

The wonders of God's world

The other day, my two year old dug into her pocket to show me something. I was surprised to find a worm in her little hand, one that had obviously been away from the garden soil for quite some time! She took great delight in examining the worm, as she does many things in nature. Often she makes me stop to look at autumn leaves, inspect insects, listen to birds, laugh at the shape of a marrow, and in so doing, helps me to enjoy the wonders of God's world.

As we celebrate Harvest Festivals in our churches, let us be reminded to take the time, like my daughter, to dig into the soil and have a good look at the beauty of the world. Too often we take it for granted and don't notice that it is telling us something wonderful about God and also something about us and our role in the world.

Christians believe that the created world tells us about God and even sings his praises. The Psalmist says, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the earth proclaims his handiwork" (Ps 19.1). When we stop and look with childlike eyes at the world around us, our minds should be drawn to the one who is behind it all—God the Creator. It was God's great energy and love which put this world into motion and it is good to acknowledge this at Harvest time.

Reflection on the created world also says something about us, that we as humans are just a small part of this vast creation. We share the world with the rest of creation,

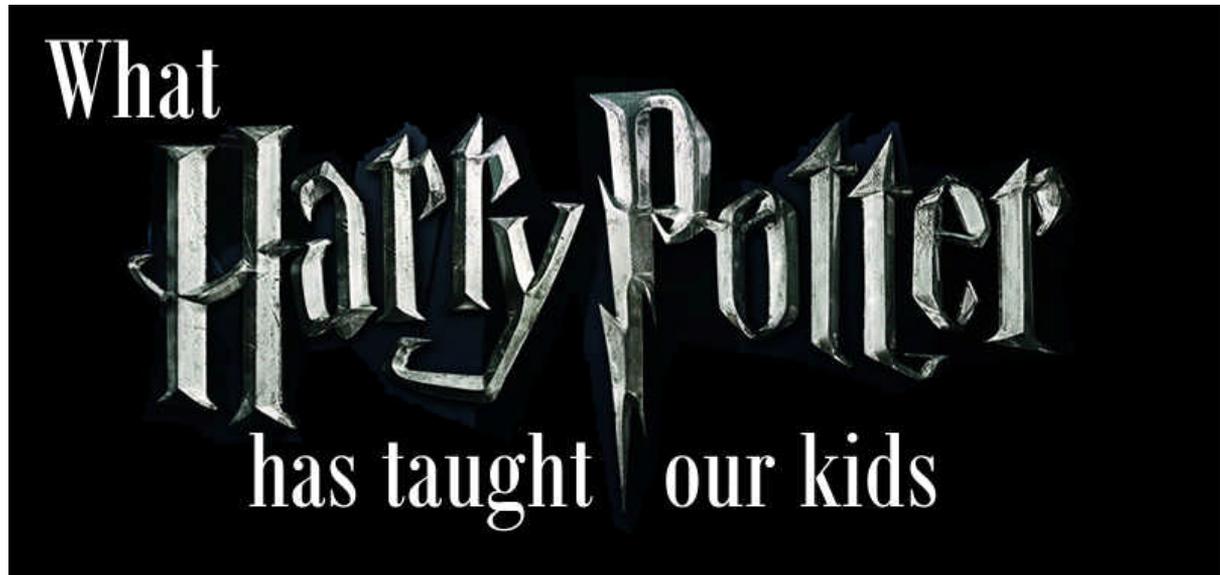
and we need to live responsibly and wisely on it. On the 4th of October, the church celebrates St Francis, who taught that all are connected as creatures of God. This connection is often forgotten when we mistreat the heavens and the earth which are intended to display God's glory. How much of our misuse of resources and poor treatment of creatures (human as well as animal) arises from forgetting that we are all part of God's created world and must care for it and maintain it!

Christians believe that humans are stewards or caretakers of the earth, but also, that the creation still belongs to God. Though the environment changes, resources are scarce and scattered, and animal and human life suffers, God is still the Creator who restores his creation when it is broken. His re-creating Spirit and our loving care for the world, together can transform and bring new life to God's creation. It is part of our task as Christians to cooperate with his Spirit in this re-creation, not only of ourselves, but of the whole of creation.

Take the time this autumn to think about the magnificent creation of which we are all a part. Take time too to admit that that we all play a part in damaging God's world, and think of ways of restoring that damage and caring for God's world so that it can continue to reflect his glory!

Beth

Chronicle



1. Lying, stealing and cheating are not only acceptable, but can also be fun.
2. Astrology, numerology, casting spells and performing magic can be exciting.
3. Disobedience is not very serious unless you get caught.
4. Being 'special' means you deserve to escape punishment for behaving badly.
5. Adults just get in the way most of the time.
6. Rules are made to be broken.
7. Revenge is an acceptable course of action.

Gwen Fancutt

Notes from the PCC

The September meeting focussed mainly on finance and fabric.

In addition to our regular giving we have received money from Gift Aid, from Ride & Stride and from legacies and memorials. Our insurance and half of our Parish Share have been paid.

The newly formed finance group has met and will meet again soon. They will bring their recommendations to the next meeting of the PCC.

St Francis' members were worried about the wear and tear to the building during the time it has been let.

Work needs to be done at St Francis' on the wall, the porch and making good the roof following the recent theft. At St James, John Gawne-Caine and Jeremy Herklots are planning to work on the repair and replacement of down-pipes on the north wall.

The compilation of a parish directory was suggested with photos and phone numbers of parishioners.

Norma Jenkins, our friend

Norma has been part of St Francis' family for many years, although many of us, myself included, have only got to know her well in the past ten years.

She was a friend of Vera and Jim Dyball, along with her family. Jim and Vera were great stalwarts of St Francis for many years.

For some years now Norma has joined in most of our church activities, and become a loyal and reliable friend. She seldom missed church services or function, unless she was travelling away – often with a family member or on a parish outing. She obviously enjoyed travel and experiencing new places.

She was a regular member of the Friends of St Francis, joining in our discussions about the Bible, our Christian life and world and parish issues. She was a very calm and thoughtful lady, never afraid to own her Lord.

Norma regularly shared our monthly Tea Break. At our meeting in August we shared many fond memories of her.

Norma was also a regular attendee at the Saturday morning service and breakfast.

At the farewell service to Lorne on July 8th Norma brought a huge cake, to celebrate with us the sixtieth anniversary of her first communion – something she was very proud of.

We know how much she mourned the loss of her husband Tony and then her partner Frank. Sadly, her great friend Margaret Wood, a much loved friend of St Francis also died some years ago. Norma received much comfort from her faith, and remained positive that our Lord is always with us.

The arrival of Lisa and her children to share the house made an enormous difference to Norma. She revelled in living, once again, within a family, although her family had always supported her. Fiona and the older grandchildren in Risinghurst, and Norma's 'boys' continued to help and cherish her and she often relied on her family for lifts to church, even after she became a little more independent in her buggy.

We are sure that Norma was a lovely Mum and Grandma. She was proud of her family and loved them greatly. Now that she has gone to her Lord and we know that He will accept and care for her throughout eternity.

Thank you Norma for being you. We miss you.

Old Photographs

Our photographs are precious
They remind us of the past again
They bring with them memories
Both of pleasure and of pain.

Faces and places long forgotten
Look back across the years.
They evoke for us old laughter
They evoke for us old tears.

Scenes of childhood haunts are shown
Captured in the past.
But joys and happiness of youth
Are far too sweet to last.

True affection never dies
When human love holds fast
And yet, there is a gap
Between the present and the past.

Old friends are gone and left us
Only photographs remain, reminders
Of the past's happy moments
Which will ne'er be spent again.

Marleene Shreeve

Rosanne Interviews

Margaret Randall

It takes a special kind of person (and I'm about to introduce you to one) who can turn the experience of a year in hospital at the age of six into an advantage in life. Let me explain. Margaret was born with a severely twisted leg and could have easily grown up with a disability. As it is she has an almost imperceptible limp and stands straight and tall in her 'five-foot-nothing' frame. When she was six she was taken into hospital and underwent three major operations to correct the twist and wore braces and a clumsy boot for a long while afterwards. And yet she believes that all those months with only an occasional visit from her Mum turned her into an independent and positive person.

Unusually, her father moved from his home in East Oxford up to the Debyshire coal mines at a time when men were flocking to Cowley to work in the motor-car industry. He married a local girl. After the birth of their third daughter, Margaret, in their small village near Balsover. Mr Jeffrey took a new job in a colliery near Armthorpe in Yorkshire. His youngest daughter was only two years old at the time so it was in Armthorpe that Margaret grew up.

She remembers her home village as a small, close-knit community (though she says it has now mushroomed out of all recognition) and her childhood was a happy one. She recalls family evenings at home around the table where her Dad taught them all to play cards. A younger brother was born, much to the delight of the whole family. Before she was five she started as a pupil at the village school. She was happy there, quickly learning to read and also progressing in arithmetic.

Her parents were anxious to get treatment for her leg so she was admitted to hospital in Newcastle – a long way from home. Once a month, on a Sunday, her mother would visit. It meant a long walk to the railway station and another walk at the other end to reach her small daughter. The expedition took the whole day.

Margaret took that year in her stride and, observing the ward staff, thought she'd be a nurse when she grew up. Teachers came in to ensure that she would not fall behind with her lessons. They were obviously successful because at eleven she sat her scholarship exam for the nearby grammar school and passed. One little memory she mentioned about that time was the thrill of being able to leave off her braces and boot and wear a pretty pair of patent leather shoes. 'They were so light I felt like a fairy,' she said and I think she probably looked like one too. Having gained her place at Thorne Grammar School she grew into a confident teenager. She was an enthusiastic Girl Guide, enjoying the various activities, especially the regular camps. It was her Guide captain who encouraged her and her peers to attend church.

Having taken and passed school certificate at fifteen Margaret (independent girl that she was) was ready to spread her wings. Her father had left behind in Oxford a clutch of sisters so both she and her elder sister moved south and lived with their two aunts in Percy Street. She was too young to take up a nursing career so instead she found a job in the office of Alden Engineers in Oxford. She learnt many office skills as she went along and so in 1955 applied to work

in Morris Motors' wages department. I guess quite a few of our readers will remember the small brown envelopes filled by Margaret and her colleagues to be brought home by the thousands of employees each Friday. I know I do!

The Cowley Fathers set up a social club in the Iffley Road – the Gladiators – and Margaret and her sister became members. The main attraction for her was table tennis. It was through the club that she met her future husband, Ken. At the time he was working for Grant's Steel Company in East Oxford. In 1952 the young couple were married and first rented, then bought, a house in Maidcroft Road. When her babies came along, Clive in 1955, Gillian in 1958 and later Linda in 1965, Margaret joined St Luke's Young Wives Group and took part in the whole life of the church. She regularly cleaned At Luke's church along with the late Phyl McClaren.

Coincidentally Ken also had an aunt living in Percy Street who was Captain of St Alban's Guide Company for many years. When her mother-in-law died in 1973 the Randall family decided to move to a bigger house in St Luke's Road and Margaret got a part-time job in the branch of Sainsbury's in Cowley Centre. Among her colleagues at the time were Margaret Martin and Pat Chambers. Sadly, she was widowed in 1990 but found great consolation in a new grand-daughter. She became a full-time caring Granny to Charlotte. Four more grand-children have followed, all of them given her full-time care. Now much to her delight a new baby boy has just been born. Her family is very close-knit and Margaret is proud of them all. Her home (and garden) is a mini-nursery packed with activities and toys for her little charges.

As treasurer of our parish Mothers' Union she is kept busy chasing members for their 'subs' and encouraging them to support MU missions overseas. She was enrolling member (leader) of the branch for a number of

years and has been associated with it in various capacities for over 40 years. Although a busy person, I know from experience that she always seems to find time for the things she considers important. And new baby grandson, Daniel, is going to be very important for years to come.

How would you describe yourself as a small child?

Quiet, shy but friendly – a very keen Girl Guide.

Have you a 'never forgotten' childhood experience?

I went to a boating lake with my brother when I was about thirteen. We got stuck on the side, I pushed us off and he fell in the water. We had to walk home soaking wet.

Has God been part of your life since childhood?

Yes, since I was about seven or eight. I was confirmed when I was eleven. I liked going to church.

If you could make a major change in the world what would it be?

I'd change the attitude of the press to vulnerable people.

Is there anything that you find positive or encouraging in modern life?

Advances in modern medicine.

Do you have a treasured possession?

My engagement ring and a locket that my daughter gave me with a photo of Ken inside.

Do you have a hero or heroine, past or present?

I do admire the young cancer girl, Jane Tomlinson, who had courage beyond words.

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

Reading – detective stories. I read the daily paper from cover to cover. I do the 'easy'

crosswords. Oh and I go on parish holidays.

Are there any places in the world you'd like to visit?

Yes, I've always wanted to go to Rome.

Do you have ambitions or plans for the future?

With a brand new grandchild I'm going to be busy for the next 16 years!

As a footnote I simply must mention Margaret's mum. This amazing lady, widowed at 60, continued to live in her own home until she reached the age of 105 with very little help. She died earlier this year at the age of 107! She used to do her own decorating until she was in her nineties and also used to look after her 'old ladies' in the village (all of them younger than she was). Margaret used to visit her mum about half a dozen times a year and misses her so much.

A North American Chief looks at the 23rd Psalm

The Great Father above is a Shepherd Chief.
I am His and with Him I want not.

He throws out to me a rope and the name of the rope is love, and He draws me to where the grass is green and the waters not dangerous. I eat and lie down satisfied.

Sometimes my heart is very weak and falls down, but He lifts it up again and draws me onto a good road. His name is wonderful.

Sometimes, it may be very soon, it may longer, it may be a long, long time, He will draw me into a place between the mountains. It is dark there, but I'll draw back not. I'll be afraid not, for it is there between the mountains that the Shepherd Chief will meet me. There the hunger that I have felt in my heart all through this life will be satisfied.

Sometimes He makes the love rope into a whip but afterwards He give me a staff to lean on. He spreads a table before me with all kinds of food. He puts His hand upon my head and all the 'tired' is gone. My cups fills till it runs over.

What I tell you is true, I lie not. Those roads that are away will stay with me through this life, and afterwards I will go to live in the Big Teepee, and sit down with the Shepherd Chief forever.

Discovered by Rachel Arnatt whilst on holiday.

Healing Service

October 11, 7pm at St Francis'

November 1 7pm at St James'



The Binsey Treacle mines

When I was a young lad in Oxford many moons ago, there used to be a standard joke going around. Someone would say, where are you going now then? And the answer would be, 'I'm off to Binsey to visit the Treacle Mines'. A piece of nonsense you will say, everybody knows that you can't get treacle from a hole in the ground, and so I thought for many years. It never occurred to me to ask the questions, Why Binsey? Why treacle? Thus quite recently when I was doing some research into something else quite by chance I came across the answer. People did indeed go to Binsey to get treacle, not just a few, but thousands of them. And they did find it in a hole in the ground, not in a mineshaft, but in a well shaft. For treacle was the medieval name for Holy Water and there was a famous Holy Well at Binsey; and since it concerns the church and faith and miracles, it seemed to me that it might be of some interest, and thereby hangs a tale.

Binsey was an important village in medieval times and has significant religious connotations. Not many people visit in now unless they are going to visit the Perch Pub by the river Thames. The village of Binsey, or Byni, as it was then called, was an island then, and approached by a causeway. The land it was built on belonged to Didan the father of our Patron Saint, St Frideswide, and she came there to escape from the unwelcome attention of her Danish suitor Hlgar. At Binsey, she built a church dedicated to St Margaret, and at the West End is the Holy Well of St Margaret, which gushed forth miraculously in answer to her prayers. This spring had such marvellous powers of healing that sufferers who obtained no relief at the shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury were cured at Binsey. So highly was the water esteemed that it sold for a guinea a quart, and a stone house was built over the well and the door kept locked to prevent illicit traffic. Even after the bones of St Frideswide had been moved to Oxford in 1180, Binsey remained a centre for pilgrimage and hostels were built near the church to accommodate the numerous pilgrims.

The church is still there so you can visit the well, so why not pay it a visit and add your own prayers to those who have gone before us?

What intrigues me, and you may wonder too, is how the grains of truth that have lingered on in the form of facetious folklore, right to our present times. That in itself is a modern miracle.

John Shreeve

Volunteers Needed

The Fellowship of Reconciliation (FoR), a small Christian peace charity based upstairs in St James Church Centre, occasionally needs volunteers to help with mailings and small admin tasks. We're very friendly! If you would be able to help, please call Nick on 01865 748796

Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist (<i>exc 2nd Sunday</i>)
	All Age Eucharist (<i>2nd Sunday</i>)

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am	Parish Eucharist
	[<i>Family Eucharist – 2nd Sunday of the month</i>]

Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – <i>St James</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Group – <i>St Francis</i>
	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 resumes 11 Sept – <i>Church Centre</i>
	10.00 am	Toddler Service – <i>St Francis</i>
	12.00 pm	Eucharist – <i>St James</i>
	12.30 pm	Tuesday Lunch Club – <i>St James</i>
	2.30 pm	Friends of <i>St Francis</i> – <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

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

Parish Directory

Team Rector

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Chronicle

The next issue of the *Chronicle* will be available from Sunday 4th November. Please send in your articles, stories, comments and news by 1st November. Contact Philip Hind on 01865 427523 or leave at St James Church.