

# PURLEY PARISH NEWS

**SEPTEMBER 2007**



*God's house is open to all..*

**35P**

For the Church & Community of  
**PURLEY ON THAMES**



# ST. MARY THE VIRGIN PURLEY ON THAMES

[www.stmaryspurley.org.uk](http://www.stmaryspurley.org.uk)

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This magazine is published on the first Saturday of each month (except August). The price of each issue is 35p with a discounted annual subscription price of £3.50 for eleven issues.

We welcome all contributions to this magazine, particularly on local issues and events. Copy can be delivered either in writing or by email. Please note however, we 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 1/2-page entry to be published. If specially preparing content, please set your page size to A5.

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## PRINTING

Richfield Graphics Ltd, Caversham

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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<b>THIS EDITION PUBLISHED</b>	1 SEPTEMBER
<b>NEXT EDITION COPY DEADLINE</b>	22 SEPTEMBER
<b>NEXT EDITION PUBLISHED</b>	6 OCTOBER

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# FROM THE CURATE

Dear friends

As I write this, the media is assuring me that summer will start on the 17 August, so by the time you read this I hope this has proved to be the case and that we are all bathed in sunshine!

The disastrous start to the summer is in complete contrast to the drought conditions and hosepipe bans we endured last year. As river and ground water rose in July, so many people experienced distress as they waited to see what would happen to their homes. A large number of homes and gardens were flooded and many other people have told how they narrowly missed the water coming in.

The frequently asked questions were *Why did it happen? What could have been done to prevent it?* I heard many of the views expressed by scientists, councillors and politicians, but nothing they said was finite or conclusive.

Rain or its absence is an important sign of God's activity in Scripture. Rain can be both a symbol of judgment and blessing. In the story of the flood, rain is an agent of God's judgment on a world that had turned its back on God.

During the days of Elijah God did not send rain for three years as a sign of judgment because the people were turning away from Him and worshipping a false god, Baal.

And Jesus himself spoke of building our spiritual lives on strong and firm foundations rather than on sand so that when the rain and storms come the *houses* which we have built remain secure.

Just recently a few of our bishops were taken to task by some of the media for implying that the devastating floods in Northern England were a sign of God's judgment upon lifestyles which contribute to global warming and which in effect countermand God's mandate to respect and care for this world's finite resources.

Sometimes we need to be careful and not to too readily enter the fray of citing specific weather occurrences as signs of God's judgment, though I do believe that the actions we take as human beings have consequences, *cause and effect*. What we sow, we reap! There does seem to be a growing consensus that global warming and its effects on our planet are a result of how we have chosen to live.

One of the great promises that came out of the judgment of the flood in the Old Testament was that God would not let the earth be destroyed. This is His promise

*As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, will never cease*

However the responsibility of how we use and care for the world remains firmly in our hands. If we continue to plunder and abuse our world, in that sense we will bring our own judgment, in terms of climate change and the devastating effects that arise from those changes.

God's judgment for today? I don't believe so.

A wake up call? Well perhaps we have all been brought up sharply with the impact that we are making today on our environment and will find ways to minimize those negative effects.

With Best Wishes

Jean

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## PARISH REGISTERS

### BAPTISM

22 July Joshua Andrew Garratt

### CONFIRMATION

15 July Kirsty Sidorowicz, Katrina Corrigan, Emily Davies, Frances Jones  
Janet Hewett and Daphne Middleton

### WEDDINGS

14 July Christopher Stares and Sophie Heath

18 August Paul Evans and Clare Newman

### FUNERALS

26 June Edwin Donovan aged 90 years (Burial)

13 July William Burgess aged 70 years (Burial at Beech Road)

31 July Roger John Bird (Cremation)

14 August Louisa Randall aged 67 years (Burial at Beech Road Cemetery)

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An Afternoon of

## COMEDY & CAKE!

You are all invited to spend a fun afternoon

St Mary's Church Hall

2-4pm Friday 2 November

Our local *Pam Ayres sound-alike*, Marjy,  
will entertain you with some of her amusing poems

Be prepared to laugh out loud!

There will be an interval for Tea & Cake and a chance to chat.

Just turn up! Bring your friends! Good endorphins guaranteed!

May we suggest a donation of £2.50 towards the £11,000 needed for work on  
the sewage pump, boiler and gas pipe at St Mary's Church

Nicki Woodward – 984 2112

## WHAT GOES ON BEYOND THE LYCH GATE?

Quite a lot actually! You may be familiar with the inside of St Mary's Church through attending Purley Tots, Singing for the Brain, a Pilates class, or a number of other activities which use the church hall. Or you may have attended a wedding or funeral in the church itself. But what happens on a Sunday?

For most of the year, there are three service times, 9.30am, 11.15am and 6pm, of which the morning services are held every week, and the evening service on the first & third Sundays in the month. The atmosphere of the services differ, which suits the needs of different people, but new people coming to worship God are always welcome.

But you may be wondering which service to come to. The 9.30 service developed as a family service, and children are with the congregation part of the time and in their Sunday School groups the rest of the time, and there is a crèche for those even younger. The service is very informal, encouraging participation, especially from the children. The music tends to be modern, including guitar music, and songs written in recent years. Once a month there is a Family Communion service.

At 11.15, the service is more formal, and most Sundays it is Holy Communion. The exception is the Sunday when there is Communion at 9.30, and then the 11.15 service is Morning Worship. The music is more traditional, though some hymns are quite modern.

The two evening services in the month usually alternate between Holy Communion and Evening Worship, but occasionally there is a livelier *Songs of Praise*. The usual services are more traditional, with written order of service and hymns. The mood of this service is quieter, meditative, relaxed - a good tonic before the stresses of the new week!

If you've never tried our Sunday services, or it's been a while since you've been able to attend, there is a great opportunity available on Sunday, 30 September. This day has been set aside nationally as *Back to Church Sunday* and if you're feeling a bit nervous or apprehensive - you will not be alone! St Mary's will be delighted if you'd like to join any of the services and an invitation has been sent to lots of people in Purley. Just give us a call if you'd like a personal invitation - don't put it off as it could change your life!

*Jacky Brown.*

For more details, contact Rev Roger Howell on 941 7727 or any of the Back to Church Sunday Support Team: David Bolam 942 1020, Pam Slingsby 961 5585, Sally Robertson 962 5978, David Manning 942 9630 or Babs Waring 942 8844

# BacktoChurchSunday

*everyone back  
to my place*

**30 September 2007**

## CHURCH SERVICES

2 September	9.30am	Family Worship	
	11.15am	Holy Communion	
	6.00pm	Holy Communion	
9 September	9.30am	Family Worship	
	11.15am	Holy Communion	
16 September	9.30am	Family Communion with prayer for healing	
	11.15am	Morning Worship	
	6.00pm	Evening Worship	
23 September	9.30am	Family Worship	
	11.15am	Holy Communion	
30 September	9.30am	Family Worship	<b>BacktoChurchSunday</b>
	11.15am	Holy Communion	
	6.00pm	Songs Of Praise	
		- hymn singing with some old favourites	
		and some new ones!	

## HARVEST THANKSGIVING

### SUNDAY 7 OCTOBER

10.30am A thanksgiving service for all the family  
6pm Harvest Communion

***WE DEPEND ON THE LAND FOR OUR FOOD  
COME AND GIVE THANKS TO GOD!***

## COMMUNITY MEMORIAL SERVICE

### SUNDAY 14 OCTOBER AT 3PM

This is a short service of remembrance for loved ones who have died. Our speaker this year will be Canon David Winter a former Head of Religious Broadcasting at the BBC. Special invitations are being sent to all who have had family funerals at St. Mary's Church or at Reading Crematorium in the last few years, but everyone is welcome to attend. The service will last for about 40 minutes and is followed by refreshments.

## PANGBOURNE, SULHAM AND TIDMARSH

John Staples, Rector of Pangbourne, Sulham and Tidmarsh is retiring in mid-October and will be leaving the area after 11 years service here. We wish him, and Jane, God's blessing as they begin a new phase in their lives. Please remember the congregations of the three churches as they plan for and manage the vacancy.



**Mon 10 September** will be a prayer walk starting outside St Mary's Church at 8pm. Please come equipped to walk and bring an umbrella if necessary!

**Tue 30 October**

**Mon 10 December**

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, places 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

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## **WEST BERKS SCRABBLE CLUB**

Now that we are into September it means that the Scrabble Club commences the Thursday afternoon meetings once again. We have had our long three-month summer break and we are refreshed and eager to establish once more our Thursday commitment to our games of Scrabble.

We also meet on Tuesday evenings.

People of all abilities are made most welcome. Thursday afternoons are particularly for "beginners" where we give guidance, if needed.

If you play, or have in the past played Scrabble, and like the idea of joining a club - not only to pursue the word game but to meet and socialize with local people - then why not come along and join us.

We meet in The Barn, Goosecroft Lane, (off Beech Road), Purley, on:

Tuesday evenings - 7.15-10pm

Thursday afternoons - 2-5pm

For further information, please speak to Ian or Elizabeth on 984 5045.

## **SELL YOUR WARES TO THE LADIES**

Purley Pre-school and Purley Infants School are holding a Ladies shopping evening on Thursday 11 October. Stalls are £10 each and stallholders are asked to provide a raffle prize. If anyone is interested in having a stall please contact joan\_halfacree@hotmail.com. Further details regarding purchase of tickets will follow.

## **KEEPING FIT AT THE BARN**

11 September is the start date for our class in the Barn on Tuesday evenings.

This class is for people who want to be mobile and exercise the body and mind.

We aim to have fun and at the same time workout.

Adults! If you have always wanted to Tap Dance, then come along on to our session on Wednesday 12 September at 8pm in St Marks Church hall, Cranbury Road, Reading.

*June Mycroft*

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## **MAKE YOUR VIEWS HEARD**

### **PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON FUTURE OF HEALTH SERVICES**

Berkshire West Primary Care Trust (PCT) has launched a consultation of its draft Commissioning Strategy, which is running from 7 August to the end of September. This strategy details how the PCT plans to buy healthcare services over the next three years.

PCTs work with their local population to improve health and well-being. They do this by commissioning (or buying) and providing a comprehensive and equitable range of high quality, responsive and efficient services within the budget allocated to us.

Berkshire West Primary Care Trust covers the West Berkshire, Reading and Wokingham areas and is part of the South Central NHS Strategic Health Authority.

In drawing up our commissioning strategy, the PCT sought the views of the public through an engagement programme called *Your Care, Your Voice, Your Views*. We used the valuable feedback from patients and their families, received via our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), and from complaints we received over the past year. We also undertook a detailed assessment of local health needs, which has helped us focus on what our local priorities should be.

The above helped the PCT identify a number of commissioning priorities that we believe require specific action. Our plan is to address gaps in service and ensure we are giving patients the right treatment in the right place at the right time.

Now we need your help to tell us if we have got it right.

An Executive Summary of the draft strategy and an online feedback form is available on the PCT's website [www.berkshirewest-pct.nhs.uk](http://www.berkshirewest-pct.nhs.uk) alternatively for hard copies please call Heidi Druce on 982 2916 or email [public.consultation@berkshire.nhs.uk](mailto:public.consultation@berkshire.nhs.uk).

We look forward to hearing from you.



First of all a brief update on what crimes I have been investigating this past month. I have been dealing with numerous incidents of criminal damage and theft in the Burghfield and Theale areas and also incidents of arson near Bradfield along with a few others that I can't really write about.

The Pangbourne Neighbourhood Police Team recently had a training day with Berkshire Ambulance Service teaching us how to give oxygen and also how to use defibrillators. I have not had to use them for real yet but I'm sure it will happen eventually, so hopefully for the patient's sake I will remember what to do!

You might have noticed that I haven't been patrolling your areas as much recently and this is due to the fact that the area I have covered has increased. I am now also the Neighbourhood Specialist Officer for the Theale, Burghfield and Mortimer areas, so this obviously means that more time is spent in the Police Station and in other areas. To make up for this you have PCSO NIX who provides reassurance and is also a deterrent, conducting high visibility foot patrols.

This past month I held a consultation in Purley by knocking on people's doors in a few streets near to St. Mary's Church. While some residents did have concerns regarding speeding vehicles, anti social behaviour and litter over 50% of people had no concerns at all in the local area, which going on results from similar consultations carried out elsewhere is a good result.

I have also been gathering information on certain individuals and looking at getting anti social behaviour orders against them as they have a negative effect on the community.

At the recent meeting of your Neighbourhood Action Group I was decided to make the use of motorbikes in Sulham Woods near Purley a priority for the group and also speeding in various villages. These are problems that have been around for some time so they will not be solved overnight but I am sure with the help of our partner agencies we will be able to tackle them effectively.

And finally in Purley and particularly Pangbourne, residents have had to contend with flooding. I and other members of the Neighbourhood Police Team were on duty on the Friday night wading through water keeping residents informed of what was happening and helping to evacuate people that wanted to get out. I would like to thank all those residents who assisted us and their neighbours on the night and into the weekend. Police Officers that had come in to help from neighbouring areas commented on how community spirited everyone was and that they hoped that their residents would pull together as effectively as you all did if a similar situation arose in their areas.

If you wish to contact me you can either send an email to [matthew.allen@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk](mailto:matthew.allen@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk), call into Pangbourne Police Station, or phone 08458 505 505 (24 hour non emergency no.) and leave a message for me. As ever if you see a crime in progress don't hesitate to dial 999 and ask for the Police.

*P.C. 5110 ALLEN, Pangbourne Police Station*

## **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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## **PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL**

The next Farmers Market will be held at the Barn on the 8 September when the Community Furniture Recycling Project hopes to attend. Future agreed dates for the market in 2007 are 13 October, 10 November & 8 December. If you live locally, please assist with the parking by walking to the venue if at all possible.



At the time of writing this article West Berkshire Council are still advising householders to retain the issued sandbags and not to put them out for collection until notified. If you wish to store them for future use they recommend the sand and bags are stored separately to avoid rotting. Please use the WBC website for updated information, which we will also post on the notice boards and our own website when received.

WBC is promoting a community stage show at Theale Village Hall on 19 September highlighting doorstep crime & fraudulent trading. Further information is on the WBC website or contact Trading Standards (01635 519930) or [tsadvice@westberks.gov.uk](mailto:tsadvice@westberks.gov.uk) to obtain a limited number of tickets.

By the time this is published, we will have submitted our accounts & annual return to Hacker Young for audit after these have been confirmed at the August council meeting. The statutory notices have been posted on the notice boards as required. Copies will be available on request from the office and will also be posted up on our website.

As well as the usual No. 75 football bus service on Reading FC match days from Goodliffe Gardens (1320 afternoons & 1850 evenings) there is now a new No. 75A service from Pangbourne which will also serve the stops at Purley Post Office (1315 afternoons & 1845 evenings) & the top of New Hill then following part of the other route. West Berkshire concessionary passes are accepted on these routes. Further information is available on the Reading FC & Reading Transport websites. Purley Sports & Social Club is also starting a coach service for members and any enquiries should be directed to them.

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

## CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Firstly, apologies that the chairman's column did not appear last month.

Clearly, the village and Parish Council are relieved that the flooding events recently were not as serious for many people as we had feared. We believe that the various agencies worked well together, enacting the upgraded emergency plan that had been prepared after the 2003 event, and that the village was well supported. On behalf of Purley, I have thanked all of those involved, especially West Berkshire Council (WBC). We are now working with them to best handle the aftermath, including the disposal of sand bags.

Before all this happened, the Council was busy deciding what strategy and actions to adopt to address the few parking issues that have been brought to our attention. We are scheduled to meet with WBC Highways to agree how and when our proposed actions can be implemented, but we do know that they will offer a further opportunity for public comment before anything is undertaken. I would like to thank all those who gave us feedback on the consultant recommendations – we intend to write back to each of those people with details of our decisions, which will also be published widely after our discussions with WBC.

We have also had to engage in emergency sewer works up at the Goosecroft Recreation Ground, when the old sewer pipe collapsed recently; are fighting for planning permission to continue with the cycle track project in Bucknell's Meadow ; and had a busy period of maintenance for parish grounds and paths at this time of year.

We hope that our website and this column continue to be useful as information sources. Graham Rolfe has kindly taken over as *webmaster* of the site, making some considerable improvements. Please contact him for queries, or to put your information on the site.

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

Neighbourhood Wardens: 945 5286  
westberks.wardens@sovereign.org.uk  
www.sovereign.org.uk/wardens

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RG8 8DR  
Tel/fax: 0118 984 4507  
E-mail: clerk@purleypc.wanadoo.co.uk

**[www.purleyonthames.net](http://www.purleyonthames.net)**

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## NOVEMBER FAYRE

On 17 November 2007, St Mary's Church plans to hold a Fayre. Look out for lots of new stalls and attractions. Maybe you could get some early Christmas presents, as well as coming to have some fun and enjoy our the refreshments.

## **THE GREAT FLOOD – OR WHY SPOIL A GOOD STORY!**

The impression given to the outside world was that hundreds of houses have been flooded in Purley on Thames - one headline read *Purley in Thames!* Whether you live up the hill or down by the river you would probably have been inundated by phone calls from friends and family asking whether you were alright.

We had an Air Sea Rescue ground crew, a rest centre set up by West Berkshire Council, the Police, the ROAD CLOSED sign - all poised for the big event but we were more awash with the media than water! TV crews from the BBC, ITV, SKY and many European networks camped out by the river willing it to give them that one picture. But instead of the disaster they were all primed for, good old Father Thames gurgled around a few gardens, lower floodable basements and low spots in Wintringham Way and River Gardens then disappeared without trace – as he often does – thank God.

Whilst most of us were irritated by the media, some were very obliging - one family even allowed them in to film the family wading through 6 inches of water in their lower basement. This film was shown on BBC as if it was part of their living accommodation. Their living accommodation - including their front door was completely unaffected. In fact, the number of houses flooded in Purley was – wait for it – NIL.

Unfortunately, the lasting legacy of all this negative and unfair media coverage may be to the detriment of Purley on Thames as a whole. Terry Wright, Flood Co-ordinator for the Environment Agency, has assured me that he will give the correct figures to local estate agents. It is up to all and every one of us to put the record straight because, otherwise, whichever road we live on – we will all be tarred with the same brush.

The simple message is NO HOUSES FLOODED IN PURLEY IN JULY 2007!

*Jenny Jones*

## **PROJECT PURLEY**

### **TWELFTH NIGHT AT THE BARN**

The Rain or Shine Theatre Company visited Purley on Thames for the third time on Friday 8 June, on this occasion to perform Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. The visit was organised by Project Purley and at 10am on the morning of the eighth, Cliff and Jean Debney, John Chapman, Peter Perugia and David Downs met in The Barn to prepare the venue. We spent a couple of hours setting out chairs and tables, then greeted the actors with tea, coffee and biscuits when they arrived at midday.

The company is totally self-contained so it was fascinating to watch their eight-strong party set up staging, lights, music and costumes then apply their makeup and do their vocal warm-up before the 1.30pm matinee performance. This was for a group of one hundred girls and staff from Kendrick School who are studying the play as part of their GCSE literature syllabus. They were joined by a handful of local residents who were unable to make the evening show. The girls laughed

in all the right places, adored Malvolio's languid frailty, clapped enthusiastically at the curtain, then left for their coaches following what their Head of English called "a wonderful experience."

Hazel and Mike King came down to The Barn at 4pm to provide a much appreciated high tea for the actors, who were able to relax for a couple of hours before the evening performance. The Barn's capacity of 140 had been sold out and, once again, the skill, timing and professionalism of the company provided a superb evening's entertainment. The play ended at 10pm, once again to rapturous applause and within an hour, the actors had changed, packed away their equipment, said their goodbyes and driven off into the night, though not before they had promised to return next summer to present *A Winter's Tale*.

Project Purley's percentage of ticket sales, plus income from the raffle, donations and Catherine Sampson's refreshments table meant that we have raised a total of £750, and this sum will be donated this year to Macmillan Cancer Relief. On behalf of Project Purley, I thank all those who helped to make the event the successful and enjoyable occasion it was.

The next meeting of Project Purley will be held in The Barn, off Beech Road, Purley on Thames on Friday, 21 September when John Chapman will be speaking about the history of St Mary's Church.

*David Downs*



## **AN INVITATION**

Would you like to sing in a friendly adult four-part choir? Thames Vale Singers invite you to an open rehearsal at 8pm on Tuesday 11 September, at Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Tilehurst. All are welcome so do please come along.

We recognise that it can take courage for an adult to join a new organisation or take up a new leisure pursuit, particularly if they are unsure they will actually enjoy it or have the aptitude required. At the *open rehearsal* you can sample singing with the choir in a relaxed atmosphere without any obligation. The evening will be tailored especially for potential new members whatever their current level of ability. There will be some serious singing but the accent will be on fun and enjoyment.

Subject to there being suitable vacancies membership is open to anyone with enthusiasm and commitment. There are no auditions, nor is previous experience a requirement. We have immediate places for tenors and basses but in order to preserve size and balance there is currently a waiting list for sopranos and altos.

September is an ideal time to join because the choir will be preparing for Christmas and we will also start learning Mozart's Requiem for a performance next March.

For more information about Thames Vale Singers or the *open rehearsal* please don't hesitate to ring 962 4651

## MESSAGE FROM HOME FARM

With the foot and mouth outbreak seemingly under control and dry weather forecast for the bank holiday weekend, we are hoping to catch up with harvest and hay making. The July storm that wreaked havoc in many areas is still the subject of much debate, indeed the Environment Agency who have commissioned a full investigation and report say they need 6 months to complete it!

Purley by and large escaped the floods if not the media coverage, which to all intents and purposes was completely O.T.T. The longer term residents on the river estate could not understand what all the fuss was about; saying "we've seen it before and we'll see it again". However, maybe not in July.

The folk who suffered from the flash flood from the high level of the Sulham Brook do want some answers. Many theories abound, such as the sluice gates being opened on the Speen reservoir to protect water down the Pang. The Pang being partially blocked by contractors building a new home in Tidmarsh, possibly sending water across the fields to the Sulham brook. This vast amount of water was never going to make it under the main road let alone through the culverts under the railway which led to nigh on 100 properties being flooded, the worst in Bourne Road but many others behind Pangbourne Primary School and in Sulham itself.

What supports this argument is that houses in *The Moors*, the lane that runs down behind Somerfield, certainly expected to be flooded, being on the side of the Pang and low lying, and yet missed out. The water that usually cascades off Flowers Hill etc, pours across the main road and bolsters this flood water, but apart from one house experiencing minor flooding they all escaped. Where was all that water that should have come down the Pang?

The Thursday before the promised storms was a glorious day and we baled 2500 bales of hay in one of the large river meadows. We cleared about a thousand and as night descended, stacked the remaining bales in large piles, covering them with plastic sheets and keeping our fingers crossed. As the rain fell on Friday we felt confident that the bales would be safe. Misplaced confidence!; as the flood water took out the bottom two layers of each stack. Sometimes you just can't win!

Tim Metcalfe



## READING HOME ORGAN & KEYBOARD SOCIETY

On 11 September at 8pm, in Tidmarsh Village Hall, our guest artist is Dirkjan Ranzijn on the Bohm Excel300.

Entrance fee is £5.50 including refreshments for visitors, or £3.50 for members.

Further information from Molly West on Reading 942 7062

# PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY



## OUTINGS

Members of the Society visited West Woodhay House and Garden Show in June, R.H.S. Gardens, Wisley and the Hidden Gardens of the City of London in July. All three visits were very enjoyable and we were very lucky with the weather, except for the morning of the Wisley trip when we had several heavy showers, but I think most people were able to find shelter in various places. I should like to take this opportunity to thank John Murphy for organizing these events. The Committee would appreciate any ideas you have for outings in 2008.

## 24<sup>TH</sup> LATE SUMMER SHOW

This will be held in Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road on Saturday, 8 September 2007. Schedules are now available at the Trading Shed and we hope we will have a good number of entries. Entry forms must be handed into the Trading Shed or to Mr. J. Armstrong, 169 Long Lane, Tilehurst by Wednesday, 5 September. The Show opens to the public at 2.30pm until 4pm. Even if you are not entering in the Show, please come along and support the exhibitors. We hope some of you might be tempted to exhibit next year. Entry to the Show is free.

## ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

As an affiliated Society, we hold a card that provides entry to the R.H.S. Gardens at Wisley, Rosemoor, Harlow Carr & Hyde Hall for one member and one guest. If you require further information or would like the card, please contact John Murphy on 941 9185.

## TRADING

The Shed in the Memorial Hall car park is open from 10am to 11am on Saturdays and Sundays until the end of October. We are always pleased to welcome new members and the annual membership is only £1.50.

In order to improve the database of all members and to enable rapid communication with members, would those members of the Purley Horticultural Society with an e-mail address please forward their name, address and e-mail address to John Murphy at [gimjams@sky.com](mailto:gimjams@sky.com).

*Marion Dabbs*  
942 2349



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## PURLEY PUPPETS

COME ALONG AND JOIN US...

7-8pm at St Mary's Church starting again on Friday 7 September

Everyone WELCOME, age 8 to 108! BRING A FRIEND too!

Contact Sally Robertson – 962 5978

Sue Guy, our Extended Schools Manager, based at Denefield School is pleased to give the following update on events around the Tilehurst & Purley cluster:



## **ATHELETICS FESTIVAL**

On 10 July, a number of pupils from five schools across the cluster joined in this exciting inter-schools athletics festival. Simone Jacobs, a former Olympic medallist, joined in and a photographer from the Reading Evening Post was there too!

Children took part in a variety of throwing, running and jumping activities, representing teams from their school. Certificates were awarded to every child that took part.

As the Key Stage 1 teams were closely matched, a trophy will be awarded to each of the three schools. The Key Stage 2 trophy winner was Westwood Farm Junior School, followed by Long Lane, Downsway and Brookfields.

Thanks are expressed to the Reading Athletic Club for the success of this festival.

Reading Athletic Club plans to launch an after school club at Denefield School in the autumn term. This multi-skills athletic club will include sprinting, which is one of the key skills that supports athletic development. Sprinting is vital for success in many other sports such as football. To register for this potential club, please contact Sue Guy (details at the end).

## **ADULT VOLUNTEERS WANTED!**

Would you like to have a say on which activities are introduced, at what cost and when? Register your interest with Sue Guy so that a discussion group meeting can be arranged in the autumn term. This will be an ideal opportunity for parents and carers to get involved with Inspire4Life and for us to try to meet your needs!

Would you like to be more involved with the running of your school or would you like to help raise money for the school? Then become a School Governor or join the School Association! There's a variety of roles to choose from. Find out more by asking at your school reception. You may be able to go along to a meeting before committing yourself!

We also need help to run a new *Action Earth* club at Denefield School on Tuesdays at 3.15-4.15pm. Work with enthusiastic adults and Denefield students to combat climate change.

- Develop understanding of environmental issues
- Learn new skills to save money and energy, conserve water, reduce waste, grow food and care for the local/global environment.

Alternatively, do you have a special skill you'd like to share with others, such as chess, art and craft, cookery, computers or sports? To volunteer or to find out more, please contact Sue Guy.

## **GO ONLINE**

Finally, forthcoming Inspire4Life events can be found on the Inspire4Life website at [www.inspire4life.org.uk](http://www.inspire4life.org.uk) and often on the Purley Parish Council notice boards. Look out for future free talks and courses for parents and carers such as child sexual health at 7pm on 25 September at Denefield School, as well as an Internet Safety talk, a Time Out for Special Needs parenting course and Family Fun Week activities in the autumn term. Don't forget to register your attendance to avoid disappointment, as places are often limited!

If you have any questions or suggestions for future activities, please contact Sue.

## **AWE ALDERMASTON SCHOOL LIAISON REPRESENTATIVE REQUIRED**

Do you work at AWE? Would you also like to work with a school in the Tilehurst & Purley cluster?

Did you know AWE assign one afternoon a month for you to visit each school? This gives you the opportunity to meet with your main school contact to discuss any needs, deliver the AWE newsletter, facilitate loaning of AWE equipment and keep your school(s) informed of forthcoming AWE events and challenges.

To volunteer or to find out more, please contact Sue Guy or speak to Lindsey Appleton at AWE.

*Sue Guy*  
941 3458 x8978  
[sguy@denefield.org.uk](mailto:sguy@denefield.org.uk)

## **PURLEY PATHFINDERS A WALKING GROUP FOR LADIES**

### **ST BIRINUS PILGRIMAGE**

Our walks continue with our theme of *Following Footsteps*. In AD634, St Birinus was chosen to *sow the seed of our Holy faith in the distant lands beyond the Kingdom of the English*. So it was that he arrived in the Thames Valley, and performed his greatest achievement – the baptism in the River Thame near Dorchester, of Cynegils, King of the West Saxons after preaching to him on Churn Knob, an ancient burial ground. Thus, Christianity became acceptable in this part of England, and for the past 30 years, a 12-mile pilgrimage has been made between Churn Knob and Dorchester Abbey. Over two walks, we planned to follow this route. The first part started in Blewbury from where we climbed up an overgrown path to reach the Downs alongside Churn Knob. We savoured the panoramic view with which our efforts were rewarded, before striding out across the Downs with skylarks above our heads, butterflies at our feet, and wide 360° views all around – wonderful! At the foot of the highest point on the Downs, Lowbury Hill, we began our descent down the chalky hillside where numerous wildflowers, including orchids, flourish in the chalk grassland. Eventually we crossed to a lane, which took us to the outskirts of Aston Upthorpe from where we took the path along the bottom of another Hill Fort, Blewburton Hill. Reaching Blewbury, we walked beside the pretty village streams, enjoyed the wildflowers in the churchyard, admired the gorgeous cottages, and marvelled at the ancient thatched cob walls, which led us to The Red Lion for lunch.

The second part of the pilgrimage began at Wittenham Clumps where, from the top of Round Hill, we used the map to find our way around the outstanding view. At the foot of the hill, we spotted the church at Little Wittenham, and we set off down the hillside to this

14<sup>th</sup> century church with its *Ace of Spades* window, and its tomb of Mary Cromwell, Aunt of Oliver Cromwell. We continued to the Thames where we paused on the bridge by Day's Lock to mimic the recent Pooh Sticks competition held here annually. Gleefully we tossed our sticks over the bridge into the water before rushing to the other side in childish anticipation as we watched to see whose stick would become the Pathfinders' champion! We joined the riverbank and walked along, accompanied by numerous colourful dragonflies, until Dorchester Abbey came into view across a field of hay bales. Not wrapped in black plastic, they formed geometric shapes of natural hay, and with Dorchester Abbey rising beyond above thatched roofs of old cottages, the scene was one of pure nostalgia! The River Thame, where St Birinus baptised the King of Wessex, led us away from the Thames and into Dorchester where we entered the Abbey along a path edged with dramatic red roses. We took time to explore inside this beautiful Abbey, built on the site of a previous church where St Birinus is buried. Having reached the destination of the St Birinus pilgrimage, where a service is held to mark its end each year, we began our return leg by passing lovely old cottages on our way towards the Dyke Hills. The Clumps loomed above this rare example of the boundaries of a pre-Roman town. We headed up Castle Hill via Little Wittenham Nature Reserve – a wonderful place which has recorded 474 species of moth and 32 species of butterfly, with its ponds holding the largest population of rare crested newts in the country. At the top of the hill, we found the Poem Tree on which, in 1844, Joseph Tubb carved a poem highlighting the history of the area. Taking in the splendid view, we made our way back down to our cars.

## STRAWBERRIES AND BROAD BEANS

Wimbledon fortnight heralds our annual strawberry walk which, this year, took us along one of the prettiest stretches of the Pang in Bradfield. We arrived at the church which we entered before walking beside the buildings of Bradfield College. Richard Adams, author of *Watership Down*, was educated here, and often took part in plays performed in the open-air theatre. Our return route took us through glorious meadows edged with poppies to arrive at Merryfields Pick Your Own farm. Here we were welcomed by the owner who had



an urn, boiling ready for us, in the marquee. We relaxed with a cuppa and our picnics before gathering juicy strawberries and plump raspberries to eat for afters. Over another cup of tea, the owner told us of life on a PYO farm before we left, clutching our punnets of fruit to take home.

Our next walk took us into the country estates of two famous landowners, The Earl of Canarvon and Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber. We crossed overgrown brooks, passed through lush, flower-rich meadows, pretty copses, and through various crop fields. In one of the latter, we were

forced to follow the tractor marks in which wildflowers had invaded the space, and in another, we had to trample our way through broad beans, relief coming now and then, as we emerged into areas covered in calming camomile. We enjoyed good views across North Hampshire countryside spotting the highest point, Beacon Hill, and Watership Down, Cottington Hill and Ladle Hill. Despite a few difficult stretches, our walk proved picturesque, but I don't think any of us could face broad beans for tea that evening!

## SUMMERTIME SPECIAL

The term end meant it was time for our Summertime Special which this year followed the footsteps of Lady Diana. Even before leaving our coach our special day had begun as, on arriving in London, our coach took us past various famous landmarks, including Westminster Abbey where the funeral of Princess Diana was held nearly ten years ago. At

Admiralty Arch, a quick look at our special permit, and we were allowed to drive down The Mall, scene of countless ceremonial processions, including the open-topped carriage carrying Princess Diana and Prince Charles after their fairytale wedding. We were lucky to be *escorted* by police on horseback as we passed the Horse Guards, colourfully making their way from Buckingham Palace. Passing through St James Park, we could see some of the important buildings surrounding us, including Clarence House, former home of the Queen Mother, and now the official London residence of Prince Charles. We arrived at Buckingham Palace where, above the famous balcony, the Royal Standard flew, signifying that the Queen was at home! With the Palace garden on one side, and Green Park on the other, we continued along Constitution Hill eventually arriving at the Wellington Arch. Here began our walk, which was to take us along part of the Princess Diana Memorial Walk that links four parks, three palaces, and two mansions associated with Princess Diana, plus other places she knew and loved.

As we entered Hyde Park we found the first of ninety rose emblems embedded in the path signifying the route. It took us through the lovely Rose Garden, alongside The Dell with its waterfall, and alongside The Serpentine with its variety of wildfowl that could be watched from the comfort of deck chairs. We ate our picnics seated around the Princess Diana Memorial Fountain. Made of 545 pieces of Cornish granite, it has been designed to reflect her life. The water tumbling over the rapids certainly resembled her playful spirit. We continued in Kensington Gardens in which we admired the recently re-gilded Prince Albert Memorial, and enjoyed the planting in the Flower Walk. Kensington Palace came into view and we headed for the Crowther Gates, made famous as the focus for the *sea of flowers* at Princess Diana's death. Inside the garden, a lady was busy constructing a sphere made up of *flowers* covered in gold leaf. Each day members of the public gild these flowers, symbol of the flowers left at the gates, and they are then made into the huge flower spheres and placed around the garden. There will be ten in all – one for each year since the Princess's death.

There was time to browse around the gift shop before we were met by our Guides who took us on an interesting and informative tour of the Palace, birthplace of Queen Victoria, and marital home of Princess Diana and Prince Charles. We saw the room in which Queen Victoria was born, and the Cupola room in which she was christened. We entered her bedroom where she was awoken to be told she had become Queen. A highlight of the tour was the room housing some of Princess Diana's evening dresses, returned to the Palace for exhibition, by an American lady who had bought them at auction when sold by the Princess, shortly before her death, in order to raise money for her favourite charities. In the Great Court Dress Collection, we could see how fashion has changed. Princess Diana's dresses looked far more comfortable than those worn by ladies in the past, especially when compared with a dress of the wife of a former Prime Minister with its enormous hips, hinged to allow the lady to pass through doorways! However, we couldn't help but be impressed by the skill shown in the displays of intricate embroidery and lace making. In the King & Queen apartments we found elaborately painted ceilings, fine tapestries, and beautiful carvings.



We were lucky that our trip tied in with the opening of a new Diana Exhibition, celebrating her life with photographs. Walls of three rooms formed the *screens* for slide shows showing Diana as a child, a young Princess, a bride, a Mother, a fashion icon, and in the latter part of her life, as a humanitarian. Emotional memories of her came flooding back in her happy smile, infectious laugh, gentle manner, and loving ways – England's Rose. We left the Palace to continue following the rose emblems, peeping into the beautifully planted Sunken Garden in which the Princess had enjoyed rare moments of peace and privacy.

Children played an important part in her life, so it was apt that we visited the Memorial Playground where six areas of play surrounding a stunning pirate ship were a hive of activity as happy children enjoyed the Peter Pan theme – she would have loved it!

After a refreshing drink alongside the gaily-sculpted Elfin Oak, we continued with a walk beside the 7-acre Round Pond and on to the impressive statue named *Physical Energy*. Soon we were walking beside the Long Water with its edges allowed to fill with wildflowers and wildlife. Overlooking it, we found the statue of Peter Pan. The stunning Italian Gardens cooled us with their spray from high fountains, blown off course by a welcome breeze. In contrast to this formal, symmetrical area, we walked beside the Bird Sanctuary through The Meadow where the grass has been left to grow long, allowing wild flowers to flourish. We passed the Police House, home to some of the police on horseback we had seen, members of the Royal Parks Constabulary. We reached the Dell restaurant with ample time to relax on the terrace bathed in sunshine, overlooking the glistening water of The Serpentine. We feasted on tea and cake, and savoured the odd glass of wine, as a lovely way to end our 'Walk for Diana' summer trip.

After our summer break we resume in September *following footsteps* of Sir Steve Redgrave at Marlow, Kenneth Grahame at Pangbourne, and Richard Adams near Watership Down. Walks vary in length from 4 miles to 6½ miles and take place on various weekday mornings. If any ladies would like a programme, please give me a ring, or contact me through the website: [www.purleypathfinders.co.uk](http://www.purleypathfinders.co.uk).

*Nicki Woodward*  
*nicki@cherryacre.com – 984 2112*

## **GARDEN TALKS IN PURLEY**

### **Purley Horticultural Society**

Sue Robinson gives a talk on

**Wednesday 17 October at 8pm**

**ORCHIDS – ALL ABOUT ORCHIDS**

Sue Robinson from Hillier Garden Centres has had an extensive career with houseplants in the wholesale trade and latterly the retail trade. Sue is the Buyer for houseplants and other sundries at Hillier's, for their 13 garden centres. Sue is also responsible for all the in-house training for the company, including plant knowledge, display and merchandising. Sue's special passion is for Orchids, she has been growing them for many years and will be happy to answer all your questions on the tender loving care, or not, that Orchids require.

The talk will be held in the Memorial Hall, Glebe Road – doors are open at 7.30pm

All residents of Purley and Neighbouring Parishes are welcome

## PURLEY PLAYERS

Purley Players are delighted to announce that following their last two productions *Slay Bells* and *He's In The Cupboard* donations were made to the following charities:

£400 The Children's Trust

£500 BIBS (Babies in Buscot Support – Royal Berkshire Hospital)

Our next production will be *Deadlier Still* on 28 and 29 September 2007 and we look forward to seeing you there. Please visit our website [www.purleyplayers.co.uk](http://www.purleyplayers.co.uk)

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## HE'S GONE

But George Fielder, our lock keeper for the past 31 years, and *Villager of the Year 2007*, went out with a song and a dance at the Barn Dance held in his honour. I don't think George missed one dance, and the photos I have sent him of the evening show a happy man with a continuously beaming smile! At the interval there was chance for George to say a few words, before a member of the band sang a fitting rendition of *Messing about on the River*, with everyone joining in with the chorus. During the supper, George was delighted to have the chance to speak personally to many Purley residents who had been cut off from him during the bridge repairs, and they in turn were glad to have the chance to say "Goodbye and Thank you" to him. Cakes cut and distributed, it was time to get back to the dancing. What fun, even though sometimes a bit of a squash – a testimony to George was the number of people who wanted to share the evening with him! George was given a standing ovation at the end of the evening, and the clapping didn't stop until George agreed to send us off into the night with a few last words: "Well, what a wonderful evening!" And it was!

They must be a certain breed: lock keepers. Our new lock keeper, Lane, certainly arrived with a baptism of fire (or should I say water!) Despite the worry of having his family under threat of flooding in Oxford, and all the renovation work to his new home here in Purley under threat too, he found time to help others. He not only borrowed containers from the Scouts, and filled them with fresh water for stranded boaters at the lock, but he also ferried some of them to the supermarket to pick up supplies! The lock café remained open throughout, and as the flood receded and brave souls donned their wellies to wade through the remaining water, a hot cuppa awaited them. Well done Lane!

I don't know if all lock keepers arriving in Purley are given some sort of test. I moved into Purley just after George, so I would be interested to know if anything major happened in his first few weeks! If it did, it certainly didn't put him off us did it.

Nicki Woodward

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**PLEASE SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL POST OFFICE**

## THE FARMER'S MARKET

I went to the Farmer's Market, just the other day  
But never saw a Farmer, or a load of scented hay.  
I never saw a shire horse, pulling on a plough,  
Or a sweet and lovely milkmaid, sitting by a cow.  
There were no kine with a crumpled horn –  
But I saw the Rector all shaven and shorn.  
There were no sheaves of golden corn;  
Or a cock heralding the dawn.

No donkeys braying,  
Or white lambs playing.  
No geese, no chicken, no duck-  
No Berkshire pig in Berkshire muck.

I never saw a thrashing machine, but a tractor I did see  
Then somebody said it belonged to the PPC.  
I never saw a field of barley, or even waving wheat,  
But there were lots of things to eat.  
I had a bacon sandwich – well, just two or three!  
Can I resist those sizzling sausages frying in a pan?  
There were apples by the score,  
Pears and plums galore;  
Organic veg, firm and fresh  
Bundles of dark green watercress.

Lamb chops, pork chops, pasties, cakes and pies,  
Everything you wanted, there before your eyes.  
Loafs of bread all crusty, soft and golden brown.  
Small eggs, large eggs, boxed up in a mound.  
Cabbage, carrots, turnips, peas and runner beans!  
I was bursting at the seams:  
For I'd bought and eaten everything in sight  
Then staggered out of sight, :  
'Cos I had four bags of shopping,  
Bulging either side.  
I thought the market topping –  
But where do the Farmers hide?

*Bill Ayling*

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## PURLEY WI

Ella Petrie had been with us for many years. We were grateful to her for her hard work and the loyalty she gave us, but the lure of the concrete cows at Milton Keynes has won her over – Happy Days Ella and Thank you.

Our ladies enjoyed a coach trip to London and "to places unknown" (an eye-opener it was too) then off to Mottisfont Abbey to gloat over the rose gardens. Delighted to say, we had a successful coffee morning plus bring and buy in the garden of Sybil Pryor, where the takings were a record high for ACWW (Association of Country Women of the World who provide water wells).

Purley Beeches  
Residents' Association

### QUIZ NIGHT AT THE BARN

Saturday, 6 October 2007  
7pm for 7.30pm

Licensed Bar  
including light supper

Tickets £5.00 from  
Suzanne on 941 5244  
or Anne on 941 3259

Please come along and  
enjoy an evening of fun

Glynn Coupland was July's speaker on *Rowing across the Atlantic*. I thought the *rowing* must surely be a printing error, but that was soon proved wrong. This young man, plus three others, were the crew in a national race which started on 30 November 2005. On this craft of limited space, they encountered 27 storms in the worst weather for 200 years. Two crewmembers were rowing all the time as, of course, should they fall asleep, they would stray off course. Rain was painful and aggressive and the wind could turn them around and, when you are engaged in a race, time is all-important.

They took miles of film, showing them putting on a kettle, sun cream and paper hats on Christmas Day as their families provided them with a small festive pack. They each had 200 packs of food providing 6,000 calories a day, plus baked brownies and 800 chocolate bars. Can't you just imagine the shock a Polish tanker had when it encountered four men in a rowing boat floating by? Shouts of "where's your sails" were heard, to say nothing of an inquisitive 28ft whale that chased them for several knots. They witnessed some amazing birds and socially they gelled very well until, finishing the race, they hit a rock. Yes, they were somewhat *cross* – well you would be wouldn't you? Constantly surrounded by water had an effect on the bladder, etc. so a container was used on a piece of string. (Ironic don't you think that, on a state of the art rowing machine, there's nothing like a plastic bucket – wonderful).

After 49 days, they finished the race (a day early) and came second. Great excitement greeted them, plus a relieved wife and – guess what – a new baby boy by the name of James, who was born while Daddy was away. (That's right ladies; the men are never there when you want them). Must say, I love a happy ending or even a happy landing.

I confess to enjoying the warmth and safety of my comfort zone, but surely it is the courage of pioneering characters who provide the excitement and, for them, we should be eternally grateful.

So, Glynn, we wonder what next you have in mind, some way-out mad cap scheme I dare say. Whatever it is we all wish you and your team good luck and we want you back. The evening was a trip into the unknown; in fact, we can still taste the salt water.

## **COMPETITIONS**

Flower of the month:	1 <sup>st</sup> Sybil Pryor
Flotsam from the Beach:	1 <sup>st</sup> Sylvia Conquest 2 <sup>nd</sup> Ann David 3 <sup>rd</sup> Kathy Devine

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 12 September at 7.30pm in Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley when the speaker will be Mrs Julia Freeman on *Life as a Wimbledon Umpire*. The competition will be a decorated tennis ball and there will be a sales table for produce. Visitors welcome.

*Sylvia Conquest*  
941 1936