

Draw Near

One of the things I really like about Cowley is Templars Square shopping centre. Since I moved to Cowley in December, Templars Square has been a sanctuary: a warm place to come and defrost from the cold outside. I also like the café in the middle of the shops; I like sitting and drinking tea and talking to people and watching the world go by. It is a refreshing place for me.

A place to warm up and a place to be refreshed...I think that Lent can also be a place to warm up. When the world is tough and icy winds are blowing, we are invited to draw near to the burning love of God. When our hearts feel a bit dull or dreary, Lent is a time when the Lord calls us to draw nearer to him. Here is the promise: draw near to God and he will draw near to you.

There are different practical ways to draw near to God. One very helpful way is to join a group of people who want to follow Jesus. This year there is a 5 session Lent course on Faith, Hope and Love and anyone who wants to join a group is welcome. Go on, you know you want to! There are groups meeting during the day and in the evenings.

Howard is part of a group which meets on Wednesday evenings and they would love you to join them; there is a great group in the Upper Room at St Francis; Thelma Telling is keen to host a group at her home...and there are other groups

you may like to join. Please do get in touch with the Church Office (747680) if you would like to be in a group to meet weekly during Lent.

I have just been to Douai Abbey, near Newbury, for a two-day training course on being a vicar. One of the best parts of the course was the chance to take time out, to go to a beautiful place with a strong focus on worship, and to draw closer to God. My room looked out on the enormous Abbey Church, with its great glass windows. We joined in some of the monks' services and one time I lay in my bed and could hear the monks' song coming faintly from the church. It was very clear that the focus of the place was worship and to be there was to be re-centred upon God. Even if you walk away from the abbey, the great church building draws your eye and pulls you back.

I think that Lent has this power to draw us back to God. Think of God as the deep reality of life; but an unseen reality. Structured prayer, worship and repentance help to draw us back to our Father, to remind us of the reality of God, the one to whom we belong. There are many ways to keep a good Lent: I strongly encourage you to join a small group which meet for prayer and worship, to be with Jesus.

Susannah

Lent

Editors' Letter

This month it's my turn to be on my own. My marvellous co-editor, Carol has taken herself off to Canada to catch up with three of her sons but also her much-missed baby grandson. It's my guess she's having a wonderful time.

Now, first I've got some marvellous news and a big thank you to pass on. Remember I did say how well we had done in the September Ride 'n Stride? Well I didn't know at the time that we were going to be top parish in the whole of the Cowley Deanery. With the £434.20 which was raised we topped our nearest rival by over £70. Again a huge thank you to our gallant cyclists and all who sponsored them. Ride 'n Stride this year is on Saturday 12th September – bring it on!

I thought that circumstances were ganging

up on our Snowdrop Day this year. However, things as I write are going well. First the weather! That "snowdrop" was not quite what was meant on the posters. The Darwin Day clashed with our first Saturday. Well we got round that OK. Then I find a gas board notice at the bottom of Beauchamp Lane announcing that the road would be closed for 42 days and their dates clashed with ours. I'll let you know how well we rose above it all next month. Some people said they'd missed Gwen Fan-cutt's lovely little poem on the back of last month's Chronicle. If you did may I commend it to you? It's lovely.

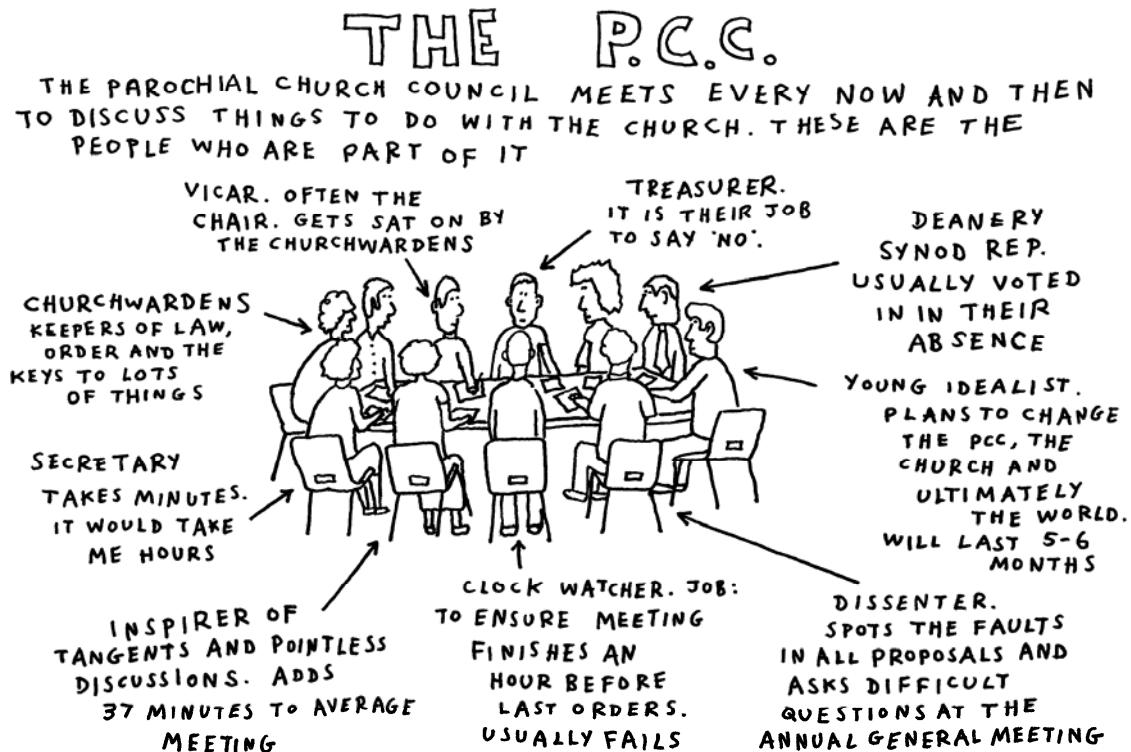
Happy 21st March – yes the first day of spring.

God bless

Rosanne

Women's World Day of Prayer : Friday 6th March 2009 : Local Services:

10.00 am	All Saints, Lime Walk, Headington	Speaker: Gill Poole
2.00 pm	Rose Hill Methodist Church	Speaker: The Rev'd Jean King
7.30 pm	St Francis Church, Hollow Way	Speaker: The Rev'd Susannah Reide



CartoonChurch.com

This CartoonChurch.com cartoon originally appeared in the Church Times and is taken from 'The Dave Walker Guide to the Church',

Services for Holy Week and Easter

St James

Maundy Thursday – 9 April

6:30 Passover supper
8:00 Maundy Thursday Eucharist

Good Friday – 10 April

10:00 – Litany and anti communion
2:00 – The last words of Christ

Saturday – 11 April

7:00 pm Easter Vigil and Confirmation

Easter Sunday – 12 April

8:00 am Holy Communion
10:00 am Celebration and Sung Eucharist

St Francis

Wednesday 8 April – a devotional performance of Pergolesi's Stabat Mater

Maundy Thursday – 9 April

7.30pm Communion with foot washing followed by vigil at the altar of repose

Good Friday – 10 April

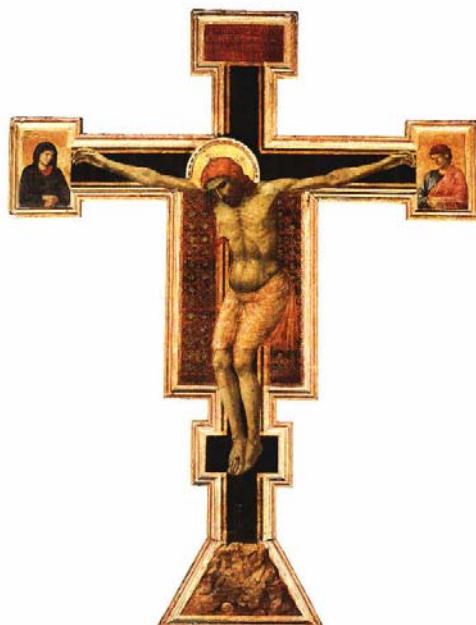
Morning: Hot cross bun making
11.30 am Children's Service
2pm Veneration of the Cross

Saturday Easter Vigil – 11 April

8:30 pm

Easter Sunday — 12 April

10:30 am Holy Communion



ROSANNE INTERVIEWS Elaine Ulett

Life seems to me always to be producing "firsts" and this interview with Elaine is one of my firsts. You see, after all these years of meeting people for the Chronicle, this month's personality is one of my former pupils. I found it interesting because Elaine, our parish secretary, is a person with a strong personality who stopped me on several occasions with, "No, that's not quite right; that isn't what I meant." In other words, she was turning the tables on her old teacher and I can only applaud her for it. So I do hope this article reflects her life, her opinions and her personality as she would wish!

Elaine is a local girl, very local in fact as she grew up on Rosehill with her younger sister and brother and attended Rosehill Primary School until she was eleven. She then transferred to Donnington Middle School. Although she was never in my class I did teach her on a regular basis and I'm sure you can guess that we swapped shared memories of many of her other former teachers. She described herself as a bit lazy at school al-

though, like most of, she worked hard at the subjects she enjoyed best. At thirteen she went on to Cowley St John's School on Cricket Road where she did particularly well in art and maths.

On leaving school at nearly seventeen, she worked in the catering industry. During this time she was married and has two boys. After a number of years working in catering she decided on a change of career. She chose hairdressing and rather than work unqualified she gained her qualifications at the London Academy of Hairdressing. She then chose to work as a self-employed hairdresser for some years around Oxford. Sadly after many years, her marriage ended, but Elaine remains good friends with her ex-husband.

Another career change saw her running her own little sandwich shop in Swindon. Never one to do things by halves, she studied business at Buckinghamshire Chilterns University where she gained a Master's in Business Administration. She also did a computer course at the Oxford Women's

Training Centre and has become so well qualified that she now teaches computer skills when she's not working in our parish office. She teaches the CLAIT (Computer Literacy and Information Technology) certificate at Restore to people returning to work after treatment for mental health problems.

Then, unaccountable, according to Elaine, she decided to go and live in France and take her two young sons with her. I must say that I am sure that God had plans for her, and when I spoke of this she said, "That's funny because other people have said that too." When I tell you what happened I think you might agree.

On the internet she found, in Albertville, a school where missionaries are taught the French language. She decided to apply for a place and went over for a visit. She was interviewed. Three families applied but only one could be accepted. Whilst there she took a photograph, came home to await the school's decision, and developed her photo. To here amazement (quite by

chance) it showed lines of perspective radiating from the little church towards the camera just as if something was drawing her in. Perhaps God? When the letter came, she knew without opening it that she and her sons had been accepted.

She began to acquire quite a good command of French, and her sons enjoyed not just their school lessons but also the services and activities at the little church. All three of them were happy but Elaine needed to save money as their board and lodgings were expensive. With no intention of returning to England she wrote to various organisations that might use her services in exchange for her keep. She was offered work at an Outward Bound centre for young people in St Etienne near Lyons. It was a Christian centre where she became a housekeeper. The boys were offered places at a private school nearby. Their whole French experience lasted for one and a half years.

Back home again in her own little house in Headington she contacted Restore to see if they might have a job for her. "Yes, please," they answered. "You can have your old teaching post back." She still works there and her job has expanded to include

career planning. Apart from this she spends part of her week at the Elder Stubbs Centre teaching cooking and catering. She is also training at Littlemore Hospital in order to work within the mental health system and as if that weren't enough, she is learning to teach yoga. Oh, and incidentally, she has recently taken on the responsibility of treasurer of CEF (the food bank based at St Francis Church.) What a lady! Asked how she packs it all in she smiles with those big brown eyes of hers and says she likes to be busy. She is doing God's work amongst people who need her help and expertise and when I told her this she looked surprised. "Really?" she said.

How would you describe yourself as a child?
Quiet. I liked puzzles and R&B music.

Has God always been part of your life?
He's always been there in the background but now I know that the path I took to France was part of the path bringing me closer to Him.

What do you think is important in modern society?
I think mental health problems are growing and anyone

can be affected.

What disappoints you about life today?

We all have lessons to learn. Some you can learn by watching other people but there are also some which you have to go through and feel. It's a great shame when we don't recognise them and more importantly learn from them.

What makes life today pleasant?

Family life.

What do you like to do in your leisure time?

I have become a member of the Institute of Toastmasters of Great Britain to learn to be a public speaker. And I do karate and yoga.

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

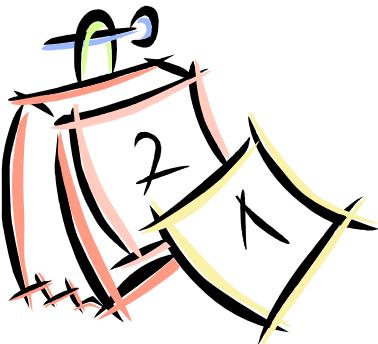
If you could change something in a spectacular way what would it be?
Eradicate all poverty and starvation.

What plans do you have for the future?

I might not be living in this country. I'd like to think that I might move to a Spanish-speaking country.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Do you keep a birthday book or a birthday calendar? I do and have done for years. On it I have the names of people who grow increasingly old year on year (well, don't we all!?) Amongst the names are friends and neighbours who are now house-bound. I also try to add a name or two to my calendar each year.



So I was wondering if we know anyone in our parish whose birthday passes almost unrecognised. I know you hear people say, "Birthdays? I've stopped bothering with them," or words to that effect. But I'm pretty sure that a card, a small gift or even a visit would be much appreciated – something to make the day a bit special.

Do you know the dates of your elderly neighbours' birthdays? How about finding out? It's just a small way for those-of-us-who-can to keep in touch.

Rosanne

Miss Pike and Miss Minnow

Miss Pike loves God in a wholesome way;
From her corner seat in the second pew
Where two or three are gathered to pray
Miss Pike will render to God his due.

Whether erring and straying or being forgiven,
Miss Pike's emotions are neat and tidy:
Christened, confirmed, confessed and shriven,
She can smile for Christmas and weep on Good Friday.

Miss Pike gives most careful thought to others,
Sends all her old clothes to the Jumble Sale.
She will always chat to the married mothers
And never jumps over the altar rail.

Miss Minnow's love is a different story.
'Minnow,' said God, 'why hurtest thou me?'
And her heart was rent with the power and the glory,
And her side with the pains of Calvary.

She gave up her wealth as though for a lark,
She tended the dying and nourished the sick;
She witnessed her Lord from a tub in Hyde Park,
They called her a harmless lunatic.

But her relatives simply refused to agree,
And no doubt it was shocking and rather silly—
When she asked the Bishop to sit at tea
Next to an elderly harlot from Piccadilly.

While Miss Pike is redeemed by a decorous sip
From a murmuring priest with a ritual cup,
Christ presses His wounds to Miss Minnow's lip,
So she doesn't notice they've locked her up.

– Juanita Peirse

Blow Away the Winter Blues

*The sermon this morning :Jesus Walks on Water
The sermon tonight: Searching for Jesus*

The fasting and prayer conference includes meals.

Saint of the Month St Gregory

March 12th is St Gregory's day. He is special in that he is one of the very few saints given the title "Great". He is also credited with being the father of Christianity in England, or Angle-land as it was called in his day.

He was born in AD 540, the son of a very rich Roman family. Brought up with many privileges he studied law as his chosen profession. He became so proficient that he was barely thirty when he was appointed prefect of the city of Rome. At the height of his career he turned away from a life of affluence to become a monk. He had inherited a vast fortune on the death of his father and used the money to found six Benedictine monasteries in Sicily and one in Rome which he entered as a novice. He adhered so fervently to the strict austerities of monastic life that he damaged his health and suffered chronic stomach ailments for the rest of his life.

One delightful story tells of his encounter with some beautiful, blue-eyed, blond children chained up in the market-place in Rome. They had been stolen from Angle-land by Pheonician traders to be sold into slavery. "Who are these children?" Gregory asked.

"Oh, only Angles from Angle-land" came the reply.

"Not Angles but angels," declared Gregory.

He discovered that they had been born in a pagan land. He decided there and then that this land far across the sea must receive God's word.

He went to the pope to ask permission to set out on missionary journey to Angle-land. He had only been away three days when he was recalled back to Rome in response to the demands of the people. In A.D. 590, much against his will he was made pope. His industry was remarkable even though he called the position a bondage. No detail of administration was too small for his attention. He preached, wrote books and revised the sacramentary. He even found time to train a choir and reformed the ecclesiastical music of his day giving his name to the chanting still used widely and known as Gregorian.

He was enormously generous in his charitable giving providing daily for a horde of beggars. When he heard that one poor man had died of starvation he did penance as if he had committed a crime.

In A.D. 596 he sent St Augustine and a small party of monks to England. He had not forgotten the children in the slave market. Gregory followed the progress of his missionaries with close attention and was thankful for their arrival on the Kent coast after many setbacks. He had sent a banner with them with a picture of Jesus on it because he believed that "pictures are to the unlearned what books are to the learned."

Once Augustine and his party had established the "infant" Church of England Gregory sent books, vestments and relays of missionaries to support them.

Despite his chronic ailments he remained vigorous in mind and intellect until the end of his life.

He died in A.D.604. The Council of Clovesho in 747 decreed that we, in England, should observe March 12th in memory of "our father Gregory."

Gardening is the new Recycling

Gardening when you have little or no space just needs a little ingenuity, or lots of old pots and pans. You just knew that all that stuff wasn't rubbish!

Your windowsills will be full of sprouting seeds, living greens and germinating seed pans, but don't let this deter you from further growing.

Many vegetable and salad crops can be grown in containers. On Gardeners' World in 2007, Joe Swift and Monty Don had a wide variety of containers that either looked a mess or interesting, depending on your point of view. However you can choose your look. I won't suggest using old sanitary ware or wellies, but even 4-pint milk containers cut down a bit will provide some space. Use large flower pots or tubs for runner beans – 'Hestia' is a compact choice which doesn't need support – or try French beans for many pickings. Round beetroot will be fine in pots, and the red leaves will enhance the colour in your garden. Grow-bags will house radishes, round carrots and of course salads and salad leaves (sow little and often). Grow-bags, cut in half and up-ended to give more depth of soil, are good for tomatoes. Some tomatoes are resistant to potato blight, but if you prefer the taste of other

varieties, like my favourite 'Sungold', then sow as early as is sensible and hope that you can enjoy some of the crop before blight hits. The alternative is to spray the crop with a chemical.

Has your redundant dustbin got a hole in the bottom? If not, use it to collect rainwater for the garden. Cover it carefully to prevent anything falling in and drowning. My cover is the upturned lid of an old woven-plastic linen basket, a perfect fit that leaves just one or two inches of open water for birds to bathe when the bin is full.

If your bin will not hold water, then knock a few more holes in it for drainage and put in four inches of soil or compost and plant some potatoes. Use five tubers of an early variety and cover with another foot or so of soil/compost. If you can keep the bin in the kitchen, light garage or greenhouse for a month or so, then you could do this soon – otherwise wait until the traditional day of Good Friday. As the foliage pushes through, keep adding more compost. Feed with liquid fertilizer once the foliage develops. Water regularly, but do not over-water. Your early new potatoes can be harvested as you want them with very little effort. Enjoy them!

Diana Pope

Blow Away the Winter Blues

Ladies, don't forget the jumble sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Don't let worry kill you off – let the Church help.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, super entertainment and gracious hostility.

Compassion for the sick

Whilst we are always pleased to be visited by our own parish clergy when we are sick and in hospital, they are very busy people and their time is often limited. It is therefore worth remembering that the Church of England is thoroughly committed to chaplaincy work in our hospitals and funds a number of clergy in our local hospitals whose job is visiting the sick on the wards and caring for their needs. Marlene and I had first hand experience of these people when she was in the J.R. for over 2 months last year. We found all of them totally dedicated and committed to their work and very much self effacing and undervalued. They are very reliable and discreet, and not at all intrusive. Their prayerful and friendly presence breathes new confidence and comfort to many patients who are awaiting major operations, and very anxious about their illnesses. With more and more of our ageing congregation having to have a spell in hospital - we ought to use this service more readily. They can be reached through the ward staff, or a message can be left in the hospital chapel which is in the main corridor of the J.R. As Christians we ought to avail ourselves of their kindly care and not be ashamed to acknowledge our faith, and trust in God during difficult times.

John Shreeve.

Sunday Lunch

Second Sunday lunches have now been served since June in the Church Centre. And very successful they have proved to be.

Open to all we serve a 2 course lunch with tea or coffee. Beautifully cooked by the ladies of the catering team Meals are served to you at your table so there is no need to move and break off conversation.

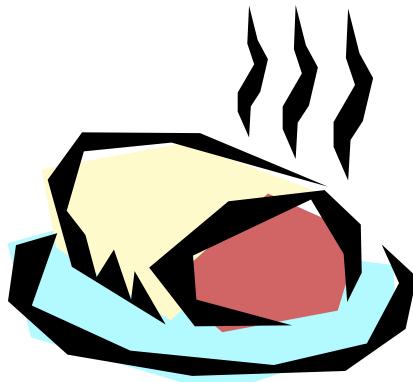
In order that we know who is coming a list is posted at the back of St James Church during the week after Sunday lunch has taken place asking those interested to add their name. Please make sure that you do this as we only cater for those listed. If it is difficult for you to sign please ring Chris-

tine Woodman on 778078 or May Morgan on 454169 at least 3 days before the lunch. Any later and

we cannot make any guarantee to feed you. The same applies if you find you have to cancel please let us know.

Where else can you get all this for only £5.00

So if you are lonely, fed up, can't be bothered with cooking and the washing up, or just bored and want some good company why not come and join us. Try it once and we are sure you will be back month after month.



MOTHERING Sunday

Do you know the story of “The Secret Garden” by Frances Hodgson Burnett? When I was a child it was one of my favourite books, and one of my favourite characters was Martha. A housemaid still in her teens, she lived in the staff quarters of a big, bleak house, several miles away from home. From the visits I have made to many of our stately homes I know that her tiny bedroom would have been tucked high up in a corner of the roof, very hot in summer and very cold in winter. According to the stories told to me by my own mother who was sent away into service at the age of thirteen, housemaids were made to rise at dawn, finish work once the family had eaten dinner and only given one Sunday off a month. That was less than a hundred years ago.

In earlier times these children were sent into service even younger. Boys to work on the farms or as apprentices to craftsmen or shopkeepers. In those days they did not get a day off once a month – only once a year and that day was Mothering Sunday.

In “The Secret Garden” Martha got up at dawn on the day she was to visit her mother to walk some miles across the Yorkshire moors and then spend the day helping to ease her mother's day by doing chores in the cottage where she grew up. She would have a meal and play with her brothers and sisters and after it was dark walk back, alone, to her place of employment.

That was very much the pattern of the origin of Mothering Sunday from the Middle Ages right through to Victorian times for children who lived within walking distance of their home. As they walked along, across the moors, fields and through the by-ways they were sure to see early spring flowers, primroses, violets and so on beginning to push through the grass. Eager to take a small gift for their mother they might pick a posy.

Mum, on the other hand, would have baked something special for tea on that very special day. That is where the Simnel cake comes in. Mothering Sunday always happens in Lent and so it is also called Refreshment Sunday. That means it's alright to eat a rich fruit cake in the middle of a time of fasting. The Simnel cake itself is traditionally topped with marzipan adorned with twelve balls and toasted. The twelve balls represent the disciples. If the cake is made for Easter there are usually eleven balls because the one missing is Judas Iscariot.

This year Mothering Sunday will be on 22nd March. After morning service at St James, posies of flowers and slices of Simnel cake will be offered to church-goers as they have been for many years. St Francis will also give little bouquets and coffee and goodies after their 10.30am service. Why not bring the family?



SIMNEL Cake

One 7 inch cake tin lined with baking paper
6oz (150g) plain flour
6oz (150g) 2 tsp butter or marg
1tsp baking powder
6oz (150g) castor sugar
3 eggs
6oz (150g) sultanas
6oz (150g) currants
4oz (100g) glacé cherries (halved)
2 tbsp candied peel
a little grated lemon and orange rind
2lbs (800g) marzipan
2 tbsp apricot jam

A Promise

Our Lord has written the promise of the resurrection, not in books alone, but in every leaf in springtime.

Martin Luther

- Sift together flour and baking powder
- Cream butter and sugar together and beat till fluffy
- Beat in the eggs one at a time
- With metal spoon fold in half of the flour
- Add all dried fruit and peel
- Add the rest of the flour and fold into mixture
- Spoon half the mixture into baking tin, smooth it flat
- Roll out marzipan (a little icing sugar on the board will avoid sticking) and when about 1 cm thick cut a round (or square) to fit over the cake mixture in the tin.
- Once marzipan is in place top with rest of mixture
- Bake cake from about 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours at 350°F, 180°C, gas mark 4, turn oven down to 300°F, 150°C, gas mark 2 and bake for a further 1 to 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours (you may need to cover the top with a square of baking paper to avoid burning.)
- Check with a skewer with when inserted should come away cleanly.
- Once the cake has been removed leave if for a few minutes before peeling off the baking paper.
- Cool on wire rack.
- Warm the apricot jam in saucepan then using pastry brush paint the top of the cold cake with jam.
- Lay another layer of marzipan over the cake.
- Make 12 little balls using the rest of the marzipan
- stick these evenly round the outside edge of the top of the cake using the rest of the warm jam. (If you're making this for Easter you only need eleven balls – see article on Mothering Sunday.)
- Place cake on an ovenproof dish and either bake for 5 to 8 minutes in a hot oven or place under the grill and toast the marzipan topping until it is just golden brown.
- Leave to cool.

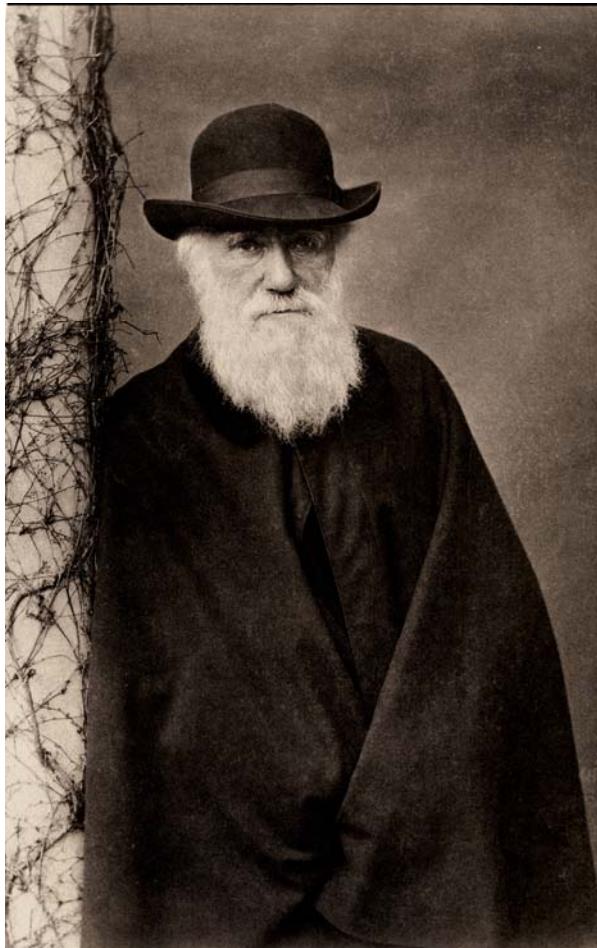
Darwin Conference

Over 100 people came together at St James Church in Cowley to celebrate the life of Charles Darwin. They listened as The Revd Professor Keith Ward, Gresham Professor of Divinity, spoke of Darwin's brilliant contribution that brought greater understanding of how life developed. He was joined by Dr Andrew Gosler, Human Sciences Lecturer in Biological Conservation at the University of Oxford, and Revd Dr Martyn Percy, Principal of Ripon College, Cuddesdon.

Darwin was born on 12 February, 1809 in Shrewsbury, Shropshire. He initially planned to follow a medical career but when he neglected his studies his father sent him to Cambridge to study theology and become an Anglican clergyman. He became established as a scientist on a five year voyage on HMS Beagle. The breakthrough in his theories came on the Galapagos Islands, where he realised that each island had a similar but different species of finch.

At the time many Anglicans received Darwin's theory without difficulty. Professor Ward spoke of the clergy understanding the Genesis account of creation as poetic language, not literal or scientific discourse. Most of the opposition to Darwin came from scientists like Richard Owen, who were not convinced by the evidence. Today the vast majority of scientists accept the evolution of all life, including humans. Is there any reason for Christians not to accept it?

There should be no problem with biological evolution. After all, each of us began as one cell, which multiplied and evolved through various stages until we became human in form. God allows us gradually to



grow into human form through a long process of development, either in the womb or over millions of years of preparation on earth.

The Genesis creation story, with its six 'days' or periods of progressive creation, looks remarkably like a sort of evolution – first, the formation of photons (light) soon after the Big Bang; then the formation of an oxygen-rich atmosphere (the sky) on earth; then plant life; fourthly, appearing visible from the earth's surface the sun, moon, and stars; fifthly, the dinosaurs (sea monsters and birds); and, on the sixth 'day', mammals, and among them humans with the responsibility to care for the earth (mammals made 'in the image of God').

Genesis tells this story with symbols and metaphors – the stars are not literally ‘lamps hung from the sky’, the earth is not a flat disc floating on water, and a day is not 24 hours, which would make no sense without the sun. The text of Genesis cannot be taken absolutely literally, and so it is a question of how you interpret the symbolism.

Darwin contemporary and supporter, Asa Gray, argued that the facts of mutation and natural selection (what Darwin called ‘descent with modification’) were totally consistent with there being a Divine purpose. Darwin’s theory of evolution does not in any way provide an understanding that God’s purpose can be seen in all of creation.

Darwin played a leading part in his parish church until 1849, when he began going for a walk each Sundays while his family attended services. He was never an atheist but in his later life described himself as agnostic. He died on 19 April, 1882 and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

If you would like to know more about what was said at the conference, a CD recording will be available next month through the church office.

Easter Confirmation

It has been several years since a confirmation service was held in the parish.

We have several candidates who are excited about being confirmed on Easter Saturday, 11 April at 7:00 pm and delighted that Bishop Bill Down will be officiating at the service. You may be wondering, “Why a confirmation on Easter Saturday?”

In the early Christian Church, two main dates were associated with baptism: Easter and Pentecost. Baptism preparation today pales in comparison with that for the first Christians. According to Hippolytus, those seeking to make a commitment to Christ and become members of the church spent a minimum of three years studying Scripture, praying, and receiving lessons before being initiated through the rite of baptism.

Before baptism the candidate would receive an exorcism from the bishop and a prayer would be said over the water. Afterward the candidate was anointed with the oil of thanksgiving. The bishop would pray over the candidate to receive the Holy Spirit with power.

In confirmation the Bishop publicly confirms the candidate’s faith in Christ and his or her intention to live a life as His disciple. Second, through prayer and the laying on of hands the Bishop and Church ask for the gift of the Holy Spirit. The biblical model for this is Christ’s own baptism by John the Baptist, in which, the gospels tell us, the Spirit descended on him when he came up out of the water (Matthew 3:16-17, Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-22, John 1:32-33).

Honouring Gwen and Ken Ranklin

There is no doubt that Gwen and Ken Ranklin made a huge contribution to the life of the Parish of Cowley, to the Cowley Deanery and to the Diocese of Oxford. They were a team who worked hard to make a difference to the church and in the lives of ordinary people. When Gwen died last May, I don't think there was any doubt that the people of the parish wanted to do some-

thing to honour the contributions made by Gwen and Ken.

At a recent meeting of the PCC and after speaking with Ken Ranklin, the parish will honour all they have done. The lounge at the St James Church Centre will be named, "The Ranklin Room" on Easter Saturday, 11 April at 12:00 noon. Gwen and Ken worked tirelessly in making the much dreamed-of

Centre a reality. It was symbolic of their dedication to hundreds of projects over the years.

Ken and other members of the Ranklin family will join in the celebration. Of course it wouldn't be a celebration without refreshments, and everyone is invited to take part in the festivities.

An Invitation from CMS

The Crowther Centre for Mission Education warmly invites you to the following public lectures:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 10th March
8pm | Public lecture by Dr. Parush Parushev
"Christianity in Europe: The way we are now"
With a response from Vija Herefoss, Latvian visiting student at the Crowther Centre. |
| 7th May
8pm | Public lecture by Dr. Atola Longkumer (pending visa)
"Religious Conversion: Re-thinking religious encounter in modern India.
(Another survey of the discourse and events in the country with conversion, mission and other dominant religions). |
| 16th May
10-3.30pm | "Does Faith Work?" Workshop day on the role of faith in the public space with Paul Woolley from the THEOS think-tank and a series of four workshops on <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faith in the School• Faith in the Hospital• Faith in the Prison• Faith in the Market. |
| 28th May
8pm | St. Thomas Lecture by Dr Joshva Raja.
Mission Challenges from Contemporary India:"that they may be one, that the world may know..." (John 17) |

Look out for their forthcoming lectures in the Autumn on Mission in Context, with Stephen Bevans. This will be a series of four lectures, using case studies from Oxford (both town and gown.)

Church Mission Society, Watlington Road, Oxford, OX4 6BZ 0845 620 1799

Letter to the editor

I saw this ad on the Stagecoach bus about 6 weeks ago:

"There probably is no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life.

So I decided that I would not use a Stagecoach bus again. *Mr John Simmons*

(John added that it hasn't been easy in this cold weather to let buses go by whilst standing at a bus-stop but he has stuck to his principles. Ed.)

From the Rector:

Dear John

I admire your determination not to use the Stagecoach bus which carried the "There is no God" campaign. So often in our part of the world Christians don't think it necessary to stand for what they believe. There is good news on the way. At least three separate Christian groups are fighting back. They are launching their own campaign to counter the ads produced by the British Humanist Association. One group, the Christian Party, will run bus advertisements that proclaim, "There definitely is a God. So join the Christian Party and enjoy your life." The Russian Orthodox Church has booked 25 supersize bus ads using the line, "There IS a God, BELIEVE. Don't worry and enjoy your life." While the Trinitarian Bible Society boldly proclaims in the campaign, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God," a quote from Psalm 53.1.

If we had the money wouldn't it be great if we could sponsor some bus advertisements like this one emailed to me by organist Patrick Gilday?



Update on the Community Emergency Foodbank (CEF)

It seems amazing that CEF opened its doors in St Francis Church 9 months ago. Opening for two hours a day each Tuesday and Friday we provide non-perishable food for people in a cash crisis. In that first month we fed 11 people while in the month of January we were able to provide food for 130 people and the numbers continue to rise. Over the period we have distributed food for over 700 people.

The referral agencies appear to be very happy with the help we provide and we've had many comments about the warm welcome people receive from the CEF Volunteers. It can be traumatic for people to

come through the door with a food voucher and sometimes we find that people have taken some weeks to pluck up the courage to come. Every week we hear extraordinary stories about peoples' lives and the difficulties they face and it is a privilege that so many will talk openly about their problems. Often conversations move to issues of belief. We've been able to share our faith and to direct some to suitable churches. One man has started going to an Alpha course with one of our volunteers. A number of people coming into St Francis Church suddenly remember attending Sunday School there and appear genuinely pleased to be back!

Sunday Services

ST JAMES' CHURCH, BEAUCHAMP LANE

8.00 am Holy Communion
10.00 am Sung Eucharist
"Church at the Centre" every fourth Sunday
Also Sunday Lunch : every second Sunday

ST FRANCIS' CHURCH, HOLLOW WAY

10.30 am Parish Eucharist

Mid-Week Services & Meetings

Monday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – St James
	2.30 pm	Parish Mothers' Union – St James (3 rd Mon)
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – St James
Tuesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – St James
	10.00 am	Seashells Toddler Group : St James
	12.00 pm	Eucharist – St James
	12.30 pm	Tuesday Lunch Club – St James
	2.30 pm	Friends of St Francis – St Francis (2 nd & 4 th)
	5.30 pm	Evening Prayer – St James
Wednesday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – St James
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – St James
Thursday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – St James
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – St James
	7.00 pm	Eucharist – St Francis
Friday	9.00 am	Morning Prayer – St James
	5.00 pm	Evening Prayer – St James

Local History Talk

The Cowley Local History Society will host an illustrated talk by Martin Greenwood entitled, "The Role of the Country Carrier," on 17th March at 8:00 pm. The meeting will be held at the United Reformed Church, Temple Road, and the cost is £3. A membership to the society can be had for £12 (concessions £10) and is available at the meeting.

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

Tuesdays 1-3:30 pm,
Fridays 9-3:30 pm,
and by appointment.

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Howard has Friday as his day off.

Team Vicar

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