

Dear Friends...

The shops are playing Christmas carols and all around us folk are preparing for Christmas, decorations are going up - too early we may feel, and presents are being bought - too expensive we might say. It is so easy to get caught up in the glamour and bright lights that we forget what it's all about.

We are on auto-pilot, moving from one task or job to the next, in a hurry to fit everything in. It is so easy to become disconnected - we forget to ask ourselves what is Christmas and why is there so much fuss?

What are we preparing for?

For me, as I write this, I am all about Advent! I know when I say Advent most of us think about the chocolate calendars (which are becoming more and more elaborate) and the important countdown to Christmas Day. But I'm thinking of Advent more in the liturgical sense. The word Advent derives from the Latin word meaning coming. The Lord is coming. We may reflect that every year at this time we celebrate his coming, so that in a sense we can lose the feeling of expectancy and joyful anticipation, because at the end of the season, everything seems to return to pretty much the same routine. If that is the case, then our preparation may have been lacking and we have therefore been robbed of much of the true meaning of this season.

During Advent we recall the history of God's people and reflect on how the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament were fulfilled. This gives us a background through which we can interpret the present. Today we can reflect on the past track-record of God and so begin to understand what it means to us now for the sake of what is

to come, in our own future and that of our world.

This is life changing stuff and we need to give ourselves time to reflect on this!

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shone.

We are in a time of preparation, a time when we need to prepare ourselves inwardly, rather than preparing our homes and places of work, we need to prepare our hearts and souls and ask ourselves are we ready for the Lord to come and for us to receive the Saviour of the World?

In our three schools this week we have been sharing the story of the rich farmer (Luke 12). He had so much but was selfish and greedy; all his attention was on making more and more money and he did not want to share with anyone - not even the poor! Jesus surprised his audience with the end of this story. The rich man suddenly dies and never gets to enjoy all the money and all his hard work. It has a blunt message and is especially potent at this time of year, when we are encouraged to think that spending more money equals loving more and bringing more happiness along the way. Of course the things that really matter are the things we can't buy - family and friends and our relationship with God. In the story, money is not really the problem; the problem is that the farmer's focus is solely on the money. What are the things in our lives that are stealing all our attention and taking us away from God and the people we love?

Advent is a time when we try to get ourselves a bit more used to the truth - the truth about ourselves, which is not

Christmas

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always very encouraging, but the truth about God above all which is always encouraging. As the darkness prevails and the stresses of Advent and Christmas take over we must remember that our little lights within continue to shine.

Christ is the light of the World. A light no darkness can quench!

The One who comes will come with a great challenge. It will be like fire on the earth as the Bible says. And yet the One who comes is coming in love. He is coming to set us free. And that is something well worth waiting for.

No matter where you are, who you have in your life, how much money you own or how many

presents you have under the decorated tree - this message of Advent is for you to respond to! Your life is precious and you are more valuable than gold. Let us not get caught up by the bling of Christmas but by the light of Christ.

As we await our coming Saviour,
Go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

Much love and may the Christ Child bless you and all your loved ones during this special season x

Skye

Rainbow and Brownies

It has been a busy year for both the Rainbow unit and the Brownie unit. Numbers continue to be high and we have a waiting list for Rainbows who are not quite 5.

Rainbows have completed 3 challenge badges – a fun Teddy Bear's Picnic, All about me badge and the Birthday Challenge. Girls have enjoyed making pizza, edible fireworks and biscuits. They have also learnt about themselves for one of the badges.

Brownies celebrate their 100th Birthday this year

and some of the unit went on a special train trip to London, laid on by Great Western. We got the chance to decorate our carriage and then spent the day in the park before heading home. In the summer we joined the rest of Girlguiding Oxfordshire for a big celebration and sleepover at Cornbury Park. Some only went for the day and joined in all the activities, and some took the plunge and stayed the night.

2015 holds new opportunities for us – we are planning our first pack holiday for 2 nights away.

CHRISTMAS GIFT AND CRAFT FAIR

A BIG, BIG THANK YOU for all the offers of help and hard work leading up to the Christmas Gift and Craft Fair. So many customers and visiting stall holders said what a happy event it was which all goes towards its success.

So far we've banked £1,253.05 and we still have the income from the wreaths to come in which will take us well over £1,300 which, as you all know, is going towards the Refurbishment of the Vestry.

Thank you all so very much

Christine and Margaret

Editor's Letter

Dear Readers

December already and another year of The Chronicle gone by! We do hope you continue to enjoy your magazine as your devoted Chronicle team beaver away to keep it interesting and fresh (and published on time!) each month. We do welcome your comments, you know, not just praise but constructive criticism too. It is on many of your ideas and suggestions that our magazine has evolved over the last four and a half years. Of course we do love it when we are told that you look forward to your new issue on the first Sunday of the month.

I have some incredible news about the wonderful work of our parish knitters. You may remember that I mentioned the "smoothie hats" which were dispatched to Sainsbury's in aid of Age UK last month. Joyce Titchell has told me that the final total was 824 – amazing. And while I am speaking about this lovely lady, can I also pass on the news that 75 filled and prettily wrapped Christmas gift boxes were sent off this year to needy children in the third world. Joyce also asked me to request shoeboxes and small gifts in the New Year as she, with Mary Biggs, her new assistant, intend to get started on next year's consignment as soon as Christmas is over.

Our interviewee this month may come as a bit of a surprise to some readers as he is a former Cowley boy who no longer lives in the parish. A chat with him was a bit like a walk down memory lane as you will see later on.

As promised the long-awaited recipe book is now available. Our Chronicle Good Food Cook Book, containing all the best recipes from our magazine for the last four years, can be obtained from your editor at the minimal price of £4 (a bargain!). £2 of the sale of each copy will go towards its production, and the other £2 will go towards the vestry (St James) and kitchen (St Francis)

refurbishment funds. Some people are buying copies to give as little Christmas gifts for friends who like to cook. How about you?

Angels, hundreds of them, will be filling St James Church this year for our Christmas Tree Festival. It is amazing how many different interpretations of what an angel might look like you can find in the shops. Some look like glamorous film stars (Marilyn Monroe springs to mind), some like innocent, cute little babies, with all sorts in between. The Festival will be very intriguing as well as beautiful this year, I am sure, with so many angels on display.

Before the year is over I do want to mention the commemorative concert devised by Howard and superbly performed by The Jubilee Brass Band. Howard handed over the final arrangements to me as he had to move to Canada before the Remembrance Weekend. I took on the responsibility with pleasure but the whole concept was his. He wanted to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the beginning of WW1 in the way that we in Cowley do so well, and I think that we fulfilled his wishes really successfully. Those who attended the concert commented that they had never heard the band play better and I totally agree with them. The whole programme was a fitting tribute to those brave people who made the ultimate sacrifice for their country.

As Advent advances and Christmas draws near I hope it is not too soon to wish all our readers and their families a joyful peaceful and, yes, Merry Christmas. Thank you to those people who have written articles, poems, jokes, letters and sent in recipes this year. We could not manage without you. Here's to even more of the same in 2015.

A very Happy New Year from the Chronicle team.
God Bless from
May, Sally, Nicki and Rosanne

37th Oxford Scout Group

It has been a very busy few months at the 37th recently! Our scouts (and Explorer scouts from Felix ESU) attended WINGS summer camp back in the summer holidays - this was attended by around 7000 scouts and guides from all over the world! It provided some great opportunities for our young people - loads of brilliant activities and chances to meet like-minded people from all over the world!

The autumn term has started really well. The scout troop has almost doubled in numbers so we are now thriving in terms of energy and enthusiasm, and we are doing lots of great activities! Most recently, we were part of the district wide game (held at Youlbury Scout Camp) and held a sleepover at the scout hut- followed by a day trip to coral reef swimming centre in Bracknell. We have also held a ready steady cook competition, worked on map and compass skills and held a night hike at Shotover.

Cubs have been busy too. They have just had a new leader join who has come with some great new ideas! They have held a Belgian interna-

tional night and have also done a night hike, as well as welcoming some new members and having lots of fun with loads of other activities!

A big development for the 37th is that we have just managed to open our own beaver section (providing for 6-8 year olds). We are lucky to have a new leader running the section, who is very enthusiastic! We have already managed to grow from around four beavers to now having 12! It is brilliant that the group is managing to grow!

This current term is now busy for all sections, with preparations for Christmas. Our group Christmas party is being held on Friday 19th December, 6:30-8, at the hut. It is always a great opportunity to celebrate the festive season, as well as the end of a brilliant year at the 37th!

Anyone interested in joining the group, either young people aged between 6-18, or adults wanting to offer some of their time to support the programme we provide, please contact David Nutt: nutty_metroman@yahoo.co.uk

Panto Time in Florence Park

After almost 30 years the energetic and enterprising folk at Florence Park Community Centre are reintroducing a Christmas/New Year pantomime in January. It sounds like lots of fun for both those taking part and for those of us who might join the audience. By the way they are looking for more local people to help with costumes, props, scenery etc – any volunteers? They have raised £300 to fund the show so it should have plenty of sparkle. And the show? “Jack and the Beanstalk”.

The performances will be on 23rd and 24th January 2015 but The Chronicle has no information about ticket prices. However any information you need is on their website: florenceparkcommunitycentre.org.uk.

I am sure many of our readers will want to support such an excellent venture in our Parish and so close to home. Let's wish them lots of luck with their production.



News from St Christopher's School

What an amazing school community we have!

It never ceases to amaze me how generous our families at St Christopher's are. I am aware that many of our families have times when they find it difficult to make ends meet, but still they manage to support our cake sales (with mountains of cakes!) and charity events for others less fortunate. So far this term we have raised over £400 for cancer charities —'Blue Skye Thinking' (including sending 200m of Loom bands for 'Loom to the Moon'), Breast Cancer and Macmillan Nurses; we sent a large amount of food to the Foodbank at St Francis Church following our Harvest celebrations and then we raised £555 for Children in Need. Well done to everyone—a fantastic effort!

We are continuing to promote a love of reading amongst all our pupils. Reading is such an important skill and we would encourage parents and carers to read with their children as often as possible at home. We would like to increase the number of volunteers who come into school to listen to children read. If you are a confident reader and could spare half an hour to an hour every week, we would love to hear from you.

Please drop a note into the school office, or speak to me or one of the class teachers.

We now have regular 'Open the Book' assemblies, fortnightly on Monday mornings, led by Revd Skye and her able group of helpers from the Cowley Parish. The children really appreciate the amount of time that this group of adults is giving to

share these assemblies and they are enjoying the different stories.

The children are now busy preparing for all the activities that happen at Christmas time in school. Rowan Class Year 5 spent two afternoons making lanterns with an artist from Magdalen Road Studios to be displayed in the Oxford Festival of Light. The lanterns all looked beautiful and it was lovely for the children to take part in this community event.

Our school Christmas Fair takes place on Saturday 29th November, with the opening at 11am when the Glee club choir will be singing Christmas songs. The Glee club will also be singing at the Christmas Tree Festival in St James Church. Other events in school will be our KS1 Christmas production, Reception Class Nativity, KS2 Lessons and Carols and the ever-popular Christmas discos for the children! Friends of the school are always welcome at these events – please contact the school office for further information if you would like to attend.

Sheenagh Broadbent
Acting Headteacher

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FLOWERS OF THE MONTH



THE CHRISTMAS ROSE

Christmas roses (*helleborus niger*) can be quite unpredictable. The first ones I grew in my garden declined to flower until nearly Easter. However, this year, bless their dear little hearts, they are just coming into bloom. Since their flowering season is delightfully long I am hopeful of a bloom or two on Christmas Day. They are hardy little flowers and can often be seen pushing through a cover of snow despite the delicacy of their petals.

There is a lovely Christmas legend attached to them. It is supposed to have bloomed outside the stables at Bethlehem. Botanical scholars have taken pains to point out that it is not a native of the Holy Land but since this is a legend, who cares? The story goes that a little country girl had wanted to visit the Christ Child in the manger but realised on arrival that she had no gift to offer the baby. She burst into tears, they dropped on to the snow and a hovering angel showed her Christmas roses peeping through where her tears had melted the snow. She picked them and laid them at the manger.

Now to get back to reality, that would not have been a good idea as the flowers are indeed very poisonous. The name hellibor stems from the Greek words hellein, which means to kill, and bora (food). In ancient times it was used cautiously to cure worms and when writing about this the famous naturalist Gilbert White warns that this "remedy" could easily kill the patient.

It is an unusual plant. For one thing the seeds are spread by snails. They eat the oil covering the seeds and carry the rest away in their slime. Rather different from an angel and the tears of a little girl but none-the-less a very welcome addition to our winter gardens.

JASMINE

Both our winter and summer jasmines originated in China though the name for them comes from an ancient Persian name, yasmin which is lost in the mists of ancient time.

The Chinese winter jasmine, so bright and cheerful in our gardens now, has the Latin name *Jasminum*

nudiflorum. It is so-called because the yellow flowers are borne on bare winter branches though the foliage is dark green and shiny throughout the summer months. It was introduced to England in 1844 by Robert Fortune, the eccentric plant hunter whom we have met before in our flower stories. He compared the yellow jasmine blossoms to "little primroses".

Fortune is worth another visit as he became an intrepid plant collector in the wilder hinterland of China in the first half of the nineteenth century equipped with a Chinese dictionary and a stick loaded with lead which he called his "life preserver". He entered forbidden areas of China dressed as a native complete with a pigtail. In his passion to try to smuggle out yet-to-be-seen plants to the West he endured being set upon by angry crowds, being robbed, falling into a wild boar trap and being attacked by pirates. He was not impressed with the Chinese despite the lovely plants he found in their vast land.

Winter jasmine is a very easy plant to propagate. It has a habit of sending out long, supple runners after the flowering season. These can be anchored to the ground where they will quickly develop a root system. The new little plant can then be dug up and transplanted to a new "home".

The fragrant summer jasmine is a very different plant. First and foremost is its fragrance. The delicate white blossoms grow in clusters on spindly stems which do not cling naturally to any support. The botanist John Gerard wrote in the eighteenth century that it "claspest not or windeth his stalks about such things as stand neere unto it but only leaneth or lieth upon those things."

The Victorians prized it for its climbing nature and added it to rose and honeysuckle bowers in romantic gardens. It also found its way from China in the seventeenth century when it was discovered that by steeping the blossoms in sesame oil the glorious scent could be preserved. Jasmine oil is wonderful to rub into tired limbs after a hard day in the garden. Surely that is what every gardener needs!

DIARY DATES TO REMEMBER

Mothers' Union

Monthly Meeting on 3rd Monday of month
from 2.30pm.

St James Church Centre

Women's Institute

Monthly Meeting on 3rd Wednesday of month
from 2 – 4.30 pm

St James Church Centre

Christmas Party on 10 December 2014

Usual Meeting on 21 January 2015

St James Café at St James Church Centre
10am—1pm

The last Saturday of each month

Next open on Saturday 31 January 2015

Coffee, Cake and Communion

Monthly meeting on 3rd Tuesday of month
from 10.30 a.m.

With Rev Skye at the Vicarage, 27 Don Bosco Close
(Tel: 434160)

Film Club

Friday, 12 December 2014 -

"Meet Me in St Louis"

Friday, 9 January 2015—

"The Inn of the Sixth Happiness"

St James Church Centre,
commencing at 6.30pm with coffee and cake

Cowley Local History Society

8pm at United Reformed Church, Temple Road
Tuesday, 9 December 2014

Talk: Plague and Fire—The Life and Works of
Samuel Pepys

An illustrated talk by Colin Oakes

Tuesday, 20 January 2015

Talk: A Tailor's View of Oxford

A talk by Cattrina Manners

Cowley Festival of Christmas Trees 2014

St James Church

Mon 8 Dec, 14.15 St Christopher's School Choir

Tues 9 Dec, 14.15 Church Cowley St James
School singers and drummers
Pegasus School handbells

Wed 10 Dec, 18.45 St Francis School glee club

Sat 13 Dec, 10.00 Organ: Brian Tidy

Sun 14 Dec, 16.00 Church tower bells

Cowley Festival of Christmas Trees 2014

Family Fun Day

Saturday 13 December 2014 10.00-2.00pm

St James Church Centre

PCC Meeting (2nd part of the Section 11 Meeting)

Wednesday, 17 December 2014, at 7pm

St James Church Centre

St James Church Committee

Sunday, 18 January 2015, at 12.15pm St James
Church Centre

St Francis Church Committee

Sunday, 25 January 2015, at 12.15pm St Francis
Church

Snowdrop Weekends at St James

7/8 and 14/15 February

Saturdays, from 10.30 until 3.30pm

Sundays, from 2-4pm

*Please note Additional Dates throughout
the year:*

To help raise funds for essential repairs to St.
James' Church a home-made cakes and puddings stall
is planned. These will take place on the 3rd
Tuesday of the month to carry over into
Wednesday and will be held in the Church Centre.
If you enjoy baking and would like to help by
baking a cake 2 or 3 times a year on a rota basis
Chris Woodman or Margaret Weller would be
pleased to hear from you.

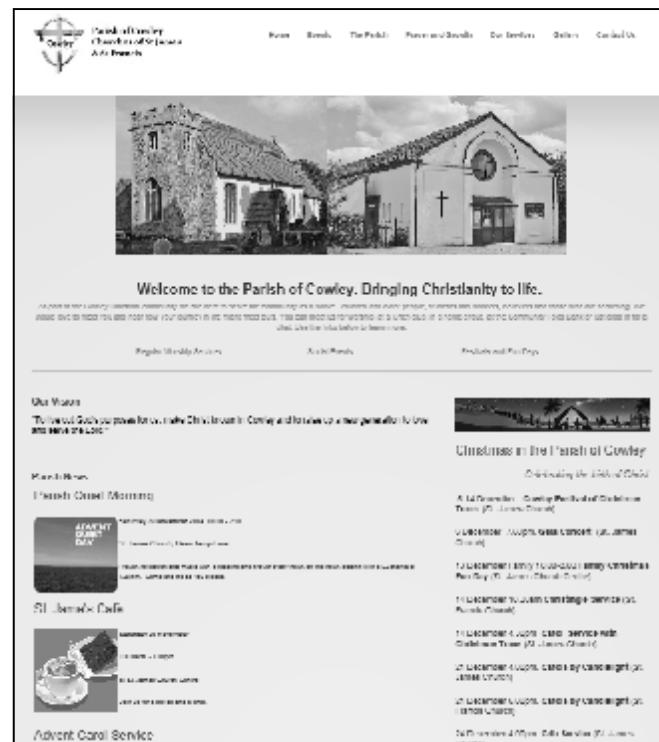
Parish Website

We are pleased to announce that the Parish of Cowley website is now up and running again and with new content. It is not perfect yet but at least the events we are advertising are in 2014 and 2015, not 2013! If you are wanting to quickly check when the Christmas services are at St. Francis or St. James, or where to find a Home Group, then this is the place to go. You will also find details here about how we can help with Weddings or Funerals and what is happening for families and children – plus pictures of your clergy team and of events around the parish.

If you have material you would like us to put on the website please send it to office@cowleyteamministry.co.uk We would particularly like to receive pictures or short reports of events that you are involved in, perhaps as a prison visitor or with a local charity.

Take a look at the website at www.cowleyteamministry.co.uk and let us know

how you would like us to improve it. Until we get a new rector the coordinator for the website is Rev Canon Mark Oxbrow who you can contact at mark@cowleyteamministry.co.uk.



Children's Church, St James Church - Autumn Term 2014

This autumn term in Children's Church we've put our thinking caps on and our theme has been the 'Nature of God'. Over the last three months we've looked at what we can say about God: we've learnt that God is Love, that he is Holy and Merciful. We know him as both our Faithful Friend and Father. We've also seen that God is Forgiving, he is a Creator and Law Giver, a Promise Keeper and above all that he is Good.

Along the way we discovered an old scroll (in the Church Centre!) written by Isaiah that spoke of God's faithfulness to us; one of us was wrapped from head to toe in 'bandages' (with more than a passing resemblance to toilet roll...) to re-enact

Lazarus' death and burial and Jesus' promise to bring him back to life; and in 20 minutes we built a replica of the Temple in Jerusalem into which we carried the Ark of the Covenant, praising God for his goodness with singing and the throwing of balloons!

Half-way through the term Jill and Ed hosted a fun and enjoyable Angel Delight angel-making party for everyone in Children's Church, where we made angel decorations for our Christmas Tree. We look forward to seeing the end result in the Cowley Festival of Christmas Trees and to a new term of Children's Church starting in the New Year!

FROM THE ARCHIVES

THE VICAR'S LETTER
DECEMBER 1940

My dear Friends

Our second wartime Christmas finds us in a far different situation from the first. Then, apart from the black-out, we could almost forget there was a war on-now we are acutely aware of it day and night, while in many places in our land Christmas will be a sad reminder, amidst the desolation of war, of the appalling mockery of the Christmas tidings of 'Peace and Goodwill' which is the result of human sin. Looking beyond our own land, we see a more desolate picture still: the peoples under German occupation and control realising more and more bitterly that the much-vaunted 'New Order' in Europe means nothing less than obeying blindly every 'new order' of Hitler; that, far from bringing security, prosperity and happiness, it is bringing them misery, starvation and despair. Well may we thank God this Christmas that we do not share their lot, though the danger from the air is still great, as the recent attack on Coventry has shown, the menace of the submarine, as in the last War, is considerable, and invasion is still a possibility, even in winter. Yet we have our freedom of thought and speech, our scarred but not scared country is our own, and we have not succumbed to that mental tyranny which settles like a fog on enemy-occupied countries, paralysing all free thought and initiative.

But what of the future? Does the Christian faith give us any real and solid hopes for that? The Festival of Christmas supplies the answer. On the first Christmas Day God intervened in the affairs of the world: not, as many people of that day expected, by overthrowing the Roman Empire and setting up a Jewish King in Jerusalem, nor yet, as others hoped, by an overwhelming display of Divine Power, bringing existence on this earth to a close. No; God intervened in the affairs of the world by being born a little Baby at Bethlehem, and living a perfect human life amidst

the hard work and temptations, the joys and sorrows, the trials and disappointments, which we have to face and experience. And in that human life, against which we ranged all the forces of evil, God conquered by the only power which is really worthy of God, the power of Love, for 'God is Love.' That God should do all this proves beyond any doubt that God never despairs of mankind-of you or me-that man was worth living for, and dying for on the Cross.

There then is our Christian hope- that the bond of love which should unite all Christians, of whatever race or nationality or denomination, will in the end prove stronger than the forces of destruction and hate. As we kneel at the altar on Christmas Day and make our Communions, we shall be united in the worship of the Babe of Bethlehem with all Christians in lands suffering invasion, who are longing for the day of deliverance, and with those Christians also in enemy countries who are suffering for religious freedom. That Babe of Bethlehem grew up to be the Man crucified on Calvary, and as the world shares that Calvary of suffering, so it will share in the glory and joy of the Resurrection, if the hearts of those who call themselves Christians are inflamed with Christ's love, determined that out of the present sufferings shall come a New Order in the world, not of Hitler's, but God's. For Christ was

'Born to raise the sons of earth'
Born to give them second birth.'

May we all have a Holy and a Happy Christmas.

Your sincere Friend and Vicar
Alec G. Whye.

P.S.

On account of the fact that the black-out does not end till 8.37am on Christmas Day, the Bishop of Oxford has given permission for the 8.am Holy Communion to be held in St. James' Hall instead of at St. Luke's Church.

ST. FRANCIS—LETTER FROM THE PRIEST-IN-CHARGE—DECEMBER 1940

Dear Franciscans,

At the time of writing siren'alerts' are more frequent and the sound of war in the air seems nearer. The question of our children gathering together at the Hall for the various organizations arises now rather more acutely. I think it would be a great pity just to drop everything. The responsibility must rest upon the parents and foster parents. In the event of a warning, those children who have been told to do so at home will leave immediately (unless actual local attack took place, when we should take all into the shelters in our field if there were time, or take the best possible cover within the Hall itself). You will notice from the details of Guilds printed above that we have put all children's organizations a little earlier—the very young ones having the earlier period of the evening.

Just before Advent begins it is necessary here to write about Christmas. All being well, Christmas Eve and Day will be kept as last year—the Midnight Eucharist, Holy Communion said at 7.30am and sung at 9.00am. No further services on Christmas Day. On the Sunday after Christmas there will be a Carol Service at 6.30pm. Evensong will be said that day at 6.00pm. I hope that it is generally understood now that the Midnight Eucharist is not an 'evening Communion,' but the first Eucharist of Christmas morning. Tickets for intending communicants at this service will be available the previous Sunday. It is not yet known whether we shall be able to go round the estates singing carols this year, but at any rate we hope to visit the Barracks and Camp on the Monday evening and the Isolation hospital on Christmas Eve. Parties for the children will be held early in the New Year - on this occasion they will be paid for by a bequest made to us under the will of the late A.C. Mackrory.

After the Confirmation at St. Luke's on December 15th, Catechism will again be held on Sunday afternoons at 3.15 pm for boys and girls of 11 years and over, who are not Confirmed.

May the Birthday of the Prince of Peace, when it

comes round again, find us nearer to a true and lasting peace!

Your sincere friend and Priest,
Bernard T. Croft

THE ANNIVERSARY OF FATHER BENSON'S DEATH

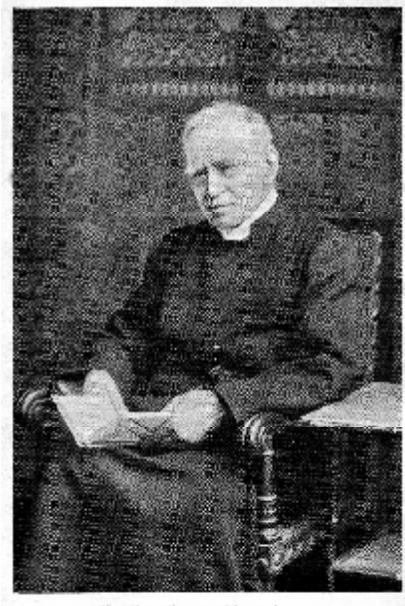
It will be exactly a hundred years on 14th January 2015 that Father Benson died. As the article from the archives (Cowley Chronicle January 1965) tells he was a remarkable man, one who held the people of Cowley very close to his heart. It would seem important not to let this centenary pass without some recognition of a deeply spiritual cleric whose ministry began in our own parish church.

FIFTY YEARS FROM FATHER BENSON'S DEATH

January 14th is the 50th anniversary of the death of Father Richard Benson, one time Vicar of Cowley and Founder of the Society of St. John the Evangelist, better known to Cowley people as the Cowley Fathers. In December, 1850, he was inducted as vicar of the village church of Cowley, St. James', a parish of 600 people, who were mostly "villagers of the simpler sort." He lived in a cottage close to the church and for six years worked the parish single-handed.

It was the time of the Crimean War, with the famous battles of Alma, Balaclava and Inkerman and the bravery of the English troops moved Father Benson to write some verses to celebrate each victory.

A few years later, the Indian Mutiny broke out and the Vicar of Cowley asked for "a fast day for the Indian Mutiny" to be kept throughout the



The Rev. RICHARD MADOX BENSON
Vicar of Cowley, 1850-1856

parish. It was typical of him that he would try and make his 'simple' parishioners feel their close unity with their suffering fellow creatures on the other side of the world.

Throughout his time in Cowley, Father Benson was thinking, praying and trying to see more of the real meaning of Christian life for himself and for the English Church. In 1858, he conducted the first retreat for clergy to be held in the Church of England since the Reformation.

New Church

The following year, the needs of those who were moving into the new houses east of

Magdalen Bridge had to be met with the building of a new church. So, on October 19th, 1859, a temporary building of corrugated iron, dedicated to St. John the Evangelist was opened in Stockmore Street. Father Benson then left another priest to take his place in Cowley, while he himself moved down to live among his new parishioners.

All this time, he was planning to go out to found a 'devotional college' of men in India, who would serve the people of the North-West Provinces. His luggage was packed and he was on the point of leaving when he learnt of the sudden decision to make an "extensive town" out of Cowley Common. The needs of Cowley were so obvious that he quietly dropped his plans and settled down to meet this new challenge. There remained in his mind and thoughts the idea of starting within the Church of England a Religious Order for men and after much prayer, the first two postulants began their strict rule of prayer and work in 1865. It was on December 27th, 1866, the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, that the two, now joined by one more, took their solemn life vows.

Work in America

From 1868 to 1880, Father Benson and two others spent much time in America, preaching to overflowing churches and helping to establish the Society there. On his return to Cowley, plans went ahead for the building of a new church to replace

the Iron Church (St. Mary and St. John), and the building of the National Hospital for Incurables, (now St. John's Home). In 1873, the Bishop of Calcutta wrote, imploring him to consider once more coming out to India. "to see with your eyes and hear with your ears the nature and character of the field in India." He longed to go, of course, and was much taken aback when the news of his intended departure resulted in a petition signed by large numbers being presented to him by his parishioners, imploring him not to leave them again. He had to give in, and instead sent two other professed fathers, who established the Society in Bombay and Poona.

Journey to India

In 1890 a younger man became Superior, and Father Benson, free from responsibility, was able at last to realise his ambition and go to India. From there he travelled to America and stayed and worked in Boston until nine years later.

By now he was old and rheumatic, and none was more surprised than he to find himself honoured and sought after by everyone. He became more and more infirm and almost blind, though this was remedied by an operation until finally, on January 14th, 1915, he died and was buried in the churchyard of St. Mary and St. John's. Many came to his funeral: "They came from Oxford and from distant places to show what they felt for our Father."

He was, indeed, one of those saintly men to whom the Church of England, and especially the Church in Cowley, is greatly indebted.

On Wednesday, January 13th, 1965, at 7.00pm, there is to be Festal Evensong in St. Mary and St. John Church in thanksgiving for the life and works of Father Benson and on Thursday, January 14th, the Bishop will be the Celebrant at the Eucharist at 7.15pm.



HOW IS YOUR LOCAL KNOWLEDGE?

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

Answer next month.



Last month's answer:

*George Moore's Tombstone
(St James Churchyard)*

My family Christmas Tradition

My mother remembered this variation on a trifle when she was small way back in the 20s and it was, and still is, always made every Christmas. A Victorian silver plated (and much over-polished) entrée dish is used. I am now the custodian of the dish and the Apricot Egg maker each Christmas Family Reunion. This year we are all in Ruabon at the house of one of my four siblings.

When I was growing up on the family dairy farm in Staffordshire, it was an arm-aching chore to whip the cream by hand mixer as it was only single cream skimmed off the top of the milk. In those days farmers were paid according to the quantity of butterfat in the milk, so we hoped the dairy would not be doing the monthly test on our milk on any day Mum was taking cream!

Apricot Eggs

You need for 8 – a rectangular low serving dish, a packet of 8 trifle sponges, apricot jam, sweet sherry, tin of apricot halves, custard (made with Bird's custard powder and full-cream milk, of course!) and softly-whipped whipping cream.

Cut the sponges in half lengthways and sandwich them back together with apricot jam. Place them in the serving dish in one layer and soften them with a mixture of some of the syrup or juice from the can, boiling water and a slug of sherry.

Place a half apricot on the top of each sponge then carefully spoon just-made custard over the fruit "egg" and fill any spaces in the dish. The custard should not be too thick and should form a smooth cover to the apricots.

Leave to cool.

Carefully spoon whipped cream around each "egg" so you end up with a dish of what looks like eight fried eggs! Delicious!

Joan Coleman

News from the Bell Tower

We have been very pleased recently to be able to muster enough ringers to ring at most Sunday services, and have continued to hold regular Thursday night practices, with the much appreciated regular help from Susan from Iffley, and Hugh and Judy from Marston. Our progress has been steady, and our enthusiasm high. We are particularly pleased to welcome a new ringer, Iris to join us. She has proved an incredibly fast learner and is a very welcome addition to our group.

In October, we hosted two extra Saturday practices. The first was arranged by Hugh, our Branch Ringing Master, to give us the opportunity to practice things we would not otherwise have the opportunity to do, with a group of experienced ringers for guidance, and the second was a Branch practice. Branch practices are held monthly, and move around all of the towers in our branch. Both were extremely beneficial, and helped us with things from basic rope handling to advancing into some methods such as Grandsire and Plain Bob Minor.

In November our Branch AGM was hosted this year by St Aldates. The format for the AGM is ringing followed by a service, then tea and the formal meeting. There were a lot of changes this year. After over 10 years, Hugh Deam, the Ringing Master stood down, although we would not let him go without promises to continue to help us with our practices. Katie Lane took on the role of Ringing Master, and she was instrumental in teaching the first members of the current Cowley band to ring. I was honoured to be asked to stand as Branch Secretary, and am now trying to

get to grips with all the paperwork which the role entails. The meeting was well attended, and both Roy and Charlotte, who joined us last year were presented with their certificates.

In the next month we hope to continue to ring regularly on Sundays, and also for the Carol Service and the Festival of Christmas Trees. We will be decorating a tree for this wonderful festival. This will be my third year decorating a tree, and I always get a sense of the spirit of Christmas beginning at this point.

As always, if anyone wishes to join us, drop in to say hello on a Thursday, or call me on 777486.

Lindsay Powell

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IF I'D BEEN BORN IN BETHLEHEM

If I'd been born in Bethlehem and lived there long ago
I might have seen the travellers passing to and fro.
I might have been in bed one night and heard the shuffling feet
Of weary people passing by along the village street;

And just along the alleyway a shouting and a din,
and someone saying, 'No more room, there's no room in the inn'
And then when all was quiet and the town was fast asleep,
faintly from the fields, perhaps, the bleating of the sheep.

And looking from the window above my little bed
I might have seen the Christmas star shining overhead;
until at last when half asleep, I might have heard on high
the voices of the angels all singing in the sky.

Then early in the morning I should have made my way
with shepherds to the stable to find where Jesus lay
I might have really seen Him and taken Him a toy,
and Mary might have held me up to kiss her little Boy.

She might have let me go there to see Him every day,
until He would have missed me if I had stayed away.
And when a little later they moved from Bethlehem
and travelled into Egypt, I might have gone with them.

I could have minded Jesus while Mary packed their things,
and I'd have kept Him company on all their travellings,
until they came to Nazareth and settled there to stay,
Then I'd have lived in Nazareth and seen them every day.

I wasn't born in Bethlehem; nor yet so long ago,
So what I've been pretending can never happen so,
I am just a little child and I am only small
and Jesus is the King of Love and greater than us all.

But if I pray to Jesus He even now will be
just as near and just as dear a loving friend to me.
Dear Jesus, please be with me, from now until the end.
Hold my hand and guide my feet, and be my Special Friend.

Quoted from a Children's Book by Joan Gale Thomas first published 1953

CHRISTMAS CRACKER JOKES

1. Why hasn't anyone ever stolen a canal?
It has too many locks
2. What kind of car does a Chinese person drive?
A Rolls Rice
3. What is a frogs favourite drink?
Croaka cola
4. What do astronauts call sausages?
Unidentified frying objects
5. How do you make a Swiss roll?
Push him down the hill
6. Why is Europe like a frying pan?
Because it has Greece at the bottom
7. Where do you always need an overcoat?
Chile
8. Doctor, Doctor I feel like a pack of cards,
I'll deal with you later
9. Why do swallows fly to Africa for the Winter?
Because it is too far to walk
10. Who looks after spooks on aircrafts?
Air Ghostesses

CHRONICLE

Editorial Team- Rosanne Butler, Sally Hemsworth, May Morgan, Nicki Stevens

Deadline for the next edition:

Wednesday 21 January 2015

If possible, please send entries by email to Sally at chronicle@cowleyteamministry.co.uk

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REPORT FROM PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

PCC members met Martin Gorick, the Archdeacon, Tim Stead, Area Dean, and Graham Sykes, Chaplain to the Bishop of Oxford, on 10 November 2014, when the PCC was advised of action to be taken to fill the vacancy left by Howard Thornton's resignation.

There was also full discussion on the Parish Profile and the PCC were advised to make some small changes. Following this the PCC Secretary was advised by the Diocesan Registrar to hold a Section 11 meeting within 4 weeks of receipt of his letter.

The Section 11 meeting is to consider the Patronage Board which consists:

The Archdeacon

Team Vicar

3 lay members of the PCC

Plus:

2 Parish Representatives (the people appointed to the Patronage Board have to leave the meeting when the two Parish representatives are appointed).

The first part of the Section 11 meeting was held on the 25 November 2014, and the following were appointed:

3 lay members of the PCC:

William Hartley

David Stanley

Lesley Williams

2 Parish representatives:

Clare Edwards

Joshua Hordern

The second part of the Section 11 meeting will be held on the 17 December 2014, when the Parish Profile will be discussed fully. Once the Parish Profile is agreed, the PCC can ask for a Vacancy (or Section 12) meeting with the Archdeacon.

This is a very formal procedure but things are moving ahead - more news in the next edition.

Sally Hemsworth

CHRISTMAS QUIZ

1. The chorus of which Christmas carol starts: "Oh the rising of the sun, and the running of the deer"?
2. Which drink comprises champagne and orange juice?
3. What was traditionally made on Stir-up Sunday, the Sunday before Advent?
4. Star of Casablanca and The African Queen, which actor was born on Christmas Day 1899.
5. Which newsreader caused a stir by dancing with Morecambe and Wise in their 1976 Christmas special?
6. In which square in Bethlehem is the Church of the Nativity to be found?
7. Which radioactive chemical element did Pierre and Marie Curie discover around Christmas 1898?
8. Dandini, Buttons and Baron Hardup are characters from which pantomime?
9. Found on the Christmas dinner table, what are pigs in blankets?
10. Which singer had an unlikely collaboration with Bing Crosby on Little Drummer Boy?
11. In the 1951 film Scrooge, who played the title character?
12. Which carol was originally written in Latin, with the title Adeste Fidelis?
13. Using the fat of which bird is considered to give the best results when roasting potatoes?
14. Manzanilla and Pedro Ximinez are varieties of which drink?
15. Who became Emperor of Japan on Christmas Day 1926?
16. In the 1996 Christmas special of which television programme did the two lead characters dress up as Batman and Robin?
17. A jolly soul with a corncob pipe and a button nose, who gets brought to life by a magic hat?
18. In which ocean is the underwater Christmas Ridge situated?
19. Who played Kevin McCallister in two 1990s films set at Christmas?
20. Which root vegetable has the Latin name *Pastinaca sativa*?

Rosanne interviews John Dawson

I wonder how many of you remember the Cowley cycle speedway track in Fairlie Road, or the big hollow tree by the drive leading to the old Rectory, or the piece of rough land which made a great place to play where Beauchamp Lane met at the top of Crowell Road? I wonder how many can recall Beauchamp Lane being called Church Way or getting your hair cut and buying your sweets at Bentley's shop at the bottom of Barns Road? John Dawson can! Talk about a walk down Memory Lane!! My interviewee this month had so much to tell me about Cowley in the 1940s and 1950s that I cannot wait to pass it on to you.

After his birth at the Nuffield Maternity Hospital in Walton Street, John was brought back to 31 Crowell Road, Cowley where he spent his very happy childhood years. The eldest of three (one brother and one sister), he was a war-time baby. His dad, in a reserve occupation, worked long hours at the Pressed Steel factory as a tool maker. John is convinced that the men in the factories did not necessarily know which part of which important piece of ammunition they were producing. No matter, it was vital work to help win the war.

His mum was a really careful housewife who knew how to bottle, jam and pickle anything including eggs in Isinglass under

the sink. Her pickled onions were wonderful, according to her son!

At five years of age John walked through St James churchyard, along the path past the cemetery and round to Singletree primary school.

Lord and Lady Longford had just vacated the building, their former home, and, with a shortage of school places, a small school was established there. His parents knew the Longfords through their association with the Oxford Labour Party. At nine years of age he was transferred to East Oxford School by which time he had his own bicycle and then at eleven he went to Temple Cowley Secondary School. It was there that he discovered his aptitude for practical subjects, especially metal work. His description of how hopeless he was at sport was "Me and moving balls don't go together".

Despite the war and post-war years with rationing and austerity, he and his younger brother, Peter, had a great childhood. I have already mentioned the Cowley Eagles cycle-speedway track in Fairlie Road but apparently there was also a bike track worn down on the rough grassy area where the Crowell Road gang could put their racing skills to the test. John still remembers all their names but one struck a chord with me, David Joseph,

who lived next door. David was the man who installed water and a sink unit in St James vestry many years ago. After the war when bonfires were allowed, the gang would collect wood and build theirs on the piece of land at the top of Beauchamp Lane and Crowell Road (now with cottages on it) and later when the Airfield had closed and the land left derelict the November bonfires were moved there for a number of years.

John has fond memories of Bentley's shop with the Coronation Lamp outside. It was there that his dad bought his newspapers but, more importantly, comics for his two lads. They were not allowed to have these until Sunday so it was a special treat to read their way through "Film Fun", "Radio Fun", "The Beano" and "The Dandy".

Although he was still a very small boy at the time the VE day party, shared between Crowell and Hampden Roads, holds vivid memories for him. It was held outside The Nelson (the old Nelson) pub in the garden, of course. In 1946 a party to celebrate VJ day was held in St James Hall. In fact the hall featured a great deal in his formative years.

You see, at the age of eight John had joined the Cubs, thus beginning a life-long association with Boy-scouting. The Hall was already built but Lord

Nuffield had two extra smaller halls added one at the side for the Scouts and one across the back for the Girl Guides. These extra rooms came into invaluable use when Parish pantomimes were staged there in the 1950s and 1960s. I was shown group photographs of the casts of "Babes in the Wood" and "Red Riding Hood" on the Parish hall stage and a programme of "Mother Goose" dating back to 1953. There was also amongst the huge file of Cowley souvenirs he bought, a programme for a Scout Gang Show staged in Cowley long before the big annual Gang Show now staged at Radley College.

At the age of eight John began to learn to play the piano. He went for lessons to a lady who lived in Egerton Road in Iffley. Her name was Florence Walker. (I wonder if any of our other readers remember her?) His lifelong love of the piano meant that many a panto, Scout production and other occasions had John playing for them. He now plays for assemblies at Botley primary School and was proud to tell me that his little school choir would be joining in the Big Sing at the Town Hall with children throughout Oxfordshire.

Another favourite haunt for the Crowell Road lads, the Taylor boys, Gilbert Payne, David Joseph, Michael Webb and Pete and John Dawkins was Beecham's coalyard. I tried to ascertain the site of this (obviously grubby) attraction and was told it was at the top of Beauchamp Lane round the back

of the old Rectory. I simply cannot place it.

Sunday School at St James was followed by a transfer to St Luke's where straight after morning service John was given the duty of running up to the Parish hall to tell Olive Barnard to get the boiled eggs on ready for parish breakfast. By this time our lad had joined the Scouts and recalled socials, later dances, in the Parish hall with the local Guides. They also had some great weekends, also with the Guides, taking a couple of boats up the Thames to Bablockhythe.

After his school days he followed his dad to the Pressed Steel as an apprentice toolmaker. What he really wanted was a job as an electrician but because he was a bit too young, a mate of his went for the interview instead and got the job. John was so disappointed but kept looking for "the right job". He eventually moved to the drawing offices, the mechanisation department where work on robotics was becoming the order of the day. His most important move, though, was into the lay-out and facilities department where he went on to become an expert in factory lay-outs not just in Cowley but all over the Midlands and North of England.

By now, through their mutual association with Guiding and Scouting, John had met and married Joyce. The wedding took place in 1964 at St James Church even though his parents had moved to Horspath and Joyce's

home was in Howard Street. The couple decided to leave Cowley after their marriage and bought a house in Botley where they still live. The decision was guided, mainly, by the price of houses and the fact that a (just) affordable home became available. At nineteen he had been the proud owner of a red Singer sports car but by now he drove a Morris Traveller, much more suitable for a married man. Soon after his marriage he found himself driving to all sorts of industrial areas, Swindon, Liverpool and Llanelli to name a few, in his capacity as a factory lay-out advisor. At forty-five he was head-hunted by the Birmingham firm of Wilkins and Mitchell as their production manager. With his expertise in factory presses he travelled the world on their behalf from Italy to Japan and many places in between. His final working years were with a Wantage firm offering so much knowledge of factory lay-out and production.

In the meantime he and Joyce became parents to two little girls, Julie and Jenny and, now in retirement are proud grandparents.

Throughout their lives the couple have remained with the Scouting movement. To quote John "It's in the blood". They are now, also, very much into the Folk Dancing scene. They are members of Headington Quarry Folk Dance group where they both play and dance. Life for them is as busy as ever. Even when I asked him about leisure time John gave me a wry smile

and I'll leave you to read his answer a little further on. He had many more wonderful stories of Cowley half a century ago but I hope you will see by now that he is truly a real local character.

How would you describe yourself as a young child?

Fairly quiet. I had one or two very close friends and I progressed well at school.

Have you any never-to-be-forgotten memories of childhood?

All the family were out on our Sunday afternoon walk along the river between Iffley and Donnington Bridge. Dad had bought me a little battery powered boat about two feet long and I was pulling it along on a piece of fishing line. Not looking where I was going, I fell into the river. I remember it was dark under the water. Dad jumped in and literally dumped me up on to the bank.

And did you get your boat back?

Yes

Has there been anyone in your life who has had a strong influence on you?

Old Harold (Pop) Chaplin. He was my first cub master and then my scout master.

Has your faith been with you since you were young?

It is still engrained in me. I lost a lot of faith over the Church's handling of the old scout group. They did not realise what an asset it was.

Do you have a treasured possession?

I was given the Silver Wolf Award because someone thought I ought to get it.

What is your opinion of present day society?

I feel sorry for the young people because they don't get the freedom in their childhood that we had. Like helping the lock-keeper at Iffley open the old lock gates, or being allowed to go off on their bikes on their own.

If you could change something in a spectacular way what would you do?

Ninety per cent of the troubles in the world are caused by religion. I would like to banish all the religions in the world and concentrate on faith.

Which period of your adult life has given you the most satisfaction?

All my life I have enjoyed. I am having a great life. I like the sense of achievement of all I have done.

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

I go up into my office at the top of the house looking out over the lights of Oxford and play my piano.

What plans do you have for the future?

I would like to find time amongst all I do to travel a bit more with my wife. We must go to Sydney to see Monica, our chief bridesmaid. Maybe, one day, we might do a cruise.

COWLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

We are holding our Christmas Party on 10th December at the Church Centre, 2.00 – 4.30 pm. As usual it will be a seasonal afternoon with our regular raffle.

In January we shall meet as usual on 21st. 2015 will be rather special for our WI because we shall be celebrating our centenary year. It seems amazing that a group formed by a few Cowley ladies a hundred years ago is still going strong meeting as we do, in fellowship, once a month. We are planning a celebratory lunch at the Church Centre on the 3rd Wednesday in February. The time of the lunch will be arranged at our January meeting.

We are a friendly group and we are always keen to welcome new members. We have interesting speakers and, as you will see if you would like to come along, we are not all "Jam and Jerusalem".

Jean Chilton

FAMOUS HYMNS AND THEIR STORIES

Brightest and Best of the Sons of the Morning by Reginald Heber (1783 – 1826)

This is really an Epiphany Carol, but its simple words have a real Christmassy feel about them, so it fits in well for the December choice. It contains only four verses but they contain all the elements of the birth of our Lord, and what value we should place on it. Strangely it did not get into our Hymnals for some time in spite of being quite popular. Its writer Reginald Heber gave us 57 good hymns and is regarded as one of the greatest writers in the Church of England. He was the author of *Holy, Holy, Holy – Lord God Almighty*. He studied at Brasenose College here in Oxford; then he was elected to a fellowship at All Souls. He later became Rector of Hodnet in Shropshire, and all in all spent 16 years as a

parish priest, during which time he wrote most of his hymns. Tennyson, the great Victorian Poet, regarded *Holy, Holy, Holy* as the finest hymn in the English language. The Hymn Brightest and Best was first set to the music of an old Scottish Ballad, but has since been sung to a number of tunes.

I particularly like the words of the last verse:

“Vainly we offer each ample oblation,
Vainly with gifts would his favour secure,
Richer by far is the heart’s adoration,
Dearest to God are the prayers of the poor”

Those indeed are very moving sentiments.

John Shreeve

THE COLOURS OF CHURCH

Have you ever wondered why the colours of the Altar frontals and lectern and pulpit hangings vary – as do the colours of the priest’s stole?

Appropriate liturgical colours are suggested by the Church of England: they are not mandatory and traditional local use may be followed. The colour for a particular service or season should reflect the predominant theme.

Hopefully, throughout this year I will be able to give a little insight into the changes we shall see in our churches.

By the time you read this the altar frontals and hangings will have been changed to purple which is the colour of Advent. Purple reminds us that despite the preparations for Christmas all around us – and the Christmas Tree Festival at St James, Advent is a time for quiet reflection as we prepare to welcome our Saviour.

At St Francis the purple theme will be varied slightly as the hangings will be changed to pink on the fourth Sunday of Advent. This Sunday is one when we think of Mary’s part in the nativity and pink is her symbolic colour.

On Christmas Eve, for the first services of Christmas the frontals and hangings will be changed to mark this festal season. At St Francis the “all seasons” frontal will be used together with white and gold hangings. At St James the gold set will be used. This change of colour emphasises that Christmas is a great festival and the whole tone of our worship changes.

Do look out for the changes throughout the year.

Margaret Martin

SAINt OF THE MONTH—December—St Frances Xavier

Here we have a saint whose missionary teaching established Christian communities throughout the eastern world and who through resourcefulness and intelligence reached not only the poorest of poor but rulers in their palaces too.

Francis was born in Navarre in Spain in 1506 at the castle of Xavier. A son of rich parents he travelled to Paris to be educated at the university there. He met and joined a group of seven young men who took their vows as Jesuit priests in Montmartre in 1534. They were ordained three years later in Venice. Francis, from the very start of his ministry, felt he was called to take the Gospel to other lands. And so his life as a missionary began. He first moved to Lisbon and was commissioned by the King of Portugal to travel to Goa. His mission was to evangelise the East Indies.

Although he only lived for another ten years the energy with which he embraced his missions was astonishing. On reaching Goa after a journey which took thirteen months he found the Portuguese Catholics were in disarray. They were inflicting savage cruelty on their slaves, were using many as concubines and their neglect of the poor was dreadful. Francis set about restoring the message of Christ in the area, reforming the Church and even taking popular songs of the age and writing new, Christian words to them for the people to sing.

He then set off for Paravar in southern India, then Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and the islands between there and the Malay Peninsula. Dressed as a poor man he lived amongst the

very poor. He slept on the floor of a small hut eating mainly rice and water. He met with great success among the low-caste people but was ignored by the richer upper classes. Wherever he went he left behind well-established Christian communities, Christianity is still strong in Paravar.

He returned occasionally to Goa but had made up his mind that he should travel further afield to Japan. In a single year in Kagoshima he converted hundreds to the faith. Having established a strong Church he pressed on to other areas to much acclaim. He met with opposition in Miyako. The Mikado would not see him because he appeared to be a poor man and apparently could not bring a present with him to his audience. Nothing daunted Francis returned to one of his former missions where he abandoned his impoverished appearance, dressed himself in fine robes and turned up with a clock and a musical box as gifts. The Mikado ensured his protection, offered him an empty Buddhist temple for a church and by the time he moved on several thousand people had embraced the Christian faith.

After a short while back in Goa, Francis turned his attention to China. However on his way there he fell ill and, exhausted by the rigours of his life of mission, he died at the early age of forty-six. His embalmed body was returned to Goa where it still remains making it an object of pilgrimage. Much is known of his life and missionary journey through the copious letters he wrote to his established churches. He died on 2nd December 1552 and his feast day is celebrated on the 3rd.

SAINT OF THE MONTH—January—John Neumann

Born in 1811 in Bohemia of a German father and a Czech mother who owned a small stocking factory, John studied at Budweis seminary and later at Prague University. He was an exemplary student. He was interested in religious studies, botany and astronomy but also, remarkably, became fluent in eight languages. He applied for ordination but was obstructed by the Austrian government so set off for America. He arrived in Manhattan in 1836 and was warmly welcomed by the Bishop of New York. At that time German-speaking immigrants were employed clearing the forests around Niagara Falls so once John had been ordained he began his ministry amongst them. After four years he was sent as a missionary priest to Baltimore on America's East Coast

where he served as parish priest. His outstanding pastoral work was recognised and he was consecrated as Bishop of Philadelphia in 1852. It was a time of growth in America and John worked tirelessly to establish the Church. He had a hundred churches and eighty schools built in his diocese. He visited remote and neglected areas to encourage his flock. He also wrote catechisms and other works much of which were published and widely used throughout the USA.

In 1860, worn out with tireless work he dropped dead in the middle of Philadelphia. It took a hundred years for John to be canonized but at the insistence of his diocese he was finally recognised as a saint. His feast day is held on 5th January.

NEWS FROM ST FRANCIS

As we move steadily towards Advent and Christmas our planned events are for the most part doing well.

We had a hugely successful All Souls Family Party (The Christian answer to Halloween). This was well attended by children and parents as well. It is important that we make this stand for Christian values in the face of the immense publicity of Halloween with its links with the occult and other undesirable elements.

By contrast our evening All Souls Memorial Service was poorly attended.

Our All Age Remembrance Sunday Service was well thought out and very meaningful.

Our farewell event for Howard and Carol – the Parish barn Dance – seems to have gone well and was enjoyed by all who attended.

Friends of St Francis and other home groups move on steadily, and we shall soon have to think about possible Advent Courses.

Our social evenings with music and poetry for students still continue, and dates will be announced regularly.

Plans for the Christmas programme have been fixed, and details are being circulated to all homes in the Parish.

All in all plenty to think about and work for in the future.

John Shreeve



THE ANGLICAN ASIAN LIVING CHURCH

The Anglican Asian Living Church is working on its vision now it has its services at St James Church since January 2014. This will be shared with the Parish so that the Parish is aware of the Church as it develops in the Parish giving it choice and enrichment and developing along with the vision of the Parish. It completed its vision for five years which included achievements of having its Minister housed in the Parish and near to the Church and its main congregation and families in the Cowley area. The feedback and discussions are done through the Liaison Meetings set up for this purpose. They then report to the PCC. The Liaison Committee has not met for a while and will be meeting soon, which is a group of people consisting from the St James Congregation and the Asian Church Congregation.

I am deployed in the Parish with the house next door to the St James Church Centre as an Associate Priest in the Parish with a working agreement. I work a full day on Wednesday to do Parish work and another day or equivalent to do Asian Ministry work. I have to attend all meetings when I can and I do services which involves the first two Sundays at St Francis Church and the other Sundays of the month at St James Church. I also do the occasional services like funerals when called to do so by the Parish and be involved in doing the special services at Easter and Christmas. The Asian Church is also involving themselves with the Festival of Christmas Trees and other Parish programmes such as the Carol Services.

We have just lost my father, the Rev Wazir Chand, who went to sleep in the Lord on Monday 24th November. He was a very influential Priest in the Cowley Parish and Anglican Asian Ministry. He founded the original Asian Ministry in this Parish. We move on as we develop that Ministry together in this Parish.

The Anglican Asian Church has its services every Sunday at 1.45 pm at St James Church and then with refreshments afterwards at St James Church Centre. The Sunday School meets in the Ranklin Room at approximately 2pm - 2.45 pm and then rejoins the main service. There is a celebration of Holy Communion the first Sunday of every month

The Asian Church Christmas Programmes and the New Year programmes are open for all to attend & are as follows:-

Christmas Eve Service 6 pm at St James Church with refreshments in the St James Centre afterwards

Christmas Day Service 1.30 pm St James Church with refreshments in the St James Church Centre afterwards

New Year's Day Service 12 noon St James Church with refreshments in the St James Church Centre afterwards

All are invited. The services normally follow an Anglican pattern with predominantly Punjabi language and culture. English language is spoken in some parts of the services and people are made welcome in the events. The Asian Church also participated in the Parish Vision and Purpose Day and the Parish Profile update for the new Rector.

All the seasons blessings as we work together to grow His Kingdom in this place.

Rev Richard Chand

Film Club at the Centre

"Mr Jones" the film shown at our November club night was different to say the least. However it was an eye-opener for many of us to learn how difficult it can be for an adult with Asperger's syndrome. Richard Gere's interpretation of the role was very powerful and strong.

It is, therefore, important to put a much lighter film on for December which is what we have done. In fact it is so light it is almost fluffy! The very young Judy Garland (the first time she has

featured in one of our film nights) stars in "Meet me in St Louis". It is a joyous musical with lovely songs such as "The Trolley Song" and "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas". December film night comes in the middle of the Christmas Tree Festival at

St James on 12th December so we should all be in full festive mood by then.

In January we are responding to a request from several of our members by showing "The Inn of the Sixth Happiness" starring Ingrid Bergman, Curt Jurgens and Robert Donat. It is based on the true life story of Gladys Aylward, a modern-day saint whose unquenchable passion to do good took her halfway around the world. It is a missionary story of incredible courage and determination and one not to be missed. January film night will be on Friday, 9th January, at 6.30 pm.



We still have one or two spaces in our membership list for new people to join so do turn up on a club night and sign in if you are interested

Home Groups

Early evening yesterday seven of us were sitting comfortably in Mark Oxbrow's cosy sitting room, sipping our tea or coffee, catching up with one another's news and chatting about the happenings in our lives since we had last met a couple of weeks previously; our Bibles at the ready for the Study we would be doing together shortly. It was a nice feeling, carrying on the fellowship from Sunday morning - just like meeting up with loved family, which is what we are!

Alternative Wednesday evenings is 'Home Group' for us; other Home Groups meet at other times at different venues. Are you in one? If so you'll know the format Christians meeting together to worship Jesus, study God's word, pray for each other and the current needs of our church, as well as needs of friends, family both near and far. That's the general idea, then each group develops into its own distinct little family, there to help each other in times of trouble and rejoice with each other in times of celebration and all the time sharing and growing in love and faith as each encourages the other to dig foundations deeper, serve with practical love and delve deeper into the delights of knowing our Lord Jesus.

This particular Home Group started seven years ago and has seen people coming and going as folk ebb and flow in and out of the Parish. New people are always welcome and soon feel part of the family - if you haven't done so yet, take the plunge and jump in! There are groups meeting on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, Tuesday afternoons as well as Thursday and Friday mornings - so come on in, the water's lovely!

Cowley at the turn of the Twentieth Century

(from Nan Davies' memoirs—we are now up to WW2)

Houses filled up and people went in for things they never had before, so much on hire purchase, earning so much more money now and wanting to keep up with the 'Jones's'. Lots of the women didn't want to give up their work and stay at home, so day nurseries began to open up. Food price controls were taken off. Cowley Post Office was transferred to Hollow Way which made it much better for all Morris Motors paper work as a van took it direct to the station. The Post Office remained there for a very long time, but is now at the Cowley Centre and does a very big trade. The rails which were built to go down to the Garsington Road Station were taken away, houses built and Morris Motors factories built both sides of the road where the men, cars and lorries go in. Can you imagine it – no Phipps Road, Bailey Road, St Luke's Road, Boswell Road, Barns Road, Gaisford Road or Frederick Road. Now when I do go out I don't see a soul I know. Where Mr White's Farm was a Doctors' Clinic has been built, probably having about eight doctors there at different times. The Clinic is next to St Luke's Church, which was another of the generous gifts from Lord Nuffield, the title bestowed on him for all he did, pity there isn't another man of his personality to put things right at the factory, for he definitely wouldn't have allowed matters to get as they are now, he would have told them to get on with it or clear out. If not, he would have closed down until they had come to their senses. Unfortunately the innocent would suffer too.

Yes, Cowley is very different today with its ugly tall concrete buildings and that terrible car park next to the John Bunyan Church. In my young days we seldom saw Oxford Town, no buses and when you reached the Terminus better known today as the

'Regal', you could get on a tram drawn by two horses and go to Carfax for 1d or the Station for 2d but on Saturdays from 2 – 10 pm there was a bus drawn by two horses, one bus from the Terminus to the 'Old Swan' for a 1d and if there was a queue and the bus filled up, you either had to wait for it to return or walk home. If you wanted to go to Marston there was a carriers cart which had a roof in case it rained and that cost 3d. In Crescent Road a Mr Harold Turner who owned the Cowley Carriers would take people's cases to the Station, small cases 3d, large 6d.

But years later his son turned a large piece of ground near them into a pig farm. If you went up the old lane at the back, you would see hundreds of their pigs walking around in thick straw and their own manure. Now today it is a smart estate. Then again when I am taken up to Blackbird Leys where I used to ride round on my bicycle and where it was all fields and at the back the big sewerage farm that grew such fine vegetables covering acres of ground and one solitary house where the caretaker and family lived. Now you see a Church Community Centre, a big pond, lots of shops and houses galore then I say to myself what progress but so much of the peace in the world has gone. I expect there are many more things I could have told you but you cannot always remember them when you want to.

About 1912 we moved from the middle of Temple Road round the corner to the two little cottages where the Polly family had lived for years opposite Whites Farm and by the old Stock tree where they used to put people in the stocks for punishment. The stocks remained until they fell down from age. I cannot remember which year the stocks fell but I do remember how a lot of us hated to see them

go. Now I look back on over 70 years of life, see the sun shining, the birds singing, nobody going hungry. We used to go to Sunday School and like it, but the children now go off with their parents in the car to the seaside all rushing around to find new pleasures and the peace has gone as we old ones knew it. Of course progress must go on but with it has come so much greed and discontent and we have lost the togetherness which was part of daily life.

SNOWDROP WEEKENDS AT ST JAMES

Next year's Snowdrop weekends will be held on the 7th/8th and 14th/15th of February. The Church will be open on Saturdays from 10.30 until 3.30 and on Sundays from 2 til 4 pm.

As usual we shall be serving tea/coffee and cake, and in the New Year will be appealing for volunteers to welcome our visitors. Please watch the 'Link' for further details.

Margaret Martin

Rosanne Butler



MOTHERS' UNION NEWS

Rev Amanda Bloor was our speaker in November and she treated us to a fascinating insight into her role as Chaplain to the Bishop of Oxford, a position she held for six years. Those of us who have met Bishop John or heard him preach will understand how much fun Amanda had in the post along with the very demanding schedule she followed keeping up pace with her "boss". Both she and the Bishop have moved on but Amanda has a variety of interesting roles now which are going to keep her very busy.

The rest of the meeting was taken up with plans for the festive season. First the Mothers' Union Christmas Tree for the Festival. May Morgan will set up (as last year) a prayer tree decked with blue lights. Small card angels will be available for visitors and members to hang on the tree. Each angel will have a personal prayer for families around the world which is what our fellowship is all about.

The Christmas party, which is traditionally our December branch meeting will be on Monday, 15th. It was agreed amongst members that the committee should provide the food and that £1 per person would be donated towards this. The

party will begin with Bible readings and carols and end with various readings, poems, etc, and knowing our branch leader, John Shreeve, a joke or two.

It was also agreed that members who can, will send Christmas cards to people in prison. There are many people in our prisons away from the family and friends who do not even get a Christmas card to put up in their cells. For several years now Cowley Mothers' Union has tried to rectify this in a small way. Cards should be given with an envelope to John and Marlene by the middle of December and they will then see that they reach their correct destination.

Members are reminded that the January Branch Meeting on Monday, 19th January is our Annual General Meeting. It is also our annual Bring and Buy Sale in aid of Mothers' Union funds.

A date for the new diary is 13th February which is planned as a (bring your family and friends) Pudding and Quiz evening. We chose that date hoping that folk might need a jolly evening at the end of a dreary winter and also hoping that we are not snowed in!

'Let's light up Christmas'

COWLEY FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TREES 2014

FAMILY FUN DAY

Saturday 13 December : 10:00-2:00

St James Church Centre

Beauchamp Lane, Cowley, OX4 3LF

*Christmas arts – music – stories
make cards and decorations
Father Christmas – face painting – food*

£1.50 per child – FREE for adults & under 4s

*then visit the trees in the Church
fundraising for*



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Oxfordshire's
Ecclesiastical
Buildings
& Festivals



Lesley Williams 01865 779 562 07982 439 828
ctf@cowleyteamministry.co.uk

COWLEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

9 December 2014

Commencing at 8.00 pm

TALK:

Plague and Fire—The Life and Works of
Samuel Pepys
An illustrated talk
by Colin Oakes

20 January 2015

Commencing at 8.00 pm

TALK

A Tailor's View of Oxford
A talk by Cattrina Manners

At United Reformed Church,
Temple Road, Cowley

Annual Membership fee £18 (OAP £16)

Visitors welcome £3 per meeting

St James Café

St James Church Centre

Beauchamp Lane



10:00 am to 1:00 pm

**Saturday
31st January**

For more information and the
booking of tables contact

Vicky Hall on
07901895825



Come along for a tea or coffee and a
slice of homemade cake - then do a
little shopping on the stalls -
jams, cards, and lots more



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'Let's light up Christmas'

COWLEY FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TREES 2014

Oxybaroxy with

Oxfordshire Youth Chamber Choir

ANGEL VOICES

Saturday 6 December at 7:00pm

St James Church

Beauchamp Lane, Cowley, OX4 3LF

fundraising for



Great Support for the
Oxfordshire's
Ecclesiastical
Buildings
& Festivals



TICKETS £10 under 14 £5

cheques payable to Cowley (Oxford) PCC

Lesley Williams 01865 779 562 07982 439 828

ctf@cowleyteamministry.co.uk



COWLEY FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TREES 2014

Let's light up Christmas with '*ANGEL DELIGHT*' !



This edition of the Chronicle will be published just as the 2014 Christmas tree festival has started: if you collect and read your copy on 7th December, you will only have missed Saturday's 'Angel Voices' concert, with Oxybaroxy & the Oxfordshire Youth Chamber Choir (*the CTF coordinator never ceases to be amazed at the standard achieved by the young people who make music with the Oxfordshire County Music Service – she is an admiring fan*)

So there will still be plenty of opportunity to view the trees, bring/send friends to do so, hear the children's music making - and be part of the CTF team by filling vital support gaps :

- supplying mince pies/shortbread/Christmas cake/cheese straws for refreshments
- be on welcoming duty during opening hours – *see the advertising cards or Link or posters*
- serve refreshments during opening hours
- person a craft table in the church during opening hours
- supervise an activity at the family fun day on Saturday 13 December

Contact Lesley in the first instance if you can help – she will point you in the right direction.

Here is the music programme

Monday 8 December

14.15 St Christopher's School choir

Tuesday 9 December

14.15 Church Cowley St James School singers and drummers
 Pegasus School handbells

Wednesday 10 December

18.45 Oxford Spires Academy
 Piano Anna James

Thursday 11 December

14.15 St Francis School glee club

Saturday 13 December

10.00 Organ Brian Tidy

Sunday 14 December

16.00 Church tower bells



Lesley Williams 07982 439 828

ctf@cowleyteamministry.co.uk

Seven years among the saints in Cowley

Hello to all of you wonderful saints. We feel privileged to have been with you as part of the Parish of Cowley for the past seven years.

In 2006, Howard was chaplain to the University of Bedfordshire in Luton, his first post after ordination. Beth Spence, curate here, told him there was a vacancy, and we made an incognito visit to a service on 31 December. Clivia Philbin saw through us: "You're a vicar; you've come to check us out.". Over the next days and weeks, we increasingly felt God was drawing us here. So Howard submitted his CV to the search committee and soon we found ourselves in Cowley.

Howard's work-load increased, and we missed the slower pace between terms, but we gradually got used to life as a parish priest and family, and all that it involved. It was very different from the university, where every spring a large number of "parishioners" moved away, their courses finished. Here, many people grew up in the parish or have lived here a long time, and some remember Cowley when it was a village. We soon had to accept another difference, when we had to say goodbye to someone we'd come to know and love who'd reached the end of his earthly life. That first funeral brought a difficult realisation that it wouldn't be the only time we felt such pain. But we are grateful we had the privilege of knowing this gentleman, and the other people we lost over the years.

After seven years, some things have stayed the same: in the parish, people's faith in God remains their linchpin, while they also hold dear a sense of history and pride in their Cowley heritage. Hospitality, outreach and service to the community continue to underpin long-standing

activities and programmes, like Mothers' Union, Tuesday lunches, Seashells, Alpha, snowdrop days, plant sales, and many more. Others have evolved or changed completely. From a study in the house, the rector's office moved into the church centre. The shape of the ministry team evolved. A group of bell-ringers was started by people who had never tried it before but wanted to hear the bells ring out again. A choir formed and has grown by leaps and bounds in numbers, skill and confidence. Lay involvement increased in services and in the schools, and a strong support team of office volunteers has developed. The Asian Christian Church returned to St. James. Baptisms are no longer insular events but became a monthly part of Sunday services. Mission and Vision statements were developed, tested and refined. Shaped by them, we tried new missional projects, such as Church@the Centre and family fun days. The St James cafe, the Festivals of Trees and Nativities, and the mapping of the churchyard were initiated by individuals as ways to welcome the community into the churches. We've been saddened by the loss of dear friends, and of course we've been delighted with new babies added to our numbers.

I think the biggest change in the parish in these seven years, as a church and as individuals, has been an increased intentionality and confidence in sharing our faith with each other and with the community around us. There are so many people in Cowley, and known to each of us, who don't yet have share in what we have known. How can we do anything but carry on, praying for them and working to demonstrate God's love and saving grace? If you keep on doing that

surely you will continue to be a blessing, and to be blessed in that work.

Something that hasn't changed is that people in the parish enjoy each other's company, having fun at Caribbean Evenings, film club, bingo, and special events like the Cowley Proms, and Jubilee and Coronation celebrations.

We were filled with conflicting emotions at the most recent of these: the farewell lunch at St James and the barn dance and ploughman's supper at St Francis. Earlier, our family was able to spend a lovely day looking back on our time here, thanks to your thoughtful gift of an afternoon champagne tea at the Savoy. Then we walked across the bridge to use our gift theatre tokens at the National Theatre, marvelling once more as we looked out on the Thames and the iconic buildings along it, and realising how much we will miss living in England.

Since Howard announced his new post, people have been so gracious. Several people helped in different ways as we prepared to move. At the first farewell at St James we felt humbled and grateful, enjoying time with friends, hearing Lesley Williams' poem, and sharing memories, hugs, laughs and tears at the luncheon. At St Francis, it was heart-warming to see so many people dressed in red and white. Sharing in the fun of the barn dance, seeing the impressive cakes, being moved by the kindness of the speeches and personal words with people, and the generous gift of a cheque - we really were overwhelmed!! Both parties (and seven years) were over far too quickly. We didn't manage to get around to speak to everyone. And I know some people came up to say goodbye but stepped away unable to speak.

We could fill the Chronicle with memories and thanks; each person there has made their own unique contribution to the parish and to our lives. It is impossible to put into words how much we appreciate the people of the parish of Cowley, and everything you have done to make the past seven years so rich and full. May God bless each and every one of you as you have blessed us!

We are settling in. We're becoming accustomed to the snow and freezing cold. We marvel at the mountains in all directions, and are still thrilled to encounter deer or elk every few days. David works in a local shop, and hopes to do some skiing. Katie remains in London for the last two years of her degree but will join us over Christmas. We hope some of you might have the opportunity to visit us in the Rocky Mountains of Canada. You will be very welcome!

We've met some of the saints in the churches in Canmore and Banff. There's much to do, and some exciting programmes are in sight for the future. Please keep us in your prayers as we search for a home to buy, and as we begin to seek and discover what it is we are meant to do here.

We miss England, Cowley, the parish and especially the people. We plan to return for a visit one day. In the meantime, you're in our thoughts and prayers. You saints of the Parish of Cowley, we will hold you in our hearts for a very long time!

With love from
Howard, Carol, Katie and David

FRIENDS OF ST FRANCIS

I think that I can safely say that this group is the longest running home group in our church - partly due to the fact that there is a deep feeling of fellowship and affection among its members. We do not pretend to be very clever or scholarly in our approach, but we do genuinely seek a better understanding of the scriptures and of our Lord.

We always try to follow a proper course book in our meditations, and this is helpful. So our sessions, usually following an established pattern of prayer, bible reading, exposition, discussion and closing prayers give us all that we need for growth.

We meet twice a month, on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday in the month in St Francis Church at 2.30 pm. We welcome new members whatever their age group or background. We usually end with tea and biscuits and enjoy some lively conversations.

Sadly Skye has not been able to join in with us owing to pressure of work – so we have a lay leader, which does not seem to cause concern amongst our members.

Do join us if you can.

John Shreeve

I lead the home group which meets on alternate Thursday mornings in the Ranklin Room at the Church Centre. However, during Lent we meet every Thursday.

Before Howard left he introduced us to many interesting projects taking us more deeply into a variety of texts from the Bible. The one he has left us which we are now studying and which will carry us forward for many sessions to come is a book called Sacred. The course was devised by Rev Philip Moon, a close friend of Howard's.

The texts we have just finished are, chapter by chapter, the gospel of St Mark. Rev Moon's commentary on each chapter is enlightening and very helpful. In Epiphany we shall be embarking on the next phase in the course, namely the first three Psalms and then into Peter's epistles. In Lent we shall be using the York Course which, for those who do not know, is a course of meditations widely used by Christians, leading up to Holy Week and Easter.

Alongside our Bible studies and discussions, which are frank, open and completely confidential, we use prayer to guide our thoughts. Many of our prayers come from a lovely little book compiled by Christian Aid sourced from many countries around the world.

Rosanne Butler

Joyce Titchell offered this poem to The Chronicle. It was written by her late husband and, so full of humour and wisdom that we thought our readers would really enjoy it.

WHATEVER'S HAPPENED TO CHRISTMAS?

Christmas comes but once a year, that's what the poem says,
But there's been many changes since my early days.
Then, snow lay round about, deep and crisp and even
Now it's fog, the wind and rain against which we've striven.

We sang carols through the streets, even all the verses,
Now they just sing two lines, and expect to fill their purses.
Turkeys hung o'er the butchers shop for you to choose at will,
Have to be in fridges now, 'cause they could make us ill.

JOKES

Students who obtained 0% on an Exam

1. In which battle did Napoleon die?
His last battle
2. Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?
At the bottom of the page

A real pine tree that's what we had, only the best would do,
Most now have a man made one they get from B & Q.
Real candles on the Christmas tree, oh they looked fantastic,
Now it's little coloured lights, and they are made of plastic.

We all stirred the Christmas pud, and did it with such gusto,
We don't bother now, just get one out of Tesco.

A threepenny joey in the pud, that's what we hoped to find
Not now of course there's not a chance, there's nothing of the kind.

Church and sleigh bells, through the night, ringing out full throttle,
The only bells that we get now is coming from the bottle.
Cathedral choirs on our crystal set crackled in good tone,
Now the sort of songs we get is something by BOYZONE.

Mince pies we left, and Whisky too, so Santa could survive,
Can't do it now of course, 'cause he can't drink and drive.
Roasting chestnuts on the open fire, that's one thing I crave
Now with all the new techniques, it's in the microwave.

Mistletoe above the door to get our Kisses under
They say now it's dying out, what can we use I wonder.
The Sally Ann came through the streets, with carols bright and brisk,
The only music we get now comes from a Compact Disc.

We played cards and other games and everything quite homely,
Now we only sit around and watch the blooming Telly.
But Christmas still has, I believe one redeeming feature,
The ghosts of Christmas past, the present and the future.

R I Titchell

3. River Ravi flows in which state?

Liquid

4. What is the main reason for failure?

Exams

5. What can you never eat for breakfast?

Lunch and dinner

When a Black Panther started something

I am not very good with house plants but there is one type that I find difficult to kill. This is the Cape Primrose or Streptocarpus. I love them. The first one I bought was at a flower show and from Dibley's who are a small nursery specialising in Streptocarpus and begonias.

That first buy was a Black Panther, the plant of the year.

Streptocarpus plants come from South Africa and have elongated thick oval leaves growing in a similar way to our primroses and the flowers are an open trumpet with lines in the throat. Black Panther is a deep purple with very few white lines. No plant breeder has ever found black in the plant kingdom!

You can reproduce the plants by leaf cuttings, either by cutting across the

leaf and putting in compost so each cut vein might produce a new plant, or by cutting along the mid rib. I find that my plants bulk up so I can just split them to produce more plants. I have brought a few to the Plant Sales. They flower from March to November and they are happy on my north-east facing window sill. I only water them when their leaves start to flop and you have to cut off the dead flower stems and be aware that they do suffer from aphids. I do spray for that but only very occasionally.

From my first purchase I then acquired a couple more different varieties and, this summer, during a visit to my sister, we visited Dibley's nursery deep in rural North Wales. I bought four more.

My problem now is that our house has only the one window with a sill wide enough to accommodate plant pots!

This autumn, one stem produced a seed pod. If I can get any seed to germinate, it will be interesting to see what grows as they will not be true to the parent. The seed pod or carpel is spirally twisted (strepto-), hence the name.

Joan Coleman

SIGNIFICANT DATES IN DECEMBER

Britain's oldest Sunday newspaper, The Observer, was printed and went on sale on 4th December 1791.

King George V declared Southern Ireland (Eire) a free state on 6th December 1922. The nine northern counties of Ulster remained part of the United Kingdom.

The first Nobel prizes were awarded on 10th December 1901. There are six prizes for achievements in physics, chemistry, medicine, literature, economics and peace. The prizes are still awarded each year on 10th December.

In 1889 the American founder of Kodak produced his first roll of celluloid film. The date was 12th December and his name was George Eastman.

The death penalty for murder was abolished in Britain on 18th December 1969.

On Christmas Day 1777 Captain Cook landed on a small island in the Pacific Ocean. Rather unimaginatively he named it Christmas Island.

SIGNIFICANT DATES IN JANUARY

On New Year's Day in medieval times people celebrated "The Feast of Fools" in the church. High officials swapped places with lower ones and a mock pope was elected. Religious rituals were parodied and everyone generally let rip. A fully irreverent time was had by all.

On 2nd January 1987 Golliwogs were banned from Enid Blyton's Noddy books by their publisher, Macdonald. Golly had become an embarrassment because the stories treated him in a racist way.

Concorde, the world's first supersonic airliner was given its first flight on 9th January 1969.

Developed jointly between British and French engineers there began an argument over whether the name should have a final "e" as proposed by France. As you can see they won.

In the United States 16th January 1920 marked the start of the Prohibition era. The manufacture and sale of alcohol was banned for the next thirteen years.

On 21st January 1987 Terry Waite, the Archbishop of Canterbury's special envoy, was kidnapped by a terrorist group. He was in Beirut to negotiate the release of other kidnap victims.

Queen Victoria died on 22nd January 1901 at the age of 81. She had ruled since 1837, longer than any other British monarch (63 years, 216 days). It is likely that our present Queen may overtake that record.

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BOOKS OF THE MONTH

'Girls with Swords'

How to carry your cross like a hero

Lisa Bevere - Waterbrook Press

I love it when I get to read books written by people I've heard speak 'live' at Conferences and other special meetings and this is no exception. Lisa is a lively passionate speaker and her books are written with passion in a way that makes the words spring off the page.

In this book Lisa is exhorting all Christians, male and female, to understand and use the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God (Ephesians 6:17). She relates how she heard the Holy Spirit urge her to explain how to reforge the sword and so her message was born. The book is divided into 4 parts, entitled: Chosen; Trained; Armed; Commissioned and Lisa uses many stories from her own life as she explains that 'the hour has come for us to live by the sword of truth, which is the Word of our God'. She is passionate that women realize their true potential in God and are equipped to stand with their brothers in Christ.

Lisa frequently refers to her knowledge of fencing as she explains how to successfully wield this spiritual weapon given to each of us and she makes the interesting point that fencing is one of the few sports in which women can match men, because fencing requires 'mental strategy over physical strength' and an 'intuitive awareness of your opponent's next move' and so, she carries on to say that it's time for women to become the heroes God created them to be and stand - 'courageous, discerning, forgiving and wise'.

Do read it!

Jill Ling

~~~~~

**Jesus' Little Instruction Book**

(His Words to Your Heart)

Compiled by Thomas Cahill

This is not a critical work with lots of heavy learning or doctrine, you will be pleased to know. It is simply a collection of Jesus' sayings separated from their original gospel contexts. The first impression is just how many there were, and the second is how well they stand up on their own. (The sources are quoted near the sayings).

We know, of course, that it was Jesus' outspoken words, often critical of the church leaders of his day, that led to his eventual death at the hands of those who hated him. He refused to be gagged on issues that he considered to be important in the Kingdom of God.

Seeing them all together in this form is an awe inspiring, humbling experience.

I commend it to you.

John Shreeve

Editor: This sounds like a lovely little present for a friend for Christmas

# RECIPES

CHRISTMAS SWEETS – Enjoy or give them as presents

Peppermint Creams - makes: 35 sweets

- 1 egg white
- 340g (12oz) icing sugar
- a few drops peppermint extract
- a few drops food colouring (optional)



Line a baking sheet with greaseproof paper. Whisk the egg white lightly in a bowl until frothy but not stiff. Sift the icing sugar into the bowl and stir it into the egg white with a wooden spoon until the mixture is stiff.

Knead in the peppermint essence. And the food colouring if required.

Roll the mixture into balls and put on a baking sheet. Use a fork to flatten them. If the fork sticks to them, then dip the fork in icing sugar before pressing down.

Refrigerate for 24 hours.

**Easy Chocolate Truffles**

Makes: 60 sweets

1 (200g) tub cream cheese, softened

350g icing sugar, sifted

500g plain chocolate, melted

1 ½ teaspoons vanilla

In a large bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth. Gradually beat in icing sugar until well blended. Stir in melted chocolate and vanilla until no streaks remain. Refrigerate for about 1 hour. Shape into 2.5cm balls.

Note:

Roll truffles in ground walnuts (or any ground nuts), cocoa, coconut, icing sugar, etc.

To flavour truffles with liqueurs or other flavourings, omit vanilla.

Divide truffle mixture into thirds.

Add 1 tablespoon liqueur (almond, coffee, orange) to each mixture; mix well.

## ANSWERS TO QUIZ ON PAGE 15

1. The Holly and the Ivy
2. Buck's fizz
3. The Christmas pudding
4. Humphrey Bogart
5. Angela Rippon
6. Manger Square
7. Radium
8. Cinderella
9. Chipolata sausages wrapped in bacon
10. David Bowie
11. Alistair Sim
12. O Come All Ye Faithful
13. Goose
14. Sherry
15. Hirohito
16. Only Fools and Horses
17. Frosty the Snowman
18. The Pacific Ocean (near Kiribati)
19. Macaulay Culkin (in Home Alone and Home Alone 2 and Lost in New York)
20. Parsnip

## 2014 Ride & Stride update

I am pleased to tell you that we have done extremely well by raising £523.75 for this year's Ride & Stride. The total for St Francis was £153 and for St James it was £370.75 and a much needed £261.85 will be received by the Parish.

Each year time and money are freely given to the Ride & Stride to make it such a success and I would like to thank everyone for the support that has been given.

June Smith

# No Fear

When a new Team Rector is installed in a church, it is one of those moments when you stand at a cross roads of life and anything can happen and probably will. Perhaps Charles Dickens summed it up best when he wrote the opening words to his famous novel, A Tale of Two Cities.

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way." (Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities)

I thoroughly enjoyed our time together. It was full of promise, growing in faith, life, laughter, love, learning, new friendships, celebrations, hard work, joy, and at times frustration, stress, disappointment, and tears in saying goodbye.

I learned so much during my time in Cowley, and I am grateful to you and to God for all the growth that took place in my life. I hope that it was a time of growth for you too. I discovered again and in new ways, just how much God loves me, and that He loves you. His love so big and strong and powerful that it can transform us and make us into new people.

I learned that we need to be able to laugh together. Laughter is God given, it is a part of learning to love one another, support and encourage one another . It is not a sign of the frivolous, but rather an element of a deep and positive relationship.

I learned from you, to be proactive. If something needs to be changed, change it. If not you end up thinking, I didn't do the things I know I should have done. Hand in hand with being proactive is the issue of time. There is a lot to be done and there is not enough time to do everything. Each of us have the same amount of time to spend each week; so we have to make choices about how we spend our time. Someone famous (my mom I think) said, "begin with the end in mind".

Or in more modern parlance, we need to have a vision of the future and of our purpose in life, so that we will know how to spend our time and energy. Each day think of why we are here, and our purpose in life.

Prayer! It is not a bunch of words that sound pious, but rather the most important life changing conversation you have each day. As someone once said to me, "There ain't nothin' gonna happen without prayer, honey." Talk to God, formally, informally, with Bible reading, with singing, alone, together, always, every day, every hour. Pray. I learned to really pray in Cowley.

You taught me that not everyone will like you. This was a hard one for me, but I learned that and I am better for it. But even if they don't like you, God still calls me (and you) to love each other like He loves us.

Trust God. You know sometimes we are motivated by fear, but God tells us over and over, "do not be afraid." Trust God, and He will be with you in all you do, all that happens, all your successes and failures. God has provided Cowley with such a rich resource in the people who are a part of our Church family. You have an amazing Ministry Team in Sky Denno, Mark Oxbrow, Richard Chand, Tony Beetham; and in the people of the congregations. How blessed you are.

Thank you for all you have given me. I have a couple of other gifts and talents that I brought with me to Cowley, but rarely had a chance to exercise. For instance, a couple of weeks ago, Banff, Canmore and Calgary were locked in a blizzard. We had 65 centimetres of snow, and winds gusting to 70 kilometres an hour. There were snow drifts everywhere and a lot of work to be done clearing snow. And I discovered my old talents for shovelling snow were still with me. I'm still waiting to see if I can resurrect my very dormant talents for downhill skiing and ice skating. I miss you terribly. I miss you dreadfully. Some day if I get a chance I will write and tell you what I mean by that. Never forget what we learned together: No fear, Trust God!

Howard

# Christmas Truce 1914

Captain R J Arness

I have just been through one of the most extraordinary scenes imaginable. Tonight is Xmas Eve and I came up into the trenches this evening for my tour of duty in them. Firing was going on all the time and the enemy's machine guns were at it hard, firing at us. Then about seven the firing stopped.

I was in my dugout reading a paper and the mail was being dished out. It was reported that the Germans had lighted their trenches up all along our front. We had been calling to one another for some time Xmas wishes and other things. I went out and they shouted 'no shooting' and then somehow the scene became a peaceful one. All our men got out of the trenches and sat on the parapet, the Germans did the same, and they talked to one another in English and broken English. I got on the top of the trench and talked German and asked them to sing a German *Volkslied* [folk song], which they did, then our men sang quite well and each side clapped and cheered the other.

I asked a German who sang a solo to sing one of Schumann's songs, so he sang 'The Two Grenadiers' splendidly. Our men were a good audience and really enjoyed his singing.

Then Pope and I walked across and held a conversation with the German officer in command. One of his men introduced us properly, he asked my name and then presented me to his officer. I gave the latter permission to bury some German dead who were lying in between us, and we agreed to have no shooting until 12 midnight tomorrow. We talked together, 10 or more Germans gathered round. I was almost in their lines within a yard or so. We saluted each other, he thanked me for permission to bury his dead, and we fixed up how many men were to do it, and that otherwise both sides must remain in their trenches.

Then we wished one another good night and a good night's rest, and a happy Xmas and parted with a salute. I got back to the trench. The Germans sang '*Die Wacht am Rhein*', it sounded well. Then our men sang quite well 'Christians

'Awake', it sounded so well, and with a good night we all got back into our trenches. It was a curious scene, a lovely moonlight night, the German trenches with small lights on them, and the men on both sides gathered in groups on the parapets.

At times we heard the guns in the distance and an occasional rifle shot. I can hear them now, but about us is absolute quiet. I allowed one or two men to go out and meet a German or two halfway. They exchanged cigars, a smoke and talked. The officer I spoke to hopes we shall do the same on New Year's Day. I said 'yes, if I am here'. I felt I must sit down and write the story of this Xmas Eve before I went to lie down. Of course no precautions are relaxed, but I think they mean to play the game. All the same, I think I shall be awake all night so as to be on the safe side. It is weird to think that tomorrow night we shall be at it hard again. If one gets through this show it will be a Xmas time to live in one's memory. The German who sang had a really fine voice.

Am just off for a walk round the trenches to see all is well.

Good night.



## Dance Based Keep Fit Class with Barbara

St Francis of Assisi Church  
Hollow Way, Cowley, Oxford OX3 7JP  
Wednesdays 10.30 – 11.45 am

Improve your energy levels, muscle tone and flexibility  
Come and enjoy the friendly, fun atmosphere

This class most suited to active 50+  
Please bring a mat/towel      **First class ½ price**

## Dance Based Fitness Class, Lean Machine, Cowley – Tuesdays 7.30-8.45pm

For further details of both classes phone Barbara

07752626642

KFA Fitness through movement, dance and exercise

[www.keepfit.org.uk](http://www.keepfit.org.uk)

# 5th Cowley Guides

We started back in November with a Bonfire Themed evening. The guides had a go at apple bobbing, picking sweets out of a plate of flour using their teeth, eating doughnuts dangling on the end of strings finishing up with sparklers, and an enrolment of a new guide.

We have had fun making decorations for our Christmas tree for the festival of trees.

We will be working towards two fun badges, a Reindeer Challenge and a Robin Challenge. This involves making Reindeer Biscuits, Reindeer Quiz, Rudolph Beetle, wrap up a present blind fold, pompom robins, Robin cupcakes and other activities. We have another girl waiting to be enrolled and she will be making her promise before Christmas.

The term will end with a Guide Christmas Party.

Cynthia Retter

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## Sharing and Caring

### THE PRISON FELLOWSHIP AT CHRISTMAS

It is at Christmas time that the separation of prisoners and their families is most keenly felt. In some cases imprisonment causes the break-up of families and divorce. Whatever the situation, the children involved are likely to suffer most, at this time. Families already strapped for cash with the loss of the breadwinner have little left for all those extra things that the festive season demands. It is here that the Prison Fellowship steps in to bring a bit of Christmas cheer. It has been their practice over a number of years to buy and send Christmas Presents to children who would otherwise get nothing. And this year, in the present tough economic climate, the demand for these has been exceptionally high. They were all the more grateful then for the Mission Gift from Cowley Parish which will make their task that much easier. And they wish to extend their thanks to the PCC who made this possible. When purchasing, care is taken to suit the gift to the age and gender of the child. The presents then are gift wrapped and then posted off to the families concerned. This is quite a mammoth task, and a few dedicated helpers work very hard to finish the job in time.

In addition Prison Fellowship members seek to involve themselves in Carol Services and special events in several of our local prisons. They talk with and pray for the prisoners. This work over a period of time often results in the conversion to Christ, and a complete change around for individual characters. All this helps to lighten the tensions in our overcrowded prisons, which must be a good thing. Christ comes to these people with his loving and forgiving power and is able to meet their situation and give them new directions and fresh hope.

John Shreeve

# Virtual Office

If I told you that I work in a ‘virtual office’ would you think that my office does not really exist. Well, I do work in a virtual office every day of the week and it certainly exists, in fact it is buzzing with activity most days. This month I would like to introduce you to two of my work colleagues who actually live thousands of miles away but share an office (a virtual one) with me.

As most of you know, Faith2Share ([www.faith2share.net](http://www.faith2share.net)) is a global network of Christian mission agencies working in around one hundred different countries to try to improve the lives of some of the most marginalised people in our world and to bring the good news of Jesus Christ to those who have had little opportunity to hear about Him. Some of our staff work from a small office tucked behind the BMW plant in this parish but Vijay and Timothy (pictured) are in India and Kenya respectively looking after our work in Asia and Africa. Each week, and sometimes more than that, we all connect up using Skype for our staff meeting. Using the video function we sometimes see that while we are shivering in our part of the virtual office Vijay is perspiring with the heat at his end of the office. We might also see in the background Timothy’s wife or hear his chickens outside! All this reminds us that we live in a wonderful, highly connected, world and God is giving us so many new opportunities to work together for his glory.

If you would like to visit our virtual office to see something of the ministry that Faith2Share is doing then please do ask me. We will try to arrange for you to come on a day when you can see Timothy’s chickens or Vijay’s young daughter as well.

Mark Oxbrow  
International Director, Faith2Share



## WHO DO YOU TRUST?

Children’s Church on 23<sup>rd</sup> November at St James caused a bit of fun when they came back into church to tell us what they had been up to. Apparently William and Caroline Hartley, their worship leaders that day had been teaching about trust and had given them a quiz to try out on the congregation. We were asked to give a show of hands which were carefully counted and recorded by the children. They were happy to share the results with our readers so here they are:

Who do you trust?

|                   |    |                                               |
|-------------------|----|-----------------------------------------------|
| Mum and Dad:      | 12 | (many of us no longer have our mums and dads) |
| Your neighbour:   | 12 |                                               |
| Your best friend: | 18 |                                               |
| Your husband:     | 28 |                                               |
| A judge in court: | 12 |                                               |
| Your wife:        | 28 |                                               |
| Your cousins:     | 19 |                                               |
| Your doctor:      | 9  |                                               |
| God:              |    | Everyone in church                            |
| Jesus:            |    | Everyone in church                            |
| The Queen:        |    | Everyone in church                            |
| Your teacher:     | 5  |                                               |

As a former teacher myself I found that a bit disconcerting especially as a couple of my old pupils were in church (both of them voted “yes”!).

What an interesting survey this turned out to be, don’t you think.

Rosanne Butler

# Christmas at St Francis C.E. Primary School

It's that time of year again. The excitement is building on an almost daily basis. As the children run in to school each chilly morning, I greet them with the shared sense of joy that Christmas is just around the corner. The pumpkins have long been carved and Guy Fawkes is just a distant memory, teachers and pupils have their eyes on one key event – Christmas.

At St Francis, the children have started preparations early. The school Christmas choir, which usually draws in around 30 children, has 60 this year and you can hear the beautiful sound of carols drifting through the school on dark Thursday evenings as they rehearse. In addition, the Nursery, Foundation and Key Stage One children are already practising their show 'Rock around the Flock' which is sure to thrill and entertain peers, staff, family and friends at the end of term. The teachers and children take great pride and work exceptionally hard to produce a performance that will bring that Christmas tear to people's eyes. After all, the tradition of the Christmas play is longstanding and an integral part of many people's annual celebration.

In addition, the school Christmas Bazaar, superbly

organised by the school PTA, raises funds for the school while providing children and their families with a fun and exciting afternoon. It is events like this that really get the Christmas spirit going at a sometimes dark and dreary time of year!

Alongside this, as a Church of England school, we work hard to help children to remember the deeper meaning of Christmas. This includes; visits to our local church, fortnightly 'Open the Book' assemblies and reinforcement through the values that we uphold as a school. After all, Christmas is more than Santa and presents under the tree.

Soon though, the wrapping paper will be torn off, trees will be out in the streets for collection and the last of the Christmas turkey will have made its final sandwich. After saying goodbye to Christmas, as a school we will be looking forward to the New Year. Fresh starts and new beginnings with the children greeting us in January ready to begin the race to Easter!

Happy Christmas from everyone at St Francis C.E. Primary School!

Anneka Fisher  
Deputy Headteacher



## CHRISTMAS QUIZ AID

We will all be giving generously to SeeSaw and ROSY over the next ten days at the Christmas Tree Festival and many of us probably support Christmas appeals from our own favourite charities – BUT in order to hit our £2,000 2014 Christian Aid target, here's a chance to contribute just a couple more pounds and test your (or Google's) general knowledge. Enclosed is a Christmas quiz sheet: try it yourself or share it with family/friends or copy it and have a competition with others.

Then return it before New Year with at least £2 per copy for a chance of a tasty Fair Trade prize.

# SUNDAY SERVICES

## ST JAMES CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

|                                                 |                      |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 8.00am                                          | Holy Communion       |
| 10.00am                                         | Sung Eucharist       |
| Every 3rd Sunday at 4.30pm ( <i>in church</i> ) | Church at the Centre |
| Every third Sunday                              | Sunday Lunch         |

## ST FRANCIS CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

|         |                  |
|---------|------------------|
| 10.30am | Parish Eucharist |
|---------|------------------|

## MID-WEEK SERVICES & MEETINGS

|           |               |                                                         |
|-----------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| Monday    | 8.30am        | Morning Prayer—St James                                 |
|           | 10.00-11.30am | Little Stars Playgroup—St Francis                       |
|           | 2.30pm        | Parish Mothers' Union—St James (3rd Monday)             |
| Tuesday   | 8.30am        | Morning Prayer—St Francis                               |
|           | 10.00am       | Seashells Toddler Group—St James                        |
|           | 12.00pm       | Eucharist—St James                                      |
|           | 12.30pm       | Tuesday Lunch Club—St James                             |
| Wednesday | 8.30am        | Morning Prayer—St James                                 |
|           | Thursday      | 8.30am Morning Prayer—St Francis                        |
|           | 7.00pm        | Cowley Parish Healing Service St Francis (1st Thursday) |
| Friday    | 2.00pm        | Bingo—St James                                          |

## HOME GROUPS

| Leader                                                 | Time/Venue                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Skye Denno                                             | 1st Monday of month, 7.30pm at Skye's home                                                                                |
| Connie Uren                                            | Alternate Tuesday afternoons at 2.30pm<br>St James Church Centre, Ranklin Room                                            |
| Friends of St Francis<br>(John Shreeve/<br>Skye Denno) | 2nd & 4th Tuesday afternoons at 2.30pm<br>St Francis Church                                                               |
| Mark Oxbrow                                            | Alternate Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm<br>Mark's home                                                                     |
| Rosanne Butler                                         | Alternate Thursday mornings at 10.00am<br>St James Church Centre, Ranklin Room                                            |
| Josh & Claire<br>Hordern                               | Thursdays at 8.00pm, often at 55 Glanville Rd<br><a href="mailto:joshuahordern@hotmail.com">joshuahordern@hotmail.com</a> |
| Helen Beetham                                          | Alternate Friday mornings at 10am                                                                                         |

The Parish Office in St James Church Centre is open:

Tuesday, 2—5pm  
Wednesday, 10—1pm  
Friday, 9—2pm

The Parish Office is currently staffed by volunteers and members of the ministry team.

Contact details: Tel: 01865 747680  
Email: [office@cowleyteamministry.co.uk](mailto:office@cowleyteamministry.co.uk)  
Out of hours tel: 07501 908378  
Website: [www.cowleyteamministry.co.uk](http://www.cowleyteamministry.co.uk)

### Team Rector:

Vacancy

### Team Vicar:

Revd Skye Denno  
Tel: 01865 434160 Mobile: 07720 768684  
Email: [skye@cowleyteamministry.co.uk](mailto:skye@cowleyteamministry.co.uk)  
Skye has Wednesday as her day off.

### Associate Priest

Revd Richard Chand  
01865 701948  
Email: [richard@cowleyteamministry.co.uk](mailto:richard@cowleyteamministry.co.uk)

### Non-stipendiary Ministers

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Revd Dr Amanda Bloor  
Tel: 01865 208221

Revd Tony Beetham  
Tel: 01865 770923  
Email: [tonybeetham1@supanet.com](mailto:tonybeetham1@supanet.com)

### Churchwardens:

David Stanley Tel: 776602  
Norah Shallow Tel: 765199

Deputy Wardens  
Margaret Martin Tel: 718532  
John Shreeve Tel: 717987

**St James Church Centre Manager:**  
Chris Woodman Tel: 778078

### Hall Bookings:

Church Centre: Pat Sansom Tel: 778516  
St Francis Church/St James Church:  
through Parish Office

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