

PURLEY PARISH NEWS

DECEMBER 2005

Christmas
His Love Is The Greatest Gift



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,
Peace to you!

I wish you all a peaceful Christmas!
Your house may be full of the noise of excited children...
You may await a houseful of visitors...
You may be worked off your feet as you prepare for the celebration...

Or it may be a house of silence...
You may be living alone...
You may be anxiously awaiting a hospital visit...
You may be thinking about a husband, wife, parent or child who has died...

Wherever you are this Christmas...
Whatever your house is like – noisy or quiet...
My prayer for you is that it may be a house of peace.

In all the busyness and rush,
planning and preparation...
Or in the stillness of memories and fretful waiting,
take a moment to reflect on what makes Christmas, Christmas.

Messages are different kinds of news that come in all shapes, sizes and forms. One of our modern convenient methods of communication is the answering machine. Its electronic voice greets the caller and records the messages. Some news is joyful, some distressing and still others comforting. But no message has brought with it such startling joyous news as the Angel announced to Mary and Joseph - the birth of the Messiah!

Christmas is not just a day which recalls an historical event. We celebrate the fact that God has come among us, to guide us, love us, encourage us and forgive us. What astounding and wonderful news! Emmanuel, God-with-us!

The peace we need is the gift of God.
And the gift of God is Jesus.
He was born for us.
He brings God within reach.
He waits to be welcomed.
When the door is opened
He always enters,
And where He is, there is peace.

A Prayer for Christmas

Lord, sometimes you seem far away,
And I wonder if you are there at all.
There are so many questions –
So much I would like to know.
Help me this Christmas to find your gift,
Your peace,
Your Son. Amen.



The most important part about Christmas is the first six letters!

May Christmas be Christmas for you.

Roger Howell

PARISH REGISTERS

FUNERALS

8 November	Robert Ralley aged 86 years (Cremation)
9 November	Sydney Waring aged 77 years (Cremation)



11 Dec	9.30am	Family Worship
	11.15am	Holy Communion



18 Dec	10.30am	Family Communion
	6.00pm	Carols by candlelight

Christmas Eve	4.30pm	Crib Service
	11.30pm	Midnight Communion

Christmas Day	10.30am	Christmas Communion
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New Year's Day	10.30am	Family Communion
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Collections at the Christmas services this year will be given to the work of Tearfund, a Christian relief agency which helps poor people throughout the world. Special envelopes will be available for your gifts.



Nine-year-old Nan is learning to live normally again after the Boxing Day tsunami nearly stole her life. She was pulled out of the waves, but still holds traumatic memories inside. She needs sensitive counselling, and practical support for her family's fishing business so she can stay in school. Jesus showed his love for people in many ways, depending on their needs. He offered friendship, practical help, a word of truth. And

with your support, Tearfund can do the same all around the world; making sure the angels' message of good news at Christmas becomes a reality today.

TUESDAY 3 JANUARY 2006

The New Year begins for St. Mary's Church with a Day of Prayer for all our activities. The building will be open from 10am to 12 noon and from 2pm to 4pm. Suggestions for prayer and thanksgiving will be available. Come and go as you wish. You won't freeze – the church will be heated!

ST. MARY'S OPEN DAY

Many people would like to see churches open all the time for folk to use. For a number of reasons this is not a practical proposition, but the Parochial Church Council is planning two Open days on Saturday 25 February and Sunday afternoon 26 February next year. St. Mary's church is an interesting building and has undergone many changes since the twelfth century when the first church was erected. Come and find out what goes on in the church, how we seek to serve the local community and how we support Christians in different parts of the world. Further details next month.

SUPPORTING KIDNEY RESEARCH UK

AS EASY AS A WALK IN THE PARK

If you enjoy the endorphins a nice brisk walk brings, why not join Kidney Research UK in the Great Kidney Walk at Virginia Water, Windsor Great Park on Sunday 12 March 2006?

The walk is a great event for the whole family to get involved in and you can opt for the 4.5 mile family route if you so wish. Alternatively, there is also the option of a 5.5 mile route for those who want to challenge themselves a little more, with both routes starting and finishing at the Wheatsheaf car park. Whichever route you choose, you can take in the peace and tranquillity of the park, including landmarks such as the Old Temple and the Totem Pole!

The registration fee is £5.00 per walker, and although there is no minimum sponsorship, we encourage walkers to raise as much sponsorship as they can as proceeds will be used to further the work of Kidney Research UK in funding research into ways to prevent, manage and treat kidney disease.

New statistics indicate that 1 in 10 people in the UK suffer from Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD), although they may be unaware that they have the condition. There are some 35,000 on renal replacement therapies, which include dialysis and transplantation, but as yet there are still no cures.

Community Fundraising Manager, Elizabeth Wright, says, "We are delighted that Crown Estates has granted Kidney Research UK permission to hold the walk at the Great Park. We hope that people will take advantage of this unique opportunity to visit and raise money for a worthy cause."

If you would like to register, or require further information, please contact our events team on 08456 12 12 26 or visit www.kidneyresearchuk.org



Christians living in Purley are invited to meet on Tuesday 13 December, at 8pm in St. Mary's Church to pray for our community.

If you would like further details, please contact:

Sally Robertson
Chris Rayers

962 5978
942 1880

sally.a.robertson@ntlworld.com
c.rayers@talk21.com

CHRISTMAS DAY VIOLENCE LEADS TO EVERY-DAY PEACE

THE TESTIMONY OF A PRISONER

This is an extract from Darren Simpson's testimony. You can read the full story at <http://www.newtestamentpattern.net/testimonies/darrensimpson.htm>. He was released on 2 August 2004

One of the earliest memories that I have of my childhood is when I was about 10 years of age, the house that I was living in at the time with my mother and two brothers, was raided by the police. I remember them going into the bathroom and removing a gun that was hidden in the wall. As I was at such a delicate age I didn't really have an understanding of what was going on or whom the gun actually belonged to. There are numerous times that experiences like this have plagued my childhood – I think that it was very much typical of the area that we lived in.

These early years of my life were lived in this house that was in the middle of a very poor council estate in the city of Leeds. I would say that there were quite a lot of very traumatic events that shaped my early years. One recollection that I have is my older brother hitting my mother with a hammer on Christmas day and then proceeding to throw the Christmas lunch all over the house, as you can imagine it totally spoiled the day for the family. I am not able to remember any particular Christmas that was a happy occasion for me when I was a child. I suppose that due to the financially deprived area that we lived in, it was always a struggle to provide the amount of presents that society (and often us the children) deemed appropriate to celebrate the Christmas holiday... We used to play truant from school and do things like going stealing out of shops and generally acting loutish... Once I started to get involved in this crime it wasn't much longer until I received my first prison sentence – after already spending some time in the custody of children's homes. When I first arrived at prison (15 years of age) I reacted to it pretty much the same way that I had reacted to things throughout my life – violently.

I remember on numerous occasions that I have been in prison and I have attacked officers and inmates. This has often manifested itself in various ways – stabbings, beatings with table legs, even to the extent of taking another prisoner hostage for nearly two days. There was never any real excuse for the violence that I showed towards others over the years.

When things like this are done, the inmate (me) would be placed in the segregation unit – this is total removal from the normal prison environment. This is seen as both a punishment and serves to protect other prisoners from those that are deemed as violent or control problems.

Prison has changed quite a bit since those days, but at the time when you was in the segregation block it would not be unusual to be placed on a punishment called 'cellular confinement' that in effect would

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totally remove all your privileges for a stipulated period of time. When this was the case the only book that you would be allowed to have in the cell would be a Bible.

This book has always held a deep fascination to me and I would often be found in the punishment block reading from it. At the time though, it was more a case of trying to understand it, so that I could disprove it to those people that held it dear. One other thing that I would like to mention is that when an inmate is in the punishment block – the regular visitors that you have daily to check on the prisoner's welfare include a member from the chaplaincy department. With the attitude that I had at that time it used to cause me immense pleasure to learn certain parts of Scripture to use against such people.

Under the surface though, there was quite a large thing happening to me, I was reading God's Word daily and unbeknown to me it was to come back and hit me straight in the face when I least expected it...

Leaping forward a number of years to 2001, I was arrested for a burglary and theft from jewellers. I received from the courts a sentence for 4 years imprisonment. When I got this it did come as a little shock, but not too much as it was certainly something that I was used to. I have actually served about 10 years in total in prison custody – which is out of the last 15 years. So, rather than it becoming a second home to me, it had become my first home and the free world seemed a novelty to me.

Anyway I came into prison and thought that would carry on much the same as I had over previous sentences – fighting, totally against authority etc. What really hit home to me the degree of my plight was the fact that I used to look around at some of the older prisoners and think that I was becoming exactly the same as them. I am now 30 years of age and I can imagine that the younger lads are now coming into prison and looking at me and thinking that I hope I don't end up like him.

I had become exactly what I hadn't wanted to be... I was still reading the Bible as I have always found it to be very interesting and I was speaking to a varying number of groups that used to have some sort of faith or belief system – all of these were not necessarily of the Christian kind.

Also on this sentence after coming to the realisation above, I decided that I would actually get a job and try and improve the skills that I already have in computers...

Contrary to what I thought though, [the prison authorities] were willing to give me a chance and I was duly transferred to the Wolds prison in Yorkshire. One of the huge bonuses of this prison was that it enabled the lads who worked on the web-design venture to have free access to the Internet. Again this is only one of two prisons in the country that allow you this privilege.

Whilst I greatly enjoyed this, I used to go on some of the Religious message boards and see what was going on out there... While I was in this situation I was repeatedly drawn back to the Bible and I started praying. And the expression that I have used before – for want of a better way of explaining it – is real get down on your hands and knees "Lord, help me!" prayer. I think at this very moment the Lord gave me conviction of sin and it was then that I knew that I was a hopeless sinner and that I needed some sort of redemption.

I was also praying that I be introduced to someone that a clear idea of what they believed and on the Internet the Lord (Christ Jesus) sent my way a good Bible based believer. This was a direct answer to prayer and at the time I probably wasn't able to fully comprehend it. All I do know is that the Lord really spoke to me through the words of this man and the various other people that were introduced to me along the way.

I certainly won't say that my conversion was overnight, rather it was a gradual stripping

away process of the old me, to reveal the new man that Christ Himself had brought out in me. But the Christian faith is all about a process, a stripping down and building up if you like...

I am still in prison at the moment having only a very small time left until I am released. I have been with Christ now for a total of 2 years and the changes that He has brought about in me continue to surprise and amaze me. All the people around me are not able to accept where the change has come from...

As I reach the stage of finishing this prison sentence – I know that going into the world, as this new creation will be hard for me. It has already served to ostracise certain of my family and friends, though the Lord continues to build up the firm group of Christian friends that I have: in effect ensuring that I am not without fellowship in the prison setting and that when I am released shortly, that I will not feel as if I am alienated in the hostile environment. It is imperative that I learn to trust on the Lord more and more.

Everything that I do now I have to trust to the Lord Jesus Christ as I know that when I start to try to do things on my own back, then I am doomed to failure. I have tried so many times to succeed on my own steam, and failed time after time.

The victory in Christ Jesus has already been won on the cross at Calvary and with this victory comes perfect understanding that with Him with me – He will not let me fail.



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"I suppose there's no good reason why I shouldn't come back next week..."



As part of a government funded project to support the needs of voluntary and community sector organisations, the Volunteer Centre West Berkshire has appointed an Outreach Officer, Jacqui Sharp.

The Volunteer Centre has experienced growing success in the recruitment of volunteers, however it is recognised that there are many groups of people across West Berkshire who are unable to benefit from the centre's services due to location and/or limitations in access to the internet.

Jacqui's role will be to address this problem by working actively to promote volunteering within the rural and eastern parishes of West Berkshire. She will work closely with other groups to develop an outreach service which will run a range of activities across the region to encourage local people to get involved in volunteering and community development opportunities.

Any organisation seeking to recruit volunteers is invited to contact Jacqui at the Volunteer Centre to discuss needs and explore ways of working jointly to promote volunteering in the parishes. Jacqui can be contacted on 01635 49004 or by emailing general@nvb1.fsnet.co.uk.

PURLEY PRE-SCHOOL GOES ONLINE!

Purley Pre-School would like to introduce you to www.purleypreschool.co.uk our brand new website. It is an excellent way for parents to find out about Purley Pre-School as it is frequently updated with information about forthcoming events and fundraising. Through the website you can order Pre-School t-shirts, sweatshirts and other related items and there is also a facility to raise money for Pre-School while doing your internet shopping.

The website can provide you with lots of information about us, from our history to our current newsletter and you can easily send messages to the committee through the "Contact Us" section.

Those of you whose children already attend Purley Pre-School may be interested to know that the weekly theme is also available on the website. This is particularly helpful if, like me, you forget to look at next week's topic and your child is very keen to bring in an item for the interest table.

Of course, the best way to find out about Purley Pre-School is to come and visit us! Details of how to do this are on our regular advertisement in this magazine.

*Nicky Danbury
Chairperson of Purley Pre-School*

RAPID RESPONSE SERVICE

Carers look after adults and children who are disabled or have an illness. Many people cope in very difficult situations with little or no support and they are unaware of the help that is available to them through local voluntary organisations or the statutory authorities. Many people do not see themselves as *carers* at all. Many may be reaching the point of being unable to cope and may become ill themselves through stress – caring at home can be very isolating and tiring.

The Rapid Response service is available to all carers in West Berkshire and it is there to help if a carer reaches the point of crisis and they are no longer able to cope.

The project is facilitated by Newbury Crossroads who employ a member of staff to be on call on weekdays from 8pm to 8am and weekends for 24 hours a day.

A telephone helpline is available in the case of an emergency - a care support worker will support the carer over the phone and make appropriate telephone calls to gain assistance.

In addition, carers who have registered with Crossroads and have been visited by the Care Coordinator receive a service that allows the Care Support Worker to visit the carer's home in an emergency situation.

To register with Newbury Crossroads please call 01635 30008.

The Rapid Response Emergency Number for all West Berkshire carers is 07867 673063.

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Going on holiday? We sell travel insurance on request, foreign currency, and travellers' cheques can be ordered with 2 days notice. The current price for 1st and 2nd class stamps is 30p and 21p respectively.

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CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR INFORMATION

Latest recommended posting dates

Outside Europe (except Canada, Japan and USA)	Fri 9 Dec
Eastern Europe, Canada, Japan and USA	Mon 12 Dec
Western Europe (including Cyprus, Greece, Iceland, Malta and Turkey)	Wed 14 Dec
Standard parcels [inland]	Wed 14 Dec
Second Class	Sat 17 Dec
First Class	Tue 20 Dec
Inland Special Delivery	Thu 22 Dec

Holiday Opening Hours

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
¹⁸ Normal	¹⁹ Normal	²⁰ Normal	²¹ Normal	²² Normal	²³ Normal	²⁴ 9-12.30
²⁵ CLOSED	²⁶ CLOSED	²⁷ CLOSED	²⁸ Normal	²⁹ Normal	³⁰ Normal	³¹ 9-12.30
¹ CLOSED	² CLOSED	³ Normal	⁴ Normal	⁵ Normal	⁶ Normal	⁷ Normal

Pensions And Allowances



Post Office Card Account Date Payment Due	Payment Credited
Mon 26 Dec	Thurs 22 Dec
Tues 27 Dec	Fri 23 Dec
Mon 2 Jan	Fri 29 Dec

The latest order date for *Bureau de Change* required for Christmas is Thursday 22 December, and for New Year it is Thursday 29 December. There is no commission charge, except on Sterling Travellers Cheques.

Travel Insurance can be issued at the counter during time of purchase.

Last orders for Christmas flower delivery from *Post Office Flowers* is Tuesday 20 December before 1500.

If you are housebound and need a delivery, we will be happy to oblige. Just give us a ring.

Thank you to all our customers for your continuous support.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and New Year
Charlotte and Graeme Jenkins
0118 984 3230

FRIENDS OF PANGBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pangbourne Primary School PTA is to change its name to *Friends of Pangbourne Primary School* (FOPPS for short). By doing this it is hoped that old pupils, and volunteers from the community, will join in to help raise funds for extra items, which the children will benefit from and which will help promote sports within the school and help to raise academic results. All sorts of events are planned to give a wide range of family fun. One of the best attended community events is the monthly car boot sale, which has become established over the last 9 months; the sales are held on the second Sunday of each month, 11am-1pm, on the school car park. During the winter months they will be held in the Infant Hall if wet. If you would like to volunteer, helping at events, please contact Jayne Evans on 0118 984 2433.

PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

WINTER TALKS

On Wednesday, 16 November Mr. Jim Asher gave us a very interesting talk on *How can gardens help butterflies*. The meeting was well attended and I hope everyone enjoyed their mince pies during the tea break. The next meeting of the Society will be the A.G.M. on Wednesday 15 February 2006.



TRADING

The Shed is now closed for the winter months and will re-open 4 February 2006. Seed potato orders should be returned to Bob Hawkins as soon as possible. If anyone else would like seed potatoes, please contact Bob for an order form on 984 2949. Bird seed may also be purchased from Alex Stott on 941 9186 (email: vastott@aol.com) whilst the Shed is closed. Glenvale Nurseries, Hungerford Lane, Southend Bradfield would be pleased to receive a visit from any member of the Society, and give a discount. They stock shrubs, trees, pots and containers packed with colourful plants and water features.

On behalf of the Society, I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and successful gardening in 2006.

Marion Dabbs
942 2349

PURLEY PATHFINDERS A WALKING GROUP FOR LADIES

During our recent walks we have taken advantage of the long autumn season to enjoy the splendour of this colourful time of year. The weather has been kind to us, with sunshine bringing out the best in the changing leaves. On 1 November the sun shone in an unbelievably deep blue sky as we met in the quintessential English village of Turville. This historic village, dating back to 796AD, has been the setting for *The Vicar of Dibley*, *Goodnight Mr Tom*, *Midsomer Murder*, and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. On this November day a film crew was in the village again, filming an episode of *Miss Marple*. Unfortunately they didn't require 40 ladies and a dog as extras, so we left them to film in peace as we passed the church and cottages at the end of the village, familiar to those of us who are fans of *The Vicar of Dibley*. With Turville nestled between Chiltern Hills, it came as no surprise to find ourselves climbing as we set out to explore first one hillside, and then the other. Throughout, we were surrounded by autumn colour made more vibrant by the rays of the sun. The climbs rewarded us with outstanding views. Red Kites swirled around the valley below us – their reddish brown wings complemented by the russet of the beech trees. Before dropping back down into Turville, we passed close to the windmill featured in *Chitty Chitty*



Bang Bang, its white frame silhouetted dramatically against the blue sky. As we passed the village green we were transported back in time as actors, dressed in their old fashioned clothes, gathered beside vintage vehicles. We ended our walk with lunch in The Bull & Butcher – a typical old English pub, built in 1550. It comes complete with a 50 foot well in the dining room which can be viewed through a glass top, cleverly incorporated into a table. The name of the pub is said to be derived from Henry VIII and Ann Boleyn – *Bullen Butcher* - with Ann Boleyn being known as Ann Bullen, and Henry VIII, obviously, the *Butcher!*



We are so lucky to have many beech woods near Purley as they must surely be the prettiest woodlands in autumn with their orange canopy above, and orange carpet below. Our next walk set out to explore the beautiful beech-woods around Cane End, the first being Withy Copse. How lovely it was to meander along an orange path with sunshine reflecting off the trees in a warm orange glow. Our route continued along a lane with the attractive trees of the oddly named Nippers Grove on one side of us, and the sun streaming across the field on our other side. Hawhill Wood, the next woodland, proved just as pretty as the last, its trees allowing dappled sunshine through to make us all feel so good. We emerged alongside some of the thatched cottages of the hamlet of Nuney Green, then, cutting across fields, we were soon back at Cane End where we were made very welcome in The Fox for lunch.



We will be finishing our *year of wildflowers* with more woodland walks where we will be foraging for fungi – many as attractive as any flower! Then the Christmas festivities will be upon us, with a walk planned to finish up at a Christmassy Garden Centre, and our final walk of the year, our annual local

Winter Wonderland Walk, which will finish, as usual, with a festive shared lunch at St Mary's Church. I hope you have enjoyed *coming with us* on our wildflower walks through the pages of this magazine. Helping me to bring you even closer to *the real thing* will be an exciting new venture for the group – our very own web page, going live in January 2006. At www.purleypathfinders.co.uk you will be able to browse through all the photos taken during our walks, in colour! However, with Matthew's continued patience and hard work, I hope readers of The Parish Mag will continue to enjoy my write-ups, as next year we will be exploring our many local waterways, with some super walks already planned. If any ladies would like to join us – weekday mornings – they are very welcome to ring for a programme.

Wishing you all a Peaceful Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Nicki Woodward
984 2112

PANGBOURNE & DISTRICT BOWLS CLUB

On the rough green grass lie open horse chestnuts, the brown conkers glistening in the late autumn sunshine where in the summer the brown woods rolled along rink one. Leaves and worm casts dot the grass and the Green team are busy in spiking, raking, deep tyning. The beautiful copper beech is resplendent. The leaves on the surrounding trees look like a fairy tale or a painting by Turner: gold, red, yellow and brown in their autumn coats of many colours. This is the bowling green before the onset of winter and it fills one with longing for the next season and the musical click of bowls as they are kicked back after each end. Somebody once said to me there is no sound like it – they were right! Ever since I've kept those chunking, clicking musical sounds in my mind, and they'll stay there until once again I can feel the soft grass beneath my feet.

I only managed to play one game on the Green this year, and even that I spent sitting on a chair between ends. But we drew! I do hope that when I have the next knee operation I can get over it quickly enough to join in next year's games.

One of the few games I was able to arrange was Finals Day – it was a tremendous success for Nigel Cabeldu who won five single competitions. Normally the finals would have taken place on one day, but due to an unexpected, unwanted and unusual downpour at four o'clock on the Saturday, two of the games had to be held over until the Sunday afternoon. Nigel won each of those, finally beating Alan Blacklock by three shots in the Handicap Singles! It was a little awkward, as at the beginning of the season Nigel had been given a handicap of plus 2, whereas poor old Blackers was at scratch! He didn't complain, he never does, and played to his best, but even Blackers best wasn't enough to beat Nigel on this day. But a new member, Joy King, brought "joy" to Blackers when they won the Open Pairs competition.

Susan Batts won the Ladies singles for the second year, Sheila Drew the prestigious Doreen Hamblin trophy and Allan Tucker the Walter Greenford Cup. I was particularly pleased to see Allan's name on the cup, as he was one of the beginners I coached a couple of years ago, and I feel we still haven't seen the best of him yet. Alan and Joan Ball did well to beat Jack and Rita Messenger in the Mixed Pairs. Well done to all the winners and I hope next year even more members will take part in the Club Competitions.

On Tuesday afternoons Jan Readman runs the Tuesday Trophy competitions. These bring a lot of pleasure to many people, especially new bowlers and people who can only play occasionally. It is a friendly, but competitive game for which everybody taking part and winning received points. This year it was won by Bill Steele and the runner up was Audrey Holmes – another new bowler!

Doreen Miller has had very good year as Captain of the Pangbourne Ladies, getting higher up the table than last year, but not quite reaching the top spot and promotion, but there is always next year! Ralph and Doreen have been excellent members this year. Ralph has been very industrious on the Green and has passed an important examination in Green Keeping, which is good for him and of course, the club. Thank you Ralph!

This will be my last year as Secretary of Pangbourne Bowls Club. After thirteen years it has been long enough, I would be happy to carry on, but as the probability will be that I'll have my second knee operation early in the next season, I think it better to stand down (forgive the pun!). I hope that that Parish Magazine would still like me to put in my reports; it is nice when people say they've enjoyed it – not so enjoyable when somebody says "You've got that wrong!" Still it is fun!

Bless you all!

Bill Ayling

PURLEY W.I.

Many of us followed through to our yearly Group Meeting held in Pangbourne. This year our guest speaker and flower demonstrator was Mrs. Tattershall, so we came away with many ideas we can use.

Some of our ladies arranged a trip by coach to the New Forest and so enthralled were they, they can't wait to arrange another visit.

Four of us represented our W.I. and "volunteered" to participate in a General Knowledge Quiz at Burghfield. A fun evening and home we returned far more knowledgeable than when we went!!

Soon Christmas will be here and, as we are dining out at a local restaurant, we must consider the menu.

We were reminded of the Farmers' Market held on the second Saturday of the month at the Barn. We are very excited by it, so a few of us decided we must muster up some goodies, just ready for the Christmas stocking filler. There is certainly a friendly feeling up there, with mouth watering food. It is a place where you can "meet-your-mate-at-the-Market," so good for the village don't you think?

We welcomed Simon Jones, our own local valuer and auctioneer, and the evening speaker, with open arms. When he appears it is like having Santa Claus back, 'cos we want to know "what have you got for us." We were dazzled by the mixture of items for Simon to weave through. Such items consisted of coins, medals (with names and regiments on the back, one from someone who earned his medal in the Boer War); bone china vases large and small; teapots with or without lids; a wooden ashtray with the symbolic mouse carved by the famous Yorkshire man, Thompson. Also a delicate boxed bracelet made with turquoise and amethyst; many oriental pieces, some old and some mass produced; a large musical box, much sought after especially if you own one with interchangeable cylinders, and strangest of all (at home it was a love or hate article), was a small wall hanging of a horse's head with a riding crop through his teeth, so at the end of the day it was somewhere to hang your riding whip. So much professional advice was offered and absorbed with great humour and expertise and, when it comes to value, much depends on whether the item is being valued for insurance

purposes, for sale or for probate. We departed feeling pleased with the value of our antiques, but secretly gritting our teeth knowing what we had "dumped" due to house moves. Personally speaking, Simon, I don't know if I was sad or glad with your appearance. Joking aside, can't wait for your next visit, Santa. Simon finished by warning us to catalogue all our pieces; to date, photograph or photocopy items and leave details for the next generation. It may be of no interest to you, but will be history to someone else in the family. DO IT TODAY!

Flower Competition	1 st Bernardine Perry
	2 nd Sylvia Conquest
Out-of-date Goods	1 st Joan Pearse (Browning gravy 1985)
	2 nd Phyll Hasemore (Garlic granules 1993)

(De-clutter ladies – de-clutter).

Next month is our Christmas Party. We have a Music Hall theme, so get your feather boa out, plus your gay hat and sharpen up your vocal chords. Should you want to bring a friend; the cost will be £5 and a prezzie for the bran tub. Don't forget your cutlery and a glass. See you there – Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley. 7.30 kick off on Wednesday, 14 December.

Sylvia Conquest
0118 941 1936

PROJECT PURLEY

THE BATTLE OF TRAFALGAR

The Battle of Trafalgar took place on 21 October 1805, and exactly two hundred years later to the day, Project Purley members attended a talk by John Gurnett, a Trafalgar enthusiast. John was a society member before moving out to Burghfield and explained that he first became interested in the life of Horatio Nelson whilst living near the Maritime Museum in Greenwich and studying the diorama of the battle.

John began by detailing some aspects of Nelson's personal life. He joined the Navy at the age of 12 and, despite being vulnerable to seasickness, was quickly promoted, advancing from Lieutenant to Post Captain in three years. He was popular with his men, for whom he showed great care and compassion and, at the time of Trafalgar, was already a national hero due to his success at the Battle of the Nile. His weakness was his affair with Emma Hamilton. Both were married when they first met, but they fell in love, moved into a house in Langham Place, London and the union produced a daughter named Horatia.

Thoughts of home were far from Nelson's mind on the morning of 21 October however. The combined French and Spanish fleet, commanded by Admiral Villeneuve, had been sighted at 0530 hours off Cadiz, despite Napoleon's decision that he preferred to invade Russia. Nelson was already on board his flagship, H.M.S. Victory, with his crew of 800 men when the enemy was spotted and he

spent the hours before the battle began walking round his ship encouraging his crew and making sure they enjoyed a hearty meal. The sailors were well paid, knew they had the chance of prize money and respected their captain. They were spoiling for the fight.

Nelson's fleet had two other advantages. The English ships had been at sea for some time, so the men were well trained, especially in the vital art of gunnery, and Nelson himself was a far better and more fearless tactician than the cautious Villeneuve. The advantages offset the combined fleet's superiority in numbers of guns – 2,568 to Nelson's 2,148 and in sailors – Villeneuve's 30,000 to the Navy's 17,000.

At 1100 hours the two fleets were on a collision course, just three miles apart. Nelson sent his famous battle signal, "England expects that every man will do his duty," with *expects* replacing *confides* on the advice of Signal Lieutenant Pasco as it was quicker to send. Nelson's final signal to his fleet was "Engage the enemy more closely," and the battle began with the home fleet making a two-pronged attack on Villeneuve's ships. The two attacks, one led by Nelson and one led by his deputy, Admiral Collingwood, sliced through the combined fleet, who in the confusion, began to fire on each other. H.M.S. Victory, leading one attack, was hit by seven or eight broadsides and the poop deck became a slaughterhouse with 50 sailors killed or wounded before Victory could retaliate.

The battle lasted little more than an hour. Nelson's strategy of splitting and dividing the enemy worked perfectly. No British ships were lost, whilst Villeneuve lost 17 of his original fleet of 33. Nelson lost 1500 men, but 14,000 men from the French and Spanish navy were killed. Tragically, at the height of the battle, Nelson was mortally wounded, shot through the shoulder, lung and spine by a musket ball fired by a sharp shooter in the rigging of the Redoubtable. He was attended by Surgeon Beattie and Captain Hardy, but did not die before he knew his fleet had won a glorious victory.

The British crews would have liked to claim prize money, but a fierce storm caused many of the battered enemy ships to sink. The majority of Nelson's fleet made it safely back to their base in Gibraltar, where those who died on the journey back were buried. Nelson's body was stored in brandy and eventually returned to England to be carried down the Thames before the funeral service in St. Paul's Cathedral on 8 January 1806. Sailors in the burial party tore scraps from H.M.S. Victory's White Ensign, used during the service, as keepsakes.

Nelson's Will asked the nation "to take care of Emma Hamilton and Horatia", but nothing happened, possibly because of public disapproval of their liaison. By contrast Nelson's brother was created an Earl, awarded a pension of £5,000 and given by the state, £90,000 to buy a house.

Emma moved to Calais and died in 1815 before Napoleon could imprison her. Horatia married the Reverend Philip Ward, had nine children and moved to Pinner to live in a house which in recent times has been owned by Ronnie Barker, then David Suchet. She always denied being Nelson's natural daughter and it was only some years after her death that the wording on her gravestone was changed from *Adopted Daughter* to *Beloved Daughter*.

Of the survivors of the battle, Admiral Villeneuve, who had been taken prisoner, was brought to Reading on 6 January 1806 and allowed to stay in the town on parole. When he returned to France, he was stabbed in the chest and assassinated on the orders of Napoleon. Survivors of Victory's crew transferred to H.M.S. Ocean, having been given carved pieces of wood from Nelson's flagship as a memento of the epic battle which changed the course of British history.

Although John's voice was rather quiet, which made it difficult for those at the back of the audience to hear, the content of his talk was absorbing, as he covered a lot of detail in just sixty minutes, about the same amount of time as the duration of the battle itself. There was one more surprise to come, however, as during the discussion which followed, one of our members, Rita Denman, produced a fascinating memento. It was an invitation card, signed by Horatio Nelson when he hosted a formal dinner for friends at Merton, his country house, in 1805.

THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR

Project Purley raised a total of £425 as a result of the Rain or Shine Theatre Company's visit to The Barn in June to perform *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. A cheque will be handed over to the Thames Valley & Chiltern Air Ambulance Trust on Thursday 17 November at the Air Ambulance Headquarters in White Waltham. The amount raised is sufficient to keep the helicopter flying for about five hours, during which time assistance can be given to many accident victims. Rain or Shine will return to The Barn on Friday 16 June 2006, when they will perform another Shakespeare comedy, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

David Downs

PURLEY PLAYERS

*Friday and Saturday
3 and 4 February
at 7.30 pm*

*Saturday Matinee
at 2.30 pm*

**ALADDIN
2006**

*At The Barn
Purley on Thames*

*Box Office Opens
4 January 2006
Tel: 0118 941 3259 or 0118 984 2563*

*Tickets £7.00
Matinee - £3.50 concessions for
children and senior citizens only*

MESSAGE FROM HOME FARM

A headline in last week's *Farmers Weekly* read, "Farm income is predicted to continue its decline". The article below opened with the encouraging comment, "Farmers will lose an average £86/ha (£35/acre) next year just by growing crops and rearing livestock". This week an almost full page advert inserted by the Royal Payments Agency, part of D.E.F.R.A., seeks to employ Temporary Inspectors to be based at one of twenty six centres nationwide. With a salary of nigh on £20k, six weeks annual leave plus 10.5 days public and privilege holiday entitlements plus all sorts of other perks, working a five-day week, I am sure they will be inundated with enquiries.

At the Farm we are well into the winter routine. We have brought in all the animals we have room for, leaving a couple of dozen outside. To be perfectly honest, in the present cold and frosty weather they will, if anything, stay fitter outside, as long as we feed them well enough, but the mild and wet weather leads to the ground being poached. The cows are milking reasonably well, quantity down a little but quality, as far as solids are concerned, have rocketed. Our Holsteins producing 4.5% butterfat would put some Channel Islands herds to shame although Vicky complains that it is too creamy for a decent cup of tea.

As you are all aware, we are negotiating a new contract for waste disposal at West Berks. More emphasis must be put on recycling. However one potentially unpopular decision has to be made and that is whether we go to Alternative Weekly Collections, i.e. one week refuse, the following recyclable items. Although this will keep costs down, some will see it as a reduction in services and might prove unpopular when two week old rubbish starts smelling and attracting flies on a hot summer's day. The debate continues...

Another controversial decision(s) to be made is over planning at Aldermaston and Burghfield. The Atomic Weapons Establishment (A.W.E.) is to make an investment of £350 million in each of the next three years, to ensure that the existing Trident warhead stockpile can be maintained throughout its intended in-service life, which of course will need planning permission for some huge new buildings. I am not sure that I am qualified to make decisions on a critical national asset, but in for a penny!

So have you all received a Kennet and Thames Vision questionnaire? Or if not, have you collected or downloaded a form to fill in? It is only by putting your views forward that will give us the mandate to act. We have presented the consultation at two public meetings and have had a comprehensive press coverage which will hopefully help in obtaining at least 30% return for the random survey.

So if you have a little time in the busy run up to Christmas, please fill in a form and send it in so that we might be able to do some good in the New Year.

Wishing you all a happy and peaceful Christmas
From us all at Home Farm

Tim Metcalfe

PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL



As anticipated last month, the Council vacancy was filled at the October meeting by the co-option of Paul Sims from Park Walk and he was also invited to serve on the Recreation Committee. We again have a full Council of thirteen members, but if anyone is interested in serving as a councillor in the future, please contact the Clerk for further information as vacancies do arise from time to time.

At the same meeting the Council agreed in principle to consider a Deed of Dedication with the National Playing Fields Association for the Goosecroft Recreation Ground and Bucknells Meadow. Details will be confirmed by the Recreation Committee but although management would be retained locally this would ensure that these facilities would remain protected in perpetuity. We would be interested to hear any views from local residents. A suggestion that we might also consider long term protection of the Trentham Bowling Green will be investigated and discussed with the Bowling Club if this is possible.

As soon as refurbishment of all the Parish Council notice boards was completed the one in Knowsley Road was vandalised again. We are still seeking information on this criminal damage so please contact this office, or the Police non-emergency number 0845 8 505 505, if you are able to help. The only way that we can stamp out vandalism and anti-social behaviour is by ensuring that all incidents are reported.

We have had a number of enquiries about recycling of plastics and cardboard and West Berkshire Council will be reviewing their collection policies in 2006. In the meantime plastics may be taken to the Savacentre or the Island Road Civic Amenity Site. Although Reading Borough Council have withdrawn plastics from the majority of their local sites, cardboard and telephone directories continue to be accepted, with Tilehurst Station the most convenient site to Purley. The attendance at the November Farmers Market by the Community Furniture Project was a great success and they can be contacted on 01635 43933.

There has been some isolated reports of fly tipping and I have been asked to remind you that this can be reported to the Environment Agency on their incident hotline 0800 807060.

Alfred McAlpine Ltd has advised us that they will be carrying out work on the low voltage overhead lines over the next three months on behalf of Scottish & Southern Energy Power Distribution, which may involve some disconnection of the electricity supply. Those affected will be contacted directly.

I am pleased to report that following requests by the Parish Council, West Berkshire has finally agreed to upgrade many of the roads in Purley to the primary salting route schedule from this winter. This should benefit residents and others in Purley Village, Purley Lane, New Hill, Colyton Way, Brading Way, Chestnut Grove and Wintringham Way.

Consultation has commenced on the Kennet & Thames Vision (previously Eastern Area Vision) by West Berkshire. If you are one of the random residents selected

please participate to ensure that local views are taken into account. Further information can be obtained on the West Berkshire website and copies of the questionnaire will also be available from this office and Pangbourne Library.

Finally on behalf of the Parish Council may I extend seasonal greetings to all local residents and advise that this office will be closed during the weeks commencing 26 December 2005 and 2 January 2006.

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

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BRINGING CITIZENS ADVICE TO YOU THIS CHRISTMAS

Here at Reading Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) we are committed to helping everyone in the community. We are especially sensitive to the difficulties which **ELDERLY PEOPLE, PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES** and **THEIR CARERS** have in getting the advice they need.

During the Christmas Period for **2 DAYS A WEEK**, the Citizens Advice Bureau is offering you the chance to speak to an adviser on a phone line dedicated to the Elderly, and people with Disabilities.

This is a perfect opportunity to talk, in total confidence, about any problems which you may have, without having to worry about the bother of coming into the bureau to get the advice you need. This special line will be fully staffed so there is no need to worry about no one answering the phone, and if it's engaged just try again.

You will be able to speak to an adviser on the following dates:

Monday 5/12/19 December & Thursday 8/15/22 December – 10am till 3pm

If you telephone - 0118 950 2829 (quote ref shopping)

This is a special time of year, and we at the Citizens Advice Bureau hope we can make life that little bit easier for you this Christmas.



LOSING A PET

A really sad event occurred this month: A friend's dog passed away after a long and joyful life. There were originally three dogs, Tom, Dick and Harry, all brothers. Dick was the last to go, the end of a line. To lose a pet is one of the hardest blows to bear as anyone who has experienced it knows. The empty bed, the water bowl, box of toys all demonstrate that he or she has gone.

Two years ago our dear little cat, Chloe died and I still feel very sad without her. She came to us at only four weeks old. She could sit in the palm of a hand and had to have baby food, scrambled egg or Ready Brek for the first few weeks because she could not cope with kitten food. She was always little but had a huge personality to compensate. If she was told off for some misdemeanour she would bear a grudge and before the day was out would inflict a wound on face or hand to remind you not to mess with her. She lived to seventeen years old and that time was blessed with all the fun and devotion that a pet can give. She is buried under the quince tree in the garden, so we feel she hasn't left us completely.

Those who have never loved a pet will find all this incomprehensible and it's very difficult to express your sadness with such people. But what joy to share precious memories and anecdotes with others who understand the joy of a pet now lost.

Dorothy West



Carol Singing
Around Purley
Friday 16 December 2005
Everyone welcome to join in

Meet at 6.30pm in the car park at The Barn, Goosecroft Lane
after which we will be singing around the Trenthams Estate

VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE

In a recent email, Nicki Woodward wrote: "Many people say they read the mag from cover to cover, and more stories of village life can only be a good thing." Believe it or not, she wasn't offering to write another article!

I am sure that Nicki and her army of walkers wouldn't mind me taking a shortcut in one of their journeys, to make way for other stories, or pieces of news from around the village and local area – all it needs is for **you** to put pen to paper (or fingers to keyboard) and tell me what's going on.

I'm happy to publish most things, as long as it's not too controversial – at least in my eyes – and that it's your own work (or you have permission of the copyright holder to have it published)

Editor

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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