

Old as Methuselah?

According to a study conducted by the Government's Department for Work and Pensions, life expectancy is rising dramatically. Right now there are 11,800 people in the UK are at least 100 years old. By 2066 there will be at least 507,000 UK residents aged 100 or over, including 7,700 people aged 110 or over. Currently those aged 110 or over is less than 100.

We are living longer because our diets have improved, our homes are warmer in the winter, less people are smoking, and we are beginning to take exercise more seriously.

The Bible is full of information about the longevity. Methuselah is reported to have lived to be over 900 years old. Do you believe that's true? It might not be literal – but it sounds like Methuselah knew something about long life. The Psalmist reminds us that purpose in life matters: "Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it" (Psalm 34:12, 14).

But many people today find the prospect of such longevity disquieting. "Having seen a number of relatives kept alive by doctors 'because they can' well beyond the time they wanted to be, this idea frankly scares me rigid.

Another person told BBC news: "I don't think it would be fun [to live to 100]because you would be surrounded by strangers which you don't know."

Professor Clark, from the Paris School of Economics, used information from household surveys to analyse the attitudes of Christians (both Catholic and Protestant) to their own happiness, and other issues such as unemployment. Findings from the study suggested that religion offers a "buffer" which can protect Christians from life's disappointments. "What we found was that religious people were experiencing current daily rewards, rather than storing them up for the future."

Professor Leslie Francis (University of Warwick), said that the benefit of faith might stem from the increased "purpose of life" felt by believers.

That brings us back to the quote from Psalm 34. It's not really how long you live that will matter – it is how you use the time you have. God calls us to live lives that reflect his generosity of love, forgiveness, patience, kindness and giving. The more we use our time to reflect God's character and nature, the more we will experience real quality of life.

Howard

Chronicle

Cowley Team Ministry

May 2011

Editor's Letter

Dear Readers

First of all, this month, I want to offer on your behalf huge congratulations to St Christopher's Primary School for coming out of special measures. All three of our church primary schools are very important to the life of our parish family and when a family member hits a difficult time we worry about them. So it is with great pleasure that we can now be assured that St Christopher's is fully on track without the constant anxiety about its future. Head Teacher, Alison, and her staff are Chronicle readers so I hope that this will reassure them that we are thrilled with their success.

The middle of May will see us working hard for Christian Aid. 15th to 21st May are the dates of Christian Aid Week 2011. On Sunday, 1st May, Amy Merone is coming to speak at the St James' 10 am service about this year's projects. There will be envelopes to be delivered and collected street by street, of course. I do realise, though, that very few of us are up to the onerous task of knocking on doors these days so there are other ways of raising funds. Cakes of the home-made variety are always good so it has been suggested that we hold cake stalls at the back of the churches on Sunday mornings for three or four weeks running to add to the funds. We are off to a very good start this year already with the money raised at the quiz evening

and the "super-soup" lunch on the Sunday of the Annual Parochial Church Meeting. We raised £1,000 in the Parish last year. Can we do better in 2011?

On the painful subject of money, have you noticed how things are shooting up in price especially since the increase in VAT? What has that got to do with The Chronicle? The answer is the cost of paper! Now that our magazine usually has 20 pages and that paper is so expensive I am afraid we are going to have to put the price up by 5p a month. So your annual subscription in August will be £3.50 for your ten copies. I am so sorry about this but we will work hard to make each issue worth 35p. Come to think of it that is less than the cost of posting a letter, isn't it?

Watch out for the answers, in this issue, to the Royal Wedding quiz page featured last month. How did you get on with your answers? I have another idea for featuring photographs in future issues.

After a glorious spring so far, let us look forward to a "barbecue summer". Barbies are a lovely way to get friends and neighbours together over a charcoaled sausage or two, aren't they? Long summer evenings ahead!

God Bless

Rosanne

Mothers' Union News

Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Our April branch meeting gave members a chance to enjoy some moments of nostalgia and happy memories as we browsed through some of the parish archives. The minutes of the former Women's Fellowship group does not have anything momentous to preserve for the archive collection but the names of officers, committee members and leaders certainly sparked off lots of – "Oh yes, I remember her, she used to ...". Though our theme for the year is "Faithful Relationships" it seems wholly appropriate to contemplate on the relationship the Mothers' Union has had with our

church family and parish over the many decades since it was founded.

The speaker at the branch meeting on May 16th will be Primrose Gallimore, former leader of the Oxford Deanery of Mothers' Unions.

We hope that all our readers are looking forward to our forthcoming "Puddings and Quiz" evening at 7 pm in the Church Centre on 6th May. We promise lovely puds and the quiz will not be too demanding. We are planning a round of questions for the children, or young at heart, amongst you so do come along. It should be fun.

Parish Quiet Day

The next Parish Quiet Day will be at Stanton House, Stanton St John, on Saturday 21 May, 10am to 4pm. Theme - The Prodigal Son. A day with lots of time for quiet and reflection in beautiful surroundings. For more information contact Helen Beetham (770923) or Christine Woodman (778078). If you plan to come, please sign up on the notice at the back of the church - number of places limited!

St Francis' News

After being on a big high with our recent 80th celebration, we have come down to earth with a bump, as we heard of the resignation of Susannah, our team vicar, for family reasons. She has had to give two months' notice and so will not be officially leaving until June. We think that by the time we have advertised the post, and arranged interviews with the applicants, we shall be lucky if our new person can take up office much before Christmas. We are so fortunate that we are in a Team Ministry situation with St James, so that we shall be covered by a member of the clergy for most of our services, and we are profoundly grateful for that.

We are also faced with the fact that our very able and energetic young organist, Patrick, will probably be leaving us in September to take up training for the ministry.

So things look like being quite difficult for us at this end of the parish for a while.

However, I know that we have a strong core of deeply committed Christians amongst our congregation, so we must not be too despondent. We shall have to pray that God will guide our little church community along the right paths and look forward with faith.

At this time the prayers of our fellow Christians in the parish will be greatly appreciated.

May God bless us all!

John Shreeve

Update on the Bell Fund

Since I wrote about the fragile state of bell number 5 in the tower of St James' I have more information to pass on. The estimated cost to fix it is £3,000. This is straight from the bell foundry company, Whites of Appleton. Thanks to a generous donation of £85 recently the fund now stands at £135 – a long way to go but I am sure we can do it. If you would like to make a contribution towards the fund could you please put it in an envelope marked "Bell Fund" and either hand it straight to Joan Coleman or pop it in the collection plate at church. We need to raise the money by Christmas if we are going to get the repair done in time for the Queen's Diamond Jubilee celebration. If not by then we will just keep going (even £1 coins will help!). Wring out your purses!

COWLEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Tuesday, 17th May 2011 commencing at 8.00 pm

The Common Lodging-House of Victorian England

An illustrated talk by Liz Woolley

At United Reformed Church, Temple Road, Cowley

Membership fee £15 (OAP £13)

Visitors welcome £3 per meeting

NEWS FROM KATIE THORNTON

Hello to all you dear Cowleyites! Wag one!?! Do you remember what that means? I hope you've all been practicing your cockney slang!

I realise that I haven't yet filled you in on my mad tube dash! I think I can effectively sum it up in one word: 'zzz.' Twelve hours, ... stops and a lot of pranks later and we did it! In fairness to the underground, we did manage to have a lot of fun. One friend brought a guitar and we had a raucous sing-song as we rode. Another friend brought a case of energy drinks, which had us practising our gymnastics on the poles. One person even brought a list of challenges and pranks, the most entertaining of which I will recount to you now;

One challenge was to conduct a small scale singing flashmob. For those of you who don't know, a flashmob is a gathering of people, who perform a random activity and then disperse nonchalantly. My team and I did this by fanning out in a crowded carriage, as if we weren't together, and then, at the top of his voice, one member of our team randomly started singing 'don't worry, be happy,' by Bob Marley.

"Here's a little song I wrote," everyone turned and stared at Josh. "You might want to sing it note for note," people shifted uncomfortably and tried to ignore him.

"Don't worry" another member of my team joined in, earning more stares. "Be happy."

"In every life we have some trouble" Yet more of us joined in, and by this point people were

openly staring at us, some with disgruntled looks of shock and others smiling encouragingly. "When you worry you make it double,"

"Don't worry. Be happy." At this last line we were all singing, and Matt, the most musically gifted member of our team began playing his guitar. We continued through the chorus, people now laughing and watching happily. Just as we finished the chorus we were pulling into the next station. Calmly, we all stopped singing, and got off the train as if we were any other Londoner navigating the underground. The other passengers watched us in stunned silence. Not a normal occurrence on the tube then!

Another prank we played was The Tarantula Fiasco. We were all sat in a carriage, talking loudly and excitedly about the fact that we had just been to a pet shop, at which I had purchased a tarantula. Every now and then I would pick up my bag and talk into it, where, supposedly, there was a tarantula in a small box. The other passengers had obviously picked up on what we were saying, and some either side of me even tried to slyly look over my shoulder and catch a glimpse of this unfriendly arachnid. As we were approaching our next stop I looked again into my bag, but this time cried in shock "my tarantula! My tarantula's gone," I jumped up and started looking for the non-existent spider, frantically asking the other passengers if they had seen a tarantula. Cue total panic and uproar! Just as a full blown terror set in, my team and I jumped off the tube, laughing at the shock

and confusion on the faces of the other passengers. A cruel prank, but an enormously funny one!

And of course, the reason for all this was XLP's trip to Ghana! Many of you were able to be at the afternoon talk i gave to share my experiences there. But for those of you who couldn't make it, I'll recount a couple to you hear now.

One of the memories which most stands out is sitting outside the house in which we were staying. Wa had had a long day, and had only just gotten in, and were ready to crash. But within half an hour of lounging around the house, local children began appearing outside the windows, peering in. We have them a little wave, but were too exhausted to move. However slowly more and more children began appearing outside the house, fighting and jostling to peer through the windows to catch a glimpse of the 'abrunies' (white people!). It was now impossible to ignore them, and we got up with fresh energy and went outside to meet them. There were about fifty children and only 8 of us. One of us produced a guitar and started jamming on the porch outside the house. A couple of the children joined him and began rapping along to the music, using their own lyrics and a few girls joined in and began singing along. Before we knew it everyone was dancing and singing, and we had a big party going on outside our house! It was so liberating to have created something out of nothing; we had no big speakers, no sound system, no recorded music, just a guitar and the raw talent of these

Gardening

What lovely weather we have had, but some gardeners are complaining about the lack of rain! We are never satisfied, are we? The grass is growing, but so are the weeds. The herbaceous plants are growing, showing nice new growth, but now we can see what has not survived the winter. Many of us have lost our cordylines (*cordyline australis*), hardy fuchsias, clematis, and other plants. I usually prune all the really dead-looking growth, but leave my dead-looking plants in the hope that they will sprout later. The fuchsias I have taken nearly down to the ground, and, hurrah, there are lots of lovely new shoots coming! So too have most of the clematis. Sometimes it is worth showing patience. Isn't Nature wonderful?

On Gardeners' World in mid April, my favourite gardener (Joe Swift) advised that we should cut the old stems down to the ground and then new shoots will appear around the old stems. I am watching carefully! My plant was only little, but I feel sorry for those with tree-like specimens.

I did sow some annual seeds back in the autumn, but these are not showing. I don't think that they are under the weeds. They just decided that Oxford was too cold this year. Why did the weeds not think the same? Some years it is a good idea to sow some seed in Autumn, this year it did not work. So

I have re-sown the seeds - after all, one usually has far too many seeds for one garden. Hopefully we have all sown extra for the Plant Sale (14th May). In mid April I sowed some French beans in toilet rolls and placed them in the cold-frame because it was still too cold to leave them outdoors. They were last year's seeds and have a very poor germination. Fresh seeds would have been better!

I don't always have to talk about cats, but my daughter was planting snowdrops-in-the-green and dug a hole. When she turned around, (having picked the plants up), Thomas was busy filling the hole for her and then carefully covering it over! Needless to say, she dug another hole for the bulbs!

My new plug plants have arrived and I have planted them out under cover. I love doing this. Also I love pricking the little seedlings out, all those baby plants tenderly placed into fresh compost. Never touch the stems, and they are ready to pot out of their seed tray once they have more than just seed leaves. This is a time of year when the windowsills are full, and so is the cold-frame. I have to leave myself a note to remind me to shut it up each night. One night of frost could destroy all those babies, but it is May now, frosts should be at an end!

Enjoy the work.

Diana Pope

kids who would never get a real opportunity to showcase it. You can't imagine the smiles!

Another evening, we went on a prayer walk around the tiny village Juaso. As we walked we met and talked to the people who lived there. They were wonderful, inspiring people. Desperately in need but gloriously happy. We asked people if we could pray with them, and everyone said yes. We asked them what they wanted prayed for. Some mentioned

specific issues; a sick relative, a dying child. Most however asked for prayer that they would see progression in their lifestyles. For me, a child of the Want-It-Now generation, it was arresting to see these people ask for so little. Their awareness of the way the Father works was inspiring. In the West, it can be easy to equate God with the tooth fairy: blindly granting our wishes. But the people I spoke with in Ghana seemed to realise that this isn't the way God uses his power, and I

learnt so much from them.

Lastly I want to thank you again for all you did to make my trip to Ghana possible. Without your prayers and support I wouldn't have been able to go, and I feel so blessed to have such a loving, supportive Church. I feel like I've grown so much since experiencing the Ghanaian culture; thank you for giving me that gift!

May God be with you all!
Blessings!

Katie

God in my life...

My first real experience of God took place around a year ago. A chance conversation with a complete stranger in the street left me in tears, the topic – God’s saving love. I bumped into a lovely lady (I am afraid I cannot remember her name) who struck up a conversation with me on my way back from the shops, we initially talked of the usual day to day things. We somehow got round to her being a Christian. I felt moved by how this lady explained the way God loves us, all of us no matter what. I had never felt this way about God before and it felt like he was not some heavenly power inaccessible to us but someone among us. She left saying she would pray for me - I guess her prayers were answered.

Previous to this conversation I had no real interest in God or religion. I studied Theology at A level but I think only so I could try and disprove what I had been taught over the years. I come from a strict Catholic background; this somehow

seemed to enforce my disbelief even further. I also believed up until a year ago that Christians were all straight laced, serious and sometimes a little crazy – I was completely wrong!!!

Something was pushing me to find out why I felt so emotional on the street that day, a Christian friend told me just to listen. I did but I could not hear anything. My message did not come as a voice telling me what to do, but more like a messenger in the form of Howard handing out leaflets for “Church at the Centre” for people who “don’t do Church”. I thought this perfectly fitted my description, so I went along. I spent much of the service feeling overwhelmed by emotion, not sad or angry just being moved by being in the presence of God. By the end I was a blubbing wreck!!! After a reassuring and tearful conversation with Howard I left knowing that what I had just experienced was God trying to say “look, here I am”, there is no other way of describing it!

Knowing I could not ignore this any longer I took the bold step of enrolling on an Alpha course. I was welcomed with open arms into the Church here at St James, and am very grateful for that. It made me feel comfortable enough to discuss the subjects on the Alpha course. Recently we attended a Holy Spirit day as part of the course, which has been one of the most moving days of my life. Sometimes the Holy Spirit is represented by fire, and the only way I can describe physically and emotionally how I felt that day was like I was on fire. If I had any doubt about God’s existence, power or love for us that moment has burnt it away.

I would now consider myself a Christian. I have lots to learn about God. It is exciting and scary at the same time, but I am glad to be a part of this Church in which I feel supported on my journey. This is my very new experience of God in my life.

Loretta Reid

ALPHA COURSE

The Alpha course which has just finished has been successful. The guests and the volunteers rapidly became a close group of friends, everyone enjoyed the course and learned a great deal. The discussions were lively, the Holy Spirit Day was splendid and quite beyond description and, of course, the food was great.

We are hoping that a Home Group will grow out of this course, the guests would like to keep together as a group but others will be encouraged to join as well.

We were blessed by God, he touched us all.

Una Dean

The Origins of Cowley

Part Twelve : “All on a market day”

There have been many theories and speculations as to why learned religious men gravitated towards the small town of Oxford during the twelfth century. No-one really knows. However by the time our young King Henry, son of the Empress Matilda, was crowned at Westminster in 1154, the early shoots of the university were springing up. Students seeking education would be housed in Halls and would flock to hear the teaching of friars and doctors throughout the town. Incidentally, New Inn Hall Street was the site of one of these halls and St Edmund Hall is the only college hall surviving from those early beginnings.

I often wonder whether Henry II had a soft spot for the people of Oxford because of the way they had supported his mother during the civil war with Stephen, especially when she successfully fled from the castle whilst under siege. Be that as it may, in 1191 Oxford was granted a charter from the King giving the citizens the right to hold a weekly market on a Wednesday with the option of a second one for livestock on a Saturday. These markets were enormously important to the prosperity of a town by raising its political status. There was no market without a royal charter.

So what was all this to do with our tiny villages of Church and Temple Cowley? Access to Oxford was the problem. The villagers could either make their way down to the Thames at Iffley and travel up river by boat or walk up to Mud Lane along Hollow Way and join the road to Oxford just beyond Bartlemas Chapel (the old leper house) opposite where The Regal now stands. Readers of my earlier articles will know that the problem for them was the Marsh with the swampy land and meres.

The growth of the university offered trading possibilities for villagers within walking distance of Oxford. All those academics and students needed to be clothed and fed. How, then could the folk of Cowley take their produce into town on market day? The solution was a causeway. And that is exactly what the Cowley people built.

Beginning somewhere near where Clive Road meets the Oxford Road, and reaching right down to The Regal we have that very causeway built in early medieval times. First huge tree trunks acted as piles (the uprights) to which woven hurdles were attached. These hurdles were made from hazel wands woven with pliable withy branches and were sunk deep into the marshy land. Between them loads and loads of stone rubble from the Headington quarries filled in the spaces until it would sink no more. After a paved surface covered the rubble the villagers could walk with their goods to market and drive their livestock to be sold. And the name of the road, even on the deeds of the map when we bought our house thirty years ago was Pile Road. Some elderly residents in Cowley still call it Pile Road.

Now, I guess you are thinking “How does she know that the road was made like that?” So I had better give you some evidence. There is a similar causeway built at around the same period between Folly Bridge and Christ Church College. About 40 years ago the Oxford Archaeological Unit had the opportunity to do a dig near the Police Station in St Aldates and they found exactly the same road building technique that I have described. Having discussed this with historians much more learned than me, I am happy to say that my theory has been corroborated.

So if I take the bus into Oxford on a Wednesday and see people who are off to market riding along Pile Road (Oxford and Cowley Roads) I often whisper a little “thank you” to dear old Henry II. Who knows, if he had not taken the wise decision to give us our Wednesday market (the same weekday since 1191) the people of Cowley might never have bothered to provide the route across the Marsh that is a part of all our lives.

If you would like to see the actual charter of Henry II it is on permanent display in The Museum of Oxford next to the Town Hall. Call me romantic if you like but I find it a magic link with our past history.

Rosanne Interviews Christine Knevett

Have you noticed that there has been quite a lot of talk lately about happiness? The group which call themselves Action for Happiness has “made it” on to the pages of our newspapers and even our television screens trying to define what makes us happy. Like him, or not, Ken Dodd’s song “Happiness” has some pretty sensible words in it and a couple of weeks ago I interviewed someone who epitomises all the wise words that we have been hearing about that illusive feeling. Christine is a person with “happiness in her soul” and most of it is because she enjoys doing things for other people.

As the second child in a family of eight children she learned very quickly how to be helpful at home. She was able, at an early age, to care for her younger siblings, a skill which she uses today in the care of her grandchildren and also in the quiet and competent way she helps to organise the Seashells mother-and-toddler group which meets in the Church Centre. You can tell by the way she talks about it that she loves every moment of it.

Born just after the second world war she was what is commonly known as a “baby boomer”, that generation of children who came along once family life had returned to normal. Her dad was in the RAF and then worked at the Pressed Steel. The family moved from Wootton to Cumnor and it was in Cumnor that Chris grew up. She told me that her mum always said she wanted four children but four went on to five then six and then twins made up the numbers to eight. Chris remembers helping to feed and look after the babies. Her

mum also taught her to cook (if you have ever tasted her lemon cheesecake you will know how well she learnt!).

Her village school in Cumnor was a brand new building with a big hall and a wide open play area. Although she was a bit shy (different from her big sister) she liked school. School plays and shows presented a bit of a problem because she would try to stand somewhere at the back of the stage not wanting to be seen. She loved English lessons, especially story-writing and reading, but maths was something of a stumbling block.

Some of her happiest childhood days were spent with the local village children, her little brothers and sisters in tow, wandering down to the Thames towards Bablockhythe where the old ferry crossed the river. They would walk or cycle along the towpath for hours. The games they played in the village were marbles, “tin-tan-copper” (ask Chris how that one goes), skipping, if the girl who owned the big rope could come out to play, and favourite of all, rounders. This last game also depended on the one child in the village who possessed a bat being willing to share it.

At eleven she went on to nearby Matthew Arnold secondary school which she found quite unsettling. Her favourite lessons were English, history and cookery, a subject she felt comfortable with thanks to her mum’s early training. The one aspect of secondary school which she hated was sports of any description. School Sports Day for her was a nightmare.

Her first job on leaving school at fifteen was at Milwards shoe

shop in Oxford. She would cycle to work, whizzing down Cumnor Hill in the mornings and toiling up its long slope at the end of a working day. The job was not really what she wanted so she applied for a post at Will R. Rose, the photographers, and found her niche. She worked at their premises in St Ebbes which was the developing and printing part of the business. Not only did they develop photographs taken by their own staff but also did work for Timothy Whites, Boots and Smiths. It is my bet that many of us have holiday snaps from the fifties and sixties which could have been developed by Chris.

After three happy years, though, she looked around for a job which paid higher wages. You see she had met and married her Bill and to take on a mortgage for a house was a big commitment. But how did she and Bill meet in the first place? Through ballroom dancing! When Chris was a teenager it was very fashionable to go dancing at Bretts’ Academy on a Saturday night. She, together with her older sister and a group of friends from the village would come into Oxford in their kitten heels, wide skirts and stiff, frilly petticoats. One of her friends picked out Bill, a very fanciable boy. However, he had his eye on Chris, asked her to dance and before long they were meeting regularly, often on Tuesdays as well as Saturdays. Chris admits that she was one of the young people whose rock ‘n’ rolling took over the dance floors of Oxford in the early sixties. She married Bill in 1966.

They began married life in a flat. She moved to a better-paid job

at Hunt and Broadhurst in order to afford to buy their house in Cornwallis Road. Bill worked at MG in Abingdon until it closed. His later working years up to retirement were with Rover. Their first son, Peter, was born in 1969 and two years later another son, David, came along.

Chris spoke warmly of her close friendship with Maida Simmonds, who lived with her husband John, and their two children in the house opposite. It was through Maida's efforts and determination that Florence Park Playschool began and flourished for twenty-one years. Christine was her right-hand woman for sixteen of those years.

It was through their friendship with close neighbours Ruby and Ralph Cadle that Maida and Chris began to attend services at St James'. They discussed the fact that they wanted to go to church with Ruby and Ralph. Chris has never wanted to find another church since that first service. Now she is fully involved in the things that make her happy. She has six grandchildren whom she loves and values enormously. She is one of a team of people who run Seashells, she helps to clean the church, arranges church flowers, helps to cater for the regular parish Sunday lunch and is never happier than when she is helping and supporting family, friends and neighbours. She misses Maida, who sadly died at too early an age, but she and Bill are still close to the family over the road. And, yes, they are closely involved in their Florence Park community

together with their other friends and neighbours (there is a title for another song I think!)

How would you describe yourself as a small child?

Shy, quiet. I loved music and singing. I used to go to chapel on Sunday and I liked singing the hymns. Dad had a large collection of records from Alma Cogan to Gilbert and Sullivan and classical music too. Mum was always singing. We children might be cross with her but she'd just keep on singing to stop us grumbling!

Have you a never-to-be-forgotten childhood memory?

It was a naughty thing really. I was teasing my friend, she wanted for rounders bat back and I was holding it over a drain. She grabbed it, I let go and it went down a drain. I was horrified because I knew I was wrong to do it.

Has anyone had a strong influence in your life?

I wanted to bring up my children as my mother brought us up. We were never smacked. Mind you she used to pick up the copper-stick but she never used it.

Has your faith been with you from an early age?

Yes, we were sent to Sunday School. At chapel we were invited to go on the outing to the seaside so that swayed it! We all went to chapel. My faith later led me to confirmation.

Do you have a treasured possession?

Before Maida died she said

she wanted me to have her St Christopher. Afterwards John gave it to me. I have got cards and things that the children have made when they were small which I treasure.

What is your opinion of life today?

Quite depressing. Life has become very materialistic and people want things NOW – they cannot wait or save for them. Also, family life seems to have become less important, that is a pity.

If you could change something in a big way what would it be?

I would have a peaceful world, that would solve nearly everything.

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

No particular time. I have had some very happy times in my life and I still am.

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

I like a good drama on TV. I love to watch good acting. I enjoy the ballet. Music: my CDs range from opera to Beethoven and other classical composers. I also love the Beatles, Elvis and Cliff Richard but I do not like swing, jazz or blues.

What plans do you have for the future?

Just to keep on doing the things I do now at home and at church. I am a very contented person. I do not want to leave Cowley, I love it here!

Notes from Number 93

If you walk up Crescent Road, you will not see a house numbered 93 (or 83, for that matter). It has got something to do with the plot sizes. Anyway, living at number 95, next door to 91, as we do, it has not stopped me designating my garden shed as number 93 and the door has the numerals screwed onto it as proof!

My shed is only a few years old replacing a rotten and ivy-clad wreck. My husband, Graham, really enjoyed getting the sledgehammer out to smash up the old one and filling two large skips in the process. The debris included the 1970's wallpaper that had decorated the inside. I think a son of a previous owner lived in this shed, together with the dodgy electrics, while his room in the house was let to a tenant!

My new shed was made down the road by H and S Sheds and is quite big with windows on 3 sides. I particularly wanted a window facing downhill and I can see the Mosque, Magdalen Tower, St Mary's Church spire, Tom Tower and the Radcliffe Camera among other notable buildings of our fair city, though the trees planted 20-odd years ago in Cowley Marsh Park are doing their best to gradually obliterate the view!

Recently it has got rather cramped with all the pots I have been given for the Plant Sale. But I have had a good tidy up. Pots have been washed and stacked in the two Ikea bookshelves kindly donated by my daughter and a friend, who, post-University, can now afford less-basic replacements.

I had an electric drill cum screwdriver as a Christmas present one year and the latter function was very handy in converting part of my son's old futon base to a potting bench. This is where I spend a lot of my time at the moment.

I have been seed sowing. Most of these go into my small electric propagator to get them germinating

and then into my rather aging greenhouse. The next process is to prick out either into trays or individual pots. I get through rather a lot of compost! I am aiming to get a really good variety of material ready for the Plant Sale on Saturday 14th May. I have terrible doubts as to whether I have given everything the right amount of time to grow so they are at a good size for sale. By the time for last year's sale I had planks supported by up-turned buckets all over the lawn holding stuff that couldn't fit in the greenhouse any longer and needing hardening off anyway.

By the day of the sale, I will have gone cross-eyed making sure everything is labelled and I will have made lightning strikes to Tesco, Cowley Road for cardboard veg boxes to transport my plants up to the Church Centre.

By 6pm on Friday 13th (no, it will be a good day!) I will be making many car trips up to Beauchamp Lane to set up the sale for the following morning.

Will YOU be there? Can you help in any way this year? Can you bring along some plants? Can you help sell on the day or contribute in the kitchen? Can you bake for the cake stall, make jams or pickles or provide stuff for the White Elephant?

If not, please come and spend your money. I am sure there will be something that you will love. All proceeds this year will go into the Churches Fabric Fund.

NB I have borrowed Pauline Shephard's wording which she used for last year's Craft Fair on the posters : "Proceeds towards the upkeep of our 12th Century Parish Church of St. James" to get customers interested, but our Fabric Fund is used for both our churches with priority to the most immediate need.

Joan Coleman

BOOK OF THE MONTH

THE WONDER OF THE BEYOND - by David Adam (SPCK).

CELEBRATING THE KING JAMES VERSION - by Rachel Boulding (BRF).

These are two recently published titles which I have read and am happy to recommend.

David Adam is the author of several books of prayers and also writes about Celtic Christianity. He was for 13 years Vicar of the Holy Island of Lindisfarne, which we look forward to visiting on holiday this summer. However this new title is rather different from his earlier books because it is an autobiography. Leaving school at 15 to work in the local coal mine, he became increasingly aware of the need to have a purpose in life. He blurted out to his father one morning in the local café, 'I want to be a vicar'. The Society of the Sacred Mission at Kelham (regarded as 'the commando course of the Church of England') was his tough training ground and after two curacies he embarked on a twenty three year ministry in Danby in the North York Moors. During this period he became increasingly convinced that a simple approach to prayer would be helpful to his parishioners and his first book of prayers in the Celtic Tradition was published. Many more bestselling volumes were to follow during the exhilarating, exhausting and unforgettable years he served as Vicar of the Holy Island of Lindisfarne. As David Adam says in his introduction to the book, it is not just an autobiography, but reveals points in his life when he was nudged to open his eyes and his heart to move in new directions and into deeper awareness of what was all about him.

This year is the 400th anniversary of the publication of the King James Authorised Version of the Bible. For many years it was the 'standard' translation used in this country in churches and elsewhere, but during the 20th century it came increasingly to be superseded by more modern language translations, so much so that we today only rarely hear it read. Although I accept the need for this, nevertheless 'through its own remarkable prose and poetry and its influence on Britain's literature and oral culture, the King James version has touched the lives of secular audiences and those of different religions' and doesn't deserve to be forgotten. To quote the foreword by Frank Field MP 'Celebrating the King James Version brings to us all the opportunity to recapture some of the riches of language and deep messages of the bible'.

This book is a collection of a hundred short daily readings from the Authorised Version with brief comments on each by Rachel Boulding, which one can use as daily devotional readings. Although there are some seasonal sections, most of the sections can be read in any order. The passages can either be read one per day as a time of reflection and prayer, or they can be read in groups of several during a longer quiet time.

Tony Beetham

Name the Couple / Royal Wedding Quiz

- | | |
|------------------------------|---|
| 1. Les and May Morgan | 1. Norman Hartnell |
| 2. Howard and Carol Thornton | 2. Bees (they appear on her family crest) |
| 3. Les and Sally Hemsworth | 3. It is a symbol of faithfulness |
| 4. Frank and Rosanne Butler | 4. Wales |
| 5. John and Marlene Shreeve | 5. Broadlands, the home of Lord and Lady Mountbatten |
| 6. Eric and Connie Uren | 6. 1936 |
| 7. Alan and Margaret Martin | 7. Henry VII |
| | 8. 21 |
| | 9. The Duke of York, later George VI |
| | 10. The Duchess of York, later Queen Elizabeth (the Queen Mother) |

SAINT OF THE MONTH St Dunstan

If you have ever visited the magnificent abbey in the City of Bath you might have seen a fine stained-glass window depicting the coronation of King Edgar by St Dunstan, then Archbishop of Canterbury, in 973 AD. However, Dunstan had experienced the reigns of four early Saxon Kings previously and had quite an eventful Christian life to boot. Here is part of his story.

He was born into a rich family closely connected by royal blood to the Kings of Wessex. The King on the throne at that time was Athelstan, grandson of Alfred the Great. The family estates were situated in Somerset so it is not surprising to learn that young Dunstan was sent to Glastonbury Abbey to be educated. Also as part of his education he was sent to the court of Athelstan where as a young child he had strange dreams and visions and believed in the supernatural. He, unwisely, talked about this and, being accused of practising magic, was banished from the court. The other pages of the court threw him into a swamp!

Alphege, bishop of Winchester, was a sympathetic relative and took the lad under his wing. He tried to persuade Dunstan to take holy orders. This suggestion was refused at first because he thought that he might one day like to marry. Once he had recovered from a serious illness, though, he changed his mind and took his vows. He returned to Glastonbury.

As he grew a little older he became convinced that everyone in holy orders should have a skill or craft at his, or her, finger-tips and he learnt to work in metal. He became a skilled blacksmith.

After Athelstan's death he was succeeded by his younger brother, Edmund. Dunstan was called back to court as an advisor but did not last long because he was too outspoken about the behaviour that went on there. However Edmund obviously held him in esteem because after what might have been a very nasty riding accident (whilst out hunting) the King asked Dunstan to ride with him to Glastonbury Abbey where the two men knelt in prayer. By royal decree Dunstan was then made Abbot. He was only twenty-one and Edmund was about one year older.

The new Abbot set about imposing strict rules of behaviour and religious practice at Glastonbury.

He was also a firm believer in education and the Abbey became a famous school. A year after this Edmund died whilst trying to help his major-domo to throw out an insolent outlaw who had infiltrated the court. He fell on the outlaw's dagger.

The next King was the youngest brother of the three. His name was Edred, a great friend of Dunstan's. When the new King offered Abbot Dunstan the bishopric of Crediton the offer was turned down. However he became a strong influence during Edred's reign.

Edwy, son of Edmund, succeeded his uncle. He was a very handsome teenager who quickly fell out with Dunstan. At his coronation feast he left his bishops and thanes for the company of a beautiful girl, a close relation, with whom marriage was impossible. The court sent Dunstan to put a stop to what was going on and bring the King back into line. The story goes that he used some strong and "intemperate" language to express his displeasure. In the end he brought the youngster back by force but, of course, Edwy was the King and Dunstan was dismissed and outlawed. He fled to Flanders, took refuge in a Benedictine monastery and learnt, for the first time, what a real, strict, monastic life was all about. Two years later after an uprising and unrest within the Kingdom of Wessex and the kingdoms north of the Thames, Edwy lost his throne to Edgar, his younger brother.

Dunstan was recalled back to England and made Bishop of Worcester and then London. The year was 959AD and Dunstan became Edgar's principal advisor throughout his entire reign. In 961AD he became Archbishop of Canterbury and the prosperity of the kingdom was largely due to him. History tells us that together with Oswald of York and Ethelwold of Abingdon, Dunstan made sweeping reforms of the monasteries of England and marked an important step in the stability of the country. Not that Dunstan was a subservient courtier. Whenever Edgar stepped out of line morally he was chastised by his Archbishop. On one occasion he misbehaved with a nun and Dunstan imposed a seven years' penance upon him.

He also imposed a high standard of moral behaviour upon the lives of the clergy. They were banned from hunting, hawking or playing dice and

RECIPES FOR MAY

These recipes would make a fine foundation for a really good dinner for Whitsun. (Or any time, of course!)

Lemon Soufflé

- 2 big lemons
- 3 eggs
- 6ozs caster sugar
- 1 packet of powdered gelatine
- ¼ pint (small carton) double cream

Separate eggs, putting yolks into small bowl that will fit over one of your saucepans.

Keep whites in large bowl for later.

Beat the yolks and sugar together with wooden spoon.

Add lemon juice, then place bowl over a saucepan of boiling water leaving a space between the water and the bottom of the bowl. Stir till mixture thickens.

Make up the gelatine using instructions on the packet and add to the lemon mixture.

Whisk hard till mixture very foamy.

Whisk egg whites to firm snow

Partially whip the cream

Using a metal spoon, fold in the cream and lemon mixture to the meringue.

Pour into soufflé dish, chill and decorate with rosettes of whipped cream

their drinking cups were regulated with a series of pegs to avoid over indulgence. When an important man in the kingdom contracted an unlawful marriage, Dunstan excommunicated him. The man appealed for absolution from the pope and got it. However, Dunstan flatly refused to accept this saying that he would not sin against the Lord by doing so.

It is no wonder he has been made a saint. He has been described as a befriender of the poor and needy, an unwearied teacher who was loving and

Stuffed Shoulder of Lamb

½ shoulder of lamb with the blade bone removed

Stuffing

5ozs white or wholemeal breadcrumbs

2ozs butter (melted)

1 onion finely chopped

2 teaspoons chopped parsley

1 teaspoon chopped lemon thyme

1 egg

Juice of one large orange

Combine all the stuffing ingredients in a large mixing bowl.

Place stuffing in the space left after the joint was boned.

Tie up with string.

Roast under foil (170° - 180° C) for about 1½ hours.

Remove foil and roast for a further 30 minutes.

Remove string and then serve.

(If you have rosemary in the garden lay a sprig of this over the joint whilst it is roasting)

Don't forget the mint sauce!

gentle with his scholars. He loved to persuade people to make up their quarrels but was never afraid to condemn sinful behaviour throughout his life.

He celebrated communion for the last time on Ascension Day in 988 AD when he announced his approaching death. He died the following Saturday on May 19th which has been commemorated ever since as his saint's day.

DIARY DATES TO REMEMBER

Puddings and Quiz	Friday, 6 May 2011 7 pm St James' Church Centre £3 a head (£2 for children)
St Francis Church Annual Congregational Meeting - Adjourned Meeting	Sunday, 8 May 2011 After the Sunday Service
Parish Plant Sale	Saturday, 14 May 2011 From 10 am St James' Church Centre
Christian Aid Week	15 to 21 May 2011
Mothers' Union	Monday, 15 May 2011, 2.30 pm at St James' Church Centre Speaker: Primrose Gallimore, former leader of the Oxford Deanery of Mothers' Union
Cowley Local History Society	Tuesday, 17 May 2011 commencing at 8.00 pm At United Reformed Church, Temple Road, Cowley The Common Lodging-House of Victorian England An Illustrated Talk by Liz Woolley
Parish Quiet Day	Saturday, 21 May 2011 at Stanton House Led by Helen and Tony Beetham

The Prayer of Cyrus Brown

(By Sam Walter Foss 1858-1911)

"The proper way for a man to pray"

Said Deacon Lemuel Keyes,

"And the only proper attitude;

Is down upon his knees."

"No, I should say the way to pray,"

Said Reverend Doctor Wise,

"Is standing straight with outstretched arms;

And rapt and upturned eyes."

"Oh, no, no, no," said Elder Slow

"Such posture is too proud.

A man should pray with eyes fast-closed;

And head contritely bowed."

"It seems to me his hands should be;

Austerely clasped in front;

With both thumbs pointing towards the ground,"

Said Reverend Doctor Blunt.

"Last year I fell in Hidgekin's well;

Headfirst," said Cyrus Brown,

"With both my heels a-stickin' up;

And my head a-pointin' down.

"And I made a prayer right then and there;

The best prayer I ever said;

The Prayingest prayer I ever prayed;

A-standin' on my head."

PAROCHIAL CHURCH COMMITTEE:

Church Wardens:

St Francis: Norah Shallow

St James: David Stanley

Parochial Church Councillors:

Maureen Chatterton

Joan Coleman

Una Dean

Gerald Ives

Nathan Phillips

Joyce Titchell (with many apologies for omitting Joyce's name last month)

Lesley Williams

Deanery Synod Representatives:

Betty Mitchell

John Shreeve

Marlene Shreeve

Christine Woodman

ST JAMES CHURCH COMMITTEE:

Frank Butler

Rosanne Butler

Pat Chambers

Peter Dewey

Ron Maguire

Margaret Martin

May Morgan

Margaret Weller

ST FRANCIS CHURCH COMMITTEE:

Insufficient people attended the St Francis Church Annual Congregational meeting on 6th April to elect members of the Church Committee, and the meeting was adjourned to Sunday, 8th May 2011, after the church service when soup and rolls will be available if required.

THE COMING OF SPRING

I have always maintained that given the right weather conditions, England in Springtime is one of the best places to be in all the world. And I have always, in my mind, associated the coming of spring with the Festival of Easter. Something that has obviously occurred to others, for the people in the Lake District refer to their wild daffodils as Lenten Lilies, because they nearly always appeared during Lent.

This year has been no exception because in spite of our cold hard winter, the blossom on the trees and in the hedgerows has been better than ever. Blackthorn and Hawthorn, Cherry and Almond have been really heavy with blooms, almost like snow in places. The recent burst of warm weather has also brought out our wild flowers in abundance. And what a colourful heritage we have there, with so many varieties. Sadly many youngsters today do not know their names, or where to find them. Flowers like celandines, wild violets, cowslips, bluebells, wood anemones, wood crowfoot, speedwell, cuckoo flower, wild pear, sea pink, foxgloves, snakeshead fritillaries. The latter used to grow in abundance in the meadows near Iffley, and now they are an endangered species. The country people used to know them well, and had their own names for them. In olden times, before the NHS, they used some of them to make their own salves and potions and ointments. Simple country remedies to cure their ailments. Apart from blossoms and flowers, the sheer vibrant green of the leaves as they first appear, and the new growth of bright green grass are overwhelming to the eye. Couple all this with the birdsong as our feathered friends whiz about building their nests and raising their young – along with the butterflies and dragonflies – so colourful – and you have something very special indeed. Something to treasure, something to protect.

John Shreeve

SIGNIFICANT DATES IN MAY

The tallest ever maypole was lifted into place in the Strand in London on May 1st 1661. The 130ft pole took twelve sailors four hours to erect watched by a massive crowd to the sound of trumpets and drums. It was also the longest standing maypole remaining in place till 1717 when Sir Isaac Newton bought it to support a new telescope.

Also on May 1st 1840, the first “Penny Black” postage stamps were issued to the public.

On May 3rd in 326 AD St Helena, mother of the Roman Emperor, reported that she had discovered the cross on which Christ was crucified in Jerusalem. The cross, complete with nails was supposedly discovered in an old underground cistern.

May 6th 1954 saw Roger Bannister, a medical student, run the first four-minute mile at the Iffley Road running track. His time was 3 minutes 39.4 seconds.

Amy Johnson arrived in Australia on 24th May 1930 after the first female solo flight from London. Her 10,000 mile journey took just over 19 days. At one point she was forced to use sticking plaster to repair the wings of her plane.

On 29th May 1953 Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing were the first men to stand on the summit of Mount Everest.

In 1910 the Girl Guide movement was founded on 31st May.

How many do you remember?

Headlight dip-switches on the floor of the car
Ignition switches on the dashboard
Trousers leg clips for bicycles without chain guards
Soldering irons you heated on a gas burner
Using hand signals for cars without turn indicator

A friend was cleaning out her grandmother's house and she brought me an old Royal Crown Cola bottle. In the bottle top was a stopper with a bunch of holes in it...I knew immediately what it was, but my daughter had no idea. She thought they had tried to make it a salt shaker or something. I knew it as the bottle that sat on the end of the ironing board to 'sprinkle' clothes with because we didn't have steam irons. Man, I am old.

Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am Holy Communion

10.00 am Sung Eucharist

Every fourth Sunday: *Church at the Centre*

Every third Sunday: *Sunday Lunch*

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am Parish Eucharist

Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	8.15 am 2.30 pm	Morning Prayer – St James Parish Mothers' Union – St James (3rd Mon)
Tuesday	8.15 am 10.00 am 12.00 pm 12.30 pm 2.30 pm	Morning Prayer – St James Seashells Toddler Group : St James Eucharist – St James Tuesday Lunch Club – St James Friends of St Francis – St Francis (2nd & 4th Tues)
Wednesday	8.15 am 9.15 am	Morning Prayer – St James Morning Prayer – St Francis
Thursday	8.15 am 7.30 pm	Morning Prayer – St James Healing Service (1st Thurs) St James/St Francis (alternate months)
Friday	8.15 am 5.30 pm	Morning Prayer – St James Evening Prayer – St James

Home Groups

Leader	Time / Venue
Una Dean	Alternate Monday mornings at 10:15am in Una's home
Connie Uren:	Alternate Tuesday afternoons at 2:30pm in St James Church Centre Lounge
Friends of St Francis: (John Streeve/Molly Oliver)	Tuesday alternate afternoons at 2:30pm in St Francis Church
Tony Beetham	Alternate Tuesday evenings at 7:30pm in St James Church Centre Lounge
Patrick Gilday:	Alternate Wednesday evenings at 7:30pm in St Francis Church upper room
Rosanne Butler	Alternate Thursday mornings at 10:30am in St James Church Centre Lounge
Mark Oxbrow	Alternate Thursday evenings at 7:30pm in Mark's home

The Parish of Cowley office in St James Church Centre is open

Thursday 12.45 pm to 4.30 pm
Friday 9.00 am to 1.15 pm
and by appointment.

Parish Secretary:
Elaine Ulett

Ministry Team Telephone:
01865 747 680
parishofcowley@hotmail.co.uk

Team Rector

Revd Howard Thornton

Cowley Rectory
11 Beauchamp Lane
Oxford OX4 3LF
Howard has Friday as his day off.

Team Vicar

Revd Susannah Reide

27 Don Bosco Close
Oxford OX4 2LD
Susannah has Monday as her day off.

Associate Priest

Revd Richard Chand

richard@cowleyteamministry.co.uk

Non-Stipendiary Ministers

Revd Canon Mark Oxbrow

13 Annesley Road
Oxford, OX4 4JH
Tel: 01865 461953
markoxbrow@aol.com

Revd Amanda Bloor

Diocesan Church House
North Hinksey
Oxford OX2 0NB
Tel: 01865 208 221
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Churchwardens:

David Stanley Tel: 776602
Norah Shallow Tel: 765199

Deputy Wardens:

Margaret Martin Tel: 718532
John Shreeve

Hall Bookings

Pat Sansom Tel: 778516

www.cowleyteamministry.co.uk