

# NOTABLE PEOPLE & CHARACTERS OF COWLEY

## Fr. RICHARD MEUX BENSON (Part One)

DECEMBER 1950

A hundred years ago this month – to be exact, on 23<sup>rd</sup>. December, 1850 – the Reverend Richard Meux Benson, Student (or Fellow) of Christ Church, was instituted as Vicar of Cowley, an event which proved to be of great significance to Church life both in East Oxford and throughout the Church of England.

Cowley was in those days a parish small in numbers (probably only about 500) but large in area, extending right down to "The Plain" at Magdalen bridge; but houses were beginning to spring up along the Cowley and Iffley Roads, at a considerable distance from the little old church of St. James'.

It was Father Benson who was instrumental in building the "Iron Church", as it was called, in that area, in 1859, and later the church of Saints Mary & John, on the Cowley Road; - and it was he who procured the separation of the parish of Cowley St. John , and he became its first Vicar in 1870.

At the same time, after several years of study and prayer at Cowley, Father Benson became the founder of the first religious community for men to be formed in the Church of England since the Reformation. He began to live a community life in Cowley with two other priests, Father Grafton (afterwards Bishop of Fond du Lac in the U.S.A.) and Father O'Neill. After a year of preparation together, they took their vows on December 27<sup>th</sup> (St. John's Day), 1866, and their society was called The Society of St. John the Evangelist (S.S.J.E.), well known now as the "Cowley Fathers".

During these hundred years since Father Benson's Institution, both the Cowley parishes have grown beyond all expectation, and between them they contain nearly 50,000 people, or half the population of the City of Oxford. During these hundred years, also, the Cowley Fathers have, in addition to their work in all parts of this country, from their three centres in Marston Street, Westminster, and Edinburgh, spread to India, South Africa, Japan, the United States and Canada, in all of which countries they have houses as bases for their work.

So we have, as you see, abundant reason to thank God for the life and work of Father Benson at the centenary of his Institution to this parish, and we shall make Sunday, December 17th, a day of thanksgiving at the Parish Church for his life and work, when Father Dalby, the present Superior-General of the Cowley Fathers, will be the preacher at Evensong, and the Bishop of Dorchester hopes to be with us, engagements permitting.

I am making an appeal to people in all parts of the world who are grateful for the life and influence of Father Benson to send us a thanksgiving offering towards the provision of a new organ at the Parish Church as a memorial to him. I hope that many people in the parish will also send

a donation during December for the same purpose. There are some still living who remember Father Benson, who died at the age of 91 in 1951, but there are, no doubt, many more who owe a debt of gratitude to the ministrations of one or other of the Cowley Fathers. We do not forget in Cowley that a former assistant priest, Father Wilks, is now one of them.

Please help us all you can, so that we can soon get the money still required before we can have the new organ which is such an urgent need at Father Benson's Parish Church of St. James', the Mother Church of East Oxford.

Alec G. Whye

FEBRUARY 1961

Why is the restored cottage next to St. James' Church, and known until now as the Vicarage Cottage, to be renamed Benson Cottage? The Reverend R. M. Benson, a young man of 26 and a

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## My farewell message as I let go

During July I was successful in my plan to move on and listen to my further calling to find new pastures and challenges. I felt I had done as much as I can in my Ministry within Oxford (Parish & Asian Ministry work). God has called me to serve him in a different context. In July 2020 (after successful interviews) I was appointed the Priest in Charge of St Paul's Parish in Braintree, Essex. 1 John 4.8 says 'God is Love'. In that God's love which we have shared here, I am now called to share that same love amongst God's people elsewhere. I will miss you all so much.

I have achieved a huge amount of learning and gained much experience from my work and link with the Cowley Parish starting from St Luke's in the 1980's. I appreciate all the help and support you all have given in our family's involvement in the Parish of Cowley. My children will remain in Oxford as they still have good jobs here and our house is here. They will remain part of the worshipping community.

I leave with much excitement thanking you for your past prayers and encouragement and your future prayers for us also.

With much love and peace in Christ.

Revd Richard W Chand  
Anglican Asian Living Church Lead Minister  
SSM Cowley Team Ministry

# COWLEY FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS TREES 2020

Joy to the World!

Friday 11 – Sunday 20 December

Whilst we obviously still do not know what life will be like by December, and recognise we may have to adapt the format, we are confidently planning for an extra joyful community event, once again to share the blessings of life in Cowley Christmas. We hope the theme may cover both living with COVID-19 and creation/climate change/sustainability – and any other interpretation! The central diorama will be around the figure of an angel and we hope there will be hosts of angels inside and outside the church.



We are talking about decorating trees in the churchyard and holding some of the events outdoors, including the concert and carol service.

We would love to engage with some new groups and businesses. If you have never been involved before and would like to be, either as an individual, a family or part of a group – please contact us and ask for details right now!

If you work for a local business or know someone with influence in one, please suggest they should get involved!

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



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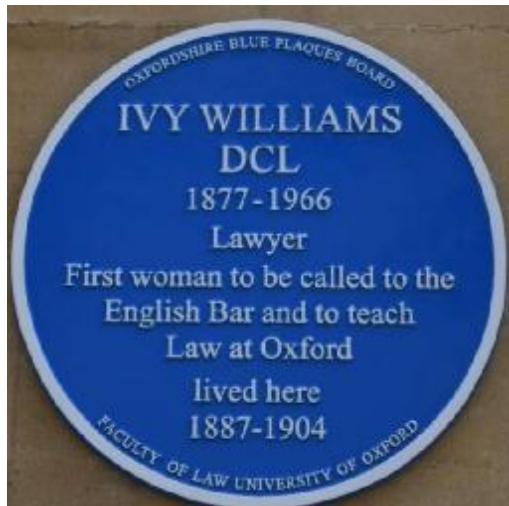
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We are listed as the charity: The Parochial Church Council of the Ecclesiastical Parish of Cowley, Oxford or you can search by our charity number: 1153602



# Ivy Williams

There have been articles in the Cowley Chronicle relating to Ivy Williams over the last few years, and many of you will have seen in a recent Oxford Mail that a blue plaque has been erected at 12 King Edward Street to her:



She was a member of the Congregational Church in George Street, where the cinema is at Gloucester Green. It was the sale of the site of this church that provided the basic funds to fund the Cowley church building and it was the support of that congregation that originally founded the small chapel community in Temple Road when Cowley was little more than a village (1886). She was at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Congregational church building at Cowley in 1930. Her name is on one of the foundation stones on the front of the church. In addition, Ivy Close in Hollow Way is another memory left to us.

She was more than just an 'interested party' in its foundation but did not marry and was very generous in social ways championing the women's movement. I believe she also was a main benefactor for a group of four flats built in Hollow Way, operated by a charity, 'for ladies of limited means' if not reserved for the elderly. Eventually one single lady could be nominated from each of the (then) four congregational churches in Oxford.

The main point is that she devoted her life (and much of her finance) to social work and supporting the community and women in particular. Before she died she apparently went blind but not before she had written a book to assist the blind. (Lots more about her on various web sites but no references that I could find about her quiet philanthropic work.)

David Cook



## Job redundancy: check your rights and talk to Citizens Advice

One of the most serious outcomes of the current pandemic problem is that thousands of people in the UK are losing their jobs. If you are one of these people, and are made redundant or offered voluntary redundancy, it is important that you thoroughly understand your rights and options.

The first thing to do if you are at risk of redundancy is to look at your contract of employment, which will spell out your basic rights. Make sure that your company abides by these conditions. Also, consider other sources of help such as your union if you belong to one. Bear in mind that if you have been in the job for less than two years you do not have as much job protection, but if for more than two years, your employer has to follow certain procedures, e.g. find you another job in the company if possible.

You can't be made redundant in an unfair way or for discriminatory reasons. The reason must be a genuine one, i.e. the job you do or the skills you have are no longer needed, or the employer can't afford you, or the business is failing. With technology advancing, sometimes fewer people are needed to do a given job.

You might be entitled to receive redundancy pay, which increases with length of service and has two elements – statutory and contractual. Statutory pay (not paid to those who have less than two years' service) is the minimum that the law says you are entitled to, and is based on your age, weekly pay and the number of years you have worked in the job. Contractual redundancy pay is the additional amount to which your contract may entitle you. If you have been furloughed, the law says that your redundancy pay must be worked out according to your usual wages, not the 80% furlough figure. Bear in mind that if your employer offers you a suitable alternative job and you refuse to take it without good reasons, they can refuse to give you redundancy pay. You can check that your redundancy pay is fair by using the calculator at <https://www.gov.uk/calculate-your-redundancy-pay>.

You are also entitled to a paid notice period or pay in lieu of notice, and the employer should give you paid time off for attending job interviews.

All the implications of redundancy are helpfully described on the Citizens Advice website at <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/work/leaving-a-job>. The website also gives advice about claiming benefits or dealing with your debts if you need this. You can talk to an adviser on our Adviceline, 0300 330 9042. Visit [www.caox.org.uk](http://www.caox.org.uk) to find your local Citizens Advice office.

## SAFEGUARDING IN COWLEY PARISH

As a Parish, we are committed to the Christian care, nurture of, and respectful pastoral ministry with, all children and all adults but particularly those who are vulnerable in any way.

So we ensure that our policies and practice on the selection and training of all those staff and volunteers with any responsibility within the Church are in line with safer recruitment principles, including the use of Disclosure and Barring Service criminal records checks where applicable.

We intend that St James and St Francis churches will be safe, caring communities which provide a loving environment where there is a culture of 'informed vigilance' as to the dangers of abuse, including domestic violence and bullying.

We will challenge any abuse of power, especially by anyone in a position of trust in our churches

We follow statute, guidance and recognised good practice in all our safeguarding procedures and check that all users of our premises agree to do so too.

Our practice is focused by a new requirement to complete a 'Promoting a safer church' action plan. With life somewhat different, we are still clarifying some of our procedures and systems

There is the danger that we *think everyone knows what they should do* but we have not checked on that; it is not possible during this hiatus.

Of course during the period of lockdown and beyond, it is also very difficult to check on the wellbeing of our families but we hope any in need of help will contact us. The schools are doing an amazing job and managing to do so.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility – *please be sure to report anything you observe whilst at church or one of our events that causes you concern for someone's safety or wellbeing.*

*It is just as important during this strange time when life is still not back to what we think of as normal; the situation throws up its own safeguarding and welfare issues. Please remain aware.*

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



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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: 45257 or calling at 18 St Omer Road. The price is still being held at £8 a copy.

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## Prayer Space

The journey isn't always smooth.  
Faith and life requires steps of  
courage and commitment. But  
faithfulness is always rewarded  
and in Christ we are never alone".

Solid Fuel by Bear Grylls

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### WOULD YOU LIKE

A three-wheel walker, never been used. It is free of charge to anyone who would like it. If interested please contact Betty Mitchell on 01865 773620.

Rosemary Gelder has offered to make face masks for £3 and will contribute any money made to the Flush Fund. Please contact her on [rosemarygelder@aol.com](mailto:rosemarygelder@aol.com). She will either post or deliver if local.

### Link to online giving!



We have put a new button on our web site! Our supporters can now make one off payment online. It will take you to the 'give a little' web site where you can decide how much you would like to give. You can also scan this image and go straight there!  
<https://givealittle.co/campaigns/49eef694-09d1-4ee3-8810-6ac86d972e6c>



# Autumn – a time of harvest and daisies!

We have just passed Michaelmas, the feast of St Michael and all Angels, on September 29<sup>th</sup>. It is one of the old quarter days when accounts were settled and it gives the name to the university and legal term up to Christmas. The flowers of the aster family, Michaelmas daisies, come to mind as they are at their best now and up to the first frosts. Our nearby Waterperry Gardens is renowned for these and September has been their Michaelmas daisy month. Walking along their famous herbaceous border, full of different varieties of them, is a delight and I plan to include more of them in my patch.



Michaelmas has always been regarded by farmers as the end of the harvest and a time for Harvest Festivals. My personal connection was the funeral of my mother that took place on Michaelmas Day, a Saturday that year, in my home village in a packed church which was bedecked for the Harvest Festival service the following day. A rural village in the dairy country of Staffordshire, there was not a tin or

packet in sight but window ledges and every other surface filled with piles of apples, pears, cabbages and marrows and all other garden and farm produce, pew ends decorated with wheat sheaves cut before the combine got to them specially to decorate the church, masses of flowers everywhere and many loaves of bread. It was an overwhelming sight and, of course, an emotional one. Mum, dying of cancer far too young, was a farmers' wife, had brought up five children, worked hard on the farm, a stalwart of the WI and many other activities, had entered local politics becoming mayor of our local town the year my husband and I got married. We became front page news on the local paper (it was a quiet news week!).

The tradition was to auction off, by the vicar, all the produce after the Harvest Festival service, for church funds. This was always a merry occasion and especially so that particular day. We came out carrying, amongst other things, bunches of dahlias, bags of apples and a loaf of bread. The bread had been produced by a retired baker, new to the village and one of many incomers eager to take part in the local community. Carrying out our purchases and chatting to old friends and relatives that Sunday made us feel embraced by love and being very blessed at a difficult time.

Joan Coleman

# Adverts from the Archives

Starting this month, I thought that the adverts from years ago which were published in the Chronicle would be of interest to some of you. I therefore will show a few of them per month, for a period. There is a vast archive I have gleaned, both local and national.

Les Hemsworth.

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## PARISH WALKS

We have had three lovely walks through September.

The first was to Shotover – we walked from St Francis Church through Brasenose Wood and managed to get to the plain at the top of a very steep hill. I think we were all very pleased that we had managed it – some found a lovely resting place!



We walked back along The Ridings down on to the plan and back to St Francis.

The second walk was along the Oxford Canal from Hythe Bridge Street – lovely photos taken along the walk:



The third walk was quite long but very enjoyable. I think none of us wished to use the buses so we met at the Iffley Road end of Cornwallis Road, walked through the nearby park on to Donnington Bridge Road, along the Thames to Folly Bridge and back through Christchurch Meadows, following the Cherwell, down Rose Lane, up Iffley Road back to Cornwallis Road.

Our next walk will be on 19 October, meeting at St Francis Church. We will then be walking to Horspath through fields and woods. This will be a new route for us.

Sally Hemsworth

### For the Traidcraft Exchange

Another challenge for Lesley Williams who has signed up with Global Adventure Challenges to fulfil a long held wish to visit Santiago de Compostela and has committed to raising £1,330 sponsorship for Fairtrade Exchange, on top of a considerable amount to cover expenses which she is paying herself. Now the Ride and Stride is done and the Christian Aid abseil nearly so, she is putting her mind to serious fundraising with events and opportunities to help with that.

The trek is the final 116km/72 miles, 5 days of the full pilgrimage route, starting from Sarria, with a grading of tough and challenging! The group has met with staff from Global Adventure Challenges and Traidcraft Exchange for a first Zoom session when we learned a lot about what to expect, how to train, ideas for fundraising.... and Traidcraft's work.

*Traidcraft Exchange exists to do two things...*

*to support people to harness the benefits of trade*

*to fight against injustice in global trade*

*It's a simple mission, but it is changing lives all over the world.*

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### Personal thoughts for October 1st (UN Older People's Day 2020)

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the United Nations and the 30th anniversary of the International Day of Older Persons.

The International Day of Older Persons is observed on October 1<sup>st</sup> each year. This year's theme is "Safeguard older persons during COVID-19 and beyond." this year.

In 2019 I had an information Neighbourhood Watch stall at the Town Hall. I was signing up new members - older members of our community who were active and still wanted to help our communities.

In 2020 the same people are being seen as elderly and vulnerable. Many of this generation are the most resilient and Covid19 has made the most independent people face dependency. However, all our partnerships and organisations are working to keep the elderly safe and healthy. Many older people have built up new relationships with younger people, learnt how to use the internet and learnt other new skills. There are too many people that remain isolated and lonely and maybe today we can make a difference and contact one of them.

In Sir Captain Tom Moore's words 'Tomorrow Will Be a Good Day.'

My wish for October 1st is we can help to do this.

Have a good day,

Maggie

(Oxford Neighbourhood Watch)

# A WARTIME CHILDHOOD

In the early months of 1940 London and the Home Counties began to experience daylight air-raids as well as night-time attacks. My dad went off to work each day leaving mummy and me with strict instructions to get down into the shelter should the siren sound the alert.

At that time while I was still only three years old there was a day-time bombing raid on our local hospital only a few streets away. My mother and I were huddled in the shelter sitting on the mattress on the floor where she had slept at night. The noise of the exploding bombs was unforgettable and the earth shook. Mum was terrified. She wrapped her arms around me and I heard her scream, "If you kill me, please kill my baby too". It was truly, truly very frightening.

Another scary experience I recall occurred around the same time when daddy didn't return from work at his usual time.

Because of the bombing raids in London as part of a firm of local builders he was frequently required to work in the City. In fact when the Houses of Parliament took a direct hit he, along with his team, shored up the huge end window in St Stephen's Hall when the bombing attack blew it out completely. They were also given the task of collecting every tiny piece of medieval glass to preserve it for future replacement. Another raid on the Palace of Westminster blew off the huge oak door known as the Members Gate. As a foreman carpenter and joiner he and his team were responsible for rehanging the door which is still in situ today.

However each evening at our little home in Surrey mummy and I would hear his key in the front door at about six o'clock just in time for him to eat his evening meal while listening to the six o'clock news on the wireless. I would then be taken up to have my bath and wrapped in a blanket ready to be put to bed in the shelter before the siren sounded to warn of approaching enemy aeroplanes.

One evening we didn't hear his key in the front door and wondered what could have happened. On the news we heard that a huge bomb had landed on Waterloo station and there were casualties. Waterloo was where my dad caught his train home. Of course there were no 'phones to reassure anyone of the situation so mummy and I just had to wait and wait ....I have no idea what time it was when we heard his key in the lock, nor how he got home as the station was severely damaged but I remember our unbounded joy when he walked in the door.

Sleeping in the shelter was no hardship for me though I do remember that on frosty nights the metal walls were unbearably cold. With my teddy for company and always a bed-time story I could snuggle down not realising the dangers and anxiety that the bombing raids on moonlit

nights were putting people through.

I, of course, was just old enough to qualify to be evacuated but my parents decided that we would stick together and see it through. As far as they were concerned their little daughter was definitely not going to be sent off to goodness-knows-where and with goodness-knows-who.

Rosanne Butler

## ELECTORAL ROLL

The completion of the Electoral Roll and the APCM for 2020 were both postponed in the spring, during lockdown. The APCM will now be held on Saturday 10 October, remotely on Zoom although Geoff and a few people will be in St James Centre.

The revision of the Electoral Roll – our Parish membership list – is complete so it is technically closed until after the APCM, when applications can be accepted again.

Contact Lesley Williams – *Electoral Roll Officer*

01865 779 562    07982 439 828

[lesleyjwilliams@btinternet.com](mailto:lesleyjwilliams@btinternet.com)

**Shaun Guard**

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Claire Ewers

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## CHURCHES OPENING FOR WORSHIP from 5 July

Holy Communion in one kind only

8.00am St James

9.30am St Francis, St James

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
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## 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)  
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Revd Canon Mark Oxbrow  
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### 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  
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[chronicle@cowleyteamministry.co.uk](mailto:chronicle@cowleyteamministry.co.uk)  
Paper contributions to the Parish Office.