



Come and join Messy Church
for fun activities to think about

Easter

Toys crafts songs Story baking

All ages are welcome

at St James' Church Centre,
Beauchamp Lane, Cowley, OX4 3LF

Good Friday 15th April

10am – 11.30am

For more details contact:

Mary Bayliss 01865 778 596

m.bayliss41@btinternet.com

or contact the Cowley Parish Church Office 01865 747 680



From the Editors

Sally Hemsworth and Nicki Stevens

Writing this makes us wonder if spring is here! Snow and sleet are falling, and a walk to the shops means wrapping up very warm! But we are a tough lot – an outside service at St James for Mothering Sunday, albeit where blankets were provided, shows this – the daffodils handed out were a cheery sight.

This month we remember the Falklands War. Hugh Williamson, whose father was a working priest in the Parish some years ago, has contributed an article to this month's Chronicle showing how his family linked with the Cowley man who died. A personal reminder for this Parish.

Our thoughts are also with the horrific war taking place in Ukraine and the suffering of its population. Words fail to describe the horrors its people are going through. You will know that there have been collection buckets in the churches for a few weeks. £610 has been sent so far, and the Parish will continue to collect during the run up to Easter – donations can be made via the buckets in the churches or donations can be made to the bank account or given to Joan or Geoff. More details are given in The Link.

It is good to see that Pat and Brian are trying to arrange day trips rather than a holiday – let's hope they get a lot of takers for the trip to Weymouth.

Something even shorter is the Parish Walk – our next one planned for 4 April is a walk to Iffley and then across to the Tandem "pub" for refreshments! Details of walks are given in the Link – they are usually every two weeks, but this may vary.

It is good to see that the Film Club's return is successful – there is a friendly atmosphere, with an opportunity to chat to others at the beginning and during the interval, over coffee/tea and cakes.

Our usual plea – ideas for articles, book reviews, recipes, jokes, cartoons are very welcome.

Happy Easter.

Nicki and Sally

St Peter and St Pauls Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church

St Peter and St Paul's Jacobite Syrian Orthodox Church meets at St Francis Church fortnightly. Recently additional sessions were booked as training days for the young members of their congregation, and we have had the following report from them:

We are happy to tell you that our church came into the first position in the children's zonal competitions. It was a competition between five churches from the south-central zone of England. So the hard work we took in preparing the children for the competition has been paid off. I would like to pass our sincere thanks for your help in facilitating the church hall for preparing the children for the competitions.

Our congratulations to the young people who participated in the competition.

A word from the Rectory

This year we need the Easter message more than ever. We need to feel resurrection energy flowing through every area of life.

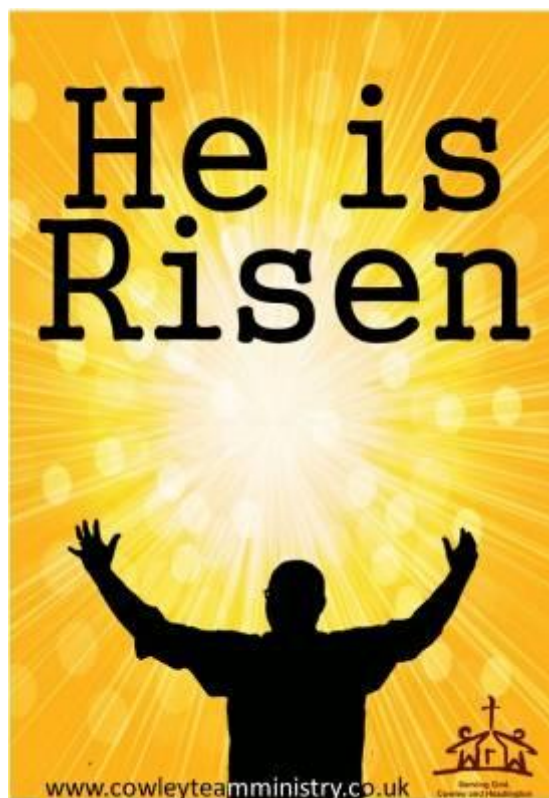
I am aware that we are facing some of the most challenging days I can remember. The cost of living has increased, the supply of workers for all industries is challenged. Levels of COVID infection are still so high. As I write, I have more friends and colleagues carrying Covid than I have ever known. And yet the good news is, praise Jesus, fewer people seem to be ending up seriously ill. Thanks be to our loving Father.

The power of God, active in the resurrection, is the same as that released into our lives as we come to faith. The promise is not for a 'quiet, easy going life', but 'life full of transforming love and power'.

St Paul, as he writes to the Romans (Ch 13 vs 14) says: *.....clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ.....* . This is not a passive action, but a call to wrap ourselves with the living Jesus. To cling onto him. To pull him around every part of our bodies. I am sure you have experienced the joy of wrapping yourself in a duvet on a cold winter's night. Interestingly you do not feel immediate warmth, but as you stay wrapped in it you stop leaking the heat of your body. Soon you feel the full benefit of it. As you move around in bed you need to stay wrapped in it.

Nobody benefits from a duvet that is still in its wrapping and sitting on a shops shelf. Not even the shop keeper!

To experience the power of Christ requires us to wrap ourselves in Him: we need to ensure we remain wrapped in him.



One of the challenges of Covid has been in the distancing of ourselves from each other. One important aspect of wrapping ourselves in Christ is the weekly gathering to praise and worship, to receive the sacraments and be strengthened by the word.

Central to our faith is gathering together. We see it repeatedly signposted in scripture. Paul, as he writes to the Thessalonians proclaims ".....encourage one another and build one another up" .(1Thes 5:11).

Lent calls on us to reflect, to seek a deeper relationship with Christ. As we move into Easter, we join with the early disciples as they discover the power of being CHURCH. Being the gathered family of Jesus. The prime vessel he is using to bring about life in fullness for all.

AMEN



Benson Cottage

STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN?



No! – It's the remains of COWLEY GAS HOLDER

Whilst out driving on 12th April I noticed that there was a big 'hole' in the side of the local gas holder in Watlington Road. I went to investigate and take some photos. On approaching the site, I noticed that the demolition notices were on the railings and gate. I have since discovered that SGN and all other gas suppliers are dismantling the gas holders as they are no longer required. It seems that our gas is now supplied directly from source and there is no need for storage of such a dangerous product. Searches on-line stated that Cowley Gas Holder was one of the very last to be used in the country.

Les Hemsworth



ELECTORAL ROLL – checking and update 2022

The Parish Electoral Roll – the official ‘membership list’ for our churches - will be reviewed and updated in time for the APCM (Annual Parochial Church Meeting) in May. ‘Membership’ allows you to stand for election to one of the Church committees and the PCC and to vote.

At this time, we remove names of any members who have sadly died during the year, moved away or with whom we are no longer in contact – and there are quite a few this year. We welcome parishioners who wish to register their commitment to the life of the Parish. It may be that you are newly arrived with us or that it’s one of those things which you have not got round to over several years.

The official notification of revision is now published : applications are invited until Sunday 24 April. The revised roll will be published on Sunday 1 May and be open only for corrections until the APCM. Further applications are accepted at any time during the year.

Here’s the official wording :

Under the Church Representation Rules any lay persons are entitled to have their names entered on the roll if the person:

- (a) is baptised,
- (b) is aged 16 or over, and
- (c) has made one of the following three declarations and duly applied for enrolment.

The first declaration is that the person is a member of the Church of England or of a Church in communion with it and is resident in the parish.

The second declaration is that the person is a member of the Church of England or of a Church in communion with it, is not resident in the parish, but has habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months.

The third declaration is that the person is a member in good standing of a Church which is not in communion with the Church of England but subscribes to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity and is also a member of the Church of England and has habitually attended public worship in the parish during the preceding six months.

This year, there remains the understanding that people may not have been attending worship because of the pandemic.

There’s a simple form to complete which is available in both churches and should be returned to Lesley Williams – Electoral Roll Officer at Church or St James Centre.

An additional form asks you to provide us with personal contact details and those of someone to contact in an emergency. All information is of course held securely under GDPR guidance.

From the Church Wardens' Pew

In the March edition of the Chronicle it was mentioned that we hoped to arrange coffee mornings and other activities connected to special dates in the religious calendar. During March two such mornings were held. On 5 March the Big Brew morning took place promoting Tradecraft and Lesley arranged a very successful event. There was a popular table selling food and drink and another very attractive one selling goods made by people from other countries who were struggling to be paid the appropriate wage for their work. The morning went well and good support for Fair-trade was shown in our community.

On 27 March Mothering Sunday posies were made at St James for us and St Francis to be distributed the next day. About six of us from both churches got together with a cup of cof-

fee and we were very happy doing something we love with flowers. A group of children came in and made Mothering Sunday cards and took home posies for their mothers. We had coffee and tea on the go for passers-by and we then vacated Church in readiness for a baptism. It's always a joy to know that a little one, or a bigger one sometimes, is going to enter the Kingdom of God and begin a relationship with Our Lord.

Finally, the outdoor service on Mothering Sunday went very well, a little chilly but with coffee, tea and cake ready for us all in Church afterwards. It was a lovely way to finish the service. What a month it has been one way or another with much going on. Keep looking in The Link for further activities.

Chris Woodman

Cowley Women's Institute

Latest news from the Cowley Women's Institute.

It's the time of year for Annual Meetings and our March meeting was just that.

We covered the business part of the meeting quite quickly, relaxed with tea and biscuits and then it was time for Gentle exercise with Joan Creese. The exercise was done to great music and we soon warmed up.

Our next outing is to Yarnton Garden Centre on 6th April, having a good look at all the spring plants; we will come back on the bus with the things we have bought.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday 20th April 22 at 2pm - Confessions of a Dance Teacher with Jackie Melsom and Wendy Sharp. This is going to be a really fun afternoon, with some audience participation and a lot of laughs.

Please come along if you would like to; we are always happy to see visitors.

Kathy Hulcup

Secretary Cowley WI

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Has anyone congratulated you for something that you knew nothing about or thought they had seen you somewhere where you had not been? I had these experiences and found that I had a 'double'.

I was a member of the church youth group and it was never a surprise when we heard of two members from the group getting engaged to be married. On this occasion my mother was congratulated that the latest news was that Margaret (one of the young ladies that I had hoped would eventually 'find' me) was engaged and that I was the lucky person.

Imagine my surprise when my parents asked me why they hadn't been told! "News to me", I said, and set about finding out who the lucky chap was. He turned out to have the same name, live in Oxford, and could have been my twin brother with similar face and hair features. Ah well, we did have something in common, though. Eventually..... I married a girl named Margaret.

On another occasion while on a holiday pilgrimage to Palestine with a multi-faith group from Oxford, we found ourselves in Jerusalem on Sunday morning. The whole group were invited to attend morning service at the cathedral and by kind invitation of the bishop, to meet in the gardens adjacent for coffee and cakes following the service.

As we were going into church someone brushed past me, and asked me to read a

lesson, handed me an order of service and the stranger was gone! Afterwards, a lady approached me, in the Bishop's garden, thanked me for reading the lesson so clearly, but asked how I managed to change from the heavy robe that I was apparently wearing while at the lectern. I reassured her that I was simply wearing the same shirt and shorts that I was wearing now, but she was not convinced. The puzzle was solved quite simply because the drape was on the lectern acting as a shroud to cover the clothes that visitors might be wearing when invited to read .

So what you see is not always reality, or the reality may be a little different to how it appears. That is the same with our lives. But we shouldn't need to cover up but aim to do our best at all times. Just be yourselves. You really are unique.

Uncle Ben

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MOTHERS' UNION NEWS

The Mothers' Union Cowley Diocesan Prayer Group meeting in March was a shared experience with members offering a wide range of subjects. These led to some very interesting discussions.

Several members are halfway through the Lent courses followed by their Home Group meetings and were happy to share and explain the messages that the courses have raised.

We then went on to talk about the Church throughout the world and the various experiences each of us have encountered in far-flung countries, as well as some in Britain – visiting cathedrals and churches.

Our Mothers' Union prayer includes our concern for families and family life in every corner of the globe, so we inevitably called to mind the desperate situation in Ukraine at this time, praying that peace will soon be restored there.

During our informal chat over tea and biscuits, we were able to look at the lovely MU greetings cards which Chris Woodman has for sale. They are of a very high quality and at just over £1 each, are so much cheaper than those in the shops. It was suggested that she should put them out in church, for the benefit of the wider congregation. So, readers, do look out for them and take advantage of a *bargain!*



Rosanne Butler

SUPPORT PHONE NUMBERS

NEEDING ADVICE OR HELP? or just want to talk?

SOME USEFUL LOCAL NUMBERS:

Citizens Advice:	08082 787 909
Oxford City Council:	01865 249 811
Oxfordshire Mind:	01865 247788
Red Cross <i>coronavirus support line</i> :	08081 963 651
Samaritans <i>available 24/7</i> :	116 123
The Archway Foundation:	01865 790 552
Mental Health helpline <i>available 24/7</i> - NHS Oxford Health:	
Adults:	01865 904 997
Children/young people:	01865 904 988
Age UK—new telephone service for older people	01865 411288

Have you been receiving a lot of scam calls on your phone, some of them quite scary? If you are concerned about them, you can obtain help by:

- phoning 03450 700 707 – that's a special department set up by the police *OR*
- Silver Lines, open 24 hrs for assistance on 08004 708 090 - this is a charity set up by Esther Rantzen, primarily to assist those elderly people in need of assistance and who live alone and are in fear of being abused.

RECIPES

Orange Butter Spice Biscuits (suitable for Easter)

Makes approx. 6 dozen biscuits

Ingredients:

- 100g butter
- 200g caster sugar 1 large egg
- Finely grated rind of 1 orange
- 225g strong plain flour
- 2 teaspoons mixed spice
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder

Method:

- Pre-heat oven to gas mark 5/375 F/190 C
- Beat sugar and butter until light and creamy.
- Thoroughly beat in the egg.
- Add the orange rind.
- Sift the flour with the spice, salt and baking powder and stir into the butter and egg mixture.
- Flour your hands and shape the dough into one long or two short rolls about 2 inches thick.
- (If dough too soft to shape, put in the fridge until it is more manageable).
- Wrap the roll in foil or cling-film and chill for at least 3 hours, more if possible.
- To cook, heat oven, take roll of dough from the fridge and, using a sharp knife, slice off about 10-12 thin rounds and arrange on the baking sheet – well spaced out.
- Bake in the centre of the oven for 7-9 minutes, until a pale golden colour.
- Remove biscuits while hot with a palette knife and place on a cooling rack whilst still warm.
- Repeat with the rest of the dough when required.

Apostle Cake

(from Cakes, Bakes, Puddings and Prayers by Susan Over)

This is a new version of the traditional Simnel Cake and would make an interesting conversation piece for Easter Sunday tea. The



eleven balls of marzipan represent the remaining disciples after Judas has betrayed Jesus and left his companions.

Ingredients:

- 175g (6oz) butter or margarine
- 175g (6oz) golden caster sugar
- 3 medium eggs
- 110g (4oz) plain wholemeal flour
- 110g (4oz) self-raising white flour
- 110g (4oz) Brazil nuts, chopped
- 175g (6oz) ready-to-eat dried apricots, chopped
- 50g (2oz) mixed candied peel
- 2 tablespoons apricot jam
- 454g (1lb) pack of marzipan
- 1-2 tablespoons milk

Method:

- Preheat oven to gas mark 4/350 F/180 C. Grease and line a deep 20cm (8") cake tin.
- Cream butter or margarine and sugar together until light and fluffy.
- Gradually beat in eggs with a little sifted flour to prevent curdling.
- Sift flours together and fold into mixture with any bran left in sieve from wholemeal flour, flour, nuts, apricots and candied peel. Add milk.
- Turn half the cake mixture into the tin, roll out about one third of the marzipan and place on top, then add the rest of the mixture. Bake for 1-1 ¼ hours or until cake springs back when pressed. Leave in tin for a few minutes, then turn out and cool on wire rack.
- Sieve and warm apricot jam, spread over top of cake.
- Roll out the remaining marzipan. Place the cake tin over the top and cut round to produce a neat circle to fit top of cake.
- Divide the trimmings into eleven equal pieces and roll into balls to represent the disciples. Apply a whole beaten egg wash over the cake, then fix the balls in place and egg-wash these.
- Toast until grill or use a kitchen blow torch.

Makes 10-12 slices.

Prayer Space

O God, I praise thee for the
goodness and love in ordinary people.
There is much weakness and much sin,
and often downright evil,
but also much
love, courage and cheerfulness.
O Lord most holy,
people are not far from thy Kingdom.
Draw them in, O Christ,
by thine own goodness and love.
George Appleton

Lord,
it is hard sometimes not to lose faith in
your purpose.
When hopes are dashed,
when dreams are shattered,
when one disappointment piles up on
another, it's difficult not to lose heart
completely, not to retreat into a shell of
despair.

I want to believe things can change,
but there seems little evidence to support it.
I want to believe the world can be different,
but experience appears to prove otherwise.
My heart tells me one thing,
my head says another,
and the latter usually wins the day.
Yet you have promised that nothing
in heaven or on earth
will finally overcome your purpose,
and throughout history
you have shown that to be true,
constantly overturning human expectations,
hope returning like a Phoenix from the ashes.
Speak to me now, through the faith
and vision of those who have gone before
me, so that, however dark the world may
seem, I too may dare to hope in turn, through
Jesus Christ my Lord.

Amen.

Taken from Prayerfully Yours
by Nick Fawcett

CHURCH MATTERS

The Annual Parish Meeting/Annual Parochial Church Meeting (APCM) is taking place on 14 May 2021, at 12 noon, at St James Church Centre. We hope to see you there.

Parochial Church Council (PCC) members are appointed at the APCM, and there are vacancies. If you are interested application forms are available in the Churches.

The PCC is legally the council responsible for the financial affairs of the church parish and the maintenance of its assets, such as churches and church halls. It also assists the clergy in the management of church affairs in the parish and promoting the mission of the church.

Church Committees:

Each church normally holds an Annual Meeting to appoint its Church Committee. These meetings are not being held this year, but the membership of each church committee is being reviewed and new members will be appointed at a specific church service (date to be announced). Again, applications forms are available in the Churches.

If you wish further information, please discuss with Geoff. I am also very willing to discuss any queries you have.

Sally Hemsworth

THE CHURCH YEAR EXPLAINED



(From April 2001)

Easter Joy!

Easter! Sunrise! Light! Triumph! Rejoice! Life! Christ is risen! Alleluia! He is risen indeed!

These are the words that spring to mind on Easter morning itself. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ – the supreme deed in the history of the salvation of the world! Through his death on the Cross and his Resurrection, Jesus Christ has given mankind the promise of eternal life.

Easter is by far the oldest of Christian festivals. There has never been an 'Easter' unobserved since the original. With the stress St. Paul laid upon Christ's death and resurrection in his epistles, we may be sure that all of his churches observed the day with great joy and thanksgiving. So each year while the Jews celebrated the Passover, and recalled the lamb whose blood had saved their ancestors, the Christians looked to a different Lamb for salvation.

From earliest Christian times, the Saturday, or Easter Eve, has been celebrated as a period of vigil, of watching and waiting for the Resurrection. It was often celebrated by lighting bonfires or Paschal candles. In many countries, candles are carried through the streets. At the beginning of some Easter Eve services the church is in darkness. Then each member of the congregation lights a small candle from one large Paschal candle. Soon the whole church is blazing with life.

Eastertime is often thought of as the days leading up to Easter Sunday. However, the Christian Calendar established the forty days before Easter Sunday as Lent. It is the forty days *after* Easter that is Easter Season. It begins with that joy-filled day when Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and continues through to Ascension, forty days later. That is when the Risen Christ made his last earthly appearance to the Disciples and 'ascended' into 'the clouds'.

A WARTIME CHILDHOOD

(Part 18)

I was just coming up to my seventh birthday when the lady who lived in the cottage just round the corner from us suggested that I might like to go with her on Good Friday to pick primroses to decorate the church for Easter. Apparently, there was an annual expedition to Appleton Woods where primroses grew in profusion. The woods were part of Lord Abingdon's estate and were kept fenced off all year round to protect his precious pheasants, but once a year he opened them up for the local folk to gather flowers for the church.

My mum agreed that I could go and I was really excited, even though I would be away nearly all day and it would be a long way to walk. With a little basket for my flowers, a ball of wool to tie up the bunches and a little picnic (dripping sandwiches, I think) I was up and ready to go when my nice friend called to collect me. She, by the way, had brought a flask of tea for us to share.

Oh, yes it was a long way! You see, Appleton Woods stand high above the Thames on the other side of the river from our village. On reflection, I think the journey must have been over three miles – a long way for a six-year-old child. However, the footpaths across the fields were full of Spring and the river looked beautiful. We crossed over a fine wooden bridge, called Weir Bridge and then up the sloping fields till we came to the woods themselves.

Now, you must understand that woods to me were a new experience. Raised in suburban Surrey, evacuated to a house in Witney, and now living in a village which didn't even have a copse, let alone a wood – the only woods I knew about were in my fairy stories! So the deep, dark interior was a bit intimidating for this little girl. Still, I had my nice friend nearby and in I went.

The adults and older children had reached the woods quicker than us (my little legs were rather slow), so most of the best flowers on the edge of the woods had already been picked and we had to venture deeper into the trees. I was shown how to tie up my bunches with three or four nice leaves round the outside to make a posy.

Somewhere about the middle of the day we stopped and made our way back to the riverbank and sat in the soft spring grass to eat our picnic. I only had a few posies but was awfully proud of them. Then it was the long walk home.

On Easter Saturday (Holy Saturday, or Easter Eve really), the ladies gathered to decorate the church. I took some of my posies, (not all of them because I had given some of them to mummy), and they were gratefully received, along with those from the other children. Our primroses were arranged in empty paste-pots and set around the font. We were sent out to gather moss to tuck in between the jars – so pretty!

A couple of years later, I was very much part of the crowd of village children who all went on adventures together. Most of my friends had older brothers and sisters, so we definitely didn't need grown-ups to escort us – we went everywhere as a group.

When I was almost nine, we set off on our 'primrosing' expedition. By then I could keep up with the older ones and we reached Appleton Woods early. We picked and picked so had lots and lots of bunches. As usual, we kept going until lunchtime and then had our picnic together.

Along the side of the Thames, across the low river meadows in that part of the river valley, channels known as flood ditches had been dug. The reason for these was that when (not if) the river flooded, the water would flow into the ditches thus protecting the nearby homes.

In order to reach Weir Bridge on our way back to the village, we had to cross one of these flood ditches by a little wooden bridge. As we did so, I looked down into the water and spotted big clumps of watercress. What a lovely treat for tea – watercress sandwiches!

I mentioned this to one of the bigger boys in our group "I'll get you some, Rosanne", he said and straight away scrambled down the steep bank. But what to put it in? Being a bit of a tomboy, it became obvious to my mum that I always needed some kind of protection over my nice skirts and sweaters to keep me clean. So she made me some little overalls from old summer dresses and luckily I was

wearing one that day. "Hold out your skirt", he shouted from the ditch, and promptly began lobbing great bunches of soaking wet watercress up and into the skirt of my overall. The water poured out all down my legs and feet, so it was a very soggy walk home!

Goodness knows what I looked like, but the basket of primroses and the huge bunches of watercress were greeted with great glee when I walked back to our cottage door.

We continued going primrosing for several years after the war had ended, but I don't think I ever brought watercress back for tea again!

Rosanne Butler

Shaun Guard

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MISSING DAY OR NIGHT

Missing from home or education. Not knowing where they are or who they are with.



NEW PLACES

Discovering they have been going to new places where they have no obvious connections.



ONLINE USE

Spending more time online. Secretive activity, refusal to come offline. Have they distanced themselves from family, friends and usual activities?



INJURIES

Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, marks. Reluctance to seek medical attention.



CHANGE IN APPEARANCE

Clothing, personal hygiene, talking differently, tired.

EXPLOITATION SPOT THE SIGNS



CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR

Have they become unusually secretive, fearful or withdrawn, aggressive, distanced themselves from family and friends, involved in anti-social behaviour.



CHANGE IN FRIENDS

Sudden changes in who they are 'hanging out' with including meeting new people from social media.



COPING MECHANISMS

Alcohol/drug use/self-harm – what they may be doing or using in order to cope.



POSSESSIONS

Unexplained items e.g. New clothing, money, phone, drugs.



HELP US STOP EXPLOITATION

SAY SOMETHING, IF YOU SEE SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS.

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0800 555 111 101

WWW.STOP-CE.ORG

Contact:

SAY SOMETHING
IF YOU SEE SOMETHING SUSPICIOUS

STOPCE

A disappointing start to spring

Spring is definitely upon us. The equinox is past and the days are getting longer. The sun is stronger. The birds are in voice and buds are bursting. Frogspawn arrived right on time in our garden pond as it usually does close to my Other Half's birthday in mid-March. I should feel joyous too and excited about the coming season but my purchase of the peat free compost has spoiled things.

It comes out of the bag cold, wet, lumpy and has a weird smell. I had potted on quite a few tomato seedlings which have rotted off. I have lost about 50! The compost is not as free-draining and open like the stuff I had been used to and the poor seedlings failed to thrive. Seeds that have been sown into the compost are not germinating as well as normal either. So I am doing repeated sowings. The Plant Sale is well into May this year so I do hope that I can produce as many plants for sale that I normally do. I am now spreading the compost out in trays in the sun to dry it out before I use it. The compost from the pots where seedlings have died, I am using as a mulch on the garden.

My other half has been digging the allotment over in short bursts so as not to exhaust himself and it is now time to get sowing and planting. The plot looks a lot tidier with remains of root crops going into a bean trench which, with lawn mowings and shredded paper, will ensure our runner beans have plenty of moisture for their roots during the drier times in summer.

We shall be planting our onion sets which

have been growing in cells in the greenhouse for the last month or so. We have decided not to put in shallot sets this year but to grow all our shallots from seed. You can get seed for the long French variety and they have been very productive in the last couple of years while the usual sets have languished. We have also got some onion seed too! Broad beans and peas will be going in as well as leeks, beetroot, chard, spring onions and all the usual veg that we are both successful at growing and which we eat. There is no point growing edibles that we don't eat! We don't grow carrots, which we do eat, because they never do well and are cheap to buy anyway.

The garden is starting to look colourful with daffodils and primulas and the tulips are coming. The camellia is also in flower as is the peach tree. I am slowly going round to weed the beds but I am recovering after minor surgery so I can't do too much. I have set up the hose for watering anything, as heavy watering cans are a no-no. The greenhouse is filling up but I am going out to get better compost now which, hopefully, means that I don't have many more casualties!

Put Saturday 21st May in your diaries for the plant sale. Donations of plants, please, as well as contributions to a cake stall and raffle, but, more importantly, we need smiling faces to help on the day!

Joan Coleman

THOUGHTS

Ten Funny Things

Funny how big a £20 note looks when we take it to church –
But how small it looks when we take it to the shops.

Funny how long it seems when we pray to God for 45 minutes –
But how quickly a team plays 45 minutes of football.

Funny how hard it is to read a chapter of the Bible –
But how easy it is to read 100 pages of a best-selling novel.

Funny how long a couple of hours spent at church are –
But how short they are when watching a film.

Funny how we can't think of anything to say when we pray –
But don't have difficulty thinking of things when talking to a neighbour.

Funny how we are thrilled when a football game goes into extra time –
But how we complain when a sermon is longer than the regular time.

Funny how people want to get a front seat at any game or concert –
But scramble to get a back seat at church services.

Funny how we need weeks of advance notice to fit a church event into our diary
But how we can adjust our schedule for other events at the last moment.

Funny how hard it is for us to learn a simple gospel well enough to tell others –
But how simple it is for us to understand and repeat gossip.

Funny how we believe what the newspapers say –
But question what the Bible says!



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