

PURLEY PARISH NEWS

JULY 2004



ASK

Ask and it
will be
given
to you;



SEEK

Seek and
you
will
find;



KNOCK

Knock and
the door
will be
opened.

MATTHEW 7:7

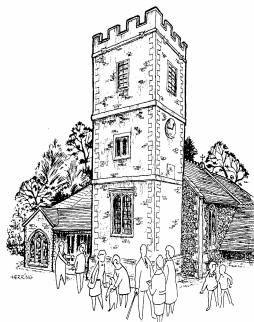
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35P

For the Church & Community of
PURLEY ON THAMES

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

PURLEY ON THAMES



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BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

All enquiries should be made to the Rector

www.stmarythevirgin.fsnet.co.uk

"Purley Church to close!"



Dear Friends

If you saw this headline, what would you think?

How would you feel about it?

Would it bother you?

What difference to the community would it make?

Thankfully St. Mary's Church is not going to close, but many churches throughout the land have shut up shop. The age-profile of congregations is high in many cases and here we are not immune from that situation. It raises some probing questions about the future. What is certain is that the Church is facing some major changes – and with them, searching challenges. In the current issue of *The Door*, the Oxford Diocesan Newspaper (if you would like a copy, just let the Rector know – they are free) there is an article about a church in rural Wiltshire which was threatened with closure because no one attended the services. When this news got out, the community came to their senses and now up to 75 people come – on a Saturday! It is amazing what comes out of the woodwork when a closure is mooted.

What do you think about regular services being available on a day other than Sunday?

Would it appeal to you?

Are there people living in our community who because of work patterns cannot attend on Sundays?

It would be good to have some correspondence in this publication about these things. Write to the editor! In every community there are many people who used to attend church – either here or where they lived before moving. Some of you who read this will be in this category. Of course there are many reasons why people do not attend a church – not least because they have no belief in God. But you may say, "I do believe in God, but the church does not interest me!" Undoubtedly many would echo this today. They may not be interested in the church, but I am interested in you. Spiritual life needs support and nourishment, and St. Mary's can offer that – on other days and at other times if there is a demand and we know about it. Many people would freely admit that they do not know what they believe, and they wish they could be more certain. You do not have to go on in that fog. There is a way through and we would be pleased to help. Get in touch and we will do what we can.

Purley church has been here since the twelfth century and before that. The building will be here for a long time to come, but whether there will be anyone coming to it remains to be seen. If you care, think about coming! But of course there may be other spiritual questions which need addressing first. I don't have all the answers, but I am willing to listen.

Roger Howell

P.S. If you are searching for God, remember He is looking for you – let Him find you!

PARISH REGISTERS

BAPTISM

23 May Matthew Anthony Steven Olivier

WEDDING

5 June Christopher Auger and Linda Ashby

FUNERALS

10 June Joyce Silvester, aged 77 years (cremation at Henley Road)

21 June Sonia Jones aged 42 years (burial at Henley Road)

COMMUNITY HARVEST SUPPER



**Saturday 25 September at 7:30 p.m.
The Barn, Beech Road.**

This will be a sit-down meal, followed by an auction of donated goods in aid of the Macmillan Cancer Relief.

Watch out for posters around the parish, tickets will be available in August at £5 per adult and £2.50 per child.

Last year tickets sold out very quickly so make sure you note the date and act when they are available.

The Rector would be glad to receive items for the auction (nearer the time!) – e.g. Wine, unwanted gifts, new toys, cakes Tel. 0118 941 7727.

CHURCH SERVICES

4 July	9:30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Holy Communion
	6:00 p.m.	Holy Communion
11 July	9:30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Holy Communion
18 July	9:30 a.m.	Family Communion
	11:15 a.m.	Morning Worship
	6:00 p.m.	Evening Worship
25 July	9:30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Holy Communion
1 August	9:30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11:15 a.m.	Holy Communion
	6:00 p.m.	Holy Communion

FAMILY TREASURE HUNT

Despite clashing with various other events, seven teams set out on a beautifully sunny day to take part in the treasure hunt around Whitchurch on Thames. The delicious scent of honeysuckle and old roses hung in the air as, down by the Mill Stream, along quiet lanes and along leafy footpaths, observational and cryptic clues were solved and letters collected to form a conundrum. The children's task was to 'collect a rainbow', and some ingenious finds were placed in their bags to cover all the colours! The highlight for many was the hunt around the Thyme Maze, tucked away in a quiet corner of the village, complete with sundial.

Hunt finished, about sixty adults and children headed for Cherry Acre, where ploughman's, cakes and drinks were served. Adults formed 'huddles' in various parts of the garden as conundrums were poured over and solved, while the children had a wonderful time playing. A fun time was had by all, and £150 was raised for St Mary's Church. Many thanks to all who took part in this year's hunt. The results were very close, with Sally and Simon Robertson's team, winning by a mere half point. Congratulations to them, and to all the children who swapped their 'rainbows' for 'edible rainbows' in the form of sweets.

Nicki Woodward

PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

LATE SUMMER SHOW

This will be held in The Barn at the Recreation Ground, Beech Road, Purley on Thames on Saturday, 11 September, 2004. Schedules are available from the Trading Shed and we look forward to a good number of entries, but you need to be a member of the Society or Women's Institute. Entry forms must be handed into the Trading Shed or to Mr. J. Armstrong, 169 Long Lane, Tilehurst by Wednesday, 8 September. The Show opens to the public at 2.30 p.m. to 4 p.m. with presentation of trophies at 3.45 p.m. Entry to the Show is free.

ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY GARDENS

As an affiliated Society we hold a card that provides reduced entrance prices to the R.H.S. Gardens at Wisley, Rosemoor and Hyde Hall. The reduced price is available for one member and one guest (member or otherwise). If you require further information or would like to use the card, please contact Pat Brightwell on 941 2424.

TRADING

The Shed in the Memorial Hall car park is open from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Saturdays and Sundays until the end of October. Membership is only £1.50 and garden supplies, etc can be purchased at discounted prices. If you have not yet renewed your membership, we would be grateful if you could do so in the near future. We are always pleased to receive new members as well.

If you have not taken your summer holiday yet, we hope you will have an enjoyable one with good weather.

Happy gardening.



Marion Dabbs
942 2349

MESSAGE FROM HOME FARM

A sunny, Saturday Morning in mid-June and rather than sitting on a tractor I am watching my daughter participate in a National judo competition at High Wycombe Judo Centre. Not a very ladylike sport, but having been used by her three big brothers as cannon fodder to practice their rugby skills for a number of years now, quite frankly I feel for the girls that she has to 'fight'!

Among the various items that arrived in the post this morning was a letter from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (did you know that one existed?). It informed us that our river meadows have been identified

as a Wildlife Heritage Site (WHS),- places that are considered especially important for their wildlife- and they wish to carry out a survey on behalf of West Berkshire Council!; fascinating what 'we' get up to!. They point out, however, that the goodwill and commitment of the landowner in continuing sympathetic management practices is a critical element in their protection. This on the face of it sounds fine, but the underlying problem for farmers is that we are now considered as caretakers of the countryside, looking after weeds, bugs and creepy crawlies. Food production seems unimportant as we can import all we need. Hopefully the tide will turn while there are enough farmers left with the necessary skills.

Another controversy that has arisen is with regards to the Thames Path, especially the route it is to take through the Purley Park Estate. This route was determined many years ago and it should have been revealed in solicitors' searches when properties were purchased. Mind you, it is one thing creating the Thames Path, but who will maintain it?, little maintenance funds seem to exist; volunteers?. Are there to be 'wardens' to pick up litter and keep the public from straying off the Path?. Replacing stiles with gates that are not stock proof, such as the one between Blounts Meadow and Thames Reach, leads to further questions; who will come and put the cattle back in the fields when they escape through a gate?. Who will pay for damage done?. What infrastructure is to be installed to support the Path?. Car parking is already a major problem, with Purley Village often blocked solid with parked cars, as many folk come to walk our 'stretch'; two Sundays ago the milk tanker could not get through as both sides of the road were filled with visitors vehicles!. One can't help feeling that schemes like this go ahead because of the kudos involved, without due consideration to the locals.

Well that's enough for this month. My articles are hardly written mellifluously or with great cogency, as my son's English teacher described his work in a recent report,(yes, I did need a dictionary), but at least it's a decent length!. This is obviously due to the length of the Judo Tournament which is about to end. Ouch..... poor girl....another Georgie victim..... I shall have to watch my step!

Tim Metcalfe
Parish and District Councillor

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, OXFORD

Parishioners of the Diocese of Oxford are always welcome to visit the Cathedral without paying the tourist entrance fee. Membership cards showing that you are a parishioner in the Diocese can be obtained through your parish church. Contact the Rector for an application form.

PANGBOURNE & DISTRICT BOWLS CLUB

I suppose I must thank Matthew for "censoring" my last month's article – unfortunately the Pangbourne Magazine did not do so and I was bombarded with balloons filled with (I hope!) water outside the gentlemen's toilet in the car park at the Recreation Ground. It was probably a co-incidence. I chased and caught the miscreants – they were about a foot taller than me – and I called them silly xxxxs and they were xxxx (you'll notice I'm doing my own censoring). I was pretty angry as you may well imagine (and wet). One look at an elderly, bald, fat old man was enough for these youths, probably aged about sixteen, and they, in the modern parlance, scarpereed. The members of the Bowls Club subsequently told me off – I should have sent for help – and a slap from a wet lettuce leaf over the wrist from the police sergeant at Pangbourne. He thought if I had attacked them they'd have gone home crying to their mums. One thing is certain; they learnt a few ex-RAF drill sergeant expressions that afternoon!

Promise this will be the last time I mention the vandals of Pangbourne – at least for a while!

What a wonderful day we had on the Bowl's club Gala day. The weather was wonderful – we have been almost miraculously fortunate with the weather in the past few years – and we had a full house of 20 competing teams from all over Berkshire and South Oxfordshire. I mention the areas from which the competitors come as this year we have lost our sponsor, and I'm hoping to persuade a regular reader of this magazine to sponsor the event next year.

The winners were from Woodley who beat an ex-Pangbourne player who has now moved to Swindon, Ron Salisbury. It was great to see Ron and his wife Doreen again even though there was a little more to see of Ron than there had been in previous years. All matches were competed for in a spirit of friendship and rivalry most of the back players visit us each year and, almost invariably their final words are "you'll ask us back again next year?"

Doreen Miller, bless her heart, sold over £200 of raffle tickets. The shopkeepers of Pangbourne and club members had donated all the prizes, so that sum was profit for the club. We had over sixty prizes and you then appreciate how generous everybody was, my very sincere thanks to everybody who contributed in any way. Thanks especially to Jack Messenger who, when I arrived at seven o'clock was already assembling the gazebo, having out the "whip" around the green removing the surface water. The Green played like a dream. A ten o'clock, sharp, start and the Final actually finished at six forty five: the Green has to be in pretty good nick to withstand all that play – and without a single break. Again, thanks to everybody who helped on that day. I was particularly grateful to

Councillor Molly Evans for allowing us to park the visitor's cars alongside the hedge when the car park was overfull.

Pangbourne are once again struggling this year in the friendly games and the Manchester Unity League. The ladies are doing quite well in the Thames Shield, but hats must be raised to Alan Blacklock and the Kennet League team. Despite being relegated last year they have won all bar one of their League games and consequently are top of the league by quite a large margin.

This year I have done reasonably well in the County Secretary's Cup, but until I know whom I'm playing in the next round I can't say if I'm going to make the almost giddy heights I reached last year. It was nice to win, especially against Gordon Simmonds of Trenthams whom I've never beaten in previous years – Gordon took it like a gentleman and bought me a large whisky! Fortunately I was not driving that day!

I look forward to bringing you some good news as the club progresses in the various competitions, but we always have room for more bowlers at Pangbourne, new or experienced; young; old; male or female. Come across any Thursday evening if you'd like some coaching – or most weekends if you want to watch some excellent club bowling.

One thing about the recent spell of very hot weather – I can thoroughly recommend having water balloons bursting over your head and shoulders to cool you down – or heat you up -depending upon your personality!

Bill Ayling

NEWBURY EXECUTIVE JOB CLUB



Are you a manager or professional who has been made redundant?

Information, Advice & Guidance
in Berkshire

Are you looking for advice, support and the opportunity to network with like minded people?

The Newbury Job Club meets on Wednesday mornings between 10:30 and 12:00 at Business Focus, 24 Cheap Street, Newbury (above the Kennet Centre – entrance opposite the old Beatties toy shop). There are regular sessions on CV's, interviews and career planning plus individual support. Members can also use Birchin Lane, a daily updated jobs database.

The job club is funded by Berkshire Information Advice and Guidance.

For further details contact:

Chris Brear
Tel: 01635 41722
Email cbrear@cfbt-hq.org.uk

PURLEY PATHFINDERS WALK REPORTS

“Oh to be in England, now that April’s there!”

A strange way to start the July issue of the Parish Mag I know, but in May I was busy greeting my little granddaughter, Milly, into the world when I was *supposed* to be writing the June Issue reports. So – lots of lovely walks to tell you about:-

On our first walk in April, the gardens of the gorgeous thatched cottages of ‘Cold Harbour’ were a riot of colour in *Celebration of Spring*. Waxy flowers shone from magnolias, and cherry trees stood in a froth of pink and white. Below them, daffodils and bluebells created a colourful under-story. We skirted the boundaries of a house set within a dell of primroses, before a bridleway took us down into the valley in which we caught our first glimpse of Elvendon Priory. We climbed to a field above, in which ewes called protectively to their young lambs. We paused to take in the pastoral scene and far-reaching views. Soon we were climbing from the Priory on a path, where, in March, we had admired the display of golden daffodils. Now, narcissi continued the cheerful display in a dazzling variety of yellows, whites and orange. We made our way to The Great Chalk Wood to ventured deep into the wood on a path which rose and fell in *waves*, delighting in the way the beech trees stretched their fresh green leaves down to greet the sea of newly emergent bluebells. Near Upper Gatehampton Farm, we left the wood and ended our walk with a stroll along a lane from where we gained a spectacular wide view, spotting Basildon House, the church at Lower Basildon, the white building of I.L.A.M. and the gleaming River Thames as it carried a boat under the Brunel bridge, which in turn supported a speeding train. A stunning end to our satisfying walk.

On a gloriously sunny day, we felt privileged to be deep within the English countryside as we set off from the historic Rushall Manor Farm Black Barn on a walk which was to stimulate every *sense*. Wending our way along a magical woodland path, we took in the breathtaking *sight*, and the heady *scent*, of bluebells flooding the woodland floor. At one point we walked at the foot of a high bank down which bluebells cascaded in a waterfall of the deepest blue – Wow! Our *ears* responded to the bleating of young lambs in the adjoining fields, and our bodies were *touched* by the warmth of the sun. *How good it all made us feel!* Leaving the woods, we crossed a large field in which primroses, for years left undisturbed, had multiplied to spread their delicate posies far and wide. Bluebells spilled out from the wood to join them in a sumptuous tapestry of yellow and blue. Down Greathouse Walk, hedgerows burst into life, and our view opened up to take in the multitude of greens within the Pang Valley. Pretty cottages, their gardens billowing with pink blossom, clustered around the village church. Here we joined the River Pang as it danced along the stony riverbed, the odd fish darting here and there in the clear water. Near a

vibrant clump of king cups, a swan sat proudly on her intricate nest as her partner patrolled protectively nearby. Young Highland Cattle gazed at us from sweet woolly faces, softly blowing through wet muzzles on this hot day. Before leaving the Pang we paid a visit to The Blue Pool, an intriguing place where minerals cause the water to appear a curious blue. Back at The Black Barn a majestic horse chestnut tree provided shade for our picnic, a fine view across the Pang Valley spread out before us.

“Oh to be in England, now that April’s there!” -- YOU BET!

May-time brings nostalgic thoughts towards traditional activities such as Dancing around the Maypole. It was good timing, therefore, to start the month in the very traditional and ancient village of Mapledurham. Here time seems to have truly stood still, and house names bring back old traditional ways, The Forge, The Bovy, and the Almshouses founded in 1613. We walked along an ancient track, formed in 1600 to link Mapledurham with Reading. Across the Thames we picked out familiar landmarks, nestled amongst the new foliage on the trees. Glancing back we admired the fine frontage of Mapledurham House, built in 1588, uniting the two previous manors of Gurny and Chazey. History continued as we passed the 17th century Park Farm, standing beside a fine cedar tree, and a cherry tree full of blossom. On a climbing path we walked through Chazey Wood, a delight on this May day with its floor carpeted with bluebells. Then, across a grassy path we entered Park Wood, displaying a breathtaking show of bluebells beneath the fresh green of the beech trees – who says ‘blue and green should never be seen’?! Here the two colours set each other off beautifully. Taking this memorable sight with us, we ended our walk by following a winding narrow path down through an area which had been landscaped in 1740 by William Kent and Alexander Pope. We paused beneath the statue of ‘Old Palm’ to share his fabulous view over the valley, with Mapledurham House and Church below. Stunning!

It was our fifth birthday on 11 May, and to celebrate we gathered for a special Birthday Outing to the National Trust property of Cliveden. On arrival, a pleasant woodland copse provided tables and chairs for coffee and a slice of birthday cake. Refreshed, we started our walk, but not before we watched the spectacle of the striking pink car, belonging to Thunderbirds’ very own Lady Penelope, being driven down the Grand Avenue into position for a photo shoot, accompanied by two equally pink Ka cars! Our walk took us between colourful rhododendron and azalea bushes to reach the Water Garden. A heron stood, statue-like, beside the red pagoda overlooking the pond. Flower borders burgeoned with colour and a cherry tree stood like a fluffy pink candyfloss. From the Shell Fountain of Love we walked along the Grand Avenue towards the house and the impressive Clock Tower. From the Terrace we could look down over the Parterre, and gain far reaching views across the surrounding countryside. Soon we were beside the Thames where an area of lawn beside the Boathouse proved the perfect place for our picnic. We relaxed

in the sunshine and enjoyed the activity on the river, especially a family of ten tiny ducklings, eager to share our lunch. Then, in keeping with our 'Thames' theme for 2004, we walked for about a mile along the riverside path with the 'hanging woods' rising up beside us. In 'Three Men in a Boat', Jerome K. Jerome wrote of this part of the river as 'perhaps the sweetest stretch of all the river', and artist, Stanley Spence said, 'You can't walk by the river at Cliveden Reach and not believe in God.' Indeed, we enjoyed a most pleasant walk, then, eventually, a climb took us into woodland where more rhododendrons made a showy spectacle above drifts of the last of the bluebells. Back at the house we split into groups to explore, at leisure, other parts of this stunning estate – the Secret Garden with its statues and roses; the Long Garden with its topiary and fabulous wisteria; the Amphitheatre, and the National Trust shop. A cup of tea, (or a glass of wine), was enjoyed in the Conservatory Restaurant where a CCTV camera showed blue tits in their nest, attending to their eggs. A special way to end our special birthday treat.

We were on the Berkshire/Hampshire border for our next walk, from where we gained good views over to the mast on Cottington Hill. Down into woodland, we followed a tributary of the River Enborne until, on reaching Hyde End, we left the pretty riverbank to climb gradually with hedgerows, full of wild flowers, beside us. The identical spires of Midgham Church and Brimpton Church came into view, and we took our break in the peaceful setting of the latter. On through fields towards a lake we were delighted to hear our first cuckoo. Back by the Enborne once more we entered the lovely parkland of Wasing and climbed to Wasing Church, looking lovely with floral displays in readiness for a wedding. Attractive glades through Wasing Wood took us back to Brimpton Common with its cottages set in beautiful gardens full of wonderful colour. Lunch was enjoyed in the Pineapple.

R U 5 - 11 yrs old?

Bored in the hols?



Mon 26 July - Fri 30 July

Holiday Club 2004

@

**Mary's Church
Purley**

9.30am until 3.00pm

**£6.00 per day / £3.50 per
session**

Contact: Anna Saverton

0118 942 8351 / 07764 660721

£10.00 non-returnable deposit required

A writer once described an English country lane in May as having '*a magic like nowhere else on earth*'. We experienced some of this *magic* as we wandered along quiet country lanes from the pretty village of Swallowfield. All manner of early summer wild flowers danced beside us and, over the hedgerow, our eyes were led across the lovely green countryside of the Blackwater Valley to the woodland of Wellington Country Park. Soon we were walking beside the River Blackwater as it meandered peacefully through several meadows. As the sun warmed up we were glad to walk along a shady track as it climbed gently through mixed woodland. Eventually we were walking in the attractive parkland of Swallowfield Park, with the house glimpsed across the fields in which a muntjac deer hugged the protective line of a hedgerow. Ahead we could see Swallowfield Church where Mary Russell Mitford, authoress of 'Our Village', is buried. With the recent sale of Swallowfield Park, the gardens are no longer open to the public. However, we were given special permission to visit the gardens to wander amongst the stunning rhododendrons and azaleas. Another piece of the '*magic of May*'.

An abundance of wild flowers scrambled along the verges as we made our way out of Inkpen towards West Woodhay. We enjoyed the view across the lake to West Woodhay House, built by Inigo Jones. Arriving at West Woodhay Church, we entered the garden beside it, looking a picture on this lovely June day. Four sections reflected four different colours in the stunning display of flowers. How does the saying go? 'You're nearer to God in a garden than anywhere else on earth'. Nowhere has a truer word been said than in this heavenly place. Inside the 19th century church we admired the lovely stained glass windows, and the 'garden inside' in the form of floral arrangements. Further down the lane, rhododendron bushes lined our route as we enjoyed wonderful views across downland and to Walbury Hill – our next target. At 974 feet it is the highest point in Berkshire, and the site of the largest Iron Age hillfort in the county. Along the Berkshire/Hampshire boundary we started our climb, pausing now and then to marvel at the magnificent views over Berkshire and Wiltshire. We were delighted by the variety of wild flowers on either side of our path, especially the large number of orchids. At the top we took our break, sitting amongst the orchids, and with the most breathtaking view before us. We didn't want to move, but, once on our way, our route was downhill with uninterrupted views across miles of wonderful countryside. Back at Inkpen, 'soul' fed, we fed our bodies in the comfortable Crown & Garter.

From Whitchurch we took the pleasant bridleway, part of the Thames Path, which snakes its way between trees to eventually pass high above the River Thames in Hartslock Wood. We enjoyed glimpses across the river to Beale Park and the slopes of Upper Basildon, with Basildon Park sitting grandly on the hillside. We left the Thames Path to climb up into the BBONT in which orchids dotted the grass with various shades of purple and lilac. At the top we took our break with a wonderful view along the

Thames to the Brunel bridge. Boats glided effortlessly on the glistening water, and trains, including the very special Southern Belle, sped over the bridge. It was lovely sitting there in the sunshine, but we managed to drag ourselves away to continue along a path beneath trees, which took us high above Whitchurch. A pleasant lane, with good views across the Berkshire Hills, took us to the welcome shade of woodland, and back down into Whitchurch, to end of our lovely walk.

On a pleasant Midsummer Day we walked along beside the Thames near Maidenhead. Thoughts of the river's inspirational quality came to mind as we noted a weather vane depicting Jerome K. Jerome's famous Three Men in a Boat. We fondly remembered our recent trip to the Source of the Thames on reading a plaque set in the ground referring to the Thames journey from 'Cotswold cows'. We continued beside England's 'liquid crown' until we reached Boulter's Lock. Some of our ladies recognised the lock from paintings they have at home – Edward Gregory's 'Boulter's Lock – Sunday Afternoon 1895'. We passed beneath another famous landmark, the Sounding Arch of Brunel's bridge, noteworthy for having the widest arch in the country at 128 feet wide, and with only 24 feet headroom. W.H.Turner, lock keeper at Boulter's Lock for over 20 years, painted the famous 'Rain, Steam and Speed' here. With boats gliding along on the smooth water, we continued along the leafy Thameside path with grand houses belonging to the rich and famous, such as Rolf Harris and Michael Parkinson, on the opposite bank. Eventually, rising up from behind one of the houses, we spotted the tower of the 13th century Parish Church of St Michael at Bray. On reaching Bray Lock, described by Jerome K. Jerome as 'probably the prettiest lock on the river', we paused for our break in the lovely surroundings, watching boats manoeuvre in and out. We left the river temporarily to walk across fields giving us good views across the surrounding countryside, with Cliveden perched high up on a hill. Back at Boulter's Lock we crossed to Ray Mill Island with its statues, aviaries and park-like gardens. Here we enjoyed a Midsummer's Day picnic, finishing with an ice-cream from the kiosk.

Well, Midsummer sees the start of Wimbledon so we'll be off next week on our 'Strawberry Picnic Walk'. Then we'll be back by the Thames at Henley with a visit to the Wind in the Willows display at The River & Rowing Museum. Our walks finish for the term with our Summertime Special. In keeping with our 'Thames' theme we will be off to Greenwich for a boat trip which will take us through the Thames Barrier to 'the sea'. Afterwards we'll explore Royal Greenwich Park. This won't be quite the last meeting as we'll be down at Mapledurham Lock to witness the flamboyant arrival of The Swan Uppers. If any ladies would like to join us, please give me a ring for a programme.

Nicki Woodward
984 1919

PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

Recent meetings of the Eastern Area Planning Sub-Committee of West Berkshire Council held in Calcot on 26 May and 8 June were well attended by both parish councillors and parishioners. David Betts, Chairman of the Parish Council, and local residents spoke on the issues with mixed success. The application (03/00057) for additional housing off the Oxford Road, adjacent to Roebuck Rise, was rejected and we are still waiting to hear whether the developers are going to appeal or to submit a new plan addressing some of the locally sensitive issues. Whilst the planning application (03/02603) for 98 dwellings to the rear of Long Lane was agreed there were concerns amongst the councillors and West Berkshire officers were instructed to continue dialogue with the developers in an attempt to seek improvements to the infrastructure.

May I give advance notice that the Parish Office will be closed during week commencing 2 August due to annual leave. The vacancy for a councillor, caused by the resignation of Ralph Miller, has now been officially advertised and unless there is a request for an election made by 12 July to the Returning Officer at West Berkshire Council the Parish Council will be authorised to co-opt. If anyone is interested in joining the council please contact the office for an application form.

The Council has prepared the accounts for year ending 31 March 2004 and copies are now available upon request. The official audit has been called for 31 July 2004 and the statutory notice providing full details has been displayed on the notice board outside the office. Another footpath map notice board has recently been erected in Purley Village near the end of Mapledurham Drive.

Finally a reminder that the last local date for collection of West Berkshire travel tokens will be on Wednesday 7 July between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. from the Parish Office. Information has already been sent out by the Concessionary Fares Team who can be contacted on 01635 519800 in the event of any query.

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

PURLEY POST OFFICE SUMMER PRODUCTS GOING ON HOLIDAY ABROAD?

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Any queries please come in for more information or phone us on 984 3230

Wishing you all a happy and safe summer holiday!

Charlotte Jenkins

PURLEY MEMORIAL HALL

A vacancy has arisen for a treasurer on the management Committee of the Hall. The hall is very well used and in order to continue running it efficiently for the Community of Purley, the treasurer's position needs to be filled.

If you feel you can assist the Committee in this important roll, please contact John Devine (Chairman) on 962 5818 or myself on 942 2349.

The Committee would also be pleased to welcome new members (Purley residents) onto the Committee and sincerely hope there is someone in the community willing to help us out with the above vacancy.

Marion Dabbs





LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Last year, in the Purley Parish Magazine, there was a letter asking for packets of flower seeds for a school/nursery garden. I have gathered many packets of seeds over the winter and would be only too pleased to donate them.

Please would you ask your readers if they are required this year. I would be willing to deliver them.

*With many thanks
Wendy Leer
07718 072705*

Dear Mr. Editor,

I have just received notification from the West Berkshire District Council that my annual allowance of travel tokens has been reduced to £40 - sufficient for nineteen return journeys by bus to my nearest shopping centre in a whole year (at present fares).

The whole of my working life was spent in the local government service, and I can remember the time when no such item as "members' travelling expenses" or "financial loss allowance" appeared in the annual budget: and yet the public service was as good then, perhaps better.

I wonder whether the WBDC, when deciding to reduce their senior citizens' travel tokens, gave any consideration to the possibility of savings under the heading of members' expenses. Could we know what is the prospective total expenditure this year under this heading, and by how much it could be reduced if members were given tokens for use on public transport, instead of their lavish car allowances?

*Yours sincerely,
George Critchell.*



The next opportunities to pray for Purley with Christians from different churches will be on 20 July and 6 September at St Mary's church.

For details: Sally Robertson (962 5978).

PROJECT PURLEY

June's report from Project Purley got lost in the email system somewhere, so this month we have a double update from Rita and David. -- Matthew

The next meeting of Project Purley will be the annual BBQ to be held on 16 July at 7:30 p.m.

On 16 April John Chapman gave a beautifully illustrated talk about his visit to the Falkland Islands. John had been fascinated by the Falklands from a very early age, but it wasn't until 2003 when he was given the opportunity to travel to the islands that he was able to satisfy his curiosity.

Even by air, the journey is a long one, and was broken by stopping off at Ascension Island. Lying just south of the equator Ascension Island is the tip of a volcano and mostly volcanic ash. Through the ages soil has formed on Green Mountain which is a habitat for donkeys who contribute to forming a growing medium. The island is home to the Royal Air Force, the BBC World Service Administration and the Americans. The permanent cloud formation is utilised to collect water from the marble collecting roofs. Due to its remote location it is almost pest and disease free. In the 1800's Kew Gardens were invited to stock the island to advance the process of cultivation. Originally occupied by the British, visits are permitted only by the British, Americans and the French by special permission.

Journeying on to The Falkland Islands, the plane was escorted in to land by Tornado fighters. The Islands are of great strategic importance affording good water anchorage and relatively calm weather although cold winds from Antarctica are experienced. There is an indented coastline, and boggy terrain. Port Louis was founded in 1610-11 and is littered with the hulks of abandoned ships and remains of the recent conflict. Tumbledown is a name well known also from the recent conflict with runs of stone and boulder, which flow down the hill like glaciers. Many kinds of Penguin march to and fro to feed, providing endless fascination. The penguins share the islands with cormorants, seagulls, skuas, albatross, ducks and geese, all of which seem oblivious to humans. The Falklands are also home to the Red Backed Kite, and rarest of predators, the Caracara.

With the aid of slides, John took us on a tour through the town centre where there is a golf course and a racecourse. The main industry is sheep farming providing meat; the sheep are sheared by travelling Australian gangs. A notable bridge for a sheep crossing was constructed in Birmingham and transported and assembled on site, in a similar way to a Meccano kit.

John's enthusiasm for the subject was transmitted to those present and we all left having learned a great deal about the background and daily life of a remote part of the world which had played such a prominent part in our recent history.



Bucknell's Meadow
Purley on Thames
18th July 2004
3 – 6 p.m.

3 p.m. *Start with the Detective Trail
from St Mary's church to
Bucknell's Meadow*

3.30 p.m. *Activities in the meadow*

Displays Games
 Music

Bring your own picnic

Ample parking at St Mary's Church

Toilets available

The walkabout through Theale High Street took place on 21 May. Despite an overcast sky twenty-three members and five guests gathered at 7 p.m. to meet our guide for the evening tour, Roy Townsend. After a brief introduction, in which he explained that the village had been shaped by the nearby locations of gravel water and road, and that the name Theale derived from a Saxon word meaning 'logs' or 'planks, we began our gentle stroll.

As befits a former Headmaster and current Theale resident, Mr Townsend's explanations of the history of the buildings we saw were informative, scholarly and easily understood. Much of the detail he related is contained in the 'walk around Theale' leaflet produced by the Theale Local History Group copies of which were distributed among our party. These were helpful as a reference particularly when the hum of passing traffic tended to obscure our speaker's voice. The leaflet became less necessary when we turned off the busy main road to view Holy Trinity church, a grade one listed building, constructed during the period 1819 to 1832 in Early English Gothic style at a cost, including the rectory and endowment, of £39,250. This was a lavish outlay for a village numbering at the time, just 450 inhabitants, but presaged the anticipated religious revival in England.

By now the traffic noise had diminished, to be replaced by birdsong and the sound of bat and ball coming from the cricket match being played on the nearby recreation ground. At this point while we were admiring the classic lines of the church, our guide rather like a magician producing a rabbit from a hat, took out of his rucksack a print of a painting of Holy

Trinity church. The original painting was by John Constable, our country's greatest landscape artist.

We continued past the Rectory, the new Medical Centre and the relatively new (1969) Saint Luke's Roman Catholic Church into Crown Lane. There is not space here to record details of all the buildings about which we were told - the excellent leaflet and Mr Townsend's expertise provided those but certain items remain in the memory. For example, the oversized bricks used to avoid the tax on bricks, the flat roofed block of bomb-proof houses built by the Ministry of Supply in 1940, to accommodate munitions workers, and the Falcon public house which still has its original coaching yard and retains its early 18th century façade, are all indicators of the way in which Theale is a microcosm of the history, of not just this part of the country, but the whole of England.

As the evening grew colder, the thoughts of some members of the group may have turned to the warmth of the interiors of the eight public houses which now populate Theale, but Mr Townsend's knowledgeable commentary held our attention as he pointed out that the graffiti on the wall of no 51, 'MP 1735' - confirms that this row of houses in the High Street dates from the eighteenth century also. After crossing the road to the south side he pointed out no 60, The Chestnuts, a superb building with arched windows, unusual shutters which rise upwards from the sill, and which was developed as a Poultry College by Edward Brown in the nineteenth century. More recently, it was occupied by the Cumber family, of whom William Cumber became, in 1902, the first Theale resident to own a motor car. Outside no 36 we were told that this was the former home of Theale's last shepherd, whose stepson, Vernon Cotes, earned fame in his own right as one of the team of brave midget submariners who penetrated the Norwegian fjord in World War II. to sink the German battleship *Turpitz*.

We completed our walk by noticing how many ancient buildings have been adapted for use by modern society. The new shops opened in 2001 were formerly a blacksmith's forge. The Blue Cobra was one of Theale's main grocery shops and next door to a hurdle maker, and the wine merchant's was previously an ironmonger's and before that a veterinary surgeon's. We finally arrived at the junction of High Street and Station Road the nearest Theale has to a village square, and where in 1832, sat Constable to paint his aforementioned watercolour of Holy Trinity.

Rather like the pilgrim's who had travelled the same route many hundreds of years before, on their journey to Reading Abbey, we were by now rather weary and footsore, but the walk had been a fascinating and stimulating one as we learned how the appearance of Theale had evolved to cope with the increasing demands of successive generations. Roy Townsend was an invigorating leader of our expedition and we are grateful to him.

Rita Denman and David Downs

PURLEY W.I.

D-Day and all the sad memories it brings reminded us why we have a hall to gather to at all! A Memorial Hall surely speaks for itself and this is an opportunity to remember the friends who didn't arrive home from two world wars. Do we take our hall for granted and what would we do without it? There is a small band of folk, known as the Purley Hall Committee, who are all committed to the upkeep of the hall. They try hard to keep it decorated, warm and comfortable despite temperamental boilers etc, so perhaps we should be saying "thank you" to another group of unsung heroes?

After a visit to Syon Park, the house was reported as being very enjoyable and a trip to the Herb Garden at Sonning Common is being planned for July. It's always sad to say goodbye to a member but life goes on, so we wished Pam Gilham and family good luck for their move to Norwich and thanked her for her contribution on the committee.

Our President this month filled in the speakers slot and provided us with a flower arrangement workshop. There's always a first time for a flower arranging session, so as we all fancy ourselves as a budding Constance Spry, away we floundered. Faced with fresh flowers we feverishly filtered our way through a flock of greenery and roses. Some of us of course were fearful, some had flair, while others fumbled and fussed. But somehow a fusion of colour and fragrance emerged. Some arrangements found themselves flagging – or flopped, while others fell to the floor! Finally we finished and frankly the evening had been fine, we'd been frivolous, fractious – even fed up but the arrangements were fantastic! Thank you Daphne Howard for a fabulous few hours and sorry you had the drama of a fire as you live next door to the Pangbourne garage. (Got my masterpiece on the fireplace!)

Competition
Garden in a saucer

1st Sylvia Conquest
2nd Edna Bint

Flower Competition

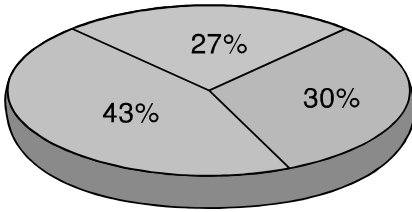
1st } Ella Petrie
1st } Sylvia Conquest
3rd Margaret Martin

July's speaker is Mrs Ruth Riley on Graphology (bring a copy of handwriting). The meeting will be on Wednesday 14 July, 7:30 Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road.

July's Competition: Limerick (5 lines) Stall: Book & video

Visitors Welcome.

Sylvia Conquest
941 1936



A PICTURE OF PURLEY

Hot off the press – we can now reveal some of the initial findings from the poll of Purley on Thames households completed for the Village Plan. Thank you once again for filling in the questionnaires – nearly two thirds of

households replied – across all age groups and representative of the various parts of the village.

As we suspected people like living in Purley. Just under 60% state that the single most important attraction for living in the village is the River Thames and the countryside. This far exceeds any other benefits mentioned. 86% of you regularly visit Mapledurham Lock and just under 70% walk along the Thames path. Over a half use the local footpaths or walk in Sulham Woods.

Most of you are regular car users. Less than one in five of households use a bus service each week. Twelve per cent use the local train service each week and one in ten regularly cycle every week.

Local shops are clearly a prized local asset. Just under 40% of households regularly use the Post Office on Purley Rise and slightly less are regular shoppers at the Village Stores on Colyton Way. But the popularity of home farmed produce is strong and over half of you would like to see a Farmer’s market in the Village.

Some of you use the local sports facilities and amenities but interestingly 16% of households use a private sports club or health club more than other facilities.

Only 5% of villagers claim they attend St Mary’s Church each month. The Parish News easily wins as the most important source of information about Purley on Thames – nearly sixty per cent of you say that this is where you find out most of your information. But there is also high demand for a dedicated Purley on Thames web site providing up to date information on local issues, facilities and forthcoming events.

This is only the briefest of snap shots from the survey which has views about crime, transport, the environment and other important issues. Analysis of the questionnaires is being completed by a busy team led by Ben Viljoen and more facts and figures about what you want from Purley will be available soon. The aim is to publish the Village Plan in the late autumn.

Tim Whitaker

JANET FOSKETT SCHOOL OF DANCING

Classes are held at St Mary's Purley (Saturday) and Whitchurch Village Hall (Monday), for children aged from 2½ to 18. At present the senior school is at Purley (8 upwards) with the junior members at Whitchurch.

Due to the Tiny Tot children becoming pre primaries, I am planning to commence a new Tiny Tot class in the autumn. This will be for children aged 2½ to 4 years of age and will be held at Whitchurch on a Monday from 3.30 until 4.00. Should you be interested, or wish to watch the existing class at the end of term, then please do contact me.

PILATES

There are two classes that are held at St Mary's Church, Purley. The improver's class is from 1.30 until 2.30 on a Thursday with the beginner's preceding it at 12.20 until 1.20. The beginner's class have had a 'taster' session, but there are a few vacancies for next term. Also, if you have done Pilates before there are one or two vacancies in the 1.30 class. You may prefer a 'one to one' session which can be arranged in your own home. Should you prefer an evening class, there is one on a Monday evening at Whitchurch, which is for improvers.

Should you require any further details on any of the above then please contact the number below.

Janet Foskett
01635 863891

FRIENDS DIARY

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.



Wed 7 July

Pang Valley Cons. Vol. AGM

Rushall Manor Farm

Join the Pang Valley Conservation Volunteers for their AGM. John Bishop, a local farmer from Rushall Manor Farm will be giving a talk on 'The Difficulties in Farming Today' Meet at Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm* at 7:30 p.m.

- Thu 8 July Nightjars and Glow worms at dusk Bucklebury Common**
8:30 p.m. – 10 p.m.
 Join BHCG leader Tim Culley for a late evening walk looking at heathland restoration and some of the specialised wildlife associated with the habitat, including Nightjars and Glowworms. Stout footwear is necessary. Meet at Angel's Corner, by the Scout Hut on Bucklebury Common at 8.30 p.m. SU 550 688.
- Sun 11 July Meadow Management Ashampstead Common**
 Come and help Dick Greenaway clear invasive Ragwort from open areas in this beautiful woodland. Meet at Ashampstead Common car park Grid ref: SU 587 751 at 10am.
- Sun 11 July Pond Training day Rushall Manor Farm**
10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
 A biodiversity course aimed at local people who manage or would like to know more about ponds. The course covers pond ecology, species identification and management. To book a place contact the Project office on 0118 930 5336. Meet at Black Farm, Rushall Manor Farm* at 10am, please bring a packed lunch. Grid ref. SU 583 723.
- Tue 13 July Footpath Work**
 Improve access in the parish by helping to clear encroaching vegetation on its 45 miles of off-road rights of way – but not all of them! Meet at the Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm * at 10.00 am. Grid ref. SU 583 723.
- Thu 15 July Nightjars and Glow worms at dusk Bucklebury Common**
8:30 p.m. – 10 p.m.
 Join BHCG leader Tim Culley for a late evening walk looking at heathland restoration and some of the specialised wildlife associated with the habitat, including Nightjars and Glowworms. Stout footwear is necessary. Meet at Angel's Corner, by the Scout Hut on Bucklebury Common at 8.30 p.m. SU 550 688.
- Sun 18 July Down the Pang Bradfield**
 Come and enjoy a 4.5-mile circular walk along the Pang to Bradfield and back via ancient woods and a SSSI Chalk pit with walk leaders Dorcas Ward and Dick Greenaway. Bring a packed lunch, sorry, no dogs are allowed on this walk. The walk will start at Rushall Manor Farm (Grid ref: SU 584 722) at 11am. Numbers are limited so please contact the Project office to book a place. There is one modest hill and a couple of stiles on this walk.
- Tue 20 July Best Practice Grassland Management Day**
English Nature/ PKVCP (FWAG), Home Farm, Sulham Lane, Pangbourne
From 1:30 p.m.
 Demonstrating conservation designed equipment for farmers and landowners. Introduction by Richard Benyon
 On demonstration, the spray-free Ecopuller for wildlife friendly control of ragwort, thistles and docks.
 Please contact the Project Office for further details.

- Sun 1 August Pond Management Stanford Dingley**
 Help with our annual task to maintain Pangfield Pond and the surrounding habitat. This task includes grass cutting and clearing back vegetation to allow educational visits. Meet at Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm* at 10.00am or phone the Project office for details of meeting on site. Grid ref. SU 583 723.
- Tue 3 August Meadow Management Pangbourne**
 We will be clearing ragwort from Sulham Meadows SSSI, so that this important site can be grazed. Meet at Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm* at 10.00am or phone the Project office for details of meeting on site. Grid ref. SU 583 723.
- Tue 10 August Tools Maintenance & BBQ Englefield**
 All the hard work we put in through the year puts a strain on our tools! We will be working at our tool store to repair those broken handles and sharpen those worn blades. We will also be having a BBQ (please bring your own food) so why not join us to find out more about what we do? Meet at the Old Estate Office, Englefield Road, Theale from 10.00am onwards.
- Tue 24 August Footpath Work**
 Improve access in the parish by helping to clear encroaching vegetation on its 45 miles of off-road rights of way – but not all of them! Meet at the Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm * at 10.00 am. Grid ref. SU 583 723.
- 4/5 September Pond Restoration Malt House Farm, West Woodhay**
 Come and help restore the pond at Malt House farm using a new geotextile lining. Meet at Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm* at 10.00am or phone the Project office for details of meeting on site. Grid ref. SU 583 723.
- Sun 12 September Heathland Restoration Bucklebury Common**
 Come and help maintain the heathland at Bucklebury Common. 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 9714830
- Sun 12 September Just above the Bottom End Tidmarsh**
 Come and continue our exploration of the Lower Pang Valley. This 5-mile walk starts and finishes at Moor Copse car park. Water meadows, quiet lanes and ancient woods. Well-behaved dogs welcome. Start time 1pm. Please contact the Project office to book your place. Grid ref: SU 633 737
- Tue 14 September Glade Management Ashampstead Common**
 Come and maintain our three flower rich glades by removing cut herbage. Meet at Ashampstead Common Car Park Grid Ref: SU 587 751 at 10am.
- Sat 18/Sun 19 Sept Royal County of Berkshire Show Newbury**
 Come and visit our new and vastly improved stand in the Countryside Area at the Royal County of Berkshire Show. Our display is being designed in conjunction with the Barn Owl Conservation Network and Murray MacLean (grower of hedgerow trees and shrubs) and will demonstrate how all three organisations' work is linked to comprehensively improve the wildlife in the Pang & Kennet Valleys.

**Sat 18 September Meadow Management Hosehill LNR, Theale
10 a.m.**

The meadow cuttings need raking up to encourage more wildflowers at Hosehill. Come and help us in this late summer task, suitable for all ages and enjoyed by all. Meet at the entrance opposite the Fox & Hounds pub at 10am. Grid ref: SU650697

Tue 21 September Pond Restoration Pangbourne School, Pangbourne

Come and help restore the pond at Pangbourne School using a new geotextile lining. This will enable the pupils of the school to use this important educational resource once again. Meet at Black Barn, Rushall Manor Farm* at 10.00am or phone the Project office for details of meeting on site. Grid ref. SU 583 723.

Sun 26 September Meadow Management Riverside Meadow Turnpike

Help to rake up the cuttings from the recently established wildflower meadow in Turnpike. Set alongside the River Lambourn, the meadow is a valuable resource for the local community to enjoy. Meet outside the Riverside Community Centre at 10am. Grid ref: SU485678

Tue 28 September Meadow Management Leyfield Meadow

Spend the day cutting back invasive bracken to maintain a wildflower Meadow. Meet at the Black Barn Rushall Manor Farm* at 10am or phone the Project office for details of meeting on site. Grid ref. SU 583 723.

Tue 5 October Meadow Management Marsh Meadows Thatcham

The three hundred wildflower plugs that were planted by the Cubs will have finished flowering and seeding by the end of the summer. The meadow will then be cut and we will need some keen volunteers to join us in raking up the cuttings. Meet outside Alldays at 10am. Grid ref: SU525680.

Sun 3 October Clay Shoot Brockhurst School, Hermitage

The 'Friends' in association with Frobury Farm Sporting Club and Brockhurst & Marlston House schools will be holding a Clay shoot featuring, 3 stand 36 bird sporting lay-out, a pool shoot and a 'have a go' training stand. For further details and to register your interest please contact the Project office.

The tasks usually begin around 10 a.m. and finish by 4 p.m. 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.

*The Black Barn at Rushall Manor Farm is situated off Back Lane, between Stanford Dingley and Bradfield. Take the gravel track north off Back Lane to the west of Scratchface Lane. Grid ref. SU 583 723.

Pang and Kennet Valleys Countryside Projects (FWAG) 0118 930 5336

PURLEY PARISH NEWS

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I welcome all contributions to this magazine, particularly on local issues and events. Contributions can either be delivered in writing or 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.

Comments and opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the P.C.C. of St. Mary's Church, Purley on Thames – publishers of Purley Parish News – nor is any endorsement of the products and services of our advertisers implied by their inclusion.

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