

PURLEY PARISH NEWS

FEBRUARY 2006



Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid ... for the LORD your God
is the one who goes with you. He will not fail you or forsake you
Deuteronomy 31: 6. (N AS)

35P

For the Church & Community of
PURLEY ON THAMES



ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

PURLEY ON THAMES

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BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

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FROM THE CURATE

Dear Friends

There's got to be more to life than this!

I wonder if you have ever experienced this feeling.

I suspect that many people have at one time or another.

According to the media, January is the busiest time of the year in divorce lawyer's offices. Couples who after the strain of the festive season have decided, 'there's got to be more to life than this!

Then there is a great increase in those joining health clubs in January, (and apparently falling attendances at them from February onwards!) no doubt filled with people looking at themselves after the festival excesses and saying 'there's got to be more to life than looking like this'

I have also noticed an increase in magazines articles on what is known as 'life coaching', where we are asked to imagine our ideal life and a 'life coach seeks to

help us work out the necessary steps towards achieving it. To help us get 'more out of life'

As a young woman, I remember thinking along with my contemporaries, that when we had moved away from home, had our own place and our own wheels, that life would be perfect. Some of us went off to university, colleges and others to work. Many of us soon discovered that when we did have our own homes and our own cars, we still had the feeling that there had to be more.

Some people believe that when they become financially secure and have a trusting stable relationship and a family, they will have arrived. But every day people with loving families and comfortable jobs decide to leave it all behind. The reason usually given is a 'mid-life crisis', nevertheless at the heart of it, is a feeling that there's 'got to be more to life than this' -- more than the day to day responsibilities of life.

And if our feelings are not quite that strong, then there are still those people who either live for the weekend or for retirement. And when that time of rest or retirement arrives they are at a loss. They feel there's got to be more. There simply has to be more to life than what we so often strive for.

People, have been feeling this way throughout the ages. In Old Testament times and even later when Jesus came to earth, people must have been feeling the same way, because they were hoping for a Messiah to change their way of life. Those who discovered the Messiah found their lives were changed. The problem was that many people missed out because they did not recognize that it was Jesus himself who was the Messiah.

Have you had the feeling that there's got to be more? That you are missing out?

If you have, you are right. There is more, more than just wealth and power and security and admiration. There is Jesus and a life dedicated to knowing and serving him.

If you have tried other ways to get more out of life, try Jesus. You will find that in him, there is more than you or anyone else could ever have hoped for.

May he become real for you in 2006.

Jean




PARISH REGISTERS

BAPTISMS

22 January Thomas Williamson
 Charlotte Jones

FUNERALS

5 January Derek Leslie Boyd, aged 78 years (cremation)
9 January Derek Edward Lambley, aged 70 years (cremation)



CHURCH SERVICES

5 Feb	9.30am	Family Worship
	11.15am	Holy Communion
	6.00pm	Holy Communion
12 Feb	9.30am	Family Worship
	11.15am	Holy Communion
19 Feb	9.30am	Family Communion with prayer for healing
	11.15am	Morning Worship
	6.00pm	Evening Worship
26 Feb	9.30am	Family Worship
	11.15am	Holy Communion
1 Mar		Lent course begins
Ash Wednesday		
5 Mar	9.30am	Family Worship
	11.15am	Holy Communion
	6.00pm	Holy Communion with prayer for healing



Mon 20 February

Tue 28 March

Mon 8 May

Tue 20 June

Mon 31 July

Tue 19 September

Mon 30 October

Tue 12 December

There's been a lot of talk (and action) recently about building new houses in Purley - but how about building the community? And how about asking God to help?

Over the past couple of years Christians in Purley from many churches have come together regularly to give thanks to God for our village, and to pray - for individuals, families, schools, groups, activities (and even the parish council and the councillors!)

Do feel welcome to come along to St Mary's on the above dates - even if you haven't before, or aren't too sure about prayer. We start at 8pm and are finished by 9pm.

If you can't manage it but want us to pray for you or a situation you are concerned about - just drop us a note or an email:

Sally Robertson - 962 5978 - sally.a.robertson@ntlworld.com -
Melyn Colyton Way (on the corner next to the shop)

Chris Rayers 942 1880 - c.rayers@talk21.com - 9 Allison Gardens

ST. MARY THE VIRGIN PARISH CHURCH

CHURCH OPEN DAYS

SATURDAY 25 FEBRUARY
10.30AM TO 4PM

SUNDAY 26 FEBRUARY
2PM TO 4.30PM

Historical display

Traidcraft

Bell-ringing

refreshments

Find our about weekday activities

Purley Tots

Hands of friendship

Baby Clinic

There has been a church here since the 12th century

Norman font and arch

14th century window

Seventeenth century tower



This is your church - come and see!

It may seem strange for a church to be advertising an "Open Day" as this may give the impression that it is closed for the rest of the time! Sadly we have to keep the church locked these days, but it is always open for services on Sundays and during the week it is in use by various groups most days. We have decided to hold these open days on Saturday Feb. 25th and Sunday Feb. 26th to provide an opportunity for residents to visit the church which has much interesting history attached to it, and to see what does go on there day by day. There will be displays of different sorts - including one by Purley Project our local history group. So come along and find out more about the story of Purley where you live. It is after all, your church. We look forward to meeting you.

OTHER CHURCH STORIES

Sudan - a church in Khartoum was set on fire on 18 Oct 2005. This simple building had served as a church for 200 Christians since 1980.

Indonesia — Many churches have been forcibly closed - as many as 30 a month. Three Christian ladies are in prison for allowing some Muslim children to attend their after-school club. They share a 5m x 5m cell with 5 other women prisoners, sleeping on hardwood platforms with no blankets or sheets. They have to pay the prison guard to turn on the water for their toilet.

The strange thing is that the Christian Church is growing in places such as these!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HOW MUCH!

£3000 - that is what it will cost to replace the long hand which was removed from the church clock during the autumn. What happened? Only the person(s) responsible for its removal will know the answer to this one. This incident was the last (hopefully) in a series of thefts from the church which began last July when the shed was broken into and the strimmer stolen. Two weeks later the same thing happened and the mower was taken. Shortly after that the other shed was broken into. A week or two later I could hardly believe what I saw, or rather did not see - the long hand was missing from the clock face on the church tower!

My most charitable thought is that it simply worked its way off the dial and fell to the ground. But even if that is the explanation, the fact remains that it was stolen from where it would have laid on the ground. Other possibilities are that either it was knocked off by a missile from a catapult or by a football or some other flying object. Or it could have been removed manually by someone climbing a ladder - some 25 feet above ground!

Whatever the correct explanation is, the hand has been taken and since then the clock has been silent. To replace it necessitates a new hand being made and then fitted. Because of health and safety regulations, ladders are not allowed and so a bosun's chair will have to be used. The cost for this, which involves 2 men and overnight accommodation, will be £3000! Where is the clock hand? Was it thrown away somewhere, or does it adorn someone's house as a kind of trophy?

Roger Howell (Rector)

RE: ANXIOUS TIMES

I was very sorry to hear about the problems experienced by the writer of the letter titled 'Anxious times' in last month's issue. Unfortunately, there is little I can do to help unless he or she contacts me directly, either via e-mail or at my regular Monday evening surgeries in the Purley Parish Office. At the moment, I don't even know which street the writer was referring to.

However, I would like to make a couple of points. Firstly, let me stress that if criminal damage is being caused or, in particular, firearms are being discharged in your street, the correct course of action is to dial 999 at the time. It is hard to believe that the sort of damage described could be caused without waking people up.

If you are calling the non-emergency number (0845 8 505 505) the next morning, it is important to give as much detail as possible. Very often, people know who is causing the problem but are reluctant to name them or even describe them. Police cannot act without evidence. That means you have to tell them who did what and when. If you are genuinely frightened of reprisals you can always call the Crimestoppers number (0800 55 1111) and remain anonymous.

Yes, calls to the non-emergency number are logged. This is important, because the information on where problems are occurring can be used to inform police action. Don't assume because a policeman hasn't come walking down your street or knocking on your door in broad daylight that nothing is happening. For instance, how many of us know that major operations involving large numbers of police and vehicles have been taking place at night along our borders with Reading to prevent the spread of crime and disorder into Purley and Tilehurst?

We are lucky in having a very experienced community policing team based in Pangbourne which should soon be up to full strength and benefiting from the addition of a couple of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). We sit down with them regularly in the Neighbourhood Action Group to discuss the best way to tackle problems together with our partners, including Sovereign Housing, Youth Services and others, so please do not think your problems are being ignored.

*David Betts (david.betts@purleyonthames.net)
Chairman, Pangbourne and District Neighbourhood Action Group*

FOOTPATH 5

Many of you may not be aware of the alteration that are being pursued with the Newbury Planning office to the footpath number 5, You will know it better as the footpath running up from the Oxford Road opposite the top of New Hill through to the top of Simons Close. This footpath is primarily used as a short-cut for the schools in Long Lane.

The present owner of Domus intends to build two large detached houses in his back garden. To do this he has applied to build a road alongside the footpath. The council had previously refused access through his driveway off the Oxford Road because it was considered to be dangerous to pedestrians and road traffic. We cannot see the application to build a road to be any safer.

The footpath has a railing at the end which slows children down before they cross the Oxford Road, either to the bus stop or down New Hill. What with the New Hill junction, Long Lane traffic lights, private driveways and bus stops all so close together, another road cannot be an improvement on safety. I can only see fatalities and danger to our younger community members. Objections were to be put into the planning office by 9 January and it wasn't general knowledge before 7 December. With the busy Christmas and New Year period I would think a lot of people wouldn't have got their objections in by this deadline. It is a real shame to see beautiful large houses being knocked down everywhere to construct mini housing estates with postage stamp gardens. This is, I have been told, encouraged by the Labour Government's new legislations to build more housing everywhere and anywhere.

Do the councils consider the already overstretched schools, dentists and doctors surgeries in the areas they keep allowing more housing developments? If you are in a similar mind to us, please put your objections to: Mr Gary Lugg, Head of Planning & Transport at Council Offices, quoting 05/02749/OUTD.

Mr & Mrs Furness

W A M: YOUNG PEOPLE WITH A MISSION

Young people tend to get a lot of bad press these days, but here in Purley-on-Thames there are some wonderful youngsters who have a mission – not to make the neighbours' life a misery – but, hopefully, to make life for others better by their presence.

WAM is St Mary's Church youth group, ranging in ages from eleven upwards. On Sunday mornings members take an active part in services, e.g. playing musical instruments, demonstrating the actions for the 'children's songs', acting out sketches to help get the week's message across. While the younger members of the church go to their Sunday School classes, WAM go upstairs to their 'den' where, under the leadership of an enthusiastic team, they learn more about how to be a good Christian, and discuss issues which are important to them during their adolescent years. One week a month they go to 'WAM Awayday', held in the local minister's home. Here they can express themselves more noisily, and enjoy a longer, livelier session!

Twice a month WAM meets up on Sunday evenings for 'Club Night'. A varied and interesting programme is drawn up, with the help of WAM members, for these evenings. Games nights are popular in the church, taking advantage of the space in the hall (and the table tennis table!). Other nights may see members puzzling over questions during a Quiz Night; getting messy on a Craft or Cookery Evening, or tucking into chocolate on a Fondue Evening. Some club nights members go to events planned outside the church – Rounders matches at the park, Fish & Chip Walks, Bowling, Laser Quest – the ideas they come up with are seemingly endless, but all great fun! These club nights are also a chance to meet up with other Christians, as youth groups from other churches are often invited to join in the fun. It's nice for youngsters to know they are not 'alone' or 'strange' in their faith. This is reinforced for them each year when they participate in events such as 'Soul Survivor', where tens of thousands of young Christians meet in the summer for fun and fellowship.

It's **OK** to be young and a Christian!!

As our young people reach 18, many go off to University, College, or have Gap Years. However, during holidays, it's lovely to welcome them back – within seconds it seems they've never been away! The Summer Holiday Club, welcomed by a hoard of Purley children, would not be the same if it weren't for the input by WAM members. The young people of WAM are a great asset to the church here in Purley. 'A great asset' and 'young people' are phrases expressed together too infrequently. The press will savour any young person's wrong doing. Well, here in Purley, we can report that there are plenty of 'good kids' living amongst us. Many of our youngsters have dedicated their time to Christian service. Some have gone on to train in youth ministry work here in the U.K., whilst others are soon to travel overseas to places such as Angola and India, working voluntarily for several months with churches there. These are, obviously, major and very worthwhile things to undertake, but for each of these, there are many 'good deeds' being done every week by youngsters in our community.

If you would like to explore your faith whilst having wonderful fun with the young people of St Mary's Church here in Purley, then come along to our 9.30am family service. You will discover 'normal' young people, interested in fashion, the pop world, sport, or the latest soap scandal, but all making the journey of exploration of faith. You will be made very welcome. Or, if you prefer, speak first to one of our ministry team. You will find their numbers at the beginning of this magazine.

PROJECT PURLEY

CHRISTMAS PARTY

This year's Christmas party was held at the usual hospitable venue of Rick and Val's residence in The Gatehouse on the chilly evening of Friday, 16 December. Once upon a time this was the regular venue for our monthly meetings, but as the numbers attending society talks have increased, we have needed to move to the larger surroundings of The Barn.

However, The Gatehouse proved once again the ideal location for our festive gathering. Always a popular event in Project Purley's social calendar, 36 members and guests were present, whilst the list of apologies included the strangely-named "Marion Fingerprints." The crowd of merry-makers was just the right size to fill the downstairs room, allowing people to circulate comfortably and, at the same time, ensure a lively and constant hum of conversation.

Among the guests were David Betts, Chair of Purley on Thames Parish Council, and John Chapman, Chair of West Berkshire District Council. Both had enjoyed a busy day as, during the morning they had, in the company of Princess Anne, The Princess Royal, attended a rural housing seminar at Hampstead Norreys. Her Royal Highness is President of the Rural Housing Trust and John had the responsibility of proposing a vote of thanks and also wishing "Happy Christmas" to the entire Royal Family.

On arrival at The Gatehouse partygoers were greeted with a welcoming glass of mulled wine, just sufficient to loosen tongues and encourage happy mingling. It was also time for a hectic exchange of Christmas cards and then for a tuck-in at the superb buffet which had been brought along by members. Next came the traditional Christmas competition, which this year consisted of an antiques quiz organised by Lee Hall. Some members were concerned that "antiques quiz" might mean that they had to guess the ages of society members, but this proved not to be the case, as Lee had prepared a set of twelve cards, each featuring an antique object and for which members had to estimate the value. Half the fun was in actually tracking down the cards as they moved around the guests, but when the quiz sheets were completed and the answers marked, the winner was found to be David Downs with a score of 10 out of 12. His prize was a box of Christmas baubles, for which he didn't need to guess the value as it was written on the side!

The cheerful buzz of chat and laughter continued until just after 10.30 p.m. with most of the discussion concentrating on family plans for the holiday period,

before Jean Debney drew everyone together for a vote of thanks to Rick and Val for their hospitality. In the true spirit of Christmas, there was no shortage of volunteers to help with the clearing away and washing up. Then it was time to drift away into the cold night air, though everyone was kept warm by the memory of such an enjoyable evening.

The next meeting of Project Purley will be on Friday, 17 February when Rick Jones will speak about The History of the Lodge.

The date for the Rain or Shine Theatre Company's production of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" in The Barn has been confirmed as Friday, 9 June 2006 at 7.30pm. Details of ticket prices and sales will be announced in a future edition of the magazine.

David Downs

F.O.P.S. – FRIENDS OF PURLEY SCHOOL

F.O.P.S. was born in 1998, thus formalising the relationship between parents and teachers at Purley Infant School. The aim was to raise funds for the school, and in so doing, support the growth and development of all our children within school.

In a small school like Purley Infants it is clearly evident how the funds raised through the very generous support of parents, teachers and the local community benefit our children directly.

The funds we have raised have over the years bought I.T. equipment such as computers and Interactive Whiteboards for the classrooms, as well as supporting school trips through the funding of transport.

Fundraising events have taken the form of Cake Sales, Refreshments at school assemblies, sponsored events – undertaken by both the children and some parents, as well as the annual Christmas Fayre and Summer Fete. We have also been able to throw a Spring Party and Disco every year for the children to enjoy. This year (2005/6) we were able to fund a professionally performed Pantomime in the new School Hall, which was also attended by Purley Pre School.

We have a close working relationship with Purley Pre School, with whom we jointly run the Christmas Fayre each year, and are also developing our relationships with Long Lane School, through discussions around the introduction of a 'Walking Bus' between both schools.

F.O.P.S. is a registered charity and is managed by a committee, which is elected at the Annual General Meeting in the Autumn term each year. These committees have been, and continue to be, dedicated and hardworking, meeting at least once per term. The committee has formal Officers in post – Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, as well as general members. Mrs Goddard is an active general member. In addition to the committee itself we rely on the support of parents and teachers in order to staff all the events throughout the year.

At a recent Committee meeting, we agreed a target for our fundraising efforts. We hope to raise £1500 over the next two academic years, to purchase new computers and related equipment for the school. We will have a barometer on display within the school to chart our progress. If anyone would like to know more about F.O.P.S. or would like to offer their services in any way – all ideas are welcome, please do contact the school or class teachers, who will direct you to a member of the committee.

*Debbie Mackay
Chair F.O.P.S.*

WINTER SUN

We're off on holiday very soon. This is the first time we've gone away at this time of year, so it's something of an experiment. In retirement, the winter seems very long. The short days and cold weather limit the summer joys of day trips, lunch in the garden or driving to see friends in various parts of the country. So this seems like a good time to fly out and find some winter sun.

Everyone who's been there tells me that Madeira is a super place and we're assured of a good time. But it does lack some of the magic of past holidays that were usually planned around some book, film or play that had deeply affected me. One of the most memorable took place after I had been bowled over by Visconti's film "Death in Venice". It is the most amazing film with magnificent views of Venice, a deeply moving performance by Dirk Bogarde and the music of Mahler's fifth symphony. The opening scene is of a boat journey across the lagoon to the Hotel des Bains on the Lido where much of the action is set. It is about as perfect a piece of film as you can get and made me resolve to try and recreate that journey.

I managed to trace the hotel which is exactly as seen in the film, even the same name. I booked three nights for a sum that would have bought us a week in a more modest place but only that hotel would do.

Arriving at Marco Polo airport, a courier met us with the proverbial clipboard, telling us that a coach is outside to take us into Venice. Husband says "fine" and goes off to recover suitcases. But I am horrified at the thought of seeing Venice for the first time from the windows of a coach! I refuse to do it and go looking for an alternative when I spot a man in beautiful green uniform with gold lettering across his hat saying "Hotel des Bains"!...He approaches me and says "Mr and Mrs West? The launch is outside to take you across to the hotel". Husband returns and accepts the inevitable.

The journey in to Venice was exactly as in the film, a dream come true. I would have been perfectly happy to return home then.

The hotel and holiday were lovely. But in a note of realism, I have to admit that the trip on the launch appeared on the final bill and was not unsubstantial! But I don't care!

Dorothy West

PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

FEBRUARY UPDATE



I regret that the Reading Chronicle recently managed to put a negative spin on the monthly Farmers Market held at the Goosecroft Recreation Ground. It is my understanding that both the organisers and the stall holders have been pleased with the local support so far. Agreed dates to come are 11 February, 11 March, 8 April, 13 May and 10 June. When future dates are agreed they will be publicised both here and on our website.

On 11 February the Community Furniture Project will also again be attending to provide an opportunity to donate surplus re-useable furniture, domestic appliances, electrical items and household goods for re-use. Smaller items can be left on the day whilst arrangements can be made for the collection of larger items by ringing 01635 43933. Further information can be obtained on their website www.cfpnewbury.org

Grant application forms have been now been sent out to local organisations with a view to consideration by the Council for awards to be made at the end of March. The budgeted amount available is limited so information has also been provided on alternative sources of funding. If your organisation did not receive a form and is interested please contact this office without delay as applications will need to be returned by the end of the month.

We have been advised of the possible temporary closure of Purley Lane for resurfacing work during the period 1 February to 31 March. The actual closure will be for a shorter period and will be indicated by notice boards displayed up to 14 days in advance. West Berkshire Council has also undertaken to write to residents affected. The authorised alternative route during this time will be via Oxford Road, New Hill and Purley Village.

*Brian J. Smith
Clerk to Purley on Thames Parish Council*

PURLEY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Our work in Purley on Thames on the Village Plan, and in other areas, is receiving increasing recognition, both locally and nationally.

West Berkshire Council is applying for Beacon status (a Government initiative to recognise centres of excellence) for its work with rural communities on developing parish plans and has chosen Purley as its main case study. In recent weeks I have been working closely with WBC senior officers, executive members and partners on presenting our case to a Government panel, both here in Purley and in London.

The good news is that feedback to date shows us to be scoring highly in all the categories on which we are being judged. We should know whether we have been accepted in a couple of months and confidence is high. If so, the plan is to share our experiences with other groups and local authorities throughout the country through conferences and road shows.

In fact, Purley is already participating in a Parish Planning conference at Newbury Race Course on 8 February, which has sold out with delegates coming from all over the country. One of the things we have been asked to share is our experience in working with the Police in developing the Neighbourhood Action Group concept of community policing. We have also been asked to share that experience with senior Police officers from all over Thames Valley at a seminar on Neighbourhood Policing best practice.

As if that were not enough, we have also been asked by the Environment Agency to participate in the launch of a new and improved national flood warning system. This will highlight the work that has gone into developing our Flood Response Plan following the flooding of January 2003.

Meanwhile, those of you who have participated in the consultation exercise on the Thames and Kennet Vision – or read the booklet – may have recognised that many of the proposals being discussed have been raised through the Purley Village Plan. Response to the consultation has been high and we should be hearing much more about the Vision in the coming months.

Implementation of the Village Plan continues in other areas. One of our latest successes has been to restore the Pangbourne to Tilehurst cycleway to West Berkshire's programme. This will run up Purley Rise and along the Oxford Road and will involve some widening of pavements – another Village Plan objective.

Work continues on developing initiatives to provide more activities for young people, including the provision of a ball court and a cycle track at Bucknell's Meadow and we are negotiating a trial visit from a mobile skate park. We also have high hopes of seeing the Neighbourhood Warden scheme currently operating in Tilehurst extended to cover Purley during 2006.

The Farmers' Market continues to be a success and is proving to be something of a monthly social event for the Village. Don't be put off by suggestions in the local press that this is under threat. The newspaper in question got hold of the wrong end of the stick... although it is true to say that its long-term success does depend on our continued support as customers.

David Betts
Chairman, 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

Parish Office

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Purley on Thames

Reading

RG8 8DR

Tel/fax: 0118 984 4507

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

www.purleyonthames.net

PURLEY ON THAMES CC PRE-SEASON TRAINING 2006



Indoor pre season training for all age groups (from 6 years to Adults) will commence in February 2006 at Denefield School.

Starters (aged 6/7/8) will be offered an "Introduction to cricket" course, based on the principles of long term athlete development and basic introductory cricket skills starting on

Sunday 12 February.

Under 9s, Under 11s, Under 13s and Under 15s will all have sessions on Sunday afternoons starting on 12 February.

For full details of all Junior cricket, please contact Martin Bishop (0118 945 3117)

Details of Under 17s and Adults nets, or if you are generally interested in participating: coaching or helping behind the scenes – please get in touch with Martin Bishop 0118 945 3117 or Barry Carter 0118 942 2075.

Don't worry if you have no previous experience – we are happy to assist with training and registration...

WEST BERKS SCRABBLE® CLUB

On 22 January, The Barn in Beech Road was again the venue for the 6th West Berks Scrabble Tournament. 96 participants attended the event on a fine winter's day. With competitors coming from as far afield as Exeter, South Wales, Southend and the South Coast, it was nice not to have to worry about people being delayed through bad driving conditions.

The players were split into 3 divisions, each of 32 players, according to ability. In the A division, Di Dennis from the London Scrabble League was triumphant, winning all 6 games. Similarly in division B, Janet Bonham from the Aylesbury Club also won her 6 games. The C division was less clear cut with the top two players both having the same number of wins and the same 'spread', which is the winning (or losing) margin and can be considered as similar to football's goal difference. Using a complex formula for splitting such ties, the eventual winner was Nicola Staunton of the Bournemouth Club.

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

Trophies were presented by Ms Jo Hunt representing the Thames Valley & Chilterns Air Ambulance.

All members of the West Berks Scrabble Club played some part in the day's proceedings, ensuring that the tournament went off without any hitches with competitors promising to come again next year and see some more of the local environment. With all administrative services being given free, including also a

veritable banquet of home made cakes during the afternoon interval, the tournament was able to provide a donation of £610.87 to the Thames Valley & Chilterns Air Ambulance.

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

The Club, which is Purley based and meets twice weekly, on Tuesday evenings and on Thursday afternoons, welcomes players of all standards, from beginners to experienced players.

For further information call Ian or Elizabeth Burn on 0118 984 5045.

PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

AGM

The 27th Annual General Meeting will be held in the Purley Memorial Hall on Wednesday, 15 February, commencing at 7.45pm. It will be followed by a talk and slide show by Mr. Ben Viljeon on "Mauritius". Members are reminded that any nomination for election as an officer or Committee Member must be made in writing to the Secretary, Mrs. P. Brightwell, 99 Devonshire Gardens, Tilehurst, RG31 6FF by 8 February.



TRADING

The Trading Store will reopen at 10am on Saturday, 4 February and thereafter will be open each Saturday and Sunday between 10am and 11am until the last Sunday in October. Membership of the Society for 2006 is £1.50 and subscriptions can be renewed at the Trading Store when this reopens. If anyone is interested in seed potatoes, order forms can be obtained from the Trading Store when it reopens or Bob Hawkins on 984 2949. Bird seed may also be purchased from Alex Stott on 941 9186 (e-mail: vastott@aol.com) or Bob. If you would like to order Suttons Seeds through the Society, catalogues will be available in the Trading Store. Alternatively, you can get in touch with Margaret Rolfe on 0118 941 7247.

SPRING SHOW

This will take place on Saturday, 8 April in Purley Memorial Hall. Schedules will be available in the Trading store in early March.

The Society had two successful outings in 2005 and we would be pleased to receive, at any of our meetings, suggestions for future trips.

Marion Dabbs
942 2349

PURLEY PATHFINDERS

A WALKING GROUP FOR LADIES

After the Christmas break we have enjoyed getting back into our boots and walking off the festive indulgencies!

The theme of our walks for 2006 is 'Waterways', and being blessed with many watercourses and lakes in our area, there has been plenty of scope when making up the walks programme.

For our New Year Celebration Walk we decided to walk the 'key' river in Purley – The River Thames. We left the village along the Thames Path through Purley Beeches, to soon be on the footpath beside the river below The Roebuck. The Thames Path varies enormously along its route from The Cotswolds to London, and this stretch differs completely from our own open meadowside path. Here it is enclosed as it weaves its way beneath a pleasant canopy of trees. Various waterfowl kept us company, and at the boatyard at Scours Lane we paused for a while to watch hoards fly in noisily to share the bounty from within a gentleman's paper bag! Soon the landscape opened up as we walked through the waterside meadows. The river looked splendid as its surface transformed into a mirror, reflecting the trees on this atmospheric morning. Eventually the smart houses of



The Warren came into view on the opposite bank, and as we neared Caversham Bridge, with its large population of swans, we even saw one property with a helicopter parked on the drive! We took a lingering look along the majestic river before heading for The Toby Carvery where we enjoyed a New Year lunch. Afterwards a few caught the train back, but most felt refreshed enough to retrace their steps back to Purley.

For our next walk we gathered in the Pangsides village of Hamstead Norreys, once winner of 'Best Kept Village'. During a dry summer we have seen the River Pang flowing along through the village, but on this winters day, it was slightly disappointing to find the riverbed dry – strange! However, after several grey days, sunlight lifted our spirits and warmed our soul. So, enthusiastically, we climbed out of the village to soon walk within a landscape of variety, with arable fields, at various stages of management, divided by hedgerows, and interrupted by small copses. Numerous birds could be seen, from large buzzards on the look-out for prey, to tiny skylarks singing their hearts out as they rose and fell in distinctive fashion. At the top of our climb we paused to take in the wide view – wonderful! We entered woodland, its beauty outlined in the skeletal shapes of its naked trees. From near Yattendon we took one field path after another to eventually pause on a wide plateau. Here we soaked up the history of the area, for this was where Wellington Bombers were based, leaving here for



the D-Day Landings. Soon the village of Hamstead Norreys came back into view. We stood above the rooftops and trees which surround the Norman church tower, before dropping down to arrive at The White Hart, which welcomed us for lunch.

Our last walk in January will find us overlooking the Thames Valley as we make our way around the varied countryside surrounding Upper Basildon. In February we will be making the most of the snowdrop season as we track down these plucky little winter beauties.

Our February Social Event will also make the most of the season as, on 8 February, we will meet at Welford Park for a walk in their grounds and woodland, dissected by a lovely stretch of the River Lambourne. Here thousands of snowdrops form a magnificent white carpet – a fleeting sight not to be missed! (Opening dates are 1 Feb – 2 March Tues, Wed, Thurs, Sat & Sun 11am–4pm. Tea & Cake available!)

Well, I hope you have enjoyed reading about our walks this month. For more information, photos etc do look up our NEW WEBSITE. E-mail or ring if you are interested in joining us.

www.purleypathfinders.co.uk

*Nicki Woodward
984 2112 (niw2001@lineone.co.uk)*

JANET FOSKETT SCHOOL OF DANCING

Classes are held at Whitchurch Village Hall - with many Purley children attending. These classes are held on a Monday and Thursday evening. If there is enough interest, I will start a new a Tiny Tot (2½ to 4) ballet class and a pre-primary class on a Tuesday evening at St Mary's, Purley.

20TH ANNIVERSARY SHOW REMINDER!

This will be held at Pangbourne College on Saturday 25 March 2006. Are there any ex-pupils (and I know there are many!) out there that would like to be involved in the above? This could be in a helping out capacity or an 'old girls' number.

PILATES

There is a long established class on a Thursday afternoon at St Mary's Purley, as well as one at Whitchurch on a Monday evening.

Should anyone be interested in joining the above, then please contact me. I also offer 'one to one' sessions on a personal trainer basis.

If you require any further information on the above, then please do contact me.

*Janet Foskett
Dance and Pilates Teacher
01635 863891*

CROSSWORD ANSWERS

Across

5 HEAVE, 6 PRAISE, 8 LATE, 9 CHESTNUT, 10 SEASONS, 12 HIGH, 14 BURY, 15 RAISING, 18 FOUNTAIN, 19 LAMA, 20 DEPEND, 21 STONE

Down

1 PHRASE, 2 FACE, 3 DEACONS, 4 MATTHIAS, 6 POEM, 7 SOUTH, 11 STRANGER, 13 EARNEST, 14 BROKE, 16 NUMBER, 17 BAND, 19 LION

NEW YEAR MESSAGE FROM THE POLICE

Over the last twelve months the local neighbourhood policing team has been working hard fight crime and to deal with local issues that have been identified to us as 'community' priorities.

The team have been raising their visibility, not only by the use of traditional patrols; but also by touring the area with the mobile police station to host 'surgeries' in villages and at local events.

The mobile police station gives us a really effective opportunity to consult with local residents; helping us to really get to know how you feel and what are your priorities.

If you see the mobile police station in your area please go and say 'hello' to the officers and talk to them.



We also hold public consultation events throughout the year, they are advertised so keep an eye out and please come along, we wan to know what you have to say.

In our work we have to constantly balance these 'community' priorities, with fighting crime and other policing issues. Our neighbourhood style of policing helps us to galvanise the support of local people, agencies and the parish councils to increase the positive effect we can have on all these areas. Key to this work has been your local Neighbourhood Action Group, which brings together all these key people on a regular basis to problem solve local issues. This partnership work helps save a huge amount of police patrol time which can be diverted to other problems such as fighting crime.

The problem with our fight against crime is that it rarely becomes a 'community' priority, unless a large proportion of the community become victims of crime. (The 'community' priorities are often speeding, parking and anti-social behaviour.) Be assured though we will not ignore crime; if we 'took our foot off the gas' for a moment crime could easily spiral out of control and it would quickly become a 'community' priority!

I have selected four areas to give you updates on; crime; anti-social behaviour; pubwatch and speeding. This gives you a flavour of what work is going on to make our communities a safer place to live.

Have a happy and safe New Year

Inspector Rodger Cartwright

REDUCING CRIME

During the last few months your local policing team have been involved in several very successful anti-crime operations. These operations have led to the arrest of over 40 criminals including car thieves and burglars. Many of these criminals were travelling across wide areas, committing crimes in many areas, including Pangbourne, Tilehurst, and Calcot, Theale, Mortimer, Basildon, Burghfield, Aldworth and Purley.

I am surprised by the number of break-ins to cars and homes that could have been easily avoided by the victims taking very simple security measures.

One of the best ways to help to reduce crime is to do everything you can to prevent yourself becoming a victim. Lock your car, lock your home, and do not leave property in the way of thieves. It seems simple, but believe me it really works.

But a word of warning: motor vehicles have an area of weakness, the windows; it takes only a moment to break a window and steal something from inside.

Go to your car is there anything in it that can be stolen? It does not have to be valuable, it could be a coat, a bag, CD's, etc. Is your radio removable, can you disable it when you leave your car?

Finally look in the boot, is there anything in it that could be stolen. Do not give a thief the satisfaction of finding anything to steal.

Don't be lazy, clear out your car - before a thief clears it out for you!

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

The previous year has seen the never ending problem of anti-social behaviour involving youths continue. The local policing team quickly responded with high visibility patrols, this tactic has worked well, but often displaces the problem to other areas. This constantly keeps us busy!

Motorbikes

The problem of anti-social behaviour has been added to by the 'unruly' use of motorbikes and mini-motor bikes; with the help of many local land owners we have made headway in stemming the increase in these problems.

Unfortunately the problems with motorbikes are on-going, but my team has had some striking results in targeting the perpetrators. This has resulted in several motorcycles being seized by police.

We are also using some interesting methods to help solve the problem. For example when the user of a motorcycle is a housing association tenant, we have

carried-out some reassuringly effective work with parents to ensure that they manage their children. The motivation for the parents to be involved is the conditions imposed on them by their tenancy agreement. It's only a pity that we cannot do this with other home-owners and tenants.

After having such success dealing with the anti-social use of motorcycles, I only hope that motorcycles have not been the Christmas present of choice this year!

Halloween

A dedicated team of neighbourhood officers and Specials were on patrol to give a visible presence in areas that have already been identified, from previous years as suffering from bad behaviour during the October event. The team targeted areas where the elderly and vulnerable have been frightened by the excessive and, sometimes criminal, behaviour of trick or treaters in previous years.

Pc Ian Henderson led the operation on the ground and said: "Halloween can be harmless fun. But in the past the behaviour of some trick or treaters has been intimidating and even criminal and there have been incidents of vandalism, broken property and graffiti. This kind of behaviour can be particularly frightening for the elderly and vulnerable and we want to ensure that they feel safe and secure.

The team did an outstanding job and made a real difference helping to make people safer and feel safer.

PUBWATCH

An effective pubwatch is up and running your area, this is very powerful means of helping to reduce anti-social behaviour. The pubwatch brings together local publicans as a group and allows them to work together as a team.

One of the main ways the pubwatch works, is if a person is barred from one local licensed premises, the pubwatch can agree to ban that person from all the licensed premises in that pubwatch area, which includes pubs and hotels. This is a really powerful deterrent and really makes people think twice before being violent, or even just rowdy.

SPEEDING

Speeding is always a concern of our communities and on the 18th November the local NAG has organised and ran a speed awareness day in Pangbourne; this event was a real partnership of local parish councillors, residents, West Berkshire Council and the Police and was a real success.

As part of neighbourhood policing, public consultation meetings are held regularly in order to determine the main issues that are affecting peoples' lives. Speeding is always in the top three.

In response to this, the Neighbourhood Action Group, residents and partners, supported by the community policing team and West Berkshire Council's Road Safety Department organised a Speed Awareness Day in Pangbourne.

Following a 7.30am briefing at Pangbourne police station, the residents, all of whom volunteered their time free of charge, took to the cold and frosty streets of Pangbourne in order to deploy SID devices and ensure speeding motorists get the message



The SID device indicates to drivers how fast they are going and display a "smile" or a "frown" depending on the speed.

Those over the limit were stopped by Thames Valley Police roads policing officers and given the option – pay a fine or listen to the implications of speeding. Those whose speeding was so excessive did not have the option and were forced to take the fine.

Nineteen drivers were stopped and 15 decided to go with the residents to the road safety van where they received a lesson on speeding and watched a hard-hitting video which shows the damage, and often death, that can be caused by being just a small amount over the speed limit.

The remaining four cases will be subject to further prosecution.

Some statistics for those who are interested; eighteen of the drivers stopped were in cars and one was in a van; fifteen of the drivers were male and four were female; the speeds people were stopped for ranged from 37mph to a massive 51mph!

Mr David Betts, chairman of the Pangbourne and District Neighbourhood Action Group, said: "Speeding remains a main concern of residents in this area and is an issue we are always being asked to take action on.

"We want the people of Pangbourne and district to be safe and we hope that today has raised awareness and taught some drivers a hard lesson – and warned others to think and slow down."

Phil Frost, Road Safety Manager for West Berkshire Council, added: "This was a successful joint initiative that was designed to raise the profile of speeding issues and to highlight that there are still motorists who speed, who need to be taught a lesson.

"The residents came out in their own time today to make a difference and take action on an issue that affects their lives. It is a pleasure to work with them and support them and we will continue the campaign to save lives."

We have received to really positive feedback from locals and we definitely plan to do similar events throughout the police are in the future.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL POST OFFICE

PANGBOURNE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Pangbourne Primary School PTA had a fantastic fundraising year in 2005 - raising almost £20,000! Our target for 2006 is to raise money for Interactive White Boards which are now such necessary pieces of equipment for each class. We will continue to run our monthly car boot sales on the second Sunday of each month in the school car park 10-1pm and have also got lots of other exciting events planned, such as the Annual torch lit Easter Egg Hunt, May Fete, Bingo etc, etc. So keep your eyes peeled for posters and notices in local newspapers. See you there and thank you for your support at our events during the past year.

Jayne Evans

PURLEY W.I.

DECEMBER 2005

Purley Memorial Hall always lends/bends itself to the occasion and, at Christmas, it never fails. So dripping with holly and greenery the festive mood is set. We decided on a Music Hall theme, so complete with our own compere – she/he looked the part with curly moustache and side burns, and being a word-smith, Leslie Honnor delivered her own introduction. We sang some oldies and with the musical accompaniment of Edna Bint we finished with a very unmusical but active rendering of the Twelve Days of Christmas and, I'm not joking, it had to be seen to be believed!! We do hope our visitors from neighbouring groups had fun – it is always good to have their support. We were then treated to an excellent supper followed by a present from the Bran Tub.

We also fitted in our speaker for the evening, Pam Harman, who recites comical monologues on owning your own false teeth, weight watchers (the ups and downs or rather the ins and outs) and finally, a detailed description in rhyme of being trapped in the back seat of a car when the seat belt refuses to work. It sounded like something from a Mr. Bean saga! All good fun and we all went home happy.

JANUARY 2006

Happy New Year to you all, so here we are again. This month we decided to start with a quiz – something to get the grey cells working, always a shock to the memory! All went well, plenty of humour and we rounded off with a pleasant supper.

Flower of the Month Competition: 1st Sylvia Conquest 2nd Dorothy Viljoen

This month's speaker is Chris Smallbone, the subject the "Longest Night." The competition is Favourite "Night Cap". The meeting will be held on Wednesday, 8 February at Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley at 7.30pm. Visitors welcome.

Sylvia Conquest
941 1936



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.

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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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