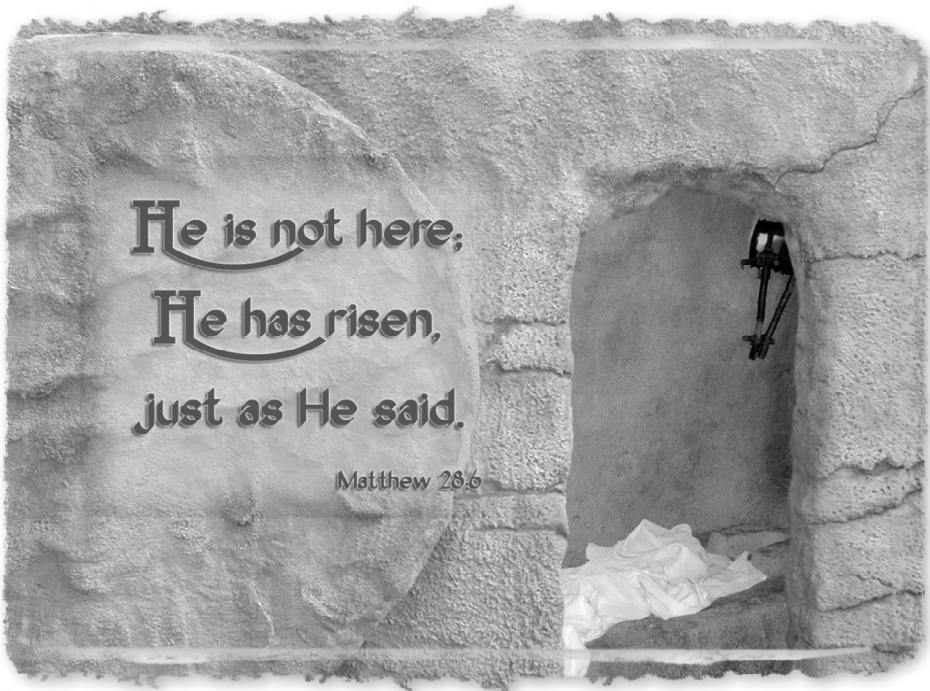


PURLEY PARISH NEWS

MARCH 2005

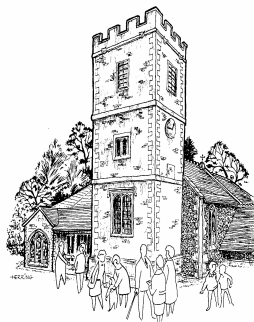


35P

For the Church & Community of
PURLEY ON THAMES

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

PURLEY ON THAMES



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CHURCHWARDENS

Sally Robertson
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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

DIFFERENT DATE SAME MESSAGE!

Dear friends

The date of Easter can fall at any point between late March and almost the end of April. This year it is very early – Sunday 27 March. Regardless of the date, its message is the same, and it is to do with something which is of great relevance to everyone. We all look more or less the same, but in fact, we are very different. We have a variety of preferences and interests. But whatever is different about us, what Easter stands for touches a subject that none of us can avoid. It concerns death and its defeat through the resurrection of Jesus Christ!



There is no argument about the fact of death. We all know it happens. From time to time, it comes very close to us, in the death of family members and friends. We attend funerals in a church or at a crematorium; we feel the sadness of parting, and the loneliness of getting through each day and trying to rebuild our lives. What happens at a funeral seems to be so final – the body is buried or burned, so how can there be anything after death?

The Christian funeral service speaks of a *sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life*. Are you sure? Do you have that certainty? These are not just nice words or mere wishful thinking. They have a solid foundation – the victory of Jesus over death on the third day after the crucifixion. But just how solid is that? Isn't it just a nice way of rounding off the story of Jesus? Many people don't believe He rose from the dead, and many others would like to believe it, but find it hard.

Belief in life after death rests on the resurrection – if that did not happen, the foundation is weak, crumbling and unsafe. But if it did take place, those who acknowledge Christ as the Son of God have the guarantee that they too will pass safely through death just as Jesus did. A fair approach to this issue is to look at the event from which the belief springs. On the basis of the New Testament account, is it reasonable to say Jesus rose from the dead? What other explanations could there be for the discovery of the empty tomb?

It is not a logical approach to dismiss it all out of hand as being utterly impossible. Neither is it a sensible approach to assume that everyone – regardless of belief – will inherit God's promise. One of the saddest things in all this is that most people have never thought seriously, about what happened to Jesus!

I wish you all a happy Easter, but not the short-lived happiness that comes from chocolate eggs, or even family get-togethers; I wish you the joy that springs from knowing that death is not the end. *Roger Howell*

PARISH REGISTERS

FUNERAL

18 Feb 2005 Charles Tomas Peppiatt, aged 86 years (cremation)



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!

THANK YOU

To the kind people who cleared a load of litter from the church car park and churchyard recently, may I say a big thank you. I know much of it blows along St. Mary's Avenue and gets caught in the Marina fence, but there are also a lot of paper and plastic bottles thrown on the ground in this area. This is not accidental and it is not because there are no facilities for depositing litter. In fact, there are four bins within a few yards of the Lych-gate!

Roger Howell (Rector)

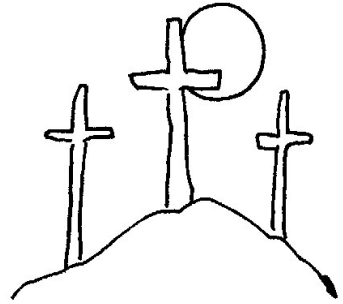
WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

This year the service will be held at St Bernadette's Church, Horseshoe Road, Pangbourne at 2.30 p.m. on Friday 4 March.

The theme will be "The Women of POLAND".

CHURCH SERVICES

6 Mar	10.30 a.m.	Mothering Sunday Service
	6.00 p.m.	Holy Communion
13 Mar	9.30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11.15 a.m.	Holy Communion
20 Mar Palm Sunday	9.30 a.m.	Family Communion
	11.15 a.m.	Morning Worship
	6.00 p.m.	Evening Worship
24 Mar Maundy Thursday	7.30 p.m.	A remembrance of the Last Supper This will be a communion service in the context of a meal. We need to know how many are coming, so please book your place by contacting Jean Rothery (984 3625)
25 Mar Good Friday	10.00 a.m.	Procession of Witness This starts from St. Mary's Church, covering some roads on the River Estate
	2.00 p.m.	The Last Hour A quiet service of meditation on the Cross
	4.00 p.m.	Children's Workshop
27 Mar Easter Sunday	10.30 a.m.	Easter Communion
	6.00 p.m.	Easter Evening Praise
3 Apr	9.30 a.m.	Family Worship
	11.15 a.m.	Holy Communion
	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 13 March, at 11.15 a.m.

GLADYS JAMIESON

It was with sadness that I received the news that Gladys Jamieson, wife of our long-standing distribution manager Les, died on 14 February; Gladys was being cared for at the Duchess of Kent House. A service was held at Reading Crematorium on Thursday 24 February 2005. On behalf of the entire Purley Parish News team, I offer our condolences to Les and his family: our prayers are with them during this time of grieving.

Matthew Slingsby
Editor



letters
page

I answered the ring of my front door bell on Wednesday at about 5 p.m. to be greeted with a tirade of abuse from a young lad sporting a large kit bag and a menacing stare. He was, of course, on a "work creation scheme" selling the ubiquitous dusters, pegs and other items that you don't need to buy.

He ranted on about how no one ever buys anything and how up our own a...s we all are. I declined his offer to buy his pegs and shut the door, as it was not possible to engage in any kind of normal conversation with him.

He then moved on to my next-door neighbour and treated her to the same string of abuse. As he worked his way around our close, he came to the house of an elderly lady who lives alone. As she opened her door, he immediately threatened her and called her a "stupid old bag". This lady is in poor health and was so upset and traumatised by this that she had to phone her sister, who is also elderly, to come and stay the night.

I phoned the Police non-emergency line (0845 8 505 505), and had the details taken by a very supportive responder. She warned that often these "lads" are simply casing the premises and she advised me to report any others who knock on the door. She also wanted to hear from others who are troubled with such callers.

Just before Christmas, we had a visit from another young man. I didn't engage with him either and the next thing my neighbour came round to report he had found this lad in my garage and had sent him packing.

I wonder if any of your readers are also heartily sick of this kind of doorstep selling and would be happy to report any such visits to the Police in future as this helps them to gather local knowledge. They did promise to send out a patrol car; I wonder if they caught him?

*Yours sincerely
Jane Bramah*

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*

PURLEY PRE-SCHOOL'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

At the end of the summer term Purley Pre-school will have provided 30 years of quality care and education for the children of our community. To celebrate this important achievement, and to ensure that Purley Pre-school will be able to serve the community well into the future, the Parents Committee will be sponsoring several events and fundraisers. Mark your calendar on Sunday morning 13 March for a fantastic Table Top Sale at the Memorial Hall. The finale will be a family fun day on Sunday 19 June at the Memorial Hall.

FRIENDS OF PURLEY PARK

Colin Baker, of Doctor Who fame, has agreed to be the patron for the newly formed "Friends of Purley Park". Our local residential home, which provides "a home for life" for adults with learning difficulties, has undergone large changes over the past year. Disposing of the main house, Purley Park, for residential development, has allowed for the construction of purpose-built, smaller, eight-bedroom homes within the grounds.

All those that have seen them, and those working in them, agree that this has improved the life-style provided for the residents. More importantly, the residents have settled in well and they like their more homely surroundings, which are complemented by a clubhouse for their social gatherings.

The newly founded "Friends of Purley" replaces the old "League of Friends" that for many years has provided support to Purley Park Trust. The first aim of the "Friends of Purley" will be to raise funds to build a hydrotherapy and sensory room, to give extra stimulus to our residents. Any assistance towards this would be gratefully received.



Some residents are well known within the community and over the years, in turn, the community has provided great moral and financial support for the home, for which we are continually grateful.

Pictured with Colin Baker are Colin Martin and Robbie Dore (an avid Doctor Who fan), at the party to celebrate the formation of the new fund raising committee.

Our residents are very special and deserve the best care that can possibly be provided. They are a credit to the community within which they live.

MESSAGE FROM HOME FARM

A phone call was all it took. The trouble is that I am a big softy at heart and if we didn't find her a home then... The following morning Josephine arrived with her family of seven and she was ushered into a hastily vacated calf-box. Now in quarantine, she will be revealed to all in due course. Have you guessed yet? Well Josephine, a *Gloucester Old Spot* sow – one of the rare breeds kept at Beale Park, which drew the short straw in the recent policy change – has now taken up residence at Home Farm.

Last week we were visited by a group of sixth form geography students. Vicky usually entertains the school parties but draws a line at being bombarded with questions on government farming policies and left the dubious pleasure to me. On spotting Josephine, they took great delight in pointing out a prime example of diversification; needless to say, they went away with their teacher explaining the term *loss leader*!

We are hoping to put up a building this year in which to store hay and straw, an exercise that we did last year but bottled out of when we discovered the cost. However, I regretted that decision as we have been struggling for space all winter. Having scaled down the building, we have accepted a quote, subject to gaining planning permission, for the barn to be erected by harvest. I am sure this will cause concern in some quarters, but we will screen it with trees and bushes, which will unfortunately take time to grow.

Talking of planning, John Chapman referred last month in his district notes to the changes being implemented to the system. I am not convinced that there will be less business. Now, as soon as we think a controversial plan enters the system or there is a chance that the planning officer may make a decision we disagree with, we must notify the planning department immediately using the correct form, countersigned by the chairman of the planning committee. What, in effect, is happening is that members are quite rightly filling in a form for almost every application stating that if the officer's views differ from theirs, it must go to committee. Our last meeting had eight applications and having started at 6.30 p.m., we didn't finish until after 10. The meetings are now to be held every 3 weeks and next week there are 16 applications to be heard. We are starting at 6.00 p.m. and continuing until finished, whatever the hour! I wonder how many of us will survive to the bitter end!

Mind you, at that last meeting we did get caught up in a debate about bats and newts, which lasted over an hour and a quarter. I kept quiet, leaving deliberations to the ward members, officers, and the so-called professionals brought in for their *expert* views. It wasn't until eighty minutes had lapsed that I put up my hand to speak (must be a record!) and queried the value of installing an amphibian fence to protect the bats that had been written as a planning condition. When I then pointed out

that the pond in one of the photographs being projected on the wall did not appear on the plan, the agent suddenly realised the photograph was of a completely different property. Embarrassed faces, hoots of laughter and the application was deferred.

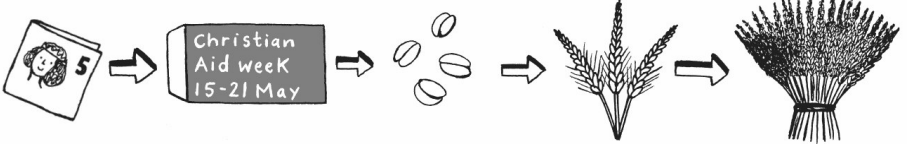
C'est la vie!!

Tim Metcalfe

LUNCH GOES DOWN A TREAT!

On 16 February, St Mary's Hall was buzzing as news and views were discussed amongst friends, old and new, over lunch. Around sixty people – with ages ranging from a newborn baby through to adults in their eighties – streamed through the doors at noon, ready for Lunch Pot. Some children were past customers, coming along when they were toddlers when Lunch Pot was held every week. They seemed delighted to have the opportunity to join in with this *Special* whilst on half-term. All the children were a credit to their parents, eating up their lunch before heading off to find the toys and activities, leaving the *grown-ups* to chat over tea and cake. A raffle was drawn, and many a yummy cake bought to take home from Babs and Gladys's cake stall. Everyone appeared to have a good time, and proceeds of £356.80 were passed on to St Mary's Church. Many thanks to all who supported this event, and to all the helpers!

Nicki Woodward



Each May, a group of collectors from St. Mary's church and the local community go around the parish, collecting money for Christian Aid. The money is used to help poor communities around the world, providing equipment and training that enable them to become more self-sufficient in the competitive world in which we all live. If you would like to help with the collection around Purley, delivering and collecting the familiar red envelopes, then please contact us. All help is welcome, whether it is for two houses or two hundred!

Pam & Matthew Slingsby
961 5585

CASH PROBLEMS?

We live in the supposedly affluent South East; so how knowledgeable are our children about real poverty?

I decided to tackle this issue with my class of eleven and twelve year olds in Drama lessons. We created a fictional family who lived a very financially secure life where most of the children's needs and wants were easily met. One was looking forward to an imminent skiing trip organised by the school and another was fairly certain of receiving the expensive bicycle he had picked out for his birthday. Until the day dad came home with a letter announcing the termination of his well-paid employment. Not to worry, a new job would certainly be easy to find and everything would be as good as always. Days, weeks and months went by without a resolution or pay cheque and the pupils undertook a whole host of scenes where trips, presents, computer games and all manner of high-tech wizardry were no longer available. In one lesson the house was repossessed and the family moved into rented accommodation where the family pets were not welcome, so they had to go. Still, they were a close family and things had to get better. Until the awful day when the last pound was spent and no-one knew where the money to buy even the bare essentials would come from.

After many lessons plotting and experiencing the financial and social downfall of our family, I stood in front of the whole class and asked the big question: "So, what do we do when we have no money, absolutely none at all?" There was complete silence and no-one had an idea of the answer. At last, one brave soul raised his hand and said "Miss, you use your Barclaycard".

Dorothy West

PURLEY PLAYERS

Purley Players will be commemorating the 60th Anniversary of VE Day at the Barn, Purley on Thames on Saturday, 14 May 2005 at 7.30 p.m. The Box Office opens on 4 April and tickets are £10. These can be obtained from Mike Adnett on 0118 962 5760 (email: mike.adnett@ntlworld.com).

The evening 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 Glenn Miller music and some of the Big Bands of the era.

Also, an evening concert by the Caerphilly Male Voice Choir will take place on Saturday 4 June in St Mary's Church Hall, Purley on Thames. Tickets are £10.50 and the box office opens on 25 April. Details and tickets can be obtained from Jean Chudleigh on 0118 984 2563.

Pray for Purley

The next opportunity to meet with Christians from a number of different churches will be on Tuesday 15 March, at 8 p.m. at St. Mary's Church.

We first met as a group in March 2004; so, what's happened in the last year? Firstly, we have been encouraged by the number of Christians, from very different denominations, who are committed to praying for Purley. Then, we have prayed that we would share God's vision for Purley and have seen glimpses of this in events such as Harvest Suppers, Party in the Park and the Village Plan, which are beginning to bring the community together in a very positive way. We have prayed for the Parish Council, for the young people of Purley and for a greater awareness of the needs of people living around us. We have felt very strongly that Jesus cares deeply about Purley, as he does the whole world and wants to be more central to village life. We trust that in the coming year more ways of turning our prayers into actions would be heard and acted on by the group. Please come and join us.

If you would like further details, please contact:

Sally Robertson	962 5978	sallyrobertson@waitrose.com
Chris Rayers	942 1880	c.rayers@talk21.com

SPRING EVENTS

Due to technical trouble, I didn't receive Nicki's updates for these events. Please contact her for tickets or the latest information. – *Editor*.

'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 was held on Wednesday, 16 February. The existing committee were re-elected, but we still have a vacancy for one more committee member. If there is a Society member who feels they can fill this vacancy, could you please contact Pat Brightwell (Secretary) on 941 2424. After the official business had been completed, we had a very interesting talk by Mr. David Penny on *Changes in gardening in the last 50 years*.

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. Please try and come along so that we have a good audience as Mr. Scott has to travel a considerable distance to talk to us.

SPRING SHOW

This will take place in Purley Memorial Hall on Saturday, 2 April. Schedules are now available from the Trading Store. The Show will be open to members of the public from 2.30 p.m. until 4 p.m. Tea and biscuits will be available. Even if you are unable to enter, please come along and support the participants.

PLANT SALE

This will take place on Saturday, 21 May in the Memorial Hall Car Park starting at 9.30 a.m. until 11.30 a.m. (approx.). Bedding plants will be available.

COACH TRIP

We are hoping to organize a trip to R.H.S. Gardens, Wisley or the HDRA Organic gardens at Ryton, Warwickshire in late June or early July. If you are interested in joining this trip, could you please put your names down on the list in the Trading Store.

TRADING

The Trading Store is open Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. until 11 a.m. Membership of the Society, costing only £1.50 for a year, is tremendous value. Not only can you buy items at the Store (in Purley Memorial Hall car park) at lower prices than most other sources, but you can also make further savings on garden purchases at Collins of Pangbourne; BSB Garden Machinery, Sulham Lane for new mowers; Englefield Garden Centre, Glenville Nursery, Bradfield Southend; and Newington Gardens, Newington on the A329 road, north of Shillingford. Please remember to show your membership card at the start of the transaction, as tills have to be set to deduct discount in some outlets. We stock peat free compost (New

Horizon and John Innes) at the Store. If you find you are unable to get to the Trading Store during the opening times, you may telephone your order to Alex Stott on 9419186 or e-mail: vastott@aol.com.

UNIDENTIFIED CUSTOMER

Will the lady who came to the Trading Store on Saturday, 19 February and bought some garotta and plastic sacks please make her identity known so that we can let her have her membership card.

*Marion Dabbs
942 2349*

PURLEY W.I.

Birthday posies were given and we wished Ella Petrie extra congratulations on her "special" day. What a gem she is for her years.

Plans are underway for the Daffodil Walk at our own Denman College – refreshments included.

We were delighted with the takings at last month's Blind Auction. Proceeds are to go to the Flood Disaster Fund – thanks for your generosity.

With slides, John Howes look us on a quick and interesting trip to the Emerald Isle. He is a freelance tour manager, so his personal touch for detail was to our advantage. Like most towns and cities, those in Ireland are saturated with ancient churches, cathedrals, monuments, etc. We travelled from Dublin (didn't even have a Guinness) to Galway, Co. Clare, Co. Limerick, Co. Kerry, Killarney and even Ballykissangel (do you remember the Sunday evening serial?). We even visited a castle that, in 1526, became closed to traffic – don't you just love it? We all felt that, it you hadn't crossed the water to visit this Emerald Isle, the talk made it very tempting.

Competitions:

Something Irish

1st Pam James

2nd Pat Miles

Flower of the Month

1st Kath Hodge

Pam James

Sylvia Conquest

2nd Bernardine Perry

Next month's meeting is our A.G.M., followed by a frolicking Beatle Drive. This will be held on Wednesday, 9 March commencing at 7.30 p.m. in the Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley. Visitors welcome.

*Sylvia Conquest
941 1936*



PURLEY ON THAMES CC SRI LANKA FUND RAISING EFFORT

On Saturday 5 February, Purley on Thames Cricket Club held a fund raising "Race Night" to raise money for Sri Lanka, following the Tsunami disaster on 26 December 2004.

We would like to thank all those who contributed through sponsorship, donations, and attendance on the night. We have raised in the region of £2200, with money still to come.

Martin Bishop, Club Chairman said "we are absolutely delighted at the response we have had to this fund raising effort from other cricket clubs, companies, our members and other individuals. We would also like to thank Purley Sports & Social Club for hosting the evening and for their donation."

If YOU would like to make a donation, cheques can be sent c/o Martin Bishop, 2 Huckleberry Close, Purley on Thames, RG8 8EH (cheques payable to Purley on Thames CC Sri Lanka Appeal).

For further information regarding Purley on Thames Cricket Club, please contact Martin Bishop on 0118 945 3117 or look at our website on

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

CALLING ALL 5 - 11 YEAR OLDS

WHY GOOD FRIDAYS?

COME AND XPLORE THE EASTER STORY THROUGH GAMES, CRAFTS AND TEA

WHEN? GOOD FRIDAY 25 MARCH 3.45 - 6.15 P.M.

WHERE? ST. MARY'S CHURCH

HOW MUCH? £1 PER CHILD

TICKETS FROM SALLY ROBERTSON 962 5978

PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL



Reading College are extending the locally based courses held at The Barn, Purley Memorial Hall and Pangbourne Village Hall. For further details, please consult the notice boards or contact them direct on 0800 371 434. Their website address is www.reading-college.ac.uk

The Parish Council budget for 2005/2006 was agreed at the January meeting and the following anticipated expenditure approved:

Recreation Committee	14,450
Highways & Footpaths Committee	8,360
Barn Management Committee	11,970
Burial Ground	1,600
General Administration	64,270
Loan repayment	5,000

Total expenditure of £105,650 has been reduced by probable income of £23,750 and an adjustment of £16,900 from balances requiring a precept on West Berkshire Council of £65,000. This represents only a 2% increase on the precept required from 2004/2005 despite the inclusion of a provision of £10,000 to support the possible extension of the warden scheme to Purley. If this does not proceed next year, this amount will be utilised to enhance the various aims outlined in the Village Plan. A calculation on the estimated tax base indicates the likely cost for band D properties to be £36.72 per annum.

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

VILLAGE PLAN UPDATE

Early days, but there is already plenty of activity on the Village Plan front; some highly visible and even more behind the scenes.

Some of you will have discovered during half term that the Goosecroft Recreation Ground Playground has been improved with the installation of an adventure trail and two new bouncy toys for younger children. Meanwhile, plans are being developed for activities for older children based around Bucknells Meadow and we are budgeting for something in the new financial year... with more to follow. Ideas will be developed in conjunction with local residents, so watch this space.

New, larger waste bins are starting to appear – two at the Recreation Ground, one at Pikeshaw and one in The Village – and more are budgeted for. Hopefully, these will reduce the amount of litter which is dropped, but they will also provide somewhere for those of you who pick up litter to deposit it. We already know of a number of volunteers, but if you would like to help keep your neighbourhood tidy then the Parish Council can provide you with a 'litter-picker' and black plastic bags.

Additional footpath lighting has been installed to illuminate a 'black hole' between the Oxford Road and Pikeshaw, which should be on line by the time you read this. All of these projects are expected to benefit from a Village Plan support grant of £5,000 from West Berkshire District Council.

On communications, Parish notice boards are being upgraded and a Parish Council Web-site is under design, as is an Annual Report, plus we will be working closely with the Parish Magazine to keep you better informed. A 'surgery' is open every Monday evening at the Parish Office from 6 to 7 p.m., but is little used at present. Do feel free to drop in for a chat if there is anything you want to discuss or would like advice on.

Behind the scenes, we are into a series of meetings with WBDC's planners about developing a Village Design Statement and are being consulted on local and regional development plans. Parish and district councillors are cooperating in the development of an Eastern Area Vision Statement to be consulted with residents and a joint Village Plan action list is being put together with WBDC.

The Neighbourhood Action Group is up and running with participation from the Police and other agencies and you should start to see the first results shortly. Discussions about extending the Neighbourhood Wardens scheme into Purley are continuing.

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

Fairtrade Food and Fun – Sunday 13 March



2.30 – 4.30 p.m. Sprinkle the Ice

Food and fun for kids
Bring your own adult for free
Tickets £2

6.30 – 9.00 p.m. Rice is nice

Food and fun for all folk
Rice supper with a difference
Tickets £10

All profits to TraidCraft Exchange

(Registered Charity 1048752)

Contact Pam Slingsby 961 5585

PROJECT PURLEY

Almost inevitably, one of the members of Project Purley who volunteered to relate their memories of schooldays at the January meeting included the phrase "schooldays are the best days of your life". From the experiences of the dozen speakers who amused the audience between 8 p.m. and 9 p.m. that certainly seemed to be true, as each of them had found something pleasant to remember, even in times of austerity and sometimes danger.

The first contributor was Jean Debney, who showed us her school art book as well as a whole school photograph from the 1940's. Husband Cliff also produced a panoramic view of his schoolmates, plus a school plaque and a magazine, which said that he was a successful cross-country runner in his youth.

Millie Bordiss remembered celebrating the 1937 Coronation of King George VI but a darker memory was the Luftwaffe bombing of her secondary School grounds in York in 1942. Children had to carry gas masks, and the only outing on which she ever went was to a nearby church so that she could study its Norman-arched doorway in preparation for an art class.

Despite her first school looking like a prison with its high walls, Pat Deane found it to be a happy place to learn and play and was much moved by the complete silence throughout the building on Armistice Day. Pat still attends reunions of her 1941 class, all of whom are now in their seventies.

John Chapman quickly realised that he was entering an unfair world when he started school in Birmingham at the age of four. His name was permanently at the bottom on the register, so when toys and gifts were

distributed to his class, all he received was a picture of a monkey! At secondary school in Gloucester, John became a prefect and was given so much respectability that he was allowed to hire a steam train for an outing he organised.

Marion and Bernard Venners had contrasting memories. Marion was at school during the big freeze of 1963, when lessons were cancelled because the toilets were out of action. She walked to her Grandmother's where they spent their time completing crossword puzzles. Bernard produced a calendar of 1952 vintage, which he made at No.IX Preparatory School. He later moved to Presentation College, where he was horrified to find that he had to kneel and kiss the Archbishop's ring before receiving his athletics prize on sports day. Bernard explained that the masters encouraged pupils to cheat in exams, and it was not unusual in later life to receive a letter from a retired member of staff asking for a contribution to the teacher's holiday fund.

"Quiet and well behaved, but shows a firmness of character and an ability to organise" would appear to be the ideal testimonial for the Minute Secretary of Project Purley committee and this was indeed the character reference given to Hazel King as an eleven year old school girl in Slough. This was in spite of her disappointment at not being allocated a place at grammar school even though she passed the eleven-plus. Hazel enjoyed sports too, and gained 3rd place in the girl's discus at the Bucks School Athletic Championships.

Also remembering her eleven plus exam, was Marion Dabbs, who had to write an essay on Princess Elizabeth's wedding as part of the test in addition to an interview and an oral exam. Her school at Bearwood had open fires, but a shortage of fuel in the terrible winter of 1947 meant they could not be lit, so all the children were sent home.

Sylvia Conquest also felt cold for most of her time in school and was a victim of bullying at times. She recalled with great humour, her ability to run a mile, learning to swim and the PE lesson where she attempted to vault the box but only succeeding in removing the top section and the girl who was holding it in place. Sylvia also remembered the damp air raid shelters, Mickey Mouse gas masks, and the fact that it was while she was at school that she made her one and only Christmas cake.

Taking a banana to school earned Janet Southall a visit to the headmistress' study, only to be asked if she could bring one for the head as well. Her special memories of her Midland education included being taught by Marion Richardson of handwriting fame, and being taken on an outing to the Wedgwood Pottery. Like several other speakers, Janet recalled the days of milk frozen in the bottle and ink being spilled as the ink monitors attempted to pour it into the inkwells.

The final speaker was Ian Burn, who modestly did not refer to his report book, which when inspected contained many glowing commendations. He

concentrated on the visit by a television film unit, making a documentary about the England batsman Colin Millburn, who attended Ian's school. Ian was filmed playing cricket on the school field, but unfortunately dropped a catch as the camera focussed on him.

I was not brave enough to produce my only surviving report from Wilson Junior School, mainly because it said I was "excellent" at country dancing, but I do remember the most interesting lesson of my entire school career. Mr Green who taught class 3A at Wilson had been a navigator on Wellington bombers during World War II. He had survived being twice shot down, and spent an hour showing us souvenirs of his RAF service.

David Downs.

The Society AGM takes place at 7.30 at the Barn on Friday 18 March followed by a talk by Margaret Cubley titled *The Campaign for the Preservation of Rural England*.

In April Jean Debney's talk will be on the subject of *The Manors of Purley*, also in the Barn at 8 p.m.

You are invited to the



PANGBOURNE & DISTRICT COMMUNITY LUNCH

On 15 March 2005 12.30-2.00 p.m.

At the DORMAN ROOMS, HORSESHOE ROAD PANGBOURNE

Please encourage anyone living or working in Pangbourne and surrounding communities to come along.

- Rob Yates from The ADVENTURE DOLPHIN CENTRE will give an update on the future plans for the centre.
- Jeremy Sandell Director of COMMUNITY ACTION WEST BERKSHIRE will outline some of the new support for West Berkshire's voluntary sector.
- There will be an update on the proposed CAB service for Pangbourne.
- Kelvin Hughes Chief Executive of THE COMMUNITY FURNITURE PROJECT will be mounting a display to highlight the support his project could give to any local recycling initiatives.

If you would like a bread, cheese and fruit lunch (cost £2) please ring Sheila Aris on 0118 942 7721 by 11 March

Supported by COMMUNITY ACTION WEST BERKSHIRE

PURLEY PATHFINDERS

A WALKING GROUP FOR LADIES

What lucky people we are to have so much beautiful countryside on our doorstep! For our last walk in January, we took advantage of the beauty there is to be seen around Sulham, as we followed a hedged track down through a woodland strip to emerge by the Folly. This landmark can be seen from many directions, and it was a nice link with our last walk, having seen it from Theale golf course. Now we shared its view, stretching across the green landscape of the Pang Valley to the hillsides beyond, and across to Theale, Calcot, and the Kennet Valley. Across the field we could see the imposing white building of Sulham House, and a pleasant amble along Nunehide Lane eventually took us to the church alongside its grounds. We explored the churchyard with its posies of primroses, clumps of snowdrops, and the spikes of crocuses – lovely! Inside the church we admired the tapestry depicting the many attractive cottages of the village. Our walk continued within the pleasant surroundings of Sulham Wood, then across grassy paths to return to the start.



Our February walks were planned to make the most of the snowdrop season. The second of February seemed a good day to start, being known as *Candlemas Day*, when, traditionally, *Candlemas Bells*, or snowdrops, are used to decorate altars during the Christian ritual of *blessing the candles*. Within minutes of leaving the shops at Woodcote, we were in open countryside with snowdrops scrambling along the verges beside us. We followed a quiet country track for some distance, enjoying the views ahead across the Oxfordshire countryside. We appreciated the history of the area, noted on a map in 1797. The woodland strip to one side is a remnant of ancient woodland, and



the distinct wood bank is at least 1,000 years old. The history continued as we passed the 17th century Beech Farm, before dropping down a field towards Elvendon Priory, which incorporates the remains of a medieval house. We pondered on the meaning of *Elvendon* – fairy hill – as our path climbed out of the valley. Snowdrops sat in dainty clumps, and the leaves and buds of hundreds of daffodils gave the promise of a fine show for the spring. Soon we were in the lovely woodland of The Great Chalk Wood. In a dip known as *Blackbird Bottom*, we stood in wonder as *old man's beard* billowed amongst the trees, and catkins dangled merrily from the hazel – altogether an unforgettable sight! Bluebell shoots could be seen emerging

from amongst the leaves on the woodland floor, whereas, in the next woodland near Crays Pond, we absorbed the beauty of a copse adrift with snowdrops. Having had hundreds of snowdrops scrabbling beside us throughout the walk, this wonderful sight was the icing on the cake for our first snowdrop walk.

We headed out to Watership Down country for our next walk, and as we drove into Echinswell, the snowdrops in the gardens, spilling over onto the roadside verges, filled us with a joyful expectancy for the walk ahead. Our path took us between banks of snowdrops, aconites, crocuses and primroses as we passed Nuthanger Farm. Then we froze in our tracks to gaze in wonder at a garden buried in a thick drift of snowdrops. With its white sloping lawn, we almost expected a skier to skim by! A menagerie of hens, ducks and geese welcomed us to the Andrew Lloyd Webber estate. With the thoughts of the approaching Valentines Day, we listened for the birds singing romantic *Aspects of Love*. Fine horses came to gaze at us with interest from the immaculate Watership Farm, while pheasants strutted away, fluffing up their *Technicolor Dreamcoats*. There were many "aahs" as we came across fields of young lambs, their bleats unable to be ignored, like the cry of any newborn baby. Snowdrops lay thickly along the base of the hedgerows, like snow which has piled up, defiantly refusing to melt. Eventually, at the far end of the village, we came upon the thatched cottage, passed in past years in a sad, derelict state. Now it stood proudly, sporting a fine new thatch on top of renovated walls from which its little windows glistened happily. We finished our walk down a long avenue piled high on each side with snowdrops, an amazing end to this lovely walk.



With no walk during half-term, we took the opportunity to meet together, socially, at Welford Park, near Newbury. We enjoyed lunch together in the tearoom before wandering beside the banks of the shallow, clear water of the River Lambourne, passing a bank of aconites. As we approached the woods, we could see the ground covered in white as if it had been snowing for days. As we drew nearer, we could see that the 'snow' was, in fact, a thick carpet of snowdrops! Awesome!

As March takes us into springtime, we look forward to greeting the host of wildflowers associated with this season of promise. Two highlights will be seeing the Mediterranean Wild Crocuses at a Site of Scientific Interest at Inkpen, and our Springtime Special – a day in the Forest of Dean, walking amongst the wild daffodils for which the area is famous.

Nicki Woodward
984 2112

The facts about...**powered scooters**

“During recent public meetings in the area local residents have raised some concerns about youngsters riding powered scooters,” said Insp Andy Talbot of Thames Valley Police.

“People are worried that someone riding these scooters will get hurt or may hurt someone else, such as the pedestrians they encounter, especially children, elderly people or people with a disability.

“Many residents have asked for more information and clarification on the law regarding this issue and so in this article I have tried to answer some of the most frequently asked questions.

“I’m sure that many youngsters and their parents are not aware of some of these facts. By letting people know all the issues that need to be considered when riding powered scooters, I hope it will help improve the safety of everyone in our communities.”

- Motorised scooters are not toys. They can often reach speeds of 20 mph or more.
- Anyone using a petrol-engined or electrically-powered scooter on a public road must have a driving licence and third party insurance.
- Riding these scooters on the road without complying with all necessary licensing, insurance and registration requirements is therefore against the law.
- They should not be ridden on pavements, verges or footpaths.
- Scooters powered with a petrol engine and electrically-powered scooters are actually classed as motor vehicles under the Road Traffic Act of 1988.
- If people do not have the appropriate driving documents they should only use these scooters on private land/property with the approval of the landowner.
- Riders are strongly advised to wear protective clothing. The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents advises that given the speed at which motorised scooters can travel, users should wear a motorcycle helmet. An impact to the head at 20 mph could easily prove fatal or cause serious injury. RoSPA also recommends that users should consider protective clothing as abrasion injuries or broken bones could be suffered if the rider falls off.

If anyone is concerned about anti-social behaviour or dangerous riding involving these types of scooters, they should contact Thames Valley Police on 0845 8 505 505.



SHAKESPEARE IN THE BARN

The Rain or Shine Theatre Company will be coming to Purley on Friday 24 June 2005, to present *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in the Barn at 7 p.m. Tickets at £10 (adults) and £7.50 (children and over 60's) will be limited and sold on a first come, first served basis. To reserve tickets, or for more information: please contact David Downs on 0118 942 4167. All profits from the production will be donated to local charities.

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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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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, Steve Corrigan.

This edition published	Next edition copy deadline	Next edition published
5 March 2005	19 March 2005	2 April 2005

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Leader image © Laura Alvarado, CrossDaily.com (used under licence)

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