

Alpha

I've been having a series of conversations with some people about the "good old days." These chats don't go back to the 1940s; we're talking about their great experiences on the Alpha Course about 12 years ago. For a lot of people in the Parish of Cowley it was a formative time, when they discovered faith in a new and vibrant way.

Over 18 million people world-wide have been on the Alpha Course. Sometime after the millennium celebrations had died down, Alpha came to Cowley and when I speak with people who attended, their eyes still shine and they become quite animated. One woman told me, "I thought it sounded so good. I learned so much. You think you know, but as you speak with others you discover there is so much more to life and faith." Of course there are lots of stories about the impact Alpha has had on people's lives. "We found it so poignant. My husband loved it. There was a real closeness of the people. He questioned everything and that openness brought people together."

I suppose that's why Alpha is the UK's favourite way to share the best news ever. It's based on a deep understanding of God and His love for each of us. It helps participants ask the questions that puzzle them. It gives a personal understanding of a faith that brings hope and joy and empowers people to love. One person said it's "a refreshing conversation with genuine, friendly, kind people who are there to get some

answers." Another said, "Alpha allows me to go out once a week, and have a good meal with some good people who want to talk about interesting things." I say, "Let's do it."

Yes. Let's do it. If you've been thinking about faith and what it's all about, let's do it. If you wonder about life and think it's worth exploring a bit more, let's do it. If you're an adult wondering about confirmation, Alpha is a great place to deepen your understanding of faith.

Here is what others are saying: "It is a great open environment where you can really speak your mind."

An atheist thought of God as "an invisible disembodied intelligence that has a personal relationship with humans that he then blames for their failings." He found the Alpha Course amazing, challenging and full of new ideas. Anyone is welcome to take the Alpha Course. Maybe you should too.

If you have never been on an Alpha Course I hope you'll look into it. If you don't like church and you're not sure that God is real, it might be an interesting night out. If you have wondered what the purpose of life is, come and explore. If you have been going to church for a while but you have never been, here's your chance. Try it.

If you've already been on an Alpha Course and you think, "I wish my friend would come and explore this idea of faith", would you mention it to them? Please start thinking and praying about how you might invite

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someone to come to Alpha. Why would they come? Well, people who have been say, "Alpha is a place where you can explore the meaning of life."

The Alpha course starts each evening with a lovely meal that we share together. Then there's a short talk. The talks are designed to encourage debate and explore the basics of the Christian faith in a friendly, honest and informal

environment. And then there's some time for discussion. You can talk and ask questions, or you can sit and listen; there's no pressure. And there's no charge; the dinner and the course materials are free.

The next Alpha course begins on Monday, 13 January, at 7 pm. I hope you can join us.

HOWARD

Editor's Letter

Dear Readers

Wasn't it good, last month, to have all the news from our local Scouts, Guides and Brownies? I don't know how many of you belonged to the uniform groups but I know in my Girl Guiding days that there were never the amazing choices of activities there are today for our young people. The occasional hike, the annual camp and activities to gain proficiency badges were highlights of our year but how about abseiling, tree climbing to say nothing of face massages and decorating false nails! Lucky youngsters, what fun they have!!

Talking of fun, did you notice that last month's magazine had one of its jokes printed twice? I am not sure if our publishing lady, Nicki, simply made a mistake or if it was her deliberate joke about a joke.

I wonder if, like me, you are getting fed up with this "festive season" which seems to be going on from the middle of October? We have been urged to book our Christmas parties in hotels and restaurants since June and now we have got "seasonal" cakes and mince pies in our supermarkets with an "eat by" date for the end of November. I even saw that our Lord Mayor is going to "roll up her sleeves" and help homeless people to make mince pies on the first weekend of November in Oxford City centre. That's even before Remembrance Day. When do people think Christmas really is? I am not being "bah-

humbug" (at least I hope not), I just want Christmas to happen at Christmas. How about you?

For our December issue we would love to include any stories you have about Christmases in the past. Maybe you remember the first time you found out about Santa Claus (and kept it a secret) or perhaps a war-time Christmas or even a special kiss under the mistletoe. It might even be a Christmas meal that went wrong! Come on, readers, don't be shy, do share your memories.

Most of our regular features in The Chronicle are there as a result of suggestions made by you: the recipes, book of the month, saint of the month, etc. We try really hard to keep each issue fresh and interesting but if there is anything that you would like us to change or a new subject you would like us to cover, please let us know. After all we want to make our magazine one that you enjoy and good value for your 40 or 50p each month.

Lots of you have, in the past, remarked on, and enjoyed, my recipe for mulled wine. I must admit Frank and I have yet to find a better one. With the mulled wine season coming up do let me know if you would like a copy (it has been in past copies of The Chronicle a couple of times).

Cheers and God Bless

Rosanne

COWLEY WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

Meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday each month at St James Church Centre, at 2 pm.

We did not meet in August but our September meeting was very enjoyable. Helen Fountain brought along clothes that we used to wear. The majority of us had all worn clothes or shoes and nylons of that era, but it was very interesting to see how clothing has changed over the years.

On October 16th Russell Cherry brought slides and spoke of his walk along The Thames from its source to Oxford. We all recognised spots along

the route, especially all the pubs!

Our November meeting, on the 20th, will include Clive Jones speaking on The Mountains of Nepal.

Our annual lunch will be held at The Longwall in November.

We are always looking for new members, do come along and see us – 2 – 4.30 pm on the third Wednesday afternoon in the month. You will be made very welcome.

Jean Chilton

Finding Jesus

I was privileged to be part of a slightly different baptism within the parish of Cowley last month and able to listen to four wonderful stories of people finding their way to Jesus. St. James and St. Francis churches have a lot to offer us but they both lack one thing – a baptistery, a deep pool of water! As the four people to be baptised on 27 October, all from the Anglican Asian Living Church, were adults who wished to be baptised by emersion, we had to move to South Oxford Baptist Church and use their facilities. Before Rev. Richard Chand and Rev Howard Thornton descended into the waters to 'bury the candidates with Christ so that they might rise with Him', each person told us how they had come to be followers of Jesus. I came away from the service amazed at how God calls people in so many different ways, through sickness, through the witness of a daughter, through seeing changes in the life of a friend, or simply discovering that Jesus is the one you have always been looking for. Thank you to Sangeeta, Jasbir and Kashila Mattu and Pankaj Hans for sharing

your stories of faith with us. What a joy it is to have the Anglican Asian Living Church as part of our parish and also to have Richard's ministry in all sorts of other ways as well. Please pray for these four new 'followers of Jesus' as they continue to share their story with family and friends. If you have not yet discovered Jesus for yourself then come and ask us to tell you our stories. And don't worry, if you don't like deep water we can also baptise by sprinkling!



Mark Oxbrow

MOTHERS' UNION NEWS

The October branch meeting was a very busy one with lots to discuss.

John Shreeve, our branch leader, passed on the sad news to those members who had not heard of the death of Tony Biggs, the husband of Mary. Mary is one of our most valued and much loved members and we all send her our sincere sympathies.

The new national Faith and Policy Watch compiled by the Mothers' Union has featured this year on the abuse and inequality suffered by women around the world. Although we, as a small branch, feel relatively powerless to intervene in such huge injustices we are convinced that prayer is powerful so with the help of Skye, who is one of our members, we are going to join together in corporate prayer in a week or two (date and time to be arranged). We are also sending a letter to our MP, Mr Andrew Smith, asking him to add our voice to this issue when it is addressed in parliament in the near future.

As a result of the excellent profit from the recent wine, cheese and poetry evening it was agreed that £50 would be sent to the Mothers' Union Wheels Appeal.

The theme and arrangements for our Christmas tree in the church festival were discussed. In an attempt to show our respect and solidarity with women around the world we intend to decorate our tree with individual members' prayers written on coloured ribbons.

Our speaker was the director of the charity Seesaw, one of the chosen charities for our Christmas tree festival. She spoke most movingly about the work Seesaw is doing to support children who have suffered bereavement. Each incident is different and the volunteers, fourteen of them, who counsel, befriend and support each child and his/her family, have a huge task on hand. The key to helping, she told us, is to listen to the child and allow the grieving process to take its own time. Wonderful work, well worth our support.

Our next meeting on 18th November should be one to stir the memory. Les Hemsworth has an enormous selection of photographs of early Cowley which he is bringing to project on to the big screen in the Church Centre. As ever we emphasise that our meetings are open to visitors who are always made most welcome so if you or any family or friends would like to come and see Cowley as it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century do join us.

Memories of Cowley

The picture of (mainly) pedal cyclists in the October Chronicle reminded me of the time when my sons went to the nursery school by St Francis Church. I would set out on my bicycle at 11.40 am to be ahead of the car workers who left 5 minutes later to go home to dinner. The children were due to be collected at 12 noon.

If I got caught in the mob I found myself acting as they did – shooting forward to occupy any space in the pack which appeared in front of me. There was a strange compulsion to do this.

Then the roads were fairly quiet until the men rushed back to work. So our ride home was quieter.

I can remember cycling up the Cowley Road from the Plain, riding in the gutter to avoid the oncoming host of cyclists. Now I look out of my window and see BMW's enormous car park, where arrival and departure seem to be staggered and there are few cyclists. Life has changed a lot in 50 plus years.

Connie Uren

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN COWLEY

Uniting

St James, John Bunyan Baptist

Temple Cowley United Reformed

St Francis

The former very large grouping 'Churches together in Cowley and district', incorporating Blackbird Leys, Littlemore and Rose Hill, has generally split into smaller localised groups, for more effective mission working and sharing Christian fellowship. The Churches together in Cowley steering group plans to ensure a pattern of seasonal joint services to bring our membership together, alongside public events at which we make ourselves known to the people of Cowley. There was a stimulating Sunday evening Pentecost service at John Bunyan church earlier this year; now you are invited to launch the season of Advent together :

Advent Sunday : Sunday 1 December 6.00 pm at St James

More details will be in Link nearer the time

Carol Singing in Templars Square : Saturday 21 December 2.00 pm

With the Salvation Army Band : all voices needed!

St. James' Church

CHRISTMAS GIFTS and CRAFT FAIR

'Calling all Crafters'

At our annual Christmas Gifts and Craft sale, this year on Saturday 16th November, we plan to have a specific Craft stall to display and sell the great talent there is among members and friends of our congregation. We are hoping to have just 1 or 2 items from each person so that a wider variety of different crafts can be displayed.

If you have a 'crafty' talent such as knitting, painting, sewing, crocheting etc. and would like to join in this event please talk with either Margaret Weller (775150) or Christine Woodman (778078).

HELP - To make the Christmas Gifts and Craft Fair a success as in previous years we would be most grateful please for items for the Tombola, home-made cakes and unwanted gifts and crafts for the St. James stall.

The proceeds of this year's Fair will go towards the refurbishment of the Vestry and surrounding area.

Film Club

October saw the club celebrate its first birthday with an impressive number of members who turned up on a wet and windy evening. After our usual cup of coffee or tea and a slice of birthday cake (complete with a candle) we enjoyed a film full of music, laughter and tears.

May Morgan, a regular member, has recommended our November film namely "The Bishop's Wife". It is a seasonal story of light romance starring Lorretta Young, David Niven and Cary Grant. As you can guess it is a slightly older film but none-the-less a really good production. Film club in November will be on the 8th of the month.

The December film on the 13th will be "White Christmas" with Bing Crosby, Danny Kaye, Vera Ellen and Rosemary Clooney. Most people have already seen it but we are sure that anyone who wants to get their Christmas off to a flying start will want to come and enjoy it. It is very suitable for young children and they would be most welcome. By the way, Friday, 13th of December falls right in the middle of the Christmas Tree Festival so we shall be up to our eyes in seasonal spirit.

We are continuing to put nearly £50 a month into parish funds, so long may Film Club continue to flourish.



FLORENCE PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE

These good people have recently been in touch with The Chronicle to tell us about the many interesting activities and projects they have in hand. As they are part of our parish we are happy to include news of them for our readers' information. Do take advantage of anything which appeals to you, they would be so delighted to welcome you.

Every Saturday morning between 10 am and 2 pm the Centre is open for Fairtrade coffee, cakes, breakfasts, lunches and newspapers. This is an initiative run by an organisation called Equip which helps unemployed people to find pathways to work giving them the skills they need to interact with the public. It received the backing of Andrew Smith, MP, who is a keen supporter of such schemes.

On Wednesdays, 7.30 – 9.30 pm there is a Craft Circle where beginners or experienced crafters

can practice their skills and pass on expertise to others.

Tuesday nights are Dance Nights 8 – 9.30 pm when Bruce Richardson, an experienced dance teacher (he trains the Oxford University Ballroom Dance team) will show you how to execute the steps for different dance genres.

There are yoga classes, T'ai Chi, history talks and much, much more, even a Little Big Voice fun choir for children between the ages of 5 and 8 years.

To learn more you can access their website www.florenceparkcommunitycentre.org.uk or you can phone: 07980 588 494 to receive their latest newsletter.

The Community Centre is at the end of Cornwallis Road opposite the new Isis Nursing Home.

The Origins of Cowley

Now that this series has brought us right up to date we have decided that it needs to be replaced with something else connected to Cowley in past times. In the seventies, a lady who had lived in Cowley all her life, had her memoirs of our area recorded and fascinating memories they are too. Her name was Nan Davies, well-known, I am sure to some of our readers. Sally knew Nan Davies through going to local whist drives with her mum (there were three local whist drives in the 50s and 60s – one at Bedford House, the old community centre in Hockmore street, one at Morris Motors social club and a third in the small hall of the Cowley Parish Hall). In the 50s or 60s Nan Davies won a big prize on the Premium Bonds, and decided to buy herself a car. However, she needed some refresher lessons to give her confidence, and Sally's mum (every helpful!) volunteered her to take Nan out on Sunday mornings until she had gained confidence to use the car. So Nan and Sally had many Sunday "dates" – although Sally thinks she did more of the driving than Nan did!

Nan was born at the end of the nineteenth century. Sadly she is no longer with us.

We are going to include episodes from her memoirs in the coming months and we hope you will enjoy them.

COWLEY AT THE TURN OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

(from Nan Davies' memoirs)

My first recollection of Cowley was an old fashioned village where we all knew the neighbours and if needs be, helped in any difficulties. Of course there was no sanitation, the 'privy' was nearly always at the bottom of the garden. We lived in Temple Road, which was known as Temple Cowley. Middle Cowley started at the Stock tree at the top of Pyle Road, now known as Oxford Road and Church Cowley at Hockmore Street down to Steam Plough Yard.

Mrs Honer kept the corner shop selling bread made on the premises; but on a Sunday you

could take your dinner and cook it in her oven for 2d. Del Nevo used to come round with a fish and chip van every night and we could have a halfpennyworth, a big treat for us. In Temple Road there lived five different King families, starting from the bottom to the top, was Mr Arnold a well-known cricketer who played a lot for Oxford City, then came the Priors, Excellors, Jaycocks, Barretts, Paynes, Bradburys, Hansfords, Oakleys, Coxs (us), Traffords, Woodwards, Sawyers, Bradburys again, Bowles, Allens, Buckingham, Hilsdons and Smiths. Mrs Smith had turned her front room into a little shop, and we loved it. She had lollies, everlasting sticks, Blackmans coconuts, sherbet dabs, all around the halfpenny mark and we could get a farthings worth at times.

We children spent a lot of time on the Marsh but we had to watch out for 'Brusher' Rogers who always wore a shade over one eye, he was the chief Groundsman. It was a golf course and he would yell at us because of the golf balls, but we would dodge him and run across either to Lye Hill where we could go to Headington over allotments and come out nearly at the Wingfield Hospital, which was then a convalescent home connected with the Radcliffe; or up Sandy Lane where there was a sheep dip, we could watch them being dipped about once a year, or we could go right over to the left, down a muddy lane that brought us out by the Regal Cinema, then known as the Terminus.

There were no surgeries like today, and Dr Hitchings rented Mrs. Hansford's front room, the pictures and nicknacks were still on the walls. He had a big wooden cupboard in one corner and two big jugs of water and he made our medicines while we waited. We paid 2d. a week to Mrs Bryan who called monthly and signed a card. There was only a narrow entrance passage with a seat inside which seated about three people and if it was wet you had to stand outside in the rain until someone left. Dr Hitchings arrived on one of those tall bicycles.

2013 MISSION GIVING

Eleven charitable causes were put forward at our meeting to distribute £2207.00 allocated. It was decided that each should get an equal portion of the money, which meant £200.00 each (except for one that was given the extra £7.00!)

We wanted to benefit local organisations that are helping people find a roof over their heads and a new start in life. Crisis, based at the Old Fire Station, does just this. Its Skylight Centre offers free education, training and employment support for homeless and vulnerably-housed people and they are currently supporting more than 300 people.

Oxford Homeless Pathways, based at O'Hanlon House in Luther Street, provides a range of services for homeless and recently homeless people aged 22+. They help people tackle the issues that have led them to become homeless and to build confidence, develop new skills and put in place plans to change their lives.

Providing people with a hot meal is what the Community Soup Kitchen is all about. They now work on Saturdays as well as Wednesday lunch times and no-one is turned away. They get the extra £7!

Archway helps people with loneliness which is an experience many of us may go through at various points in our lives. The Archway Foundation was established in Oxford in 1982 to help relieve some of the real distress caused by loneliness. Feelings of loneliness affect people of all ages and backgrounds and connect those feeling alienated with a diverse group of volunteers, many of whom know for themselves how damaging loneliness can be.

Oxford Youth Works is an ecumenical Christian charity, an open and inclusive worshipping community of Christians from a variety of traditions. They are committed to service amongst young

people and to training youth workers. They bring change, offering support and hope to young people in Oxford in schools, community groups and one-to-one mentoring.

The Faith2Share network exists to strengthen indigenous movements for the mission of God. The network is international, multi-cultural, evangelical and committed to partnership with local and national churches of many different backgrounds. The International Director is our own Rev Canon Mark Oxbrow.

Practical Action also works across the world. It provides information on appropriate, small-scale technologies that improve the lives of people living in poverty. One example is the Zeer pot fridge which can be made with local clay and will keep vegetables fresh for longer. They produce, for example, information that will help people in poverty to get clean water and sanitation as well as to construct buildings with local materials to withstand earthquakes.

OXCAT (The Oxford Committee Against Trafficking) is fighting to stop human trafficking. Because trafficking is hidden, we all need to open our eyes to what is going on – under the surface. We know that as a result of Operation Bullfinch in Oxford, it is going on here.

We have been praying at St James for baby Albie Logan. Brainwave is a charity that exists to help children, like Albie, with disabilities and achieve their full potential. That potential may be anything from helping a child walk or ride a bike to recognising colours or writing their name. The children they work with have a range of conditions including Autism, brain injuries such as Cerebral Palsy and genetic conditions such as Down's Syndrome.

Prison Fellowship is a volunteer-led group supporting prisoners. There are prayer groups and

letter-writing but they also get involved with Sycamore Tree, a victim awareness programme that teaches the principles of restorative justice. It is taught in prisons in groups of up to 20 learners by PF volunteers. Prisoners on the programme explore the effects of crime on victims, offenders, and the community, and discuss what it would mean to take responsibility for their personal actions. Angel Tree supports prisoners in their family relationships by providing a way for them to give Christmas presents to their children.

Our final charity is one that hails from down-under. At the end of last year, Beth Spence

died in Sydney. Beth had worked in our parish and was remembered in an inspiring memorial service at St James' Church. The Spence family are setting up a fund to endow a postgraduate nursing scholarship at the University of Sydney in memory of Beth. Their aim is \$700,000 in one year. They found the help they had from nurses while Beth was in hospital invaluable and "watching the nurse/patient relationships form in these painful times showed what a difference nurses can make in people's lives." It may be that we should do more to help their fund-raising further.

Joan Coleman

SIGNIFICANT DATES IN NOVEMBER

On November 3rd 1679 a comet was spotted heading towards earth. The comet gave us a near-miss which caused panic and superstition throughout Europe. Everyone believed that the earth and its people were heading for disastrous events.

A ship was sighted west of Spain on 7th November 1872. Its sails were set but it was steering an erratic course. The ship was "The Marie Celeste" and was completely deserted. The crew of eight, plus the captain, his wife and two-year-old daughter had simply disappeared. The lifeboat was missing but the ship was in perfect condition. The mystery of "The Marie Celeste" has never been solved.

The level of the River Thames rose by 28 feet on November 15th 1875. London and its surrounding areas were severely flooded.

Mickey Mouse's first film, "Steamboat Willie", was first shown to an audience at the Colony Theatre on Broadway, New York on 18th November 1928.

It is hard to forget 22nd November 1963 as this was the day that President John Kennedy was driven through Dallas in an open-top car. He was shot by an assassin and cradled in his wife's arms was rushed to the Parkland Hospital. 25 minutes later he had died.

On 25th November 1984 a host of rock stars gathered at Ladbroke Grove, London to record "Do They Know It's Christmas?" The song was recorded to raise money to combat famine in Ethiopia. It went on to become the highest selling single of all time in the UK raising over £90 million, a huge amount in those days almost 30 years ago.

Anders Celsius, the man who gave us the centigrade (Celsius) thermometer scale was born in Sweden on 27 November 1701.

FLOWER OF THE MONTH – THE ORCHID

The famous Botanical Gardens in Singapore are the home of the entire collection of the world's orchids. It is possible to walk through a long tunnel full of every type of orchid. They grow along the walls and right across the ceiling and dazzle the eye. The orchid is Singapore's national flower and at Changi Airport one is greeted with banks and banks of these exotic flowers.

For, indeed, they have the reputation for being exotic, only available to the rich and famous. To wear a corsage of an orchid declared to the world that you either had a very rich escort or a father who had a greenhouse on his extensive estate where the head gardener would grow them for your adornment. Nowadays, of course, we can buy orchids at the supermarket for a few pounds and very good value they are since, kept in the right conditions, they will continue to flower for anything up to six months. The houseplant does not like high temperatures or bright sunshine but will flourish on a well-lit windowsill even in the steamy conditions of a kitchen or bathroom.

When I was a child I grew up in a village where every spring a patch of glorious wild orchids would appear. We children knew them as "blue butchers" and had no idea how rare they were. I have since discovered that they were one of the many species of orchids which grow wild in the British Isles. They were the early purple orchids. I have to admit, to my shame, that I would gather a posy of them to take home to my mum.

Our native wild orchids are rare and beautiful. They often establish themselves on limestone, stony places and gravel areas often on roadsides and where new road building has taken place.

There is a regular show of pyramid orchids each year on one of our Oxford ring road roundabouts where they are quite safe from prying hands. We have orchids in this country which disguise themselves as bees, lizards, frogs and even a lady's slipper.

The history of the orchid is one of lust, greed and wealth. The most famous one, the vanilla orchid, was thought, in the past, to promote strength. The Aztecs drank vanilla mixed in with chocolate to give them prodigious powers. At first Westerners exploring the New World would throw away vanilla orchids in favour of the plant they were seeking-tobacco. By 1753 Linnaeus, the famous botanist, was recommending vanilla as an aphrodisiac. By this time sixty-nine species of orchid had been listed.

The Greek word for testicle is orchis and it is this that gives the plant its name. The root tubers, when dug up, look like a pair of testicles one of which is dying whilst the other is developing to promote next year's growth. John Ruskin, in his day, was shocked at the name and tried to change it to "wreathworts" but to no avail. In the nineteenth century a drink called Saloop or Salep was made

by grinding up the dried tubers and mixing them with hot milk or water, honey and spices. This was given to manual workers presumably keeping the story of the



Aztecs going. The drink was also made in the Middle East.

The paphiopedilum orchids are named after the town of Paphos in Cyprus where Aphrodite was worshipped and prostitution was freely available. The flower is supposed to encourage power and lust. (I am not sure that this information is really suitable for our magazine!). However the search

for the many species throughout the world did engender a lust of a different kind – wealth. The plant hunters, two hundred years ago, were said to have transported tubers by the ton even resorting to chopping down four thousand forest trees to get at the orchids which grew among them.

Sad stories for a species of beauty, indeed.

Churchwarden's Report

The beautiful and historic St James Church of Cowley has received some well needed care and attention to its outside face. Fundraising was successfully concluded earlier in the year and over the summer the works were completed. The limestone rendering was repaired where necessary and many coats of lime wash applied throughout. In addition the stonework and the metal guttering have been replaced where required and the latter have been gloss painted. We have some repairs to the internal tiles which we hope to complete in the next few weeks. Thanks to everyone who contributed towards this goal.

The old school next to the Church is maintained by trustees connected to, but in a separate Trust from the Church. It is currently derelict but has had some remedial works done with limited funds to eradicate dry rot and replace rotten timbers including the kitchen extension recently removed. It is hoped the current structure can be preserved whilst at the same time longer term use, development and funding in the educational field is actively being sought. Some of us will have memories of its previous life and a vision of its future is slowly taking shape.

Dave Stanley
Churchwarden

SILVER AND GOLD

November morning, quite early.

The world is a different place,
As if the fog in the night-time
Has veiled its familiar face.

The gossamer lace of a cobweb
Is hung with silvery dew.

The lawn is a carpet of crystal
Where summer daisies once grew

No birds disturb the silence
(As if the night were still here)
Confused by the blanket of silvery white,
Unsure if morning is near.

The traffic fades into the distance
As it crawls through the shrouded streets.
People walk with deliberate caution
As if shod on soft slippers feet.

An ash tree unhinges a leaf,
It silently flutters to earth
And soon there's a golden shower,
Leaves falling for all they are worth.

But look, on the distant horizon
Light is coming to scatter the cold.
The sun has arrived with the dawning
And turned all this silver to gold.

Rosanne Butler

Rosanne interviews Stephen Dew

Stephen (or Steve which he prefers to be called) is a man on a mission and when he agreed to be this month's interviewee he made me promise that I would make it clear to everyone what that mission is. So before we launch into the interesting details of his life I must keep my promise. You see, Steve is the new head teacher at Cowley St James CE Primary School and his plan (I nearly wrote "dream" but I assure you it is more than that) is within three years to turn the school into an outstanding one. Not just, I must add, in the eyes of the parents, pupils and staff but in the estimation of that austere body OFSTED. He also wants to turn the school into a hub of the community where all kinds of activities take place bringing together people from many differing age groups and backgrounds. He views the area of Cowley as a central hub between Iffley, Rose Hill, Blackbird Leys and Headington and sees his school at the centre of it all.

I asked him what attracted him to Cowley St James and he explained that he wanted to lead a school that was not in a "leafy village" but a city school that could make a real impact on its community. He said with a smile, "After all we have a captive audience here, four hundred and sixty pupils, over five hundred adults (at least) and a staff of eighty people. I was surprised at those huge numbers and even more

surprised to be told that the school is almost the biggest primary in Oxfordshire.

Steve was born in Warrington, the middle child of a family of three. He has one elder sister and one younger. He explained how, because his father was an engraver for the local newspaper, he hardly saw him in his early childhood at all. Engraving meant starting work at about 3 pm every day (even Sundays) in order to cut in the type for all the newspaper stories to be printed that night. The papers were printed on huge metal drums and began to roll in the small hours of the morning. Mr Dew would come home from work at about 3 am each day and would be sleeping when his children set off for school. Steve admires greatly his father's work ethic and is convinced that he has inherited it.

He told me interesting facts about his home town which is one of the twentieth century New Towns. It was built near a huge American army base and has the largest underground hospital in the world. He grew up on a new housing estate where all the schools from infant right through to secondary were built side-by-side and all the local children attended them. Steve did not like school except for the opportunities to play sport. In fact sport took over his teenage years with major consequences. Team sports which he favoured were football and rugby but it

was swimming which became a huge factor in his young life. Between the ages of fourteen and nineteen he swam at least four hours a day and his weekends were taken up with travelling far and wide in competitions. A very talented swimmer he turned out to be competing and winning for his country. He was crowned "10m National Champion".

However school lessons suffered and particularly homework was neglected and at aged sixteen in the presence of his parents he was told that his secondary school could do no more for him. It was arranged that he should transfer to a Community College. Life from then on took an upward turn. Despite the need to take two buses to travel to college each day Steve found school life much more positive. He found good teachers there who helped him to achieve good academic results whilst at the same time he was swimming for England all over Europe becoming champion in 1995.

He qualified for university in Gloucester, now known as St Paul's University and studied sport physiology as his main subject. Having qualified as a physiologist he moved on to Liverpool University to do a post-graduation course. Then came what he describes as his "Dick Whittington" moment when he set out for London to seek his fortune. He arrived in Morden in Surrey and worked

for Holmes Place, a large health and fitness centre with premises all over the south of England. He was with them for five years during which time he met his first partner. By this time he had enough confidence to set up his own business within the company and was dealing with all kinds of sports injuries. During the winter skiing season it was mainly knee and ankle damage whereas in the summer, being so close to Wimbledon he saw many tennis players, from beginners to stars, who needed physiotherapy. He even worked on Martina Navratilova in her Wimbledon era.

Soon he was opening up his own premises in places such as Hendon, Epsom and Croydon. He had nine sites in all, learning to manage a huge staff and also much of what was required to be successful in business. His company then (when he was only 26) was sold out to Virgin. Steve's partner worked for Boots, the chemist, and her job was transferred to their headquarters in Nottingham. They moved north together with their baby son, Noah. He found himself, suddenly, with very little to do beyond caring for a tiny baby. It was then that a career in teaching called.

He decided that secondary school science would be his niche but whilst working in a city academy deemed to be the "second worst school in the country" he found himself coping with a pupil which totally changed his ambition. Coping is not quite the right word to

explain the relationship Steve had with this particular boy. The rest of the staff were at a loss to understand him. He had educational special needs and was completely disengaged in the world of school. He and Steve developed a special relationship. Steve has never forgotten him not least because following this experience he knew that he had the skill to work with disaffected children and the place to do it was in the primary sector.

Whilst gaining his qualifications at Leicester University Steve's second child, a daughter, had been born. His partner's job necessitated a move south, first to Reading and then to set up home in Oxford. His first teaching post was at Pegasus school in Blackbird Leys. After a spell in a small village school he applied for the post of deputy head teacher at John Henry Newman School in Littlemore.

During these years his relationship with his partner deteriorated and they agreed to separate. Steve, however, has kept in very close contact with his two children. It was at a reunion party for staff at Pegasus School that he met up with a former work colleague, Kate. They soon discovered a mutual attraction and they became very much involved. After four years together they were married in May this year. Kate was living in a cottage opposite St James Church so it was no surprise to learn that Howard arranged a lovely service of blessing for them.

Now they are happily settled in Cuttleslowe as near as they could be to Steve's former partner and his son and daughter. And Steve himself? Well, this September he began his new post at St James School, a man who feels that he has arrived in a place he was really meant to be.

How would you describe yourself as a young child?

Totally disillusioned with school. Sport was my thing.

Have you any memories you would like to share?

Long summer dreams of it being very hot and being out playing till about eleven at night. Also watching my first "Crime Watch" with my mum. The photo-fits were so hideous that mum and I laughed for about ten minutes and we still do when we remember it.

Has your faith been with you since childhood?

I went to church with my mum and with the cubs. It was nice that Howard blessed my marriage.

Is there anyone who has had a strong influence in your life?

My work ethic has come from my dad. Robert Kyle (the boy mentioned earlier) is the reason I became a teacher.

What is your opinion of modern society?

Very positive and optimistic. I have faith in how people can change anything. You need to

act yourself into a new way of thinking, not think yourself into a new way of acting.

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

The last two years. My kids are amazing, my wife is amazing and I have been given the opportunity to do something worthwhile.

How do you like to spend your leisure time?

Go to the park with my

children. Cooking – I have made my wife's breakfast every working day since we have been together. I cook for the family 99% of the time. Oh, and I have just bought myself a guitar.

What plans do you have for the future?

The school will be outstanding in three years' time.

Two years ago I went to Vietnam and saw a project in Kioto run by a charity. It was a restaurant run to help street

children learn about hygiene, how to prepare and serve good food and also have their school lessons. When we have a community café in Cowley Centre like that where children from here will design everything giving them great skill levels (children will make cakes, learn business skills, hygiene and bring in the local community), when that is up and running I will resign.

I also want to start a family with Kate.

NEWS FROM ST FRANCIS

Thanks to a powerful performance by our visiting Gospel Choir, our patronal festival was considerably livelier than it would have otherwise been. They really put their heart and soul into their singing, and have no inhibitions about hand and body movements to enhance their voices. Everyone seemed to enjoy their music.

We were also pleased to welcome back John and Claire Tomlinson (our previous Vicar and his wife). In his sermon, John recalled our church's pilgrimage to Assisi and his thoughts about St Francis in his home town. And that struck a chord with a number of us. We all joined in with refreshments at the end to complete a happy evening.

We are now looking forward to our Remembrance Sunday Service when Martin

Gorick will be presiding. We shall have to be on our toes for that occasion.

Our Caribbean Evening is getting closer now and that will be a big event when we hope to raise money for our Parish Funds. More details will be available soon.

We are having a special service in the evening for All Souls Day when we shall be joining in with St James.

Another Fun Day is in the offing soon for the children, details to be announced.

All in all we have plans for some lively and interesting events in our Autumn schedule.

John Shreeve



DIARY DATES TO REMEMBER

Mothers' Union

Monthly Meeting on 3rd Monday of month from 2.30pm.

Cowley Parish Church Centre

Women's Group

1st and 3rd Monday of the Month from 7.30 – 9 pm

Cowley Parish Church Centre

Women's Institute

Monthly Meeting on 3rd Wednesday of month from 2 – 4.30 pm

20th November 2013—Speaker: Clive Jones—Mountains of Nepal

Cowley Parish Church Centre

Student Soup Supper

Upper Room, St Francis

2nd and 4th Thursday every month 6 -8 pm

Coffee Morning/Games

2nd Saturday of every month, 10 – 12 noon
St Francis Church

Film Club

Friday, 11th October 2013, commencing at 6.30 pm with coffee and cake

"The Bishop's Wife"

Cowley Parish Church Centre

Caribbean Evening

Friday, 8th November 2013, 7 – 12 midnight
St Francis Church

Tickets £12 in advance or £15 at the door

Christmas Gift and Craft Sale

Saturday, 16th November 2013
St James Church Centre

PCC Meeting

Tuesday, 19th November 2013, at 7.30 pm
St James Church Centre

Cowley Local History Society

Tuesday, 19th November 2013 at 8 pm

Talk: the Journey to Chalgrove Field

An Illustrated talk by Mike Payne

United Reform Church, Temple Road

Parish Quiet Morning

Saturday, 30th November 2013
from 10.00am to 2.00pm

St James Church

Churches Together in Cowley

Advent Sunday: 1st December 2013, 6pm at St James Church

Carol Singing in Templar Square: Saturday, 21st December 2013, at 2.00pm

Cowley Festival of Christmas Trees

6 – 15 December (See article in The Chronicle for full details)

St James Church

Film Club

Friday, 13th December 2013, commencing at 6.30 pm with coffee and cake

"White Christmas"

St James Church Centre

Mothers' Union – Puddings and Quiz Evening
17th January 2014

Please note Additional Dates throughout the year:

To help raise funds for essential repairs to St. James' Church a home-made cakes and puds stall is planned. These will take place on the 3rd Tuesday of the month to carry over into Wednesday and will be held in the Church Centre.

If you enjoy baking and would like to help by baking a cake 2 or 3 times a year on a rota basis Chris Woodman or Margaret Weller would be pleased to hear from you.

MEMORIES OF OLD COWLEY

After lunch at St James Church Centre on Sunday, 24th November 2013, Les Hemsworth will be showing some pictures of old Cowley. They will be shown when coffee is served, about 1.45 pm/2 pm, and if you are not having lunch you may wish to come along and see the show. Many will remember old Cowley and it will be an opportunity to remind ourselves what it was like. Hope to see you there.

RECIPES

November a month of pumpkins! We have found two for you this month to help use up all those that are flooding the supermarkets at the moment. First recipe, the pumpkin pie is a traditional dish served up on Thanksgiving Day in the United States.



Pumpkin Pie

1 x 9 inch flan case of short-crust pastry (baked blind)

Filling:

4 ozs brown sugar	Pinch of salt
1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon	½ teaspoon ground ginger
¼ teaspoon ground cloves	24 ozs of pureed pumpkin
3 eggs lightly beaten	10 fl ozs single cream

Chop the pumpkin into small pieces and cook in pan of water till soft. Sieve or blitz with food processor after draining off the water.

Combine the sugar, salt and spices in a small mixing bowl, add eggs and mix well using a wooden spoon.

Gradually stir this mixture into the pumpkin and add the cream.

Pour this into the pastry case. Place on baking sheet and bake at gas mark 5, 190° for about 40-50 minutes or until a knife inserted into the filling comes away clean.

This pie can be served hot or cold with further cream or ice-cream.

Pumpkin Soup

1 oz butter
2 small onions thinly sliced and made into rings
1 lb pumpkin flesh
2 pints chicken stock
½ teaspoon salt
1 stalk of celery trimmed and chopped up small
1 large potato peeled and chopped up small
1 tablespoon of lemon juice
1 dash of tabasco sauce
A little paprika (to taste)
8 fl ozs double cream

In a large heavy saucepan melt the butter

Add onion rings and pumpkin and cook, stirring occasionally, for about 5-7 minutes. The onions should be soft but not brown.

Gradually stir in the stock and add all the other ingredients except the cream.

Bring the mixture slowly to the boil

Reduce heat, cover the pan and simmer for 30-35 minutes

Pour the soup through a strainer pressing the vegetables with the back of a wooden spoon. Discard any pulp.

Stir in the cream and return the soup to the saucepan and heat, stirring constantly but DO NOT BOIL. Serve immediately with croutons. A sprinkle of chopped parsley on the top looks pretty.

'LET'S LIGHT UP CHRISTMAS'
Cowley festival of Christmas trees 2013
6-15 December in St James Church

Here's the confirmed programme to put in your diary

Wednesday 4 - Friday 6	set up	
Friday 6	7:00	reception for all participants
Saturdays 7 and 14	10:00-4:00	open
Sundays 8 and 15	2:00-4:00	open
Monday 9 – Friday 13	2:00-4:00	open

and by arrangement at other times for groups so

we hope the schools and play groups may come and visit in the mornings

live music and refreshments
 quiz trail from Templars' Square

Saturday 7	7:00	gala concert
Saturday 14	10:00-2:00	Christmas family fun day
Sunday 15	4:30	festival carol service



most trees will remain in church or the Parish Centre until the New Year

We're still looking for more schools/churches/groups/families/businesses to be involved and turn this into a truly community festival – please ask for a letter and information leaflet for yourself or to hand on to anyone who may like to be involved. We are looking this year for more creative 'alternative trees' like last year's broom tree from the ArkT Centre : could you knit, crochet or embroider a tree? Or sketch, paint, sculpt one? create a plum pudding tree?

Templars Square has committed actively to promote the festival and we are talking to Templars Shopping Park management. We want to be prepared for thousands rather than hundreds of visitors – please be ready to bake cakes!

Chris Woodman will soon (after the craft and gift fair) be waving a rota list at you, for stewarding and serving refreshments. We are delighted that the WI is going to be involved in that essential task too. Howard will of course need help at the Family fun day.



To all the fit and mobile: please also be ready to deliver Cowslip in the first week of December and hand invitations to all your friends, neighbours and family.

Lesley Williams 01865 779 562 07982 439 828
ctf@cowleyteamministry.co.uk

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Extracts from The Cowley Chronicle, September 1964.

Garden Party at St Luke's



St Luke's Garden Party on Saturday, August 15, was a very happy afternoon. The weather was fortunately fine and more people came than in recent years.

Those who put so much work into its smooth running were well rewarded to see so many taking part in the sideshows, enjoying tea on the lawn, listening to the music of the Carib Six, visiting the fortune teller, or joining in the races.

There were several competitions – cake-making, flower arrangements, guessing the name of a doll, and others.

Mr Percy Best generously came and gave a Punch and Judy show to a most attentive crowd of children though he had at least two other engagements the same afternoon.

Finally a note about the children's fancy dress. It was won by Susan and Nicholas Fathers as Miss Muffett and her spider, with Barry Newman a close second as a Space Man.

St James Patronal Festival



Ox-roasting was considered, but as they were not sure how much Ox-fordians could eat, Mr and Mrs Willoughby and the St James Committee fell back on Chef Moffatt (not literally and not as a substitute!), sausages (20 pounds), tall hats, onions and cheese, and a beat group for those "with it".

About 100 people came along, many of whom first attended Holy Communion in Church to mark the patronal festival. A pleasant evening was had by all and some even heard a quiet snort of relief from somewhere offstage."

New Glass for Sanctuary Lamp

Worshippers will have noticed the new and originally-shaped glass in the sanctuary lamp at St James. It is unique in England, for it has been especially "blown" by Mr Saxton, chief glass-blower at the Clarendon laboratory. It holds an unusually large quantity of oil, so that it should burn for a long time without being refilled.

Our Local Heroes

On Remembrance Sunday we shall be thinking of all our warriors from all theatres of war as usual. However, for the Chronicle I thought that we should come closer to home, and remember our own local heroes, our Cowley heroes, though not many people are aware that they existed. It all started here in Cowley during the 2nd World War. In those years, and for some years after, there stood some buildings known locally as the Cowley Barracks. They were the headquarters of the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry. They were only some half a mile away from our St Francis Church. And it was from this source that our heroes emerged, after a long and thorough period of training. They were entrusted with one of the most charismatic and daring missions in the war. So important that the supreme commander General Eisenhower took a personal interest in their planning and progress.

Their brilliant leader, Major John Howard, was definitely an Oxford man, and a Cowley man. He had been in the Oxford Police Force before the war, and after he had enlisted he had a house in Cowley quite near the Barracks, where his wife and two children lived. He was given personal instructions by a very senior officer on Eisenhower's staff and entrusted with the date of the D Day invasion, which very few knew about in advance. For his mission was closely aligned to D Day, as becomes apparent later. He was then given a free hand to select his troops and give them the necessary training, which he did with extreme care and thoroughness, over a long period of months. By the time he had finished they were some of the fittest and ablest soldiers in the British army. They were not to be a large body of men barely over a company in size, but really they had to know what they were about. Their orders were to land in France in the early hours of the morning well in advance of the main invasion. Their objective to capture and hold a vital road bridge in Normandy over the river Orne, quite close to the village of Ranville. This was important to protect the eastern flank of the main invasion force, so that the enemy could not rush support troops over it, and so that it would be

available to British and American forces when they came to break out of the Normandy beach-heads and move further inland. For the purposes of this mission, Howard's team were seconded to the Parachute Regiment and received parachute training. Though they did not eventually need it for they were carried to their objective in large gliders. The whole essence of the mission was that it should be swift, sudden and silent, so that the element of surprise should be complete.

In the last hour or so on the night before D Day our heroes boarded their large Horsa gliders and were towed across to France. Soon after they had crossed the French coast the towline was released and they were on their own. This was very much so because they had been warned categorically that they could not expect any help from anyone, also because all other groups would be concentrating on the main D Day invasion on the beaches.

Major Howard was proud of his company, 'D Company'. He thought it was the best in the British Army, and he was confident that they could achieve their objective provided they could be landed safely within 40 metres of the bridge. So now it was down to his pilot Jim Wallwork and co-pilot Ainsworth to keep them on course. With no engine to correct their speed and direction, they relied on the elements, very careful compass navigation, and strict timing. They were descending slowly in pitch darkness towards their destination. At the last moment the clouds parted briefly to allow them a glimpse of the river – they were on course. They finally crashed down at just under 100 mph very close to the bridge which was just as required. However, the enemy had placed anti-invasion poles just where they hit the ground and they caused havoc. The gliders were damaged and some of the soldiers were injured. However, such was their training that they still rushed out of the broken fuselages and quietly formed up according to their battle plan and stormed across it. After a few short skirmishes the bridge was theirs. It had been defended by low calibre troops who had been taken by surprise.

Now came the tough bit, their orders were to hold until relieved and whenever they could be reached.

They had no means of knowing the strength of the enemy forces. They themselves were lightly armed, with no armour or artillery forces. It was certain that the Germans would counter-attack but where, and in what strength was an unknown factor. In fact there was an Elite German tank regiment quite close by – but German bureaucracy in Berlin would not allow

them to move until it was too late. At one point Howard realised that all of his officers had either been killed or severely wounded. However, hold they did and when they finally heard the bagpipes of Lord Lovat's Scots Commanders coming down the road they were hugely relieved.

They had done their job and with honour. At the end of the day, of the 181 men who started out only 40 remained.

John Shreeve



HOW IS YOUR LOCAL KNOWLEDGE?

Each month we are going to challenge our readers to identify a Cowley landmark.

Our roving photographer, Les Hemsworth, will choose a local view to get you thinking.

Answer next month.

*Last month's answer:
Oxford Military College, Bennet
Crescent, Hollow Way*

I knew I was going bald when I found it took me longer to wash my face.

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NEWS FROM DURHAM

At the end of August I departed Oxford to work as an intern for Kings Church in the beautiful city of Durham. I will be studying some theology modules, receiving training and opportunities to develop leadership skills as well as serving Kings Church and the local community. This can include children's and youth ministry, involvement in Alpha courses, working with students, supporting refugees, working in prisons as well as working with vulnerable children and adults in the community.

There are eight other interns from across the country with one team member from Chicago! I am so thankful to God for providing such a committed and loving group of people to serve alongside.

The programme began with an intensive induction followed by different strands of theology teaching in Old Testament, New Testament and Historical theology studies, which included learning some Greek!

Last month we went on a mission trip to Hunstanton in Norfolk to support a local church called The Way Christian Fellowship. This was an amazing time where God challenged us and taught us more about His love and faithfulness. We had the privilege to have some amazing conversations and were led to pray with people in the local community. We had a time of singing hymns (Worship on the Streets) and at the weekend we ran a free cream tea, which certainly led to many fruitful conversations. On the final day we held an outdoor church service at the bandstand right next to the sea.

Back in Durham, much of our focus has been on welcoming the many students who returned or started their studies at Durham University, praying for them and supporting them in what

can be a challenging first few weeks living away from home. We run a student café twice a week in which students can drop in to chat and pray and read through the bible with us. (One of the most exciting things was witnessing a 2nd year student become a Christian in the Café after explaining to us that he had gone on a solo pilgrimage to Rome in the hope of finding God!).

Once a week I run a craft session in a local charity called Aquila Way in Gateshead that supports vulnerable young women and their children who require emergency accommodation, and are then supported to live independently again. It is a real privilege to be involved in this and I am gathering ideas on how to teach the women to make homemade Christmas gifts.

In addition to this we are also involved in a lot of outreach in the local community, and run activities at a local community centre. Kings Church Alpha course has just started again, and the Sunday morning children's ministry is now in full swing.

None of this is possible without God and I would really appreciate it if you can support the intern team by praying for the following:

We are living in a relatively deprived area of Durham, therefore please pray for opportunities to engage with the local community, reach out and be a blessing to them.

That God would establish strong and trusting relationships between the intern team and that we would work effectively together.

That the Holy Spirit would be working in the lives of those on the Alpha course and that they would meet with God in a powerful way.

For the women and children at Aquila way, that each of them would come to know about Gods

love during this difficult time in their lives. That interns who work there would be able to make a real positive difference in their lives.

That the intern team would be able to effectively reach out and bless the student community at Kings and support them to grow in their walk with God.

Thank you - With love and blessings

Kim Hughes

P.S Since this is a voluntary unpaid internship

programme I am funding this year myself. I have set up a Stewardship account which allows Christian workers to collect sponsorship money. For every £10 that is given Stewardship enables me to receive £12.50. Therefore if you feel led to or would like to consider supporting me financially, I would greatly appreciate this and would kindly ask you to fill out a Stewardship form (which can be provided by Howard Thornton or Bev Hughes) and return it to the address on the back.

COWLEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Tuesday, 19 November 2013
commencing at 8.00 pm

TALK:

**The Journey to Chalgrove Field
(the story of the battle of Chalgrove)**

An Illustrated talk by Mike Payne

At United Reformed Church, Temple Road, Cowley
Annual Membership fee £18 (OAP £16)
Visitors welcome £3 per meeting

For the first time in many years a man decided to go to the cinema. After buying his ticket he stopped at the concession stand to get some popcorn. Handing the attendant £1.50 he commented, "Last time I came to the cinema popcorn only cost three pence". "Well sir", came back the reply, "you're really going to enjoy yourself, we've got sound now".

COWLEY WOMEN'S GROUP

The next meeting of the Women's Group will be held on the 11th December 2013, 7.30 – 9 pm in the St James Church Centre. Chris Woodman and Margaret Weller are coming to show us how to make either a wreath or a table display. A list will be coming up in church for you to put your name on if you wish to attend (or tell, Vicky Hall, Chris or Margaret)

There will be a small charge of £2.50 for each person.

Vicky Hall

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BOOK OF THE MONTH

FALLING LEAVES

The true story of an unwanted Chinese Daughter by Adeline Yen Mah

Thought to bring bad luck because her mother died after giving birth to her, Adeline Yen Mah - born in 1937 - was discriminated against by her family all her life. *Falling Leaves* is both the moving story of how she survived that rejection and an enthralling saga of a Chinese family. Adeline's childhood in China during the Civil War was a time of fear, isolation and humiliation. The cause of this was not political upheaval but systematic emotional and physical abuse by her step-mother and siblings and rejection by her father.

Falling Leaves is the story of a fifth younger daughter and her determination to survive the pain of a lonely childhood. It is a riveting family history, but also a story about endurance and the cost it can exact. This is a moving autobiography of a young Chinese girl, Adeline Yen Mah, born the fifth child to an affluent Chinese family. Her life begins tragically. Adeline's mother died shortly after her birth due to complications brought on by the delivery and, in Chinese culture this marks her as cursed or "bad luck". The situation is compounded by her

Father's new marriage to a woman who has little affection for her husband's five children. She displayed antagonism and distrust towards all of the children, particularly Adeline, whilst favouring her own younger son and daughter born soon after the marriage.

Falling Leaves outlines Adeline's struggle to find a place where she feels she belongs. Denied love from her parents she finds solace in relationships with her Grandfather Ye Ye and her Aunt Ba Ba, but they are taken from her.

Adeline immerses herself in striving for academic achievement in the hope of winning favour. The pain Adeline felt is acute as she suffers constant rejection by her step-mother but perhaps it is the indifference of her father that crushes Adeline more brutally. She is a forgotten child to him.

It is not all doom and gloom however! Adeline wins prizes at school for her story telling and passes exams with honours. Eventually she is able to study medicine in London and moves later to America where she becomes a successful surgeon and later still a bestselling author.

Marlene Shreeve

CHRONICLE

Editorial Team- Rosanne Butler, Sally Hemsworth, May Morgan, Nicki Stevens

Deadline for the June edition:

Wednesday 20 November 2013

If possible, please send entries by email to Sally at chronicle@cowleyteamministry.co.uk

The Editorial Committee in no way accepts responsibility for goods or services supplied by our advertisers.

SAINTS OF THE MONTH—St Cecilia

Although St Cecilia is a fairly obscure saint whose story is more legend than historically factual she is well-loved mainly because she is the patron saint of music. In Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford at the far end of the north aisles there is a very beautiful stained-glass window made by the Morris Company (of Arts and Crafts fame) and designed by Edward Burne-Jones. The panel which depicts St Cecilia shows her playing a small hand-held organ of the type used in Roman times. Below this is a smaller panel which tells the story of an episode of her legendary life.

Cecilia was a Roman lady martyred in the third century. She was a patrician, which means she was of high blood, who was betrothed to a pagan named Valerian. This was obviously a forced marriage since in her youth she had dedicated her life to God vowing to preserve her virginity. She told her husband that she had a guardian angel to help her. Valerian questioned this and said that if that were true she had better show him this angel. If an angel appeared he would believe in God and be baptized. Well the angel did appear and Valerian and his brother, Tiburtius, were baptized by the Pope.

This was a very precarious time for Christians in Rome and the two men were arrested and put to death. Heartbroken, Cecilia took the bodies of the two martyrs and gave them a Christian burial. She was, then, herself, brought before the Roman prefect who tried to force her to make sacrifices to the Roman

gods. She refused, of course, and in the process of being persecuted managed to convert the men who were torturing her. However, she was condemned to death and sentenced to be suffocated in her own bath. This plan failed, a soldier was sent to behead her but even this attempt to kill her did not work. She lingered for a further three days and finally died, a Christian martyr.

Her home was dedicated by the Pope as a church. Later her remains were buried in the small church. In the sixteenth century, a sculptor, Maderna, made a life-size marble statue of Cecilia as if she were a maiden lying on her bed.

During her lifetime she was reputed to be a talented musician playing the organ and singing beautifully. John Dryden in the seventeenth century wrote a song for St Cecilia's Day which includes these words:

"Orpheus could lead the savage race;
And trees unrooted left their place,
Sequacious of the lyre;
But bright Cecilia rais'd the wonder higher:
When to her organ vocal breath was given,
An angel heard, and straight appear'd
Mistaking Earth for Heaven"

St Cecilia's day falls on 22nd November.

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LETTER FROM BOSTON (Part 1)

As the Indian Summer is closing in on us and the cooler nights are beginning to transform our surroundings into an awe-inspiring spectacle of autumnal colours, it is time for me to post my next letter to you from the shores of Massachusetts Bay.

You will be pleased to read that since I last wrote to you about devotion and sports, our home team, the Boston Red Sox, have been performing fantastically well, so I'm told. So well indeed, that they made it into this year's World Series! I have to admit that I am not quite sure what exactly that means, but it does sound pretty impressive to me.

But if you thought that this success might have helped me resolve my confusion about all things American Football, you are wrong. If anything, it made my confusion even worse: You see, until very recently, I had lived under the impression that the Boston Red Sox, who happen to be owned by Fenway Sports Group (which incidentally also own Liverpool Football Club in the UK for those of you interested in the Premier League), are a Football Team. Retrospectively, this explains to me the utter bewilderment of my colleagues that met my joyful exclamation that I hope we may see the Red Sox play in the Super Bowl next year! But no, Anne, you've got it all totally wrong. It turns out that the Red Sox are in fact a Baseball team, and to complete my utter embarrassment, as I wrote to you last time, of course, the Super Bowl has absolutely nothing to do with baseball. Well, there we go, I acknowledge my defeat. At least, there will be a couple of more months for me to try and work out all the confusing differences between those American sports.

With the official Major League Baseball Season nearing its end, Government back at work, and with winter on the doorstep, our thoughts at St Paul's Cathedral (where I am doing my placement as seminarian this year) increasingly turn to all the homeless people in our congregation who still are without shelter for the winter. Caring for the members in our community who are without

homes at the moment and feeding those who don't have enough to eat has traditionally been, and still is, a core ministry at St Paul's Cathedral in Boston. We consider everyone equal, there is no 'them and us'.

According to a recent Wall Street Journal article, a staggering 15% (47.8 million) of the US population receive food stamp benefits at the moment, that's a rise of 70% since 2008. While the US economy is slowly recovering, the stagnating job market and the rising poverty rate are some of the driving factors behind this increase. But despite that, in the context of the current sequestration, the past few weeks have seen law-makers in Washington DC proposing and discussing considerable cuts to the food assistant program for those who can't afford to buy food. Compare that to Super Bowl: This year, sponsors paid \$4million for a 30 second advertisement. Welcome to our capitalist world.

Anne Katherine Geneits

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NEWS FROM ST CHRISTOPHER'S SCHOOL

St Christopher's has had a busy few weeks since the Summer holidays. It was lovely to arrive back in September to see lots of new faces, both children and staff. There was a lot of work done around the site over the Summer holidays and we now have a newly refitted ICT suite and staffroom and some much needed fitted cupboards for extra storage in our conservatory area.

Rev Thornton has been taking our Wednesday morning assemblies and had the novelty of taking an assembly in our outdoor classroom area. The children really enjoyed having assembly in the open air! Some of the older children enjoyed a visit to St James' Church to experience the Harvest activities that were on offer there.

We had a really exciting week in St Christopher's at the end of September. We had our 'Problem Solving' week and all the children enjoyed practising new skills to help them with their learning. We are most keen to develop the skills of good communication and teamwork in school, as well as the skill of perseverance (or 'stickability' as the children like to call it!). There was a visit from the 'Happy Puzzle Company' and all the classes from F1 to Y6 spent an exciting session in the hall, working together on solving large and small puzzles. The feedback from children and staff was really positive. The whole school has also been looking at the 'Big Problem' of how to survive and escape from a desert island. Some amazing solutions have been suggested and many of the classes are now knee-deep in grass, twigs and leaves as the children have built scale models of their shelters and rafts!

Our PCSO, Jan Billingham, has been working with a group of older children on cycle safety this week. The children are learning how to ride their bikes safely and will have a special test on their skills next week.

A variety of exciting new clubs has now started. The chess club began on Tuesday, run by 2 sixth-formers from Magdalen College School and has 12 members. We have started a new drama club for Year 1 and 2 on

Tuesdays in the hall, called Dreamweavers. This club is also now full and we have a waiting list for next term. We also have a 'Mad Science' club running on Thursdays and the dance club on Mondays.

Sheenagh Broadbent,
Deputy Headteacher

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NEWS FROM THE BELL TOWER

You may be wondering what has happened to the bell ringers recently, as we have been doing very little Sunday ringing. This has been due mainly to holidays and illness, but there has nevertheless been a lot going on for us, and we hope this will translate into more regular Sunday service ringing for you to enjoy (at least we hope you do).

Like many ringing bands around the country, we do not have many ringers. I was on a course recently (more about that later), and in repeated conversations with people from other towers, the recurring theme was lack of new recruits, and how to provide enough ringers for Sunday service. In Burford, they try and cover three churches – ringing in one, then jumping into cars to race to the next and so forth. In some of the villages around Banbury they share ringers, and each church has a band to ring on one Sunday in four. Having heard these tales, I realised that our position was far more fortunate. Nevertheless the lack of ringers has been an issue for us, and to that end, we held an open afternoon in July, which generated a lot of interest, but sadly, no new ringers. We were therefore very pleased when two potential new ringers got in touch with Margaret in the space of a couple of weeks and have now joined our group. Learning to ring is a long process, but both Roy and Charlotte are progressing well, and we are really happy to welcome them. If anyone else would like to come and try ringing, we would be happy to see you at a practice night. We practice between

7.30 and 9pm on a Thursday.

As well as training new recruits, we also want to improve our own skills, and to this end, Margaret Craig, Margaret Weller and I applied to the Steeple Aston Course. It is often over subscribed, so we were delighted to hear we had all got places. The day is very intensive, with visits to three towers, and a theory session. I rang at Charlton on Otmoor, Bletchington and Rousham, and concentrated on ringing a method called Plain Bob Doubles. Margaret Craig and Margaret Weller went with another group to ring Plain Hunt, around some towers in the Banbury area. All of us felt we benefitted a lot from the course, and it really helps to meet people from other towers who are struggling with the same things. I also felt extremely grateful to the instructor and helpers. Learning to ring methods is very labour intensive – in order to learn, you need to be the only student ringing, which means you need five experienced ringers to ring with you plus an instructor to stand with you. All these people give their time for nothing, as they are passionate about keeping our church bells ringing, and ensuring we have the people to do so. All in all, I feel the future of bell ringing at St James is looking very positive. We have some other exciting outings planned. In the next issue we hope to be able to tell you about our forthcoming trip to Worcester Cathedral bell ringing training centre.

Lindsay Powell

A Date for your Diary!

WELCOMING THE LIGHT

A Parish Quiet Morning at St James celebrating and reflecting on the season of Advent on Saturday, 30 November from 10 am to 2 pm. Come and go as you can!

For more information contact Helen Beetham (01865 770923).

SUNDAY SERVICES

ST JAMES CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00am	Holy Communion
10.00am	Sung Eucharist
Every 2nd & 4th Sunday	Church at the Centre
Every third Sunday	Sunday Lunch

ST FRANCIS CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30am	Parish Eucharist
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MID-WEEK SERVICES & MEETINGS

Monday	8.30am	Morning Prayer—St James
	10.00-11.30am	Little Stars Playgroup— St Francis
	2.30pm	Parish Mothers' Union— St James (3rd Monday)
Tuesday	8.30am	Morning Prayer—St Francis
	10.00am	Seashells Toddler Group— St James
	12.00pm	Eucharist—St James
	12.30pm	Tuesday Lunch Club— St James
Wednesday	8.30am	Morning Prayer—St James
	7.30pm (alt wks)	Women's Group—St James
Thursday	8.30am	Morning Prayer—St Francis
	7.00pm	Cowley Parish Healing Service St Francis (1st Thursday)
Friday	2.00pm	Bingo—St James
Saturday	10.00am-12pm	Coffee Morning, St Francis (2nd Saturday)

HOME GROUPS

Leader	Time/Venue
Skye Denno	1st Monday of month, 7.30pm at Skye's home
Connie Uren	Alternate Tuesday afternoons at 2.30pm St James Church Centre, Ranklin Room
Friends of St Francis (John Shreeve/ Skye Denno)	2nd & 4th Tuesday afternoons at 2.30pm St Francis Church
Mark Oxbrow	Alternate Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm Mark's home
Rosanne Butler	Alternate Thursday mornings at 10.00am St James Church Centre, Ranklin Room
Helen Beetham	Alternate Friday mornings at 10am

The Parish Office in St James Church
Centre is open:

Tuesday, 2—5pm
Wednesday, 10—1pm
Friday, 9—2pm

The Parish Office is currently staffed by
volunteers and members of the ministry
team, and is open most office hours.

Contact details: Tel: 01865 747680
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Website: www.cowleyteamministry.co.uk

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Revd Howard Thornton
Howard has Friday as his day off

Team Vicar:

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Email: skye@cowleyteamministry.co.uk
Skye has Wednesday as her day off.

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