

PURLEY PARISH NEWS

DECEMBER 2004

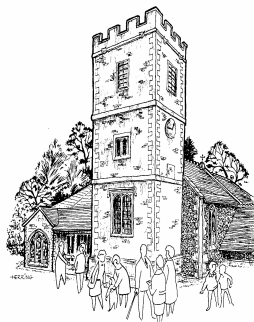
Aramaic - Edo bri'cho o rish il'shato brich'to!
Cantonese - Seng Dan Fai Lok, Sang Njan Fai Lok
Dutch - Vrolijk Kerstfeest en een Gelukkig Nieuwjaar!
Finnish - Hyvää Joulua or Hauskaa Joulua - Onnellista uutta vuotta
French - Joyeux Noël et Bonne Année!
German - Fröhliche Weihnachten und ein glückliches Neues Jahr!
Greek - Alla Christougenna Krestinomenos O Kenorios Chronos
Hebrew - Hanukkah Lesim'ha
Hindi - Happy Christmas
Italian - Buon Natale, e Felice Anno Nuovo
Japanese - Shinnen omedeto. Kurisumasu Omedeto
Mandarin - Kung Hsi Hsin Nien ping Chu Shen Tan
Ojibwe (Chippewa) - Niibaa' anami'egijigad @ Aabita Biboon
Polish - Wesołych Świąt i Szczęśliwego Nowego Roku.
Portuguese - Boas Festas e um feliz Ano Novo
Spanish - Feliz Navidad, y Próspero Año Nuevo
Swedish - God Jul och Gott Nytt Ar
Thai - Suksan Wan Christmas lae, Satonadee, Pee Mai
Turkish - Noeliniz Ve Yeni Yiliniz Kutlu Olsun
Urdu - Naya Saal Mubarak Ho

35P

For the Church & Community of
PURLEY ON THAMES

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

PURLEY ON THAMES



RECTOR

Rev. Roger B. Howell
The Rectory, 1 Westridge Avenue
Purley on Thames
Tel: 0118 941 7727
Email: rbh@bradean.fsnet.co.uk

CURATE

Rev. Jean Rothery
"Oaklea", Tidmarsh Road
Tidmarsh
Tel: 0118 984 3625

ORDAINED LOCAL MINISTER

Rev. Andrew Mackie
12 Church Mews
Purley on Thames
Tel: 0118 941 7170

CHURCHWARDENS

Sally Robertson
Tel: 0118 962 5978

Lorna Herring
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 LOCAL MINISTER



I would say that Christmas is getting earlier every year – except that over 20 years ago, the year I first arrived in Reading, I recall sweltering in a T-shirt in Broad Street, watching incredulously as Santa Claus made his way into a local department store.

Certainly, as I start writing this at the beginning of November, the Christmas trees already adorn the walls of the Manchester office of the company which employs me.

But I am just as bad. Almost every year, earlier than the previous year, I buy an Advent book and read it from cover to cover before the season starts. The excuse of staying one step ahead of the congregation is exactly that – an excuse – it doesn't happen many other times of the year!

This year I have been reading an interesting book which explores the Christmas story character by character as it unfolds, and attempts to relate their behaviour to the social norms of the day. It is a thought-provoking book. The author at times discounts as natural some events which I have always regarded as being extraordinary. At other times he brings out extraordinary aspects of events which had previously seemed to me to be commonplace.

Let me give you an example. Luke is generally regarded as a stickler for historical accuracy. He tells first the amazing story of Zechariah and Elizabeth. They were childless, although for years they had longed and prayed for a baby. Now getting on in years, Zechariah was a priest who was struck dumb because he expressed disbelief at the angel's news that his wife would have a son – John the Baptist.

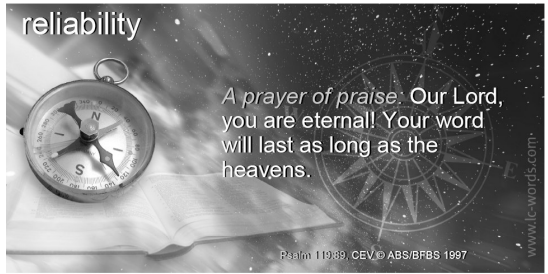
Elizabeth was Mary's cousin. When months later the angel visited Mary, Luke tells us that he delivered to Mary not one but two extraordinary bits of news – that she herself would become pregnant with Jesus and that Elizabeth was expecting.

And then Luke says that Mary hurried off to see Elizabeth. I'd always taken that at face value – maybe like hurrying off to Tilehurst station, as I seem to have been doing a lot recently. But this was no brisk walk that Luke was describing. This was a difficult journey of well over a hundred miles, through land where the Jews were not welcome, across passes renowned for thieves attacking travellers, a journey not to be made alone.

But Mary did make that journey alone, or at least without Joseph. A hundred miles at walking pace, either her own or perhaps that of a donkey. Several days of baking heat, nights of bitter cold, sleeping in strange surroundings. Not the most obvious, or the most sensible, way to spend the early days of a pregnancy.

She hurried off because she was determined to explore for herself the truth of what the angel had told her. And when she reached the house of

her cousin she discovered that it was indeed true, and the Bible tells how she expressed her joy in the words of what we now call the Magnificat. But it wasn't just Mary who was overjoyed. The Bible story tells us that the baby in Elizabeth's womb leapt for joy at the sound of her voice.



This Christmas you can explore the truth of the story without travelling as far as Mary did. Come and explore it with us at St. Mary's. If there is something you've always wondered about, take the opportunity to do something about it this year – we will be happy to try to help you as you seek an answer.

And if you find your answer, as I hope you will, and that answer is a joyful "Yes", the Bible tells us that you will not be the only one to celebrate. God himself will throw a party in heaven to celebrate with you – that's something else it says in the Bible. What a Christmas party that will be!

With best wishes,

Andrew

PARISH REGISTERS FUNERALS

11 Nov Michael John Cullen aged 72 years (cremation)



CAROL SINGING

Around Purley
Tuesday 21 December 2004
Everyone welcome to join in



From 6.30 p.m. meet in the car park at St. Mary's Church

Singing at:	St. Mary's Avenue	(~6.45 p.m.)
	Colyton Way	(~7.05 p.m.)
	Wintringham Way [West End]	(~7.30 p.m.)
	Brading Way	(~7.45 p.m.)
	Chestnut Grove	(~8.10 p.m.)
	Church Mews	(~8.25 p.m.)

Returning to St. Mary's Church for refreshments around 8.30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES



5 Dec	9.30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11.15 a.m.	Holy Communion
	6.00 p.m.	Holy Communion
12 Dec	9.30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11.15 a.m.	Holy Communion
19 Dec	10.30 a.m.	Family Communion
	6.00 p.m.	Carols by Candlelight
24 Dec	4.30 p.m.	Crib Service
Christmas Eve	11.30 p.m.	Midnight Communion
25 Dec	10.30 a.m.	Christmas Communion
Christmas Day		
26 Dec	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
2 Jan	10.30 a.m.	Holy Communion
	6.00 p.m.	Holy Communion

Come to church this Christmas – all are welcome!



A DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE WORK OF ST. MARY'S CHURCH



On Monday 3 January 2005 we begin the New Year with an opportunity to come to the church at some point during the day or evening to spend time in prayer for God's guidance and blessing on the work of St. Mary's in the local community and further afield. There will be three separate sessions, divided into half-hour slots. Come and go as you are able. Suggestions for prayer will be available.

9.00 a.m. to 12 noon

2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

7.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.

Further information from Roger Howell (941 7727)

MESSAGE FROM HOME FARM

I am afraid that the beginning of November is my least favourite time of the year. I don't mean to be a killjoy but fireworks have always seemed to me to be a complete waste of money. A few pretty flashes and another fiver gone up in flames. However that is not the main reason for my distaste. Fireworks and animals don't mix. Over the years we have had many incidents with cattle being upset but this year on the Sunday evening before bonfire night, I can remember thinking after an enormous barrage of explosions arose from Bucknells Meadow, that the calves whose pens are in the wooden building closest to the meadow must have been upset. Sadly the following morning we found a freshly weaned calf lying dead in its pen. Of course I can't say that the two incidents are connected, but...

Another problem that has reared its ugly head, or should I say their ugly heads, are mink. Have you noticed the absence of moorhens and ducklings on the river this year? Even cygnets have disappeared. Mink have been becoming a more familiar sight along the bank of the Kennet in recent years but their migration to our stretch of the Thames Valley is a major worry. When I say sight, it is more of a glimpse as they are fleet of foot, just as happy in the water as on land. They are capable of climbing trees, disappearing down small holes in the ground or bashing through the densest of undergrowth.

Last month two mink were caught on Home Farm. They were the size of a small cat, not dissimilar in appearance to a ferret, black with a small blaze of white underneath the chin, they can also be a shade of brown or occasionally silver. Controlling mink, the ultimate vermin is not easy. They are difficult to shoot even with a shotgun, which of course is not permitted on or near public footpaths, i.e. the towpath. Although mink can be trapped, many are 'trap shy' leaving only one successful way of controlling them.

There are 24 packs of mink hounds in the country of which the Valley Mink Hunt, being our local hunt, has played a major part in controlling the mink population in the Kennet and Thames Valley. Like all mink hunts they will respond to a call-out with regard to pest control and are successful on most outings. Even if they don't catch any mink, they are useful at locating them for control by other means.

The huntsmen and followers of the hunt are from all walks of life and have been an enormous boon to the environment agency in controlling a pest which is a direct threat to the countryside. I wonder if our fishermen (one in particular) realise what a service they do in maintaining the fish stock in our rivers. It is amazing how some like to bite the hand that feeds them. Not that I have ever followed a hunt or felt like doing so, but I do respect and acknowledge the right of those who wish to do so. My feelings are




exactly the same for fishing. I wonder if the gentleman I have already referred to realises that this sport will be the ignorant "anti's" next target?

Get off your soap-box Metcalfe... the point to make is that not only are the mink (and our MP – oh dear, there I go again) a threat to our countryside, but if they feel trapped can be very vicious, inflicting a nasty wound to a child or a pet.

No space for West Berks news this month.... That's good isn't it?!!

With Seasonal Greetings to you all...

Tim Metcalfe and family

	Denefield Business Academy @ Denefield School	Helping Purley on Thames to meet its Adult Education needs			
Course	Day and Time	Room	Start Date	End Date	Cost
Build Your Own Website (MS FrontPage)	Tuesdays 19.00 – 21.00	Room IT9	11.01.05 22.02.05	08.02.05 and 22.03.05	£35
MS Word Basic	Wednesdays 19.00 – 20.00	Room IT9	12.01.05 23.02.05	09.02.05 and 23.03.05	£20
Charts and Graphs in MS Word and Excel	Wednesdays 20.00 – 21.00	Room IT9	12.01.05 23.02.05	09.02.05 and 23.02.05	£30
MS Excel Basic	Thursdays 17.00 – 18.00	Room IT9	13.01.05 17.02.05	10.02.05 and 17.03.05	£20
To find out more and/or to book a place, please contact nikki@inschool.com or telephone 07963 973933. There will be more courses coming soon...					



A CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS

The League of Friends of Reading Hospitals will be holding their ever popular Christmas Concert of readings and music again at 7 p.m. on Sunday

12 December. Once again the event is being held in the stunning Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel at Pangbourne College. Readings will be given by friends of the Reading Hospitals and the music, for both choir and audience, will be led by the Pangbourne Choral Society under the direction of Darren Everhart. Baritone Julian Hubbard will join the choir in Vaughn Williams' Fantasia on Christmas Carols.

Tickets (£10) which include refreshments after the concert can be obtained from the League of Friend's offices at the Royal Berks Hospital, Craven Road, Reading RG1 5AN - 0118 987 8592.



A VIEW FROM THE GREEN

Finals Day at Pangbourne Bowls Club now looks and feels a long way away. I can vaguely remember the burnished leaves on the trees surrounding the Green and the feel of warm afternoon sunshine. In the morning the grass was very damp from the not so early dew. Allan Tucker did his best with a long swish to wipe most of it off the surface, but when we started at 10 o'clock it was still very damp and slow. Due to some fisticuffs outside of the Workingmen's Club in Pangbourne (no, I was not involved!) I had to walk the long way to the Green via the second railway bridge. Eileen had dropped me off in the village but the police wouldn't allow even pedestrians under the first bridge. By the time I'd got to the ground carrying my woods I was feeling very exhausted and not looking forward to 21 ends of bowls, which would last the best part of three hours.

In the event, the Open Pairs lasted three hours and ten minutes and the names of R. Bracey and B. Ayling now appear on the club's honours boards. It was a very tough game against that tenacious American Ralph Miller and his lead Tony Tibbitts. Eventually Rodney and I won by 4 shots in the last end. The cup, genuine silver and the engravers tell me it is worth about £1,500 but before there are any black thoughts entering the minds of the criminal fraternity (not that I can envisage any of them reading this literate paper) the scrap value of the cup is probably nearer £50! Nevertheless it is something that I'm inordinately proud of and is the first major trophy I've ever won at Pangbourne Bowls Club. I'm sorry that there had to be a Runners, for Ralph and Tony played some blindingly good bowls until the grass dried out then Rodney came into his own. It was a really memorable occasion.

The day finished with Alan Blacklock and Linda Tucker winning the Mixed Pairs, fairly comfortably, Blackers getting beaten by Dave Ball in the Men's Singles but then winning again in the Walter Greenford Trophy; this time against Linda. Other winners were Susan Batts, winning, but not easily, against the new Ladies Captain Doreen Miller. Another two Purley residents - Mickie Robinson won a hard fought battle for the Doreen Hamblin trophy and Frank Lewendon was a worthy victor of the Novices Cup. An ex-Purley man, Alan Clarke won the men's two woods competition.

Now we are indoors at Rivermead Bowls Club. Indoors bowling is quite different to the outside game but does require more skill and the lightest of deliveries when you bowl your wood, otherwise the wood will finish in the ditch with a resounding bang. Possibly some of you have seen the indoor matches on television. These men play bowls that are not of this world and we poor relations can only gasp and say, "I almost played a shot like that once!" Once, but not very often!

The Annual General Meeting is coming up shortly when I will be Secretary for one more year, hopefully after that we will have a volunteer to take over the post, Rodney Bracey has decided that two years in the hot seat as Captain is quite sufficient and Tony Voysey takes over. I do hope he will get a lot of backing from the members. Roy Rosekilly is carrying on as Chairman and Eileen as Social Secretary.

Well, that is about all the news from the Pangbourne Bowls Club for this year. I hope I'll be invited to contribute articles again next year. It has given me a great deal of pleasure writing about the events at Pangbourne, I hope some of the enjoyment has rubbed off on those of you who have been kind enough to read them and even, at times, compliment me on them!

Thanks to all and a very happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year to everybody.

Bill

P E AND J M WALTERS
PRODUCERS OF TRADITIONAL FARM FRESH
CHRISTMAS TURKEYS FOR OVER 30 YEARS



Our turkeys are naturally reared on a diet of home grown cereals and non-GM soya

Barn reared white turkeys

From £5.50/kg (£2.49 per lb) oven ready wt

Free range bronze turkeys

£7.78/kg (£3.52 per lb) oven ready wt

Phone today on 01635 578251 with your order for collection from the farm (recently improved access)

Bower Farm, Aldworth, Reading, Berks, RG8 9TR

LAST MONTH'S CROSSWORD

Across: 7 Locate, 8 Beulah, 9 Move, 10 Treasure, 11 Prophet, 13 Bible, 15 Sheep, 17 Earnest, 20 Creation, 21 Seal, 22 Forest, 23 Silver

Down: 1 Honour, 2 Wave, 3 Heathen, 4 Abner, 5 Question, 6 Barrel, 12 Pleiades, 14 Madness, 16 Harlot, 18 Stater, 19 Piety, 21 Sell



GET THE MESSAGE - 0870 741 5369

Just dial this number for a new Christian message each day.

PURLEY RISE POST OFFICE STORES

If you need cash, you can withdraw from the following. It's free, easy, convenient and secure.

Alliance and Leicester	With card and PIN or with cheque book and card
Barclays	
Lloyds	
Co-Op	
Smile	



Payment of cash or cheques can also be paid into any of the above, with a personalised paying in slip.

The new Post Office card account and some basic bank accounts can also be cashed. Details are available at the counter.

Telephone. British Gas, Thames Water and Council Tax bills can be paid at no extra charge. We can also supply you with T.V and fishing licenses.

Going on holiday? We sell travel insurance on request and foreign currency and travellers cheques can be ordered with 2 days notice. E111's are also available.

The current price for 1st and 2nd class stamps is 28p and 21p respectively.

CHRISTMAS GIFT IDEAS

Children's Bonus Bonds (sold in units of £25), Premium Bonds (minimum of £100). Special gift postal orders are on sale this year - £5, £10 and £20. Each one comes with the choice of card and an envelope.

Cut the cost of national and international calls with our range of Post Office phone cards, commencing at £5.

Flowers can be ordered at the counter. Please ask for details.

Argos Gift Postal Orders are available in £5, £10, £20 denominations.

E-Top-Ups and E-Vouchers are available at the Post Office counter

Come in and pick up a Christmas Gift Catalogue

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR INFORMATION

POST OFFICE OPENING HOURS

As normal, except:

Date	Opening Hours
Friday 24 December	09:00 – 16:00
Saturday 25 December	CLOSED
Sunday 26 December	CLOSED
Monday 27 December	CLOSED
Tuesday 28 December	CLOSED
Friday 31 December	09:00 – 16:00
Saturday 1 January	CLOSED
Sunday 2 January	CLOSED
Monday 3 January	CLOSED

Latest recommended posting dates

Outside Europe (except Canada, Japan and USA)	Monday 6 December
Eastern Europe, Canada, Japan and USA	Friday 10 December
Western Europe (including Cyprus, Greece, Iceland, Malta and Turkey)	Monday 13 December
Standard parcels [inland]	Wednesday 15 December
Second Class	Saturday 18 December
First Class	Tuesday 21 December
Inland Special Delivery	Wednesday 22 December

Latest order dates

	Christmas	New Year
Bureau de Change	Thursday 23 December	Thursday 30 December
	No commission charge, except on Sterling Travellers Cheques. Travel Insurance can be issued at the counter during time of purchase.	
Flower delivery from Post Office Flowers	Monday 20 December	
	If you are housebound and need a delivery, we will be happy to oblige. Just give us a ring.	

PENSIONS AND ALLOWANCES

Allowance Book			
Advance Payments		Post Office Card Account	
Date Payment Due	Payment Available on or After	Date Payment Due	Payment Credited
Sat 25 Dec	Sat 18 Dec	Sat 25 Dec	Fri 24 Dec
Mon 27 Dec	Mon 20 Dec	Mon 27 Dec	Fri 24 Dec
Tues 28 Dec	Tues 21 Dec	Tues 28 Dec	Fri 24 Dec
Sat 1 Jan	Thurs 30 Dec	Sat 1 Jan	Fri 31 Dec
Mon 3 Jan	Thurs 30 Dec	Mon 3 Jan	Fri 31 Dec

Thank you to all our customers for your continuous support.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year

Charlotte and Graeme Jenkins
0118 984 3230

VILLAGE PLAN LAUNCHED

As many of you will know, the Village Plan was launched at a crowded meeting in The Barn early in November. Guests included our MP, the prospective Conservative parliamentary candidate and the Chairman, Leader and Corporate Director of West Berkshire District Council. This was a clear demonstration of how seriously our Plan is being taken. Since then, we have had a very positive and constructive meeting with the Corporate Director to discuss how the Parish and District Councils can work together on its implementation.

The Plan outlines a range of aims and objectives over a broad spectrum. As it states, some of them are easy to achieve and others more difficult. Some – litter, policing, provisions for young people - are already being addressed. Others will require a longer-term approach in partnership with other authorities and agencies. We have already secured a seat at the table on the Eastern Area Vision Task Group to promote the Plan's proposals for major infrastructure developments.

One of the things we are working on is the development of a Village Design Statement, which we hope can be used to help control future developments in Purley. There is an outline of the VDS included in the Village Plan. This is not set in stone, but is a consultation document. We want to hear your views, whether you support the proposals in the outline or not, so please send them to me by email to the address below or by post to the Parish Office.

I recognise that the vast majority of respondents to the questionnaire would rather there were no more significant housing developments in Purley. This is, however, not a sustainable position. A simple statement that further major developments should not be permitted would be unrealistic and would simply be ignored. Our aim, therefore, must be to try and ensure that further development is integrated into an overall plan rather than piecemeal, contains the types of housing which residents believe the Village needs and includes the infrastructure improvements necessary to achieve sustainability.

Perhaps the most contentious issue raised in the outline VDS is the possible development of Kirton's Farm at some point in the future. I believe this may well be inevitable now that the settlement line behind Long Lane has been breached and mentioning it in the Village Plan does not make it any more or less likely. My concern is that, if and when this happens, we are not caught unawares, but have a plan in place. This should ensure that the site is not developed in a piecemeal fashion; that a suitable road system is included to relieve the pressure on Long Lane and open up a new bus route; that the housing and infrastructure needs of the community are taken into consideration; and that a substantial proportion of the land is earmarked for extending the recreation ground rather than being swamped with housing.

David Betts
Chairman, Purley on Thames Parish Council
Email: ppc.chair@ntlworld.com



 *The Spirit of*
Christmas

An evening of Carols, Christmas Music and Readings

Performances at:

Pangbourne Village Hall, Pangbourne ~ Friday 10 December 04

Purley Memorial Hall, Purley ~ Saturday 11 December 04

Both Performances will commence at 8 p.m.

Tickets cost £5 for Adults and £4 for Senior Citizens and Children

To obtain your tickets or for more details please contact
Peter Farrow, TVS Chairman on (0118) 941 3887

SCHOOL GOVERNORS WANTED

Have you ever thought about becoming a school governor? I certainly hadn't until I was asked by the Parish Council to represent it on the Board of Governors of Westwood Farm Junior School.

Frankly, I wasn't terribly keen on the idea. My own daughter completed her education years ago and had attended Long Lane and then Denefield. I knew nothing about Westwood Farm, which takes pupils from Purley, but is just over the Parish boundary in Tilehurst. Anyway, education wasn't one of my principal interests.

Now, however, I couldn't be more pleased that I agreed to take on the role. Westwood Farm is a delightful, well run little school with the added interest of housing a special unit for children with hearing disabilities. I am proud to be one of its governors and find the job both satisfying and rewarding.

School governors contribute to many matters in schools today – from the curriculum, finance and health and safety to recruitment and building projects. Skills that you have gained in your career can be used to support schools in your local area.

Westwood Farm currently has vacancies for Local Education Authority (LEA) appointed governors. If you would like to find out more about becoming a governor you can ring Westwood Farm on 0118 942 5182 or Governor Support at West Berkshire District Council on 01635 519739.

*David Betts
Deputy Chair of Governors, Westwood Farm Junior School*

PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

The Village Plan launch meeting held in the Barn on 2 November was well attended by nearly a hundred parishioners as well as the local Labour MP and the prospective Conservative candidate. There was also a group of senior representatives of West Berkshire including both the Chairman and Leader of the Council. The report, which was well received, was financed by a grant from the Countryside Agency together with contributions from West Berkshire, the Parish Council and local donations. The members of the steering group were congratulated on the conclusion of their work and thanked for the time and effort expended. The Chairman of the Parish Council has already met with West Berkshire to discuss how the recommendations in the report can be progressed. He will be reporting progress through the Parish News over the coming months. Copies of the Parish Plan have been distributed to all households in the civil parish but if anyone still requires a copy please visit the office to collect.

By the time this is published the meeting with the Police organised by the new Neighbourhood Action Group will have been held in the Barn on 23 November.

The outcome of this meeting should have been to assist the Police in setting priorities for actions locally. Posters were displayed and leaflets distributed where possible to encourage public participation.

I have been asked to remind you that it is the responsibility of householders to ensure that foliage from plants and trees on their property do not overhang any public footpaths or pavements. If the District Council have to take action, any costs are likely to be recharged.

A working party has been reviewing the small grants procedure operated by the Parish Council. New criteria have been agreed and will be issued with an updated application form. All previous applicants will have received these before the end of the year but if there is any other local group who wish to apply, please contact this office at once. Applications will need to be submitted before 31 January with a view to grants being awarded by 31 March 2005.

In accordance with past practice the clerk and the caretaker will be on leave over the Christmas/New Year period for two weeks commencing 20 December. Unless special arrangements have been made, the office and the Barn will also be closed during this time. The Council would like to take this opportunity of expressing seasonal greetings 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

£167.71 has been sent to the Children's Society as a "Happy Christmas" from the Purley box holders.

S Pryor
984 3589



PURLEY PATHFINDERS A WALKING GROUP FOR LADIES

As I write, the wind is whipping the leaves up into a frenzy. By the time we go on our next walk at the end of next week, I doubt there will be many leaves left on the trees. This ever-changing scenery adds variety to our walks, as each season brings its own unique pleasures. In order to enjoy the delights of the autumn time, our walks this month have been centred in and around woodland, and, being blessed with the wonderful beech woods of The Chilterns on our doorstep, our first walk took us into their heart. The drive, itself, was inspirational as we travelled beneath a glorious autumn canopy, and so, it was with anticipation that we arrived at Russell's Water Common. We strode out across the common along the edge of the wonderful Warburg Nature Reserve in which the densely wooded bank tumbled down into the valley below in a blaze of golds, yellows, oranges and russets. On we went into the woodland of Welgrove Wood, and then through fields tottering high above the treetops which formed a colourful collage beneath us. At Crocker End pretty cottages surrounded the village green, but we soon left civilisation behind once again as we enjoyed more of the lovely Chiltern countryside in all its autumn splendour. Sitting on the top of the hillside, The Five Horseshoes proved a lovely place to have lunch as, seated at the windows, we gained fabulous views down into the wooded valley.

During Remembrance Week it seemed apt to be walking in the footsteps of Laurence Binyon whose poem, 'For The Fallen', (They shall not grow old, as we that are left grow old), has become the core of Remembrance Day services. So, passing Westridge Farmhouse where Binyon lived, we took a path which led us into quiet woodland. Walking in the countryside was one of Binyon's favourite leisure pursuits, so no doubt he would have enjoyed the glory of these woods in autumn time, just as we did on this sunny November day. Fungi in abundance made their own little 'gardens' beneath the trees, and gnarled old tree trunks took on interesting personalities with their coverings of moss. As we passed Grimms' Ditch, a clearly visible historic landmark in this ancient area, we left the woodland momentarily, and enjoyed the surprising warmth from an autumn sun as we skirted the edge of a field. Then, back beneath trees, we scrunched and kicked the orange carpet beneath our feet to, eventually, arrive in Aldworth village alongside the Norman church. Inside we viewed the wonderful Aldworth Millennium tapestry, and the famous nine Aldworth Giants – stone effigies of the de la Beche family, dating from 1340. In the churchyard, where Binyon was buried in 1943, we found the slate memorial slab, sculpted with the flowers which he loved so much. Leaving the churchyard alongside the centuries-old yew tree, (reputed to have been used by King Alfred to make bows), we headed out to The Downs

These never fail to impress with their wide-open spaces beneath an even wider sky. Extensive views appeared on all sides, and we particularly enjoyed how the sunshine illuminated the valley below. Our walk ended with a good lunch in The Four Points.

We began our next walk in Upper Basildon. Country lanes led us to the splendid Ashampstead Woods. Where in the summer, foxgloves had risen in bold purple spikes from the fresh green understory. Now, on this autumn day, they were replaced with rounded, yet equally bold, heads of fungi rising from a patchwork of yellow and orange. Our route took us to Yattendon to pass fields of fine horses, then on to Quick's Green from where paths took us up and down through glorious woodland, back to Upper Basildon where we ended with lunch in The Red Lion.

The autumn has provided us with some wonderful walks, surrounded by rustic shades of colour, and the nostalgic smell of bonfire in the air. Now we look forward to another season as it vies for our attention. There will be the stark beauty of bare trees, outlined against a winter's sky, and the distinctive smell of a crisp winter's morning after frost. We will end our 'Year of the River Thames' by walking our own picturesque stretch at Purley, before indulging in our traditional shared Christmas lunch.

I hope you have enjoyed reading about our walks this year, which have concentrated on The River Thames. Apart from walking several miles locally along The Thames Path, we also went on some very special walks which took us to The Source of The Thames, and to Greenwich where the river joins the Sea. I look forward to reporting back about our walks in 2005, which will follow a theme of 'Wild Flower Walks'. Some special walks have been planned looking at areas full of wild crocuses, snowdrops, wild daffodils, fritillary, bluebells, poppies, and through meadows full of wild flowers associated with cornfields of days gone by. So, an exciting year ahead for Purley Pathfinders. If you would like to join us in 2005, please ring for a programme. We walk 4 to 6 miles on various weekday mornings and you will be made very welcome.

To all readers, especially to those who, unable to join us on walks in person, join us through the pages of the Parish Mag each month, we wish a very 'Happy Christmas'.

Nicki Woodward
984 2112

BOOK SALE

Dr Hofmeyr has only a few copies of his book left (see excerpts in last two magazine issues) and is offering them at the reduced price of £18.50, including postage. Contact Dr Hofmeyr at 11 Roebuck Rise, Tilehurst, RG31 6TP if you would like to purchase a copy.



PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

WINTER TALKS

Mr. Nigel Glover-Wright gave us a very interesting slide show and talk on plants, birds and animals in Tsavo West, Amboseli and Samburu on Wednesday, 17 November. We will not be meeting for a talk in December and January, but the A.G.M. of the Society will take place on 16 February 2005 commencing at **7.45 p.m. in Purley Memorial Hall.**

TRADING

The Shed is now closed and will re-open the first weekend in February 2005. Seed potato forms have been sent to everyone who ordered potatoes last year and should be returned to Bob Hawkins as soon as possible. If anyone else would like seed potatoes, please contact Bob for an order form or the Trading Shed when it re-opens. Birdseed may also be purchased from Alex Stott on 941 9186 (e-mail: vastott@aol.com) or Bob Hawkins on 982 2949 whilst the Shed is closed.

Finally I would like (on behalf of the Society) to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and best wishes for the New Year.

Marion Dabbs
942 2349

PROJECT PURLEY

The next meeting of Project Purley will be on 10 December at The Gatehouse.

The January meeting will be held at The Barn on the 21st of the month and will be an evening of "Memories of School Days".

On 15 October, George Fielder, Mapledurham Lock and Weir keeper ("Lockkeeper" for short) gave us an informative talk supported by slides of photographs and pictures from his magnificent collection of pictures of and about the River Thames taken and collected by him just before and since he was appointed Mapledurham Lockkeeper in 1975. The term "Lockkeeper" is of course something of a misnomer. The primary duty of the man living in the house beside the lock is that of "weir-keeper." He has a 24-hour responsibility for the maintenance of the water levels in the reach above the lock, which takes precedence over the insistent demands of passing craft.

George pointed out to us, with the illustrations, how the first weirs were constructed across the river by millers to further their own interests. The weirs would hold back the water and provide a head of water for their mills. The immediate effect of the weirs was to assist navigation, for they

ensured for a certain distance above them, there would be enough water to float a boat. But in thus overcoming one of the navigator's difficulties, the millers posed another problem and that was how to get the boats past the dam-like obstructions. The millers would not willingly agree to remove a section of the weir and so lose his head of water but the navigator had to get past the obstruction if he was to continue his journey. Fights between the millers and navigators ensued and fierce bargaining took place and eventually money changed hands before the boats were able to proceed through an opening in part of the weirs. These openings contained bucks or paddles, made of wood and were called Flash Locks or Flash Weirs and when removed, flushed or 'flushed' the boat through the opening going downstream and allowed the boat to be winched up, by the use of a winch placed on the land opposite the opening when travelling upstream. It was a very unsatisfactory situation and in 1751 The Thames Navigation Commissioners were appointed to manage the river and allow unrestricted navigation. They built the first pound locks and charged the barge-masters a fee of so much per ton per mile because most of the traffic on the river consisted of barges transporting goods. In 1840 the Great Western Railway Company competed with the barge-masters and the transportation of most goods was changed to the railway company and income from the tolls was considerably reduced and the locks and other works fell into a state of disrepair.

In 1857 the Thames Conservancy became responsible for the control and management of the river and carried out works and management as is near enough seen today. In 1974 the Thames Conservancy was absorbed into the Thames Water Authority to become a River, Water and Sewage authority and in 1989 the water and sewage part of the authority was sold off and the river was taken over by the National Rivers Authority and eventually the control and management was in 1996 transferred to the Environment Agency.

We were shown a wonderful selection of old photographs showing various locks and weirs and the commercial side of the river with the Thames sailing barges, and the Salter's Steamers and the pleasure side with pictures of the Victorian and Edwardian ladies in all their regalia enjoying themselves in punts and rowing boats and the enormous number of boats in the locks giving the lockkeepers a headache for apart from locking them through, they had to collect the tolls for each vessel.

George concluded by having a question and answer session for the members and guests attending, and inevitably the question of flooding at Purley was raised. He said that everything possible was done to get the water down to the sea as quickly as possible when heavy rain increased the height and flow of the river, but once the ground was saturated and the river was full and it continued to rain, there was nowhere else for the water to go other than to overflow on to the adjoining land.

Darrell Hicks

PURLEY W.I.

Some of our ladies visited the Reading Hexagon to listen to the ever popular Kate Adie; she had much to enlighten us with - in fact, a brilliant speaker.

Our speaker this month, Mr. Self, returned to give us an insight into being a TV or film extra, he also appears in adverts. He had many amusing tales to tell, especially about acting alongside animals, because they don't perform on cue as you can imagine! He mentioned the time when "they" were instructed to walk along a road but had to avoid the taped off areas. These areas were later super imposed with traffic islands. So you see, all is not what you think it is! Extras are also used for voice-overs and there can be well-dressed sophisticated ladies shouting obscenities off stage; sometimes an actress will scream with that chilling sound for those frightening horror movies. So you see everyone has their use and age doesn't matter either.

Our December meeting means it is time for our Christmas Party. Last year we enjoyed our get-together, the theme being the Circus. This time we thought we would go for the Wild West theme. This includes Cowboys and Indians and the Cavalry. So ladies, get your tomahawks and bows and arrows at the ready and be ready for action. Please remember to bring your canteen rig and pressie for the bran tub. If you would like to bring your husband, partner or friend, there will be a charge but they will be most welcome.

November competition winners were:

Flower table	1 st (joint) Shirley Lewis and Phyllis Hasemore
	2 nd Kath Hodge
Mini Guy Fawkes	1 st Sylvia Conquest
	2 nd Lesley Honor

The December Meeting (Christmas Party) will be held on Wednesday, 8 Decemberth at 7.30 p.m. at Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley. See you there.

Sylvia Conquest
941 1936

P.S. Hot Flushes and Mr.Darcy last month was written by yours truly and I hope you enjoyed my trip into fantasy!

Editor's note: Poor Sylvia seemed to get the raw end of my typos last month. Not only did I miss her name off the bottom of the article mentioned above but also I called the ladies of the W.I. fiends instead of friends! One of those unfortunate typing errors that results in a valid word with completely the wrong meaning! Sorry ladies! - *Matthew*

THE TALENT STOP

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY COURSES 2004

It's time to stop practising the hairbrush-in-front-of-the-mirror routine and make a REAL pop star of yourself!

Just as cries of "I'm bored..." on Day 1 of the school holidays ring out in houses across Berkshire, The Talent Stop is here to help. Throughout the Christmas season they are running a bunch of "Make a Pop Video" workshops including one in Tilehurst (28-29 Dec). The 2-day courses, run from 10 a.m. 'til 3 p.m. daily and are open for any 5 - 15 year olds who fancy themselves as a bit of a pop princess or action hero!

The course involves learning the art of filmmaking whilst acting, singing and dancing in your very own video and obviously makes a brilliantly unique Christmas gift. As a student, you need have NO previous experience, just lots of enthusiasm, a packed lunch and your favourite outfit to be captured on film.

All activities are performed as a group and there's no pressure to join in the bits you don't want to, so if you want to sing and dance but not act for example, we'll put you in the "singy" and "dancey" bits, if you just want to act we'll put you in the "acty" bits and so on, although most students will just love having a go at everything.

The Talent Stop Principal Avis Lilly says "...the emphasis of the course is on having fun as well as learning new skills, we make time for lots of games, the students make a heap of new friends and have a fab momento of 2-days extremely well spent."

The spending on the grown-ups part totals £55 for the whole 2-day experience and includes one FREE copy of the masterpiece on VHS or DVD (with extra copies as marvellous presies for Grandma, Granddad and Cousin Ron in Australia. also available.)

To register, visit www.thetalentstop.co.uk or call us on 0118 962 3379.

IF YOU KNOW ABOUT BEING A PARENT...



...and can volunteer a few hours each week to help a family, become part of Home-Start.

A volunteer preparation course is due to start in February.

Contact Home-Start Reading on 0118 942 9518

Registered Charity
No. 326148

THAMES VALLEY POLICE

The clocks have gone back, autumn is giving way to winter and many of us are beginning to slow down a little; it's harder to get up in the morning and the weather puts us off going outside as much. Unfortunately, this is not the case for criminals. They show just as much determination at this time of year as any other, in fact, the dark, in particular, works to their advantage. I really recommend that you nip into a DIY store and invest in some light timers to ensure your house looks occupied, even when you are out, and that you spend one weekend making sure the general security of your house and garden is up to scratch.

One group of people who won't be slowing down because of the change in season are the sector's community policing team (CPT). Not only do they have an excellent new vehicle, in the shape of a specially adapted Vauxhall Vivaro, which allows the team to spend much more time away from the station patrolling our communities, but two officers, PCs Rachael Mylum and Jayne Richards, have recently begun patrolling on bicycles. They have found this allows them to cover much more ground than foot patrolling. Add to this the fact that the CPT itself will be expanded in January with the addition of a further PC and you begin to see how things are constantly evolving and improving.

Policing this sector involves a lot of situations where plans and ideas need time to evolve and progress. This has certainly been the case in Burghfield during our work as part of the National Reassurance Policing Programme, and I think this will continue as we take the lessons we have learnt there to other areas of the Pangbourne sector.

At the end of September we held the first Neighbourhood Action Group meeting for representatives from Tilehurst, Purley and Pangbourne. It was very positive and we had a helpful discussion on the best way to find out which issues are concerning people the most. As a result it was decided that three public meetings would be held around the area to give residents a chance to give their views. The first of these was held in Purley on 23 November.

It is only by listening to residents in this way that organisations such as the police, parish and district councils and housing associations can begin to find solutions to those issues people are most concerned about. This is a key part of the process - all the agencies are committed to improving quality of life in the Pangbourne sector - but we have to be realistic about the resources available to us. We know we can't solve every problem, but together we can work hard to tackle the things which matter most to people in a prioritised and joined-up way.

Get involved in your community now - your opinion could really help shape the way things are done in your area.

Insp. Andy Talbot



SEASONS GREETINGS

As another year as Editor of Purley Parish News passes I would like to thank all the contributors that have sent in articles this year and wish them, our advertisers and readers (including several new ones gained since the Village Plan edition) a very Merry Christmas.

Purley Parish News

CIRCULATION: Les Jamieson
58a Wintringham Way,
Purley on Thames
Tel: 0118 941 2342

EDITOR: Matthew Slingsby
24 Skerritt Way, Purley on Thames, RG8 8DD
Tel: 0118 961 5585 Fax: 0118 961 5125
Email: purley.pariahnews@ntlworld.com

ADVERTISING: Liane Southam
27 Waterside Drive, Purley on Thames, RG8 8AQ
Tel: 0118 942 8243
Email: adverts@stmarythevirgin.fsnet.co.uk

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.

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	Next edition copy deadline	Next edition published
4 December 2004	12 December 2004	1 January 2005

Cover image © Kevin Brandon, CrossDaily.com (used under licence)

Other images © Lindisfarne Scriptorium and © Scripture Gift Mission

Purley Parish News is printed by Richfield Graphics Limited