

PURLEY PARISH NEWS

DECEMBER 2007



O LORD, WE WELCOME THEE

35P

For the Church & Community of
PURLEY ON THAMES



ST. MARY THE VIRGIN PURLEY ON THAMES

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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.

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THE BABY ON PLATFORM 17 – A STORY FOR CHRISTMAS

One o'clock in the morning is usually a quiet time for the night staff at the mainline station. The last trains had run, the drivers had packed up and gone home and the mail was not due to arrive for another hour or more. Pete, the station manager was settling down with a cup of tea when there was a knock on his office door. Outside stood a young man in working clothes, worn and patched but well cared for, carrying a battered suitcase and bag of tools.

"Excuse me, I'm sorry to bother you" he began. "My girlfriend and I have come up from the country to visit our relations and missed our connection. We've tried all the hotels we can find but they're all closed. Have you anywhere we can sleep before we go on?"

"What a nuisance", thought Pete. "Why can't people organise their lives better? Still, no point in turning them away. They might not get on too well on the city streets, and the girl was obviously pregnant anyway."

"There's a coach at the far end you can sleep in. It was vandalised last month by a load of football supporters. You can stay the night in there so long as you move on first thing. I don't want my supervisor coming in and finding you."

Pete led the couple to Platform 17 and there stood the coach. The glass was missing from most of the windows and the upholstery torn out of the seats, but it was far enough away from the bustle of the station to offer a chance of some rest. Wishing them a curt "Goodnight", Pete returned to his office and his interrupted cup of tea.

About an hour later, he was on his usual nightly round checking that all was well. But all was not well in the gents' toilet on Platform 4. There was no sign of Bill the cleaner and nothing to show where he had got to. On Platforms 6 and 9 it was the same. There was no sign of any of the cleaners except for young Harry in his usual corner on 14, eating a Mars bar.

"Where have they all got to then? Pete demanded. "Why isn't there any work going on?"

"Gone to see the baby, haven't they?" answered Harry.

"Baby? What baby?"

"The one in that coach on Platform 17. I thought you knew about it boss. It was you who said they could sleep there."

"I didn't know she was going to have a baby. Not so soon anyway."

"Lovely baby he is" Harry went on. "Made a bed for him out of those slashed seats and wrapped him in a couple of mail bags, lovely and warm"

"I put that couple in there to keep them out of the way and now the whole station knows about it. How did you find out?"

"It was this monk what came round. At least I think he was a monk or something. He was wearing a long robe sort of thing. He said there was this

new baby on Platform 17 and we could go and see him if we wanted. Said there was something special about him and it would be worth getting a sight of him."

A baby on Platform 17! Not the sort of thing you wanted to happen every day. Pete hoped fervently that the management didn't find out. Things could become a trifle awkward.

The next couple of hours were a busy time as the mail began to arrive and had to be directed to the right trains. The early shift came in and the mail trains left one by one. Just as things were beginning to settle down, Pete was hailed by what he took to be a city gent wearing a well-cut overcoat and carrying a briefcase.

"Excuse me. I've been looking for you for some time. Could you please tell me where I can find the baby?"

"Well, there is a baby, but I'm not sure if I can allow you to see him. Anyway, how did you know he would be here?"

"My friends and I have been studying the indicators. They have been predicting it for some time."

"Well..." said Pete, "you'll find him on Platform 17 in a wrecked carriage, but would you mind telling me...?" But the man and his friends had gone.

A baby on Platform 17 – a baby expected by three smartly-dressed businessmen. Something very strange indeed was going on! Then Pete caught sight of Bill back on Platform 4, leaning on his broom and rolling a cigarette.

"Oi, Bill!" he called out, "Time you finished that by now. What have you been up to?"

"Sorry mate," said Bill, "but the bloke said we ought to go and see the baby. Said he had a great future ahead of him. Going to put everything to rights, change things so that poor blokes like me get a fair deal. Make a new set of laws so everyone has to act fair and square. Things'll be cleaned up when he grows up and no mistake. I'm just off to clean the lavs now. Sorry I'm late, but somehow I feel I want to make a really good job of them today."

"A baby who'll grow up to put everything to rights," thought Pete. "The city gents seemed sure of it too and they ought to know. Mind you, if there's anything in it he'd better watch out. He could pose quite a threat to the powers that be. Somebody like that could end up getting himself killed."

I wish you all a joyful Christmas.

Roger Howell

PARISH REGISTERS

FUNERALS

31 Oct	Anne Rosemary Brown aged 73 years (Burial at Beech Road Cemetery)
12 Nov	Elsie May Lester aged 83 years (Cremation)

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SERVICES

2 December	10.30am	Advent Communion
9 December	10.30am	Holy Communion
16 December	10.30am	Family Communion
	6.00pm	Holy Communion
23 December	10.30am	Holy Communion
	6.00pm	Carols by candlelight
Christmas Eve	4.30pm	Crib Service
	11.30pm	Midnight Communion
Christmas Day	10.30am	Family Communion
30 December	10.30am	Holy Communion

**Come and catch a glimpse of this amazing event
God entering the world of time and space in the Child of Bethlehem
Once you have seen it, Christmas will never be the same again!**

WAM IN A SLUM

1 billion people spend their whole life living in slum conditions. St Mary's church youth group WAM's developing awareness of the needs of others, prompted them to take part in the nationwide initiative, Slum Survivor. This involved spending 24 hours – or in their case 25 hours as it was the weekend the clocks changed! – in a way that so many people live every day.



Several members of WAM, and two of their leaders, set about building their own *slum* from materials normally discarded by our society: wooden pallets, cardboard boxes and odd pieces of wood, with the luxury of a piece of polythene which, luckily, wasn't needed until near the end of the 25 hours! *Home* was the car park of St Mary's Church, and during their time there, they had to prepare and cook typical slum food of rice and lentils. They also tried their hand at making things to sell from any materials they could find lying about, just as slum dwellers do. They had to amuse themselves (no iPods or Gameboys allowed!) so they made very passable footballs etc.

At the end of the 25 hours, they joined the 9.30am service – where WAM regularly meets discuss various Christian and moral issues – still dressed in their *one set of clothes* and having had a quick wash in water provided by the outside

tap (what a luxury for slum dwellers!). They each had something to say about their experience. Things most missed were music, decent food, electronic games and a comfy bed, with concerns about hunger, comfort and hairstyle (not a female by the way!)

Obviously, here in Purley on Thames, WAM couldn't create the exact conditions tolerated by real slum dwellers, (for a start they had Camping-Gaz!), and they knew it would not be long before they could return to the luxuries of life at home. However, during the service, a short film of real people living in real slums day-in, day-out, helped to achieve WAM's aim of raising awareness of the work being done in poor communities around the world by Soul Action, a Christian charity. Donations popped in the bucket by visitors to the slum, along with sponsorship money, raised over £600 towards their work.

The young people took the plight of slum dwellers to heart having experienced some of the conditions they face. In 2009, church projects in South Africa will be looking for volunteers to help for two weeks with people in need. Already some of our wonderful youngsters are contemplating signing up!

Closer to home, WAM continue to support St Mary's Church. They have made cakes to sell after services with just two sales so far already raising over £70. Many visitors to the Victorian Christmas Fayre at St Mary's Church, drove away with beautifully clean cars after the car washing efforts of WAM, raising a further amount for church funds.

WAM leaders

P.S. Did you see us in the Reading Chronicle, voted Club of the Week?

VICTORIAN VILLAGE FAYRE

ENTRY TICKET PRIZE

The holder of the winning ticket has not been identified!

If you still hold ticket number

191

please phone Jacky Brown urgently on 984 2989 to arrange exchange of your ticket for the prize:

A family ticket to
Living Rainforest
Hampstead Norreys

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



MR PICKWICK'S CHRISTMAS AT DINGLEY DELL

Christmas at Dingley Dell, went very well
For Snodgrass and Tupman, Sam Weller and I
As we sported beneath the snow filled sky.
We were falling, snowballing,
Then heard the cry:
"The pond's frozen over, let's give it a try!"
Sam Weller and Tupman they made quite a hit.
Snodgrass he slithered about quite a bit.
I slid all around
And almost fell down.
But Sam's strong right arm
Saved me from harm.
Said Snodgrass after a spectacular fall
"Let's all go back to the Hall."

The Hall was in a colourful array
Dozens of candles turned night to day.
A Christmas tree, spreading and tall,
Took up almost half the hall.
Like colourful cock pheasants
Lay piles of presents,
Which the children all fished for
And found what they wished for.

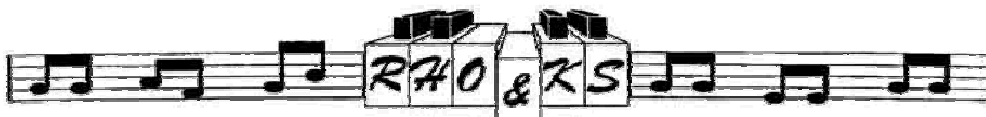
Hung about was holly and mistletoe.
Gleaming brass lamps were lit and aglow
Reflecting on glasses of rich golden sherry
Which we sipped and said to each other "Be Merry!"
Supper was a gargantuan feast;
Tupman at least
Said, he'd had enough,
But still he managed two slices of duff.
That did not stop him joining the dancing
And Snodgrass, recovered, was also up prancing.

Pretty young lasses in crinoline dresses
Gave intimate handshakes and affectionate kisses;
And I'll always treasure
The pleasure
Of a kiss from a miss
Whose passionate squeeze,
Made me weak at the knees.

We all sat round the roaring fire
Watching the pine logs flame higher and higher.
We told stories of Christmas long ago,
Of goblins and the sexton who got lost in the snow.
We had snapdragons from the pot,
But the raisins grew hot,

Though the steaming mulled wine was in flow.

On Christmas morning
The frost was still forming
As we tramped to the church 'cross the field.
The choir was singing
The church bells were ringing
And gaily we heard their sweet peals.
Then the whole congregation
Gave an ovation
When the parson said, "Bless us"
And wished "Merry Christmas"
As we gave salutation
To this joyous occasion.
And everyone there did agree
It was the best Christmas ever
And never
A better would be.



READING HOME ORGAN & KEYBOARD SOCIETY

The next concert (and Christmas Party) is on 11 December 2007 at 8pm in Tidmarsh Village Hall, Pangbourne Road, Reading RG8 8ES. The guest artist is Matthew Bason.

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

Further information from Molly West on Reading 942 7062

WEST BERKS SCRABBLE CLUB

October was National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Mattel, who owns all rights to Scrabble, contacted clubs in the UK asking if they would be willing to raise money for Breakthrough Breast Cancer, the major charity behind the initiative. As we have a very courageous member who has been battling cancer, the decision to fundraise for the campaign came easy to us. We invited Reading Scrabble Club to a sponsorship tournament on Sunday 21 October where six players from both teams individually sought sponsorship monies. The church elders of United Reform Church very kindly allowed us the use of their premises. To date I am still awaiting some monies from players but with monies collected and monies pledged I can say that the final sum will be over £1000. With Gift Aid to be added, the gross sum raised will be in the region of £1,200. Needless to say, we are all delighted in what we achieved.

Still on the subject of charity fundraising, our members are going through the process of voting for the local charity we will sponsor at our annual tournament

in January 2008. In January 2007 the charity was Headway Thames Valley who received our donation of £752.22. I will let you know in the near future which charity we elect to sponsor in January.

We do not meet on Thursday afternoons during the busy month of December. However, Tuesday evenings we meet and will have our Christmas Scrabble Evening on the 18. We will then reopen in January.

Come on you village scrabblers, why not join our friendly sociable club. We would love to meet you; you don't have to be expert, just to enjoy words, in very good company. Interested? Then speak to Ian or Elizabeth on 984 5045.



ROTARY CLUB OF PANGBOURNE

Snow and frost last time
rain and lots of it this time!



Once again the members of the Rotary Club of Pangbourne donned their heavies and spread across the district armed with leaflets to tell of the 'good works' and fun of being a Rotarian.

When this was done earlier this year some very pleasant people came to visit us and duly stayed to join our ranks and the new intake was so successful that the Club decided to have another go - hence our latest outing.

Pangbourne Club now meets at the Calcot Hotel and enjoys a very pleasant meeting while planning their adventures in aid of the community.

The most recent - and successful - was the Dragon Boat Racing in the summer held shortly after the Art Exhibition of aspiring local artists. Together with the usual Senior Citizens Christmas party these raised lots of useful money to fund our ventures whilst at the same time providing a lot of enjoyment among the members.

The Club meets most Mondays for an evening dinner to which they invite many interesting visitors to tell of their ventures and there are a series of extra social functions through out the year.

These are enjoyed by ourselves and our families and this year saw several more ladies - and two married couples - joining us and this was so enjoyable that the club decided to open its doors to all those with a leaning to community spirit and social enjoyment...

So... do come and see us. You will be made very welcome and we promise not to give you a job to do too soon! Give Clive Williams a ring (01491 671631) if you would like to hear more - and DO JOIN US - it is great fun and very worthwhile.

Better still, look us up on the web: pangbourne-rotary.org.uk - you'll be surprised!

PURLEY RISE POST OFFICE & STORES

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR INFORMATION

Christmas is nearly upon us, so just a few reminders!!!

Latest Recommended Posting Dates:

Fri 7 Dec	South & Central America, Caribbean, Africa, Middle East, Asia, Far East, (except Japan), Australia & New Zealand
Mon 10 Dec	USA, Canada, Japan & Eastern Europe
Thu 13 Dec	Western Europe
Fri 14 Dec	Standard Parcels
Mon 17 Dec	Second Class
Thu 20 Dec	First Class
Fri 21 Dec	Special Delivery/Saturday Guarantee
Sat 22 Dec	Special Delivery

Post Office & Shop Opening Hours:

As normal, except:

	Post Office	Shop	Please note:
Mon 24 Dec	9am-12.30pm	9am-4pm	Pensions and Allowances due on 25 December will be available for withdrawal on 24 December
Tue 25 Dec	CLOSED	CLOSED	
Wed 26 Dec	CLOSED	9am-4pm	
Mon 31 Dec	9am-4pm	7.30am-8pm	
Tue 1 Jan	CLOSED	9am-4pm	

The Post Office offers a wide range of services. If you need cash you can withdraw free of charge. It's convenient and secure all you need is your card & PIN or chequebook and card. (Please note you can only withdraw money if you have accounts with the following banks: Alliance & Leicester, Barclays, Lloyds TSB, Co-Op, Smile, Cahoot, Nationwide, Clydesdale, and Bank of Ireland)

Phone cards - Cheap and easy to contact family over the festive season, we offer great rates without charge. We also offer **free & unlimited international calls** - get free calls to different destinations between noon and midnight every Saturday, or talk as long as you like for 15 pence on Sundays.

With our One4all Gift Vouchers, you need never risk buying a wrong gift again; this gift voucher can be brought from your local post office and spent in thousands of shops and services nationwide. We also offer a Post Office Christmas Saving Club! Sign up for your saving card from Jan 2008 deposit as little as £5 at a time, and have a great Christmas for the whole family.

Take advantage of our excellent Post Office Broadband. There are 4 different packages to choose from, all have connection speed of up to 8Mbps - which is super fast, a free set-up connection, UK based customer service, a low -call rate line for technical support available 24/7 and five email addresses. Please contact your local Post Office for more information.

There is a lot more to the Post Office than just selling stamps! Thinking of saving money or sorting out your finances? Why not look at the Post Office for competitive rates & offers on products such as:

Life Insurance - £100 cash back!!! (Terms & Conditions apply)

Bonds, Saving & Investments, Car Insurance, Travel Insurance, Home phone, Bureau De change, Credit Cards, Mobile Top-ups, E -Top-Ups, E-Vouchers, Postal Orders and Paying Bills. All this in one place!!!! What could be easier!!!

We are happy to take orders for Christmas, if you are looking to buy anything from a case of wine or boxes of chocolates please feel free to let us know. If you are housebound and need a delivery, we would be happy to oblige. Just give us a call.

Finally, we would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has supported the Post Office. As you all know, there has been a lot of media coverage and speculation about Post Offices closing. There have already been a number of closures, and there is concern for urban office like us! So far, we have been lucky enough to survive. We need each & everyone of you to use us or you will lose us!!! It's that simple.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Gurmit, Ruchi, Jasria & Charlotte
984 3230

PURLEY HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

TALKS

We shall not be meeting in December and January, but the A.G.M. of the Society will take place on Wednesday, 20 February 2008.

TRADING

The Shed, in the Memorial Hall Car Park, is now closed and will reopen on 2 February 2008. If you require seed potatoes for next season, could you please contact Jim Armstrong on 942 1645 for an order form as soon as possible. Margaret Rolfe now has Suttons Seeds Catalogues so if you would like to order seeds through the Society, please contact Margaret on 941 7247.

On behalf of the Society, I would like to wish you all a very happy Christmas and enjoyable gardening in 2008.

Marion Dabbs
942 2349



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 OPEN

www.purleyplayers.co.uk

LESLIE AND FRANCIS GET RESCUED!

One beautiful sunny day recently, I stepped out of the front door and there was a little hedgehog on my path. I called my husband to have a look and we agreed that he was too small to survive winter hibernation and he was also suffering from a generous sprinkling of ticks attached to his spines.

I telephoned the vet for advice who gave me the phone numbers of the RSPCA and Tiggywinkles, a wildlife hospital in Buckinghamshire. I called Tiggywinkles and they told me that if a hedgehog is out in the daytime, something is wrong and it needs picking up.

As Tiggywinkles is over thirty miles away, I decided to call the RSPCA who informed me that any vet will treat a wild animal on their behalf. So off we went to the vet who accepted him but told me that the creature would be euthanized that afternoon since they don't have the facilities to keep every wild animal brought in. Reluctantly, I left him.

At home, my husband was outraged by this scenario and instantly rang the vet's surgery, telling them not to touch the hedgehog as he was coming to get him. When he arrived, another little one had been brought in, so he collected both and arrived home with two boxes in the boot of the car.

We drove two very noisy hedgehogs over thirty miles to Tiggywinkles, the largest wildlife hospital in Europe which is at Haddenham, near Thame. It is a beautiful place full of every kind of wild creature you can imagine: deer, badgers, foxes,

birds, even wallabies which are now to be found in a few places. Our two patients were examined and deemed too small to survive the winter in the wild so we signed them over to the care of this lovely place. They'll be released next spring.

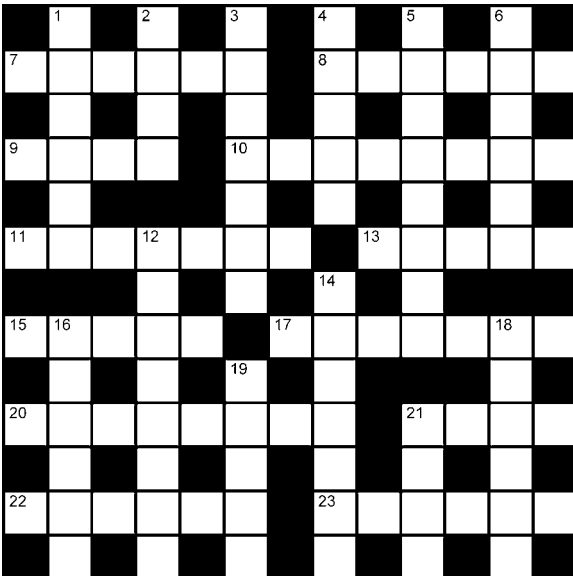
Driving home, we couldn't believe that we'd driven nearly seventy miles to save the little guys (or were they girls)? We don't know what sex they are but Leslie and Francis (or Lesley and Frances) got rescued and are safe.

Dorothy West

CROSSWORD

Across

- 7 Outward or token appearance(6)
- 8 The basic unit of money in Israel(6)
- 9 A youthful attendant at official functions or ceremonies(4)
- 10 A member of an ancient Jewish sect noted for strict obedience to traditions(8)
- 11 100 years(7)
- 13 The loose soft material that makes up a large part of the land surface(5)
- 15 A prominent mountain, 11 miles west of the Sea of Galilee(5)
- 17 Number of disciples sent forth by Jesus(7)
- 20 An ancient seaport in northwestern Israel(8)
- 21 Address God(4)
- 22 To separate grain from chaff(6)
- 23 The fruit of an evergreen tree cultivated in the Mediterranean region(6)



Down

- 1 A journey(6)
- 2 Capital city of Italy(4)
- 3 Make ready(7)
- 4 Commonly encountered(5)
- 5 Give entirely to a specific person(8)
- 6 An arid region with little or no vegetation(6)
- 12 Another name for family or clan(8)
- 14 Northern boundary of the land of Canaan(7)
- 16 Arid, an extensive region in the south-west of Asia(6)
- 18 To go from one place to another(6)
- 19 Dull orange(5)
- 21 Two items of the same kind(4)

PRISONERS OF WAR

I was interested to read in a recent issue of Purley Parish News about prisoners of war working at Westbury Farm. You may be interested to know that prisoners also worked at Home Farm for Mr Bucknell. They were Italians; their names were Pedro and Joseph and they used to wear brown overalls with a large white patch on the back.

In their spare time they used to make baskets from the willows. I think most people in the village had either a bicycle basket, washing basket or a shopping basket made by these two prisoners!

They also built themselves a cooking range from old house bricks. On this, they used to cook their meals. They built this at the foot of the Poplar trees just below the allotments. I remember, as a four-year old at the village school, being rather afraid of these two when they walked down the village street.

Whilst on this wartime subject, my father was an A.R.P. warden. They had a searchlight and anti-aircraft gun in the field at Kennel Gates, about at the top end of Sherwood Rise. They also had a wardens' post at the junction of Colyton Way and Brading Way. This was an old Shepherd's hut, painted white with A.R.P. on the side, but I don't recall this being used.

Eddie Rawlins

PROJECT PURLEY

A bitterly cold evening restricted the numbers attending Project Purley's monthly meeting on 19 October, but those members who came to listen to Ben Viljoen's talk on Purley Hall could not fail to be warmed by his enthusiasm for his topic.

This was the third in a series of talks originally delivered in the Millennium Year of 2000, and just as he did seven years ago, Ben began with a photographic tour of the hall and grounds as they are now. The Property is now in private ownership and sadly no longer accessible to the general public. Furthermore, much defensive planting means that the view of the property, especially from Sulham Woods is greatly obscured.

Ben's carefully compiled selection of slides, taken on a frosty winter morning in 1996 when the Cussins family allowed him access, began with the rustication decorated gates on the A329, then moved up the driveway to the front of the house. We were shown the dining room, where the three parishes of Purley, Sulham and part of Whitchurch once met – a brass plaque under the dining room carpet marks the exact spot. We also saw the croquet lawn with its superb yew hedge, the rose garden and coach house extension, the Y-shaped canal, the rustic temple said to have been built by Frances Hawes to commemorate the battle of Culloden, and the walled kitchen garden with its restored well, fruit trees and flower beds. The tour finished with a view of the lodges either side of the entrance gates. The lodges are in fact one property as they are connected by an underground tunnel.

Once his audience had an understanding of the present design and orientation of Purley Hall, Ben began his account of its history. In 1485 the manor of Purley La

Hyde was left to Elizabeth Carew by her childless brother Nicholas. It was on this site that Hugh Hyde and his son Francis finished the building of Hyde Hall, in the style of a Jacobean manor house, in 1609. Purley Hall, despite many additions and much restoration, remains remarkably similar to the one that the Hydys built.

The Hydys lived in Hyde Hall for 111 years (1609-1720) but as a catholic family they encountered financial difficulties and sold the property to Francis Hawes. He was Cashier to Customs whilst his brother, Thomas, was Secretary for the Navy. Due to their connections, Francis became a Director of the South Seas Company and embarked on a programme of expenditure on his new house, which he renamed Purley Hall. He replaced the stone mullioned windows with fashionable sash windows, faced the lower portion of the south front with stone, and most radically, changed the orientation so that the main driveway now swung around the house to the new entrance on the west side. He also built a stable block, constructed the walled kitchen garden and ornamented the property with a series of tasteful statues.

When the South Sea Bubble burst, Francis Hawes was declared bankrupt and an inventory made of his assets, including the "contents of Purley Hall." From a document discovered by Ben in the basement of the House of Lords, we know that Charles Bridgeman was paid £122 for landscaping the gardens at Purley. The remains of one of the statues he introduced, that of Hercules and Antaeus, can still be seen in Sulham Woods. Paintings and stained glass windows, including one in the form of a sundial by John Rowell, were also listed as Hawes' property, but he was allowed to continue living in Purley Hall due to the generosity of his brother, Thomas, who having bought the property, made it over to him.

Frances Anne, daughter of Francis, was born in 1720 and enjoyed many lovers, including her first husband, Lord William Hamilton. She later became Countess Vane, and when she left Lord Vane for Sewallis Shirley, was described by the Earl of Egmont as her husband's "favourite spaniel bitch." We were also told that she had extremely irregular teeth, though clearly this did nothing to deter her long succession of suitors.

Francis Hawes died in 1764, though his wife remained in Purley Hall until 1777. She fell further and further into debt so that in 1777 the estate was bought by the Reverend Dr Henry Wilder of Sulham. He and his family brought a more circumspect aspect to the goings-on at the house, leasing it out to various tenants, one of whom was Warren Hastings, the former Governor-General of India, and who lived there during his seven year long trial for impeachment.

By 1800 and after several leases, Purley Hall was in a state of disrepair so the Wilders commissioned Thomas Hopper as their architect to renovate the property. Between 1818 and 1820 he removed the top storey, demolished the stable block, filled in the stem of the badly silted canal and replaced many of the sash windows.

For the rest of the nineteenth century the Wilders occupied Purley Hall, though in the Edwardian period it was leased once again, this time to the St.Claire Soames family. One of their daughters, Olave, was aged just 23 when she married the

55 year old Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement. Olave was the archetypal tomboy who kept chickens as a young girl and who supported her ageing husband by becoming Chief Guide.

In the modern period of Purley Hall, the estate has changed hands several times. Iris Moon inherited the property in 1954 on the death of her father, Henry Wilder, but in 1961 it was sold to the Bradley family after being owned by the Wilders for 184 years. The Bradleys made the grounds regularly available to the public for village fetes, but after a short period in residence, they sold to a new owner, Prince Ali Reza. After him came two consecutive owners whose names sound identical but are spelt differently – the Coussens and the Cussins. The second Cussins sold the property after restoring the well in the orchard and putting the fountain in the lake. Purley Hall was bought by David Weinberger in 1997 and sold on again in 2002 at an advertised price of £4,500,000 to an owner whose identity still has to be confirmed.

Ben concluded his talk with a picture of llamas in the grounds of Purley Hall, reminding us of the Indian Menagerie introduced by Warren Hastings and which briefly found a home on the same site. He had spoken clearly, precisely and without notes for an hour and contributed greatly to our knowledge and understanding of one of the most imposing residences in West Berkshire.

David Downs.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE BARN

On Wednesday, 19 September the Project Purley committee and a few guests met at The Barn to present a cheque for £750 to Abbie Stevens who was representing Macmillan Cancer Support. Philip Wroughton, the Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire, was also in attendance.

The donation of £750 was the profit from Rain or Shine's production of *Twelfth Night* in The Barn in June. The theatre company will return next year on Friday, the 6 June to perform *A Winter's Tale*.



In case you don't read *Wingdings*, the above says 'Pray for Purley'!

Some people think prayer is a foreign language or gobbledegook but it isn't: it's talking (and listening) to God, telling him about the things that matter to you, and knowing that he's interested and wants to help (although admittedly he often does that by changing the person praying).

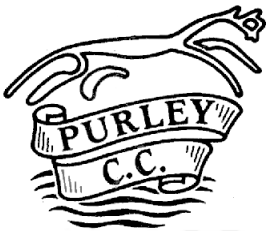
We have one more time together this year, on **Tuesday 11 December**. Do feel welcome to come along to St Mary's then - we start at 8pm and are finished by 9pm. You don't have to be a member of St Mary's – or even a regular church-

goer – to come and pray, and give thanks for all the good things God has given us over the past year (and maybe moan about the bad stuff as well).

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!

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



PURLEY ON THAMES CRICKET CLUB 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

Purley on Thames Cricket Club will celebrate its 40th Season with a Cricket Week in 2008.

The club played its first fixtures in 1968 shortly after the completion of the construction of the Goosecroft Recreation Ground in Beech Road.

Since 1968, the club has developed into one of Berkshires leading Cricket Clubs with a successful adult record in competitive cricket and a thriving Junior Section.

The aim of the Cricket Week, to take place in July 2008, will be to include as many of our members, our supporters, sponsors and the local community as possible in a celebration of the clubs 40th season. The week will comprise of a series of events, cricket matches and social events culminating in a cricket match on the final Sunday around which the club hopes to host a village event at which as many local organisations as possible can participate and raise money to support their own activities.

The Cricket Club will shortly be setting the date for the events and writing to local organisations offering the opportunity to participate.

If you require further information or would like your local organisation to be involved please contact Martin Bishop on 945 3117.

ANNUAL QUIZ NIGHT

Don't forget the Cricket Club Quiz night, Friday 25 January 2008 in The Barn, Beech Rd, Purley from 7pm. Quiz Starts at 7.30pm. Tickets will be £5 each, and will include a meal of either fish and chips or sausage and chips for every contestant. Cheap bar on the night, £1 beer, £1 glass of wine.

Maximum of 8 per team. **Enter a whole team or join a team on the night.** Send your choice of food and £5 entry per person, by 31 December 2007, to: Charlotte Bishop c/o 2 Huckleberry Close, Purley on Thames, RG8 8EH

STORY SACKS

First and third Fridays of each month during term time from 9.15-10.15am at Denefield Day Nursery, Denefield School.

A story time loan scheme for families with under 5s. Each bag contains books, toys and ideas for family fun activities - ideal for parents, carers and grandparents! Come along with your child and relax in the child friendly environment. Have a cup of coffee and relax. Last one for 2007 on Friday 7 December, first one in 2008 on Friday 4 January. Small registration fee applies, but just turn up and make friends!

Thanks are expressed to AWE Aldermaston and the Skipton Building Society for their donations and also for the kind support received from both the Tilehurst & Purley Women's Institutes.

FAMILY FRENCH COURSE

14 January 2008, 2.30-4.45pm at Denefield School

A free 10 week beginners course run by Newbury College for parents/carers with a child aged 8-10. Learn how to greet people, days of the week, counting, items of clothing and how to ask for food and drink. During the first hour adults learn the basics to pass on to their child.

After a short break your child joins in for the second hour of Family French at 3.45pm. Transport in place from Partnership schools to Denefield via Kool Club walkers at a charge of only £1 per session. A free crèche is available for younger siblings thanks to a grant from West Berkshire Council. Only 8 family places are available for this course so register with Sue Guy now. Closing date: 10 December 2007.

ADULT MATHS COURSE

Starting 22 January, 10-11.30am at Denefield Training Centre, Denefield School

A free 8 week course for those with no maths qualifications. Would you like to improve your maths? Would you like to be able to help your child with their maths homework? Come along to these free and informal sessions, which include refreshments. This course will also give you a chance to improve your IT skills.

A free crèche is available thanks to a grant from West Berkshire Council. Only 9 places available on the course, so book with Sue Guy now.

Closing date: 10 December 2007.

For more information or to register for an activity, please contact Sue Guy.

*Sue Guy, Extended Schools Manager
Inspire4Life, Tilehurst & Purley Cluster
972 8978
sguy@denefield.org.uk*

PURLEY PATHFINDERS

A WALKING GROUP FOR LADIES

Alongside a clamour of swans and ducks, we joyfully appreciated the River Thames as its waters flowing beside us reflected the welcome October sunshine. Beyond the interesting streets of Henley we walked beside the grounds of Friar Park, former home of the late Beatle, George Harrison. We often spot wildlife on our walks, but as we headed for the golf course, we spotted peacocks in a grand aviary, and llamas in a paddock nearby! We swept across the golf course, noticing how the deep green of the grass contrasted now with the browns of the autumnal leaves.

With the changing of the clocks, Autumn has arrived, and, as we entered the lovely Lambridge Woods, we crunched our way through the orange carpet at our feet, and marvelled at the way the sunlight played amongst the russets, browns and golds of the leaves remaining on the trees. We enjoyed these glorious surroundings for some time before emerging onto National Trust land. In the woodland the trees professed beauty on mass. Here in the parkland of Greys Court the trees stood majestically alone, vainly flaunting their individual beauty. Sheep grazed beneath their canopies while Red Kites oversaw this peaceful scene from high in the blue sky.

We continued along a Medieval Holloway edged with fungi of various shapes, sizes and colours. Another bonus on our autumn walks! One field after another eventually took us back to Henley where we lunched 'with' Mr Toad in the River Rowing Museum.

During Remembrance Week we began our walk by passing the former home of poet, Laurence Binyon, writer of *For the Fallen*. On into woodland, the sun brought out the beauty of the beech trees. Our kicking of the leaves disturbed numerous pheasants, which mainly ran to right and left, although some decided it was more fun to run along the path in front of us for some distance! We took our break at St Mary's which gave us plenty of time to explore inside this interesting Church. On the Millennium Tapestry Queen Elizabeth I is depicted, as is the helicopter which brought Princess Anne to Aldworth. We followed the footsteps of these Royal visitors for, they too, had entered the church to be awed by the Aldworth Giants – nine huge effigies of members of the de la Beche family – Queen Elizabeth in 1644, and Princess Anne in October 1998. Thoughtfully we read from the tapestry border, the words from Laurence Binyon's poem which would be quoted later in the week at Remembrance Services throughout the country – 'They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old...'

We continued our walk, passing Binyon's grave as we crossed the churchyard, (which, incidentally, also holds the grave of the Sellwood family who lived at Pibworth Manor with their daughter Emily who married Lord Tennyson at Shiplake in the church visited earlier in the year). In contrast to the woodland of the first half of the walk, we now walked in the wide, open space of The Downs with their far reaching views. On the tapestry we had also noted the presence of Concorde. At the suggestion of the landlord of The Bell, one hundred people paid one hundred pounds each to make the first ever chartered Concorde flight. The

pilot, Brian Calvert, was a regular at The Bell, and it was to its cosy interior that we followed his footsteps to enjoy lunch.

Luckily for us it has been a long autumn, so we have been able to enjoy the glory of the season for many more of our walks than in some years. So it was that in the middle of November we continued to enjoy the beauty of the autumn colours which edged our field paths, and formed golden copses through which we passed. This glorious countryside led us to Plastow Green, a gem of a village oozing character cottages set in pretty gardens.

Leaving civilisation once more we headed deep into the countryside. As we paused for our break, we were entertained by three deer, dancing away through the long grass, and by a green woodpecker which whistled a song as it headed for the cover of trees. What a wonderful setting in which to spend some of ones childhood. Hopefully Prince Charles agreed with this, for we crossed a stile and entered the grounds of Cheam Hawtreys School where he was a pupil from the age of nine. It was while he was here that the Queen announced him to be Prince of Wales. With a good view of the school, we crossed the playing fields and entered a copse. What a fabulous place of adventure for any young lad, with hollows and ditches crossed by planks of wood, and even a meandering brook! We wished Prince Charles a 'Happy Birthday' as we left to cross several fields back to the start where there was time to browse around Cottismore Nursery.

A few frosts recently announce the fast approaching winter, but with each season bringing its own special rewards, we look forward to ending our 'following footsteps' year as we walk near the home of the great grandfather of David Cameron, and explore the village which is home to yachswoman Tracy Edwards. December will find us enjoying our 'Tinsel & Turkey' walk, and ending the year with the traditional Winter Wonderland walk around Purley followed by a shared lunch.

Next year our theme will be *Village Life* and I hope you will enjoy 'coming on the walks' with me through the pages of this magazine. Until then, on behalf of the ladies of Purley Pathfinders, may I wish you all a wonderful Christmas and a very Happy New Year!

Nicki Woodward
nicki@cherryacre.com - 984 2112

THE HAND OF FRIENDSHIP

Is there anyone who would like to meet new friends, and spend a pleasant afternoon in friendly company? The Hand of Friendship is a group that meets every Tuesday afternoon from 2pm to 4pm in St. Mary's Church Hall. We welcome new members, of any age, for a chat, tea and cakes; we have a small raffle. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Babs Waring 942 8844
Gladys Morris 942 3610

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.

THAMES VALLEY POLICE ON THE BEAT



This past month some of the crimes I have been investigating include criminal damages, thefts and fraud. Victims of crime can sometimes be upset at how long it takes the Police to investigate crimes but I can assure you that although it can seem as if nothing is happening a lot of work goes into investigating what might seem the simplest of crimes.

I would like to thank the residents of Southend Bradfield (apologies if I've got it the wrong way round) who I spoke to on 6 October at the farmers' market. A quick survey highlighted the fact that speeding was the main priority and this will again be something that the local Neighbourhood Action Group will look at. I would also like to thank the people that came and spoke to me at the Boathouse Surgery in Pangbourne and hope to see more of you as it becomes a regular event.

I have again been seizing alcohol from youths and also adults in the company in youths in public and would urge parents to be aware of what their children are up to when not at home and also whom they are with. In the run up to Bonfire Night I also seized fireworks and would ask people to make sure they know the law in relation to fireworks before purchasing them.

I assisted with a youth evening at the new nightclub in Calcot, J12, which considering approximately 1500 youths attended seemed to pass off very well which just goes to show that the vast majority of youths are well behaved.

If you wish to contact me you can either send an email to 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*

WEIGHT WATCHERS IN PURLEY ON THAMES

Following on from the success of Pangbourne, Weight Watchers are opening a meeting in Purley on Thames. This will be held every Tuesday at 7pm starting on Tuesday 8 January at the Purley Park Social Club in Wintringham Way. The leader of the meeting Paula Krowllaw, who herself lives in Purley and has lost 105lbs with the Weight Watchers' programme is thrilled to be involved in this meeting. The Weight Watchers programme offers a healthy eating plan which is flexible and you can eat the foods you love!

Watch your letterbox and local notice boards for more details and special offers.

For details of this meeting Paula's phone number is 07822 386 865, or call Customer Services on 0845 3451500 for details of any other local meetings.

PURLEY ON THAMES PARISH COUNCIL

The final Farmers Market of this year will be held at the Barn on the 8 December. As this may be busier than usual, please walk to the venue if you are able to do so to avoid pressure on parking spaces.



I have just been advised by the external auditor of some presentational changes to our submitted accounts he has requested. Therefore I will again delay reporting on the 2006/7 figures until the audit has been fully completed.

West Berkshire Council will soon be advertising the statutory enactment of the parking proposals submitted after local consultation and will then take note of any objections or comments raised. I expect this is likely to be done early next year and we have agreed for drawings to be made available locally when this process takes place.

Local grant applications are being considered over the next couple of months but if your organisation did not apply please contact the office to see whether we may still be able to assist. CAWB have 15 laptop computers to give away to community groups. For further information, or an application form, contact Katie Reynolds at CAWB, 1 Bolton Place, off Northbrook Street, Newbury RG14 1AJ.

We have had only had a limited response to the request for candidates for the Parish Council. The statutory process regarding the current vacancy has been put in place and information posted on the notice boards and website. If anyone else is interested in serving on the Parish Council please contact us for further information.

We continue to receive complaints from residents of the mess caused by dog walkers not clearing up after their animals. Please remember this is an offence and will be targeted by the authorities. The Neighbourhood Wardens have also been asked to investigate the problem whilst undertaking their other duties.

May I wish all parishioners a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

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

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The year seems to be rushing on, with Christmas not too far away now. We intend to offer the same Christmas Tree re-cycling service as was so successful last year. There will be a signed drop-off area at the Goosecroft Recreation Ground. Look out for notices from the clerk on the notice board, and on the web site, for details of timing and location.

The Tilehurst Learning Campus project has suffered some delay. By now we were expecting wide public consultation and decisions by West Berkshire Council. However, the Council did the right thing and commissioned a thorough feasibility study, which has unfortunately shown significant issues in funding, development and concerns over effects on traffic. WBC has given careful consideration to these issues, and is currently seeking additional funding from central government. We therefore still await the outcome of this scheme. Throughout, Purley Parish Council has resolutely put forwards the best interests of Purley, and we will continue to do so.

December is upon us. And January/February not far behind – usually the wettest time of the year. The flood scare in the summer put us on high alert. Our volunteer flood wardens did a splendid job of communication and community adhesion, and we gained confidence in our emergency plan and the support agencies, who were great. We should continue to make preparations however. Vulnerable households should keep in touch with those on the Environment Agency warning system, and ensure that they have read the relevant leaflets giving preparation advice, and follow that advice. Today, for quite low cost, barriers can be fitted to doors and airbricks, that are far more effective than sand bags, and easier to deploy. Plan ahead and be prepared – just in case!

Enough of the seriousness – Purley Parish Council wishes all residents a happy Christmas and New Year celebration.

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
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Goosecroft Lane
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Purley on Thames
Reading
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Tel/fax: 984 4507
E-mail: clerk@purleypc.wanadoo.co.uk

www.purleyonthames.net

AND FINALLY...

May I wish all our readers, contributors and distributors a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Contributors please note, to get your material in January's edition, I need it by 15 December.

Editor