

## SAMARITAN'S PURSE – OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

<https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/>

Yes, we are collecting gift shoe-boxes again this year and have until the first week of December. As we have no pre-printed boxes, please wrap a real shoe box and follow the instructions from the leaflet, which is available on line or from Lesley Williams.

OR give a few of the items and we will make up some Parish boxes

OR there's the offer to do it all on line : for £20 which includes the £5 transport contribution, you choose gender, age and gifts <https://shoebonline.samaritans-purse.org.uk/step/1>

Let Lesley Williams know if/how you wish to participate - she can collect from you by Tuesday 8 December & will deliver our contributions to Didcot when the centre there opens.

[lesleyjwilliams@btinternet.com](mailto:lesleyjwilliams@btinternet.com) 07982 439 828 01865 779 562



The advertisement features a young child smiling while holding a green shoebox. To the right, a green panel contains the Samaritan's Purse logo and the text 'BUILD A SHOEBOX ONLINE'. Below this, it says 'Bless a Child in Need in Just a Few Easy Clicks'. At the bottom, there is a red bar with the website 'SHOEBOXONLINE.ORG.UK' and the Samaritan's Purse International Relief logo.



The advertisement for Shaun Guard TV Aerial Services features a background image of a TV aerial against a blue sky. The text includes the company name 'Shaun Guard TV AERIAL SERVICES' and a list of 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)', and 'Sky TV - also foreign language satellites'. The logo for 'OXFORD AERIALS' is at the bottom, along with the website 'www.oxfordaerials.co.uk' and the phone number 'Call Oxford 01865 400141'.

Claire Ewers


### APPLEBY VINTAGE DESIGNS

Interior Design & Decoration  
Bespoke Handmade Soft Furnishings & Unique Home Décor

City & Guilds Qualified & Award Winning Decorator  
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Email: [applebyvintage@icloud.com](mailto:applebyvintage@icloud.com)



Neighbourhood Watch  
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## SUSPICIONS



From: Maggie Lewis (NWN, Multi Scheme Administrator, Thames Valley, Oxford LPA)

I have been told that it may be difficult to report suspicious activity on the main reporting line. This link will make it easier for direct reporting of suspicions and you will get an acknowledgement to your report. <https://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about>

Non-emergency:

Online (if available with the local force in charge)

Search by location to find out which force's jurisdiction it falls into.

By Phone – 101

Report online or call 101 if you want to report a minor crime or incident, such as:

- a stolen item
- property damage
- a civil dispute
- if you suspect drug use or dealing in your neighbourhood
- to share information about possible criminal activity in your area
- antisocial behaviour
- Non-urgent enquiries

Emergency - By Phone – 999.

Call 999 if:

- a serious offence is in progress or has just happened
- someone is in immediate danger of harm
- property is in danger of being damaged
- a serious disruption to the public is likely

Your call should be answered within ten seconds. A trained member of staff will ask you what happened and where you are. They may ask you if you need any other emergency services, such as an ambulance.

If you're deaf or hard of hearing, use the textphone service on 18000.

Anti-Terrorist Hotline - 0800 789 321

Call the UK Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321 or report online if you've seen or heard something you think could suggest terrorist activity.

Report crime anonymously to Crimestoppers:

Online: [crimestoppers-uk.org](http://crimestoppers-uk.org)

By phone - 0800 555 111

If you want to report a crime, but you don't want to identify yourself, contact Crimestoppers. They'll ask questions about the crime but won't ask about you. If you're concerned your call could be traced, dial 141 before 0800 555 111, this will block your phone number.

0800 numbers are free from a landline and don't show up on BT or cable phone bills.

Report fraud and cyber-crime to Action Fraud

Online - [actionfraud.police.uk](http://actionfraud.police.uk)

By phone - 0300 123 2040

If you've been the victim of a fraud, online fraud, cyber-crime or you suspect one is being attempted, report it to Action Fraud.

Action Fraud is the UK's national fraud and cyber-crime reporting centre.

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## QUIZ

Rosanne has missed being the parish quizmaster this year so she has compiled a Christmas quiz for The Chronicle to compensate!

1.	Who is said to have introduced the traditional Christmas tree to Britain?
2.	Before "The Night Before Christmas" poem dressed him in red, what colour clothes did Santa Clause (St Nicholas) wear?
3.	When is the "Feast of Stephen"?
4.	Which local group of people traditionally perform an ancient mummers' play each Boxing Day?
5.	How long, in the Middle Ages, was the yule log expected to burn?
6.	"Oh what a laugh it would have been if Daddy had only seen ...." Are the words from which Christmas song?
7.	St Nicholas is the patron saint of children and which other people?
8.	Tiny Tim in Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' said "God bless us every one". So to what family did he belong?
9.	Why is Boxing Day so called?
10.	How many wise men visited the infant Jesus?
11.	What is the botanical name for the Christmas rose?
12.	In which Oxford College is the Boar's Head Carol sung?
13.	In ancient times on 12 <sup>th</sup> night which member of the family was crowned the "Lord of Misrule"?
14.	Where do the Royal Family traditionally spend Christmas: (a) Balmoral (b) Buckingham Palace (c) Sandringham (d) Windsor Castle?
15.	The Romans celebrated a mid-winter festival around the darkest time of the year. What was it called?

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Cowley Rainbows and 2<sup>nd</sup> Cowley Brownies

Both Rainbows and Brownies had to stop meeting back in March. At first we kept in contact by email but soon moved to Zoom meetings which have been enjoyed by all. We took part in some virtual sleepovers and continued to earn badges.

In the summer we were able to start meeting outside which was a welcome chance to catch up with everyone. We met with one group outside and the other on zoom one week, then swapped the following week. The recent lockdown meant meeting had to stop again but we just went back to Zoom. These meetings will continue till Christmas with the hope (and fingers crossed) that we can start meeting again in the New Year.

Abi Reynolds

## 5<sup>th</sup> Cowley Guides

It has been a tough year for guides, as it has been for many people. Due to Covid-19 we did not meet between March and September, we did manage to meet in October, with social distancing and extra cleaning procedures and started working towards a badge before the second lockdown. During this lockdown we set the girls tasks they can do at home, one of which was to make a poppy pinwheel for Remembrance Sunday. Sadly some of our guides have left and we are now quite a small company, we would love for some more girls to join us. Guides is open to all girls aged 10-14, for more information go to <https://www.girlguiding.org.uk/what-we-do/guides-10-14/>. We look forward to meeting again with the guides when we can.

Becky, Sofie and Amy

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Cowley Brownies

Thank goodness for technology. And brown paper bags.

Both have been in full use over the last few months with the Brownies unable to meet at St. Francis Church Hall as usual.

We have taken things round to the girls and used WhatsApp extensively to share programme activities and ideas. Families kindly collected their At Home pack after half term (in those brown paper bags) which was a great help although there are one or two families who unfortunately have decided remote guiding isn't really for them. We're very aware that everyone is under so much pressure at the moment and hope that keeping some Guiding going is helping some of the families and girls to try different challenges and most of all to have fun.

The girls have done brilliantly, completing badges, making flamingos and owls, kiteflying, rainbow windows, baking, painting remembrance poppy stones; contacting MPs during Parliament Week and even managing virtual sleepovers and festivals, thanks to Girlguiding. The regional and national get togethers have helped the girls see that they are still part of an active network and many of them have enjoyed "sleepouts" in their garden or in makeshift tents indoors. There's a YouTube Panto coming up (Oh yes it is!) We're due to try making microwave mug cakes soon – fingers crossed that goes to plan!

We did manage a few outdoor meetings, thanks to the loan of Scout grounds, before the resumption of lockdown and following very strict Girlguiding guidelines. We only managed a few

but it was wonderful to see them all again, despite the rain. They certainly didn't mind it; hula hoops in pouring rain was full of laughter.

Some of them did magnificently during Children in Need week, rising to the Act Your Age challenge and walking their age in miles, devising their own workouts and generally having fun. Most of all, they raised over £300.00 in sponsorship!

We're so hoping we will be able to re-start meetings eventually. But most of all we hope the Brownies and their families will stay safe until we can see them again.

Hilary & Mandy, Guiders and Izzy, Young Leader

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## The History of Emmaus

The first Emmaus community was founded in 1949 by the Abbé Pierre, Father Henri-Antoine Groues, a former member of the French Resistance. As an MP, he fought to provide homes for those living on the streets of Paris. One night, Georges, a homeless man, tried to commit suicide in the Seine. He had been released after 20 years in prison and found his family unable to cope with his reappearance.

When he was brought to the Abbé Pierre, he was not just offered a place to sleep. The Abbé told Georges about the homeless mothers who needed help. Would he join in his mission to help them? Georges became the first Emmaus Companion. He helped build temporary homes for those in need, first in the priest's own garden, and then wherever land could be obtained. Later Georges said, "Whatever else he might have given me, I'd still have tried to kill myself. What I was missing was something to live for."

In 1951 Abbé Pierre resigned as an MP to devote himself to fighting poverty and homelessness. Without his salary to pay for the 18 men of the community, the former MP put on his cassock and medals and toured the restaurants of Paris, asking for donations. But the Companions were outraged. They said that begging compromised their self-respect. So, to raise the money needed, they collected things people no longer needed and sold them on. The concept was born: Companions who run self-supporting businesses, with the profits going to those in greater need.

In the brutal winter of 1954, angered by needless deaths, Abbé Pierre appealed to the nation. The public responded and support flooded in. Across France, Emmaus communities opened. As the Abbé spread the word, communities were established in Europe, Africa, the Far East, and South America.

In 1990 the UK's first Emmaus Community opened near Cambridge. They continue to be established here, based on the founding principles of acceptance, sharing, self-respect, and working for others in greater need.

As Richard Chand left us last month to become Priest in Charge of St Paul's Parish in Braintree, Essex., we thought that this article prepared by Rosanne was very appropriate.

#### ROSANNE INTERVIEWS

(Originally Published Nov 2009)

#### RICHARD CHAND

Were you amongst the congregation in St. James' a few weeks ago for Richard's induction service? If so, I am sure that like me, you could not fail to be moved by the complimentary remarks from the pulpit about his tenacity on his journey towards ordination. The warm welcome extended to him by Bishop John was moving too. But most of all I got the impression at the reception after the service that Richard, his wife Rebecca, their family and friends certainly know how to party. In fact he told me that one of his favourite leisure pursuits is partying! What makes me think that he is going to fit into our parish like a hand in a glove?

It is some years now that I interviewed Reverend Wazir Chand, Richard's father, and so I felt very privileged to sit in the lounge of Moore House (the pretty house next to the Church Centre) and chat to his son on your behalf.

Richard was born in the Punjab area of India and lived there with his mother and two sisters until he was three. He told me he remembers nothing of those early years and in fact, his earliest memories are of his mum, Joyce, bringing the family to England to join her husband in Birmingham where he held a teaching post. Richard speaks enthusiastically about his childhood in the Handsworth area of Birmingham. They were very happy years with great friends, good schools and a secure Christian family life. He told me, with a grin, that as a small boy, he was "a bit of a handful." However, most of his teachers were nice personalities and knew how to cope with him.

From a very early age he has been mad on all sports, especially cricket, and football, and nowadays will watch any sport on television except for horse-racing. He remembers Handsworth, as a quiet area where little boys could kick a ball around or set up a cricket pitch in the street. By secondary school days he had settled down a little and developed a love of history and geography. He "grew into" science but when I enquired about maths, his answer was, "Oh, no!"

While he was a student at Handsworth Secondary School his father was invited to come to Oxford to teach. The family moved to Cowley, leaving Richard behind with his grandmother in order for him to complete his GCSE exams. At seventeen, by now living with his parents, he decided to begin a career rather than join a sixth form class in Oxford. After several interviews, which resulted in offers of various posts, he plumped for the Post Office, and has been working for them ever since. He recently received recognition of thirty years' service and now holds a position of supervisor in the Central Post Office in Oxford where he works part-time. The rest of the week he works as a member of our clergy team.

After leaving school, he continued his studies at evening classes taking more GCSE exams in several subjects, gaining a BTEC in business studies and qualifying as a certified accountant. He also developed a strong interest in world affairs. He is arguably the BBC World Service's most avid listener.



He met Rebecca at a party in London and told me that they both knew almost immediately that it was the “real thing”. Their early days together were not easy because in order to marry, she would have to convert from her Hindu faith. She was living with her sister who quickly realised that the two were in love. So it was Rebecca’s sister who negotiated with their family back in India. The situation was apparently smoothly resolved, Father Wazir instructed her in the Christian faith and Richard’s lovely bride was, in fact, confirmed into the Church of England on their wedding day. Richard is the proud father of two teenagers, Daniel, who is a student at Cheney School in Headington, and Elizabeth, who is reading Business Studies at De Montfort University in Leicester. So was his vocation to the ministry influenced by his father? Not so. He told me of the dramatic moment when he knew God was calling. It came in a dream in which he saw a flaming cross with a figure standing nearby. He heard a powerful voice saying, “I need you. I need you.” The same dream has recurred several times since. Following what he described as a “lean time” spiritually, it had a huge impact. He spoke to our curate at that time, Fr. Simon Grigg, who gave him great encouragement, but it was Fr. Ian Knowles who took him under his wing. He was confirmed in SS Mary and John Church. Fr. Kieth Hayden helped by organising short preparatory courses of study which led to a certificate in Theology. After a period as a licensed lay minister at St. Mary’s Church in Barton, he began his studies leading to ordination. Rebecca gave him complete support throughout. He completed his course at Ripon College. In 2005 Bishop Richard Harries commissioned him to lead the Asian Christian Church in Oxford, and finally he was ordained in 2006.

He began his ministry in Barton and now here he is on the Cowley parish team. He leads his Asian flock in worship at the United Reform Church at the moment but is in the process of transferring them to integrate with St. James’. He plans a weekly Sunday service for them at 1.00pm in the parish church. I asked him if there was anything else he would like our readers to know about him and this is what he said: “Tell them that since that very first dream, my ministry comes from my heart.”

How would you describe yourself as a child?

Very active and cheeky.

Is there an incident in your childhood that you will never forget?

We played cricket in the road. One day my best friend and I were playing and I hit the ball and it went through someone’s window. We scarpered! In the holidays when the school grounds were locked, we used to climb over the fence to play football.

Has God been part of your life since childhood?

Oh yes. Due to my father’s and mother’s faith. Our roots are in St. James’ Church, in Handsworth.

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

When I met Rebecca.

Are there any aspects of modern life that disappoint you?

School Assemblies. The children’s day needs a good start. It unifies the school in one act of worship.

What makes life good for you?

The Lord's hand in my family's and my ministry. I feel we still need to sort out the "pick and mix" culture in our society – taking what suits you and forgetting what doesn't.

What do you enjoy doing in your leisure time?

Watching films with the family. I love to watch sport on TV – also news, current affairs – also visiting friends, and especially parties.

Do you have a treasured possession?

Apart from my mobile, my old radio.

If you were not doing what you are doing now, what would you choose?

I would like to live in a bungalow in the country with Rebecca.

Looking to the future, what do you hope to be doing in ten years' time?

I want to leave the Asian Church in good vibrant shape. My successor could take a strong active church.

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## MOTHERS' UNION NEWS

Because there has been no Mothers' Union News in The Chronicle for many months, telling you all about the interesting and active things we get up to, I would not like you, dear reader, to get the impression that we have locked down completely during this extraordinary year. Not a bit of it!

Many people who are locked up in prison over Christmas often have nothing to put in their cells to mark the occasion. So the Mothers' Union have for several years now run a scheme in which members have sent individual Christmas cards to be given to prisoners as a token of goodwill. We, in the Cowley branch, have embraced the idea and recently wrote and sent over one hundred cards to give a little cheer to those who need it most.

Our other big project, linked in with the Mothers' Union philosophy of "caring for families", is the regular supply of cot blankets and little garments for our wonderful special baby unit at the John Radcliffe Hospital. Well, I have to tell you (and at the same time give a huge vote of thanks to the knitters) that over the last months 28 beautiful cot blankets have been put in my care along with a large collection of the sweetest, softest tiny jackets and caps to send to the premature baby unit. Because of the wretched virus they are not allowed to take delivery of them so until the vaccine is proven to be successful I shall take them into my care.

On a sadder note I wish to pass on to the family of Cynthia Retter our love and sympathy at her loss (and that includes the big family of guides who loved her). We at Mothers' Union have lost a dear friend and a much valued member of our branch.

Rosanne Butler



# Update on ReFresh and Seashells and Little Stars

My first comment is Thank you God for technology. Throughout the recent months, most of those who have been at ReFresh have been able to connect with one another through What's App. For those who don't know about it, we have formed a group where only those who are part of the group can see the messages. Anyone who sends a message communicates with all the group and everyone can see it and that helps us all to see how we are all doing and what to pray about. Many of the group contact each other separately and keep an eye out for others. In the summer we tried meeting outside at the park but that wasn't always practical for those with children. This season now is extremely hard for many of us as finding a moment to pick up the phone and chat isn't always possible with little ones to look after and the weather is not good for outside chats!!

In recent months we have moved to meeting regularly via Zoom, so we can see each other and that means we can see a smiling face and if a parent needs to look after their child for some time so we can take notice of that. Despite all the distractions we have had some good discussions on Suffering, Why? Spiritual MOT, God and the Pandemic and How to make the most of the next 6 months. We have watched speakers talking on some of these topics and read books, before the meetings. Not easy things to discuss and no easy answers. At the end of each meeting everyone is asked for something they would want praying for and we pray as time permits - zoom meetings are 40 minutes long. On top of this, we can share things that are going in different peoples' lives and we can be honest about how we feel. Despite not being able to meet face to face in person which we had thought we might in October, it is hoped this

group offers a safe place to be yourself, where others can pray for you and care about you. If you wish to join us please do ask. At present we are meeting on Thursday mornings at 10am.

Again, we had hoped to open up for a very limited number of Seashells' and then Little Stars' attendees. BUT Lockdown 2 came. As we hadn't started, we thought we might try Zoom singing and bible story time on Monday and Tuesday mornings at 10am. We have had up to 9 adults and 13 children joining in at home with the singing and actions. If you have tried singing on zoom, it doesn't work well, so everyone is muted and you sing on your own to the music or for some songs, Mary.....solo.....AHHHH!! Hopefully it has been helpful to families to have something to do on a bleak morning when going out or staying out after the school drop off isn't what you want to do.

Now, we are considering a new venture to start Seashells again but as of today, I am awaiting confirmation from the Diocesan Advisor as to how many adults/children we can have before sending out invitations. My constant reminder is that we may have shifting sands around us but we can choose to stand on the rock, Jesus, and He will help us. There is always hope for a good day each day and it is OK if plans are changed. If we feel locked down, we can choose what sort of prisoner we are: we can be a prisoner of Hope. So do we know what these groups will look like over the next months? No! but God does and he will reveal what we need to do as and when we need to do! Listening to Him and allowing the Holy Spirit to work through us, seem to me a good way forward.

Mary Bayliss

# 2020 - my life with the Pandemic



like many of us went into the year 2020 thinking "this is going to be my year"! After all, 2019 ended amazingly - I met one of my favourite singers, started to adapt to Uni life and made new friends. I had so many things planned for 2020, I would see the Harry Potter play live with my mum in March, would travel loads with friends and would go to many concerts. I was so excited. The year went off to a good start. I finished my first semester of Uni in February having done much better than anticipated. As a reward I made a short trip to London to meet up with a few friends and go to a concert together. That was mid-February. At this point COVID-19 was already talked about in Europe but it wasn't seen as a huge threat. Looking back on this trip I am more than glad I went - it was the last time I saw many of my closest friends who are scattered all over Europe. Fast forward a month to mid-march, COVID-19 hit Germany. I was about to head on my second trip of the year to Berlin and from there straight to Amsterdam and Rotterdam visiting some friends. The first "lockdown" hit mid trip making me cut it short. A friend and I went to Berlin on the 12<sup>th</sup> March staying

I there for only one day before heading to the Netherlands to visit a friend one last time. But even during that trip we didn't really go out we just stayed inside before heading home on the 15<sup>th</sup>. Shops in Germany closed on the 16<sup>th</sup> so I just made it back in time before the "lockdown". The reason I have Lockdown in quotation marks is that Germany never had a lockdown as such, sure shops (except supermarkets or drugstores) were shut and we weren't allowed to meet other people but we were allowed to go out as much as we wanted.

Uni only started after Easter so I had a whole month of free time, I think my room was never more organised than in this time and I did more DIY in one month than the last 3 years. When Uni started back up in April, I was actually excited to finally do something again, to not sit around doing nothing but to learn new things and see what online Uni was all about. The excitement lasted about a week. It became clearer and clearer to me that Uni at home was more difficult, your own time management was more crucial than ever and every professor had different techniques and ways to work through the semester. But the thing that was worse for me was that there was no division between my place of relaxation and down time and my place of work. I slept in my room, I did classes in my room, I relaxed in my room, I sometimes ate in my room. And the fact that I couldn't even meet my friends to get rid of some stress made it even worse.

Then at the end of May I turned 21, a birthday I couldn't really celebrate with anyone. So, I made use of newfound technology and did a zoom pub quiz Birthday party. In a way

it was even better I was able to celebrate my birthday with my friends from all over, I had friends from the US, Portugal, the Netherlands, the UK, Greece and of course Germany join the fun trying to figure out if a quote was said by Trump or Shrek.

I spent most of my June and July finalising my second semester writing essays, doing online exams and actual in person exams which made me incredibly nervous. At the beginning of August my family and I went on our annual holiday to the North Sea coast. It was amazing, besides wearing a mask, not eating out as much and keeping extra distance on the beach it almost felt like things were normal. September once again was difficult. One of my closest friends was going abroad for Uni and we did a social distanced farewell party. It was particularly hard because with the situation we didn't know when we'd see each other again, usually I could just visit them in London, with COVID-19 not so much.

Fast forward again to the end of October: Lockdown round 2! I was in Berlin at a friend's house when news about a second

lockdown broke. Again I was happy I still had the opportunity to see her before the lockdown but again I am in the same place as in April doing Uni from home, not able to meet up with friends or even visit parts of my family. It's difficult, I think it is really difficult for all of us. But a friend recently said to me that "it's just a bad day not a bad Life" and I have to agree, this life really isn't that bad when you really look at it.

And with that I wish all of you a merry Christmas!

Fiona



## VOLUNTEERS IN COWLEY WANTED

Coordinators and Members wanted for Road Schemes

The schemes are run by the community and we need YOU

We need volunteers to be coordinators NOW

"YOU can make a difference" Are you a good neighbour?

Do you want to help make your neighbourhood safer?

Do you care about the elderly and vulnerable in your road?

Please join on <http://www.ourwatch.org.uk> or contact

Maggie Lewis on [maggiejewis@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:maggiejewis@yahoo.co.uk)  
for a Registration form



YOU CAN HELP YOUR  
COMMUNITY  
JOIN NOW



You say "Peeping Tom".  
I say highly active member  
of the neighborhood watch.



## A WARTIME CHILDHOOD

I'm afraid I was not a very happy little evacuee. In fact, I think the time my mummy and I spent in that crowded house in Witney was probably the saddest part of my childhood.

To begin with we only had one double bedroom to share (that was all the room the other two couples could spare), instead of our dear little semi-detached home in leafy Surrey. The house was cold with winter coming on, and to my horror, the only toilet was in a shed outside the backdoor instead of our shiny bathroom at home. Even worse was the fact that instead of a lovely big bath for me to play in, I had to stand in a bowl of warm water in front of the kitchen range while mummy sponged me down.

There was no nice back garden with a lawn and flowerbeds in which to play because my uncle and his brother-in-law had turned their back garden into a vegetable patch, responding to the "dig for victory" maxim. I had left behind my swing, my much-loved tricycle, a bedroom full of cuddly toys and books, a big cosy armchair which I shared with my daddy at bedtime-story time and my little playmate Freddy. But worst of all, I didn't have my dear daddy to give me my bedtime kiss.

Mummy did her best but I'm sure that she felt that we were something of an intrusion. She took me to the Palace Cinema to see the Walt Disney film "Pinocchio" and we would go for walks. Bedtime stories were read in our cold bedroom in the double bed I shared with her, but it wasn't the same.

The I got chickenpox. My auntie's mother lived

in a house at the end of a little lane nearby and she had a pen of chickens. I didn't know much about chickens, but I really hated them when I got chickenpox, because I thought it was their fault. Actually I think I was quite ill at the time.

Daddy came down to see us on a couple of weekends, so I slept on a mattress on the bedroom floor. It was lovely to see him, but nothing felt as it should.

We had only been in Witney for a couple of weeks in October 1940 when one evening the sky was full of enemy bombers, wave after wave they came and I remember my mum saying "Oh no! They've followed us from London!" Of course, they flew on over Oxfordshire heading west and I, with the grown-ups in the house, climbed up to the attic where from the windows we could see the autumn sky turning bright red. There was much speculation as to who was being "blitzed". Was it Birmingham, Bristol or maybe Coventry? Well yes, it was Coventry, who that night was completely devastated even (as we know now) losing their beautiful medieval cathedral.

Christmas was approaching and the people of Witney held a big party for the children in the Corn Exchange. My mum thought it would be a treat for me, so in my best dress, clean socks, and a pretty ribbon in my much-brushed curls, off we went. Well, of course, I knew no one there and felt so lonely. I politely ate my tea and then went home, back to our billet.

I don't remember much about that Christmas except that daddy came and joined us for a few days. I do remember that Father Christ-



mas brought me a new rag doll. She was dressed in a pretty, yellow dress with a bonnet to match, so, of course, she had to be called Primrose.

Things seemed very bleak after Christmas – cold, snowy and sad – and then something completely wonderful happened!

Rosanne Butler

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## AN AFFECTIONATE LOOK AT COWLEY THROUGH THE AGES

In response to popular demand this little book has just had its second reprint. Copies can be accessed by contacting Rosanne Butler, the author, either by telephone: 453257 or calling at 18 St Omer Road. The price is still being held at £8 a copy.

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Neighbourhood Watch  
| Join Us



### Do Not Give Burglars A Sneak Preview of Your Gifts This Christmas

From: Emily Boneham (Police, Campaigns Officer, Thames Valley)

As nights draw in and Christmas gets closer, it is really important for everyone to do as much as they can at home this year to ensure that their house is protected and that they are not an attractive target for burglars.

We know that the period following the clocks going back and in the run up to Christmas often sees the number of burglaries start to rise. We will of course be out on patrol, targeting offenders and locations across the Thames Valley, only with COVID restrictions in place some of our traditional crime prevention outreach work has not been possible. Burglary is significantly down on previous reported levels, but we must not be complacent. These figures will no doubt have been impacted by the stringent lockdown measures that have been in force earlier in the year and most recently through the month of November.

You can reduce the risk of becoming a victim of burglary by taking a few simple steps which can find [here](#) or check out our [Home Security Guide](#).

Detective Superintendent Ailsa Kent, the force lead for burglary said: "As Christmas draws ever closer and much of our shopping is done online, it's more important than ever to be protecting your home and belongings from burglars.

"Please make sure items are delivered when you are at home to receive them, or have them delivered to a trusted alternative address. Also be sure to cut up packaging, especially for any expensive items, so that it will fit inside your refuse bin - never leave boxes next to the bin where they can be seen.

"Remember, if you leave your purchases and gifts on display or you're sharing photos of them on social media, potential burglars can also see these. Don't give burglars a sneak preview of your gifts this Christmas!"

## ..but why?

I've often been heard during conversations around faith as referring to myself as a 'part time' Christian. One of the main reasons for this is due to my thinking that because I question my faith so much I must therefore not believe it enough. I've written before about my ponderings of 'Why' over things in life and of course my husband Duncan then always being quick to tell me that God will have a reason and we may not ever find out what that is.

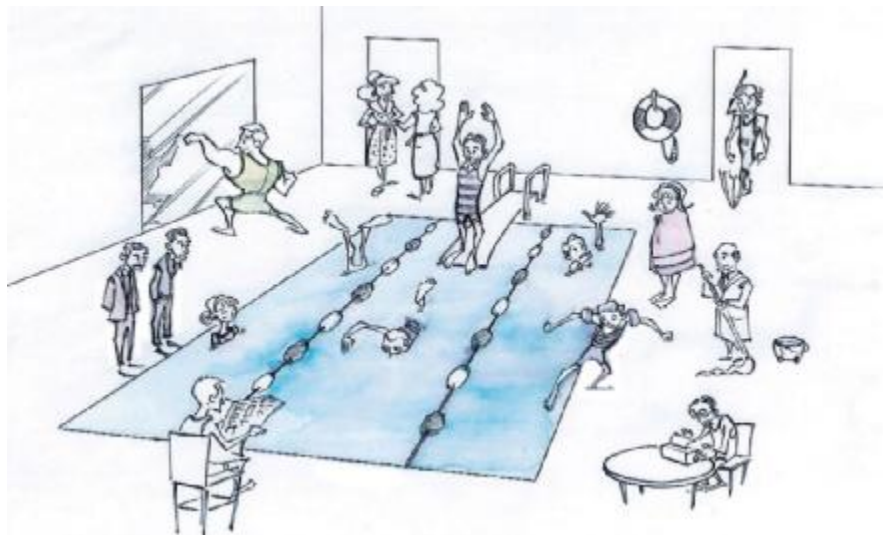
The image below was shown in one of our ReFresh group meetings and I've looked back on it a few times since. You have to choose which person in the picture best resembles you in where you are in your journey of faith. Are you standing at the side, peering quizzically in to this interesting pool of Christianity? Are you ready to jump but unsure of the depth of the pool or whether you are strong enough swimmer? Or are you the one who has jumped right in there, swimming front crawl in the pro-swimmer lane of Christian life telling everyone to 'jump on in, the water's lovely!'

I've looked at the image a few times now and find the person I choose changes quite often. Some days I can feel like I'm standing at the side lines looking in, sometimes dipping in my toe and others bobbing along in the water.

The heartbreaking local news recently of a car accident which ended up taking the lives of 3 out of 4 children in a family, along with their mother, leaving behind the father and their 18 month old child, was something that has really troubled me and left me questioning even more. I found myself crying on my way home from work the night after it had happened with lots of questions of why? Why be so cruel? Why would it not have been kinder to take the whole family together? Would that have been worse for other family and friends? How would the father manage to live his life now and a young child that will be unlikely to have any memories of their family?

My mind will often go on a stampede of 'Why's and 'What if's' and inevitably the more questions I have, the stronger the belief becomes that I must not be a Christian enough.

I've always been 'a worrier' and a big 'what if' kind of person and have been more recently having counselling for mental health problems that have been unwelcome guests overstaying their welcome in my head for the past ten years or so. I've mentioned a few times in my counselling sessions that I should try to 'be more Phoebe'. It would pop up as an idea that when dealing with these horrible thoughts that maybe I should try thinking more like our 4-year old daughter. The childhood innocence of 'oh never mind, Mummy, it will all be ok' and watching her take enjoyment from the simplest things of life is something that always makes me smile.



I was thinking of the 'be more Phoebe' way of life last week when I was slowly recovering from the 'mad hour' that seems to appear at school and pre-school drop off and pick ups when I end up frazzled with the thoughts of have we got everything? Is it PE day? Do they have their lunch and snacks? What day is it? It's more often than not that Phoebe decides that now would be a perfect time for a debate over why are bananas yellow and why can't they be pink? That's not actually a debate we have had, we've had too many to list and I wouldn't be surprised if this popped up on the agenda at some point! The outburst of 'but why Mummy?!' makes a regular appearance in these debates and more often than not, much to her annoyance, I have no answer for her.

It was during this calming down moment that a verse from the bible appeared to me –

*"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever takes the lowly position of this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* Matthew 18: 2-4

How were Phoebe's questions of 'why?' any different to the questions of 'why?' that I was having? Children have many questions in their early lives as they are beginning to understand the world they are living in and although the topics we question later in adulthood are not childlike things, this doesn't mean we should stop questioning.

I began thinking maybe questioning of my faith and why things happen the way they do in life doesn't make me less Christian (or a part time one) at all, maybe I'm just embracing 'being more Phoebe', being more childlike and further down the steps in to that swimming pool after all!

Cara Vivian

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## PARISH WALKS

Parish Walks continued until the start of the second lockdown – picture shows some walkers at Iffley Lock in lovely sunshine.

We hope to continue again – Tier 2 allows groups of six to meet. We are a "weather permitting" group– but we hope to fit in a couple during December. Details will be circulated to those "on the list" and if you would like to have details please contact Sally Hemsworth so that she can "put you on the list!"





## Better Times Ahead

Heavenly Father, we thank you for your wonderful creation. The four seasons which in our country we delight in. At this time of Advent we await in frugal anticipation the anniversary of you sending your Son into our world.

At this time we witness the trees shedding their leaves and the vibrant colours that they give us and afterwards the starkness of the bare trees for a few weeks that in a certain light can look quite menacing. Then, the magical hints of greenery that creep through and finally the bulbs which blossom into such an abundance of colour and beauty. Heavenly Father thank you for the miracle that occurs every year and give us the courage we all need during the winter months.

If we feel a little low let us focus on the spring and let us look forward to another year which will give us hope. Thank you for always walking with us during this difficult time and we pray 2021 will be a very different year to the one which is now coming to an end and we await Christmas with excitement and reverence.

Chris Woodman

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### Answers to Quiz

1. Prince Albert, the German consort of Queen Victoria
  2. Green
  3. 26<sup>th</sup> December
  4. Headington Quarry Morris Men
  5. 13 – from Christmas Even through to Twelfth Night
  6. "I saw Mummy kissing Santa Clause"
  7. Pawnbrokers. The 3 gold balls outside their shops represent the three bags of gold he secretly gave to three poor girls who would have been destined for prostitution.
  8. Cratchet
  9. On the day after Christmas day employees would visit their employers to receive their Christmas gifts (or "box"). It became known as Christmas Boxing Day".
  10. Nobody knows – the Bible doesn't say how many men only 3 gifts.
  11. Helleborus niger
  12. Queens' College (get an extra point if you put the apostrophe in the right place!)
  13. The eldest son who took over the household and could order any food, naughty tricks or bad behaviour he liked for just one day.
  14. Sandringham
  15. Saturnalia
- 

### WEDDING – BROUGHT FORWARD TO MISS THE LOCKDOWN

In the difficult times we are all experiencing in 2020, on the morning of 4th November the sun was shining brightly when I woke, my first thought was "I do hope this sunshine stays like this, for it was a very special day for Toby and Maxine" - yes today was their wedding day, and St James our lovely church was there for this special occasion.

Pat Chambers

# Money, Money, Money!

First, can I thank so many people for their generosity. You are an amazing bunch. So many of you have overcome the challenges of not being able to meet in Church and have continued to give generously supporting our work in building the kingdom of God

Finance Report -

Joan Coleman Treasurer

General Fund

The closing of the churches for four months of 2020, and restrictions on attendance when open, has meant that our weekly cash and envelope collections have been hit. However, individuals who do donate in this way have sent donations in other ways. It has been very heartening. Some have begun direct debits through Parish Giving and there has been no break with those who already do this and with those who donate with bank standing orders. There have been a few donations using the button on the website too! So our income from donations is less but not largely so.

Lettings at St Francis' Church are down, of course, but we did get a government grant of £1,500 to compensate for some of the loss.

This means that we are able to pay our Parish Share in full.

Some of our expenses of the churches have been lower than previous years because of the lack of activity but bills like insurance, fire safety, music licences, churchyard bin emptying continue. Gas and electricity usage will be less but most of the non-usage was in the summertime!

We did have over £20,000 in reserves at the beginning of the year and we hope that we will not eat into that too much by the end of 2020.



## The OXFORD ABSEIL

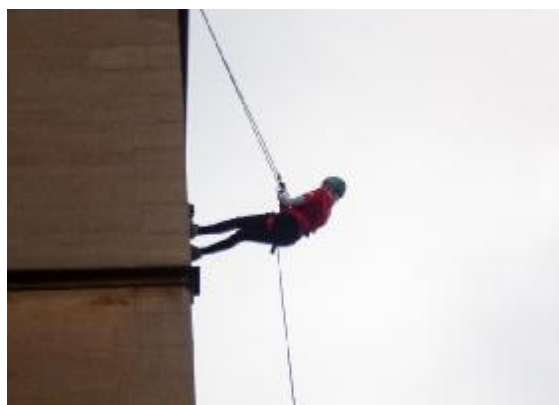
Saturday 17 October 2020

St Mary Magdalen Church (Mary Mags) tower, central Oxford

THANK YOU to everyone who sponsored me – family and friends from far and wide as well as those in the Parish of Cowley – with the truly amazing result, including Gift Aid, of £1,000! With only one Big Brekkie in 2020, a minimal on line Christian Aid Week and no Quiz Aid, that's such a heartening response!

We look forward to the return of our usual Christian Aid events later in 2021

Lesley Williams



## CHURCHES OPENING FOR WORSHIP from 6 December

Holy Communion in one kind only

8.00am St James

9.30am St Francis

11.00am St Francis, St James

## PRIVATE PRAYER IN OUR CHURCHES THIS WEEK

Wednesday 2.00—4.00 St James

**ALL OTHER ACTIVITIES  
SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER  
NOTICE—FACEBOOK DAILY  
PRAYER TAKES PLACE  
MONDAY—SATURDAY 12  
NOON,**

**LOCAL PROGRAMME NOT OPERATING AT MOMENT—  
LOOK OUT FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## SUNDAY SERVICES

### ST JAMES CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00am Holy Communion  
10.00am Sung Eucharist  
1.45pm Anglican Asian Living Church  
Sunday Lunch – the date varies so watch for notices

### ST FRANCIS CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30am Parish Eucharist

## MID-WEEK SERVICES & MEETINGS

Morning Prayer	8.00am	Tue, Thu, Sat at St James; Mon at St Francis
Monday	10.00-11.30am	Little Stars Playgroup— St Francis
	2.30pm	Parish Mothers' Union— St James (3rd Monday)
Tuesday	10.00am	Seashells Toddler Group— St James
	12.00pm	Eucharist—Ranklin Room, St James Church Centre
	12.30pm	Tuesday Lunch Club— St James
Thursday	7.30pm	Local House of Prayer, St James

## HOME GROUPS

Leader	Time/Venue
Friends of St Francis (Katherine Reed)	2nd & 4th Tuesday afternoons at 2.30pm St Francis Church
Geoff Bayliss	Alternate Wednesdays at 10am St James Church Centre, Ranklin Room
Mark Oxbrow	Alternate Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm Mark's home, 13 Annesley Road (just behind the Rose Hill Coop). Enquiries to Mark at 01865 461953
Rosanne Butler	Alternate Thursday mornings at 10.00am St James Church Centre, Ranklin Room

The Parish Office in St James Church Centre is staffed by volunteers and is not covered continually.

Please leave a message and someone will get back to you.

Contact details: Tel: 01865 747680

Email: [office@cowleyteamministry.co.uk](mailto:office@cowleyteamministry.co.uk)

Out of hours tel: 01865 778596

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

### Team Rector:

The Revd Canon Dr Geoffrey Bayliss

Tel: 01865 747680 (o) 01865 778596 (h)

Email: [rector@cowleyteamministry.co.uk](mailto:rector@cowleyteamministry.co.uk)

### Team Curate:

Revd Gemma Beesley

Email: [curate@cowleyteamministry.co.uk](mailto:curate@cowleyteamministry.co.uk)

### Self-supporting Ministers

Revd Canon Mark Oxbrow

01865 461953

Email: [markoxbrow@aol.com](mailto:markoxbrow@aol.com)

### Churchwardens:

Christine Woodman Tel: 778078

St Francis : Nick Dewey

Tel: 07952 524664

### St James Church Centre Manager:

Chris Woodman Tel: 778078

### Hall Bookings:

St James Church Centre, St James Church, St Francis Church: Please contact the Parish Office Tel: 747680

### Cowley Chronicle—Editorial Team:

Sally Hemsworth, Nicki Stevens

Articles to be emailed to:

[chronicle@cowleyteamministry.co.uk](mailto:chronicle@cowleyteamministry.co.uk)

Paper contributions to the Parish Office.