

Something's Stirring

Something good and lasting is stirring. People across the country were caught up in a project that was bigger, grander and more important than all the little things that sometimes divide us. There was a mood shift, an attitudinal adjustment that was tangible. People all over the country felt a humble pride that we are created for noble causes: to be generous and caring and sharing people learning to love others as we would be loved. This good and lasting thing stirred in us and grew as we welcomed people from all over the world who had come to compete and cheer and be caught up in the Olympics, a human endeavour that celebrates God's Spirit in us. We laughed and cried with our athletes, looked at the number of gold, silver and bronze medals won, and noted too those medals that were missed by fractions of seconds. Hearts were stirred by each athlete's commitment to strive to be the best he or she could be.

And now we are hosting the second phase of the world's most prestigious sporting competition, the Paralympics, which had their birth in Stoke Mandeville. Just before the outbreak of the Second World War, a Jewish refugee, Dr Ludwig Guttmann, came from Germany to Oxford's Radcliffe Infirmary to continue his research into spinal injury treatment. In the 1940s, as the world's leading expert, he was asked to establish the National Spinal Injuries Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital in Buckinghamshire.

Guttmann believed that sport could play a major therapeutic role in helping build up the physical, emotional, and spiritual strength of injured military personnel. He held this belief so strongly that he organised the first Stoke Mandeville Games for disabled persons. Guttmann's games in Stoke began on 28 July 1948, the same day as the start of the London Olympic Games.

Lord Coe, chairman of the Olympic Games in London, said our athletes provided "moments of heroism and heartbreak", and the British people

responded in a "spirit of generosity". The Paralympics will do the same because the athletes involved are just as heroic and will provide the same level of drama. God's love extends to us all and we are all valuable in his eyes.

Christians everywhere are called to have the same noble aspirations. We are called to be generous, caring people who love others. Because of the great hope we carry within us, we are called to touch the lives of others and to change the world, just as Guttmann did, by standing alongside people and helping where we can, encouraging, giving of ourselves generously and striving to live out God's purposes for our lives. Like our Olympic athletes, we need to train and practice and strive to be all we can be. The athlete who finishes well is the one who trains and strives with all his or her heart before the contest begins.

Several events this month will give us all an opportunity to generously share our lives together and with the community. On Sunday 16 September we will celebrate "Harvest Thanksgiving" at St James and St Francis Churches. Please show your generous spirit by bringing gifts of food for people in Cowley and Oxford who need a bit of help, and gifts of money to feed children in Africa. It is a chance to celebrate God's generosity to each of us. Please invite your neighbour to meet our generous God and take part in the world's biggest supper party.

On Sunday 30th September we once again celebrate Back to Church Sunday. Just as we welcomed the world to England for the Olympics, and discovered that people had a great time coming together, I would like to encourage you to invite the world (or at least one or two good friends) to come to church. Invite your friends to experience church again, for the first time. You might be surprised at how many people are just waiting for an invitation.

Howard

Chronicle

September 2012

Editor's Letter

Dear Readers

Welcome back after our summer break and a big welcome to our new readers. Wow! What a summer it has been! The Jubilee celebrations both ours and the nations' were something special and then we only just caught our breath before London 2012 was upon us. Discussing with several people over coffee after church recently the wonderfully idiosyncratic Opening Ceremony of the Olympics I gather that family and friends, even in far-flung countries, loved the whole presentation and the Queen's "helicopter arrival" crowned it all. I loved the Games from start to finish and as I write I am looking forward enormously to the Paralympics too.

I have had several favourable comments in the last few months about the recipes we print in The Chronicle each month. Now, I wonder, if like me, you file your copies away or put them out for the bin-men and forget to snip out a good recipe you would like to keep. Sally and I were discussing this the other day and wondered if a Cowley Cook Book with past recipes might be a good idea. If we make it smart enough and not too expensive you could even buy one for your best friend as a Christmas present. What do you think? We would welcome your comments.

It is that time of year when the parish seems to spring into life again after the lethargy of August. There is so much to engage us it is quite hard to know where to begin. On 14th of the month we have one of our popular wine, cheese and poetry evenings. Then there is Harvest Festival. The Ride and Stride day is coming up (see June Smith's article for all the details) and please do try to sponsor someone if you are unable to either ride or stride yourself. The Christmas Gifts Fayre is fast approaching and all you knitters are being asked to make hats for Smoothies again. The Christmas boxes for disadvantaged children are being packed even now and then you need to watch out for the

next Parish Christmas Tree Festival. Lunch Club on Tuesdays is up and running and Seashells toddler group is back. The Home Groups begin again in September and (whew) if that were not enough the Big Book Project is being launched in our primary schools.

You may remember earlier in the year that plans are afoot to commemorate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in the parish by planting a tree. Joan Coleman and I have been assigned the task of choosing which species and where to plant it. We did ask Chronicle readers for their ideas. So far none have been forthcoming but it is not too late. Do let us know (as soon as possible – the year is rushing by) if you have any suggestions, please. Then we can buy our tree, find a site and settle it in "ere the winter storms begin".

After the favourable response to the showing of the Jubilee DVD on the big screen in the Church Centre Howard and I thought it would be fun to use the equipment more often. We have been consulting and have come up with a new initiative which we hope will meet with your approval. Watch out as you delve further into your magazine for news of our forthcoming film club.

Also in the next few pages you will notice that both Diana Pope and Joan Coleman are writing our gardening columns. They have great advice to offer and each has her own lively and distinctive style so Sally and I are really pleased to include them for you. Thank you Joan and Diana.

Thank you, too, to all our contributors, their articles, we hope make for interesting reading month by month. We are always keen to welcome new ideas, though, so do send in yours.

Happy St Giles Fair!

God Bless

Rosanne

5th COWLEY GUIDES SUMMER CAMP

On the 4th August we set up camp at Hardimans Field, Shipston-on-Stour. The Guiders managed to set up their tents before the Guides arrived (missing the heavy rain). The Guides had to put up their tents next, in the rain. We had rain and sun at the beginning of the week, then on Wednesday it changed to hot and sunny.

The theme of the camp was the Best of British. We covered activities to do with the Olympics and complete three different Diamond Jubilee Badges, which Guides groups around the country had produced.

On Tuesday, the girls went to the local swimming pool. On the Wednesday we all went out for the day to Warwick Castle. It was a great trip with lots to see and do. On Thursday the Guides had to cook in their patrols for the day.

Between the adults we had four children, Isobel 8 months, Blake 20 months, Ashlea 4 years and Janine 7 years. We hope to be able to let you read some extracts from the camp diaries they made next time.

FLOWER OF THE MONTH – NASTURTIUM

Nasturtiums originated exclusively in South America first described by the Spanish plant collector and physician, Nicolas Monardes. In 1569 in his paper “Joyfull Newes out of the New Found Worlde” he noted that in the middle of every nasturtium petal there was a spot like “a droppe of bloode, so redde and so firmly kindled in couller”. He, of course, was looking for plants which he could use as medicinal cures but marvelled at their “fairnesse” as he put it.

One famous person who planted nasturtiums for their beauty was the impressionist painter, Monet. In his glorious garden at Giverny in France he used them in profusion to spill over pathways, their exuberance delighting his eye for colour throughout the summer and autumn months. He was a contemporary of the English garden designer Gertrude Jekyll who also revolutionised planting by changing the formal fashion for gardens with her use of free flowing natural bedding. As well as being informal and beautiful they are invaluable in the garden for filling in spaces with a minimum of effort and expense.

Their name comes from two Latin words, *nasus*, the nose, and *tortus*, twisted. The plant has a distinctive and pungent smell and has a habit of twisting its stems into strange shapes especially when the seed

pods appear. (Perhaps you also twist your nose as you crush the leaves or flowers?) The botanical name for the plant comes from Greek. It is *tropaion* meaning a trophy. The explanation for this is that after a battle in the age of the ancient Greek Empire the helmets and shields of prisoners would be hung on trees as trophies of war. The flowers of nasturtiums do look like small Greek helmets and the leaves are certainly the same round shape as those of warriors' shields seen on the decorations of Greek urns. Intriguing. The correct botanical name is *tropaeotum*.

The first nasturtiums discovered by Monardes were smaller than the varieties we grow nowadays. These were developed in Europe in the mid-17th century. By that time they were used as food, the flowers adding colour and flavour to salads and the seeds were used in pickles. In the Parish exhibition of 1878 there were thirty different varieties of the plant on show.

The nasturtium is ridiculously easy to grow. Anyone can scatter a handful of seeds on the poorest of soil and be rewarded with a carpet of little shields and helmets in every shade of red, orange and gold or plant the climbing variety against a trellis and enjoy their “fairnesse” for months.

Gardening: Thoughts on Harvest

I write just after our Elder Stubbs Festival, which, this year was graced with the most glorious summer weather. It is a great community event, being the 21st organised by Restore to raise money for their mental health charity. So it is now over two decades when some overgrown allotments were tenanted by them to give practical and social help to people who get “a helping hand, a smile and encouragement that life will get better”.

I also find Elder Stubbs an oasis of calm and gone are the days of many overgrown allotments. The allotment-holders have a Veg Show at the Festival and it was a bit thin this year due to the weird weather. I certainly had to struggle to find entries, though I did win the longest runner bean!

This end of the summer and September is always synonymous with harvest. It's maybe my farming background. We will be picking runner and French beans, courgettes, pumpkins, sweet corn, carrots and beetroot, autumn-fruiting raspberries (variety Joan J, of course!) and digging up the potato crop.

Ah! The potato crop! Last year our spuds were stolen, this year they have just not grown! It will be interesting to see just how few we get. There is

Mothers' UNION News
Christian care for families

Our July branch meeting took the form of a summer tea party when 18 members sat down to scones, cream and strawberry jam, dainty sandwiches and other goodies. After opening prayers and a hymn we dealt with business matters and then tucked in. Our branch leader, John Shreeve, read some entertaining pieces and poems. We broke up for our summer break duly well-fed and amused.

On Friday, 14th September we are holding another of our popular wine, cheese and poetry evenings. It is open to all and if you have not yet experienced one of these evenings you will be very welcome to give it a try. We meet in St James' Church centre

always next year. You have to be optimistic in this game.

In the garden, I have a good crop of tomatoes coming on which have, so far, missed the blight which is prevalent this summer. I also have chillies from the four varieties I have grown this year. My Victoria plums are starting to ripen, though the crop is not as heavy as last summer when a large branch broke off the tree due to the weight. I know one is supposed to thin heavy crops but I can't bear to do it.

I shall be trimming the hedges this month, as birds will have long given up nesting, and planting daffodils for next spring's display. I always add a few each autumn especially if I remember where the gaps were this year and, no doubt, telling myself off for not photographing said gaps in the spring as the experts tell us to! But I will give myself time to sit down and just be in the garden, maybe enjoying a juicy ripe plum!

Enjoy the harvest too and here's hoping we have great weather!

Joan Coleman

at 6.30 pm and ask people to bring along favourite poems to share. Wine (or soft drinks) and supper are all included in the price. Entrance is £5 (if you do not bring a poem) or £4 (if you do).

The September branch meeting will be on 17th of the month at 2.30 pm in the Church Centre. We are looking forward to our speaker, Beverly Hughes, who is going to tell us about the ministry work she is currently doing in HM prisons.

We are delighted to welcome a new member to our branch. Our new vicar, Skye, is already a Mothers' Union member and we are very pleased that she will be joining us.

NEWS FROM ST FRANCIS

What a relief it is to have our own Team Vicar in situ at long last. And our Skye with her confident and friendly approach and her general air of competence, has quickly endeared herself to our congregation.

She has also wasted no time in getting to grips with our situation and getting to know us better. After a recent Bring and Share lunch she invited us to put forward our views on how we would like our church to progress in the near future, and she and her husband shared with us a few of their own thoughts on this issue. We were also asked to sign our support for any particular church matters that we felt strongly about. As a result a Worship Committee has already met to discuss our services, and a Social Committee to look at Fund Raising Events and social matters. A social year planner has been produced with events listed from September 2012 through to August 2013. Skye has some interesting ideas on our special services, e.g. Harvest Festival, our Patronal Festival and Remembrance Sunday. A regular all-age service will take place monthly where young people will have the chance to play a more positive role in things, and we are looking for volunteers to help with young people on a regular basis. Sadly we are losing James Lord who has been a tower of strength in this area. He is moving to London for some Teacher Training, and we are sorry to lose him, but wish him well in his new career.

As stated in The Link a new Babies and Toddlers Group is starting up in September, called the "Little Stars" Playgroup on Mondays from 10 am – 11.30 am. This will be a Church Playgroup so there will be a chance to tell a few Bible Stories and perhaps sing a children's hymn.

So all in all things are moving along quite nicely with us now, and we can look forward with confidence to the future.

John Shreeve

Saint James' Church Bells

Except for weddings St. James' bells have recently been silent but never fear the ringers' holidays will soon be over and St. James' bells will be ringing out again for Sunday morning services and Thursday evening practice.

Nevertheless we have had a busy summer ringing for all the various celebrations. Our first event was 'Ringing for England' on Monday 23rd April, with 28,000 bells in 15,000 churches ringing in England all together at 6 pm in recognition of St. George's Day.

Next on the bell ringing calendar was St. James' own Jubilee celebrations on Saturday 19th May and the bell ringers made their contribution to a wonderful day by ringing from 6 to 6.30 pm

Also, in celebration of the Queen's Jubilee on Saturday 26th May the whole of Oxfordshire rang at 5pm and once again we joined in with great pride.

Next were the Olympics and Paralympics and as the Olympic Torch passed through Temple Cowley on Monday 9th July we rang for ½ hour to cheer the runners on. We also rang on Friday 27th July at 5 pm to celebrate the Opening of the Olympic Games.

Wednesday 29th August at 5 pm saw our final

celebration of these games when we rang for the opening of the Paralympic Games.

So although our bells have been relatively quiet over the past few weeks we have had a wonderful summer ringing for all the celebrations this country has seen and two of our ringers are looking forward to a residential course which promises to be very exciting – more about that next month.

Margaret Weller

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

Extract from *The Cowley Chronicle*, Mid-September 1960

81 HOMES ON OLD VICARAGE SITE

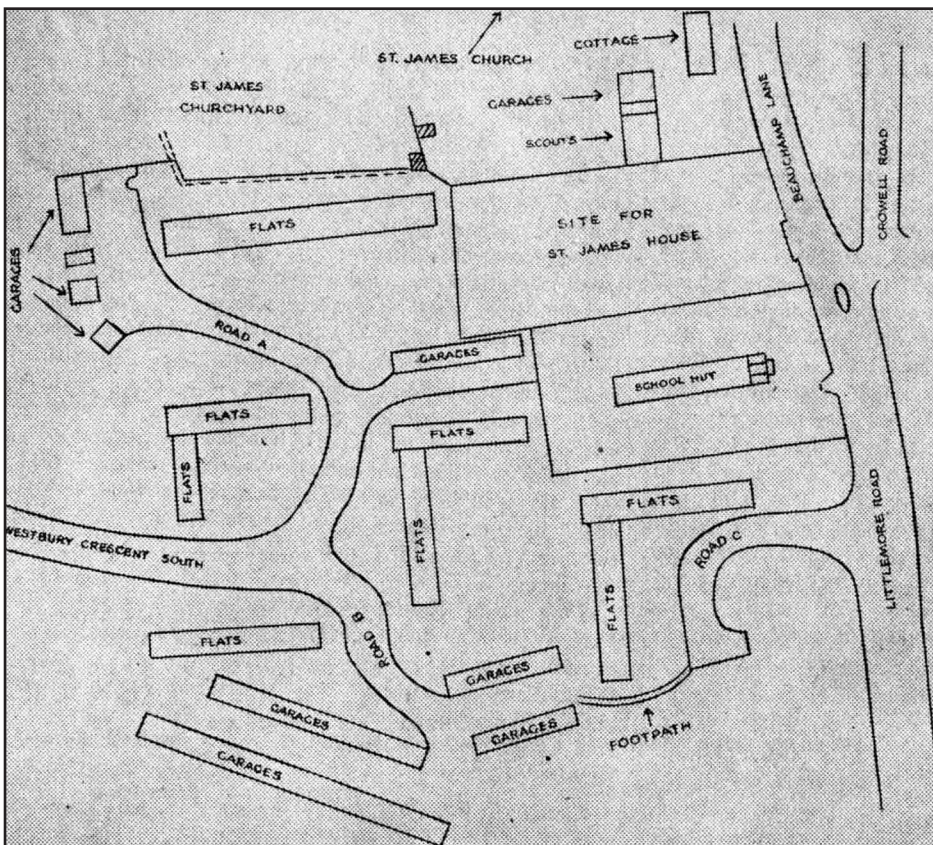
There will be no chimneys and only one TV mast on the ground now being developed by George Wimpey and Co Ltd on the site of the old Cowley Vicarage. Each of the 81 dwelling units will have gas and electric supply, a telephone lead and a TV lead. The plan reproduced here is based on information kindly supplied by Wimpey's and rapid progress is now being made. A spokesman for the firm said that they expected to finish completely on the site by October 1961. There will be slightly more maisonettes than flats. All the dwelling blocks are three-storey and the typical unit is a ground floor flat, with two maisonettes on top of it, each having a living room, hall and kitchen on the first floor, and two bedrooms and a bathroom on the top floor. Both maisonettes and the flat will have independent

front doors, the three doors being side by side. In the plan of one flat, an L-shaped living-room has an area of 206 sq ft and the bedrooms are 15 ft 10 ins x 9 ft and 13 ft 6 ins x 9 ft. The kitchen will be fully fitted, and there will be an electric fire and two electric oil-filled radiators in the living-room.

In the block backing on to the Parish Churchyard there will be 15 such dwellings. All will be sold leasehold, but the price has not yet been announced.

The exterior of the blocks, free from chimneys and masts, will be varied by sections of differing brickwork, and by having parts cement-rendered and then either painted or pebbled. The ground between the buildings will be grassed and trees have been retained as far as possible. There will be a footpath, providing a through way for pedestrians from Westbury Crescent South to Littlemore Road.

The roads will be built by Wimpey's, and it is likely that they will then be maintained by the Council.



The top right part of the plan does not concern Wimpey's development. The new St James' House for the priest-in-charge of St James, will be built in the near future on the driveway of the old vicarage. The cottage beside the Churchyard is at present being renovated and will be used by Fr. Norton until St James' House is ready.

The school hut is being used now as part of St James' School.

BOOK OF THE MONTH

'God in the Shadows' by Hugh Redwood

I like this book because it depicts front line Christianity working successfully under the most difficult circumstances to change lives and drastically improve situations. Something the world will not admit can and does happen. I like it also because it is an honest, very human book, that also charts the author's spiritual development wants and all. It moved me very greatly when I first read it some years ago, and it still resonates with me today. And I think that it must have affected many other people in the same way because it ran into 16 impressions in quite a short time, something quite unusual with this sort of book. The author also wrote a companion volume called 'God in the Slums'. He is quite convinced that God was at work in a very special way guiding and supporting relief work in disadvantaged areas during the 1920s and 30s. And from the many examples he gives, I am inclined to agree with him.

The author writing about himself describes his early working life as a somewhat cynical young newspaper correspondent who has a born again experience and joins the Salvation Army – entering with enthusiasm into their work. Then as a result of a dispute with his senior officer suddenly decides to leave. In fact he decided to turn his back on God and the religious

life altogether, and concentrate on his own career. He progresses steadily up the working ladder to a position of senior management. He has a nice home, and a wife and young daughter whom he loves intensely. Suddenly as a young teenager she is struck down by a mysterious illness which is life threatening. He brings in various consultants and specialists to try to find a cure, but to no avail. He engages a nurse to be with her day and night, and suddenly the situation becomes critical. In a nightmare of anxiety and despair he sinks to his knees one evening – asks for God's forgiveness for his backsliding and begs for the life of his daughter. Next morning he pops into her bedroom with fearful anticipation, only to find a smiling nurse who says that his daughter's condition is greatly improved. He looks at the temperature chart by the bed and sees that her change for the better happened at exactly the time he had prayed for her in his study.

It is a scenario directly out of the New Testament. His daughter still has to spend some months in hospital on her way to full recovery, but the worst is over. In the course of his regular hospital visits he becomes aware of the plight of many other young patients from much poorer backgrounds and becomes determined to improve their lot both in

and out of hospital. He uses his money and influence to improve their lives and give them chances they never had before. In short, God has turned him around completely. He had given up on God – but God never gave up on him. I find that very moving and very heartening in these times of criticism and unbelief. May we all be encouraged to trust the Lord even in these tense and volatile times.

John Shreeve

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Time to have your say...

This year the Parochial Church Council (PCC) has allocated £2,581.00 from the budget to be spent on Mission Giving. The money is equal to 5% of the planned giving, including Gift Aid claimed, given to the parish in 2011.

If you have ideas of where this money could be distributed, please give me full written details.

There will be a meeting to make the final decisions on Wednesday 3rd October at 7.30 pm at St James' Church Centre. Everyone is most welcome as, no doubt, will be the tea/coffee and cake!

Joan Coleman – Parish Treasurer 01865 770865 ojcoleman@btinternet.com

THE FRIENDS OF ST FRANCIS

In our own quiet way we “Friends” have been pursuing our course with dedication and enthusiasm. We have our own short liturgy (designed by Thelma Telling) that brings us comfort and cohesion. Our studies and discussions on various bible passages, have been frank and free. Our prayers have been sincere and heartfelt, and everyone is encouraged to bring a special prayer of their own choice to each meeting. We meet fortnightly, and by having two leaders we spread the load, and are covered in case of illness. Several of our members have had serious health problems and have had to be away from us for weeks at a time. Yet they always feel drawn back to the fellowship and friendship that they find at our meetings, and return to us as soon as they can. So we must be getting something right. We are always open to receive new members, if you feel so inclined, and we are all grateful for the Lord's Blessing on our little gathering.

John Shreeve

Editor's Note: The Chronicle would be interested to receive news from other Home Groups

SIGNIFICANT DATES IN SEPTEMBER

On 3rd September 1976 Viking II made a soft landing on the surface of Mars. The probe transmitted colour pictures of the planet's surface and tested the soil for signs of life.

The guillotine was abolished as a form of capital punishment in France as recently as 9th September 1981.

Cleopatra's Needle was erected on the Thames Embankment in London on 12th September 1876. Weighing 186 tons, the Egyptian obelisk is 3,500 years old. It was shipped to Britain from Alexandria as a gift from the Egyptian people.

20th September 1258 was the day when Salisbury Cathedral was dedicated. The spire at 404 feet, the tallest church spire in Britain was added later.

As the sun crosses the equator on its way south day and night are exactly equal in length of time on 23rd September each year. This is called the Autumnal Equinox.

25th September marks the first ever mention of an Englishman drinking a cup of tea. The famous diarist, Samuel Pepys reported drinking this new brew in 1660. It did not take long for the nation to adopt it as a favourite beverage.

A Churchwardens Report

I have been fortunate to enjoy some mountain walking in the Pyrenees earlier this year. Because it was early in the season one had the tracks to oneself for most of the day and the combination of solitude and the magnificent scenery and wild flowers popping up all around was inspiring. I was able to give time to prayer and meditation and listening to God in a way that is rare in normal every day life with all the distractions of the media and busyness that characterises so much of our daily lives.

“Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord” Ephesians 5:19 also became a natural thing in such a setting with no-one to hear except the Creator and a few birds! In the rare times one’s Spirit got low through weariness, hunger, thirst or the occasional danger. Yes, there were some difficulties with snow which cover the markers and making finding the route problematic. There were two days when I was not sure if I would be able to reach the mountain hut by nightfall. It was easy to slip on a rock and twist your ankle or worse. Sometimes the ice became too steep or thin over a river to safely walk. In all these things I was able to give it to the Lord and just rest in that assurance. I

can testify that He has always protected me and guided me to safe lodgings over many years of walking.

Lastly, its a minor miracle that after severe sciatica several years ago that even now makes it hard for me to stand in one place for more that 5 minutes at a time that I could now carry a 8kg rucksack up and down mountains all day long (one day was 13hrs) and enjoy the rewards. I thank the Lord for that.

If we could all find a place away from the noisy demands of the world and listen to God’s prompting it would do our souls, minds and bodies good.

Where is your retreat?

As you may know the long awaited repairs at St James Church are drawing nearer with applications being made for grants towards part of the cost of the work. Please pray that any further obstacles may be removed and we may reach a successful and speedy conclusion to this project hopefully in the Autumn.

Dave Stanley
Churchwarden

BROWNIE SLEEPOVER

BY JANINE HIGHAM AGE 7

In June a group of Brownies from 3rd Cowley went to a giant sleepover at Jubilee House. When we got there we got our beds out and we got to choose where we were sleeping, I slept by my friend Phoebe. Then we had dinner. We had hot dogs, after that we had some yoghurt’s and little cupcakes. Then in a while we watched a film about mosquitoes and children getting mosquito bites on them. Our sleepover money was being used to buy more mosquito nets. Then we all sat in a circle and sang camp fire songs and had hot chocolate with little marshmallows. Then we went to bed. In the morning we got up and got dressed. Then we had our breakfast. After our breakfast we went on the obstacle course. Next we played parachute games. Then we went home. We had a fantastic time!!!

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RIDE AND STRIDE 2012

All too soon and it is nearly September the nights will be drawing in so we have to make the most of the daylight hours. A good way of doing so is to become involved in the 2012 Ride & Stride (St/Ride) happening on 8th September 2012 from 10.00 am – 6.00 pm.

Churches around the county will be participating and raising much needed funds for the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust, not to be left out so will our Parish. It is a fun way to raise money to help restore and protect historic churches. This year 34 County Trusts are holding St/Rides, including all the counties adjacent to Oxfordshire. St/Riders will be able to visit churches and chapels on what will be a very pleasant Saturday. I can't imagine a better way of spending a Saturday, I certainly enjoyed doing just that last year.

The total amount raised for the 2011 Ride & Stride was just over £120,000 including £16,000 Gift Aid tax rebate and as a Parish we raised £600.02, half of

which was paid back to us (£300.01). This is money that will help to continue God's work.

If you would like to be a Rider, Strider or Welcomer, sponsor forms are now available at St James and St Francis but if you are feeling that you would love to take part and are not feeling up to it - don't worry the Riders, Striders and Welcomers would appreciate it if you could sponsor them.

The Bishop of Oxford will be supporting the event and will be visiting the Cowley Deanery during the day. He will be at St Francis at 12.00 noon and at St James at 1.30 pm.

The value of the Oxfordshire Historic Churches Trust has been shown recently when they gave a grant for repair work at St James' Church, and have indicated that they are willing to look at future requests sympathetically.

Thank you everyone for supporting this very worthy event.

June Smith

KFA Moves KFA Moves KFA Moves KFA Moves

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DIARY DATES TO REMEMBER

Graveyard Project
Wednesdays, 10 am
St James' Churchyard

Women's Institute
Monthly meetings on 3rd Wednesday of month from
2 – 4.30 pm
St James' Church Centre

Mothers' Union
Monthly meeting on 3rd Monday of each month from
2 – 4.30 pm
Talk: Beverley Hughes on her ministry work with
HM Prisons
St James' Church Centre

Ride and Stride 2012
Saturday, 8th September 2012
St James' Church
St Francis Church
10 – 6 pm

Open Doors 2012
Saturday, 8th September 2012
Sunday, 9th September 2012.
10-4 pm at both St James' and St Francis
St James: 2 – 4 pm
St Francis: 12 – 2 pm

Cowley Festival of Christmas Trees
Planning Meeting, Monday, 10 September 2012 – 9.30
am
Ranklin Room, St James' Church Centre

Mothers' Union
Wine, Cheese and Poetry Evening
Friday, 14th September 2012 at 6.30 pm
St James' Church Centre

Harvest Festival Service
Sunday, 16th September 2012, followed by lunch at
the Church Centre
St James' Church

Mission Giving Meeting
Wednesday, 3rd October 2012, 7.30 pm
St James' Church Centre

Film Club
Friday, 12th October 2012 6.30 pm
Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, Cert 12
St James' Church Centre

Craft Fair
Saturday, 3rd November 2012
Watch out for details

All Souls Service, remembering departed loved ones
Sunday, 4th November 2012

Film Club
Friday, 9th November 2012 6.30 pm
Mamma Mia, Cert PG
St James' Church Centre

Remembrance Sunday
Sunday, 11th November 2012

Mothers' Union Quiz night with puddings
Friday, 16th November 2012
Watch out for details

'Let's Light up Christmas' – Cowley Festival of
Christmas Trees – Theme Christmas Carols
Friday, 7th to Sunday, 9th December
St James' Church

A middle-aged lady bought a selection of beauty products to make her look younger. After spending hours applying them she asked her husband "Tell me, honestly, darling, how young do you think I look?" The reply came, ~"Well, from your skin – twenty-three, from your hair – nineteen, from your figure – twenty two." "Oh that's wonderful", she exclaimed. "Hold on a moment", he answered, "I haven't added them all up yet!"

RECIPES

Risotto (vegetarian version)

10 ozs long-grain rice – soaked in cold water for 30 minutes

2 small onions

2 green peppers

8 ozs button mushrooms

5/6 medium sized tomatoes

Small can sweet corn

½ teaspoon thyme (dried or freshly chopped)

Black pepper

¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper

A dash of Worcester sauce (optional)

13 fl ozs chicken stock or vegetable stock

2 ozs grated Parmesan cheese

2 oz butter

Skin and slice onions into rings

Remove pith and seeds from peppers and cut into chunks

Wash and cut mushrooms in half

Dip tomatoes into boiling water to loosen skins, then peel and chop into chunks

Melt half the butter in frying pan and fry onions and peppers for about 5 minutes

Add mushrooms and cook for further 3 minutes, stirring constantly.

Remove veg from pan with slotted spoon and reserve

Add remaining butter to pan, when foam subsides drain rice, add to pan and fry for 3 minutes. Stir in all the other ingredients except the parmesan.

Pour the stock over, turn down heat and simmer gently for 20-25 minutes. The rice should have absorbed all the liquid.

Serve hot with Parmesan sprinkled over.

For a main dish cooked and sliced breast of chicken can be added and crispy fried bacon (also sliced) will enhance the flavour.

Almond and apricot tart

Sufficient short crust pastry to line a 9" flan dish

Filling:

4 ozs ground almonds

4 oz butter or margarine

3 ozs castor sugar

1 egg

1 tablespoon plain flour

1 tablespoon of kirsch or amaretto

1 lb or tub of fresh apricots/or use tinned ones, halved

Apricot jam

Miss together the ground almonds and butter or margarine, mix in the eggs, flour and kirsch or amaretto and put the mixture over the raw pastry

Arrange the apricot halves around the flan (cut side on to the mixture)

Bake for 15 minutes at gas mark 6 and then 25/30 minutes at gas mark 4-5

Towards the end of the cooking, heat the apricot jam, with some juice if available, and then brush over the flan after it is cooked. Can be served hot and cold.

A delicious/melt-in-mouth dessert

A couple were all dressed up, ready to go out for the evening. As they waited for their taxi they put the cat out knowing that if it were left in the house it would wreak havoc before they returned. Before the taxi arrived the animal shot back indoors so the husband rushed after it. Several neighbours were in their front gardens and wondered what was happening. "My husband has just gone back to say goodbye to my mother" the lady remarked. "Sorry I took so long" he said as he re-emerged from the house. "The stupid thing was hiding under the bed and I had to poke her with a coat-hanger to make her come out".

Middle Cowley Residents Action Group (MCRAG)

You will remember that this group was formed by a small number of Cowley residents to give an opportunity to their local community to have their voices heard about the future quality of their lives. The following update has been received from the group.

St Luke's Road: We finally got the County Council to agree to repair and resurface St Luke's Road, after a lot of campaigning. They are also going to repaint the yellow line to stop dangerous parking on the bend and are going paint double yellow lines across people's driveways, so people can get their cars out of their driveways. The council will not repair/resurface Coleridge Close, as they say they have run out of money!

Cowley Community Centre: The developers are submitting their plans in August we will be objecting to this development on many grounds:

- The Labour Council is asset striping Cowley, taking away our community centre and using the money raised from the sale of the site to build a new community centre in North-way and sports hall plus many other facilities Cowley can only dream about! This will leave Cowley with one small community room for hire by the hour and no other facilities.
- We also support the Save Temple Cowley Swimming Pool Group, as we feel it is wrong to close down a perfectly good pool that just needs minor repairs. We understand from a labour councillor that they intend to sell off the site for student housing! Not housing for local people, which is crazy considering there is a housing shortage!

We have told the labour group that we feel that they are wrong to have stopped the grant that supports Ma Smith's soup kitchen that opens on a Wednesday at Mansil Way Centre to feed and support the homeless. A lady of 81 who was made a member of the British Empire for twenty two years service to the homeless by our queen, a true Christian woman, an example to all of us!! We feel they have acted disgracefully, hitting the people who have the least and are homeless often through no fault of their own!

The Group asks that you write to your Councillors, and Member of Parliament to tell them what you think and ask for a reply!

Martin Tasker

FILM CLUB AT THE CENTRE

This new initiative will run on a monthly basis when a film will be shown on the second Friday of each month. Since it will be a private club there will be a membership of 50 people and each member will be able to invite one guest. We shall only be able to advertise programmes in The Link and The Chronicle. There will be no admission fee (thus avoiding performing rights restrictions) though we shall ask for a minimum donation of £2.50 per person to cover costs. Each session will begin at 6.30 pm when coffee, tea and cake will be on offer (free) and the film will start at 7 pm. We shall advise about the subject matter and certificate rating of each film. To obtain your numbered club card please speak to Howard or Rosanne. The following programme is already planned:

October 12th: Best Exotic Marigold Hotel. Cert 12

Starring Judi Dench, Bill Nighy, Tom Wilkinson and Celia Imrie

A group of British retirees travel to India to take up residence in what they believe is a newly restored hotel. Less luxurious than its advertisements, they are forever transformed by their shared experiences. A charming comedy drama.

November 9th: Mamma Mia. Cert PG

Starring Meryl Streep, Pierce Brosnan, Colin Firth, Julie Walters

Bride-to-be, Sophie, is on a quest to find her father before her big day. There is just one problem. She is not sure which of her mother's three former loves he is. The fun of the film is enhanced by the inclusion of many songs made popular by ABBA.

The Origins of Cowley

Part Twenty Four : Icons of Cowley

This month's episode should, I think, be entitled "Icons of Cowley" and there is no more worthy person to be addressed as such as Rev. George Moore. As promised in July we are devoting a whole section of our history to this remarkable man and no-one would be happier to feature in our magazine than Georgie Moore himself.

You may remember that in 1875 the parish was in turmoil after the shocking episode (recorded earlier this year) of Rev. Coley and the funeral of Mr Fred Merritt. Not only was the parish without a priest but the boys' school of Cowley St James' had been closed due to lack of management and insufficient staff. The Bishop of Oxford cast around for a suitable person to rescue the situation in the two small rural parishes. His solution was to invite the dynamic young curate at St Mary Magdalen's Church in the city to take on the task. Rev. Moore at first declined but being persuaded to "give it a try" agreed. Never a man to do things by halves he set about the task with gusto.

He took up residence in a double-fronted house in Temple Road which has Manor House carved over the door but on old maps is called Quintain. A new and very large vicarage was built near the old Church Farm stables (now St James' Church Centre) in 1879 and he moved in at about the same time as he was married, his bride, the widow of a member of parliament, Mrs Mary Reid. They were married in St Paul's Cathedral. She joined her husband in Cowley and lived with him in the Victorian vicarage until she died in 1901. She was buried in St James Churchyard.

By now Georgie, as he was affectionately known, had taken the schools in hand. He had a huge affection for children and felt personally responsible for their education and spiritual development. He became trustee of the boys' school at St James and the girls' and infants' school at St Christopher's. The teachers looked to him as their employer and he decided the curriculum taught. He took all religious studies at least twice a week and would arrive in the classrooms accompanied by two, sometimes three, large dogs who would flop down on the floor whilst he gave his scripture lessons. If the children in the front row fidgeted during these sessions the dogs would go for their legs

so they soon learnt to sit still. There are several photographs of him with classes of small children about him and it is easy to see from his face that he enjoyed his time with them.

He would often turn up in the schools, or even at weddings and funerals with mud on his boots for Georgie was a farmer-priest. His farmland was around the Westbury area of Cowley from just behind St James' Churchyard up to the Littlemore boundary. As far as I can tell there is no record of whether he owned the land or if he farmed it for Christ Church College who, as has been noted in former articles, owned the majority of land in Cowley. He had a good knowledge of horses and dealt vigorously with local farmers and breeders to secure the best animals. The story goes he was involved in haggling with one dealer over the price of a mare when he realised that he was due to preside over a funeral service, the cortege slowly appearing in Church Street (now Beauchamp Lane). The dealing had reached a crucial point so he shouted to the vendor, "Wait a few minutes and I'll be back" as he rushed into the back entrance of the church. Having donned his vestments he met the coffin at the door dirty boots and all underneath! The deal was sealed later.

He farmed 600 acres, a huge area, and was on favourable terms (on the whole) with fellow farmers in Cowley and Iffley. His land must have reached down to The Isis as there is a story about one of his cattle, having slipped into the river, getting into difficulties. Two or three fishermen procured ropes from Iffley Lock and eventually hauled the creature out with Georgie looking on. When it was suggested that a small reward might be in order Georgie came back, with a quick return, "If you are not satisfied with getting it out go and put the back again". His language was frequently colourful to put it mildly.

Another "farming" story worth the telling (this a report from an eye-witness, by the way) involved a rat which Mr Walker at Donnington Farm had caught and intended to drown. Rev. Moore dissuaded him and suggested that one of his dogs might dispatch the rat instead. The rat was let loose and promptly climbed up inside the leg of Georgie's trousers. He squeezed them tight, thus

trapping the animal and then bawled to those who were watching to unbuckle the trousers and take them down! Incidentally the dog did kill the rat!!

As a priest he was certainly dynamic, just as the Bishop had hoped. He soon packed the church, where people would arrive, sometimes an hour early, for services, such was the unpredictability and power of his sermons. He would thunder against Lloyd George and his agricultural policy, would liberally lash out with his tongue against local people with whom he had fallen out and even preached a memorable sermon about pub signs. His harvest festival services were so popular that he had to hold two on successive Sundays. It is apocryphally told that a shilling or two as a "back-hander" to the church wardens would reserve you a front row pew at Harvest Festival. His Sunday School sessions were packed each week and he would organise an annual picnic with a trip on a Salters' steamer for the children's summer treat.

Georgie was never one to suffer fools gladly. On one occasion he had ordered the sexton to dig a grave in preparation for a burial. When the reverend turned up to check all was well he found the grave had been sited in the wrong place. With one almighty punch he knocked the unfortunate sexton into the hole and walked away leaving him to struggle out. And Georgie certainly could pack a punch, he had been a university boxing blue before ordination. He also rowed for Oxford as an undergraduate.

He knew his parish well, dominating parish council meetings. On stormy winter nights he would trudge from Church Cowley to Temple Cowley along the dark country lanes with a stick in one hand and a storm lantern in the other dressed in his faded black clothes. In one description of him it is said that his cassock and cloak had faded to such a shade of green that he could be mistaken for Robin Hood. And he hummed to himself sounding about as musical as a swarm of bees.

St James' Church was the garrison church of Cowley Barracks and the soldiers would march down Hollow Way to church parade

accompanied by their young bugle-boys all in their bright red tunics. Georgie was proud to be their chaplain and hated the whole business of war. His sermons, haranguing the wickedness of conflict especially during World War I, lived long in the memories of those who heard them.

Rev George Moore served as vicar of Cowley for fifty-three years, until his death in 1928. After the death of his wife Mary he took a housekeeper, Miss Emily Durrant, to run his vicarage. In later life he could be seen driving round the parish in his horse and trap with his housekeeper beside him. He was held in great admiration by most of his parishioners so much so that when he was summoned to London to face a court case against him for assault and acquitted, the men of the parish walked to Oxford station to meet him off the train. They took with them a cart and pulled Georgie back home through the streets in triumph.

His funeral was amazing. It took place at St James', of course, where a bishop and eight ordained priests were amongst the mourners. The staff and pupils of "his" schools, workers from Morris Motors Ltd, representatives from Cowley Barracks, the entire parish council and the Boy Scouts joined family and friends to lay him to rest in the churchyard of the Parish Church. The newspapers of the time lost count of the crowd of mourners estimating "hundreds". His grave is still easy to find under the lovely old lime trees facing the wall next to The Westbury where he farmed and over which he would reputedly vault when he realised he was late for a service.



GOD IN MY LIFE

Perhaps it may help to know my background after surrendering to Christ at Cambridge whilst trying to disprove Christianity! 10 years an officer in the British Army, 5 years in Business directing my own company recruiting construction engineers to work in the Middle East, 5 years directing evangelistic campaigns in Africa and Asia ... crowds of up to 2-300,000 people, with thousands coming to Christ; then 8 years as Senior Pastor of 4 churches in West Hertfordshire, during which time I acted as Missions Director for the Muslim World for a Pentecostal denomination. For the next 7 years, I split my time working for my wife's ministry of "Heartcry for Change", setting up the London PrayerNet, raising 24 hour prayer to cover London; at the same time setting up the Charity "Back to Jerusalem Foundation", working with Bro Yun (also called "the Heavenly Man") to raise the profile of the Chinese underground Churches mission to raise 100,000 missionaries to carry the Gospel all through the Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist world "back to Jerusalem".

We moved from West Hertfordshire across to Oxford in 2005, and I was ordained by Bishop Richard to take over the position of Parish Vicar at St Aldates Church. It was thrilling to spend almost 6 years pastoring in such an exciting environment with 12-1500 people flooding in every Sunday. However God had bigger plans ... during that time the seeds were planted for what has now become a National network to reach Muslims. It began 7 years ago as a weekly early Morning Prayer meeting in Oxford for those with a passion to reach Muslims, and has now become a cross-denominational

ministry called "Mahabba" (meaning "Love" in Arabic). After 2 years of weekly prayer, the ministry suddenly took on a new life with Muslims coming to Christ, the planting of an Iranian fellowship, and the training of over 400 ordinary Christians to reach Muslims. A converted Mullah from Uganda, who had been trained in Sharia law in Cairo, joined the team, as did other missionaries from the Muslim world, and slowly a dynamic team emerged.

Out of this strong prayer base, many activities emerged, and Churches began to hear of "Mahabba". In November 2010, the Mahabba team hosted a City Networks conference to which many cities came, and since then Mahabba groups have begun in about 8-10 cities, and many more cities are calling us. It was at this time that CRIB (Christian Response to Islam in Britain) and the Evangelical Alliance/Global Connections teams floated a motion to all those working with Muslims in Britain, that the Mahabba Network should be set up nationally to help spread the net wider. This was accepted unanimously as the best way forward, so that ordinary Christians across the country could be trained to reach Muslims. I then left St Aldates and began to set up Mahabba UK.

Our Vision is "to motivate and mobilize ordinary Christians to reach Muslims for Christ, and to mentor and multiply dynamic communities of disciples in Islamic neighbourhoods" ... intentionally reaching them with a vision of multiplying discipleship groups within their extended families and friends. So now we are committed to spread this Mahabba model across Europe

... and internationally. We are however initially focussed on creating a replicable model in UK first. We are now beginning to alert Churches and ministries across UK, helping them to "Face the Facts, but not Fuel the Fear"! We are seeking to raise the initial seed funding to launch the Network first across the UK this autumn. At this time we are busy forming the Charity of Mahabba Network International, which will be the carrier of this Vision into the future.

I do however have a family – and a gorgeous Chocolate Labrador called Dibley! Rachel and I have two children. Nicola is married to a Hillsong Pastor and they have two children and are planting a new church in Melbourne, Australia. Our son, David, is married and part of a great Church in Peterborough called Kingsgate. He is a Chartered Financial Analyst. Both children love and serve the Lord.

20 years ago, Rachel set up her Charity "Heartcry for Change", now with two full time staff and travels internationally, ministering to churches, leadership teams, conferences, and social projects. Her weekends are like her working week, so she is preaching somewhere most weekends. One of the joys Rachel and I have is to minister together in different Nations: hence the recent time together in Czech and Poland ministering at Christian Summer Camps. We love preaching together. Over the next month we are preaching at two conferences in the States and two churches in Australia – and seeing the grandkids! Yes we are busy, but we love the Lord, love each other and love life!

Gordon Hickson

'LET'S LIGHT UP CHRISTMAS'

Cowley festival of Christmas trees 2012

Friday 7 – Sunday 9 December (set up Wednesday 5, Thursday 6)

Theme : Christmas Carols

Charities : ROSY and See-Saw

We suspect that, despite our early start, nothing much has progressed over the summer, apart from a delighted response from our chosen charities, which will send representatives to our next planning meeting, which is also for anyone in the Parish wishing to be involved in the organisation : **Monday 10 September – 9.30 am – Ranklin Room**

If you are part of or know of a group outside the Parish, which you think might like to take part, please ask Lesley Williams for an introductory letter

Lesley Williams

01865 779 562 07982 439 828 lesleyjwilliams@btinternet.com



CHRISTMAS BOXES

We have been very lucky this year to have such a lot of boxes to fill. However, we now have the task of collecting items to fill them with! If you can give any help with this it would be great. We are looking for such things as:

- Exercise Books/Writing Pads/Jotters
- Pencils/Coloured pencils
- Tooth brushes/tooth paste/sponges/soap
- Benny Hats/finger puppets
- Skipping Ropes
- Plastic Scissors
- Wrapped sweets

We are not allowed to include any liquids or chocolate.

Any help you can give would be much appreciated.

Joyce Titchell

GRAVEYARD PROJECT

The graveyard project is continuing slowly, lots of work still to do but good progress has been made in transcribing the stones. We have now begun work on the South side of the graveyard, some easy to read and some of the older ones very difficult, but all interesting.

As you can imagine rain has stopped play quite a few Wednesdays, but the faithful band of volunteers have not been discouraged. We are now working in quite a difficult area, and having to contend with ivy, brambles, rubbish and even drug needles so caution is needed. If anyone would like to help with some of the clearing of the outer edges of the plots they

would be most welcome. We hope to continue working for at least the next three Wednesdays, starting at 10 am, coffee break 11 am. and finishing (weather permitting) about 1.00pm.

Transcribing the memorial stones is only a small part of the project, next will come lots of checking of all the resources we can find, including the parish registers to verify that names and dates are correct. Then sometime next year we will compile a CD with photos and inscriptions.

Please contact Erma on 748153 or Sheila 433266 for any further information.

THE BIG KNIT

Calling All Knitters!

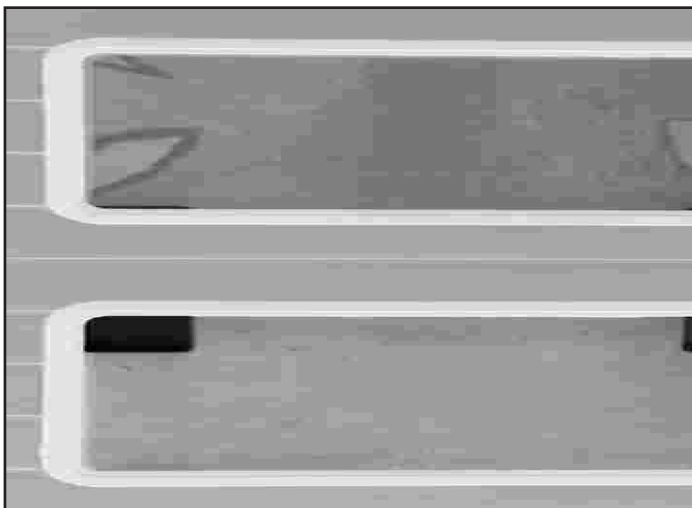
Grab your needles and wool and get knitting to raise funds for Age UK Oxfordshire

Hats have to be at Age UK Oxfordshire by 1st October 2012 – Please get your contributions to the Church Centre by the 24th September 2012 if possible.

Although a number of patterns and advice are available at the Church Centre, the beginner pattern is as follows:

1. Pop your feet up with a cup of tea
2. Using double knitting yarn and some small needles, cast on 28 stitches
3. Knit 2 rows. Then, starting with a knit row, work in stocking stitch (knit 1 row, purl 1 row, knit 1 row, etc.) for 12 more rows.
4. For the next row, knit 2 together to the end (14 stitches). And for the row after that, purl 2 together to the end (7 stitches)
5. When you've finished, cut the yarn leaving about 25 cm. Thread the cut end of the yarn through a sewing needle, then run it through the loops and remove the knitting needle.
6. Tighten the yarn and sew the little hat together at the side. Once finished, turn it right-side out so that the seam you've just sewn runs up the inside.
7. Just to check you're on the right track we reckon when laid out flat, the hat dimensions should be about 5-7 cm along the bottom and at least 3 cm high.
8. Sew a little bobble onto the top of the hat.

The advice I have received is to knit a number of hats first, and then sew up – some people are even knitting more than one at once – if you try this don't get the wool in tangles!!



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:

Old entrance to Rock House, Temple Cowley

TEMPLE COWLEY POOLS CAMPAIGN

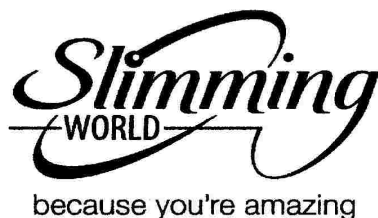
The Save Temple Cowley Pools Campaign continues to try to keep the Temple Cowley Leisure Centre open, and is currently challenging Oxford City Council in the High Court over two issues:

- **Consultation:** The Council has never asked the public what they want, whether they want Temple Cowley Leisure Centre kept open, or what they would do if TCP was shut.
- **Equality:** The Council has not carried out its obligations under the Equalities Act to properly consider existing users of leisure facilities at either TCP or the existing Blackbird Leys Swimming Pool, many of whom comprise minority groups such as elderly, infirm, disabled parent/toddlers, schoolchildren etc.

The Campaign is putting forward lots of arguments for the retention of the Temple Cowley Pools, such as:

- **Cost:** It is less expensive to refurbish what we have and will extend the life of TCP for 25 years
- **Carbon:** When you compare like with like, using Council's own figures, TCP has a lower carbon footprint than the proposed new pool
- **Transport:** It is easier for people across Oxford to get to TCP than to Blackbird Leys.

Much more information is available on <http://tiny.cc/savetcp> and you can email your views to savetcp@gmail.com.



Would you love to lose weight, be supported by a warm welcoming group and be part of something amazing?

Come and join us and make your weight loss dreams come true!

Cowley Slimming World
St James Church Centre
Beauchamp Lane

Monday nights 5pm and 7pm Sessions

Call Rachel on 749852 or 07764844994

SUMMER AFTERNOON IN THE GARDEN

Time to sit and contemplate
The play of light and dappled shade
To wiggle bare toes on the dewy lawn
And watch insects amongst the grassy blades
Time to hear the wind in the poplar tree
Whose pendant leaves barely stir
And busy shoppers in Templar Square
Hussle and bustle like a distant purr
Time to see cirrus clouds drift in the blue
Long plumes of downy white feathers
And scraps of cumulus changing shape
As they slowly meet and come together
Time to hear the restless honey bees
Visiting the stems of my heuchera flowers
And watch tiny spiders on a bush
Spin away for what seems like hours
There goes jenny wren in the honeysuckle
No need to move and scare her away.
Just sit. A dragonfly hovers, look
Paper white butterflies are out to play
Time to hear children in the playground
Swinging too high which makes them scream
Time to remember childhood holidays
Riverside picnics all gone in a dream
Time to think of our own children's summers
Learning to swim, kicking a ball
Life then was busy, all day we were busy
Then there seemed no dreaming time at all.

Rosanne Butler

Rosanne Interviews Joel Denno

As many of my readers know, one of my favourite gambits at the onset of an interview is the question “What brought you to Cowley?” Of course, that would be a superfluous question for Joel (wouldn’t it?) because most people in the parish know that he is married to Skye, our new Team Vicar, and he and their three young children accompanied her when she took up her post here amongst us. Instead I asked Joel what his first impressions of Cowley are and he drew me a picture of contrasts from the village in Gloucestershire which was their former home. To start with he has had to search out good places to walk the family dog. He is a large animal, a lurcher, and needs space to run. Joel has just found the fields on the other side of the by-pass at the foot of Shotover and is pleased that he can walk the dog and sort out in his head the strands of reasoning he needs for his dissertation (but more of that later). Dursley, the small village where Skye did her curacy, was surrounded by fields but a bit short of shops and Joel likes the fact that walking to shops in Cowley is easy.

He also likes the idea that his children will grow up in a multicultural environment. He expressed pleasure at the way the pupils at St Francis School, which his daughter Sophia attends, all mix, playing, working and making friendships together.

Joel was born in Leamington Spa but his parents moved while he was still a baby to live on the outskirts of Derby. His mother was a French teacher and his father an ordained Church of England clergyman. However,

he left the Church of England and started a house-church on a council estate. Joel is the eldest of a family of four so his mother left her teaching job to become a stay-at-home mum. She did, though, work hard alongside her husband establishing the new church. Joel and his siblings attended the local primary school where he enjoyed all his lessons. What made school really exciting for him, though, was football.

I presumed at this point that he must have been a supporter of Derby County football club but not so. He follows Sheffield Wednesday (because his dad does!) and we digressed a little at this point to discuss Wednesday’s promotion last season over their arch rivals Sheffield United. Sorry, readers, but we had to clear that up! Anyway as a nine and ten-year-old, young Joel had developed quite a talent for the game, so much so that he was picked to play at the Baseball Ground (where Derby used to play) for a team of ten-year olds who represented the club’s youth team. They played against a Tottenham Hotspur team and although they lost Joel scored Derby’s only goal – a proud moment.

At eleven he moved on to secondary school and life became very tough. He was the victim of quite a lot of bullying. He told me that at the time he was determined to “stick-it-out” and developed a variety of strategies to cope with it. He found solace through a close friend and his brother. He continued playing football until training sessions were switched to Sunday mornings, which clashed with church, and evenings, which

clashed with his paper round. He did eventually join a group of Christian lads who belonged to a team.

Academically he found lessons came easily especially learning German. He was determined not to study French because his mother taught the subject. The subjects he struggled most with were art and design-technology. He attained good GCSE grades and moved on to 6th form college about seven miles away. What a difference! School became happy again. He cycled there every day and found a longer route (nine miles) with a steep hill to climb in order to keep fit. He was quite laid back about A levels but did well enough to be offered places at all the universities to which he applied. Instead he rejected the whole idea and took a “gap” year working in a guest house in Druze in Israel. His duties were mainly domestic as he helped to provide facilities for pilgrims staying there. This was his first real away-from-home experience and helped him to grow up.

On his return he took up a university place at Leeds reading mathematics. However, after two months he left. Whilst in Israel he had become fond of a girl but the relationship broke up so at this period of his life he was very unsettled. His father, who was half Iraqi, was very close to his son. He would take him on long treks across the lovely Peak District to help him come to terms with his problems. Rev. Denno himself found freedom and solace in the hills.

Joel went back to living at home but wanted more adventures. In the meantime he got a job

which he describes as “the best”, working at the Crown Derby china factory. At the end of the day any of the china which was described as seconds (not perfect) would be loaded into a skip and Joel had the task of smashing the lot! He also applied to train to teach English as a foreign language. While he was waiting for his application to be accepted and the course to begin he went out to Wyoming, USA, to work on a “dude ranch” where his aunt lived. He became a grounds keeper and had lots of fun.

Back home he did his teaching course and began to study Russian literature. Prompted by this he spent some time working in Russia near the Black Sea. Whilst back in Derby on leave, he joined his parents’ church on a Spring Harvest holiday in Skegness and there met a young lady who was a student at Derby university. She introduced herself as Skye and she and Joel travelled back from Skegness by train together. It only took that short journey for them to realise that something special was happening. They began going out together but Joel, on the move again, went to Conwy in Wales to work for the Youth Hostel Association thus enforcing a seven month separation.

Back together again in Derby a wedding was arranged which turned out to be a very happy day for them both surrounded by family and friends. The young couple decided that after their marriage they would undertake some missionary training prompted by a visit to Serbia. An Oak Halt project to take relief packages to refugee camps had inspired them. Skye by this time had graduated and went to Redcliff College in Gloucester

to train. Joel began to feel the need to study and did a degree in theology. By now their eldest child, Sophia, was born. Their venture into missionary work took them to India but after five weeks working in an orphanage there they realised that in order to make a difference it would be necessary to learn a whole new culture. Instead they decided that there was a huge need for missionary work in a country they knew well – Britain.

Back to Gloucester they came and Skye was called into the Ministry. They became attached to a large church in the city from which they had contacts with the Area Dean. He mentioned Skye during her preparation. Joel managed a branch of Costa Coffee shops. Phoenix, their son, was born and Skye did her theology studies at St John’s College in Nottingham. He became a full-time home father for their two little ones.

We have almost turned full circle now. Dursley, in Gloucestershire was where Skye served her curacy years and then began to look around for a parish priest’s post. In the meantime baby Casper, now a toddler, was born and came with his mum and dad to Cowley when Skye was called to interview for the post of Team Vicar. Being unpretentious people themselves I found it interesting to be told that the “unpretentious” advertisement for the job in the Church Times is what attracted them to apply. We all know the happy outcome.

I knew before I ended my interview that our readers would want to know about Joel’s unconventional hairstyle and Skye’s “way out” fashion leanings – so I asked. No mystery to these – as a young couple when

they lived in Gloucester they hung out in the local pubs and clubs with other youngsters who dressed in their own particular style. They were part of the culture and see no need to change. Why should they?

Joel has been on lots of adventures and now seems to have settled. He is very busily occupied in studying for an MA degree in English literature – hence the deep thoughts for his dissertation. I am full of admiration for his ability to juggle this with being a house husband and father. When I mentioned this he smiled a laid-back smile and I felt he had it all under control.

What were you like as a young child?

Quiet. Not very nice to my siblings.

Do you have a never-to-be forgotten memory from childhood?

I was about twelve. Our church was baptising one of its members in the River Dove at Dovedale. While the preparation was in progress I clambered up the high hill near there. It is very steep and has patches of scree on it. I saw some girls from church following me and I started to run away. I must have stepped on a divot, slipped and tumbled right down on to the path below. I hit my head and was knocked unconscious. I came round and a lady from church was leaning over me. I was startled especially when she started praying in tongues! I had broken my ankle and displaced my foot. The whole morning plays back to me like a video. After that a guy was there with a mobile phone (unusual in those days) and called an ambulance. I was on the

wrong side of the river and had to be carried over the stepping stones on a stretcher. When I was in plaster and using crutches I learnt to play football by leaning on them and kicking with my left foot. I can now kick with either foot. Useful!

Has your faith been with you since childhood?

I had a faith as a child but it changes. It is a continuous line.

What is your opinion of present-day society?

I think the world seems a lot less hostile than when I was a child.

As I get older I think people

are not really bad. I find there are more positive than negative motivations.

If you could change something important what would you do?

Maybe I could make Iraq a safe place to visit and I could see the places where my dad grew up.

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

When the children were born, they were special moments. I tend to think life gets better and better.

How do you like to spend

your leisure time?

What leisure time?! I am doing an MA in English literature. I do performance poetry – “slams” (competitive poetry). I grew up without a TV so I learnt to love reading.

What plans do you have for the future (say ten years time)?

I would like to have had something published. I have written two novels (as yet unpublished). I write performance poetry and I hope that I will have had some of my poems published by then.

SAINT OF THE MONTH The Martyrs of Korea

Many of the saints whose stories we have told in The Chronicle recently lived in the very early years of the Church. However this month we have chosen a group of martyrs who were beatified as recently as 1925. Their saints’ day is marked as 20th September and they are known as The Martyrs of Korea.

Christianity first came to Korea through Christian books sent from China. The first Korean Christian was baptised in 1784. In 1794 there were about 4,000 Christians in Korea but when their Chinese priest was killed in 1801 they found themselves without a priest to lead them. The Pope sent two priests from a Paris Missionary Society to them followed by a bishop, Laurence Imbert, who was forced to enter Korea in disguise as Christianity was forbidden in the country. For two years these brave men worked in complete secrecy often rising at 2.30 am in order to conduct services under cover of darkness and in conditions of extreme poverty.

However, the number of Christians was growing (now about 9,000) and it was impossible to keep their faith a secret. They were violently persecuted so the three young Frenchmen allowed themselves to be arrested in an attempt to avert a massacre. They were beheaded in the capital, Seoul, in September 1839. Many other Korean Christians were executed at the same time. The first Korean priest, Andrew Kim, was martyred seven years later.

Between 1846 and 1867 many more missionaries and their converts died for their faith. Altogether 103 martyrs, 10 French missionaries and 93 Korean priests, nuns and members of the Church, were beatified in 1925 and canonized in 1984 by Pope John Paul II. So on their saints’ day on 20th September perhaps we should remember them in our prayers and thank God that we are free to declare our Christian faith openly and without fear of persecution.

RUN TO WIN

Are you exhausted after the Olympics? My lungs are in much better shape now, sadly not from running or swimming but from all that cheering and shouting from my sofa! Seriously though, I have been inspired again by the dedication, energy and skill of all our athletes. For many years I was a canoe instructor and I particularly enjoyed watching the canoe slalom races from the new Lee Valley course in North London. On my flight back from Thailand in July I sat next to a lady from the Salvation Army who was coming to work as a volunteer at the Olympics on the “More than Gold” programme – a Christian witness programme which has been reaching out particularly to young people through sport. She reminded me that St. Paul himself used many pictures of life being like a race that we must run to win.

In my work with Faith2Share I come across quite a few mission workers who work mainly through sports. Years ago I knew a Korean man, called Henry, who worked in the Dagestan region of Russia as a tennis coach. In that area of southern Russia (next to Chechnya) which is 99.5% Muslim, he shared his faith with university students as they played tennis. The result was a small Christian church composed of university students and their parents. That was fifteen years ago. Today one of those students teaches at a Bible College in Samara, central

Russia, another is acting Principal of a college training missionaries for Central Asia, and a third is a great photographer (ask to see his pictures next time you are in my house!). It all started playing tennis.

All Brazilians of course are born playing football. One of the mission agencies that belongs to Faith2Share is Antioch Mission from Brazil and one of their main ways of getting to know non-Christians is through sport – football camps, basketball training, swimming lessons. One young friend of mine from Brazil has just returned from a year of mission in New Zealand – mostly playing sport! And then there is a crazy young man I know from Woking who joined “Snowboarders for Christ” and claims to be doing mission in the Rocky Mountains! He has videos to prove it.

So how about a St. James football team or a St. Francis hockey team? I know our Asian Christian Living Fellowship already have their regular cricket matches.

If you are interested to know more about the ministry of Faith2Share through sports around the world or would like to consider supporting us regularly in one way or another please contact me at mark.oxbrow@faith2share.net or 07985 631816.

Mark Oxbrow

THE CHURCH AND THE YEW

Quite often on our travels we look for places of historical interest, and England is full of them. Occasionally, however, we come across them by chance, and that is even more remarkable and exciting. Then again, sometimes it is not the buildings themselves that we find the most interesting, but something outside that fires our imagination and gives us cause to wonder. Such was the case at Crowhurst, a small village on the Kent/Sussex border. We had not even planned to stop there, but had lost our way on badly signposted minor roads, and needed a break from driving for a while. We suddenly spotted the church laying back from the road as we came round a bend and decided to come to a halt, on the spur of the moment, and take a breath of fresh air. It was typical in design of so many of our medieval churches, with some good features and some rather dull. And it was not until we were about to leave, that we noticed a prominent poster giving details about an historical Yew Tree of great age to be found in the churchyard. It declared that this amazing natural phenomenon was no less than 4,000 years old, and was authenticated and signed by Robert Runcie (the former Archbishop of Canterbury) and Robert Hardy (the famous actor and expert on Yew Trees). So we hurried outside to take a look, and there it was tucked away in a corner behind the church. There was no mistaking its age. The vast gaunt green frame was supported in places by posts to hold up its sagging lower branches and a notice nearby stated that it was one of 50 greatest English trees. We saw that its aged trunk had been split wide open at some time and there was room inside for several people to stand up in it.

We found out later that this damage had been caused by a canon ball hitting it at some time in the past. The bark had been removed and the naked wood shone in the sunshine, and felt as hard as iron to the touch. Yet there was no doubt that it was still alive, for the leaves on its upper branches were green and healthy.

This tree had been there long before William the Conqueror came to our land, back in the mists of time. If only it could talk, what a tale it could tell. Its girth round the trunk is about 11 yards, an amazing sight. We could only stand and gaze at it with awe and wonder. How glad we were that we had made our unscheduled pit stop..

John Shreeve

