

PURLEY PARISH NEWS

OCTOBER 2005



Autumn

*He changes times and seasons;
...He gives wisdom to the wise
and knowledge to the discerning*

Scripture: Eccl. 1:2

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

UK Church life – moving rapidly towards wipeout

Within the space of 35 years, 18,000 church buildings may close! That could be the case if current trends continue, according to findings carried out by Christian Research[‡], which reports every two years on religious trends. Will St. Mary's Purley be one of them?

- By 2040 church attendance could be down to just 2% of the population
- 2000 rural churches will be closed by 2020
- Virtually all rural and inner-city churches would be gone by 2040
- Nobody under 20 years will be attending church
- Most members will be over 65 years

[‡] www.christian-research.org.uk

- Christian ministers will be down from 35,000 (in 2000), to 26,000 (in 2040)
- Church schools will be replaced by multi-faith schools
- Alpha courses will be forgotten
- Weekday services and home worship will wither away
- Christmas will be a secular festival called Winterval

Many of us will not be around in 2040, but the signs of these predictions are there in increasing measure today, and in the next ten years may become even more evident. Does it matter?

- Would it matter to you if St. Mary's church was declared redundant and closed?
- Would it matter if the Church of England Infants School in the parish became a multi-faith school?
- Would it bother you if there were no under-twenties attending church?

Whether the findings of Christian Research prove to be true, only time will tell, but they are a wake-up call to professing Christians today! The latest Census returns for Purley revealed that more than 70% claimed to be Christian. This is in stark contrast to the 2% who belong to St. Mary's or another Christian church.

If you stand in the bows of a ship, it is hard to see the exact course ahead, but if you go to the stern, you can easily see where you have come from. These depressing forecasts may not become reality, but if we look back over past years, we can see how things have changed in the life of the Church and in the country as a whole. The signs of decline and decay are there for all to see!

What is your reaction to this situation? It may be that you feel that the momentum of decline is so under way and so hard to slow down and stop that you can do nothing about it. You simply and perhaps sadly have to stand by and watch it happen. That the weight of this momentum is heavy is indisputable. That it is gathering speed and power is pretty obvious. That nothing can be done about it is a lie!

Undoubtedly the Church has a lot to learn. It has made mistakes in the past and has failed to seize opportunities. But God has not given up on His Church! We may be small in numbers, and up against some powerful forces, but the downward trends can be slowed. They can be stopped and they can be reversed. And this is not a pipe dream or pure wishful thinking. God specialises in giving new life! He did it with the resurrection of Jesus. He has done it for countless thousands of people as they have discovered His forgiveness in Christ. He can do it again – today – here in Purley! But He needs help – your help if you reckon yourself a Christian.

Come and meet others who are concerned, and want to pray for the community – Monday 31 October at 8pm in St. Mary's hall.

Roger Howell

PARISH REGISTERS

BAPTISMS

28 August Jamie Owen Everitt
25 September Alfie Frederick Webber
Cydney Joanne Webber

WEDDING

16 July Martin Shields and Lois Taylor (by special licence)

FUNERAL

30 August Roland Edward Hill, aged 80 years

CHURCH SERVICES

2 Oct	10.30am 6.00pm	Harvest Thanksgiving for all the family Harvest Communion
9 Oct	9.30am 11.15am 3.00pm	Family Worship Holy Communion Community Memorial Service
16 Oct	9.30am 11.15am 6.00pm	Family Communion Morning Worship Evening Worship
23 Oct	9.30am 11.15am	Family Worship Holy Communion
30 Oct	9.30am 11.15am	Family Worship Holy Communion
6 Nov	9.30am 11.15am 6.00pm	Family Worship Holy Communion Holy Communion



The next meeting is on Monday 31 October, at 8pm in St. Mary's Church.

Christians living in Purley may worship in different places on Sundays, but we belong together, and this community is our home. **Come together to pray for our community** and meet some other members of your worldwide family who live in the area – perhaps just up the road from you, or even nearer!

If you would like further details, please contact:

Sally Robertson	962 5978	sally.a.robertson@ntlworld.com
Chris Rayers	942 1880	c.rayers@talk21.com

PURLEY PLAYERS

COMING TO THE BARN IN 2006 and a date for your diary

Aladdin (the pantomime) on 3 and 4 February 2006

Evening performances on Friday and Saturday with a matinee performance on Saturday afternoon – Full details will be circulated soon

At the time of going to press, tickets are still available for the Murder Mystery Evening "The Tangled Web" on Saturday, 29 October

These can be obtained from Mike Adnett on 0118 962 5760
or email to mike.adnett@ntlworld.com

COMMUNITY MEMORIAL SERVICE

The Annual Community Memorial Service will be held at St. Mary's Church

Sunday 9 October at 3pm

This service is designed for all who have been bereaved recently or more distantly. It is an opportunity to remember loved ones and give thanks for their lives. Refreshments will follow the service.

Special invitation cards are being sent out, but all are welcome.

AUTUMN LUNCHPOT

Enjoy lunch with the community at this popular event

Friday 21 October, noon – 1pm
St Mary's Church Hall

All your favourites will be there for you to savour whilst enjoying a chat

Soup Jacket Potato Ploughmans Cakes and a Cuppa

Lunch will be £4 per adult (Children's Lunch £2 per child)

Tickets in advance only please

ALL WELCOME : BRING YOUR FRIENDS

Contact: Nicki Woodward 984 2112
(all proceeds to St Mary's Church)

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

The admirable Rain or Shine Theatre Company became the first professional set of actors to visit Purley on Thames when they performed Shakespeare's, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in The Barn. And what a marvellous show they put on! The bawdy knockabout comedy, apparently written by The Bard in just 14 days, and at the express request of Queen Elizabeth I, is full of comic repartee, but the diction, timing and movement of the eight-strong cast was so precise and expressive that the sell-out audience was able to enjoy every laugh from start to finish. Even the occasional soliloquies, employed to hurry along the narrative, kept everyone entertained.

The action centres on the amorous intentions of Sir Thomas Falstaff, a roguish knight "of good substance", played with incredible energy by Andrew Hodges. The scene in which we received a realistic thrashing from the cuckolded Master Ford (played by David Middleton, a Rain or Shine veteran) was pure knockabout farce, verging on pantomime, which had the audience in hoots of laughter. But a real scene-stealer, especially in the first half of the play, was the fiery Dr Caius (Alistair Cope), who entertained everyone with an outrageous mock French accent and exaggerated facial expressions.

The Barn is not the easiest of venues for theatre. It has a high vaulted ceiling and limited stage area, but The Rain and Shine Company's skill lies in not just establishing an immediate rapport with the audience, but sustaining a fast pace till the end. All of the tight knit group of actors did superbly well, but look out for Kate Izon, not yet a year out of drama school, who played Mistress Page with delectable humour. The cast fully deserved the lengthy applause they received at the curtain and have promised to return with their next production.

David Downs



St Mary's Advent Fair
Saturday 19 November – 11.30am to 2.30pm

**Raffle, Tombola, Toys, White Elephant, Cakes,
Plants, Preserves and lots more.**
Come and have lunch in our Advent Cafe

MESSAGE FROM HOME FARM

What a wonderful social occasion the Farmers Market proved to be. It seems that most of Purley attended sometime during the morning and with glorious weather, thoroughly enjoyed walking around the trade stands. There are approximately 125 different businesses that are members of the Thames Valley Farmers Market Co-operative Ltd., which organizes markets at 31 different venues. Along with Purley, Didcot & Charlbury hold their market on the 2nd Saturday of the month.

To be perfectly honest, you could source more locally produced food at a local farm shop as the suppliers that attend the markets come from all over the country. However, no one can deny that the quality of the food on offer was excellent and presented very professionally. I only hope the different stallholders return and maybe increase in number over the coming months.

There is no doubt that adding value to the commodities farmers produce by selling direct to the public ought to be the answer especially as we are supposed to be a nation of shop keepers. Mind you, the time and costs involved in attending these markets eat into any profit made and of course, while you're at these markets, no work is being done at home.

Mind you, the same could be said of Council work. I was on duty today at Newbury Show on the WBC stand, promoting waste recycling. Now how sad is that, especially as I had to leave the inaugural soccer league match being played in Bucknells Meadow at half time with the score 2-2! Seriously, we had a small stand in one of the junk aisles, which seem to attract the majority of the public. We handed out freebies such as green shopping bags made with jute, a natural and biodegradable product made under ethical conditions. Jute is environmentally friendly and when discarded will totally decompose leaving only valuable nutrients.

While walking around the show later on, I bumped into a certain newspaper reporter who needless to say asked for an in-depth interview. Instead, I marched him to the WBC stand and politely suggested that he wrote something useful. It was his paper that reported that our MP had called me a buffoon. He could have called me anything, but why buffoon? When being interviewed, you tend to use words you are familiar with and regularly use. All was revealed when some locals who this summer did a tour of the Houses of Parliament mentioned to the guide that Martin Salter was their M.P. Oh, he replied, the buffoon!

Tim Metcalfe

QUIZ NIGHT AT THE BARN

Teams of 4 to 6
Saturday, 19 November 2005
7.00 for 7.30 pm
Light Supper available

Details from Sara Lang on 0118 954 8052

PURLEY PATHFINDERS A WALKING GROUP FOR LADIES

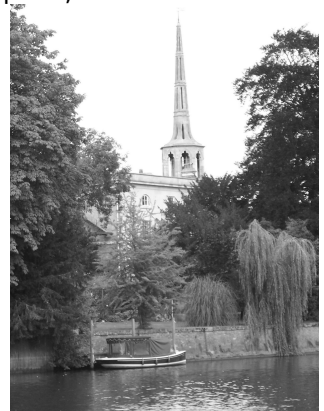
After the summer break, we were feeling excited about putting our boots back on and meeting up with everyone. Already the mornings feel autumnal, but the sunshine appeared in readiness for our walk as we gathered in Wallingford.



Although, as its name suggests, Wallingford developed around a ford, a bridge has existed here since medieval times. It came in useful in 1066 when William the Conqueror used it to cross The Thames on his way to London! We followed in his footsteps over the impressive 17 arches, which stretch 900 feet, making it one of the longest medieval bridges in England. From the bridge, we accessed a footpath, which took us away from Wallingford and into open areas with lovely country views.

Gradually climbing, we reached a pretty tree-lined part of the Ridgeway, which took us to a high point where Red Kites soared in the blue sky. We paused to share their glorious 360° view of the Berkshire and Oxfordshire countryside, glowing in the sunshine. Passing some happy *pigs in mud*, we dropped down a lightly wooded path, which burgeoned with nature's bounty – blackberries, elderberries, spindleberry and rosehips. *Old Man's Beard* frothed over hedges and framed our view of Wittenham Clumps on the skyline. On reaching the now redundant, fairly isolated, church of St Mary's at Newnham Murren, we paused to enjoy its simplicity with its flint walls and Norman doorway. Soon we were walking beside the Thames where there was much activity from the many water birds as grebes dived beneath the water, coots *surfed* astride floating branches, ducks busily dabbled amongst the waterside plants, and swans glided aloofly, no doubt admiring their reflection in the clear water. The riverbank held a wealth of wildflowers, and the clumps of lilac asters reminded us of the approaching autumn. Across the river we spotted the partially hidden church of St Leonard's, the oldest of Wallingford's three churches, dating, in parts, from Saxon times. However, we were drawn ever closer to the more prominent slender spire of St Peter's, which dates from 1777 when its striking design caused quite a stir! Now it is one of Wallingford's best-known landmarks. Several adult swans with their juveniles greeted us back to Wallingford Bridge, from where we made our way to the riverside terrace of The Houseboat for lunch, and a chance to catch up on any holiday stories.

We'll be back by the water next week as we follow The Lambourne Way, with our final walk for September taking place around Sydmonton and Ladle



Hill. Any ladies wishing to receive details of the walks programme are welcome to phone me for a copy. Walks take place on weekday mornings, and lifts are arranged from the village to the starting points. You will be made very welcome.

Nicki Woodward
984 2112

PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

LATE SUMMER SHOW



We held a successful Show on Saturday, 10 September in Purley Memorial Hall with over 200 entries and were very pleased to see a good number of visitors viewing the exhibits. The medal and cup winners were as follows:

- Ray Stuart - Banksian Medal, P.H.S. Perpetual Challenge Cup & Fairfoull Cup.
- Hazel King - Reg Ayers Memorial Trophy.
- Daphne Howard - Neil Buckle Trophy & Purley Homecraft Salver.
- Sylvia Conquest & Daphne Howard - Purley W.I. Cup.
- Jim Armstrong - Purley Home & Garden Bowl
- Wendy Chapman - Frankston Vase.
- Helen Dryden - Golden Jubilee Cup (Children's Classes)

HDRA ORGANIC GARDENS

A few members of the Society went by minibus to these Gardens at Ryton on Sunday, 4 September. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit and I hope the rest of the Group did also. The weather was perfect, although a little warm at times. I would like to thank Jimmy Armstrong for organizing the trip and Patrick (one of our members) for driving the minibus.

TALKS

On Wednesday, 19 October, Mrs Gwen Barton will be giving a talk and slide show on New Zealand. She is always a very interesting lady to listen to. On Wednesday, 16 November Mr. Jim Asher will give a talk about Butterflies. Both these talks will take place in Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road commencing 8pm.

TRADING

The Shed in the Memorial Hall car park will close for the winter months on Sunday, 30th October, re-opening at the beginning of February 2006. We hope you have all purchased your bulbs and any other gardening requirements you may need whilst we are closed. The Shed now stocks bird food, so please make sure you have ample food for the birds during the winter months.

I hope you have all enjoyed the summer months, even if it has been rather warm at times and that your garden has produced successful results for you.

Marion Dabbs
942 2349

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GO ON - MAKE THEIR BIRTHDAYS FUN!

A WAY WITH WORDS...

A bicycle can't stand alone because it is two-tired.

Time flies like an arrow - fruit flies like a banana.

A backward poet writes inverse.

In a democracy, it's your vote that counts; in feudalism, it's your count that votes.

If you don't pay your exorcist you get repossessed.

With her marriage she got a new name and a dress.

Show me a piano falling down a mineshaft and I'll show you A-flat minor.

When a clock is hungry it goes back four seconds.

The man who fell into an upholstery machine is fully recovered.

You get stuck with your debt if you can't budge it.

He often broke into song because he couldn't find the key.

A lot of money is tainted. 'Taint yours and 'taint mine.

A boiled egg in the morning is hard to beat.



BOOK SALE

**ST. STEPHEN'S, UPPER BASILDON
SATURDAY 12 NOVEMBER, 10AM-2PM**



Thousands of second-hand books

Novels - classic and modern

Lots and lots of Children's books - all ages

Cookery - crafts and art - history - geography and travel

Biographies - Sports - Humour - Art - Health - Religion - Education and more

No entrance fee - refreshment available

Further information from Michael Penny (01491) 671357

WHO NEEDS EXTENDED LICENSING HOURS?

It is only a matter of weeks now before the law change permitting extended licensing hours comes into force [November] and the Church has added its voice to those opposing the change.

A spokesman for the Church of England recently confirmed that it "shares fully the serious concerns about the relaxation of the laws expressed by the police, judges and the medical profession.

"We cannot see how extending licensing hours through the night will help to reduce the high levels of alcohol abuse and binge drinking in this country, particularly among young people. It can only result in people drinking more and for longer.

"Often it is the Church which finds itself working with the victims of alcohol abuse and their families, and we are very concerned that these reforms will do nothing to improve their situation."

While the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) welcomes the new powers given to the police by the Licensing Act, such as Drink Banning Orders, it also considers the hours-extension unhelpful. Chris Allison, ACPO spokesman on licensing, says they have concerns "given the culture of excessive drinking that already pervades our society. However, we are never going to solve this problem through enforcement alone, as that only deals with symptom and not the cause. Meanwhile, the police service will have to divert more and more resources to deal with the increasing levels of drunken thuggery that blight our cities, towns and villages."

Alcohol Concern, the national charity that helps people who become alcohol-dependent, agrees that a more punitive stance needs to sit side by side with one that encourages responsible behaviour. "This is only possible through raising awareness of the negative impact of excessive consumption, informing people about safe drinking and encouraging people to question their own drinking patterns," said a spokesman.

The Government estimates that alcohol-related crime costs the UK £7.3 billion per year in terms of policing, prevention services, processing offenders through the criminal justice system and human costs incurred by victims of crime. One in five violent crimes take place in or around pubs and clubs. It is to be hoped that local authorities will make full use of their powers to refuse applications for hours extension which they think are against the public interest.

Source: parishpump.co.uk



SPARE CHAIRS

St. Mary's has some three-dozen church chairs, which are surplus to requirements. They are offered **free of charge**.

*For further information, contact:
Lorna Herring (Churchwarden) Tel. 942 1547.*

A YEAR IN?



A senior police officer was recently heard describing gap years as "middle-class jollies". It is not uncommon these days for young adults to take a 'year out' of full-time education: some spend their 12 months attempting to scrape together enough money to cover University course fees; others look for work experience to help them in future careers; still more take the time to visit exotic locations, catching the wanderlust-bug and buoying the international tourism market.

I anticipate that there may be many moments in the next twelve months of my life which are far from "jolly". SIM is an organisation which works in over 25 of the world's poorest nations, and with whom I will be spending the next year. Rather than sojourning through the relative affluence of a traveller's paradise, SIM (which stands for "Serving in Mission") has its missionaries wading in to get their hands dirty. From education and children's work, health care and HIV/AIDS awareness, literacy programmes, practical training, church planting and discipleship, SIM aims to be holistic, addressing individuals' physical, practical and spiritual needs as appropriate where it finds them.

At the time of writing, I am not sure what my own role will be, and indeed where in the world I am to be sent! A number of young people are sent out each year for at least six months to help out in the programmes where they will be most needed. Before jumping on the plane, though, I will undergo two months' training at the SIM headquarters in Suffolk; training which will cover, amongst other things, practical issues like cross-cultural awareness as well as the importance of spiritual development, in order to pursue the goal that this is a year in for God's service more than one out of formal education.

As I prepare to leave Purley behind for some time, I would value your ongoing prayerful support: do feel free to ask to be included on the distribution list for my prayer letters, even if you're just feeling nosy enough to wonder what I might get up to on this "year in for God". In the meantime, before the training begins, I am working as hard as I can teaching English to help fund the year ahead!

David Mackie

PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

David Betts, Chairman of Purley on Thames Parish Council, was recently pleased to accept, on behalf of the village, a plaque (and a small monetary reward) recording our success as runners up in the Calor Berkshire Village of the Year Competition 2005.



At the August meeting the Council approved the Annual Report and accounts for the year ending 31 March 2005 for submission to the auditors appointed by the Audit Commission. During the year, the Council spent £99,540.82 whilst receiving income of £108,515.88 including the precept of £63,700.00. The General Fund, including investment assets of £46,000.55, now stands at

£79,310.19. Copies of the accounts, which provide more detailed information, are available from the office upon request.

At the same meeting, Council reluctantly accepted the resignation of Penny Williams, who had led on the Village Plan project, and thanks were expressed for all her efforts on that and many other issues. The vacancy has been advertised by a statutory notice on all the notice boards and if the Returning Officer advises that no election has been called we will again be given the powers to co-opt. Anyone interested in being considered is invited to contact the Clerk for further information.

May I thank all those who left unused travel tokens at the office, as at the time of writing it appears that Pangbourne Volunteer Centre may benefit by receiving a sum in excess of £1,800 from Purley residents alone.

Parents – do you know what your children are doing when they are out of the house?

We had hoped that incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour would decrease now that the schools are back, and the darker evenings coming in, but regret that there has been a spate of problems throughout the parish over the last few weeks. Although the Police are endeavouring to increase patrols when resources permit, they need to be directed to where the problems are. To achieve this please can we again appeal for all incidents to be reported on the Police non-emergency telephone number 0845 8 505 505. Only if the village as a whole takes an interest can we stamp out this scourge on our society.

May we remind local golfers that because of public safety all golf practice is banned at both Bucknells Meadow and the Goosecroft Recreation Ground. Legal action may be taken if this nuisance persists.

Finally on behalf of the Council may I congratulate Purley on Thames Cricket Club on becoming both champions of the Berkshire Cricket League Premier Division and winners of the Reading Midweek League K.O. Trophy.

Brian J. Smith
Clerk to Purley on Thames Parish Council

The office, located near the tennis courts, opens:

Mondays (not BH): 5.45pm to 8.30pm

Including an opportunity to meet

Councillors between 6pm & 7pm

Thursdays: 9.00am to 3.15pm

Barn Manager: Jean Chudleigh 07917 453187

Purley on Thames Parish Council

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DON'T FORGET TO LOOK AT THE NEW PARISH WEBSITE
www.purleyonthames.net

THAMES VALLEY POLICE

For the past three years, I have enjoyed being Sector Inspector for the Pangbourne area, working with a huge range of people since I joined the team in May 2002. But I have now been given a new posting in the Force and start working in Oxford this month.

At a time of change like this I always find it useful to reflect on what has happened over recent years, look at where we are now and where we want to go. When I first came to Pangbourne my priorities were to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour. Thanks to a lot of hard work by the neighbourhood policing team and other staff at Pangbourne police station, along with our many partner organisations and help from you in our communities, we have achieved those reductions.

As I mentioned in my last newsletter article there is now 20 per cent less crime in the Pangbourne sector compared with two years ago. We have also been tackling 'quality of life' issues such as vandalism, litter, graffiti and speeding, which can have a real impact on how you feel about where you live.

Building on this work the Pangbourne sector was one of the first areas in the Force to introduce neighbourhood policing. We wanted to make sure that people felt they had a voice, that they were being listened to and that they could genuinely influence where the police and other public services focused their efforts. We've organised public meetings, drop in days, visits and surveys to find out what people want us to do and how we can make our neighbourhoods even safer.

We have also needed to be honest and realistic. It is not possible for the police to solve everybody's problems, so we've asked people to tell us what their priorities are – what needs doing first? When we'd got this information we set up Neighbourhood Action Groups so that we could work with residents and representatives from a whole range of organisations such as local parish and district councils, Sovereign Housing Association and the youth service, to concentrate on these priorities and find solutions together. And it seems to be working. Now neighbourhood policing is being introduced in all three counties covered by Thames Valley Police, and the process continues to grow and develop.

I know that lots of you will have heard me and my colleagues say, in the past, that the police can't solve everything on their own and that everyone has a role to play in helping to reduce crime. Please don't 'switch off' when you hear phrases like this, or think that it's nothing to do with you – it is! We all need to pull together to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and any other problems that come up in our communities. Neighbourhood policing is a great way to achieve this. We need to keep talking to each other, and to keep listening.

I know that your new Inspector, Rodger Cartwright, who is a very experienced police officer, is looking forward to developing this even further. And I will be taking everything I have learned during my time in Pangbourne to my new post,

in the hope that it will help me ensure we provide the best possible service to local people.

It only remains for me to say thank you to everyone I've worked with, especially for their commitment and positive attitudes in making neighbourhood policing work – not least the officers on the neighbourhood policing team, shift officers, the CID team, special constables and police staff working at Pangbourne.

I am grateful to you all for your support and cooperation during my time here and wish you all the very best for the future.

Insp Andy Talbot

A CLOSE CALL

A few weeks ago, we had a visit from an old friend who has lived in America for many years. He was bringing his new bride to see us so we were anxious that the day went well. It was a very happy day and the new wife turned out to be absolutely lovely. As they left, they invited us to visit them in the U.S. They promised us an interesting time because they live in the Deep South, in Mississippi, cotton country, near to the Gulf of Mexico.

Only three weeks after we saw them, Hurricane Katrina struck. We got the atlas out and quickly realized that their home is very close to New Orleans. They must have been affected by the storm.

We sent e-mails asking if they were OK, but they were not delivered. Then we began phoning but were told that our call could not be connected, "try again later" the American operator suggested. The news reports on television were very alarming and other English friends of theirs were phoning us, "had we had any news?" After several anxious days and another frightening TV report, I picked up the phone once more and dialled the US. Amazingly, it rang and our friend answered. My words poured out: "Are you OK? Have you been hit by the storm? Do you know how badly New Orleans has been afflicted?"

"Dorothy! Yours is the first voice we've heard in four days. It's wonderful to hear you. Please phone my brother in Wales and tell him we're safe and well although we've been badly hit by the hurricane. We were one mile from the eye of the storm and have lost twenty or thirty trees from our land, one of which is blocking our drive. The telephone has been out and we only have 30 minutes of electricity a day from a solar panel I put on the roof last year. We have no petrol and only food and water for a week. But we're safe and have each other!"

DO YOU LIVE IN THE HIGHFIELD ROAD AREA?

Our existing distributor is unable to continue the delivery of the Purley Parish News in the Highfield Road area, and so we are looking for someone to take on this round. There are approximately 18 houses that require the magazine, which will need delivering on or very soon after the first Saturday of each month.

*If you can help us, please contact:
Les Jamieson (941 2342) or Steve Corrigan (967 6061).*

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 2pm to 4pm 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*

REALITY CHECK

This month's magazine seems to be one for telling the stories of people's lives. As I celebrate fifteen years of marriage, I have been given a kind of reality check, as I am reminded that many people have experienced great pain in their relationships and that, all too often it seems, this leads to a break-up. Here we read one man's reflection on his experience, written at the time he moved to this area.

Editor

IT STARTED...

I'd like to say it started with a kiss. My love affair with Reading, Berkshire, that is. But it didn't; that was the trouble. No talking, no cooking, no touching. And definitely, no kissing. And I was the one who got a headache.

I didn't understand it. I'd prayed to God for United to win and my prayers were answered. But when I prayed to Him for the woman in my marriage to be a wife it was as if I was speaking in Sanskrit. I knew He had other people to care for but I'd asked Him for help on so many occasions that I'd almost completed the two-year separation in preparation. Then again, I wasn't in the least prepared for the nightmare that followed. And they wanted me to give up the sleeping tablets. She slept alright; and on every job! Keep your friends close and your wife even closer?

I remember the nice Solicitor lady warning me 'She may try to provoke you now you've petitioned for divorce'. It was a sign but just another one I missed. I'd become so used to the screaming I was almost immune to it. But being assaulted; being threatened with being stabbed; and watching the lady you married jump sky high, several times, in the living room prior to my being arrested were all things beyond any imaginable pale. Me nervous? I was in such a state of shock I asked a policewoman to marry me.

I tell you, you can't write this stuff...

I don't have a family – just cousins. I used to have a family and I used to have the friends I grew up with. Now I just have cousins and even they're reducing. Hard to figure it out; I don't have the mark of Cain. Anyway, one such cousin thought it would be a good thing if I moved away and started 'a new life'. Now

whilst I still don't think I can run away from myself, I have to admit that the 'old life' hadn't been so good. (I think there's an understatement there somewhere and I'd be grateful to anyone for finding it!)

"So what do I have to lose," I asked myself. She'd cleared all my Bank accounts along with most of the people I'd loved.

My 'new life' has started strangely; the ends of roads are strange places to put roundabouts and the sides of some streets are strange places to find bollards. The local Bank doesn't advise transferring what's left of my account even if a new chequebook is overdue whilst the bills are not. And the locals talk funny.

But I'm not complaining. At least the locals talk to me...

The man from a couple of doors along made it his business to introduce himself and to welcome me. Me? He told me he'd been orphaned from birth and, in fifteen minutes, he'd reached me; knew the depths of me, and the intrinsic loneliness. The emptiness within and the longing I try to hide from without. He was surprised that I was alone...

Things are 'on the up!' I may not have any curtains on my windows yet but I do have a couple of writing assignments. My light fitter let me down but I can still watch the Red Devils on television. And whilst I miss a special pair of blue eyes, I can still listen to Sinatra singing.

I believe in happy endings – Anyone for finishing with a kiss?

Name and address supplied



Lifeboats

Tilehurst, Purley and West Reading Branch

COFFEE MORNING

to be held at

99 DEVONSHIRE GARDENS

Tilehurst, Reading

on

Saturday 15 October 2005

from 10am to 12noon

Coffee - £1



RNLI Souvenirs available including Christmas Cards and Calendars

PROJECT PURLEY

This year's summer barbecue held in the beautiful tiered garden of Highveldt in Beech Road was significant for several reasons. Not only did those attending include the Chairman of West Berkshire District Council, but also the event took place on July 15th, Saint Swithin's Day. According to tradition, the excellent weather - warm enough for some members to wear clothing akin to tropical kit - that graced the evening, would now be certain to last for the next forty days.

Four gazebos and one larger marquee had been set up during the day and a total of thirty two members and six guests began to arrive around 7 p.m. for pre-barbecue drinks before getting down to the serious business of eating. The hot food had been prepared by the Purley Catering Corps personnel, Ben Viljoen and John Chapman. At one stage, the latter had to stop serving the burgers and sausages to take a call on his mobile phone, though one guest's suggestion that it was Egon Ronay ringing to ask for advice was strongly disputed. Another distraction for the dinner was the sight of a young chaffinch at the top of the tallest tree in the garden calling plaintively for its mother. Eventually it flew away hopefully to be reunited.

As everyone returned to their chairs and table to eat, the air was so still that it was possible to pick up strands of conversation from all parts of the garden. Topics of discussion included: the VE and VJ 60th Anniversary celebrations in London; Salisbury; Buckingham Palace garden parties; Westwood Farm Junior School's recent sports day; Reading Football Clubs chance of promotion to the Premiership; Chelsea FC's chance of relegation to the Championship; the awful preponderance of reality TV programmes; the Duchess of Cornwall's hats; the bad language used by so many young people nowadays; how much longer the Royal Family is likely to last; and opinions about the performance of "The Merry Wives of Windsor" in the Barn. The most raucous laughter of the evening was inspired by a chat about the various uses to which a set of jump leads can be put - anyone who requires further explanation can ask Hazel and Michael King!

Members had contributed a mouth-watering selection of desserts and once these had been shared and consumed, we filled then drained our glasses for the last time. The shadows lengthened, then the last of the natural light faded, to be replaced by the flickering flames of the candles on the tables. There was just time to reflect on how lucky we are to belong to such a lively and generous society before at about 10.30pm Jean Debney brought the occasion to a close with a vote of thanks to Ben and Dorothy Viljoen. Their kindness was even more remarkable on this evening, as they were due to leave for a holiday in the Isle of Wight at 5am the next morning.

Jean also made a presentation to Darrell and Christine Hicks, who were attending their final Project Purley event. They have been members for just four years, but residents of Purley on Thames for thirty-five. Darrell and Christine are leaving the area to begin a new life on the Lincolnshire coast and take with them the best wishes of all those of us who have known them.

David Downs



PANGBOURNE & DISTRICT VOLUNTEER CENTRE

If you need help with transport, or know of anyone else who does, please contact us.

Volunteer drivers always needed! Do you have a few spare hours? Car drivers are needed to transport clients to hospitals, also for local journeys to doctors, etc. Help in the office is also required. Office opening hours: Mon/Wed/Thurs/Fri 9.30am to 11.30am. Please come and join us.

Call 984 4586 or pop into The Committee Room, Pangbourne Village Hall.

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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If you are new to the area and would like to subscribe to Purley Parish News, please contact either Steve Corrigan or Les Jamieson.

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