

# A question of questions

Can you answer this?

What is it? ...

This word has seven letters ...  
It preceded God ...  
It is greater than God ...  
It is more evil than the devil ...  
Poor people have it ...  
Wealthy people need it ...  
If you eat it, you will die.

When you think you know the answer – drop me a line, pass me a note, or send me an email with your name, address and telephone number along with what you believe is the correct answer. I will draw two names from all the correct answers and they will each receive a prize. The winners will be announced at 10:00 am St James and 10:30 St Francis “All Age” services Sunday 16 September.

In the meantime, things are happening in the Parish of Cowley. For example, Carol, Katie, David and I are having a great time getting to know the people of St James and St Francis and becoming more familiar with some of the things Cowley has to offer. Having lived in eight different homes over the past eight years, we look forward to putting down some roots. We’re in the middle of unpacking boxes, trying to determine what belongs where and, perhaps more difficult, what needs to go. In some cases, we’ve opened a box, looked at something that we

stored for eight years, and asked, “Why did we keep this in the first place?” Of other possessions we think, “I don’t need this, but I can’t bear to part with it.” Sometimes I wonder, “Do I own my possessions or do they own me?” Times like this bring into focus one of life’s most basic questions. “What are the most important things in my life?” It’s a question small children think about, teenagers work on, and those in retirement continue to ponder. What is the purpose of life?

During the summer Carol and I took part in Evensong at Westminster Abbey. The music, voices, readings, stained glass – everything was beautiful, but for me one thing stood out above all the rest. These words were written on the lectern: “Attempt great things for God.” I have since discovered that they are the words of William Carey (b. 1761) who was the father of the modern missionary movement. The complete quotation is, “Expect great things from God; attempt great things for God.”

Over the coming months I hope each of us will continue to discover the purpose of our lives, through expecting great things from God, and then attempting to do great things for him.

**Howard**

Chronicle



The Bishop of Oxford, the Rt Revd John Pritchard, Revd Howard Thornton and Revd Beth Spence on the occasion of Howard's installation on 17th July 2007.

We welcome you!  
May the Lord richly bless you  
And make you a blessing  
among us.

## **FAITH**

Amidst all our wetness this summer it is hard to believe that there are many parts of the world suffering from extreme drought, absolutely desperate for rain. I like this simple story about just such a situation.

The fields were parched and brown from lack of rain, and the crops lay wilting from thirst. People were anxious and irritable as they searched the sky for any sign of relief. Days turned into arid weeks. No rain came. The ministers of the local church called for an hour of prayer in the town square the following Saturday. They requested that everyone bring an object of faith for inspiration. At high noon on the appointed Saturday the townspeople turned out en masse, filling the square with anxious faces and hopeful hearts. The ministers were touched to see the variety of objects clutched in prayerful hands: holy books, crosses, rosaries.

When the hour ended, as if on magical command, a soft rain began to fall. Cheers swept the crowd as they held their treasured objects high in gratitude and praise. From the middle of the crowd one faith symbol seemed to overshadow all the others, a small child had brought an umbrella!

**John Shreeve**

# • STREET NAMES •

Cowley derived its name from Cufa's wood or clearing.

What is the difference between a street and a road? In Roman times the street was a paved way and was called a via strata. Along which it was possible to use wheeled vehicles. A road was narrower and used for riding.

The oldest road in Cowley, which is the oldest road in Oxford, runs from Dorchester to Alchester and passes between "Pressed Steel" sports ground and the factory.

In Roman times Cowley was more important than Oxford. There were Roman British potteries at the Twin Towers Road, St Lukes Road and at Annesley Road.

Temple Road was named after the Knights Templar who lived in the 12th century. There a fish pond was discovered when the library and swimming pool were built.

At the time of Charles I the Earl of Essex tried to lay siege to Oxford and fierce fighting took place in Cruel Lane.

In 1512 it was mentioned as Croole Lane, maybe because a William Crowell had some property in the area. Cowley people did not like it being called Cruel Lane and so it was renamed Crowell Road.

Oliver Road and Wilkins Road derive their names from Oliver Cromwell and his sister Robina who married Peter Wilkins and lived in Cowley Manor House.

We all know the story of Alice in Wonderland

which was written by Rev Charles Dodgson using the pen name of Lewis Carroll. His name is perpetuated in Dodgson Road. It will be remembered that when Alice arrived on the other side of the looking glass everything was backward, so it was necessary to walk away from a place in order to arrive. Having lived in Dodgson Road for 56 years, I know that if you start at one end of our road, you do arrive safely at the other end!

Alice was the daughter of Dean Liddell and after whom Liddell Road was named. Part of Church Cowley was probably called Westbury in the Middle Ages. Just north of St James Church was Westbury close and in 1512 two big holdings were known as Westbury Lane.

The origin of the name 'The Grates' is a little uncertain. It could have been because of its bars at both ends, just as a fire grate is so called because of its bars. It also could have been named after Thomas Grate who owned two cottages there in 1512.

Salegate Lane used to run north instead of joining Hollow Way as it does now. The gate at the end of Salegate Lane was once a meeting place for selling hay on the commons.

Benson Road and Beauchamp Lane are named after two vicars of Cowley. Beauchamp Lane was renamed from High Street.

The names of streets, roads and lanes call to mind the interesting history of Cowley from Roman times until now.

**Gwen Ranklin**

## **ORIGINS OF COWLEY**

To hear lots more interesting history about Cowley, come along to **St James Church Centre on Friday 14 September at 7.30 pm**. Rosanne Butler has done lots of research on Cowley and will tell us all about it on that evening.

# Rosanne Interviews

## Carol Thornton

Statisticians will tell us that there are three major events in a person's life which cause serious stress. The first two are divorce and the death of someone close. The third is moving house and yet here was this lady sitting back in her chair quite relaxed (her house full of packing cases and boxes) prepared to give me and my readers a precious morning of her time. No need, of course, to ask what brought her to Cowley. We know that as the wife of our new rector she has arrived at the Rectory with two teenagers (and seven suitcases) from their former home in Luton. And now delivered from their 'real' home in Canada, she has a houseful of boxes to unpack. 'No hurry though,' Carol told me. She intends to tackle her mini-mountain in her own time. As you talk to her you realise that this is one adaptable person.

She is the eldest daughter in a family of none who grew up on a farm in Alberta, Canada. Whilst her youngest sister was the one who helped Dad on the farm, Carol was the girl who helped Mum in the house. She learnt to cook at a very early age. One of her Mum's favourite boasts was that her eldest daughter could cook a full chicken dinner by the time she was six! She loves to bake and also told me that her jam is renowned amongst many of her former neighbours. When she was a little girl the farm was not mechanised so horses pulled carts and binders for the grain harvest. So keen was her Dad to teach his sons the old ways as well as the new that even after the purchase of a combine harvester he harvested some of his crops using his horses. The farmhouse did have electricity but no running water (so outside loos). Besides arable crops there were pigs and a

herd of Aberdeen Angus cattle to tend. Her great-grandfather began farming in Alberta in 1904 having moved north from America. Part of the same land is still farmed by Carol's brother, while her sister owns a farm nearby.

School for the little girl was a bus-ride away. She recalls her Mum walking with her in the winter snow before dawn along the half-mile track to meet the school bus and again on the way home on the dark, frozen evenings. She loved school, especially English and reading. Cookery classes were (excuse the pun) a piece of cake but her crocheted doilie was something of a disaster, needing constantly to be unravelled and begun again. At seventeen she graduated and then studied broadcasting at Calgary Technical College for two years. She loved the idea of spreading her wings. She told me that from her school bus she could see the mountains and realised there was a big world out there. Add to this the news bulletins, plays and documentary programmes she'd heard from early childhood on her Mum's radio and it is easy to see how she gravitated towards a course on television, radio and the arts. She describes herself as very naïve but she soon met and fell in love with a handsome fellow student, Howard Thornton.

After college she worked at the University of Calgary managing audio-visual equipment while Howard got a job further away as a programme presenter and announcer on a local television in Kamloops. Next they both worked in television in Saskatoon, Carol in administration and Howard hosting programmes and presenting his own regular 'slots'. It was time to get married and set up

home.

It was while they were living in Saskatoon that church began to feature strongly in their lives. Living on a farm way out of town, attending church was spasmodic during Carol's childhood. Granny could drive and would take the children to special festivals. She also insisted on teaching them their Bible, whereas Howard grew up in a 'church' family. He and Carol met up with one of his former ministers who was working in Saskatoon and before long they were encouraged to take part in his 'new' form of worship on Tuesday evenings. Carol was swept along by Howard's enthusiasm and soon they were leading a prayer and praise group at their own local church.

With a family of two small sons and another baby on the way, Howard took a new job in television in Regina. Carol believes that this was a special point in their lives as they worshipped at a small, friendly church with young families. Their third baby boy was greeted with excitement. She told me that their church was led by a wonderful clergyman. Howard's career continued successfully and they lived in Regina for 17 years. She was also involved in TV work, mainly fundraising for charity (something like Children in Need). During the last couple of years she was the lead volunteer helping to raise one million dollars for disabled people. As church became a more important part of their lives she began to wonder whether God had plans for Howard. His mother echoed her thoughts. Howard made his decision and they finally told their three sons that their Dad had enrolled in a master's degree course at Regina Theological College. Alongside his studies he continued with his broadcasting career and met a number of famous names in the world of Canadian entertainment.

Carol's life began to change too. Through contact with a South Korean mission group she felt that her personal response to God's

call would be to foster unwanted mixed-race orphans. She prayed about it but found herself pregnant after almost 10 years so fostering was then out of the question. Her baby daughter, Katie, was born on their third son's tenth birthday.

As part of his training it was suggested that Howard should come to England. Carol, who always wanted to spread her wings, was excited. By the time Howard enrolled at Wycliffe Hall in Oxford, a fifth baby, David, had completed their family. They found a home in North Oxford and a new phase in Carol's life began. For quite a long time she had written short stories, plays and poetry so once in Oxford she joined a creative writing class in Summertown. From there she moved to day school at Rewley House. With a diploma under her belt her tutor suggested that she should study for a masters degree. She applied to Norwich University which, according to Carol has the best courses in creative writing in the country. It would seem so as amongst her professors was Andrew Motion, the poet laureate. Nowadays she writes poetry for literary magazines and is launching into radio dramas. There is more to come – listen out for the name!

Howard returned to Canada for ordination and the question of work arose. Both he and Carol were sure that God needed them back in England. Another move followed (no wonder she's taking this one so calmly!) and a curacy in Freeland and Hanborough was Howard's first job in this country. When her husband went to become chaplain of Luton and Bedford University, Carol helped with administration on the students' journal. And now they have returned to the city with which they fell in love while Howard was at Wycliffe. Thrilled to be here and living in the Rectory, Carol told me that her biggest thrill is her small office where she can concentrate on her writing whenever her creative urge inspires her.

How would you describe yourself as a small child?

Reserved. I often had time on my own but I always felt that there was someone with me. I think now that it was God.

Have you any significant childhood memories you'd like to share?

I think the best time in childhood was Christmas. We didn't have a lot of money but the tree would be brought in from behind the barn. I loved our turkey dinner made by my Mum (I still use her stuffing recipe). It was a real family day each year.

If you could make a major change in the world, what would it be?

I'm dreadfully concerned about what the world will be like for my children and grandchildren. Seeing the imbalance with what we take, have, use compared with other parts of the world can't go on. I'm afraid we will reap what we have sown.

Is there anything in life today which you find positive or encouraging?

The same things as when I was 'this high'. The things God created – the sun, the trees, the sky ... - that's where I get my energy.

Do you have a treasured possession?

Letters. I have treasured letters from people still living and some now dead. I would hate to lose them.

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

I have lots of people who have come into my life. One woman in Canada in particular who is very prayerful and steadfast. I learnt from her to be able to do things without being noticed or thanked.

How do you spend your leisure time?

I love the theatre and to read (lots of poetry). I enjoy browsing through antiques. And I'm looking forward to listening to our CDs, just delivered from Canada.

What plans do you have for the future?

We do eventually hope to end our days in Canada with lots of grandchildren\* and I hope to have a couple of books published. I also hope to see Katie and David in successful relationships and careers.

\* Carol and Howard's first grandchild is due in a matter of weeks.



## From the Registers

### Funerals:

3 July Beryl Tutty  
20 July Rona Moss  
27 July Phyllis McLaren  
2 August Norma Jenkins  
10 August Ray Terry

### Weddings:

14 July Caroline Norris and  
Mark Dean  
4 August Denise Bradley and  
Andrew Smith

18 August Lorraine Plowman and  
Stephen Phillips  
24 August Jenny Turner  
Eamon O'Malley

### Baptisms:

15 July Ashton Jenkins  
22 July Pheobe Billington  
Amy Billington  
5 August Morgan O'Callaghan  
19 August Jaden Ernest Logan  
Kai James Logan

### Healing Service

September 6 at St James' 7pm  
October 4 at St Francis' 7pm



# Choosing a good minister

Some of our church community were recently involved in the process of choosing a new team rector.

As a result of this selection we now rejoice in the arrival of Howard and his family, now living amongst us.

So, we thought that this description of the wrong way to approach things might be of interest.

One of the toughest tasks that the church faces in choosing a good minister. A member of an official board undergoing this difficult process finally lost patience. He had just witnessed the pastoral relations committee reject applicant after applicant for some minor fault – real or imagined. So he stood up and read this letter, purporting to be from an applicant.

Gentlemen: understanding that your pulpit is vacant, I should like to apply for the position. I have been a preacher with much success and have also had some success as a writer. Some say I am a good organiser, and I have been a leader in most places I've been.

I'm over 50 years of age and have never preached in one place for more than 3 years. In some places I have left town after my work has caused riots and disturbances. I must admit I have been in prison three or four times – but not because of any real wrongdoing.

My health is not too good, though I still accomplish a great deal. The churches I have preached in have been small, though located in several large cities.

I have not got on well with the religious leaders in the towns where I have preached. In fact, some have threatened me and even attacked me physically. I am not too good at keeping records – and I have been known to forget whom I have baptised.

However, if you can use me I promise to do my best for you.

The board member turned to the committee and said 'Well, what do you think? Shall we call him in?'

The good church folks were appalled!

Consider a sickly, trouble-making, absent-minded ex-jail bird?

Was the board member crazy? Who signed this application? Who had such colossal nerve? The board member eyed them all keenly, before he replied:

It's signed the Apostle Paul.

**John Shreeve**

## Sunday Services

### ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist ( <i>exc 2nd Sunday</i> )
	All Age Eucharist ( <i>2nd Sunday</i> )

### ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am	Parish Eucharist
	[ <i>Family Eucharist – 2nd Sunday of the month</i> ]

## Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Group – <i>St Francis</i>
	2.30 pm	Parish Mothers' Union – <i>St James (3<sup>rd</sup> Mon)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Seashells resumes 11 Sept – <i>Church Centre</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Service – <i>St Francis</i>
	12.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St James</i>
	12.30 pm	Tuesday Lunch Club – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Friends of <i>St Francis</i> – <i>St Francis (2<sup>nd</sup> &amp; 4<sup>th</sup>)</i>
5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>	
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Tea Break – <i>St Francis (1st Wed)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	11.00 am	St Francis Prayer Group
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St Francis</i>
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Saturday	9.15 am	Morning Prayer & Breakfast – <i>St Francis</i>

### Day Off

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

## Parish Directory

### Team Rector

Revd Howard Thornton  
Cowley Rectory,  
Beauchamp Lane  
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parishofcowley@hotmail.co.uk

### Team Curates:

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beth.spence@ntlworld.com

The Revd Dr Michael Spence,  
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michael.spence@law.ox.ac.uk

### Non-Stipendiary Minister

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markoxbrow@aol.com

### Churchwarden:

Jeremy Herklots  
Tel: 429277  
Norah Shallow  
Tel: 765199

### Deputy Wardens:

Margaret Martin  
Tel: 718532  
Pat Chung  
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### Chronicle Editor

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**Chronicle**

The next issue of the *Chronicle* will be available from Sunday 7th October. Please send in your articles, stories, comments and news by 2nd October. Contact Philip Hind on 01865 427523 or leave at St James Church.