

Trust in God

As I write, the government has nationalised Bradford & Bingley, making the buy-to-let mortgage lender the second bank to be taken into public ownership in the UK this year as a deepening financial crisis claims more victims around the world. At the same time we've seen large increases in the cost of food, gas and electricity. In Tesco the other day someone I'd never met before began telling me how the financial crisis will affect us here in England over the next couple of years.

Each of us faces uncertainty because of the precarious state of the economy, and many are no doubt calculating how we can manage our debts or protect our savings, and how we can economise. All these actions may be necessary, but more important for us is to shift the focus of our trust. St. Paul writes to Timothy urging us not to put our trust in wealth, which is uncertain, but to "trust in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment." (1 Timothy 6:17)

During our Harvest Festival and Thanksgiving service it was interesting to hear the children of the church list so many ways that God blesses us. Our consumer society "values things and uses people" and it is easy for all of us to fall into the trap of believing that real contentment comes from the things we own. Paul again writes of another kind of contentment that does not hang on our bank balance.

I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation...whether living in plenty or in want. Phil.4:12

Contentment. Aah, isn't that what we

all long for? A general satisfaction about the way things are. Freedom from anxiety and from striving after more.

Many of us are asking ourselves hard questions about the extent to which our contentment, and our hopes for our families, depend on our financial security. Do we recognise how much we have and how richly God blesses us? Do we stop to think how, in our two churches, we might seek to be a blessing to others?

Paul's experience led him to write to the Romans, 'Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another.' (Rom.13:8) The best things in life are free. Do we believe this enough to give from our abundance? Grace, love, hope, nature, and beauty totally eclipse the promise of the larger car, the loft extension, the latest garment or gadget. It was wonderful to see so many people take this idea seriously by making welcome donations of food to the Porch at the Stepping Stone.

In the midst of uncertainty we find hope. A few weeks ago the PCC met for a Saturday of thinking about who we are as a parish, the resources we have and what God is calling us to do. We began to talk about how we might serve God. We hope to develop plans that would allow us to be a part of God's mission and blessing in Cowley. This is a parish that has a history of successfully carrying out God's plans. After all, the Cowley Fathers used the resources with which God had provided them and made a difference both in Cowley and in far-flung areas of the world. We live in exciting times.

Howard

Chronicle

October 2008

Letter from the editors

Dear Readers

In early times when survival through the winter depended on the produce of the summer months, autumn was a time for thanksgiving. It was a time to pick the fruit from the trees and bushes to pickle or preserve. It was a time to store away grain, nuts and honey, a time to chop logs for winter fuel. When all this was done people felt secure.

Although this is a time of uncertainty about our fuel bills and the rising cost of food, we still have lots to be thank-

ful for. We went right through the summer without a hosepipe ban (didn't we just!). When we turn on our heating and lights they "happen". When we go shopping there are affordable items on the shelves and more people are using their gardens to produce food and sharing it. In Third World countries much of this is considered luxury. So let's be thankful.

And while we're giving thanks we shall soon be commemorating those brave men and women who lost their

lives fighting for our freedom. A couple of years ago we featured one person whose name appears on the Roll of Honour in St James' Church. It was a moving story and it has been suggested that we repeat the idea with another of our heroes. So if you have a story to tell about one of those brave people would you be willing to share it? Please let us know.

With love

Rosanne & Carol

Letters

Our new Church Centre is a pleasure to us all and a great asset to the progress of St James.

It does not go unnoticed that the surrounding area of the Centre has been developed into a wonderful garden with landscaping, making it a pleasure to walk around as I often do with my young grandson. All of this is a great tribute to the memory of Gwen.

The reason I am making these comments is because most of what we see in the garden is due to the hard work and dedication of Kathryn and John Gawne-Cain. We are grateful and we thank them very much.

Doug Treadwell

THE PARISH REGISTER

Baptisms:

14 September - Lukus Adrian Norwood-Clark

21 September - Kelci Jemma Crowder
- Aiden McDonald
- Benjamin Samuel Raven

The Wedding Gift

A love that is so special
Needs a gift that's truly worth
Everything that God can give you
For your wedding here on earth.

So take the gold of laughter,
Take the silver of your tears,
Add diamonds for contentment,
Let love grow through the years.

Let Him give you understanding,
Wisdom, patience, care,
Strength when you are parted
And such great love to share.

May you have many presents,
But may you also pray
That the greatest surely comes from God
Upon your wedding day. **Gwen Fancutt**

Weddings:

13 September - Carly Shallow and Stuart Molloy
27 September - Rebecca Louise Thompson and Gareth Paul Hughes

Norman Alderson: Reflections of my Dad's life

By his son, Alan

Dad was born in Darlington on 27 November 1922, the youngest of three brothers, Maurice, Arthur, Frank and a sister Mary. When his Granddad died in 1928, his mother Alice, moved to Lastingham, Yorkshire with her sister Mattie Coates, Dad and Frank. In 1936, they moved to Weald in Kent and then to Sevenoaks. By then, Dad had lost contact with Mary and also with Maurice who had stowed away on a ship bound for Canada. He first worked in Tonbridge in a large house where they helped students to improve their education before going to university. Next employment was at the Wilderness Golf Club as a waiter, before moving to hotels such as the Grosvenor, Victoria and Carlton in Haymarket, London. There, he waited on many famous people including the French General, Charles de Gaulle. I can remember him talking about his nights off in London, when they would go out for a curry during the bomb raids – that must have been hot!

Wanting to do something for the war effort he moved to Oxford to work on Manchester and Lancaster aircraft at the Press Steel Company, before being called up to join the Royal Navy. Training at Fareham, he was one of 60 men selected to join the choir,

trained by Captain Vivian Dunn. They sang at the Albert Hall in aid of the Naval Benevolent Fund (that's why he was good on a karaoke machine singing Frank Sinatra's My Way and others.) Dunn became Major General of all Marine bands.

By early 1942 he was on a troopship bound for Egypt; however he was transferred to the battleship, HMS Malaya and joined the Mediterranean Fleet escorting Merchant shipping to Malta. Many ships were hit and very few merchant ships reached Malta during this time, but Dad never set foot on Malta until 1995, when he was awarded the Malta Medal. Eventually, his ship was recalled to Plymouth and in 1943 he was transferred to the battleship HMS Valiant. I can remember Dad saying how his 21st birthday night was "guns pounding away", a far cry from the youngsters of today! They escorted convoys in the Atlantic before sailing to Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) where they would be based, bombarding places like Sebang and Penang. From there, the ship sailed to Australia, to begin the bombardment of Java. In a dry dock incident, the ship was holed and rudders damaged, and it had to return to Plymouth. A week's leave in Cairo enabled Dad to see the Pyramids and Sphinx, before the



ship entered the Suez Canal only to run aground and block it. Tugs could not move the ship, so they waited for high tide. When the Captain called "All hands to the Quarter deck," and with the tugs pulling, 1,200-crew jumped up and down to bounce the 32,000-ton ship free! Now forced to sail around Africa at four knots with an escort of three destroyers they reached Plymouth three months later. It would have been his first Christmas at home in five years, but he caught Diphtheria and spent three months in an isolation ward. During those war years he was awarded five medals including the Atlantic, Africa and Burma Stars.

He returned to the Press Steel Company in 1946 and that year Mum's brother Bob Green introduced her to Dad in a pub at the Quarry. They married next year and I was born two years later. We lived in Wood Farm Estate and moved to Horspath in 1961, where Dad had quite a large garden, lawns,



Frank, Mary, Maurice and Dad reunited. (Arthur died some years before).

borders and a number of roses (my favourite was the Standard Rose 'Peace' just outside the front door).

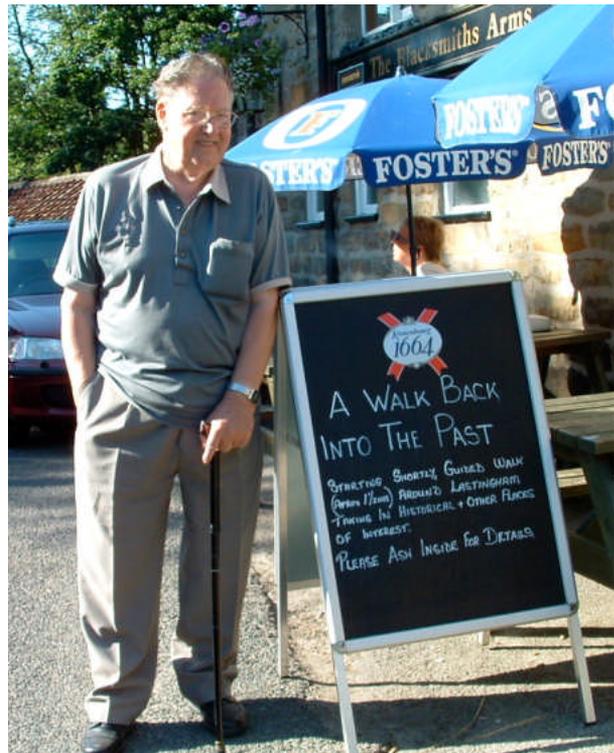
Dad enjoyed gardening, and runner beans (his speciality) were as long as walking sticks. (Not surprising given the amount of compost he put in the trench!) He bought a greenhouse to add to his vegetable patch and the tomato crops were quite something and with me now living in Cambridge with a half-acre vegetable garden we would compare and swop tips and I can tell you, he certainly knew his onions!

A sociable person, he liked pub games like darts, Aunt Sally, dominoes and Cribbage. His favourite pastimes were football and fishing, especially in Scotland with Frank. I could tell many a tale at this point, as the fish, like the runner beans got longer and bigger – was it the fine Highland whisky or

the pint of Heavy? That will be my secret, but I have pictures... of the fish of course! Boat fishing on Loch Lomond was a great favourite whether we caught anything or not; Dad loved the scenery and being with his brother. All our family have this fond memory. On trips out with Frank's fishing club or just our families, walking for miles to find some small loch hidden in the heather or more likely by the midges... but the barbecue smoke kept the midges away and the clink and drink of a

bottle helped numb the bites. It was good fun and more tales were told on the way to the clubhouse where Dad became only the second popular Englishman in the club, Frank being the first.)

Dad retired in 1987, after 46 years at the Press Steel Company, (40 as a Shop Steward). Dad was awarded the T&GW union Gold Medal for 50 years service. He continued his union work, in the Retired Members Association and became Chairman of the Rover Retirees until a few months ago. He was good at organising, so it's not surprising he excelled in these positions. In 1998 Mum and Dad moved to Cowley and joined St James and soon became involved, just when I thought they should be taking it easy! Not to mention all the cam-



Dad outside the pub in Lastingham. (Look what is chalked on the board – "A walk back into the past"!)

paigining for Pensioners' rights, seats in the city centre and much, much more...

We had many great holidays over the years, and as Mum and Dad got older Sandra and I used to take them somewhere for a week. In 2005, we took Dad back to Lastingham, where he grew up, his second return visit. On our first night there, Frank, who was seriously ill in hospital, died, leaving Dad as the sole survivor. We

stayed the week and Dad enjoyed reminiscing those hard but good times living there with his brother, but what made it special was that the village had hardly altered through all those years, being protected with National Park status and, a surprise, on both visits Dad met up with an old school friend.

And finally, I can remember when Dad and I went to Stanton Harcourt where his mum and Aunty lived and we

went skimming stones across the water of the gravel pits; well, unfortunately I've had to skim over quite a lot of his life, but Dad was a sincere and caring man and was there for all, especially my Mum, his wife of 61 years, and to me, a truly great Dad who will always be by my side.

"... Do not stand at my grave and cry. I am not there, I did not die!"

Around Cowley

News Reports

GUIDE CAMP 2008 (9th – 16th August)

We set off in typical August weather – rain, wind, cold – but despite that, in high spirits. Our destination was Deer Park Activity Centre, Gloucester, which has its own on-site activities. This year we participated in Pistol Shooting, Traverse Wall, Low Ropes Assault Course and Archery.

Our Guide leaders also organised things for us to do including wide games, kickball, rounders, water slide, quizzes, mini-Olympics, night-lights and finger football. These helped the Guides to gain badges and 'go for its'.

Mid-week we had a day out. Previously we have gone to the beach but this year we decided to go on a shopping trip to Cheltenham.

On the last night, we had a huge campfire and sang many songs. We also used this as a badge/go-for-it awarding ceremony.

Each camp has a theme and this time it was 'the Olympics'. The Guides were divided into patrols and these were named after past Olympic gold medallists and the colours of the medals.

Although a good time is had by all, patrols have to carry out certain duties i.e. cooking, cleaning, wood and water collecting.

At the end of a great action packed week, it's

back to reality when the equipment has to be unloaded and packed away into the store. If anyone knows of a dry, secure store that we could use, we would be very grateful. In last year's floods we lost a lot of equipment when water got into our current store and its only through Sainsbury vouchers that we've been able to replace some of it. It would be such a shame to have to stop going on these great camps because of lack of equipment.

By Emma and Laura Sherwood

NEW LIFE FOR THE UPPER ROOM

Did you know there is an Upper Room at St Francis? Until recently it housed the offices of Florence Park Family Centre, but for the last few months it has lain empty and bare – an unused resource!

Chatting after church one Sunday, we discovered a real need in our parish for a space to get together, study, pray – to 'stand in awe ... commune with your own heart ... and be still'. (Ps 4:4) This need will only intensify over the coming months as new Christians are formed and disciplined through our Alpha course, and as older Christians are matured alongside them. We felt the Holy Spirit leading us to consider the question: How will we most fully build on the blessings God gives to

all of us during Alpha?

The Friends of St Francis and various St James'– based groups provide much of that support; but there exists no home group, bible study, or prayer network for Christians at the northern end of the parish who work, or are otherwise committed during the day. The Spirit's leading brought us to a clear conclusion: our Upper Room should become a home for the growing community of working-age individuals and families at St Francis. Steep stairs restrict access for some to the Upper Room, and so its uses are limited to activities involving the more mobile among us. Younger members of our congregation at St Francis currently have no space for quiet prayer or study. God fits the burden to the basket, and the basket to the burden, as the saying goes. By the grace of God, others saw the same logic. Last month the PCC granted £200 for the revitalisation of the Upper Room, and we have now drawn up a project plan and schedule to help us make best use of those funds. But the PCC's money is intended as a "start-up", a gesture of support which will cover the costs of much of the work, and some of the items to get the room up and running. But if this project is really to get off the ground, we need everyone to be involved. So we're asking for gifts of furnishings, time and skills. What do we need? Lots of larger items – second-hand sofas, easy chairs, coffee tables, bookcases, lamps, rugs, curtains and other fabrics. Many smaller items – framed pictures, cushions, throws, tablecloths, plants and books. None of these items need be new! Give something that has served *you* well, and let it serve someone else well, too. We also need your *help*: we'll be painting the Room on 25th and 26th October (around services!) and will need willing volunteers, as well as loans of brushes, rollers, paint trays, white spirit, jars and dust-sheets. Do you have carpentry, or DIY skills? Let us know – we'll need them! Can you sew? We need to make curtains, as well as bean-bags and cushion covers. Finally, if rummaging in the attic or pulling on a pair of overalls seems too much but you'd still like to help, we'd very gratefully accept donations of money (payable to the PCC,

please). Some of the work we'll be doing requires professional expertise.

We hope this project excites you as much as it excites us. We feel that God has a specific task for the Parish of Cowley, and that this is part of it. Please pray for the project and pray for us as we set it in motion. And, if you've any questions, or would like to give or help in any way, please do contact us on any of the numbers below.

Jenny Bushell ' 429 106

Diana Pope ' 432630

Patrick Gilday ' 203050

QUALITY MERCHANDISING AT THE CHURCH CENTRE

If you are thinking of starting your Christmas shopping – DON'T! At least not until you've visited the stalls at the autumn Craft Fair in the Church Centre on Saturday 8th November. As last year, the hall will be packed with tables full of lovely things to buy, some similar to last year but many selling for the first time. Amongst the items on offer will be designer jewellery, knitwear, home-made preserves, quilting, greetings cards, stained glass art, woodturning sugar-craft, home-made toys, Phoenix Trading and lost, lots more. Coffee and simple lunches will be available all day and while you enjoy your snacks in the lounge, away from the bustle of the stalls, you can watch a demonstration of pillow lace making. Second-hand books of all kinds will also be on sale. In the afternoon we are hoping that the pupils of Cowley St James School will be on hand to entertain us with their hand-bells.

Obviously a date for your diary and one not to be missed. Oh, yes, and if you arrive early you'll be able to snap up one of the lovely home-made cakes which will also be on sale.

CELEBRATING ST FRANCIS

It has to be said that we, as a parish, are very good at celebrating! Back in July St James' congregation had a lovely evening with a bring-and-share supper to celebrate their patronal festival.

Now it's St Francis' turn but with the policy of "you can't have too much of a good thing" they intend to celebrate TWICE.

On October 5th (the day our October issue is out) they are celebrating their patronal feast with a bring-and-share lunch after morning service. Then on Sunday 19th October they have plans for another bring-and-share to celebrate St Luke's Day. If past experience is anything to go by, both occasions will be a lot of fun and the food will be magnificent.

N.B. That will leave just nine weeks to lose a few pounds in order to get into your Christmas best clothes before all the mince pies and other goodies take over!

MOTHERS' UNION NEWS

Last month's talk with illustrations in St James' Church was a success if the comments made by a number of visitors are anything to go by. It was a very different branch meeting and gave us a chance to raise our profile to non-members. It was a great pleasure to welcome one of our very long-standing members, Marjorie Pipkin, now 96, who was escorted by her son.

This month's meeting on Monday 20th October, at 2.30 p.m. in the Church Centre, will be a chance to highlight our 2008 M.U. theme "Relationships". Mrs Alison Holden, head teacher at St Christopher's C.E. primary school in Temple Road, is going to speak about her role in a Church of England school set in one of the most multi-racial areas in the city. How do she and her staff maintain their hold on Christian faith whilst teaching respect and understanding for families with different faiths or no faith at all? It should be a fascinating afternoon. As ever, visitors will be more than welcome.

Before the next meeting however, we are running another "Puddings Plus" evening with a family quiz. Visitors are vital to make this event go with a bang. Everyone is welcome; it begins at 6.30 p.m. on Friday 10th October, in

the Church Centre, and it costs just £1 each. The puds will be lovely so don't eat too much tea!

THE COMMUNITY EMERGENCY FOODBANK (CEF)

On Tuesday, 16 September the Community Emergency Foodbank (CEF) held a launch party at St Francis Church. Guests represented the council, referring agencies, and churches, and several members of St Francis and St James churches attended. The Rt Reverend John Pritchard, Bishop of Oxford spoke in support of the food bank.

Jane Benyon, who began the project, had been inspired by learning of a food bank in Chicago. When she moved to Oxford in 2006 and retired, she began looking for a volunteer opportunity where she could continue to use her skills. She researched the question of whether a food bank was needed, and felt it was. She and two colleagues began searching for suitable premises.

By the time St Francis church became available, they had built up stocks of food donated by many local churches. They had contacted referring agencies who had contact with people in need. Volunteers were recruited and the CEF opened in April.

The object of CEF is to help people who face a crisis. The food bank is open for two hours each Tuesday and Friday. People referred bring a food voucher, and receive a hamper containing food for three days. It includes a note explaining that the hamper is offered to them as a way of showing God's love in a practical way.

Jane has been amazed by the diversity of people from a range of social and economic backgrounds. "The system appears to be working." People tend to make a maximum of three visits.

CEF has now fed over 250 people. It is a constant challenge to keep the cupboards full. "We like our slogan for people going shopping. **Buy one Give one Free.**" Jane hopes that individuals will commit themselves to giving one or two items on a regular basis. If all the congregations involved did this, CEF would never run short.

ROSANNE INTERVIEWS

Joyce Titchell

I think you would be amazed at the number of people who, when invited to be interviewed for 'The Chronicle', will turn me down with something like this: "Oh no, Rosanne, you don't want me! You interview such interesting people and I'm very ordinary". If I do manage to cajole them (and many of you know that I'm quite a cajoler) they then proceed to tell a life story which is so fascinating that I can't wait to write it for you. One such person is Joyce.

Born in North London before the Second World War, she was quite a little "townie" and so, when she was evacuated with her elder sister and two brothers to a quaint little village in Northamptonshire at the end of 1939, it was quite a culture shock. The village was called Denton. Baby brother Peter was too young to go without their mother so she came too, leaving father behind in London. Due to the injuries he had sustained fighting in the First World War, he was unsuitable for military service so he left his trade as a greengrocer and worked in a munitions factory.

The little cottage in the village which was allocated to them had absolutely no facilities – no gas, electricity, a loo at the bottom of the garden and all their water was

collected from the communal pump on the village green. Joyce recalled that when her father joined them over the Christmas holiday, the weather was so severe that on Christmas morning the men of the village had to build a bonfire round the pump in order to thaw it out. No early morning cuppa until the water flowed. Yet throughout all those difficult times Joyce never once heard her mother grumble. One big advantage was that the cottage was situated next-door to the village bakery. The bake-house oven was used by the villagers who took their Sunday joint (such as it was in those days of rationing). The further away you lived the colder your meat would be by the time you reached home, but living next-door meant a piping hot dinner every Sunday. Like many Londoners after the first few months of the war, with no bombing raids, the family returned home. However, at the end of 1940, when the blitz really began, the family evacuated again, this time to the Oxfordshire village of Eynsham. Being so many (five children and mum) their billets were scattered throughout the village which was quite difficult for them all. Finally, the council managed to find them accommodation in a large cottage in

Bladon, which they shared with one elderly lady. Joyce became one of the village children attending the village school and thoroughly enjoying the whole experience. Even better for them all was when their dad was transferred to the Pressed Steel factory in Cowley.

At eleven Joyce followed her sister and eldest brother to the Marlborough School in Woodstock. Her favourite subjects were English and maths, so on leaving at the age of fourteen, she was drawn to office work first at the Swan Bakery and then at Hunt and Broadhursts in Botley. This meant cycling to work in all weathers, quite a feat for such a young teenager.

On Saturday evenings in those days, Bladon held regular dances in the village hall and that was how Joyce met Ray. He would cycle over, with a group of lads, from Eynsham. In a matter of weeks the two young people were "going steady". He was her one and only real boyfriend and after three years of courtship (interrupted by Ray's National Service) they were married.

Although his dad owned a provision store in Eynsham, Ray worked in the pharmacology department of the Oxford University Laboratories. When he and Joyce be-

gan their married lives, sharing a house with friends in Kidlington, they had even longer cycle rides to work each day. After an experimental period helping in Mr Tichell's shop in Eynsham, the couple moved back to Bladon and found further work in Oxford. It was obvious that they needed a home of their own. They found one in Sandhills and soon after this their baby daughter, Christine, was born. Five years later they decided to adopt a baby sister for Christine. Her name was Sue. One of the greatest tragedies of Joyce's life was the death of Sue, aged 19, and her fiancé in a dreadful car crash. Bringing up their two little girls was a great joy. Some of those years were spent in High Wycombe where Ray and Joyce took their own small shop. However, their inclination was always in this direction and when a store fell vacant on the corner of Fernhill Road and Wilkins Road, they decided to take it and there they stayed till Ray retired.

Although they made lots of friends amongst their neighbours and customers, they lived over the shop and Joyce felt that life was becoming rather monotonous and dull. Having tracked down evening classes at Temple Cowley School, she decided to sign on so that she'd meet new people and enjoy a chat with fellow students. Originally she was attracted to woodwork but

when she learnt that the group was all male, she thought again. She wanted a mixture of new friends, including some ladies, for a good old natter!

Winemaking filled the bill and, having joined the class, she opened up for herself (and her husband) a whole new world. "It was the best thing I ever did", she told me. Soon Ray and Joyce began making high quality wines of their own, entering and winning competitions. Such was their expertise that they were asked to judge wine-making competitions all over this area. Joyce was judging the home-made wine classes at Thame show right up until last year. She has a huge circle of friends amongst the wine aficionados of the county, including members of the prestigious Oxford Guild of Sommeliers. She and Ray were members for fifteen years. The annual conventions are held in a different college each year, hosted by the butler and his staff.

Sadly, after a long illness, Ray died in 2000 leaving Joyce to live alone in the charming house in Rupert Road, for which they had saved in order to enjoy their retirement together. They had been married for 52 happy years. After losing her husband, Joyce's faith was shaken and she retreated into her shell for at least two years. Then her near neighbour, Helen Dorling invited her to join an Alpha course. She went, found a new circle of friends

and, most importantly, her lost faith. As a child, the elderly lady in whose house she had lived in Bladon, took her to chapel and her faith in God was established. Now it is stronger than ever.

She is a faithful worker for Him in a number of ways, predominantly as a filler of shoeboxes, those wonderful parcels which the folk at St Francis send, with love, to the children of the poorest countries of the world. She also knits endlessly for the orphans of Cameroon. At the moment she is also making goods for the sale at the autumn craft fair.

Joyce is also a proud grandmother, her daughter, Christine, has two grown-up children and lives within easy reach for visiting. Never one to waste a moment. I hope you see now why this month's personality is not ordinary at all. In my opinion Joyce is as remarkable as anyone I have had the privilege of interviewing.

How would you describe yourself as a little girl?

Fairly quiet. My brothers I found a bit overpowering but I always found it easy to make friends.

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

I loved my infant school. After school lunch we were given a little bottle of milk with a straw. Then the teacher told us a story and then we had a rest. We had

little folding camp beds and a blanket and we had to lie down and rest for half-an-hour. After we'd put our beds and blankets away the teacher would take out a big gold tin and give us each a spoonful of cod-liver oil and malt. And then it was time to go home! I don't remember having any lessons in the afternoons.

Has God been part of your life since childhood?

On and off. He's always been there even when things were tough (and they've certainly been tough at times).

If you could change something in our modern world what would it be?

I'd knock some sense into the heads of some of the world leaders then maybe we'd get peace.

Is there anything in modern society which you find encouraging?

No, things aren't getting better. People are not courteous to each other and I don't think children are properly disciplined these days.

Do you have a treasured possession?

I treasure my gold cross and chain because they were my very last present from Ray.

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

I do cross-stitch, knitting

reading (anything except really horrific thrillers). I love historical novels. (R.B. Joyce is a Jane Austen devotee).

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

I would have liked to visit New Zealand. It strikes me as a clean, fresh country.

Do you have plans or ambitions for the future?

I want to stay here. I'm very lucky with my neighbours and I've got lots of friends. I just hope they all keep well and I'm able to get out and enjoy their company for a long time yet.

A Date from the Past

Scientists in Jerusalem have managed to germinate a Date Palm seed which has been carbon dated as being just over 2000 years old. If it grows to full stature and bears fruit, they are going to name it Methuselah.

How wonderful to think that this seed from a tree that may well have been growing when Christ was alive in the Holy Land could be flourishing now. It was found in the Dead Sea area – so that may not be so dead after all.

We ourselves have come across a Yew Tree in a churchyard in Kent that was officially authenticated as being over a thousand years old. This had a signed certificate from the Archbishop of Canterbury and David Bellamy no less. There is a movement at present throughout the country to identify and protect old and special trees.

And why not? - for they are as much a part of our heritage as are old buildings. The Parliament Oak under which King John convened a special meeting of Parliament is still there. The tree under which Elizabeth I was sitting when she received the news that she was to become Queen is still to be found near Hatfield House. If we are at all keen on our country's history, we should support such movements.

John Shreeve



TRAVELLERS' TALES

Brian and Barbara Brown have sent reports on the trips they have organised this summer and plans afoot to keep Cowley travellers on the move next year. What a wonderful variety of trips they organise – a big thank you to them - :

Hampton Court Flower Show

After a day of torrential rain, Thursday 10th July dawned bright and sunny. Forty-eight of us set off for the flower show, a new venture for the parish and their friends. New faces were welcomed and we were soon on our way.

There were so many things to see; the show gardens, lots of things to buy, most wonderful sculptures, garden furniture, greenhouses and sun rooms.

Crossing the river, we found show tents, the exhibits of many varieties of flowers, also fruit and vegetables. The sponsors, The Daily Mail, had a marvellous tent, showing a cottage and its garden that was to be won by some lucky person, and Hardys' display of the most wonderful perennials.

The previous day's rain had made it muddy underfoot, but we all managed to get around, even our two wheelchair people and their wonderful carers!

A really successful trip, so much so that we have been asked to visit The Malvern Spring Show next May, possibly the 8th, so watch this space.

Windsor Castle – 13th August

Our visit to Windsor Castle lifted our spirits in what turned out to be one of the wettest Augusts on record, the weather being rea-

sonably kind to us.

What splendour so near to home. On arrival we picked up our audio guides for our visit to the State Apartments, before joining a Castle Warden who guided us through the precincts.

Before entering the State Apartments there was the opportunity to see the wonderful dolls' house belonging to Queen Mary, as well as the exquisite dolls and their clothes, and accessories sent from France.

An exhibition to celebrate the 60th birthday of Prince Charles was interesting, exhibits showing photographs from his early childhood through to the present day. The State Apartments are truly magnificent, wonderful paintings, ceilings and furniture, as well as beautiful china adorning the amazing drawing room, where State visitors are entertained.

We passed through the room where the great fire started, now restored to its former glory.

As we made our way towards the exit, we visited St George's Chapel, the resting place for many former Kings and Queens. Services are held at the end of each day.

On leaving the castle, we were able to visit the historic Victorian railway station, now a hive of shops and restaurants, a chance to get something to eat and chat before returning to Oxford.

.....

Our next trip is a visit to London to the Adelphi Theatre to see "Joseph", then we look forward to our winter break to Boscombe, and our spring break to Newquay. There is still a chance to join us on both trips, spaces to Newquay are limited.

Anyone wishing to join us, please ring us on 01425 280156.

God Bless you all,

Barbara and Brian

-
- Don't let your worries get the best of you; remember, Moses started out as a basket case.
 - Some people are kind, polite, and sweet-spirited until you try to sit in their pew.
 - Many folks want to serve God, but only as advisors.
 - It is easier to preach ten sermons than it is to live one.
 - When you get to your wit's end, you'll find God lives there.

Rose Neal



It was May last year when I first came to St James, walking up the road with Joy. I was immediately impressed by the strength and friendliness of the congregation: so many people actively involved in church activities, and welcoming to a newcomer. This while having had no parish priest for some time was pretty impressive. But there were Beth and Michael, recently ordained, with John, Tony and Mark also taking services. Five priests holding the fort until Howard came with his family!

Two other things made a strong impression: history and music. You can tell by looking at the outside of the church that it is old. But I wouldn't have guessed it was built 900 years ago; it's older than the cathedral. And still the church is kept in such good condition, and is warm and comfortable inside. During a quiet moment in church I sometimes think of the generations of people who have worshipped here over all

those years.

And the music: I'm not especially musical, but I sure appreciate the sound of a good traditional organ at Sunday service. It also featured at the Proms concert we had one night recently at St James. Also the church bells get the occasional workout, and I'd love to have a go sometime.

Something I have particularly appreciated has been the response to my need for guidance in quiet prayer and meditation. It's perhaps a minority concern, but having mentioned it, it turned out that others are interested, and a group has been formed. This can be really helpful in deepening our spiritual lives.

Then there's the social life. I've not known a congregation quite so active throughout the week. We have the benefit of the new Church Centre; however did previous generations manage without it? I found the coffee

time after Sunday service a great way of getting to know people, and then there's also lunch the second Sunday of every month, and various events in the week. I feel part of an extended family. We are truly blessed.

Howard, we know, is working on outreach to the broader community in this very large parish. A lot has already happened since he arrived; and it seems this is just the beginning.

This is one of a series of articles on "God in my life." My experience of coming to St James has certainly enhanced my sense of God in my life, but I have also seen God working in the lives of many people I have come to know. This is not a church where people take a back seat (including those who sit at the back of the church!) It is a church where the Spirit

CHURCH WARDEN'S REPORT

A good start to a new term.

I have been helping with tree issues and liaising with the Tree Officers to make things safe in the carpark and healthy for the trees.

Sea Shells seems to be in a better position with a few people helping to set up and down, but more committed help on Tuesday mornings is still needed.

Clare has been involved in the new appointment which will give Howard the much needed secre-

tarial/admin support needed for a parish this size.

Jeremy very helpfully left this post having set up the office which will help centralise a lot of information and help with communication.

An exciting time ahead with Alpha coming up and & Christmas looming.

Well that's all for now but please be in touch with either myself or Clare about anything, good or not so.

Dan and Clare

Notes from the September PCC Meeting

Clare Edwards was co-opted to be a member of the PCC.

Colin Doling attended the first part of the meeting to report on the work he had done on the outside of St Francis' Church building. He also pointed out the inadequacy of a previous repair to the roof tiles.

Some members were worried that sometimes money from special events was dealt with personally instead of through the Treasurer. Joan will present guidelines at the next meeting so that a Parish policy can be agreed.

Rosanne and Frank were to be congratulated on the very successful Cowley Prom and thanked for this fantastic evening that was so much enjoyed.

The Treasurer presented the accounts up to the end of July so that we could compare our actual income and expenditure with the budget we had planned. A small group was formed to meet and decide on the distribution of our mission giving. Suggestions will be invited from the congregations.

St Francis will celebrate its Patronal Festival and St Luke's Day, each with a Bring and Share lunch.

Suggestions for the celebration of Christmas included a Service of Lessons and Carols and a Carol Concert led by the Jubilee Brass Band. (Venues to be decided).

The Church Centre is flourishing having hosted the Seashells, monthly Sunday lunches and the champagne buffet at the Cowley Prom. Dan, John and Catherine have worked hard on the garden, paving and surroundings. Benches have been purchased.

A small group from St Francis is planning to refurbish the upper room to provide a venue for a "home group" to meet after the Alpha course has finished.

CMS LECTURE SERIES

Our neighbours at CMS are offering a series, Mission and the Arts @ CMS, held mostly on Thursday evenings at 8 (with two exceptions*.)

16 Oct. Lucy Winkett, Canon of St Paul's Cathedral with responsibility for music and liturgy

23 Oct. Ernesto Lozada-Uzuriaga, artist-priest

30 Oct. Ann Pilling, novelist and poet

*5 Nov. Bishop John Pritchard (Wednesday) – *The need for eccentric mission*

13 Nov. Catherine Fox, novelist and columnist

20 Nov. Roger Wagner, painter and poet

27 Nov. Julia Golding, children's author, diplomat and policy advisor

4 Dec. Rob Hutton, journalist

*11 Dec. Toddy Hoare, sculptor and priest

Before the lectures, a meal will be served from 7 pm at the CMS café. Cost: £7 on the day. Reserve a place 7 days before by emailing berdine.vandentoren@cms-uk.org

cms-uk.org

DECIDING WHETHER TO GO TO CHURCH OR THE FOOTBALL MATCH



CHURCH



FOOTBALL

YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR OWN MIND UP REALLY. THERE IS NOTHING THAT I COULD SAY THAT WOULD CONVINCE YOU ONE WAY OR THE OTHER

The Night the Proms Came to Cowley

I think by now everyone has heard what a wonderful affair the Cowley Proms was. It all went so smoothly; it was so very enjoyable; everyone was happy, rose to the occasion and dressed up; everyone was very friendly. In short, it was an experience that none of us lucky enough to have secured tickets will ever forget.

I would like to pay tribute to the backroom boys and girls.

First came the idea; then came the planning. The date was set, musicians were approached, a programme was compiled. I suspect that was the easy part!

The tickets had to be designed and printed and sold (a waiting list soon took shape.) The buffet had to be planned and executed. This meant shopping and storage and then a whole day spent preparing. I understand that it looked most attractive. I know that it was very tasty, and easy to handle. The champagne corks popped and volunteers poured and served the bubbly. As always with a Cowley gathering – even with so many guests from outside Cowley – the decibel level soon rose, a sure sign we were enjoying ourselves.

We were ushered into the church, our tickets were checked – that all had to be organised too. I am not musical, but I enjoyed the concert. Our wonderful catering team produced juice at the interval, and then we settled in for the second half. I understand that during the interval a large Union Jack appeared in the arch at the front of the church – who did that?

We all had our English flags to wave during the patriotic songs – and how we waved them and how we sang! I understand that we could be heard across the road.

We all left feeling very pleased with our evening. The clearing up? The washing up? The thank you letters? Only those who had to do these things gave them a thought. (I bet a certain house in St Omer Road has gained a reputation with the recycling men!)

– Una

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS

NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS

The team of hand-bell ringers at St James' primary school are busy preparing a programme of Christmas music and carols. The good news is that they are coming to play at the Church Centre on 8th November on the afternoon of the autumn Craft Fair. They are also making a return visit to the Tuesday lunch club on 11th November, an occasion not to be missed!

Cowley Gardens Win Awards

Some of the prizes in the Oxford in Bloom competition were awarded to gardens within the parish. Congratulations go to the following Cowley winners:

Suzanne Smith – Best Terraced House

Susan Cummins – Family Garden

St Christopher's Primary School won a gold medal for the Best Schools Environmental Project. About 20 to 25 children formed a gardening club, and have tended the courtyard since March.

According to Alison Holden, headteacher, "It looks lovely, really beautiful."



New ways of Gardening

by Diana Pope

Here we are Autumn has arrived. Summer must have got lost somewhere. We are learning new ways of gardening – plants once thought tender, are now surviving outdoors, especially if kept on the dry side.[with all that rain!] The indoor plants which have been enjoyed a holiday in the open air will need to be brought in now, but for example: geraniums [pelargoniums], which used to be brought in by September, it may be possible to enjoy them outside for another month. I shall wait for frost forecasts before I bring mine into the cold frame.

We are still cutting our grass [or have you got a lawn?] and may still need to do so for another month or so. Have you tried grasses in your borders? This year mine has flopped – literally- flowers bowing down to the ground. They could be beautiful, airy panicles! Never mind, next year!

My biggest flop has been the tomatoes. Potato blight and late ripening has all but wiped out our tomatoes again this year. Has anyone had a successful harvest? Is there a secret? Please share it.

To save you time and energy – don't cut all your seed heads down to tidy the garden for winter. Frosted seed heads of teasels, alliums, ornamental grasses, heuchera can all look magical, and they, along with some hollow stems, offer some protection for insects.

Sow some seeds now. Try sowing some salad leaves and covering them with fleece or putting them in a cold frame. Sow hardy broad beans and sweet peas. Try sowing winter hardy White Lisbon[spring onions] or some overwintering onions[or leave it till next month and plant sets of these later onions]..

Consider sowing some annual seeds now, maybe just in a spare corner, or a large pot, or even in the ground outside your garden. I have a tree in a big bed outside my garden!!! Try marigolds, nigella, blue cornflowers[becoming scarce in the wild!], poppies, or meadow mixtures; plants which attract bees and other insects; and don't destroy all your nettles, cherish them for the butterflies.

You have, of course, finished planting daffodils, and are preparing for the tulips. You have planted the huge bulbs of Amaryllis [Hippeastrum] for beautiful flowers and are scouring the seed catalogues for new ideas for the spring and summer sowing bonanza. You have? You are? My goodness!. Maybe you should be writing this!

Next month. More seeds to sow? Finish your tulip planting. Think about which plants should be moved or divided and consider what plants to put in the gaps.

Diana Pope

Congratulations to the children born in the 1940s and 1950s. We survived being carried by mothers who smoked and drank, took aspirin, ate blue cheese and tinned tuna. Our medicine bottles weren't child-proof, nor were the doors or cabinets. We drank water from the hosepipe, not a bottle. We shared one soft drink among four friends and no one died. We ate cakes, white bread and butter, and had soft drinks with real sugar, but we weren't obese because.... We were playing outdoors! We rode a bike or walked to a friend's house. We'd leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were home when the street lights came on. We spent hours building a go-kart from scraps and then rode down the hill, only to find out we forget to put in brakes. After crashing into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve the problem. We played with worms and made mud pies. We fell out of trees, got cut, and broke bones, but didn't file lawsuits. We made up games with balls and sticks, and no one lost an eye. We didn't have computer games, DSs, surround sound, mobiles, text messages or internet chat rooms. (Some of us might have had a Wii but we wouldn't talk about it in public.) The idea of our parents bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They sided with the law. This generation produced some of the best ever problem-solvers and inventors. The past 50 years have seen an explosion of innovation and new ideas. We had freedom, success, failure and responsibility, and we learned how to deal with it all. Congratulations to us! Kind of makes you want to run through the house with a pair of scissors, doesn't it?

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 – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Parish Mothers' Union – <i>St James (3rd 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 Toddler Group : <i>St James</i>
	12.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St James</i>
	12.30 pm	Tuesday Lunch Club – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Friends of St Francis – <i>St Francis (2nd & 4th)</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>
	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>

Team Rector

Revd Howard Thornton, Cowley Rectory, Beauchamp Lane
Tel: 747680

parishofcowley@hotmail.co.uk
Please note Howard has a day off on Fridays.

Non-Stipendiary Minister

Rev Canon Mark Oxbrow,
13 Annesley Road
Oxford, OX4 4JH
Tel: 01865 461953

markoxbrow@aol.com

Churchwardens:

Dan and Clare Edwards
Tel: 01865 774002
Norah Shallow
Tel: 765199

Deputy Wardens:

Margaret Martin Tel: 718532
Pat Chung: Tel: 773792

The Chronicle

Deadline for stories: 27th Oct.
Next issue out: 2nd Nov.

Rosanne Butler : Tel: 453257

Carol Thornton : Tel: 747680

Churches bounce back

John Shreeve contributed a story he clipped from the newspaper. It reported on the fact that while in the UK, two churches a week close because of dwindling congregations, a church in Sardinia has found a new way to attract worshippers.

They've put up an inflatable church. It's filled with air, pumped in the same way as for a bouncy castle. At some 30 feet wide and 100 feet long, the "bouncy church" is big enough to hold an altar and a confessional. Its first outing was on a Cagliari beach.

John comments, "I can't visualise our aging population bouncing up and down on this."