I guess you will be thinking about Christmas shopping. Well, I suggest you don't go near those crowded shops with their early music about "Frosty, the Snowman" and a certain red-nosed reindeer until you have visited our two church Christmas sales. St James is holding theirs on 12th November in the Church Centre and St Francis is on 26th November. If past experiences are anything to go by I am sure you will find lots of goodies, gifts and treats for you and the family. On top of which you will be supporting the parish funds and that leaves a nice warm feeling inside, doesn't it?

Congratulations to all the marvellous knitters in our parish who managed to make over 700 "little hats" for smoothies. These are sent to Sainsbury's to sell in aid of Age UK. Joyce Titchell was thrilled with the result and has asked me to thank you all.

Are you getting ready for our Christmas tree festival? Lesley Williams has sent in an up-date of progress in the planning for "Let's Light up

Christmas". It seems to me that almost half our parishioners are going to be involved in this new venture. It all sounds very exciting.

News, hot off the press (as they say) could not be better about the walls on either side of the path leading to the parish church. Have you seen it yet? All the nasty, crumbly bricks have been replaced and from the gate to the church door has been rebuilt. There is also news that the dangerous surface of the path is going to be sorted out so that a perfect walkway will soon be in place. Good news indeed.

Finally, a big thank you for the marvellous response from both churches to the appeal for food at our harvest festival services. A fine selection of canned and dried food was donated to both the Foodbank and the Porch. Let's keep the donations coming in so that not only at harvest time but also throughout the coming months hungry people can be given help.

God bless

**Rosanne**

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## Continued from page 1

wars and revolutions that cost 60 million people their lives, Solzhenitsyn said that he could not put it more accurately than to repeat what he had heard older people say when he was a child: "Men have forgotten God; that's why all this happened."

This month we remember those who died in service to our country - those who gave their lives so that others could live in freedom. But at the heart of our remembering, let us never forget God and the purpose of our lives.

**Howard**

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## *BELL RINGING*

St. James' bell ringers have been invited to practise at St. Aldates church but unfortunately this is on a Monday evening which clashes with our own practice nights. As this is an opportunity not to be turned down we have had to change our own practice night. Therefore, as from Thursday 13th October St. James' bell ringing practice nights will be on a Thursday evening. Apologies for not getting this in the October issue to give advance notice but this was a rather hasty change of practice night - I expect those living nearby will already be up to speed with events.

# LIKE THE 'FLU

Smiling is Infectious,  
You catch it like the flu.  
When someone smiled at me today  
I started smiling, too.  
I passed around the corner,  
And someone saw my grin,  
When he smiled, I realised  
I'd passed it on to him.  
If you feel a smile begin  
Don't leave it undetected,  
Let's start an epidemic  
And get the world infected!

Once again can I thank the congregation of St James for their wonderful Harvest contribution towards the CEF food bank on top of the regular contribution that both St Francis' and St James' gave given to CEF throughout the year. This regular giving from both the churches is an inspiration and encouragement to all of us who work for CEF, so thank you all so much. I always seem to be saying that the numbers of people coming for food is rising but this year the numbers have been without precedent as people find it more difficult to manage on limited resources and rising prices. I can assure you that 99% of the people receiving food are really appreciative of what they get and over and over again indicate that the food makes an enormous difference to their lives at a very difficult time. **Jane Benyon**



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## ADVENT QUIET MORNING

Saturday 3 December 2011

From 10.00am to 1 00pm

At St James Church, Cowley

A Quiet Morning of prayer and reflection in preparation for Christmas, with prayers & reflection every half hour and concluding with a Eucharist at 12 30 pm. Come and go as you can.

Helen Beetham

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## 'LET'S LIGHT UP CHRISTMAS' : Cowley festival of Christmas trees 2011

**9-11 December 2011 in St James Church**

Friday, 9 December - 11.00-7.30

Saturday, 10 December - 10.00-6.00

Sunday, 11 December - 2.00-5.00

concluding with a Festival Carol service at 5.30 with the vision of bringing hundreds of Cowley folk into our Parish church for a beautiful experience.

Proceeds to be shared between Oxford Children's Hospital and Save the Children

### Planning update

The number of trees is growing! We're nearly at 30, with several more businesses joining in – Howard has done a great job at Templars Square - and others showing interest. It's not too late to sign up more so if you have contact with a local organisation or business and could make a personal invitation, please ask Lesley for the letter and form. We hope to finalise the list by Monday 14 November.

Our task groups have begun work on Publicity - Hospitality - the Programme. You will soon be asked if you can help deliver flyers, setting up, act as stewards, provide some seasonal refreshments – it needs to be a big team effort!

Lesley Williams    01865 779 562    07982 439 828

lesleyjwilliams@btinternet.com

# Cowley Community Play

## Writers, Actors, Musicians, Singers, Dancers and Performers Wanted

As a spin-off from our I-Cowley Project, storyteller and writer John Morrissey is going to be developing a community play, drawn from the history of Cowley and the struggles and issues encountered by its peoples in its past and present. The play writing will come from talking and vision circles to determine a true voice for the community. This presentation will introduce new methods for creating radical theatre that could heal and empower us to overcome our differences and unite in common purpose.

To hear more about this, share stories of Cowley, and find out how to get involved, email for more information, and come to the opening event on Friday 25th November, 7-9pm here at Fusion.

Fusion Arts  
East Oxford Community Centre  
Princes Street  
East Oxford  
OX4 1DD  
01865 245735

info@fusion-arts.org

## COWLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

The speaker at our meeting in October spoke on the History of Costume Jewellery. Once again a very good speaker who incidentally has a stall on Saturdays in Templar Square and who would be quite willing to advise you on any jewellery you have. I think we all went home to check whether our own jewellery was valuable or fake!

The subject for the November meeting is The History of the Blue Cross. This is on 16th November. In December we are holding our Christmas Social hoping to be entertained by members and committee. We have a visit to the pantomime planned for January 11th. We are meeting on 2nd November for lunch at The Long Wall.

**Jean Chilton**

## EAST OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY PROJECT

The East Oxford Archaeology and History Project has been working hard this year since funding was secured. Many test pits have been dug but the main concentration of work this autumn has been at the site of the medieval leper hospital of St Bartholomew/Barnabas just off the Cowley Road near the Regal.

I have helped on a few days and luckily the weather has been very kind to us. We know that the leper hospital began in the 1120s but that the disease had died out in the 1300s and the site became an alms house and the present chapel was built in the 14th century. The present Barnabas House and Farmhouse probably date from the late 1500s. There is no evidence of what buildings were there originally.

A trench was dug all around the chapel as drainage work is needed. This was done by a small digger while archaeologists were on hand to look for any finds. This trench has been further dug by volunteers and two other trenches have been opened, one on the north side and one to the south.

Evidence of cobbled and mortar floors have been found which are probably 19th century farm buildings and deeper we have found walls that predate the chapel. The chapel was knocked about by Cromwell's troops during the Siege of Oxford in the Civil War and musket balls have been found as well as possible post-holes for the scaffolding to replace the roof after the war was over. Lots of pieces of medieval pottery and floor tile have been found as well as coloured window glass and lots of animal bone and bits of clay pipe. We await the final report as lots of work now has to go on recording and examining the huge quantity of finds. This includes microscopic surveying of soil samples to look at stuff like insects and pollen to really see what life was like on the edge of Cowley Marsh in the distant past. We know that the leper hospital was deliberately set up well outside the city but it was on a direct route in and out of Oxford. The present Cowley Road bends near the Regal but in early times it would go straight continuing over the present allotments to join Mud Lane, the present Barracks Lane and probably joining the old Roman road via the current Horspath Road.

**Joan Coleman**

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Deadline for the December Chronicle is the 25th November,  
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# EXPLANATION OF GOD

My thanks to a friend who lives abroad for the following. She writes "it was written by an 8 year old, Danny Dutton for his third grade homework assignment. The assignment was to explain God, I wonder if any of us could do as well?

"One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth. He doesn't make grown-ups, he just makes babies. I think that's because they are smaller and easier to make and he doesn't take up his valuable time teaching them to talk and walk, he can just leave that to their Mums and Dads.

God's second most important job is to listen to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on since some people, like Preachers, pray all the time not just bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to radio or TV because of this. Because he hears everything there must be a lot of noise in his ears unless he has thought of a way to turn it off.

God sees everything and hears everything and this keeps him very busy so you shouldn't waste his time going over your Mum and Dad's head asking for things they said you couldn't have. Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are many of them where I live at least there aren't any who come to our church. Jesus is God's

son. He spent a lot of time doing hard work like performing miracles and walking on water trying to teach people who didn't want to learn about God and they got tired of him and crucified him but he was good and kind and told his Father they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said OK.

His dad (God) said thanks for all he had done and all his hard work on earth and told him he didn't need to go on the road anymore and could stay in Heaven so he did. He now helps his Dad out by listening to prayers and doing things which are important so he needn't bother Dad all the time, like a secretary only more important.

If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like camp but God can. It's good to know he's around when it's dark and you are a bit scared or you get thrown in the deep end of the pool by the bigger kids.

You shouldn't always think of what God can do for you, he put me here and he can take me back any time he pleases and that's why I believe in God.

LET US PRAY: LORD GIVE US CHILDLIKE WISDOM. AMEN!

**Pat Sansom**

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## COWLEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Tuesday, 15th November 2011

Commencing at 8.00 pm

### BLUE PLAQUES, PEOPLE AND PLACES

A Talk by Eda Forbes, at United Reformed Church, Temple Road, Cowley

Membership Fee £15 (OAP £13)

Visitors welcome £3 per meeting

# SAINT OF THE MONTH St Hugh

If you visit the beautiful city of Lincoln and spend time in its magnificent cathedral, as I did earlier this year, behind the high altar you will find the tomb of Hugh, Bishop of Lincoln. His coffin was carried on its last journey by bishops and abbots and also by the reigning monarch of England at the time – King John. The year was 1200 AD and the tomb has been undisturbed ever since.

At the time of his birth in 1135 the Kingdom of England was closely linked with Normandy and much travel occurred back and forth across the Channel. Hugh was born to a noble family in Burgundy. When his mother died he was only eight years old and his father retired from his castle to a monastery taking his little son with him. Hugh was brought up to become a monk. He was a strange, serious child who did not indulge in childish games and fun, not even with the other boys in the monastery school. He was encouraged in his studies by his father.

Early in his teens he became a deacon and adhered to rigid discipline and complete separation from the world. He was admitted into the brotherhood of the monastery at Grande Chartreuse, and remained there for fifteen years. Obviously an intelligent man he was promoted to procurator of the monastery and was praised for his wisdom and diligence in business.

His outstanding ability caught the attention of the King, Henry II,

and while he was still in France he was visited by a deputation from Henry to become the prior of his new priory at Witham in Somerset. Despite Hugh's protestations of his unworthiness he was urged to take up the position. He met with the King on many occasions and Henry loved Hugh's plain speaking. He enjoyed their conversations so much that he vowed to never let Hugh leave his Kingdom even though the latter told him in no uncertain terms when the health of his soul was in jeopardy. Rumour about royalty is not confined to present-day media and such was the close friendship between the King and his prior that it was said that they could be father and son!

When Hugh was made Bishop of Lincoln he risked the King's displeasure censoring his chief forester for misdemeanours and refusing a favourite courtier his pension. Henry was furious and summoned him to his presence. Hugh came, Henry turned his face away and would not speak so the prior ignored the King, took a torn glove out of his pocket and proceeded to sew it up. At last Hugh chanced a cheeky remark which made Henry laugh. They made up the quarrel and the forester was punished.

Richard I was the next king to respect Hugh and easy terms existed between them. The Diocese of Lincoln stretched from the Fens right down to Oxford and Slough and because Richard was born at Beaumont Palace in Oxford Hugh called him "my parishioner" and said

he was responsible for the royal soul. He had heard that he had been unfaithful to the Queen and upbraided him. Richard was heard to say, "If the other bishops were like him, no king or noble could hold up his head against them."

Hugh held Richard in such high regard that, though his funeral was conducted in a particularly wild and lawless part of France he insisted on going. He showed no fear even turning off from the journey to visit the bereaved queen. He arrived just in time to show his respect to his King.

The relationship with King John was not so amiable. Hugh realised that John was devious and told him in no uncertain terms that he mistrusted lies. He would preach for so long in the King's presence that on the occasions it was whispered that he should cut his sermons short he ignored the royal request and carried on. And yet John had enough respect for his honest priest to help to bear his coffin to its final resting place.

As a bishop he had high standards of ministry. He hated flamboyant display and had simple tastes. He even carried his own luggage on the back of his horse, a thing unheard of in those times. He was generous with money and especially caring of lepers, believing that he was behaving as Jesus would have done. He loved peace and hated quarrels "more than the plague". It is said he worked many miracles.

His greatest love though was for animals and birds. Throughout

**An elderly man returned from hospital looking very worried and upset. “What’s the matter, dear?” asked his wife. “The consultant told me I have to take one of these tablets every day for the rest of my life”, he said. “Well, that’s not too bad is it?” she replied. “Oh, yes it is,” he said gloomily, “he only gave me seven.”**

his life he tamed wild birds and squirrels to feed from his hand. In a park near Lincoln there appeared a large fierce swan who made friends with the bishop. This bird would follow Hugh like a dog and hunt for bread in his pocket. It would even follow him into his house and climb the stairs to find him. The swan became his symbol and Hugh is always depicted with the bird by his side.

After a visit to the continent in September 1200AD at the age of 65 the good bishop was taken sick. He never recovered and though he lingered on for two months he died on 16th November that year. His saint day is commemorated on the day that he died.

### **WALK THROUGH THE BIBLE (New Testament)**

A whole study day – what luxury - and what a lot there was to learn! Having studied A level ‘Scripture’ at school and ‘Divinity’ at College (as they were called in those days!), as well as listening to a fair few sermons, I thought I knew or would recall most of it. But it was amazing how much extra our tutor Martin Davies, of the Walk through the Bible ministry, instilled. And in such a lively and active way – this was kinaesthetic learning with a twist. OK, so we didn’t actually walk far but we did stand a lot, to perform a whole series of movements which help us remember the structure of the New Testament; the sequence of significant events in Christ’s life and ministry; and then of Paul’s. We took away our own study book through which to work, to remind us of the day’s learning and give us leads to follow up.

This was an excellent, interactive day, fulfilling our Parish purposes of Ministry and Evangelism in fine style. We would like to have shared the experience with more parishioners and friends. If Walk through the Bible returns to Cowley, do make it a priority!

Lesley Williams

## **SECRETS OF A LONG AND HAPPY MARRIAGE**

**An old woman was sipping on a glass of wine, while sitting on the patio with her husband, and she says, “I love you so much, I don’t know how I could ever live without you”. Her husband asks, “Is that you, or the wine talking?” She replies. “It’s me – talking to the wine.”**



### **HOW IS YOUR LOCAL KNOWLEDGE?**

Each month we are going to challenge our readers to identify a Cowley landmark. Our roving photographer, Les Hemsworth, will choose a local view to get you thinking. Answer next month.

*Last month’s answer: Old Cowley Parish Hall*

# Rosanne Interviews **Alina and Nicolae Nănescu**

I have been interviewing personalities for The Chronicle for well over twenty years now and I hope it is evident to my readers that I enjoy the experiences very much. Everyone is different and everyone has a story to tell. However, this month's interview was so strikingly different that it left me wondering where to begin. No, it was not because I met a husband-and-wife couple. That I have done before, as Stella and Randford and John and Marlene will tell you. It was simply because I have never talked, in depth, to two people who were born into, and grew up under, a repressive communist regime and as a young married couple were right in the very town where the revolution, which led to democracy, took place.

Alina and Nico come from Romania. They are living at the moment in Cowley in order to support their very talented daughter, Alexandra. She is reading Chinese at Oxford University and is hoping to study for a masters' degree in the language once she has graduated. Alexandra's parents found their way to St James' Church where they have made many friends. Although they have left behind a family house in Timișoara, Romania's second city, and a mountain cabin, built by Nico, near a lake in the beautiful Romanian countryside. They are happy for the time being to be living here, close to their daughter. Alina is in love with the city of Oxford. She travelled over with Alexandra for her university interview in 2006 and as soon as they arrived in Oxford

Alina found the wonderful architecture of the city reminded her of the castles and palaces in the fairy stories told to her by her father when she was a little girl.

Nico was a country boy. His home was situated on the outskirts of a small town very near the forest. He would wander through the trees as a child, learning to love the natural world, far away from the restrictive regime which dominated everyone's life in Romania. His father was a teacher of mathematics and his mother taught in a primary school. It was from his father that he learnt the love of mathematics and its language so it is no surprise to learn that he excelled in maths at school and on to university. He grew up enjoying an outdoor life, the changing seasons and all they had to offer. He swam in the nearby rivers and lakes with his elder brother in the hot summer months and spent the bitterly cold winters skating for pleasure on those same lakes.

At university he studied electrical and mechanical engineering going on after graduation to work in a factory, designing electrical meters. It took Alina, at this point, to interrupt and tell me that he was made head of his department. At my urging, Nico then explained how his position had required him to make quite lengthy tours abroad promoting the products the factory made. He travelled to such places as Egypt, South America, Russia and other socialist countries.

Alina was the only child of

parents whose families belonged to long lines of ancient central European origins. She was born in a little town which had once been at the centre of the Austro/Hungarian Empire. It was a prosperous area with rich mineral reserves. There was a long-established cultural tradition with an early theatre centred there. Alina spoke of elderly ladies in their eighties and nineties who had descended from old aristocratic families. These amazing people continued to hold musical soirees, despite the communist regime. Alina began piano lessons at the age of three and whilst quite a young child played at these soirees. She spoke affectionately of her grandfather who had been a leading politician in the town and who, as mayor, had entertained Queen Mary of Romania, the English grand-daughter of Queen Victoria. Her grandmother spoke only Hungarian and German even teaching her little grand-daughter to say her prayers in Hungarian, something Alina does even today

So the little girl grew up not only speaking the languages she learnt from her granny but also Serbian and of course Romanian, the language used in school. Her father, a doctor, taught her French and read stories to her in a variety of languages. He was a lover of books and art. When he took her to the Uffizi Gallery in Florence she was amazed to realise that he knew, in detail, in which room which old masters' works were hung. Because of his eminent position in the world of medicine he was allowed to travel to capitalist countries beyond the



communist world taking his wife and daughter with him. Before she left school Alina had visited Italy, France, Germany, Holland, Greece, Spain, Turkey, even England with her parents.

At university she studied philology which is the relation between the structures of different languages. She majored in French and Romanian literature. She told me her home was a place full of books and antiques. Once she had graduated she taught French in a large secondary school. She was forced to move to the countryside where she and her pupils were directed by the government to work long days, from 7 am till dark, in the fields at planting and harvest times as well as keeping up with school work. Rations of food were sparse so it was little wonder that she eventually became very ill. When she had recovered enough to resume work she was sent to a factory in Timișoara as a translator for patent specialists. Nico was the most skillful researcher in the establishment and it was there that they met.

“And so”, I suggested, “you fell in love and got married?”

“Something like that!” Nico said with a smile.

In the fateful year of 1989 Alina gave birth to their daughter. While the baby was only eight months old Nico was sent on a business trip to East Germany. His parents moved in to support and help their daughter-in-law. While he was away the revolution began. Nico returned to a very unstable situation on the streets of Timișoara. A day later the dictator, Ceausescu, fled from the capital city, Bucharest, and

the revolution was over. The date was 23rd December. The joyful result for them was that the whole country could celebrate Christmas again. This had been totally banned during the regime. They could go to church and sing carols. The excitement throughout Romania can only be imagined.

With a new freedom and support from so many neighbouring European countries Alina decided to open her own book shop. Nico left the factory and started his own business. He made his own wine and chocolates. Best of all, for him, he worked with his hands creating beautiful wooden furniture. The couple had many friends and enjoyed a full social life especially when they spent time out in their mountain cabin. Alexandra grew up in a country free from oppression and now is learning how pleasant English people can be, as indeed are Nico and Alina. They hope to stay here for at least another two years before they return to family and friends in Romania.

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

A. I was naughty. I was the only child. My father was 42 and my mother 36 when I was born so I was spoiled.

N. Quiet. I had lots of friends and I loved playing in the woods.

### **Do you have a never-to-be-forgotten memory from childhood?**

A. When I was five years old my grandmother came back from Budapest with an LP of the operetta “Sylvia”. I heard it from my bed in the middle of the night (the first LP I ever heard). I still sing it.

N. I think I was four in 1952. Father Stalin died and I saw my mother cry for the first time.

### **Was your faith important to your early life?**

A. My mother was a Calvinist, my father an Orthodox Christian. My grandmother took me to the Catholic Church and I learnt to pray in Hungarian. Grandmother taught me that God is not Orthodox, Catholic or Calvinist. He is just God. My father would read the Bible to me especially on Christmas Eve.

N. Yes all the time. We waited for Christmas. It was illegal to celebrate Christmas so we sang carols in secret. My parents were teachers and could have been sent to prison if they were found out.

### **Do you have a treasured possession?**

Both: Our cabin in the mountains built by us and every object in it made by Nico. We put so much love into our mountain house.

A. I do have an antique silver fruit compot from my father's house – very precious.

### **What is your opinion of modern society?**

A. Oxford is a special town, not like other parts of England, more cosmopolitan. The approach to society is higher here. The heart of Oxford is beating and is shaping the future of England.

N. I feel things are getting better. Today's governments are really trying their best to improve things.

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# God in my life...

Regarding the title, I must say how enriched my life has been over the last few years since I decided to frequent St James' and St Francis' parish. I have made many friends and associates within the church's facilities and religious boosters. I was brought up in the C of E faith and confirmed on the same day as my darling mother in March 1956 at St Mary's Church, Leamington Spa. At that time I became a senior boy in the choir and a firm believer in the Anglican faith.

I was born in Liverpool in 1942 and my beloved parents had many ups and downs and numerous moves through force of circumstances. Having said this my education involved a lot of different schools across the country, which was unsettling at times, but nevertheless, I managed to achieve a more than satisfactory schooling. Throughout the years I kept up my religious sincerity even in

my regular service in the Royal Air Force where I served both at home postings and in Germany. After leaving the RAF, occupations were varied, i.e. salesmanship, industrial security, work at Cowley car factory, hospital portering, to mention but a few. Throughout the years I have enjoyed meeting all kinds of people and offering help when necessary, which has been gratefully received by the majority.

To conclude, I must say that I enjoy participating in all the church's activities, i.e. choir, services, Parochial and Church Committees and various social activities in the Church Centre. My thanks to Howard, all the ministerial team and all participants of St James' and St Francis'. All of you have impressed me to continue my sincere followings of Christ's doctrine and the Holy Spirit.

**Gerald Ives**

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## Greetings from us all at Church Cowley Primary School!

So much has been happening at CCSJ since the start of the new academic year. Our Y6 children have just returned from a fantastic week 'Outward Bound' at Kilvrough Manor on the stunning Gower Peninsular. Unusually the weather was fantastic which meant the children had great fun canoeing, caving, rock climbing and beach walking. Our school choir are hard at work rehearsing with the massed Oxford children's choir who will be performing at the Royal Albert Hall on the evening of Wednesday 9th November.

On the home front, we continue to enrich our children's learning with a variety of visits and activities linked to the curriculum. Y4 had great fun working with staff and children from Oxford Spire Academy on the 'Rocket Science' project in which the children had to design, build and test how far they could get a rocket to fly using air propulsion.

Y2 had a super day working with a visiting workshop acting out scenes doing activities based on the 'Great Fire of London' and Y6 worked with

staff from the Pitt Rivers Museum in school to create their own historic displays about their lives after visiting the museum. Y1 also really enjoyed their trip to the 'Toy Museum' at Woodstock.

Our recently re-established Parents and Friends Association is now busy planning Christmas fundraising activities and would value any support that anyone might wish to offer.

We continue to strengthen our links with St James Church. Y1, Y2 and Y3 had a very successful 'Harvest Festival' and performed a mixture of poetry and songs to a packed congregation of children, parents and of course Reverend Thornton who led our prayers and thoughts during the service. Y4, Y5 and Y6 also celebrated harvest with a lovely service in the school hall. We are planning to hold traditional 'Christingle' services in the church in December as well as a number of Christmas productions at school as we head towards the festive season.

# Gardening

Can you believe the season? It is the last week in October and I am still harvesting ripe tomatoes from my outdoor tomatoes. I still have not brought all my pelargoniums under cover, and the primroses are in flower! I think that the tulip bulbs are not in any hurry to be planted yet. Are we about to get a foul winter, or are we going to have Christmas lunch in the garden? (By the time you read this, the snow may have come and I shall be cursing the fact that I have not put the pelargoniums inside.)

On the TV I saw a different way to take pelargonium cuttings. A separate leaf and its stem, each with a small 'heel' were dibbed into the very edge of a pot. This will take up less space (at first) than the usual way I use of taking shoots, and stripping most of the leaves off. I shall try this. Do let me know if you use this method or will try it later.

The Jerusalem artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*) is still in full leaf. They haven't flowered again this year, and they are taller than a man. I have never

had any sunflower-like flowers from them, but there is always another year! I will cut the tops away soon for my compost, and harvest, a little at a time, saving a few larger tubers for re-sowing. It is not a very friendly root - rather windy, but is an interesting addition to the winter fare, either boiled, stewed or roasted.

Joking apart, there are still some jobs to do before the winter hits. Dahlias need digging up and drying once they are blackened by the frosts. I wouldn't risk leaving them in the ground after last winter. There are various ways to protect plants in pots - lag the pot, truss the leaves up and fleece the plant, but remember that wet and cold are the main killers, so raise the pots up from the ground to allow good drainage.

The garden colour is really gorgeous this year and it is a joy just to admire the reds and golds. So enjoy the view as you work - it may all be gone soon, leaving soggy grey and messy black.

**Diana Pope**

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## Continued from page 9

### **If you could effect a huge change in the world, what would you do?**

A. Take footballers' enormous salaries and give them to starving children.

N. I just want everybody to love each other. I would get rid of all enemies.

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

A. Travel, read and listen to

music - classical and jazz. I like what Leonard Cohen once said, "There is a hole in everything. That is how the light gets in".

N. I love the smell of wood so I love working with wood. I read books mostly connected with scientists. I enjoy discovering music - jazz, The Beatles, things like that. Oh and I do enjoy Bill Bryson's books.

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

A. I would like to become part of Oxford. Also I want to end my pilgrimage to Santiago da Compostela. The shell is a special thing in Romania and I feel it here in Oxford in the shells on the coat of arms at Wadham where I work and also in St James' Church.

N. I hope God will give me enough good health to spend six months in Romania and six months in Oxfordshire each year for many years to come.

# ST FRANCIS NEWS : OUR FAREWELL TO PATRICK AND LYDIA

Our church organists in general are often underrated and undervalued people in the Church of England. Yet they are essential to our worship, and greatly enhance it. The organ as an instrument really lends itself to our services; with its rich sonorous tone and resonant cords, it underpins our hymns and responses in an amazing way. So that a really skilled craftsman on its keyboard is someone of great value. Patrick, our organist at St Francis, was just such a craftsman, a superb musician, as was immediately apparent when he started to play, and his music gave us all a great deal of pleasure. Yet there was much more to Patrick than just his music. We soon realised that his faith was really strong and important to him. So that we were not entirely surprised when he announced that he had applied for training in the ministry, and glad for him when he was accepted. That he had come to this decision during his time at St Francis, we felt was an honour for our church. So when it came to saying goodbye it was an occasion where our sadness was also mixed with gladness for his future. And it was very clear that everyone present at our Bring and Share lunch to mark the occasion, held him in great affection, as they did his young wife Lydia.

Apart from the musical side, Patrick and Lydia gave great commitment to the general running of our church, which was of immense value when Susannah, our priest, became very ill, and also has been so ever since. They motored in every Sunday all the way from Middleton Stoney, the other side of Bicester,

quite a long journey. They would arrive very early and immediately set about lining up things ready for the service. Liaising with the visiting clergy over any tricky bits in the Liturgy that might need their attention. They also involved themselves in the changing of the church furniture ready for the week ahead.

When it came to the design and planning of our special 80th Anniversary Service, Patrick really came into his own, and gave us a service to be proud of.

He produced lovely Carol Services, enlisting some of his young college friends to form the nucleus of a choir, and gave us superb singing.

His Marriage Service was something we shall never forget. So full of life and colour and rich in special music. Lydia, his very talented young wife in her own quiet way, has also done much for our church, and we are grateful to her.

So all in all, we have so much to thank this delightful young couple for at St Francis. Our gratitude was expressed verbally, and practically with some nice presents, a beautiful bouquet of flowers, and a gift token, to give them some spending money.

As we left the church to return home we all felt so pleased that the occasion had gone so well.

Patrick has promised to come back and see us, and not to lose touch, and we look forward to that and will be praying for him in his training.

**John Shreeve**

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## The Choir

When we had a party for Brian Tidy when he had served fifty years as our organist, we invited all the choir boys we could. I spoke to two ladies at the party and they said they sang in the choir when Mr Beauchamp was vicar but they were not allowed to process and they had to sit behind a pillar out of sight of the congregation. An elderly ex choir boy I spoke to told me the same, girls were allowed to sing but not to be seen.

I wonder if it was Father Whye who allowed visible girls? Brian may know.

**Una Dean**

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**A lady, who for some years, had become increasingly hard of hearing, was excitedly telling her friend about her new hearing aid. "It wasn't cheap, you know, but believe me it's worth every penny," she declared. "Oh, what kind is it?" asked the friend. "Half-past three," was the answer.**

# THE MYSTERIOUS 'GREEN MEN'

If you look at the organ in St James Church you will see two gilded carved faces. These are called Green Men and there are many other examples in many other churches. It is a mystery why they are allowed to appear in churches as they have often been linked to paganism.

Last year I went to a talk given by Tim Healey, a local writer and musician, who has a passion about Green Men, and I recently went on a follow-up walk around Oxford with him and others to have a look at some examples. They are everywhere. Get your eye in and you will see them. Starting at Magdalen Bridge, we meandered up the High via St Mary's Church and Brasenose then a look at Carfax Tower and down St Aldates' via Pembroke College and then to Christ Church and the Cathedral. Tim described how there are two types of Green Men. The leafy kind, where the face merges into leaves, and the second 'disgorging' types where the nose, eyes or mouth discharge vegetation which

is leafy and often has grapes or acorns. They seem to show abundance and fruitfulness. The faces are usually human but early ones can be cat- or lion-like in appearance.

Tim said that there is no sign of these representations in Celtic or pre-Roman times and the ones found in ancient Rome were just the leafy mask types often associated with Bacchus, the Roman god of wine.

There is a theory that these representations came via the silk route from Indian and Buddhist traditions where similar, but disgorging faces, are seen and that medieval carvers in both wood and stone elaborated their own. There is nothing written about what ideas the masons had of what they are supposed to mean or represent.

However, Green Men are often sited at thresholds or above doors or at the chancel in a church. Some believe that they are there to fend off evil spirits and that guarding the entrance

ensures peace and harmony in the building. Many of the colleges built in the 19th century were by the architect 'Oxford' Jackson who used the Green Man motif on many of his buildings. Because of pollution and age, many of the medieval stone carvings of grotesques on earlier buildings have gone but inside in the 15th century cloisters of Christ Church there are many examples. However the masons creating the entrance to the cathedral in the late eighteenth century, still included several.

I have yet to visit New College to take a look at some particularly fine 14th century misericord carvings, including Green Men, in the chapel.

I have given little clues as to the exact places we saw Green Men on my walk. Go and have a look for yourselves!

Incidentally, the organ now in St James' Church, originated in St Martins' Church which was demolished to leave Carfax Tower.

**Joan Coleman**

All our news this month is good. First we have the result of our fund raising wine, cheese and poetry evening. We made a profit of £41 to send to Mothers' Union Wheels Appeal. More than that, though, it is good to report that the poetry evening was a very happy occasion. Most of our guests were complementary about the very nice buffet. They and members brought a marvellous selection of poems and with willing and efficient clearing up a great time was had by all.

Sister Margaret Anne's talk at the branch meeting was interesting, delightful and sprinkled with that lovely sense of humour that we all remember and enjoyed when she was part of our clergy team.

Our next meeting will be a "sell-out" I am sure. By that I mean that no-one will want to miss Mark Oxbrow's return visit to Mothers' Union when he will be telling us about the missionary work he has recently been engaged in in Malaysia. Visitors, as ever, are more than welcome. We meet this month on Monday, 20th November, at 2.30 pm in the Church Centre.

The area winter meeting is being held this year in The Exeter Hall, Kidlington on 29th November. The keynote speaker is Rev. Louise Brown and her subject will be "If Jesus came back today would he start with the Mothers' Union". Our branch leader says "No" her reason being that he already knows we are on his side! Some of us are not so sure as we think that there are one or two details he would probably want to sort out. It should be an interesting day. Timing for the meeting is 10 am (for coffee) to 3 pm. It is suggested that those attending take a picnic lunch.

## SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR NOVEMBER

In 1859 on 2nd November the Maharajah of Cashmere presented Queen Victoria with a solid gold bedstead.

Again on 2nd November but this time in 1924 the very first crossword was published in the Sunday Express.

The first woman member of Parliament was installed in the House of Commons on 7th November 1919. Her name was Nancy Astor. She was notoriously good at frequently clashing verbally with Winston Churchill throughout her career. On one occasion she accused "Mr Churchill, you are drunk". Back came the reply, "Yes, madam, and you are ugly, but I shall be sober in the morning!"

On Armistice Day, 11th November 1920, two years after the First World War had ended, the body of an unknown soldier was buried in Westminster Abbey. He was buried with full state honours as a mark of respect for all those who fell in that terrible war.

The famous bell "Big Ben" was struck for the first time on 18th November 1858. It was named after Sir Benjamin Hall and weighed 13 ½ tons.

23rd November in 1963 the first programme of a new television series was broadcast. It starred William Hartnell as the first "Dr Who".

We end this month with the death of Oscar Wilde. The year was 1900, the date 30th November and the city was Paris. Amongst his last words were "Either this wallpaper goes, or I do."



# NEWS FROM EMMAUS

It is quite a long time now since I wrote an article about the Emmaus Centre and the great work they do in our community so I was delighted to be welcomed back there the other day as I was able to find out their latest news for The Chronicle.

Perhaps, first, I had better remind our readers about the concept behind the organisation which was founded amongst the homeless poor in Paris decades ago. The driving force is to help people who have reached a low point in their lives and have decided to change. Mainly homeless, jobless people seek to become companions of Emmaus. In order to be accepted into the Centre they are required to turn their backs on alcohol and drugs and take themselves off benefit. Having made those decisions, Emmaus then helps them to make a fresh start.

When I made my first visit to the centre it was very new, all newly-painted, bare walls, adequately, though quite sparsely, furnished and the garden was just a patch of earth. How things have changed. The companions, 24 of them, now live in a comfortable home, with photographs and paintings on the walls, soft sofas (all donated) and the most beautiful mural you could wish to see in the entrance hall (this painted by one of their

members). Steve, who welcomed me, was keen to tell me about their latest ventures.

They are the most amazing fund raisers. I saw an impressive list of charities which have benefitted from their efforts including Helen and Douglas House, MacMillan Nurses, Help for Heroes, the Pakistani flood disaster appeal and SSNAP. They also take on all kinds of community projects such as building a new fence round a play area for the children of homeless mums. They also go into numerous youth clubs to talk, warning the young people about the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Of course these talks have real impact as they are speaking from first-hand experience. They have also set to and repainted the premises of a newly-formed after-school club.

Four of the Emmaus companions have been out to Bosnia where they helped to build and establish a community centre which had been destroyed by the war out there. However, I think one thing which Steve was most proud to tell me about was that two of their guys have changed their lives so much that they are now fully employed, have left the centre and are established in their own flat. This is a mark of real success and so the work goes on.

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## News from St Christopher's CE Primary School

We had a great end to our summer term. Our Year 6 SATs results exceeded our challenging targets and progress and attainment in year groups was higher than previous years. The staff have worked incredibly hard over the last two years and we now have solid foundations and practices to raise standards and attainment further. I am incredibly lucky to work with such an enthusiastic and dedicated team.

The final piece of great news was that we won the Oxford Mail School Build competition. Miss Harris, one of our Key Stage 2 teachers had created plans for a stimulating outdoor learning environment and work has begun to ensure that her wonderful plans become reality. Thank you to all of you who collected the vouchers on our behalf – it was very much appreciated. Once the work has been finished we will be inviting people to come and have a look.

**Alison Holden - Headteacher**

# The Origins of Cowley

## Part Sixteen

It is well recorded in history that the English Civil War divided the country, communities, even families who chose to side either with the King or the Parliamentarians. There seems to be no archival evidence to tell on which side the villagers of our three small Cowley villages fell.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a devout Roman Catholic family, the Napiers, lived here. It was probable with support from them that a Benedictine house for priests was established under Charles I's queen, Henrietta Maria. That might suggest that at least part of Cowley supported the Royalists. A cousin of theirs Sir Robert Napier, an MP in London, was arrested in 1651 after the Civil War. Thomas Napier from Cowley was also arrested for failing to cooperate with the authorities in the arrest of his cousin. This would seem to indicate under-cover activities against the victorious Commonwealth.

However, it was very well recorded that whereas the University of Oxford was mainly a strong supporter of the King, the townsfolk, including the town council sided with parliament. It is my guess that would also be true of Cowley folk swayed, I am sure, by the fact that on its way to establish Oxford as its garrison town the Royalist Army was encouraged to help themselves to food, livestock and certainly money from the simple peasants in the villages through which they marched and rode. That most certainly would not have gone down very well as the Cavaliers swept on from Abingdon through the villages east of Oxford.

As we have seen in former episodes, the Cowley folk were able to augment their meagre livings by taking what produce they could spare to market. As not only a Royalist garrison but the city chosen by the King and Queen in which to take refuge during the war Oxford was crammed to over-flowing with rich courtiers, painters, poets, musicians, even "ladies of the court". All of these people were used to rich diets and fine clothes. It would have been rich pickings for Cowley villagers to take their eggs, butter, fruit, honey and so on to sell each week. The

sheep farmers too would have had fine wool to be woven or felted into clothing.

The Chancellor of the University was also Clerk of the Market and set the top prices that sellers could ask. They are recorded as:

*A pound of butter, sweet and new, the best in the market:*  
0s.6d.

*A pound of the best cheese:*  
0s.2d.

*Eggs, six, for:* 0s.2d.

*Best lamb at the butchers by the pound:*  
0s.3d.

*Hay and litter, day and night, within every inn and stable:*  
0s.8d.

Special areas of the town were designated for the sale of goods. Cornmarket, of course, is obvious, bread was sold in the middle of Carfax, meat in Butchers Row (now Queen Street) and the butter stalls were at the top of The High.

It would not have been easy to get into the town as the Royalists set up defences all around St Clements, cutting off the lane leading to Cowley at the Plain (the edge of our parish). Also Magdalen Bridge was fortified but, of course, provisions from the country were welcome so access was agreed.

In 1644 the plague hit Oxford. Since it is recorded that only three Cowley people died of the dreadful disease it would seem that our villagers stayed well away, lowered their heads, and got on with their normal agricultural lives until the danger passed.

One piece of enterprise which gives me great pleasure to record, though, is that our clever villagers discovered a fine seam of pure white clay on Shotover Hill. By the sixteen hundreds tobacco smoking was fashionable amongst the rich young men of the country. There were scores of those in Oxford at the time so Cowley folk learned how to make tobacco pipes from white clay which were also carried to market for sale. Who says that we Cowley people are not resourceful?!



# Recipes

Apples had to feature in this month's recipes simply because we have so many to use up!

## TOFFEE APPLES

10 good eating apples

10 wooden sticks

For the Toffee:

1 lb soft brown sugar

2oz butter

2 teaspoons malt vinegar

5 fluid ozs water

2 tablespoons golden syrup

In large saucepan combine all the ingredients

Heat over moderate hob stirring constantly

Once the sugar and butter are thoroughly melted increase the heat and bring mixture to the boil

Cook for 10-15 minutes until the toffee forms a "hard crack" when a little is dropped into cold water. (Be careful the mixture is very hot by now)

Remove from heat

Spread non-stick baking paper over work surface

Speare the apples with the sticks and dip into the toffee mixture

Set them on the baking paper to set

These can be stored till required in greaseproof paper or an air-tight tin (or eaten as soon as they are cool!)

## HOLLOW APPLE PUDDING

(A very old recipe known in some country areas as Apple Hat)

A little butter for greasing

5ozs self-raising flour

3ozs shredded suet

3 cooking apples (peeled and sliced)

2 or 3ozs brown sugar

Grated rind of lemon (optional)

1 oz raisins

1 oz currants

1 tablespoon water

4 fluid ozs milk

Sift flour into bowl and stir in suet. Add enough milk to form a soft dough.

Knead dough till smooth on lightly floured surface

Roll dough into a circle about 10 inches across

Cut out a quarter of the dough circle and reserve

Grease a pudding basin, then use the  $\frac{3}{4}$  circle of dough to line it remembering to dampen the join in order to seal it

Fill the pudding with layers of apple, sugar, dried fruit and lemon peel. Sprinkle with water.

Roll out reserved pastry to make a lid. Dampen the edges and press firmly down on to the pudding

Cover with non-stick baking paper and tie this down with string

Place pudding in large saucepan and pour boiling water in until it reaches about  $\frac{2}{3}$  rds of the height of the basin. Keep an eye on this and top up with boiling water as required.

Cover and steam over low heat for 3 hours

Turn pudding out and serve with cream or custard. 7

# RESTORE

Several times a year The Chronicle receives the Restore newsletter telling us about the events taking place in the Restore Centre in Manzil Way off Cowley Road, and their sister premises at Elder Stubbs allotments. Of particular interest to readers will be their news about them joining in the big East Oxford Archaeology and History Project currently happening in our area. We are including this and also Maria's Story which highlights the great work they do. They are certainly worthy of great support.

Elder Stubbs Gardeners Dig for History:

Anticipation is rising as Restore's very own "Time Team" prepares to unearth the secret history hidden beneath the Elder Stubbs allotments.

A group of fifteen service users have been trained by Archeox (The East Oxford Archaeology and History Project) and will take part in a two-day test-pit excavation at the end of August. The Archeox Project, which held its launch event at Restore's Manzil Way site last September, is a four-year project run by Oxford University's Department of Continuing Education. It aims to discover more about the little-

explored history of East Oxford. In the course of three lively training sessions, our Time Team learned about modern excavation techniques, looked over maps revealing the changing history of the area and examined Roman artefacts and pottery that have been discovered nearby. One group member commented, 'It was really fascinating and the instructors really got us involved.' Archeox Project officer Jane Harrison was equally enthusiastic, saying 'We really enjoyed meeting everyone'.

During the 2 days, our Time Team will get their hands dirty helping with surveying, excavating a test-pit and washing finds like pottery. At this stage, the archaeologists do not have any specific clues as to what they are likely to find. Jane Harrison said, 'It will be a voyage of discovery.' Let's hope they strike lucky. To find out more about the Archeox Project, visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.archeox.net"](http://www.archeox.net) www.archeox.net.

## **Maria's Story:**

My first approach to Restore was after I had left work in September 2008 through ill-health. In previous years I had suffered bipolar and been very ill at times. My psychiatrist recommended

Restore as a good starting point in getting back to work, gaining some qualifications and meeting people with similar problems.

I attended Restore's Skilled for Health course which I found very useful. Restore helped me to access adult literacy and IT skills courses and I finally achieved my ITQ level 2 and literacy level 2. I have also made some good friends through Restore.

For many years I had only gone out to go to work and do my shopping and had not felt able to go out to anything else. Restore helped build my confidence and I gradually returned to a social life. It has been a great help having advice on job seeking and the help and support of Restore's employment specialist. At the end of 2009 I started voluntary work in a charity shop, which helped me to gain confidence and put some structure into my life.

In September 2010 I was successful in gaining a permanent part time job. This is a retail job and I enjoy meeting people and get the chance to connect with others. It has given me a purpose to my days. I wouldn't have come this far without the help of Restore's employment specialists.

## RIDE AND STRIDE AT ST FRANCIS SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT

Dear Editor

June Smith was very effusive in her praise for helpers with the ride and stride, but as far as St Francis is concerned, she has got her facts wrong.

Katherine Woods did not man the church all day on her own. There was no way that I would have allowed that situation to happen as Deputy Warden. In point of fact, Marlene and I were on duty as welcomers for pretty well the whole morning, Katherine reported in for duty round about lunch time and may well have been on her own after then.

If you do not want to take my word for this, then check it out with Richard Chand and David Stanley. They both did some riding for the church and signed in at St Francis during our time of duty.

We did have a poor response to our appeal for helpers, and I am sorry that Katherine was left to cope on her own. However, both Marlene and I felt that we had done more than our fair share, and had some shopping to do in the afternoon.

So I would be grateful if you could set the record straight in your next issue.

Regards

**John Shreeve**

### RIDE AND STRIDE

I am pleased to say we have raised the following:

St James: £393.50

St Francis: £106.52

Total for Cowley Parish: £500.02

A very good figure and well done to both churches.

June Smith

## St Francis Primary School - October 2011

Once again we have had a very busy few weeks at St Francis School. The children and staff have all been working hard and have done some very interesting and enjoyable things as well.

The Year 3 and 4 classes enjoyed a day at Hill End camp as part of their 'rocks' topic. They had the opportunity to learn more about how rocks are formed and to dig in different soils.

Writing workshops were held in the hall for children and their families. The workshops were based on the stories "Dear Zoo" and "The Three Billy Goats Gruff" and there were exciting activities including mask making, writing in foam, drama and puppets. The afternoons were very well supported and it is hoped they will encourage families to enjoy writing.

Children in Years 2-6 walked to church on St Francis Day, October 4th. Revd Howard Thornton and Lesley Williams were there to welcome us. We learnt more about the life of St Francis and we were shown pictures of the saint. We sang hymns

and some of the children read prayers that they had written. We were joined by some parents and carers. There was also a harvest assembly in school and a collection of tins and packets of food was sent to the food bank.

We hope the Year 1 and 2 children will be able to have a guided tour of the church in November. They have a visit to the mosque planned for early November.

We have received an email from our international partner school, Bedford School, South Africa. They enjoyed sharing letters from our children and are very grateful for the donations of books and stationery we sent across. More recently we have sent a scrap book of photographs, school newsletters and even a copy of The Chronicle!

Plans are already underway for the Christmas bazaar which will be held in school on Friday November 25th from 3:10 to 4:30 and we hope this will raise lots of money for our school.

**Sarah Lacey**

# THE OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY CENTRE

As you reach the traffic lights at the road junction where the former St Luke's church stands you cannot help noticing the new plaque on the wall telling you that you are opposite the Oxfordshire History Centre. You may remember that before its re-opening in July it was called the Oxfordshire Records Office. On several occasions, whilst sitting on the bus from Oxford I have heard people say, "I wonder what goes on in there?" So I thought it was high time I went and found out, after all it does stand bang in the middle of our parish.

In response to a visit to the reception, I received a telephone call from one of the curators, Mark Priddy, who agreed to spare me some of his busy time. I spent the best part of an afternoon questioning him on how things have changed since the Records Office originally moved in.

The first archives to be stored there were mainly pre-1974 records such as those of the County Council, parishes throughout Oxfordshire, boundary changes encompassing such places as Abingdon, Kennington and so on and details of private families. Many county businesses also stored their records there such as the various breweries in Oxfordshire and the different Witney blanket factories.

Down at the Westgate library many valuable local printed and published archives were stored. They also held microfilm of all local newspapers and a vast collection of photographic material. People searching for historic matter especially those researching families would find themselves travelling from one centre in Oxford up to Cowley to collect data.

The situation got to the point where the collections would be better under one roof. The staff merged, new storage facilities were built in the old church and after a big reorganisation the new History Centre is up and running. To add to the collection the County Health Archives have also found accommodation there (with a

new strong room built to store them) after being kept at the Warneford Hospital for many years. Mark told me that medical students use these old records when researching details of past epidemics and trends in the development of medical science as part of their degree courses.

The Centre has as many as 600 people a week using the facilities it provides. An enormous amount of the data is stored on computer, of course, thus providing instant response for those looking up old parish records, census statistics and so on. Many visitors will spend up to four hours at a time researching family history. I mentioned that I did not ever seem to have time to start on my family tree and was told that, yes, you do need lots of time once you start as the whole process is addictive and absorbing. In order to use the Centre you do need a reader's ticket and are registered but to get one is a simple process and offers you access to other county record offices in other parts of Britain, very useful if your research leads you to other areas.

Some of our parish archives are lodged at the History Centre already and more will be joining them shortly. I took along, for Mark's perusal, a sample of some of the wide ranging material we still have to store safely. He has promised to list any which they decide to keep so that any of us can have access in the future by just referring to the list he will provide. He asked me to ask our readers for any archives they feel they would like to share. For instance diaries (unless they hold secrets) and old letters of historic value, theatre programmes, Oxford United (or Headington) memorabilia and, best of all, photographs. There is a system whereby the Centre will hold and, of course, preserve everything it values but the donor continues to maintain ownership. So, do you have old papers etc. tucked away which would enrich the known history of Oxfordshire? The History Centre would love to hear from you if you do. You can reach them by telephone on 01865 398205.

# Churchwardens Report

A reminder that God has a sense of humour came with the advent of Back to Church Sunday when the careful planning for the services was put in jeopardy by discovering that not only the Audio Visual system now vital for the Church@the Centre was not working but also both sets of keys to access it had gone missing! A hasty search revealed zilts and it was left to the leaders to cobble up and accept a much reduced but still adequate alternative. No sooner had we resigned ourselves to this state of affairs when a set of keys was uncovered and full service was restored. I don't think many were aware of this at the time. It is my perception that God frequently puts us in situations that we feel uncomfortable in. He allows it to happen and asks that we may be willing to accept and trust in Him. We aren't always asked to go through with it. It's really a test of our willingness to do His will however difficult it might be. It's that which helps us to grow.

Update - 23/10/11 Church@the Centre is alive and well! Today we had Audio-visuals, keyboard, guitar, bongo-box, 2 miked vocalists. Come along and bring your instruments!

Have you reviewed your Will lately? This is something we are advised to do regularly every 5 or so years as our circumstances change and because it is part of our responsibility to have our financial affairs in order, as good stewards of the gifts God gives us.

Perhaps you would want to consider along with providing for loved ones what you might also give to charities and this might include, assuming you have supported the work of the Church during your lifetime, any consideration for the Cowley Ministry. Really this is about making informed choices and literature will be available about this subject and how one might go about it at different times. There are now some leaflets at the back of St James Church.

At the PCC level perhaps we should consider forming a policy on the use of such gifts bearing in mind the donors vision for the Church which could be taken into account.

It is also possible to make use in November of the WillAid scheme whereby a local solicitor will make up your will for free in exchange for a contribution to a selection of well known charities.

**Dave Stanley**

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## **BOOK OF THE MONTH : A LIFE LIKE OTHER PEOPLE'S**

Alan Bennett's book is a poignant memoir of his childhood and of his parent's marriage recalling Christmases with Grandma Peel and the lives, loves and deaths of his unforgettable Aunties Kathleen and Myra – his mother's sisters.

He relives family crises, early parties and the lost tradition of musical evenings round the piano with a wry observation and understatement that has earned him a place in the forefront of contemporary writing. With the sudden descent of his mother into depression and later dementia, a long-held family secret concerning Grandpa Peel is uncovered.

This is a moving and, at times, funny work, of autobiography by one of our best loved English writers who has been our leading dramatist since the success of "Beyond the Fringe" in the 1960s. In "A Life like Other Peoples" he is hampered, as he sees it, by a family that never manages to be like other families. Life is generally something that happens elsewhere.

He has an ordinary childhood. His father a butcher who enjoys playing the violin, his mother a reader of women's magazines who dreams of coffee mornings, cocktail parties and life 'down south', and an older brother. He explains that the scarcity of photographs in the book can be put down to the war and just after when film was hard to come by. And nor was it cheap coming in rolls of eight or twelve and the changing of the roll always a fiddly business.

I enjoyed this book immensely – it is the sort of book one finds difficult to put down. I am pretty sure it must still be available. It was £12.99 in hb, published by Faber and the ISBN is 9780571248124.

**Marlene Shreeve**

## 2011 Mission Giving - Where the money went

K is only in her 30's, but acute anxiety, depression and lack of self-confidence has resulted in her becoming socially isolated. Her Archway driver has given her the support and encouragement to get out of the house. Archway has been given £300 to help subsidise the transport to take people like K to Archway social events. Several members of our congregations help with this local Oxford charity and tell us how important the work is.

Another local organisation is Daybreak (£300) which has 3 centres, our nearest being at The Clockhouse in Blackbird Leys. Here, day clubs welcome those suffering from dementia and give support, as well as a break, for their carers.

One Wednesday, I will go and help at the Community Soup Kitchen (£366) held at the Asian Cultural Centre in Manzil Way. Between 12 and 2pm, hot food and drinks are given to the homeless and needy.

Also serving local people is the Community Emergency Food Bank (£200). CEF is based at St. Francis' Church and also benefited by food donations from our Harvest services.

A national organisation, the Church Housing Trust (£100), funds projects including those for young people leaving care, ex-service personnel, women's refuges, those needing alcohol and drug rehabilitation and places for other vulnerable homeless people

Parents and Children Together or PACT (£100) is an organisation within the Oxford Diocese which was formed a century ago to help families - homeless teenage parents, victims of domestic violence, help with fostering and adoption - and makes a considerable impact on those it supports.

Likewise, the Mothers' Union (£150) fundraises to help families internationally, in 83 countries, as well as in Britain. For example, volunteers have been trained in HIV/AIDS awareness, early cancer signs, agricultural skills, health and nutrition training and many other essential skills in developing countries.

Oxford Youth Works (£350) is an organisation that concentrates on taking the Christian message to our local school communities by working with young people on projects that engage and inspire

them.

Faith2Share (£500) is based in Cowley and the International Director is our own Mark Oxbrow. He coordinates a global network of Christian mission movements and supports individuals like Oliver Ofoegbu in Togo who has brought together 15 churches across this very poor country squeezed between Ghana and Benin. Many new Christians have escaped a life governed by the local animist religion that practises voodoo worship.

We are sponsoring the recording of a book! Yes, a donation of £500 to the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) means that a whole children's book will be recorded so that a young blind person will get the benefit of hearing it through their Talking Books service. It will have a dedication from Cowley Parish. Watch this space for details later.

Medecine Sans Frontiere (£150) is truly "Doctors without Borders". They have been on the scene to give medical and humanitarian help in all the recent emergencies in Sudan, Somalia, Ivory Coast, India and after the Japanese earthquake. Dr Martial Ledecq in Western Ivory Coast talks about treating the wounded from war. "Their treatment requires very specific and precise surgery. People feel humiliated by their wounds ... That's why we have to help restore patients' dignity, in addition to providing surgical care".

Mercy Ships (£100) provides a similar service but from hospital ships. They also treat those disabled by disfigurement.

The Leprosy Mission (£100) works to fund the treatment and rehabilitation of those suffering from leprosy. They are also funding research into the causes and consequences of this disease. Last year they expanded their work to China "to bring healing and hope to impoverished and marginalised communities".

Many thanks to those who suggested charities that we should consider with our giving this year and to those who helped make the decisions. Finances will continue to be difficult next year and we probably will not be able to be as generous.

**Joan Coleman - Parish Treasurer**

ST. JAMES' CHURCH

# CHRISTMAS GIFTS WITH A DIFFERENCE

Saturday 12th November 2011

St James' Church Centre, Beauchamp Lane, Cowley  
10.00 am to 2.00 pm

*enjoy tea, coffee or a lunch time soup while you shop*

home made biscuits & cakes (including Christmas cakes)

home made jams and marmalades

toiletries

toys and crafts

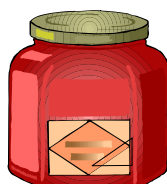
gift stationery

Phoenix cards

accessories

second-hand books

and lots, lots more



*prices you can afford*

*raffle with the first prize of a  
meal for two at the Karma Indian Restaurant plus many other prizes*

All proceeds will go towards urgent repairs to keep St James church  
bells ringing for many years to come. Please come and join us.

# 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

Una Dean

### Time / Venue

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:

Tuesday alternate afternoons at 2:30pm in St Francis Church

(John Streeve/Molly Oliver)

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.

*The parish office is currently staffed by volunteers.*

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.

*Associate Priest*

**Revd Richard Chand**

richard@cowleyteamministry.co.uk

*Non-Stipendiary Ministers:*

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*Churchwardens:*

**David Stanley** Tel: 776602

**Norah Shallow** Tel: 765199

*Deputy Wardens:*

**Margaret Martin** Tel: 718532

**John Shreeve**

*Hall Bookings*

**Pat Sansom** Tel: 778516

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