

Welcome Back

WHEN our family returned from a long holiday in Canada, we found a note from a member of the parish. "Welcome home. I do hope you had a good time away; we missed you." It was a note that contained a wow factor of 10 for 10. It made us all feel like we'd been missed and that we mattered.

Before we left, I worked on a door-to-door survey of people who live within the parish boundaries. It asked what they feel is their greatest need. More than 60% answered that it is their need to feel connected to other people who live in the area and to feel valued. Many of them are looking for a place where they can make friends.

What keeps people from coming to church? For those who have attended church previously, there can be many reasons. It may be that they've had a bad church experience of some kind. Sometimes Sunday morning sports commitments have squeezed church out of their lives. They may have attended church regularly but then moved house and were unable to find a way into the local church. Perhaps they fell out with the vicar. Whatever the reason, there are a lot of people who believe in God and who would consider coming back to church.

Research conducted by the charity Tearfund has found that for those who are not attending church now, "a personal invitation or encouragement from a family member or friend is much more powerful than anything" else in offering a way in. We have a great opportunity to let

people know that the church is the place to go to make friends, to feel valued, and to become part of a loving community. We need to hone our skills so that visitors will feel welcome and included as a part of the family of God here in Cowley.

It all begins with prayer.

What can you do? It all begins with prayer. As a committed member of the church, would you pick up a *Back to Church Sunday* bookmark? Write on it the names of the people you will pray for, and invite them to the combined "Welcome Back and Harvest Service" planned for St James and St Francis churches on Sunday, 31 October. The people on your list might be your next door neighbour, or a good friend, someone who used to come to the church but has stopped coming, or someone who's never been before. Is it difficult to invite people back to church? No, it's amazingly easy. Just say something like this. "I'm going to church on Sunday and it's going to be great. Will you please come with me?" You're not being intrusive; you're being welcoming. Christians have discovered the greatest treasure we can ever know: a loving relationship with God. As a church, we believe that he has called us to tell others about God's love. *Welcome Back Sunday* can be a part of His plan for us and for Cowley.

Howard

Chronicle

Letter from the editors

Dear Readers

First of all we'd like to say "thank you" to those of you who have told us that you enjoyed the summer issue of "The Chronicle". As we told you last month, we do welcome feedback from you (good or bad!) so do let us have your comments. If you have something to tell us which might be of interest to other readers why not write something for the letter page?

Quality of life has a lot to do with good things to look forward to, doesn't it? We think that that is why Christmas begins so early for so many people with cards and decorations in the shops, 'turkey and tinsel' events and all the rest beginning, it seems, about the first week in October. Here in the parish though, we've got so many interesting events to look forward to, Christmas

will need to be put properly in its seasonal place. This month we have Harvest Festival, with the Harvest Supper, coupled with Back-to-Church Sunday. Oh, and don't forget Ride and Stride Saturday on the 13th. Next month St Francis will be celebrating their patronal festival and watch out for the Mothers' Unions' family evening of gorgeous puddings and quiz. That is to say nothing of our regular parish lunches on Tuesdays, monthly Sunday lunches and Tea Breaks. All that and, of course, welcoming our new parish vicar in our own inimitable style.

No wonder there is such a positive "buzz" about the parish just now! Happy autumn everyone!

God bless,
Rosanne and Carol

Letters to the editors

Not so NICE

After observing comments from N.I.C.E. (National Institute for Clinical Excellence) – As a devout Christian I was appalled to hear, as stated in the media, that the above institution rejected to endorse the provision of a new drug intended for the treatment of kidney cancer on the grounds that they considered it not cost effective.

It is very sad that an organisation with the acronym N.I.C.E. is not living up to its name!

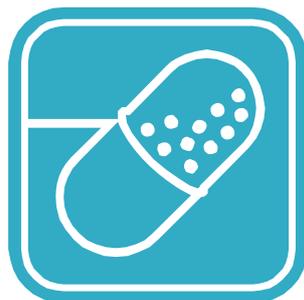
This is putting the possibility of relieving pain or even re-

mission, out of the hands of medical staff. N.I.C.E. is putting money issues before the lives of sufferers.

Shame on them!

Gerald Ives

Editor: Thank you for bringing this to our attention. Would anyone like to take this further?



My memories of Gwen

I was very saddened to hear of the death of Gwen and could hardly believe it, as I was talking to her at Easter when I came down to Ox-ford for the holiday to East-bourne with St James' Church.

Gwen will be greatly missed by everyone who knew her. It must be nearly fifty years since I first knew Gwen through St James Church (of which I was a member) and the young Wives' group at St James - which were very happy times. We had outings and coffee mornings in

each other's houses. But the thing I shall always remember Gwen most for, was this – In 1961 my daughter, Nicola, was, at ten weeks old, admitted to the Slade Hospital with pneumonia. Who should be her one-to-one nurse but Gwen. How supportive she was. She gave me such strength in that worrying time – something I have never forgotten. My daughter did get better with Gwen's help and devotion. Another memory of Gwen, which also will stay with me, is of coming to Oxford and St James Church and Gwen saying "Hello Doreen," and giving me a big hug. She also stood by our seats to tell us when to go up to communion.

Gwen will never be forgotten by St James Church or the people who knew her, for all the kindness and love she gave. I know I shall never forget such a wonderful person as Gwen.

Doreen Bushnell
Isle of Anglesey

Dear Friends

Marlene and John would like to thank their many friends for their good wishes, cards, and not least, their steady and continuing prayers for Marlene during her long illness and hospitalization. They have been a constant source of comfort and support to us, and are greatly appreciated.

Marlene got through the 4½ hour operation to replace her heart valve quite well. Then complications set in, and she had to have a second operation within 24 hours – this time on her stomach. This exploratory operation turned out to be unfounded, and there was no problem there.

However, the double dose of ops left her very poorly, and she was in Intensive Care for a fortnight. Thankfully she is out of that now, and back to a general ward. Marlene has had trouble with her lungs and an infection set in. This is now much better and she has been released from the oxygen mask which

has been so intrusive. Although her new valve is working well, her heart hasn't quite steadied down and is working unevenly. The operations left her with a weakness on one side of her neck, which has made swallowing difficult – so she is on liquid food. There have been other slight complications too, yet slowly, a day at a time, she is pulling through, and we thank God for that. Throughout it all, both in Intensive Care and general ward, the standard of nursing care has been wonderful. It will be some time yet before she is ready to come home, but she is getting the medical care she needs, just when she needs it, and that is what matters. She is much brighter now and able to speak clearly.

Thank you all once again. Keep up the prayers!



PARISH REGISTER

Weddings:

12 July - Samantha Tyreman and Neil Brewer
19 July - Rebekka Louise Brawn and Andrew Spooner
1 August - Sarah Crook and Herman Bauer
2 August 2008 - Eleanor Asbridge and Ben Armstrong
9 August - Stacey Jane Black and Stephen James Donnelly
16 August - Jane Gelder and Justin Marah

Baptisms:

20 July - Benjamine Andrew Seward
24 August - Jack Jon Collier
31 August - Mayson Robert Carlisle

Little Johnny at church:

"Mum, the vicar said we have got to help others, so what do the others do?"

"When I was in church they gave me a big plate of money to hold. You told me to be polite so I said, 'no, thank you!'"

"They told us a story about the Romans throwing Christians to the lions for sport. I'll bet nobody ran on to the pitch".

"Mum, where do vicars learn all the things they tell people not to do?"

Around Cowley

News Reports

Can you help?

We know of people who would like to come to church but aren't able to drive. It would be wonderful to be able to offer this service. If you're not able to devote time to a regular ongoing ministry in the parish, perhaps this is an area where you could help out once in a while. Maybe you come every Sunday, and have a car, and could provide a regular ride for someone. Or perhaps you don't even drive, but you might have time to organise the rota. If you can help with this in any way, please have a word with Howard.



Church Wardens Report

All change!! Dan and I have taken on this role as a job share and we are very excited and a little daunted by it. Thanks so much to Jeremy Herklots for doing such a brilliant job.

We both desire to support and serve Howard and now Suzanna and the parish in any way that we can. The way that we are planning to undertake the role is that Dan will lead on the buildings and maintenance aspects of the role and that I will focus on the pastoral and human resources aspect of the role. We are both pretty good at problem solving and will work closely together on all aspects so both of us knows what is going on. We already have a black information book, and are keen for us to both keep abreast of what is going on.

We both work full time; Dan as an aboracultrist and I at Helen and Douglas House as the Deputy Chief Executive and with the girls' life is quite full. So help with the girls when we are both needed at meetings / functions would be super. The new term from September promises to be an exciting new chapter for the church and we feel that it is a privilege to be part of it.

The best way to contact us is on our landline, which is 01865 774002. We aim to return calls if messages are left as quickly as possible, but do bear with us if it is not the same day.

Clare Edwards

Benches for St James' Centre Garden

What a marvellous, generous group you are! No sooner had we suggested that garden seats would add a whole new dimension to our lovely garden at St James' Centre, than the donations began to flood in. Collecting for the seats has been a wonderful summer project. We have received enough money to buy four sturdy seats (partly due to B&Q's half-price offer!) and four smart matching pads, thus making the pleasure of sitting outside even more enjoyable. Two of the seats are now in situ, two await the paving on which to set them.

There has also been a donation of an attractive fifth seat which has been set against the lovely stone wall at the back of the garden. It is surrounded by flowers, and has already given pleasure to a number of people. A big thank you to Erma Clarke. Also a big thank you to everyone who contributed to the seats, we hope they are going to be a real asset for all summer occasions. Now we need some summer weather to add to the pleasure.

St Francis – A Church in Waiting

News From Your Roving Reporter At St Francis

We in St. Francis are eagerly awaiting the arrival of our new team vicar Susannah Reide , and we are praying for her and her family as they prepare to move here very shortly. She will have special responsibility for the care of our little church, and this will be a new experience for us, because it is the first time we have had a woman priest at the helm, so to speak. However, we are sure that she will receive the usual St. Francis warm and friendly reception.

In the meantime we have been ticking over quite well in our church. People have been quietly getting on with their usual jobs; the cleaners, the flower arrangers, the readers, the prayer leaders, the people who set the church up - the tea makers and so on. On the whole our congregations have remained pretty steady during the interregnum, and

A green team for the Parish of Cowley?

What is our responsibility as Christians in caring for God's Creation? If we believe conservation of our planet is an essential tenet of our faith - not just a response to the fear of climate change but a positive expression of being a Christian - then all our use of the Earth's resources both at home & in our Church buildings should aim to fulfil that commitment. And it should be part of our declaration of faith.

There are aspects of our current Parish life that I feel should be reviewed : for example, I don't think we've got our recycling refined enough, particularly in that wonderful St James Church Centre kitchen. I'm not sure about lighting & heating & water use : no doubt Jeremy & John could tell us how economical we're being but it's not just a case of the budget! There's car use - could we be car sharing more, thereby also helping carless members? And the dreaded question of paper and photocopying.....

Churches Together produced an 'Eco-congregation toolkit' back in 2000 which begins, of course, with an audit at which I'd like to take a look. Will anyone else join me?

Lesley Williams

we have

our own unique mixture of worshippers from a number of different lands. They all seem to blend together very well. We have been grateful for the visiting clergy who have supported us, both from within the parish and outside.

Now we look to the future and a fresh start. Both church committees, plus the P.C.C. will be meeting to make plans for our future strategy and the possible appointment of a Parish Administrator. I am all for this if it will free-up our clergy for their spiritual and pastoral duties. We must pray for all concerned in this, that they make the right decisions.

We should also pray for spiritual revival in all our churches, because without this we shall not be fully effective as we seek to meet the challenges of our times.

John Shreeve



Alpha Returns

Ask almost everyone who has completed an Alpha course and they will tell you what a rewarding experience it was and how it helped to give depth and new insights into their faith. Each course follows the same pattern of themes but each course differs because of the personalities of the group taking part. Each individual has his/her own questions or issues and these give vitality and impetus to discussions.

Our new Alpha course begins on Tuesday 30th September with a welcoming supper for all who are interested in finding out more. It is usually nice for those who are a little unsure to be accompanied by a friend who has invited them. This initial supper in no way requires a commitment simply an invitation to “give Alpha a try”.

You will have noticed that invitations are required from those of us who “believe” in Alpha to those we know who might find the

whole course rewarding. So it is important that we do go out of our way to ask friends to come along. If you do, please let me know (for catering purposes) how many people you are bringing. By the way you don’t have to wait to be invited if you are already curious to know more – just come ! Back to the subject of catering. Each week the session begins with a sit-down supper provided by volunteers (ingredients expenses are reimbursed, of course). We therefore do need a few willing folk to cook main dishes, desserts, and/or help with the washing-up. This last task is not too onerous thanks to the dish-washer. So, over to you, let me know if you would like to be involved in any way. And remember the date – Monday evenings at 7:00 beginning on 6 October . in St James’ Centre. See you there?

Rosanne Butler

Notes from the June PCC Meeting

This was the first meeting of the new PCC elected at the APCM. The Vice-Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary were elected and there were 2 co-options.

Pat Chung had arranged for a speaker from PACT to visit both churches and her talks were very well received.

The Food Bank is not yet used by very many people but the organisers are pleased with its progress so far.

John Gawne-Cain had asked the PCC to apply for a Faculty for the next stage of the work needed to fulfil the requirements of the Quinquennial Inspection at St James’ Church. This was agreed and the PCC also agreed to authorise John to negotiate with the Architect to draw

up a specification. They were very grateful to John for his work on the church building, and to him and Catherine for their hard work and care for the surroundings of the church and church centre.

The Treasurer reported that our giving is going down and we are not meeting our budget. Utilities bills are rising and the rent we have been receiving from the Fellowship of Reconciliation will cease when they move to their own premises.

The Architect had surveyed the problem of damp at St Francis’ Church and suggested that bricks from a bricked-up doorway should be removed and allowed to dry out. The PCC agreed to apply for a Faculty for the

necessary work to be done after a specification had been obtained. The circular window needs attention and broken roof tiles need to be renewed. The PCC authorised spending of up to £300 to get these two things done. The serving hatch is stuck and needs to be repaired urgently.

Christine Woodman reported on the Church Centre. She reported on maintenance, bookings, events and on a brochure which has been produced to promote bookings. Sunday lunches are going well and the Tuesday lunch club continues to flourish. A table top sale had raised £246 for church funds and a barbecue is planned. The patio area looks attractive; benches are

being donated and Ken Ranklin has kindly given a gazebo. The PCC elected Christine to be the Centre Manager and agreed that Doreen Werlinger should be asked to be her Deputy. The PCC discussed at length

the possibility of creating a Parish Office in the upstairs rooms at the Centre and of appointing an Office Administrator for 10 hours per week. They decided that this was the way forward and agreed to go ahead.

Howard described the procedure for appointing a new Team Vicar. We plan to observe Back to Church Sunday in September and an Alpha Course will follow shortly after.

MOTHERS' UNION NEWS

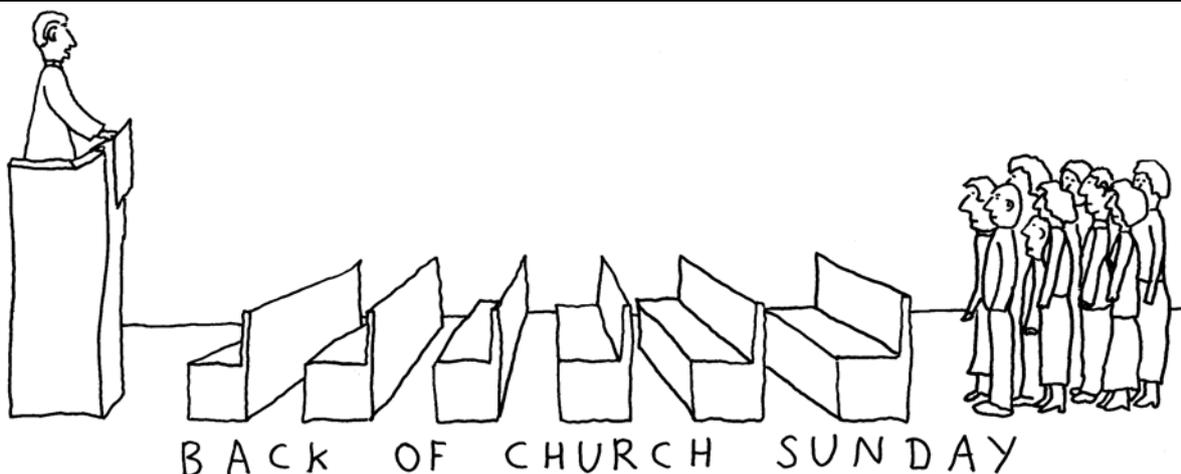
The new programme for autumn 2008 to summer 2009 has just been planned and is now being printed for all branch members. Anyone else who would like a copy need only ask a committee member. The committee: Pat Chung (branch leader) Molly Oliver (minuting secretary) Margaret Randall (treasurer) Betty Mitchell, Marlene Shreeve, Cynthia Dales and Rosanne Butler. We welcome visitors to all our meetings asking a contribution of £1 for tea and biscuits and also a little towards M.U. funds. We meet on the third Monday of each month in the Church Centre at 2.30 p.m.

On Monday 15th September members from Bracknell (Berks) M.U. are visiting and we have planned to introduce them to our lovely church. By popular request Les Hemsforth is going to show slides of his magnificent photographs which he calls "Up Close and Personal at your Parish Church". These will be accompanied by commentary from Rosanne Butler highlighting some of the historic features. This talk/slide-show will be open to all. Many people expressed regret that they missed the original show earlier in the year. 2.30 p.m. in the

church are the time and place and there will be a cuppa served in the Church Centre afterwards.

Also returning by popular request is our "Puddings Plus" evening. This will be on 10th October in the Church Centre beginning at 6.30 p.m. For those who do not know (or remember) the format is as follows – after eating your evening meal at home you come along to the Centre where the first round of a family-friendly quiz begins. There is then a break for everyone to enjoy wonderful home-made puddings (lots!). Rounds 2 and 3 of the quiz follow. Next coffee or tea is served and the evening is rounded off with the raffle and a final round of questions. All that will only cost you £1 !! Do come and enjoy an evening of great fun, it doesn't matter if you can't muster a team of your own you'll soon find one to join.

M.U. meetings always include prayer and a short act of worship. We have speakers on a wide range of subjects and quiet, reflective afternoons in Advent and Lent, led by members of our clergy team. Do come along if you are interested, not necessarily to join but perhaps as a visitor. You will be most welcome.



ROSANNE INTERVIEWS

Phil and Debbie Allen

In my mind's eye, when I think about the interiors of our two lovely churches, St Francis' and St James', one of the first things I reflect upon is the beauty of the flower arrangements so lovingly set in place each week. And I'm quite certain that many of our readers feel the same. Flowers, for me, are among the necessities of life. We have lots to thank our "flower ladies" for, don't we? This month I have interviewed two people whose whole lives revolve around flowers. You probably know them well by sight though maybe not by name. They are the couple who own the flower kiosk in Templar Square and have done so for the last sixteen years.

In fact, as far as Phil is concerned, the flower business has been his family's livelihood for three generations. Both his grandfather and father ran flower stalls mainly in Reading market. When he was quite a youngster he would get up in the small hours of the morning to go to Covent Garden with them to buy supplies. It comes as second nature, now, for him to leave home at 3 a.m. on Monday and Wednesday mornings to purchase his flowers (now at Nine Elms) by 4.30 a.m. He arrives at the Cowley shop by half-past eight in order to

set up his stall where his wife, Debbie, is waiting to help. He follows this routine, week in, week out, with sometimes an extra trip to London if they have a special order or a sudden run on stock. They are always ready to supply particular requests for maybe a wedding for example when special colours are needed. They enjoy providing flowers for the church and Debbie describes us as among their best customers. It is interesting to learn that the Allen family have spread their floristry business all over this area with shops and stalls in Newbury, Basingstoke, Swindon and Maidenhead. It is, however, a dying trade. Now that the supermarkets can sell fresh flowers to cheaply Phil and Debbie are resigned to the fact that independent traders have only a few years left. Added to this is the present financial crisis when life's luxuries, like a bunch of flowers, are just too much for many people to afford and trade will inevitably drop off.

The Allens told me some amazing stories about some of their customers. Phil made me laugh about one chap who thought he'd better buy his wife a bunch for her birthday.

"How much are those?" he

asked.

"Only £5 a bunch," Phil told him.

"Oh dear, that's a bit too much," he replied. Haven't you got anything cheaper?"

"Well, we've got some a few days older in that bucket, we're selling them off at £1 a bunch."

"Great, they'll do, I'll take some of those," he said and paid his pound as he went off with his "past-their-best" bargain!

Another story was about a man who asked about flowers for his wife's funeral. Phil showed him the book of designs for wreaths, sprays, etc. which they make up for customers.

"They're all a bit dear," said the man when he saw the prices under the pictures. "How much did you think of spending, then?" he was asked.

At this point he put his hand in his trouser pocket and slapped four one pound coins on the counter.

"What can you do me for that?" he wanted to know!!

Debbie and Phil have a wealth of stories like those to tell but what about them as people? After all that is really the main aim of my interview each month, to introduce you to interesting people.

They both grew up in Read-

ing, both went to local primary and secondary schools where, according to Debbie, they were taught to respect their teachers and all those in authority.

After school she did an apprenticeship in hairdressing. She had wanted to be a hairdresser even as a little girl. The only alternative might have been becoming a mounted police-woman. She has always loved horses. As a teenager she owned three and rode them in local shows. However, having completed her training and gaining her hairdressing qualifications she made the decision to confine her riding to her leisure time.

Whilst Debbie was growing up with her horses Phil was enjoying his school days. He is a keen sportsman with football as his absolute favourite. He is a Manchester United fan but also supports Reading, of course. He shone at all practical subjects at school especially wood and metalwork. After school he did an apprenticeship in plumbing and, once, fully qualified, he set off alone to see a little of the world spending many months travelling in Turkey and Greece. On his return his experience in the world of floristry took over.

Debbie met Phil in a nightclub in their hometown. It was very much a case of love at first sight as their eyes met across the dance floor. When I asked who "chatted up" whom Debbie

said "Phil" and Phil said "Debs"! They met up again the very next day and have been together now for 20 years. They began life together in Reading and now have a home in Nuneham Courtney. They have a lovely 13 year-old-daughter named Jasmine (she had to have a flower for a name, didn't she?) who, surprise, surprise, is mad on horses. Her ambition is to become a mounted police-woman. Debbie enjoys helping Jasmine to care for her own horse although she wasn't that happy about a nasty horse-fly bite she was nursing on her thigh the day we chatted.

Phil is pleased with his flower kiosk which he explained is much more manageable than the shop he once ran. He is proud of the fact that when he began trading in Cowley there were nine flower shops here. Now, there is only one – his – which has outlasted them all. With a big circle of friends from school days he and Debbie have a busy social life and are a happy couple. I would say that that is reflected in their warm smiles as they serve you. Long may they continue to do so.

How would you describe yourselves as children?

Phil: Mischievous, a bit of a devil, went round with a gang of friends.

Debbie: Quiet, really liked school, horse-mad, had lots of friends.

Have you any special

childhood memories you'd like to share?

Phil: I remember when my parents took my brother and me to Spain. We drove there and we were supposed to stay for two weeks which turned into six. We made friends and spent all day on the beach, swimming playing football.

Debbie: Going to Hayling Island with my sister and my mum and dad. They had a caravan there and we'd go down there for the whole summer. We had a little boat, called "Jovine" with a motor on the back which we messed about in.

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

Phil: I'd put a stop to terrorism and teach people that violence and bombs are not the answer.

Debbie: If I could change anything I'd say more discipline for younger people and make them respect their elders as we did at their age.

Is there anything in our modern society that you find positive or encouraging?

Phil: Technology and medicine have improved. Treatments for serious illnesses have moved on a lot.

Debbie: No! Times were better when we were young than they are now. Technology has moved on but the world's not safer. The social side of life has deteriorated.

Do you have any treasured possessions?

Both: Our photographs and family videos because they tell the story of our family life.

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

Phil: Golf, travelling when I get the time, watching football, sport and documentaries on T.V. and spending time with our friends.

Debbie: Anything to do with computers, horses, travelling with Phil and Jas. and reading (real-life stories or a good novel).

Are there any places in the world you'd like to visit?

Phil: I'd like to experience the world's rainforests – Peru, Brazil, anywhere in South America.

Debbie: I'd like to go to

Dubai because of the horses and I've always wanted to go to the Pacific Islands.

What are your ambitions for the future?

Phil: Owning a house abroad, living half the year in (maybe) Spain and half here in England.

Debbie: Taking life easy with lots of sunshine.

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS

OAK TREE TEAROOM

On Wednesday 9th and Thursday 10th of July, Year 3/4 at St Christopher's School opened a tea room. We were set a task to turn £20 into a profit by opening a tea-room. Half of the profits are going to the N.S.P.C.C. and half of the profits are for our end-of-the-year party.

We had to decide what food to have and make the menu. We had to decide what to name the restaurant and design the uniform and the logo. We made posters and sent invitations. We did research to help choose the cakes. We did the same with surveys to find out our favourite foods and drinks. We did the costing on the ingredients to help decide the prices.



We set up the tea-room and opened for business. We decided who would do which job. We sold cakes, sandwiches and drinks. We put

some 'customer comments' cards on the table and I will write one comment out for you: "I think you're all brilliant and deserve 10 class stickers".

We raised £81.35 for the N.S.P.C.C. and £81.35 for our end-of-the-year party. The tea-room was very quiet and very nice. It was my best day in school. I loved it!

by Henna

Church Cowley St James School

The Church Cowley building in Bartholomew Road is 50 years old this year, a fact that will be celebrated during the coming term with classroom research by the children and a special thanksgiving service, exhibition and School/Parish event towards the end of term: dates yet to be set. We think it's also a significant anniversary year for the St James building, next to the Church, but we're checking the Trust deeds for that.

An exciting new project will find Church Cowley St James children visiting our Tuesday lunch clubbers, just after lunch each week, to talk about

memories of old Cowley generally and the schools in particular and producing a publication of their findings. We're expecting Rosanne will be involved!

We'd like to hear from you : if you don't come to the lunch club but would like to be involved in this oral history project : if you have any memorabilia, photos or old documents - school books, reports, newspapers, letters - we could borrow : if you have any great ideas for the project or the celebration

We want to make this special for all concerned!

A large, stylized number '50' in a vibrant purple color with a white outline and a slight shadow effect, positioned on the right side of the page.

A challenge to all gardeners!

Do you have, like me, herbaceous perennials that need dividing, self-sown seedlings and plants that have plenty of cuttings material that can be propagated?

Then we need you!

On May 16th next year we are having a Plant Sale for parish funds. This autumn is the time to get propagating and potting up to produce loads of wonderful plants for the sale. Remember, what is in your garden could be a little treasure to someone else! You could also be collecting and sowing seeds from your plants too!

Those of you that have lots of empty pots in the shed and can give them to us for this, then please pass them to me. I can then distribute them to those with plants to put in them.

Winter is the time to plan ahead and order seeds. May is the time people want bedding plants - and don't forget those vegetables! Many people only want one or two courgettes or pumpkins and you get loads in one packet of seeds. Be creative and productive!

Please let me know if you can be a grower for the sale and also for helping on the day at the Church Centre. There are also plans to sell books, cakes and teas – but more details later!

Contact: Joan Coleman at 95 Crescent Road phone 770865 or e-mail ojcoleman@btinternet.com

Rosanne Butler



In our Thursday morning fortnightly prayer group we have been following a brilliant course suggested by Howard. It is called "Psalms, prayers of the heart". Each morning we take a different psalm, study its message and relate it to our own lives and respond to our discussions with prayer.

A few weeks ago we took psalm 103 as our theme. The booklet required us to think and pray about our salvation. At the end of the session it was suggested that we write our own psalm of praise since 103 begins – "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me bless his holy name".

I walked home with my head full of God's blessings which are given to me. What was I to write, what are the things for which I, personally, praise Him? Well, I came up with this psalm which one person in my prayer group thought I might share with you.

Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name.

Bless the Lord for my senses, for all the joys they bring, for all the ways that they enrich my life.

Bless the Lord for my sense of touch: the softness of a cosy sweater, the roughness of limestone, the stroke of a hand, the feel of cool water on a hot day.

Bless the Lord for my hearing: the sound of the wind in the trees, the surge of a wave on a pebbly beach, the majestic soaring of a Beethoven Symphony, the pulse of a rhythm in a jazz tune, my son or daughter's voice on the 'phone.

Bless the Lord for my sense of taste: honey on a slice of new bread, Stilton cheese on a cracker, a glass of beer on a hot day, rich chocolate, creamy ice-cream.

Bless the Lord for my sense of smell: of lime flowers in late June, cut grass, the scent of the garden after rain, bacon grilling, the subtle smell of planed wood.

Bless the Lord, most of all for my sight: the heart of a rosebud, a baby's tiny hands and feet, silhouetted trees against an incredible sunset, a smile from my husband across a room, a vibrant painting by Matisse or Kandinsky, soaring pillars in a great cathedral.

I think the psalms are wonderful and I suggest you read the rest of psalm 103 and see what it brings to mind for you.

Oh, and by the way, our prayer group meets in the lounge of St James' Centre at 10.15 am for coffee, study and prayer (and always a sharing of news) every other Thursday. The next one will be on 18th September. You are very welcome to join us.

Healing Service : 2nd October at St James

SAINT OF THE MONTH

St Giles

There are not as many facts known about St Giles (called Aegidius in early writings) as about some later saints, and many legends have sprung up. He is reputed to have been born in Athens the son of Theodore and Pelagia. In any case, he is thought to have been a wealthy noble. When his parents died, he spent his fortune helping the poor, and eventually sailed away, wanting to follow Christ. He lived in solitude in what is now southern France, eventually coming to the diocese of Nimes, deep in a forest, to a cave whose mouth was guarded by a thick thorn bush. He ate whatever wild plants he could find. The story continues that God sent a hind to him so he could drink its milk.

One day the king, with his huntsmen and hounds, followed the deer to the cave. When the king shot an arrow at the hind, it hit Giles in the leg, crippling him. The king, hearing that the hind was his constant companion, ordered his men to let it be. Although Giles continued at his devotions, and asked to be left alone, the king sent doctors to treat his wound, and visited him. The king grew to respect the hermit, who in his humility refused all compensation.

As his fame spread, followers gathered near the cave and the king built a monastery in the valley, making Giles its first abbot in about 673. A small town grew up around the monastery.

An early book about the saints claims that as Giles celebrated a mass to pardon the sins of the emperor Charlemagne, an angel placed on the altar a letter recounting a sin so terrible Charlemagne had never been able to confess it. Several texts refer to this hidden sin.

St. Giles was revered in the Middle Ages, with countless churches and monasteries throughout Europe dedicated to him. Many writings in prose and verse told of his virtues and miracles. Pilgrims from all over the continent travelled to his shrine.

St Giles became the patron saint of woodland, of lepers, beggars, outcasts, and of nursing mothers (based on the story of his sheltering the hind). In modern times he is also patron saint for people with disabilities.

He is patron of more than 150 churches in the UK, and many hospitals. Many medieval St Giles churches and hospitals were built a safe distance outside the city walls, so that they could serve lepers, who were forbidden from entering the cities.

Described in the Prayer Book as *St. Giles, Abbot and Confessor*, St Giles is commemorated on 1 September. In Oxford, the St Giles Fair is still celebrated on the first Monday and Tuesday in September. You can visit the National Gallery to see a painting called *Saint Giles and the Hind*, painted in about 1500.



Carol Thornton

Keeping in touch

B.O.G.O.F. How often we see that in the shops these days! It's a clever way for the big supermarkets to encourage sales, especially of items which we were not sure we really wanted. Perishable items such as fruit, salad and vegetables are often offered "Buy one, get one free" and I find myself bringing home bags full of things which I know we shall never eat before they are past their best. However, there are people, housebound people, who can't always take advantage of these offers because they simply don't get to the shops and wouldn't want such quantities anyway.

So don't refuse the offers, bring them home and then call on someone you know who would love a net of oranges, a bag of apples, a nice fresh lettuce, or whatever. Not only does it help their budget but it does mean that you will be calling round to see them with a little present. And it won't cost you a thing.

Talking of calling round to our elderly and housebound – don't forget to drop in "The Link" and "The Chronicle" regularly. They really do like to keep in touch with our churches and all our news.

Gardening in September

Doesn't time fly?

It seems to move even faster when you are a gardener; you are always at least one season ahead of the rest of society. I was still looking forward to an August holiday when I received my first bulb catalogue! By 1st August I had received three different ones through my letterbox.

August also sees the first spring bulbs in the shops; both for planting in the garden and for preparing for indoors. We really appreciate those brave flowers in the dark cold days of winter, so prepare now for a floriferous spring.

Plant your daffodils deep this month. Different varieties flower from February till April. I tend to use the smaller varieties because they look more proportioned in our smaller gardens. Prepare for a riot of colour in the house also. Pot up some prepared hyacinth bulbs in flower pots and keep them cool and dark and do not let them dry out. Then when their flower buds are about 1½ inch (4cm) high and the pot is full of lovely strong roots gradually bring them into the warmth of the house – your room will soon be filled with a most glorious scent.

That has got you into training; now comes the busy time! In mid month plant dwarf irises, muscari (grape hyacinths) and crocus in borders or patio pots. Top up with pansies sweet smelling violets, primroses or other primulas. I often plant daffodils below all this just to extend the season of interest

Talking of crocus- do you have problems with squirrels? Last year I saw one eating a 'lollipop' from my patio pot. *One crocus corm with a small shoot which made a very handy 'stick'*. Yes we know about chicken wire over or just in the soil, or deep gravel; but this year I am going to try a perfumed method! I shall cut up some prunings from lavender, rosemary, cotton lavender or sage and sprinkle this around the soil surface with some gravel. I will let you know how I get on. Has anyone else got any humane tips?

Next month: plant tulips, garlic, hardy cyclamen, and summer flowering bulbs you didn't plant in August!

Diana Pope

A New Way to give to Charity

Charity shops have been a brilliant development over recent years. They help the charities by raising money. They help those of us with too much 'stuff' to find a home for it. They are good for the environment by helping us to reuse and recycle. And of course they are good for people who pick up things they need at bargain prices.

So for a lot of us it is good to give things we no longer need to our own favourite charity shop.

A new development which is now becoming widespread is that for those of us who pay tax it is possible to Gift Aid our donations. This only works with those charities (usually the bigger national ones) that have the system set up. You, the person giving something to the shop, give them your name and address and sign a Gift Aid declaration exactly as if you were giving them money. They give you a number and card. Every time after this that you give anything to the shop you simply identify it as a Gift Aid donation and show them your card.

The shop is then able to track how much your gift sells for and that amount of money becomes your personal Gift Aided donation to charity and from time to time the charity will write to you to tell you how much money you have given. Easy!

If your favourite charity doesn't yet use this system please go on supporting them anyway. But if your charity does use the system please sign up, it could increase the profit from sales by up to 25%.

A quick look around the local areas shows that the following charities are already using the system: British Heart Foundation, PDSA, Help the Aged, Sue Ryder and Barnardo's. There are probably others; so if you ever give things to a charity shop ask if it is possible to Gift Aid it.

giftaid it

Top 25 favourite hymns

Several months ago many people in the Parish of Cowley completed a survey asking them what their most loved hymns were. We checked every survey (26 were handed in) we received and discovered that the most loved hymn is *Dear Lord and Father of mankind*.

The words are from a long narrative poem, "The Brewing of Soma." It describes Vedic priests going into the forest and drinking themselves into a stupor with a concoction called "soma." They try to have a religious experience and contact the spirit world. It is after setting that scene that Whittier draws his lesson:

"Dear Lord, and Father of mankind, forgive our foolish ways..." This hymn is as relevant today as when it was written. The hymn was sung in the 2007 movie *Atonement*, which won an Academy Award for best score.

Here is a look at the top 25 hymns from our survey. A complete list will be available at the back of the church later in September.



- 1 Dear Lord and Father of mankind
- 2 Thine be the glory
- 3 Love Divine
- 4 Abide with me
- 5 Praise my soul the king of heaven
- 6 How great Thou art
- 7 Abide with me
- 8 I the Lord of sea and sky
- 9 Holy, Holy Holy, Lord God almighty
- 10 Guide me O thou great Redeemer
- 11 Be still for the presence of the Lord
- 12 There is a green hill far away
- 13 The king of love my shepherd is
- 14 Immortal, invisible, God only wise
- 15 Be thou my vision
- 16 At the name of Jesus
- 17 Amazing Grace
- 18 When I survey the wondrous cross
- 19 The church's one foundation
- 20 Tell out my soul
- 21 Morning has broken
- 22 Just as I am without one plea
- 23 I danced in the morning
- 24 For all the saints
- 25 To God be the glory

Men's Breakfast

Saturday 13th September 2008, at 9.00 a.m. – Venue: Wetherspoons

Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am Holy Communion
 10.00 am Sung Eucharist
 "Church at the Centre" every fourth Sunday
 Also Sunday Lunch : every second Sunday

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am Parish Eucharist

Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – St James
	10.00 am	Toddler Group – St Francis
	2.30 pm	Parish Mothers' Union – St James (3 rd Mon)
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – St James
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – St James
	10.00 am	Seashells Toddler Group
	10.00 am	Toddler Service – St Francis
	12.00 pm	Eucharist – St James
	12.30 pm	Tuesday Lunch Club – St James
	2.30 pm	Friends of St Francis – St Francis (2 nd & 4 th)
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – St James
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – St James
	2.30 pm	Tea Break – St Francis (1st Wed)
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – St James
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – St James
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – St James
	7.00 pm	Eucharist – St Francis
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – St James
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – St James



The Chronicle

Deadline for stories and news: 29th Sept. Next issue out 5th October.

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Margaret Martin Tel: 718532

Pat Chung: Tel: 773792

Join the Club

Just a line to say I'm living
 That I'm not amongst the dead
 Though I'm getting more forgetful
 And mixed up in the head
 I've got used to my arthritis
 To my dentures I'm resigned
 I can cope with my bi-focals
 But-ye-Gods I miss my mind
 Sometimes I can't remember
 When I'm standing by the stairs
 If I'm going up for something
 Or have just come down from there

And before the fridge so often
 My mind is full of doubt
 Now did I put some food away
 Or come to take some out
 If it's not my turn to write dear
 I hope you won't get sore
 I think I might have written
 And don't want to be a bore
 But remember I do love you
 And wished that you lived near
 But now it's time to mail this
 And say "Good-bye my dear"
 I'm standing beside the mail box
 Any my face – it sure is red –
 Instead of posting this to you
 I've opened it instead.

Sorry, no space for a crossword this month.