

# A word from the Rectory

By the time you read this letter the Lent courses will be well underway and we will be into testing out projectors and screens in St James Church. Up at St Francis the new kitchen will be in place serving the Church and community. Each part intending to help us to make steps as we fulfil our vision "To live out God's purposes for us, make Christ known in Cowley and to raise up a new generation to love and serve the Lord."

Raising up a new generation is not about any single age group. It touches our very youngest children and our very oldest grandparents. You are never too old or too young to join Jesus' family. It is not just about making first contact but keeping contact and making sure people are cared for. It is the job of each and every one of us. How does that well known hymn go-'Brother Sister let me serve you. Let me be as Christ to you and pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant too!'

## Communion before confirmation

For our young people (Key Stage 2 and above) we are offering a chance of some preparation for 'communion before



confirmation'. The Church of England is very happy for the children of families who are regularly at Church to share in the bread and wine of Communion. But they do wish to check several things. First, that the children desire it. Second, that parents are supportive and are themselves communicant members. Third, that the Church has carried out a preparation course to help the children understand what Communion is all about. And it is expected that, in due course, and following a Confirmation course, the children will be Confirmed.

Confirmation may well follow several years later. The names of children who have been prepared for and admitted to Communion before Confirmation are recorded in a register that is similar to the Baptism and Confirmation registers held in both churches. It is common that such courses are run for children in Key Stage 2 or above. This means that they are in at least school year 3. Skye and I will be running such a course on Sunday afternoons at 2 pm in the Rectory, Beauchamp Lane. If this is of interest to anybody you know do please speak to one of us.

## Baptisms, Confirmation and all that

I am keen that we regularly make available times when teenagers and adults can make a public commitment to being part of the Church and Jesus' family. This might mean Baptism, Confirmation or remaking baptismal vows. It is very important that everybody knows they are welcome to be part of Jesus' family, our family. We are never going to have all the answers to all our questions neatly sorted out. For Jesus it is enough that we want to be part of His family and are willing to ask His help in doing that. We are always delighted to be involved in the baptism of babies and young children! So if you are interested in Baptism, Confirmation, re-exploring the basics of the Christian faith do please speak with Skye or myself.

Lastly as we head toward the great celebration of Easter, remember that the story is about God and you. Easter only happened because God loves you enough to step in and make the difference. May God bless you?



Benson Cottage

# Chronicle

March 2016

# Editor's Letter

Dear Readers

How time flies! In last month's Chronicle we were reporting about our Christmas activities and now we shall very soon be celebrating Easter again and, maybe, even April Fool's Day. As I write I am visualising the Palm Sunday procession with that dear little donkey that took part last year. Let's hope it is a fine Sunday afternoon and pray that all the Cowley folk who watch it pass or perhaps join in will find something of the special meaning of Holy Week.

Before I write further I must mark the recent passing of two dear friends of the parish. First I want to pay tribute to Ken Ranklin, a man without whom dear Gwen would have been lost. Some of you may not realise that the Ranklin Room in our Church Centre is dedicated to Gwen who worked tirelessly and with great vision to help convert the old stable block next to Benson Cottage into the brilliant facility we all enjoy today. That is not all she did but much of what she did achieve was largely due to the unstinting support of her loving husband, Ken. He was a true servant of the parish.

Next I want to revere a dear man whom I greatly respected, as did many others, namely Rev John Goodwin. When he first came to live in our parish some of you recall he helped administer the Eucharist. His knowledge of the Bible, of the wise writings of eminent theologians and his deep, deep faith provided exceptional wisdom and understanding to our home group. He was also a proud father, grandfather and great-grandfather and will be greatly missed.

Now I have an apology to make to our last month's interviewee, Kathy Newman. There was so much to write about this dear lady that I inadvertently forgot to include the fact that after moving to Cowley with her three elder children she had another baby, Barry, thus making up her family of four. Sorry Kathy and Maurice and especially Barry. What a mistake to make.

Some of you might be interested to hear that on the sixth of April at 7 pm in the Church Centre I am launching into a series of monthly talks called "The Story of Cowley". The title of the first one I am giving is "How It All Began". Now, if you have been my readers for a number of years you may recall my articles in The Chronicle "The origins of Cowley". Most of the historical facts were in those episodes (though I have learnt a bit more since then!) but if you want to hear what I have to offer straight from the horse's mouth so to speak do come along. There will be refreshments (naturally) and all proceeds are going to The Friends of the Old School fund.

Following the little column last month about the state of the church's old lawn mower you will be pleased to hear that several donations have been made. However, there is still room for a few more contributions – and the grass is beginning to grow!

Not only the grass but lots of lovely signs of spring are in evidence and the days are getting longer and a little warmer. Perhaps I am being a bit hasty but not a flake of snow has fallen on Cowley this year. Put those snow shovels away and rejoice.

God bless

Rosanne

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**A proud father telephoned the local newspaper to announce the birth of his twins. The girl on the newsdesk did not quite catch all the details. "Would you mind repeating that, sir?" "Not if I can help it" came his reply.**

# Film Club at the Centre

February's film club evening saw the biggest audience yet. We had put out just enough chairs! Donations from our generous members made a profit of over £80 for church funds. That is a great result coupled with the fact that a most enjoyable evening sent everyone home happy. Thanks must go, as ever, to our regular catering team, Chris and Margaret, and to Sally who became our stand-in projectionist while David went off for a short break to the Lake District. The film "The Bridges of Madison County" was perfect for Valentine weekend – very romantic and a big contrast to our film for March.

On Friday, March 11th we are showing "She Wore a Yellow Ribbon". After three and a half years this is the first time we have featured a John

Wayne film. It is set in the Western States of America and focuses on the US Cavalry. Needless to say there will be quite a lot of action out on the prairies but it has a nice human story and not too much blood and thunder.



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## SIGNIFICANT DATES IN MARCH

In ancient Rome the 1st March was New Year's Day. It was not until 713BC when two extra months, January and February, were added to the year that March ceased to be the first month on the calendar.

In 1965 the film "The Sound of Music" was released on 2 March in America. It was an instant hit.

The phrase "the iron curtain" was coined by Churchill on 5th March 1946. He made a speech in which he referred to the Soviet Union when he said "An iron curtain has descended across the Continent".

On 10th March 1974 a Japanese soldier was discovered on Lubang Island in the Philippines wearing World War 2 battlegear. He thought the war was still in progress nearly thirty years after it had ended.

Pluto, the planet furthest from the sun, was announced as a new discovery on 13th March 1930.

On 17th March 1649 Oliver Cromwell abolished the office of king and declared England a Commonwealth.

On the same date in 1973 our Queen opened the new London Bridge.

Six Dorset farm workers, known as the "Tolpuddle Martyrs" were sentenced to transportation to Australia on March 18th 1834. They swore an oath to join a trade union. Due to public outrage they were pardoned two years later.

## REPORT FROM PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

The PCC met on 21 February 2016 and discussed the following matters:

- ◆ **Accounts for 2015:** The PCC agreed that these should be submitted for inspection and the inspected accounts will be approved at the March meeting of the PCC ready for the APCM on the 17 April 2016.
- ◆ **Mission Giving:** The PCC agreed to continue to allocate 5% of planned giving to mission giving. An open meeting will be arranged when those on the electoral role will be invited to put forward ideas for mission giving.
- ◆ **Churchyard, St James Church:** The PCC agreed to apply for a Faculty to ensure we have the necessary **permissions** covering the ashes area and memorials in the south west section of the churchyard of St James.
- ◆ **Update on Faculties obtained:**
- ◆ **St Francis Church:**
- ◆ **Kitchen:** The refurbishment of the kitchen is going well and the new kitchen will be in place at the beginning of March.
- ◆ **Sale of Redundant Bell:** The Keltek Trust is willing to try to find a home for the bell.
- ◆ **CEF Storage Facility:** This is in place.
- ◆ **New Fencing Alongside Church:** Estimates have been received for a close-boarded fence to replace the existing panelled fencing and the Church Committee is following this up.
- ◆ **St James Church:**
- ◆ **Vestry, St James Church:** work is ongoing, and it is hoped that the project will be finished by the end of May/beginning of June.
- ◆ **Outside Lighting:** The DAC has agreed to lighting on the outside of the church – the main door and the north door – and a Faculty has been requested for this work. The Parish has been asked to reconsider the lighting along the footpath, and St James Church Committee is reconsidering this matter.
- ◆ **Solar panning at St James Church Centre:** This is now in place and has been connected.
- ◆ **Improved Parking Areas at St James Church Centre:** The Church Committee has considered a proposal for wooden machined round poles, pinned into the ground, and this is being costed.
- ◆ **Permission to Administer the Chalice:** The PCC has agreed a list of people who have permission to administer the Chalice and Host during Holy Communion in both churches. This permission used to be given by the Bishop but can now be done by the PCC.
- ◆ **Appointment of PCC Members on three year rolling cycle:** The PCC discussed how the appointment of a three year rolling cycle could work, and this will be discussed at the Annual Parochial Church Meeting.
- ◆ **Anglican Asian Living Church:** Regular reports are given to the PCC on the way the church is linking within the Parish of Cowley.

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting is planned for Sunday, 17 April 2016, 12.15 pm at St James Church Centre, when it is hoped you will attend.

Sally Hemsworth

## AT THE CATHEDRAL DURING LENT

### 9 March 9 pm Compline:

The Lord Almighty grant us a quiet night and a perfect end: the service of Compline opens with these words offering a peaceful setting in which to reflect, worship and pray.

### Until 4<sup>th</sup> April:

An exhibition entitled The Beautitudes features a textile art display in the North Transept throughout Lent. This exhibition is one of a series of textile displays by Jacqui Frost touring cathedrals throughout Britain.

The cathedral is open during the week from 10.30 am to 4.30 pm.

### Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 7.30 pm:

A service of reflection for Holy Week. Organ music by Brahms, reflections by Canon Professor Sarah Foot.

### Wednesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 7.30 pm

Hayden's Stabat Mater  
Hayden's beautiful setting of the famous poem for the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary is scored for choir, orchestra and four soloists.

The Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford  
Baroque

Directed by Stephen Darlington

### Good Friday

Family service 12 noon – 1 pm

Journey of the Cross

An all-age processional and interactive service for families. Travelling round the Cathedral and remembering the key moments of Jesus' journey to the cross, the children will collect special symbols of the Easter story.

**A young boy went home from school and was telling his mother about his new teacher. "She asked me if I had any brothers or sisters", he said, "so I told her I was an only child. "What did she say to that?" asked his mother. "Thank goodness for that!" he replied.**

## POEM

### Simplicity

Two little girls with faces aglow  
Each with a dandelion to show.  
It wasn't the one with the sunshine head  
But a fluffy clock in each hand instead.  
They held them so gently to keep them in place  
But, oh, the expression on each little face.  
A look of amazement, of wonder, of joy.  
A look that no earthly care could destroy.  
Let's take a lesson from the serenity found here  
As we grow older year after year,  
Never let go the simplicity of mind  
That a child has in gazing at the things God  
designed.  
For if we keep mindful of these heavenly things  
Our hearts will be lighter and our spirits have  
wings.

June Hardiman

(courtesy of the Women's World Day of Prayer  
brochure "Together in Prayer")

## Prayers from the Ark

### By Carmen Bernos de Gaszold

Translated from the French and with a  
Foreword and Epilogue by Rumer Godden

#### THE PRAYER OF THE CRICKET

O God,  
I am little and very black,  
but I thank You  
for having shed  
Your warm sun  
and the quivering of Your golden corn  
on my humble life.  
Then take – but be forbearing, Lord –  
this little impulse of my love:  
this note of music  
You have set thrilling in my heart.

AMEN

# DIARY DATES TO REMEMBER

## Mothers' Union

Monthly Meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of month  
from 2.30pm.

St James Church Centre

## Women's Institute

Monthly Meeting is on 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of month from  
2 – 4.30 pm St James Church Centre

## Coffee, Cake and Communion

Monthly meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of month  
from 10.30 a.m.

With Rev Skye at the Vicarage, 27 Don Bosco Close  
(Tel: 434160)

## Film Club

Friday, 11 March 2016 – “She wore a Yellow Ribbon”  
St James Church Centre, commencing at 6.30 pm  
with coffee and cake

## Cowley Local History Society

Tuesday, 15 March 2016 at 8 pm

“Votes for Women—The History of the Women’s  
Suffrage Movement in Oxford 1870-1918”

An illustrated talk by Kathrine Bradley

## Parochial Church Council Meeting

Sunday, 13 March 2016, 12.30pm

St James Church Centre

## Parish Easter Fun Day

Saturday, 19 March 2016, 10am-2pm

St Francis Church

## Parish Sunday Lunch

Sunday, 20 March 2016 at 12.30 pm

St James Church Centre

## History of Cowley – Series of 4 talks:

6 April, 11 May, 8 June and 6 July 2016

6.45 pm for 7 – 8.30 pm

St James Church Centre

£5.00 an evening

In aid of St James Old School

St James Church Centre

## Annual Parochial Church Meeting

Sunday, 17 April 2016, at 12.15 pm

St James Church Centre

## St Francis Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, 24 April 2016, at 12.15 pm

St Francis Church

## St James Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, 8 May 2016, at 12.15 pm

## Plant Sale

Saturday, 14 May 2016, 12 noon – 3 pm

St James Church Centre

## Christian Aid Week 15 – 21 May 2016

### Cowley Festival of Christmas Trees 2016

Planning Meeting, Friday, 20 May 2016 at 9.30 am

St James Church Centre

## Welsh Male Voice Choir Concert

Saturday, 11 June 2016—evening

St James Church

## DO NOT FORGET – Tuesday Lunches at St James

Church Centre from 12.30 pm





# PLANT OF THE MONTH—FRITILLARY

The patron saint of Oxford has on her lovely banner in Christ Church a border of embroidered fritillaries. She is, of course, St Frideswide. I had always assumed that this lady, who spent most of her life in Oxford, would have known and loved the fritillaries that bloom and grow in our river meadows especially at the end of March and beginning of April each year. I, therefore, found it strange and rather puzzling to learn that fritillaries were “found” by botanists as late as 1736. So how did they reach the shores of Britain?

One theory is that they grew on the banks of the River Rhine (they still do in very rare places) and that when Britain was separated by earthquakes from the continent by the North Sea in prehistoric times the Thames and Rhine parted company thus leaving tiny vestiges of the plant to grow here. That is only a theory. It still does not answer the puzzle of why it was not recorded until the eighteenth century. No matter, it is, to my mind, one of the loveliest of our early spring flowers.

Though there are now many white versions of the species it is easy to see why the deep purple flowers are widely known as snakesheads. In other parts of England they have other local names. In the Buckinghamshire village of Dinton (previously spelt Donnington) the flowers are called “frogcups”. There is a Frogcup Meadow nearby though one suggestion was that it might mean a rather cheeky “frock-up”! Right up until the beginning of the Second World War in the village of Ford they held Fraw-cup Sunday – a variation of the name Fordcup for their fritillaries. The most northerly part of Britain where they grow is Staffordshire and there they are called falfillaries. There used to be many habitats for them in Suffolk though these have gradually disappeared and they are left with only two in the villages of Monewden and Framsdén In the latter there was a big meadow where right up until 1960 the lady who owned it would allow folk to take home a bunch for a shilling. However the meadow was sprayed with weed-killer. Now,

thanks to the local Conservation Trust a rescue has occurred and a small area has been re-established.

But let’s concentrate on our local sites. It is widely acclaimed that the finest place in the world to see fritillaries in all their glory is in the meadows of Magdalen College, Oxford. They grow undisturbed in profusion and will continue to do so. Similarly, in the care of the Oxfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire Wildlife Trust, the plants are filling Iffley meadows year-on-year. The village which has almost become the fritillary village of Oxfordshire, though, is Ducklington, near Witney. There is a field near the river Windrush which floods regularly and each year for one weekend, once the floods have receded, it is open for all to visit. It is owned by two farming brothers who have given it over to the local community and it will never be sold except to the National Trust. On their fritillary day Ducklington is en fete with Morris dancers in the street, cream teas in the parish hall and the church open to visitors. The hand embroidered kneelers are decorated with fritillaries and there is a lovely simple window in the church also celebrating them. Watch out in the local press for the dates. I can assure you on a warm spring Sunday afternoon it is a delight to visit this pretty village and enjoy the flowers.

One curious fact with which to end. It is just possible that the Magdalen flowers actually came from Ducklington since in the eighteenth century the living of the village church was under the patronage of Magdalen College. It is possible that an incumbent carried a few bulbs back to plant and the world’s finest fritillary field was established.

