

PURLEY PARISH NEWS

FEBRUARY 2005



FOR YOUR LOVE IS EVER BEFORE ME,
AND I WALK CONTINUALLY IN YOUR TRUTH

Psalms 26:3

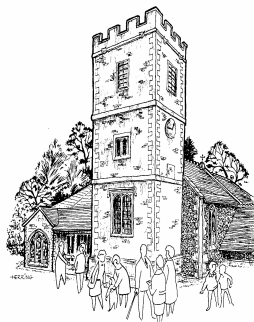
*Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

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

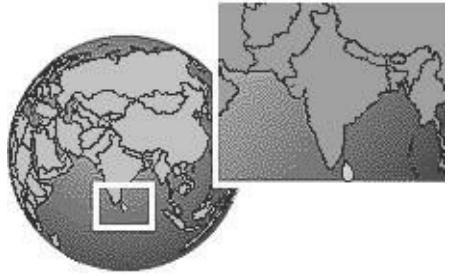
FROM THE RECTOR

Dear friends,

WHY? WHY? WHY?

This has been one of the most frequently asked questions since the dreadful events of Boxing Day when thousands of lives

were lost in the countries around the Indian Ocean following the earthquake and devastating tsunami. The questions have been spoken and unspoken. They have been addressed to family, friends and complete strangers. Very often they have been aimed at God – even if He has not been addressed directly.



Why does God allow this sort of thing to happen?

What kind of God is He that He punishes innocent people like this?

In one way or another we have each asked these or similar questions, and we have not found an answer. I am sure you will not be expecting a definitive answer here, and if you are, you will be disappointed for I don't know! This year sees the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz where over one million people perished. On a much larger scale of course, such horrific events raise the same range of questions that arise when a single life is lost through accident or criminal act.

Where is God when such things happen?

Is God there in the first place?

And if He is, surely He could prevent such horrible things?

Words attributed to Moses Maimonides, a twelfth century sage, I found helpful. I saw them in an article by Jonathan Sacks the Chief Rabbi.

"Natural disasters he said have no explanation other than that God, by placing us in a physical world, set life within the parameters of the physical. Planets are formed, tectonic plates shift, earthquakes occur and, sometimes, innocent people die. To wish it were otherwise is in essence to wish that we were not physical beings at all. Then we would not know pleasure, desire, achievement, freedom, virtue, creativity, vulnerability and love. We would be angels – God's computers programmed to sing His praise."

For some, loss of life on this scale will just confirm an already-held belief that there is no God. But for others, whilst the questions remain, there will be the conviction that God is there in the midst of the pain and suffering.

There are no quick answers to these questions, and any attempt to give one is unlikely to help anyone. I share the questions, but I also believe that God is there. He shares the suffering as He did when Jesus was crucified. The conviction of St. Paul is a comfort to me:

For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8 vv 38-39¹ (New Testament)

What do you think?

Roger Howell

PARISH REGISTERS FUNERALS

11 Jan 2005 Maurice James Day, aged 80 years (cremation)
17 Jan 2005 William George Alborough, aged 72 years
(burial at Beech Road Cemetery)



ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Parochial Church Meeting will be held in St. Mary's Church on Wednesday 20 April at 8 p.m.

At this meeting we shall elect the following:

- Two churchwardens for the coming year
- Two representatives for the Parochial Church Council
- Three representatives for the Bradfield Deanery Synod

The revision of the Church Electoral Roll will take place from Sunday 6 March until Sunday 3 April. Application forms will be available from the Rector or the Electoral Roll Officer (a.k.a. the Purley Parish News editor!).

Please also contact us if you are on the Electoral Roll but, for whatever reason, no longer wish to be!

¹ Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. All rights reserved throughout the world. Used by permission of International Bible Society.

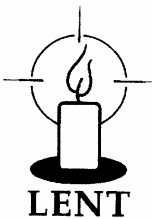
CHURCH SERVICES

| | | |
|--------|------------|--------------------------------------|
| 6 Feb | 9.30 a.m. | Family Worship |
| | 11.15 a.m. | Holy Communion |
| | 6.00 p.m. | Holy Communion (healing service) |
| 13 Feb | 9.30 a.m. | Family Worship |
| | 11.15 a.m. | Holy Communion |
| 20 Feb | 9.30 a.m. | Family Communion |
| | 11.15 a.m. | Morning Worship |
| | 6.00 p.m. | Evening Worship |
| 27 Feb | 9.30 a.m. | Family Worship with visiting speaker |
| | 11.15 a.m. | Holy Communion with visiting speaker |
| 6 Mar | 10.30 a.m. | Mothering Sunday Service |
| | 6.00 p.m. | Holy Communion |

SERVICES WITH PRAYER FOR HEALING

The ministry of the laying on of hands continues to be available at St. Mary's Church on a monthly basis, but if anyone would like prayer for any aspect of healing, at another time please contact the Rector (941 7727).

The next service will be on Sunday 6 February at 6 p.m.



LENT BEGINS ASH WEDNESDAY – 9 FEBRUARY

There will be a service of Holy Communion at St. Mary's at 10.30 a.m. and in the evening, at 8 p.m., we shall be joining with the other members of All Churches Together for a United Communion Service at St. Stephen's Church, Upper Basildon.

VISITING SPEAKER

On Sunday 27 February we shall be welcoming Edwin Bates at both morning services. Edwin leads the Church Army's Marylebone Project for Homeless Women. There will be a shared lunch in the church hall after the second service.

MOTHERING SUNDAY – 6 MARCH

There will be one morning service only on this Sunday, at 10.30 a.m.

The 6 p.m. service will be Holy Communion as usual.

Do you know anyone whose life has gone pear-shaped through marriage or relationship breakdown?

The Aquila Care Trust exists to help those caught up in these situations.

Tel. 01892 665524

Email: admin@aquilatrust.org

Website: www.aquilatrust.org

A SEASONAL TALE

A man that had just moved into the village walked into the pub and promptly ordered three beers. The bartender raised his eyebrows, but served the man three beers, which he drank quietly at a table, alone.

An hour later, the man had finished the three beers and ordered three more. This happened yet again. The next evening the man again ordered and drank three beers at a time, several times.

Soon the entire village was whispering about the "Man Who Orders Three Beers".

Finally, a week later, the bartender broached the subject on behalf of the village. "I don't mean to pry, but folks around here are wondering why you always order three beers?"

"It's odd, isn't it?" the man replied. "You see, I have two brothers, and one went to America, and the other to Australia. We promised each other that we would always order an extra two beers whenever we drank as a way of keeping up the family bond."

The bartender and the whole village were pleased with this answer, and soon the "Man Who Orders Three Beers" became a local celebrity and source of pride to the village, even to the extent that out-of-towners would come to watch him drink.

Then, one cold February day, the man came in and ordered only two beers. The bartender poured them with a heavy heart. This continued for the rest of the evening: he ordered only two beers. The word flew around the village. Prayers were offered for the soul of one of the brothers.

The next day, the bartender said to the man, "Folks around here, me first of all, want to offer condolences to you for the death of your brother. You know - the two beers and all..."

The man pondered this for a moment, and then replied, "You'll be happy to hear that my two brothers are alive and well. It's just that I, myself, have decided to give up drinking for Lent."

FIGHTING POVERTY

If, like me, you were disappointed with the Christmas Day edition of The Vicar of Dibley and found its humour vulgar and offensive, you may not have tuned in to the New Year's Day special. If this is the case, then you missed an excellent episode which carried a much more serious message.

"Poverty kills 30,000 people a day – almost the equivalent of the death toll in the Asian tsunami every week", reports the Door (The Oxford Diocese newspaper). The **MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY** campaign, the focus of the Vicar of Dibley special, is a unique UK alliance of charities, trade unions, campaigning groups and celebrities who are mobilising around key opportunities in 2005 to drive forward the struggle against poverty and injustice.

To find out more, visit their website: www.MAKEPOVERTYHISTORY.org

Matthew Slingsby

LUNCHPOT SPECIAL

WEDNESDAY 16 FEBRUARY FROM NOON TILL 1 P.M.

Everyone is welcome to come to lunch at St Mary's church, sharing good food and good company. Choose from Homemade Soup & Roll or a filled Jacket Potato. Follow this with a slice of Homemade Cake, all washed down with a hot or cold drink. Children may choose a child's portion of the above, or a Hot Dog. There will be toys set aside for the youngsters, so the adults can enjoy a nice chat over a cuppa.

Tickets (in advance only) are £4 per adult and £2 per child

Tickets are sure to be in demand, so purchase yours as soon as possible. See Nicki Woodward at the 9.30 a.m. Sunday Service, ring 984 2112, or call in to Cherry Acre.

Proceeds in aid of St Mary's Church.



Three candidates and only two churchwarden places made the annual church meeting a little fraught.

The horrors of global warming encouraged me to write this poem:

THROW AWAY SOCIETY

Wardrobes bursting with excessive clothes
All the trappings, the wrappings
And on it goes

Twenty pairs of shoes
One pair of feet

Others somewhere with nothing to eat

More toys around than hours to play
Hidden in cupboards
Or given away

Domestic machines thrown out by the score
With in-built obsolescence
They'll sell plenty more

Old three-piece suites out
The fashion is changing
Now all of our rooms need re-arranging

New curtains and carpets
Perhaps a new floor
We'll throw out the old
Council collect from the door

With our nimby mentality we won't be aware
That what we've thrown out
Is still polluting somewhere

Bigger cars are safer
Some selfishly say

Will we then all drive a juggernaut one day?

And what of new technology?
It hasn't saved even a leaf of a tree
The scourge of nature I'm ashamed to say
Is us – you and me
We'll create doomsday

Let's stop – push the pause button
Manufacture less
Make things that last and pass the time test

Then perhaps we'll all have more time for leisure
A richer life for all
And one with less pressure

Jenny Jones

WEST BERKS SCRABBLE® CLUB

On 15 January, The Barn in Beech Road was again the venue for the 5th West Berks Scrabble Tournament. 96 participants attended the event on a fine but overcast winter's day.

The players were split into 3 divisions, each of 32 players, according to ability. In the A division, Philip Nelkon from the London Scrabble League was triumphant, winning all 6 games. Similarly in division C, Mark Murray from the Exeter Club also won his 6 games. The B division was less clear-cut with the final outcome being decided by 'spread', which is the winning (or losing) margin and can be considered as similar to football's goal difference. Graham Bonham from the Aylesbury Club was the eventual winner.

A trophy was also presented to the best player from the three participating Berkshire Scrabble Clubs, irrespective of the division in which they played. That was won by Graham Harding of the East Berks Club. Both this trophy and the overall winner's trophy were kindly sponsored by Fujitsu Services.

Trophies were presented by Mrs June Law representing the Sue Ryder Home in Nettlebed.

All members of the West Berks Scrabble Club played some part in the day's proceedings, ensuring that the tournament went off without any hitches with competitors promising to come again next year and see some more of the local environment. With all administrative services being given free – including also a veritable banquet of home made cakes during the afternoon interval – the tournament was able to provide a donation of £610.10 to the Sue Ryder Home.

The organisers would like to publicly thank those people who donated their time, their services, and raffle prizes, without which the tournament would not have been the success it was. Mattel, Chambers, Marks & Spencer, John Lewis, Fujitsu Services and Astres Trophies of Tilehurst, all gave us their support.

In the last edition, mention was made of our annual Christmas competition although copy dates meant that I could not announce the winner. I am pleased to announce, that sweeping all before him was Alan Harmer, who won the event ahead of Norman Jackson.

The Club, which is Purley based and meets twice weekly, on Tuesday evenings and on Thursday afternoons, welcomes players of all standards, from beginners to experienced players. For further information call Ian or Elizabeth Burn on 0118 984 5045.

ARE YOU WORKING IN CHILDCARE, A PARENT, OR THINKING OF A CAREER IN CHILDCARE?

Staff & Committees: Do you want...

- Information on **FREE TRAINING** and support currently available?
- Help and advice on how to run your group or venue more effectively?
- Free and professional financial or funding help and advice?
- Advice on recruitment?

Parents: Do you want information on...

- **FREE COURSES** e.g. How your children learn, Parenting Skills and First Aid
- Childcare options and what to expect from pre-schools, out of school clubs and childminders?
- Activities for pre-school children in West Berkshire?
- A career in childcare?

At school or college – Do you want information on...

- Qualifications in childcare?
- Opportunities for working in childcare?
- Job vacancies?

This is the **FREE** event for you!

EARLY YEARS AND PLAYWORK TRAINING AND INFORMATION FAIR

9.30 – 11.30, 28 February at Newbury

United Reform Church, Cromwell Place, RG14 1AF (behind WH Smith on Northcroft Street)

12.30 – 14.30, 3 March at Calcot

Beansheaf Community Centre, Charrington Rd, Calcot, Reading RG31 7AW

Drop-in and meet your support network!

West Berks Early Years – Newbury College – Children’s Info. Service
PCT – Homestart – St John Ambulance – Mencap – Readibus
Dingley Family Play Therapy – IAG – Berkshire Community Foundation
Community Action West Berkshire – Pre-School Learning Alliance & more!

LAST MONTH'S CROSSWORD ANSWERS

ACROSS

7 PEOPLE, 8 HEAVEN, 9 SIDE, 10 GARLANDS, 11 BETROTH, 13 ENEMY, 15 THICK, 17 RAISINS, 20 COVENANT, 21 MASH, 23 PILATE, 24 SHEKEL

DOWN

1 LEHI, 2 APPEAR, 3 WEIGHTS, 4 CHORD, 5 CANAAN, 6 HERDSMAN, 12 ETHIOPIA, 14 BAPTISE, 16 CAESAR, 18 SAMUEL, 19 CALEB, 22 SEER

Matthew Slingsby
Editor

MESSAGE FROM HOME FARM

The national blood service was desperate for donors before Christmas, to the extent that I not only received two letters but also a phone call. An early Christmas present of a cold kept me from the local clinic at Tidmarsh Village hall on Christmas Eve, however I regained health in time to attend at Caversham on New Years Eve. I was accompanied by Vicky and Andrew, No. 3 son, who came of age in blood donating terms (and driving, beware!) in November. I gave him the preamble about staying on the couch for 10 minutes after the needle is removed and only drink a cold drink afterwards. Needless to say he thought I was only fussing until a young lady jumped up too fast and within seconds landed in an ungainly lump on the floor. Mind you I have done exactly the same. I first gave blood some 30 years ago when, as a member of a large group of agricultural students, we skipped afternoon lectures and attended a session in Bedford. The nurses were delighted to see so many of us pour into the hall, although I have often wondered whether the alcohol level of that blood was rather high.

We have now completed the ploughing save for 10 acres of maize stubble, which will take the slurry for the next month or two, and Ian is off to cut hedges for other local farmers. Reading the new *Cross Compliance Handbook* we are not allowed to cut or trim any hedgerows between 1 March and 31 July each year. There are exceptions listed but we would certainly not reckon to cut hedges during this period anyway as it would be far too damaging for nesting birds. An army of inspectors are now being employed by *The Rural Payment Agency* to make sure that we are obeying the new rules. The only requirement is that applicants must have a full driving licence. It is comforting to know that your inspector may know nothing about the practicalities of farming, but at least they will be able to drive to your farm!

On that note, I am looking forward to reading Phil Davies thesis on the *Single Farm Payment* and the *Cross Compliance Rules*, which is the reality of farming today. I am sure as an ICT expert working in "town" (and a full driving licence!) he would be rated very highly by D.E.F.R.A. By the way Phil, at the end of this month (January) I have a meeting arranged with our MP at Newbury. I promise not to attack him although I have every reason to believe he can look after himself!!

Tim Metcalfe



FREE TO A GOOD HOME

Working computer scanner, complete with OCR software and drivers for Windows98 (XP drivers not available).

Contact 0118 942 3087

CALOR VILLAGE OF THE YEAR 2005

The Community Council for Berkshire (CCB) is, once again, organising the Calor Village of the Year competition for Berkshire. This is open to villages with a population of under 5,000 throughout the county. It aims to recognise well-balanced and vibrant rural communities that are active in working together for the benefit of the village. For 2005, Defra (Dept. for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) is supporting the competition and its aim is to encourage the inclusion of all groups and individuals into the fabric of rural life.

The prize money has been increased and so there will be a first prize of £750, with £100 for the runner up and £100 for the best village in the IT category. The entry form has been simplified and shortened since last year. The closing date for entries is 20 May and judging will take place in the summer.

For further information and an entry form, contact Wendy Dacey, CCB, 55 Russell Street, Reading RG1 7XG, Tel: 0118 961 2000 or email: wendy.dacey@ccberks.org.uk

MAGAZINE NEWS

DISTRIBUTION

For many years, Les Jamieson has been the Distribution Manager for this magazine. Recently, his wife has been admitted to hospital and Les understandably needs to concentrate his time on caring for Gladys rather than ferrying magazines around! Therefore, Steve Corrigan has taken on this important role, with the assistance of John Dolbear. Steve is taking on the Distribution Manager role and John will be doing some of the other distribution tasks that Les has also handled. I would like to extend a warm welcome to both of them. If any delivery agents still have outstanding subscription money for 2004/5, Les has asked that this still be passed to him, so that he can complete the books before, potentially, passing this on to someone else for future years. Our thoughts and prayers are with Gladys and Les, at this difficult time.

COPY DEADLINES

On a number of occasions I have made reference to my late night magazine editing sessions. In an attempt to reduce these, and the ensuing typos, I am trying a slightly different approach to magazine deadlines this year. The general rule will be that copy (of any sort) will need to be with me a fortnight before the publication date – the penultimate Saturday of the preceding month – but feel free to send it earlier! A list of dates is included towards the back of this month's issue.

PURLEY PLAYERS

SOME DATES FOR 2005

Purley Players will be commemorating the 60th Anniversary of VE Day at the Barn on Saturday 14 May 2005. The event is going to be fairly informal and will take the form of a 1940s party, dance and supper. The cast will be dressed in costumes of the time and the audience will be invited to do the same. There will be sketches, songs and dancing to music such as Glenn Miller. More details will follow in the next issue of the Parish News.

AUTUMN SHOW

Plans are underway to celebrate the Bicentenary of Nelson in the autumn and details will be posted in the Parish News over the coming months.

COME AND TREAD THE BOARDS WITH US

If you have a yearning to be on stage or offstage then why not come and join us.

Please ring Jean Chudleigh on 984 2563 or Rita Denman on 984 4682 for more information or visit our website: www.purleyplayers.co.uk

ADVANCE NOTICE OF EVENTS

'SPRINGTIME IN THE GARDEN' AT CHERRY ACRE

Friday 1 April 11 a.m. till 2.30 p.m. & Sunday 3 April 1.30 p.m. till 4 p.m.
Wander around the garden in Purley Village to see the results of intensive spring bulb planting; fritillary in the meadow, and cowslips and primroses naturalised in the grass.

Activities for children

Tea & Cake

Plant Stall

New for this year – Thyme Time Trail and Rose Walkway

FAMILY FUN ON THE FARM

Sunday 17 April. Bring the family along for a guided ramble through Rushall Farm's bluebell woods. Visit the Lambing Sheds to see the newborn lambs. Enjoy a Tractor Trailer Ride around the farm. Relax with Soup, Hot Dogs, Cakes and Drinks with views over the lovely Pang Valley.

Tickets (in advance only) will be available soon.

Contact for both events – Nicki Woodward 984 2112

PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

A.G.M.



The 27th Annual General Meeting will be held in the Purley Memorial Hall on Wednesday, 16 February, 2005, commencing at 7.45 p.m. After the official business has been completed, Mr. David Penny will give a talk on "Changes in gardening in the last 50 years". Members are reminded that any nominations for election as an Officer or Committee Member (we have one vacancy for a Committee Member) must be made in writing to the Secretary, Mrs. P. Brightwell, 99 Devonshire Gardens, Tilehurst, RG31 6FF by 9 February 2005.

TALK

On Wednesday, 16 March, Mr. Victor Scott will give a talk on "Springtime in the Cape". This will take place in Purley Memorial Hall commencing at 8 p.m.

SPRING SHOW

This will take place in Purley Memorial Hall on Saturday, 2 April. Schedules will be available from the Trading Store from late February/early March.

COACH TRIP

We are hoping to organize a trip to R.H.S. Gardens, Wisley or the HDRA Organic gardens at Ryton, Warwickshire in July. A board will be circulated at the A.G.M. for members to put their names down if they are interested, but we will need at least 40 people to make a coach trip viable.

TRADING

The Trading Store will reopen at 10 a.m. on Saturday, 5 February and thereafter will be open each Saturday and Sunday between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m. until the last Sunday in October. Membership of the Society for 2005 is £1.50 and subscriptions can be renewed at the Trading Store when this reopens. If you have not already placed your seed potato order with Bob Hawkins you may hand it in at the Trading Store.

Marion Dabbs
942 2349

DISTRICT NOTES

Each year we have to approve what is called the tax base for the district. This finishes up as the number of band D equivalent houses in the district and is also calculated for each parish. From this the Council can calculate how much Council Tax to levy each year. The statistics are quite

interesting as they show the relative size and affluence of our local parishes.

| | Number of Houses | | | | | | | | Band D equiv |
|-----------------|------------------|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|----|--------------|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | |
| Purley | 27 | 30 | 171 | 332 | 422 | 424 | 148 | 7 | 1370 |
| Pangbourne | 15 | 49 | 158 | 404 | 231 | 137 | 180 | 70 | 1787 |
| Tilehurst | 270 | 180 | 1064 | 2504 | 898 | 493 | 227 | 12 | 5550 |
| Tidmarsh/Sulham | 4 | 0 | 6 | 27 | 32 | 27 | 82 | 16 | 262 |

A new system of delegation of Planning Applications came into effect in the New Year. This makes it very difficult for members to call applications in to be considered by committee, as we don't know the officer's recommendations until it is too late. Also the Eastern and Thatcham Committees have been merged as they will have a lot less business in future with most decisions being taken by officers.

Our local primary schools came out very well in the recently published Government tables; West Berkshire is in the top twenty of all Local Education Authorities across the country. Our Children's Services also had a good inspection.

The Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment for 2004 has moved the Council from the 'fair' to the 'good' category, but there are still several areas of concern. Luckily the overall score is heavily weighted in favour of Education so one could argue that the major reason for the improvement has come from the dedication and professionalism of our teachers and other school staff.

A scheme of season tickets for the Village Hall car park in Pangbourne has recently been approved. This is to help stimulate businesses in the village.

The Civil Contingencies Act comes in to force very shortly. As well as preparing to respond to possible emergencies, it places a duty on the Council to undertake risk analyses for any business deemed to pose a hazard and also to advice businesses on drawing up what are called Business Continuity Plans. These are to take precautions in case something happens to disrupt the business. The range of possibilities is huge, from fire and arson to fraud and accident. Quite often businesses do not realise the consequences for their employees and community if they fail for no fault of theirs. If anyone is running a business and wants more information we have a booklet available.

*John Chapman
West Berkshire Councillor*



PURLEY ON THAMES CC

PRE 2005 TRAINING FOR ALL AGES

Pre-season nets & training sessions for all ages (from 6 years to Adults) commence in January 2005 onwards at either Pangbourne College or Denefield School.

Starters (aged 6/7/8), Under 9's and Under 11's will all have sessions at Denefield School on Sunday afternoon/evenings starting on the 13 February.

Under 13's will have nets at Pangbourne College Sports Complex starting on Sunday 27 February between 5 and 7 p.m.

Under 15's, 17's and Adults Net sessions will commence at Pangbourne College Sports Complex on Sunday 30 January (7 to 9 p.m.).

All sessions will run through ready for the start of the cricket season and all Junior sessions will be Supervised and run by Qualified Coaches.

Purley on Thames CC is a progressive Club offering excellent facilities to play competitive and friendly cricket, come along and join us.

Newcomers of all ages welcome.

For further information please contact Martin Bishop, (Club Chairman) on 0118 945 3117, or look at the club website on

<http://purleyonthames.play-cricket.com>

PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL



The outcomes from the meeting with the Thames Valley Police in the Barn on 23 November were circulated to all members of the Neighbourhood Action Group for discussion at their meeting on 12 January. The major concerns covered traffic & speeding, anti-social behaviour and vandalism, drug dealing and lack of facilities for teenagers. One item that was relevant to a number of local parishes was the problems caused by youngsters on scooters and motorbikes and following an in-depth discussion, a strategy was devised to attempt to alleviate some of these problems over the next few months.

A further meeting of flood wardens was scheduled for 18 January when the new type 'sandbag' should have been demonstrated by West Berkshire Council and copies of the parish flood plan provided to the wardens. Other representatives of the Council will have attended the Eastern Area Forum at Beansheaf Community Centre on the same evening.

WBC has advised that the Cotswold Sports Centre in Tilehurst recently received a major face-lift, which has injected new life into this popular community facility. Information on membership packages can be obtained from them on 0118 941 4690.

Please note that the Whitchurch Road (B471) at Pangbourne will be closed from 10 p.m. on 22 February until 6 a.m. on 23 February to enable a safety inspection of the railway bridge to be carried out.

The Barn Management Committee is considering the appointment of a Manager to ease the administrative burden on the Caretaker and myself and have asked me to include the following in this article:

Purley on Thames Parish Council is seeking a suitable person to perform the role of Manager, Purley Barn. The position is a paid, part-time role, with hours not expected to exceed 20 per month. The Barn Manager will be responsible to the Council for the day to day running of the facility, liaising with users and managing the care and maintenance of the building and equipment. The role will suit a person who wishes to contribute to the community in a practical way, is well organised, and can work with local residents and organisations. The Parish Council wish to start this position as soon as possible; interested persons should contact Rick Jones or Penny Williams in the first instance for more information.

Rick Jones (0118 962 3793) email jonesrj1@ntlworld.com

Penny Williams (0118 941 1310) email penny@hpwilliams.demon.co.uk

Brian J. Smith
Clerk to Purley on Thames Parish Council

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

Mondays (not BH): 5.45 p.m. - 8.30 p.m.
Including an opportunity to meet
Councillors between 6 p.m. & 7 p.m.

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
E-mail: clerk@purleypc.wanadoo.co.uk

FOR THOSE THAT TAKE THINGS A BIT TOO SERIOUSLY

And Jesus said unto them, "*And whom do you say that I am?*" They replied, "You are the eschatological manifestation of the ground of our being, the ontological foundation of the context of our very selfhood revealed." And Jesus replied, "*What?*"

Matthew 16 vv15-17 (not!)

THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP

Is there anyone who would like to meet new friends, and spend a pleasant afternoon in friendly company? The Hand of Friendship is a group that meets every Tuesday afternoon from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. in St. Mary's Church Hall. We welcome new members, of any age, for a chat, tea and cakes; we have a small raffle. We look forward to seeing you soon.

*Babs Waring 942 8844
Gladys Morris 942 3610*

PROJECT PURLEY

The kind hospitality of Rick and Val Jones meant that this year's Christmas party could once again take place in the beautiful setting of The Gatehouse. So, on the chilly winter evening of Friday 10 December, thirty-five members gathered together to celebrate an event which is unique in the calendar of Project Purley's annual programme. Unique, not just because of the traditional and spiritual significance of the occasion, but also because it enables us to chat and socialise, and remind ourselves of the very many good friends we are lucky to have in and around the village of Purley on Thames.

All of those attending were served with a glass of mulled wine or fruit juice on arrival, and then after a brief introduction and welcome from our Chair, Jean Debney, it was down to the serious business of tucking into the superb buffet which included contributions from everyone present. It seemed that this year the catering was planned with military precision – everyone felt that they had had enough to eat, and at the end of the evening nothing was left over.

Conversation during the evening centred on the usual topics for this time of year, including the rigours of Christmas shopping, Nativity plays, plans for the holiday period and reminiscences about Christmases past. The beauty of the venue at The Gatehouse is that people can sit comfortably while they eat, drink and talk, or if they prefer, find enough space to circulate among other guests.

As usual, this year's party included a fun competition; this time entitled "Predicting Project Purley's Precocious Personalities" (and if that is not taking the P's I don't know what is). Members were asked to bring a photograph of themselves as a child for identification by other members. A total of thirty photographs were assembled – there is no suggestion that the five members who declined to produce a photograph were in fact children before photography was invented – and the winner of the competition was Marion Venners with thirteen correct identifications. In keeping with another Christmas tradition, that of Scrooge from 'A

Christmas Carol', no prize was offered, except for an invitation to help with the washing-up!

Towards eleven o'clock the buzz of conversation began to die down, then the guests collected hats, coats, gloves and scarves to prepare for their exit into a night which was no longer chilly but decidedly frosty. It had been a most successful and enjoyable party, filling everyone with the real spirit of Christmas.

The next meeting of Project Purley will be held in the Barn, off Beech Road, on 18 March. The Annual General Meeting will begin at 7.30 p.m., to be followed by a talk titled 'The Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England' to be given by Margaret Cubley.

David Downs.

P.S. Although not strictly speaking a Project Purley activity. Some committee members are helping to organise a performance by the Rain or Shine Theatre Company, in the Barn on Friday evening, 24 June 2005, a date which you might like to reserve in your diary. This professional theatre company will be putting on Shakespeare's comedy 'The Merry Wives of Windsor'. If you would like more information, please contact David Downs on 0118 942 4167.

INAUGURAL WALK

NEW PATHS AT ELING FARM, HAMPSTEAD NORREYS SUNDAY 20 MARCH 2005

Brian and Anna Goodenough of Eling Farm are hosting a joint event with Defra, The Friends of the Pang & Kennet Valleys, The Pang & Kennet Valleys Countryside Project and West Berkshire Council Countryside Department to open the new Access Paths they have created at Eling Farm as part of their Countryside Stewardship Plan.

The event will consist of a poster display at the farm followed at 1 p.m. by a 2½-mile walk around the paths and through Park Wood, led by Brian Goodenough and assisted by Dick Greenaway of the Friends of the Pang & Kennet Valleys.

Eling Farm is an Organic Farm, as well as being in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, Brian and Anna will be explaining the principles of organic farming and how their farm management aims to improve the habitat for wildlife.

West Berkshire Countryside Department will take the opportunity to launch the new **Parish Paths Leaflet for Hampstead Norreys.**

PURLEY W.I.

A WILD WEST CHRISTMAS

Zimmer frames and crutches were chucked out of the window, as we threw ourselves into a "Wild West" evening, this being our theme for this year's Christmas party. Participants ranged from cowboys/girls to the sheriff, Indians and saloon girls (they have to be there to keep the wandering men happy as they travel across the prairie).

The hall was decorated aptly, wigwams, totem poles and horse riding equipment. The saloon girls performed well and, with great difficulty, we waddled our way through some line dancing routines. Why is it when you should be on your right foot, you're on your left?

Thanks to Edna Bint, we sang our way through some hillbilly songs while she accompanied us on her accordion.

We trust our visitors from other groups enjoyed the evening; they certainly entered into the spirit of things, spurs and all! With much activity, the sausages, baked potatoes, beans, and apple pie and cream were most welcome. Must say bangers have never tasted so good!

I think it is true to say we have enjoyed a year of interest with varied speakers. Thanks to a hard working Committee for getting it all together and others for their support.

NEW YEAR FUN

At the January meeting we presented birthday posies for the December and January birthday girls – lots of them! Plans were made for a skittles evening and for the Spring Council Meeting on Thursday 31 March.

We then sat down to a finger food supper and the ritual Blind Auction (of unwanted Christmas presents!) which raised £105 for charity, and gave us a good deal of silly fun – some of the presents found good homes!

Our next meeting will be on 9 February, when we hope to be shown slides of the beautiful Emerald Isle. The competition is The Best of Irish (anything of Ireland).

Anyone who wants to come on the committee should start thinking about it! New members always welcome.

We meet the second Wednesday of each month at Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley. Meetings start at 7.30 p.m. Visitors are always welcome.

*Sylvia Conquest (December report) 941 1936
Sybil Pryor (January report)*



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Helping Purley on Thames to meet its
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| Course | Day and Time | Room | Start Date | End Date | Cost |
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| Information Technology Half-term courses | | | | | |
| IT Skills Refresher | Wednesday 10.00 – 16.00 | Room IT16 | 16.02.05 | 16.02.05 | £40 |
| Build your own web site | Wednesday 10.00 – 16.00 | Room IT9 | 16.02.05 | 16.02.05 | £40 |
| Information Technology Courses up to Easter | | | | | |
| Build The Purley Website (MS FrontPage) | Tuesdays 19.00 – 21.00 | Room IT9 | 22.02.05 | 22.03.05 | £35 |
| MS Word Basic | Wednesdays 19.00 – 20.00 | Room IT9 | 23.02.05 | 23.03.05 | £20 |
| Charts and Graphs in MS Word and Excel | Wednesdays 20.00 – 21.00 | Room IT9 | 23.02.05 | 23.02.05 | £30 |
| MS Excel Basic | Thursdays 17.00 – 18.00 | Room IT9 | 17.02.05 | 17.03.05 | £20 |
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PURLEY PATHFINDERS A WALKING GROUP FOR LADIES



Our *Year of the Thames*, 2004, finished with a very pleasant walk along our own stretch of this lovely river. This was a fitting way to end the year in which we had walked at The Source, passed through the Thames Barrier to 'The Sea', and walked many miles along parts of the Thames Path in between. We felt lucky to have all this natural beauty on our doorstep, and on the way we watched with interest as a steamer was filmed as part of a documentary on Einstein, this

being the fiftieth year since his death. The walk set us up nicely for the shared Christmas lunch which we enjoyed in festive mood at St Mary's. Afterwards we watched a video made during some of our Thameside walks. With laughter, oohs and aahs, happy walks shared as a group were remembered with delight, especially the two mentioned above, plus our other 'Specials' to Cliveden and Hampton Court.

The New Year heralds the start of a new theme, with 2005 set to become the *Year of the Wild Flower*. The walks programme has been put together to include areas in which we will find some very special wild flowers, as well as the more common ones. With more and more areas being lost to the 'concrete jungle', every sighting is a special joy.

Our first walk back took the form of a New Year Celebration walk. On a lovely sunny January morning, fifty-two of us set off in cheerful mood, firstly to explore Arthur Newbery Park. This lovely open space, dotted with some fine trees flaunting their skeletal shapes, gave us excellent views across to the Chilterns. Our path led us on to McKilroy Park to take a pleasant wooded path. Suddenly this opened up into grassland from where we enjoyed a stunning view along the Thames towards Caversham. This unexpected view never fails to prompt a gasp of surprise from anyone witnessing it for the first time. We stood for quite a while to take in the scene, and to relish the warmth on our faces from the sun. We ended our walk with an excellent celebratory lunch at The Tylers Rest.

Our second walk was equally well supported as we left Theale village via hedged paths which took us to the golf course. From here we could see the folly at Sulham, the church tower of Holy Trinity, Theale, and the spire of St Mark's, Englefield. The former will be visited next week,



but the latter two were on our present route. Through the quiet hamlet of North Street we made our way to Englefield – a village little changed over the years. One small change, however, was in our favour – the conversion of the Barn at the Post Office Stores into a tea-room! Here our pre-ordered coffee and homemade cake awaited us, which went down very well on this blustery morning! Refreshed, we continued along The Street to the impressive flint-faced Parish Church. Sadly, the doors have to be locked these days, but Lord Binyon let us in and gave us a guided tour of this historic church. We were especially interested to see the Saxon font, discarded after the Victorian font was installed. Lord Binyon explained that permission has recently been given for the Saxon one to be reinstalled. After our informative tour we walked down the drive of Englefield House to pass beneath the fine Gatehouse archway. Back at Theale village, we walked through the arch at the base of its church tower, before a stroll down the High Street revealed some of its history within its architecture and the V.R. post box set in a brick and flint wall.

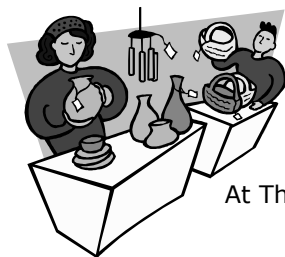
As the earth reveals more of its buried treasures over the coming weeks, we look forward to welcoming the early wild flowers. Our first Social event will be a visit to Welford Park where we will walk in the grounds amongst thousands of snowdrops – one of the first flowers to brave the last of the winter's chill. Our exciting 'Year of the Wild Flower' starts here! Watch this space.

Nicki Woodward
984 2112



1st Purley and Pangbourne Scout Group

Support our Scout Group's International Project which is raising funds to support projects and Scouts and their families in Uganda and other parts of Africa and...



Come to our **Table Top Sale** Saturday 26 February

At The Barn, Goosecroft Lane Recreation Ground
(off Beech Road, Purley on Thames)

2.30 – 4.30 pm

Refreshments available

If you would like to book a Table (cost £10.00):
Please contact Suzanne Stout on 0118 984 1246.

COMMUNITY POLICING UPDATE

I would like to extend my best wishes to you all for the New Year, and hope you had an enjoyable Christmas.

After the festive season, most homes have some extra contents in the form of carefully chosen gifts. If you are the proud owner of a brand-new mobile phone, iPod®, DVD player, or any of the latest electronic gadgets, bear in mind that these are the favourite targets of burglars.

Please make sure you keep such valuable items out of sight, and remember to check that your home is secure before you go out. I recommend that you mark your property with a postcode or house name: this is a deterrent to thieves and helps us to identify the rightful owner if you are unfortunate enough to be a victim of burglary.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

On a more positive note, we've had some very helpful input from residents who attended the recent public meetings in Purley and Tilehurst. They raised specific issues of concern in their local areas, most of which related to anti-social behaviour, vandalism, speeding and parking problems. We will be holding a third public meeting in Pangbourne 29 January and I hope that many people will come along and tell us their views.

Once local issues have been identified, they will be put before the Neighbourhood Action Group, whose members will decide on the priorities and then work in partnership to develop long-term solutions. This approach has been very successful in Burghfield, as part of the National Reassurance Policing Programme.

Our own Neighbourhood Action Group covers the parishes of Tilehurst, Purley, Pangbourne, Basildon, Tidmarsh and Sulham. Its members are drawn from various local organisations, including the community policing team, parish councils, housing associations, schools, youth groups and residents' associations.

NEW SERGEANT

I'm pleased to welcome a new addition to the Pangbourne and District community policing team. Sgt Barry Walker joined us on 17 January, but some of you may already know him. Barry has been working as a reactive shift sergeant in Pangbourne, in other words, he was leading one of the teams that respond to 999 calls.

Community policing requires a different approach, notably problem-solving in partnership with local residents, and I know Barry is looking forward to working more closely with people in his patch.

Barry takes over from PC Ian Henderson, who has been acting sergeant for the past 18 months or so. Ian has done a fantastic job in this role,

particularly in relation to dispersal orders, for which he did most of the work. Luckily, he will be staying with us as a valued member of the community policing team.

DISPERSAL ORDERS

Pangbourne and District was the first area of Thames Valley Police to introduce dispersal orders, and they have had a marked impact on anti-social behaviour. Since the orders came into effect on 1 June 2004, there has been a big reduction in problems caused by youths congregating in Overdown Road and Knowsley Road in Tilehurst. Residents and shopkeepers welcomed the extension of the dispersal orders for a further six months from 1 December.

Providing vital back-up to the team is the new CCTV van, which many of you will have noticed patrolling the area. This specially adapted vehicle contains computers, CCTV equipment and a holding area for prisoners. It enables our officers to get spend more time fighting crime and anti-social behaviour, and allows instant evidence-gathering at the scene.

As our resources increase, so crime continues to fall across Pangbourne and District police area. In the Tilehurst sector, for example, crime fell by 30 per cent between April and November 2004, compared with the same period in 2003.

As someone with a long-standing commitment to community policing, I am very encouraged by the way things are going. Thames Valley Police is in the midst of a major reorganisation that will put a greater emphasis on neighbourhood policing and on working more closely with the communities we serve.

In my next update, I'll be able to tell you more about how this reorganisation will affect policing in your community.

Inspector Andy Talbot

£5,000 RAISED FOR CHARITY

Purley Sports & Social Club is delighted to have raised a further £ 5,000 for Charity during 2004, bringing the total the Club has donated to Charity close to £40,000. A big thank-you to all our members, and others throughout the community, who helped achieve this figure during the various fundraising activities. This amount will be split equally between "The Purley Park Trust" and "DebRA".

The Club's chosen Charities for 2005 are "The Purley C of E Infants School" and "Speakability", a charity assisting in rebuilding communication following a stroke. We hope that we have your continued support and can once again achieve our target of £5,000.

WAR REQUIEM COMES TO PANGBOURNE

On Saturday & Sunday 5/6 March at 8 p.m. in the stunning, and most appropriate, Falkland Islands Memorial Chapel, the Pangbourne Choral Society will be presenting a semi-staged performance of Britten's War Requiem to commemorate the 60th anniversary this year of the ending of WW II.

The War Requiem was commissioned to celebrate the consecration of St Michael's Cathedral in Coventry in May 1962. Britten was a lifelong pacifist and the War Requiem is about the brutality and futility of war, along with the senseless suffering and monstrous death and destruction that it brings. As well as the normal Requiem text, the War Requiem includes many of the World War I poems. The fact that it will be 'semi-staged' will give some extra interest to the event.

The Pangbourne Choral Society will be joined by the Pangbourne College Choir, the Philomel orchestra and international soloists Elizabeth Collier, Young-Hoon Heo & Julian Hubbard, all under the baton of Darren Everhart & artistic direction of Kim Begley, who writes:

Having performed this piece many times I have long nurtured the idea of staging Britten's War Requiem. The almost operatic nature of the music, together with Wilfred Owen's haunting poetry, conjure up strong visual and dramatic imagery.

Traditional presentations of concert oratorio works still have their place however modern media and film techniques have developed our expectations of entertainment and performance.

The Falklands Memorial Chapel at Pangbourne is an exciting space which will suit our ideas for the War Requiem. The 130 strong Pangbourne Choral Society under the baton of Darren Everhart will be acting as well as singing in the manner of a Greek chorus. Evening dress will be replaced by costume. Masks will be used by some and the music partially memorised.

Students from Pangbourne College will swell the choir's ranks and the Art and Drama departments have made the subject matter of the work an integral part of their curriculum.

The pity of war, as Wilfred Owen puts it, is the inspiration for this project, as relevant today as when it was written. All ages are involved and the audience will also find themselves inextricably linked to the performers.

This is the first time this moving and powerful work has been staged – an exciting first for all.

Tickets – (£10, U-18s £2) from Premier Pets, Pangbourne or PCS Tickets, 13 Shooters Hill, Pangbourne, RG8 7DZ.

pcs@musician.org

www.pangbournechoralsociety.fsnet.co.uk

Purley Parish News – Copy Deadlines 2005

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|--------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|
| March | 19 February | September | 20 August |
| April | 19 March | October | 17 September |
| May | 23 April | November | 22 October |
| June | 21 May | December | 19 November |
| July | 18 June | January 2006 | 10 December |

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. If specially preparing content, please set your page size to A5.

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