

*Cowley festival  
of Christmas trees*  
**'Shine a light'**

**St James Church**  
Beauchamp Lane OX4 3LF

**10 – 19 December 2021**  
fundraising for : ROSY & SeeSaw  
[www.cowleyteamministry.co.uk](http://www.cowleyteamministry.co.uk)

*Cowley festival of Christmas trees*  
**Light up Cowley**

**a concert with Jubilee Brass  
and Doug Loveridge**

**St James Church**  
Beauchamp Lane OX4 3LF  
Friday 17 December  
7:30-9:30  
**£10 free for children  
and full time students**

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/jubilee-brass-concert-for-cowley-festival-of-christmas-trees-tickets>

fundraising for : ROSY & SeeSaw  
[www.cowleyteamministry.co.uk](http://www.cowleyteamministry.co.uk)

# Chronicle

December  
2021—  
January 2022

# From the Editors

*Sally Hemsworth and Nicki Stevens*

The Chronicle is full of details about events during December and January – we do hope you will be able to go to some or all of these. The Christmas Tree Festival is offering some great sounding events, and there is an appeal for helpers at these events. Contact Lesley Williams if you can help – I know she will be pleased to hear from you. In the meantime, why not knit or crochet some stars – we did well on the knitted Christmas Trees and are sure these numbers can be beaten!

It is so good to learn that both craft and gift fairs went well – although St Francis were not so lucky with the weather as St James. But marvellous events which we hope will be held again in 2022.

Eight boxes were completed for the Samaritan's Purse and taken to the distribution centre at Chalgrove Depot. Although this is a lower number than previously, we know that more people made contributions direct to Samaritan's Purse on-line.

The Parish Walks are continuing – the next is on Monday, 13 December 2021, meeting outside the Randolph at 12.30 pm. The regular walkers have decided to have a "Christmas" snack (at the King's Head, Holywell – not the Randolph!) before the walk around University Park. If you wish to meet the group, why not join them?

Film Club is back in January – Remember you need to be a member (and then you can bring a guest) to come. A full programme will be available at Film Club on the 14 January 2022.

Our next Chronicle edition is in February 2022 – we look forward to hearing from you with ideas, articles, recipes, etc.

All our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Nicki and Sally

---

## BIBLE SOCIETY 'MORE THAN A BOOK' REGISTRATION

If you order anything on-line or by phone from the Bible Society, please use the unique Parish reference number 12044 or select the 'Parish of Cowley' from the drop down menu when placing the order and we will benefit from the 'More than a book' cash back scheme. It's that easy! We earn a little from our 'Open the Book' resources orders but a top up from some personal shopping would be useful.

Do look at the on-line shop for Bibles, prayer books, cards, stickers, courses, fiction, DVDs etc.

<https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/products/>



## A word from the Rectory

In these ongoing days of challenge, the Christmas message brings such contrast; *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* I often get asked 'where does resilience come from?' In different circumstances I may give slightly different responses. BUT for the Christian, at the core, a simple truth can be found.

*"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*

What is that light? It's not a 'what' but a 'Who'. Jesus is the light. At Christmas we hear of that light coming down and living amongst us. When we come, as individuals, to understand that God loves us, and is routing for us; that He has prepared a place for us and will walk with us until we eventually find our way home; When we ask him to guide our lives; Then the fear of darkness gets pushed aside.

Increasingly, over this season of Covid, I have observed increased levels of worry. The World, many thought safe, turns out to be full of danger. The understanding that medicine can conquer 'ALL' has been shattered. Corrie Ten Boon wrote: "Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength."

God gives us an ability to think. Worry and concern are different. Concern allows us to manage and recognise risk. It is a positive attribute that helps us stay safe. It encourages us to find life in fulness. Worry is the opposite. It is concern taken too far, and produces negative outcomes that reduce quality

*"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*  
John chapter 1 verse 5

of life. Here are 5 simple ways to turn negative 'worry' into useful 'concern'.

1. Remember God's faithfulness throughout history. It is the big story of the Bible. God is always faithful.
2. Remember God is working even when we can't see it. *"I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. (Jeremiah 29:11)"*
3. Remember God's provision for the rest of creation. (Matthew 6:25-30)
4. Remember God always has a plan, and it is always good. (Romans 8:28, Proverbs 16:9)
5. Remember God has provided a secure eternal future. (Romans 8:17, Titus 1:1-3, 1 Corinthians 15)

The Christmas message: *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* is part of the truth that can help us put worry aside and find life in fulness.

God bless you all this Christmas!



It is with great joy that I can announce that we will be having a new Curate. If all goes well Liam Cartwright will join us next June.

He is married to Hannah who holds a post as an Associate Vicar with the University Church. They will live in a house just outside the parish but within easy travelling distance. Liam will bring many gifts with him so look out for the accompanying article elsewhere in the chronicle.

God bless you all!



Benson Cottage

# Christmas at St James and St Francis

Date	Location	Service	Time
<b>Sunday 12 Dec</b>	<b>St Francis</b>	<b>Christingle</b>	<b>09:30</b>
	<b>St James</b>	<b>Christingle</b>	<b>11:00</b>
<b>Sunday 19 Dec</b>	<b>St James</b>	<b>Carol Service</b>	<b>16:30</b>
	<b>(Church Yard)</b>		
<b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>St James</b>	<b>Crib Service</b>	<b>16:00</b>
	<b>St James</b>	<b>AALC Service</b>	<b>18:00</b>
	<b>The Corner House Pub</b>	<b>Carol singing</b>	<b>18:00</b>
	<b>OX3 7JF</b>		
<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>St James</b>	<b>Traditional Language Communion</b>	<b>08:00</b>
	<b>St Francis</b>	<b>Family Christmas Communion</b>	<b>09:30</b>
	<b>St James</b>	<b>Family Christmas Communion</b>	<b>09:30</b>
	<b>St James</b>	<b>AALC</b>	<b>11:30</b>

[www.cowleyteamministry.co.uk](http://www.cowleyteamministry.co.uk)

COME AND JOIN THE CELEBRATION



For more info:

 Parish of Cowley

 Phone 01865 747680

shine a light!



## CHILDREN'S CORNER

The other day I turned the clock back. Yes, I know. We lost summer-time and now have early darkness before we go to bed, but I mean that I 'went back in time' and did something that I hadn't done for a long time. In fact it took me back to when I was very young, probably younger than you are. I lit an open fire in my house and turned off the central heating. The chimney had been specially cleaned by a chimney sweep some months ago so it would be safe to use.

I lived in a house that had coal fires in grates in the living rooms on the ground floor and in the two main bedrooms. They didn't bother with the type of heating that we have now with a central boiler and radiators. At the time the houses were built, that sort of heating cost too much. That meant that you had to have a fire in the living room every day. You might have hot water from an electric immersion heater if you were lucky or heated by a boiler at the back of the fire in the main living room. And you had ONE electric point in the kitchen - for an electric iron! And you paid extra for a downstairs loo - outside the kitchen door!

Every day the first task was to empty the cold ashes from the old fire grate and get the small pieces of dry chopped wood. Yes, before school, unless you had things prepared the night before. Then, after carefully laying the fire with yesterday's newspaper and arranging the sticks of wood, and small pieces of coal, it was possible to try to start the fire. Coal was usually kept outside so on a cold day it wasn't the nicest thing to do. Light the fire and make certain there was a supply of coal or wood blocks to continue later, put the fire guard in place to stop sparks flying onto the carpet, if you had one on top of the lino (linoleum) and you

were done. At least that was the first one finished! On a cold day the fire didn't always keep going because the chimney had got cold overnight, and you had to start again.

If someone was ill, you might need to have another fire in the bedroom grate, upstairs. What a job. My mother used to tell the story that when she was 13, and working for a local doctor, 'in service', she had four fires to light before breakfast! Then help the housekeeper to prepare breakfast for the family, and of course all before the doctor started his surgery. Of course, I do have central heating now and electric points all over the place so don't get worried that I still live in the past. I try to stay warm using modern heating - sensibly.

We are so lucky these days that we only have to turn a switch or set a dial and we have heat and light, but that is progress, and it saves time and energy. Then we come to the big question. WHAT do WE do with the time that is saved by all these great inventions? Some of my time is writing these stories. Try NOT using your mobile phone for a whole day. Walk or cycle to school or when you go shopping. It may feel that life is slower, but it will give you time to think and give thanks - or perhaps write to a friend or Grandma / Grandpa who will tell you many other things that are really marvellous. Take care. You have a whole New Year before you. What will you do with your time ?

Uncle Ben

Editors' note:

Does Uncle Ben remember the time before double glazing when we were mesmerised by the lovely frosted windows, and the time before duvets when we were weighed down by blankets and eiderdowns?

## MOTHERS' UNION NEWS

On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> November, Cowley Branch of the Mothers' Union ceased to exist. Our closing service was led by our Rector, Geoff, and was attended by eight other members and Patricia Campbell, our area vice-president. However, the Cowley membership has re-emerged as an enthusiastic and vibrant group of Diocesan members who plan to meet regularly on the third Monday of each month at 2.30pm.



The format for each meeting will be the responsibility of individual members. Each will lead the group using their own theme and prayers.

We intend to remain committed to the ethos of the MU and will take part in all the projects that we have embraced in the past, including our popular "Puddings and Quiz" evening early next year.

We have our annual Christmas party planned for 20<sup>th</sup> December and will, as ever, take part in the church's "Christmas Tree Festival".

Far from being an occasion for sadness and loss, we are, as a revitalised group of MU members, looking towards the future full of optimism.

Rosanne Butler

---

## OPEN THE BOOK

Telling scripted Bible stories in assemblies for our three Parish schools – an essential part of our mission to the children of Cowley

Your new year resolution? To join the Open the Book team?

We have just enough storytellers for our three teams – but not if someone is away, ill or just not available....so more team members are still urgently needed in each school.

The commitment is for alternate weeks in each school but you can do as little or as much as you wish :

- alternate Mondays at 9:00 – arriving at 8:40 – St Christopher's School, Temple Road
- alternate Tuesdays 2:45 – arriving at 2:15 – Church Cowley St James School, Bartholomew Road
- alternate Thursdays 10:30 – arriving at 10:00 – St Francis School, Horspath Road

*to learn more about what's involved, talk to Geoff – Lesley Williams – Joan Coleman – Jill Ling*

## RECIPES

### CHOCOLATE MARSHMALLOW FUDGE

This lovely article and recipe have been received from Ruth Goodwin:



"I don't know about you but I thoroughly enjoyed our Christmas Craft and Gift Fair on November 20<sup>th</sup>, especially as we had not been able to hold one last year. It was so good to catch up with friends we had not seen in a while – in fact the Church Centre was absolutely buzzing!

If anyone bought my Chocolate Marshmallow Fudge on the day and enjoyed it, here is the recipe if you want to give it a go ... otherwise I will gladly make more to order!

70g butter  
120ml evaporated milk  
300g soft light brown sugar  
Packet mini marshmallows

Heat gently until everything is dissolved, then boil for 5 minutes, stirring frequently.

Turn the heat down and add:

70g dark chocolate & 300g milk chocolate  
- broken into small pieces or grated  
Teaspoon of vanilla

Stir over gentle heat until chocolate has melted. Pour into a tin lined with baking parchment.

Another recipe good to have around because it gets better the longer it is kept!

### GINGERBREAD

12oz flour  
3 teaspoons ground ginger  
4oz butter or margarine  
3oz brown sugar

4oz golden syrup  
1 level teaspoon bicarbonate of soda  
About 1/8<sup>th</sup> pint milk  
2 small eggs

- Grease a 7-8 inch Yorkshire pudding tin
- Sieve together flour and ground ginger
- Put fat, sugar and syrup into a saucepan and heat gently stirring until all melted together
- Dissolve bicarb with milk and stir into dry ingredients
- Add liquid fat mixture and eggs
- Mix thoroughly to very soft consistency
- Pour into prepared tin and bake in a slow oven for 1¼ - 1½ hours until firm to the touch
- Cool on a cake rack and cut into squares

The best part of this lovely gingerbread is that if you shut it into an air-proof tin it gets stickier and more yummy.

**Shaun Guard**

**TV AERIAL SERVICES**

- Poor reception solved
- Aerials - supplied & repaired
- TV's - hung on your wall or set up & tuned
- Internet - extension points & improved wifi
- Extra TV Points - for aerial and Sky (also in HD)
- Sky TV - also foreign language satellite

**OXFORD AERIALS**

[www.oxfordaerials.co.uk](http://www.oxfordaerials.co.uk)

**Call Oxford**  
**01865 400141**

# Prayer Space

the greatest festival of Christmas is drawing nearer and I am busy preparing for it - choosing presents, writing cards, planning 'get togethers', buying food, so much that has become an accepted and expected part of this season.

Yet, in all the bustle, I so easily forget what matters most:

responding to the gift of your Son.

Forgive me for relegating Jesus to the periphery of my celebrations rather than placing Him in the centre where he belongs; for doing so much to prepare for Christmas on the surface, yet so little to make myself ready within.

Open my heart to welcome the living Christ into my life, and so may I rejoice in His love, not just at Christmas, but always. in His name I ask it.

Amen

Taken from Nick Fawcett's book  
Prayerfully Yours"

Caring & professional  
**Foot Health Practitioner**

**Routine nail trimming; corn & hard skin removal; diabetic foot care and advice; mildly ingrown, thickened and fungal nails**

**Home Visits or clinic appointments -  
Full PPE- sterilised instruments -  
insured & DBS checked**

**Kate Reid MCFHP MAFHP  
07952127534**

[kate@nurturefootcare.co.uk](mailto:kate@nurturefootcare.co.uk)



# COWLEY FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TREES 2021

## Shine a light

When you read this, we will be preparing to welcome groups and families to set up their trees, ready for our opening Reception of Friday 10 December, 5:30 pm and then public opening.



There are a series of 'satellites' for the festival - at Flo's – the Place in the Park, Oxford City Farm, Florence Park Community Centre, Restore, Grace Church, Wilkins Road shops, Ark-T, the Oxford Factory and Templars Square with a banner saying 'Cowley festival of Christmas trees is here and at St James Church, Beauchamp Lane'. On the 10-clue trail, can be found a 'bauble' can be found with a character from the Christmas story – with answers brought back to the 'home' festival at St James.

Wednesday 15 December 7.00-8.30 pm

A free harmony singing workshop 'Shine in the dark' with Emily Marshall. Come to sing or just listen – with refreshments.

Thursday 16 December 7.00-8.30

A free mini-concert with Rising Voices – with refreshments

Friday 17 December 7.30-9.30 pm

Jubilee Brass and Doug Loveridge - 'Light up Cowley'

£10 – tickets available from Lesley Williams and on EventBrite

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/light-up-cowley-with-jubilee-brass-tickets-204100910317>

We'd still like to slip a few more trees into the church – just bring one along, however small.

THANKS to Thembi Hall, who has been advertising for us on social media.

Please sign up to a set up and/or steward duty slot during the festival opening times - we need lots of help! Also for putting up (Thursday 9 and Friday 10 December) and taking down (Monday 20 and Tuesday 21 December) all the banners and direction arrows around the area.

## STARS TO LIGHT UP COWLEY

A new project! Calling all who knit, crochet, sew, felt – please get to work immediately to create small (5-8 cm) stars to attach to one of our Cowley festival of Christmas tree invitation cards and leave on trees, bushes, fences, gates, benches around the area – before and during the festival. You can do that yourself or leave them at church for us to deliver, to spread the light around Cowley.

We have knitting and crochet patterns available if you need one. THANK YOU!

Lesley Williams 01865 779 562 07982 439 828 [ctf@cowleyteamministry.co.uk](mailto:ctf@cowleyteamministry.co.uk)

# A WARTIME CHILDHOOD

(Part 15)

From about the middle of November onwards, speculation and excitement grew concerning the school Christmas party. I learned that it would be held in the village hut on the following Saturday after we had broken up for the Christmas holidays. The older children in school filled me in with the details.

There would be decorations which we would make (the school did not have Christmas decorations) and these would consist mainly of paper chains, made from strings of any old scrap paper we could get hold of. There would be a party tea with party games and school prizes for children who had done their best work throughout the year.

As a little five-year-old this all had to be relayed to my mummy who thought it imperative for me to have a new party dress. She, of course, would make it but where were enough clothing coupons to buy the material? It was a real problem. To my eternal gratitude, she removed the silk lining of her best pre-war coat and used it to produce a pretty little silk dress for me to wear to the party.

At last, the great day arrived and we flocked into the hut in anticipation to find our paper chains festooned across the ceiling. Big trestle tables were laid out down the room with piles of sandwiches and cakes on them. The ladies of the village had saved up their points from their ration books to make the cakes for us, though being a country village, there were always plenty of eggs. However, by way of variation, there were also fish paste or jam sandwiches as well!

Having been relieved of our coats we were seated at the tables. Then, after the vicar had said grace, we tucked in. Tea was the main

drink but I think I remember watery orange juice being the alternative.

The ladies of the village, including our head teacher, stood behind our chairs and helped to serve us. I do remember some scathing comments about some children's table manners. Mind you the way some of the older boys grabbed at the food and stuffed it into their mouths not only shocked those ladies but also this little five-year-old, who had been rigorously taught how to behave at table.

Once tea was over, the tables were cleared and pushed back against the walls and it was time for party games. Musical chairs was a bit of a riot because the big boys (10 and 11 year-olds) always pushed in front of the little ones to bag a chair. One local farmer's wife brought her wind-up gramophone with a record of Sousa's marches for the music. I only have to hear 'The Stars and Stripes Forever' even today and it takes me right back to those school parties. Another game we played was 'Spin the Trencher', (the trencher in fact was an old breadboard). Basically, someone stood in the middle of a circle of children who were seated on chairs and spun the trencher on its side and called out someone's name. The person whose name was thus called then had to jump up and catch the trencher before it fell to the floor. If it did fall to the floor that person had to pay a penalty, such as to recite the alphabet backwards, stand on one leg and sing 'God Save the King', or quote the 9 times table backwards. *I sat in terror*, because at five years old I'd only just begun to learn my 9 times table *forwards!*

'Squeak, Piggy Squeak!' was much less of a

challenge. Somebody would be blindfolded and have to stand in the middle of the ring. They then would be twisted round three times and have to grope their way round to someone else in the ring and sit on their lap. Then that person had to disguise their voice with a strange squeak. If they were identified, *they* then became the person to stand blindfolded in the middle of the circle. If they were not identified, then the original guesser had to keep on going. I became quite good at this.

The games went on until it was time for the prizes to be given out. The infants didn't get a prize, only the older children, but as the years went on and I moved up into the junior class, I was successful on one or two occasions. The party broke up with a couple of carols, especially 'Away in a Manger'. After that, mums and dads would be allowed in to collect their children and then for us, Christmas could begin.

Rosanne Butler

---

## CHRISTMAS QUIZ

For your Christmas Quiz this year we thought we would test your knowledge on the county of Oxfordshire. Try these questions out on your visitors over the holiday season when you've run out of cracker jokes and party games.

1. Oxford is the meeting place of two rivers. Which are they?
2. Sir Christopher Wren is buried here.
3. Where can you see Einstein's blackboard?
4. Surely the most extraordinary stained-glass window in the county – it features Christ's family tree starting with Jesse. Where is it?
5. A ghostly ruined manor house in the Windrush Valley.
6. Name the Roman road which crosses Oxfordshire east to west.
7. An enchanting riverside shrine to the Arts and Crafts Movement.
8. It is the first purpose-built concert venue in England, opened in 1748.
9. What are known as the 'Whispering Knights' and the 'King's Men'?
10. C. S. Lewis and his chums met here. Locals call it the 'Bird and Babe'.
11. Alexander Pope, the great poet, completed his verse translation of Homer's 'Iliad' in Pope's Tower. Where is it?
12. Jerome K. Jerome, author of 'Three Men in a Boat' is buried in an Oxfordshire Churchyard. Which one?
13. The site of Britain's largest operational RAF base?
14. The name of Henley's world-famous rowing club?
15. Where did Oxford's fine Ashlar stone (used for building) come from?

(See answers elsewhere in The Chronicle)

# Star knitting pattern

(crochet pattern will be in church)

## Materials

Use any suitable yarn that suggests stars/starlight.

If you have 4ply, use size 10 (3¼) needles, or DK use size 8 (4) needles

Sewing needle



## Instructions

Cast on 2 stitches, and K 2 rows

Row 3: K1, M1, K1 (3sts)      *M = Make a stitch*

Row 4 and 5: K

Row 6: K1, K1fb, K1 (4 sts)      *Kfb = Knit into the front and back of the stitch (inc 1 stitch)*

Row 7: K

Row 8: K2, M1, K2 (5 sts)

Row 9: K

Row 10: K2, K1fb, K2 (6 sts) leave about 3 inch tail, cut yarn

These 10 rows form one star point. Leave on one needle and knit another 4 (you need 5 altogether). You should end up with all 5 star-points on the one needle, then :

To form centre of star

K across all 5 points (30 sts)

Next row: (K1, K2tog) to end of row (20 sts left)

K1 row

Next row: K2tog to end of row (10 sts left)

K1 row

Thread yarn through remaining sts and draw up, fasten off and sew side seam of star.

Sew in the loose ends, leaving one as a hanging thread to attach a Christmas Tree Festival postcard to.

Leave around your neighbourhood on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December or over the following few days, suspended on trees, bushes, gates, railings, fences etc

OR give to Lesley, Mary or Jill. Thank you so much.

# Hunkering down

At the end of a year it is time to look back at achievements, mistakes, highs and lows and to think how things could have been done better and to look forward to the future.

Our home has seen lots of mishaps. Storm Dennis ripped all the ridge tiles from one corner of our roof in February, then the oven went bang and had to be replaced. The boiler gave up the ghost so it was cold showers for a week or two before British Gas could come out. Luckily it was summer! We have had a plumber to fix the overflow on a toilet and another to replace dripping taps and a repair person to change the thermostat on the fridge as it froze everything. We hope that nothing else goes wrong in 2022.

In the garden, the borders have gone into winter mode. Most of the annuals are now dead and blackened from frost and perennials are looking tired. Leaves have fallen off trees and shrubs and I must get out and gather some up for composting. The leaves on our beech hedge, at the front of our house, are still holding on and are a gorgeous gold colour. They will drop later on in winter. The berries on our small cotoneaster tree have long since gone. Taken, this year, by wood pigeons rather than the usual blackbirds. The bird feeders are now getting busy again.

The greenhouse, though unheated, is

sheltering pots of geraniums, begonias, agapanthus, fuchsias and other tender things. I also have seedlings growing from seeds sown in the autumn of cerinthe and sweet peas. Other seedlings, like foxgloves, are able to stay outside during winter in a sheltered spot joining plants I have potted up of border perennials. All these are in preparation for the Plant Sale 2022!

The Plant Sale this year was a great success. We raised over £1,000.00 for the Flush Fund and we will definitely hold the sale outside next year using this year's format, devised because of Covid.

Our allotment is looking sad, with a bonfire heap awaiting dry times and lots of annual weed cover. Happily, the Other Half has started some winter digging and we shall plan for next year, which will probably be our last. We had great crops of beans and peas this year but our potato yield was lower than usual because of the dry spring and our raspberries were not as bountiful too. Had some great beetroot and parsnips, though.

But soon, as the year turns, I shall be firing up my propagators and will be seed sowing again, though I shall have to get in some more compost first!

Joan Coleman

# JOHN SHREEVE'S ARTICLES FROM THE PAST

## WISE MEN OR KINGS?

February 2012

Our Christmas Carols are full of them, tall elegant figures in full dress regalia, complete with gold crowns, seated astride equally tall camels, moving purposefully across the desert following the star. In denial of the fact that no self-respecting monarch would have risked presenting such an obvious temptation to the ruthless brigands that abounded in those troubled times. Nor would they have been happy to have exposed expensive Royal costumes to the rigours of a long sweaty journey in hot temperatures in dusty desert conditions.

More to the point, they wrongly assume that these Kings arrived at the Bethlehem stable at an early stage, viz. shortly after the visit of the shepherds. Whereas, all the experts are now convinced that it was considerably later, probably by as much as two years.

Matthew, whose Gospel is the only one to recount this fascinating tale, is irritatingly vague on a number of points, and we have no documentary backup of any sort to substantiate his story. He does, however, firmly state that the travellers were 'Wise Men' who came from the East. The Jews were always convinced that deep learning and philosophy originated in the East. He gives no clues as to exactly where they come from, nor does he state how many there were, or indeed whether they had any sort of escorts travelling with them, which might have been a wise precaution given that they were supposed to be rich.

It is thought that with their keen interest in the stars they might have been Astrologers by profession. Astrologers were much sought after in Royal courts in those days. Few Kings

would make a major decision without consulting their resident astrologers.

However, it is interesting to note that within 400 years of this story being told, the 'Wise Men' had assumed the status of Kings, were firmly established as three in number, and had been given the names Gaspar, Melchior and Balthazar. Paintings and Mosaics, e.g. the Ravenna Mosaics in Italy, always depict them in the same way. Gaspar who takes the lead is shown as a dignified elderly man with a beard, followed by Melchior as a tall thin young man of Middle Eastern appearance. Balthazar is quite different from the other two being short and stocky with a black complexion, obviously African in origin.

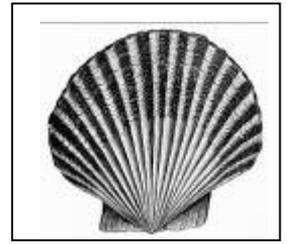
Exactly how and when these changes occurred we have no means of telling. However, this image seems to have persisted down the ages, and some countries in Europe celebrate these famous travellers by dressing up in costume or putting up the initials C.M.B. above the lintels of their houses.

The star that they followed must have certainly been a comet to have moved across the sky in a certain direction, long enough to act as a guide to these doughty explorers. The Chinese, who kept very early records of such things, have a note of one that appeared more or less exactly the time Matthew was writing about.

The gifts that were given to Jesus were certainly expensive and two of them, Frankincense and Myrrh, had great religious significance. The 'Wise Men' who presented them will always fascinate us, and we will always admire their persistence and strength of character.

John Shreeve

**CAMINO to Santiago de Compostela, Galicia –  
The Way of St James  
2-9 October 2021 - with and for Traidcraft Exchange  
Lesley Williams**



This is the final mention of this particular challenge.... before a new one in 2022.

**Fundraising**

My 250.50 mile walking during April 2021 raised an amazing £1,375, and with some other donations, I transferred £1,875 to Traidcraft Exchange at that time, which hit the requested target for the project, as I had paid my own transport and cost of living fees.

I'm hoping to top it up to £2,500 so there is an on-line giving page, with GoFundMe, with a aim of receiving £750, which will of course overtake my overall target figure but there are GoFundMe system fees to deduct. Although there is also gift aid to add! As at 30 November 2021, there is £415 on this page so I am well over £2,000.

If you don't like on-line giving, I'm happy to accept the cash and I'll pay it in.

**THANK YOU!**

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/traidcraft-exchange-camino-de-compostela>



---

## **Anti-Slavery Initiative Oxford (ASIOX)**

On 11 November Jill Ling and I went to Flo's Cafe in Florence Park to help wrap Christmas presents for the victims of ASIOX. We were the first to arrive at 7.30pm except for the organisers and by 7.45pm the cafe was buzzing with activity. Many people came in laden with bags full of presents waiting to be wrapped.

We were welcomed with refreshments which had been provided by a firm supporting ASIOX and cakes supplied by 'Happy Cakes'.

We sat at long tables designated to gifts for female, male, children and sundry items and wrapped away until 10pm. At the beginning, each gift bag contained 5 gifts but as there were so many this was increased to 6 in each bag. By the end of our time there, 70 bags had been filled with 6 gifts in each.

It was a very memorable evening with so much generosity and kindness being shown. We hope these gifts will show that all the victims of abuse who are receiving these bags are loved and remembered.

Chris Woodman

# When out of poverty is born



By singing together this Christmas, your church can remember those facing poverty and the climate crisis, and stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers around the world.

## When out of poverty is born

When out of poverty is born  
a dream that will not die  
a landless, weary folk find strength  
to stand with heads held high,  
it's then we learn from those who wait  
to greet the promised day:  
'The Lord is coming; don't lose heart  
Be blest: prepare the way!'

When people wander far from God,  
forget to share their bread,  
they find their wealth an empty thing,  
their spirits are not fed.  
For only just and tender love  
the hungry soul will stay.  
And so God's prophets echo still:  
'Be blest: prepare the way!'

When God took flesh and came to earth,  
the world turned upside down,  
and in the strength of women's faith  
the Word of Life was born.  
She knew that God would raise the low,  
it pleased her to obey.  
Rejoice with Mary in the call:  
'Be blest: prepare the way!'

Words: Kathy Galloway, provided with permission  
Suggested tune: Kingsfold

Find more resources including a video of  
this carol at [caid.org.uk/christmas](http://caid.org.uk/christmas)

