

PURLEY PARISH NEWS

NOVEMBER 2007



35P

For the Church & Community of
PURLEY ON THAMES



ST. MARY THE VIRGIN PURLEY ON THAMES

www.stmaryspurley.org.uk

RECTOR

Rev. Roger B. Howell
The Rectory, 1 Westridge Avenue
0118 941 7727
rbh@bradean.fsnet.co.uk

ORDAINED LOCAL MINISTER

Rev. Andrew Mackie
12 Church Mews
0118 941 7170

CURATE

Rev. Jean Rothery
Oaklea, Tidmarsh Road, Tidmarsh
0118 984 3625

CHURCHWARDENS

Mary Barrett
0118 984 2166

Debbie Corrigan
0118 945 1895

CHURCH HALL BOOKINGS

Lorna Herring
0118 942 1547

BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

All enquiries to the Rector

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).

Most common computer file formats are accepted, with the notable exception of Microsoft Publisher – sorry! When sending articles containing images, you may need to send the images separately, to avoid file size limits.

EDITOR

Matt Slingsby
24 Skerritt Way, Purley on Thames,
RG8 8DD
0118 961 5585
ppn@stmaryspurley.org.uk

DISTRIBUTION

Steve Corrigan
11 Mapledurham Drive
Purley on Thames
0118 945 1895

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Les Jamieson
58a Wintringham Way
Purley on Thames
0118 941 2342

ADVERTISING

Liane Southam
1 Bakery Cottages, Reading Road,
Burghfield Common, Reading
0118 983 1165 (before 6pm please)
liane.southam@virgin.net

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.

Comments and opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editor or the PCC of St Mary's Church, Purley on Thames – publishers of Purley Parish News – nor is any endorsement of the products and services of our advertisers implied by their inclusion.

THIS EDITION PUBLISHED	3 NOVEMBER
NEXT EDITION COPY DEADLINE	17 NOVEMBER
NEXT EDITION PUBLISHED	1 DECEMBER

Cover image: Copyright © Pamela McAdams, Crossdaily.com

FROM THE CURATE

The Photograph on the front page of the newspaper gripped and moved me. There stood a five-year-old boy, trousers below his knees, socks around his ankles, school cap on his head, proudly wearing his father's medals. He was searching on the new memorial that the queen had just dedicated to servicemen who have been killed since the Second World War, for the name of his father, who had been killed in Iraq in 2003.

Another photograph came to my mind, this time of three much older men, Winston Churchill, President Roosevelt and Josef Stalin, meeting at Yalta in February 1945 during World War II. They met as allies fighting against Hitler and forged an agreement. Promises were made, only some were kept and the alliance quickly fell apart after the war.

During the course of our lives, we probably make many promises or agreements. The most notable being the vows we make in marriage. Sometimes we break our promises to our spouses, our relatives and friends. The consequences are always damaging.

It is difficult enough for promises to be kept between two people, let alone between whole nations. Yet, if you look through history books, you will find countless examples of pacts that were made as promises of peace between different countries. Treaties made about all sorts of things: boundaries of territory; limitation of ammunition and arms; trade agreements and many others. There can be dire consequences if these are broken, but clearly some still are. Many wars have been fought since World War II and pictures of war and its consequences still adorn the front pages of our newspapers.

Do promises mean much then? Who can we trust? Of course you would expect me to say God, wouldn't you? And you would be right.

God doesn't give up trying to put situations right. He made an agreement, or covenant, with Israel that was broken many times. Sometimes the people responded to Him, but most of the time they ignored Him, so He sent prophets to them to tell them about their selfishness and bad behaviour and to ask the people to follow His ways of peace. Eventually God made a new agreement with the people and sent Jesus to show us the way to true and lasting peace.

Lasting peace begins with changing ourselves first and Jesus promises to help Christians do that. It means keeping the promises we have made to other people and having the love and determination to keep on trying with those people and nations who break their promises and agreements with us. We must recognise that peace is a fragile delicate butterfly, which can be blown about on the winds of history. But as we continue to fight various conflicts across the world and that shadowy imprecise enemy nearer to home in the *war on terrorism*, we should look back with gratitude on the past and look forward with the Christian hope written on our hearts.

This year on Remembrance Sunday, in recalling the past, let us also pledge ourselves to work with renewed vigour for future lasting peace.

Wishing you all true peace, *Jean*.

PARISH REGISTERS

FUNERALS

19 September Frances Ruby Heath aged 81 years (Ashes)

15 October Edward Charles Parrott aged 63 years (Cremation)

PACT = PARENTS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER

PACT sustains birth families, but also creates new "forever" families through adoption and fostering, and educates the professionals who care for them "from crèche to care home." Much of what we do is supported, directly or indirectly, by national or local government. For example, we receive grants for specific projects (such as the Children's Centres we manage) receive fees for successfully finding permanent placements for children in adoptive or foster homes or receive income for delivering Government schemes, such as Supporting People.

A legacy to PACT guarantees you make a daily difference to thousands of families.

For further information Tel. 938 7600

Pray for Purley

No, prayer doesn't have to be made with flowery language, and it's not a magic spell. It's talking (and listening) to God, just like you talk to your friends and neighbours, telling him about the things that matter to you, and knowing that he's interested (which friends and neighbours aren't always!)

We have one more time together this year, on **Tuesday 11 December** (please note change of date); do feel welcome to come along to St Mary's then - we start at 8pm and are finished by 9pm. You don't have to be a member of St Mary's - or even a regular churchgoer - to come and pray!

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.

And to help us plan for 2008 we would like to invite ALL Christians in Purley, whatever church you are associated with, to St Mary's on **Saturday 19 January** at 7.30pm. There will be a few refreshments, time to get to know one another, and we might even pray!

You'll notice some new contact details below - thanks to Sally Robertson for her leadership over the past years.

*Nan Craig, 942 8266, 4 St Mary's Avenue
Chris Rayers, 942 1880, 9 Allison Gardens
c.rayers@talk21.com*

CHURCH SERVICES

4 November	9.30am	Family Worship
	11.15am	Holy Communion
	6.00pm	Holy Communion with prayer for healing
11 November	9.30am	Family Worship
	10.55am	Holy Communion (Remembrance Sunday)
18 November	9.30am	Family Communion
	11.15am	Morning Worship
	6.00pm	Evening Worship
25 November	9.30am	Family Worship
	11.15am	Holy Communion
2 December	10.30am	Advent Communion
	6.00pm	Holy Communion

PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS TODAY

On Sunday 25 November, we are privileged to have Dr. Patrick Sookhdeo, International Director of the Barnabas Fund, at St. Mary's Church at both morning services (9.30am and 11.15am). News of what is happening to Christians in many parts of the world today does not often reach the headlines in the media – in fact, it is often not reported at all! In this country, we want people to be free to express their religious belief openly and without fear. The same freedom should apply to Christians in other places where they are in a minority. Come and find out what is happening, and how Barnabas Fund is supporting them.

ADVENT SUNDAY - SUNDAY 2 DECEMBER

At 10.30am, we are having a special Advent Communion Service at St. Mary's Church, and we shall be inviting all those who have been confirmed from the church over the last few years. Watch out for your invitation and we shall be delighted to welcome you at this service.

At 6pm, there will be the usual Advent Carol Service at St James the Less, Pangbourne – organised by All Churches Together.

THE ORDER OF JACOB'S WELL CELTIC HEALING SERVICE

Morlias Room, St Michaels Church, Tilehurst
8pm, Wednesday 21 November

Everyone is welcome, please bring a friend

Refreshments available

TRIBUTE TO JASPER

Two or three years ago, a ginger cat decided to make Simons Close his home. His owners had moved away and took him to a new home less than a mile away, but he had other ideas. Time and again he came back, often taking two days for the journey. The lure of Pike Shaw wood at the end of the close proved irresistible with its rich offering of wildlife. After collecting him many times, his owners decided to leave him where he was clearly happiest.

For a whole winter Jasper survived by his own wit and skill, hunting wildlife and eating other cats' food when the opportunity arose. He had no home, shelter or regular food supply but he looked pretty fit. I thought he was a hero and called him *Captain Scott of Simons Close*.

I stroked him, bought the odd tin of food and looked out for him each day. Predictably, I grew to care for him and he seemed to feel the same way about me. His previous owners came to call and I agreed to *foster* him and they could come to call any time they wished.

He was a joy to have around. A gentle giant, weighing 11 pounds and almost a metre long when he stretched out to sleep. He was so good-natured that children loved to stroke him. He adored company and whenever anyone called, even men in uniform, he would show up for any attention going.

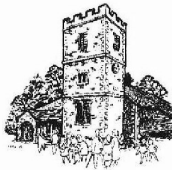
VOTE FOR Purley's Favourite Christmas Carol

In Aid of St Mary's Church

From 7 November - 7 December
vote and leave a donation at:

St. Mary's Church
Purley Rise Post Office Stores
The Village Shop, Colyton Way

The **Top 10** Carols
- the 10 which raise the most in donations -
will be sung at the Farmer's Market at The Barn at
10am on Saturday 8 December



A few weeks ago Jasper went missing. On the first day we weren't too worried: Jasper was, after all, a wanderer. The second day found us walking every path and alley, calling and searching. Then someone knocked our door to say a ginger cat was dead at the side of the road by the roundabout - could it be Jasper? We knew immediately it was him. His rambling had got him in the end, his luck ran out.

Anyone who has lost a pet will know the sadness I feel. I wasn't prepared to lose him yet: he was only seven years old and fit as a flea. I still *hear* the cat flap open and getting up in the morning is difficult because he was always waiting for his breakfast.

So Simons Close has lost its mascot and my life is sad at the moment. But I wanted to pay tribute to a splendid ginger chap called Jasper.

Dorothy West

MESSAGE FROM HOME FARM

I wondered how many comments I would get after the 'deliberate' mistake in last months article. To my surprise not one sarcastic remark has been made. Initial delight that no one noticed the mortality of the village ears soon left me thinking whether anybody bothers to read the articles any case!

One topic that always excites folk is planning. The National policy has recently been altered to deter back garden development and the Planning Inspectorate is now beginning to reflect this in its decisions. Also density is no longer mandatory. The rule of 30 homes/hectare has been altered so that new developments must reflect the character of the local area. Therefore *appropriate planning* is the new buzz phrase unless a precedent has already been set.

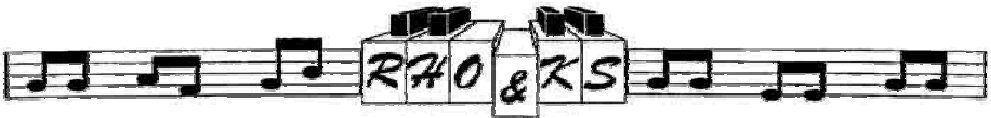
The problem we have in West Berkshire is that it has been decreed that we must build 500 houses a year for the next 20 years. This is excluding windfall sites such as the 350 houses to be built by the dual carriageway in Theale or the proposed Kennet Valley Park where up to 1700 houses might be built. In Purley we have more than our fair share of new houses although along with Newbury and Thatcham, the East of West Berkshire is considered a preferred area.

Since 1985, gardens have been deemed brown field sites (as are farm yards!) as long as they are within a settlement boundary. If these are not used then we must face pressure on some green areas beyond the current boundaries. Indeed these settlement boundaries are to be looked at again and probably pushed outwards.

Oh, but what about our Village Plan I hear you cry. Well unfortunately their vision for the future is not a material consideration. Village Design Statements however are considered as they are adopted for supplementary planning but their level of importance is very low.

Whether we like it or not, new houses will be built. We now have slightly more control on location, density and character of the houses to be built. But remember, if planning permission is applied for within a settlement boundary, then reasons have to be found why the development should not be allowed, not the other way around.

Tim Metcalfe



READING HOME ORGAN & KEYBOARD SOCIETY

Our next concert is on 13 November 2007 at 8pm at Tidmarsh Village Hall, Pangbourne Road, Reading RG8 8ES. Our guest artist is Chris Jones.

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



TALKS

On Wednesday, 17 October, we had a very interesting talk on all the different types of orchids by Sue Robinson of Hilliers and I hope the orchids purchased from Sue by members of the Society will do well.

There will be a talk in Purley Memorial Hall on Wednesday, 21 November at 8pm by Gwen Barton on Brazil (see opposite for more details) This should be a very entertaining evening, so please come along in order that we have a good audience for this speaker.

TRADING

If you require seed potatoes for 2008, could you please contact Jim Armstrong on 942 1645 for an order form or any forms picked up from the Trading Shed during the last two weeks of trading should be returned to him as soon as possible.

The Shed in the Memorial Hall car park is closed until the beginning of February.

PANGBOURNE SCARECROW TRAIL

I hope the majority of our members were able to see our entry in the above trail and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Wendy Chapman (our Treasurer) for all the hard work she put in to making such an excellent exhibit for us. Several of the Committee manned a stall selling bulbs, etc. for the Society on the opening night of the Trail.

Marion Dabbs
942 2349

PURLEY MEMORIAL HALL

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the above mentioned Charitable Trust will be held on Wednesday 28 November 2007 in the Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley on Thames at 7.30pm.

Inhabitants of the Parish of Purley on Thames in the County of Berkshire who are aged twenty-one and above may attend and vote at this meeting. They may also nominate prospective members of the Management Committee and submit resolutions as described below.

Six members may be elected to the Management Committee. According to the rules of the Management Committee, each nomination must be in writing and contain the names of the candidate and of the proposer and seconder. Motions for discussion at the Annual General Meeting must also be in writing and contain the names of the proposer and seconder.

Both nominations and motions must reach the Honorary Secretary at the address given below not later than Friday 17 November 2007, in order that they may be incorporated in the Agenda.

Honorary Secretary, Mrs M Hoare
5 Larissa Close, Tilehurst, Reading, RG31 6LE

GARDEN TALKS IN PURLEY

Purley Horticultural Society

Have secured Gwen Barton to give a talk on

Wednesday 21 November at 8pm

THE EXOTIC SIDE OF BRAZIL

Gwen is returning to give her impressions of her visit to Brazil. Gwen has travelled to many of the third world countries - Gambia, Jordan, Sierra Leone and Tanzania - to name a few. Her main interests are in the wildlife and natural flora of these countries. Gwen is also involved in volunteer service and has worked in Jordan with the Schools for the Deaf. A thespian at heart – and this will be revealed at her talk – Gwen has performed in front of royalty, the King of Jordan!

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 present

DICK WHITTINGTON

1st, 2nd & 3rd (matinee) February 2008

Evening Performances: 7.30pm – Matinee: 2pm

The Barn, Goosecroft Lane, Purley on Thames

Tickets £8 and £6 (concessions)

cash bar at the evening performances

ice creams and soft drinks at the matinee

Tickets from:

Suzanne Harper (941 5244) or Anne Bolland (941 3259)

BOX OFFICE OPENS: 20 NOVEMBER 2007

www.purleyplayers.co.uk

PROJECT PURLEY

The stirring sound of constantly pealing church bells greeted members of Project Purley as they arrived at St Mary's for the September meeting. The venue was entirely appropriate, as the topic for discussion was the history of our village church. The speaker was our Chairman, John Chapman, and his talk was to be the second in a series of repeats of those given to society members in the Millennium Year of 2000.

As John began it seemed as if he might be the first speaker in the history of Project Purley to deliver his lecture to a musical accompaniment, but fortunately the bell-ringers finished their practice just as he was getting into full flow. This was a great relief to all concerned, as John's presentation was no mere rehash of his 2000 effort but an updated version with an easy to follow PowerPoint display.

We were told that Christianity first came to Purley between 635AD and 750AD, and that it was probable that Purley's first church was built around 800AD. At that time, Lords of the Manor could build their own church to improve their social standing, and employ the priest, who could read and write, as their clerk. The original church stood amongst mud and marshland, on an island in the centre of the village, as evidenced by the flood plain maps of 1947 and 2003.

By the year 900, all settlements had agreed parish boundaries - hence the ancient custom of "Beating the Bounds" - which invariably included a place of worship. However, Purley's Saxon church was burnt down during the English Civil War period of 1135 to 1139, and rebuilt around 1150. It was dedicated to St Mary the Virgin, a cult which had become popular in France, and whose influence had become increasingly popular in England.

The church was quite small, about the size of the present nave. It had a Norman font and window typical of the period, and the Reading Abbey charter of 1241 confirms that the parishioners of Purley had to pay a yearly pension of 2 shillings (10p) to the Abbot of Reading. In the fourteenth century, the church was rebuilt, with a change to Gothic style, incorporating rounded windows and gargoyles adorning the new tower.

At the time of the Reformation, when Henry VIII sequestered the monasteries, Purley's church was declared royal and belonging directly to the Crown. Any incoming rector, therefore, had to be appointed by the Prime Minister's office. Elizabeth I, however, allowed worship in England to become fragmented due to her suspicion of Catholics, and there were introduced in churches, many unlicensed clergy who just read homilies instead of conducting complete services.

St Mary's survived all these tribulations and, in 1626, there was another rebuild with a new chancel, porch and tower. The bells in the tower date mostly from the period 1627-1635, though others were added in 1787 and 1788. The rectory was also rebuilt in the eighteenth century and the rectors clearly enjoyed a comfortable, if not opulent, lifestyle. In 1777, Benjamin Skinner's annual account showed that he had an income of £228, whilst his expenditure was just £51. Much of his profit came from the sale of tithes (£140) whilst he could also levy a fine of one shilling (5p) per parishioner for non-attendance at church.

By 1870, the church had been redesigned yet again. There was a new vestry and organ chamber, the memorials had been moved to the tower and there was a new north aisle, but the roof slates were wrongly angled, so that the supporting timbers rotted as the rain soaked through them. But this problem did not affect the beautiful east window, resplendent with Victorian iconography, or the recently installed and fancily decorated floor tiles. The church was also provided with oil lamps, refurbished pews, a boiler and a heating system, which would keep the interior just moderately warm on cold days.

There are World War One and World War Two memorials inside the church, as well as a tablet commemorating the life of John Dudley Matthews, appointed rector in 1902, but who drowned on the night of 20 December 1914 as he attempted to cross the river from Mapledurham, where he had preached at Evensong.

As St Mary's moved into the modern era a monthly church magazine, the forerunner of the parish magazine you are reading, was introduced and an appeal was launched in 1972 for money to build a church hall as an extension to the main building, which would become a focus for community activities. A number of graveyard pits were excavated by local diggers, including some of the founder members of Project Purley, before the builders began work. However, work by these amateur archaeologists had to stop when a skull suddenly appeared. The police were notified and twelve complete skeletons uncovered. The skeletons were subjected to forensic examination and classified as pillow burials (i.e. no coffin used, but the head supported by large stones) dating from the year 1200 at the latest.

Once the police were satisfied there had been no recent foul play, building of the church hall began in earnest. The work on the extension was carried out by Clarke & Stone Limited of Tilehurst at an estimated cost of £200,000.

John's final illustration was an aerial view of St Mary's taken in 1985 and showing the church as it is today, a building much admired with a long and proud history and still very much the vibrant heart of our village.

After coffee, tea and biscuits, there was the opportunity for members to explore the church and to contribute to the collection plate. A total of £30 was given which will be donated to church funds.

David Downs

We can confirm that the Rain or Shine Theatre Company will be returning to the Barn, on Friday 6 June 2008, to put on a production of A Winter's Tale.



THAMES VALE SINGERS
present an evening of
Christmas entertainment

Carols around the world

The Barn
off Beech Road, Purley on Thames

Fri 7 and Sat 8 December 2007

Performances start at 8pm

Tickets £7 for Adults
£6 for Senior Citizens & Children
obtainable by telephoning 0118 962 4651

HAVE YOUR SAY

At 7pm on 22 November, members of the community are invited to take part in an informal discussion group meeting at Denefield School. This will be an opportunity for local families to have their say on the sorts of activities they would like in the area.



The Partnership is keen to deliver services to suit the needs of the community, so ideas from participants will be a good way of collating information about local requirements. Sue Guy will then investigate the feasibility of implementing new activities in an affordable and sustainable way. The feedback will be communicated back via Sue's termly Partnership newsletter, website and a future article in Purley Parish News.

If you would like to attend, please contact Sue Guy, our Extended Schools Manager. Sue is also keen to receive ideas from anyone who is unable to attend, so please feel free to pass on any suggestions at any time.

Additionally, if anyone is interested in volunteering to run an activity such as an after school chess club or computer club, please let Sue know and she will be pleased to hear from you.

Forthcoming events can be found on the Inspire4Life website at www.inspire4life.org.uk and often on the Purley Parish Council notice boards. Look out for details of some art & craft activities coming soon in 2008! The website includes information on the various organisations that run local activities across the Tilehurst & Purley Schools cluster.

There's a wide variety of opportunities on offer for our community including:

Badminton, Football, Taekwon-do, Brownies, Dyslexia Society and Rosemary Conley Diet & Fitness Club.

VENUE HIRE

Need a venue for a special event, one off activity or regular slot at an affordable price? Denefield School may have a room available to suit your purposes - anything from indoor/outdoor sports to exhibitions/concerts and courses! Weekends and holidays are also possible. Telephone the Finance Office at Denefield on 941 3458 and ask about lettings.

Sue Guy
941 3458 x8978
sguy@denefield.org.uk

PURLEY PATHFINDERS A WALKING GROUP FOR LADIES

Beside the drive of Sydmonton Court, home of Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber, we began our walk into the countryside which has proved so inspirational to him in his work. We admired his home as we passed by, and were intrigued by a garden door, slightly ajar, allowing a view of a fountain and a path leading towards the Chapel in which it is said he composes his masterpieces. We continued onto a track from where views opened up towards Watership Down.

We climbed up the tree-studded path to reach a high vantage-point from where the Downs swept down in gentle curves and waves to the valley below. Nestled within the folds of the valley sits Shepherd's Cottage, former home of Richard Adams. We could almost peep down the chimneys to the warm fireside below, around which Adams would have told his children of the adventures of the rabbits that lived on Watership Down. These stories formed the basis of his most famous book.

We tore ourselves away from the view over this inspirational landscape to continue onto the Wayfarer's Walk, which took us along the crest of the Downs. Now our view stretched across the rooftops of Sydmonton Court to various landmarks on the horizon. Soon we were walking on Ladle Hill and, as we continued on this September morning, we began to wonder which season we were in! Above us skylarks sang as if it were Spring. Down in the valley, stands of trees glowed with the russets and browns of an Autumn day. At our feet our path stretched away through a picture of red poppies, a scene befitting any Summer's day in June. Wonderful! With lungfuls of fresh air and memories full of *feel good factors* we began the mile back down Ladle Hill through a delightful wooded strip to end our fabulous walk in rural Hampshire.

We met in Shiplake, former home of George Orwell, with a touch of Autumn in the air and the fresh smell which comes after rain. We were soon walking alongside the smallholding belonging to Antony Worrell Thompson where from within we could hear the grunts from his pigs, and spot the odd chicken and goose. There was a chance to look at his colourful house, and chat to his gardener before heading off to Shiplake Lock. The River Thames looked splendid as we walked beside it for some distance along a path, which passed through meadows, and ducked under tunnels of trees.

Victorian Village Fayre



Saturday 17th November

St Mary the Virgin, Purley

11.30am - 2.30pm

Lunch and Beverages available

.....and much more!!!

*Please come and support us -
make a note in your diary.*



We paused by Shiplake College Boathouse to take a lingering look at the river's beauty as it meandered along to disappear around a bend. We climbed to the church of St Peter & St Paul where we were able to walk in the footsteps of Lord Tennyson down the aisle to the altar where, in 1850, he married Emily Sellwood. Behind the altar and to the side we noted the wonderful medieval stain-glass windows, originating from France. A photographer took several photos to be included in a forthcoming article in the Henley Standard. We were fortunate that the vicar was on hand to tell us the fascinating story of how the windows came to end up in Shiplake church. We looked forward to seeing the article in print, or on the paper's website. As we continued, the rain began to fall, so we were grateful that our walk took us into the shelter of woodland. Soon we were passing the fine houses of Shiplake once more, unable to resist collecting some shiny new conkers which fell at our feet. We were warmly welcomed into the Baskerville Arms for lunch.

Leaving the Norman church at Rotherfield Greys, we dropped down through woodland to emerge into a green valley with a view of Greys Court on the skyline. We made our way along a medieval holloway which links Rotherfield Greys with Greys Court. From here we climbed through woodland to reach Shepherds Green, an idyllic hamlet of pretty thatched cottages. Our walk proved to be one of variety as we continued up and down through beechwoods in their early autumn splendour, and up and down through fields and neat parkland. Eventually we passed through the farm which is home to Simon Williams, James Bellamy of Upstairs, Downstairs fame, and his wife, Lucy Fleming. Her father, Peter Fleming, brother of Ian Fleming, creator of James Bond, once owned the farm. So, feeling we had walked in plenty of footsteps as befitted our theme for 2007, we dropped down the valley. More woodland in which we spotted deer, and more farmland above which Red Kites whistled, took us into the National Trust parkland of Greys Court. We walked past the Tudor house, looking stunning in the sunshine after its recent clean. We admired the stately trees and lovely views over the Chiltern countryside before making our way back to Rotherfield Greys where we enjoyed lunch in the Maltsters Arms.

AUTUMN SPECIAL

This found us following the footsteps of our greatest Briton, Sir Winston Churchill at Britain's greatest palace, Blenheim Palace. We drove through the Triumphal Woodstock Gate into the parkland dotted with fine trees in their autumn splendour. Beside us lay the lake, the Queen's Pool, flowing through the stunning Vanbrugh's Grand Bridge. Beyond all this stood the beautiful Blenheim Palace, its mellow stonework glowing in the bright sunshine. WOW! No wonder Sir Winston's father, Randolph Churchill, said as he made this same entrance in 1874, "This is the finest view in England", and George III is said to have exclaimed, "We have nothing to equal this!" As our coach parked we became surrounded by gents and ladies dressed in period costume, and in the courtyard the *guards* of Buckingham Palace stood poised in front of mock Palace railings. We were lucky that our visit coincided with the filming of *The Young Victoria*, starring Emily

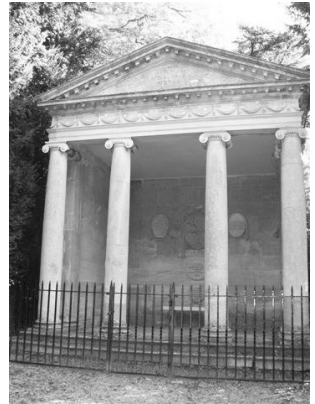


Blenheim Palace, its mellow stonework glowing in the bright sunshine. WOW! No wonder Sir Winston's father, Randolph Churchill, said as he made this same entrance in 1874, "This is the finest view in England", and George III is said to have exclaimed, "We have nothing to equal this!" As our coach parked we became surrounded by gents and ladies dressed in period costume, and in the courtyard the *guards* of Buckingham Palace stood poised in front of mock Palace railings. We were lucky that our visit coincided with the filming of *The Young Victoria*, starring Emily

Blunt, Rupert Friend and Princess Beatrice. More footsteps to follow! A quick photo-shoot with some of the cast and then we gathered to begin our walk.

We passed through the grand East Gate and on through the Clock Tower Arch to reach the courtyard – a hive of activity with various regal scenes before filmed. Out in the formal gardens we were awed by the magnificent Water Terraces adorning the west front. Admiring the view, we continued on the Lakeside Walk, the mirror image of the wonderful autumn trees of the opposite bank shattered now and then by diving grebes. The powerful roar of water heralded our arrival below The Grand Cascade, one of England's most picturesque waterfalls. The lakes and Cascade are the work of Capability Brown, having flooded the Glyme valley. We left the River Glyme to continue on its way as we climbed up through the Arboretum. The Duke of Marlborough planted 465,000 trees between 1893 and 1919, and now we could enjoy their splendour as specimen and rare trees showed themselves off to perfection. We entered the Rose garden where a series of walkways, overarched by hoops covered in climbing roses, led us around beds of roses still flaunting beautiful, scented blooms in red, pink and white.

Next we found the Temple of Diana where Sir Winston Churchill proposed to Clementine Hozier. A romantic spot with its commanding view down a vista between golden trees to the lake. We passed the south front of the Palace, spotting across the South Lawn the tower of the church at Bladon where Churchill is buried. Bordered by the East Front and the Orangery, lies the Italian Garden. Overlooked by topiary birds, intricately patterned beds surround a mermaid fountain to form a garden which is beautiful in all seasons. Off the South lawn, we circled a statue of cherubs hidden within neatly trimmed hedges, before walking around a wild pond edged with bulrushes and glowing autumn shrubs. Just past the Temple of Health we entered the Secret Garden, an oasis of calm. We followed winding paths amongst interesting, labelled planting, to cross bridges over tranquil streams, and beside ponds and waterfalls. Our walk ended in this heavenly place.



Settling on benches and grassy banks we picnicked, soaking up the glorious view over the lakes, across the Grand Bridge, and up to the 40 metre high Column of Victory, crowned with the lead statue of the 1st Duke of Marlborough. The Palace was built in the early 1700's as a gift from Queen Anne in recognition of the Duke's Military services. We looked forward to our tour of this fine example of English Baroque architecture. After lunch we climbed the red carpeted steps (courtesy of the film crew!) to be met by our guides in The Great Hall, one of Blenheim's architectural glories. We cast our eyes to its 20-metre high ceiling showing the Duke victorious. From here our guides took us on an interesting and informative tour where corridors adorned with paintings and porcelain led us into one sumptuous room after another. Each held wonderful tapestries, portraits, elaborate sculptures, beautiful fireplaces, fine furniture and furnishings, We saw writings and paintings by Sir Winston who is recorded as saying, "At Blenheim I took two very important decisions: to be born and to marry". We entered his Birth Room where hangs a portrait of the young Churchill, and a curl from his head. After our tour we entered The Chapel where, in this peaceful place, we took time to reflect on the beauty and splendour we had witnessed on our tour. Free time allowed further exploration of the Palace exhibitions, grounds and pleasure gardens before meeting up for a Blenheim Cream Tea to end our wonderful autumn day at Blenheim Palace.

Nicki Woodward
nicki@cherryacre.com – 984 2112

PURLEY WI

Members who attended the Autumn Meeting at the Hexagon in Reading were treated to a morning with Pam Ayres. An engaging and excellent speaker, the audience heard about her life before and after her success on television's Opportunity Knocks. Using many of her 'odes', some familiar and some new, Pam's brilliance and insight as an observer of everyday life had the audience smiling and laughing, and, on some occasions joining in. A thoroughly enjoyable morning, greatly appreciated by everyone who attended.

Our W.I. continues to attract visitors who we hope will become new members, and if they were interested in wildlife, "Talks on the wild side" would have been an excellent introduction. This month's speaker was Mr Nigel Glover- Wright, who has spent many holidays on safari in the African Wildlife Reserves.

He presented us with a feast of superb slides he had taken of the scenery, birds, animals and flowers. He accompanied these with stories of some of the encounters he had with some of his subjects. On one occasion he met some huge, somewhat ugly marabou storks, one of whom stole his sandwiches from his picnic table (no bird to argue with being over 5 feet tall and bulky!)

Amongst other slides, we saw some amazing flowers that we would love to have available to enter in the flower of the month competition. The final sequence of pictures involved a lioness stalking a young warthog and as things got really exciting, the film ran out and a spare camera was rapidly employed but a bit too late. Mr. Glover-Wright's enthusiasm remains undimmed and he hopes to return to Africa soon.

COMPETITIONS

Wildlife Photograph 1st Marion Maybank
 2nd Sylvia Conquest
 3rd Margaret Martin

Flower of the Month 1st Nicki Woodward

Next month, we will be holding a Craft Workshop for Christmas. The competition will be a Handmade Christmas Card. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, 14 November at Purley Memorial Hall, Glebe Road, Purley on Thames commencing at 7.30pm. Visitors are always most welcome.

Lesley Honnor
941 2571

FOR SALE

Breville Whole Fruit Juicer. 10 months old, used only 3 times. £30 o.n.o.

Mrs Goddard
941 1079



THAMES VALE SINGERS
present an evening of
Christmas entertainment

Carols around the world

The Barn
off Beech Road, Purley on Thames

Fri 7 and Sat 8 December 2007

Performances start at 8pm

Tickets £7 for Adults
£6 for Senior Citizens & Children
obtainable by telephoning 0118 962 4651



LIFE WITH THE LIONS

The South Chilterns is one of 44,000 Lions Clubs in the world's largest service club organization. We support the international Lions effort to combat disease, poverty and the effects of disasters in Third World countries but...

Our main interest is in serving our Local Community.

We provide practical help to elderly, infirm, disabled and other disadvantaged people. We help individuals with equipment to give a better quality of life, supply food parcels to the elderly and needy at Christmas, and support youth activities including Drug Awareness and Good Citizenship schemes in local schools. We also support the work of other local charities. For over 25 years, we have provided joy to hundreds of children each Christmas with Santa and his sleigh.

BUT WE'RE NO ANGELS

We are ordinary people from all walks of life and backgrounds, united in a common aim of helping others. Just a group of friends supporting those less fortunate than ourselves – and having fun doing it. And it is not all fund raising – there is a great social and entertainment side too!

Membership of our Club is open to men and women who are prepared to give some spare time to help others in their community. The partners of Members are included in the many social activities and can help with fund-raising if they wish. We meet for an hour or so on the 3rd Monday of each month at The Six Bells at Beenham.

INTERESTED?

If you would like to help us or want further information, please contact:

George Lovering on 01491 873590 or Tony Palmer on 0118 932 3399

Help Others Make Friends Have Fun

PANGBOURNE & DISTRICT VOLUNTEER CENTRE



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

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

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

PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL



The next Farmers Market will be held at the Barn on the 10 November. The following date for the market in 2007 is 8 December. If you live locally, please help to ease pressure on the limited parking by walking to the venue if at all possible.

At the time of writing, we are still awaiting the results of the annual audit so I will delay providing information on the accounts until the process is completed. We are also still awaiting details of the response from WBC to the limited-parking proposals, but will advertise this further when received.

If any local organisation failed to meet the 31 October deadline for grant applications, please do still submit them in case we can assist. If you require a form or further information, please contact the office.

Tim Whitaker has asked to resign from the Parish Council for personal reasons, which will leave a vacancy. The statutory process will be put in place to call an election and this information will be placed on the notice boards. If no election is called we will be given powers to co-opt to fill the vacancy. In either case, candidates will be required, so I would ask anyone interested in serving on the Parish Council to contact us for further information.

We have had a spate of graffiti throughout the village on both play equipment and street furniture. Thanks to the West Berkshire Neighbourhood Wardens much of this has been cleaned off or painted over. We need your help to catch the culprits so any information you can provide to the wardens, the police, or us will be appreciated. All the various authorities are working together, through the Neighbourhood Action Group and other groupings, to address problems of anti-social behaviour and vandalism but they need the assistance of all the public. Please do not assume that someone else is aware of a problem but report it, or even better provide information, through the various channels available. Just as a reminder the Police non-emergency number is 0845 8 505 505. The calls logged by the control room are disseminated through the system and resources are tasked accordingly. If things are not reported, then clearly additional resources will not be supplied. The remedy is in your own hands. The wardens will make themselves available to discuss problems and are there to help improve the quality of life in the community. They can be contacted on 945 5286 or by e-mail to westberks.wardens@sovereign.org.uk. Despite the email address, they **are** available to the whole village not just housing association tenants.

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

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Graham Rolfe has been busy making some improvements to our website over recent months. Notices and documents are slicker and more informative, and the home page has much more content now - there are more news items, flood status and a dynamic street map giving access to more local information (click on the home page picture of the lock). The Neighbourhood Issues page is regularly updated with news from the Action Group about community safety

actions and comment. Please take the time to look at these, and get more informed about Purley!

A successful cricket season has ended, and football clubs are now active again at the Goosecroft ground. We have been busy keeping the ground and pavilion looking good, and just now installing new goal posts.

Unusually, there is not much more to tell you about this month. This is both good and bad news. Good, because it means that we have not had to deal with anything badly *broken* within our areas of responsibility and activity. Bad, because we have also not been able to move forward many of our key projects over the past few weeks, mainly through a lack of sufficient time amongst our councillors to overcome the barriers that always occur when implementing new initiatives. Many have to find time for the council in competition with job/business and family, and it is not easy.

This situation has been exacerbated by the resignation of Tim Whitaker this month. Tim has been our Chairman of Highways and Footpaths, and Alternate Vice-Chairman of the council, and has contributed a lot over the last three years or so, for which I would like to register our grateful thanks. He will be missed by us for his skills as councillor.

I would like to spread our workload as much as possible, and ask residents to consider offering a little time to help with council work. There are several opportunities where a few hours periodically would make a difference to our delivery of services to the village. If you think that you can help, please contact either myself or Brian Smith, our Clerk.

Rick Jones, 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

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

Purley on Thames Parish Council
Parish Office
Goosecroft Lane
off Beech Road
Purley on Thames
Reading
RG8 8DR
Tel/fax: 0118 984 4507
E-mail: clerk@purleypc.wanadoo.co.uk

www.purleyonthames.net

CHILDREN'S SOCIETY BOXES

It's November again, so I should be coming to collect the Children's Society boxes from around the parish, in time for Christmas. If any people, newly arrived locally, have a Children's Society box they would like included in the collection, ring me so we can make a plan!

S Pryor
984 3589