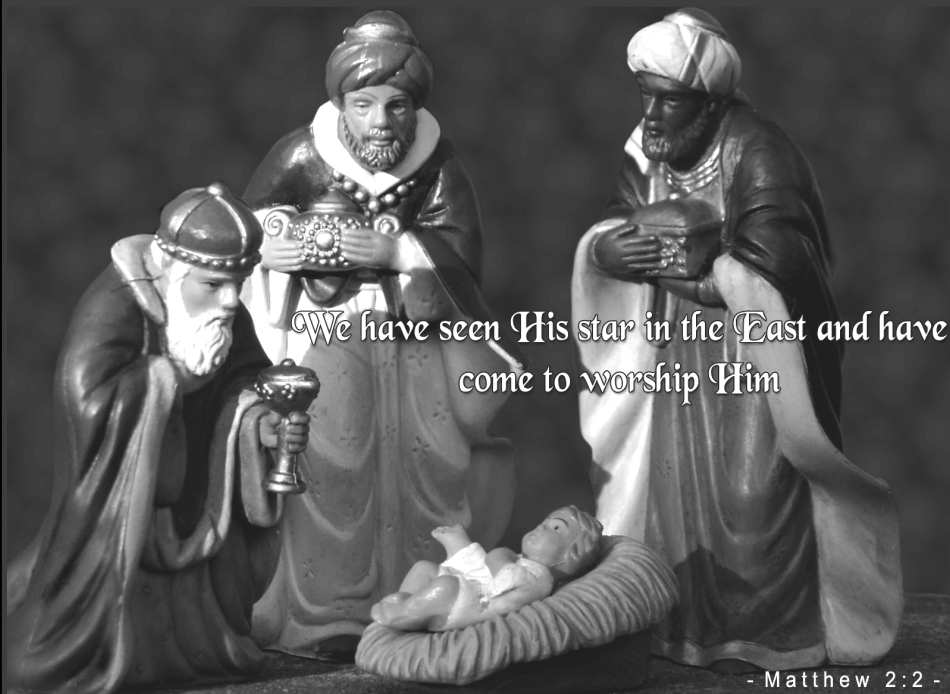


PURLEY PARISH NEWS

JANUARY 2004



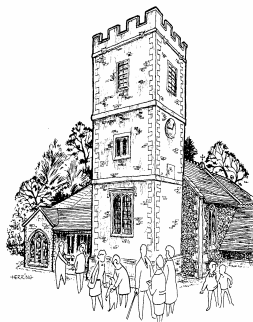
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35p

For the Church & Community of
PURLEY ON THAMES

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

PURLEY ON THAMES



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Purley on Thames
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Sally Robertson	Lorna Herring
Tel: 0118 962 5978	Tel: 0118 942 1547

CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS

Lorna Herring
Tel: 0118 942 1547

BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

All enquiries should be made to the Rector

www.stmarythevirgin.fsnet.co.uk

FROM THE RECTOR

Dear Friends,

Community d-i-s-i-n-t-e-g-r-a-t-i-o-n



I talk to many people who hark back to the “good old days” when they knew everyone in our community. In recent years it has grown rapidly, and now of course many people hardly know the folk who live next door to them, let alone elsewhere in the community. Many are out at work all day – leaving early and coming home late, so the opportunities for getting together are rather limited. Families often live far away and so visiting takes people away at week-ends. But quite apart from these things, do people want to be linked to a community in any way? Of course, we all are, whether we like it or not, but to what extent are we interested in making Purley a real community of care and concern for one another?

Our Parish Council has set up a steering group of volunteers to develop a Village Plan for Purley. That of course raises a question straightaway – are we still a village? I don’t know how many residents have been here long enough to remember the time when it clearly was a village, but it is hard to see how such a description applies today! Whether it is, or not, the fact remains that we all live very near to each other and we are being asked what we want for our community in the years ahead.

Well, what sort of a community do we want? Do we care enough to get involved in a Village Plan? It is easy to moan about things but do nothing and give nothing to help make them better. There is no doubt that the sense of community has been disintegrating for many years – here and in countless other places in the country. There may be many factors in this situation, but high on the list are attitudes – mine and yours. Concern for self alone, regardless of how our behaviour affects others, is damaging to any sense of belonging together. Unwillingness to get involved with the community and work to change things is another nail in the community coffin.

Harking back to the “good old days” is all very well, but I suspect that life was not entirely free of the problems we are aware of today. Vandalism for example is not a new phenomenon, but it is much more vicious and nasty today. The telephone kiosk on Purley Rise has been smashed up several times in the past year. It is not a ten-second job to break the glass! Who hears and sees and says nothing? Every year the grit bins are tipped over and the contents spread around – who is doing it? After every week-end there is a trail of empty bottles and drink cans thrown aside down Purley Lane and in the field in Purley Village. Shop windows have been broken and I have heard of a number of people who live in fear of what will happen if they say anything. Do we really want a community

where such things are tolerated, and encouraged by our silence and individualism?

Whatever we would like to see in our community, nothing will change very much unless we who live here change – in our attitudes and actions. If we want to see a better community then we have to become better citizens in it – willing to do things which serve the interests of others, rather than our own!

For our community and to our readers, I wish you are a different New Year.

Roger Howell

PARISH REGISTERS

FUNERAL

8 December Mavis West, aged 79 (Cremation)



SAMS

PAT BLANCHARD RETURNS TO PERU

Pat is St. Mary's Mission Partner working in Peru, South America. She has been home in the UK for the past few months, visiting her supporting parishes around the country, spending some time with her family in Dorset and trying to get accustomed to the culture here which she says is not only radically different than Peru's but has also changed so much since she left for South America 3½ years ago.

Pat came to visit us in Purley soon after her return to the UK but at the end of January she will be returning to Peru. Pat works with a number of churches, particularly within the shanty town areas of Lima (Peru's capital) and in Arequipa where a small feeding programme has grown into a primary school for 170 children.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY OF HEALING

We continue to have the laying on of hands for healing on a monthly basis at St. Mary's. The next services will be on Sunday 4 January at 6:00 p.m. and on Sunday 15 February at 11:15 a.m. We are always willing to pray for those in need - please let us know, and we will visit you at home or you can come to church on one of these Sundays, or on any other Sunday.

CHURCH SERVICES

4 Jan	9:30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Holy Communion
	6:00 p.m.	Holy Communion with the laying on of hands
11 Jan	9:30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Holy Communion
18 Jan	9:30 a.m.	Family Communion
	11:15 a.m.	Morning Worship
	6:00 p.m.	Evening Worship
25 Jan	9:30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Holy Communion
	3:00 p.m.	All Churches Together Christian Unity Service
		St Lawrence's Church, Tidmarsh
	8:00 p.m.	Evening Worship Extra

HIDDEN BOOKS

Can you find 20 books of the bible in the following paragraph?

I once chose an occasion to make some remarks about hidden books in the Bible. It was a lulu; kept some people looking so hard for facts. To others it was a revelation. Some were in a jam, especially since the books were not capitalised. But the truth finally struck home to numbers of readers. To others, it was a real job. We want it to be a most fascinating few moments for you. No need to be formal; a child could have fun doing this. Yes, there will be some really easy ones to spot. Others might require judges to determine. It may help if you format the words differently. We will quickly admit it usually takes a minister to find one, and there will be loud lamentations when you see how simple it is. You may not want to take too long reviewing this, however, since it may become a chronic lesson in futility for you. A little lady says that if she brews tea, she can concentrate better. See how well you can compete. Relax now, there are twenty (or 22?) in this paragraph.

Adapted from Christchurch Link, Hitchin

PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

The Parish Council were concerned that a proposal for a Denefield campus had been released by West Berkshire Council without proper public consultation especially in view of existing housing pressures from a number of planning applications in Long Lane. In an effort to bring this matter out into the open the Council issued the following press release which received coverage in the local media prior to Christmas:

Purley on Thames Parish Council calls for public consultation on Denefield Campus proposal

Purley on Thames Parish Council is calling for the widest possible public debate of West Berkshire Council's proposal to bring together Denefield, Long Lane and Brookfield schools in a single campus on the Denefield site in Long Lane, Tilehurst.

The Parish Council has written to the Chairman of West Berkshire's Eastern Area Forum expressing concern at the lack of consultation to date and asking that the proposal be placed on the agenda for its next public meeting on 20th January 2004 (which is scheduled to be at the Calcot Centre). It is urging local residents who have an interest in the proposal – either as parents or because of concerns about housing development, traffic, public facilities, recreation and impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) – to attend this meeting.

A Parish Council spokesman said: "At this stage, the proposal probably raises more questions than answers. We are intrigued by the campus principle and would welcome public facilities like a new swimming pool and library on the site, however there are a number of issues which deserve broad public consultation."

"In particular, we are concerned at the possibility of yet another addition to the piecemeal development of high-density housing on land behind Long Lane and about the potential impact on the AONB to the west of Long Lane."

"The impact of this proposal needs to be weighed carefully against the potential benefits for the community. We would ask all parties to take their time, consult as fully as possible and, in particular, to await the publication of the Purley Village Plan in some 12 months time. This will be based on extensive research into the present and future needs and desires of the residents of Purley on Thames."

During December Purley hosted a meeting of the Six Parishes Liaison Group who endorsed the request that this be placed on the agenda of the Eastern Area Forum. If this is done and you wish to attend please watch the notice boards for further details prior to 20th January. Gary Lugg, the Head of Planning & Transport Strategy at WBC, made a presentation to the

Group and was therefore ideally placed to hear our concerns over a number of planning issues.

Under new Government policy the Parish Council will no longer have a right to nominate school governors to local primary schools but the existing nominations will continue in post until their term of office is complete. Anyone interested in becoming a school governor should ensure that their names are passed to the Education Department at WBC or ourselves as we may well be consulted over future vacancies.

A new rocking horse was recently fitted at Bucknells Meadow to replace the previous one which was old and dangerous.

In view of the recent problems with vandalism we would appreciate local residents being vigilant and ask that they report any problems. The play area at the Goosecroft Recreation Ground had to be closed for longer than expected due to the dangerous state of the sand pit following vandalism there as well. Please help us to stamp out this anti-social behaviour and protect small children.

As mentioned last month the WBC travel tokens have all been returned to Newbury so if you still have any questions please contact the Concessionary Fares Team on 01635 519800. An umbrella left by mistake during the July issue period still remains unclaimed at the Parish Office.

Finally Happy New Year to all local residents.

Brian J. Smith
Clerk to Purley on Thames Parish Council

The office is located near the tennis courts and is open:

Mondays: 5.45 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.
(except bank holidays)

Thursdays: 9.00 a.m. to 3.15 p.m.

Purley on Thames Parish Council
Parish Office
Goosecroft Lane
off Beech Road
Purley on Thames
Reading
RG8 8DR

Tel/fax: 0118 984 4507

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOXES

£153.21 was collected from all the boxes about Purley parish and sent to the society in November, in time for Christmas. They were very grateful for this generous donation, which will be put to good use. See letter on church notice boards for details.

S. Pryor

WEST BERKS SCRABBLE® CLUB

To those who searched in vain for the answer to the Scrabble puzzle in the last issue of the magazine, the answer was to place the 'E' and the 'S' in front of the existing word CHEWED, making ESCHEWED, MOPE and STRAINED for a score of 84.

Now, on a different note, in mid January the Club is holding its regular annual tournament in The Barn. This year, with our reputation firmly established on the national Scrabble tournament circuit, the event has attracted 96 entrants, along with a significant waiting list. Players are coming from as far afield as Southend, Cardiff, Rutland and the south coast. All profits from this year's event will go to the local charity of Thames Valley and Chiltern Air Ambulance. We are all looking forward to a successful (but very busy) day.

If you enjoy Scrabble then give us a call. We are a friendly club and are always looking to expand our membership.

Wishing you all what you would wish for yourselves in 2004 – a very happy year!

Ian Burn, West Berks Scrabble Club, ☎ (0118) 984 5045.

PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY TALKS

The Society will not be meeting for a talk in January, but the A.G.M. will take place on Wednesday, 18th February in Purley Memorial Hall, commencing at 7.45 p.m.



TRADING

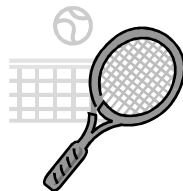
The Shed will re-open on Saturday, January 31st, when you will be able to renew your subscription for 2004. Seed potato orders can also be handed in from this date.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New Year and pleasant gardening in 2004.

Marion Dabbs
9422349

PURLEY (BERKS) TENNIS CLUB

NEWS



For news and information about forthcoming matches and events and also for regular updates about training and coaching session have a look at the NEW tennis club notice board which can be found up on the parish offices.

Following the announcement of the results of the annual club tournaments prizes were awarded to all the winners at a well-attended ceremony held at the Ferryboat Inn, Whitchurch. The new trophies, engraved with the winners name, year and event proved to be a great success and will hopefully inspire players to compete with gusto next year.

Despite the cold weather the men's, ladies teams keep playing their league matches with a varying degree of success with equal numbers of matches won, lost and drawn.

COURT AVAILABILITY – CLUB SESSIONS

- Wednesday afternoons Club session 1.30 pm until dark (all through the year)
- Informal and free winter coaching for all takes place on the first Saturday of each month from 9.30 until 10.30 am.
- From 10.30 am on Saturdays there is adult practice and although regularly attended more are always welcome.
- Matches take place on most Saturday afternoons and some Sundays.

For membership enquiries please contact: Colin Moses (Chairman) 0118 984 5429; or Judy or Martin Dickins (Membership Secretaries) 0118 941 2399 - new members are **very** welcome.

Bev Mackenzie

MOBILE LIBRARY DATES

The Mobile Library will be at the following points:

Orchard Close	2:15 to 2:30
Memorial Hall	2:35 to 2:50
Hazel Road	2:55 to 3:15
Farm Close	3:20 to 3:35
Purley Church	3:40 to 7:00

Visiting dates: 22 January, 12 February, 4 March, 25 March

PROJECT PURLEY

The next meeting of Project Purley will be held at The Barn, Goosecroft Lane, on January 16th. The evening titled 'Memories of World War II' will recall what wartime was like in the Purley area and members personal recollections.

On November 17th, Ben Viljoen delighted members with a talk entitled 'Fragments of the Gardens of Purley'. Ben's talks are always accompanied by stunning slides and this time he opened the evening with a view of Purley from the hills above Hardwick and a painting by R Gallon of the ferry at Mapledurham.

In addition to the manors there were in former times several large houses with extensive grounds. All had fine gardens with landscaping and specimen trees and it is the remnants of these gardens, which Ben has been tracing. Purley has the distinction of having had two of the great landscape gardeners, namely Humphrey Repton and Charles Bridgeman apply their skills here. Humphrey Repton who was the successor to Capability Brown prepared proposals for a new mansion with pleasure gardens for Anthony Morris Storer who purchased the Manor of Purley Magna in 1793. In the event these plans were never carried out, as being so near to the river, Storer was fearful of flooding. However the proposals in the 'Red Book' that Repton prepared remain to show us not only what

might have been but also how the manor house and its farm building next to the church appeared before the changes were made. Repton's drawings were known to be very accurate.

There have been three different Rectories within living memory. The oldest of these was begun in 1743 and stood on the site of Lister Close. At one time there was a garden and rockery on the south side, a walled garden and orchard to the east and a fine hedge on the north boundary. The remains of these can still be seen together with the old stable wall.

Moving along the 'Street' now known as Purley Village is Purley Lodge. A document dated 1212 records a virgate of land belonging to Thomas Huscarle. This measurement is

Tickets available from
1 January 2004

Roger Howell
941 7727
Pam Slingsby
961 5585



Songs old and new
performed by the singers and musicians from St Mary's

Organ recital with guest organists

Saturday 7th February 2004,

7.30 p.m.

St Mary's Church

Tickets £1

Light Refreshments

All proceeds to the Children's Society

around 30 acres and may have been the land on which Purley Lodge, a Queen Anne house with much older foundations stands. Aerial views show the extent of this piece of land, which runs up to the main road. In the late 1800s Westfield house was built at the southern end of this virgate of land but was demolished in 1970 to make way for what was to become Nursery Gardens. The walled garden of Westfield House ran parallel to the main road with a curve in the wall (which still remains) to accommodate Well Cottages. The coach house and stables still stand at the corner of Oxford Road and Purley Lane. The gardener's cottage was later the Post Office and was eventually demolished after a fire seriously damaged the building. Well Cottages were demolished in 1938. Parts of the wall of the walled garden are still the boundary wall of the modern houses backing onto the Oxford Road and this provides a microcosm for the attractive borders of the gardens of these homes.

Purley Hall was built in 1609 by Francis Hyde and was sold in 1720 to Francis Hawes who was a director of the South Seas Company. In 1720 Hawes employed the great landscape gardener Charles Bridgeman to lay out his garden. For this Bridgeman received a fee of £122. 11. 0d. Charles Bridgeman became Gardener Royal to George II in 1738. The plans which Hawes implemented included a canal, statues, a kitchen garden and a new stable block. By 1777 Hawes had died and his widow sold Purley Hall to the Wilder family who called in William Hopper who had done work for the Prince Regent and once again modifications were made to the garden and house.

The spirit of the great landscape gardeners lives on in the more modest gardens of Purley, where follies, eye catchers and beautiful vistas can still be found.

Rita Denman

EPIPHANY

On 6 January we celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus. But who were these wise men? No one knows for sure. Matthew calls them 'Magi', and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia. It wasn't until the third century that they were called kings - by a church father, Tertullian. Another church father, Origin, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of healing - and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the eighth century, the magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

PURLEY W.I.

THE CIRCUS COMES TO PURLEY

What can I say about this absolutely fabulous evening? Our speaker, Cathy Valentine, on the "Circus scene" gave us the theme for our December meeting. A mouth watering buffet and animals decorating the hall were all to promote our mood. Much thought provided wonderful and imaginative outfits like animals, clowns and ring leaders, which made for a very enjoyable evening. All this was enhanced by the speaker, who was a teacher of clowning tricks. She oozed with energy and provided bags of magical equipment. We all became apprentices of the clowning world. Just imagine a hall full of people trying to work a Diablo, throwing three chiffon scarves in the air and balancing plates on poles. Well, we were all quite hopeless but quite hilarious! Thank you to all concerned for an unforgettable evening.

Next meeting – Blind auction – light supper provided

Competition: Best wrapped parcel

The meeting will be held 14 Jan 7:30 p.m. Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Rd.

Happy New Year

*Sylvia Conquest
0118 941 1936*

RITA HINE

We sadly lost my mother - Rita Hine (lived in Oakley Cottage, Westbury Lane, Purley on Thames for 30 years) in June of this year.

Although she had only just moved to Tilehurst, she continued her association with many Societies in the Village.

On behalf of my Father and my family here in Nottingham I would like to thank Mr and Mrs Debney and the members of Project Purley who have very kindly continued to fund raise for Oxfam in memory of my Mother.

It is very comforting from these few miles away that Rita wasn't forgotten straightaway - my thanks publicly are for the kindness of this group of friends whose company I know Mum always appreciated and enjoyed.

Happy New Year to all our old friends in Purley.

*Tom, Audrey, Lenny and Robbie Hine
Long Eaton, Nottingham*

PANG & KENNET VALLEY COUNTRYSIDE PROJECTS

The Friends of the Pang and Kennet Valley Countryside Project has been set up to represent all of the people who care about the countryside in the two valleys. The events below are co-ordinated by The Friends and give you the opportunity to come out on practical tasks, learn new skills, meet new people and, above all, enjoy yourself. The tasks usually begin around 10am and finish by 4pm but you are very welcome to come for as much time as you wish to give during these hours. Please wear suitable footwear and clothing, and bring a packed lunch if you are coming for the full day. Hot drinks are usually provided, as are the necessary tools.

FRIENDS DIARY

Conservation tasks

- Tue 13 January** **Coppicing** **Rushall Manor Farm**
Join the volunteers coppicing glades at Rushall Manor Farm to improve access to the woodland for visitors. Meet at the Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm* at 10am.
- Sun 18 January** **Hedge coppicing** **Holt Lodge Farm**
Come and help restore hedgerows in the beautiful North Wessex Downs AONB and experience the hospitality of Holt Lodge Farm. We will be coppicing to help regenerate an overgrown hedge. Meet at Kintbury train station. Grid Ref: SU386672 at 9.30am.
- Sat 24 January** **Hedge Planting** **Hosehill Lake LNR**
Join the Ranger and Theale Area Bird Conservation Group in gapping-up the hedge around this quiet wildlife reserve. Meet at the entrance opposite the Fox & Hounds Pub at 10.00. Grid ref: SU650697
- Tue 27 January** **Coppicing** **Hampstead Norreys**
Restoring an old hedge and copse by coppicing hazel. The coppice products will be used in the Hedge Laying in February. Meet at Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm* at 10.00am or phone the Project office for details of meeting on site.
- Sun 8 February** **Waymarking** **Paices Hill**
After the very successful footpath clearance day in August, now come and help to install waymarkers on the route, to help people enjoy this beautiful site. Meet at 10.00 at Paices Hill (through Youngs Industrial Est.) Grid ref: SU586638
- Tue 10 February** **Hedge Planting** **Pangbourne**
Help restore the hedgerow alongside Tidmarsh Rd. Meet at Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm* at 10.00am or phone the Project office for details of meeting on site
- Tue 17 February** **Butterfly Bank** **Upper Basildon**
Help to create a butterfly haven to be enjoyed by Basildon Primary School pupils. Meet at Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm* at 10.00am or phone the Project office for details of meeting on site

Sat 21 February Scrub bashing/Ash coppicing Hosehill Lake LNR
Help Theale Area Bird Conservation Group and the Ranger to clear scrub from a meadow area to create glades within an ash woodland. There will be a bonfire so feel free to bring along some marshmallows. Meet at the entrance opposite the Fox & Hounds Pub at 10.00. Grid ref: SU650697

Sun 22 February Hedge Planting Holt Lodge Farm
Come and help restore hedgerows in the beautiful North Wessex Downs AONB and experience the hospitality of Holt Lodge Farm. We will be gapping up a boundary hedge to restore it. Meet at Kintbury train station Grid Ref: SU386672 at 9.30am.

Sun 29 February Hedge Planting Pangbourne
Help restore the hedgerow alongside Tidmarsh Rd. Meet at Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm* at 10.00am or phone the Project office for details of meeting on site

Sat 6 March Improving Access Marsh Meadows
Come and help the local community to access and enjoy this public open space by installing pedestrian gates and steps. Meet outside Alldays at 10.00am. Grid Ref: SU525680

Tue 9 March Hedge restoration Barn Elms Farm
Coppicing and gapping up of the historic Parish Boundary hedge at Barn Elms Farm. Meet at Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm* at 10.00am or phone the Project office for details of meeting on site

Bucklebury Heathlands Conservation

Sun.11 Jan Heathland Management
Sat.14 Feb Heathland Management (inc BBQ - bring own food)
Sun.14 Mar Heathland Management

For all tasks meet at Angel's Corner, by the Scout Hut on Bucklebury Common (Grid ref. SU 550688) at 10.00am. Contact Tim Culley for more details on 0118 971 830.

Walks

Sun 25 January Hill Fort and Green Lanes. 11am-4pm Hermitage
Five and a quarter miles along sheltered Green Lanes starting and finishing at Grimsbury Castle (SU 511 723). No pubs on the route so bring a packed lunch! We will walk along Fence Lane to the edge of Bucklebury Common and back via Boar's Hole. Meet at Grimsbury Castle car park at 11am. To book a place please contact the Project Office 0118 9305336.

Sun 7 March Woodland Wander, 11am Paices Hill
An early spring walk starting in the striking woodland at Paices Hill and exploring the wider area. An opportunity to appreciate the amazing diversity and features in the woodlands of this area. Meet at 11am at Paices Hill (through Youngs Industrial Est.) Grid ref: SU586638

Sun 28 March The Bottom End, 1.30pm-4pm Pangbourne
Three and a quarter miles starting and finishing in Pangbourne to look at the down stream end of the River Pang and the Sulham Brook. Meet at the (pay) car park next to the Working Men's Club (SU 635 767) at 1.30pm. To book a place please contact the Project Office 0118 9305336.

Events

Fri 27 Feb

PVCV Social eve, 7.30pm - 11pm Upper Bucklebury

Join the volunteer group for the annual 'Pang Valley Skittles Championship'. Cost £8 per person. Tickets include a buffet meal (please bring own drink and glasses)- available from Project Office. Meet at Upper Bucklebury Memorial Hall (SU 545 684) for 7.30pm.

Sat 20/21 March

Lambing Open Days

Rushall Farm

Come and see the first lambs of the season at Rushall Farm, Bradfield*. The farm will be open from 11am to 6pm all proceeds go towards the Reading Multiple Sclerosis Society.

Sat 20 March

Willow weaving

Hosehill Lake LNR

Come and learn or improve your willow weaving skills with the help of a trained instructor at this local nature reserve. Meet at the entrance opposite the Fox & Hounds Pub at 10.00am. Grid ref: SU650697

Sun 21 March

River Clean up

Shaw/Newbury

The Rivers and Environmental Spaces Clean-Up Event is back! Come and help clean up part of the River Lambourn at Shaw as part of the RESCUE event. Meet on bridge in Walton Way off Turnpike Road at 10.00am.

Sat 27 March

Tree care and riverside meander

Riverside Meadow

A mixture of work and play at the Riverside Meadow, Newbury. Spend the morning carrying out some tree management in the copse next to the meadow, followed by a relaxing afternoon stroll along the River Lambourn. Meet outside Riverside Community Centre at 10.00am. Grid ref: SU485678

Hedgelaying Events

6/7 Feb

10am

Hampstead Norreys

Come and have a go at hedgelaying in the picturesque Pang Valley. A trainer will be on hand to help develop and improve your hedgelaying skills. Meet off Wyld Court Hill NGR SU536762. Booking is required for this event either £10 per day or £5 per day for concessions.

27/28 Feb

10am

Newbury

Come and learn the traditional skill of hedgelaying at the Riverside Meadows, Newbury. A trainer will be on hand to help develop and improve your hedgelaying skills. Meet at Riverside Meadow SU485677. Booking is required for this event either £10 per day or £5 per day for concessions.

13 March

9.30am, Competition

Shefford Woodlands

Enter or come and watch the Projects Hedgelaying competition at Newton Lodge Farm, Shefford Woodlands off J14 of the M4. For those who want to practice their newly acquired hedgelaying skills there are various classes. Entry into the competition is £3. From 9.30am parking available Off the B4000 NGR SU364728

To register interest for the above events please contact the PKVCP tel. 0118 9305336 or email pang.kennet@fwag.org.uk



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I've had a few letters this month but I thought I'd start the year on a positive note with the following tale from Bill Ayling:

It was four o'clock on Friday 5th December and I was doing a very quick shop in Pangbourne and then back to my car in the Working Men's Car Park. A pain in the chest - I ignored it, but as the doctor's surgery was near I thought I'd pop in!

Within five minutes I was laying flat out on the examination table with enough electrodes clapped onto me to fit out Frankenstein. Ten minutes later I was whizzing down the M4 with blue lights flashing and the siren wailing. Fortunately I had my mobile phone with me and the ambulance attendants let me ring Eileen. She sounded very calm, "All right," she said, "ring me when you can." The ambulance was jolting all over the place. "We have the same chassis as a baker's van," said the ambulance attendant quite cheerfully.

After what seemed a nightmare journey through the motorway rush hour traffic on a wet, dark Friday night, I arrived at the Royal Berks. The hospital was incredible. Straight away I was wheeled into a little screened off cubicle and more wires attached. A blood pressure tube attached to my arm and blood was being drawn off for testing.

The staff, the doctors and everything were first class. I'd only been there a short while when a very worried looking Eileen appeared, she had even remembered to pack an overnight bag - "I won't need that," I said confidently - I was wrong.

A fresh-faced youngster, a Doctor called David, put me at my ease; he explained that they were going through the usual procedure when somebody comes in to the doctors with chest pains. A really smashing senior nurse called Suzy was unbelievable, sympathetic, kind, considerate and lovely. She put me at my ease when my blood pressure soared over 220 - that was when they said I wouldn't be going home tonight!

My one regret, and Eileen's, was that we had nothing to read - somehow food and drink at that time did not seem important. In the next cubicle a ninety four year old lady was having serious problems. You try to shut your ears to it, but the screens were not sound proof. I tried to remember every poem I had written and recite it slowly to myself. It helped a little.

Whisked off for a heart X-ray. A burly, incredibly cheerful guy called Ben. "Any thing you want?" He asked, expertly whipping me around the corridors and nearly, but not quite, trapping my fingers against the side of

the cot. "A wee!" I gasped; it was beginning to get a little desperate. "A wee whisky", he joked.

Back to the cubicle. A hard grey cardboard bottle container was brought! Thank goodness!

About eleven o'clock a very tired David came again and said that he thought they had managed to find a bed for me in the Battle. Suzy bless her heart, came along with toast and tea for the pair of us. She stood there and insisted that Eileen ate all her toast! We tried to tell her how much her kindness was appreciated. She explained that when people come through the doors into Casualty they are nervous and worried; it is her job, and the other nurses to put them at their ease. She succeeded with us.

Another ambulance came around twelve and myself and an elderly lady in a wheel chair were whisked over to Battle Hospital. Into the CCU. It was like a four star hotel. Soft lights, thick carpets, air mattresses and peace and quite. Another ECG. Eileen went home but en route to Battle she had managed to find an all night garage open and purchased a copy of the Reading Post - I don't believe I have ever read a newspaper so thoroughly as I read that: literally every word including all about synchronised swimming and even course fishing!

At four thirty a pair of brilliant white teeth in a watermelon smile woke me up. More blood taken! All through the night a band around my arm kept tightening to almost unbearable pressure and then slackening off - taking my blood pressure.

At ten to six the nurse came back with the good news that my blood test had proved negative, gave me another ECG and wheeled me off to another ward. This time it was noisy. Snoring, whimpering and sighing. Once more I picked up the Reading Post. I read a report of the Wigan v Reading match in 1982 (score was 2-2) with the team names and their current whereabouts! Eventually about seven o'clock I fell asleep, to be awakened at twenty past seven by somebody saying "Good morning". She suggested I might like to get up and have some breakfast. It sounded too good to be true - it was!

Around about eight thirty I had a bowl of cornflakes; "No, thanks," I insisted, "I do not want prunes." (The nurse seemed slightly disappointed.) A cup of surprisingly good coffee and two slices of toast.

At ten thirty three doctors came around. Dr Chong suggested I stayed as their guest until Monday. I demurred. Provided I could pass fit on the tread exercise machine I might go home with medication this afternoon.

The stepping machine was unbelievable. I do a fair amount of walking and playing bowls, but compared to that exercise machine those were nothing. Within two minutes sweat was streaming down my face. My legs felt like

rubber. The muscles at the top of my legs were straining. "How much longer," I gasped. "We'll turn it up now," said the nurse. Up! I carried on for a total of 3 minutes 58 seconds and gasped "No more!" I collapsed into a convenient armchair and watched my blood pressure surge to unheard of heights. Then slowly, slowly it sank, the recovery time increased. "Any chest pains?" I just had enough breath to gasp, "No!"

The Dispenser at the Royal Berks stayed on after twelve - they normally close at that time on Saturdays - and they even sent a taxi to get my drugs. I had another cup a coffee and a well-filled ham and salad sandwich. Eileen came for me and then home twenty-four hours late. Ambers was pleased to see me!

I would like to close this with my heart-felt appreciation of the staff and the hospitals at both the Royal Berks and Battle - they were all wonderful. The NHS gets a lot of flack but believe me, what those people must go through and the service they offer is beyond compare. Fortunately this time it was a 'scare', but had it been the real thing I couldn't have been in better hands. I wish them all well in the New Year.

Bill Ayling



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I welcome contributions from anyone to this magazine, particularly on local issues and events. Contributions can either be delivered in writing or, preferably, as a WORD attachment by email. Please note however, I reserve the right to edit contributions to suit space availability and to maintain consistency of style (font etc). Local event adverts can be accommodated but space is limited; landscape format copy is preferred in this case as it allows a ½ page entry to be published.

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This magazine is published on the first Saturday of each month (except August). The price of each issue is 35p with a discounted annual subscription price of £3.50 for eleven issues.

If you are new to the area and would like to subscribe to Purley Parish News, please contact the Circulation Manager, Les Jamieson.

This edition published	3 January 2004
Next edition paper copy to be received by	15 January 2004
Next edition "electronic" copy to be received by	22 January 2004
Next edition published	7 February 2004

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