

Life's little foxes

Foxes are a problem in Beauchamp Lane. The neighbour across the road from the Church Centre tells me that she sees four foxes regularly feasting in the rubbish by the drive. They drag the scraps of food over the pavement and someone has to sort it out in the morning. What pests!

The 'urban fox' is quite a problem in Oxford. Nocturnal and cunning, these little foxes find nice places to burrow in suburban gardens. There they find plenty of good food from domestic waste, bird food, and small animals.

Apparently the best way to eradicate foxes from a garden is to deter them from ever entering it! You should remove potential harbouring places by filling voids in the garden and, most importantly, keeping it free of rubbish.

All that reminds me of a short verse in the Song of Songs, "Catch the little foxes, the foxes that ruin our vineyard". The Song of Songs is an intimate song between two lovers. Throughout Christian history, it has been interpreted as a poem expressing God's love for his people, the church. God desires intimacy with the ones he loves and wants nothing to destroy the joy they share together. So he says to his beloved, "Catch the little foxes that ruin our vineyard".

This, in turn, made me wonder what little foxes are

around in my own life? What little sins, like pests that are so hard to get rid of, have found a place to nest? The peace in our lives, in our relationships with God and one another, is rarely damaged by dramatic acts of rebellion. It is more often destroyed by cunning, pesty, little sins—wrong attitudes that we indulge, a lack of patience, unforgiveness, anger. Pretty soon those little sins can burrow in and, like the foxes, be a problem not only in my garden, but in the whole neighbourhood of which I am a part.

So I ask a similar question, how do we eradicate these little, irritating sins from our own lives? Again the foxes give us the answer. We should fill up the spaces in our own lives with things that are good. "Whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute; if there is any virtue, and if there is any praise, think on these things", wrote St Paul. How much better it is to prevent sin from burrowing in, than to have to try and chase it out! Those foxes set me a challenge to fill my mind with things that are helpful and true, my mouth with things that build up and do not denigrate, and my time with things that God would enjoy my doing.

Beth

Chronicle

Farewell to Stephen, Sharon and their Family



William, Catherine, Sharon, Stephen and Lizzie



A final children's talk in Church; Catherine and Lizzie; cutting the cake at Stephen and Sharon's farewell lunch



Stephen will be **Licensed** by the Bishop of Reading as Team Rector of the Hermitage Team Ministry in **St Mark's Church, Cold Ash** near Thatcham on **Wednesday 6th September at 7.30 pm**

A coach has been organised to take people to Hermitage for Stephen's Licensing. It will leave from St Francis at 6.00 pm and from St James' at 6.15 pm for a 7.30 pm start at Hermitage. A sign up sheet will go up soon in both churches.

Ministry of Healing

*A monthly service on the first Tuesday of the month,
alternating between St James and St Francis Churches*

Healing Services:

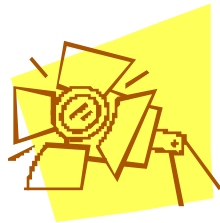
There is no healing service in August

Next service:

**Tuesday 5th September
7.00 pm**

St James Church

The ministry of healing is available at St James' Church every Sunday during the 10 o'clock service. Please go to St Luke's Chapel after you have received Communion where members of the Healing Team will be available to listen and to pray in complete confidence.



Spotlight on Seashells

On 10th January this year, the Church Centre held the first ever Seashells baby and toddler meeting with 8 children (50% of them belonged to Beth and I!) and some rather nervous grown ups. The following week we welcomed 20 children and their

carers, and 30 children came to the last meeting before the summer break.

Seashells is a new but important part of the ministry at St James, and a place where parents can find refuge and friendship, someone to talk to, and the chance to enjoy some refreshments while their children play. Several Dads attend regularly, as well as childminders, grannies and even a great-Grandad (who is a very patient story teller)!

We are very grateful to the dedicated group of volunteers from the Church who make endless cups of tea every week and mop up the spills, set up and put away the toys and most of all, give their time to talk to the children and their carers. Everyone who comes to Seashells is struck by the warmth of the atmosphere, and our hope for the future is that it will continue to thrive and provide many more parents with love, support and a glimpse of faith in action in Cowley.

Lorna Hind

From the registers

July baptisms

Euan Barrett
Cane Hines
Reece Massey-Khan



Interregnum Update

In August, the PCC will meet to draw up a Parish Profile which will include demographic information about Cowley, a description of the worship style, community life and mission activities of the two churches and a sense of what the parish is looking for in a new Priest. The post will then be advertised and interviews will take place. Responsibility for the appointment is shared between the Diocese and the Patronage Board and will include four parish representatives elected by the PCC. This could take some time and the wardens have been told not to expect a new Rector until spring. Please ask the wardens or PCC members if you have questions about the appointment process. Things may not run quite so smoothly as usual for a while, so please be patient as we take on the great many tasks that Stephen and Sharon performed for the parish. Most importantly, please be committed to praying regularly that God might give wisdom and discernment to those responsible for the appointment.



Rosanne interviews Gwen Fancutt

Several of my readers, from time to time, suggest that a photo to accompany the current article would help to identify the personality of the month. They could look across the church and say, 'Oh, that's him (or her)'. No, dear readers, that is not the idea at all. If you can't put a face to a name, wouldn't it be a good thing to track down the person in question and chat to them? That was Fr Stephen's philosophy when he first cajoled me into this marathon task years ago. He wanted us to get to know each other better and that means more than recognising a face.

However, if I tell you that Gwen is the small, elderly lady with an infinite collection of hats, I'm sure that most of you will know who she is. And what an interesting life story she has had. Now almost ninety, she is not about to recognise it as complete. There is still a lot ahead for this active, forward-facing lady who

drives her car far and wide (maybe, I suggested, a telegram from the Queen in ten years' time!).

What brought her to Cowley in 1949? She had been left a widow with a tiny baby daughter and she came to Crappers in the Cowley Road to buy a caravan for a home. That, though, is far from the beginning so let's go back further. She was the only child of an important Birmingham family. Father was a departmental manager of the big Dunlop Company and often travelled to Cowley to do business with William Morris with whom he became friends. Mother was a Birmingham city counsellor and as such hosted parties where close friends such as Lucy Baldwin (Stanley's wife) and Annie Chamberlain (wife of Neville) were frequent guests. Other family friends included Sir Alfred Bird, of custard fame, and the Butlers of Mitchell and Butler, the brewers. As the daughter of a councillor, Gwen

recalls having to accompany her mother to garden parties, civic occasions and so on, always on her best behaviour and suitably dressed. At eight years old she was sent to a convent boarding school in Plymouth which she found incredibly hard. The nuns were extraordinarily strict, and, says Gwen, "too good to live"! Daily services night and morning, cold dormitories and the rigid regime were there to be endured. She often thought of her little village primary school, even though from the age of five it had meant a two-mile walk each way. She also missed visits to the family's weekend cottage situated on the Banbury to Stratford-upon-Avon road. Apart from enjoying history, geography and tennis in the summer, she hated the whole thing and made up her mind to leave at seventeen and train for nursing.

She applied to two local fever hospitals, Coventry and Warwick. As her parents were sending her

to holiday in Switzerland, she missed the reply date for Coventry and so spent a year in Warwick, where she learnt a great deal, before being accepted for formal training at Birmingham General at the age of eighteen. She had just completed her training when World War II began, so she joined the Queen Alexandra's Nursing Service. Her first posting was to Farnham in Surrey and next, happily, back to a military hospital in Birmingham. She told me how she wanted a properly tailored uniform suit so she had one tailored personally for her at Burtons, the Fifty Shilling Tailors. Whilst nursing she met and fell in love with a captain in the tank regiment. They were married in 1941.

After the war, Walter took up tenant farming on the Welsh/Hereford border and later moved to a large farm near Stratford. Their daughter, Joan, was born in 1946, and all went well until the disastrous winter of 1947 when her husband's father died. Walter travelled to Folkestone for the funeral, and whilst there had a heart attack and also died. Left alone with her baby, Gwen had to leave the farm. She needed to find a

home and, having some friends on the Cowley Road, she came to Oxford. As I explained earlier, she planned to move into a caravan. At the home of these friends she met William Fancutt. A romance flourished, he proposed, she accepted, and William took his new bride and step-daughter to live in his home in Cowley. The following year a baby son, Richard, was born.

Gwen and her children took an active part in parish life at St James'. Richard sang in the choir and Joan, as she grew, became a bell-ringer, while Gwen delivered parish magazines on the newly built airfield estate. As she went from home to home she realised there was a large number of young families in the area and mentioned to Fr Whye that there should be a young wives club for them. "You start one then" was the reply and so she did. She had to step down from the committee later due to ill health.

Her son had gained a choral scholarship to the Cathedral choir school and the expenses of his 'extras' (sports gear etc.) plus those of Joan's

education made it necessary for Joan to return to work. To fit in with the school holidays she took a post first at the Dragon School and then at Rye St Anthony, a local girls' school. She was then offered private nursing for a gentleman who lived on Boars Hill. His mother, an Austrian princess, had been a friend of the von Trapp family and Maria visited him on several occasions. Gwen got to know her quite well. She went on to nurse a number of eminent professors from the University.

Sadly, her husband William suffered several severe strokes and needed constant nursing until he died in 1952. The house where they had lived had a large garden which became too much for Gwen, so she sold it and moved to her present flat in Wykeham Crescent where she lives happily with her two cats. She moved away from St James due to a contretemps with Fr Keith Haydon over the baptism of two of her great-grandchildren. However, she once again worships at her parish church. She runs what she calls her retirees group at her home, organising activities,

speakers and strawberry teas! Recently she has been featured in a 'must-see' video film about elderly folk and their quality of life.

Bishop Richard was also a contributor. Just before I visited she had been trimming the hedge outside her windows with a borrowed pair of loppers almost as big as her. She talks with animation about her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She still takes them out on treats to the cinema, theatre, museums and enjoys their company enormously. She is an enthusiastic world traveller.

Inevitably, she has many friends, one of whom found her a kitten a while ago. She drove over to Le Manoir Aux Quatre Saisons to collect it from Raymond Blanc who often invites her to tea. She berated him for not finding her a little female tortoiseshell, but accepted the male tabby because she found the translation too complicated. Raymond keeps in touch with her because his mother-in-law was one of the many people who have benefited from her nursing skill.

How would you describe yourself as a small child?

Always ill. As soon as I got over one darned thing another happened. I was a quiet child.

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

I used to play with the local doctor's son. He was a horrible boy but my mother considered him a 'suitable' playmate. His mother made good toffee so that helped.

Has God been part of your life since childhood?

Mother played the organ in the village church so on Sunday you put on your best clothes and went to God's house and that was how I got to know Him. He's always been there.

In modern society what disappoints or angers you?

What disappoints me most is that children are not taught good manners nowadays.

What in modern life do you find encouraging?

I thank God for everything I have in life.

What is your most treasured possession?

I suppose my Bible and a book of hymns, poems and readings called 'Best Beloved' compiled by Martin Hanson.

Do you have a hero or heroine past or present?

Florence Nightingale—she was the mother of modern nursing.

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

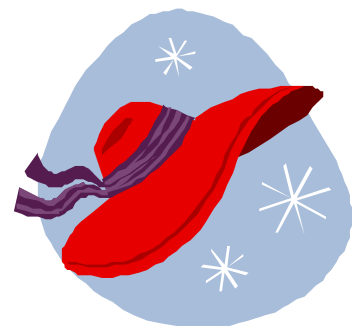
Gardening, sewing tapestry, and writing letters to house-bound friends

What makes you laugh?

Good, clean humour—really anything which Ronnie Barker was in.

Do you have an ambition for the future, say ten years' time?

I'm hoping to keep active, but if I eventually have to go into a care home I would hope to go into Longlands at Blackbird Leys because it is a very well run home.



Prayer for August

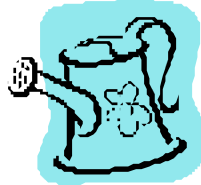
I weave a silence on to my lips
 I weave a silence into my mind
 I weave a silence within my heart

I close my ears to distractions
 I close my eyes to attractions
 I close my heart to temptations

Calm me, O Lord as you stilled the storm
 Still me, O Lord, keep me from harm
 Let all the tumult within me cease
 Enfold me, Lord, in your peace.

Amen

Gardening Offered



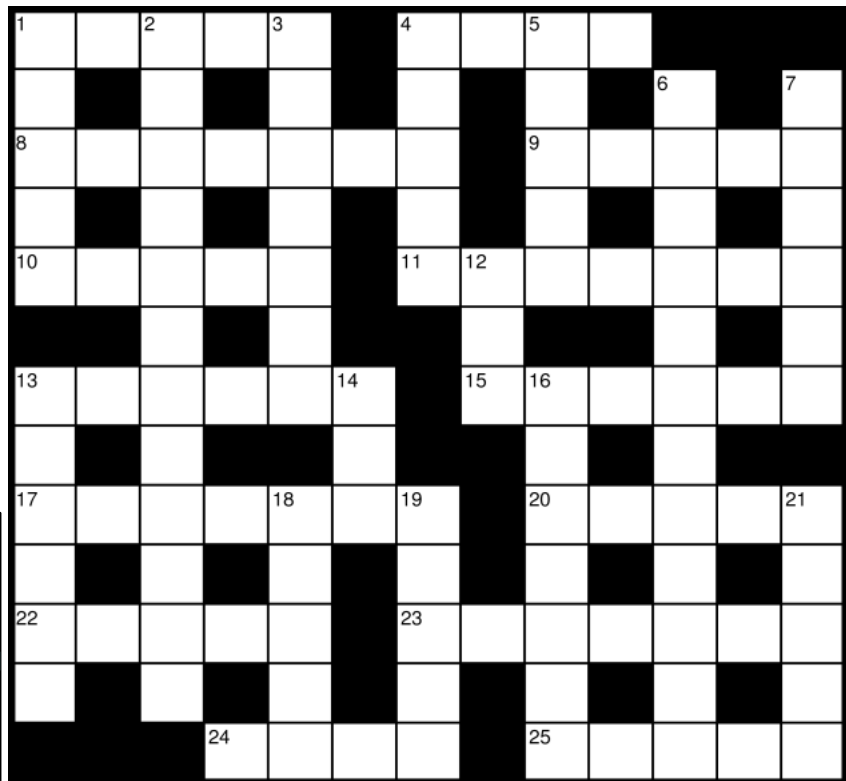
I am currently studying National Certificate in Horticulture Level 2 and have some time available to take on more gardening clients. If you have a garden or know of someone who needs help (especially elderly people or those with young children), please contact me. My transport is by bike, but I am prepared to cycle out of the city.

Susie: 0790 600 7602

July's Solution

S	B	G	Q	S	T	E	E	P			
C	Y	R	E	N	I	U	S	H	N		
R	E	A	I	K	I	N	G	S			
I	N	A	C	T	I	V	E	R	R		
P	D	S	E	S	T	R	A	W			
T	E	D	R	Y	E	V					
S	H	I	N	T	O	E	L	E	V	E	N
R	G	R	O	T	N	R					
P	E	R	I	L	L	S	S	A			
S	N	H	I	T	T	I	T	E	S		
T	H	I	E	F	V	E	A	I			
E	E	D	E	P	A	R	T	E	D		
A	D	O	R	N	T	L	E	E			

August's Crossword



Across

- 1 ..seek peace, and _____ it (1 Pet 3.11) (5)
- 4 ..unto the going down of the _____ (Mal 1.11) (4)
- 8 Tree under which Elijah sat in 1 Kings ch. 19 (7)
- 9 _____ the meat in my sight (2 Sam 13.5) (5)
- 10 Have a feeling of loss, like Joseph's bowels in Genesis ch. 43 (5)
- 11 The first epistle general of Peter is addressed to the inhabitants of this region, among others (7)
- 13 Divisions between seats in church (6)
- 15 Laban did this to Jacob in Genesis ch. 29 (6)
- 17 He and the teacher cast lots in 1 Chronicles ch. 25 (7)
- 20 Seat (5)
- 22 Wife of Elimelech in Ruth ch. 1 (5)
- 23 Convent (7)
- 24 The Philistines put out Samson's in Judges ch. 16 (4)
- 25 Enthusiastically praise (5)

Down

- 1 ..therefore _____ pleasure (Ecc 2.1) (5)
- 2 Class to teach children about Christianity (6,6)
- 3 Remove completely (7)
- 4 Shoot produced by the vine in Ezekiel ch. 17 (5)
- 5 One who sits for an artist (5)
- 6 One of the two major divisions of the bible (3,9)
- 7 e.g. Melita in Acts ch. 28 (6)
- 12 Vessel built by Noah (3)
- 13 For though I be _____ in the flesh (Col 2.5) (6)
- 14 Into which a herd of swine ran in Mark ch 5 (3)
- 16 Aromatic mixture burnt in churches (7)
- 18 Lay people, as distinct from clergy (5)
- 19 Silver annuli in Esther ch. 1 (5)
- 21 Like the diadem in Isaiah ch. 62 (5)

Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist (exc 2nd Sunday) All Age Eucharist (2nd Sunday)

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am	Parish Eucharist <i>[Family Eucharist - 2nd Sunday of the month]</i>
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Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Group (Summer break)
	2.30 pm	Parish Mothers' Union - <i>St James (3rd Mon)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Seashells (Summer Break)
	10.00 am	Toddler Service (Summer Break)
	12.00 pm	Eucharist - <i>St James</i>
	12.30 pm	Tuesday Lunch Club- <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Friends of St Francis - <i>St Francis (2nd & 4th)</i>
5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>	
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Tea Break - <i>St Francis (1st Wed)</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	11.00 am	St Francis Prayer Group
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	7.00 pm	Eucharist - <i>St Francis</i>
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – <i>St James</i>
Saturday	9.15 am	Morning Prayer & Breakfast - <i>St Francis</i>

Day Off

Lorne and Michael can be contacted in the evenings and at weekends. Beth can be contacted during the day as well.

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Vacant

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If you have material or ideas for the Chronicle please contact Philip Hind (Tel: 427523)