

# Parting of the Ways

After a colder winter than we have been used to, Spring is now getting under way. With a hosepipe ban already in force perhaps we need to look forward to a long, dry, hot summer. Sadly for Sharon, myself and my family, the next few months will be preoccupied with saying our farewells to all our friends at St James' and St Francis' churches. In August we shall be moving to Hermitage just this side of Newbury as I prepare to take up my post as Team Rector of the Hermitage Team, consisting of seven churches with 14 churchwardens and seven PCC's!!!

Our 10 and a half years spent in Cowley have been some of the happiest that Sharon and I have spent in ministry. Over the years there have been many changes and it has been a privilege to be working amongst such friendly and supportive congregations. One of the costs of parochial ministry is that the time comes when one is called by God to move on.

Journeying has been very much a theme of the Christian life down the centuries and we have been so very fortunate in having such wonderful companions on our pilgrimage. Together we have worked and prayed and praised and laughed in our work of building up God's kingdom.

Parting is always difficult but as Christians we believe that we do not

journey alone. As we look to the future with its uncertainties two verses from scripture spring to mind:

*I know the plans I have for you says the Lord - plans to give you hope and future.* (Jer 29.11)

*I am always with you;*

*And hold me by my right hand. You would guide me with your counsel.*

(Psalm 73.23 & 24)

As the long drawn out process of choosing my successor gets under way, what is important is that we are all praying that we may discern God's will and that the person whom he has chosen to lead the Christian community in this parish will themselves be guided to realise that for themselves.

As with all vacancies in parishes, the intervening period between one parish priest leaving and another being appointed, is yet another opportunity for the Christian community to discover the gifts and talents which lie within.

May God bless us as you look forward to the months ahead assured of his graciousness and kindness which we have come to experience from him in the years gone by.

With my love and best wishes,



# Chronicle

# Ministry of Healing

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

## Healing Services:

Thursday 11th May 7.30 pm

St Francis Church

Thursday 1st June 7.30 pm

St James Church



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

## Churches Together in Cowley

# Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 29<sup>th</sup> May - 4 June 2006

Services will be held at the following churches each evening at 7.00 p.m. the services last about 20 minutes.

Monday	29 May	Littlemore Roman Catholic
Tuesday	30 May	St James, Cowley
Wednesday	31 May	Rose Hill Methodist Church
Thursday	1 June	Temple Cowley URC
Friday	2 June	John Bunyan Baptist Church
Saturday	3 June	Holy Family, Blackbird Leys

## Pentecost Sunday 4 June 3.30pm

Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church, Blackbird Leys  
Picnic in the church garden and short united service

## NOTES FROM THE MARCH PCC



The PCC received reports from the Church Committees and the Deanery Synod, at which a small study group was

formed to look more deeply into the Deanery mapping exercise.

St. James' Committee had discussed practical matters relating to the Church Centre. Bookings are increasing and a special lunch is planned for Easter Tuesday. A possible move by the Asian Fellowship to St. Francis' Church was discussed further.

St. Francis' Committee are considering alternative ways of incorporating an aisle into the church floor. They have decided to produce a regular newsletter for circulation to people who do not attend church. Regarding the replacement of the heating system, they agreed that the existing radiators have proved adequate and the heating engineer has agreed to re-assess the situation and re-estimate. A new Faculty will be applied for.

The Treasurer presented the Parish Accounts for 2005. They were formally approved and accepted by the PCC.

The PCC Study Day was reviewed. Its focus was our vision for the Parish and members were asked to consider what we might do better together as a Parish rather than in our two separate churches.

As this was Gwen's last meeting as Churchwarden, Stephen expressed our most sincere thanks.

# CELEBRATING THE MONTH OF MAY



May is the month when the ancient pagans used to get up to all sorts! The Romans held their festival to honour the mother-goddess Maia, goddess of nature and growth. (May is named after her.) The early Celts celebrated the

feast of Beltane, in honour of the sun god, Beli.

For centuries in 'Olde England' the people went mad in May. After the hardship of winter, and hunger of early Spring, May was a time of indulgence and unbridled merriment. One Philip Stubbes, writing in 1583, was scandalised: "for what kissing and bussing, what smooching and slabbering one of another, is not practised?"

Henry VIII went 'maying' on many occasions. Then folk would stay out all night in the dark rain-warm thickets, and return in the morning for dancing on the green around the May pole, archery, vaulting, wrestling, and that evening, bonfires.

The Protestant reformers took a strong stand against May Day - and in 1644 May Day was abolished together. Many May poles came down - only to go up again at the Restoration, when the first May Day of King Charles's reign was "the happiest Mayday that hath been many a year in England", according to Pepys.

May Day to most people today brings vague folk memories of a young Queen of the May decorated with garlands and streamers and flowers, a May Pole to weave, Morris dancing, and the intricacies of well dressing at Tissington in Derbyshire.

May Day is a medley of natural themes such as sunrise, the advent of summer, growth in nature, and - since 1833 - Robert Owen's vision of a millennium in the future, beginning on May Day, when there would be no more poverty, injustice or cruelty, but in harmony and friendship. This is why, in modern times, May Day has become Labour Day, which honours the dignity of

workers. And until recently, in communist countries May Day processions were in honour of the achievement of Marxism.

There has never been a Christian content to May Day, but nevertheless there is the well known 6am service on the top of Magdalen Tower at Oxford where a choir sings in the dawn of May Day.

An old May carol includes the lines:

*The life of man is but a span,  
it flourishes like a flower  
We are here today, and gone tomorrow  
- we are dead within an hour.*

There is something of a sadness about it, both in words and tune, as about all purely sensuous joy. For May Day is not Easter, and the joys it represents have always been earth-bound and fleeting.

*They have Dial-a-Prayer for atheists now - you call up and it rings and rings but nobody answers.*

## ANNUAL PAROCHIAL MEETING



### ELECTION RESULTS

At the Annual Parochial Meeting held on 20th April 7.30 pm in St James Church.

The following were elected:

*Churchwardens:\**

Alan Howell	Norah Shallow
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*Parochial Church Councillors:*

Rosanne Butler	Margaret Martin
Marlene Shreeve	John Shreeve
June Smith	Thelma Telling

Lesley Williams

*Cowley Deanery Synod Representatives*

*(elected last year):\**

Pat Chung	Una Dean
Diana Pope	Gwen Ranklin

\* *ex officio members of the PCC*



# Rosanne interviews Bishop John Garton

It's not every day that a former bishop and his wife walk into your church and quietly take part in the service, discretely leave and return the next and subsequent Sundays. I guess that a good many worshippers at St James' don't realise that John and Pauline have had such a distinguished career before settling in Cowley, so it's high time that I introduced them.

My first question was, what brought them to our "neck of the woods"? I was given a list of very good reasons, not least of which was to be near two beautiful grand daughters, whose photographs grace the mantelpiece of their charming sitting room. Both their married sons live locally, one just round the corner and one in Headington. Both are teachers.

John was an Oxford undergraduate forty years ago and principal of Ripon College Cuddesdon twenty years ago, so he knows the area well and declared it a good place in which to retire. He has quite a story to tell.

Born in Horley, Surrey, he has an older sister and a twin sister who, unusually, has a different birthday from his since she and he arrived on either side of midnight. They attended the local primary school, where John was not particularly happy. In fact the most significant event in his early years was discovering the public library. He describes it as an important part of growing up – a highlight in fact.

Life really began for him when he became a pupil at Oxted Grammar School and improved

even more when the family moved to Solihull and John attended Tudor Grange Grammar School. Not that it was the enchantment of academia which appealed (not for John) but his love of sport. He played cricket and rugby, rising to captain of the school team. He was also made Head Boy.

At eighteen he had very little idea of what to do on leaving school so he joined the army as an officer cadet at Sandhurst. He was commissioned into the Royal Tank Regiment. It was from Sandhurst that he gained a scholarship to Worcester College, Oxford, where he had intended to read philosophy, politics and economics. However, he had only been at university two days when, by chance, he encountered a charismatic professor giving a lecture on the sexual behaviour of the three-spined stickleback. That sounded fun and (I'm not quite clear how!) he switched courses to study for a degree in philosophy and psychology instead. I'm afraid at this point I was laughing so much that I didn't ascertain whether sticklebacks were something to do with psychology!!

Whilst he was a teenager he got involved in his local church. He said with a twinkle in his eye, because the most attractive girls in the neighbourhood went to church. However there was obviously more to it than that as he was already considering ordination. At Oxford he explored the possibility of training for the Church's ministry. He went on to study theology and was ordained in 1969. He served as a Deacon in Christ Church

Oxford and in 1970 as a priest at the Guard's Chapel in London. He trained at Cuddesdon College. One evening in 'The Bat & Ball' pub in the village he met a rather special girl. She was visiting mutual friends for the weekend. Asked if he "tracked her down" the next day, John agreed that he certainly and so began their courtship. Her name was Pauline. She had driven up from her home in Hove and for a year after that she made the same journey at weekends to be with John. They were married at her parish church in Hove and began their married life in a tiny cottage in Cuddesdon village.

Back in the army, a stint as assistant chaplain at the Guards' depot in Pirbright was followed by a similar position at Sandhurst. Whilst living there their elder son Stephen was born. A year as army chaplain in Northern Ireland from 1972-1973 gave John the opportunity to meet many people working for peace and order and trying to make sense of the terrible situation there. With his lovely sense of humour he also told me he managed to share quite a few glasses of whisky too!!

After the army the couple moved with their two small boys, Patrick having been born whilst they were in Ireland, to Lincoln, where John lectured in theology. They were there for five years, which they described as "very hard work". This was followed by a totally different experience, when he became rector of a team ministry in Coventry. It was a challenging, but wonderful experience for both he and Pauline, as they so much enjoyed

the vast range of different people within the community with whom they came into contact. John chaired the Coventry Council of Churches and was appointed advisor for community relations to the Bishop of Coventry. The dialogue between Christians and those of other faiths and cultures has always been of particular importance to John.

Next came the appointment as principal of Ripon College Cuddesdon and also, as was the tradition at that time, Vicar of the parish church. During their ten years at the college the couple, having experienced the problem at first hand, were aware of the lack of accommodation for married students. As a direct result of their amazing fund-raising efforts the Runcie Building was built and opened. They and their committee had raised over a million pounds to achieve this.

John was consecrated Bishop of Plymouth in Southwark Cathedral in London in 1996. His area covered south and west Devon, and during the nine years he held the See, he and Pauline fell in love with it. He described to me the experience of arriving at a village church on Dartmoor on a dark winter's night, where the building was ablaze with light and packed with people for a confirmation service. The spirituality of it was almost tangible and very moving. Sadly it was whilst he was in Plymouth that ill health struck in the form of Parkinson's disease. What he wanted to believe was tiredness due to the rigours of a demanding job, finally proved to be more than that. On a long awaited trek through the Himalayas his legs "gave out" as he put it. Far from civilisation his sherpa came to his rescue and for three days virtually piggy-backed him down to base. After that his retirement was inevitable.

So we come full circle to he and Pauline buying a house in Cowley

and finding their way to St James. With a home full of books, plenty of sport on T.V., those adorable grand-children (and another on the way) and hundreds of friends to keep in touch with, that seems to me the perfect recipe for a contented retirement.

### **How would you describe yourself as a young child?**

I disliked my junior school so much I sometimes used my bronchitis, as an excuse not to go.

### **Have you any significant childhood memories?**

I have a vague memory of V.E. day but I do remember having very nice cakes after food rationing.

### **Has God been part of your life since childhood?**

When I was a young child my mum sent me to Sunday school. At fifteen I belonged to a thriving youth club run by a curate who had a remarkable influence on young folk.

### **In our present society is there anything which angers or disappoints you?**

Clearly, I can be quite passionate about questions of poverty, justice and the attempt to create a world where God's peace and love may prevail.

### **Is there anything about life today which you find positive or encouraging?**

A great deal! There are lots of people who are committed to the care of others. There is a lot of good work done by young people in their concern for the environment, charities and so on.

### **Do you have a treasured possession?**

My pectoral cross\*. Oh and my library of books (which, along with my wife are my best friends).

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

Several. In terms of the last century, Bonhoeffer, a great theologian and pastor, killed by the nazis. And Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Tutu because they taught us so much about forgiveness.

### **How do you spend your leisure time?**

Reading and walking, visiting art galleries and watching sport on T.V. particularly Rugby.

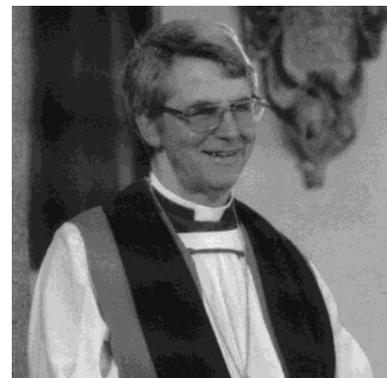
### **What makes you laugh?**

I find the human condition very funny – it's important that we laugh at ourselves.

### **Do you have ambitions, plans for the future?**

It would be nice to see our grandchildren grow up in a less selfish, more tolerant society. I hope to keep well enough to travel.

*\*A Pectoral cross (from the Latin pectoralis, of the chest) is a cross, worn around the neck by a bishop*



## PARENTAL EXCUSES

These are actual excuse notes from parents excusing their children from missing school (includes original spelling):

My son is under a doctor's care and should not take P.E. today.

Please execute him.

Please excuse Lisa for being absent. She was sick and I had her shot.

Dear School: Please excuse John being absent on Jan. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and also 33.

Please excuse Roland from P.E. for a few days.

Yesterday he fell out of a tree and misplaced his hip.

John has been absent because he had two teeth taken out of his face.

Carlos was absent yesterday because he was playing football. He was hurt in the growing part.

Megan could not come to school today because she has been bothered by very close veins.

Chris will not be in school because he has an acre in his side.

Please excuse Ray Friday from school. He has very loose vowels.

Please excuse Tommy for being absent yesterday. He had diarrhoea and his boots leak.

Irving was absent yesterday because he missed his bust.

Please excuse Jimmy for being. It was his father's fault.

I kept Billie home because she had to go Christmas shopping because I don't know what size she wears.

Please excuse Jennifer for missing school yesterday. We forgot to get the Sunday paper off the porch, and when we found it Monday, we thought it was Sunday.

Sally won't be in school a week from Friday. We have to attend her funeral.

Please excuse Jason for being absent yesterday. He had a cold and could not breathe well.



### Meow

"What is your kitty's name, James?" asked the visitor.

"Ben Hur", said James.

"That's a funny name for a cat. Why did you name it that?"

"Well, we just called him Ben - until he had kittens."



## Ascension Day

Thursday 25th May

**ST FRANCIS**

**7.00 pm Holy Eucharist**

*note later time*

**ST JAMES**

**9.30 am Holy Communion**

**7.00 pm Sung Eucharist**

### God's Grace Distilling

The grace of God  
on you distil,  
The grace of Christ  
dew-dropping fill,  
The grace of Spirit  
flowing still  
Each day and night  
upon you pour  
Of this life's share  
for you in store;  
O day and night  
upon you pour  
Of this life's share  
for you in store.

*from Poems of the Western  
Highlanders*

**ARCHBISHOP - FAITH SCHOOLS PROVIDE ESSENTIAL EDUCATION**

The Archbishop of Canterbury has launched a strong defence of faith schools as helping to provide the 'broadest possible access to ideas' for young minds.

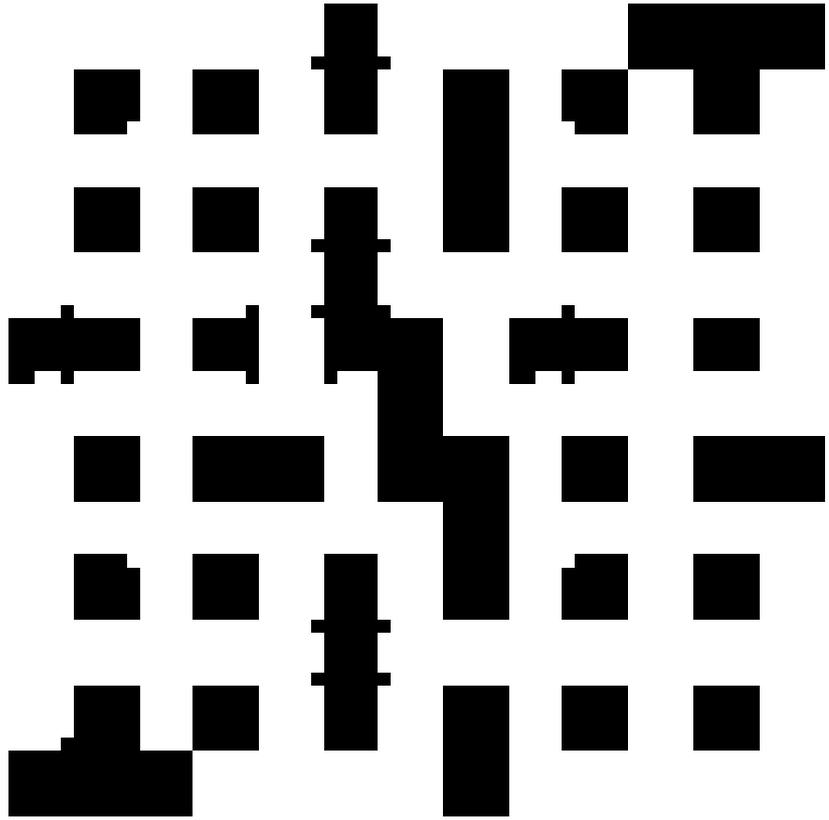
In a speech given at the recent National Church Schools Conference in London, Dr Williams argued that faith schools offer an essential contribution to the development of strong and integrated communities. He rejected accusations that they encourage divisiveness, exclusivity and irrationality.

Rejecting the misconception that faith schools offer mostly middle class families an alternative to paying for private education, Dr Williams says that the Church of England educates children from a diversity of social backgrounds and regularly provides a faith based education for those living in deprived areas:

"The often-forgotten fact that church schools are the main educational presences in some of our most deprived communities means that it simply cannot be said that these schools somehow have a policy of sanitising or segregating."

Dr Williams also believes that an avowedly secularist approach to the provision of public education has serious implications for good community relations in the future.

# May's Crossword



**Across**

- 1 Former unit of currency in France (5)
- 4 12 down's wife became a pillar of this (4)
- 8 He killed Gedaliah in Jeremiah ch. 41 (7)
- 9 Intoxicated, like Uriah in 2 Samuel ch. 11 (5)
- 10 Land owned by a parish church used to support its priest (5)
- 11 Its utterer is a fool, according to Proverbs ch. 10 (7)
- 13 ..fillest thee with the \_\_\_\_\_ of the wheat (Ps 147.14) (6)
- 15 Footfalls (6)
- 17 like the instruments in Ecclesiastes ch. 2 (7)
- 20 Crowd in which Jesus turned about in Mark ch. 5 (5)
- 22 Intreat me not to \_\_\_\_\_ thee (Ruth 1.16) (5)
- 23 Vehicle used by Naaman in 2 Kings ch. 5 (7)
- 24 Encourage, like the pharisees did in Luke ch. 11 (4)
- 25 Those mentioned in Proverbs ch. 23 are dainty (5)

**Down**

- 1 Hurl (5)
- 2 The first day of Lent (3,9)
- 3 Small buildings for Christian worship (7)
- 4 He was sent with Paul to Berea in Acts ch. 17 (5)
- 5 Seller of purple in Acts ch. 16 (5)
- 6 The first Sunday in Lent (12)
- 7 Jerusalem's filthiness is in these, according to Lamentations ch. 1 (6)
- 12 His wife became a pillar of 4 across (3)
- 13 That of Matri was taken in 1 Samuel ch. 10 (6)
- 14 Beverage (3)
- 16 Valley mentioned in Isaiah ch. 17 (7)
- 18 ..let thy heart \_\_\_\_\_ thee (Eccl 1.9) (5)
- 19 It is described as filthy in 1 Timothy ch. 3 (5)
- 21 Positions (5)

## April's Solution

P	L	E	D	G	E		P	I	P	E	S	
O	L	A		A		O	U		A			
P	S	A	L	M		B	R	O	I	L	E	D
L	P	A		N		R	S		D			
A	B	S	O	L	V	E		H	E	E	L	
R	E	I		R	O	B						E
	E	D	G	E			E	D	E	N		
G			L	O	T		N		L		P	
E	A	R	S			R	E	J	O	I	C	E
N	A	S		O		A	A		A		T	
T	A	B	I	T	H	A		M	A	K	E	R
L	B	A		S		I		I			E	
E	L	I	A	B			A	N	I	M	A	L

# Sunday Services

## ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am	Holy Communion
10.00 am	Sung Eucharist ( <i>exc 2nd Sunday</i> ) All Age Eucharist ( <i>2nd Sunday</i> )
1.00 pm	Cowley Asian Christian Fellowship

## ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

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

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

### Day Off

Stephen has Friday off, Except in emergency, please try and respect this day of rest. Lorne can be contacted in the evenings and at weekends.

## PARISH DIRECTORY

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### LICENSED LAY

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### CHURCHWARDENS:

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